

# *The Rogue Miner's Cache*

*by H. Charles Beil*

*A Real Treasure Hunting Adventure*



## **An H.Charles Beil Treasure Hunting Adventure©2017**

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### **About The Author**

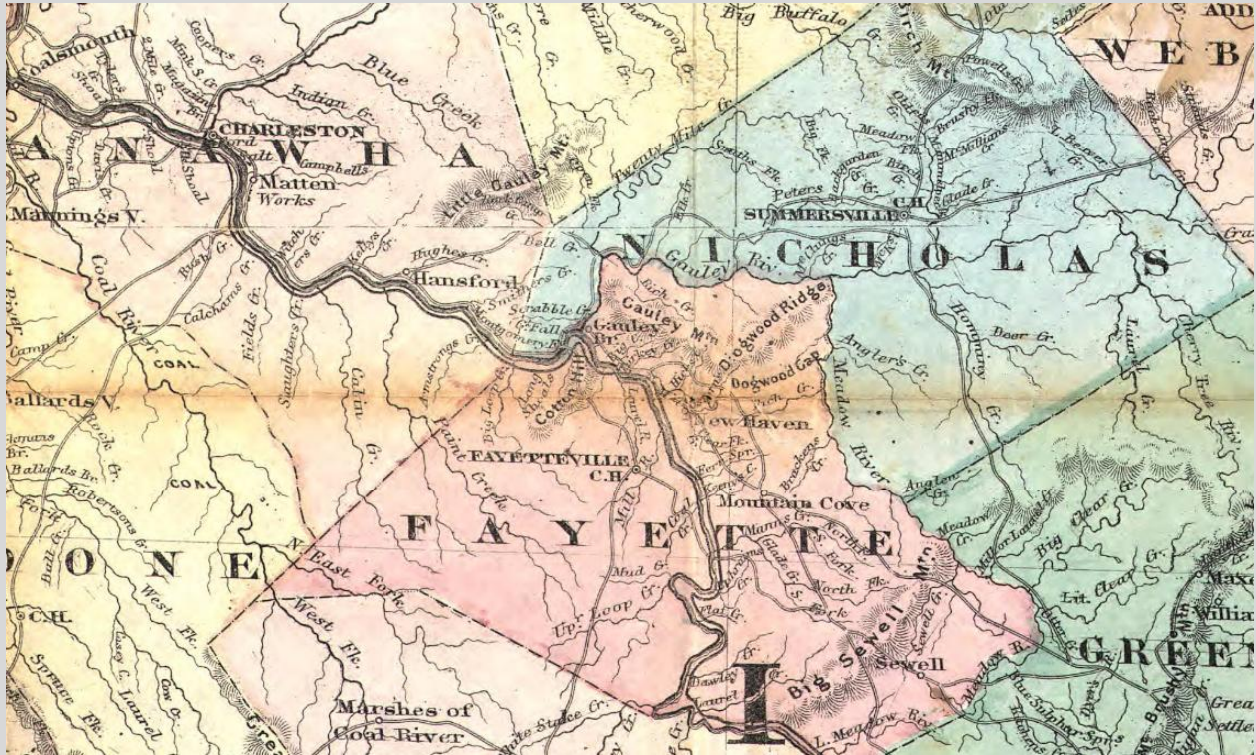
H.Charles Beil received a degree in History from Duquesne University in 1982; studied historical geology, archeology and oceanography under Skinner and other world renowned geologists, archeologists and scientists and has been an avid treasure hunter for nearly 50 years. He's published numerous articles on the subject of treasure hunting and has been a frequent researcher in the tiny historical societies, large libraries and museums all along the Eastern Seaboard and the Mid-Atlantic States. More than an historian, his finds are in museums and personal collections throughout the country. He is the larger than life "Indiana Jones". Having amassed his fortune for nearly 50 years, H.Charles Beil has now divided his treasure and is reburying it as caches throughout the country with at least one fabulous cache guaranteed to be the largest treasure chest buried in the last 100 years (see the chest in the picture below). Are you ready to begin the treasure hunt of a lifetime? The adventure continues with volume ten: *The Rogue Miner's Cache*.

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Hidden away in the rock crags of mountainous West Virginia is a fabulous treasure of hundreds of coins and precious gems awaiting the enterprising treasure hunter!



We were waiting to make a connection on one of the "weak and weary" stagecoaches that wander through the Mountain region of West Virginia, and an hour and a half had passed with no signs of the expected stage. Evidently the local we waited for carried some bank president or local political leader, as the coaches were not always so patient and considerate. Story-telling had been adopted by the half-dozen passengers to pass away the time, after every newspaper and magazine had been read and re-read.

Among the anecdotes related there was one told by a woman which seemed to have enough of the eerie and supernatural to it to make it worthy of recording. As the relator was a niece of the principal

characters in the story, and had heard it directly from them, it was of added value for the records of history. And thus it ran :

"Those of you who travel have all passed through the little hamlet on one of the main branches of the stage line called Fayette/Hemlock Station. Those who have traveled long enough have seen the splendid patch of hemlock trees, from which the station received its name, dwindle to a single, scraggy, half-dead trunk, surrounded by the barkless skeletons of its defunct brothers, for as the grove stood along the turnpike property, no one had authority to remove the trees as they died, and there was no authority to plant new ones. The grove seemed to summarize the glories of the little community, as the handsome patch of hemlocks faded with the passing of the coal mining business.



Away back in the middle eighties of the last century there was no busier center along that road than Fayette. Several large mines were located in the area, and there was an active industry in shipping soft and hard coal to the regions east. There was, of course, a large floating population of coal buyers, miners, prospectors and cruisers who overflowed the mines, and brought a rich harvest to the two hotels which stood across the pike from the coach station. These hotels were bleak, bare structures, built of unplanned and unpainted lumber, devoid of all architectural features except utility, and, oh, how forbidding they looked on a rainy day, when the water poured off the soggy, curled-shingle, unspouted roofs!



Unlovely as they were, the surroundings of mountains, forests, fields and streams made up for all they lacked. There were always some guests, who apparently had nothing to do but to sit on the porch and steps at coach time, and give a busy', populous air to these flimsy hostelries.

When crews for some of the more distant coal mines arrived at Fayette Station, they generally came in a body and spent a night at one of the hotels, where the miners engaged rooms in advance. Their coming would give a momentary air of excitement to the little station, and the jangling of the tin trunks and the thud of heavy "grips" on the oaken platform, could be heard a great distance. The arrival of a new gang of miners always attracted the native population to the station, and few stops along the line could boast of

bigger crowds when the stage came in at such times. But these were exceptional or gala days, and' of very short duration. Five minutes after the stage had departed everyone had gone about his or her business, and the habitual air of calm, or, more properly, of desolation, pervaded the little station. There were days when not more than a single passenger would board or alight from the stage; no one was surprised, as there were dull times between seasons in the mining business as the Ajax mine would shut down in periods of bad weather. One of these hotels, the larger of the two, was known as the Hotel Blume, and its landlord, "Uncle Dave" Henry, was as genial a boniface as ;he business could boast of. He was a big, florid, jovial man, a Civil War veteran and a former miner, very matter of fact, who never saw the inside of a mine except to mentally figure out how many tons of coal it contained. He was not troubling himself about signs and tokens and dreams, vagaries which seemed to linger on from former generations in some of the mountain folks even his wife. "Uncle Dave's" wife was given to seeing ghosts, often dreamed straight, and sometimes her powers of divination were truly marvelous an inheritance of the Celtic ancestors from whom she descended.

One foggy morning in September in chestnut time she informed her daughter that she had had a very peculiar dream the night before ; it was so vivid that it surely must be obeyed ; but how could she impress her matter-of-fact husband, who was always accommodating, and always ready to pick up a dollar. Then she proceeded to tell her story.

In the dream, she was standing at the door of the hotel office, looking across the pike ; it was afternoon, and the pale, yellow leaves of the chestnut trees on the mountain were falling. A shrill



whistle down the pike betokened the arrival of the afternoon stage, bound west. A passenger must be getting off, as no one seemed to be waiting on the platform, and the whistle from the driver meant that the stage was going to stop at Fayette. The coach came in and stopped and "Aunt Tilly," as the landlord's wife was called, waited until the stage had passed on, to see who got off, as the platform was on the opposite side of the pike, and she could see a figure alighting. When the stage had gone, the lone passenger a woman was standing in the middle of the pike, and' stood there, gaping about as if in indecision. Then, with very big strides, which were very unfeminine, crossed the dirt road and strode in the direction of the Hotel Blume.



When the woman came near, it was apparent that she was a very masculine-looking person, being of large build, raw-boned, rather rosy cheeked, her hair was cut short, and she wore a black bonnet, adorned with small red beads and pink roses. Her coat and skirt were ill-fitting, her hands and feet were very large. Bowing politely

to "Aunt Tilly," still standing in the doorway, she asked if the landlord was about, that she would like to see ,him on a matter of business.

The good landlady hunted up her husband, finding him in the barn, for he was a great lover of horses and always kept a spirited road team, and brought him out to meet the stranger. The visitor was not long in explaining her business. She had a brother who was lying at the point of death near the head of Fern Creek, some twenty miles north of Fayette Station, and, as if to prove the truth of the assertion, drew put of her coat pocket a crumpled piece of telegraph paper.

There would be no coach from Charleston until the next morning, and she must get to him that night if she would see him alive. It was a matter of life and death; surely he would drive her there she would pay him well. "Uncle Dave" did not have to be urged; he said that he was always glad to accommodate, and if the lady would take a seat on the porch, he would have his best stead and buggy ready inside of ten minutes.

"Aunt Tilly," after having heard this part of the conversation, went about her business, but the kaleidoscope of the dream continued. "Uncle Dave" went into the lobby, took down his overcoat and best cap from a hook, then went over to the safe, which stood by the desk. He deftly unlatched It, and added another hundred dollars in heavy coin to the already heavy purse of coins and gemstones which he always carried. He did not notice all the while that a sinister, leering face was peering through from the porch, gloating over his preparations. Then he went out through a door back of the bar to the stables and harnessed his racy little bay, Lambert the old hero of the county fair races. Putting a cigar in his mouth and cracking his

whalebone whip, which had his name painted on it, he drove up the alley almost on a gallop and swung around in front of the hotel, pulling the little rig up short.



"Aunt Tilly" came to the door as the stranger was climbing in, and he was putting a buffalo robe over her knees. He called to his wife, "I'll be back some time towards morning." Then with another snap of the whip he was off down the hill towards the old Townsend rope ferry.



The stranger seemed very affable, was interested in everything, and was very desirous of having pointed out all the local landmarks. "Old Forgy," the ferryman, the same who gave his life from overwork recently while relieving congestion at Charleston Ford, after the dastardly burning of the historic and picturesque old covered wooden bridge, cracked jokes with "Uncle Dave" and his fare, and before long the opposite bank had been reached and the team were racing along towards the northern mountains. The sun had begun to cast long shadows, and the air was growing chilly. The sun was obscured by the mountains as they drove along the dark, hilly road that skirted the waters of New River. The road led up the mountain, here and there through patches of original timber, and was all but obscured in darkness. The sunset came and went as they drove

higher into the mountain ; darkness fell ; it was frigid, and steam rose from the horses' backs. The stranger was asking all kinds of questions, which the genial "Uncle Dave" delighted to answer; he was happy and comfortable, and completely off his guard. It was very dark, and the road was long, all was still save for the squeaking of the whiffletrees and the champing of the bits.

All this while the stranger was getting ready for a coup de main. Out of that same pocket where she had drawn the crumpled bit of telegraph paper came a bludgeon, which she passed from her left hand to her right, which was over the back of the seat ; the buggy gave a jolt over an uneven piece of road. It was very dark. Oh, Heavens! What was that? A crushing blow fell on the back of "Uncle Dave's" skull ; everything seemed to wheel and go sideways, and he knew no more. Reeling over the dashboard, he toppled down among a lot of rocks piled along the side of the road, and lay still. The horses started to plunge and rear, but the stranger, quickly picking up the lines and the whip, stopped them and alighted not a hundred feet beyond the dark form lying so still over the hillside. As soon as she was on the road she tossed the reins back into the buggy, then cut the horses a couple of times across the flanks and sent them careering forward with the empty buggy. Then she approached the silent form on the pile of rocks. Stooping down she listened at the heart ; it was still. Tearing open the overcoat like a wildcat goes for a stag's heart, she began searching the pockets. The heavy purse was tucked inside his inner coat pocket. She counted it out all but fifty dollars. She took five hundred coins and the gems and left him there without further concern, even allowing the gold watch and heavy chain, with its massive Knight Templar fob. As she climbed' down the steep face of the mountain, in the direction of the river, she

muttered to herself : "They'll think his team ran away and killed him, for no thief would leave fifty dollars and a gold watch and chain'.

At the pike "she" stripped off "her" feminine attire, turned down "her" trousers, and pulled a man's cap from an inside pocket. He weighted the woman's suit and hat with stones and sunk them in the creek. Then he sat down on a tie pile and calmly waited for the coming of a north-bound stage. However his wait was interrupted by the rushing of oncoming horses and the cry of "find the buggy".

He knew he had been discovered. The rogue miner who had disguised himself as a woman, waylaid "Uncle Dave" and robbed him of his rich purse was now climbing the mountain for all that he was worth.

Weighed down by his heavy sack of money he secreted it in a cleft in the rocks and continued to the top of a steep cliff.

Without warning the rocky ledge collapsed sending the despicable miner into the gorge, his body being washed down the river through its treacherous rapids.

So ran "Aunt Tilly's" vision. As she closed the relation of it she said to her daughter, with emphasis : "That woman will arrive on the afternoon train today. 'Uncle Dave' must not be allowed to take her out at any cost." The women decided to tell the story to "Uncle Dave." but he only laughed until his great sides shook. "There won't be any such person get off the train this afternoon ; stop your fooling." "Yes, but there will," insisted "Aunt Tilly," "and you shan't take that devil to Fern Creek."

Gradually the fog rolled away, and a day as clear and pensive as Indian summer ensued. The pallid leaves kept dropping from the gnarled old chestnut trees. Groups of children were seen trooping towards the woods to gather nuts, for it was on Saturday and there was no school. "Aunt Tilly" Henry was standing by the doorway of the Hotel Blume, just as in the vision, when she heard the afternoon driver whistling; it was going to stop at Fayette Station; a passenger must be getting off, for no one was on the platform, except the agent who came out in his shirtsleeves to give some messages to the driver. The stage slowed down and stopped. "Aunt Tilly" could see one passenger, apparently a woman, getting off on the opposite side. The train moved on, and the figure stood in the middle of the pike, looking about, as if uncertain as to whether to go to the Hotel Blume or the Black Horse further down. She was an ungainly creature, her chip bonnet was too small, her coarse black hair was cut short, her suit was several sizes too large, and her shoes were brogans such as a workingman would wear.

Finally, with great strides, she advanced towards the Hotel Blume. to where "Aunt Tilly" stood. Nodding obsequiously she asked for the landlord.