

THE SEVEN SONS

Or

The Ups and Downs, Mostly Downs

Of

The Seven Little Diamonds In The Rough

By

John T Diamond

[Written around 1949]

Compliments
of
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JOHN T. DIAMOND

WINTER HAVEN – John T. Diamond, 85, of 616 Avenue E., S.E., died yesterday morning in a Bartow Hospital after a long illness. He was a native of Jay, Fla., and had been in Winter Haven for the past month visiting with his daughter, Mrs. Orville Struthers.

Mr. Diamond was county school superintendent of Santa Rosa County and later was with the Florida State Board of Control. He was on the board for 30 years and was secretary for 28 years. He retired in 1958 to Jay, Fla. He was a member of the Masonic Lodge and received his 50-year pin two years ago.

He was also active in the Tallahassee Masonic Lodge. He was elected Man of the Year in Santa Rosa County in 1958 and was a member of the Jay Baptist Church.

He is survived by his widow, Mrs. Mae Morino Diamond, Jay, Fl., two daughters, Miss Rowena Diamond, Pensacola, and Mrs. Struthers; four brothers, Sam Diamond, Montgomery, Ala., Emory Diamond, Miami, Irl Diamond, Mobile, Ala., and Walker Diamond, Jacksonville, and four grandchildren.

Service arrangements will be announced by Crisp Funeral Home in Winter Haven.



“GRANDMA TO 300” – Approximately 300 residents of Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties are direct descendants of Mrs. Mary Ann Nelson, widow of James Nelson, who is entering her ninety-sixth year. [News Journal photo by Foote]

Grandma of 300 Keeps Busy Making Quilts and Canning

[By Dee Jones-Pensacola News Journal – June 1, 1947]

“I’m fussy about what I eat”, said Aunt Mary Ann Nelson, explaining how she still can piece quilts and can peaches as she enters her ninety-sixth year, outliving many of more than 300 descendants.

Aunt Mary Ann spurns milk and spinach, preferring coffee, corn bread, butter beans and “spring water” as a longevity diet.

It appears to agree with the spry old lady who last week was visiting her niece, Mrs. W.H. Crawford, principal of P. K. Yonge School, and her granddaughter, Mrs. L. B. Kennedy, 1224 East Cervantes street.

Mrs. Kennedy is one of more than 300 of Mrs. Nelson's descendants who are living in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties. Although the family congregates only for funerals and other special events, Mrs. Nelson estimated that her 10 children have given her 95 grandchildren, 53 of whom are living; 180 great-grand-children, with 86 still alive and 57 great-great-grand-children.

200 at Birthday

When Mrs. Nelson celebrated her ninety-fifth birthday last month, 200 of her relatives called at her home in Jay to wish her "many happy returns."

A native of Bluff Springs, Mrs. Nelson was born in 1851 and remembers climbing on the porch rail of her father's farmhouse to see the conquering Yankee soldiers march through Florida. Three of her brothers served in the Confederate forces with her father and two other brothers in the Home Guard.

John William Diamond, her father, set an age record for his daughter to equal. Although the family Bible recorded his death at the age of 96, other records showing that he served with Andrew Jackson in the war against the Indians indicate that Diamond may have been more than 100 when he died.

Records Confused

That records of his birth may be confused is understandable because the family legend is that John William Diamond was born on a houseboat while his parents were drifting from South Carolina to Florida to make their home in the southern wilderness.

Mrs. Nelson remembers spinning and weaving cloth from cotton grown on her father's farm during her youth. All 14 Diamond children were taught to work to help their Baptist parents who did not believe in slavery. Quilting is still one of Aunt Mary Ann's favorite pastimes to avoid sitting "doing nothing." "I like to go fishing, too, if somebody'll haul me down to the water."

Likes Spring Water

Aunt Mary Ann no longer works in the fields as she used to do, but she regularly carries her own spring water up the hill to her home because it's better than well water. Pensacola tap water also is inferior stuff, Aunt Mary Ann believes.

Although she enjoys automobile riding, Aunt Mary Ann is reluctant to accept an invitation to go flying with her pilot nephew High Gilmore, 1700 East Jordan Street. She told him, "that's too high for me."

Coons' Beat Possums'

Retired Educator Writes Of Pioneer Days of Area

By: Miriam Sawyer – *Pensacola News Journal* – December 22, 1957

JAY, Dec 21 – The “coons” beat the “possums” in a political race and won the honor of having a community named in their memory.

A study of the origin of names of Santa Rosa towns and communities such as Coonhill is one of the hobbies of J. T. Diamond, former secretary of the Florida State Board of Control and former Santa Rosa County school superintendent.

Diamond, 79, has retired to a home near here and he has tagged his residence “Bid a Wee” – a Scotsman’s version of “Stay Awhile.”

He spent more than 50 years in educational work as a teacher in small public schools, including Milton and Tate, and 30 years with the Board of Control.

His place of retirement is only about a quarter of a mile from his family’s old home place. There, he spends much of his time working among hundreds of plants in a beautiful garden. He also devotes much time to reading and writing and recalling stories of pioneer life in Santa Rosa County.

His interest in Santa Rosa history is no less now than when he was a boy asking questions of now deceased residents about their memories of earlier days. The fruit of this avid curiosity is, so far, a book about his Aunt Mary Ann, who lived to be more than 100, and could remember when Indians lived in the county. He is also planning other books because he believes that the knowledge of the county’s early days should be preserved for future generations.

He is especially interested in how different places within the county have acquired their names. The town of Jay, according to Diamond, received its name in 1902 when the U. S. Post Office Department decided to establish a post office there. It asked J. T. Nowling, owner and operator of the only store there, to pick a name. He suggested several and they were all turned down by the Department because it had other post offices named the same thing. Finally, the Post Office Department named the post office itself, “Jay,” the first letter of Nowling’s name.

Diamond, besides collecting the interesting memories of his antecedents, has had some interesting experiences himself. He can remember when Milton was known as “the toughest town in Florida,” and four men were killed on the street within one year. He can remember when a speaker for prohibition, later Governor of the state, Williams Catts of DeFuniak, couldn’t find anyone in Milton to introduce him because they were afraid the saloon operators would shoot them. Diamond introduced the prohibition speaker.

Like many other school teachers, Diamond’s fondest memories are of “green old backwoods boys” in whom he recognized talent, whom he taught and encouraged and who are now very successful in their professions. Tears gather in the eyes of the grey-haired old gentleman as he tells about people informing him of the accomplishment of these former students of his, “I don’t tell them that’s one of my green old backwoods boys from Santa Rosa County,” he says.

Diamond retired, at doctor’s orders, as secretary of the Board of Control, in 1943 [?]. His worth to the board and numerous civic organizations, both in Tallahassee and Jay, is recognized through the many citations that they have presented him.

Diamond is not the only resident of the hospitable home who has a background of pioneers. His wife is the former Miss Mae Moreno of Pensacola, descendant of Don Francisco Moreno, early Spanish King of Pensacola.

Since he got over his illness, retirement hasn’t been easy for the vigorous Diamond who has worked hard his entire life. “I never made application for an hour’s work in my life,” he said, “but I worked all of it until I had to retire and never had a vacation.”

Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough

PINE LEVEL

PINE LEVEL'S PINES AND PIONEERS

THE EARLY PIONEER'S CASH WAS FROM THE PINES

SOUTHERN GIRLS

PINE LEVEL

Pine Level extended from the state line on the north
To the Big Open Pond 'd Blackjack Creek on the south
To Holly Mill creek and Escambia Riv'r on the west
To a clear crystal creek, West Cold Water on the east

Among old memory pictures refreshing to my soul
Are boyhood scenes when before me they oft unroll
Pristine Pine Lev'l, my home, my native land
Painted by the all-wise Master and handed to man

Skillful art with all the colors of the rainbow
Ne'er has painted scenes quite like they do grow
Trees fruits gay leaves 'd flowers with dainty hues
The varied luscious grasses wet with sparkling dews

Pine Lev'l's flora, dainty shrubs and big tall trees
Its lovely flowers, vines 'd brilliant colored leaves
Became my counterpart while roaming the woods through
And from its wood made billy goat carts 'd gadgets too

Clev'r man ne'er did paint the fauna of this land
Like it roamed the scenic range a joy to rustic man
Or swam among the bars and bonnets of crystal streams
'Twas turtles, fish and water fowl of golden dreams

Pine Lev'l's wild birds, fish, fauna 'd all its game
Became a part of me as we oft did race and play
I learned their living habits, haunts and hideouts
And all about their fighting tricky moves 'd knockouts

Pine Lev'l durin' pioneer days was the chosen land
Natural resources then made it a paradise for man
With tall stately pines thick as they could stand
'Twas called by stalwart pioneers the "Promised Land"

Pine Lev'l was a beautiful land a long time ago
Where yellow pine trees tall and stately did grow
Towering hickories standing sentinels o'er time
Large dogwoods grew here flowering thoughts divine

From the Level's forest massive pines tall 'd straight
Millions were cut and sent through our market gate
Spars to move mighty sailing ships o'er seven seas
To hold ships against gusty gales with perfect ease

Sticks of pine timber large'd long both hewn'd sawn
Supplied foreign trade till all the pines were gone
Our timber built big ships strong for world trade
And from it large cities and modest homes were made

Crooked sassafras trees grew tall among the pines
With their yellow blossoms heralding spring times
Tall persimmon trees grew luscious fruits so sweet
Ripening in the fall when 'possums were good to eat

Magnolia trees with broad leaves glossy and green
Grew thick and tall along each murmuring stream
Beneath these trees fringing the "Land of Paradise"
Rose magic springs of crystal clean and cold as ice

The tall buckeye bush once grew wild on every land
Living proof Pine Lev'l was and is a fertile land
'Twas long spikes o' pretty flow'rs on bushes tall
And big brown buckeye balls following in the fall

Many crystal brooks oft converge forming a creek
To supply pow'r for mill machinery complete
Where from logs long and large was made lumber neat
And plenty golden grain ground for man'd beast to eat

Beneath tall pine trees much wild grasses did grow
On which great herds of catt'l grazed a long time ago
Durin' the summer wild oats grew full six feet tall
Fatt'ning cattl' faster than grain fed in a stall

Swamps all along the streams adjacent to Pine Level
Were thick with massive trees the forest primeval
Cypress grew ten feet through and forty fathoms high
Giant oaks six feet through towering toward the sky

Sweet gum, Florida's mahogany and birch wood rare
Many ash trees tall'd hickories high grew well there
For fine furniture 'twas maples white and yellow
And maples and curl'y for good violins mellow

Wild mulber'y trees grew large 'd long for sacred pews
Tall poplars for furniture varnished varied hues
'Twas juniper post, row boats light and shingles true
Chestnut for the split rail fence and tasty nuts too

Low lands and marshes along rivers and streamlets too
Grew luscious grasses, swamp reeds and big bamboo
To supply winter feed to fatt'n cattle on the range
Why the cattle grew fat grazing here wasn't strange

Old Pine Level and each surrounding hill and vale
Supplied wild delicious fruit that ne'er did fail
Mayhaws for making jams, jellies and best pies
Hickory nuts for roasting 'd eating around the fires

Huckleberries in spring 'd the "Good Old Summer Time"
'Twas wild grapes and muscadine for the mellow wine
'Possum haws 'd wild persimmons to brew the best beer
And blackberry juice just right for friendly cheer

'Twas wild plums to make jams for layer cakes fine
Blueberries to make rich cream and sugar seem sublime
Chinquapins grew here with nuts good roasted or raw
They first were used by red children 'd the old squaw

Pine Lev'l once had few fields for feeding the birds
Woodpeckers were thick'n pines like candidate's words
The quail ate wild grain when bugs were out of sight
In the spring seeking a mate whistled "Bob White"

Gay larks were here 'd always flew up to meet the sun
They 'd sing "Laziness'll Kill You" till the day was done
Woodpeckers were on the Level 'd lived among the pines
They 'd hammer on dead limbs to sound morning chymes

Sweet singing birds were on the Level the year round
Nesting in the low bushes and living near the ground
The cardinals and mocking birds our sweetest singer
The orioles thrushes blue jays and others that linger

Bird's lays made Pine Lev'l's welkin ring at night
The bullbat 'd his "Spesbona" high in the early twilight
Hoot owl's "Who who are ya" and screech owl's eerie note
The whippoor-will's one song "Whip Will with a whiteoak"

When the Indians first built tepees along our streams
Plenty wild game was real and not a hunter's dreams
It thrived on Pine Level'd roamed far among the pines
But the way 'twas wasted is among the worst of crimes

Wild game played around the cabins a long time ago
Each man killed big deer 'round the rustic cab'n door
Venison steak and roast were common in the cab'n home
'Cause for the best venison hunters ne'er had to roam

'Twas "Turkey in the straw" around each settlement
And "Turkey on the tab'l" made everyone content
'Twas turkey stew broil bake'd fry fresh from range
And turkey cured with hickory smoke just for a change

Wild ducks of many kind were on every stream'd pond
Workmen moving logs upon wat'r hith'r thith'r'd yon
Oft times brought big fat ducks home for dinners
Memories of bake duck'd trimmins aren't for sinners

Thick swamps and hammocks bord'ring on every stream
Were alive with little squirrels the hunter's dream
While stately pines'd tall hickory trees on the lev'l
Furnished big gray squirrels room to roam and revel

The early pioneer shooting squirrels had his fun
'Twas gay sport for little boys to shoot'm with a gun
Squirrels are good'n spicy stew'd brown tender fires
But are best when baked in big light juicy pies

The waters around the Level once grew the finy tribe
Big riv'r bass were game fighters known far and wide
'Twas chan'l catfish two feet long for steak'd stew
They were good to make the best appetizing chowder too

Fishing's a manly sport and choc-full o fancy fun
'Tis always the same doesn't matter how it's done
It's a tonic pleasant and true building brawn'd brain
It whets a fellow's wits and makes his thinking sane

Fishing makes a fellow feel like eternal youth
Always speak think act and live a fisherman's truth
'Twill rest a man's muscles soothe his weary soul
And balance his life in a perfect harmonious whole

Catching no-bigs'd stump-knocks isn't a fishing feat
Both're small and bony but always mighty good to eat
Catching shellcrackers' and bream's a joy not for sinners
The sport and eating constrains a feeling that lingers

Jackfish're big and bony but delicious tender steak
Creek suckers are not the best but easy to take
Catching big goggle-eyes is a sport hard to beat
It's a joy that makes a fellow forget to stop and eat.

Streams once were alive with turtles used for food
For turtle steak and soup folks are ever in the mood
The loggerhead turtle's beef pork and fish in one
'Tis softshells for soup to put all others on the run

The common streaked-head in creek and river thrives
'Tis good any way bout's better for stews and fries
The big green turtles' full of tender tasty eats
A luxury food, a dainty dainty one seldom meets

The rabbit's been on the Level living among the briers
Since soon after Adam and Eve were the first liars
He's a vegetarian and lives on tender shoots'd leaves
And juicy herbs'd bark from young and slender trees

His steaks tender and tasty are known far and wide
They're sought by men hawks owls and the feline tribe
'Tis always op'n seas'n night'd day from air and land
How he's held his own's long been a puzzle to man

To folks familiar with all the rabbit tricks'd lore
It's ne'er been a puzzle how he's held his score
The reason's so plain, he know his woods'd hideouts
And all his eaters their clever tricks'd whereabouts

He's the color of the leaves'd grasses all about him
He sleeps with big eyes op'n to see all around him
He shifts gears quick so none can out-dodge him
He thinks and acts so none can outwit him

Possums were on Pine Level'd lived among the pines
A long time before men and their trusty canines
The possum likes chicken'd oft robs the poultry lot
And for such thievery oft his carcass finds the pot

Possums are comical chaps and always a grinning
He likes persimmons and climbs for them a winning
He winds his tail around a limb and hangs downward
Swinging picks fruit with feet'd flings it mouthward

The possum has no voice and makes not a single sound
Not even when climbing or trav'ling on the ground
'Tis e're been thus, 'tis his natural make up
For stalking food at night without a wake up

Big 'possums and potatoes bakin' in the old time pan
The most delicious eats to tickle the tongue of man
MY WHAT JOY, none has yet been able to describe it
'Cause nothing's e're been tasted exactly like it

A clever raccoon runs to wat'r when chased by a hound
And finds great sport in trying his chaser to drown
He crawls upon light floating driftwood slick'd round
Jumps from drift to drift tiring his chaser down

When the crafty coon has worn the canine chaser out
'Neath the surface he dips the wearied canine's snout
With hindfeet upon the driftwood'd fore ones on the nose
Canine's ducked'd strangled till sick'd full of woes

If you've not had a 'coon chase with piney woods boys
Nor felt the sportive thrills'd dreamy lingering joys
Of a chase along winding streams among trees'd shadows
You know not joy and your life drags in shallows

Pine Lev'l's wild fauna though so useful to man
Has one little cat isn't worth a tinker's dam
'Tis loathed and shunned by all men and beast alike
'Cause none can tell where or when stinker'll strike

He's the well-known common streaked stinker skunk
With squirt gun and bag of musk he deals his stunt
'Tis used in self-defense, a poor fight without it
It's full of danger and sick'ning no doubt about it

The common old stinker skunk and his defensive musk
Is much like the hum'n skunk and his offensive stuff
One sprays folks with stink musk for self defense
One kills character with stink stuff for lack of sense

Back bears gray timber wolves and panthers savage
Were here with bold pioneers and the land did ravage
They ate calves sheep lambs'd yearlings by the score
Pigs'd kids both young'd old by the hundreds or more

Soon all the sturdy pioneers came to understand
They'd have to match wits with a thieving wily band
To keep their livestock from this crafty gang a prey
If in the fair "Land of Promise" they meant to stay

With their long Kentucky rifles powder and ball
Wolf pits pens poison and the death dealing deadfall
And packs of trusty dogs to bring motley bruits to bay
Our forefathers won the long fight for a fairer day

They drove the beast from the "Promised Land"
A splendid start for making it the "Golden strand"
They laid broad and deep a firm solid foundation
Upon which we should build a better civilization

Then all honor to their courage let us pay
For all their heroic efforts clearing the way
Along which oth'rs must go of wild raiding thieves
To help them develop noble thoughts'd high'd ideals

The first farming on Pine Lev'l was mere patches
And cultivation was but plowing shallow scratches
All patches planted were small'd the crop yields low
The acre yield for corn was ten bushels and no more

'Twas all done by logging men in self defense
The methods used were primitive but a mere pretense
'Twas done during shutdowns'd lulls in logging work
When men were unsettled and full of gloom and murk

But with all the bad handicaps they made a good start
Laid a corner stone deep and kindled a burning spark
Lighting a long winding farming trail along the way
That's brought our better farming where 'tis today

Pine Lev'l's now noted far and wide for good farming
With fertile land'd broad fields 'tis crops charming
'Tis acres o' corn peanuts and plenty of cotton too
Peas velvet beans hay potatoes'd pastures quite a few

The first livestock Pine Lev'l people e're did grow
Were razorback pigs sound and fat but a little slow
Small range plump porkers they were maturing late
Took two years with feed to make two hundred weight

For a long time fine fat hog production was slow
Now o'er oth'r field crops they have the money go
They're good grazers on pastures all the year around
Save farmers much lab'r harvesting crop off ground

They now lead king cotton with long folding cash
And make big silver wheels jingle with a gay flash
They buy the farmers big lighted tractors new
Pay debts dress up home dad and all the family too

Large range cattle o'er Pine Level used to roam
Fat herds then were like folding cash from home
But cutting the timber did cause grazing to flout
Thus thinning the cattle to knock folding cash out

The grazing flout was but a blessing in disguise
That made many sturdy farmers grow money wise
And graze big thoroughbred beef cattle in the fields
Soon they saw the folding cash come'n triple yields

Such beef brings highest price where e'er it's known
'Cause 'tis the best beef our country e're has grown
'Tis fat tender tasty juicy and always prime
Next to baked 'possum about potato digging time

'Tis much corn in the crib'd acers for feeding down
Tons of peanuts to shell and acers feed in the ground
'Tis cane syrup in the can'd brown sugar in the sack
Fresh vegetables in pot'd deep freeze by the pack

Tis fat hogs to sell'd bacon hams'd sausage to keep
Big fat cattle to maket'd roast stew'd steak to eat
A big four gallon jersey around the milking barn
And plenty milk and butter for all folks on the farm

Pine Lev'l's poultry once graded low now ranks high
'Tis always tender tasty and juicy's the reason why
Pine Lev'l's reputation for splendid chickens tasty
Has spread far and wide o'er all the country hasty

'Tis breed watchful care'd home grown feed they eat
That makes all the nice tender tasty juicy meat
'Tis for our poultry growers a big boost indeed
And a splendid booster battery for home grown feed

Early pioneer schools on Pine Level were poor indeed
They knew not how to serve old Pine Level's need
But because of canine courage and determination
Pine Level's schools now have a splendid reputation

They're serving greater Pine Level's needs today
Training children and grownups to the better way
It's been a long hard pull up a rough and rugged road
'Tis grateful joy to peep over the hill'd see the goal

The first preaching was under arbors among the pines
Where folks heard God's plan from missionary divines
'Twas sowing Jehovah's word in fertile soil
Where the harvest would come from the servants toil

The harvest did come like the old preacher prophesied
Proof is nice church buildings all along the roadside
Christian homes around the edge of broad fertile fields
'Stead of brush arbor'd crude cabins among the trees

Pioneer roads were narrow and winding among the pines
They served their purpose well durin' the pioneer times
But they've long since served their useful day
And passed on at the coming of the modern highway

PINE LEVEL'S PINES AND PIONEERS

The Indians pioneers were here long ago
Building little tepees among the pines
Where wild game played around the tepee door
And wild turkeys tuned spring morning chymes

They dug long canoes from huge pines
Build tepees with pine sapling poles
Killed big game with split pine arrows
Cooked it brown and tasty o'er pine coals

Indian pioneers conserved fish and game
'Twas to them the Great Spirit's special gift
To feed his wand'ring children of the woods
Lest wastefulness cause twixt them a rift

They made sleeping beds of pine straw
Upon restful bunks of pine poles true
Pine masts made fat game for the fall kill
Rosin from pines made good gum to chew

Tepees were thatched with green pine bows
And floored with plenty clean pine straw
Soon 'twas replaced with straw fresh and new
To save floor cleaning for the good old squaw

Fat pine wood fires kept the Indians warm
Long fallen pine trees made good foot logs
For crossing streamlets and rivers small
Pine poles and straw made walkways o'er bogs

Indians build lean-tos with pine poles
Roofed'm water tight with pine bark and tar
Made magic drink from pine gum and straw
To cure Indian sick, heal wound no scar

Centuries ago Spanish pioneers came
And built little log cabins by the score
Friendly cabins were they among the pines
Where game fed around the rustic cab'n door

They were seeking the fountain of youth
But failed to sight the magic fountain fine
Instead they found a perfect substitute
A land of crystal springs and longleaf pine

A land of creeks flowing water power
A long o' green succulent pastures strange
Growing grasses, wild oats and swamp reed
The ideal land to grow livestock on the range

Many Spanish pioneers began to cut pines
Large ones for the homeland timber sale
For building Spanish sailing ships
And spars to hold'm against the gusty gale

Others began to grow livestock on the range
'Twas cattle and swine for a going start
Staying fat and growing throughout the year
'Twas for livestock here a kindling spark

In eighteen hundred twenty the great
U. S. bought from Spain the land of pines
Then sturdy pioneers from the states came
To build anew this land of better times

The Pine Lev'l pioneers were resourceful men
Who made good use of things at hand
Didn't worry about trifles here and there
Or fret about things beyond their command

They had not learned from the printed page
But from nature's pages and hard knocks
They knew men and simple business affairs
And how to hold industry from the rocks

They were not trained in art or science
Yet they knew the great woods and trees
Its soils waters wild life fish and game
Knew their names haunts and habits with ease

They weren't linguists or civic workers
Yet they could word a lawful contract
Having no quaint double meanings
And talk civic thoughts with clever knack

Wayback midst friendly forest woods
They soon formed the habit of cooperation
To cope with brutish beasts and savage men
'Twas a needful act for self-preservation

In the great woods they learned self-reliance
Canine courage and a strong determination
Where they communed with nature's God
During deep thought in quiet meditation

A few pioneers kept swine sheep and cattle
A pine rail worm fence made strong their pens
They grazed upon the range far among the pines
Till they grew fat and sleek the prize of men

The old cabins and lean-tos were repaired
New log landings made upon the river
Log roads extended far among the pines
Progress moved along without a quiver

New cabins were built close beside springs
And all along small clear creeks running swift
May small mills were built upon streams
Everywhere signs were seen showing thrift

Since then pioneers have been building
To better serve Pine Level and the nation
They've made a good start along a rugged way
Toward their first ideals realizations

When first I saw Pine Level land
'Twas a forest primeval pines stately
With tall pines thick - growing giants
I gazed upon them standing sedately

Saw'm in all their sylvan beauty
To gaze upon the huge pines was inspiring
To see'm in all their pristine splendor
Would make one wonder while admiring

To ramble o'er the Pine Level country
Listening to whispering winds a blowing
Or stroll beneath the cool restful shade
And hear music soft of pines a growing

Made many brave pioneers glad to dwell
Midst such stately trees terrestrial
And see and feel Jehovah's creative power
Pointing thoughts to glories celestial

The massive pines were sentries of time
Living sentries full of song and rhyme
Sacred History written to show the hand
That made the magic pines is divine

A century and more timber moved to market
‘Twas logs lumber and timber hewn and sawn
For both the domestic an the foreign trade
For world wide building ‘twas a new dawn

From the Level many spars were cut’d sold
An hundred fifty feet long and straight
To hold the canvass upon big sailing ships
To harness winds moving worldwide freight

The pines produced naval store by tons
Going to market for the worldwide trade
‘Twas cars of rosin and turpentine
By far the best from any pines e’re made

‘Twas turpentine for paints and drugs too
Thick pine tar syrup for coughs and colds
Pine healing oil for cuts and bruises
Spirits pure to cure many ailing woes

For the rustic cabins built among the pines
‘Twas a pitch pine foundation solid
Sapling poles cut long and straight for walls
Notched deep to make the building strong bodied

‘Twas slim pine poles for rafters straight
From pines lathing was split true and strong
Heart pine roofing boards were split smooth
Pine ceiling boards were split thin and long

Pine floors were split and hewn puncheon style
Chimneys were built split pine log and stick
Daubed inside and out with native clay
And fireplace lined with rock instead of brick

For doors and windows ‘twas split boards wide
Planed smooth like a politico’s “Same Song”
Swung with wooden hinges tough and hard
For locks ‘twas pine latches made strong

The pioneers built a rustic meeting house
From pine timber midst beloved pines
Where they communed with Jehovah God
About spiritual things and thoughts divine

Unsawed pine lumber built the smokehouse
Where Pine Level pioneers cured their meat
'Twas pickle pork and home cured bacon
Home cured ham and sausage tasty and neat

'Twas good old time corned beef by the bar'l
Beef cured with hickory smoke by the stack
Turkey and fish smoked for delicious eats
Wild venison cured from the pemmican pack

'Twas pine knot fires to keep the cabin warm
Dry split pinewood to boil the dinner pot
Rosin from the pine to tune up the old fiddle
And pine coal for the crossroad welding shop

'Twas pine straw to bed barn and stable dry
Long fat pine splinters made the torch bright
Around log camps where they were handy
Pine tar made the rowboat water tight

Pine timber built the pioneer's big barn
His little crossroad welding shop
A strong mustang stable and corn crib neat
The wife's poultry yard and pioneer's ox lot

'Twas pine poles for the log road causeways
Pine piers and stringers for bridges stout
Pine poles for log camp and lot among pines
Pine bows and straw to stop a log road washout

'Twas long slender pine pole binders
For holding the log raft together
A long pine pole stem to hold the oar blade
So the raft the swift current couldn't sever

Pine Level pioneers built a cabin school
From pine wood back midst friendly trees
Where their little ones learned the three R's
To think noble thoughts and live high ideals

For the small short time used logging camp
Where a few tall spars were dug way back
From the log landing down upon the river
‘Twas pine poles and bark for the cozy shack

Pine mast made range hogs fat in the fall
Tender and tasty with fat firm and hard
‘Twas a jest pine roots during summer
Made far more turpentine than lard

Pine poles built the small log camp commissary
And cabin quarters new and neat to thrill
For the sawmill store ‘twas rough pine plank
And all the cottage quarters round the mill

When the Pine Level pioneers began to plant
Small patches among the pines called “My Farm”
To grow sweet potatoes cowpeas and corn
‘Twas pine bark’d straw to keep the ‘taters warm

Pitch pine post were cut and used by the score
Lasting post swinging gates firm and true
Good pickets were split from the heart pine
For fencing the home yard and garden too

Big log carts were built from heart pine
To haul big logs cut from stately pines
‘Twas pine wood to build huge wagons strong
For hauling freight in pioneer times

‘Twas pine lumber for rowboats strong
Things of beauty running like a song
Pine lumber from massive trees tough
Built the river ferry flats wide and long

‘Twas pine timber built the river barges
Pine lumber for the flat bottom boats
For plying our sallow sounds and bay
Sand o’er shallow bars in rivers float

‘Twas strong pine timber to build saw mills
And all the early creek logging waterways
Pine pole piling and rough-edge waste boards
To guide logs down the ditch on floating days

Heart pine wood made good ditch and flume locks
Boats timber and logs to higher lev'ls lift
Strong pine timber made flumes across chasms
For floating logs and timber above the rift

Pine made the yearling cart – a boy's delight
Training a yearling to pull the rustic cart
Hauling things round a country home and camp
Was a joy supreme to the pioneer boy's heart

'Twas pine wood to build the old wheelbarrow
The handiest thing around a place except a boy
Pine wood to build the gladsome goat wagon
For boys and billy goats the rolling joy

Small pine logs made the old wolf pen strong
To catch and kill the marauding thieving beast
To protect game and cattle o'er the open range
Where wolf packs were wont to hold their feast

When pioneers first began to build cabins
Far away from crystal spring and creek
Pine wood split and sawn curbed big dug wells
And long pine plank curbed bored one neat

Pine wood made vats for the old tan yard
Near the tanner's home down beside the creek
Where for years the pioneer tanned leather
And made good wearing shoes strong and neat

Much wild game and many feathered friends
Lived on Pine Level far among the trees
To make the pioneer's woodland more bewitching
And tickl' his taste with fancy foods to please

Wild deer and turkeys played among the pines
And made the tall magic forest fascinating
The cunning fox and clever squirrel were here
And made the mystic woodland captivating

Bears once did walk the forest primeval
Screaming panthers came here for crimes
Howling wolves oft made trav'lers lonely
The three made echoes rattle among the pines

Sam the grinning 'possum racked around the pines
So did sporty pat the wise old 'coon
'Twas a mystic rack midst pines and shadows
A spooky woods and weird 'neath a shining moon

Peter rabbit danced all around the pines
So did Reynard the fox 'neath a pale moon
'Twas indeed a wild weird ghostly dance
And a mystery to see the eerie typhoon

Song and game birds lived deep in the woods
Ate mast and made the welkin ring with song
Bull bats twilighting high above the pines
And mocking birds singing all the day long

'Twas cardinals red with whistles weird
Larks were "up to meet the sun" high above pines
'Twas merry brown thrush and quail on the ground
Oriole and finch whistling merry rhymes

Blue jays were here fussing about the times
Blue birds and warblers were happy all day
Kingbirds were chasing hawks above the pines
And blackbirds and woodpeckers sounding away

The brave eagle lived midst towering pines
To add courageous charms to pristine trees
The old eerie bird soared high among the clouds
With mystic charm and fascinating ease

Hawks and crows dwelt high in tallest trees
To add human traits and charms to tall pines
'Twas but a "Hawk and buzzard" sordid life
Peck and scratch at each other all the time

Hoot owls live high midst imposing pines
Their foreboding calls a dreary night
Gave folks a creepy spooky feeling
Oft 'twas a foolish race from sheer fright

'Twas a charming sight in early spring
To see gold pollen from the pine blooms blown
And spread o'er all the woods like yellow snow
Or like the Jew's manna from heav'n strown

Other trees than pines grew upon the level
Friendly among the pines sentries of the way
To add chummy charms to enchanting woods
And to fruit the merry music makers gay

Branching oaks grew large upon the level
Friendly were they the mighty oak trees
Feeding friends playing midst their bows
A pristine woods and festive jamborees

Crooked sassafras trees were among the pines
Golden flowers mongst the green were fine
Persimmons grew upon the wonderland
And were best about 'possum hunting time

'Possums were ripe at 'tater eating time
Good fat 'possum and 'taters in the pan
Sim'erin' appetizing sniffs a mile away
Good enough eatin' for king or any man

The buckeye bush thrived upon Pine Level
Its red flower spikes I spring were gay
Oft times 'twas called Pine Level's "Charm"
'Cause its fruits was said to keep spooks away

Towering trees grew among the pines
In the fall their golden leaves did shine
To show strong living sentries were still
Pointing men's thoughts to creation divine

Spreading dogwood trees bloomed among pines
The white flowers made calm restful scenes
As they blended among the green pine bows
A sylvan nook for the pioneer's quiet dreams

THE EARLY PIONEER'S CASH WAS FROM THE PINES

The early pioneer's cash was from the pines
All his building wood came from the pines
His winding trails led far among the pines
To his rustic home midst friendly pines

All this long life's work was with the pines
His recreation was hunting among the pines
Tired he sat and gazed upon beloved pines
Living o'er and o'er his work midst pines

When called to rest from labor midst pines
Friends made for him a casket from the pines
'Twas restful dreams 'neath friendly pines
'Tisn't odd why the pioneer and his pines
Oft are linked in legend song and rhymes

SOUTHERN GIRLS

Learning is a bright and shining ornament
So are intellectual culture and refinement
Doubly so when possessed by one so fair
With a Bible name full o' beauty and rare

The rose is called the sweetest flower
That e'er has bloomed on bush or bower
But when a young man's hot with cupid's dart
There's nothing like a Daisy to soothe his heart

When the sky is gray and the clouds are low
And the chilling wintry winds doth blow
Don't fret and fume and the ugly temper show
But smile 'cause the Weather's made it so

We like girls with head, heart and hand
Who's ever ready to do what e'er she can
Like those who come from the far off isles
And Provi wearing the lingering smile

Western girls go to college for muscle
While the eastern girls learn to hustle
But we like the southern girls the best
'Cause they're hardy and smarter than the rest.

Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough

COUNTRY GENTLEMEN OF THE OLD SOUTH

REJECTED

COUNTRY GENTLEMEN OF THE OLD SOUTH

Title "Country Gentleman of the Old South"
Was given to older men who met the rule
Fixed by a long time high social structure
To own land, wear a derby had 'd ride a mule.

The custom started back'n "Old Virginia"
Among hills and long, winding tobacco rows
And soon spread south into southern states
Where donkeys sing and king cotton grows.

Bein' a Country Gentleman of the Old South
To the old land barons was a coveted goal
'Twas like when knighthood was in flower
And being knighted for courage true 'd bold.

'Twas the one great desire of boys and men
From Potomac Valley and its fertile land
Throughout the great Southern cotton states
To the far away valley of the Rio Grande.

The coming of the new science farming ways
To every nook and corner of the Southland
Modern motor machinery has freed the mule
And made a Gentleman a useful working man.

Many a southern youth filled with a desire
To be knighted "Gentleman of the Old South"
Has sadly seen the star of hope go down
As he stood sad 'd sil'nt down in the mouth

It's been the same with all things better
Thus the new order must replace the old
The bright star of hope for some must fade
As they see cherished hopes die and mold

Hopeful youth stand not sour sad and sul'n
Of nob'l titles there's ne'er been a drought
Shun those based on what you wear and ride
And be a "Noble Gentleman of the New South."

REJECTED

A stranger stood at the gates of hell,
And the Devil himself had answered the bell.
He looked him over from head to toe,
And said "Mr. Friend, I'd like to know,
What have you done in the line of sin,
To entitle you to come within?"

The Franklin D. with his usual guile,
Stepped forth and flashed his toothy smile.
"When I took charge in thirty-three,
A nation's faith was mine," said he.
"I promised this and I promised that,
And I calmed them down with a fireside chat.

I spent their money on fishing trips,
And fished from the decks of their battleships.
I gave them jobs on the P.W.A.
Then raised their taxes and took it away.
I raised their wages and closed their shops,
I killed their pigs and burned their crops.

I double-crossed both old and young,
And still the fools my praises sung.
I brought back beer and what do you think?
I taxed it so high that they couldn't drink.
I furnished money with government loans,
When they missed a payment, I took their homes.

When I wanted to punish the folks, you know,
I'd put my wife on the radio.
I paid them to let their farms be still,
And imported foodstuff from Brazil.
I curtailed crops when I felt real mean,
And shipped in corn from Argentine.

When they'd start to worry, stew and fret,
I'd get them to changing the alphabet.
With the A.A.A. and the N.L.R.B.
The W.P.A. and the C.C.C.
With these many units I got their goats,
And still I crammed it down their throats.

My workers worked with the speed of snails,
While taxpayers chewed their fingernails.
When the organizers needed dough,
I closed up plants for the C.I.O.
I ruined jobs and I ruined health,
And I put the screws on the rich man's wealth.

And some who couldn't stand the gaff,
Would call on me and how I'd laugh.
When they got too strong on certain things,
I'd pack and head for old Warm Springs.
I ruined their country, their homes and then,
I placed the blame on 'nine old men.'"

Now Franklin talked both long and loud,
And the Devil stood and his head he bowed.
At last he said, "Let's make it clear,
You'll have to move - you can't stay here!
For once you mingle with this mob,
I'll have to Hunt Myself a Job."

Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough

RIDING A TRICKY TRAIL ASTRIDE A TOMBSTONE

RACING ROUND A RIGHT ANGLE

RIDING A TRICKY TRAIL ASTRIDE A TOMBSTONE

It was late in October. The fall flowers were blooming profusely in the big woods. Golden and crimson daisies and yellow buttercups were on every road. Hundreds of small flowers of various hues not so showy were interspersed among the larger flowers. Not withstanding their miniature size they added to the beauty of the season. Tall spikes of golden rod made the woods appear more like a choice flower garden than a mere forest. The tall will oats standing high with heads bending because of the heavy grain added to the beauty of the woods. The leaves on all the forest trees were full of beauty exhibiting all the colors of the rainbow. The big woods were attractive, fascinating and really presented a sort of romantic appearance. The big woods on this October day was indeed the far-famed "Land of Flowers." The handiwork of creation was at its best. Thus it was just the time for a country church to put on what was known on a Florida Frontier as a "PROTRACTED MEETING" called in later years a "Revival." It was such a time as this when the old Ebenezer Methodist Church established many years before, five or six miles southwest of the place later known as the Diamond Homestead, was holding its annual protracted meeting. The only thing keeping the situation from being perfect was the moon was not at its brightest and at night the horizon was covered with low overhanging clouds drifting slowly northward.

The events of this narrative occurred shortly after mules from Missouri replaced mustangs from Texas and Mexico as domestic animals in the Florida Frontier community. It was a few months after Father had traded his first pair of rabbit-like mules, Brownie and Mousie, partly because of their bucking bronco habits and partly because they were too small to do heavy farm work. They were not as good as the famous span of snow-white ponies known as Jack and Minnie for farm work or horseback riding. Brownie and Mousie would have been used for riding very little had it not been for the mistaken idea that the quickest and surest way to obtain the title 'SOUTHERN GENTLEMAN OF THE OLD SOUTH' was to ride a mule.

This tricky trail riding event took place not long after Father became the owner of a pair of large tall snow-white mules answering to the names of Old Henry and Mary. These mules were about eighteen hands high and weighed fourteen hundred pounds in ordinary working condition. Old Henry was an extraordinary good saddle mule. He was often ridden by Father instead of his favorite saddle horse, Jack. The three younger of the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough often accused Father of riding Old Henry for the sole purpose of acquiring the coveted title 'SOUTHERN GENTLEMAN OF THE OLD SOUTH.'

Father was now the owner of a span of snow-white pony horses and a snow-white span of mules, all four of which ranged in age from sixteen to twenty-two. One of Father's best friends, an elderly gentleman residing near the Diamond Homestead, as a joke, told a number of neighbors that Father had gone into the tombstone business and requested them to call Father and place an order for a large white tombstone. For several weeks Father was busy turning down such orders and explaining that he was not in the tombstone business. In the meantime Father's friends had enjoyed the joke. They had lots

of fun by razzing Father about gathering up the old white mules, too old for any service except graveyard monuments. The razzing of Father about the tombstone business caused him to add the name 'TOMBSTONE' to the names already given to the large white mules and was partly responsible for the title of this narrative.

The reader probably understands October weather of the sort prevailing at the time the events of this narrative took place sometimes causes teenage boys to have a sort of inward ticklishness sometimes referred to as "Romantic Ticklishness." Sometimes this ticklishness causes a peculiar sentimental feeling, developing into a sort of constraining, compelling force that makes teenage boys as well as older people travel all the trails of their own communities and occasionally cross the border lines into adjacent territory and develop into a sort of constraining power.

It was a custom in this community to begin services not by the clock but by the sun. Everybody understood this sort of time and could be on time by it but not so by the clock time. It was customary to have a song and prayer service begin thirty minutes before sundown and continue for about twenty minutes. Then a short recess would be taken for recreational and social activities. This song service and the social hour were the great drawing parts of the meeting for a great many people. It gave them an opportunity to see and visit with each other and discuss the events of the community. It was a great hour for all the teenagers. It provided an opportunity for a teenage boy to ride up astride a tall mule and make a grand social hit. It was probably because of this as well as a little romantic inward ticklishness with its constraining force that placed Emory, the fifth of the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough astride Old Henry, the Tombstone, this fine October afternoon and headed him toward [the] Old Ebenezer protracted meeting. Be the causes, reasons or excuses what they may, he made a grand social hit, heard a good Gospel sermon and had some wonderful experiences he still delights to relate.

Dressed in his best black Sunday suit and big black derby hat riding astride a snow-white mule full six feet tall, Emory made a wonderful appearance as he approached the little country church standing in a grove of beautiful forest trees. He had managed to arrive at exactly the right moment to catch the eyes of the crowd as it was entering the building for the song and prayer service thirty minutes before sundown. He adroitly dismounted from the back of Old Henry, the Tombstone, and with a Chesterfield walk and air joined the crowd and took part in the song and prayer service. It was short, only three or four songs were sung and a prayer by the preacher made up the service. The preacher then announced a thirty-minute recess for recreational and social activities.

As was usual everyone was thirsty and had to walk a hundred fifty yards down a wide well beaten trail to a beautiful spring of pure crystal water. This is a common custom until this day at country churches. It was necessary in pioneer days when services usually were two or three hours long, from 11:00 A.M. until 1:00 or 2:00 P.M. and the night services the same length. Voices became dry and husky from speaking or singing. Water was provided for the use of the preachers in such churches by placing a small pitcher of water on a stand beside the pulpit. The poor congregation soon learned to fill their reservoirs before services began or suffer the dire consequences. This afternoon was no

exception to the general custom. Everybody walked down the trail to the spring and filled his or her reservoir. Visiting around the spring was a great social event. Everyone present enjoyed the cool water, a little primping up and the long conversations with neighbors and friends, and returned to the church before dark for the preaching hour.

Speaking of the social hour at this spring reminds me of an interesting incident that took place there twenty years before. It is so true to life in early Florida Frontier communities around the earliest mission stations and the first organized churches until I am digressing a few minutes to relate it.

At times for many years this spring had been the place for drinking not only the pure crystal water flowing so freely from it but intoxicating spirits sometimes carried to church in the earlier frontier days in the pockets of a few individuals having the mistaken idea that a few drinks of it were necessary to fit them to appear smart in public places. Twenty years before, this spring had been the scene of such a drinking bout. At the regular Sunday morning services a group of three young men started off toward the spring for a little drinking and a little primping before the 11:00 o'clock service began. When they were approximately a hundred feet from the church one of the old Stewards of the church waved a water pitcher from a window and called to one of the young men to come get the pitcher and bring some cool water for the use of the preacher during his sermon. Of course, the young man was glad to accommodate the elderly brother. At the spring the young men primped up a little, drank a little spring water and paused a few minutes for a friendly chat. Presently one of the young men in the group who had been to Pensacola the day before and sold a lot of timber pulled a quart flask of whiskey from his pocket and passed it around to the others for a social drink. After each took two or three swallows, the real prankster of the gang suggested that the pitcher be filled only partially with spring water and the remaining contents of the flask poured into the pitcher for the preacher so he could preach a real sermon, one that would be a credit to him, an honor to the church and bring sinners to repentance. There was no argument. The vote was unanimous. The young men thought the weather far too hot to take more than a swallow or two of whiskey. And too, they agreed that they would get more fun from seeing the preacher take a swallow or two of it during his sermon than from drinking it themselves. They just couldn't pass up the opportunity of giving the preacher such a splendid Sunday morning treat. The remaining contents of the flask was poured into the pitcher and enough water poured in with it to fill the pitcher about three-fourths full.

The question now was how to get the pitcher to its customary place without creating any suspicion. It was agreed that the pitcher be carried part of the distance up the hill and then handed to someone to take to the church. Here luck was with the group. Just as the boys came up the small hill from the spring a good brother of the church was seen coming toward the church from his home. Two of the boys went on to see about their horses to avoid any suspicion, leaving the most religious one to hand the good brother the pitcher and request him to place it on the stand beside the pulpit. The gang all knew the good brother liked his liquor. If the preacher for any reason failed to like his Sunday treat the boys would all accuse the good brother of spiking the water. The good brother took the

pitcher without suspecting he was taking such a gratifying treat for the preacher. Neither did he suspect that if trouble arose he would be made the culprit.

Soon the singing began as a signal for the congregation to assemble. The young men scattered and entered the church one at a time and sat in different parts of the church for obvious reasons. In due time the sermon began. Again luck was with the gang. The subject announced for the morning was TEMPERANCE as applied to the use of intoxicating beverages. It was a hot summer day. Soon the preacher warmed up to this subject. The perspiration began to flow. The hotter the preacher became the louder and faster he spoke. Within fifteen minutes he pulled a large white handkerchief from a pocket in the tail of his long coat and began drying the sweat from his brow. By the time he had spoken half an hour his voice began to sound a little husky. This was just what the gang had been waiting for. He was now warming up to the peroration closing the first half of his sermon. He stopped speaking for a moment, mopped his face and neck with the handkerchief held in his left hand and poured the large drinking glass three-fourths full from the pitcher. The pitcher was returned to its stand. The partially filled glass was then held high in the right hand as he completed his peroration in substantially these words, spoken loud and dramatically, "BRETHERN, THIS ALCHOLIC LIQUOR IS HELLISH STUFF, IT CAUSES NINETY PERCENT OF ALL CRIME AND MISERY OF THE WORLD. HEAR ME, BRETHERN, NO ONE EXCEPT A GULLIBLE IDIOT EVER DARES TO DRINK THE DAMNABLE STUFF." In the excitement the contents of the glass was poured into his mouth and swallowed at a single gulp, while his closing words reverberated in the building and echoed and re-echoed among the adjacent forest trees.

Because of the nature of alcohol to rise to the surface the speaker had swallowed at a single gulp three-fourths of a glass of almost pure alcoholic liquor. He almost lost his breath. His eyes blinked several times. He almost collapsed before he was able to breathe. He tried to cough in an effort to clear his throat of the burning, stinging sensation. He hemmed and hawed for not less than two minutes before he could get his wits to working and begin the second half of his sermon. The perspiration now flowed like a feshet. The sermon was closed far ahead of schedule time and congregation dismissed without ceremonies.

The congregation knew the speaker had become over-heated because of the extra warm weather and his hard preaching. As the congregation left the building the two oldest officials of the church were called to the pulpit to receive the report and examine the remaining contents soon the pitcher. a number of people including the four young men responsible for the episode assembled on the shady side of the building where they could look through open windows and see if the preacher was improving after his near collapse from what they thought was excessive heat. Because the two elders and the preacher remained for some time at the pulpit a number of other elderly members of the church returned to the building to learn if the preacher's near collapse was serious and to express sympathy. It was later learned from some of the group of sympathizers that the contents of the pitcher had been strongly spiked and that the two elders and the preacher actually drank the remaining contents of the pitcher trying to determine if the spiking ingredient

was whisky, gin or plain wildcat corn, without reaching a decision.[We now return to the main narrative.]

Within a short time the entire crowd returned from the spring to the church to be joined by a large number of people who were unable to attend the song service but had come to hear the sermon. About dark the crowd assembled in the church where a few songs were sung while waiting for those who might be a little late to arrive before the preaching began. There was nothing unusual about the preaching service. It lasted the usual length of time for protracted meeting services in a Florida Frontier community, an hour and a half to two hours. About 8:30 or 9:00 o'clock the services were over and the congregation left the church and started for their respective homes, some on foot, some on horseback and others in buggies or wagons.

Instead of taking the road back home Emory decided to take an old trail leading up the south side of the McCaskill Mill Creek, some times known as "Goblin Creek" in territorial days long before the McCaskill Mill was built. This name was given to the creek during the Spanish colonial days because it was said ghosts and goblins frequented an old abandoned Spanish Homestead settled during the Spanish occupation. This old place was half a mile up the creek from the church. The trail taken by Emory led near the old Spanish Homestead site, and united with the country road two miles from the church near the head of the creek. It was impractical to travel this route with a buggy or a wagon because of a small branch or two and a few hills and hollows where gullies had been washed. In early pioneer days this trail bore the name "Tricky Trail." By traveling this trail Emory would save a mile or more in distance.

Tradition years ago held two conflicting reports about the old Spanish Homestead up on Tricky Trail. One was that the old Spaniard abandoned the place after Florida was purchased from Spain in 1821 and either returned to Spain or sailed to Mexico. The other is that he sold his cattle preparatory for leaving and was murdered on the place for his money. This report gave rise to the rumors that the spirit or ghost of the Old Spaniard was often seen at certain times lurking about the old homestead as if in search of the stolen treasure of some kindred spirit. This was probably responsible for the belief that the old place was haunted. The old house for years was the home of bats and owls, both birds of ill omen. This too, might have been partly responsible for the belief that the place was haunted. Be that as it may, the place presented a weird spooky appearance even in daytime. A night like this one added to the lonely weirdness of the situation.

The makeshift roads leading up beside this creek had long since been discarded and in many places grown over with trees, brush and briars. Along the hills and hollows, gullies had been washed. The trail had been used for years only by people who traveled on foot or on horseback, in carrying corn to the little gristmill on the creek below the church. Because this trail was little used it too had grown over in many places with trees, bushes and briars. Emory was a brave boy and courageous, however, it is doubtful if he would have taken this trail at night to save a mile if he had known of the stories of ghosts and goblins and the traditional reports of the haunted place.

The night was naturally dark with only an occasional star visible. About the time the congregation left the church thick low overhanging clouds covered the horizon as they drifted slowly northward. This added to the darkness and the spookiness of the Tricky Trail. It was the right sort of weather for ghosts and goblins to be stirring. They always travel on such nights because they are then unseen by human prowlers. Riding the Tricky Trail Astride a Tombstone was like June roses for the first quarter of a mile, although Tombstone had never traveled it. This was probably because he had traveled many other trails over gully washed hills and hollows in South Alabama years before coming to Florida and was familiar with such trails. Soon the trees and bushes got thicker and the night darker. Old Henry the Tombstone was reined from among the trees to the more open places. No signs of the trail were visible. Still the pair of them, Old Henry and Emory kept on up the creek. Within ten minutes an opening was observed a few yards ahead. They each probably breathed a sigh of relief and gratitude for having gotten safely through the thicket with no mishaps. A few feet ahead a dim light streak was observed winding northward toward the creek as though it might be a sand bed washed out in the bottom of a ravine. As this streak was approached Old Tombstone slowed down, walked with measured steps as if feeling his way and stopped still six feet from the streak.

Emory now slashed him frantically with the long end of the bridle reins and kicked him in the sides with both heels with all his might trying to persuade him to walk across the streak. The old mule stood as still as if anchored as a monument on a grave. All Emory's efforts failed to move him. Emory then reined him a few yards to the right and dittoed his persuasive efforts, to find Tombstone too, had learned how to ditto efforts at standing still. After repeated efforts Emory reined the mule a few yards to the left around a cluster of trees and small bushes hoping to ride straight across the streak, but with no more success than before. He now doubled and quadrupled his efforts but Old Henry the Tombstone stood adamant, unexcited. Emory sat still and gazed into the darkness at the streak for a few minutes but could observe nothing.

After wasting fifteen minutes trying to persuade Old Tombstone to walk across the streak he used his favorite method of reasoning and deducted that the "parliamentary" thing to do would be to dismount, make friends with the mule in the hope of gaining his friendship and confidence and lead him across the streak. Off he crawled and adjusted his saddle a little as an excuse for dismounting. He then petted the mule a little about like a boy would a pet puppy. He then threw the reins over the mule's head, took a firm grip with both hands and stepped backward a step or two as he pulled on the bridle.

As he pulled he said to Old Tombstone in low persuasive tones, "There's no danger here. Come on now. Follow me and I'll lead you across this white streak." His words had no effect on the mule of many years.

Old Tombstone stood like a well-anchored monument. Emory pulled harder as he begged the mule to come on across and placed his hindmost foot further back and braced the other one for a harder and more coaxing pull hoping to budge fourteen hundred pounds of mule. As he did so his hindmost foot broke the edge of the gully and let him slip into it up to his waist. As Emory went down, Faithful Old Henry who doubtless had been taking

care of immature striplings for two decades raised his head, stepped back a little and pulled Emory from the gully. And thus the Faithful Old Tombstone saved Emory from somersaulting backward to the bottom of a gully ten feet below with fourteen hundred pounds of mule on top to cinch the deal.

A miracle had been performed. A life had been spared. A youthful stripling had been saved to grow up and travel many other TRICKY TRAILS. The incident recorded in the Holy writ of Balaam's having been rebuked by the donkey he was riding had been reenacted. About the only difference in the two events was the donkey spoke to Balaam in words with a human voice and Faithful Old Henry spoke to his rider in actions. In either case the rider was saved and his eyes opened. In either case it was an act of Jehovah that saved the rider. Emory expressed the incident in a letter to me in laconic style: "My life was saved because Old Henry, the Tombstone, had more sense than I used." Then after a little comment he expressed a thought in these words: "If people, especially immature boys, would only use the sense they have, they'd find traveling TRICKY TRAILS a lot easier."

Emory now straightened up beside his benefactor, remounted and set out to locate the Tricky Trail and cross the gully or go around its mouth. He now permitted Old Henry to move slowly, cautiously and select his own route. Within two hundred yards of the spot where Emory had received the stinging rebuke from the Faithful Old Mule, Old Henry evidently came upon the trail because he turned squarely to the right and after walking a short distance slowly down a gentle slant and across the white streak of sand at the bottom of the gully and up a similar slant out of it.

Emory and Old Tombstone were now near the edge of the old field cleared for a cattle corral over a hundred years before. They were now nearing the haunted house, the home of bats and owls and the place where ghosts and goblins often frequented when the nights were dark and misty, the air still and the horizon lined with low overhanging clouds. Especially was this true if the large horned or swamp owls were sounding their lonesome, HOO, HOO, HOO, AU'S in the creek swamp a few hundred yards away or in the big shade trees at the old homestead site and the shivering cries of the little screech owls adding to the loneliness. The hooting of these owls or the lonely shivering cries of the screech owls always made one think of scary ghosts and goblins if heard in silent darkness where the human eye can see not and where the ear listening hears voices strange and mysterious; and where the imagination perceives deadly dragons, tall shadowy ghosts foreboders of evil and a thousand satanic spirits with fiery features all armed with sharp pronged pitchforks as vice-gerents of the devil himself.

Pretty soon the lonesome hooting of an owl was heard in the creek swamp some distance away. The hooting continued at short intervals. Old Henry, the Tombstone, was now walking the trail two hundred yards from the old homestead site where the screech owls were wailing their lonely shivering cries. The trail was winding among many old roads, washed out gullies and treacherous overhanging boughs. He was slowly picking his way. The low overhanging clouds were thick and moving, seemingly, just above the tall

treetops. All was quiet except the sounds of Old Henry's hoofs striking the hard spots in the trail and the lonesome hooting of the owls far across the old field in the creek swamp.

Old Henry was now plodding along the winding Tricky Trail. The owls continued their lonely hoots in the distant swamp, as if speaking to each other from some distant hiding haunts. Presently a large white object was seen dimly in the dark approaching the trail ahead of Old Henry. It looked ghost-like to Emory. He became a little suspicious of danger and would have tried to change his course but remembered he had been rebuked only a short while ago by the Faithful Old Tombstone, so decided not to invite another rebuke so soon. About this time the old white cow lowed and was answered by her calf on the opposite side of the trail. This soothed the spooky feeling for a while at least.

The trail was now winding among the trees and fallen logs further up the hill past the old Spanish home site. And occasional hoot of an owl was heard from the distant creek swamp. Ere long one of the owls evidently attracted by the lowing of the cattle and the sound of the mule's feet let go his familiar sound, HOO, HOO, HOO, HOO'S and ended with a squeaky W A I T, not more than a hundred feet behind the mule. The rider now slanted Old Henry the Tombstone with the long ends of the bridle reins and kicked him in the sides with both heels to pearten his speed. The Old Tombstone no doubt was familiar with the song of the hooting owls and knew there was no danger in such noises and resisted the slashing and kicking for a while and refused to pearten his speed. The slashing and kicking still persisted. Still Old Tombstone refused to pearten his speed. He knew the Tricky Trail was winding beside old road washouts and under overhanging bows. Still the slashing and the kicking continued, and so did the distant hooting of the owls. Soon the familiar HOO, HOO, HOO, AU'S sounded closer behind the slow plodding Tombstone and ended the second time with the weird squeaky W A I T, and the slashing and kicking continued.

Presently the Old Tombstone moved up his speed to a slow jogging trot. The urging for speed ahead continued till faithful Old Henry, the Tombstone, struck a long striding gallop. Before he had galloped a hundred feet a long slender overhanging bough flipped off the rider's derby. To terra firma it tumbled. Owls or no owls, ill omens or good luck charms, ghosts and goblins or guardian angels, the big derby had to be saved. It was one of the keys for unlocking the gate to the coveted title: "SOUTHERN GENTLEMAN OF THE OLD SOUTH." The momentum of fourteen hundred pounds of old mule tombstone material moving at galloping speed required not less than fifty feet, a dozen WHOA'S quickly called in SOS tone, and lots of brake tugging and tightening for the sake of take up. The Old Tombstone then had to be anchored to a sapling while the rider crawled upon all fours up and down either side of the TRICKY TRAIL feeling for fifteen minutes among tall grass, thorny dewberry vines and clusters of bull nettles for a derby hat as black as the night.

Faithful Old Henry had now administered a "Shore 'Nough" stinging rebuke to his rider. The rider had no difficulty in recognizing this as he rubbed his hands against a bunch of bull nettles while feeling for his hat and wished he had trusted Old Henry to lead the way

while traveling a TRICKY TRAIL in the midst of pitfalls under overhanging dangers among ghosts and goblins and hard by the haunts of birds of ill omen.

When the derby was found the rider unanchored Old Tombstone, remounted and continued riding the trail another mile to its junction with the road near the head of the creek without further mishaps. There were three miles more to ride or about forty-five minutes for mediation. Any one at all familiar with the methodical habits and philosophical reasoning of Emory would expect him to utilize this forty-five minutes thinking over and weighing all the UPS AND DOWNS OF RIDING A TRICKY TRAIL ASTRIDE A TOMBSTONE and stow away in his memory chest at least a few worthwhile deductions and conclusions.

Many years later the experience Emory had on this memorable evening, long, long after he had grown up and traveled other TRICKY TRAILS, dodged pitfalls, ducked overhanging boughs, tamed birds of ill omen and changed them to good luck charms and licked to a frazzle both real and imaginary ghosts and goblins, he related to me his experiences of this evening substantially as they are repeated in this narrative. After he had related the UPS AND DOWNS of the trip he added by way of emphasis: "This was my first experience in being rebuked by a half donkey, but the rebukes were given justly and because I was able to accept them in the spirit of justice, I have since been able to consider more wisely other rebukes from other half donkeys and even whole donkeys some of whom are better described as human donkeys. The experiences of that evening were the best lessons I ever had for impressing the importance of watching out for and avoiding pitfalls, overhanging dangers and real or imaginary trouble while TRAVELING TRICKY TRAILS.

RACING ROUND A RIGHT ANGLE

Riding a right angle at slow speed is not as easy as it appears to a bystander. This is especially true if the rider happens to be a little gifted at day dreaming and has his mind off his business at the moment he rides the right angle. This is also true if the rider happens to be taking an early morning nap while returning from a night out in the wee small hours of the morning when the right angle is made. Racing a right angle astride a speedy pony is just about the most dangerous acrobatic stunt to be undertaken. Only two classes of people ever try to do such stunts, namely, circus clowns and country boys. They have lots of fun learning the trick and sometimes get a few bad bumps and bruises with the fun.

Sam was a short stubby well-built boy from the time he began walking. His chubbiness made him appear shorter than he really was. Notwithstanding the shortness of his legs, Sam was an excellent walker, a fast runner and an expert horseman. He was seldom

beaten in a foot race and could walk as far and fast as any one regardless of leg length. Sam liked to ride horseback and often made excuses to do so. He would walk half a mile any time, bridle a horse, if a bridle was handy, or tie a plow line around a pony's neck and ride it bareback to drive a cow or a yearling two or three hundred yards, even if he knew it would walk straight to the pen. Sam just naturally liked to ride horseback and did so every time he could find an opportunity to do so.

As stated before Sam was a fast runner. He was ever ready to run a foot race and just as ready to race a horse after cattle on in a race with another horse. He would run a horse race as the least temptation. When horseback driving cattle he usually had no trouble finding excuses for racing.

One summer afternoon when Sam had ridden the old gray mare with nothing by a plow line for a bridle to drive a stray yearling to the pen, two men were building a logging cart for Father near the entrance to a lane leading to the cattle pen. A short time before sunset they heard a boy hollow back of a small field like he might be driving cattle. Upon looking up they saw a slender built yearling with head and tail high coming round the field. They also saw the old gray mare and her rider coming full speed close behind the yearling.

Immediately they stopped work to watch the race. They knew from the direction the yearling and the old gray mare were headed it would be necessary for them to make a right angle turn as they entered the lane leading toward the cattle pen. They both looked at the race and wondered what would happen if the speed was not lowered at the turn. They watched the speed increase as the old gray mare came close upon the yearling's heels. As the older of the two men expressed it, "It was nip and tuck in the race."

Soon the yearling passed close by the men with head and tail no longer held high but sticking straight out horizontally with all steam turned on making for the entrance to the lane. Sam and the old gray mare were close behind he frightened yearling probably having no idea of why it was being chased in such a manner. The old gray mare's head and tail were stretched out like the yearling's. She came by with her rider holding the plow line with one hand and the other one clinched in the old mare's mane about the middle of her stretched-out neck, his legs hugging her sides with his body leaning forward as if trying to accelerate the speed.

About this time the yearling raced round the right angle in safety and headed toward the lot gate with all possible speed. Suddenly Sam saw the workmen looking at him as if enjoying the race. He greeted them with a smile and a nod of the head. He let loose the mane and waved a hand at the workmen as the old gray mare speeded by. This evidently caused him to forget about the right angle only a few feet ahead. While he was still smiling at the workmen who were enjoying the race and admiring his skill as a rider, the old gray mare will all steam on and head and tail still stretched went round the right angle without a slowdown or a slip.

Smiling Sam was not so fortunate. Lady luck had deserted him in a moment of need. As the old gray mare turned up the lane Sam was left suspended in mid air between heaven and earth with one hand still holding to his plow line. Sam now took a thirty degree downward angle straight across the mouth of the lane landing on his back ten feet from where he slid from the old mare's back. Still smiling Sam continued his journey sliding another ten feet from where he landed. Immediately he jumped up and ran off up the lane to catch the old gray mare before she chased the frightened yearling far beyond the lot gate. Without even looking back he waved a farewell to the workmen and disappeared around a curve in the lane leaving them to enjoy their loud laughter all alone.

The older of the workmen had the knack of making laughable remarks about the common place things and the younger one the aptitude of seeing the ridiculous side of any incident or mishap taking place in their presence. When they saw Sam go down smiling, jump up quicker than he went down and still smiling the younger one later reported that he said, "Boy, I now dubb you SMILING SAM because I never before saw anyone slip off'n a runnin' horse, sail through the air and slide on the ground like you, go down a smiling, get up a smiling and chase off to catch the horse still a smiling like you did. It's great to know a boy who can do that. Shucks, if that'd a been me I'd a gone down a praying and a got up a cussin', if I'd a been able to get up at all." To this the older man remarked by way of a reply, "No, if that'd a been you took that fall you'd a never got up agin, your old big beer belly would a been busted wide open." To this the younger man replied, "You need'nt say nothing, if you'd a took that fall your old dry bones would a been busted like a sack o' empty beer bottles tossed on a brick pavement."

For many years afterwards the older workman took great delight in teasing Sam about making a good ground slide out'n himself. Said he, "Just like the old home-made ground slides we used back in Alabam' to bring baskets o' seed cotton from the fields. And dogged it he didn't slide off a that old gray mare for the world like a flying squirrel and would a landed on his feet but he held to that plow line too hard and it turned him over causing him to land on his back. If it hadn't a been for that I do believe he'd caught square on his feet a running."

The younger workman chimed in, "Yes sir ee, that's so. That boy is some rider. By George, he'd a never fell off if he hadn't turned loose that mane to wave at us. That made him forget the right angle turn around the fence corner. If we hadn't a been here to bother him he shore would a rid that right angle round without a slack in speed or a slip. He's a rider, that boy is."

Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough

MISCHIEF, MISSIONARIES AND MISHAPS

SIXTEEN AND SHOD

PETS, PEAS AND PREACHERS

MISCHIEF, MISSIONARIES AND MISHAPS

One summer Father was having his logging cart repaired preparatory to hauling some logs from land near the house which he planned to fence and place in cultivation. The wheelwright doing the repair work left a half-inch auger on the floor of a large porch almost directly under a shelf commonly called the "Water Shelf." This shelf was made by fastening one end of a twelve inch board to the wall at the end of the porch by nailing a twelve inch length of a one by four inch board to the wall and then nailing the end of the shelf on top of the short piece. The other end of the shelf was fastened to a post at the corner of the porch in the same way.

Soon after the wheelwright had left the auger and departed for his home Henry and I, the Hans and Fritz of the homestead, found the auger. We looked it over and decided to try it out by boring a few holes in a piece of wood. Thought we, this is the time and the place to begin learning how to build logging carts and other things like wheelwrights and carpenters build. We were glad the old man had forgotten to lock the auger in the toolbox with his other tools. For two days we had begged him many times to let us use his auger or other tools, but he would not permit us to even handle his tools much less use them. Now we would try this auger and he would never know we had even seen it. Soon we would be wheelwrights and carpenters.

We looked about for a steady piece of wood needing holes in it. Naturally as we raised up with the auger we came in contact with the shelf. It was a nice clean board, perfectly steady and just the right height for us to bore a hole through it without having to stoop over. And too, it was a good wide board on which we could try our skill at keeping the auger on the lever so as to make a hole straight through the board. We decided each of us would bore a hole. The mischief began. I being the older lad was permitted to try my skill first. I bored half through the shelf. Then Henry took the auger and bored at another place approximately two inches from the hole I had started. When he got the auger half through the shelf he handed it to me to complete my job. Within a few minutes the auger was through the shelf, coming out in the center just as I had intended. The auger was then give to Henry to complete his job. Within a few minutes his job was completed. The holes were exactly alike. Hans and Fritz had done skillful work and were proud of it. Two new skillful carpenters were now in the community.

The holes were examined and all splinters protruding at either edge of the shelf removed. The shavings that had fallen on the floor were swept into the yard. The auger was placed where it had been left by its owner.

This shelf was made from a board sawed only one inch thick. Dressing it by hand with a jackplane had cut it down to thirteen-sixteenths. The half-inch holes had left only three eighths of an inch about evenly divided half at the topside and half at the bottom side. No one noticed the holes except Hans and Fritz who admired them every time they were near the shelf but carefully avoided calling them to the attention of others.

Within a few days a Mr. Green was employed to assist Father in sawing logs and help with other work about the place such as building fences and clearing land. A Mr. Burk was employed to drive the logging team and haul the logs to the Escambia River to be floated down the river to market. Father and Mr. Green worked near the house and of course each day were at home for dinner. Since only two loads of logs were hauled each day, one in the forenoon and one in the afternoon, Mr. Burk was able to eat dinner with Father, Mr. Green and the family each day. The family at this time was made up of Father, Mother, Aunt Irene, one of Mother's single sisters, John, Henry, sister Mamie, Sam and Charley.

John, Henry and Sam were kept busy cultivating the small patches adjacent to the house and working at other odd jobs such as must be done daily at a country home where logging and a little farming are the chief occupations. Charley was too small to do any regular work; hence he was not burdened with responsibilities like the other three boys.

About an hour before noon on the day the events here related occurred Dr. Frank Abbott, a medical missionary and his Aunt, Miss Lizzie Abbott, also a medical missionary and gospel singer, drove up to the house in a buggy. Of course, the boys were called to unhitch the horse, water him and then give him dinner. Dr. Frank was usually addressed as Brother Frank and Miss Lizzie as Aunt Lizzie. Brother Frank had a crippled foot and a crippled hand. He walked with a considerable limp and could hold only light bundles in one hand. For this reason the boys carried his book satchel and pill pockets from the buggy to the house. When this was done and the horse taken care of we boys were told to go back to the fields and work until dinner. Off we went not too well pleased with the dinner situation.

We worked about an hour before being called to dinner. Or rather I might say we were in the field for about an hour. Little work was done. The time was spent in considering ways and means to get a good dinner and escape the ordeal of listening to the reading, singing, preaching and praying. We were a little disappointed when the call was heard to come to dinner because we had not yet worked out a satisfactory plan of action. We knew Aunt Lizzie would do the singing, and make Brother Frank do the rest. We knew too, that both were "long winded." Under the circumstances it was indeed a sad and solemn situation. To us it was like being led into battle with no plans for attack, and no well-laid schemes for defense. How we could stand our hand was yet a puzzle.

Soon dinner was served. As was expected Sam, Henry and I had to wait and eat after the Missionaries had eaten. As usual we nearly starved before we got to the table. We never needed Dear Old Sandy to assist us more that we did at this time. However, this was a year or two before he was an inmate of this home and became a life long friend to honest-to-goodness hard working boys. Judging from the long time these people stayed at the table we expected to find little or nothing left on it, if we ever got there, but empty dishes and plates heaped high with bones and other waste for Rock and the pigs.

Just as we were about to breathe the last time the dining room door opened and out came the crowd, with Father, Mr. Green, Mr. Burk and even Brother Frank each rubbing his

back on the front side. We took this as a good omen. With sad heart and down cast countenances we crept slowly to the table. The situation was better than we had anticipated. We breathed freely, smiled a few times and prepared for the feed a kind Mother had reserved for her hard working sons of toil. We went to work in earnest in strict accordance with the challenge set before us. Just as we were making a good beginning we heard Aunt Lizzie say, "Brother Frank, you have a long drive to make this afternoon and must be on your way as quickly as possible, but before going we must have scripture reading, singing, preaching and a little praying for the benefit of these people. Get your Book and read a few chapters suitable for helping these poor benighted people." We boys giggled. We knew we were poor but didn't know until now we were benighted. We giggled some more and wondered what we would be because it refers to plain people living in the wilderness like these people here. And too, it refers to John the Baptist whose "food was plain and whose raiment was coarse." Then she added, "These people are timber cutters and will understand what is meant by the words 'and now the ax is laid into the root of the tree.'" Then after a moment's hesitation while Brother Frank was busy hunting his selections, she added with much emphasis, "You must not forget to read the Sermon on the Mount and explain it in language these people can understand. They need it so much."

Yes, thought we boys, just like missionaries, won't let honest-to-goodness tired hard working boys have time to eat in peace, but are willing to have them spend an hour or two hearing reading and preaching that doesn't mean anything to them. "Shucks," said philosophical Henry, "Them missionaries and pill peddlers should know better than to try to preach to boys when they are hungry. It's a pity we couldn't get to the gullies before this thing started."

At this very moment Father stuck his head in the door and said, "The missionaries have got to go. You boys come to the porch at once and hear the service." We filled our mouths, hands and arms full and running over with whatever we could gather up from the table that appeals to a hungry boy and out we came. We must have been a ludicrous sight to look at as we entered the porch with mouths too full to speak or chew, hands and arms full and running over with big slices of corn bread hollowed out and filled with heaps of field peas, sweet potatoes and meat, a couple of big high-top country biscuits filled with country syrup a dripping and two pieces of peach pie for desert. Everybody on the porch laughed except Mother and Aunt Lizzie. Mother's face showed signs of embarrassment and Aunt Lizzie's signs of anger. We were scolded a little, but it suddenly stopped, evidently the scolders decided this was not the time nor the place to start a scene lest it mar the sacredness of the occasion. Father and Mother then halfway apologized for the uncouth manners of their sons they were kept so busy putting up with, by saying, "The boys have been in a grassy potato patch all day and probably are tired and hungry." We boys made a mental note that the word "working" was omitted from the apology but whether it was done accidentally or purposely we would not know until the missionaries had departed. Brother Frank accepted the apology and added, "I can well remember when I was a working country boy before the rheumatism got me. To have to wait in punishment enough to last a bunch of boys a year." We wanted to say a GREAT BIG

AMEN, but our mouths were too full for utterance. We did the best we could by nodding our assent.

Henry and I did the natural thing for a normal boy to do. Instead of sitting down in a chair we passed them all by and elbowed and kneed ourselves on to the long water shelf beside Mr. Burk and Mr. Green. Sam was more polite. He was too short to get onto the high shelf. He had a hard time to get into a chair without spilling his load of rations. Finally after a few trials he elbowed and heeled himself backward into a chair.

It is here suggested that the reader close his eyes and use his imagination for a few minutes. By so doing he will doubtless be able to see a ludicrous situation as it actually was. Here it is:

A porch thirty feet long and ten feet wide extending the full length of a log house on the eastside was used for the Mission Station. Near the center of this porch were seated the two Medical Missionaries. Brother Frank was holding his Book ready to read from the heathens when given the signal. Aunt Lizzie was holding her songbook ready to express the gospel in song when we boys got seated. A few feet away sat two embarrassed parents. Near them sat Aunt Irene, a quiet young lady and sister Mamie, a child of about eight years. A little nearer the high shelf sat Charley in a baby chair as quiet as a judge, stilled tied to his mother's apron strings, but wishing he were on the shelf beside his older brothers. Near Charley sat Sam in a grown folk's chair because the rations he brought from the table to work on during the service and his tender age made it impossible for him to perch on the shelf. He was leaning back against the chair and braced by holding his heels against the tops of the front posts of his chair. His elbows were resting on his knees, so his hands could reach his mouth with little effort. On the end of the shelf nearest the wall sat two cedar buckets almost full of water. Next to the buckets sat Mr. Green. His feet were swinging back under the shelf. His elbows resting on his knees with his body leaning forward with chin resting in his hands. He had a large hunk of brown mule chewing tobacco in his mouth and was busy chewing on it to settle his dinner. As he chewed his head worked up and down instead of his under jaw. Henry sat next to Mr. Green. He was sitting up straight with his feet hanging straight down. His elbows were beside his body with hands pointing upward because of the food held in them. I sat next to Henry. My body was sitting up straight. My legs, long and slender, were dangling downward and swinging as if running a tight race chasing a shoat from the potato patch. My hands were held upward near my mouth as if in readiness for pushing rations into the chewing hopper. Next to me sat Mr. Burk. He, like Mr. Green, had placed a large hunk of brown mule chewing tobacco in his mouth and was busy chewing it as an aid to digestion. Between Mr. Burk and the post sat a large tin wash basin half full of water.

Everyone was now ready and waiting for the missionaries to begin. All was quiet except the chewing of food and the smacking of tobacco. This noise was low, barely audible because of the sacredness of the occasion. Aunt Lizzie began by singing two songs, "What a friend we have in Jesus," and "Jesus loves me." She then asked if anyone had a song to suggest. Mr. Green stopped chewing his brown mule [tobacco] long enough to suggest, "Mazie and Grace", meaning of course, "Amazing Grace." Mr. Green's selection

was sung in long meter. Mr. Green showed that he had some musical talent by keeping his tobacco chewing in perfect time with the singing. When this was finished Brother Frank began reading the third chapter of Mathew.

He stopped occasionally to comment. He spoke of the wildernesses of all back countries and the good plain people living in them, of John's plain food and coarse raiment, of laying the ax into the root of the tree, of the work of Abraham in the wilderness and then warmed up on baptism for fifteen minutes. All this time the chewing of food and brown mule moved slowly along, each chewer keeping a different time. When Brother Frank stopped for breath Aunt Lizzie ordered him to read something from the Sermon on the Mount and explain it as he read in language these plain simple people can understand. At this point Burk, Henry and I looked at each other and grinned, intending of course to smile. Burk whispered to Henry and me, "She means me." "Nope" said I with a grin, "She means us." We three then looked at each other and giggled a little, just as Brother Frank began to read.

Father evidently attracted by the giggling looked straight at us. All was quiet again for a few minutes.

Brother Frank read the long Sermon on the Mount explaining many passages as he read. The reading and explaining went along smoothly in a monotone for not less than thirty minutes without any disturbance except the chewing of brown mule, all the rations having been eaten sometime before. In the meantime four pairs of dangling legs continued to get tired and tired and the shelf harder and harder. The four high perchers were showing signs of fatigue and each wishing he had had sense enough to sit in a chair at the beginning instead of climbing upon the high shelf. The high shelf position was getting painful. We all suffered, grinned and endured the pain hoping and trusting for a chance to dismount and cool the burning spots. But alas, the reading and explaining was like Tennyson's brook in these lines: "Men may go and men may come, but I go on forever." Our burning spots must have decided we had died sitting up and failed to fall over.

The food had all been eaten and was now needing water. Three boys were suffering for water. This made the two on the shelf more restless. Burk and Green could be a little more quiet because their chewing of the brown mule was like the brook in that it went on forever. The burning spots were beginning to feel like they had blistered and burst. We grinned and endured. Presently Brother Frank closed his Book and announced we would all now kneel for prayer. The four high perchers were so glad to hear this until they forgot to slide from the shelf and kneel on the floor. The prayer continued in the same monotone as the reading and comments. It lasted long like the brook. Our legs dangled and ached. Our feet began to swell as an indication that our blood was beginning to settle in them. This explains why we failed to slide from the shelf when prayer was announced. Like dumplings we sat and suffered.

The prayer continued. So did our suffering. Our burning spots seemed as if they were on fire. We all tried shifting burning spots a little for temporary relief. This helped a little at

first. Within three minutes the burning got worse. We twisted and wiggled to ease the burning spots. Green and Burk rolled their quids of brown mule from one side of the chewing hopper to the other for relief. Poor Henry and I had no brown mule to shift and roll for relief. We just shifted as they rolled brown mule and shifted. Finally the rolling of brown mule quids and the shifting a little to ease burning spots shifted too much weight to the center of the shelf causing it to SNAP in the middle like a powder explosion thus giving instant relief to four sufferers by somersaulting them backward into a pig wallow six feet below the shelf where mud and water soon cooled their burning spots and the law of gravitation let blood flow from their swollen feet to their empty heads.

Now a few words of explanation about the pig wallow are in order before continuing the narrative. A litter of seven pigs had been partly raised in the yard during the late spring and early summer where they had been given some special feed in the backyard to bring them through the summer without stunting their growth. This special feeding had caused them to think they belonged in the yard rather than on the range. They had learned to climb rail fences or root under them and did which ever was found to be the quicker method of gaining entrance to the back yard feeding trough. With the use of their long hard snouts they could rip pickets from the yard fence as quickly as a man could with an iron crowbar. In search of a cool damp place to lie during the heat of the day, when in the yard, they had rooted a shallow place directly under the high water shelf where waste water was sometimes thrown. Not enough was thrown there to make a muddy wallowing place, but just enough to keep the soil damp and cool. However, when the two buckets and wash basin were emptied into this damp wallowing place it immediately mixed with the loose dirt making a muddy place for men and boys to be somersaulted into. And to add to the uncomfortableness of the somersaulting landing place, recently the logging men had been using plenty of soap and sometimes kerosene oil to get the dirt and fresh pine gum from their hands. The water containing this extra supply of soap and kerosene had been thrown on the yard where the water spread out and soon soaked into the soil leaving the soap and oil on the surface forming the slickest place in the world outside a soap factory. Every boy on the place knew this from sad experiences of many falls and slippery slides down the gentle slope over which the water spread.

The sudden snapping and explosion of the shelf, the rattling of buckets and basins, the tumbling of men and boys mingled with grunts and groans and the pouring and splashing of water were taken by Aunt Lizzie as a signal for closing the prayer without the customary AMEN. She immediately raised to her feet, grabbed Brother Frank by the shoulder next to her, gave him a hard jerk and a few shakes and shouted, "They've tumbled from the high water shelf on their heads into the yard and are badly hurt and maybe dead. Quit your praying at once and get your medicine bags. They need medical attention now instead of SPIRITUAL MINISTRATION."

Brother Frank obeyed orders by slowly rising to his feet without uttering a word, not even a simple "AMEN", or asking a question. He then quietly limped to the south end of the long porch, picked up his pill pockets and limped back to the north end of the porch where he stood laughing at the performance and seemingly enjoying the show. Mother,

Aunt Irene, Mamie, Sam and Charley also watched the show from this same vantage point.

Because Henry and I were in the middle of the shelf we were the first ones to land in the pig wallow. I landed on the back of my head and shoulders flat in the mud and water with feet wedged in between Green and Burk. Immediately I scrambled to my feet and cautiously backed away over the slippery space fifteen feet away and leaned against a pomegranate tree where I stood laughing at the big show.

Henry landed on hard dirt beyond the wallow, striking the dirt and bumping the breath from his body. He lay still.

Burk came in third in the race landing with his head and back just outside the wallow with the seat of his pants flat in the mud and water and his feet up against the big porch sill. His burning spots were quickly cooled.

Green came in fourth, probably because he tried to hold on to the slanting shelf as he came down. His head landed in the wallow with both knees braced against the large sill supporting the porch. His mouth was just a little above the water so the brown mule juice trickling from the corners of his mouth could spread out on the surface of the water. He was braced in this position too tight to move. Here he stuck half stunned.

Immediately after Aunt Lizzie ordered Brother Frank to quit praying and get his medicine bags she went down the steps into the yard and skipped around to the end of the porch near the pig wallow to gaze upon the morgue. Father followed close behind her. As Aunt Lizzie rounded the porch corner she almost ran into Mr. Burk as he was getting on his feet and yelled, "Dear man, are you hurt? Do you need attention? Do you need medicine?" As Mr. Burk brushed the mud and water from his now much cooled burning spot he answered, "No'm I ain't hurt and I don't want nothing "scept'in to get away from here to my work. I'm nearly two hours late now." He then walked straight through the gate and drove his team off to the woods.

Everybody laughed at Mr. Burk's reply and quick get-a-way.

As this moment Aunt Lizzie made a few quick steps toward Henry while partially stooped over as if intending to pick him up. Just as Father arrived at the scene Aunt Lizzie's fidgety feet slipped, sitting her flat on the slick sloping ground. When she sat so suddenly upon the hard ground she bounced a time or two and then slid directly toward Father. He picked her up and led her off the slippery place. The fall and sliding made her as mad as a bottle of bees in hot weather. She was ready to sting and sting she did. She turned toward me, shook her finger in my face and shouted, "Quit standing there laughing, you little hatchet faced heathen. Don't you see your brother's killed?" As I backed out of her reach I said, "Not yet, breath just bumped out'n him. A punch in the flank and a shake or two and he'll be alright."

By this time Father picked Henry up and gave him a shake or two. He was all right, walked over beside me, and joined in my laughing. By this time the Missionary singer's anger had increased from red to white heat. She shook her finger at Henry and me and said, "Quit your giggling you silly little rascals, don't you see Brother Greens dead. His neck's broken. Look at that blood running from his mouth and nose." "Nope," said I, "its only brown mule juice from that square he's been chewing on." She shot at me as she raised her finger and pointed straight at me, "Shut your mouth, you little imp, before I have your Father slap your face." Henry and I moved to one side where we could get a better look at Mr. Green as Father pulled his knees from their brace against the sill and let him topple over sideways.

After lying still a second or two Mr. Green breathed, scuffled to his feet, mopped brown mule juice from his mouth, nose and forehead with the palm of his hand and staggered on to the slick slanting soil. His feet suddenly slipped. Down he went sprawling. He scrambled and scuffled frantically in an effort to get upon his feet. Just as he got to this feet and made a step or two on the slick slope toward where Aunt Lizzie was standing, a quick jump on her part saved her from being knocked down by the sliding man. Everybody on the porch and in the yard laughed heartily at the man's mishap and Aunt Lizzie's quick jump to dodge the man, seemingly, thrown at her. When the laughter quieted down, philosophical Henry remarked, "She gits young again when she sees a man chasing her." Everybody laughed again, even Aunt Lizzie joining, and seemingly enjoying it. She was now supremely happy.

As the persons in the yard returned to the porch Aunt Lizzie admitted it gave her a great thrill to see a man tumbling, slipping and sliding on the very spot where a few moments ago she had furnished entertainment by putting on the identical act. She then became talkative and admitted during her younger days when she was fair and beautiful she was often chased by men but never before had one been thrown directly at her. The laugh that followed closed the episode.

As Father and Mr. Green started off to their log sawing, Father told Henry and me to hitch the Missionary's horse to the buggy before going back to out grassy potato patch. Then he added, "Sometime during the afternoon you boys get a new board from the barn and put up another shelf in the place of the one you high percher's broke." We did but were careful not to show the broken ends of the old shelf to anyone. The evidence showing what caused the shelf to break was destroyed. Of course, we were glad both broken ends of the shelf stuck in the mud when it broke.

Let no one get the idea the closing of the service so abruptly and so unceremoniously destroyed its good effects. Not so, the sudden snapping of the shelf, the rattling of buckets and basin, the abrupt somersaulting of men and boys backward into a pig wallow mingled with the groans and the pouring and splashing of water together with the comical mishaps following the crash only served to cinch the good points of the service and engrave them upon the minds and hearts of everyone present. Without the closing episode the service and all its good effects soon would have been forgotten. But because of the mishaps, the words, the rhythm and thoughts expressed in song became the Gospel of

Salvation expressed in magic poetry with appealing and lasting effect. The sound philosophy expressed in the scripture read stirred thoughts and ambitions that linger a long time. The comments of the righteous missionary revealing the practical application of the true philosophy of life and right living became living memories because of their connection with the episode that almost became a tragedy, entitled,
MISCHIEF, MISSIONARIES AND MISHAPS.

SIXTEEN AND SHOD

Many, many times different ones among my numerous nephews and nieces have asked me if it is true that the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough never wore shoes until they were sixteen years old like Papa has told them. My answer has been yes and no depending upon what you mean. If you mean to ask if we ever had any shoes before we were sixteen my answer is yes, we had shoes to wear on special occasions for dress parade and occasionally when the weather in our Florida Frontier community was cold enough to spew icicles six to ten inches long straight up in damp places or freeze the ground hard enough to cut our callused feet. However, if you mean to ask me if we wore shoes regularly before we were sixteen years old my answer is an emphatic no, that is for the four older boys.

When I say we were shod at sixteen I mean that is about the average age at which we began to wear shoes regularly. Henry and I had this handicap inflicted upon us when we were approximately sixteen years old. It was thrust unwillingly upon Sam and Charley when they were about fifteen years old by an improved social order that began to invade our frontier community. Emory and Irl had it spread all over them when they were about thirteen years old along with white Sunday shirts, stiff standing collars, patent leather slippers, creased trousers as sharp as a broad axe and climaxed with big derby hats and mule riding. Poor Walker, the seventh son caught it like a country boy catches mumps, measles, whooping cough and head lice in a country public free school and was in cultured society wearing squeaky shining shoes at the tender age of eleven and moving around in polite society with as much ease as if he were the Earl of Chesterfield.

The special occasions when we older boys had to wear shoes were such events as weddings of outstanding importance where everybody within half a day's riding or walking distance just had to go to see the wedding garments of the bride and the new outfits of everybody else and at Christmas trees [parties] where frontier boys and girls had to put on a program for which the boys would receive gifts of stick candy, red apples, jackknives and Chinese fire crackers while the girls would receive candy containing love lines written on heart shaped pieces, red apples and dolls or face powder according to their ages. Protracted meetings held at the early mission stations and at the first organized churches when big free dinners were served on the ground and two sermons preached were among the special occasions. Here too, dress parades were much in evidence.

The first special occasion we older boys attended and were made to wear shoes to keep from disgracing the family was at the first Christmas tree ever seen in our frontier community. This Christmas tree was at the closing exercise of a three-month's term of a public free school. Sixteen boys, ranging in ages from six to eighteen and in sizes from a midget to six feet and four small girls put on the show under the training and direction of the famous personage known in our frontier as "The School Marm," by speaking speeches for the entertainment and the enlightenment of the great throng of visitors. The program had been arranged by the teacher primarily for the entertainment of her patrons to show them how much she had taught her "Scholars" [as we were called here] during three months.

The little log cabin used for a school building was only large enough to hold the twenty scholars. Since a great crowd was certain to be in attendance the men of the community erected a platform directly in front of the cabin large enough to place the Christmas tree on one end and leave space enough on the other end for the scholars to assemble for the program. Blocks were sawed twelve or fifteen inches long from a log and long twelve-inch planks laid on them directly in front of the platform to supply seats for the older men and women. Plenty of clean pine straw was placed adjacent to the seats upon which young folks and men could either sit or stand during the program. Blanket curtains were placed around the edge of the platform so the Christmas tree with all its colored decorations and gifts could not be seen until the curtains were pulled back and the show began.

Committees had been appointed to do all the work. The teacher used real diplomacy by appointing every one of the fathers and mothers of her scholars on important committees. There was a committee to build the platform, one to build the seats, one to get a nice juniper tree of the right size and shape and set it up, a committee to decorate, a committee to build the firejacks and provide the fat pine wood to furnish bright lights for lighting the grounds, a committee to watch and protect the tree, a committee to keep order on the grounds, a committee to meet and welcome visitors and even a dog committee was appointed whose duty it was to keep dogs from getting on the platform around the tree or under it or in the house with the scholars.

The weather had been warm all the fall. No shoes had been worn by little boys, middle size boys or big boys during the long summer and warm dry fall. As was the custom in Florida Frontier communities long before sunset the people began to arrive. They came on foot, in wagons and on horseback. Before dark the school yard and adjacent woods was crowded with a cross section of frontier life. It didn't take this crowd long to observe the effects of compelling boys to force their long spreading feet into shoes that fit when worn the winter before. It was a sort of cause and effect proposition with two causes of equal rank, namely, the feet had been growing and spreading all during the summer and fall and the shoes had been hardening and shrinking during the same period. The effects were many and of disputed rank, such as riding toes, mashed nails, twisted toes, burning bottoms from folded skin in the middle of the big feet, aching arches, skinned ankles, "busted" blisters and nervous all-over-ishness. It was a ludicrous sight to see the boys as they approached. Some were limping on first one foot and then the other. Some were

limping on one heel and on the other toes. Others were limping only on one heel and some turning half way around at each step. Some were hobbling and halting along in a way hard to describe or imitate. A few came up with their shoes tied together and swinging across their shoulder.

Almost every pair of shoes in sight was made of course tough leather with a pair of brass knucks on the toes. This was evidence that all the daddies in the community worked for the same logging firm and traded at the same commissary. The bright shining brass on the dull shoes produced a contrast as noticeable as the pain and pleasure delineated on the faces of the boys as they approached, pain from hurting feet and pleasure from meeting the jolly crowd they were soon to entertain and enlighten. This assembling of the scholars was a never-to-be-forgotten event.

These brass knucks on frontier shoes really rendered worthwhile service. They made the shoes last two or three winters. In the first boy wearing a pair of such shoes became unable to force his feet into them the second or third winter they were handed down to a smaller boy who in turn handed his pair down to still a smaller boy in the same family or perchance was able to show his thriftiness by trading them to a boy on the other side of the creek for a two-bit jackknife, or a hews harp, or a dime barlow [knife]. These shoes enabled frontier boys to hold their own in a kicking match with other frontier boys be the match fussy or friendly. They were handy in helping a boy to stand his hand with a belligerent piney woods rooter or a butting billy goat. They were a present help in standing off a biting canine. About the only thing a good pair of brass knucks on shoe toes couldn't stand off were the heels of a dynamiting donkey.

As dark approached the lighting committee lighted huge fires on each of four big firejacks lighting the grounds for a hundred yards in all directions. The platform was as light as a bright noonday sun. Modern electric lights would be as a small lighted tallow candle compared with these frontier firejacks when it came to lighting up a large area. Soon the scholars began to assemble in the little log cabin schoolhouse. About half a dozen cur dogs and hounds in an effort to follow the children from their homes into the cabin got tangled up in some of the Christmas tree decorations under the tree and almost pulled the tree over. The two oldest men among the patrons of the school, as a committee to look after the tree, instead of calling the dog committee into service, caught the tree and held it up and requested a couple of big burley boys having big aching feet because of having been forced into hard shrunk up shoes who were just entering the cabin to kick the dogs from under the tree and off the platform. At this very moment two dogs began to growl as if each were accusing the other of being responsible for getting them tangled up in the decorations. Immediately two pair of big hard shoes with toes capped with brass knucks went into gattling gun action. Within less time than it takes to tell what happened the dogs were kicked free of all decorations and somersaulted off the platform. Their howls and whines attracted other dogs to the spot. Soon canine curiosity caused a new group of dogs to slip up the steps at the end of the platform and sneak under the Christmas tree where each on felt the sobering [effect] of well wielded hard shoes capped with brass knucks and departed pronto by way of the somersaulting road telling of their experience with wailing howls.

All was quiet now except the dull sounds made by big feet scraping and stomping on the cabin floor as the scholars assembled to the platform for the opening song. The sounds made by the sixteen awkward boys with burning toes, blistered and bleeding heels and aching feet as they went hobbling and scrambling toward the platform was interspersed with yells and squeals, such as "Quit shoving me," "Quit kicking me or I'll kick you back," "Quit a pulling my hair or I'll kick the devil out'n you." "Don't you ruff up my hair," "Quit or I'll snatch yours out," were entertaining to the crowd. Presently the scholars all were on the platform. The two older men as a committee to look after the tree slipped out under the curtains and found seats near the edge of the platform. Within a few minutes the schoolmarm had the scholars all placed in position ready for the opening song. The curtains were then pulled back and the song was sung in about as many tunes as the number of scholars taking part. However, it went over with dramatic success. It made a great hit. The fact that a few older voices came out at the end of lines and verses from half a word to two words behind all other voices and with a twang plainly indicating suffering from burning toes, aching arches and blistered and bleeding heels made a great hit with the crowd, causing more laughing than a Negro minstrel or a big circus clown. The great throng of people had now been prepared for the rest of the program. It was now ready for fun and eager for the next part to begin.

As soon as quiet was restored a few Christmas poems and Christmas stories were recited by dainty dolled up little girls. This part of the program was instructive, educative and enjoyed by the crowd in a different way from the joy produced by the song. This part of the program really quieted the crowd and made the people think seriously of the Christmas celebration. The next few numbers on the program were some recitations by some small boys consisting of poems and prose relating to the Christmas season and the birthday of the Christ Child. These poems gave the crowd a splendid picture of the Christian civilization and the idea of what the birth and resurrection of Christ should mean to all people.

The second song was now sung by the school. It was a little better than the opening one. The scholars had gotten over the first fright and could keep together a little better. And too, the excitement had caused burning blistering aching feet to be forgotten.

Now came the speeches by half a dozen big burley boys consisting of burlesques on big fat daddies and thin skinny daddies trying to play Santa Claus stumbling and falling over chairs and play things left on the floor at bed time by tired children. Some were badly bruised by falls. One poor would-be Santa Claus stepped on a tack left by children in tacking up stockings for Santa Claus to fill and in doing so screamed and waked up all the family by dropping Santa's pack of toys to scatter all over the floor where the children rushed in and gathered up the broken fragments. Everybody laughed at the Santa Claus dads, even the dads joining in the laughter. One big boy spoke of the Wash Day Just Afore Christmas, when the tornado hit the clothesline and carried his Sunday pants where they were never found. He cried and screamed, "Oh My Sunday Pants" as he saw them go straddling out of sight high among the clouds. His screams produced as much fun as a big circus. The fact that his pants were lost forever and he had to stay home all the

Christmas holidays was a real tragedy to him and he acted it well not withstanding his aching feet.

One old comical chap delivered a speech about George and his army at Valley Forge and how the Christmas Spirit aroused his patriotism, causing them to cross the Delaware and lick the British. His patriotism ran over and rose above the tall pines standing nearby. One tall one with big feet and a ludicrous look made a speech about a WISE OLD BILLY GOAT having a head carrying more power than a steam engine. This old goat was full and running over with love of country and the Christmas Spirit and finally butted his way to fame.

The big boys came to the front of the platform as their names were called to make great speeches. Their aching feet caused them to stand a while on one foot and then on the other one, sometimes holding one entirely above the floor to soothe a burning spot. Sometimes they would overbalance a little while resting one foot and would hobble about a little. Not withstanding all this the boys made the welkin ring with great speeches. Their voices reverberated among the groups of tall stately pines standing like towers around the little cabin and finally faded away in profound silence in the beautiful dogwood grove one hundred fifty yards in front of the platform. Esquire Mann, an old Southern gentleman who had come to the Frontier Florida in the early days as a famous Kentucky Colonel and Texas Ben Cobb another gentleman of the Old Southern type, for years afterward in teasing the scholars who spoke their speeches at this Christmas Tree Celebration declared their voices divided as they bounced against the tall pines near the cabin, half the sound reverberating toward the dogwood grove to the east and half rolling into the big gully only a few feet west of the cabin and there echoed and re-echoed, bouncing from different chambers of the gully to others until the echoes collided in mid air and finally died away.

When the program was over the missionary sojourning in this frontier made a few remarks summarizing the good points of the program and explained the place of a Christmas Tree in a Christian Nation. Santa Claus began delivering gifts and joy and happiness moved in and ruled supreme. Little girls and big girls, little boys and big boys, fathers and mothers came forward and received their gifts direct from the hand of Santa Claus. One of the greatest ovations of the evening was given when the big awkward boys came forward with elastic springly steps to greet old Santa and receive their gifts. At first it was thought burning toes and aching feet had been completely forgotten because of the gifts. However, a closer look disclosed that shoes and socks had been shucked and laid aside as soon as the scholars had said their speeches and boys were now walking around on bare feet and smiling to the embarrassment of mothers and sisters but entertaining to the crowd as evidenced by the ovation given.

This had been a great gathering and an auspicious occasion. It was a sort of milepost on the great highway leading a frontier community to a bigger and better civilization. And why not when SIXTEEN SCHOLARS had spoken from the same platform on the same program. This was probably the only time in history any frontier Florida community had enjoyed this distinction. It was the talk of this community and adjoining communities for

many years because it was something different, something new and full of fun and fascination. And all because of big brass toed shoes and big barefooted boys. And too, a new expression had been coined by the Father of the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough. The expression often heard so descriptive of Florida Frontier girls, "SIXTEEN AND SWEET," now had been given a companion expression just as descriptive of Florida frontier boys, to become the title of this narrative sixty years later, SIXTEEN AND SHOD.

PETS, PEAS AND PREACHERS

It has been said there is a period in the life of every child known as "The Age of Pets." This was true in the life of each of the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough. Father's home usually had one or more pets day in and day out through the years. Sometimes it was a worthless kitten, a crippled chicken, or a mongrel puppy. At other times it might be a motherless pig, or a motherless kid, or a stray lamb. These pets seemingly were always a nuisance about the homestead. They got in everybody's way, were always in the wrong place and forever into some sort of mischief, yet everybody on the place petted them, fed them and otherwise aided in making them a general nuisance.

It seems the pets giving the most trouble, and the hardest to keep in the right place, were the little pet billy goats. Seldom did they let a day go by without butting into something or butting some body. When young, they would crawl through small holes in fences and get into enclosures where they should not be. When larger they would climb to the top of the tallest fences and jump off on the wrong side. When first brought to the house or yard to be fed to keep them from starving they would gladly drink milk from a bottle. Soon they wouldn't do this. The process was too slow. They would fight for the privilege of drinking directly from a pan, a bucket, or a cup or whatever vessel might contain the milk. If not given this privilege they usually succeeded in butting the vessel containing the milk from the hands of the person trying to feed them, making it necessary to secure another supply of milk.

These pet billy goats soon acquired by right of conquest the undisputed right to any part of the house they desired to explore. If a bedroom door was left open and a pet billy goat was around he would be certain to take a nap in the middle of the bed. If the kitchen door was left open the billy goat would be certain to slip in and search for food. If food should be found he would help himself to what he wanted and scatter the rest over the kitchen. He usually succeeded admirable in breaking a few dishes and in messing up things in general.

Father and Mother used to think billy goats picked up a lot of troublesome tricks from their tutors and keepers, the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough. No doubt this was true. It was also true that the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough picked up a lot of mischievous tricks from the pet billy goats under their care from time to time. Evidently it was a fifty-fifty partnership in the business of mischief making.

Probably the pets second in trouble making to pet billy goats were young roosters. They were not as mischievous in playing prankish tricks as billy goats but were a lot meaner. Pet roosters were mean for the sake of meanness and not merely mischief making, like billy goats. At an early age they learn to fight. They would fight for food when hungry, which means they were always ready for a fight because they are like billy goats in that they are hungry all the time. They are always prowling in search of food. Where billy goats butt into things, pet roosters are certain to scratch in. It was probably pet roosters that gave the idea for the old time fiddle tune, "Chicken Scratching Out the Bread Tray." They scratch out every pan, bucket, tray or box left about the place, whether it contains food for chickens or something else. The pet rooster must scratch everything out of the container to see what it has even down to the bottom. In the yard he must scratch up every flowerbed regardless of what it contains. Pet roosters too are like pet billy goats in that they look with a great deal of suspicion upon strangers. They will keep a watchful eye on any stranger about the place. Especially will they keep a watchful and suspicious eye upon preachers. The preachers visiting at the Diamond Homestead used to explain to the Seven Sons that this is because of the natural instinct roosters have. They explained that roosters have a sort of intuition or instinctive way of knowing that preachers have caused the destruction of more roosters in America than all the wild varmints inhabiting the wilds of this country.

At the time of the episode spoken of under the heading, "Pets, Peas, and Preachers", a six months old pet billy goat was the chief pet at the Diamond homestead. The name Sandy has been given to this pet by Henry when the goat was small because of his color, and because of his Irish temper and love of a fight. Sandy had been deserted at an early age by his mother and had to be raised by feeding him milk from a bottle. At an early age he let it be known that he was not to be the "Under Privileged Orphan," at this place. He was not to be the "Half Clad, Half Starved and Kicked About Orphan." He would Stand His Hand against all odds, regardless of time or place.

At this time the pet next to the chief one was a pet rooster about the same age of Sandy and answering to the name of "Streak." This name was given to him when he put on his first coat of real feathers because of his streaked colors. "Streak" had been the lone biddy of his mother about the lot where the log teams were kept. The mother hen had been accidentally killed at the lot leaving "Streak" a wandering waif. He was picked up by some kind-hearted person and sent to the house to be fed and cared for until he was old enough to scratch for himself. Like Sandy he soon began to show signs of being able to Stand His Hand at all times and places.

"Sandy" and "Streak" were tutored and teased by every one who ever fed or petted them. They soon learned many clever tricks, and all the fancy, popular, and scientific strokes a

pet billy goat or a pet rooster could use either fun or fight. They also learned the habit of displaying all their clever tricks every time they had an opportunity to do so. They became opportunists at early ages.

At the time “Sandy” and “Streak” were young almost everybody in our community was employed in logging. Almost no farming was done. No one in the community knew anything about Agriculture. Seldom did any one cultivate even a garden for the production of vegetables for home use. Gradually the logging men began to clear small patches of land adjacent to their large log houses and plant them in corn and field peas. This sort of farming soon gave rise to the expression “Pea Patching.” Sometimes the expression was heard, “Yes, growing a few roast ears and peas to live on during the summer lull in logging.”

Because very few people in the entire community knew how to grow any vegetables except field peas it wasn't long before every pioneer settler was growing field peas for summer vegetables. They became the favorite vegetable in every home. Everybody was eating peas and liking them. At first only the old speckled peas were planted. Pretty soon some pioneer settler would make a visit back to his boyhood neighborhood and bring back seed peas of a better variety, such as “Black Crowders,” “Yellow Crowders,” and other varieties. The varieties were called “Aristocracy Peas from the Old Country.”

For a number of years after Father settled on a homestead three miles southwest from where Jay is now located there was no preaching in the community except an occasional sermon by a traveling missionary. These brave, unselfish men endured the usual hardships of a frontier country in their efforts to civilize the early pioneer settlers and to partially Christianize them and their families. Among the early missionaries in this section were the following:

Rev George Miller
Rev. J.E. Edwards
Dr. Samuel Ingram Spence

Rev. Henry Kierce
Rev. J. E. Holly
Dr. F. W. Abbott

From the time Father settled on the homestead the missionaries acquired the habit of visiting at his home and making it a sort of headquarters. This was probably because Father and Mother were members of a Baptist church located ten miles southwest from Jay on the Escambia River organized there by Father's Uncle the Rev. Samuel Johnson, who answered the call years before to do Missionary work in South Alabama and West Florida. In the early seventies Uncle Sam answered a call to become a missionary in the great state of Texas, and went there where he spent the remainder of his life making Texas a Great Missionary Baptist State.

Rev. George Miller lived about 100 miles from the Florida and Alabama line in Alabama. For a number of years he traveled on foot preaching and distributing literature. Later some of the logging people bought him a mustang pony for use in his work. This was done as an expression of love and appreciation for the man and his missionary work. His work was a labor of love.

Many good things could be said about each of the other missionaries who traveled over this country in early pioneer days. Suffice it to say here that they were all good men and true and did a great work. They laid the foundation broad and deep upon which others coming after them would build.

After several years of missionary work a Missionary Baptist church was organized at a springhead known as "Shady Grove Church." The springhead was known as "Holmes Head" named for the early Spaniard who settled there during the Spanish colonial days and took up the tract of land known to this date as the "Holmes Grant."

Within a few years the church grew and became self-supporting. For a number of years preaching services were held there the fourth Sunday in each month. On the fourth Sunday in July in the early nineties when Rev. J. T. Filingim of Bluff Springs in Escambia County, Florida, was pastor a sort of Homecoming Day was held. Several of the former missionaries in the community were invited to come back for a visit. Among those coming back for a visit were Dr. J.E. Edwards, Dr. F. W. Abbott and Rev. Henry Kierce. Of course, a large number of other visitors came to the Homecoming to meet old friends and former acquaintances.

People began arriving as early as an hour or more before the preaching hour. They came on foot, horseback, in large wagons drawn by oxen or mules and in buggies. By ten-thirty the house was filled with people and the yard and adjacent woods crowded. It was evident if the preaching was to be done in the small log building only a minor fraction of the crowd would be able to hear the sermon. The weather was fine for meeting outside. There was plenty of shady places near the house where the ground was well covered with pine straw and dogwood leaves. A few of the older men held a conference and in less than two minutes the senior deacon and dean of all community activities, Esquire J.W.C. Mann, a Kentucky Colonel who came to Florida many years before, called for volunteers to move the seats from the house to a nearby shady spot where everyone could hear the preaching. Several men and boys responded and within fifteen minutes every thing was ready for the services to begin.

An old Methodist brother, Uncle Louis Jones, from the Mount Carmel Methodist Church, gathered up all available songbooks and brought them to a table used as the speakers stand. He then went around among the crowd and requested a number of good singers to come and assist him with the singing. Under the leadership of Uncle Louis a great song service was started. By eleven o'clock the crowd had gathered around the speaker's stand. The seats were occupied by the older women and a few of the oldest men, among whom were Uncle Tom Sunday, who was, as he expressed it, "now nearing four score and ten," Mr. Oliver Wolf, Mr. Levi Gay, Esquire J.W.C. Mann, Mr. B.W.T. Cobb, Uncle Frank Cobb and Uncle Pat Burk. Almost all the rest of the crowd sat on the thick carpet of straw and leaves. A few stood on the outskirts.

At eleven o'clock the preaching began. Dr. Edwards being the oldest one of the visiting missionaries was requested to preach the sermon. After a few preliminary remarks by the

pastor he requested Rev. Kierce to read the scripture lesson. Immediately after the reading of the Scripture the sermon began. The subject selected was MISSIONS. Dr. Edwards reviewed the history and the accomplishments of the missionary work done by Saint Paul and other New Testament characters. He then traced the work of missionaries throughout the world finally coming down to the time when the first missionary came to Pine Level. He named the different men who had served as missionaries in this section since the territorial days and of the work done by each of them. Many interesting events occurring in the efforts of the work of the early missionaries to establish a church on Pine Level were related. These men evidently encountered all the hardships of a pioneer missionary in a pioneer country. He closed his sermon by reviewing the organization of the Shady Grove Missionary Baptist Church and its most marvelous growth during its first few years.

The Doctor had preached a great missionary sermon. He had proved beyond all reasonable doubt that the work of pioneer missionaries had civilized and Christianized the American people and made the nation what it was at that time. When the Doctor closed the Pastor called upon each of the other visiting ministers, former missionaries in the community to say a few words.

Then Rev. Henry Kierce and Dr. F. W. Abbott each spoke fifteen minutes reviewing his work as a missionary on Pine Level. They each told of many ups and downs in the life of a pioneer missionary in a pioneer country and closed by expressing great joy and appreciation because of having been permitted to have a part in establishing a church destined soon to be a great church in a great community.

When the missionaries had finished, the pastor had to summarize a little and extend an opportunity for church membership. Some fifteen or twenty people came forward for membership baptism. According to the customary practice in that community at the time the applicants for membership had to be given the right hand of Christian Fellowship. This required another fifteen minutes. After this the pastor made a few closing remarks, followed by a song by the great throng of people and a closing prayer by Rev. Kierce and a benediction pronounced by Dr. Edwards.

The service had lasted a little more than two hours. And strange as it may seem, quiet had prevailed throughout the meeting. The great throng of people had listened with marked attention from the beginning of the service to the end.

It was one-thirty in the afternoon by the time the crown got started for home. As was Father's custom, he invited the visiting missionaries for dinner at the Diamond Homestead. Soon it was agreed between the pastor and the visiting ministers that the four of them would go to Father's place for dinner. Father's oldest brother, William Diamond, one of the senior deacons in the old Damascus Missionary Baptist Church ten miles southwest from here for thirty years, had come with Rev. Kierce and, of course, was included in the dinner party. Two other members from the Damascus Church, both Father's boyhood friends, two McDavid brothers, Henry and Bill, were at the meeting and would pass by the Diamond Homestead enroute home. Of course, Henry McDavid,

also a deacon with Father and Uncle William in the Damascus Church, and his brother Bill, the bachelor, accepted the invitation to join the dinner party. Then a neighbor by the name of Wash Campbell joined the dinner party just to be with the “boys” he had known a long time, and as he expressed it, to get a real “Preacher Dinner.”

The Diamond Homestead was four miles from the church. By the time we traveled the four miles and Mother had dinner warmed and on the table it must have been near 2:30 in the afternoon. Mother and Father had both anticipated a large crowd for dinner on this occasion and had made the necessary preparations. A large fat kid had been dressed and the greater part of it baked the day before. A few chickens of tender and juicy age had been dressed and fried. The customary cakes and pies had been baked and set aside to cool. Saturday afternoon a large pot of field pies had been prepared for cooking. Sunday morning the peas had been placed in an old-fashioned large sized dinner pot with an ample supply of country smoked ham bones and cooked before the family left for the meeting. The corn bread in large pones also had been baked Sunday morning. The only thing to be done when Mother arrived home from the meeting was to warm the dinner in general, bake the biscuits, boil the coffee and churn the milk for fresh butter and buttermilk.

Be it remembered this was in the dispensation when boys had “to wait” when company came for dinner. This was especially true today because the dining table only had room for ten grown people. The four preachers, the four other men and Father and Mother occupied the table. This left four boys, John, Henry, Sam and Charlie to play in the back yard with the two mischievous pets, “Streak” and “Sandy” or take a stroll in the nearby gully for an hour and a half. Of course, sister Mamie had to take baby Emory off and entertain him during this waiting, starving period.

Of course, we boys had assisted Mother in getting dinner ready by starting a hot fire for warming the dinner, baking biscuits, and boiling a large pot of coffee. We had also supplied plenty of fresh cool water and churned two gallons of fresh buttermilk.

When the dinner bell rattled it was an invitation for the guest to come to dinner but a signal for the four boys and the two pets to clear out. As the guest came joyfully to dinner we boys and the pets went like the slave to his quarry, not to be scourged but to be starved, a more wretched punishment.

We put “Sandy” and “Streak” through all the clever tricks they had been able to pick up. Each boy took turns in playful butting with “Sandy” until starvation caused boys and billy goat to become contrary and turn the play into fights. An effort was made to teach “Sandy” and “Streak” a few new tricks, but because of hunger their minds and muscles refused to take to anything new. Soon this had to be abandoned. We surveyed the plum orchid adjacent to the back yard, climbed all the thorny trees, chinned the bar on the swinging limbs and played windmill on limbs growing in open spaces. We played ‘coon hunting by making “Rock” and “Watch” chase the pet tomcats up the plum trees as ‘coons. We climbed the trees and shook the poor cats out and enjoyed the fights until the cats could get free, climb the fence and head for the branch. This was great sport for the

boys and dogs but a little rough on the cats, but it made starvation easier. When all the cats had been chased away we returned to the open yard and rolled human cartwheels until it got tiresome. We then pulled our little goat cart and yoke from under the house and yoked the dogs to the cart. This was poor sport but it kept starvation off by making us think of something besides eating.

Finally we exhausted our means of entertaining ourselves. Starvation was staring us in the face. We were getting desperate. Death was really knocking at the door. "Streak" and "Sandy" were in the same fix. We took stock and found we had only eight while there were ten at the table. Our eight were also weak because of having eaten nothing since early breakfast and the ten at the table should be well fed by this time. This well-fed idea only increased our agony. We became desperate, and as is often the case, desperation brought new ideas.

Pretty soon the back dining room door quietly opened a little. Perhaps a gentle breeze had sprung up from the west and caused the door to stand ajar a little. Whatever caused the door to open only a few inches and then stand still in that position surely was an act of a kind providence. It was a friendly act toward starving boys whose own resourcefulness to save themselves had about been exhausted. Soon "Sandy" and "Streak" stole in through the small opening.

The kitchen and dining room were in a log house. The door through which "Sandy" and "Streak" stole was on the west porch. Now, on the south end of this house next to the dining room were a few cracks large enough for peeping through. The four starving boys immediately and quietly moved to those cracks in order to observe the acts of "Sandy" and "Streak."

The two mischief-making pets sauntered slowly and deliberately around the table, looking carefully at each person. "Sandy" would sniff occasionally. "Streak" would answer with a gentle chirp or sort of cluck as if asking for a few crumbs. What the two were really looking for was someone who could be persuaded to give them a small crust of bread or a few crumbs and pet them a little as they ate. The two kept sauntering around the table keeping a suspicious eye on the preachers. "Sandy" arched his neck and back and snorted a time or two when a preacher looked at him a little too close. This started a conversation about goats and roosters.

Uncle William and Mr. Campbell noticed how the two pets were keeping a suspicious eye on the preachers, and called it to the attention of the party. They were asked why Billy Goats and Roosters always look with suspicion upon preachers. Dr. Edwards, the Dean of the group explained that billy goats and roosters know by a sort of intuition or spontaneous thinking that preachers have caused the destruction of more goats and chickens than all the wild varmints in all the wilds of this country. "Why", said he, "These pets probably know right now by reason of their keen sense of intuition that the baked kid and the fried chicken on this table is none other than their brothers in the flesh from the herds and flocks of the Diamond Homestead."

Mr. Campbell accepted the explanation as the best ever heard, and added "Yes, Dr., judging from the way these pets are eyeing you they must know by this same sense of, well, whatever you call it, just how much of their brothers in the flesh you have eaten today, and that sooner or later their cooked carcasses will be the center of attraction, and as wicked as they are, they too, like their brothers will enter the ministry." Everyone at the table laughed at Mr. Campbell's remark. As soon as the laughter was over Rev. Filingim remarked, "Wash, you made that remark only to draw attention from the enormous amount you have eaten. You know as well as everyone that you have eaten twice as much as any two preachers at the table."

The laugh was now at Mr. Campbell's expense. However, he was not at all embarrassed by the remark about the enormity of his appetite. He only took advantage of it to pass his plate for another helping of peas from the huge pot in the center of the table just refilled from a boiling pot by Mother, who had gotten up and refilled the dish as an excuse to run the two pets from the room. As Mother turned around Mr. Campbell requested her to pour him another cup of hot coffee. While she was getting the coffee for Mr. Campbell, Father asked if anyone else would like more coffee. This caused a few other cups to be passed to Mother for refilling. While she was refilling the coffee cups "Streak" and "Sandy" had been keeping a watchful eye on the table and listening to the remarks made about wicked pets and their brothers in the flesh. No doubt, they resented some of the remarks and had been looking for an opportunity to even the score, by standing their hand even with PEAS AND PREACHERS. Anyway, while Mother was refilling the last coffee cup, "Streak" flew up and lighted on the back of her chair and looked over the table as if selecting a place for the next landing. At the same time "Sandy" placed his forefeet on Mother's vacant chair. He was not quite high enough to get a good view of the entire table. He then placed his hind feet in the chair and his fore feet on the edge of the table beside Mother's plate.

When Mother looked around and saw "Streak" and "Sandy" in their new positions she almost dropped the cup of hot coffee. Father had seen the position of the pets and said rather hurriedly, "Mother, slap that chicken off the chair and the goat from the table." Poor Mother, she must have been embarrassed beyond measure. She stood still as if afraid to come nearer lest both pets land on the table. Presently she moved a step or two and shook the loose part of her long skirt and shouted, "Goat" at "Sandy." Now, if you know anything about billy goats you will know at once if "Sandy" "goated" at all it was in the wrong direction. Instead of "goating" toward the partly open back door he placed his hind feet up on the table edge beside his fore feet. As he brought his body up higher he caused "Streak" to overbalance and fall backward off the chair. As Mother neared the table "Sandy" snorted and sneezed a little and jumped to avoid a slap from Mother, landing on all four feet right in the middle of the dish of hot peas. His feet were badly burned causing him to utter a sad, long, mournful squall. He turned on all the power possible in order to get out of the hot peas. His hind feed slipped on the bottom of the dish, scattering peas over three preachers. Dr. Edwards, being at the head of the table escaped this sprinkling. His was reserved for the next scattering. As "Sandy's" hind feet slipped in the dish he scuffled on the table knocking over some more dishes and hot coffee. In the scuffle to get up he pawed peas with his fore feet toward the other side of

the table and toward Dr. Edward at the head of the table, thus competing the job. During his scuffling “Sandy” was continuously bleating because of his burning feet. When he got straight from his scuffling and had his feet off slippery places he went out over the heads of those in front of him, landing on the floor full six feet or more from the table.

Everyone had gotten up from the table and was shaking peas, pea soup, and hot coffee from his clothes. “Sandy’s” feet were still burning. He circled the table a couple of times, still bleating mournfully, before Mother could get the back door wide open so he could see it and make his exit. “Sandy” jumped from the porch and joined the boys who had left their peeping places to meet him at the end of the porch. The boys, “Streak” and “Sandy” went to a playing place in a shade in the back yard. Mother straightened up the table by changing the linen so the men could return for desserts of cake, pie and coffee. While Mother was changing the table and getting the dessert ready the laughs coming from the house sounded like log camp laughing on Saturday afternoon paydays.

When the table and the desserts were ready the men reassembled and seemingly enjoyed the cake, pie and coffee better by having had so much fun over the “SCATTERING OF PEAS AND PREACHERS.”

The preachers teased Mr. Campbell about losing his last and third helping of peas. He took the teasing good-naturedly and a few extra pieces of cake and pie with an extra cup of hot coffee in the same jovial spirit.

After finishing their dessert the men assembled on the large front porch where with the help of Mother, a pan or two of water, and a few wash cloths, they were cleaned up and made presentable enough to return home. Luckily they was no preaching Sunday night, so the preachers got along fine without extra clothing.

As soon as the cleaning up process was over the men all walked to the back yard to see what had become of the pesky pets. They were much amused to see “Sandy” standing in a pan of water and seemingly enjoying it. Bill McDavid remarked, “It is the first time I ever saw a goat enjoying having his feet in water.” Rev. Kierce replied, “Bill, getting his feet burned in that dish of peas makes quite a difference.”

Mr. Campbell called the attention of the preachers to the fact the goat was quietly standing in the water, and admonished them, thusly, “Preachers, that’s what you’ll be doing tomorrow, or tied in a cold running branch, because that’s the treatment given to horses when floundered from over eating to prevent hoofs from slipping.” Whereupon Rev. Kierce remarked, “Wash, you shouldn’t say a word. You ate as much as all four of us preachers. You’re the one who’ll be sick. In my opinion you’ll send for a Doctor before the night is over.”

The men looked at the door through which the mischief making pets had entered the dining room. Some comments were made about why the pets decided to enter through that door at the time they did. Bill McDavid, the bachelor, said it must have been that

instinct the Dr. spoke about at the table. His suggestion was accepted as a satisfactory explanation as the boys rushed off to dinner without any comment.

Uncle William and Father were reared in a family of eight boys. They each had a large family of boys and knew a little more about the average large family of boys than did Bill the bachelor. Judging from the peculiar twinkles in their eyes when Bill suggested instinct as the cause, we boys got the idea they suspected the boys knew more about how the pets entered the dining room door than did Bill, the bachelor.

Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough

TWO RACING GRAYS

WATERING HORSES

BRIGHT AND JERRY GO TO A WEDDING

TWO RACING GRAYS

From my earliest recollections Father owned and operated one or two logging teams, each team consisting of three or four yoke of oxen. Often the logging work closed down in the summer months during which time the oxen would be let out to graze on the open range. The oxen usually came home at night. However, during late summer and early fall after the large black cattle flies ceased to be so numerous the oxen would sometimes range five or six miles southeast from the Diamond Homestead and would not return home each night. This was the case one fall and a few days before the teams were to begin hauling logs, Father sent me one afternoon to hunt the logging oxen and drive them home. The little gray mare was now three or four years old and had had lots of practice in driving cattle and racing in the woods.

During the afternoon while riding through the woods about half way between the head of Blackjack Creek and the Open Pond on the lower edge of the country known from earliest Spanish settlements as Pine Level, a large gray fox jumped from a cluster of small bushes almost directly under the pony's nose and ran straight in front of her. Without a word or a motion from me the pony followed close upon the heels of the fox. The pony had been trained to follow dogs when on a chase in the woods. If the dogs were in sight the pony would keep up as long as the chase was on ground which a horse could follow. If the dogs went into thick marshy swamps or crossed creeks where horses could not follow the pony would wait until the barking of the dogs came in hearing again. As soon as the barking of the dogs were heard again she would go at full speed until she caught up with them.

From the beginning the little gray mare kept close upon the heels of the racing gray fox. Soon the long cow whip tied to the saddle was brought into action and popped a few times over the moving fox. The popping of the whip accelerated the speed of the fox and the race was on. The speed continued as I watched the two racing grays pick their way through the woods around trees and stumps, over logs and fallen treetops, circling either to the right or to the left to avoid contacting any objects that might slow down the race. Once the fox made a quick turn and passed through a thicket of small post oaks. Without any hesitation the little gray mare took the shortest way around and increased her speed to catch up in the race. When she caught up the whip was cracked on the fox. This was evidently a new experience to the cleverest of wild animals that put him to zigzagging to dodge the whip. Whether this was the purpose of the zigzagging or not the result was the same. It missed the whip cracks and ran straight ahead again, and the pony moved up to the heels of the fox. And the race continued as the whip popped over the fox to increase its speed. The fox now became convinced that in a straight-ahead race it had no chance to win and began to run in circles. The fox circled and ran through a cluster of thick treetops. The little gray mare again took the nearest way around and quickened her speed to catch up in the race. The whip cracked over the fox and the race continued.

Soon the fox circled toward a stooping dogwood tree as if intending to take refuge up the tree. Just before reaching the tree it curved away from it and moved on, evidently

thinking the tree was not high enough to afford protection. The fox now headed straight across an open space a full two hundred yards wide. The race grew more interesting in this open space. The whip was brought in to perfect play where no trees or bushes were in the way. The fox put on all speed possible to gain the protection of pine trees and undergrowth beyond the open space. The race here has to be left to the imagination of the reader because it is impossible to describe it as it was. In crossing this open space it became evident that the only reason a fox can keep ahead of a dog so well in a long race is not due to its speed but to its cleverness in dodging and throwing the dog off its track.

Near the edge of the open space the fox again curved toward a tall stooping sassafras tree as if intending to climb it for safety. As it neared the tree a few strokes with the long whip kept the fox moving past the tree, and the race kept on. The fox made several circles as if looking for a hollow log or a hiding hole in the ground. None was found and the race kept on and interest grew by leaps and bounds. Ah, it was a race to be remembered. It was a race full of thrills from the beginning, with new and greater thrills at every turning point and with the jumping of every high log.

Pretty soon the fox headed straight toward a small gum pond. At once I knew the race would be over if it reached the pond. Immediately I reined Pearl to one side and with the customary touch of my heels had her move up beside the fox. A few strokes from the whip caused the fox to circle away from the pond, and the race kept on and so did the new thrills. The fox now turned toward the headwaters of Blackjack Creek, as it had decided to seek refuge in the creek swamps. Again the same methods used in making the fox turn from the gum pond were used in turning it from the direction of the creek. The successful use of such methods not only brought new thrills, but new experiences, experiences that come to but few persons at any time or at any place.

It was plain now that what started out to be only a short race for a little simple fun had changed into something entirely new, Fox Driving. It was real fox driving because the direction of the fox was controlled exactly as the direction of a half wild yearling or a skittish piney woods hog is controlled. The fleeing fox had been turned from the pond and from the direction of Blackjack Creek as easily as a straying yearling is turned toward the herd.

The fox was now showing signs of fatigue. It had been crowded for a distance of four or five miles by the fleet-footed pony and the sharp cracking whip. It was now unable to increase its speed as it did when the long whip was first popped over its back. It was now plainly demonstrated that a fox cannot continue for a long period unless it is able to stay far enough ahead of the hounds to make use of its clever tricks in making sudden turns and crossing and recrossing its trail to throw the hounds off and slow down their speed.

The fox now entered an open space and headed toward a large thicket of small pine saplings. I moved up beside the fox and brought the whip into action to steer it around the thicket. It turned and jumped over several large logs right near each other. Pearl went over the logs not more than ten feet behind. This was like a hurdle race. Within fifty feet of the last big log the fox turned a little to one side and disappeared down a large gopher

hole and the most exciting race of my life was over. Pearl stopped as quickly as possible and returned to the gopher hole.

I dismounted and let the little gray mare loose to feed on the wild oats just beginning to head. I looked at the hole for a minute or two and wondered how deep it might be. A slender pine sapling about the size of a fishing pole was growing about forty feet away. With a pocketknife this sapling was cut and prepared to poke down the hole through mere curiosity without really expecting the fox to come from its hiding place. As I returned to the hole a small fat pine knot was picked up and held in my right hand as the pole was pushed down the hole with my left hand. The pole was 12 or 14 feet long. About the time the last foot of it was pushed into the hole to my great surprise out came the fox. It jumped from the mouth of the hole as if ready for another race. As it did so, without knowing why, I threw the pine knot striking it on the head. The pretty racing gray fox fell dead not over six feet from me.

I looked at it and wished I hadn't picked up the knot or hadn't learned to throw quite so hard and accurate thus preventing another thrilling race between the TWO RACING GRAYS

WATERING HORSES

There is nothing that gives a country boy more honest-to-goodness joy than galloping a spirited pony along a country road and listening to the horse's feet rattle sweet music against the hard surface of the road. Ah, that is the delightful life of a country lad. To see such a lad galloping down a country road holding himself as straight as a great military general is indeed an inspiration. It's the kind of recreation that develops brawn, brain and character, three things which the country has not yet produced a surplus.

With the coming of gasoline propelled vehicles, the building of so many hard surface roads and the growth of the "City Life" idea, the real country boy and his pony are rapidly disappearing. Motor vehicles and paved roads mean progress. We must continue to be a progressive nation. Yet, I sometimes doubt very seriously if the progressive idea of exchanging a gay pony full of speed and fiery spirit, a red leather squeaking saddle and bridle for a large automobile capable of making from 60 to 100 miles per hour will be better for developing all the finer qualities in the sturdy lusty lads of our country, than letting them take recreation astride a gay peppy pony and listen to the music of rattling hoofs on a country road.

One of the brightest spots in the memory of the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough is their recollection of riding horses to water just before feeding time late in the afternoon. During the seasons when the horses were not used daily on the small farm in plowing, riding to logging work or in looking after stock, they would be ridden to the spring

branch near home for water. After standing in the stables all day the horses would be well rested and just as eager to get out for a little racing as any of the boys would be for the privilege of riding the horses to water. They always seemed to get as much real joy out of the evening races to the watering places as the boys did. The horses would be bridled, if a bridle was handy, if not a plow line would be tied around their necks as a makeshift for a bridle. They would be ridden without saddles, bareback fashion, often referred to as "Indian Style."

In going to the watering place the short route would be used, a distance of not more than three hundred yards, because horses do not enjoy running downhill, and too because it's dangerous for boys to ride them too rapidly downhill. Returning from the watering place to the barn a much longer route was used, one over which horses could race at full speed without danger to the horse or the rider. A circuit would be made upon leaving the drinking place until a straight open space was reached leading directly up the long hollow leading toward the east just north of the barns. In this space the horses were permitted to run full speed, a distance of approximately one hundred yards. When the horses came to the beginning of this open space in the hollow it was almost impossible to keep them from starting at full speed and continuing as rapidly as possible until the road running directly across the hollow north and south was reached. Many were the races run up this hollow, and my, me, how the horses did enjoy them. Never did a boy ride this race once who did not want to ride it again and again.

Four medium size logs were lying across this track, not more than thirty or forty feet apart. These logs provided hurdles making the races more interesting to both horses and riders. At the upper end of this track two trees grew twenty feet apart, having limbs overhanging the runway the right height to strike a boy about the neck and face unless he ducked at the right time. Many a boy who failed to duck at the right time came away with a few face, neck and head scratches. Occasionally a slower ducker would end the race wearing a shredded shirt minus a few shirt strips left dangling from the limbs. This was considered legal proof of carelessness on the part of the rider, because instinct alone will cause even a boy to protect his head in time of danger. These logs and limbs could have been easily removed but since they made the racing more hazardous and more fascinating no one who ever ran the runway would permit them to be moved.

A slight slowdown had to be made when the horses reached the road in the hollow to enable them to make the right angle turn without stumbling. This was also necessary to prevent some riders from rolling, or sliding on up the hollow at accelerated speed when the horse made a right angle turn up the road toward the barn. It was interesting to notice how quick a clear-footed horse can make a right angle turn and get into full speed again. After a little practice on the part of horse and rider the turn was often made with little loss of speed.

As soon as the sharp turn was made the horses would go at full speed up the hill around a curve in the lane until within a few feet of the lot gate before slowing down for the stop. Sometimes a horse would run right up to the gate and stop suddenly, in which case, if the rider didn't have his mind on his business, one of the Seven Little Diamonds in the

Rough would tumble over the gate landing in the lot, sliding or rolling. These sudden stops were fine for teaching boys how to sit steady on the back of a horse and prevent tumbling off and being unexpectedly slid or rolled into a fence corner, or perhaps tossed against the jagged ends of a fence jamb in the lane. When the running horses would come to the hard surface in the road and in the lane the music made by their fast moving feet was fascinating indeed. It possessed irresistible charms for lusty country lads. No wonder boys like to ride racing horses and would do so at every opportunity, excuse or provocation, and in a few instances have actually been known to make plausible opportunities, excuses and provocations.

One of the favorite mischievous pranks of the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough was to hide in a fence corner in the lanes leading toward the lots and barns and suddenly jump from his hiding place with a feed sack or even a white sheet draped over his extended arms in front of a fast moving horse when some other boy was riding causing the horse to stop suddenly or jump sideways. Sometimes a large feed sack stuffed with hay or a large cotton basket filled with corn shucks would be rolled in front of a fast galloping pony coming from the watering place or from driving cattle to the pens just to get the rider's skills in staying on the back of a horse under difficulties. All such mischievous pranks gave the boys an opportunity to show their skill under such conditions. Anyone can ride slowly on a gentle horse along a smooth road, but not everyone can ride a lively spirited horse over the unexpected rough places in the road. Incidentally, these prankish tricks taught the boys to be ever on the watch for the unexpected rough places in whatever roads they later might travel.

One evening about sundown as I was coming from the watering place astride the little gray mare at the rate of about a mile in 1:53 and leading the other horse by at least three lengths and thinking about the graceful dismount I would make when the old mare arrived at the gate and got in the lot ahead of the other horses. When about 30 feet from the gate one of the Seven Sons suddenly stepped from hiding in a fence corner with a large feed sack over his head almost directly in front of the fast moving horse. She braced herself with her fore feet for the take up and then sprang off side ways tossing me high over her head. While tumbling through the air I rolled up like a ball, thinking I would land rolling. However, since I had left the back of the old gray mare while her hind feet were in a sort of squatting position I had gone tumbling rather perpendicularly instead of horizontally. Hence, when I did finally come down I came down like I went up, perpendicularly. The results was when I struck the ground, one of the Seven Sons flattened out like an unbaked biscuit thrown hard against a solid brick wall.

Disappointment was mine because I did not make the graceful dismount planned. I was humiliated because every one in sight laughed at my mishap. Even the old gray mare must have been tickled, because she stopped at the gate and looked around at me and snorted a few times. Then she looked back and forth at the gate and me as if saying, "Come on you awkward rider, open the gate and give me my supper." I got up, but felt like every bone in my body was cracked. I ached from my toenails to the hairs on my head, but was too much of a sport to let it be known. I breathed, then heard heartbeats. This was encouraging. I walked a few steps to the gate and opened it. The old gray mare

rushed in to her stable. I closed the door and managed to climb into the crib where I sat down and shucked some corn. Sitting down was good for me. I sat still and shucked corn slowly hoping to feel better by the time enough ears were shucked for a feed. I would shuck an ear or two and then rub my shoulders, neck, arms, hips, knees and legs. Really, landing without a glance, slip or slide gave me a case of All-over-ish-ness. By the time a feed of corn had been shucked the two log-team drivers had come in with the teams and joined Father and the boys in teasing and joking me about the beautiful landing I made. The corn was carried to the stable. Soon I felt better and could see the funny side of the prank played on me and laughed with the crowd. It was just my turn to take the ups and downs coming to me and furnish fun for the family and the ox drivers.

WATERING HORSES

'Twasn't watering horses that gave the fun
'Twas riding them in the races we did run
The sport was racing up the long hollow
Trying to lead a race 'd let others follow

Leaping hurdles always brought a thrill
Ev'n though a careless boy oft did spill
Cause a fall would furnish fun 'd laughter
For days and weeks a long time after

Racing o'er logs 'd ducking bending boughs
Furnished fun like driving up the cows
To turn a right angle riding a mile in one
Furnished frequent thrills 'd freakish fun

Racing a hill around a hard curving lane
List'ning to hoofs tapping music plain
Was the happiest race for lads 'n creation
'Twas the climax for fun and fascination

BRIGHT AND JERRY GO TO A WEDDING

Approximately one month after my 13th birthday, a week or so after the opening of the second term of school taught in our community, a big old time frontier wedding ceremony was performed six miles from the Diamond Homestead. The brother of a nearby neighbor was the groom. The bride was the daughter of one of Father's long time friends. For this reason the family had been given a special invitation, verbally of course, with an urgent request not to miss the wedding, the Big Wedding Feast, nor the all night dancing festivities following the wedding and the supper. Of course the groom's brother residing a mile or so from the Diamond Homestead had to go and celebrate with his older brother. The young lady schoolteacher staying at the Diamond Homestead, who had come from down in Florida among the orange groves, wanted to see the big wedding and all night celebration. She had been in West Florida only a month and probably wanted to go from mere curiosity rather than for the supper or the dancing. One of Mother's single sisters was living with us at this time and of course wanted to go see the wedding and the celebration following. Sister Mamie was Auntie's boon companion and of course must go if Auntie went.

A week or so before the big event it was decided by Father and Mother that the neighborhood party would ride in the big wagon pulled by Bright and Jerry and that John would be the driver. A week was spent in getting everything ready for the event. The "Wedding Garments" were made ready. The wagon wheels were oiled for easy running. The big body was scrubbed as it had never been scrubbed before or after. The little boy who was to be the driver was made to dress up in his Sunday suit. He was even made to oil and shine his shoes that had lain in a dusty corner all during spring, summer and fall. Of course, like the feet of all growing boys, one summer's growth had made the shoes two numbers too small, but since it was wear the shoes or stay at home the feet were forced into the shoes and the shoes worn until the first opportunity to slip them off and hide them under a board seat across the wagon body.

The Sunday afternoon before the wedding about the middle of the week the hour for leaving the Diamond Homestead was designated as 5:00 in the afternoon. The wedding was to be at 7:00 sharp and the supper shortly thereafter. This five o'clock leaving time gave two hours to make the six-mile drive. Several of the people thought we should start earlier because they had seen some oxen traveling very slowly and were a little afraid the party would be late for the wedding and might miss the big supper. However, Father assured the uneasy members of the party that Bright and Jerry would only require from an hour and a half to an hour and forty-five minutes to travel the six miles with a load of the ten persons who would make up the party. Father's assurance was accepted.

At exactly ten minutes of five o'clock the loading of the wagon began. A wide board was placed across the wagon body to be occupied by the older brother of the groom and me, the driver. Eight straight white hickory chairs were placed in the wagon body to be occupied by the other members of the party. Each of these chairs had clean white cloths spread over them to make certain all wedding garments would remain in perfect condition until they were seen by all members of the immediate inner circle of the

wedding party. When the chairs had been placed and spaced just right the loading began in reality.

The back gate of the wagon body was removed. A large box, about two feet high was placed near the back end of the wagon. A small box about a foot high was placed beside the taller one. Then Father and the older brother of the groom assisted the women and girls into the wagon and helped them to get seated. All this time I was standing in front of Bright and Jerry holding to the ropes fastened around their horns. Such ropes are sometimes referred to as "driving ropes." When all was ready, Father jokingly gave the "Go" signal.

Immediately I climbed to the seat reserved for the driver and down the lane Bright and Jerry trotted. The party could then understand why Father had required me to stand in front of the oxen during the loading. The party moved along with no mishaps at the rate of almost four miles per hour. The young lady schoolteacher in the party had the only watch in the crowd. She was appointed at the start as the official timekeeper. The brother of the groom and I knew by reason of having traveled the road so many times when we had traveled each mile of the way. When each mile had been traveled the time announced and the driver reprimanded if the mile had not been made in the fifteen minutes allotted. The first two miles were made in exactly thirty minutes. After this the party lost all uneasiness about arriving late and missing the wedding march and supper.

As soon as all members of the party were certain we would not be late they really began to enjoy the ride. They talked, joked and laughed a plenty. Really, it was a gay wedding party. Some members tried to figure out how many people would be at the wedding, how scared the bride, groom and the attendants would be, and if all parties would be able to go through with the ceremony without getting badly frightened or perhaps fainting.

When this figuring and guessing ran its course, the party then began to wonder and guess what would be served for supper. One guessed beef, while another guessed pork. Then some one mentioned chicken. Finally the party voted that beef would be the principal meat served with probably one or two small porkers roasted with new sweet potatoes thrown in during the roasting process. The bread came in for a lot of guessing. This was soon over. Then the talk turned to cakes and pies. The brother of the groom guessed the pies would all be potato custards because they would not require any top crust. He won. Then the cakes came in for a full mile of estimating quantity and guessing about the quality. This lasted until we were within one mile of the place. This other mile was then spent in talking about the good hot coffee needed to keep folks awake after having eaten the kind of a supper our party had prepared and served in the big wagon.

When we got in sight of the home where the wedding was to be, the large lane and open space in front of the house and back toward the lots and barns were observed filled with wagons and carts of all sorts and sizes. No fewer than a dozen big yoke oxen were hitched to a stout lot fence. A few yoke were hitched to the hind wheels of the wagon. This was resorted to after the nearby suitable fences were filled. A few buggies and horses were there and not fewer than twenty-five mustang horses were wearing saddles.

At exactly five minutes after six-thirty our party was unloading. As was done during the loading process I took the driving ropes and stood close in front of Bright and Jerry so there would be no sudden moving of the wagon that might cause someone to fall. The brother of the groom assisted the women and girls to get from the wagon by removing the gate from the back end of the body and placing a chain on the ground as a step.

As the party started toward the house leaving me to move the wagon to one side, unhitch the oxen and tie them in a suitable place, a vote of thanks was unanimously tendered to BRIGHT, JERRY AND JOHN for getting the party there so quickly. Within ten minutes the wagon and oxen had been taken care of and I walked across the lane and into the yard through the front gate. The crowd was immense. Standing room in the yard and on the front porch was at a premium. Soon I learned the marriage ceremony was to be performed on the porch so the crowd in the yard and lane could see the show. Lamps were on the porch to give a little light. About the time I walked up four big "jacks", two in the yard and two in the lane, were lighted, each having been previously supplied with a supply of fat pine wood. Within ten minutes the front porch, front yard and the lane were as light as a June day.

In the front yard were two or three boys about my size and age. Since they were without shoes I felt perfectly at home with my shoes resting quietly under the wagon seat where they had been stuck away soon after leaving home. Two of the boys and I selected a desirable standing place in the front yard and remained there until after the ceremony was over and the supper hour was announced. We then made our way through the crowd to the back yard near the kitchen from which the supper was being served. Some good woman assisting with the serving knew us barefoot boys. She approached with three large empty water buckets and invited us to go to a well in the yard and bring her the buckets filled with fresh cool water. We accepted the invitation with thanks because we suspected this might give us an opportunity to enter the kitchen to deliver the buckets filled with fresh drinking water. When we returned with the water the lady met us at the door and handed to us in exchange for the water, three well-filled plates of the choicest part of the supper. We thanked her for the plates. She explained she was short of help at this time and requested us to come back as soon as we had eaten what was on the plates and bring some more water. As we started off to find a good eating place she added, bring your plates with you and I'll give you some cake and pie. Needless to say she got all the water needed for serving with supper and for dishwashing too.

Shortly after the wedding ceremony was over the square dance started. Several couples danced a while before going to supper for the appetite's sake. When we boys had "licked the platter clean" the third time and filled the buckets the third time, we slipped inside and looked at the dancing now keeping time with the music being supplied by the famous blind fiddler of all West Florida and South Alabama, Mr. William Cobb. He was playing the old time tunes such as, "Arkansas Traveler", "Fire in the Mountain", and "Turkey in the Straw."

We boys soon tired of this watching and listening from a crowded corner and slipped out for cooler and more comfortable quarters. Soon we were perched on the edge of the front

porch listening to the conversation of a group of old men. Two of them had been soldiers in the Civil War of the 1860's. They were telling some wonderful experiences, a few of which might have been true. Soon the conversation drifted to the events occurring following the close of the war in 1865 known as "The Carpet Bag Days." This too, was interesting. The following terms were used often in the conversation: "Carpet Bagger", "Scalawag", "Deserter", "Renegade" and "Kuklux."

These men were not educated in so far as having a supply of "book knowledge" means education, but they did know current events and what they meant to the country. They were all engaged in the logging business. This came in for a share of discussion, but as this was not an occasion to discuss work but rather a celebration for play and pleasure the discussion soon drifted to the period when these men were in their teens and twenties, shortly after the Civil War. Such events as all night dances, all day "Quiltings" and all day "House Raisings" were brought to memory. Such events were the most important social gatherings in those days. One elderly gentleman entertained the crowd by relating the events of a wedding followed by a big supper and an all night dance, way down on Pond Creek in the early days when many of the men and women who attended came on foot a distance of from ten to fifteen miles.

The three platters of roast beef, bread, pork and potatoes plus cake and pie were beginning to call for water. We three small boys sought the well in the back yard from relief. After drinking all the water we could hold, we again wedged our way through the crowd into the house and spent a short time watching the dancing and listening to the music of the blind fiddler. Almost all the young single folks and the younger married couples were enjoying the dancing. Those who were members of the few scattering churches or mission stations were doing like us small boys, looking on and talking to each other, and seemingly enjoying the celebration.

Mother and the schoolteacher who came with us were standing in a corner talking to a small group. Soon I heard Mother ask the teacher the time. The gold watch was brought into view and the reply given as 11:30. Soon Mother walked over toward me and suggested that I better go yoke the oxen, hitch them to the wagon and drive up near the back gate ready for starting home. This was done within about fifteen minutes. Then I waited at the gate for members of the party to assemble and get seated in the wagon. At almost 12:00 midnight we started homeward.

The schoolteacher was the official timekeeper on the way home as she had been to the wedding. Bright and Jerry were well rested and anxious to get home. The rate traveled was approximately a mile in 15 minutes.

Before we were out of hearing of the loud calling of the square dance the party began discussing the "real wedding garments." The kind of material and the manner or style of the making were discussed pro and con. Then the same was done for all the wedding attendants. When "The Wedding Garments" had all been ripped apart and remade at least a half a dozen times the conversation switched over to the wedding guests. This lasted a mile or two. Since I had not taken part in the conversation some one in the party

suggested that I be called upon to tell what part of the celebration I enjoyed most to keep me from going sound asleep, tumbling off, and leaving the party without a driver. It wasn't any trouble for me to answer the question. I replied quickly, "Three things, three large platters 'o good rations." My reply provoked hearty laughter from all the party except Mother, who wanted to know right then and there if I had disgraced the party by making a glutton of myself. The driver got out of the situation by talking to Bright and Jerry and causing them to move faster so the rattling of the wagon would cause the conversation to cease for a few minutes. When the noise was over someone came to my rescue by accusing me of falsifying, because none was handed more than one plate of supper. No explanation was offered. Hence, I got by with this, for a mile or two, before the conversation gave me an opportunity to explain.

When the conversation had slowed down the following explanation was given:

"Two other barefoot boys and I were in the back yard for a drink of water when a kindly lady who knew us handed us three large empty water buckets and invited us to fetch her three buckets full of fresh water, and that we were compelled to accept the invitation or act rude toward her. Of course, we were not expecting any pay or favors for being polite and bringing her the water, but when we handed her the buckets filled with water drawn from the well a hundred feet deep she handed us each a big platter of supper. As we started off to find a good place to rest and eat we were told to come back within a few minutes and get some cake and pie. Of course, the invitation was accepted for politeness sake. The same invitation was extended a third time and of course we were too polite to refuse it and let the lady go a hundred feet and then draw water from a hundred foot well." Only a few of the party believed the story.

Presently someone wanted to know if we were really barefoot boys at the celebration. It was then I was accused of disgracing the party by strolling into the dancing room with bare feet. Mother and the schoolteacher came to my rescue by saying they did not believe my shoes had been pulled off because they had seen me in the house and had not noticed I was not wearing shoes. Again I talked to Bright and Jerry and forgot about the shoes, which at that time were under the seat where they had been placed soon after leaving home.

By the time we were within two miles of home the conversation lulled to a few low words spoken in a slow monotone indication that the sandman was at work and doing a fine job. We had had four straight miles of lively conversation about the wedding, big supper and big dance. Everyone admitted having enjoyed every minute of the time even going and coming. The young schoolteacher from "way down among the orange blossoms" liked the ox-wagon ride.

Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough

BOYS AND OXEN

My First Trip To Flomaton

Henry's First Trip To Bluff Springs

TOBE AND LEP

HENRY AND I GO TO BLUFF SPRINGS

BOYS AND OXEN

The four older of the Seven Sons on the Diamond Homestead were brought up with oxen of all sizes, ages and color. We four boys saw oxen worked in every conceivable way. Oxen were worked single to carts, wagons and plows. Sometimes two oxen were worked to a wagon and at other times two yoke would be worked depending upon the loads to be hauled and the condition of the roads. Occasionally four yoke or eight oxen were worked to a wagon. Six to eight thousand pounds was the usual load for a team of three or four yoke of oxen. Occasionally as much as ten thousand pounds would be carried at one load.

Wagons pulled by oxen were used almost exclusively for hauling freight from the towns and villages. In the earlier days heavy freight was mostly feed for logging teams and groceries for human consumption. Such freight was hauled from the nearby villages of Bluff Springs, located in the northern part of Escambia County, Florida, Flomaton and Pollard, Alabama. These towns were each located approximately ten miles from the Diamond Homestead on the opposite side of the Escambia River. Because of the condition of the roads leading across the low swampy flood plain of this river and the fact that no bridges were in use at this time it was quite a problem to haul freight from these markets.

The next nearest town was Brewton, Alabama, located seventeen or eighteen miles away. This town too, was on the opposite side of the river and with almost impossible crossing facilities. Because of the condition of the roads and the fact that it required camping one night to make the trip to this town, very little freight was hauled from it.

Milton, the county seat of our county, was located twenty-five miles away. Because of the distance and the fact that the ten miles of road nearest the town was a veritable sand bed, little hauling was done from this town. It was impossible for any team to pull more [than one or two tons over such roads.]

Teams of large oxen consisted of three or four yoke were used to haul logs from the forest to the sawmills, or to rivers down which the logs were floated to mills. During the 1890's railroads were built to carry logs from areas far from streams to the sawmills. Oxen were still used to haul the logs to the railroads. Some years later steam skidders were used to pull the logs to the railroads.

Boys living in a community where the chief work animals were oxen, and almost all hauling was done by oxen, very naturally learned at early ages to drive oxen in hauling almost everything that was ever hauled in the community. From the time we were eight years of age we drove oxen to carts and wagons. Sometimes it was one ox pulling a small cart. Sometimes it was one or two yoke pulling a wagon. By the time we were sixteen years of age we were permitted to drive a logging team of three or four yoke of oxen and haul the big logs. This was a coveted feat for boys. They were now treated as men.

We boys drove oxen to all the nearby markets as long as Father kept logging teams. We made trips singly or in pairs. Sometimes we would make a trip with one or two yoke of

oxen pulling it and the smaller boy driving one or two oxen pulling the cart. A short account is given here of a few trips made. These will give the reader an idea of some of the ups and downs in the life of small boys driving oxen in a frontier country.

MY FIRST TRIP TO FLOMATON

When I was a small boy not more than eight years of age Father took me with him to Flomaton on a trip for a wagonload of feed for oxen and groceries for the family. A yoke of oxen named Bright and Jerry was driven to a wagon. We left home a little before sunrise. Because of the bad conditions of the road through the low flood plain in crossing the Escambia River and the few low bridges across a few sloughs in the swamp a good cutting ax, some spike nails and a long strong rope were carried. The ax and spike nails were carried for use in the event it became necessary to construct a small bridge over a narrow slough or over a bog hole. The rope was carried for use in the event the wagon got stuck in a bog hole or a slough where the oxen might not be able to obtain a good foot hold for pulling. In such a case the oxen would be unhitched from the wagon tongue and moved out to firm ground. The rope would be tied to the end of the wagon tongue and the other end fastened to the ring in the yoke. The oxen could then pull the wagon from the bog hole.

When we came in sight of the first low boggy place we found a man who had gotten his wagon, pulled by a large gray horse, stuck in a bog hole the day before. In his efforts to make the horse pull the wagon from the hole the horse had jerked one shaft from the wagon. He had been compelled to leave his wagon loaded with groceries in the hole during the night. He had returned with a new shaft, which he planned to put in the place of the broken one. Then by unloading the wagon he would have the horse pull it to solid ground. We were requested to assist him in pulling his wagon from the hole. This we did by tying the middle of the long rope to the back axle of our wagon and the ends of the rope to the ends of the axle of the man's wagon. The oxen easily pulled the small one horse wagon to solid ground where his repair work was easily and quickly done.

As we returned home with our wagon heavily loaded on two occasions we found it necessary to cut a few small trees to open a road around a bad bog hole. We cut small poles and bridged over one place where it was almost impossible to go around. This was much easier and took far less time than it would to get a wagon from a bog hole by unloading 1,500 or 2,000 pounds and moving it by hand to higher ground and then reloading it after having gotten the wagon from the hole.

HENRY'S FIRST TRIP TO BLUFF SPRINGS

When Henry was a small boy he went with Father to Bluff Springs for a load of feed and groceries. Bright and Jerry were driven to a wagon.

Their first unusual experience was a little bridge repair job. They found three or four bridge planks had been ripped from the floor of a bridge by a recent freshet and washed away. They had to cut a few small poles and spike them down as bridge flooring before crossing. This was quickly and easily done because they were prepared for just such emergencies.

Their next strange and unusual experience was when the wagon was driven onto the ferryboat, commonly called a "Flat." The ferryman had motioned to them to drive on the flat and informed Father that "All's ready, come on." The oxen were driven onto the flat. The ferryman had failed to tie the flat securely. When the hind wheels of the wagon struck it the small weak stake to which it had been fastened gave way and the flat floated out from the bank. When the hind wheels struck the flat the coupling tongue of the wagon broke. The wagon body slipped off the back axle of the wagon and the pair of wheels rolled under the flat into the swift current of water fifteen feet deep and were carried away.

An hour or longer was then spent in fishing for the lost wheels but because of the high water and the lack of any grappling hooks the wheels were not located. It then became necessary for Father and Henry to arrange a sort of improvised body on the front wheels of the wagon and bring only half a load on this trip.

As soon as the high water receded some hooks were obtained and the pair of wheels located approximately 150 yards from where the accident occurred and were brought ashore.

This was a new and a unique experience seldom happening anywhere.

TOBE AND LEP

Probably the most fascinating thing in the entire world for a group of small country boys is the working or riding of billy goats. However, as boys get older and larger they naturally outgrow the billy goat age. Then comes breaking, working and riding yearlings. Working with yearlings has a greater degree of usefulness than working with billy goats. This was particularly true in a frontier community in which all the hauling and a large portion of the plowing was done by oxen. Ox drawn wagons were the only means of conveyance for family travel. Such conveyance was used to carry many families to all social gatherings, such as picnics, weddings and visiting neighbors. Well do I remember when thirteen years of age driving a yoke of oxen, Bright and Jerry, to a large wagon six miles to a wedding. This was the first wedding it had been my privilege to see. A young lady school teacher, the second teacher to be employed in our community, and the greater portion of two or three other families rode in that wagon along with three or four members of the Diamond Family. It was a great trip. The wedding was set for eight o'clock. Our party left at five in the afternoon. The trip required two hours. This gave us

an hour's leeway to visit with friends and get ready for the big supper. The party got a lot more fun and frolic from this trip than if it had been made in the finest automobile ever on the market. Of course, the trip required two hours to go and two hours to return home, but what was time to a frontier people?

The reader can readily understand why the breaking and training of a pair of young oxen in such a community had a degree of usefulness as well as so much fascination and appeal so strongly to country boys. This was one way frontier boys could begin at an early age to do the work in which almost all men in the community were employed. This alone appealed to boys. Then too, for a boy to have a yearling to drive as his own gave him prestige in the community. It gave him something to talk about and boast of when with other boys. It gave him about the same standing then in his community as the owning and driving of a big six passenger automobile would forty years later. The boy who had been able to break a "Raw Steer" and train him for useful work was a hero in the eyes of boys who had not accomplished this feat.

When Henry and I were eleven and thirteen years of age and Sam and Charley were about six and eight years old we decided one Sunday morning to work a pair of two-year old yearlings to our newly made cart. Father was away from home at a logging camp. When Mother milked the cows that Sunday morning she left Henry and me to drive the cattle from the pen and come to breakfast within a few minutes. Before driving the cattle from the pens we decided to keep two yearlings, Tobe and Lep, in the pen and spend a few hours that day in working them. Thought we, by doing this we would soon have a well-trained yoke of valuable oxen.

Tobe was taller than Lep. His sides were red. His back had a broad white stripe running from his neck backward. His underside was white. His horns were long and keen with one pointing downward. Lep was not as tall as Tobe. His head, neck and shoulders were black. The middle part of his body was black and white speckled and his hips and hind legs were white. His horns were small and short. The pair of yearlings did not match at all in color or height but that made no difference to us. The fun and fascination of working them would be the same to us as if they were "A Dead Match."

When breakfast was over we four lusty lads hurriedly did all the Sunday morning errands. An extra supply of stove wood was brought in and all the buckets filled with fresh water from the large spring bubbling from beneath the large magnolia trees under the steep bluff directly back of the house. Enough green field peas and other vegetables were gathered and brought to the kitchen to feed the family three or four days. All dish water and garbage waste from the kitchen was carried to the hogs in a nearby pasture. Nothing was left undone lest we be called from our yearling breaking after we got into the fun.

About ten o'clock in the morning we began to get our yoke, bows, cart and ropes ready for the great event. New and stronger keys were made from scraps of white hickory and fitted in the bows. Pains were taken to fit them so they could be taken out quickly in case it became necessary to unyoke the yearlings to get them out of a tangle. Strong pull pins

were placed in the tongue and all weak parts of the cart strengthened so there would be no break downs in case of a "Run-a-way." The two best plow lines on the place were selected for placing on the yearlings. Two or three plow lines were assembled for use in emergencies. The entire outfit was assembled in the lane near the lot gate.

Henry and I each took one of the best ropes and entered the lot, cowboy like, to rope the wild oxen. With the help of Sam and Charley to hem Tobe and Lep in the corners of the lot we soon had them roped. Henry roped Lep and I roped Tobe. The yearlings were now led and pulled up beside each other and tied to a post. Henry took one bow and went up on Lep's side while I took the yoke and the other bow and went up on Tobe's side. They were in the right position to be yoked, but every time we tried to place the yoke on their necks they turned around, each facing the post, one on one side and one on the other. All our efforts failed to get the yearlings yoked.

We surveyed the surroundings and soon found a hole in the side of the barn through which we could pass the ropes and tie them on the inside. This was done and both yearlings pulled up close to the barn and the ropes tied on the inside. In this position we had their twisting ground confined to half a circle instead of a complete circle. Henry then went up on Lep's side as I went up on Tobe's side. We soon had them yoked. Henry then went inside the barn and untied the ropes and passed them to me. He came out and took his rope.

We now let the soon-to-be-fine-yoke of well-trained oxen walk around in the lot a few minutes to get use to the yoke. They galloped and bucked around the lot a few times and turned the yoke. Turning the yoke meant that the yoke had gotten on the underside of their necks instead of on top. We had seen this happen when men were breaking wild steers and knew what to do to get the yoke back in the right position. Soon this was done. We then decided to tie their tails together so the yoke could not be turned again. When we started to do the tying we remembered that Lep had gotten into an accident when a young calf and had lost all of his tail but a stub eight or ten inches long, and of course, it wouldn't do "to tie to." One of our emergency ropes was now used to tie the rear ends of the yearlings together so there would be no more yoke turning. We now let them "rear" about the lot, and "rear" they did. When they found they were fastened together at each end they really did the Bronco Bucking Act. They jerked Henry and me down a few times and butted down a few panels of fence which had to be fixed immediately.

Soon we led them into a wide place in the lane where the cart was pulled up by hand and the tongue made fast in the ring in the middle of the yoke. Henry now got on Lep's side and I on Tobe's side. We gave the words and signals to go and go they did, straight into the rail fence knocking down three panels. The fence was soon rebuilt and words and signals again given for moving. This time they started off in a run down the north end of the lane. Henry and I were carried along in a run touching the ground only in high places with our feet, while Sam and Charley followed close behind the cart yelling to us, "Hold'm, they're a rearing." We got them checked up and stopped in a narrow place in the lane near the cane mill lot. Immediately upon stopping, Tobe lay down. He had "sulled."

Quite a while was spent here trying to persuade Tobe to get up. We used all the tricks we knew and all we could think of to make him get up. His tail was twisted, but unlike tail twisting on a billy goat it had no effect. A couple of tomcats were brought and tied on him as scratching machines. Their scratches went unnoticed. We tried smothering him by holding his mouth closed and stopping up his nose. He lay as dead. We tried holding his head in a bucket of water. He only shook his head enough to spill the water. We then brought up the two dogs, Rock and Spot. After considerable effort we succeeded in “sicing” both dogs on Tobe, but the dogs looked upon the affair as a matter of play and only played with Tobe. After a lot of yelling and “sicing” we got both dogs to biting Tobe’s tail. Soon they were biting hard and shaking it like they were killing a raccoon or a possum in the poultry yard. This was too much for Tobe’s sullen nature. He jumped up and the yoke of yearlings moved off in a hurry. They went along very well for approximately one hundred yards. They stopped just north of the cane mill lot near some large oak trees under which one or two beeves had been killed and dressed each week for market for the past two or three summers. Here Tobe again lay down, this time broad side as if dead. Sam, Charley and the two dogs had followed behind the cart and of course gathered around Tobe when he stretched out as if feigning death. We stood around and looked on for a few minutes. The dogs came up as if looking for blood to be trickling from Tobe’s neck where he probably had been “stuck” for getting the blood from the beef.

We watched the disappointed look on the face of each dog when he found no blood. We then began “sicing” the dogs on Tobe. With our help soon we had Rock biting and shaking one of Tobe’s ears and Spot biting and shaking his tail. This was too much biting for poor sullen Tobe. He began bellowing distress calls as rapidly as he could. Fifteen or twenty head of cattle grazing on the hill across the hollow opposite the boys and Tobe began bellowing and stampeded toward Tobe as if answering his distress calls. Within a few seconds the cattle were near us. The bellowing of the cattle mingled with Tobe’s distress calls and an occasional bark from the dogs made a dreadful noise. Sam and Charley lost no time in climbing over a ten rail fence into a field on one side of the lane. In their fright they yelled to Henry and me to leave Tobe and Lep and climb the fence before we got hurt by the stampeding, bellowing cattle. The noise was deafening for a few minutes.

The bellowing of the cattle, the barks and bites of the dogs were too much for Tobe. He ceased his distress calls and got up. The cattle quit bellowing at each other. The storm was over. The herd of cattle quietly fed off up the hollow toward the east. Sam and Charley climbed back over the high field fence and stood around Tobe, Lep and the cart. Henry and I each held to our ropes looped around the horns of Tobe and Lep. We stood ten or fifteen minutes waiting for the herd of cattle to get some distance away so that in the event Tobe “sulled” again and we had to make the dogs bite him and he gave his awful distress calls we would not be bothered with the cattle.

We got our yearlings and cart started down the hill. They went along fine for a few yards until they came to the place where the herd of cattle had crossed the road and fed off up

the hollow. Here our oxen stopped still and looked toward the cattle grazing some distance away. They refused to be led or driven further down the road. In our efforts to get them started we let our ropes slack. Tobe and Lep took advantage of this and dashed from the road in the direction of the grazing cattle. In spite of all the efforts of Henry and me to hold them they got thirty or forty feet from the road and were stopped then by one wheel striking a stump, the sudden stop jerking both yearlings to one side into a patch of black jack scrubs oak bushes. Here, again luck was against us; because hidden away under some of the large leaves was a small wasp nest containing half a dozen large red wasps. Tobe and Lep each got the benefit of a sting or two. They reared and snorted to get out of the patch of bushes, but the wheel held fast against the stump. Henry and I had to run around to the same side and pull the yearlings away from the bushes so the cart wheel would pass the stump. In doing this we each got a sting or two on the neck. When the wheel struck the stump and jerked the yearlings into the bushes Rock ran up to assist in moving sullen Tobe. He too, got a sting, whined a little, tucked his tail and checked out.

When Henry and I got the yearlings away from the bushes and quiet, we found that upon hearing the word "Wasp" mentioned, Sam, Charley and Spot had sought refuge behind a patch of bushes a full fifty yards away. We let the yearlings stand still a few minutes. During this short rest period the two frightened boys and dogs came back near the cart and joined Henry and me in wondering what would be next. We tried to make the yearlings circle back toward the road by following an open space we had picked out. Naturally they refused to go any direction except toward the herd of grazing cattle. Henry and I got in front of the yearlings and pulled toward the open space over which we planned to get back to the road. We then had Sam and Charley take a small switch and try to drive them the way we were pulling. The yearlings stubbornly refused to budge from their tracks, but kept turning their heads in the direction the herd of cattle had gone.

Finally about the time we boys had all decided the yoke of oxen had struck camp for dinner, they suddenly dashed toward Henry and me. We had to jump to the side to prevent being run over. When our ropes became slack both yearlings turned in the direction they knew the cattle had gone. Before we could get straightened out and tighten our ropes the yearlings were in a RUN-A-WAY. The yearlings were jumping over logs, breaking limbs and crushing through treetops. The cart was bouncing over stumps, logs and treetops. Henry and I were holding to our ropes with our feet jumping from log to log and treetop to treetop. Sam and Charley were chasing along behind laughing loudly and enjoying the show. Both dogs were keeping close upon the heels of Tobe and Lep and barking furiously, which added confusion to the rattling of the cart and the breaking of dead limbs.

When this show had proceeded approximately fifty yards the yoke passed directly over a solid fat pine stump just low enough for the yoke to miss it. It was about three or four inches to high for the cart axle to pass over it. Hence the axle tree struck the stump a solid blow. The sudden take up summersault both yearlings over the yoke. Tobe's sharp horns stuck their full length into the ground. His neck doubled under his body with his tail end resting up on two logs. Lep's head was directly under his body with all four of his legs

sticking straight up. In these position they lay as still as death. Their eyes seemingly were "Set in their Heads." They didn't wink or blink. Rock and Spot ran quickly up and sniffed for beef blood. The air had become suddenly painfully quiet and the feeling extremely tense.

Sam ran up close by, stopped and gazed straight at what he considered dead yearlings and stutteringly said, "Both of'm dead and Papa not here to skin'm for beef." By this time Henry and I had removed the yokes from the necks of the "Dead Yearlings," and were pulling their heads from under their bodies. Lep got up as soon as his body was rolled over off his head. We almost had to lift Tobe's body from across the logs in order to pull his horns from the ground. This we did within a few seconds, but his body yet lay still as death. We moved his head a little and tickled his flank with a few kicks with bare feet. He caught his breath and got up. Only the breath had been bumped from him.

The feeling was not as tense as it was a few seconds before. Each of the four boys smiled and looked a little thankful, and said not a word. Sam, who was a little more excited than the other three looked at both yearlings as they were being held by their ropes and remarked: "Goodness, they were not shore nuff dead, were they?" Charles looked at Sam and replied, "Better be glad they're not shore nuff dead, cause if they had-a-been Papa 'd a skinned us instead o' the yearlings."

We now heard Mother calling across the field for us to come to dinner. Hence, it was decided by a unanimous vote that Tobe and Lep be let loose right there and we four hitch ourselves to the cart and try to pull it back to the house. After we had pulled and tugged for some time and had gotten the cart over the logs and from the treetops onto open ground we stopped for a few minutes rest. While resting philosophical Henry looked off in space and said: "Well, boys, pulling this cart from that jamb and back to the house will get us over our fright, put some color in our faces and work up an appetite for all them things we brought in for dinner."

It did, and off we went all four of us pulling the cart up the hill to the house and were soon doing justice to a big dinner.

HENRY AND I GO TO BLUFF SPRINGS

One night about the first of March when Henry was about 12 years old and I almost 14, Father told us to go to Bluff Springs the next day and get a load of feed for the logging teams, if the corn and oats [that he had] ordered [to be] shipped from the wholesale feed house in Pensacola had arrived. If the feed had not arrived we were told to bring back a ton of fertilizer that had been unloaded and stored in a barn near the small depot during a freshet in the river when crossing was impossible.

We were up early the next morning delighted that we were to make the trip without Father or any hired man to boss the job. We were delighted at having the responsibility placed upon us. We were off at the crack of day, about the time Father left to look after some logs and timber that had drifted from the river during the recent freshet. He must get them back into the river before the water got too low. This is why Henry and I were given full responsibility for the freight hauling.

Henry drove a large black ox named Jerry to a cart. I drove a yoke of oxen named Sam and Tom. We carried the usual emergency equipment for such trips, an ax, ropes, spike nails, a hatchet and some strands of wire taken from bales of hay. The river had recently been at high flood stage for three weeks during which time there was no crossing of the river except in small rowboats.

As was expected we found the roads in the low swampy flood plain almost impassable. Many low places were still filled with water and the road as soft as quagmire. Many places were veritable bog holes. A few boards had been ripped from the bridges during the recent flood, leaving holes. These holes had to be repaired. We did the job like men and were really proud we had met the responsibility and were equal to the emergency. All was going well until we were near the river when we came upon a short bridge over a deep slough. An examination showed this bridge had three spans each about 12 feet long. The lower stringer in the middle span had been torn out during the recent flood leaving the ends of the bridge flooring boards sagging down two or three inches.

We stopped at this bridge for a long conference. It looked dangerous. The risk of falling into the swift water ten feet deep under the bridge was great. The situation was considered from every angle. We were both splendid swimmers and were not afraid of deep water but we did not much want to get the oxen in the water while hitched to the wagons. After surveying the situation and searching the surrounding area for some drift bridge timbers or old bridge flooring for repair material we locate in a large drift down the slough two solid 8 inch by 2 inch deal [boards] 12 feet long and a few small thin boards. These were brought from the drift to the bridge. The exact distance between wagon wheels was then measured. One deal was then placed on the upper side of the bridge as close to the bridge railing as the wheels could get, with each end reaching the cross sills upon which the center stringers were resting. The other deal was placed in the same position the exact distance between the wagon wheels. Both deals were then nailed to the bridge floor. The deals were then chopped slanting so the wagon wheels would roll up on them without jarring the bridge. Several tall stakes were then sharpened and

driven beside the lower deal so the oxen would be forced to walk as close to the upper side of the bridge as possible.

We now rested and looked over our first real engineering job. It looked good to us. Soon we decided to try it. Jerry was led across first. All seemed solid with a thousand-pound ox moving gently over it. Sam and Tom were then led over the bridge. Within ten minutes we were at the river.

The reader can readily understand why we took plenty of caution to see that the “flat” was securely fastened and the right bridging placed so the wagon wheels would not break it loose. The river was crossed with no mishaps. Within half an hour we were at the freight depot but for some unknown reason the feed had not arrived. This meant we would have to take back the ton of fertilizer.

We drove to the barn where it was stored supposing it was really in a barn and we could roll the 200 pound sacks from the barn door into the wagons. To our surprise and disgust we found the heavy sacks flat on the ground in a narrow hallway. No help was in sight for the loading. We now had to do some more planning. We remembered seeing a long deal three hundred yards down the road. Off we went to get it hoping we could place one end of it on the ground and the other end on the back end of the wagons and roll the heavy sacks up it into the wagons. The deal was found to be solid and strong. We shouldered it and started toward the barn. It was heavy. We had to rest several times before arriving at the barn with it.

The wagons and the deal were placed. Then it was the real labor began. We lifted and pulled, strained and tugged, and sweated in streams. After not less than an hour and a half we had the ten sacks loaded. Seven sacks were placed in the wagon and three in the cart. About 100 pounds of other freight was placed in the cart so that each ox had about 700 pounds to pull. The deal which we had used as a roll way was discarded from old bridge timbers and rescued by us from driftwood. It was placed in the wagon on top of the fertilizer for use in the event we should get a wagon bogged down in a soft hole in the swamp and have to unload a portion of the weight so as to get the wagon out. Fortunately, for us we did not get stuck in the mud, and did not have to use the deal for unloading and reloading.

When we got to the river we were careful to get some poles and limbs and bridge the rise from the ground up to the floor of the “flat”, because the “flat” had no “aprons” to make a gentle rise from the ground to the floor. And too, we saw that the “flat” was securely tied before we let the loaded wagons move aboard. We were also just as careful when we drove the wagons off the “flat.”

Within ten minutes after leaving the river we arrived at the bridge that was still giving us much concern. Here we stopped the wagons for some time while we again examined the bridge. If those sacks of fertilizer were still as heavy as they were when we rolled them up the “gang plank” we wondered if the two stringers would hold the additional weight. We tried to figure what we would do if a stringer broke, dropping oxen, wagon and

fertilizer in the swift running stream 30 feet wide and ten feet deep. As the conclusion of our figuring the answer was about as follows:

The ton of fertilizer valued at \$20.00 and the groceries valued at \$10.00 would be a total loss. We would hold to the rope fastened around the oxen's horns, swim ashore, tow the oxen after us, and have them pull the empty wagons from the slough. In the event the wagons got hung around trees or vines we would unyoke the oxen and let the wagons sink or drift down stream to a cluster of trees and a pile of driftwood. We would then use our long strong rope and have the oxen pull the wagons from the stream.

We did not like to risk the loss of the fertilizer and groceries. Neither did we want this experience. Hence we made a further examination of the bridge to be certain it would be safe with the additional weight of fertilizer. We ripped up some flooring on the bridge and sounded the sills with a hatchet to determine their strength. The sills were then blazed lightly with the hatchet as a further aid to detect any signs of weakness. Both stingers were found to be splendid heart pine timber with no knots or other weak spots. All the flooring was then place back as it was fixed earlier in the day when we crossed it safely with empty wagons. We then placed almost all the load on the side of the wagon that would pass over the upper side of the bridge so as to permit each stinger to carry its share of the weight. We then crossed the bridge as safely as if it had not been damaged.

Or next problems now were to get around or across three of four bad boggy places in the road without getting stuck or stalled and having to unload and reload several of the 200 pound sacks. We did this by cutting trees and logs and opening a new driveway around two of them. One we "crosswayed" to prevent the wagons from bogging down, and the fourth bad place we pulled through with little trouble.

The only other place giving us any concern was the high hill at the edge of the swamp of low flood plain. This steep hill had been washed full of holes and gullies by the heavy rains causing the recent freshet. We looked it over and decided to gather short limbs and pieces of dead timber adjacent to the road and bridge over a few of the worst holes. This enabled us to get up the hill without any trouble. The rest of the way was easy because on normal roads we had only half a load for our oxen and wagons.

Henry and I were proud of having been the first persons to drive a wagon across this swamp after the big freshet and also proud of the job we did in repairing bridges and opening new roads around the bad bog holes. Our engineering feats brought favorable comments from the community during the next few months.

Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough

FATHER MOVES A SAW MILL

BRIGHT AND JERRY GO TO A MISSION STATION

A THREE DAY JOURNEY

FATHER MOVES A SAW MILL

When Henry and I were small boys, 13 and 15 years of age, Father was employed to move a steam sawmill from Brewton, Alabama to a location three miles south of where the village of Jay is now located. Henry went with him for the first load. Father drove five yoke of oxen to a log cart with a "tail" cart fastened to it. Henry drove one yoke of oxen to a wagon. The wagon was loaded with small irons and light pieces of machinery.

The log cart and the tail cart were loaded with a large steam boiler weighing approximately four tons. Two straight pine logs 40 feet long, ten inches in diameter at the large end and 8 inches in diameter at the small end were hoisted under the carts to the axle-tree in each cart and held steady with strong chains, leaving about 30 feet between the two carts. These logs were about four and one half feet apart. The large steam boiler was then rolled on top of the logs and made secure. Of course, this was done by the use of strong ropes placed under the boiler and then pulled by the oxen. It was rolled up on three 8-inch poles 12 feet long.

The trip was made from home one day and the loading done that same afternoon. The wagon and carts were loaded in time for the party to travel a mile or two on the way home that afternoon before camping for the night.

The roads were like all country roads in those days, in bad condition. Creeks were forded and rivers crossed on flat bottom ferryboats called "flats." The ferry landings were always in poor condition. When the rivers were at low water stage it was necessary to go up steep banks from the water, making a rise of from ten to fifteen feet in traveling not more than thirty to fifty feet. This was the case at the Henley Ferry on the Conecuh River where the wagons had to cross the river. As a small boy, Henry was much impressed with the methods used in getting the heavy load across on the small "flat." He knew only one yoke of oxen could get in the flat with the large improvised wagon for hauling the big boiler. Hence, he wondered how one yoke of oxen could pull the heavy load or ever pull it from the flat up the steep bank on the other side of the river. Here is his version of the crossing:

"The big wagon carrying the boiler was stopped on the slope leading down to the flat. Four yoke of oxen were then taken loose from this load and placed in the flat and carried across the river. Then my wagon was loaded on the flat and carried across. When the flat landed with my wagon two more yoke of oxen were hitched ahead of my one yoke and pulled my wagon up the steep hill. The flat then went back for the boiler. The one big yoke of oxen would be able to pull the heavy load aboard the flat, because of the down hill start. The only danger was the fear the oxen would not be able to stop the heavy load when it reached the flat before it might push them into the water."

"The apron on that end of the flat was adjusted and braced so it would carry the load gently aboard. Father placed ropes on the yoke of oxen and led them down the steep driveway into the flat. Instead of pulling the load the oxen had to hold it back all the way until it was aboard. Father was careful not to let the heavy load get out of control at any

time. This made the entire process of getting the boiler aboard really easy. Just in case the load might get out of control, Father had the hired man walk beside the hind wheels with a large well chosen block to be dropped in front of a wheel the very moment the oxen failed to hold the load at the slow easy moving speed. The block was not needed. As a safety precaution Father had large blocks against the wheels in front and behind to hold the boiler steady in case the flat might be given a sudden jerk while moving across the river.”

“When the flat landed and was securely fastened, the other four yoke of oxen and the yoke from my wagon were hitched on ahead of the one yoke that had brought the boiler aboard. When all was ready Father gave the signal to move. The six yoke of oxen walked up the steep incline with perfect ease.”

Here Henry paused for a few seconds. Then he looked at me and said, “You know, bringing that big boiler across the river and up that steep bluff wasn’t any trouble at all. I had been expecting a lot of excitement at the river and I think a lot of other folks were too from the way they stood around in the way and looked on. They showed a lot of disappointment when the job was done so easily and without any excitement.”

At this point Henry paused again and looked off in space, as was his custom when about to make a philosophical comment. Presently he remarked, “you know the job was easy because Papa made all the necessary preparation beforehand. If that big boiler had gotten out of control in bringing it aboard or in taking it from that little flat up that awful steep bluff it could have caused a lot of damage. Some of the crowd gathered around to watch the show expressed the idea that the one yoke of oxen could not hold that boiler in coming down that bluff aboard the flat. Well, you see they just didn’t know Bright and Jerry. You know I believe Bright and Jerry sensed danger and somehow knew they must hold that load or be pushed into the river. They acted like it anyhow. Some oxen show better sense about doing things that a lot of men.”

Here Henry paused again. Presently he looked up and said, “Maybe it was the training Bright and Jerry had been given. You know John, they’d do almost anything from Papa.”

“We were soon off from the river on the way. We came to the big ditch across the road at Mt Carmel before stopping. Here we cooked and ate dinner while the oxen rested. We arrived at the sawmill location and unloaded the wagon and carts and were home a little before sundown.”

The next day Father and I went back to Brewton for the rest of the sawmill machinery. We left home early and arrived at Brewton in time to load the machinery that afternoon and come back almost to the Conecuh River to a good camping place where we struck camp for the night.

The same methods in crossing the river were used that were used with the first load of mill machinery. A great crowd of men and boys had gathered at the ferry to see the eight thousand pounds brought into the flat by Bright and Jerry. The two logging carts and

rigging weighted a little more than two thousand pounds. The load of machinery weighed approximately 8,000 pounds. No one believed that one yoke of oxen of the size of Bright and Jerry could hold ten thousand pounds and ease it down the steep bluff and into the flat without being pushed into the river. All agreed the oxen must have known through instinct, training and the way Father talked to them in calm low tones as he stood in front of them with a hand resting on the forehead of each, that their lives were dependent upon their ability to ease that extraordinary load down the steep bluff and into the flat as they knew Father was directing. The load was eased into the flat without any mishaps or any indication that a mishap might disturb the plan adopted for crossing the river.

As the crowd left the river several remarked, "It's well worth the trip down here to see the power and intelligence of a well trained yoke of oxen."

When the flat was landed on the other side of the river the other four yoke or oxen and the yoke I was driving to a wagon were hitched in front of Bright and Jerry. Father walked close beside Bright and Jerry so it would be easy to direct them to hold the wheels in the well packed wagon ruts up the steep bluff. He requested me to walk near the lead oxen and keep them pulling well on the outside of the curve near the top of the bluff. The long team was then given the signal to give the heavy load a fast start from the flat and keep it moving as fast as possible to the top of the bluff. This was done and the load went up the bluff without a balk or bobble.

The entire trip was made without a single mishap. The new mill site was reached and the machinery unloaded before night.

BRIGHT AND JERRY GO TO A MISSION STATION

When the Diamond family consisted of Father, Mother and the five older children a sort of a mission station had been established at what was a rather historical spot at a spring three fourths of a mile north of where the village of Jay is now located. This spring was known in early days as "Holmes Head" so named because a grant of land was entered there by a Spaniard named Elijah H. Holmes during the time Spain owned Florida. In those days and for many years after Florida became a state a good spring of flowing water was a location for a settlement. Wells and pumps were almost unknown in a frontier country. Because of this spring this same spot was the location of a large soldier camp during the Civil War. The soldier's camp was located there not only because of the spring of pure water but because of the strategic position, the converging point of several country roads and trails. The log schoolhouse was located there for the same reason.

The earliest itinerant missionaries held their first services in pioneer homes or in abandoned logging camps. Soon after this small log school was build an itinerant missionary occasionally preached there. Within a few years the mission station grew in importance and missionaries sometimes had regular monthly appointments there. It was at one of these regular monthly appointments at which dinner was to be served "On the Ground" so as to get a large crowd to hear the two sermons to be preached that day, one before dinner and one after dinner, that Bright and Jerry made their first trip to the mission station.

A few minutes after 9:00 o'clock Sunday morning the oxen were hitched to a wagon and driven near the front gate and hitched under the shade of a tree. Within a few minutes a large box containing dinner was loaded. Following this the smaller children were loaded, sitting on a blanket spread on the floor of the wagon body. Mother and a visiting lady or two were seated in chairs near the front end of the wagon body. Father, as the driver, sat on a board seat placed across the body at the front end. Of course, Henry and I had to sit beside him and watch the oxen. At about 9:30 the wagon started. The distance was four miles. This was traveled in an hour putting us there half an hour before preaching time. This half an hour was used as a sort of "Social Hour" in which people greeted each other and spread the neighborhood news. It was almost as important as the preaching. It was customary for people to arrive a long time before the service began so as to get the full benefit of the "Social Hour." This is still the custom in many country churches.

When we arrived two or three other large wagons pulled by oxen were already on the ground. Soon several others arrived. Not fewer than a dozen such wagons were there long before the preaching hour arrived. The "Social Hour" on this day was indeed a great one. A few minutes before eleven o'clock a song service was begun in the house. Within five minutes the house was filled with people and three or four times as many people left standing on the outside as had been able to crowd into the building. Within a few minutes some of the old men of the community and the missionary held a conference after which the oldest man announced that the preaching would be under some large dogwood trees in front of the building and invited the men to come and assist in moving the benches and a table or two out under the trees. This was done quickly.

The missionary took his place in front of the seats and called for a song or two. During the singing of the songs the crowd assembled. The woman soon occupied all the seats leaving the men and children to sit on the carpet of pine straw and dogwood leaves.

The sermon was preached by Rev. Dr. F. W. Abbott, a medical missionary. It was approximately one hour long. At the close of the sermon, the benches were arranged in the form of tables under the same shade and dinner spread on the improvised tables. A great dinner was served. Almost every family had bought a huge box or basket filled with baked and stewed meats, fried chicken, chicken pies, vegetables, bread, cakes and pies. A supply of hot coffee was served from two large "wash pots." When the crowd had finished eating, a large quantity of food was taken up and carried back to the wagons.

A thirty-minute "Social Hour" was announced immediately after dinner for relaxation and rest before the preaching hour again under the trees. This half-hour was spent in the same manner as was the "Social Hour" before the morning preaching hour. It was a great success. It really was enjoyed as much as the preaching.

At 2:00 P.M. a few songs were sung to assist in assembling the crowd. The crowd quickly assembled as it had in the forenoon and the preaching began. Dr. Abbott again preached for an hour. At the close of the sermon it was decided by those present that steps would be taken sometime in the near future to organize a church at this place. A committee was appointed to secure a list of people in the community holding membership in a Baptist church who would like to become charter members of the organization and submit this information for consideration at some future meeting at the mission station. The congregation was then dismissed with prayer.

Soon great crowds of people were leaving, some on horseback, many on foot and many in large wagons pulled by logging oxen.

A THREE DAY JOURNEY

Before Pine Level was occupied by many permanent settlers Father was often summoned to serve on the jury in circuit court. One spring when Charley and I were small boys while [Father was] serving on the jury he swapped sweet potatoes to a Milton merchant for cotton seed meal, giving a bushel of potatoes for a hundred pound sack of meal. The price of timber had been low all during the winter. About the first of March all the sawmills in our section of the country shut down for repairs and to wait until prices were higher. This meant little money would be in circulation in our section of the country during the entire summer and probably longer. The thought of this condition was an important factor in starting farming operations in West Florida and South Alabama, and especially so on Pine Level where laboring men would be idle all the summer unless they were employed in farming operations. This situation was probably the reason Father traded potatoes for cottonseed meal. And too, he had a surplus of sweet potatoes and could use the meal as fertilizer in enlarging his small farm work. Considering the economic conditions he thought he had made a splendid trade, even if he did have to haul the potatoes twenty-five miles to market and the meal the same distance home. And too, since there was no school in our community that year and Father had boys and oxen to feed he figured the cost of the long hauling would be almost nothing.

A day or two after his return from serving a week or ten days on the jury he told Charley and me to measure and sack twenty bushels of good well selected sweet potatoes to carry to Milton to be exchanged for twenty sacks each weighing one hundred pounds of cottonseed meal for fertilizer, and get the wagon ready to take the potatoes to Milton tomorrow. Of course, we were thrilled over the thoughts of making this long journey. As we gathered up sacks for the potatoes he added, "Take twenty bushels to swap for twenty sacks of meal, then if you care to do so you may take a few extra bushels to sell and use the money you can get for them to buy something you need." Of course, this added to our thrills. We sacked up six extra bushels and had no trouble in selling them at a dollar a bushel. With the six dollars we almost thought ourselves rich. We bought some school supplies such as slates, tablets and pencils and some "shore-nough-store-bought" clothes. Of course a good pocketknife for each of us came first.

Before night we had everything ready for an early start the next morning. A pair of good wagon oxen named Sam and Tom were yoked, hitched to the wagon and driven near the front gate and the loading process started. At this point the following articles were placed in the wagon:

1. A bushel of corn for feeding the oxen two nights
2. Two blankets and a few empty corn sacks
3. Eight bundles of corn fodder tightly tied with a rope
4. One box of cooked rations, consisting of the following:
 - Two fried chickens
 - A baker of biscuits
 - Two bakers of corn bread

- A sack of syrup cookies
- A quart bottle of country made cane syrup
- A dozen hard boiled eggs
- A dozen fresh eggs
- A strip of home smoked bacon
- A frying pan
- Two tin plates
- Two spoons
- Two forks
- One butcher knife
- 5. One gallon jug filled with drinking water
- 6. A large sheet of canvas for keeping things dry in case of rain
- 7. Two small boxes for use in feeding Sam and Tom
- 8. One ax, one hatchet, a few nails, assorted sizes, a few strands of haywire and a strong rope.

As soon as the excess baggage was loaded, the wagon was driven to the potato banks. Here the excess baggage had to be unloaded and then placed on top of the sacks of potatoes after they were loaded. This required only a few minutes for two small boys filled with thoughts of the pleasures and responsibilities of such a long journey. We then drove back to the field gate at the end of the long lane leading from the house to the big road. Father met us here and gave final directions about the roads and cautioned us to take care of Sam and Tom in coming out of Milton through the awful sand road.

About eight o'clock we were on the way. For the first ten miles we drove about three miles an hour, the average speed for a loaded ox team on reasonably good country roads. About one o'clock we watered the oxen at a pond and ate dinner from our ration box. Soon we struck the sand road. Our rate of travel became slower as the sand became heavier. About sun down we struck camp three or four miles from town. The wagon was pulled 30 or 40 feet from the road and stopped under trees. The oxen were unyoked and tied to some nearby small trees and fed in the boxes brought for this purpose. A supply of fuel from the surrounding woods was then gathered and piled near the wagon. A fire was then started and supper served by firelight. Little or no cooking was done because we had plenty of cooked rations left from dinner and our several lunch periods during the day.

After supper we raked a pile of pine straw and oak leaves under a spreading oak tree, placed a few clean corn sacks on them for a bed and covered them with one blanket. We slept under the other blanket. We had a good bed and a night of restful sleep. The next morning we were up early. The oxen were fed, breakfast prepared and eaten. The camping equipment was all packed in the wagon. The oxen were then yoked and hitched to the wagon and off we went hoping soon to see the county seat we had heard so much about and had wondered a thousand times what sort of a town it was.

About the time we started we heard the whistle at the James A. Chafin sawmill in Milton and at the Simpson and Company mill at Bagdad. As the first rays of sun began to shin we were entering the northern edge of Milton. Ten or fifteen minutes after sunrise we had

located the hitching place on the riverfront directly back of the main stores. Here we waited for an hour and a half or longer before any stores opened for business.

While waiting we strolled up and down the street keeping a watchful eye on the wagon and its load. In the meantime the large Chafin Mill only a hundred yards or so up river began sawing timber and sliding the big square sticks down a long shoot into the water. This entertained us a few minutes. Then we saw a train cross the big drawbridge in the south edge of the town. After this we wondered where the storekeepers spent the forenoons. We wondered lots of things about why no stores were opened. We simple country lads had not then learned that town people have a habit of working or recreating the first half of the nights and then sleeping late the next morning. While waiting we had located the McMillan store where the potatoes were to be exchanged for cottonseed meal.

About 8:00 the store opened. Charley and I walked in as the first customers of the morning and inquired for Mr. McMillan. The gentleman to whom we had spoken informed us that he was Mr. McMillan. He was then informed that we had some sweet potatoes sent by Mr. Peter Diamond to be exchanged for cottonseed meal. He wanted to know if we were Peter's boys. Upon being answered in the affirmative he asked us several questions about Father and the number of boys in our family. After a few minutes conversation with him he showed us where to drive the wagon to unload the potatoes and to load the meal and sent a stout colored man to assist us. With the help of the strong colored man the job was done within a few minutes. The wagon was then driven back to a hitching place and the oxen tied to a railing.

Charley and I then proceeded to make a few purchases for the home folks and to invest our six dollars potato money. This shopping required but little time because the stores were all still without customers. Some of the clerks asked us if we were from the country. We replied, "yes, and from that part of the country where people sleep at night and work in the day time."

Within half an hour after the wagon was loaded we were ready to go. Then it was we remembered we had not seen the great public building about which we had heard so much, the COUNTY COURT HOUSE, the building sometimes spoken of as THE TEMPLE OF JUSTICE, the place where criminals were "tried" and some convicted and sent to prison and others hanged. We thought we could not go back home without a glimpse of this PUBLIC BUILDING. We inquired of a man passing near us where the County Court House was located. He told us just around the corner on the next street and pointed the way. We walked past the corner and stared at a small red brick building. Not very great, thought we, but probably mighty powerful.

After looking at the building for two or three minutes we were ready to start our homeward journey. We had a well-loaded wagon and our heads full of strange things to relate upon arrival home among the neighborhood boys.

At about nine o'clock in the morning we started toward home. By the time we got to the big live oak tree three hundred yards beyond the edge of town we thoroughly understood

why Father cautioned us to take care of the oxen in coming out from Milton through the heavy sand. The sand was dry making the loaded wagon pull hard. Toward noon the sun began to get hot. This was our first experience traveling with a heavy loaded wagon in such sand. It was far worse than mud and quagmire in the swampy flood plains of the Escambia River. If a wagon got stalled or stuck in a bog hole it could be unloaded and gotten out. It could then be reloaded and move on. Not so here. We were stuck for the afternoon in a sand bed seven miles long. The oxen were rested every one or two hundred yards. Occasionally in the worst places every hundred feet they were permitted to rest long enough to catch a little "wind." Occasionally they were rested longer in a cool shade.

At about sundown we arrived at the "Seven-Mile-Pond." Here we struck camp for the night. The oxen were let loose for water and permitted to graze a short time on the tender grass around the edges of the pond. This seemed to give them a well-earned rest. Soon they were tied to some nearby trees and fed. Our supper was soon over, and we were snoozing in a camper's bunk, made of pine straw and oak leaves.

We left camp before day the next morning in order to get entirely out of the sand before the sun began to shine so hot. We arrived home shortly after noon on the third day of the journey.

The greatest lesson we learned on this three-day-journey was patience and endurance. It had been demonstrated to us as never before that the slow plodding ox ever has been used correctly as the symbol of PATIENCE, PERSEVERANCE AND ENDURANCE. To sit contentedly in a wagon moving three and a half miles per hour, the average rate of travel for oxen on a reasonably good country road, will develop patience and perseverance, but to be compelled to move at the rate of one mile an hour and watch the faithful oxen do their best will not only develop PATIENCE, PERSEVERANCE AND ENDURANCE but FOREBEARANCE AND LONG-SUFFERING to the Nth degree. To observe the faithful slow plodding oxen stretching their necks forward and pulling with all their strength to move a heavy load inch by inch without losing their patience or once rebelling against their master is convincing proof that patience, perseverance and endurance are virtues to be desired and sought with all diligence. When we think of the conditions under which our pioneer ancestors traveled, lived and developed this country we should show great appreciation for their virtues and the virtues of their faithful friends, the slow plodding oxen.

Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough

THE KICKINGEST COW

THE LITTLE GRAY MARE

DRIVING UP THE COWS

A DUMB CURE FOR DEAFNESS

THE KICKINGEST COW

Father swapped oxen with a man and got a fine looking heifer to boot. Her name was Alice. Not "Alice In Wonderland" but "Wonder Alice on our land." Alice was a real wonder in many ways. She was a find looking animal in every respect except her eyes, which were large and almost all white, indicating a mean disposition. This later proved to be too true, when she became a milk cow. She was a little above the average range cow in size. Her color was a little darker than a mouse. Her face and large bushy tail were white. Her horns were medium size and length and stood almost straight up. She was, as is sometimes said of horses, of trim build, with well shaped hind legs. She was a fast runner for a milk cow.

Alice was a splendid milker, far above the average range cow. Sometimes she would give as much as two gallons a day, with no feed except range grass. Alice was a recluse if ever there was one among cows. She would never come to the pen at night unless hunted and driven there. She never stayed with or near any other cattle when grazing on the range. In the pen, if possible for her to do so, she would get off in a corner by herself. She taxed the ingenuity of every boy on the place to find her in the woods. She could pick the best hiding places of any cow in the country. In this she imitated the instinct of wild animals. She knew how to pick a cluster of bushes her color, get in the mist of it and "freeze" there as a squirrel or a rabbit does in hiding from its enemies. If cattle flies were bad the switching of her bushy white tail might be the means of locating her. Sometimes late in the afternoon she would be found lying down in the midst of a cluster of bushes too low to hide her while standing. The only thing that made it possible for the boys to find Alice was the fact she seldom ever ranged more than a half mile from the pens, and the woods were rather open.

Alice was as hard to get to the pens as she was to find. It was almost useless to undertake to drive her to the pens on foot because as soon as she was started toward the pens she would run off in the opposite direction at full speed, much faster than a man or boy could run. She would continue at full speed until some distance away and then hide for the night. For this reason every boy who went to hunt Alice and drive her to the pens soon learned to ride a horse. Alice had plenty of good cow sense because she soon learned the horses used in driving her could easily outrun her and would trot straight to the pens, unless the weather was damp or rainy. In such weather she never came to the pens without giving the horse a good race. She never liked the sound of popping whips, neither did she like the stings of the whip when cracked across her back or around her legs. If she was not found and driven to the pens in the afternoon she would be there next morning waiting to be let in to her calf.

Alice had many mean ways, but the meanest of her faults was her kicking during the milking process. Seldom was she milked without kicking the milker two or three times. She never gave any notice of her intentions to kick. The first warning was when her hoof hit the bucket of the milker. She usually kicked both over, even if it required two or more kicks to complete the job. Usually two kicks were sufficient. She seemed to know exactly how hard to kick and exactly where to kick to send a milking cup or bucket ten to fifteen

feet rolling in the milking pen. The same was true when she wanted to kick the milking boy rolling on the ground. If ever a cow laughed, Alice laughed at the milking boy getting up after she had sent one rolling over the milking pen. As soon as she had kicked a boy over she would trot off a few steps, stop, turn around, stare at him with her big white eyes, open her mouth, stick out about six inches of her tongue and blow toward the sprawling boy as he was getting to his feet. Who knows but what she was apologizing for the mishap.

Some of the boys who milked Alice seemed to think she was worse about kicking in bad rainy weather. [I never milked Alice or any cow, because I never could bear the odor of milk. The taste or odor of milk is the most nauseating substance known to me.] The mud might have given encouragement. It was certainly much easier for her to kick a boy sprawling in the wet muddy pen than in a dry one. One rainy morning when Father was milking Alice and I was holding the calf away from her, the rattling of a bucket was heard. On looking up, the milk bucket was seen rolling and bouncing eight or ten feet away. Before the bucket stopped rolling and bouncing Father received the next kick toppling him over backwards toward the bucket. As was her custom Alice jumped off a few jumps, turned and stared at Father with her large white eyes, opened her mouth, ran out her long tongue and blew a few grunts toward Father as he scrambled to his feet.

As soon as Father had gotten to his feet he looked at Alice and yelled: "Now stand there you drotted hussy and laugh it off, I'll show you how it feels and it won't be so funny to you." He then chased the cow into a fence corner and gave her a couple of kicks in the flank. This sat Father down flat in the mud. This fall irritated Father more than the kick from the cow. He quickly scrambled to his feet, picked up a small stick of wood and threw it at the cow with terrific force striking her in a tender spot. She dropped to the ground as if dead and lay there perfectly still, not even wiggling her feet a little as a beef would do when knocked in the head or shot.

Father now stood looking at the cow, his face exhibiting a worried look as well as an irritated one. He thought he had killed the cow and remarked "I had no idea I could kill her with that little stick." I let the calf loose and started toward the cow, remarking as I went, "She isn't dead, just creased a little. She isn't even hurt, just the breath bumped out." I then walked up to the back side of the cow so she could not kick my bare legs when she "caught her breath", and gave her a kick in the flank with a bare foot. She "caught her breath", jumped up as quickly as she had fallen. She then trotted off a few steps, turned around and looked at us exactly as she had done a few minutes after kicking over the bucket of milk and the milker. We both looked at the cow. I laughed. Father chuckled a little too, and remarked as he stared at the cow, "Stand there and laugh you drotted hussy. You've only had ONE DOWN while I've had TWO, but we'll call it a draw and quit." He then walked off to pick up the milk bucket and go to breakfast.

On the way to breakfast Father wanted to know where I got that creasing idea. He was informed that B. W. T. Cobb, who had been a Cowboy on the Plains of Texas and worked a number of years with range cattle and mustang ponies, had told me about creasing cattle and horses. His experience as a Cowboy was interesting. Nothing pleased

me better than to hear him relate the thrilling experiences he had had with wild cattle and mustangs. He explained that unruly cattle were creased purposely in order to handle them.

When Father got to the house he was, of course, called upon for an explanation about the lot mud smeared pretty well over his clothes. His explanation was given in two words, viz, "Milking Alice." Every member of the family knew the rest of the story. After the mud had been removed from Father's clothes he explained that in the bout with Alice he had gone down twice but Alice only once, but they had quit and called it a draw. Finally I had to relate how Alice had been creased and seemingly "knocked out cold" and kicked a little in the flank to revive her breathing organs.

The lonesome Alice continued to kick boy and bucket about the milking pen as long as she was milked. We never knew just why she kicked so much during milking. Who knows but what her nervous system was affected by the changes of weather or other environment that caused her to kick from some sort of "reflex action" or from some spontaneous nerve action.

During our contemplative moods we boys often compared the kicking proclivities of The Kicking Cow with the peculiar, predominating characteristics of some human recluses we knew. Such comparisons are interesting if made in the right spirit. Maybe, you better try it when you have a spare moment.

THE KICKINGEST COW

Lonesome Alice was the kickingest cow
Seldom was she milked without a row
She 'd kick for fun and frolicsome joy
To tease 'd torment a lusty milking boy

Alice kicked cold when weather was cold
Boy and bucket over the pen she 'd roll
Then trot about pen look sad and serene
Then moo "My boy 't isn't venting a spleen."

Alice kicked hot when the weather was hot
And tumbled the milker all over the lot
Hither and yon about the pen she'd run
'Twas the kickingest cow's greatest fun

Alice kicked high when weather was dry
She'd kick boy and bucket bouncing high
Her hoof oft bruised both bucket 'd boy
Because this to Alice was blissful joy

Alice kicked you bet when weather's cold
Boy and bucket flat in the mud she'd set
Then walk about the pen so wet and slick
Look at boy and "Moo a nice little trick."

Alice always kicked durin' milking time
With but a trivial excuse reason 'd rhyme
She'd bounce a milker boy from spot to spot
Like a rubber ball on a baseball lot

Alice kicked for the prankish fun she'd git
From choice rather'n weather 'd prankish fit
The bucket oft she'd kick all over the pen
Like a June bug a dodging the old red hen

Alice was like some sour folks we've known
Whose talent was to kick, grumble and groan
Better take stock and straighten yourself
Afore you sour'd, jump atop a kicker's shelf.

THE LITTLE GRAY MARE

When I was a lad twelve years old the Old Gray Mare brought to the Diamond Homestead a little gray colt that later became known as the little gray mare. The colt was named Pearl because of its pure white color. It was given to me to be my own to pet, feed, water and otherwise care for in a thousand ways. To me this colt was well and truly the “pearl of great price.” I now have something to live for, to look forward to, to the time when I would have a gay spirited pony as my very own to ride and could really see the world on horseback. There was no longer any doubt in my mind about my seeing all the interesting parts of my America. Ere long I would go west and grow with the country. Soon I began to wonder what would be the cost of a good riding bridle, halter and a Texas Cowboy red leather, squeaking saddle and how I would earn money enough to purchase the outfit. The only work to be done at this time in our frontier country was sawing logs, hauling logs or floating them down the creeks and rivers to market. I knew I was not large enough now to do any of this sort of work to earn the price of a riding outfit. However, the idea kept growing in my mind until it bore fruit. About four years later Henry and I sawed logs at a log camp in South Alabama about sixteen miles from home for three months. By working hard all day, from daylight to dark, we were able to earn about a dollar per day above our board and other expenses. The money earned this summer was invested in the riding outfit and a new store bought suit of clothes.

By this time I was four years older than when I was suffering with that awful disease so prevalent among early teenage boys known as “wander lust.” During these four years I had been privileged to attend the little log cabin school in our community for three, four months, terms. Two of these terms had meant little. The teachers were unprepared for the work of teaching. They knew almost nothing to teach. They had no outlook on life, no vision, nothing to awaken ambition in a country lad. They strolled each morning along the trails and roads winding among the tall pine trees pointing upward as if trying to inspire the teachers to something higher in order that they might be an inspiration to those entrusted to their care. However, they trudged to the little cabin located in a wonderfully inspiring location, like slaves to a quarry or dumb driven cattle to the slaughter. They never saw the beauty of the tall pines standing all around the cabin. They never saw the beauty nor the inspiration emanating from the great grove of large dogwood trees one hundred yards in front of the cabin. They never saw the grandeur of the great gully just to the rear of the school yard nor felt the spiritual awakening that should have welled in their souls from gazing toward the east over the broad fertile acres of Pine Level or gazing toward the west over the rolling hills extending to the Escambia River. They never caught the inspiration that comes from gazing upon a beautiful spring of water, as a symbol of purity, as it flows from under a steep bluff overgrown with tall spreading magnolia trees symbolic of life itself. These teachers left no mark upon the community. They left no inspiration with the youth that sat daily for four months at their feet looking and longing for intellectual inspiration.

Luckily for me the third teacher was exactly the opposite of the first two. He saw beauty and inspiration in all his surroundings. He saw intellectual growth in everything he did. To him the little log cabin was a thing of beauty and an inspiration as it stood in the midst

of its surroundings. He was a man of VISION as well as a man if INSPIRATION and best of all he had the happy faculty of transmitting these qualities in a sort of indescribable way to all with whom he came in contact. This is why the guiding star of my ambitions had changed considerably by the time I had earned the purchase price of the much-coveted riding outfit. The temperature of my wander lust fever had cooled.

Pearl was given the usual care ordinarily given to the average colt raised in a frontier logging community. She was petted, played with and worked enough so that when she was old enough and large enough to do light work she was ready for the task. She was a well-trained work animal. From the time she was large enough to carry a small boy on her back she was ridden almost daily all during the summers to drive a large herd of cattle to the pens each afternoon. She was now called, "The Little Gray Mare" instead of the colt. She was used almost exclusively for this work for two or three summers. Henry and I did most of the cattle driving. However, Sam and Charley were getting large enough to gallop a gay pony over the woods and came in for their share of the fun and fascination of cattle corralling. Through this work Pearl received a lot of training in driving cattle at an early impressionable age. She learned to run in the woods, dodge trees and stumps, jump fallen logs, steer clear of holes and jagged treetops. She was as fast as the fastest Texas ponies and always clear footed. She could teach a dull boy how to drive cattle.

The little gray mare was used from the time she could carry a small boy on errands over the community and to ride to whatever social meetings were attended by any of the boys. Many were the times one of the boys rode the little gray mare to mill for the weekly supply of corn meal and grits for the family or to the country post office for mail. Many were the trips she made to the logging camps to carry messages or groceries. Many were the trips she made to the nearby villages or Pollard, Flomaton and Bluff Springs. These were great and new experiences for the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough. Needless to say we boys liked this sort of "work", better than we did the daily drudgery about the Homestead or the log camps.

The early training the little gray mare received in running after cattle later proved helpful to her in racing with other horses. The quick pick up she learned so well in chasing a half wild yearling and bringing it back to the herd before it really got started served well in getting the start in a horse race. This was long before the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough just had to race her with other horses. She soon acquired a community-wide reputation as a "race horse."

As this pony grew older she was used in plowing and driving to a buggy. She was a fast trotter and pulled a buggy well on good roads. She was a splendid plow pony. However, she remained better for the work she was early trained to do. Racing in the woods was her first love and she never ceased to like it. She was ever as eager for a race as a well-trained fox hound is for a chase with his master.

At the special request of my numerous nephews I am here relating some of the events of a trip made in the middle of the summer when I was sixteen and a half years old and

Pearl was four and a half. A long time friend of Father who resided approximately twelve miles southeast from the Diamond Homestead across West Coldwater Creek invited Father and his family to a wedding at his home. It was to be a great social event. The wedding was to be at four o'clock in the afternoon. Supper was to be served immediately after the wedding. Dancing was to begin at six o'clock. The date of the wedding had been known for weeks. Much preparation had been made. It had been the talk of the country far and wide, probably because of the BIG FEAST that was to be served.

Father had told me and Henry several days before the big event we could go to the wedding and ride our gay spirited ponies. Henry would ride his gray pony named Minnie but often referred to as "My Filly." I would ride Pearl, often referred to as "The Little Gray Mare." Three boys residing approximately two miles from the Diamond Homestead were going with us. James Nelson rode a little snow white horse named "Sirocco." Walter Lord rode a black pacing mare noted for her ability to stumble. Her name was Ida. Mark Magaha rode a bay horse that was a slower walker, a rough trotter and not by any means a noted racer. The black mare was a very good saddler in a slow rack. Walter described it as a "Rack of Misery." Sirocco was a gay frisky pony. He pranced from one side of the three-trail roads to the other and then in the woods beside the road. Where Sirocco ever got his name no one knew. Neither did any of us know at the time that Sirocco is the name of Libyan Desert oppressing winds. Neither did we then know that Sirocco was of Arabian stock and probably named for some of his noted Arabian ancestors.

We boys were to meet at Mark's home not later than two o'clock. Walter was to come to the Diamond Homestead a little after twelve noon. We would then meet James and Mark at Mark's home where we had planned to leave not later than one o'clock. We were all there and ready to start a few minutes before the appointed hour. We had figured that we would need not less than three full hours to ride the long distance and have a little breathing spell to quiet our nerves so we could enjoy the wedding and the festive supper.

Our horses were all full of "pep" and fiery at the start. During the first three miles of the trip we traveled a dim woods trail little better than the plain open woods. While traveling the trail we tried to ride Indian fashion, one directly behind the other, or like a litter of pole cats on the march. This was impossible because "My Filly" just had to show lots of her circus tricks before the other horses. In doing this she often pranced sideways, sometimes on one side of the trail and then on the other. Sirocco also had to show a lot of his inherited Arabian tricks. He too pranced back and forth across the trail. Blacky kept a steady "Rack of Misery," stumbling often but never falling. Pearl and Bay plugged along at a steady gait as though they were in for a long trip and preferred to take it easy during the hottest part of the day.

Some of my nephews often asked if we boys ran any races during the trip. My reply was an emphatic "No", while riding a crooked trail among the thick pines. My reply was an emphatic "Yes" while riding a road. We raced in every straight place long enough to get started and take up before coming to a hair pin bend. I am certain there is no exaggeration to say that each boy in the company ran not less than a dozen real races during the trip

plus as many more little short “skirmishes.” The weather was extremely hot. We crossed two or three clear brooks and small creeks. At these our horses drank water freely. They were then permitted to rest and cool. This made the trip much easier on the horses. It also kept us boys from sweating down our standing collars and white Sunday shirts. It also saved our Sunday suits from a soaking in the briney sweat of hard working country boys.

After we crossed West Coldwater we had a better road to ride. When about a mile or so from this creek a heavy summer shower fell out of an almost clear sky. A sudden wind sprang up driving the rain sideways. This enabled us to ride close up beside a large pine tree and keep our Sunday suits dry. The rain cooled the horses as well as the air. Soon the horses began to show inclinations to speed up a little. Sirocco and “My Filly” began to prance from one side of the wet muddy road to the other and then into the woods beside the road. Then two or three of the boys suggested that since we were traveling in a better road we might have a free-for-all race down a long straight stretch of road. My reply to this suggestion was emphatically “NO”, because to do so on such a muddy road would probably splash mud over the last one of us from head to heels. I know of nothing that can sling mud faster than the hoofs of fast running horses on a hard country road containing an inch or so of wet loose soil. I had been in a free for all race on such a road once and had foolishly permitted the race to start with the little gray mare and me in the rear. Rather than decline to take part in the race to keep out of the mud and have the gang razz me about staying out of it to keep Pearl from getting beaten in a race I had entered it with all the racing spirit Pearl and I had. We took our share of the mud spattering for the first hundred yards before passing the two hindmost horses. We took more of the same for the next fifty yards before passing the other horses. After that we flung mud a-plenty on all horses and riders who came near enough to accept it. When the race was over every member of the gang was as muddy as the proverbial sow after wallowing in the mire.

In this case I made up my mind to get ahead before the race got started or take to the woods to miss the mud-flinging contest. As I worked my way past the two horses in the lead I was accused of trying to get the start in the race. This remark started the outstanding race of the afternoon and the master mud flinging, water-spattering contest during the ages was on. They type of soil, the amount of water in the road and the general terrain of the country all contributed to make the contest a marvelous success. The master mud marvel continued over two or three small red clay hills; then down a long slope over black mud-like dirt and across a two hundred yard strip of yellow clay and chalk to a small stream of water. At the stream Pearl was pulled away from the road and brought to a stop. The rest of the gang dittoed.

Every dirty member of the gang, five in number, halted at the stream, dismounted and the master washing, scrubbing and cleaning up contest of the season was on in ragtime rhythm. We were scrubbing a miry, muddy mixture of red clay and black dirt in sticky proportions set with yellow clay chalk and sand. The large pine trees had kept out Sunday suits from the rain, but thought we, what was the use. The suits were now being scraped with small fuzzy pine limbs and straw and scrubbed with branch water. We were scraping and scrubbing not for the dancing but for the festive feed following the wedding. We had to be presentable for this. When the cleaning up process was finished we remounted our

horses and hurried on down the road toward the nuptial ceremonies and festive spread. Washing Branch, as named by the gang, was only about two miles from the wedding scene. Lest we might miss the wedding feast the two miles were galloped within ten or fifteen minutes. Our horses were hitched some distance from the house because all the nearby hitching places were taken. We walked up to the house pulling and straightening out our wet clothes like we had just been in a hard rain, and got by with the ruse like a wayward chronic drunkard alibying.

About fifteen minutes after our arrival the wedding ceremony took place. Within another fifteen minutes the wedding supper was spread in the back yard. The long table was loaded with all the good things that the culinary art can prepare. Roast meats were there in large quantities; beef, pork and mutton, all baked to eat. Fried chicken in platters and chicken pie in pans were there. Cornbread baked a golden brown from water ground meal and big fat country style biscuits were interspersed from one end of the long table to the other. Good baked sweet potatoes were there in profusion. Cakes and pies were there for everyone and his friends. Big sponge cakes, large frosted cakes and layer cakes stacked high were delightful to look upon. And pies were there too, with top crust and without top crust, made of fruits in season and dried fruits. A large iron pot was beside the table filled with smoking coffee for the old people. It was a great wedding feast. Needless to say we five boys embraced the opportunity with outstretched arms.

We were really proud of our ability to render service at the right time and place.

Before the supper was over the famous blind fiddler, Mr. William Cobb began playing the old time fiddle tunes customarily played for the famous square dances. Soon the dancing folks from sixteen and sweet to seventy-five and jolly gathered into the two large living rooms of the residence and the dancing was in full swing. Our gang visited with other boys of our ages and strolled about the place in the sun until it went down in an effort to dry our freshly washed Sunday suits. By night they were pretty well dried out. We then squeezed into the house and enjoyed the music and the dancing, for short intervals until about eleven o'clock and then started for home.

The night was dark, only a few stars showing occasionally. The horses were now well rested and ready for the twelve-mile trip home. With the exception of the first three miles the roads and trails were unsuited for night riding, but this didn't bother boys. What does it matter to a hardy country boy if a horse steps into a stump hole and tosses him over his head? Or what does he care if a horse gallops into a washed-out gully and turns a summersault flinging the boy forward rumbling him into the same gully? The boys and the horse will probably scramble around in the gully together but soon they'll be out and ready for new and challenging experiences. A portion of the road was nothing but longtime abandoned log roads, in places grown over with bushes and in other places washed full of holes and gullies. These were not so bad in daylight but in the darkness of night were a challenge to ride without an occasional stumble and perhaps a tumbling fall. In many places the traveling was along a single dim woods trail winding among the thick, tall pines. Near the creeks and small branches to be crossed the hillsides were washing in small holes and near the water overgrown with bushes and overhanging limbs. To dodge

these bushes and overhanging limbs and keep from having to dismount and feel for yards around among the tall, wet grass and low bushes, among cold frogs and slimy snakes for a lost hat was another challenge that kept a boy's muscles ever ready for action.

Such roads and trails were not conducive for horse racing. Few races were run on our return trip. Because of this the homeward trip required almost twice as long as the going one did. By the time we came to the old abandoned log roads and dim trails speedy Pearl's pacing trot became the "ox team three mile gait." Bay's jiggy trot was traded for a sleepy creepy walk. "My Filly" ceased her circus exhibitions and struck the new ground breaking walk. Blacky exchanged her rack o' misery for a cautious walk feeling for holes and gullies, and the symbol of desert winds had calmed. Our traveling was now like a family of polecats on the march, one directly behind the other with Bay leading the procession feeling his way with a sleepy creepy walk. We arrived home about three o'clock A.M., in time for one hour's sleep before getting up time in all frontier logging communities, **FOUR O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING, WAY BEFORE DAY WHEN THE ROOSTERS BEGIN TO CROW.**

DRIVING UP THE COWS

Driving up the cows was great sport
In which country lads held the fort
'Twas attractive to every lusty lad
Making a youthful heart gay and glad

To find the cattle scattered grazing
Hollo and pop the whip was amazing
To see them raise their heads and low
With one accord start the homeward go

To listen for the cow bell to rattle
Race around and drive home the cattle
Was worth a whole day a fishing
Liste'ning to the strong line swishing

To race among the wet low bending bows
Circling the half wild straying cows
Was like goin' to mill pond a washing
Feeling the cool wet wat'r a sloshing

To have a heifer stray from the herd
Then come back like a flying bird
With horse 'd rider in fleeting flight
Was a sportive country lad's delight

To race a yearling o'er hill and plain
Or down a long straight country lane
And racing swift pass the yearling by
Ne'er yet made a lusty laddie cry

Riding the fiery fleeting steeds
O'er high logs among stumps and trees
Was frolicsome fun for sportive boys
Fit to fill 'm with gay 'd gladsome joys

To ride o'er woods among the beautiful trees
Observing Nature's efforts to please
And the natural beauty of all creation
Gave a boy high and noble inspiration

A DUMB CURE FOR DEAFNESS

Defective hearing has long been considered as one of the major afflictions of the human race. It is one which medical science and surgery have been unable so far to handle satisfactorily. Medical science and surgery have made much progress and are still doing their best to discover an effective cure. Various and sundry remedies have been prescribed by modern ear specialists, some of which have been successful in certain cases and in others failures. Thousands of remedies have been prescribe by regular medical doctors with about the same degree of success and failures thus indicating that medical science and surgery have not yet discovered any remedy that can be definitely used to completely cure or control this ailment of the human race.

Then we have hundreds of remedies that have been tried by so called quack doctors with a temporary degree of success depending upon the degree of the defectiveness of the patient's hearing and his faith in the hocus pocus words spoken as a part of either the remedy or its application. Then too, we have many remedies for curing this affliction that have been handed down to us through the ages as a sort of tradition that are still in use, a few of which are very effective when properly applied. The remedy related in this incident is in this class. It has come down to us through the ages since the first recorded advice of reformers to fathers or boys. This is a cure in which Philosophic Henry says the correct application is far more important than the remedy itself. To obtain successful results from the use of this remedy it must be applied at the right time, in the right place, and in the right manner, and with the right sort of implements.

One fall when Irl and Walker were small boys, Father had to operate the cane mill at home with no help except them. They were as playful and as full of boyish pranks as the older of the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough were at their age. Father was busy looking after the cooking and canning or bottling of the syrup. This was a steady job for him because he took great pride in making nothing but the best grade of syrup. It must be as clear as honey, of the right "thickness" and possess a delicious flavor. He watched the cooking process almost continually from the time the first juice was poured into his large cooper [copper?] evaporator in the morning until the last drop of syrup was run from the evaporator at night into his large cooling trough dug out of a large yellow popular log. In this looking after the cooking of the syrup so closely Father had little time to do other things or to keep the boys as busy as he probably thought they should have been.

When Irl was feeding the cane between the large steel rollers of the mill Walker was kept busy stacking cane in the rack at the mill, removing the cane pomace as it dropped from the rollers, keeping plenty of firewood stacked at the mouth of the furnace and many other odd jobs or emergency jobs that are certain to come up during cane grinding. If Walker was feeding the mill Irl was looking after all the odd jobs.

The boys were constantly playing pranks on each other and on any person who visited the cane grinding. It was necessary for Father to be constantly reminding the boys to keep busy and not let the supply of juice coming to the evaporator run low and thereby disturb his usual flow of syrup or cause him to have to permit the filling to slow down a little

while waiting for juice. But in spite of Father's watchful eye and frequent words urging them to keep busy the boys found time to play a little as a means of recreation.

As one of their favorite play stunts to break the monotony of twelve to sixteen hour of continuous work each day, the boys had rigged up what they called their underground telephone by placing one end of some discarded piping formerly used to bring water from the house well to the cane mill at the spot where the boys stood or sat while feeding the mill and extending the other end back 75 or 80 feet directly under the large heap of cane pomace 10 or 12 feet high on the opposite side from the mill and evaporator. To break the monotony of the drudgery the boy doing the odd jobs would slip off on the backside of the pomace heap and speak through the pipe to the one feeding the mill. The speaking was usually done in a loud whisper or a low conversational tone of voice.

One day when the work was getting a little monotonous the boys tried the talking stunt. Walker was feeding the mill and Irl was rolling pomace from the mill in a wheelbarrow. Irl took a load of pomace around back of the large heap, dumped it out well up on the side of the heap and signaled to Walker to answer the underground telephone. Walker stuck his head down to the end of the pipe while Irl went to the other end, got down on his knees, made a sort of funnel with his hands to fit over the end of the pipe and began the conversation. A few words were spoken from each end of the pipe when Father heard the single tree bumping the horse's legs and looked around to see what was the trouble. He saw Walker with his head down near the ground and seemingly talking to himself. The horse was slowly walking around the circle with the single tree bumping his hind legs because no cane was in the mill and the weight of the trace chains kept the single tree constantly bumping the horse's legs. The boys had done like many people do who talk over a long distance telephone pay station at so much per minute, forgetting all about the time until the operator cuts in and reminds them the conversation has now reached the sum of \$7.75.

When Father saw Walker with his head down near the ground and seemingly carrying on a make believe conversation with himself, no cane in the mill and no juice pouring into the barrel he immediately stepped toward the mill to learn why no cane was being fed between the rollers. He carried his skimmer with him. As Father neared the seat of Walker's pants as it protruded rather high he heard Walker say, "Speak a little louder, I didn't quite hear you." Then presently as Father stood beside the seat of Walker's pants, Walker spoke these words, "That's O.K., but next time you take a load behind the heap slip off to the kitchen and bring me a biscuit and a piece of sausage. I can't hear you, talk louder." At this moment Father was tired of hearing the single tree bump the horse's legs because no cane was in the mill and the juice already running low. With the use of his skimmer handle he burned two red streaks across the seat of Walker's pants, remarking as he did, "Quit you nonsense, get some cane in that mill. Don't you see the juice is running low? Where's Irl?" By this time Walker was trying to poke six big cane stalks in the mill when he knew it wouldn't hold but four.

As Father turned around looking for Irl he stumbled and dropped his skimmer. He was almost directly in front of the horse so he moved without waiting to pick up the skimmer.

As he raised up he heard Irl's voice on the opposite side of the large heap of pomace. He proceeded straight over the top of the heap, picking up and carrying with him one of the largest and heaviest pieces of pomace handy. When he reached the top of the heap he saw Irl down on his knees with his head down on the ground, with his hands under his face and the seat of his pants pointed upward toward the top of the heap. As Father approached, Irl thinking Walker was still at the other end of the improvised underground telephone system was saying: "Speak louder, I can't hear you, Are you deaf as a post? I can't hear a BLAME THING YOU SAY."

Just at this moment Father, holding the large tough heavy pomace in both hands burned a brown stripe directly across the seat of Irl's pants, saying as he did so, "See if you can hear that." He immediately swung the pomace for another brown stripe but while the pomace was making a semi-circle Irl swears he jumped not an inch less than six feet straight ahead on all fours, causing the big pomace to miss its mark by three feet. He then scrambled to his feet, grabbed the wheelbarrow and headed straight toward the woodpile for wood for the furnace. As Father walked back over the heap toward the cooking syrup he remarked as he shook the big pomace: "If you boys let the juice run low before dark I'll get a frail pole and cure your deafness if I have to burn out the entire seat of your pants to do it. Sah, get that wood to the furnace and some cane to the mill. Play, Play, can't you think of anything else? Walker, pearten up that horse and get some juice here quick."

Irl says business picked up at the cane grinding without further applications of remedies for deafness. He declares he stacked a ton of cane at the mill and half a cord of wood at the furnace within the next fifteen minutes, without ever stopping to rub the brown stripe burned as a cure for deafness. It is Irl's report that Walker stood up the rest of the afternoon, for obvious reasons and kept four big cane [stalks] in the mill and two more pushed against the rollers ready to slip between them as soon as space was available, in spite of the time one hand was used to rub two red streaks.

The Seven Sons have had many laughs about this cure for deafness. Irl and Walker admit the burning remedy is a sure cure. Yet they think the seat of a boy's pants is a strange place indeed to apply a remedy for ear trouble. Both boys maintain to this day [that] the remedy is unsound according to the principles of engineering, physics, physiology and medical science. It seems a little strange that while both boys admit the remedy when properly and scientifically applied is a SURE CURE, yet they dubbed it from the beginning a DUMB REMEDY.

Both boys admit there is little sportsmanship in the proper application of this remedy, scientifically or otherwise. They think it is wrong to apply this remedy without any warning at all so that a fellow could at least let the seat of his pants slacken up a little to ease the burning. They both admit it would be more sportsman-like to give a fellow time to stick a few pieces of pomace under the pants at strategic points of contact. At this time philosophical Henry spoke up saying: "Boys, I'll tell you the truth about this remedy for deafness. It will never prove a sure cure unless it is applied correctly. The

correct application is what cures. This is true with almost all remedies for the cure of human ills. All real doctors will tell the patient this. Even the quack doctors do this with all their hocus pocus schemes. This remedy must be applied quickly and without notice because this sort of application is necessary to set in action the under-the-skin communication system in the human body so that a remedy applied at one spot will effect a sure cure at some related distant spot in or on the body.”

The boys all laughed heartily at this explanation but admitted its truth as they strolled off to bed to beat the sandman.

Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough

GOING TO MILL

BOYS AND BUGS

THE MULE NOBODY COULD RIDE

GOING TO MILL

In the pioneer section of Northwest Florida it was the custom for each community to have a gristmill for grinding corn into meal or grits for use in the neighborhood. Corn was sometimes ground on these mills for feeding to livestock used as work animals. When corn was ground for this purpose the product was known as chops or cracked corn, because it was not ground as fine as meal or grits. On some of these mills the husks were removed from rice grown in the community. However, rice mills were usually different from the ones used for grinding corn.

The mills were constructed and operated by some one residing in the community who owned a tract of land through which a stream flowed for furnishing waterpower. A dam would be constructed backing up water for supplying the power. The lake made was referred to as the millpond. The head of water formed in millponds was usually from ten to fifteen feet deep at the dam and becoming shallower back toward the head of the pond. The water usually backed up the creeks a distance from one forth to one half a mile from the dam.

Corn was carried to mill by boys too small to do a man's work either in the logging camp or on the small farms. Such boys were spoken of as "Mill Age Boys." Their ages ranged from six through sixteen years. These mill boys usually rode horseback carrying from a peck to a bushel of corn in a sack balanced across the back of the horse. Boys often trained yearlings to work to a cart single or in pairs to do light hauling in a homemade cart. Such conveyances were often used to carry corn to mill. The Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough at the Diamond Homestead sometimes went to mill on horseback, sometimes driving one yearling to a cart or a wagon. During three of four years Cam and the Cart were used for Going to Mill at the Diamond Homestead.

Many of my nephews have often asked me if there was any responsibility or real fun in going to mill. My answer has yes, plenty of each. There is always responsibility with every task that had to do with furnishing bread for a family. This responsibility increases with the size of the family and the distance the family resides from the markets where bread can be purchased, or the distance from the home to the nearest gristmill.

Every boy of mill age who ever carried this responsibility sooner or later had mishaps in going to mill. During my mill age days I had the following mishaps adding to the responsibilities of Going to Mill:

1. When I was seven years old a bushel of corn fell off the back of the old gray mare when a hog jumped from under a clump of bushes by the road causing her to squat and suddenly jump from under the corn. This happened a quarter of a mile east of the long cross way on Gillberry Branch two or more miles from the Chafin-Jernigan mill on the West Coldwater and two miles from where anyone resided. Of course, a seven-year-old mill boy could not lift a bushel of corn to the back of a horse. If I would never do to leave it there while riding two miles or more for assistance. Neither would it

show any sense to sit there and wait for someone to come along on that road to assist in placing the corn back on the horse because it was a seldom traveled road.

After thinking over my mishaps a few minutes, the gray mare was tied near the corn as a sort of protection for it in case cattle or hogs might come near and decide to have a feed. I then went back to the Gillberry Branch cross way and found some old cross way poles that I thought I could use in a slanting position to roll the corn to the top of a nearby stump from which I might roll it into the saddle. These poles were carried one at a time and placed on the upper side of a large saw log stump on a hillside with one end on the stump and the other on the ground. Then after a lot of hard lifting and pushing the sack was rolled to the top of the stump. The old gray mare was then led beside the lower side of the big stump. From the top of the stump the corn was gotten back into the saddle. I then sat down on the corn and rode on to the mill.

2. This same gray mare pulled the bridle off one day while my corn was grinding and started off up the road homeward in a fast gallop. This looked like a ten-year-old mill boy was going to have a four-mile walk home with a heavy sack of meal on his shoulders and a bridle in his hands. Three other mill boys went with me following behind the old gray mare hoping she would stop galloping and begin feeding on the grass in an old field half a mile from the mill where we might pen her in some lots. One of the boys rode his mill horse to aid in the chase. When we arrived near the settlement we were not surprised to find the gray mare gently nipping the grass in the fence corners of a lane. By climbing over a fence and getting on the other side of her she was hemmed in the lane and caught, thus saving a ten year old mill boy from a hard trip home.
3. One day when Cam and the Cart were used to carry corn to mill a tire came off a wheel on the cart, breaking one felly and one spoke in the wheel. This was a real mishap. The cart had five hundred pounds of more of corn on it to be ground into chops for feed and a bushel to be ground into meal. It was on a road over which very seldom anyone traveled except a mill boy on horseback with his corn or meal. I was puzzled for a while. Soon I decided to patch the wheel and try to limp along with it until I could get home

A hatchet was always carried in the cart for emergencies. A few nails were also carried. Unfortunately no material suited for use was available. The problem now was to find something that could be used for a patching job. Finally it was decided to take a board from the cart body and split it in pieces the right size. This was done as rapidly as possible. The two pieces of the broken felly were placed back together and a piece of board cut to fit on each side. They were nailed fast. The broken spoke was patched the same way. The tire was then placed back on the wheel and made tight by wedges made from the board taken from the body. It was a patched up looking job but it held together until the corn was gotten to the mill and the meal and chops gotten home. To make the tire tighter while the corn was being ground the cart was driven into the edge of the millpond and the wheel soaked in water to cause the fellies and wedges to swell. In order to make it easier for the patched wheel to hold together for

the trip almost all the load was placed well on the side of the cart having the good wheel, thus leaving the crippled wheel to carry nothing much but its own weight.

The three mishaps mentioned here and how they were handled will suffice to show that all was not fun and frolic when a boy went to mill. I dare say the other six of the Seven Sons had similar experiences during their mill age period. We all had many mishaps, ups and downs, in going to mill. This thing called "GOING TO MILL" was a great life. We all look back upon it as a great experience in our early training.

Now we come to the second part of the question asked so often by my numerous nephews and also by many other boys who have never had the experience of 'Going to Mill.' "Is there any fun in going to mill?" The answer is a plain big "No" in just going to mill. The fun and frolic was incidental to going to mill. 'Twas the sport of going-in-a-washing in the old millpond wash hole that furnished the fun and fascination and gave magic to the well known works, "GOING TO MILL."

The old millponds supplied the greatest Community Washing Holes in the world. They were far greater and rendered more useful service than any modern swimming pool. In many communities mill age boys within a radius of ten to fifteen miles met at the Mill Pond Wash Hole on Saturdays, because this was "Mill Day" everywhere in the Florida Frontier.

This wash hole angle was what made going to mill a coveted privilege. To hear Father and Mother call one of the Seven Sons and tell him to Go To Mill gave him greater thrills than going to town where the long trains and even the big circus could be seen. This was the thrill that made the frontier life really worth living. With frontier boys going to mill and in-a-washing with the old mill pond gang took the place of present day movies, circuses, bathing pools, dance halls and many other places of amusement whose influences, to express it mildly, "sometimes border on the twilight of the immoral."

While the miller was grinding corn all the boys of the mill age gang would "Shuck" their scant summer clothing and go-in-a-washing in the old millpond wash hole. No bathing suits were permitted in this old wash hole. No, siree, no "sissies" were allowed to enter here. Any boy acting "sissy" was given the sure cure immediately or sooner. Nephews often asked what the sure cure was, and how it was administered. This is a hard question to answer, because there were so many sure cures. Sometimes it might be a splendid paddling while the clothing was all "shucked." Sometimes it might be a score of "ducking" bouts. Sometimes it might be compelling a boy while clean "shucked" to walk a mile down a public highway to get his clothing. Sometimes a clean "shucked" boy might be thrown from the top of the mill house to the millpond striking the surface of the water with blistering effects. In short, whatever was necessary to effect a permanent cure was administered without discussion or delay.

In these old millpond wash holes all sorts of contests were held. Long and short swimming races were held. To hold the championship title to one of these races was indeed a high honor. It gave a boy standing with the millpond gang. Diving contests were

held. Swimming under water contests were held. The boy winning in these contests was often dubbed “Didapper” because of the diving ability of this water bird. Turning summersaults in diving was also practiced. To be able to turn summersaults forward and backward was a coveted feat, accomplished by many boys. To become expert at this also gave a boy high standing with the gang.

The boys taking part in the Old Millpond Wash Hole Contests were accustomed to a hardy frontier life. They had developed muscles of iron and sinews of steel. They had the muscles and skill to produce speed. They had endurance beyond measure. Seemingly they could swim in the water all day and show no signs of fatigue. These boys had no college trained athletic directors to train them in fancy strokes or freak swimming. They had something better, something far superior for producing speed and endurance. They had the tactics and the technique learned from the wild life of forest and stream. Fortunate boys, indeed to have such teachers.

It sometimes happened the mill age gang would spend almost all day in the old millpond wash hole notwithstanding many sacks of corn were ground early in the morning. They just couldn't leave the gang in the old millpond wash hole and go home. Many a boy was hurried off to mill early in the morning with the urgent request from his Mother to be back as quickly as possible with the meal because she needed it for dinner. These words would be straight way forgotten when once the boy was in the wash hole with the gang. Many a sack of meal was ready to leave the mill by nine in the morning and should have arrived home not later than eleven, instead of four thirty in the afternoon with a well planned alibi all thought out and memorized enroute home. No doubt many a mill boy had his denim trousers and homespun shirt dusted before becoming skilled in the fine art of alibying.

It has been many years since the Seven Sons had the privilege of Going To Mill and taking part in sports with the Millpond Gang in the Old Millpond Wash Hole. Yet, the memory of Going to Mill riding astride a spirited pony, or in a cart of his own making drawn by one yearling or two is still fresh. The memory of swimming, diving and ducking in the deepest parts of the Old Pond and splashing in its shallows, vying with members of the gang in making beautiful rainbows lingers. During these years we have seen the advent of city recreation parks, the building of costly gymnasiums and costly swimming pools. We have had the privilege of swimming in such pools, of splashing in blue rippling waters of the Gulf, or riding the pearly waves of the broad Atlantic and lolling in the laughing waters of Florida's crystal lakes. Such sports have thrills and fascinations for those who have never had the experience of GOING TO MILL and joining the MILL AGE GANG, taking part in their sports and stunts while listening to the roaring and rumbling of the rocks grinding the grist and the music made by the sparkling water forcing its way through the old fashioned wooden wheel is indeed a thrill and a fascination having no rival.

GOING TO MILL

Goin' to mill itself wasn't such a rare 'd noble treat
'Twas the mill pond gang from far 'd wide a boy did meet
And goin' in a washing in the old mill pond wash hole
That made glad every nerve 'd fiber in a mill boy's soul

To splash 'd swim in pearly waters of the old millpond
In a ducking diving contest with the great throng
Of mill boys waiting for their grinding corn
Was sport that filled youthful minds with joy and song

A gang o' mill pond boys racing across the old wash hole
Like fiery steeds racing down a track toward the goal
Makes muscle and sinew hard strong and tough as steel
Ready for the world's work in factory, forest and field

To see bright lights 'd all pretty sights in big towns
The big circus with the wild animals and funny clowns
And all the sights in this old world beautiful 'd fair
To splashing in a millpond with a gang can't compare

To bathe in modern pools and swim with fancy strokes
Long's been advised by doctors for the pale weak folks
To cure much human weakness known to medical science
A millpond splash with the gang bade all ills defiance

Millpond wading and splashing water high in the sun
To make bright rainbows with the gang was sportive fun
To float 'd drift gently upon the old mill pond wash hole
List'ning to roaring rocks was sweet music to the soul

To ride briney ocean waves and sun on sandy beaches
For blood and brawn is what the new health idea teaches
But to ride briney ocean waves and loll on parchy sand
Is nil to a splash in the old pond for making a man

To splash, wade 'd, swim in old millpond wash hole 'd dive
Make all boys of the mill age gang glad to be alive
And kept strong 'd growing their youthful inspiration
Leading their noble thoughts and ideals to realization.

BOYS AND BUGS

The name bug applies to many and varied insects, just how many no entomologist knows, neither does any boy or gang of boys know. Scientist have studied bugs for years and collected a great many facts. The average boy who has been reared on a farm, worked with plants, chased hogs, goats and cattle from the fields or chased them through all sorts of woods has also collected many facts. This is also true of the boys who have lived in logging camps, cut logs on hills, in valleys, swamps and marshes and hauled them from such woods and floated them down all varieties of creeks and rivers. No doubt the information learned by a boy or a gang of boys is a little different from that learned and recorded by scientists because each has collected the information under different circumstances and for different purposes. It is probably true that each could teach the other new facts.

The average boy has ways and means of getting information about bugs the scientists know not of. This is particularly true of boys when they are in what is often called the "gang age." For instance a lone boy would not get a thrill of finding a "bee tree" and robbing it of honey. Yet let the gang find a bee tree and take the honey and every boy in the gang will get plenty of thrills, even if little or no honey is taken from the tree. Every boy in the gang will not only get thrills but adventure, a lot of fun, a good fight and many stings. In all this getting he will also collect information helpful in the next "bee tree cutting."

There were five bugs living in the neighborhood of the Diamond Homestead that had special attraction for boys in the gang age. They were honeybees, bumble bees, wasps, hornets and yellow jackets. They were attractive to boys because they lived in gangs and would put up a good fight when molested. This is characteristic of boys too. The greater the fight a gang of boys would have in robbing a bee tree or in routing a nest of yellow jackets the greater would be the thrills and the more interesting the adventure. These bugs are intelligent. They have a fine philosophy. This also makes them attractive to boys.

The average boy or gang of boys will take very little interest in colonies of bees kept for honey. They will keep away from the apiary lest they get stung. Yet they get thrills and adventure from hunting a wild bee tree and taking the honey in what they call a fighting contest. I wish every reader could have the privilege of observing a gang of boys in the woods trying to locate a bee tree and then be able to witness from afar the process of taking the honey from the bees. Every country boy understands that when a bee gets a load of honey from the flowers it flies in a direct line toward its colony. This has given rise to the expression, "A bee line" meaning a straight line.

A few years ago I witnessed with brother Henry as an invited guest, the cutting of a bee tree by a gang of eight boys, and three or four dogs. The sight was far better than a Barnum and Bailey circus. The clownish pranks of the boys and dogs caused more laughter than circus clowns. To watch the gang preparing to cut the tree and take the honey was quite a thrilling experience. The gang got greater thrills from this preparation

than the average businessman could get from preparing to take a trip around the world. The gang got adventure and excitement out of everything done for the event. They got fun and frolic along with the adventure and the thrills. Their boyish imaginations worked overtime in planning what to do to save all the honey in the tree.

The dogs also shared the thrills and adventure along with the boys. The dogs also joined in the fun and frolic with the gang. When the tree was almost ready to fall the owners of the dogs took them to one side and held them so they could not run under the tree as it fell, expecting to find a possum, raccoon or fox in the tree. Soon the tree began to crack and then fall. When the cracking of the tree began the dogs began to scuffle and bark to get loose. When the tree fell the dogs were so full of excitement they pulled loose from their owners and into the treetop they went, looking for a wild varmint. Soon they found the bees, or perhaps I should say, the bees found the dogs.

Out came the dogs fully as fast as they had entered the treetop. They were yapping and yipping for help and ran direct to their owners with bees sticking on them and a fresh swarm following. The boys scattered for safety, some seeking shelter behind big trees, a few hiding under bushes and others doing their best to keep distance between themselves and the dogs. The night was rather dark thus enabling the dogs to get rid of the stinging bees rather quickly.

By the time this excitement was over, the organization as planned began to click. The procession marched in the treetop in this order: the smoke blowers, the torchbearers, the choppers and the honey takers. Each group was well armed with the implements of its office as a result of the thorough preparation and organization. Soon the right place was located and the chopping begun. Occasionally a boy would get stung, but like true soldiers each stayed at his post ready to perform his part of the job. The dogs soon forgot about the stings they had gotten and rushed back when the chopping began, of course, expecting to see a wild varmint jump from the hollow in the fallen tree. Occasionally a yip and a yap from a dog would announce another bee had survived the smoke screen and used its javelin on an innocent dog. An occasional yell from a boy was an announcement that another bee was using its javelin in spite of the good work of the smoke blowers. Of course, several bees flew into the torchlight and got their gauzy wings singed and dropped to the ground. A few bees would get a little sick or stifled from the smoke and also drop to the ground. Even though these bees were small and sick or singed they had no trouble making a barefooted boy jump over a log or a protruding limb almost every time he stepped on one.

Within ten or fifteen minutes the hollow fallen tree was all cut open. Only a small quantity of honey was located, just about enough for each boy to have a square of comb two or three inches across. One of the boys carrying a torch brought me a small piece so I would again remember how wild honey tasted when I was of the gang age in the same community.

The buckets and pans had to return home empty. The gang was a little disappointed not so much for the lack of honey as for the lack of a good fight. The battle had been planned

too well. The smoke blowers had done their work so well until the fighting bugs were unable to put up a royal battle. However, the boys had gotten thrills and adventure in planning for the event and in knowing they had done a good job. It was a great event for me, carrying me back to early boyhood days.

A lone boy would get little or no thrill or adventure out of stumbling onto or stirring up a nest of yellow jackets, but a gang like the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough never failed to get thrills, excitement, adventure, a good fight, lots of fun and a new supply of information in routing or destroying a colony of these bugs. A colony of yellow jackets is well organized and always ready for a fight at a moment's notice. By reason of this organization a gang of boys may have to retreat, perfect its organization and renew the attack. Occasionally a gang of boys may have to delay the attack until reinforcements can be brought to its aid. In perfecting their organization and gathering recruits the boys are doing exactly what they have learned from the bugs. Sometimes the attack may have to be renewed a third or a fourth time on different days if the colony is to be destroyed or made to move to a new location. This is because there is always a large inner guard that will not join in the battle during the first few attacks.

For a number of years our cattle pens were kept each summer on newly cleared land usually back of the small fields. Occasionally when a pen was moved to a new location a colony of yellow jackets would be found near the pen and some times in the pen. It might be in a hole where a stump had burned out or decayed or in the hollow roots of an old decayed stump. Once in a while a colony would be located in the ground protected by a thick clump of bushes. These nests or colonies or bugs would have to be destroyed or routed to prevent them from stampeding the cattle.

When it became necessary to destroy or route a colony of such bugs Father would ask rather suspiciously, "Boys, I wonder how we are going to get rid of that nest of bugs so the cattle can get to the pens." Soon some one of the gang would suggest a way to destroy or move the bugs. Father's usual reply was, "Boys, suppose several of you get together and try that later when we have more time." The gang knew what that meant. Father wanted to be absent when the attack was made so he would not get mixed up in the fight. He [had] rather leave the job to the gang, and was perfectly willing for the gang to have all the thrills, adventure, fun and fight to say nothing of any stings that might be thrown into the bargain.

The gang never failed to accept the challenge. Different tricks were used on different nests depending upon its location and the number of bugs in the household. Seldom did one of the gang get stung. If one of the gang got stung it was usually due to his own carelessness. Any one careless enough to get stung during the attack would be laughed at, razzed and ridiculed by the other members of the gang so much until he would take more precautions during the next attack and come out "UNSTUNG."

Three neighbor boys, Henry and I, had our first encounter with a colony of these stinging bugs one day by accident. We were playing near a large spring under a steep bluff. Many large Magnolia trees were growing on the side of the bluff and at its base. The steep

bluff, well covered with dry leaves, was an inviting place upon which to slide down and tumble over in the great quantity of leaves heaped up at the base of the bluff. After wading in the stream until the wading lost its attractions the gang began sliding down the steep bluff. A few slides were made furnishing fun for the gang. Soon the gang decided to take an even start at the top of the bluff and have a sliding race down the bluff and tumble and roll as far as possible over the heap of leaves at the foot. The go signal was given and the race was off. Good speed was made down the bluff, which accelerated the tumbling and rolling over the leaves. The excessive speed carried the gang a few feet further than average speed and landed the gang in a clump of small bushes under which was located a large colony of bugs containing thousands of the worst stinging yellow jackets ever encountered.

Hundreds of the stinging bugs covered each of the five members of the gang and each one tried to take care of himself. The stampeding of cattle when attacked by a nest of these bugs was a tame "Sunday School" affair compared to the stampede of the gang at this time. Two or three of the gang ran through a cluster of thick low bushes as cattle do to get rid of cattle flies in "Fly Time" and when attacked by a swarm of stinging honeybees or yellow jackets. The gang fought the bugs with small brushes and cone shaped wool hats. Two of the boys soon lost their hats in the running fight. The stinging got worse because the yellow jackets kept bringing up fresh recruits every time the stingers seemingly were pretty well thinned out to a few scattering ones. The two hatless boys finally had to be soused into a hold of water to get the yellow bugs from their bushy heads of long hair. All members of the gang finally carried the running fight to the hill country where the members took a new stand and fought the enemy in the hot sun. Reinforcements quit pouring into the battle here. The scattering bugs remaining in the fight were soon destroyed with brushes and hats. The real fight had lasted at least ten minutes because of the territory covered during the running fight. Stampede racing covers ground quickly.

When the last buzzing bug had ceased to buzz around our heads we rested and took stock. We had been whipped and routed from our playground, but were too much like all boys of the gang age to admit it. We had been literally speared, spiked and stabbed. Big red spots were rapidly appearing on our feet, legs, face, neck and hands. We resembled a gang of boys with a case of "red measles" well broken out. Never the less we refused to surrender. A council of war was held to plan an attack on the enemy. We would go back to our sliding place and capture it. There were too many thrills in sliding down that bluff and too much fun in tumbling and rolling in the huge heap of leaves at its base to abandon it without hard and bitter fighting.

Some scouts were sent to survey the stronghold and report on the position of the enemy. The report came back quickly that all was quiet at the fort. The enemy was having dinner or holding a conference in the inner chamber.

It was decided now that we gather a lot of dry quick burning pine straw and assemble it as an ammunition dump near the fort. This was done within five minutes. A long brushy limb was then found that would hold a quantity of straw to be poked over the entrance to

the fort. The brushy end of the long limb was then filled with a supply of straw. The straw was set fire and placed over the entrance of the nest of stinging bugs. More straw was added to the fire until it was impossible for even the outer guard to escape and make an attack. Occasionally a few yellow gauzy wings could be seen rising from the entrance which was kept open by means of a long pole. The hot flames flashing from the straw would singe the gauzy wings and the bugs would drop back to be destroyed by the fire. This process was kept up as long as any of the enemies could be induced to leave the fort. This process was repeated on successive days until the bugs were all destroyed or deserted the stronghold and moved to other quarters far from our sliding and tumbling place.

After this the gang held undisputed rights to slide and tumble down this bluff. Many times the gang enjoyed strolling, sliding or tumbling down this bluff. This was ours now by right of conquest. All bugs, snakes and varmints recognized our rights to this bluff, and kept a safe distance from it. They evidently didn't like the gang's way of fighting with fire.

The steep bluff and spring where the stampede and running fight mentioned here took place is directly in front of Brother Henry's home. It was near this same spring a few years ago I witnessed as an invited guest the cutting of a bee tree by a gang of boys. The bee tree cutting gang ran over some of the same ground while trying to keep a long distance between themselves and stinging honeybees over which the gang in my gang age days ran over in the stampede from the yellow jackets. As Henry and I watched the bee tree cutting boys run we thought of the day when the three Lord boys and we had stampeded from the yellow jackets and had another laugh about the manner in which we tumbled and rolled into the nest of stinging bugs.

The wasp family of bugs had a lot of attraction for boys of the gang age. This is because of the fight that is within them. All boys like a good fighter, be he bug, bull, billy goat or boy. This is the spirit of the American invincible. It is the spirit that made America a free nation and will keep it free. It is the spirit that has made American industry what it is and will keep it in the forefront of nations.

There are two varieties of wasps in our part of the state. The large red family and the small yellow family sometimes called "guinea wasps." The yellow ones are cousins to the yellow jackets because they have not only color in common but the same quick temper and stinging ability. Wasps are unlike honeybees and yellow jackets in that they will not follow enemies far from their nests in stampeding fights. The outer guard will strike one blow and return to the nest giving the intruder an opportunity of retreating without further fighting. This trick of the wasp may work well with some intruders but not with a gang age boy. The boy will locate the nest and destroy it and the entire family.

Wasps are unlike bees and yellow jackets in that they seldom hurl their javelins into an intruder if the intruder is looking at the family of wasp, or is looking at a single wasp away from its home. Wasps are full of humor. Nothing gives a wasp more real joy than to stab a boy in the back and then hide among the bushes or briars and sit and watch the boy

run and rub his wound. A few years ago I was picking up some ripe pears under a tree when I noticed a large nest of big red wasps attached to the under side of a small limb. I was near it when I first saw the nest and immediately backed away keeping a close watch directly at the dozen or more big red wasps holding to the nest because I knew if my back was turned toward the wasps while near it a javelin would be driven into my back. When I was 30 feet away from the nest [measured] I stooped over and picked up two pears. As I reached for the third pear my back was turned toward the wasp nest because I thought the distance between me and the wasps was too great for the wasps to strike. However, in this I was mistaken. I had forgotten for the moment that wasps are humorists, or had had experience enough in dodging stones and sticks thrown at their nests to suspect I was picking up an object to dislodge their nest from the limb. Be that as it may, as soon as the seat of my pants was turned toward the wasps the two largest ones on the nest, probably parents of the large family, came like darts and drove their long javelins through the seat of my pants and leisurely drifted back to their nest. When the javelins struck their mark I literally “KICKED THE BUCKET” spilling the pears.

I straightened up and looked at the wasps on the nest. The two big javelin hurlers were quietly watching my every movement. I picked up a pear and threw it at the nest but missed it by a few inches. A few of the wasps flew around the nest a few inches and settled back without showing any indications of further attack on me. I then backed away and returned within two minutes with a large wad of dry paper fastened to the teeth of a small rake. As I approached the nest my eyes were kept focused directly on it. When within ten feet of the nest a match was used to light the paper. As the paper burned it was held under the nest and the entire family destroyed, not a single wasp leaving the nest to attack me. In this respect a wasp is exactly like a biting fice dog. Such dogs never bite a person as long as the person keeps his eyes directly on the fice.

The hornet is nothing more than a large wasp having a javelin larger and longer than the wasp, honeybee or yellow jacket. The hornet makes a large nest and hangs it in a tree, usually near the end of a long swinging limb, in thick swampy woods. The nests are made from a substance scraped from dead wood and are usually made 18 to 20 inches long and 8 to 12 inches in diameter. The nest has only one opening, directly at the lower point. This keeps rain and dust from the nest.

Hornets seldom come in contact with people, because they seldom build a nest except in the midst of large swamps. And too, their nests are usually well hidden among the branches of the tree where it is suspended. For this reason few people are stung by hornets. This experience came to me only once during all my boyhood days working with logs in all sorts of woods, including some of the thickest swamps and marshes in West Florida and South Alabama. This experience came to me one afternoon when Henry and I were sawing some big pine timber logs near a big swamp. A large tall pine had been sawed down, the top of it falling into the edge of the swamp, evidently disturbing a hornet's nest. We were sawing the log into [at about] twenty or thirty feet from the edge of the swamp when suddenly I saw a large bug coming swiftly toward me which I took to be a common horse fly. As it approached its streaked appearance was observed. I then let loose the saw handle and slapped at the flying bug. I had been too late in letting loose the

saw handle. The hornet struck me on the side of the face and disappeared as quickly as it had come. The pain was severe, much worse than the sting of many bees, wasps or yellow jackets. Before night the side of my face was swollen badly. The pain and swelling remained for three days.

A gang of boys are cautious in charging a hornet's nest. About the only way to destroy or route a family of hornets is to approach the nest quietly and place a stopper in the only opening. Many nests have been captured this way with the family inside. The other approach is to slip a sack made of strong thick material over the hanging nest and twist or tie the top of the sack so the bugs cannot escape. The other method the gang often uses in charging a hornet's nest is to knock the nest from the tree by throwing stones, sticks or pine knots at it. This brings out all the fight there is in hornets. It gives the gang thrills and adventures a plenty. This gives thrills, adventure and accomplishments with the usual fun. But boys get a lot of thrills out of real accomplishments well done.

The largest of these honey-making-dart-driving bugs is the bumblebee. Two varieties of this honey maker lived in the same community in which the Seven Diamond boys were reared, a small brown one and a large bald faced or white faced one. We came in contact with these stinging fellows only occasionally. Some years they were plentiful in the clover field during hay cutting time and in the pea fields at green pea picking time. If pea vines were on the corn at fodder pulling time big bumblebees might be found sucking honey from pea blossoms. In the clover fields occasionally a barefooted boy accidentally would step on a big bumblebee and feel the javelin immediately. At fodder pulling time occasionally a bumblebee would get mixed up in a hand full of fodder and get mashed in a boy's hand. The bee never failed to sting when mashed. The sting of the bumblebee was more painful than the sting of any of the other stinging bugs including the hornet. This bug carries a larger and longer javelin than any of the other stingers. When this javelin is driven its full length into a person it almost paralyzes him for a short time. Boys soon learn this and rather shy away from making an attack on a colony of big bumblebees.

This is the only bug that can and often does trail its enemies. A nest of big bald-faced bumblebees in a hollow "cat face" on a pine tree near the ground was attacked one day by a gang of boys. The gang had planned to destroy the bees as they came from the hole in the "cat face." This plan worked for a few minutes. Then a few big bald-faced fellows got by the boys and attacked from behind. One stab was enough to make a boy run if he was not too much paralyzed to do so. The boys scattered in different directions, with not more than one or two bees following after each boy. The bees were soon knocked to the ground with a brush or a wool hat. The boys would then get a short distance away and lie flat on the ground. In this position they were usually safe from further attacks. One large boy ran approximately a hundred yards followed by one of the biggest bees flying above the boy's head. When the boy was some distance ahead of the bee he lay down behind a log. The bee passed over him going several feet beyond the boy. The boy turned his head and looked at the bee. It circled a few times as if looking for the boy and then flew back to the tree. It then flew low only a few inches above the woods grass until it found where the boy had run from the tree. It then followed the direct route ran by the boy making each crook or bend made by him. It passed over the log and a few feet beyond the boy. Then it

stopped, turned back and before the boy could move, drove its javelin full length in the small of the boy's back as he was preparing to run for safety, almost paralyzing him. Some of the gang had to rub his back before he was able to walk straight. He was as the gang expressed it, "knocked out cold."

The gang rested and held a strategy conference. A second attack was made with the use of fire. A large bundle of flaming straw was held close up to the opening in the tree while one of the gang beat against the tree with a big pine knot. As the big stingers came out, their wings were "clipped" faster than George Washington ever "clipped the wings of the British."

THE MULE NOBODY COULD RIDE

When the four older of the Seven Sons were boys at the Diamond Homestead only one mule was kept within a radius of fifteen miles of the place. This mule was then a greater show than a large Cadillac car tens years later or a large airplane ten years after automobiles made their appearance. Mules were not needed because all hauling was done by oxen. Oxen were used in some places for plowing the small cultivated patches. Mustang ponies from Texas and Mexico were used for horseback riding and driving range cattle. The four older boys had plenty of experience in breaking and working oxen. They had experience in breaking and working small ponies and in riding them driving cattle. From the oxen we learned patience, self-reliance and endurance. The slow plodding ox is the very symbol of patience. He never gets excited when pulling a load in dangerous places. When overloaded he doesn't quit or refuse to pull but will keep tugging away at his load doing the best he can until he falls under the yoke. In riding and working the small pony horses we learned the value of alertness and speed, the real value of moving quickly at the right time and place. In these matters we had an advantage over the three younger boys.

Mules came to our community after we four older boys were grown and away from the Homestead, either working or attending school. Hence, we missed all the training that comes from working or riding mules. The three younger boys of the Seven Sons had this training. They each worked and rode mules to their heart's content. They played the part of the Southern Country Gentlemen in grand style. They drove mules to wagons, plowed mules, rode behind them in buggies, and even had the privilege of wearing a big derby hat and riding mules. In all this they learned the superior philosophy of things and of life that comes only from driving and riding mules. In these matters they had an advantage over us four older boys.

Early one spring when the three younger boys were in their upper teens, Father traded a rather old much worn gentle mule for a fine young one. Father was able to make this trade because the young mule would not permit anyone to ride him, and was considered dangerous to work to a wagon, unless working with another mule perfectly gentle and

sure not to let the young one run away. The young mule would pull a plow satisfactorily. The young mule's name was Scott. Scott was worked a few days with a large gentle mule in hauling freight until the farmer who was to plow him during the summer got acquainted with him. He was then carried to the field and plowed for a week or two in breaking land for spring planting. He was found to be a splendid plow mule and plenty gentle for this work.

After Scott and the young tenant farmer had gotten well acquainted with each other the farmer late one afternoon decided to ride Scott from the back side of the field to the barn. He led Scott up beside the fence and jumped astride his back. Immediately Scott stuck his head between his knees and tossed the farmer high in the air giving him an awful jar together with many bad bruises and sprains. Scott loped off to the barn leaving the plowman rolling on the ground and rubbing his bruises and sprains. Fifteen minutes later the plowman was seen limping down the lane. When he arrived, Scott had been watered and fed. The plowman explained about his awful experience in getting such a bad fall and ended by saying he would not be able to plow for a few days, until he could get over his shake up, bruises and sprains. Of course, Father was much vexed because he had told the man nobody could ride Scott and cautioned the man to stay off his back.

Within a month or so another man was plowing Scott for a few days. He had been told nobody could ride Scott and requested not to try it lest he too would be badly hurt and have to rest a few days nursing his bruises. Scott plowed so well and was so easily handled until he considered the story about nobody could ride Scott to be nothing but idle talk to keep him from riding Scott to and from the field.

At the close of his third days plowing Scott at quitting time he was half a mile from the barn and he thought too tired to walk and lead a gentle mule. He unhitched Scott from the plow, fastened the trace chains over the hames, and arranged one line for bridle reins. He then led Scott near the fence, straddled his back and grabbed hold on the top ends of the hames, thinking Scott too tired to buck him off when he had such a hold. By the time the man struck Scott's back, the mule went into action. The man's hold on the hames kept him from falling [during] the first or second jump. The third time Scott went higher than usual, shuffling the man a little to one side. The fourth buck he really went up in the air and gave a side way shuffle with his back parts tossing the poor man high over the fence. Scott then loped off toward the barn. When he reached the lot gate he didn't even hesitate but leaped over it as if it were only a plaything. When Scott arrived at the barn, of course, Father was vexed because he knew another plow hand was laid up for a few days, if not left in the field with a broken neck or some broken bones. He put Scott in a stable and started to the field in search of a plowman. When about half way to the back of the field he saw the plowman slowly plodding along on the outside of the field. Father then climbed over the fence and went toward the slow moving man. As soon as in speaking distance Father asked for an explanation. When the man came closer Father saw he had been badly hurt and was barely able to explain what had happened. Soon it was discovered that the man was not seriously hurt, but had been badly shocked by the fall and the breath knocked from him. He had lain on the ground sometime before he could

get up and walk. As soon as he was able to talk distinctly he explained the whole proceedings.

In telling about the affair Father said he really intended to give the fellow a good reprimanding for trying to ride the mule nobody could ride, but when he found he was so badly “bunged up” he decided to wait until later. Later every time Father thought of the man’s getting thrown from the field over the fence and getting so badly “bunged up” he could do nothing but laugh.

During the next two or three months no one tried to ride the mule nobody could ride. Neither did anyone have to be warned to stay off Scott’s back. The fact that he had once tossed a man from the field over a fence landing him in the middle of a hard, well packed road was warning enough.

In July after all the crops had been “laid by” and Emory, Irl and Walker were at home Emory and Walker went off a girling in a buggy Emory was using as a rural mail carrier. Soon Father and Mother rode off in a buggy to visit a nearby neighbor, leaving Irl at home. At this time he was about eighteen years old and feeling his strength and really looking for an opportunity to show ability to do what the other fellows couldn’t do. Soon he thought about what a great feat it would be to ride the mule nobody could ride. Thought he, now is the time and the place to do what can’t be done.

It wasn’t long before he had Scott tied with a large long rope used for roping cattle, well blindfolded and saddled. The next thing was to place a sack of dirt in the saddle and tie it securely with two or three strong ropes. He then ran the end of the long rope through the rings in the bridle bit and took a half hitch around Scott’s nose so it would be easy to hold him. He then took hold of the end of the rope, removed the blind fold and moved to the middle of the lot. As was expected Scott went into bucking action. Irl stood in the middle of the lot and let the mule buck in circles until he quit of his own accord. He then tied the rope to a post while he put on a clean shirt, coat and big derby hat. He then blindfolded the mule, took the rope off, led him from the lot to the lane, eased the sack of dirt from the saddle and quietly got into the saddle. He then got a good hold on bridle and saddle and pulled the string holding the blindfold in place and started the mule off in a lope. He kept him in a lope for a mile or more, then let him slow down to an ordinary saddle gait. By this time the bucking spirit was gone.

Irl later reported he rode around until he knew Father would be home so he could see the finest saddle mule in the country coming down the road in high style. He rode through the village of Jay and immediate community to let folks see how a sure-nough Southern Gentleman would look riding the finest, fastest and most stylist saddle mule in the country. After riding through the village in grand style he turned homeward and let Scott slow down to cool off before arriving home. Then about the time he was getting in sight of the Diamond Homestead he tightened up on the bridle reins and got Scott into his stylish movements.

Irl later related that just as expected, Father had returned and was sitting in his accustomed place on the front porch as if looking for someone. He then straightened up, pulled Scott into his most stylish gait and came down the road like a millionaire. Soon he left the main road and turned down the long lane leading directly to the front gate. At this point he really put on the aristocratic style and really caught Father's eye. Scott carried himself as proud as the proudest circus horse.

Mother came to the porch just as Scott turned down the lane directly toward the house. She avowed Father remarked about the fine saddle mule traveling so much like Scott, but he knew it wasn't Scott because nobody could ride him. As Irl neared the front gate Mother reported that Father commented a time or two about the good saddle mule and the stylish looking rider and wondered who the rider could be who had a mule so much like Scott. His last comment before Irl arrived at the gate was, "That's the way my mule would look if anybody could ride him."

As Irl approached the gate he looked down at the saddle as if untying a rope to prevent Father and Mother from seeing his face. As he arrived at the gate, he tightened the bridle, said, "Whoa" and dismounted from the saddle before the mule stopped. Father now recognized the stylish rider and showy mule and walked to the gate. He was somewhat excited. Irl and Mother both reported Father as having reprimanded Irl as follows: "Sir, don't you know nobody can ride that mule? Don't you know he'll kill you? What do you mean anyway?" Irl still was standing beside Scott's head and smiling at Father's remarks, replied, "He's a good saddle mule, Papa. How do you like the way he travels?" Father, still leaning against the gate continued, "But you should know nobody can ride that mule. He'll kill you yet. You have better sense."

Irl repeated, "He's a good saddle mule, don't you like the way he travels?"

Father did not reply.

Irl then removed the saddle, let the mule to the pump for water, and then carried him to the barn for feeding. The boys teased Father a great deal about his mule nobody could ride. A little later the boys said Father admitted he was really glad to have the mule broken to ride but was also glad that his boy who did what nobody could do did not get hurt in doing it.

On my next visit to the Diamond Homestead the boys were still teasing Father a little about the mule riding. When I had an opportunity to do so I asked Irl to tell me how he managed to ride the mule so successfully the first time he tried the stunt. He then related the story substantially as it is given here.

When Irl had finished relating the story of his riding the mule, he looked at me and said, inquiringly, "John, you never did ride a mule when you were a boy did you?"

"No, " I said, "that part of my education was neglected."

Irl then looked at me and remarked, in an authoritative manner, “John, I’ll tell you, mules have a lot of human nature in them. ‘Bout like boys and billy goats. John, you know if a boy finds you’re afraid of him he’s always a pickin’ on you, but the minute he learns you can stand your hand he quits pickin’ on you and respects you. That’s a mule exactly.” Then he looked around to see who was calling us to breakfast and said as we started toward the dining room, “Why Scott’s the best saddle mule in the country.”

Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough

A BOY, A PONY, PUP AND PIGS

SUMMER SOCKS

THE ROAMING RAM

A BOY –A PONY – PUP AND PIGS

When I was a slender gawky lad eighteen or nineteen years of age, Father had a small red dog named Pup, noted for miles around for his outstanding ability to hunt half wild range razor back hogs. Pup had been trained by the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough to hunt and chase small shoats from sweet potato patches covered with a heavy growth of vines, from corn fields partially covered with rank velvet bean vines and small thick growing patches of sugar cane. Usually in the fall of the year shoats ranging up and down the lanes around the small fields at the Diamond Homestead would acquire the habit of breaking through old rotten rail fences and we boys would have to chase them from the fields. These shoats would soon learn to go to the thickest places and hide among the cane, bean vines or potato vines, where it was impossible for us boys to find them. Pup was small and the right age for playing with boys. He would be carried to the fields where he soon learned to play with the boys in chasing the shoats from their hiding places. Pup had plenty of sense and soon learned to trail a hog to any hiding place and chase him out into the open spaces where the boys could join in the chase. This was all play to Pup but very useful play for the boys. Soon he was well trained to hunt the hidden hogs.

Pup never forgot his early training. When he grew to be larger we could take him into any woods, open piney woods, or thick swamp, let him know we were hunting hogs and wanted his assistance and be certain if any were in the vicinity or had been there during the past ten or twelve hours he would locate them. At this time the community was being settled by farmers who were clearing the cut over lands so the open range was not what it had been a few years before. Father had very few hogs on the open range and had little use for this dog except to chase mischievous hogs of cattle from the cultivated fields. However, Pup's fame as a "Hog Dog" had spread beyond the borders of his immediate community. Occasionally he was wanted by some of Father's friends to assist in hunting half wild range hogs strayed from home.

Late in October one fall when the little gray mare was seven years old and I was a tall, slender gawky lad nineteen years of age, one of Father's long time friends, Mr. Thomas W. Penton, known affectionately as Uncle Tom, came to Father's place and requested the use of Pup to assist him in locating some half wild hogs that had strayed from home sometime before. Father explained that Pup would be of little service unless one of the boys, as he called the Seven Sons, could go with him in the woods to let him know he was to hunt hogs and probably to assist in chasing them on a horse. He then explained that Pup was a short legged dog and could not run as fast as a wild razor back hog, and that it might be necessary for one of the boys to circle the hogs on a horse and assist Pup in bringing them to bay. With this explanation Father promised to send John with Pup and the little gray mare Friday afternoon or before day Saturday morning.

So Saturday morning at three o'clock Pup, the little gray mare and I, started for the home of Uncle Tom six or seven miles away, to assist him in "Rounding up his porkers," as he expressed it. We were there, had breakfast and off to the woods before daylight. Uncle Tom rode his small bay horse known as "Bob" and I rode the little gray mare. Uncle Tom

led the way to the woods approximately two miles away where his hogs had ranged a few months before. We noticed several persimmon trees full of ripe fruit. Soon I suggested to him that we look under these trees for fresh hog tracks and in the event any tracks were located I would have Pup trail them to their daytime hideouts.

Within a few minutes we located plenty of fresh tracks under a big persimmon tree. Pup was called and given to understand in language that he readily understood that we were looking for shoats and wanted his help. He trailed around under the tree a little and started off to the east. I remounted the little gray mare and followed him yelling "SOOEY" a few times. Pup now thoroughly understood what was wanted and went at the job in earnest. Uncle Tom and I kept up following Pup from one thicket of persimmon trees to another for sometime. Then Pup turned toward the southeast almost in a straight direction for a mile or more and stopped at the water's edge of a wide shallow pond. No hogs were in sight but plenty of fresh rooting in the mud at the edge of the water. I rode around the edge of the pond a few yards in each direction from where Pup had stopped and tried to assist him in trailing the hogs in the route they had left the pond after getting water and rooting in the mud. Pup refused to pick up any trail.

I then dismounted and petted Pup a little in appreciation of the good work he had done in trailing the hogs to the watering place. Pup then looked at me and then toward the middle of the pond where a cluster of trees and a lot of underbrush were growing. I then asked Uncle Tom if there was any dry ground in the center of the pond where the trees and bushes were growing. His reply was, "I don't think so." I then asked him how deep the water was between us and the trees. He didn't know. I then informed him that Pup thinks the hogs are in the pond and he and I are going in there and see and requested him to ride around to the opposite side of the pond so he could observe if any hogs ran out as Pup and I approached the center of the pond. He rode off around the pond. I waited beside Pup until Uncle Tom was well on the other side. I then remounted and signaled Pup to go into the center of the pond and I rode straight toward the center. Pup took the lead. Soon the water was over his back and because of the shortness of his legs he had to swim. He kept straight toward the trees. We found the trees were growing on dry ground. I hollowed "Sooey" a time or two and sicked him toward the center of the thicket. In he went and routed a herd of twenty or twenty-five hogs of all sizes, ages and colors, from pigs to old ones with long tusks protruding from their jaws. The taller ones waded and the smaller ones followed swimming coming out by Uncle Tom. Pup and I followed. By the time Pup and I got to where Uncle Tom was the hogs were scattering and moving off rapidly. I asked him if any of the hogs were his and if he wanted to catch some of them. He replied "Yes", and pointed toward four running off in a separate group looking like they were about a year and a half old or two years old and weighing about 125 pounds gross weight. I followed the four and called for Pup to come on. He followed as fast as he could. Soon the four were circled a time or two and headed back toward Pup. Pup met them and gave close chase with me still circling them. Soon they took refuge under a large clay root, where Pup held them at bay while Uncle Tom and I held a short conference.

Uncle Tom wanted the hogs but was of the opinion we could not catch them. I suggested we would try anyway, and dismounted, took two plow lines from my saddle, fixed a running noose in the end of one, tied the two together and with the assistance of a long dogwood sprout from a nearby thicket soon had one of the porkers roped and pulled from under the clay root. Uncle Tom helped me to tie this one. Soon another one was caught and tied. All this time Pup was urged to keep at close bay. When the third one was roped and pulled from under the clay root, the fourth one immediately rushed out over Pup and made off faster than Pup could follow. Uncle Tom was requested to hold the third one until I could help Pup catch the fourth one now fifty yards away and just getting into high gear. Saying this I handed him both hind legs of the hog, jumped astride the little gray mare and the race was on. The woods were reasonably open, but pretty well covered with old log tops, stumps and stump holes. It was plain from the start that the hog was out-distancing Pup and that he must have help or lose the hog. Within a few hundred yards the fleeing hog was overtaken. The long cow whip tied to the saddle was then brought into action and cracked a few times around the hog to make it wear itself down. Soon it began to slow down and was circled back toward faithful Pup who was coming as fast as his short legs would permit. A few short circles to get the hog back near Uncle Tom caused the hog to take refuge under a high log resting on another fallen log. While Pup kept it at bay I went to where Uncle Tom was holding the third hog, got the rope and by walking up on the high log roped the fourth and last one of the group. The fourth hog was then brought to where the other three were and the four left there until later in the day.

Uncle Tom and I then held a short conference about the other hogs that ran from the pond. He was certain that all of them were his but mentioned three large old ones looking like they might be three or four years old. He thought they would weigh 250 or 300 pounds gross weight each and expressed a wish to find them and see if they were in his mark, [Exhibited his ear marking or brand] but doubted if we could catch them at all because of their size. I asked him if he could show me the exact route they took when leaving the pond. He replied, "Yes." The ropes and whip were all tied back in place on the saddle and we rode slowly back to the pond, where Uncle Tom pointed to the route the hogs ran.

I then dismounted, brought Pup to the tracks made by the fleeing hogs and petted him a little by way of encouraging him to do his best. I remounted and suggested that we lope along slowly keeping well up with Pup who would not make much speed because he was now showing signs of being a little tired. I then told Uncle Tom that we would "Jump" the hogs a mile or more hidden under brush or probably in another pond used as a hideout and when we did it would be necessary for me to do a lot of circling and real running to make those big old rascals seek refuge for protection where Pup could hold them at bay. I then added, "Hogs as large and as old as those would probably prefer to fight a while before seeking refuge in any hideout or other place where Pup could hold them at bay." To this Uncle Tom agreed and said, "Yes, John, they've probably learned to stay together and fight to protect each other, and that's why they're still here in the woods."

All this time Pup was trailing along keeping the horses in a slow trot to keep up. Pup continued at this rate for something over a mile and stopped near a brier patch at the edge

of a large dogwood thicket used much as a “Sheep Wallow.” Here Pup raised his head and sniffed the air as if trying to decide if the hogs were in the brier patch and to learn if I wanted him to enter the briers and route the hogs. I suggested to Uncle Tom that I would do the best I could to keep the hogs running in open woods where they could soon be tired down and would bay in a clay root or under a cover of logs as a protection.

When given the signal to go, Pup picked his way among the briers and soon ran out three big hogs, and the master hog race I ever had was on and stayed on for quite a while. It must have lasted three miles, of course, counting the circles and turns made. The whip was brought into action and the burly big fellow crowded to the limit for a full mile or more until they began to slow down for lack of wind. They were then whipped a little more severe than at first and made to circle back toward the pond used as a daytime hideout from which they had been routed two hours earlier.

In making the circles back toward the original day time hideout in the pond I had kept hollowing and popping the long whip so that Pup would know our location and join the race without making the long run made by the hogs. The hogs and I had gone only a short distance on the return trip back toward the pond when faithful Pup came meeting us. He must have been delighted to find the big burley beasts slowed down sufficient for him to keep well up in the race. A little more severe use of the whip and a little more racing under pressure lowered the fighting spirit of the hogs and slowed down their speed so that Pup could readily snap their hind legs. Pressure was kept on and the hogs made to continue in the direction of the pond. Soon Uncle Tom joined in the race. He was surprised to see such wild hogs toned down to a driving speed, but when he saw the white lather dripping from the mouths of the hogs and their tongues hanging out he understood the cause of the slow down.

Pup was encouraged to continue snapping the hind legs of the hogs. They couldn't stand this and soon took refuge under a high log hanging over a fallen treetop. We rode up close to the log in front of the hogs. Uncle Tom looked at the ear markings of the hogs found that one of them was his, but expressed grave doubts if we would be able to catch it. I suggested we try. He agreed and the task was started.

Pup was called from his baying and the hogs permitted to move from their refuge, and get a little start ahead of the dog. Then the little gray mare was raced right up on the hogs causing them to scatter, each now trying to save himself. The one wanted was followed, Pup called into the race and urged to snap the hogs hind legs freely. This was too much for the tired porker. He soon sought refuge by backing up against a big log partially covered with briers in the edge of a small thicket of young dogwood trees, where Pup held him at close bay. The situation was now surveyed. Uncle Tom and I conferred on the plan of attack. He looked at the length of the hog's tusks and estimated his fighting ability and declined to dismount from Bob's back. My expressed judgement was the hog was too tired to fight if it could be avoided. The suggestion was then made that he be roped and tied close up to a nearby forked dogwood. Uncle Tom agreed.

The long rope was fixed and with the help of a long fishing pole-like dogwood sprout the noose was placed near the hog's mouth. As was expected, the hog grabbed the noose in his mouth to bite it. The noose was jerked tight quickly and held that way to prevent it from being slipped off. The end of the rope was then passed through the fork of a dogwood tree near by and pulled with all my strength. As soon as Pup saw the hog's head was roped so he could not turn around, he began biting the hog's hind legs make the hog jump forward. All slack in the rope was pulled over the fork in the dogwood as fast as the hog moved forward. Within a few minutes the porker's nose was pulled up tight against the tree. The long end of the rope was then tied to another nearby tree.

Uncle Tom then dismounted and assisted me in tying the big hog in real hog fashion. Four strong rope-like strings were used. First his hind legs were securely tied together. Second his fore legs were securely tied together. Third, the hind legs and the fore legs were pulled together and tied securely. Fourth, his jaws were tied securely. The big hog was then left in a cool shade to rest until a wagon came to haul him home. We estimated the big hog to be five years old and to weigh 300 pounds gross weight.

Uncle Tom now suggested that we go home and get dinner and a wagon to take the hogs home.

After dinner his son Wilburn and a grandson, Tom, came with a wagon and carried the hogs home. On the way back to the woods for the hogs we went by the pond in which the hogs had been found thinking a few of the scattered ones may come back about noon for water and finding all quiet might have slipped back to their hideout in the center of the pond. In this we were not disappointed. At the water's edge Pup picked up a trail and led off southward. We followed keeping close up so as to be near if any hogs were routed and to know how many and what kind were in the bunch. Half a mile from the pond two nice shoats about a year old jumped from a clump of small bushes and ran off at full speed, leaving Pup from the start. Again it was necessary to circle the hogs and put on pressure speed to tire them down so Pup could bring them to bay. The race was on in full speed. The whip was again brought into action and cracked around the hind legs of the hogs. A half a mile of pressure speed brought the slow down. They were then made to circle back toward the pond so as to meet Pup. Two hundred yards away Pup joined in the race and began at once to pinch the hind legs of the shoats, causing them to take refuge by backing up against the first log in sight. Uncle Tom came up in a trot on Bob. Both shoats were his. Since the shoats had bayed in an open space one was roped from the back of the little gray mare. The other one ran with Pup still pinching its rear end, so that it was unable to make much speed. Uncle Tom held the one roped so that I could assist Pup in catching the other one. It was caught not more than a hundred yards from where the first one was being held by Uncle Tom. The two were then tied and left for the wagon to take home.

We then went back for the wagon and assisted in loading the seven hogs caught and tied, loaded them on the wagon so the boys could go home. When the hogs were loaded Uncle Tom and I circled the woods for another hour or two, but never found any more hogs. About 4:30 in the afternoon Uncle Tom started for his home where he was needed to

assist the boys in unloading the hogs and I started home, with a tired Pup. The day had certainly brought me some new and unique experiences. During the next few days I walked with some difficulty on account of the soreness of the muscles of my legs caused by so much zigzag riding and the jumping of so many big logs in racing the piney woods razorbacks.

The racing and roping events of the day reminded me of a speech made by a Florida citizen in 1892 in Chicago while attending the Colombian Exposition. It was made at a meeting held shortly after awards had been made for prize-winning hogs on exhibition in a fat hog show at the Exposition. Representatives from a number of states were present at the meeting. Men from a number of livestock producing states had been called upon for a few remarks. They had praised the big fat hogs on exhibition, and boasted about the fine stock being produced in their states. Each speaker from a livestock producing state had tried to boast a little bigger and brag a little louder about the fat hogs and the feed produced in his state for making the big fat hogs than the speaker from other states.

Near the close of the meeting some prankish person slipped a note to the presiding officer notifying him that a representative from Florida was present and requested that the Florida man be invited to speak as the representative from his state. At that time Florida had no hogs except a few lean, long, lank piney woods razorbacks. The Florida man knew this and knew the representatives from the livestock producing states knew this too. He also probably knew he was being called upon merely as a joke and not for what he might say about fat hog production in Florida.

The Florida man was a resourceful speaker and was not to be outdone in the boasting and bragging business. He praised the fine fat hogs produced in other states and the progressiveness of the people making this possible. He congratulated the people who have the privilege of representing such states as a Big Fat Hog Show. He told the crowd the breed of hogs they were producing was fine for their states and urged them to continue producing that same breed. But, said he: "Down in Florida we must stick to the breed suited to our section, Piney woods razor backs. It would be a wasteful use of time and energy for us to undertake to grow your breed of hogs down in Florida. First, because our corncribs are far too small, and second, because we must produce a breed that can out-run a "Nigger." He closed and sat down amidst applause.

The newspaper had much to say during the next few weeks about this speech and the breed of hogs being produced in Florida. Florida and the South got far more publicity from this short impromptu speech made by one of its resourceful citizens than did all the livestock producing states for the great speeches made and the big fat hogs sent to the Exposition.

Florida and the South again got a lot of publicity in 1918 when a Florida man produced a hog that took the Grand Champion Prize at a Stock Show in Chicago. Many newspapers whose publishers recalled the breed of hogs produced in Florida in 1892 again mentioned the incident and commented in their editorials about the progress made in Florida during the twenty-six years intervening.

THE PINEY WOODS HOG

The piney woods hog looked lean and lank
With little fat showing about the flank
For the working man he made good meats
Ham ribs backbone 'd bacon were good eats

His legs were long 'd slender for the race
Made for rapid moving from place to place
He carried but little fat upon the rack
To hinder racing swiftly o'er the track

His body was plump 'd trim made for speed
Because this oft was his greatest need
To win a race with a hungry wolf or man
Seeking a meal from a tender tasty ham

His long slender nose was strong 'd tough
So he could dig for grubs 'd roots enough
To keep himself growing and in fit shape
When chased for ham to make a good escape

He lived where little grain was grown
From a tiny pig he was upon his own
Yet he put meat into the dinner pots
Without help from the big feeding lots

He did the best could be done by hogs
In a land where all men work with logs
Hams spareribs bacon and sausage fried
Backbone and shoulder baked he supplied

But few thoroughbreds could do better
In such a land bound with the same fetter
A thoroughbred left here upon his own
Would be a flabby mass o' hair hide 'd bone

He dug roots 'd grubs with no wish to quit
Fought wolves 'd bobcats with bulldog grit
'Twas the old law of self-preservation
Planing to lay a broad 'd deep foundation

The piney woods hog was great in his day
He served his country in a splendid way
Oft did he stall off starvation
Thus saving a great and powerful nation

'Stead deriding this hog with sniffs 'd sneers
Silly wisecracks stale jokes jibes 'd jeers
He should be praised for self-reliance
Ability to meet hard times with defiance

To the pioneer the lean lank rooting hog
Was like sweet manna from the hand of God
The kind hungry Jews on the march did eat
To pioneers those rooters were bread 'd meat

The range hog we just 'd joke so much about
Is what put the whole British army to rout
Because they fed George and his men so well
They whipped 'd sent a British army pell mell

Had it not been for the thrift of this hog
Our army ne'er could have gone o'er the log
And we might have been till the present day
Trudging along the same old British way

Let none criticize this pioneer hog
Like pioneer men he came from God
To feed pioneer men during early years
Thus saving life and freeing fret 'd fears

He served well his place in History
'Twas thrift brought success 'd not mystery
'Twas his thrift won the war 'd made us great
Then let us his thriftiness emulate

Tip out hats to his untarnished memory
For the priceless pearl he won, LIBERTY
By recognizing his service to mankind
E'RE HE PASSES from the HUMAN MIND

SUMMER SOCKS

During the Civil War and for several years thereafter socks were scarce in the markets of almost all the southern states. They were exceedingly scarce in pioneer West Florida and South Alabama. During this period all socks worn by men and boys were made at home. The women spun the thread and knitted the socks. The greater portion of home knit socks were made of wool. Occasionally they were made half wool and half cotton, by twisting one wool thread and one cotton thread together and knitting the socks of the twisted thread. Almost every household had a spinning wheel and cards. One set of cards was used for wool and another for cotton. The spinning wheel and cards were prized possessions of every elderly woman when I was a boy.

In those days many elderly women spent almost all of their time spinning thread and knitting socks. A number of widows supported themselves in this work. The wool and cotton were carded into small bats called rolls and then spun into thread. Well do I remember seeing my grandmother Ezell carding wool into bats and then spinning it into thread. As the thread was spun it would be wound over the back of a straight chair or some similar object. A bundle of it would be tied in what was called a hank. When this thread was to be knitted into socks it would be wound into a small ball for convenience in moving about the house.

Many a woman could knit a pair of socks in one day in addition to taking care of her regular household duties. Hence, it was not a hard task for a good housekeeper to supply her husband with well-knitted socks, because only two or three pair was needed during a year. The difficult task came when a mother had a bunch of rough boys large enough to wear socks. Mother started out to knit wool socks for her boys. She soon found that she had not sufficient time to supply her Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough with home knit wool socks. The four older boys had the privilege and pleasure of wearing a few pair of these rare luxuries, but since we never wore shoes until we were about sixteen years old except during the coldest days of winter the few pair we had lasted us until we were almost grown and cheap store bought socks were available.

Father never ceased to wear wool socks. When Mother could no longer obtain the necessary thread for use in knitting his socks he was able to purchase them from some widow or from the clothing stores in the nearby villages. However, he soon found it required more than two pair of store bought wool socks to last him a year. He often said it took six pair of the store bought wool socks to last as long as two pair of home knit ones. The wearing ability was in the ration of three to one.

When Father worked in the woods or in the river at various phases of logging he could easily wear a pair of wool socks a week without getting them so full of dust and perspiration until they would possess unpleasant odors. However, after he sold all his logging equipment and began to farm the condition changed. In mid-summer when the weather was dry and hot Father plowed in dusty fields along toward the end of the week the odor of his socks would cause one to suspect the place was well supplied with hamburger cheese of the overripe variety, the variety like a certain farmer brought home

one evening from the village in his coat pocket when his four year old son met him at the gate and placed his arms around his daddy, hugging him to show his affection, and stuck his nose against the outside of the coat pocket containing the cheese. On smelling the cheese he suddenly let loose of his Father and ran toward the house calling to his Mother: "Mama, Mama, Daddy's dead and doesn't know it. Mama, he shore is dead and doesn't know it. We got to send for the preacher and the undertaker, and we shore got to hurry."

In mid-summer Mother was almost continuously speaking to Father about the odor of his Summer Socks and admonishing him to put on some clean ones in the morning. Sometimes she would place a pair of clean socks by his shoes and insist that he put them on in the morning. However, she soon found her instructions went unheeded unless she hid the dirty one. Father would listen attentively but do nothing except tease Mother a little. He would wear his Summer Socks until Saturday night regardless of Mother's admonition. Her lectures were continued notwithstanding Father always forgot her advice before morning. Father finally got so he would leave his Summer Socks and shoes in the back yard near the laundering equipment on a bench where a small tub was kept for summer foot washing each night.

One summer in the month of June when the weather was hot, the fields dry and dusty and Father had plowed all week, Saturday night his Summer Socks and shoes had been left on the bench in the back yard as usual before he came in, took a bath and ate supper. Shortly after supper Father and four or five of the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough were sitting on the back porch discussing current events when Mother passed by on her way from the kitchen and accused Father of leaving his plow shoes and Summer Socks on the porch. Father explained that his plow shoes and Summer Socks were on a bench under the China tree right where he had left them. Mother expressed doubt about the truthfulness of the statement. Father teased her a little about her imagination and the subject of Summer Socks was dropped.

Within a few minutes the boys scattered off to various parts of the house and Mother began arranging bed linen in several rooms. Within an hour or so every one had gotten off to bed. Shortly after Father and Mother lay down they were heard discussing Summer Socks again. Mother accused Father of leaving his plow shoes and Summer Socks in the bedroom to worry her all night. Father was heard laughing about her acute sense of smell and her imagination. He admonished Mother to stop her silly sock talk and go to sleep. He assured her the socks were in the back yard where he had left them. All was quiet for two or three minutes when Mother again accused Father of leaving the shoes and Summer Socks in the room to tease her. Said she, "Those smelly old Summer Socks are right here under this bed," and up she got, lighted a lamp and searched under the bed. Still no Summer Socks in sight. Father had a good laugh at Mother's expense because she found no socks under the bed as she had expected to do. She went to the front door, sniffed a little fresh air, blew out the lamp and returned to bed. All was quiet for ten or fifteen minutes.

Soon Mother raised up in bed and accused Father of hiding his socks in the closet by the chimney. She sat still sniffing in an effort to make certain the socks were in the closet. Father admonished her to leave off her silly sock talk and let her imagination and tongue rest a little so she could sleep. She continued to sniff the air trying to determine if the socks were in the house. Father continued to tease her about her keen sense of smell. This went on for five minutes when Mother again got up and lighted the lamp. She then searched the closet from floor to ceiling. Still no socks in sight.

She again went to the front door this time walking out on the porch where she could get some real fresh air as she expressed it. After standing on the porch for a minute or two she returned to the room, blew out the lamp and went back to bed. Father now teased her worse than before about her acute sense of smell, or her imaginary sense of smell and admonished her to quiet down for the night. She admitted that she really thought she had smelled the Summer Socks before she got up. All was quiet for ten or fifteen minutes when Mother suddenly sat up in bed and accused Father of hiding his Summer Socks in the Wardrobe in the corner of their bedroom. She sat and sniffed. Father lay and laughed. She grumbled. Father teased. Mother sat still and sniffed. Father rolled over and razzed her about her strong imagination. Mother lay down and was quiet for two or three minutes, then sat up and sniffed some more saying, "The smelly old Summer Socks are hidden in that wardrobe and I know it. The odor comes from that corner of the room." She again got up lighted the lamp and searched every shelf, nook and corner in the wardrobe. She even laid everything in it out on the floor, shaking and unfolding each garment or article of linen. Still no socks in sight.

Father now laughed more than before and really teased Mother about her silly sock hunt. She took it good-naturedly but walked to the porch and remained there until Father's loud laughing had subsided. She then returned to the room, blew out the lamp and went back to bed without saying a word. Father then rolled over and said, "Thank you Missus, glad you've decided to stop the silly sock talk and go to sleep." Mother said nothing. All was quiet again for ten or fifteen minutes.

Mother again sat up in bed and sniffed trying to detect the Summer Socks odor. She continued to sit and sniff with now and then a comment about the "Stinking old Summer Socks." Father continued to lie still and now and then comment about Mother's imagination. He accused Mother of having the finest imaginary sense of smell he had ever heard of. Mother accused Father of having his nose so completely stopped up with plow dust from that old red clay corn field until he couldn't smell a dead horse under his nose. This sniffing, smelling, teasing and razzing continued for a few minutes when Mother again got up, lighted the lamp and accused Father of placing the "Stinking old Summer Socks" between the mattresses, and instructed Father to get out of that bed at once and assist her in looking between the mattresses. Father's reply was, "It's too late to start any more nonsensical sock searching now," and admonished Mother to get back to bed and get a little sleep before getting up time.

Mother walked around over the bedroom sniffing for Summer Sock odors. Soon she told Father to get up or she would roll him and the mattress off on the floor. Father lay still

and snored as if sound asleep. Mother gently took hold of the back corner of the top mattress and pulled it over Father. She then walked to the front of the bed and pulled the mattress off the bed rolling Father from the bed, dropping him flat on the floor with the mattress on top of him. She left Father and the mattress lying still, got the lamp and searched for the Summer Socks. Still no socks in sight.

Father now crawled from under the mattress and informed Mother that he would put the mattress back on the bed as soon as she was through with her Summer Sock Searching and Sniffing. Mother put the lamp down and said, "Put the mattress back and I'll straighten the linen." The work was soon done and each went back to bed without much teasing or joking. Evidently they had detected each other's patience was beginning to show signs of weariness. All was quiet for five minutes.

Mother turned her pillow over to make it a little more comfortable and lay back down. She then sat up, grabbed the pillow and threw it quickly to the floor in the middle of the bedroom. She then got up and lighted the lamp. As she was lighting the lamp Father rolled over and inquired if she had had a bad dream or a nightmare or if she had gotten up to start breakfast or to milk the cows. Mother curtly replied, "No, it's not a bad dream or any nightmare. Neither do I expect to start breakfast or milk any cows until I get your STINKING OLD SUMMER SOCKS out of this room and sleep a little if we don't have breakfast before ten o'clock Sunday morning." By this time her searching and sniffing were over. She had found the Summer Socks in her pillowcase. As she pulled them from the case she remarked to Father, "After all this trouble here they are right where you hid them for me to smell." Father was surprised because he knew he had left the socks on the bench in the back yard and wondered how they had gotten in the pillowcase. Father was too busy trying to figure out how the socks got in the pillowcase to make any reply.

Mother took the SUMMER SOCKS, walked to the edge of the front porch and threw them as far as she could in the yard. As she came back through the bedroom she remarked to Father, "I'll wash my hands, get another pillow, put a clean case on it and maybe I can get a little sleep before the night is over." To this Father replied in a long drawn out manner, "A, M E N, M I S S U S."

Mother then went to the back porch where she washed her hands using plenty of soap to remove the Summer Sock odor. She now made good her threat to get a new pillow in a clean case and try to get a little sleep before the night is over.

All was quiet now on the front side of the house. Soon all was quiet on the back porch and in the back yard. Several of the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough were glad Mother had suddenly stepped out on the front porch to throw the socks in the yard rather than on the back porch at that particular moment.

THE ROAMING RAM

During the time the four older of the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough were of the “goat age”, five to fifteen inclusive, the community adjacent to the one in which we ranged had what was known far and wide as “The Roaming Ram.” This remarkable sheep was the property of a spinster who had acquired the sheep when it was a little motherless lamb. About the same time on some of her numerous visits to southern cities she picked up an orphan Negro boy. The lamb and the boy grew up together and were boon companions until the boy grew too large and too old to spend his time playing with the pet sheep. This boy taught the sheep to butt and butt hard. He also taught the sheep many prankish tricks and how to protect himself in butting bouts. Doubtless the sheep also taught the boy many tricks about sheep lore. It was said of them by their nearby neighbors that the two often reminded people of “Mary and Her Little Lamb”, because wherever the boy went there the sheep “was sure to go.”

When the boy grew up he left the frontier country and returned to the city, probably in search of kith and kin, leaving his pet ram to live a lonely life. ‘Twas then the ram began to roam and ramble in search of congenial companions. When one understands no Negroes resided in this frontier community and no sheep grazed on the open ranges near the spinster’s home it is easy to understand why the Negro returned to the city leaving his pet sheep to roam and ramble the range alone. When the sheep found himself without a companion he roamed the range and occasionally would be found grazing with a herd of cattle. He soon formed a habit of taking up with whatever herd of cattle or flock of goats he came across in the big woods and accompanying them to their pen for the night, where he would make himself a nuisance by butting every person who came near him or attempted to drive him into or out of a pen. Almost every family residing within a radius of six or eight miles from the home of this sheep had interesting stories to tell of visits from the Roaming Ram or Butting Monster as he was sometimes called. He was no respecter of persons. He butted every person crossing his path, be he young or old, large or small. Only stout men who knew the tricks of his trade and armed with heavy clubs could cope with him at all. Those people who had once felt the effects of his blows stayed away from barn yards and cattle pens during his visits unless accompanied by a stout man armed with suitable clubs.

This roaming Ram had never visited our place because we were far out on the edge of his range. The four older boys of the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough had heard some little talk of this Roaming Ram and his ability to butt. We had heard only enough about him to arouse our boyish curiosity and create within us a desire to see this butting monster and have an opportunity to compare his ability to butt with that of our Dear Old Sandy. We knew how hard our pet billy goat, Dear Old Sandy, could butt and wondered if a sheep could out butt him. We knew if he could beat Sandy he must be a real butting monster, something to be dreaded, something to be shunned. Really, we had begun to wonder if all this talk about the Roaming Ram and his butting were true or only fairy tales. Or perhaps a ghost story to frighten prankish little boys out of lots of fun.

And too, we had heard many stories about a great big “bogy man” who was supposed to “git” all bad little boys. We had gotten to the age where we were beginning to want to know more about this great big “bogy man.” If he “got” bad little boys we wanted to know what he did with them and if anybody had ever seen him. Boy-like we wanted information and were willing to search for it. We were beginning to think the story of the Roaming Ram was just another big “bogy man” story.

In an adjacent community lived a venerable lady, Mrs. Cartwright, who was considered for miles around as absolute authority on ghosts and ghost lore. Her home was four or five miles southwest from the Diamond Homestead. She had a relative residing six or seven miles to the northeast from the Diamond Homestead. Two or three times a year she would visit her relative and usually spent a night at the Diamond Homestead on her way to the home of her relative and a night with us as she returned to her home. She was not only [an] absolute authority on ghosts and ghost lore but had an inexhaustible supply of ghost stories and was expert in telling them. When she spent a night at the Diamond Homestead nothing pleased us boys more than to have her tell us some of her breathtaking, hair raising, nerve shivering ghost stories. We would sit around her feet on the floor and listen for hours at her thrilling stories of ghosts and goblins. We would sit and listen to her stories of ghosts as white as snow. After listening to her stories of ghosts and goblins and all sorts of spirits of departed human beings we would look for ghosts and goblins in every fence corner in the long lane leading from the big road to the house. We would even jump from our own shadows at high noon.

The good old lady told us that ghosts are spirits of the long departed dead who had come back to this earth to fulfill some important mission that had been neglected during life. She said they can float in the air faster than any bird can fly. They can vanish at will and appear miles away in an instant and often do this very thing to accomplish a good purpose. When we asked her for an explanation she said: “Why, child, ghosts can change themselves from one form to another in the twinkling of an eye. One minute a ghost may be in the shape of a sheep and as large as a big bed sheet and in the next minute it may be in the shape of a cat as black as night.” We boys couldn’t exactly understand this. It was beyond our grade. We asked her why this was so. Said she: “Ghosts change their form and color so they can travel unnoticed. Usually in the daytime they are the color of light and are often invisible. At night they are often as black as the night itself so that no one who has not the real spiritual eye can detect their presence.” We accepted the explanation but informed her we did not thoroughly understand it. She replied by saying: “That’s alright boys, you will when you grow older and have some real ghost experience.”

We next asked the venerable lady why ghosts scare people. “My dear boys,” said she, “ghosts never like to scare people. If people get scared at ghosts it is their own fault.” At this moment she hesitated and looked long into the fire on the hearth in the large stick and dirt chimney as she tried to think up another ghost story to tell us or to get a better answer to our questions. Presently she said: “If people would only speak kindly to ghosts they would never get scared.” We wanted to know immediately if ghosts could understand words like people speak and what people might say to a ghost. Said she: “Why, children, ghosts can and often do speak to real people, but since ghosts are

spiritual and immortal and people are not, ghosts do not speak to people until people have become very, very spiritual so they can understand spiritual things.” Here she hesitated a long time as if in a deep study. Then she looked at us and said: “If people would only ask a ghost what it wants or what they can do for it, it will usually answer in one or two measured words spoken in a low spiritual tone but clear and audible like ‘REPENT, FACE ABOUT, SIN NOT, SOBER UP’ and vanish in the twinkling of an eye leaving the trembling person in silent darkness to think soberly, quietly and clearly.” By this time we boys would have to get out hats on tight to keep our hair from standing up straight.

One night while sitting around the good lady’s feet directly in front of the large open fireplace, full six or seven feet wide, she told us about a ghost that resembled a large black sheep that had roamed the country side for many years. She said it had the habit of suddenly butting people down and then mysteriously disappearing in the darkness. She knew it was nothing but an evil spirit taking the shape of a large black sheep as dark as night so it could travel in the dark unseen and suddenly butt people down as a warning against mean ways of living and disappear. As proof of this she related that no one had ever been Able to get his hands on this evil spirit. When the lonely traveler had reached his hands out to take hold of it, it had vanished as quickly and as quietly as it had appeared. A time or two it had been cornered but had just vanished without any one ever knowing how, where or when it disappeared. All efforts to catch or cripple it had been futile. It had been shot at [from] close range several times but had always been able to disappear quicker than the explosion of powder. One man, to her certain knowledge, had shot at it three fair shots with pewter bullets without effect, and after the third shot had taken no effect he dropped his gun and fled in fright because he knew now he had been shooting at a “spirit.” We didn’t exactly understand what she meant but said nothing, while she hesitated and relighted her pipe.

After she had gotten her pipe to smoking real well again she said: “My children, a few times this ghost has appeared in the form of a snow white sheep so people could see it with the hope of having some one speak to it so it could obtain some desired information, but so far no one had met the white ghost who had been courageous enough to speak.” She then explained that usually black ghosts are evil spirits and white ones are good spirits. She admonished us to speak to any black or any white ghost we might be fortunate enough to meet, but to do so in a low gentle tone of voice with but few and measured words.” She evidently saw we boys were showing signs of being a little frightened and smiling, said: “Why, my dear children, do not get frightened, no ghost has ever really harmed anyone. They are only spirits. They appear in the twinkling of an eye. Never run from one. They vanish and appear miles away in an instant. If you run from a ghost it may appear in front of you and before you know it you’ll run right into its arms.” As she hesitated to rekindle her pipe we asked her if that black ghost didn’t hurt people when it suddenly appeared behind them and butted them down? Then before she could answer we explained that Dear Old Sandy sometimes hurt when he suddenly appeared and butted folks down from behind and asked her to explain the difference.

Said she: “You boys are too small and too young to understand the difference. Maybe someday you’ll understand. It will be when you are older. Keep you eyes open and your

mind active. However, the difference is like this. Dear Old Sandy is a plain mortal goat. He cannot change his color or form. Neither can he appear in any place in an instant like a spirit can. When the spirit appeared in the shape of a black sheep it did not butt people down. They were only frightened because of their own wickedness and fell down because of fright. They had no bruises on the seats of their pants like you boys had after being butted down by Dear Old Sandy.”

We replied that Dear Old Sandy may not be spiritual but he could get behind a fellow sometimes without a fellow knowing it until he felt the deadening blow and went sprawling on the ground or a rolling off like a bucket butted for feed. She now laughed at our explanation, yawned a little and suggested that we better go to bed before the sandman got us. With this suggestion we boys slipped off to bed and pulled the cover over our heads to keep from seeing black ghosts, white ghosts and ghosts of many colors all at the same time.

Soon this ghost story began to be linked with the stories of the Roaming Ram belonging to the spinster. Soon we boys began to wonder if the Roaming Ram did really and truly exist at all or if the whole thing was based on the good old lady’s ghost story. We now had another great big “Bogy Man” problem to solve, or at least to think about and draw our own boyish conclusions. We had heard about the Roaming Ram but had never heard any one say positively that he had been butted down by him. We thought about it for a few days and began to wonder if the Roaming Ram was only an evil spirit sent in the shape of a ghost to punish evil doers. We halfway decided to play no more pranks on anybody or any animal, not even on Dear Old Sandy. For a few days we kept thinking over this sheep ghost story and the mysteriousness of the way ghosts can suddenly vanish and appear far away in the twinkling of an eye. We also thought a lot about the mystery of changing from one form to another or from one color to another to suit special situations and occasions. This was long, long before we studied Political Science, or understood the chameleon-like changes in form or color of politicians. The good old lady was right when she said: “Maybe some day you’ll understand,” and admonished us to keep our eyes open, and our minds active.

Within a month or so after the good old lady had stirred our imaginations with he ghost lore Father employed a carpenter to do some finish work on a new house nearing completion. The carpenter was a rather large man, a man who was beginning to show the middle age spread by developing a “bay window” on his front side. He was easily irritated, always wearing his feelings on the outside of his coat sleeves. He too was fond of telling ghost stories, especially as they related to the Civil War battles in which he had fought as a Confederate soldier. Father was away in a log camp, leaving Mother and the children at home to take care of the place. After supper the carpenter liked to entertain us boys with war stories that sounded more like ghost stories or fairy tales than true history. However, we boys liked to hear his stories and prodded him along by asking lot of questions. One night after he had told a hair raising ghost story about spirits appearing over a battle field where men were dying, we boys asked him if he knew anything about the good Old Lady’s ghost story of the butting sheep that was only a spirit taking the form of a black sheep so it could travel at night unseen and frighten people to make them

quit their evil ways, and taking the form of a white sheep sometimes to represent a good spirit. He laughed a little and said he would explain that entire mess as soon as he could get a fresh chew of brown mule tobacco to aid in digesting his supper.

Within three minutes he had the chewing adjusted and began the explanation. Said he: "That ain't no ghost at all. It ain't nothing but that little old pet sheep belonging to the spinster. This sheep's been running around over the neighborhood since that Negro boy ran away and went back to town to be with other Negroes. I've heard some talk about how this sheep can butt but have paid no attention to it. It ain't nothing but idle gossip. I doubt if the sheep ever butted anyone. No sheep can butt a grown man down. Such talk is tommy-rot, nonsense. You boys should be ashamed to ask about such nonsense."

We gazed at the fire while the carpenter chewed on his tobacco and spit on the hot coals and listened to the sputtering. We wondered if he was right and the venerable lady wrong.

The carpenter then looked at the top of the room as he chewed in the same two-four time in which he worked with his jack plane and hand saw. After chewing a while and spitting some more he looked straight at us boys and said: "By Granny, I've been seeing sheep all my life but never have seen one that could butt a real man down. Sheep just can't butt that way. That's all there is to that. Idle words, gossip, exaggeration, straight out lying."

We boys began firing a fusillade of questions at him. We wanted to know if he had ever been butted by a sheep or a billy goat and it knocked him down, and if it hurt much? Before he could answer we added that Dear Old Sandy could and often did butt a man down and it hurt grown men too, sometimes, like it did little boys. This made him furious. He looked straight at us, flashed his eyes and scraped his feet on the floor as if trying to frighten us and said: "By, Granny, you little rascals must think I'm crazy to think about letting a little old sheep or a stinking old billy goat butt me at all much less butt me down. Pshaw! If one were to attempt to butt me I'd kick him a summersault and 'stomp' the gizzards out'n him." He then kicked with one foot high into the air and "stomped" on the floor with both feet to show us how he would do the trick.

We were now a little frightened and sat perfectly quiet for at least three minutes. During this time the carpenter's chewing made the brown mule juice flow freely. He squirted the juice between two fingers straight into the fire as though he could hit a tomcat's eyes the full length of a large pioneer log house. After the juice was emptied from his mouth he said: "By, Granny, sooner or later I'm going to see that old Roaming Ram and see for myself how some people have stretched the truth about him. I have no use for such talk. Why can't they tell the truth. Half the truth hasn't yet been told. Pshaw! I'm disgusted."

We then asked him if the ghost sheep as an evil spirit could butt a man down like the good Old Lady said it sometimes did and if it is true that people were really afraid of the ghost sheep. He now seemed a little more vexed than before. He stood up, made a step or two to the fireplace and said: "By Granny, I'm telling you right now for the last time that you should know better than to believe any such talk about a ghost sheep or a pet sheep. Neither of them can butt a grown man down. Disgusting, pure tommy-rot! If a spirit

should take the form of a sheep it would never travel up and down the roads and trails butting people for meanness or fun. Spirits never do so such things. And as for that little ole pet ram, there's nothing to that wild tale you've heard. He probably butted a boy a little in play and long gossiping tongues seized upon this with the idea of connecting it with the good old lady's ghost tale to make something fearfully frightening and alarm weak minded folks like some I know. Some day I'm going to welcome the opportunity to see that little old runty ram and learn just how many lies have been told about him and his butting habits. And, by Granny, I'm telling you right now and for all time when I do you can bet your socks I'll clear up all this foolishness about which THE TRUTH HAS NEVER YET BEEN TOLD."

At this time Mother suggested that the carpenter and us boys better get off to bed and talk some more at another time about ghosts, Roaming Rams and butting billy goats. We accepted her suggestion and hied away to bed still thinking about that Roaming Ram about which we had heard so much and trying to reconcile the conflicting reports of his ability to butt. We tried to console ourselves by wishing that maybe some time he will come home at night with out cattle or goats and we shall see with out own eyes if he can out butt Dear Old Sandy.

It was not thus about the ghost sheep. We thought a lot about him, but never did we wish he would come to our house with our cattle or goats or alone. We had no desire to see this spirit sheep traveling trails, roads or lanes. We were suspicious of anything that could change its form suddenly in the twinkling of an eye. We had no great longing to come face to face with anything that could vanish in the twinkling of an eye and appear far away in an instant, and probably in a new form. We just wondered and doubted and soliloquized, "maybe some day we'll understand."

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The carpenter had erected a workbench under a large China tree near the end of the front porch. He spent as much or more time at this bench as he did in the house. He was making doors and window frames and dressing the material by hand. A few days, not more than a week, after the carpenter's talk with us boys about the Roaming Ram and the spirit sheep, about the middle of the afternoon the wind blew down a lot of leaves and berries from the big China tree under which the carpenter's workbench was located. The leaves and berries were all over the ground near the bench and on top of it. A light shower of rain fell immediately after the leaves and berries were blown from the tree. During the rain and for some time following the shower the carpenter had found it convenient to work inside the house. He was working inside when we four boys came from out little log cabin school among the pines.

As soon as we boys arrived home from school we got busy with the dozens of little jobs always waiting at a country home for a bunch of boys coming in from school, such as feeding and watering horses, feeding and watering hogs in a feed lot, feeding and milking cows, and bringing in fuel. In this rush of work some small boy had left the front yard gate open. Pretty soon a herd of forty goats came trotting down the long lane from the

nearby road and began eating the few leaves and berries outside the yard fence. Soon they noticed the open gate and the leaves in the yard. They immediately rushed through the gate and began eating the leaves. The workbench was surrounded. A few goats even climbed on top of it. The carpenter saw this through an open window upon which he was working. The goats on his workbench greatly annoyed him. He rushed from the house into the yard yelling at the goats and kicking at those nearest to him. They paid little attention to his yells and kicks and kept eating leaves and berries.

Just at this time Sam was coming through the gate with his arms full of stove wood. As he entered the gate with arms full of wood the sheep about which we had heard so much but had never seen, had come down the lane with the goats unnoticed and was entering the gate with a few goats. Suddenly he butted Sam down and passed on into the yard with the hindmost goats Sam let out a few loud yells as a danger signal and made for the porch. His yells attracted the attention of every one near including the carpenter, who started toward the gate with his plane still in his hand, not yet knowing a black sheep was in the midst of the goats. The carpenter who had been wishing for an opportunity to see this Roaming Ram was now meeting the opportunity face to face without knowing it. His wishes were soon to be realized. He would know exactly how some people can exaggerate and how much of the truth had been told. Mother had heard Sam's yells and rushed to the porch to learn the cause. Aunt Annie was sweeping leaves from the porch with a slender broom. They were listening to Sam tell of his sudden introduction to the Roaming Ram. Charley, Henry and I were at the large wood stack in the lane looking and listening. We still did not know the Roaming Ram had come to see us. We thought Sam had only placed a little temptation right before Dear Old Sandy. This was nothing new.

The carpenter came walking toward the gate with plane in hand trying to chase the goats from the yard not knowing that within thirty seconds he would receive an introduction to the little old runty Ram and learn the truth first hand. His wish was soon to be realized.

The sheep came close to him. When he saw the Ram he stood still and stared straight at him as if wondering. The sheep paid no attention to the carpenter but kept eating leaves. Presently the carpenter kicked at the Ram and struck at him with his plane. The Ram then lowered his head, snorted a time or two as he backed away, all the time keeping an evil eye on the carpenter. The carpenter followed a few steps and said in a boasting tone, seemingly for the benefit of all persons in hearing as well as for the Ram: "Now back off, you cowardly runt." He then turned around and walked three or four steps toward his workbench, which had been covered again by goats. The sheep backed far enough away to get up plenty of speed. He then came forward with terrific speed, striking the carpenter about the bend of the knees, knocking both legs from under him, dropping the man on the Ram's back. The momentum of the Ram caused him to go from under the man permitting the poor man to land flat in the yard on the hard dirt bumping the breath out and stunning him for a few seconds. He lay still and groaned. The sheep stopped quickly, shifted gears, backed a few paces and then came forward faster and fiercer than before. Just as the man had caught his breath and gotten upon all fours the lightning struck the seat of his pants, driving the man six feet forward on the hard ground where he slid another three feet making a red mark on the hard clay with his big nose.

The man lay still a second. Then evidently remembering the sheep would probably strike again, struggled to his feet just as the sheep barked a shin bone and dropped the man flat on his face and bay window. The sheep went several feet before he could take up and shift gears. In the meantime the carpenter clambered to his feet and yelled for somebody to hand him a club so he could knock the devil out'n that confounded sheep. Aunt Annie handed the man the broom she had been using to sweep leaves. H grabbed the sweeping end and turned to hit the sheep with the handle. The Ram had stopped, shifted gears and was coming with head lowered and snorting as if really mad. The carpenter's nerves failed. He turned as if intending to climb on the porch and avoid the blow. However, the blow stuck just as he had turned sideways, knocking him flat on his side. The sheep's momentum carried him several feet before he could stop and shift gears. Mother and Aunt Annie stood on the porch just above the man and yelled at him to climb on the porch quick before the sheep butted him to death. He reached his hands to the edge of the porch and they pulled him up just in time to save him from the fifth blow. The man sat down on a nearby bench. The Ram came near the porch and looked straight at the carpenter as if saying: "You big cowardly fellow. You kicked at me and stuck at me with a big brogan and with you large jack plane. I knocked it from your hand, and was easily getting the better of the bout when you called for a club again evidencing your unfairness in a fight of your own starting. If your friends hadn't pulled you on the porch I'd have taught you to respect all my kith and kin during the remainder of your life." The sheep then turned around, snorted a few times, walked slowly away and joined the goats in eating leaves and berries while the carpenter sat on the porch rubbing his bruises with Sloan's lineament handed to him by Mother.

The Four Little Diamonds in the Rough were now acting like Job's steed when he sniffed the battle from afar. We were standing some distance away screaming with laughter at the free "Circus" we had witnessed. There was no longer any doubt in our minds. We now knew the Roaming Ram was a reality and not a ghost or a fairy tale. And too, we knew he was not a spirit taking the form of a black sheep or a white sheep to travel up and down our trails and make-shift roads to frighten little boys out of a lot of prankish fun or to call evil doers to repentance.

We had seen the Roaming Ram, sometimes referred to as a butting machine in action under full steam. We now knew what he could do. We had learned his technique. We knew the difference in the modus operandi of a billy goat and a sheep when butting under a full head of steam, augmented by righteous wrath.

The goats and the Roaming Ram continued to eat leaves and berries in the yard, even cleaning the carpenter's bench of all leaves and berries. The carpenter continued to sit on the porch and rub his bruises with lineament and grumble to himself by mumbling threatenings about butting sheep and billy goats.

We boys were now partially hidden behind a large wagon body in the lane and a pile of yellow fat pine limbs and knots hauled there for firewood. We had ceased our loud laughter and were beginning to wonder what would be the next "Circus." We knew the

goats and the Roaming Ram must be driven from the yard before they began feeding on Mother's rose bushes. We knew too, the goats must be driven to their pen and the gate closed before night. We thought we might be the next target for the Roaming Ram. A council of war was being held. We were trying to plan a scheme of attack and a form of defense if we were to be exposed to the rapid blows of the Roaming Ram. And too, we were trying to select weapons we knew how to use. We were not going to fight the Giant with Saul's armor. As we were thinking the tough looking situation over we heard Mother call, "John, John." No answer was given. She called, "Henry, Henry." No answer was given. She walked to the other end of the porch and called, "Charley, Charley" She knew we were in the lane a few minutes before she called. She walked back a little on the porch and looked straight at the woodpile. One of us giggled a little and moved. She heard the noise and saw one of us through an opening in the woodpile. She then told us to come from our hiding and drive the goats from the yard and pen them for the night. This was about what we were expecting to be called upon to do. Boys often wonder how their parents ever managed to get along before they had a bunch of boys to do the jobs about the home that no one else likes to do. All boys since the days when Cain and Abel strolled in the garden and surrounding woods have had these same wonders. And so it will be with all other boys who come after the present generation. This is as natural as it is for all real manly boys to like a job that carries with it a worthwhile CHALLENGE. We were really proud that Mother had called on us to be a sort of protector of her, Aunt Annie and the smaller children. We had really enjoyed seeing the carpenter get first hand information about the ability of the Roaming Ram to butt. We really enjoyed seeing him find out exactly how some people had exaggerated about this Roaming Butting Black Ram. We had witnessed a great show at no cost. It was a free exhibition of butting and tumbling. If we got butted down a few times it would be all right because the free circus we had seen was well worth it. However, we knew we were not going to take the sort of butting the carpenter had taken because we had learned the sheep's technique. And too, we were going to double team on him and attack from both sides. If one boy got butted down the others would be working on the other end of the sheep.

With our attack and defense planned we accepted the challenge to be the man of the house and drive the enemy away. Sam, who had been with us at the woodpile when he left with his arms full of stove wood, now rejoined us. He had not been hurt because the sheep had only butted him lightly on his arms full of wood. The looks of the large black wooly sheep was more frightening than hurtful in his case. Let no one think Sam ever showed the white feather in a fight. A certain boy at the little log cabin school once remarked that Sam would fight a boy, a billy goat, a bull yearling or even a big bobcat barehanded any time at the drop of a hat. In this case he had only been frightened because of the looks of the big black ram upon receiving the sudden introduction so abruptly and was too anxious to get a little revenge. The four of us, each armed with a supply of well chosen fat pine knots of the "venison ham" and "rose comb" shapes entered the yard and charged the enemy. The goats were soon headed toward the open gate. After picking up a few scattering leaves the leader walked through the gate. Others followed.

The sheep was slow in moving at all. He had been busy in staging a butting exhibition while the goats had been eating leaves and berries. Now he resented being urged to leave

before getting his share. We four boys surrounded him, keeping far enough away to be out of danger. The sheep kept eating leaves ignoring us rather contemptuously. He kept looking at us from the top of his eyes, evidently thinking of charging one of us if we came too near or interfered with his eating. Suddenly his jaw made perfect connection with a heavy pine knot rattling his teeth. He raised his head, spit out a few partially chewed leaves and looked around as if trying to determine whence the knot had come so suddenly without warning. Soon he spied a Little Diamond in the Rough with a few knots under one arm and one in his hand ready for throwing at the first opportune moment. The old sheep of many battles took this a conclusive proof that he had located the right place. Immediately he lowered his head, blew his nose a few times as an exhibition of his anger and began to walk backward all the time keeping an evil eye on the boys suspected of throwing the knot. This boy used head, heels and toes and climbed to the top of a high picket fence while the sheep was backing off for a good start. Two boys went behind the big China tree. Just about the time the sheep was ready for a long run and a hard blow the boys behind the tree discharged a battery of knots against his jaws and legs, not well padded with a thick coat of wool.

The sheep now circled the yard a little as if looking for a boy not on the fence. Soon a boy appeared in front of him to induce him to back close up to the big tree for a long run and a hard blow on the boy in front. The ruse worked. The sheep lowered his head, blew his nose as before and backed right up beside the tree. As he did so the boy behind the tree took his heaviest venison ham knot in both hands ready for a hand to tail blow. The poor sheep unfortunately for his own protection was not made with a pair of good eyes on each end. As he backed beside the tree the boy with the big knot struck a terrific blow, driving the sheep's backbone up at least six inches. The sheep immediately reversed gears, lowered his head, gave a few angry snorts and backed off for a long run and a hard blow for the careless boy who permitted the blind unprotected end of the sheep to back squarely against such a hard jagged knot. Just before the sheep was ready for the long run and hard blow for the careless boy beside the tree, the boy on the fence jumped off and permitted the same blind end of the sheep to back abruptly against another hard, jagged knot, driving his backbone still further up toward his shoulders.

While John and Henry were so inconsiderate, Sam and Charley were busy permitting the Roaming Ram of many battles to feel the effects of many pine knots thrown hard against his unprotected parts. This was getting annoying. He looked around. No boy was in sight to butt. He circled close by the big tree and received the third hard blow driving the tail end of his backbone a few inches nearer his shoulders. This proved to be the knock out blow. He now headed toward the open gate, limping and dodging under a volley of pine knots coming from four directions. Three badly bruised legs, a bruised jaw with shattered teeth and a backbone driven far up toward his shoulders were enough for one time. In this condition he limped through the gate and joined the goats in the lane. All four boys followed picking up a supply of scattered knots as they left the yard for emergency use just in the event they were needed. Three boys now stood guard while the fourth one went around the goats and walked along near the fence as a place of refuge if the sheep charged again. The gate was reached in safety. It was opened and the goats driven in the

pen. The sheep walked in with the goats without showing any signs of butting anyone. The gate was now fastened.

As we boys returned to the wood pile and continued bringing in fuel for the night the carpenter who was still sitting on the porch rubbing his nose and other bruises came back into the yard, picked up his jack plane and carried it to the work bench and began straightening up his tools and work scattered by the goats while eating leaves and berries off the bench. We boys soon left the woodpile and congregated as near him as we could get, remaining on the outside of the high picket fence. We each took hold of pickets with both hands, turned our heads sideways so we could peep through the cracks in the fence with both eyes and asked the carpenter if he still thought some people exaggerated about the Roaming Ram's ability to butt. His reply was, along with a dirty look: "You little rascals go on and attend to your own duties and leave me alone. I don't want to hear black sheep again tonight." As he started toward us we read the wrath all over his face and ran for the barn to finish feeding of horses, cattle and hogs for the night. We wanted to say more but were afraid to until his bruises quit hurting.

While at the barn we thought about the chorus of a song we heard a few weeks before at the Shady Grove Mission Station. This chorus was as follows:

THE HALF HAS NEVER YET BEEN TOLD
OF LOVE SO FULL AND FREE
THE HALF HAS NEVER YET BEEN TOLD
THE BLOOD IT CLEANSETH ME

Right in the midst of the song the Missionary delayed the singing long enough to explain that the word "cleanseth" means a continuing process. He said as used in the song the word means not once or twice or a dozen times., but every time a cleansing if desirable, hence, a continuing process.

As soon as we finished all our work we got together and paraphrased the chorus of this song as follows:

THE HALF HAS NEVER YET BEEN TOLD
OF BUTTING SO FIERCE AND FREE
THE HALF HAS NEVER YET BEEN TOLD
THE SHEEP HE BUTTETH ME

We then went back near the carpenter in the lane on the outside of the high picket fence and repeated the words of the chorus as we had paraphrased them in L O N G D R A W N O U T syllables a few times. This made the carpenter furious. He threatened to climb over the fence and paddle us with his handsaw. However, since the sheep had driven his backbone up several inches we knew he couldn't climb over a fence. We also knew we could outrun him in his present condition. Hence, we kept teasing him by asking questions about the Roaming Ram. We wanted to know why he didn't kick the sheep a summersault and the stomp the gizzards out'n him like he said he would do? We

wanted to know if being butted down by a ram sheep hurt a man like being butted down by Dear Old Sandy sometimes hurt little boys? We wanted to know if he was not certain the Roaming Ram was not the spirit sheep mentioned in the venerable lady's ghost story? At first he gave us a few nonsenseable answers and again threatened to come over the fence and paddle us with a long thin board. We laughed at his threats of climbing a fence until he got over his bout with the Roaming Ram. Then he started to the house to call Mother to come with a long sprout from her gallberry yard broom. We then sensed danger and checked out.

We now decided to stay out of his presence until after he had slept, his bruises quit hurting and his temperature cooled below the explosive point. We gathered some feed sacks, hoes and a wheelbarrow and trotted off to a new ground potato patch to dig potatoes enough to last the family for two or three weeks. [Potatoes had not yet been harvested for the winter] We told Mother of our plan and suggested that it would be dark before we got back. We stayed at the potato patch until dark so the carpenter would be through with supper before we returned. When we came in he had eaten and gone to bed to ease his bruises.

The next morning the goats were kept in the pen until all cattle, horses and hogs had been fed so there would be no butting bouts with the sheep. Before letting them from the pen Henry and I entered the pen with the hope of having the sheep and Dear Old Sandy stage a butting match. We were not very successful in this. The sheep had no horns while Sandy had a pair of long keen ones. Sandy did not like the sheep's way of butting. He followed him when he backed away for a long run to aid him in delivering hard blows and used his long keen horns in an effort to sever the sheep's body. The sheep thought this unfair and kept away from Sandy. Of course, Henry and I were a pair of disappointed boys.

When the goats were let out of the pen they trotted off down the north end of the lane toward a nearby woods. As the sheep walked from the pen it was observed he walked in his blind end exactly like a worn out "Plug" mule. He limped a little in the other end. His movements showed conclusively that he had backed against some hard objects and made contacts at unprotected points.

After looking at the sheep's movements philosophical Henry remarked: "Oh, well it doesn't matter since he doesn't have to sit down. The carpenter's the one who'll have trouble when he tries to sit down." About this time Sam joined Charley, Henry and me for a look at the butting monster. When Charley saw the sheep and the carpenter both walked with considerable stiffness and Sam did not, he wanted to know of Sam why he showed no signs of stiffness from his butting bout with the old sheep. Sam's reply was: "The old rascal butted me on my arm full of wood a light side bump as he crowded by me in the gate. He then backed off a snorting. Then he started back at me for a hard blow. That's when I yelled and got on the porch. If the carpenter had done that he wouldn't a been butted all over the front yard."

The four of us boys now turned back and walked up near the carpenter at his workbench, of course, staying outside the high picket fence to see how his big red nose looked. We asked him if he had really butted the sheep with his nose. He showed his contempt for us and our questions by ignoring both. We then repeated the words of the song as paraphrased a time or two in L O N G D R A W N O U T S Y L A B L E S as we had done the afternoon before. This raised his wrath again to the paddling point. He picked up a long slat, started to the gate to come out and administer, as he said: "The paddling you boys needed." We retorted: "We'll take the paddling if you can catch us in your present condition." We stood around in the lane and razzed him about his big red nose caused by trying to butt a sheep with it instead of using his hard head until he got to the gate. Then we checked out down the long lane to work in the field until eight o'clock when we had to go to the school. When we stopped running Charley remarked: "Did you boys notice the carpenter's as stiff in his hind legs as the sheep is? I'll bet my marbles against a cotton ball he'll do more work today than he did yesterday because he can't sit down and enjoy it." "Yes," said Henry "He'll have to get on his knees to eat dinner." "Yes," said Sam, "if he doesn't have to stand like a horse."

The Roaming Ram did not return to the Diamond Homestead for more than a year. Evidently he decided that a bunch of hard headed piney woods Diamonds in the Rough organized like a colony of yellow jackets, well skilled in the art and practice of using hard jagged pine knots were too tough for his comfort and well being.

Within a week or so the carpenter's bruises with the help of Mother's lineament were well, except a slight stiffness in his hind parts. He talked and joked freely about the Roaming Ram. He agreed he was a veritable butting machine and that,

THE HALF HAS NEVER YET BEEN TOLD
OF BUTTING SO FIERCE AND FREE

THE ROAMING RAM

The roaming ram a butting machine was he
He was black as a black sheep could be
A hornless ram of normal size 'd strength
Yet he could butt a man right over a fence

The Roaming Ram was raised an orphan waife
With a Negro orphan playmate him to chafe
Negroes didn't live near this orphan's home
No sheep were there this open range to roam

All their early training was not complete
Cause neither had any kith and kin to greet
The Ram 'd lad were tutors and mutual mates
They taught each other all love and hates

Oft they had a few temporary falling outs
Leading to bad and bloody butting bouts
'Twas oft times a puzzle and a draw to know
If sheep or boy could butt the harder blow

The Negro grew up 'd left kith 'd kin to find
Leaving the bad butting sheep far behind
'Twas then the Ram grew sad bitter and blue
Poked about butting 'd didn't know what to do

The forsaken Ram then began to roam around
To see if kith and kin too could be found
The lonely ram roared o'er the countryside
All directions up and down far and wide

Where 'er the lonesome Ram a Roaming went
He brought trembling fear and discontent
'Twas on such a raid a much butted man
Dubbed the old black sheep, "The Roaming Ram"

Soon he found roaming grazing cattle
But didn't like their talk 'd mode of battle
Next a butting billy goat herd he found
Soon bleats 'd butting heads began to sound

Said the Roaming Ram "My kith 'd kin's fine
Their talk 'd battle mode's much like mine"
"We'll be friendly" Quoth the Roaming Ram
"And partners butting mutton murd'ring man"

From that day till his soul wafted home
The Roaming Ram no longer roamed alone
But ranged with billy goats on hill 'd glenn
Goats and sheep butting prankish boys 'd men

Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough

BOYS AND DOGS

THE BUTTINGEST BILLY GOAT

THE DAMMED WASH HOLE

BOYS AND DOGS

Boys and puppies have much in common. Healthy boys and puppies are always hungry. When either a boy or a puppy is off feed something is wrong. All boys and all puppies are playful. It is a sort of instinctive something that makes them exercise for growth. They each have latent possibilities that can be developed about as the parents of the boys and the masters of the puppies desire. They each have lots of surplus energy that must be properly directed if they are to stay out of mischief. Neither boys nor puppies are conscious of their own ability, either physically or mentally. The right sort of training and leadership are necessary to make them conscious of this ability.

Boys always love puppies and puppies have the same affection for boys. Did you ever notice the attachment between boys and puppies? No affection is more touching than that exhibited by a boy for his pet puppy or that exhibited by a puppy for his boy master. Once I heard a prominent educator in discussing the "Age of Pets", as applied to the education of boys, say, "I have very little respect for and little hope for the future of a boy who has not loved and petted, yes, slept with his dog, not a doggie with his tail cut off at the end of his backbone and a silk ribbon or a gold chain around his neck, but a plain YALLER DOG with a head like a block of stove wood and a tail like a baseball bat." This is sound education sense. The few exceptions found only serve to prove the rule. The real manly boy having worthwhile possibilities who does not have the privilege of loving, petting, training, feeding and sleeping with his dog is missing a valuable part of his education and should have the sympathy of all his friends. Boys learn many useful lessons in feeding, petting and training their puppy or dog friends. Not only do they learn to take care of and train their puppy or dog friends but they learn patience, self-reliance and how to deal with people as well as puppies and dogs. Yes, I mean to insinuate rather strongly that puppies and dogs have lots of human nature in their make up and a boy learning to deal successfully with them will know how to deal successfully with people.

The first puppy any of the Seven Sons ever loved, petted or slept with was named Spot because of his color. He was the special pet and companion of the two older of the boys. He went where they went about the homestead. If the boys chased chickens from a vegetable garden, Spot took the lead and soon learned to catch and hold a chicken without harming it. If the boys chased a piney woods razor back rooter from a potato patch, Spot did his part and seemed glad of the opportunity to render useful service.

Spot soon learned to go with Father in the woods in the logging work. If Father rode the Old Gray Mare, Spot would stay with her wherever she might be hitched. He soon delegated himself the duty of protecting her from people or animals. Nothing was permitted to come too near her without feeling the painful effects of his sharp teeth. Spot soon learned to obey Father's commands without waiting to reason why. If Father requested him to catch an animal, the animal was caught. If Father requested him to let the animal loose the command was obeyed.

At a rather early age Spot learned to kill or tree every opossum or skunk seeking a chicken supper about the poultry yard. A danger squawk from a chicken was all the

signal necessary for him to do the job. He didn't like the odor of the first skunk he found causing an old blue hen to give the danger signal when her brood of broilers was attacked. He bayed the chicken thief from a distance until Henry and John arrived with the well known lighted torch and threw a pine knot or two at the skunk and urged Spot to "KETCH 'M." The skunk was caught and killed pronto. After that Spot never hesitated to kill any skunk found prowling about the place.

A little incident in the life of Spot is related here because it is always interesting to boys. A neighbor residing two miles or more from the Diamond Homestead owned a dog larger and two years older than Spot. From the time Spot was large enough to follow Father and the old gray mare to the woods this dog took special delight in giving Spot a severe wallop every time he met him on the road or in the woods. A few times it was necessary for Father to dismount and pull the dog off Spot to prevent the inflicting of severe wounds with his sharp teeth. These wallopings occurred so often until Spot evidently thought it was necessary for him to lie down and take one every time he met the dog. One day when Spot was about a year old but still smaller than the other dog, he met the dog and as usual the big dog jumped on him and began as usual to administer a severe wallop. The big dog was biting Spot about the neck and body but not hurting a great deal. Father walked up and looked at the dogs. Spot looked up and whined a little as if asking that the big dog be pulled again off him. Instead of pulling the big dog off, Father slapped his hands a little as a signal for Spot to "sick 'm" and then yelled at him in urgent terms to "Ketch 'm, Bite 'm, Tear 'm up."

A little encouragement from his master at the right moment turned the tide. Spot immediately turned his head around a little, opened wide his mouth and sunk his sharp teeth deep into the big dog's foot. The big dog, taken by surprise, immediately began yelping because of the pain. Soon he rolled over off Spot and continued to yell. Spot kept on chewing the foot until Father asked him to let loose. Spot let loose and away the big dog ran on three legs and carrying the other one. As the boys used to say, "He ran adding thirteen, putting down three and carrying one."

From the time of this little incident, Spot took no more wallopings from any dog. He was now conscious of his own power to protect himself and used this power. A few words of encouragement from his master in whom he had the utmost confidence had changed the future course of his life. In this Spot was exactly like many awkward boys who have never yet become conscious of their own physical strength or mental ability. And too, such boys are like Spot in that all they need to change the future course of their lives is a little encouragement at the right moment from one in whom they have perfect confidence to cause them to know and understand their own capabilities.

The second puppy any of the Seven Sons had the privilege of petting, loving and sleeping with was a large red one named "Watch. This puppy was the special pet of Charley. This was probably because when this puppy first became part of the Diamond Family the three older boys were attending the first school ever taught in the community, thus leaving Charley and "Watch" to play alone all day at home. This term of school was only three months. During this time Charley and Watch played together, ate together and probably

had many naps together wherever they happened to be when they tired of playing. One day Charley and Watch ran away and went to school. When they arrived at the front steps of the little log cabin the teacher invited Charley to come in. Charley quickly informed the teacher that Watch is out here. The teacher insisted that Charley come in. Charley replied, "Watch is here, too" and continued to stand with one arm around Watch's neck. After a few minutes the teacher went to the door and said, "Charley, come in and sit with the children until school is out." Charley still standing with one arm around Watch's neck, as he patted Watch on the head with the other hand, and said, "Watch is out here with me. We came together." The teacher turned and went ahead with her work leaving Charley standing with one arm around Watch's neck and the other hand resting on his large head. After a few seconds Charley took Watch by one of his big ears and the two walked beside each other toward home. Upon arrival home Charley told Mother where he and Watch had been and informed her that the teacher had invited him in the school house but would not invite Watch in too, not even when he told her Watch was with him. Charley said he told her three times that Watch was with him, but all she ever said was, "Come in Charley and sit with the children," and he and Watch turned around and walked off home. Mother reported that with tears dripping for his fiery eyes Charley told how he and Watch had been mistreated and insulted and then added for emphasis, "Watch and I will never go to that old school house as long as that teacher is there." Mother said they never went to school any more that year.

This awkward puppy sprawling around the place with every one laughing at his big feet soon grew to be a useful dog around the little farm. He soon learned to chase pigs from the fields and varmints from the poultry houses. He never became much of a woods dog, probably for the lack of any training along this line. During the first summer of his stay at the Diamond Homestead, Father sold at retail a beef each Saturday at a large logging business six to ten miles from home. Watch never failed to go with the beef wagon pulled by the old gray mare. Watch soon learned to take care of the beef wagon and the old gray mare. For this he was as good as Spot had been before him. On one occasion when the old gray mare was tied to a swinging dogwood limb, that part of the limb to which the halter was tied split from the tree. As soon as the old gray mare moved a few feet from where she was hitched, Watch caught hold of the limb still held by the halter and held the animal right where she was tied under the shade of the dogwood tree. [Watch was the dog referred to in the article entitled SUNDAY SQUIRRELING].

A short time before Watch passed on to the place where all good dogs finally go, a large red dog by the name of Rock became an inmate of the Diamond home. Rock was not "raised from a pup," as a certain boy told his friend when his friend found him crying because his dog had died and suggested that he should not cry because his dog had died, and said, "Why my grandmother died yesterday and I am not crying." Between sobs the little boy replied, "I reckon not, cause you didn't raise her from a pup up."

Rock came to our house as boot when Father traded an old worn out log ox for a fine looking heifer name Alice. [Alice later became, "THE KICKINGEST COW."] Rock was of little use at first. He was not used to boys and of course did not know how to play. He seemingly did not know what to do or when to act. Before many months he became a

useful farm house dog. He became a good trailer, but slow. He became the best possum dog in the country. Many were the fat possums several of the Seven Sons of different occasions shook from persimmon trees where treed by Rock. He also became a good rabbit dog. Some of his best service was in protecting the vegetable gardens from raiding rabbits.

Rock stayed with the Seven Sons for ten or twelve years, longer than any other dog ever lived at the Diamond home. During this long time he learned many tricks. He learned how to beg pitifully for what he wanted and of course, usually succeeded in getting it. His favorite pleasure was to be permitted to lie down on the floor in front of a good warm fire. When permitted to enjoy this pleasure for a short while and some one of the family would tell him to get up, he would immediately get up and go to the person speaking to him and stick his forepaw up as if asking for a hand shake or a howdy. After “howdying” with this person he would then “howdy” with every person in the room. After making the round he would ease back in front of the fire and lie down continuing to whine a little if begging for a few more minutes of enjoyment.

Probably the one outstanding quality that Rock possessed above all other dogs in the community was his ability to take care of himself when attacked by other country canines of all breeds, sizes and ages, single, double or even a few times in tribble [triple] attacks. As long as he lived he was never known to take a wallop from any other dog or dogs when attacked having to take them on in single, double, or even in tribble doses. On several occasions around the Cane Grindings at the Diamond Homestead or at the Diamond log camp, Rock was attacked by two dogs his equal in size. On one occasion he was attacked by three strange dogs, one much over his size and two small ones. In such cases he would calmly chew a foot or neck of the leading attacker until he was whipped and ready to run off howling and begging for help. He would then turn his undivided attention to the other attacker and bite him until he was yelling for help if he had breath enough left to howl.

The thing that enabled Rock to take care of himself when so savagely attacked by two or more dogs was his ability to take, without a whine, the biting and chewing of one or two dogs while he put the first attacker out of business. This usually required only one or two good bites or about ten seconds. Rock was never known to whine or howl from any punishment he ever received in a fight with other dogs, or wild animals such as skunks, coons, foxes or bobcats. He was never known to get hold of a fox, coon or cat that he didn't kill almost instantly. Another thing that made Rock loved and respected by every one who knew him was the fact that he was never known to show any signs of picking a disturbance with another dog. He seemed to be perfectly conscious of his ability to protect himself any time it became necessary. Oft times at Cane Grindings, log camps or at a beef wagon when strange dogs were seen to approach him in a growling or fighting attitude, Rock would quietly walk away and lie down. If such dogs followed him in this attitude they would suddenly be given a severe licking and sent away howling and yelping.

The next dog to come to our house as a sort of inmate or a playmate for the Seven Sons was a red dog with a large body and short legs. He was a great play dog, as a companion for boys, a good farm dog, a splendid trailer but a little slow. He was never much in a race because of his short legs and large body. He got his early training from Rock during the last few years of his faithful service. This made him a splendid dog for chasing varmints from the poultry yard at night and from the fields of corn, peanuts and potatoes. He was also an extra good dog for trailing hogs about the fields or in the woods. This had been taught him as a puppy, by the boys in training him to find a lot of mischievous shoats that were bad to tear through some old rail fences and hide in thick pea vines, rank potato vines or in a thick cane field when being chased from the fields. Without the help of Pup, as this little dog was named, it would have been almost impossible to have chased these shoats from the fields.

The training Pup received in chasing these mischievous shoats gave him the best of training as a "Hog Dog." His reputation soon spread for miles away from the Diamond Homestead. The results was Father's friends who owned wild or half wild razor back rooters ranging in the piney woods or in the swamps of the Escambia River often were wanting to borrow Pup to hunt their hogs. They would always be informed that Pup could locate the hogs but could not run fast enough to catch them and that it would be necessary to have another dog to do the running after the lean razorbacks had been routed. This was particularly true in the swamp where a horse could not do the running for Pup. And too, since the boys had trained Pup for this work he would do better work for them than anyone else because he understood their language perfectly well. This meant that a boy was always loaned with Pup. If the hogs were ranging on the piney woods where a horse could do the rounding up for Pup, a boy and a horse were also loaned with Pup. If the reader has not read the article entitled, "A PONY, PUP AND PIGS" may I suggest that it be read immediately.

Before Pup was grown some of the boys taught him to hunt and chase all pet cats from the house or near it every time a boy imitated the mewling of a cat. On several occasions when company was having dinner at the Diamond home and a large number of the Seven Sons had to "wait" and eat at the second or third table and the waiting was drawn out long by a combination of too much conversation and eating, it became a common convenience for a couple of cats to be squeezed into the dining room. The cats would soon get under the table looking for a few crumbs to fall or perhaps beg a little hand out. The dining room door would accidentally open a little when a nearby boy would "Mew" and point toward the door. Pup would rush in and the master cat chasing, cat squalling and dog yapping would be on. Nothing could stop Pup until the cats were safe up a tree in the nearby plum orchid. Oft times did such a commotion break up a long drawn out eating contest and give hungry boys a chance to prevent complete starvation. Pup was indeed a faithful friend in time of suffering. He, like Dear Old Sandy, was a lifesaver in breaking up long drawn out Sunday festive dinners, when boys had to "WAIT."

The next puppy to become an inmate of the Diamond Homestead was a black one having a white ring around his neck and two white legs and feet. He was a tall slender puppy and was give the name Nero, not because of any historical character, but because of a famous

local hunting dog. Nero was brought to the home by Irl and was his favorite pet and partner in all sorts of games and chases. Two weeks after Irl brought Nero home to become an inmate of the Diamond Homestead, Walker brought a little brindle puppy as his favorite pet and partner in prankish mischief and in possum hunting. This puppy was named Prince. Prince, like Nero, was tall and slender. In size and shape he was much like a greyhound. His speed was equal to that of any greyhound that ever raced a rabbit around a track.

With the splendid treatment the boys gave their puppies they soon had two tall, slender, nice looking dogs. Nero developed into a good hunting dog and a fine trailer. He was good in picking up and following a cold trail for long distances. He ran slowly on cold trails, but on hot trails his running was much faster. He had plenty of voice in trailing. Prince was not inclined to pay any attention to a cold trail. He would follow along with Nero sometimes on a cold trail. When the trail got hot, Prince would take the lead. He never used his voice in running a trail or in running by sight. All the energy Prince possessed was put into speed.

At the time Prince and Nero were at their prime, Irl and Walker were in their early or middle teens. They were the only ones of the Seven Sons at home now. Logging work in our community had ceased to exist except that being done by one or two large lumber companies on a wholesale basis. All work in the community was farming. The boys were kept busy with farm work all the year. Even during the six months of public school now held in the community, the boys had lots of farm work to do mornings, afternoons and Saturdays.

The two boys must have been rather lonely at home after the other five boys were no longer their daily companions in work or play or prankish mischief. Their favorite sport and recreation was possum hunting around the fields in the fall at night with their friendly partners, Prince and Nero, and chasing possums up persimmon trees and feasting next day on 'GOOD OLD BAKED POSSUM AND TATER SIMMERING IN THE PAN.' Many were the races they had at night following Prince and Nero across the wide levels or up and down the branches and creeks hot on the trail of some wily raccoon or clever fox. However, their races were never of the old time variety often had in the fox chases, because of the way the two dogs ran. Prince never trailed much until the trail was hot. Then he would take the lead but never barked. The results was while the wily coon or the clever fox would be playing along a quarter of a mile or perhaps a half a mile ahead of the loud barking Nero, Prince would suddenly appear at his heels and catch and kill him or put him up a tree in short order. When the raccoon, fox or possum took to a tall tree to save his life, Prince would bark and let Nero and the boys know the game was treed.

Upon arriving at the tree, the game was never killed by shooting, but was made to jump from the tree. One of the boys would climb the tree and make the game jump to the ground while the other boy held Prince to let the fox or raccoon get a little start. Then Prince would be let loose for the race. The racing was the greatest sport of the hunting. On one occasion when Walker had climbed a large stooping sassafras tree to make a fox jump, while Irl held Prince to let the fox get a good start so they could have a fine

moonlight race. When the fox jumped, Prince jerked loose and caught the fox as it neared the ground. In Irl's efforts to get Prince loose from the fox so they could have the race, he accidentally struck Prince on a shoulder breaking the upper part of the blade bone. When the dogs had killed the fox it was found Prince could not walk. He was brought home in the arms of the boys.

The next morning it was found Prince could not use his leg at all. This was a sad experience for the two boys. Prince had been "raised from a pup up." They could not bear to take Prince off and kill him to prevent a long spell of suffering and then death. Hence, the boys tried their hand at "setting a broken bone." Several boards were cut the right size and shape for fitting on the leg and shoulder. They were placed and well wrapped with approximately fifty feet of bandage cut from feed sacks. Prince was then placed in a small box fitted with a good bed and laid on his well side. He was a good patient and lay in the position placed by the boys until moved by them. Prince was well cared for two weeks, before the bandages were removed. To the delight of the boys and all their friends Prince could walk on his injured leg. As a precaution he was kept in his little box house for another week. He was then permitted the run of the yard around the residence for a week or two. By this time he was seemingly as well as before the accident. It was soon learned that Prince had lost none of his speed from the injury. He could catch and kill a fox as quickly as before the shoulder was broken.

Irl and Walker taught Prince and Nero to ride in a wagon pulled by horses or mules when hauling various things about the farm such as wood, hay, cotton, corn, cane peanuts and potatoes. Cam and the Cart had been replaced by mules and wagon. Poor boys, they never had the privilege and pleasure of taming or driving oxen. At first the dogs had to be assisted in climbing into the wagon body. Soon the boys taught them how to jump into the wagon by running from behind and jumping over the back end of the body, landing on the floor of the body where the boys would be riding. This required high jumping. Only well trained dogs having strong muscles could do this. It was great sport to watch these dogs run at high speed and make this high jump one right behind the other.

One afternoon when Father and one of the boys had been hauling some lumber for building purposes around the farm, as they returned to the barn late in the afternoon they picked up what is commonly called the "wagon body extension" still bolted together at each end. It was placed on the wagon "bolsters" and with Father and the boy sitting on the coupling tongue the wagon was made to appear as if the body was all on the wagon and Farther and Irl sitting on the floor of the body. Prince and Nero came up from behind the wagon and saw the extension body sides and the heads of Father and Irl above the sides and very naturally supposed the wagon body was all in place. The dogs decided to ride to the barn. The two got approximately fifty feet behind the wagon. They then came running one behind the other and leaped over the extension body. They were compelled to land on the ground between the fore wheels and the hind wheels of the wagon.

Father laughed for many years every time he thought of the expressions that came over the faces of the dogs when they came over the back end of the extension body and saw no floor upon which to land. From the way they were able to hold themselves suspended in

mid air while deciding where and how to land to prevent being hurt by the wagon wheels. Father thought dogs must have some sort of instinctive or unnatural power of holding themselves suspended in the air. He was certain from watching the expression on the faces of the dogs that they used their heads in directing the wiggling movements of their body, tails and legs to change their natural course in order to make a safe landing.

This was only the old law of self preservation brought into action, regardless of whatever name by which it may be called. It is the same law that enables a boy making a long high jump from an embankment in a gully to wiggle himself to a new landing place to prevent landing upon jagged rocks. Again, may I add that boys and dogs have many things in common.

A year or so before Prince and Nero passed on to the Happy Hunting Ground where all good dogs finally go, Walker brought home a little white shaggy haired dog from the city expecting, of course, to make the old Homestead a little like a city. He was evidently a little tired of a plain “YALLER DWARG” with a head like a block of stove wood and a tail like a baseball bat, or a long lean hound like “DWARG” having a ring neck, a long nose, long ears and a long slender tail pointing straight behind in the chase. It didn’t take the two country bred boys long with the help of Prince and Nero to teach the little shaggy city fellow something of the ins and outs of farm life in a big woods. This little city doggie was named Ponto. Where the name came from no one ever seemed to know. Father used to say the name Ponto was like a frightened log hauler said about an awful ghost that almost frightened him out of his life. When asked where the ghost came from his reply was: “It didn’t come from nowhere’s. It just happened right before my eyes.”

E’re long Ponto was “shagging” along behind the boys and doing his best to keep up with Prince and Nero. His first experience with varmints was with a medium size possum treed one dark night in the scuppernong vine. This possum was not hunting a chicken for supper, but was only seeking a little muscadine juice to aid in digesting his stomach full of peanuts when the faithful old Nero scented him near the house and soon located him among the vines. The possum was hard to locate among the thick vines. Ponto was placed on top of the arbor. Within a short time he located and tackled the possum. In the fight that followed Ponto and the possum fell through the vines with Ponto holding the possum by the back of his neck. The boys took the possum before the big dogs got hold of it. From that night on, Ponto was a Possum dog if ever such a canine lived. Ponto had been the hero of the hunt and was proud of his catch.

Ponto was taught many tricks and enjoyed showing off in their performance. He would stand on his hind feet and dance for his favorite food. After barking and dancing for his food if it was not forthcoming his temper turned up for a fight. Everybody teased Ponto to hear him growl and grumble. If the teasing continued the boys would tell him to “cuss” the teaser. He would then charge close up to the teaser and bark loud and fierce. Stranger would get away as rapidly as possible because he acted as though he really meant to bite. However, he was never known to bite anyone. He was only doing what he had been taught to do when told to “cuss ‘m”. He was sometimes referred to as the “cussing dog.”

Ponto was also taught to preach. His preaching was quite different from his “cussin.” “Cussin” was fierce and forceful barks as though he was ready for a fight. His “Preaching” was plaintive, mournful barks given with sad expression. Many laughs were had when Ponto would be induced to “cuss” before the preachers. Then when he could be induced to “Preach” a little before the preachers, the real laughing contest would be put on in rapid force, the preachers always leading in the laughter.

Ponto was also taught to “Dance like Preachers.” This was a little jiggy dance about like some church members sometimes used to do under some fictitious name to fool the missionaries and circuit riders.

Preachers are all good sports and enjoy a little innocent fun as much as any class of people in the world. They got more fun from Ponto’s pleasantries than other people did.

BOYS AND DOGS

The fondest affection the world has ever known
Is that of laddies for dogs called their own
Dogs have the same affection for a loving lad
‘Tis abiding love that makes dog and laddie glad

Dog and laddie like romping all over the ground
Oft they roll tumble and chase in circles around
‘Tis like seeing a circus clown play hide’d seek
You’d laugh to see them hide’d for each other peep

Dogs like helping chase erring shoats from fields
They hunt their hiding place ’d snap at their heels
Chasing them over big fields down rows straight
Never failing to bring ‘m all through the open gate

Boys ’d dogs like ‘possums hunting when night’s dark
Soon dogs’ll scamper off hit a trail ’d begin to bark
Then the race is on the lads following among trees
Till ‘possum climbs a tree and hides among leaves

Lads gather at the tree kindle a light on the ground
A lad with a long forked poke climbs ’d pokes him down
Big fat ‘possum comes tumbling ’d tries to get away
But the faithful dogs are on the job and make him stay

Into sack the 'possum's dropped and off they run
To find another 'possum 'd make two instead o' one
They circle by a big springhead where trail's found
Then race over the level and Mayhaw ponds around

Then head for a big creek and tree in a hollow gum
Lads taking a short cut soon come round on the run
Then a lad and ax cut a big hole in a hollow tree
A big fat possum's now pulled thence to make it three

Happiness is now supreme with dogs and lads alike
The way smiles greet each other's a wonder sight
'Tis festive thoughts about 'GOOD OLD POSSUM & TATER'
For feeding hungry lad 'd dogs nothing's greater

If lads 'd dog would have a GRAND OLD TIME FOX CHASE
They'd hie far away to wildwoods 'd hunt a foxy place
Then in language known by none but dog and lad
Dogs are told what to do to make all the party glad

Then a little stroll down Holly creek 'd race's on
Dogs circle the big swamp 'd head up Red Hill prong
Sweet music's heard 'mong massive pines o'er hills
'Tis come boys a race's on with sweet music 'd thrills

The trusty canines courageous loyal brave and true
Seeking for the hardest task the master bids, 'm do
They'll catch 'd kill a big bobcat for master's sake
Catch 'd hold a long tusked boar with no fear or quake

The faithful dog'll guard what'er his master owns
He'll stay'd starve day'd night till last enemy moans
Gladly guarding till the final curtain falls
Unless he hears the words the loving master calls

A boy'll e'er protect his dog even with his life
A dog'll protect his master e'en the lowly fice
'Tis mutual love and friendship till the final end
Greater lover hath none than to die for his friend.

THE BUTTINGEST BILLY GOAT

The subject of this narrative was a large sandy colored billy goat named Sandy, a name given him at an early age because of his color. When he grew older he was often referred to as “Dear Old Sandy” because of the affection and respect people had for him. Those who knew him best loved and respected him for his genuine character. A few people who looked upon billy goats as nothing but a subject of laughter, something to be despised and buffeted about, a fit subject for wise-cracks and vulgar jokes, respected Sandy because of his ability to butt HARD, often and accurate. While people and animals respected Sandy he always respected the rights of people and other animals as long as they respected his rights. Any infringement on his inherent rights never failed to bring his butting machinery into the most perfect action.

Sandy was left a lone orphan at an early age and had to be fed milk from a bottle. He thus became a playmate of the Seven Sons at an early age, a very impressionable age. He soon became the favorite pet at the Diamond Homestead. Those of the Seven Sons who were of goat age soon became his teachers and trained him for many future bouts and knockouts. Sandy was an apt pupil and soon had a big bag full of clever tricks and exhibited them at every opportunity. Sandy was like the schoolboy who was often in fights with other boys. One day his teacher asked him why he was in so many fights. His reply was: “Some big boys taught me how to fight, but I was easy to teach because I liked to fight and got lots of fun out of it.” Sandy was an apt pupil probably for the same reason. He liked to butt and got lots of fun out of it.

Sandy’s physical growth was as rapid as his mental development. Soon it was evident that he would be able to “Stand his hand” under any and all circumstances. He was not to be the under privileged orphan half fed and butted about by his kith and kin and kicked around by men and boys. Neither was he to be hooked about by bull yearlings or other cattle. By the time Sandy was grown he was the largest goat in the herd and could butt harder than any other goat that ever butted.

The natural instinct of a billy goat is to butt. Without this instinct and his outstinct a billy goat would not be what he is. There would be nothing attractive about him. He would no be an object of laughter wherever mentioned. No wise cracks would be made about him. He would be only a plain unnoticed goat.

The Seven Sons admit the natural instinct of a billy goat to butt is as natural as it is for smoke to rise. They also believe that the ability of a pet billy goat to butt hard, often and accurate is improved by training of the right sort. The intensity of the natural instinct is increased. This was certainly true with Sandy. Sandy’s tutors taught him to butt for a bottle of milk. Soon he was taught to butt for feed of any kind. He would beg a little for feed but if it was not given to him after a little begging he would proceed to butt for it and woe be unto the person who teased him a little too much or withheld the feed too long.

Sandy soon learned that feed was often carried about the barns and feed lots in buckets. Any one passing near Sandy with a bucket containing feed or even an empty bucket would get an invitation to hand this goat a little feed, just one mouthful would satisfy him. Not getting the little bit of feed, Sandy would proceed to butt the carrier of the bucket and the bucket both to the ground and help himself to the feed. The Seven Sons soon learned to give Sandy a handful of feed or let him look into the empty bucket to avoid a butting match. Strangers who had not learned this often felt the deadening sensation of Sandy's pile driver blows. A few times Sandy got badly fooled by butting a bucket of water on himself. In such cases he always looked a little humiliated at having played such a trick on himself.

The one touchy spot about any billy goat is his tail. When Sandy's tail was twisted, pulled or pinched he butted fast and furiously at any one or anything handy for the blow. This habit of his touched off by a prankish boy caused many an innocent by-stander to acquire a better understanding of billy goat nature. Sandy learned at an early age, whether instinctly, or from tutoring, to butt any person shaking his fists at him in a threatening manner. He would also butt any boy or man shaking his head at him as if inviting a butting bout, and woe be unto the person teasing Sandy in this manner who failed to get over the fence quick enough.

Once a hired man at the Diamond Homestead had a habit of talking to himself and in doing so would shake his head to emphasize and clinch different points in his conversation. On one occasion this man walked by Sandy while carrying on a conversation with himself. He was shaking his hands and head as he sometimes did in these conversations. The conversation must have been an interesting one because the man failed to notice Sandy was observing closely the man's actions and preparing to accept the challenge. Before the innocent man noticed Sandy he had been butted sprawling on the ground. The man was a little slow overing the shock and getting up. When he did start to rise unfortunately for him he got up on all fours first with his head away from Sandy. Sandy took this as a great insult or an invitation to show his butting strength. The lightning like blow came quickly. The man's body was turned into a ground slide. He was stunned. He was addled. The breath was bumped out of him. He had received three blows, one from the goat, one when his head struck the hard surface of the lane and one when his stomach struck the ground, a three-in-one for a complete knock out. He lay still, then twisted a little, groaned and grunted a little. He caught his breath and rolled over. His head was raised a little. His eyes were opened. He was Sandy standing on hind feet, full six feet high, with his neck arched, ready for another lightning like blow. Sandy put his feet back on the ground and walked around eyeing the man as if trying to discover if the man was satisfied or if he would presently get up and extend another invitation. Sandy blew his nostrils a couple of times, then raised up on his hind feet and arched his neck. The man took advantage of the moment and climbed over a fence before Sandy could get near enough to strike the third blow. Two of the Seven Sons who had watched the circus through cracks in the fence informed the hired man that Sandy would sometimes butt folks who shake their heads or head at him. The man's curt reply was. "I know it now" and walked off across the field where he could finish his conversation unmolested by boys or billy goats.

Sandy was only partly Christianized although he had been an inmate of the Diamond Homestead for some time and had often come in close contact with several missionaries, too close for the comfort of the missionaries at times. He was very much like his associates, the Seven Sons in that he had not yet learned how to withstand temptation when placed right before his eyes in a tempting and enticing manner. The Seven Sons soon found this weakness in Sandy and were continually placing objects before him to see how hard he could strike. Finally Sandy became an opportunist. He butted every time he had an opportunity to do so. His favorite target was the seat of a pair of pants whether they contained a boy or a man. The only difference we were ever able to notice was the larger the seat of the pants the harder he would butt. He got more fun and lasting joy from this sort of butting than from any of his prankish tricks. One blow was usually enough to teach men and boys never to stoop over in Sandy's presence.

Early one morning one of the drivers of a log team had to do a little work on the nose iron of the end of the cart tongue. In his haste to do this little job and move on with the other teams he forgot that a herd of goats had just been let out of a pen into the lane. Sandy saw the man stooped over at work. He arched his neck, walked a little sideways toward the man. When within about ten feet of his target he raised himself on hind feet, arched his neck, walked a few steps on his hind feet and landed a blow that sent the man somersaulting in the dust. Before the man caught his breath enough to get up, Sandy scampered off down the lane to join the herd now rounding a curve some 150 yards away. The man swore vengeance against the goat while all by-standers laughed at the early morning bout.

Hog killing at a country homestead is usually a great time for every one taking part. This was particularly so with Sandy, if he was permitted to gather round where the men and boys were working. He seemed to sense the situation and took delight in butting some one down in a dirty mess of hot water, dirt and hog hair. Many a time it became necessary to drive Sandy off and shut him in a pen until the hog killing was over.

Cane grinding at the Diamond Homestead was another time when Sandy had no trouble butting up a lot of fun. Sandy liked to come to cane grinding for drinks of the sweet cane juice. He seemed to know that at this place people were constantly stooping over to pick up wood for firing the furnace, to pick up cane to carry to the mill, to pick up pomace to carry from the mill and thousands of other things to be handled about a cane grinding and had no trouble in finding himself constantly at the right place for temptation to be placed right before his eyes. Workmen around the cane mill would soon learn to be constantly on the watch for Sandy and his butting pranks. It was the innocent visitors who furnished the targets at cane grinding. It was for their benefit that Sandy was usually coaxed to the cane grinding lot by supplying an occasional handful of corn from the pocket of some over-worked boy who just had to have a little fun to keep from getting tired and to break the monotony of the daily grind.

For about 15 years Dear Old Sandy was the favorite pet at the Diamond Homestead. During this time he butted many knock-down bouts. He learned many clever tricks about

butting people and animals. He was never known to butt without having a good reason for doing so. Sometimes he butted to protect himself. The law of self-preservation was his first law. He had to do this often for the same reason that the average boy has to do a certain amount of fighting. People treat billy goats and boys exactly alike by picking at them, poking fun at them and imposing on them at every opportunity. Then Sandy sometimes had to butt to make people respect the lowly goat. He knew he was a goat and was proud of it, but did not like to be told of it in an insulting manner. He often butted for fun. This was evidenced by the twinkling in his eyes, the twitching of his tail and the proud walk exhibited as he departed from the scene of action.

Sandy often played with the Seven Sons in a butting match for fun only. In such cases Sandy was never known to butt too hard as long as a boy did not take any undue advantages in the game. He seemed to sense the situation as if he were playing with another small goat and was careful not to get rough. He always exhibited affection for those who petted and fed him.

Dear old Sandy soon learned to have an evil eye for all strange billy goats coming within the gate of the goat pen at the Diamond Homestead. It would only take a few minutes for him to have a definite understanding about who was to be the boss of the pen. Any strange billy goat undertaking to even question Sandy's right to boss the herd immediately felt the deadening blows of Sandy's massive horns. This is when he would be at his best in the use of his butting machine. This is when he used his full strength and all his bag of tricks. Many billy goats in fighting each other have a habit of striking a few hard blows, then stand and look at each other a few minutes arching their necks and backs in a threatening manner as if arguing the case. In fights with strangers Sandy never stopped to argue, but kept landing one blow after another. He took delight in crowding his antagonist in to a fence corner and then doing his best to butt him through the fence. When his antagonist would back off a few paces to get a start for a harder blow instead of doing the same thing Sandy would rush in on his antagonist and use the sharp points of his long keen horns in an effort to sever the body of his antagonist. Pretty soon his antagonist would turn tail and run to escape the awful Irish temper and fury of Sandy, and the fight would be over.

And here's hats off from each of the Seven Sons to Dear Old Sandy as

“THE BUTTINGEST BILLY GOAT”

DEAR OLD SANDY

He was a large pet billy goat
His name was Dear Old Sandy
When playing butt rough 'd tumble
Tricks 'd horns were mighty handy

Dear old Sandy's name was Irish
'Twas so with his temper too
If boy or beast made him mad
Sandy 'd butt him till black 'd blue

Old Sandy had a brilliant mind
His tutors taught him how to fight
They taught him many clever tricks
And how to do each one 'zactly right

Oft times he'd butt for his feed
Sometimes he'd butt folks for fun
'Twas then he butted soft and slow
Oft he winked an eye to see 'm run

Sometimes he'd get into trouble
Showin' off his many clever tricks
But when he did out he'd come
Usin' his hard head and ready wits

Fights he'd have with billy goats
But never had to take a licking
Cause he used wits 'd booty tricks
With never a thought of quitting

Dear Old Sandy showed an evil eye
For strangers within his gate
Oft go sauntering round 'd watch
To butt them back beyond his gate

Sandy had a short stubby tail
He wore it bent o'er his back
Every single time 'twas twisted
The twister got an awful whack

Sandy wore his beard long 'd white
It made him proud to have it so
When 'twas ruffled oft he'd snort
Then butt the rowdy ruffler sore

His hard horns were long and keen
They were his kingship's glory
Who'er gave insult to his honor
He'd hook'd butt till soft 'd gory

His muscles were large and strong
His bony head hard as solid rock
Teased too much for fun or fight
His teaser 'd get a dreadful shock

Sandy oft pulled a little wagon
Bringing sportive fun to gay boys
Hauling feed 'd fuel about a farm
But best yet were the riding joys

Sandy 'd let a boy ride on his back
Trotting up 'd down the Diamond lane
For prankish fun he'd jam the fence
Pra'ps to see if boy's siss or game

Dear Old Sandy was ever fair 'd square
'Twas so with friends 'd adversaries
This was his bright and guiding star
Ev'n butting boys and missionaries

Dear Old Sandy lived a long time
He always did his best to please
Ev'n butting folks to pearly gates
'Twas ev'n so with preachers 'd peas

Sandy's life was ever high 'd noble
Instinct law was his only guide
Can't we be better 'n a billy goat
And within reason's realms abide?

All Sandy's years were seven 'd ten
To butt 'm right afore taking the can
Butted head away 'd left tail awiggle
To carry on the work against man
Till called by the fable goat god, Pan

Dear Old Sandy loved affection
Loved loyal friends was kind 'd true
When he died 'twas a sad farewell
Every body cried a big BOO HOO!

THE DAMMED WASH HOLE

The first adjective in this title is not log camp cussin', police profanity or college slang but a perfectly good reputable English word derived from the Anglo Saxon and other language meaning to restrain the flow of water by a dam. This is exactly what it did. It held water in a pool better known in the early Florida Frontier as a wash hole. At the time this dam was constructed no one in the community of the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough had ever heard of a bath tub or a bathing pool. In those early frontier times no one ever bathed or went in swimming. People washed or went in a washing.

The dammed water hole was made by building a sort of wild beaver dam across the Diamond spring branch approximately 200 feet below the Diamond spring and was called in plain words "Wash Hole" because that is exactly what it was built and used for. As a wash hole it was a world wonder. It possessed magic powers because it not only supplied pure crystal water but soap, sponges and other washing material exactly suited for those who used the wash hole. In one edge of the wash hole where turf and dirt were removed for use in building the dam was a bed of pure white pinkish chalk splendid for removing dirt and absorbing filthy substances as well as the best soap on the market. In the upper end of the pond on one side grew a large cluster of wild ferns. A few fronds from this clump wet and rubbed between the hands produced a soapy lather having a pleasant odor that would put Proctor and Gamble's sweet soap to shame like a frontier skunk turns Hoit'd Dime Cologne green with envy. Near the edge of the wash hole opposite the cluster of ferns was a small patch of spagnum moss fully as useful as a sponge for washing purposes. In the middle of the wash hole along the branch was plenty of white sand from as fine as fine wheat flour to as coarse as Florida frontier water ground grits.

The Diamond Homestead was not equipped with a bathtub. No home on a Florida frontier had such luxuries in those days. Water for domestic use at the Diamond Homestead was brought from the nearby spring flowing from beneath magnolia trees growing at the foot of a steep bluff about 300 feet from the house. It was transported by what was known as "A boys' Bucket Brigade," usually composed of from two to four of the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough who were inmates of the homestead. All laundry work was done at the spring because it was less work to carry laundry to the spring than it was to transport water up the steep bluff via the Bucket Brigade.

When the boys of the bucket brigade had to transport water up the bluff for laundering themselves for obvious reasons it oft was used far too sparingly in hot dry weather to make themselves presentable. It was a common occurrence to see a boy or a group of them come from the laundering process looking much worse for having made the effort. They reminded one of seeing a snow white piece of fine silk dipped in thick muddy water as a pretense of laundering it. The bucket brigade would use water so sparingly until only a few narrow streaks on each cheek and the palms of the hands would be washed. Saturday afternoon or Sunday morning boys of the bucket brigade might be seen dressed in their best Sunday suit with face, neck, ears, hands and arms covered with field dust and feet and legs double coated with cow pen or ox lot mud.

Such sights would be hurrahs to look at. Any one not accustomed to meeting such hurrahs might readily have taken them for spirits or specters from the nether world. Such continuous appearances brought admonitions from parental authority to use more water, plenty of soap and elbow energy for health's sake as well as preventing the appearance of hanty looking, ghost-like objects. Still the members of the bucket brigade continued to use water sparingly and to conserve elbow energy. The specter-like objects continued to appear in half darkened corners and shady locations, as is the custom of spirits and haunts.

Pretty soon the boys of the bucket brigade found themselves taking the part of the STAR players in the old time game known during the dispensation of the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough as "Glory Hallelujah Around the Old Huckleberry Bush in the Back Yard" Played to the tune of a two-step jig with a magic wand from the handy gallberry yard broom sometimes known as a wonder pants duster to keep perfect rhythm with the two-step-jig put on in double time.

The bucket brigade now found stern necessity staring each member straight in the face. There was no longer any room for doubts or hesitation. NECESSITY, the sternest of teachers was here and the bucket brigade knew it. Some wise old sage said: "Whom God would he sends to the school of NECESSITY and not to the school of the GRACES." Another wise old sage said; "Necessity is the mother of invention." They knew they were being enrolled in the school of NECESSITY and not in the school of GRACES. No doubt many of the bucket brigade had had useful experiences in the school of NECESSITY in the little log cabin school when they were the chief actors in the game Glory Hallelujah Around the Jungleberry Bush with a spinster teacher of uncertain age, unnumbered disappointments and unrealized hopes. However, the WASH BASIN version of the game was now bubbling over with mystery and tragic trouble. The bucket brigade saw the mystery writing on their wall.

The brigade was only hard working frontier boys unskilled in the affairs of state craft and the art of oriental politics but like Old King Belshazzar they could see the writing. But even though they were untutored hardworking Florida frontier boys unlike King Belshazzar they did not have to call in any Astrologers or Soothsayers to read the writing written on their wall [and] to explain the writing and the interpretation thereof. They read the writing and knew tragic trouble and diverse dangers were waiting just around the corner unless the brigade met the emergency like all Florida Frontier hard working boys meet the "Law of Survival of the Fittest." The brigade had great ambitions to survive. Every member of the Bucket brigade was now beginning to think about what it might mean to have the amiable dispositions of seven slender hard headed hatchet faced Florida Frontier Fledglings, known as the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough soured at a young and tender age.

The boys of the bucket brigade began to think seriously about having to face necessity and what it might mean. They knew stern necessity had a way of making his teaching stick. They knew stern necessity had a way to cinch his points. They knew necessity could tame the wildest animals of the Florida frontier forest with whom they had raced

and a few of which they themselves had tamed. They soon found out that stern necessity had even put a bucket brigade to thinking. A meeting of all members of the bucket brigade was called to devise ways and means by which two things could and would be accomplished; namely: 1. To prevent the bucket brigade from having to transport washing water up that steep bluff to launder themselves. 2. Flag forever the unholy game, "Glory Hallelujah Around the Huckleberry Bush" with a magic wand from the yard broom known as the wonder pants duster to keep perfect rhythm with a two-step jig put in double quick time.

The entire brigade got all heads together. Some scheming and planning was done and a little thinking. The practice of transporting the laundry to the spring to be laundered and then transporting back was discussed. Finally some member of the brigade began to wonder why the entire brigade could not be transported up and down the bluff like the laundry, and suggested that each member transport himself both ways. Pretty soon it was decided without objection, which is equal to a unanimous vote in parliamentary parlance, that this would be a good solution if only a wash hole could be found or made big enough to prevent any one of the Seven from having "To Wait." They had had unholy experiences in having "to wait." They wanted no more of it.

The task now was to plan the project. Soon a dam sight was selected. The question of how to build it caused a little worry. That was no dam-wright among the brigade. However, a plan was soon agreed upon and a mental list of material made. Because sand was continuously washing down the branch it was decided to build the dam with a flood gate so the sand could be permitted to pass through. This would require a spillway. Then mental list of materials was about as follows:

- 3 large mud sills
- 6 upright posts
- 3 stout pieces to fasten on top of the post
 - Boards for the spillway and gate
 - Nails and spikes
 - Poles to hold the dirt in place for the dam
 - Tools, consisting of axes, shovels, hoes and a wheelbarrow.

It was agreed we would cut the sills, posts and poles near the dam site. The boards would be picked up where they could be found about the homestead. The nails we would salvage from an old discarded smokehouse.

During the next few days every boy worked hard assembling the materials. As soon as this was done the building of the dam was begun. Deep trenches were dug for the mud sills. As soon as the sills were placed a little below the bed of the branch, two deep holes were dug close beside the upper side of each sill and the post set. Stout pieces were then spiked on top of the posts. Then the boards were nailed in the spillway. The floodgate was made later after the dam was built.

Turf along the edges of the branch where the water would back up was cut away and placed in the dam. Each side of the branch for 30 feet above the dam was cut wider and the brush placed in the dam. Poles were cut and brought to place below and above the dam to hold the dirt in place. Every member of the brigade now worked like fighting a fierce fire. Trash, straw, leaves and whatever was handy was placed in the dam. A wheelbarrow, hoes, rakes, shovels and shirttails were used in moving dirt in a hurry. Stern necessity was a hard master. Saturday afternoon the dam was finished and the floodgate made and set ready to be dropped in place. The WASH HOLE was ready for dedication Sunday morning.

Sunday morning at dawn one boy went to the Wash Hole and shut down the gate, plastering with chalk any little cracks in the gate of walls so no water would waste and a full head of water would be ready soon after breakfast.

All Sunday chores were attended to before breakfast or soon afterwards. Under such circumstances it is really astonishing how quickly a brigade of boys can milk a dozen cows, split and bring in a supply of stove wood, water horses, feed and water hogs, gather vegetables for dinner, supply the house and kitchen with water for the day and do dozens of other things that are constantly coming up for attention.

Long before eight o'clock each member of the bucket brigade was armed with a handful of fresh laundered clothes and headed toward the wash hole to enjoy a Florida Frontier wash in the then greatest wash hole in the brigade's world. It was something like the Old Mill Pond Wash Hole for mill age boys a little later.

Upon arrival at the Wash Hole the water was found only half way up the dam. All Sunday morning chores had been done too quickly. However, all clothing was shucked instantly and a stampede made for the Wash Hole. The spring water was cold. This didn't matter much. The splashing and real washing soon warmed the water. Approximately an hour was spent in the washing processes. It was without doubt the splashiest hour in the history of the Diamond Homestead. Really, it was a sort of four in one process. Plastering, absorption, scrubbing, washing and rinsing.

The plastering process was when the pinkish white chalk was plastered on dirty feet and legs and other parts needing or requiring softening and absorption processes before the scrubbing process. The scrubbing process was removing the chalk after it had done its work. It was usually done by using some spagnum moss and sand from the bottom of the wash hole. It was a sort of leveling cleansing process like sanding new or old floors to make them clean and new.

The washing process was done by using a handful of fern leaves dipped in water and rubbed between the hands until plenty of sweet scented lather was formed. This was a real washing process. It really opened the pores of skin and removed every particle of intruding objects causing in any way uncleanness. The splashing process was really rinsing. It was the process that put the finishing touches on the washing. It bleached the boys of the brigade like modern chemicals bleach fine linens. The boys of the bucket

brigade were probably cleaner when they had finished the four-in-one round in the dammed wash hole than they had been since they were spanked and bathed across their mother's lap. No doubt it was the first time within years they had been clean of field dust, log road dust, ox lot and cow pen mud and billy goat odors. If cleanliness is next to Godliness as many wise sages have said, the boys of the bucket brigade must have experienced some real devotional feelings when the four-in-one wash hole process running concurrently were finished.

They were really clean, these bucket brigade boys were. Even the dirty streaks behind their ears were white like snow, save a little pinkishness, the aftermath of hard rubbing and polishing with spagnum moss saturated with fine sand. Feet made tough, rough and rusty by a thousand stubs on jagged pine knots, shaggy brush, braddding brier thorns, climbing bamboo [Southern smilax] thorns in chasing stubborn yearlings, skittish shoats and hard headed billy goats had been bleached by constant plastering with pinkish white chalk and persistent squishing in the sandy bottom of the wash hole. The value of chalk as an absorbing cleanser had been proved beyond a doubt. It would absorb the rust and roughness from a country boy's feet and legs like it absorbs impurities from raw petroleum.

This bucket brigade crowd was a sporty bunch. Hence when the four fold cleansing process was over a few sporting contests just had to be put on to properly celebrate the memorable event. Though the wash hole was small and did not have a full head of water it had to be determined which one could swim the fastest. It had to be determined which one could float the longest without making an effort to stay atop the water. It had to be determined which one could lie on the bottom of the clear hole as if dead, the longest. No diving contests could be held because the water was too shallow. Of course, every boy in the brigade had to be ducked many times even though it took all the rest of the gang to do a good job of it. This was a sort of climax to the celebration.

Finally it was decided without objection, which in parliamentary parlance is equivalent to a unanimous vote, that a few boxing bouts should be staged with the contestants standing in waist deep water to determine if the Florida Frontier stock is holding its own or running out in the younger generation. Pretty soon temperatures began to rise. The cool spring water could not keep the steam gage down. Ere long handfuls of soft mud began to fly and stamp black stars on nude bodies, faces and heads. Soon soft colored chalk was used for stamping stars among the black ones. Pretty soon the whole gang looked like a gang of circus clowns staging a sham battle with all sorts of colored mud and chalk. As the fury of the star stamping business increased, some of the contestants were forced to retreat to the nearby thickets of brush, briars and thorny bamboo. This was a little rough on the skin of those retreating which was not without the protection of homespun shirts and blue denim trousers. A truce was now called. All the brigade now returned to the wash hole where the black, white and pink stars were washed away bringing to a close a three hour dedicatory celebration. It had been three hours of fascinating fun, frolic and fighting. Without objection it was decided the Florida Frontier stock in the younger generation is still sound and full of the frontier pioneer spirit.

Hundreds of other celebrations similar to the opening Sunday morning one were staged in and around the wash hole on Sunday mornings and on Saturday afternoons. About the only difference was as time moved along the gang picked up new contests to stage.

This opening day at the wash hole was a memorable day for the gang. It was a sort of turning point in the long winding trail to be traveled by the different members of the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough. Every member had been a little discouraged. The outlook was not a bit brighter. Dim rays of hope were now plainly visible upon a new dawning horizon. It had been demonstrated beyond the twilight of a doubt that rusty feet and scaly brier torn legs can be made white. The new wash hole was convincing proof that dingy ears and dirty necks can be made clean without scrubbing them raw with potash and sand. The dull drudgery of bringing tons of washing water up the steep bluff was no longer a ghastly ghost staring the gang in the face like a graveyard hant beside a country road. The thoughts of being the star performer in a Saturday afternoon or Sunday morning exhibition of the game: GLORY, GLORY HALLALUJAH AROUND THE PROVERBIAL HUCKLEBERRY BUSH, was no longer a specter full of tragic trouble and deadly danger dreaded like horned devils armed with sharp pitchforks.

THANKS A THOUSAND TIMES TO OLD NECESSITY.

Without objection so said we all.

Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough

HENRY AND THE HAME-LEGGED HORSE

TOM CATS AND TIN CANS

BOYS, BULLS AND BUGS

HENRY AND THE HAME-LEGGED HORSE

The incident here related occurred one Saturday afternoon in June when Henry was a small plowboy. It was the racing sensation of the season. It created more conversation on Pine Level than any Kentucky Derby ever run.

The characters involved in the afternoon races were two men, two boys, three horses and one plow mule. The men were Dan, a laborer and miniature farmer who spent much time promoting horse trading and or horse racing, and George, another laborer who thought he owned the fastest horses in the country. The boys were Henry, one of the Seven Sons and George's boy, Sonny. The horses were Pat, Blacky and Bay. The mule was Dan's old plug plow mule.

Horse racing has been a favorite sport among men since the first wild horses were tamed and used for working or riding. For hundreds of years people of means spent large sums of money betting on horse races at regular racing tracks where none but thoroughbred, trained horses enter the races.

Not to be deprived of the sport of horse racing many laboring men got together and raced their own horses. In such races usually each man bet on his own horses. Usually the bets placed or the prizes offered are small. In many pioneering American communities regular racetracks were prepared and racing tournaments held quarterly. To these tournaments men came from miles around, each bringing his own work horse or cow pony. Each man usually came with the feeling that his horse could outrun any other horse or pony at the races and was ready to back his opinion by betting all the funds at his command. These tournaments were great events in the early life of many Americans. They were useful in improving the grade of driving and riding horses. These events gave the American people horses possessing the speed and stamina equal to any horse in any country at any age.

The Characters

Dan was what was sometimes called a promoter of horse trading and racing. If he had no trading stock of his own he could usually find some friend ready to give him Five or Ten Dollars to make a certain horse swap for him. He often picked up some pocket money by betting on races between different horses in the community. He always managed to get the speed of the different horses and seldom lost a bet. His stock in trade was to get the speed of the horses without the owners knowing he was interested from the betting side. Dan was a jolly good fellow. He possessed a wonderful vocabulary for use in making the other fellow trade Dan's way. He could promote a trade or a swap between two men and collect Ten Dollars from each man for his service in assisting in beating the other one out of a good horse and keep the friendship of both men. He had the greatest capacity of any man I ever knew for enjoying a horse swap or a horse race.

George was a laboring man in logging work who usually owned one or two mustang ponies and prided himself upon having the fastest horses in the community. He was a great horse swapper and usually able to hold his own in a trade. Occasionally, like all horse swappers, he traded himself a foot. His specialty in horse swapping was in getting a

pair of small steer yearlings to boot. These he would put to work in hauling at odd jobs and within a year or two have a yoke of good log oxen for sale or trade.

Henry was the second in age of the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough. At this time he was a bare foot plowboy, 14 years old. He had loved and studied horses from the time he could walk. He knew horses as well or better than any man in the community. He had been working and riding horses since about five years of age. He was a real jockey when it came to riding a horse in a race, probably the best one among the Seven Sons. Henry was also an expert in extolling the good qualities of his own horse and in razzing the other fellow about the poor qualities of his horse.

Sonny was the seven or eight year old boy of George who had gone with his father to ride Bay on a Saturday afternoon swapping or racing exhibition. He was being trained in the avocation of his father at an early age.

Pat was a sixteen-year-old cream-colored horse Papa had traded for two years before for the purpose of getting rid of a bucking, kicking horse that was dangerous for small boys to work or ride. The horse Father traded appeared to be a much better one than Pat. For this reason Father received a nice cash difference to boot. However, after Pat had been fed well and properly cared for a few months in addition to being perfectly safe for riding or driving by Mother or any of the small children, it was found that he possessed greater speed and stamina than any horse in the community.

Pat had a small white spot in his face and a white streak on one hind leg. His mane and tail were black. He had a large spavin on each hock joint. These spavins had caused his hind legs to become as crooked as a pair of hames. Hence, he was sometimes referred to as the "The Hame Legged-Horse." Pat was as hardy and lively as any two year-old colt running in a clover field. He was a good workhorse to a wagon, buggy or plow. He was a splendid saddle horse, having four distinct gaits. He was a fast trotter to a buggy and could trot all day without showing any signs of fatigue.

As a scrub racehorse, Pat was never beaten, yet from a casual look one would never suspect he could head an old milk cow. His head was wide between his eyes and broad between his ears. His ears were small. His muscles were large, strong and quick of action. From knowledge of the different strains of horses learned later it is evident that Pat was of the Arabian stock. Pat's weight was approximately 900 pounds.

Blacky was a solid black mustang pony of trim build. Her hind legs were straight and well proportioned. Her mane and tail were long and a little wavy. Her neck was small and a little curved. She was a fast trotter to a buggy. Blacky carried herself well under the saddle and in harness. She was a real show pony. She was six years old. Her weight was about 800 pounds.

Bay was, as her name indicates, a beautiful light bay color. Bay was not as well built as was Blacky. Yet Bay was a beautiful little pony weighing about 800 pounds. Her mane and tail were a little lighter than her body. She worked well anywhere and was a better

saddle pony than was Blacky. Bay was five years old. Bay and Blacky made a beautiful span of ponies. Their owner had ample reasons for being proud of his ponies.

Dan's mule was named Plug. His color was bay with black mane and tail. Plug weighed about 1100 pounds. Plug was twelve or fourteen years old, was perfectly gentle for any one to work or ride. Dan had traded a kicking mustang for Plug to get something for his small boys to plow and work about his ten-acre farm. Plug stood perfectly still during the races as though nothing unusual was happening.

Henry had plowed Pat on this Saturday from sunrise in the morning until five o'clock in the afternoon with an hour out for dinner. At five in the afternoon he had unhitched Pat from the plow and ridden him to the woods to drive a herd of 60 or 70 head of range cattle to the pens. He had found the cattle and was herding them preparatory to driving them home when about a mile from the pens and a hundred yards from the road he saw two men and the boy riding along the road. They stopped, called Henry and motioned for him to come to the road. Boy like he galloped to the road and chatted a few minutes. Dan bantered to trade Blacky for Pat for two yearlings to boot. Of course, he knew Henry would not accept any offer to trade Father's horse. The offer was made only to get Henry's reaction to a trade. In making the offer Dan spoke of the racing qualities of both Blacky and Bay, telling him that if he had either of these ponies he would not have to tie his horse and take it afoot to head a cow. Of course, this did not set well with Henry when he knew Pat's speed, and he quickly retorted about Pat's racing ability. Dan and George continued to razz Henry about the "Hame Legged Hoss" that couldn't head a cow.

Henry knew both Dan and George wanted Pat's speed in order to know how to place a bet against a certain horse in the community and at first declined all offers for a race. They offered to lend Henry a saddle and to run Bay against Pat. After a considerable amount of razzing Henry, with nothing on Pat except a plow bridle and a plow lines for reins, brought Pat onto one side of the road and invited George to bring the Bay up beside Pat if he wanted to find out how slow Bay can run. Bay was brought up. The race was to start when Dan yelled, "Go." Henry slipped well up on Pat's shoulders, bent over on his neck, clinched his legs tight against Pat's sides and patted his neck to let him know that the race was coming. Pat stood still as a mouse having already placed his feet for the start at the word. When the word "go" sounded Pat leaped forward making one jump before the sound of the word finished. The second leap was made by the time Bay got her feet placed. Within a few seconds Pat was far ahead. George saw he was beaten and stopped.

George began with a long ALIBI about not having any whip or switch, claiming that Bay had been taught to run under a whip and would not run without it. Dan immediately supplied two good long dogwood sprouts and insisted that George use them. George took the sprouts and began flailing Bay as he said "to warm her up for the race" claiming that if he had done this at first he would have won the race by fifty feet. During this warming up process Pat stood perfectly still. When one sprout had been worn out, Bay was pulled up beside Pat, who placed his feet for a "quick pick up" this time upon hearing the word "go." Henry placed himself in position as before and according to Dan's version of the

affair, actually whispered some profound secrets right in Pat's ears. At the sound of the word "go" Pat made two long jumps before Bay got her power turned on. Then the whaling being given to Bay was another signal for Pat to do some fast running. Bay and George were left behind worse this time than the first race. George came back alibiing. Dan lay down on the straw, kicked up his heels and roared with laughter. George continued to alibi. Henry razzed him about beating his poor horse so much until it couldn't run at all. "Why", said Henry, "You could have done better afoot." This remark from Henry started Dan on a new spree of rolling on the straw and laughing. George continued to beat his horse with the stub of his stick. Pat stood perfectly still.

When Dan quieted down, George said he should have run Blacky instead of Bay. To this remark Henry replied, "Taint too late yet if you want to see how slow Blacky can run." This started Dan in another uproaring laugh. As soon as this uproar subsided, Dan brought up two good dogwood limbs for Blacky, one for the warming up process and one for the race. Reluctantly George mounted Blacky and began the warming up process. Henry was able to keep Pat perfectly still, Dan swore, by whispering secrets in his ears.

Soon the warming up process was over. Pat moved into place and made ready for the third race. Dan handed George the dogwood limb for the race. Blacky was pulled up beside pat. Henry placed himself well up on Pat's shoulders, lent over and again whispered more secrets into Pat's ears. When the word "Go" was sounded Pat again got two long jumps before George and his limb got Blacky's power turned on. Within less than five seconds the race was over. George came back alibiing worse than when Bay was beaten. He claimed that Blacky was tired, having been ridden ten miles since dinner, and besides she would not run late in the afternoon in any direction except toward home.

Dan again rolled on the straw and reared with laughter. George continued to alibi. Pat stood still as before. When Dan's laughter ceased, according to Dan's report, Henry remarked, "Dan, cut him a couple more good limbs of'n that tree and we'll run the fourth race toward Blacky's feed trough. Maybe then she can get into a high lope. The thoughts of some feed may help more'n the limb." Down went Dan for another round of roaring, laughing and heel kicking.

Dan supplied two more good limbs. The warming up process was soon over. Pat was placed in position to run toward Blacky's feed trough. Dan reported that Henry placed himself well up on Pat's shoulders, lent over, clinched his legs against Pat's sides and whispered some more secrets in his ears, this time rubbing Pat's head and neck until the word "Go" was sounded. Dan's report of this was about as follows:

"At the sound of the word "go", Pat pulled a quicker pick up than before and kept it up. At the sound of the word "go", George struck Blacky an awful blow in her right flank with a large keen sprout but instead of moving forward she reeled off to the left scringing from the pain of the terrific blow which evidently deadened nerves on that side. Blacky got started after the second blow in the flank. By this time Henry and the "Hame Legged Hoss" were full fifty yards down the road, Henry holding one hand up waving to George to come on."

“Yes, Siree”, said Dan, “That old hame legged hoss is the fastest thing I ever saw run, and that boy Henry is the best rider I ever saw riding a race. Yes, Siree, when that boy gets in position, clinches his legs against the hoss’s sides, twists his left hand in his mane, rubs the top of his head and neck with his right hand and at the same time whispers secrets in his ears that Pat understands he really goes down the road. Shucks, chain lightning couldn’t ketch ‘m”

George came back as before, alibying. This time Blacky was too tired having been ridden ten miles since dinner. Dan again rolled and roared with laughter. Henry’s reply was, “Ten miles ain’t nothing. Pat’s pulled a big plow more’n twice that far since dinner.” And with this he went off in a high lope to catch up with the cattle before they got to the pens, leaving Dan rolling and roaring with laughter and George alibying.

THE HAME LEGGED HOSS

The hame legged hoss, a great hoss was he
Raised on blue grass in old Tennessee
Was brought south, a clever cow pony to be
Became a mast'r at this, take it from me

This little hoss was nimble, plump and fat
That's why when young, his mast'r named'm Pat
His quick wit'd steps were Irish to the core
His hame-like legs were Irish o'er and o'er

Pat's body was a darkish cream and glossy
His feet and legs jet black and glistening
His mane and tail night black, long and wavy
His carriage on road and track stately

A mighty handy hoss in the harness was he
He'd pull a buggy fast like a royal steed
Wheel a wagon load like a Norman Percheron
Plow a garden'd farm like enchanting morn

If anyone a horseback ridin' would go
"The HAME LEGGED HOSS" would make it so
Pat could walk, trot and rack fast or slow
And with soothing canter capture the show

On a range he liked to hunt'd drive cattle
He'd stop and listen for a bell to rattle
Then chase 'm from mead, forest hill'd glen
Never failing to bring them all to pen

With a barefoot boy astride his bareback
Pat always like to run the racing track
Quick as start with hast'ning speed apace
The record 'tis true Pat ne'er lost a race

Pat was a handy hoss around about the place
Farm road track or woods 'twas good grace
Pat's one great desire was to do his best
This was done till is fin'l call to rest.

TOM CATS AND TIN CANS

Sometimes when boys are about 16 years of age, they get the idea that every little curly haired, brown eyed, blue eyed or black-eyed girl they see is smiling at them as an invitation to call on her. Sometimes this desire is augmented by liver disorders in the spring of the year being interpreted as heart ailments. In such cases a bottle of good liver tonic is the remedy. Usually the parents of a large family of boys keep an adequate supply of such tonics on hand for use each spring and apply them when the first symptoms of the disorders appear.

One spring along in April, Henry developed a serious case of this disorder so rapidly until it was unnoticed. Saturday night a group of young people was holding a meeting to practice a program for a May Day picnic. Henry was not on the program but thought he just had to be there because of a misinterpretation of a spring liver disorder. So as soon as work was stopped he rushed to the house, fed his pony and took a bath. Before dressing for the trip he slipped in and ate a little supper, giving Mother the excuse for eating ahead of the rest of the family that he had to go back to the new potato patch and water a few hogs. He went out and got a sack and that over-worked family vehicle, the wheelbarrow, and proceeded to roll the wheelbarrow around the house a time or two killing time for the rest of the family to go to supper.

As soon as the rest of the family went to supper Henry hurried to his room, literally jumped into his Sunday suit, slipped out, saddled his gray pony and loped off to the program practicing party.

Supper was soon over and the family scattered about the place. It was near bedtime before anyone noticed Henry was missing. Mother explained that he had evidently gone with the wheelbarrow for a sack of potatoes, because she saw him with a sack and the wheelbarrow. A little investigation revealed that his saddle, bridle and the gray pony were missing. Father laughingly remarked that Henry evidently intended to bring the potatoes on horseback instead of in the wheelbarrow. This soon found to be wrong because of the fact that his Sunday suit was also missing. Nothing much was said. Soon everyone went off to bed. About the time some of the boys got to bed they decided that Henry would try to slip in during the night without anyone knowing what time he arrived, and agreed to "fix things" so he would announce his return regardless of his desire to keep it a profound secret.

Soon a number of five-gallon square tin cans used for holding kerosene oil and a few smaller ones were assembled at his room door. The door was lightly propped open about 8 or 10 inches and two large cans balanced on top of it so that with the least movement of the door the cans would tumble down on the head of the one opening it. Two or three straight chairs were placed just on the inside of the door, propped against each other and some cans balanced on top of the chair posts in such a way that the lightest touch would cause the chairs and cans to tumble over on the floor and give the cans a rolling start across the room. All the boys then hied themselves off to bed to wait for the announcement of Henry's return.

The wait was short. Soon light footsteps were heard passing under the window of a room in which some of the boys were waiting. Presently Henry came to the back steps. He placed one foot high up on the steps, unlaced the shoe, pulled it off and gently set it down on the floor. He did the same thing with the other shoe. He then picked up both shoes and tiptoed to his room door. All was as quiet as a mouse listening for a cat. He found the door partly open. This aroused a little suspicion that it might be propped that way purposely by a chair placed back of it. The shoes were set down on the floor. The door was held with one hand while he reached around it with the other hand to feel for a chair or whatever object was holding it, to push it gently back a little so the door could be opened wide enough for him to enter. A chair was found. It was moved a little. When it moved the door moved. Without a moments notice down came the cans and chairs. In the mix-up some of the cans rolled off and toppled over. Others struck the chairs and bounced off to the floor. One of the square cans also took a rolling start and slapped the floor each time it turned over. It sounded like shots in the stillness of night to those so suddenly aroused. The announcement of his arrival was heard for 200 yards in every direction. Every member of the family except the boys who placed the cans and chairs were awakened.

All was quiet for five minutes. The Father called Charley who was sleeping in the room nearest to the bedroom of Father and Mother. No answer came from Charley. Father called a second time. Still no answer. He called a third time. Charley grunted some sort of a reply as if he were only partially awake. Father inquired if he knew what made that strange and unusual noise at this late hour. Charley grunted a negative answer. All was quiet again for five minutes.

Presently Mother was heard to say, "That sounded like some pans falling in the kitchen. You know several pans were left in the kitchen turned over some things on a table. A lot of dishes were also left on the same table nearby. I'll bet that half wild, prowling, thieving, starving old tom cat that has been prowling around here for the past several nights has found some way to get into the kitchen in search of food again and has thrown those pans and dishes off the table. I know a lot of dishes are broken and my Sunday dinner ruined. I'll have some of the boys take the dogs tomorrow, hunt him and kill him. I just can't put up with his prowling and tearing things up ever night." Saying this she got up and lighted a lamp for use in going to see about her pans, dishes and Sunday dinner. In the meantime, Father had gotten up and without waiting for a lamp started toward the kitchen. He evidently suspected some trickery or prankishness from the grunt-like answers he had received from Charley. He stopped near Henry's room door and called, "Henry, are you back yet with that sack of potatoes?" Henry replied, "I'm back but did not get any potatoes." [The potato story was new to Henry] Father then asked if he knew what made that awful noise, waking everyone and then added, "Was it you or that old prowling tom cat that created this disturbance, waking everyone at this hour?" Henry replied, "When I opened the door all the tin cans on the place fell from the top of the room on some chairs and then rolled all over the floor."

Father mumbled a few words of disgust, turned around and started back toward his bedroom. He met Mother coming with a lighted lamp. She demanded that he go back with her to the kitchen and assist in finding that “drotted old prowling cat” and help her to chase him out before he knocked down more pans and dishes and completely ruined her Sunday dinner.

Father related what Henry had just said about all the empty tin cans on the place falling from the top of his room when he opened the door and suggested that she come on back and try to get some sleep. Mother hesitated. Father continued toward his room and said as he walked, “That wasn’t your ‘drotted old prowling tom cat’, it was the prankish tricks of these devilish boys we’re kept busy putting up with. There’s very little difference between a prowling tom cat and a prowling boy. People can’t sleep around either of them.”

BOYS, BULLS AND BUGS

There is a certain amount of similarity between boys and bulls. Boys have a lot of bull nature in them and bulls have a lot of human nature in them. Their character, disposition and general behavior have a lot in common. The more one studies boys and bulls the greater similarity one may observe. A thorough study of human nature or human behavior reveals much animal nature or animal behavior. Such a study reveals much human nature or human behavior in almost all animals, both wild and domesticated species.

Some Similarities

Boys	Bulls
Boys have strong will power	Bulls are hard headed
Boys are quick to resent insults	Bulls like to fight
Boys are smart alecks	Bulls like to attract attention
Boys are researchers	Bulls are investigators
Boys are boastful	Bulls are bluffers
Boys have wonder lust	Bulls are ramblers
Boys are inquisitive	Bulls are meddlers

Boys go with the gang

Bulls go with the herd

Boys like to be leaders

Bulls like to be bosses

Boys are full of pranks

Bulls are full of meanness

Boys butt in or pry in

Bulls butt in or horn in

Boys take a wide range

Bulls like a wide range

This could be carried to the nth power, but what's the use? The above similarities will suffice. If the reader is interested he may extend the list to his liking.

The reader has probably heard this expression, "He's like a red headed bull," which means he tries to find out the cause and effect of everything he sees, hears, suspects or imagines, even though it is not any of his business and he should not meddle in the matter at all. This is a characteristic of a red headed bull. Any little unusual object in his path will attract his attention and immediately an investigation is started, whereas other cattle will pass the object by unnoticed.

Once when new pens were built for our cattle the old rail fence adjacent to a field was used as one side of the pen. In repairing the fence and making it higher a large wasp nest was found suspended from the lower side of a flat rail. It was left alone for good reasons. First, the boys didn't want to get stung at that time. Second, they wanted to see a bull meddle with the nest and observe bull nature in dealing with bugs.

The second afternoon when the cattle were driven into this pen, a short length of haywire had a hook bent in one end and this hook placed around the slender stem holding the nest to the rail. The other end was placed around a slender pole in such a way that when the pole was pushed over, the nest would be torn from the rail and dropped in the pen. A gay colored bandana handkerchief was then draped over the wire to attract attention. This gay colored handkerchief had no attraction for the herd of cattle. Many were purposely driven near it. They took a glancing look and passed by without any particular notice. Later a young meddlesome bull was casually driven past the handkerchief. As soon as he saw it he began to look with suspicion. He'd walk a step or two nearer, stop, look and shake his head in a threatening manner. He stopped within two feet of it, arched his neck and bellowed as if daring it to fight. The handkerchief remained still. The bull moved closer and continued to look and bellow. Presently he shook it with one horn. When he did the guard on the nest warned him with a light stab under the chin.

The investigating bull shook his head fiercely, grunted a few times and loped to the other side of the pen. The other cattle paid no attention. This evidently was a disappointment to him. He was now "as mad as a bull" and expressed his madness by bellowing and pawing the dirt with his fore feet. After a little exhibition of his madness he started back toward the wasp nest, but stopped within fifteen of twenty feet of it and bellowed and pawed the dirt again. Presently he walked two or three steps toward the nest and repeated the

bellowing and pawing. This was kept up until he was close to the handkerchief. When almost within reach of the handkerchief, he stopped and bellowed louder, pawed the dirt a little and stuck one horn in the ground as if digging a bracing hole for his forefeet when expecting a fight with another bull. After loosening the dirt with his horns he pawed the loose soil from the hole, bellowed and moved both forefeet into the hole. He was now ready to hold his place. No bull could push him from his moorings. He bellowed a few times as if inviting an attack. The handkerchief didn't move. The bull struck the wire and the pole with his horns. Down came the pole, wire and handkerchief, bringing the wasp nest with them. Before the nest landed on the ground, a dozen or more mad wasps speared the bull's neck, head and breast with their long javelins.

Immediately the bull bellowed, bucked and pawed his jaws in an effort to get the javelins out and stop the pain. He circled the pen, still bellowing, bucking equal to a Mexican Bronco, but not as a fighting bull but as a whipped one wanting help to pull the painful spears from his carcass before death brought relief. His bellowing and bucking no longer indicated defiance but distress. He was suffering the pangs of death and wanted all the cattle to know it and extend a little sympathy before he died. Soon he ceased bellowing and bucking but continued moving in circles and pawing the dirt as if trying to throw some of it on his wounds. Presently he stopped pawing and moving in circles and walked to the opposite side of the pen from the wasp nest. When near the other side of the pen he stopped and licked his wounds, evidently to ease the pain and to determine if blood was flowing freely. The licking of the wounds must have soothed the pain and the failure to taste blood gave encouragement. His countenance put on a changed appearance. He evidently decided death had been cheated and walked to a corner in the pen, stood still and looked at the cattle long and wishfully as if soliloquizing about as follows: "I destroyed a suspicious and dangerous looking enemy found in a fence corner that might have meant death to all of us had it not been detected and destroyed before it made the fatal attack. In thus risking my life for your protection I got badly gored in at least a dozen places. My wounds were severe. The awful pain and intense suffering were almost beyond endurance. The distress call was sounded but you heeded it not. I bellowed and bucked all over the pen right before your eyes. The intense pain in my body, the distressful condition of my mind and the extreme agonizing of my soul caused me to circle the pen the second time in order that you might detect my condition, but everyone of you 'passed by on the other side' and left me to my suffering. Not one of you, 'had compassion on me.' You left me to die, but I revived without aid, licked my own wounds and 'poured in oil and wine.' I've now learned my lesson. From now on, you ungrateful, unsympathizing Priest-Levite-like hypocritical creatures will be left to the mercy of any and all suspicious and dangerous looking thieves spying from a corner."

About this time little six year old Charley came over by Henry and me where we were waiting at the gap to let some calves and yearlings out to graze during the night and said: "Huh, just like a fool boy, couldn't let it alone until he tore it down, got stung all over and then cut the fool begging for sympathy." To this remark philosophical Henry replied, "Not so bad, only showing human nature in a bull."

One summer in June Henry and I were clearing a little spot, raking trash, piling brush and burning them on the back side of a field for use in planting fall turnips. About eleven o'clock we heard a lot of bellowing near a cattle watering hole approximately a quarter of a mile from the field. The bellowing continued for quite a long time. We decided it would be a convenient time and place to see a pair of big bulls fight. Immediately we left our work and went off in a run toward the watering place. When we came in sight we found two different herds of cattle had come for water at about the same time, one coming from the south of our place and the other from the north. A large bull was with each herd. The bulls were five or six years old and about the same size, one was heavier than the other because of a larger posterior body. They were facing each other with two big logs making a sort of a fence between them. The bulls had stood there and pawed the dirt until they each were well "dug in" for a fight. Neither was willing to leave his dugout because of its advantage in a fight.

Henry and I stood afar off at first, looked on and tried to decide if the bulls really wanted to fight or were only bluffing using the logs between them as an excuse for being unable to get to each other. We kept getting a little closer until we mustered up courage enough to try to drive the bulls from behind the logs into a more open space where they would not have quite such a plausible excuse. Armed with an ample supply of well-chosen pine knots we ventured close enough for the knots to take telling effect. We each selected a nearby dogwood tree, easy to climb, just in case the bulls resented the fusillade of knots soon coming their way. Soon we were in the vantage-point and the fusillade of knots was let go. Soon both bulls were pelted from their moorings, and walking toward the end of the logs. We walked around far off to either side and yelling, heaved a few more knots toward the bulls in an effort to make them walk toward each other. The heaving of the knots had the desired effect. Both big animals arched their backs, lowered their heads, and started walking "sorta" sideways toward each other. They slowly and cautiously came closer until they were not more than eight or ten feet apart. Suddenly they each jumped at the other. Their massive heads and horns crashed.

Henry and I were only eight and ten years old respectively and did not know definitely what danger might be lurking around near such a fighting match, so as a precaution we each went up a large dogwood tree and watched the fight from our high perches in the trees.

The bulls were well matched. It was plain from the beginning that a hard fight was ahead. They would push straight ahead for a few seconds, then try swinging around to the side, each trying to get the advantage of the other. They circled among the trees, stumps and logs, each keeping clear of any object that might hinder his efforts or give his antagonist the advantage. The sound made by the crashing of their massive horns could be heard several hundred feet away. The fight continued for half an hour or longer, with one and then the other seemingly getting the better of the other. Both bulls were now "as mad as a bull," and also "as hot as a bull." Occasionally they would stand still as if resting to catch up a little on breathing. During these short resting periods we noticed both bulls were panting rapidly.

The bull ranging to the south of the water hole had a much larger posterior section of body than did the one ranging to the north of our place. He was a little heavier than the other bull and at first the favorite in the fight. However, after the fight had continued for three quarters of an hour or longer, it was evident that he was getting hotter and panting faster than the bull having a more trim body. Occasionally the trim built bull would push his antagonist backward several feet. This happened several times. Presently the bull having a large posterior body was pushed backward into a fallen pine treetop containing a large number of dead and partially decayed limbs. The limb breaking was now on. Soon the trim built bull pushed the other one against a log and turned him a summersault over it. He then climbed over the high log and rolled the somersaulted bull fifteen feet out of the treetop, breaking the many big limbs in stove wood length. At the edge of the treetop the rolling bull scrambled to his feet and galloped off southward, bellowing and squealing distress signals, his long tongue hanging out dripping plenty of white lather-like foam. The victor in the fight went to the water hole, drank freely and walked off in the direction of his herd.

Henry and I came down from our high perches and returned to our trash raking in the would-be turnip garden. However, during the rest of the day we talked more “bull” than we raked trash.

Four or five years after having witnessed our first real bull fight we had a unique experience with a strange black-headed bull that come to our cattle pens late in the afternoon shortly after the cattle had been penned. This bull was three or four years old and rather saucy. He came up bellowing like he was looking for a fight with whatever crossed his path. When Sam and I undertook to drive him away from the gap to drive some calves and yearlings out for the night, instead of moving he arched his neck and “bowed up” at us in a threatening manner. With the aid of a sharp ended fence rail and a few well chosen pine knots we changed his mind for him and drove out the yearlings.

A few days before this strange saucy bull came to the cattle pen a nest of yellow jackets had been located sixty or seventy feet from the back side of the cattle pens. Of course, our first thought was to aid the saucy bull to walk through the cluster of small bushes in which this nest was located.

We boys had been planning to destroy this nest of javelin carrying bugs but for first one reason and then another had not gotten to the job. We were now glad we had not destroyed it, especially glad if we could but induce the saucy mean tempered bull to walk through the right cluster of bushes.

As soon as the yearlings were all penned, Sam, Henry and I walked gently around back of the pen, threw, from some distance, a few pine knots into the cluster of bushes containing the yellow jackets. The stinging bugs swarmed over the bushes a little and soon settled back below the tops of the bushes. We waited a minute or two for the outer guard to get down near the mouth of the den. When all was right, the strange, saucy, stubborn would-be fighting bull was slowly, cautiously headed toward the right cluster of bushes. It was plain he was going much against his stubborn will. He shook his head and bellowed as if

he wanted to fight. He stopped a time or two and looked at us, each time shaking his head in a threatening manner. We three boys knew not to “rush the bull” in this instance. When he stopped we would also stop. Presently a small knot would bounce off his body or hind legs. He would then move a little nearer to the right cluster of bushes. Things were going just right. The bugs were mad and so was the bull. Another few steps and the show would be on. Now he stepped to within six feet of the bushes and stopped. Three boys held their breath. A small knot rolled in the grass just back of the bull’s hind legs. He bellowed, lowered his head, stepped up to the bushes and twisted the top off the tallest bush, then bellowed and jammed his horns in the ground as if trying to show his strength and madness by tearing up the entire cluster of bushes. We boys moved back to safer ground.

The bugs covered the bull. He sounded the distress signal, turned on all the power in order to move from the bushes, but instead of moving [forward] his feet [driving wheels] slipped and dropped him right over the nest. He scrambled to his feet, opened wide the throttle and uttered distressing calls having the sound of the bellowing of a bull, the squealing of a hog and the wailing of a big bobcat all blended into one continuous roaring. He bucked, and pawed for the first forty feet while continuing his blended sound. His running gear was now in high, his tail high in the air and his speed at its best. His blended sound soon became a succession of short jerky squeals. By the time he had made the first hundred yards the noise ceased. All energy was now used for speed ahead. Within an instant he entered a grove of pine saplings three hundred yards away and with his bushy white tail still held high in the air waved us a fond farewell. “G, GO, GOOD BYE” said Sam as he waved his hand toward the disappearing bull.

Father who was in a nearby vegetable garden had heard the unusual noise, looked toward the cattle pens and saw the bull’s tail high in the air and the bull making off at high speed. Father now walked over to the pens to learn the cause of the noise and the bull’s speeding departure. He saw three of the Seven Sons sitting high on a fence and laughing at the bull’s misfortune. He suspected at once that the laughing boys must have had a hand in the speeding departure. If Father had known of the location of the nest of yellow jackets he would have known at once what had happened. When he arrived at the pens he asked little Sam what had caused the bull to run away so rapidly and make such unusual sounds as he departed.

Sam, who at that time had not been given

“THE STUNNING CURE FOR STUTTERING,”

started to explain what had happened. He began, “T T That s sau sau c c cy b bu bu bull came up h h here m m ma mad and w w wanted a a fi fi fight.” Father then turned to Henry for the explanation.

Henry then explained a strange, saucy bull had come to the pens just after our cattle had been shut up for the night and that when we were ready to let some calves and yearlings out to graze during the night the bull had gotten in the way and acted like he wanted to fight us by bellowing and shaking his head in a threatening manner. He then told how we had driven him away from the gap and the fool bull had walked off bellowing like he was

mad and tried to tear up a cluster of bushes containing a nest of yellow jackets. Father now understood the situation and joined in the laughter.

Philosophical Henry remarked when the laughter was over: “ We were not mean to that saucy bull. He had strayed away from his home, entirely out of his range and was looking for a fight with whatever crossed his path. We only accommodated him by helping him to find exactly what he was looking for, A SOBERING LICKING AND A THROUGH TICKET HOME.”

Father replied to Henry’s remark: “Yes, about like saucy boys when they first get away from home, entirely out of their range. Try to act smart to attract attention. It’s a pity such boys can’t always get what the bull got, A SOBERING LICKING AND A RETURN TICKET TO THE PARENTAL ROOF.”

By this time Sam had observed Father wasn’t at all disturbed about the bull’s having strolled into a nest of yellow jackets and was now joking, laughing and talking “BULL” with the rest of us. He remarked: “BULLS AND BOYS, PINE BLANK ALIKE.”

The four of us now went off to supper discussing, “BOYS, BULLS AND BUGS.”

Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough

PENNING THE PRETTY PIED PONY

GULLY GREENY RIDES A ROLLING LOG

JUMPING SHEEP AND SHOATS

PENNING THE PRETTY PIED PONY

When Henry and I were small teenage boys we planned to pen and bring home a small half-wild pony approximately three years old, as soon as the field crops were gathered so the pony could have the fields for pasturage. During three weeks we talked about this event. It was discussed pro and con, backwards and forward and from all the sides and angles we could think of. We discussed the ups and downs that might be ours if we had to chase the pony swiftly through the woods on horseback. We wondered if we would get thrown from the backs of our running horses, and if so, if we would be able to double up and hit the ground rolling or perhaps spread out and land in a slanting sliding position, or perchance hit solid and flatten out like a griddle cake. We wondered what might be the results if we had to run our horses at full speed for several miles through a woods partially covered with a thick growth of pine trees, scattering patches of oak bushes and dogwood thickets. We wondered what would happen to us while having to run our horses at full speed for several miles through a woods literally covered with tops of pine trees cut a few years before for saw mill timber.

We finally reasoned this problem out about like this. We decided that since we had two clear footed horses having the best of eyesight and well trained to run in the woods so they would not run against any tree or trees, or run into any dangerous snaggy tree tops or fail to jump high over any logs lying in our paths, we would have nothing to fear in running our horses through such woods. Next thing we got to thinking about the danger of having a fast running horse step into one of the numerous burned out stump holes partially hidden by overgrown grass and fallen pine straw. This gave us real concern for a day or two. We soon got over this worry by agreeing that our horses were clear footed in running in the woods, neither of them ever having been known to step in a hole and fall and surely they wouldn't do such a foolish thing now. And too, we would be careful and assist them in selecting the best possible routes for running.

The thought of the fun, fascination and thrills we were going to get out of penning the pretty pied pony and bringing it home made our corn gathering, hay cutting, cotton picking, and peanut gathering a thousand times easier. The crop was gathered this fall in less than half the usual time required for the task. This is not unusual for boys when they can look ahead a few days and see and thoroughly understand the fun and frolic they know will come to them from an adventure. With the help of Cam and the Cart two hundred bushels of corn were soon placed in the crib, and all the Mexican clover hay hauled to the barn. The grass hay was hauled to a corner and carefully stacked and fenced. The cotton was picked and the peanuts pulled. Then both were hauled and housed.

We knew the pretty pied pony was not wild when it wandered off from home a little over a year before and took up with a drove of wild horses ranging for the greater part of the year ten or twelve miles from the Diamond Homestead. However, we suspected this young spirited pony during this time because of not coming in contact with human beings

had become about as wild as its companions. Said philosophical Henry; “Young spirited ponies are like young spirited boys, soon become as wild as their companions.”

We had heard many stories of men chasing wild or half-wild horses long distances through forest and covered woods. Such stories were thrilling. They were especially so to Henry because of his instinctive tendencies to love horses and his innate desire to work with and race horses. To Henry such stories were irresistibly fascinating. We recalled all the stories we had heard about penning horses and wondered if we too would be fortunate enough to have some interesting experiences in penning the pretty pied pony. At this point we thought about what might happen to us because we had no experience in chasing wild woods horses. Our boyish imaginations worked overtime. Oh, what fun boys can get out of their active imaginations!

We wondered if a wild or a half-wild horse could run as fast and as long without tiring as a well cared for workhorse could. We wondered if Pearl and Pat could hold out to run long enough to tire range fed horses so much until they would slow down and either be penned or roped in the woods. And then we thought of what might happen to us if we were able to run the pony down in the woods and rope it like we sometimes did shoats, goats and yearlings on foot around the homestead. We boys, Henry and I, were long winded. When boys, if a horse was not handy, we thought nothing of running down an unruly shoat, a stubborn goat or a contrary yearling and bringing it to the pen. Such animals, usually, would begin to show signs of fatigue after being chased at high speed for ten or fifteen minutes. Within another ten or fifteen minutes they would begin to seek protection in a clump of bushes, a fallen tree top, a brier patch or perchance in a fence corner. In such locations a pair of long, lean, lusty, racy, country lads trained in the tricks of the trade never failed to finish the task. We had never chased horses, either on foot or on horseback. Hence, we wondered and wondered without coming to a satisfactory solution of our imaginary problem.

By the last of October all the cotton had been picked and placed in the house. The last load of corn had been brought to the crib with Cam and the Cart. The few acres of peanuts had been plowed loose, pulled, cured in the sun like hay and hauled to the barn with Cam and the Cart. A few tons of Mexican Clover hay had been cut, cured and hauled to a corner. There it was stacked and fenced as a protection from stock grazing in the fields. The fields were now ready for the pony.

Henry and I were now ready for the adventure. To us it was something new because we had never chased horses in the woods like we had cattle, hogs and goats. We knew well the speed and endurance of lean long legged razor back hogs raised on wild persimmons pine mast, pine roots and wild grass when chased on foot or horseback. We knew the speed and endurance of a skittish nervous two or three year old yearling that preferred the woods rather than the cattle pens. We were now going out to get some new information. We had turned a leaf and were anxious to tackle the new lesson.

We quit work Friday afternoon two hours earlier than usual to get ready for an early start on Saturday morning. Out saddles and bridles were carefully checked over and made

ready. Out cow whips of our own making were put in order and tied to the saddles. We thought of taking Papa's fifty-foot rope used to lasso beef cattle but found he had carried it to the logging camp. Some plow lines were brought into use. Two strong ones were tied together in a neat knot, making a rope thirty feet long. One such rope was tied to each saddle.

We were up early next morning. The horses were fed and breakfast eaten before dawn. Henry rode Pat, the hame legged horse. I rode Pearl, the little gray mare. Both horses were well trained for riding or running in the woods. They were indeed "sure footed," if ever that name applied to horses. In all our experiences in running them in the woods neither had ever been known to fall or stumble enough to slacken speed or disturb the rider. Both horses were fast runners and long winded. Pat, the hame legged horse, had run hundreds of scrub races without a single loss. Both horses were noted for their endurance in a race.

[If the reader has not read the two articles under this cover entitled: "HENRY AND THE HAME LEGGED HORSE," and "TWO RACING GRAYS," may I suggest that he do so now.]

Henry and I had understood from persons claiming to know the habits of horses grazing on this range that they fed on the "Wire Grass" areas in the early spring and summer during which season the "Wire Grass" was tender and luscious and during late summer and fall they would feed on the areas where the wild oats grew in abundance. At this season the wild oats were at their best. There was a luxuriant growth of them this season. In many open spaces the tops of the wild oats, although bending because of the heavy yield of grain, stood as high as a tall man's head while riding horseback through them. During the day Henry and I rode through patches of them where the grain was two feet or more above our heads.

A few minutes after daylight Henry and I rode off toward the south, as proud and happy as any two cowboys who ever sat in a saddle or rode the roundups on the plains of Texas. At the big mayhaw pond, a little over a mile from the Diamond homestead, we separated, agreeing to meet at the large Open Pond three miles from the mayhaw pond. I turned to the left and took a southeastern course expecting to go by two or three small gum ponds and the famous "Our Tank" place on the Skinner and McDavid log railroad. At this place I was to cross to the eastside of the railroad and search the woods for a mile or more south to opposite the large open pond and then turn west to the pond. Henry was to continue south on the country road to opposite the Steve Lord place. Then he was to travel southeast to the open pond. This large open pond had been a famous watering place for range livestock since the arrival of the first Spanish settlers in this section. Doubtless many an Indian had stalked his game while watering at this pond. During dry weather when the smaller ponds contained no water, cattle, horses, sheep and hogs visited this pond almost daily for water.

We had agreed that in the event either of us found the drove of horses containing the pretty pied pony he would slip away unnoticed and bring the other boy to the herd so we

could both take part in the chase. Within about an hour we met at the Open Pond, neither of us sighting any horses. At the pond we found plenty of horse tracks, indicating that many horses of all sizes had been watering at the pond during the past two or three days. This was indeed interesting information. We decided that in the event we did not find the pony today we would visit this pond at noon during the watering period each day for a few days.

The ride from the big mayhaw pond to the Open Pond was through a picturesque wooded country. The land had been covered with a thick growth of large straight tall pine trees. The largest ones had been cut eight or ten years before for saw mill timber. However, many large ones were left that now towered over 100 feet high to the first limbs and as straight as a line. Many large white hickory trees, large wild persimmon trees, large sassafras trees and numerous thickets of large white flowering dogwood trees were interspersed among the tall pines. The leaves on the hardwood trees were all on gay dress parade. All the colors of the rainbow were in evidence. Tall gray wild oats were thick in all the open spaces, many patches of them standing seven to eight feet high with their heavy heads bending with grain. It was a most beautiful country and a fitting place for country lads to ride through and learn many lessons without knowing they were learning.

After resting a short time at the open pond we continued south. We were to meet next time on the northern edge of a large open meadow containing five or six hundred acres where water had backed up from the Big Pond during the Lincoln freshet in West Florida and South Alabama shortly after Lincoln's death. During this freshet the water stood several weeks from six inches to two feet deep killing all the pine timber. This meadow was approximately four miles south from the Open Pond. Henry was to ride south on first one side and then the other of the Skinner and McDavid Railroad. Particularly he was to search the woods in and near Buck's Deadening for horses. This famous deadening was at a location where a man by the name of Buck settled about the year 1868 or 1870, bringing with him a large herd of range cattle, seeking good pasture for his stock. Here he built a log cabin and fenced eight or ten acres for cattle pens. He deadened the pine timber on twenty-five or more acres on land to be used later for cattle pens and future farming. Mr. Buck remained here only a year or two because he got into disputes with two or three other cattle owners living six or eight miles away. The other cattle owners had been living there twenty years or more and rather resented having a stranger trespass on their cattle ranges. Before Mr. Buck had accomplished much except building a cabin and deadening a lot of timber he packed his belongings in a large wagon drawn by a yoke of oxen and pulled out, driving his cattle before him. When I was a lad of six or seven years old a trip was made to Milton with my Grandfather Diamond. As we rode through the deadening he gave me the history of the place. Said he, "Buck was a contentious man and found his cattle were gradually ranging farther south and southeast to the areas near the famous Big Pond, the head waters of the west fork of Pond Creek, the well known Bay Gall Pond, a few miles east from the Big Pond and the celebrated Three Hollows, making the head waters of the east fork of Pond Creek, where they were ranging with other cattle," Grandfather said. Buck reported as he left the deadening, "My cattle got to ranging with the cattle of contentious rascals and it was move, kill or be killed, so I decided to move where I can have elbow room."

I was to ride a mile or so east from the Open Pond and then travel south by several large shallow ponds in which horses and cattle often fed during dry weather by wading in water from three to twelve inches deep. In due time we met at the appointed place. Here we dismounted and rested, half an hour or longer, while we permitted our horse to graze in the edge of the large meadow. This meadow was approximately the dividing line between the wiregrass and the wild oats. Hence, we decided to go no further south but to turn north westward four to six miles to a famous old field where an old time settler by the name of Wash Cobb had settled and built his cattle pens. Mr. Cobb had passed away a few years before. The large herd of cattle had been sold. The old house had been destroyed and the field fences built of rails, split from yellow pine timber, had burned thus leaving the old fields as a part of the open range. These old fields had grown over with carpet grass and were now feeding grounds for many range cattle, horses and sheep. We agreed on the next meeting place as the old field. As before, we rode about a mile apart, sometimes zig zagging back and forth to visit certain ponds that might serve as a watering place or perhaps feeding grounds in shallow water. In due time we met at the old field, without sighting a single horse. Here we rested a few minutes under the shade of some large dogwood trees at the edge of the old field.

From here we decided to circle back toward Buck's Deadening by way of a large damp meadow at the head of the Boutwell School House Spring Branch. This time we agreed to meet at Buck's Deadening. As was our custom we traveled a mile or so apart and in due time met at the appointed place. No horses had been sighted. At this place we discussed turning back toward Bay Gall Pond and coming around by Three Hollows. This was probably the best feeding area in all of West Florida and South Alabama. This area had been famous for the production of fine cattle and horses since the coming of the earliest Spanish settlers. It had produced thousands of fine beef cattle almost equal in size, tenderness and juiciness to stall-fed cattle anywhere. There never was nor is there today anything strange about this area. It is here as everywhere, feed produces fine cattle. This area still has the feed and of course, produces cattle. After thinking the situation over, we decided that because of the lateness of the hour and the distance of six to eight miles to the Bay Gall Pond and the Three Hollows, we had better turn back toward the northwest and hunt both sides of Moore's Creek.

At the north edge of Buck's Deadening we came upon a logger's cabin with a small cultivated patch beside it, containing half an acre more or less. We stopped and engaged the logger in conversation hoping to have a friendly chat with him and get some valuable information about the horses that may have been feeding in the Deadening. After talking with him a few minutes, we inquired if he had seen any horses feeding near his cabin during the past few days, "Yep" said he, "There's a dozen or so feeding over there behind that haw pond now." He then offered to go over to the haw pond and show the horses to us. We thanked him for his offer and explained that we would ride over by the pond and look the bunch over for a pretty pied pony about three years old. Our friend then came from his cabin, climbed over the rail fence surrounding the house and started following us and talking all the time. We checked our horses and waited for him to catch up. He informed us that the pretty pied pony was not at the mayhaw pond. Said he, "About thirty head of the range hosses fed past here yesterday evening. They fed off that way on

wild oats.” [He pointed northwest toward Moore’s Creek] He then continued, “I allow you’ll locate’um over there on the creek about the Tom Bell old field near the lower waste way on the creek, cause that’s a good watering place.”

We lingered a while hoping to pick up additional information about the “Hosses that fed past here yesterday evening.” Said he, “The wild oats are fine this fall. They shore do fatten hosses when they are in the boot or headed. Them hosses fed past here are fat. They’re as fat as them hosses you’re ridin’ and I ‘spect a lot fatter, cause they ain’t had nothing to do ‘cept to feed on grain.” Henry asked him what he meant by being in the boot. “Why” said he, “That’s when they’re in the milk stage just before the grain begins to harden. In that stage they’ll fatten stock quicker’n corn.”

The man looked at us a few moments and said, “Did I understand you’re looking for a pied filly?” We replied, “Yes.” Then he said, “Come to think about it that pied filly is with that bunch of hosses that fed passed her yesterday. She’s bay in color with lots of white spots on her. And listen to me, where she’s bay, she’s really red, and where she’s white, she’s white as snow. Boys, she’s a pretty thing. She’s a Spanish pony. Like as not come down through the years from the hardy Spanish hosses fetched here by the Spaniards before the United States existed. Good pony. I’d like to trade you out’n her.”

We told him the pony he had described so well was not for trade or sale, and thanked him for the information. “Nat a tall” said he in a friendly voice. After thanking him again we rode off in the direction of the lower waste water weir, referred to as a good watering place. When we were fifty yards or more from the cabin we heard our friend hollow. We stopped and looked back. He yelled at the top of his voluminous voice, “Calculate you’ll find them hosses a feeding in the edge of the Tom Bell Old Field near that there watering place. You know them hosses will get water about noon and rest in the shades about the old house place until the middle of the evening before going to feedin’, they jist about now beginning to feed.” We yelled our thanks and rode away toward the old field.

It was now about three o’clock in the afternoon, sun time. Henry and I were now in high spirits. Our cherished dream of penning the pretty pied pony was now about to come true. The castles built in the air were about to have foundations placed under them. We began to plan the tactics of penning the pony. We remembered watching a man handle a large unbroken Texas mustang for Father when we were little boys, too small to run horses in the woods after stock. Father had traded for this large Texas mustang and soon found he had to have help in riding and working it. He employed for a few days a man experienced in such work. Henry and I watched him and all his tactics. The mustang was so large and strong until the man had great difficulty in holding it. On one occasion it was about to get loose from him. He suddenly lay flat on the ground. The mustang dragged him only a few feet and stopped still. Said this man, “If you ever rope a wild or partially wild animal you can’t hold, just lie flat on the ground at once, cause no hoss ‘ll drag a man but a few feet, cause the pull’s slow and steady and not by jerks. If you see you are going to be thrown from the back of a hoss, roll up like a ball and hit the ground a rolling instead of spreading out flat and landing on your head.” Since we had seen such tactics work fine with this man we thought we might try them if we got in a tight place.

Old Uncle Texas Ben Cobb who had been in a thousand mustang roundups on the plains of Texas, advised circling wild or partially wild horses or cattle rather than letting them run straight ahead. He explained that riding in a circle some distance away from such animals will cause them to run in a large circle and run the first fright off after which they could be driven in almost any desired direction. Henry and I decided we would try this if and when we found the drove of horses.

Soon we came in sight of the Tom Bell old field. Grazing in the north edge of the old field we noticed a drove of approximately twenty-five head of horses. Approximately a hundred yards behind this group of horses was another group of ten or a dozen feeding quietly on the carpet grass. Soon we saw our pretty Spanish pied pony in the center of this group. We stopped still behind a cluster of oak bushes to decide the best way to tackle the task before us. While we were discussing the advisability of suddenly running our horses between the two groups in an effort to separate the smaller group from the larger group, a large bay stallion grazing at the head of the larger group raised his heads and looked toward us. Immediately he gave one loud warning whinny and started running full speed toward the north. At the signal given by the leader, every horse in every group followed him at full speed, not a trot or a gallop but at the fastest speed possible. Talk about “quick pick ups!” Every horse in the group had plenty of it and knew how to use it upon hearing the signal of the leader.

Henry and I stood still. He looked at me and I looked at him. Neither of us spoke. We both looked at the fleeing horses. It seemed the sudden stampede of the horses had stunned us for the moment. Henry looked at me and I looked at him. We spoke at the same moment, saying, “Well, let’s circle them till they cool down,” and off we went.

During the past hour or so Pat and Pearl had been acting a little tired, but not so now. All the racing spirit in them, and they had plenty, was now bubbling over. They ran without effort on the part of the horse or the rider. They knew we had found the object of our hunt and wanted to head the horses homeward like they had done on many hunts. Pearl was reined up close to Pat when I said to Henry, “I’ll speed up and keep the leaders circling. You keep about opposite the pied pony and at the first opportunity, rush in the line and separate her and a few others next to her from the main drove and then we’ll follow and circle the bunch she’s with until they slow down and can be driven.”

Within a mile or so I was close up beside the big bay stallion causing him to run up the edge of a long hollow and out by a little green head. Henry kept getting closer to the main body of the drove. The race had started toward the north. It was now running toward the east. The race was now on fast and furious! Pat and Pearl were having a real race and enjoying it as they had never enjoyed a race after slow cattle. They leaped fallen logs and treetops like wild deer being chased by swiftly running hounds. They were not rearing to run. They were running. They seemed to understand horses can run faster than cattle and were anxious to run past the fleeing horses and head them like driving gentle cattle. The race was sport for Pat and Pearl. It was sometimes necessary to hold them back a little to

keep them from over doing the race by running into the drove and scattering the horses pell mell.

The race was now running just right. The circling was satisfactory so far. We passed near the big Open Pond moving a little south of east. It was soon detected the leader was making a heroic effort to lead his herd toward the head waters of Black Jack Creek where it would be an easy task for the horses to scatter and hide among the hills and black jack bushes. We were now in big woods where the running was easy. Pearl was pulled up beside the big bay leader and a long keen cow whip cracked around his extended neck making him circle southward. Of course, the herd followed closely the line run by its leader. Soon we were racing among a large number of small gum ponds and over ground thickly covered with logs and fallen treetops. Here the speed began to slow down a little. Two different efforts were made to separate the pretty pied pony and a few others from the main drove by rushing in and cutting the racing line as it passed a pond. The trick failed because the slower horses would not be separated. They were not yet tired.

Henry and I rode near enough to communicate with each other. We agreed quickly that a few more miles of fast running would be necessary to slow down the few hind-most members of the drove, and proceeded to pick up the speed.

As soon as we passed around the end of a pond into a stretch of more open woods Pearl was pulled up close beside the leaders and the long whip used to put them in high speed. Henry and Pat came up close to the back of the drove and with the effective use of his whip brought the slower animals close up behind the leaders. The race was now at its best speed. The sharp cracks from the two whips kept the high speed for a mile or two. It was hard to judge the distance because the miles were traveled quickly.

The herd had now circled south and a little west until it was almost due east from Buck's Deadening. Here it was plain the leader was attempting to head toward the southeast in order to lead his herd to hiding places among the hills of Three Hollows, the head waters of the east prong of Pond Creek. Henry and Pat left the rear end of the drove and came up beside Pearl and me. We conferred for a second and agreed to rush the leaders a few minutes. Whips were cracked and a few rebel yells sent forth to reverberate among the tall pines. SPEED PICKED UP. We were now nearing the point in the race we had been hoping for. The leaders were rushed and the hind-most horses given an opportunity to slow down a little. After being forced to put on all the speed possible for a mile or two, they seemingly were glad to accept the opportunity.

Soon Henry and I rushed into the racing line separating the pretty pied pony and nine other horses from the main drove. Henry then circled the pretty pied pony and the other nine back toward the west while I put full speed behind the main drove for approximately two hundred yards so as to get it quickly too far away for the smaller group to unite with it. I then turned back and joined Henry who had already permitted the smaller group to slow down. We lingered some distance behind. Soon the smaller group came to a pond where it stopped for water. We were glad of this opportunity to let the horses have a little rest after such a long race.

After drinking, the horses trotted off toward the south. We then circled them back northwest. Soon they slowed down to a gentle trot. We turned them northwest toward the home of a logging man whom we knew had some large lots used for penning his oxen. We then dropped behind a little so the range horses could slow down and to let Pat and Pearl have a little breathing spell. Within a mile or so the entire group slowed down to a walk. We were then able to ride slowly and quietly close to this group and drive it easily in whatever direction was desirable.

From the time we left the Bell old field until the groups were separated we had traveled ten or more miles at high speed. It was no doubt the longest race we ever had at such speed. It gave us more thrills than all the racing we ever did in driving cattle. There wasn't any doubt about it now. We had had the race we'd been longing for and planning for while sweating in the hot fields during the past month in gathering corn, cotton, hay and peanuts.

Within twenty minutes we had the Pretty Spanish Pied Pony penned with nine other horses in an ox lot belonging to a logging man residing in the vicinity of Buck's Deadening. Now the problem was to rope the pony and take her home.

Henry and I each took our ropes and tried to walk around in the big ox lot and rope the pony without causing some of the horses to jump the fence or tear it down by running against it. We knew if one animal went over or through the fence all the others would follow and we would have another race. Soon we saw this plan of roping the pony was not going to work. We could not get near her. The group would run from one side of the lot to another and bump against the strong high plank fence en mass, giving the fence an awful strain. We knew the combined weight of eight or ten horses thrown with terrific speed against even the strongest of fences would soon break through. Hence, our efforts at roping the pony were abandoned pronto.

While waiting and talking strategy a few minutes the Pretty Spanish Pied Pony and two other small ponies walked into a blind trap formed by the side of a large corn crib on one side and the high fence on the other side and one end. This trap was approximately sixteen feet long and three feet wide. We knew the horses had gone into this trap expecting to find a way to escape from the lot and get back into the big woods. Henry and I were quick to take advantage of this blunder on the part of the pony by baring [boarding] up the open end of the blind ally. Some stout boards were tied to the fence opposite the end of the crib so the horses could not back out of the trap.

We let the three trapped ponies stand still awhile to get used to the place and over the excitement of being trapped. We then took ropes and crawled up beside our pony and tied a rope around her neck. It was then fastened around her nose in the manner of a halter so she would not be so hard to hold, because all her pulling would then be done by the end of her nose instead of her neck. The short bars were then untied and removed. The three ponies were then permitted to back out of the trap. Henry and I both held to the rope now the length of three plow lines, about forty-five feet long. The pony tried to pull us around

the lot a few times, but made little headway at this. She then reared up on her hind feet and rolled over backwards. She got nothing from this except two or three hard falls. Within ten or fifteen minutes she quieted down as though resigned to the penning and roping. We drove her around the lot a time or two to better acquaint her with the leading and driving process.

The lot gate was then opened and the other horses let out and given a good start back toward the woods. After waiting until the woods horses were entirely out of sight, Pat and Pearl were brought into the lot. I mounted Pearl and took the rope to lead the pony while Henry rode behind to do a little driving. In this fashion the lot was circled a few times. The gate was then opened and the procession moved outside. The pied pony tried hard to follow the route taken by the other horses when they were let out of the lot. She reared up on her hind feet, fell over backwards, jerking me from the saddle to the ground. I too, fell backwards. Soon the procession started again. This time Henry used his light whip a little. After this, there was no more pulling back. The pied pony stayed close by Pearl to keep out of reach of the whip. The six-mile trip home was made without a single event occurring worthy of note.

By the time we had gotten half way home the pretty pied pony was leading as gentle as an old plow horse. She had lost the wildness that required twelve months to acquire. Disappointment was rapidly becoming visible in the faces of Henry and me. Our demeanor plainly showed disappointment. We couldn't hide it. Sadness was swiftly overcoming us. One of the chief things for which we had planned for days, yea even dreamed of in our slumber, was slipping away, slipping from us fully as fast as disappointment was being delineated upon our boyish faces. Yes, it was plain the only opportunity we would ever have of becoming heroes was gone and we knew it. It was as plain as could be that the fun and fascination of riding and working our wild pretty pied pony was gone forever. The pretty pied pony was again a plaything for country boys, something to be petted and loved.

Henry and I had gotten a great thrill out of the day's experience. We traveled over little if any strange territory. Doubtless we had been over this same woods many times with Father in hunting or driving beef cattle. However, the race we had run this day was a new and exciting experience. It was full of excitement from the start to the end. It gave us thrills of joy, frolicsome fun and fascination that still linger. Horse racing has ever been and still is exciting, thrilling and fascinating. Thus it will ever be, regardless of mechanical contrivance for faster racing.

Many interesting things were noticeable in the racing Henry and I did this day well worth remembering a few of which are here given with the hope that they may be thrilling or inspiring to spirited country boys who love the big woods and riding and racing spirited ponies.

1. The care with which the leader selected the running route, never leading his followers into fallen treetops or brushy brambles, over or through boggy meadows. From the way he resisted being forced to run in circles he knew by intuition or otherwise that

running in circles would lead only to capture and loss of freedom. He knew his woods and how to lead.

2. The perfect confidence the followers had in their leader. Each horse seemed to know by intuition or otherwise that it must run the route run by the leader or be captured.
3. The cooperative spirit of our saddle horses. They had the racing spirit from the moment the leader sounded his warning whinny. Not once did they stumble, falter or waver in the race.
4. The value of SOUND HORSE SENSE.

PENNING THE PRETTY PIED PONY

The horses were sighted in the Bell old field grazin'
At the lead'rs warning whinny the start was amazin'
Off northward all the horses running swift went
Like a steel pointed bullet from a long rifle sent

The quick take off of all the herd at the signal sound
The rumbling 'd roaring, of rattling hoofs on the ground
Stunned Henry and me and made us sit still, unnerved
We looked at the fleeing horses and spoke not a word

Silent I looked at Henry and he looked at me
Then we looked at the horses as they did flee
Again we looked at each other and quickly agreed
To race 'm in circles regardless of woods or speed

Reins were tightened 'd forward we lent a signal to go
Pat 'd Pearl full o' fiery pep joined the race all aglow
They raced by trees o'er fall'n logs swift as a bird
Within a coup'l a minutes were circling around the herd

The race was now fast and furious like a circus show
Pat and Pearl full o' racing spirit and rearing to go
They circled the racing drove by little green head
Across Pine Level the route the big bay stallion led

Quick as a flash the big Open Pond was left behind
The big stallion heading for Blackjack hills to hide
Pearl and a long whip circled him south on the level
While Pat 'd Henry kept the drove running like a devil

A couple miles forced speed circling gum ponds among
Was too much race for the slower horses to run
They began to show fatigue and lag behind in the bout
The stallion tried to lead a tiring herd a safer route

But a few strokes with a long whip circles him west
When two miles more were run without a single rest
The Pat and Henry moving swift like a fast bird
Cut the Pretty Pied Pony 'd nine others from the herd

Speeding Pearl 'd long cow whip sent the big stallion
An thirty more horses from his battalion
To a safer place far among the hills of Three Hollows
And left behind slower members among his followers

Henry and I then circled the smaller herd a mile or two
Keeping Pearl and Pat behind and partly out o' view
So the herd would over the racing fright and run no more
And thus the race "PENNING THE PRETTY PIED PONY" be o'er

Then the smaller herd forgot the fright 'd a ten-mile race
'Twas tame and tractable 'd could be driven to any place
'Twas then driven slow a few miles without a trot
And 'THE PRETTY PIED PONY' penned in a big ox lot.

GULLY GREENY RIDES A ROLLING LOG

One summer early in July after the small patches of corn, cotton, cane, peanuts and sweet potatoes had been “laid by” Father began hauling logs to the Escambia River and selling them to a lumber mill located twelve or fifteen miles down the river. The logs were cut from areas close by the small cultivated patches on the Diamond Homestead preparatory to clearing the land to enlarge farming operations. Father explained he had a twofold objective in enlarging his farming operations, namely [1] to keep his Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough busy and thereby enable him better to put up with them and [2] to produce food to augment the groceries required to feed seven growing boys.

The logs were hauled to the river at a place known for many years as “The Gaylor Dead River Landing” so named because the dead river formed when the main river made a “cut-off” where an oxbow loop had been made was near the pioneer home of a famous Spaniard who had settled here during the Spanish occupations. The logs had to be poled [poled] three-eighths of a mile from the landing out of the dead river into the main river down which they floated to the lumber mill. The logs were poled to the main river approximately every six weeks when the number had reached from one hundred fifty to two hundred.

One morning when Father, a hired man and I [a 15 year old boy] had rolled approximately 150 logs into the Dead river and were booming them for poling to the main river two groups of two men in each group came to the landing for a day’s fishing on the river. One of the men in the first group to arrive was a young man, a newcomer to this area who had never seen men riding logs in floating water. He thought it real sportive fun rather than work. He wanted to try his skill at riding logs in floating water.

When Father learned he had never been on logs in floating water he advised him to stay off such logs unless he wanted several good duckings and probably one good drowning. His reply was, “Oh, shucks, I can swim if I fall in, but then I ain’t gonna fall in. There ain’t nothing to do but stand on a log and push a little with a light pole. Any fool can do that.” After the laugh quieted down the young man explained he was tired of clearing new ground, plowing among roots and briars and working in dusty field dirt for four bits and dinner or six bits and feed myself for a day’s work. Said he, “I’m going to work on logs on the river where I can make from \$1.50 to \$2.00 a day.” To this remark Father replied, “Rather ambitious eh?” The young man admitted it. He then laid down his fishing pole and line and started on to the floating logs. Father again advised him to stay off the logs unless he could take several deep duckings and maybe at least one good drowning. By this time he was staggering over several logs loose in the deep eddy water. By this time the men on the logs and the fishermen knew the young man was as Father had described him, “A Gullible Greenhorn.” The comedian among the fishermen changed the name Father had given the young man from “Gullible Greenhorn” to “Gully Greeny” for short.

The men now decided to let “Gully Greeny” put on a real show. A spike pole was handed to him and a small light corky high floating log was pushed toward him. It was a log

experienced river hands knew would perform all stunts known to river log driving crews. Gully stepped upon the swishing, corky thing as it was pushed away from the other logs. As soon as its speed slowed down Gully make a few awkward steps and the show was on in full swing

The show lasted about twenty minutes. The three of us on the logs went ashore so we could enjoy the circus without falling through open spaces between the floating logs. The comedian among the fishermen rolled on the log landing, as he laughed, roared and guffawed. The six of us on the shore laughed until we were too weak to stand on our feet and watch the stupid stunts of the clownish performer. His crude remarks during the show were as entertaining as his stunts. They were full of original wit, uttered as automatic outbursts provoked by the man's new surroundings.

During the performance so many expressions were heard that were called by or comedian fisherman "sorta rhymie" until the event is related here in a few "sorta rhymie" lines. A few of the "sorta rhymie" expressions heard during the show are as follows:

This work's fine
Must be my line

All is quiet
Busting by it

A skittish hog
A twisting log

Riding a rolling log
Fills my head with fog

He's a sprawling
Now a squalling

It bucked and pranced
It rolled and danced

Grab my floating hat
And ride you for that

Its plenty slick
For another trick

Laughing ripples round
Where Gully went down

Black eye and bloody nose
Uh! Overboard I goes

Saved and towed a shore
To ride logs never more

GULLY GREENY RIDES A ROLLING LOG

A gully greeny at the river
Saw riding log, men clever
Thought this sort of work fine
Said, "Surely ridin' is my line"

"I'll show you I can ride
A rolling log on a river wide
My clever skill can find work
Better'n digging dusty dirt"

A workman handed him a pole
Pushing him a corker to roll
He took poll'd, stept on the log
It jumped like a skittish hog

It rolled two ways with zest
It bucked two ways 'd shot west
Log rearing 'd, rolling to right
Poor ole Gully sank from sight

A floating hat 'd ripples round
Marked where Gully went down
Soon bubbles did rise 'd break
A Gully rose but mighty late

Gully coming up for air
Grabs his hat looks here 'd there
He grabs log but corky rolls
Him off 'd straight down he goes

Again hat and big ripples jolly
Mark the spot of Gully's folly
Surface calm hat floats quiet
Big bubbles rise 'd burst by it

Again Gully grabs floating hat
Swears he'll ride log for that
He tried to ride it toward bank
It bucked from where Gully sank

No hat was left to mark the spot
Where Gully sank like a rock
The rolling, bucking, waltzing log
Slipt away like a wild swamp hog

Gully Greeny rose, hat and all
No worse from the headfirst fall
Swimming, Gully to the log clings
Then soon upon the log he swings

The rolling log now plenty slick
Was anxious to do a master trick
A slippery step, atop log he sprawls
“Yep, slicker’n an ell” he squalls

Scuffling ‘d clamb’ring up straight
Wond’ring what’ll be the next fate
A corky log cuts a coon jig ‘d jumps
On the log, face and nose he bumps

With a black eye and a bloody nose
Grappling the pole down he goes
Tugging hard with a sing’l flounce
The rolling, corky thing he mounts

Log would waltz two way to once
Making him feel like a daffy dunce
First his head would begin to swim
Then his body ‘d splash with vim

Cautiously he stands upon the log
Dazed from falls he’s full o’ fog
The log cuts cap’r with rid’r bold
Slips flat on it and bumps off cold

A bump-off sinks, no bubble rise
He’s snatched from a watery demise
Rescued ‘d ‘vived then towed ashore
To ride a rolling log never more.

JUMPING SHEEP AND SHOATS

On Sunday morning when I was an even dozen years old, Father and I attended preaching services at the Damascus Church in the Coon Hill community. On the way home we stopped for dinner at the home of Uncle William Diamond. After dinner two of Uncle William's small boys, Dan and Wright, invited me to go with them to a nearby mayhaw pond approximately 250 yards from their home. While at the pond a neighbor boy a little larger and older than Dan came to the pond and joined us in gathering a few mayhaws. His name was Dave Dunlap. Soon he suggested we go with him to the Cartwright abandoned old log-cabin residence and assist him in jumping some sheep. Dave explained he had just walked by the old house and had noticed twenty-five or thirty sheep lying in the building, probably spending the hot noon hour there. Dan and Wright accepted the invitation at once. Of course, I went along with the party.

The old house was not more than a hundred yards from where we were. The boys were all talking and laughing about the great fun of jumping sheep. My curiosity compelled me to ask what is meant by jumping sheep. The reply was: "No time now to explain. Come on and wait and see. It's plenty fun. We've jumped sheep from that old house before." About this time Dave requested Dan, Wright and me to stand still and quiet while he stalked to the house and shut the door before the sheep heard us and dashed from the old building. As soon as he had the door closed, Dave motioned to us to come quickly. We came running. As we approached Dave said; "The sheep are rearing to jump. Get that big box and that long plank, quick." Dan got the plank and Wright and I got the box.

The door opened toward the inside. Dave told Wright and me to place the box right in front of the door, close against the wall. We did this. The box was longer than the width of the door. The ends extended beyond the door a little on each side. The box was approximately two feet high and a foot wide. Dan laid the plank lengthwise on top of the box. Dave then told Wright to crawl through the small opening he had made by pushing the door open about 6 inches. Wright crawled through as directed. I was then told to stand on the north end of the porch and see the fun. As soon as Dave and Dan had a good hold on the plank, one hand being placed at each corner, Dave pushed the door open and ordered Wright to let one sheep come over the plank at a time. The jumping process was now on in full swing.

When the sheep jumped over the box the plank was lifted quickly, throwing the sheep off balance and landing it on its head beyond the edge of the porch. The plank was again put in place. This time it was held 6 to 8 inches above the box with the edge next to the sheep 2 or 3 inches lower than the other edge. This caused the sheep to jump on the plank and then make a second jump toward the ground. As the sheep started to jump from the plank the boys gave it a quick swing forward and upward causing the sheep to land not less than 15 feet away squarely on its head. The sheep stood still a second or two on its head before toppling over on its back with its head toward the house. The poor mesmerized sheep had lost all sense of directions. When it clambered to its feet it started toward the house. After moving 3 or 4 feet it shifted gears and headed off directly away from the building.

This jumping process was continued until the entire herd of approximately 25 sheep were jumped or rather somersaulted 15 feet through the air each landing on its head. Many of them landed a little slanting, their heads slipping a few inches on the ground before their bodies toppled over with the head always pointing toward the house. Every one of them seemingly had lost all sense of direction. It seemed the greater effort the sheep made to jump quickly from the plank the farther it was thrown and the harder it landed on its head. The only thing keeping the necks of the sheep from being broken and their heads “busted” like a water melon dropped from the top of a ten rail worm fence was the fact their heads and necks were made for hard butting.

It seemed the sheep could not understand why they failed to land on their feet as they were accustomed to land when making long high jumps. They never failed to show a look of surprise and disgust when they discovered they were heading back toward the prison in which they had been trapped and from which they had been catapulted a little like skyballing with the sheep playing the part of the ball. Anyone with a thimble full of proverbial gray matter would have no trouble to understand the sheep were not accustomed to somersaulting and landing on their heads when making high jumps.

It was indeed a new variety of sport to me. When the last sheep had been catapulted from the plank various and sundry remarks were made about the sport of jumping sheep as Dave called it. Many different views were expressed about the sport. All agreed while it looked hard on the sheep’s heads and necks it was probably the only way they could save their lives. Landing on other parts might have meant broken legs or broken inwards parts. It was Dave’s philosophy that the sheep had used their heads to land on to save their lives, exactly like a cat always lands on its feet to save its life.

Within a few days I had something new to tell the other boys pranking about the Diamond Homestead. After explaining the jumping process the other boys at home wanted to see how it worked rather than just be content to hear me relate the process the way it had appeared to me. Very naturally it had to be tried out on some of the goats and hogs about the barn at our home.

We next decided to try the new sport on some long nosed piney woods razorbacks. The best place we had to try this sport on the long nosed rooters as they came from the ox lot over the so-called bottom bar in the gap. One day at noon when Henry, Sam, Charley and I came in from the fields we were trying to cultivate while Father was working at logging work we found a dozen or more hogs in the lot. Thought we, this is the time to try the game on hogs instead of sheep and goats.

The gap was fixed as near right as we knew how. The hogs would have to jump over bars about 18 inches high. Henry and I took one of the planks used as bars to be used as the jumping plank. Sam and Charley went into the lot to run the hogs over the plank one at a time if possible. The first hog come over the plank was a small one that come over too quick for us. We jerked the board too late to throw the victim off balance. Hence no fun from this would-be-jump.

We had learned that hogs do not jump on the top of what they jump over like sheep and goats, but clear it as a single jump. We now changed the position of our board by holding it not so flat-wise. We stood looking straight into the lot so we could determine better when to jerk the board up and give it the right flip as the hogs came over. In this position the board was held in front of us. The hog coming over the board was a large one weighing approximately 200 pounds gross weight. Of course, we were determined to jerk the board up quick enough this time. As the board came upward the hog hit it at high speed. Henry and I were knocked 15 feet into the middle of a 30-foot lane. We landed on our backs with the heavy board on top of us and the big hog on top of the board. The momentum of the hog slipped the board on our bodies off on our faces and heads peeling patches of skin as it went. We were badly battered and bruised as well as minus a few small patches of skin. This had proved to be great fun for the hogs, Sam and Charley, but no fun at all for Henry and John.

This hog jumping sport was left alone for a few days until four of the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough could scheme out a more workable plan. We knew we needed better equipment better suited to our height and strength and one that was suitable for hogs instead of sheep and goats. Soon we located a round smooth gap pole that we could handle with ease. We had also learned to stand behind the jumping board or pole so in the event it should be knocked from our hands we would not be carried with it to the middle of the land and get battered and bruised again.

It wasn't many days before we tried this hog-jumping stunt again. When Henry and I had the pole in position we asked Sam and Charley to let a few small hogs come from the lot first so we could practice on them a little before trying any of the larger ones. After a few trials we could flip a hundred-pound porker ten or fifteen feet and land him on the end of his long nose every time he crossed the pole. We had learned the technique and the science too. We were not as strong as Dave and Dan but for our size and strength we were hard to beat at this sport. After a few jumps the hogs would squeal continuously from the time they started to make the jump until after they had landed on the end of their noses, got up, shifted gears and headed 15 or 20 feet away from the jumping station. We had lots of fun jumping mean mischievous hogs that caused us trouble in chasing them from potato fields, cane patches and other places they were always breaking into. It wasn't long before we could run one through the lot gate and he would begin to squeal as he neared the gate if anything was at the gate requiring him to jump a foot or two high to get from the lot. They were even afraid to jump over a pole or a plank set up on its edge in the lane.

During a lull in logging work in the summer while Father was working at home assisting the four older ones of the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough to cultivate the few acres he then had in cultivation, it was his custom to take a short nap during his noon rest period. As he lay down at his usual noon napping place on the porch he told us boys to go and chase a herd of 15 or 20 hogs from the barn and under the crib where they were laying in a bed of dust. He requested us to drive them all the way to the spring so they would have fresh clean cool water to drink and to wallow in. Then he added: "That dust is already making some of them cough. Get 'em out of it before they all get sick." We four

boys proceeded to the lot to carry out his orders. At the lot we decided to give the hogs a jumping that would take them all the way to the spring and beyond and keep them from the lot, barn and under the crib the rest of the day. We fumbled around some time getting all the jumping machinery in place and in perfect catapulting order. When everything was ready Charley, the smallest boy in the group, was sent strolling around the house to see if Father was asleep and bring a report before the machinery was started to work. He soon returned with a favorable report. The report consisted of two words as follows: "He's snoring." The machinery was switched on and the jumping began.

The poor hogs would begin to squeal when they were within 10 or 15 feet of the jumping gap. The squealing would grow louder and louder until the pole had been crossed, the hog landed on his nose, stood balanced in that position two or three seconds, toppled over, clambered to his feet, shifted gears and headed off 15 or 20 feet from the landing place. Pretty soon the loudest squealer on the homestead was brought over the pole. This was the same old 200 pounder that had given Henry and me such a drubbing several days before.

This old hog had heard the squeals of the others that had already gone over the pole and the squealing was vociferous. The squealing, or perhaps, I should say the bellowing, for it sounded more like a gored whipped bull than it did the squealing of a hog. Anyway the awful noise woke Father who came toward the barn to learn what was the cause of the unusual racket.

As he came in sight the jumping machinery was well greased and working fine. He saw an old barrow weighing approximately 125 pounds gross weight come over the pole. He squealed worse than if he had been caught by a bear. It seemed he stood balanced on his nose a full minute before topping over on his back. During this time he squealed and bellowed enough to alarm the neighborhood. When he scuffled to his feet he was so mesmerized until he almost jumped back over the pole before his sense of direction revived. He then shifted gears in double quick time and headed off like a deer shot at and missed. He continued to squeal and bellow for at least 50 feet.

The jumping machinery stopped as quickly as the old barrow had shifted gears and headed off toward the branch. Four boys were about as badly frightened as was the poor hog. No doubt about it, the boys expected to get a severe scolding plus a good brushing with what Father sometimes called: "My pants dusting frail pole." As Father approached we observed he was laughing as the mesmerized barrow's queer capers. When he was close enough he wanted to know what we were doing.

We explained as best we could in our frightened condition that we were breaking hogs from lying up under the barn and crib in that dust and sending them off to the branch like we thought he wanted us to do when he sent us out here to run the hogs off to the branch. We then explained that every hog over the pole would go to the spring and beyond and stay at least the rest of the day.

Charley then piped in with his shrill voice: “You know, Papa, it’s a lot easier to get them fool hogs to the branch this way than it is to have to run them almost down through bushes and briers to get them there, and then have them beat us back to the barn. Every time we have to drive them fool things to the branch we come back with our feet bruised and our bare legs thorned and scratched with briers and bushes and that ole mean poison oak growing all down in that hollow.”

Charley won the case for the four of us. It was only the legal embryo in him beginning to develop. Instead of four boys getting a severe scolding plus a brushing with that: “Proverbial Pants Dusting Frail Pole,” we were told the remedy was worse than the bad habit of dust breathing, followed by the final order: “YOU BETTER NOT LET ME CATCH YOU AT SUCH TRICKS AGAIN.” We didn’t.

Seven Little Diamonds In The Rough

Racing – Tumbling and Rolling

Cam and the Cart Can

Two Boys Break A Span of Billy Goats

Sandy's Mission Work

RACING – TUMBLING AND ROLLING

From the time I was old enough to squish the mud in the ox lot with my bare feet and feel the mud squeeze between my toes, chase a razor back shoat from the potato patch, ramble in the nearby woods in search of range cattle or oxen that had to be driven home each afternoon, or catch a half grown rabbit in a brier patch, I was often laid up for repairs because of ground itch, stone bruises, or splinters and sticks of various sizes and material stuck into or through my feet. Occasionally such injuries after having been soaked two or three times a day for a few days in mud holes, and grass or weeds wet with either rain or dew, became infected and so painful until I could not walk for a few days.

This had happened to me one fall when I was eight years of age and was walking three and a half miles to the first school near enough to the Diamond Homestead for any of the seven sons to attend. It was being taught in an abandoned residence. Aunt Irene, Mother's sister, Henry and I were attending this school. Schools were such a rarity in our part of the country until Father considered it a real crime for one of his children to miss even one day if it could be avoided. I may say in passing that after this short term of school it was three years before another school was taught near enough for any of the seven sons to attend.

One Monday morning my feet were found to be in such bad condition I was unable to walk the long distance to school. The heel of one foot was all puffed up because of a bad stone bruise or a stick jammed far in and broken off out of sight. The toes of the other foot were all swelled up from a severe case of ground itch that had become infected. When it was decided that I could not walk to school, Father suggested that I ride the old gray mare to school that day. She was gentle and easily managed. Oft time I had ridden her in driving cattle and on errands for Father in connection with his logging work. Many were the times I had ridden her to mill.

Soon after breakfast the old gray mare was saddled and led close to the fence. I climbed to the top of the fence and then into the saddle. A few schoolbooks carried home for study during the weekend and a large tin dinner bucket were handed to me. The bucket contained plenty for dinner and an extra supply for morning and afternoon recess. With the books and dinner bucket adjusted, off I rode, delighted that I would not have to miss a day from school and proud that I would have an opportunity of showing the other school children what a gay pony Father had and how skillful a rider I was for one of my age. All went well on the way to school and all during the day.

When school was over for the day, one of the large boys assisted me in saddling the pony. I then led her beside a large stump, climbed on top of it and then into the saddle. By the time this was done all the other school children had gotten some distance from the schoolhouse. About half a mile from the schoolhouse a group of children was overtaken. Among this group were several large boys and girls from sixteen to twenty years old. The pony was permitted to walk along behind the group for a short distance. Soon some of the older boys bantered me for a race. This was declined because I knew the pony could

out run any person. Many a time I had tried her speed in driving cattle. Many a time I had found it necessary to “head” an unruly yearling and chase it back to the herd.

Soon the large boys and girls began to tease and taunt me about being afraid to ride faster than a slow walk. I took the teasing and taunting very well for a while. They called me a “sissy”, a weakling and a coward. I could stand being called a weakling and a coward but like all small boys I resented being called a “sissy”, and told them so. They then began to ridicule me for being a “sissy.” I thought about dismounting and defending my reputation and probably would have done so but for the fact that I was too crippled to outrun the large boys. Experience had taught me that I was no match for these boys in a hand to hand battle. I was a fast runner and could throw pine knots accurately and with great force. When they got rough with me I had on several occasions resorted to this method as a means of self-protection. A few small heavy pine knots of the rose comb variety would be gathered and every time one of the boys got near enough a knot would be bounced off his head. This always raised a “punk” knot on the boy’s head and sometimes downed him. By using this method I had no trouble in standing my hand with them.

Next the boys accused Father of owning an old “stove up” horse or an old “plug” horse that no one else would have. They intimated that the old gray mare couldn’t “head” an old milk cow in driving cattle. Of course, I resented this much worse than being called a coward and a “sissy”, but declined to race with anyone. Then they ridiculed me for riding an old “plug” horse. The razzing continued for quite a while. Finally the boys persuaded one of the girls to challenge me for a race. They then cut some long switches for use on the old “plug” to get her out of a slow walk. The girl was pushed out front ready for the race. Two of the boys then struck the old gray mare a few times with their switches. Immediately she started off at high speed, almost jumping from under me at the start. The girl making the challenge got out of the way in time to prevent being knocked down and run over.

Before I could get the books and bucket adjusted so as to check up the pony, a few dishes and some spoons placed in the bucket by Mother began rattling like a run-a-way wagon loaded with empty tin cans. This frightened the old gray more and down the road she went at full speed. With the dinner bucket hanging on one arm and that arm full of books, and not a very good hold on the bridle reins with the other hand, I knew I would have to drop the books and bucket before I could stop the running pony or even hold her in the road.

While trying to get the bucket off my arm the old gray mare came to a large tree that had blown down across the road several weeks before. The tree, where it lay across the road, was approximately thirty inches in diameter. The stump end of the fallen tree was between thirty and forty feet from the road. A dim road had been made around this end of the fallen tree. This road left the main road thirty or forty feet from the tree at an angle of forty-five degrees. It curved around the big stump and entered the main road at about the same angle. I had been engaged in getting my arm from under the tight fitting handle of the dinner bucket and had not noticed the fleeing pony was nearing the large log across the road. Just as I got the bucket loose and dropped it, the old gray mare came to the road

leading around the fallen tree. Whether the dropping of the rattling bucket on her left side or the big log caused her to take the dim road I will never know.

Regardless of what was in her mind, she took the dim road around that large log while I took the old road straight toward the big fallen tree. When the old gray mare turned suddenly from the road I tumbled toward the ground at a slanting angle, striking the ground fifteen or twenty feet from where I left the saddle. During the tumbling process I managed to roll myself up like a ball. When this human ball hit the ground it bounced a time or two, like the balls we used at school in playing town ball, and then rolled until it flattened out against the big log. The human ball and the big dinner bucket struck the ground near each other and staged a rolling race to see which could flatten against the log first. In this race, the ball won over the bucket by less than a length. This was the second race of the afternoon. It was a draw in trying to determine which made the louder noise when bumping the log, the ball or the bucket. It is my candid opinion that the log saved me from being run over by the old gray mare, and probably hurt, as she reentered the main road not less than thirty feet from the log.

Within an instant from the time I flattened out against the log, I jumped up and peeped over the log. This is what I saw:

The old gray mare straining every muscle and nerve
With full steam on, rapidly rounding a curve
Down the road a-going, holding head high
Long white tail sheet-like, waving goodbye.

Within another instant I grabbed my run up wool hat and pulled it tight over my head. Then I grabbed the bucket and swung it on one arm. A search was then started for the books. Because they wouldn't roll like a ball or a bucket, it was necessary to run back thirty or forty feet for them. The big log was then clambered over and the third race of the afternoon was on.

Hipperty hop, hip, hipperty hop, hip
Down the road I went, feet sore or fit
A hop on a sing'l heel, a hip on toth'r toe
For the task ahead no doubt slightly slow

Hipperty hop, hip, hipperty hop, hip
Steady as an old clock, tick, tock, tick
Like a slow tortoise racing a swift hare
You see I had to catch the old gray mare

Hipperty hop, hip, hipperty hop, hip
Round the bend the old gray mare did nip
The tall wild oats growing on either side
Thus a hipperty hop hip did catch a ride.

The old gray mare had gotten over her fright and was quietly feeding on the wild oats beside the road. The saddle and the blankets under it were quickly adjusted. She was then led close to a large saw log stump. I climbed to the top of the stump and from there into the saddle and rode on home with no unusual events happening.

I was not hurt either by tumbling from the saddle or rolling against the big log. The only damage was a few bruises on the bucket and a broken cup and saucer in it. Mother was a little disturbed about the loss of a cup and saucer and the bruises on the bucket and wanted to know what happened. She was informed the bucket had slipped from my arm while coming home.

There were three things I have always been very thankful for about these races, (1) no one saw either the second or third race, (2) the big log kept me from rolling under the feet of the fleeing horse and (3) the old gray mare liked to graze on wild oats.

CAM AND THE CART CAN

Cam was the name of a cream colored calf of a milk cow at the home of the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough. It was customary at our home to tie a rope around the neck of the sucking calves and hold them away from the cows while the milking was being done. The reader will easily understand how easy this was when he remembers there were seven sons in this home. This was a part of my daily work during the greater part of the time Cam was a sucking calf or yearling. During this time we came to know each other very well.

He liked to be petted and played with and soon picked up many clever tricks from the different boys who held him during the milking. When he saw the milking cease, if the rope was not immediately removed from his neck he would walk up to the boy holding the rope and rub his head against the boy's knees as a signal to remove the rope. If no attention was paid to this gentle reminder that it was time for him to finish his meal he would back off a few steps and butt the boy's knees harder and harder until the rope was removed.

Cam naturally loved a good fight. At an early age he would sometimes get into a fight with other yearlings twice his age and size. He was very much like a boy who likes a good fight. It took little training and encouragement to make him a first-class fighter. Of course, this fighting spirit pleased the boys. They continued to encourage him in this sport. Soon the boys were encouraging him to fight with yearlings much older and larger than he was and would get the other yearling by the tail and pull him around sideways so Cam could easily out push him and make him run. Cam quickly learned about this help and was not so eager to get into a fight with a large yearling unless a boy was close by to assist him in case it was needed to keep him from taking a licking.

Cam was trained to pull a small cart when he was less than six months old. The cart was made by Henry and me by using wheels sawed from a black gum tree, --a tree whose wood is exceedingly tough and non-splitable. The axle and shafts of this cart were also made of black gum wood. The yoke we used was made from a piece of wood cut from a titi tree, having the natural crook to fit Cam's neck. The bow used was made from a piece of wood split from a young hickory tree because of its toughness and easy bending qualities.

With this outfit ready for a trial, Cam was yoked and hitched to the new cart. After a few runaways in which the cart was bumped into rail fence corners and a few panels of fence demolished and rebuilt at once by the boys, Cam took the working or the pulling of the cart as a part of the play games and entered into it the same as the boys did. After working him a little while he always got some extra feed. I think he sometimes looked forward with great anxiety to the unyoking time when he would get the extra feed. He soon learned to pull as much as one or two hundred pounds on this cart anywhere about the place. Of course, the greater part of such hauling was done as play but occasionally some useful service was rendered.

When Cam was about a year and a half old, a larger cart was made to take the place of the one made of black gum wood. This was a real honest-to-goodness cart. It was light but strong. It would carry a thousand pounds or more on almost any sort of road. The body on this cart was arranged so loads could be "dumped". This often saved time in unloading.

Cam's work now ceased to be considered only as play. He and this cart were classed as useful things about the place. But few days went by without Cam and the cart being called into some useful and necessary service. Cam and the cart with a small boy would do as much work in some instances as a man with a wagon and a yoke of oxen or a pair of mules or horses. Cam and the cart could turn around in a small corner, get the cart loaded and be gone before the wagons could be placed for loading. This outfit could take a load of stable manure into the vegetable garden, dump it and back out without disturbing any plants, whereas this was impossible with a wagon. Cam could also back this cart into many places for loading and unloading that could not be reached at all by a wagon. In hauling straw or leaves for bedding in the stables, Cam and this cart could easily wind in and out among the thickest pine saplings or other trees where a wagon could not go. In fact, Cam was so well trained to handle this cart until he could take it almost anywhere a well-trained man could take a wheelbarrow.

Cam and the cart were used one day almost every week to "go to mill", to carry corn to be ground into meal for making "golden corn bread" of the eatable sort, and not the modern mushy stuff often called corn bread. Corn was also ground into grits for home use. A lot of corn was also ground for feeding to livestock. This was called "chops" or "crack corn". It was not ground as fine as grits or meal. Cam and the cart were used for hauling great quantities of wood used to fire the furnace in cooking syrup each fall during cane grinding season. Cam and this cart were used to haul to barns and cribs almost all the crops produced. On a few occasions they were used to haul fence rails and lumber.

This was done by placing the rails and lumber on top of the cart body and letting one end stick out behind the cart and the other end protrude over Cam. Cam and this cart were used to haul some of everything ever hauled at the Diamond home as occasion arose for such hauling. In fact, I doubt very seriously if Father and Mother could have gotten along without the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough and Cam and the cart.

Every man who has a boy in his family, if possible for him to do so, should provide a yearling for him to pet, play with and work. The materials and a few tools should be provided and let the boy build his own cart for use in working the yearling. The fact that the cart is a product of his own hands and his own genius will add greatly to the pleasure gotten from the entire outfit. Boys get lots of fun and useful experience working with a yearling. The experience of building equipment for use in training a yearling is a real worthwhile experience in the life of any boy. The working of a yearling, too, is excellent training. Boys learn how to care for the animal and that with the right treatment a yearling will take delight in always doing his best as a work animal. The lessons learned in kindness to dumb animals alone will be worth all the expense. The axiom "kindness begets kindness" is clearly demonstrated in working with a yearling or an ox. Boys will also learn a lot about human nature and how to get along with people in dealing with a yearling or an ox because such animals have a lot of human nature and human philosophy in them. The slow prodding ox teaches PATIENCE, PERSEVERANCE AND ENDURANCE as nothing else can.

Then there is the economic value of having a yearling and cart for boys to play with and work. It is the finest opportunity in the world to turn play for boys into useful work. Around every home there are always many small objects that need to be moved that can be moved in such a cart more quickly and more economically than in any other way. If a farm, large or small, is operated there will be many things to haul from time to time, such as, wood for fuel, various crops from the fields to the place of storage, such as, corn, hay, potatoes, cotton, cane to haul to the mill for grinding and probably many other unexpected things to be moved about the farm.

CAM AND THE CART CAN

When the flour is out and the meal is low
And horse and men must work don't you know
Corn's to shell and some one to mill must go
'Tis then little Diamonds in the rough with Cam and the cart can

When corn in the field must come to the crib
And all the oxen, men and wagons are busy
And the tall beans and burs make folks dizzy
'Tis the little Diamonds in the rough with Cam and the cart can

When feed's low and all the barns are empty
And hay's stacked in field like horns o' plenty

And horses and cattle are gaunt and empty
'Tis then little Diamonds in the rough with Cam and the cart can

When the weather's cloudy, rainy and cold
And winters chilling icy winds doth blow
And someone for bringing fuel must go
'Tis then little Diamonds in the rough with Cam and the cart can

When Mama says "All the groceries are low
Someone with a wagon to market must go"
And Dad and the big boys are workin' you know
'Tis then little Diamonds in the rough with Cam and the cart can

When a dozen dirty hauling jobs wait
Cause Dad and the big boys procrastinate
And to do drudgery joys, grit it'll take
'Tis then little Diamonds in the rough with Cam and the cart can

When the cane stacked at the mill is down
And the horses are going round and round
And someone to haul cane must be found
'Tis then little Diamonds in the rough with Cam and the cart can

When rails are to haul and fields fence
And oxen to logging camps have gone thence
And nobody knows the job will come whence
'Tis then little Diamonds in the rough with Cam and the cart can

When fat pine around the old cane mill
Has but a few tiny knots left in the hill
And one's needed with strong arms and will
'Tis then little Diamonds in the rough with Cam and the cart can

When feed at the logging camp is out
A trusty husky the country must scout
For corn and hay with a hauling rig stout
'Tis then little Diamonds in the rough with Cam and the cart can

Wherever there is hauling to be done
Whether 'tis hard work or playful fun
It doesn't matter by the hundred or ton
'Tis then little Diamonds in the rough with Cam and the cart can

TWO BOYS BREAK A SPAN O' BILLY GOATS

From the earliest days of the Diamond Homestead it contained boys and billy goats. The two became inseparable in speaking of the place. The homestead also contained poultry--chickens, geese, and guineas. Tom cats and dogs were also on the place and became more or less associated with the seven sons.

At the time the events here recorded occurred, the homestead had four boys, a bunch of billy goats, one dog named Spot, two or three tabby tomcats and a few big tall roosters. The roosters, tomcats and dog usually ranged in the back yard or in an adjacent plum orchard. Near the backside of this plum orchard was a shelf containing four or five colonies of bees commonly called hives or gums.

On the Sunday afternoon of this event, Father, Mother, sister Mamie and the baby boy, Charley, a two year older, and Sam a four year older, had walked off half a mile for a short visit with our only nearby neighbor, leaving Henry, Spot and me to take care of the place. We were all three playing in the large back yard when a herd of about forty goats came trotting up the lane and began eating the fallen leaves and berries under three large china trees growing just on the inside of the picket fence in front of our house. Henry and I had been pulling a small two-wheel cart of our own making and wishing we had a span of billy goats broke to work to it. When the herd of goats arrived naturally the sight of the goats put ideas in our boyish heads. We would now break the goats if we could only catch two of the right size and get them in the back yard where we could work them with no danger of their getting loose with any ropes or harness hanging to them and escape into the woods.

It didn't take us long to find some improvised ropes and catch two pretty butt headed billy goats we thought would make us a splendid span because having no horns they looked so much like horses.

Soon we had them in the backyard ready to hitch to the cart. We were dreaming of the great amount of hauling we would soon be doing with this pair of goats. Soon our dreams came to an end. We had no yoke or harness. Thought we, we make everything else we need, why not make some harness at once. We went to work bringing into use all of our resourcefulness. Soon we had a one by three-inch board, three feet long for a yoke. We nailed it to the end of the cart tongue. Then we found a large corn sack and cut it into long strands 3 or 4 inches wide. A goat was led under each end of the improvised yoke and a long strand cut from the sack wound around his neck and the yoke several times, fastening it to the yoke. The two ends of the strands were then tied together on top of the yoke. We were now ready for the caravan to move forward. The show was ready to start. In the meantime, Spot and a couple of tomcats and a flock of chickens, including two sassy old roosters and a few hens, had joined us. The chickens were there evidently thinking they would be able to pick up feed usually dropped when pet billy goats were fed in the back yard. Spot of course was there to take part in any sport indulged in by the two boys.

We got directly in front of the goats, each one holding to a sort of improvised rope only seven or eight feet long and tried to lead the goats. Nothing doing. Neither goat would move an inch. We pulled and tugged at the ropes but were unable to move the procession. We now really needed a third boy to act as chief tail twister, but since we did not have one, something else had to be done. Henry held both ropes while I went into the adjacent plum orchard and with my dime barlow knife cut two good keen limber plum sprouts. We each took one and stepped back beside the sullen billy goats who had refused to be led, evidently because of their necklaces. We each twisted our ropes around one hand so there would be no jerking lose, and with the other hand gave each goat a hard cut with the keen sprouts. The procession moved off like a whirlwind. Each billy bleated long and loud as he jumped five or six feet, almost jerking Henry and me sprawling. We recovered from the scuffle and were carried along by the fast moving goats, our feet touching the ground only in high places. You see, the goats had no horns and our ropes were fastened around their necks making it much harder to hold them. They first circled around the house and then made for the front yard gate hoping to find it open, make an exit there, and join the herd in the lane. Finding the gate closed and latched, they passed on around the house into the backyard near the starting place. After circling around in the backyard a few times they ran full speed headfirst into the side of a large log smokehouse standing at one end of the plum orchard. Here they summer saulted over the improvised yoke. We thought their necks were broken, since neither bleated or kicked but lay still. A few jerks at their heads and legs straightened them out and they jumped up, with the improvised yoke under their necks. They had "Turned the yoke." We had to do considerable twisting of necks to get the yoke back in place. When this was done and the team pulled around so their heads pointed away from the smokehouse, we tried again to lead the sullen span. Still nothing doing. All our coaxing and pulling was not able to make them budge a step. We were forced to step back beside them and use our plum sprouts again. This time we tried to be a little easier by striking gently so as to prevent another run-a-way. The sullen butt-headed things wouldn't move when gently stroked with the sprouts. We became vexed and again struck with all the force we had. This started the circus as before. The circus including the two billy goats, the two boys and Spot, made two complete circuits of the house and was well on the way for the third one when Spot got in front of the goats and began barking. The goats dodged to one side and ducked under the edge of the porch. We were able to stop them only when we were jerked against the edge of the porch which served as a brace for us.

Now the job to get them back rather puzzled us. We couldn't pull them straight back. Neither could we pull them sideways because when we both pulled at the same time we pulled against each other. Finally, we pulled one rope over the backs of the goats and both pulled from the same side. After much pulling and sweating we were able to get them back into the yard. We again tried leading but still nothing doing. We had to use the sprouts rather hard to move them. This time they headed toward the smokehouse. They missed it with their heads but one wheel struck the corner. The sudden take up of the cart again summer saulted both goats, again turning the yoke. We had a hard task this time to turn the yoke back in the right position. Both goats were restless. They refused to stand still enough for us to handle them at all. The strain on the strands of sack had stretched

considerable so that they were rather loose but we could not easily get them untied so as to take up the slack. The goats kept twisting around until they got their heads pointed toward the plum orchard with the improvised yoke still swinging under their necks. We got in front so as to be between them and the plum orchard. Here both goats lay down. They had “Sulled.”

All of the coaxing and whipping with sprouts failed to make them get up, much less go. At this time Spot and the tomcats and a few chickens, usually standing around in the backyard, came up close by and acted as if they thought the goats had been killed for dressing and they stood ready for their share of the waste parts. We boys again needed a third boy to act as official tail twister because when everything else fails to move a billy goat this is the one sure way to move him. We coaxed and pulled but still nothing doing. We knew of course, the tail twisting was a little dangerous for us to undertake while we held the ropes lest we be jerked down and the cart roll over us. However, the emergency forced us to take the risk. We each twisted a rope around one hand, got a good tail hold with the other and each at the sound of the word “Ready” gave what is known in goat parlance as the “Wicked Tail Twist.” It worked. It always had worked in such emergencies. Both goats jumped up and headed for the plum orchard, the very place we did not want them to go. Soon they were in the orchards among the thick trees. The tomcats, Spot and the chickens followed as if following a dead carcass to a tree to be hung up for dressing. They had done this before and were given certain waste parts for good.

Way back in the orchard under a large peach tree on a table was a newly hived colony of bees. The swarm had come out a week or so before and settled on a low limb. Father had placed the table under the tree with the hive on it. The limb on which the bees had settled had been sawed off and lowered gently on the table by the mouth of the hive. Three or four small notches had been sawed in the bottom as opening for the ingress and egress of bees. The bees did not seem to enter through these openings but kept crawling around the bottom edges of the hive. Father then brought a rather large heavy fence rail from a nearby worm fence and tilted the hive over a little, propping it with the rail. This left an opening on one side of the hive large enough for the bees to enter the hive without looking for the small openings made for this purpose. Immediately the bees began entering the hive and were all soon inside. The rail was left there for several days holding the hive a little tilted.

These goats kept in high speed and managed to circle among the thick plum trees without hanging the yoke or the cart on a single tree. Soon it became evident they would knock this new hive of bees from the table. This thought brought visions of trouble. The procession moved on unchecked. When it was within ten or twelve feet of the rail leaning against the hive, Henry and I let go of our ropes and moved back thirty or forty feet and took refuge behind a tree. We intended to imitate Job’s steed by sniffing the battle afar off.

The yoke struck the end of the rail resting on the ground, one goat going to the right and the other one to the left. This knocked the rail to the ground, however, quite different

from what we expected the hive did not tumble off the table but only rocked back and forth a few times. The goats moved only about one yard after hitting the rail when they struck a large plum tree with the middle of the yoke. Unlike the rail, it stood solid. The goats tumbled over from the sudden take up.

When the hive rocked back and forth the bees poured in swarms. The goats, Spot, the two tomcats and the few chickens, were soon covered with bees. The entire population of the menagerie immediately began a contest to see which could make the loudest and most mournful sounds. The goats bleated and squalled. The sound was more of a combination of a goat bleating and a hog squealing. Spot yelped and whined in painful wailings. The tomcats wailed and yowled, sad and mournful. The chickens squalled and flopped their wings. It was awful. Henry and I were about to make up our minds to risk joining the battle long enough to pull the goats loose from the cart, when each one of them jerked backwards from the end of the yoke and the strands cut from the sack, already somewhat stretched, slipped off the ends of the yoke, freeing the goats so they could save themselves. We were now free to sniff the battle from afar as did Job's old horse. Our freedom lasted only a second. Spot left the scene of battle and came to us for help, bringing with him, buzzing over his back, a lot of stinging bees. We yelled at him to "Get Away," as he came whining close to us. He only came closer and whined more pitifully. We grabbed our run up wool hats and began knocking bees from his back. Soon the bees began stinging our bare legs. We kicked and fought frantically with hats and hands. A large swarm of reinforcements came up from the hive and joined their stinging comrades. Spot, Henry and I scattered. Henry and I circled in the yard among some bushes. Soon we dodged some of the bees. We had gotten stung several times on the head, the back of the neck and on our bare legs. Spot went on under the nearby house. He circled the yard a time or two yelping and whining. He then came by us, climbed over the back fence and headed toward the spring branch.

The tomcats made two or three short circles among the plum trees, then climbed to the top of the back fence, jumped off still wailing, yowling and spitting. They were last seen like two gray streaks going southwest toward a big brier patch. The chickens, after a few squalls and flopping of the wings, made for the fence. The hens flew over and sailed for the woods. The old roosters were too heavy to fly the fence. They uttered a few harsh sounding squawks and made for a low cross fence separating the plum orchard from a cultivated field. After a few efforts, with the assistance of a few more stings on their large red combs, they managed to flop over the fence and still squawking, headed south across the open field.

As soon as the goats got free from the yoke, they circled a little and ran close by Henry and me. Again we were in the fight. No sniffing the battle now from afar. Our run up wool hats were brought into action. We ran and fought frantically. The goats went under the house bumping the sills and sleepers with their mall-like heads. Henry and I went to the north end of the yard under some wild cherry trees. We had gotten several stings in this fight but kept knocking and slapping the bees from in front of our faces. The goats went to the front gate and tried to get out. Finding the gate latched, they made off around the south end of the house, leaving some bees at the gate where they made a sharp turn.

Henry and I ran back toward the northwest corner of the yard. We could now see the goats making toward the west gate still carrying with them swarming bees. When the goats saw the back gate was closed, they wasted no time in trying it, but cleared a ten rail fence, like wild deer being chased by a pack of hounds, and headed north across a big hollow toward the big gully.

The goats carried with them the short ropes and corn sack necklaces. They were now loose on the range. Henry and I knew we had to pen those goats and remove the ropes and necklaces. So over the fence we went and gave chase. As we went down the hill we saw the herd of goats beyond the hollow and not far from the big gully. We felt better now because we knew it would be an easy task to drive the entire herd of goats to the pen where we could catch the two goats we had broken to work and remove the ropes and necklaces.

When the herd of goats had been penned and the ropes and necklaces removed, we decided to hunt the two squawking roosters and drive them back to the house lest they spend the night in some hiding place and be eaten by wild varmints during the night. We went to the place in the field where the roosters were last seen heading southward. About the time we located the tracks of the two roosters, Spot came from toward the spring and joined us in the hunt. He had been in the branch because he was wet. We trailed the chickens to hiding places in different fence corners at the back of the field. They were well hidden under some briars and tall grass. Spot soon routed the roosters from their hiding places. With his help, we caught the roosters and carried them back to the poultry yard. Their big combs were twice their normal size, red as fire and showed signs of many stings. They sat around for a few days with their heads resting a large part of the time on the ground because of the extra weight they were having to carry on them. And too, because of the swelling around their eyes they had great difficulty in traveling about the plum orchard without bumping into thorns.

The poor tomcats did not show up until late the next afternoon. When they did return, their eyes resembled the eyes of a drunken man who had spent a night and a day on a SPREE.

About dark Henry and I retrieved our cart. During the week we made a good black gum yoke and two tough white hickory bows for use the next time we broke a span of billy goats. While working on the yoke and bows we scratched our itching stings and siloquized about like this: "Well, we got lots of stings, but they didn't hurt much. Oh Shucks! The sport and fun we got from the affair was worth more than a day in the woods or a trip to town."

SANDY'S MISSION WORK

Dear old Sandy lived a long, long time
Tasks were hard but ne'er did he whine
Why aren't folks wise like this old goat
And rain or shine, sound a pleasant note

All old Sandy's years were ten and seven
Then his master called him to goat heaven
He heard the plaudid, well done Sandy
Keeping folks straight, you've been handy

You taught them with but a single stroke
To respect all creatures, 'd lowly goat.
In token for this task for my sake
You'll aid Saint Pete at the Pearly Gate

You've ever been faithful about my work
No sacred duty have I seen you shirk
Nor did I see you procrastinate
Surely you'll not fail me at the gate

From your wrath sinners oft have fled
This you've caused using a noble head
A new task you'll do strikingly well
Butting intruding sinners down to _____
Where they should be.

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## **Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough**

**A STUNNING CURE FOR STUTTERING**

**DYNAMITE**

**RIDING A DONKEY**

**TWO BROWNIES IN A TWO ACT SHOW**

**A ONE ACT CIRCUS**

## A STUNNING CURE FOR STUTTERING

For a number of years Father dressed and sold on the retail market at a large logging camp one or two beeves each week. The Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough were his chief helpers in driving the beef cattle, killing the animals and dressing the beef. To kill a beef and get it ready for market requires a lot of work. After the animal has been killed and the hide removed, the four quarters must be hung in a cool place. The hide must be cared for, either salted or stacked out to dry. The brains and tongue must be removed from the head, washed and placed for cooling. If the hoofs are to be used for making oil, they must be prepared. If the tripe is to be saved, it must be removed and dressed. Then all waste must be gathered and carted away.

One Friday afternoon when it was necessary to dress a beef to supply the Saturday trade, the animal selected for slaughter was an extra large one. Father had requested four of the boys, Charlie, Sam, Henry and John to come from their work that afternoon at four o'clock to assist him. Because of this Father decided not to risk driving it to the regular slaughtering place lest it get away. Hence, it was necessary to dress it in the cattle pen where it was. A big rain had fallen about noon on that day which made the pen in which the animal was enclosed somewhat muddy and slick.

While Father was shooting the animal and cutting its throat so as to drain the blood from the carcass, three of the boys were sent for a supply of clean, green bushes to be placed on the ground around the carcass to keep it clean. By the time they were back with the bushes, the carcass was through bleeding and ready to be placed in position for removing the hide. The bushes were placed and the carcass [was] laid in the right position. Father and I each began with a hind leg, while Henry and Sam each began work on a fore leg. We were not long in removing the hide.

It probably should be stated here that when Sam was a little excited or in a hurry he sometimes stuttered. Too much excitement caused him to stutter badly. His stuttering often provoked laughter among members of the family and friends. Sam, of course, resented being laughed at. As Father was removing the stomach and other waste parts from the carcass he suddenly came to the spleen. It was an extra large one and Father remarked about its unusual size. At this time, Henry was standing directly back of Father a little to the right. Sam was standing a few feet to one side of Henry. Charley was standing near Sam directly in front of a bucket of fresh water he had brought for us to use in keeping everyone's hands clean while working with the beef. He was holding in his hands several clean cloths he had brought for use in washing spots of blood from the beef as it was removed from the carcass. I was on the opposite side of Father holding the carcass in position for him to work. As Father removed the spleen from the carcass, he remarked that he had often heard it said that knocking a stuttering person down with a beef spleen immediately upon its being taken from the carcass while it was still warm would cure stuttering.

Immediately Henry said: "If that's so, hand it to me and I'll cure Sam's stuttering." Father had just finished cutting the spleen loose and handed it to Henry to be hung upon the fence. Henry took hold of one end of it with both hands and brought it around in a semi-circle the length of his arms as the radius and gave Sam an awful wallop on the side of the head. This unexpected wallop sent Sam sprawling in the mud. He went down on his face and evidently with his mouth and eyes wide open, because when he got up his eyes were full of dirt and he was spitting mud. As Sam fell to the ground, Charlie had to step back a little to give him a clean fall and to keep from being pushed over. As he did so, his heels struck the bucket of water he had just set down a few minutes before, causing him to over-balance and sit down in the bucket. He scuffled and turned the bucket over. He and the water spilled together. Of course, he was in the mud now. In the scuffle his clean cloths were rolled in the mud causing him to return to the house for others.

In the meantime, Sam had gotten a portion of the mud from his eyes and mouth and half whining and half crying was circling the pen looking for a club or a brick-bat with which to even the score with Henry for knocking him down and giving him a taste of cow pen mud. Soon he located a piece of soggy 2 x 4 scantling approximately two feet long and threw it with all his strength straight at Henry in an effort to make good his promise. Henry dodged the stick of wood which struck Father endways on the small part of his back, knocking him head-first into the beef carcass which lay directly in front of him. Henry had jumped as quickly as possible to dodge the piece of scantling thrown at him, and in doing so slipped sprawling in the muddy spot caused by the bucket of water turned over by Charlie a minute before. Father was stunned by the blow from the billet of wood intended for Henry and dropped over on his face into the beef carcass.

Henry scuffled to his feet, shook off the worst of the mud and assisted me in pulling Father up on his feet. Father's back was hurting too badly for him to remain standing. He eased down on his feet and hands and rubbed his back a few minutes. While in this position he scolded Sam and Henry very severely, Henry for knocking Sam down in the mud so suddenly without any provocation, and Sam for throwing a billet of wood at Henry, and halfway promised to take a brush and settle with them both when his back quit hurting sufficient for him to stand on his feet. Henry spoke at first opportunity in a frightened tone of voice and said: "Well, I thought you wanted me to cure Sam of his stuttering and expected me to do a good job of it while that big spleen was warm and limber. You said the knocking of a stuttering person down with a warm, fresh, beef spleen would cure stuttering. I though you meant for me to knock him down in order to cure him. I--just--did--the--best---I--could—to—do—what—I—thought—you—meant—for—me—to—do."

Sam, who was still half crying and half whining, and occasionally trying to spit out the remainder of the mud packed in his mouth when he was knocked down on his face, said: "Papa, I didn't intend to hit you. Henry knocked me down in that mud with that old bloody spleen when I wasn't looking at him. I resent that sort of treatment. I think anyone would resent being knocked down so unexpectedly in the mud. I just wanted to show Henry how it felt to be knocked down in such a dirty place."

Within a few minutes Father got over the blow from the scantling and continued work in cutting up the beef carcass. He evidently decided that Henry had made a good explanation of the remedy, and that Sam probably had given a reasonably good excuse for throwing the billet of wood at Henry. Then too, Father probably decided he had been at fault in handing the large spleen to Henry as he had made the remark about the cure for stuttering. Anyway he forgot the KNOCK-DOWN, SLIP-DOWNS and FALL-DOWNS and said nothing more to the boys about the promised "BRUSHING."

As the job was being finished, a general discussion was started about the disturbance caused by the application of the "Stunning Cure for Stuttering," and the different accidents happening to each one of us on the location. Charlie, who later became a lawyer, probably at that time had a little legal embryo somewhere in his mind, for he wanted to know whether Henry or Sam was guilty of causing him to sit down in the bucket of water, then scuffle out and muddy his clothes and the clean cloths he was holding at the time. The question was not answered. Sam denied he was to blame because Henry had knocked him directly towards where Charlie was standing. Henry denied that he was responsible for the accident, first, because Sam had plenty of room to have fallen without staggering as far away as the spot where Charlie was standing, second, because Charlie had plenty of space for sitting down without sitting directly in the bucket, third, if Charlie had had sense enough to have sat still in the bucket it would not have overturned, spilling the water and making a muddy spot. Maybe Charlie's knowledge of the law has given him the correct answer.

Charlie next wanted to know how it was that John had come through the episode without a down. "My Down", said John, "was when I over-balanced and went head-first into the beef carcass when pulling Father up from his down." With this report John exhibited the blood on his hat and shirt as proof of his statement. To this the legal embryo replied tersely: "The evidence is sufficient. The witness is excused."

The clouds of misunderstanding soon vanished. Everyone was laughing and telling of that part of the episode most interesting to him. The situation was very much like a get-together meeting after an election in which the proverbial mud, brickbats and 2 x 4s and other billets have been fiercely and fluently flung.

A few minutes before the work was completed Mother came by the pen and wanted a boy to assist her in milking some five or six cows. She stopped a minute or so to look at the large fat quarters of beef where they had been hung up and washed for cooling. After looking at the beef she noticed that Father and some of the boys were muddy, some were bloody, and some were pretty well smeared with mud and blood. This condition aroused her curiosity and a little wrath too. She scolded everyone from Father down to the youngest boy for getting his clothes so dirty and filthy. She said: "You should be ashamed of yourselves. No one can get those clothes clean like they should be. It'll take a dollar package of soap and washing powder and a day's boiling and rubbing to get those clothes fit to wear again. What on earth have you been doing? And how did you manage to get so much mud and blood to stick all over you clothes?"



“Just a couple of KNOCK-DOWNS and a few other DOWNS.” Said Father, “caused by a little too much spleen activity,” and requested Sam to go and assist Mother with the milking.

Henry still maintains that the “STUNNING CURE FOR STUTTERING” as he applied it really cured this defect in Sam’s speech. Henry places as much emphasis on the manner of the application as he does in the remedy. His philosophy is that, many remedies often fail to cure because of improper application. He thinks this philosophy is sound in the application of all remedies for mental, moral and physical defects. Sam does not agree with Henry at all in the application of the stunning cure for stuttering. He is certain that knocking him down with the yard of beef spleen had nothing to do, whatever, with curing this defect in his speech.

His philosophy is that stuttering is exactly like many other ailments of the human race. Namely, just keep doctors, drugs, quacks and remedies of all sorts away, leaving the ailments alone and they will just naturally cure themselves.

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## **DYNAMITE**

Dynamite was a little mouse colored female donkey acquired by Father in a trade when five of his seven sons were just about the right age to enjoy riding and working with such an animal. Dynamite was not more than thirty-five inches high. Her gross weight was not more than three hundred fifty pounds. This three hundred fifty pounds, guessed at weight, possessed more strength and more power than anything of that weight I ever knew, except a stick of fresh dynamite. This is why she acquired the name Dynamite soon after Father traded for her.

Her outstanding characteristics were slowness, kickishness, indifferentness, stubbornness and toss-off-ness.

Dynamite could never be hurried. She traveled in a slow walk in spite of all efforts to increase her speed. Occasionally when being ridden along by the side of a horse she could be persuaded to travel faster than a slow plodding walk.

Her stubbornness was supreme at all times. Perhaps I should say her strong willpower instead of stubbornness. The reader probably understands that when referring to ourselves we use the term “strong will power”, but when speaking of others we use the term “stubbornness.” Dynamite’s stubbornness was on exhibition at all times, either provoked or unprovoked.

Her kickishness was ever ready to be brought into action for her own protection and the punishment of what seemed to be her enemies. She could kick harder and faster than the strokes of a steam hammer. She was an ambi-pedous kicker when this method seemed to be sufficient for her protection, but when this method did not seem to meet the emergency she quickly became a quadru-pedous kicker. It was while she was in this sort of action that Sam yelled "look out boys, that thing kicks at both ends and with all four feet"

Dynamite was indifferent to everybody, to everything that moved in her sight and to all her surroundings. She was as stoical as it is possible for an animal to be. She accepted punishment with as much indifferentness as would a solid stone. When hungry or thirsty she ate food and drank water with the same indifferentness. She was the most even-tempered animal with which any of the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough ever came in contact. She never showed any signs of joy, pleasure, sadness or anger. If she ever showed any indication of feeling it was a combination of sadness and remorse.

The peculiar characteristic of toss-off-ness was one that no one ever understood. She could toss a boy from her back with the least effort of anything I ever saw in action. In modern times we hear much of the split-second in connection with electrically driven machinery and gasoline engines. As quick as such action is, it is slow when compared with the swiftness with which this bundle of dynamite could toss a boy to the ground. If the reader has any doubts about this statement let him confer with any one of the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough.

The boys never got much fun or recreation in riding dynamite, because she traveled too slow. There evidently was no way to hurry this little animal, because if there had been surely a bunch of wide-awake, prankish boys would have discovered it, or even developed one of their own. They never did get Dynamite to move with much speed. So far as I know they tried all the tricks they ever heard of, or were able to invent, yet she remained stoically slow.

When Dynamite tired of her rider, her head was suddenly placed between her knees, her nose almost on the ground and the top of her head back even with her knees. As her head went down to this position, her hind feet went straight up into the air, thus changing her body from a horizontal position to a perpendicular one. When in this position, the boy riding her, if he had time to do so, would try to hold on by clinching his legs around her body and grabbing at her short mane. He dared not pull on the bridle in this position, because to do so would only pull him straight to the ground. While in this position, Dynamite would, at the right moment, draw her hind legs up a little, switch her short tail, arch her back, give a forward twist at the same time and toss her rider forward on the ground directly in front of her. Sometimes the boy would hit the dirt on his head, over-balance and fall flat on his back with his heels pointing directly away from Dynamite. At other times he would slide off on his hands, face and stomach.

As soon as the boy was flat on the ground, Dynamite would bring her hind feed back to the ground, raise her head to a natural position, un-arch her back and gaze into distant space, seemingly interested in nothing and seeing nothing.

She would usually stand perfectly still until the boy brushed the dirt or mud from his clothes, according to the dryness or wetness of the ground, re-mount and give the signal to move on. She would then move along in her usual slow plodding manner as if nothing unusual had happened until she had as inclination to repeat the performance.

Each performance was put on in a slightly different style from the previous one, occasionally she would suddenly turn halfway around in the road and toss her rider a few feet to one side. Sometimes she would execute an about-face, turn in less than the proverbial split-second and toss her rider from eight to ten feet in the middle of the road in the opposite direction from which she was traveling.

Dynamite never entered into the capers of the bucking bronco of the western prairies. She rarely ever bucked. It was never necessary in order to toss a boy from her back. Bucking required too much energy. Dynamite used easier methods requiring less energy. If the boy refused to be tossed off on the ground in sliding fashion, or tossed off in the somersault style at the first arching of her back, and understood to hold on by clinching her body with his strong legs and bare feet and holding to the saddle with his hands, when he had a saddle, Dynamite would immediately lower her hind feet, raise her head and fore feet straight up in the air and lean backwards so quickly until the boy would feel certain she was going to fall on her back squarely on top of him. Of course, he would do his best to jump or fall far to one side to keep Dynamite from falling on him when she somersaulted backwards. In such cases, the boy would usually hit the ground rolling or crawling on his all-fours in order to get out of the reach of Dynamite's quadru-pedous action.

One Saturday afternoon Charlie rode Dynamite to the post office for the mail. The distance was a little more than a mile. The trip to the post office was made without any misbehavior on the part of Dynamite. All went along smoothly and with reasonably good speed. Charlie was delighted with his success. He had about come to the conclusion he had learned how to manage Dynamite the right way. At last he had learned the technique of managing this three hundred fifty pounds of stubbornness. He would now razz the other boys about their inability to ride this little mouse, as she was sometimes called. He would get the mail and let Dynamite take her own slow time in coming home while he sat quietly in the saddle and improved his mind by reading the newspapers and magazines. He would spend about forty-five minutes on the road in returning home and would utilize all of this time to good advantage.

The mail was obtained from the post office. Charlie mounted Dynamite and rode off as he had planned. When a short distance from the post office he quietly unfolded a paper and started to improve his mind. He read a few lines. All went well. Suddenly a gentle breeze rattled the papers. In the twinkling of an eye he somersaulted flat of his back in a muddy place in the road. Charlie got up, gathered his mail, rolled it up tightly and

remounted. At the signal to go Dynamite moved along as usual. Soon Charlie decided to improve his mind a little more by reading a little more news. He would hold the paper in small folds this time so the wind could not cause any disturbance. He did so for a few minutes. The article he was reading became interesting. He forgot for the moment, unfolded the paper to read the lower edge and let it make a little too much noise. Again he was tossed to the middle of the road, this time partly catching on his hands and head so as not to pick up and carry off on his clothes quite so much surplus dirt.

Charlie got up again, rolled up his mail and remounted. Dynamite moved along as usual. All was going well on the front. No casualties seemed in sight. Charlie abandoned the idea of improving his mind until he got home. Soon everything was so placid until he decided to ease open a magazine and read a little without Dynamite's knowing it. He managed to do this for a short distance. He had not permitted the pages to rattle at all. He did not intend to do so. He would ride up to the house reading and let the other boys see how he had tamed this three hundred fifty pounds of Dynamite. Just as these thoughts were going through his mind, for some unknown reason, Dynamite made a face-about turn and flipped him ten feet in the middle of the road. He thinks he was at least five minutes in catching his breath and rubbing the aches out of his bones before remounting. While he was doing this Dynamite stood perfectly quiet gazing into space. He took hold of the bridle, again pointed her head homeward and remounted. At the signal to move on she slowly plodded toward home. He now determined to read no more until after reaching home. Dynamite traveled along reasonably well. However, just as he was entering the long lane leading straight down to the Diamond home, Dynamite suddenly had an inclination to dismount her rider, and without a moments notice she turned half around as if thoroughly frightened at some approaching object and tossed Charlie and his bundle of mail in the corner of a rail fence and as usual stood gazing into space. Charlie got up furiously mad. He broke a large brush and proceeded as he says, "to make Dynamite over."

When he had finished this job, he was as hot as one could get from taking violent exercise. He then rolled up his bundle of mail, remounted and rode on home with no further mishaps.

When Charlie arrived Father happened to be near the lot gate in the lane and noticed how hot and muddy Charlie was, and immediately inquired the cause of this disfiguration. In a few short sentences Charlie related his experiences with Dynamite and the mail. He explained that the foolish donkey has thrown him off the first two times because it did not like the rattling of the papers, and the other two times for pure cussedness. He then explained that he had gotten a brush and whaled the devil out of her, and supposed that was what made him so hot. He said he regretted that he had not done this the first time he was tossed in the mud and saved him the other three falls.

Of course, everyone of the family laughed at Charlie's droll, comical style of relating his experiences with Dynamite and the mail. By the time he had gotten cleaned up a little and cooled off the entire episode was funny to him. He began to take delight in telling his experiences and joined in the laughing.

Occasionally Father would utter a few words of rather homely but sound philosophy as a sort of advisory regulation for his seven sons. Sometimes it took, and sometimes it didn't. On one occasion in speaking about some of Dynamite's peculiar characteristics he remarked "boys you better study that donkey, because as you grow older you'll find the world contains many other varieties of donkeys. You'll find them among all classes of animals and people, and some of them will have the same predominating characteristics Dynamite has."

Charlie thinks that the ups and downs he had that afternoon with Dynamite and the mail were excellent training in preparing him for later ups and downs when he first entered upon his professional career as a country school teacher. Here he found himself dealing with donkeys of a different sort, a few of which possessed characteristics somewhat similar to those possessed by Dynamite. And too, a little later as a young barrister trying to get a start in life he found the ups and downs with Dynamite and the mail had been splendid training in preparing him to deal diplomatically with still a different type of donkeys.

There is no doubt in my mind but that each one of the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough at different times and in different ways had about the same experiences with Dynamite as is here related in connection with Charlie's visit to the post office. It might have been a shorter ride, or it might have been a longer one. It might have been an attempt to drive Dynamite from one field to another, or to lead her to water.

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## RIDING A DONKEY

Riding a donkey's great sport  
If you're able to hold the fort  
Cause the rider can ne'er tell  
When he'll take a spooky spell

The donkey's not a fiery steed  
Neither known for his speed  
He has mean and stubborn traits  
Giv'n him by the wicked fates

When a he boy a donkey rides  
'Tis then firmness collides  
'Tis kicks, bumps'd, bloody blows  
Whatever else nobody knows

It's many sudden downs and outs  
Barefooted kicks and rapid bouts  
Heel thumbs and frailing fights  
Full of strange'd funny sights

Tricky head twist his knees  
Hind legs high up like trees  
Donkey'll wink 'd wiggle a whack  
Flipin' the rider from his back

When a donkey's traveling best  
And a boy's riding with zest  
He'll stop like he'd hit a stump  
Givin' the rider a headward dump

When all is quiet on the trail  
And all's blissful joy and song  
A tossing temper may flare  
Tossing the rider through the air

The donkey's a buckeroo 'l blue  
A triple kicker hard and true  
He can toss a boy like a ball 'd  
Kick him thrice during the fall

He likes to creep slow and drab  
Then jump sideways like a crab  
Dropping a boy flat in the mud  
With a splashy resounding thud

When 'tis calm and bugs do fly  
Buzzing the donkey's ears by  
Donkey'll fling the rider free  
And from buzzy bugs he'll flee

A boy ridin' a donkey down a road  
Whistling wielding whip and goad  
Dogs bout his legs snap 'd whines  
'Tis then boy's tossed to canines

A boy ridin' a donkey on a range  
Where 'tis but a little strange  
When bush or brier flips a flank  
He'll show a boy a hellish prank

A boy ridin' a donkey down a lane  
Donkey'll seem harmless and tame  
If a little shoat jumps thence  
'Tis donkey wheel and boy whence

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## TWO BROWNIES IN A TWO ACT SHOW

The next time I visited Father at the Old Homestead while we were sitting in front of an old fashion pine knot fire after supper discussing happenings in the community in general, suddenly he began laughing and by way of explanation said: "You will recall on your last visit home five or six months ago I told you about Walker's two act circus in wearing a big brown derby and riding that fool brown mule to make a ten strike with the new socialites in the community?" "Yes, I remember it very well," I replied, and asked if he had been having some more real fun along this line. Father replied: "Yes, I suppose so. That's what I was laughing about. You know this idea of wearing a big derby hat and riding a mule as the first cut of a Country Gentleman is a little ketchin'." Father then laughed a little and began relating the narrative of what he called: "Two Brownies In A Two Act Show".

Change is a universal law of life. Sometimes changes take place slowly in certain communities and at other time they come quickly. The latter was the case when the three younger of the Seven Sons were in their early teen ages and just beginning to experience that feeling of importance prevalent at this age. Economic and social changes took place rapidly in our community about this time. Within three or four years the entire economic and social structures of the community were completely changed.

The first great change was economic. Logging, lumbering and naval stores disappeared with the exhaustion of the pine timber and agriculture became the chief occupation of the people. Mules from Missouri and Kansas took the place of mustangs from Texas and Mexico. Mule teams took the place of ox teams. Plows were pulled by mules instead of oxen and mustangs. A few pony horses were kept for horseback riding and driving. Buggies were introduced. Cotton became the chief source of money instead of timber. Good Jersey cows and thoroughbred hogs took the place of scrub range cattle and the proverbial long nosed razor back rooters. The standard of living was changed for the better.

The second change in the community was social. Small one room public free school had been established and the old mission stations had been replaced by country churches. Pastors and circuit riders replaced missionaries. People rode to church and other public gatherings in buggies or factory built wagons pulled by mules or horses instead of in home made wagons pulled by log oxen. Women wore store bought dresses instead of those made at home from calico or homespun. Store bought hats replaced home made bonnets. Face powder and rouge were visible in public places. Store bought lipstick and

finger nail polish had not yet reached our community. It was a little too far back for this. Hence, substitutes had to be found. The chewing of a small piece of red calico produced a fairly good effect. The women and girls of the community really put on an ample supply of “come hither” and blossomed as the proverbial Rose of Sharon.

The men, not to be outdone by the females of the species, began to make great improvements in their personal appearance. Store bought suits became a necessity for Sunday wear. They had to be cleaned and creased weekly for all the younger men and teenage boys. Brogan shoes were replaced by the famous squeaking gaiters and patent leather slippers. Stiff bosom white linen shirts, high standing stiff collars and broad white linen cuffs replaced denim homespun shirts, celluloid collards and cuffs. Stetson hats and big Derbys took the place of ordinary dollar black wool hats and ten gallon cowboy sombreros. As has always been the case, the men followed the women in improvements in personal appearance, including dress, culture and refinement.

Country post offices were established. Rural free delivery of mail was provided. Newspapers and magazines made their appearance. People were compelled to read at least one weekly paper to have any social standing. Education took a new start in the community with the appearance of newspapers and magazines. The few scattering school teachers holding only the lowest grade certificate issued to teachers were even looked upon as educated cultured people and respected because of their much learning and leadership.

With the advent of stiff linen shirts, collars and cuffs, a new method of laundering had to be found. Pioneer methods were no longer satisfactory. Ordinary flat irons heated by a pine knot fire could not shine shirt fronts and high standing collars for teenage boys. Something had to be done about the laundry situation. The poor mothers did the best they could with the facilities at their command. Yet, their teenage boys continued to grumble. Shirts and collars were not satisfactory for their special occasions. Pretty soon a number of the teenage boys got together and solved the situation by arranging for the mail carrier to take a large basket of laundry the first of the week to Flomaton, where he received the mail from the railroad, and ship it to a Chinese laundry in Pensacola where it would be done in Chinese style and returned each Saturday. This gave the Lord Chesterfields of Jay stiff shirt fronts, collars and cuffs for Sunday display.

Father, not to be outdone in the economic changes, had disposed of his logging teams and equipment and was now trying to make a living from farming operations. He had purchased a light factory built wagon pulled by two small snow white horses. In order to keep up with some of his neighbors who has recently moved from a cotton growing section in Alabama and brought mules with them, Father traded four small un-broke woods pony colts for a pair of small mules in order to be progressive and to make it possible for his younger sons to maintain their social standing by riding and driving mules. They were to have advantages the older of the Seven Sons never dreamed of. One of the mules was named “Mousie” and was the color of a ordinary field mouse. The other mule was of a dark brown color and answered to the name “Brownie.” Now a real brownie is a good natured spirit, gentle and loving, having an affectionate disposition and



ever ready to perform Christian service for worthy people. In this respect Brownie, the mule, did not represent the real Brownies far famed in literature for their many kind deeds but rather the opposite. Brownie, the mule, at times acted like the spirit of a demon from another world.

These small rabbit-like mules would work to a wagon or pull a plow, but they had never been ridden. They resented this sort of treatment. This probably suited the boys, because notwithstanding the fact that Father had two splendid pony horses for horseback riding, the three younger of the Seven Sons just had to ride these mules to maintain their social standing or “bust” in the attempt. The boys contended they wanted to ride the mules to let the horses have a rest. However, rumors were in the community that in order for one to be a “FIRST CLASS SOUTHERN COUNTRY GENTLEMAN” it was necessary for one to wear a big derby hat, a pair of high boots and ride a mule. This old antebellum slogan of Southern Aristocracy had now reached Jay and had been embraced by the teenage boys. Father knew the boys were not interested in letting the white pony horses have a rest. He had observed the struggle for stiff shirt fronts and high stiff collars and thoroughly understood the situation. Fathers usually do understand the situation.

This new laundry problem had made it necessary for frequent Saturday afternoon trips to be made to Jay for a bundle of laundry. This was proving a splendid time for boys to improve their social standing by riding to Jay in the full style of a SOUTHERN COUNTRY GENTLEMAN. Accordingly big derby hats were purchased for wear when riding a mule. These Saturday afternoon trips would bring a boy to Jay at a time when many of the teenage gang, including girls as well as boys, were there. It was a good time for showing off a little, a time to see and be seen.

The four older boys had been away from the old homestead almost continually during the past few years either working or attending school, leaving only Emory, Irl and Walker there. Emory had been compelled to look after a small mercantile business on the place and had had limited experience in handling the rabbit-like mules. The plowing and hauling with the mules had fallen to Irl's lot. He had gotten well acquainted with them and they with him. He knew their tricks and how to outwit them. He had been riding them a little not withstanding their wicked ways

Late one Saturday afternoon after Walker had quit work, cleaned up and dressed up in his second best suit, commonly referred to as “My Saturday Suit” put on his squeaking gaiters and rode off to Jay for a bundle of laundry. Shortly after this Saturday laundry trip experience I made a short visit home. While there Father told me of the event, named by him: “Two Brownies in A Two Act Circus”.

Father said he told Walker he'd better ride Jack, a white saddle horse, because that fool mule would take a bucking spell and throw him if he tried to bring back a bundle of laundry and rattled the paper wrapping, but Walker declined the suggestion by saying, “Brownie isn't a bad buck. He's alright for anyone who knows how to handle him. That Simmons boy fell off him last week because he didn't know how to handle him. And besides he's no rider anyway. All you have to do is to let Browne know who is boss.”

Then he added by way of emphasis, “He travels better than old Jack because he’s a lot younger and not so stiff.”

Father said he told Walker to go ahead and ride Brownie but to be careful with that bundle of stiff shirts and collars and not let the paper rattle. He said he knew Walker had had little experience in riding the mule and the mule would go to bucking and throw him if the paper on the laundry ever rattled. Father then explained that he was careful to be about the barn when Walker returned so He could observe any signs of a fall, from dirty clothes, a smashed up bundle of laundry, or perhaps a dent in a BIG BROWN DERBY.

About sundown he saw Walker and Brownie coming down the road at a brisk rate as though nothing had happened. He noticed when Walker arrived at the barn he was not as talkative as he was when he left and appeared to be a little tired and hot, but said nothing to him about the trip or how he got along riding Brownie. However, he kept looking for signs of a fall in the shape of extra dirt on Walker’s clothes, a dirty bundle of laundry or dust and dents on a derby. Pretty soon he observed Walker’s clothes showed signs of having been dragged in the dirt. A close inspection of the laundry showed the bundle had been smashed a little and the derby showed dirt but no dents. Soon the mules and horses were all fed and he and Walker started to the house to get ready for supper. As they entered the front yard gate he got an opportunity for a close-up look which told the true happenings. Father said he then asked Walker if his shirts and collars were ruined when he was thrown and dragged in the dirt. Here Father laughed and said Walker’s curt reply was, “no, not ruined, but mashed up a little. They’ll do to wear.” He then asked Walker if the mule did much real hard bucking or if he just fell off like the Simmons boy did.

This amused Walker a great deal. He really enjoyed the joke on himself. While they were waiting for the supper bell to ring, Walker related the complete story of his UPS and DOWNS with Brownie on the trip. Father said Walker got more real fun from telling about it than the listeners did. He said the show was in two acts, both good. The report was about as follows:

The mule did fine all the way to Jay. He never got frightened or showed any signs of wanting to buck. No one could expect a mule to ride any better.

He was doing fine on the way back until we arrived at the first place with woods on each side of the road this side of the Hawsy place when a large covey of quail flew up from under a bush right by the road almost under his feet. They made an awful loud noise. Brownie jumped off sideways and the show was on. He bucked a few jumps. The laundry had to be dropped so I could better manage the mule. When it hit the ground the fool mule again jumped sideways, dropping me flat in the middle of the road. The bridle reins were held tightly when he went from under me. He tried to get away and dragged me a few steps. That’s what got so much dirt on my clothes.

I had a time getting back on the mule with the laundry. He was afraid to get near it. After several trials the laundry was concealed under my coat and the mule led beside a big log. I then climbed upon the log and quickly dropped into the saddle. This ended the first act.

Brownie now looked and listened for another covey of quail and another bundle to rattle or drop under his feet. He pranced from one side of the road to the other dodging imaginary birds and bundles. Nothing much happened until we were just beyond the corner of our new ground field under those big tall pine trees down this side of the Higdon place. Here Brownie struck a large dry pine burr with his hind foot causing it to roll out to one side. This rattling, rolling burr was taken as the signal to start the second act. Immediately his head was lowered between his knees. He bucked a time of two coming down stiff kneed. In pulling on the bridle reins the laundry was dropped. When it hit the ground the fool mule went sideways as quick as lightning dropping me flat in the road again. I held to the reins. He tried to get away and spun me around a few times before I could get up.

When I got up I was in the edge of a dead treetop. Several of the limbs were broken into stove wood lengths over the mule before I tried to get back on him. The hat was then picked up and placed on my head, the laundry again concealed under my coat, and the mule led beside a stump. From the stump I again dropped into the saddle. This ended the second act, as Papa called it.

From there on home the Brownie from the nether regions tried to be a real Brownie of Fairy Tale fame by trotting off home as gentle as a proverbial cat. Really, I think this was not because of any change of heart but because the feed trough was nearby.

“No,” said Walker, “I was not hurt, just a few slight bruises in the UPS AND DOWNS of the trip. Had lot ‘o luck, too. Saved my laundry and derby.”

The supper bell was now ringing and all hands hurried off to supper still talking about how it feels to be a FIRST CLASS SOUTHERN GENTLEMAN.

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## A ONE ACT CIRCUS

His description of this One Act Circus was substantially as follows:

Soon after Walker’s wonderful experiences in wearing a big brown derby and riding the little bucking brown mule and the great social hits he made as a Country Gentleman of the Old South, Emory began to show symptoms of having the same bug in his system. He had really caught the germ and had to wear a big derby hat and ride a mule or burst in the attempt. He couldn’t stand by on the sideline and see Irl and Walker practicing what was called THE FIRST CUT OF A COUNTRY GENTLEMAN and get so much fun and social recognition while he looked on from afar. So one Friday afternoon about five o’clock he made an excuse to go to Jay to get his hair cut. It seemed he just had to have a hair cut before Sunday and since he would be busy all day Saturday in the little store this was his only chance to get the haircut. It was called to his attention that one of the boys

had ridden Jack, the white horse, off to drive up some cattle. Emory explained very quickly that he would ride Browne, the mule. He was reminded of Walker's two-act circus with Brownie because of carrying bundles of laundry while riding him. Emory's reply was that since he would have no bundles of any sort he would have no trouble.

Within a few minutes Emory was dressed in his Sunday suit, had on his big black derby and astride the Brownie from the nether world riding off for his trimming and primping for Sunday show. All went well on the way to Jay. On Friday afternoon the little barber had very few customers if any. Pretty soon Emory was trimmed and primped and on the little Brownie heading for home. All went well on the return trip until he and the Brownie from the lower regions were passing the tenant farmhouse near where the Jim Mann old log road crosses the Jay road. I mean that little house where a big bunch of fice dogs is kept and occasionally get out of the yard enclosing the house and give chase to horses, buggies or wagons passing the place.

You know John, Emory's pretty shy, doesn't talk freely like Irl and Walker. Never tells any of his down mishaps or UPS and DOWNS. None of us knew anything about this One Act Circus for two or three weeks. One day, about three weeks after the show, I was driving the two little mules to Pollard and in passing this house the man living there came out to the road and stopped me to inquire if my son was hurt in the fall from that brown mule and to apologize for the mishaps caused by the dogs in chasing and snapping at the mule. I told him I had heard nothing about any fall and naturally supposed no one was hurt, and asked him to tell me about the free show that had been brought right to his own door. The old man laughed and admitted he had enjoyed the show, but had been a little worried because he was afraid the boy had been hurt in the fall from the mule. He then gave the following account of the incident:

"Two or three weeks ago, late one Friday evening, one of your boys was passing here riding that little brown mule [pointing to Brownie] evidently going home from Jay when the old mother fice and five puppies slipped out through a gate accidentally left open by some of the children and raced down the road after the mule. They went yipping, yapping, yapping all around the mule. It was dogs on either side, dogs in front and dogs to the rear. Soon they were all under the mule still yapping and snapping at his legs and ankles. The mule didn't like this snapping at his ankles. He peartened up a little and pranced from one side of the road to the other. Soon the old bitch snapped harder. The mule kicked a puppy rolling. It got up whining as if hurt. This made the old bitch mad. She ran around and snapped at the mule's nose. The mule began pawing at her with a fore foot, and pranced off down the road a little faster. The boy tightened his reins to hold the mule. The dogs ran under him and in front still yapping and snapping. Then the mule suddenly jammed his head down between his stiff knees and bucked a time or two. Then he stood on his head and tossed the boy over his head, flat in the road among the puppies."

"You know the boy carried the reins over the mule's head as he left the saddle. The mule pulled back and slid the boy around a little. I thought for sure the old bitch would bite the boy before he could get up. But, Sir, do you know that boy went to kicking them dogs

with both feet and every last one of the pack turned tails and skedaddled back toward the house, while the boy jumped up, remounted the mule and went off down the road in a lope. Uncle Peter, I sure hope your boy wasn't hurt."

I explained that so far as I knew no damage was done either to the boy or the mule. The old man then seemed to feel some what relieved at hearing no damage was done and continued his narrative by way of explanation as follows: "It was strange to me them fool fices didn't seem to mind being kicked at by the mule, even after one of 'm was kicked a rollin' and a whinin', but as soon as that boy got his feet into kicking action they turned tails, whined and skedaddled home 'skert' half to death."

At this point Father laughed heartily. Of course, I joined him in the laughing. Presently Father said: "I told that old man I'd been telling my boys if they didn't stay off'n the little rabbit-like mules, a tryin' to gain social prestige by imitating 'COUNTRY GENTLEMEN OF THE OLD SOUTH' sooner or later they'd go to the dogs." Then after clearing his throat he added: "I think the foolish fad's about run its course. The boys are working better now and taking more interest in school."

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## **Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough**

**BOYS AND MISSIONARIES**

**SAPS AND SAPLINGS**

**CANE GRINDING**

## BOYS AND MISSIONARIES

Almost all small boys have peculiar misgivings about missionaries. They are inclined to shy away from missionaries. This is perhaps because all real boys are a little suspicious of anybody or anything having a tendency to interfere with their grand outdoor FREEDOMS. Perhaps this feeling of suspicion comes to boys by hearing people talk about missionaries making people good, by making them give up a lot of pleasures and fun, such as going berry picking on Sunday, or going to the may-haw ponds on Sunday for fruit or perhaps strolling in the woods on Sunday to study the great forests and the wildlife living there among the big trees, and incidentally to gather a supply of nuts for winter eating. With this sort of talk constantly repeated before a group of Wild Life country boys accustomed to the great out-door life from the earliest childhood, from the time when they had first learned to walk, it's not strange that such boys become suspicious of missionaries and shun them as long faced hindrances to the natural life and development of the best there is in a boy.

When Father and Mother settled on a homestead three miles southwest from where the village of Jay now is, only a few families lived on all Pine Level. Churches, Sunday Schools and public free schools were unheard of institutions in Our Wilderness. Father and Mother held membership in the Damascus Missionary Baptist Church located in the Coon Hill community some eight or ten miles southwest on the Escambia River where the church had been organized before the Civil War. The fact that Father and Mother held membership in this old established church soon was known far and wide to all the missionaries passing through our Wilderness. All of them soon learned too, to make the Diamond Homestead either for dinner or for a night's lodging. They all found a cordial welcome at this Old Homestead in spite of the Seven Sons. They were news heralds in those days, these missionaries were. They were welcomed for the news brought from the outside world to our little world, sometimes referred to as Our Wilderness. The current news brought about foreign countries, that is countries foreign to us, election news, the candidates running for office and the price of timber gave these missionaries a starting point for conversations. From these worldly news items they would soon turn to things spiritual. They often spoke of Churches, Sunday Schools, and public free schools as the thing to take the place of worldly pleasures such as strolling in the great woods and reading the Book of Nature. Now this is where the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough began to become suspicious of missionaries. This is when they began to see visions of burley school teachers wielding the much talked of proverbial hickory stick, of innocent little boys standing for hours in dark corners with dunce caps pulled over their heads and cross grained spinster school teachers playing checkers on their backs with dogwood sprouts, always felt from the back of the neck to the bend of the knees.

From their earliest recollections the Seven Sons had heard of missionaries, seen missionaries, come in contact and stood their hand with missionaries. The Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough had gotten the idea that the main work of missionaries was to make Sissies of all boys by having them stay out of the woods, live about the house and be goody goodies, so good until they would be good for nothing but for folks to laugh at.

The Seven boys had somehow gotten the impression that too much close contact with the long faced straight jacketed missionaries would deprive them of all future frolic and fun, so that life itself would be a dreary, dreary drolling away of time in Our Wilderness. There would be no more strolls in the great forests with thousands of attractions. There would be no more wading for the Seven barefooted sons in the clear sparkling brooks and creeks. There would be no more climbing of tall trees and jumping from boughs to boughs like the foxes, raccoons and squirrels. There would be no more steep cliff climbing in the great gullies, or sliding down the high white sandy banks or somersaulting down the long slopes of soft sand. There would be no more throwing of small rocks from the edges of the deep gullies across the wide gorges or the throwing of pebbles at little innocent birds.

And ah, how sad to relate, the sad, sad thought of no more visits to the wild fruit trees in our great woods. These Seven Sons were not without appreciation for the things they had. They knew good things too. The very mention of these things oft brings tears to the eyes of even the two stout hearted ones. I can even now see the three tender hearted ones drying their tears and imagine the saliva streaming from the mouths of the two gluttonous ones. Dear reader, please think on the sadness of what might have come to these Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough. Think of what it would have meant for us not to be permitted to climb to the top of the tall wild persimmon trees, find an easy perch on the topmost boughs and sit there in the breezes eating the luscious fruit, just after the first sweetening winter frosts. Think of being deprived of swinging in the tall Muscatine grapevine swings and feasting on bullisses. Think of no more may-haw jellies and jams. And, MY, ME, think what it would have meant not to have BLUE BERRY PIE in season. And worst of all to have no hickory nuts or chinquapins to roast during the long winter evenings while sitting around the log fires in the huge fire places in stick and dirt chimneys at the ends of big log houses.

Dear reader, with the idea in mind that these pleasures and joys were in a fair way of being gradually, slowly but surely removed from the life of Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough who didn't have much to enjoy except their great out-door wilderness and a sturdy determination to Stand their Hand against the encroachments of missionaries or any other sort of civilization that might interfere with their inherent rights, is it any wonder, may I ask, that the Seven shied away from too much close contact with the early missionaries? May the Seven of us ask that you be at least a little sympathetic and charitable toward our attitude in standing our hand against any encroachment upon our inherent rights.

One among the earliest missionaries to the Diamond Homestead was one Reverend Samuel Ingram Spence who came somewhere from the foreign country of Alabama. The grand old man arrived one day about two hours before dinner. Father was away at his logging business. Henry and I were hoeing in a small sweet potato patch not far from the house. Mother called us from the potato patch to water and feed the missionary's horse. This done, we were told to catch and kill two chickens of tender and juicy age for the missionary. This done, we were told to go to the nearby spring under a steep bluff and bring a supply of fresh cool water. This done, were told to bring a supply of wood for



cooking fuel. When this and a half dozen other errands were done we were told to go back to the potato patch and hoe until dinner was ready.

Soon we were back in the potato patch soliloquizing about as follows:

“Now, think of that long-faced joy killer lying up in the heat of the day in the best bed while we are out in the heat digging and pulling at crab grass and weeds all tangled up with contrary potato vines. We’ll probably have to eat field peas and corn bread for dinner while he eats chicken and biscuits. He’ll have his dinner while everything is warm and fresh and we’ll probably have to wait and eat whatever we can get. Yes, we chimed in, and if we say anything he’ll try to have [us] spanked for impudence.”

Then we went into a conference in a shady corner of the fence to devise ways and means to Stand Our Hand against all such unwelcome encroachments coming under the name of missionaries or any other civilization. “To wait” was discussed. For the benefit of any one who never had the misfortune of living under the dispensation when boys “Had to Wait” I may say that “To Wait” meant that all small boys had to stand around outside regardless of how hot and tired they might be while the other more important folks ate all the best things on the table. We decided that this practice was cruel, inhuman and should be abolished, as an Old Timer in our community used to say “immediately or sooner.” It didn’t take us long to decide that any missionary who would eat all the best of two chickens leaving only the necks and wings for honest-to-goodness hard working little boys wasn’t much of a Christian and should be recalled by his foreign organization whatever it was. It took us about two minutes to decide that the reading from a book and praying for little heathen boys who had to work in the hot sun was something that “couldn’t do us no good” anyhow and that hence forth we’d cut it out even at the risk of getting spanked. At about this point in our conference we were called to dinner.

We hurried to the house hoping to get to the first table. In our haste we dipped our hands in a spoon full of water, rubbed that once or twice over the middle of our faces, then rubbed the towel over the dry sides of our faces and made a rush for the table. Before we got seated Mother quickly sent us back to wash our faces and hands clean and comb our hair back out of our faces so we would not look so much like our playmates, a bunch of pet billy goats. By the time we got washed, primped and primed and got past the inspection line to the table one of us got a little piece of neck and the other a tough wing. Just as we expected, we filled up on field peas and corn bread, just as we had soliloquized, believe it or not.

While Mother cleaned up her table and washed the dishes, the missionary sat on the large front porch while Henry, Sam, Charley and I lay on the floor rolling from one end to the other and turning summersaults back. Of course, we were entertaining the missionary.

Pretty soon Mother walked to the porch and took a seat. She and the missionary engaged in conversation a few minutes when he told Mother that he had a long drive that afternoon to get to a lodging place for the night and would have to go. He then added that

he would like to read a few verses before going and pray for the heathens everywhere. With this remark he went for his book. Mother stepped inside the house for a minute.

At this moment Henry and I rolled off the end of the porch and crawled under the house and backed into a low chimney jamb. Now at the chimney end of this large house the floor was near the ground. Henry and I could squeeze under to the chimney only with difficulty. Soon we heard Mother and the missionary calling us to come and hear the missionary. We didn't budge. Soon Sam and Charley told of our hiding place. They hadn't been initiated yet and didn't know not to talk out of turn. Mother and the missionary came to the edge of the house and looked under at us. At first they couldn't see us. Soon their eyes got adjusted to the darkness in our hiding place. They begged us to come out and hear the missionary's message for the heathens. We only looked at them and grinned and grunted like a pair of half wild shoats backed into a clay root [tunnel] for protection when being bayed by an angry cur. They begged and persuaded. We grinned and grunted. The more they begged us to come out the more we grinned and grunted. We didn't say it but we thought we were standing our hand and protecting our rights. We knew we were where no woman or missionary could come. This is the time, thought we, to stand our hand. We stood firm, on all fours.

Finally Mother, the missionary and the small children, went back on the porch and held their service. It was short. The missionary evidently was in the right humor to make it short. Soon he had his horse hitched to his buggy and was on his way, and Henry and I did the rejoicing.

Henry and I slipped out and hied away to the potato patch. As we struggled during the afternoon with tough crab grass and weeds tangled with contrary vines we laughed and talked about how we had played a joke on that missionary by cutting his service for eating all the chicken and leaving us only a neck and a wing.

Toward night Henry and I quit work, came to the house to attend to the evening errands such as feeding the cattle and hogs, penning the goats, and bringing in a supply of wood for fuel. And, of course, a supply of water must be brought from the spring for the night. We were smart little boys now. All our work was soon done. About this time Mother discovered that our clothes were covered with dust, red clay and smut rubbed off the chimney jamb in our hide out. The combination, black dust, red clay and black smut were a little puzzling to her. She looked at the combination of colors from several angles and began to talk about thusly:

"Boys, your clothes are far too dirty, Surely they'll have to be dusted. If that cannot be dusted off you boys will have to spend the night in that chimney jamb or in the barn with the pigs." Then she calmly led us to the back yard and pulled from her well-seasoned gall berry yard broom a nice long sprout and did the dusting job in a hurry. She did a good job too. Within less than two minutes she had two solemn binding promises that we would never hide out in that dirty chimney jamb. We didn't.

Time kept fleeting by and the missionaries continued to visit the Diamond Homestead. The boys continued to grow slowly and the younger ones to join the older ones in the job of standing their hand against all encroachments upon their inherent rights to enjoy the great outdoors that surrounded the homestead.

It is the instinctive nature for boys never to be punished the second time for doing exactly the same thing in the same manner. They'll always change their tactics a little with the hope of using their wits to avoid punishment. So it was with Henry and me a couple of years later.

One day late in the summer Dr. and Mrs. J. E. Edwards stopped at the Homestead for dinner while Dr. Edwards was serving as Association Missionary in the Pensacola Bay Association which Association at the time covered two counties, plus. The usual chores had to be done upon the arrival of the missionary, such as putting clean table linen out for use, clean missionary towels, chickens killed and dressed, fresh butter churned and biscuits baked with all flour in addition to the corn bread so useful in filling boys.

We boys began to feel a little suspicious even at dinner when the missionary began to tell of his work in organizing churches and mission stations in old abandoned logging camps or abandoned dwelling houses. Among other things we particularly noticed he said was that his organized churches and mission stations gave the children in the communities places to go to Sunday far better than strolling in the woods. We listened attentively to this sort of talk and saw encroachments upon the rights to live unmolested in Our Wilderness. From his conversation we suspected he would want to read and preach to us heathens as soon as possible after dinner. Immediately after dinner Henry and I climbed to the highest parts of a huge China tree growing in the front yard, and selected easy perches among the thick limbs and leaves and sat quietly to see what would happen. Within a short time we heard the well known call, John, Henry, John. We gave no answer. The calls were repeated several times both by Mother and the missionary. We gave no answers. Neither did we stir a leaf among the boughs. We froze like wild animals in danger.

A searching party was soon formed composed of Mother, the missionary, and Mrs. Edwards and sister Mamie. The inside of the house was searched. The well known chimney jamb was peeped into. The plum orchid adjacent to the house was searched. No traces of the culprits were found. Just as the searching party came back to the large front porch we heard Mrs. Edwards remark that she thought she had seen a boy climbing that China tree as she came out from dinner. Immediately all eyes were focused toward the thick treetop. When members of the party walked into the yard directly under us the view was plain. We were literally treed. We couldn't hide further or run. We just had to sit there and be gazed at like a wild varmint when treed in the woods. Dr. and Mrs. Edwards laughed much at the situation. The Doctor said the situation reminded him of raccoons, 'possums, foxes and squirrels in the woods when he was a bouncing bubbling boy. The grand old man then turned around to Mother and said: "Sister Diamond, I've had many boys to hide from me or to walk away in wild life communities but this is the first time I've really been able to get the friendly little rascals up a tree where I can talk to them

with no fear of having them walk off in the midst of my talk.” Dr. Edwards then looked up at the two of us high in the big tree and informed us that he would hold service for our special benefit. And he did that very thing then and there.

He invited Mother, Mrs. Edwards and sister Mamie and Charley and Sam to come on the large porch where they could occupy chairs. The Doctor then took a standing place on the porch where he could look up and see us and where he knew we could hear every word he read or said. He then opened his Book and read the story of Zacchaeus climbing the sycamore tree. When he had finished reading he jollied us a little about not making haste to come down like Zacchaeus had done but informed us that we were not as bad as was Zacchaeus, the publican, and that we, like Zacchaeus, would soon come down and be better for having climbed the tree. He really made us feel proud of having climbed that tree at that particular time.

Really the Doctor preached a beautiful sermonette taking as his subject Zacchaeus and the tree. He related how his Lord had sent Zacchaeus, a hardened publican and a sinner, up a tree, and had brought him down a changed man. He then expressed the thought that the Lord had sent the two wild life boy friends of his up the tree purposely and in due time would bring them down with even greater changes than had been wrought in the life of the hardened publican Jew. He then expressed his thought in beautiful, well chosen words full of sympathy and pathos for the wild life lads and praised his Lord for giving such lads the freedom of the great woods where such lads can learn first hand information about the creation of the great wild forests and all wild life contained therein. He then quoted the following which I later in life learned was from the Book of Job:

But ask now the beasts and they shall teach thee;  
And the fowls of the air and they shall teach thee;  
Or speak to the earth and it shall teach thee;  
And the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee.

His short comments on the above thoughts were beautiful. He drew a full size picture of the wild life lads learning from the trees, and flowers of the woods, learning from the wild animals and birds making their homes in the forests, learning from the fishes living in the waters of the wild wilderness. He presented a life sized picture of us lads holding conversations with almost every tree and shrub, with almost every animal and bird, and with almost every fish and turtle living in the waters. Really he pictured us as great characters and made us feel our importance as we had never done before and perhaps since. The Doctor then closed his service with a short beautiful prayer for the occasion. He gave thanks for the great wild woody wilderness and the wild life therein, for the streams in these great woods and all the life living in the waters. He then gave thanks for the sturdy, hardy determined lads the Lord had in training in these great forests often referred to as wild wildernesses. He then spoke of the training in the wilderness of Moses, Washington and Lincoln. He closed without any mention of the heathens everywhere or anywhere.

Soon Dr. and Mrs. Edwards were out hitching their horse to the buggy preparatory for leaving. The tree lads came down and assisted in this. When Dr. and Mrs. Edwards left, we boys hied away to some grassy weedy parts of the little fields about the Homestead, often referred to as “patches” and began our afternoon’s work.

It wasn’t long before we wanted water. However, we suspected Mother was rather humiliated at our tree climbing and might find some excuse for giving our clothes a little dusting and stayed on as long as possible giving her plenty of time to get sorry for the little tired hot, hard working lads. Finally we had to go for water. After we had gotten water and rested a little, Mother came out for an inspection.

Alas, the foolish tree lads had miscalculated in more than one thing. Only a short time before we climbed that tree, a summer shower has wet the tree which was well covered with dust from the nearby cattle pens and the dusty lane. This wet dirt and dust mixed with the dark dye from the dead bark of the tree had really fixed our clothes. Each tree lad was in a dirtier condition than were Henry and I when we had crawled from the dirty smutty chimney jamb a couple of years ago. As soon as we had been shown the condition of our clothes we knew the dusting was coming, and come it did. The faithful old gall berry yard broom was brought into play and as usual was equal to the occasion.

Back in the grass patch we talked over the situation we had gotten ourselves into. We allowed we had only miscalculated again. We thought we would never be located in the top of the tall tree. We never thought about the wet dirt and dye on the limbs until it was too late. We were vexed only at our own mistakes. And, too, we had a great deal more respect for missionaries after having been treed and compelled to listen to a man who, although a missionary, really understood boys. This man knew that the greatest object of such boys is “to stand their hand against encroachments upon their inherent rights.” He also knew the greatest task of the parents of a herd of wild life lads is “putting up with the lads.” Hence, he was able to be helpful to both parties, as well as create respect for his work.

Time kept moving along, slowly thought we boys. Time has a habit of moving slowly with boys. It seems a lifetime for a group of boys to grow large enough to protect their rights. At certain ages boys get the idea that every man’s hand is against them and wish they were grown up so they could make a few men over. So it was occasionally with the Seven Sons.

Missionaries continued to come and go with the seasons. Dr. Edwards soon became pastor of the First Church in Pensacola. For a year or more we had no more visits from him. We halfway regretted it when he ceased to be a missionary. We had learned to get along with him instead of standing our hand.

The next missionary to make regular visits through our community was a medical missionary by the name of F. W. Abbott. He was a good man, a good physician and a good missionary. We put up with him some times and at other times we stood our hand. He didn’t encroach much upon our inherent rights, so this helped matters. He was lame,

having a crippled foot and a crippled hand. He was unable to do much walking. This was in his favor with us. We knew he could never catch us if we had to retreat for safety.

One day not more than a year or so after the two of us had miscalculated, been treed, preached too, and partially tamed, Dr. Abbott came by for a visit and incidentally for dinner. Mother's sister Aunt Annie was living with us then. Two neighbor women were there that day, Mrs. Frank Cobb and her spinster sister, Miss Jane Dixon. This company was in favor of the boys because the company diverted attention. Dinner was served soon after the missionary arrived. In fact it was about ready when he came in. Dinner had been prepared for company, hence, no preacher preliminaries were necessary. Of course several boys had to "wait", not because of the shortness of the table but because of the embarrassment which might be caused to Mother and the visitors.

We boys suspecting we would have to be preached to for a couple of hours as soon as the dinner dishes were washed and things cleaned up in general got our heads together and made a bee line for the big gully near the house. We had heard this new missionary and knew he was "long winded." We climbed to the tops of some of the highest and steepest cliffs, slick chalk cliffs where we knew no woman, young or old or crippled preacher could possibly climb. We had some hideout holes here unapproachable by our enemies. Here we hid for protection, expecting almost any minute for over an hour to hear the well known calls, John, Henry, Sam, Charley. We waited and listened. Speaking not above a low whisper at any time. Finally when we realized the afternoon was slipping away, but we heard no calls from either Mother or the missionary. We slipped from our hideouts in the chalky cliffs and reconnoitered a little to see what had become of the missionary, thinking perhaps [that] he was still preaching. It did not take long to find he had gone soon after finishing dinner. He had not even mentioned reading or preaching.

We were a sad, disappointed set of boys. All our trouble in hiding in the gully had been wasted. And too, we discovered that we had been wallowing in hideouts partially lined with damp chalk of many colors. The chalk in the hideout holes in the tall cliffs was in layers, each layer being a different color. Our clothes showed blue, pink, white and red colors in streaks. We were a mottled looking bunch of boys. We resembled a bunch of escaped circus clowns. We realized too, that the chalk would not easily dust from our clothes. Of course, this meant we were in for another and perhaps more severe dusting than Henry and I got for climbing the China tree to get away from the missionary. Of course, Mother would attend to this after her neighbor visitors had gone home.

We did not tarry about the house but hurried off to our work in a three-acre cotton patch. This cotton had been introduced recently by some missionary or other traveler from the foreign country of Alabama. Father had planted this cotton to provide work for his drove of boys to keep them from other mischief. He had an idea if he could make the boys work off a large portion of their surplus energy it would be easier for him and Mother to "put up" with them. This cotton patch certainly worked off a lot of energy. However, the boys did not agree that it made it any easier for Father and Mother to "put up" with their boys. In so far as work was concerned the cotton patch was a 100 percent success. We four boys chopped, hoed, picked and pulled tough crabgrass, stringy coffee bean weeds and

long tough morning glory vines in this cotton patch all the summer. We couldn't even go berry picking or to the creeks or millpond wash holes during the summer on account of this pesky cotton patch.

About the first of September the picking began. We boys spent the fall and a greater part of the winter picking cotton. We dragged corn sacks up and down the cotton rows all fall and up till Christmas. The patch produced one and a half bales. In November cotton enough to gin one bale was loaded on a large wagon pulled by a three yoke log team and carried 12 miles in another county to be ginned. It took two full days to make the trip. This bale was sold for the magnificent sum of FOUR CENTS a pound, bringing \$20.00 and two bits in trade. The remainder of the cotton crop was stowed away and a year or two later hauled to a new gin erected only three miles from home. It was hauled by small boys with Cam and The Cart. This cotton was brought home in sacks and used by Mother to make beds and covers for her bunch of boys she was kept so busy "putting up with." The bunch had now increased to the sacred number SEVEN. Father always said the sacredness of the number SEVEN didn't make it any easier for him and Mother "to put up with" their herd of hardheads.

During the afternoon we boys had plenty of time to talk about the dusting in store for us when we came in to do the evening chores. Of course, we were thoroughly disgusted when we found the missionary had not even requested permission for a few verses, preach a sermonette and pray for the heathens everywhere. We had lost an hour from the pesky cotton patch and ruined our clothes. We were now in for a dusting of the severest sort. We wondered if the clothes and the gall berry broom would hold out to complete the job.

Of course, a bunch of resourceful wild life boys have no trouble in presenting a good alibi. We had planned it so we would all tell the same thing. We went on the assumption that if we were to tell a lie it would be a lot better if we all told the same lie. So when we were called up to explain why we had been in that chalky gully and ruined our clothes, we replied that we went down there to play a little while during our noon rest period so our noise would not disturb the missionary and the visiting neighbor women. We knew they had lots to talk about and would resent being disturbed. Of course, we did not want to embarrass any one with out playful noise. We were just as sorry as we could be about getting our clothes soiled in the colored chalk. We were running on top of the cliff and didn't know the chalk was so wet and slippery until we were on it and had slipped and rolled down the cliff landing in a pile of loose wet chalk. We had not memorized our story, hence each one told about the same but in his own words. Our alibi evidently helped some, because our dusting was a rather light one. The explanation was given that we should have been more careful and not run on a cliff that was so wet and slippery.

As time passed the missionaries began holding services in abandoned logging camps or abandoned dwelling and ceased to hold any services in homes they visited. This did not end all the troubles of the Seven Sons with the missionaries. The missionaries continued to visit at the Diamond Homestead and the boys continued "to stand their hand" with them.

On one occasion when the Rev. John Deer from South Alabama has spent a night at the Diamond Homestead enroute to fill an appointment some distance to the south, he left his pipe on a convenient shelf near a cake of soap as he went to breakfast. We were still living under the dispensation when boys had to wait. As usual the missionary and Father ate a long time or sat at the table and talked a long time.

The Rev. John Deer was a good man and a splendid preacher, but he had to smoke immediately after breakfast or he couldn't preach that day. When he come from breakfast he filled his pipe with a plentiful supply of fresh tobacco, packed it down with his finger, stuck a lighted match to the tobacco and sucked and sucked with all his might. No smoke came. He loosened up the tobacco a little, stuck another match to the tobacco and sucked and sucked and sucked. No smoke came. This performance was repeated half a dozen times but no smoke came. He then emptied the pipe, pulled the stem from the bowl and tried to stick some straws and small twigs through it to see if perchance it had gotten stopped with some foreign object or objects. Pretty soon he broke a short piece of a small twig off in the middle of the stem. He secured another twig and in trying to dislodge the first twig, he stuck more twig ends in the stem. About this time Mother passed by and saw the missionary was evidently in serious trouble and went to his aid. Soon she brought an old-fashioned knitting needle with which she discovered the broken twig ends. To the surprise of the missionary and Mother a lot of soap was also dislodged from the stem.

The pipe was filled again and the lighting performance repeated. To the great joy of the missionary when he sucked the smoke came. After taking a few puffs, blowing them out and watching them curl off into thin air the missionary packed his grip and started for the gate preparatory to starting on his long journey. Just as he came around a corner he suddenly met Charley, one of the boys who had been required to wait at breakfast. Neither of them had expected this sudden meeting. The missionary looked straight at Charley and Charley looked straight at the missionary. The two looked at each other for at least half a minute and said not a word. The missionary seemed to get his bearings first and said in a surly voice: "Charley, why did you pack soap in my pipe stem while I was at breakfast?" Immediately, without taking his gaze off the missionary Charley said: "Sir, why did you leave your pipe by the soap inviting what you got, and why did you eat so long and leave me only a tiny piece of tough neck for breakfast?" Without another word, smile or even a grunt, each walked around the other and went his way.

In the course of another year or two, Henry, Sam, Charley and John were often away from the old Homestead either at work or attending school, leaving the three younger boys, Emory, Irl and Walker to "Stand their hands" with the missionaries as best they could. They often had hard times and got into close places. Occasionally one or two of the older boys would be at home for short visits between jobs when a little coaching could be done to save the reputation of the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough and keep the missionaries in the middle of the road.

Things were growing different now in the community. Much of the great forests had been cut and carried to the timber markets of the world. Some land had been cleared and



placed in cultivation. A few neighbors had settled in the community. A church or two was in existence for service once a month, sometimes. Sunday Schools were held occasionally for short periods. A public school was held for three or four months a year when a teacher could be found who would work for \$20.00 a month and “board around” and was able to stand his or her hand with an even dozen wild life hard headed lads.

The poor younger boys had other troubles unknown to the older boys. They had to “stand their hands” with both missionaries and pastors making things doubly hard for them. With the little coaching and private tutoring they received they were able to “stand their hands” fairly well. If they ever surrendered the fort, retreated, or stuck up the white flag they kept it a profound secret from the older boys. The having to wait dispensation was still current history at the Old Homestead. The same soap dish still sat on the same shelf. No doubt but they were useful to many a smoking stranger who extended invitations. The big China trees had blown over, but the large gully stayed on and became a little deeper and the cliffs a little steeper. No doubt about their usefulness in emergencies.

About this time a famous fyce [?] doggie became an inmate at the Old Homestead and a companion of the younger boys. This fyce was named Ponto. Where the name came from no one ever seemed to know. Ponto was full of pranks and tricks, and enjoyed pulling them at every opportunity. Ponto was taught at an early age to cuss and preach. Of course, you may think this was a strange combination for a fyce dog. When Ponto was told to cuss any person or object he would bark rapidly and fiercely. His face would exhibit a mad look. When he was told to preach, he would bark loud and lonesome and exhibit a far-a-way-wishful look. No doubt many a missionary and pastor visiting at the Old Homestead was both amused and provoked at the tricks and pranks of Ponto.

Another famous pet making history at the Old Homestead during many years was Dear Old Sandy. At this time Sandy was growing a little old, having been fed and played with and butted with by all the Seven Sons. It took less disturbance to bring all his butting machinery into action now than it did in his younger days. It had long been a custom at the Homestead to introduce all visiting missionaries and pastors to Sandy upon their first visit. The introduction was about as follows:

The unsuspecting visitor was usually given a bucket of feed to carry to his horse without being told that Sandy would consider it a personal insult for any stranger to walk by him with a bucket of feed and not give him at least a handful. Neither would the stranger be told that Sandy would not argue with anyone about religion or what he was not offered to eat. Neither would the stranger be told that Sandy was a goat of action. The usual results were that the missionary or Pastor would walk by Sandy and not offer him a handful of feed. Then the next thing the missionary or Pastor would know would be a deadening sensation of the impact of Sandy’s massive horns on the seat of a Sunday pair of pants. A glimpse at the introduction would show a man sprawling on the ground and Sandy helping himself to the feed usually scattered on the ground. If the man got up quickly with his head toward Sandy all was over. But woe unto the man who got up on all-fours with the seat of his pants toward Sandy because Sandy’s fine sense of humor would never

let him pass up a golden opportunity for doing a good deed especially when the invitation with please was held up right before his eyes.

This introductory trick was often pulled on a young preacher when in company with other older ones. Many a missionary or pastor furnished the Sunday circus about the barns, lots and lanes of the home of the Seven Sons. No doubt but what many a sermon became a sermonette because the preacher's thoughts were divided between bruises and billy goats.

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## SAPS AND SAPLINGS

The above title suggested itself one Sunday afternoon when Henry and I were small boys. On this day shortly after we had eaten dinner, Henry and Mark Magaha, who had eaten dinner at the home of the Lord boys, came to our place with the three Lord boys, Thaddeus, Walter and Garfield. The two Magaha boys and Thaddeus were from three to five years older than either Henry or me. At this time the father of the Magaha boys lived at what was known at that time as the Farrah Cobb old place, later known as the Abbott place and now as the Harrison place. The father of the Lord boys lived at what was later known as the Padgett place and now known as the Hudson place.

Very soon after the arrival of the boys one of the boys suggested that we visit the large gully nearby. With no opposition, off we seven went for a play in the Big Gully. Here we climbed the steep cliffs and somersaulted off in the soft sand piles below. We climbed the almost perpendicular banks playing the game of mountain climbing and sliding down the long slopes. We tested our strength and skill in long jumps from high banks into soft sand below. We raced from one section of the gully to other sections. When a little tired we sat and played in the many colored sands. Soon our interest in scratching in the sand began to wane. We then climbed out of the gully on a rock knoll where we spent some time throwing rocks at various objects in the gully or across a section at whatever objects in throwing distance attracted our boyish attention.

When we tired of the sport of throwing rocks we hied away to a nearby dogwood thicket. Here we climbed the dogwood trees and swung from the top of [one] tree to [the top of another] tree by climbing to the tips of long limbs and causing them to swing in reach of the tips of limbs projecting out from other nearby trees and caught hold of them and climbed squirrel like through the tree tops and repeated the swinging stunt to other trees. We imagined we were squirrels climbing in search of food or dodging enemies. Sometimes we were imitating the wild foxes of the community in climbing from tree to tree and coming to the ground some distance from the first tree climbed in order to throw the chasing dogs off the trail. This was great sport and fine physical exercise for developing strong muscles and endurance.

Right here I have often been asked if this was not a little dangerous for boys. Yes, it was a little dangerous for boys who were a little heavy or clumsy. It was also a little

dangerous for boys whose judgement was poor in estimating distances from one limb to another or the strength of small limbs. Some boys sometimes failed to catch hold of a limb in making a jump from one tree to another or sometimes caught hold of a limb not strong enough to hold their weight. In such cases the boy would make a sudden tumble to mother earth. The trees were not tall and seldom was a boy hurt in such tumbles. Then, too, a few such tumbles were useful in improving the judgement of the tumbling boy.

'Tis the habit of the human mind and muscle to tire of any sport and after a short rest want to try something else. This is what happened here with a bunch of sturdy boys. We sat a while under the dogwoods on the thick covering of leaves and straw discussing the likes and dislikes of boys as they appealed to us. Our thoughts no doubt rambled as we gazed about seeking other things of interest or other worlds to conquer. Nearby was a large thicket of small pine saplings from two to four inches in diameter, tall, slender and unusually limber. These tall slender saplings presented themselves as a new world to conquer in the sport of climbing. One long wishful look at the saplings was enough. The stampede started en masse.

Soon seven lusty lads were suspended from ten to twenty feet above the ground clinging to slender saplings with legs and arms and swaying back and forth in a gentle breeze. The few limbs on the saplings were small and weak. When a boy climbed to a few limbs they were of little assistance in holding to the sapling. Only a gentle pull would cause the limbs to snap off close to the body of the sapling. One boy tried resting a portion of his weight on a limb and fell twelve or fifteen feet to the ground bumping the breath for his body. Two or three other boys had to slide quickly down saplings to the ground and roll him to "bring him to." It took lots of rolling and flank tickling to fill him again with the climbing spirit.

Soon a slender sapling bent under the weight of one of the heaviest boys giving him a gentle but unexpected ride to the ground. Immediately the other six boys had to try the same stunt by climbing to the top of a sapling and swinging off causing it to bend to the ground. Pretty soon the largest boy in the crowd climbed twenty or more feet up a sapling and swung off to ride to the ground. Instead of bending to the ground the sapling bent over a little ways and stopped, holding the boy suspended fifteen feet in the air. He was unable to get his feet back around the sapling. He dreaded the fall to the ground. He became frantic. The boys on the ground encouraged him to hold on until a pile of straw could be placed under him to make his forced landing a little easier. His hands slipped loose before much straw was placed under him. In the fall he swung himself about like a cat and caught on his feet and hands all-fours-like without being hurt. Immediately one of the boys shouted, "PINE BLANK LIKE AN OLD CLUMBSY TOM CAT." With one accord this boy was dubbed "Tom Cat" for the rest of the afternoon.

The climbing and swinging off process continued for a short time. Soon the real art of the stunt was conquered. The desire to climb, swing off and ride to the ground vanished. Again we sat or rolled on the thick covering of straw. We rested as we talked. As we talked we looked around for other stunts. Someone who had seen squirrels jump from one tall sapling to another suggested that we try that too. The suggestion was enough. The

challenge was accepted. Each boy selected a sapling that could be bent over to a second one, the second one to a third one and so on. Then the climbing and scrambling from one sapling to another began. It was a new angle to the same sport. The race was on to see who could climb through the greatest number of saplings before coming to the ground or get the farthest away from the starting point before coming to the ground. Some boys soon tried and came to the ground. Others found themselves out of reach of any other saplings. They had gone up a blind alley so to speak and lost the race.

Within fifteen or twenty minutes all boys had assembled for another rest period and to plan more stunts. After sitting a while several boys lay flat on their backs gazing into the sky. We listened to the wind blowing through the tops of the tall pines and wondered if it sounded like the roaring of the waves at sea. Presently some birds flew high in the tops of the tall pines. One boy expressed a wish that he could fly like birds as well as climb like squirrels. "Shucks," said another boy, "You can't even climb like a squirrel. You fell twice this afternoon, once from a dogwood and once from a pine sapling." The joking continued [for] sometime. Each boy who had fallen during the climbing, jumping or sliding stunts in the gully or in the climbing stunts in the trees was razed about his clumsiness. Such boys were called "sissies, babies, weaklings," and advised to stay at home. They were warned never to go into deep gullies or climb trees.

We continued to lie on the ground. Soon one of the boys saw a buzzard sailing high above us and called our attention to the ease with which the old bird was sailing through the air. Watching the old buzzard sailing, seemingly without effort, started a discussion of flying and raised the question why can't boys fly. This reminded one of the older boys of the efforts of a boy named Bill Kelly who lived [for] a few years where the Cora Baptist Church is now located, who while lying on his back one day, watching an old buzzard sail, had gotten a desire to fly. Said he, "Bill lay for a long time watching the buzzard and trying to think up some way to fly like the buzzard. Bill finally decided that he could beat the buzzard flying if he only had a pair of wings. Then he thought a long time about how he might get the wings. He looked around for material for use in making some wings that could be fitted on his arms. Soon he found some large feed sacks and some thin boards. He then decided to make a pair of wing frames by using the light boards and cover them with the feed sacks. He went to work out behind the barn where no one would know what he was doing. The frames were made large, strong and light. They were then covered with the feed sacks. Arm fittings were then sewed on the wings so they could be easily fitted on his arms for flying. Handles were fixed to the frame of the wings so Bill could turn the wings in the right direction to suit the wind for sailing fast or slow like the buzzard changed the position of his wings to regulate speed or change directions. When the wings had been completed, Bill put them on his arms and ran around for a while to get accustomed to using them. He then decided that he could fly if he could get a good start by jumping from a high place. He looked around for a convenient place. He saw the top of the nearby barn. With difficulty he carried one wing at a time to the top of the barn. He then fitted the wings on his arms and walked back and forth a few times on the top of the barn roof so as to get his balance in taking a running start for a sail off the highest end of the roof. When he thought he knew exactly how to make the start, the wings were set in the right position. He ran the length of the barn and sailed off."

“Poor Bill! As he left the roof one wing turned edge-ways and the other one flat-ways. This turned Bill over like a duck having one wing shot off while flying high above the hunter. Bill tumbled to the ground quicker than a crippled duck and struck much harder, dazing him and bumping the breath from his body. He lay still, he knew not how long. He then wiggled a little, caught his breath, breathed a little and opened his blood-shot eyes. An old buzzard was sailing high over him. Whether it was the one from which he had gotten the idea of flying, he never did know. Bill looked at the old buzzard. He raised his legs to see if they were broken. He shed his wings and found his arms still useable. As he rolled over to rise, the old buzzard flapped his wings several times. Bill watched the flopping process and they by way of consoling himself said, ‘If I hadn’t a forgot to flop I’d now be a flying.’” As soon as the laughing quieted, philosophical Henry said, “Bill didn’t forget to flop. All he did was a shore ‘nough FLOP.” “Correct,” chimed the boys.

In rolling around among the small saplings while discussing Bill’s poor judgment and how it must have been improved by the impact of the sudden stop of his flying experience, a long legged boy stuck his feet high upon a sapling. A nearby boy chided him by saying, “Get those big feet and long legs down from that sapling. It’s all you can do to climb a tree head’ard. You know you can’t climb it heel’ards.” This remark contained a new thought. The boys all acted like perfectly natural boys by accepting the challenge. Instantly each one was doing his best to climb a slender sapling heel’ards.

Every boy worked hard until his “wind” was exhausted. No one had gotten his head more than a foot or so above the ground. All rested and talked about the new stunt. A second effort was made with no better results. A second rest was taken. Five of the boys gave the stunt a third trial while Walter and I looked on. The results were a little better. Another rest was taken. After resting four boys spit in their hands saying: “This is the fourth and last trial.” Brother Henry joined Walter and me in watching the other four boys climb. The four boys soon exhausted their “wind” getting no higher than before. They dropped to the ground saying; “It just can’t be done. No one can climb these slick saplings heel’ards. Not even a squirrel could do it with a dog about to catch him.”

All was quiet for a moment. Walter, who was noted for his witty remarks said, “Don’t know about that. John ain’t been a watching you fellers fail for noth’in. He’s a cautious coon at climbing. I’ll bet he can do it.”

Upon hearing this remark from Walter, all the boys declared anew the stunt could not be done. “Why,” said they, “John only got a foot or so at two trials and was afraid to make a third trial much less a fourth one like we did.” Then the gang dared me to try the stunt again. After this razzing quieted down, I cautiously climbed a small sapling with head up a distance of ten or twelve feet. This started more razzing and remarks that I had misunderstood the situation as evidenced by my climbing with head up. Now this climbing with head up was done for two reasons, namely: to observe the exact movement of all muscles in climbing head’ards and to rub all loose bark from the tree, before trying to climb heel’ards.

The gang continued to razz Walter about his “Cautious Climbing Coon.” The gang razed Walter until I felt sorry for him and decided I must climb the sapling backward higher than two or three feet or betray Walter’s confidence in his “Cautious Climbing Coon.” No, I couldn’t let a friend down like that. So I spit in my hands a few times, rubbed them together, reversed my position and started climbing up the sapling heel’ards.

Soon I was six feet up the tree and stopped to catch a little more breath and rest a little. Then the boys all began to razz Walter by telling him they knew the stunt could not be done. Said they, “Your cautious old climbing coon’s given out a ready. He’s about to drop now.” Walter yelled back, “He’s not gwinta drop. He’ll climb that sapling or bust.” At this time having rested a little, on up the sapling the cautious climbing old coon went as high as the loose bark had been rubbed off. Another rest stop was made. The boys ceased razzing Walter about his “Cautious climbing old coon.” Instead of coming down as had been planned, an effort was made to go still higher. Suddenly the loose bark under my hands, arms and legs slipped. Down came the “Cautious climbing old coon” head’ards of course. The head’ards drop was an accidental slip. The gang thought it but a trick of the “cautious climbing coon.”

While making this descent of fifteen feet, more thoughts and visions passed through my head than ordinarily would have within a month. I saw myself dead, with a broken neck and a “busted” head. Then a small wooden casket containing my body was placed near an open grave with a crowd standing nearby. The gang was all there. All was quiet now. No razzing, no laughing. How strange, thought I. Never were those boys quiet before. Then they acted perfectly normal making me feel better. One said, “I knew he’d climb it or break his neck.” “Well”, said another, “He did one and nearly did the other.”

The last thing remembered when the bark slipped was to send out a little nerve message along a nerve system to hands, feet, arms and legs, “to hug the sapling tight. It doesn’t matter if arms, hands, feet, legs and breast are burned, blistered and skinned, save the neck and head.” Evidently the message was delivered on schedule time. The sapling was hugged. The body was stopped with the hair of the head touching the straw on the ground. Breath came back. The heart beat again. Circulation started. The feet were let loose and flipped sideways to the ground. Hands were loosed. They were red hot but not blistered. The boy lay limp on the ground. The excitement was over.

The game now dubbed “SAPS AND SAPLINGS” was gone to come again no more.

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## CANE GRINDING

All the articles ever written about Cane Grinding were in the superlative degree. We Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough use to wonder why this was not true of the Cane Grinding at the Diamond Homestead. The grinding period during the first season was short because the cane crop in our community was short. Nothing seemed to work in the

superlative degree. The second season was also short. Not much wood was hauled for firing the furnace. Only a short time was required for two small boys and Cam and the Cart to haul all the cane to the mill yard. The third year the situation began to change. The quantity of cane to be cut and ground was two or three times larger than any previous season. An entire week was spent in hauling wood for firing the furnace. Several days were spent in stripping, cutting and hauling cane from the field to the mill.

About the first of November the grinding started. Along about the third week in October a young lady had been sent to our community to teach [at] the little country school in the community housed in a little log cabin. School was composed of approximately fifteen little county urchins. The teacher was affable and did her best to make a good impression. She took her work seriously, going to much trouble to impress the community of her interest in the welfare of all her "Scholars." She was very solicitous with the parents in trying to obtain their aid in the education of their children. She called the school her "Academy" for the scholarly effect. On the afternoon of the second day of Cane Grinding the teacher stopped at the Cane Grinding on her way home. Father invited her to drink some juice. The invitation was accepted and lots of tasty juice drunk. She was then invited to taste some of the candied foam settled on the edges of the big cooling trough. After having eaten a goodly quantity of this essence of sweetness she engaged in conversation with Father who was looking after the boiling syrup. Soon Father asked how she liked the juice and candied foam. She replied with dignified gestures in a scholarly tone of voice as follows: "My dear Mr. Diamond, they are the most sweetest and most nicest thing I ever saw or tasted." Then she added by way of emphasis: "This candied foam is most exquisitely delicious." This reply attracted the attention of three of the Seven Sons who were on duty at the cane grinding at the time. During the next few days it was a three way race with them to see which one could make use of the word "MOST" and word "EST" the greater number of times in describing things and happenings in and about the cane mill yard. Soon our work became the "Most hardest" or the "Most easiest." Of course, each boy thought he had the "most hardest" job and the other boy has the "most easiest" job. Ordinary frontier boys became the "most prankish" boys and played the "the most prankish pranks" in the "most prankish" ways the ingenuity of non-academic boys could think of. There's no way of telling what sort of pranks might have happened if the boys had been a little academic. From this afternoon Cane Grinding at the Diamond Homestead was in the superlative degree. All words at all descriptive of the affair began with "MOST" or ended with "EST." Sometimes it required the use of both "MOST and "EST" to express the true meaning. The new teacher had really changed the Cane Grinding at the Diamond Homestead from the frontier class to the city class.

The teacher continued to visit the Cane Grinding at the Diamond Homestead often, and to talk in the same scholarly style. She continued to use "Most" and "Est" more often than any of three un-academic boys could. When Father invited her to visit the Cane Grinding as often as she liked, her reply was: "Yes, Mr. Diamond, I shall certainly avail myself of this most glorious invitation. I think it will be the 'Most properest' thing for me to do." Two or three little boys working nearby in feeding the mill, stacking cane or wood, looked at each other and giggled a little, but said nothing. The teacher continued to talk to Father. Soon the boys picked up enough of the conversation between the teacher and

Father to understand she was soliciting Father's aid and comfort in helping her to "PUT UP WITH" the four of his Seven Sons numbered among her "SCHOLARS" at the ACADEMY. As a matter of principle and fair play we four boys didn't like this. It smacked like a little too much "Reporting" to Father.

Before the "Most Properest" teacher got away from the Cane Grinding this afternoon she had managed to clean off the top of the barrel holding the waste skimmed from the boiling syrup on her long trailing skirt unsuited for Cane Grinding wear. Pretty soon she tired of standing and sat down on a box covered with sticky candied syrup, and almost tore away a large piece of her clothing when she arose to go. When she left she was the "Most Stickiest" and probably the "Most Sweetest" teacher ever in the community.

On another occasion when the "Most Properest" teacher was at the Cane Grinding to eat her quota of good drinks and sweet eats and incidentally to submit her "Report" to Father and solicit aid in enabling her to "Put up with" the four of his progeny who were among her fifteen "SCHOLARS", she had her fair tresses fixed in the fashion often worn by "Spinsters School Marms." This made an inviting place for yellow jackets to make contacts. It wasn't long before she was stooped over the cooling trough eating her share of the "Most Sweetest" thing she ever saw or tasted. While in this position the poor gluttonous bugs had eaten more syrup than their slender wings could get away with and of course landed in her fair tresses. In her effort to free the intruders she fingered one of them at the wrong end and had her first lesson on the stinging ability of such bugs. She jumped and jiggled a little from the pain of the sting. When this was over she discovered a bug had slipped down beside her collar on the inside. She reached to free this bug. In mashing it, the sting was in the neck. She admitted it was the "Most Painfulest" of the two. The teacher visitor was now well stuck-up and well stung-up. She had almost ruined half a dozen dresses at the Cane Grinding, been stung and caused to act undignified because of the pain, her fair tresses given an unkempt and disheveled appearance and worst of all, laughed at by several grown people right before two or three of her "SCHOLARS." This was too much for a dignified scholarly teacher. Her visits were fewer from now on and her opportunities for "Reporting" to Father and soliciting his aid, dwindled down to normal. Father was told she quit coming for her juice and foam because he was not polite enough to pick the bugs from her tresses. No wonder she took offense when he stood there and let get a finger and her neck stung, when he could have so easily pulled the bugs from her fair tresses and attractive neck. Father admitted he was glad she had stopped reporting to him so often and if the bugs had caused this, they had done one good deed.

Cane Grinding at the Diamond Homestead was a stern reality of cold bare facts and not an imaginary fantasy of sweetness. It was, unlike the Cane Grindings anyone ever read of in the newspapers or farm journals in that Cane Grinding at our place contained lots of the "Most Hardest" work along with the sweetness so often written about in the superlative degree from start to finish. Everything at Cane Grinding isn't sweetness in the superlative degree. Cane Grinding has its share of sourness that might too be expressed in the superlative degree. To the Seven Sons Cane Grinding at our place meant sixteen hours of hard work during the grinding season with barely time over to eat three square



meals a day plus what cane juice we could drink, packed down with a quart or so of candied foam scraped from the cooling trough. Little time was available for fun and frolic except what could be sandwiched in with the hard work and drudgery we had to do. Fortunately for us, we were always able to get a little fun, frolic and fascination out of the most trying tasks we had to perform. We were just boys, ordinary boys like others living on a frontier. Thus we liked the manliest jobs and not the sissiest ones. There's no challenge in a sissy job. Every boy likes a CHALLENGE spelled with BIG capitals. Cane Grinding to us was a CHALLENGE and was accepted as such. That's why we could do the job.

The following is a partial list of the various and sundry sorts of work that must be done in a cane mill yard during Cane Grinding.

1. Great stacks of wood must be cut and hauled to the mill before grinding begins.
2. The fodder or leaves must be stripped from the cane in the field and the cane cut.
3. The cane must be loaded on wagons or carts and hauled to the mill.
4. The cane must be stacked near the mill from where it is fed by hand between the hard rollers.
5. The pomace must be removed from the mill every few minutes and stacked out of the way.
6. A supply of wood must be stacked at the furnace each day for feeding to the flames.
7. Horses must be changed every hour or so, depending upon the size of the cane and the number fed in the mill at a time.
8. Horses must be fed and watered three times each day.
9. If the mill is not located so gravity will carry the juice to the cooking pan, it must be carried by hand in buckets.
10. The fire in the furnace must be looked after and kept at the right heat.
11. The boiling syrup must be skimmed almost continuously if the finished product is to be of the best quality.
12. The syrup must be measured and put in barrels, cans or other airtight containers while it is hot and sealed immediately.
13. The mill must be cleaned and oiled as often as needed, at least once each day.
14. The water skimmed from the cooking syrup must be removed each day before it ferments, sours and forms a poisonous substance. This waste is splendid hog feed if fed before it becomes a deadly poison.
15. A supply of clean water and clean cloths must be kept handy at all times for keeping everything touching the syrup clean.
16. Dozens of small drudgery emergency jobs are ever demanding attention and must be done during the day. Such work is assigned to no one but must be done by whoever is available when the emergency arises.

Each of the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough, at the right age best to perform the different jobs to be done at a Cane Grinding, took his turn in doing each and every task here mentioned plus any emergency job occurring when he was close to it. Each of the Seven Sons learned all the techniques and all the art that goes with each job from the planting of the cane to the sealing of the syrup.

One of the hardest jobs was to cut and haul great stacks of the fattest pinewood to be found in the big woods and stack it near the furnace. This sort of pine was always the smuttiest and the hardest to find and handle. Hauling this wood by a pair of boys with Cam and the Cart would make the blackest boys in the community. It was done at a time when wild persimmons were ripe and possums were fat. This was come compensation. It gave some sweetness along with the sourness. Especially was this so if a trusty dog was able to “Tree” a fat possum occasionally. Then a visit to the potato patch and then, oh, then, the joy of eating baked possum blended with sweet potatoes sort o’ candied in luscious brown gravy. Talk about “Most Exquisite Deliciousness,” the boys would have it as compensation for cutting and hauling the smutty fat pinewood.

Good old baked possum and tatters simmering in a pan  
Tis plenty good a’nough for king or common man  
Oh perfect joy and bliss no one can e’re describe it  
Cause there’s nothing in this old world zactly like it.

Tis a delicious dinner full o’ fascination and joy  
Tis an earthly paradise for a hungry working boy  
Tis tastier far than a sweet sixteen’s first kiss  
Tis earthly pleasure blended with heavenly bliss

The stripping of the fodder or leaves from the cane was one of the sour spots of Cane Grinding. The sharp saw-like edges of the leaves would sometimes make painful cuts on a boy’s hands if the leaves were permitted to slip though the hands. After the cane had been stripped of all the leaves and the tops cut off it had to be hauled to the grinding lot. This was quite a task, especially so if it had to be hauled by one boy and Cam and the Cart. It would require several days to haul cane enough to make five or six hundred gallons of syrup, the usual number made each year at the Diamond Homestead. However, this was not considered a job of sourness because of the riding back and forth and the working with animals. All boys like to work animals of any sort from billy goats to the biggest mules.

One of the sourest tasks to be done in grinding cane at the old time small farms was “Starting the Mill ‘Way Before Day when the Chickens Begin to Crow in the Mornings.” Probably the bitterest thing about the entire Cane Grinding was the getting out of a warm bed Way Before Day when the thermometer registered ten degrees below freezing. When the clock struck THREE A.M. we would hear Father’s well known call, “Get up and start the mill quick.” Then he would add, “Try to hurry the grinding along a little so the cooking will not have to be slowed down during the day.” Can the reader imagine how the average boy felt to get out of a warm bed at this early hour when all the damp places were filled with ice and be met with a northwestern wind coming across the big hollow beside the cane mill yard, blowing icy blasts at forty miles per hour? This wasn’t sweetness. It was different from the “Most sweetest thing ever seen or tasted.” This is what made Cane Grinding at the Diamond Homestead a “Stern reality of cold bare facts.”

Usually the boy who would start the mill at three A.M. would have a small fire near the feeding station to warm his hands to prevent them from freezing in handling the cold cane. On cold windy mornings the smoke from a fire made of pitch pine knots would soon smoke the boy as black as soot itself. It would require an hour of hard scrubbing with hot water and the use of both soap and sand to admit the boy to the Academy of the Dignified Educator on account of racial restrictions. This scrubbing process is mentioned because the boy starting the mill so early would work until all the others had eaten breakfast and were ready to take over the work. This boy would then go to breakfast. After breakfast he would have to cleanup and go to school. Because of the scrubbing required for admittance he seldom ever got to school on time. Usually two boys worked during the forenoon and went to school during the afternoon and the two working during the afternoon attended school during the forenoon. This was an arrangement made by Father and the teacher to keep the attendance high enough to prevent the closing of the school because of the low attendance. In those pioneer days an Academy like ours was closed if the average daily attendance was below ten "Scholars." Think of such a requirement in pioneer days on a frontier to keep a school from closing. Very few of the larger accredited High Schools of the most modern school systems have as many as ten real "Scholars" in them, even now with all the advancements made during sixty years of improvements.

Usually after Cane Grinding had been under way a few days everything on the place would get pretty well stuck up with juice and syrup as well as each person visiting the grinding yard. Every gate latch near the mill would somehow get well smeared with syrup and candied foam so that every visitor entering the place would get his hands sweetened and have them stuck up as he entered. Soon one of the boys remarked, "Every visitor entering the cane grinding yard has to Stick Up his hands and keep them from [his] pockets." It didn't take long for visitors to understand the meaning of "Stick 'm Up" and to know why they should be kept from pockets.

For a number of years the only cane mill in the neighborhood was at the Diamond Homestead. People came from miles around to visit the Cane Grinding and to drink juice. The great number of visitors gave the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough plenty of opportunities to sandwich in along with a lot of work all sorts of boyish pranks. This was a good place to play any and all sorts of freakish pranks because people who visit Cane Grindings are out for fun and lots of it. It was a splendid place to study people and observe how gullible and conceited is the average person. It is surprising how many people will sit down on any sort of improvised seat without looking to see if it is covered with sticky candied syrup or with a cup of waste skimmed from the cooking syrup. The more conceited the more gullible is a truism the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough learned in watching and observing visitors at Cane Grindings. It isn't always necessary to pour candied syrup over an improvised seat and then place a thinly woven sack or a thinly woven piece of cloth over it to prevent the syrup from showing to get a conceited person to sit down and smear the sticky substance on his clothes. It isn't always necessary to cover a tack or a crooked pin with a cloth to entice a conceited person, often known as a Biblical mule to feel the punch of a sharp tack or pin. Many a person has sat down on an improvised seat in the cane mill yard at the Diamond Homestead when the top of the

seat was well covered with candied syrup having the sticking qualities of glue and sit there permitting the syrup to penetrate the clothing until when he got up he almost left a large piece of his clothing. Of course, the sticky syrup was spilled there by accident and no one had time to wash it off before it partially dried.

Yellow jackets were plentiful in the woods near the cane mill yard around the edges of our spring branch and in the large hollow directly north from the mill yard. As soon as the odors of boiling syrup began to waft away down the hill into the valley, swarms of these pesky bugs would come to the mill yard and feed on juice and syrup. They would not sting in the yard unless they were mashed or otherwise accidentally hurt. When Irl was a little fellow three years old while playing near the syrup cooking he accidentally stepped on some of these yellow jackets that had gotten to stuck-up with syrup to fly. Naturally Irl put on a splendid hopping exhibition. Yellow jackets was too long [of] a word for him to use very well. He named the pesky bugs "Hop Jackets." After that they were often referred to as hop jackets. Many a barefoot child and a few large barefoot boys stepped on hop jackets by accident and put on an exhibition of the hopping stunt. Such exhibitions were not boyish pranks. They often caused much laughter among visitors not accustomed to such events in the cane mill yard.

In a frontier neighborhood it was customary for almost all the large boys and many men to go barefooted all the summer and late into the fall, usually until cold weather. A number of such boys and men would visit the Cane Grinding in going to or returning from their work in the logging [business] being carried on in the community. These big barefooted boys would stroll from the juice barrel at the mill to the juice tub at the cooking pan, drinking a supply of juice at each place. Then they would visit the cooking trough for candied foam with which to settle the juice.

One day by accident a large number of yellow jackets had their wings singed over a paper fire. They dropped to the ground and proceeded to crawl all over the yard. They would sting if stepped on by bare feed. This was true of these bugs when they got syrup on their wings so they couldn't fly. One afternoon three or four of those big barefoot fellows stopped by the cane grinding by accident just before a large number of hop jackets had the misfortune of having their glossy wings singed. They were crawling thick and fast when the boys came in. The boys were soon full of juice and enthusiasm and talking like wild fire. Into a bunch of crawling hop jackets they walked and the hopping exhibition was on. Some of the bugs having syrup on their wings to make them stick, got between the big long toes. This was the "Most Hoppingest and Jiggingest" contest of the season. The feet covered so much of the crawling space until it was an easy matter for a foot to mash new bugs during the contest, thus prolonging it beyond the average length of such contests. One of the boys described them as "The Most Stickiest. The Most Stingingest and the Most Hurtingest" bugs ever stepped on and the "Doggonest, Hottest bugs ever trapped between toes."

The crowd was treated to a three way jigging contest. Everybody laughed a plenty including the contestants. Of course, they laughed after the show was over. When the laughing subsided the crowd extended a vote of thanks to the contestants for the

entertainment given so forcefully and freely. The crowd then took a vote to determine which of the contestants had won the contest. After the vote was taken the winner was called upon to explain both the technique and the art of the winning. His explanation was short. Said he, "There wasn't no technique or no art to it, 'Twas jis cause them stinging hop jackets got stuck twixt toes on both feet at the same time." The explanation was accepted by an outburst of roaring laughter. Before the boys left they jokingly admitted they'd been "Sweetened Up, Stuck Up, and Jumped Up" not once but several times without being "Shot At" a single time.

These hop jackets sometimes late in the fall on warm days would get to be a perfect nuisance. The hardworking prankish Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough had to make good use of their presence in order to get some compensation for having to be pestered with them all day. The circumstances constrained the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough to become the "Most Prankish" hard working little lads on the Long Florida Frontier. The old law of self-preservation just had to work for the lads whether they were academic or illiterate. That's the way the old FIRST Law of the Land works. Soon each of the Seven Sons was armed with a small piece of a springy twig ten inches long and a little less than a fourth of an inch in diameter. The small end of the little twig had been split two inches and the thinner side of slip [was] cut one fourth of an inch shorter than the other side. Each side was then trimmed on the inside to a wedge shape for half an inch from the ends. The instrument was named 'pick o' flipper.' It was used to pick up and flip hop jackets after they had been made sticky with syrup so they would stick against whatever objects they might be flipped against. Each boy soon learned how to select a tough twig of the right springiness and how to trim it for the best use. Each boy soon learned how to pick up and flip a sticky hop jacket ten feet and land it in curly tresses or on an enticing neck and everyone at the Cane Grinding [would] assume it was just another case of another hop jacket's getting stuck-up so it couldn't fly straight and by accident landed where it wasn't wanted and by accident left it's trademark behind.

The Academic School Marm was not the only trainer of pioneer urchins to feel the stamp brand of a sticky hop jacket. Two years after the Academic School Marm moved on to other and greater, we hope, not greener, fields of academic usefulness the county school officials sent a man teacher to try his hand at "Putting Up With" the little group of un-academic minded "Hardheads" making up the school. He was withal a good fellow and tried to do his best for all his "Scholars" as he called his urchins. He was very solicitous about the assistance of all the parents called by him "His patrons." He was a regular Ichabod, being full six feet and three inches tall, and slender. He came to the community only a week or two before the Cane Grinding at the Diamond Homestead was in full swing. Of course, he, like the young lady two years before, had to come to the Cane Grinding to solicit Father's aid to enable him better to "Put Up With" five of the Little Diamonds in the Rough numbered among his "Scholars," and incidentally to drink juice and eat foam from the syrup trough.

During his third visit to the Cane Grinding we learned he too had early taken up the habit of reporting to Father. This was learned of course by accident. While the "Professor" as he was called in the community, when as a matter of fact he was only a "Wire Grass

School Keeper", and Father were standing at the cooking pan talking as Father was busy attending to the boiling syrup, one of the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough stalked up unnoticed near enough to detect the direction of the wind. Not one of the Seven liked this reporting business. It was considered unfair to Fathers and sons alike, unprofessional, un-academic and calculated to accomplish nothing except to uncover and magnify the "Professor's" weaknesses. Accordingly it was decided without much discussion that a few old time pranks and probably a few new ones should be played on the professor as opportunities were presented, or could be made.

The next afternoon when the dignified young man with long hair and scholarly appearance came to Cane Grinding, a large block seat was waiting for him. The trap had been set and baited with what he liked best, a restful looking place to sit down upon and lots of sweet foam from the cooling trough. "The Boys" had learned during three weeks that the professor's chief job at school was to sit down in a white hickory chair behind a small table upon arrival at school in the morning and remain in that position until the end of the school day. He wouldn't even go out among the beautiful trees surrounding the cabin to eat his dinner, but ate it from his basket on the table before him. "The Boys" had his correct number. That's why the trap was prepared as it was.

The big block, thirty inches high, sawed from a large log, was placed early in the day and a square cut from a loosely woven corn sack spread over it. It was placed so any one sitting on it could lean back against a post supporting the shelter over the cooking pan. During the day several different people tried the seat and commented upon its restfulness. It was near Father's high box seat so the professor could be comfortable while making his report to Father on the state of "The Boys." During the day a large cotton flannel cloth used by Father in cleaning and drying cans just before filling them with syrup had been folded into a six inch square containing not less than a dozen folds so it would hold heat and plenty of hot sticky syrup and candied foam. When the professor was seen across the hollow two hundred yards away coming toward the Cane Grinding the folded flannel was brought into use to clean and dry some cans for use a little later when Father began to measure and can the day's run. Without much effort it was accidentally dropped into the boiling syrup and left there long enough to get heated and well saturated. It was then picked up by means of a hook and carefully placed on the block under the thinly woven square cut from the sack. All this was done so carefully and calmly until no one saw the flannel placed.

As was expected upon entering the gate the professor got his hands stuck-up. He spoke to the crowd near the gate and commented about the stick-up at the gate. He greeted Father as was his custom and immediately turned toward the seat and commented thusly, "This is such an inviting restful looking seat I believe I shall sit down here and rest a few minutes before drinking my quart of juice and eating my quota of that sweet candied foam I like so well. You know, teaching the way I teach is so awful tiresome and wearing on muscles and nerves I'm tired plum-out by the time school closes." As he finished commenting he sat flat upon the flannel well saturated with hot syrup. He didn't move until the syrup had soaked through the sack and all his clothing and a sort of burning sensation forced exertion enough to pull the seat of his pants and the square of the sack

from the block. The heat must have created a rather peculiar sensation. When he straightened up and looked around, the sack was still sticking to the seat of his best suit. Everyone in the mill yard, including several women visitors who had come to Cane Grinding to meet their children as they came from school, roared with laughter. Father looked around and pulled the sack from the pants. He then laid it aside and picked up the folded flannel. It was plain [to see] the flannel had been left on the block by someone in a hurry and the sack had been thrown over it without the one throwing it there knowing the flannel was saturated with boiling syrup. Before the laughing was over, the professor, in order to keep from indicating too much how he must have felt, walked to the juice barrel and began to drink juice and joined the laughing crowd in conversation about his accident. After drinking all the juice he wanted, he walked with short steps to the cooling trough where he proceeded to fill up on foam. It was easy to tell from the way he walked [that] he was well stuck-up. No doubt he had on the “Stickiest Pants” he had ever worn.

When he stooped over at the cooling trough his head of long hair presented an inviting place for a few sticky hop jackets. About this time some sensational sport was started near the gate drawing the attention of all workers and visitors. When the excitement was over three or four sticky hop jackets had gotten tangled in the professor’s long strangling wisps of hair. They were not detected until the juice had been settled with half a quart of foam. When they were detected, long fingers began to fish them from the wisps of hair. Then a finger was stung and the jigging was on with a pair of long winding legs not withstanding the sticky pants. In the jigging the other bugs were forgotten. Presently one got under the high collar and then to use a slang expression commonly heard; “Somebody got it in the neck.” Then the real jigging was on and the laughing roared. The professor had had plenty to drink, plenty to eat, been well stuck-up, painfully stung-up, had given a free jigging exhibition and furnished the laughs for the crowd. The Cane Grinding had one of its jolliest afternoons. All visitors had been wonderfully entertained, and were profuse in expressing gratitude to Father and the professor for the good time. As the crowd left the Cane Grinding it was noticed the professor walked with short steps and not his usual academic strides. The professor continued to come to Cane Grinding for his quart of juice and quota of foam. He was always careful about sitting upon any objects in the cane mill yard. However, on several occasions sticky hop jackets would accidentally get caught in his long scholarly hair, and as they were being removed did their stinging stunt on fingers or neck and set the long striding legs in action. The professor’s reports to Father were now few and far between. Soon he learned better how to understand and deal with un-academic frontier folks and boys. His initiation into the order was well worth the effort.

On one occasion Father had a hired man working at the cane mill who wore a large pair of brogan shoes without socks. The tops of the shoes leaned outward from his ankles on each side and at the back over his heels. This made inviting hiding places for sticky hop jackets, whose wings had been singed or rolled in syrup. Because of the man’s long pants hanging down over his brogans it required a week or more with two or three boys watching and waiting for the coveted opportunity to witness a mono-jigging exhibition by one who really coveted the opportunity to witness a mono-jigging exhibition by one who really knew how to do the stunt in rapid rhyme. Finally late one afternoon about quitting

time the man sat down on a block and stuck one foot far out behind the block upon which he was sitting. The boy on watch at the time was quick to observe the situation and of course immediately had to walk rapidly by the big shoe to look after something that had to be attended too at that moment. Of course, as he passed the shoe a number of hop jackets sucking to a little spilled syrup were made to fly from the ground and two of them, having eaten a lot of syrup and gotten a little of it stuck upon their wings, accidentally landed in the brogan and tumbled down beside the ankle. The man felt the crawling or tumbling sensation and jerked his foot to the front and in doing so mashed one of the stinky bugs. It left its trademark and the fastest jigging spell of the season was on. The man jumped and kicked, jigged and yelled, all the time trying to untie a contrary string that wouldn't untie. He then tried to break the string with no success. Suddenly the second bug left its trademark on an ankle. The jigging and jumping began anew, faster than at first. Finally the shoe was jerked from the foot with the string still holding, and the crown still roaring. The man emptied two mashed hop jackets from the shoe into the fiery furnace remarking as he did, "I'll get even with two yellow devils. You gave me hell while it lasted. Now I'll show you how it feels." This gave the crowd another laugh equal to the one roaring forth while the hopping and jigging were in full swing.

The thing that gave the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough the greatest thrill was to have a conceited foppish fellow bring his best girl friend to Cane Grinding to get her really and truly sweetened up and instead get himself really and truly stuck-up, stung-up and be made to jump and jig a free exhibition right before his best girl friend. This was a little prank that every visitor who ever came to Cane Grinding was delighted to see. Of course, they never knew how such things happened. Yet, occasionally they happened and when they did everybody enjoyed the sport and fun. On one occasion a happy, gullible and conceited young fellow brought his best girl friend to Cane Grinding to show himself and her off a little before working boys and visitors. His loud mouth and long nose were into everything tasteable, talkable, or smellable. Attention was what he wanted and he was getting it by loud and boisterous talking, gulping cup after cup of juice first at the juice barrel, at the mill and then at the cooking pan. Then he would pack the juice with candied foam scraped from the straining cloth over the cooling trough.

He joked and razzed at every worker and visitor on the place and did almost all the laughing himself. Finally in the excitement caused by his loud boisterous remarks the easy seat was fixed for him with plenty of hot sticky syrup in the folded flannel hidden by a loosely woven sack, without anyone on the yard ever suspecting a trap was being set for the gullible Biblical mule. When he had about run out of words and wisecracks things quieted down and every worker was busy, the young man looked around and jokingly remarked; "Well, I guess I might as well rest a little while since everyone else is resting or at work." He then sat flat on the folded flannel. The hot syrup penetrated all his clothing immediately. He jumped up smarting a little from the hot syrup in his pants and with the sack sticking to the seat of his Sunday Suit. He looked crest fallen. To add to his saddened look his girl friend pulled the sack from the seat of his pants. From the sound made in jerking the sticky sack from its location one would think the seat of the pants was ripped out with the sack. Everyone yelled and roared with laughter. The young man



showed by his appearance [that] he was in a pitiful plight. His wilted look told exactly how he felt. Later philosophical Henry remarked:

“The young man was evidently thinking about what he had to sit on while riding six miles home in an open buggy pulled by a slow plow-mule.”

The young man tried to be brave and endure his plight without complaining. He ceased to pour forth great sluices of nonsense about everything in the mill yard. His Sunday pants were too sticky to feel right. It wasn't long e're a sticky bug accidentally flew against his clean shaven neck and slid beneath his stiff collar to do the stinging stunt. He hopped regardless of sticky pants but with caution no doubt for good reasons. Everyone in the mill yard roared with laughter at his hopping, and jiggling maneuvers in freeing the sticky bug. The young man had now played all the parts of a young gullible smart aleck full of conceit and had succeeding admirably in ruining himself. He was now ready to go home sadder but wiser than when he sat flat upon the folded flannel and ruined his Sunday Pants.

One of the most laughable incidents ever to occur at Cane Grinding at the Diamond Homestead during the days when at least three or four of the Seven Sons were workers, there occurred one afternoon immediately after two of the boys had come from the small one-teacher school in the community. The incident was not a prank of any boy or group of boys, but was just a little innocent incident that could happen around such a Cane Grinding almost any time. It is related here to show how prankish boys often get credit for happenings that are merely accidental and never done with any intentions of playing an innocent prank of anyone.

As the two boys entered the mill yard and were approaching the cooking pan near where Father was looking after the boiling syrup two or three yellow jackets flew directly into the face of one of the boys. At the same time Father backed up to his high box seat by the furnace to sit down. As the bugs flew into the boy's face the boy did the perfectly natural thing and slapped at the bugs knocking one on them directly under the seat of Father's pants. The bug was mashed and of course, did the stinging stunt without warning. The boy slapping the bug tried to explain that he had not intended to slap the bug where it might sting anyone but was only trying to keep it from stinging him. The other boy also offered an explanation but with no better success than the boy who had slapped the bug from his face. Father, who was smarting from the painful and unexpected sting, rubbed the seat of his pants with one hand and waved the boys toward the gate with the syrup skimmer in the other hand. These words were spoken rather harshly to the boys as they were departing: “Si, you boys get out of here and to the cane patch at once and get to stripping cane. Try to strip the rest of it by dark. Tomorrow I want you to take Cam and the Cart and haul that cane to the mill. I'm surprised. You should know better than to come in here and begin slapping them stinging things under someone first thing. I don't want to see any playing or fooling around in that cane patch. Si, if I do I'll come out there with a frail pole and straighten you out.” By the time Father has finished giving orders the two boys were out of hearing on the way to the cane patch enjoying a wholesome laugh about the incident.

Annual Cane Grindings at the Diamond Homestead were often community social events. This was the only cane mill for a number of years within a radius of many miles. Father would have to grind cane and make syrup for neighbors each year on a toll basis. Seldom did any neighbor produce enough cane to run the mill for more than a day or so. However, this was enough for the family and many friends to spend a day at Cane Grinding, watching the grinding of the cane and the cooking of the syrup, drinking juice, eating candied foam and otherwise enjoying a day's vacation.

These social gatherings continued from three to five weeks each season. It was a season of good eating for working boys to have a share of good things prepared for company. This was the fried chicken and pound cake of Cane Grinding time. And too, each year near the close of the season, socially inclined families having syrup made at the Diamond Mill would want a few gallons boiled into candy late in the afternoon and invite their friends to a Cane Grinding and Candy Pulling. Candy would be pulled until it was as clear as crystal and as hard as icicles. This would be a time when everybody would get stuck-up and candied at the same time. Ordinary cane juice and candied foam would lose all their sweetness sung to the tune, "How Tedious and Tasteless the Hours."

It would often happen that as soon as everyone had tired of pulling candy and eating to overflowing, the older people would gather around the big furnace fire and talk of old times in a reminiscent manner while the younger generation would gather in a corner of the mill yard around a big fire jack, or perhaps at the Diamond residence and entertain themselves by playing various and sundry games popular at that particular time and season. They were always full of life and fun. It was easy for them to entertain themselves. At such Cane Grindings, supper would sometimes be served consisting of newly made syrup, hot biscuits and fried chicken. Usually such Cane Grinding Social affairs were over by ten thirty, because working people rising at three A.M. could not tarry too late.

Such Cane Grinding would be reminders of times often written up in newspapers or farm journals under the title; "AN OLD FASHION CANE GRINDING IN THE OLD SOUTH." Such articles when read by people not familiar with sixteen hours of hard work each day, or with the freezing feeling of getting out of a warm bed at three A. M. and standing three hours in icy winds feeding cold cane to cold steel rollers or felt the stinging trademarks of swarms of yellow jackets frequenting such sweet places, are sometimes made to want to leave the city and live on a farm where they too can enjoy such luxuries. They would expect to enjoy, along with the sweetness of Cane Grinding, fried chicken, tender and juicy, fresh country butter and big fat country biscuits with new made syrup. They would be expected to enjoy baked hams and spotted shoat brindle gravy simmering with baked sweet potatoes "sort a" candied in the process of browning. They would be looking for good old corn bread baked a golden brown, made from fresh water-ground meal from home-grown corn, and turnip greens seasoned with home-made bacon smoked with hickory logs and flavored with a sassafras finish. And too, they would expect plenty of home-made sausage seasoned with herbs from the home garden and cured just right for good eating. For breakfast it would be steaming hot coffee and

griddle cakes stacked high, plastered with fresh butter and pure cane syrup. For deserts, it would be big frosted cakes light and spongy and layer cakes ten stories high flavored with tasty jam and jellies, or perhaps pies made of pumpkins, potatoes or fruits in season.

The period of holding frontier social affairs and playing boyish pranks at Cane Grindings at the Diamond Homestead lasted for more than twenty years, from the time the mill was purchased and the first grinding season was opened until the youngest of the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough went away to attend the State University. During this long period many a pleasant Cane Grinding parties were had and hundreds of boyish pranks played upon workers and visitors in the mill yard. These pranks were all played in fun and never failed to produce plenty of it and roaring laughter from visitors and workers alike. This was probably because no one except the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough ever knew the pranks played were not just accidental happenings.

Before many Cane Grinding seasons had passed the Seven Sons learned the truth of the trite saying, "The more conceited, the more gullible," and made it the basis for prankish fun. Pranks were seldom played upon anyone except conceited gullible greenhorns who needed a few hard sit-downs or social set backs for sobering effects. They were played then only after a cordial invitation had been extended and its acceptance urged. All visitors at Cane Grindings were out for lots of fun and a jolly good time and would have been lonesome at the Diamond Homestead without the boyish pranks. These boyish pranks soon became as much a part of the Cane Grindings as the drinking of juice, the eating of candied foam, fried chicken, tender and juicy, baked ham and spotted shoat brindle gravy with sweet potatoes, or turnip greens and new corn bread dunked in pot licker. It took the two to make the Cane Grindings memorable events for everyone who ever got Stuck Up, Stung Up, Candied Up, Filled Up or made to Jump Up at Cane Grindings at the Diamond Homestead. It took the sweetness of Cane Grindings combined with other good eats blended with innocent boyish pranks all flavored with the Diamond Homestead Style of Florida Frontier hospitality to make Cane Grindings at the Diamond Homestead memorable events like,

"THE OLD FASHIONED CANE GRINDINGS OF THE OLD SOUTH."

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## **Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough**

**POLLING LOG**

[Poling Logs]

**BOYS AND BEAUX**

## POLLING LOGS

[Poling Logs]

From my earliest recollections, the logging business would have a dull season every summer. During this dull period, Father would often haul a few hundred logs from his own land to the Escambia River rather than let the log team remain idle all the summer. These logs were sold to a Mill Company that had the logs floated down the river to the mill in what was called "Log Drives." In this fashion the logs were floated loose in the river and not fastened together in clamps and rafts. The logs were hauled to a landing on the river know as "Gaylor Dead River Landing", because the landing place was on a arm of the river that some years before had been what is called "An Ox Bow Loop", before freshets or high water cut a new channel and left the loop cut off from the main river. The landing place got its name from Rix Gaylor, an early Spanish settler.

One of the stipulations of the mill company buying logs on the river was that the man selling the logs would roll them into the main river approximately once a month, directly ahead of the mill company's log drive coming down the river. Sometimes when landing room was scarce the logs would be rolled into the water and kept in a closed boom in a cove or in an arm of the river something like the dead river into which Father's logs were placed, until the mill company notified the logger to put his logs into the main river on a certain date. The number of logs to be polled [poled] from the dead river landing into the main river each month varied according to the distance they were hauled and the number of teams hauling. Usually Father had something like 150 logs each month to be polled [poled] into the main river.

The first summer Father had logs to be polled [poled] from the dead river into the main river he had a hired man to assist him with the job. The summer before I was fifteen years of age in the fall, Father informed me that I could assist him within a week or ten days in polling [poling] the logs from the landing into the main river a distance not quite half a mile. I was thrilled at being informed that I was to be permitted to do the work that had heretofore been done by a full grown hired man and thrice thrilled at the opportunity to work on the water and ride the logs as they were polled [poled] to the main stream.

Some ten days or two weeks before the logs were to be put into the main river, Father suggested that I had better fit up two good new spike poles for our use. Accordingly, two straight slender cypress polls [poles] were cut, the bark peeled off, and the polls left in the sun to dry so they would be light an easy to handle. The polls [poles] were sixteen or eighteen feet long. At the top end the diameter was about one inch. The large end was worked down with a drawing knife to about two or two and a half inches in diameter to fit the iron band to be placed at the end of the pole. After the strong iron bands were fitted on the ends of the polls, [poles] a hole six or eight inches deep was bored down the center of the poll [pole] with a three quarter auger or bit. A strong steel spike was then placed in the hole and made fast by means of four wedges made from dry well-seasoned wood. The large end of the spike usually had a few jagged beards cut in it so that it could not be pulled from the poll [pole] when once made fast. The outer end was sharpened to a square point a little less than a quarter of an inch at the tip end.

On the day set for polling [poling] the logs from the landing to the main river, we had breakfast a little earlier than usual so we could walk the four miles to the river, complete the job and return home by the noon hour. We carried the spike polls [poles] and a peavey for use in rolling several logs from the landing into the water. By nine o'clock we had the logs all rolled into the water, a temporary boom made by tying five or six of the longest logs together at the ends with two short ropes and a few pieces of "Tough Vine" cut from the adjacent swamp, and all other preliminary arrangements made and ready to start the logs moving toward the main river.

Father directed me to take one side of the logs or one end of the boom that curved around the back side of the cluster of logs, keep it clear of all snags near the bank of the river and to keep the logs moving along as fast as I could. The water was from eight to fifteen feet deep with a width of a little more than one hundred fifty feet, the dead river not being as deep or wide as the main river because of the filling-in process over a long period of years. Now, I had often seen men polling [poling] logs from this landing. The work looked easy there being nothing to do but stand on the logs and push a little with the poll [pole] as it rested on the bottom of the river or against a tree or stump standing on the edge of the bank. In my opinion I was going to have an easy ride to the main river.

When Father gave the word "GO" my pole was placed against the bottom of the dead river and I began to push as hard as I could. The large cluster of heavy logs moved very slowly if at all. I pushed harder, but seemingly only sunk the end of the poll [pole] deeper and deeper into the soft mud bottom. Finally I got the logs to moving slowly in the right direction. I kept pushing on the poll [pole] and stepping forward on the boom log until I was almost at its end. Then I started to pull my poll [pole] up to move up to the front end of the log and take a new start by placing it against the bottom and pushing the logs another length of the long boom log. My pole was stuck hard and fast in the mud. I pulled with all my strength. The pole held fast in the mud and the momentum of the heavy logs kept moving in spite of my pulling. I was getting frantic. I saw myself being pulled off into the water with nothing to hold to but a pole stuck fast in the bottom of water ten or twelve feet deep. The main body of the logs had already left the boom some four or five feet. I jerked harder than I have ever jerked on a pole before or since. This pulled the boom log back toward the pole. The pole came loose and the pole and I went backward into the water between the main body of the logs and the boom log. My hat floated. I came up, got the hat and climbed back on the boom log. In the meantime Father was resting quietly on his side of the logs and laughing at me.

The boom log was soon brought up against the main body of logs, but in the meantime my side of the log drift had gotten behind. Father came over to assist me a little in getting my side up with his side before our boom logs were pushed out of place. My side soon was moving along as it was expected to move. Presently a small light high floating log slipped out at the front of the drive on my side. Father requested me to get on another loose log and go get the small one back before it got out behind a cluster of bushes. He suggested that I turn a long log endways toward the small log which was not more than 25 feet away, then walk out on the long one, get on the small log and bring it back in

place. I followed directions. When I stepped on the small log it acted like it was made of cork. It shot off in the opposite direction from which I wanted it to go, and began to jump up and down, roll over and then without warning jump sideways. Father stood still and watched the show. He laughed more than he would if he had been watching a circus clown in action. Still the log continued to roll first one way and then the other. One end would sink down into the water as I moved nearer to that end and the other one rise almost entirely above the surface of the water. Then I would quickly step toward the high end of the log, and down it would go and up would come the other end. All this time the log never ceased to roll sometimes to the right and then to the left. It bucked more like a two-year old bull yearling than a horse, or log. Soon my toehold slipped and into the water I went feet first. The bottom was not reached. I came up, caught my hat which was floating right where I had left it a moment before. Father yelled and screamed with laughter. I climbed back on the cork-like log more determined than ever to ride it back in place.

The strenuous exercise through which I had just gone had started a free flow of perspiration. The sudden ducking had cooled me off quite a lot. Father, between outbursts of laughter, told me to push the log off end ways and the forward movement would stop the rolling and jumping process. Said he, "Riding a log is like riding a bucking mustang, keep him going forward and he will have no time for bucking, keep a log a going and you'll have no trouble to ride it." "Same way", said he, "with people, busy folks never have time to kick or find fault." Homely philosophy, the reader may think, but never-the-less true.

The log was pushed rapidly toward its place and was soon there. With a little more assistance from Father, my side of the log drive was moving along nicely and keeping well up in place. All went well for two hundred yards or more when a log about the middle of the group caught fast against a solid snag, and held up the procession. Soon the log was released from the snag and the snag permitted to pass between two logs backward to the boom logs. Then we had to untie the ends of the two logs and pull them around the snag and retie them. By the time this was done a gentle breeze had sprung up that drifted these logs from the front end of the drive under some long willow tops hanging partly in the water on my side of the river. It then became necessary for me to get these stray logs back in place. I was determined to do this without another ducking. The logs were reached by walking out near them on another log. The stray logs were spiked and pulled back toward the front of the boom. All was going well. The water at that spot was not more than 3 or 4 feet deep. This put the long end of my pole in the air. Somehow before I knew it the long part of the pole made an "entangling alliance" with the willow tops above my head and with my slender legs as they were moving on the log on which I was standing and pushing it away from the willow tops. While pulling at the pole to free it from the willow tops, the log floated from under me. Backwards I stepped off the end of the log and received my third ducking of the morning. This was the worst of the three because I fell flat on my back and carried my hat under with me. The water was not over my head. The logs were immediately pushed away from the willow tops and back into their place in front of the boom.

All this time Father was standing in the middle of the drive of logs and holding it as still as possible. Of course, he had another laugh at my expense. All went well from this spot until the logs in the front of the drive began to contact the swift running water in the main river and began to swing around and push the entire drive backward and to the side. Immediately Father moved up to the front of the drive and began to push the front logs directly into the running water, which carried them on down the stream. I kept pushing the drive toward him from first one side and then the other as he worked the front logs out into the stream.

As the number of logs remaining in the boom grew less, I began to wonder how we would get the last boom logs into the swift water without riding them down the stream until we could make a landing on our side of the river. The two ropes were removed from the boom logs and tied around my body for safekeeping. Two large high floating logs were held back for our use in getting out of whatever plan Father directed. He had now drifted near the bank not far from a willow point. The water at the end of the logs where I was standing was 8 or 10 feet deep, but not over 20 feet from the bank. Since I was already wet, I had about decided to give my log a hard push into the running water and swim out. I held it back to see what Father would do with his last log before making my decision to jump and swim, or to ride the log down the stream a short distance until I could land it. Father pushed the front end of his log out into the stream, walked back to the rear end, stepped off in water not over knee deep and told me to push my log out as he had pushed his out and step off by him. I did so and followed him to the shore. He then explained to me that the ridge on which we waded out was very narrow, and if I stepped only two or three feet to either side I would have had my fourth dunking of the morning.

This was my first real experience in assisting in moving logs in water. It was also my first experience in trying to ride logs in deep water. It was my first day in a new school and the first assignments now in the rear, some of which had been learned the hard and lasting way. Experience is a school in which impressions received linger. This school still has many advantages for those who are willing to accept its challenges. I had often been with Father and the other men when they were hauling logs in not only still water but in swiftly moving streams. They went about the work in a casual manner, as I would walk on level ground. Standing on a floating log looked to me like mere play. It was so easy until any one could do it without effort. I had seen men riding cork logs without any thought of falling into the water. But the lesson of the day had given me a different idea of this work of moving logs in deep water. I now thoroughly understood that those men had become the experts they were because of long experience in this work. They had accepted the challenges the school of experience had to offer and had mastered them.

This was one time one of the Seven Little Diamond in the Rough experienced many “UPS AND DOWNS” in reverse. I say “REVERSE” because usually the “UPS” come first and the “DOWNS” second, but in this case the “DOWNS” came first and the “UPS” second. Many years have passed since this first lesson in taking “UPS” and “DOWN” in reverse. Since then the school of experience has taught me that “UPS” and “DOWNS” may often come in reverse, and not to be surprised when they come that way. May I



admonish the reader who has registered in the school of experience to be on the watch for the “UPS” and “DOWN” of life that may come in reverse.

My first lesson in “POLLING LOGS” [Poling Logs] was well learned. I say this because in all my future experience in poling logs, and I had much of it, I have never experienced “UPS” and “DOWNS” in reverse. During the next few days following the experiences related in this article. I tried to sum up the things learned from my awkward mistakes that provided so much laughter for Father. Here they are. If any reader ever has the rare privilege of “POLING LOGS” or “RIDING LOGS”, may he remember the following:

1. To pull a spike pole from mud or wood, first twist it loose, then pull gently.
2. Make no “entangling alliance” between the pole and other objects.
3. Keep a rolling log moving straight ahead.
4. Don’t turn a log slick-side sunward.
5. Keep your head in balance as well as your body.
6. Watch your step lest in trying to walk on water your faith fails.
7. Keep your head cool without dipping it under water.

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## BOYS AND BEAUX

Since the beginning of primitive love making, small boys have ever been a bane to all beaux with whom they came in contact. The Seven Sons reared at the Diamond Homestead were no exception to the rule. They were perfectly normal boys in this respect. No doubt during the long period of their boyhood they played a few innocent pranks on beaux and others visitors at the Diamond Homestead. Occasionally one of Mother’s younger sisters would live with us for a year or two during which time she would receive a few calls from some of her boy friends known as “BEAUX” in those days. Occasionally these beaux might find strange objects in their coffee such as salt, pepper or pebbles, the latter of course, indicating the coffee was made by using clear spring water from our big spring flowing from beneath large magnolia trees under a steep bluff near the house. Occasionally a few sharp tacks or a few plain pins with wicked crooks in them might accidentally get dropped in a chair near the dining table or in a chair grouped in crescent formation in front of the big fireplace or in a chair arranged in groups on the long porch. When this happened a beaux would invariable sit down in the chair and feel the piercing sharp end of the tack or pin. In the case of either tack or pin the nervous fellows would have an opportunity to exhibit physical fitness by showing

how quickly they could rise. However, the quick get-ups would usually bring forth grunts and groans similar to those sometimes uttered by aged people suffering from severe chronic rheumatism. Such acrobatic exhibitions accompanied by groans and grunts when given so suddenly usually proved embarrassing to the beaux but amusing to others.

No one ever knew just how such accidents happened. No one ever will know. Really, no one is expected to know. Such happenings are still among the mysteries of the world. They just happen and that's all anyone ever knows. It's really nice to have a group of boys circulating round about a homestead to bear the brunt of all such mysterious happenings whether they are guilty or innocent. Almost all manly worthwhile boys get used to such accusations and learn never to deny or affirm any criminations but accept them as important parts of their early training. Thrice blest is the family having a large group of small boys in the household to accuse of all the little prankish mischievous happenings about the place.

One summer about the first of August when Mother's sister, Annie, was living with us she went with the family on Sunday to preaching at a large mission station located four or five miles from the Diamond Homestead. The entire family went to this meeting riding in the big wagon pulled by Bright and Jerry, the big yoke of oxen. Dinner was carried in baskets and served on the ground. The Missionary preached two sermons, one before dinner and one an hour or so after dinner, giving the crowd an hour or so for social visiting. During this social hour Aunt Annie became acquainted with a young man of huge proportions. He was tall and bulky. His weight must have tipped the scales at not less than two hundred fifty pounds. Aunt Annie thought nothing of meeting this young man. However, the big young fellow must have been smitten or enchanted because he showed up at the Diamond Homestead the very next Sunday morning.

As was often the case, Father was away from home on this Sunday morning when the young man arrived. He arrived about ten o'clock, on foot. He had walked seven or eight miles. The day was exceedingly hot. Upon arrival the young man appeared to be rather warm from his long walk. He was invited to have a seat on the large porch. Immediately he went to a water bucket on a shelf at one end of the porch. He found the bucket almost dry. As was the custom in such cases Henry and John were requested to go at once to the nearby spring and bring some cool water. Upon our return, the young man drank an abundant supply of the cool water. Mother and Aunt Annie sat on the porch for a few minutes and carried on a conversation with the man. Soon they excused themselves to complete some housework and to prepare dinner, leaving Henry and me to entertain the gentleman visitor.

Immediately after Mother and Aunt Annie left the porch the gentleman moved his stout white hickory rawhide bottom chair near the wall and leaned back against the wall directly under a large porch mirror. The man was already perspiring freely before he drank the large quantity of cool water. Pretty soon the perspiration was flowing faster than ever. His clothes were wet and dripping. Perspiration was dripping from the bottom of the chair.

Henry and I tried to entertain the man the best we could. We asked him what sort of work he did for a living. We wanted to know if he sawed logs because that was almost all the work one could find to do in that area for which money was paid. Soon he began to ask us questions about Father's logging work and the little cultivated patches adjacent to our home. Then we talked about our oxen and horses and probably everything we could think of. Of course, horse loving Henry wanted to know why he did not ride a horse to our house instead of walking, if he had one. Some of our questions he answered and some he ignored. We told him about Dear Old Sandy and how he could butt, and about our experiences in working yearlings and breaking a span of goats. In spite of our efforts to entertain the man he soon began to nod and doze.

The porch we were on was ten feet wide and the entire length of the house, approximately thirty-two feet long. At the outer edge of the porch it was four or five inches lower than it was at the edge near the wall. It was made of all heart pine boards twelve inches wide. They had been worn by use and constant scrubbing with sand and soap until they were as smooth and slick as glass. The outer edge of the porch was approximately three feet above the ground. The walls of the house were made of rather large logs. The walls were ceiled [sealed] on the inside leaving the logs bare on the outside.

The man's drowsiness kept getting worse. He nodded and dozed in spite of all the noise Henry and I could make. We rolled from one end of the long porch to the other. Still the man nodded and dozed, the sweat kept dripping. Finally Henry asked him if he was used to sleeping in the daytime. He blinked his eyes a few times and informed Henry that he sometimes got a little sleepy in the middle of the day when all was quiet. Henry shot back by asking what he meant "when all is quiet." He dozed instead of answering.

We then somersaulted a few times from one end of the long porch and back but still the man nodded, dozed and began to sleep. We kicked over a few chairs. This would arouse him only a moment. We wondered if the sleep was caused by our poor entertainment or the excessive loss of perspiration. We decided it was probably due to both. Hence, we doubled our efforts to arouse our guest. We rolled, kicked and pinched each other. Then we yelled at each other to quit kicking so hard. Chairs were again kicked over with the hope we would be able to keep the man awake until dinner was served. We kept up the noise but still the man dozed and slept. Henry and I looked on and wondered at the man's ability to sleep in wet clothes. We kicked over a couple of chairs and yelled at each other. The noise aroused the man enough for him to blink his eyes, grunt and yawn. As he yawned, his huge fists were clinched and his massive arms raised above his head.

The man's fists struck a large mirror hanging above his head, breaking it into many pieces. The glass fell all over the man's head, face and body, landing on the floor where it broke into hundreds of small pieces. The noise made by the falling glass woke the half-sleeping man. He was now dazed. He opened his eyes a little and tried to see what had happened, still in a dazed condition. When he realized what had happened in his embarrassment he made a quick jerky effort to rise from the chair. The effort caused the chair to slip on the slanting floor. As the bottom of the chair posts went forward on the

slick floor, the back of the chair came down the wall bumping the back of the man's head on each log down to the floor. For good measure his massive head struck the floor making a noise similar to that made by a maul wielded in splitting rails. His head received six bumps on the logs and one on the floor like unto Dear Old Sandy's pile driver blows. No wonder the poor man lay for at least thirty seconds in a dazed condition exactly as he hit the floor, without twitching a foot or finger or blinking an eye. Henry and I roared with laughter at the man's comical fall.

Soon the man blinked his eyes, twitched his fingers and feet and made an effort to get up. This effort caused the chair to slip on the shattered glass down the slanting floor. Into the yard it went carrying the man still holding his hat tightly in one hand. He somersaulted forward landing on his face and stomach. The take up made a dull deadening sound. It jarred the house like a sudden burst of thunder. The doors and windows rattled. The breath was bumped out'n the man. While he lay still for about thirty seconds, Henry and I screamed with laughter as we peeped over the edge of the porch. The man grunted in his scuffles to get up. The scuffling kicked the chair over to one side. He got on all fours and made three or four steps toward the gate in this position with the seat of his large pants pointing directly toward Henry and me. By this time he had revived from his dazed condition, stood upon his feet, walked zigzaggy and reeling to the yard gate, opened it wide and walked away without stopping to close it. He put his hat on his head after walking a few steps from the gate.

Just as the man got on the outside of the gate, philosophical Henry looked at me and said: "Did you see the seat of that big pair of pants looking at us?" "Yes," I answered. "What about 'm'?" Henry replied: "I was just thinking what a pity it is that Dear Old Sandy can't always be at the right place at the right time. John, think if it. A two hundred fifty-pound man down on all fours just in the right position. What a temptation for a butting billy goat with the seats of big pants as his specialty. One that no billy goat would have the strength of character to withstand, much less one with the training and experience Dear Old Sandy has had. That was a temptation and an opportunity at the same time, a sort of two in one combination.

Henry then looked at me as if expecting me to agree with what he had said. "Yes", said I. "There is no doubt about it. If Sandy had been here at the right time he would have embraced the golden opportunity presented in such a tempting manner and added his blessing to the embarrassed man by butting him with but a single stroke beyond the gate. Poor old billy goat! How sad he would be if he knew what an opportunity he had missed for rendering charitable service in getting the departing man quickly out of sight." By this time he was evidently sweating cold drops of moisture, because he pulled a large handkerchief and mopped his face, neck and head.

At this moment Mother and Aunt Annie came to the porch to learn the cause of the unusual commotion. Quickly they saw broken glass on the porch, more of it in the yard, the hickory chair in the yard, the freshly torn up earth near the over turned chair, the wide open gate and the "Might have been beaux" rapidly disappearing around a bend in the

lane still mopping cold sweat. All these things were not mute. They told a true story far more effective than mere words.

Henry and I stopped laughing and looked straight at Mother and Aunt Annie to see if any clouds were rising to indicate for us a scolding, or perhaps a spanking, or peradventure a gall berry dusting just because we were fortunate enough to see the circus and had laughed so much at the unlucky man's careless accident. Henry and I looked first at Mother and Aunt Annie and then at each other but said not a word. Mother and Aunt Annie stood gazing at the disappearing man until he entered the big road and disappeared behind a small patch of tall corn. Then they looked at each other and both smiled. Henry and I looked at each other and smiled too. We now felt better. We gazed straight at Aunt Annie to understand how she was feeling about the sudden departure of what might have been her best beaux. We were still a little leery over the situation. We wanted her good will because she often cooked good things for her nephews to eat when Mother was too busy putting up with the four older of her Seven Sons to do so.

At this moment Aunt Annie turned to Mother and said; "Well, gentle people, he didn't even say GOODBY." The four of us laughed at her timely remark.

The loud laughing attracted Sam and Charley who were playing under a tree in the back yard. They came around the end of the house leading a team of corncob oxen all yoked and hitched to spoon wheel log carts and wanted to know what had become of that "feller" who had come to see Aunt Annie. This provoked another laugh. Aunt Annie replied to the question asked by Sam and Charley, that the "feller" had left without even saying goodbye. Henry looked at Aunt Annie and said: "Why, Annie, the poor fellow couldn't 'cause he didn't have time. He went of'n the porch like a slick eel sliding down a mud river bank."

Mother and Aunt Annie now called upon Henry and me to tell them what had happened to cause the man to slide so abruptly into the yard and take such sudden leave. Within a few minutes we had related how the man had perspired all over the place after drinking so much cool water from the spring. We told about how wet his clothes were and showed them the wet chair and the wet place on the floor as proof of the copious sweating. We then related how he had nodded and dozed in spite of our efforts to keep him awake. We showed them how we had somersaulted back and forth on the porch and even kicked empty chairs over in spite of all this he had nodded, dozed and even slept. We then explained how we had aroused him enough by slamming two chairs on the floor to cause him to blink his eyes, grunt and yawn, and finally how he had clinched his big fists, raised his huge arms above his head as he yawned and struck the face of the mirror, breaking it and shattering glass all over the place. We then gave a brief description of his falling on the floor, sliding into the yard, his scuffling there and of his hurried passage through the gate and departure without even looking back.

When we had finished, Mother asked us a few questions about the details of the fall. Finally, Mother asked us to tell her exactly what caused the chair to slip on the floor and let the man fall so hard. We quickly told how he was waked up enough to grunt and yawn

and in doing so had raised his big fists above his head breaking the glass. We then explained how his head had gotten six hard bumps on the logs and one Sandy Pile Driver Blow when it hit the floor and that he had lain there in a dazed condition a little while. We then showed her how his jerky jump had started the chair to slip on the broken glass somersaulting the man into the yard. We explained that it was but a few seconds from the time his head hit the floor like a big maul until he grunted in the yard with the breath bumped out'n him. About all we knew was that after his big fists hit the mirror things moved so fast until it was hard to know just how each part had happened. All was now quiet. Mother hesitated a few seconds and then asked Henry and me a few pointed questions that indicated to us that she might have a faint idea we had started the accident as an innocent prank on the drowsy man by a gentle pull or a tap on the back side of the bottom ends of his chair posts as he had nodded, dozed and slept.

Hastily, Henry and I denied having anything to do with breaking that mirror or sliding that man into the yard. "No, No," chimed we. "We never had thought of doing such a thing at any time. We never would play such a prank on anyone and certainly not on a stranger on Sunday." "Shucks," said we. "It might have killed him and the we'd been sent to jail. Nonsense! We were way back on the end of the long porch when he broke the mirror. We couldn't have reached him or his chair with a ten-foot pole. And besides, we didn't have any pole." We then showed the exact location on the porch where we were rolling, kicking and banging chairs when the man yawned and struck the mirror.

We then explained the best we could how sorry we were because the mirror was broken but we could not keep the big man from nodding, dozing and sleeping. We explained how we used all our boyish resources to keep him awake until dinner was ready but had completely failed. He had nodded, dozed and even slept to show his contempt for our efforts to keep him awake until dinner. All was quite for a few seconds. Mother and Aunt Annie still looked like they might have a little notion that we boys knew a little more than we had told.

We now indicated how the somersaulting into the yard was done by sliding off the porch and turning over as we went from the porch to the ground. We then imitated his scrambling, grunting and scuffling in getting upon all fours, then how he got on his feet and reeled and staggered toward the gate. At this moment a bunch of goats and hogs came near the gate. Mother requested us to close the gate. We did so and returned to the porch.

When we went back on the porch we again vehemently denied having anything to do with breaking the mirror or somersaulting that man off'n the porch. We were still a little uneasy. We had been too busy alibying to determine what the verdict was to be.

After a few laughs at our mimicking exhibition, Aunt Annie looked at Mother and said: "Sister Mary, if I thought these boys had anything to do with sliding that big fat porpoise off'n the porch and somersaulting him into the yard, I'd bake 'm a big frosted cake apiece this very afternoon. It's worth a whale of a big cake to do a job like that." Mother and Aunt Annie now left the porch to get dinner on the table. Sam and Charley drove their

corn cob log teams around the house to haul more logs. Sister Mamie who had been standing around with Mother and Aunt Annie saying nothing but evidently thinking a lot returned with Mother and Aunt Annie to assist with dinner.

As soon as Henry and I were left on the porch he looked at me and I looked at him. Not a word was spoken. It wasn't necessary to speak. Each knew what the other was thinking about. We stared at each other. We spoke not a word but shook our heads. We knew how we had blundered, blundered unmercifully, and without rhyme or reason in denying we had any part in sliding that man off'n the porch and somersaulting him into the yard. We had acted like many foolish boys and a few grown people we knew by using our tongues instead of our heads and regretted it too late. We hadn't acted as wisely as a hardheaded butting billy goat would have done. He would have used his head and kept his tongue. Foolish boys thought we. The thoughts of a big frosted cake apiece haunted us. Gone, gone, not even a taste. Talked too much, talked too much, no doubt about it. We half wished that man hadn't nodded dozed and slept. Fifteen minutes ago we thought he had acted as if foolish, simple and stupid. But now the situation had changed. We were using our tongues instead of our heads. We knew we had surpassed him in pulling a senseless, stupid stunt. Foolish boys we were. We didn't need a spanking or a gall berry dusting. We needed a steam powered kicking machine with automatic drive attached. My, Me! Two hungry boys here and BIG FROSTED CAKE APIECE gone. Nothing we could do now but to regret and grieve. We could think only of our MISERY and spew the saliva from our watering mouths. We had seen a BIG FROSTED CAKE APIECE slip away from us faster than the man had slid off'n the porch. It had vanished from our sight quicker than our guest had disappeared behind the cornfield. GONE, GONE, thought we without a taste. What a loss for being too smart. What a loss for not using as much sense as a billy goat. 'Tis a sad, sad, sobering thought. Yes, thought we, boys like billy goats sometimes loose "GOLDEN OPPORTUNITIES." We could only creep slowly away with a crest fallen look, soliloquize, agonize and weep.

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## **Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough**

**SMILING SAM**



## SMILING SAM

Sam was a short, chubby, well built boy from the time he began walking. His chubbiness made him appear shorter than he really was. Notwithstanding the shortness of his legs, Sam was an excellent walker, a fast runner and an expert horseman. He liked to ride horseback and often made excuses to do so. He would walk a half mile anytime, bridle a horse and ride it bare backed to drive a cow or a yearling two or three hundred yards, even if it would walk straight to the pen. He just naturally liked to ride horseback and did so every time he could find an excuse for doing so.

Sam also liked to drive a good horse to a buggy or a pair of horses to a wagon. He was a good driver as well as a splendid rider. He was always careful, taking good care of his horses and his buggy or wagon. As well as I can remember he never had a runaway with horses or oxen. He would occasionally get thrown over the head of a horse or slide off on one side when galloping a horse in a lane at home when one of the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough would hide in a fence corner and suddenly roll a cotton basket or a sack filled with some farm produce directly in front of the horse. In this he was doing exactly what the other six boys did, when Sam was the one to roll the basket or throw the sack in front of some other boy and watch him tumble to the ground. Hence, such falls were accepted as a matter of course and quickly forgotten.

One Fourth of July about ten o'clock in the morning one of our aunts came by home with two of her daughters and two girls of one of her neighbors driving a large horse to a double seated buggy or surrey on their way to a picnic some three or four miles from home. They stopped at a field gate by the side of the road and in conversation with Father some of the girls told him that they wanted one of his boys for a driver. Father immediately called Sam, who was probably planning to go to the picnic anyway, and suggested that he might drive for the girls. Sam accepted the invitation and was soon off for a FOURTH OF JULY celebration.

Sam soon found the horse was an old work horse and lazy. He had to work his way by slashing him constantly with the lines and a partially worn out whip. He also found that the horse was a little troublesome to keep in the middle of the road. It was necessary to hold each line tight all the time to keep the vehicle from striking a stump or a tree as they traveled along a narrow country road. Imagine, if you can, a young fellow in 1944 riding with four pretty girls to a Fourth of July picnic, and having to use both eyes and both hands every minute of the time to keep his vehicle from bumping into a tree, a log or a stump and spilling the party. SAD, SAD, you will probably say, if not WOEFULLY WICKED. No one in the party told Sam [that] the horse was blind and he never suspected it until he arrived at the picnic grounds. Sam said he picked out a nice little pine sapling about forty feet tall and four inches in diameter to use as a hitching post near the center of the celebration grounds and headed the horse straight toward it. When the horse was near the sapling, Sam said he pulled back on the lines a little expecting the horse to stop when he came to the tree. Instead of stopping, he butted the tree with the center of his head, almost uprooting the tree. The sudden jar almost pitched his aunt and

the girls off the seats. All members of the party had a good laugh over the incident. Sam was a good sport and never ceased to have a good laugh every time his experience in driving a lazy blind horse for a bevy of picnic girls was mentioned.

As stated before, Sam was an excellent walker and a fast runner. He was ever ready to run a foot race and was seldom beaten. He liked to run a horse race and would do so at the least temptation. In fact he would sometimes try the speed of a pony when there was nothing to race with except a shadow. When horseback and driving a cow or a yearling he usually had no trouble in having a race.

One summer afternoon when Sam had ridden the old gray mare with nothing on her except the plow bridle and a plow line for reins to drive a stray yearling to the cow lot, two men were working building a logging cart for Father near the entrance to a lane leading toward the house. They heard a boy holler like he might be driving cattle and upon looking up they saw the yearling headed toward the entrance of the lane and the old gray mare and her rider following close behind. They immediately stopped work, looked and saw the racing yearling and the old gray mare. From the direction in which they were coming it would be necessary for the yearling and horse to make a right angle turn around a fence corner to enter the lane. They both looked at the race and wondered what would happen if the rate of speed was not lowered at the turn.

Soon the yearling passed with hoisted head and tail and with all steam turned on. It made the sharp turn without shutting off steam or jumping the track. Sam and the gray mare were close upon the heels of the frightened yearling that probably had no idea of why it was being chased in such a manner. The workmen stood holding their breath. The old gray mare with head and tail stretched straight out came by with her rider who was holding a tight rein in one hand, the other hand clinched in the old gray mare's mane about the middle of her neck, his legs hugging her sides and leaning forward as if to accelerate the speed. Suddenly Sam noticed the workmen looking at him. He greeted them with a smile, a nod of the head and let loose the mane and waved his hand as the old gray mare came speeding by. This evidently caused him to forget about the sharp turn around the fence corner. While he was still smiling at the workmen, who were admiring his skill as a rider, the old gray mare with all steam on rounded the corner with head and tail stretched and without a slow down or a slip.

Smiling Sam was not so fortunate. Lady Luck had deserted him in a moment of need. He had been left suspended in mid air between heaven and earth while the old gray mare continued close behind the yearling. Sam took a 30 degree angle toward mother earth landing flat on his back with his head landing some ten or twelve feet from where he slipped from the back of the horse. Still smiling, Sam continued his journey sliding another ten or twelve feet from where he landed. Immediately Sam jumped up and started off in a run to catch the old gray mare and get her in a stable before she scattered the cattle.

The older of the two workmen who witnessed this little incident had the knack of making laughable remarks about common place events and the younger one the aptitude of seeing

the ridiculous side of any little accident or mishap taking place in his presence. When they saw Sam jump up quicker than he went down and still laughing, the younger one remarked, "Boy, I now dubb you SMILING SAM because I never seen any one slip of'n a runnin' horse, sail and slide like you, go DOWN a smiling and get up a smiling. Shucks, if that'd been me I'd a gone down a praying and got up a cussin', if I'd been able to get up at all."

To this the older of the two men remarked: "No, if you'd a took that fall you'd a never got up again, your old big beer belly would a been busted wide open." To this the younger man replied, "You needn't say nothin', if you'd a took that fall your old dry bones would a busted like a sack o' empty beer bottles tossed on a brick pavement"

As Sam disappeared around a bend in the lane, the older workman said, "That boy shore did make a good ground slide out'n himself. Just like the old fashioned homemade ground slide we used to pull baskets of seed cotton from the field on each afternoon. And dogged it he didn't sail off a that old gray mare for the world like a flying squirrel and would a landed like one but he held to that plow line rein too hard and it turned him over in the air and made him land on his back. If it hadn't a been for that, I do believe he'd a caught square on his feet."

The younger one of the two men remarked: "That's so, dogged if that boy ain't some rider. By George, he'd a never slipped off that old gray mare if he hadn't turned her mane loose to wave at us. And too, that made him forget about that sharp turn around the fence corner. If it hadn't o'been for us a standing here, he shore would a rid that curve around." "That's right", said the older man, "He shore is some rider, ain't he."

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## **Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough**

**BOYS AND GULLIES**

**HENRY AND “MY FILLY”**

**BOYS IN THE WOODS**

## BOYS AND GULLIES

Near the home of the Seven Sons were some large gullies. These gullies from the time the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough were old enough to walk had a great attraction for these boys. Gullies are always attractive. Each separate gully has its own attractions. We boys learned this at an early age. Hence, as small boys much of our spare time was spent in rambling, tumbling and rolling in these gullies. It must have been a sort of compelling; constraining instinct that led us to these gullies. At this age we had never heard of or read of Cave Dwellers, yet we imagined we were living in caves as a protection from the ever changing climatic conditions and as hiding places from wild beasts and Indians. We prepared hide-outs by digging holes in cliffs that could be reached only by those who knew the key routes and how to climb the steep cliffs without tumbling to the bottom of the deep gorges. We were quite surprised many years later when we read of Cliff Dwellers in other ages and other civilizations.

Many years later we learned from reading that the attractions of these large gullies for us boys were the same attractions that through the ages have caused countless thousands to travel long distances to visit the great caves and under-ground caverns of the world, and the great gorges like the Grand Canyons of Colorado. The attractions that caused us to climb the steep banks and tall cliffs were the same attractions that through out the ages have caused people to climb steep mountain peaks as sport.

The gully nearest home consisted of two partially separated gullies. Between the two parts was a narrow ridge. Steps were dug in either side of this ridge for use in getting out of the gully. Some steep, slick, chalky banks furnished a quicker and easier way to enter the gullies. This route was longer and led through thick bushes near the large springs bubbling from the foot of the huge bluffs under some tall magnolia trees. For several years these springs supplied water for use for the home and for livestock. Later water was supplied from a well or a deep pump.

The four older boys had the fun an frolic of bringing water from this spring. To boys this was not the drudgery some people thought because there is always something attractive about a spring of cold water. It is refreshing to stand and watch the cold water bubbling from a great bluff in the cool shade of a tall magnolia tree. It's compensation for climbing up the bluffs with a bucket of water. There is always something attractive about any watering place, be it a spring, a lake or a river. The shoreline of a lake or river is constantly changing. One soon learns to watch the changes constantly taking place because of rains, freshets and climatic changes and to understand that change is a fundamental law of life.

At the top of the steep bluff near the edge of the gullies was a small knoll made up of thousands of small brown rocks sometimes called pebbles. No boy ever stood on this knoll and looked over the edge of the gully forty feet below or across the gully at the steep banks upon the opposite side where grew clusters of tall pine trees without trying his skill at throwing rocks. A rock had to be tossed over the edge and watched until it landed forty feet below. A rock had to be thrown toward the opposite bank and watched

until it struck and bounced back to the bottom of the gully. Then a challenge would come to the boy to throw a rock across the gully and see it land on the other side. Next the nearest pine tree on the opposite side of the gully became the coveted target. After a few rocks had been bounced off the nearest pine another pine a little farther away became the target and so on until rocks were bounced off the farthest pine in the group. This required years of practice and growth.

As long as boys were sent to the spring for a bucket of fresh cool water their legs invariably became as tired from climbing the steep bluffs until they would have to stop and rest on top of this rocky knoll. Of course, the boy would have to throw rocks while resting his legs. It was on this knoll the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough developed muscles and sinews to throw rocks and other objects long distances and with great accuracy. This training enabled them to bring down from the cherry tree in the yard many a woodpecker feasting on cherries. This was the training that enabled them to knock over many a rabbit about the farm with a small pine knot. This was the training that enabled them later to become experts in ball playing when schools were established in their neighborhood. This was the training that enabled them to stand their hand in any crowd of boys regardless of size or strength where pine knots or pebbles were available. Many a large boy who undertook to play the part of a neighborhood "BULLY" and slapped over one of the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough because he was little, slender, hatched faced and seemingly without physical strength had to retreat under a fusillade of pine knots, rocks and other small objects thrown from a distance with great speed and accuracy.

The smaller gully near the house was used often as a playground. It was a great place for sports such as climbing steep banks and cliffs. It furnished attractive places for jumping from high banks and landing on new caved-in sand and many other stunts that appeal to boys.

The larger gully a quarter of a mile from the house covered approximately ten acres. It contained five separate parts or divisions, each of which was noted for its own peculiar formation and shape. In one part almost all the walls and bottom were composed of snow white sand. It always presented a clean, neat appearance. It was a nice playground for children. It contained no steep banks or cliffs for climbing. It had no deep dangerous gorges. On the opposite side of this gully was a section composed of stiff clay and chalk. It contained no suitable places for sports or play of any kind. Another section contained many steep sandbanks and cliffs just right for sliding and rolling down. These sandbanks were attractive for climbing. The high bluffs afforded place for high jumps to the loose newly caved-in sand far below. A jump into such a sand pile was similar to a jump into deep water.

In another part of this gully, sands of many colors were in abundance. All colors of the rainbow were there. This section was noted for the deep colors of its sands. Some of the sand was as fine as the finest flour while others were as coarse as the coarsest salt. No one was ever able to describe all the colors of the sands in this section. In this section were also some rocks of sand formation and some formed from excessive heat.

Chalk of many colors was found in almost every section of this gully. Much of it was white, some pink, some almost red and some made up of various colored layers. This chalk is sometimes spoken of as potter's clay. It makes a good grade of crockery.

This large gully is one of the finest natural playgrounds for children I ever saw. It is superior to a modern gymnasium for physical training. As a place for building muscle it is unexcelled. As a health preserver it surpassed a drug store and a doctor combined. It is a health giving tonic for the aged and infirm to stand and watch children of all sizes and ages romping, jumping, sliding and rolling in this gully.

Since boys first lived in this community this gully has had a peculiar attraction for them. It ever has and still does present a challenge to every boy having the privilege of looking over its edges and beholding the various colors and shades of the sands, clays and chalks forming its walls, cliffs and ledges. There is a distinct challenge to each youth to climb the walls and steep embankments and observe at close range the various colored clays, sands and chalks. He wants to hold them in his hand and examine their colors and textures.

The high embankments and long stretching ridges of sand surrounded by piles of loose sand and clay, present challenges to climb to the top-most points and jump off, landing in the soft earth far below. The long steep slopes stretching to the sandy bottom present challenges to slide or roll to the ravines below. The deep gorges between narrow ridges present inviting dares to boys to jump from one ridge to another without slipping and tumbling into the gorges.

This gully was and yet is an inviting spot for children and youth to engage in many kinds of sports, fine for developing the best in them. Sports engaged in here do not stop with developing strong muscles and sinews in climbing the almost perpendicular banks, in jumping from the top of one ridge or cliff to another on in jumping from high places to the soft sand banks far below. Accuracy of vision is developed here in judging the exact distance from one ledge to another. Accuracy of judgment is developed here to prevent one from attempting to jump beyond one's strength resulting in dangerous falls as in real mountain climbing. Misjudging distances or the strength of small foot-holding ledges has caused many a boy to receive a bruising fall. Carefulness is developed here as a means of self-protection. The experience of a few falls into a jagged rock pile below due to inaccuracy of vision, indiscreet judgment or carelessness may be one's best lessons. Such experiences prevent falls of a more serious nature throughout one's entire life.

These gullies offered many educational advantages to all observing persons who saw them. Every youth who climbed the steep banks of these gullies or tumbled in their fascinating sands had an opportunity to study at close range the formations of the earth's surface. Every boy who whittled a piece of furniture, a pair of wagon wheels, an ox yoke, a tool or an animal from a piece of chalk picked up in this gully had an opportunity to learn [that] the chalk was formed in layers and the layers were washed there by moving water. Every boy who threw a rock from this gully had the advantage of studying

Physical Geography from the greatest book ever written on the subject. Every boy who played in the various colored sands in this gully had a lesson in the Art of judging beautiful colors. Every youth who looked at the rock formations about the edges could easily detect the presence of heat at some remote date in rock formation and in other places chemical action could be observed. In many places one could easily see the different layers of clay, chalk and sand had all been placed by water as a leveling agency. This gully too, was the best place I ever saw for studying the action of heat and cold, of winds and rain upon the erosion of the earth's surface. In this gully could be found miniature deserts, barren of vegetation. Small alluvial flood plains could also be found covered with luxuriant vegetation. There were sand deserts and rock deserts. The causes of these miniature deserts, flood plains, fertile soils and poor are the same as the causes of larger deserts, flood plains, fertile soils and poor soils. No scientist has ever yet written in any textbook facts and explanations as easy of understanding as those written in this gully by the Author of the Great Book of Nature.

This gully furnished an excellent place for the study of Botany. The vegetation on this ten acres was varied and worthy of close study. In this small area one may study as many varieties of plant life as might be found over areas miles apart. Valuable lessons could be learned here for a little close observation. Around the edges of this gully, as in no other place, the root systems of many plants and trees could be studied where one side of the entire root system has been exposed by the washing away of the soil, leaving all roots bare. One could observe in some instances how one small root may finally have to take the place of an elaborate system to keep the tree alive. Then the growth and physical condition of such a tree may be compared with the growth and physical condition of a similar tree having a full root system.

In the miniature deserts one could observe the struggle of a few small plants to grow there and readily understand what causes no vegetation on the great deserts of the world. In some places small lichens could be observed growing seemingly without food or moisture. On the dry slopes, void of fertility, one could easily see the effects of no fertility and the causes of the scant vegetation on mountains of rock formation. Then in the flood plain covered with luxuriant vegetation, one could easily understand what the fertility of the soil means to the plant life of a country. One could readily understand why the great river valleys of the world have become the food producing areas of the world, and why these valleys have a greater population per square mile than mountainous regions.

The Seven Sons, as they grew from childhood to youth, and from youth to manhood, played in these gullies and accepted all the challenges, enchantments, and dares they had to offer. They climbed their steepest banks and cliffs, jumped their deepest and widest gorges and jumped from dizzy heights to inviting sand piles below. They slid, rolled, tumbled and somersaulted down their longest and steepest slopes. They observed the formation of rocks, and layers of chalk and sand and the effects of water as a leveling agency. They observed the effects of heat and chemistry in rock formation and the coloring of sands and clays. They observed plant life on fertile flood plains and poor soil, and the absence of plant life on steep washed-off slopes and deserts.



Whatever scientific principals were revealed here relating to the formation of the earth's surface, whatever part of the atmospherical agencies this gully displayed showing the action of erosion on the earth's surface, whatever scientific principals of plant growth revealed here were observed by each of the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough as they skipped along from childhood to manhood and left a lasting influence. Whatever physical fitness, whatever accuracy of vision, whatever discreteness of judgment, and whatever carefulness could be acquired or developed by accepting the many challenges, enchantments and dares these gullies offered, became a part of the life and character of each of the Seven Sons as he grew in a great open country of a Florida Frontier.

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### **HENRY AND "MY FILLY"**

If any one of the Seven Sons at the Diamond Homestead was a "Born Lover of Horses" it was Henry. He loved horses, studied horses and wanted to be with horses from the time he was old enough to walk. At two years of age his favorite sport was to slip away from the house and steal to the lot and barns where he could look at the horses. If he was missed about the house and yard, Mother knew to look for him at the lot and barn. Every time he had an opportunity to do so he would follow after the horses. If Father or anyone else was plowing near the house, Henry would undertake to follow the plow up and down the rows. He liked to ride on the back of the horses when they were pulling the plow. He would hold to the upper ends of the hames and ride until he would get sleepy and begin to nod and have to be taken off to keep him from tumbling off. Long before he could get on the back of a horse, nothing pleased him quite so much as placing him on the back of a horse, giving him the reins and letting him manage the horse all alone.

If a strange horse was kept at the Diamond Homestead for the night, as was often the case with early Missionaries, log inspectors, and peddlers of various and sundry sorts, Henry would spend much time looking it over, studying its shape and muscular development. If the strange horse was loose in the lot Henry would probably be found astride the lot fence gazing at the horse or perhaps driving it around in the lot to see how it could travel. If it were in a stable, Henry would probably be found peeping through the cracks in the stable walls and occasionally poking the horse with a stick to make it turn around so he could observe the other side. If the animal had any blemishes such as a blind eye, a knocked down hip, a crooked leg, or enlarged joints, Henry would soon know it and be certain to ask the owner what caused the blemish. He would fire a fusillade of questions at the owner about the blemishes. He would want to know if a crooked leg or a spavin kept the horse from being a good traveler. If they made him stumble? And if he ever fell entirely down when someone was riding him? He never failed to inquire if the slightest blemish kept him from being a fast runner. He usually advised the owner of any horse upon which he found any blemishes to trade him off and get one without any blemishes. He usually added, for good measure, "You know, those things will get worse as he grows older and pretty soon no one else will have him and then you can't trade." Missionaries, peddlers,

log inspectors and others took Henry's advise good naturedly because of his honest childish sincerity.

When Henry was eleven years old, the old family gray mare brought a little gray colt that was given to him to love and care for as his own. This was about the greatest event in the life of Henry. He now had a horse all his own and was now a man of wealth. He was a changed boy. He walked with a different swing. He now had something to work for and to live for.

The colt was named "Minnie." However, she soon became know to Henry as "My Filly," a name given to her by Henry in imitating an elderly gentleman in the community who owned an old "Stove Up Plug," mare that couldn't trot through the woods without falling down and tossing the rider over her head, and yet he always spoke of her as "My Filly."

During the next two years Henry spent a large portion of his time in feeding, playing with and petting this pony. He gathered some scrap lumber and roofing and built "My Filly" a special stable. A special trough was provided for use in feeding the pony. "My Filly" was curried, fed and watered often. She too got lots of special rubbing to give her a "Sort of Specialized Speed," for winning future races. If some one told Henry that oats fed to a colt would produce a glossy color, long windedness and plenty of speed, "My Filly" ate oats. If he was told wheat bran, or wheat shorts would do the trick "My Filly" ate bran and shorts. Once a local horse trader told Henry that turnip tops and turnip roots would produce a glossy color and speed. "My Filly" ate turnip tops and all for a while.

Before the colt was a year old Henry had built a light plow stock and with some improvised harness was driving "My Filly" up and down the lane in make-believe plowing. This sort of play went on almost daily until she was trained in the trick of playing plow horse. "My Filly" was then harnessed between the shafts of an old buggy and led up and down the lanes and adjacent roads. "My Filly" took the whole affair as a part of the daily play and seemed to enjoy the game as well as Henry and the smaller of the Seven Sons who invariably followed the buggy up and down the long lanes and adjacent roads.

This play continued until the colt was two years old. The play was then gradually turned into useful work. Henry would drive her to the back of a new-ground field for a bushel for sweet potatoes, or to the turnip garden for a basket of vegetables for dinner. Occasionally he would drive her two miles and carry a bushel of corn to be ground into meal or grits. He would ride her on errands over the neighborhood, or to drive up the cattle late in the afternoons. Sometimes he would ride her for pleasure and to train her to travel several different gaits. On such trips Henry taught her many tricks such as may be performed by real "Circus Horses." She was taught to stand straight up on her hind feet or to stand on her fore feet and kick her hind feet high in the air, according to the way Henry pinched her neck and tickled her flanks with his toes. She would prance side ways and occasionally buck like a bronco, according to Henry's secret signals.

Once “My Filly” developed a cold. She would cough, hold her head down and blow corruption from her nostrils. Henry thought she had a severe case of distemper. He soon saw all the so-called horse doctors in the community and applied all the “Horse Remedies” given to him by them. No doubt in some cases the remedies were as dangerous as the disease. Be that as it may, “My Filly” was soon well and as gay as ever. The right remedy was evidently used. After that Henry considered himself a FIRST CLASS HORSE DOCTOR.

When “My Filly” was two and a half years old, Henry rode her to the Old Shady Grove Mission Station one Sunday morning to attend preaching services by the Missionary. This place was four miles from home and one mile north from where the village of Jay is now located. The preaching was in an old log house in which the “Shady Grove Missionary Baptist Church” was organized a few months before. For many years this place had been used by Missionaries on what they called “Missionary Tours.” Preaching in those days was a great event. People came from far and wide to hear the preaching. Many came on foot, thinking nothing of walking as far as six miles to the services. A large number of people came in big wagons pulled by oxen. It was not uncommon to see as many as a dozen such wagons parked under the dogwoods near the old log house, the front end of the bodies filled with home made white hickory chairs as seats for the grown people and a blanket or quilt spread on the floor of the back part of the body to provide seats for the children. Many men and boys came horse back, riding mustang ponies shipped from Texas or Mexico.

It was then as now, while a large majority of people come to hear the preacher, others came for social purposes, or business reasons. During pioneer days many horse traders came for the sole purpose of trading horses. This was considered great sport on “Pine Level” in those days.

This was Henry’s first time to ride “My Filly” to a large public gathering. He afterward related how he had planned to show her off on this trip, especially when the services were over and the crowd started home. Since Henry could relate the events of this day better than any one else it is here given in his own inimical style.

“My Filly” and I left home early this Sunday morning so “My Filly” would not get hot or tired before arriving at the Mission Station. I wanted her to be well rested when we started home and in fine shape for putting on a real circus. We took our time on the road. If she showed signs of being at all warm we stopped in a cool shade and let her cool and rest. We arrived at the Mission Station real early. Only a few people had arrived ahead of me. A cool shady place was selected under a large dogwood for hitching “My Filly.” Here she was hitched to a long swinging limb so she could not wind the halter around the tree. After hitching her I stood around for a few minutes expecting a few boys and men to come and look at the finest filly in the community. Only two boys about my size came. After looking the pony over we three decided to join the group of men and boys sitting on some logs near the house.

Here we found the men discussing logging work, hunting, hard times and horse swapping. This horse swapping business was interesting to me. I wondered when I could really do some swapping and make some money at it. After listening to wonderful trades made, it appeared that every person who ever swapped horses made money. This rather puzzled me at this time and for a few years longer until I learned that what one man gains in a swap, the other man loses. When this conversation among the men grew tiresome the two boys and I decided we must go to the spring 150 yards away down under a steep hill for a drink of water and to primp-up a little before the preaching hour.

Off we went in a run as was customary for small boys. At the spring our hands and faces were washed a little and our head thoroughly wet. Our hair was then combed according to the latest fashion. We stood around the spring a few minutes, wondering if we should hurry back up the steep hill or linger there until joined by other boys of our age. Presently we heard men and horses just around a branch head, [we made] a few steps and saw six or eight young men and as many horses. Attracted by the horses we walked over near them. Before getting near enough to hear the conversation being carried on between the group of men, we wondered what they were doing off behind the branch head so near the preaching hour. When we got near enough to hear the conversation, we learned the entire group were trying to swap horses. This was interesting to me. I drew nearer where I could hear every word said. I listened attentively. I soon walked close enough to look at the horses.

I knew several of the men, and they knew me. They spoke to me and invited me to join the horse swapping party. I came closer and looked hard at the horses. At first it seemed each man was trying to swap horses with every other man in the party. Before long the banter to swap narrowed down to two men, Joe and Ed. Each of them was asking the other one [for] \$25.00 to boot. This went on for a while with a lot of seesawing, without making any headway at swapping. Each man ridiculed the other for wanting boot.

Pretty soon Joe had three friends lined up with him and Ed had three friends [lined] up on his side. The show now soon got underway. Ed pulled out a large flask of whiskey and passed it around. All hands took about two drinks before handing the bottle back to its owner. Ed and his three friends then began to ridicule Joe's horse and to extol the good qualities of Ed's horse.

When this started I began to look for the horse having so many good qualities. Before I located the horse I decided this must be the best horse in the world. He was gentle and as sound as a dollar. He was a perfect saddle horse, a splendid buggy horse and could pull a ton when hitched to a wagon over any of the rough roads in use at that time. He had been the winner of a thousand races in a dozen states, and won a big bet on every one of them. He was the best horse in the world except "My Filly" and no doubt would soon be far ahead of her. I was beginning to wonder if I should go back to the church and get "My Filly" and offer to trade for this horse before Joe got him and he would be for swap no more. Suddenly Joe pulled out a long slender round bottle of whiskey and passed it around. Each man took about three drinks from it before handing it back to its owner.

During the drinking there was a lull in the talking. Just as the bottle was handed back to Joe, his friends began to run down Ed's horse and to magnify all the good qualities of Joe's horse. A dozen minor blemishes were pointed out in Ed's horse, such as one blind eye. A large spavin on one leg, a badly sprung knee, some skinned places on his hind legs indicating of course, that he was a dangerous kicker. He was also stone deaf, stiff in the back and one stiff leg so that he could not even herd an old milk cow in driving cattle.

While this was going on, I was busy trying to locate all the blemishes mentioned. Many of them I found and wondering what had given me the idea of trading my fine filly for such an old PLUG. About this time Joe's friends began to tell of the good qualities of his horse. They really surpassed Ed's friends in bragging about good points. Joe's horse was a thoroughbred Hamiltonian from the Blue Grass of Kentucky and had won prizes in every horse show held between Kentucky and Florida. They even explained that the ancestors of this horse were race horses on one side and draft horses on the other side. That was why this horse had been able to win a thousand races and big purses on each one. This was why this horse had won prizes in workhorse shows. This horse had never been placed on exhibition without winning both first and second prizes. This horse was as gentle as a cat, as sound as a dollar and [had] a record as clean as a hound's tooth.

I had now located the horse to swap "My Filly" for. I was worried because I knew Ed would pull out the \$25.00 to boot and hand it over pronto.

I crept over a little nearer to Joe's horse to see just what such a fine prize winning animal really looked like. Just as I got where I could get a good view of the animal that had won prizes in horse shows from the Blue Grass State to the Land of Flowers, Ed's friends had gotten a few more drinks and began to point out and magnify the blemishes of Joe's horse. Immediately this champion prize winner of many seasons became an old stove up crooked legged horse not worth SIX BITS. Both fore legs were badly sprung. His hind legs were as crooked as a pair of hames. Large spavins were on each hock joint. He had patches of hair and skin knocked off almost all over his legs and body from falling down when being used as a saddle horse. He almost died with colic every time he got the least bit hot. Scars were pointed out on his lips that had been cut by drenching bottles when being treated for colic and other stomach diseases. He balked in harness, wouldn't even pull an empty wagon on a level road. At this point the flask was passed again.

While the drinking was going on I had time to understand what a fool I had been to creep up closer so I could offer to go and get "My Filly" and swap her for the CHAMPION PRIZE WINNER OF MANY SEASONS. As I backed away Joe's friends who too had been imbibing rather freely began to magnify the blemishes of Ed's horse. The ridiculing was awful. Evidently the more TALKING TONIC these men took, the better they could run down one horse and praise the other. Ed's horse instead of being a prize winner and a champion in many shows became a worthless FOUR-BIT stove-up Texas Mustang. Within five minutes this champion had dwindled in value to less than 30 cents.

Again I had time to reflect on what a crazy boy I had been to even think of trading "My Filly" for a 30 cent stove-up Texas mustang.

Joe now passed his TALKING TONIC again and his friends broke loose with a lot of new blemishes and diseases about Ed's horse. Within three minutes Ed's horse had all the diseases known to the famous "HOSS DOCTORS" in the country. He had all the mean qualities know to Jockeys the country over. Not withstanding all the diseases and blemishes he was still the worst buckner in the country. All he needed to put on a bucking show was three days rest and half feed. This would bring back the fiery spirit of twenty years ago when he was shipped from Texas to New Orleans and sold at auction for NINE DOLLARS AND SIX BITS. "Why", said they, "he wouldn't even bring Ten Dollars, the price of a blind plug horse, when he was in his prime." They accused Ed of being like Bud Hinckley in the Bingville Bugle, not quite right in the head to even offer to swap even, much less to ask for \$25.00 to boot. They again pointed out the spavins on his hock joints. One man even yelled, "LOOKEY THERE, they're as big as a gallon jug. A blind man could see them." "Buck", said anther man, "Yes, he'll buck the saddle off his back any time he has three day's rest." "Kick", yelled another man. "He has been known to kick a 'chaw' of brown mule tobacco from his owner's mouth when he went to the stable to bridle the rascal." "Look", said another, " At those scars all over his legs and hips. That's the result of his falling in a ragged stump hole one morning when his owner was driving up his work oxen."

While this talk was continuing about Ed's horse, Ed had passed his TALKING TONIC again and had his friends now ready to turn loose a broad side fusillade about the bad qualities of Joe's horse. Within three minutes Joe's horse had a bad case of incurable distemper, a fatal case of halitosis, and the worst case of perdiculosis ever know to Hoss scientists. Joe's horse was no longer a thoroughbred from "MY OLD KENTUCKY HOME" but a HINNEY MUSTANG from Mexico, that had been shipped to Mobile with a car load of Mexican Mustangs and sold at auction, having brought only FOUR DOLLARS AND NINETY EIGHT CENTS when at his best. "Kick", said on man, "yes, he kicks with all four of his feet. A HINNEY'S the kickinest thing the world. They out kick a donkey two to one."

At this time one of Ed's friends, who had been quiet for a while as if thinking of something new and mean to say about Joe's Hamiltonian from Kentucky, broke loose about the diseases Joe's horse has. "Why", he yelled, "That old SIX BIT PLUG MUSTANG" has an incurable case of the perambulation. His perambulatory glands have been eaten up long ago with this disease. He is suffering with a fatal case of he-be-gees. He's liable to die any minute from this deadly disease. And worst of all he is suffering immensely from an incurable case of chronic constitutional inertia."

At this point Joe and his friends admitted, for the sake of stopping the lying contest, that he and Ed swap even, drink the remaining few drops of TALKING TONIC and agree to quit lying. Ed and his friends agreed with no comment. Joe and Ed swapped horses, each keeping his own bridle and saddle. The bridles and saddles were [not] exchanged. The two quart bottles were then drained for the last drop. The men then mounted their plug mustangs and rode off up the hill, leaving me to trot up the hill to the preaching service.

I looked around for the boys who had come with me a few minutes ago, but they were no where in sight. They had evidently slipped away while I was busy listening to the men telling about the good qualities of CHAMPION PRIZE WINNING HORSES that turned out to be Ten Dollar plug mustangs from the plains of Texas.

I trotted off up the hill toward the old log Mission Station to hear the preacher. To my utter surprise when I reached the top of the hill the only animal in sight was "My Filly." She was pawing and prancing around under the dogwood [tree] as far as the halter would permit in an effort to get loose and go home as the other horses had done sometime ago. I looked in the old log house. It was empty and quiet as a graveyard on a dark rainy night. Not a soul [was] in sight. Preaching was over and everybody [had] gone. I felt a little dazed. I couldn't understand the situation. Surely the preacher had failed to come and the people had all gone home early. I looked at the sun and judged the time of day [to be] 12:30. But surely, thought I, this horse-trading had not been so fascination as to keep my interest almost two hours.

I was disappointed and disgusted at the same time. Now I would ride off from the old Mission Station alone. The opportunity to stage a circus with my prancing pony was gone. My love for looking at horses and my interest in horse swapping had brought sad disappointment. There was nothing left for me to do but to mount "My Filly" and go home. The lonely little pony was so anxious to get started toward home until it was a problem to keep her still long enough to get into the saddle. Before I got seated in the saddle she was in a gallop down the road.

As I rode the four miles home, I had plenty of time to think the events of the day over and to soliloquize a little. Thought I, my love for horses had caused me to play the fool. I had been fascinated by looking at the horses and mesmerized by the talk of the horse traders. As I rode along the lonely road home I began to understand that a good horse trader is a good liar in words or actions. The thought also came to me that a better horse trader is one who can take one look at a horse and know quickly its real present and potential value and can also tell quickly whether a would-be horse trader is lying by talking or by not talking.

All the way home I kept thinking over and over about the fact that I had gone to preaching and got switched off on a side track and spent nearly two hours looking at a bunch of scrub mustang ponies and listening to the witicisms and falsehoods of a crowd of drinking horse traders. It occurred to me that after all I had gotten some valuable experience that might keep me from later getting fascinated with some worthless horse and mesmerized by the shrewd talk of a judicious horse trader and swap "My Filly" for a Kentucky thoroughbred of prize winning fame that would later turn out to be only a NINE DOLLAR AND SIX BIT mustang from Texas. I tried hard to console myself for having gotten so interested in the horses, traders and horse swapping until I forgot all about how time slips away.

Another thought that kept bobbing up in my mind all the way home was the whiskey drinking and the effect it had on the horse swappers. It proved to be a real TALKING

TONIC for them. I had not known before that a certain amount of whiskey drinking was supposed to be a part of the game of horse swapping in those days. I wondered if it required this drinking to make a trader shrewd enough to out-trade the other fellow. Later I learned that the real trick of the whisky drinking was for the shrewd trader to take a pretense of drinking and persuade the gullible greenhorn to drink until drunk and then as the shrewd traders say, "MOP UP WITH HIM" in the trade. This was a little consoling to me for having played the fool. Maybe after all it would some day be a worthwhile lesson to me.

I knew several of the men and they knew me real well. Three of these men had been employed by my Father at different times in logging work. They knew me well and were very friendly. Yet, not a man in the crowd offered me any of the TALKING TONIC. They knew it would have been declined. They knew Father did not drink intoxicating liquors and would not approve of their offering it to one of his small boys. I appreciated the respect these men had for Father and his boys in not offering me the poisonous tonic.

I arrived home at least a half an hour later than was customary for those attending preaching at this place. Then I was asked why I was late, my reply was, "The preacher was late beginning and long winded." I thought I had gotten by with this explanation until the next morning when Father called me out back of a plum orchard near the house for a little important business engagement of his own making. He cut a plum sprout and told me he would have to dust my pants a little because of my Sunday behavior. After he finished the dusting job he looked pretty straight at me and spoke as one having authority and said: "Young man, from now on when you go to preaching service I expect you have sense enough to get in the house, or as near the house as you can, and hear the preacher, instead of strolling off behind a branch head and listening to the wit, profanity and lying [of a] crowd of drunken horse traders."

The experiences of this particular Sunday and the following Monday morning were really the sort that linger long with a lusty lad. I never did know just how Papa found out I spent an hour and a half down behind a branch listening to the jokes, wise cracks and wit of a crowd of drinking horse swappers instead of hearing the preaching. However, since that Sunday I've never gone to preaching and forgot to hear the preacher. You know, a good tough plum sprout is a mighty good thing to improve a boy's behavior and keep his memory active.

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## BOYS IN THE WOODS

The Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough, during their early boyhood days, had splendid opportunities for traveling in the big woods surrounding the Diamond Homestead and observing the hills and hollows, flood plains and streams, swamp lands and the big Pine Level and all the flora and fauna these woods contained. We did not travel over the



woods as idlers roaming hither and yon with no interest or objective except to while away the time, but with Father, either in logging work or in looking after range cattle, horses, hogs and goats. Father was an experienced woodsman and a close observer of what ever came before him. Many a time did he point out to one or more of the Seven Sons interesting things in the woods and explain the causes and the benefits or danger.

At different times Father was engaged in different varieties of timber and logging work and on different kinds of soil. The larger part of his work was in cutting and hauling pine logs to market. Sometimes the logs were cut from timber growing on the big pine level famous from the earliest days of the first settlers as "Pine Level." Sometimes the timber would be cut along the creeks and sand hills among many oak bushes. On two occasions he contracted to haul some hewn pine timber [that was] too long to be hauled with a single cart. A second and smaller cart called a "tail cart" was brought into use under which the small or top end of the long sticks of timber was hoisted. Because the roads were not at all straight it was necessary to have a man "tail" this cart.

On one occasion Father contracted to haul five hundred pieces of hewn cypress timber from the Escambia River swamp. This was a new and interesting experience. The land in the swamp where the cypress grew was low and boggy, adding to the difficulty in moving the timber. Then, too, many pieces of the timber had to be brought across deep sloughs. Bridges were built across these when the number of pieces of timber behind the slough justified the cost of the bridge. If only a few pieces of timber were in such an isolated area they would be pulled across on a single "foot log."

The Seven Sons also had opportunities of hunting and driving livestock in all sorts of woods. As barefooted boys we worked in and over all woods and forests. We walked over and through all sorts of big woods and forests, sometimes chasing livestock. We rode horse back over and through all sorts of big woods and forests. We ran horses over and through all sorts of woods, open piney woods, thick oak bushes among the rolling sand hills, and in the swamps and occasionally in boggy meadows and branches. In all this we were getting experiences and gleaning information in a quiet way that no doubt played a part in shaping our work when grown to manhood. No doubt but what the experiences and information gained as "boys in the woods," enabled us better to understand many text books to which we were later exposed and to form clearer concepts concerning them.

There is nothing more rejuvenating to people both young and old than strolls or a horse back ride in a beautiful woods filled with growing trees, wild flowers and green grasses. Especially is this so when all the trees are covered with new foliage and many filled with large showy flowers forming veritable bouquets as large as the big tall spreading trees. This is also doubly true during autumn when the "fall flowers" are at their best and the leaves have put on all colors known to man. Such strolls are invigorating. They keep young folks well, healthy and growing. They develop strong muscles and endurance surpassed only by the wild life inhabiting the woods. They are the best tonic for older folks. Such strolls are guaranteed to keep older folks from "souring" on the world, as they grow older. Strolls or horseback riding in such woods are a source of valuable

information. They supply information first hand, whereas if obtained from a book it would be second hand and probably obtained in a different area and under different circumstances and would not apply at all to the area in which the reader resides.

We Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough came in contact with all sorts of insect life in our area in the woods, forests and fields. We came in contact with all the crop destroying insects, and all the insects that pester human beings such as mosquitoes, flies of many varieties and red bugs that bite or sting, according to the way one feels at the time the contacts are made. We came in very close contact on occasions with all the honey making insects or "BUGS" such as bees, wasps, yellow jackets, hornets and the big bald faced bumble bees. On certain and sundry occasions we Seven Sons were contacted by this class of insects in a manner that gave the Seven of us great and lasting respect for the strength of a well planned organization. If the reader has not done so may I suggest that he immediately read the articles under this cover, "BOYS AND BUGS" and "BOYS BUGS AND BULLS."

The study of bird life is always interesting to young and old alike. This is especially so when done in a woods where the birds have their homes and raise their young. "BOYS IN THE WOODS" soon learn all the different birds in a community or area. They soon learn where to look for them and where to look for their nests. For instance, they know that certain birds like the mockingbird, thrushes and cardinals build in low bushes while hawks and crows build in the tops of the tallest trees in the area. Boys soon learn also all the migratory birds and exactly when to look for them and when they will leave a certain area.

The woods and forests adjacent to the Diamond Homestead were full of birds. Boys have a way of learning the names of all the birds without ever seeing their names in print. How they do it no one ever knows. Boys soon learn the kinds of food eaten by each variety of birds. As a small boy on my first trips into the woods I wondered why the millions of dogwood berries, black gum berries and gall berries were produced. Later I saw thousands of birds feeding on these berries. I also saw hogs, raccoons and 'possums eating them.

Boys soon learn to recognize the different birds in an area by size, shape, colors or voices.

The Seven Sons, while working in the woods or hunting and driving livestock, had distant introduction to the snake life of the area as well as with the other wild life. As boys we were taught that snakes are a symbol of LYING AND DECEITFULNESS and admonished to shun the cold slimy things.

As boys working in the woods we learned to know at sight almost all the varieties of snakes in our woods and swamps, such as rattlers, moccasins, gopher snakes, coach whips, black snakes, adders and many others. We learned their natural feeding grounds, their hiding places and hibernating habits. The fact that we knew their feeding grounds and habits is probably the reason not one of the Seven of us was ever bitten by a snake,

although as barefooted boys we chased over all sorts of areas from high piney woods to marshes and swamps.

Here is a little snake incident happening in our community. It is given for the benefit of small boys. They all like it because it is true and because they like the thing it teaches and the way it ends.

An elderly man and his grandson were working in a small potato patch, the elderly man was hoeing and the grandson twelve years old was turning the vines from the side of the rows out of the way of the hoeing. When they got to the end of the row the grandfather saw a black snake about thirty inches long lying on a flat rail about three feet from the ground. In order to have some fun out of the boy he directed him to take the snake by the tail and pop its head off by slinging it around over his head a few times and then pop it in the manner of popping a whip. The boy had never handled a snake, but thought he had to do whatever his grandfather requested him to do. The old man stepped back a few feet out of the way. He boy eased his hand over the snake's tail, but kept an eye on the snake's head. The snake kept "licking" its tongue out and shaking its tail. The boy jerked his hand away. After several attempts to take hold the old man told the boy not to be such a "sissy" and to grab the snake and jerk quick. The boy obeyed. It was a true case of "The tail hold," slipping at the wrong time. The snake shot off through the air and landed around the old man's neck, who went over two or three potato ridges at a jump until he clawed the snake from its lodging place. The boy expected a paddling and began to explain half talking and half crying that the "tail just slipped out" and that it was an accident. The old man said, "I might have known you'd let it slip. I had no business asking you to do it. Get to turning vines." Later the old man laughingly admitted the boy rightly turned the joke on him.

In all our working, walking and riding in the woods nothing gave us boys more pleasure and greater inspiration than the tall forest trees of yellow pine and cypress, many varieties of oaks, yellow poplar, gums, hickory, ash, bay and many others not so tall or of so much commercial value. We soon learned to look upon the straight towering pine trees as symbols of uprightness and endurance. The large white hickory trees were symbols of toughness. The great oaks with their long spreading branches were reminders of strength and the tall cypress trees measuring from four to eight feet in diameter above their enlarged bases and towering from one hundred fifty feet to two hundred feet high were looked upon as sentinels of centuries. They were real objects of admiration. As we looked upon the giants of the forests we wondered how long it required to produce such towers of strength and beauty. Our big woods were primeval and filled with plenty o' pristine beauty.

Growing in the forests near the Diamond Homestead were many smaller trees worthy of note such as the large white flowering dogwood, sassafras, wild persimmon, hollies with their beautiful green foliage and red berries, beech, sycamore, birch, and others too numerous to mention. These trees were not of so much commercial value but they added much to the beauty and grandeur of the woods throughout the year, especially during the flowering season and the autumn when foliage presented perfect pictures in color.

Among the more important flowering trees growing wild in the forest may be mentioned, the bay family, the magnolia grandiflora, producing large white flowers, the white bay, producing small white flowers and the red bay producing small red flowers, the yellow popular, sometimes called a tulip tree, producing light yellow tulip shaped flowers as large as the largest tulips, and the dogwoods producing masses of showy white flowers in spring and red berries in the autumn.

Among the finest flowering shrubs in our area [that] may be mentioned [are] the wild hydrangea with its large cluster of snow white flowers, the azaleas, three varieties, pink, yellow and red, mountain laurel with its masses of pink blooms containing the most delicate shades of pink, lavender and white and grandfather graybeard with its long white flowers resembling an old grandfather's long white beard. This flower producer is sometimes called a fring tree. Among flowering vines [that] may be mentioned are the yellow jessamine with its long cluster of yellow flowers and the woodbine with its bright red flowers.

May I suggest here that it might be a wise thing for people to select the native trees and shrubs growing near their homes for use in landscaping their grounds and gardens, and thus obtain trees and shrubs suited to the soil and climatic conditions. No doubt the effect would be as beautiful and artistic as it might have been by using plants not so well suited to the location.

As would be expected by all grown people, the Seven Little Diamonds in the rough soon became well acquainted with all the trees, shrubs and vines producing edible fruit in the woods where we worked at logging and looking after livestock, whether eaten by people, animals or birds. Among such fruits growing in our big woods may be mentioned the wild persimmon, hickory nuts, mayhaws, chinquapins, both tree and bush varieties, chestnuts, [Until about 1910 when the chestnut blight killed the trees] several varieties of huckleberries, blackberries, dewberries, scuppernongs, [bullises] and several varieties of delicious grapes. We Seven Sons soon learned the location of almost every wild fruit producing tree or vine growing in the woods near the Diamond Homestead and the exact day on the calendar upon which the fruit would be ripe. And too, we knew the fruits that were eaten by animals or birds that were not eaten by boys or human beings. And like all other boys who ever lived in isolated districts of any country we had a sort of instinctive way of telling which wild fruits are poisonous and which non poisonous. "Boys In The Woods" evidently acquire this information from wild animals with which they associate.

Observing the native trees, shrubs and vines growing in forests by men or boys while working among them will give the individual a practical working knowledge of such plants but not a real scientific knowledge of them. This practical working is what the average layman would do well to acquire. A little close observation when the opportunity is available will be worth while.

In the woods adjacent to the Diamond Homestead the Seven Sons soon became acquainted with many wild animals, such as the white tail deer, the common wild cat

sometimes called the bobcat, the gray fox, the raccoon, opossum, skunk, gray fox squirrels, cat squirrels and beavers. In our work at logging camps and in looking after livestock we became familiar with the feeding grounds and hiding places of all the wild animals in the immediate territory. At early ages we learned the habits of opossums foxes, raccoons and skunks because of their raids on roasting ears, peanuts, sweet potatoes and poultry. These little animals would visit our small cultivated patches in the early days at the Homestead, eat and destroy a large portion of what we small boys produced. After tiring of a vegetable diet they would visit the poultry yard in search of a young fryer of tender and juicy age or a fat hen for dessert. When the chickens were disturbed and gave the danger signal a well-trained cur dog usually caught and killed the thief before the dessert was finished. We had less experience with bobcats, they being more shy than the other varmints. They seldom stir during the day. They seldom would visit a poultry yard because they were shy of being chased by dogs.

Wild deer were plentiful during the early days of the Homestead. Many a time wild deer were observed loping by the cabin not more than a hundred yards away. Occasionally one would be seen at the spring when we older boys went for water for domestic use. When deer were chased for a long race between the Homestead and the Escambia River, they often came up the Holly Mill Creek to its head, our spring, and then ran on first one side and then the other of our home directly across the level to a spring forming the head of Cobb Creek and down that creek to Coldwater Creek to get entirely away from the hunters. Wild deer were often seen in the logging woods during the 1880's and 1890's. Wild turkeys were plentiful. They too often ran by our home when chased by hunters. They also were often seen in the logging woods.

Large gray fox squirrels were plentiful on the level while the little cat squirrels were plentiful in the swamps adjacent to the rivers, creeks and smaller streams. Seldom did we boys hunt squirrels or any other game because Father knew we were faring better working grassy patches of corn, cotton, peanuts, and potatoes, or assisting him in the log camp.

Rabbits were plentiful everywhere. They lived near the few small cultivated fields, in the big woods, on the level, in the woods near the small streams and near the edges of the larger swamps. We soon became familiar with their feeding habits and their methods of escaping capture by their enemies. Rabbits do almost all their feeding at night. Occasionally they may be seen feeding during cloudy afternoons or in early morning.

The poor rabbit has the hardest time of any of the smaller wild animals. His tender steaks are a sweet morsel to all the feline tribe and the predatory birds, hawks, owls and eagles. During the day the hawks and eagles are constantly on the watch with their keen eyes for the slightest movement of a rabbit's cotton-like tail. The same is true at night by owls. Is it any wonder that the rabbit spends much of his time sitting on his snow white tail? At night the rabbit is hunted by all the bobcats in the community. The foxes too, spend much time hunting for rabbit steak. And too, it is open season on rabbit hunting all year round both night and day. The rabbit is about the only living creature that is attacked all the year round both night and day, from both the land and the air. Before I really understood

rabbit nature I used to wonder how they were able to survive in a world where they were being constantly attacked by so many enemies. This wonder was increased when I learned that the rabbit possess no fighting ability and his speed is surpassed by bobcats, foxes, hawks, eagles and owls.

One morning when nine years of age, I was accompanying Father to a big cypress swamp where he was preparing to cut some cypress logs. When a little more than a mile from home, just as the sun was beginning to send it's rays through the open spaces among the tall pine trees as we rounded a little bend in the road where we could look three hundred yards down a straight stretch of a wide country road we saw a large buck rabbit enter the road from the woods at the other end of the straight stretch and head down the road toward us. When the rabbit had run approximately forty feet a large gray fox entered the road at the point entered by the rabbit and gave chase for rabbit steak.

Father instantly remarked, "LOOK, LOOK, now, we're going to see a real race", and stepped behind a small pine tree growing beside the edge of the road. I moved beside Father. We knew a great race was on and coming our way. We too, knew that under the circumstances each contestant would do his best. The fox was running for rabbit steak for breakfast and the rabbit was running to save his life. The race was a "dead match" for the first hundred yards. Then the rabbit seemed to lose the use of his legs. The fox began gaining. Our hopes for seeing a real race between two racy animals under circumstances in which both undoubtedly would do his best began to wane. The rabbit bounced along, jumping up too much to make the speed the fox was now making. It seemed the rabbit has been chased a long time and had been badly out winded by the fox. His poor legs couldn't make speed. As the boys used to say about horses, when running their best in a race, "The fox lay down to it and came down the road like a streak of greased lightning." The fox was now not more than twenty feet from the rabbit. Still the rabbit seemed bewildered. He bounced up and down like a dropped rubber ball, without making much headway. The fox was still gaining. He was now within fifteen feet of the steak he would soon be eating for breakfast.

Father and I both lost interest in the race. It seemed the rabbit was resigned to his fate and did not care much to prolong the agony. He seemed too scared to run. He would jump high but not forward. He ran a little on one side of the road and then a little on the other side. Then he jumped high but made no speed. We thought sure the rabbit was to be eaten and [the rabbit] knew it as well or better than we did. His running was almost over. The fox came closer and closer but the rabbit continued as before. It appeared the poor thing had been completely mesmerized. He jumped up and down. The fox was now stretched out like a taunt string. The fox was within three or four feet of the rabbit. The two were not more than thirty feet from Father and me. The fox now turned his mouth sideways so he better could grab a good hold on a good rabbit steak. Father and I were now holding our breath expecting to see the end of the race as the fox snapped his sharp white teeth deep into the hind leg of the rabbit. But not so. Without warning the rabbit came to life and jumped full six feet at a right angle and moved off with accelerated speed and went through a large brier patch thirty feet from the road. The speeding fox had been tricked into running his best as the brier patch was nearer so that when the rabbit dodged to the

side the fox slipped, rolled and slid thirty feet down the road before he could take up. As he was about to take up near Father, he threw his ax toward him. The bewildered fox scampered off on the opposite side of the road, tired and hungry without any breakfast.

It was now perfectly clear to Father and me that the rabbit had bounced and jumped along keeping tab on the exact distance between his hind legs and the sharp teeth of the fox and had tricked the fox to run his best down this straight stretch of road and planned to roll him beside the briar patch where he [the rabbit] could make a quick get-away before the fox could take up, get up and turn around for another race.

On another occasion several years later when I was larger, Father and I were going in a buggy pulled by Pat, the "Hame legged horse," to what was known as "The Gaylor Dead River Landing" on the Escambia River near where the Jay hard surface road enters the swamp, to assist in poling some logs from the dead river into the main river, when we were within thirty feet of the mouth of a large gully partly over-grown with trees, a large swamp rabbit came full speed from the mouth of the gully and crossed directly in front of Pat. The rabbit was followed by a large bobcat not more than ten feet behind. Twenty feet after crossing the road when the bobcat was within six feet of the rabbit the rabbit jumped into a thick patch of bushes six or eight feet in diameter, coming out at a right angle from the direction he entered. The big bobcat went straight through the cluster of bushes and looked bewildered because he could not see the rabbit when he came from the bushes. The big cat turned immediately toward another cluster of bushes fifteen feet in front of him as if searching there for the rabbit. Evidently attracted by the noise of the moving horse and buggy, the cat looked toward us and scampered off into the swamp toward the river. The rabbit had already crossed the road immediately behind the buggy and entered the thick underbrush covering the side of the steep bluff.

From the two incidents witnessed by Father and me exactly as related, we came to the definite conclusion that the rabbit as a species of timid non-belligerent small animal has been able to survive during the ages down through countless generations from continuous attacks of his enemies from land and air, both day and night, because of the following briefly expressed reasons:

1. His large round protruding eyes enables him to see in all directions at the same time without turning his head, even when asleep.
  2. The rapid action of his steering gear without any slow down of speed
  3. The rapid acceleration of his speed, QUICK PICKUP.
  4. He never gets excited or "loses his head" in time of danger.
  5. He knows his enemies, their habitats, their weapons and their manner of attack
  6. He knows his woods, all the thickets, brambles, holes and hide-outs.
  7. He is ever on alert, even when asleep
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## **Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough**

**STABLING A DONKEY**

**SUNDAY SQUIRRELING**

**EMORY GALE GOES A GIRLING**



## STABLING A DONKEY

During the early days of the Diamond Homestead the Seven Sons had the coveted privilege of playing with, driving, and riding horses, colts, oxen, bull yearlings and billy goats of all sizes, colors and descriptions. We also had the racing task of chasing long nosed, long legged, razor back hogs from the cultivated patches. Chickens, guinea fowls and geese on the place also provided responsibilities that added to the early education of the seven youngsters. Wild deer, turkeys, squirrels, raccoons, foxes, 'possums and other varmints were about as plentiful as the domesticated animals during the earlier days of Henry and me. Sam and Charley had some experience in observing the wild animals and birds. The water used for domestic purposes was brought from a spring located under a high bluff not more than one hundred fifty yards from the house. The family laundry was usually done at the spring. It was not an uncommon sight to see wild deer and turkeys using the spring as a watering place during the early days at the homestead. We boys at an early age became familiar with the behavior of the tame animals and fowls on the place and with the wild animals and fowls in the nearby forests. We learned their temperament, likes and dislikes, and how to deal with them in the easiest way.

One afternoon Father brought home a little donkey, sometimes called a "Jenny", as a sort of a wind-fall in a trade. Upon his arrival with the donkey several boys crowded around staring at it with much curiosity and wondering where he had gotten a nice little mule colt for the boys to break. Mother soon came out to see what was attracting so much attention. She explained that the little animal was not a mule colt as Father had led us to believe, but a donkey and warned us to keep away from its heels. Mother then turned to Father and wanted to know why he brought that animal here to kick the heads off some of the boys. "Why" said she, "Donkeys are the kickingest things in the world." Father's only reply was, "I reckon the boys will soon learn to stand their hand with the donkey's heels." The reader may rest assured we did. However, Father always thought this donkey was the nearest match for the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough he ever had about the old homestead.

This donkey was soon found to be different from any other animal on the place. The fun a billy goat gets from butting was but a joke compared with the joy this donkey got out of kicking. Sam soon expressed a laconic truth as a warning as follows: "Better look out boys, that thing kicks with all four feet and at both ends at the same time, and without notice."

This donkey was the epitome of stubbornness. Usually it refused to do whatever we wanted it to do and no amount of coaxing or punishment could change its attitude. The boys had learned long before that about three twists of a billy goat's tail was a sure cure for sulkiness. But not so with this donkey, for no one could be found willing to give the second twist. When this donkey decided to stand still it stood still notwithstanding the many tricks thought out and tried by the Seven Sons. The placing of briars or thorny bamboo [Southern Smilax] under its tail had no effect. The tying of two tom cats together by their tails and swinging them across the donkey's back or neck to scratch and fight attracted no attention. The two family dogs were once brought and "sicked" on the

donkey with the hope that a few snaps about the ankles would do the trick. The first dog to approach the tail end received a kick that sent him rolling and licking his bruises. The other dog tried approaching the other end and received a blow from a front foot. He too, retired to lick his bruises.

The animal spent almost all of its time grazing in a field. Water had to be carried to it. This was monotonous. If one of the boys could only have tied a rope around its neck and loped it off to the spring for water as he did the horses all would have been well. It finally got to be a real nuisance on the place. The reader will no doubt want to know if the boys ever rode it. The answer is yes, but the riding was entirely too slow for a boy who had been riding in a wagon pulled by oxen. And too, no one riding this donkey ever knew when its head would be jammed between its knees and the rider tossed or flipped to the ground. It never threw its rider very high. Hence, the falls were not dangerous, but they did grow monotonous. Getting up and brushing dirt off continuously gets tiresome.

When plow time came in the spring and crops were planted it became necessary to keep the donkey out of the fields. This brought new problems. Sometimes it would refuse to enter a lot gate or a stable door. Then the real trouble would begin. One afternoon the donkey was in an ox lot. When Father saw the teams coming he requested Charley and me to put the donkey in a stable before the oxen were let loose in the lot.

First we tried to coax it into the stable with a bucket of feed. It wouldn't even notice the feed. We then tried to drive it in. This proved futile. We then placed a rope around its neck and tried to lead it in the stable. It led to the door where it stopped and stood still. We pulled with all out strength but the donkey braced its feet against the doorsill and we were unable to budge the little animal.

By this time the logging ox teams were coming into the lot. Father seeing our plight came to assist us. He had been looking on and hoping to stay out of the trouble. He tried to take hold of one front leg of the donkey and lift it over the doorsill but received a hard kick for his trouble. He knew now why Charley and I had been keeping our distance from either end of the donkey. Father then grabbed hold of the rope with Charley and me and jerked with all his strength as he admonished us to pull our best and we would be able to pull the drotted thing over the sill. We jerked at the same instant Father did. The old rope snapped, dropping us against the back wall of the stable. We rubbed our bruises and looked at the donkey still standing in its same tracks. Father then got a stout rope and tied it around the donkey's neck expecting us to pull the animal into the stable if the rope held. We jerked and pulled but could not move the stubborn thing.

The oxen had now finished eating their grain and were walking around in the lot looking for hay. The two divers, John Ard, a short heavy set man, and Arch Pyburn, a large tall man, had walked up and were watching our efforts to move the donkey. Father requested them to get a large flat rail from the lot fence and come and assist in getting the animal in the stable. Father then showed the men how to place the flat side of the rail against the donkey's hips and push it through the doorway. The rail was placed as directed. When all was ready, Father shouted the words, "Pull and push together." We pulled and the two

men pushed. Nothing moved. Presently the animal raised its back end a little off the ground bringing its hock joints up to the rail, then arched its back and straightened out against the rail, landing both men flat in the lot with the rail on top. The lot was muddy as usual. Both men got up “a cussin” the kicking thing, and the slick lot.

As they brushed mud from their backs, Father walked from the stable passing too near the tail end of the donkey and received a hard kick for his carelessness, slipping him sprawling on the ground, making a life size picture of him. This made him as mad as the two ox drivers. He grabbed a board and paddled the donkey, but it did not move a foot or even notice him or his board any more than if he had been beating a stump. He laid the board aside and requested the men to place the rail under the back part of the donkey’s body and summersault it into the stable. “Just flip it over,” said he. The rail was placed and the back part of the body raised about a foot from the ground, when suddenly both hind legs were jerked to the front side of the rail and the rail kicked much harder than before, sending both men sprawling to the ground again with the rail on top. This second fall was harder than the first one. The two heavy men almost shook the earth when they struck the ground. They got up cursing the kicking thing, the slick lot and the rail. They were madder but wiser about the habits and strength of a donkey. Then and there the donkey was dubbed, “DANAMITE,” meaning dynamite, of course.

It was now plain that the kicking process must be cured if the animal was to be pulled or pushed into the stable. The stout rope was passed over a joist, a half hitch taken with the rope around the donkey’s nose and its head pulled high into the air. The rail was then placed under the body of the donkey close against its fore legs. A sudden lift on the rail brought the fore legs from their brace under the sill. All slack in the rope over the joist was taken up and the donkey naturally swung into the stable, and the job was over.

As the stable door was being fastened, the cursing changed to laughter.

Still laughing, the three men and two boys stepped back to get a better look at the pictures recently printed in the mud. The better look renewed the laughing. When it was quieted, Mr. Ard, who was noted for making odd remarks, shook his head and said as he looked up, “Arch, that’s your picture. The kicking camera got your full length and size. I’d recognize it in the dark.” Then he shook his head again a time or two and said: “And all that kicking, cussing and picture making in the mud over STABLING A DONKEY. Who’d a thought it.”

“So say we all,” said Arch.

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## SUNDAY SQUIRRELING

Father once had a dog named Watch. He went with Father almost every time he left the place. The dog became attached to the old gray mare. If the horse was driven to a buggy or a wagon, the dog went along. If Father rode horseback the dog went with him.

Wherever the horse was tied, there the dog stayed as a protector. He took it upon himself to keep all other animals as well as persons from this horse when she was left alone. This dog often followed the horse when she was let out to graze. One Saturday night during the summer Father let the mare and her colt out to graze. The dog followed them to the woods. Next morning Father decided that since the dog did not eat grass he would walk out back of his fields and drive the mare and colt home so the dog could be given some breakfast.

Half a mile away Father found the mare and colt grazing. The dog was quietly resting in a shade nearby watching them. The dog declined to come home with him unless he brought the mare and colt too. Hence, he started driving the horse home. Soon the dog chased a young fox squirrel up a small pine tree. The squirrel took refuge in a hole in the tree about forty feet high. From the looks of the tree, Father decided the young squirrel was one of a brood of young ones raised in this hollow tree. He left the mare, colt and the dog there in the woods, the dog to keep the squirrel in the tree while he returned home for an ax and a bunch of boys to catch a brood of young squirrels. Father thought by cutting down the tree several young squirrels might be captured and tamed to aid in the education of his Little Diamonds in the Rough.

As soon as he told about leaving Watch to keep a squirrel in a tree while he returned for an ax and some help in catching the young squirrels, one boy grabbed for an ax and he and three or four others started for the tree with Father following some distance behind. On the way to the tree a neighbor, Uncle Frank Cobb, joined the party. This old man was full of wit and frontier philosophy. He went along for the fun he expected to get from seeing the boys catch some half grown squirrels and get badly bitten and scratched. Mr. Cobb and Father were both experienced woodsmen and knew a lot about fox squirrels that we boys didn't. We soon learned that they expected to have a real circus in the woods that Sunday morning with us boys as the clowns. In this they were not wholly disappointed. Only one squirrel was in the tree. If several had been there I suppose the circus would have been much greater. As it was, they had plenty of fun for one day. They never ceased to laugh when "Sunday Squirreling" was mentioned.

Soon the place was reached. The dog was waiting at the root of the tree. Father sounded the tree by striking it with the head of the ax. As he thought, it was only a hollow shell and could be chopped down quickly.

Father began to chop on the tree. As he worked Mr. Cobb and we boys stood around looking up the tree as if we expected to see many squirrels come from the hole because of the chopping. Mr. Cobb kept us all laughing at his witty remarks about his many and

varied experiences during his boyhood days in the woods. He had been bitten and scratched by almost every animal that can bite or scratch. He related many of these experiences for the benefit of us boys, explaining that he was doing it so we would know how to catch that nest of young squirrels, take them home and tame them. We listened with marked attention.

Pretty soon Father stopped cutting on the tree and requested us boys to stand in a circle round the spot where the tree would soon fall, telling us that the young squirrels might come from the tree as soon as it hits the ground and cautioned us to be ready. He had one of us hold Watch so he would not run under the falling tree and get hurt. Mr. Cobb selected a grandstand location to see the show. The tree leaned and cracked. Everybody held his breath. It cracked again. Another lick or two with the sharp ax and down it fell.

The dog and the boys closed in. No squirrel came from the tree.

The openings in the tree were all stopped. Father sounded the tree to ascertain the place or places to cut into the hollow to locate the squirrel or squirrels. Short piece after short piece was cut from the log. During this time we were entertained by our neighbor. He told us of a similar experience he had as a boy. It is here given in his own words almost exactly as he related it.

“This reminds me of an occasion when two other boys and I had located a large pine tree that we thought contained a nest of young fox squirrels. SIR, PETER, we had a lot of fun in cutting the tree down. It was a big tree and perfectly solid at the ground. We boys cut it down with an old worn dull ax. The weather was hot. We worked and sweated nearly a half a day cutting the tree. It was about the hardest and hottest work we had ever done. We began chopping about nine o’clock in the morning. We worked without dinner until about three that afternoon before the tree fell. When it fell we were tired, hot and hungry.”

“We confounded fool boys rushed up to the hole in the tree where we expected to see the squirrels come out. We had forgotten our tired, hot and hungry feelings in our anticipation of catching the squirrels that we knew must be in this hollow tree. HUH! I WONDER! Not a single squirrel came out to greet us. SIR, PETER, imagine our disgusted looks, when a swarm of yellow jackets came out of that tree and covered us. The shock of hundreds of piercing javelins brought forth yells and screams as we scattered running and striking at the devilish stinging bugs. We ran through clusters of bushes with the hopes of getting rid of the bugs. We broke small brushes and fought them away. We pulled them from our heads with our hands. They stung our fingers as we pulled them from our hair. We yelled and cursed. Still they stung.”

“One fool boy had pulled his shirt tail out during the hard chopping, ‘to cool off’, he said. SIR, PETER, HUH! It’s no exaggeration when I tell you that confounded fool’s temperature reached the boiling point in three minutes. That’s the way he cooled off.

After running all over the nearby woods he had to “SHUCK” his shirt to get rid of them biting bugs. We razzed him ragged about his ‘cooling off’ process. SIR, PETER, he was ruined. As he ran, his shirttail stretched out behind him and Sir, them bugs went under it like hiding under a clay root. His entire body was red and raw as fresh beef. HUH! During the next few days our noses were as red as an old turkey gobbler’s snout and our eyes nearly closed because of the swelling in our faces. YES SIR EE, WE WERE HURRAHS TO LOOK AT.”

“In our excitement in leaving the fallen tree, one of the boys dropped the ax. When we got over our experiences our Dads made us go back and get the old dull ax. We went back at night so the stinging rascals wouldn’t be watching for us, and [we] got even with them by setting fire to the hollow tree and burning them. We gave the rascals TIT for TAT. HUH! They gave us a lot of living hell. We handed it back to them.”

“SIR, PETER, HUH! I’d give ten dollars to see this bunch of boys meet a swarm of yellow jackets from that tree like we boys did that day. We never can forget it. HUH! I WONDER! It would be lots of fun for us and wonderful experience for the boys. They’d enjoy it too, after they overed it.”

About the time our neighbor finished telling of his experiences in cutting down the squirrel tree and we were thinking seriously of yellow jackets as well as squirrels, Father yelled, “LOOK OUT, here comes a squirrel.” Out jumped a pretty, half-grown, gray squirrel. It passed close by several boys, dodged us and the dog and climbed a nearby pine sapling. The sapling was no more than 5 or 6 inches in diameter at the ground and approximately forty feet high.

Mr. Cobb was laughing and teasing us boys for letting the squirrel get away. He remarked, “HUH, SIR, PETER, them boys of yours dodged that squirrel like a bunch of houn’s would dodge an old wild bobcat when routed from his refuge under a clay root.” We laughed at his remarks but knew he was only teasing to make us do our best to catch the next squirrel and get badly bitten and scratched so he could laugh at us.

Father examined the log and made certain that no other squirrel or squirrels were in it. He then began to think of cutting the sapling so we could have another chance at catching this one. At this point I volunteered to climb the sapling and make the squirrel jump out. I explained that by making the squirrel jump from the tree the dog would see where it would come to the ground and could catch it before it climbed another tree. With this said, up the tree I went.

Then about 16 or 18 feet up the tree I looked up and saw the squirrel was getting restless. If evidently didn’t like my coming up and had decided the tree was too small for both of us at the same time. I yelled to the folks on the ground, “LOOK OUT, IT’S GETITNG READY TO JUMP.” To this Mr. Cobb replied, ‘SIR, HUH! I WONDER! If that boy’s getting dizzy a-ready, or scared or just can’t climb.” I said, “I ain’t dizzy, I ain’t scared and I can climb this sapling to its top, but that squirrel’s a coming out a-here.”

At that moment the squirrel sailed out toward a spot where no one was standing. At the same moment I jumped from the tree. When the squirrel landed I was there too, and caught it. Lady luck was with me. The squirrel was caught by the back of the neck with one hand and its hind legs with the other. Neither of us was badly hurt. The squirrel gave me one bit through the center of a thumbnail and a few minor scratches.

About the time the squirrel and I landed, Mr. Cobb said, "I WONDER! SIR, PETER, it's a good thing that blasted squirrel didn't wait until that fool boy got higher to jump. If he had the boy might o' killed himself." Then he roared with laughter. "Well", said he, "It's a great show. It's well worth the cost. HUH! I WONDER! It's a show to see a boy climb a tree and jump out like a squirrel. HUH! SIR, I've seen boys climb saplings all my life but sir, that's the first time I ever saw one jump over 18 feet high 'pine blank' like a squirrel. HUH! SIR, I WONDER! I'm glad you invited me to come along and see the circus."

With this observation he sat down on the grass and guffawed and ha, ha'd to his heart's content.

When he overed his guffawing and rolling on the grass, he said: "Sir Peter, I thank you. The Sunday squirreling was equal to a good circus. The Little Diamonds in the Rough make good squirreling clowns."

With this remark he mounted his little black horse named Ball and rode off in a slow rack toward his home. The squirreling clowns hied away to build a cage for the new pet.

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## **EMORY GALE GOES A GIRLING**

The incident related under the above heading happened a few years after the four older of the Seven Sons were away from the Old Homestead either at work or attending school. It is given here substantially as told by the three boys involved and corroborated by Mother in so far as lot mud and billy goat odors appearing on Sunday suits could be used as circumstantial evidence.

One Sunday afternoon when Emory, Irl and Walker were all in the teenage [years], the three drove Jack, the snow white horse, to a buggy to attend some sort of church or Sunday School service in the immediate neighborhood. When the services were over Irl and Walker found that Emory had persuaded one of the girls of the younger socialites to invite him home with her for supper and to spend the evening at her home with a group of

young people in practicing for a Sunday School or Baptist Young People's Union program. This left Irl and Walker to walk home, as distance of two miles.

Irl and Walker ordinarily would have thought nothing of having to walk home because it had been a rule among the Seven Sons when two or more of the boys were riding in the same buggy, the first one to get a girl to ride with him was to have the buggy the rest of the day and the other boy or boys would willingly walk. However, on this particular afternoon a heavy rain had fallen while the boys were in the church, causing them to have to walk two miles on a wet, clay, slippery road. Because of this Irl and Walker decided without much debate that Emory had played a slick trick on them and that sooner or later they would give him a dose of his own medicine and make him take it and like it. They discussed the matter as they trudged along in the slippery sticky clay, but were unable to decide how they would be able to give him a deal as slick and as dirty as he had given them. Home was reached without any decision of how they would even the score.

It was near night when they arrived home. Feeding time was on. Father called Irl and Walker to assist him in feeding cattle, horses and hogs. In assisting with the feeding they came in contact with Dear Old Sandy who wanted to eat some feed in a stable without a horse. They had quite a scuffle to get him out of the stable without receiving a knock down blow from this butting machine. Soon the feeding was over and the boys went to the house and washed and otherwise cleaned up a little by removing clay sports and lot mud from their clothes. After supper the two boys were sitting around a table reading when the slick dirty trick Emory had played on them again got under consideration. Pretty soon the narrow escape they had in the encounter with Dear Old Sandy about the feed in the stable put ideas in their heads. Thought they, what a nice thing it would be if Dear Old Sandy could be kept in a stable until Emory came in and put Jack in a stable and fed him. No doubt Emory would feel the full force of at least one blow from Sandy's butting machine. These boys knew the customary thing for Sandy to do as soon as dark came was to go to an open dry barn and enjoy restful sleep. In this case Emory would not come in contact with him at all. Soon the matter was dropped.

Just before bedtime the question of evening the score with Emory came up for further discussion. A little further discussion and the idea placed in their heads because of the contact with Sandy in the stable burst into full bloom, followed by fruit. It was decided to go to the barn, get Sandy and place him in Jack's stable. By shutting him in the stable there would be no doubt but what Emory would make touching contacts. Yes, agreed they, this will be a slick dirty trick. It will even the score while the matter is fresh in Emory's mind.

Irl and Walker expected to find Sandy sound asleep but were certain with the aid of a little corn he would gladly follow them to the stable. Once in the stable it would be an easy task to close the door and fasten it. Not so. Dear Old Sandy was no plain plebian goat. He belonged to the Aristocracy. He would eat feed handed to him in the dry barn but refused to follow any feed bucket from the dry barn into a muddy lot. The boys coaxed and petted but Sandy still declined to leave his sleeping quarters. Finally the small



amount of feed brought to the barn was eaten without Sandy's showing any signs of leaving his bed.

The two boys went into conference. First they thought it might be well to get more feed, but upon thinking this over decided that since Sandy would not be coaxed to leave his warm dry bed when he was hungry he certainly would not do so after his stomach was almost full. It was soon agreed that Irl would take Sandy by the horns and pull and Walker would get behind and push. Accordingly the two boys spit in their hands, and got themselves in position. The signal was given for the procession to move. A gentle pull and a similar push failed to move Sandy from his tracks. Irl pulled his best and Walker pushed with all his strength. Nothing moved. Sandy seemed anchored for the night. A few hard jerks by Irl and a couple of tail twists by Walker and Sandy was moved from the barn a few feet into the muddy lot. Here the slickness of the lot prevented any hard jerks lest the boys slip flat in the mud. Dear Old Sandy resisted with all this strength and tried to free himself from the boys so he could return to his warm bed in the barn. As was his custom, he put up a good fight.

These two boys knew how to handle a big billy goat in a scuffle. They knew the tender spots of a billy goat and how to move him if they could but get the right hold. They stood at ease for a little rest. Irl then quietly stroked Sandy's long white beard as if showing affection. When he had gotten his right hand well twisted in the beard and held the sharp tip of the long horn next to him with his left hand so as to keep it from doing damage he gave Walker the signal to move. As Irl pulled on the long beard, Walker twisted Sandy's tail. Now the only touchous places on a big billy goat are his beard and tail. Sandy knew now he had been tricked by permitting the boys to get these foul holds. He was now like Samson when his hair was shorn. His resistance was gone and he knew it. So after a few minor scuffles in which he and the boys were pretty well muddied he was led to the stable and the door shut and fastened, where he had to wait until Emory arrived and put Jack in the stable.

The boys expected Emory to arrive about 10:30, late bed time for working country boys of teen age in those hard working days, and get thoroughly frightened when he opened the door and met Sandy face to face. They expected Dear Old Sandy to be still mad because of having been aroused from his warm bed, fed, and then tricked and forcibly placed in a stable. They expected Sandy would rush from the stable as soon as the door was opened. Not so. In arriving at these conclusions the two boys forgot billy goats have appetites comparing favorably with the appetites of boys. Dear Old Sandy was now ready to eat the feed carried to the stable for Jack. He resented having Jack placed in the stable for a partner. Emory's task now was to get Sandy from the stable lest he hurt the horse with his long keen horns or Jack kick the goat unmercifully during the night.

Now who knows but what Dear Old Sandy might have decided that since he was taking the place of a horse in a stable he might soon be a real horse and entitled to eat the feed placed there for the horses. And too, with the thought still in mind that he had been illegally aroused from his warm bed, forcibly ejected from his sleeping quarters and placed in the stable against his will had made him fighting mad. Regardless of what he

thought, Sandy was still mad and ready to resist any more trickery or cruel treatment. He probably reasoned thusly: To be wakened late at night when he was enjoying peaceful slumber that comes only from useful labor well done, first coaxed and persuaded to leave his accustomed sleeping place and upon his refusal to do so had been tricked and forcibly dragged across a muddy lot was enough insult for one night. He therefore respectfully declined to leave the stable. No, he was not to be made the goat in the case any further. He was now going to be a horse and eat like one until tricked from the stable like he had been tricked into it. He began eating the feed in the trough and jabbing at the horse's jaws with the sharp points of his long horns. Jack, finding himself unable to get his head into the feed trough, reversed his position and began kicking at Sandy with both heels. Jack had been raised on the Diamond Homestead along with the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough and a bunch of billy goats and had at an early age learned to stand his hand in whatever position he found himself.

At this time Emory realized that his first job was to stop the fight before the clash of horns and hoofs against stable walls aroused the sleeping folks at the house and they, thinking thieves were tearing down the barn, would arm themselves and come forth to battle with the thieves. At once he rushed in, grabbed Sandy by the long white beard and gently led him toward the door. Upon arriving at the door Sandy refused to be led further. He stopped, still chewing the corn in his mouth. You see, Emory did not have the assistance of a tail twister like Irl had in leading Sandy to the stable. Hence, the going was not so good. After a few preliminary skirmishes, Sandy was gotten outside the door. Once outside the door Emory let loose of the long white beard, expecting Sandy to walk off across the muddy lot and join his kith and kin for another nap.

Not so. As Emory turned around to close the door and fasten it, he heard a familiar snort and a sneeze, which he knew was a danger signal. Immediately he jumped to one side, leaving the door unfastened. His quick jump prevented his receiving a knock down blow straight from the full strength of Sandy's butting machine. As it was, he received only a side glancing blow causing him to stumble to his knees and hands in the muddy lot. His nimbleness enabled him to avert the second blow by striking Sandy across the nose with the bridle still held in his hand. Sandy then turned and walked off to the goat barn where he soon was dreaming of what a horse he might have been had he remained in the stable.

Emory returned to the door, fastened it and put the bridle in the barn. He then walked slowly and quietly to the house, hoping to get to bed without waking anyone. Of course, he was unaware that Irl and Walker were wide-awake listening for the fracas certain to take place when Jack and Sandy found themselves in the same stable. Neither was he aware that the sounds of horns and hoof crashing [against] stable walls had aroused Father who had partially dressed and was standing on the front porch listening for further noises before going to the barn to investigate the lumbering sounds. As Emory entered the gate, Father inquired if a mule or horse had kicked a stable down or if anything was wrong with the stock at the barn. Emory replied curtly, "No, nothing wrong, only a door slammed a time or two," and walked around the house to his room.

Early Monday morning all three boys were out before breakfast with brushes and benzine cleaning lot mud and billy goat odors from Sunday suits. Mother passed by the cleaning and stopped to inquire how the clothes had gotten so muddy. Before she received any answer she detected the billy goat odors mixed with the fumes from the benzine used in the cleaning process. She said disgustingly, “Why you boys must have spent yesterday afternoon with some neighbor boys riding and working billy goats. Really, will you boys never get large enough to quit spending Sunday time with stinking old billy goats?” Without waiting for an answer, she walked on sniffing and sneezing a few times.

When the boys finished the cleaning process and were putting their clothes away, Irl remarked, with a twinkle in his eye, “Well, the truth is we started out to play a little clean joke on each other, but it turned out to be a SLICK, DIRTY, STINKING AFFAIR for all of us. I’ll bet it’ll take a bath in benzine to remove the odors.”

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## **Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough**

**SKY BALLS**

**JACK & MINNIE**

**STRANGE MIX-UP**

## SKY BALLS

It was an almost universal custom among logging men in our part of the country to let their oxen run on the range during the summers while the mills sawed the logs accumulated during the winter when the streams usually had a deeper flow of water for floating logs to market. Railroads were not in use at this time for bringing logs to market. Father, following this custom, had let his oxen run on the range during the summer. In September he was repairing his lot fences and barns preparatory to begin logging operations the first of October. Henry and I were small, Henry being almost five and I a little over six years old. We were standing around watching the work and being made to think we were assisting with the job.

Shortly after the noon hour one day Father discovered he must have some new gatepost to replace some decayed ones. He knew where a small fat pine tree stood only a short distance [away] from which the post could be cut. He decided to go cut the posts that afternoon and haul them to the place where they were to be used early the next morning when the oxen would be handy. Henry and I were permitted to go with Father. We went by the house for a drink of fresh water. When Mother learned we were going to [the] nearby woods she decided to go too. The two small children were made ready and soon we were off. Within ten minutes we were at the tree from which the posts were to be cut.

The weather was an ideal autumn day. The first signs of the season were beginning to appear. Wild flowers were blooming among the pine trees. The forest leaves were changing from green to bright purple and golden colors. The woods were colorful, inviting, fascinating, a fitting time for two of the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough to be introduced to the vicissitudes of the many UPS AND DOWNS awaiting around the corners, crooks and curves of the long, long road ahead of them.

Mother soon seated herself beside a large nearby tree in a cool shade. Mamie and Sam, the two smaller children, played near her busying themselves picking a few wild flowers and bright colored leaves with which to amuse themselves and Mother. Henry and I at once began the usual research activities of small boys in the woods by looking for a tree or trees to climb. No suitable ones for climbing were found nearby. A substitute for trees was soon found. Nearby the tree Father was cutting for posts, was a large fat pine tree top lying across another log fifteen or twenty feet from the top end from which some large branches extended slantingly ten or twelve feet high. The large end of this treetop extended twenty-five or thirty feet back from where it rested on the log with the end resting on the ground. This caused the top end where the branches were sticking up to be approximately two feet above the ground.

Soon Henry and I were perched like birds on the tops of two tallest branches protruding upward from this treetop. Father was busy chopping down the post tree and had paid no attention to Henry and me. Mother had noticed us on the high perches and had called to us a few times to get down before we fell and got hurt on some of the many jagged limbs and knots below us. We were too busy playing like we were birds to pay any attention to

her calls. We were wishing we could fly from one high point, through the air, to another high one. It was too much trouble to have to climb down to the ground, walk to another tree and then climb up again. To fly, we thought, would be lots of fun and save time and energy. Seemingly we had forgotten to think about the great sport and fun of climbing. We didn't know then that we were climbing because of innate tendencies or probably inherited instincts. Neither did we know the real meaning of the word "CLIMB". All we knew was that we possessed an uncontrollable inclination to climb to the top of every tree that looked inviting. We probably were too young to know that our inherent tendencies to climb were a part of the great plan to develop physical strength and endurance.

Father had kept busy chopping down the tree and had paid no attention to Henry and me, except to look up three or four minutes before he knew the tree would fall to be certain we were well out of reach of the falling tree. A few more strokes with the ax and the tree would fall. Father knew it would fall across the large end of the treetop in which Henry and I were perched, about half way from the large end resting on the ground and where it rested on the log. He thought the post tree was too light to give the treetop any noticeable jar or shake, hence, he let us stay on our high perches as he continued chopping.

Henry and I were talking in a sort of confidential conversation to each other about how great it would be to have wings and fly through the air instead of having to walk on the ground like slow moving animals such as oxen, cows and hogs. We were holding to our perches with our feet like birds and using our hands to imitate the motions of bird's wings when in flight and pointing to the top of some distant tree to which we would fly if..... Suddenly the post tree gave one little break and fell directly across the large end of our treetop at the right place to spring the middle down about six inches and the top end up about twelve inches. This flip up of the tree top together with the springiness of the branches upon which Henry and I were perched, ten feet above the ground, threw us like "SKY BALLS" not an inch less than FIFTEEN FEET HIGH circumscribing a half circle between Heaven and earth, thus giving us an unexpected opportunity of experiencing a real-honest-to-goodness bird flight instead of the imaginary ones the fall of the trees had so suddenly ended.

This flight was far too sudden and the landing all too soon for thrills. All we had time to do from the sudden "take off" until the "safe landing" was shut our eyes and hope to land not on pine knots and jagged limbs. Our hopes were realized. Neither of us struck a thing in the landing except grassy ground, plenty hard enough to bump the breath from us. We dozed. We dazed, and dozed and dazed AND SAW \* \* \* \* \*.

When I woke Father was gently tapping me in the right flank with one hand and mashing my back on the front side with the other. The trick worked. I breathed, scrambled to my feet and looked around for the other bird. Mother was shaking Henry's head and repeatedly telling Father that he had killed both boys by carelessly cutting a tree down on them. Father calmly replied, "they're not hurt, just had the breath bumped out." He then reached over and mashed Henry's back on the front side and gave him a sudden shake.

The trick worked. Henry breathed, looked around and asked, “How far did we land from our perches?” Mother was still nervous and wanted something done quick.

Father told Henry we had been thrown upward from the tops of the limbs and had landed fifteen feet away on the grass, free from limbs and jagged knots. He congratulated us for our thoughtfulness in picking out smooth landing places.

Mother hustled us away from the place of excitement to a cool shade for a little rest.

While cooling and resting in the shade, Father joked Henry and me about our “SKY BALLING” experience. He wanted to know how it felt to play sky ball and be the ball. We had never played the game and, of course, were not familiar with the methods of knocking “SKY BALLS.” We had never been to school and had not learned of this sport. Father then explained the method of knocking “SKY BALLS”, as a sport.

Henry and I then told about how we had been wishing we could fly and were imitating the motions of bird’s wings in flight with our hands as the tree fell.

Father suggested that we wish for wings next time. We replied, “There ain’t going to be no next time, we don’t like playing Sky Ball. If we’ve got to be the balls.”

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## JACK AND MINNIE

Jack and Minnie were two hardy hard-working pony mules raised on the Diamond Homestead along with the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough. The ponies were descendants of a hardy stock of horses brought direct from Spain by Spanish planters who settled in the territory of West Florida along the course of the Escambia River in what later became the north western corner of Santa Rosa County. It was claimed by the early settlers in this frontier that the Spanish stock of ponies brought from Spain had been bred a few years before with the famous white Arabian stock of horses, which was probably responsible for their snow white color, speed and durability. The seven head of boys with who the ponies were raised were descendants on the paternal side of their ancestry from English and Irish and on the maternal side from French and Welch; not a bad inheritance for boys reared by pioneers on a Florida Frontier where hardiness and durability were essential traits if they were to be able to stand their hand in the “Ups and Downs” they would face. These ponies and boys grew up together, played together, worked together and therefore shared one another’s joys and sorrows, good luck and misfortunes and friendships and hardships. The boys fed, watered and otherwise took care of the ponies and in return the ponies looked out for and cared for the boys until each of the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough had a wife and children to take care of him and keep him traveling the straight and narrow trail.

Probably no animal or animals had a greater influence or left a more lasting impression upon the lives and characters of the Seven Sons than did this span of snow-white ponies, Jack and Minnie. Every one of the seven of us were closely associated with these ponies for many years. During the early boyhood days of the two older of the boys all hauling at the Diamond Homestead was done by oxen, singly or in pairs. During their earlier days they sometimes drove three or four yoke in hauling the big pine logs to market. These faithful slow plodding oxen left lasting impressions upon these two boys. The greatest lessons these boys ever learned in patience and stick-at-a-tiveness were learned from Bright and Jerry, Ruff and Ready and others like'em. These oxen possessed super strength, patience and a determination to do the task set before them.

The two older boys used Jack and Minnie freely for horseback riding, driving to a buggy and plowing. However, they never drove them to a wagon in hauling freight or various and sundry commodities about the old Homestead. The other five boys often used Jack and Minnie for horseback riding, driving to a buggy and working to a little light factory built wagon for hauling everything ever hauled at a Florida Frontier farm occupied by a large family. The logging work was now rapidly being replaced by agricultural work. As farms were cleared and put into cultivation the other boys had the privilege of plowing these ponies for many days a year. These five boys received many and lasting impressions from the behavior of this span of ponies. I doubt seriously if any one of them really understands just how much of the warf and woof of his life, physical, mental and spiritual is the result of his early close association with these snow-white ponies of Spanish and Arabian stock.

This span of ponies was gentle, strong and sturdy. Their dispositions were amiable. There was nothing mean about either of them. They seemingly were tireless in traveling long distances or in pulling heavy loads over makeshift roads. Although only small pony horses they often pulled heavier loads of freight through and not over the boggy roads leading across the low swamps of the Escambia River and up the steep "River Hills" from the villages of Pollard and Flomaton both in Alabama than were pulled by other larger horses or mules. The secret of this feat was their ability to take things with patience, slow and steady and pull together. What wonderful lessons for boys to learn at an impressionable age.

During a period of approximately one year this span of ponies was used to haul freight, one load three or four times each month, to a logging camp. The freight was loaded at the County seat twenty-five miles from the Diamond Homestead and hauled about the same distance to the camp, which was located ten miles from the Diamond Homestead. This meant each load hauled required traveling sixty miles. Since this freight was hauled through a pioneer frontier it meant the driver had to camp in the woods one night each round trip. When the three younger boys were not in school Father would take one of them with him for company and to assist with the horses and to assist around the camp at night. The boys got some wonderful experiences and many exciting thrills from their trips to the County seat and in the camping experience.



The feed and other freight in the wagon was protected by a canvas cover stretched over old-fashioned split white oak bow frames. Not withstanding this protection for the wagon and its freight the boys had some disgusting experiences, as they called it then, trying to sleep on the ground around a campfire. They often thought the weather too cold to sleep on the ground and spent the greater portion of the night keeping a big fire burning pine knots and smoking by it until they were as black as soot itself long before daylight. They often got soaking wet in warmer weather and then smoked themselves black in trying to dry their clothes before entering town. They would then be a hurrah to look at until they could get back home and clean up and primp up a little in the magic Wash Hole old necessity had builded [built].

Father would have lots of fun from these episodes. He always referred to them as Educational Experiences for the boys, a sort of training for their future traveling and UPS and Downs along the trails they would travel later. On one occasion Emory and Father had made their bed for the night under a heavily loaded wagon with freight not at all suited for spreading out and using for a bed in order to have a dry place for sleeping. During the night a downpour of rain fell. A few hours before day the next morning the fall of rain increased causing the water to run under the wagon and give Emory a “genuine wetting” as Father described his predicament. Soon after the downpour of rain ceased a big campfire was built. Pretty soon Emory was standing around it trying to dry his clothing. In the effort he was smoked as black as the blackest tar. His face was black except his eyes and a streak bordering the edges of his mouth as wide as he could reach with his tongue. His big ring-like eyes and his mouth with the clean oblong circle around it gave him the appearance of a first class circus clown. His efforts to wash without soap made the situation worse. He was now vexed, chagrined and humiliated at the thoughts of having to go to the County seat in this scare crow clown looking appearance.

Emory declares until this day father added to his humiliated feeling by asking with plenty of smiles: “Young man did you have a good night’s sleep?” Emory says his answer was given in a half crying voice, “Shucks, no. No one could sleep in a pond of water except ducks and I ain’t no duck.” Emory said after Father finished his laugh at his reply, he explained that this was [a] real educational experience to fit him for future beds he might have to tumble. To this Emory said he replied’ “it ain’t no education to me, just miserable misfortune. Nobody but a crazy person would call it educational experience. If this is education, I hope my education is now complete.” Emory afterwards said he knew right then from the way Father laughed he had talked too much. He knew Father would never tire of telling about the fact that he had one boy who had all the education he wanted. Emory took the razzing for years good naturedly and finally got to where he had as much fun from it as Father did.

According to Father’s reports of these freight hauling trips, Irl and Walker also had many wonderful experiences in going to the “Big County Seat,” as they called the town of Milton. The fun of camping in the woods, called by them “Camping Out” gave them lots of fun and thrills that still linger in their memories. They too, had wetting and freezing

experiences that linger long. They still remember being smoked black and having ring eyes and big white oblong streaks around the mouth as wide as the tongue could reach. "It's a great pity" often said Father, "The boys couldn't use their tongues and paws like a cat and clean up completely so they wouldn't look so much like a frightful false face."

During a period of two dozen years these ponies ran many horse races with one of the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough astride his back. Just how many races were run no one has ever known or ever will know. No one has ever made much effort to assemble accurate information about the races these ponies ran because of the well-known nature of horse racing. Parental authority kept this information from circulation until every one of the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough had a wife and children and was living under a new dispensation. By this time every one of the Seven Sons had a son or sons of his own except the writer and of course for obvious reason would never admit he had ever run either of the ponies in a race with another horse, or even been an interested bystander at a horse race, much less tell of them any races he had won astride the back of one of these ponies. Hence, it has been left to me and to me alone to gather the information about the many races the snow white ponies ran and won with one and some times two of the Seven Sons astride his back. This calculation has been a hard problem because of the lack of correct information for a working basis. Due to the first fact that I was away from the Diamond Homestead working in a logging camp, attending school or teaching school much of the time when the younger boys were of the racing age has made it almost impossible for enough correct information to be obtained to give the accurate number of races run. From close figuring and calculations based solely on a few facts acquired confidentially from the two brothers who have never slept in a deacon's seat or made fatal efforts to instruct a Sunday School class it appears these ponies were run an average of an even baker's dozen races each week from the time they were two years old until they were old enough to be a United States Senator, a total of 18,928 races. This is not counting the races they ran with each other when being ridden to water or to a pasture. If these races are counted the total number approximated is 77,864. No facts were obtainable for use as a basis for figuring the number of races won. Considering the fact that these ponies were placed on the track young and kept there at intervals until they were rather old for real racing, it is probably safe to say that they had a fifty-fifty record.

Jack and Minnie were ridden miles and miles and then more miles in "Going to Mill" at the Diamond Homestead. They probably made not less than a thousand round trips to the neighborhood gristmill during the decade they were taking care of the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough. The usual load on such trips was a mill age boy and from three pecks to a bushel of corn. Usually one peck would be ground into grits and the balance of the corn ground into golden meal. This going to mill business at the Diamond Homestead was an important business. It always is, where seven boys are to be fed three times daily. It was also important because the trip to mill was a coveted one among the boys, not just to go to mill but for the glorious privilege of joining the mill age gang in the Old Mill Pond Wash Hole. No doubt every one of the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough many a time loped Jack or Minnie two or tree miles to mill early on Saturday morning on the pretense of getting to the mill ahead of the other boys so he could get his meal and grits

early and get home in time to have bread for dinner. However, after getting into the Old Mill Pond Wash Hole with the gang he would forget to go home until middle of the afternoon. Then the pony would be galloped almost all the way home and the explanation given that he had to wait three hours for his meal and grits and regretted to have to ride so fast but did it in order that Mother might have fresh meal to bake for dinner. Then, too, there has never been any accurate figures obtainable about the number of horse races these ponies had to run with a boy and a bushel of meal or corn upon his back. This information, like other racing information, was kept from circulation for many years for obvious reasons. After many years, little by little, information leaked out until enough was assembled to establish the fact that at least one of such races was run once a week for twenty-four years. This information was obtained in strict confidence and cannot be divulged lest fraternal relations be strained to the breaking point.

The snow-white ponies were a symbol of purity. This is evidenced by the fact that they were great church goers. In the early pioneer days they often carried John or Henry to the Old Mission Stations. A few years later when well established churches took the place of the Mission Stations and heavy wagons pulled by logging oxen were replaced by light factory built wagons pulled by small pony horses or mules, Jack and Minnie became regular church goers, always carrying the family and as many neighbors as could sardine into the wagon. Long years after Missouri mules were brought to Pine Level as work animals, Jack and Minnie continued to pull the light wagon to church because they traveled better and had a better type of religion than did the mules. Even on special occasions two preachers stayed for a week or ten days at a time at the Diamond Homestead while conducting what was then called the Old Time Florida Frontier Protracted Meetings, later called revivals, and rode sardined in the wagon pulled by the span of snow white ponies. On one occasion two young ministerial students from Stetson University stayed at the Diamond Homestead for ten days while conducting a Great Protracted Meeting and sardined into this wagon along with a large number of the family and two young lady Sunday school teachers, fair, jovial and good to look upon, and seemingly enjoyed every minute of the ordeal and preached good sermons because of the rides behind the white ponies and their association with the teachers. They admitted they had enjoyed the stay, notwithstanding their close contacts with prankish boys, butting billy goats and cussing dogs. On more than one occasion young Sunday School and BYPU workers sent out by the State Mission Board had this same privilege and seemingly enjoyed it, in spite of boys, Dear Old Sandy and Ponto, the pet. {Ponto was the cussing fice dog taught to preach along with his cussing.}

Jack and Minnie were very religious although their names were never enrolled on any church record. They attended church services more often than many so called pious pillars of the pew. They contributed to the church not in money but in service in getting members to church on time. In many ways their behavior was more exemplary than the behavior of many church leaders. They attended services regularly. They never talked about their neighbors. They contributed regularly in services rendered. They did not take the name of God in vain. They did not bear false witness against anyone. They did not steal. They did not covet. They worked six days a week and attended church on the

seventh day if any services were held within ten miles. The ponies did not acquire religious habits from hearing preachers talk, or attending Sunday School classes, or from taking any BYPU Training courses. They picked up these habits from their long association with preachers and Sunday school workers in hauling them from railroad stations to Mission Stations and then back to the railroad stations. In hauling them over a wide Florida Frontier community from log cabin to log cabin and from frontier home to Mission Stations and frontier churches at a time when transportation was a problem. This was obtaining religion by association. Just good sound horse sense was all. And by the way, it's still good horse sense even for people.

These ponies were educated horses, yet they never enrolled in the neighborhood log cabin school or in any educational institution. They picked up their educational training from association with schoolteachers. It was a sort of absorbing process, about like they got religion. They hauled school teachers twenty-five miles from railroads and their baggage to community boarding places and back to the railroad stations. School teachers rode these same ponies up and down the trails of Florida Frontier communities. They drove them to a buggy over the make-shift roads in visiting school patrons in the interest of their "scholars", as they called their indifferent, hard-headed boys. They rode these same ponies or drove them twenty-five miles to a buggy to the county seat when attending to business matters in the interest of their schools. They rode behind these ponies attending social functions in the community and for pleasure when they cared to do so. Because of this association, these ponies became courteous in behavior, polite in manners, as well as a little bookish.

These ponies, having learned to enjoy associating with country school teachers by force of habit, hauled five of the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough and their scanty wardrobes and meager libraries twenty-five miles to railroad stations when they left the Old Homestead to attend the State Normal School, Stetson University or the State University. They hauled these same boys and their scant luggage upon their return trips. They hauled these same boys, scant luggage and meager pedagogical belongings from the Diamond Homestead to isolated school districts where they served their country not in fighting to conquer the armies of enemy nations but endeavoring to conquer the enemy of ignorance as wire-grass school teachers, erroneously called "Fessors." This span of ponies rendered this sort of service from the time the oldest of the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough transferred from the earliest and most famous institution in Frontier Florida, the Logging Camp, and made his debut as a wire-grass school teacher until the youngest of the Seven boys tired of farm drudgery and tried his luck practicing on innocent frontier children and too, was called "Fessor." This sort of unselfish service continued at short intervals during two decades. A careful calculation based upon confidential information reveals these ponies traveled 9,669 miles during the decade of these missions of mercy.

During a decade every one of the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough, at different times and ages, rode these ponies on romantic wanderings up and down all the tricky trails of their own range and occasionally crossed the border lines when guards were caught off duty and the attractions worth the risk. The only times these ponies had a rest from this

sort of service was during the short period of three or four years when the false but fascinating idea that the quickest and surest way for a country boy to become A SOUTHERN GENTLEMAN OF THE OLD SOUTH was to wear a big derby hat and ride a mule, was holding the social sway supreme. During this period any sort of mule was preferable to the best horse. Even an old worn out blind plug mule would be ridden during this period by a "Social Climber" boy in preference to a Spanish-Arabian steed. A mule, just any sort of mule, was the passport and admission ticket to social fame. Blind mules, bucking mules, bronchos [brancos], brownie mules as evil spirits from the nether world, slow plodding plow mules and even old Tombstone mules were ridden by such boys up and down all the romantic trails of the range. There isn't any doubt but what Jack and Minnie were glad to have this short rest period and were made SAD indeed at hearing the sound and resulting reverberations following the bursting of this social bubble.

Occasionally a boy would drive one of these ponies to a buggy while traveling the rough romantic roads of his range. These ponies were far better for use in riding the winding twisting tricky trails of romance or buggying along the wandering highways of rolling romance than any of the best automobiles. If a boy on a late homeward ride became sleepy these ponies never tested the strength of roadside trees or stumps or the depth of ditches, gullies or rivers or undertook to climb a telephone pole. The old boy could drop the reins over the horn or the saddle, clasp the horn tightly with both hands and sleep soundly until the pony stopped still at the lot gate when he would wake, rested by refreshing sleep. If the old boy was bumping along in a buggy on the homeward stretch in the wee short hours of the morning, he could drop the lines over the dash board, curl up on the seat and sleep like a deacon in a Baptist church as long as the old rickety buggy continued its rattling lullaby. When the buggy stopped at the barn the boy would miss the soothing sound, awake, feed the horse, eat a hearty breakfast and be off in a jiffy for a hard day's work. This is no pipe dream or fancied strain of the imagination. The Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough each had experience. They have slept in the saddle, and in the rickety, rattling buggy and sat in a Baptist deacon's seat where they no doubt slept soundly until the sermon was over, always waking during the singing of the closing hymn.

Every one of the boys plowed one of these ponies many days each year for a number of years. The two older boys had this privilege for only a short four or five years while each of the other five had this unusual privilege at intervals during their entire plow boy age. No one has been able to calculate accurately the number of miles any one of the boys plowed these ponies or perhaps I should say the number of miles these boys held to plow handles while walking behind snow white ponies. The two best mathematicians among the Seven Sons, the two bookkeepers, after ten years of heroic figuring came out with an exact figure of 1, 917,659 miles in the aggregate for the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough. Immediately, Charley, Emory and Irl each accused the two brother bookkeepers of being, "No Good at Figures" and "Poor Guessers." Evidently, these three did the brunt of the plowing.

This span of ponies was ridden by each of the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough during a period of twenty-four years in hunting and driving beef cattle. In this work the ponies were well trained. Either of them could teach an average boy how to hunt and pen the wildest cattle. They knew the woods well, how to avoid sink holes, treetops and fallen logs. They could jump high logs and brushy treetops like a wild deer, these ponies could. It was usually no trouble for a resourceful boy to make such opportunities while chasing cattle. Never was either of these horses known to stumble or fall in running after cattle, regardless of the sort of woods in which the chase might be. There isn't any doubt but what every one of the Seven Sons had his life saved by the good horse sense and clear footedness of these ponies. This riding and racing of horses after cattle in all sorts of woods was splendid training for frontier boys without their knowing it. This is what Father called "Education With The Sting Taken Out." Philosophical Henry used to say: "If children could be educated without calling it 'going to school,' the world would soon be educated."

During a period of fifteen years or more Father sold at retail one or two beeves each week for eight or ten months each year. His market was the back end of a bow-framed covered wagon pulled by Jack and Minnie. The markets were at a big logging camp and at a small sawmill town. One of the smaller of the Seven Sons often went with Father on his beef selling days to assist in delivering small bundles of beef and to take care of the horses and wagon when Father was attending to other business. The beef wagon often left home at 4:00 A.M. in order to be at the market ready for business early, sunrise for working people in a log camp or a sawmill town. This early hour was sometimes disagreeable but the boy having the privilege was delighted because he would rather get up and get off at 4:00 A.M., wear dressed up clothes, deliver bundles of beef and look after the horses, than to wear sweaty dusty clothes and spend the day hoeing a pesky grassy potato patch or plowing a lazy mule in a dusty cotton or corn field.

Father never offered for sale any meat except the best. Because of this the span of snow white horses and white canvas covered wagon became known far and wide as a symbol of the best meats on the market. This same outfit, because of its color, was the subject of many laughable jokes and wise cracks about purity and cleanliness and even about roving tombstones.

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## A STRANGE MIXUP

History records many strange and varied mix-ups at various times and places. Some are so absurd as to be almost unbelievable. Yet, they are historical facts and have long been accepted as such by the world. Such a mix-up happened one afternoon at the Diamond Homestead in a lane near the stock feeding lots and barns. As absurd as it may seem, a Diamond, a Pearl and a Swine became involved in an amusing mix-up in this lane. It was

a subject of laughter, jokes and comment for all the family, two hired men and all the neighbors for several weeks.

The Diamond in this mix-up was not a bright and shining one having great commercial value. However, it was a real Diamond, a lean, slender hatched faced one, a typical Little Diamond in the Rough, the first born of the Seven Sons.

The Pearl in this mix-up was not the one of great price, nor one of the class the Holy Writ admonishes us to cast not before swine, but the cattle carrolling [corralling] pony often ridden by any one of the Seven Sons in carrolling [corralling] cattle or running hundreds of other errands about the Homestead.

The swine in this mix-up was not one of the Holy Writ herd having become the habitation of devils stampeding down a steep bluff committing suicide in the sea, but a big tan colored sow of the same kith an kin also having become the habitation of devils who was suddenly seized with an uncontrollable desire to commit mischief by stampeding to the wrong place at the wrong time, thus causing a reversal of the Biblical Injunction, "Cast not your pearls before swine." A swine was cast before a pearl, for the first time in history.

This amusing mix-up happened one bright sunny summer afternoon a few minutes before sundown. Pearl had been ridden by me to drive the cattle to the pens. After the cattle had all been penned and taken care of for the night, as a typical barefoot boy, I mounted the pony on her bare back and rode off in a fast gallop down the long hard lane toward the feeding barns. Approximately one hundred feet from the lot gate a large tan colored sow was lying in a fence corner among some dark green jimsonweeds. This sow had long ears hanging over her eyes so that she could not always see well in front of her. When frightened, she sometimes would run the wrong way and bump into objects unintentionally. When she heard the sounds made by the feet of the fast galloping pony coming down the lane and was unable to see the approaching pony or to judge from whence the noise was coming, she naturally suspected approaching danger. This old swine at this time acted exactly like many people would under similar circumstances and moved without knowing where to move. At this very moment, the devils having found habitation in this swine acted like the devils in the swine herd of Holy Writ by constraining her to commit mischief by jumping suddenly and directly in front of the fast moving pony.

The devils in this old sow evidently knew the sudden appearance of a large tan colored object from the cluster of bright green leaves would look more like an apparition, a ghost or a moving spirit from the underworld, than it would a mere hog. It was a real "devil of a ghost." It loomed large. It was only a large tan colored object with no head or legs visible coming rapidly through the tops of the weeds. It was a frightful looking ghost. No wonder the Pearl before whom the swine, ghost like, had cast itself, suddenly stopped still, executed a face-a-bout turn, tossing a Diamond before a swine, changing slightly the Biblical injunction.

I had often seen and heard of various objects and things being tossed before swine but never before had I been the object or thing tossed. It was a new and humiliating experience. It was more humiliating than new because I had often been tossed from the back of a pony. Sometimes the tossing was over the pony's head and sometime off to either side, depending on which way the pony had suddenly turned. I had often tumbled from high bluffs and banks in the big gullies. Many a time I had jumped or tumbled from trees much higher than the pony's back. On one occasion I had been catapulted high into the air as a human sky-ball. Hence, being tossed over a fast moving pony's head was not at all bad or humiliating. The humiliation was because I had been suddenly tossed right before a swine filled with devils. How many devils were in this swine I never did know, but during the mix-up I thought it was a herd of swine and many devils.

Exactly how I landed I never did know. I must have landed cat-like on all fours, directly in front of the old sow who jammed her long nose and head under my body. The first thing I knew I was in an awful mix-up with the hog in the middle of the lane, balanced across her neck and shoulders trying to get the advantage in the scuffle. Soon the hog toppled over on her side. Then I grabbed a hind leg with both hands and looked around for a good stick, intending of course, to hold the leg with the left hand and beat the devils out of the hog using the stick with my right hand. No stick, board or club of any kind was in sight. Hence bare feet were used instead of a billet of wood. As a sort of cooling off process I gave the hog several hard kicks with first one foot and then the other. Her squeals attracted the attention of the folks at the house and of the two hired men feeding [the] log teams in the feed lot. They looked down the lane and saw the kicking being given to the hog and the pony standing nearby looking on as if still trying to decide what the object was that appeared so suddenly and so ghost-like before her only a moment ago. One of the men in the lot even left his team a few minutes and came near enough to see I was kicking with bare feet. He wanted to know at once why I should get down off the pony's back just to administer the kicking with bare feet. I offered no explanation but continued to administer a few more kicks before letting the hog go. I then caught the pony by the bridle and led her to the barn where she was stabled and fed.

Pretty soon everyone wanted to know all the whys about the entire mix-up. The explanation was given about how the old hog had appeared ghost-like before Pearl and I had been tossed directly in front of the moving swine, and that the mix-up had started the kicking they saw administered to the swine. Every one on the place laughed at the very thoughts of a swine's being tossed before a Pearl. Soon Father, with a twinkle in his eye, asked if it was not a new thing to have a Diamond cast before swine. This started the laughing anew. When the laugh subsided the real joking, teasing, razzing and ridiculing started about my new experience in being tossed before a swine.

Within a few minutes Father brought up an incident that took place three miles from our home a few years before and suggested that I was probably trying to collect a reward for catching a hide-out criminal. The incident was said to be true. Whether true or not, it's a good story and well worth repeating. Here it is almost verbatim.



A report was current in our community that a criminal wearing a tan suit who was dodging the Sheriff of Escambia County, Florida, and Escambia County, Alabama, had crossed the Escambia River near Flomaton and was hiding in our community. A report was also in circulation that a reward of \$200.00 was offered for the capture of the criminal. A few men in the community had been quietly looking around for the criminal. A young man in the community who was a great tease and a prankish joker had reported as a joke that the criminal had been seen once or twice slipping in to an abandoned log shack about night on a rainy afternoon. This report soon spread over the neighborhood as a fact and several men had been looking in abandoned shacks and log camps in rainy weather hoping to catch the criminal and get the reward.

One rainy day this joker was passing an old abandoned shack when he saw an elderly man stalking toward the shack and called to know why he was stalking in this manner toward the shack. The elderly man made no reply other than to motion to the prankish joking man to come to him. The prankish joker obeyed and walked quietly to the elderly man. Upon reaching the elderly man the joking man was informed in a whisper all about the criminal hiding in the community and the \$200.00 offered as a reward for his capture. Still talking in a low whisper, the elderly man stated he was certain the criminal was at this very minute sleeping in the shack and offered to split the reward fifty-fifty if he would assist in capturing the criminal. Said he, "This will be easy money made on this rainy day. We can't afford to pass up this opportunity." The prankish joker agreed to assist, hoping of course, to add one more joke to his collection, even if he failed to catch the criminal and get the \$100.

After considerable discussion, all carried on in a low whisper, a plan of action was agreed upon. The elderly man was to stalk to the front door of the shack which was settled down to the ground and both door shutters long since removed as well as all flooring, leaving only a dirt floor in the shack. Upon entering the shack, the elderly man was to grab the criminal. The practical joker was to stalk to the back door and in the event the elderly man failed to catch the criminal and he [the criminal] started to escape through the back door the practical joker was to catch him as he attempted to escape.

Just as they were about to separate, each going to the door agreed upon, the prankish joker gave the elderly man this last piece of advice so as to be certain the criminal did not escape. Said he, "You know that the criminal may be sitting in there by a few coals of fire with a few old corn sacks or coats over him. Or he may be lying down on some straw with a few sacks or straw over him as a sort of blind. You remember how Brown Bowen {Brown Bowen was a noted criminal in this country 30 or 40 years before} escaped capture once by having some dead bushes placed over him instead of green ones. The deputies looked in an old shack, saw the dead bushes and passed on. Later it was learned Brown Bowen was asleep under the dead bushes at the time. Let's not let this happen to us." The he added, "You jump a straddle of anything you see in that shack." The men separated each going to his door to capture the criminal.

As soon as the elderly man looked in the shack he caught a dim glimpse in the darkness of a tan colored object partly covered with pine straw and dry oak leaves. Without waiting to blink his eyes a time or two to get them adjusted to the darkness of the shack, he jumped astride the object, yelling as he did so, "I'll be blest if I ain't good for \$100, easy money." Immediately an old tan-colored piney-woods razor-back sow scrambled under him, and in the scuffle to free herself, grunted a time or two. The prankish joker was then standing in the back door looking on. The elderly man shouted upon hearing the grunts, "You needn't grunt and groan 'cause I gotchu. A hundred dollars ain't bad for a rainy day." The struggle was over within a moment and as the elderly man saw his \$100.00 escape through the back door and disappear among the oak bushes surrounding the shack, amid the laughter of the practical joker, he calmly admitted he was a little disappointed at not finding the criminal in that shack.

Father and the two log haulers accused me of thinking the criminal wearing the tan colored clothing was still hiding in our community and said when I came galloping down the lane and glimpsed the tan colored hog lying in the fence corner, among the weeds, I had jumped from the pony's back astride the hog and shouted, "I'll be blest if I ain't good for \$200.00 easy money." They further said by way of joking and razzing me about the mix-up that when I saw the old tan colored hog in my hands instead of \$200.00, I lost my temper and almost ruined my feet "Kicking the devils out of her." Then they would soliloquize by adding, "his feet would surely have been ruined if they had not been as hard as pine knots."

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## **Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough**

### **THE FAMOUS FIRST DOLLAR**

**John**

**Henry**

**Sam**

**Charley**

**Emory**

**Walker**

## THE FAMOUS FIRST DOLLAR

The first dollar a boy earns by his own work and collects as his very own has been a significant one since dollars have been earned by boys. It will be so, as long as the dollar is the medium of exchange. It has ever been true and will continue to be so as long as ambitious boys want to make something for themselves and begin early in life to find opportunities to earn their own expenses. No worthwhile boy will remain long dependent upon any one for his support. He knows by intuition or innate tendencies that to do so will deprive him of his greatest inherent rights, the right to earn, to enjoy and to hold property for himself. By the same thing he knows to continue to be dependent upon others will discredit him among all his associates.

It is a significant fact that a boy will appreciate his first dollar earned in proportion to the number of dollars spent for comfort and pleasure during his past life. He must be made to know the value of a dollar. For this reason no wise parent will supply his boy with dollars he doesn't need. Because to do so will deprive the boy of many of his valuable inherent rights and weaken his ability to become a useful citizen.

It is also a significant fact the further back in a big frontier woods a boy is from, the usual flow of dollars, the greater will be his appreciation for the first dollar he earns. The appreciation a boy gets from the first dollar he earns is in the ratio of one to the square distance between his home and the channel through which the dollar flows. Doubtless this is why the first dollar earned by each of the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough at the Diamond Homestead became the FAMOUS FIRST DOLLAR and was so much appreciated.

In this short article the kind of work done by each of the Seven Sons to earn his first dollar and a few of the hardships encountered and endured in earning his dollar are briefly related. An idea is also given about how this dollar looked to its owner and how he felt when he first realized he possessed ability to be self supporting and had the great responsibility of handling money thrust upon him.

The oft repeated familiar words,

“For childhood shows the man  
As morning shows the day”

Never did express a greater truth than did the work done by each of the Seven Sons to earn his first dollar showed his future ability to make money or not to make it. Five of the Seven became “wire grass” country school teachers and taught in Florida Frontier communities where teachers were called “professors,” sometimes shortened to “fessor.” Three of them later brought disgrace upon their honored Christian father and mother by turning politicians and being elected to different county offices. All five of this group definitely learned how not to make any money and never outgrew it.

One later became a state employee and one even became an employee of the Federal Government, both keeping their heads in the public feed trough for many years. Four of them later became professionally minded, one became a preacher and preached "a spell", until his health, voice or rations failed. Two became bookkeepers and have been figuring ever since for the other fellow for a subsistence. Only one of the Seven has been true to the precepts and example set by his illustrious Father and Mother by remaining an honorable hard working man endeavoring to live an upright Christian life and earn an honest living. Thanks A THOUSAND TIMES to our dear brother Irl for saving the untarnished reputation of our Father and Mother, SO SAY WE ALL -- with a BIG AMEN.

### JOHN

My FAMOUS FIRST DOLLAR was paid to me by a nearby neighbor for cutting, curing and housing Mexican clover hay when I was a lean, lusty lad twelve years old. According to the agreement, I was to receive thirty-three and a third cents for each hundred pounds of hay cut, cured and housed in a small corn crib built on an old place a few years before. When Father moved to what later became known as the Diamond Homestead there was a small log cabin located near his homestead built prior to Civil War days. It had been the home or camping place of many different logging workers for more than forty years. Approximately three acres of land had been cleared and fenced years before. No one had lived in the cabin or cultivated the small field for several years before the year of my business adventure of hay cutting. The place was now occupied by a man who was employed at logging work on the Skinner and McDavid logging works with headquarters at this time at what was known as the "Old Water Tank Camp" three miles south from the Diamond Homestead. The man had repaired the old rail fence enclosing the three acres and had cultivated the larger portion of it growing a crop of corn and field peas. When the corn was "laid by" about the last of June the soil was covered with a thick growth of Mexican clover that grew to be approximately twelve inches high. This is where my first cash business adventure was performed. The little field was next to where brother Henry's barns are now located.

Farm wages in the community at this time was fifty cents a day without board and lodging for grown men. From my experience in cutting Mexican clover hay at home I was certain my daily earnings would be between sixty and seventy-five cents a day. Not a bad bargain at all of course, provided the weather conditions were favorable. Since the hay was to be housed not more than fifty yards from where it was to be cut and cured, I could carry it from the field to the house. Twenty-five pounds could easily be carried at a time thus only requiring four trips for each hundred pounds. Of course, there would be no expense for hauling the hay.

The agreement was made late Sunday afternoon in October 1890, with the understanding work would start early Monday morning. I was up early, through with breakfast and at the field with a sharp hoe and a file ready for work before sunrise. The clover was damp

with the early morning dew and thus tender. The cutting was fine for a few hours. When the sun got hot, the clover stems became tougher and the cutting slower. At twelve o'clock sun time, I went home for dinner. This required about half an hour. During this time my arms had what I called a short needed rest period. At sundown, I quit work and went home feeling certain that I had cut nearly three hundred pounds of good hay. It was all clear of briars and bushes and green enough to prevent any leaves from falling off in the process of curing and handling.

The next morning I was at the field and cutting clover when the first rays of the sun came through the tall pines standing on the east side of the field. From my first recollections of hay cutting and curing, the familiar slogan "MAKE HAY WHILE THE SUN SHINES" was now literally being practiced. The clover was rapidly falling at the strokes of my wide sharp hoe and being rolled into small bundles and flattened out on the ground to be dried by the sun. As soon as the sun had dried the dew, the hay cut during the forenoon of the day before was turned over with a pitchfork, cut from a crooked sassafras tree, so the bottom side of the small bundles would dry. This pitchfork had a crooked handle so that when its prongs were stuck in a bundle of hay and the hay raised from the ground, the weight of the hay would turn the fork over, making it an easy task to turn the hay over. This same hay fork was used at the Diamond Homestead for many years. Late in the afternoon, all the hay cut during the first half a day was placed in the house.

On the third day, the tall clover was being cut long before sunrise. Because of low overhanging clouds the night before, there was little dew on the clover or on the partially cured hay in the field. As soon as the sun's rays began to shine through the open spaces among the tall pines the hay cut Monday afternoon and Tuesday morning was turned over so the bottom side could dry. About ten A.M. the sun ceased to shine. The clouds began to fly thick and fast from the southeast. Before going home for dinner all the hay cut Monday and Tuesday was gathered up and carried to the nearby shelter. By four o'clock in the afternoon, the clouds were flying thicker and lower. Soon showers began to fall. The wind was blowing harder. A Southeastern hurricane was bent on stopping my first business adventure. I had to seek shelter in the small house with the newly cured hay. After a few showers there was a short interval between the showers and hard gusts of wind. My hoe, file, tying rope and pitchfork were gathered up and homeward I started, hoping to get there ahead of the next hard shower.

The wind and rain continued for thirty-six hours. Then during the week following, showers continued to fall every hour or two during the day. This ruined all the hay cut and left in the field. The hard wind had also blown the clover, still standing, flat on the ground so that my hay cutting for that year was finished.

After the rains ceased, the hay cut, cured and housed was weighed. Its new weight was 336 pounds. After multiplying by  $33 \frac{1}{3}$  it was found the man owed me the sum of \$ 1.12. Because one-cent pieces of money were not in general circulation at the time, I receive only one dollar and one dime for almost all of three days work. And when I say three days, I mean twelve hours per day. In those days, laboring people worked all day. It

was commonly said that men “worked from can to can’t”, meaning from daylight till dark. However, in those days many laborers worked from “way fore day when roosters begin to crow”, until long after fireflies [lightening bugs] began their evening display of fireworks. The fact that many laborers worked until long after the fireflies were displaying their lights gave rise to the expression, “work till you see the bugs.”

Needless to say, I was thoroughly disgusted with the weather. This was my earliest recollection of what are sometimes referred to as “a West Indies Hurricane.” This was also my first real introduction to the vicissitudes of equinoctial weather. The loss of all pay for one and a half days hard work and the loss of at least four more days impressed this introduction upon me in a way that has lasted throughout the years. Seldom do I ever pass by the field where the hay rotted without seeing in my imagination the three hundred or more pounds of fine clover hay for which I received no pay.

When I received my FAMOUS FIRST DOLLAR and the dime, as its companion, they were stuck in my small pocket with a large quantity of such property as a boy usually carries in his pockets, like marbles, nails, screws, small bolts, iron washers, pebbles strings, slings, a jack knife and some pieces of soft wood to whittle on and a few whistlers of my own design an making. As soon as I was out of sight of the man paying me the dollar and its dime companion, my pocket was unloaded and the dollar and the dime carefully examined. They were then carried one in each hand the rest of the way home. I was now walking as if floating on thin air. I had some wealth, but not what I had expected to have. I stopped a time or two and attempted to figure the amount of wealth I would had for display had the hurricane not come or been delayed a week. The figures came out about as follows: The big fish had gotten away. They still do.

The hay cut during a day and a half had netted me almost seventy-five cents per day. At this rate I should have had for the entire weeks’ work almost \$4.50. Of course, I was delighted to have the BIG DOLLAR and the little dime. They meant much to me, but really I couldn’t enjoy them as much as I would if I had not been busy estimating what I might have received if that hurricane had not interfered with my first business adventure.

Upon my arrival home, Father, Mother and each one of the children wanted to borrow my money. They teased me about being wealthy and starting a loan business. Of course, I didn’t enter the lending business. When I refused to lend my money to anyone, the family teased me about being a stingy wealthy person who wouldn’t assist a friend when in need of help. I knew they were only teasing and passed it by as a joke.

Now to lay all joking about this dollar and a dime aside, I want to say that this was the biggest dollar and the biggest dime I have ever seen. They gave me more real pleasure than any money I have ever handled. It was great money and full of inspiration.

## HENRY

About 1892 when Henry was a small boy, all the money in circulation in West Florida and South Alabama was paid for timber and lumber. When the price of timber and lumber dropped below the cost of manufacturing it, the sawmills would have to shut down for a year or two to await better prices. When the mills were closed almost every laboring man in the country was out of employment. Very few of them had sufficient savings to carry them for more than one summer. If the mills were closed for a year or two the cry of 'HARD TIMES' was on everybody's lips. Stout, able-bodied men were glad to work for fifty cents a day and board themselves. This was the case one summer when a neighbor employed Henry to plow a small field of corn. This man had fenced several large ox lots where several log teams had been kept at a large logging headquarters for three years. The soil was exceedingly fertile. It has been cleared to plant corn. Because of the fertility of the old lots the corn had been planted much thicker than corn was ordinarily planted in this section of the state.

About the middle of June the owner of this unusual field of Florida corn was laid up about two weeks with a light attack of malaria fever. During this time Henry was employed at fifty cents a day to plow this unusual field of corn. The man owned a large fiery racing mustang horse that would plow reasonably well in old ground clear of stumps and roots, but was awful hard to manage in ground full of stumps and roots. When the plow struck roots or stumps the old mustang would fret and refuse to go or either go in a gallop. That was the animal Henry had to plow in this big corn.

On the morning of the 21<sup>st</sup> day of June, Henry began this job. It was finished just before sun down on the afternoon of the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June. Thus you see, Henry was right in saying afterwards that those were the two longest days he ever worked anywhere and the hottest days he had ever felt. It was Henry's opinion that the thermometer registered during the two days not lower than 100 degrees in the shade and in that corn field 120 degrees. The corn was real thick, rank and a little over seven feet high at the time of plowing. The soil was dry and hard. No breeze was stirring. The combination made the place really hot.

The plowing started a little after sunrise. Within an hour, the horse and the plowboy were dripping with perspiration. The horse began to fret. The plow would be jerked against solid roots and stumps. Oft times the plow handles would give the plowboy awful punches in the stomach or ribs. This made matters worse. The old mustang refused to quiet down long enough to cool. Finally the plow was hung purposely under a small stump at the end of the rows where the horse would harm no corn by frisking and pulling until he wore himself out. He was then permitted to stand still until he cooled off. Things went better then for the rest of the day.

The great amount of sweat on the plowboy's face, hands, legs and clothing collected great quantities of field dust. By night he was the color of the dust from head to feet. When he arrived home, Mother thought something had happened to her boy because she



never had seen one of her boys come from a plow field looking like that. Henry's explanation was the weather has been hot and that old mustang fiery and contrary. Mother thought he should not plow another day with that horse in that big high corn. However, Henry being a natural country boy full of ambition and a high sense of honor, felt that he was duty bound to plow that field of corn at fifty cents per day. And too, he wanted a whole dollar and not a half. Hence, he went back the next day and was plowing in the field of corn before sunrise.

He stuck closely at it all day. The hotter the place got, the faster the old racing mustang walked and the more punches Henry received in the stomach and on the ribs. The faster the mustang walked, the harder the plow handles punched when the plow struck a root or a stump. These hard punches only added to the misery of the situation, and made the sweat flow freely. Naturally the more sweat, the more dust stuck to the plowboy's legs, face, feet and clothing. By the time the day was over the horse and the boy were exactly the color of the field dust. Naturally when Henry arrived home at night of the second day he was a strange looking plowboy. Mother's description was, "He's a pitiful sight to behold." Henry's explanation was, "Nothing is the matter. Just been a little hot in the big corn. Lots of sweat and dust with no breeze to blow it away. It all settled on me." He then proceeded to take a bath and get on dry clothing.

After getting rid of not less than ten pounds of dust, now changed to salty mud, and getting on some dry clothes, what was considered "A pitiful sight to behold," a few minutes before, came out about "the happiest boy to behold," exhibiting his FAMOUS FIRST DOLLAR to earn and collect. Henry came from his bath holding a large silver dollar in both hands as if it was so large until it required the strength of both hands to carry it. As it was held up for the other boys and Mother to look at, Henry remarked, "Here she is, big and round, some of Byran's free silver in the ratio of 16 to 1, 16 gallons of free sweat to one dollar." About this time Father came in for supper and joined the rest of the family in laughing at Henry's expression, "Sixteen gallons of free sweat to one dollar." He thought that was about as good an explanation as he had heard from any political office seeker about the ratio of 16 to 1, as applied to the silver question in politics. After the laugh quieted down, Henry told the younger boys how he felt about his FAMOUS FIRST DOLLAR when it was handed to him. Fifty years later he related this experience to me in his peculiar philosophical way of expressing his observations in substantially the following words:

"The contrariest old blazed faced racing mustang I ever saw was plowed two long hot days for the first dollar I ever worked for and collected all as my own to have and to spend as I wanted to. This plowing was done the 21<sup>st</sup> and the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June, the two longest days in the year and I think the hottest ones of which I have any recollection. This dollar was paid to me about six o'clock in the afternoon of the second day after I had completed the two hardest days of plowing I ever did before or since. It was tossed over a high picket fence after I had placed the old mustang in the stable and was ready to go home. As it came whirling through the air toward me it looked as big and as bright as the big tin pie plates Mother used to bake potato, pumpkin and peach pies for her seven hardy

hungry boys. By the time it dropped into my ball catching hands it was a circle as big as the dishpan that sat upon the corner of the kitchen table in the old log kitchen. This dollar was handled a little, then all the printed words and figures on it were read. I thanked the man for the dollar and started toward home in a hurry because I wanted to show it to the other boys and Mother.”

“When I had walked twenty or thirty steps, the man called me back near enough to express his appreciation for the good job I had done in plowing his corn so quickly and then informed me that he wanted me to plow for him again as he had more plowing to be done. His words of appreciation and the invitation to plow for him again when he had plowing to be done made me feel almost as happy as the big shining silver dollar did. I thanked him and hurried home. Three times on the way home a peculiar feeling compelled me to stop and give the big wheel a thorough inspection and read again the words and figures printed on it. Just before sundown I arrived home with my money, my hard earned cash. Soon it was being displayed before Mother and all the younger boys who were rejoicing with me over my riches. You know a dollar meant something in those days. It would buy things then. I really had money. It was a great dollar, this FAMOUS FIRST DOLLAR was. You know I have handled lots of money during my life for a working man, but all of my combined earnings for fifty years have not given me half the pleasure this FAMOUS FIRST DOLLAR did. I’ll tell you the harder a fellow works for a dollar the more he will appreciate it and the more he can get out of it. I wish every boy had to work hard for his first few dollars so he will know how to appreciate them, use them wisely, and be able to dream inspiring dreams of more hard work and big bright dollars in a ratio of sweat and dollars better proportioned than were my sweat and FIRST FAMOUS DOLLAR.”

“And folks I must say while I was proud of that dollar I was prouder of myself than I was of the dollar but still prouder of the good job I had done. The words ‘WELL DONE’ are full of meaning and INSPIRATION.”

### SAM

When the Seven Sons were small boys the town of Pollard, Alabama, was a prosperous little trading village. Father often went there to purchase groceries for the family, feed for logging oxen and small items of hardware used at logging camps and small farms. Usually one of the small boys would go with Father on these trips. In this way the merchants in the village became acquainted with the boys. One store in this village was owned and operated by a Doctor who kept a large supply of groceries, feed, hardware and dry goods and a supply of drugs and his office in one corner. For several years the owner of this store had been watching the different boys accompanying Father to the village. He had observed they were skillful little lads in handling horses and oxen and in loading and unloading wagons. Finally one day he explained to Father that he wanted one of the boys to work around his store, drive a large horse in hauling freight from the depot to the store and in delivering merchandise in and near the village. And too, he would like to have the

boy accompany him and drive his horse to a buggy when he was making long trips visiting patients in the country. The Doctor was a fine old southern gentleman, a high type Christian character. He explained to Father that the boy would live at his home and be treated as if a member of his family. It was his opinion that the work would be fine business training for a small county lad from what was considered the "back country." After several talks with the Doctor on different trips to the village, Father agreed to permit one of the boys to work for the Doctor until another school might be in session in our neighborhood, provided of course, one of the boys was willing to try that work for a few weeks. The salary was to be at the rate of \$1.00 per week, plus board in the Doctor's home.

After some discussion of the matter between Father and the smaller boys it was agreed that Sam would accept the offer with the condition that he could give up the work at any time he desired to do so. The other boys all teased Father a great deal about having arranged for one of the boys to work in town a while, even though the town was a small one, with the hope that the boy might get a few of the rough edges rubbed off, polished up a little so to speak, and be an inspiration to the other boys to polish up a little too. Father seemingly enjoyed the teasing, but turned it off by explaining there are always more character polishing processes taking place in the country than in small towns and that he was certain he would have to brush the rough edges off Sam that fall when he came back home to attend school.

On Saturday early in March, after the usual short term of Public School held in our community was closed, Sam accompanied Father to Pollard for family groceries and other merchandise when final arrangements were made for Sam to return to Pollard on Monday to begin his first business adventure. It so happened on this Monday morning that all the horses and the other boys had to be busy probably at spring plowing because of the lateness of the closing of school thus causing Sam to have to walk to Pollard. As usual, we were all up early and ready for an early start with our work. Sam was also up and ready for an early start. About sunrise Sam was dressed up a little more than the boys who went to the fields to work. Because of this he was teased a little by the other boys about having a "gentleman's job." Because of his Irish wit and genial disposition Sam was able to turn all jokes thrust at him aside quickly and was off on the way to his new field of work. His extra clothing and other belongings were carried in a pair of new shiny leather saddle pockets because of the ease with which they could be carried across his shoulder.

Since Sam's salary was to be one dollar per week one can readily understand that he was required to work six days in the store and hauling freight and then on Sunday feed and water two horses and probably drive the Doctor's horse and buggy several miles visiting patients. Many of the other boys thought they did harder manual labor for their FAMOUS FIRST DOLLAR than Sam did but admitted Sam put in more days and probably longer hours than they did. However, the other boys replied that all work in town is easy for a country boy because he does not think so much about his work when he can see painted houses, hear train whistles blow, see the fast moving steam engines with their long string

of coaches or cars and see and meet lots of people to keep one from worrying about continuous work for long hours. Sam is certain he worked fourteen hours a day for seven days to earn his FAMOUS FIRST DOLLAR.

Sam worked four weeks before coming home. He caught a ride home Saturday afternoon with Father and one of the younger boys. They arrived home late in the afternoon. Of course, Sam had many new experiences to report, and many eager listeners. He had managed to get home with two silver dollars representing half the money he had earned in four weeks, the other two dollars having been spent for laundry, two new shirts at twenty-five cents each, and a new spring white straw hat, at a cost of fifty cents, all having been purchased at cost because he was a clerk in the store. He wore one of the shirts and the hat home. While some of the older boys looked at the shirt and hat, the others looked at the two silver wheels. The fact that Sam had on a ready made store bought shirt brought forth as much comment as did the two dollars he had saved. Sam was kept pretty busy from the time he arrived until he left Monday morning on his return trip to the city, relating to his younger brothers his wonderful experiences in the city. In their minds Sam was a Hero, and a great one.

Sam's idea of how he felt when he received his FAMOUS FIRST DOLLAR is given in his own words. "Saturday night the Good Doctor called me back into his office in one corner of the large store and explained that it was time to pay off for the week. He then handed me a large silver dollar. I say large because it appeared to be much larger than any dollar I had seen in the store during the week. It looked as large and bright as a new tin pie plate, but of course had a different ring when dropped on the floor to hear the attractive clinking of 'Bryan's Free Silver at the Ratio of 16 to 1.' However, there was nothing free about this silver. I knew I had given good measure of time and hard work for this dollar. That's why it looked so large and meant so much to me. I realized as never before that I had ability that a businessman was willing to pay for, and that from now on I could be self-supporting. Then too, I looked into the future as far as my childish eyes could see. I saw the business world moving faster than at the present time. I saw great business firms being organized and better business methods being inaugurated. I saw myself managing a big firm, directing all the employees, handling all the money and paying everyone off on paydays. Yes, Sire ee, I really builded [built] BIG PROVERBIAL AIR CASTLES upon the receipt of this FAMOUS FIRST DOLLAR of mine. It helps a fellow to build air castles like I builded [built]. It's lots o'fun. I only wish I could keep on building them."

Next fall when Sam had returned home and entered the country school near the Diamond Homestead, of course the other boys in the community were interested in hearing of his wonderful experiences in the city and about the work he had been doing all the summer. A week or two after school opened Sam made an itemized list of what he did to earn his first dollar. It was written on a sheet torn from a large school tablet about like he had been required to use to itemize bills of groceries sold to a large family. Here it is. Read it and decide for yourself if he earned that dollar.

Working

To hauling 16 loads of freight from depot to store  
To delivering 18 loads of feed and groceries from 200 yards to 1 mile  
To delivering 98 packages on foot from 200 yards to half a mile  
To watering and feeding 2 horses 3 times each day  
To feeding two milk cows 2 times each day  
To hitching up and driving the doctor's horse and buggy 125 guessed miles  
    during the night over almost impassable roads to visit patients  
To clerking in store from 6 to 8 hours each day  
    in addition to other duties performed.

### Casualties

To 2 finger nails partly torn off handling sacks of feed  
To 3 toe nails ripped up at the corner in stubbing them on brick bats while  
    looking at passing trains instead of where I was walking  
To 1 leg blistered a little by spilling kerosene on it in filling a can for a customer  
To kicking the biting ideas out of 2 town dogs when delivering packages  
To 1 thumb mashed in opening boxes of freight  
To 1 ankle sprained in kicking a street scavenger hog while it was attempting to  
    tear open a sack of feed on the depot platform  
To licking 2 town boys for calling me a green country boy who had to work for  
    his board.

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### CHARLEY

To hear Charley tell of his first business adventure is as laughable as listening to the wise crack of a circus clown and watching his prankish tricks, or seeing the comic strips at a modern picture show. This first business adventure was when he as a barefooted boy sold three days of his time and talent to a neighbor for a dollar and dinner each day. For the dollar an dinner he had agreed to break up three guessed at acres of new ground. The spot to be plowed had recently been covered with a thick growth of pine saplings, oak bushes known as oak runners, wild persimmon bushes and briers of the bush and vine varieties. All fallen logs and trees had been cleared away leaving over seven hundred stumps and all their roots for the benefit of the plowboy. The roots were there by the thousands of all sorts, lengths and sizes. Many were too large and strong to be broken with the plow. The plow would break many, both ends of which would spring backward and bark the legs of the plowboy. The large roots would furnish sudden stops for the plow so the plowboy would receive a few punches from the plow handles in the stomach or ribs to remind him that he had a stomach in the middle of his body and ribs on each side. The briers usually managed to wrap themselves around the plowboy's legs and ankles and saw notches in his shin bones, or if the shins were tougher than the brier thorns the thorns would be stripped off and a red streak or perhaps a blister burned instead of a notch sawed. The

combination used to break this three guessed at acres was, according to Charley's version, about as follows: 1. An antiquated plow stock that had seen better days. The handles were loose and rickety providing plenty of loose motion. 2. A three inch bull tongue scooter plow almost worn beyond use and as dull as the proverbial froe. 3. The harness was old and patched. The hame strings had been tied full of knots and was soon replaced with a strand of haywire. The hooks were continually slipping off the single tree. 4. The mule used to pull the plow was a small one weighing eight hundred pounds, guess at weight of stubbornness inherited from his paternal ancestor. This little mulatto mule had also inherited a superabundance of friskiness, fidgetiness and nervousness from his maternal ancestor, a small Texas mustang. And worst of all, he had not been trained to pull a plow. 5. The plowboy was a lean, lusty lad, thirteen years of age weighing seventy-five guessed at pounds. He was a slow walker, a slow talker and generally slow motioned but moved with deliberate precision with no lost motion. He possessed plenty of toughness, endurance, grit and determination to do the job. Later, in speaking of this five way combination, Charley stated that he has never yet been able to figure out exactly how this queer combination was ever able to work together long enough to break that contrary piece of new ground. He is certain that such a combination could not be worked nowadays by even an expert on "combinations." He admits it may be that he worked the combination because of a lack of Cents, spelled CENTS and SENSE, multiplied by a cypher [cipher].

The combination was assembled at the new ground at six o'clock in the morning and Brown started down the edge of the new ground for the first furrow. He walked rapidly at first with a frisky step. Soon the plow struck a solid root. The hame string broke and Charley received his first punch in the ribs. Soon the string was patched up and the combination moved on. The dull plow came out of the ground and slid along on top. It was necessary to back up a little and remove the grass and roots from it and start over. Brown refused to back. It was necessary for the plowboy to pull him back or go around in front and bat him over the head with a pine root or an oak runner. This tangled up the harness and required some time to get the combination ready for moving.

It was soon found that the dull plow resented being held in the hard ground. Soon a large heavy billet of wood was found and placed on the plow stock to aid in holding the plow in the ground. The combination worked better then. Soon roots snapped in the middle and both ends sprung back and cracked the skin on Charley's bare legs and ankles. Occasionally a solid root was struck by the plow and the handles gave the plowboy wonderful punches. Then a long brier would rasp Charley's legs and saw a neat little notch in a shinbone. Then the end of the furrow would be reached and a row [and it] would be necessary to turn Brown around and get him started down on another furrow. This routine went along for sometime with little or no change. Charley admits it really got monotonous until Brown began to get hot. Then the cross between a Mexican donkey and a Texas mustang began to show inherited stubbornness in many unruly ugly ways.

Charley admits he got hot too, as Brown became more unruly. Finally he stuck the plow under a big root, climbed over the fence and broke a big dogwood limb and made the

stubborn brown mule over, by improving his hearing and introducing him to the words, Whoa, Get Up, Gee, Haw, Back and Obey. After that, things went better, but the stumps, roots and briers continued to punch hard his stomach and ribs and seesaw his legs. Soon noontime came and an hour was taken for a little rest and nourishment needed after being properly transformed.

The afternoon was spent much as the morning, in wrestling with plow handles, dodging stumps and roots and seesawing with briers. More shin cracks, notches and scratches were made visible. By the middle of the afternoon Brown had toned down to a steady walk and the rib punches were not quite as hard as at the start. Charley admits he was pretty well worn out when the day ended and [he] thought Brown was in the same fix. At sundown Brown was unhitched and led to the barn for water and feed. Charley went home for supper and rest.

At sunrise the next morning Charley was at the new ground with the combination ready for a second day of wrestling, punching, scratching and sew-sawing[seesawing]. The day's work was a repetition of the day before. Rib punches were received, sometimes on new spots, but more often on the same old spots now beginning to feel sore from the bruises. Scratches and notches were made on the legs, sometimes in new places but often in the same old sore spots. At first, according to Charley's version, the punches, scratches and notches hurt a little worse than they did on the first day, but after the nerves and muscles got well warmed up for the job the feeling was about the same.

Sometimes a cluster of oak runner roots would be encountered. Then the broken roots would spring back in rapid succession making a fellow's legs sting like he had encountered an ant bed or a nest of yellow jackets. Then again a patch of briers would be plowed into and the sew-sawing [seesawing] would be almost continuous. Then new notches would be sawed and the old ones make a little wider and a little deeper. Next it would probably be an area of big roots and the punches would be fast and furious.

At sunrise the third day Charley was again at the new ground with his combination and soon had it moving along smoothly. It was now really beginning to click. It had been repaired [repaired], oiled, brushed and made over. It was now working without any trouble. It had been transformed. However, the punches from the rickety [rickety] plow handles when the plow suddenly struck solid roots and the unpleasant feeling of briers around the legs and ankles were no longer able to strike in new places. All the available space had been bruised black and blue, notched, blistered or skinned. There was no more frontier to tackle.

About half an hour before sundown on the third day, the breaking of the biggest three guessed at acres of new ground in the country was completed. Charley carried the combination to the barn and received the BIGGEST DOLLAR ever coming from a United States Mint. We now use Charley's own words to relate how he felt as he walked, trotted and ran home with this BIG DOLLAR.

“The large, silver, wheel was held in my hands all the way home. Three times I stopped and looked at it from both sides and all the edges. I read every word printed on it and every figure it contained. I tried to make out what the words and figures meant. It was the largest amount of money I had ever had as my very own at any one time. My first business venture had netted me one hundred cents and I was delighted with the transaction. My bruised ribs, shin cracked and sew-sawed [seesawed] legs, scratched ankles and sore muscles were all forgotten. I was so anxious [anxious] to get home and display my wealth before the other boys until I ran almost all the way. Soon I was there and passing the dollar from boy to boy to feel of and look at. I knew they would look upon me as a hero, a boy of wealth and one worthy of emulation. After the boys had all looked at it and tried to understand what the printed words on it meant, it was handed back to the Hero Combination worker. It was then handed to Father and Mother to look over so they could express the pride and joy of fond parents because of having such a successful son.”

During the next few days Charley was caught rubbing his bruises and scratches with lineament in an effort to remove some of the soreness. He admitted his ribs, shins and ankles had had some rough treatment but they would soon over it and be the stronger by having had the new ground experience.

One day about a week after this business adventure was over, Charley was found during the noon hour at home sitting on the back porch with an old fashioned school slate and small pencil busy figuring out what he had done to earn his FAMOUS FIRST DOLLAR. When he had finished he confided this information to me as his oldest brother:

|                                                                                                                          |            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Number of miles walked in actual plowing.....                                                                            | 105.6      |
| Number of miles walked in turning at end of furrows.....                                                                 | 21.3       |
| Number of blue and black bruises on ribs and other parts<br>of body (not counting those on top of each other)...         | 147        |
| Number of notches sawed on legs and ankles by thorny<br>wild dewberry vines (not counting re-saws or<br>descabbing)..... | 39         |
| Number of brier scratches on legs and ankles, visible.....                                                               | 76         |
| Number of shin cracks from broken roots.....                                                                             | 83         |
| Number of toe nails torn off or partly torn off.....                                                                     | 7          |
| 3 six-foot limbs worn out in transforming Brown.....                                                                     | 30 minutes |

Charley carried his figuring a little further and found that he had received only a tiny fraction over nine tenths of one cent for each mile of furrow he plowed. Said he, “I walked for less than one cent a mile not counting twenty-one and three tenths miles walked in turning around as rest periods, rest from rib punches, shin cracks and brier scratches.”



Charley then carried his figuring still further and reported that he had received three tenths of one cent for each separate bruise, see-saw notch, brier scratch, shin crack and torn toe nails.

Charley then checked over his big slate full of figures a time or two as if trying to understand the real significance of what they revealed. He then looked at me with a satisfied expression and said in a confidential manner to his big brother: "Well, there isn't any profit in this sort of business, except EXPERIENCE. By placing proper value on my experience I didn't do so bad."

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## EMORY

When even the youngest of the Seven Sons was a small boy, corn planters and fertilizer distributors were unknown in the Florida Frontier in which the Diamond Homestead was located. Commercial fertilizers had just been introduced by a few farmers recently from other states. At this time all corn was planted by having a small boy walk up and down the furrows, commonly called rows, and drop from one to three grains of corn to the "hill." The so-called hills were usually spaced three feet apart. Occasionally a small farmer who used more fertilizer per acre than his neighbor would have his corn spaced in the row from two to two and one half feet apart. The fertilizer would be distributed by hand similar to the manner of dropping the corn. This was referred to as "putting out" fertilizer. The dropping of corn and the putting out of fertilizer was almost always done by small boys. If a man had no small boys among his household, he would try all over the neighborhood to hire a boy to drop his corn and put out his fertilizer. Men couldn't drop corn or put out fertilizer. If he was unable to employ a boy for this work it was a fifty-fifty chance he would decide at the last minute not to plant any corn but to sow the land in oats or let it grow up in weeds. Too often the land grew up in weeds.

One year when Emory was nine years old a nearby neighbor who had no boys of his own managed to employ him to drop his corn and assist in putting out a ton of fertilizer in planting six acres. I think the only reason Emory was persuaded to sell his brawn and brain for four days for the sum of twenty-five a day plus dinner was the fact he had remembered seeing and handling a large silver dollar brought home by his brother Charley a few years before as his FAMOUS FIRST DOLLAR, and ever since that evening about dark when the Hero of the Contrary New Ground arrived he had been wishing and longing for an opportunity to show the family what he, too, could do in the way of earning wealth by the sale of time and talent.

The field to be planted in corn was supposed to contain approximately six acres. Emory expressed his opinion that the field had been measured with the Daniel Boone measuring line, a coon skin and throw in the tail each length of the hide. And too, this field had been plowed that spring a little late after the hot March and April sun had dried the soil. For this reason the field broke in large hard clods, making walking up and down the rows hard on bare feet. Emory had been employed to drop corn and to assist in putting out

fertilizer when the putting out of fertilizer was behind. Emory swears by all the Good Book swearing that the putting out of fertilizer stayed behind during the four days. This meant that he not only dropped all the corn but put out at least three fourths of the fertilizer.

Emory was at the field a few minutes after sunrise of the morning his first business venture began. As soon as the owner of the field could get some seed corn and a few sacks of fertilizer in the field and open a few furrows the corn dropping began. Emory was given orders to drop two grains in a hill exactly three feet apart. With a two-quart bucket three fourths full of seed corn down the first row Emory walked. At first he was accused of getting the two grains spaced about two feet instead of three feet. He was admonished to stretch the space out a little. This was done. After a few rows had been dropped, he was admonished not to space the corn five or six feet apart. He checked back over a few rows and found that he had evidently gotten in too big a hurry and really spaced some of the hills not less than six feet. He then went over the few rows and dropped two grains between each hill already dropped. Soon he came to a row where the corn had been spaced not more than four feet. Here it became necessary for him to pick up and move two hills out of three dropped. This stooping over was soon found to be the worst part of the work. After an hour or so the mistakes had all be corrected. He then started over on the three-foot basis. This went well until he was fifteen rows ahead of the fertilizer. He was then called to leave off the corn dropping and assist in putting out fertilizer until it caught up. This didn't catch up until dinner time. He had found the putting out of fertilizer far more tedious than the dropping of corn. It was difficult to see the grains of corn down in the furrows among the hard clods. And too, while looking for the grains of corn it was next to impossible to watch for the hard rock-like clods. Toes were stubbed and some times a toenail ripped loose at one corner.

Then worst of all it was difficult to pick up in one's hand at each grab the right amount of fertilizer to make a bucket full of fertilizer stretch far enough for an entire row. Emory reported that many a time he put three fourths of a bucket of fertilizer on half a row and the other fourth on the other half. He often wondered if there was any difference in the yield of corn at gathering time.

During the dinner hour Emory got a yardstick and measured a string one yard long and put it in his pocket. When he went back to corn dropping that afternoon every now and then he would measure the distance between the grains dropped in the rows. By doing this he became an expert at guessing at the distance of a yard. Forty years later he admits this was his best lesson in measurements. Later he tied knots in the string one foot apart so he could measure distance of one or two feet as well as three feet. He became adept in guessing the distance of a yard. Seldom did he ever drop two grains of corn farther apart than thirty-seven inches nor closer together than thirty-five inches. It is admitted even today that Emory can take a bucket of corn and walk down a furrow and space the corn more evenly than any corn planter yet placed on the market. Some machinery for precision is Emory even until this day.

At night on the first day so slow had the work progressed that only twenty-five rows had been planted. Forty or fifty rows should have been planted. It was agreed by Emory and the owner of the field that they could do better the second day because they had gotten onto the technique and the art of the work. Emory's version of this was that he (Emory) had gotten onto the technique and the art of spacing corn in a row and of stretching a little bucket of fertilizer from one end of a long row to the other, while the owner of the field had mastered the art of opening and covering furrows as fast as Emory could drop the corn and put out the fertilizer and onto the technique of killing all the rest of his time. It was and still is Emory's unanimous opinion that the owner of the little farm had found the technique of trudging up and down the long rows over the numerous hard clods too tedious and tiresome and as a result mastered the technique of time killing.

On the second day forty rows were planted. Emory reports he dropped the corn in all forty rows and put out the fertilizer in thirty-nine of them. Emory claims the improvement was due to his having mastered the technique and the art of spacing corn in a row and of stretching a little bucket of fertilizer. The extra number of rows was partly because he did not have to walk back over several rows and re-space two-thirds of the corn dropped.

On the morning of the third day Emory admitted his back was stiff and sore from stooping up and down half a dozen long rows re-spacing corn. His arms were too stiff and sore to work well until they had had an hour or more in a warming up process. And worst of all his legs were more stringhalted than any Texas mustang ever loping the trails of a big Florida Frontier. He couldn't stoop over. If by chance a few grains of corn were spaced wrong they were covered by pushing a hard clod over them with a big toe and other grains dropped in the right place. If a little fertilizer was spaced wrong or a little too much dropped in one place it was covered with clods and a little more thrown in the right place. According to Emory's confidential report the earning of the third two bits was a miserable day. He was certain Joshua or some other general had ordered the sun to stand still while he MISERIED with stringhalted steps up and down a few more cloddy rows and stubbed a few more sore toes. Night wouldn't or couldn't come.

On the morning of the 4<sup>th</sup> day the situation started a little brighter than it did on the third day. Some of the stiffness and the soreness had been worn away. After an hour or so of warming up for work the string-haltiness began to improve, though no misplaced grains of corn were moved. The scripture was followed literally, "In the place where the tree falleth, there it shall lie." However, after about three weeks had past and one warm spring shower had fallen this sentence from Holy Writ might well have been changed to read as follows, "In the place where the seed corn falleth, there it shall come up." Oft has this fact told wonderful history of what became of the seed corn, causing many a boy to experience painful sensations in the seat of the pants.

About half an hour before sun down on the fourth day of the corn planting the owner of the farm who was about as worn out, stringhalted, stiff and sore as Emory, suggested that they quit and leave the remaining few rows to be planted in peas. It was Emory's opinion

that the man was too tired to continue the work until night. The man had been used to logging work and could not endure the fatigue of trudging back and forth over the plowed ground covered with hard clods. Emory and the man gathered up a few tools and buckets and trudged snail-like off toward a small barn where the mustang was stabled and the tools housed. The man then managed to creep into his home and soon came out and handed Emory a bright new bill that became Emory's FAMOUS FIRST DOLLAR. Emory's description of his feelings when he had wealth suddenly thrust upon him is given in his own words. Said he, "I admit I was a little disappointed when the man handed me a bright new dollar bill instead of a shining silver wheel that I could drop on the floor and listen to the satisfying ring. I wanted a dollar that could be played with by rolling it across the floor and ringing it with a silver tone when it whirled around as it stopped rolling. The bright silver appealed to me more than the silken paper with its bright green colors. After I had looked at this dollar a few minutes it appeared to be about the exact size of an ordinary towel. When I had looked at this dollar over and over a dozen times it loomed large in my sight. Surely now it was as big as the largest bath towel ever used by ocean bathers. It was great, this dollar was. It was folded twice and held in my hands all the way home. Three times I was constrained to stop still and try to read every word printed on it. Much of what was on it was read but only a little of it understood. The only thing I really understood was that having wealth suddenly thrust upon one produces a strange feeling. By the time I arrived home the big bath towel had become as large as a blanket. When I got in sight of the house the boys were waiting and looking for me and my money. They were expecting to see a silver dollar and was a little disappointed when they took the dollar bill in their hands and began passing it around and commenting. As it went the rounds it kept growing. By the time it got back to me it was as large as a big double blanket spread wide. It was a whopper."

Some time after Emory's first business adventure when he had learned a little more about linear measure and a little about simple calculating rules he spent much time in an effort to figure out just what he had done to earn his FAMOUS FIRST DOLLAR. After figuring and sweating over it for four days he brought out a sheet of paper torn from a large school tablet containing the following information:

|                                                                                                                             |             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Number of miles walked over hard clods in dropping corn.....                                                                | 33 1/3      |
| Number of miles walked over same soil putting out fertilizer.....                                                           | 26 2/3      |
| Number of times hand reached into a bucket and two grains<br>of corn picked up and dropped in furrow .....                  | 29,120      |
| Number of times hand reached into a bucket and picked up a<br>small portion of bad smelling guano to be placed in furrow... | 21,804      |
| Number of toenails having at least one corner ripped off<br>by being stubbed.....                                           | 6           |
| Number of string halted legs.....                                                                                           | 2           |
| Number of stiff backs.....                                                                                                  | 1           |
| Amount received for each mile walked in trudging up and down<br>the cloddy furrows.....                                     | 1 2/3 Cents |

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## IRL

Irl saw and observed closely the genuine joy and pleasure Emory got out of his famous first dollar earned dropping corn. He also saw Emory delighted beyond measure when he dressed up in his first new store bought Sunday shirt and gay colored necktie. This filled Irl with an unconquerable desire to fulfill the injunction of the Holy Scriptures, "Go thou and do likewise." This desire and enthusiasm took root in fertile soil, grew rapidly and kept spreading like a green bay tree of the Orient in native soil. Thought he, I've dropped corn at home many a day when I got nothing but what I ate until I'm tired of it. I want to make a few quarters like Emory. I'm about as big as he is and can do as much work as he can. If he can drop corn for money I can too. This thought kept growing. Soon it was enthusiastic wishing, with determination enough generated to make the wish come true.

In a few days Irl was called upon by a nearby neighbor who had no boys of corn dropping age to drop corn and assist in putting out commercial fertilizer on approximately five acres. The price for such work had long been fixed in the neighborhood as two bits a day, the name by which a quarter of a dollar was then known in our frontier community. This meant Irl would have to work hard four full days from before sunrise until after sunset to earn his famous first dollar. He had to wait four days after getting the job for the would-be farmer to get his fertilizer hauled. This was a long, long, four days for an enthusiastic boy to have to wait to begin earning a quarter. It wore his nerves down worse than the work tired his muscles. His nerves nearly cracked under the strain. The thoughts of a dollar and a new spring Sunday shirt and neck tie like Emory was sporting were long lingering thoughts and full of strain.

Finally the day came for the corn dropping to begin. Irl was up before daylight, through with breakfast and waiting at the home of the would-be farmer long before the man had his breakfast. Here he had to spend an hour waiting for the man to eat breakfast and get fertilizer to the field and plow stock and plow harness ready for use. Then it was necessary to wait for the man to open some furrows or rows for fertilizer before work could begin.

The man had worked at logging work until the latter part of April, a little late for planting. Hence, he would not wait to break the land but planted primitive style, commonly referred to as, "streak off the land and plant."

About half of the little field had been planted in cotton the year before and the other half had been planted in oats and pastured after the oats were cut late in May. Of course, this meant it had produced some weeds and many dewberry vines well filled with thorns. The soil was rather dry and hard for this sort of planting. It had to be "streaked off" with a small bull-tongue scooter and then the "streaks" opened with a wide shovel plow in order to get the fertilizer and the seed in the ground. This sort of plowing was slow with a small pony horse of the mustang variety. Many hard clods like rocks were broken and rolled beside the furrows for the special misery of the corn dropper boy. If stalk cutters had been invented at this time no news of the invention had reached our frontier community.

Hence, the small cotton stalks grown the previous year were still standing. They were also splendid for adding to the misery of a barefooted corn dropper boy. And, of course, the many dew berry vines grown up the year before in the old oat patch place were like saws on a boys' bare legs, ankles and feet.

Irl found that he had to distribute the fertilizer before dropping the corn. He hadn't bargained to do this for no two bits a day. However, he was game and went to work. A six-quart bucket was supplied. He filled it with stinking seafowl guano and began to earn his two bits. Down the first row he went scattering the stinking stuff, some in the furrow and some where the high wind blew it. Pretty soon his attention was called to the fact the wind was blowing almost all the fertilizer outside the furrows and told he would have to stoop over enough to get his hand down almost in the furrows before letting the stinking stuff loose from his hand. This was some job. At first it was thought to be only a back breaker. Before noon it was found to be one of the worst of stringhalted jobs in addition to a back breaking ordeal. Irl declared until this good day he has symptoms of backaches and stringhaltedness everytime he handles fertilizer while the wind is blowing.

By noon the man had streaked off and opened furrows on a little over one acre and he had distributed the fertilizer. After dinner he dropped the corn and the owner of the field covered the corn by running a furrow on each side of the furrows with a small scooter plow. This covered the corn too deep to come up but a few days after it was planted the rows were all "boarded off" by placing a small board on a plow stock and running it over the rows.

When sundown arrived the plowman, the mustang and Irl were all tired enough to take nourishment and sleep soundly without any suasiveness.

The second day was almost a repetition of the first one. The work was the same sort and still among the old cotton stalks. The clods still toe stubbers and heel bruisers. The wind was still blowing from the north making it necessary to stoop over again. Irl thought the punishment bad enough the first day. However, now he found it had been a Fourth of July Picnic compared to the muscular pains in a stiff back and stringhalted legs during the first warming up hour or more. After that the misery was not so bad. At noon the wind ceased to blow about the time the work changed to corn dropping. The afternoon was easier. At sundown on the second day the cotton patch part of the field had been planted.

Early on the morning of the third day the work got off to a good start. For a while the plowman had considerable trouble in getting his pony mustang to streak off a straight furrow in the old oat patch part of the field because there were no rows for her to walk between as a guide. Within half an hour a few rows were ready for the fertilizer. He then grabbed his bucket and down the row he went scattering the stinking seafowl fertilizer. It was some consolation not to have the wind blowing a gale for two reasons. It saved the strained and stiffened muscles of his sore back and stringhalted legs from additional pain. It also kept him from sniffing his nose full of the essence of seafowl fertilizer. The clods broken out from the furrows were not as hard as they were in the cotton patch part of the

field. This was easier on toes already stubbed sore and heels sensitive from two days of constant bruising. However, a new problem had appeared and had to be reckoned with. It was soon found to be as painful as the hard clods and cotton stalks. The long dewberry vines were a treacherous enemy. They would saw a notch in a boy's bony leg seemingly without effort. They would get between toes on a bare foot and rip off the tender uncalled skin. They would wrap themselves around a boy's ankles and tear the sensitive skin around the ankles as full of holes as a sieve. These vines had been pulled from their mooring by the plow and lifted atop the dead grass and weeds and left in the right position to do their bloody work on the feet, ankles and legs of a barefooted boy of corn dropping age. Long before the day was over Irl's shin bones were sawed full of notches, his ankles and feet scratched like he had been in an encounter with a litter of baby bobcats. His aching back and stringhalted legs were forgotten. The dewberry vine problem had really cured the other troubles. The day dragged on. The thorny vines sawed new notches and ripped off more patches of skin. It appeared the king of the dewberry vines had taken a tip from Joshua of old and commanded the sun to stand still and the moon to stay [away] until the pesky vines triumphed over their enemies as the Hebrews avenged themselves upon five kings, leading to battle a whole army of Amorites at Gibeon. Anyway, the sun seemed to stand still and the moon to stay until the thorns finished peeling the toes, ankles, and legs of the corn dropper boy. The day moved slowly along with weary efforts. The sun stood still and the shadows shortened not, neither did they lengthen, while the notched and pecked up legs grew more tired and weak and the entanglements with the vicious vines became more irritating. Yet the day dragged on and on and on. But finally about 9:30 p.m. the sun went down and the sixth boy of the bunch earned his two bits.

On the morning of the fourth day the sun was shining brightly. The weather was ideal for the best day of all. Things went along about as they did on the third day. Nothing new took place worthy of note. The most noticed happenings were the descabbing of the notches, punctures and scratches made the day before. To the corn dropping boy this descabbing process at first was a little painful, but like the backache and stringhaltedness of the second day it gradually vanished as the mind became absorbed in the work at hand. And too, a new enemy was encountered near the edge of the field in a corner of newly cleared land. Here the scabby legs made perfect contact with a big bunch of bull nettles. This encounter made the corn dropper boy forget all of his other problems for a short time. This stinging was soon over. After a little scratching such as a pioneer country boy soon learns to do when making such contacts, the burning stinging sensation was over. The pleasant reaction that followed proved to be a real blessing. The day was finished in apple pie order. Five acres of corn had been planted in four days.

Tools, buckets and empty sacks were then gathered and carried to the nearby barn. Irl now received his pay for the work he had done and started off home in a run, boy-like, as though he wasn't at all tired. He says he probably would have run all the way home but just had to stop and look at his money. He had to read all the words and figures printed on the dollar. He would read a word or two, then trot a little distance and read some more

words. When he arrived home, of course, he had to display his money to the other boys, especially Emory and Walker.

Not long ago Irl told me the story of how he earned his first dollar. He related it about as it is here given. He ended the narrative with these words:

“In the excitement that followed, my aching back, scabby legs and stringhaltedness were all forgotten. Really the money had cured them. Money can and does mean a lot to a small boy when he works for it and knows he has earned it. You know I had really earned that two bits a day. I had put out seven 200 pound sacks of guano and dropped the corn planted on nearly five acres. Unlike Emory and Charley, I have never had time to figure out how many steps I took or the miles walked during the four days, nor the number of brier scratches, stubbed off toenails or bruises received. All I know, I more than earned my two bits a day. But after all the hard work, that was the greatest DOLLAR I ever earned. Wish I could enjoy one now like I did that one.”

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## WALKER

The youngest child in every large family is usually looked upon as a baby and treated as one for many years after it has passed the baby age and begins to resist such treatment. The Diamond Homestead was no exception to this rule. Walker was treated as a baby by all the other members of the family until he was a school boy and thought himself almost a young man. Walker resisted being treated as a baby even as a small child. As he grew older the resistance increased in double ratio. When he saw his brothers Emory and Irl being assigned to jobs about the place having the appearance of tasks to be done by large boys or men and drudgery work or childish chores being assigned to him, he resisted it bitterly. He quickly explained he could do the same kind of work Emory and Irl were doing and he was tired of being kept around the house to do the menial jobs of bringing in wood for fuel, making fires, feeding the chickens and worst of all sweeping the yards with that handiest of all handy useful implements kept about a well regulated large family of boys, the much used gallberry yard broom. This sort of work wasn't considered manly, but rather “sissy” and Walker knew it. Of all things a real manly boy resents is to be assigned a task that carries with it the “sissy” idea, like sweeping floors, setting the dining table or washing dishes. When a small boy having older brothers is assigned such tasks and is teased and razzed about his “sissy work” by his older brothers it usually brings out all the fight there is in him. It's a fight in the family or a good foot race and oft times both. Suffice it to say here that no accurate records were kept at the Diamond Homestead of such events.

When Sam and Charley who were about the same size, first began to earn a few dimes or quarters by doing odd jobs for neighbors, the money looked big to Emory and Irl. They soon thought that were old enough and large enough to quit the “sissy jobs” about the place and do the same sort of work the larger boys were doing. It is well known to the



parents of large families of boys that boys can do what they make up their minds they can do. As proof of this truism pretty soon Emory and Irl were performing tasks appearing to them more like men's work. Naturally this left almost all the so called "sissy jobs" to be assigned to Walker, and just as naturally he resented such assignments and began using his thought-box in hatching out schemes to improve his position. This scheming continued for days, weeks, and even months and his position dittoed.

A few neighbors in our community of the Diamond Homestead were now planting corn and peas to pull them through the summer lull in logging. However, corn planters had not yet been invented or either our Florida Frontier had not heard of them. Hence, all corn planted had to be dropped by hand. This was considered a boy's job, far too "sissy" to be done by any man, and especially so by men who had been employed in logging work. Lucky it was for the Seven Sons who were of the corn dropping age because this false idea among men enabled the boys to earn a few dimes and quarters during corn planting time. One spring when Sam and Charley had reached the plowboy age and Emory and Irl the corn dropping age, corn dropping age boys were in great demand because as many as fifteen or twenty acres in our neighborhood was being planted in corn by would-be farmers who had no boys. Emory and Irl by taking advantage of this boom in the corn planting industry had managed to pick up a little Sunday shirt and new tie money while Walker was still doing "sissy" jobs providing no dimes or quarters for a new Sunday shirt and tie. This situation increased Walker's resentment toward 'sissy' jobs. His thought box worked overtime. His resentment temperature was rapidly rising. The explosive point was well in sight. He was now seven years old and had had one year of schooling, four months of educational training in the little log cabin school and had grown to be a big boy. He was tired of being a child.

Somehow Mother detected Walker was much disturbed about some grave problem either real or imaginary. This was probably easy for a Mother who had seen similar situations with six older boys. In a diplomatic way Mother opened a conversation with her seventh son and by gently leading him along he soon was explaining in confidential tones and manners that he had completed one year at school and would be in the second reader next year. Next he explained to Mother that he was no longer a little child to be "hacked around" doing "sissy" jobs, but a big school boy and could earn dimes and quarters for a new Sunday shirt and tie as well as Emory and Irl and had just as much right to do so as they had. Surely she would be ashamed for him to wear an old faded and torn shirt while the other boys strutted in a new shirt and a new tie and at the same time teased and laughed at him for having to wear old ones. Mother now knew the cause of all his troubles. She knew too, it was her task to find a remedy for the troubles by finding some manly work for her seventh son to do to earn some money for a new Sunday shirt and necktie and thus make it easier for her to put up with what she sometimes referred to as "The boys." Walker's pleading had won his case. Mother set about to find a task for him to do to earn the Sunday shirt and tie money.

Around the Diamond Homestead were numerous places for rats to hide and live, such as a big barn filled with hay, a big crib filled with ear corn in the shuck, a great heap of cane

pomace in a nearby cane mill lot and a large smoke house in one corner of the back yard containing barrels filled with pickled pork or pickled beef and a rack hanging full of smoked bacon, sugar cured hams and home-made sausage stuffed and seasoned for eating and smoked with hickory logs and finished with sassafras for the delicious flavor. This was a long, long, time before garages replaced smoke houses and freezing plants in cities became meat curing plants for farmers.

To keep the pesky rodents in check a few cats were kept at the Diamond Homestead. It sometimes happened, the number of cats became too numerous and had to be reduced by giving them away, carting them off or killing them. Usually it wasn't any trouble to contract with a thrifty boy for a quarter or the coveted privilege or going to mill on Saturday to kill a half a dozen cats. Five cents each or six for a quarter had been the price. Mother began bargaining with Walker on this basis. Walker declined to kill any cats at that price. He held out like a foreign diplomat driving a bargain with Uncle Sam. He had also heard the older boys talking about how much hard work they had done to earn their first dollar. At once he conceived the idea of earning a dollar with far less work and in much less time than any of his dull brothers had been able to do. Hence, he stood adamant against a kind mother. He considered the killing of cats a murderous job and declined to kill any cats for less than a dollar. He was tired of "sissy" jobs but wasn't hunting a cat-killing job at any price. He was wanting enough money to purchase a new Sunday shirt and tie and thought this the easiest and quickest way to get it.

At this time Mother was getting only fifteen cents a dozen for eggs and thought it rather hard to have to pay the price of seven dozen eggs for the killing of half a dozen worthless kittens. After dickering for a few days Mother made a bargain with her youngest boy to kill five worthless cats for the sum of one dollar and to be paid as soon as the job was done.

The murderer now began to make plans and preparations to earn his blood money. The victims were pointed out to the soon to be murderer, who sacked them without delay. They were carried off toward the big deep gully, two hundred feet from the edge of the back yard. Upon arriving at the edge of the deep gully each victim was to be pulled from the sack one at a time, killed and tossed thirty feet below to the bottom of the gully. The first one was fished from the sack, carefully laid beside the edge of the gully, given a fatal blow on the head with a rock and tossed to the nether world. When the blow struck, the first victim yowled and went tumbling down, down and down to the bottom of the great gully. The second victim was fished from the sack and dittoed. The yowling of the two cats had made the other three suspicious. They were now mewling and trying to escape. After much effort the third one was pulled from the sack and given the same death dealing blow as was given to the other two. Like the others it yowled and went tumbling down, down and end over end to join the land of its two brothers. This third cat yowled much louder than either of the others. This made the two left in the sack more restless. They scrambled in an effort to free themselves from the sack and flee for safety. When the fourth one was caught and pulled from the sack it fought frantically to free itself. In Walker's efforts to give it the rock treatment he let loose for a moment the

mouth of the sack. As the fourth cat yowled a time or two and went tumbling down to the nether world to join its companions, the fifth one escaped from the sack. Now the race of the season was on. The cat running for it's life and Walker running for a new Sunday shirt and necktie. The race lasted for some time during which the cat crawled through the cracks of an old fashioned rail fence while its chaser had to climb back and forth over the fence. After racing back and forth through an old plum orchard between the house and the gully, the cat hid under some logs and brush from where it was pulled and sacked. It was then carried back to the place of execution and given the rock treatment and sent tumbling down to join its kindred spirits. Walker now went to the house and collected his FAMOUS FIRST DOLLAR.

That night Mother enjoyed relating how smiles of happiness beamed from the face of her seventh boy when she handed him the dollar. She admitted the experience she had had was worth the price of seven dozen eggs to her and she was certain it would be worth it to Walker. That night Walker really razzed and ridiculed Emory and Irl about working four days and walking many miles to earn a dollar while he had earned one by working less than half an hour. He claimed his dollar represented brains while theirs represented only brawn. This he explained is the real difference between a man and a mule. Of course, Emory and Irl teased and ridiculed Walker for being a hired murdered and accepting blood money in order to dress up in a new store bought Sunday shirt and necktie, while they had earned theirs by honest toil. This teasing and razzing continued occasionally during the evening until bedtime to the amusement of the other members of the family. Walker was delighted that he was through with "sissy" jobs. He would now be treated as a big boy and not as a child.

To Mother's great surprise the next morning she found all five of the dead cats had returned during the night from the nether world and were prowling around as usual in her pantry. As soon as she could get over the shock of having the cats return from the regions of the dead, she called Walker and informed him that cats have nine lives and he would have to take them off and kill them eight times more or return the dollar. Mother said Walker's curt reply was: "I'll kill them cats a dozen times before I'll miss wearing a new store bought shirt and tie like the other boys." Mother said Walker then grabbed a sack and began catching and sacking cats. Soon she saw him making off toward the deep gully with a sack swung over one shoulder and a sharp hatchet in one hand. The other eight lives of the cats were killed and their chopped up carcasses again sent tumbling down, down, down, to the nether world from whence they never returned and Walker wore a new store bought Sunday shirt and new pink necktie that spring like the other boys.

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# **Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough**

## **AN EXPLANATION**

## AN EXPLANATION

These articles descriptive of many of the UP and Downs, mostly Downs, of the Seven Sons who were sometimes referred to as “The Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough” during their boyhood were suggested by hundreds of inquiries made from time to time by my numerous nieces and nephews. Seldom did any of them ever spend five minutes with me in his or her younger years without asking dozens of questions about the Ups and Downs of his or her daddy and uncles during their boyhood. They would begin about like this: “Uncle John, were all seven of you boys regular little sissy saints when you were boys?” Then before I could answer the question I would hear something like this: “From the way Papa talks one would think so. Please, Uncle John, do tell us something about what you boys did for recreation when you were small and living WAY back in the backwoods where there were no movies to go to and no places to get good books to read when you got lonesome. What did you do on weekdays when you had no school to go to? And what did you do on Sundays when you had no Sunday School to have to get up to go to on Sunday morning and then have to stay for preaching and listen to a long winded preacher talk about things that no boy except a goody, goody, sort of fellow was interested in listening to?” Before half of these questions could be answered, something about like the following would start.

“Uncle John, Papa tries to make us believe Grandpa kept you boys busy all the time working. Was that so? And is so, what did you do?” Before I could finish explaining about the clearing of new ground, planting of sweet potatoes, grassy cotton fields and the grassy potato patches, the questions would take another angle about like the following.

“Uncle John, was Papa really the best one of Grandpa’s boys? Please do tell us if he ever got into trouble when he was a boy and got paddled. Did Grandma ever have to spank him for his bad table manners? Did he ever go to the table with a dirty face and hands and without combing his long bushy hair out’n his eyes? Did she ever have to beat the dirt out’n his Sunday clothes? She did? Did he always tell Grandma the truth about how he got the dirt all over his new clothes? Did Grandma always use that old gall berry sprout from her long yard broom? After that did Papa have sense enough not to go and do the same thing again or would he hunt a new place and do it a little different and try to get by with it?” Then after a little boyish comment some one would chime in with another question and listen eagerly for an answer.

“Uncle John, did Papa ever go to bed at night in the hot summer time with black dirty feet and have to be paddled out’n bed and made to wash them? Well, Sir! Uncle John, did Grandma ever have to make you boys leave the table for eating like a glutton when she had company?” Then before the questions could be answered, some boy would chime in with another interrogation. “Did Grandma ever give you boys castor oil? And ain’t it bad?” The laugh then almost would make the boys forget the subject of conversation.

Then presently some one would begin again. “Papa said you boys used to ride billy goats and sometimes worked them. Is this so and was there any fun in riding and working billy

goats?” By the time this question could be halfway answered, some niece would inquire if all billy goats butt, and if so why?

Before any answer could be given except a plain yea, another bushel of questions would be tossed at me. “Uncle John, just why do all boys like to butt each other with their hard heads? Is it because they have no more sense than billy goats? Or do they [goats] butt for fun like boys do? Before any explanation could be given about the causes or the whys and wherefores of billy goat butting, another niece would ask if all billy goats smell worse than skunks. Before the laughing quieted down another sweet little niece would chime in about like this: “Uncle John, one time my brother played with a boy and billy goat. He came home full of the awfulest scent all over his clothes. Mamma had to bury his clothes for a week to get that awful smell from them so he could wear ’m again.” Then a nephew would chime in with something like this: “Uncle John, did Papa ever get his clothes so full of billy goat scent until grandma had to bury them for a week? What? She made him wash his own clothes in benzine or gasoline?” Then after a short pause, “My gracious! Didn’t it catch fire and burn Papa and the clothes up?”

Then after a few seconds another nephew would ask if it is true that twisting a sulked billy goat’s tail always unsulked him. Before the question could be answered, another nephew would answer it about as follows: “Yes, Uncle Irl said my Papa was the tail twister one Sunday night to make old Sandy move when he sulked.” Then a niece would want to know why it is that boys and billy goats are so much alike.

Long before all the similarities in boys and billy goats could be explained, the questions would turn to horses and mules and get off to a different angle. Did you boys ever ride horses bareback? How did you hold on with no saddle? Did you ever run in a horse race? Could Papa ride a horse very well? Did he have to be bucked off or did he just fall off? Did you ever ride a horse to drive cattle? Before this fusillade of questions could be answered, some niece from the city would ask a lot of questions about milking cows. She would want to know if cows are hard to milk and if they sometimes kick the bucket when being milked. Before I could answer her question some boy bubbling over with enthusiasm would answer her question. “Yes, Papa said he got kicked a rolling and a bouncing all over the lot one morning by the kickingest cow in the world. I sure wish I could have seen him bounce and roll. Uncle John, are such sights funny?”

Then after a few minutes discussion among a niece or two and two or three nephews about milk cows and cattle, a nephew would fire a lot of questions as rapidly as slugs from a modern gattling gun. “Oh, Uncle John, do tell us if you boys ever broke yearlings to work. Is it lots of fun? How do you yoke them up at first? What sort of cart did you have to work them to? What were the names of some of the yearlings you boys worked? Would yearlings run away easy? Do tell us the truth about Tobe and Lep. Oh, do tell us if you boys ever rode bull yearlings.” Usually all the time allowed for answering a round of such questions would be just enough to reply with monosyllables about as follows: “Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, no, no, no, no.”

Then some belligerent boy would look around and butt his nearest boy cousin with his head, and inquire if we Seven Sons ever saw bulls fight. Upon being answered in the affirmative, the boys would show renewed interest and begin another round of questions about little bull fights, middle size bullfights and big bullfights. Pretty soon the nieces present would push at the boys and demand that they hush up about bullfights and accuse them of being interested in bullfights because boys are like bulls, always looking for a fight. Then after a moment's hesitation a niece or two would look at me and ask why all boys like to fight and enjoy talking about any animals that like to fight each other. By the time this twin question could be answered with a plain "Yes," a nephew would remark for my special benefit: "Now listen at that, Uncle John's just like Papa and all other men, take sides with a bunch of little old sissy girls even if he knows they're wrong. Boys are accused of lots of things they don't do." Then some interested nephew would want to know if bulls hurt each other every time they fight or if they sometimes do like boys do when they fight, just push each other around a little and walk off and blow? Then a niece would chime in with a scream, "Goody, goody, that proves boys and bulls are alike, doesn't it Uncle John?" Before this statement and question with answers attached could be disposed of, except by a moment of silence, an inquisitive nephew would ask: "Uncle John, did you seven boys ever have fights at school? And did you get whipped by the other boys and the teacher too? You know it's pretty hard on a fellow to get two whippings, ain't it?"

Then at the suggestion of school, the questioners would want to know all about the kind of schools we Seven Sons attended. "Uncle John, did you have mean teachers in the woods like we sometimes have in town? Would they keep you in for missing three words? Did they use a ruler, strap, or a switch? I think I would rather have a switch than a ruler or strap. You know a leather strap hurts when a mean teacher jerks it hard." "Uncle John, Daddy said you taught school. Is that so?" Then another nephew would ask, "Did Papa really go to school to you? [Was you Papa's teacher?] He Did? Uncle John, could he learn anything at all?" Then when the laugh was all over the conversation might change to the following.

"Uncle John, did all you boys go to mill when you were small? Did you all go in a washing in the mill pond like Papa told me you did? Uncle John, was it really great fun to go in a washing with a crowd of millpond boys? Uncle John, what made boys like to go to mill? Was it to keep out of a grassy potato patch like Papa said? Did you ride horse back all the time or did you sometimes drive a yearling to a cart? Uncle John, was it more fun to drive a yearling or to ride a horse to mill?" Then a rest spell for ten seconds would be had.

"Uncle John, did you boys ever climb big tall trees like Papa said you did? Was it lots of fun to climb trees like squirrels, coons and possums? Uncle John did you boys ever go a possum hunting? Did you have any good possum dogs? We sure wish Papa lived where we could have dogs and go possum hunting. Uncle John is possum and tater as good as people say it is? We sure would like to have some of it. Does it ever give boys the stomach ache? Uncle John, did you boys ever tear your clothes in climbing trees and did Grandma fuss about it? Did Grandma make Papa sew up his torn trousers like Papa said

she did? Could he do a good job at sewing? What? She made him rip it out and sew it over twice?"

"Uncle John, did you boys ever have a fox chase in the GREAT BIG woods? Could your dogs outrun a fox? They must have been some runners to catch a fox. Uncle John, can a horse outrun a fox too? I'd sure like to run a horse after a fox like I've seen in pictures. Uncle John, do country boys pet and love their dogs like a lot of people say they do? Did you and Papa and some of the other boys sleep with your dogs? Was it about like sleeping with another boy?" Then a bright niece would sneeringly ask: "Uncle John, isn't it a fact that boys and puppies are just alike?" Then before this question with an answer attached could be affirmed, a bright nephew would change the subject by asking: "Did you Seven Sons ever have the seven year itch? And did Grandma make you take pills to cure it?" This would do the trick of changing the subject from an explanation of the similarities of boys and puppies.

Then Uncle John would have a rest spell for about two seconds before some nephew would ask: "Uncle John, did you boys ever go a fishing? You did? And did you ever catch any fish? Why didn't you?" The mentioning of a river would recall pictures in a geography book used in school. Then the questioning would be as follows: "Uncle John, in my geography book, I saw pictures of logs being floated down a river to a lumber mill. Did Grandpa ever do this sort of work when he hauled logs? Did any of you boys ever help him to poll [pole] logs down a deep river? What? You did? Please do tell us if it is easy riding on logs floating in DEEP water. Uh, what did you do when you fell off in the deep water? Oh, you could already swim?"

"Uncle John, did you boys ever help Grandpa kill a big beef? Papa said he did but we thought he might be just a bragging to us. Uncle John, how long does it take to kill a big beef and get the meat ready for cooking? Did you boys ever help Grandpa kill hogs too? Is that hard work too, like killing a big beef? Uncle John, did Papa really do all sorts of work on the farm? He told us he did, but you know it sounds a little strange because Mama can't get him to work a bit in the garden or even kill a chicken."

Then a bright niece would remind the party that there are lots of strange sounding things in this world and we just have to learn to know from the strange sounds if they are true or false. Then a nephew would remind us that a fellow hearing strange sounds in the dark just can't wait around to learn too much about them.

Then he would ask: "Uncle John, did you ever see a ghost or a hant?" Then a niece would come to my rescue by immediately explaining that there are no such things as ghosts or hants. The argument would continue for at least two minutes with the speakers each reciting positive proof of his or her contention. The debate would end in a draw. Then quiet would reign for at least a minute before the questioning would be renewed,

"Uncle John, did you boys ever help grind cane? Was it all fun like drinking juice and just having a good time all day? Did you boys have a good time at cane grinding like I read bout one time in the papers? What? Is there any real work about it? I thought the



horses did all the hard work at cane grinding. Please do tell us all about the real honest-to-goodness cane grinding AWAY back on a farm, and that makes everyone talk about a cane grinding with a smile and a chuckle and want to go to one. Please tell us how you boys managed to have a lot of fun at cane grinding when it requires so much hard work. Uncle John, why don't people who write about cane grindings tell about the hard work too? They just tell about the fun of drinking cane juice and eating candy and having a good time in general."

"Uncle John, we went to the big gullies near Grandpa's home with Papa one day. While there, he told us you boys used to play in them same gullies when you were little like us. What games did you boys play in the BIG DEEP gullies? Did you ever fall in them? Did you ever fall down any of the steep bluffs and get hurt? Papa thought we were going to fall and get hurt every time we got ten feet away from him. If that's the way you boys were treated I don't see how you had any real fun in going to the gullies. We threw some rocks into them and watched them until they hit the bottom. Did you ever throw rock much? Could Papa throw rocks when he was a boy? He said he could but he couldn't when he went to the gullies with us. Is it just because he is getting old? Uncle John, did you boys ever roll or slide down the steep banks of sand or red clay into the big gullies? You know, Papa wouldn't let us do that when we went to the gullies. Did Grandma ever get after Papa for getting his clothes full of chalk and clay in this gully? What? Really, did he look like a circus clown?"

"Uncle John, we saw some huckleberries at the big gully. Did you boys ever hunt wild fruit in the woods when you were little? Was it great fun? Did it ever give you the stomachache? Papa made out like it would hurt us, but we thought he just didn't want us to eat much of it. What, he ate all he could hold when he was a boy and it didn't kill him? Was that because he was harder and tougher than we are? Does living in the GREAT BIG backwoods make boys harder and tougher than living in town? Why is this?"

"Uncle John, we once saw a big snake that had been killed in the country and dragged into town behind a car. Did you boys ever see big snakes in the woods? Did they bite you? Why didn't they if you ran over the woods like Papa said you did? He wouldn't let us run over the thick woods because he was afraid we would get snake bitten. He said we wouldn't know a snake from a crooked limb. Uncle John, how did you boys tell snakes from crooked limbs?"

"Uncle John, we've read about lots of birds but have never seen many of them in the woods. Did you boys ever see many of them in the woods? Did you ever find their nests? How did you know where to look for their nests? Uncle John, do tell us how we can see them in the woods where they make their homes. It must be great fun to see them in the great woods where they live. Uncle John, how could boys back in the woods learn the names of all the birds when they did not have any books to tell them? Do they know then by name when they first see'm?"

"Uncle John, Papa told us one time about getting stung by a big red wasp. Did you boys ever get in many wasp nesting places and get stung like he said you did? We were

helping Grandpa pick some peas one time for dinner and go into a wasp nest and got stung. They sure did hurt. Uncle John, did Grandpa ever have any honey bees on his farm? He did? Did you boys ever get into a fight with a swarm of them? We've heard people tell about how bad they are. Papa told us they are not as bad as yellow jackets. Do you know anything about yellow jackets? Please tell us about them. Did you boys ever get into a big nest of them? Did they get all over you? My, how did you get rid of them? Did you ever know if goats, cows and yearlings sometimes get into a nest of yellow jackets and get stung? They do? How do they act when they accidentally get near a swarm of bees or walk into a nest of yellow jackets and get stung all over?" Then the boys would express the idea that to see animals in such a predicament must be great fun, and express a wish to see the exhibition of freeing themselves from the stinging bugs. Then the girls would criticize the boys for their cruel dispositions and a lack of sympathy for even an animal that had such a misfortune. The debate would now be on in full swing, during which time I could look on and enjoy a breathing spell for a least two minutes before another fusillade of questions would start.

"Uncle John, did you ever ride a mule? What, you didn't? Then you ain't a gentleman like Papa and your younger brothers, are you?" Before I could answer with a monosyllable containing only two letters, a niece or two wanted to know why I didn't ride mules when I was a boy. Then I would have to explain that when I was a boy large enough to plow and haul logs with a big cart and four yoke of big oxen, only one mule was to be found in all the big community called Pine Level. Before I finished this explanation, questions like this would be thrown at me three at a time: "Did you haul big sure enough logs? How did you get them on the cart? How many made a load for a big team?" Then I would have to explain the logs were not loaded on a cart but hoisted under the cart, swinging on strong chains. In the early pioneer days they were hoisted with the Drake Tail rigging and later with a cast iron roller and a long jacking stick. The boys would listen to this explanation, but the girls showed no interest in any logging methods. By the time the boys understood the hoisting process, there would be a rest period or at least ten seconds, before a fusillade of questions would be let loose about the following.

"Uncle John, did you haul all things with oxen and carts in those days? Did you work oxen to wagons? What? Carts? Do tell us about that yearling you boys used to work a long time ago. Papa told us a little about him, all he could remember. Was his name Cam? Oh, yes, that's the one. DO tell all about Cam and the Cart." Before I could give much explanation about the hauling done with Cam and the Cart, some niece would want to know if we went to town with Cam and the Cart, and if Cam could trot fast like a horse hitched to a buggy. Before this could be explained, a vociferous nephew would want to know if his Pa ever rode a donkey and if his Pa was tossed off by the donkey or just fell off like he told us one time about when he fell off a worm rail fence. Then half a dozen questions would be asked at the same time about as follows: "What is a worm rail fence? What is a rail? Where do people buy rails? How do you make such a fence?" Before these questions could be answered, some fast talking nephew would chime in:

“Uncle John, did Papa ever have ground itch and seven year itch at the same time? He did? What did he do? Just sit and scratch day and night until he got well? Or did Grandma blister him with gimpson [jimsonweed] and polk root tea until he thought he was on fire all over? And did that cure his itches?” Before his questions could be answered, a bright, much refined city niece would demand the subject be changed because it isn’t nice to talk about itches. The she would add a cinch to her point: “People who have itch go dirty, don’t bathe and change clothes as often as they should.” This would stop the conversation for a few seconds.

Then some smart boy would ask: “Uncle John did all Grandpa’s and Grandma’s boys have measles? And did they all have them at the same time? What? My, me! What could Grandma do to keep all that bunch of hardheads in the house at the some time?” Then some other nephew would answer the question by saying she did not keep them all in the house at the same time because she could not put up with all of them at one time. Then someone would want to know if Grandma wore-out all the long sprouts in her old handy gall berry yard broom to keep her gang of boys from wading in the branch, going off to the millpond wash hole or wading in all the mud holes up and down the log roads, like Papa said she did? Before an answer could be given in a monosyllable, a niece would ask: “Uncle John were all seven of you boys at home at the same time? My Gracious Alive! How did Grandma and Grandpa put up with you?” This question would be answered by a niece: “My Papa said Grandpa got all of you out of bed at four in the morning, away’fore day in the morning and made you work all day. If your Papa made you do like that you’d be a lot better and get fewer spankings.” During this discussion between nieces and nephews, I’d have a two-minute rest spell, before a nephew chimed in:

“Uncle John, were you Seven Sons at the same home all really good quiet boys, hard working little boys who never gave Grandpa and Grandma any worries? How did Grandpa ever manage to keep the seven of you working so hard until you were too tired for lots of fun? Did you boys never play any pranks or tricks on each other or on Grandpa or on anyone else? Did you never forget and leave a chair, a basket or something in a hall or walkway and later some one fall over the object, skinning and bruising himself all over and accuse you of leaving the object there purposely, and then refuse to believe you and insist on having you paddled for an unavoidable accident? If so please tell us about the pranks, tricks or accidents.” It would now become necessary to relate a few incidents, like boring holes in a water shelf, climbing the big china tree to get away from the missionary, placing tin cans over a door, shutting Dear Old Sandy up in a stable, hiding a pair of socks, flipping a yellow jacket where it could leave its trademark, singeing the wings of a swarm of yellow jackets so they would have to crawl in walk ways, placing a cloth, wet with hot syrup, for people to sit on, or twisting Dear Old Sandy’s tail at the opportune time for the information of nephews and nieces who really thought they had an inherent right to learn all the information possible about their dads for their own protection, present and future.

The questions recorded in the preceding pages and hundreds of others asked by an even dozen nephews and one less nieces, each filled with health and happiness and looking for all the innocent fun and fascination to which lusty lads and lasses are entitled and their continued requesting, begging, pleading and imploring me for over thirty years to reduce to writing a true narration of a few of the innocent prankish tricks and a few of the UPS and Downs, mostly downs, fate handed to the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough during our uneventful boyhood days, is responsible for the writing of these pages. It is the sincere hope of the first born of the Seven that anyone taking time to read these pages will keep in mind the reason why they were written and at least be chairtable [charitable].

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Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough

HISTORY OF THE SEVEN SONS

FOREWARD

HISTORY OF THE SEVEN SONS IN DOGGREL TODATE
AS LED ALONG BY A KIND PROVIDENCE AND FATE

1. John Thomas Diamond
2. Henry Van Diamond
3. Samuel Ingram Diamond
4. Charles Peter Diamond
5. Emory Gayle Diamond
6. Irl Ebory Diamond
7. Walker DeWitt Diamond

JOHN THOMAS DIAMOND

John Thomas the little racer was the first born
He's ever been thin and gaunt and lean and long

First a log camp flunky then a regular sawyer
Then a trainer of yearlings and a log hauler

Wheelwright expert with log saw and ax for tools
Studied pedagogy in the log camp schools

Teacher in grades, vocational and Principal
Trainer of teachers and a Public School Official

A Vocational Clerk with State Department of Ed.
A three board secretary with minutes to be read

An inspector for plant pests and diseases
For the protection of our plants and treeses

Budget fixer fiscal flunky and figure head
Was kept busy keeping records out of red

HENRY VAN DIAMOND

Henry Van the philosophic was the second born
He's always been a little thin and medium long

A boy flunky at the log camp and sawyer too
Then a teamster and foreman of camp and crew

Successful Florida frontier farmer in the main
Harvester of plenteous crops of meat and grain

Kept a country store and dealt in eggs and chicks
Had a little mill and kept it grinding golden grist

Was doing well and became a local politician
Was Chairman School Board and County Commissioners

Paid back debts and did building for the schools
Built roads and bridges and county finance improved

Politics let briars take the farm and cobwebs the store
Now he's farming for Mrs. Henry Van evermore

SAMUEL INGRAM DIAMOND

Samuel Ingram was the next to see the light of day
Sam is short and stout always happy and gay

First a flunky on a Florida frontier farm
Clerked in a village store from dawn till dark

Taught two years in a one room country school
Spared not the rod and made the boys obey the rule

Attended business college and taught to pay his way
Big boys took advantage of his size and tried to play

He grabbed 'm by the collar and dragged 'm from the room
They obeyed and learned their lessons might soon

Became a bookkeeper and taught it for a season
Then went into business for a monetary reason

This adventure went well till the depression
Then for the same reason returned to his profession

He's now busy checking figures not a few
And making Income Tax returns correct and true.

CHARLES PETER DIAMOND

Charles Peter was the next appearing on the scene
Short and very thin, then later stout and serene

First a flunky on a Florida frontier farm
Taught school four long years but did little harm

While doing but little harm caught an inspiration
To starve and strive and study for an education

With gizzard full o' grit and head full o' schemes
Off to college he went wearing a new pair o' jeans

Had a little teaching money spent it mighty soon
Swept floors and washed dishes for board and room

Won a law degree and to win the war went to France
Won the war and began law with one pair o' pants

Since the law college didn't even make a dent
He came through a trying novitiate badly bent

But by luck he'd learned a little law from the court
Became judge and fondly hopes to hold the fort.

EMORY GAYLE DIAMOND

Emory Gayle was the next one to see the light
He's not too tall or fat but 'zactly right

Clerked in a country store and plowed the sod
Taught a country school but never used the rod

A mail carrier for Uncle Sam he became
Road [Rode] the route three years but didn't like the game

Went to college and studied a preacher for to be
Four years of study won for him the A. B. degree

Then in the seminary two long years he spent
And preached a season like one divinely sent

After a dozen years of earnest preaching
For splendid reasons returned to teaching

Nineteen forty two he got leave from this
Since he's been busy building fighting ships.

IRL EBORY DIAMOND

Irl was the sixth Diamond to arrive
He's medium of stature and always wears a smile

He did a thousand things about the Diamond farm
And always did them well with a welcome arm

He loved his dogs and taught them how to run
And chase the coon the cat and fox for fun

Worked many mules and road them for recreation
And joined Uncle Sam's army to save the nation

This task done he builded fords and cadalacs
Till the depression gave business awful whacks

With money hard to get robbers plied their trade
He then repaired safes and as good as new them made

Nineteen forty-two he answered the nation's call
And's now an expert ship fitter to win the war

WALKER DEWITT DIAMOND

Walker DeWitt the seventh made the gang complete
Seven sacred sons now perfection and discreet

Walker is a little short but not too fat
When a boy he was a sport and wore a derby hat

Walker worked on the farm and plowed the sod
But ne'er learned to like the dirty dusty job

Taught a little country school and ruled it right
Then joined the navy for a bigger and better fight

Two years he went to college but didn't like the game
Then took a business course and a bookkeeper became

Then took the civil service examination
And became a customs collector for the nation

Nineteen forty two rejoined the navy for the fight
To show the Germans and the Japs that we'r right

A FOREWARD

The Seven Sons mentioned in these pages were the sons of Peter L. and Mary E. Diamond. They were born and reared in the extreme northwest corner of Santa Rosa County, in the state of Florida. Their names are, in the order of date of their birth, - not ages: John Thomas, Henry Van, Samuel Ingram, Charles Peter, Emory Gale, Irl Ebory and Walker DeWitt. As boys, we were known and still are, as John, Henry, Sam, Charley, Emory, Irl and Walker. These names only will be used in giving an account of a few of the UPS And DOWNS, -- mostly downs, of the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough. That is the sobriquet given the Seven of us at an early age. Whether this sobriquet was given because of our personal appearance, uncouth manners or rough and rowdy behavior, neither history nor tradition has yet revealed. It may have been because we were born and reared on a rough Florida Frontier and were unable to overcome the influence of a rough environment. Anyway it was not our fault. We did the best we could under the then existing circumstances.

Because the number "seven" was often referred to as the "Sacred Number" some people tried to place an everlasting stigma upon us by naming us "The Sacred Seven". We resented this attempt with all the might in us. We looked upon it as a strain we would never be able to live down. Pretty soon some Missionary preached a sermon on "Sabbath Desecration." In this he referred often to the numbers, "Seven", "Seventeen", "Seventy", "Seven Times Seventy", "Seventy Times Seven", "Three Score and Seventeen", et al. In this sermon he spoke of the number "Seven" as meaning "Perfection." Then we boys were in for the hard task of living down this idea of perfection. By the time we have lived down this "Sacred Number" notion and the "Perfection" idea the sobriquet "Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough" was fixed upon us as thoroughly as a western rancher burns his brand upon his cattle and horses.

Whether or not there is anything sacred about the number "Seven" or in the Biblical names, "John", "Thomas", "Peter", and "Samuel", or in the fact that some of the Seven were named for preachers who rank high in the ministry still remains as ENIGMA. Be this traditional idea as it may, we Seven Sons were not looked upon as any man's "Seven Little Saints," even if we were Seven in number. We were just boys with all the significance that word implies, and it implies a lot. We were never "Bad" in the ordinary meaning of this little nomosyllable. We were healthy, hardy and bubbling over with life and enjoyed innocent fun. This is only natural for a bunch of healthy boys. Especially is this true of boys residing far away from the influence of that much overworked word called "Society" in a frontier country often called "Backwoods." Then, too, we boys had inherited a superabundance of dynamic energy from our frontier ancestors who lived on a frontier and in a period where the law of the "Survival of the Fittest" was the supreme law of the land, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and the Legislative Acts, to-the-contrary notwithstanding.

By the very nature of things we were compelled to miss a valuable part of the early education of a boy, - namely, the privilege of playing with and fighting with neighbor

boys. A boy who missed this privilege may sometimes overcome the loss but it is a hard struggle. Any one overcoming this handicap is certainly entitled to "Honorable Mention," if not "Cum Laude." This handicap was partially overcome in our case because "We Were Seven" in number and could occasionally get a little training from each other.

On one occasion when father was evidently a little worried and vexed at putting up with Seven Sons he remarked that once he had an old friend who had through a long period of years developed a unique philosophy of life, and had become known far and wide as a splendid authority on "Rearing Boys," say that any man who reared seven boys on this earth was automatically exempted from seeing any "Hell" or running for the Legislature or County Commissioner, hereafter, because he would have had a double portion, shaken down and running over on this earth. Father explained that he did not get the full meaning of his friend's philosophy until he had Seven Sons of his own all at home at the same time. Then right here he would sometimes explain that the "Double Portion, shaken down and running over," came when the Seven Sons got mixed up with a flock of billy goats, a herd of bull yearlings, a pair of curr dogs, a few squawking roosters, a half a dozen tom cats, a bucking mule, or a kicking stubborn donkey with a few colonies of stinging wasps, bees or yellow jackets thrown in for good measure.

Speaking about a frontier country, hardy ancestors and the "Law of the Survival of the Fittest," it may be interesting to the reader to know that the paternal grandfather of the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough was born in a hollow cypress log which served as a home, a hospital and a hide-out, at the same time and spent his first fifteen hours there in perfect silence lest any audible celebrations of his birthday might reveal his hiding place to hostile Indians. At the end of fifteen hours the family moved on down the river in a hastily constructed make-shift boat traveling only at night and rowing the boat with muffled oars in the middle of the stream lest the noise might aid the Indians in locating them. During the day the family sought refuge in a hideout in the swamp. No fire was permitted at night lest the light reveal the camp. No fire was had during the day lest the smoke rising above the treetops reveal the location of "Paled Faced" enemies on the run.

The family was coming down the Chattahoochee River getting away from Indians on the "War Path" somewhere north of where the present city of Columbus, Georgia, was later located. The exact location of the cypress log that served three purposes at once is not known. Neither is it known whether it was on the Georgia or the Alabama side of the river. The family left the river thirty or forty miles north of the Florida State line and traveled on foot westward. In leaving the river no signs of landing were left to prevent their being followed by Indians.

It may be stated here that Grandfather's birthday was the 16th of June. However, the exact year was lost track of during the trials and struggles of traveling westward through a country filled with scattering hostile Indians, unfriendly Spaniards, fierce bears, wolves and panthers. At this time the Spaniards in Florida were making raids in Georgia and parts of Alabama for the purpose of capturing and harboring slaves, and driving cattle into Florida. For this reason the family could not cross the line into Florida without danger from the Spaniards. The recollection of some of the family was that Grandfather

was born soon after the close of the War of 1812, a short while after Jackson's unique capture of Pensacola and his signal victory at New Orleans on January 8, 1814. Grandfather's sister, Nancy, who was twelve years of age when her brother John was born, was certain his birthday was June the 16th, 1804, instead of 1814. She was sure of this because she remembered hearing the family and other frontier timber hewers talk about wanting to go west and settle in the "newly acquired plains beyond the Mississippi River," sometimes spoken of as "The Louisiana Territory." Since the Louisiana Purchase was made in April 1803 it is quite probable that Aunt Nancy was correct. It would have been easy years later to use 1814 instead of 1804.

The trip westward was real pioneering. The travel was necessarily slow and cautious. [I am relating from the stories told me when a small boy by Aunt Nancy who was twelve years of age when the trip was made.] Only a few miles could be traveled in a day. The family consisted of the father, mother, baby John, two small girls, Mary and Nancy, two small boys, Robin and Ruben and two older ones, Neal and William. She reported that her father and the two older boys took turns in guarding the camp, which was usually a hide-out, and scouting the country a few miles ahead looking for scattered Indians, Spaniards, run-away slaves, and signs of white settlers. Within a few days the scant supply of food brought with them gave out. Then they lived on roasted venison and turkey seasoned with sassafras and bay leaves. Deer and turkey were plentiful. A walk of a few hundred yards from the camp would make it possible to kill a nice young fat deer any time venison was needed. Turkeys were the same way. Big fires were kept burning at night with clothing hung about the camp in the manner of a "scare crow," to keep the bears, wolves and panthers away as they were attracted there by the odor of roasting meat.

This journey continued for three or four weeks before any settlements of white people were located. This was real pioneering. This was hardships. This was the sort of hardships one can expect when every member of the family is compelled to leave home without notice, leaving all earthly possessions to be destroyed except the few personal belongings that can be carried on one's back. This is the sort of hardships that compelled every member of the family to carry his share of responsibility. Aunt Nancy said that each small child carried little bundles of clothing – probably only a scanty change of clothing for itself.

The first settlements located were a number of timber camps near a river which later was identified as the Choctawhatchee. Here her father and the two older boys obtained work hewing timber. The fact that they had their large broad hewing axes with them was taken as proof of their trade and enabled them to begin work at once. Here they found a vacant cabin for a camping place. Scanty rations were available. The worst of the hardships were over. The family remained here for a year or longer and then moved westward, continuing in the timber cutting business. The next stop was on Pea River, where the timber was still floated down the Choctawhatchee River and by way of the bay of the same name and then through Santa Rosa Sound to Pensacola. From Pea River the family moved to near the Conecuh River a few miles above the junction of the Conecuh and Patsaliga [Sepulga]. Timber here was floated down the Conecuh River and the Escambia

River to Pensacola Bay and sold on the Pensacola market. The family gradually moved down the river to get nearer to the market and the source of supplies. Approximately 50 miles north east of where the Conecuh River enters the State of Florida, Grandfather married. Within a few years he became the owner of a small upright water driven saw mill where a village by the name of Bluff Springs was later built. A few years before the beginning of the Civil War he moved across the Escambia River and built a sawmill on a creek later known as the "Diamond Mill Creek."

In this mill Father learned sawmill work. He was first "handy boy" about the mill and later sawyer, becoming a sawyer at 12 years of age. When the Civil War broke out all timber work ceased. All able-bodied men soon were in the Army. The old men and boys were used as "Home Guards" operating ferries, guarding bridges, railroads and other property valuable in War. Grandfather and three smaller boys were employed to operate a ferry on the Escambia River and to make salt by boiling seawater and hauling it to the Alabama River north of Mobile, for shipping to the Confederate Army. Father operated the ferry on the Escambia River during part of the war and assisted in making salt the rest of the time. Father's job was to haul the salt from Mulat at the head of Escambia Bay to the Clayborn {Claiborne} Steamboat Landing on the Alabama River with ox teams. It was shipped from there to the Confederate Army.

May I say before mentioning some of the hardships of the maternal grandfather of the Seven Sons that Grandfather Diamond served several years in Indian Wars in Florida where he endured all the hardships of Indian fighting in Florida Frontier flat woods and marshy swamps. He learned the technique of fighting Indians neck deep in water. He learned the art of defeating them in Pumpkin Swamp and routing them from Old Town Hammock.

The maternal grandfather of the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough was named Jessie Ezelle. He too was a timber hewer on the frontiers of South Alabama and West Florida. He did not begin life in a hollow cypress log. Yet he suffered all the hardships pioneering on a Florida Frontier. He served as a soldier in the Confederate Army during the Civil War. He endured all the horrors of war. He was captured at the close of the war and held several months as a prisoner because he refused to sign the Amnesty Proclamation call by him and his partner in the army and in prison, State Senator Hon. E. V. McCaskill, the "Damn Nasty Proclamation." Soon after their company was captured every member signed the proclamation and was released except the two. Each day they refused to sign the proclamation. For weeks they were given no food except stale bread and water. Still they refused to sign the proclamation, and told the Officers in charge they would stay in prison until they died of starvation or prison filth before they would sign the "Damn Nasty Proclamation" and thereby cast a blighting stigma upon the fair name of their children and grandchildren for generations.

Shortly after this they were given better food. As soon as they were able to travel on foot they were released without signing anything or making any promises, and congratulated by the officers in charge for having the courage to stand by their honest convictions. A

supply of rations to last them several days enroute home was given them by the officers because they said they could not release brave men to beg their way home.

Both the grandmothers of the Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough endured all possible hardships in a frontier country while staying at home and taking care of small children while their husbands and older boys were in armies,-- some on the firing lines and others at war work. Somehow they bore the hardships with courageous fortitude and kept their small children from starvation. They and their children learned the art of living where the “Survival of the Hardest” was the supreme law of the land.

The first few years following the Civil War were in many respects as bad if not worse than the war itself. These years brought hardships of an entirely different variety. These were hardships of BROKEN DOWN MORALE. They were hardships of an INFERIORITY COMPLEX to the nth degree. They were hardships that LINGER LONG. They were hardships that TIME AND PATIENCE BLENDED WITH BULLDOG DETERMINATION AND CANINE COURAGE alone can overcome.

During this reconstruction period the country was controlled, absolutely, by the swarms of carpet baggers who rushed to every hamlet, burg, and community to gather up the spoils of victory for their own use. They were aided by many deserters and renegades who came from their scattered frontier hideouts to share the spoils. They plundered the villages and towns and searched the countryside far and wide. Cattle were driven away and other property confiscated.

All the taxes possible were assessed and collected not for public purposes, but for their personal benefit. Roads, bridges, public buildings and schools were forgotten. Political corruption ruled supreme until the returning soldiers could over the shock, get their bearings, and with the help of their sons organize and take the control of public affairs from the carpet baggers, deserters and renegades. However, the damage done during the eight or ten years required a much longer period to repair. Damage may be done in a few days that requires many years to repair is a truism that applied here.

The Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough were enduring hardships on a Florida Frontier before damage done by these demagogues was repaired. We traveled trails instead of roads. We swam streams or crossed them on antiquated “ferry-boats or log billy-boys instead of bridges.” For a few years the older ones of the Seven knew not the benefits of school. Then veritable makeshifts were provided for three months a year, --some years. The buildings were mere shacks--not even log cabins. Not even a pretense was made to teach anything except the proverbial “Three R’s.” The teachers knew not how to teach. They couldn’t even read understandingly. They knew not the science of the simplest numbers. It was a clear case of the “MENTALLY BLIND” attempting to teach the untaught. Both stumbled in the ditch of ignorance.

These things are mentioned here in order that the reader may have at least a vague idea of the background and of the early environment of the Seven Sons and better understand the sobriquet-- “Seven Little Diamonds in the Rough.”

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Chapter 24.....Pine Level
Pine Level's Pines and Pioneers
The Early Pioneer's Cash was from the Pines
Southern Girls

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Coon' Beat Possums.....Pensacola News Journal Article – Dec 22, 1957

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John T Diamond [1878 –1963]Lakeland Ledger – December 24, 1963

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Aunt Mary Ann.....Pensacola News Journal Article – June 1, 1947

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John Thomas Diamond
1878-1963