

February 1, 2023

**Special points of interest:**

- Sea Urchins
- Variegated English oak
- Rough day ends for 15th Missouri
- Six Toes makes a new friend as the serial ends
- New Teacher Mentors

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# Bob's News & Musings

**What's New?**

My first conifer book, *Small Conifers For Small Gardens*, has sold out. It has proven to be my most popular conifer book since it was first offered in 2011. I have had to purchase additional copies several times over the years since then.

The printing costs have skyrocketed so I am now marketing it as a print-on-demand book through Amazon. I will no longer have any copies on hand for sale. Any profits are minimal but so are my expenses.

Altogether, I have written six conifer books. They have thoroughly covered the world of cultivated conifers. I deliberately avoided the encyclopedia type of concept with an alphabetical arrangement of conifers featuring

individual pictures and brief descriptions on how they grow.

The titles reflect the contents of each book. The knowledge being shared is different in each one and every conifer collector should have a complete set. Even collectors who focus upon the dwarf forms will have some large-growing cultivars to provide a supporting framework in their gardens.

Those of you who have the complete set of books are aware of their value.

I will not replenish my inventory of any of these titles in the future. When a title sells out, it will no longer be available from Coenosium Publishing. I might make each one available through Amazon through their print-on-

demand, but the price will be about \$10.00 per book higher than the present rate.

I do not plan to write any more conifer books. However, I am working on a book about the Coenosium Rock Garden at South Seattle College Arboretum. I do not expect it to have a wide appeal beyond people in the Seattle area.

I am focusing my future writing on historical fiction and eventually fantasy.

I may even write a book of sonnets. I am fascinated by the rules applied to this form of poetry. I had written about thirty sonnets in my book, *Paradise Lost An Angel*, and enjoyed the process, although the subjects were difficult.

I do like to keep busy.

**What's Old?**

I guess that I am. I don't feel as old as my driver's license says. However, time eventually catches up to us all. I suspect by the time I hit ninety I will have to slow down. But until then, I refuse to "act my age".

Some time ago (@20 years) I put together a montage of all my conifer friends (page 12) by printing their pictures and then cutting out the individual images, which I glued onto rigid backing. Then I framed it and ever since I have

kept it hung on a wall near my work area. It provides me with trips down memory lane. It also reinforces how fast time passes and the importance of good friends.

Most of my friends in the montage are gone and I value the friendship of the ones I can still visit. Friendships never get old, they mature and become richer.

Spending 49 years immersed in the world of conifers has given me the opportunity to develop

close friendships with a wide range of people I would not otherwise have met.

I constantly make new friends and this montage could easily be expanded way beyond its present size.

The American Conifer Society has its greatest value in the way it presents opportunities for cone-heads to get together and develop friendships that can last for very long times. Such things are priceless.



*There were  
thousands of  
witches' broom  
seedlings growing in  
long, straight rows.*

## ***Pinus strobus* 'Sea Urchin'**

During the late 1970's Al Fordham had told me to visit Dr. Sidney Waxman at the University of Connecticut. When I visited Waxman and had a tour of his facility, I was amazed. There were thousands of witches' broom seedlings growing in long, straight rows. He had been working with them long enough that he was starting to make some selections.

His first introductions were selections of *Pinus strobus*. He showed me the original plants of *Pinus strobus* 'UConn', 'Green Shadow', 'Blue Shag', and 'Sea Urchin' and I arranged for him to send me scion wood from all of them. Over the years *Pinus strobus* 'Blue Shag' has become a popular replacement for *Pinus strobus* 'Nana' due

to its similar growth rate and improved color. Two of the others, 'UConn' and 'Green Shadow' have seen limited popularity, possibly due to their faster growth rates.

*Pinus strobus* 'Sea Urchin' is the most dwarf of all Waxman's introductions. He found it was more difficult to propagate than the others, but its diminutive size and excellent color made it a popular choice for smaller gardens. Its slow growth rate means that the "quick buck" nurseries will not produce it, but enough of the better nurseries offer it to make it relatively easy to locate.

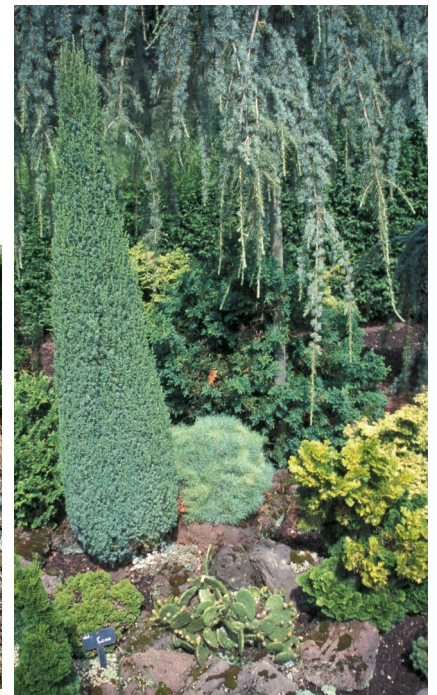
*Pinus strobus* 'Sea Urchin' is a dwarf shrub that develops into a dense, low, bluish mound. It grows about 2" (5 cm) per year, and its foliage

is bluish-green with short needles. Each year before the new growth appears, the old needles need to be cleaned out from the interior of the plant. All of the dwarf *Pinus strobus* tend to trap their old, fallen needles inside the plant which can lead to disease problems.

Use *Pinus strobus* 'Sea Urchin' wherever a bluish cushion is desired in the garden. It is a wonderful choice for a rock garden or a miniature conifer garden or a foundation planting. Do not mix it with larger growing perennials since they will tend to smother it.

The picture to the left shows multiple grafts of 'Sea Urchin' on an old *Pinus strobus* which I used as understock.

The lower picture is 'Sea Urchin' at my former place in Eatonville while the one to the right is located at a garden in Holland and growing next to a tight *Juniperus communis* 'Compressa'.





## ***Quercus robur* 'Furst Schwarzenburg'**

I have always enjoyed plants with variegated, or multicolored, foliage since they add so much to the landscape. They are almost like permanently flowering plants.

Found in the then Czechoslovakia before 1884, *Quercus robur* 'Furst Schwarzenburg' was always high on my "want list". It was also very hard to locate. I could not find any plants for sale but eventually I obtained a few scions, which I successfully grafted.

The second flush of growth possesses the variegation shown in the pictures. The leaves are extensively mottled with white variegation and even tinged with pink when they

first appear.

The English oak is not readily available in America. The most common cultivar is 'Fastigiata' and that is unfortunate since there are a number of attractive cultivars that grow quite well in this country.

I grew ten different cultivars in my Eatonville gardens. They all produced nice crops of acorns but the Stellar Jays always got to them before me.

I wanted to collect the acorns to see if I could get any new cultivars. I knew that cultivars could blend some characteristics, similar to the *Fagus sylvatica* sharing of traits.

I had a *Quercus robur* 'Pendula' that was flowering and could

have produced some interesting variants.

I also grew a more common variety of English oak called 'Argenteomarginata'. It had the habit of producing some completely white acorns, which produced white seedlings. That also happens with white fruit from *Ginkgo biloba* 'Variegata' and white cones from *Tsuga canadensis* 'Albospica'. However, the seedlings all die as soon as the food from the seed is gone.

In future issues of this newsletter I will share some of the obvious crosses that have produced nice new cultivars of *Quercus robur*.

*They all produced nice crops of acorns but the Stellar Jays always got to them before me.*





*plants weep due to  
the actions of lignin  
in the cell walls.*



## Why Conifers Weep (It's not because they are sad.)

The true cause of a weeping growth habit is not completely understood. It appears to be partly related to an uneven distribution of growth auxins in the growing shoots of the plant. Gravity normally causes an auxin distribution that accelerates the growth of cells along the basal (bottom) side of a shoot and retards the growth along its dorsal (top) side, causing it to grow up and away from the ground. This auxin distribution leads to the formation of what is called, compression wood on the basal side of a branch. In a vertical shoot, there is no auxin difference and no compression wood formation.

Compression wood is formed by an acceleration of cambial activity. It is up to 40% heavier than normal wood since it is rich in lignin (up to 40%) and lower in cellulose (32% vs. 42%). Compression wood has a red color and different expansion properties than normal wood. The cells in newly formed compression wood expand longitudinally and try to push the branch upward, which also results in additional force to keep the branch from turning down. Likewise, if a tree is harvested and milled and has compression wood present (perhaps due to leaning), there will be more shrinkage of the compression wood section of any lumber produced, causing warpage.

Compression wood is denser and darker in color which makes it difficult to separate summer wood from spring wood. In a cross section of a branch, the compression wood has wider growth rings than wood, leading to an oval cross section of the branch. The greater

the weight of the branch, the greater the volume of compression wood produced. Pendulous conifers with many trunks or thick branches that are not vertical will have a definite oval cross section to those parts.

According to Gerald Kingman, University of Arkansas, plants weep due to the actions of lignin found in the cell walls. Lignin gives rigidity and strength to cells and is a very important component of wood. If it forms later than normal in a plant, gravity can pull a branch down before it hardens. Once it hardens, the branch is locked in that weeping position and to try and bring it back up can break the branch.

In the spring, when the growth auxin/gravity interaction occurs, the new growth of a conifer "reaches up to the sky". This activity can even cause older weeping branches to be "pulled upward" as well as the spring wood is forming. The upward growth can even cause bending beyond the vertical which is corrected by the auxins, resulting in a slow motion, waving action of the new shoot. As the new growth slows and hardening occurs, lignin is created to stabilize the shoot. If the lignin does not form and harden, the shoot will bend due to the pull of gravity and then harden in a pendulous position.

If the shoot is staked, it will harden in the vertical position and stay that way. If the pendulous conifer maintains a strong central leader on its own, then lignin must be forming and hardening in that area first.

This mutation may be encouraged in regions with heavy snow-

fall, where plants with weak lateral branches have the best chance of survival since they bend rather easily under heavy snow loads. In regions without heavy snowfall a weak lateral branch would be shaded by stronger growing branches and die.

It is interesting to note a seasonal effect upon the tendency of conifers to weep.

I had not noticed this until Al Fordham visited me when I lived in Pennsylvania.

We observed that the newly elongated candles on a *Pinus strobus* f. *pendula* were all standing straight up, often to the extent that they curved up beyond the vertical. Even the previous year's growth, consisting of well hardened wood, had apparently been pulled up and extended horizontally.

Evidently, wood formed in spring on this cultivar exhibits "normal" growth.

The new candles and/or shoots point straight up, and auxin activity causes the older wood to follow suit as it forms new wood. As the wood hardens and the branches thicken during the summer, the shoots turn down, producing a weeping conifer. I have noticed this effect on a number of pines. The pendulous spruces don't appear to do the same, perhaps because the new shoots are not as strong as those of a pine.

Auxins can rapidly bend old wood in the spring. I once laid a *Picea glauca* 'Conica' on its side when spring growth was at its maximum. In a few days the tree started to bend toward the sky. As the new growth hardened off, I stood the tree upright and the trunk remained bent at a 90° angle.



## Why Conifers Weep (cont.)

Hanging a pine upside down when the new growth begins causes a 180° bend in the trunk in a little over a week, and repeated turning could produce a corkscrew effect in the trunk.

There are many conifer species that have weeping forms. A number of these weepers produce viable seed, which often produce seedlings with different degrees of weeping habit. For example, the spruce *Picea omorika* f. *pendula* varies from species normal to a narrow spire. Another spruce, *Picea abies* f. *pendula* can be any one of several named cultivars: 'Reflexa', 'Inversa', 'Aarburg', or 'Waartburg'. But the most prolific species of all is *Tsuga canadensis*. People have been growing seedlings of weeping forms of this species since the late 1800's. They have all been lumped together as 'Pendula'. However, weeping forms found in the wild or in gardens that have been given specific names will have distinctive growth habits.



Above: Larry Stanley standing next to an old *Tsuga canadensis* f. *pendula* at Longwood Gardens.

Below: An old *Tsuga canadensis* f. *pendula* on the Hunnewell Estate near the Arnold Arboretum showing compression wood in the oval branch shapes.

Below left: *Pinus strobus* f. *pendula* showing the effect of growth hormones as they pull last year's wood to an almost horizontal position with the new candles reaching upward.

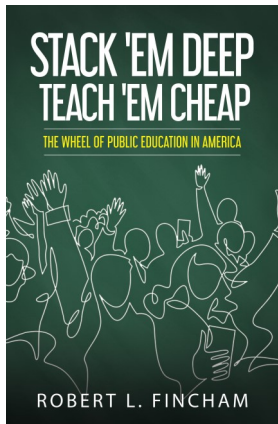
Far left margin: *Abies alba* 'Green Spiral' (top) and *Cedrus libani* 'Beacon Hill' (bottom)

Right margin: *Picea abies* 'Reflexa' (top) and *Pinus sylvestris* 'Mitsch Weeping' (bottom)



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bend old wood in the  
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*I quickly discovered  
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## Stack 'em Deep & Teach 'em Cheap

Section Five: Teachers

Unit One: The New Teacher

Chapter Six

Mentors: Lifeguards for the New Teachers

My first teaching position was as a full-time substitute at the Weatherly Area Junior-Senior High School in Pennsylvania. I signed a contract with the Weatherly Area School District on January 30, 1967, with an annual salary of about \$5,000.00 to teach general math to two sections of seventh grade and one of eighth grade. I would also teach 9<sup>th</sup>-grade algebra, 10<sup>th</sup>-grade business math, and 11<sup>th</sup>-grade shop math. These were all lower-level classes.

While preparing my first lessons based on notes from the last substitute teacher, I quickly discovered how hard it was to prepare lesson plans for five different classes. I had little experience with business math, so I had to stay several lessons ahead of my students. The general math and shop math were straightforward. I knew how to do algebra, but I quickly discovered that understanding each problem well enough to teach students how to solve it took things to a higher level.

Not only did I have to prepare these lesson plans, but I also had to map out how to handle discipline. Here I was, a pacifist who had wanted to be a forest ranger and was backward around other people about to take on students who had destroyed three other substitute teachers. I was extremely nervous. I was confident about handling the subject matter but worried about managing the students. Many of

them were almost my age.

Occasionally one reads a story where a parent teaches their child to swim by throwing them into a pool and telling them to swim or drown. That epitomizes my time as a rookie teacher during my tenure at Weatherly Jr.-Sr. High School. In the 1960s, there was no such thing as a mentor for a new teacher. You were put into a classroom and expected to survive on your own. The principal and the county intermediate unit would observe you in action and write evaluations. Then you were expected to correct anything ineffective or inappropriate. After the observation, there would be a meeting only if you had significant problems. Otherwise, "sink or swim." The three substitute teachers before me had "sunk." I was determined to "swim," especially since my classroom was right across the hall from the Superintendent's office.

February and March went by without any substantial problems. I presented lessons, and most of the students were doing good work. Those who had difficulties understanding the material would come in after school for extra help. However, April started to show some problems, especially with my eleventh-grade shop math students. They tended to be the roughest kids in that grade. Usually, they had little interest in learning anything academically related. Moreover, my hard-ass façade was fading as we got to know each other. By May, I was so frustrated that I was ready to quit teaching and go into the service.

Mr. Madden, the Superintendent, was so pleased with my work that he created a science/geography position for me. He

wanted me to stay on with the district. But near the end of May, he told me how sorry he was that he had offered me that new position. It was just after I had a rough day with my junior-year shop math students. As my room was right across from his office, he was aware of my problems with them. I could have used corporal punishment, but I felt they were too old for paddling, and I was not particularly eager to strike a student with my hand. I have never been one for violence (except toward inanimate objects like a car when it does not start). Nevertheless, I did manage to retain some semblance of control until the end of the school year. The following year Madden was gone, and I could start afresh.

During my first few years of teaching, my only help was teacher conversations in the faculty room. Not once was I observed by an experienced faculty member who could have given me some advice. When the county intermediate unit monitored me during my shop math class, the students behaved but made it look like they were acting. As a result, I did not get a very good rating. That was the only questionable observation I ever had in thirty-nine years of teaching.

In September 1969, I started teaching science in the Tamaqua Pennsylvania School District. The district encouraged some older teachers to retire to replace them with younger staff. That did not always work out, especially since no mentoring program existed. The principal and the department head served as mentors to assist the new teachers. Unfortunately, neither the department head nor the principal had time



## Stack 'em Deep and Teach 'em Cheap (cont.)

available in their schedules where it would be possible to observe and help a new teacher. Not surprisingly, things did not always work out very well.

One of the new teachers hired at Tamaqua was in physics and chemistry. He had no concept about how to maintain classroom discipline. It finally got so bad that when he did try to discipline a student, he got punched in the face, and the principal expelled the student. A mentor might have given that teacher enough guidance that the incident would not have occurred. Unfortunately, there was no mentor, and he barely finished the school year. We had a new physics teacher the following year.

I moved to Oregon in 1986 and took a seven-year hiatus from teaching. In 1993 I returned to teaching in Washington State, where I hoped a mentoring program would ease me back into education. However, as an experienced teacher, I was not eligible to be mentored. As a result, I had to fit into my new position with minimal assistance from the principal and my teammates.

Eventually, it was my turn to become a mentor for Nick, a new science teacher. I mentioned Nick in the previous chapter. It was a disaster. Another teacher, who possibly thought she was a better choice for the position, negatively influenced Nick. He refused to accept any assistance from me.

Mentoring needs the cooperation of both parties to work.

New teachers have a high rate of attrition. There are multiple causes for this problem, many of which can be eliminated or modified to reduce this rate of loss.

Not everyone is suited to become a successful teacher. People who enter the profession invest a lot of time, effort, and money to complete the educational requirements. Quitting after a year or two is not only disappointing, it is a major step backwards and a rethinking of life's dreams and aspirations.

So, why quit?

Anyone who enters teaching for summer vacations, easy work, or with a desire to coach sports as a priority either has a short career or bumps along mired in mediocrity.

People who sincerely want to be educators have the best chance of becoming successful teachers. However, they are also the most vulnerable people at successfully coping with the modern educational system. Their attrition rate is the concerning problem facing the public school system.

In this chapter, I go into some detail about mentors and my experiences with mentors and also with being a mentor.

Mentors cost money and not

all school districts want to spend that money. A mentor teacher spends considerable time mentoring (obviously) and needs to be paid a stipend for their time. A substitute must be brought in from time to time so the mentor can observe the mentee (new word?) in the classroom.

The mentor is not always the best teacher since those teachers usually have too many other commitments.

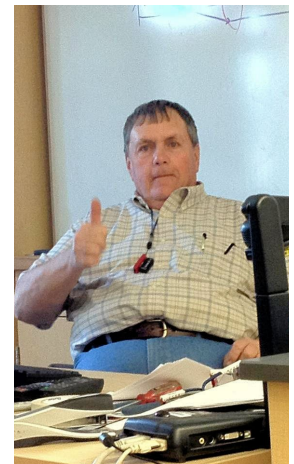
Mentoring is an investment by the district that produces an excellent return with its effect upon the quality of the teaching staff. New teachers need someone to help them through that first year.

The principal needs to monitor mentoring programs in their building and make certain the team members are compatible with each other and that the mentee is open to suggestions from an established teacher.

Other problems that affect new teacher attrition are covered in other chapters of my book. Two examples are the new teacher getting the classes from hell and the realities of teaching providing a rather rude awakening.



*Not everyone is suited to become a successful teacher.*





*They discovered a  
Confederate sergeant  
pinned to the ground  
by a bayonet through  
his lower abdomen.*



## The Death of an Army (Working Book Title)

Battle of Franklin, TN

Chapter Six: 15th Missouri, November 30, 1864 (continued)

Part 3 of Chapter 6

Holding their two torches high, they moved out into the killing field. In addition to the oft-times gruesome human remains, the detritus of violent warfare was scattered all about. "There be enough traps scattered about to equip 1000 men or more." Baker whispered to no one.

As they moved past a busted wagon, a voice croaked from just outside the ring of light cast by the torches "That why you Yanks come out here? Lookin' for val'bles and such?"

Shifting their direction and moving in the direction of the voice, they discovered a Confederate sergeant pinned to the ground by a bayonet through his lower abdomen. The bayonet was attached to a rifle with a shattered stock. A Union soldier lay a few feet away. The Minié that shattered the rifle stock put a large splinter into his neck as well as a hole through his chest.

"You're done for reb. I guess you know'd that already." was Jedediah's comment as he took in the scene and knelt by the dying man.

"I just been waitin' for someone to find me before I died so I could give 'em somethin'." he whispered as he weakly coughed and struggled for breath. Then he went on to say, "I had hoped to be found by some of me own Arkansas boys."

Baker came over and asked "You want I should pull that toad sticker out of you? That way you would be more comfortin'?"

"Christ, no, the pain would be somethin' terrible. Right now I is all numb in my lower parts."

Then with a pleading look at Jedediah, he asked a favor. "In my breast pocket I got a letter and a ring. It be addressed to my wife in Arkansas. Please see that she gets it. I ain't seen her nor my baby in

two years now."

Jedediah opened his breast pocket and found the letter and ring in a leather pouch. Before he could promise anything, the dying man took a long breath and exhaled with a rasping sound as he died.

Putting the packet inside his own breast pocket, he turned to Baker and told him "Yank that bayonet out and throw it aside. Then may he rest in peace."

"A lot of good men died today and nothing was accomplished by either side. The sooner we get this here war over with, the sooner the dyin' can stop."

They left the dead sergeant where they found him as they moved on to locate Samuel's body. Jedediah knew they were close when they heard the cocking of a rifle hammer followed by the sound of a falling rifle as it clattered against a rock. Then Perkins walked into the torchlight wiping his tomahawk and in a loud whisper said "Keep agoin' Lieutenant. There ain't no more muggins around this area. The one I kilt was by hisself goin' through the dead. You scared him when you got too close to where he was hidin'. I had already done his mate."

Jedediah just shook his head and smiled "I be glad you are on my side, Perkins. Someday you need to explain how you got so good at sneakin' round like some Injun."

It only took another five minutes and some luck to find Samuel's

body. They took Samuel back to the where the reb sergeant lay. It was a bit of a chore, but they were determined. Then, using two shovels that Baker had somehow obtained, they dug a wide, shallow grave and buried the two men side by side near an old oak tree.

Jedediah said a few words to mark their passing. He knew some Bible phrases but decided to speak from the heart instead. "Lord, please accept these two men into your Kingdom. They done fought and kilt others and then was kilt themselves in this war. They both was good men with families. Now they just both be Americans who had done their duty as they seen it. John Barker was the southerner who I just know'd for a few minutes. Samuel Brown was my good friend who I know'd for years. Thank you, Lord."

Baker asked Jedediah, "Ain't we gonna mark their graves with somethin'?"

"They got this here tree and I scratched SB into it. Any marker might draw some muggins thinkin' someone important be buried here. No animals will bother 'em with all the meat lyin' around and there is so much blood in the soil that I doubt they'll ever smell them either. Besides, they is down almost three feet."

"I be writin' their families 'bout where they be buried. Now we best get back before that Captain shows up."





## The Death of an Army (Working Book Title)

Battle of Franklin, TN

### Chapter Five: 5th/13th Combined Arkansas, November 30, 1864

When the Confederate Army of Tennessee had marched out to battle that afternoon, it was the second largest fighting force available to the Confederacy. Sergeant Aaron Talbot was a part of this magnificent veteran army, proud and confident and itching for a fight. Unfortunately, these were outward appearances. Many units had been decimated during the three years of constant warfare while the Union seemed to have an endless supply of manpower and armaments.

Aaron had lost friends to bullets and disease and was starting to wonder how much longer this war would last. There were men all around him who were using rags for shoes and showed signs of malnutrition and disease. Many of them could hardly walk and would probably collapse long before reaching the Union lines. There was a mixture of confidence and defeatism throughout the ranks.

As the leading lines halted just outside of rifle range, the drums and bugles became silent, and Talbot thought about the silent enemy behind their distant fortifications. It was going to be a very costly attack across those two miles of open fields. They were well protected and would be hard to displace. He was starting to have misgivings about what was going to happen when the last of the battle lines exited the forest and the bugles and drums came alive once more. The lines surged forward with parade ground precision. Aaron marched in silence as the men cheered. Some gave a piercing cry as the rebel yell was rippling through the ranks, building its force. When the time came to rush forward in a massive charge, the yell would come from 20,000 voices in a massive sound known to strike fear into the hearts of their enemies.

Shoving his doubts aside, Aaron

focused his thoughts upon moving forward and setting a good example for his men. He did not survive three years of warfare and hardship to have it all end on this day. The optimism that was sweeping through the army as they moved forward was contagious. He knew they would sweep over the Union positions and take Franklin before the day was over.

The 5th/13th Combined Arkansas, leading the assault, showed little emotion, and marched as if on parade. Aaron held his rifle in a horizontal position as he marched forward, leading the right side of the Arkansas line. He felt confident that Fordge and Potter were following him into the developing firestorm, especially since Caleb and Fulton were in the rank following them. His mind went elsewhere as he shut out the carnage around him and simply marched straight ahead. He was now thinking about his Becky and their three children. He was torn by two duties. One was to honor his oath and serve in this army until the Confederacy was free while the other was to take care of his family.

He had seen thousands of men crippled and killed in this brutal war and it seemed as if it would never end. Many of the lives were just thrown away by incompetent officers while numerous others died from one of the many diseases that were common throughout the army. He was tired of the whole thing, but he knew he had to be true to himself and see this war to its end. He also knew that he was responsible to the men in his company and must do all he could to see that they also survived this war. Only by surviving this war could he be true to both of his commitments. Deep in his heart he did not expect to ever see his family again. He did not say anything to Caleb, but he also carried a pouch tethered around his neck with a final message for Becky.

## Inside the Story

Each alternate chapter of this book looks at the Battle of Franklin from a different side. The first three issues of this newsletter looked at the Union side of the battle through the eyes of the 15th Missouri, a Union Regiment (Chapter Six).

The next several newsletters will look at Chapter Five of the battle which views it from the Confederate side through the eyes of the 5th/13th Combined Arkansas Regiment.

It was a combined regiment because the original two regiments had lost so many men during the war that they had had to be combined to create one understrength regiment. The South was running out of manpower.

Their part in the battle starts in this issue, on this page.



*The optimism that  
was sweeping  
through the army as  
they moved forward  
was contagious.*





*Tossing a hatchet to  
the Apache, Six  
Toes said, "We go  
now and kill them  
when it is dark."*



Pictures from the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA

## The Yaqui Renegade, July 1861: Part three of three

The two men silently backed away and returned to their camp. Six Toes hung his Winchester back over his shoulder and took a bow and quiver of arrows from his blanket roll. Then he looked at Restless One and said, "You stay here. You no can use a bow, so you cannot help."

"My right arm works, and I can still swing a hatchet or war club."

Tossing a hatchet to the Apache, Six Toes said, "We go now and kill them when it is dark."

The two men returned to their hidden spot and watched the camp. It had become dark, but the fire still burned brightly. One man stood watch at the edge of the light cast by the fire while the others sat near the fire, passing a jug of whiskey around. White Star was still tied to the wagon wheel.

The lone guard walked into the darkness as if on patrol and came within twenty feet of the two watching warriors. When an argument broke out among the men at the fire, the noise covered the bow's twang as Six Toes fired an arrow into the man's throat.

The man fell to the ground with just a slight gurgling sound as the Comancheros' leader broke up the argument and staggered over to White Star. He pulled out a knife and cut her loose while keeping her ankles tied together.

Before she could react, he pushed her face down into the dirt and started to tie her hands behind her back. The arrow that hit him between his shoulder blades was a complete surprise. He dropped his knife and grabbed at the arrow shaft. As he struggled, White Star grabbed the knife and plunged

it into his stomach.

By the time the others realized they were under attack, Six Toes and Restless One were among them. Gunshots were fired, but they were poorly aimed and fired in fright. The three Comancheros never had a chance.

Restless One had rushed the men as Six Toes shot an arrow into the back of the leader. By the time Six Toes had joined him, Restless One had split one skull with his hatchet and was chasing another past the fire. The third man had run directly into Six Toes and fell with a Knife wound to his chest.

Six Toes stood cleaning his knife on a piece of the dead man's shirt as Restless One walked into the firelight carrying a scalp. He acknowledged the Apache with a nod of his head. Before he could say anything, White Star walked over to him and held out a fresh scalp.

She said, "This belong to you. Thank you for saving my life."

Six Toes said, "I wounded him. You took his life, so it is yours. Besides, I have two others."

Restless One cleared his throat, and White Star turned to him, saying, "You are the one called a coward. You are Restless One."

He started to turn away but stopped when she said, "You are no coward. You attacked these men with one good arm and only a hatchet. You also save my life."

As she spoke to Restless One, Six Toes went over to search the wagon for anything of value. He discovered a sack containing several scalps. White Star saw him lift it and rushed over to his side. She

said, "Two of those are from my parents, and the rest are from others of my people."

Six Toes handed the sack to White Star, who walked over to sit near Restless One by the dying fire. He said to her, "My wound has started to bleed once again. I will rest tonight, and tomorrow I will return you to your people."

"I will bind your wound, and we will go to our people tomorrow. I will tell them your story."

Six Toes had finished going through the wagon and stood behind them. "I will go with you. When you return with White Star and four horses, they will no longer call you coward."

"You would not take these horses?"

"White Star needs a horse to ride, and I already have a good horse and need no other. You take these weapons and bullets with you. Comancheros be less of a problem for your people."

As the sun rose the next morning, the small party moved away from the fight scene and a gathering of circling vultures. Two of the extra horses carried weapons and supplies from the dead Comancheros and their burning wagon.

Six Toes led the two pack-horses as he followed Restless one and White Star. He did not know where his path would lead, but perhaps having some Apache friends would make it a mite easier.



## The Origin of My New Symbol/Logo

Coenosium Gardens had a logo designed by Jane Gerhard, an art teacher I worked with at Tamaqua Senior High School during the 1970s. It was a sketch of a corner of a landscape that displayed a variety of plants that represented a plant community (a Coenosium).

For Coenosium Publishing I decided I wanted something different since I was now offering books for sale.

I looked at a variety of old pictures and selected the one shown on this page. Huck Finn was a real salesman and I had a picture of myself that reminded me of Huck.

I was about 6 years old when this picture was taken. My family used to spend a week during the summer at a cabin near Lake Harmony, a lake in the Pocono Mountains of Eastern Pennsylvania. It belonged to my Uncle Louie Davis and provided an opportunity to get away from the big city of Jim Thorpe (Mauch Chunk).

My dad could still drive to work if he had an issue getting the week off from his job.

While we were at the lake, we would have other family members spend some time with us. We even had visitors drive up from Culpepper Virginia to spend a couple of days.

The water activities were always fun. We did boating and fishing in the lake.

We had access to an old rowboat for water excursions. I recall one time my mother, my aunt, my grandmother, and a couple other people decided to go for a trip around the lake. Unfortunately, when the last person got into the boat, water came over the side and sank the boat. It created an image that still comes into my mind

whenever I hear the name, Lake Harmony.

I liked fishing off the dock. I had a stick with a piece of string and a hook. My dad told me that the fish would bite on bread. It was easier than finding and skewering a worm so that became my preferred bait.

I started to become disenchanted with the bread-as-bait fishing method when I suddenly caught 'a whopper'. It was almost 6 inches long. I even posed for a picture proudly displaying my catch still on the hook.

The picture was even colorized by my grandmother in the late 1950s. Unfortunately, that picture has been lost but I had an original black and white to

work with. I colorized it digitally and have also made a copy with the background remaining black and white (page 12, bottom).

As a side note: years later I discovered that one of my uncles had originally caught the fish and swam under the dock to attach it to my hook. When he jerked on the string, I thought I had caught the fish with my bread-for-bait.

Sometimes I wonder if that is where the expression, "Just jerking your chain," came from?



*Above is the original picture after I digitized it.*

*Below is a colorized picture of the successful fisherman with his grandparents at Lake Harmony. I wonder if the fish was getting ripe by then?*



## Book Sales



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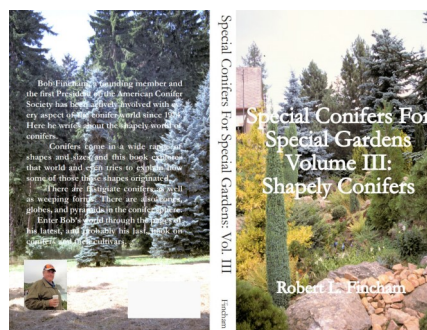
If you would like more information on weeping conifers, you should consider purchasing my recent book:

Special Conifers For Special Gardens  
Volume three: shapely conifers

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Mention this newsletter and during the month of February the list price will be figured at \$25.00 for direct purchases through my web site or direct email. Multi-book purchases through my web site or direct email would apply any additional discounts to this price. More information is available at [www.robertfincham.com](http://www.robertfincham.com).



## In Future Issues

I will be printing a new, three part serial from my selection of old west short stories.

My novel will continue the chapter from the Confederate side of the Battle of Franklin.

I will also print another chapter from *Stack 'em Deep & Teach 'em Cheap*.

Somewhere along the line I will give details on the three main characters who form the basis of my historical novel and most of my short stories.

I will always include a conifer of the month and some conifer facts. Eventually, I will run out of deciduous trees for the tree of the month. Until then, they will continue.



## Montage (from page 1)

