

LAIM

of

S. R. ALESHIRE

S. R. Aleshire, a witness of lawful age, being first duly sworn deposes as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION: Mr. Price.

Q. Your name is S. R. Aleshire?

A. Yes sir.

Q. How old are you?

A. Will soon be 49.

Q. Where do you live?

A. Page County, 5 miles west of Luray.

Q. Own any real estate in the valley?

A. Yes sir.

Q. How much?

A. About 200 acres.

Q. With improvements, buildings?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Farm buildings and home?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Modern improvements on both?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Do you own land in the park area?

A. Yes sir.

Q. How much?

A. The deed calls for 91 acres, the tax book shows 90 acres, more or less.

Q. You haven't filed with your claim the description by metes and bounds, of this property, have you?

A. No sir.

BY MR. ARMSTRONG: There is no question about his owning the 90 acres.

Q. Mr. Aleshire, will you file a copy of your deed with your testimony here so the Commission can have a full description of your property?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Whose land does your land adjoin?

A. Frances Lamb, Isaac N. Long, and C. G. Koontz.

Q. When did you purchase this land, Mr. Aleshire?

A. The whole boundary?

Q. Yes.

A. in 1907 or 1908.

Q. Did you buy a 1/2 interest in it?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Who bought the other 1/2 interest?

A. Harry L. Aleshire.

Q. When did he die?

A. About 1914; it was some years ago.

Q. What did you and Harry Aleshire pay for this property at the time you bought it?

A. \$850.00.

Q. Was the land cleared at that time?

A. No sir. It had been but it had been let go and had grown up again in a bad condition.

Q. Your brother, Harry Aleshire; who were his heirs?

A. H. Scott Aleshire and Ruben Lee Aleshire.

Q. Two sons.

A. Yes sir.

Q. And a widow?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Did you purchase this other 1/2 interest originally owned by your brother?

A. Yes sir.

Q. When?

A. 1929. They wanted their money out of it so I just passed their money back to them, the money they had in it.

Q. You had developed this land at your own expense?

A. Yes sir.

Q. What are the ages of these boys?

A. Scott will be 21 in October and Ruben Lee will be 19 in February coming. He was 18 last February.

Q. What did you pay them back?

A. \$450.00

Q. In the meantime, after the death of your brother, Harry Aleshire, had your father been paying them rent for this property during the years that he and you used it together?

A. Yes sir.

Q. And the price that you paid them then wasn't the actual value of the land at the time you got it, but what they thought they had in it?

A. Yes sir.

Q. What do you think it is worth?

A. I think I filed a claim of \$35.00 an acre which would amount to \$3100.00 and something.

Q. \$3150.00, would it be?

A. Yes sir.

Q. You think that is a fair market value for your land?

A. Yes sir. I feel that it is low, I feel that it is reasonable.

Q. If it wasn't being condemned and you had a purchaser for it for \$3500.00, would you sell it?

A. Not for \$4000.00.

Q. How many cattle have you pastured on it in a season?

A. 25 to 30 heads.

Q. How many have you on it this season?

A. 34 heads.

Q. How much do they put on in this pasture, these cattle you have been carrying on it?

A. I don't carry all large cattle but they have put on 300 and 350 pounds.

Q. The large cattle?

A. Yes sir. 350 pounds would be the average.

Q. Of what they would do.

A. Yes sir, of what they would do.

Q. In clearing up this land, Mr. Aleshire, have you spent - - give the Commissioners some idea of what you have spent and the number of men you have worked.

A. It would be a hard estimate of what I spent. I never kept a

record, I always went over it myself and worked 20 to 30 men a season to get it in the shape it is now in.

Q. You aim to do your clearing in the month of August?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Mr. Aleshire, doesn't the public road run through about the middle of your land?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Would a man travelling along that public road get a correct estimate of your grazing land?

A. No sir.

Q. Tell the Commissioners why he wouldn't.

A. Well sir, the land lies, the best of the sod lies to the west of the road, going south and it is a little steep and by going up to the rise you have a much better view of it. You can see the land much better.

Q. A man riding along the road and looking at it from the road wouldn't think it would carry that number of cattle?

A. No sir.

Q. Then in order to get a correct estimate, he would have to go up and look it over to get a real estimate?

A. Yes sir.

CROSS EXAMINATION: Mr. Armstrong.

Q. Mr. Aleshire how much of your farm can you see from the public road?

A. Public road?

Q. From the road you spoke of.

A. I don't know exactly. Not half of it by any means.

Q. Could you see as much as 35 acres?

A. Yes sir.

Q. And you mean that the 35 acres he could see is of much poorer quality?

A. No sir, I would say that it is very good but it is better on the table land.

Q. I understand you to say that a man couldn't arrive at anything like the proper value from what he could see from the road?

A. I have some worth \$75.00 an acre.

Q. Then there is a difference in the types of soil that makes up this 90 acres?

A. Some people might take it that way.

Q. Could they take it any other way from your statement?

A. I don't know. You might.

Q. Don't you?

A. No sir.

Q. Then there is no difference in the land in sight of the road and the land outside the sight of the road?

A. Yes sir, there is some differences.

Q. Then some portions of your land is of far greater value than other portions?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Mr. Aleshire, I notice in the copy of your claim that I have that 10 acres of your land is cleared.

A. 10 acres?

Q. Is that right? What is that intended for? You filled out your claim, didn't you?

A. No sir, I did not. Mr. Miller did.

Q. There must have been mistake in regard to the 10 acres?

A. Yes sir, I don't think there is but about 10 acres in timber.

BY MR. PRICE: Where is the 10 acres? I see that is what he intended to put in there.

Q. Could you give us your best estimate as to the actual number of cleared acres?

A. No I couldn't. I never measured it, never had it surveyed. On my judgment there is between 10 and 12 acres in which is some sod among the brush and timber. I would judge about 87 acres of cleared land; 85 or 87.

Q. You must be a little mistaken there because you only have 90 acres.

A. I mean about 75 or 80 acres.

BY MR. PRICE: You mean 75?

A. Yes sir.

Q. I notice from the memorandum I hold in my hand, made by representatives and employees of the State Commission on Conservation and Development that they find approximately 34 acres of slope type land which they report to be uncleared. Do you think there could be that much?

A. No sir.

Q. Could there be half that much?

A. No sir.

Q. Now, how would you classify as to acreage your grazing land with respect to quality?

A. I don't know that I could do it at all sir.

Q. You speak of having some better grazing land than others?

A. Yes sir.

Q. As to acreage, have you some better acres than others?

A. No sir.

Q. You can at least give the acreage of both?

A. Well, I just couldn't. I wouldn't know how to go about that Mr. Armstrong.

Q. Well you know better than anyone else. You know you have about 75 acres according to your statement and some of it is better than others. I believe you said you could see how many acres from the road?

A. I don't know that I said.

Q. You can see 30 or 35 acres, can't you?

A. Yes sir.

Q. And you can't get any estimate of your land because the 35 acres you can see is much poorer than what you can't see?

A. Taking it in a whole - -

Q. No matter how you take it, the land you can see isn't as good as the land on the table land?

A. No sir.

Q. Then the 30 or 35 acres you can see isn't as good as what is out of sight, and you have 75 acres of cleared land, all together approximately 40 acres out of sight is the best land, isn't it?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Then you have 35 acres of good land and 40 acres of much better land?

A. Yes sir.

Q. You don't make any mention of timber value in your claim?

A. No sir.

Q. You haven't any timber of any value?

A. No sir.

BY MR PRICE: We will take you up there and let you cut some timber and you can see for yourself.

Q. The cleared land that you speak of, is it nearly cleared or is that to any extent grown up in brush?

A. It is pretty well cleared. The brush has been cut down.

Q. You cut your brush every year?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Mr. Aleshire, you arrived at the value of this land by its grazing quality, didn't you?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Have you ever rented any land for grazing?

A. No sir.

Q. How many cattle do you keep?

A. How many do I keep?

Q. Yes, on your home farm.

A. I had 38 last winter, cows and calves together, 48 I mean.

Q. And how many of these were cattle?

A. 34 were cattle.

Q. And you are carrying 24 of these cattle up on this place?

A. Yes sir.

Q. And you are carrying the rest on your home place?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Have you ever taken in grazing on this place for anyone else?

A. Yes sir.

Q. How many would you take?

A. I don't know. I don't have as many this year as usual. I took in 6 or 8 this year.

Q. For who?

A. Mr. Phillip Burner.

Q. What was your contract with Mr. Burner?

A. There was no contract. He was a neighbor of mine.

Q. You had no contract?

A. No sir.

Q. How long did you keep them there?

A. 5 1/2 months sir.

Q. How much did his cattle put on, do you know?

A. No sir, I don't know. They were small cattle.

Q. Mr. Aleshire, a man who buys his cattle in the fall, carries them through the winter, feed them corn or fodder and roughage, then turn them out in the Spring and during the grazing season, the pounds that he puts on from the time he turns them out until he takes them off is not clear profit, is it?

A. I can't see why it wouldn't be.

Q. You figure that you can carry them through the winter for nothing?

A. Yes, particularly so with the roughage that I have on my farm. What could I do with that if it wasn't for my cattle?

Q. You could dispose of it.

A. Not to any advantage.

Q. Your statement is that you don't take into consideration what it takes you to carry the cattle through the winter.

A. That is right sir. Considering the roughage I have.

Q. Could you sell that roughage to anyone else?

A. I don't know, I never have tried.

Q. Hasn't fodder any value to sell there in your country?

A. Yes, but I wouldn't consider what I could get out of it.

Q. If it had any value to the man he sold it to, would it be

worth absolutely nothing to you?

A. Well, I think it would be hard to sell.

Q. Well, say in estimating the profits on your cattle, you estimated from the number of pounds that they put on from the time they were put on this land in the Spring until they were taken off in the Fall, and not take into consideration what it cost to be carried through the winter. Is that right?

A. Yes sir, the way I would work it would be different from most people. I keep my cattle and raise my own cattle. I wouldn't feel that I was out anything. What I get out of the cattle I feel that it is clear cash. I am trying to improve my farm, and I have this feed for them in the Spring of the year.

Q. But the cash is made up of fodder, straw, and hay that you spend good money on in raising on your farm?

A. Yes sir, that costs me something to raise it.

Q. And what you feed to your cattle, you are out of the value that you could get for selling it, aren't you?

A. Yes, I would think so.

Q. You pay taxes on your cattle, don't you?

A. Yes sir.

Q. And taxes on your land?

A. Yes sir.

Q. How much do you pay on your land?

A. The 91 acres?

Q. How much on the 91 acres?

A. Last year it was \$11.72 or \$11.73 I think.

Q. The taxes have decreased?

A. Yes sir.

Q. In the last re-assessment of the lands, was it decreased?

A. I suppose so, sir.

Q. So the land assessment decreased your land?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Do you know what the assessment is?

A. No, I do not.

Q. Did he come to see you when he assessed it?

A. No sir.

Q. Didn't you see him?

A. No sir.

Q. Would you be surprised to learn that the assessment value of this land is \$630.00?

A. I didn't know what it was, sir.

Q. Would that seem extremely low to you?

A. Yes sir, it is.

Q. If it is assessed at \$630.00 and it has 90 acres, it is \$7.00 an acre, isn't it?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Now when we come to making money on cattle, that is about as precarious a business as any other business in farming, isn't it?

A. I don't know, sir.

Q. I will ask you whether or not you know it to be a fact that farmers in Page County or elsewhere that you may know in the valley of Virginia in recent years have bought cattle, keeping them through the winter and been compelled to sell them for a lower price than they originally paid for them?

A. I couldn't say, I don't know.

Q. Have you ever heard of any. You bought these to raise.

A. Possibly they have, some may have in recent years.

Q. So there is no way a man can estimate what his profits will be for grazing year in and year out?

A. I consider a man that makes a success of any business has to stay in it year in and year out.

Q. Until he goes broke?

A. He won't go broke. That is the only way to make a success is to stay in it all the time.

BY MR. PRICE: Do you know ^{anyone} that owns some of this Blue Ridge grazing land that has gone broke?

A. No sir.

BY MR. JOSEPH SAMUELS: Do you cultivate any of this land?

A. No sir.

Q. How much was cleared when you bought it?

A. About 50 acres. It was in brush as it had been let grow up sir.

Q. Was any of that in sod?

A. Well, it had a little sod but it wouldn't amount to much.

Q. Since you purchased it, you have cleared something like 25 acres, cut the timber off of it, and the brush off this other land?

A. Yes sir.

Q. How did you get it into sod, did you sow it?

A. Yes sir, we sowed lots of orchard grass.

Q. If you want a good sod on it, you sow orchard grass first?

A. Some do. Now I sowed the orchard grass in order to get a real good grass.

BY MR. PRICE: That is a good practice, Mr. Samuels.

BY MR. SAMUELS, COMMISSIONER: It wasn't quite clear to me. I don't know whether it was to the rest of the Commission, whether you didn't pay the \$450.00 for your brothers 1/2 interest until 1929?

A. They only asked me to turn the money back that my brother had put in it. He died soon after we bought it and I put my money in it, my father was associated with me in my business and he paid them pasturage as long as he lived.

Q. In other words, he used the pasture and paid your brothers heirs for it.

A. Yes sir.

BY MR. PRICE: You furnished the money all these years without charging it up to these children?

A. Yes sir.

BY MR. SAMUELS: Your father only had two sons and your brother only had two sons?

A. Yes sir

BY MR. PRICE: So this land that we have been describing, the

part that you can see from the road is the rather rought part, isn't it?

A. Yes sir.

BY MR. ARMSTRONG: You speak of having obtained the other 1/2 interest about a year ago, was that your brothers 1/2 interest?

A. Yes sir.

Q. That was sold under decree of the court?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Was that because some of your brothers children were infants?

A. Yes sir, both were infants.

Q. Are you able to state whether or not the court referred it to a commission to ascertain the value of that land?

A. I am not in a position to say, I don't know.

Q. Do you know whether or not there was a suit brought for the sale of the infants interest?

A. I think there was, sir.

Q. Do you know whether or not there was testimony taken in the case in regard to the value of the land?

A. I think there was.

Q. Were you present?

A. Was I present? No sir, not all the time.

Q. Part of it?

A. Part of it.

Q. What was the testimony as to the value of the land?

A. I don't know. If I did know, I have forgotten. I don't know whether any of the witnesses were on the land to value it either.

Q. Did I understand you to say that someone had been renting your brothers 1/2 interest during his life time?

A. No, after his death.

Q. Who had been renting it?

A. My father.

Q. What was the terms of the renting?

A. I don't know. He always paid the boys just what he saw fit

to give them. He always told me that he paid them and paid them well.

Q. You don't know what he paid them?

A. I knew nothing about that part of the business.

Q. You never had any idea about what he paid them?

A. No sir.

Q. Was he guardian of the infant children of your brothers?

A. Yes sir.

Q. And he rented from himself as guardian?

A. Yes sir, and from my brothers widow.

Q. Did he settle his account as guardian?

A. Yes sir.

BY MR. PRICE: Is your father dead?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Left these boys his money?

A. Yes sir.

Mr. R. D. Koontz, a witness of lawful age, being first duly sworn, deposes as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION: Mr. Price.

Q. Mr. Koontz, are you familiar with the S. R. Aleshire 90 acre tract of land on the Blue Ridge Mountain in Madison County, the tract that is in the park area?

A. I am.

Q. You own property adjoining that?

A. On the east side.

Q. Have you recently been over this land?

A. Yes sir.

Q. I wish you would tell the Commissioners what you estimate to be the value of that land.

A. What I estimate to be the value of it? Well, I think \$35.00 an acre would be a reasonable price for it.

Q. You think that is a fair market price for it?

A. I think so.

Q. How many cattle does he carry on it, you know?

A. I pass through there every year going to my place and it looks to me like from 25 to 30 heads.

Q. Cattle do well?

A. Yes sir.

Q. There is some question among the Commissioners. If a man buys a steer in the fall, feeds him on fodder and hay during the winter, he loses about 100 pounds, doesn't he?

A. Yes sir.

Q. And put him back on this character of grass, and he will take on how much?

A. About 300 pounds.

Q. What does it ordinarily cost a man to run a steer on straw and fodder during the winter if he is paying someone else to do it?

BY MR. ARMSTRONG: It depends on the kind of steer, doesn't it?

BY MR. PRICE: A 700 or 800 pound steer?

A. I have taken them in for \$1.00, \$1.50 and \$1.75.

Q. Last winter?

A. It was \$2.50 and \$2.25 last winter.

Q. Did you carry any last winter?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Who for?

A. Mr. Hershberger.

Q. For how much?

A. \$2.25 per month per head.

CROSS EXAMINATION: Mr. Armstrong.

Q. So Mr. Koontz you don't agree with Mr. Aleshire who has just testified that you don't take into consideration the cost of feeding cattle during the winter in figuring your profit and loss?

A. I don't my own cattle. I don't pay any attention to my own cattle because I get it back on my place.

Q. Is that the basis of figuring by which you arrive at the value of this land?

A. I don't know that it is.

Q. How do you arrive at \$35.00 per acre as the value of this land?

A. By going over it and looking at it to see what kind of land it is. I know what it will graze. It is well worth \$35.00 an acre according to my judgment.

Q. Your land is better land than this, isn't it?

A. I don't know that it is. Some of it may be.

Q. You have about 700 acres of cleared land, haven't you?

A. Yes sir.

Q. How much cleared land is in this boundary?

A. It is all cleared except a few acres. I would say 8 - 10 - or 12 acres at the most.

Q. There is about 70 or 75 acres of cleared land?

A. I think so.

Q. How many cattle does he carry?

A. About 30 or 35 heads.

Q. He carries about 30 or 35 heads on between 70 or 75 acres of cleared land?

A. Yes sir.

Q. And you carry 125 to 150 on your land?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Now you didn't carry as many cattle on your land as your land would have carried a much heavier stock, owing to the fact that you weren't in a position to get the cattle to put on it?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Now, couldn't you have taken in cattle to put on there?

A. Sometimes you could and sometimes you couldn't.

Q. Why was that?

A. People had grazing land of their own.

Q. How many farmers in Page County own valuable grazing land on top of the Blue Ridge, in the neighborhood of this land that you are speaking of?

A. Adjoining this land?

Q. No adjoining but on the magnificent table land on top of the Blue Ridge, in Page County.

A. About 12 I think.

Q. How many farmers in Page County feed cattle during the winter?

A. For the market?

Q. Keep them for grazing during the entire year?

A. The biggest portion of them.

Q. How do you account for the fact that with this splendid grazing land, that you are unable to rent it to people when you didn't have cattle of your own, notwithstanding the fact that the grass up there is so much better. How do you account for the fact that you couldn't rent it for pasture?

A. People didn't have the cattle and they didn't want to rent it for pasture for cattle they didn't have. The people that had cattle didn't have to rent pasture for them.

Q. Is there any other grazing land in Page County to compare with the land on the Blue Ridge like this and Mr. Lee Long's?

A. I suppose so, but there is none better.

BY MR. PRICE: Aren't we going right far from this the question. This man Aleshire has had his farm stocked right up to the minute and it isn't a question of whether Mr. Koontz's land is stocked up or not.

BY MR. ARMSTRONG: If you will agree with what he says hasn't anything to do with Mr. Aleshire's land, it has nothing to do with this, then I will stop.

BY MR. PRICE: The cattle he is grazing has nothing to do with Mr. Koontz.

BY MR. ARMSTRONG: Well, I won't disagree with you about that.

Mr. Phillip Long, a witness of lawful age, being first duly sworn, deposes as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION: Mr. Price.

Q. Mr. Long, how old are you?

A. 71 years old.

Q. Where were you born and reared?

A. In Page County, close to Luray. About seven miles from Luray on the Shenandoah River.

Q. The property where ^{you} were born has been in the Long family a long time?

A. As long as I have known anything.

Q. Hasn't it been in the Long family since it was granted them by the Crown of England?

A. Yes sir.

Q. And you still own a portion of that land?

A. Yes sir.

Q. What is your occupation?

A. Farming.

Q. Been farming all your life?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Tell the Commissioners whether you have handled a number of cattle each and every year?

A. Yes, each and every year.

Q. How many have you been carrying for the last 15 or 17 years?

A. 75 or 100.

Q. It is your practice to feed your cattle in the winter along with the other farmers in the neighborhood?

A. 40 to 60 cattle every winter.

Q. You familiar with this Blue Ridge grazing land?

A. Yes. I have been going up there since I was 10 years old. My father owned land up there.

Q. Your father owned the land up there that you now own?

A. Yes sir, some of it, but some of it I bought myself.

Q. Mr. Long, Joe Wing says that cattle grazed on this sweet limestone soil - -

BY MR. ARMSTRONG: I object to that.

Q. Says that cattle grazed on blue grass - on this sweet limestone soil have an excellancy that is hard to describe or define.

BY MR. ARMSTRONG: Objected to. No one knows who Joe Wing is or what he knows about cattle.

BY MR. PRICE: I am quoting this from Joe Wing. I am reading from his text book on cattle and farming.

A. Mr. Joe Wing certainly put a finish on cattle.

Q. You agree that that statement is correct?

A. He certainly puts a finish on cattle. When you put the cattle up there, I suppose the shade and water has something to do with it and the value of the grass too, but something certainly puts a finish on them. I can't explain what it is but something does.

BY MR. ARMSTRONG: That is probably correct. I would much prefer having Mr. Long's statement than Joe Wings.

Q. Are you familiar with the Aleshire tract of land on the Blue Ridge Mountain?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Is it close to the property owned by you?

A. It isn't very far but it doesn't join my land.

Q. On the same ridge?

A. Yes sir.

Q. What do you think is a fair market value of that land?

A. I don't think it is valued too high.

Q. At \$35.00 an acre?

A. It isn't too high.

Q. You have seen cattle that were grazing on it?

A. Yes sir, I have bought cattle off of it.

Q. Did they do well?

A. They did well. I have seen cattle every year that came off of it and they came off in good shape.

Q. Mr. Long, a 700 pound steer that you have in October and run him through the winter on fodder and straw, how much would he lose?

A. From 50 to 75 pounds, maybe more, probably 100. I have scales at the house and as a rule, I usually put them on the scales and weigh them before taking them up on the mountain.

Q. How much do they put on on the Blue Ridge Mountain?

A. 300 or 350 pounds.

Q. By actual weight?

A. Yes sir.

BY MR. ARMSTRONG: You speaking of your own cattle?

A. Yes sir, my own cattle. I mean from the time we take them to the ridge to the time we bring them back.

Q. All of the large farmers in Page County used to pasture their cattle in the summer and sell them on the December or January market and for the last few years, they have been selling them right off the grass to the market?

A. Yes sir, they have.

CROSS EXAMINATION: Mr. Armstrong.

Q. You have land as you have testified in the immediate neighborhood of this farm?

A. Yes sir, not far.

Q. You have a claim filed in these proceedings for the tract, have you not?

A. Yes sir.

Q. How does your land compare with this land?

A. I think it is better land than Sam's.

Q. Isn't it universally considered better land?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Isn't this the better of the best in that whole area?

A. I don't know about that. I will leave that for the other fellow to say.

Q. But I understand this is the best land in that area.

A. I will let somebody else say that.

Q. Do you ever rent any pasture?

A. No sir. I never have.

Q. I don't mean take in cattle to graze. Have you ever grazed cattle out on anybody else's land?

A. No sir.

Q. Are you familiar with the price for grazing an 800 pound steer for a month?

A. No sir.

Q. Haven't you ever heard of people grazing cattle up there?

A. I would say \$2.00 to \$2.50 a month.

Q. That would be a reasonable charge?

A. That is usually what they charge. Cattle business is like any other kind of business, some years they do good and some years they don't.

Q. What could a man afford to pay for rent for grass for 800 pound cattle per month?

A. I don't hardly know. I never rented any, never had any occasion.

Q. Do you think \$1.50 to \$2.50 a month?

A. That would be a fair price.

Q. According to the quality of the grass he is run on?

A. According to the pasture. That is one thing I don't know so much about because right around us nobody takes in any cattle for pasturing.

Q. Is there any corn or fodder sold in your neighborhood?

A. No sir, not that I know of. Sometimes, somebody dies and they have a little sale but there is hard matter - - to get any fodder in our neighborhood.

Q. Is there any bought in your neighborhood?

A. I have bought some myself and paid 1¢ a bundle.

Q. Is that the highest you have paid for it?

A. I have paid 2¢ a bundle. It has sold as high as 7¢ a bundle last fall, but if we stock many years like that, there wouldn't be any to buy. I couldn't buy it for a cent a bundle.

Q. What does it cost to keep an 800 pound steer during the winter?

A. I don't know. I have never estimated the cost of it.

Q. Mr. Long, you are a good business man and a good farmer and that is something very body knows, and a man couldn't be a good business man unless he could arrive at some estimate of what it cost him. What would be your best idea?

A. Some idea. I know that if we didn't have any place to keep them in the summer time, they wouldn't be worth anything to us. And if we didn't have them, we wouldn't have anything, You see, one farm helps the other.

Q. But other men in estimating the profit off of what he makes on his cattle must know what goes into them?

A. Yes, I suppose so.

Q. It costs something for somebody to feed them through the winter?

A. But I say that is how we estimate what we feed them. We get it back on our farm. That is the way we estimate it but we may be wrong, I don't know.

Q. In estimating the value of this land, you estimated the number of pounds that will put on a steer?

A. On what we get for it. Sometimes we get 1¢ less than we paid for them per pound but it doesn't work that way all the time. It couldn't.

Q. Wouldn't it be a fair way to estimate the value of this land, if a man had nothing but this grazing land, wouldn't it be a fair way to arrive at the value of it, wouldn't it be fair to estimate it at what it would rent for?

A. Yes sir, but we don't look at ours that way.

BY MR. PRICE: You always thought you were doing better by pasturing your own there than your neighbors, didn't you?

A. Yes sir.

BY MR. ARMSTRONG: Objected to.

Mr. R. B. Long, a witness of lawful age, being first duly sworn, deposes as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION: Mr. Price.

- Q. Mr. Long, are you the son of Mr. Phillip Long?
- A. Yes sir.
- Q. What is your business?
- A. Farming.
- Q. Do you feed cattle?
- A. Yes sir.
- Q. How many cattle do you feed a year?
- A. I keep 20 to graze.
- Q. Are you familiar with the Blue Ridge Mountain land?
- A. Yes sir.
- Q. Been going up there all your life?
- A. Yes sir.
- Q. Familiar with the Aleshire 90 acres?
- A. Yes sir. I have never been all over it but I have been through it different ways several times.
- Q. What do you think it is worth?
- A. What he priced it at.
- Q. What he priced it at?
- A. Yes sir.

CROSS EXAMINATION: Mr. Armstrong.

- Q. How did you arrive at that value?
- A. I arrived at it from different ways. He could rent it.
- Q. Of course. Any other way?
- A. There are several different ways.
- Q. You would have to pay more for cattle in the spring of the year than in the fall proceeding, wouldn't you?
- A. Yes sir. I don't know that you would this spring.
- Q. What are 800 pound cattle worth this spring, good quality?
- A. They could have been bought for 6 or 7¢.
- Q. Now, what have cattle weighing now 800 pounds, been contracted for to be sold this fall?
- A. I don't know.

Q. Do you know of any that have been contracted for to be sold this fall at any price?

A. No sir.

Q. Do you agree with your Father who has just testified, what would be a fair price per month for grazing 800 pound cattle, that is, taking them in to graze?

A. Yes sir.

Lester Ruffner, a witness of lawful age, being first duly sworn, deposes as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION: Mr. Price.

Q. Mr. Ruffner, how old are you?

A. 53.

Q. Where were you born and reared?

A. On the Shenandoah River, 2 miles West of Luray.

Q. In Page County, Virginia?

A. Page County.

Q. Were you raised on a farm?

A. Yes sir.

Q. You have been on this 90 acre tract of land that is owned by Mr. Aleshire on top of the Blue Ridge Mountain?

A. I have..

Q. Been on there recently?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Will you tell the Commissioners what in your judgment is a fair market value for that property?

A. Yes sir. \$35.00 an acre.

Q. Mr. Ruffner, you own any land up there?

A. No sir.

Q. Have you seen Mr. Aleshire's cattle up there when he brings them off the ridge every year?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Tell the Commissioners if they did well on that property?

A. Yes sir, they did.

CROSS EXAMINATION: Mr. Armstrong.

Q. Do you own a farm on the Shenandoah River?

A. Yes sir.

Q. How large is your farm?

A. 200 acres.

Q. You raise cattle?

A. A few.

Q. Your land won't grow grass?

A. Not much blue grass. No sir.

Q. You were never engaged in the cattle business?

A. I used to handle more cattle than I do at present.

Q. How many did you used to run?

A. I used to run 25 or 30 heads but I didn't keep them there in the summer.

Q. Where did you keep them?

A. At that time, on the land of Mr. Koontz's.

Q. C. G. Koontz?

A. Yes sir.

Q. What did you pay him?

A. That was before this land was cleared.

Q. How long ago has that been?

A. About 30 or 35 years ago.

Q. You were quite a young man then?

A. Yes sir.

Q. You were about 18 years old?

A. Yes sir. We took cattle up there and paid Mr. Frank Weekly so much to graze them.

Q. What was brush grazing worth than?

A. We paid Mr. Weekly 15 or 20¢ a head for grazing them.

Q. Mr. Koontz charged you nothing?

A. No sir. It wasn't fenced in then.

Q. How long have you owned the farm you now own?

A. I have owned it myself about 20 years.

Q. Did you inherit it?

A. Yes sir.

Q. You know the usual price paid per head for grazing 800 lb. steers by people who rent land to graze?

A. I think anywhere from \$1.50 to \$2.00.

Q. Depends on the quality of the grass?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Does that apply to other lands as it does to mountain land?

A. What do you mean? Grazing out their places?

Q. Yes sir.

A. There isn't any grazing/around here any place except on the mountain.

Q. No other grazing lands in Page County except on the mountain?

A. There is some but I don't know of anyone that rents any out.

Q. What would be the grazing season, ordinarily?

A. On the mountain?

Q. Yes sir.

A. I would say about six months.

Q. Six months?

A. Yes sir. ,

BY MR. PRICE: Something was said about that Shenandoah Forest range, that is the Massanutten Mountain, that isn't any grazing country, is it?

A. No sir.

Q. I believe they charged 60¢ for running cattle in there. They won't take on a single pound, will they?

A. They merely live, that's all.

Q. Their food gives out right after harvest?

A. Yes sir, earlier than it does on the Blue Ridge Mountain.

Q. That is a poor thin sandy mountain, isn't it?

A. No grazing land on it at all.

BY MR. ARMSTRONG: They charge that for running the cattle on the mountain, not for grazing.

A. I don't know whether anyone would really run any cattle on

BY MR. PRICE: If they do, they quit?

A. Yes sir.

Mr. William Long, a witness of lawful age, being first duly sworn, deposes as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION: Mr. Price.

Q. Mr. Long, I believe you are a resident of Page County?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Been a member of the House of Delegates for the State of Virginia?

A. Yes sir.

Q. You are a farmer?

A. Yes sir.

Q. How much land do you own on the Shenandoah River?

A. 300 acres.

Q. You also own some land in this park area?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Do you handle any number of cattle, Mr. Long?

A. Yes, I handle a right large number.

Q. Been handling cattle all your life since you were big enough to attend to business?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Are you familiar with Mr. S. R. Aleshire's tract of land they are going to condemn?

A. Yes sir.

Q. What is it worth?

A. In my judgment it is priced reasonable enough. I would hate to take that for it.

Q. \$35.00?

A. \$35.00.

CROSS EXAMINATION: Mr. Armstrong.

Q. You are the same W. M. Long who testified in the case of

R. D. Koontz and others?

A. Yes sir.

Q. And you testified yesterday that you charged \$2.00 per head for cattle that you graze on your land when you take in other peoples?

A. This is the only year I have ever taken any in.

Q. You testified further that you considered your land of a better quality of grazing land than Mr. Koontz's, did you not?

A. Yes sir.

Q. How do you consider Mr. Aleshire's? Of about the same quality as Mr. Koontz's?

A. It is in a little better shape now for pasturing than Mr. Koontz's. It is clear, doesn't have as much brush on it as Mr. Koontz's.

Q. Someone testified for Mr. Koontz that the brush was an advantage, do you agree?

A. Yes sir, this time of the year it is. Mr. Koontz doesn't have enough brush to hurt the land.

Q. Brush isn't as good grazing as grass?

A. I prefer the grass.

BY MR. PRICE: I want to get it cleared up about the Shenandoah National Forest. You live close to that on the Massanutten Mountain?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Your farm extends up to the foot of the mountain?

A. I sold them some of it.

Q. Is that good grazing land?

A. Nothing to amount to anything. The people that used to run them in there have stopped. They have trouble getting them there.

Mr. Phillip Burner, a witness of lawful age, being first duly sworn, deposes as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION: Mr. Price.

- Q. Mr. Burner, are you a close neighbor of Mr. Aleshire?
- A. Yes sir.
- Q. What business^{are}/you in?
- A. Farming.
- Q. Are you familiar with his 90 acre tract of land on the Blue Ridge Mountain?
- A. Yes sir.
- Q. Have you pastured any cattle on there?
- A. Yes sir.
- Q. What did you pay?
- A. \$1.25 per month.
- Q. How many heads did you have up there?
- A. Six.
- Q. What size cattle were they?
- A. Most of them were small, 400 or 500 pounds, some weighed 600 or 700 pounds.
- Q. Mr. Burner, what in your judgment is this land worth?
- A. \$35.00 an acre is a very reasonable price.
- Q. Haven't heard of Mr. Aleshire wanting to sell it before this park situation came up?
- A. No sir.

CROSS EXAMINATION: Mr. Armstrong.

- Q. How many acres do you think are worth \$35.00 an acre?
- A. Well, I think some of it may be worth more than the rest but on an average it is worth \$35.00 an acre.
- Q. How would you classify the land as worth more and less?
- A. I never looked over it with the idea of the value of it in my head. All I know is the grass is very good on it all.
- Q. So the \$35.00 is more or less an arbitrary figure?
- A. Yes an average price.
- Q. This land is strictly a grazing land, isn't it?
- A. Yes sir.
- Q. ~~And~~ if grazing should cease to be profitable, the land wouldn't be profitable for any purpose, would it?

A. I suppose not, but nobody considers giving up the grazing, that is, as long as they have a place to graze.

Mr. Phil Long, a witness of lawful age, being first duly sworn, deposes as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION: Mr. Price.

Q. Were you familiar with this land when Mr. Aleshire bought it?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Who owned it previous to that?

A.

Q. He had purchased it from your brother?

A. Yes sir.

Q. What was the condition of the land at that time?

A. It was full of brush. The brush had grown up all over it.

Q. Has he done a considerable amount of work on it clearing it up?

A. I wouldn't have known it. When we went over it, I wouldn't have known it because of the way he had cleaned it up. He has spent considerable money on it. He used to go up there every summer and stay several weeks. When Sam bought it, it was grown up in brush and he has cleared it up wonderfully.

Mr. Joe Brubaker, a witness of lawful age, being first duly sworn, deposes as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION: Mr. Price.

Q. Mr. Brubaker, where do you live?

A. Page County, four miles west of Luray.

Q. On the Shenandoah River?

A. Yes sir.

Q. What is your occupation?

A. Farming.

Q. Handle cattle?

A. Not very many.

Q. Got a few good short horns?

A. Yes sir, what I keep, I keep good.

Q. You have been on this 90 acres of Mr. Aleshire's on the Blue Ridge Mountain?

A. Yes sir.

Q. What in your judgment is it worth?

A. I think the price is very reasonable.

Q. You think \$35.00 an acre is very reasonable for it, a fair market value?

A. Yes sir.

CROSS EXAMINATION: Mr. Armstrong.

Q. How do you arrive at the value?

A. Well, I looked over it. If I wanted to buy it, I would be willing to give that for it.

Q. How did you make up your mind it was worth that much?

A. By going over it and looking over it and seeing the grass that is on it, and by seeing the shape the cattle are in when they come off it.

Q. How much can a man afford to pay for grazing land at the present prices of cattle, grazing 800 pound cattle? How much can he afford to pay for grazing land so as to be able to get a profit out of it?

A. That depends on the grass.

Q. That wouldn't depend on the land, that would depend on what he could afford to pay for it, if it would put pounds on his cattle.

A. That's true too.

S. H. Marsh, a witness of lawful age, being first duly sworn, deposes as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION: Mr. Armstrong.

Q. Mr. Marsh, are you familiar with the tract of land of Mr. Aleshire's, to which he has filed a claim in these proceedings?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Did you go upon that tract of land with the idea of ascertaining its value?

A. I did.

Q. Will you state what in your opinion its value is, and state how you arrived at such value?

A. The valuation of this tract was arrived at in ways similiar to the other tracts in that general region. We were guided in the valuation of this property by the prices of similiar lands and selling prices of similiar lands in that neighborhood and vicinity.

Q. In your visit to this land, state whether or not you noted the various types of land and the acreage comprised in the various types, and whether or not you merely carried that in your mind, or did you make a memorandum of such?

A. In the examination of this property as in other properties, we made a careful map of the property classifying the various kinds of land on it. This was done by running strips through the property.

Q. Do you have before you any memorandum which you made showing the results of your visits, and the values of the land arrived at by you?

A. I have.

Q. Will you look at that memorandum and refresh your memory and give the Board of Appraisal Commissioners your conclusion as to the value?

A. Produces copy and reads.

It is in the head of Dark Hollow and entirely within the park area. The soil is a sandy loam of good depth and fertility. The wooded portion is steep and very rocky. The first class grazing has a good sod, but only a small proportion is blue grass. Slopes are gentle and there is little rock, but there are quite a few logs

and a small amount of hazel and sumac. The second class has a poorer sod with some bare ground and more rocks, hazel and sumac and considerable fern and moss. Some parts are steep. The third class is steep and rocky with much brush, logs, and fern and little grass. The woodland grazing has a thin stand of trees with patches of grass. It is nine miles over rough roads with the exception of one mile which is paved to Stanley, the nearest shipping point. The tract has been cut over at various times and only a very poor stand remains. There are a few scattered white pine to 18" DBH. The estimate is 1 M. saw timber : \$3.00 - \$3.00. There are several different types of land. slope type - 34 acres \$2.00 per acre - \$68.00; grazing I - 20 acres - \$27.00 per acre - \$540.00; grazing II - 25 acres - \$17.00 per acre - \$425.00; grazing III - 8 acres - \$10.00 an acre - \$80.00; woodland grazing - 4 acres - \$5.00 an acre - \$20.00. Total value of land - \$1133.00 Total value of timber - \$3.00. Total value of tract - \$1136.00. Average value per acre \$12.48.

CROSS EXAMINATION: Mr. Price.

Q. Find any water on it?

A. No sir. ,

Q. Mr. Marsh, in figuring your estimate of this land, did you figure how many cattle that tract would carry?

A. I would say 15 or 20.

Q. Were you on it last summer?

A. Yes sir, this summer too.

Q. How much time did you spend up there?

A. 15 months off and on.

Q. This park area extends from Front Royal to Basic City?

A. No. It isn't Basic City, the line is Garman Gap.

Q. It is in the same neighborhood of Basic City?

A. Yes sir, north east.

Q. You made up these reports Mr. Marsh, before you had the benefit of listening before these Commissioners and farmers who had grazing

land on that mountain?

A. These reports were made up before, naturally.

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