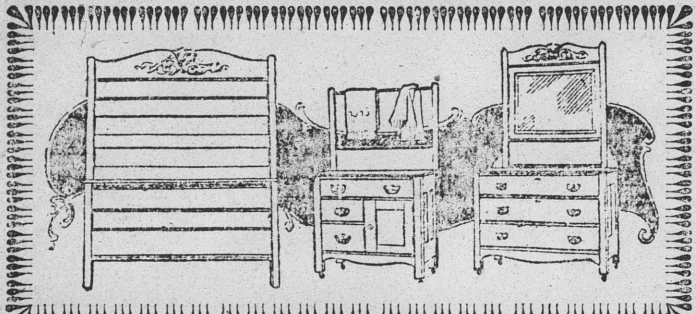




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"AXIE" YODER.

A True Story of the Life of the Old Axe-Maker of Elk Lick Township.

BY W. H. WELFLEY.

(Continued from last week.)

Mr. Joder has left it as a matter of record that Aaron Schrock was the most obedient and faithful apprentice he ever had; and he also became the best workman. The late Michael Koontz, who lived several miles south of Somerset, was his next apprentice.

Other apprentices seem to have been: David Frankhauser, John Swartzendruber, Samuel Judy, Gabriel Schrock, Leonard Berkey, John Yowler, Joseph Weimer, George Lichty, Benjamin J. Joder, (his son), Thomas Moore and George Coleman. As soon as an apprentice or journeyman could really make and shape an axe he was allowed a stamp of his own, and was permitted to stamp his name under that of J. J. Joder.

After Michael Koontz became free he located a shop about three miles south of Somerset, on the Centerville road. Joder sent the iron, steel, borax, etc., to him, his son Benjamin usually doing the hauling. Koontz then worked and shaped the material into axes; then they were hauled back to Mechanicsburg to Mr. Joder's shop where he tempered them himself. Others of the journeymen may have done the same.

We give here a statement of the number of axes made by Joseph J. Joder himself as well as those made by the apprentices and journeymen, but which received the final tempering and hardening at his hands:

No. made by Joseph J. Joder,	4,550
Michael Koontz,	2,200
David Frankhauser,	300
John Swartzendruber,	200
Samuel Judy,	700
Gabriel Schrock,	900
Leonard Berkey,	200
John Yowler,	1,142
Joseph Weimer,	25
George Lichty,	438
B. J. Joder,	418
Thomas Moore,	29
George Coleman,	1,195
Total	12,355

Besides these there were hundreds of chisels, drawing knives, etc., made here also.

These figures are from his books as he kept them, and came down to 1857, when he quit work.

We believe the last of his apprentices were Jerome Bowman and Jere J. Livengood; the latter now resides at Salisbury. Bowman went to the war and lost his good right arm in the service, and could no longer work at the trade. Mr. Livengood became a worthy successor to the great axe-maker, and we venture to say that, as a maker of steel and edge tools, he does not have his equal in Somerset county.

About the year 1824 he bought a small tract of land from William Miller, which then was in Elk Lick township. Here he built himself a house, shop and small barn.

Later he laid this land off into town lots, filling the plot in the Recorder's office at Somerset. He gave his new town the name of Mechanicsburg, though when a postoffice was established it could not keep this name, but took the name of Summit Mills. It was for a long time also called "Totter Stedde" by the German-speaking portion of the people.

In 1844 Mr. Joder sold his interests at Mechanicsburg and moved to a small tract of land in Elk Lick township, which he had bought from Daniel Hershberger, and which was situated between the Hershberger and Samuel Compton farms. Here he established his shop and continued the making of axes, etc., as long as his eye-sight permitted him to do so, which was up to the year 1858.

In addition to his axe-making he also paid some attention to repairing clocks and watches. Indeed there were few things in the metal line he could not make. Doctors in that community in those days were but few, and for a long time he kept for sale a stock of family medicines. No one who ever knew him well will deny that he was not of an inquiring turn of mind and given to investigation and he also had some talent for invention. The much talked of nail-making machine was not an invention of his. His invention was a device for feeding a nail-making machine. The machines then in use did not permit the making of a cheap nail. His invention, attached to a nail-making machine, as a self-feeder, enabled one man or boy to do the work of a dozen men or boys in looking after a machine or in feeding it.

It goes without saying that it was a useful invention. It is also certain that he was unjustly robbed of his invention.

This is said to have come about in this way: While he was a man of intelligence he was of a confiding nature. He judged other men somewhat by himself, and he thought other men were honest, as he himself certainly was.

It would seem that he lacked the means at that time of patenting the machine and getting it into use. The writer does not know how expensive the obtaining of a patent was in those days nor whether it was at that time possible as now to protect an invention for a reasonable time by filing a caveat at a trifling expense. At any rate he did exhibit his machine first among his neighbors in the hope that some one would join him in securing the patent and getting the invention into use, but none of these would make the venture. After some correspondence with a firm of patent lawyers he took his model to Pittsburg, where he showed it to several men who were in the nail-making business, but failed to enlist their aid.

Yet there can be but little doubt but that these men saw the merit of the invention, and that some one of their number took the good points of his model and forestalled him in the procuring of that patent.

The old man and his oldest son both have always claimed that there was rascality practiced somewhere in the matter.

It is not true that he ever made a search for any hidden treasure, squandering a fortune therein, as many people believe. It is true that he did make a search for minerals and metals that he and others supposed might exist in that part of Somerset county.

With regard to the search made in this direction along Pine run, in Greenville township, the following we believe is a true account, because it is derived from one yet living, who took some part in the work, which was done in 1836.

Something in the nature of a company had been formed. Altogether \$225.00 had been raised in this way. Three of the Bluebaughs, each had a share; a Mr. Hare, of Hopwood, Fayette county, had two shares; Frederick Bealman and John McDonald had each a share; Joder himself had three shares; several other persons had each a share.

The primary object of the search along the mountain was for iron ore, which was found, but not in such quantity as would justify working it. There were a number of excavations made along the run and mountain.

There was one made in the locality described in this new legend of the argonauts, but it was not made for the purpose of finding any hidden treasure chest. "Die Erd Spiegel" of Moll Dell cut no figure. This particular excavation was made to a depth of perhaps eight or ten feet, and was on low ground and but a short distance from the run, the seepage of whose waters through the intervening earth and rock strata could not be kept out of the pit, and it had to be abandoned. It is true that watch was kept for any other metal or mineral that the rocks might carry, other than iron, and that Mr. Joder did carefully test the several rocks encountered, and did find some time traces of silver, but not of a paying character.

The search was then abandoned. It was found that the sum of \$195.00 had been expended, leaving a balance of \$30.00, which was returned to the shareholders. The books and papers relating to the transaction are still in existence, and can be shown. This is the foundation for a legend that has been floating through Elk Lick township for fifty or more years, and in which what was a fortune for those days should have been wasted; and it has obtained even more than local circulation.

How so intelligent a man as Professor Leslie, who was associated with Professor Rodgers in the first geological survey of Pennsylvania, and was at the head of the second geological survey, could have been imposed upon as he certainly was, and made to believe in the truth of these absurd stories, in which there is not a word of truth, passes our comprehension. Yet such is the fact.

In one of his lectures on "Man's Origin and Destiny" he says: "I have seen shafts sunk in the glades of Somerset county, Pennsylvania, under the dictation of an old scamp who would lay in his hunting-cap a small looking-glass which had cabalistic characters on the back of it, and was called an 'erd spiegel'; and then, holding his own face over it, he would describe the depth to an inch of all the mineral wonders that he saw beneath the surface. So strongly did the imagination of this fetich act upon his workmen—simple old German immigrants from the motherland of superstition as they were—that they affirmed with all their faith that when at work at the bottom of the shaft they

could distinctly hear invisible agents laughing, talking, pounding, picking beneath their feet, removing the treasure downward out of reach; for, of course, they never found it."

Without doubt Professor Leslie saw the shafts; but the circumstances under which they were sunk are just as we have related them, and just as scores of others have been sunk in Elk Lick township, some in search of coal, others for limestone, and here and there others for iron ore; some rewarding the labor bestowed on them, and others making no return whatever. And it is only by these toilsome and expensive searches that any of the treasures of the earth, whether they are gold, silver, copper, lead or iron, coal or limestone, were ever laid bare, except, perhaps, in a few isolated cases, when the discovery was the result of an accident; and it is the height of injustice to hand down the names of those who have failed, and their name is legion, as knaves or fools.

In 1859 Mr. Joder removed to Holmes county, Ohio, where, we believe, he had some relatives, and where his co-religionists are quite numerous. He remained there only a couple of years, and returned to Somerset county, becoming a resident of Genesaw township, where he died in the month of April, 1863, at the advanced age of seventy-four years and four months.

His remains were interred in the Kauffman graveyard. By his first marriage there were several daughters and one son, Benjamin J. Joder, Esq., now residing at Waterloo, Iowa, but who, for many years before going west, was a leading and well-known citizen of Greenville township.

Levi J. Joder, of Meyersdale, and Reuben J. Joder, at one time a well-known school teacher of Somerset county, are sons of the second wife.

Oh, we don't want to fight!
But, by Jingo, if we must,
We will make haughty Spain
Lick the dustiest of dust.
For the eagle will scream
In the lustiest of tones,
And make himself a meal
Of the Spaniard's marrow bones.
—Pittsburg Times.

The Scull sheets make a big ado over the fact that Bedford county has no indebtedness, and because the same can not be said of Somerset county, they cite that as strong evidence to prove that our County Commissioners are poor financiers. The Commissioners are all right, however. The county is in debt simply because Scull ring rule made it so; for years these leeches had such a hold on county patronage, charging the most outrageous prices for their services, that it is really a wonder that the county is able to exist. Things will soon be in better shape, however, as the Scull-seeker crowd is doomed to be entirely relegated to the rear. Their sin has found them out, and now they are setting up the "stop thief" cry in order to cover up their own tracks.

The President's cabinet is discussing war and it is rumored that Spain must say at once whether she will pay indemnity. The "Dons" will not be permitted to play for time with this government, and if Spain refuses to settle, Congress will declare war. The Board of Inquiry, which is investigating the Maine disaster, is expected to make a full report, this week, and it is believed that the report will show that the Maine was destroyed by Spanish conspirators, some of whom are said to be known. In the meantime "Uncle Sam" is making active preparations for war. Forts and garrisons are being strengthened, ammunition is being manufactured on a large scale, recruits are being added to the army and navy, vessels are sailing about under sealed orders and the smell of gun-powder seems to be in the air. Let the dogs of war be turned loose if the occasion demands it, for Spain ought to be wiped off the map to say the least.

"TIMMIE" SCULL is a great farmer as well as a great auditor. Last week he printed a letter signed "Farmer," in which a sneaking, cowardly attack was made upon Commissioner George Kimmel. That isn't the first farmer letter written in the Herald office by "Timmie" Scull & self, as the late Wm. Enfield would state it. If the said letter was really written by a tiller of the

soil, why didn't he have his real name published with the same, to show that he was acting in good faith and wasn't doing something he was ashamed of? Oh no, "Timmie," you can't fool the people anymore that way, for they know your weakness for resorting to "ways that are dark and tricks that are vain." You are a farmer, to be sure, but your occupation is farming the farmers and not the soil. But go ahead, for you can't hurt sturdy, honest old George Kimmel. He has a reputation for honor that will withstand all the hyena-like attacks you can make upon that reputation. Some of Salisbury's oldest and best citizens have known Geo. F. Kimmel nearly all his life, and all of them speak of him as a man of rugged honesty and upright, manly principles. Can anyone truthfully say that much for you? Can they say that much for anyone of your whole gang, from the chief magnate of the Phil Sheridan Oil Company down to the smallest trod of the Scull mud-puddle? "Nit!"

Looks Like War.

Karl Decker, special correspondent to the Pittsburg Sunday Post, says he has reliable information from two sources that the U. S. war ship, Maine, was blown up by a torpedo placed under it by a Spanish diver employed by three Spanish merchants, for a consideration of \$10,000, part of which has been paid. At Washington the situation is said to be most threatening. Indemnity finds no favor. Secretary Long will remain at his post instead of taking a vacation.

Tarred With the Same Stick.

By an overwhelming majority the New York Legislature has censured that state's recreant Senator, Murphy, for voting for the Teller resolution. This will not induce Murphy to resign, but it will show him that the rotten money cause is as weak in New York in 1898 as it was in 1896, and incidentally it will tell him that he is serving his last term in elective office.—Somerset Herald.

The Herald might also have added that Senator Quay assisted the Free Silver Democracy, by voting for their measures in the Senate of the United States, only a few weeks ago. It is therefore evident that Quay, of our state, and Murphy, of New York, are tarred with the same stick; but of course "Timmie" Scull dare not poke any fun at big Boss Quay, for that would keep too much Quay campaign boodle out of "Timmie's" hands. "Timmie" voted for Quay in the St. Louis convention, when he well knew that nine-tenths of the Republicans of Somerset county detested Quay and favored McKinley's nomination. But what does Quay's little Somerset bassinet care for the will of the people when there is big boodle in sight?

As to Titles.

Somerset Standard.
It is laughable how the title "General" throws the old Scullpaper into hysterics. It may be because the title is higher than "Colonel."
"Col." is an abbreviation of "Colonel." "Col." also stands for "Collector" of Internal Revenue. How did the senior editor of the King organ get his military title? Was it when raking in the \$300 commutation money from drafted men at Chambersburg during the war? or was it while wearing the seat-out-of-his-breeches signing internal revenue stamps for twenty years as collector of this district at a salary of \$4,000 a year?

"President," perhaps, would be a more suitable and appropriate title for him, as the citizens of Somerset have not forgotten when he was "President" of the famous Phil Sheridan Oil Company, and how a number of our farmers were "taken in" by this "fake organization" and relieved of their hard-earned money.

This great Phil Sheridan Oil Company, of which Mr. Scull was president, was such a good thing (there was to be "millions in it") that none but Republicans were allowed to take stock. What a lucky escape for the Democrats! It is not surprising that the Scullpaper is haunted by the word "fake."

Will the heirs of the "Colonel" please air themselves in an explanation of when and how that title was acquired?