of Black's life that are to be found in the Library of Congress and the Pennsylvania State Library are not mentioned.

Northwestern University

Alston G. Field


Much information about rafting and boat building and many tall stories of the heyday of the lumbering industry along the Clarion River are contained in this collection of reminiscences written by lumbermen and old residents of the region. Between the lines of romantic poetry and interesting fiction there is, however, a touch of tragedy, for by May 22, 1915, when the last fleet of thirty-three rafts loaded with pit posts and manned by skilled rivermen went down the Clarion and Allegheny rivers to Pittsburgh, the virgin forest of northwestern Pennsylvania that had brought industry and wealth to the towns along the river was gone except for one small tract at Cooksburg. Of the sixteen communities whose histories are sketched by the old-timers in this book but two, Ridgeway and Clarion, are towns of any note today, and of the others but five are named on modern state maps.

In 1832 enterprising pioneer lumbermen rafted their timber from Clarion to Cincinnati when they couldn't find a market in Pittsburgh. By 1870 lumbering had grown so profitable that the Navigation Company was organized to dredge the channel and chart the river. The industry could not have been very remunerative for the raftsmen, however, for one raconteur states that he and his brother “when all our bills were paid . . . had about 30c for our two winter's work” in the spring of 1874. The greatest profits seem to have been made during the last three decades of the nineteenth century, when well-organized lumber companies, improved transportation facilities, and a good market in industrial Pittsburgh made lucrative the task of cutting and marketing the big trees. The boat and raft building industry flourished and mills appeared at every creek junction. The period was productive, too, of raftsmen's band concerts and incredible yarns. After the turn of the century the forests began to dwindle and by the end of the first decade the mills were fast disappearing, the boat builders' scaffolds were neglected, and the great lumber camps were being abandoned.

The book is divided into three sections: poetry and songs, which seem to
be modern productions; narratives, or personal anecdotes; and histories, which are for the most part personal reminiscences and brief résumés of various lumbering activities. Several dedicatory pages containing portraits and sketches of men prominent in the raftsmen's association precede the main sections. A list of Clarion River pilots (p. 13) and a detailed map (p. 25) of the Clarion River, with every creek and ripple, every early town and camp marked, are unique features. There are illustrations of lumbering and rafting scenes during the latter part of the nineteenth century, several of which will interest western Pennsylvanians familiar with the state's reserve, Cook Forest. One wishes, however, that the editor had devoted more time to editing and arranging his contributors' manuscripts. The miscellaneous arrangement of the articles, without even an attempt at chronological order, makes the omission of an index a serious defect in the book. The use of triple exclamation points or question marks where one punctuation mark would suffice is a peculiarity of the book. An unusual and praiseworthy omission is that of all references to the gory tragedies that are customarily to be found in such collections, although one story of a man so destructive as to be dubbed "Seven Buckets of Blood" did escape the censor.

Western Pennsylvania Historical Survey


Unlike the majority of county historians, Mr. Beebe does not seem so much concerned with glorifying the pioneers and their successors as with giving a truthful and unvarnished account of his county's history. Potter County followed the usual cycle of Pennsylvania mountain counties. Its first permanent settler came in 1807, three years after it had been created, and the early years saw the vicissitudes incident to pioneer times—the journeys in freezing weather to the older settlements for food and the difficulties of clearing land and of obtaining clothing. Prosperity came with the growth of lumbering, and the chapter on this phase of industry is of particular value. The author evidences a realization of the seriousness of wholesale deforestation but brings out the significant fact that it was almost forced upon landowners by the policy deliberately adopted by local officials and expressed in the words "lay the taxes right on; in a few years the timber will be gone, and we shall have no unseated taxes" (p. 163). Railroads were constructed and mills built for the