

“Some Feathered Diggers”
by Thornton Burgess

Peter was disappointed. He had just about made up his mind to return the way he had come, when from beyond the swamp, farther up the Big River, he heard the harsh, rattling cry of Rattles the Kingfisher. It reminded him of what he had come for, and he began to hurry in that direction.

Peter came out of the swamp on a little sandy beach. There he squatted for a moment, blinking his eyes, for out there the sun was very bright. Then a little way beyond him he discovered something that in his eager curiosity made him quite forget that he was out in the open where it was

anything but safe for a Rabbit to be. What he saw was a high sandy bank.

With a hasty glance this way and that way to make sure that no enemy was in sight, Peter scampered along the edge of the water till he was right at the foot of that sandy bank. He squatted down and looked eagerly for a hole such as he imagined Rattles the Kingfisher might make. Instead of one hole he saw a lot of holes, but they were very small holes. He knew right away that Rattles couldn't possibly get in or out of any of those holes. In fact, those holes in the bank were no bigger than the holes Downy the Woodpecker makes in trees. Peter couldn't imagine who or what had made them.

As Peter sat there staring and wondering a trim little head appeared at the entrance to one of those holes. It was a trim little head with a very small bill and a snowy white throat. At first glance Peter thought it was his old friend, Skimmer the Tree Swallow, and he was just on the point of asking what under the sun Skimmer was doing in such a place as that, when with a lively twitter of greeting the owner of that little hole in the bank flew out and circled over Peter's head. It wasn't Skimmer at all. It was Banker the Bank Swallow, own cousin to Skimmer the Tree Swallow. Peter recognized him the instant he got a full view of him.

In the first place Banker was a little smaller than Skimmer. Then too, he was not nearly so handsome. His back, instead of being that beautiful rich steel-blue which makes Skimmer so handsome, was a sober grayish-brown. He was a little darker on his wings and tail. His breast, instead of being all snowy white, was crossed with a brownish band. His tail was more nearly square across the end than is the case with other members of the Swallow family.

“Wha—wha—what were you doing there?” stuttered Peter and his eyes popped with curiosity and excitement.

“That’s my home,” he twittered.