

Pennsylvania Fireside Tales Vol. VII

By Jeffrey R. Frazier

An encore volume of more of the author's favorite Pennsylvania mountain folktales and legends, the stories herein are guaranteed to hold the reader's attention as much as episodes in the previous six volumes and also transport you back to a world much different than the modern world we live in today.

REVISED EDITION WITH NEW PHOTOS AND NEW CHAPTERS!



Pennsylvania Fireside Tales

Volume 7

(Volume 7 in the *PENNSYLVANIA FIRESIDE TALES* series exploring the origins and foundations of old-time Pennsylvania mountain folktales, legends, and folklore).

By Jeffrey R. Frazier

Author of:

Pennsylvania Fireside Tales

The Black Ghost of Scotia
& *More Pennsylvania Fireside Tales*

Pennsylvania Fireside Tales Volumes 3, 4, 5, and 6

Ghosts of Penn's Woods

*In winter's tedious nights sit by the fire
With good old folks, and let them tell their tales
Of woeful ages long ago betide*

*Shakespeare
"Tragedy of Richard II"*

Pennsylvania Fireside Tales

Volume VII

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Indians at the Wyoming Massacre

Print from *Scribner's Magazine* (New York: Chas. Scribner's & Sons, 1887) entitled "The Indians departing after the massacre of Wyoming". Creator: Frederick Coffay Yohn. "Picture Collection, the Branch Libraries, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations, #833783". See the chapter titled "Queen Esther's Rock" for a related story about the terrible events that occurred here.

Second Edition
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Egg Hill Publications
113 Cottontail Lane
Centre Hall, Pa. 16828

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included in critical essays and reviews.

ISBN 978-1-63068-370-2

Cover: Skidding team, Central Pa Lumber Company

Taken near Forksville in Sullivan County, the caption on the photo reads:
"This team weighs about 3300 #". The picture was taken by J. S. Illick, in
August of 1923. Publication Relations Office, Photo File (#2385); RG-6
Dept. of Forests and Waters; Pennsylvania State Archives. See the
author's "Sleepless Night in a Haunted House" in volume 1 for a tale
about one lumberman who had a skidding team much like this one.

To those who created, by the very lives they lived, the human interest tales and stirring episodes that have colored Pennsylvania's mountains and valleys with charm, mystery, and a seemingly endless source of intriguing episodes of days gone by.

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INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME VII

This is a book I had not planned to write. When I started my *Pennsylvania Fireside Tales* series I thought it would end up as a set of six unique volumes. In fact on the front cover of volume six I noted that it was indeed the “last” volume of the series. However, I didn’t feel quite right about it. I still had some colorful tales left that I wanted to share with readers, but didn’t think that there were quite enough to fill yet another volume. Fate, on the other hand, seemed to have other ideas. After Volume 6 was published in 2005 I continued to get invitations to speak in front of various groups, which I’ve always enjoyed immensely. My talk, which I title “Pennsylvania Mountain Folktales and Legends – Fact or Fancy”, has always been well received, and inevitably when I end my presentation someone always comes up and shares a tale with me that they feel might deserve inclusion in my next book.

As a result of these pleasant interchanges, I acquired some anecdotes over the last two years that include some of the best material I’ve found in my thirty-seven years of collecting the state’s folktales, legends, and oral history. These new additions to my treasure chest of tales led me to decide that a seventh volume was definitely possible and certainly necessary, not only to preserve these new additions for posterity but also to preserve the other colorful tales I had left to share.

Another benefit of producing a seventh volume is that I would have an opportunity to expand on previous tales for which I had collected additional facts since they were first published. One of the best examples of a situation like that relates to a tale in my Volume 2 called “The Lower Fort” in which I describe an Indian massacre that occurred near the frontier fort called “Potter’s Fort”

in Potter Township of Centre County in 1778. A number of years after that volume was published I was put in touch with the great great great grandson of the young Stanford boy who was captured by Indians during that raid, and who later escaped. Abraham Stanford's descriptions of his time on the frontier were preserved by his descendants and they are such gems of unsurpassed value that they should not be lost. For that reason they are included in the story in this volume entitled "War Whoop and Scalping Knife".

Consequently, as a result of my good fortune in finding the new tales and in having some of equal quality left from previous years of collecting, readers will now have an opportunity to enjoy them all, including one which local folks have asked me about in the past since it was never included in the first six volumes. This old account, the tale of the "Ingleby Monster", has grabbed the attention of young folks in my region for at least fifty to one-hundred years, and it still circulates today. The hair-raising anecdote, which can be found in the present volume's chapter titled "Dark Side of the Mountains", captures the imagination because of its bone-chilling details but also because the place where it is said to have occurred is, even yet today, so isolated and wild; two factors which inevitably cause people to wonder if what the story relates just might be true.

But like many of the other tales in my books that seem to be of the "far-fetched" variety, there is good reason to argue that they never really happened; that they are instead just colorful creations of good storytellers. However, even though my objective in each of my books has been to explore whether or not the stories included therein have any basis in fact, I've always found, regardless of what might be concluded about a tale's origins, that they do cause

us to pause and wonder. And in that way, if nothing else, they make life a little more fascinating and entertaining.

If that is one of the legacies I leave behind with my books, to have entertained some folks over time, then it will have been worth the effort. Then too, if the books instill in people a greater appreciation for Pennsylvania's mountains and wild areas, thereby deterring a would-be litterbug or saving ten acres of mountain or forest land from the advance of so-called progress, then they will have served a good purpose in this regard as well.

Certainly I would have liked to have done better and done more, but that was not possible when doing this as a hobby. I've never tried to present myself as an historian, folklorist, or some other trained person who was more professionally qualified to take on the task I've pursued since 1970, but I have tried to be as thorough as possible in my investigations. In fact, as close as anyone could come to assigning a label to me was a young gentleman who, upon hearing what I was doing and how I tried to delve into the origins of the tales I was collecting, commented, "Oh, so you're an investigative reporter?"

At first I thought he had "nailed it", but then I realized that even investigative reporters should verify all their facts and establish the reliability of all their sources before publishing a story. Obviously in the realm of folktales and legends you can only go so far along those investigative paths, and if I had assiduously adhered to that credo then there never would have even been a volume one, let alone six others besides.

So I guess the legacy I leave behind is a set of books containing lots of colorful and entertaining anecdotes that readers will have to evaluate for themselves as far as whether or not the tales are grounded in truth in any way. But if there is any truth to

comments I've gotten from readers in the past, the tales will, if nothing else, inspire you to go out into the Pennsylvania hills and visit the spots where the events described in the stories themselves are said to have occurred. If so, then the books will have provided yet another source of enjoyment for those who are inspired to journey "off the beaten path" and into the less-traveled back roads of the Keystone State.

And with respect to those mountain back roads, I have, just like my new stories, acquired a few more favorite mountain vistas during my picture-taking and story-collecting trips over the last two years. These are in addition to those views mentioned in my last volumes, and all are vistas that rival for beauty many of those that can be found in more famous spots like Great Smoky Mountains National Park or the Blue Ridge Mountains of Tennessee and Virginia. So I will leave you with these three for your further viewing pleasure; all are worth a trip:

1. Kettle Road, along Broad Mountain in Huntingdon County. This rough gravel road passes by Milligan's Knob in Rothrock State Forest. At 2,320 feet the peak is the highest mountain in the Seven Mountains country.

2. Route 44 along White Deer Ridge in Lycoming County. Unsurpassed views can be seen between the villages of Collomsville and ElimSPORT.

3. Route 164 in the Allegheny Mountains of Blair and Cambria Counties. Views between the villages of Smith Corner (Blair) and Martindale (Cambria) are exceptional and as close to anything I've seen in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina.

A word or two about the last chapter in this volume also would seem appropriate at this point. It includes stories from some of the old-time airmail pilots who flew the open cockpit biplanes in the infancy of the United States Airmail Service. Although all other episodes in my books have much earlier roots, these tales take us into the modern age, and therefore seem to be a fitting conclusion to what I think this time is really the last book in the *Pennsylvania Fireside Tales* series.

NOTE TO CURRENT EDITION: The preceding paragraphs are what appeared in the first edition of this volume, and the same chapters that appear in this second edition are the same ones that were included in the first edition. There are also two new chapters in the second edition that did not appear in the first, and there are additions to the original chapters. These extras include interesting details that were not discovered until after the first edition was published and which I felt needed to be added to the chapters in order to enhance their quality. This edition also has many new photos not included in the first edition but which add a whole new level of interest to the original tales. I hope these enhancements add to the reader's enjoyment. JRF

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PANTHER DAYS (AND NIGHTS)

Lehigh County was once a treasure trove of old-time Pennsylvania legends and folktales, but over the years almost all have been forgotten – lost in the currents of time. However, there was one legend here that proved to have a longer lifespan than any others in the area; longevity attributable, no doubt, to the macabre nature of the tale. In fact, for over 150 years the account cast a shadow of fear over the sacred ground of a little country church in the lower part of that same county. But that's not surprising, considering the fact that the episode was once described in one early account as "a story of horror, gloom, and death" ¹. Said to date back to the late 1700's, the old tale could still be heard along the foothills of the Blue Mountains as late as the mid-1940's, and it is said that it was responsible for often causing even some of the area's bravest men to walk a little faster when passing by the graveyard where the events related in the legend supposedly occurred.

The Salisbury Church and its graveyard still can be found on a hillside north of Emmaus, Lehigh County, but it's no longer the isolated spot it once was in the 1700's. Back then this "church in the wildwood" appeared normal during the day but at night it was said to take on a gloomy and sinister appearance to those who knew its legend. And that legend told of a local miscreant who had sold his soul to Satan in order to save his life when fighting in the Revolutionary War. It was an effective insurance policy. The man came through the war physically unscathed, but it became a matter of debate as to the state of his mental faculties when he

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returned home and boasted that his first order of business would be to “lay low” another local man against whom he held a deep-seated grudge.

But it was obvious to everyone that the boast was a futile one; the man’s hated enemy now lay buried in the churchyard on the hill. Nonetheless, the veteran of bloody engagements with the king’s Red Coats swore that his “cowardly” foe could not even hide from him in his grave, and that he knew of a way to bring him out to fight. Then one night, after many rounds of hard liquor in the local tavern, the ruffian made that same boast again, and his drinking companions, most of whom were as drunk as the boaster, dared him to confront his rival that very evening.

With a string of oaths, the would-be antagonist stormed out of the tavern while calling forth his enemy from the bowels of the earth. The same summons was heard once more when the drunken man reached the cemetery gate, but then shrill screams and wild cries floated down to the listeners in the tavern below, all of whom, to a man, had not had the courage to go along to view the ungodly combat that was to take place.

In fact there was not a single tavern patron who could summon up enough courage to go up the hill that night to see what might have happened to their friend, and it wasn’t until the next morning that a few of the braver individuals found his mangled body, bloody and naked, lying in the graveyard.

Those of a more superstitious frame of mind believed that the war veteran had actually been killed by the fiendish spirit of the man he had summoned forth from the grave, but others said that there was a more mundane explanation. These “free thinkers”

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noted that the man merely picked the wrong time and place to be in the “city of the dead” that dark and foreboding night. They contended that a panther had wandered into the graveyard before the man got there, thinking it could sleep here undisturbed, but when the drunken intruder interrupted its rest, the big cat attacked and mangled him. However, no matter which explanation was espoused, everyone was convinced that the matter was an “act of God” and divine justice had been duly meted out. ¹

The Lehigh County legend does not say whether locals finally solved the mysterious murder at the Salisbury Church graveyard, but the old tale does serve as a good starting point for relating some real panther encounters that actually occurred in the Pennsylvania hills over the last two hundred years. Unlike the Lehigh County tale, it can be easily accepted that the events preserved in the following episodes actually happened and portray a time in Pennsylvania’s past that was, and may be becoming so again, a period where danger lurked in the tall trees and dark hollows of Penn’s Woods. Certainly one old Centre County couple, if they were alive yet today, would agree that panthers were once a force to be reckoned with in the mountains of the Keystone State.

John and Lucretia DeLong lived in a log cabin in the mountains near Livonia, Centre County, during the decades immediately preceding the Civil War. There are a number of different mountains that surround the little town that used to be a Mecca for hunters of the state’s big game animals, and it’s not known for sure today on which peak the rustic dwelling that John fashioned

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with his own hands stood. However, regardless of whether it was on Nittany, Hough, Brush, or Hall Mountain, or even on Sugar Valley Mountain to the north, it is agreed by the DeLong's descendants that their ancestors lived in a home that was located in a lonely and wild place in those days; one they shared with both wolves and mountain lions.

Born in 1792 in Nazareth, Pennsylvania, "city boy" John DeLong was not afraid of a life on the frontier, nor was his wife Lucretia. Not quite thirty years old when, around 1848, she and her mate moved on to the mountains above present-day Livonia, Mrs. DeLong worked as hard as her husband to make the place their home. Despite the nightly screams and howls of wild beasts, and the sense of danger those sounds evoked, John and Lucretia actually found the area to be a spot they enjoyed - as witnessed by the name they assigned to their alpine retreat. They called it Mount Pleasant. However, things were not always pleasant for the DeLongs when they lived at Mount Pleasant, particularly on that frightening day when a panther decided to "hitch" a ride on their topped buggy.

The DeLongs' descendants don't know where John and Lucretia were headed that particular day, but wherever it was, they took their horse and buggy. The buggy had a canvas top over it to protect its riders from snow and rain, but the sides were open for easy entrance and exit, much like topped Amish buggies today. On most trips it must have been a pleasant experience to ride through the mountains in the conveyance since its top afforded some protection from the elements while the open sides allowed its passengers to smell the fragrances of the deep woods and enjoy

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the cool breezes of the forest. However on this trip the DeLongs' enjoyment of their natural surroundings was short-lived and rudely interrupted.

At some point on their journey, probably at one of the most secluded and heavily wooded areas on the mountain, the DeLongs' reveries were jarred by the sound of something that landed on the canvas overhead. They must have realized it was a heavy object from the noise it made, but they most likely didn't realize it was a big cat until it screamed or began clawing at the canvas.

What Mrs. DeLong's exact reaction might have been is not recalled by family members today anymore, but she no doubt screamed, and hollered for her husband to do something. There was not much he could do since he apparently did not have his gun along with him, but he knew that some immediate action was needed in order to save their lives. What he did next will probably sound "far-fetched" to many folks today, but perhaps many of us would have made the same move in the same situation. And DeLong's move, according to DeLong descendants, was to grab his buggy whip.

By that time the DeLong's horse had no doubt bolted, frightened out of its wits by the panther on the buggy roof directly behind it. DeLong probably knew he couldn't stop the terrified horse, and he certainly hadn't grabbed the buggy whip with the intention of using it in the normal way – that is, cracking it to speed the horse up. There was no use in trying to run away, and since flight was not an option, DeLong knew he had to fight, and that's exactly what he did.

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Leaning out the side of the buggy, the steely mountaineer drew back his arm and then began flailing the mountain cat with the whip. The attack must have surprised the formidable creature; it was a defense it had never seen before and it was not sure how to handle it. Perhaps it clawed at the whip a time or two, and most probably growled at it as well, but finally the panther jumped off the buggy roof and bounded back into the thick woods where it must have decided that there were easier pickings somewhere else. As for the DeLongs, they probably agreed that they had traveled far enough that day. They may have also concluded that the next time they took a buggy ride a gun might be a good traveling companion. ²

Guns, however, proved to be of no use to two men who encountered panthers back in the first decade of the twentieth century near the small village of McAlevy's Fort in Huntingdon County's Stone Valley. Typical of panther stories that were once common throughout the state, these two stirring tales are also interesting because of the way the big cats managed to cheat death. In one case the panther got away because his intended victim decided not to shoot it after all, and in the second case the cat had what seemed to be a "sixth sense" that kept it safe from a hunter's bullet.

Both tales come down to us today from old-time lumberman Thomas Milton Wilson who was born near McAlevy's Fort in 1885. In his last years the rough and ready mountaineer delighted in recalling these episodes to his grandchildren, who were lucky enough to have him still around when they were old enough to appreciate his tales of an earlier and simpler time. Today those

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same grandchildren are happy to pass his stories on to others who are usually as delighted to hear them as the old man was in telling them. Two of his favorites were panther tales – one being of a personal encounter on Broad Mountain, and the other about another man who lost his horse but not his life when attacked by a big mountain lion on Stone Mountain.

Wilson's personal encounter with a Pennsylvania mountain lion occurred around 1900, about the same time that the heavy timbering carried out by lumber companies all over the state had finally destroyed most of the natural cover and food supplies that deer depended upon to survive. This unchecked destruction of natural resources had reduced the state's deer herd to a few scrawny stragglers, and so whenever a hunter spotted a deer track in those times it was a pleasant surprise. It was also enough incentive to cause most hunters of that era to grab their guns and follow the tracks. Wilson was no exception.

A light skiff of snow lay on the ground one fall morning when Wilson walked into the woods to work at his family's lumber mill near McAlevy's Fort. As the teenager made his way through the foothills of Broad Mountain he kept his eyes on the ground, looking for telltale signs of wild game. Then he saw the unmistakable tracks in the light snow. He had stumbled across, or, in the words of the seasoned hunter, "cut", a deer trail. All thoughts of work immediately went out of his mind, and the young man turned around and went back to his parent's house for his gun.

After picking up his weapon and packing some food to take along, young Wilson set off on what he hoped would not be a long

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trek. He was determined to follow the deer as long as necessary to bring it down, but by the time the noon hour arrived without his even catching sight of his quarry he could have been excused for thinking that he may have bitten off “more than he could chew”. Thinking that the deer might settle into a spot to feed as nighttime approached and that he therefore might have a better chance of coming up on it later in the day, the young hunter decided to take a short nap and continue his quest at night.

It was late afternoon when he found a leafy bed in a hollow spot on the forest floor, and he soon dozed off. He had just fallen into a light slumber when he was awakened by the sensation that someone was throwing leaves onto his face. The unexpected feeling caused his eyes to snap open, and then it did not take him long to realize the terrible predicament he was in. Much to his dismay he could see a large panther busily using its rear feet to scatter fallen leaves on top of him. He knew that any movement on his part would provoke an attack, and so he lay as still as he could until he was completely covered. The mountain lion then turned and walked away, as though tired of its little game.

After the big cat had disappeared, the frightened young man got up from his leafy grave, and, with gun in hand, scrambled up the highest and sturdiest tree he could find close by. The tree was a safer spot than being on the ground, and Wilson also figured he could see the panther better from a loftier perch if the big predator came back to look for him. He did not have long to wait before the large cat returned, slinking quietly through the woods and then creeping slowly up to the pile of leaves. Finally, when it was close

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enough, the ferocious animal pounced upon the leafy mound, thinking its sleeping prey was still there.

At that point the fearless boy in the tree raised his rifle and drew a bead on the animal that had intended to kill him. However, just as he was about to pull the trigger, he noticed that the lioness had two small cubs with her. She must have brought them along for what she thought would be an easy meal or even an easy lesson in stalking and killing prey, but her intentions had been somehow thwarted and now she would have to make a kill somewhere else that day if her cubs were not to go hungry.

Perhaps sensing the animal's frustration and despair, the treed rifleman decided he "didn't have the heart", as he would later say, to shoot the cubs' mother. He knew he was out in the woods far enough that the hungry panther would not be a threat to any livestock back home, and so he decided not to gun her down. Perhaps he had second thoughts as he watched the glowing eyes of the mother and her cubs disappear into the darkening forest, but he stuck with his decision to spare the hungry lioness' life so she could provide for her litter and see them grow to adulthood.³

Tom Wilson's account is regarded as factual by his descendants since he is remembered by them as a "no-nonsense" kind of guy" who wasn't prone to telling tall tales. Moreover, the part of his story about the panther covering him with leaves is corroborated by none other than Sam Askey, the great Pennsylvania panther hunter of the Alleghenies. In relating an incident where he shot and killed a panther that was about to attack him because he got too close to a carcass of a deer "covered with leaves" that the beast was guarding, Askey told his biographer that "venison is a

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panther's choice meat, and when he kills one and has satisfied his appetite, he covers the carcass and lays near, taking his meals regularly until all is consumed." ⁴

Actually being covered with leaves by a panther was a far more serious brush with death than a similar encounter Wilson had one night about ten years later when he was coming back across Broad Mountain after spending a pleasant evening "courting" his future wife. The smitten beau had stayed later than usual at Nanny May Henninger's home that night, and to make matters worse he had forgotten to fill his lantern with kerosene before heading back through the darkening forest. He had not gotten too far before the lantern began to sputter and its light died out completely. Fortunately the sky was clear and the moon was full that night, and so there was just enough moonlight to guide him along his way. In fact it was light enough that it didn't take long for his eyes to adjust to the point where they could begin to discern objects in the soft white glow that permeated the woods.

Straining to keep his eyes on the path so as not to lose his way, Wilson suddenly spotted what looked to be an animal coming toward him on the trail ahead. Perhaps his imagination got the best of him, but the more he looked at the creature in front of him the more he became convinced that it had to be the panther that many folks had recently reported seeing in the area and which had taken one of his neighbor's hogs. At this point he stopped dead in his tracks and decided not to move any further, and the animal, seemingly deciding upon on the same strategy, stopped as well. There the two nocturnal travelers stood - in a face-to-face standoff - until Wilson decided to force the issue.

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The young lumberman had always enjoyed listening to the panther tales the old hunters in the area would tell of their younger hunting days, and from that local lore Wilson believed that mountain lions were not the fearsome beasts many folks believed them to be. After all, he had heard those who should know the facts firsthand say that the big cats would try to pounce on their prey, either from a tree or from a running start, but that if they missed their target or did not make a good hit on their first try, they would generally run away. Upon recalling that fact, Wilson decided it was sound enough basis for his next move, which, he felt, was the only thing he could do if he was going to survive this encounter.

Slowly the lone wayfarer hunkered himself down until his chest rested upon his knees. Then, once he felt his legs were ready to provide the most powerful spring he could get from them, the determined hiker, screaming and hollering as loud as he could, took a running dive at the beast on the trail.

He had judged the distance well, hitting the animal with the impact he had hoped for. However, when he did bump into the beast it gave a loud yelp, turned, and fled into the night. It's easy to imagine the young man's relief, given his experience some fifteen years earlier, as he watched his neighbor's dog run away with its tail between its legs and howling in fear. Wilson later decided that the dog had been so scared by his actions that, judging from the way it ran away from him, it must have run all the way back to its home at top speed, never slowing down once, either to catch its breath or to see if the "panther" that had attacked it was still hot on its tail. ³

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Among the stories of real panther episodes passed on to Wilson by his elderly neighbors in Stone Valley was one account that told of another man whose luck was also with him one night when he was attacked by a large mountain lion along present-day Route 305 on Stone Mountain. The account shows once again not only how dedicated the doctors of that day and age actually were, but also how fearless and bold they sometimes had to be in order to carry out their duties.

The tired country doctor had been summoned from his office in Belleville, Mifflin County, to deliver a baby in McAlevy's Fort, and it had taken longer than he had planned. There was no trained medical practitioner in the little town named after the frontier blockhouse erected on the spot by Captain William McAlevy during the Revolutionary War, and so the Belleville physician was often called over here to treat sick patients. It was a long trip on horseback, and now on this late dark night there was hardly any moonlight by which to see. Then as the horse and rider approached that section of the road locals called Watering Trough Hill, the horse seemed to get "skittery".

As they got closer to the old watering trough that sat along the sharpest bend in the road, the doctor sensed trouble. He had stopped here to allow his horse to drink many times before, but tonight the animal was acting funny and appeared to be frightened. With some effort the horseman spurred his mount toward the liquid refreshment, but the darkness prevented him from seeing the mountain lion standing on the trough. It was then that the huge cat made a leap at the horse and hit it with such

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force that it broke the animal's neck, causing both the animal and the doctor to fall down roughly onto the road.

Although badly bruised and frightened, the physician managed to get up and run away. The hungry cat was more interested in making a meal of the horse at that point, and so the fleeing doctor was able to make his escape. However he never stopped running until he saw the lights of the first farmhouse along the road. Here the winded man was able to get a gun and some help, and with these reinforcements went back to rescue his horse.

By the time the doctor got back to the place of the attack, his attacker was nowhere to be seen. It had disemboweled the horse and eaten a few mouthfuls of the entrails, but the panther's instincts had apparently warned it of the danger that was approaching. Rather than take the risk of confronting that danger, the wily beast decided to forgo the rest of its hard-earned meal, slinking back into the deepest and darkest hollows of the mountains where it could enter its rocky den and go to sleep without feeling the pangs of hunger. ⁴

Whether or not the watering trough panther lived much longer after that is, of course, not known. No doubt a veritable army of hunters converged on the area after hearing of the good doctor's narrow escape, all hoping to be the slayer of one of the last, if not the last, mountain lions in Stone Valley. And one of those Nimrods could very well have been successful in tracking down and killing the doctor's attacker. At least dates for the last panther bounties paid in Huntingdon and surrounding counties coincide with that time period. Unconfirmed reports indicate that the last Huntingdon County mountain lion bounty was collected in 1911,

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and if that's true, that same lion might have been the beast that attacked the Huntingdon County doctor. If so, then it can be said that the lion finally paid the ultimate price for its boldness.



An old time hunter

Luther Weaver of Woodward, Centre County, showing off his many trophies of the chase, may have been more than a match for any panther (photo courtesy of Vonnie Henninger).

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Site of the old watering trough

(Local tales say that it was here, along present-day Route 305, on Stone Mountain, Huntingdon County, that an old-time country doctor and his horse were attacked by a large panther around 1900)

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John and Lucretia DeLong

(When a panther jumped onto their “topped” buggy, John resorted to a unique way of saving his life, and that of his wife, by chasing the beast away in a bold and dangerous way that most of us would find unbelievable today. Photos courtesy of Kathryn McFate)



View of the rocks at Hexenkopf Rock

(See the chapter titled “Old Scratch” for the weird tales that surround this strange spot that some today say is still haunted by ghosts of witches from the olden time who still frolic here at midnight).

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