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# Desperate and Determined Men: West Virginia's Lincoln County Feud

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**DESPERATE AND DETERMINED MEN:  
WEST VIRGINIA'S LINCOLN COUNTY FEUD**

A thesis submitted to  
the Graduate College of  
Marshall University  
In partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts  
in  
History  
by  
Brandon Ray Kirk  
Approved by  
Dr. Kevin Barksdale, Committee Chairperson  
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Marshall University  
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*Dedicated to the feudists and to the people who told their story*

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## **ABSTRACT**

The Lincoln County Feud occurred between 1878 and 1890 in the Harts Creek community of Lincoln and Logan counties, West Virginia. The aim of this thesis is to determine the causes of the feud, explore factors that contributed to its escalation, and identify reasons for its conclusion. The Lincoln County Feud arose out of personal grievances between prominent residents Paris Brumfield and Canaan Adkins, intensified due to the changing socioeconomic nature of the Harts Creek community, transformed into a contest among merchants for economic and political supremacy, and concluded with the elimination or outmigration of anti-Brumfield factions. Late nineteenth century Southern Appalachian feud studies provide invaluable insight into Civil War legacy and violence, require a micro view of feud communities that allow for a better understanding of mountain culture, offer reasons for crime causation and cessation, and consider a link between societal transformation and violent behavior. This thesis reflects over twenty-five years of research by a direct descendant of feudists and relies upon printed accounts of the feud, contemporary newspaper accounts of the feud, numerous oral histories provided by descendants of feudists, and rare documents maintained in local courthouses, archives, and university libraries in West Virginia and Kentucky.

## INTRODUCTION: “MURDERLAND”<sup>1</sup>

This thesis will examine the Lincoln County Feud, a blood vendetta that transpired from 1878 to 1890 in the Harts Creek region of the Guyandotte Valley in southwestern West Virginia. The Lincoln County Feud arose out of personal grievances between prominent residents Paris Brumfield and Canaan Adkins, intensified due to the changing socioeconomic nature of the Harts Creek community, transformed into a contest among merchants for economic and political supremacy, and concluded with the elimination or outmigration of anti-Brumfield factions. Excepting the Hatfield-McCoy Feud, which largely transpired in Kentucky, the Lincoln County Feud is West Virginia’s most famous feud.

## NARRATIVE

The Lincoln County Feud occurred between 1878 and 1890 in the Harts Creek community, a settlement bisected by the Lincoln-Logan county line and located in the midsection of the Guyandotte Valley in southwestern West Virginia.<sup>2</sup> Feud leaders Paris Brumfield and Canaan “Cain” Adkins were leading citizens of the community, although each possessed marked differences in their backgrounds and occupations. Brumfield, whose grandfather first settled locally in 1804, owned more than one thousand acres of

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<sup>1</sup> T.C. Crawford, *An American Vendetta: A Story of Barbarism in the United States* (New York: Bedford, Clarke and Company, 1889), 9, 113.

<sup>2</sup> For the purpose of this study, *Hart* is the name of the town situated at the mouth of Big Harts Creek. Big Harts Creek, shortened to *Harts Creek*, whose headwaters are in Logan County and whose lower sections are in Lincoln County, is the name of the primary stream in the community. The town of Hart and the lower portion of Harts Creek are located in *Harts Creek District*, the southernmost district in Lincoln County. The upper region of Harts Creek, known as Warren or Upper Hart during the feud era, lies in the Chapmanville District of Logan County. Altogether, the upper and lower sections of Harts Creek and the region surrounding the creek constitute the *Harts Creek community*.



land in the valley, primarily centered upon Browns Branch.<sup>3</sup> Adkins, who married into a prominent local family and migrated to Harts Creek during the late 1860s, owned a 205-acre farm on West Fork.<sup>4</sup> Brumfield worked as a logger, storekeeper, and distiller.<sup>5</sup> Adkins was a United Baptist preacher, teacher, country doctor, and justice of the peace.<sup>6</sup> Many feared Brumfield and regarded him as a roustabout, while one newspaper viewed Adkins as an esteemed citizen.<sup>7</sup>

The original source of trouble between Paris Brumfield and Cain Adkins most likely involved ownership of valuable land situated at the mouth of Harts Creek. From an early date, Paris Brumfield, the husband of Ann Toney, had coveted his father-in-law's farm situated at the mouth of Harts Creek. Conversely, father-in-law James Toney had not approved of Brumfield's marriage to his Ann.<sup>8</sup> Following James Toney's 1865 death, Brumfield made several attempts to drive his widowed mother-in-law Nancy Toney from the property. By 1869, Abner Vance, father-in-law to Cain Adkins, had acquired the "Toney tract."<sup>9</sup> In 1878, Abner deeded the Toney tract to William T. "Bill" Fowler, merchant-cousin to Nancy Toney.<sup>10</sup> Sometime after 1880, due to continued trouble with

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<sup>3</sup> Doris C. Miller, "Arrived By Horseback From Giles County, Virginia: Brumfield Family Here Dates Back to 1808," *Herald-Dispatch* (Huntington, WV), 8 January 1960; Land Book (1870-1878), Lincoln County Clerk's Office, Hamlin, WV; Land Book (1879-1885), Lincoln County Clerk's Office, Hamlin, WV.

<sup>4</sup> Ronnie Adkins, *Adkins: Land of York to Beech Fork* (Montgomery, AB: self-published, 1990), 125; U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1870; Land Book (1870-1878), Lincoln County Clerk's Office, Hamlin, WV; Land Book (1879-1885), Lincoln County Clerk's Office, Hamlin, WV.

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1880; *Polk's West Virginia State Gazetteer and Business Directory* (Detroit: R.L. Polk & Co., 1882-83); *Polk's West Virginia State Gazetteer and Business Directory* (Detroit: R.L. Polk & Co., 1884).

<sup>6</sup> Daisy Ross, telephone interview by John Hartford, Kenova, WV, 25 October 1995; Daisy Ross, interview by author and John Hartford, Kenova, WV, 16 March 1996.

<sup>7</sup> *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 11 November 1891; *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 23 June 1888.

<sup>8</sup> Oris Vance, interview by author, Atenville, WV, 28 November 1995.

<sup>9</sup> Law Orders A (1868-1875), 145, Logan County Circuit Clerk's Office, Logan, WV; Land Book (1866-1872), Logan County Clerk's Office, Logan, WV. In November 1865, the court appointed Guy Dingess as administrator of Toney's estate.

<sup>10</sup> Land Book (1879-1885), Lincoln County Clerk's Office, Hamlin, WV.

Paris Brumfield, Widow Toney, who had remained on the property, resettled in the headwaters of Little Harts Creek.<sup>11</sup>

During the 1880s, Paris Brumfield—a noted bad man, womanizer, distiller, and head of the local gun culture—and Cain Adkins—teacher, preacher, doctor, and justice of the peace—waged an inter-family feud. Throughout the decade, the two men intermittently fought and shot at one another, prompting one newspaper to refer to them as “sworn enemies.”<sup>12</sup> Oral history recounts one story in which the two men fought near the Guyandotte River; in the encounter, Adkins knocked Brumfield into the river, then pulled him out using his rifle.<sup>13</sup> Brumfield’s feud with Adkins extended to other family members. In September of 1882, he fatally shot Adkins’ son-in-law Mont “Boney” Lucas in the abdomen at the Narrows of Harts Creek.<sup>14</sup> Oral history provides three reasons for the Brumfield-Lucas difficulty: Lucas had reportedly made improper advancements toward one of Brumfield’s daughters; animosity existed between their children at school; and the two men disputed ownership of logs.<sup>15</sup> The incident at the Narrows was particularly violent: Lucas attacked Brumfield with an axe, striking him two or three times and severely cutting one of his arms at the shoulder. Brumfield in turn shot Lucas using a pistol or Winchester rifle.<sup>16</sup> In killing Lucas, Brumfield had committed the community’s first homicide. Lucas’ death caused intense bitterness on the part of the

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<sup>11</sup> U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1880; Oris Vance, interview, 28 November 1995.

<sup>12</sup> “The Terrible Vendetta,” *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 29 October 1889.

<sup>13</sup> Verdayne Shelton, interview by author, Atenville, WV, 22 November 1995.

<sup>14</sup> *Sentinel* (Parkersburg, WV), 9 September 1882.

<sup>15</sup> Glenna Epling, telephone interview by author, Wayne, WV, 2002; Lawrence Kirk, interview by John Hartford, Harts, WV, 27 July 1993; Ray Kirk, interview by author, Ferrellsburg, WV, 22 November 1995.

<sup>16</sup> *Sentinel* (Parkersburg, WV), 9 September 1882; Bob Adkins, interview by John Hartford, Hamlin, WV, 24 July 1993; Lawrence Kirk, interview, 27 July 1993; Ray Kirk, interview by author, Ferrellsburg, WV, n.d.; Bob Adkins, interview by author, Hamlin, WV, 12 February 1996.

Adkins toward the Brumfields and brought hardship to Lucas' pregnant widow, Angeline.<sup>17</sup>

During the late 1880s, Green A. McCoy, son-in-law to Cain Adkins, joined the feud. McCoy, a Kentucky migrant, fiddler, and timber man, had married Adkins' daughter, Spicie, about 1887.<sup>18</sup> The primary source of trouble between Brumfield and McCoy appears to have been McCoy's familial relationship to Cain Adkins. At the time of McCoy's betrothal, Brumfield bragged to Adkins that "he had another son-in-law to kill."<sup>19</sup> In February of 1888, Brumfield met McCoy at a saloon in Hamlin, seat of government for Lincoln County, offered insults, then engaged him on the street. In the gunplay that followed, McCoy's gun misfired, while Brumfield accidentally shot the county assessor.<sup>20</sup> That same year, Brumfield committed a "murderous assault" upon Cain Adkins for which he was indicted in June by a Lincoln County grand jury.<sup>21</sup> Also in 1888, Brumfield and Adkins exchanged shots during a circuit court meeting in Hamlin.<sup>22</sup> At times, Green McCoy left Harts to quell the growing violence between himself and Brumfield.<sup>23</sup> In 1889, he nearly blinded Brumfield in a fight and, in September of 1889, shot him in the leg.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Glenna Epling, telephone interview, 2002.

<sup>18</sup> "The Terrible Vendetta," *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 29 October 1889; Daisy Ross, telephone interview by author, Kenova, WV, 27 October 1995; Daisy Ross, telephone interview by John Hartford, Kenova, WV, 8 December 1995; Daisy Ross, interview by author, Kenova, WV, 11 December 1995; Daisy Ross, interview, 16 March 1996.

<sup>19</sup> Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 25 October 1995; Daisy Ross, interview, 11 December 1995; Daisy Ross, interview, 16 March 1996.

<sup>20</sup> "Shooting Scrape," *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 25 February 1888.

<sup>21</sup> *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 23 June 1888.

<sup>22</sup> "The Terrible Vendetta," *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 29 October 1889.

<sup>23</sup> Green McCoy, letter to Harrison McCoy (19 May 1889), author's collection.

<sup>24</sup> Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 27 October 1995; Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 8 December 1995; Daisy Ross, interview, 11 December 1995; Daisy Ross, interview, 16 March 1996; "Lynched!" *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 28 October 1889; "Quick Justice Done," *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 29 October 1889.

Simultaneous to the Brumfield-Adkins feud, Henderson Dingess, leading citizen of Upper Hart, waged intra-family feuds with Benjamin “Ben” Adams and the Hall family. Dingess, the son of pioneers, had married Adams’ older sister, while Adams had married Dingess’ niece.<sup>25</sup> Trouble between Dingess and his Adams in-laws may have begun as early as 1869 when Floyd Gore, acting on behalf of John Q. Adams’ heirs, sued Dingess. In February 1869, Gore accused Dingess of “entered upon said land and has cut about forty poplar trees on said land and has hauled said logs to the Smoke House Fork of Harts Creek which said lumber is worth one hundred and fifty dollars.”<sup>26</sup> In his bill of complaint, Gore added that “said Henderson Dingess is wholly worthless and the value of said timber could not be made out of his effects.”<sup>27</sup> By the 1880s, Henderson was a farmer and noted distiller; Ben operated a store, saloon, distillery, and splash dam.<sup>28</sup> The source of trouble between the two men mostly involved Dingess’ view that Adams had poorly influenced his sons, Charles, Floyd, and Hugh.<sup>29</sup> In one row, Charles Dingess nearly killed Ben in a fight at Cole Branch.<sup>30</sup> Simultaneously, Floyd Dingess feuded with the Halls, who were relative newcomers to the community. The trouble between Floyd and the Halls involved one or all of the following: Floyd often abused his wife, the former Eveline Hall, who complained to her family; Floyd bullied Eveline’s younger

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<sup>25</sup> Henderson Dingess family Bible (copy), author’s collection; Marriages-Births-Deaths (1872-1892), 68, Logan County Clerk’s Office, Logan, WV.

<sup>26</sup> *Floyd S. Gore, adm. vs. Henderson Dingess* (1869), Logan County Circuit Clerk’s Office, Logan, WV. John Q. Adams, a brother to Ben, was killed in 1863 while serving in the Confederate Army.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Polk’s West Virginia State Gazetteer and Business Directory* (1882-83); *Polk’s West Virginia State Gazetteer and Business Directory* (1884); Bob Dingess, interview by author and John Hartford, Warren, WV, 8 August 1995; Cas Baisden, interview by author, September 1995; Ethel Adams, interview by author, Warren, WV, September 1995; Verdayne Shelton, interview, 22 November 1995; Freeman Adams, interview by author, Spottswood, WV, 20 March 2011.

<sup>29</sup> Maude Dingess, interview by author, Shively, WV, 20 December 1995.

<sup>30</sup> John Dingess, telephone interview by author, East Windsor, CT, 8 December 1996.

half-brother, Billy “Little Bill” Hall; and/or Floyd and Billy both courted the same local married woman.<sup>31</sup> On 15 November 1888, Billy Hall killed Floyd, then fled to Kentucky.<sup>32</sup> Unable to locate him, Hugh Dingess harassed the Halls, killing their cattle and so forth.<sup>33</sup>

During the late 1880s, Allen Brumfield, merchant son of Paris and son-in-law of Henderson Dingess, feuded with several competing businessmen in the community. Brumfield was a popular farmer, general store keeper, whisky boat operator, and overseer of a log boom at the mouth of Harts Creek.<sup>34</sup> His occupations provided a high standard of living and prominent social status. The log boom was particularly enriching, as it required timber men to pay Brumfield a dime for each log that passed through it into the Guyandotte River.<sup>35</sup> Brumfield’s business ventures put him at odds with two neighbors: John W. Runyon, a tavern keeper, store operator, timber boss, political rival, and deputy sheriff, who had settled in Hart a few years earlier from Lawrence County, Kentucky; and

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<sup>31</sup>“Quick Justice Done,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 29 October 1889; Margelene Adams, interview by author and John Hartford, Spottswood, WV, 11 September 1996; Margelene Adams, interview by author, Spottswood, WV, 9 March 2013; “Murder and Moonshiners: A Fight Between West Virginia Brothers-in-Law Starts a Vendetta,” *Pittsburg (PA) Dispatch*, 4 January 1889.

<sup>32</sup> Henderson Dingess family Bible (copy), author’s collection; “A Bloody Feud,” *Los Angeles (CA) Daily Herald*, 8 October 1889; Bob Adkins, interview by author, Hamlin, WV, n.d.; “West-Virginia’s Feud,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 16 November 1889; Maude Dingess, interview, 20 December 1995; John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996.

<sup>33</sup> Maude Dingess, interview, 20 December 1995; John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996.

<sup>34</sup> A whisky boat operator is a person who sells distilled spirits on a boat. “Letter from Lincoln County,” *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 9 October 1889; “The West Virginia Feud,” *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 9 November 1889; Moses “Dood” Dalton, interview by F.F. Earl, Harts, WV, July 1976; Lenore McComas Coberly, “Settling Family Differences,” *Goldenseal* (Summer 1992), 36; Bob Adkins, telephone interview by John Hartford, Hamlin, WV, 22 July 1993; Lawrence Kirk, interview, 27 July 1993; Bob Adkins, interview by author and John Hartford, Hamlin, WV, 3 March 1995; Mae Brumfield, interview by author and John Hartford, Harts, WV, 4 March 1995; Bob Dingess, telephone interview by John Hartford, 24 March 1995; Mae Brumfield, interview by author, Harts, WV, 29 November 1995; Maude Dingess, interview, 20 December 1995; Vergia Rooney, telephone interview by author, Houston, TX, 19 May 1996.

<sup>35</sup> Mae Brumfield, interview by author, Harts, WV, n.d.; Mae Brumfield, interview, 4 March 1995; Bob Dingess, telephone interview, 24 March 1995; Bob Adkins, interview, 12 February 1996; Pat Adkins, interview by author, Harts, WV, 28 August 1996; John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996.

Ben Adams, an uncle to Brumfield by marriage.<sup>36</sup> Brumfield's trouble with Runyon involved business competition and political matters.<sup>37</sup> Adams accused Brumfield of log theft; on more than one occasion, the two exchanged gunshots.<sup>38</sup> Due primarily to his marriage to Hollena Dingess, Brumfield also feuded with the Hall family.<sup>39</sup> In addition to these quarrels, Brumfield suffered tension with his Nester cousins relating to timber and family property on Browns Branch and also with brother-in-law Isham Roberts, a merchant in Hart whose sister Louisa Mullins was a Runyon ally.<sup>40</sup>

The most sensational events of the Lincoln County Feud, extensively covered by newspapers throughout the United States, occurred in the fall of 1889. On September 19, Al Brumfield and Alfred Hall engaged in a serious physical altercation over deprecation of Hall's cattle on Brumfield's land.<sup>41</sup> Three days later, on September 22, persons unknown hiding among rocks with Winchester rifles at Thompson Branch ambushed

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<sup>36</sup> "The West Virginia Feud," *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 9 November 1889; U.S. Census for Lawrence County, KY, 1880; Land Book (1886-1891), Lincoln County Clerk's Office, Hamlin, WV; Marriages-Births-Deaths (1872-1892), 68, Logan County Clerk's Office, Logan, WV.

<sup>37</sup> "The West Virginia Feud," *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 9 November 1889; "West-Virginia's Feud," *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 16 November 1889.

<sup>38</sup> Lawrence Kirk, interview, 27 July 1993; Lawrence Kirk, telephone interview by John Hartford, Ferrellsburg, WV, 28 November 1994; Charley Davis, interview by author, Harts, WV, n.d.; Bob Adkins, interview, 3 March 1995; Mae Brumfield, interview, 4 March 1995; Bob Dingess, interview, 24 March 1995; Maude Dingess, interview by author, Shively, WV, July 1995; Bob Dingess, interview, 8 August 1995; Harvey Dingess, interview by author, Shively, WV, 20 December 1995; Irene Adkins, interview by author, Harts, WV, 12 July 1996; John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996; Johnny Golden Adkins, interview by author, Harts, WV, 2 April 2011; Joe Adams, interview by author, Spottswood, WV, 30 June 2011.

<sup>39</sup> "Lynched!" *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 28 October 1889; "Quick Justice Done," *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 29 October 1889; "West-Virginia's Feud," *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 16 November 1889.

<sup>40</sup> Delanie Napier, interview by author, Ranger, WV, 2000; Ann Vickers, letter to author, Logan, WV, 19 August 2016; Henry H. Hardesty, *Hardesty's Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia* (New York: H.H. Hardesty and Company, 1884; reprint, *West Virginia Heritage Encyclopedia*, ed. Jim Comstock, Richwood: Comstock, 1974), 7: 137; "The West Virginia Feud," *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 9 November 1889.

<sup>41</sup> "A Family Feud in West Virginia," *Lancaster (PA) Daily Intelligencer*, 8 October 1889; "Southern Civilization," *Salt Lake (UT) Herald*, 8 October 1889; "West-Virginia's Feud," *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 16 November 1889.

Brumfield and his wife as they rode a single horse down Harts Creek.<sup>42</sup> Brumfield was shot in the arm; Hollena was shot in the face.<sup>43</sup> Initially, the Brumfields and Dingesses blamed the ambush upon members of the Hall family.<sup>44</sup> On September 25, a number of

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<sup>42</sup> “Serious Shooting on Hart’s Creek, in Lincoln County,” *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 26 September 1889; “Disappointed Love Leads to a Desperate Crime in Lincoln County,” *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 2 October 1889; “Blood in West Virginia,” *Ironton (OH) Register*, 3 October 1889; “A Bridal Couple Killed,” *Calhoun Times* (Grantsville, WV), 3 October 1889; “Letter from Lincoln County,” *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 9 October 1889; “Quick Justice Done,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 29 October 1889; “Lynched!” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 28 October 1889; “The Terrible Vendetta,” *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 29 October 1889; “The Truth,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 3 November 1889; “The West Virginia Feud,” *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 9 November 1889; “West Virginia’s Feud,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 16 November 1889; Fred B. Lambert, *The Llorrac: The Yearbook of the Carroll High School of Hamlin, West Virginia* (Hamlin, WV: Faculty and Students of 1926), 62; Bill Adkins, interview by Billy Adkins, Harts, WV, 19 April 1992; Coberly, *Goldenseal*, 36; Bob Adkins, telephone interview, 22 July 1993; Bob Adkins, interview, 24 July 1993; Lawrence Kirk, interview, 27 July 1993; Bob Adkins, interview, 3 March 1995; Ida Taylor, interview by author and John Hartford, Green Shoal, WV, 5 March 1995; Lawrence Kirk, interview by author and John Hartford, Ferrellsburg, WV, 5 March 1995; Bob Dingess, telephone interview by John Hartford, Warren, WV, 13 March 1995; Bob Dingess, interview, 8 August 1995; Garnet Adkins, interview by author and John Hartford, Harts, WV, 8 August 1995; Carolyn “Johnnie” Farley, interview by author and John Hartford, Shively, WV, 24 October 1995; Elmer Dingess, interview by author and John Hartford, Atenville, WV, 24 October 1995; Vergia Rooney, telephone interview, 19 May 1996; Dorothy Brumfield, interview by author and John Hartford, Warren, WV, 30 July 1996; Corbett Brumfield, interview by author, West Madison, WV, 6 December 1995; Bob Adkins, interview, 12 February 1996; Wirt Adams, interview by author and John Hartford, Spottswood, WV, 1 August 1996; John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996; John Dingess, telephone interview by John Hartford, East Windsor, CT, 17 December 1996; James Davis, interview by author and John Hartford, Harts, WV, 9 December 1997; Jesse Sias, interview by author, Melville, WV, 4 September 1999; Freeman Adams, interview, 20 March 2011. John Dingess (8 December 1996) said the ambush occurred at the ‘hot rock’ near Thompson Branch.

<sup>43</sup> “Serious Shooting,” *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 26 September 1889; “Letter from Lincoln County,” *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 9 October 1889; Coberly, *Goldenseal*, 36; *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 9 October 1889; “Disappointed Love,” *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 2 October 1889; “Lynched!” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 28 October 1889; “The Terrible Vendetta,” *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 29 October 1889; “The Truth,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 3 November 1889; “Lincoln County Letter,” *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 6 November 1889; “West Virginia’s Feud,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 16 November 1889; Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 62; Bill Adkins, interview, 19 April 1992; Bob Adkins, interview, 3 March 1995; Ida Taylor, interview, 5 March 1995; Bob Dingess, telephone interview, 24 March 1995; Harvey and Maude Dingess, interview by author, Shively, WV, July 1995; Bob Dingess, interview, 8 August 1995; Brady Thompson, telephone interview by John Hartford, Stafford, VA, 4 September 1995; Ezra “Jake” Dalton, interview by author and John Hartford, Harts, WV, 23 October 1995; Carolyn “Johnnie” Farley, interview, 24 October 1995; Elmer Dingess, interview, 24 October 1995; Corbett Brumfield, interview, 6 December 1995; Lawrence Kirk, interview by author, Ferrellsburg, WV, n.d.; Vergia Rooney, telephone interview, 19 May 1996; Dorothy Brumfield, interview, 30 July 1996; Pat Adkins, interview, 28 August 1996; John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996; James Davis, interview, 9 December 1997; Johnny Golden Adkins, interview, 2 April 2011.

<sup>44</sup> “Shooting from Ambush,” *Sacramento (CA) Daily Record-Union*, 9 October 1889.

persons presumed to be Halls ambushed Paris Brumfield, wounding him in the breast.<sup>45</sup> On October 4, a Brumfield faction wounded a Hall ally by shooting him through the leg before being driven away.<sup>46</sup> The next day, in a scrape with the “opposing party,” one of Hollena’s brothers was shot through his leg.<sup>47</sup> On October 14, the *Lincoln Citizen*, reporting from Hamlin, referenced recent troubles as the “Brumfield-McCoy-Adams-Hall war.”<sup>48</sup>

Within weeks, Al Brumfield gathered suitable evidence to indicate that Green McCoy and an associate, Thomas Milton “Milt” Haley, described by one newspaper as “desperate and dangerous” men, had committed the ambush upon himself and his wife; he offered a reward for their capture.<sup>49</sup> On 18 October 1889, a detective apprehended and jailed Haley and McCoy in Martin County, Kentucky.<sup>50</sup> While incarcerated, McCoy agreed to turn state’s evidence against Haley, who he said had shot the Brumfields.<sup>51</sup> On October 22, Kentucky authorities turned Haley and McCoy over to a Lincoln County

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<sup>45</sup> “Many Shots Fired,” *St. Paul (MN) Daily Globe*, 30 September 1889; “A Bloody Feud,” *Los Angeles (CA) Daily Herald*, 8 October 1889; “A Family Feud in West Virginia,” *Lancaster (PA) Daily Intelligencer*, 8 October 1889.

<sup>46</sup> “Shooting from Ambush,” *Sacramento (CA) Daily Record-Union*, 9 October 1889.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> “Al Brumfield Still Alive,” *Lincoln Citizen* (Hamlin, WV), 14 October 1889.

<sup>49</sup> “The Terrible Vendetta,” *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 29 October 1889; “Lincoln County Letter,” *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 6 November 1889; Bob Adkins, telephone interview, 22 July 1993; Bob Adkins, interview, 24 July 1993; Bob Dingess, telephone interview, 24 March 1995. The *Wheeling Intelligencer* stated: “Suspicion at once fastened on McCoy and Haley, and early the next day they left for Kentucky.”

<sup>50</sup> “Assassins Arrested,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 23 October 1889; “Known by Other Names,” *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 25 October 1889; “Would-Be Murderers Arrested,” *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 28 October 1889; “Lynched!” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 28 October 1889; “A Double Lynching,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 28 October 1889; “Prisoners Murdered,” *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 29 October 1889; “The Terrible Vendetta,” *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 29 October 1889; “Quick Justice Done,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 29 October 1889; “The Truth,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 3 November 1889; Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 25 October 1995.

<sup>51</sup> “Lincoln County Letter,” *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 6 November 1889; Wild Bill wrote the letter on 25 October 1889.



posse, which included Al Brumfield and a sympathetic constable.<sup>52</sup> The Brumfields and Dingesses carried their prisoners from the Tug region through the Twelve Pole Valley to Hugh Dingess' home on the Smokehouse Fork of Harts Creek.<sup>53</sup> At that location, they conducted a "mock trial" wherein McCoy once again provided a confession and blamed the shooting on Haley.<sup>54</sup>

On October 24, the Brumfield-Dingess gang escorted Haley and McCoy away from Harts Creek, carefully avoiding rival mobs led by Cain Adkins, John W. Runyon, and Ben Adams, to George Fry's home at the mouth of Green Shoal Creek, near the Guyandotte River.<sup>55</sup> That night, a mob of Brumfield sympathizers gathered at the Fry residence and assumed control of the prisoners.<sup>56</sup> At some point, McCoy and/or Haley claimed to have been hired by John W. Runyon and other prominent parties to assassinate Al Brumfield, his wife, and his father.<sup>57</sup> Thereafter, the Brumfield mob tortured Haley

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<sup>52</sup> "That Double Lynching," *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 2 November 1889; "Prisoners Murdered," *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 29 October 1889; Bill Adkins, interview, 19 April 1992; Bob Adkins, interview, 24 July 1993; Lawrence Kirk, interview, 27 July 1993; Lawrence Kirk, interview by author and John Hartford, Ferrellsburg, WV, 3 March 1995; Billy Adkins, interview by author and John Hartford, Harts, WV, 4 March 1995; Lawrence Kirk, interview, 5 March 1995; Verdayne Shelton, interview, 22 November 1995. The *Wheeling (WV) Register* printed a nearly identical version of the story titled "Shot in Cold Blood" on 30 October 1889.

<sup>53</sup> Bob Adkins, telephone interview, 22 July 1993; Bob Adkins, interview, 24 July 1993; Lawrence Kirk, interview, 27 July 1993; Lawrence Kirk, telephone interview, 28 November 1994; Lawrence Kirk, interview by author and John Hartford, Ferrellsburg, WV, 4 March 1995; Maude Dingess, interview by author, Shively, WV, September 1995; Carolyn "Johnnie" Farley, interview, 24 October 1995; Harvey Dingess, interview by author and John Hartford, Shively, WV, 24 October 1995; John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996. John Dingess said, "Guys liked to join a gang back then."

<sup>54</sup> "That Double Lynching," *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 2 November 1889; Coberly, *Goldenseal*, 37.

<sup>55</sup> "Prisoners Murdered," *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 29 October 1889; "The Terrible Vendetta," *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 29 October 1889; "Quick Justice Done," *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 29 October 1889; "Shot in Cold Blood," *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 30 October 1889; "Hired to Murder," *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 31 October 1889; Lawrence Kirk, telephone interview, 28 November 1994; Billy Adkins, interview, 4 March 1995; Ida Taylor, interview, 5 March 1995; Dorothy Brumfield, interview, 30 July 1996.

<sup>56</sup> Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 63; Corbett Brumfield, interview by author, West Madison, WV, 30 January 1996; Basil Frye, telephone interview by author, Fayetteville, NC, 13 July 1996. Corbett stated that Al "turned them over" to the mob.

<sup>57</sup> "An Old Feud Revived," *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 29 October 1889; "The Terrible Vendetta," *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 29 October 1889; "All Up In Arms," *Louisville (KY) Courier-*

and McCoy, then brutally murdered them, leaving their bodies in the yard with a warning to neighbors to let them rot.<sup>58</sup> A gang of Brumfield partisans next rode to find Runyon and Adkins, who had fled the community.<sup>59</sup> Within a day or so, Benjamin W. “Ben” Walker, a church man, organized a burial party that included Melvin Kirk and buried Haley and McCoy in a single grave on West Fork near the Adkins farm.<sup>60</sup>

Following the Haley-McCoy murders, the Lincoln County Feud commanded headlines in state and national newspapers until its conclusion in the summer of 1890. Newspapers dubbed it the Brumfield-McCoy-Adams-Hall War, the Brumfield-Hall Feud, the Brumfield-McCoy-Haley Affair, the Brumfield-Adams Feud, the Brumfield-Runyon Feud, the Brumfield-McCoy Feud, and the Lincoln County War. Many reporters hopelessly confused its history, events, and participants with the Hatfield-McCoy Feud transpiring in the nearby Tug Valley. One horribly inaccurate account even appeared in the *New York Times*.<sup>61</sup> Oddly, newspapers could not agree on the state of affairs in the community; most provided details of atrocities, while some dismissed tales of violence.

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*Journal*, 29 October 1889; “That Double Lynching,” *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 2 November 1889.

<sup>58</sup> “Lynched!” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 28 October 1889; “A Double Lynching,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 28 October 1889; “An Old Feud Revived,” *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 29 October 1889; “All Up In Arms,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 29 October 1889; “Hired to Murder,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 31 October 1889; “More Murdering,” *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 31 October 1889; “That Double Lynching,” *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 2 November 1889; “The Truth,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 3 November 1889; “The West Virginia Feud,” *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 9 November 1889; Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 63; Corbett Brumfield, interview by author, West Madison, WV, 22 November 1995. The Fred B. Lambert Collection contains an interview with a contemporary man who stated “Paris and his gang killed Milt Haley and Green McCoy.”

<sup>59</sup> “West Virginia’s Feud,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 16 November 1889.

<sup>60</sup> Lawrence Kirk, interview, 27 July 1993; Shelby Kirk, interview by John Hartford, Harts, WV, 27 July 1993; Lawrence Kirk, telephone interview, 28 November 1994; Lawrence Kirk, interview, 5 March 1995; Billy Joe Fleming, interview by author, Warren, WV, May 1995; Garnet Adkins, interview, 8 August 1995; Boyce Lucas, telephone interview by author, Ferrellsburg, WV, Summer 1995; James Davis, interview, 9 December 1997; Billy Joe Fleming, telephone interview by author, 15 May 1998; Johnny Golden Adkins, interview, 2 April 2011.

<sup>61</sup> “West Virginia’s Outlaws,” *New York Times*, 3 November 1889.

During the fall and winter of 1889-90, Harts Creek hosted what newspapers called a “war.” Initially, the Brumfields and their enemies procured weapons from gun shops in regional towns.<sup>62</sup> On October 29, John Brumfield, younger brother to Al, purchased a number of Winchester rifles and revolvers in Huntington.<sup>63</sup> Feudists also located guns at Logan Court House.<sup>64</sup> One Logan County deputy sheriff speculated the Governor of West Virginia would be appealed to for aid in the matter.<sup>65</sup> On November 3, the *Wheeling Register* of Wheeling, West Virginia, in attempting to sort out the factions, described the trouble as existing “between the Brumfields on one side, and the Adams, Tomblins and one or two other families, all related to each other by marriage on the other.”<sup>66</sup> At that time, Runyon, Adkins, and two accomplices had fled to St. Albans or Huntington, leaving the Brumfields in complete control of the feud community.<sup>67</sup> On November 2, the Brumfields visited Runyon’s and Adkins’ homes, turned out the women, and tore down and burned homes and buildings.<sup>68</sup> Ben Adams was also under siege, protecting his home from fire on at least two separate occasions.<sup>69</sup> Not long thereafter, Runyon returned to Harts Creek.<sup>70</sup> A well-known Charleston newspaper editor visited the feud region and

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<sup>62</sup> “Arming for the Fray,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 30 October 1889; “Reporter’s Notebook,” *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 30 October 1889; “Arming For Battle,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 1 November 1889; “John Brumfield Starts for the Scene of Battle,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 1 November 1889; “The Lincoln Feud,” *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 1 November 1889; “Mulhattan Outdone,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 2 November 1889; “That Double Lynching,” *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 2 November 1889; “The Truth,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 3 November 1889.

<sup>63</sup> “Arming for Battle,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 1 November 1889; “John Brumfield Starts for the Scene of Battle,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 1 November 1889; “Mulhattan Outdone,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 2 November 1889.

<sup>64</sup> “The Lincoln Feud,” *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 1 November 1889.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> “The Truth,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 3 November 1889.

<sup>67</sup> “Victorious Brumfields,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 4 November 1889.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996; Mae Brumfield, interview, n.d.; Irene Adkins, interview, 12 July 1996.

<sup>70</sup> “Another Chapter in the Hatfield; Hall and Healy Feud,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 11 November 1889; “Brumfield Dead,” *Wichita (KS) Eagle*, 12 November 1889; “Paris Brumfield and Wife Reported Killed,” *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 13 November 1889.

reported on “the location of each faction—the Brumfields and the Runyons.”<sup>71</sup> On November 9, the *Daily State Journal* of Parkersburg, West Virginia, reported that Louisa Mullins, former Brumfield employee, was “with Runyon” and “is one of the leaders of his party.”<sup>72</sup> On November 10, one group, presumably the Runyon faction, attacked the home of Paris Brumfield, nearly killing Brumfield and his wife.<sup>73</sup> Following this incident, Runyon once again left Harts Creek and the Brumfields seized control of the region. They issued a dire warning to the remnants of the Adkins clan, urging them to “clear out” or they would “kill everything from the house cat up.”<sup>74</sup> On November 20, members of the Brumfield-Dingess faction arrived in Barboursville, West Virginia, with warrants for the arrest of Runyon sympathizers.<sup>75</sup>

The resumption of timber season in the fall of 1889 cooled the feud. The regional timber industry and a desire for profits by feuding timbermen demanded a less volatile community. Wood hicks of all factions needed to cut trees. Ben Adams and Albert Dingess needed to operate the splash dams. Al Brumfield needed to oversee the log boom. Burl Farley and Charley Brumfield needed to pilot log rafts to market in Guyandotte. Newspapers reported no violence between mid-November of 1889 and December 1889. In events likely unrelated to the feud, Will Adkins, a member of the Haley-McCoy lynch mob, drowned on November 23 while attempting to intervene in a

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<sup>71</sup> “The Seat of War,” *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 7 November 1889.

<sup>72</sup> “The West Virginia Feud,” *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 9 November 1889.

<sup>73</sup> “Another Chapter in the Hatfield; Hall and Healy Feud,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 11 November 1889; “Brumfield Dead,” *Wichita (KS) Eagle*, 12 November 1889; “The Killing of the Brumfields,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 13 November 1889; “Paris Brumfield and Wife Reported Killed,” *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 13 November 1889; “The Brumfield Vendetta,” *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 13 November 1889; *Clarksburg (WV) Telegraph*, 16 November 1889; “West Virginia’s Feud,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 16 November 1889.

<sup>74</sup> Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 25 October 1995.

<sup>75</sup> “Armed With Warrants,” *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 22 November 1889.

quarrel at Al Brumfield's log boom.<sup>76</sup> On December 31, local resident Tom Ferrell shot Albert Butcher, who died on January 3. Newspapers mistakenly linked the Butcher murder to the Lincoln County Feud, a Butcher mob took charge of Hamlin, and Ferrell escaped into the woods.<sup>77</sup>

During the winter of 1889-1890, the Brumfields achieved two objectives. First, they received indication of a Runyon-Adams collusion in the previous year's ambushes. Second, Cain Adkins' remaining family members fled the community. On 4 January 1890, John W. Runyon and Ben Adams registered at the Oakland House, a popular hotel for timber men. In a statement to the *Logan County Banner* of Aracoma, West Virginia, printed on January 9, Runyon said the "Brumfield-McCoy war" was over.<sup>78</sup> The coincidence of two chief suspects in the ambush of 1889 meeting in January 1890 did not escape the Brumfields. Runyon's offering of a statement regarding the feud renaming it as the "Brumfield-McCoy war" as opposed to the Brumfield-Runyon war may have provoked the Brumfields to further action. On January 8, under cover of darkness, the Adkins clan, led by Mrs. Cain Adkins, fled the community on a rented raft.<sup>79</sup> Runyon

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<sup>76</sup> Will Adkins, headstone, Ferrellsburg Cemetery, Ferrellsburg, WV; Bill Adkins, interview, 19 April 1992; Pat Adkins, interview by author, Harts, WV, n.d.; Bob Adkins, interview, 12 February 1996; Garnet Adkins, interview by author, Harts, WV, 29 February 1996; Johnny Golden Adkins, interview by author, Harts, WV, 29 February 1996.

<sup>77</sup> "More Trouble in Lincoln," *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 9 January 1890; "A Mob After Ferrell," *Richmond (VA) Dispatch*, 11 January 1890; Nannie Peyton Lambert, interview by Fred B. Lambert, Barboursville, WV, 12 November 1953, Fred B. Lambert Papers, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV.

<sup>78</sup> *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 9 January 1890.

<sup>79</sup> Ralph McCoy, telephone interview by author and John Hartford, Marengo, OH, 25 October 1995; Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 25 October 1995; Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 27 October 1995; Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 8 December 1995; Daisy Ross, interview, 11 December 1995; Daisy Ross, interview, 16 March 1996; Nell Thompson, interview by author, Wayne, WV, 3 October 1996.

remained defiant: in March, he sued Al Brumfield over ownership of a large amount of timber.<sup>80</sup>

In the spring and summer of 1890, a high profile murder trial occurred in Hamlin, West Virginia, seat of government for Lincoln County. Seven men, including Paris and Al Brumfield, were accused of murdering Haley and McCoy.<sup>81</sup> The trial involved Judge Thomas H. Harvey, Prosecuting Attorney Joseph E. Chilton, and defense attorney and former Congressman Eustace Gibson, all widely known figures in West Virginia.<sup>82</sup> In August, the Brumfields and their allies were acquitted of murdering Haley and McCoy.<sup>83</sup>

The Lincoln County Feud concluded due to the eradication or outmigration of anti-Brumfield forces in 1889-1890. In 1890, John W. Runyon sold his property to Al Brumfield and moved to Martin County, Kentucky.<sup>84</sup> That same year, the Brumfields burned the business of Bill Fowler, who sold his property to Isaac B. Adkins and relocated between May and October of 1892 to Central City in present-day Huntington, West Virginia.<sup>85</sup> In 1890, Paris Brumfield deeded land upriver from Hart to his daughter,

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<sup>80</sup> "First Blood, Then Law," *Shenandoah Herald* (Woodstock, VA), 4 April 1890; "Settling a Vendetta," *Peninsula Enterprise* (Accomac, VA), 5 April 1890.

<sup>81</sup> "Will Be Tried For Murder," *Pittsburg (PA) Dispatch*, 5 April 1890; "Logan County, W.Va., Feud Averted," *Evening Bulletin* (Maysville, KY), 7 April 1890.

<sup>82</sup> Judge Harvey's brother, William H. "Coin" Harvey, soon became famous for his defense of the silver standard and later ran for President. J.E. Chilton's brother, W.E. Chilton, was affiliated with the Kanawha Ring and later became head of the West Virginia Democratic Party, West Virginia Secretary of State, owner of the *Charleston Gazette* newspaper, and U.S. Senator. Thomas Condit Miller and Hu Maxwell, *West Virginia and Its People*, Vol. 3 (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1913), 784; Hardesty, *Hardesty's Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 109; "The Brumfields Acquitted," *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 13 August 1890; *Congressional Directory* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1885), 95.

<sup>83</sup> "The Brumfields Acquitted," *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 13 August 1890; "Not Guilty," *Shenandoah Herald* (Woodstock, VA), 22 August 1890. This aspect of the Lincoln County Feud qualifies it as feuding with compensation.

<sup>84</sup> Land Book (1886-1891), Lincoln County Clerk's Office, Hamlin, WV; Mae Brumfield, interview, 4 March 1995.

<sup>85</sup> Irene Mitchell, interview by author, Harts, WV, 25 November 1995; Pat Adkins, interview by author, Harts, WV, 11 September 1996; Land Book (1886-1891), Lincoln County Clerk's Office, Hamlin, WV; Susan Porter to Martha A. Fowler, deed of sale, 7 May 1892, Deed Book 39, 139, Cabell County

Martha Roberts, thus removing her and her merchant husband from town.<sup>86</sup> In 1890, Cain Adkins deeded his West Fork property to John H. Adkins.<sup>87</sup> Ben Adams remained at Upper Hart but resettled on Trace Fork in 1891, farther away from the Dingess homesteads, where he continued to profit as a businessman.<sup>88</sup> By 1891, Louisa Mullins, the estranged wife of James P. Mullins and a Runyon partisan, left the community and became the paramour to Robert “Bob” Hatfield, son of “Devil Anse” Hatfield.<sup>89</sup> By 1892, James P. Mullins moved to Dickenson County, Virginia—apparently under some duress, disguised in women’s clothing.<sup>90</sup> Floyd Nester, a Runyon ally, moved to Wayne County.<sup>91</sup>

## HISTORIOGRAPHY

Appalachian feud historiography consists of three major schools of thought regarding the cause of Appalachian feuds. The progressive model of feuding—whether referencing a culture of violence or a culture of honor—asserts that feuds resulted from some form of social and cultural primitivism. Specifically, one group of writers including Theron C. Crawford, William G. Frost, John Fox, Jr., S.S. MacClintock, Hartley Davis

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Clerk’s Office, Huntington, WV; Martha Ann Fowler to Lewis H. Taliaferro, deed of sale, 19 October 1892, Deed Book 40, 230-231, Cabell County Clerk’s Office, Huntington, WV.

<sup>86</sup> Land Book (1886-1891), Lincoln County Clerk’s Office, Hamlin, WV.

<sup>87</sup> Land Book (1886-1891), Lincoln County Clerk’s Office, Hamlin, WV.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*; Land Book (1887-1892), Logan County Clerk’s Office, Logan, WV; *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 19 February 1896; Ethel Adams, interview, September 1995; Alvie Thompson, interview by author, Whirlwind, WV, September 1995; Vilas Adams, interview by author and John Hartford, Spottswood, WV, 30 July 1996; Dorothy Brumfield, interview by author, Warren, WV, 26 September 1996; John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996.

<sup>89</sup> Craig T. Hatfield, headstone, Hatfield Cemetery, Wharncliffe, WV; U.S. Census for Mingo County, WV, 1900.

<sup>90</sup> Special Schedule of the Eleventh Census (1890), Enumerating Union Veterans and Widows of Union Veterans of the Civil War for Lincoln County, WV; U.S. Census for Dickenson County, VA, 1900; Dennis Fields, email to author, Orange Park, FL, 5 March 2012.

<sup>91</sup> U.S. Census for Wayne County, WV, 1900.

and Clifford Smith, Raymond Gastil, Richard Drake, Josiah Stoddard Johnston, Ellen Churchill Semple, Horace Kephart, Jean Thomas, David Hackett Fischer, Keith M. Brown, and John C. Campbell believe that feuds resulted from a cultural proneness to violence, whether inherited (genetic determinism) or caused by isolation (geographic determinism). Others, namely Edward L. Ayers, Richard Nisbett, and Dov Cohen, advocate that Old World honor transferred to British America during the colonial period and preserved in Southern Appalachia (and the U.S. South) required that men respond to insults with violence. In effect, the culture—whether due to violence or honor—was deficient and would be remedied by modern life. The second school of thought related to the causes of feuding is the Civil War school and propagates that feuds arose from issues and experiences relating to the Civil War. Writers and scholars who advance this viewpoint include John Fox, Jr., Otis K. Rice, William Lynwood Montell, and Richard Maxwell Brown. The capitalist disruption model of feuding, in stark contrast to the progressive model, asserts that feuds resulted from industrial (and related) intrusion into a largely rural society. S.S. MacClintock, Edwin Albert Cubby, Ronald D. Eller, William Lynwood Montell, Altina Waller, and Keith F. Otterbein represent several notable writers and scholars who propagate this viewpoint. Aside from these three major schools, several lesser but important factors have been identified as causing or contributing to feuds: political rivalries; a lack of business; women; a drifting population of single young men; and enforcement of federal whisky revenue laws.



Feuding is a form of violent crime, one of five forms of killing.<sup>92</sup> The *New Oxford American Dictionary* defines feuding as “a state of prolonged mutual hostility, typically between two families or communities, characterized by violent assaults in revenge for previous injuries.”<sup>93</sup> In 1913, Appalachian writer Horace Kephart offered this worthwhile definition: “A feud is an armed conflict between families, each endeavoring to exterminate or drive out the other. It spreads swiftly not only to blood-kin and relatives by marriage but to friends and retainers as well.”<sup>94</sup> Keith F. Otterbein, an anthropological expert on global feuding, defines feuding as “a series of revenge-based killings that result in the loss of human life and contribute to the disruption of the social order.” Feuding, according to Otterbein, requires five elements. First, kinship groups must be involved. In Appalachia, a kinship group consists of an “important man” and his descendants, as well as ego-oriented, fraternal groups called kindreds (i.e., employees, sons-in-law). Second, three or more homicides or acts of violence must take place. Otterbein identifies five types of homicidal encounters or episodes: ambushes, gunfights, house attacks, encounter battles, and arranged battles. Third, killings must occur as revenge for an injustice. Fourth, acts of violence and killings must occur within a political entity (i.e., a state). Fifth, some means of ending the conflict must be available.<sup>95</sup> Feuds may be categorized

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<sup>92</sup> Keith F. Otterbein, “Feuding,” *Encyclopedia of Crime and Punishment* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2002), 691-692. The other four forms of killing are homicide, capital punishment, warfare, and human sacrifice.

<sup>93</sup> Angus Stevenson and Christine A. Lindberg, eds, *New Oxford American Dictionary*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., (Oxford University Press, 2010).

<sup>94</sup> Horace Kephart, *Our Southern Highlanders* (New York: Outing Publishing Company, 1913), 337.

<sup>95</sup> Keith F. Otterbein, “Five Feuds: An Analysis of Homicides in Eastern Kentucky in the Late Nineteenth Century” *American Anthropologist*, June 2000, 102(2): 231-232; Otterbein, *Encyclopedia of Crime and Punishment*, 691.

into types: market-based feuding or feuding with compensation.<sup>96</sup> Market-based feuding occurs in a region “where a local market system is linked to the world system” and where the feuding ends due to something other than payment of compensation.<sup>97</sup> Feuding with compensation is when a feud ends due to the payment of compensation for a killing.<sup>98</sup>

## PROGRESSIVE MODEL: CULTURE OF VIOLENCE

The culture of violence model views mountain violence, specifically feuding, as the manifestation of a deficient, uncivilized culture. Theron C. Crawford, a reporter for the *New York World* who visited Logan County, West Virginia, in 1888 to investigate the Hatfield-McCoy Feud, labeled the region as “Murderland.”<sup>99</sup> For Crawford, the “outlaw land where murder reigns supreme” was a place where men readily engaged in fighting and shooting scrapes, even among friends and over the most petty of matters.<sup>100</sup> William G. Frost, president of Berea College during the 1890s, wrote how the people of Appalachia had “not yet grasped the decidedly modern notion of the sacredness of life.”<sup>101</sup> According to author John Fox, Jr., Appalachian Kentuckians regarded human life as “cheap.”<sup>102</sup> S.S. MacClintock, a sociologist, agreed that Appalachian residents occupied a place where “life is cheap.”<sup>103</sup> In 1903, Hartley Davis and Clifford Smyth

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<sup>96</sup> Otterbein, *American Anthropologist*, 231, 241; Otterbein, *Encyclopedia of Crime and Punishment*, 691.

<sup>97</sup> Otterbein, *American Anthropologist*, 231.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 231, 241; Otterbein, *Encyclopedia of Crime and Punishment*, 691. Otterbein claims that all Kentucky feuds were market-based feuds (241-242).

<sup>99</sup> Crawford, *An American Vendetta*, 9, 113.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 112, 108.

<sup>101</sup> William G. Frost, “Our Contemporary Ancestors in the Southern Mountains,” *Atlantic Monthly* (March 1899), 6.

<sup>102</sup> John Fox, Jr., “The Kentucky Mountaineer,” *Blue-Grass and Rhododendron: Out-Doors in Old Kentucky* (New York: Charles Scriber’s Sons, 1901), 136.

<sup>103</sup> S.S. MacClintock, “The Kentucky Mountains and Their Feuds...I. The People and Their Country,” *American Journal of Sociology* (July 1901), 16.

described southeastern Kentucky (“the land of the feuds”) as a “savage primeval country” where “bloodshed is a pastime.”<sup>104</sup> More recently, social scientist Raymond Gastil labeled feuds as a southern phenomenon—perhaps genetic, perhaps not—caused by a regional predisposition to violence that began prior to 1850.<sup>105</sup> Similarly, historian Richard Drake wrote of a feud spirit that existed among residents of the Cumberland-Allegheny region prior to the Civil War, while T.R.C. Hutton believes the cultural South had a reputation for violence long before secession.<sup>106</sup>

Many feud writers ascribe the culture of violence to a genetic tendency rooted in an Anglo-Saxon/Scots-Irish heritage (ethnic determinism). Josiah Stoddard Johnston, a journalist writing in 1899, described Appalachians as “essentially English” with “a large percentage of Scotch-Irish blood” whose feuds had “every earmark of the Scottish feuds among clans.”<sup>107</sup> John Fox, Jr. believed the Kentucky mountaineer a “distinct relic of an Anglo-Saxon past,” noting feuds as “an inheritance” that “takes root in Scotland.”<sup>108</sup> Geographer Ellen Churchill Semple attributed the “survival of the blood-feud” to the genetics of the people—who she felt possessed “the purest Anglo-Saxon stock in all the United States”—and an “Old World spirit.”<sup>109</sup> S.S. MacClintock believed an Appalachian feudist “inherits a fighting spirit.”<sup>110</sup> According to Hartley Davis and Clifford Smyth,

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<sup>104</sup> Hartley Davis and Clifford Smyth, “The Land of Feuds,” *Munsey’s Magazine* 30(2); 162 (Nov. 1903), 161-162.

<sup>105</sup> Raymond Gastil, “Homicide and a Regional Culture of Violence,” *American Sociological Review* 36 (June 1971).

<sup>106</sup> Richard B. Drake, *A History of Appalachia* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2001), 110; T.R.C. Hutton, *Bloody Breathitt: Politics and Violence in the Appalachian South* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2015), 74.

<sup>107</sup> Josiah Stoddard Johnston, “Romance and Tragedy of Kentucky Feuds,” *Cosmopolitan* 27 (September 1899), 109, 111.

<sup>108</sup> Fox, *Blue-Grass and Rhododendron*, 141-142, 138.

<sup>109</sup> Ellen Churchill Semple, “The Anglo-Saxons of the Kentucky Mountains,” *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society* (1901; reprint, Aug. 1910), 26, 6.

<sup>110</sup> S.S. MacClintock, “The Kentucky Mountains and Their Feuds... II. The Causes of Feuds,” *American Journal of Sociology* 7 (September 1901), 171.

“most of these mountain folk are descendants of Anglo-Saxon pioneers,” persons of “lawless ancestry.”<sup>111</sup> Horace Kephart, writing in 1913, stated that feudists were their “ancient Scotch or English ancestor born over again.”<sup>112</sup> Jean Thomas, an eastern Kentucky folk festival promoter and writer, also attributed feuds to a “clannishness inherited from their Scotch ancestors.”<sup>113</sup> More recently, historian David Hackett Fischer ascribed Appalachian violence to a Scots-Irish heritage which he viewed as transplanted unchanged from the Old World to America.<sup>114</sup> Keith M. Brown, in his history of feuding in Scotland, largely agreed with Fischer, stating that the feud tradition of Kentucky and other southern states “probably has its roots in Scottish and Irish immigrants.”<sup>115</sup> O. Norman Simpkins, a sociologist writing in the mid-1970s, dismissed the importance of Appalachian racial stock in causing feuds. For him, the culture was Celtic, regardless of the genetics of its people. In other words, culture trumped biological ancestry.<sup>116</sup>

Feud writers also attribute Appalachia’s culture of violence to the region’s isolation (geographic determinism). According to these writers, mountain isolation either preserved an inherited, deficient (and violent) culture, or it created a primitive culture. John C. Campbell, author of *The Southern Highlander & His Homeland* (1921) stated: “The most direct cause of the ‘old feuds’ was the fact the people who engaged in them lived in an isolated, out-of-the-way section.”<sup>117</sup> In 1901, John Fox, Jr. wrote of the

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<sup>111</sup> Davis and Smyth, *Munsey’s Magazine*, 172.

<sup>112</sup> Kephart, *Our Southern Highlanders*, 347.

<sup>113</sup> Jean Thomas, *Blue Ridge Country* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1942), 45.

<sup>114</sup> David Hackett Fischer, *Albion’s Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 605-632.

<sup>115</sup> Keith M. Brown, *Bloodfeud in Scotland, 1573-1625: Violence, Justice and Politics in an Early Modern Society* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 2003), 3.

<sup>116</sup> O. Norman Simpkins, “Culture,” *Mountain Heritage* (Morgantown, WV: Morgantown Printing and Binding Company, 1974).

<sup>117</sup> John C. Campbell, *The Southern Highlander & his Homeland* (The Russell Sage Foundation, 1921; reprint, Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1969), 111.

region's "extreme isolation," while S.S. MacClintock preferred to dub it as "a case of arrested development in civilization."<sup>118</sup> Ellen Churchill Semple noted "isolated communities," while Hartley Davis and Clifford Smyth wrote of a people whose isolation "has been almost complete."<sup>119</sup> Horace Kephart cited an "isolated and belated people who still carry on the blood-feud," persons who are "stranded far out of the course of civilization" and who "do not know civilization."<sup>120</sup> Jean Thomas felt the "high mountain walls" had caused eastern Kentuckians to know "no law but the gun."<sup>121</sup> Richard Maxwell Brown, in his study of American violence, partially attributed Appalachian feuds to the isolation of the region.<sup>122</sup> Folklorist William Lynwood Montell, who studied Appalachian communities along the Kentucky-Tennessee border, said the region's isolation had prompted residents to create a code of violence in order to protect themselves from one another.<sup>123</sup> Historian Brian McKnight, in his history of the Civil War along the Tennessee-North Carolina border, emphasized the violence and isolation of the region.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Fox, *Blue-Grass and Rhododendron*, 137; MacClintock, *American Journal of Sociology*, 3.

<sup>119</sup> Semple, *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society*, 6; Davis and Smyth, *Munsey's Magazine*, 172.

<sup>120</sup> Kephart, *Our Southern Highlanders*, 352, 351.

<sup>121</sup> Thomas, *Blue Ridge Country*, 45.

<sup>122</sup> Richard Maxwell Brown, *Strain of Violence: Historical Studies of American Violence and Vigilantism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), 10.

<sup>123</sup> William Lynwood Montell, *Killings: Folk Justice in the Upper South* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1986), 151.

<sup>124</sup> Brian McKnight, *Contested Borderland: The Civil War in Appalachian Kentucky and Virginia* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2006), 1. McKnight mentions how isolated the region was *four* times on page one of his book.

## PROGRESSIVE MODEL: CULTURE OF HONOR

Some scholars attribute Southern violence, including feuding, to a culture of honor transplanted from Europe. According to academics Edward L. Ayers, Richard Nisbett, and Dov Cohen, a culture of honor is characterized by these traits: men have as much worth as others confer upon them; men respond to any insult (real or perceived) with violence; public opinion requires a response or the offended person becomes “less” of a man; children are indoctrinated to be physically aggressive; and the community accepts the “rule of retaliation,” whereby an insulted person has the right/duty to respond with violence.<sup>125</sup> Violence is viewed as a legitimate response to an insult, appropriate for self-protection and a tool to maintain/restore order.<sup>126</sup> Once common throughout British America, the culture of honor lingered in the U.S. South due to a lack of immigration, lack of economic and social diversity, and a lack of challenge to the slaveholding aristocracy.<sup>127</sup> In 1901, S.S. MacClintock captured the essence of this culture. “Just as public opinion formerly forced a man to accept the challenge in a duel, so in the mountains today the man who will not fight, who allows himself to be run over, loses caste,” MacClintock wrote. “Many a man is thus forced to do what he would gladly escape. He who is game and not afraid to fight is the one that is lauded. To have killed your man—and especially more than one—is to become a person of note in the

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<sup>125</sup> Edward L. Ayers, *Vengeance & Justice: Crime and Punishment in the 19<sup>th</sup>-Century American South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 13, 20-22; Richard E. Nisbett and Dov Cohen, *Culture of Honor: The Psychology of Violence in the South* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), xv, 2.

<sup>126</sup> Richard E. Nisbett and Dov Cohen, *Culture of Honor*, 32.

<sup>127</sup> Ayers, *Vengeance & Justice*, 23, 26. According to Ayers, a culture of dignity evolved in the northern and middle colonies.

community.”<sup>128</sup> Writing in 1984, Ayers put it simply: “Southerners killed one another for honor’s sake.”<sup>129</sup>

An undue affection for guns, what scholars Nisbett and Cohen refer to as a “gun culture,” is closely associated with a culture of honor. A gun culture is characterized by gun ownership, gun toting, and use of guns for self-protection.<sup>130</sup> Numerous writers identified Southern Appalachia as a place where men readily used guns. In 1888, Theron C. Crawford described Logan County, West Virginia, as a place where Winchester rifles were “regarded in every household as an indispensable article of domestic furniture.”<sup>131</sup> According to Horace Kephart, “A typical highland bravo always carried a revolver or an automatic pistol.”<sup>132</sup> John C. Campbell stated, “The general ‘toting’ of pistols, a part of their manhood creed, is a contributing cause” of feuds.<sup>133</sup> More recently, Keith F. Otterbein opined: “Increased firepower in Appalachia seems to account for increased killing in numerous encounters.”<sup>134</sup> Importantly, Edward Ayers identified the South’s prevalent gun culture as a “symptom” of the culture of honor (not the “disease”).<sup>135</sup>

Many feud writers link alcohol consumption and/or abuse to feuds. John C. Campbell asserted, “There has always been an intimate connection between whiskey and feuds.”<sup>136</sup> Ellen Churchill Semple wrote of shootings that occurred in “the madness of moonshine intoxication.”<sup>137</sup> Horace Kephart mentioned that some feuds “start in mere

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<sup>128</sup> MacClintock, *American Journal of Sociology*, 174.

<sup>129</sup> Ayers, *Vengeance & Justice*, 12.

<sup>130</sup> Nisbett and Cohen, *Culture of Honor*, 35.

<sup>131</sup> Crawford, *An American Vendetta*, 120.

<sup>132</sup> Kephart, *Our Southern Highlanders*, 343.

<sup>133</sup> Campbell, *The Southern Highlander & his Homeland*, 111.

<sup>134</sup> Otterbein, *American Anthropologist*, 233.

<sup>135</sup> Ayers, *Vengeance and Justice*, 12.

<sup>136</sup> Campbell, *The Southern Highlander & his Homeland*, 110.

<sup>137</sup> Semple, *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society*, 28.

drunken rows.”<sup>138</sup> William Lynwood Montell concluded that 94-percent of the killings in his community study involved whisky.<sup>139</sup> A bit later, historian Ronald L. Lewis asserted that a “prevalence of liquor and related enterprises” aggravated the ordinary physical violence found in frontier boom towns.<sup>140</sup> For Lewis, the rise in crime was “directly correlated with liquor.”<sup>141</sup> Keith F. Otterbein attributed one-third of the causes of Kentucky feuds to alcohol, whether resulting from drunken brawling or competition between two groups vying for control of an illegal whisky business.<sup>142</sup> Edward Ayers, linking alcohol to a culture of honor, stated how the two combined to create “a volatile mixture.”<sup>143</sup> Alcohol, he asserted, “dissolved the barriers of self-restraint that kept honor under control, heightened the thirst for the respect and admiration of others, [and] loosened the tongue.”<sup>144</sup>

A large number of writers ascribe Appalachian feuds to a weakness or partisanship of legal apparatuses. In 1921, John C. Campbell wrote, “Miscarriages of law and justice have been perhaps the greatest cause of keeping up feuds, if not of originating them.”<sup>145</sup> Josiah Stoddard Johnston, writing in 1899, identified Appalachia as a place where “local agencies of the law are weak or indisposed to act,” and stated, “The delinquency of the sheriff here is the prime cause of the trouble, whether from fear or, as is too often the cause, from sympathy with one of the factions. The same may apply to

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<sup>138</sup> Kephart, *Our Southern Highlanders*, 339.

<sup>139</sup> Montell, *Killings*, 150.

<sup>140</sup> Ronald L. Lewis, *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside: Railroads, Deforestation, and Social Change in West Virginia, 1880-1920* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 203.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 205.

<sup>142</sup> Otterbein, *American Anthropologist*, 232, 242.

<sup>143</sup> Ayers, *Vengeance and Justice*, 14.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>145</sup> Campbell, *The Southern Highlander & his Homeland*, 111.



the other county officers—judge, clerk, jailer, and magistrates; if not partisans of the stronger faction, they may be overawed into inaction.”<sup>146</sup> S.S. MacClintock said, “In a thinly settled community the officers are almost inevitably connected with one party or the other. Partisanship and intimidation result.”<sup>147</sup> Ellen Churchill Semple, writing in 1901, offered this: “The administration of the law is almost impossible in a feud case. It is impossible to convict a murderer in his own county, because the jury, and often the witnesses, are intimidated by the party of the defendant, and will fail to render a verdict of guilty.”<sup>148</sup> William Lynwood Montell attributed violence to lax or corrupt methods of law enforcement, a strong feeling that courts were not effective instruments of justice, and a belief that sheriffs and deputy sheriffs were “bought off” with whisky.<sup>149</sup> Altina Waller attributed “phase one” of the Hatfield-McCoy Feud to “an externally imposed, arbitrary boundary line that prevented the local authority system from legally adjudicating the case.”<sup>150</sup> Ayers wisely linked a culture of honor to a weak legal system. “Honor and legalism,” he stated, “are incompatible.”<sup>151</sup> True men settled their scores away from the court; to go before the court was a public admission of weakness. More often than not, juries acquitted, either from belief the accused had acted in self-defense or because they feared the consequence of a guilty verdict. Ayers noted that while honor worked against the legal apparatus (southerners preferred personal instead of impersonal justice in matters of honor), it did not render it powerless.<sup>152</sup> T.R.C. Hutton, in his study

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<sup>146</sup> Johnston, *Cosmopolitan*, 112.

<sup>147</sup> MacClintock, *American Journal of Sociology*, 173.

<sup>148</sup> Semple, *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society*, 27.

<sup>149</sup> Montell, *Killings*, 150-151.

<sup>150</sup> Altina L. Waller, *Feud: Hatfields, McCoys, and Social Change in Appalachia, 1860-1900* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 93.

<sup>151</sup> Ayers, *Vengeance & Justice*, 18.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, 32, 23.

of the Breathitt County Feud, noted that sheriffs and constables were often compliant in cases of extralegal violence.<sup>153</sup>

## CIVIL WAR SCHOOL

The Civil War school of feud historiography is centered on the idea that the Civil War stirred mountain violence and that many feuds originated within the sectional passions dividing mountain communities during and after the conflict. The war split persons into different factions, trained men in the use of weapons, taught men to kill one another, and provided an opportunity for persons to act “legitimately” outside of the law (bushwhacking, questionable home guard activity). John Fox, Jr., stated his opinion rather succinctly: “The Civil War was the chief cause of bloodshed.”<sup>154</sup> Fox added: “Most of the men who have been engaged in these fights were born, or were children, during the war; and were, in consequence, accustomed to bloodshed and bushwhacking from infancy.”<sup>155</sup> Historian Otis K. Rice, in his study of the Hatfield-McCoy Feud, determined the Civil War as a causal factor in stirring the feud.<sup>156</sup> William Lynwood Montell viewed the Civil War, particularly the use of guerilla warfare by partisans, as the impetus that “planted seeds of violence that sprouted after the war.”<sup>157</sup> Richard Maxwell Brown likewise attributed Appalachian feuds to a Civil War legacy.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Hutton, *Bloody Breathitt*, 81.

<sup>154</sup> Fox, *Blue-Grass and Rhododendron*, 139. Josiah Stoddard Johnston is the only writer adamant the Civil War did not cause feuds. In “Romance and Tragedy of Kentucky Feuds” (1899), Johnston labels the assertion that “feuds originated in the civil war” as “wrong” (111).

<sup>155</sup> Fox, *Blue-Grass and Rhododendron*, 140.

<sup>156</sup> Otis K. Rice, *The Hatfields & The McCoy's* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1982), 14.

<sup>157</sup> Montell, *Killings*, 157-158.

<sup>158</sup> Brown, *Strain of Violence*, 9-10.

## CAPITALIST DISRUPTION MODEL

The capitalist disruption model of feuding constitutes the third primary school of thought regarding feud causation. Most writers who ascribe to this theory view industrial penetration into postwar Appalachia as a disruptor to rural society, resulting in feuds.<sup>159</sup> In 1901, S.S. MacClintock identified “business rivalry and jealousy” as cause for feuds.<sup>160</sup> Historian Edwin Albert Cubby, in his 1962 study of the Guyandotte and Big Sandy valleys, noted a correlation between violence and a transition from an agrarian and rural industrial stage of existence to the “coming of the railroads and the development of coal mining as a major industry.”<sup>161</sup> According to historian Ronald D. Eller, the rise of rural industrial capitalism ushered in a period of rapid growth (railroads, towns, villages) and prompted social change that greatly altered traditional patterns of mountain life, caused poverty, and warranted responses (mostly unpleasant) and defenses by native residents.<sup>162</sup> William Lynwood Montell cited “changes in the local economy,”

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<sup>159</sup> Market historians generally assert that Appalachia was never preindustrial or egalitarian and existed in various degrees of non-isolation. Wilma Dunaway, in *The First American Frontier: Transition to Capitalism in Southern Appalachia, 1770-1860* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), asserts that Appalachians were *born* capitalist (16). Van Beck Hall, in “The Politics of Appalachian Virginia, 1790-1830,” in Robert D. Mitchell (ed.), *Appalachian Frontiers: Settlement, Society, and Development in the Preindustrial Era* (1991), advocates the existence of at least two pre-war, pre-industrial Appalachias: one consisting of growth centers (farms and towns) occupying the periphery of the capitalistic core, the other a more traditional pre-industrial Appalachia. Also of note: several writers and scholars advocate that industrial development did not cause feuds, that feuds typically occurred before the introduction of major industrial development, and that industrial development ultimately eradicated feuds. Scholar Edward L. Ayers, for example, in *Vengeance & Justice* noted how feuds occurred in his study region decades before the upcountry South experienced social dislocation caused by their sudden integration into the international market economy via coal (262). Ayers linked a poor economy, specifically the lack of ability by uplanders to produce a profitable crop for sale in the market economy during the 1880s and 1890s, to an increase in moonshine production and thus violence (261). Most importantly, he linked feuds to the federal government’s collection of taxes on whisky as the specific cause of feuds, what he called the “outside force,” the “dramatic change” (262, 263).

<sup>160</sup> MacClintock, *American Journal of Sociology*, 175.

<sup>161</sup> Edwin Albert Cubby, “The Transformation of the Tug and Guyandot Valleys: Economic Development and Social Change in West Virginia, 1888-1921” (Ph.D., dissertation, Syracuse University, 1962), iv.

<sup>162</sup> Ronald D. Eller, *Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers: Industrialization of the Appalachian South, 1880-1930* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1982).

specifically the “introduction of saw-milling,” as a cause of violence in his community study.<sup>163</sup> In his view, “killing was a response to social and economic tensions.”<sup>164</sup> Altina Waller noted “new opportunities created by the demand for timber” as an external factor contributing to “phase one” of the Hatfield-McCoy Feud.<sup>165</sup> Anthropologist Keith F. Otterbein linked Kentucky feuds to the intimidation of those advancing commercial interests and those trying to prevent commercial activities from entering the region.<sup>166</sup>

Aside from these three major schools, a quintet of lesser but important factors have been identified as causing or contributing to feuds: political rivalries; a lack of business; women; a drifting population of single young men; and enforcement of federal whisky revenue laws. These factors are mostly interrelated to the larger schools, or to one another.

## CONCLUSION OF FEUDS

Few writers offer reasons for the conclusion of feuds, indicating a preoccupation with causation. Writing in 1899, Josiah Stoddard Johnston offered the most credible theory of feud cessation. Feuds, he said, end by the conquest or relocation of one faction.<sup>167</sup> Keith F. Otterbein opined that feuds ended “if the participants became tired of the killing, if some major participants were killed, if some of the feudists were imprisoned or hanged, if participants moved from the area to escape capture by authorities or to prevent being killed, or when major participants died of illness and old

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<sup>163</sup> Montell, *Killings*, 145.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.

<sup>165</sup> Waller, *Feud*, 101. Waller fully develops her theory on pages 8-13, 139-157. Important to note: Waller does not blame industrialization solely for causing the feud. In fact, she suggests industrialization would solve some of the problems causing the feud.

<sup>166</sup> Otterbein, *American Anthropologist*, 232.

<sup>167</sup> Johnston, *Cosmopolitan*, 111.

age.”<sup>168</sup> Other early writers, adherents of a progressive model/world view, believed that economic development and modernization (education, political, religious institutions) would end feuds by transforming a backward society. Two such writers, S.S. MacClintock and John C. Campbell, believed industrial development would cure the problem of feuds. MacClintock, in *American Journal of Sociology*, partly attributed feuding to a lack of business and the consequent idleness of mountain residents.<sup>169</sup> Campbell, in *The Southern Highlander*, asserted an “economic revolution” would correct the problems of mountain culture and “catch up the mountaineer in the current of human progress.”<sup>170</sup> Writing many years later, William Lynwood Montell offered four reasons why feuds ended: outmigration, the government’s anti-moonshining efforts, departure of men to serve in World War I, and a higher rate of school attendance by Appalachian youth.<sup>171</sup> Otterbein also added these factors: “government control in the form of state mediators, the presence of state militia, and the prosecution of the killers.”<sup>172</sup>

## METHODOLOGY

The Lincoln County Feud arose out of personal grievances between prominent residents Paris Brumfield and Canaan Adkins, intensified due to the changing socioeconomic nature of the Harts Creek community, transformed into a contest among merchants for economic and political supremacy, and concluded with the elimination or out-migration of anti-Brumfield factions. This thesis will provide invaluable insight into

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<sup>168</sup> Otterbein, *American Anthropologist*, 233.

<sup>169</sup> MacClintock, *American Journal of Sociology*, 175.

<sup>170</sup> Campbell, *The Southern Highlander & his Homeland*, 377.

<sup>171</sup> Montell, *Killings*, 161.

<sup>172</sup> Otterbein, *American Anthropologist*, 233.

Civil War legacy and violence in Southern Appalachia, enhance understanding of mountain culture and crime causation through the lens of community study, offer reasons for crime causation and cessation, and provide analysis of possible links between societal transformation and violent behavior. As a West Virginia-based feud study, this thesis also refutes the widely-held belief that feuding was a Kentucky phenomenon. Most notably, historian John A. Williams, in *Appalachia: A History* (2002), states: “The identification of feuding as an Appalachian phenomenon, as opposed to a Kentucky one, is questionable, since there were no counterparts to the Kentucky feuds in Georgia, North Carolina, or the rest of West Virginia.”<sup>173</sup>

In Chapters 1 and 2, this thesis will analyze the early history of the Harts Creek community, providing a much-needed context for the feud and feudists.<sup>174</sup> Because many writers have attributed feuds to geography, isolation, genetics, and culture, emphasis will be placed on geography, demographics, population, genealogy, ethnicity, social stratification, property, and crime. Also, emphasis will be placed on five social institutions: family, education, religion, economy, and politics. The aforementioned topics will be arranged into two categories: Antebellum Period (Chapter 1) and Postwar Period (Chapter 2). Much of the antebellum portion of this thesis will contribute to dispelling what scholar Henry D. Shapiro and Ronald L. Lewis have labeled the myth of Appalachian otherness, while the postwar portion will reveal vital information pertaining to the Harts Creek community during its immediate pre-feud years.<sup>175</sup> Postwar

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<sup>173</sup> John A. Williams, *Appalachia: A History* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 192.

<sup>174</sup> Otis K. Rice, in *The Hatfields & The McCoys*, refers to this sort of material as the “essential backdrop” to understanding feuds (8).

<sup>175</sup> Henry D. Shapiro, *Appalachia on Our Mind: The Southern Mountains and Mountaineers in the American Consciousness, 1870-1920* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1978);

information is especially critical: aside from offering a nice complement/contrast to the antebellum community and placing the feud within a necessary context of community development, it allows for a better understanding of the immediate causes of the feud and its reasons for escalation.

In Chapter 1, the antebellum portion of this thesis will reveal the Brumfield-Dingess faction settled early in the community while their antagonists mostly arrived after the Civil War. Population pressures did not trigger violence. Most residents possessed English, not Scots-Irish, origins and therefore a Scots-Irish heritage did not trigger a feud. The community actually possessed some ethnic diversity. The adult male-female population rate, while substantially favoring males, did not trigger violence. Social stratification based on land ownership, prestige, and power existed from the outset. It was not a post-industrial event. The community dabbled in capitalism from the beginning and was never entirely isolated from larger markets. Timbering constituted the community's primary industry but was not intrusive until a "boom period" after the Civil War. The community suffered little significant criminal activity. Early settlers showed interest in churches and schools.

Chapter 1 will also show that the Lincoln County Feud was not directly rooted in Civil War events or animosities. The secession crisis and war revealed a consensus among local residents regarding the Democratic Party, Virginia secession, enlistment in the Confederate army, and opposition to the creation of West Virginia. The war did not divide the community into post-war "factions"; the feud did not arise from war-related grudges. This thesis will accept that the war contributed to the feud by encouraging a

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Ronald L. Lewis, *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside*. Lewis attributes the creation of Appalachian otherness to writer John Fox, Jr. (1)

belief among some residents in extra-legalism, provided training in the use of violence, and fostered a gun culture. Of particular interest is the way in which the war affected the feud's most aggressive antagonist, Paris Brumfield, who served in the Confederate army (see Chapter 3).

In Chapter 2, the postwar portion of this thesis will reveal how the creation of Lincoln County between 1867 and 1869 divided the Harts Creek community between Lincoln and Logan counties. Community population increased at nearly double the rate as before the war. Approximately ninety percent of residents were Virginians or West Virginians by birth, although a significant number of non-natives (mostly Kentuckians) settled the area in the 1880s. The community enjoyed moderate ethnic diversity. The adult male-female population ratio declined from its 1860 level and remained consistent in 1870 and 1880, although males still outnumbered females 52 to 48 percent. Social stratification intensified. Absentee landowners decreased in number but increased their acreage. The community enjoyed an increase in the number of female and African-American property owners and a generally decreasing number of unsettled estates. Most residents maintained traditional occupations (farming/housekeeping), but a growing minority enjoyed more occupational diversity. Four local settlements established post offices, the most significant being "Hart's Creek," renamed "Hearts Creek," and finally renamed "Hart." The arrival of "Big Timber" contributed to social and economic confusion, while also assisting the community to more fully assimilate into the national economy. The immediate postwar period was marked by disruption of county government, unofficial military activity by ex-Confederates, and a continuation of bushwhacking activity; regardless, violent crime remained virtually nonexistent in the



Harts Creek community. The United Baptist Church became more active within the community, while public education improved.

In Chapter 3, this thesis will analyze Paris Brumfield's role in initiating the feud. While acknowledging the possibility/probability of genetic contributions it will discard the theory of biological deviance and constitutional theories and focus instead on social learning theory, specifically Edwin Sutherland's differential association theory, which holds that persons *learn* crime and deviance.<sup>176</sup> Paris Brumfield's deviance and proclivity to crime was rooted in the Civil War. The war exposed him to the controversial Confederate officer, Vincent "Clawhammer" Witcher, a leader admired by Brumfield who taught him directly or indirectly how to wage war against enemies. Brumfield *modeled* himself after Witcher, deserted his official unit to serve under Witcher, and later named a son for him.<sup>177</sup> The war contributed to Brumfield's proclivity to violence by training him in the use of weapons and exposing him to large-scale death and personal atrocities. Following the war, Brumfield emerged as the community's primary deviant, initially by acting aggressively in a failed attempt to acquire the coveted "Toney tract" of land situated at the mouth of Harts Creek. His desire to own land, the primary source of wealth and status in Southern Appalachia, was not unusual; however, his cut-throat method of acquisition at the expense of his in-laws shocked the community and led to

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<sup>176</sup> Frank Schmallerger, *Criminology Today* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc. 2004), 143-162, 232-233. Sir Francis Galton's behavioral genetics (156), as well as such twin studies as *Verbrechen als Schicksal* (Crime as Destiny) and the Karl O. Christiansen and Sarnoff Mednick study of 1968 (156), are particularly noteworthy. Likewise, such chemical factors as testosterone (152), which has been linked to aggression and deviance, and the thyroid hormone, T3 (156), which has been linked to alcoholism, psychopathy, and criminality (152-154).

<sup>177</sup> Daniel Glaser's differential identification theory holds that persons commit crimes by identifying themselves with others, whether through actual or imaginary relationships. Albert Bandura's modeling theory, also useful to understand the Brumfield-Witcher dynamic, advocates that behavior is derived from modeling and imitating others. See Frank Schmallerger, *Criminology Today*, 235, 178, 186.

further misbehavior.<sup>178</sup> Brumfield's initial acts of deviance, while sensational, did not earn him the label of deviant.<sup>179</sup> That would come later. Brumfield's rampant hedonism, most evident by his siring of several illegitimate children by two women, contributed to his poor reputation. His postwar occupational roles of logger and distiller enhanced his stature as a notorious figure.<sup>180</sup> By the 1880s, Brumfield was leader of the community's prevalent culture of violence.<sup>181</sup> It will be shown that Brumfield's criminality partly derived from his suffering of substance-related disorders (alcoholism, possible Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder), developmental disorders, anxiety disorder, personality disorders (possible Type A personality, Antisocial Personality Disorder, sociopathy), and stress.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> Altina Waller, in *Feud*, noted similar activity and community response involving Anderson Hatfield (40); Robert K. Merton's strain theory is helpful here; strain theory states that a person becomes criminal when they are unable to achieve a socially accepted goal (in Paris' case, prosperity and prestige afforded by land ownership). See Frank Schmallenger, *Criminology Today*, 207, 210.

<sup>179</sup> Edwin Lemert would call Brumfield's initial acts "primary deviance," predecessor to secondary deviance, meaning he had acted in a deviant manner but had not yet been tagged as a deviant. Walter Reckless, writing about containment theory, would have viewed his lack of ability to control himself (inner containment) as significant. In time, Brumfield would have been labeled as a deviant, much more serious than someone who merely commits deviant acts. Frank Tannenbaum and Howard S. Becker offer unparalleled labeling theory studies. See Frank Schmallenger, *Criminology Today*, 235-238, 239.

<sup>180</sup> Edwin Sutherland's differential association theory holds that people learn criminal behavior by association with other persons (for Brumfield, distilling and logging placed him in company of many of the region's roughest elements). Robert K. Merton's strain theory also appears relevant (Brumfield's desire for but inability to achieve socially accepted goals, in this case wealth, led to criminal tendencies). At least two subcultural theories—William F. Whyte's subcultural theory and Albert Cohen's delinquent subculture theory—are likewise useful. Both theories involve the development of a subculture that includes criminal attitudes and behaviors leading to crime. See Frank Schmallenger, *Criminology Today*, 210, 215, 219, 232-233.

<sup>181</sup> Sheldon Hackney, "Southern Violence," *The American Historical Review* 74 (3), 1969: 906-925. Historian Sheldon Hackney, in his subculture of violence theory, proposes the U.S. South has always been characterized as a place of violent heritage. Franco Ferracuti and Marvin Wolfgang, whose work predates that of Hackney, defined a subculture of violence essentially as a subculture with norms that emphasize violent behavior. Albert Cohen's delinquent subculture theory proposes that a deviant subculture arises from a lack of economic and social opportunity. Because Brumfield was known as the most notorious member of the subculture, Tannenbaum and Becker's labeling theory would advocate that he was labeled as such.

<sup>182</sup> *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association, 1994), 175-176, 194-196, 424-429. David Elkind, "Erik Erikson's Eight Ages of Man," *New York Times Magazine*, 5 April 1970; Daniel J. Levinson, *The Seasons of a Man's Life* (NY: Ballantine Books, 1978); Don Baucum, *Psychology* (New York: Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 1999), 91-92; Nicky Hayes, *Foundations of Psychology*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Boston, MA: Thomson Learning, 2000), 224-225;

In Chapter 4, this thesis will explore the background and occupational status set of Cain Adkins, Paris Brumfield's primary nemesis, so as to better understand the source of the patriarchs' original grudges. Adkins, like Brumfield, originated from a prominent family, although his roots were planted in the Twelve Pole Valley, not the Guyandotte Valley. Unlike Brumfield, who was born and raised within the Harts Creek community, Cain settled locally after marrying into an affluent family. Cain, like Brumfield, had participated in the Confederate army, but his service in the Virginia militia was brief; he later served in the Union army. After the war, Cain's father-in-law acquired land sought by Paris Brumfield. By the 1870s, Adkins possessed a moderate acreage of land, mostly provided by in-laws. His social status was derived not by land ownership but by his occupational statuses and relationship to the Vance family. Adkins' occupational status set placed him at odds with Brumfield. Cain's teaching and preaching occupations established him as a progressive force in the community, someone who conveyed knowledge and morality. As a preacher he enjoyed membership among "respectable" groups of citizens; he also enjoyed a forum for social control. His doctor status gave him contact with community members from cradle to grave. As a justice of the peace, which required a popular election in the district, Cain was empowered to judge and handle many legal matters at the local level.

In Chapter 5, this thesis will prove the maturation of rural industrial capitalism disrupted and confused the Harts Creek community, thus contributing to the feud.<sup>183</sup>

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Don H. Hockenbury and Sandra E. Hockenbury, *Psychology*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (NY: Worth Publishers, 2006), 645-650; Thomas H. Holmes and Richard Rahe, "The Social Readjustment Rating Scale," *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, 1967, Table 3, 216.

<sup>183</sup> Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labour in Society* (New York: The Free Press, 1997). Durkheim's model of mechanical solidarity and organic solidarity (transition from simple society to complex society), as well as the capitalist disruption model, will serve as the theoretical backgrounds for this argument.

First, commercial logging allowed for the establishment of the town of Hart, a proto-urban center situated at the mouth of Harts Creek populated by mostly non-native merchants. Because Al Brumfield's feud was largely rooted in economic tensions and occurred within the context of a dangerous business climate, this thesis will examine Hart and profile the town's primary merchants: Bill Fowler, James P. Mullins, John H. Napier, Isham C. Roberts, John W. Runyon, and Al Brumfield. Second, so as to understand the nature of timber work, particularly in order to illustrate the stark difference between timber work and traditional farming, as well as to provide information regarding the rough and rowdy type of man required to do the work, the following topics will be examined: methods of timbering, the use of splash dams and booms, and the effect of immigration. The chapter will focus on the key participants in the local timber industry (and the feud), including: timber bosses Enoch Baker and Burl Farley, splash dam operators Albert Dingess and Ben Adams, boomer Al Brumfield, and timber migrants Milt Haley and Green McCoy. Due to the local timber industry's relationship to violence in the community, its status during the feud's "hottest years" (1888-1890) also serves as a point of interest.

Chapter 6 will examine the seven lesser feuds/quarrels that ultimately merged into one large awful vendetta between 1887 and 1890. Specifically, these smaller feuds were the Brumfield-Adkins Feud, the Dingess-Adams Feud, the Brumfield-Runyon Feud, the Brumfield-Adams Feud, the Dingess-Hall Feud, the Brumfield-Hall vendetta, and the Brumfield-Nester troubles. By exploring these lesser feuds, and by placing them in the context of the larger feud involving overlapping personalities and story lines, Chapter 6 will show how the Lincoln County Feud qualifies as a feud and not a string of violent

episodes or mere acts of vigilantism. All of the elements required of a feud as specified by Keith Otterbein will be evident. Chapter 6, while introducing the lesser feuds, also provides a larger narrative: Paris Brumfield and Cain Adkins continued their longstanding vendetta during the late 1880s, while local timber barons and merchants Al Brumfield, John W. Runyon, and Ben Adams waged a war for economic and political supremacy in the community.

Chapter 6 will also explore the role of kinship and family loyalty in Appalachian feuds. Many historians have mistakenly attributed feuds to family loyalty. An examination of Lincoln County feudists' genealogy explains some alliances, but also reveals that some enemies were in fact closely related by blood or marriage. For instance, Ben Adams often feuded with his nephews (the Dingess boys) as well as his niece's husband (Al Brumfield). Likewise, Al Brumfield was ruthless in acquiring the lands of his Nester cousin at Browns Branch, who in turn did not support him in his feud with John W. Runyon. Family attachments, while important to residents of Harts Creek, did not always translate into loyalty. In many cases, due to intermarriage, it becomes difficult to separate the kinship network. For example, Henderson Dingess was both a first cousin and a father-in-law to Burl Farley. Henderson's son Hugh Dingess, who married a first cousin, was both the nephew and brother-in-law of Ben Adams. As a result, the Lincoln County Feud occasionally appears as a complex intra-family feud, rather than a more simplified inter-family feud.

Chapter 6 will offer analysis of the culture of honor and the related effects of alcohol and gun ownership on the feud. A look at the state of alcohol use within the community, particularly its manufacture by Henderson Dingess, Paris Brumfield, and

Ben Adams, and any correlation between its use and the commission of violent acts, will be useful. This thesis will acknowledge the existence of a postwar culture of violence, specifically a gun culture, in the Harts Creek community. A discussion of crime and local law enforcement, particularly through the lens of kinship and politics, will also be necessary. Considering Lincoln County Sheriff James D. Porter, Deputy Sheriff John W. Runyon, Justice Cain Adkins, Justice Elias Vance, and Justice Anderson Blair and their connections to the feud is important for understanding certain legal realities in 1889-1890.

By the late 1880s, Chapter 7 will show, the feud had transformed from personal vendettas among various families into a contest among merchants for economic and political supremacy. Specifically, Chapter 7 will analyze the feud's most sensational events: the ambush of Al and Hollena Brumfield in September 1889, the apprehension of Milt Haley and Green McCoy in Martin County, Kentucky, in October 1889, and the lynching of Haley and McCoy in October 1889.

The Lincoln County Feud was widely reported by newspapers throughout the United States, particularly between 1888 and 1891. Chapter 8 will explore the national media frenzy that existed throughout the fall and winter of 1889-90 and provide further examples of feud episodes (i.e., ambushes, house attacks). Of note: although the feud was widely covered by newspapers, renowned scholar Altina Waller, writing in *Appalachia in the Making: The Mountain South in the Nineteenth Century* (1995), failed to identify the Lincoln County Feud as an Appalachian feud story reported by the *New York Times* between 1851 and 1910. Likewise, historian John A. Williams, in *Appalachia: A History* (2002), neglected to note the Lincoln County Feud as having been reported upon by

national newspapers between 1867 and 1912 or the *Louisville Courier-Journal* between 1874 and 1893.<sup>184</sup> The *New York Times*, the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, and many other newspapers did in fact report upon the Lincoln County Feud.

In Chapter 9, this thesis will offer political commentary relative to the local judiciary, provide insight into mountain justice, and analyze the last major act of the feud: a high profile trial featuring such widely known political leaders Judge T.H. Harvey, former Congressman Eustace Gibson, and Joseph E. Chilton...and the seven men who were accused and acquitted of murdering Haley and McCoy. The Lincoln County Feud, as revealed in Chapter 9, concluded due to the extermination and out-migration of the anti-Brumfield factions. By observing how the feud ended, it will also be possible to identify its type. Because the Lincoln feud occurred in a region where the local market system was linked to the world economic system, and because it ended due to something other than payment of compensation, it qualifies as what Keith Otterbein calls a market-based feud. Only minor aspects qualify it as the other feud type: feuding with compensation.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> Mary Beth Pudur, Dwight B. Billings, and Altina L. Waller, ed. *Appalachia in the Making: The Mountain South in the Nineteenth Century* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 348; John A. Williams, *Appalachia: A History* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 193.

<sup>185</sup> Otterbein, *American Anthropologist*, 241.

CHAPTER ONE: ANTEBELLUM HARTS CREEK:  
“A COUNTY OF BOUNDLESS RESOURCES OF WEALTH”

Analysis of the antebellum history of the Harts Creek community serves three essential purposes regarding the Lincoln County Feud. First, it provides a much-needed context for the feud and feudists.<sup>1</sup> Second, because many writers have traditionally attributed feuds to geography, isolation, genetics, and culture, it is sensible to view these concepts in relation to the Harts Creek community. For this reason, emphasis will be placed on geography, demographics, population, genealogy, ethnicity, social stratification, property, isolation, crime, and, within the framework of functionalist theory, the five social institutions: family, education, religion, economy, and politics. Third, antebellum historical analysis dispels some of what scholar Henry D. Shapiro has labeled the myth of Appalachia, which in turn assists in understanding the true causes of the Lincoln feud and perhaps feuding in general.<sup>2</sup>

#### EARLY SETTLEMENT

The Lincoln County Feud occurred in the Harts Creek community, which centers on Big Harts Creek, one of the larger tributaries of the Guyandotte River. The feud community also includes Little Harts Creek, Big Ugly Creek, Fourteen Mile Creek, Abbotts Branch, Green Shoal Creek, Douglas Branch, (Elias) Adkins Branch, Low Gap

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<sup>1</sup> Otis K. Rice, in *The Hatfields & The McCoys*, refers to this sort of material as the “essential backdrop” to understanding feuds (8).

<sup>2</sup> Shapiro, *Appalachia on Our Mind*, ix-xix.



Branch, (Isaac) Adkins Branch, Browns Branch, Bridge Branch, part of Kiah's Creek, Sand Creek, and Dry Branch.

The Guyandotte Valley home of the feudists is marked by hills of considerable elevation, high and rough, situated in Appalachia's Cumberland Plateau, part of what historian John A. Williams calls the "core region of Appalachia" and what historian Paul Salstrom calls "Newer Appalachia."<sup>3</sup> The Guyandotte River, reportedly named *La-ke-we-ke-ton* by the Miami, *Se-co-ne* ("narrow river bottom") by the Delaware, and *Wyandotte* by the Shawnee, became known by its present name in connection to a French fur trader who once operated at its mouth.<sup>4</sup> In 1769, the river appeared on a land grant as Arbuckle's River.<sup>5</sup> The name "Guyandot" first appeared on a map drawn by Thomas Hutchins in 1778.<sup>6</sup>

A pioneer named Hart lent his name to Big Harts Creek, as well as its sister stream, Little Harts Creek. According to Hart family tradition, Native Americans scalped Hart near the mouth of Little Harts Creek.<sup>7</sup> Stephen Hart, presumed son of the pioneer, later lived in a cabin at the forks of Big Hart and devoted his time to hunting deer, not

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<sup>3</sup> "Lincoln County, West Virginia," *West Virginia—Description and Travel* (Charleston, WV: West Virginia State Board of Centennial Managers, 1876); Williams, *Appalachia*, 193; Paul Salstrom, "Newer Appalachia as One of Appalachia's Last Frontiers," *Appalachia in the Making: The Mountain South in the Nineteenth Century* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 86.

<sup>4</sup> *West Virginia Blue Book* (Charleston, WV: Jarrett Printing, 1937), 699.

<sup>5</sup> C.E. Krebs and D.D. Teets, Jr., *West Virginia Geological Survey: Cabell, Wayne and Lincoln Counties* (Wheeling, WV: Wheeling News Litho Company, 1913), 102; Twila Virginia Doult, "Place Names in Logan County, West Virginia," (Thesis, Marshall College, 1955). Krebs also relates the story of the river being named for the Wyandot native tribe.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Hutchins, "The Western Parts of Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland and North Carolina," 1778, David Rumsey Historical Map Collection. <http://www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/detail/RUMSEY~8~1~281~30139:A-New-Map-of-the-Western-Parts-of-V> (accessed 18 March 2014).

<sup>7</sup> Eliza Hager, interview by Fred B. Lambert, Midkiff, WV, 23 January 1953, Fred B. Lambert Papers, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV.

farming.<sup>8</sup> On the left hand fork, a short distance from his cabin, Hart erected a small structure “in which to cure his venison” before taking it “to the settlement whenever an opportunity would offer itself.”<sup>9</sup> This fork—later home to feudists Henderson Dingess, Hugh Dingess, and Burl Farley—became known as Smokehouse Fork.<sup>10</sup> Hart did not remain in the area long, choosing to move “as soon as other settlers got within a few miles of him.”<sup>11</sup>

The earliest Anglo settlers to the valley arrived just after 1800, some ten years after the native presence had dissipated locally. Most original inhabitants migrated from the New River section of Montgomery (later Giles) County, Virginia. They came on foot through the mountains or down the Kanawha Valley in covered wagons. Some came in push boats.<sup>12</sup> Richard Elkins, a hunter, farmer, and ginsenger who “reared his cabin” on Harts Creek in September 1807, was the community’s first permanent settler.<sup>13</sup> Prior to 1809, Harts Creek was located in Kanawha County, Virginia. Thereafter, it became part of Cabell County.<sup>14</sup> The first written instance of “Harts Creek” appears in an 1813 land

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<sup>8</sup> Henry Clay Ragland, *History of Logan County, WV* (Logan, WV: Logan County Banner, 1895-1896), 33, 50; J.A. Vickers, *Local History and Topography of Logan County* (Charleston, WV: George M. Ford, State Superintendent, 1927), n.p.; Doult, “Place Names in Logan County, West Virginia.” Doult refers to Hart as an “Indian hunter.” Nearly all published sources claim that Stephen Hart was the settler. According to Ragland, Hart lived “where Henderson Dingess now [1896] lives” (33). Stephen Hart, born about 1810 in North Carolina, first appears in local records via a deed dated 16 February 1839 on Crawley Creek, near the present-day community of Chapmanville, in Logan County. He also appears in the 1840 U.S. Census for Logan County. By 1850, he was a resident of Boone County.

<sup>9</sup> Ragland, *History of Logan County*, 33.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 33, 50.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>12</sup> Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 7.

<sup>13</sup> Hardesty, *Hardesty’s Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 7: 106. According to *The Llorrac*, Elkins settled at the mouth of Big Harts Creek in September 1807 (3) or “about the year 1815” (8). Hardesty’s states that Elkins settled at “the mouth of Big Hart creek” (134) in “about the year 1816” (133) or “in 1816” (134).

<sup>14</sup> Edgar B. Sims, *Making A State* (Charleston, WV: Mathews Printing and Lithographing Company, 1956), Map 4, p. 199, Map 5, p. 201, Map 6, p. 203.

grant of 185 acres for Jacob Stollings.<sup>15</sup> In 1824, Harts Creek became a part of Logan County, formed from Cabell.<sup>16</sup>

The Brumfield-Dingess faction of the Lincoln County Feud settled early in the community, while their antagonists mostly arrived after the Civil War. William Wirt Brumfield, grandfather to Paris, settled at the mouth of Big Ugly Creek, several miles below Harts Creek, on the east side of the Guyandotte River, about 1804.<sup>17</sup> John Fry, grandfather to Mont “Boney” Lucas, settled at the mouth of Green Shoal Creek, just upriver from Harts Creek, about 1822.<sup>18</sup> Abner Vance, father-in-law to Cain Adkins, settled on West Fork between 1820 and 1824.<sup>19</sup> Moses Brown, uncle to Paris Brumfield’s wife, arrived to Browns Branch between 1824 and 1827.<sup>20</sup> John Lucas, grandfather to Mont “Boney” Lucas, settled locally between 1827 and 1830.<sup>21</sup> Joseph Adams, father to Ben Adams, arrived to Upper Hart from Kentucky in the late 1830s.<sup>22</sup> Bill Fowler, surrogate father to Al Brumfield, arrived to Adkins Branch from Boone County before 1850.<sup>23</sup> Daniel “Bill” Nester, a Native American orphan whose sons

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<sup>15</sup> *Sims Index to Land Grants in West Virginia* (Charleston, WV: State of West Virginia, 1952), 74; Jacob Stollings (Stallings), 15 September 1813, 185 acres, Land Office Grants No. 64, 1813-1815, p. 47 (Reel 130), Virginia Land Office Patents and Grants/Northern Neck Grants and Surveys (1692-1874), Library of Virginia.  
[http://va1.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/F/KRTIXDHCSBV41F4QQCTRRL6NYHT9GHFDM5U5S2RQDK6ACR4U24-42892?func=full-set-set&set\\_number=006400&set\\_entry=000144&format=999](http://va1.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/F/KRTIXDHCSBV41F4QQCTRRL6NYHT9GHFDM5U5S2RQDK6ACR4U24-42892?func=full-set-set&set_number=006400&set_entry=000144&format=999) (accessed 9 July 2011).

<sup>16</sup> Sims, *Making A State*, Map 7, 205.

<sup>17</sup> Doris C. Miller, “Treesearching With Doris,” *Boyd County Press-Observer* (Catlettsburg, KY), January 22, 1976.

<sup>18</sup> Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 8; Ragland, *History of Logan County*, 33. According to Ragland, Fry arrived in 1805. He first appears in the U.S. Census for Cabell County, VA, in 1820. According to *The Llorrac*, his home still stood as of 1926 (8).

<sup>19</sup> U.S. Census for Cabell County, VA, 1820; Tax List for Logan County, VA, 1824.

<sup>20</sup> Tax List for Logan County, VA, 1824; Tax List for Logan County, VA, 1827.

<sup>21</sup> Tax List for Logan County, VA, 1827; U.S. Census for Logan County, VA, 1830; Ragland, *History of Logan County*, 34.

<sup>22</sup> U.S. Census for Logan County, VA, 1840.

<sup>23</sup> U.S. Census for Logan County, VA, 1850.

TABLE 1  
*Population Trends: Harts Creek Community, 1830-1880*

Census Year	Number of Families with Different Surnames	Estimated Number of Households	Male-Female Ratio <sup>a</sup>
1830	10	24	+5
1840	20	50	+4
1850	28	75	-1
1860	50	110	+40
1870 <sup>b</sup>	82	160	+17
1880 <sup>c</sup>	98	215	+23

*Sources:* U.S. Census for Logan County, VA, 1830; U.S. Census for Logan County, VA, 1840; U.S. Census for Logan County, VA, 1850; U.S. Census for Logan County, VA, 1860; U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1870; U.S. Census for Logan County, WV, 1870; U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1880; U.S. Census for Logan County, WV, 1880.

<sup>a</sup>For 1830 and 1840, due to the manner in which the census was recorded, the male-female count is based on all persons aged 15 years or older. For subsequent years, ages are more clearly defined; as a result, the 1850 to 1880 count is based on all persons aged 18 years or older.

<sup>b</sup>Figures for 1870 and 1880 combine residents of the Harts Creek Township/District of Lincoln County and Harts area residents in the Chapmanville Township/District of Logan County.

<sup>c</sup>In 1872, Laurel Hill District was partly created from the northern section of Harts Creek District, thereby removing those residents from 1880 figures for the Harts community. That same year, a portion of the district was returned to Wayne County, likewise reducing population.

would play a small role in the feud, also arrived before 1850.<sup>24</sup> In the early 1850s,

Henderson Dingess settled on Harts Creek after marrying a daughter of Joseph Adams.<sup>25</sup>

Cain Adkins arrived to West Fork from Wayne County, West Virginia, in the late

1860s.<sup>26</sup> The Hall family settled on Rockhouse Fork from Kentucky between 1870 and

1880.<sup>27</sup> James P. Mullins and wife arrived to Big Branch in 1877.<sup>28</sup> In the early 1880s,

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Henderson Dingess family Bible (copy), author's collection.

<sup>26</sup> U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1870.

<sup>27</sup> U.S. Census for Letcher County, KY, 1870; U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1880.

<sup>28</sup> Hardesty, *Hardesty's Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 136.

TABLE 2  
*Harts Creek Settlers, Place of Origin*

	English	Irish	English- Irish	English- Scottish	Dutch- English	German	Scots- Irish
Number	33	7	4	1	1	1	1
Percent	68.8%	14.5%	8.3%	2.1%	2.1%	2.1%	2.1%

*Sources:* Personal research assembled by author based on various family histories; “The Meaning of Surnames,” <http://www.searchforancestors.com/surnames/origin/> (accessed 21 April 2009).

Milt Haley came “from across the mountain” to Trace Fork from Twelve Pole.<sup>29</sup> John W. Runyon moved to Hart about 1887 from Martin County, Kentucky.<sup>30</sup>

#### ANTEBELLUM DEMOGRAPHICS

Because feuds are sometimes attributed to population pressures, it is worthwhile to examine antebellum population trends in the Harts Creek community. Essentially, population increased substantially during the antebellum period, but did not trigger violence. In 1830, the community contained approximately 24 households. Between 1830 and 1860, the community enjoyed an average household number increase of 29 every 10 years. The 1830s were particularly robust, as the number of households doubled in that decade. Between 1840 and 1860, the number of households increased from 50 to 110.<sup>31</sup> In spite of this rather significant population increase, the Harts Creek community remained stable. No homicides appear to have occurred prior to the Civil War.

Most early Harts Creek settlers possessed English and not Scots-Irish origins. A study of the 48 different family groups who arrived prior to 1857 reveals that over three-

<sup>29</sup> Lawrence Haley, interview by John Hartford, Spottswood, WV, 23 March 1991.

<sup>30</sup> Land Book (1886-1891), Lincoln County Clerk’s Office, Hamlin, WV.

<sup>31</sup> See Table 1.

quarters of the “first families” possessed English surnames, while one-quarter connected to Scotland or Ireland.<sup>32</sup> Consequently, the Lincoln County Feud did not result from Scots-Irish genetics or from a Scots-Irish culture.<sup>33</sup> In fact, the community possessed some degree of ethnic diversity, containing a small number of persons with German, Native American, French, Melungeon, and (non-free) African-American backgrounds.<sup>34</sup>

According to one recent study, a surplus of young males may increase the probability of crime and/or violence, specifically if the male advantage is two percent or more.<sup>35</sup> In antebellum Harts Creek, between 1830 and 1860, the adult male population essentially equaled the adult female population. By 1860, however, males significantly outnumbered females by fourteen percent. This declined to a 4.8-percent male advantage by 1870 and remained relatively constant through 1880.<sup>36</sup> In spite of this, between 1860 and 1880 violent crime did not permeate the community. Thus, a surplus of young men did not have any bearing on crime in Harts Creek.

## ANTEBELLUM SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

Some writers attribute feuds to the introduction of market/industrial capitalism into what they regard as a preindustrial egalitarian culture.<sup>37</sup> Antebellum Harts Creek,

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<sup>32</sup> See Appendix 1 and Table 2.

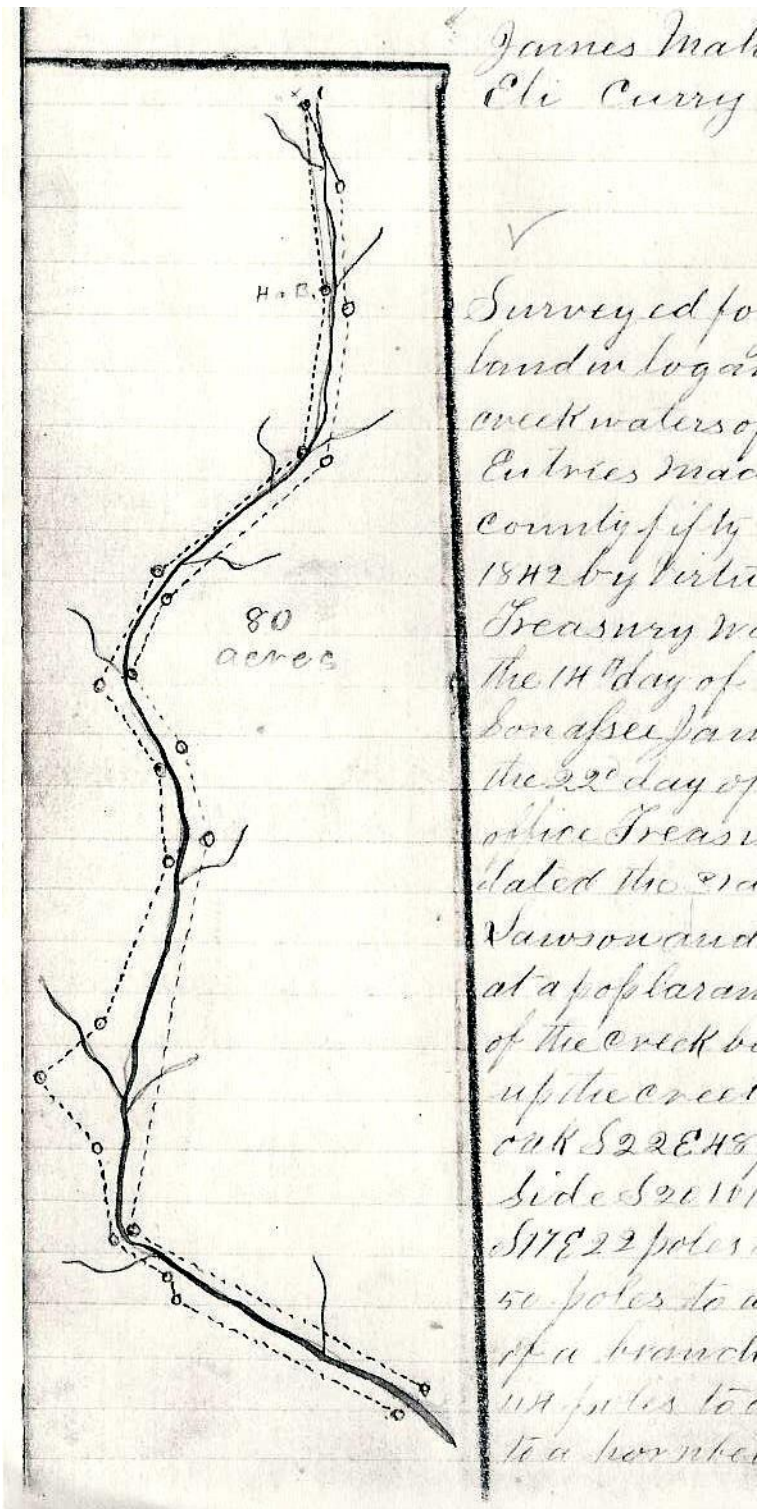
<sup>33</sup> See Simpkins, *Mountain Heritage*. Simpkins suggested that Appalachian culture was Celtic regardless of the ancestry of its people.

<sup>34</sup> See Table 2 and Table 4.

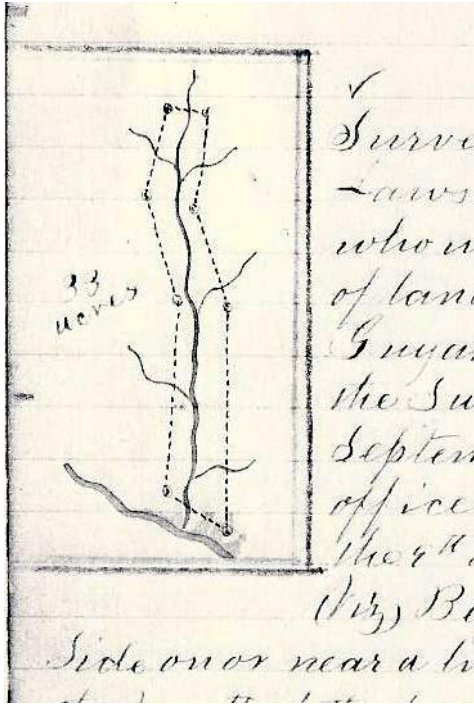
<sup>35</sup> Valerie M. Hudson and Andrew M. den Boer, *Bare Branches: The Security Implications of Asia Surplus Male Population* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2005).

<sup>36</sup> See Table 1 and Table 3.

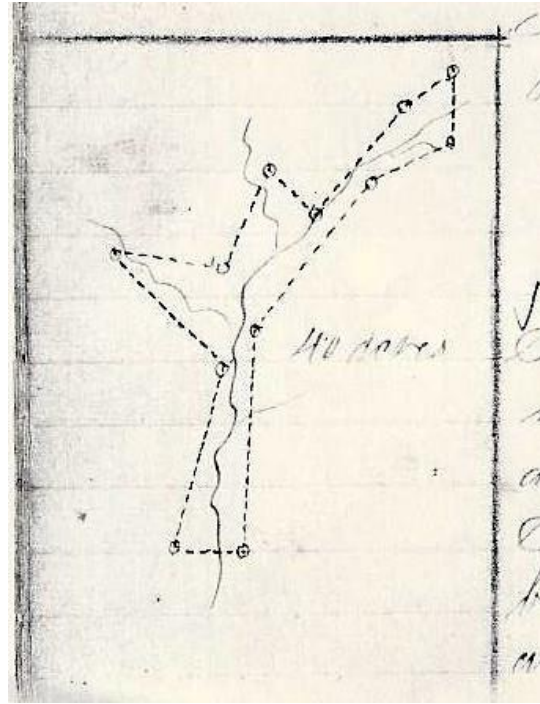
<sup>37</sup> Most notably, Eller in *Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers*.



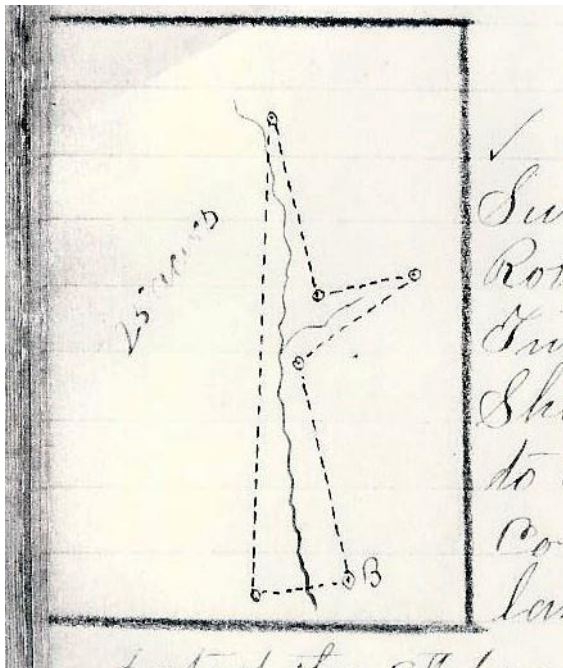
**FIGURE 1.** Land Grant for 80 acres, *Surveyors Record Book A*, Logan County Clerk's Office, Logan, WV.



**FIGURE 2.** Land Grant for 33 acres, *Surveyors Record Book A*, Logan County Clerk's Office, Logan, WV.



**FIGURE 3.** Land Grant for 40 acres, *Surveyors Record Book A*, Logan County Clerk's Office, Logan, WV.



**FIGURE 4.** Land Grant for 25 acres, *Surveyors Record Book A*, Logan County Clerk's Office, Logan, WV.



while primarily a place of undiversified subsistence farming supplemented by hunting, was never egalitarian or entirely preindustrial. Social stratification based on land ownership existed from the outset. Henry Clay Ragland, who published the first history of Logan County in 1895 and 1896, stated: “The early settlers, while having come from every class of society...”<sup>38</sup> Wealth, represented by land ownership, best illustrates social stratification. During the early 1800s, primarily through land grants from the State of Virginia, buckskin elite gathered thousands of acres or as little as thirteen acres, mostly valuable bottomlands situated along the river and at the mouth of tributaries.<sup>39</sup> A small number of buckskin elite owned slaves.<sup>40</sup> Beneath the buckskin elite were yeoman farmers—perhaps slave-holding, perhaps not—non-slave-owning landowners, subsistence farmers, poor whites (landless field hands, tenant farmers), and slaves.<sup>41</sup>

Social stratification was evident in 1850 and 1860. In 1850, Isaac Adkins, the community’s wealthiest resident and Logan County’s second largest slave owner, owned \$4700 worth of real estate. John H. Brumfield, father to Paris, was next at \$4000, while Elias Adkins, brother to Isaac, followed at \$2300. Joseph Adams, father to Ben, ranked seventh (but first among residents who lived on Big Harts Creek) with \$1500. At the bottom among property owners was John Gore, who owned \$40 worth of real estate.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 27 February 1895; *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 5 February 1896; Ragland, *History of Logan County*, 43.

<sup>39</sup> See Appendix 2, Appendix 3, Appendix 4, and Figures 1-4. Surveyors Record Book A, Logan County Clerk’s Office, Logan, WV. The term “buckskin elite” is borrowed from John A. Williams’ *Appalachia in the Making: The Mountain South in the Nineteenth Century* (220).

<sup>40</sup> See Table 4.

<sup>41</sup> Mark A. Weitz, *A Higher Duty: Desertion Among Georgia Troops During the Civil War* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 14; Ronald L. Lewis, “Beyond Isolation and Homogeneity: Diversity and the History of Appalachia,” in *Confronting Appalachian Stereotypes: Back Talk from an American Region*, ed. Dwight B. Billings, Gurney Norman, and Katherine Ledford (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1999).

<sup>42</sup> See Appendix 3. U.S. Census for Logan County, VA, 1850. Isaac Adkins is my great-great-great-great-great-grandfather; John H. Brumfield is my great-great-great-great-grandfather.

TABLE 3  
*Population Trends: Harts Creek Community, 1830-1889*

Census Year	Total Male Population Above 18 Years of Age <sup>a</sup>	Total Female Population Above 18 Years of Age <sup>a</sup>	Total Resident Male Property Owners	Total Resident Female Property Owners	Total Properties Listed as Estate or Heirs	Total Nonresident Property Owners	Percent Male Resident Property Owners (excluding estates)
1830 <sup>b</sup>	31	26	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
1840 <sup>b</sup>	58	54	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
1850 <sup>b</sup>	81	82	39	0	N/A	N/A	48.1%
1860 <sup>b</sup>	162	122	57	2	N/A	N/A	35.2%
1870	253	230	116	16	23	38	45.9%
1880	340	309	119	16	12	18	35%
1889 <sup>c</sup>	430 est.	388 est.	190	58	12	11	45% est.

*Sources:* U.S. Census for Logan County, VA, 1830; U.S. Census for Logan County, VA, 1840; U.S. Census for Logan County, VA, 1850; U.S. Census for Logan County, VA, 1860; U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1870; U.S. Census for Logan County, WV, 1870; U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1880; U.S. Census for Logan County, WV, 1880.

<sup>a</sup>For 1830 and 1840, due to the manner in which the census was recorded, the male-female count is based on all persons aged 15 years or older. For subsequent years, ages are more clearly defined; as a result, the count for 1850 to 1880 is based on all persons aged 18 years or older.

<sup>b</sup>Land books are not available prior to 1865, rendering it difficult to identify property owners before 1865.

<sup>c</sup>The destruction of 1890 census records complicates a tabulation of 1889 population; hence an estimate based on growth from 1850 to 1880.

Ten years later, in 1860, Spencer A. Mullins, son-in-law to the late Isaac Adkins, and Burbus C. Toney, postmaster, were the wealthiest residents of the community, claiming \$4000 worth of real estate. Harvey S. Dingess, brother to Henderson, ranked third with \$3500. John Fry, grandfather to Boney Lucas, and Abner Vance, father-in-law to Cain Adkins, ranked ninth. Henderson Dingess ranked 22 with \$1200 worth of real estate and Paris Brumfield ranked 34 with \$800.<sup>43</sup>

Prestige and power further stratified locals. Some large landowners like William Wirt Brumfield, grandfather to feudist Paris Brumfield, served as a War of 1812 officer

<sup>43</sup> See Appendix 4. U.S. Census for Logan County, VA, 1860.

TABLE 4  
*Slave Ownership: Harts Creek Community, 1830-1860*

Census Year	Number of Slave Owners	Number of Slaves
1830	1	1
1840	1	4
1850	2	8
1860	6	11

*Sources:* U.S. Census for Logan County, VA, 1830; U.S. Census for Logan County, VA, 1840; U.S. Slave Schedule for Logan County, VA, 1850; U.S. Slave Schedule for Logan County, VA, 1860.

and a Cabell County gentleman justice during the 1810s.<sup>44</sup> Others who owned little or no land improved their standing through occupation or cult of personality. Josephus Workman, for instance, who ranked low among property owners in 1850 and owned no real estate in 1860, enjoyed prestige and power due to his status as a popular preacher.<sup>45</sup> Likewise, Enos “Jake” Adkins, who owned no property in 1850 and very little in 1860, served as a first lieutenant in the 129<sup>th</sup> Regiment Virginia Militia and led local men away to fight Federal invaders at Boone Court House in 1861.<sup>46</sup>

## ISOLATION

Many writers attribute Appalachian feuds to the isolation of its people. From the outset, the Harts Creek community was only moderately isolated from the larger world.

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<sup>44</sup> *Cabell County, West Virginia Heritage, 1809-1906* (Marceline, MO: Walsworth Publishing Company, 1996), 129-130.

<sup>45</sup> See Appendix 3 and Appendix 4.

<sup>46</sup> U.S. Census for Logan County, VA, 1850; U.S. Census for Logan County, VA, 1860; Enos Adkins, Carter’s Company, 129<sup>th</sup> Regiment Virginia Militia, Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from Virginia (National Archives Microfilm Publication M324E, roll 1056), War Department Collection of Confederate Records, Record Group 109, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC; Pat Adkins, interview, n.d. Pat Adkins referred to Jake’s unit as “Captain Jake’s Company.”

Initially, residents made their way to and from the area using old Native American trails, roads hacked from the wilderness, or in canoes similar to those constructed by native people.<sup>47</sup> The earliest roads, barely more than upgraded Native American trails, were “of the rudest possible construction” and generally followed the creeks or ridges.<sup>48</sup> During the 1810s, barely a decade after the first settlers arrived to Harts Creek, the Cabell County Court acted to construct or improve county roads. In 1814, the Court appointed men to oversee road construction from the Falls of Guyan (a site about 22 miles downriver from Harts Creek) to the Kanawha Court House and to the forks of Twelve Pole Creek (present-day Wayne). More important to this study, the Court arranged for a road to be constructed from the mouth of Nine Mile Creek to the mouth of Huff’s Creek (passing directly through the Harts Creek community).<sup>49</sup> By 1831, this road (which linked Cabell County to what was then Monroe County) crossed the Guyandotte River at the Isaac Adkins Shoals just below the mouth of Big Hart.<sup>50</sup>

Locals did not idly wait for such improvements. In 1848, Harts Creekers joined with others to beseech the state legislature to “clear out the obstructions in the navigation of the Guyandotte River”—what the petitioners termed “their “great channel of Communication”—so they could transport their resources to market and receive “the necessities of Life.” According to the 1848 petition, Harts Creekers and their neighbors occupied a “County of Boundless resources of wealth, with a Soil adapted to the growth of all substantial necessities of life.” While “the article of Salt may be brought across the

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<sup>47</sup> Fred B. Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 57.

<sup>48</sup> Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 19-20.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 31-32.

<sup>50</sup> “Discovering Your Roots,” *Logan Banner* (Logan, WV), 29 November 1981.

County from Kanawha, almost everything else must and *should* be Brought up the river.”<sup>51</sup>

During the Antebellum Period, Harts Creek residents, like many mountain residents, had access to “town functions” and modernity. Barboursville served as the primary regional entrepot, meaning a county seat located along a major migration route in the trans-Appalachian West.<sup>52</sup> Barboursville—population 339, seat of government for Cabell County as of 1814—was a manufacturing town situated conveniently at the mouth of Mud River in the lower Guyandotte Valley and approximately forty miles downriver from Harts Creek. According to J.W. Miller’s *History of Barboursville Community* (1925).

As soon as the town became the county seat, hotels, livery stables, stores, shops that function of all kinds were built. The stores carried large stocks of goods bought in New York or Philadelphia. The merchants would go to the eastern markets about twice a year to buy their stock. These goods were exchanged for corn, country produce, grain, dried fruit, hogs, ginseng, deer hides, and feathers. There was much traffic between Barboursville and Logan. Barboursville was then known as a manufacturing town. There was a furniture factory, a fan mill factory, hat factory, wagon and buggy factory, two or three harness shops, a large tannery, large lots of leather, several tailors, blacksmiths, shoemakers, a large mill which cut large quantities of steamboat bottoms...<sup>53</sup>

After 1832, Barboursville was accessed by the James River and Kanawha Turnpike.<sup>54</sup>

“Immigrants and general travel was at all times heavy, immigrants going West in covered wagons,” Miller wrote in 1925. “All livestock was driven to market over this road.”<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Library of Virginia, General Assembly Legislative Petitions, Logan County, Reel 111. Located at West Virginia Archives and History, The Cultural Center, Charleston, WV.

<sup>52</sup> Mary Beth Pudup, “Town and Country in the Transformation of Appalachian Kentucky,” *Appalachia in the Making* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 282, 287.

<sup>53</sup> J.W. Miller, *History of Barboursville Community* (n.p., 1925).

<sup>54</sup> Frances B. Gunter, *Barboursville* (self-published, 1986), 1, 20; Joe Geiger, Jr. *Civil War in Cabell County, West Virginia* (Charleston, WV: Pictorial Histories Publishing Company, 1991), 3; Billy Joe Peyton, “James River & Kanawha Turnpike,” *The West Virginia Encyclopedia*. <http://www.wvencyclopedia.org/articles/978> (accessed 14 February 2014).

<sup>55</sup> Miller, *History of Barboursville Community*, n.p.

Lawnsville represented a closer, although smaller, growth center, or early quiescent local center, for residents of the Harts Creek community.<sup>56</sup> Located only twenty-four miles upriver, Lawnsville was established by English merchant Anthony Lawson in the early 1820s at a site previously called “The Islands.”<sup>57</sup> In 1824, Lawsonville became seat of government for the new county of Logan, which included the Harts Creek community. By 1838, the town was renamed “Logan Court House.” Travel between the regions was facilitated by the river as well as the road system. A mail carrier walked twice a week from Barboursville to Logan, approximately 60 miles.<sup>58</sup> Between 1852 and 1857, Thomas Dunn English, a New York physician and popular American poet, settled at Logan Court House, where he served as mayor, renamed the town “Aracoma,” and actively promoted the region’s timber and coal potential.<sup>59</sup>

Green Shoal Post Office, located at the mouth of Green Shoal Creek 2.8 miles from Harts Creek, served as the local proto-urban center.<sup>60</sup> Established by Burbus C. Toney in 1855, Green Shoal P.O. acted as the community’s political, religious, social, and economic gathering center.<sup>61</sup> A.S. Fry operated a flat boat, which he built entirely

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<sup>56</sup> Pudup, in *Appalachia in the Making*, describes an early quiescent local center as a county seat town established in the first half of the nineteenth century that enjoyed a steady level of social and economic activity but remained in the shadow of neighboring towns (286).

<sup>57</sup> Ragland, *History of Logan County*, 40, 44, 50; George Thomas Swain, *History of Logan County, West Virginia* (Kingsport, TN: Kingsport Press, 1927), 83; Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 57.

<sup>58</sup> Gunter, *Barboursville*, 1.

<sup>59</sup> Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 31, 59; Robert K. Spence, *The Land of Guyandot: A History of Logan County* (Detroit: Harlo Press, 1976), 199.

<sup>60</sup> Pudup, in *Appalachia in the Making*, uses this term to describe a rural neighborhood establishment, usually located at the mouth of a stream and containing a merchant (usually a merchant-farmer), a mill, and a post office, where “the movements of people, goods and information converged” (285). Proto-urban centers are sites of convenience for internal movement of goods and information, as well as centers of social life (283-285).

<sup>61</sup> Postmaster Appointments for the Green Shoal Post Office in Logan County, Virginia, U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

from walnut, at Green Shoal.<sup>62</sup> For many years, the community had enjoyed the service of a miller. The White grist mill, a small tub-wheel mill built about 1821, the Lambert water mill (“the only mill where corn could be ground into meal in this district”), and the Bailey grist mill at the mouth of Harts Creek each served the community.<sup>63</sup>

## ANTEBELLUM ECONOMICS

Prior to the Civil War, subsistence farming, hunting and gathering, and timbering typified the Harts Creek economy.<sup>64</sup> Most locals regarded themselves as farmers, planting corn, oats, wheat, potatoes, rye, buckwheat, and tobacco, while raising sheep, cows, hogs, horses, chickens, turkeys, guineas, pea fowls, geese, and ducks.<sup>65</sup> They also hunted and trapped wild game.<sup>66</sup> At that time, the local forest was populated by deer, turkey, bear, panthers, wildcats, foxes, wolves, otter, beaver, gray and black squirrels, elk, pigeons, and wild hogs.<sup>67</sup> Barter and market exchanges occurred frequently within the community, while trade beyond the locale also occurred, but to a lesser extent. Principal exports included produce, ginseng, cattle, and peltry.<sup>68</sup> Locals transported ginseng by horseback

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<sup>62</sup> William “Blind Bill” Peyton, interview by Fred B. Lambert, 1925, F.B. Lambert Papers, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library Special Collections, Marshall University, Huntington, WV.

<sup>63</sup> Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 8, 28; Hardesty, *Hardesty’s Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 106; Sam Bias, interview by Fred B. Lambert, January 1942, Fred B. Lambert Papers, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV.

<sup>64</sup> Barbara Rasmussen, in *Absentee Landowning and Exploitation in West Virginia, 1760-1920* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1994), described this era using the term “nascent capitalism” (8).

<sup>65</sup> Thomas H. Perry, “From Youth to Old Age,” *Cabell Record* (Milton, WV), 1909/10, 7; William “Blind Bill” Peyton, interview, 1925.

<sup>66</sup> Paul Salstrom, *Appalachia’s Path to Dependency: Rethinking a Region’s Economic History, 1730-1940* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1994).

<sup>67</sup> Perry, *Cabell Record* (Milton, WV), 9; Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 29-30; Ali Franklin Queen, interview by Fred B. Lambert, no date, Fred B. Lambert Papers, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV.

<sup>68</sup> Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 30; Joseph Martin, “Counties in West Virginia in 1835” in *West Virginia Heritage* (Richwood, WV: West Virginia Heritage Foundation, 1968), Vol. 2, 43.

to the Salt Licks of Kanawha County and sent deer hams and skins by push-boat down the Guyandotte River to larger markets.<sup>69</sup> One contemporary publication predicted the region would be “one of the finest wool growing” areas in the United States.<sup>70</sup>

On 7 January 1848, 115 Logan County citizens—including residents of Harts Creek, namely Henderson Dingess—petitioned the state government for Guyan River improvement, emphasizing the untapped agricultural wealth of their region.

The Indian corn, Rye, oats, Tobacco, Hemp, Flax, Potatoes, Cabbages, Carrots, Pumpkins, etc. grow as well perhaps in this County as any other region of the Commonwealth, while there is no County can exceed it on fruits, Particularly Peaches. By planting on the North Hill Sides they never fail to yield their fruits and the Peaches often measure from 2 ½ to 3 inches in diameter. That many cattle are annually raised and drove from the County, that these vast herds of Cattle live through the winter without being fed from the Produce of the farms, with the exception of a few days of Heavy Snow and Cold rains, from the rich character of our hills. Fine grapes will grow upon them. It is believed that no portion of the world would be better adapted to the growing of Sheep. Our sheep are large and very thrifty.<sup>71</sup>

By the 1840s, timbering constituted the community’s primary industry.<sup>72</sup> As early as the 1820s, pioneers had cleared timber, viewing it as an impediment to settlement and progress—not for its sale in the market. “It may be stated that here, as in many of the other counties, there was a large but necessary destruction of fine timber in the clearings of early settlers,” said the *West Virginia Geological Survey: Cabell, Wayne and Lincoln Counties* (1913). “The period of such destruction in Lincoln began about 1820 and lasted approximately for fifty years.”<sup>73</sup> The son of one regional prewar timberman had this to say:

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<sup>69</sup> Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 30.

<sup>70</sup> Joseph Martin, “Counties in West Virginia in 1835,” 43.

<sup>71</sup> Library of Virginia, General Assembly Legislative Petitions, Logan County, Reel 111.

<sup>72</sup> Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 7, 15, 28, 58. According to Lambert, “almost from the very beginning of history in this region, logs have been rafted on the Guyandotte and floated to Cincinnati and even to more distant markets” (58).

<sup>73</sup> Krebs and Teets, *West Virginia Geological Survey*, 420.



Father followed farming mostly, and timbering some, and sold some timber. He was a great pilot for rafts, boats, etc. He usually piloted rafts from Four Mile down. I often went to Logan for rafts. Had all night dances. My father was a good canoe maker. He hollowed out and shaped them from poplar trees. Sold them from 12 to 25 dollars each.<sup>74</sup>

In 1847 or 1848, the Elkins saw mill was constructed in the Harts Creek area on the sash-saw plan with the ability to cut from 800 to 1000 feet of lumber per day.<sup>75</sup> That same year (1848), Logan County petitioners, including Harts Creekers, bragged: “There is perhaps no County that can boast of a finer growth of timber which now is and must Continue to be in great demand upon the ohio river.” Only by appropriating a “sufficient sum of money together with what may be raised By individuals to remove the obstructions to the navigation of said river,” said the petition, could “Flat Boat and Rafts float Downwards at the proper stages of the tide” and get out “our lumber and cane or wool and the Products.”<sup>76</sup>

Simultaneously, Logan County residents were aware of coal deposits in the Guyandotte Valley. “We have no doubt our County abounds with valuable minerals of many descriptions,” said the 1848 petition. “There is in every portion of the County rich and deep veins of Bituminous coal and several banks of the canal coal have been found and doubtless the County is filled with it. The coal alone if it could be gotten to market would bring in a great resource of wealth.”<sup>77</sup> Thomas Dunn English, mayor of Aracoma during the 1850s, noted, “The whole country is underlaid with almost exhaustless seams of coal—much of it the finest cannel.”<sup>78</sup> A bit further downriver in Cabell County, at the

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<sup>74</sup> William “Blind Bill” Peyton, interview, 1925.

<sup>75</sup> Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 106.

<sup>76</sup> Library of Virginia, General Assembly Legislative Petitions, Logan County, Reel 111.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 31.

mouth of Four Mile Creek and at Upper Two Mile, one resident recalled of antebellum times: “The river bottom is a solid bed of coal; and farmers, blacksmiths, and others often pried up coal to use at home.”<sup>79</sup>

In the 1850s, the Harts Creek community benefited from a lock and dam project in the Guyandotte River. The project began in 1848, when Joseph H. Gill, state engineer of Virginia, surveyed the lower and mid-sections of the Guyandotte River. Gill recommended that by commencing a slack water navigation project from the river’s mouth to Logan Court House and by clearing the river above Logan for “sluice” navigation, the State of Virginia could establish steamboat travel in the valley and tap the county’s rich timber and coal reserves. The following year, in support of internal improvement, Virginia incorporated the Guyandotte Navigation Company and purchased three-fifths (or sixty percent) of the company stock. Elias Adkins of Adkins Branch, near Harts Creek, and John Fry of Green Shoal were among nine residents listed in the “Chapmanville” area who were told to “open the books” for “receiving subscriptions” in the joint stock company.<sup>80</sup> New York investors supplied most of the remaining stock, although some local capitalists also made contributions.<sup>81</sup> Ignoring Gill’s recommendation for sturdy locks and dams, the state built them of wood cribs filled with stone and in locations that allowed for fewer of them (thereby saving money). The company soon went bankrupt. In 1853, the Guyandotte Land Company assumed charge

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<sup>79</sup> Sam Bias, interview by Fred B. Lambert, 5 January 1932, Fred. B. Lambert Papers, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV.

<sup>80</sup> Act of Incorporation for the Guyandotte Navigation Company (1849), Fred B. Lambert Papers, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV.

<sup>81</sup> Leland R. Johnson, *Men, Mountains and Rivers: An Illustrated History of the Huntington District U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 1754-1974* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1977), 57-59.

and reinitiated the project.<sup>82</sup> By 1854, seven locks were constructed in the valley, the nearest to Harts Creek being located fourteen miles downstream at Nine Mile Creek. Steamboats such as the *Alto*, the *Major Adrian*, the *Louisa*, and the *R.H. Lindsey* were common sights on the river until September 1861, when a flood destroyed most of the locks.<sup>83</sup> The commencement of the Civil War put to rest any notions of reviving the project.<sup>84</sup>

## ANTEBELLUM CRIME

The Harts Creek community did not suffer an unusual level of crime prior to the outbreak of the Lincoln County Feud. Cabell County criminal records, which detail crime for Harts Creek for 1809 to 1824 (and part of the community thereafter), reveal no serious crime in the community. William Wirt Brumfield, grandfather to Paris, is the only local person who appears in criminal records for this period. In 1813, Brumfield was a co-defendant in two criminal cases. In 1815-1817, he was accused and found guilty of assault and battery and ultimately arrested for not paying his fine.<sup>85</sup> In 1831 Richard Elkins, on behalf of Edley Elkins, sued Peter Dingess.<sup>86</sup> Between 1831 and 1834, Sarah Dingess, administrator of William A. Dingess, and Peter Dingess, administrator of Peter Dingess, sued Richard Elkins.<sup>87</sup> Between 1835 and 1839, Preston Spears was accused of

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<sup>82</sup> American Canal Society Index, "Guyandotte River Navigation," [http://www.americancanals.org/Data\\_Sheets/West%20Virginia/Guyandotte%20River%20Navigation.pdf](http://www.americancanals.org/Data_Sheets/West%20Virginia/Guyandotte%20River%20Navigation.pdf). (accessed 25 January 2015).

<sup>83</sup> William "Blind Bill" Peyton, interview, 1925.

<sup>84</sup> George W. Summers, *The Mountain State: A Description of the Natural Resources of West Virginia* (Charleston, WV: Moses W. Donnally, 1893); Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 58.

<sup>85</sup> Law Orders Book (1812-1819), 25, 42, 113, 131, 135, 151, 165, Cabell County Circuit Clerk's Office, Huntington, WV. The target of his assault is a mystery; records are incomplete.

<sup>86</sup> Law Orders Book (1831-1841), 11, Cabell County Circuit Clerk's Office, Huntington, WV.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 24, 29, 37-38, 41, 43, 72, 76, 114.

assault and battery; in 1839, because he failed to appear five times, the court issued a “judgment of outlawry” against him.<sup>88</sup> In 1836, Peyton Spears was charged with a crime.<sup>89</sup> In 1838, John H. Brumfield, father to Paris, was charged with a crime.<sup>90</sup> In 1852 and 1853, William and John Lucas enjoyed a case against Elias Adkins and Irvin Lusher.<sup>91</sup> In 1855, Paris Brumfield and his brother John brought suit against their father’s heirs.<sup>92</sup> The antebellum community appears to have been more peaceful than settlements in the Tug Valley, a border region situated at the West Virginia-Kentucky border that hosted at least one pre-war feud: the Marcum-Muncy Feud.<sup>93</sup>

#### ANTEBELLUM RELIGION AND EDUCATION

Early settlers of the Harts Creek community showed interest in church and schools. A sparse number of preachers and church congregations existed in the Harts Creek community prior to the Civil War. Methodists, who became America’s largest denomination during the Second Great Awakening (1790-1840), appear to have been very influential at Harts Creek during the antebellum period. In 1823, William West, a Methodist minister, preached the first sermon in what would later constitute Harts Creek District “and here in the same year he gathered a little church, one of the first ever found in the valley of the Guyandotte river; but of its history or who composed its membership,

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<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 144, 162, 176, 198, 224, 246, 279, 302.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 176.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 261, 269, 294-295.

<sup>91</sup> Chancery Orders Book 0 (1831-1862), 295, 308, Cabell County Circuit Clerk’s Office, Huntington, WV.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 354.

<sup>93</sup> “The Gallows,” *New York Herald*, 29 November 1879; Swain, *History of Logan County, West Virginia*, 76-77.

nothing is known.”<sup>94</sup> Josephus Workman, who married Paris Brumfield to Ann Toney in 1858 and Cain Adkins to Mariah Vance in 1860, was a Methodist Episcopal South minister.<sup>95</sup> Between 1854 and 1860, Workman married twenty-four couples with thirty-two different surnames.<sup>96</sup>

United Baptists, a group of Baptists that embraced evangelicalism and missionary work while rejecting Calvinism, were likewise popular in the Harts Creek community.<sup>97</sup> The Kiah’s Creek United Baptist Church, situated at the mouth of Kiah’s Creek of Twelve Pole (at the edge of the Harts Creek community), was established on 25 March 1848.<sup>98</sup> Elijah Gartin, a resident of Little Harts Creek, was a charter member.<sup>99</sup> Initially, Kiah’s Creek Church belonged to the Paint Union Association of United Baptists.<sup>100</sup> On 4 November 1848, the Zion Association of United Baptists organized at Salem meeting house with six churches, including Kiah’s Creek UB Church, and 205 members.<sup>101</sup> Darby Kelly Elkins, likely a Baptist, is recorded as a local preacher in the early 1850s.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Hardesty, *Hardesty’s Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 106-107; Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 49.

<sup>95</sup> Ethel Evans Albert and Troy Taylor, *Logan County, Virginia Marriage Records 1853-1860 and 1850 Census* (Kingsport, TN: n.p., 1974), 29, 41; Commissioners Record Book (1866-1874), Logan County Circuit Clerk’s Office, Logan, WV.

<sup>96</sup> Albert and Taylor, *Logan County, Virginia Marriage Records*.

<sup>97</sup> Waller, in *Feud* (29, 264), is one of several scholars who link evangelicalism to market capitalism (progress/modernity).

<sup>98</sup> *Bethlehem Association of United Baptist Churches: Keeping Memories Alive*, (n.p., n.d.), 1.

<sup>99</sup> Fred B. Lambert Papers, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV.

<sup>100</sup> *Bethlehem Association of United Baptist Churches: Keeping Memories Alive*, (n.p., n.d.), 1.

<sup>101</sup> *Bethlehem Association of United Baptist Churches*, 1; J.H. Spencer, *A History of Kentucky Baptists, From 1769-1885*, Vol. 2 (Cincinnati, OH: The Author, 1885), 587-588; John Sparks, “Minutes of the Old Zion Association of United Baptists, of Eastern Kentucky and Western West Virginia, 1848-1880,” <https://www.scribd.com/document/51406079/MINUTES-OF-THE-OLD-ZION-ASSOCIATION-OF-UNITED-BAPTISTS-OF-EASTERN-KENTUCKY-AND-WESTERN-WEST-VIRGINIA-1848-1880> (accessed 22 July 2012).

<sup>102</sup> Hardesty, *Hardesty’s Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 133.

Primitive Baptists, a denomination that embraced Calvinism and rejected missionary activity, also maintained a presence in the Harts Creek community.<sup>103</sup> John Lucas, a Primitive Baptist preacher who settled near Big Creek before 1830, was active for many years.<sup>104</sup> One antebellum resident recalled:

Old Johnny Lucas, a Primitive Baptist preacher, probably lived on Fourteen of Guyan River. He lived to be over 100 years old. I have heard him preach when I was a boy. He was a fairly able preacher. He expected to die on his one-hundredth birthday, but failed to do so.<sup>105</sup>

Between 1855 and 1860, John Lucas married seven couples, mostly kinsmen, with ten different surnames.<sup>106</sup>

Early settlers showed some inclination toward educating local children.

*Hardesty's Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia* reported:

The first school was taught in a log cabin one mile above the mouth of Big Harts creek about the year 1832, but who the teacher was cannot now [1884] be ascertained. The date, however, is remembered by an old resident, because it was the year in which he first visited this section. The first house for educational purposes was built near the mouth of Big Harts creek in 1834. It was a five-cornered building, one side being occupied by the ever-present huge fireplace.<sup>107</sup>

Still, as late as 1870, the local population remained highly illiterate: in the census for that year, John Toppings, an Englishman, was listed as one of the only men in the district who could read and write.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Waller, *Feud*, 28-29.

<sup>104</sup> Ragland, *History of Logan County*, 34; U.S. Census for Logan County, VA, 1830. Ragland cites him as "the first Baptist preacher mentioned in the county" (34).

<sup>105</sup> Fred B. Lambert Papers, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV.

<sup>106</sup> "Logan County, Virginia Early Marriage Records, 1853-1860," West Virginia GenWeb Project, <http://www.wvgenweb.org/logan/locomar.htm> (accessed 13 July 2010).

<sup>107</sup> Hardesty, *Hardesty's Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 106.

<sup>108</sup> U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1870.

## CIVIL WAR

The Civil War, often blamed for stirring many Appalachian feuds, did not play a direct role in causing the Lincoln County Feud.<sup>109</sup> First, residents of Harts Creek enjoyed a consensus regarding the Democratic Party, the presidential election of 1860, secession, the war, and the creation of the state of West Virginia. Most, regardless of slave ownership, supported Virginia and the Confederacy. Second, all known war-time atrocities were committed by invading Union troops—not by locals against one another—so the feud did not arise out of lingering war-time grudges.

Logan County, like many Virginia counties south of the Kanawha River, favored Democratic candidates in the presidential election of 1860, secession at the Richmond Convention of April 1861, and Virginia's secession by popular referendum in May 1861. Logan County also contributed large numbers of its men to the Virginia militia/Confederate army and opposed the creation of West Virginia in 1863. In the 1860 presidential election, Logan County gave over ninety percent of its vote to Vice President John Breckinridge.<sup>110</sup> All of the county's leading politicians supported the Confederacy. On 4 April 1861 and 17 April 1861, James Lawson, representing Logan, Boone, and Wyoming counties at the Richmond Secession Convention, voted for the Ordinance of Secession.<sup>111</sup> Later, on 23 May 1861, Logan County voters approved the Secession

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<sup>109</sup> Fox, *Blue-Grass and Rhododendron*, 139; Montell, *Killings*, 157-158.

<sup>110</sup> The 1860 Presidential Vote in Virginia, extracted from *The Tribune Almanac and Political Register for 1861* (New York: The Tribune Association), <http://www.wvculture.org/history/statehood/1860presidentialvote.html> (accessed 22 March 2014).

<sup>111</sup> How Virginia Convention Delegates Voted on Secession, [http://www.virginiamemory.com/docs/votes\\_on\\_secession.pdf](http://www.virginiamemory.com/docs/votes_on_secession.pdf) (accessed 4 February 2015).

Ordinance, 518-63 (89.2%).<sup>112</sup> At Chapmanville, located only ten miles from the mouth of Harts Creek, no Union sympathizer was allowed to vote on the ordinance.<sup>113</sup>

Logan County men, including residents of Harts Creek, overwhelmingly supported the Confederacy. Between sixty to ninety percent of Logan County troops, including well over 150 Harts Creekers, served in Confederate units.<sup>114</sup> Of the 118 Civil War veterans who lived in what later constituted the Harts Creek District of Lincoln County, 101 (or 85.6%) served in the Confederate army.<sup>115</sup> Aracoma, also called Logan Court House, served as a regional recruitment center.<sup>116</sup> “Logan was inhabited by a set of desperadoes,” said one Union prisoner of war who passed through town in the winter of 1861. “Almost every man was swearing vengeance upon the Yankees in general.”<sup>117</sup> The bulk of county men served in the following units: Col. John DeJernatt’s 129<sup>th</sup> Regiment Virginia Militia (Carter’s Company), Col. John McCausland’s 36<sup>th</sup> Virginia Infantry (Logan Wildcats), Lt. Col. Vincent “Clawhammer” Witcher’s 34<sup>th</sup> Battalion Virginia Cavalry (Co B and D), Lt. Col. Henry Beckley’s 45<sup>th</sup> Battalion Virginia Infantry (Co A, B, D, E), and Lt. Col. Thomas B. Swann’s Battalion Virginia Cavalry (Carpenter’s Company, Watkins’ Company). Others served in less-official home guard units, such as the Black Striped Company.<sup>118</sup> A small number claimed war-related injuries. A survey

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<sup>112</sup> Virginia County Vote on Secession Ordinance, 23 May 1861. [http://www.newrivernotes.com/historical\\_antebellum\\_1861\\_virginia\\_vote\\_for\\_secession.htm](http://www.newrivernotes.com/historical_antebellum_1861_virginia_vote_for_secession.htm) (accessed 3 February 2015).

<sup>113</sup> Boyd B. Stutler, *West Virginia in the Civil War* (Charleston, WV: Education Foundation, Inc., 1963), 165.

<sup>114</sup> Confederate Recruitment. <https://sites.google.com/site/wvotherhistory/county-confederate-recruitment> (accessed 3 February 2015).

<sup>115</sup> Harold R. Smith and Brandon R. Kirk, *Ranger Area Civil War Veterans Laurel Hill and Harts Creek Districts*, (n.p., 1996), 14.

<sup>116</sup> James Carter Linger, *Confederate Military Units of West Virginia* (Tulsa, OK: self-published, 1989).

<sup>117</sup> “The Rebel Raid of Guyandotte,” *Ironton (OH) Register*, 17 April 1862.

<sup>118</sup> Jack L. Dickinson, *Tattered Uniforms and Bright Bayonets: West Virginia’s Confederate Soldiers* (Huntington, WV: Marshall University Foundation, 1995).



of the Harts Creek District's fourteen surviving veterans in the 1890 Special Union Veterans Census shows two persons who had war-related injuries.<sup>119</sup> One Confederate veteran, Aaron J. Adkins, of Hart, lost his eyesight after a musket backfired in his face.<sup>120</sup>

Union General George B. McClellan's 1861 western Virginia campaign, specifically the arrival of Brigadier General Jacob D. Cox's southern force to the Guyandotte-Mud-Kanawha rivers region, brought the war to Harts Creek.<sup>121</sup> The purpose of Brig. Gen. Cox's force was to drive Confederate Brigadier General Henry A. Wise from the Kanawha Valley. On 11 July 1861, Cox sent the 2<sup>nd</sup> Kentucky Infantry across the Ohio River to the town of Guyandotte, where it assumed control of the town, established Camp Crittendon nearby, and moved toward Charleston. On 14 July 1861, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Kentucky dispersed a force of Confederates at Barboursville.<sup>122</sup> At Scary Creek, on July 17, a Confederate force defeated Cox's troops.<sup>123</sup> Brigadier General Wise, fearing strong Union reinforcements, thereafter abandoned the Kanawha Valley. Cox, in turn, occupied the valley, as well as the strategic town of Gauley Bridge on July 29. Throughout August, Confederate Brigadier Generals Wise and John B. Floyd fought several engagements against Cox's force.<sup>124</sup>

In late August, Gen. Cox dispatched Lt. Colonel David A. Enyart and six companies of the 1<sup>st</sup> Kentucky Infantry into the Coal River Valley where Confederate

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<sup>119</sup> Special Schedule of the Eleventh Census (1890), Enumerating Union Veterans and Widows of Union Veterans of the Civil War for Lincoln County, WV.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*; Verdayne Shelton, interview, 22 November 1995; Billy Adkins, telephone interview by author, Harts, WV, 23 January 2008. The 1890 census notes of Adkins: "eyes affected."

<sup>121</sup> Michael B. Graham, *The Coal River Valley in the Civil War* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2014), 28-29.

<sup>122</sup> Geiger, *Civil War in Cabell County, West Virginia*, 23-24, 30-31; Graham, *The Coal River Valley in the Civil War*, 30; Linger, *Confederate Military Units of West Virginia*, 8.

<sup>123</sup> Graham, *The Coal River Valley in the Civil War*, 31.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

Colonel Ezekiel S. Miller had gathered the 187<sup>th</sup> Regiment Virginia Militia (Boone) and the 129<sup>th</sup> Regiment Virginia Militia (Logan).<sup>125</sup> This action brought the war close to Harts Creek. On 1 September 1861, Enyart's well-trained and experienced force of 750 men attacked and defeated Miller's 225 men at Boone Court House.<sup>126</sup> An unknown number of Harts Creek men participated in this battle. One participant, Jake Adkins—a peripheral character in the Lincoln County Feud—gave his one command of the war: “Run for your lives! Every man for himself!”<sup>127</sup> After the battle, Union troops burned the courthouse, jail, and surrounding town, employing the total war tactics later used by Union General William Tecumseh Sherman.<sup>128</sup>

The Battle of Kanawha Gap (Chapmanville) on 25 September 1861 constituted the most significant regional wartime engagement. Following the Battle of Boone Court House, Colonel James W. Davis organized 250 Confederate militia at Chapmanville, some ten miles upriver from Harts Creek, where the Boone-Logan Road converged with the Logan-Barboursville Road. Davis' purpose in gathering troops at this location was to recruit local men into the Confederacy and ultimately recapture the Coal River Valley. General Cox, aware of the danger, sent Colonel Abraham S. Piatt and a force of more than 600 men to counter Davis. On 25 September, Piatt's men charged strong Confederate positions at Kanawha Gap, near Chapmanville, and won the battle. Piatt and his men spent the night in Chapmanville before returning to the Kanawha Valley, while

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<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 50-53.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 58-61

<sup>127</sup> Pat Adkins, interview, n.d.

<sup>128</sup> Stutler, *West Virginia in the Civil War*, 162-164; Graham, *The Coal River Valley in the Civil War*, 31, 44, 46-47, 56-64.

Confederates regrouped at Logan Court House.<sup>129</sup> Bill Fowler, who played a part in the Lincoln County Feud, participated in this battle.<sup>130</sup>

Two significant wartime events occurred in the Harts Creek community. The first, Major K.V. Whaley's escape from Lt. Col. Vincent "Clawhammer" Witcher through Harts Creek, occurred in November 1861. The *New York Times* recounted Whaley's escape as follows:

At last he came upon Hart's Creek, and supposed himself to be in the vicinity of a Union settlement at the head of Twelve Pole. He went up Hart's Creek, and inquired of an old lady named Adkins, who with her son and son-in-law were in the house, asking her to direct him to Kyer's Creek, which he knew to be one of the branches of Twelve Pole. Young Adkins finally agreed to show him the creek for \$2, and when they started the Major observed that the son-in-law, Thompson, started in another direction. The Major suspected that Thompson knew him, and feared pursuit, so he hurried young Adkins along a good deal faster than that young gentleman desired to move. Arriving at the creek, the Major, having been robbed of all his money at Guyandotte on the night of the fight, could not comply with his contract with Adkins, but gave him 25 cents, all the money he had, and a new pair of soldier shoes, taking in exchange the guide's old moccasins. The Major struck down the creek along a very narrow road, passing two houses, at one of which he saw a little girl, but had not gone a great distance before he heard the tramp of the cavalry coming in pursuit. The Major was about turning a bend in the road, and had barely time to jump over a fence and lie flat upon his belly, when along dashed a company led by the fellow Thompson, before mentioned. The Major was lying not six feet from where his pursuers passed, and could see their eyes peering anxiously forward in search of him. After the pursuers passed, he crawled up a ravine, and spent another twelve hours exposed to the hardest kind of rain, accompanied by the fiercest lightning and the loudest thunder. [The Major afterwards learned that the little girl whom he had seen had informed his pursuers that he had just gone around the bend in the road, and in their anxiety to gain the bend and capture him, they never thought of looking to the right nor to the left.] Being exceedingly weak and feeble, in consequence of having gone three days without food, the Major determined to approach a house a short distance ahead and ask for something to eat. Accordingly he waded the creek, about waist deep, picked up a couple of boulders, and going to the house, spoke to the occupants. He was answered by the man of the house a Union man, who recognized the Major almost at once, and warned him not to remain a minute if he wanted to escape, as the cavalry had been there hunting for him. The Major offered the man \$500 to conduct him to the Queen settlement, and to the house of Absalom

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<sup>129</sup> Graham, *The Coal River Valley in the Civil War*, 109-110, 115-122, 125.

<sup>130</sup> Hardesty, *Hardesty's Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 7: 134.

Queen. The man, though avowing himself a good Union man, refused the offer, stating that he would be killed by his cannibal neighbors, if discovered. He, however, gave the Major a blanket to throw over his shivering shoulders, and directed him to the house of Queen.<sup>131</sup>

An 1862 skirmish fought between Captain George W. Hackworth's 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment Virginia State Line (Company F) and 7<sup>th</sup> West Virginia Cavalry (Company D) at the Forks of Big Ugly Creek represents the other significant local wartime event. Reflecting on the skirmish many years later, one participant, Thomas H. Perry, recounted:

In 1862 my company was ordered to move from Chapmansville down the Guyan river. About three o'clock that day we ran into a company of Federal soldiers at the forks of Big Ugly creek, and as neither company was expecting trouble at this time, we were not ready for the fight, but our captain ordered his men in line, and we marched around the hillside, fronting the creek, and the Federals formed a line up the creek, fronting us. Here we tried our bravery for a few minutes, but as we had the advantage of some timber, the Federals broke ranks and went into the woods, except for ten or twelve that lay flat upon the ground, and we captured them, and all the rations the company had, such as coffee and sugar, which was a treat for us in that country. About this time another company came up and followed the Federals into the woods.<sup>132</sup>

The burning of the Logan County Courthouse on 15 January 1862 constituted the most destructive regional act of the war. In January 1862, Gen. Cox sent Colonel Edward Siber and six companies of the 37<sup>th</sup> Ohio Infantry to the Guyandotte and Mud river sections to quell widespread marauding and to destroy the Black Striped Company.<sup>133</sup> On 12 January 1862, Major Charles Ankele entered Logan County with four companies of the 37<sup>th</sup>. The following day, they arrived in Chapmanville and proceeded up the Guyandotte River to Logan Court House. En route, Major Ankele was joined by the other two companies of the 37<sup>th</sup>, including Col. Siber. At Logan Court House, on January 14, a

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<sup>131</sup> "How a Congressman Escaped from the Rebels," *New York Times*, 8 December 1861. A similar account may be found in P. Fish Reid's *Incidents of the War* (New York: Long & Co., 1862), 57-59.

<sup>132</sup> Perry, *Cabell Record* (Milton, WV), 1909/10, 18-19.

<sup>133</sup> Graham, *The Coal River Valley in the Civil War*, 136.

skirmish occurred between the 37<sup>th</sup> and local Confederate sympathizers. Fearing that heavy rains and the rising river would trap his force in Logan, Siber evacuated town early on the morning of the 15th, after burning the courthouse.<sup>134</sup> In his report, Siber stated “the place could not be held without more sacrifice of life, and as the inhabitants of this town had acted with so much animosity and other public buildings of this place had long ago been converted into barracks, used as a principal point of refuge for rebel cavalry, I thought it my duty to deprive the enemy of such position, only valuable to him and useless to us, and ordered to set fire to these buildings before my departure.”<sup>135</sup> This act purged most Harts Creek records from history for the 1824 to 1861 period.

The Civil War played an indirect role in contributing to the Lincoln County Feud. First, Paris Brumfield—a chief Lincoln County feudist—appears to have been influenced by Vincent “Clawhammer” Witcher, a controversial Confederate officer who used unorthodox tactics to wage war. Second, Paris Brumfield and Cain Adkins—the primary antagonists in the Lincoln County Feud—initially fought on the Confederate side, although Adkins later became a Union soldier. Third, later feudists who saw combat suffered psychological trauma. Fourth, key postwar migrants to the community, typically from Kentucky, were Union veterans, hailed from strong Union families, and were politically active Republicans. These four factors as they relate to the feud will be explored in future chapters.

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<sup>134</sup> Stutler, *West Virginia in the Civil War*, 165-166; Graham, *The Coal River Valley in the Civil War*, 137.

<sup>135</sup> Stutler, *West Virginia in the Civil War*, 166.

## CONCLUSION

Analysis of the Harts Creek community during the antebellum period reveals that many popular notions of feud causation do not apply to the Lincoln County Feud. Because the Brumfield-Dingess faction of feudists settled in the Harts Creek community during the early decades of the nineteenth century and their antagonists mostly settled after the Civil War, the feud may have contained an inside-outside dynamic; early settlers perhaps felt a sense of ownership over the community and resented later settlers. Most likely, it was not the timing of the settlement but the ideas and other traits of the later settlers, who largely originated in Kentucky. Population growth and a surplus male population, often linked to violent outbursts in many studies, does not appear to have prompted the feud; antebellum Harts Creek did not suffer serious crime. Most Harts Creek settlers were of English ancestry, therefore a Scots-Irish heritage did not trigger the feud. Harts Creek was never an egalitarian society; stratification existed from the outset. The feud was not waged by people of lower class; feudists and their ancestors often represented members of the upper class. Remoteness did not cause the feud; Harts Creek residents were not entirely isolated. Feudists did not reject economic modernization; many participated in it. Timbering existed in the community prior to the Civil War and did not trigger violence. A lack of churches and schools did not cause the feud; residents enjoyed church and schools prior to the war. The feud did not arise out of Civil War-related issues; locals were nearly unanimous in their views regarding the war.

## CHAPTER TWO: APPALACHIAN BORDERLAND: THE POSTWAR HARTS CREEK COMMUNITY

Analysis of postwar history of the Harts Creek community serves three essential purposes regarding the Lincoln County Feud. First, it provides an immediate context for the feud and feudists.<sup>1</sup> Second, because scholars and writers have used geography, political boundaries, demographics, population, social stratification, property, economy, crime, religion, and education to explain the feud phenomenon, particularly to explain what did or did not cause a feud, it is necessary to analyze these factors for the Harts Creek community. Third, postwar history when attached to antebellum history will reveal long-term community trends relating to the above factors that allow for better understanding of feudists and their feud.

### LINCOLN COUNTY

The creation of Lincoln County in the late 1860s divided the Harts Creek community, establishing a geopolitical borderland situated remotely from the centers of Hamlin and Aracoma. Lincoln County, formed in 1867 from Cabell, Putnam, Boone, and Kanawha counties, was the third county formed in the new State of West Virginia.<sup>2</sup> By 1869, after two boundary shifts that restored all of Putnam's land while adding parts of Logan and Wayne counties, Lincoln County included the lower section of Harts Creek,

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<sup>1</sup> Rice, in *The Hatfields & The McCoys*, refers to this sort of material as the "essential backdrop" to understanding feuds (8).

<sup>2</sup> Krebs and Teets, *West Virginia Geological Survey: Cabell, Wayne and Lincoln Counties*, 13; Hardesty, *Hardesty's Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 89; Sims, *Making A State*, Map 10A, 213.

which along with Big Ugly Creek, Fourteen Mile Creek, and Little Harts Creek, constituted Harts Creek Township. Upper Hart, meanwhile, remained a part of Chapmanville Township in Logan County.<sup>3</sup> This new political boundary divided the community in regard to elections, education, transportation, and the judiciary, but not so much in matters of economy, religion, and family. In 1872, a large portion of the Harts Creek Township's land was restored to Wayne County, contributing to some confusion among residents.<sup>4</sup> That same year, under the new state constitution, Harts Creek *Township* became Harts Creek *District*. During this five-year period of botched new political boundaries, the Harts Creek community suffered no significant disruption or conflict.

#### POSTWAR DEMOGRAPHICS

During the postwar period, unprecedented population growth and new patterns of land ownership typified the Harts Creek community. Population pressure can trigger violence; it does not appear to have factored into the Lincoln County Feud. Between 1860 and 1870, the number of adult residents increased by 201 persons and the number of households increased by 50 (as opposed to the pre-war per decade average of 29). During the 1870s, the number of adult residents increased by 166 persons and the number of households by 55.<sup>5</sup> Land ownership, specifically a low percent of ownership or a dwindling amount of property owned per person, can trigger violence and/or crisis. In the postwar period, specifically between 1870 and 1889, the percent of landowners generally

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<sup>3</sup> Sims, *Making A State*, Map 10A, 213.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> See Table 1 and Table 3.



registered at 45 percent while the number of large landowners (those claiming 451 or more acres) declined and the number of small landowners (those claiming less than 200 acres) more than doubled from 79 to 210.<sup>6</sup> Land ownership patterns do not appear to have contributed to the feud.

After the war, Harts Creek primarily consisted of West Virginia-born residents, although a significant percentage hailed from Kentucky. These Kentuckians, while a small percent of the population, played a prominent role in the Lincoln County Feud. In 1870, 92 percent of Harts Creek District's 858 residents were natives of West Virginia or Virginia. Seven percent originated in Kentucky. Of the remaining non-natives, three hailed from North Carolina, two from Pennsylvania, two from Tennessee, two from Ohio, one from Missouri, and one from England.<sup>7</sup> In 1880, 90 percent of Harts Creek District's 1118 residents were natives of West Virginia. A little more than six percent were born in Kentucky; about two percent (22) in Virginia. Of the remaining non-natives, seven were born in Ohio, five in North Carolina, and three in Pennsylvania, and one each in Tennessee, Massachusetts and Arkansas. There were no foreign-born residents.<sup>8</sup> A survey of fifteen prominent district residents in 1883 showed that four were born in Lincoln County, three in Logan County, one in Kanawha County, one in Monroe County, one in Cabell County, one in Boone County, one in Wayne County, and one in Mercer County. Additionally, one resident was born in Pennsylvania; another in Martin County, Kentucky.<sup>9</sup> Many new residents, such as Green McCoy, were timber men from

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<sup>6</sup> See Table 3 and Table 5.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1870; U.S. Census for Logan County, WV, 1870.

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1880; U.S. Census for Logan County, WV, 1880.

<sup>9</sup> Hardesty, *Hardesty's Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 133-138.

Kentucky.<sup>10</sup> One part-time resident, Enoch Baker, who oversaw timber operations on the creek as early as 1885, hailed from Nova Scotia.<sup>11</sup> On average, ten African-Americans lived in the district between 1880 and 1900; one of them was a life-long resident, while the rest were migrants to the community.<sup>12</sup>

Between 1870 and 1880, males outnumbered females well above the two percent threshold required by at least one major study to trigger violence.<sup>13</sup> The adult male-female population ratio declined from its 1860 level of 57 to 43 percent and remained consistent in 1870 and 1880. In 1870 and 1880, the adult male-female ratio registered at 52 percent to 48 percent.<sup>14</sup> Regardless, no known homicides or serious violent crime occurred in the community between 1865 and 1881. An overabundance of males did not contribute to causing the Lincoln County Feud.

In sum, Harts Creek population increased after the war but did not create a demographic crisis that contributed to the feud. Land ownership remained constant relative to population. Although average acreage declined, no issues relating to general land ownership appear to have contributed to a feud. Even though the male-female ratio remained high in favor of males, no serious crime occurred between 1865 and 1881. A surplus male population did not trigger a feud.

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<sup>10</sup> U.S. Census for Pike County, KY, 1860; U.S. Census for Pike County, KY, 1870; U.S. Census for Pike County, KY, 1880.

<sup>11</sup> *T.A. Bryan & Co v. Enoch Baker* (March 1885), Execution Lien Docket Book A, 2-3, Logan County Clerk's Office, Logan, WV; *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 12 September 1889; Thomas Condit Miller and Hu Maxwell, *West Virginia and Its People*, Vol. 2 (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1913), 268.

<sup>12</sup> U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1880; U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1900. There were eight African American residents in 1880 and twelve in 1900.

<sup>13</sup> Hudson and den Boer, *Bare Branches*.

<sup>14</sup> See Table 1.

## POSTWAR SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

Social stratification existed in the Harts Creek community prior to 1865; thus, the regional timber boom of the 1870s and 1880s did not disrupt a preindustrial egalitarian society and cause the Lincoln County Feud. Land records for the 1870-1889 period indicate four social classes: large landowners (those who possessed 500 acres or more), moderate landowners (those who possessed 201 to 499 acres), small landowners (those who possessed 200 acres to one acre), and the landless.<sup>15</sup> A large number of Harts Creek residents did not own land. Between 1870 and 1889, as many as 65 percent and as little as 54 percent of the community's adult males were landless.<sup>16</sup>

Postwar elites are best identified through land ownership.<sup>17</sup> In 1870, Burbus C. Toney, former Green Shoal postmaster, was the community's largest landowner with 1635 acres. Abner Vance, father-in-law to Cain Adkins, owned 742 acres, ranking fourth among landowners. Admiral S. Fry, uncle to Boney Lucas, owned 532 acres. Dicy Adams, mother to Ben Adams, owned 270 acres, making her the most property-rich woman in the community. Paris Brumfield owned a paltry ten acres.<sup>18</sup> As of 1880, Paris Brumfield and his wife Ann—who by then owned more than 1500 acres—had replaced earlier landed elites as the community's primary resident property owners. Admiral S. Fry, the community's largest resident individual landowner, claimed 785 acres. Other notable landowners were Jake Adkins, brother-in-law to Paris, who owned (jointly) more than 1000 acres; Valeria Nester, sister to Paris Brumfield, who owned (jointly) more than 400 acres; Ben Walker, a conciliator in the feud, who owned 400 acres; and Bill Fowler,

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<sup>15</sup> See Table 5.

<sup>16</sup> See Table 3.

<sup>17</sup> Rasmussen, *Absentee Landowning and Exploitation in West Virginia*, 14.

<sup>18</sup> See Appendix 5.

cousin to Ann Brumfield, who owned 365 acres. Of interest, Cain Adkins owned 40 acres, placing him low among landowners. Peter Martin, a local African-American, owned 82 acres. James Williamson, who owned four acres, ranked at the bottom among the landed class.<sup>19</sup>

Stratification based on land ownership was a way of life. Between 1870 and 1889, less than half of adult male residents of the Harts Creek community owned land. In 1870, 46 percent of resident adult males owned property.<sup>20</sup> Most of the large landowners at that time lived in the backcountry near the Wayne County line. Their acreage, which varied from 500 to 836, dwarfed that of their neighbors, most of whom owned 200 acres or less.<sup>21</sup> In 1880, 35 percent of adult males owned property. By then, most of the largest property owners in the community resided in the Guyandotte River section.<sup>22</sup> During the 1880s, the number of large landowners (451+ acres) decreased substantially and the number of property owners whose acreage totaled 200 or less doubled. Those who owned fifty acres or less actually quadrupled between 1880 and 1889.<sup>23</sup> Other general trends between 1870 and 1889 are: a significant decrease in the number of non-resident landowners but an increase in the amount of land claimed by non-resident landowners; an increase in the number of female and African-American property owners; and a generally decreasing number of unsettled estates.<sup>24</sup>

Political office holders, as persons of power and prestige, are also important to note. Between September 1867 and April 1869, the following Harts Creek men held

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<sup>19</sup> See Appendix 6.

<sup>20</sup> See Table 3.

<sup>21</sup> See Table 5 and Appendix 5.

<sup>22</sup> See Table 3 and Appendix 6.

<sup>23</sup> See Table 5 and Appendix 7.

<sup>24</sup> See Table 3, Appendix 5, Appendix 6, and Appendix 7.

TABLE 5  
*Property Size: Harts Creek Community, 1870-1889*

Property Size (acres)	1870 (Number of Owners)	1880 (Number of Owners)	1889 (Number of Owners)
1-50	25	20	84
51-100	33	43	66
101-150	17	15	38
151-200	14	12	22
201-250	20	20	15
251-300	7	7	14
301-350	3	5	10
351-400	12	7	3
401-450	2	1	5
451-500	12	5	2
501-550	3	0	0
551-600	4	2	0
601-650	3	1	1
651-700	2	4	0
701-750	3	1	0
751+	16	12	8

*Sources:* Land Book (1870-1878), Lincoln County Clerk's Office, Hamlin, WV; Land Book (1879-1885), Lincoln County Clerk's Office, Hamlin, WV; Land Book (1886-1891), Lincoln County Clerk's Office, Hamlin, WV; Land Book (1866-1872), Logan County Clerk's Office, Logan, WV; Land Book (1880-1886), Logan County Clerk's Office, Logan, WV; Land Book (1887-1892), Logan County Clerk's Office, Logan, WV.

political office in Logan County: Christian T. Fry (road supervisor), Jeremiah Lambert (road supervisor), Andrew D. Robinson (constable, road supervisor), Mathias Elkins (road supervisor), Patton Thompson (road supervisor), John W. Vance (road supervisor), Baptist Fry (road surveyor), Robert Thompson (road surveyor), John Gore (justice of the peace), John McCloud (overseer of the poor), Floyd S. Gore (road supervisor), and Lewis Vance (road supervisor).<sup>25</sup> The original Harts Creek Township officers in Lincoln County (1869) were Burbus C. Toney (supervisor), Jeremiah Lambert (justice of the peace), Jesse

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<sup>25</sup> Commissioners Record Book (1866-1874), 42, 48-49, 104-105, 110, 130, 138, Logan County Clerk's Office, Logan, WV.

Gartin (constable), Andrew D. Robinson (clerk), Adam Lambert (school commissioner), William Lucas (school commissioner), and Lewis Queen (school commissioner).<sup>26</sup>

From its beginnings, the Harts Creek community was a place of social stratification. It was never egalitarian. A postwar intrusion of rural industrial capitalism did not create stratification, disrupt an egalitarian way of life, or cause the Lincoln County Feud.

## ISOLATION

During the postwar period, the Harts Creek community became less isolated from and more incorporated into the larger world. With Lincoln County's creation in 1867, Hamlin—seat of government for the new county—became a late quiescent local center for Harts Creek, most of which was contained within Lincoln.<sup>27</sup> In the mid-1880s, Hamlin contained thirty dwellings, six resident attorneys, five general mercantile establishments, three resident physicians, two millinery stores, two hotels, a grocery store, saddle bag and harness establishment, graded school, flouring mill, saw mill, printing office for the *Lincoln Clipper* newspaper, courthouse, post office, church building, jail, resident surveyor, and a Masonic lodge.<sup>28</sup>

During the late 1860s and 1870s, Green Shoal continued its role as the Harts Creek community's proto-urban center. On 9 July 1866, Green Shoal Post Office, mastered by pioneer settler Burbus C. Toney, was discontinued, (note) leaving the nearest

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<sup>26</sup> Hardesty, *Hardesty's Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 107.

<sup>27</sup> Pudup, in *Appalachia in the Making*, described a late quiescent center as a county seat town created late in the second half of the nineteenth century, a crossroad town somewhat peripheral to the main centers of capitalist development with a courthouse and small retail and service sectors largely serving the local population (287).

<sup>28</sup> Hardesty, *Hardesty's Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 96.

post offices at Ten Mile, some fifteen miles downriver, and Chapmanville, some eight miles away.<sup>29</sup> On 25 November 1873, Admiral S. Fry, a Confederate veteran and merchant, re-established Green Shoal Post Office, and served as postmaster.<sup>30</sup> Under Fry's guidance, Green Shoal prospered. Ward Fry, son of Admiral, provided this memory:

When I was a boy, people gathered for a week's religious meetings. My father would keep from forty to fifty people. They held meetings in the summer or in the early fall. The people came on horseback from all directions. The meeting was at the Green Shoal Schoolhouse. This was an old log building. Before it stood three or four beech trees. Preaching was under these trees. This school was about one fourth mile above our residence.<sup>31</sup>

On 13 November 1878, Kelly Steele, a Confederate veteran, became postmaster at Green Shoal. The post office was discontinued on 17 November 1879.<sup>32</sup>

Beginning in the 1870s, Hart, a proto-urban center located at the mouth of Big Harts Creek, competed with Green Shoal as the community's preeminent social and political center. On 3 November 1870, Henry S. Godby, a peg-legged Confederate veteran, established a post office there called "Hearts Creek."<sup>33</sup> At that time, Godby also operated a store called "Foster and Godby" in partnership with John M. Foster, a resident of Chapmanville and a liquor retailer.<sup>34</sup> Discontinued on 20 November 1872, Hearts Creek P.O. was reorganized as "Hart's Creek" by Bill Fowler in 1876. On 2 March 1877,

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<sup>29</sup> Postmaster Appointments for Green Shoal Post Office in Lincoln County, WV, U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC; *List of Post Offices in the United States* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1868).

<sup>30</sup> Postmaster Appointments for Green Shoal Post Office in Lincoln County, WV.

<sup>31</sup> Lambert, *The Llorac*, 53.

<sup>32</sup> Postmaster Appointments for Green Shoal Post Office in Lincoln County, WV.

<sup>33</sup> Postmaster Appointments for Hearts Creek Post Office in Lincoln County, WV, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

<sup>34</sup> Chancery Orders A (1868-1882), 69, Logan County Circuit Clerk's Office, Logan, WV; Commissioners Record Book (1866-1874), 146, Logan County Clerk's Office, Logan, WV.

Fowler became postmaster.<sup>35</sup> At that time, the community consisted of a Baptist and a Methodist church congregation, a free school, a gristmill, two physicians, two general stores, and a clergyman.<sup>36</sup> On 2 December 1880, Hart's Creek P.O. was discontinued. All local mail service thereafter was provided by Fourteen Post Office, which had been established on Fourteen Mile Creek by Albert M. Adkins, on 10 January 1877.<sup>37</sup> On 6 July 1881, Andrew D. Robinson, a Confederate veteran, re-established the old Hart's Creek P.O. as Hart Post Office.<sup>38</sup> Mail was received weekly.<sup>39</sup> In 1882-83, the population of Hart (town) was fifty; it contained two general stores, two blacksmith shops, and one distillery.<sup>40</sup> Coinciding with the growth of Hart proper, there was also significant growth on Harts Creek, particularly at its headwaters. On 17 June 1884, Andrew D. Robinson established Warren Post Office five miles up Harts Creek near the mouth of Smokehouse Fork. Warren, initially petitioned to be named "Robinson," contained two general stores, two blacksmiths, two distillers, a physician, and a mason.<sup>41</sup>

By the early 1880s, Hart was a small timber boom town situated on the Guyandotte River, approximately 46 miles upriver from Huntington, a significant railroad

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<sup>35</sup> Postmaster Appointments for Hart's Creek Post Office in Lincoln County, WV, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

<sup>36</sup> *Polk's West Virginia State Gazetteer and Business Directory* (Detroit: R.L. Polk and Company, 1877).

<sup>37</sup> Postmaster Appointments for Fourteen Post Office in Lincoln County, WV, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

<sup>38</sup> Postmaster Appointments for Hart Post Office in Lincoln County, WV, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC; Postmaster Appointments for Warren Post Office in Lincoln County, WV, U.S. National Archives & Records Administration, Washington, DC.

<sup>39</sup> "History of the Nigger Hill Community," Fred B. Lambert Papers, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV. Prior to the Civil War, mail was carried on horseback weekly between Barboursville or Nigger Hill (later Ousley's Gap) and Logan Court House.

<sup>40</sup> *Polk's West Virginia State Gazetteer and Business Directory* (1882-1883).

<sup>41</sup> Postmaster Appointments for Hart Post Office in Lincoln County, WV; Postmaster Appointments for Warren Post Office in Lincoln County, WV; *Polk's West Virginia State Gazetteer and Business Directory* (1884).



and industrial city on the Ohio River, some 30 miles away from the county seat of Hamlin, and 24 miles downriver from Aracoma, a well-known fur-trading spot inhabited by some 200 to 400 residents. Aracoma, the closest town of any size, consisted of a half-dozen stores, two hotels, two sawmills, a primary school, and the only church building in Logan County.<sup>42</sup> Because the region was more integrated to the outside world than ever before, the notion that feuding occurred in the community due to its isolation seems unlikely.

## POSTWAR ECONOMICS

The timber industry's expansion in the postwar era improved river-based commerce, spurred a railroad initiative, stimulated the evolution and advancement of towns or "centers," and increased occupational diversity.<sup>43</sup> For young landowners who were concerned with shrinking acreage and an opportunity to own farms of great/necessary size, merchant capitalism offered a solution (barring outmigration or smaller family size).

Following the Civil War, most Harts Creek residents maintained traditional occupations (farming/housekeeping), but a growing number enjoyed more occupational diversity. In the 1870 Lincoln County Census, only four Harts Creek men identified themselves as non-farmers—two were merchants and two were teachers. All four non-farmers were migrants to the community.<sup>44</sup> In 1880, census records indicate a little more

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<sup>42</sup> *Polk's West Virginia State Gazetteer and Business Directory* (1877); *Polk's West Virginia State Gazetteer and Business Directory* (1882-1883); *Ironton (OH) Register*, 31 October 1889.

<sup>43</sup> Rasmussen, in *Absentee Landowning and Exploitation in West Virginia*, described this era using the term "merchant capitalism" (10).

<sup>44</sup> U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1870; U.S. Census for Logan County, WV, 1870.

occupational diversity: four midwives, two store clerks, two physicians, two weavers, one carpenter, one painter, one who “works in timber,” one spinner, one who works “at home,” and one with an illegible occupation.<sup>45</sup>

Timbering, which had been underway since at least the 1840s, continued to serve as the community’s primary industry. As recent as the 1870s, virgin timber remained prevalent on property located near the Guyandotte River; residents still cleared land and established homesteads. One Adkins descendant recalled of his great-grandfather, Burl Adkins, who relocated from Wayne County to near the mouth of Harts Creek about 1870:

When Burl first came in here the bottom was filled with big timber. They cut rings around trees and plowed around them the first year. They died and were cut using a broad axe. They used the dead wood for firewood. Could hew a log in about a day. The second year, they’d go back and use a root cutter to cut the stump out.<sup>46</sup>

During the 1870s, Harts Creek and much of the valley was swept up in a timber boom. Perhaps illustrating the way in which pre-war and post-war timbering differed, Fred Lambert, the premier regional historian of his era, noted in the 1920s how timbering began in the valley during the 1870s.<sup>47</sup> At this time, loggers mostly engaged in what historian Ronald D. Eller has termed “selective cutting” and “limited logging practices.”<sup>48</sup> Men also floated timber down the Guyandotte River to its mouth and sold it for profit.<sup>49</sup> “In 1872, floating began on the Guyandot and Mud rivers,” according to *West*

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<sup>45</sup> U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1880; U.S. Census for Logan County, WV, 1880.

<sup>46</sup> Johnny Golden Adkins, interview by author, Harts, WV, 24 June 2011.

<sup>47</sup> Lambert, *The Llorrac*.

<sup>48</sup> Eller, *Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers*, 92.

<sup>49</sup> For specifics on the rafting process, see Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 58-59; “Colorful Logging and Pushboating: Cops Describe Guyan, Sandy Experiences,” *Huntington (WV) Herald*, 27 August 1939. For reminiscences by former loggers, see T.C. Whited, interview by Fred B. Lambert, Logan, WV, n.d., Fred B. Lambert Papers, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV, and Bob Fuller, interview by Fred B. Lambert, n.d., Guyandotte, WV, Fred B. Lambert Papers, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV.

*Virginia Geological Survey* (1913). “The first men to engage in this industry were Blankenship and Hoback, who bought poplar timber near the Guyandot and Mud rivers. Prichard & Lewis, the largest floaters on the Guyandot, built dams on many of the tributaries of that river and splashed out the logs to the main stream. They operated from 1885 to 1895.”<sup>50</sup> Men also rafted timber and rode it downstream to market. “An immense amount of rafted timber is and has been passing down the river during the late rise,” reported the *Huntington Argus* in 1882.<sup>51</sup>

After the war, boosters made an effort to develop a railroad in the Guyandotte Valley, largely to tap rich coal deposits. In July 1868, the West Virginia legislature passed an act to incorporate the Guyandotte Valley Railroad Company. The railroad was slated to begin at Barboursville and proceed up the Guyandotte River to the Falls and on to Chapmanville, Logan Court House, and Wyoming Court House. The act was amended in 1870 to extend to the mouth of the Greenbrier River in Monroe County.<sup>52</sup> The company formed at Barboursville in 1873 with plans to construct a railroad in the bottoms adjacent to the river from Huntington to Logan County, as well as lateral branches along Fourteen Mile Creek and Little Ugly Creek, among others.<sup>53</sup> Local newspapers encouraged the project by touting the existence of coal deposits in the region.<sup>54</sup>

River commerce intensified in the postwar period, primarily through use of pushboats.<sup>55</sup> Generally pushboats were piloted by crews of powerful men who used poles

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<sup>50</sup> Krebs and Teets, Jr. *West Virginia Geological Survey*, 421.

<sup>51</sup> “Barboursville Items,” *Huntington (WV) Argus*, 25 May 1882.

<sup>52</sup> *Acts of the Legislature of West Virginia* (Wheeling, WV: John Frew, Public Printer, 1868).

<sup>53</sup> Deed Book 19, Cabell County Clerk’s Office, Huntington, WV.

<sup>54</sup> “Guyandotte River,” *Democratic Banner*, 9 April 1874. Summers, in *The Mountain State*, referenced the existence of coal deposits in the Harts Creek region, one vein eleven-feet thick (175).

<sup>55</sup> Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 57; Krebs and Teets, *West Virginia Geological Survey*, 13.

to move the boats; sometimes, however, steamboats towed them.<sup>56</sup> “A large amount of goods for the counties of Lincoln, Logan and Boone have been shipped in ‘pushboats,’ up the Guyan river,” one newspaper reported in 1874.<sup>57</sup> That same year, Arthur L. Cox of Barboursville noted that about \$400,000 worth of farm and forest produce floated out of the river each year and about 300 tons of merchandise were shipped upriver in push boats from the town of Guyandotte.<sup>58</sup> Cox recommended that Congress fund construction of fifteen locks and dams on the river for barge navigation. Congress ignored Cox’s call for locks and dams, citing high costs, although the river was cleared between 1878 and 1883 to facilitate log-rafting and push boat navigation as far as forty miles above Aracoma.<sup>59</sup>

When the Lincoln County Feud began in the early 1880s, timbering had been a part of life for local residents since before the Civil War. Timber did not “arrive” in the community after the war; it did not trigger the feud.

## POSTWAR CRIME

Between 1865 and 1869, Logan County, which included the Harts Creek community, experienced considerable disruption. First, Logan Countians did not readily accept their inclusion into the State of West Virginia. Many Confederates returned from the war with their weapons and refused to pay taxes to the state or county, and threatened to resist any efforts to collect them. As late as 1868, only a few hundred dollars had been collected in a small portion of the county.<sup>60</sup> Second, prewar regional leaders, who were

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<sup>56</sup> Gunter, *Barboursville*, 21.

<sup>57</sup> *Democratic Banner* (Guyandotte, WV), 7 May 1874.

<sup>58</sup> Johnson, *Men, Mountains and Rivers*, 117. Guyandotte (town), now a part of Huntington, should not be confused with the Guyandotte River.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> Sixth Annual Message of Governor Boreman, of West Virginia, “Bands of Armed Rebels Continue to Defy State’s Authority,” 21 January 1868, 3-5.

universally Confederate during the war, were barred from holding public office after the war; this created a power vacuum, contributed to a rebellious spirit among leaders and citizens alike, and fostered a weak political structure. Third, regional Confederate leaders, particularly William “Rebel Bill” Smith, disrupted ordinary functions of law agencies, often usurping their power. In November of 1866, Governor Arthur I. Boreman issued rewards for Smith, who he said had “led a band of armed rebels in the counties of Wayne and Logan” and who is guilty of “murdering, robbing and plundering the people of that region.” Unfortunately, Boreman discovered, “the civil officers had not force sufficient to arrest him, and he was regarded as such a desperado that others would not undertake it, even for the reward offered, and this proved unavailing.”<sup>61</sup> During the summer of 1867, federal troops were sent to Logan and Wayne counties, remaining until the spring of 1869.<sup>62</sup> In June of 1868, the Ku Klux Klan prevented a funeral for Elijah Gartin, late resident of Little Harts Creek. “About 25 Ku-Kluxes came on the ground,” the *Wheeling Intelligencer* reported on June 9, “armed with revolvers and other weapons, swearing that if any damned Radical should come on the ground he would not be permitted to leave alive.”<sup>63</sup> Fourth, physical structures necessary for county functions had been destroyed since 1862. As late as August 1869, Logan County lacked a courthouse;<sup>64</sup> a bit earlier, by September 1868, a jail had been rebuilt.<sup>65</sup> In March of 1869, the county commission resolved to “make a claim against the U.S. for using the courthouse for barracks” during the late war.<sup>66</sup> Election breakdowns also typified the era: on 23 November 1869, the

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<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> James M. Prichard, “A Lingered War Zone: Post Civil War Violence in Northeastern Kentucky,” Filson Institute Fall Conference, 23-25 October 2014, 3.

<sup>63</sup> *Wheeling Intelligencer*, 9 June 1868.

<sup>64</sup> Commissioners Record Book (1866-1874), 177, Logan County Clerk’s Office, Logan, WV.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 130.

county commission reported that only two polls were properly certified at the last election.<sup>67</sup>

Remarkably, agents of county justice functioned and the Harts Creek area did not suffer a high rate of violent crime. From September 1865 until October 1869, the Logan County court hosted 446 criminal cases. Of the 446 cases, 158 (or 35 percent), were due to matters of debt; 42 (9.4 percent) were for assault and battery; 26 were for assumpsit/breach of contract (5.8 percent); 16 were for appeal (3.6 percent), 16 were for trespass (3.6 percent); 15 were “in chancery” (3.4 percent); 14 were for lewdness (3.1 percent); 14 were for *scire facias* (3.1 percent); 10 were “upon a forfeited forthcoming bond” (2.2 percent); 8 were for felony (1.8 percent); 8 were for notice (1.8 percent); 7 were for adultery (1.6 percent); 7 were for detinue (1.6 percent); and 7 were for divorce (1.6 percent). Of the 446 cases, only two were murder cases.<sup>68</sup>

Based on available records, postwar crime within the Harts Creek community seems minimal. Circuit clerk records for 1865 to 1869 reveal a total of 74 Harts area crimes for the period of 1865 to 1869. This number represented 17 percent of the total for the county. Debt represented the most common cause for trial; 43 cases were suits related to debts, often accrued before the war. Seven cases were made due to “a forfeited forthcoming bond.”<sup>69</sup> Some of the more interesting Harts Creek cases include suits against Allen Adkins (lewd and lascivious cohabitation), James Browning (larceny),

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<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 191.

<sup>68</sup> Law Orders Book A (1868-1875), Logan County Circuit Clerk’s Office, Logan, WV; Chancery Orders A (1868-1882), Logan County Circuit Clerk’s Office, Logan County, WV. The following constitute the more interesting Harts Creek cases: Allen Adkins (lewd and lascivious cohabitation), James Browning (larceny), Josiah Browning (grand larceny and assault with intent to kill), Anthelia Elkins (attempted larceny), Floyd S. Gore (grand larceny), George Hensley (assault and battery), and Rebecca Smith (lewd and lascivious cohabitation).

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

Josiah Browning (grand larceny and assault with intent to kill), Anthelia Elkins (attempted larceny), Floyd S. Gore (grand larceny), George Hensley (assault and battery), and Rebecca Smith (lewd and lascivious cohabitation).

During the postwar period, no Lincoln County feudists were accused of serious crime. In fact, many future feudists were closely aligned to law officers. Jeremiah Lambert, a resident of the Bend of the River, below Harts Creek, served as justice of the peace as early as 1870 and as late as 1884.<sup>70</sup> Available historical records identify Isaac G. Gartin, brother-in-law to Paris Brumfield, as a justice of the peace in Harts Creek District for four years. Likewise, Andrew D. Robinson, a brother-in-law to Ben Adams and Henderson Dingess, served as a justice in the district. In 1883-1884, Aaron Adkins, Jr., brother-in-law to Paris Brumfield, was a constable, while Patton Thompson was deputy sheriff.<sup>71</sup> In 1889, at the height of the feud, the *Wheeling Intelligencer* described feudists as “generally law-abiding,” whereas the *Anaconda Standard* of Anaconda, Montana, described them as “notorious law-breakers... whose chief occupation is the manufacture of moonshine whisky and fighting.”<sup>72</sup>

Based on available records, postwar Harts Creek was not a place where violent crimes occurred. The Lincoln County Feud did not occur in a community where violence was the norm. Additionally, most future feudists were leading citizens of the community, persons who ordinarily did not break the law.

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<sup>70</sup> Solomon Adams to Harvey S. Dingess, deed of sale, 18 November 1870, Deed Book 218, p. 179, Logan County Clerk’s Office, Logan, WV; Commissioner’s Record of Destroyed Title Papers Book 2, 5, Lincoln County Clerk’s Office, Hamlin, WV; Hardesty, *Hardesty’s Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 137.

<sup>71</sup> Hardesty, *Hardesty’s Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 107, 135, 137-138.

<sup>72</sup> “The Truth,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 3 November 1889; “Let ‘Em Go It,” *Anaconda (MT) Standard*, 31 October 1889.

## POSTWAR RELIGION AND EDUCATION

Because many writers attribute feuds to a lack of churches or schools, it is necessary to revisit their history in the Harts Creek community prior to the outbreak of the Lincoln County Feud.<sup>73</sup> During the Civil War, church activity was disrupted; most churches failed to meet or keep records. The Zion Association of United Baptists (UB), for instance, did not meet regularly during the war, while the Methodist Church, which had existed locally since the 1820s, disappeared entirely.<sup>74</sup> Dr. Caleb Headley, a Wetzel County Methodist who settled locally in 1866 “united with the Christian Church” because he found no Methodist church in Lincoln County.<sup>75</sup> Soon however, the community enjoyed an increase in churches and church activity, a trend that continued through the feud era.<sup>76</sup> By the late 1880s, local congregations met in schoolhouses or in peoples’ homes. Church meetings were popular events. One 1889 gathering offered “preaching at the school house” where “a very large congregation” assembled and “the best of order was kept throughout the entire service.”<sup>77</sup>

Postwar United Baptist growth in the Guyandotte-Twelve Pole-Tug region was noteworthy. Due to increased membership in those areas, the Zion Association created the more local Bethlehem Association in September of 1871. The Bethlehem Association initially consisted of sixteen churches.<sup>78</sup> Kiah’s Creek UB Church, established much earlier in 1848, and Cove Gap UB Church, established in 1872, were association churches initially

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<sup>73</sup> Theron C. Crawford, in *An American Vendetta* (10), is one of many who link feuds to a lack of churches.

<sup>74</sup> Sparks, “Minutes of the Old Zion Association of United Baptists, of Eastern Kentucky and Western West Virginia, 1848-1880.”

<sup>75</sup> Hardesty, *Hardesty’s Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 135.

<sup>76</sup> See Table 6.

<sup>77</sup> “Cove Gap, W.Va.,” *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 10 April 1889.

<sup>78</sup> *Bethlehem Association of United Baptist Churches*, 1, 4.



TABLE 6  
*Bethlehem Association of United Baptist Churches, 1872-1897*

Year	Number of Churches
1872-1873	16
1874	15
1875-1876	17
1877	18
1878-1879	21
1880	18
1881-1882	19
1883	22
1884-1885	14
1886-1887	15
1888	16
1889	18
1890-1891	21
1892	22
1893	25
1894-1895	29
1896	35
1897	29

*Source: Bethlehem Association of United Baptist Churches: Keeping Memories Alive* (no publisher, no date), 4.

located closest to the Harts Creek community. In 1876, Kiah’s Creek hosted the annual association meeting.<sup>79</sup> Gilbert Moore, a United Baptist preacher and resident of Cove Gap, served as moderator of the annual meeting in 1881.<sup>80</sup> In 1882, Mt. Era United Baptist Church organized on Buck Fork of Harts Creek; it was a member of the Bethlehem Association.<sup>81</sup>

Between 1873 and 1890, Van Prince of Upper Hart, Josephus Workman (Methodist Episcopal, South) of Guyandotte River, Cain Adkins (United Baptist) of West Fork, and

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<sup>79</sup> *Bethlehem Association of United Baptist Churches*, 4.

<sup>80</sup> Hardesty, *Hardesty’s Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 235; Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 53; *Bethlehem Association of United Baptist Churches*, 4, 22.

<sup>81</sup> Louise Workman, interview by author, Whirlwind, WV, November 2016.

Isaac Fry (United Baptist, later Church of Jesus Christ) were the primary preachers operating in the community.<sup>82</sup> Between 1873 and 1890, in the Logan County section of the community, Van Prince performed 58 marriage ceremonies; Josephus Workman performed 43; Cain Adkins performed 38; Isaac Fry, 8; and James Queen, 5. During this same period, nonresidents Philip Hager and Dyke Garrett also married a small number of local couples.<sup>83</sup> In one 1877 business directory, Josephus Workman was listed as the community's only clergyman.<sup>84</sup> Andrew Elkins, a Baptist preacher and resident of Fourteen, near Hart, was also active during this period. "Andy Elkins preached on Fourteen, Little Hart and Cove on the waters of Cove Creek, which flows into Twelve Pole and heads against Fourteen," said one old-timer. "He was a good man, but not an able preacher."<sup>85</sup>

Following the Civil War, residents of the Harts Creek community gradually improved their educational lot. Recalling an early school at the mouth of West Fork, local historian Kile Topping had this to say:

The first school in Harts Creek District supported by public donation was located at the mouth of West Fork of Big Hart. The school started in 1865 in an old hunter's cabin. This section was a wilderness. There wasn't very much cleared land. Trees grew all around the house. The teacher had to take guns with him to school because there were wild animals in the woods. The children were in danger of being lost going to and from the school house. There was scarcely a path through the woods to the house. The West Fork school, as it was called, had only about four or five patrons to send children to school. There were only about ten pupils. Parents who were giving instructions to their children under a private tutor

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<sup>82</sup> Albert and Taylor, *Logan County, Virginia Marriage Records 1853-1860 and 1850 Census*. Isaac Fry was married to Paris Brumfield's niece, Susan Nester. His denomination as a United Baptist is provided by the Pilgrims Rest United Baptist Church record book (1907), which is kept at Mountaineer Missionary Baptist Church at Harts Creek, WV. His obituary, taken from the *Lincoln Monitor* of Hamlin, WV (11 June 1914), identifies him as a deacon in the Church of Jesus Christ.

<sup>83</sup> Marriages-Births-Deaths (1872-1892), 26-64, Logan County Clerk's Office, Logan, WV; Hardesty, *Hardesty's Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 136. John Lucas, a popular antebellum preacher, continued to marry locals as late as 1867 (137). In 1877 and 1879, Isaac Fry married Nester men to their wives in the Lincoln County section of the community (136).

<sup>84</sup> *Polk's West Virginia State Gazetteer and Business Directory* (1877).

<sup>85</sup> Fred B. Lambert Papers, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV. Andrew Elkins is my great-great-great-great-grandfather.

in the home were not asked to send their children to this school. On the day school opened, the boys had to cut the briars that had grown through the old rotten board roof and into the house. The building was about ten by twelve feet, and was made of logs. The logs were wide apart and they were able to see the squirrels as they ran up and down the trees just outside of the house. The floor was of dirt, and the children sometimes bruised their toes on the briars. After a while, the ground became as dry and hard as brick. The seats were made by the teacher and pupils from saplings cut into two pieces. One end extended into the crack of the wall, and the long end furnished a seat for two. All the pupils studied out loud and the teacher had a big switch for the ones who would not do so. Old Elijah Adkins was the teacher. After about an hour, he would say, "Now boys, let us rest and have a song." Sometimes he would tell stories about the people traveling over the mountains on foot from Virginia. He had one story for which he had a particular liking. It was "How I stole sugar and cream when I was a boy." The children liked to hear it, and they would crowd around and look up into his face. The school term lasted three months and the teacher received about a dollar a day for his services.<sup>86</sup>

Following the Civil War, local schools faced several significant hurdles. West Virginia's requirement that ex-Confederates not serve as teachers caused problems. "It is impossible to get many of the districts to conform to the law in its present form, as the trustees are not educated," reported Logan County Superintendent M. Hinchman in 1866. "It is impossible to supply their places with loyal men, and if we could we have as many uneducated rebels as there are of the loyal stock."<sup>87</sup> In nearby Wayne County, Superintendent Burwell Newman echoed: "Some of the townships are so completely disloyal that officers and teachers cannot be found."<sup>88</sup> In 1867, Logan County Superintendent U. Hinchman offered this: "It is difficult to get teachers for so many schools. The law is in the way of disloyal men's teaching, thus it makes it hard to find

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<sup>86</sup> Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 8. A story by Tommy Galloway titled "Topping Is 79-Year-Old Lincoln County Historian" printed in the *Lincoln Journal* (Hamlin, WV) on 15 October 1975 features a nearly identical quote.

<sup>87</sup> "Reports from County Superintendents," *Third Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Free Schools of the State of West Virginia* (Wheeling, WV: John Frew, Public Printer, 1867), 31.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

teachers.”<sup>89</sup> Lincoln County’s first report came in 1868. Superintendent George Boster stated:

Our county and township lines have been changed so often that a satisfactory report from this county cannot be expected. During my visits to the schools, I found the teachers faithful, and the pupils progressive. Irregular attendance is a great drawback. Parents are very careless, and work much injury, in this respect, to their children.<sup>90</sup>

The 1870s afforded little educational progress in the Harts Creek community. In 1870, Lincoln County superintendent James Alford reported:

Hart’s Creek Township has never had a fair opportunity to place her schools in good condition. A portion of this township formerly belonged to Logan county, and a portion to Wayne county, and school affairs became considerably confused in making this township. But the citizens are manifesting great interest in their schools, and will no doubt, at no distant day, have their schools in full operation, and, with the assistance of competent teachers, make great improvement in the youth of the township.<sup>91</sup>

The following year, Superintendent J.W. Holt complemented the district for constructing two schoolhouses. “The buildings are of logs, but are really neatly and substantially gotten up, and reflect credit upon the contractors and the township. This township is exhibiting a very commendable spirit upon the subject of education, and in the course of another year will have her school affairs in good working order.”<sup>92</sup> Toward the end of the decade, Superintendent Marion Vickers said:

There is great irregularity in the attendance of our children. Is not this non-attendance too large for an enlightened community? How can the children of our country receive the many benefits of our school system, unless they are sent to school. Should not the parents consider that they are depriving their children of that which will be of more benefit to them than anything else within their power to give? While passing around and seeing so many naturally intelligent youths

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<sup>89</sup> “Reports from County Superintendents,” *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Free Schools of the State of West Virginia for the year 1867* (Wheeling, WV: John Frew, Public Printer, 1868), 78.

<sup>90</sup> “Reports from County Superintendents,” *Fifth Annual Report of the General Superintendent of Public Schools of the State of West Virginia for the Year 1868* (Wheeling, WV: John Frew, Public Printer, 1868), 84-85.

<sup>91</sup> *West Virginia Educational Directory* (1870).

<sup>92</sup> *West Virginia Educational Directory* (1871), 107.

growing up in ignorance, with almost every possible opportunity offered for improvement, I am almost ready to say: "Give us a compulsory system of education."<sup>93</sup>

At Upper Hart, Bulwark School was established in 1880.<sup>94</sup>

During the 1880s, Harts Creek residents made strides in education. In 1880, only fifteen children had attended school within the year. The fathers of these "educated" children were: Cain Adkins, Jake Adkins (census enumerator and brother-in-law to Paris Brumfield), Allen B. Brumfield (brother to Paris), Overton McCloud (brother-in-law to Cain Adkins), Baley McNeely, Marvel Vance, (brother-in-law to Cain Adkins), Josephus Workman, and William Workman. In 1880, the school term lasted for three months.<sup>95</sup> In 1883-1884, one Lincoln County history noted moderate facility improvement in Harts Creek District and a remarkable increase in student enrollment: "There are now ten public school houses in this district, some of which, says an informant, are in bad condition, but will soon be replaced by frames. 334 boys and girls attend school in this district."<sup>96</sup>

Some of the community's leading men served as teachers. In 1871, Dr. Caleb Headley taught school in the district.<sup>97</sup> Elias Adkins, a teacher in 1871, was one of the community's earliest settlers and a one-time slave-owner.<sup>98</sup> In 1872, Bill Fowler and Cain

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<sup>93</sup> "Reports of County Superintendents," *Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Free Schools of the State of West Virginia for the Years 1877 and 1878* (Wheeling, WV: W.J. Johnston, Public Printer, 1878), 82-83.

<sup>94</sup> Vickers, *Local History and Topography of Logan County*, n.p.

<sup>95</sup> U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1880.

<sup>96</sup> Hardesty, *Hardesty's Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 106.

<sup>97</sup> Fred B. Lambert Papers, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*; Adkins, *Land of York to Beech Fork*, 36-38; U.S. Slave Schedule for Logan County, VA, 1850; U.S. Slave Schedule for Logan County, VA, 1860. Caleb Headley is my great-great-great-grandfather.

Adkins taught school in the township.<sup>99</sup> Fowler, who was a cousin to Paris Brumfield's wife, operated a general store, served as postmaster of Hart from 1877 to 1879, and became the wealthiest merchant in the district by 1889.<sup>100</sup> Stephen Lambert, a resident of Upper Hart and justice of the peace, was a teacher in 1872 and 1877-1878.<sup>101</sup> Van Prince, a teacher in 1871 and 1872, served as the community's primary preacher and physician at Upper Hart.<sup>102</sup> T.H. Buckley, an English-born schoolteacher in 1873 and 1877-78, was also a physician and served as postmaster of Hart in 1884.<sup>103</sup> Andrew D. Robinson, a teacher in 1877-78, was postmaster at Hart from 1879 to 1883.<sup>104</sup> In 1883, George Thomas Holton was a teacher in Harts Creek District.<sup>105</sup> William R. Nester, Paris Brumfield's nephew, served as president and secretary of the district board of education during the early 1880s.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Fred B. Lambert Papers, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV. Cain Adkins also taught school in 1877-1878.

<sup>100</sup> Hardesty, *Hardesty's Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 134; *Polk's West Virginia State Gazetteer and Business Directory* (1877); *Polk's West Virginia State Gazetteer and Business Directory* (1882-1883); *Polk's West Virginia State Gazetteer and Business Directory* (1884); Postmaster Appointments for Hart's Creek Post Office in Lincoln County, WV.

<sup>101</sup> "Annual Reports of County Superintendents," *Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Free Schools of the State of West Virginia for 1872* (Charleston, WV: Henry S. Walker, Public Printer, 1872), 57; "Reports of County Superintendents," *Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Free Schools of the State of West Virginia for the Years 1877 and 1878*, 83.

<sup>102</sup> "Annual Reports of County Superintendents," *Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Free Schools of the State of West Virginia for 1872*, 53; Fred B. Lambert Papers, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV; Marriages-Births-Deaths (1872-1892), 27-60, Logan County Clerk's Office, Logan, WV; *Polk's West Virginia State Gazetteer and Business Directory* (1884).

<sup>103</sup> "Reports of County Superintendents," *Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Free Schools of the State of West Virginia for the Years 1877 and 1878*, 83; Fred B. Lambert Papers, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV; *First, Second, and Third Annual Reports of the Secretary of the State Board of Health of West Virginia* (Wheeling, WV: Charles H. Taney, State Printer, 1883), 104; Postmaster Appointments for Hart Post Office in Lincoln County, WV.

<sup>104</sup> "Reports of County Superintendents," *Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Free Schools of the State of West Virginia for the Years 1877 and 1878*, 83; *West Virginia Educational Directory* (1877-1878); Postmaster Appointments for Hart's Creek Post Office in Lincoln County, WV; Postmaster Appointments for Hart Post Office in Lincoln County, WV.

<sup>105</sup> Hardesty, *Hardesty's Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 135.

<sup>106</sup> Hardesty, *Hardesty's Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 136-137.

Postwar progress in church activity and education dispel any notion the Lincoln County Feud resulted from a lack of churches or schools.

## CONCLUSION

The creation of Lincoln County in the late 1860s divided the Harts Creek community, establishing a geopolitical borderland situated remotely from the centers of Hamlin and Aracoma and affected the ability of county officials to enforce the law. While population increased after the war, no demographic crisis contributed to a feud. The Harts Creek community remained a place where most residents were born in Virginia/West Virginia, although a small but important minority originated in Kentucky. The male-female ratio remained high in favor of males but no serious violent crime occurred between 1865 and 1881; thus a surplus male population does not appear to have contributed to the feud. Social stratification remained as before the war; no egalitarian society existed to be disrupted by a heightened postwar timber industry. The community became less isolated, so the feud did not occur in an isolated region. A more robust timber industry after the war contributed to but did not cause the feud. Most residents maintained traditional occupations, although key feudists participated in timbering and store/whisky business. While the immediate postwar period was characterized by disruption (mostly related to the war), the Harts Creek community did not suffer a high rate of violent crime. The Lincoln County Feud did not occur in a community where violence was the norm. Prior to the feud, Lincoln County feudists do not appear to have engaged in criminal activity. The Harts Creek community experienced improvement in church activity and schools, thus a lack of churches and schools did not cause the feud.

### CHAPTER THREE: PARIS BRUMFIELD:

#### “THE NOTED DESPERADO OF LINCOLN COUNTY”<sup>1</sup>

Paris Brumfield’s transformation from leading citizen to primary deviant served as the essential catalyst in commencing the Lincoln County Feud. For the first thirty years of his life, Brumfield occupied the same respectable statuses as had his elite forefathers: farmer, soldier, landowner, and politician. The Civil War, however, profoundly altered his life course. First and most importantly, the war exposed Brumfield to Lt. Col. Vincent “Clawhammer” Witcher, one of the Confederate Army’s most controversial officers, from whom he learned a corrupt leadership style, questionable methods of waging war, disrespect for the law, a belief in extra-legalism, and criminality. Additionally, the war trained Brumfield in the use of weapons, exposed him to terrible violence, taught him violent attitudes and behaviors, de-sensitized him to violence, and may have caused psychological damage. After the war, Brumfield became the community’s chief law-breaker/antagonist, initially through his aggressive and ruthless pursuit of property. By the 1880s, his rampant hedonism, alcoholism, and spousal abuse had alienated him from his family. As a logger and distiller, he caroused with other deviants, indulged in rowdy behavior, and suffered legal difficulties. A leader of the local gun culture, his name became synonymous with crime. One regional newspaper referred to him as “the noted desperado of Lincoln County.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 11 November 1891.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Paris Brumfield is my great-great-great-grandfather.



## FAMILY BACKGROUND

Paris Brumfield's ancestors represented some of the Guyandotte Valley's earliest residents and leading citizens. About 1804, William Wirt Brumfield, grandfather to Paris, along with his brother and wife, removed themselves from Montgomery County, Virginia, and settled in the vicinity of Hamilton and Ugly creeks in what was then Kanawha County, Virginia.<sup>3</sup> Upon arriving to the Guyandotte Valley, William traded his horse to a local landowner for "a considerable acreage of land" situated at the mouth of Ugly, then borrowed the horse and rode east so as to record his deed.<sup>4</sup> Brumfield soon emerged as a leader in the valley. During the War of 1812, he organized a detachment of cavalry consisting of Cabell County men and left with it for Richmond, Virginia. Attached to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Regiment of Virginia Cavalry, Brumfield's company served at Norfolk, Virginia, and at "other places on the seaboard" where it "had a hard time, as many died in a plague."<sup>5</sup>

William Wirt Brumfield's final two decades of life consisted of public service and land acquisition. In 1818, Governor James Patton Preston appointed him a "gentleman justice" in Cabell County.<sup>6</sup> Brumfield earned this selection due to his wisdom, common sense, good character, maturity, honesty, and probity.<sup>7</sup> As a member of the Cabell County

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<sup>3</sup> Miller, *Herald-Dispatch* (Huntington, WV), 8 January 1960; Doris C. Miller Papers, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University. Huntington, WV. The area settled by Brumfield became part of Cabell County in 1809, Logan County in 1824, and finally Lincoln County between 1867 and 1869.

<sup>4</sup> Miller, *Herald-Dispatch* (Huntington, WV), 8 January 1960; Doris C. Miller Papers, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University. Huntington, WV; Miller, *Boyd County Press-Observer* (Catlettsburg, KY), 22 January 1976; George Seldon Wallace, *Cabell County Annals and Families* (Richmond: Garrett & Massie, 1935), 74; Miller, *History of the Barboursville Community*.

<sup>5</sup> Wallace, *Cabell County Annals and Families*, 74.

<sup>6</sup> *Cabell County, West Virginia Heritage*, 129-130.

<sup>7</sup> Helen S. Stinson, *Greenbrier County, West Virginia Court Orders, 1780-1850* (1988).

Court, he presided over matters of common law, chancery jurisdiction, criminal jurisdiction, and police and fiscal jurisdiction.<sup>8</sup> The next year, in January of 1819, the State of Virginia granted him 75 acres along the Guyandotte River near his farm at the mouth of Ugly Creek.<sup>9</sup> In 1823, he settled at the mouth of Wolf Creek near Shoals in the Twelve Pole region of what was then Cabell County but is now Wayne County.<sup>10</sup> Brumfield continued his role as a public servant, while working as a wheat farmer.<sup>11</sup>

At the time of his death in 1833, William Wirt Brumfield was regarded as “a man of considerable substance.” In his will, asserting his belief in “the uncertainty of this mortal life,” he disposed of his estate as follows: to his six oldest children (John H. Brumfield, Henderson P. Brumfield, Allen T. Brumfield, Bostick Brumfield, Susan Hatfield, and Jourdan Brumfield), he bestowed a tract of land, a crop of wheat, a gray horse, and a wheat fan. To his two youngest daughters (Margaret Ann Brumfield and Kit Ann Brumfield), he granted a horse apiece valued at fifty dollars, a saddle apiece valued at sixteen dollars, a good bed and good bed clothes for each, and a cow and calf apiece, with instructions to “board and school the infant children from the profits of the farm and send them to such schools as may be near enough.” To his son Jourdan, he left “the grave field.” To his widow, he bequeathed all lands and perishable property until her death or remarriage—thereafter to sons, Milton and William, Jr.<sup>12</sup>

John H. Brumfield, oldest son of William Wirt and father to Paris, was born just after his parents’ arrival to the Guyandotte Valley. He spent his youth in the Ugly Creek

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<sup>8</sup> Wallace, *Cabell County Annals and Families*, 18.

<sup>9</sup> *Sims Index to Land Grants in West Virginia*.

<sup>10</sup> Miller, *Herald-Dispatch* (Huntington, WV), 8 January 1960.

<sup>11</sup> Doris C. Miller Papers, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV.

<sup>12</sup> Will Book 1, p. 141-142, Cabell County Clerk’s Office, Huntington, WV; Miller, *Boyd County Press-Observer* (Catlettsburg, KY), 22 January 1976.

section of Cabell County where he benefited from his father's status as a soldier, justice, and large landowner. On 28 July 1823, about the time of his father's re-location to Wolf Creek, John married Rachel Haskins in Lawrence County, Ohio.<sup>13</sup> In 1824, he and Rachel settled on the original Brumfield farm located at the mouth of Ugly Creek.<sup>14</sup> Brumfield's return to the Guyandotte Valley separated his family from the larger clan on Wolf Creek, although in time his kinsmen dispersed even greater distances: four of John's nine siblings went west—three settled in Missouri and one participated in the California gold rush of '49 before returning to Wayne County.<sup>15</sup> At Ugly Creek, John and his wife Rachel enjoyed fifteen children: four named after Brumfield's siblings (Margaret, William, Allen, Susan) and one for his mother.<sup>16</sup> No contemporary resident of the Harts area produced more children than Brumfield.

John H. Brumfield was a large landowner in the Harts Creek community. Beginning in the late 1820s, he secured numerous tracts of land in the vicinity of Ugly Creek. In 1829, he bought two parcels from James Smith: a seventy-acre tract and a twenty-eight-acre tract. In 1833, he bought an additional seventy-five acres from George Spears.<sup>17</sup> Between 1835 and 1855, the State of Virginia granted him ten tracts totaling nearly three thousand acres at Ugly and Fourteen Mile creeks—more than enough property to bestow upon his fifteen children, of which Paris was the ninth.<sup>18</sup> A non-

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<sup>13</sup> Marriage Index Book 1 (1817-1843), 52, Lawrence County Clerk's Office, Ironton, OH; Doris C. Miller Papers, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV.

<sup>14</sup> Hardesty, *Hardesty's Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 139; Tax List for Logan County, VA, 1827; U.S. Census for Logan County, VA, 1830.

<sup>15</sup> Miller, *Herald-Dispatch* (Huntington, WV), 8 January 1960; U.S. Census for Wayne County, VA, 1850.

<sup>16</sup> U.S. Census for Logan County, VA, 1850; U.S. Census for Logan County, VA, 1860.

<sup>17</sup> Deed Book 1 (1808-1922), Cabell County Clerk's Office, Huntington, WV.

<sup>18</sup> *Sims Index to Land Grants in West Virginia*.

slaveholding yeoman farmer and the possessor of a large amount of choice property, he qualified as “buckskin elite.” Perhaps reflective of his high standing in the community, he served as a constable in Cabell County between 1826 and 1833.<sup>19</sup> By 1850, he was the second wealthiest landowner in the community.<sup>20</sup>

John Brumfield’s life was largely shaped by agriculture, land acquisition, family, and public service, but the historical record hints at a few other influences. First, he may have had some attachment toward scholarship, as the only purchases he made from his father’s estate aside from saddle bags were three books.<sup>21</sup> Second, he was receptive to internal improvements in the Guyandotte Valley. In 1853, he sold three hundred acres of land to a capitalist from New York City who represented the Guyandotte Valley Navigation Company. The GVNC was at that time buying land in the valley so as to construct several locks and dams and thus open the river to steamboat transportation between the Ohio River and the town of Logan.<sup>22</sup> Third, he was likely a Democrat—no doubt of the Jacksonian ilk. An 1889 newspaper story referenced the Brumfields in Harts as “being all Democrats.”<sup>23</sup> Regarding the sectional questions of the day, Brumfield perhaps agreed with many in the valley who “worked, prayed, voted for the Union, but thought he owed his allegiance first to the state and then to the general government.”<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Carrie Eldridge, *Cabell County (West) Virginia Minute Book E-3, 1826-1835* (Athens, GA: Iberian Publishing Company, 1994), 9, 191.

<sup>20</sup> See Appendix 3. U.S. Census for Logan County, VA, 1850.

<sup>21</sup> Will Book 1, 185, Cabell County Clerk’s Office, Huntington, WV.

<sup>22</sup> Fred B. Lambert Papers, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV.

<sup>23</sup> “West Virginia’s Feud,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 16 November 1889.

<sup>24</sup> Thomas H. Perry, *Cabell Record* (Milton, WV), 1909/10, 14.

John Brumfield died of flux on 8 October 1854 at the age of fifty years, leaving a large estate to be divided among his children.<sup>25</sup>

## EARLY LIFE

Paris Brumfield, born about 1837, likely spent his childhood inundated with stories of his late grandfather William Wirt Brumfield: pioneer settler, hero of the War of 1812, gentleman justice, and prominent landowner.<sup>26</sup> Tales of the clan patriarch were perhaps matched by first-hand memories of his maternal grandmother Nellie (Hoover) Brumfield, the daughter of a wealthy Virginia planter and slave owner.<sup>27</sup> Additionally, the importance of his own father, one of the largest landowners in his section of the valley, would have been profound. Together, the three progenitors supplied Brumfield with a heritage of migration, land ownership, procreation, farming, civic service, and socioeconomic prominence. For Paris, formal education proved elusive. As late as 1880, he remained illiterate.<sup>28</sup> He also struggled to acquire land. In 1855, he and his brother John Brumfield sued “John [H.] Brumfield’s heirs.”<sup>29</sup>

In the late 1850s, Paris Brumfield joined the Toney-Brown-Nester family cluster. On 3 May 1858, Josephus Workman, a Methodist Episcopal (South) preacher, married

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<sup>25</sup> “Early Logan County VA/WV Death Records, 1853-1860,” <http://www.wvgenweb.org/logan/edeaths.htm> (accessed 19 January 2010).

<sup>26</sup> U.S. Census for Logan County, VA, 1850.

<sup>27</sup> “History of the Brumfield Family,” by Bostic Brumfield, Doris C. Miller Papers, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV; Miller, *Boyd County Press-Observer* (Catlettsburg, KY), 22 January 1976.

<sup>28</sup> U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1880.

<sup>29</sup> Chancery Orders Book 0 (1831-1862), 354, Cabell County Circuit Clerk’s Office, Huntington, WV.

Paris to Ann Toney in Logan County.<sup>30</sup> Ann was the daughter of James Toney, an early settler at the mouth of Harts Creek. Moses and Lettie Brown, Ann's childless maternal uncle and aunt, had raised her since childhood. The Browns lived at Browns Branch, just below the mouth of Harts Creek. Aside from Ann, the Browns had also raised Daniel "Bill" Nester, a "part-Indian," who had married Paris' older sister, Valeria.<sup>31</sup> According to family tradition, Ann's family did not approve of Paris Brumfield—perhaps due to personality issues or his lack of land ownership...<sup>32</sup> Of course, Brumfield's thirst for land may have already manifested itself through the 1855 lawsuit.

Paris and Ann Brumfield settled adjacent to the Browns and Nesters at the mouth of Browns Branch bottomland where the three families—Brown, Nester, Brumfield—maintained daily contact. During this period, Moses Brown, as well as Bill Nester, may have enjoyed paternal influence over young fatherless Paris. Paris and Ann, meanwhile, began their family; in 1860, son Allen was born, followed by Rachel in 1863. Allen was named for Paris' brother closest to him in age, while Rachel was named for his mother. As of 1860, Brumfield owned \$600 worth of real estate and \$250 worth of personal property.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Albert and Taylor, *Logan County, Virginia Marriage Records 1853-1860 and 1850 Census*, 29. The original marriage record for Paris Brumfield and Ann Toney is located at the Virginia State Archives in Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>31</sup> Mabel Nester, interview by Anna Lee Bryant Markos, Tabb, VA, 27 March 1989; Malinda Queen Webb, interview by Anna Lee Bryant Markos, Tabb, VA, 12 June 1989; Ruth Nester Renfro, letter from Anna Lee Bryant Markos, Tabb, VA, 9 July 1989; Ray Kirk, interview, n.d.; U.S. Census for Logan County, VA, 1850.

<sup>32</sup> Oris Vance, interview, 24 October 1995; Oris Vance, interview by author, Atenville, WV, 28 November 1995.

<sup>33</sup> See Appendix 4. U.S. Census for Logan County, VA, 1860; U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1870; U.S. Census for Lincoln County, 1880. Most antebellum land records for Logan County were destroyed when Union troops burned the courthouse in 1862. Consequently, the source of his \$600 in real estate is unknown.

## THE CIVIL WAR

During the Civil War, the Brumfields almost universally supported the Confederacy. Paris Brumfield, three brothers (John S., Allen B., and Evermont W.), and two brothers-in-law (Bill Nester, Irvin Lucas) served in the Confederate army. One brother (Evermont W.) initially served in a Virginia militia unit, later enlisting in the Union army; one brother-in-law (Jackson Spurlock) served in the Union army. The Brumfields were reluctant Confederates: throughout the secession crisis of early 1861, no *rage militaire* existed among their ranks.<sup>34</sup> During the spring of 1861, with secession established in Virginia, the Brumfields maintained their recalcitrance, refraining from participation in the celebratory mood and patriotic fervor that permeated many communities mobilizing for war. This absence of martial spirit is surprising; there were five sons of fighting age in the family. Finally, on 27 August 1861, at Logan Court House, Allen B. Brumfield and Evermont Ward Brumfield, as well as Bill Nester, enlisted in the 129<sup>th</sup> Virginia Militia (Carter's Company), thereafter fighting against Union soldiers at Boone Court House on 1 September 1861.<sup>35</sup>

Curiously, William Wirt Brumfield, Jr., an uncle to Paris and a resident of Ceredo in Wayne County, acted as one of the state's leading proponents of Unionism. In mid-

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<sup>34</sup> Term borrowed from James M. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 17.

<sup>35</sup> Allen B. Brumfield, Carter's Company, 129<sup>th</sup> Regiment Virginia Militia, Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from Virginia (National Archives Microfilm Publication M324E, roll 1056), War Department Collection of Confederate Records, Record Group 109, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC; Evermont Brumfield, Carter's Company, 129<sup>th</sup> Regiment Virginia Militia, Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from Virginia (National Archives Microfilm Publication M324E, roll 1056), War Department Collection of Confederate Records, Record Group 109, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC; Daniel Nester, Carter's Company, 129<sup>th</sup> Regiment Virginia Militia, Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from Virginia (National Archives Microfilm Publication M324E, roll 1056), War Department Collection of Confederate Records, Record Group 109, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

May 1861, Wirt (as he was known) was one of five delegates sent by Wayne County to the First Wheeling Convention, which met in Virginia's second largest city to support Unionism. Wayne County was the only southern county to send delegates to the First Wheeling Convention.<sup>36</sup> On 11 June 1861, less than a month after voters in Virginia approved the Ordinance of Secession, a second convention met at Wheeling. Wirt constituted one of three Wayne County delegates to this convention, which lasted until 25 June 1861. Essentially, the Second Wheeling Convention nullified Virginia's Ordinance of Secession, created the Restored Government of Virginia, and laid the groundwork for the eventual creation of the State of West Virginia.<sup>37</sup> Wirt was also Wayne County's delegate to the West Virginia Constitutional Convention, which met from November 1861 to February 1862.<sup>38</sup> Meanwhile, Wirt's brother Bostic Brumfield owned seven slaves in Wayne County; his position on secession and the Confederacy is unknown.<sup>39</sup> What effect the Wayne County "set" of Brumfields had on Paris and his clan is unclear.

The murder of William R. Brumfield, oldest brother of Paris, in the spring of 1862 at the Falls of Guyan by marauding Yankee troops stirred the Brumfields to actively participate in the war. According to printed historical sources and family tradition, William refused to allow Union soldiers to seize his horse and was promptly shot to death.<sup>40</sup> In 1862, Paris served in an unknown Confederate unit; his older brother, John S.

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<sup>36</sup> Delegates to the First Wheeling Convention.

<http://www.wvculture.org/history/statehood/delegateswc1.html> (accessed 26 October 2015).

<sup>37</sup> Delegates to the Second Wheeling Convention.

<http://www.wvculture.org/history/statehood/delegateswc2.html> (accessed 26 October 2015).

<sup>38</sup> Delegates to the Constitutional Convention.

<http://www.wvculture.org/history/statehood/delegatessc.html> (accessed 26 October 2015).

<sup>39</sup> U.S. Slave Schedule for Wayne County, VA, 1850.

<sup>40</sup> Hardesty, *Hardesty's Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 109; Perry, *Cabell Record* (Milton, WV), 16; Harold R. Smith, letter to author, Ranger, WV, 15 February 1994. The "Falls of Guyan" were roughly a mile above the present-day town of West Hamlin in Lincoln County, WV. The institution of the Confederate draft on 16 April 1862 may have also played a role.



Brumfield, enlisted in a company of Confederate cavalry and served for one year.<sup>41</sup> On 26 August 1862, Bill Nester, Paris' neighbor and brother-in-law, enlisted in Company D, 34<sup>th</sup> Battalion Virginia Cavalry at Logan Court House.<sup>42</sup> Lt. Col. Vincent "Clawhammer" Witcher, a notorious Confederate commander from Wayne County, led the 34<sup>th</sup> Battalion Virginia Cavalry. Union troops captured Nester on 6 January 1863 while he was at home on furlough and sent him to Camp Chase, Ohio.<sup>43</sup>

The capture of Bill Nester on 6 January 1863 and the creation of the State of West Virginia on 20 June 1863 served as probable catalysts for Paris Brumfield's formal enlistment in the Confederate army. On 1 August 1863, at Logan Court House, he and brother Allen B. enlisted in Company F, 45<sup>th</sup> Battalion Virginia Infantry.<sup>44</sup> At that time, the 45<sup>th</sup> Battalion, commanded by Colonel Henry A. Beckley, was part of a Confederate force ordered to check Federal troops commanded by General Ambrose E. Burnside in

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<sup>41</sup> Special Schedule of the Eleventh Census (1890), Enumerating Union Veterans and Widows of Union Veterans of the Civil War for Lincoln County, WV. John Brumfield is not listed in the *Virginia Regimental History Series Index, Volume 1 (A-D)* by Jeffrey C. Weaver (Saltville, VA: self-published, 2005). Although a Union census, the enumerator for Harts Creek District included Confederate veterans in his census. John S. Brumfield named a son born about 1863 after General Albert Gallatin Jenkins of Cabell County, (West) Virginia.

<sup>42</sup> Daniel Nester, Company D, 34<sup>th</sup> Battalion Virginia Cavalry, Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from Virginia (National Archives Microfilm Publication M324E, roll 189), War Department Collection of Confederate Records, Record Group 109, National Archives and Records Administration.

<sup>43</sup> Scott C. Cole, *34<sup>th</sup> Virginia Cavalry* (Lynchburg, Virginia: H.E. Howard, Inc., 1993), 166. For family recollections of Daniel Nester and his Civil War service, see Hardesty, *Hardesty's Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 136.

<sup>44</sup> Paris Brumfield (Broomfield), Co. F, 45<sup>th</sup> Battalion Virginia Infantry, Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from Virginia (National Archives Microfilm Publication M324E, roll 891), War Department Collection of Confederate Records, Record Group 109, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC; Allen Brumfield (Broomfield), Co. F, 45<sup>th</sup> Battalion Virginia Infantry, Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from Virginia (National Archives Microfilm Publication M324E, roll 891), War Department Collection of Confederate Records, Record Group 109, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC. McPherson, in *For Cause and Comrades*, cites revenge and hatred as common factors in initial combat motivation. Other factors include honor (public reputation) and to prove one's manhood. From a Southern perspective, men also enlisted due to their notions of liberty, concern about rights, and feelings of subjugation. Virginians wrote particularly of defending their homes against an invading enemy as combat motivation (21-25, 110, 147).

the Cumberland Gap region of East Tennessee. Presumably, the Brumfield brothers made their way to Georgia Camp in Tazewell County, Virginia, where the 45<sup>th</sup> Battalion Virginia Infantry was then stationed.<sup>45</sup>

During the fall of 1863, Evermont W. Brumfield, younger brother to Paris and formerly a soldier in the 129<sup>th</sup> Virginia Militia, enlisted in the U.S. Army. In November 1863, Evermont enlisted in Captain Harshbarger's Company of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Regiment West Virginia Volunteers (Union) at Barboursville, Cabell County. His unit later became Company G, 3<sup>rd</sup> West Virginia Cavalry. Brumfield served in numerous battles (Winchester, Piedmont, Mount Crawford, Rodes Hill, and Bunker Hill) before his discharge on 30 June 1865 at Wheeling, West Virginia. After the war, he married and settled near Hamlin, the seat of government for Lincoln County, where he served as county jailer and "class leader" at a Methodist Episcopal Church.<sup>46</sup>

The Civil War trained Paris Brumfield in the use of weapons, exposed him to terrible violence, taught him violent attitudes and behaviors, and desensitized him to violence.<sup>47</sup> His time with the 45<sup>th</sup> Battalion was characterized by spotty fighting and desertion. On 28 August 1863, the 45<sup>th</sup> Battalion occupied a vital salt works at Saltville, Virginia, then moved to camp on the Virginia-Tennessee border. In early September, the 45<sup>th</sup> may have participated in one of several skirmishes that occurred in Upper East

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<sup>45</sup> Jeffrey C. Weaver, *45<sup>th</sup> Battalion Virginia Infantry* (Lynchburg, Virginia: H.E. Howard, Inc., 1994), 38.

<sup>46</sup> Hardesty, *Hardesty's Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 107, 109. Interesting to note that he did not live among his family after the war.

<sup>47</sup> In *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008), Drew Gilpin Faust wrote: "Killing...challenged men's fundamental assumptions about the sanctity of their own and other human lives. Killing produced transformations that were not readily reversible: the living into the dead, most obviously, but the survivors into different men as well, men required to deny, to numb basic human feeling at costs they may have paid for decades after the war ended" (60).

Tennessee.<sup>48</sup> Paris and Allen were among the “several members of the battalion” who deserted in mid-September.<sup>49</sup> Unit records dated 1 April 1864 cite the Brumfield brothers as “Absent without leave since Sept 14 [1863].”<sup>50</sup> Between October and early December, a portion of the 45<sup>th</sup> Battalion patrolled Logan and Boone counties to recover deserters, recruit local men, and observe a Union force headquartered at Louisa, Kentucky.<sup>51</sup> Paris and Allen appear to have returned to the battalion during this time, remaining until March 1864. In December 1863, the 45<sup>th</sup> returned to Tazewell County, Virginia, spending January 1864 to April 1864 at Princeton, West Virginia.<sup>52</sup> Unit records dated 31 December 1864 cite the Brumfield brothers as “Absent without leave *with Witcher* since March 15, 1864.”<sup>53</sup>

Lieutenant Colonel Vincent “Clawhammer” Witcher, a Confederate commander in southwestern West Virginia, had a profound influence on Paris Brumfield, who later named a son for him. Witcher taught Brumfield how to wage a certain kind of war against enemies—a cruel, personal, destructive war that operated outside the bounds of acceptability (extra-legalism), showing a complete disregard for the law. Witcher, born in 1837, had settled in Wayne County in early 1860. Originally from Pittsylvania County,

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<sup>48</sup> Weaver, *45<sup>th</sup> Battalion Virginia Infantry*, 38.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>50</sup> Paris Brumfield (Broomfield), Compiled Service Records; Allen Brumfield (Broomfield), Compiled Service Records.

<sup>51</sup> Weaver, *45<sup>th</sup> Battalion Virginia Infantry*, 39.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 42-43.

<sup>53</sup> Paris Brumfield (Broomfield), Compiled Service Records; Allen Brumfield (Broomfield), Compiled Service Records. James M. McPherson, in *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), identifies three primary causes of desertion for Civil War soldiers: a “fight or flight” moment, dissatisfaction with regimental army life, and/or concern over the home front (97). For more on Confederate desertion, see Mark Weitz, *A Higher Duty: Desertion Among Georgia Troops during the Civil War*. Weitz suggests that desertion rates are difficult to ascertain because AWOL lists often referenced men who had gone home to farm, been captured, or joined other companies. Desertion figures for the Confederacy are particularly misleading because they might include such variables as improper conduct.

Virginia, he had “divorced” himself from there after he and his kinsmen killed three members of a neighboring family. A lawyer by trade, Witcher was an early supporter of the Confederacy. In September 1861, he organized Witcher’s Battalion, Virginia Mounted Rifles, later 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Virginia Mounted Rifles, reorganized as part of the 34<sup>th</sup> Battalion Virginia Cavalry, of which he was elected captain.<sup>54</sup>

Witcher established a reputation as a merciless Confederate partisan. Early in the struggle, while operating in the Twelve Pole region of Wayne County, his guerilla band used “the most barbarous principles of warfare.” One report accused him of murdering a Wayne County man so as to take possession of his horses. Another credited him with originating “Witcher’s Parole,” a cruel form of hanging by use of a bent pole.<sup>55</sup> In December of 1861, Confederate General John B. Floyd accused him of committing “deeds of plunder and robbery” and ordered his arrest.<sup>56</sup> General Floyd wrote of him: “V.A. Witcher collected a band of 17 or 18 men, calling themselves partisan rangers. Instead of affording protection and safety to the property of persons of loyal Southern men, this company rendered themselves an object of fear and terror to the entire population, whether Union or Secession. Their deeds of plunder and robbery fell alike on those true or untrue to the South. They came to be viewed as a set of robbers and deprecators, banded together solely for the purpose of plunder, and acting without authority of law or order.”<sup>57</sup> Witcher firmly planted his personality on the 34<sup>th</sup> Battalion

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<sup>54</sup> Jack L. Dickinson, *Wayne County, West Virginia in the Civil War* (Salem, MA: Higginson Book Company, 2003), 39.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>56</sup> Lawrence J. Fleenor, “Witcher’s Boys in Lee County during the Civil War,” 1997. <http://homepages.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~duncanrw/witchersboys.html> (accessed 25 January 2013).

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

Virginia Cavalry. Some descriptions of his battalion include “reckless and daring” and a “rather rough bunch, a fierce lot of warriors looking and hoping for trouble.”<sup>58</sup>

At the time of Paris Brumfield’s desertion to the 34<sup>th</sup> Battalion Virginia Cavalry in March 1864, some two years after Witcher’s initial indiscretions involving General John B. Floyd, Witcher was embroiled in another controversy. In early March, while ill and admitted to a hospital in Bristol, he was charged with being AWOL, conduct prejudicial to good order, and leaving his command.<sup>59</sup> At that time, the 34<sup>th</sup> Battalion Virginia Cavalry was plagued by weak morale and discipline.<sup>60</sup> According to a March 14 review, “better officers” were needed,<sup>61</sup> partly because the men “know nothing of drilling.”<sup>62</sup> The officers, according to the review, “take little control of the men” and failed to punish troops who committed “smaller offenses.”<sup>63</sup> In April, Witcher pled not guilty to the three charges against him. A military court at Bristol, Tennessee, found him guilty of the first two charges and suspended him from rank for two months (effective in June).<sup>64</sup> In March and May, Cabell County grand juries indicted Witcher and other officers for larceny and grand larceny.<sup>65</sup>

During the spring and summer of 1864, Paris Brumfield and the 34<sup>th</sup> Battalion Virginia Cavalry operated in West Virginia. In late April 1864, the battalion moved toward the Big Sandy River, passing through Bland County, Virginia. As it passed through Bland County, according to one eyewitness, they “took corn from people that

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<sup>58</sup> Cole, *34<sup>th</sup> Virginia Cavalry*, 5.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 75-76.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 77-78.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

<sup>65</sup> Dickinson, *Wayne County, West Virginia*, 41.

had not more than one bushel.”<sup>66</sup> The 34<sup>th</sup> Battalion Virginia Cavalry, this witness concluded, consisted of “the meanest men in the world.”<sup>67</sup> In May, Witcher’s force engaged Union troops along the Levisa Fork of the Big Sandy River.<sup>68</sup> While in Big Sandy country, some men of the 34<sup>th</sup> Battalion Virginia Cavalry went into Cabell and Logan counties to round up deserters.<sup>69</sup> Such a close proximity to Harts Creek likely provided Paris and Allen B. Brumfield (and others who lived locally) an opportunity to visit their families. Allen B., who had married about a year before his enlistment, may have visited his wife during this time; she bore him a son, Morgan (named after the Confederate general John Hunt Morgan), in April 1865. Paris’ wife also gave birth to a child (named Martha, after his wife’s sister) in 1865.<sup>70</sup>

About the middle of May 1864, Witcher’s character as a commander once again came under scrutiny, this time from a captain who refused to attach his company to Witcher’s battalion. “I have objections to Lt. Col. Witcher as a commander and cannot consent,” the captain wrote. “He has been guilty of offenses which in my judgment renders him unfit to command men and objections on discipline... His men are notorious for having committed offenses.”<sup>71</sup> In late June, while the 34<sup>th</sup> Battalion Virginia Cavalry was stationed at Pound Gap, Virginia, Witcher’s two-month suspension took effect. Major William Straton of Aracoma, West Virginia, replaced him as commander.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>68</sup> Dickinson, *Wayne County, West Virginia*, 41.

<sup>69</sup> Cole, *34<sup>th</sup> Virginia Cavalry*, 80.

<sup>70</sup> U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1900; Hardesty, *Hardesty’s Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 137.

<sup>71</sup> Cole, *34<sup>th</sup> Virginia Cavalry*, 80-81.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

On August 9, Witcher was reinstated to his command, largely due to letters sent on his behalf to President Jefferson Davis from Brig. Gen. John Hunt Morgan and others.<sup>73</sup> General Morgan wrote:

He [Witcher] has a fine battalion of 300 men in a fine state of organization and discipline. His company officers however I do not regard a one capable of commanding the Battalion. They may do very well in their subordinate positions, and whilst they have Col. Witcher to direct and control them, but if Col. W. is taken I am satisfied that the result will be the disintegration of the Battalion. There will be lost to the Country a fine body of troops, which if Col. W. is retained in his position, can be made to render efficient service. These troops were raised within the enemy's lines in North Western Va. and *are very much attached to Col. Witcher*, indeed from what I can learn it was through his efforts they were brought into our army, and if he is taken from the command of them, I fear the result will be as stated above. One hundred of its absentees who had returned to their homes in N.W. Va. during the last winter and spring, have just returned to duty. It is very difficult to keep these men well together even under Col. Witcher, the controlling spirit.<sup>74</sup>

Almost right away, a detachment of the 34<sup>th</sup> Battalion Virginia Cavalry was sent to Logan County to arrest deserters, recruit, and obtain information about Union troops.<sup>75</sup>

During the late summer of 1864, Paris Brumfield participated in highly successful actions in West Virginia. In August 1864, Witcher and the 34<sup>th</sup> Battalion Virginia Cavalry captured and burned Ramsey's Fort at Kesslers Cross Lanes in Nicholas County, West Virginia, then returned to Tazewell County, Virginia.<sup>76</sup> On September 17, the 34<sup>th</sup> Battalion Virginia Cavalry left Tazewell, Virginia, through New River to Lewisburg, West Virginia.<sup>77</sup> On September 22, the unit moved to Bulltown, West Virginia, where, on the 25<sup>th</sup>, it dispersed home guards and burned their fortification.<sup>78</sup> In September of 1864,

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<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 83-84. Note Morgan's repeated reference to Witcher's "controlling spirit."

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

Witcher's battalion attacked Weston and Buckhannon in West Virginia, destroying a million dollars worth of stores while capturing 300 prisoners, 500 horses, and 200 cattle.<sup>79</sup>

That fall, the 34<sup>th</sup> Battalion Virginia Cavalry spent a great deal of time in the Cabell-Logan area of West Virginia, where it enjoyed limited action. On October 21, Witcher was at Marsh Fork of Coal River.<sup>80</sup> Two days later, the unit was at Guyandotte in Cabell County. On October 26, the 34<sup>th</sup> Battalion Virginia Cavalry attacked a Union force at Winfield, West Virginia, retreating to Logan County.<sup>81</sup> On November 5, it burned two U.S. steamboats at Buffalo Shoals in the Big Sandy Valley.<sup>82</sup> Witcher's battalion was subsequently accused of "robbing men, woman and children of their clothing and horses," adding to their poor reputation as ruthless partisans.<sup>83</sup> By November 15, the battalion had burned a government stable at Barboursville and rode to Logan County.<sup>84</sup> From there, Witcher moved to Wyoming Court House (Oceana) and then to Princeton in Mercer County.<sup>85</sup>

In December, the 34<sup>th</sup> Battalion Virginia Cavalry fought near Abingdon and Saltville, Virginia.<sup>86</sup> On December 11, Witcher's men clubbed two Union sympathizers to death with stones in Lee County, Virginia.<sup>87</sup> Thereafter, the battalion camped at the Narrows of New River.<sup>88</sup> In January 1865, Witcher attacked Beverly, West Virginia,

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<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 89-90, 93.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 95. Yet another opportunity for Paris and Allen to visit family.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

<sup>83</sup> Dickinson, *Wayne County, West Virginia*, 41.

<sup>84</sup> Cole, *34<sup>th</sup> Virginia Cavalry*, 96-97.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 99; Jack L. Dickinson, *Wayne County, West Virginia*, 41.

<sup>87</sup> Fleenor, "Witcher's Boys in Lee County during the Civil War," 1997.

<sup>88</sup> Dickinson, *Wayne County, West Virginia*, 41.



forcing the surrender of 800 men and burning the town.<sup>89</sup> Following General Robert E. Lee's surrender on 9 April 1865, Witcher encouraged his men to travel south and join General Joseph E. Johnston's army to continue the fight.<sup>90</sup> Paris and Allen B. returned home from the war in 1865, the latter having been wounded.<sup>91</sup> Records indicate that neither brother was paid for his service in the army.<sup>92</sup>

## LAND

Following the war, Brumfield emerged as the community's primary deviant by aggressively pursuing the acquisition of family property. While the desire for property was not extraordinary (property ownership remained the primary means of achieving economic and social status), Paris operated outside the norm by placing the value of land *over* the interests of his family. Three facets of Brumfield's relationship with land are noteworthy: first, he failed to immediately acquire a share of his father's extensive properties at the mouth of Big Ugly Creek; second, he coveted his father-in-law's property at the mouth of Harts Creek; and third, he desired his uncle-in-law's property at the mouth of Browns Branch. As of 1865, Paris owned a modest twenty-acre tract of land jointly with his brother, Allen.<sup>93</sup>

In the late 1860s, Paris aggressively pursued acquisition of James Toney's property at the mouth of Harts Creek. Following Toney's death in 1865, Paris—unable to

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<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>91</sup> Earl Hager, interview by author, Chapmanville, WV, 12 March 1996; Earl Hager, interview by author, Chapmanville, WV, 10 April 2011.

<sup>92</sup> Paris Brumfield (Broomfield), Compiled Service Records; Allen Brumfield (Broomfield), Compiled Service Records.

<sup>93</sup> See Table 7. Land Book (1866-1872), Logan County Clerk's Office, Logan, WV.

secure the Toney property legitimately as a son-in-law—resorted to intimidation.<sup>94</sup> Essentially, he wreaked havoc upon his widowed mother-in-law, Nancy Toney, hoping to drive her away from the farm and gain it for himself. “He would turn Mrs. Toney’s cattle loose in her corn or turn them loose across the river,” recalled one Toney descendant. “She said she would sell the place and move before she’d live there with no peace.”<sup>95</sup> Brumfield’s frustration in not securing Toney’s land was likely exacerbated by the fact that between 1867 and 1869 he was landless. By 1869, Abner Vance, a resident of the West Fork, had acquired the Toney property.<sup>96</sup> The widow Toney continued to live on the land, dubbed “the James Toney tract,” as late as 1880, before relocating to a ridge-top farm in the head of Little Harts Creek.<sup>97</sup>

During the early 1870s, Paris Brumfield drew closer to Moses Brown and acquired a significant amount of the Brown property, as well as acreage that had once belonged to his father, John H. Brumfield. In 1870, Moses Brown lived in Brumfield’s household.<sup>98</sup> Initially, Brumfield’s land transactions involved non-Brown acquisitions. In 1870, he acquired 10 acres “near [the] mouth of Harts Creek” from brother-in-law, William Carr Lambert; he maintained that property for one year.<sup>99</sup> In 1871, he secured 300 acres on Big Hart.<sup>100</sup> Thereafter, land records indicate a larger role with the Brown property. In 1871, four of Moses Brown’s six tracts of land were entered into record “by

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<sup>94</sup> Law Orders Book A (1868-1875), p. 145, Logan County Circuit Clerk’s Office, Logan, WV. In November 1865, the court appointed Guy Dingess as administrator of Toney’s estate.

<sup>95</sup> Oris Vance, interview, 24 October 1995; Oris Vance, interview, 28 November 1995.

<sup>96</sup> Law Orders Book A (1868-1875), November 1865, 145, Logan County Circuit Clerk’s Office, Logan, WV. Note: Abner Vance was father-in-law to Cain Adkins. Perhaps the Brumfield-Adkins trouble began as a Brumfield-Vance quarrel over this land.

<sup>97</sup> Oris Vance, interview, 28 November 1995; U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1880.

<sup>98</sup> U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1870.

<sup>99</sup> Land Book (1870-1878), Lincoln County Clerk’s Office, Hamlin, WV.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

order [of] Paris Brumfield.”<sup>101</sup> In 1872, the Browns bestowed all six of their tracts to *Ann Brumfield*, “wife of Parish.”<sup>102</sup> As the husband of Ann, Paris legally co-owned the tracts; however, the placement of the tracts in Ann’s name likely indicated the Browns’ preference for her and/or some aversion toward Brumfield. The Brown transaction made Ann the leading female property owner in the community, a distinction she would maintain through 1889. By claiming all of the Brown property, Paris and Ann essentially cabbaged the choicest property on Browns Branch—its lower section and bottomlands at Guyandotte River—relegating Paris’ sister, Valeria Nester, and her family to ridge-top property situated between Browns Branch and the Short Bend of Little Harts Creek. In 1874, Paris and Ann owned a total of eight tracts of land totaling 947 acres worth \$1312, while the Nesters possessed a mere 484 acres valued at \$584 (including a one hundred dollar structure).<sup>103</sup> The next year, 1875, Paris finally garnered some of the John H. Brumfield lands, acquiring 696 acres on Hamilton and Little Ugly Creeks.<sup>104</sup> By 1880, he owned over 1500 acres jointly with his wife, making him the largest resident landowner in the community.<sup>105</sup>

Between 1862 and 1880, Paris held some of the same positions as his ancestors—soldier, landowner, and politician. By comparing his standing in the community to that of his ancestors, three things are clear: first, Brumfield’s service in the Confederate army likely eclipsed his grandfather’s service during the War of 1812; second, he accumulated

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<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> See Table 7. *Ibid.*; Moses and Lettie Brown to Ann Brumfield, deed of sale, 04 January 1873, Deed Book B, 330-331, Lincoln County Clerk’s Office, Hamlin, WV. (This deed is referenced in Deed Book 62, 343.)

<sup>103</sup> See Table 7. Land Book (1870-1878), Lincoln County Clerk’s Office, Hamlin, WV.

<sup>104</sup> See Table 7. *Ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> See Table 7. Land Book (1879-1885), Lincoln County Clerk’s Office, Hamlin, WV. His sister Valeria Brumfield Nester ranked as the second-largest female property owner in the community in 1880. She owned 342 acres.

TABLE 7  
*Paris Brumfield Property, 1865-1890*

Year	No. Tracts	Total Acres	Building	Total Value
1865-1866	½ interest <sup>a</sup>	20	\$0	\$10
1867	0	0	0	0
1868 <sup>b</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
1869	0	0	0	0
1870	1	10	0	\$25
1871	1	300	0	\$300
1872-1873	7 (6 by Ann)	752	\$100	\$1037
1874 <sup>c</sup>	8 (7 by Ann)	947	\$100	\$1312
1875-1877 <sup>c</sup>	9 (7 by Ann)	1643	\$100	\$2008
1878-1881 <sup>d</sup>	9 (7 by Ann)	1568	\$100	\$1855.50
1882 <sup>d</sup>	9 (7 by Ann)	1568	\$100	\$2050
1883-1884 <sup>d</sup>	9 (6 by Ann)	1543	\$100	\$2149
1885-1886	8 (6 by Ann)	1318	\$100	\$2254
1887	8 (6 by Ann)	1318	\$100	\$2080
1888	5 (3 by Ann)	1233	0	\$1622
1889	4 (2 by Ann)	1138	0	\$1501.75
1890	3 (2 by Ann)	1063	0	\$1351.75

*Sources:* Land Book (1866-1872), Logan County Clerk's Office, Logan, WV; Land Book (1867-1869), Lincoln County Clerk's Office, Hamlin, WV; Land Book (1870-1878), Lincoln County Clerk's Office, Hamlin, WV; Land Book (1879-1885), Lincoln County Clerk's Office, Hamlin, WV; Land Book (1886-1891), Lincoln County Clerk's Office, Hamlin, WV.

<sup>a</sup>This tract was owned jointly with his brother, Allen Brumfield.

<sup>b</sup>Figures for 1868 are unavailable for the Harts Creek region, most of which was located in Logan County prior to 1869.

<sup>c</sup>Includes half-interest in 300 acres owned jointly with Tomblin.

<sup>d</sup>Includes half-interest in 225 acres owned jointly with Tomblin.

property of comparable acreage to that of his father or grandfather; third, his selection as a Lincoln County delegate to an 1872 Democratic Convention in Logan hints at a degree of political clout comparable to his grandfather's service as a gentleman justice and his father's stint as a constable.<sup>106</sup> Additionally, Paris continued his father's zest for

<sup>106</sup> "Democratic Meeting in the Ninth District," *Huntington (WV) Argus*, June 1872.

procreation, fathering fourteen children by three women. He sired eight children by his wife, naming four of them (Allen, Rachel, John, William) after his parents or siblings and one (James) for his father-in-law.<sup>107</sup> Of interest, none were named for his immediate neighbors, the Browns or Nesters. Toward the end of the decade, his daughter Rachel Spry honored him by naming her first born child after him.<sup>108</sup>

Brumfield's land dealings, while enhancing his personal wealth, violated community norms (greed at the expense of elders), weakened his bonds with individuals (particularly his family), and led to stigmatization, as well as further criminal activity. By 1875, paternal figures John H. Brumfield, James Toney, and Bill Nester had died, leaving only Moses Brown. Having secured Brown's land, Paris was free of a controlling mechanism (Brown's property); this, coupled with his alienation by the Toneys, had disastrous consequences within his family. In various ways, and for various reasons, Brumfield's internal controls on behavior became nonexistent. One newspaper, reporting in 1891, said of him: "With independence came the curse of too great a fondness for women of ill-repute and for the native moonshine alcoholic product."<sup>109</sup>

## FAMILY TROUBLES

By the late 1870s, Brumfield's womanizing laid the groundwork for future problems within his immediate family. As early as 1875, thirty-eight-year-old Brumfield began a long-term affair with eighteen-year-old Keziah "Kizzie" Ramey, native of the

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<sup>107</sup> U.S. Census for Logan County, VA, 1860; U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1870; U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1880. William Brumfield, called "Bill," was my great-great-grandfather.

<sup>108</sup> U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1880. This child, Paris Spry, was the only descendant of Ann Brumfield's named for Paris Brumfield.

<sup>109</sup> "Brumfield Dead," *Sentinel* (Parkersburg, WV), 6 November 1891.

Trough Fork section of the community.<sup>110</sup> According to oral history, their affair began when Paris “found her crying by the road and put her on back of his horse and took her to Harts.”<sup>111</sup> A whirlwind courtship followed. Due to Paris’ reputation, when he rode to Trough Fork to see Kizzie, residents would pretty much “clear out.”<sup>112</sup> At some point, Paris built her a house near his residence.<sup>113</sup> Essentially, from the mid-1870s until 1891, Paris alternated his time between his wife, Ann, and his mistress, Kizzie. Between 1875 and 1880, Paris fathered three children with Ann: William “Bill” (b. 1875), Dollie (b. 1878), and James S. “Jim” (b. 1880).<sup>114</sup> He also fathered two children by Kizzie: Mary Florence (b. 1876) and Paris, Jr. (b. 1878).<sup>115</sup> Indicative of Brumfield’s fondness for his old Civil War commander, Kizzie’s son was named Paris *Witcher*.<sup>116</sup> By 1880, Kizzie lived one household away from Paris; within a short time, she had two more children: Wirt (b. 1881) and Winnie.<sup>117</sup>

Aside from Ann and Kizzie, Brumfield enjoyed other lovers: “He had women all over,” recalled one descendant.<sup>118</sup> During the same time as his affair with Kizzie Ramey, Brumfield reportedly “kidnapped” a much-younger Lydia Smith of Wayne County and “kept her” at a logging camp. Their relationship resulted in one child, Neary Jane (born

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<sup>110</sup> Bob Dingess, interview, 8 August 1995.

<sup>111</sup> Corbett Brumfield, interview, 30 January 1996.

<sup>112</sup> Mae Brumfield, interview by author, Harts, WV, 19 June 1999.

<sup>113</sup> Corbett Brumfield, interview, 30 January 1996. The family remembered him as “Witch.”

<sup>114</sup> U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1880.

<sup>115</sup> U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1880; Bob Dingess, interview by author and John Hartford, Warren, WV, 8 August 1995; Pearl Deason, telephone interview by author, Logan, WV, 18 May 1996.

<sup>116</sup> Corbett Brumfield, interview, 30 January 1996.

<sup>117</sup> U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1880; Mae Brumfield, telephone interview by author, Harts, WV, n.d.; Lawrence Kirk, interview, 5 March 1995.

<sup>118</sup> Corbett Brumfield, interview, 6 December 1995.

October 1881), and perhaps a son named Ed (born 1878).<sup>119</sup> Paris' private arrangement with women was unique in the community, operated outside of the norm, and was illegal, but as one old resident recalled, "People were afraid to say anything."<sup>120</sup>

Based on family history, Brumfield was an abusive father. According to one story, Paris tied a log chain around a young Charley Brumfield after he had "done something" and allowed a horse to drag him.<sup>121</sup> By 1880, perhaps to escape such treatment, oldest son Allen Brumfield established residence with prominent resident Bill Fowler, his mother's cousin, in Hart, thereby distancing himself from his father.<sup>122</sup> Jim Brumfield, Paris' youngest son by Ann who went unnamed for the first three months of his life until someone named him after Mrs. Brumfield's late father, was said to have "suffered a rough childhood."<sup>123</sup>

By the early 1880s, Paris' debauchery had prompted an estrangement from his brother, Allen B. Brumfield. Paris and Allen B. were only one year apart in age, had served in the same units during the Civil War, and had once jointly owned property. According to Allen B.'s grandson, Paris thought a lot of Allen, naming his oldest son for him. Allen B. separated himself from Paris: he "wouldn't go around him after he started acting bad."<sup>124</sup> Still, about every six years, Paris would visit Allen B. at his home on Big Ugly Creek. About 1882, during a visit to Allen's home with his son, Charley, aged 14 years, Charley and Allen's son, Ira, had a disagreement. After about twenty minutes,

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<sup>119</sup> Megan Jones Clark, letter to author, Layton, UT, 5 November 2015; U.S. Census for Wayne County, WV, 1900; Monroe Adkins to Jane Brumfield, marriage record, 30 April 1905, Mingo County, WV.

<sup>120</sup> Mae Brumfield, telephone interview, n.d.

<sup>121</sup> Ella Mae Triplett, interview by author, Ranger, WV, n.d.

<sup>122</sup> U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1880.

<sup>123</sup> U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1880; Ida Taylor, interview, 5 March 1995. Ida was Jim's daughter.

<sup>124</sup> Demple Hager, interview by author, Huntington, WV, 2 June 1996.

Allen B. cut a switch. Paris said, “Let ‘em fight, Allen. I like to see a good fight.” Allen said his boys were not allowed to act that way. “There’s no civilization to it,” he said. Paris told Charley to get their horse and they would go home. Allen warned Paris that Charley would do anything. It was the last time Allen ever saw him.<sup>125</sup>

## OCCUPATIONS

In the 1870s and 1880s, Brumfield complemented his farming endeavors with timbering, storekeeping, and distilling. In 1880, Brumfield was noted in the census as a storekeeper.<sup>126</sup> Period newspapers provide evidence that he was successful in his business pursuits. “By industry and close application to his business, farming and timbering, he accumulated quite a competency and he had not then shown signs of a belligerent disposition,” reported the *Sentinel* of Parkersburg, West Virginia, on 6 November 1891.<sup>127</sup> One descendant said, “Paris kept workhands around. He had a bunk house. The rooms were called ‘Blue Room’ ... Had names.”<sup>128</sup>

Brumfield’s status as a logger and raftsman enhanced his reputation as one of the rougher elements of the community, provided an opportunity to associate with similar people, contributed to his deviancy, and alienated him from his agricultural neighbors. The whole process of cutting timber, rafting timber, and riding rafts to market at the mouth of the river called for a man of the rougher sort. Perhaps more importantly, Brumfield’s association with rowdy loggers placed him among “people not noted for

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid. This story hints at Brumfield’s participation in a culture of honor. According to Nisbett and Cohen in *Culture of Honor: The Psychology of Violence in the South*, “Young men of the South were prepared for violent activities by a socialization process designed to make them physically courageous and ferocious in defense of their reputations. Even young children are encouraged to be aggressive” (2).

<sup>126</sup> U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1880.

<sup>127</sup> “Brumfield Dead,” *Sentinel* (Parkersburg, WV), 6 November 1891.

<sup>128</sup> Ray Toppings, interview by author, Harts, WV, 12 March 1996.



angelic sweetness of temper” and provided an opportunity to teach and learn criminal values.<sup>129</sup> Quite frequently, Brumfield joined two other loggers, Jerome Shelton of West Hamlin and Pete Dingess of Harts Creek, to stir up trouble in the town of Guyandotte. Dingess would climb a ladder and pretend to make speeches to taunt officers and supposed-to-be fighters. He would begin with, “I am God. Millions bow to me,” followed by wild cheering. The trio caused problems for local law enforcement, who often “took cover.”<sup>130</sup> On one occasion, in 1882, during one of Pete’s speeches, a town marshal named Fuller attempted to arrest the three men, but could not.<sup>131</sup> Late in 1884, a marshal and logger named J. “Doc” Suiter came to Brumfield’s hotel room to arrest him. A brawl ensued in which Brumfield tossed Suiter through a window.<sup>132</sup> On a separate occasion, while rafting down the Guyandotte River, Paris came upon Suiter, who had fouled his raft on some shoals; like many loggers did in those days, Brumfield rammed his raft into the marshal’s, splitting it in two. History records one marshal in Guyandotte named Wilburn Bias who managed to arrest Brumfield and Shelton. Bias was said to be the only man feared by Brumfield.<sup>133</sup>

During the 1880s, Brumfield operated a distillery in the Harts Creek community. *Polk’s West Virginia State Gazetteer and Business Directory* lists him as a legal distiller at Hart in 1882, 1883, and 1884.<sup>134</sup> Brumfield’s association with alcohol production

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<sup>129</sup> “Paris Brumfield,” *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 9 November 1891.

<sup>130</sup> Sam Bias, interview, 1942.

<sup>131</sup> George Bias, interview by Fred B. Lambert, Proctorville, OH, n.d., Fred B. Lambert Papers, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV; Law Orders Book 5 (1880-1882), Cabell County Circuit Clerk’s Office, Huntington, WV, 493, 552.

<sup>132</sup> George Bias, interview, n.d.; Law Order Book 7 (1884-1886), Cabell County Clerk’s Office, Huntington, WV, 39-40. In the Suiter case, Brumfield paid a fine.

<sup>133</sup> George Bias, interview, n.d. According to the *Cabell Record* (Milton, WV), 4 August 1898, Doc Suiter was a Republican.

<sup>134</sup> *Polk’s West Virginia State Gazetteer and Business Directory* (1882-83); *Polk’s West Virginia State Gazetteer and Business Directory* (1884).

contributed to his deviant reputation (for many, not all), further alienated him from the community's moral elements, and drew him closer to those who consumed alcohol.<sup>135</sup> As a legal distiller—one of only a few in the community—he may have battled local illegal distillers. He certainly incurred the wrath of prohibition writers and editors. “It is a well known fact that a moonshine distillery will demoralize a community for at least three miles in every direction,” wrote one future West Virginia governor in *After the Moonshiners: A Book of Thrilling, Yet Truthful Narratives* (1881). In its 11 Jan 1883 issue, the *Huntington Argus* of Huntington, West Virginia, went so far as to say, “If the curse of God ought to rest on anything it is the liquor traffic.”<sup>136</sup> After 1883, Lincoln County prohibited the manufacture of liquor. “The counties of Lewis and Lincoln have joined the anti-license counties in this state, and refused to grant whiskey licenses for next year,” according to a 5 May 1883 item printed in the *Wheeling Intelligencer*. Such prohibition may have propelled Brumfield into the realm of illegal distilling and initiated a whole new dangerous dynamic regarding his ties to liquor.<sup>137</sup> At least one source recalls him as a moonshiner.<sup>138</sup> In 1888, Lincoln County joined an overwhelming majority of West Virginia's counties and voted 1062 to 225 to once again allow “intoxicants” to be sold under license. Thereafter, Brumfield could have resumed his status as a legal distiller.

By the 1880s, Brumfield regularly consumed alcohol; actually, by all accounts, he abused it. An 1891 newspaper story stated that he was cursed by a fondness for “the

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<sup>135</sup> Thomas H. Perry, in “From Youth to Old Age,” stated: “They [drunkards] were considered a low class of people, and ruled out of society” (11).

<sup>136</sup> George W. Atkinson, *After the Moonshiners: A Book of Thrilling, Yet Truthful Narratives* (Wheeling, WV: Frew and Campbell, Steam Book and Job Printers, 1881), 28.

<sup>137</sup> *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 5 May 1883.

<sup>138</sup> Verdayne Shelton, interview, 22 November 1995.

native moonshine alcohol product.”<sup>139</sup> Oral history provided by Brumfield descendants confirm his alcoholism. “Paris stayed drunk,” recalled one great-grandson.<sup>140</sup> A granddaughter stated: “He drunk an awful lot.”<sup>141</sup> A great-grandson stated that he drank red liquor and charred moonshine, which he kept in small kegs hidden in his barn.<sup>142</sup> Alcohol would have drastically affected his behavior, disinhibiting any pre-existing aggression. One newspaper highlighted this by reporting that he was “dangerous when in whisky.”<sup>143</sup> Alcohol factored into Brumfield’s frequent commission of intimate-partner assault.<sup>144</sup> “Ole Paris was mean as a snake and he would beat up on his wife every time he got drunk,” one old resident recalled.<sup>145</sup> One granddaughter said: “Dad said he kindly mistreated their mother. They [his kids] was afraid of him.”<sup>146</sup>

#### VIOLENT SUBCULTURE (GUNS)

By the 1880s, Brumfield created, fostered, and led a violent subculture in the Harts Creek community. As with most violent subcultures, the one that emerged in Harts consisted of these elements: gun ownership, rituals that stress macho role models, quick and decisive responses to insults, a proclivity for fighting to settle disputes, an expectation and legitimization of violence, and songs and stories that glorify violence.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> “Brumfield Dead,” *Sentinel* (Parkersburg, WV), 6 November 1891.

<sup>140</sup> Corbett Brumfield, interview, 6 December 1995.

<sup>141</sup> Ida Taylor, interview, 5 March 1995.

<sup>142</sup> Corbett Brumfield, interview, 6 December 1995.

<sup>143</sup> “Paris Brumfield,” *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 9 November 1891.

<sup>144</sup> “Brumfield Dead,” *Sentinel* (Parkersburg, WV), 6 November 1891; *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 11 November 1891; Bob Adkins, interview, 3 March 1995; Maude Dingess, interview, 20 December 1995; Pearl Deason, telephone interview by author, Logan, WV, 18 May 1996.

<sup>145</sup> Bob Adkins, interview, 24 July 1993.

<sup>146</sup> Ida Taylor, interview, 5 March 1995.

<sup>147</sup> Franco Ferracuti and Marvin Wolfgang, *The Subculture of Violence: Towards an Integrated Theory in Criminology* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1967).

Paris Brumfield typified gun ownership. According to family tradition, he packed two six-shooter pistols.<sup>148</sup> While most other locals owned weapons for hunting, recreation, and personal safety, Brumfield's willingness to use gunplay to intimidate and settle scores separated him from most of the rest. "Paris glorified in shooting people," recalled one contemporary. "Many people were afraid of him."<sup>149</sup> An 1891 newspaper stated: "His name has been printed in papers all over this country, and there are few in this State who keep up with the deplorable record of crime, who have not heard of Paris Brumfield *and his gun*."<sup>150</sup> A descendant described him as the kind of fellow "who would come along and shoot a man's ducks in the road."<sup>151</sup>

In early September 1882, Paris Brumfield killed Monteville "Boney" Lucas, a 25-year-old timber man, in a row at the Narrows of Harts Creek.<sup>152</sup> This episode constituted the community's first homicide, earning Brumfield more notoriety. The day of Lucas' killing, Brumfield and his daughter, nicknamed Rat, rode up Harts Creek to a store. On his return downstream, he encountered Lucas, who worked timber at the Narrows below the mouth of West Fork.<sup>153</sup> The two quarreled and Lucas attacked Brumfield with an axe. One Brumfield descendant said Lucas used the butt end of his axe to knock Paris into the creek.<sup>154</sup> Another tale told that Lucas chopped Brumfield, nearly severing one of his arms.<sup>155</sup> According to a Brumfield descendant, at Paris' request, Rat retrieved a pistol

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<sup>148</sup> Howard "Lucky" Brumfield, interview by author, Harts, WV, 1996.

<sup>149</sup> Sam Bias, interview, 1942.

<sup>150</sup> "Brumfield Dead," *Sentinel* (Parkersburg, WV), 6 November 1891.

<sup>151</sup> Corbett Brumfield, interview, 30 January 1996.

<sup>152</sup> *Sentinel* (Parkersburg, WV), 9 September 1882.

<sup>153</sup> Bob Adkins, interview, 24 July 1993; Lawrence Kirk, interview, 27 July 1993; Bob Adkins, interview, 12 February 1996.

<sup>154</sup> Lawrence Kirk, interview, 27 July 1993.

<sup>155</sup> Ray Kirk, interview, n.d.

from a bag and gave it to her father,<sup>156</sup> which Brumfield then used to shoot Lucas.

Another old-timer said Paris “shot him with a Winchester right across the creek. He tried to get away.”<sup>157</sup> At least one state newspaper reported on the incident. “A difficulty occurred between Paris Brumfield and a man named Lucas on Guyan, in Lincoln county, last week, in which Brumfield received several very ugly and painful cuts with an ax,” the *Sentinel* of Parkersburg, West Virginia, stated on 9 September 1882. “After receiving two or three cuts from the ax, Brumfield shot Lucas in the abdomen.”<sup>158</sup> Boney died about a week after the incident.<sup>159</sup>

The Brumfield-Lucas trouble, while sensational in and of itself, arose out of the larger quarrel between Paris Brumfield and Cain Adkins, who was Lucas’ father-in-law.<sup>160</sup> Folk tradition gives several specific reasons for the Brumfield-Lucas trouble: a dispute “over logs,”<sup>161</sup> trouble between their children at school,<sup>162</sup> and/or an improper remark made toward one of Brumfield’s daughters by Lucas.<sup>163</sup> Any one of these causal factors, or a combination of them, may have played a part in stirring the Brumfield-Lucas trouble. Within the prevailing culture of honor, any one of these triggers would have required a personal response from Brumfield or Lucas.<sup>164</sup> Of interest: Brumfield and Lucas had overlapping kinship connections. Boney Lucas’ brother, Irvin Lucas, was

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<sup>156</sup> Lawrence Kirk, interview, 27 July 1993.

<sup>157</sup> Bob Adkins, interview, 24 July 1993; Bob Adkins, interview, 12 February 1996. Bob also stated Paris Brumfield’s daughter had given him the Winchester.

<sup>158</sup> *Sentinel* (Parkersburg, WV), 9 September 1882. According to Adkins in *Land of York to Beech Fork*, Boney died several years later, about 1891, “when the Brumfield brothers killed him by cutting his throat while Angeline watched” (235-236).

<sup>159</sup> Daisy Ross, interview, 11 December 1995; Daisy Ross, interview, 16 March 1996.

<sup>160</sup> Ronnie Adkins, *Land of York to Beech Fork*, 235-236.

<sup>161</sup> Ray Kirk, interview, 22 November 1995.

<sup>162</sup> Lawrence Kirk, interview, 27 July 1993.

<sup>163</sup> Glenna Epling, telephone interview, 2002.

<sup>164</sup> Ayers, *Vengeance & Justice*, 23.

married to Paris' sister. Two of Boney's sisters had married Paris' nephews. One of Paris' nephews would impregnate Boney's niece in 1889.<sup>165</sup> Ultimately, Brumfield was not sentenced to prison for the killing, indicating that he committed the act (or was perceived to have committed the act) in self-defense. The community, likely embracing notions of honor, does not appear to have acted against him. Only Lucas' widow, who was pregnant with her fourth child, considered avenging his death.<sup>166</sup>

By the early 1890s, Brumfield was noted as a "bad man" in the region. In an 1891 story, the *Parkersburg Sentinel* dubbed him "the terror of Lincoln county,"<sup>167</sup> while the *Ceredo Advance* preferred "the noted desperado of Lincoln County."<sup>168</sup> An 1892 *Pittsburg Dispatch* story called him "the famous desperado."<sup>169</sup> In 1893, the *Shenandoah Herald* of Woodstock, Virginia, called him "the terror of the mountains."<sup>170</sup> In essence, Brumfield was stigmatized, leaving few legitimate opportunities available to him. One person who married Brumfield's great-grandson said of him, "He was a vicious old fellow. He was mean. Everybody was afraid of him. Everybody stayed out of his way. You had to obey him."<sup>171</sup> An in-law said: "He was mean as a snake, that old devil was."<sup>172</sup> As is often the case, Paris associated with similar people, who, along with Brumfield, constituted the community's non-respectable group of citizens. One newspaper, in reporting on his "many grievous faults," put it thusly: that he preferred to

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<sup>165</sup> Demple Hager, interview, 2 June 1996.

<sup>166</sup> Glenna Epling, telephone interview, 2002.

<sup>167</sup> "Brumfield Dead," *Sentinel* (Parkersburg, WV), 6 November 1891.

<sup>168</sup> *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 11 November 1891.

<sup>169</sup> *Pittsburg (PA) Dispatch*, 10 August 1892.

<sup>170</sup> "The Mountain Terror," *Shenandoah Herald* (Woodstock, VA), 21 July 1893.

<sup>171</sup> Mae Brumfield, telephone interview, n.d.; Mae Brumfield, interview by author, Harts, WV, 29 March 1996.

<sup>172</sup> Bob Adkins, interview, 3 March 1995.

be surrounded “by a people not noted for angelic sweetness of temper.”<sup>173</sup> The descendant of one of his victims put it this way: Paris Brumfield “had a band of people. They went around and killed a lot of people, they said. Mommy said they had a mob and if they didn’t like somebody they’d kill them. The Brumfields was rough.”<sup>174</sup>

By the end of his life, Brumfield was credited with killing as few as seven or more than a dozen men.<sup>175</sup> An 1891 story stated:

From various causes, such as encroachment of timber claims, jealousy of women, and others, feuds arose between the Brumfields and several families. He killed his first man in 1884, and since that time several people have mysteriously disappeared, and the Brumfields were accredited with knowing a great deal more of the occurrence than they sat around and talked about. He always maintained that no man could get the drop on him and it is said that there are several mounds upon which the verdure had gathered to prove the correctness of this assertion.<sup>176</sup>

According to one story, Brumfield killed a man named Charlie Hibbitts on a point at the Bend of the River and placed his body on the “Haint Rock.”<sup>177</sup> Oral history blames Paris Brumfield for the disappearance of pack-peddlers who frequented the community. One great-nephew said:

Well, one thing, he killed an old pack-peddler up there at Hart, took his stuff, and threw him in the river. And he killed another man, too. Why, he’d kill anybody. Yeah, killed that old pack-peddler. That’s what they said he did. He was a mean old devil.<sup>178</sup>

A descendant of Brumfield’s enemy, Cain Adkins, had this to say: “Pack-peddlers went up the hollow where Paris lived and never came out. The next day, Paris would be riding the man’s horse and the Brumfield kids would be playing with his inventory. They’d tie

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<sup>173</sup> “Paris Brumfield,” *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 9 November 1891.

<sup>174</sup> Daisy Ross, interview, 16 March 1996.

<sup>175</sup> “Bad Women and Whisky,” *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 11 November 1891.

<sup>176</sup> “Brumfield Dead,” *Sentinel* (Parkersburg, WV), 6 November 1891; *Ceredo Advance*, 11 November 1891.

<sup>177</sup> Mac Lucas, interview by author, Fourteen, WV, n.d.

<sup>178</sup> Bob Adkins, interview, 3 March 1995. A pack-peddler is a person who travels with items for sale, often on his back or in a wagon.

him up under the river and let him drown and the fish would eat him.”<sup>179</sup> There is a story that he shot and killed a man for making noise while a fiddler played his favorite song: “Golden Slippers.”<sup>180</sup>

Worth noting, the honor/respect accumulated by Brumfield through his various exploits—particularly by his refusal to allow insults to go unanswered—was significant. It extended beyond his own person; it would have been shared by family members, including his daughters.<sup>181</sup> Only Cain Adkins and his family consistently challenged Brumfield’s status within the Harts Creek community.

#### BIOLOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL POSTSCRIPT

Paris Brumfield’s multi-faceted deviance, particularly his aggressiveness regarding land acquisition and his choice of occupational statuses, contributed greatly to the stirring of the Lincoln County Feud. Rather than use Brumfield as a scapegoat for the entire feud, which would be unfair and untrue, it seems prudent to look a bit deeper at *why* he behaved as he did. Combining known biological/genetic and psychological factors (psychohistory) with the sociological and environmental factors discussed previously renders a more complete analysis. Unfortunately, due to a lack of certain types of information, such analysis requires a moderate degree of conjecture.

A survey of Brumfield’s family background reveals little criminal activity. During the mid-1810s, William Wirt Brumfield, grandfather to Paris, suffered minor legal difficulties. On 10 May 1813, Frederick Hammer sued Brumfield and two others. On 11

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<sup>179</sup> Nell Thompson, interview, 3 October 1996.

<sup>180</sup> Mark Triplett, interview by John Hartford, Huntington, WV, 1 March 1995.

<sup>181</sup> Ayers, *Vengeance & Justice*, 29.



October 1813, Manoah Bostick sued Brumfield and Thomas Ward.<sup>182</sup> On 16 October 1815, the Cabell County Court issued a summons for Brumfield, who stood accused of assault and battery.<sup>183</sup> On 14 May 1816, Brumfield, who had pled not guilty of assault and battery, was found guilty and fined five dollars.<sup>184</sup> Apparently, he neglected to pay the fine. On 13 October 1817, the Cabell County sheriff brought him to the courthouse where he was confined in jail for fifteen days.<sup>185</sup> John H. Brumfield, father to Paris, appeared in only one criminal case. Cabell County circuit court records for 1838, dated April 30, May 4, and November 10, cite a case titled *Commonwealth v. John Brumfield*.<sup>186</sup> Paris appears in Cabell County criminal records, primarily a long-running 1872-1883 suit filed against John H. Costillo et al, and for misdemeanors from 1882 to 1891.<sup>187</sup> He had no serious criminal cases against him.

Paris Brumfield suffered from psychological disturbances that contributed to the outbreak and early events of the Lincoln County Feud. Many of his psychological categories overlapped, making it nearly impossible to discern which preceded the other. First, Brumfield exhibited aggressiveness (considered a maladaptive trait). Second, he suffered from personality disorders. Third, he suffered from developmental disorders. Fourth, he may have suffered from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Fifth, he appears to have been an alcoholic, indicating a substance-related disorder. Sixth, he suffered a high degree of stress.

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<sup>182</sup> Law Orders Book (1812-1819), 25, 42, Cabell County Circuit Clerk's Office, Huntington, WV.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, 113.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, 131, 135, 151.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, 165.

<sup>186</sup> Law Orders Book (1831-1841), 261, 269, 294-295, Cabell County Circuit Clerk's Office, Huntington, WV.

<sup>187</sup> Law Order Book 1, Cabell County Circuit Clerk's Office, Huntington, WV; Chancery Orders Books 2, 3, 4, Cabell County Circuit Clerk's Office, Huntington, WV; Law Orders Book 5, 6, 7, 10, and 11, Cabell County Circuit Clerk's Office, Huntington, WV.

Brumfield's aggression, which ranked chief among his maladaptive traits, could very well have resulted from a combination of biological factors, cognitive (learned) factors, personality factors, and environmental factors. First, such biological factors as a diminished level of the neurotransmitter serotonin in his brain could have produced a violent outburst.<sup>188</sup> Second, cognitive (learned) factors may have caused aggression. As a child, Brumfield might have learned his aggression from observation and imitation; oral history does not provide clues. During the Civil War, Brumfield certainly learned aggression—violence—which desensitized him to it and caused him to accept it, imitate it, and identify with it.<sup>189</sup> Third, personality traits could have also contributed to aggression.<sup>190</sup> Brumfield's personality appears to have been Type A. Type A personalities have free-floating hostility and anger with no object or focus, are extremely irritable and competitive, and always seem to struggle with time, other people, or both.<sup>191</sup> Fourth, environmental factors such as the changing nature of the Harts Creek community would have affected his inclination to act aggressively or violently.<sup>192</sup> According to the frustration-aggression hypothesis, Brumfield's inability to inherit something expected—such as the Toney tract—may have led to aggression.<sup>193</sup>

Brumfield appears to have suffered from antisocial personality disorder. Persons with antisocial personality disorder exhibit a persistent disregard for and violation of others' rights, treat people as objects, are intolerant of everyday frustrations, live for the moment, and primarily seek thrills. They feel no shame or guilt and are not deterred by

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<sup>188</sup> Schmallenger, *Criminology Today*, 151.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, 186.

<sup>190</sup> Robert A. Baron, *Human Aggression* (New York: Plenum Press, 1977), Chapter 5.

<sup>191</sup> Hayes, *Foundations of Psychology*, 224-225.

<sup>192</sup> Rod Plotnik and Haig Kouyoumdjian, *Introduction to Psychology*, 10<sup>th</sup> ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2014), 602.

<sup>193</sup> Schmallenger, *Criminology Today*, 182.

reprimand or punishment. Persons with antisocial personality disorder fail to conform to social norms, repeatedly perform acts that are grounds for arrest (destruction of property, harassing others, pursuit of illegal occupations), project irritability and aggressiveness (physical fights, assaults, spouse beating, child beating), and engage in sexual behavior or substance use that has a high risk for harmful consequences. They may possess an inflated and arrogant self-appraisal, be irresponsible and exploitative in their sexual relationships, be irresponsible as parents (children dependent on neighbors or relatives for food and shelter), receive dishonorable discharges from the armed services, have substance-related disorders, and be more likely than the general population to die prematurely by violent means.<sup>194</sup>

As a child and adolescent, Brumfield may well have suffered from Conduct Disorder, a condition that is typified by aggressive conduct that causes or threatens physical harm to other people and animals, non-aggressive conduct that causes property loss or damage (fire setting), deceitfulness or theft, and serious violation of rules. Conduct Disorder, a sort of precursor to antisocial personality disorder, is caused by parental rejection and neglect, inconsistent child-rearing practices with harsh discipline, physical or sexual abuse, lack of supervision, frequent changes of caregivers, large family size, and association with a delinquent peer group.<sup>195</sup>

While details regarding Brumfield's early life remain elusive, interviews with his descendants establish that as an adult he failed to master significant developmental tasks necessary for healthy advancement through life's emotional and psychological stages.

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<sup>194</sup> *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 645-650; Schmallenger, *Criminology Today*, 176-177.

<sup>195</sup> *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 85-91.

There is moderate evidence of malfunction during the adolescent stage (age twelve to eighteen years), when Brumfield would have attempted to find his identity, struggled with social interactions and grappled with moral issues. At this stage, Brumfield's primary developmental task was to determine an identity—to determine who he was separate from his family and society. However, as the ninth child and third son in a family of sixteen, and considering that his father died during this stage, there is a strong possibility that instead of achieving a sense of identity he suffered from role confusion and an identity crisis.<sup>196</sup>

More significantly, Brumfield failed to master the primary developmental tasks associated with young adulthood (age eighteen to 35) and middle adulthood (age 35 to 55). As a young adult, Brumfield should have expressed intimacy with his wife; instead, he treated her poorly. Consequently, he suffered from isolation, distantiation, and an inflated sense of superiority.<sup>197</sup> Later, as a middle-aged man, he should have guided his family and improved society (generativity). He should have maintained healthy life patterns, developed a sense of unity with a mate, assisted his children into becoming responsible adults, created a comfortable home, used leisure time creatively, and/or achieved mature, civic, and social responsibility. Instead, he became self-absorbed and stagnant.<sup>198</sup>

Brumfield's Civil War experience may have afflicted him with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), a severe and long-standing condition characterized by involuntary flashbacks, recurring nightmares, insomnia, and feelings of guilt. Initially,

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<sup>196</sup> David Elkind, "Erik Erikson's Eight Ages of Man," *New York Times Magazine*, 5 April 1970.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*

Brumfield should have received positive support from family members; later, however, due to his aggression regarding family property and subsequent alienation from many family members, social support might have been unavailable to him.<sup>199</sup>

Brumfield suffered from alcoholism. Alcohol, a mind-altering psychoactive drug that interacts with the central nervous system to alter a person's mood, perception and behavior, inhibits the brain's normal functions and causes a loss of self-control. Perceptions and senses become distorted and a person's behavior may become obnoxious. In stage two of alcoholism, a person drinks heavily, hides his habit, may suffer from blackouts, and is unable to recall what happened during an episode. In stage three, a person drinks compulsively, is inefficient at work, goes on drinking sprees that may last for weeks, and feels sick if deprived of alcohol. Prolonged and heavy use of alcohol can cause brain damage and a change in personality.<sup>200</sup>

In numerous ways, Brumfield's mental health suffered from stress caused by stressors and hassles. A person who encounters a stressor that is intense or prolonged will react to it. Throughout the 1880s, but particularly about the time of Boney Lucas' killing in 1882, Brumfield experienced a significant amount of stressors. By placing known historical events for Brumfield within the context of the Social Readjustment Rating Scale (SRRS), his circa 1882 stress level rates at *moderate*. Specifically, about 1880 to 1881, he experienced personal injury (53), sex difficulties (39), gain of a new family member (39), change in number of arguments with a spouse (35), son leaving home (29), trouble with in-laws (29) and *minor* violations of the law (11). These events—

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<sup>199</sup> *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 424-429.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, 194-196.

notwithstanding those events lost to the historic record—total 274 on the SRRS stress scale. A 300 or greater score is needed to qualify at major stress level.<sup>201</sup>

At least one critical event of the Lincoln County Feud occurred during a “transition period” for Brumfield. During Brumfield’s “midlife transition” (aged 40 to 45) from Early Adulthood Stage (aged 17 to 45) and Middle Adulthood Stage (aged 40 to 65) he killed Boney Lucas. Much of the feud occurred during Brumfield’s Middle Adulthood Stage, a time when he should have found stability, developed a tolerance and understanding for others, discovered a sensitivity and concern for others, and used his influence to guide future generations, whether directly or indirectly. Failure to do so would have caused Brumfield to cling to the past or become bitter about his direction in life. The Haley-McCoy affair that occurred in the late 1880s coincided with this stage for Brumfield.<sup>202</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The Lincoln County Feud arose out of personal grievances between prominent residents Paris Brumfield and Cain Adkins. Brumfield’s transformation from leading citizen to deviant was the primary catalyst in causing the Lincoln County Feud. Without Paris Brumfield, the Lincoln County Feud would not have occurred. While originating from one of the Guyandotte Valley’s leading families, Brumfield became corrupted by the Civil War. The war exposed Brumfield to Vincent “Clawhammer” Witcher, trained

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<sup>201</sup> Holmes and Rahe, *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, 216. The SRRS lists 43 items that require individuals to make the most changes in their lives. Each number refers to the expected impact that event would have on one’s life. To obtain a score, add the numbers associated with each event experienced in the past year. The total number reflects how much life change a person has experienced.

<sup>202</sup> Levinson, *The Seasons of a Man’s Life*.

him in the use of weapons, exposed him to terrible violence, taught him violent attitudes and behaviors, and desensitized him to violence. Brumfield's postwar aggression and deviancy originally manifested itself in his poor treatment of mother-in-law Nancy Toney. His desire to own her land, particularly his use of menacing tactics to acquire it, violated community norms, weakened family bonds, and led to stigmatization and further criminal activity. By the 1880s, Brumfield had become the community's most notorious resident, claiming a mistress, siring illegitimate children, abusing his wife and children, logging (unpopular in some circles), distilling, overindulging in alcohol, heading a violent subculture, embracing a gun culture, and committing the community's first killing (possibly others). Brumfield's criminality originated from biological, psychological, and environmental (social) factors, including PTSD, aggressiveness, alcoholism, developmental disorders, antisocial personality disorder, and high levels of stress.

## CHAPTER FOUR: CAIN ADKINS: “ESTEEMED CITIZEN”<sup>1</sup>

The trouble between Cain Adkins and Paris Brumfield arose out of personal grievances prompted by Adkins’ occupational statuses, which consistently placed him at odds with Brumfield. Cain Adkins was a schoolteacher, United Baptist preacher, country doctor, and justice of the peace;<sup>2</sup> Brumfield was a timber-man, distiller, storekeeper, and full-fledged participant in the local gun culture. In almost every conceivable way, and in ways that would frequently generate friction, Adkins appeared as the polar opposite of Brumfield. In one sense, Adkins and Brumfield symbolized the two versions of manhood competing in Victorian America: the “sober, responsible, dutiful son or husband” and the “hard-drinking, gambling, whoring, two-fisted man among men.” Historian Ronald L. Lewis framed it as a conflict between “law-abiding, sober, middle class residents” and “saloon keepers, both legal and illegal, and those who preferred spending their free time in the bars and brothels rather than the church.”<sup>3</sup> To fully understand how and why this personal feud occurred requires an examination of Cain Adkins’ history and his statuses in the Harts Creek community.

### TWELVE POLE BACKGROUND

Cain Adkins was the beneficiary of a distinguished heritage in the Twelve Pole Creek region of present-day Wayne County. Littleberry Adkins, his grandfather and the first member of the Adkins clan to settle locally, arrived at Beech Fork of Twelve Pole as

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<sup>1</sup> *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 23 June 1888.

<sup>2</sup> Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 25 October 1995; Daisy Ross, interview, 16 March 1996.

<sup>3</sup> McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, 26; Lewis, *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside*, 208.



early as 1796.<sup>4</sup> Later, in 1817, Littleberry relocated his homestead to Lick Creek on the East Fork of Twelve Pole where he had acquired hundreds of acres of property.<sup>5</sup> This latter location, known as Adkins Mills Post Office, was the site of a tub-wheel mill operated by brother-in-law Sherrod Adkins.<sup>6</sup> In the late 1840s, Littleberry and his wife passed away, leaving their homestead to oldest son Jesse Adkins and granting additional lands to their other children.<sup>7</sup> By that time, Hezekiah Adkins, fifth child of Littleberry and father of Cain, was the operator of a mill at Lick Creek.<sup>8</sup> Hezekiah was noted as a large landowner, being involved in “numerous land records.”<sup>9</sup>

Cain could count among his immediate family some of the leading men of the Twelve Pole Valley. His uncle David Fry oversaw an inn near the county seat of Trout’s Hill (later Wayne) from 1843 to 1844; later, he worked as a tanner in Lawrence County, Kentucky, and as a push boat operator on the Big Sandy River.<sup>10</sup> From 1847 until the 1860s, Uncle Jesse Adkins, counted as “among the more wealthy of the county,” ran the family inn.<sup>11</sup> Uncle James Fry was an ordinary near Wayne.<sup>12</sup> Near Stiltner, farther away from the county seat, Uncle Jacob Adkins, Jr. and Uncle Moses Napier were farmers; the former was regarded among the “top five-percent of the county residents.”<sup>13</sup> Only Uncle

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<sup>4</sup> Adkins, *Land of York to Beech Fork*, 30. Hardesty, in *Hardesty’s Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, states that Littleberry settled in present-day Wayne County in 1807 (168). His log home still stands on Beech Fork.

<sup>5</sup> Adkins, *Land of York to Beech Fork*, 30.

<sup>6</sup> Hardesty, *Hardesty’s Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 168; Adkins, *Land of York to Beech Fork*, 61. According to Hardesty, Sherrod built the mill in 1817.

<sup>7</sup> Adkins, *Land of York to Beech Fork*, 30, 55.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 33, 61.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 55. The inn was apparently profitable. In the 1850 Wayne County Census, Adkins boasted seven hundred dollars of personal property and \$1850 of real property; in 1860, he claimed \$2100 of personal property and \$3648 of real property.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 62-63.

Isom Adkins had left the region: he settled in Raleigh or Kanawha County, where he “dealt in ginseng and furs and owned several stores.”<sup>14</sup>

Young Cain Adkins enjoyed privilege and comforts due to his kinship to many of the Twelve Pole Valley’s leading citizens; yet as a young man, he established a lifestyle that deviated considerably from that of his family. Two serious events that occurred when he was about twelve to fourteen years old may have triggered this “rejection” of his heritage. In 1845, Cain’s mother died, perhaps due to childbirth complications, having delivered her tenth child in that year. Two years later, his father remarried.<sup>15</sup> By 1850, Adkins—aged seventeen and still unmarried—had left his father’s home to reside with oldest brother, Jesse.<sup>16</sup> In his 1860 marriage record, he listed himself as a resident of Cabell County.<sup>17</sup> In subsequent years, Cain farmed and abstained from milling or inn-keeping, thus rejecting the traditional trade of his father and/or uncles.

Cain Adkins’s family history reveals little criminal activity. Between 1812 and 1815, Littleberry Adkins, grandfather to Cain, was involved in three Cabell County cases. On 13 October 1812, the Commonwealth of Virginia sued him. On 17 May 1815, Chester Howe sued him. On 16 October 1815, he sued Chester Howe.<sup>18</sup> On 28 April 1837, Cain’s father Hezekiah Adkins was involved in a suit.<sup>19</sup> The next year, in November of 1838, one Littleberry Adkins—perhaps Hezekiah’s father, perhaps his brother, Littleberry, Jr.—

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>15</sup> Hardesty, *Hardesty’s Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 226; Adkins, *Land of York to Beech Fork*, 61.

<sup>16</sup> U.S. Census for Wayne County, VA, 1850.

<sup>17</sup> Albert and Taylor, *Logan County, Virginia Marriage Records 1853-1860 and 1850 Census*, 41.

<sup>18</sup> Law Orders Book (1812-1819), 8, 102-103, 107, Cabell County Circuit Clerk’s Office, Huntington, WV.

<sup>19</sup> Law Orders Book (1831-1841), 207, Cabell County Circuit Clerk’s Office, Huntington, WV.

was accused of bigamy, adultery, and fornication.<sup>20</sup> In 1858 and 1859, Cain himself was accused of assault and battery.<sup>21</sup>

On 2 March 1860, in Logan County, Cain Adkins (aged 24 years) married Mariah Vance (aged 16 years), a non-native to the Twelve Pole Valley.<sup>22</sup> Mariah was the eldest daughter of Abner Vance, an early settler and large landowner on the West Fork of Harts Creek.<sup>23</sup> Cain's father-in-law was a grandson to and namesake of the Reverend Abner Vance, whose 1819 execution by hanging in Russell County, Virginia, had become something of a celebrated event in mountain folklore.<sup>24</sup> Initially, Cain and Mariah resided in the Lick Creek area of Wayne County. The 1860 census lists Cain as a 27-year-old farmer with no real estate and \$100 worth of personal property. Mariah was aged 16 years.<sup>25</sup>

## CIVIL WAR

During the Civil War, Cain served in the 129<sup>th</sup> Regiment Virginia Militia (Confederate) and the 14<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Infantry (Union). On 27 August 1861, he enlisted in the 129<sup>th</sup> Regiment Virginia Militia (Carter's Company) at Logan Court House.<sup>26</sup> Barney

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<sup>20</sup> Law Orders Book (1831-1841), 291, 301, Cabell County Circuit Clerk's Office, Huntington, WV.

<sup>21</sup> Law Orders Book (1855-1863), 252, 295, 337, Cabell County Circuit Clerk's Office, Huntington, WV. Records do not reveal any further details about the incident.

<sup>22</sup> Albert and Taylor, *Logan County, Virginia Marriage Records*, 125.

<sup>23</sup> Land Book (1866-1872), Logan County Clerk's Office, Logan, WV; Land Book (1867-1869), Lincoln County Clerk's Office, Hamlin, WV; Land Book (1870-1878), Lincoln County Clerk's Office, Hamlin, WV.

<sup>24</sup> Willis David Staton, *Hatfields and McCoys: True Romance and Tragedy* (Huntington, WV: Aegina Press, 1993), 165-169.

<sup>25</sup> U.S. Census for Wayne County, VA, 1860. Note that Cain's age changed between each record.

<sup>26</sup> Canan Adkins, Carter's Company, 129<sup>th</sup> Regiment Virginia Militia, Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from Virginia (National Archives Microfilm Publication M324E, roll 1056), War Department Collection of Confederate Records, Record Group 109, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

Carter, captain of the company, lived in the Hoover Fork section of Harts Creek in Logan County.<sup>27</sup> Captain Carter had married a sister to Jackson Mullins, who later became the father-in-law of feudist Milt Haley.<sup>28</sup> Jake Adkins, 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant of Carter's Company, and Isaac Gartin, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant of Carter's Company, were brothers-in-law to Paris Brumfield, having married sisters to his wife.<sup>29</sup> On 1 September 1861, Cain and the 129<sup>th</sup> participated in the Battle at Boone Court House.<sup>30</sup> As of September 26, he had served fifteen days and was sick the rest of the month.<sup>31</sup>

According to a pension claim filed by his widow in 1926, Cain served in Company H, 14<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Infantry (Union) in 1862.<sup>32</sup> Adkins does not appear in 14<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Infantry rosters; perhaps he served unofficially as a scout or in a similar capacity.<sup>33</sup> In January 1862, the 14<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Infantry, commanded by Col. John C. Cochran, advanced from Louisa, Kentucky, to Prestonsburg, enjoying a skirmish near Paintsville on January 5. The 14<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Infantry, along with other Union troops commanded by General James A. Garfield, won the Battle of Middle Creek on January 10. The unit thereafter established winter camp at Paintsville, where it suffered from disease, weather, and sometimes hunger. The 14<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Infantry remained in the

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<sup>27</sup> U.S. Census for Logan County, WV, 1870.

<sup>28</sup> U.S. Census for Logan County, VA, 1860.

<sup>29</sup> Enos Adkins, Compiled Service Records; Isaac G. Gartin, Carter's Company, 129<sup>th</sup> Regiment Virginia Militia, Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from Virginia (National Archives Microfilm Publication M324E, roll 1056), War Department Collection of Confederate Records, Record Group 109, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC; Hardesty, *Hardesty's Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 135; Adkins, *Land of York to Beech Fork*, 76.

<sup>30</sup> Graham, *The Coal River Valley in the Civil War*, 53-54.

<sup>31</sup> Canan Adkins, Compiled Service Records.

<sup>32</sup> Canaan Adkins, Company H, 14<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Infantry, Pension Application No. 1557288 (WV), 7 October 1926, Organization Index to Pension Files of Veterans Who Served Between 1861 and 1900, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

<sup>33</sup> "14<sup>th</sup> KY Infantry Union Volunteers,"

<http://freepages.military.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~us14thkyinfantry/> (accessed 14 February 2012).

vicinity until March, when it moved to Louisville. Early in April, the unit arrived in the vicinity at Cumberland Gap, which it occupied in June. In September, the 14<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Infantry evacuated the gap and moved to Greenup, Kentucky. October was spent in Covington, Lexington, and Winchester, Kentucky.<sup>34</sup>

The Civil War divided Cain's family. Brothers Winchester and Jackson Adkins served in the Confederate army, while brother Harmon served in the Union army. Winchester served in the 8<sup>th</sup> Virginia Cavalry (Company K), 4<sup>th</sup> Regiment Virginia State Line, and 45<sup>th</sup> Battalion Virginia Infantry (Company F). W.B. Hensley enlisted Winchester into the 45<sup>th</sup> Battalion Virginia Infantry on 1 April 1863 at Wayne Court House. Company muster rolls dated 1 April 1864 reported him absent *with* leave since 3 October 1863.<sup>35</sup> On 6 September 1862, Jackson Adkins enlisted in 16<sup>th</sup> Virginia Cavalry (Company G).<sup>36</sup> Unionist Harmon Adkins, brother to Cain, served as a sergeant in 45<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Mounted Infantry (Company E) from 8 August 1863 to 24 December 1864.<sup>37</sup> After the war, in 1890, Harmon, a resident of Cove Creek, claimed war injuries: the "upper part of abdomen broke by being thrown from horse in battle."<sup>38</sup>

The Civil War afforded Cain Adkins and his family opportunity for interaction and thus friction with Paris Brumfield and other future participants in the Lincoln County

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<sup>34</sup> "Service History of the 14<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Infantry Regiment," <http://freepages.military.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~us14thkyinfantry/history.html> (accessed 22 June 2014).

<sup>35</sup> Winchester Adkins, Carter's Company, 129<sup>th</sup> Regiment Virginia Militia, Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from Virginia (National Archives Microfilm Publication M324E, roll 1056), War Department Collection of Confederate Records, Record Group 109, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

<sup>36</sup> Jackson Adkins, Company G, 16<sup>th</sup> Virginia Cavalry, Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from Virginia (National Archives Microfilm Publication M324E, roll 146), War Department Collection of Confederate Records, Record Group 109, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC; Hardesty, *Hardesty's Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 168. According to Hardesty, he "served twelve months under General Floyd" (226).

<sup>37</sup> Adkins, *Land of York to Beech Fork*, 126.

<sup>38</sup> Special Schedule of the Eleventh Census (1890), Enumerating Union Veterans and Widows of Union Veterans of the Civil War for Wayne County, WV.

Feud. On 14 September 1863, Winchester Adkins, brother to Cain, brought an assumpsit suit against William R. Brumfield, brother to Paris, in Cabell County. Because neither Adkins nor Brumfield appeared for trial, the case was dismissed.<sup>39</sup> Of interest, Winchester Adkins and Paris Brumfield served in the 45<sup>th</sup> Battalion Virginia Infantry during the final years of the war.

#### SETTLEMENT AT HARTS CREEK

Cain Adkins was not a native to the Harts Creek community. The first members of the Adkins clan to migrate to Harts Creek were Isaac and Elias Adkins, who arrived from the Beech Fork area of Twelve Pole between 1824 and 1827.<sup>40</sup> Isaac and Elias were first cousins to Cain Adkins' father.<sup>41</sup> Isaac settled at the mouth of Adkins Branch, opposite Guyan River from the mouth of Harts Creek, while sibling Elias settled just upriver at the mouth of Adkins (later Fowler) Branch.<sup>42</sup> The farms were located on the east side of the river, some two miles apart. Isaac and Elias were prominent residents of the community, owning slaves. In 1850, Isaac was Logan County's second-largest slave-owner.<sup>43</sup> Cain's settlement in Harts Creek appears to have had little or nothing to do with Elias or Isaac Adkins; instead, it was due to his wife's West Fork origins. Interestingly, he made the move to Harts Creek about the time of his father's death on 2 March 1867.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Law Orders Book (1863-1869), 12, Cabell County Circuit Clerk's Office, Huntington, WV.

<sup>40</sup> Tax List for Logan County, VA, 1824; Tax List for Logan County, VA, 1827. Lambert in *The Llorrac* stated that Elias and Isaac Adkins settled locally about 1822 (8). I descend from Isaac Adkins.

<sup>41</sup> Adkins, *Land of York to Beech Fork*, 6, 8-11, 30-33, 36-38, 61, 125.

<sup>42</sup> Lambert in *The Llorrac* incorrectly reversed the locations of their settlement (8). (Isaac) Adkins Branch was later renamed Schoolhouse Hollow; Fowler Branch was originally known as (Elias) Adkins Branch. Isaac Adkins is my great-great-great-great-great-grandfather.

<sup>43</sup> U.S. Slave Schedule for Logan County, VA, 1850; U.S. Slave Schedule for Logan County, VA, 1860.

<sup>44</sup> Hardesty, *Hardesty's Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 226; Adkins, *Land of York to Beech Fork*, 61. Hardesty provides Littleberry's death year as 1866, while Adkins and his tombstone say

On 29 December 1868, he deeded his part of his father's estate in Wayne County to his sister, Mitty Fry.<sup>45</sup> This was also about the time his father-in-law Abner Vance acquired the Toney tract coveted by Paris Brumfield.<sup>46</sup>

## LAND OWNERSHIP

Cain Adkins, through his marriage into the Vance family, became a landowner in the mid-section of West Fork.<sup>47</sup> In 1872, father-in-law Abner Vance deeded him a forty acre tract of land worth two dollars-per-acre.<sup>48</sup> As of 1880, Cain constituted one of the community's smallest property owners; only twelve persons ranked at or below him.<sup>49</sup> In 1882, Abner Vance (widowed the previous year) bestowed an additional twenty-five acre tract of land worth two dollars-per-acre. The following year, 1883, Cain's property sported a building valued by the county assessor at fifty dollars.<sup>50</sup> In 1885, Adkins acquired two tracts of land totaling an additional 140 acres, more than tripling the size of his farm; one of the tracts included a building valued at 150 dollars. (This was likely more Vance property; Abner Vance died in 1885.) All told, by 1885, Cain's property consisted of four tracts totaling 205 acres worth 540 dollars, not including two structures

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1867. According to Daisy Ross (interview, 16 March 1996), Spicie Adkins, daughter of Cain, was born on Harts Creek in 1866.

<sup>45</sup> Joseph C. Wheeler, special commissioner, to Jackson Adkins and others, Deed of partition, 29 December 1868, Deed Book H, 569-572, Wayne County Clerk's Office, Wayne, WV.

<sup>46</sup> Law Orders Book A (1868-1875), November 1865, 145, Logan County Circuit Clerk's Office, Logan, WV.

<sup>47</sup> See Table 8.

<sup>48</sup> Land Book (1870-1878), Lincoln County Clerk's Office, Hamlin, WV.

<sup>49</sup> See Appendix 3. Cain Adkins maintained significant land holdings in Wayne County. On 18 November 1872, Jackson, Harmon, and Johnson Adkins—brothers to Cain—deeded him 150 acres on Lick Creek (Deed Book J, 215-216, Wayne County Clerk's Office, Wayne, WV).

<sup>50</sup> Land Book (1879-1885), Lincoln County Clerk's Office, Hamlin, WV.

worth 150 dollars.<sup>51</sup> On 6 February 1888, he made one additional land transaction: he secured from John W. Runyon, an enemy to Al Brumfield, 66 2/3 acres on the ridge between West Fork and Guyandotte River.<sup>52</sup> By 1889, Cain qualified as a respectable landowner in the community, although he remained one of the community's least wealthy citizens.<sup>53</sup> Nearly all of his property had been granted by his in-laws.

## STATUS

Cain Adkins initially derived his social status and social power from his family of procreation: the prominent and long-established Vance clan. By 1889, his land ownership and occupational statuses afforded him even greater power, authority, social capital, and prestige. In the fifteen years leading up to his feud with Paris Brumfield, Cain acted as a school teacher, United Baptist preacher, doctor, constable, and justice of the peace. By receiving his power through recognized sources, Cain was a man of authority. He further bolstered his statuses with good deeds. According to his granddaughter: "He had little shacks built and would bring in poor people that didn't have no homes and Grandpa would keep them and Grandma would have to furnish them with food. Kept them from starving to death."<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Land Book (1886-1891), Lincoln County Clerk's Office, Hamlin, WV. For specific calls of each tract, see Abiel A. Low et al. to Canaan Adkins, deed of sale, 1 July 1882, Commissioner's Record of Destroyed Title Papers Book 2, 347-349, Lincoln County Clerk's Office, Hamlin, WV.

<sup>52</sup> John W. Runyon to Canaan Adkins, deed of sale, 6 February 1888, Deed Book 52, 248, Lincoln County Clerk's Office, Hamlin, WV.

<sup>53</sup> See Appendix 4. Fae Smith, a great-granddaughter of Adkins and resident of Catlettsburg, KY, said in a 1995 interview: "I would imagine Grandpa Cain was pretty well off at that time compared to other people."

<sup>54</sup> Daisy Ross, interview by author and John Hartford, Kenova, WV, 16 March 1996.



TABLE 8  
*Cain Adkins Property in the Harts Creek Community, 1871-1895*

Year	No. Tracts	Total Acres	Buildings	Total Value
1871	0	0	\$0	\$0
1872-1881	1	40	\$0	\$80
1882	2	65	\$0	\$130
1883	2	65	\$50	\$167.50
1884	2	65	\$50	\$180
1885-1887	4	205	\$150	\$490
1888 <sup>a</sup>	4	205	\$150	\$490
1889-1890	4	205	\$150	\$490
1891 <sup>b</sup>	3	165	\$0	\$330
1892	3	165	\$0	\$330
1893	3	165	\$0	\$330
1894	0	0	\$0	\$0

*Sources:* Land Book (1867-1869), Lincoln County Clerk's Office, Hamlin, WV; Land Book (1870-1878), Lincoln County Clerk's Office, Hamlin, WV; Land Book (1879-1885), Lincoln County Clerk's Office, Hamlin, WV; Land Book (1886-1891), Lincoln County Clerk's Office, Hamlin, WV; Land Book (1892-1896), Lincoln County Clerk's Office, Hamlin, WV.

Note: Cain maintained ownership of a 154-acre tract of land in the Stonewall District of Wayne County prior to 1889. Thereafter, following his move away from Harts, he expanded the size of his Wayne County farm to 314 acres.

<sup>a</sup> Property total does not include purchase of 66 2/3 acres from John Runyon. He sold this tract to John H. Adkins on 12 May 1890.

<sup>b</sup> In 1890-1891, Cain Adkins sold one of his four tracts of land to John H. Adkins. On 25 December 1893, according to deed records, John H. Adkins sold all four tracts to Salena Vance. Tax books continued to list Cain as the owner of three tracts of land until 1894.

## OCCUPATIONS

Throughout the 1870s, Cain Adkins taught school in Harts Creek District.<sup>55</sup>

Initially, the county superintendent hired teachers based on a one-to-five certification scale, with a No. 1 certificate representing the best rating.<sup>56</sup> In 1872, Cain taught with a

<sup>55</sup> Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 25 October 1995.

<sup>56</sup> Charles H. Ambler, *A History of Education in West Virginia: From Early Colonial Times to 1949* (Huntington, WV: Standard Printing Publishing Company, 1951), 154.

Number Four certificate.<sup>57</sup> After 1873, the county superintendent, an *ex officio* chairman, and two experienced resident teachers issued teaching certificates.<sup>58</sup> By 1877-1878, Cain had improved his certificate to a Number Two.<sup>59</sup> Beginning in 1877, teachers were required to attend at least one county institute per year. These institutes lasted five days. In 1877, Cain likely attended the Peabody Normal Institute held at Hamlin and presided over by Professor James Francis Snowden of Wheeling.<sup>60</sup> After 1879, the county superintendent and two experienced teachers bearing Number One certificates determined certification; certificates were also based on a one-to-three scale.<sup>61</sup> Applicants were required “to be of good moral character and temperate habits.”<sup>62</sup> Cain’s annual pay between 1872 and 1881 ranged from \$31.46 to \$28.22.<sup>63</sup>

Cain Adkins, a schoolteacher imparting knowledge, morality, and discipline upon local children, represented modernity in the community.<sup>64</sup> West Virginia teachers were expected to impart a great deal of sophisticated subject matter, as well as morality. In 1882, the West Virginia State Superintendent of Free Schools prepared teachers at county institutes with exercises in geography, arithmetic, manners (“how to teach politeness in public schools”), alphabet, general history, writing, tardiness, physiology, language lessons (“a correct use of the mother tongue”), spelling, reading, history, writing,

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<sup>57</sup> “Annual Reports of County Superintendents,” *Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Free Schools of the State of West Virginia for 1872*, 53; Fred B. Lambert Papers, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV.

<sup>58</sup> Ambler, *A History of Education in West Virginia*, 154.

<sup>59</sup> “Reports of County Superintendents,” *Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Free Schools of the State of West Virginia for the Years 1877 and 1878* (Wheeling, WV: W.J. Johnston, Public Printer, 1878), 83.

<sup>60</sup> “Reports of County Superintendents,” *Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Free Schools of the State of West Virginia for the Years 1877 and 1878*, 83.

<sup>61</sup> Ambler, *A History of Education in West Virginia*, 155.

<sup>62</sup> Ambler, *A History of Education in West Virginia*.

<sup>63</sup> Ambler, *A History of Education in West Virginia*, 164.

<sup>64</sup> Historian John A. Williams, in *West Virginia: A History* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1984) cites teachers and preachers as forces for modernization (105).

spelling, hygiene for school room, mental arithmetic, grammar, letter writing, mineralogy, map drawing, supplementary reading, West Virginia geography, need for natural sciences, school law, music, influence of newspapers in education, and recreation and playground. The superintendent also emphasized “the teacher’s influence, duties and responsibilities in regard to the morals of the pupil.”<sup>65</sup>

During the feud era, Cain Adkins served as the primary United Baptist (UB) preacher in the lower section of Harts Creek.<sup>66</sup> Along with other local preachers, Cain counted himself among the community’s “respectable” group of citizens and acted (with his congregation) as an agent of social control. As a preacher, Cain garnered a great deal of status within the community. “A God-fearing man has the unlimited respect of everyone in the mountains,” geographer Ellen Churchill Semple wrote in the *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society* (1901). “A preacher is a privileged person. Wherever he goes, he finds free board and lodging for himself and his horse, and his horse is always shod free.” Preachers were also excused, along with physically handicapped men and males under 15 years or over 60 years, from obligatory work on public roads.<sup>67</sup> At that time, preachers were not paid; paid preachers were not favored.<sup>68</sup>

It is worth noting that preachers were not *always* well-received by certain elements of a community. Consider this event, which occurred at Cove Gap, near Little Harts Creek, in October of 1888: “We had preaching the greater portion of last week, at the school house. We had a very interesting protracted meeting until the closing sermon

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<sup>65</sup> “Programme,” *Huntington (WV) Argus*, 29 June 1882.

<sup>66</sup> Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 25 October 1995; Daisy Ross, interview, 16 March 1996; *Bethlehem Association of United Baptist Churches*, 17.

<sup>67</sup> Semple, *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society*, 24; Eller, *Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers*, 36.

<sup>68</sup> Durwood Dunn, *Cades Cove: The Life and Death of a Southern Appalachian Community, 1818-1937* (Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1988), 106.

Sunday night when some of the ‘baser sort’ had to let the congregation know that they were present by throwing rocks against the house. Justice ought to deal with such ‘rowdies.’” An uninterrupted service was newsworthy. “We had preaching at the school house at this place, by Revs. Jas. Queen and W.K. Spence,” the *Ceredo Advance* reported of a Cove Gap gathering late in March of 1889. “There was a very large congregation and the best of order was kept throughout the entire services.”<sup>69</sup>

Cain, a minister in the Bethlehem Association of United Baptists, would have embraced evangelicalism, represented progressivism, opposed predestination, favored missionary work, and practiced open communion. The Bethlehem Association to which he belonged was a General Baptist association (more progressive), unlike some other neighboring associations who were Regular Baptists (less progressive).<sup>70</sup> Because evangelicals have been linked by scholars to market forces, Adkins’ affiliation with the Bethlehem Association may have allied him with local businessmen.<sup>71</sup> One likely member of Adkins’ congregation was neighbor John W. Runyon, chief antagonist to Al Brumfield, son of Paris. Runyon’s wife was a United Baptist.<sup>72</sup>

The Bethlehem Association—and most assuredly, Cain Adkins—frowned upon alcohol consumption and huckstering, particularly at its annual association meeting. As early as 1877, the association declared that “all members in the association are forbidden to deal in spirituous liquers of any kind.” In 1879, it stated that “no persons shall be

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<sup>69</sup> “Cove Gap,” *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 12 October 1888; “Cove Gap, W.Va.,” *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 10 April 1889. A correspondent named “O.K.” penned the latter dispatch on April 3.

<sup>70</sup> Frank S. Mead, *Handbook of Denominations of the United States* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1982). The other associations commonly cited in the region are Mt. Sion (Regular United), Calvary (Regular United), Union Bethlehem (Regular), and Old Bethlehem (Regular).

<sup>71</sup> Waller in *Feud* identifies the connection between evangelicalism Protestantism and the promotion/defense of a market economy as “enormous” (264).

<sup>72</sup> James Webb, interview by author, Stidham, KY, December 2006. Webb recalled that John Runyon’s widow was the namesake of the Mary United Baptist Church at Tomahawk, KY.

allowed to bring any huckster wagon or tracks to sell within two miles of the preaching ground hereafter.” In 1883, it directed people to “place the peddling wagons in proper distance from the stand and allow nothing sold that will intoxicate and see that wagons leave the Association grounds after four o’clock.” In 1884, the association forbade “any Huckster Wagon selling cider on the ground.” By 1888, the association yielded a bit on the issue of huckstering: “We rescind the order made by the Association last year concerning Huckster Wagons and leave it to the church where the association is held.”<sup>73</sup>

The Bethlehem Association also believed “feetwashing is an example of Jesus Christ and that we keep it up,” and also that “we set aside Dec 25<sup>th</sup> as a day of Fasting and Prayer.”<sup>74</sup>

As a United Baptist preacher, Cain Adkins regularly married residents of the Harts Creek community. From 19 September 1874 until 12 April 1889, he performed thirty-eight wedding ceremonies in the Logan County section of Harts Creek.<sup>75</sup> Based on available records, the Tomblin and Workman clans, as well as the Dingess and Mullins families, represented a significant percentage of Cain’s marriages. Of note: Adkins did not marry any members of the Brumfield family. The Brumfields seem to have preferred Josephus Workman or Isaac Fry, two preachers in the Guyandotte River section. After 1882, the year of Boney Lucas’ killing, Cain did not marry any Brumfield associates (Dingess/Farley) in Logan County. Of interest, many of the families married by Adkins (Tomblin, Workman, Mullins, Adams) were residents of Upper Hart affiliated with anti-Brumfield forces. The most striking example would be Milt Haley and Imogene Mullins,

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<sup>73</sup> *Bethlehem Association of United Baptist Churches*, 39-40.

<sup>74</sup> *Bethlehem Association of United Baptist Churches*, 39.

<sup>75</sup> See Table 9. Marriages-Births-Deaths (1872-1892), 27-60, Logan County Circuit Clerk’s Office, Logan, WV. Unfortunately, records concerning Adkins’ Lincoln County marriages were lost in a courthouse fire. One 1888 Lincoln County record for Albert Adkins and Emma Jane Hager has been located, courtesy of Rena Adkins of Hamlin, WV.

TABLE 9  
*Logan County Marriages Performed by Cain Adkins, 1874-1889*

Surname	Percent of Marriages
Tomblin	7.9
Workman	7.9
Dingess	6.6
Mullins	6.6
Browning	5.3
Bryant	5.3
Dempsey	3.9
Farley	3.9
Kinser	3.9
Abbott	2.6
Adams	2.6
Adkins	2.6
Caldwell	2.6
Kirk	2.6
Marcum	2.6
Thompson	2.6
Other	30.3

*Source:* Marriages-Births-Deaths (1872-1892), 27-60, Logan County Clerk's Office, Logan, WV.

who married in 1884; in 1889, Haley would be accused of shooting Paris Brumfield's son from ambush.<sup>76</sup> One final observation: Adkins' number of Logan marriage ceremonies declined steadily from 1877 to 1881, at which time they increased in 1882, then declined until 1888. Over one-fourth of his ceremonies occurred in 1888-1889. If this pattern reflects community support or dissatisfaction of Adkins, it appears he was popular in 1877, 1882 (the year of Boney Lucas' murder), and 1888-1889 (the feud's hottest years).

One peculiarity regarding Adkins' role as a church leader was his fondness for fiddle music. In fact, he *was* a fiddler. More traditional preachers and congregations

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<sup>76</sup> Marriages-Births-Deaths (1872-1892), 47, Logan County Circuit Clerk's Office, Logan, WV.

considered fiddle music inappropriate. The fiddle was widely regarded as the “devil’s box” due to its association with drinking, dancing, and sin.<sup>77</sup> Ignoring this, or perhaps hiding it, the preacher fully embraced music. Several of his children and in-laws played fiddles and banjos. In 1896, when Cain lay dying, “someone came in and wanted to hear a song” so “they had him to play the fiddle on his deathbed. It made him feel better.”<sup>78</sup> Adkins played a fiddle, saying, “They ain’t no harm in a fiddle. If they’s any harm, it’s when no one plays it.”<sup>79</sup> Cain’s love of music, particularly the fiddle, was precarious because his status as a preacher came at the discretion of his congregation, who scrutinized him constantly.

For much of his life, Cain Adkins operated as a country doctor, or “herb doctor.”<sup>80</sup> His granddaughter recalled that he was a “medical doctor” but no proof of medical training exists. “He just had the brains,” his granddaughter said. As a doctor in the Harts Creek community, Cain healed and brought comfort to the sick. His doctoring activities joined his roles of teaching and preaching to shape him as a man who could “alter fate.” As with his preaching, his doctoring generated little or no money. Farmers typically paid him with dried apples or chickens. “Lots of times when he doctored, they didn’t have no money,” his granddaughter recalled. “They’d give him something off of the farm.”<sup>81</sup>

In 1881, the West Virginia legislature passed a law that created a state board of health and required a physician to hold a degree from a reputable medical college in the

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<sup>77</sup> Charles Wolfe, *The Devil’s Box: Masters of Southern Fiddling* (Nashville & London: The Country Music Foundation Press & Vanderbilt University Press, 1997), xv-xvi.

<sup>78</sup> Daisy Ross, interview, 16 March 1996.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 25 October 1995. As of 2015, Adkins descendants still use his diphtheria remedy.

<sup>81</sup> Daisy Ross, interview, 11 December 1995.

school of medicine to which the person belongs; or prove practice in West Virginia for ten years prior to 8 March 1881; or pass an examination administered by the state board of health.<sup>82</sup> A candidate for licensure should possess “a good moral character, temperate habits, and pay a fee of ten dollars, which shall be returned to him if a certificate be refused.”<sup>83</sup> As for the exam itself: “Examinations may be in whole or in part in writing, and shall be of an elementary and practical character, and shall embrace the general subjects of anatomy, physiology, chemistry, *materia medica*, pathology, pathological anatomy, surgery and obstetrics, but sufficiently strict to test the qualifications of the candidate as a practitioner of medicine, surgery and obstetrics.”<sup>84</sup> In the event a person met one of the three criteria, the state board of health would grant a certificate. A practicing physician would be required to pay a special tax of fifty dollars per month.<sup>85</sup> As part of this law, the state board of health, with the approval of the County Court, would also appoint three “intelligent and discreet persons (one of whom, at least, shall be a legally qualified practicing physician)” to constitute a county board of health, each serving a two-year term.<sup>86</sup> In 1882, this latter aspect of the law was changed: the County Court would thereafter nominate physicians to serve on the local board at the discretion of the state board.<sup>87</sup>

Cain Adkins was not listed in official state reports as one of eleven doctors residing in Lincoln County in 1882.<sup>88</sup> Among the county’s eleven doctors, none had

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<sup>82</sup> *First, Second, and Third Annual Reports of the Secretary of the State Board of Health of West Virginia*, 7, 10-11.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 11-12.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.



completed medical school; six had been certified by having practiced for ten years or more, while five had passed the examination through the local board. Nine were located in Hamlin, two in Griffithsville.<sup>89</sup> Among all licensed doctors, T.H. Buckley, a resident of Cove Gap in Wayne County, lived closest to Harts Creek.<sup>90</sup> After 1882, if Cain continued practicing medicine without meeting the new criteria, essentially operating as a “quack,” he would have been subject to “a fine of not less than fifty dollars, nor more than five hundred dollars or by imprisonment in the county jail for a period of not less than thirty days, nor more than one year, or by both such fine and imprisonment, for each and every offense.”<sup>91</sup>

During the 1880s, Cain Adkins served as a justice of the peace in Harts Creek District.<sup>92</sup> A district justice of the peace (JP) resolved misdemeanor offenses and small civil claims, set initial bail in felony cases, and conducted preliminary hearings.<sup>93</sup> JPs were elected by residents of the district to a four-year term. Each district had two justices and two constables. A justice could appoint special constables to assist him in serving warrants or making arrests.<sup>94</sup> Typically, JPs were fair and wise, men held in high esteem by their neighbors. They were connected genealogically to large voting blocs within the district. They also possessed some local political power, or acted as political pawns.<sup>95</sup> JPs were not paid for their services, although they were compensated by the costs assessed

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<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 97-98.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>92</sup> Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 25 October 1995.

<sup>93</sup> H. John Rogers, “Justice of the Peace,” *The West Virginia Encyclopedia*, <http://www.wvencyclopedia.org/articles/1084> (accessed 6 March 2012).

<sup>94</sup> Charles Brumfield, interview by author, Harts, WV, 2 July 2009.

<sup>95</sup> Dunn in *Cades Cove* referred to JPs as “almost always men of some education and wealth, whose unquestioned integrity lent gravity to their judgments” (130).

against the losing party in civil cases and against criminal defendants who were convicted.<sup>96</sup>

Records list Cain Adkins as a justice between 5 March 1885 and 7 July 1888.<sup>97</sup> As JP, Adkins served on the front line in matters concerning local criminal elements. Every decision he rendered risked angering segments (sometimes very dangerous segments) of the community. While Cain's JP record book is lost to history, a Harts Creek District JP book for 1905 to 1926 shows that JPs dealt with matters of assault, personal property disputes, illegitimacy, rape, theft, carrying a revolver, land disputes, and disturbing religious worship.<sup>98</sup>

Interestingly, by serving the Harts community as a teacher, preacher, doctor, and lawman, Cain reversed his earlier rejection of his family heritage and became a full-fledged participant in it. While maintaining his distaste for milling or inn-keeping and never securing the massive amount of land ownership enjoyed by his forefathers, he nevertheless continued their tradition of public service. Some of his familial contemporaries led similar lives: James Madison Ross, a brother-in-law, served as justice of the peace in the Stonewall District of Wayne County. Ross, like Cain, supported public education; while not a teacher, he did donate land that facilitated construction of the Bartram Fork School.<sup>99</sup> Jackson Adkins, Cain's younger brother, was a Christian Baptist

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<sup>96</sup> Rogers, "Justice of the Peace," *The West Virginia Encyclopedia*.

<sup>97</sup> Commissioner's Record of Destroyed Title Papers Book 2, 1-13, Lincoln County Clerk's Office, Hamlin, WV; Floyd and Martha Caldwell to Melvin Kirk, deed of sale, 7 July 1888, Deed Book S, 389, Logan County Clerk's Office, Logan, WV.

<sup>98</sup> Charles Adkins, justice of the peace docket book, 1905-1926 (copy), author's collection.

<sup>99</sup> Adkins, *Land of York to Beech Fork*, 124-125.

minister, lawyer, justice of the peace, notary public, and postmaster at Cove Gap in Wayne County.<sup>100</sup>

## FAMILY CONSIDERATIONS

Cain Adkins, as the head of his clan, wielded great influence among his family; he also had power over fraternal interest groups, i.e., sons-in-law and employees. Cain's in-laws, particularly teacher and landowner Elisha W. Vance and Justice of the Peace Elias Vance, provided a significant support system in the community.<sup>101</sup> Cain could also depend on support from his nephew-in-law, John H. Napier, a Hart merchant and one-time Wayne County superintendent, who later operated a detective agency.<sup>102</sup> As for his own immediate family, Cain fathered ten children between 1862 and 1880.<sup>103</sup> Nancy and Flora, two of his daughters, died of diphtheria and were buried at the family farm.<sup>104</sup> Because his oldest children were female, he enjoyed no sons of fighting age during the Lincoln County Feud. He did, however, possess three sons-in-law of fighting age, namely Mont "Boney" Lucas, Canaan D. Jordan, and Green McCoy.

Boney Lucas, a native of Green Shoal Creek, near Hart, married Cain's oldest daughter, Angeline, in 1877.<sup>105</sup> Boney and Angeline lived on 75 acres of land on West

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<sup>100</sup> Hardesty, *Hardesty's Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 226; Adkins, *Land of York to Beech Fork*, 125.

<sup>101</sup> *West Virginia Educational Directory* (1871), 107.

<sup>102</sup> Hardesty, *Hardesty's Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 136; Robert Michael Thompson, *East Lynn Booming* (Genoa, WV: n.p., 2007), 32.

<sup>103</sup> U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1870; U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1880; Adkins, *Land of York to Beech Fork*, 125.

<sup>104</sup> Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 27 October 1995; Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 8 December 1995; Daisy Ross, interview, 16 March 1996. According to her headstone, Nancy was born in 1868 and died in January of 1872. Flora's headstone is unmarked.

<sup>105</sup> U.S. Census for Logan County, VA, 1860; U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1870; Adkins, *Land of York to Beech Fork*, 235-236.

Fork, which Lucas had acquired from his wife's uncle, Overton McCloud, in 1881. Of interest, Adkins family history hints at a divide between Adkins and Lucas. Following Lucas' shooting by Brumfield, as he lay dying, no local preacher—including Cain—would baptize him because he had not been a member of any church. Adkins eventually consented to baptize Lucas; neighbors constructed a contraption to transport the wounded man to the creek.<sup>106</sup> That same year, 1882, Lucas' property was transferred to Edward O. Estep. By 1884, Cain had acquired it.<sup>107</sup>

In 1882, Canaan D. Jordan of Wayne County married Cain's second-oldest daughter, Jane.<sup>108</sup> The Jordan and Vance families were intertwined: Canaan Jordan's mother, the former Theresa Ross, was the wife of Jane's maternal uncle Addison Vance (making Jordan a stepson to Jane's uncle); Canaan Jordan's sister Mindiana married Addison Vance's son (her stepbrother).<sup>109</sup> Canaan and Jane lived on Harts Creek as late as 1889.<sup>110</sup> Migrant laborers Sherman Boyd and Lynza John McCoy (brother to Green) are the most remembered of Cain's employees; they likely acted as partisans in the feud.<sup>111</sup>

## FEUD WITH PARIS BRUMFIELD

The Brumfield-Adkins feud arose out of personal grievances between Paris Brumfield and Cain Adkins. The first potential cause of trouble occurred during the Civil War, through the 1863 *Adkins v. Brumfield* lawsuit. Additionally, Cain's switching of

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<sup>106</sup> Daisy Ross, interview, 11 December 1995; Daisy Ross, interview, 16 March 1996.

<sup>107</sup> Land Book (1879-1885), Lincoln County Clerk's Office, Hamlin, WV.

<sup>108</sup> Canaan D. Jordan to Mary J. Adkins, marriage record, 20 December 1882, Logan County, WV. [http://www.wvculture.org/vrr/va\\_view2.aspx?FilmNumber=571278&ImageNumber=48](http://www.wvculture.org/vrr/va_view2.aspx?FilmNumber=571278&ImageNumber=48)

<sup>109</sup> U.S. Census for Wayne County, WV, 1880.

<sup>110</sup> Lessie Jordan, birth record, 13 February 1889, Lincoln County, WV.

<sup>111</sup> Daisy Ross, interview, 11 December 1995.

loyalties—his service in the Union army—may have irked Brumfield. Abner Vance’s purchase of the coveted Toney tract was a likely point of contention; Vance was Cain’s father-in-law. Cain’s postwar migration to Harts Creek (an “outsider”) as well as his pulling of other related (mostly prominent and influential) Wayne Countians into the community may have irritated Brumfield (a “native”). Most importantly, Adkins’ postwar occupational statuses placed him in direct conflict with Brumfield; each man, through his status set, possessed conflicting values, norms, and lifestyles.

Cain Adkins and Paris Brumfield did not feud due to land disputes or business issues. Brumfield *was* land hungry; yet his farm and that of Adkins were not adjacent to one another. Adkins claimed a farm of 205 acres on West Fork valued at 540 dollars with two buildings worth an additional 150 dollars, while Brumfield owned (with his wife) 547 acres of land on Browns Branch, seventy-five acres at Fowler Branch, and 696 acres at Big Ugly Creek.<sup>112</sup> No records or oral traditions exist documenting land disputes between Brumfield and Adkins. Brumfield seemed concerned with property at the mouth of Harts Creek, while Adkins was quite content at his West Fork farm, some three miles away. Likewise, Brumfield and Adkins were not business competitors. While Brumfield timbered, distilled, and operated a general store, Adkins was not so inclined.

Cain Adkins’ status as a teacher in the Harts Creek community contributed to his feud with Paris Brumfield. As a man offering knowledge, progress, and morality, Cain irritated Paris and other local elements who did not favor public education or modern thought. Brumfield’s views regarding education are not entirely known, but based on

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<sup>112</sup> Land Book (1879-1885), Lincoln County Clerk’s Office, Hamlin, WV. Brumfield owned two tracts; his wife owned six tracts. One of her tracts, valued at a whopping seven dollars per acre, contained a building worth one hundred dollars. Most tracts in the vicinity were valued at \$1.50 per acre.

census records he was illiterate and few of his children regularly attended school.<sup>113</sup> Cain, a preacher and teacher, actively crusaded against the use of alcoholic beverages and narcotics; this would have also stirred resistance from the Brumfield camp.<sup>114</sup>

There is, of course, a possibility that Cain Adkins served as the teacher to Paris Brumfield's children. In this instance, it is easy to postulate two immediate scenarios of conflict. First, if Brumfield was lax in sending his children to school after 1877, when the West Virginia legislature passed the Compulsory Attendance Act, Adkins would have been obligated to intervene. The Compulsory Attendance Act required teachers to enforce compulsory attendance and required trustees to close schools if daily attendance fell below thirty-five percent of the total number enumerated in any month.<sup>115</sup> Second, Brumfield's 1882 murder of Boney Lucas at least partly arose from trouble occurring between the Brumfield and Lucas children.<sup>116</sup> If their trouble arose during school, a school taught by Cain, or if Cain had shown favoritism or partiality toward the Lucas children (his grandchildren), it would have prompted conflict.

Cain Adkins' status as a preacher also placed him at odds with Paris Brumfield. His evangelicalism particularly opposed the prevailing culture of honor embraced by Brumfield.<sup>117</sup> More specifically, as a spiritual leader and head of the community's more respectable group of citizens, Cain would have offered criticism and likely condemnation of neighbors who chose to operate outside of the church's moral code. Cain, then, represented social control: watching, regulating, constraining, and providing external

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<sup>113</sup> U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1880.

<sup>114</sup> Ambler, *A History of Education in West Virginia*, 212. No evidence exists the Brumfields used narcotics, but narcotics were targeted by teachers during this time.

<sup>115</sup> Ambler, *A History of Education in West Virginia*, 228.

<sup>116</sup> Lawrence Kirk, interview, 27 July 1993.

<sup>117</sup> Ayers, *Vengeance & Justice*, 27.

containment for those (like Brumfield) who lacked internal containment. No doubt, his sermons frequently offered direct or indirect criticisms of Brumfield's reckless hedonism, specifically his blatant adultery and connection to alcohol.<sup>118</sup> Brumfield, by contrast, does not appear to have been a member of *any* church.<sup>119</sup> Assisting Cain, of course, in his crusade was the congregation. At times, the church's power to act as a sort of "invisible government"—to control the mores and attitudes of a community—held more power over the community than did civil authorities, political parties, or businessmen.<sup>120</sup>

Cain's service as a justice of the peace in Harts Creek District most aggravated his relationship with Paris Brumfield. Adkins' role as a judge within the district and his ability to call out constables to enforce the law upon residents stood in stark contrast to Brumfield's role as a law-breaker. His occupation as a justice likely brought him into direct conflict with Brumfield, whose lifestyle frequently challenged the law. It is easy to imagine Adkins called upon to render verdicts regarding or to correct Brumfield's criminal behavior. Because Cain's service as JP required the approval of the district's electorate, there is also room for political speculation. Both Adkins and Brumfield were Democrats.<sup>121</sup> Regardless of party registration, it is difficult to imagine Brumfield supporting his nemesis in a district-wide election for justice of the peace. It's entirely

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<sup>118</sup> *Bethlehem Association of United Baptist Churches*, 39-40. Also see Lewis, *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside*, where he writes "a strong church membership and a growing middle class, often one and the same, condemned drunkenness and the fighting, prostitution and other behavior that accompanied drinking in boom towns" (208). Dunn, in *Cades Cove*, stated "the Baptist remained strongly opposed to alcohol consumption" during the 1800s (110).

<sup>119</sup> The earliest church records available for the Harts Creek community, the Montana United Baptist Church, established in 1894, and the Low Gap United Baptist Church, established in 1898, show only one Brumfield member. Copies of these church records are located in the author's private collection.

<sup>120</sup> Dunn, *Cades Cove*, 99, 111.

<sup>121</sup> Brumfield's politics is based on his service in the Confederate army and the party affiliations of his oldest children. Adkins' politics is based on a story printed in the *Huntington (WV) Advertiser* on 23 June 1888.

possible, and quite likely, that Brumfield and Adkins affiliated with different *factions* of Democrats popular at that time: the Regulars, Redeemers, Agrarians, and the Kanawha Ring.<sup>122</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The Lincoln County Feud arose out of personal grievances between prominent residents Paris Brumfield and Cain Adkins. Cain's personal history reveals a few possibilities for trouble with Brumfield: his brother's 1863 lawsuit against Brumfield's brother, his service in the Union Army during the Civil War, and his father-in-law's acquisitions of the Toney tract. The fact Adkins originated outside of the Harts Creek community could have played a role in their vendetta. He also may have provoked Brumfield by attracting other successful Wayne County men to Harts Creek. Unquestionably, by 1882, their feud was underway; in that year, Brumfield killed Cain's son-in-law, Boney Lucas.

Most importantly, Cain's occupational status—teacher, preacher, and justice of the peace—certainly placed him at odds with Brumfield. As justice of the peace, Cain opposed Brumfield's criminality. As the feud widened to include others, Cain appears to have joined with Brumfield antagonists. John W. Runyon, enemy to Paris' son, was his most significant ally. Both Adkins and Runyon were United Baptists and they enjoyed a land deal together in 1888. They were also linked by Green McCoy, Cain's son-in-law, and Milt Haley, Runyon's cousin, both of whom were great friends.

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<sup>122</sup> Lewis, *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside*, 213-214. Lewis also notes (8) how, during this era, the old Confederate-Democratic vs. Yankee-Republican split was replaced by pro-industrialist and anti-industrialist factions in each political party.



## CHAPTER FIVE: MERCHANTS AND TIMBER: MONEY MEN AND WOOD HICKS

During the 1880s, commercial timbering disrupted the socioeconomic fabric of the Harts Creek community. Prior to that time, Harts Creek was a relatively stable, well-integrated settlement; it largely remained so until the commencement of the feud. Positively, timber prompted population growth and diversity, fostered more business opportunity, offered seasonal cash-based occupations, further integrated the local economy into the national economy, and provided modernity. Negatively, timber fostered a rougher and rowdier culture, led to the destruction and recession of farming property and interests, triggered profit-motivated jealousies and disputes, and contributed to a sketchy business climate in the town of Hart.<sup>1</sup> The growth of the timber industry did not trigger the Lincoln County Feud, but it did agitate it. The evolution of Hart (town), directly connected to the local timber boom, likewise contributed to the feud, but did not cause it.

### BIG TIMBER

During the 1880s, the Harts Creek community hosted a rather large-scale and unprecedented timber boom.<sup>2</sup> “Hart’s Creek district is one of the largest of the eight in Lincoln county, and is situated in the extreme southern part of the county and is bounded on the south by Logan county,” the *Wheeling Intelligencer* reported in 1889. “The Guyan

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<sup>1</sup> For more on this process, see Lewis, *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside*; and Waller, *Feud*, 9-10, 12.

<sup>2</sup> *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 9 January 1886. Examining all available issues of the *Logan County Banner* and the *Huntington Advertiser* for the period of 1889 to 1900 reveal that an even greater timber boom would occur in the 1890s.

river traverses the entire western boundary of the district. It is a fertile, little valley and the hills are heavily timbered and there has not been a time for ten years when there was not a lumber camp within its boundaries.”<sup>3</sup> Poplar, walnut, oak, ash, beech, chestnut, and pine were abundant.<sup>4</sup> In 1885, one visitor to Logan County “reported all the creeks leading into Guyandotte river full of timber awaiting water to bring it out.”<sup>5</sup> In 1886, the *Huntington Advertiser* crowed: “Guyan River and its tributaries are booming. Large quantities of timber have been rafted at the mouths of tributary creeks.”<sup>6</sup> In 1889, the *Logan County Banner* said “two hundred rafts were started to market” and “there is still a large quantity of timber tied up at this place.”<sup>7</sup> As late as 1893, there yet remained “magnificent tracts of tens of thousands of acres of timber which have never been touched by the woodman’s axe” in the Harts Creek community.<sup>8</sup>

#### TIMBER BOSSES: ENOCH BAKER AND BURL FARLEY

Enoch Baker, who migrated to the area in 1877, was one of the most notable timber personalities operating on Harts Creek during the feud era. Enoch was born on 5 May 1842 in Annapolis, Nova Scotia, the son of Ward and Hannah (Grimes) Baker.

According to *West Virginia and Its People*:

He went to school and remained there, working on the farm, until his nineteenth year; then he struck out to seek his fortune. Gold had been found in Nova Scotia, and his first experience was in the diggings on the Atlantic shore of the province; here he remained, with no great success. In 1862, at the age of twenty, he went to Boston, and remained there, following his trade, that of carpenter, for seven years; in the summer varying employment with mowing grain. In 1869 he migrated west

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<sup>3</sup> “The Terrible Vendetta,” *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 29 October 1889.

<sup>4</sup> Summers, *The Mountain State*, 175-176.

<sup>5</sup> *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 24 October 1885. This type of story is common in the *Advertiser* and other regional newspapers during this period.

<sup>6</sup> *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 9 January 1886.

<sup>7</sup> *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 9 May 1889.

<sup>8</sup> Summers, *The Mountain State*, 176.

as far as Indianapolis, and here worked at the carpenter's trade, and took building contracts. For four years he prospered there, but in the panic of 1873, he lost all his money. He struggled on again, however, poor enough, but not disheartened. In September, 1877, he came to West Virginia and entered into the timber business.<sup>9</sup>

In 1880, Baker, described as “a champion with both the axe, and as a mower,” lived with a Scaggs family on Crawley Creek, near Harts Creek.<sup>10</sup> For many years, Enoch remained a single man, although he did father one child named Roxie Alice, born 14 September 1882, by Missouri Kinser, and at least two more children, Anna (born 1886) and Thomas (born 1888), by Ann (Browning) Butcher, the wife of a neighbor.<sup>11</sup> In 1883, Baker operated a “lower dam” on Browns Run of Smokehouse Fork of Harts Creek. He continued his work as a timber man until 1884, then spent a year in Tug River area.<sup>12</sup> Thereafter, he settled in Huntington and became active in the real estate business.<sup>13</sup> Baker was a Democrat and Baptist, and affiliated with the Masons, Modern Woodmen, and the Knights of Pythias.<sup>14</sup> The *Logan County Banner* kept its readers up to date on Baker's return trips to Logan County. “Enoch Baker, who has been at work in the county clerk's office and post office for several weeks, is now on Hart's creek,” it reported on 12 September 1889.<sup>15</sup>

James Burwell “Burl” Farley, who resided on Smokehouse Fork of Harts Creek, was a noted *native* timber boss.<sup>16</sup> Burl was born 18 March 1856 to William H. and

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<sup>9</sup> Miller and Maxwell, *West Virginia and Its People* Vol. 2, 268. The authors described Baker as having been born of “good old Anglo-Saxon stock” (268).

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Census for Logan County, West Virginia, 1880. According to John F. Ferrell in *Centennial Program, City of Logan, West Virginia, 1852-1952* (Logan, WV: Logan Centennial Association, 1952), Baker built the first splash dam on Crawley Creek (14).

<sup>11</sup> Roxie Alice Hager, death record, 14 March 1964, Lincoln County, WV; Liz Richner, email to author, New Smyrna Beach, FL, 28 January 2015.

<sup>12</sup> Miller and Maxwell, *West Virginia and Its People*, 269.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 12 September 1889.

<sup>16</sup> Verdayne Shelton, interview, 22 November 1995. Based on Logan County court cases, his timber career really accelerated in the 1890s, after the feud.

Elizabeth Jane (Clark) Farley in Logan County, (West) Virginia.<sup>17</sup> On 7 August 1877, he married Mary Ann Dingess, daughter of Henderson and Sarah (Adams) Dingess, in Logan County. Burl and Henderson were first cousins and thereafter in-laws. Cain Adkins, presumably not yet engaged in a quarrel with the Brumfields, performed the marriage ceremony.<sup>18</sup> In 1880, Burl lived in Harts Creek District of Lincoln County.<sup>19</sup> Later in the decade, he worked timber with Al Brumfield, his brother-in-law.<sup>20</sup> He was also a member of the gun culture; he always kept a .38 on his person.<sup>21</sup> On 4 July 1888, Burl pled guilty to a crime in Logan County and paid a one dollar fine.<sup>22</sup> On 8 April 1889, he pled not guilty to a felony and was released on bail. On 2 July 1889, a felony indictment against him was discharged in Logan County.<sup>23</sup> As of 1889, Burl owned 35 acres of land valued at one dollar-per-acre on the Smokehouse Fork of Harts Creek in Logan County; his wife owned 155 acres at that same location valued at \$890.60, including a thirty-five dollar building.<sup>24</sup> By 1889, Burl had fathered five children, four living.<sup>25</sup>

Mr. Farley, a brother-in-law to Al Brumfield, was noted as a prominent but intimidating man. His nephew had this to say of him:

Uncle Burl was pretty well to do. He started out in timber. [My grandpa] Will Headley stayed around Burl Farley a lot. He went to Harts Creek around Burl's. Burl was dangerous. He was an Atheist. He didn't believe in no hereafter. Had nothing to fear. Will said so. Burl had to be to make it on Harts Creek. If he liked you, he was good to you. He ruled over his domain down there. What he said went. Uncle Bal Headley told me that he drove some nails in a board and had an

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<sup>17</sup> U.S. Census for Logan County, VA, 1860.

<sup>18</sup> Marriages-Births-Deaths (1872-1892), 34, Logan County Clerk's Office, Logan, WV.

<sup>19</sup> U.S. Census for Lincoln County, West Virginia, 1880.

<sup>20</sup> Carolyn "Johnnie" Farley, interview, 24 October 1995.

<sup>21</sup> Carolyn "Johnnie" Farley, interview by author, Shively, WV, 6 May 1996.

<sup>22</sup> Law Orders Book E (1887-1890), 157, Logan County Circuit Clerk's Office, Logan, WV.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 331-332, 400.

<sup>24</sup> Land Book (1887-1892), Logan County Clerk's Office, Logan, WV.

<sup>25</sup> U.S. Census for Logan County, West Virginia, 1900.

old poor horse and beat that horse around all over. Said, "I come to look at it. It was almost dark. It looked like a big fat hoss." He sold it to him. Now that's cruel: beatin' a horse with a board with nails in it to get it to swell up.<sup>26</sup>

## TIMBER CAMPS

Timber camps represented headquarters for the vast logging operations in the locale and the shanty house served as the camp's primary building. In the center of the shanty, a large cambuse fire blazed on a mound of sand beneath a large hole in the ceiling. The fire burned continually and provided heat and light. Along the inside walls of the shanty, bunks with straw mattresses were situated closely together.<sup>27</sup> Ordinarily, a camp hosted about fifty men.<sup>28</sup> Initially, camps were located near settlements. Later, as mountains were cleared, the camps were located further away from settlements.<sup>29</sup> Local men, as well as migrant workers, typically stayed in camp.<sup>30</sup> Aside from the shanty, most camps offered a store, blacksmith shop, a saw filer's shop, a stable for horses, and storage sheds for coal, hay, and meat.<sup>31</sup> All the buildings were constructed of log from the work site.<sup>32</sup> Supplies arrived by push boat once or twice a week.<sup>33</sup> Loggers worked ten or eleven hour days, six days a week.<sup>34</sup> They were generally paid between \$1.25 and two dollars per day, not including board.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Ward Adkins, interview by author, Wewanta, West Virginia, 14 January 1997.

<sup>27</sup> Peter Adams, *Early Loggers and the Sawmill* (New York, NY: Crabtree Publishing Company, 1981), 35-36.

<sup>28</sup> Lewis, *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside*, 133. Eliot Wigginton, in *Foxfire 4* (New York: Anchor Books, 1977), speaks of logging tramps (304-305).

<sup>29</sup> Lambert, *The Llorac*, 58.

<sup>30</sup> Lewis, *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside*, 133.

<sup>31</sup> Adams, *Early Loggers and the Sawmill*, 40; Lewis, *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside*, 133.

<sup>32</sup> Lewis, *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside*, 132.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 139

Generally, Harts Creek natives constituted the bulk of the logging population. In 1889 commentary, the *Wheeling Intelligencer* described Harts Creek loggers: “The native workers at these camps are a hard working hospitable though rough and uncouth class, as indeed are all the people residing in this isolated district. They are untrained in society’s ways and uncultured, but a more hospitable, generous people never existed. Strong in friendship until they believe they have been ill treated and then bitter in their hatred.”<sup>36</sup> Joe Adams, a great-nephew to Ben Adams, had this to say: “Back then, if somebody needed something, it didn’t matter how mean they were, people’d go help them. If somebody was sick, people’d go sit up with them.”<sup>37</sup>

Timber season began in the late summer or early fall.<sup>38</sup> Each day began quite early in camp. The camp’s bull cook woke at 3:30 a.m. and prepared breakfast at the fire. Food served at such logging camps was legendary. It was part of payment for work. Aside from the foreman, the cook was the highest paid man in camp.<sup>39</sup> He was assisted by the cookee, a younger man learning the trade, who also set the tables. The lobby hog, usually an older man no longer able to work in the woods, woke the teamsters at 4:30 a.m.<sup>40</sup> Teamsters had to feed and harness their work animals, then eat breakfast.<sup>41</sup> At 5 a.m., the cook roused the workers.<sup>42</sup> Men sat about the shanty and quietly ate hot biscuits, steak, fried eggs, fried potatoes, raisin pie, oatmeal, donuts, and prunes, and they

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<sup>36</sup> “The Terrible Vendetta,” *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 29 October 1889.

<sup>37</sup> Joe Adams, interview by author, Spottswood, WV, 20 April 2005.

<sup>38</sup> *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 3 August 1897; *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 30 August 1897; *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 14 October 1899; Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 58; Adams, *Early Loggers and the Sawmill*, 32.

<sup>39</sup> Lewis, *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside*, 138.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 133, 138.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

<sup>42</sup> Adams, *Early Loggers and the Sawmill*, 38.

drank coffee or tea.<sup>43</sup> Beans were a part of every meal; usually, they were boiled and then baked with pieces of pork. During the meal, a logger did not speak except to request that someone pass food. After eating, he stuck his fork in the wall over his bunk until the next meal.<sup>44</sup> The cookee thereafter washed dishes and cleaned the kitchen. The lobby hog carried coal and maintained the fire, scrubbed the lobby, and cleaned the stables.<sup>45</sup> At nine o'clock and one o'clock, the cook put out lunches of pork, bread, and cheese. From this, loggers made their own lunches, which they ate in the woods.<sup>46</sup>

## TIMBER WORK

Timber men were divided into specific wood crews. Each crew consisted of approximately six men. Every man carried an axe, saw, wedges, a sledge hammer, cant hook, and measuring pole.<sup>47</sup> At 7 a.m., the crew gathered near a skid-road and began to cut trees.<sup>48</sup> The most coveted/valuable trees were yellow poplar, black walnut, white ash, black cherry, white oak, red oak, and chestnut oak. Other less valuable but plentiful timbers were beech, maple, hickory, birch, black gum, white elm, sycamore, and others. There was a fairly good growth of hemlock in favorable localities through the county.<sup>49</sup> A chopper, or fitter, cut a notch in a tree to direct its fall, making a big undercut on the side toward which he wanted a tree to fall.<sup>50</sup> Two sawyers cut from the opposite side of the

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<sup>43</sup> Lewis, *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside*, 135.

<sup>44</sup> Adams, *Early Loggers and the Sawmill*, 38-39; Wigginton, ed., *Foxfire 4*, 303-304.

<sup>45</sup> Lewis, *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside*, 138.

<sup>46</sup> Adams, *Early Loggers and the Sawmill*, 38.

<sup>47</sup> Lewis, *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside*, 139.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.

<sup>49</sup> Krebs and Teets, *West Virginia Geological Survey: Cabell, Wayne and Lincoln Counties*, 420; Ben Workman, interview by author, Halcyon, WV, 7 October 2007.

<sup>50</sup> Fred B. Lambert Papers, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV; Adams, *Early Loggers and the Sawmill*, 42-43; Lewis, *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside*, 139.

notch using a six-foot cross-cut saw. A crew could cut a tree in minutes. Once the tree fell, the chopper marked it into lengths of twelve to sixty feet (usually sixteen). Knot bumpers or “brush men” then used flat axes to cut the limbs and knots from the tree.<sup>51</sup> Thereafter, based on notches made by the chopper, sawyers then cut the tree into logs.<sup>52</sup> A crew could prepare 225 logs per day.<sup>53</sup> Peelers would “bark” them, making them easier to skid.<sup>54</sup> Workers also “bucked” them on one end.<sup>55</sup> Skidders, or bull punchers, transported logs to skidways, trails made by swampers and maintained by road monkeys.<sup>56</sup>

From the skidway, loggers could “snake” logs to the river in several ways. Typically, teamsters hauled them on skid-roads using seven yoke ox teams, horse teams, or spans of mules to haul them on skid-roads.<sup>57</sup> Transporting logs, particularly on a slope, could be very dangerous: men and horses could be crushed by runaway logs.<sup>58</sup> To avoid this, grab-jacks might attach a j-grab into a log and allow his horse to pull it; then, just as the log began to slide end-first, he and the horse would step aside into a clearing called a jay-hole.<sup>59</sup> Teamsters also used a technique called snubbing: they chained one end of a log to a horse while the other end was tied to a tree at the top of the hill; as the horse

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<sup>51</sup> Eliot Wigginton, *Foxfire 4*, 268-269; Lewis, *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside*, 139; Mark Adkins, interview by author, Barboursville, WV, 6 September 2013.

<sup>52</sup> Adams, *Early Loggers and the Sawmill*, 42.

<sup>53</sup> Lewis, *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside*, 139.

<sup>54</sup> Mark Adkins, interview, 6 September 2013.

<sup>55</sup> Gladys Bell, interview by Fred B. Lambert, West Hamlin, WV, Summer 1928, Fred B. Lambert Papers, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV.

<sup>56</sup> Adams, *Early Loggers and the Sawmill*, 45-46, 60; “Colorful Logging and Pushboating,” *Huntington (WV) Herald*, 27 August 1939.

<sup>57</sup> Fred B. Lambert Papers, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV; Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 58; Wigginton, *Foxfire 4*, 268-279; Adams, *Early Loggers and the Sawmill*, 46; Lewis, *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside*, 140; Mark Adkins, interview, 6 September 2013.

<sup>58</sup> Adams, *Early Loggers and the Sawmill*, 47.

<sup>59</sup> Lewis, *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside*, 141.



pulled the log down, the rope around the tree was slowly let out.<sup>60</sup> Both of these techniques helped prevent logs from hitting the animals on their way downhill and breaking their legs or killing them. Loggers might also load logs onto a one-horse sled called a go-devil.<sup>61</sup> Sometimes, a grab-driver would fasten the logs together in groups of ten using crotch-grabs, short chains with hooks on the ends before skidding.<sup>62</sup> Finally, log booters could simply use cant hooks to slide logs downhill. Ultimately, logs arrived at the river and were piled into stacks called rollaways.<sup>63</sup> At some point, logs were marked with the owner's "brand" by use of a heavy iron mallet.<sup>64</sup>

At 4 or 5 p.m., timber men returned to camp. For supper, the cook served meat, bread, potatoes, vegetables, cheese, butter, pea soup, raisin pie, molasses cookies, cake, tea, and milk. Afterwards, workers gathered in small groups and told stories of trees they had cut, of loggers' bravery—even ghost stories...<sup>65</sup> They greased their cork boots, hung their wet socks by their bunks to dry, and sharpened their axe using a whetstone.<sup>66</sup> They never took baths but might wash off in a basin.<sup>67</sup> Shaving was regarded as an effeminate pastime and those who did it were viewed suspiciously.<sup>68</sup> Alcoholic beverages, gambling, and women were prohibited, so workers had to indulge in those vices secretly or off-

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<sup>60</sup> Adams, *Early Loggers and the Sawmill*, 46.

<sup>61</sup> Ralph Clement Bryant, *Logging: The Principles and General Methods of Operation in the United States* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1913), 155-156.

<sup>62</sup> Lewis, *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside*, 140.

<sup>63</sup> Adams, *Early Loggers and the Sawmill*, 47.

<sup>64</sup> A.P. Christian, letter to Fred B. Lambert, Seneca, WV, 20 May 1943, Fred B. Lambert Collection, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV; Adams, *Early Loggers and the Sawmill*, 50; Lewis, *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside*, 108. Christian said, "I used one made in the shape of a fish. It belonged to Goebel and Williams of Catlettsburg, Kentucky."

<sup>65</sup> Adams, *Early Loggers and the Sawmill*, 38, 57.

<sup>66</sup> Lewis, *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside*, 133.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

site.<sup>69</sup> At 9 p.m., the cook rang a piece of steel with a hammer to alert the men that it was time for sleep. On cue, men climbed into their bunks and lights were doused.<sup>70</sup> Bedbugs or grey-backs sometimes fell from the walls and hit men in their face.<sup>71</sup> Except for the crackling fire, the shanty would be quiet.

Throughout the late summer, fall and winter, men cut timber, branded it, and stacked it by the creek (or river) bank. A “raise” or freshet might occur anytime between November and July and carry logs downstream to the river and on to the town of Guyandotte.<sup>72</sup>

#### SPLASHERS: BEN ADAMS AND ALBERT DINGESS

Because water flow was not predictable, timbering required the use of splash dams. Splash dams—structures made of stone and wood—were triggered by opening a gate made of straight poles or releasing a key wedge.<sup>73</sup> According to one source:

Dams were built across the creeks by using large sills at the top and bottom of the dam on each side of the creek nailing heavy boards on the upper side of the sills ten or twelve feet long close enough together so as to hold the water supplied by the creek. Heavy weights of stone or “dead men” as they were called were used in building these dams so as to hold them in place and keep them from washing out by the heavy pressure of water caught above the dam. Large gates were built in the center and arranged to swing on the top of the sill of the dam and swing loose at the bottom. The bottom of the gate was fastened by a trigger, and a heavy lever

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<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 135.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

<sup>72</sup> *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 10 November 1898; *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 14 December 1899; *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 23 January 1890; *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 8 February 1890; *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 24 March 1898; *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 26 April 1900; *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 4 May 1893; *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 22 June 1899; *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 27 July 1895.

<sup>73</sup> MacClintock, *American Journal of Sociology* (July 1901), 8-9; Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 58; Ferrell, *Centennial Program*, 14; Wigginton, *Foxfire* 4, 305; Eller, *Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers*, 90.

was arranged on the gate to throw the trigger and release the bottom of the gate, thus letting the water through which was held above the dam.<sup>74</sup>

Benjamin Adams and Albert Dingess, brothers-in-law, were the primary “splashers” in Upper Hart.<sup>75</sup> Adams’ dam was located on “main Hart,” just above the mouth of Buck Fork, while Dingess’ dam was located on Smokehouse Fork.<sup>76</sup> Prior to release, Adams’ dam would back water as far upstream as the mouth of Henderson Branch.<sup>77</sup> To synchronize a release required great cooperation and timing on the part of splashers. “We turned them loose in such order that they would time each other beginning at the upper one so as to keep the water running and give us time to push the logs off the bank,” said one old resident.<sup>78</sup> At the moment of release, backwater would rush through and create an artificial log tide, carrying logs to Al Brumfield’s boom at the mouth of the creek.<sup>79</sup> Releasing the “splash” was a great spectacle; local residents gathered to watch it happen. For days, men would walk the creek bank with grappling hooks, pushing left-over timber back into the stream. Splash dams, it should be noted, caused great damage to creek banks.<sup>80</sup> Farmers’ fields were temporarily flooded. “They

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<sup>74</sup> Gladys Bell, interview, Summer 1928.

<sup>75</sup> Alvie Thompson, interview, September 1995; Verdayne Shelton, interview, 22 November 1995; Andy Mullins, interview by author, Harts, WV, 25 March 1996; Freeman Adams, interview by author, Spottswood, WV; 20 March 2011. Several lawsuits were filed against Adams, Dingess, Burl Farley and others in the 1890s over their use of splash dams (Logan County Circuit Clerk’s Office in Logan, WV).

<sup>76</sup> Andy Mullins, interview, 25 March 1996; Freeman Adams, interview, 20 March 2011.

<sup>77</sup> Roger Mullins, interview by author, Halcyon, WV, 7 May 2009.

<sup>78</sup> Fred B. Lambert Papers, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV. This recollection pertained to the five or six splash dams located on Ten Mile Creek, located downstream from Harts Creek.

<sup>79</sup> MacClintock, *American Journal of Sociology* (July 1901), 8; Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 58; Gladys Bell, interview, Summer 1928.

<sup>80</sup> Eller, *Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers*, 90.

finally stopped it, the old farmers did, because it was getting over their farm land,” said one old timber man.<sup>81</sup>

#### BOOMERS: AL BRUMFIELD

Timbering required the use of log booms.<sup>82</sup> The most common type of boom was a flexible pocket (or string) boom, which consisted of heavy timbers chained together in a line of two hundred to three hundred feet and three-timbers wide. “To build a boom took man hours of the hardest labor,” said John F. Ferrell, who recalled Garrett and Runyon’s 1876 boom at the mouth of Crawley Creek in Chapmanville. “In the beginning a poplar tree measuring about 75 to 80 feet in length was put across the creek; then logs approximately 12 inches in diameter and 15 feet long were buckled to the original log. The boom was held in place by anchoring to three elms on each side of the creek with heavy chains. Garrett and Runyon had these chains sent to the location by push boats, the chains being so heavy that it required two push boats to transport them up the Guyandotte River and six teams of oxen to stretch them for anchorage to the trees on the bank.”<sup>83</sup> By law, they could not exist on streams navigable by steamboats.<sup>84</sup>

Al Brumfield operated a log boom about 300 yards upstream from the mouth of Harts Creek.<sup>85</sup> According to his grandson’s wife, he “went to the government and got a

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<sup>81</sup> Earl Hager, interview, 10 April 2011. On 15 May 1897, the *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV) featured commentary about the illegality of splash dams. As late as 1900, court cases regarding splash dams on Harts Creek can be found in Logan County Circuit Clerk records.

<sup>82</sup> Lambert, *The Llorac*, 58; Gladys Bell, interview, Summer 1928; A.P. Christian, letter, 20 May 1943.

<sup>83</sup> Ferrell, *Centennial Program*, 14.

<sup>84</sup> Lewis, *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside*, 108.

<sup>85</sup> Moses “Dood” Dalton, interview, July 1976; Bob Adkins, telephone interview, 22 July 1993; Mae Brumfield, interview, 4 March 1995; Bob Dingess, telephone interview, 24 March 1995; Mae Brumfield, interview, 29 November 1995; Maude Dingess, interview, 20 December 1995; Vergia Rooney, telephone interview, 19 May 1996.

charter to put in a boom.”<sup>86</sup> The Brumfield boom held all logs in Hart until they could be made into rafts. It was an incredible sight. One old timberman at Big Branch recalled: “Them logs was piled on top of one another from that boom to the mouth of this branch.”<sup>87</sup> Brumfield charged a fee or tax of ten cents or a quarter per log.<sup>88</sup> Al’s operation of the boom placed him at odds with many locals who resented paying his tax. One in-law said, “The people on the creek were jealous and didn’t want to pay the fee.”<sup>89</sup> According to one niece, “People wanted Al to take the toll off the boom.”<sup>90</sup> Regardless, log booms were necessary. According to one story featured in the *Logan County Banner* on 6 February 1890, the Island Creek boom near Aracoma “broke,” the result being that 15,000 to 20,000 logs charged out into the river.<sup>91</sup>

## RAFTING

At the Brumfield boom, men fastened loose logs into rafts so they could float them to market.<sup>92</sup> Generally, a boss or company man hired workers to raft timber. In other words, men who cut timber did not necessarily raft it, nor did rafters always own the timber they were rafting. Sometimes rafts were made of logs that belonged to

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<sup>86</sup> Mae Brumfield, interview, 4 March 1995.

<sup>87</sup> Moses “Dood” Dalton, interview, July 1976.

<sup>88</sup> Mae Brumfield, interview, n.d.; Mae Brumfield, interview, 4 March 1995; Bob Dingess, telephone interview, 24 March 1995; Bob Adkins, interview, 12 February 1996; Pat Adkins, interview, 28 August 1996; John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996. Mae wasn’t sure if the amount was a dime or a quarter per log. Bob Dingess said his uncle Al charged a dime per log. Pat Adkins and Bob Adkins said the fee was one dime per log.

<sup>89</sup> Mae Brumfield, interview, 4 March 1995.

<sup>90</sup> Maude Dingess, interview, September 1995.

<sup>91</sup> *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 6 February 1890.

<sup>92</sup> Gladys Bell, interview, Summer 1928; “Colorful Logging and Pushboating,” *Huntington (WV) Herald*, 27 August 1939; Ferrell, *Centennial Program*, 14. Note: Logs were also floated or drifted downstream individually.

different neighbors who ultimately divided up the proceeds.<sup>93</sup> Typically, a raft measured ten to fifteen feet wide (four to eight logs across) and stretched from sixty to two hundred feet long. A raft might contain thirty logs or as many as two hundred, each log cut twelve to fifteen feet in length.<sup>94</sup> Poplar floated best; rafters often put oak between poplar logs.<sup>95</sup> Three men were required to construct a raft: “one to sight or place the logs, one to carry poles, and one to drive the pins.”<sup>96</sup> To bind the logs into a raft, men drilled auger holes into them and fastened eight or nine tie poles of varying lengths crosswise with hickory pins. A more common method, one that did not damage the logs, was to connect them with chain dogs.<sup>97</sup> It generally took about a day to make a raft. Pay was one dollar a day for each person.<sup>98</sup>

Rafting commenced anytime between November and July, depending on high water.<sup>99</sup> Regional historian Fred B. Lambert recalled rafting as beginning in February, while an old logger said it started in the spring: “Men waited for the elderberry raise in the spring, when the elderberries bloomed and rain came.”<sup>100</sup> According to one historian, “When the day came for a trip and the oarsmen decided that the river was at a safe ‘log

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<sup>93</sup> Fred B. Lambert Papers, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*; John F. Ferrell, *Centennial Program*, 14. Eller, in *Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers*, stated that 70 was typical, but 100 to 150 were not uncommon (90).

<sup>95</sup> Ben Workman, interview by author, Halcyon, WV, 7 October 2007.

<sup>96</sup> Fred B. Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 58.

<sup>97</sup> Fred B. Lambert Papers, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV; Gladys Bell, interview, Summer 1928; A.P. Christian, letter to Fred B. Lambert, 20 May 1943.

<sup>98</sup> Fred B. Lambert Papers, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV.

<sup>99</sup> *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 10 November 1898; *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 14 December 1899; *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 23 January 1890; *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 8 February 1890; *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 24 March 1898; *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 26 April 1900; *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 4 May 1893; *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 22 June 1899; *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 27 July 1895. Lambert, in *The Llorrac*, noted that rafting season began in February (58).

<sup>100</sup> Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 58; Jesse Sias, interview, 4 September 1999.

tide,' the great ropes were loosened, the men took their places, the raft slowly moved into the current, and the wild ride was on."<sup>101</sup> The release of the boom and rush of rafts was awesome, by far the most exciting large-scale event to occur in river towns.<sup>102</sup> Every few days, for the next few months, hundreds of thousands of logs and staves would float downstream. Many people gathered to watch the timber roll by. At times, the river nearly choked with logs. "Twenty thousand logs went out from Big Ugly and Hart's creek last week," stated the *Cabell Record* of Milton, West Virginia, on 6 December 1900.<sup>103</sup> The following year, on April 4, it offered this: "Rafts followed one right after the other for several days."<sup>104</sup>

Each raft contained a pilot and as many as five oarsmen. Burl Farley, Charley Brumfield, Moses Toney, Jerry Lambert, Jr., and Leander Fry were some of the best-known pilots in the Harts Creek community.<sup>105</sup> The pilot stood at the stern of the raft. He knew where to go, where the shoals were, and how to work up to the point on a hard bend. Pilots were paid ten dollars a trip, compensated for their expenses, and reimbursed twenty-five cents per meal.<sup>106</sup> Oarsmen, as directed by the pilot, steered the raft using sweeps.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 59.

<sup>102</sup> Thomas Dunn English, mayor of Aracoma, captured some of its appeal in his poem, "Rafting on the Guyandotte," published on 6 January 1872 in *Appletons' Journal of Literature, Science, and Art* (1-2). The *Huntington Advertiser* and the *Logan County Banner* provided regular coverage of such events.

<sup>103</sup> *Cabell Record* (Milton, WV), 6 December 1900.

<sup>104</sup> *Cabell Record* (Milton, WV), 4 April 1901.

<sup>105</sup> Ewell Bias, interview by Fred B. Lambert, Guyandotte, WV, n.d., Fred B. Lambert Papers, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV; Carolyn "Johnnie" Farley, in a September 1995 interview, stated that Burl Farley was a rafter.

<sup>106</sup> Fred B. Lambert Papers, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV.

<sup>107</sup> Adams, *Early Loggers and the Sawmill*, 51.

Guyan Valley loggers rode rafts to the town of Guyandotte, situated on the Ohio River.<sup>108</sup> From Hart, the trip required two days.<sup>109</sup> The first day, they usually made it to the Falls of Guyan, near West Hamlin, or a little further, to Salt Rock. They had familiar stopping points. Certain “logger friendly” people living along the river regularly granted permission for timbermen to tie rafts to their riverbank property, and to camp in their yards or to sleep in their homes.<sup>110</sup> “They stopped overnight along the way,” a descendant of loggers said. “They’d stop the rafts by running them close to willow trees at the riverbank and then throw ropes out to the people they stayed with.”<sup>111</sup> One particularly large residence at the Falls hosted as many as 150 raftsmen at a time.<sup>112</sup> There was plenty of opportunity to socialize—loggers from all up Guyan mingled with one another, with host families... Some men, like Paris’ brother Allen B., courted their future wife on these trips.<sup>113</sup> Beyond Salt Rock, the river afforded plenty of “dead water” that made for a slower ride.<sup>114</sup>

Rafting was dangerous work—occasionally fatal. Dangers were constant.

An experienced raftsman always knew when it was safe to go. And well he did, for below him were the treacherous fall and shoals and eddies ready, without a moment’s notice, to hurl him to a terrible death. If by any accident, a man lost his balance, and fell into the water, he was generally carried at once by the eddies to the bottom of the river; or, he drifted under the raft and was seen no more until his body was found, drifting far below, after many days or even months.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Alvie Thompson, interview, September 1995.

<sup>109</sup> Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 59.

<sup>110</sup> T.C. Whited, interview, n.d.; A.P. Christian, letter, 20 May 1943.

<sup>111</sup> Johnny Golden Adkins, interview by author and John Hartford, Harts, WV, 8 August 1995.

<sup>112</sup> Sam Bias, interview by Fred B. Lambert, Huntington, WV, 7 January 1942, Fred B. Lambert Papers, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV.

<sup>113</sup> Demple Hager, interview by author, Huntington, WV, 2 June 1996.

<sup>114</sup> Johnny Golden Adkins, interview, 8 August 1995.

<sup>115</sup> Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 59.



When temperatures were cold, men kept a spot on the raft covered in sand so they could build a fire for heat. During the ride downriver, they amused themselves by singing and dancing.<sup>116</sup> Their songs started from the lower raft and repeated from raft to raft until the last one was reached.<sup>117</sup> Along the way, “river drivers” caught stray logs and tied them up at the river (a job that paid about fifty cents per log).<sup>118</sup>

At Guyandotte (town), raftsmen were paid for their work, typically a dollar a day or about three dollars for a round trip from the Falls.<sup>119</sup> “Better wages were paid to the raftsmen than any other classes of labor,” according to regional historian Fred B. Lambert.<sup>120</sup> Having been paid, rafters bought an ample supply of corn liquor, raised all kinds of hell, and stayed overnight in one of the town’s hotels.<sup>121</sup> A.S. Fry, former resident of Green Shoal, operated the National Hotel, a popular spot located on the southeast corner of Bridge and Main streets. One newspaper referred to the National Hotel as “a neat comfortable and roomy hotel—the place to stop if you want rest for the body and good fare.”<sup>122</sup> As many as 800 loggers might be in town, most of whom gave the town a taste of “high life.” There were fancy fights and policemen usually didn’t

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<sup>116</sup> Adams, *Early Loggers and the Sawmill*, 51, 54.

<sup>117</sup> Fred B. Lambert Papers, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV.

<sup>118</sup> George Henry Bias, interview by Fred B. Lambert, Guyandotte, WV, 20 January 1943, Fred B. Lambert Papers, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV.

<sup>119</sup> Fred B. Lambert Papers, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV.

<sup>120</sup> Fred B. Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 59.

<sup>121</sup> Fred B. Lambert Papers, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV; Bob Adkins, interview, 12 February 1996.

<sup>122</sup> *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 13 March 1890. According to notes in the Fred B. Lambert Papers, Mr. Fry “kept hotel in Guyandotte & kept river men.”

interfere.<sup>123</sup> According to one local history, “When the rafts were anchored there the good citizens of Guyandotte ‘anchored’ themselves safely at home.”<sup>124</sup>

Eventually, inundated with alcohol and, often in crowds of twenty-five to fifty, the men trekked back upriver on foot.<sup>125</sup> One or two old fiddlers usually accompanied them and provided entertainment at night around camp fires.<sup>126</sup> The journey made for a circus-like atmosphere. An eyewitness to the spectacle later said, “These men were gloriously drunk and filled the air with such cursing and yelling as one hears not more than once in a lifetime.”<sup>127</sup> After one such trip, in May of 1889, the *Logan County Banner* reported: “The raft boys are nearly all back from down the river. Some of the boys say that Huntington is a very enterprising town.”<sup>128</sup>

#### TIMBER MIGRANTS: MILT HALEY AND GREEN MCCOY

Timber migrants to the Harts Creek community were typically young, single drifters; a significant number engaged in rough and rowdy crimes.<sup>129</sup> The *Wheeling Intelligencer*, in writing of Harts Creek troubles in 1889, referenced Harts Creek timber camps and migrants: “Around these lumber camps have come and gone from time to time many desperate criminals. Without knowledge of their crimes the hospitable

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<sup>123</sup> Fred B. Lambert Papers, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV.

<sup>124</sup> John F. Ferrell, *Centennial Program*, 14.

<sup>125</sup> Fred B. Lambert Papers, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV.

<sup>126</sup> Lambert, *The Llorac*, 59; Adams, *Early Loggers and the Sawmill*, 54.

<sup>127</sup> Fred B. Lambert Papers, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV.

<sup>128</sup> *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 16 May 1889.

<sup>129</sup> Lewis, in *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside*, attributed the rise in crime in West Virginia timber towns to “the dramatic increase in a young, drifting population of single men,” as well as liquor (205).

mountaineers have given them shelter and oft times employment, and in disguise and under assumed names they have often hidden for weeks until the sleuth hounds of the law tracked them up and they had to flee.”<sup>130</sup> Most often, migrants hailed from eastern Kentucky or southwest Virginia. Two such men, Milt Haley and Green McCoy, played a large role in the Lincoln County Feud.<sup>131</sup> Haley and McCoy were “good friends” and “played music together.”<sup>132</sup>

Milt Haley’s early life was filled with difficulties and dysfunction, which likely contributed to his later troubles. He was born about 1856 in Cabell County, (West Virginia), the illegitimate son of Benjamin R. Haley and Penelope “Nelly” Muncy.<sup>133</sup> Prior to Milt’s birth, Nelly had been married to Ryburn Parsley, who left the area after 1850 due to his involvement in the Marcum-Muncy Feud in the Tug Valley.<sup>134</sup> Sandwiched between the older Parsley children and Milt, Nelly gave birth to a son named “Kenis Pa(r)sley” in 1853 at Big Hurricane Creek in Wayne County.<sup>135</sup> At the time of Milt’s birth, his father was married to Cynthia Dyer, with whom he had fathered seven children, the oldest in 1844, the youngest about 1856.<sup>136</sup> In 1860, Nelly Parsley married Wilson Messinger in Logan County.<sup>137</sup> In the Logan County Census for that year, Milt

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<sup>130</sup> “The Terrible Vendetta,” *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 29 October 1889.

<sup>131</sup> Bob Adkins, interview, 24 July 1993.

<sup>132</sup> Daisy Ross, telephone interview, WV, 25 October 1995.

<sup>133</sup> Marriages-Births-Deaths (1872-1892), 47, Logan County Clerk’s Office, Logan, WV. Milt is given as the son of “B.H. Hauley and N. Muncy.”

<sup>134</sup> U.S. Census for Logan County, VA, 1850; *New York Herald*, 29 November 1879; Swain, *History of Logan County, West Virginia*, 76-77; William C. Kozee, *Pioneer Families of Eastern and Southeastern Kentucky* (Huntington, WV: Standard Printing and Publishing Company, 1957). The *New York Herald* story, written years after the feud, claimed that Parsley killed at least one man in the feud. According to Swain, he moved to Mississippi and served as a brigadier general in the Confederate Army.

<sup>135</sup> General Index to Births From 1853 (N-R), 25A, Wayne County Clerk’s Office, Wayne, WV. The birth record did not list a father’s name.

<sup>136</sup> U.S. Census for Wayne County, VA, 1860; Paul E. Dyer, *Patrick (Dyar) Dyer (1675-?) of Prince George County, Maryland and Descendants* (Louisville, KY: no publisher, 1985), 56.

<sup>137</sup> Ethel Evans Albert and Troy Taylor, *Logan County, Virginia Marriage Records 1853-1860 and 1850 Census* (Kingsport, TN: n.p., 1974), 41.

was listed as “Thomas P. Parsley.”<sup>138</sup> After the 1860 census, Nelly and Wilson Messinger disappear from U.S. census records. During the Civil War, Milt’s father, Ben Haley, was a prominent Wayne County Unionist, serving as first lieutenant in the 5<sup>th</sup> West Virginia Infantry (Company F).<sup>139</sup> Ben found some trouble in 1862 for inciting mutiny, refusing to identify himself to a superior officer, and leaving his camp for “a Beer Saloon, playing the violin for some teamsters and enlisted men to dance.”<sup>140</sup> In 1870, he resided in Sheridan District of Lincoln County, while Milt—who never appeared in a census with his father—lived with William Marshall “Bill” Duty in Logan County, near Tug Fork.<sup>141</sup>

In 1881, Haley found employment under a Mr. Lake in Boone County, West Virginia. One day, Milt and Mr. Lake suffered a dispute about Milt’s pay. After a heated exchange, Mr. Lake walked away. Haley, unsatisfied, pulled a pistol and twice fired at Lake. “I didn’t aim to hit you,” he called out. “I only want my settlement.” Mr. Lake, now fearing for his life and more willing to appease Haley, fetched his son. Rather than escalate the situation by provoking more gunplay, Lake and his son “counted” Haley’s work and settled with him. Shortly thereafter, Haley was accused of trespass and felony assault and battery. During the trial, which occurred in April 1882, he proved (and his former employer, Mr. Lake, agreed) that he was a young man of good character and a peaceable, truthful, hard-working, and law-abiding citizen. Testimony from one witness, however, condemned Haley. This witness, a young boy, said Haley told him he had shot

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<sup>138</sup> U.S. Census for Logan County, VA, 1860.

<sup>139</sup> Hardesty, *Hardesty’s Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 171; Dyer, *Patrick (Dyar) Dyer*, 56.

<sup>140</sup> Benjamin R. Haley, Company F, 5<sup>th</sup> West Virginia Infantry, Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from the State of West Virginia, (National Archives Microfilm Publication M324E, roll 126), National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

<sup>141</sup> U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1870; U.S. Census for Logan County, WV, 1880.

at Lake with the intention of harming him. The jury found Haley guilty of a felony; he was sentenced to serve one year in the state penitentiary. Early in 1883, eight of the jurors decided the witness' statement was nothing more than the idle talk of a boy and that no positive evidence existed to prove Haley shot to kill Mr. Lake. The Boone County prosecuting attorney, former Boone County prosecuting attorney, seven members of the Boone County bar, Judge J.E. Stollings, county officers, eight jurors, and 176 citizens united to sign a petition of pardon. On February 6, 1883, Governor Jacob B. Jackson issued a pardon for Haley.<sup>142</sup>

During the 1880s, Milt Haley became affiliated with the Mullins family on Trace Fork of Harts Creek in Logan County. A rambler, he came "across the mountain" to Harts Creek and "got into it good with the Mullins family a makin' moonshine."<sup>143</sup> According to one old-timer, the Mullins family was a "rough bunch" who viewed their own family with suspicion. Many were horse thieves who had been chased out of Kentucky and who regarded isolated territory like Harts Creek to be a safe haven. They were primarily gamblers and moonshiners and were always fighting among themselves. Womenfolk in their clan had to work while the men of the family sat in the yard and played cards.<sup>144</sup> On 22 March 1884, Milt married Imogene Mullins, the daughter of Jackson and Chloe (Gore) Mullins in Logan County. Cain Adkins performed the

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<sup>142</sup> West Virginia Secretary of State's Office Pardons and Paroles, October 30, 1865-December 31, 1904 (Ar 1561, Box 1), West Virginia State Archives, Charleston, WV.

<sup>143</sup> Lawrence Haley, interview, 23 March 1991; Bob Dingess, telephone interview, 24 March 1995.

<sup>144</sup> Bob Dingess, telephone interview, 24 March 1995.

ceremony.<sup>145</sup> Milt and Imogene lived on Trace Fork where they had one son, James Edward, born 16 August 1885.<sup>146</sup>

At the age of three years, Ed Haley, Milt's son, lost his eyesight to a bad case of measles.<sup>147</sup> Folk history blames his father, who dipped Ed under water.<sup>148</sup> Most accounts portray Milt's act as having occurred due to ill-temperament or cruelty.<sup>149</sup> Lawrence Haley, the grandson of Milt, provided one version of the tale:

My dad's first cousin [Joe Mullins], he told me that when my dad was very young—he couldn't have been over two or three—he had the measles. And when his father came in from working in the timbers that evening he didn't like the whiny way my dad was acting. It was the dead of winter. There was ice on the creeks. So as to make him more of a man and cut out his babyish crying, he took him out and held him by the feet and dropped him in a rain barrel through the ice. Now according to my cousin that's partly what caused my dad to go blind.<sup>150</sup>

Folks around Harts Creek had heard a similar tale. "His dad was a mean guy," said one. "My dad has told me many times that Ed had the measles when he was a kid and his daddy took him out up here on Rockhouse and stuck him in the creek and that's what made old man Ed Haley blind."<sup>151</sup> A Mullins descendant agreed: "They said his dad was kind of a mean fella and he took Ed out when he was a little kid—held him by the heels—and ducked him in the creek. He had some kind of a fever in wintertime."<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Marriages-Births-Deaths (1872-1892), 47, Logan County Clerk's Office, Logan, WV. Milt claimed to be 25 years old, while Imogene was 15.

<sup>146</sup> U.S. Census for Logan County, WV, 1900; Ed Haley, United States World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918, Boyd County, KY, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC. In 2015, Ed Haley was inducted into the West Virginia Music Hall of Fame.

<sup>147</sup> Lawrence Haley, interview by John Hartford, Ashland, KY, 21 March 1991; Kermit "Stump" Dalton, interview by author and John Hartford, Ferrellsburg, WV, 23 October 1995.

<sup>148</sup> Billy Joe Fleming, interview by author, Warren, WV, April 1995; John Barry Martin, telephone interview by John Hartford, Warren, WV, 22 May 1995; Joe Adams, interview, 30 June 2011. Joe said Milt Haley dipped Ed into ice so as to "make him tough."

<sup>149</sup> Dave Brumfield, interview by author, Harts, WV, 26 May 1995.

<sup>150</sup> Lawrence Haley, interview, 21 March 1991. Lawrence repeated part of this story during a visit to Harts Creek on 23 March 1991.

<sup>151</sup> Ezra "Jake" Dalton, interview, 23 October 1995.

<sup>152</sup> Wirt Adams, interview, 1 August 1996.

Some accounts portray Milt's deed, while crude, as the action of a man concerned for his child's health. Roxie Mullins, niece to Imogene Haley, said of Ed:

When he was a little boy, they said it took some kind of a fever. I don't know whether it was the typhoid fever, brain fever or what. And said its daddy took it to the creek and busted the ice and put it under the ice and that made him go blind. That's how come him to be blind. He had such a fever, he thought that'd kill his fever, see, and it went to its head and put his eyes out. My grandmother always told me he had a fever and he was doing something to help it.<sup>153</sup>

Another old-timer recalled the story this way:

They said Ed went blind when he was three or four years old. He had the measles. Well, he was sick and had a high fever. Maybe he was crying with fever in his head. I don't know whether you ever knowed it or not but the gypsies used to come around in the country and he had a high fever and they told his dad and them to take him down to the creek and throw him in the cold water and that would break the fever on him and he'd never have a fever again. And that's what he done, and it put him blind. Ed said he could remember seeing.<sup>154</sup>

A few sources said the event occurred much earlier in Ed's life.<sup>155</sup> Milt's granddaughter-in-law said: "It was measles that did it. That's what Mom Haley told me. And that they left him out in his buggy in the sun." A Mullins descendant said: "They said that Ed got a fever of some kind when he was a baby and Milt went out and cut a hole in the ice and stuck him under the ice in the creek to break the fever."<sup>156</sup> One old-timer said: "Milt had been told the way to make a baby healthy was to dip him in water every day for a year or so."<sup>157</sup> John Dingess, whose family feuded with Milt, said of Ed: "When he was a baby, old Milt wanted to make him tough and he'd take him every

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<sup>153</sup> Roxie Mullins, interview by John Hartford, Spottswood, WV, 23 March 1991. Alvie Thompson (September 1995) heard Ed had a high fever when he was young and "they" put him in the creek.

<sup>154</sup> Ugee Postalwait, interview by John Hartford, Akron, OH, 17 April 1991.

<sup>155</sup> Ward Browning, interview by author, Ferrellsburg, WV, 30 April 1996; Freeman Adams, interview, 20 March 2011. Ward said someone told Milt the way to make a baby healthy was to dip it into water every day until it was a year or so old.

<sup>156</sup> Andy Mullins, interview, 25 March 1996.

<sup>157</sup> Ward Browning, interview, 30 April 1996.

morning to a cold spring and bath him. I guess he got a cold and couldn't open his eyes. Something grew over his eyes so Milt took a razor and cut it off and put him blind."<sup>158</sup>

Two versions of the tale attribute Ed's blindness to Burl Farley, a local timber boss who later feuded with Milt Haley. Burl's grandson said:

I know how Ed Haley got to be blind. Ed Haley's mother stayed over there with Burl Farley when he run that saw mill when he lived over there, and Ed Haley was born. Burl Farley and them was on a drunk. Ed Haley was about two days old. Got his mother drunk and told her, said, "Let's make the toughest man that ever lived out of Ed Haley." And she said, "What do you want to do?" Said, "We want to chop a hole in the ice and baptize him." They took him down there—it zero weather—and chopped a hole in the ice and stuck him under that ice. Man, he hated the Farleys with a passion. He told the story to everybody.<sup>159</sup>

According to one old-timer, Burl Farley had encouraged Milt to dunk Ed in the water.

Milt and Burl Farley, they was drinking where Burl lived down at the mouth of Browns Run. And Ed was just a little baby—been born about a week. Old man Burl said to Milt, "Take him out here and baptize him in this creek. It'll make him tough." And it was ice water. He just went out and put him in that creek and baptized the kid and the kid took the measles and he lost his eyes. That's how come him to be blind.<sup>160</sup>

Milt Haley, a timberman and fiddler, was noted as a rougher sort.<sup>161</sup> One Mullins descendant said:

Milt, my dad just barely could remember him. He said he was a hard-working fellow and when he'd come in home he'd just tell them boys, "Right now, we got to have a fight and get everything settled and we'll be all right." They liked to fight. One of them got in a fight and he bit Milt's ear off right in the yard down there. Uncle Peter and Aunt Liza used to tell it. Said every time they come, Milt and them boys, said he'd just fight with all of them one at a time. Have a good time. Say, "Now we're friends." That old woman said, "I'll agree to that. That's the way it ought to be done." Back then, that's what they believed in.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> John Dingess, telephone interview, 17 December 1996. On 8 December 1996, John said: "His dad used to give him a bath in ice-water. It caused him to go blind."

<sup>159</sup> Tom Farley, interview by author, Halcyon, WV, 7 September 2002.

<sup>160</sup> Charles Conley, interview by author and John Hartford, Shively, WV, 30 July 1997.

<sup>161</sup> Bob Adkins, interview, 24 July 1993; Joe Adams, interview by author and John Hartford, Spottswood, WV, 8 August 1995; Ezra "Jake" Dalton, interview, 23 October 1995. Jake said he was a "mean guy."

<sup>162</sup> Turley Adams, interview by John Hartford, Spottswood, WV, 27 July 1993.



Roxie Mullins, niece to Imogene Haley, had this to say of Milt: “He was awful bad to drink they said and he kept a loaded Winchester sitting right by the side of his door. People was trying to kill him and he was trying to kill people.”<sup>163</sup> Imogene ultimately left Milt, but did not secure a divorce. According to the *Wheeling Intelligencer*: “Haley has been about Hart’s Creek several years, and was regarded as a man capable of any crime. He married a daughter of a reputable family living on Hart several years ago, but on account of his worthlessness she was compelled to leave him, since which time he led a very disreputable life. It is said that several years ago he ‘done’ a man in Boone county, named Lakin.”<sup>164</sup> As of 1889, Milt owned no property.<sup>165</sup>

Green McCoy—friend to Milt Haley and a migrant timberman himself—was born 5 September 1859 to William Richard and Lucinda (Adkins) McCoy in Pike County, Kentucky.<sup>166</sup> The youngest of eleven children, the oldest born in 1835, Green was mostly raised on Knox Creek and later Peter Creek (present-day Jamboree, Kentucky).<sup>167</sup> As a young man, in 1880, Green boarded in the home of G.D. Dotson.<sup>168</sup> His exodus from home may have been related to his older brother James’ return from an institution. James

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<sup>163</sup> Roxie Mullins, interview, 23 March 1991.

<sup>164</sup> “The Terrible Vendetta,” *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 29 October 1889. This is clearly a reference to Mr. Lake.

<sup>165</sup> Land Book (1886-1891), Lincoln County Clerk’s Office, Hamlin, WV.

<sup>166</sup> Truda Williams McCoy, *The McCoys: Their Story as Told to the Author by Eyewitnesses and Descendants* (Pikeville, KY: Pikeville Preservation Press, 1976), 320-321.

<sup>167</sup> U.S. Census for Pike County, KY, 1860, U.S. Census for Pike County, KY, 1870; McCoy, *The McCoys: Their Story*, 320-321; David Charles to William McCoy, deed of sale, 14 April 1851, Deed Book C, 455, Pike County Clerk’s Office, Pikeville, KY; Benjamin McCoy to William McCoy, deed of sale, 1 December 1851, Deed Book C, 516, Pike County Clerk’s Office, Pikeville, KY; William R. McCoy to Oliver Blankenship, deed of sale, 15 October 1868, Deed Book G, 385, Pike County Clerk’s Office, Pikeville, KY; William R. McCoy to Oliver Blankenship, deed of sale, 24 February 1872, Deed Book I, 343, Pike County Clerk’s Office, Pikeville, KY; William R. McCoy et al to Peyton Justice, deed of sale, 7 February 1873, Deed Book J, 36, Pike County Clerk’s Office, Pikeville, KY; Ezekiel Blankenship to William R. McCoy, deed of sale, 15 February 1877, Deed Book K, 465, Pike County Clerk’s Office, Pikeville, KY; William R. McCoy to Benjamin McCoy, deed of sale, 30 October 1879, Deed Book I, 57, Pike County Clerk’s Office, Pikeville, KY.

<sup>168</sup> U.S. Census for Pike County, KY, 1880.

had once been married but was noted in the 1880 census as “insane” and living with his parents. According to the record: “He has been in some asylum in Kentucky but I cannot find out what asylum nor exactly when he was there but it has been some five or six years ago.”<sup>169</sup> On 9 June 1881, at Peter Creek in Pike County, Green married Ella Jane Griffey, fifteen-year-old daughter of David and Jane (Compton) Griffey. The marriage application was not “returned,” indicating that the couple was perhaps not legally married.<sup>170</sup> The relationship resulted in the birth of at least two children: Alafair (b. July 1882) and Mary.<sup>171</sup> Green and Jane did not remain together. For reasons unknown, Green abandoned Jane, taking their youngest baby. One relative to Mrs. McCoy said:

He married my Aunt Jane. And when he left her he took their baby, Mary McCoy. He wanted to hurt her by taking her baby Mary and leaving Alafair with her. Aunt Jane looked and looked for her for months, then later a lady told her a colored lady had a white baby. Jane crossed the mountain and went to the colored lady’s house and knocked at her door and asked if she had her baby. The lady told her months earlier a man came to her house and asked if she would care for his baby. The baby was very hungry. It eat and eat.<sup>172</sup>

Jane McCoy never saw Green again.

Prior to settling on Harts Creek, Green McCoy suffered a few legal problems in Pike County. On 18 June 1881, Hiram McCoy (relationship unknown) “unlawfully assaulted, beat and bruised” Green “with Rocks and with his fist and also Bit off his left eye brow to his great Damage in the sum of Five hundred Dollars.” Both men lived in Pike County, Kentucky, but the trouble occurred in “Logan County, [West] Virginia, near the state line on the Tug River.” Green filed a petition against Hiram McCoy on 24 June

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<sup>169</sup> Supplemental Schedule for the Defective, Dependent, and Delinquent Classes, Pike County, KY, 1880.

<sup>170</sup> Marriage Book 12, 51-52, Pike County Clerk’s Office, Pikeville, KY.

<sup>171</sup> U.S. Census for Buchanan County, VA, 1900; Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 25 October 1995; Daisy Ross, interview, 16 March 1996.

<sup>172</sup> Elizabeth Morgan, email to author, Adrian, MI, 14 February 2013; Elizabeth Morgan, email to author, Adrian, MI, 15 February 2013.

1881. A subpoena was issued for the defendant on 17 September 1881 and 10 October 1881. Daniel Wolford was subpoenaed as a witness for the defense on 10 October 1881.<sup>173</sup> On 15 October 1881, Green was charged with giving spirituous liquors to a minor.<sup>174</sup> On 21 October, the court “dismissed without prejudice” the charge against Hiram McCoy.<sup>175</sup> On 7 September 1882, Green was found guilty by a jury of giving spirituous liquors to a minor and ordered to pay a fifty dollar fine and court costs or serve twenty-five days in Pike County jail.<sup>176</sup>

Green subsequently made his way to Harts Creek “playing music” with his brother, Lynza John McCoy.<sup>177</sup> He courted Spicie Adkins, daughter of Cain and Mariah (Vance) Adkins. Both were musicians: Green, who the Adkins family called “Will,”<sup>178</sup> was a fiddler and banjo player, while Spicie could sing all four parts in a song and was a left-handed banjoist.<sup>179</sup> In Spicie’s view, Green was “the best [fiddler] she ever heard.”<sup>180</sup> Green’s previous “marriage” to Ella Jane Griffey nearly derailed his courtship with Spicie Adkins. “Green McCoy pretended to be a single man,” said Daisy Ross, a daughter of Spicie. “Mom didn’t know he was a married man until they were engaged. When Grandma found out, she tried to keep them from marrying.”<sup>181</sup> Daisy recalled that

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<sup>173</sup> *Commonwealth v. Hiram McCoy* (1881), Pike County, KY, Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives, Frankfort, KY.

<sup>174</sup> *Commonwealth v. Green McCoy* (1881), Pike County, KY, Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives, Frankfort, KY.

<sup>175</sup> *Commonwealth v. Hiram McCoy* (1881), Pike County, KY, Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives, Frankfort, KY.

<sup>176</sup> *Commonwealth v. Green McCoy* (1881), Pike County, KY, Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives, Frankfort, KY.

<sup>177</sup> Daisy Ross, interview, 11 December 1995. In a separate interview (16 March 1996), Daisy said John McCoy came to Harts Creek after Green had married her mother.

<sup>178</sup> Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 27 October 1995; Daisy Ross, interview, 16 March 1996. Perhaps an alias.

<sup>179</sup> Daisy Ross, interview, 16 March 1996.

<sup>180</sup> Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 8 December 1995.

<sup>181</sup> Daisy Ross, interview, 11 December 1995.

Spicie's older sister Angeline—the widow of Boney Lucas—revealed the story of Green's past.<sup>182</sup> According to Daisy, “Just before their marriage, Spicie learned that he had been married before and had two children. Green said he had divorced her.”<sup>183</sup> The family never really knew whether or not he had divorced his first wife. Spicie did not believe the story; she thought her family said those things to keep her from marrying him.<sup>184</sup> “Grandma didn't approve of the marriage but Mom loved him so good she went ahead and married him anyhow,” Daisy said.<sup>185</sup> He and Spicie thereafter lived in a “shack” on the Adkins farm at West Fork of Harts Creek. Green would leave for days at a time; Spicie had no idea of his whereabouts. It was thought by the Adkins family that he might have been traveling between Spicie and his other “wife.” Each time when Green returned, Spicie ran out into the yard and Green would run playfully away from her, finally letting her “catch” him. Spicie told him she would “swim the briny ocean for him.”<sup>186</sup> By 1889, they had one son, Sherman (born 1888).<sup>187</sup> Green owned no property.<sup>188</sup>

Not all timber migrants were of Haley's and McCoy's ilk. “William Vance died at this place May 15<sup>th</sup> of measles,” reported the *Ceredo Advance* on 5 June 1889. “He removed to this place from Logan county about two months ago. He was formerly a

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<sup>182</sup> Daisy Ross, interview, 16 March 1996.

<sup>183</sup> Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 25 October 1995. No divorce record exists in Kentucky for Green McCoy.

<sup>184</sup> Daisy Ross, interview, 11 December 1995.

<sup>185</sup> Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 25 October 1995.

<sup>186</sup> Daisy Ross, interview, 11 December 1995.

<sup>187</sup> Green McCoy, letter, 19 May 1889; U.S. Census for Wayne County, WV, 1900.

<sup>188</sup> Land Book (1886-1891), Lincoln County Clerk's Office, Hamlin, WV.

citizen of Knott county, Ky., and was beloved by all who knew him. He leaves a wife and three children to mourn for him.”<sup>189</sup>

## NEIGHBORLY DISPUTES

The growing timber industry divided Harts Creek residents into a largely traditional agrarian faction and a modern rural industrial faction. Traditionalists resented the intrusion of modern rural industrial life: rising land prices, polluted runoff and drinking water, soil erosion, downstream flooding, forest fires, an influx of migrant workers, disease, and cut-throat competition.<sup>190</sup> Altina Waller, in her landmark study of the Tug Valley, noted how many traditionalists viewed timbering as “risky, speculative and conducive to dishonesty.”<sup>191</sup> And for good reason. In 1942, Sam Bias, an old logger in the Guyandotte Valley told historian Fred B. Lambert:

Timber was branded at both ends by branding irons or special branding hammers. It was against the law to cut off brands. In fact, it was a penitentiary offense. However, many men took the risks. They cut off the brands [and] took the logs up creeks or back water, where they kept them for a long time, and finally sold them to lumber mills at Huntington or elsewhere. When brands were first sawed off, the ends of the logs showed the fresh cut sides.<sup>192</sup>

Due to the value of timber, locals jealously guarded their property lines, which led to increased property disputes. Earl Hager, last of the old-time Guyan Valley timbermen, said:

Back in those days, instead of coal, timber was the thing they were after. The virgin timber. Man, more people had trouble over their timber—you know,

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<sup>189</sup> “Warren, Lincoln County,” *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 5 June 1889. “Wild Bill” penned this dispatch on 21 May 1889.

<sup>190</sup> Rasmussen, *Absentee Landowning and Exploitation in West Virginia*, 113.

<sup>191</sup> Waller, *Feud*, 40.

<sup>192</sup> Sam Bias, interview, 1942. A.P. Christian, in his 1943 letter to Fred B. Lambert, agreed.

getting over their lines—than anything else. A lot of people, if you cut their timber why that was a real violation.<sup>193</sup>

Ellen Churchill Semple, a geographer writing in 1901, stated that stealing timber ranked just behind horse thieving among mountain people.<sup>194</sup> A quick survey of civil cases during the feud era reveal an increased number of timber-related suits. On 7 March 1885, Enoch Baker was sued over a timber matter in Logan County.<sup>195</sup> As late as 4 July 1889, he was sued again. In two cases early that July, he pled not guilty.<sup>196</sup> On 18 October 1889, Green Farley accused John Fon Conley of taking “eighteen poplar saw logs of the value of \$36.00.” Conley lost the case and was ordered to pay the accuser thirty-six dollars or return his logs.<sup>197</sup>

HART, c.1889

During the 1880s, Hart merchants competed with one another in store business and alcohol sales, creating a charged and potentially explosive climate. The regional timber boom afforded Hart an unprecedented number of stores. Profit-seeking merchants, hoping to outperform one another, whether through legitimate or illegitimate means, co-existed in a tense atmosphere. According to one old resident of Harts Creek: “They’s all there makin’ money. You know how that stirs up trouble. They’s buckin’ one another, like money men does.”<sup>198</sup> Hart was also a bawdy timber town where alcohol was readily

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<sup>193</sup> Earl Hager, interview, 10 April 2011.

<sup>194</sup> Semple, *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society* 42(8): 580 (1901; reprint, Aug. 1910).

<sup>195</sup> *T.A. Bryan & Co. v. Enoch Baker* (March 1885), Execution Lien Docket A, Logan County Clerk’s Office, Logan, WV.

<sup>196</sup> Law Orders Book E (1887-1890), p. 383-384, 428, Logan County Circuit Clerk’s Office, Logan, WV.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, 23, Logan County Circuit Clerk’s Office, Logan, WV. These cases would multiply during the 1890s.

<sup>198</sup> James Davis, interview, 9 December 1997.

available. Many merchants were not natives to the community, providing a native vs. non-native dynamic. Of Hart's six primary merchants, five were non-natives; three had been born in Kentucky. Only Al Brumfield was native-born. As of 1889, most merchants had prospered, at least one had failed, and two were locked in a near deadly game of tit-for-tat.

During the Lincoln County Feud, Bill Fowler reigned as the community's primary businessman. Fowler was born 29 June 1825 at Burning Spring Hollow in Kanawha County, (West) Virginia, the son of Thomas R. and Elizabeth (Gillespie) Fowler.<sup>199</sup> He settled locally in 1847 and appeared in the 1850 and 1860 Logan County Censuses.<sup>200</sup> About 1850, he married Polley Emerine Adkins, daughter of Elias and Susannah (Fry) Adkins. The couple had three children, born between 1851 and 1857.<sup>201</sup> Polley died on 29 February 1860 and was buried behind the Adkins home at Adkins (later Fowler) Branch.<sup>202</sup> Bill Fowler served in the Confederate army during the Civil War, participating in the Battle of Kanawha Gap (Chapmanville).<sup>203</sup> In 1870, he lived in Harts Creek District of Lincoln County.<sup>204</sup> On 10 June 1871, he married Martha A. Adkins, daughter of John B. and Elizabeth "Betsy" (Childers) Adkins, in Cabell County.<sup>205</sup> That same year, he taught school in the district with a Number Five certificate and bought 50 acres of land

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<sup>199</sup> Hardesty, *Hardesty's Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 134; U.S. Census for Logan County, VA, 1850, U.S. Census for Logan County, VA, 1860.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>201</sup> Hardesty, *Hardesty's Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 134; U.S. Census for Logan County, VA, 1860.

<sup>202</sup> Polley Ann Fowler, headstone, Ferrellsburg Cemetery, Ferrellsburg, WV. I live just downhill from her grave.

<sup>203</sup> Hardesty, *Hardesty's Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 134.

<sup>204</sup> U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1870.

<sup>205</sup> Hardesty, *Hardesty's Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 134.

from John Lilly and others on the Marsh Fork of Big Harts Creek.<sup>206</sup> In 1873, he bought three parcels on Harts Creek totaling 250 acres from J.E. Stollings, commissioner.<sup>207</sup>

In the late 1870s, Bill Fowler relocated to the mouth of Harts Creek and operated a general store business. In 1876, he reestablished the old “Harts Creek Post Office” as “Hart Post Office.”<sup>208</sup> On 15 March 1877, Aaron and Enos Adkins deeded him 90 acres on the west side of Guyan River. In 1878, he acquired 75 acres (the “James Toney grant”) from Abner Vance.<sup>209</sup> In 1880, Al Brumfield (a cousin) lived in his home.<sup>210</sup> In 1882, he sold 200 acres on Marsh Fork and Harts Creek. That same year, he constructed a \$100 building on the old Toney tract.<sup>211</sup> According to Hardesty’s *History of Lincoln County, West Virginia*, compiled in 1883-84, Fowler was

a merchant, miller and farmer in Hart Creek district, with business headquarters on Guyan river at the mouth of Hart creek. He now owns 200 acres of land at the mouth of Big Hart creek, and 254 acres on Mud river. That situated on Hart creek produces well, and has a good orchard and a part is heavily timbered with oak, poplar and pine; coal and iron ore are quite abundant. The land on Mud river is very heavily timbered.<sup>212</sup>

He also operated a saloon.<sup>213</sup> The following year, on 28 November 1885, the *Huntington Advertiser* stated: “Mr. W.S. Fowler, a prominent citizen of Hart, Lincoln Co., was in the City Thursday on his return from Cincinnati, where he had taken a shipment of 12,000 pounds of ginseng and seneca root.”<sup>214</sup> In 1889, Martha A. Fowler, wife of Bill Fowler,

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<sup>206</sup> *West Virginia Educational Directory* (1871), 107; Land Book (1870-1878), Lincoln County Clerk’s Office, Hamlin, WV.

<sup>207</sup> Land Book (1870-1878), Lincoln County Clerk’s Office, Hamlin, WV.

<sup>208</sup> Postmaster Appointments for Hart Post Office in Lincoln County, WV.

<sup>209</sup> Land Book (1879-1885), Lincoln County Clerk’s Office, Hamlin, WV.

<sup>210</sup> U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1880.

<sup>211</sup> Land Book (1879-1885), Lincoln County Clerk’s Office, Hamlin, WV.

<sup>212</sup> Hardesty, *Hardesty’s Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 134.

<sup>213</sup> Pat Adkins, interview, 28 August 1996; Pat Adkins, interview, 11 September 1996; James Davis, interview, 9 December 1997.

<sup>214</sup> *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 28 November 1885.



was deeded thirty acres on the east side of the Guyandotte River from Aaron Adkins. As of 1889, the total value of Fowler's property was \$1010, including the store building.<sup>215</sup> By that time, he and his wife had four children, the oldest born in 1875, the youngest born in 1880.<sup>216</sup>

Allen "Al" Brumfield, the town's only native-born merchant, was widely viewed as Fowler's protégé. Born in March of 1860 to Paris and Ann (Toney) Brumfield in what was then Logan County, Virginia, Brumfield had, about 1881, married Hollena Dingess, daughter of Henderson and Sarah (Adams) Dingess of Smokehouse Fork.<sup>217</sup> Al and Hollena lived in a little boxed house just below the mouth of Harts Creek—specifically between the mouth of Browns Branch and Isaac Adkins Shoals along the Guyandotte River.<sup>218</sup> In 1888, Al acquired this property, 100 acres valued at \$350 from his mother. That same year, he acquired 145 acres of land from D.E. Wilkinson, commissioner. This latter tract, which included land on Browns Branch and along the ridge of Little and Big Harts Creek, was valued at \$217.<sup>219</sup> According to one early history, "Brumfield had a store on Guyan River about a fourth of a mile below Hart, on the south side of Guyan and sold whiskey on a houseboat."<sup>220</sup> In October 1889, Al was described in a dispatch to the *Ceredo Advance* as "a prominent merchant living at Hart, W.Va.," who was "a good citizen, highly esteemed by his neighbors." The dispatch described his wife as "a noble and kind-hearted lady, beloved by all her acquaintances." According to the dispatch, Al

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<sup>215</sup> Land Book (1886-1891), Lincoln County Clerk's Office, Hamlin, WV.

<sup>216</sup> Hardesty, *Hardesty's Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 134.

<sup>217</sup> U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1900; Coberly, *Goldenseal* (Summer 1992), 36; Bob Adkins, telephone interview, 22 July 1993.

<sup>218</sup> Mae Brumfield, interview by author, Harts, WV, 15 December 1995; Mae Brumfield, interview, 29 March 1996. Mae said Al and a local carpenter named Wade Wiley built the dwelling, which took two years to complete.

<sup>219</sup> Land Book (1886-1891), Lincoln County Clerk's Office, Hamlin, WV.

<sup>220</sup> Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 62.

and Hollena possessed a “large train of friends.”<sup>221</sup> Brumfield and his wife were “self-educated people” who were “civilized” by standards of the day.<sup>222</sup> One relative described Al as an honest man, “outstanding among the Brumfields,”<sup>223</sup> while another said he was “kind of a rough character: all those Brumfields were, you know.”<sup>224</sup> By 1889, the Brumfields had four children, the oldest born in 1883, the youngest about 1888.<sup>225</sup>

James Preston Mullins, Jr., a Kentucky-born merchant, once prominent, suffered declining fortunes by 1889. Born about 1851 to James P. Kelley/Mullins and Dorcas Mullins in Floyd County, Kentucky, Mullins had moved with his family to Boone County, West Virginia by 1870.<sup>226</sup> On 25 May 1872, he married Louisa J. Collins, daughter of Isham Collins and Dicy Roberts, in Buchanan County, Virginia. He and Louisa settled in Lincoln County in 1877, living in the Harts Creek District.<sup>227</sup> In 1880, James acquired 203 acres of property at Big Branch of Harts Creek from Isaac Adkins, Jr. worth \$203.<sup>228</sup> According to Hardesty’s *History of Lincoln County, West Virginia* (1884): “Mr. Mullins is a man of good business qualifications, and is prosperously engaged in merchandising, with business quarters on Hart creek, one and one-half miles from its mouth. He now owns about 250 acres of fine farming land on Hart creek. The farm has good improvements, and a large orchard.”<sup>229</sup> In 1884, James constructed a \$200 building

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<sup>221</sup> “Letter from Lincoln County,” *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 9 October 1889. “Wild Bill” wrote this dispatch on 27 September 1889.

<sup>222</sup> Bob Dingess, telephone interview, 24 March 1995.

<sup>223</sup> Mae Brumfield, interview, 29 November 1995.

<sup>224</sup> Bob Adkins, interview, 24 July 1993.

<sup>225</sup> U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1900.

<sup>226</sup> Hardesty, *Hardesty’s Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 136; U.S. Census for Boone County, WV, 1870. James P. Kelly, Sr. was born illegitimately; he used the surname of both Kelly and Mullins.

<sup>227</sup> Hardesty, *Hardesty’s Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 136.

<sup>228</sup> Land Book (1879-1885), Lincoln County Clerk’s Office, Hamlin, WV.

<sup>229</sup> Hardesty, *Hardesty’s Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 136.

on his 203 acres and also acquired a 25-acre tract of land and a 30-acre tract of land on Harts Creek. In 1885, he transferred ownership of his 203 acres to his wife. That same year, his 30-acre tract increased to 93 acres. In 1886, his store building increased in value from \$200 to \$300.<sup>230</sup> In 1887, Louisa J. Mullins acquired and sold 150 acres on Francis Fork of Kiah's Creek to John W. Workman. In 1888, James' 203 acres was reconfigured to 272 acres, placed in his wife's name, included a \$300 building, and was valued at \$1360.<sup>231</sup> By 1889, James and Louisa had parented ten children, the oldest born in 1873, the youngest born in 1888.

Isham C. Roberts, Jr., Al Brumfield's brother-in-law, was born about 1859 to Isham Collins and Dicy Roberts in what later became Martin County, Kentucky.<sup>232</sup> Isham's parents lived separately for many years: in 1860, his father lived in McDowell County, (West) Virginia; by 1870, his father had relocated to Minnesota, while his mother lived in Floyd County, Kentucky.<sup>233</sup> In 1877, Isham settled in Lincoln County, West Virginia, where, in 1883, he married Martha J. Brumfield, daughter of Paris Brumfield. According to Hardesty's *History of Lincoln County, West Virginia* (1884): "Mr. Roberts is a prosperous young merchant in Harts Creek district, having his business headquarters on Guyan river, at the mouth of Big Hart creek. His prices are the most reasonable and the business very extensive."<sup>234</sup> He did not own any property.<sup>235</sup> By 1889, he had one daughter, Georgia Belle, born in March 1885.<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>230</sup> Land Book (1879-1885), Lincoln County Clerk's Office, Hamlin, WV.

<sup>231</sup> Land Book (1886-1891), Lincoln County Clerk's Office, Hamlin, WV.

<sup>232</sup> Hardesty, *Hardesty's Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 137.

<sup>233</sup> U.S. Census for McDowell County, VA, 1860; U.S. Census for Floyd County, Kentucky, 1870.

<sup>234</sup> Hardesty, *Hardesty's Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 137.

<sup>235</sup> Land Book (1886-1891), Lincoln County Clerk's Office, Hamlin, WV.

<sup>236</sup> U.S. Census for Osage Territory (Osage Kaw Indian Reservation), OK, 1900.

John Wesley Runyon was the primary Brumfield antagonist operating a business in Hart. Born a twin on 15 February 1855 in Lawrence County, Kentucky to Adam and Wealthy (Muncy) Runyon, Jr., John W. and his family lived in Logan County, (West) Virginia in 1860 where young Perry Cline was his neighbor.<sup>237</sup> By 1870, the family had returned to Kentucky, living in Lawrence County.<sup>238</sup> On 25 December 1878, John married Mary Magdeline Williamson, the daughter of Stephen and Ellender (Blevins) Williamson, in Martin County, Kentucky.<sup>239</sup> In 1880, the couple lived at Peach Orchard in Lawrence County.<sup>240</sup> By 1881, Runyon had two daughters: Aquillia (born 1879) and Wealthy (born 1881).<sup>241</sup> In the late 1880s, Runyon migrated to the Harts Creek community, settling on land along the Guyandotte River just above the mouth of Harts Creek. In 1887, he acquired 75 acres on the west side of the river from Albert S. “Major” Adkins. In 1888, he acquired 25 acres on the west side of the river from Aaron Adkins, father to Major.<sup>242</sup> At this location, Runyon operated a store and saloon near the mouth of Harts Creek.<sup>243</sup> An 1889 news story referenced Runyon as “a prominent man.”<sup>244</sup> A descendant of his closest neighbor described him as “slick.”<sup>245</sup>

Finally, John H. Napier, formerly of Wayne County, West Virginia, operated a store in Hart. Born on 22 August 1843 in Wayne County to Robert and Mary (Osborne)

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<sup>237</sup> Robert Runyon and Amos Runyon, *Runyon Genealogy: A Genealogy of the Runyon Families Who Settled Early in Kentucky, North Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia* (Brownsville, TX: privately printed, 1955), 88-106; U.S. Census for Logan County, Virginia, 1860. Perry Cline played a prominent role in the Hatfield-McCoy Feud.

<sup>238</sup> U.S. Census for Lawrence County, KY, 1870.

<sup>239</sup> Joseph W. Alley, *Williamson Genealogy* (Huntington, WV: Cook Printing, 1962), 167.

<sup>240</sup> U.S. Census for Lawrence County, KY, 1880.

<sup>241</sup> U.S. Census for Wyoming County, WV, 1900.

<sup>242</sup> Land Book (1886-1891), Lincoln County Clerk’s Office, Hamlin, WV.

<sup>243</sup> Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 62; Coberly, *Goldenseal*, 31; Bob Adkins, telephone interview, 22 July 1993; Mae Brumfield, interview, 4 March 1995.

<sup>244</sup> “West-Virginia’s Feud,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 16 November 1889.

<sup>245</sup> Johnny Golden Adkins, interview by Billy Adkins, Harts, WV, August 1995.

Napier, he had served as “a faithful soldier” in the Confederate army during the Civil War. On 4 June 1865, he married Julia A. Ross, niece to Cain Adkins. He served as superintendent of free schools in Wayne County. He and Julia settled in Lincoln County in 1879.<sup>246</sup> In the 1880 census, the family was listed as residing in Harts Creek District.<sup>247</sup> According to Hardesty’s *History of Lincoln County, West Virginia* (1884): “Mr. Napier is a prosperous merchant in Hart Creek district, with business headquarters at the mouth of the creek. He also owns 100 acres of good land in Wayne county.”<sup>248</sup> By 1889, Mr. Napier had fathered eight children, one daughter born in 1878 named for Mrs. Cain Adkins.<sup>249</sup> He did not own property in Hart.<sup>250</sup>

#### ECONOMY, 1888-1890

Between 1888 and 1890, the feud’s hottest years, prosperity seemed to prevail in the Harts Creek community: merchants enjoyed good business, talk of a railroad permeated the Guyandotte Valley, farmers had success, and timber fared well. In November of 1888, Andrew D. Robinson, postmaster at Warren on Harts Creek, wrote to the *Ceredo Advance* expressing his hope that the recent presidential election will end the “general stagnation of business” that had marked the country and region during the Cleveland administration.<sup>251</sup> In December, the *Ceredo Advance* delighted residents of the Guyandotte Valley when it announced that work would commence in the early spring on the Huntington and Guyandotte River Railroad between Huntington and Pineville in

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<sup>246</sup> Hardesty, *Hardesty’s Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 136.

<sup>247</sup> U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1880.

<sup>248</sup> Hardesty, *Hardesty’s Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 136.

<sup>249</sup> U.S. Census for Wayne County, WV, 1880; U.S. Census for Wayne County, WV, 1900.

<sup>250</sup> Land Book (1886-1891), Lincoln County Clerk’s Office, Hamlin, WV.

<sup>251</sup> *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 7 November 1888. The *Ceredo Advance* was a Republican newspaper.

Wyoming County.<sup>252</sup> The potential of the railroad to unlock the wealth of the valley was evident; plans for it had been in place since at least the early 1870s.<sup>253</sup> By April of 1889, according to “Wild Bill,” local merchants had recovered since the election of “comrade Ben” and were “doing a good business.” The writer said “things are looking up and predicted “good times,” noting the “timbermen are hopeful and pushing their business.”<sup>254</sup>

The economy continued its upbeat performance. On 9 May 1889, the *Logan County Banner* stated: “Our timbermen in the Guyandotte have at last been favored with a log tide, and about two hundred rafts were started to market on Thursday and Friday.” The following month, on June 5, the *Ceredo Advance* reported: “Times are still looking more prosperous and money seems to be more plentiful than it has been for several years. The timber men are discouraged at present, but we have good prospects for fine crops. The farmers in this community are very busy planting corn.”<sup>255</sup> On June 6, the *Logan County Banner* cheered: “The Guyandotte river on last Friday reached its highest stage for five years, and at least five thousand logs of the very best quality, besides some hundred or more rafts, passed this place for Guyandotte.” Later that fall, on November 21, the *Logan County Banner* offered this: “We had a splendid stage of water in Guyan river last week, and a considerable quantity of timber was floated out.” According to the *Logan County Banner*, one million dollars-worth of timber went out of the Guyandotte Valley in 1889.<sup>256</sup>

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<sup>252</sup> *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 5 December 1888.

<sup>253</sup> The railroad would not materialize until the late 1890s, ultimately finished to Aracoma (Logan) in 1904.

<sup>254</sup> “Warren, Lincoln County,” *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 3 April 1889.

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.* “Wild Bill” wrote this dispatch on 21 May 1889.

<sup>256</sup> *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 9 January 1890.

## CONCLUSION

The Lincoln County Feud intensified due to the changing socioeconomic nature of the Harts Creek community. The postwar timber boom prompted this change by disrupting life for Harts Creek residents. Most notably, it triggered jealousies and disputes among timbermen and contributed to a sketchy business climate among Hart merchants. The significance of these two factors cannot be ignored: a large number of feudists were timbermen and/or merchants. The Brumfields and Dingesses, particularly Al Brumfield, Burl Farley, and Albert Dingess, were heavily involved in the timber industry, as were their antagonists John Runyon, Ben Adams, and the Nesters. An increase in timber activity during the 1880s coincided with an increase in timber disputes. Timber work encouraged rowdy behavior, whether in the woods, the camps, on the rafts, or in timber towns; it required a man of strength, unafraid of danger, who labored in extreme weather conditions. Timber migrants such as Milt Haley and Green McCoy contributed to crime in the community. The growth of Hart, related to the timber boom, also agitated the feud. Prominent merchants Bill Fowler, Al Brumfield, John W. Runyon, Isham Roberts, and James P. Mullins all sought to gain an advantage over one another, creating fiction. Most merchants in Hart were non-native; Al Brumfield was the only merchant born locally. Merchants were mostly interrelated, creating confusion about loyalty; Al Brumfield, for instance, was a cousin to Bill Fowler and brother-in-law to Isham Roberts. The timber industry enjoyed great success in 1889, the feud's hottest year.

## CHAPTER SIX: FEUDS AND HONOR:

“EVERY BODY SAYS HE WILL KILL ME IF I DON’T KILL HIM”<sup>1</sup>

In the late 1880s, the Lincoln County Feud, which began some ten years earlier as a personal dispute between Paris Brumfield and Cain Adkins, absorbed several smaller but similarly vindictive and nasty feuds, namely the Dingess-Adams Feud, the Brumfield-Runyon Feud, the Brumfield-Adams Feud, the Dingess-Hall Feud, the Brumfield-Hall vendetta, and the Brumfield-Nester troubles. The convergence of these related feuds in the late 1880s intensified the already deadly Lincoln County Feud. Because some writers fail to connect feud-related events or choose to view certain incidents as separate acts of vigilantism or as “regional violence” (not feuds), it is important to provide the proper linkage between feud events.<sup>2</sup> All five essential elements required to label homicide-related events as a feud will be evident: kinship groups were involved; homicides occurred; killings operated as revenge for an injustice; three or more killings or acts of violence occurred; and killings occurred within an overall political authority, such as a tribe, nation, or country. The feud also included five types of feud episodes: ambushes, gunfights, house attacks, encounter battles, and arranged battles.<sup>3</sup>

For convenience, the term “feud” will be applied to each of the smaller quarrels, although only two included all of the five elements.<sup>4</sup> The Brumfield-Adkins Feud, which represents the heart of the larger Lincoln County Feud, qualified as a feud in and of itself.

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<sup>1</sup> Green McCoy, letter, 19 May 1889.

<sup>2</sup> Ken Sullivan, “Feuds,” *The West Virginia Encyclopedia*, 23 July 2012  
<http://www.wvencyclopedia.org/articles/2255> (accessed 4 April 2014).

<sup>3</sup> See Table 11. Otterbein, *Encyclopedia of Crime and Punishment*, 691-692.

<sup>4</sup> See Table 10. The term “quasi-feud” would perhaps more accurately describe the lesser quarrels.



It featured kinship groups, acts of homicide, revenge for an injustice, and three or more acts of violence. The Dingess-Hall Feud likewise featured two families linked by marriage, an act of homicide, revenge for an injustice, three or more acts of violence, and occurred within an overall political authority. Other “feuds” included within the larger Lincoln County Feud included some of the required elements. The Brumfield-Runyon Feud and the Brumfield-Adams Feud operated through the lens of business, not kinship, and included scuffles, ambushes, and attempted homicides. The Dingess-Adams Feud, the Brumfield-Hall Feud, and the Brumfield-Nester troubles occurred within two related family matrices, qualifying as interfamily squabbles and included an unknown number of violent acts.

Any understanding of the Lincoln County Feud requires analysis of the Brumfield-Adkins Feud, as well as of the lesser feuds...all of which combined to heighten the level of violence in the Lincoln County Feud. By 1889, the original feud between Paris Brumfield and Cain Adkins had expanded to include a Brumfield-Dingess faction opposed by an Adkins-Runyon-Nester-Adams-Hall faction. It is also important to consider the culture of honor, specifically its combination with alcohol and guns, and its effect on the legal system.

#### BRUMFIELD-ADKINS FEUD

The feud between Paris Brumfield and Cain Adkins, which may have begun as early as the Civil War or with Abner Vance’s 1869 acquisition of the desirable “Toney tract” at the mouth of Harts Creek, was well underway by 1882 when Paris Brumfield killed Boney Lucas. An 1889 story printed in the *Wheeling Intelligencer* claimed that

Paris Brumfield and Cain Adkins “had been sworn enemies for some time,” that “there had been an enmity of many years standing” between them, that they “had on more than one occasion exchanged shots...”<sup>5</sup> According to an 1889 story in the *Wheeling Register*, “The feud broke out about six years ago [1883], when several people were shot, Paris Brumfield being credited with inflicting two or three fatal wounds.”<sup>6</sup> In its earliest years, the Brumfield-Adkins Feud contained a Brumfield faction and an Adkins-Lucas-Vance faction. Based on the *Wheeling Register*, Brumfield killed two or three Adkins family partisans in the early 1880s.<sup>7</sup> Cain’s in-laws suffered serious losses between the late 1870s and 1885, perhaps at the hands of Brumfield. Brother-in-law Wes Vance moved to Wayne County between 1870 and 1880. Mother-in-law Christina Vance died on 22 February 1881. Brother-in-law Elisha W. Vance died about 1884. Father-in-law Abner Vance died on 5 November 1885. Nephew-in-law Abner A. Vance, who was convicted of forgery in 1885 and sentenced to serve two years at the state penitentiary, died before 1890.<sup>8</sup> The *Wheeling Register* stated the Brumfield-Adkins Feud represented a “very serious state of affairs for a time,” although “matters were quieted down, and there was no bloodshed. Even all through the Hatfield-McCoy war Lincoln county was quiet.”<sup>9</sup>

Green McCoy’s entry into the community about 1887 and his subsequent marriage to Spicie Adkins, daughter of Cain Adkins, seems to have reignited the Brumfield-Adkins feud. The *Wheeling Intelligencer* described McCoy as a “desperate

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<sup>5</sup> “The Terrible Vendetta,” *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 29 October 1889.

<sup>6</sup> “The Truth,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 3 November 1889.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1870; U.S. Census for Wayne County, WV, 1880; Abner Vance, West Virginia State Penitentiary records, Moundsville, WV. Located at West Virginia Archives and History, The Cultural Center, Charleston, WV; F.C. Lloyd to Mindiana Vance, marriage record, 18 September 1890, Wayne County, WV.

<sup>9</sup> “The Truth,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 3 November 1889.

and dangerous man” and “a member of the now famous McCoy family of Pike county, Kentucky” who arrived “from Kentucky some years back.”<sup>10</sup> Because of McCoy’s prominent role in the Brumfield-Adkins Feud, the latter years of the feud transitioned from a quarrel containing a Brumfield faction and an Adkins-Lucas-Vance faction into a spat containing a Brumfield faction and an Adkins-McCoy faction.

Paris Brumfield targeted Green McCoy due to his relationship to Cain Adkins. While the *Wheeling Intelligencer* described Green as “desperate and dangerous,” oral history provided by Adkins descendants assert that Paris Brumfield was the instigator of renewed violence.<sup>11</sup> “The Brumfields was rough,” said a granddaughter to Cain Adkins. “They had a mob. The Brumfields first killed Grandpa’s son-in-law, Boney Lucas, and when Mom [Spicie] married Green McCoy they said they had another one they’s gonna kill.”<sup>12</sup> Green, while small in stature, seems to have held his own with Paris Brumfield, who was known as a mountain terror. McCoy once fought with Paris, “got him down,” and pulled his eyeballs out and “let them pop back like rubber bands.”<sup>13</sup> Paris had to wear a blindfold for a while afterward.<sup>14</sup> Placed within the context of a culture of honor, Green’s response to Brumfield is understandable; a non-response by McCoy would have diminished his worth.

During the first half of 1888, the Brumfield-Adkins Feud became hot, garnering extraordinary media attention. On 25 February 1888, the *Wheeling Register* reported a

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<sup>10</sup> “The Terrible Vendetta,” *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 29 October 1889.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 25 October 1995; Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 27 October 1995; Daisy Ross, interview, 11 December 1995.

<sup>13</sup> Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 8 December 1995; Daisy Ross, interview, 11 December 1995; Daisy Ross, interview, 16 March 1996. Daisy provided this quote in two different interviews.

<sup>14</sup> Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 27 October 1995; Daisy Ross, interview, 11 December 1995; Daisy Ross, interview, 16 March 1996.

sensational incident between Paris Brumfield and Green McCoy that occurred in the Lincoln County seat of Hamlin.

Information has just reached here of a shooting scrape which occurred at Lincoln Court House, Lincoln county, this State, early this week. From what can be learned, Paris Brumfield, met one of the McCoys, a resident of Wayne county, at Lincoln Court House, where Brumfield was on trial for some offense. An old grudge existed between the two men and after Court adjourned for dinner McCoy went to a saloon and found Brumfield. The latter made some insulting remark which caused McCoy to leave. Shortly after, the two men met on the street, when McCoy got the drop on Brumfield. McCoy snapped his pistol at Brumfield, who immediately fired at McCoy, but missing his intended, hit Rufus Stowers, aged sixty, in the leg. A running fire was indulged in until twelve or fifteen shots were fired. The men were not drinking when the fracas first began. Each was arrested and placed under bond and afterward released.<sup>15</sup>

During the late 1880s, Paris Brumfield continued his feud with Cain Adkins. On 23 June 1888, the *Huntington Advertiser* reported:

Paris Brumfield was indicted for felony in five different cases by the grand jury of Lincoln County at its recent term. He has fled the county, not being able to give bail, which was fixed by the Court at \$5,000. Brumfield's latest act of violence was his murderous assault upon Cain Adkins, a staunch Democrat, one of the Advertiser's most esteemed subscribers. The last act was the straw that broke the camel's back, and the county became too hot for Paris. Gibson & Michie have been retained by Brumfield's friends to defend him when brought to trial.<sup>16</sup>

Preacher Cain Adkins' willing or unwilling involvement in a feud likely diminished his prestige within the community. This unfortunate reality was made worse by dramatic events that occurred within his family between 1887 and 1890. These events included: Spicie Adkins' betrothal to the controversial (and perhaps still married) Green McCoy; Spicie's birthing of Sherman Boyd McCoy on 30 May 1888; Angeline Lucas' romance with Sherman Boyd, a boarder at the Adkins farm; Angeline's birthing of illegitimate son William Taylor Lucas on 11 October 1888; Angeline's romance with

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<sup>15</sup> "Shooting Scrape," *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 25 February 1888. Rufus Stowers was Lincoln County assessor in 1889.

<sup>16</sup> *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 23 June 1888.

Lynza John McCoy, brother to Green; and Angeline's birthing of illegitimate daughter Wilda Lucas on 7 April 1890.<sup>17</sup> Regarding his daughters' controversial behavior, his granddaughter said, "Because he [Cain] was a doctor and gone a lot, he wasn't around to be strict. Some of the girls done things Grandpa wouldn't have approved of."<sup>18</sup>

Angeline Lucas, the widow of Boney Lucas, remained bitter toward Paris Brumfield for murdering her husband. According to one story, she laid in wait for Brumfield with her son Millard, who was nine years old [placing the event c.1889]. She had a gun and was hidden behind a rock. When her son figured out what she was going to do, he asked her, "Why are you going to kill Uncle Paris?" She put the gun down and said, "I almost made a mistake like the Brumfields made."<sup>19</sup>

On 19 May 1889, Green McCoy wrote a very revealing letter to his brother, Harrison, who lived on Peter Creek in Pike County, Kentucky.

Dear Brother. after a long delay of time I take this oportunity of drop[p]ing you a few lines to let you know that I am well hoping when these lines reaches you they may find you all the same. Harrison you must excuse me for not writing sooner. the cause of me not writing is this the post master here is very careless. they let people brake open the letters and read them. so I will write this time to let you know where I am and where Lynza is. I have moved back to the west fork of Harts Creek and Lynza is married and living in wayne Co. yet on beach fork. every body is done planting corn very near in this Country. every thing looks lively in this part. tell Father and Mother that I coming out this fall after crops are laid by if I live and Lynza will come with me. tell all howdy for me. you may look for us boath. if death nor sickness don't tak place we will come. Harrison I would rather you would not write any more this summer. people brakes open the letters and reads them. so I will not write a long letter. Brumfield and me lives in 2 miles

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<sup>17</sup> U.S. Census for Wayne County, WV, 1900; Adkins, *Land of York to Beech Fork*, 236; Daisy Ross, interview, 11 December 1995; Daisy Ross, interview, 16 March 1996; Edna Lucas, interview by author, Wayne, WV, 24 July 2016; Taylor Lucas, headstone, Community Memorial Gardens, Armilda, WV; Angeline Adams family Bible (copy), author's collection; Charles Coey to Wilda Lucas, marriage record, 15 February 1908, Ross County, OH. John McCoy, a widow, had married Penelope Parsons on 13 February 1889 in Wayne County (John McCoy to Pumelephy Parsons, marriage record, 13 February 1889, Wayne County, WV) and then Mary A. Dotson on 30 January 1890 in Pike County, KY (Marriage Book 16, 67, Pike County Clerk's Office, Pikeville, KY)

<sup>18</sup> Daisy Ross, interview, 16 March 1996.

<sup>19</sup> Glenna Epling, telephone interview, 2002.

of each other and has had no more trouble but every body says that he will kill me if I don't kill him. I look to have trouble with him. So I will close this time. My wife sends her best respects to you all and says she would like to see you all. My boy is begining to walk. he is a spoiled boy to.<sup>20</sup>

As late as the summer of 1889, the Brumfield-Adkins Feud, or as it would soon be dubbed, the Brumfield-*McCoy* Feud, raged in the Harts Creek community. In mid-September 1889, Green McCoy shot Paris Brumfield through the leg.<sup>21</sup>

#### DINGESS-ADAMS FEUD

Coinciding with the Brumfield-Adkins Feud, the bitter Dingess-Adams Feud boiled on Harts Creek throughout the 1880s. The feud may have begun as early as February of 1869 when Floyd Gore, acting on behalf of John Q. Adams' heirs, sued Dingess. Family arrangements regarding this matter were peculiar: Henderson Dingess (defendant) was an uncle to Gore (plaintiff) and a brother-in-law of the late John Q. Adams. In his bill of complaint, Gore said his uncle Henderson had "entered upon said land and has cut about forty poplar trees on said land and has hauled said logs to the Smoke House Fork of Harts Creek which said lumber is worth one hundred and fifty dollars."<sup>22</sup> In his bill of complaint, Gore added that "said Henderson Dingess is wholly worthless and the value of said timber could not be made out of his effects."<sup>23</sup> Available records do not indicate the outcome of the case.

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<sup>20</sup> Green McCoy, letter, 19 May 1889. Note: Ross Fowler, a cousin to Al Brumfield, was postmaster.

<sup>21</sup> "Lynched!" *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 28 October 1889; "Quick Justice Done," *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 29 October 1889.

<sup>22</sup> *Floyd S. Gore, adm. vs. Henderson Dingess* (1869), Logan County Circuit Clerk's Office, Logan, WV. John Q. Adams, a brother to Ben, was killed in 1863 while serving in the Confederate Army.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

The Dingess-Adams Feud, as recalled by oral history, originated due to personal grievances between Henderson Dingess and Ben Adams, prompted by Dingess' poor view of the Adams family, Dingess' notion of Adams' corruption of his sons, and squabbles between Adams and Dingess' sons. The primary belligerents in the Dingess-Adams trouble were Henderson Dingess and his sons, Charley Dingess, Floyd Dingess, and Hugh Dingess; Ben Adams and his henchmen, John "Frock" Adams and Tom Maggard, opposed them.

Henderson Dingess was a leading citizen of Warren at Upper Hart near the Logan County line. Born in May 1829 in Logan County, (West) Virginia, the son of John and Chloe (Farley) Dingess, he was the youngest of ten children.<sup>24</sup> As a young man, he had lived with and worked for pioneer settler Joe Adams on Harts Creek.<sup>25</sup> On 10 December 1853, he married Adams' daughter, Sarah, called "Sallie," at the Adams home.<sup>26</sup> At some point his father-in-law "gave him land to live on."<sup>27</sup> During the Civil War, Henderson served as a Confederate soldier; afterwards, he farmed a large tract of land on Smokehouse Fork.<sup>28</sup> A survey of Logan County records for 1865 to 1869 reveal Henderson as a man who was sued several times over debts, but never prosecuted for violent crimes.<sup>29</sup> As early as March 1866, he served on a Logan County jury, for which

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<sup>24</sup> U.S. Census for Logan County, VA, 1850; U.S. Census for Logan County, WV, 1900.

<sup>25</sup> John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996.

<sup>26</sup> Henderson Dingess family Bible (copy), author's collection.

<sup>27</sup> John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996.

<sup>28</sup> Henderson Dingess, Carter's Company, 129<sup>th</sup> Virginia Regiment Militia, Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from Virginia (National Archives Microfilm Publication M324E, roll 1056), War Department Collection of Confederate Records, Record Group 109, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC; Special Schedule of the Eleventh Census (1890), Enumerating Union Veterans and Widows of Union Veterans of the Civil War for Lincoln County, WV; U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1870. The 1890 census specified Dingess as a member of the 36<sup>th</sup> Virginia Cavalry from 1863 to 1864.

<sup>29</sup> Law Orders Book A (1868-1875), Logan County Circuit Clerk's Office, Logan, WV. This book contains criminal records for 1865, 1866, and 1867, as well as 1868-1875.

he was paid two dollars.<sup>30</sup> By 1889, he and Sallie had parented eleven children, the oldest born in 1854, the youngest born in 1878.<sup>31</sup>

During the Lincoln County Feud, Henderson Dingess operated a federally-licensed peach and apple brandy distillery.<sup>32</sup> The Dingess distillery was a large and lucrative operation. Hugh Dingess, a son, helped with the distillery, as did sons Harvey and Dave. Harvey hauled fruit from Bryant Ridge to Henderson's home. Henderson's distillery supplied liquor to local businesses. Al Brumfield, Henderson's son-in-law, sold Dingess brandy in his saloon. Henderson's son, John Dingess, also peddled it at his Twelve Pole Creek saloon.<sup>33</sup> According to one granddaughter, Henderson was "well-off. He had a good plantation."<sup>34</sup>

Benjamin "Ben" Adams, born in 1855, was a brother-in-law to Henderson. He was the youngest son of Joseph and Dicy (Mullins) Adams.<sup>35</sup> For a period of time, Adams and his Dingess in-laws maintained an agreeable relationship. In 1873, he married Victoria Dingess, Henderson's niece.<sup>36</sup> Adams and his wife subsequently occupied a two-story log cabin on Harts Creek, situated midway between the home of Henderson Dingess and Dicy Adams.<sup>37</sup> Perhaps indicative of an attachment to his Dingess in-laws, Adams named his oldest daughter Sarah after his sister (wife of Henderson); his second-oldest daughter for his mother-in-law, Patsy Dingess, and his second-oldest son for his father-

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<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 159.

<sup>31</sup> U.S. Census for Logan County, VA, 1860; U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1870; U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1880; U.S. Census for Logan County, WV, 1900.

<sup>32</sup> *Polk's West Virginia State Gazetteer and Business Directory* (1884); Freeman Adams, interview, 20 March 2011.

<sup>33</sup> Maude Dingess, interview, 20 December 1995.

<sup>34</sup> Maude Dingess, interview, September 1995.

<sup>35</sup> U.S. Census for Logan County, VA, 1860.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*; *Marriages-Births-Deaths (1872-1892)*, 68, Logan County Clerk's Office, Logan, WV.

<sup>37</sup> Dorothy Brumfield, interview, 26 September 1996; John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996.



in-law, Harvey S. Dingess.<sup>38</sup> During the 1870s and 1880s, Adams frequently caroused with Henderson's three oldest sons—Charley, Floyd, and Hugh—who were his approximate age.<sup>39</sup> In 1877, the family bond between Ben and Hugh grew closer when Hugh married first cousin Viola Dingess, the sister to Mrs. Ben Adams.<sup>40</sup>

As early as the 1870s, Henderson Dingess and his family operated as *de facto* law enforcement in Upper Hart. The family administered harsh justice to those who misbehaved about his farm. "A lot of his brothers and cousins would stay with him," said one in-law. "He told them if they gave him any trouble, he'd have his 'boys' tie them to a tree and he'd whip them. If anyone bullied around his place, he'd tell them that. By 'boys,' he meant his gang, not just his sons."<sup>41</sup> His authority also extended beyond his farm to the larger Harts Creek area. In 1874, when kinsmen Ben Adams, Charles Adkins, and Albert Dingess were accused of committing a felony in Logan County, Henderson and his sons, Charley and Hugh, guarded them until trial. In September of 1874, the county court paid the elder Dingess and Hugh six dollars apiece for having guarded the men for six days; Charley was paid four dollars for having guarded them for four days.<sup>42</sup> Henderson's "boys," who assisted him in carrying out *de facto* law duties, could be rowdy and difficult to manage, but there was no doubt the old patriarch "was kindly the leader of them all."<sup>43</sup>

An 1878-1879 "pig trial" reveals Henderson Dingess' relationship to local and county law officials. In 1878, Henderson, Charles Dingess, David Dingess, and Allen

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<sup>38</sup> U.S. Census for Logan County, WV, 1880; U.S. Census for Logan County, WV, 1900.

<sup>39</sup> Maude Dingess, interview by author and John Hartford, Shively, WV, 24 October 1995.

<sup>40</sup> Marriages-Births-Deaths (1872-1892), 34, Logan County Clerk's Office, Logan, WV.

<sup>41</sup> Harvey Dingess, interview by author, Shively, WV, September 1995.

<sup>42</sup> Law Order Book A (1868-1875), 592, Logan County Circuit Clerk's Office, Logan, WV.

<sup>43</sup> Maude Dingess, interview, 24 October 1995.

Butcher brought suit against Polk Farmer, Irvin Dingess, David Dingess, and William Dingess, who stood accused of stealing two of the plaintiffs' hogs. On 25 December 1878, Justice of the Peace Stephen Lambert ruled in favor of the plaintiffs, but only for three dollars. Unsatisfied with the amount of compensation, Dingess brought suit against JP Lambert and Polk Farmer in 1879, asking the Logan County Court to prevent Lambert from hearing any further action brought by himself against Farmer and the others for the hogs, which he valued at seven dollars. On 13 February 1879, the Court granted Dingess' request.<sup>44</sup>

While Henderson Dingess was regarded as a leading citizen and a person of authority, young Ben Adams was known locally as a troublemaker. In 1871, Jackson Mullins, Ben's first cousin and the husband of Ben's brother's widow, swore out a peace warrant against him.<sup>45</sup> About that same time, Adams fathered an illegitimate son by Lucinda Brumfield, niece to Paris Brumfield.<sup>46</sup> Oral history provided by Adams' own descendants is not complimentary. Ben was a "big tall ruffian" and a "villain," said one great-grandson.<sup>47</sup> Two old-timers, one being a descendant, described him as a "mean fellow."<sup>48</sup> Ben was "ruthless" and "mean."<sup>49</sup> He was "a mean man...you couldn't bother him."<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Law Orders Book B (1878-1886), 58, Logan County Circuit Clerk's Office, Logan, WV.

<sup>45</sup> Jackson Mullins vs. Benjamin Adams, peace warrant note (copy), April 1871, author's collection.

<sup>46</sup> Adams Family Notebook, Billy Adkins Genealogy Collection, Harts, WV.

<sup>47</sup> Alvie Thompson, interview, September 1995.

<sup>48</sup> Cas Baisden, interview, September 1995; Gaynelle Thompson, interview by author, Chapmanville, WV, 1 October 1995.

<sup>49</sup> Harvey and Maude Dingess, interview by author, Shively, WV, 20 December 1995.

<sup>50</sup> Bob Dingess, interview, 8 August 1995.

Henderson developed a poor view toward the Adams family (in spite of the fact his wife had been an Adams). He came to view the Adamses as “hoggish.”<sup>51</sup> He also viewed them as lazy. When his youngest son Dave behaved shiftlessly, Henderson referred to him as being “all Adams.”<sup>52</sup> Dave made a habit of laying out in the shade instead of hoeing corn. After a while, he would throw some dirt on himself and then come inside the house and wipe dirt off of his shoes as if he had been working.<sup>53</sup> “If I knew where the Adams vein was,” Henderson would say to Dave, “I’d drive a knife in it and let it run out.”<sup>54</sup>

At some point, a serious rift developed between Henderson Dingess’ family and Ben Adams. According to Dingess family tradition, Henderson blamed Adams for “teaching” his sons “their meanness.” Adams, in turn, became agitated when Charley Dingess and Floyd Dingess “turned it” onto him (meaning directed it toward him).<sup>55</sup> A breaking point came when Ben and Charley engaged in a dispute regarding a yoke of cattle. Ben located his nephew at Cole Branch and a row ensued: Charley “nearly killed him in a fight.” The two never spoke again.<sup>56</sup> Afterwards, Ben rode to Henderson’s property on horseback to complain about his treatment. Henderson, who stood inside the house, told his wife, Sallie, “Go out there and tell him to go on home. We don’t want no trouble with them.” Sallie went outside and told her brother, “Now Ben, you just go right back home. Don’t you get off here. There’s no use to quarrel at Charley and Floyd ‘cause

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<sup>51</sup> John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996. Perhaps related to the earlier land case.

<sup>52</sup> Maude Dingess, interview, September 1995.

<sup>53</sup> Bob Adkins, interview, n.d.

<sup>54</sup> Maude Dingess, interview, 24 October 1995.

<sup>55</sup> Maude Dingess, interview, 20 December 1995.

<sup>56</sup> John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996.

you've made 'em what they are. You taught it to 'em."<sup>57</sup> For the most part, Henderson and his family "separated themselves from the Adams family."<sup>58</sup>

By the 1880s, Ben Adams had become a powerful force in Upper Hart. He owned a respectable amount of property, served as a splasher on main Hart, and operated a store and saloon.<sup>59</sup> He was a "millionaire in his day."<sup>60</sup> He reportedly managed a "government still" with cabins nearby.<sup>61</sup> One great-grandson said:

Him and Henderson Dingess both had government stills. That's why they's both so mean. They was a man come there, gauge it some way or another and check it all out for him. Now him and Henderson Dingess both was licensed. Had to be a little politics in that. Had to be a little money that went under the table.<sup>62</sup>

On 8 April 1879, the Logan County Court appointed Adams as surveyor of roads for Precinct 21, which ran from the Lincoln County line up the main artery of Twelve Pole Creek and crossed the mountain to Twelve Pole. His appointment came at the expense of brother-in-law Albert Dingess, who had been removed by the county court.<sup>63</sup> Adams used his prosperity and prestige to recruit cronies. One descendant put it this way: "He kept a bunch of hatchet men around to do his meanness."<sup>64</sup> According to family history, nephew John "Frock" Adams and Tom Maggard served as his primary henchmen.<sup>65</sup> Once a resident of Pikeville, Kentucky, Maggard had settled in Harts Creek after being indicted for shooting a constable in the stomach.<sup>66</sup> One Adams relative said:

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<sup>57</sup> Maude Dingess, interview, 20 December 1995.

<sup>58</sup> Maude Dingess, interview, 24 October 1995.

<sup>59</sup> Ethel Adams, interview, September 1995; *Polk's West Virginia State Gazetteer and Business Directory* (1884); Bob Dingess, interview, 8 August 1995; Cas Baisden, interview, September 1995.

<sup>60</sup> Bob Dingess, interview, 8 August 1995.

<sup>61</sup> Bob Dingess, interview, 8 August 1995; Verdayne Shelton, interview, 22 November 1995; Freeman Adams, interview, 20 March 2011.

<sup>62</sup> Freeman Adams, interview, 20 March 2011.

<sup>63</sup> Law Orders Book B (1878-1886), 71, Logan County Circuit Clerk's Office, Logan, WV.

<sup>64</sup> Freeman Adams, interview, 20 March 2011.

<sup>65</sup> John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996. John said Tom Maggard served as Ben's "right hand man."

<sup>66</sup> Shirley Marcum, email to author, 22 July 2014.

Old John was mean, too. I remember him. You didn't fool with that old man. He stayed with Ben. He done the meanness.<sup>67</sup>

On 27 December 1887, John Frock deeded Ben a tract of land situated “below John Adams house” on Trace Fork of Harts Creek in Lincoln County for one hundred dollars. Justice of the Peace Cain Adkins witnessed the deed.<sup>68</sup>

In the Dingess-Adams Feud, kinship did not determine loyalties. Both factions of the feud were closely related. Adams family members dismiss the intra-family feud's peculiarity. “Families would argue back then,” recalled one Adams descendant. “They'd shoot mules, cows, burn barns...of first cousins, not strangers.”<sup>69</sup> One Adams descendant said, “The Adamses were mean—they'd kill each other.”<sup>70</sup> Ben Adams' great-grandson had this to say: “I know these Adamses. They'd rather die as see their brother or some of their family making it pretty good. Jealousy. They was sneakin'. They wouldn't fight you fair. They'd hide in the bushes and shoot your brains out.”<sup>71</sup> In mid-September 1889, in events perhaps connected to the Dingess-Adams quarrel, unknown parties shot one of Henderson Dingess' sons.<sup>72</sup>

## BRUMFIELD-RUNYON FEUD

In the late 1880s, store and liquor business competition, as well as timber disputes, political differences, and perhaps issues relating to women, triggered the Brumfield-Runyon Feud. At that time, Al Brumfield, oldest son of Paris, operated a store

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<sup>67</sup> Freeman Adams, interview, 20 March 2011.

<sup>68</sup> John Adams to Benjamin Adams, deed of sale, 27 December 1887. Of interest, Cain Adkins had married John Adams to his wife in 1881.

<sup>69</sup> Joe Adams, interview, 8 August 1995.

<sup>70</sup> Carolyn “Johnnie” Farley, interview, 24 October 1995.

<sup>71</sup> Freeman Adams, interview, 20 March 2011.

<sup>72</sup> “Lynched!” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 28 October 1889.

TABLE 10  
*Homicide-Related Incidents as Feuds*

Required Criteria to Label Homicide-Related Incidents as Feuding	Brumfield-Adkins	Dingess-Adams	Brumfield-Runyon	Brumfield-Adams	Dingess-Hall	Brumfield-Hall	Brumfield-Nester
Kinship groups must be involved	X	X		X	X	X	X
Homicides must occur	X		X	X	X		
Killings must operate as revenge for an injustice	X		X	X	X		
At least three or more killings or acts of violence must occur	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Killings must occur within an overall political authority (country)	X		X	X	X	X	
Some means must be available to end the conflict	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

and whisky boat below Hart; John W. Runyon had a store and saloon above Hart.<sup>73</sup>

“Runyon and Al Brumfield were neighbors, and both keep stores near the same place,”

the *Daily State Journal* of Parkersburg, West Virginia, reported in 1889. “The Brumfields had been doing more business than Runyon, and this excited the latter’s jealousy, making the feeling between them more bitter.”<sup>74</sup> One relative of Al Brumfield attributed most of the blame for the trouble to Runyon, who he called “the root of all evil.”<sup>75</sup>

Timber played a prominent role in the Brumfield-Runyon Feud. First, Al Brumfield’s log boom served as a source of contention. Runyon, whose access to the Guyandotte River allowed him to bypass the boom and its tax, nevertheless attempted to have the boom removed by persuading the West Virginia Legislature to declare Harts

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<sup>73</sup> Bob Adkins, telephone interview, 22 July 1993; Lawrence Kirk, interview, 27 July 1993; Bob Adkins, interview, 3 March 1995.

<sup>74</sup> “The West Virginia Feud,” *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 9 November 1889.

<sup>75</sup> Bob Adkins, interview, 24 July 1993.

Creek a navigable stream.<sup>76</sup> Second, according to at least one newspaper account, “the feud originated over the ownership of a large amount of timber.”<sup>77</sup>

Louisa Mullins, estranged wife of merchant James P. Mullins, compounded the problem between Brumfield and Runyon. According to the *Daily State Journal*: “Mrs. James P. Mullins had been living with one of the Brumfields, but demanded more money than he cared to pay, and a quarrel ensued. The woman left Brumfield and joined John Runyon. She immediately stirred up Runyon’s dislike for Brumfield.”<sup>78</sup> A Parkersburg newspaper later referred to her as “one of the leaders of his [Runyon’s] party.”<sup>79</sup>

The election of 1888 also contributed to the Brumfield-Runyon Feud. According to an 1889 story printed in the *Daily State Journal*:

John Runyon was a deputy sheriff two years ago. He is a Republican, and Lincoln county is Democratic. Last fall Runyon organized a band of regulators to elect a Republican sheriff in order that Runyon might be deputy sheriff again. The Brumfields, who are Democrats, discovered Runyon’s action, and intense hatred began.<sup>80</sup>

The *Louisville Courier-Journal* reported:

The Brumfields are one of the most numerous families in Lincoln county. They have been active in politics, and being all Democrats have practically controlled the elections. The Halls, Haleys, Adkins and Runyons compose nine-tenths of the remaining population of the settlement. They are generally Republicans, and there has been bitter jealousy between them and the Brumfields for years past.<sup>81</sup>

More clues to the origin of the Brumfield-Runyon trouble could be gleaned from a story printed in the *Louisville Courier-Journal*: “Paris Brumfield quarreled with Jeff [sic] Runyon, who had hitherto taken no part in the feud. Runyon was a prominent man

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<sup>76</sup> Billy Adkins, interview, 4 March 1995.

<sup>77</sup> “First Blood, Then Law,” *Shenandoah Herald* (Woodstock, VA), 4 April 1890.

<sup>78</sup> “The West Virginia Feud,” *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 9 November 1889.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> “West-Virginia’s Feud,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 16 November 1889.

and an ex-Deputy Sheriff. The Brumfields charged him with assaulting the wife of one of their number. While this feeling existed, Paris Brumfield was shot from ambush by some unknown parties and seriously hurt.”<sup>82</sup>

## BRUMFIELD-ADAMS FEUD

During the late 1880s, timber issues—specifically economic competition and theft of logs—prompted the Brumfield-Adams Feud. Al Brumfield, operator of the log boom at the mouth of Harts Creek, and Ben Adams, a splasher and uncle to Brumfield’s wife, fought intermittently over log ownership.<sup>83</sup> “I think it was over logs,” said one Dingess descendant. “Them Adamses up in there had to bring their timber over them, and Al and Hollene owned the boom.”<sup>84</sup> Regarding the cause of the trouble, a grandson of Hugh Dingess said: “I imagine that it was timber.”<sup>85</sup> Specifically, the dispute arose for one or all of the following three reasons. First, Adams refused to pay Brumfield’s toll at the boom.<sup>86</sup> “He was a bully and wanted to control the creek,” said a Dingess descendant. “Ben wanted to run his timber down Harts Creek and not pay the fee.”<sup>87</sup> Second, Adams lost a lot of timber near Brumfield’s boom and blamed Brumfield for it. He intended to make Brumfield pay; Al refused. After a heated discussion, Brumfield went into his house to fetch a gun. Adams took off back up the creek and made his way home by traveling up Big Branch and over a ridge.<sup>88</sup> Third, Adams accused Brumfield of stealing

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<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> Charley Davis, interview, n.d.; Harvey Dingess, interview, 20 December 1995.

<sup>84</sup> Johnny Golden Adkins, interview, 2 April 2011.

<sup>85</sup> Bob Adkins, interview, 3 March 1995.

<sup>86</sup> Irene Adkins, interview by author, Harts, WV, 12 July 1996.

<sup>87</sup> John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996.

<sup>88</sup> Bob Dingess, interview, 24 March 1995; Bob Dingess, interview, 8 August 1995.



timber by sawing his brands from the ends of his logs and replacing them with his own.<sup>89</sup> One Adams descendant had this to say: “Ben got into it with the Brumfields because the Adamses would rise slash dams to send their logs down the creek and the Brumfields would cut Ben’s brand off the logs and replace them with his.”<sup>90</sup> This was a serious offense—to steal a branded log worth \$10 or more was grand larceny, punishable by one to five years in prison.<sup>91</sup>

On at least one occasion, Ben and Al traded shots at the boom.<sup>92</sup> According to a Dingess descendant: “Ben shot Al with a pistol and it hit a button and it saved him. It happened at a tavern at the mouth of Harts Creek.”<sup>93</sup> Eventually,

Ben tried to force his logs out at night. Brumfield’s men were ready at Panther Branch with the Dingesses. Ben put his wife at the front of the gang because he thought they wouldn’t shoot her. They all just started shooting. They shot her dress full of holes. She came around the next day to show Henderson what the Brumfields had done to her. She thought Henderson would punish his boys.<sup>94</sup>

## DINGESS-HALL FEUD

During the late 1880s, Floyd Dingess, son of Henderson, feuded with his in-laws, the Hall family. Floyd, born 13 April 1856, was married to Eveline Hall, daughter of Hiram and Lucy (Delphs) Hall.<sup>95</sup> Floyd’s roots in the community extended back to the original settlers, whereas Eveline’s father was a recent settler in the community, having

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<sup>89</sup> Lawrence Kirk, interview, 27 July 1993; Lawrence Kirk, telephone interview, 28 November 1994.

<sup>90</sup> Joe Adams, interview, 30 June 2011.

<sup>91</sup> *Acts of the West Virginia Legislature*, 1882, Chap. 118, 338-340; Lewis, *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside*, 108.

<sup>92</sup> Mae Brumfield, interview, 4 March 1995.

<sup>93</sup> John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996.

<sup>94</sup> Maude Dingess, interview, July 1995.

<sup>95</sup> Henderson Dingess family Bible (copy), author’s collection; Marriages-Births-Deaths (1872-1892), 34, Logan County Clerk’s Office, Logan, WV.

arrived after 1870.<sup>96</sup> Floyd and Eveline had married on 15 November 1877 in Logan County.<sup>97</sup> Seven years later, in 1884, Floyd secured 150 acres on Rockhouse Fork of Harts Creek worth three dollars per acre from his father-in-law, Hiram Hall.<sup>98</sup> Floyd, described in one newspaper story as a “prominent man,” was reportedly “a stout man” considering his small size.<sup>99</sup> Floyd would kill wild boars in the mountains and could run across log rafts like a grey squirrel.<sup>100</sup> As of 1888, he and Eveline had six children, the oldest born about 1879, the youngest born in 1888.<sup>101</sup>

By the late 1880s, Floyd had become unpopular with Eveline’s family, the Halls.<sup>102</sup> According to one newspaper account, Floyd “abused” Eveline and “she complained to her family.”<sup>103</sup> On at least one occasion, Eveline left Floyd and returned to stay with the Halls, who lived a short distance down Rockhouse Fork. When Floyd came for her, as he walked through the yard, Eveline clattered pots and pans in the kitchen so her family would not hear his whistling.<sup>104</sup> Floyd also made a practice of bullying Eveline’s younger half-brother, Billy “Little Bill” Hall. Billy had been born about 1862 to Hiram Hall, the product of an extramarital affair.<sup>105</sup> “Floyd was mean. He was picking on Hall. He beat him up two or three times.”<sup>106</sup> Aside from Floyd’s bullying of Little Bill, a quarrel existed between the two men regarding a married woman “to whom they had

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<sup>96</sup> U.S. Census for Letcher County, KY, 1870.

<sup>97</sup> Marriages-Births-Deaths (1872-1892), 34, Logan County Clerk’s Office, Logan, WV.

<sup>98</sup> Land Book (1879-1885), Lincoln County Clerk’s Office, Hamlin, WV.

<sup>99</sup> “A Bloody Feud,” *Los Angeles (CA) Daily Herald*, 8 October 1889; Maude Dingess, interview, 20 December 1995; John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996.

<sup>100</sup> Maude Dingess, interview, September 1995; Maude Dingess, interview, 20 December 1995.

<sup>101</sup> U.S. Census for Logan County, WV, 1900. Oral history states that Eveline was pregnant with her last child, Randolph Dingess, when Floyd was killed in 1888.

<sup>102</sup> “A Bloody Feud,” *Los Angeles (CA) Daily Herald*, 8 October 1889.

<sup>103</sup> “Quick Justice Done,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 29 October 1889.

<sup>104</sup> Maude Dingess, interview, 20 December 1995.

<sup>105</sup> Margelene Adams, interview, 11 September 1996; Margelene Adams, interview by author, Spottswood, WV, 9 March 2013.

<sup>106</sup> John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996.

both been paying their attentions.”<sup>107</sup> Reportedly, someone gave Billy a gun and told him to stop letting Floyd pick on him.<sup>108</sup>

On 15 November 1888, Billy Hall killed Floyd Dingess at the mouth of Rockhouse Fork of Harts Creek in Lincoln County.<sup>109</sup> The day before, Floyd and Eveline had quarreled and separated.<sup>110</sup> At Rockhouse, Dingess and Hall met while working timber and exchanged words, reportedly “over timber.”<sup>111</sup> One version asserted that the quarrel began because Hall was “bent on avenging the wrong” done to Eveline.<sup>112</sup> In either case, Floyd chased Hall with a hand spike, striking at him. Floyd dropped the hand spike and as he stooped to pick it up Hall “drew a revolver and shot him in the mouth, the ball ranging upward and lodging in his brain.”<sup>113</sup> One newspaper claimed that Floyd stabbed Hall in a dozen different places before Hall killed him.<sup>114</sup> Another version provided by Floyd’s niece asserts that Floyd bent over to drive grabs in logs at the creek when Billy knocked him in the head. Supposedly, the creek was in flood and his pregnant wife was brought to the scene and sent across to him on logs. Floyd died in her arms.<sup>115</sup>

Immediately following the killing, Floyd’s younger brothers, Harve and Dave, who had been there fishing in the creek, raced home to tell the family about the awful event. According to the *Pittsburg Dispatch*, “Dingess’ father and brother came up a short

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<sup>107</sup> “Murder and Moonshiners,” *Pittsburg (PA) Dispatch*, 4 January 1889.

<sup>108</sup> John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996.

<sup>109</sup> Henderson Dingess family Bible (copy), author’s collection; Maude Dingess, interview, 20 December 1995; John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996.

<sup>110</sup> “A Bloody Feud,” *Los Angeles (CA) Daily Herald*, 8 October 1889.

<sup>111</sup> Bob Adkins, interview, n.d.

<sup>112</sup> “West-Virginia’s Feud,” *Louisville (KY) Courier Journal*, 16 November 1889.

<sup>113</sup> John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996; “Murder and Moonshiners,” *Pittsburg (PA) Dispatch*, 4 January 1889.

<sup>114</sup> “West-Virginia’s Feud,” *Louisville (KY) Courier Journal*, 16 November 1889.

<sup>115</sup> Maude Dingess, interview, 20 December 1995. Based on the most likely birth year for Eveline’s son, Randolph Dingess, she had already given birth to the boy in 1888.

time afterward, and seeing him lying in the road, went through his pockets and found a bottle of whisky, from which they coolly wiped the blood and drank its contents. The general sentiment is that Hall was justified in his action, but the Dingess family and their followers have sworn vengeance against him, and are searching for him in every direction. He has many friends and it is feared that there will be further trouble over the matter.”<sup>116</sup>

Hugh Dingess, brother to Floyd, pursued Billy Hall but lost his trail at Kiah’s Creek.<sup>117</sup> Hall initially fled to Robinson Creek, Kentucky.<sup>118</sup> According to family tradition, “They [the Dingesses] watched the Hall home for a long time. Hugh took Harve with him to watch one night when he was drunk and he got mad because the Hall boy was not back and he shot one of the Halls’ cattle.”<sup>119</sup> It was said that Hugh and his brother Charley would kill the Halls’ cattle “for them to see.”<sup>120</sup> At one point, the Dingesses “located Billy in Kentucky in a jail but Hugh went over and said it wasn’t him. It was the wrong person.”<sup>121</sup> At a later time, the Dingesses learned of Hall’s whereabouts on Robinson Creek but his family sent him a warning before they could arrive and he continued further south by train to Tennessee. The Halls never heard from him again.<sup>122</sup>

Hiram Hall, father to Billy, died on 18 March 1889, which may have contributed to a cooling of tensions. “Hiram Hall died near this place about midnight on the 18<sup>th</sup> inst.

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<sup>116</sup> “Murder and Moonshiners,” *Pittsburg (PA) Dispatch*, 4 January 1889; “West-Virginia’s Feud,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 16 November 1889. The latter source states that Hall “was stabbed in a dozen places, but finally recovered.”

<sup>117</sup> John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996.

<sup>118</sup> Margelene Adams, interview, 9 March 2013. Maude Dingess (20 December 1995) knew Hall had hid in Kentucky.

<sup>119</sup> John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996.

<sup>120</sup> Maude Dingess, interview, 20 December 1995.

<sup>121</sup> John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996.

<sup>122</sup> Margelene Adams, interview, 9 March 2013.

TABLE 11  
*Feud Sequences*

Episodes	Brumfield-Adkins	Dingess-Adams	Brumfield-Runyon	Brumfield-Adams	Dingess-Hall	Brumfield-Hall	Brumfield-Nester
Ambushes	X	X	X	X			
Gunfights	X	X		X	X	X	
House attacks	X	X	X	X	X		
Encounter battles	Nearly	X	Nearly	X		X	
Arranged battles							

of Bright’s disease,” the *Ceredo Advance* reported on 3 April 1889. “He was an esteemed citizen and beloved by all who knew him. He was a kind and hospitable citizen and had a large train of relatives who mourn for him, as he has passed from them never to return. He was born in Grayson county, Va., and was about 90 years of age and was an old-fashioned man and greatly delighted himself in amusements with his gun and dogs. He was a staunch and sound Jacksonian Democrat and always voted the Democratic ticket until the last election when he came to cast his ballot for Judge and when he saw the corrupt methods used to defeat the Hon. Ira J. McGinnis he cast his ballot for him as all honest Democrats did.”<sup>123</sup>

It was perhaps the Dingess-Hall intra-family vendetta that “Wild Bill” had in mind when he wrote a dispatch from Warren to the *Ceredo Advance* on 21 May 1889 stating “the vendor of the ardent is still in our midst, but peace and harmony reigns in our midst at present.”<sup>124</sup>

<sup>123</sup> *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 3 April 1889.

<sup>124</sup> “Warren, Lincoln County,” *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 5 June 1889. “Wild Bill” wrote the dispatch on 21 May 1889.

## BRUMFIELD-HALL FEUD

The Brumfield-Hall Feud involved Al Brumfield, brother-in-law to the slain Floyd Dingess, and various members of the Hall family. According to newspapers, Al took up the quarrel and swore to avenge Floyd's death on behalf of his wife, Hollena.<sup>125</sup>

The *Louisville Courier-Journal* reported:

The first fight occurred on a small branch of Hart's Creek, three miles from the mouth. The parties met at a country store. There were seven participants, and when the fight was over two of the Hall faction were left on the ground fearfully wounded. Their companions fled. The victorious Brumfields sent the wounded men to their friends, and refused to take advantage of their helplessness.<sup>126</sup>

One newspaper claimed that Brumfield fatally wounded one of Hall's brothers.<sup>127</sup> More trouble occurred in early September 1889 when Alfred Hall's cattle damaged Al Brumfield's land. "Hall and Brumfield came to blows," according to the *Sacramento Daily Record-Union*, "Hall being pretty badly beaten."<sup>128</sup> Between 30 September 1889 and 28 October 1889, newspapers located in St. Paul, Minnesota, Los Angeles, California, Prescott, Arizona, Iola, Kansas, and Louisville, Kentucky, reported on what they called the Brumfield-Hall Feud. In mid-October 1889, the more local *Lincoln Citizen* lumped the Hall troubles in with the larger feud, calling it the "Brumfield-McCoy-Adams-Hall war."<sup>129</sup> On 28 October 1889, the *Louisville Courier-Journal* stated that four men "have come to a violent death in the past year, as a result of the Brumfield-Hall feud."<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> "Lynched!" *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 28 October 1889; "Quick Justice Done," *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 29 October 1889; "West-Virginia's Feud," *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 16 November 1889.

<sup>126</sup> "West-Virginia's Feud," *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 16 November 1889.

<sup>127</sup> "A Family Feud in West Virginia," *Lancaster (PA) Daily Intelligencer*, 8 October 1889; "Southern Civilization," *Salt Lake (UT) Herald*, 8 October 1889.

<sup>128</sup> "A Bloody Feud Which is Now Existing in West Virginia," *Sacramento (CA) Daily Record-Union*, 9 October 1889.

<sup>129</sup> "Al Brumfield Still Alive," *Lincoln Citizen* (Hamlin, WV), 14 October 1889.

<sup>130</sup> "A Double Lynching," *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 28 October 1889.

## BRUMFIELD-NESTER FEUD

During the 1880s, Al Brumfield aggressively pursued neighborhood property, much of it at the expense of his Nester cousins, who lived in the head of Browns Branch. As early as 1880, Floyd Nester, Al's first cousin, had relocated to Piney Fork near the Vance family and, by 1889, was affiliated with Cain Adkins and John W. Runyon.<sup>131</sup> In 1888, Brumfield acquired 145 acres of land at Browns Branch from a commissioner, likely Nester land lost to taxes.<sup>132</sup> The following year, he secured fifty acres from Daniel Nester, Jr., his first cousin.<sup>133</sup> Nester family history hints at an attempt by Brumfield to kill or drive away John S. Nester, his first cousin, during a land dispute. "Al Brumfield had a job going with timber and someone turned the timber loose on John [Nester]," said one Nester descendant. "Almost killed him. There was a dispute over land. John left here after that—never was well no more."<sup>134</sup> Another Nester descendant said: "Brumfield told my granddad to sell out to him and leave or his wife planned to see him murdered."<sup>135</sup>

## CULTURE OF HONOR

A culture of honor, which likely existed in the Harts Creek community from the beginning of Anglo settlement, certainly manifested itself during the postwar period, contributing to the Lincoln County Feud.<sup>136</sup> Initially, it appeared in a spectacularly

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<sup>131</sup> U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1880; "Victorious Brumfields," *Louisville (KY) Courier Journal*, 4 November 1889.

<sup>132</sup> Land Book (1886-1891), Lincoln County Clerk's Office, Hamlin, WV.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>134</sup> Delanie Napier, interview, 2000.

<sup>135</sup> Ann Vickers, letter, 19 August 2016.

<sup>136</sup> Waller, in *Feud*, links increased violence in the Tug Valley during the postwar period to a lack of land opportunity for the younger generation. According to Waller's theory, a shrinking opportunity to

violent form as the Brumfield-Adkins Feud during the early 1880s; later, it spawned other feuds, all of which ultimately joined into one sensational interwoven vendetta. Honor, according to Edward Ayers, may be defined as “a system of values within which you have exactly as much worth as others confer upon you; only adult white males had the right to honor and if challenged, had to prove their worth through courage.”<sup>137</sup> In a culture of honor, men project strength by monitoring any affronts that show disrespect. Based on the “rule of retaliation,” if an insult is given, particularly one that causes the recipient to feel diminished, he retaliates and becomes more aggressive so as to maintain/re-establish his status. A man who fails to respond to insulting behavior is viewed with contempt. The availability of guns increases the likelihood that retribution will be deadly; the knowledge that others are likely armed may prompt pre-emptive strikes. In a culture of honor, violence is favored for self-protection/self-defense, to defend one’s family, for purposes of protection of property, for retaliation to an insult, and for the socialization of children. Social institutions are likewise more accepting of individuals who have committed violent crimes in defense of their honor. Women also play a role: they teach honor to their sons, enforce it on their menfolk, and sometimes participate in violent behavior.<sup>138</sup>

A culture of honor, if mixed with alcohol abuse, creates what Edward Ayers called “a volatile mixture,” dissolves the barriers of self-restraint, loosens the tongue, and heightens a desire for respect.<sup>139</sup> Many such instances occurred in the Lincoln County

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acquire tillable land, the primary source of status, caused men to choose fighting as a way of proving their worth. No additional “heroic opportunity” such as the Civil War existed for them (101-102, 239-244).

<sup>137</sup> Ayers, *Vengeance & Justice*, 13.

<sup>138</sup> Nisbett and Cohen, *Culture of Honor*.

<sup>139</sup> Ayers, *Vengeance & Justice*, 14. According to Ayers, criminologists agree alcohol is one factor in crime that cannot be dismissed; however, he also reminds that not all areas where alcohol is consumed have high levels of violence. In other words, alcohol does not solely explain the problem of crime.



Feud. A good deal of oral history affixes the blame for community violence upon alcohol.<sup>140</sup> During the early 1880s, Henderson Dingess, Paris Brumfield, and Benjamin Hager operated legal distilleries.<sup>141</sup> Henderson Dingess, the grandson of a German immigrant, possessed a predisposition for distilling. In 1815, his father had been indicted, although found “not guilty” in 1817 for “retailing spirituous liquors” in Cabell County.<sup>142</sup> By 1889, based on newspaper reports, Henderson Dingess was an illegal moonshiner. On 4 January 1889, the *Pittsburg Dispatch* stated:

Henderson Dingess is running a moonshine distillery in the neighborhood, and about eight miles away, on Marrowbone creek, another is located. Both are run in open defiance of the law and the owners have gathered about them a body of men, all under oath to stand by each other, and they run the neighborhood to suit themselves, the law-abiding citizens fearing to do anything or give any information that would get the moonshiners into trouble.<sup>143</sup>

Feud-era local newspapers universally condemned alcohol, which was viewed as a social blight. On 9 January 1889, the *Ceredo Advance* reported a 29 December 1888 dispatch from Newman Mills in Wayne County: “There has been a vast amount of whisky conveyed up 12 Pole in the last ten days, and a great deal of drunkenness on the road. There were three men, or we should say brutes, two riding grey horses and one afoot, will likely be indicted for using obscene language on the public highway, and in hearing of at least three dwelling houses at the same time.”<sup>144</sup> In one of its many editorials, the *Logan County Banner* printed this: “Whisky, that damnable, hellish fiend, the curse of our people, is being unlawfully dealt out all around us. In Heavens name, let

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<sup>140</sup> Lawrence Kirk, interview, 27 July 1993.

<sup>141</sup> *Polk's West Virginia State Gazetteer and Business Directory* (1884).

<sup>142</sup> Law Orders Book (1812-1819), 50, 134, 150-151, 169, Cabell County Circuit Clerk's Office, Huntington, WV.

<sup>143</sup> “Murder and Moonshiners,” *Pittsburg (PA) Dispatch*, 4 January 1889.

<sup>144</sup> *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 9 January 1889.

us stop it. Where are the eyes of our officials?”<sup>145</sup> Newspapers consistently linked alcohol to gun violence. One resident of Warren offered this bit of news, which the *Ceredo Advance* printed on 3 April 1889: “John Vance was shot a few nights ago in a *drunken* melee and is in dangerous condition. He is a young man and belongs to respectable parents.”<sup>146</sup> Later, in 1889, during the height of the feud, the *Anaconda Standard* reported how “both factions are composed of men who are notorious lawbreakers, and whose chief occupation is the manufacture of moonshine whisky and fighting.”<sup>147</sup> The *Wheeling Register* stated rather bluntly, referencing the feud: “Whisky is largely responsible for the continuance of this trouble, and will be in great measure blamable for any further loss of life.”<sup>148</sup>

A culture of honor, when combined with an undue affection for guns, similarly created a dangerous climate.<sup>149</sup> During the feud era, Harts Creek was a gun bastion; this fact contributed to the Lincoln County Feud. “Them old fellows, 90 percent of them carried a pistol all the time,” said one feud descendant.<sup>150</sup> Gun ownership was a way of life and, in the eyes of many, a necessity. One local man had this to say: “Of course, old-timers in those days always kept a gun with ‘em. There was such things as wolves still out back in those days. And highway robbers would layway a man like Paris goin’ to his barn early, or maybe late in the evenin’.”<sup>151</sup> If necessary, and sometimes with little provocation, men would use their weapons. “Them old people, you couldn’t fool with

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<sup>145</sup> *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 31 July 1890.

<sup>146</sup> *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 3 April 1889.

<sup>147</sup> “Let ‘Em Go It,” *Anaconda (MT) Standard*, 31 October 1889.

<sup>148</sup> “The Truth,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 3 November 1889.

<sup>149</sup> Ayers, *Vengeance & Justice*, 12.

<sup>150</sup> Joe Adams, interview, 20 April 2005.

<sup>151</sup> Pat Adkins, interview, 28 August 1996.

‘em,” said one Adams descendant. “They’d talk to you today and shoot you tomorrow.”<sup>152</sup>

Aside from feud-related violence, 1888-1889 afforded random incidents of gunplay. In November 1888, Justice A.B. Lowe arrested Albert Dingess so as to prevent what the *Logan County Banner* called “a difficulty” between Dingess and Meekin Wiley. At the moment of arrest, John Lackey, a resident of Hoover Fork of Harts Creek, “came up and struck Lowe with a large rock, cutting his ear, and disfiguring him for life.”<sup>153</sup> In April 1889, Joe Blair shot Lackey. On April 18, the *Logan County Banner* reported on the incident: “Blair is thought to be justifiable in the shooting, as Lackey who is considered a dangerous man, and had threatened to kill Blair, and Blair thought he was making an attempt to do so when he shot him.”<sup>154</sup> In a separate incident, another local man named John Vance was shot. “John Vance, who was shot near this place several weeks ago, has recovered,” a Warren correspondent informed the *Ceredo Advance* in June 1889. “Also John Lackey, who was shot near this place about six weeks ago, is convalescing.”<sup>155</sup> The following month, in July 1889, Lackey was found guilty of unlawful wounding for his attack upon Justice Lowe and sentenced to two years in the state penitentiary.<sup>156</sup>

A culture of honor also affected the legal system, which in turn affected the Lincoln County Feud. “Honor and legalism are incompatible,” wrote Edward Ayers, primarily because “true men” settled scores away from the court and because juries,

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<sup>152</sup> Joe Adams, interview, 30 June 2011.

<sup>153</sup> *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 11 July 1889.

<sup>154</sup> *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 18 April 1889.

<sup>155</sup> “Warren, Lincoln County,” *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 5 June 1889.

<sup>156</sup> *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 11 July 1889.

fearing retribution or believing the crime was committed in self-defense, tended to acquit the accused.<sup>157</sup> Additionally, kinship, partisanship, and weakness of authority affected the ability of justices of the peace and constables to carry out their duties as local law agents.<sup>158</sup>

Kinship prompted peculiar scenarios, hampering the ability of law officials to function with credibility. For instance, in 1874 Henderson Dingess, Charley Dingess, and Hugh Dingess were paid money by the County Court for guarding Charles Adkins, Ben Adams, and Albert Dingess prior to trial. Albert Dingess was Henderson's nephew, while Ben Adams was Henderson's brother-in-law. Adams, as well as Charles Adkins, had married Henderson's nieces (sisters to Albert Dingess). Additionally, Adkins' mother, once widowed, had married Henderson's brother, Harvey S. Dingess, who was the father of Albert Dingess!<sup>159</sup> In 1889, the *Wheeling Register* tapped into this fact in its commentary on the state of affairs in Harts Creek: "In explanation of the apparent reluctance of the authorities to do anything to suppress the lawlessness, it may be stated that most of the local officers in the section where the Brumfields live are related, in some way or other, or are in sympathy with, one or other of the factions, and are not disposed to act."<sup>160</sup> Kinship likely affected the pseudo-legal posses organized to stabilize the feud. "Posses have been got together, but have failed to perform what was expected of them, and there is no apparent solution of the trouble except by the parties concerned

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<sup>157</sup> Ayers, *Vengeance & Justice*, 18.

<sup>158</sup> Rice, *The Hatfields & The McCoys*, 16.

<sup>159</sup> Law Orders Book A (1868-1875), 592, Logan County Circuit Clerk's Office, Logan, WV.

<sup>160</sup> "The Truth," *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 3 November 1889.

themselves,” the *Wheeling Register* continued. “It is quite as likely that this solution will be found, as that there will be a continuance of the trouble, and further bloodshed.”<sup>161</sup>

Partisanship, often but not always related to kinship, undermined the ability of law enforcement officers to carry out their duties in events relating to the Lincoln County Feud. Early in the decade, four justices of the peace, namely Stephen Lambert at Upper Hart, John McCloud at Upper Hart, Jeremiah Lambert in the Guyan River section, and Hiram Lambert of Harts Creek, were likely nonpartisans.<sup>162</sup> During the late 1880s, however (the feud’s “hottest” moments), partisans Cain Adkins, Elias Vance, and Anderson Blair served as justices. JP Cain Adkins and Deputy Sheriff John W. Runyon were actual feudists! Cain Adkins—sworn enemy to Paris Brumfield—held his office as late as July 1888.<sup>163</sup> By August of 1889, Elias Vance—a neighbor to Cain who had married Cain’s former sister-in-law—was justice of the peace.<sup>164</sup> Anderson Blair, whose wife was a first cousin once removed to Green McCoy, was a recently elected justice of the peace in Chapmanville District of Logan County, which included Upper Hart.<sup>165</sup> Among local law officials, the Brumfields could have counted on support from Victor Shelton, a Harts Creek District constable who was friends with Paris Brumfield and the

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<sup>161</sup> “The Truth,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 3 November 1889.

<sup>162</sup> Solomon Adams to Harvey S. Dingess, deed of sale, 18 November 1870, Deed Book 218, p. 179, Logan County Clerk’s Office, Logan, WV; Jackson Mullins vs. Benjamin Adams, peace warrant note (copy), April 1871, author’s collection; A.J. Mullins to Mathias Elkins, deed of sale, 4 August 1880, Deed Book G, 233, Logan County Clerk’s Office, Logan, WV; Commissioner’s Record of Destroyed Title Papers Book 2, 1-13, Lincoln County Clerk’s Office, Hamlin, WV; Hardesty, *Hardesty’s Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 106-107; John H. Adkins to Salena Vance, deed of sale, 25 December 1893, Deed Book 70, 458-459, Lincoln County Clerk’s Office, Hamlin, WV.

<sup>163</sup> Floyd and Martha Caldwell to Melvin Kirk, deed of sale, 7 July 1888, Deed Book S, 389, Logan County Clerk’s Office, Logan, WV.

<sup>164</sup> Aaron and Nancy Jane Adkins to Malissia Adkins, deed of sale, 14 August 1889, Deed Book 80, 96-97, Lincoln County Clerk’s Office, Hamlin, WV. Elias Vance, “a Justice of said county,” certified the deed.

<sup>165</sup> McCoy, *The McCoy’s: Their Story*, 322; Commissioners Record Book 2, 212, 221, Logan County Clerk’s Office, Logan, WV.

father of three illegitimate children by Brumfield's niece.<sup>166</sup> Aaron "Little Aaron" Adkins, a constable in 1883-1884, perhaps yet remained a constable by 1889.<sup>167</sup> If so, as the husband of Paris Brumfield's sister-in-law, he may have provided the Brumfields with another ally.<sup>168</sup> (Of course, based on the turbulent history between Paris Brumfield and his in-laws, the constable may have also served as yet another enemy to Brumfield.) Interestingly, Adkins, Vance, Blair, Shelton, and Adkins were Democrats, as were the Brumfields.

At the county level, partisanship also prevented the proper functioning of the law. Lincoln County Sheriff James D. Porter, a Populist-Republican elected in 1888 with no support from the Brumfields, had appointed John W. Runyon—noted enemy to Al Brumfield—to serve as a deputy.<sup>169</sup> Runyon's organization of regulators to ensure Porter's election in 1888 had contributed to ill-feeling between himself and the Brumfields.<sup>170</sup> The Brumfields had no support from Sheriff Porter or Deputy Runyon. Porter, for his part, was known as a "mixer" and "lucky in politics."<sup>171</sup>

Weakness of organized law also played a role in the feud. Based on newspaper reports, Paris Brumfield's criminal behavior largely went unpunished by the sheriff or the court. The *Morning Call* of San Francisco, California, wrote in 1892, shortly after the feud had subsided:

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<sup>166</sup> Shelton Family Notebook, Billy Adkins Genealogical Collection, Harts, WV.

<sup>167</sup> Hardesty, *Hardesty's Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 107. As of 1883-1884, Aaron Adkins and Patton Thompson were constables in the district.

<sup>168</sup> Adkins, *Land of York to Beech Fork*, 156.

<sup>169</sup> "The West Virginia Feud," *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 9 November 1889; *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 9 January 1890; *Biennial Report of the Treasurer of the State of West Virginia, 1889-1890* (Charleston, WV: Moses W. Donnally, Public Printer, 1890), 247.

<sup>170</sup> "The West Virginia Feud," *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 9 November 1889.

<sup>171</sup> *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 15 December 1896. This story referenced Mr. Porter as the first non-Democratic sheriff elected of Lincoln County.

Brumfield was often indicted but never brought to justice. The records will now show that he had at least 1000 indictments against him, from a misdemeanor to a felony, yet never suffered one day's imprisonment. He made fun of the Sheriff and remarked that there was no necessity to send a Judge to this county to try cases. That they always let people in his township do as they pleased.<sup>172</sup>

Brumfield's lackadaisical attitude toward judges was likely based on the sort of experiences preserved in this account by his great-grandson:

A representative sent out by the gas company came to visit Paris and tried to get him to sell his mineral rights. The man said, "Why would you want to hang on to this? It ain't worth nothing." Paris couldn't read or write. He said, "Well, if it ain't worth nothing, why the hell do you want it?" They argued about it and the man didn't leave quick enough. Paris pulled out his .45 and shot the man in the heel as he ran over the bank getting away. Judge Shepherd asked him if he was guilty of attempted murder and Paris said, "I plead not guilty. Hell, I can shoot better than that." The judge said, "Mr. Brumfield, get on your horse and go back to Harts Creek." The judge would later come to Harts and drink with Paris.<sup>173</sup>

#### CULTURE OF VIOLENCE?

During the 1880s, Harts Creek was a typical rowdy timber settlement. While rough and seedy, only two homicides occurred in the community: Paris Brumfield's 1882 killing of Mont "Boney" Lucas and Billy Hall's killing of Floyd Dingess in 1888. In 1889, the *Wheeling Intelligencer* went so far as to say that "the people of that part of the State are as peaceable and as honest as any you will find in the country."<sup>174</sup> Still, by 1889, the Harts Creek community had earned a reputation as Lincoln County's most troublesome locale. The *Wheeling Intelligencer*, in reporting this fact, wisely shifted blame away from local residents. "Most of the serious trouble in this county has

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<sup>172</sup> *The Morning Call* (San Francisco, CA), 12 November 1892.

<sup>173</sup> Corbett Brumfield, interview, 6 December 1995. Judge Thomas R. Shepherd was a Republican and resident of Huntington, WV.

<sup>174</sup> "That Lincoln County War," *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 22 November 1889. This account came from Major J.C. Alderson, who had recently visited the southern part of West Virginia on a business trip.

TABLE 12  
*Logan County Deaths, 1888-1890*

Cause of Death	Number of Deaths
<b>Nonviolent Deaths</b>	<b>31</b>
*consumption	6
*typhoid fever	5
*cholera	4
*croup	3
*bronchitis	3
*fever	3
*phthisis	2
*bowels	2
*diphtheria	1
*dysentery	1
*tuberculosis	1
<b>Other</b>	<b>4</b>
*blood poisoning	2
*found dead	1
*abortion	1
<b>Violent Deaths</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Blank</b>	<b>1</b>

*Source:* Register of Deaths (1889-1916), 1-7, Logan County Clerk's Office, Logan, WV.

originated in the Harts creek district, more by force of peculiar circumstances than the natural tendency of the people to outlawry,” the *Wheeling Intelligencer* stated in late October 1889.<sup>175</sup> When reporting on crime, the *Logan County Banner* typically noted the “Sandy side” of the county, not Harts Creek, as the primary location of trouble. During one term of court in 1891, for instance, sixty-seven of ninety misdemeanor indictments returned by a grand jury for carrying pistols regarded folks from “Sandy side.” That same term, sixty-four of seventy-six misdemeanor indictments for selling whisky were from

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<sup>175</sup> “The Terrible Vendetta,” *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 29 October 1889.



“Sandy side.”<sup>176</sup> The rowdy climate of the feud community contributed to the feud, but did not cause it.

At the time of the Lincoln County Feud, the Harts Creek community as a whole does not appear to have been a violent place. While the destruction of the Lincoln County Courthouse by fire in November 1909 eviscerated criminal records for most of the community, records for Logan County, which include the upper sections of Harts Creek, are available. Between 1888 and 1890, Logan County residents overwhelmingly died nonviolent deaths. Of the 38 deaths recorded in Logan County for that period, 31 died nonviolently, 4 died of “other” causes, two died violently, and one listed “no cause of death.”<sup>177</sup> For the Harts Creek section of the county, three died nonviolently and one died of blood poisoning. No violent deaths were recorded as occurring in the Logan County section of the Harts Creek community.<sup>178</sup> Consequently, it can be concluded that feuds raging in the vicinity were an exception to the norm.

## CONCLUSION

In the late 1880s, the Lincoln County Feud transformed from a personal vendetta between Paris Brumfield and Cain Adkins into a contest between merchants for economic and political supremacy in the Harts Creek community. More specifically, the Brumfield-Adkins Feud coalesced with several other local feuds, namely the Dingess-Adams Feud, the Brumfield-Runyon Feud, the Brumfield-Adams Feud, the Dingess-Hall Feud, the Brumfield-Hall vendetta, and the Brumfield-Nester trouble. By examining each of these

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<sup>176</sup> *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 30 July 1891. The “Sandy side” would soon constitute the new county of Mingo.

<sup>177</sup> See Table 12.

<sup>178</sup> Register of Deaths (1889-1916), 1-7, Logan County Clerk’s Office, Logan, WV.

feuds, it is proven that the Lincoln County Feud included all of the necessary elements to qualify as a feud. Following the killing of Boney Lucas, Paris Brumfield continued to feud with Cain Adkins and his son-in-law, Green McCoy. Henderson Dingess and his family, meanwhile, feuded with in-laws Ben Adams and Billy Hall. The Dingess-Hall Feud prompted the murder of Floyd Dingess, the second killing to occur in the Harts Creek community. Al Brumfield, son of Paris, inherited (or chose to participate in) these feuds by marrying Hollena Dingess, daughter of Henderson. Al also feuded with Ben Adams (his wife's uncle) due to matters of timber and with his Nester cousins due to matters of land. He and John W. Runyon feuded due to business competition, timber disputes, political differences, and perhaps a woman. The prevailing culture of honor required men to answer insults with violence, which escalated violence in the community. Alcohol use and the prevalence of guns contributed to the culture of honor and created a climate ripe for violence. The culture of honor disrupted the legal system, encouraging scores to be settled extra-legally. Kinship, partisanship, and weakness of authority also interrupted the legal process. A possible culture of violence existed in the Harts Creek community, contributing to the feud.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: AL BRUMFIELD: GENIAL MERCHANT

During the late 1880s, the Lincoln County Feud transitioned from a personal vendetta between patriarchs into a war between various elites, absorbing several feuds with numerous (and often confusing or unknown) alliances. In 1889, merchant John W. Runyon, timber boss Ben Adams, and perhaps other anti-Brumfield forces conspired to assassinate Al Brumfield, Hollena Brumfield, and Paris Brumfield.<sup>1</sup> The plot arose out of long-standing quarrels involving business and politics, but the immediate cause was that Louisa Mullins, who “had been living with one of the Brumfields, but demanded more money than he cared to pay...left Brumfield and joined John Runyon” and “immediately stirred up Runyon’s dislike for Brumfield.”<sup>2</sup> One newspaper account attributed the plot to the fact that Runyon and others viewed the Brumfields “as very obnoxious.”<sup>3</sup> Numerous writers and sources state that Runyon hired Milt Haley and Green McCoy to kill the Brumfields.<sup>4</sup> Oral accounts cite Ben Adams as the person who hired Haley and McCoy, either single-handedly (that he “framed” Runyon) or in conspiracy, stating that he did it

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<sup>1</sup> “An Old Feud Revived,” *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 29 October 1889; “The Terrible Vendetta,” *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 29 October 1889; “All Up In Arms,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 29 October 1889; “The Truth,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 3 November 1889; “The West Virginia Feud,” *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 9 November 1889; Coberly, *Goldenseal* (Summer 1992), 36; Bob Adkins, telephone interview, 22 July 1993; Bob Adkins, interview, 24 July 1993; Lawrence Kirk, interview, 27 July 1993; Bob Adkins, interview, 3 March 1995; Ida Taylor, interview, 5 March 1995; Bob Dingess, telephone interview, 24 March 1995; Glen Dingess, telephone interview by Billy Adkins, Chapmanville, WV, July 1995; Bob Dingess, interview by author, Warren, WV, September 1995; Bob Adkins, interview, 12 February 1996; Pat Adkins, interview, 28 August 1996.

<sup>2</sup> “The West Virginia Feud,” *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 9 November 1889.

<sup>3</sup> “That Double Lynching,” *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 2 November 1889.

<sup>4</sup> “An Old Feud Revived,” *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 29 October 1889; “The Terrible Vendetta,” *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 29 October 1889; “All Up In Arms,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 29 October 1889; “The West Virginia Feud,” *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 9 November 1889; Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 62; Coberly, *Goldenseal* (Summer 1992), 36; Bob Adkins, telephone interview, 22 July 1993; Bob Adkins, interview, 24 July 1993; Lawrence Kirk, interview, 27 July 1993; Bob Adkins, interview, 3 March 1995; Ida Taylor, interview, 5 March 1995; Glen Dingess, telephone interview, July 1995; Carolyn “Johnnie” Farley, interview, 24 October 1995; Pat Adkins, interview, 28 August 1996; John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996.

because Al stole his logs, because he resented paying Brumfield's tax, and/or due to trouble partly caused by Ben's wife; Adams reportedly gave Haley and McCoy a .38 Winchester apiece or a side of bacon to kill Al Brumfield.<sup>5</sup>

John W. Runyon and his co-conspirators hired Milt Haley and Green McCoy—"two professional gunmen"—to assassinate the Brumfields.<sup>6</sup> Haley, son-in-law of Jackson Mullins, was a first cousin to Runyon.<sup>7</sup> As of 1889, his wife had left him "on account of his worthlessness."<sup>8</sup> McCoy, son-in-law to Cain Adkins, was a bitter enemy to Paris Brumfield. Haley and McCoy were "boon companions" and former associates of Billy Hall, who had killed Floyd Dingess in November of 1888.<sup>9</sup> Both men originated outside of the community and were timbermen and fiddlers. According to later newspaper accounts, Runyon and his cohorts, by written contract, paid or were to pay

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<sup>5</sup> Lawrence Kirk, interview, 27 July 1993; Lawrence Kirk, telephone interview, 28 November 1994; Mae Brumfield, interview, n.d.; Mae Brumfield, interview, 4 March 1995; Lawrence Kirk, interview, 5 March 1995; Bob Dingess, telephone interview, 13 March 1995; Bob Dingess, telephone interview, 24 March 1995; Dave Brumfield, interview, 26 May 1995; Joe Adams, interview by author, Spottswood, WV, July 1995; Harvey and Maude Dingess, interview, July 1995; Bob Dingess, interview, 8 August 1995; Brady Thompson, telephone interview, 4 September 1995; Maude Dingess, interview, September 1995; Harvey Dingess, interview, 24 October 1995; Harvey Dingess, interview, 20 December 1995; Irene Adkins, interview, 12 July 1996; Dorothy Brumfield, interview, 30 July 1996; Bob Dingess, interview, September 1995; Dorothy Brumfield, interview, 26 September 1996; John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996; John Dingess, telephone interview, 17 December 1996; Freeman Adams, interview, 20 March 2011; Johnny Golden Adkins, interview, 2 April 2011; Joe Adams, interview, 30 June 2011. According to Harvey Dingess (20 December 1995), the old Dingesses said, "Old Ben's the one at the head of all of it."

<sup>6</sup> "An Old Feud Revived," *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 29 October 1889; "The Terrible Vendetta," *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 29 October 1889; "All Up In Arms," *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 29 October 1889; "The West Virginia Feud," *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 9 November 1889; Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 62; Coberly, *Goldenseal* (Summer 1992), 36; Bob Adkins, telephone interview, 22 July 1993; Bob Adkins, interview, 24 July 1993; Lawrence Kirk, interview, 27 July 1993; Bob Adkins, interview, 3 March 1995; Ida Taylor, interview, 5 March 1995; Glen Dingess, telephone interview, July 1995; Carolyn "Johnnie" Farley, interview, 24 October 1995; Pat Adkins, interview, 28 August 1996; John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996.

<sup>7</sup> Marriages-Births-Deaths (1872-1892), 47, Logan County Clerk's Office, Logan, WV; Kozee, *Pioneer Families of Eastern and Southeastern Kentucky*.

<sup>8</sup> "The Terrible Vendetta," *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 29 October 1889.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

Haley and McCoy 500 dollars or 400 dollars to assassinate the three Brumfields.<sup>10</sup> Other sources state: McCoy was paid a side of bacon and a barrel of flour, while Haley was paid twenty-five dollars;<sup>11</sup> they were each paid a side of bacon and a barrel of flour;<sup>12</sup> they were paid a side of bacon and a can of lard,<sup>13</sup> or they were paid two or three slabs of bacon and money.<sup>14</sup> Said one Adams descendant: “They were the type of people you could hire.”<sup>15</sup>

#### AMBUSH OF AL AND HOLLENA BRUMFIELD

On Sunday, 22 September 1889, Milt Haley and Green McCoy ambushed Al and Hollena Brumfield on Harts Creek.<sup>16</sup> Earlier that day, the Brumfields rode a single horse up Harts Creek to enjoy supper with Henderson Dingess, Al’s father-in-law, who lived on Smokehouse Fork.<sup>17</sup> On their return trip downstream, at a narrow defile in the road, about

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<sup>10</sup> “An Old Feud Revived,” *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 29 October 1889; *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 29 October 1889; “All Up In Arms,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 29 October 1889; “Hired to Murder,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 31 October 1889; “That Double Lynching,” *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 2 November 1889; “The West Virginia Feud,” *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 9 November 1889; “West Virginia’s Feud,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 16 November 1889; Johnny Golden Adkins, interview, 2 April 2011.

<sup>11</sup> Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 62.

<sup>12</sup> Coberly, *Goldenseal* (Summer 1992), 36.

<sup>13</sup> Bob Adkins, interview, 3 March 1995.

<sup>14</sup> Johnny Golden Adkins, interview, 2 April 2011.

<sup>15</sup> Joe Adams, interview, 30 June 2011.

<sup>16</sup> “Serious Shooting on Hart’s Creek, in Lincoln County,” *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 26 September 1889; “Letter from Lincoln County,” *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 9 October 1889; “Quick Justice Done,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 29 October 1889; “The West Virginia Feud,” *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 9 November 1889; “West Virginia’s Feud,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 16 November 1889; Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 62; Bill Adkins, interview, 19 April 1992; Bob Adkins, telephone interview, 22 July 1993; Ida Taylor, interview, 5 March 1995; Lawrence Kirk, interview, 5 March 1995; Garnet Adkins, interview by author and John Hartford, Harts, WV, 8 August 1995; Elmer Dingess, interview, 24 October 1995; Vergia Rooney, telephone interview, 19 May 1996; Dorothy Brumfield, interview, 30 July 1996; John Dingess, telephone interview, 17 December 1996; James Davis, interview, 9 December 1997; Freeman Adams, interview, 20 March 2011.

<sup>17</sup> “Serious Shooting on Hart’s Creek, in Lincoln County,” *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 26 September 1889; “Letter from Lincoln County,” *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 9 October 1889; “Disappointed Love Leads to a Desperate Crime in Lincoln County,” *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 2 October 1889; “Blood in West Virginia,” *Ironton (OH) Register*, 3 October 1889; “Lynched!” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 28 October 1889; “The Terrible Vendetta,” *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 29 October 1889; “West Virginia’s Feud,”

a mile and a half below Dingess' residence, while passing Thompson Branch, about three o'clock in the afternoon, with Hollena's younger brothers, Harvey and Dave Dingess, riding separately behind on mules, Haley and McCoy shot the Brumfields from brush using .30.30 Winchester rifles.<sup>18</sup> During the ambush, Hollena was shot in the face, knocking her from the horse, a ball entering her right jaw in front of the ear and ranging around the cheek bone and striking her nose, coming out near the nose and tearing away the greater portion of her jaw. Al, who ducked just before the shooting began, was shot in the right arm below the elbow, producing a flesh wound, and also through his vest, grazing his breast.<sup>19</sup> Dave Dingess, who had seen a gun barrel pointing in their direction

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*Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 16 November 1889; Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 62; Coberly, *Goldenseal* (Summer 1992), 36; Bob Adkins, telephone interview, 22 July 1993; Lawrence Kirk, interview, 27 July 1993; Bob Adkins, interview, 3 March 1995; Ida Taylor, interview, 5 March 1995; Vergia Rooney, telephone interview, May 1996; John Dingess, telephone interview, 17 December 1996; James Davis, interview, 9 December 1997.

<sup>18</sup> "Serious Shooting on Hart's Creek, in Lincoln County," *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 26 September 1889; "Letter from Lincoln County," *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 9 October 1889; "Disappointed Love Leads to a Desperate Crime in Lincoln County," *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 2 October 1889; "Blood in West Virginia," *Ironton (OH) Register*, 3 October 1889; "A Bridal Couple Killed," *Calhoun Times* (Grantsville, WV), 3 October 1889; "Lynched!" *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 28 October 1889; "The Terrible Vendetta," *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 29 October 1889; "The Truth," *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 3 November 1889; Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 62; Coberly, *Goldenseal* (Summer 1992), 36; Bob Adkins, telephone interview, 22 July 1993; Bob Adkins, interview, 24 July 1993; Lawrence Kirk, interview, 27 July 1993; Bob Adkins, interview, 3 March 1995; Ida Taylor, interview, 5 March 1995; Bob Dingess, telephone interview, 13 March 1995; Bob Dingess, interview, 8 August 1995; Garnet Adkins, interview, 8 August 1995; Carolyn "Johnnie" Farley, interview, 24 October 1995; Elmer Dingess, interview, 24 October 1995; Corbett Brumfield, interview, 6 December 1995; Bob Adkins, interview, 12 February 1996; Wirt Adams, interview, 1 August 1996; John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996; John Dingess, telephone interview, 17 December 1996; Jesse Sias, interview, 4 September 1999; Freeman Adams, interview, 20 March 2011. John Dingess (8 December 1996) said the ambush occurred at the 'hot rock' near Thompson Branch. In a later confession, Green McCoy said they only had one gun between them.

<sup>19</sup> "Serious Shooting on Hart's Creek, in Lincoln County," *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 26 September 1889; "Letter from Lincoln County," *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 9 October 1889; Coberly, *Goldenseal* (Summer 1992), 36; *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 26 September 1889; *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 9 October 1889; "Disappointed Love Leads to a Desperate Crime in Lincoln County," *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 2 October 1889; "Lynched!" *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 28 October 1889; "The Terrible Vendetta," *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 29 October 1889; "The Truth," *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 3 November 1889; "Lincoln County Letter," *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 6 November 1889; "West Virginia's Feud," *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 16 November 1889; Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 62; Bill Adkins, interview, 19 April 1992; Bob Adkins, interview, 3 March 1995; Ida Taylor, interview, 5 March 1995; Bob Dingess, telephone interview, 24 March 1995; Harvey and Maude Dingess, interview, July 1995; Bob Dingess, interview, 8 August 1995; Brady Thompson, telephone interview, 4 September 1995; Ezra "Jake" Dalton, interview, 23 October 1995; Carolyn "Johnnie" Farley, interview, 24 October 1995; Elmer

just prior to the ambush, raised his hand to shield his sister before the first shot was fired, and was shot through the hand, reportedly by the same bullet that pierced Hollena's cheek.<sup>20</sup> Al Brumfield, disabled in one arm, equipped only with a pistol, his horse having run away, fired a few shots, then removed himself from harm's way, while the Dingess brothers rode back up Harts Creek.<sup>21</sup> Haley and McCoy came to Hollena in the road in order to "finish her off" but she "begged them out of it," saying "they'd already killed her. She told them she was dying anyway."<sup>22</sup> Because her eyes were filled with blood, she was unsure of their identity.<sup>23</sup> At that juncture, Al returned to the scene, hidden under the creek bank, and shot at Haley and McCoy, who he couldn't identify due to distance.<sup>24</sup> Haley and McCoy thereafter became scared and fled.<sup>25</sup>

Within a short time, neighbors, Al Brumfield, and members of the Dingess family came to Hollena's assistance.<sup>26</sup> According to Brumfield family history, Jane (Thompson) Adkins, a local midwife, first came to help her in the road.<sup>27</sup> One Dingess descendant

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Dingess, interview, 24 October 1995; Corbett Brumfield, interview, 6 December 1995; Lawrence Kirk, interview, n.d.; Vergia Rooney, telephone interview, 19 May 1996; Dorothy Brumfield, interview, 30 July 1996; Pat Adkins, interview, 28 August 1996; John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996; James Davis, interview, 9 December 1997; Johnny Golden Adkins, interview, 2 April 2011.

<sup>20</sup> "Serious Shooting on Hart's Creek, in Lincoln County," *Logan County Banner*, 26 September 1889; "The West Virginia Feud," *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 9 November 1889; Bob Dingess, telephone interview, 13 March 1995; Bob Dingess, interview, 8 August 1995.

<sup>21</sup> "The Terrible Vendetta," *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 29 October 1889; "West Virginia's Feud," *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 16 November 1889; Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 62; Bob Adkins, telephone interview, 22 July 1993; Bob Adkins, interview, 24 July 1993; Maude Dingess, interview, September 1995; Bob Dingess, interview, 13 March 1995; Bob Adkins, interview, 12 February 1996; John Dingess, telephone interview, 17 December 1996.

<sup>22</sup> Coberly, *Goldenseal* (Summer 1992), 36; Bob Adkins, interview, 24 July 1993; Bob Adkins, interview, 3 March 1995.

<sup>23</sup> Bob Adkins, interview, 24 July 1993; Bob Adkins, interview, 3 March 1995.

<sup>24</sup> Bob Adkins, interview, 3 March 1995.

<sup>25</sup> "The Terrible Vendetta," *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 29 October 1889; Bob Adkins, interview, 3 March 1995.

<sup>26</sup> "The Terrible Vendetta," *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 29 October 1889.

<sup>27</sup> Mae Brumfield, interview, 29 November 1995.

recalled that Hollena crawled half a mile to Chap Dingess' home.<sup>28</sup> Another Dingess descendant claimed that Dave Dingess removed his shirt, tore it into pieces, and tied it around Hollena's head "to keep her from bleeding to death."<sup>29</sup> Eventually, Harve Dingess returned from his father's home, having retrieved a yoke of oxen and a sled with which to transport Hollena's body to Smokehouse Fork.<sup>30</sup>

The Dingess and Brumfield families procured medical doctors to treat Al's and Hollena's wounds.<sup>31</sup> Dr. Cecil L. Hudgins of Aracoma, Logan County, and Dr. Virginius R. Moss of Barboursville, Cabell County, were solicited for aid.<sup>32</sup> Hollena's injuries warranted the greatest cause for immediate concern; her "face was literally torn to pieces"<sup>33</sup> and "it was thought she would die of her wounds."<sup>34</sup> On Monday, September 23, Dr. Hudgins dressed Hollena's wound.<sup>35</sup> By September 27, "Wild Bill," a resident of Warren, confidently predicted to the *Ceredo Advance* that "they will both recover."<sup>36</sup> In mid-October, the *Lincoln Citizen* reported that Hollena had been "severely shot and may not get well."<sup>37</sup> On October 25, Will Bill notified the *Ceredo Advance* that Al "has got

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<sup>28</sup> John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996; John Dingess, telephone interview, 17 December 1996.

<sup>29</sup> Bob Dingess, telephone interview, 13 March 1995.

<sup>30</sup> Harvey and Maude Dingess, interview, July 1995; John Dingess, telephone interview, 17 December 1996.

<sup>31</sup> "The Truth," *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 3 November 1889.

<sup>32</sup> "Serious Shooting on Hart's Creek, in Lincoln County," *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 26 September 1889; "Letter from Lincoln County," *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 9 October 1889. According to *First, Second and Third Annual Reports of the Secretary of the State Board of Health of West Virginia for the Years Ending December 31<sup>st</sup>: 1881, 1882, 1883*, Dr. Moss had received his medical degree from the Medical College of Virginia in 1865 (83). Dr. Hudgins was one of three members of the Logan County Local Board of Health (109). As of 1889, according to Commissioners Record Book 2, Hudgins acted as a doctor and surgeon to those confined in the Logan County jail and also was licensed as a druggist (274, 276).

<sup>33</sup> "The Terrible Vendetta," *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 29 October 1889.

<sup>34</sup> "Lynched!" *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 28 October 1889.

<sup>35</sup> "Serious Shooting on Hart's Creek, in Lincoln County," *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 26 September 1889.

<sup>36</sup> "Letter from Lincoln County," *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 9 October 1889; letter written by Wild Bill of Warren, WV, on 27 September 1889.

<sup>37</sup> "Al Brumfield Still Alive," *Lincoln Citizen* (Hamlin, WV), 14 October 1889.



about well,” while his wife “is improving very slowly, but she will get well.”<sup>38</sup> A few days later, the *Wheeling Intelligencer* stated of Hollena’s condition: “though still living, she will always be disfigured.”<sup>39</sup> By November 3, the *Wheeling Register* felt sure that she “will likely recover.”<sup>40</sup> As late as November 9, at least one newspaper reported that Hollena “is not expected to live.”<sup>41</sup>

Al and Hollena Brumfield’s ambush garnered attention in regional newspapers and generated public support for the Brumfield-Dingess family. The *Huntington Advertiser* dubbed it “the Brumfield tragedy.”<sup>42</sup> The *Ceredo Advance*, citing the work of “some low down villain,” reported on the “state of confusion” that existed in the post-ambush Harts Creek community.<sup>43</sup> The motive for the attack, according to one correspondent, was robbery, although the *Ceredo Advance* and the *Ironton Register* attributed it to “a former suitor of Mrs. Brumfield.”<sup>44</sup> Support for the Brumfields blossomed. “Mr. Brumfield is a prominent merchant living at Hart, W.Va., and is a good citizen, highly esteemed by his neighbors,” Wild Bill wrote to the *Ceredo Advance* on 27 September 1889. “His wife is a noble and kind-hearted lady and beloved by all her acquaintances. They have a large train of friends who sympathize with them in their distress. The good and law-abiding citizens should unite and rid the earth of such miserable miscreants.”<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> “Lincoln County Letter,” *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 6 November 1889; Wild Bill wrote the letter on 25 October 1889.

<sup>39</sup> *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 29 October 1889.

<sup>40</sup> “The Truth,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 3 November 1889.

<sup>41</sup> “The West Virginia Feud,” *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 9 November 1889.

<sup>42</sup> “An Old Feud Revived,” *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 29 October 1889.

<sup>43</sup> “Letter from Lincoln County,” *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 9 October 1889.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*; “Disappointed Love Leads to a Desperate Crime in Lincoln County,” *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 2 October 1889; “Blood in West Virginia,” *Ironton (OH) Register*, 3 October 1889.

<sup>45</sup> “Letter from Lincoln County,” *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 9 October 1889.

## HALLS

The attack on Al Brumfield—on the *honor* of Al Brumfield—required a personal response.<sup>46</sup> Almost immediately the Brumfields and Dingesses organized to determine the identities of their assailants.<sup>47</sup> Initially, they targeted members of the Hall family, who they believed to be guilty. According to the *Sacramento Daily Record-Union*, “The friends of the Brumfields at once made a search for the Halls, and pursued them for several miles but the would-be murderers succeeded in making their escape.”<sup>48</sup> During this period of “great excitement,” episodes, mostly ambushes, encounter battles, and perhaps arranged battles, occurred on Harts Creek. On 25 September 1889, near the place of Al and Hollena’s attack, members of the Hall family fired eight or ten shots from ambush at Paris Brumfield, wounding him in the right breast.<sup>49</sup> At this juncture, according to the *Sacramento Daily Record-Union*, “the neighborhood was under arms, each side having their friends and acquaintances enlisted in the bushwhacking.”<sup>50</sup> Newspapers provided details (admittedly confusing) regarding subsequent events. On 4 October 1889, “the Brumfield faction caught a man named Dingess, a relative to the Halls, and succeeded in breaking his leg with a Winchester ball before the Halls rallied and drove the assailants off.”<sup>51</sup> On 5 October 1889, according to the *Los Angeles Daily*

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<sup>46</sup> Ayers, in *Vengeance & Justice* (1984), asserts that southerners preferred personal justice instead of impersonal justice when honor was at stake; subsequent acts by Al Brumfield and his family largely proves this true (23).

<sup>47</sup> “That Double Lynching,” *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 2 November 1889.

<sup>48</sup> “Shooting from Ambush,” *Sacramento (CA) Daily Record-Union*, 9 October 1889.

<sup>49</sup> “Many Shots Fired,” *St. Paul (MN) Daily Globe*, 30 September 1889; “A Bloody Feud,” *Los Angeles (CA) Daily Herald*, 8 October 1889; “A Family Feud in West Virginia,” *Lancaster (PA) Daily Intelligencer*, 8 October 1889. The latter two newspapers reported the event as occurring on 24 September.

<sup>50</sup> “Shooting from Ambush,” *Sacramento (CA) Daily Record-Union*, 9 October 1889.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

*Herald*, a brother to Hollena Brumfield “was shot through the leg in a fight with one of the opposing party.”<sup>52</sup> The *Sacramento Daily Record-Union* predicted “more trouble will occur, as there is much bitterness expressed by the friends of each man.”<sup>53</sup> On 8 October, the *Los Angeles Daily Herald* identified “a bloody feud raging in Lincoln county between the Brumfield and Hall families,”<sup>54</sup> which the *Iola Register* of Iola, Kansas, described over a week later as “a feud as bad as the Hatfield-McCoy[s].”<sup>55</sup>

Some newspapers downplayed the post-Brumfield ambush violence. “All kinds of rumors are rife about the Brumfield-McCoy-Adams-Hall war in this county,” reported the *Lincoln Citizen* on 14 October 1889. “Of course everything is greatly exaggerated. Beyond the shooting from ambush of Al Brumfield, Jr., and wife a few Sundays ago we think nothing has occurred. The report that Paris Brumfield was shot and killed by McCoy a few days ago is generally discredited here.”<sup>56</sup> On 19 October 1889, the *Ohio Democrat* of Logan, Ohio, reported: “A gentleman from Hamlin, Lincoln County, informed your correspondent that the report of the feud existing between the Brumfield and Dingess families and the war of extermination in progress is very much exaggerated. No other persons have been molested.”<sup>57</sup> On November 3, the *Wheeling Register* stated that “there had been no shooting from the time Brumfield and his wife were fired upon.”<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> “A Bloody Feud,” *Los Angeles (CA) Daily Herald*, 8 October 1889; “West Virginia’s Feud,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 16 November 1889.

<sup>53</sup> “Shooting from Ambush,” *Sacramento (CA) Daily Record-Union*, 9 October 1889.

<sup>54</sup> “A Bloody Feud,” *Los Angeles (CA) Daily Herald*, 8 October 1889.

<sup>55</sup> “The South,” *Iola (KS) Register*, 18 October 1889.

<sup>56</sup> “Al Brumfield Still Alive,” *Lincoln Citizen* (Hamlin, WV), 14 October 1889.

<sup>57</sup> “West Virginia Feud Exaggerated,” *Ohio Democrat* (Logan, OH), 19 October 1889.

<sup>58</sup> “The Truth,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 3 November 1889.

## MILT HALEY AND GREEN MCCOY

By mid-October, the Brumfield-Dingess faction determined that Milt Haley and Green McCoy had ambushed Al and Hollena Brumfield.<sup>59</sup> Initially unsure of the identities of their assailants, the Brumfields and their allies had “watched all around to see who it was.”<sup>60</sup> The primary cause of Haley’s and McCoy’s suspicion was this: the day following Al and Hollena’s ambush, both men had left Harts Creek<sup>61</sup>—“just left their family and went to Kentucky. Just deserted their families. Then they knew who it was.”<sup>62</sup>

Haley and McCoy were “boon companions,” were associates of Billy Hall, and had often engaged “in some of the fighting and other questionable exploits on Hart’s creek.”<sup>63</sup> Still, prior to this incident, in spite of the feud between Green McCoy and Paris Brumfield, no trouble had transpired between Al Brumfield and McCoy.<sup>64</sup> Likewise, no trouble had occurred between Milt Haley and Al Brumfield, although Haley was related to John W. Runyon. Oddly, just a few days before the ambush, Haley and McCoy had *eaten dinner* at the home of Al Brumfield.<sup>65</sup> According to the *Wheeling Intelligencer*, “Between ‘Little Al’ Brumfield and McCoy there had never been any open breach, if, indeed, there had been any feeling at all, and it is claimed that McCoy and Haley had

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<sup>59</sup> “The Terrible Vendetta,” *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 29 October 1889; “Lincoln County Letter,” *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 6 November 1889; Bob Adkins, telephone interview, 22 July 1993; Bob Adkins, interview, 24 July 1993; Bob Dingess, telephone interview, 24 March 1995. Of note, the *Wheeling Intelligencer* stated: “Suspicion at once fastened on McCoy and Haley, and early the next day they left for Kentucky.”

<sup>60</sup> Bob Adkins, interview, 3 March 1995.

<sup>61</sup> *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 29 October 1889; Lenore McComas Coberly, *Goldenseal*, 36.

<sup>62</sup> Bob Adkins, interview, 3 March 1995.

<sup>63</sup> “The Terrible Vendetta,” *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 29 October 1889.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

dinner at Al's a few days before the shooting of himself and wife."<sup>66</sup> This dinner occurred just days after McCoy had shot Paris Brumfield through the leg.<sup>67</sup>

Al Brumfield offered a two hundred dollar reward for Haley's and McCoy's capture, dead or alive; oral history subscribes the amount as five hundred dollars or \$1500 apiece.<sup>68</sup> One source states that Al "supplemented the reward offered by the state with one of his own."<sup>69</sup> The Brumfields and Dingesses pursued Haley and McCoy "like bloodhounds," while detectives also scoured the region searching for them.<sup>70</sup> If found, under West Virginia law, Haley and McCoy would have been charged with malicious or unlawful assault, which carried a penalty of confinement in the state penitentiary for two to ten years for each offense.<sup>71</sup> According to one Adkins descendant, the Brumfields learned Haley's and McCoy's location from a spy who crawled under Cain Adkins' house and listened to him tell of Haley and McCoy's whereabouts as he sat in front of his fireplace.<sup>72</sup> An Adams descendant thought Sol Adams, Jr. located Haley and McCoy in Kentucky.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> "The Terrible Vendetta," *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 29 October 1889.

<sup>67</sup> "Lynched!" *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 28 October 1889.

<sup>68</sup> "The Terrible Vendetta," *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 29 October 1889; "Would-Be Murderers Arrested," *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 28 October 1889; "Assassins Arrested," *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 23 October 1889; "Known by Other Names," *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 25 October 1889; "The Truth," *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 3 November 1889; Coberly, *Goldenseal* (Summer 1992), 36; Bob Adkins, telephone interview, 22 July 1993; Bob Adkins, interview, 24 July 1993; Bob Adkins, interview, 12 February 1996; Dorothy Brumfield, interview, 30 July 1996; John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996; John Dingess, telephone interview, 17 December 1996.

<sup>69</sup> Lambert, *The Llorac*, 62.

<sup>70</sup> "The Terrible Vendetta," *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 29 October 1889; "Assassins Arrested," *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 23 October 1889; "Known by Other Names," *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 25 October 1889; "Would-Be Murderers Arrested," *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 28 October 1889.

<sup>71</sup> *The Code of West Virginia*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Wheeling and Charleston, WV: West Virginia Printing Company, 1887), 879-880.

<sup>72</sup> Boyce Lucas, telephone interview, Summer 1995.

<sup>73</sup> Vilas Adams, interview, 30 July 1996. This fellow would soon be elected a justice of the peace in Logan County and thereafter called "Squire Sol."

Green McCoy and Milt Haley hid themselves in Inez, Kentucky, seat of government for Martin County.<sup>74</sup> Said one Dingess descendant: “They used to there in West Virginia, [if you] committed a crime in West Virginia they run away and went to Kentucky. In the hill part of Kentucky there on the Tug River.”<sup>75</sup> One Adkins descendant thought they went to Kentucky because “they were from there.”<sup>76</sup> An Adams descendant said, “They left here. They went over into Kentucky and was workin’ for somebody, clearing out new ground.”<sup>77</sup> Cain Adkins’ family thought McCoy went to Inez because “he had been married before and he had a wife and two children there.”<sup>78</sup> On their way to Kentucky, Peter McCoy, a resident of Wayne County and half-nephew to Haley, gave them two hundred dollars to facilitate their escape. McCoy later said of them: “They were as innocent as Jesus Christ when He was on the cross.”<sup>79</sup>

## INEZ, KENTUCKY

On Friday, 18 October 1889, nearly a month following the attack upon Al and Hollena Brumfield, a detective captured Milt Haley and Green McCoy in Martin County, Kentucky.<sup>80</sup> The detective first located McCoy, who he recognized by a nick in one of his

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<sup>74</sup> “The Terrible Vendetta,” *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 29 October 1889; “Quick Justice Done,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 29 October 1889; “The West Virginia Feud,” *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 9 November 1889; “West Virginia’s Feud,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 16 November 1889; Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 62; Billy Joe Fleming, interview, April 1995; Corbett Brumfield, interview, 6 December 1995; Dorothy Brumfield, interview, 30 July 1996; Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 25 October 1995; Corbett Brumfield, interview, 6 December 1995; John Dingess, telephone interview, 17 December 1996; Freeman Adams, interview, 20 March 2011.

<sup>75</sup> John Dingess, telephone interview, 17 December 1996. Billy Joe Fleming, a resident of Warren, WV, in an April 1995 interview, agreed.

<sup>76</sup> Charley Davis, interview by author, Harts, WV, 26 May 1995.

<sup>77</sup> Freeman Adams, interview, 20 March 2011.

<sup>78</sup> Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 25 October 1995.

<sup>79</sup> Howard Dalton, interview by author, Spottswood, WV, July 1995. Peter McCoy later became a well-known preacher at Cove Gap.

<sup>80</sup> “Assassins Arrested,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 23 October 1889; “Known by Other Names,” *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 25 October 1889; “Would-Be Murderers Arrested,” *Wheeling (WV)*

ears, at an Inez restaurant.<sup>81</sup> Approaching McCoy, he grabbed him by the ear and shook it, saying, “I think you’re the man I’m looking for.”<sup>82</sup> McCoy subsequently revealed the whereabouts of Haley, who he found churning butter on a steamboat at Tug Fork.<sup>83</sup> That night, Martin County authorities held Haley and McCoy captive at the county jail until they could be transferred to Lincoln County, West Virginia.<sup>84</sup> Within a few days, “Wild Bill” of Upper Hart cheerfully wrote to the *Ceredo Advance*: “The perpetrators of the awful crime—Milton Haley and Green McCoy—have been arrested. Haley did the shooting and McCoy is accused of being an accomplice, but the latter will be released by turning state’s evidence against Haley.”<sup>85</sup> According to one Dingess descendant, Brumfield first learned of their capture by letter.<sup>86</sup> Another Dingess descendant said: “One day a guy rode up on a horse looking for Al Brumfield. He was out back shoeing an ox steed. Al came down to the house and said, ‘You put ‘em across the Tug River and when I identify them you’ll get your money.’”<sup>87</sup>

Newspapers indicated that proper legal procedure would ultimately settle the matter. According to the *Louisville Courier-Journal*: “There was strong talk of lynching the men, but by counsel of law-abiding citizens it was agreed to let the law take its

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*Intelligencer*, 28 October 1889; “Lynched!” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 28 October 1889; “A Double Lynching,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 28 October 1889; “Prisoners Murdered,” *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 29 October 1889; “The Terrible Vendetta,” *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 29 October 1889; “Quick Justice Done,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 29 October 1889; “The Truth,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 3 November 1889; Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 25 October 1995.

<sup>81</sup> Bob Adkins, telephone interview, 22 July 1993; Bob Adkins, interview, 24 July 1993; Bob Adkins, interview, 12 February 1996.

<sup>82</sup> Bob Adkins, interview, 12 February 1996; Bob Adkins, interview, n.d.

<sup>83</sup> Bob Adkins, telephone interview, 22 July 1993; Bob Adkins, interview, 24 July 1993.

<sup>84</sup> “Assassins Arrested,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 23 October 1889; “Prisoners Murdered,” *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 29 October 1889.

<sup>85</sup> “Lincoln County Letter,” *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 6 November 1889; Wild Bill wrote the letter on 25 October 1889.

<sup>86</sup> Bob Adkins, telephone interview, 22 July 1993.

<sup>87</sup> John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996; John Dingess, telephone interview, 17 December 1996.

course.”<sup>88</sup> At Warren, located within the feud region, “Wild Bill” urged “the *law* should be enforced against such persons [Haley and McCoy] to the utmost extent.”<sup>89</sup> He also provided indication that tension had increased among feud factions. “Our neighborhood is in a state of intense excitement and may terminate in a deadly feud between two parties who have been accused wrongfully of being accessory to the shooting,” he wrote. “God only knows what our country will come to, as the deadly Winchester is fast becoming the ruling factor in our land.”<sup>90</sup>

## BRUMFIELD POSSE

Al Brumfield and his associates ultimately opted to pursue extralegal justice. First, the culture of honor required a personal response. Second, partisan law officials could have thwarted the desired result. Third, the legal system allowed many avenues of escape for accused criminals.<sup>91</sup> In October 1889, Al Brumfield organized a gang and rode to Martin County, Kentucky, to retrieve Milt Haley and Green McCoy.<sup>92</sup> The Brumfield-Dingess gang consisted of Al Brumfield, John Brumfield, Charley Brumfield, Charley Dingess, Hugh Dingess, John Dingess, Burl Farley, Albert Dingess, “Short Harve” Dingess, French Bryant, and Constable Victor Shelton.<sup>93</sup> According to one Dingess

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<sup>88</sup> “Assassins Arrested,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 23 October 1889.

<sup>89</sup> “Lincoln County Letter,” *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 6 November 1889; Wild Bill wrote the letter on 25 October 1889.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> Ayers, *Vengeance & Justice*, 109.

<sup>92</sup> “More Murdering,” *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 31 October 1889; “The West Virginia Feud,” *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 9 November 1889; Bill Adkins, interview, 19 April 1992.

<sup>93</sup> Lawrence Kirk, interview, 27 July 1993; Shelby Kirk, interview, 27 July 1993; Lawrence Kirk, interview, 3 March 1995; Mae Brumfield, interview, 4 March 1995; Ida Taylor, interview, 5 March 1995; Verdayne Shelton, interview, 22 November 1995; Corbett Brumfield, interview, 6 December 1995; Bob Adkins, interview, 12 February 1996; Ida Taylor, telephone interview by author, Green Shoal, WV, n.d.; Dorothy Brumfield, interview, 26 September 1996; John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996; John Dingess, telephone interview, 17 December 1996.



descendant, Charley Dingess “was a ringleader in it,”<sup>94</sup> while another source said Hugh Dingess had organized the posse.<sup>95</sup> The Dingesses made sure to take French Bryant. “He did a lot of dirty work for the Dingess men,” said one Dingess descendant.<sup>96</sup> Another said of French: “He didn’t care for nothing. That’s why he went along.”<sup>97</sup> To reach the Tug River, the gang rode up Trace Fork of Harts Creek, over onto Twelve Pole Creek, and down Jenny’s Creek or Marrowbone Creek to the Tug, which was in flood.<sup>98</sup>

According to newspaper accounts, a legal posse fetched Haley and McCoy in Kentucky, before surrendering them to a Brumfield-led gang. The *Daily State Journal* of Parkersburg, West Virginia, reported: “A dozen of the [Brumfield] party went to the sheriff and tendered assistance to escort McCoy and Haley to jail. They were accepted.”<sup>99</sup> According to the *Ceredo Advance*, “officers” rode to Kentucky and took charge of the prisoners; Al Brumfield, Vic Shelton, Jim Brumfield, and four others “whose names are not known” met the officers at the Tug and “accompanied the officers and prisoners, ostensibly for the purpose of acting as additional guards.”<sup>100</sup> The *Wheeling Register* reported that, “officers started to take them [Haley and McCoy] across the West Virginia line, knowing that they had no legal right to hold men in Kentucky. A posse was formed and laid in wait for the men.”<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> John Dingess, telephone interview, 17 December 1996.

<sup>95</sup> Bob Bryant, telephone interview by John Hartford, Harts, WV, 28 March 1997.

<sup>96</sup> John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996.

<sup>97</sup> Harvey Dingess, interview, 20 December 1995.

<sup>98</sup> Mae Brumfield, interview, 4 March 1995.

<sup>99</sup> “That Double Lynching,” *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 2 November 1889.

<sup>100</sup> “Prisoners Murdered,” *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 29 October 1889. The *Wheeling (WV) Register* printed a nearly identical version of the story titled “Shot in Cold Blood” on 30 October 1889.

<sup>101</sup> “Quick Justice Done,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 29 October 1889.

Supported by Constable Victor Shelton, the Brumfield-Dingess gang retrieved Haley and McCoy from Martin County authorities.<sup>102</sup> One Dingess descendant recalled that Al Brumfield posed as the sheriff of Lincoln County, while another stated he brought a deputy-sheriff and extradition papers.<sup>103</sup> A Brumfield descendant said he “went over to arrest them under the name of the State of West Virginia.”<sup>104</sup> Most likely, Constable Shelton presented his credentials (either legal papers or bogus warrants) to Kentucky authorities, who turned Haley and McCoy over to the Brumfields.<sup>105</sup> At Tug Fork, they stationed men on both sides of the river, then tied Haley and McCoy to horses and sent them across the high water.<sup>106</sup> Once in West Virginia, Constable Shelton turned the two prisoners over to the Brumfield gang and “come on back.”<sup>107</sup>

The Brumfields returned to Harts Creek via the Twelve Pole Valley in Logan (now Mingo) County. The gang rode up Marrowbone Creek or Jenny’s Creek on horse trails and over the mountain to Twelve Pole.<sup>108</sup> The Brumfields and their associates did not make the ride easy for Haley and McCoy. “They tied their hands together and they had a guy named French Bryant and he run and drove them [like a pair of horses] ahead of these guys on the horses,” said one Dingess descendant. “That’s quite a ways to let ‘em walk.”<sup>109</sup> On 22 October 1889, the gang spent the night at John Dingess’ home on

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<sup>102</sup> Bill Adkins, interview, 19 April 1992; Bob Adkins, interview, 24 July 1993; Lawrence Kirk, interview, 3 March 1995; Verdayne Shelton, interview, 22 November 1995.

<sup>103</sup> Coberly, *Goldenseal* (Summer 1992), 37; Bob Adkins, interview, 24 July 1993; Glen Dingess, telephone interview, July 1995.

<sup>104</sup> Corbett Brumfield, interview, 6 December 1995.

<sup>105</sup> Lawrence Kirk, interview, 27 July 1993; Lawrence Kirk, interview, 3 March 1995; Billy Adkins, interview, 4 March 1995; Lawrence Kirk, interview, 5 March 1995; Verdayne Shelton, interview, 22 November 1995.

<sup>106</sup> Mae Brumfield, interview, 4 March 1995.

<sup>107</sup> Lawrence Kirk, interview, 3 March 1995; Verdayne Shelton, interview, 22 November 1995.

<sup>108</sup> Lawrence Kirk, interview, 27 July 1993; Lawrence Kirk, telephone interview, 28 November 1994; Lawrence Kirk, interview, 4 March 1995.

<sup>109</sup> John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996; John Dingess, telephone interview, 17 December 1996.

Twelve Pole. John Dingess, brother to Hollena Brumfield, operated a large country store and saloon in the vicinity of the town of Dingess.<sup>110</sup> According to one descendant, “Nothing exciting happened around there.”<sup>111</sup>

#### ADAMS-RUNYON-ADKINS GANGS

Anti-Brumfield forces organized rival mobs and gangs and placed them at strategic points on Harts Creek so as to recapture Haley and McCoy. Ben and his brother Anthony Adams organized a mob consisting of one hundred men at Sycamore Bottom, below Trace Fork.<sup>112</sup> According to one Adams descendant, Ben wanted to free Haley and McCoy because he was their friend.<sup>113</sup> A bit further down Harts Creek, at Big Branch, Cain Adkins and John W. Runyon had also gathered a mob.<sup>114</sup> “Old man Cain Adkins and his outfit met up here at Big Branch and a big gang of ‘em aimed to take McCoy and Haley away from ‘em as they come through,” said one old Harts resident. “And they had a traitor in the outfit and he slipped ahead and told them.”<sup>115</sup> Regarding the rival gangs organized to recapture Haley and McCoy, one Dingess descendant said: “You can just imagine what kind of war would have been if they had a got ‘em.”<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Bob Adkins, telephone interview, 22 July 1993; Bob Adkins, interview, 24 July 1993; *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 8 February 1899.

<sup>111</sup> Bob Adkins, interview, 24 July 1993.

<sup>112</sup> Charley Davis, interview, n.d.; Dorothy Brumfield, interview, 26 September 1996; Dave Brumfield, interview by author, Harts, WV, 4 December 1996; John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996.

<sup>113</sup> Vilas Adams, interview, 30 July 1996.

<sup>114</sup> Bill Adkins, interview, 19 April 1992; Billy Adkins, interview, 4 March 1995.

<sup>115</sup> Bill Adkins, interview, 19 April 1992.

<sup>116</sup> Dorothy Brumfield, interview, 30 July 1996.

The Brumfields re-entered Harts Creek after dark via Trace Fork, home of Milt Haley and the Mullins family.<sup>117</sup> John Brumfield, astride a white horse, rode ahead of the gang toward the mouth of Trace, where he located the Adams mob.<sup>118</sup> Hearing rifles “crack like firewood,” he immediately rode back up Trace and met his confederates at Board Tree Bottom.<sup>119</sup> The Brumfields detoured over to main Harts Creek, turned up Buck Fork, and traveled over a mountain to the home of Hugh Dingess on Smokehouse Fork.<sup>120</sup>

## HUGH DINGESS

At Hugh Dingess’ two-story log residence, the Brumfields and Dingesses—what one Dingess descendant called “a band of outlaws”—“made a fortress,” then enjoyed a meal and commenced a sort of party.<sup>121</sup> What had originated as a small gang soon became a mob, mostly kinsmen. Henderson Dingess, father to Hollena Brumfield, did not participate in the mob, but “he saw it was done.”<sup>122</sup> At Hugh’s, the group feasted and drank corn liquor, red whisky, and apple brandy from half-gallon cans, while Haley and

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<sup>117</sup> Billy Adkins, interview, 4 March 1995; Charley Davis, interview, 26 May 1995; John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996.

<sup>118</sup> Charley Davis, interview, n.d.; Dave Brumfield, interview, 26 May 1995; Dorothy Brumfield, interview, 30 July 1996; Dave Brumfield, interview, 4 December 1996; John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996.

<sup>119</sup> Charley Davis, in an undated interview by author, stated that Brumfield could hear the cocking of pistols. John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996; Charley Davis, interview, n.d.

<sup>120</sup> Hugh Dingess was Hollena Brumfield’s brother. Roxie Mullins, interview, 23 March 1991; Bob Adkins, interview, 24 July 1993; Lawrence Kirk, telephone interview by John Hartford, Ferrellsburg, WV, 21 February 1995; Charley Davis, interview, 26 May 1995; Bob Adkins, interview, 12 February 1996; Dorothy Brumfield, interview, 26 September 1996; John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996. Roxie thought the Brumfields took Haley and McCoy to “where Sallie Dingess’ home is.”

<sup>121</sup> Harvey Dingess, interview, 24 October 1995; John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996; Lawrence Kirk, interview, 27 July 1993; Carolyn “Johnnie” Farley, interview, 24 October 1995; Maude Dingess, interview, September 1995; Harvey Dingess, interview, 24 October 1995; John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996. John Dingess said, “Guys liked to join a gang back then.”

<sup>122</sup> John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996. John Dingess estimated about one hundred men “on both sides.”

McCoy were kept in handcuffs upstairs under guard.<sup>123</sup> The Dingess women, most sources agree, prepared the food; one Dingess descendant claimed the prisoners were made to cook it.<sup>124</sup> “When they got their supper ready,” said one Adams descendant, “they brought them [Haley and McCoy] down to eat their supper and Milt looked over at McCoy or McCoy looked over at Milt and said, ‘Eat a good supper, Milt. This is the last supper you’re going to eat.’”<sup>125</sup> Another Adams descendant recalled that Haley told McCoy: “Eat hardy ‘cause this’ll be our last meal.”<sup>126</sup> Afterwards, Hugh Dingess removed his family—the women and children—to the nearby home of his brother or mother. Because both Haley and McCoy were musicians, it was decided that they should play music for the pleasure of their captors. “They gave them their supper and they played their last tunes on the fiddle,” said one Adams descendant.<sup>127</sup> Someone rode away to locate musical instruments.<sup>128</sup> The Dingess gang made Haley, who was a fiddler, play all night while they got drunk and danced. Said one Dingess descendant: “They told him to keep that fiddle a going.”<sup>129</sup> Said another: “They played a fiddle and a banjo all night.”<sup>130</sup> Yet another Dingess descendant recalled it this way: “I forget which one, but

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<sup>123</sup> Roxie Mullins, interview, 23 March 1991; Lawrence Kirk, interview, 27 July 1993; Carolyn “Johnnie” Farley, interview by author, Shively, WV, September 1995; Dorothy Brumfield, interview, 30 July 1996; Harvey Dingess, interview, 24 October 1995; Bob Adkins, interview, 12 February 1996; John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996; John Dingess, telephone interview, 17 December 1996.

<sup>124</sup> Carolyn “Johnnie” Farley, interview, September 1995; Carolyn “Johnnie” Farley, interview, 24 October 1995.

<sup>125</sup> Roxie Mullins, interview, 23 March 1991. Roxie thought this occurred at Henderson Dingess’ home.

<sup>126</sup> Violet Mullins, interview by author and John Hartford, Whirlwind, WV, 30 July 1996.

<sup>127</sup> Roxie Mullins, interview, 23 March 1991.

<sup>128</sup> Carolyn “Johnnie” Farley, interview, 24 October 1995; Harvey and Maude Dingess, interview by author and John Hartford, Shively, WV, 24 October 1995. Harvey thought Haley had a fiddle while Maude said “they sent for one.”

<sup>129</sup> Harvey Dingess, interview, 24 October 1995.

<sup>130</sup> Carolyn “Johnnie” Farley, interview, 24 October 1995.

they never could get one guy to do much. The other one'd do whatever they'd tell him to do."<sup>131</sup> The gang, meanwhile, danced around "like a party."<sup>132</sup>

While at Hugh Dingess' home, the Brumfield-Dingess faction "tried" Green McCoy, who offered a confession.<sup>133</sup> "They wanted to be awful sure that they were right," said one Dingess descendant. "See, they didn't want to kill somebody that was innocent."<sup>134</sup> The Brumfields and Dingesses took Haley outside the cabin to the orchard, purportedly to hang, leaving McCoy inside.<sup>135</sup> They shot a few times as if they had perhaps killed Haley. Milt hollered to his confederate, "Don't tell 'em a damned thing! I ain't dead yet! Don't be scared!" McCoy, responded, "I ain't told nothin' yet."<sup>136</sup> After some time, the gang told McCoy that Haley had been hung from a walnut tree, adding "You better tell what you know." Thinking Milt was dead, Green confessed. "He broke down and cried and admitted to it," said one Dingess descendant.<sup>137</sup> McCoy said he and Haley had laid there in a sinkhole all day waiting on Al Brumfield where McCoy had whittled sticks with a straight razor. "You go down there and check on that sink hole and you'll see piles of shavings made from wood," he said. Because he and Haley only had one gun between them, they had drawn straws to see who would actually do the shooting. McCoy drew the short straw, meaning it fell upon him. When Al and Hollena came

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<sup>131</sup> John Dingess, telephone interview, 17 December 1996.

<sup>132</sup> Carolyn "Johnnie" Farley, interview, September 1995.

<sup>133</sup> "That Double Lynching," *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 2 November 1889; Coberly, *Goldenseal* (Summer 1992), 37.

<sup>134</sup> Bob Adkins, telephone interview, 22 July 1993; Bob Adkins, interview, 24 July 1993.

<sup>135</sup> Bob Adkins, telephone interview, 22 July 1993; Bob Adkins, interview, 24 July 1993; Bob Adkins, interview, 3 March 1995; Harvey and Maude Dingess, interview, July 1995; Bob Dingess, interview, 8 August 1995. Bob Dingess recalled how the gang took one man outside and lectured him, while the other man remained inside.

<sup>136</sup> Lawrence Kirk, interview, n.d.; Dorothy Brumfield, interview, 30 July 1996; Dorothy Brumfield, interview, 26 September 1996.

<sup>137</sup> Bob Adkins, telephone interview, 22 July 1993; Bob Adkins, interview, 3 March 1995. Harvey and Maude Dingess, in a July 1995 interview by author, had heard a similar detail, as had Lawrence Kirk, in an undated interview by author.

riding down the creek, McCoy vomited from nervousness. Haley took the gun and said, “You ain’t got no nerve. Give me the gun and I’ll do it myself.” According to a Dingess descendant: “And he claimed Haley was the one that shot. He didn’t do it.”<sup>138</sup>

Unbeknownst to McCoy, Haley had not been hung. Said one Dingess descendant:

They took him down there in the yard and gagged him so he couldn’t make a noise. They had Haley right on the outside, handcuffs behind him, and stuck a gun in his back and told him if he made any noise they’d shoot him. And he listened to the other fellow. A funny thing happened out there. He broke loose from them and pretty near got over the fence and Short Harve caught him.<sup>139</sup>

Haley, who had been gagged and made to listen to McCoy’s confession, was then ushered back into the Dingess cabin.<sup>140</sup> Said one Dingess descendant: “Well, he came out and cursed McCoy and told him he didn’t have any nerve and said everything to him. Said that fellow just cried and said, ‘Now you know I’m telling the truth.’”<sup>141</sup>

Regardless of the fact Green McCoy’s confession had been given under the false impression that Haley was dead, the Brumfield-Dingess crowd was satisfied of Haley’s and McCoy’s guilt. Or maybe not? Said one Dingess descendant: “They claimed one of them guys confessed. But you know, the punishment they put on ‘em—what else could they do?”<sup>142</sup> The Brumfield-Dingess mob considered hanging them from a walnut tree at Hugh Dingess’ farm, but changed their minds.<sup>143</sup> “French Bryant was a leader in the gang and urged them to stop fooling around and kill the men,” said one Dingess descendant. “He was pushing the thing, hollering, ‘Let’s kill the sons of a bitches!’ He wanted to hang

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<sup>138</sup> Bob Adkins, telephone interview, 22 July 1993; Bob Adkins, interview, 24 July 1993.

<sup>139</sup> Bob Adkins, telephone interview, 22 July 1993. John Dingess (8 December 1996) also remembered it this way.

<sup>140</sup> Bob Adkins, interview, 24 July 1993.

<sup>141</sup> Bob Adkins, interview, 24 July 1993; Bob Adkins, telephone interview, 22 July 1993.

<sup>142</sup> John Dingess, telephone interview, 17 December 1996.

<sup>143</sup> Maude Dingess, interview, September 1995; Harvey Dingess, interview, 24 October 1995; John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996.

them by a walnut tree but they decided against it.”<sup>144</sup> Either way, Haley’s and McCoy’s fate was largely sealed, although it was decided by the mob that no bloodshed would transpire at Hugh Dingess’ house. “Well, they didn’t do anything to them there,” said Hugh’s grandson. “They didn’t want any murder going on around their home. Then it would be too easy to pin it on them.”<sup>145</sup> According to one Dingess descendant, Hugh’s wife Viola wanted the men taken away from her home.<sup>146</sup> The existence of a nearby Adams mob also stirred them to relocate with the prisoners. “They got scared the Adamses was gonna take ‘em,” said one Dingess descendant, so they departed for Green Shoal.<sup>147</sup>

On 24 October 1889, Al Brumfield and the rest of his gang left Harts Creek, presumably en route to Hamlin, where the prisoners would be placed in jail.<sup>148</sup> From Hugh Dingess’ home, they rode up Hugh Dingess Hollow, over Piney Mountain, and down Piney Fork, reaching a spot on West Fork just above Cain Adkins’ farm. From there, they rode up West Fork, up Workman Fork, up a small hollow (later known as Frank Fleming Hollow), over the mountain, and down Abbott Branch to the Guyandotte River.<sup>149</sup> Along the way, local resident Burbus Dial and his wife Martha heard the gang’s approach. Aware of the gang’s purpose and hoping to avoid involvement, the Dials hid in

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<sup>144</sup> Harvey Dingess, interview, 24 October 1995.

<sup>145</sup> Bob Adkins, interview, 24 July 1993.

<sup>146</sup> Paul Dingess, interview by author, Shively, WV, 26 July 2015. Other sources imply that Mrs. Dingess had been led away from the house. As of 2016, Paul Dingess lives on the site of the old Hugh Dingess residence.

<sup>147</sup> John Dingess, telephone interview, 17 December 1996; Maude Dingess, interview, September 1995. John Dingess provided the quote.

<sup>148</sup> “Prisoners Murdered,” *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 29 October 1889; “The Terrible Vendetta,” *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 29 October 1889; “Shot in Cold Blood,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 30 October 1889; Ida Taylor, interview, 5 March 1995.

<sup>149</sup> Lawrence Kirk, telephone interview, 28 November 1994; Billy Adkins, interview, 4 March 1995; Dorothy Brumfield, interview, 30 July 1996.



weeds and watched the men ride by, two men on each horse. Addison Vance, the brother or nephew to Mrs. Cain Adkins, was among the riders.<sup>150</sup>

## GEORGE FRY HOME

Rather than ride to Hamlin, the Brumfield-Dingess gang opted to stay overnight at the A.S. Fry home, situated at the mouth of Green Shoal Creek across the Guyandotte River from Abbotts Branch.<sup>151</sup> They chose the Fry home due to one or a combination of factors. First, it was a popular and long-standing stopping point for travelers in the Harts Creek District.<sup>152</sup> Said one Brumfield descendant:

They was supposed to have been taking them to Hamlin to give them trial and that was a stop-off place. They was supposed to delivered them back to the law over at Hamlin, our county seat. And they stopped down there to stay overnight. Of course, I guess it was all planned.<sup>153</sup>

As of 1889, the A.S. Fry home was occupied by George Fry, son of A.S., a “prominent farmer.”<sup>154</sup> Second, A.S. Fry’s genealogical connection to Boney Lucas (his nephew) may have factored into the decision. George Fry, son of A.S. Fry, was a first cousin as well as brother-in-law to Boney Lucas.<sup>155</sup> Third, George Fry, a likely Republican, may

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<sup>150</sup> Essie McCann, interview by author, Ferrellsburg, WV, 27 July 1996. This memory of a Cain Adkins in-law riding among the Brumfields is peculiar.

<sup>151</sup> “Prisoners Murdered,” *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 29 October 1889; “Quick Justice Done,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 29 October 1889; “Shot in Cold Blood,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 30 October 1889; “Hired to Murder,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 31 October 1889; Bob Dingess (24 March 1995) said Cat Fry, an eyewitness to subsequent events, described the Fry house as a two-room cabin with a fireplace in one room and sleeping quarters in the other.

<sup>152</sup> “Quick Justice Done,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 29 October 1889.

<sup>153</sup> Ida Taylor, interview, 5 March 1995.

<sup>154</sup> Lucian Fry, Sadie Fry Bunn, and Andrew J. Fry IV, *George Fry I and Descendants* (Kingsport, TN: Arcata Graphics, 1992), 283. A.S. Fry was a timber contractor (282). According to the *Logan County Banner* (5 November 1891), A.S. operated the National Hotel in Guyandotte, WV.

<sup>155</sup> Fry, Bunn, and Fry, *George Fry I and Descendants*, 48, 207, 282-283.

have enjoyed a political tie to Al Brumfield's enemy: Deputy Sheriff John W. Runyon.<sup>156</sup> Fourth, the Brumfields had loose family ties to Mrs. Fry's family: Paris Brumfield's sister, Rachel, had married Irvin Lucas, her brother; two of Paris Brumfield's nephews had married her sisters; one of his nephews, Morgan, a member of the mob, had impregnated her niece.<sup>157</sup>

The Brumfield gang reached the Fry residence by crossing the river in boats and received permission from George Fry to stay overnight.<sup>158</sup> According to oral and written accounts, three guards and an officer crossed the river with Haley and McCoy.<sup>159</sup> A ford existed to facilitate their crossing of the river.<sup>160</sup>

At George Fry's home, the "officers" guarded Haley and McCoy, who enjoyed a meal. Cat Fry, the niece of both Mr. and Mrs. Fry, cooked for the men.<sup>161</sup> Stella Abbott, a niece to Mr. and Mrs. Fry, also cooked for the men.<sup>162</sup> One of the prisoners had a headache and said he couldn't eat. Someone said that he had better eat because it would be his last supper.<sup>163</sup> According to one Brumfield descendant, Haley wasn't hungry and McCoy said, "Eat well, 'cause tomorrow we may die." A Brumfield guard sitting at the

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<sup>156</sup> According to the 4 August 1898 edition of the *Cabell Record* (Milton, WV), Col. A.S. Fry, father to George, "was at Huntington early last Saturday to participate in the Republican district convention. The Colonel was always an enthusiastic worker for his party."

<sup>157</sup> Dimple Hager, interview, Huntington, WV, 2 June 1996.

<sup>158</sup> "Prisoners Murdered," *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 29 October 1889; "The Terrible Vendetta," *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 29 October 1889; "Shot in Cold Blood," *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 30 October 1889; "That Double Lynching," *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 2 November 1889; "The West Virginia Feud," *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 9 November 1889; "West Virginia's Feud," *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 16 November 1889; Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 63; Bill Adkins, interview, 19 April 1992; Basil Frye, telephone interview, 13 July 1996.

<sup>159</sup> "More Murdering," *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 31 October 1889; Basil Frye, telephone interview, 13 July 1996.

<sup>160</sup> Shelby Kirk, interview, 27 July 1993.

<sup>161</sup> Bob Dingess, interview, 8 August 1995; Vergia Rooney, telephone interview, May 1996; Irene Adkins, interview, 12 July 1996.

<sup>162</sup> Lawrence Kirk, interview, 27 July 1993; Lawrence Kirk, telephone interview, 28 November 1994; Opal Brumfield, interview by author, Green Shoal, WV, 12 October 1995.

<sup>163</sup> Garnet Adkins, interview, 8 August 1995.

end of the table immediately said, “Eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow you *shall* die.”<sup>164</sup> Another Brumfield descendant remembered hearing it this way: “It was said when they were eating supper that night, Green McCoy and Milt Haley, said one looked over to the other one and told him, said, ‘You better eat all you want because this will be our last meal.’”<sup>165</sup> An Adkins descendant recalled that one of the men said to the other, “You better eat plenty ‘cause this will be our last meal.”<sup>166</sup> One person recalled it as: “Eat plenty ‘cause it’ll be our last meal.”<sup>167</sup> A Dingess descendant told that one of the men said, “I’ve got a headache. I can’t eat much,” to which his confederate replied, “Eat plenty ‘cause it will be our last meal.”<sup>168</sup> Another Dingess descendant remembered that one of the men said, “I don’t want nothin’. My head’s hurtin’,” to which the other fellow replied, “You better eat ‘cause this will be your last meal.”<sup>169</sup> After eating, Haley and McCoy were handcuffed together and placed in bed.<sup>170</sup> Haley, presumably angry at McCoy for his confession, cursed him.<sup>171</sup>

## BRUMFIELD-DINGESS MOB

That night, a mob of Brumfields and Dingesses arrived at the Fry house and assumed charge of Haley and McCoy.<sup>172</sup> Oral history affixes the number of mobsters at

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<sup>164</sup> Lawrence Kirk, interview, n.d.

<sup>165</sup> Ida Taylor, interview, 5 March 1995. In an undated telephone interview, Ida recalled hearing the man said, “Eat plenty ‘cause this will be our last meal.”

<sup>166</sup> Boyce Lucas, telephone interview, Summer 1995.

<sup>167</sup> Opal Brumfield, interview, 12 October 1995.

<sup>168</sup> Garnet Adkins, interview, 29 February 1996.

<sup>169</sup> Johnny Golden Adkins, interview, 2 April 2011.

<sup>170</sup> Bob Dingess, telephone interview, 24 March 1995; Ida Taylor, telephone interview, n.d.; Bob Adkins, interview, 12 February 1996; Irene Adkins, interview, 12 July 1996.

<sup>171</sup> Bob Adkins, interview, 12 February 1996.

<sup>172</sup> Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 63; Corbett Brumfield, interview, 30 January 1996; Basil Frye, telephone interview, 13 July 1996. Corbett stated that Al “turned them over” to the mob.

ten or fifteen, while newspapers gave the number between forty and sixty.<sup>173</sup> Those present were: Paris Brumfield, Al Brumfield, Charley Brumfield, John Brumfield, Bill Brumfield, Burl Farley, French Bryant, Charley Dingess, Hugh Dingess, Albert Dingess, John Dingess, Harvey Dingess, G.B. “Dump” Farley, Wash Farley, “Dealer Dave” Dingess, Will Adkins, John Adkins, Fed Adkins, Mac Adkins, Tucker Fry, and Rome Lambert.<sup>174</sup> Not all members of the gang actively punished Haley and McCoy. Will and John Adkins, for instance, remained outside the house and “held the horses.”<sup>175</sup> Said one Brumfield descendant: “It was said where their horses stood... I used to hear Dad and them talk about it. He said where their horses were tied to those fences—you know how they used to build the old log rail fences?—it was said they tore that place apart up there that night, those horses and things, all the shooting and everything going on.”<sup>176</sup>

At George Fry’s house, Haley and McCoy were once again made to play music. Milt “was told he was to be shot to death in five minutes, during which time he calmly played his fiddle,” according to a 1924 news story. “The feudist and a friend was shot to

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<sup>173</sup> Bob Adkins, interview, 24 July 1993; “Lynched!” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 28 October 1889; “An Old Feud Revived,” *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 29 October 1889.

<sup>174</sup> Bill Adkins, interview, 19 April 1992; Bob Adkins, interview, 3 March 1995; Lawrence Kirk, interview, 3 March 1995; Mae Brumfield, interview, 4 March 1995; Billy Adkins, interview, 4 March 1995; Ida Taylor, interview, 5 March 1995; Bob Dingess, telephone interview by Billy Adkins, Warren, WV, 5 March 1995; Howard Dalton, interview, July 1995; Harvey and Maude Dingess, interview, July 1995; Boyce Lucas, telephone interview, Summer 1995; Billy Adkins, interview by author, Harts, WV, July or August 1995; Garnet “Don” Morris, interview by author and John Hartford, Toney, WV, 7 August 1995; Bob Dingess, interview, 8 August 1995; Garnet Adkins, interview, 8 August 1995; Opal Brumfield, interview, 12 October 1995; Carolyn “Johnnie” Farley, interview, 24 October 1995; Verdayne Shelton, interview, 22 November 1995; Corbett Brumfield, interview, 22 November 1995; Corbett Brumfield, interview, 6 December 1995; Bob Adkins, interview, 12 February 1996; Daisy Ross, interview by author and John Hartford, Kenova, WV, 16 March 1996; Dorothy Brumfield, interview, 30 July 1996; Vilas Adams, interview, 30 July 1996; Pat Adkins, interview, 28 August 1996; Dorothy Brumfield, interview, 26 September 1996; John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996; Bob Bryant, telephone interview, 28 March 1997; James Davis, interview, 9 December 1997; Tom Farley, interview by author, Halcyon, WV, 7 September 2002; Johnny Golden Adkins, interview by author, Harts, WV, 18 June 2004.

<sup>175</sup> Bill Adkins, interview, 19 April 1992; Billy Adkins, interview, 4 March 1995. The Adkins men were present “to show support.”

<sup>176</sup> Ida Taylor, interview, 5 March 1995.

death when the five minutes expired.”<sup>177</sup> Spicie McCoy’s daughter had this to say: “They made Green McCoy play the fiddle and he didn’t want to. They made him play before he died. He didn’t want to at that time. They’s gonna kill him.”<sup>178</sup> A Dingess descendant said: “These people that killed them, they made ‘em play their last tune. One of ‘em would play and one guy I think he never would play for ‘em. That’s just before they started shootin’ ‘em. The tune that they played was ‘Hell Up the Coal Hollow’.”<sup>179</sup> Dingess descendants agreed: “McCoy played a fiddle. His last tune was ‘Hell Up Coal Hollow.’”<sup>180</sup> An Adams descendant said, “They made them both play, both fiddlers, made them play their farewell tunes and killed them right there.”<sup>181</sup> A Fry descendant recalled that one of the men played a banjo and sang, maybe so as to “go out in style.”<sup>182</sup>

It was likely at George Fry’s home the Brumfields and Dingesses learned of Haley’s and McCoy’s hiring by Deputy John W. Runyon and others. According to later newspaper accounts, Haley and McCoy while at Green Shoal “implicated other prominent parties in the Brumfield tragedy, alleging that they, McCoy and Haley, were hired to kill little Al Brumfield, his wife and Paris Brumfield, and that they received \$500, or were to when the job was completed.”<sup>183</sup> One newspaper account said that Haley and McCoy also stated “there was a band of regulators organized to remove certain

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<sup>177</sup> “Ed Haley and Wife Play for the Radio,” *Lincoln Republican* (Hamlin, WV), 28 August 1924. According to the story, “the fiddle was kept by the Brumfields for some years and later returned to the son of the murdered man.”

<sup>178</sup> Daisy Ross, interview, 16 March 1996.

<sup>179</sup> John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996; John Dingess, telephone interview, 17 December 1996.

<sup>180</sup> Harvey and Maude Dingess, interview, July 1995.

<sup>181</sup> Freeman Adams, interview, 20 March 2011.

<sup>182</sup> Garnet “Don” Morris, interview, 7 August 1995.

<sup>183</sup> “An Old Feud Revived,” *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 29 October 1889; “The Terrible Vendetta,” *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 29 October 1889; “All Up In Arms,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 29 October 1889; “That Double Lynching,” *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 2 November 1889.

parties, among whom are Paris and Allen Brumfield.”<sup>184</sup> According to one source, Bill Fowler was involved in the conspiracy, although “Haley and McCoy wouldn’t squeal on Fowler.”<sup>185</sup>

Eventually, members of the mob began to torture Haley and McCoy. “They done everything mean that could be done,” said one Farley descendant.<sup>186</sup> “They’d foul them up so they couldn’t move and shoot them in the leg or something. They’d take a big drink of liquor and shoot them again.”<sup>187</sup> They’d say, “That’s what you get for shooting that woman.”<sup>188</sup> “They punished ‘em quite a bit there,” said one Dingess descendant.<sup>189</sup> “They beat them all night,” said one old-timer.<sup>190</sup> A Brumfield descendant told that “one was crying and begging for them not to kill him because of his wife and kids.”<sup>191</sup> One of the men begged the vigilantes to let him live so he could see his children.<sup>192</sup> “They did them so bad that when they killed them they crawled under a bed. Dump [Farley] said it was so cruel he didn’t want to see anymore.”<sup>193</sup> A younger Brumfield said they should not kill the men.<sup>194</sup> At least one account says Haley’s and McCoy’s wives came to the house to request the mob to spare their lives.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> “Hired to Murder,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 31 October 1889; “That Double Lynching,” *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 2 November 1889.

<sup>185</sup> James Davis, interview, 9 December 1997.

<sup>186</sup> Carolyn “Johnnie” Farley, interview, September 1995.

<sup>187</sup> Carolyn “Johnnie” Farley, interview, 24 October 1995.

<sup>188</sup> Carolyn “Johnnie” Farley, interview, September 1995.

<sup>189</sup> John Dingess, telephone interview, 17 December 1996.

<sup>190</sup> Ward Browning, interview, 30 April 1996.

<sup>191</sup> Shelby Kirk, interview, 27 July 1993.

<sup>192</sup> Oris Vance, interview, 24 October 1995.

<sup>193</sup> Carolyn “Johnnie” Farley, interview, September 1995.

<sup>194</sup> Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 27 October 1995.

<sup>195</sup> Billy Adkins, interview, 4 March 1995; Garnet “Don” Morris, interview, 7 August 1995.

## HALEY-MCCOY MURDERS

A Brumfield-led mob brutally murdered Haley and McCoy at George Fry's home.<sup>196</sup> Eyewitness Cat Fry provided the most widely-accepted account of the killing.

Said Cat Fry's nephew:

The Brumfields and Dingesses were drinking heavy. There was a lot of drinking going on. They had whisky there. A lot of drinking going on and a bunch of them, must have been ten to fifteen people, and there was Brumfields and Dingesses all mixed up. Haley and McCoy were handcuffed in bed. They had them in there in the bed. It was late, about 10 p.m. Well, she [Cat] said the first thing she knew she was sitting in the living room, the front room, they were back in the bedroom in bed and she said somebody shot the lamp out. She had the lamp lit. It was dark. It is a wonder that it had not burned the house down isn't it? Someone shot the lamp off of the mantle above Cat Fry's head and she jumped behind a flour barrel. She run and jumped behind a flour barrel in the kitchen over in the corner til the fracas was over. Haley and McCoy were shot to death in bed and dragged out into the yard where they took axes and cut their heads open and shot them all to pieces and then got on their horses and left. Al Brumfield was one of the head fellows who did it and he was a first cousin of Dad's.<sup>197</sup>

Cat Fry's granddaughter recounted:

Now, Grandma Cat was at that house that night when those men were killed. She possibly saw it happen. It was sometime in the night time, after they had gone to bed. They killed them in, you know, started shooting them in the bed. They was handcuffed together. They said when that was going on, she ran and hid up in a chimney. Big open fireplace.<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> "Lynched!" *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 28 October 1889; "A Double Lynching," *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 28 October 1889; "An Old Feud Revived," *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 29 October 1889; "All Up In Arms," *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 29 October 1889; "Hired to Murder," *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 31 October 1889; "More Murdering," *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 31 October 1889; "That Double Lynching," *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 2 November 1889; "The Truth," *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 3 November 1889; "The West Virginia Feud," *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 9 November 1889; Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 63; Corbett Brumfield, interview, 22 November 1995. The Fred B. Lambert Collection contains an interview with a contemporary man who stated "Paris and his gang killed Milt Haley and Green McCoy."

<sup>197</sup> Bob Adkins, telephone interview, 22 July 1993; Bob Adkins, interview, 24 July 1993; Bob Adkins, interview, 3 March 1995; Bob Adkins, interview, 12 February 1996. In 1996, Bob said the gang shot Haley and McCoy in the yard, cut their throats, and left on horses.

<sup>198</sup> Ida Taylor, telephone interview, n.d.; Ida Taylor, interview, 5 March 1995.

One Dingess descendant stated that Cat Fry hid in the corner or the fireplace. “It was very cruel.”<sup>199</sup> Others recalled that Cat hid under a bed or between featherbeds at George Fry’s, while others still recall that *someone* hid under a bed.<sup>200</sup> Supposedly, Cat heard one of the men scream, “You cut my leg!”<sup>201</sup> One of the men also reportedly told his confederate to “Stand up and die like a man!”<sup>202</sup>

Most accounts of the lynching state that Haley and McCoy were shot and beaten or chopped with clubs, axes, or some similar device.<sup>203</sup> According to one Dingess descendant, “Burl Farley gave the order to shoot.”<sup>204</sup> One local remembered that John Brumfield kicked Haley or McCoy in the head and said, “I’ll put a bullet there.”<sup>205</sup> Another remembered it a bit differently: “John Brumfield shot one of them in the head and put his toe where the hole was. He said, ‘I put that hole right there.’”<sup>206</sup> According to Spicie McCoy’s daughter, “they shot them.”<sup>207</sup> She added: “When they killed them they wasn’t satisfied with that. They took a pole axe and beat their brains out. The brains splattered up on the door. That hurt Mom so bad.”<sup>208</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> Bob Dingess, telephone interview, 13 March 1995.

<sup>200</sup> Lola McCann, interview by author, Harts, WV, 4 March 1995; Garnet Adkins, interview, 8 August 1995; Boyce Lucas, telephone interview, Summer 1995; Garnet Adkins, interview, 29 February 1996; Vergia Rooney, telephone interview, 19 May 1996; Johnny Golden Adkins, interview, 2 April 2011; Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 27 October 1995; Opal Brumfield, interview, 12 October 1995.

<sup>201</sup> Boyce Lucas, telephone interview, Summer 1995.

<sup>202</sup> Lola McCann, interview by author, Harts, WV, 9 May 1996.

<sup>203</sup> Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 63; Bob Dingess, telephone interview, 24 March 1995; Bob Dingess, interview, 8 August 1995; Opal Brumfield, interview, 12 October 1995; Carolyn “Johnnie” Farley, interview, 24 October 1995; Oris Vance, interview, 24 October 1995; Basil Frye, telephone interview, 13 July 1996; Essie McCann, interview, 27 July 1996; John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996; James Davis, interview, 9 December 1997; Brady Thompson, telephone interview, 4 September 1995; Vilas Adams, interview, 30 July 1996; Dorothy Brumfield, interview, 30 July 1996. John Dingess said they “shot their brains out.”

<sup>204</sup> Bob Dingess, telephone interview, 5 March 1995.

<sup>205</sup> Charley Davis, interview, n.d.

<sup>206</sup> James Davis, interview, 9 December 1997.

<sup>207</sup> Daisy Ross, interview, 16 March 1996.

<sup>208</sup> Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 25 October 1995; Daisy Ross, interview, 16 March 1996.



According to Brumfield oral history, French Bryant hit Haley and/or McCoy in the head with an axe, perhaps delivering the fatal blow.<sup>209</sup> “French Bryant was supposed to been the man to have killed them with the axe,” said one Brumfield descendant. “Flat-ways with the axe.”<sup>210</sup> Another said: “Just before daylight, they let ‘em out the back door and someone hit ‘em over the head with a double-headed axe sideways. A little girl was there who hid in a pile of apples. She knew what they were going to do.”<sup>211</sup> Another Brumfield descendant said “they had their brains beaten out of their heads.”<sup>212</sup> A Dingess descendant stated: “they knocked their heads out with axes.”<sup>213</sup> One Adams descendant said, “They beat ‘em with axe handles.”<sup>214</sup> One local man heard they “beat their heads in with what you drive posts with.”<sup>215</sup> An Adkins descendant thought the men had been shot and hung,<sup>216</sup> while a Brumfield descendant thought the men had only been hung, stating “French Bryant had the ropes.”<sup>217</sup> French Bryant’s son stated: “They had a bunch ganged up. It didn’t take much to get them to shoot you. People killed one another just to be doin’ something’.”<sup>218</sup>

Some Fry descendants recount that Haley and McCoy were murdered while sitting at the kitchen table, execution-style.<sup>219</sup> According to this version, Haley and McCoy were tied back-to-back in chairs at the table, which featured a kerosene lamp.<sup>220</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> Ray Kirk, interview by author, Ferrellsburg, WV, 27 July 1996.

<sup>210</sup> Lawrence Kirk, interview, 27 July 1993; Lawrence Kirk, telephone interview, 28 November 1994; Lawrence Kirk, interview, 3 March 1995.

<sup>211</sup> Shelby Kirk, interview, 27 July 1993.

<sup>212</sup> Dave Brumfield, interview, 26 May 1995.

<sup>213</sup> Dorothy Brumfield, interview, 30 July 1996.

<sup>214</sup> Vilas Adams, interview, 30 July 1996.

<sup>215</sup> Jesse Sias, interview, 4 September 1999.

<sup>216</sup> Essie McCann, interview, 27 July 1996.

<sup>217</sup> Irene Adkins, interview, 12 July 1996.

<sup>218</sup> Bob Bryant, telephone interview, 28 March 1997.

<sup>219</sup> Garnet “Don” Morris, interview, 7 August 1995.

<sup>220</sup> Billy Adkins, interview, 4 March 1995; Madge Sowards, interview by author, Hamlin, WV, 12 February 1996.

Prior to their murder, Hugh Dingess shot out the lamp so as to prevent anyone from witnessing anything.<sup>221</sup> Haley and McCoy were subsequently shot or hit with stove wood.<sup>222</sup> Accordingly, “one died praying, the other died cussing.”<sup>223</sup> Bud and Vinnie Workman later owned the bullet-riddled Fry kitchen table.<sup>224</sup>

Most accounts of the murder place the location outside the Fry house,<sup>225</sup> or just at the doorway. According to a Farley descendant:

They took them outside. They didn’t want no blood nor nothing left over. Either Al [Brumfield] or Burl [Farley] took the first shot. Dump [Farley] just figured they’d be drinking. He had no idea what was really going to happen. It hurt him. He crawled under the bed to keep from watching.<sup>226</sup>

A Toney descendant had been told by a Dingess descendant that Cat Fry looked out of a window in the top story of the house and “saw their bodies in the yard.”<sup>227</sup> A Brumfield descendant said, “They put their bodies in the yard.”<sup>228</sup> An Adkins descendant said they “shot them in the yard and cut their throats.”<sup>229</sup> Another said:

The killing took place down under that riverbank. Paris was just as bloody as he could be where he had stabbed on them men. Said Paris was bloody as a hog. He just took a knife and cut ‘em to pieces.<sup>230</sup>

A grandson to George Fry said they shot Haley and McCoy outside.<sup>231</sup> The Brumfields issued a warning that no one bother the bodies. They were to be left in the yard to rot.<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>221</sup> Madge Sowards, interview, 12 February 1996.

<sup>222</sup> Billy Adkins, interview, 4 March 1995.

<sup>223</sup> Garnet “Don” Morris, interview, 7 August 1995.

<sup>224</sup> Billy Adkins, interview, 4 March 1995. Their daughter, Garnet “Don” Morris, recalled the bullet holes.

<sup>225</sup> Garnet Adkins, interview, 8 August 1995; Basil Frye, telephone interview, 13 July 1996; Johnny Golden Adkins, interview, 2 April 2011.

<sup>226</sup> Carolyn “Johnnie” Farley, interview, 24 October 1995.

<sup>227</sup> Oris Vance, interview, 24 October 1995.

<sup>228</sup> Corbett Brumfield, interview, 22 November 1995.

<sup>229</sup> Bob Adkins, interview, 12 February 1996.

<sup>230</sup> Pat Adkins, interview by author, Harts, WV, 28 August 1996.

<sup>231</sup> Basil Frye, telephone interview, 13 July 1996.

<sup>232</sup> Wayne Brumfield, interview by author, Ferrellsburg, WV, 12 October 1995; Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 27 October 1995.

The horrible affair terrified the Fry family beyond measure. “Mrs. Fry that lived in that house, she’s afraid they’s gonna kill her,” said Spicie McCoy’s daughter.<sup>233</sup>

## AFTERMATH

Following the Haley-McCoy murders, the Brumfield-Dingess gang rode to the homes of John W. Runyon and Cain Adkins for retribution. According to a later news story: “The lynching party immediately started for Runyon’s house, but the latter had warning and fled. The house of Conrad [sic] Adkins, McCoy’s father-in-law, was next visited, but Adkins was absent. Adkins, Runyon and four or five of their friends escaped to Huntington.”<sup>234</sup> According to Cain’s granddaughter: “Grandpa Cain and Winchester had to get out ‘cause they were going to kill ‘em and they left the women folks to manage to get out.”<sup>235</sup>

That night, Al Brumfield visited the home of his uncle Jake Adkins, who lived at Douglas Branch about a mile below the Fry residence.<sup>236</sup> According to Jake’s grandson:

Now Al, evidently somebody else took his horse or something because he didn’t want to keep it. He came down to Grandfather’s house, which was his uncle by marriage, and he told Grandpaw what they had done. Well, Grandpaw told him to go on upstairs and go to bed. No, he did not want to do that because he was afraid those McCoy and Haley people might come in on him, friends or something. He slept up in the hollow under a beech tree. It was the summertime, you know. The next morning, he got out and he ate his breakfast with Grandpaw and then he went on to Harts.<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> Daisy Ross, interview, 16 March 1996.

<sup>234</sup> “West Virginia’s Feud,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 16 November 1889.

<sup>235</sup> Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 25 October 1995; Daisy Ross, interview, 11 December 1995. Daisy said (25 October 1995) the Brumfields told her family they were going to “kill everything from the housecat up.”

<sup>236</sup> Bob Adkins, interview, 12 February 1996.

<sup>237</sup> Bob Adkins, telephone interview, 22 July 1993; Bob Adkins, interview, 24 July 1993; Bob Adkins, interview, 3 March 1995; Bob Adkins, interview, n.d.

During the trouble, while Al was away in Kentucky and riding in the gang, he had ensured that people watched his home.<sup>238</sup>

Til Dial, the daughter of Cat Fry and foster daughter of Bird and Sarah (Lucas) Brumfield of Green Shoal, saw Haley and McCoy's bodies the following morning while on her way to school.<sup>239</sup> According to Til's daughter:

My mother told me about it. At that time, she was going to school around here at what they call the Toney Addition. That's where the school house stood then when she was going to school there and she said she thought that when she went out that morning you know walking out in the snow, they was laying out in the yard. She said still handcuffed together and said they looked like colored people. They were beat up, I guess, and shot you know, and blood altogether, that's what she said. They were laying there in the yard. And I remember tales they'd left a little stream of blood run down through the yard.<sup>240</sup>

Another daughter said Til told her of seeing one laying "across the doorstep going into the house."<sup>241</sup> The chickens, Til saw, were pecking the brains of Haley and McCoy.<sup>242</sup> Because the Brumfields had issued a warning to locals not to touch the bodies, locals stood around the Fry homestead for most of the day, unsure of what to do.<sup>243</sup>

Ben Walker, a church man ordained to preach the following year (1890), along with Melvin Kirk buried Haley and McCoy near the Adkins farm on West Fork.<sup>244</sup>

Walker, a neighbor to Cain Adkins, was married to Al Brumfield's maternal first cousin,

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<sup>238</sup> Bob Adkins, interview, 12 February 1996.

<sup>239</sup> Ida Taylor, telephone interview, n.d.; Ida Taylor, interview, 5 March 1995; Vergia Rooney, telephone interview, 19 May 1996.

<sup>240</sup> Ida Taylor, interview, 5 March 1995.

<sup>241</sup> Vergia Rooney, telephone interview, 19 May 1996.

<sup>242</sup> Opal Brumfield, interview, 12 October 1995; Oris Vance, interview, 24 October 1995; Dorothy Brumfield, interview, 30 July 1996.

<sup>243</sup> Wayne Brumfield, interview, 12 October 1995; Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 27 October 1995; Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 8 December 1995; Doran Lambert, interview by author, Harts, WV, 25 March 1996; James Davis, interview, 9 December 1997.

<sup>244</sup> Lawrence Kirk, interview, 27 July 1993; Lawrence Kirk, telephone interview, 28 November 1994; Lawrence Kirk, interview, 5 March 1995; Billy Joe Fleming, interview, May 1995; Garnet Adkins, interview, 8 August 1995; Boyce Lucas, telephone interview, Summer 1995; James Davis, interview, 9 December 1997; Billy Joe Fleming, telephone interview, 15 May 1998; Johnny Golden Adkins, interview, 2 April 2011.

while Melvin Kirk's step-father was a maternal uncle to Spicie (Adkins) McCoy.<sup>245</sup> Due to the Brumfield warning, locals were afraid to touch the bodies, much less provide land for the burial.<sup>246</sup> Ben Walker said, "Why, you can bury 'em on my property. I'm not afraid of the Brumfields. They won't bother me."<sup>247</sup> Melvin Kirk, who passed by Walker's farm, was asked to assist. At Green Shoal, Walker and Kirk "wrapped" Haley and McCoy and made a rough burial preparation, bringing the bodies to the Adkins farm on West Fork via Low Gap using a wagon or sled.<sup>248</sup> An old justice of the peace oversaw the matter. Delph Workman, a little girl, thereafter watched an old white-headed man shovel blood over the hill.<sup>249</sup> A rough coffin was made for Haley and McCoy, and they were buried in a single grave.<sup>250</sup> Ben Walker chose the spot on his property, which was just across West Fork from Cain Adkins' farm.<sup>251</sup> Spicie McCoy, the pregnant widow of Green, never saw their bodies.<sup>252</sup> The ropes which had been used to bind or hang Haley

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<sup>245</sup> U.S. Census for Logan County, VA, 1870; U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1880.

<sup>246</sup> James Davis, interview, 9 December 1997.

<sup>247</sup> Billy Joe Fleming, telephone interview, 15 May 1998. James Davis, in an interview on 9 December 1997, said that Walker "was not afraid."

<sup>248</sup> Melvin Kirk is my great-great-grandfather. Shelby Kirk, interview, 27 July 1993; Lawrence Kirk, telephone interview, 28 November 1994; Lawrence Kirk, telephone interview, 21 February 1995; Lawrence Kirk, interview, 5 March 1995; Boyce Lucas, telephone interview, Summer 1995; Lawrence Kirk, interview, n.d.; Daisy Ross, interview, 16 March 1996; John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996; Johnny Golden Adkins, interview, 2 April 2011.

<sup>249</sup> Billy Joe Fleming, telephone interview, 15 May 1998.

<sup>250</sup> "Ed Haley and Wife Play for the Radio," *Lincoln Republican* (Hamlin, WV), 28 August 1924; Bob Adkins, telephone interview, 22 July 1993; Lawrence Kirk, interview, 27 July 1993; Lawrence Kirk, telephone interview, 28 November 1994; Garnet Adkins, interview, 8 August 1995; Corbett Brumfield, interview, 6 December 1995; John Dingess, telephone interview, 17 December 1996; Billy Joe Fleming, telephone interview, 15 May 1998. According to the *Republican*, "both their bodies were buried in a wooden box."

<sup>251</sup> Lawrence Kirk, interview, 27 July 1993; Lawrence Kirk, telephone interview, 21 February 1995. The Haley-McCoy grave is located across a drain and uphill from the burial location of Nancy and Flora Adkins.

<sup>252</sup> Daisy Ross, interview, 16 March 1996.

and McCoy later appeared at the home of Salena Vance, wife of Justice of the Peace Elias Vance.<sup>253</sup>

## CONCLUSION

In the 1880s, the Lincoln County Feud transformed from a personal vendetta between Paris Brumfield and Cain Adkins into a war between local elites over matters of business and politics. By 1889, the feud contained a Brumfield-Dingess faction and a Runyon-Adams-Adkins-Mullins-Hall faction. In that year, John W. Runyon or Ben Adams (or both) hired Milt Haley and Green McCoy to kill Al Brumfield. The ambush of Brumfield by Haley and McCoy, within the context of a culture of honor, required a personal response from Brumfield. The Brumfields chose to retaliate by operating outside of the proper legal channels, partly because the culture of honor required it and partly because their antagonists controlled key legal agents (Sheriff James D. Porter, Deputy John W. Runyon, Justice Elias Vance, Justice Anderson Blair). First, the Brumfields used extralegal means to apprehend Haley and McCoy in Kentucky. Second, they placed McCoy on “trial” at Hugh Dingess’ residence. Third, they executed Haley and McCoy at George Fry’s home. Fourth, they made raids on the homes of Adkins and Runyon. Local residents Ben Walker and Melvin Kirk ignored Brumfield warnings to let Haley’s and McCoy’s corpses rot in the Fry yard and buried them. Newspapers throughout the United States provided extensive coverage of the feud’s most sensational event: the Haley-McCoy lynching.

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<sup>253</sup> Garnet “Don” Morris, interview by author, Toney, WV, November 1995. Essie McCann (27 July 1996) remembered Mart Morris, son-in-law to Salena Vance, having the ropes. Mae Brumfield (29 March 1996) recalled that Mart Morris, who married a daughter of Salena Vance, had the ropes in his barn shortly before he died in 1958.

## CHAPTER EIGHT: NATIONAL SPOTLIGHT: “A WAR OF EXTERMINATION”<sup>1</sup>

Between October 1889 and January 1890, the Lincoln County Feud raged unchecked in the Harts Creek community, overwhelming the ability of law officials to restore order or investigate and prosecute guilty parties. The prevailing culture of honor, which dictated that insults must be answered by violence, locked feudists in a deadly tit-for-tat, each group engaging in reciprocal acts. While the community did not approve of or condone the feud, most residents acquiesced out of fear or acceptance of the rule of retaliation.

### NEWSPAPERS

The Haley-McCoy lynching, as well as subsequent acts of violence committed by feudists, commanded headlines throughout the United States. Initially, journalists featured detailed and often conflicting accounts of the Haley-McCoy murders, unquestionably the most sensational event of the feud. They also wrote of subsequent feud acts—ambushes, procurement of weapons, house attacks, encounter battles—and complained about the failure of law enforcement to quell the matter. During the early weeks of November 1889, newspapers offered opposing views regarding the feud’s intensity. Simultaneously, some writers vilified Harts Creek residents, while others defended them. The drowning of Will Adkins in November 1889 and Tom Ferrell’s murder of Albert Butcher in December 1889—two tragic local incidents unrelated to the

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<sup>1</sup> “Arming for Battle,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 1 November 1889.

feud—contributed to the community’s uneasiness and fueled additional (garbled) newspaper coverage of the feud.

## HALEY-MCCOY MURDERS

Due to the sensational nature of the Haley-McCoy murders, newspapers all over the United States reported upon the event. Reporters estimated that the Brumfield mob contained from twelve to sixty men who shot Milt Haley and Green McCoy—either as a means of execution or after they were beaten and hung. On 29 October 1889, the *Louisville Courier-Journal* stated how “a mob of forty men took the prisoners and hung them to a tree, after riddling their bodies with bullets.”<sup>2</sup> That same day, the *Huntington Advertiser* said: “Green McCoy and Milt Haley were riddled with bullets on the night in question by an organized force numbering sixty determined men.”<sup>3</sup> In a separate story, the *Ceredo Advance* offered specific details regarding their deaths: “The prisoners were taken out into the yard, tied up and shot dead, there being no less than eight balls fired into each body.”<sup>4</sup> The *Wheeling Intelligencer*, also reporting on October 29, said: “At ten o’clock the armed force as stated above appeared on the scene, and it only took a few minutes to do their work.”<sup>5</sup> The *Wheeling Register* stated: “Their throats were cut and their bodies riddled with bullets.”<sup>6</sup> Two days later, the *Wheeling Register* described it as “one of the most brutal affairs ever known,” adding: “The prisoners were clubbed almost

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<sup>2</sup> “Lynched!” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 28 October 1889.

<sup>3</sup> “An Old Feud Revived,” *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 29 October 1889. The *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal* printed an identical story titled “All Up In Arms” on 29 October 1889.

<sup>4</sup> “Prisoners Murdered,” *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 29 October 1889; “Shot in Cold Blood,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 30 October 1889.

<sup>5</sup> “The Terrible Vendetta,” *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 29 October 1889.

<sup>6</sup> “Quick Justice Done,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 29 October 1889.



to death. Their heads were frightfully mashed by the mob. Then they were shot and afterwards hanged.”<sup>7</sup>

On 31 October 1889, the *Logan County Banner* provided a local and detailed account of the Haley-McCoy murders.

About 8 o’clock a number of persons supposed to be about twenty, came to Fry’s house and demanded the prisoners. Mr. Fry and family were told to go into the kitchen and the guard to leave the house. The mob then entered the house and began shooting. The prisoners were dragged out of the house and shot down in the yard in front of the door. Not being satisfied with putting several balls through each of the men the mob took rocks and mashed their heads all to pieces. After finishing their murderous work the crowd dispersed, leaving the neighbors to look after the dead bodies.<sup>8</sup>

Newspapers agreed that Haley and McCoy had been shot, although they disagreed on the sequence of events. Reporting on 31 October 1889, the *Daily State Journal* of Parkersburg, West Virginia, stated: “The following is the delicate method taken by the lynchers of Green McCoy and Milt. Haley, in Lincoln county a few nights ago, to prevail upon them to transfer their existence to another world: 1<sup>st</sup>. Their bodies were clubbed. 2d. Their heads were mashed. 3d. They were shot. 4<sup>th</sup>. They were hanged. This ‘persuasion’ had the desired effect.”<sup>9</sup> A few days later, the *Daily State Journal* added: “When the prisoners told the story the twelve men clubbed them until they were insensible. Then they beat their heads almost to a jelly and strung them to a tree. While hanging, their bodies were riddled with bullets.”<sup>10</sup> On November 16, the *Louisville Courier-Journal* offered a few final grisly tidbits: “That evening a mob entered the house, clubbed the prisoners to death and hung their bodies to a tree in the yard.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> “Hired to Murder,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 31 October 1889.

<sup>8</sup> “More Murdering,” *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 31 October 1889.

<sup>9</sup> *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 31 October 1889.

<sup>10</sup> “That Double Lynching,” *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 2 November 1889.

<sup>11</sup> “West Virginia’s Feud,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 16 November 1889.

Misinformation and gossip made its way to journalists, who became confused by inconsistency in the stories. On 29 October 1889, the *Huntington Advertiser* reported:

The guards (?) claim that a mob took the prisoners from them and did the shooting, but two women who occupied the house where they stopped, testify that they saw no mob nor any one save the prisoners and the men who came with them as guards. There are several versions to the story, one of which is to the effect that Brumfield and party followed the prisoners and guards through the country for many miles, the latter trying to evade their pursuers. They were finally overtaken at Fry's house, where the guards had the prisoners bound hand and foot. Those in the house were awakened by a stone which was thrown through the window sometime in the night. The guards became frightened, got out of the house and ran away, leaving the prisoners behind. The house was then entered by the Brumfield party, and the prisoners taken out and shot.<sup>12</sup>

One account even placed the sheriff with the Brumfield party: "During the night when the sheriff was asleep, the rest of the party took the prisoners to the woods..."<sup>13</sup>

Newspapers understood the Brumfields had been involved in the Haley-McCoy lynching, but could not ascertain the specific names of participants. On October 29, the *Wheeling Intelligencer* stated: "Who the sixty were or who led them is only speculation here now, though it is not known that there were any attempts at concealment. Those coming from the region are reticent and no one who knows will tell what he knows except in the most confidential way."<sup>14</sup> That same day, the *Wheeling Register* said: "The Brumfields and their relatives constitute the greater part of the population on Hart creek, and it is known that a number of them were in the lynching party. The officers who had the men in charge made no resistance to the attack of the lynchers, and they were not injured."<sup>15</sup> On November 3, the *Wheeling Register* offered this: "The two prisoners were

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<sup>12</sup> "Prisoners Murdered," *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 29 October 1889.

<sup>13</sup> "That Double Lynching," *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 2 November 1889.

<sup>14</sup> "The Terrible Vendetta," *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 29 October 1889. While this reticence stemmed from an unwillingness to become involved in the trouble, it also may be attributed to the community's belief in the rule of retaliation—that Haley and McCoy had received "justice" from the victims of their assault.

<sup>15</sup> "Quick Justice Done," *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 29 October 1889.

taken right in among the Brumfields, and it was evidently intended from the first that they should be killed. When they were taken to Fry's house there were a number of the Brumfields about, but they all went away, as evening approached. During the night they came back, and the prisoners were shot to death."<sup>16</sup>

## COMMUNITY MOOD

Newspapers described the community's mood after the Haley-McCoy killings. On 29 October 1889, the *Wheeling Intelligencer* stated:

Lincoln county, or that part of it around the county seat, is now in a ferment of excitement concerning the fearful tragedies enacted within the borders of the county. The report further says that the result of these disclosures [that others were involved in the Brumfield assassination attempt] has brought about open hostilities and the entire district is arrayed, either on one side or the other, and that these are congregated well-armed, and the aspect is most threatening. What the result will be no man can tell, as both sides are known to be composed of desperate and determined men. That so much has been done as has is greatly deplored by the order loving people of the county. That it is only commenced and that other lives will be sacrificed is greatly feared.<sup>17</sup>

That same day, the *Wheeling Register* stated: "The lynching of Haley and McCoy does not end the war, and it is probable that more blood will be shed at an early day."<sup>18</sup>

On 31 October 1889, the *Wheeling Register* declared: "Officers are after members of the mob, and it is feared the trouble will end in another Hatfield-McCoy feud. Much excitement prevails in the neighborhood where the trouble occurred."<sup>19</sup> The *Wheeling Intelligencer*, also reporting on October 31, stated: "A letter received, dated at Hamlin,

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<sup>16</sup> "The Truth," *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 3 November 1889.

<sup>17</sup> "The Terrible Vendetta," *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 29 October 1889. Part of this story was also featured in a *Huntington Advertiser* story titled "An Old Feud Revived" and a *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal* story titled "All Up In Arms," both printed on 29 October 1889.

<sup>18</sup> "Quick Justice Done," *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 29 October 1889.

<sup>19</sup> "Hired to Murder," *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 31 October 1889.

Lincoln county, today, speaking of the Brumfield-McCoy-Haley affair, says: ‘No news of any further hostilities has been received, though it is known that each side has a large armed force, and a fight may occur at any time.’<sup>20</sup>

On 1 November 1889, the *Huntington Advertiser* provided a reliable account based on the statement of Logan County Deputy James Bilton Buskirk.

Deputy Sheriff J.B. Buskirk, of Logan county, who was in the city this morning, said that the feud between the Brumfields and McCoys was by no means ended with the killing of Green McCoy. He says there are about forty people organized in each of the two factions, and that each side is gathering up Winchester rifles wherever they can get them. They have been to Logan Court House and have secured all the arms that is possible to obtain there, and every man has been heavily armed. A great many of the people of Logan county have united with their friends in Lincoln, and are ready to enter the bloody contest. A regular vendetta of a more bloody nature than that of the Hatfields and McCoys, may be expected to break out at any time.<sup>21</sup>

That same day, the *Louisville Courier-Journal* reported: “So far as is known here matters are still quiet in Lincoln county, but evidences of coming trouble multiply. There are many sensational rumors, but nothing definite.”<sup>22</sup>

According to at least one newspaper, feudists participated in a battle. On November 1, the *Louisville Courier-Journal* reported:

The Lincoln county war has claimed another woman victim. Mrs. James Brown, the wife of one of the adherents of the Brumfield party, was shot from ambush, while carrying ammunition and arms from a house to a party of men some distance off. The woman was shot through and through. Her assailants were able to escape through the underbrush on the mountain side. At the last information the Brumfields were pursuing them.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> “The Lincoln County Feud,” *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 31 October 1889.

<sup>21</sup> “The Lincoln Feud,” *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 1 November 1889.

<sup>22</sup> “John Brumfield Starts for the Scene of Battle,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 1 November 1889.

<sup>23</sup> “Another Victim Falls,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 1 November 1889.

The *Wheeling Register* later corrected this story: “Mrs. James Brown was accidentally shot by a duck hunter. She has had nothing whatever to do with the so-called feud.”<sup>24</sup>

Tensions remained high throughout the early part of November 1889. On 1 November 1889, the *Wheeling Register* stated: “It is understood that the war is on, and the parties concerned proposed to see it through. Allen Brumfield and his crowd are no triflers, and the friends of Haley and McCoy are equally in earnest. There have been no further hostilities, but trouble is expected, and a war of extermination may be the result.”<sup>25</sup>

Because some journalists unfairly vilified feudists, labeling them as poor, uneducated, and uncivilized, the *Wheeling Register* offered a defense of Harts Creek residents.

A few words about the people of Lincoln county will not be amiss. They are not the savages represented in the papers. On the contrary, the very men involved in this Brumfield-Adams feud are among the largest taxpayers and most extensive farmers in the county. They are men of intelligence, tall, broad-shouldered and good-natured, hospitable beyond all comparison, and are generally law-abiding. Their only failing, if it may be put thus mildly, is complicity in the unfortunate feud between the families who have been mentioned.<sup>26</sup>

Rather than blame the people, the *Wheeling Register* attributed much of the trouble to whisky. “Whisky is largely responsible for the continuation of this trouble, and will be in great measure blamable for any further loss of life,” it stated.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> “Mulhattan Outdone,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 2 November 1889.

<sup>25</sup> “Arming for Battle,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 1 November 1889.

<sup>26</sup> “The Truth,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 3 November 1889. What the *Wheeling Register* viewed as complicity, insiders might understand as fear or acceptance of the rule of retaliation.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

## GUNS

Following the Haley-McCoy murders, feudists procured additional weapons for defense and for assault. On October 30, the *Louisville Courier-Journal* stated “that both factions in the feud are arming. Large orders for rifles have been received at Hamlin and Huntington within twenty-four hours. A fight is considered inevitable.”<sup>28</sup> On November 1, the *Huntington Advertiser* reported how “about forty people organized in each of the two factions” are “gathering up Winchester rifles wherever they can get them. They have been to Logan Court House and have secured all the arms that is possible to obtain there, and every man has been heavily armed.”<sup>29</sup> John Brumfield, for his part, visited gun shops in Huntington. While in one of the shops, he inadvertently shot himself; he “received a slight flesh wound while examining a revolver.”<sup>30</sup> Undeterred, he purchased a number of revolvers and Winchester repeating rifles,<sup>31</sup> “which he took to Lincoln county to be brought into requisition in the event they are needed by the Brumfield faction in the Brumfield-McCoy feud.”<sup>32</sup> The *Daily State Journal* stated that “two of these men bought quite a quantity of ammunition this week at Huntington, but it was for proper purposes.”<sup>33</sup> Ben Adams ordered eight 1873 Model .32 Winchesters and eight 1873 Model .38 Winchesters.<sup>34</sup>

The *Wheeling Register*, reporting on 3 November 1889, accused newspapers of sensationalizing the extent of gun purchases by feudists. “There has been a good deal of

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<sup>28</sup> “Arming For the Fray,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 30 October 1889.

<sup>29</sup> “The Lincoln Feud,” *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 1 November 1889.

<sup>30</sup> “Mulhattan Outdone,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 2 November 1889.

<sup>31</sup> “Arming For Battle,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 1 November 1889; “John Brumfield Starts for the Scene of Battle,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 1 November 1889.

<sup>32</sup> “Reporter’s Notebook,” *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 30 October 1889.

<sup>33</sup> “That Double Lynching,” *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 2 November 1889.

<sup>34</sup> Naaman Adams, interview by author, Spottswood, WV, 13 July 1996; Freeman Adams, interview, 20 March 2011.

buying of arms and ammunition by both sides,” it stated. “True a good many rifles have been bought, principally at Logan Court House, and ammunition has been sent for from Huntington, but in neither case has there been even an approximation to the quantities mentioned in the papers. There is not loose money enough in the neighborhood to make the first payment on ‘ten wagon loads of Winchesters and revolvers,’ and if there was that amount of cash, the arms would be useless for there are not men enough to carry them.”<sup>35</sup>

### BRUMFIELD-DINGESS RAIDS

Throughout late October and early November 1889, the Brumfields controlled the feud region, constituting the Big Harts Creek and Guyandotte River section of the community.<sup>36</sup> “The prompt action of the Brumfield faction and the overwhelming numbers of their sympathizers have completely awed the Hall-Haley gang, and most of them have fled, or are in hiding,” reported the *Louisville Courier-Journal* on 4 November 1889. The anti-Brumfield faction, for the most part, had fled the community. “John Runyon, whom McCoy and Haley declared had lured them to shoot Al Brumfield and his wife fled to this place [St. Albans], and is guarded by his friends,” the *Louisville Courier-Journal* continued. “With him are James Vance, Floyd Nester and Cain Adkins. The Brumfields have set a price on the head of each man.”<sup>37</sup> In a separate story, the *Louisville Courier-Journal* stated: “McCoy-Haley factions have fled, or are in hiding. A price has been set on their heads.”<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> “The Truth,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 3 November 1889.

<sup>36</sup> “Victorious Brumfields,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 4 November 1889.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

On November 2, the Brumfields and their allies re-visited the residences of John W. Runyon and Cain Adkins and destroyed much property, tearing down or burning homes.<sup>39</sup> According to the *Louisville Courier-Journal* on 4 November 1889:

Runyon's and Adkins' houses were both visited Saturday by armed parties. The women were turned out and the buildings burned with their contents. Numerous other like outrages have been committed. Three more of the McCoy faction in the Lincoln county war arrived here [Huntington] today [Nov. 3]. They say they were forced to leave the county to save their lives. The Brumfields have complete control of the whole section.<sup>40</sup>

Adkins, yet in exile in Wayne County, was reported to be "alive and well" by the *Wheeling Register*.<sup>41</sup> As late as November 9, it was said of Louisa Mullins that she "is now with Runyon [and] is one of the leaders of his party."<sup>42</sup>

The Brumfield-Dingess faction raided and pillaged, engaging in battle with any of their remaining enemies. One horribly inaccurate story appeared in the *New York Times* on November 3 titled "West Virginia's Outlaws."<sup>43</sup> In the *New York Times* story, which likely originated from a fakir in Milton, West Virginia, the Lincoln feud was confused with the Hatfield-McCoy Feud, with the feudists names even being misspelled. Later in the month, on November 16, the *Louisville Courier-Journal* reported a more likely event: "On one of these raids, Mrs. Martha Burns was seriously shot by unknown parties while carrying food to the Brumfields. The Brumfield party was also fired on and John Brumfield wounded. The assailants escaped into the bushes."<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> "Victorious Brumfields," *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 4 November 1889.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> "The Truth," *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 3 November 1889.

<sup>42</sup> *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 9 November 1889.

<sup>43</sup> "West Virginia's Outlaws," *New York Times*, 3 November 1889. In a story titled "Another Battle," the *Daily State Journal* of Parkersburg, WV, told of similar erroneous events on November 4.

<sup>44</sup> "West Virginia's Feud," *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 16 November 1889.



Perhaps it was during this time that members of the Dingess clan attacked the home of Ben Adams. According to Dingess and Brumfield descendants, Charley and Hugh Dingess and others hoped to flush Ben out of his cabin and kill him. In order to drive him outside, they put cornstalks dowsed in kerosene on his porch and set them afire. Unbeknownst to the Dingesses, Ben was “laid out in the woods.”<sup>45</sup> His wife, Victoria, came out onto the porch and tried to extinguish the growing fire. She said Ben had gone away and begged the Dingess men—her cousins—to extinguish the flames before they killed her children. She promised to leave in the morning, if spared.<sup>46</sup>

## LAW ENFORCEMENT

Newspapers lamented the lack of action by law enforcement officials in Lincoln County. According to the *Wheeling Intelligencer*: “No attempt is being made at the county seat to quell the trouble, as indeed nothing, it seems, could be done if the reports are true.”<sup>47</sup> The *Logan County Banner* said: “No effort has been made to arrest any who were engaged in the outrage, yet it is pretty generally understood who were the leaders of the gang.”<sup>48</sup> The *Anaconda Standard* of Anaconda, Montana, lamented: “Both factions are composed of men who are notorious law-breakers, and whose chief occupation is the manufacture of moonshine whisky and fighting. The authorities of West Virginia have shown their utter inability to put a stop to the feud, and if the dispatches should chronicle the fact that both parties had been cleaned out entirely on the battlefield there will be a

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<sup>45</sup> John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996; Mae Brumfield, interview, n.d.

<sup>46</sup> Irene Adkins, 12 July 1996.

<sup>47</sup> “The Terrible Vendetta,” *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 29 October 1889.

<sup>48</sup> “More Murdering,” *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 31 October 1889.

few who would read the news with regret.”<sup>49</sup> In early November 1889, newspapers continued to berate the Lincoln County legal system. “There seems to be no effort on the part of Lincoln county officials to put a stop to the outrages, at least we hear of none,” groused the *Wheeling Register* on November 1.<sup>50</sup> The *Sentinel* of Parkersburg, West Virginia, encouraged:

If the news from Lincoln county be true there is opportunity for the vigorous exercise of the strong arm of the law. It is reported that the feud, which resulted in taking two men from jail and riddling them with bullets, a few days ago, has grown until each gang is now armed and in battle array, anxious that hostilities may begin. It is also reported that the county is largely divided on the issue between the sides, are arrayed for blood and are ready at any time to begin the awful slaughter.<sup>51</sup>

The reality was that at this heightened state of the feud, Lincoln County law officials were overwhelmed and could not restore order. On November 1, the *Huntington Advertiser* reported: “The officers of the law have taken every precaution to maintain order, but the force is so strong that the civil authority is defied. Mr. Buskirk is of the opinion that the Governor of the state will be appealed to for aid in the maintenance of order, and the state militia will doubtless be brought into requisition.”<sup>52</sup> Two days later, the *Wheeling Register* offered more clues regarding the weak position of authorities:

In explanation of the apparent reluctance of the authorities to do anything to suppress the lawlessness, it may be stated that most of the local officers in the section where the Brumfields live are related, in some way or other, or are in sympathy with, one or other of the factions, and are not disposed to act. Posses have been got together, but have failed to perform what was expected of them, and there is no apparent solution of the trouble except by the parties concerned themselves. It is quite likely that this solution will be found, as that there will be a continuance of the trouble, and further bloodshed.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> “Let ‘Em Go It,” *Anaconda (MT) Standard*, 31 October 1889.

<sup>50</sup> “Arming for Battle,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 1 November 1889.

<sup>51</sup> *Sentinel* (Parkersburg, WV), 2 November 1889.

<sup>52</sup> “The Lincoln Feud,” *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 1 November 1889.

<sup>53</sup> “The Truth,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 3 November 1889.

The *Louisville Courier-Journal* offered hope for a restoration of order. “The Lincoln county authorities will try to recruit a force to capture the leaders on both sides,” it stated on November 4. “Ten men have been enlisted. It is generally felt, however, that the work is so dangerous that no posse will venture into the region, and the feud will be allowed to run its course.”<sup>54</sup>

#### JAMES V. HENDERSON VISITS THE FEUD REGION

James V. Henderson, editor of the *Charleston Nonpareil*, visited the Harts Creek community during this tumultuous time. On November 7, the *Huntington Advertiser* offered details of Mr. Henderson’s trip:

Mr. J.V. Henderson, editor of the *Charleston Nonpareil*, was in the city to-day, having just returned from the scene of the recent trouble in Lincoln county. He went to get a full description of the place and the causes which led to the trouble for the metropolitan dailies. Mr. Henderson went to the house where Green McCoy and Milt Haley were murdered, and made a map of the house and its surroundings. He also made a map of the Heart’s Creek country, giving the location of the headquarters of each faction—the Brumfields and the Runyons. While going up Heart’s Creek he was met by two men acting as pickets, armed with Winchester rifles, who asked him where he was going and what was his business. Mr. Henderson told them that he was a newspaper man and wanted to get information regarding the trouble in that vicinity. He was informed that “they didn’t want no facts published, they didn’t want nothing published, and they would give him an hour in which to get his carcass out of Heart’s Creek district.” He replied that he only wanted five minutes, and put spurs to his horse, his short hair standing on end as he went. Mr. Henderson took the hint and left at once. He says he learns that both factions are heavily armed and are expecting an attack at any time. Each side has its pickets out ready to give the alarm in the event of the hostile movements by the other side. The road up Heart’s Creek is blockaded, and travelers through that region avoid the place.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> “Victorious Brumfields,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 4 November 1889.

<sup>55</sup> “The Seat of War,” *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 7 November 1889. A nearly identical story appeared in the *Braxton Democrat* (Sutton, WV) titled “Latest from Lincoln County” on 15 November 1889.

Shortly thereafter, a “Charleston gentleman”—perhaps James V. Henderson—provided information to the *Daily State Journal*.

The Charleston gentleman says he passed through the Harts Creek district and found both factions armed to the teeth. The ridges on either side of Harts creek are patrolled by pickets of the opposing factions for several miles. There are about forty men on either side stationed three-quarters of a mile apart armed with Winchesters. Every movement of either side is watched by the others, and every passer-by halted and questioned in regard to his business. No injury is intended by either side to anyone but the opposing factions, but death is the desired end in this direction. Both factions are opposed to their deeds being sent to the outside world. Spies and reporters would be summarily dealt with. An outbreak is expected anytime, and so when it comes it will be a bloody affair. Many families of both factions live side by side, and if the outbreak does occur, death and carnage will be rampant. Each side has many friends who may be drawn into the feud.<sup>56</sup>

#### NO FEUD?

Other newspapers insisted the state of the feud had been exaggerated, in essence asserting that no trouble existed in the community. According to the *Wheeling Intelligencer* of November 2: “The dispatches reported to come from Milton in regard to the troubles in Harts Creek district, Lincoln county, are untrue. There has been no further trouble in Lincoln since Thursday night of last week, the time of the killing of McCoy and Haley. Intelligence from there today states that the excitement is abating, and that there is no need of troops, as reported.”<sup>57</sup> The *Wheeling Register* stated:

It is one of the misfortunes of West Virginia that sensational newspapers outside of the State persistently distort and exaggerate every lawless act committed within its borders. No falsehood is too glaring for them to publish. The late difficulties in Lincoln county have furnished a rich opportunity in scribbling falsifiers who manufacture these stories. The wildest exaggerations have been built up on the slightest tissue of fact. The Register has positive information that there has been no deed of lawlessness in Lincoln county since McCoy and Haley were killed, eight days ago. The party of fifteen desperate men who are represented in the special as guarding ten wagon loads of arms to be distributed among the Brumfields exists only in the versatile liar’s imagination. One of the Brumfields

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<sup>56</sup> “The West Virginia Feud,” *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 9 November 1889.

<sup>57</sup> “The Hatfield-M’Coys,” *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 2 November 1889.

purchased a few revolvers and rifles in Huntington, and the Register published full information of that fact yesterday morning.<sup>58</sup>

On 2 November 1889, the *Daily State Journal* opined that the fakir issuing false reports of a feud to metropolitan dailies deserved a special place in hell. “The man connected with the Lincoln county outrages and sensations who comes nearer to deserving lynching than any other individual in the whole crowd is the unconscionable liar who is sending out the story to the big city newspapers,” it seethed. “The place that the Hatfields and McCoys will occupy in the future world will be Beulah Land itself compared with the pit in which that reprobate will wallow and writhe.”<sup>59</sup> That same day, in a separate story, the *Daily State Journal* reported: “That there will be any uprising of the people, or that they are divided into factions and ready to fight is generally denied.”<sup>60</sup>

The *Wheeling Register*, on 3 November 1889, offered considerable and persuasive commentary on the notion that no trouble had recently occurred in the Harts Creek community.

There are many rumors, some of them of a very sensational character, afloat regarding the situation in Lincoln county, but the best information obtainable here is that the telegrams sent out under date of Milton, during the past two days, are very far from showing the real situation, the bloody battles recounted existing only in the imagination of irresponsible scribblers, who have no possible means of obtaining the details they work up into late telegrams for newspapers in the large cities. Milton is at least forty miles from the scene of the trouble in Lincoln county. The roads leading thither run through one of the roughest sections of country in West Virginia. It would take two days to make the trip on horseback. No one at the scene of the trouble would have interest enough in any newspaper or correspondent to take the news over to the railroad. And even if anyone conversant with the facts regarding a row cared to make the trip, he would not do it, because of the natural reluctance of any one concerned in the trouble, on one side or the other, to have the details go abroad. Any one known to be gathering news for the papers, would be pretty apt to be in bad odor in the immediate section of country where the disturbances were located, and for all these reasons,

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<sup>58</sup> “Mulhattan Outdone,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 2 November 1889.

<sup>59</sup> *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 2 November 1889.

<sup>60</sup> “That Double Lynching,” *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 2 November 1889.

and others which have not been mentioned, it is pretty safe to say that none of the accounts of “battles,” nor of “entrenched positions” taken up by one side or the other, are of value as giving the real situation. It is asserted in telegrams sent out by special correspondents that there are “two hundred” or “three hundred” men under arms on each side. There are not that many men in the country. Probably eight or ten principals on each side, with perhaps as many more men whose services can be commanded in a great emergency, constitute the utmost limit of the strength of the factions. It is doubtful that, even with the existing excitement and bad feeling, a dozen and a half men are actually engaged in laying for each other.<sup>61</sup>

According to the *Huntington Advertiser*, on November 4: “The *Huntington Advertiser* has inquired closely into these stories of the Hatfield-McCoy war said to be raging in Lincoln County, and finds there is not one word of truth in them. There has been no trouble in Lincoln county worth mentioning since the reports published in this paper last Friday afternoon, and the Hatfields and McCoys do not live in the county.”<sup>62</sup> That same day, the *Daily State Journal* reported: “A reliable citizen just arrived from the neighborhood of Lincoln county, where the alleged warfare exists, says that most of the reports sent out from Huntington and other points near there are purely imaginary. He says the people are not armed nor divided into factions, and that McCoy and Haley are the only two persons killed at any time since the trouble began.”<sup>63</sup>

On 7 November 1889, the *Logan County Banner* attempted to correct many specific errors that had thus far been reported about the feud.

Neither the Hatfields nor the Hatfield sympathizers had anything to do with the lynching of McCoy and Haley. It was done by the citizens of Lincoln who sympathized with the Brumfields and Dingess and by men who do not believe in the assassination of women by way laying and shooting them as they peacefully ride along the bank. The Hatfield-McCoy feud had nothing whatever to do with

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<sup>61</sup> “The Truth,” *Wheeling (WV) Register*, 3 November 1889.

<sup>62</sup> “The Hatfield-McCoy War A Lie Out of Whole Cloth,” *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 4 November 1889.

<sup>63</sup> “The Reports Denied,” *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 4 November 1889.

the trouble, and from present appearances it is about over. Reports that some forty men are armed and preparing for battle is without foundation.<sup>64</sup>

Two days later, on 9 November 1889, the *Huntington Advertiser* reported: “The Lincoln Citizen, referring to the false reports sent out from that county, says: ‘There has been no trouble since the killing of McCoy and Haley, two weeks ago. A few have gone away until everything cools down, and as we understand it both sides, if two sides it could be said to have, have gone home and to work, saying all they want is to be let alone.’”<sup>65</sup>

The most convincing non-feud account came from Major Joseph C. Alderson, a Wheeling insurance magnate who visited southern West Virginia in November 1889. “Major J.C. Alderson, who has just returned from an extensive business trip through the southern portion of the State, informed the INTELLIGENCER last night that the recently published and widely circulated reports regarding the alleged Brumfield-McCoy vendetta, in Lincoln county, sent out from certain towns in that vicinity by enterprising sensational reporters, were untrue in almost every particular,” the *Wheeling Intelligencer* reported on 22 November 1889. “The blood curdling accounts of whole communities being arrayed against each other and factions thirsting for the blood of their enemies on account of certain grievances; that citizens are entrenched in the mountains, armed with Winchesters and defying officers of the law, and a hundred other hair raising stories, are manufactured by a penny-a-liners who find for them a ready sale to the newspapers of the outside world.”<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> “Two More Victims,” *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 7 November 1889.

<sup>65</sup> “The Reign of Peace,” *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 9 November 1889.

<sup>66</sup> “That Lincoln County War,” *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 22 November 1889.

Major Alderson dismissed rumors of a feud, while offering kind words about residents of southern West Virginia.

The truth is no vendetta exists in the locality referred to, and none ever has existed, he said. There is not a word of truth in the sensational reports recently imposed upon the newspapers, and through them on the reading public, and they are base slanders upon a law-abiding people. The trouble ended with the lynching [of Haley and McCoy]. There is no reign of terror and the people are not concerning themselves about private grievances. Nothing partaking of the nature of a vendetta exists. The people of that part of the State are as peaceable and as honest as any you will find in the country.<sup>67</sup>

As a visitor to the region seeking to develop its natural resources, Major Alderson was particularly concerned that feud reports would interrupt economic development.

The sensational stories that are being broadcast about alleged feuds and vendettas in West Virginia, and which are untrue, are injuring the State. I find in other States capitalists who refuse to come here to prospect because they say they are afraid of our outlaws. You cannot get them to go into the interior to inspect our timber and coal lands for fear they will be ambushed. It matters not that I assure them of the fact that these things do not exist. The impressions created by the newspaper liar are hard to get rid of.<sup>68</sup>

## RUNYON'S FACTION

John W. Runyon's return to the Harts Creek community in early November escalated the feud. "It is known that Runyon and his friends, who recently fled to avoid the Brumfields, are armed and have returned to the Hart-creek region," the *Louisville Courier-Journal* reported, "and trouble is anticipated."<sup>69</sup> On November 9, late at night, a party of masked men presumed to be Runyon's faction approached Brumfield's home, knocked on the door, called out Brumfield and his wife under the pretense that they

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<sup>67</sup> "That Lincoln County War," *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 22 November 1889.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> "Another Chapter in the Hatfield; Hall and Healy Feud," *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 11 November 1889; "Brumfield Dead," *Wichita (KS) Eagle*, 12 November 1889; "Paris Brumfield and Wife Reported Killed," *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 13 November 1889.



wanted to see them on a matter of pressing importance.<sup>70</sup> When Brumfield opened the door, the group “fired a volley into the doorway as soon as they appeared,”<sup>71</sup> injuring both.<sup>72</sup> “The Brumfields are in pursuit of the murderers, and it is believed that they cannot escape,” reported the *Louisville Courier-Journal* on November 13. “A delegation of Lincoln county citizens are expected here to-morrow for aid to put down the trouble. The local authorities are helpless.”<sup>73</sup> Three days later, the *Louisville Courier-Journal* provided an update, stating that Brumfield’s wife “is not expected to live,” although Brumfield’s wounds “are less serious than at first reported.”<sup>74</sup> It concluded: “The end of the feud is not yet in sight. The State cannot summon a sufficient force to put it down, and the local authorities are helpless. It will probably continue until one party or the other is rendered helpless.”<sup>75</sup>

## THE BRUMFIELD RESPONSE

Following the attack upon Paris Brumfield, the Brumfields once again controlled the region, while their enemies fled. On 13 November 1889, the *Arizona Weekly Journal-Miner* of Prescott, Arizona, called the feud “a war of extermination,” reported the Brumfields had “at least twenty-five armed men,” and noted how Charley and John

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<sup>70</sup> “Another Chapter in the Hatfield; Hall and Healy Feud,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 11 November 1889; “The Brumfield Vendetta,” *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 13 November 1889; “The Killing of the Brumfields,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 13 November 1889; *Clarksburg (WV) Telegraph*, 16 November 1889; “West Virginia’s Feud,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 16 November 1889.

<sup>71</sup> “The Brumfield Vendetta,” *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 13 November 1889.

<sup>72</sup> “Another Chapter in the Hatfield; Hall and Healy Feud,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 11 November 1889; “The Brumfield Vendetta,” *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 13 November 1889; “The Killing of the Brumfields,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 13 November 1889; *Clarksburg (WV) Telegraph*, 16 November 1889; “West Virginia’s Feud,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 16 November 1889.

<sup>73</sup> “The Killing of the Brumfields,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 13 November 1889.

<sup>74</sup> “West Virginia’s Feud,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 16 November 1889.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

Brumfield had gone “to Huntington recently and recruited about a dozen of their relatives who work there in the Cincinnati & Ohio railroad shops” before purchasing “all the rifles and revolvers they could find in the place, securing in all about one hundred repeaters of recent model, and nearly one hundred and thirty revolvers” as well as “several thousand cartridges.”<sup>76</sup> The *Arizona Weekly Journal-Miner* concluded: “This supply of war material was loaded upon ten wagons and then were driven south toward the scene of the Lincoln county feud, surrounded by a guard of fifteen desperate men, armed to the teeth. No attempt was made to stop them, as the county authorities are powerless.”<sup>77</sup>

On 16 November 1889, the *Louisville Courier-Journal* confirmed the dominance of the Brumfields in the feud region, while also deflating recent reports of violence.

The correspondent of the *Courier-Journal* has just returned from a trip through the Hart Creek region of Lincoln county, the scene of the Brumfield-Runyon war. The Brumfields and their friends now have control of the entire section, and matters are quiet. The sensational reports sent out from various sources in regard to pitched battles and small armies organized on each side are largely exaggerated. There are about 1,000 inhabitants of the Hart Creek settlement, and not more than 100 men have been under arms at any time. No deed of lawlessness has been committed since the attempt to kill Paris Brumfield and his wife on Monday night. The perpetrators of this outrage have fled, and are now out of the State. As long as the would-be murderers stay away there will be no further trouble.<sup>78</sup>

On November 20, the *Climax* of Richmond, Kentucky, stated less optimistically that “there has been no recent outbreak of the Brumfield-Runyon feud in West Virginia, but trouble is expected at any time.”<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> “The West Virginia Feud,” *Arizona Weekly Journal-Miner* (Prescott, AZ), 13 November 1889.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> “West Virginia’s Feud,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 16 November 1889.

<sup>79</sup> *The Climax* (Richmond, KY), 20 November 1889.

According to at least one (garbled) newspaper account, the Brumfields pursued their enemies into Cabell County. On 22 November 1889, the *Wheeling Intelligencer* reported:

Big Al Blumfield [sic] and Heart [sic] Dinges [sic], cousins of Little Al Blumfield [sic], who, with his wife, was murdered by Wilt [sic] Haley and Pete [sic] McCoy, in the Hatfield-McCoy vendetta, arrived at Barboursville yesterday. They were heavily armed and have warrants for the arrest of several members of the McCoy and Bunyan [sic] families, alleged to be concerned in the killing of old Mr. and Mrs. Parish [Brumfield], at Field [sic], in Lincoln county, last week. The warrants are issued by Justice of the Peace Tom Blumfield [sic], and he says he is going to have the men arrested if it takes all the Blumfields [sic] and Hatfields in Lincoln county to capture them.<sup>80</sup>

#### A LULL

By late November 1889, based on newspaper accounts, the Lincoln County Feud appears to have quietened substantially. Most likely, the resumption of the timber season played a role. In November, newspapers cheered the passage of logs through their towns. “We had a splendid stage of water in Guyan river last week, and a considerable quantity of timber floated out,” reported the *Logan County Banner* on 21 November 1889.<sup>81</sup> Due to the large amount of money at stake for many feudists, timber season could not be ignored. Al Brumfield, Ben Adams, John W. Runyon, Albert Dingess, Burl Farley, Anthony Adams, and others played prominent roles in local timber affairs. Wide newspaper coverage may have also played a role in quelling the feud. Perhaps feudists had no desire to see their names raked through the mud or have their story told in such a sensational manner. Perhaps they found it difficult to wage a feud under such heavy media scrutiny.

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<sup>80</sup> “Armed With Warrants,” *Wheeling (WV) Intelligencer*, 22 November 1889.

<sup>81</sup> *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 21 November 1889.

## WILL ADKINS

On 23 November 1889, Will Adkins, a member of the Haley-McCoy lynch mob, drowned at Al Brumfield's boom.<sup>82</sup> Prior to the incident, Will plod along Harts Creek en route to see his mistress (and first cousin), Clementine.<sup>83</sup> At the boom, on the opposite side of the creek, he discovered his brother Fed Adkins in a row with Bill Abbott.<sup>84</sup> Will inquired of his brother if he was okay and started across the logs to see if he needed assistance. "If you come over here, I'll beat hell out of you," Bill Abbott said to him. "That'll be no problem," Will said. "I'll just come over."<sup>85</sup> On his way across, Will, who had been drinking alcohol, fell into the backwater and drowned.<sup>86</sup> One Adkins descendant thought he fell because someone hit him in the head with a rock as he came over the logs.<sup>87</sup> Others said he drowned because his boots filled full of water.<sup>88</sup> Will's premature death was the first of several by members of the Haley-McCoy lynch mob. Over time, a folk tale evolved claiming a terrible death awaited many of the men who had helped to kill Haley and McCoy (in effect, the lynchers were cursed).<sup>89</sup> He was buried at Adkins (later Fowler) Branch; Bill Fowler, an uncle by marriage, bought his tombstone.<sup>90</sup>

During the early weeks of December 1889, the *Logan County Banner* provided small updates and commentary on the feud. On December 12, it reported: "Enoch Baker,

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<sup>82</sup> Bill Adkins, interview, 19 April 1992; Will Adkins headstone, Ferrellsburg Cemetery, Ferrellsburg, WV.

<sup>83</sup> Johnny Golden Adkins, interview, 29 February 1996.

<sup>84</sup> Bill Adkins, interview, 19 April 1992.

<sup>85</sup> Bob Adkins, interview, 12 February 1996.

<sup>86</sup> Bill Adkins, interview, 19 April 1992.

<sup>87</sup> Bob Adkins, interview, 12 February 1996.

<sup>88</sup> Pat Adkins, interview, n.d.; Garnet Adkins, interview, 29 February 1996.

<sup>89</sup> Vilas Adams, interview, 30 July 1996; James Davis, interview, 9 December 1997.

<sup>90</sup> Will Adkins, headstone, Ferrellsburg Cemetery, Ferrellsburg, WV; Bill Adkins, interview, 19 April 1992. I live just downhill from this grave.

of Harts Creek, was in town Monday, and reports every thing quiet, but thinks the Brumfield-McCoy Feud is liable at any time to break out afresh.”<sup>91</sup> No elaboration of why Baker thought as such was provided. On December 19, the *Logan County Banner* chided: “The Huntington and Charleston correspondents of our city dailies seem to be asleep. Nothing startling from the Hatfield-McCoy or the Brumfield-McCoy feuds for two long and weary weeks.”<sup>92</sup>

#### BUTCHER-FERRELL TROUBLES

On 31 December 1889, Tom Ferrell, a resident of Big Ugly Creek, near Harts Creek, shot Albert Butcher over a card game, reportedly in self-defense.<sup>93</sup> Albert Butcher’s subsequent death on January 3, while not a part of the Lincoln County Feud, marked the fourth homicide committed in the Harts Creek community in less than two years. Counting Will Adkins’ drowning, it was the fifth unnatural death in the community in less than two years. Tom Ferrell, who was not noted for criminal behavior, quickly surrendered himself to authorities and was confined in jail at Hamlin to await trial. Within a short time, however, a gang of Butcher’s family and friends set out from Logan County toward Hamlin to execute revenge.<sup>94</sup> Tom Ferrell’s uncle Bill Duty, upon hearing of their departure and fearing that they would lynch Ferrell, rode a horse to death to reach

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<sup>91</sup> *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 12 December 1889.

<sup>92</sup> *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 19 December 1889.

<sup>93</sup> *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 9 January 1890.

<sup>94</sup> “More Trouble in Lincoln,” *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 9 January 1890; “A Mob After Ferrell,” *Richmond (VA) Dispatch*, 11 January 1890.

Hamlin and warn the jailer, Andrew Chapman.<sup>95</sup> Chapman, having no power to protect Ferrell from an armed mob, released him and told him to run for his life.<sup>96</sup>

The Butcher gang's raid on Hamlin and the inability/unwillingness of law officers to protect a prisoner jailed in the county seat showcases the power of mobs over organized law enforcement. On January 8, the *Logan County Banner* reported a story originally printed in the Lincoln newspaper: "News reached this place [Hamlin] that there was a mob on the way from Logan county and Hart's creek for the purpose of lynching Ferrell, who killed Butcher in Hart's Creek, about a week ago."<sup>97</sup> Not long thereafter, the Butcher gang arrived in Hamlin. "It is reported that Ferrell's friends from Hart's Creek are on their way to this place [Hamlin]," the *Logan County Banner* continued, "so if it comes to pass that these reports are true, and both parties meet here at the same time, the probability is there will be bloodshed."<sup>98</sup> As might be expected, many newspapers confused the Ferrell-Butcher trouble with the Lincoln County Feud. On January 11, the *Richmond Dispatch* of Richmond, Virginia, stated: "The officers took Ferrall [sic] from the jail and have him concealed. Ferrall [sic] is an adherent of the McCoy faction in the Lincoln-county war, and the lynching party is supposed to be composed of Brumfields and their friends. More trouble is expected."<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Fred B. Lambert Papers, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV.

<sup>96</sup> "More Trouble in Lincoln," *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 9 January 1890; "A Mob After Ferrell," *Richmond (VA) Dispatch*, 11 January 1890.

<sup>97</sup> "More Trouble in Lincoln," *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 9 January 1890.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> "A Mob After Ferrell," *Richmond (VA) Dispatch*, 11 January 1890.

## JOHN W. RUNYON AND BEN ADAMS

On 4 January 1890, Deputy Sheriff John W. Runyon and Ben Adams met at the Oakland House in Aracoma, Logan County.<sup>100</sup> “John Runyon, Deputy Sheriff of Lincoln county, and Benjamin Adams, of Harts Creek, registered at the Oakland House Saturday,” stated the *Logan County Banner*.<sup>101</sup> Under the circumstances, what might have appeared to be prominent timbermen spending the night at a local hotel instead appeared as a meeting of conspirators. Amazingly, Deputy Runyon went so far as to provide a statement regarding what he termed the “Brumfield-McCoy feud.” According to the *Logan County Banner*: “Mr. Runyon says that every thing is quiet on Harts Creek, and that he thinks that the Brumfield-McCoy war is at an end.”<sup>102</sup> What response the story elicited from the Brumfields, who would have read the story on January 9, is unknown.

## CONCLUSION

By the late 1880s, the Lincoln County Feud manifested itself as a contest among merchants for economic and political supremacy in the Harts Creek community. The Haley-McCoy murders, a crime unsurpassed in regional history prior to 1889, generated widespread newspaper coverage throughout the United States. Based on newspaper accounts and oral history, the Lincoln County Feud continued during the winter of 1889-1890. The Brumfields drove their enemies away from the community, destroying their homes. Feud factions overwhelmed law officials who were unable to restore order. Locals, meanwhile, remained complacent due to fear of gangs, support of certain actions,

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<sup>100</sup> *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 9 January 1890. The *Logan County Banner* also reported that Squire Anderson Blair was in Logan that same day.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

or acceptance of the rule of retaliation. Late in November 1889, the feud temporarily cooled, likely to accommodate logging season. John W. Runyon's return to Harts Creek resulted in a house attack on Paris Brumfield and escalated the violence. The death of Will Adkins and the killing of Albert Butcher (both events unrelated to the feud) added confusion. The weakness of organized law in Lincoln County was revealed by the Butcher raid on Hamlin in January 1890.



## CHAPTER NINE: “FOUGHT OUT IN THE COURTS:”<sup>1</sup>

### TRIAL AND CAPITULATION

The Lincoln County Feud ended due to the elimination or outmigration of the anti-Brumfield-Dingess factions from the Harts Creek community. Specifically, the following events caused the feud’s end: the exodus of Cain Adkins and his family/associates from Harts Creek in 1889-1890; the acquittal of the Haley-McCoy murder suspects in 1890; the departure of John W. Runyon and his allies in 1890; the relocation of Ben Adams to Trace Fork, a reasonable distance from the Dingess clan; the departure of Bill Fowler in 1890; the departure of Isham Roberts in 1890-91; the departure of Louisa Mullins by 1891; and the murder of Paris Brumfield in 1891.

### LINCOLN COUNTY LEGAL AUTHORITIES

During the winter and spring months of 1889-1890, the Lincoln County law enforcement apparatus functioned, albeit slowly and infused with politics and partisanship. So as to understand each step of the legal journey that ultimately resulted in acquittal for the Brumfields, it is necessary to review each officeholder and his role in the matter. Sheriff James D. Porter, who investigated the Haley-McCoy murders, was a Republican allied to John W. Runyon (his deputy).<sup>2</sup> Prosecuting Attorney Joseph E. Chilton, who determined how to proceed based on Sheriff Porter’s investigation, was a

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<sup>1</sup> “First Blood, Then Law,” *Shenandoah Herald* (Woodstock, VA), 4 April 1890.

<sup>2</sup> “The West Virginia Feud,” *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 9 November 1889; “West-Virginia’s Feud,” *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 16 November 1889; *Biennial Report of the Treasurer of the State of West Virginia, 1889-1890*, 247.

Democrat.<sup>3</sup> Circuit Clerk James A. Holley,<sup>4</sup> who chose a pool of grand jurors for trial, was a Democrat. Judge Thomas H. Harvey, who presided over the 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit, was also a Democrat.<sup>5</sup>

Throughout the fall and winter of 1890, Lincoln County Sheriff James D. Porter, a Republican elected in 1888 partly due to John W. Runyon's support in Harts Creek District, investigated the Haley-McCoy murders.<sup>6</sup> Born in 1854 in Russell County, Virginia, he relocated with his parents to Ceredo, West Virginia, by 1870.<sup>7</sup> Sometime after 1880, he moved to Myra, near Hamlin, on Mud River.<sup>8</sup> The primary obstacles impeding his investigation of the Haley-McCoy murders would have been the dangerous climate that existed in the Harts Creek community during the winter of 1889-90, Deputy Sheriff Runyon's widely reported involvement in a conspiracy to assassinate the Brumfields, and a fear by eyewitnesses to provide statements and testimony. Because the Brumfields had opposed Porter's election in 1888, he had no reason to favor them politically and significant reasons to pursue them.

Sheriff Porter ultimately gathered enough evidence to implicate seven men for the murder of Haley and McCoy: Paris Brumfield, Allen Brumfield, Charley Brumfield, Burl Farley, Morgan Brumfield, Frank Brumfield, and Howard Fry.<sup>9</sup> Howard Fry, a 37-year-

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<sup>3</sup> Hardesty, *Hardesty's Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 7:109; Greg Moore, "William Edwin Chilton," *The West Virginia Encyclopedia*, <http://www.wvencyclopedia.org/articles/1167> (accessed 19 June 2015).

<sup>4</sup> "Holley Hills Estate," <http://www.wvculture.org/shpo/nr/pdf/lincoln/80004029.pdf> (accessed 21 August 2014).

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Condit Miller and Hu Maxwell, *West Virginia and Its People*, Vol. 3 (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1913), 784.

<sup>6</sup> "The West Virginia Feud," *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 9 November 1889; "West-Virginia's Feud," *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal*, 16 November 1889; *Biennial Report of the Treasurer of the State of West Virginia, 1889-1890*, 247.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Census for Wayne County, WV, 1870.

<sup>8</sup> The 1880 U.S. Census shows James Porter as a resident of Wayne County. The birth record for his daughter, Ida Belle Porter, who was born in 1887, lists her birthplace as Myra, Lincoln County, WV.

<sup>9</sup> "Will Be Tried for Murder," *Pittsburg (PA) Dispatch*, 5 April 1890.

old farmer, lived in the vicinity of Sand Creek with his wife (a niece to Paris Brumfield) and five children, three of whom reportedly had been fathered by Constable Victor Shelton.<sup>10</sup> Frank Brumfield, a 29-year-old nephew to Paris Brumfield, lived on Fourteen Mile Creek with his wife and children.<sup>11</sup> Morgan Brumfield, a 24-year-old nephew to Paris Brumfield, lived on Big Ugly Creek and was the paramour of Boney Lucas' niece, Louisa, who would give birth to his child on 28 May 1890.<sup>12</sup> Having gathered evidence, Sheriff Porter submitted his report to the prosecuting attorney.

Joseph E. Chilton, prosecuting attorney for Lincoln and Boone counties, had been elected to the position as a Democrat in 1880. Born in 1855 in Kanawha County, he first taught public school in his native county while studying law under Kuna and Walls. At the age of twenty-one years, he was admitted to the bar. He settled in Lincoln County in 1878 and, in 1882, was appointed a Regent of West Virginia University.<sup>13</sup> William E. Chilton, brother to J.E., was a former prosecuting attorney in Kanawha County and unsuccessful candidate for the West Virginia state senate, as well as the future head of the West Virginia Democratic Party, close friend of future governor William A. MacCorkle, future West Virginia Secretary of State, leader of the Kanawha Ring, future U.S. Senator, and future owner of the *Charleston Gazette* newspaper.<sup>14</sup> Based on Sheriff Porter's

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<sup>10</sup> U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1900; Shelton Family Notebook, Billy Adkins Genealogical Collection, Harts, WV.

<sup>11</sup> U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1870; U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1880.

<sup>12</sup> U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1870; Lawrence Kirk, interview, Ferrellsburg, WV, n.d.

<sup>13</sup> Hardesty, *Hardesty's Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 109. The *Huntington Advertiser* stated on 15 August 1896 that T.M. Smith was "elected by a large majority in 1888" as prosecuting attorney of Lincoln County; contemporary newspapers, however, cite Mr. Chilton as the prosecutor.

<sup>14</sup> Moore, "William Edwin Chilton," *The West Virginia Encyclopedia*, <http://www.wvencyclopedia.org/articles/1167> (accessed 19 June 2015).

report, Prosecutor Chilton decided the Haley-McCoy murder case would be tried as a felony and most likely that it would go to a grand jury.

Merchant James A. Holley, a Democrat, had been elected Circuit Clerk of Lincoln County in 1884. Born locally in 1855, Holley was educated at West Virginia University and Duff's Commercial School in Pittsburg. According to one biographer, his interest in politics originated when "he had become deeply interested in public matters" and decided to take "a more or less active part in supporting the candidates of the Democratic party."<sup>15</sup> A member of the Kanawha Ring, he was closely associated with the Chilton family.<sup>16</sup> Noted for his "loyal party work," he became chairman of the Lincoln County Democratic Executive Committee in 1888. In the future, widely regarded as "one of the leading Democrats in the state," he would be appointed adjutant general by Governor MacCorkle, elected a member of the state Democratic executive committee, serve as clerk of the West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals, elected mayor of Charleston, and elected chairman of the Kanawha County Democratic Executive Committee.<sup>17</sup> As Lincoln County Circuit Clerk, Holley provided a pool of jurors for the Haley-McCoy murder trial.

Huntingtonian Thomas H. Harvey, elected Judge of the 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit in 1888, was a Democrat. A former student at Buffalo Academy in Putnam County, Harvey served during the Civil War under Col. John McCausland in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Kanawha Regiment, later the 36<sup>th</sup> Regiment Virginia Infantry, Company A (Buffalo Guards). During a fight at

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<sup>15</sup> Miller and Maxwell, *West Virginia and Its People*, Vol. 3, 684.

<sup>16</sup> "Holley Hills Estate," <http://www.wvculture.org/shpo/nr/pdf/lincoln/80004029.pdf> (accessed 21 August 2014).

<sup>17</sup> Thomas Condit Miller and Hu Maxwell, *West Virginia and Its People*, Vol. 3, 684-685; "Holley Hills Estate," <http://www.wvculture.org/shpo/nr/pdf/lincoln/80004029.pdf> (accessed 21 August 2014).

Fort Donaldson in 1862, his left hand became forever disabled. After the war, Harvey earned his law degree at Washington College (later Washington and Lee University) and practiced law in Putnam County, where he was elected prosecuting attorney. In 1874, he relocated to Huntington, practicing with his brother William Hope Harvey (later nationally famous as “Coin”).<sup>18</sup> Thereafter, Harvey lawyered with the firm of Harvey, Vinson, and McDonald.<sup>19</sup> In 1890, the *Logan County Banner* would write of Judge Harvey’s return to Huntington from Aracoma on a flatboat. “Judge Harvey and Attorneys Vinson and Marcum left here on Saturday for their home in Huntington by way of a flat boat on the Guyandotte. We have taken the same kind of a pleasure trip, and are satisfied that they enjoyed themselves hugely. They worked hard while here and deserved a little pleasant recreation, so we will not be mean enough to envy them.”<sup>20</sup>

#### HAMLIN, 1890

The Haley-McCoy murder trial would occur in Hamlin, seat of government for Lincoln County. At least three times per year, Hamlin hosted “court days.” Court days, aside from serving as a time for adjudication, constituted great social opportunities. “I recall the crowds of men coming in from the surrounding country, to meet friends, to settle difficulties, and to have a good time during these court sessions,” said Nannie Peyton Lambert, reflecting on life in Hamlin during 1890. “The hotels—two of them—

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<sup>18</sup> Miller and Maxwell, *West Virginia and Its People*, Vol. 3, 767; “‘Coin’ Harvey, 85, Noted Bi-Metallism Champion, Succumbs,” *Herald-Dispatch* (Huntington, WV), 12 February 1936.

<sup>19</sup> Wallace, *Cabell County Annals and Families*, 505-508; “Two More Victims,” *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 7 November 1889. The *Logan County Banner* reported a fire at Harvey Block in Huntington that destroyed a “considerable portion of their law library.”

<sup>20</sup> *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 30 October 1890.

were generally filled to the limit.”<sup>21</sup> One hotel, the Campbell House, was owned by Christopher Scites but operated by his son-in-law, Elisha Peyton (father to Nannie).

Nannie recalled:

One morning I counted 75 men who ate their breakfast at my father’s tables in the “Campbell House.” The cooks, all women, sure were busy people at such times. Soon as everything was over with one meal, another had to be prepared for. Some of the men coming in from the country didn’t hesitate to stop at the saloon that was up the street near the court-house. No place of entertainment was like it out in the lonesome wilds in those days. As long as these merry men behaved reasonably well the law left them alone. Only occasionally did men really come to blows. Guns were not used.<sup>22</sup>

The Lincoln County courthouse, which hosted the Haley-McCoy murder trial, faced Main Street. “It had a large fenced-in lawn, and was an imposing end to the north end of Main Street,” Mrs. Lambert said. “Behind the Court House, but in the same fenced-in lot, was the substantial brick jail. Behind this large lot was the open country.”<sup>23</sup>

## TIMBERING

The feud “lull” that began earlier in the fall, likely prompted by a resumption of timber work, continued throughout the winter of 1889-90. Many feudists appear to have returned to ordinary life. (Whereas timber often served as a source of friction, in this instance it may well have refocused attention away from the feud and toward potentially lost profits.) On 2 January 1890, Cain Adkins (having relocated away from Harts Creek the previous October) performed a marriage ceremony for a young couple in Wayne

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<sup>21</sup> Nannie Peyton Lambert, interview by Fred B. Lambert, Barboursville, WV, 12 November 1953. Fred B. Lambert Papers, Special Collections Department, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV. Mrs. Lambert was wife of Fred B. Lambert.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

County.<sup>24</sup> During this time, timbering—not feuds—dominated daily life. “We had a fine log tide in the Guyandotte river this week, and quite a nice lot of timber was started for market,” said the *Logan County Banner* on January 23.<sup>25</sup> On February 13, “several rafts went down the river Sunday. The river was at a very fair stage.”<sup>26</sup> On March 13, the *Logan County Banner* jubilantly stated: “Our timbermen are getting their logs to market.” Early in March, John W. Runyon, “of Harts Creek,” met William C. “Will” Fry, a timber man and resident of Guyandotte, in Aracoma “on business.”<sup>27</sup> Will Fry was a brother to George Fry, at whose home the Haley-McCoy murders had occurred the previous October.<sup>28</sup>

That spring, timbering once again agitated feud belligerents. In late March 1890, John W. Runyon sued Al Brumfield over a timber dispute. On 4 April 1890, the *Shenandoah Herald* of Woodstock, Virginia, printed this:

Bloody Brumfield-Runyon feud in Lincoln county, which has cost six lives, is now being fought out in the courts. The feud originated over the ownership of a large amount of timber, and John W. Runyon is now suing Allen Brumfield for it. Allen Brumfield is the man who was shot, with his wife, by hired assassins who said Runyon paid them. Both of Brumfield’s would be murderers were lynched, while Runyon had to leave the country. Four other persons were also killed during the outbreak. Both sides are attending the trial of the case in Lincoln county court fully armed, and a conflict is not improbable.<sup>29</sup>

Newspapers did not indicate the result of the Runyon-Brumfield timber case.

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<sup>24</sup> Jackson Watts to Millie Ramey, marriage record, 2 January 1890, Wayne County, WV.

<sup>25</sup> *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 23 January 1890.

<sup>26</sup> *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 13 February 1890.

<sup>27</sup> *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 13 March 1890.

<sup>28</sup> Fry, Bunn, and Fry, *George Fry I and Descendants*, 283.

<sup>29</sup> “First Blood, Then Law,” *Shenandoah Herald* (Woodstock, VA), 4 April 1890.

## HALEY-MCCOY MURDER TRIAL

In April 1890, Prosecutor J.E. Chilton secured indictments against eight of the Brumfields and their associates for the murder of Haley and McCoy.<sup>30</sup> Most likely, he presented a “bill” and a sufficient amount of evidence to persuade a grand jury to indict by returning a “true bill,” thus ensuring a quicker move to trial. Less likely, he persuaded the judge to issue the indictments based on the strength of his evidence.<sup>31</sup> According to the *Pittsburg Dispatch* of April 5:

In the Circuit Court of Lincoln county indictments for murder have been returned against Paris Brumfield, Allen Brumfield, Morgan Brumfield, Charles Brumfield, [John Brumfield,] Frank Brumfield, Howard Fry and Burwill [sic] Farley. The men were all actual participants in the famous Brumfield-Runyan [sic] vendetta. They are charged with the murder of Green McCoy and Milt Haley, who were members of the Runyan [sic] faction.<sup>32</sup>

An April 7 story printed in the *Evening Bulletin* of Maysville, Kentucky, reported:

“Seven...persons indicted at the last term of the Logan [sic] county circuit court for the murder of Green McCoy and Milt Haley, at Hart’s Creek, which threatened for some time to grow into a feud equal in proportions to the Hatfield-McCoy feud, have been admitted to bail in the sum of \$5,000 each.”<sup>33</sup> Of interest, key mobsters French Bryant, Charley Dingess, Hugh Dingess, Albert Dingess, and John Dingess were not named as defendants.

Eustace Gibson, a partner in the Huntington firm of Gibson & Michie, represented the Brumfields in the Haley-McCoy case.<sup>34</sup> Born in 1842 in Culpeper County, Virginia,

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<sup>30</sup> “Will Be Tried for Murder,” *Pittsburg (PA) Dispatch*, 5 April 1890; “Logan County W.Va., Feud Averted,” *Evening Bulletin* (Maysville, KY), 7 April 1890.

<sup>31</sup> “Criminal Charges: How Cases Get Started,” <http://www.nolo.com/legal-encyclopedia/charged-with-crime-how-29677.html> (accessed 4 July 2013).

<sup>32</sup> “Will Be Tried for Murder,” *Pittsburg (PA) Dispatch*, 5 April 1890.

<sup>33</sup> “Logan County W.Va., Feud Averted,” *Evening Bulletin* (Maysville, KY), 7 April 1890.

<sup>34</sup> “The Brumfields Acquitted,” *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 13 August 1890.



Gibson had organized a group of local men in 1856 and rode to Kansas in order to oppose John Brown.<sup>35</sup> During the Civil War, he served as captain in the 49<sup>th</sup> Virginia Infantry, Company K (Sperryville Rifles), participated in the Battle of Manassas, and was wounded near Richmond.<sup>36</sup> After relocating to Huntington in 1871, he was elected as a conservative Democrat to the West Virginia House of Delegates, serving as Speaker. In 1882 and 1884, he was elected to the U.S. Congress; he failed to win reelection in 1886 and 1888.<sup>37</sup> In April 1888, at the request of West Virginia governor E. Willis Wilson, he argued West Virginia's position before the U.S. Supreme Court in the Hatfield-McCoy Feud case, *Mahon v. Justice*.<sup>38</sup>

Eustace Gibson afforded the Brumfields excellent representation. In 1882, the *Sentinel* of Parkersburg, West Virginia, referred to him as “one of the best lawyers and most effective speakers in this district,”<sup>39</sup> also calling him “a leading lawyer in this section of West Virginia...a man of strong intellect and of the most marked individuality.”<sup>40</sup> Referencing his ability and courtroom demeanor, the newspaper stated: “Captain Gibson has a thorough knowledge of law, and his opinions are valued for their soundness and strength as well as for the intensity with which he delivers them; at the same time his manner, both to the Bench and the Bar, has always been characterized by candor, courtesy and deference, and for that suavity of manner that never fails to

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<sup>35</sup> “Eustace Gibson,” *Sentinel* (Parkersburg, WV), 2 September 1882.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*; Wallace, *Cabell County Annals and Families*, 394; Julie Bushong, “Culpeper Currents: Mrs. Gibson's Boys,” *Culpeper (VA) Times*, n.d. <http://www.northernvatimes.com/culpeper/article/culpeper-currents-mrs.-gibsons-boys> (accessed 25 January 2013).

<sup>37</sup> *Congressional Directory*, 95; *Sentinel* (Parkersburg, WV), 19 August 1882.

<sup>38</sup> Rice, *The Hatfields & The McCoys*, 90.

<sup>39</sup> *Sentinel* (Parkersburg, WV) 19 August 1882.

<sup>40</sup> “Eustace Gibson,” *Sentinel* (Parkersburg, WV), 2 September 1882.

please.”<sup>41</sup> Two years later, in 1884, the *Sentinel* stated how Gibson addressed a crowd of 1200 people in Guyandotte, West Virginia—the “largest political meeting ever held in this town”—and “for an hour and forty minutes held the crowd by the best political speech of his life. Round after round of applause greeted him, and when at the close of his speech three cheers for Gibson were proposed, the deafening shouts that responded proved him to be the people’s favorite candidate. Altogether the meeting was grand and harmonious, and will be long remembered in the political annals of this town.”<sup>42</sup> At one gathering in Hamlin, at the courthouse, “the building would not hold the people who assembled to hear the speeches, and the enthusiasm was unbounded.”<sup>43</sup>

Due to the Lincoln County Courthouse fire of 1909, details concerning the Haley-McCoy murder trial are sketchy. The trial occurred in early August 1890. One Brumfield in-law recalled hearing how the Brumfields and their friends attended the trial with picnic baskets filled with guns.<sup>44</sup> A Dingess descendant recalled it this way: the Brumfields, Dingesses, and their allies “got a gang of men on horses and rode in and walked in with guns and sat down with guns on their laps. The case came up and the judge threw it out. They would’ve shot up the place.”<sup>45</sup> Ultimately, the eight defendants were found innocent.<sup>46</sup> On August 13, the *Huntington Advertiser* reported:

This morning the ADVERTISER gained all information in regard to the Brumfield case, which is that by a verdict rendered in the Lincoln county circuit court last night, Paris Brumfield, John Brumfield, Charles Brumfield, Al Brumfield, Jr., [Frank Brumfield,] Morgan Brumfield and Howard Frye [and Burl

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<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> “Cabell County Letter,” *Sentinel* (Parkersburg, WV), 2 October 1884.

<sup>43</sup> *Sentinel* (Parkersburg, WV), 7 October 1882.

<sup>44</sup> Mae Brumfield, interview, 15 December 1995.

<sup>45</sup> John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996.

<sup>46</sup> Politics and weak legal apparatus aside, one reason for their acquittal might have been this: a culture of honor is characterized by institutions that favor violence for purposes of protection of property, retaliation for an insult, and for the socialization of children. Ayers, in *Vengeance & Justice* (1984), points out how a murderer could avoid conviction if he had money or friends (113).

Farley] were acquitted of the charge of being the murderers of Haley and McCoy, and they are now free men and will never be held to answer this charge again. This case is a famous one, and many of the main details have been extensively published. Gibson and Michie, of this city, represented the defense, while the prosecution was conducted by J.E. Chilton. The jury had been out in the case for several hours, but it was hinted that a verdict would be reached some time last night, and true enough at 9 o'clock the official proclamation was read declaring the accused free of the crime. The Brumfields, the ADVERTISER is informed by friends of attorneys on both sides in the matter, had a good case and proved beyond any question their innocence. The question will ever be: Who killed Haley and McCoy.<sup>47</sup>

According to one story, "It was not believed they would be found guilty. Their release and acquittal was received with enthusiasm and congratulations from several hundred of their friends and adherents."

#### EXTERMINATION AND OUTMIGRATION

The extermination and outmigration of the anti-Brumfield factions largely explain the feud's end in 1890-1891. Cain Adkins, primary enemy to Paris Brumfield, left the community for Wayne County in October 1889; his family followed him on 8 January 1890. Many of his associates, such as John H. Napier, the Jordans, and some Vances, followed suit. In 1890, John W. Runyon and Bill Fowler left the community. That same year, Isham and Martha Roberts relocated further upriver from Hart; within a year, they had left the community entirely, settling in Oklahoma. After June 1890, James P. Mullins moved to Breaks, Virginia; his wife, Louisa J. Mullins, commenced an affair with Bob Hatfield, conceiving a child by him in 1891. Floyd Nester, an ally to Runyon (and first cousin to Al Brumfield), settled in Wayne County by 1900.

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<sup>47</sup> "The Brumfields Acquitted," *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 13 August 1890.

On 8 January 1890, Mariah Adkins, wife of Cain, and her family left Harts Creek for Wayne County.<sup>48</sup> In preparation for the move, Mariah rented a large boat or raft; she slaughtered twelve sheep and some hogs, which she placed in barrels on the raft, along with household items such as furniture.<sup>49</sup> The Brumfields had said they would kill anyone who helped the women leave Harts.<sup>50</sup> Mariah asked a local African-American man to pilot the boat, but he declined, saying, “he’d be killed if he did.”<sup>51</sup> On the 8<sup>th</sup> of January, in cold and rainy weather, the Adkins women quietly navigated their raft down the Guyandotte River,<sup>52</sup> which was “up from bank to bank.”<sup>53</sup> On the raft were Mariah, Spicie McCoy, Mittie Adkins, Liza Adkins, Lena Adkins, and Cain Adkins, Jr., along with children.<sup>54</sup> Due to a recent warm spell, Spicie McCoy later recalled, “the peach trees were in full bloom.”<sup>55</sup> As the raft crept past the Brumfield homes, the Adkins women took extra care to remain quiet. Spicie, who was four months pregnant, held her infant son Sherman.<sup>56</sup> At the Brumfield farm, Sherman pulled a long pin from his mother’s hair and stuck it repeatedly into her chest.<sup>57</sup> The poor woman was afraid to take the pin away for fear he might cry and alert the Brumfields of their passing; besides, the cold weather

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<sup>48</sup> Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 27 October 1995; Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 8 December 1995.

<sup>49</sup> Ralph McCoy, telephone interview, 25 October 1995; Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 8 December 1995; Daisy Ross, interview, 11 December 1995.

<sup>50</sup> Nell Thompson, interview, 3 October 1996.

<sup>51</sup> Daisy Ross, interview, 16 March 1996.

<sup>52</sup> Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 25 October 1995; Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 27 October 1995; Daisy Ross, interview, 16 March 1996.

<sup>53</sup> Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 8 December 1995.

<sup>54</sup> Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 27 October 1995; Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 8 December 1995; Daisy Ross, interview, 16 March 1996. Most likely, Angeline Lucas and her children were also on board the raft.

<sup>55</sup> Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 25 October 1995; Daisy Ross, interview, 16 March 1996. Daisy used this quote in both interviews.

<sup>56</sup> Daisy Ross interview, 16 March 1996.

<sup>57</sup> Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 8 December 1995.

prevented her from feeling any pain.<sup>58</sup> The trip downstream was fraught with danger. “The river was up from bank to bank and they thought ever minute they’s going to be drowned,” said Mariah’s granddaughter.<sup>59</sup> “Grandma [Mariah] tried to steer the boat but almost tipped it twice and Aunt Mittie had to do it.”<sup>60</sup> The Adkins women docked the raft at Ranger, approximately ten miles downriver from Hart, and unloaded their goods at a local home.<sup>61</sup> They later sent Bill Frazier to fetch the goods but “very little of the meat was left.”<sup>62</sup>

After 1889, Cain Adkins lived in Wayne County, reportedly never returning to Harts Creek.<sup>63</sup> In 1890, he deeded forty acres of his West Fork farm to John H. Adkins, a local illiterate farmer.<sup>64</sup> On 12 May 1890, he deeded an additional 66 2/3 acres to Adkins.<sup>65</sup> By 1893, John H. had acquired Cain’s three remaining West Fork tracts.<sup>66</sup> Cain remained a popular preacher: he married seventeen couples in Wayne County between 1890 and 1896.<sup>67</sup> He died in 1896 of Bright’s disease.<sup>68</sup> His rock tombstone reads: “Here

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<sup>58</sup> Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 25 October 1995.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*; Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 8 December 1995.

<sup>60</sup> Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 25 October 1995; Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 27 October 1995; Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 8 December 1995; Daisy Ross, interview, 16 March 1996.

<sup>61</sup> Daisy Ross, interview, 8 December 1995; Daisy Ross, interview, 16 March 1996.

<sup>62</sup> Daisy Ross, interview, 8 December 1995; Daisy Ross, interview, 16 March 1996. In both interviews, Daisy provided this quote.

<sup>63</sup> Oddly, he does not appear in the 1890 veterans census index for Wayne or Lincoln counties.

<sup>64</sup> Land Book (1886-1891), Lincoln County Clerk’s Office, Hamlin, WV.

<sup>65</sup> Canaan Adkins to John H. Adkins, deed of sale, 12 May 1890, Deed Book 52, 248, Lincoln County Clerk’s Office, Hamlin, WV. This is the property John W. Runyon had deeded to Cain Adkins in 1888.

<sup>66</sup> See Table 8. John H. Adkins to Salena Vance, deed of sale, 25 December 1893; Land Book (1892-1896), Lincoln County Clerk’s Office, Hamlin, WV. In 1893, John H. Adkins sold all four tracts of “the Canaan Adkins Farm” to Salena Vance for \$607.50, although according to land books Cain Adkins maintained ownership of three of the original four tracts. On 15 March 1894, John H. Adkins sold the 66 2/3 acres to Salena Vance.

<sup>67</sup> Marriage Book 4, Wayne County Clerk’s Office, Wayne, WV; Marriage Book 5, Wayne County Clerk’s Office, Wayne, WV.

<sup>68</sup> General Index to Deaths From 1853 to 1998 (A-C), 3, Wayne County Clerk’s Office, Wayne, WV; Adkins, *Land of York to Beech Fork*, 125; Daisy Ross, interview, 16 March 1996.

Lies A Man That Loved Jesus.”<sup>69</sup> As for his associates: Canaan Jordan, son-in-law, resettled in Martin County, Kentucky, by 1900, and later to Williamson, West Virginia, where he operated a store.<sup>70</sup> John H. Napier, nephew-in-law, moved to East Lynn in Wayne County, West Virginia, where he operated a detective agency.<sup>71</sup> Malinda Jordan, niece, sold her land to Arisba Lambert in 1890 and moved to Wayne County.<sup>72</sup> Marvel Vance, brother-in-law, moved to Putnam County, West Virginia, by 1900.<sup>73</sup>

In 1890, John W. Runyon left the community, having deeded his 100 acres of land to Al Brumfield.<sup>74</sup> Prior to his departure, Runyon visited neighbor Aaron Adkins and borrowed bull rings, promising to return them.<sup>75</sup> “I’m leavin’ out,” he said, before rolling away in a wagon with a young woman and a baby.<sup>76</sup> “He left there in a one-horse wagon with a cow tied to the back of it,” said one Adkins descendant, “and never was heard tell of no more.”<sup>77</sup> In 1890, Al Brumfield deeded the 100-acre tract to John L. Dingess, his first cousin and a son-in-law to Louisa Mullins, who in 1891 deeded 75 acres of the tract to Al’s wife, Hollena.<sup>78</sup> Floyd Nester, Al Brumfield’s first cousin and a Runyon ally, relocated to Wayne County by 1900.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Canaan Adkins, headstone, Community Memorial Gardens, Armilda, WV. Cain was originally buried in his family cemetery at Stiltner, WV. When East Lynn Lake was constructed in the late 1960s or early 1970s, his family cemetery was relocated to Armilda, WV.

<sup>70</sup> U.S. Census for Martin County, KY, 1900; U.S. Census for Mingo County, WV, 1920.

<sup>71</sup> Thompson, *East Lynn Booming*, 32.

<sup>72</sup> Land Book (1886-1891), Lincoln County Clerk’s Office, Hamlin, WV; U.S. Census for Wayne County, WV, 1900.

<sup>73</sup> U.S. Census for Putnam County, WV, 1900. He returned to live at Twelve Pole Creek, near Dingess, where he died in 1918.

<sup>74</sup> See Appendix 8. Land Book (1886-1891), Lincoln County Clerk’s Office, Hamlin, WV; Mae Brumfield, interview, 4 March 1995.

<sup>75</sup> Johnny Golden Adkins, interview, 2 April 2011.

<sup>76</sup> Johnny Golden Adkins, interview, 8 August 1995.

<sup>77</sup> Johnny Golden Adkins, interview, 2 April 2011.

<sup>78</sup> Land Book (1892-1896), Lincoln County Clerk’s Office, Hamlin, WV; John Dingess to Hollena Brumfield, deed of sale, 7 August 1891, Deed Book 52, 418-419, Lincoln County Clerk’s Office, Hamlin, WV. Based on Land Book (1892-1896), Hollena acquired the remaining 25 acres in 1893.

<sup>79</sup> U.S. Census for Wayne County, WV, 1900.

In 1890, Ben Adams moved from his residence just above the mouth of Smokehouse Fork to a more distant location on Trace Fork.<sup>80</sup> Ben's family knew firsthand of his involvement in the conspiracy to kill Al Brumfield. Some relatives named his nephew John "Frock" Adams—not Milt Haley and Green McCoy—as the person who had ambushed Al and Hollena Brumfield. According to one great-nephew: "The Dingesses heard that 'Long John' Adams had shot the Brumfields but the Dingess and the Brumfield people never believed it."<sup>81</sup> Curiously, on 2 December 1890, Ben Adams deeded 25 acres located on the Left Side of Meekin Branch of Trace Fork to John Frock.<sup>82</sup> In 1891-1892, *Polk's West Virginia Business Directory* listed him as a general store operator at Warren. Anthony Adams, his brother, was listed as a blacksmith.<sup>83</sup>

In 1890, Paris Brumfield's family burned Bill Fowler's store and saloon in Hart.<sup>84</sup> The Adkins family who lived across the river watched as barrels of liquor exploded up into the air.<sup>85</sup> "My grandfather said he could stand on the other side of the river and them barrels of whisky would shoot up," said one Adkins descendant. "Said they'd shoot fire, looked like a big ball of fire completely across the river. He said, 'I stood there and

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<sup>80</sup> See Appendix 8. Land Book (1886-1891), Lincoln County Clerk's Office, Hamlin, WV; Land Book (1887-1892), Logan County Clerk's Office, Logan, WV; Ethel Adams, interview, September 1995; Alvie Thompson, interview, September 1995; Vilas Adams, interview, 30 July 1996; Dorothy Brumfield, interview, 26 September 1996; John Dingess, telephone interview, 8 December 1996. Land records for 1889 show him as a resident of Lincoln County, while land records for 1890 show him as a resident of Logan County. By 1891, all of his property was located in Logan County.

<sup>81</sup> John Dingess, telephone interview, 17 December 1996. John "Frock" was also known as "Long John," both nicknames prompted by his fondness for wearing a long overcoat. Of interest, Howard Dalton (July 1995) said Preacher Peter McCoy (a son of Milt Haley's sister, Jane) believed Haley and McCoy were "as innocent as Jesus Christ when he was on the cross." McCoy said he gave Haley and McCoy two hundred dollars to help them escape.

<sup>82</sup> Benjamin Adams to John Adams, deed of sale, 2 December 1890, Deed Book R, 469, Logan County Clerk's Office, Logan, WV. Was this "payment" for a service?

<sup>83</sup> *Polk's West Virginia State Gazetteer and Business Directory* (Detroit: R.L. Polk & Company, 1891-1892).

<sup>84</sup> Irene Mitchell, interview, 25 November 1995; Pat Adkins, interview, 11 September 1996.

<sup>85</sup> Pat Adkins, interview, 11 September 1996.

watched it.”<sup>86</sup> Thereafter, Fowler “sold out” to Isaac B. Adkins.<sup>87</sup> On 7 May 1892, Martha A. Fowler, wife of Bill, bought Lot 6 on Block 88 at Central City, near Huntington.<sup>88</sup> By June of 1892, Fowler and his wife had settled in Central City.

Sometime after June 1890, James P. Mullins relocated to Breaks, Virginia, disguised as a woman.<sup>89</sup> Louisa J. Mullins, wife of James P., also left the community; she conceived a child by Bob Hatfield, son to Devil Anse, in March of 1891.<sup>90</sup> On 7 June 1892, James P. married a much-younger cousin, Millie Ann Colley, and fathered ten more children.<sup>91</sup> In November of 1892, one local newspaper reported that Louisa Mullins, estranged wife of James P., and her new paramour, Bob Hatfield, had tried to rob a Jewish pack peddler.<sup>92</sup> By the late 1890s, Bob and “L.J.” (as she would be known) operated businesses in Wharncliffe, West Virginia.<sup>93</sup>

In 1890, Paris Brumfield deeded his daughter Martha J. Roberts a tract of land just upriver from Hart, thus removing her husband Isham—the brother of Louisa J. Mullins—from the mouth of Harts Creek.<sup>94</sup> In 1891, Martha Roberts deeded her land to Lettie Belle Fowler and relocated to the Osage and Kaw Indian Reservation in Oklahoma

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<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> See Appendix 8. Land Book (1886-1891), Lincoln County Clerk’s Office, Hamlin, WV.

<sup>88</sup> Susan Porter to Martha A. Fowler, deed of sale, 7 May 1892. At the time of the deed, Fowler was yet a resident of Lincoln County.

<sup>89</sup> See Appendix 8. Special Schedule of the Eleventh Census (1890), Enumerating Union Veterans and Widows of Union Veterans of the Civil War for Lincoln County, WV; Dennis Fields, email, 5 March 2012.

<sup>90</sup> Harry Leon Sellards, Jr., *Hatfield Family History* (Deland, FL: no publisher, 1995), 192; Craig T. Hatfield, headstone, Hatfield Cemetery, Wharncliffe, Mingo County, WV.

<sup>91</sup> Dennis Fields, email to author, Orange Park, FL, 6 March 2012. 1892 is the final year he shows up in Land Book (1892-1896) as a property owner in Lincoln County land books.

<sup>92</sup> *Big Sandy News* (Louisa, KY), 11 November 1892.

<sup>93</sup> “Robert Hatfield Captured at Wharncliffe,” *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 14 September 1899.

<sup>94</sup> See Appendix 8. Land Book (1886-1891), Lincoln County Clerk’s Office, Hamlin, WV.



Territory.<sup>95</sup> According to one Brumfield descendant, Paris had a daughter who “moved away and they didn’t know what happened to her.”<sup>96</sup> In 1890, Paris deeded 5 acres on the upper side of Harts Creek to his brother-in-law, Jake Adkins, who had hosted Al Brumfield right after the Haley-McCoy murders.<sup>97</sup>

As for other participants: Justice of the Peace Anderson Blair lost his re-election bid in 1892. In March of 1894, someone—reportedly a Brumfield and an Adkins woman—dynamited the home of JP Elias Vance on West Fork.<sup>98</sup> In 1898, Vance was sent to prison for embezzlement.<sup>99</sup> Constable Vic Shelton, a Brumfield partisan, murdered Albert or Martin Smith in April 1894.<sup>100</sup> The Halls, who had feuded with the Dingesses and Brumfields, returned to Kentucky. “They couldn’t hardly make it here,” said one descendant.<sup>101</sup>

## NEWSPAPERS

Some newspapers had trouble letting the feud end. On 9 January 1891, the *Critic* of Washington, DC, reported: “News reached here [Charleston] yesterday [Jan. 8] from Logan County, this State, that the Brumfield-McCoy vendetta, which has been quieted for some months, has been renewed and that in a fight on Hart’s Creek a few days ago,

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<sup>95</sup> Land Book (1892-1896), Lincoln County Clerk’s Office, Hamlin, WV; U.S. Census for Osage and Kaw Indian Reservation, OK Territory, 1900.

<sup>96</sup> Ida Taylor, telephone interview, n.d.

<sup>97</sup> Land Book (1886-1891), Lincoln County Clerk’s Office, Hamlin, WV.

<sup>98</sup> *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 22 March 1894; “A Dynamite Fiend’s Work,” *Washington (DC) Times*, 25 March 1894; *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 3 May 1894. A story titled “Cora Abbott Burned Alive” from the *Huntington (WV) Advertiser* printed on 10 November 1896 states the bomber of Vance’s home was named Cora Abbott.

<sup>99</sup> *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 27 August 1898. On 3 March 1899, Gov. George W. Atkinson pardoned Vance.

<sup>100</sup> “Killed in a Quarrel,” *Fort Worth (TX) Gazette*, 8 April 1894; “Shot in a Quarrel,” *St. Paul (MN) Globe*, 8 April 1894.

<sup>101</sup> Margelene Adams, interview, 11 September 1996.

between adherents of the respective factions, six men were killed.”<sup>102</sup> The *Pittsburg Dispatch* dismissed the story: “The sensational report sent from Charleston, W. Va., concerning a battle between the McCoy-Brumfield factions on Hart Creek is a canard. The most minute inquiry from persons who have just arrived from that section shows the report to be false.”<sup>103</sup>

From the *Hocking Sentinel* of Logan, Ohio, dated July 23, 1891:

The West Virginia feud is on deck again and the McCoy's are strictly in it. This time it was a Roberts and not a Hatfield who got 67 bullets in his body. The Roberts, a large and influential Logan county family, swear the usual oath of vengeance and the war of extermination is expected to go merrily on. West Virginia news has been rather tame lately, so for this favor much thanks.<sup>104</sup>

## BOUNDARY CHANGE

The Lincoln County Feud may have contributed to a boundary change in the Harts Creek community. In the early 1890s, the Lincoln-Logan county line was altered so as to include more of Upper Hart in Logan County.<sup>105</sup> Because of this boundary adjustment, feudists Henderson Dingess and Ben Adams joined Burl Farley and Jackson Mullins as residents of Logan County.<sup>106</sup> On 30 October 1891, the Hart Post Office, located at the mouth of Harts Creek, was discontinued.<sup>107</sup> On 17 January 1894, the Warren Post Office was discontinued, with mail sent to Fourteen Post Office.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> “The McCoy's at It Again,” *The Critic* (Washington, DC), 9 January 1891.

<sup>103</sup> “A West Virginia Fake,” *Pittsburg (PA) Dispatch*, 11 January 1891.

<sup>104</sup> *Hocking Sentinel* (Logan, OH), 23 July 1891.

<sup>105</sup> Sims, *Making A State*, Map 10A, 213; *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 23 March 1893. According to one source, a resident of Twelve Pole Creek was charged with moonshining during this time. New surveys resulted when he argued that he did not live in the county prosecuting him. The new surveys revealed errors in the existing county boundaries and they were subsequently altered.

<sup>106</sup> U.S. Census for Logan County, WV, 1900.

<sup>107</sup> Postmaster Appointments for the Hart Post Office in Lincoln County, WV.

<sup>108</sup> Postmaster Appointments for the Warren Post Office in Lincoln County, WV.

## AL AND HOLLENA BRUMFIELD

Al Brumfield emerged from the Lincoln County Feud as the Harts Creek community's wealthiest citizen, a title he maintained until his untimely death in 1905.<sup>109</sup> In April 1891, Hollena conceived her first child since her near-fatal wounding.<sup>110</sup> This child, named Belle, reportedly belonged to Fed Adkins, a neighbor and member of the 1889 lynch mob.<sup>111</sup> By 1899, Al owned 714.5 acres worth \$2774; on his property were three buildings valued at \$150, \$150, and \$750.<sup>112</sup> Additionally, he added to his wealth by operation of a store, log boom, saloon, gristmill, ferry, and orchard. In 1900, he re-established the Hart Post Office.<sup>113</sup> It was a prosperous time: timber was in its hey-day and the railroad was on its way. "Allen, son of the late Paris Brumfield, who has a big lot of property at and near the mouth of Hart's creek, says times have been good," said the *Cabell Record* of Milton, West Virginia, on 26 July 1900. "He has a pretty home and one of the finest store-houses along the river."<sup>114</sup> Later in October, the *Cabell Record* reported: "Times were never in better shape along the river. Timbermen are active and saw mills are busy. The farmers are doing well, and the new railroad is giving employment to many."<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> See Appendix 8. "Death Claimed Noted Feudist," *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 24 June 1905.

<sup>110</sup> U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1900.

<sup>111</sup> Aaron Adkins Family Notebook, Billy Adkins Genealogy Collection, Harts, WV; Pat Adkins, interview, 11 September 1996. The Brumfields denied this story, particularly Earl Brumfield (interview by author, Barboursville, WV, 14 April 1995) and Mae Brumfield (interview by author, Harts, WV, 19 June 1999).

<sup>112</sup> See Appendix 8. Land Book (1897-1900), Lincoln County Clerk's Office, Hamlin, WV.

<sup>113</sup> Postmaster Appointments for the Hart Post Office in Lincoln County, West Virginia.

<sup>114</sup> *Cabell Record* (Milton, WV), 26 July 1900.

<sup>115</sup> *Cabell Record* (Milton, WV), 4 October 1900.

## BRUMFIELD-DINGESS FAMILIES

The Brumfield and Dingess families drew closer after the feud. On 27 November 1890, Charley Brumfield, son of Paris, married Caroline Dingess, daughter of Henderson.<sup>116</sup> About 1892, William “Bill” Brumfield, son of Paris, married Hollena Adkins, great-niece of Henderson.<sup>117</sup> On 14 October 1893, John Brumfield, son of Paris, married Harriet Dingess, daughter of Henderson.<sup>118</sup> Henderson Dingess, meanwhile, continued to prosper.<sup>119</sup> In 1891-1892, *Polk’s West Virginia Business Directory* listed him as a legal distiller in Warren.<sup>120</sup>

In May 1891, John Brumfield—Al’s younger brother and a key member of the 1889 gang—shot Constable Wade Lambert and his son Jerome on Green Shoal Creek.<sup>121</sup> The fracas occurred during a dance at Marine Spurlock’s residence. Young Brumfield was disturbing the dance when the Lamberts tried to arrest him. Brumfield shot the elder Lambert in the knee, while Jerome was shot but spared injury due to a button on his pants that flattened the bullet.<sup>122</sup> According to the *Logan County Banner*: “The younger Lambert, being a Constable, attempted to arrest Brumfield, whereupon he resisted and proceeded to get in his work in his usual way.”<sup>123</sup> In June, John impregnated Eliza Fry, wife of George Fry.<sup>124</sup> “George Fry had been ‘fooling around’ on his wife and so she had

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<sup>116</sup> Marriages-Births-Deaths (1872-1892), 64, Logan County Clerk’s Office, Logan, WV.

<sup>117</sup> U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1900.

<sup>118</sup> Marriage Record 2 (1892-1913), 5, Logan County Clerk’s Office, Logan, WV.

<sup>119</sup> See Appendix 8.

<sup>120</sup> *Polk’s West Virginia State Gazetteer and Business Directory* (1891-1892).

<sup>121</sup> *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 28 May 1891.

<sup>122</sup> Fred B. Lambert Papers, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV.

<sup>123</sup> *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 28 May 1891. The *Logan County Banner* mistakenly said the shooting occurred “near the Mouth of Harts Creek” and cited the “younger Lambert” as constable when in fact it was his father.

<sup>124</sup> U.S. Census for Lincoln County, WV, 1900; Bernie L. Brumfield, death record, 8 July 1956, Cabell County, WV; Delores Riggs Davis, *Dehue History Book: Logan County, West Virginia: 1916-1994*

an affair,” said a granddaughter. “She said she’d put the same patch on his pants as he put on her dress.”<sup>125</sup> The following spring, Judge T.H. Harvey sentenced Brumfield to the penitentiary for his wounding of Constable Lambert. “John Brumfield plead to unlawful shooting and was sentenced to two years confinement in the penitentiary,” the *Logan County Banner* reported on 3 March 1892.<sup>126</sup>

On 3 November 1891, Paris Brumfield was shot and killed by his son, Charley.<sup>127</sup> The younger Brumfield was not initially arrested nor prosecuted for the crime.<sup>128</sup> In November 1891, a Lincoln County grand jury failed to find an indictment against Charley Brumfield for the murder of his father. “We understand that he is at home and is thought by his neighbors to be guilty of no crime as the killing was done in defense off his mother,” the *Logan County Banner* stated.<sup>129</sup> In December of 1891, Charley Brumfield shot and killed George Smith and wounded William Messinger.<sup>130</sup> In May of 1892, Frank Brumfield’s home was destroyed by fire, killing two children.<sup>131</sup> In 1892, the Brumfields participated in rigging an election. The ensuing legal case was ultimately decided by the West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals.<sup>132</sup> On 8 December 1892, the Paris Brumfield

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(n.p., 1994), 77, 125; Ray Kirk, interview, 22 November 1995; Dave Brumfield, interview by author, Harts, WV, 23 November 1995; Jewell Adkins, interview by author, Huntington, WV, 6 July 1996.

<sup>125</sup> Jewell Adkins, interview, 6 July 1996.

<sup>126</sup> *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 3 March 1892. Note: This occurred after the death of Paris Brumfield. On 29 November 1892, Governor A.B. Fleming pardoned Brumfield. In July of 1894, John Vance, brother to JP Elias Vance, shot (but did not kill) him. During that time, Brumfield reportedly fathered an illegitimate child by Vance’s wife, Bell (stepdaughter to Elias).

<sup>127</sup> For trends relating to Paris Brumfield’s land ownership, see Appendix 8. “Brumfield Dead,” *Sentinel* (Parkersburg, WV), 6 November 1891; *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 11 November 1891; “Bad Women and Whisky,” *Daily State Journal* (Parkersburg, WV), 11 November 1891; “The Mountain Terror,” *Shenandoah Herald* (Woodstock, VA), 21 July 1893; Daisy Ross, interview, 16 March 1996.

<sup>128</sup> *Ceredo (WV) Advance*, 11 November 1891.

<sup>129</sup> *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 26 November 1891.

<sup>130</sup> “A Desperado Takes Another Scalp,” *Pittsburg (PA) Dispatch*, 12 December 1891.

<sup>131</sup> “Two Children Cremated,” *Ohio Democrat* (Logan, OH), 14 May 1892.

<sup>132</sup> *Dial v. Hollandsworth* (1894), Thomas S. Riley, ed., *Reports of Decisions of the Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia* (Charleston, WV: Tribune Printing Company, 1905), 1-17.

murder trial resulted in a hung jury.<sup>133</sup> In July of 1893, Charley Brumfield was acquitted of murder.<sup>134</sup>

## WOMEN

The Lincoln County Feud resulted in the deaths of Boney Lucas, Floyd Dingess, Milt Haley, and Green McCoy. Each man left a widow. Angeline Lucas, the widow of Boney Lucas, married William Leander “Lee” Adams on 12 January 1893 in Wayne County and had nine more children.<sup>135</sup> In 1900, she and her Adams family lived in Wolfe County, Kentucky.<sup>136</sup> By 1920, she lived alone on Napier Ridge in Wayne County, listing herself as a widow.<sup>137</sup> She died in 1936.<sup>138</sup> Her husband died in 1941 under the alias of “W.L. Auxier” in McDowell County.<sup>139</sup>

Eveline Dingess, widow of Floyd Dingess and the mother of seven children, remarried to Adam Cline about 1890, by whom she had four children between 1892 and 1899.<sup>140</sup> In 1900, Eveline and her children lived on Harts Creek two households away from her former father-in-law, Henderson Dingess; she listed herself as a widow in census records.<sup>141</sup> On 11 May 1901, she married John L. Thompson in Logan County.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 8 December 1892.

<sup>134</sup> “The Mountain Terror,” *Shenandoah Herald* (Woodstock, VA), 21 July 1893.

<sup>135</sup> Adkins, *Land of York to Beech Fork*, 235-236; Angeline Adams family Bible (copy), author’s collection.

<sup>136</sup> U.S. Census for Wolfe County, KY, 1900.

<sup>137</sup> U.S. Census for Wayne County, WV, 1920.

<sup>138</sup> Adkins, *Land of York to Beech Fork*, 235-236.

<sup>139</sup> W.L. Auxier, death certificate, 12 May 1941, McDowell County, WV.

<sup>140</sup> U.S. Census for Logan County, WV, 1900.

<sup>141</sup> U.S. Census for Logan County, WV, 1900. Her son Randolph lived with Henderson Dingess. In an interview on 9 April 1996, Mae Brumfield said Sallie Adams raised Randolph. According to Ward Browning (30 April 1996), Randolph stayed with the Dingesses because his mother’s second husband was mean to him—he would set him on a hot stove.

<sup>142</sup> Marriage Record 2 (1892-1913), 135, Logan County Clerk’s Office, Logan, WV.

Imogene “Emmy” Haley, widow of Milt Haley, lived with her parents, Jackson and Chloe Mullins on Trace Fork of Harts Creek. “I always thought from what I heard that she stayed with some people around in the Harts Creek area until she died,” said one relative. “After he died, she was able to work some and she’d go out and work for the neighbors to keep herself up and not ask nobody for nothing. She was an independent person.”<sup>143</sup> On 19 March 1891, her parents deeded twenty acres on Trace Fork to her.<sup>144</sup> Emmy died of unknown causes on 11 October 1891.<sup>145</sup> On 9 May 1898, Harry Blair, Jr. was made guardian of her blind son, Ed Haley.<sup>146</sup> Young Haley was mostly raised by his maternal grandparents, Jackson and Chloe Mullins.<sup>147</sup>

Ella Jane McCoy, first wife of Green McCoy and the mother of at least two children—Alafair and Mary—married Joseph A. Cook on 24 May 1890 in Pike County, Kentucky.<sup>148</sup> By her second marriage, Jane gave birth to at least nine more children.<sup>149</sup> Her daughter Alafair married her stepbrother, William M. Cook, on 18 March 1897 in Pike County and lived in Buchanan County, Virginia, in 1900 and Pike County, Kentucky, in 1910.<sup>150</sup> Alafair relocated to Lewis County, Washington, by 1920, where she died after 1940.<sup>151</sup> Jane McCoy Cook died in 1938 in McDowell County.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Carolyn “Johnnie” Farley, interview, 24 October 1995.

<sup>144</sup> A.J. and Chloe Mullins to Immagin A. Haley, deed of sale, 11 October 1891, Deed Book P, 406, Logan County Clerk’s Office, Logan, WV.

<sup>145</sup> E MULL headstone, Bob Mullins Cemetery, Spottswood, WV.

<sup>146</sup> Record of Bonds Book B, 136, Logan County Clerk’s Office, Logan, WV.

<sup>147</sup> U.S. Census for Logan County, WV, 1900; Roxie Mullins, interview, 23 March 1991.

<sup>148</sup> Joseph A. Cook to Ella Jane McCoy, marriage record, 24 May 1890, Pike County, KY.

<sup>149</sup> U.S. Census for Pike County, KY, 1900; U.S. Census for Buchanan County, VA, 1910.

<sup>150</sup> William M. Cook to Alafair McCoy, marriage record, 18 March 1897, Pike County, KY; U.S. Census for Buchanan County, VA, 1900; U.S. Census for Pike County, KY, 1910.

<sup>151</sup> U.S. Census for Lewis County, WA, 1920; U.S. Census for Lewis County, WA, 1940.

<sup>152</sup> Jane Cook, death certificate, 22 June 1936, McDowell County, WV.

Spicie McCoy, Green McCoy's widow, gave birth to her second child by Green—named William Greenville McCoy, Jr.—on 31 March 1890 in Wayne County, West Virginia.<sup>153</sup> On 24 June 1893, in Wayne County, she remarried to Goble Fry, her first cousin.<sup>154</sup> By her second marriage, she had seven children.<sup>155</sup> For many years, Spicie remained bitter: she “couldn't forgive the Brumfields” for killing Green McCoy, who she thought was innocent of any wrong-doing.<sup>156</sup> Years later, Sherman McCoy, Spicie's oldest son, told her to “forgive but not forget” the Brumfields or else she would “go to the same place where they did.”<sup>157</sup> Finally, in the 1910s, she was baptized. Thereafter, she was a member of the McCoy Time Singers, a popular Gospel quartet in the Tri-State region of West Virginia, Kentucky, and Ohio.<sup>158</sup> Spicie “always grieved” over her slain husband.<sup>159</sup> On one visit to the Wayne County home of Preacher Peter McCoy, she told of her husband's death. “She got married in red and they said anybody that got married in red would see blood,” said Preacher McCoy's daughter. “When she went to see [Green] there was blood beside the road and she thought of that dress.”<sup>160</sup> Spicie died in 1963 in Wayne County.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Adkins, *Land of York to Beech Fork*, 236.

<sup>154</sup> Adkins, *Land of York to Beech Fork*, 236; Fry, Bunn, and Fry, *George Fry I and Descendants*, 571; Ralph McCoy, telephone interview, 25 October 1995; Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 25 October 1995. Cain Adkins did not perform the marriage.

<sup>155</sup> Adkins, *Land of York to Beech Fork*, 236; U.S. Census for Wayne County, WV, 1910.

<sup>156</sup> Daisy Ross, interview, 16 March 1996.

<sup>157</sup> Daisy Ross, interview, 16 March 1996.

<sup>158</sup> Oris Vance, interview, 24 October 1995; Ralph McCoy, telephone interview, 25 October 1995; Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 27 October 1995; Daisy Ross, interview, 16 March 1996.

<sup>159</sup> Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 27 October 1995; Daisy Ross, telephone interview, 8 December 1995.

<sup>160</sup> Bessie Fraley, telephone interview by author, Kiahsville, WV, 23 February 1998.

<sup>161</sup> Adkins, *Land of York to Beech Fork*, 236; Fry, Bunn, and Fry, *George Fry I and Descendants*, 571.



## LEGACY

The Lincoln County Feud, particularly the lynching of Milt Haley and Green McCoy, remained firmly fixed in the minds of Harts Creek residents for the next one hundred years.<sup>162</sup> In the years immediately following the events, George W. Ferrell, a local musician, composed a song called “The Lincoln County Crew.”<sup>163</sup> On 11 March 1897, the *Huntington Advertiser* reported sightings of ghosts resembling Milt Haley and Green McCoy at the mouth of Green Shoal Creek in Lincoln County.

It is away back in 1889 since McCoy and Haley the desperadoes of Lincoln county who sought to assassinate Al Brumfield and his wife of Hart’s creek from ambush were clubbed to death in a small shanty near the scene of their crime. The men were pursued by a posse and were caught in Martin county, Ky., and brought to this state. Their lifeless bodies were found the next morning after their first night in West Virginia inside the cabin where they were taken in the evening, and their heads were beaten to unrecognizable masses. Who killed the men has never been found out nor has any one seemed desirous to know. But about the region of the old cabin where they met death the residents now travel very seldom and everyone evades the place if possible. They refuse to go there on dark nights from the fact that a few weeks ago two men saw ghost-like forms there and they declare that they resembled Haley and McCoy. The stories they tell have excited many of the inhabitants who have heretofore scoffed at ghost stories.<sup>164</sup>

In early May of 1899, the *Huntington Herald* printed a story about the unexpected discovery of cartridges near Big Ugly Creek, likely remnants of the Lincoln County Feud. On 11 May 1899, the *Logan County Banner* printed the *Herald*’s story:

L.F. Fry, who resides in Lincoln county, on the Guyandotte river, informs the *Huntington Herald* that last Tuesday evening while he and his son were gigging fish they suddenly heard the rapid fire of a great number of shots. Knowing that E. Brumfield was burning brush on the new ground from whence the sound emanated, for a moment believed that the great heat made by the fires caused the popping or scaling of rocks. Brumfield with one of his men, however investigated the matter, and found, to their great surprise, that a wooden box containing one thousand .32 Winchester cartridges of the model of 1873, had been concealed in

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<sup>162</sup> As of the 1990s, nearly every elderly resident of the community could tell some version of the story.

<sup>163</sup> See Appendix 9. I live a stone’s throw away from Mr. Ferrell’s grave in Ferrellsburg, WV.

<sup>164</sup> “Old Tragedy is Recalled,” *Huntington (WV) Advertiser*, 11 March 1897.

the crevice of a ledge of rocks, which the burning brush had been piled against, and the head had caused 800 of them to explode. The remaining 200 were untouched, and fully a quart of bullets from the exploded shells were gathered up. Mr. Fry says that many in the neighborhood believe that they had been hidden there during the feud between the Brumfields and Runyons, which was in progress about ten years ago, the box containing the cartridges which was not totally destroyed by the blaze indicating about that age. The person who hid them was probably killed or hurriedly left the country.<sup>165</sup>

Early versions of the feud story and “The Lincoln County Crew” appeared in Professor John Harrington Cox’s *Folk-Songs of the South* (1925) and Fred B. Lambert’s *The Llorrac* (1926).<sup>166</sup> In 1986, *Goldenseal* magazine revived interest in the story, printing an additional feature in 1992.<sup>167</sup> By that time, musician John Hartford had initiated his research of the feud, which prompted an entry in *The West Virginia Encyclopedia*, a 2000 story in *Smithsonian* magazine, a play, feud-related CDs, and contributions to the popular movie *O Brother, Where Art Thou*.<sup>168</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The Lincoln County Feud ended due to the elimination or outmigration of anti-Brumfield-Dingess factions. By the spring of 1890, the feud had essentially ended and the legal apparatus could function properly. Al Brumfield and John W. Runyon suffered a timber dispute in court. The Haley-McCoy murder trial, which occurred in the summer of

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<sup>165</sup> “A Mysterious Find,” *Logan County Banner* (Logan, WV), 11 May 1899.

<sup>166</sup> John Harrington Cox, *Folk-Songs of the South* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1925); Lambert, *The Llorrac*, 62; Fred B. Lambert Papers, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV.

<sup>167</sup> Michael M. Meador, “The Lincoln County Crew,” *Goldenseal* (Summer 1986), 48-49; Coberly, *Goldenseal* (Summer 1992): 36-37.

<sup>168</sup> John Hartford and Brandon Ray Kirk, “Lincoln County Feud,” *The West Virginia Encyclopedia*, <http://www.wvencyclopedia.org/articles/1406> (accessed 11 November 2013); Edwards Park, “A Tale of Fatal Feuds and Futile Forensics,” *Smithsonian* (March 2000), 32-36; John Hartford, *Wild Hog in the Red Brush*, Rounder Records, CD, 1996; John Hartford, *The Speed of the Old Long Bow*, Rounder Records, CD, 1998.

1890, involved high profile men. Seven locals were tried and ultimately acquitted of the murders. Most likely, the Brumfields used political capital to help facilitate their acquittal. Runyon sold his property to Al Brumfield, which may have spared his life and helped to end the feud. Cain Adkins sold his property and never returned to the community. Ben Adams moved a bit further away from the Dingesses; likewise, Isham Roberts moved further away from the Brumfields. The Nesters moved to Wayne County—and to Washington State. James P. Mullins resettled in Virginia, while his wife remarried to Bob Hatfield and moved to Ben Creek. The Brumfields removed Bill Fowler from Hart by burning his store and saloon. The Lincoln County Feud may have contributed to a boundary change in the Harts Creek community. Al Brumfield ultimately acquired the Fowler lands and became the community's leading merchant. The Lincoln County Feud continued to serve as a source of interest, inspiring news items, songs, and plays.

## CONCLUSION

Late nineteenth century Southern Appalachian feud studies provide invaluable insight into Civil War legacy and violence, require a micro view of feud communities that allow for better understanding of mountain culture, offer reasons for crime causation and cessation, and consider a link between societal transformation and violent behavior. The Lincoln County Feud, while not caused by old Civil War grudges, did result in part from a Civil War legacy. Paris Brumfield, the feud's primary desperado, was corrupted by the controversial Lt. Col. Vincent "Clawhammer" Witcher and negatively impacted by the war's violence. After the war, Brumfield's aggression and deviance manifested itself through his ruthless acquisition of land at the expense of his own family. Land situated at the mouth of Harts Creek, long sought after but never acquired by Brumfield, brought friction with his mother-in-law, pioneer Abner Vance, and businessman Bill Fowler. Simmering resentment, fueled by biological, psychological, and environmental factors (some of which were prompted by the war) ultimately yielded for Brumfield a feud with Cain Adkins, son-in-law to Vance, whose service in the Union army had likely irked Brumfield and whose occupational statuses (teacher, preacher, justice of the peace) repeatedly placed him in opposition. Once the feud began, Brumfield waged a cruel war inspired by his earlier days in Witcher's Battalion. Drawing from Witcher's "gang mentality" and his use of extralegal means to achieve objectives, Brumfield spent much of the 1880s waging war upon the Adkins-Vance clan. His killing of Adkins' son-in-law, Boney Lucas, in 1882 as well as his prominent role in the apprehension and killing of

Adkins' son-in-law, Green McCoy, along with Milt Haley, in 1889 marked the culmination of at least fifteen years of aggression, vindictiveness, and hedonism.

The Civil War does not appear to have affected other feudists, although Cain Adkins' service in the Union Army warrants note, especially since he came to live in a community dominated by former Confederates. Importantly, Adkins suffered no trouble with anyone other than Paris Brumfield. In fact, he was popular enough to be elected as district justice of the peace. Based on this, Adkins' Unionism does not appear to have crippled his popularity in the Harts Creek community. Most likely, his Union partisanship was dulled by the high status enjoyed by his in-laws and the fact that, like most everyone else in the district, he was a Democrat. The arrival of John W. Runyon, a Kentucky Republican whose family had strongly supported the Union, appears more problematic, since Runyon actively opposed the Brumfields politically while also carrying the stigma of Unionism. Adkins and Runyon likely shared a similar world view (evangelicalism and market forces), lived within close proximity of one another, and enjoyed at least one land deal.

Because many writers have attributed feuds to geography, isolation, genetics, and culture, feud studies should always consider geography, demographics, population, genealogy, ethnicity, social stratification, property, and crime. Other essential social categories include family, education, religion, economy, and politics. The Lincoln County Feud, contrary to popular notions about feud causation, did not arise from geographic isolation, a genetic predisposition to violence, demographic crises (i.e., overpopulation), a surplus male population, a lack of educational or religious institutions, or a backward economy. Postwar heightened market forces (while contributing to the

feud) did not transform an egalitarian community and provoke violence by feudists. Because many writers attribute kinship to feud loyalties, it is important to note that kinship did not always determine loyalties among Lincoln County feudists. A community study, aside from revealing certain truths about feuds, provides deeper insight about nineteenth century mountain culture, i.e., circumstances of settlement, ethnic background of settlers, patterns and methods of land acquisition, social stratification, population trends, slave ownership, degree of isolation, efforts at modernization, and so forth. In the case of the Harts Creek community, it is shown that settlers arrived just after 1800, were mostly English, were stratified, gained population, were not entirely isolated, sought internal improvements, and enjoyed church and school activity.

The Lincoln County Feud provides useful explanations for why crime occurs, specifically why a certain type of crime (feuding) occurs, and ends. In the case of the Lincoln County Feud, violence erupted between prominent residents Paris Brumfield and Cain Adkins due to Brumfield's rampant deviance and Adkins' occupational status set, which repeatedly placed them in oppositional space. The historical record provides other specific possible reasons: Brumfield's Confederate service vs. Adkins' Union service, a wartime lawsuit between Adkins' and Brumfield's brothers, valuable land acquired by Adkins' father-in-law at the mouth of Harts Creek, and Brumfield's killing of Boney Lucas (which could have predated his feud with Adkins). Simultaneous to the Brumfield-Adkins Feud, several concurrent feuds in the Harts Creek community soon joined the larger feud. Some of these feuds, like the Brumfield-Adkins Feud, were of a highly personal nature. Henderson Dingess and his sons, for instance, feuded with in-law Ben Adams and Billy Hall over such matters as poor perception, physical scuffles, bullying,

and women. Others feuded due to business competition and political disagreements. Al Brumfield, for instance, feuded with businessman John W. Runyon over store and whisky competition, timber disputes, the election of 1888, and possibly a woman (Louisa Mullins). Brumfield, as the husband of Hollena Dingess, inherited her family squabbles with Ben Adams and the Hall family; he also feuded with Adams over timber issues, and with his cousins, the Nester family, over land. Underlying the great feud was a culture of honor, a gun culture, and a culture of violence, all of which motivated a significant amount of the trouble. Another significant contributor was the heightened state of the postwar timber industry, which did not transform the community, but did disrupt and alter it. Ultimately, the feud ended due to the outmigration (Adkins, Runyon, Mullins, Fowler) or extermination (Lucas, Haley, McCoy) of anti-Brumfield forces.

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**APPENDIX 1**  
Harts Creek Settlers, Prior to 1857

Settling Family	Date of Arrival	Surname Origin
Brumfield	1804	English
Elkins	1807/1815/1816	English
Toney	By 1815	English
Conley	By 1815	Irish
Thompson	By 1815	Scots-Irish
Fry	By 1820	English
Lucas	By 1820	English
Vance	By 1820	English-Irish
Brown	By 1824	English
Browning	By 1824	English
Workman	By 1824	English
Gore	By 1824	English
Adkins	By 1827	English
Spurlock <sup>1</sup>	By 1830	English
Rowe <sup>1</sup>	1838	English
Adams	By 1840	Dutch-English
Collins	By 1840	Irish
Dingess	By 1840	German
Dolen <sup>1</sup>	By 1840	Irish
Heart <sup>1</sup>	By 1840	English
Johnson <sup>1</sup>	By 1840	English
Lambert	By 1840	English
Lilly	By 1840	English
Perry	By 1840	Irish
Tomblin	By 1840	English
Hensley	1842	English
Butcher	1843	English
White <sup>1</sup>	1843	English
Mullins	1844	English-Irish
Dalton	1847	English-Irish
Fowler	1847	English
Dempsey	1850	Irish
Gartin	1850	English
Abbott	By 1850	English-Scottish
Blankenship <sup>1</sup>	By 1850	English
Brooks <sup>1</sup>	By 1850	English
Butcher	By 1850	English
Estep	By 1850	English
Farley	By 1850	English
Ferrell	By 1850	Irish
Nester	By 1850	Irish
Richards	By 1850	English
Spears	By 1850	English
Woodrum <sup>1</sup>	By 1850	English
Dial	1852	English-Irish
Carter	1854	English
Farmer	1856	English
Sias	1857	English

Sources: Tax List for Cabell County, VA, 1815; U.S. Census for Cabell County, VA, 1820; Tax List for Logan County, VA, 1824; Tax List for Logan County, VA, 1827; U.S. Census for Logan County, VA, 1830; U.S. Census for Logan County, VA, 1840; U.S. Census for Logan County, VA, 1850; Hardesty, *Hardesty's Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, 7: 134, 148. Sims, *Sims Index to Land Grants in West Virginia*; "The Meaning of Surnames," <http://www.searchforancestors.com/surnames/origin/> (accessed 21 April 2009).

<sup>1</sup> Indicates families who did not remain in the community.

## APPENDIX 2

### Harts Creek Community Land Grant Recipients, 1812-1860

Anthony Lawson*	6502 acres
Anthony Lawson et al*	3400 acres
Charles Lattin et al	2667 acres
John H. Brumfield et al	2328 acres
Spencer A. Mullins	2145 acres
John Dempsey et al*	2090 acres
Isaiah Adkins	2058 acres
Evermont Ward*	1800 acres
William Johnson	1794 acres
Elijah A. Garten	1620 acres
Charles J. Stone	1610 acres
Hamilton Fry	1488 acres
William Johnson et al	1435 acres
Burbus C. Toney	1332 acres
William Straton et al*	1319 acres
Thomas Dunn English*	1085 acres
Thomas A. Childers et al*	1050 acres
Samuel Damron et al	1043 acres
Joshua Butcher	808 acres
William Straton*	791 acres
Elijah A. Garten et al	770 acres
Isaac Adkins	720 acres
Moses Harrison et al	700 acres
Abner Vance, Jr.	642 acres
George Hager et al*	600 acres
Isaac Adkins, Jr.	595 acres
Samuel Short et al*	561 acres
Elias Adkins	560 acres
George Hager*	520 acres
Crispin S. Stone et al	485 acres
John H. Brumfield	480 acres
Moses Brown	412 acres
Peter Mullins	408 acres
Robert Lilly	393 acres
Joseph and Dicy Adams	384 acres
Charles Lattin	378 acres
Albert Abbot	370 acres
Christian T. Fry	367 acres
Lorenzo D. Hill*	340 acres
Lewis Adkins et al	325 acres
Enos "Jake" Adkins	320 acres
Richard Elkins	311 acres
Obediah Merret*	310 acres

Squire Toney	307 acres
Isaac Samuels et al*	300 acres
William T. Nicholls et al*	296 acres
Samuel Lambert	269 acres
Richard Elkin, Jr. et al	260 acres
Anderson Barker, Jr. et al*	250 acres
Noah and William Haner et al*	250 acres
William Smith et al	250 acres
Harvey S. Dingess	242 acres
Abijah Workman	239 acres
Samuel Ferrell	238 acres
Noah Haner et al*	235 acres
Charles F. Dingess & Peter Dingess, Jr.*	233 acres
Henderson Dingess	233 acres
Richard Elkins et al	230 acres
James Justice*	220 acres
John Fry	204 acres
Elias and Allen Adkins et al	200 acres
James Smith and Harvey Smith	200 acres
James Toney et al	200 acres
James Browning	190 acres
William Buffington et al*	190 acres
Charles Lucas	190 acres
James Wilson et al*	190 acres
James Butcher	185 acres
Jacob Stollings	185 acres
A.F. McKendree et al*	185 acres
Grandison B. Moore	180 acres
Peter Dingess	170 acres
Joseph Fry	162 acres
Robert Elkin	160 acres
Admiral S. Fry	157 acres
Robert Hensley	154 acres
Richard Vance	153 acres
Levi Collins	150 acres
Harvey Elkins	148 acres
James Smith	148 acres
Reese W. Elkins	125 acres
John Fry, Jr.	125 acres
Price Lucas	125 acres
Ralph Lucas	125 acres
William Dalton	123 acres
Andrew Dial	120 acres
Lewis Adkins	116 acres
Patton Thompson, Jr.	112 acres
John W. Adams, Jr.	110 acres

Charles Adkins	110 acres
Obediah Workman	106 acres
Stephen Lambert	105 acres
John Goare	104 acres
Moses Workman and John Workman	100 acres
James Toney	95 acres
Francis Browning	94 acres
Alexander Tombolin	94 acres
Allen Butcher	93 acres
Ira Lucas	93 acres
William P. Blankenship	92 acres
David Robison	92 acres
Joseph Gore	90 acres
Archibald Elkins	87 ½ acres
Anderson Barker et al*	85 acres
Isaac Fry et al	85 acres
Paris Vance	84 acres
William Brumfield	75 acres
Henry Conley	75 acres
Squire Toney et al	75 acres
Andrew Dial et al	73 acres
Burbus C. Toney et al	73 acres
Henry Adkins	70 acres
Isaiah and Charles Adkins	70 acres
John W. Sartin	70 acres
Barnabus Carter	65 acres
Mathias Elkin	63 acres
Patton Thompson	62 acres
Samuel Parsons*	60 acres
Harvey and Andrew Elkin	55 acres
Meken Vance	55 acres
Joel Elkins	50 acres
Jeremiah Farmer	50 acres
Baptist Fry	50 acres
William Smith	50 acres
Thomas P. Spears	50 acres
Charles Spurlock	50 acres
Samuel Vannatter et al	50 acres
Edmund Toney	46 acres
Sally McComas et al heirs	45 acres
George Perry	44 acres
Arnold Perry, Jr.	40 acres
William Thompson	40 acres
John Workman	40 acres
Josephus Workman	40 acres
John Rowe	38 acres

Melville Childers et al*	37 acres
John Dalton	34 acres
Polly Vance and William Vance (son)	33 acres
Garland Conley, Jr.	32 acres
Moses Workman	26 acres
William Brown	25 acres
Royal Childers*	25 acres
Wesley Vance	25 acres
Richard Vance, Jr.	13 acres

*Source: Sims Index to Land Grants in West Virginia, 43-79, 388-424.*

\*Identifies known absentee landowners.

**APPENDIX 3**  
Harts Creek Elites, 1850

<b>Local Resident</b>	<b>Value of Real Estate Owned</b>
Isaac Adkins	\$4700
John H. Brumfield	\$4000
Elias Adkins	\$2300
Robert Lilly	\$2000
Burbus C. Toney	\$2000
Squire Toney	\$1600
Joseph Adams	\$1500
Isaiah Adkins	\$1200
John Fry	\$1000
Andrew Dial	\$900
Joseph Fry	\$900
Moses Brown	\$800
Ham Fry	\$800
James Butcher	\$600
Daniel Fry	\$500
Aaron Adkins	\$400
Charles Adkins	\$400
Abner Vance	\$330
Levi Collins	\$300
Garland Conley, Sr.	\$300
John Conley	\$300
Richard Elkins	\$300
James Fry	\$300
Spencer A. Mullins	\$300
Abijah Workman	\$300
Obediah Workman	\$300
Price Lucas	\$250
Garland Conley, Jr.	\$200
William Dingess	\$200
Peter Mullins	\$200
Alex Tomblin	\$200
John Workman	\$200
Charles Lucas	\$150
Henry Adkins	\$100
John Spears	\$100
Josephus Workman	\$100
Preston Spears	\$75
John Dalton	\$50
John Gore	\$40

*Source:* U.S. Census for Logan County, VA, 1850.

**APPENDIX 4**  
Harts Creek Elites, 1860

<b>Local Resident</b>	<b>Value of Real Estate Owned</b>
Spencer A. Mullins	\$4000
Burbus C. Toney	\$4000
Harvey S. Dingess	\$3500
Elias Adkins	\$3000
Isaac Adkins, Jr.	\$3000
Isaiah Adkins	\$3000
Hamilton Fry	\$2500
Squire Toney	\$2500
Henry Adkins	\$2000
John Fry	\$2000
Joseph Fry	\$2000
Abner Vance	\$2000
James Butcher	\$1700
Charles Adkins	\$1600
Aaron Adkins	\$1500
Andrew Dial	\$1500
E.A. Gartin	\$1500
Peter Mullins	\$1500
John Workman	\$1500
Christian T. Fry	\$1410
Garland B. Conley	\$1400
Ab. Workman	\$1250
Henderson Dingess	\$1200
Daniel H. Fry	\$1200
Andrew Robinson	\$1125
John Adams	\$1000
Moses Brown	\$1000
Corbin Bryant	\$1000
Admiral S. Fry	\$1000
Edward Lilly	\$1000
James Toney	\$1000
William Dingess	\$800
Marvel Elkins	\$800
Charles Lucas	\$800
Paris Brumfield	\$600
Barnett Carter	\$600
James Conley	\$600
Patton Thompson	\$600
Allen Adkins	\$500
John S. Brumfield	\$500
Rachel Brumfield	\$500
William Brumfield	\$500
William Spry	\$500
O. Workman	\$500
S. Lambert	\$400
William Lucas	\$400
John Farley	\$300
John Spears	\$300



Elizabeth Thompson	\$300
Robert Mullins	\$280
Enos "Jake" Adkins	\$250
Joel Elkins	\$200
Daniel Nester	\$200
Al. Tomblin	\$200
Price Lucas	\$170
Overton Elkins	\$150
Gordon Lilly	\$150
Moses Tomblin	\$93
Moses Workman	\$90

*Sources:* U.S. Census for Logan County, VA, 1860; U.S. Census for Cabell County, VA, 1860.

**APPENDIX 5**  
Property Owners:  
Harts Creek Community, 1870

Name of Property Owner	Total Acres Harts Creek Township, Lincoln County	Total Acres Harts Area, Chapmanville Township, Logan County	Total Acres
<i>Anthony Lawson of Wythe County</i>	6211	-	6211
<i>A. Lawson of Wythe County and E. Ward of Cabell County</i>	3962	-	3962
Isaiah Adkins heirs	1922	-	1922
Hamilton Fry heirs	1641	-	1641
Burbus C. Toney	1635	-	1635
<i>John Dempsey, Sr.</i>	1552	-	1552
<i>John Dempsey and William Straton of Logan County</i>	1407	-	1407
<i>Samuel Wellman and Kelly Ferguson</i>	1225	-	1225
<i>Isaac Bloss of Wayne County</i>	1115	-	1115
<i>William Straton</i>	-	1102	1102
Mahala S____h, John S____h and others*	950	-	950
<i>Emily Smith, Mary Anne Smith, F. Dingess heirs, Susan Lilly heirs</i>	-	900	900
<i>William Defoe of Wayne County</i>	896	-	896
<i>Nicholas, T.S. Short, S. Damron</i>	889	-	889
Samuel Damron, Sr.	836	-	836
Henry Mainard*	755.5	-	755.5
Abner Vance	742	-	742
John Queen	725	-	725
Henry Adkins*	702	-	702
<i>Elijah Gartin of Lincoln County and J. Lawson of Logan County</i>	675	-	675
Abijah Workman of Lincoln or Wayne County*	400	255	655
<i>N. Haner heirs</i>	367	250	617
Isaiah Adkins heirs and others	605	-	605
George B. Hinkle Estate*	605	-	605
Spencer A. Mullins of Lincoln County	-	595	595
<i>Samuel Wellman and A. Queen</i>	575	-	575
Lewis Mainard*	553	-	553
Samuel Pack	553	-	553
<i>? McCulloch, H.J. ?, C.L. Roffe of Cabell County</i>	544	-	544
Admiral S. Fry	532	-	532
Elijah A. Gartin heirs	529	-	529
William and Allie Damron*	500	-	500
Henry Queen*	500	-	500
Lewis Queen	500	-	500
William Perry	495	-	495
Harvey S. Dingess	180	302	482
Elias Adkins	470.5	-	470.5
<i>Noah Hainer heirs and C.S. Stone</i>	235	235	470
James Butcher	-	465	465
Richard Vance	457	-	457
<i>Hiram Fotche</i>	455.5	-	455.5
Charles Henderson*	455.5	-	455.5
Enos "Jake" Adkins	455	-	455
Nathan Perry	415	-	415
Henry Workman	407	-	407

<i>John Garrett of Logan County and John Godby of Logan County</i>	400	-	400
William R. Lucas	400	-	400
Jesse Mainard heirs	400	-	400
John Queen heirs	400	-	400
Andrew Dial*	396	-	396
Elias Williamson*	396	-	396
<i>Charles Lattin</i>	<i>393 ¾</i>	-	<i>393 ¾</i>
Charles Lucas	378	-	378
<i>Samuel Wellman and Thomas Preston's heirs</i>	<i>375</i>	-	<i>375</i>
<i>Joel Elkin of Wayne County</i>	<i>370</i>	-	<i>370</i>
James Queen	370	-	370
Albert Abbott	367	-	367
Peter Mullins	-	343	343
John W. Vance	320	-	320
Christian T. Fry	312	-	312
John B. Browning*	300	-	300
Alex Collins and George F. Collins*	300	-	300
Stephen Queen heirs	280	-	280
Obediah Workman	-	276	276
Dicy Adams (wife of Joseph Adams)	270	-	270
J.H. Brady and Gallup*	270	-	270
<i>Lorenzo D. Hill of Logan County</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>160</i>	<i>260</i>
<i>George S___th of Pennsylvania</i>	<i>250</i>	-	<i>250</i>
John Adams, Jr. Estate	-	244	244
James Pack	240	-	240
Francis Browning	237	-	237
<i>Thomas Dun English of New York</i>	<i>235</i>	-	<i>235</i>
Squire Toney	235	-	235
John Fry	234	-	234
Henderson Dingess	233	-	233
<i>Peter Dingess and Charles Dingess heirs</i>	-	<i>233</i>	<i>233</i>
Samuel Ferrell*	232	-	232
<i>John Denner of New York</i>	<i>227 ¾</i>	-	<i>227 ¾</i>
<i>John N. Haner*</i>	<i>227 ¾</i>	-	<i>227 ¾</i>
Isaac Nelson	225	-	225
Mary Adkins	220	-	220
James P. Ferrell	220	-	220
Moses Brown	215	-	215
Mary E. Browning*	212	-	212
<i>Reece C. Hines of Pennsylvania</i>	<i>212</i>	-	<i>212</i>
Enos Adkins and Aaron Adkins	210	-	210
Mary Vance of Lincoln County*	-	203	203
Allen Adkins* (disappeared)	200	-	200
James D___on, Sr.	200	-	200
Squire Dial and others*	200	-	200
J.W.C. Lambert*	200	-	200
Samuel Pack and Mrs. Pack	200	-	200
Aaron Adkins	195	-	195
<i>Absolum Queen of Lincoln County and P.C. Buffington of Cabell County</i>	<i>195</i>	-	<i>195</i>
Robert Lilly heirs	-	189	189
Garland B. Conley	-	182	182
Barnabus Carter	-	180	180
James Browning	175	-	175
<i>Thomas Childers of Lincoln County and C. Lattin of Cabell County</i>	<i>175</i>	-	<i>175</i>
John Brumfield heirs	172	-	172

Obediah Workman, Jr.	-	159	159
Harrison Pack*	150	-	150
Margarett Sartin*	150	-	150
<i>George Hager</i>	<i>142.5</i>	-	<i>142.5</i>
<i>Harvey Dyer</i>	<i>140</i>	-	<i>140</i>
Samuel Mainard	140	-	140
Stephen Lambert	-	135	135
Samuel Nelson	130	-	130
Stephen Queen heirs and Polley Queen	130	-	130
<i>Guy Dingess of Logan County</i>	<i>87.5</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>127.5</i>
John C. Farley*	125	-	125
James Lilly	-	125	125
Harmon Stroud	125	-	125
Isaac Nelson, Sr.	120	-	120
Aaron Adkins and Allen Adkins	119	-	119
Kendrick McCane*	115	-	115
Mary Workman	-	108	108
Henry Eplin*	105	-	105
<i>E.F. Chapman of Logan County</i>	<i>100</i>	-	<i>100</i>
<i>James Hood of unknown residence</i>	<i>100</i>	-	<i>100</i>
Gilbert Moore*	100	-	100
James Morris	100	-	100
Jesse Perry	100	-	100
Jesse Queen	100	-	100
Harrison Spence*	100	-	100
Francis Vance	100	-	100
Joseph Fry*	98	-	98
James Mainard, Sr.*	95	-	95
William Dalton	93	-	93
Francis Browning Estate	84	-	84
<i>William Spurlock</i>	<i>82</i>	-	<i>82</i>
<i>John Dempsey</i>	<i>80</i>	-	<i>80</i>
James W. Romans Estate	80	-	80
<i>Anderson Barker, Jr. of Logan County</i>	<i>75</i>	-	<i>75</i>
Levi Collins	75	-	75
Fulton Ferrell	75	-	75
Jermiah Lambert	75	-	75
Price Lucas	75	-	75
F. Nelson Estate	75	-	75
<i>Arnold Perry, Sr.</i>	<i>75</i>	-	<i>75</i>
Alexander S____th	75	-	75
Burbus C. Toney and A. Dial	73	-	73
<i>Anthela Elkin of Wayne County</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>70</i>
Moses Mainard	70	-	70
Lydia E. Mullins	64	-	64
Daniel Messer	62.5	-	62.5
Matthias Elkin	-	60	60
<i>C.S. Stone of Logan County</i>	<i>60</i>	-	<i>60</i>
<i>Ali Williams</i>	<i>60</i>	-	<i>60</i>
Robert Mullins	-	59	59
Alexander Tomberlin	-	56	56
Anthony Adams	-	50	50
Benjamin Adams, Jr.	-	50	50
John S. Brumfield	50	-	50
Henry Conley	-	50	50
Jeremiah Farmer	-	50	50
<i>Isaac Nelson, Sr. and S. Bartrum</i>	<i>50</i>	-	<i>50</i>
Paris Vance	50	-	50
<i>Sarah McComas and others</i>	-	<i>47</i>	<i>47</i>

John Gore	-	40	40
James Mainard, Jr.*	40	-	40
Greenville Nelson	40	-	40
<i>Kelly Elkin of Wayne County</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>36</i>
Moses Workman Estate	-	26	26
<i>Lewis Adkins and C. Lattin</i>	<i>25</i>	-	<i>25</i>
<i>James Bartram of Kentucky</i>	<i>25</i>	-	<i>25</i>
James R. Dalton*	25	-	25
Martin Dalton heirs	25	-	25
G.M. Nelson	25	-	25
William Thompson Estate	-	25	25
John Workman	-	25	25
Floyd S. Gore*	-	23	23
Meekin Vance	-	14.5	14.5
Charles Pack*	14	-	14
Parris Brumfield	10	-	10
Elizabeth Adkins	1	-	1

Sources: Land Book (1870-1878), Lincoln County Clerk's Office, Hamlin, WV; Land Book (1866-1872), Logan County Clerk's Office, Logan, WV.

Note: Absentee landowners are italicized.

\*Identifies local persons who owned property in the Harts area but were not listed in the 1870 census for Lincoln or Logan County.

**APPENDIX 6**  
Property Owners:  
Harts Creek Community, 1880

Name of Property Owner	Total Acres Harts Creek District, Lincoln County	Total Acres Harts Area, Chapmanville District, Logan County	Total Acres
<i>Aspinwall Low et al of New York</i>	20,000	35,000	55,000
<i>A. Lawson of Tazewell County and E. Ward of Cabell County</i>	6441	-	6441
<i>Anthony Lawson of Tazewell County</i>	3300	176	3476
<i>Charles H. Miller of Cabell County</i>	1620	-	1620
William F. Butcher	-	1618	1618
<i>E.J. Stone of Logan County</i>	1610	-	1610
<i>John Dempsey and W. Stratton of Logan County</i>	1407	-	1407
<i>John W. Gray, residence unknown</i>	1300	-	1300
<i>Charles I. Stone of Logan County</i>	1000	-	1000
<i>William Stratton of Logan County</i>	174	771	945
David Dingess	-	852	852
A.S. Fry	785	-	785
Garten and <i>Lawson</i>	750	-	750
Parris Brumfield	696	-	696
Floyd S. Gore	-	688	688
Enos "Jake" Adkins	680	-	680
Lilly heirs	-	657	657
Ann Brumfield (wife of Paris Brumfield)	647	-	647
Patterson Ferrell	600	-	600
Isaiah Adkins	567	-	567
Elijah Garten heirs	489	-	489
I.G. Garten and W.A. Mann	489	-	489
Andrew Jackson Vance	485	-	485
Andrew Dial	481	-	481
David Workman	481	-	481
Enos & Aaron Adkins	443	-	443
John Chambers heirs	-	400	400
<i>George Hill of Logan County</i>	400	-	400
Benjamin W. Walker	400	-	400
Albert Abbott	370	-	370
Burbus C. Toney	368	-	368
William T. Fowler	365	-	365
William Perry	362	-	362
<i>H. Hager of Lincoln County and R.A. Bowden of Kansas</i>	350	-	350
Valeria Nester (widow of Daniel Nester)	342	-	342
William Farley	-	325	325
Christian T. Fry	310	-	310
Marion Fry	305	-	305
John B. Browning	300	-	300
John H. Fry	300	-	300
Samson Brumfield	280	-	280
<i>James Starr of Logan County</i>	272	-	272
Peter Mullins	-	268	268
Sarah A. Ferrell	258	-	258
Irvin Lucas	258	-	258
John Adams heirs	-	244	244
Francis Browning	237	-	237
<i>T.D. English</i>	235	-	235
Squire Toney*	235	-	235

John Fry, Sr.	234	-	234
<i>Peter Dingess and Charles Dingess heirs</i>	-	233	233
Allen Brumfield	232	-	232
Floyd Fry	227	-	227
Parris Brumfield and Tomblin	225	-	225
Lydia E. Mullins (widow of Spencer Mullins)*	224	-	224
Charles Lucas	220	-	220
Patton Thompson	220	-	220
Jeremiah Lambert	219	-	219
Aaron Adkins	215	-	215
Mary E. Browning	212	-	212
Abner Vance	211	-	211
Elias Adkins Estate	210	-	210
Alex Tomlin Estate	-	209	209
Richard Vance	205	-	205
James P. Mullins	203	-	203
Squire Dial et al	200	-	200
James P. Ferrell	200	-	200
J.M.C. Lambert heirs	200	-	200
William Thompson*	-	200	200
(Andrew) Jackson Vance	200	-	200
Lewis Fry	196	-	196
Josiah T. Browning	195	-	195
Garland B. Conley	-	190	190
Robert Lilly*	-	189	189
Aaron Adkins, Jr.	179	-	179
Anderson Fry	175	-	175
Barnett Carter	-	154	154
<i>Hugh Toney</i>	150	-	150
Jerry Lambert and Ballard Lambert	149	-	149
John S. Brumfield	147	-	147
Margret Sarten	145	-	145
Daniel H. Fry	141	-	141
Henderson Dingess	93	44	137
James Dalton, Sr.	-	131	131
<i>Lorenzo D. Hill</i>	-	130	130
John C. Farley	125	-	125
Kelly E. Johnson	121	-	121
Anthony Adams	-	120	120
Dicy Adams (widow of Joseph Adams)	120	-	120
Abijah Workman of Lincoln County	-	119	119
Jackson McCloud*	-	110	110
Mary Workman	-	108	108
Charles Browning	100	-	100
Jack and James Browning	100	-	100
Matilda J. Estep*	100	-	100
Louisa Fry	100	-	100
W.R. Lucas and Moses Lucas	100	-	100
James Morris*	100	-	100
Rhoda J. Robinson (wife of Andrew D. Robinson)	100	-	100
Wirt Toney*	100	-	100
Francis Vance	100	-	100
Henry Workman	-	100	100
<i>Caroline C. Jackson (wife of Allen Dingess)</i>	-	99	99
Lewis Nelson and Meekin Vance, Jr.	-	98	98
Patterson Toney	95	-	95
Patterson Vannatter*	95	-	95
William Dalton*	93.5	-	93.5
Andrew Elkins	92	-	92

Leander Fry*	91.5	-	91.5
Rhoda Fry (wife of A.S. Fry)	90	-	90
<i>Guy Dingess</i>	87.5	-	87.5
Josiah Workman	-	86	86
Valeria Nester and heirs	85	-	85
Peter Martin (African-American)	82	-	82
Isaac G. Garten	75	-	75
Joseph Hager, Jr.	75	-	75
David Kinser	75	-	75
Price Lucas*	75	-	75
Overton and Minerva McCloud	75	-	75
Alex Tomblin*	75	-	75
Alfred Tomblin and Alex Tomblin	75	-	75
Martin Vance*	75	-	75
George Burns	-	73	73
Burbus C. Toney and Andrew Dial	73	-	73
Mary I. Dingess*	70	-	70
William A. Adkins*	66 2/3	-	66 2/3
Andrew J. Mullins	-	66	66
Margaret Collins (wife of Preston "Bug" Collins)*	-	65	65
Alexander Hall	-	65	65
Stephen Lambert	-	62	62
<i>Guy Dingess and J.B. Lawson heirs</i>	-	60	60
Irvin Workman	60	-	60
Robert Mullins	-	59	59
<i>Guy Mont Dingess</i>	-	55	55
Jeremiah Perry	55	-	55
James Browning	50	-	50
Thomas Carter	-	50	50
John Chandler	50	-	50
Robert Hensley	-	50	50
William P. Jonas	-	50	50
Moses Workman*	-	50	50
Moses Toney	45	-	45
Canaan Adkins	40	-	40
David Dingess, Jr.	-	40	40
Robert Thompson, John Thompson, Harvey Thompson	-	40	40
Lewis Cass Garten	37	-	37
Alexander Bryant	-	25	25
(Michael) Michael Kinser	-	25	25
William Porter*	25	-	25
William Thompson heirs	-	25	25
Martha Caldwell (wife of Floyd Caldwell)	20	-	20
Meekin Vance	-	14.5	14.5
Lewis McCloud	-	5	5
Van B. Prince*	-	5	5
James H. Williamson	4	-	4

Sources: Land Book (1879-1885), Lincoln County Clerk's Office, Hamlin, WV, 1881; Land Book (1880-1886), Logan County Clerk's Office, Logan, WV, 1880.

Note: Absentee landowners are italicized.

\*Indicates local persons who owned property in the Harts area but were not listed in the 1880 census for Lincoln or Logan County.



**APPENDIX 7**  
Property Owners:  
Harts Creek Community, 1889

Name of Property Owners	Total Acres Harts Creek District, Lincoln County	Total Acres Harts Area, Chapmanville District, Logan County	Total Acres
<i>Aspinwall Low et al (mineral interest)</i>	16,507	17,000	33,507
<i>Aspinwall Low et al</i>	3493	16,875	20,368
<i>Samuel Eddy</i>	20,000	-	20,000
R.A. Lewis	1620	-	1620
Squire Toney and R.A. Lewis	1156.5	-	1156.5
R.H. Prichard	1000	-	1000
<i>E. Ward and John Allen's heirs</i>	900	-	900
Parris Brumfield	771	-	771
Patterson Ferrell	640	-	640
I.G. Gartin and William Mann	489	-	489
<i>George Hill of Boone County</i>	470	-	470
Squire Toney	434.5	-	434.5
Aaron Adkins	430	-	430
William Farley	-	425	425
<i>C.H. Miller of Cabell County</i>	410	-	410
Admiral S. Fry	405	-	405
Ann Brumfield (wife of Paris Brumfield)	397	-	397
Burbus C. Toney	380	-	380
William Perry	362	-	362
Nancy A. Fry (widow of Hamilton Fry)	350	-	350
R.W. Peck	-	350	350
Benjamin Adams	80	260	340
Sarah Dingess	338	-	338
Andrew J. Vance	334	-	334
Patterson Vannatter	325	-	325
Floyd S. Gore	40	284	324
Allen Brumfield, Sr.	317	-	317
George M. Fry	317	-	317
Samp Brumfield	315	-	315
Bradford Toney and Squire Toney	300	-	300
Patterson Toney	300	-	300
Frances Vance	300	-	300
Albert G. Abbott	295	-	295
Allen Brumfield, Jr.	295	-	295
J.E. Thompson	-	280	280
Irvin Lucas	278	-	278
Anthony Lawson heirs	-	276	276
Mitchell Browning	272	-	272
Thomas Chafin	272	-	272
Christian T. Fry	268	-	268
Enos "Jake" Adkins	263	-	263
Solomon Adams	-	260	260
Sarah Ferrell	258	-	258
John H. Fry	250	-	250
Van D. Lambert	240	-	240
Marion Fry	235	-	235
Alexander Hall	-	233	233
Mary J. Mann	233	-	233
David Workman	233	-	233

Hugh Dingess et al	-	230	230
Louisa Blair (wife of Anderson Blair)	-	229	229
Robert Mullins	-	229	229
Floyd Fry	227	-	227
James P. Ferrell	220	-	220
Henderson Dingess	208	-	208
Canaan Adkins	205	-	205
William R. Duty	205	-	205
Wirt Toney	205	-	205
Ann F. Davis (wife of Giles Davis)	200	-	200
Jesse Dingess	200	-	200
John C. Farley	200	-	200
F.D. Lambert	200	-	200
John C. Farley	200	-	200
J.M.C. Lambert heirs	200	-	200
Elisha Vance Estate	200	-	200
John Workman	-	200	200
Thomas Farley	-	195.5	195.5
William Abbott	-	189	189
Elizabeth Lucas (wife of Blackburn Lucas)	180	-	180
Hezekiah Adkins	175	-	175
Anderson Fry	175	-	175
Floyd Caldwell	174	-	174
William N. Stone	170	-	170
William T. Fowler	165	-	165
Charles Lucas	165	-	165
John S. Nester	165	-	165
Acy Williamson	160	-	160
Lewis Fry	156	-	156
Mary Ann Farley (wife of Burwell Farley)	-	155	155
Lee A. Dingess	-	154	154
John Bell	150	-	150
Garland B. Conley, Jr.	-	150	150
Floyd Dingess	150	-	150
Squire and Kizzie Dial	150	-	150
Nancy Spurlock	150	-	150
John W. Workman	150	-	150
Charles Browning	147	-	147
John S. Brumfield	147	-	147
<i>Hugh Toney of Boone County and P.M. Phipps of Logan County</i>	<i>145</i>	-	<i>145</i>
Daniel Fry Estate	141	-	141
Garland B. Conley	-	140	140
Pricy Elkins	-	135	135
Lydia Mullins	133	-	133
Josiah Workman	-	132	132
David Dingess	-	130	130
Irvin Workman	-	130	130
Van Buren Mullins	-	127	127
Sarah Adkins	125	-	125
Alvin Hall	125	-	125
Hiram Hall	125	-	125
Marvel Vance	125	-	125
Nancy Adkins (wife of Aaron Adkins, Sr.)	122	122	122
Dicy Adams (widow of Joseph Adams)	120	-	120
Squire Dial	120	-	120
James P. Hall	-	119	119
Lorenzo D. Browning	115	-	115
William F. Butcher	-	115	115

Wade S. Lambert	110	-	110
Jackson McCloud	-	110	110
David Thompson	109	-	109
Blackburn Lucas	108	-	108
Irvin Workman	108	-	108
Mary Jane Workman	-	108	108
George Vannatter	107	-	107
Aaron Adkins, Jr.	106.5	-	106.5
Barnett Carter	-	106	106
James B. Mullins	-	104	104
W.C. Workman	-	104	104
Anthony Adams	-	100	100
James Adams	100	-	100
Charles Adkins	100	-	100
Elvira Baisden	100	-	100
Andrew Jackson Browning	100	-	100
Jacob and James Browning	100	-	100
Elizabeth Burns	-	100	100
Lydie E. Dingess	100	-	100
Burbus C. Dial	100	-	100
Squire and Margaret Dial	100	-	100
Venila Dingess	-	100	100
Overton Elkins	100	-	100
Ellen Ferguson	100	-	100
<i>J.H. Ferguson of Wayne County</i>	<i>100</i>	-	<i>100</i>
Leander Fry	100	-	100
Mary A. Fry	100	-	100
William R. Lucas and Moses Lucas	100	-	100
Rhoda Robinson	100	-	100
John W. Runyon	100	-	100
James Stowers	100	-	100
Bradford Toney	100	-	100
F.M. Wiley	100	-	100
Spencer Wiley	100	-	100
Caroline C. Dingess (wife of Allen Dingess)	-	99	99
Lewis Nelson and M. Vance	-	98	98
W.H. Browning	95	-	95
Moses Tombolin	-	94	94
Andrew Elkins	92	-	92
Rhoda Fry (wife of A.S. Fry)	90	-	90
Harrison Williamson	90	-	90
George A. Wyicek	-	90	90
David Kinser	88	-	90
Stephen Lambert heirs	-	87	87
Martin Vance	83	-	83
Amanda Lambert	82	-	82
Arnold Perry	82	-	82
Isaiah Adkins	80	-	80
J.M. and Manerva Chandler	80	-	80
Kizia A. Dial	80	-	80
Allen Dingess	-	75	75
Isaac G. Gartin	75	-	75
Josephine Robinson	75	-	75
Margaret Sartin	75	-	75
Elizabeth Tomlin	75	-	75
Joshua Walls	75	-	75
Moses Workman	-	75	75
M.A. Stollings	-	74	74
Alexander Bryant	-	71	71

Russell S. Stollings	71	-	71
John H. Brumfield	70	-	70
John Chandler	70	-	70
Allen Nelson	70	-	70
Ballard P. Lambert	69	-	69
Polley Bryant (wife of French Bryant)	-	68	68
Paris Smith Vance	67	-	67
Thomas J. Carter	-	66 2/3	66 2/3
Thomas Baisden	66	-	67
Moses Dalton	-	65.5	65.5
Richard Collins	-	62	62
Jane Dalton	-	62	62
John H. Adkins	60	-	60
Frank C. Browning	60	-	60
Abner Vance Estate	60	-	60
Louisa J. Hager	59	-	59
Alex Tombolin Estate	-	59	59
Mary Ann Collins and Francis Marion Collins	-	56	56
Benjamin Adams, Sr.	-	50	50
Albert S. "Major" Adkins	50	-	50
Louisa J. Bell	-	50	50
Frances "Frank" Browning	50	-	50
W. Bird Brumfield	50	-	50
Anthony Bryant	-	50	50
Melvin Butcher	-	50	50
J.W. Collins	50	-	50
Adam F. Cummings	50	-	50
David Dingess Estate	-	50	50
John F. Duty	50	-	50
Albert Gore	-	50	50
Polly Ann Gore	-	50	50
Dicy Ivins	50	-	50
J.M. and Victoria Johnson	50	-	50
Polly A. Kinser	-	50	50
Gordon F. Lilley	-	50	50
Manerva McCloud	50	-	50
James B. Mullins and John W. Mullins	-	50	50
Daniel J. Nester	50	-	50
Harrison Perry	50	-	50
Floyd Rakes	50	-	50
C.I. Stone	50	-	50
George W. Stone	50	-	50
J.C. and Mary J. Tomlin	50	-	50
Frances Vance	50	-	50
Moses Toney	49	-	49
William Tombolin et al	-	48	48
Miles B. Browning	47	-	47
D.K. Johnson	46	-	46
William R. Nester	45	-	45
Russell Fry	41	-	41
Luticia Browning	40	-	40
Martha Dingess	-	40	40
John Fry Estate	40	-	40
Marinda Fry Estate	40	-	40
Malinda J. Johnson	40	-	40
Arisba Lambert (wife of Hiram Lambert)	40	-	40
Andrew Jackson Mullins	-	40	40
Solomon Mullins	-	40	40
Lewis Nelson	40	-	40

Robert Thompson, John Thompson, Harvey Thompson	-	40	40
W.T. Toney	40	-	40
<i>S.S. Vinson of Wayne County</i>	<i>40</i>	-	<i>40</i>
Lewis Cass Gartin	37	-	37
Burwell Farley	-	35	35
Melvin Kirk	35	-	35
Peter Mullins	-	35	35
George Ward (African American)	35	-	35
Michael Kinser	-	33.5	33.5
George Alderson	30.5	-	30.5
Albert G. Abbott and Margaret Abbott	30	-	30
S.S. Altizer	-	30	30
Dicy Blair (wife of Harrison Blair)	-	30	30
Martha A. Fowler	30	-	30
William W. Vance	30	-	30
Francis "Frank" Brumfield	28.5	-	28.5
Mary D. Mullins	-	28	28
William Vance	27.5	-	27.5
Sarah Toney (wife of Burbus Toney)	26	-	26
Peter Carter	-	25	25
John Chambers heirs	-	25	25
Albert Dingess	-	25	25
Henry Hensley	-	25	25
George Kinser	-	25	25
William R. Lucas	25	-	25
James P. Mullins	25	-	25
Shade Smith	-	25	25
William Thompson heirs	-	25	25
Wesley Williamson	25	-	25
Benjamin W. Walker	25	-	25
Thomas J. Mann	21	-	21
John W. Nelson	20	-	20
Amanda Tomlin et als	20	-	20
Minnis Perry	19	-	19
Russell Fry	18	-	18
Joseph Hager	15	-	15
<i>J.I. Kuhn, Atty</i>	-	<i>15</i>	<i>15</i>
Peter A. and Mary A. Mullins	15	-	15
Jackson Vance of Lincoln County	-	14	14
Moses Lucas	12	-	12
Robert Vanderpool	-	10	10
Paris Smith Vance and Elias Vance	7	-	7
Sarah Jane Prince (wife of Van Prince)	-	5	5
Robert Hensley	-	4	4

Sources: Land Book (1886-1891), Lincoln County Clerk's Office, Hamlin, WV, 1890; Land Book (1887-1892), Logan County Clerk's Office, Logan, WV, 1889.

Note: Absentee landowners are italicized.

**APPENDIX 8**  
Hart Merchants-Feudists

Property information arranged in columns as follows: (1) Year; (2) Number of Tracts; (3) Total Acreage; (4) Value of Buildings; (5) Total Value of Property Including Buildings

<u>Ben Adams</u>					↑	<u>Al and Hollena Brumfield</u>					↑
1887	2	340	\$0	\$380		1887	0	0	\$0	\$0	
1888	2	340	\$0	\$380		1888	2	245	\$0	\$567.50	
1889	2	340	\$0	\$380		1889	3	295	\$0	\$642.50	
1890	4	415	\$0	\$492.50		1890	6	465	\$25	\$960	
1891	4	370	\$0	\$502.50		1891	6	737	\$200	\$2408.50	
<u>Paris and Ann Brumfield</u>					↓	<u>Henderson and Sarah Dingess</u>					↑
1887	8	1318	\$100	\$2252		1887	5	582	\$100	\$1270.50	
1888	5	1233	\$0	\$1794.50		1888	5	582	\$0	\$1270.50	
1889	4	1138	\$0	\$1675.75		1889	5	546	\$100	\$1334.50	
1890	4	1138	\$0	\$1675.75		1890	5	546	\$100	\$1334.50	
1891	3	763	\$0	\$1526		1891	5	546	\$100	\$1528	
<u>Bill and Martha A. Fowler</u>					↓	<u>James P. and Louisa Mullins</u>					↓
1887	2	165	\$0	\$810		1887	3	258	\$300	\$1410	
1888	2	165	\$0	\$810		1888	2	297	\$300	\$1710	
1889	3	195	\$0	\$900		1889	1	25	\$0	\$50	
1890	1	30	\$0	\$90		1890	1	25	\$0	\$50	
1891	1	3	\$0	\$30		1891	1	25	\$0	\$100	
<u>Isham and Martha J. Roberts</u>					↓	<u>John W. Runyon</u>					↓
1887	0	0	\$0	\$0		1887	1	75	\$0	\$112.50	
1888	0	0	\$0	\$0		1888	2	100	\$0	\$187.50	
1889	0	0	\$0	\$0		1889	2	100	\$0	\$187.50	
1890	1	75	\$0	\$150		1890	0	0	\$0	\$0	
1891	0	0	\$0	\$0		1891	0	0	\$0	\$0	

*Sources:* Land Book (1886-1891), Lincoln County Clerk's Office, Hamlin, WV; Land Book (1892-1896), Lincoln County Clerk's Office, Hamlin, W; Land Book (1887-1892), Logan County Clerk's Office, Logan, WV.

## APPENDIX 9

“The Lincoln County Crew” (A Song)  
Composed by George W. Ferrell

Come all young men and ladies.  
Come fathers, mothers, too.  
I'll relate to you the story  
Of the Lincoln County crew.  
Concerning bloody rowing  
And many a thieving deed.  
Come friends and lend attention.  
Remember how it reads.

Tw'as in the month of August  
All on a very fine day.  
Al Brumfield he was wounded.  
They say by Milt Haley.  
But Brumfield did not believe it.  
He said it was not so.  
He said it was McCoy  
Who struck the fatal blow.

Allen Brumfield he recovered.  
Some weeks and months had past  
When at the house of George Fry  
These men they met at last.  
Green McCoy and Milt Haley  
About the yard did walk.  
They seemed to be uneasy  
And no one wished to talk.

They went into the house  
And sat down by the fire.  
But little did they think, dear friends,  
They'd met their final hour.  
The sting of death was near them  
When a mob rushed in at the door  
And a few words passed between them  
Concerning the row before.

The people all got frightened  
And rushed clear out of the room  
When a ball from some one's pistol  
Lay the prisoners in their tomb.

Their friends all gathered 'round them  
Their wives did weep and wail.  
Tom Ferrell was arrested and soon confined in jail.

Confined in jail at Hamlin  
To stay there for a while  
In the hands of Andrew Chapman  
To bravely stand his trial.  
The Butchers talked of lynching him  
But that was just a fear.  
And when the trial day came on,  
Tom Ferrell, he came clear.

They shot and killed Boney Lucas,  
A sober and innocent man,  
Who leaves a wife and children  
To do the best they can.  
They wounded Rufus Stowers,  
Although his life was saved.  
He meant to shun the grog shop  
That stood so near his grave.

And then poor Paris Brumfield,  
Relation to the rest.  
He got three balls shot through him.  
They went straight through his breast.  
The death of poor old Paris  
So lately has been done,  
They say it was a hired deed.  
It was done by his son.

The death of these few men  
Have caused great trouble in our land,  
Men to leave their wives and children  
To do the best they can.  
Lincoln County's still at war.  
They never, never cease.  
Oh, could I only, only see  
My land once more at peace.

I composed this as a warning,  
A warning to all men.  
Your pistols will cause trouble,  
On that you may depend.  
In the bottom of a whisky glass,  
A lurking devil dwells.

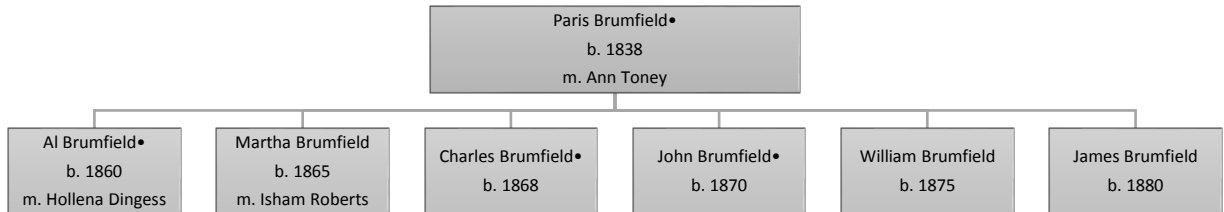


It burns the hearts of those who drink,  
And sends their souls to hell  
To writhe in fiery torment in endless eternity.  
Dear men of Lincoln County, such scenes should never be.

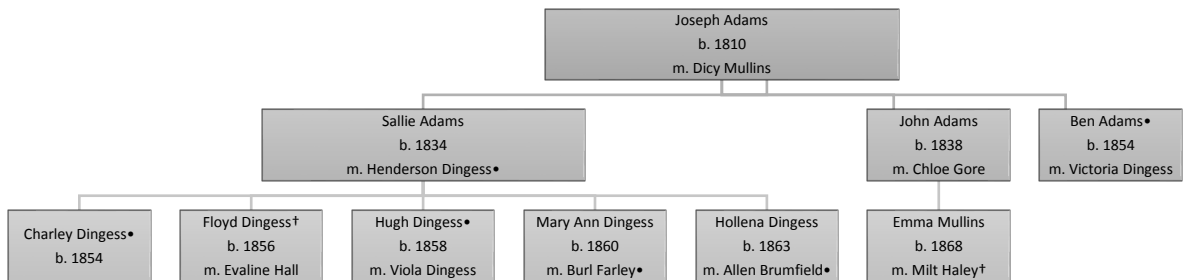
*Sources:* Lambert, *The Llorac*, 62; Fred B. Lambert Papers, Special Collections Department, James E. Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV; Meador, *Goldenseal* (Summer 1986), 48-49.

## APPENDIX 10 Genealogy Charts

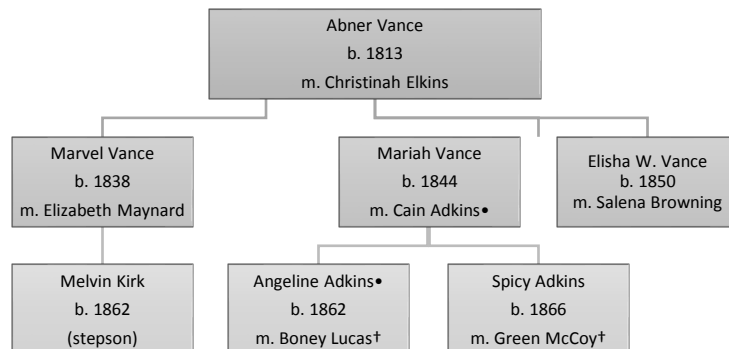
### THE BRUMFIELDS *An Abbreviated Genealogy*



### THE DINGESS – ADAMS CLAN *An Abbreviated Genealogy*



### THE ADKINS – VANCE CLAN *An Abbreviated Genealogy*



•Feudist  
†Killed in feud

## APPENDIX 11



Office of Research Integrity

November 18, 2016

Brandon Kirk  
13 Kirk Street  
Harts, WV 25524

Dear Mr. Kirk:

This letter is in response to the submitted thesis abstract entitled "*Desperate and Determined Men: West Virginia's Lincoln County Feud.*" After assessing the abstract it has been deemed not to be human subject research and therefore exempt from oversight of the Marshall University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The Code of Federal Regulations (45CFR46) has set forth the criteria utilized in making this determination. Since the information in this study does not involve human subjects as defined in the above referenced instruction it is not considered human subject research. If there are any changes to the abstract you provided then you would need to resubmit that information to the Office of Research Integrity for review and a determination.

I appreciate your willingness to submit the abstract for determination. Please feel free to contact the Office of Research Integrity if you have any questions regarding future protocols that may require IRB review.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Bruce F. Day'.

Bruce F. Day, ThD, CIP  
Director

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