

will be devoted to the Wolf House and the early days there.

About the same time of Jacob Wolf, another Jacob came up White River in search of fortune and adventure. He was Jacob Mooney—a son of Old Erin (Ireland), lately of McMinnville, Tennessee. He and a man named McDonald, four slaves and four other men poled a flat-boat up White River until they found a spot to their liking. The exact location of their first trading post has been lost, but it was somewhere between present day Hurst's Fishing Camp and Wild Cat Shoals. In the unpublished manuscripts of my late father, Herbert A. Mooney, he writes this concerning his great-grandfather, Jacob Mooney. "They must have had a very large boat for their inventory showed many unexpected items: a large brindie cow, two black and white spotted pigs, six red hens and a speckled rooster, two guineas, one runty, but friendly bull, one bushel dried east (yeast) foam, twenty kinds of seed, one hoghead black powder, ten pounds flint, anvil, forge, one liquor still (a necessity for an Irishman) one hundred bolts of cloth, one gross needles and sewing thread, one demijohn of live beer seed. Business seems to have been good from the very first, as they operated the store from the boat until the first buildings were raised."

By fall they had constructed one large log building for the store and two cabins for living quarters. The four men who had come with Mooney were men of mystery—referred to by oldtimers who knew of them as "Lungeons." They were neither Negro or Indian and in later years Jacob Mooney was ostracized for living with these "foreigners." Could these men have been Melungeons—the mysterious people of the hills of Tennessee who have recently been identified as being Mediterraneans possibly of Jewish lineage, and who lived in America prior to Columbus's discovery of the "new world"?

All summer McDonald and Mooney worked around the trading post. By fall they were very anxious to return to Tennessee—McDonald to see his wife, Mooney to take a wife. The slaves had tanned deer hides to construct a bellows and had improvised a smelter to convert silver ore into the bars that the Indians used for trade. When the first snow fell, McDonald and Mooney loaded their boat and started down river on the first leg of their journey to Tennessee. They carried silver, lead, furs, wild honey and brandy. It seems that Ned, the colored overseer, had discovered that a refreshing brandy could be distilled from the paw-paw fruit. The men planned to return to their White River Trading Post in the Spring, if all was well at home. But all was not well and they went South to join "Old Hickory," Gen. Andrew Jackson, and McDonald was killed a few days before the battle of New Orleans. It was nine years before Mooney returned to Arkansas. Kiss-ling his wife and four youngsters goodbye he began outfitting a flatboat for his return to his Arkansas paradise. Hoping for the best, yet fearing the worse, Mooney started out. Near the mouth of the White River a trader bought some primer from him with silver that he said came from Mooney's Landing. So the store was still there. Later at Rare Town. Mooney was served an exotic drink when he demanded

their best. He only smiled to himself when the innkeeper assured him the drink had come all the way from Europe. Mooney would know Ned's paw-paw brandy anywhere. At Liberty, Major Wolf assured Mooney that the trading post upriver was still his possession and all his men were still there, although they had hired a prospector by the name of Hightower to front for them in the store, as some of the settlers thought they were too high-class to buy from slaves. Wolf also had performed several weddings for Mooney's men, and Quapaw Indian maidens and there had been three deaths among the children. Mooney spent the night at the Wolf House, having Major Wolf draw up papers selling each of the slaves to himself. Later Mooney wrote in his journal: "Late yesterday I came in sight of home. I could hardly believe my eyes. The store was much larger, beside I counted ten new buildings, good sized fields full of growing crops and little pickaninies swarming everywhere. I landed the boat and went ashore, leaving my hands to secure it. Everything is as beautiful as we hope heaven is going to be. A comely Indian lass was tending the store. When I asked about lodgings for the night Ned's voice called from the back room, 'Is that you, Master Jaker? We fell into each others arms and shouted, like we had just professed religion.'"

Jacob Mooney continued to "commute" between his wife in Tennessee and his trading post in Arkansas until after her death in 1832. By the time he moved to Arkansas for good, his former slaves and the "lungeon" men had died and most of their families had moved west with the other Indians. In a later chapter we will read about Jacob Mooney's son, Jesse, who would later operate a ferry, cotton gin and steamboat landing near his father's old trading post. The Mooney family name is still very much in evidence in Baxter County. Later, Jacob Mooney lived near the Whiteville church and is buried there. When the cemetery was fenced, Mooney's grave and the graves of the mixed-bloods who lived with him were left outside. For many years the huge oak tree growing over his grave was periodically struck by lightning. There were two explanations for this—he had taken some of his Indian silver to the grave and the metal was drawing the lightning; and God was showing his wrath because Mooney had lived with "foreigners."

"Schoolcraft In the Ozark" is a book I would recommend to anybody interested in early history of our area. It was originally published in London, England, in 1821 and not distributed in America at that time. It was reprinted by Hugh Parks, Van Buren, Arkansas, in 1955 and a copy of it was presented to the Baxter County Library by the Twin Lakes Chapter of the Ark. Archeological Society in memory of Mrs. Aline King. In the fall of 1819, Henry Schoolcraft and Levi Pettibone began a tour at Potosi, Missouri, and traveled southwest toward the Rocky Mountains. The families they met in what is now Baxter County were the Wells, on the Bayou, near what is now Camaliel; Augustine Friend at the mouth of Bruce Creek on White River; J. Yochem and a man named Matney, who lived near the mountain that still bears his name. They didn't visit the Wolf

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House, but mention a trader's keelboat tied up at the mouth of the Big North Fork. Items offered for trade were flour, salt, whiskey, coffee, calico, and smaller articles in exchange for beaver, deer, otter, bear and raccoon skins, bear's bacon, fresh pork and beef, venison, beeswax, wild honey and buffalo beef. All the settlers Schoolcraft visited in Arkansas and Missouri expressed their fear of the Osage Indians who were supposed to be in their winter camps far to the north. Augustine Friend had recently been a captive of the Osage and was very bitter toward them.

But mostly the white settlers had pleasant dealings with the Indians. Another early day family in Baxter County was the Talberts—also spelled Talburt and Talbot. Three brothers, Sim, Fed, and Wat came to Arkansas in the late 1820's. According to both the Talbert family history in Shiras' "History of Baxter County" and an article in "Folklore of Romantic Arkansas", Fed Talbert was one of the first settlers to make a land entry in what is now Baxter County. Fed and his family settled on White River—between Cotter and Bull Shoals Dam. There was a fine ford nearby (the place where many believe DeSoto's men crossed White River) and Talbert felt that someone might try to steal the land from him. Just across the river from the Talbert's, the Delaware Indians had a large village. Their chief, Johnny Cake, was highly civilized and well liked by all the white settlers. He had a power gristmill on a large spring where he ground corn for both the Indians and the Whites. Fed Talbert showed his trust in Johnny Cake and his Delawares by asking them to watch out for his wife while he was gone to St. Louis—site of the nearest land office—to file a claim on his land. Kissing his wife and children goodbye, Talbert called his bear dogs, shouldered his long rifle and set out on foot for St. Louis.

The next day a band of Delawares appeared across the river and Mrs. Talbert waved her apron to them that all was well. Shortly after they had disappeared back into the woodlands, Mrs. Talbert noticed a large black bear lumbering toward the cabin. Her husband had killed a deer before leaving and she thought the bear had been drawn by the scent of fresh venison. Mrs. Talbert got the children in the house and barred the door. The bear approached and rattled the door, then began stalking around and around the cabin, roaring and growling in anger. The cabin was not closely chinked and occasionally the bear would stop and peak in at them. Then he decided to climb to the roof. When his paw slipped through one of the logs, she struck at him with a broad axe, cutting off about six inches of his paw. The bear hightailed it out of there—roaring in pain, and leaving a trail of blood. The next day when Johnny Cake's men appeared in the clearing, Mrs. Talbert signaled for them to cross over. They trailed the bear to his hide-out in one of the many holes that pockmark the White River Palisades and killed him. They brought back a large bear ham for Mrs. Talbert and the children to feast on.

When the Cherokees began to move westward over the military roads, Talbert's ferry was known from east Tennessee and north

Georgia into Oklahoma. Later Talbert's Ferry would become Mooney's Ferry and during the War Between the States would be the scene of a small skirmish, but that is another story.

According to the records in the National Archives, a Post Office was established at Talbot's, Izard County, on January 5, 1832—discontinued May 18—re-established on Dec. 12, 1832 and discontinued on January 20, 1836—making it one of the earliest Post Offices in what is now Baxter County. The Talbert family is still very much in evidence in Baxter County.

The Cherokees and other related tribes lived in our area—undisturbed and in friendly harmony with the ever arriving white settlers—for nearly two decades. During this time many marriages took place between the settlers and Indians—a fact proven because so many of us proudly claim a "full blooded Cherokee" ancestor not too many generations removed. Usually these weddings consisted of a white groom and an Indian bride, but in at least one recorded instant, the situation was reversed. About 1900, John Tabor, who was a mixed blood Cherokee sub-chief and the founder of the well-known basketball playing Tabor's of Marion County, related this story to W. R. Jones. Peter Cornstalk was the last of the great chiefs of the Arkansas Cherokees and his camp was at Sequotchie, near Buffalo River, in Marion County. Mr. Tabor recalled attending Cornstalk's marriage to a beautiful young white girl. The wedding ceremony took place at the Wolf House and was attended by all the Cherokee, as well as many members of other Indian tribes and white settlers. And as the old saying goes, "a good time was had by all."

One of the saddest and most shameful chapters of American history was partially written here as the "Trail of Tears" crossed through the southwestern part of the country. However, the Trail of Tears refers not to the Indians' exit from Arkansas, but to the forced marches under military escort of the Indians living in the Carolinas, Georgia, Alabama, and Tennessee. Pres. Jackson retaliated against the Indians for their service to Great Britain during the War of 1812 by forcing their removal from their prosperous homes along the eastern seaboard.

To expedite their removal, military roads were laid out from the east to Indian Territory in Oklahoma and one of these roads crossed through Baxter County, with a river crossing at Talbert's Ferry upriver from present day Cotter. Since the Indians were natural engineers these military roads mainly followed old Indian traces. The first forced march, under the watchful eye of the U. S. Army, was the saddest and most disastrous. It was called the Trail of Tears because every mile was marked by the graves of old people, women and children who fell along the way. They were buried by the trail and their families were prodded on by the military—wailing and moaning because they would never again be able to visit the graves of their loved ones.

Their sad plight raised such a cry and hue in Congress that later marches were more humanely conducted and proceeded at a livable pace. Also, in later exodus, the scouts used different branches of the

military roads for personal reasons. At first the trail passed through Shawneetown (now Yellville), but unscrupulous whites were adding to the red man's burdens by selling him whiskey, so Shawneetown was bypassed. Kit Carson had his own favorite branch of the military road. He brought his groups by the trading post of Bill Bridger (brother to Jim Bridger, the famous Indian scout) at Lithia Springs. Carson also came by Dry Corners, a trading post located where the Monkey Run road now leads off Hwy. 126. Carson's cousin, a Russian named Zurchsky, had discovered his own little paradise. In one of his early journeys through Arkansas, Johnny Applesseed had planted a large orchard where Zurchsky settled—for the man dearly loved apple cider. Mulberry trees surrounded the trading post and Zurchsky imported some silk worms and had dreams of one day establishing a silk factory. In later years, the wife of "Uncle Bob" Carson did manage to spin and weave several yards of silk from Zurchsky's worms. A natural salt lick was nearby. He had everything his heart desired, except living water, so he called his place Dry Corners and dug a well. The trading post and blacksmith shop set back off the trail to the right, heading toward White River. When the white settlers began coming over the improved military road, there was also a sort of post office at Dry Corners. Not a regular established post office, but pocket contract. Anybody heading toward Dry Corners carried mail for that section in his pocket and left it for Zurchsky to deliver when the addressee got around to calling for it—sometimes months later. Today the old military road is still a faint trace through the woods near Dry Corners. And with each heavy rain oxen and mule shoes and horse-shoe nails from the old blacksmith shop still wash out of the soil. Also a tiny china dog and several broken dolls have been uncovered near the site of the trading post at Dry Corners. I know this to all be true, as my home—and for several years the store "Four Sisters" which my family operated—are on this same spot. As a child I climbed the giant "Johnny Applesseed" tree many times to retrieve the red-green striped apples Johnny Chapman planted so many years ago. The old tree stump continued to sprout and bloom until about ten years ago when the woodpeckers finally sounded its death knell.

The Indians were supposed to have all been removed from Arkansas by the time of statehood in 1836, but many remained until the 1840's. They are all gone now—but their heritage remains behind, very much a part of our history. They gave the Ozark manna, corn-bread. And that sweet, perfect time between Fall and Winter is called "Indian Summer" because it was then our Indian forefathers had their last fling before cold weather set in. They were the first ecologists—they killed only the male of the species and only what they needed for food and clothing. They cut only the imperfect trees and just what they needed for fuel and shelter. And I like to think we inherited their stoic nature and steady perseverance as summed up in this paraphrase of the little prayer so popular today: God grant me the courage to change the mistakes I can, The strength to accept what I can't change,

## Chapter Three The House That Wolf Built

As children we read about the house that Jack built, and all but memorized the story of the three little pigs and the wolf that huffed and puffed until he blew the house in. Now let me tell you about the house that Wolf built—the wolf in this story being Major Jacob Wolf, the son of Mike Wolf of German descent. He was born in South Carolina, May 12, 1786, and moved to Bowling Green, Kentucky, in his youth. He earned the title of Major while serving as drill master of the Kentucky militia. The original spelling of the family name was Woolf, but Mike Wolf preferred the phonetic spelling. I'm happy to report to you that the house that Wolf built has withstood the huffing and puffing of time, Civil War, neglect and that most destructive of all enemies to mementos of the past—progress.

In 1809, President Thomas Jefferson appointed Major Wolf as Indian Agent to the Arkansas Cherokee Nation and to help administer the affairs of other tribes living in the northern section of the District of Arkansas, Louisiana Territory. To illustrate the remoteness of the country to which he was appointed—the 1810 census shows that the entire white population of the District of Arkansas was 1,062. By 1820, that number had grown to a startling 14,000.

Wolf and several Negro slaves poled a flatboat up to the mouth of the Big North Fork of the White River where they began to clear the land and construct the log house that would one day become the most famous in Arkansas. I wonder if they even remotely dreamed that with each stroke of the broad axe they were making history. Major Wolf supervised the Indian workmen in constructing the two-storied, double-log mansion. Yellow pine was used exclusively and each log was hewn and dovetailed to fit perfectly. To dovetail is to notch the log so that the water runs out, not in, and this is one reason why the Wolf house is still so remarkably preserved. The slaves built a blacksmith shop nearby and fashioned the wrought iron hinges and rivets to hang the doors and window shutters. They also made the very few square cut nails used in the building.

Shortly after the building was complete, Wolf went home to Kentucky and later returned with his young bride and a number of household and field slaves. The wilderness home he brought his new wife to was crude, perhaps by the standards of the great homes of