

The Spring Branch leaves the Royal Spring and enters the North Elkhorn Creek and then flows under the present-day Southern Railroad bridge and then the new U.S. 25 Highway bridge. Below that is the old mill dam of Charles Thompson at the 'Bulk Head', some of the buildings, still stand, including the stone and frame warehouse and the Victorian frame miller's house. The old mill chimney is still standing.

"At the edge of Georgetown, "says Davis, "the creek runs towards U.S. 460, then parallel to the road for a short time before it turns north and swings south of the Scott County High School, around the Cardome Monastery on the heights."

In the very early 1800's Major William "Willa" Viley brought his wagon to a stop in a cane break . . . on Christmas Eve one mile from the home of Jonathan Robinson, father of the future Governor Robinson. Here Viley would settle and raise a large family. An old family Bible dating from 1810 has one of the Viley's being killed in the War of 1812. Actually the man was killed fighting Tecumseh's brother's Shawnees at the Battle of Tippecanoe in 1811, a year before the War of 1812. Willa Viley would fight in Jacob Strucker's company at the battle of the Thames.

"Cardome", the brick mansion north of creek---was built in 1821" and then purchased by Governor James Robinson in 1844. The name Cardome means 'Dear Home.' It became a monastery of the Sisters of Visitation Academy. An Italian academy building with a Romanesque Tower was built in 1896. The convent was completed in 1904 and a boarding school for young women was established. It was very successful and continued until 1969." These buildings still stand but the Robinson mansion was destroyed by fire in 1985. "A number of secret tunnels, with political of Underground Railroad connections, have been found on the property."

There are many events held on the Cardome grounds; from kite flying to Civil War re-enactments. One year Mollie and I brought her daughter Pam and her two young sons to a John Hunt Morgan event. It is a strange fact but most re-enactors prefer to be 'Rebels.' In many of the re-enactments there are few Yankees so some of the Rebels play the Yankee. There was no Civil War battle held here but on this day mounted men dashed about the Cardome field brandishing sabers and shooting pistols at each other.

There was a sizeable crowd caught up in the swirling action as was Mollie's grandsons. I was close to where a Rebel and Yankee came close together and the Yankee fell off his horse. The Rebel rode close, leaned over and asked, "Are you O.K? The Yankee called out "Yes" and the Rebel pulled out his pistol and pretended to shoot the fallen Yankee. The stunned onlookers saw the flash of the pistol, heard the report of the shot, inhaled in shock and then booed the Rebel. Welcome to a real war people.

Flowing west from Cardome the creek is soon joined by McCracken Creek coming in from the right and on left beyond the creek is the Canewood Subdivision. Betsy Johnson, daughter of Jemima Sugget Johnson, one of the girls at the Siege of Bryan's Station, lived in the stone home still standing. She had married Brigadier General John Payne who had commanded Kentucky's troops in the War of 1812 before General Harrison assumed command. The couple would have thirteen children

Ward Hall. I will go into detail at this place as it typifies the many mansions in Central Kentucky. For years I'd heard two tales of Ward Hall. It was said the mansion was built as a 'Summer' residence and could not be heated: Not true. The mansion was paid for in 50,000 dollars in gold. True.

"Ward Hall (is), a very large brick house behind Corinthian columns forty feet tall---it is almost a cube, very stately and stable upon its fossil-faced foundation. Its silver hardware is unscathed---and its plaster work in the interior is as much as it was when the house (was built) in 1855,, unique in America in retaining its ordinal, unrepentant, flamboyant color."

"it is a house built by people who were rich, proud, powerful, physically strenuous, aesthetically alert, rejoicing in their capacity to make large and beautiful things."

The mansion was built by Junius Ward, a grandson son of Jemima Sugget Johnson and her husband Robert Johnson. He was said to be a "a man of gentle manners and modesty. He had a 'manly form, open frank face, and pleasing manner." His obituary states that "There was so much goodness in Ward and so much honor, that he could have made a dozen gentlemen." That might have been true but he became wealthy as a result of his father being the Supervisor of the Choctaw Nation in Mississippi and somehow seeing that Junius 'by hook or crook' came into possession of a huge chunk of the Choctaw lands where he established a plantation. Ward built 'an extensive log home' on the plantation.

"When Junius Ward began construction of Ward Hall in 1853, slaves certainly formed a large portion of the construction crew. James Baily, a free mulatto, served as an assistant to Taylor Buffington in the construction. James Baily was the son of a free woman of color named Mary and a white man, Littleton Baily. Ward and Minor Williams, friends of Captain Baily, brought James to Kentucky, educated him in Cincinnati, as a carpenter and builder and encouraged their friends in Scott County to employ him. Baily built some of the finest houses in Georgetown and Scott County, including several extant structures at Georgetown College. Further complicating the understanding of race in America, as late as July, 1863, James Baily owned three slaves."

A mansion of 12,000 square feet like Ward Hall required, "fifteen to seventeen slaves

(who) attended to the work of the completed mansion. The basement of Ward Hall served as the control center of that operation. Slave women and men kept the fires going, prepared the food, and washed and ironed the clothing of the family and guests. Servants could be called to the public or private sides of the house at any time day or night. Though slave quarters existed west of the mansion, some evidence indicates slaves, perhaps a butler, kitchen manager, cooks and maids actually lived in the house. The personal servants, a valet, children's nurse, manservant, and maid servant accompanied the Ward's from Mississippi each summer and probably resided in the house as well. White family members and guests came into contact with their servants many times every day, knew them personally, and benefited directly from their labors."

"Large scale farming and the lifestyle it supported depended on the labor of African-American slaves. The statesman Henry Clay, who believed slavery was wrong, told a son not to think about farming as an occupation if he remained opposed to owning slaves. Junius Ward certainly kept highly skilled slaves to care for his expensive thoroughbred horses, but rather than bringing field hands from Mississippi, he probably borrowed slaves from his Johnson relatives to plant and harvest his crops."

Ward and his brother-in-law Captain Willia Viley played key roles in the development of the Kentucky thoroughbred, most notably through the ownership of the famed racehorse Kentucky---who sired Asteroid and Norfolk amongst many other outstanding horses. Ward's obituary in 1883 said "he raced not for money, but from a love of turf sports." He should have thought more of money than of love for he went bankrupt and lost Ward Hall. He went and lived in his extensive log home in Mississippi.

Until a few years ago a gigantic horse barn stood in decaying condition near the mansion. It has now collapsed. Mollie's oldest daughter Lauren is an architect who is drawing up plans to rebuild the barn if funds can be raised. Ward Hall is open for tours at times. I prefer touring it when it is decorated for Christmas.

Two and a half miles from Georgetown is the Great Crossing of the North Elkhorn. Here massive herds of buffalo passed as they went from one salt lick to another. Robert Johnson had attempted to settle there in 1775 but had to abandon it for fear of Indian attack. Ben Guthrie said he came to Kentucky in 1783, "Was a week or two at Gilbert's Station; heard that Robert Johnson intended to build a station at the Crossing and wanted some young men to help him. I went over to Bryant's Station and remained there till we got ~~the~~ Big Crossing finished, it was picketed in." They moved into the station by Christmas.

In a letter Betsy Johnson Payne said of her father Robert Johnson, "he moved to the Great Crossing---in the fall of 1783 and he had a station at the place well stockaded with





























