

The First House in Wears Valley

Before there was anyone living in Wears Valley, two young men by the name of Aaron Crowson and Peter Percefield were exploring the valley one day when they were attacked by a gang of hostile Indians. Percefield was killed in this battle, which occurred near the mountains at the north-east end of the Valley. When Crowson saw that Percefield was dead, he rode for help at Waldens Creek, where there was a Fort and a small Settlement.

When the men at the Settlement heard what had happened, they came back to the Valley with Crowson to try to find the Indians. Included in this band of white men were Aaron Crowson, his older brother Richard, and his father William. Aaron Crowson was the grandfather of my grandfather (Richard West Jr.), and my grandfather related this incident to me as it had been related to him.

It was believed that the Indians had come from Tuckaleechee, and the white men were convinced that the Indians were out to kill any white people they could find in Wears Valley.

They overtook the Indians at a cane brake, just as it was starting to get dark. As the white men rode out of the woods and into the cane brake, the Indians saw them first and started shooting at them. They were about two hundred yards away on the other side of the cane brake. Aaron Crowson fired one shot, and this shot killed one of the Indians. When the other white men joined the battle, the Indians retreated into the woods, and disappeared in the darkness.

The next day the white men buried young Percefield at the top of a hill about a half-mile from where he had been killed, and buried the Indian at the edge of the cane brake where he had died.

In just a few months after this, 18-year old Aaron Crowson constructed the first house in Wears Valley and he and his teen-age bride, Jane, moved into that house to become the first white settlers in the Valley.

Since they were the first to receive a land grant in Wears Vally, they had their choice of where to build their house; and the spot they chose is the spot that the present Will Crowson house now stands on. My Grandfather said that there were two main things that his Grandfather Aaron looked for when he decided where to build their house: plenty of level land and plenty of water. There were two large springs near by, and three cool streams meandered through the property.

When this teen-age couple first moved into their brand-new log cabin, their closest neighbor was over five miles away at Waldens Creek, much too far to be of any help in case the hostile Indians decided to come back again. We can be sure that night and day, young Aaron was never very far from his rifle.

James Aaron Crowson
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