THE ROARING FORK LAND GRANTS

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Foreword

Roaring Fork of the Powell River is a special place. Its desolation and isolation are noteworthy. Its place in our early history is forgotten. Its remarkable geography is approximated by only two other places in the United States, Rocky Mountain National Park and Boone, North Carolina. It is one of the two major tributaries of the southernmost of the two North Forks of the Powell River of Virginia, which is the westernmost tributary of the Tennessee.

It starts at the very spine of the Appalachians. Black Mountain, Indian Mountain, Pine Mountain, and Roger's Ridge meet at Bakers Flats, a mountain top plateau. Water falling on Baker's Flats can run off either into the Big Sandy River, a tributary of the Ohio, or into the Cumberland, which courses into Tennessee before reentering Kentucky, like an errant child. Or it can flow via Roaring Fork into the Tennessee, before it and the Cumberland both empty into the Ohio just before that river flows into the Mississippi. Just over the ridge to the west, the Kentucky River starts its journey to the Ohio.

It once was the major route of travel from Powell Valley into Kentucky, and the Old Ohio Country. The old trails made by the buffalo, elk, and deer – followed first by the Indian, and later by the Long Hunters and settlers – came out of Clinch Valley and up Big Stony Creek to High Knob, and then across Little Stone Mountain to Kelly View, and to the mouth of Roaring Fork at Kent Junction. The current communities of Norton and Wise did not exist. If one wanted to access the Cumberland Valley, he went up Roaring Fork and took its main eastern tributary, Cane Patch Creek, and easily crossed into the head of Black Creek, and then back into the headwaters of the main southern North Fork of the Powell, and then easily crossed the divide into Guest's River. If one wanted to go through Pound Gap (then known as Winding Gap because of the roar the wind used to make in it before it was widened for the modern highway), he would turn down Guest's River to Stevens and cross over into the head of Indian Creek, which took one to Pound Gap, from which one could travel down Elk Horn Creek to Ashland, Ky. on the Ohio. If one wanted to access the Cumberland, he turned up Guest's River to its head and crossed over Fox Gap and Flat Gap. The Kentucky River was accessed via Stonega Gap in Black Mountain and Scuttle Hole Gap in Pine Mountain. Famous Indians, such as Chief Benge and Big Jim used these trails.

The ethnology of the settlers on Roaring Fork is one of the most pristine examples of the mass Regulator Exodus from North Carolina of 1771. They were a

special group of people, and their coming here was part of the largest mass migration in colonial America.

Another reality that makes Roaring Fork so special is that the valleys of two of its three major tributaries are now totally uninhabited, though they were once thriving mountain communities. The third tributary once contained three coal camps, one of which is now totally gone, one diminished to half a dozen dwellings, and the third reduced to a fourth of its former size. The rest of the country has been heavily strip mined for coal, and put back to its 'approximate original contour', and is uninhabitable except for the reintroduced bear and elk.

Maps show cemeteries, streams, and ridges that bear the names of former settlers. Thousands of people of today trace their ancestry back to these long vanished people. Their lands, including their homes and cemeteries, were bought up by large coal companies in the 1880's. Most of the cemeteries have been relocated. All that remains are the names on the maps.

This author has written a number of essays and one book (Black Mountain, Mother of Today) that probe into the humus of this lost history. The only window into this lost civilization is that provided by the collection of original land grants on file at the Library of Virginia. However, the surveys accompanying these grants are so primitive, and the current country so much a rubble pile, that the author previously has avoided facing the task of digging into this potential resource. The lure of this lost civilization has twice before motivated the author to start the underlying research, but frustration also has twice before caused him to file away the work. The magnetic draw of the enigmas involved have yet again caused him to resume the task. This time persistence was rewarded, and now a presentation of the gained data and understandings have been put into essay form. Many will find it arcane, but others will find it rewarding.

The Regulators

In 1492 many things began to happen that were to have effects on Roaring Fork. The Spanish Christians finally defeated the Spanish Moors, who were primarily of North African Berber descent. The Christians began the Inquisition, in which they systematically took all the Moorish men, and women past childbearing age, out to sea and threw them overboard. Many Moors publically converted to Christianity (called 'Conversios'), but because they often continued to practice their Muslim faith in the privacy of their homes, were forced to become colonists in the New World.

The Spanish approached the process of colonization differently from the English, who made a distinction between a colony and a military outpost. The Spanish combined the two. Spanish America was populated with outposts that consisted of both men and women, with the men being soldiers. The typical family unit consisted of one long term Christian couple as a married man and wife, plus five

female Conversio 'household servants'. All six women typically reproduced at maximum capacity.

The Spanish began a massive transfer of gold and silver from Mexico and Peru to Spain. These treasure galleons sailed from Panama and from Mexico to the Spanish Caribbean Islands, and then to the Florida coast, which they followed north to Long Island, which was their sign to turn due east, and to sail that bearing until they collided with the Iberian Peninsula.

Portugal began a war of independence from Spain. Privateers were commissioned by the Portuguese, who also had close ties to the Berber Barbary Pirates of North Africa. They hid out in the islands and inlets along the current American coast, in such places as Pamlico Inlet, Albemarle Sound, and the Chesapeake Bay. The Portuguese privateers were joined by pirates from North Africa, which consisted of Berbers, French Huguenots, and German Pietists. The English joined into the feeding frenzy. They either allied themselves with these privateers, or out right sanctioned their existence with written Letters of Marque. Tangier Island in the Chesapeake became a more or less permanent settlement of these people, who acquired the name 'Picaroons'. The Spanish viewed them all as being "English".

Spain moved aggressively to counter this 'English' presence in North America. In 1539 Hernando de Sota began an exploration of the southeastern United States, which carried him through North Carolina and Tennessee. His party would have consisted on many Conversios. In 1566 the Spanish established a fort, and colony, at Santa Elena on Parris Island in South Carolina. They built a chain of forts / colonies extending the length of the Yadkin River on to the Little Tennessee. The main fort / colony was at present Morganton, North Carolina, just south of the upper Holston Valley. The westernmost fort was at the capital of the Over Hill Cherokee at Chota, just southeast of Knoxville. Santa Elena was no inconsequential affair, as it became the capital of Spanish "Florida". A list of surnames of these some 400 soldiers / settlers exists, and shows them to have been primarily Berbers with Portuguese and Spanish alterations to their spellings.

As one would expect, the population of the Spanish and Portuguese blossomed among the Inland Waterway, and in the Yadkin Valley, just to the south of the Virginia border.

In 1587 Spanish authorities, knowing that they were going to launch their Armada against England the next year, ordered the emergency evacuation of their colonies in North Carolina, of which Tennessee was a part. The colonies west of Morganton were not evacuated, perhaps due to lack of communication. Hundreds of colonists were thus abandoned.

In 1714 a smallpox epidemic had wiped out the Yuchi, who lived in the Holston Valley. The Catawba Indians lived in the Yadkin Valley. In 1731 smallpox of

European origin killed 95% of the Catawbas. The Cherokee attacked the weakened Catawbas, and massacred the men and the old women, and adopted the young women and children into their tribe. This process, plus the abandoned Chota Spanish settlement, led to the introduction of much Spanish and Portuguese DNA and culture into the Cherokee. In 1738 the Cherokee were hit by smallpox, but only about half of them died. The fatality rate among persons of Old World descent was usually 50%. This means that by 1738 the DNA of the Cherokee was approximately all Old World. The only possible sources are those enumerated above.

In the French and Indian War Shawnee attacks on the Scots-Irish settlements west of the Shenandoah Valley at Kerr's Creek in 1754-1769. Similarly, these attacks terrorized the German pacifist Brethren settlement at Dunkard's Bottom near Radford. Massive numbers of Scots-Irish and Germans abandoned their Virginia settlements and crossed the mountains into the Yadkin Valley. The Cherokee, who had occupied the Yadkin after the annihilation of the Catawbas, were allies with the British during the French and Indian War. Large scale intermarriage of the Cherokee, Spanish, Portuguese, Germans, and Scots-Irish ensued. Repeated epidemics of smallpox hit this population, and killed most of the pure blooded Cherokee, a circumstance confirmed by modern DNA analysis.

Eastern North Carolina was controlled by the English. The various groups of people in the Yadkin were opposed to any established church, such as the Church of England. The English considered them to be heretics. All the groups in the Yadkin were at odds with civil authority. The Cherokee, the Berbers and the Scots among them had always lived in mountains. In 1771 the back country people, who had formed armed mobs in order to 'regulate' the government, got into a shooting war with the English and lost. The English from Eastern North Carolina came in and burned court houses, homes, and hanged all the Regulators they could find. This produced the largest mass migration in colonial America as thousands fled through every available pass to get into Virginia. Due to surveying errors it was thought that East Tennessee was largely in Virginia. Dark complexioned people who hated governments in general, who were half Indian in their culture, who were hunter-gathers, and who held to atypical religions fled into the valleys of the New, Holston, Clinch, and Powell Rivers. They would pass over good bottom land and head to the highest mountain. Many claimed to be Cherokee, despite the fact that most of the full blooded Cherokee had died of smallpox.

The Yadkin River begins at Boone, North Carolina. The New River also begins there, and flows into Virginia through Mouth-of-Wilson. Yellow Mountain Pass gave access to Elizabethton, Tennessee and on to Blackwater and Newman's Ridge on the Tennessee-Lee County line. Such people headed straight to Mount Rogers, and then to Roaring Fork.

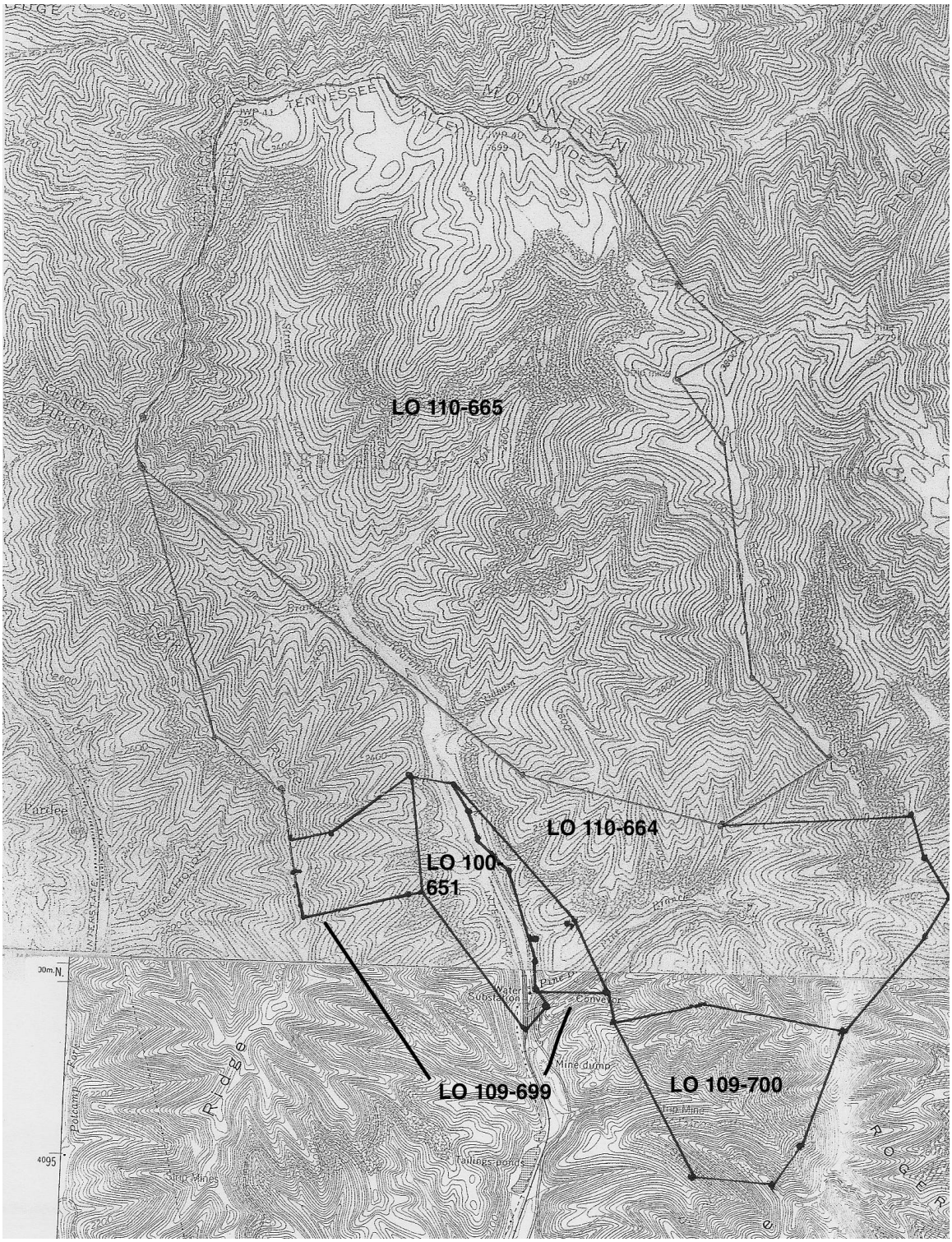
The Land Title Process

By the time the next generation of exiled Regulators began to move away from places like Mouth-of-Wilson, Black Water, and Newman's Ridge, the earlier 'settlement right' ('corn right') process of obtaining ownership of public land was no longer in use. The situation had simplified to a process of the aspiring owner going to tracts of public land and of picking out a section he wanted. He would then pay to have a county approved surveyor survey the land. The survey would be filed at the local county courthouse, and another copy sent to the Commonwealth of Virginia's Land Office in Richmond. An examination of records would be made to verify that the land had not been sold to someone else. The process could sit like this for years. These surveys were often honored, and even referenced, in subsequent surveys. Many such surveys were never bought. This situation leads to much confusion when modern analysis of the records is attempted. When these issues were resolved the buyer would pay for a land warrant, which would give him ownership of the tract. Washington County was noteworthy in that most of its old surveys still exist, but other than that most of the surveys were lost or destroyed. The courthouses of Wise and Lee Counties were burned during the Civil War. In Wise, the deeds were saved from the fire, but the surveys were not. At the fall of Richmond in 1865 the land grant deeds with the surveyor's mets and bounds were saved from the ensuing fire, but many surveys were not. Copies of the deeds were returned to the county courthouses where they are available to the public. In the late twentieth century the land grants in Richmond were microfilmed, and then placed on-line by the Library of Virginia. Another process of acquiring land ownership was for a person to simply start living on the property, totally without any 'due process'. If he worked the land, and especially if he fenced it, a law formally called 'adverse possession' would take effect after a few years and the person would be given formal ownership of this land, a process commonly called 'squatter's rights'. There is no record of such land ownership among the land grant records in Richmond. This situation accounts for the large blank spaces on a map showing the plottings of the land grants.

The Plottings of the Roaring Fork Land Grants On a Modern USGS topographic Map

The four USGS 7.5 minute quadrangles that are used in this essay are the Whitesburg, Ky., the Flat Gap, Ky., the Norton, Va. and the Appalachia, Va. maps. The process of placement of the surveys on these maps is as follows. The mets and bounds as given in the grants are drawn on plain paper. The topographic notations associated with the calls are drawn in if they are potentially identifiable on a modern map. A call for "on top of a ridge", or "west side of the creek" are examples, as are comments about shared survey corners or lines with other named surveys. Even comments about trees, such as "to a maple, a hickory, and an oak" are helpful, as the next surveyor of adjoining tracts will use the same notations. A paper cutout of the survey is made, and is moved across the topo to match call requirements with

the features on the map. The easiest surveys are done first, and then additional surveys referencing these foundation placements are added. This essay will follow the format of this sequence of placements, rather than a chronologic one.



GRANTS IN THE UPPER REACHES OF ROARING FORK

William Carnes and Loring Tyler's LO 110-665

This grant is the best example of the above discussion on the entire Roaring Fork project. Surveyed in 1853 and granted in 1854, this survey is definitively anchored on the modern map by its conformity to the state line between Kentucky and Virginia, and by the unique rugged topography. Other grants reference it, so it can be used to locate them.

It was for 2000 acres, and was a speculative investment for these two men, who otherwise never lived on it. It is a historic site, as the long hunter, John Baker, spent the winter of 1769-70 living in a rock house near its top. Carnes was born on Trading Creek west of Jonesville, and married the daughter of William Duff, Sr. He had a very successful store at Stickleyville and acquired a large estate. In 1860 his estate was given as having been worth $61,000. Loring Tyler was born in Massachusetts and did not move to Lee County until 1834. He acquired a considerable estate there, at least partly in farming. Hickory Flats may have been his home.

The calls of LO 110-665 state that one of its survey corners was "70 poles north of Gabriel Church's house". This distance is about 300 yards, and is unique in its referencing the dwelling of a neighbor. Church was a well known minstrel.

William Carnes' LO 110-664

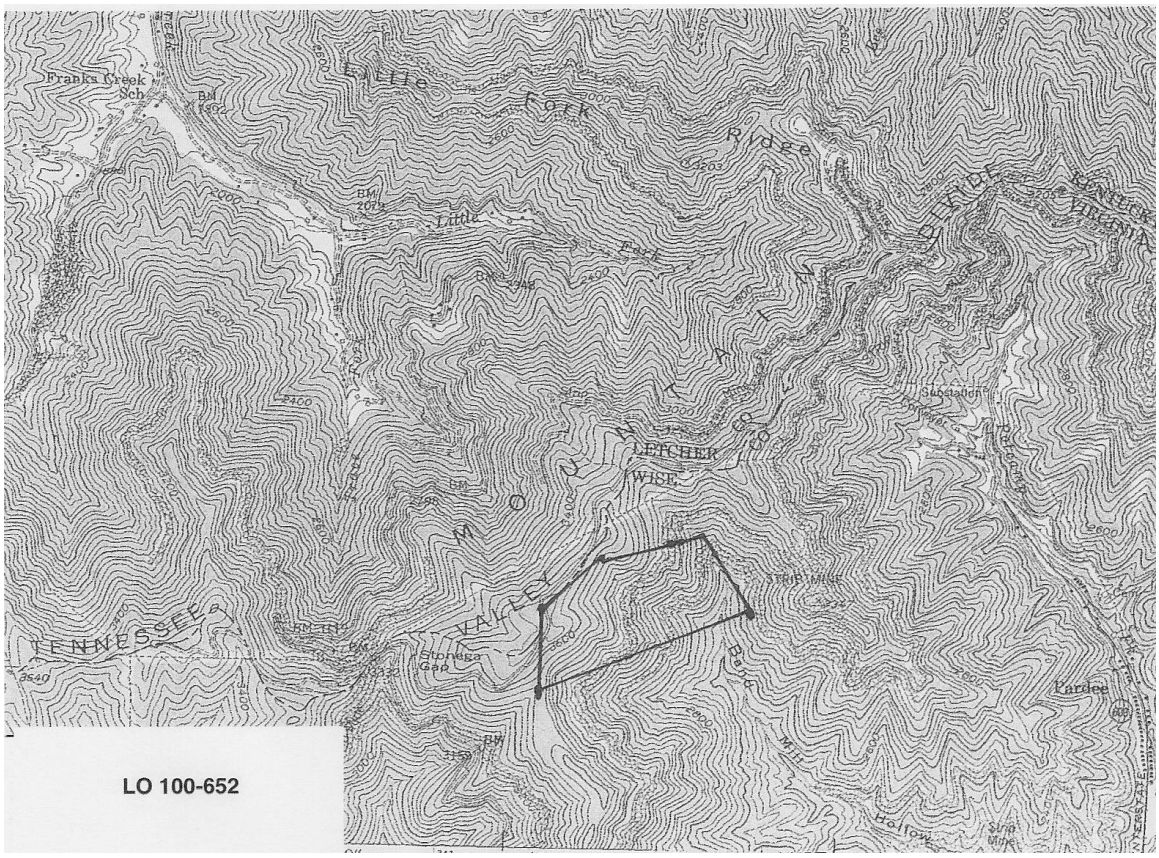
Carnes bought by himself a contiguous grant of 673 acres to the above grant whose ownership he shared with Tyler. It can only be viewed as having 'fleshed out' LO 110-665. It included the bases of Fork Ridge and of Roger's Ridge, as well as large bottoms between the two along Roaring Fork. There was a surprising amount of fairly flat land along the ridge tops, which would have likely been open big game pastures at the time. Black loam was often found along the top of Black Mountain and its spurs. Blue Stem prairie grass grew in abundance. As Carnes was not a long hunter, these features of the grant could have only been viewed as having enhanced its investment value.

William Carnes' LO 100-651

This grant of 76 ¾ acres was bought in 1848, five years before Carnes bought the two grants to its north. Its plotting is impossible without relating its calls to LO 110-664, however. It contains the large bottoms along Roaring Fork that in the 20th Century contained the Pine Branch coke oven complex. It was Carnes' first venture at land speculation in Roaring Fork. See Gabriel Church below.

William Carnes' LO 100-652

Carnes' 96 ¼ acre grant of Sept. 1848 is for 96 ¼ acres is featureless, and the survey calls were for 'trees and spurs'. It was said to be in "a cove on Black Mountain". As the land on Black Mountain and to the west of Roaring Fork is contained within the Olinger Survey, and Black Mountain to the east ends at Baker's Flats at the head of Roaring Fork, this tract certainly is part of the Roaring Fork drainage. The grant was issued on Sept. 1848, the same date as LO 100-651, and thus was among the earliest grants on Roaring Fork. The term 'cove' was used in these surveys as a synonym for 'hollow'. It is remarkable that none of the official grants cover land within Band Mill Hollow, which is among the flattest and most desirable land in the Roaring Fork drainage. One would have to assume that this land was already taken by 'squatters' right' settlers. Why Carnes thought that this tract was desirable is hard to understand. Perhaps the issue was that it was simply available and cheap at a time he first had enough savings to invest in land speculation.



Gabriel Church's LO 109-699

Gabriel Church's grant of 76 acres is one of the smallest holdings on Roaring Fork. It was surveyed in 1853 and granted in 1854. It actually consisted of two tracts of land granted as a single survey. These two tracts are totally separated by LO 100-651. As it was bought a few months before Carnes bought the two grants to its north, they could have been part of a package of related transactions. The arrangement makes little sense unless Church had bought Carnes' LO 100-651, and was simply fleshing out its limits in 'left over' land not included into the survey of LO 110-664. The total package would have made Church an economically viable farm.

Church's home site is noted in the survey of LO 110-665, an unusual circumstance. The survey of LO 110-665 was done in 1853, showing that Church was living on LO 109-699 at least a year before he bought it.

Church was a famous musician of his time and place. He is best known for his ballad "Poor Goins" about the murder of Alexander Goins on Mud Lick on Callahan Creek in 1844. He knew both the victim and the murderers. Goins, Church, and one of the murderers – a man named George Hall – had their origins on Newman's and Wallen's Ridges, and on back to Mouth-of-Wilson. "Poor Goins" is among the University of Kentucky's collection of mountain folk music.

Alexander Goin's sister, Elizabeth Jane, lived with her husband Michael Peter Craiger on Craiger Branch about a half north of LO 100-651.

This 76 acre grant is locatable because of its shared calls with LO 110-664 and LO 100-651.

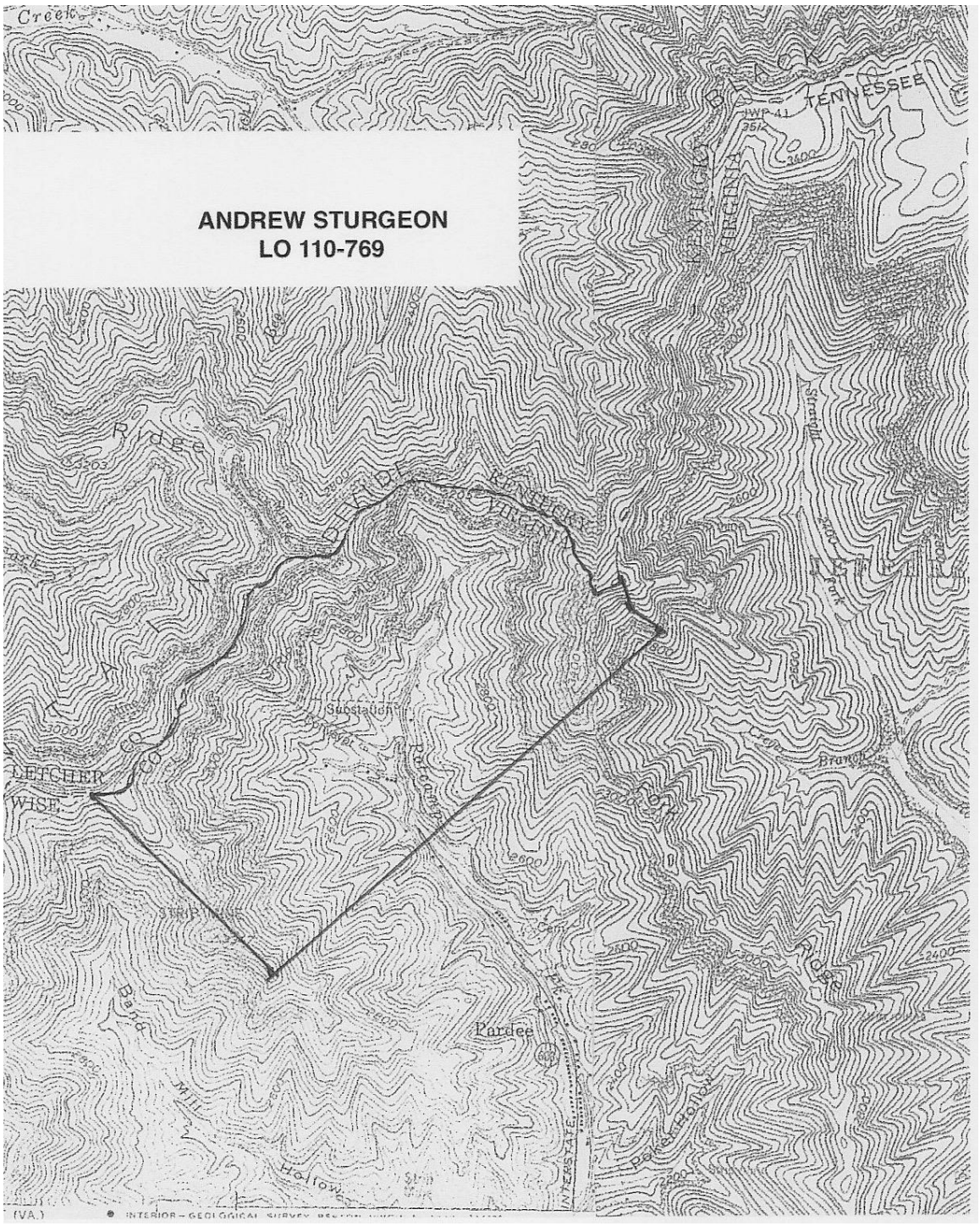
William Church's LO 109-700

This tract was granted the same date as Gabriel Church's land, June 2, 1854. William and Gabriel were half brothers, and were from Mouth-of-Wilson on the North Carolina side. It is locatable only by its shared calls with LO 110-664. He is not to be confused with 'Preacher Billy' William B. Church, who also came from Mouth-of-Wilson, and settled somewhere in the general vicinity of Black Mountain.

This tract is bounded to its east by William Carnes' LO 114-385, which is not plotted as it lies in the drainage of the main head of Powell River, and thus is not within the scope of this essay. The land to the east of this tract contains Black Creek and Powell River bounded to the south by the coal camp of Blackwood, and to the east by Guest's River. Its dividing ridge with the drainage of Roaring Fork is Roger's Ridge, which is named after Joseph Rogers, who owned much land in this drainage.

As an interesting commentary on the loose real estate practices of this era, one notes that LO 110-620 owned by William Carnes and Thomas Duff, who was of the influential family of Duffs at the head of Wallen's Creek, and related to Fannie

and Archibald Scott of Chief Benge fame, adjoins LO 114-385. Its deed lists it as being located on Lee County, despite the fact that it also lists it as being "100 acres on the Pound Fork of the Big Sandy". In November 1, 1854, when this deed was recorded in Jonesville, the land actually lay in Russell County.



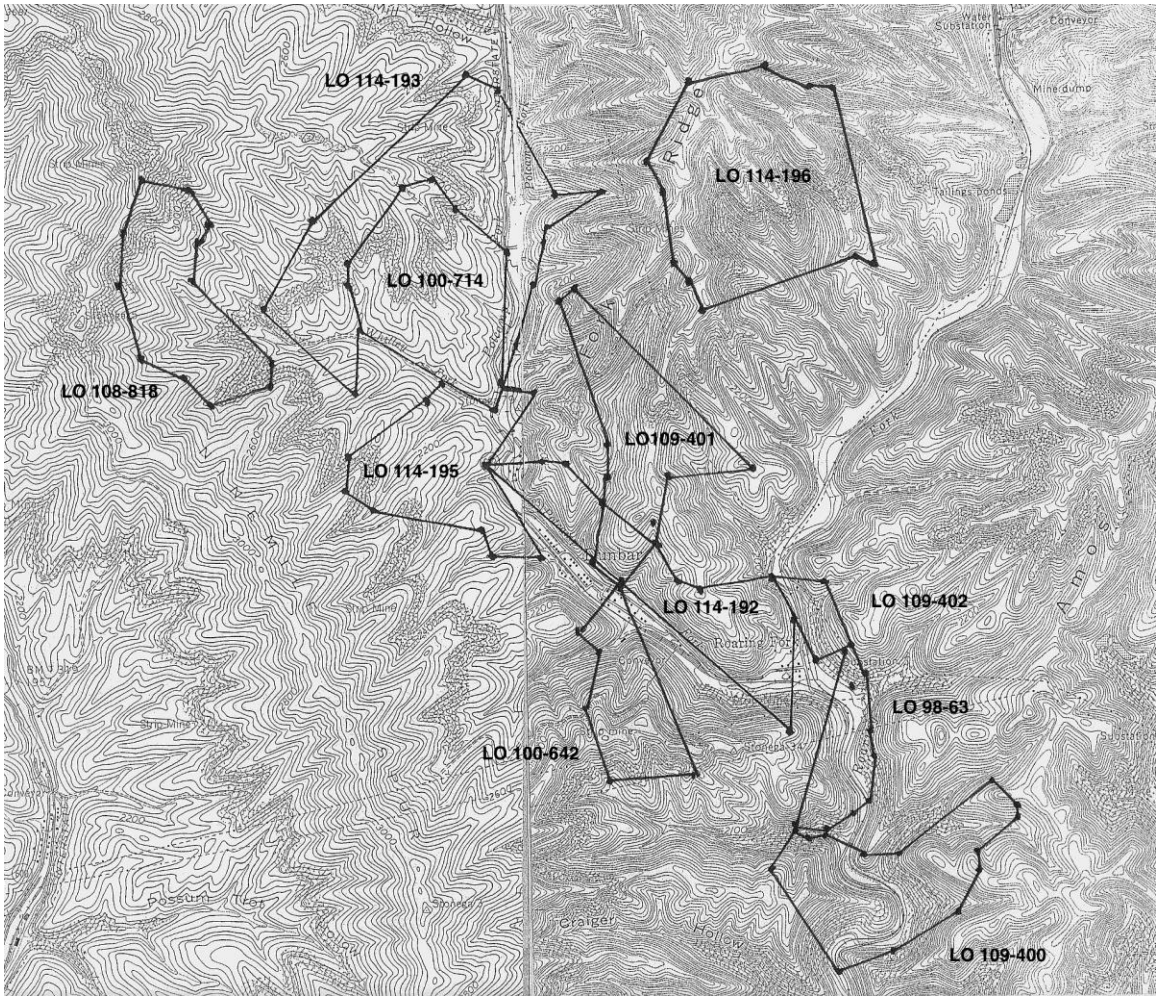
Andrew Sturgeon's LO-110-769

This grant is locatable because of its shared calls with LO 110-665. It is for 300 acres, surveyed in 1854 and granted 1855. The purchaser is better known today as 'Sturgill'. He was to become the largest land owner on Roaring Fork, and likely the wealthiest inhabitant. His total holdings were 2,225 acres. The family was one of those Germans that wound up in Western North Carolina, and moved to Mouth-of-Wilson. Originally spelled 'Steagel', they lived for a while in Sturgill Hollow, which is a short cut to Mount Rogers, just west of Mouth-of-Wilson. About 1810 they moved to Flat Gap, Ky., and later to Powell Valley east of Big Stone Gap. John Sturgill married Jemima Wells, and moved to the mouth of Looney Creek at the future Appalachia. Andrew was their son, and owned land in Powell Valley before moving to Roaring Fork. He had an eye for business, and owned the only grist mill in the area around Roaring Fork. He also kept 98 stands of bees, a circumstance that implied he sold lots of honey. As his mill would have sold grain to the public, it is likely that he kept something of a store there. He kept sheep, which he kept locked up at night to protect them from the wolves, and he hunted a lot. His home was near the mouth of Whitley Fork (see footnote at the end of this essay), 300 yards below his mill. This tract contains all the bottom lands at the head of Pot Camp Fork of Roaring Fork, and the northern part of the future coal camp of Pardee.

"Pot Camp" is an intriguing name. Certainly it references an old long hunter's campsite, likely near the head of the stream named after it. At first blush one could assume that it might imply an old discarded cooking pot left by an early long hunter. It likely references a spring that once determined the location of the hunting camp. Germans, including English Anglo-Saxons, frequently referred to a spring that came up out of the ground into a pot or kettle like concavity as a 'pot spring'. Some of the hot springs in Yellowstone National Park are so referenced today. As all the springs on Pot Camp Branch have been sunken (dried up) by mining over the past century and a quarter, this issue is unverifiable today.

David Booth LO 98-63

This is the oldest grant within the drainage of Roaring Fork, having been surveyed August 6, 1845, and granted August 31-1846. David was the brother of Nancy, the wife of Andrew Sturgeon. Their parents were William and Sarah Ann Taylor Boothe. The land sits in a nest of grants to Andrew Sturgeon, but the nearest survey date for these was 1852, six years after Booth's survey. It seems likely that Andrew followed his wife's family into Roaring Fork. David's choice of land is obscure, as it only the lower half of the bottom land at the junction of Pot Lick Fork, when he could have gotten it all. Perhaps an unrecorded squatter already had the upper two thirds, later to have been patented by Andrew Sturgeon.



Nolan Carroll LO 100-642

Nolan Carroll's land was granted September 30, 1848. His choice of land is hard to fathom. Nolan married Drucsilla Boothe, the sister of David and daughter of William and Sarah Ann Taylor Booth (see above LO 98-63).

Andrew Sturgeon LO 100-714

This is Andrew's first purchase on Roaring Fork, bought in 1848. It has farmable land over much of the lower half, and more significantly it dominates the intersection of Whitney Fork with the main Pot Camp Fork. His later choices of land confirm his eye for trail intersections, which would be of great use for any business serving the public. On it was sited his home, and his mill and probable store are just to its east. Its southwestern line borders the main trail up Whitley Fork leading to the top of the Nine Mile Spur, which surveys document was also called Trace Spur. This trail led to Appalachia to the southwest, and to Frank's Creek (named after Andrew's Brother Francis) to the northeast.

Andrew Sturgeon LO 108-818

Bought in 1853, Andrew was beginning to show his increasing wealth. Even though the surveyor's calls do not show it, the contours of it and of LO 114-193 suggest that may have actually they actually touched. With the primitive instruments available at the time distances in very steep terrain were very hard to measure. This tract contained the upper half of the Whitley Fork trail to the main one on top of Nine Mile Spur, which it touched for a considerable distance. Andrew seemed to understand the modern dictum that location is everything.

Andrew Sturgeon LO 109-400

At this point, Andrew Sturgeon went on a land buying spree on Roaring Fork. The hollow along its northern extent contained the main trail up to the meadows atop Amos Ridge. The utility of the portion of the tract that lay to the west of the river is hard to ascertain. It touches a 100 acre tract of his that does not show up in the land grants. He could have only obtained it by buying land from a squatter. When added to his holdings on Cane Patch Creek, the total block of contiguous land that he bought in a short period of time is impressive. In order to understand this, we must remember that the main trail from southern present Wise County to the northern half ran up Cane Patch Creek. Again, the commercial instincts of Andrew are in evidence.

William Sturgeon LO 109-401

William Sturgeon was the son of Andrew and Nancy Booth Sturgeon. His wife was likely Frances Stidham (however, another on-line genealogy lists his wife's maiden name as Boggs.). His daughter married a Maggard. There is a Stidham Cemetery on Cane Patch Creek. The Boggs clan lived on Cane Patch Creek just to the east of William, on Callahan Creek to the west of Roaring Fork, and on Frank's Creek to the north of Roaring Fork. The Maggards lived on Frank's Creek and on down the Cumberland River. Frank's Creek was named after Andrew's brother, Francis.

The two land holdings of William on Roaring Fork were clustered with those of Andrew. William died in West Virginia during the Civil War.

Besides this tract contributing to the large block of land of Andrew's mentioned above, it had the added value of containing a long segment of the meadows on top of Fork Ridge, as well as the hunting trail located there.

Andrew Sturgeon LO 109-402

The only value this small steep tract added to Andrew's holdings was that it touched LO 114-192, which he was soon to buy, and thus completed his strangle hold on the entrance to the Roaring Fork trail.

Andrew Sturgeon LO 114-192

The survey of this tract overlays LO 109-401. This sort of surveying error was common in that era, and is called 'shingling', as the tracts overlap like shingles on a roof. It is an interesting tract for a couple of other reasons. It completes his geographic control of the Roaring Fork trail. It also contains a large game hunter's dream of a perfect watch. Note the knob at the top of Fork Ridge along the tracts northeastern leg. It sits on a knob situated in a blue stem grass meadow, which it surveys from an eighty foot elevation surrounded potentially by a 360 degree view of a field of grazing animals. The surveyor's calls confirm this by naming the site as 'a Camp Ground'. There probably was a spring at the head of the hollow that begins at its eastern margin. Together with LO 109-402, it controls the entrance to the northern extent of Roaring Fork.

Andrew Sturgeon LO 114-193

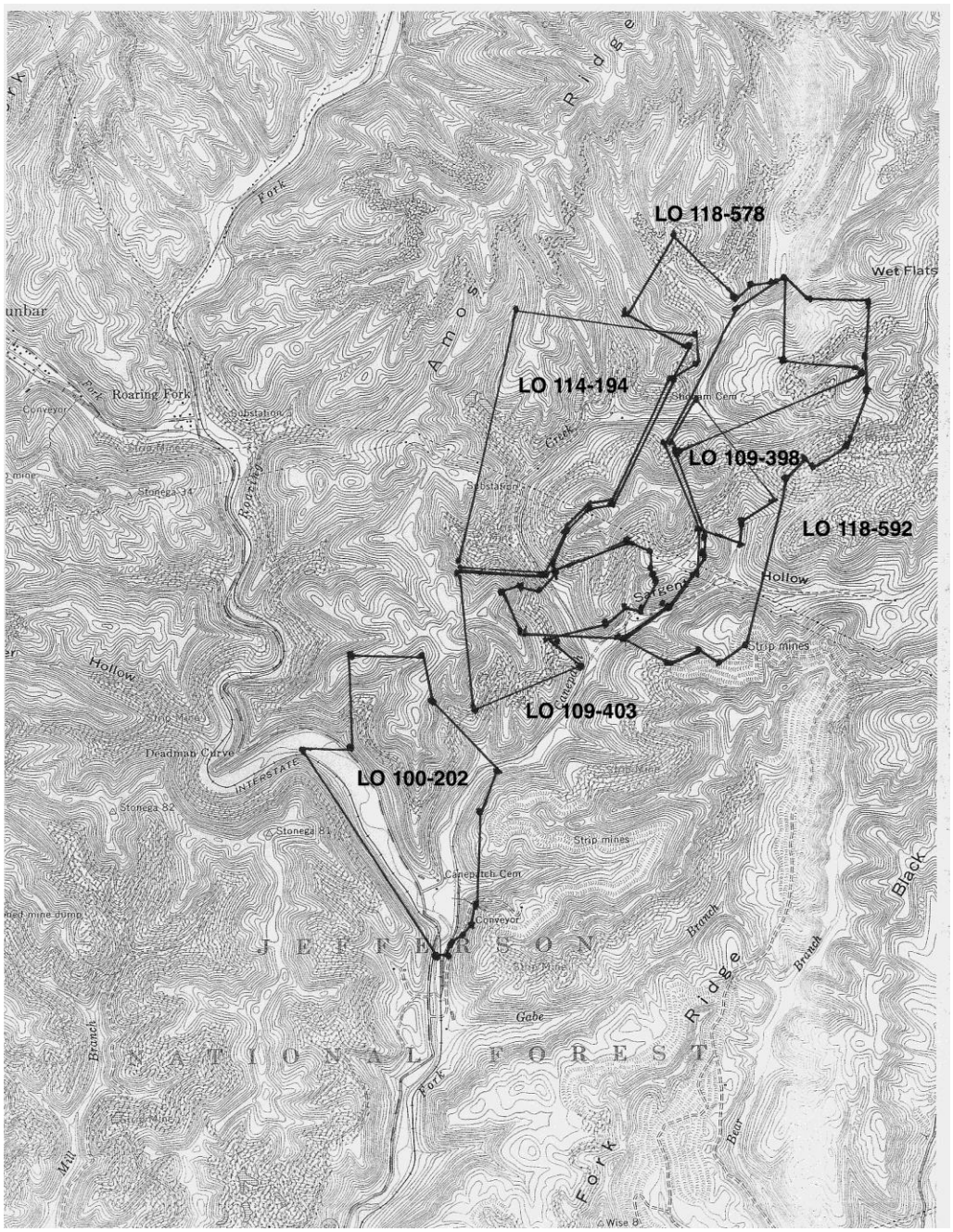
The call for "top of Fork Ridge" must be corrected to "Nine Mile Spur". It wraps around LO 100-714 and enhances its value. Another surveyor's call identified the site of his mill, stating that the designated surveyor's corner is at the head of a hollow "is above Sturgeon's mill". The 'above' means elevation, and not compass bearing. It is known that Sturgill's mill was, in fact, located on the stream at that hollow's mouth. It is known that the mill was 300 yards above his home, which was at the mouth of Whitley Fork.

William Sturgeon LO 114-196

This tract contains a large portion of the meadows on top of Fork Ridge. Purchased in 1857, one suspects that the days of good big game hunting were largely over. Perhaps William farmed or grazed them. There is an enigma associated with the calls of this survey, as all sides of it except for the southern line state that these lines are shared with those of Andrew Sturgill. Yet, none of these contiguous tracts of Andrew's are listed in the land grants – to anyone, least of all to Andrew. There are only two possibilities for an explanation for this circumstance. Either Andrew had these tracts surveyed and never purchased them, or he had bought them from settlers with squatter's rights. One suspects the latter.

Andrew Sturgeon LO 100-202

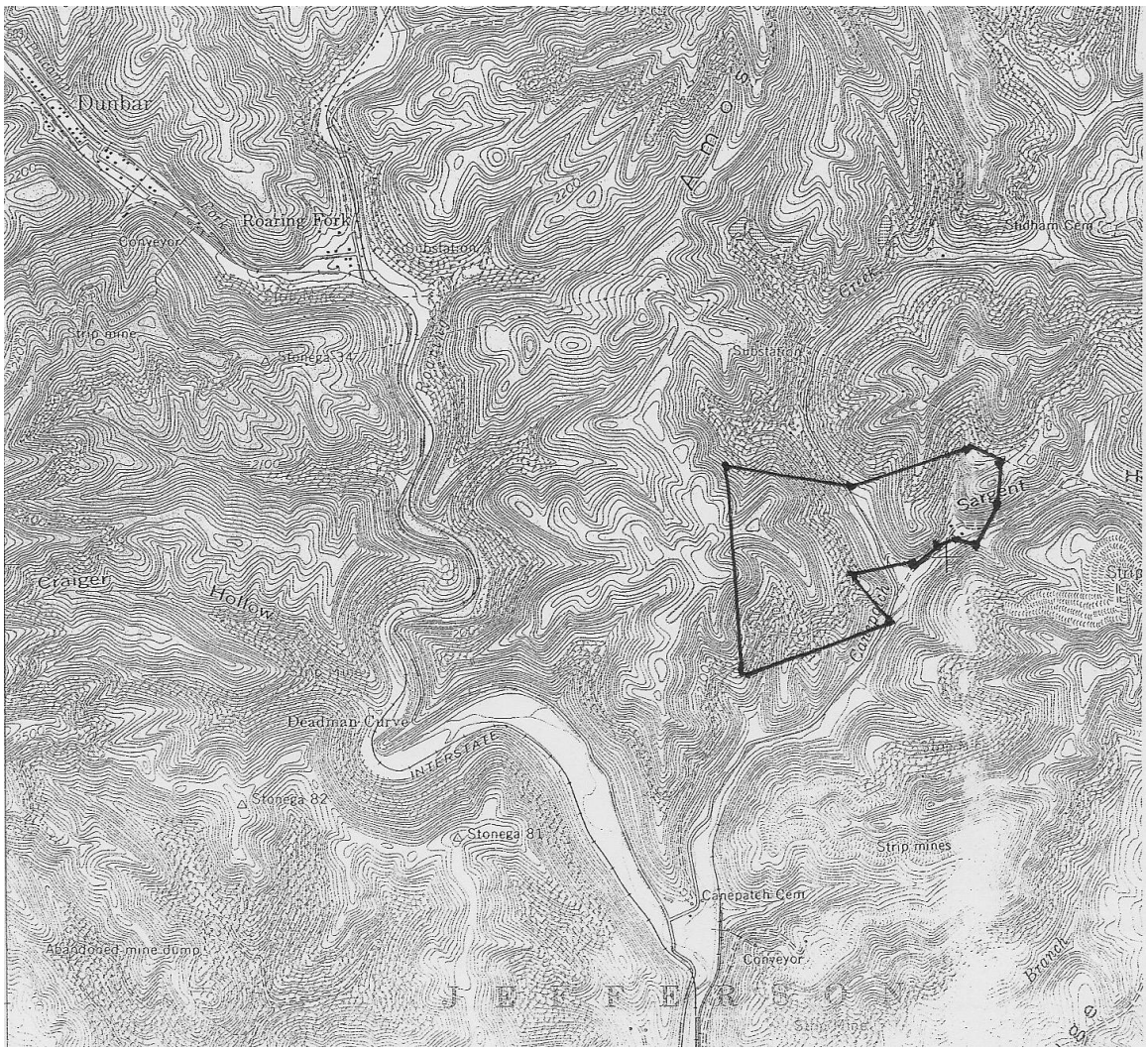
Surveyed Sept 22,1847, this tract is Andrew Sturgeon's first purchase of land within the drainage basin of Roaring Fork. It is easily the best choice of land on Roaring Fork. It has the largest bottom lands in the valley, it contains the most important fork in the trail system which includes the Cane Patch main trail to Winding Gap, and the entrance to the ridge top trail of Amos Ridge. Thus it reflects his hunting, farming, and commercial interests.



DUE TO THE SIGNIFICANT SHINGLING UP CANE PATCH FROM LO 100-202 THE PLOTS OF THESE GRANTS WILL ALSO BE SHOWN INDIVIDUALLY

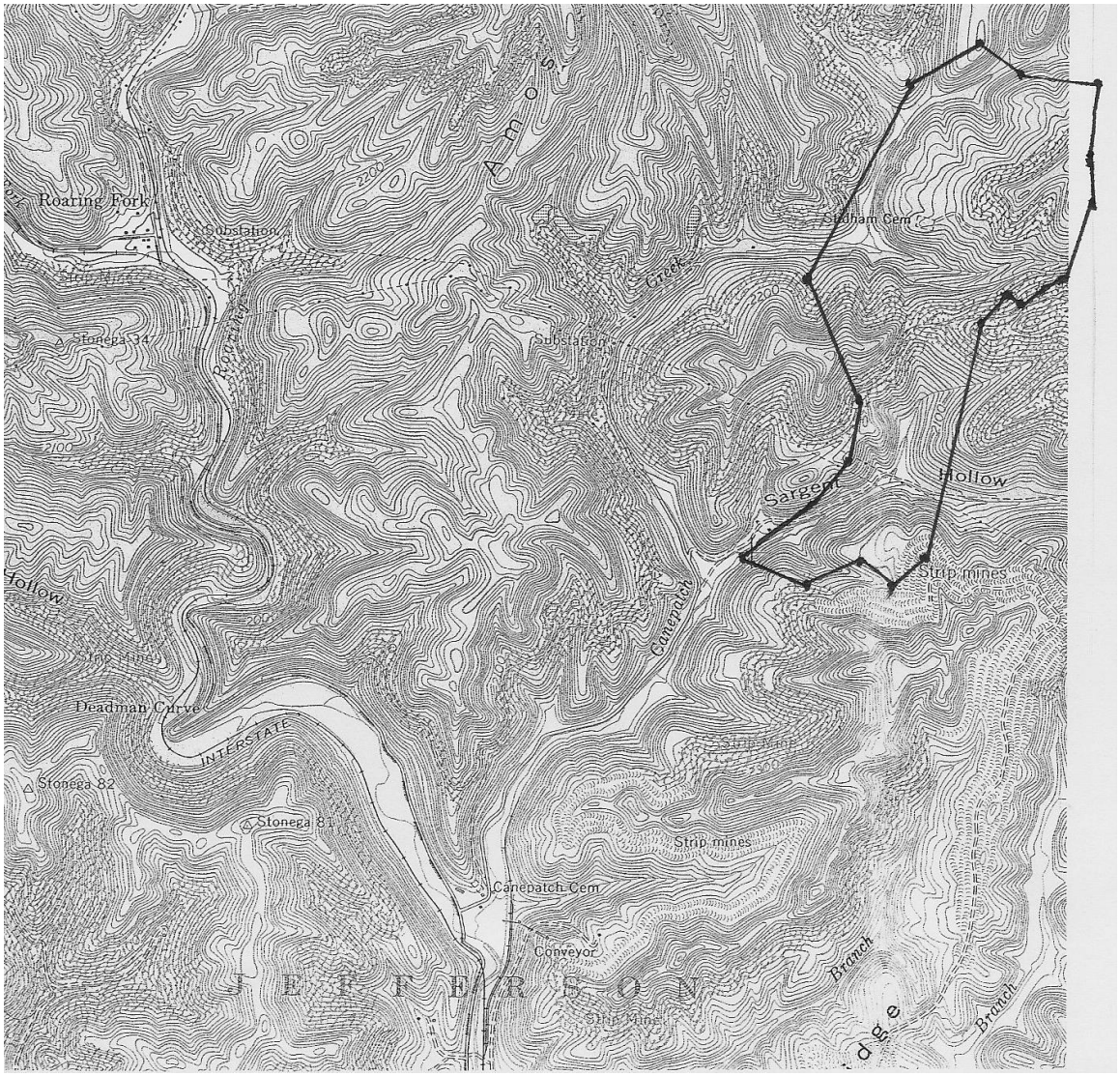
Andrew Sturgeon LO 109-403

Surveyed May 11, 1852 has significant ridge top meadows as well as controls the Cane Patch Trail. It is for 133 acres.



John R. Boggs LO 118-592

Surveyed on May 13, 1852 this 300 acre tract contains much of the headwaters of Cane Patch Creek and its trail as it passes onto the head of Black Creek. It has a fair amount of tillable land. Its network of hollows and trails makes for good big game hunting. The grant is severely overlaid by later grants of Andrew Sturgill. He likely was a member of the James L. Boggs' family of Big Stone Gap, Mud Lick on Callahan, and of Frank's Creek.



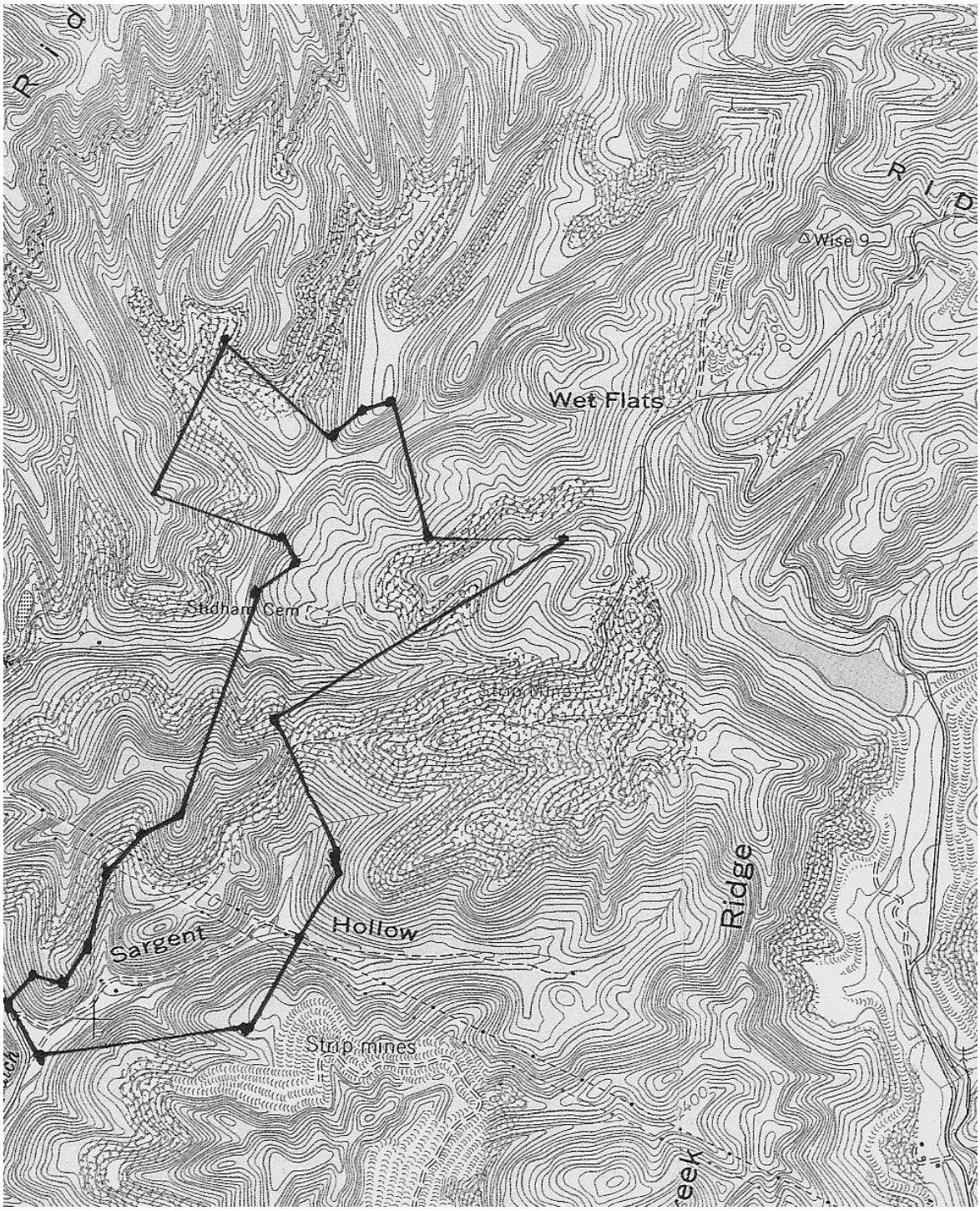
LO 118-592

Andrew Sturgeon LO 114-194

This 200 acre tract was surveyed June 4, 1856. It contained a major segment of the Cane Patch Trail, and some of the Amos Ridge meadows. Its calls mention shared lines with a 133 acre tract belonging to Sturgeon, but which is not among the Virginia Land Grants. He likely bought it from a squatter. It severely shingles Bogg's land at their northern ends.

Andrew Sturgil LO 118-578

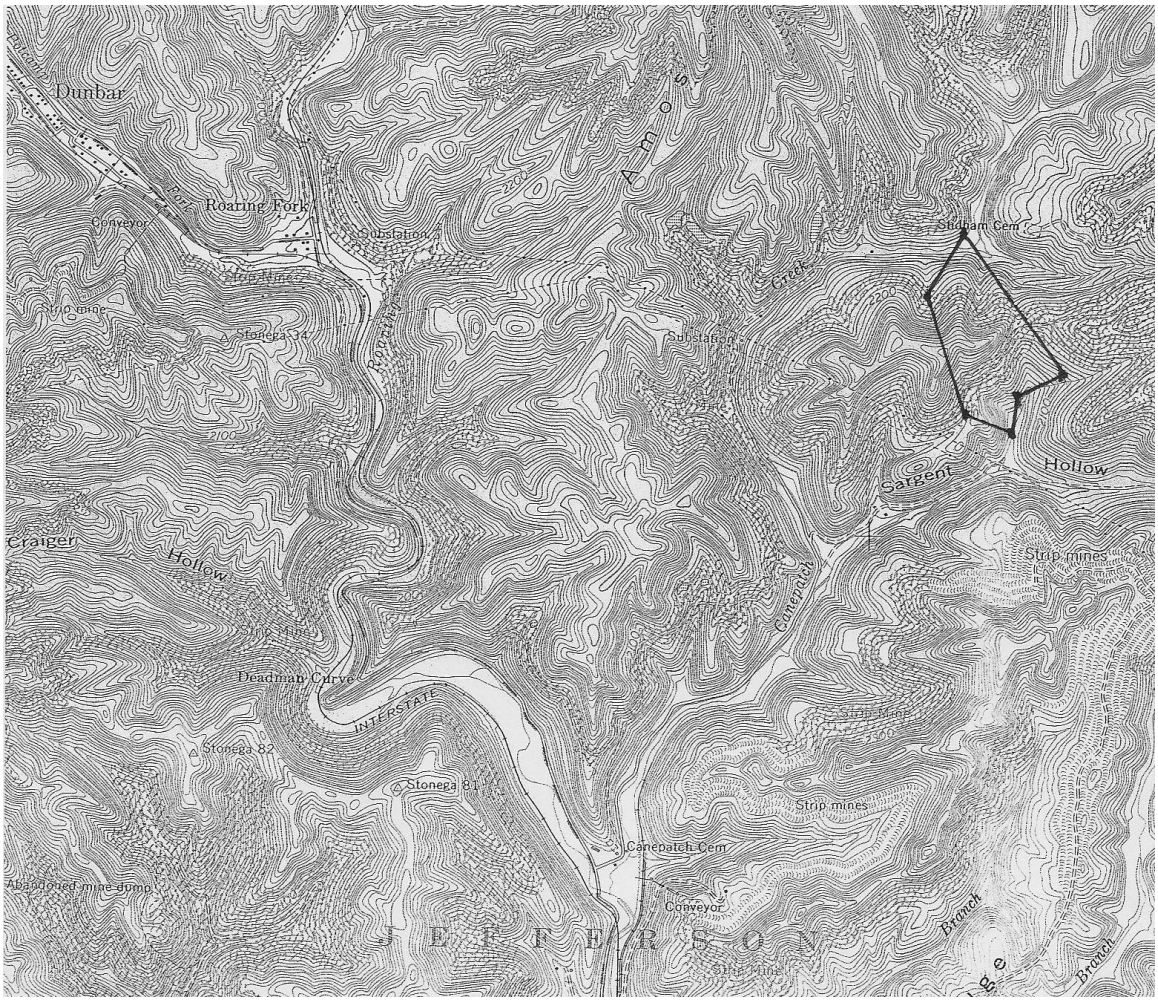
This 277 acre tract was surveyed Sept. 8, 1867. Note that the spelling of his surname has shifted from Sturgeon to Sturgil – not quite Sturgill as of yet.



LO 118-578

ANDREW STURGEON LO 109-398

This 41 acre tract surveyed May 13, 1852 completely overlays Boggs' land. It is hard to understand why Sturgill bought it.



LO 109-398

This ends all the land grants that are online at the Library of Virginia which are indexed as being on Roaring Fork or its tributaries, except for LO 110-48. This is a 38 acre tract to William Boggs, bearing a survey date of May 15, 1852 and a grant date of July 1, 1854, and located on Cane Patch Branch. None of the survey calls reference any other feature than trees and one call for "a branch". The grant is too small to display any distinctive shape that would assist in placement on a modern map.

It is reasonable to assume that all the land within the basin of Roaring Fork of Powell River that is not designated by these land grant plottings was either owned by squatters under the law of adverse possession, or was never granted. In the 1880's all of it passed into the possession of the large coal companies, such as the Blackwood Fuel Company and Virginia Coal and Iron Co.

FOOTNOTE ON WHITLEY FORK

The origin of the name 'Whitley Fork' is provocative. Most of the topographic names within the Roaring Fork drainage are either descriptive, or come from the persons who acquired land grants there. A notable exception is Baker's Flats, named after a very early long hunter. A very extensive and exhaustive computerized genealogic database of the grantees within Roaring Fork fails to document a single 'Whitley'. It is a notable exception, as the most well known and most relatively wealthy inhabitant of Roaring Fork, Andrew Sturgill, lived there. One wonders why the name of Whitley Fork did not bear Sturgill's name. One surmises that the name 'Whitley' was significantly fixed in people's minds that all subsequent references to other inhabitants was nullified.

Whitley Fork is a significant place. It provides the major egress out of Roaring Fork to the drainage of the Cumberland River at present Eola, Kentucky. It converges with the trail that runs on top of the Nine Mile Spur from its tip at Appalachia, Virginia to its base against Black Mountain. Indeed, one of the grants described in this essay refer to the Nine Mile Spur as "Trace Spur". The old trail down the northern face of Black Mountain into Frank's Creek at Eola from Stonega Gap is named 'Trace Fork'. 'Trace' is a common reference to a significant trail in the southern Mississippi River Valley, the most famous of which is the Natchez Trace.

There is only one Whitley family documented in the records of Virginia and of Kentucky, discerned by combining Google Search and the Land Grants Records with the Annals of Southwest Virginia by Summers. That family came early from Ireland to Beverly Manor, also known as the Irish Track, and which conformed fairly closely to the limits of Augusta County. The most famous of that family was Col. William Whitley, who was a noted pioneer and Indian fighter, having fought in the French and Indian War, the Revolution, and in the War of 1812. He was a brother-in-law of George Rogers Clark, and served under him in his campaign in which he captured the Old Northwest Territory. His sister, Sarah, married a Lewis, likely the family of Meriwether Lewis. Another sister, Mary, married a Gilmore of Kerr's Creek, which lies west of Staunton, Virginia, and was the site of three Indian massacres in the French and Indian War. The Gilmores (Gilmers) moved to the upper Clinch River in present Russell Co. and Tazewell Co., Virginia. Some of Mary's brothers moved to the North Fork of the Clinch, also.

William took his family to Kentucky in 1775, where he became an icon. Whitley Co., Ky. is named after him. This county is astride the Wilderness Road, and its largest communities are Corbin and Williamsburg, which is named after him. Some histories say that Col. Whitley and Tecumseh killed each other at the Battle of the Thames, in Ontario, near the end of the War of 1812.

It seems highly probable that Whitley Fork is named after a member of this family, who must have sojourned there long before the era of Andrew Sturgill. (D, I, J)

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