

REVIEW

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AN EXCURSION TO NATURAL STEPS

By J. H. Atkinson

In the long ago when steamboats plied the Arkansas River, and even long before that, "Natural Steps" was a notable landmark on the south bank of the river some fifteen miles above the "Little Rock." It was a high rocky bluff about 300 feet long descending by stages to the river's edge. Rising above the river fifty feet or more, it served as a guide for pilots going up and down the river. It also served as a boat landing where pilots could anchor to load the bales of cotton from the local area that in the fall of the year lined the bank of the river at this point.

I have long been interested in "Natural Steps," but had never visited the spot until Sunday afternoon, May 8. On that day, my wife and I and Mr. and Mrs. E.L. Kinkead, 1617 N. Grant, who have a 300 acre farm nearby, made a trip up there and he and I explored the site.

Going out Highway 10, a half mile beyond where it is intersected by Rodney Parham Road, we entered and passed through "Devil's Hollow." It is about a quarter of a mile in length and now usually goes unnoticed. Many years ago, before the present road was built, only a narrow dirt road passed through the hollow on the other side. The road was so narrow that it is said that one entering at one end would always yell to make sure that no one would enter at the other end until he had passed through. Two or three miles further on the right side of the road we passed the site of a long-vanished post office named "Iveyville." There is said to be a chimney still to mark the location.

At the Robinson School, we took the road that leads to the right and passes above the base of Pinnacle Mountain and below the new Maumelle Dam. After crossing the railroad where once stood the station called "Natural Steps," we turned to the right and in a distance of probably a half mile we came to the Natural Steps Baptist Church and the cemetery across the road. The church is relatively recent, having been built, it is said, in 1912. The cemetery is much older, having grown up around a Methodist church that was burned many years ago.

In this cemetery I read on the monuments these names: Lester Bushnell, died 1861, age 41 years; Edward Mainerd, died Dec. 9, 1869, age 40 years, 9 months, and 11 days; Joseph Fletcher, died Jan. 10, 1888, age 60. There were many others, too numerous to copy. The first two of these were ancestors of Mr. Kinkead.