

Lost John Quarry

Bull Run Mountain is home, liveliho

LOST JOHN, who once described himself as being perhaps the "only actual Bull Run Mountain quarry," has a double claim to the title. Not only does he live on the mountain—has lived there for some 30 years—the mountain also provides him with a living.

Literally. Lost John Quarry ("I got the name registered") provides him with an income sufficient to provide for his needs, help with the raising of a son, who went to live in Alexandria after the death of his mother, and pay for whatever equipment he needs to carry out his trade. Lost John says, not without a touch of pride, that his pickup truck and his International, caterpillar-tread bulldozer, were paid for with hard cash, provided by a bank which appreciated his ability to repay the sums.

The rock he quarries is peculiar to this area, and a favorite, Lost John says, with local builders, especially for laying floors and patios. Some of it is used for facing buildings, too—and Gosson's Store in Jaymarket is cited by Lost John as an example of the rock he has quarried out of Bull Run Mountain. But the rock's special characteristic of working out into broad, flat, fairly uniform sheets makes it a special favorite for patios and flooring.

"I DON'T know what the name of it is," Lost John admits, of the particular type of rock he quarries. "It's got a name. Only thing, on this side of the mountain (the West side) it works—splits smooth. And on the other side of the mountain—on that mountain over there—you get over there, and it breaks and works like a washboard."

Lost John is equally unsure of the exact nomenclature of the Bull Run Mountain's various ridges and heights. He knows practically every square inch of the mountain, from Thorougfare Gap to Alder, but he's not always so certain of the exact names of each part of the range.

The Plains Fire Company conducts fund campaign

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS ago this month, The Plains Volunteer Fire Company was organized to serve the people of the surrounding community. This month, fire company members are preparing for their annual fund drive. The volunteers will begin house-to-house canvassing on October 20. Last year, fire company members made only one request of people in The Plains area for donations and they hope to keep the same arrangement for the rest of this year.

During the past 25 years, The Plains Volunteer Fire Company has grown in many areas, providing fire and rescue services with well trained personnel. This service has been made possible by local men who volunteer their efforts and hours with no compensation. Within the past year the fire company has replaced the 25 year old jeep with a new 1975 Scout, four-wheel drive truck, adapted for brush and field fires as well as automobile accidents. On order is a 1975 ambulance to replace the 1965 model. Within the next year they hope to replace the 1955 fire truck with a new one so that insurance rates can be kept as low as possible.

All these improvements are made possible through donations. Checks may be made payable to The Plains Volunteer Fire Company. All contributions are tax deductible. Generous donations during this once-a-year fund drive assure residents of The Plains community fire protection and rescue service throughout the year, said John B. Adams, president of The Plains Volunteer Fire Company, and George L. Beavers, chief.

Run Mountain's various ridges and heights. He knows practically every square inch of the mountain, from Thorougfare Gap to Alder, but he's not always so certain of the exact names of each part of the range.

"The old fellas, they always called it White Rock Mountain," he says of the particular location of his latest quarry, near Hopewell Gap. "I've heard it called a little bit of everything, but the old fellas, they always called it White Rock Mountain. I don't know why; it's got a dozen different names."

"I been over every foot of this mountain. I've hunted it from one end to the other, and I've walked it all over, been over it every way you can go. I've been around in this mountain now about—now, off and on, not all the time—off and on for about 30 years."

Lost John Austin "got out" of the mountain for awhile. He sold a place he owned near Waterfall and moved to Bath County, where Hot Springs is located. "The reason why I done that," he says, "is my wife had asthma bad, and I thought gettin' up in the high country would help her. But it didn't. So I moved back down here then."

BILL BATES owns the land where Lost John Quarry is located. Austin leases the place from Bates on a sort of trade-out agreement. For example, part of the current lease was paid for by Lost John using his quarry bulldozer to clear some woodland so Bates could plant a garden. It's a big garden. Lost John says he'll do some more clearing this fall for Bates.

The bulldozer is a thing of special pride to Lost John. "It's a '67 model 150 International," he says, grinning with pride. "Had it five years. I give \$5,000 for it and I ain't had much trouble with it."

"The lack of trouble, he says, is a tribute to the tractor's metal. "Now that stone's tough," he says, describing the method of his quarrying. It's all done without

blasting; a dynamite explosion would shatter the relatively sheets of stone and destroy usefulness as paving material. He points to a seam in layers of rock that slant up from quarry floor, at an angle of 60 degrees. He calls the "come off." He takes a

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Lost John not only operates his own quarry, he repairs well, when the need arises

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