

CARTER COUNTY, KENTUCKY.

Latest News from the Holers—Some Matters of Interest Concerning the Country.

Correspondence Cincinnati Commercial.

GRATON, CARTER CO., KY., July 11, 1877.

The excitement that has prevailed throughout this section of country for the past few weeks over the Underwood troubles in the Tygart District, has in a great measure subsided. Captain Wood, of the Covington Light Guards, returned to this place late last Saturday evening with his company, having in charge George W. and John Bell Underwood, and the colored man James Williams. Sheriff Armstrong accompanied them as far as Olive Hill, where he left them and started home. After some considerable delay the Town Marshal, Peter Brown, was at length found and persuaded to take charge of the Underwood party. As there had been no writs issued by the Magistrate, the prisoners were taken by the Marshal to his residence and a guard placed over them.

Monday morning the party started for the residence of Benjamin Rice, on Tygart Creek, the place appointed for the trial of the opposite party. Upon their arrival they found all present and ready for trial, the Holbrook and Stauffer party having given bail for their appearance. S. V. Holbrook and Captain Joe Harrison were tried and found not guilty; whereupon they, with the remainder of their party, were discharged, there being no evidence against any of them. The trial of the Underwood party upon the same charge (that of shooting with intent to kill), which had been set for the same time and place, was continued until July 28, 1877, and the Underwoods remanded into the custody of the Sheriff, who returned with them to the place. George Underwood was allowed by the Sheriff to return home to look after the family and stock the Sheriff furnishing him with a horse. The Sheriff has been severely censured for allowing him to return home alone, and without bond, as Jesse and Alf Underwood are both thought to be in the Tygart neighborhood. George L. Underwood, who was left at the "Fort," supposed to have been mortally wounded, is reported very much better, and improving under the skillful treatment of Dr. Steele. Nothing has been heard of Elverton or William Underwood, but it is rumored that they are both with Jesse and Alf, in the brush, which, if true, will, doubtless, cause the authorities further trouble. A report has just reached here that a son of Lequire Charles Ham, who lives near the edge of Rowan County, was shot. From all we could learn it seems the boy was out looking after some cattle, when he discovered smoke arising from what he thought was a camp fire. His curiosity being aroused, he approached and discovered three men sitting around the fire whom he recognized as John Martin, Clark Jones and William Banks. They called him to them and gave him a thorough overhauling, questioning him about the movements of the soldiers and Sheriff, and all that had taken place. They then told him he might go, as they had no farther use for him. He at once left, and had gotten fifty or seventy five yards when he was fired upon, the ball passing through his right arm. Many of the citizens here think the worst is yet to come, and that there will be more trouble when the Underwoods are taken into the Tygart country for trial, while others think it has all ended, and have very much confidence in the ability of the State Guard Company, which is to be organized and mustered in here on the 18th inst. They are to be known as the "Carter Light Guards." Eighty-five men have been enrolled, thirty-five of them being from this place, twenty from Willard and thirty from the neighborhood of Olive Hill. There are but two aspirants to the Captaincy—Jasper N. Stewart and — Burnett—either of whom would make most excellent officers. The former seems to have the most friends, and will probably be elected.

The Tygart Valley Iron Company, which was organized November, 1872, now own upwards of 10,000 acres of land, situated in this and the adjoining counties of Elliott and Lewis. A large body of this company's land is situated near the scene of the Underwood troubles, and is known as the "Olive Hill" tract. They have some thirty farms which are rented to tenants. The timber on this tract can not be expelled, a large portion of it never having been touched by the axe. Here every species of timber can be found. The block ore which is found upon this tract appears similar to the Lambert vein, which, at Charlotte Furnace, fifteen miles northeast, increases to from four to eighteen feet in thickness, and has been worked for several years unsuccessfully. The estate of this company has a great value whenever railroad facilities may be extended to them, and the timber, iron ore and coal transported, which could be accomplished with but a small outlay of money, and that such facilities will be extended to this section of the State at an early date must be obvious to those who have traveled through this section. The Chesapeake and Ohio road, through its interest and direct ownership in the Louisville Short line, and the Lexington and Big Sandy road, controls a continuous line from Richmond, Virginia, to Louisville, Kentucky, a distance of six miles, of which only eighty nine miles (being from Mt. Sterling to Huntington) remains unfinished. The Tygart Valley Iron Company's land is situated at or near the center of the unfinished link. The company have granted two and a half miles of the right of way through their lands. The cost of building the Chesapeake road has been so great that it does not seem possible that it should long continue to suffer this connecting link (the construction of which would not at the most require the expenditure of over two millions of dollars), and without which it is void of any direct Western connection and cut off from its main and only reliance—the Southern trade. The geological formation of this section, which includes the counties of Greenup, Carter, Elliott, Lewis and Rowan, embraces sandstone, shale, ironstone, millstone, grit, freestone, conglomerates, limestone, marble, &c., and from which are derived soils by no means unproductive if properly and skillfully treated. The timber of these counties is practically inexhaustible. The climate and healthfulness of these mountain counties can not be excelled, while the scenery in many places is equal to any in Europe. Sheep raising can nowhere be followed with greater success than in this part of Kentucky, where the native grasses and the blue grass on the ridge land afford a perpetual pasture for all kinds of stock. Tobacco, grapes and fruit of all kinds grow well wherever the land is not too hilly or abrupt for cultivation. The immense beds of iron ore and coal will make this county (Carter) within a few years one of the best mining districts in the West, and will enrich all who have the enterprise and capital to engage in mining and manufacturing.

The people are kindhearted and hospitable, and seem anxious to have the resources of the country developed. Grapes flourish here as well (we are told) as they do in the mountainous countries of France, Spain or Germany, and no portion of the United States presents cheaper lands with such favorable surroundings than does this mountain section of Kentucky.

Schoolhouses are springing up all over this section, and education is beginning to make itself felt.

Graton, the county seat of Carter, has improved most wonderfully in the last few years, and at present is doing considerable business; there is a bank and several large stores, all of which seem to be doing well. The Eastern Kentucky Railroad passes through and brings to and carries from this place quantities of freight, such as pig iron, lumber, bark and all kinds of produce.

A word in regard to the railroad from here to Riverton and I will close. This road is owned by the Eastern Kentucky Company, and is used for the purpose of transporting iron ore, coal, pig iron, lumber and all kinds of produce. The company own 20,000 acres of land upon which are (if we were correctly informed) seven furnaces, the Hunnewell, Pennsylvania, Bellefonte, Mt. Savage, Charlotte, and the Princess. The last named being the only stone coal furnace, and one or two of the first named being the only charcoal furnaces now in operation in the Hanging Rock region. There are upon this road seven tunnels, the largest of which is 1218 feet. New rails are being laid, and the road has much improved. A new passenger car has been placed upon the road, which adds much to the comfort of travelers. From three to four millions of dollars have been expended by the company in the counties of Carter and Greenup, and the road is in splendid condition and considered one of the best managed in the State. The length of the road, as far as completed, is about thirty five miles. The excellency of the engineering of this road is due to the skill of J. M. Goodman, now of Cleveland, Ohio, and J. McL. Stroughton, of Covington, Kentucky, both gentlemen of high reputation in engineering circles. Riverton, the northern terminus, is situated upon the site of the old homestead of a brother of Daniel Boone, who lived and died there. It is 184 miles from Cincinnati, and is destined at no distant day to be one of the most important iron manufacturing towns on the Ohio River. Here the company have erected a hotel, a large brick building used as offices, and a handsome residence, which is occupied by Colonel W. H. Bates, Vice President and General Manager of the company. Riverton can properly be said to belong to the Eastern Kentucky Railroad. We trust, with all these facts before them, the authorities will make an effort to rid the county of Carter of the element which has so long been disturbing the peace and quiet of her citizens. J. P. H.