

**THE BLACKWATER CHRONICLE: A
NARRATIVE OF AN EXPEDITION
INTO THE LAND OF CANAAN IN
RANDOLPH COUNTY, VIRGINIA**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649075041

The Blackwater Chronicle: A Narrative of an Expedition into the Land of Canaan in Randolph County, Virginia by Philip Pendleton Kennedy

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PHILIP PENDLETON KENNEDY

**THE BLACKWATER CHRONICLE: A
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INTO THE LAND OF CANAAN IN
RANDOLPH COUNTY, VIRGINIA**

Kennedy, Orendelton.

THE

BLACKWATER CHRONICLE

A NARRATIVE OF AN EXPEDITION INTO

THE LAND OF CANAAN,

IN RANDOLPH COUNTY, VIRGINIA,

A COUNTRY FLOWING WITH WILD ANIMALS, SUCH AS PANTHERS,
BEARS, WOLVES, ELK, DEER, OTTER, BADGER, &c, &c, WITH
INNUMERABLE TROUT—BY FIVE ADVENTUROUS GENTLE-
MEN, WITHOUT ANY AID OF GOVERNMENT, AND SOLELY
BY THEIR OWN RESOURCES, IN THE SUMMER OF 1861.

By "The Clerke of Orendelton."

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM LIFE BY STROTHER.



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110 AND 112 NASSAU STREET, NEW YORK.

1853.

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15 Chambers Street, N. Y.

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
CHAPTER I.	
Introductory	5
CHAPTER II.	
Getting under Way	15
CHAPTER III.	
In which the Expedition dances a Hornpipe on the Top of a Mountain	24
CHAPTER IV.	
The Cockneys explained by the Prior of St. Philips, from the Top of the Allegany	35
CHAPTER V.	
Winston and its Castellan—Mr. Edward Towers	51
CHAPTER VI.	
The Blackwater Invasion determined upon	63
CHAPTER VII.	
The Dale on the Potomac—and a Somewhat Particular Description on the Array	83

	PAGE.
CHAPTER VIII.	
The March into the Canaan.....	102
CHAPTER IX.	
The Lodge in the Wilderness.....	120
CHAPTER X.	
The Blackwater Found—A Great Number of Trout taken— Mr. Butcut fries some Fish.....	130
CHAPTER XI.	
The Blackwater Villa.....	145
CHAPTER XII.	
The Falls of the Blackwater.....	159
CHAPTER XIII.	
How we got out of the Canaan—and in Spite of our Teeth..	181
CHAPTER XIV.	
The Return to Winston—"Bootless Home and Weather-beaten Back.".....	209

THE
BLACKWATER CHRONICLE.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

IF the reader will take down the map of Virginia, and look at Randolph county, he will find that the Blackwater is a stream that makes down from the north into the Cheat river, some few miles below the point where that river is formed by the junction of the Dry fork, the Laurel fork, and the Glade fork—the Shavers, or Great fork, falling in some miles below: all rising and running along the western side of the Backbone of the Alleghanies.

The country embraced by these head-waters of the Cheat river is called “The Canaan”—a wilderness of broken and rugged mountains—its streams falling through deep clefts, or leaping down in great cataracts, into the Cheat, that sweeps the base of the Backbone.

It is to the Blackwater, one among the largest of these streams of the Canaan, that we purpose to take the reader. If, therefore, his fancy urges him to the venture, let him come with us. All he has to do is to set himself down in his easy-chair, and lend us his ears. By the magic of this scroll we shall take him.

This Blackwater (it should be called Amberwater), and north source of the Cheat, rises high up on the western slope of the Backbone, directly across from the Fairfax stone—where the head-spring of the Potomac has its source on this the eastern side of the mountain; and it is supposed that these headwaters of the two rivers are not more than some half a mile (or mile at most) apart. The Backbone, following a general course from north to south, here turns at almost a right-angle, and takes across to the eastward some fifteen miles, when it regains its former southerly direction, thus forming a zigzag in its course. At the point where it first makes the bend to the east, a large spur—apparently the Backbone itself—keeps straight to the south, and butts down on the Cheat, at the distance of some ten or twelve miles. Between this large spur and the point where the Backbone bends to the south again, is contained the cove of mountains which is called the Canaan. This region of country is in the very highest range of the Alleghanies, lying in the main some three thousand feet above the level of the sea.

Until a few years past, the whole of the district embraced by the head-waters of the Potomac and the Cheat was as remote and inaccessible as any part of the long range of the Alleghanies. But some few years ago, the state of Virginia constructed a graded road from Winchester to Parkersburg, which passes over the Backbone through the Potomac limits; and consequently this portion of the district has become opened out somewhat to the knowledge of the world, and has since been settled to a considerable extent. The Baltimore and Ohio railroad also passes near here—at a distance from the head-waters of the Potomac varying from ten to twenty miles. The railroad will bring all this region within a day's travel of the seaboard; and as the country lies about the head of the Maryland glades—in themselves a source of attraction—and contains within its range many tracts of land of great fertility and beauty, it is not irrational to suppose that it will be cleared out and settled with rapidity.

As it is, there is a good settlement around here already—the result, in the main, of the construction of the Northwestern road. Long, however, before this road was made, there was a Mr. Smith who pitched his tent in these wilds some fifty years or more ago, I am informed, and cleared out and improved a handsome estate for himself, lying along the Maryland shore of the Potomac, and containing some fifteen hundred acres of fine land of varied