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Your main commentary should be focused on *compounds*. Other topics may also be addressed.

Phillips Brook ran to Paris and the Ammonoosuc—and into the Connecticut River. The rivermen drove hardwood sawlogs along Phillips Brook to Paris, and some pulpwood, too. The sawmill in Paris was strictly a hardwoods operation—the manufacturing company in Maine made toboggans—and the logging camp in Paris, with its steam-powered sawmill, had converted the former horse hovel into a machine shop. The mill manager’s house was also there, together with a seventy-five-man bunkhouse and a mess hall, and some rudimentary family housing—not to mention an optimistically planted apple orchard and a schoolhouse. That there was no schoolhouse in the town of Twisted River, nor had anyone been optimistic enough about the settlement’s staying power to plant any apple trees, gave rise to the opinion (held chiefly in Paris) that the logging camp was a more civilized community, and less temporary, than Twisted River.

At the height of land between the two outposts, no fortune-teller would have been foolish enough to predict success or longevity for either settlement. Danny Baciagalupo had heard Ketchum declare certain doom for the logging camp in Paris and for Twisted River, but Ketchum “suffered no progress gladly”—as the cook had cautioned his son. Dominic Baciagalupo was not a storyteller; the cook routinely cast doubt on some of Ketchum’s stories. “Daniel, don’t be in too big a hurry to buy into the Ketchum version,” Dominic would say.

Had Ketchum’s aunt, an accountant, truly been killed by a toppled stack of edging in the lathe mill in Milan? “I’m not sure there is, or ever was, a lathe mill in Milan, Daniel,” the cook had warned his son. And according to Ketchum, one thunderstorm had killed four people in the sawmill at the outlet dam to Dummer Pond—the bigger and uppermost of the Dummer ponds. Allegedly, lightning had struck the log carriage. “The dogger and the setter, not to mention the sawyer holding the band-saw levers *and* the takeaway man, were killed by a single bolt,” Ketchum had told Danny. Witnesses had watched the entire mill burn to the ground.

“I’m surprised that another of Ketchum’s relatives wasn’t among the victims, Daniel,” was all that Dominic would say.

Indeed, another of Ketchum’s cousins had fallen into the slasher in a pulpwood slasher mill; an uncle had been brained by a flying four-foot log at a cut-up mill, where they’d been cutting long spruce logs into pulpwood length. And there’d once been a floating steam donkey on Dummer Pond; it was used to bunch logs for the sawmill entrance at the outlet dam, but the engine had exploded. A man’s ear was found frozen in the spring snow on the island in the pond, where all the trees had been singed by the explosion. Later, Ketchum said, an ice fisherman used the ear for bait in the Pontook Reservoir.

“More relatives of yours, I assume?” the cook had asked.

“Not that I’m aware of,” Ketchum had replied.

Ketchum claimed to have known the “legendary asshole” who’d constructed a horse hovel upstream of the bunkhouse and mess hall at Camp Five. When all the men in the logging camp got sick, they strung up the purported legend in a network of bridles in the horse hovel above the manure pit—“until the asshole fainted from the fumes.”

“You can see why Ketchum misses the old days, Daniel,” the cook had said to his son.

Dominic Baciagalupo knew some stories—most of them not for telling. And what stories the cook could tell his son didn’t capture young Dan’s imagination the way Ketchum’s stories did. There was the one about the bean hole outside the cook’s tent on the Chickwolnepy, near Success Pond. In the aforementioned old days, on a river drive, Dominic had dug a bean hole, four feet across, and started the beans cooking in the ground at bedtime, covering the hole with hot ashes and earth. At 5 a.m., when it would be piping hot, he planned to dig the covered pot out of the ground for breakfast.