

Bits and Pieces

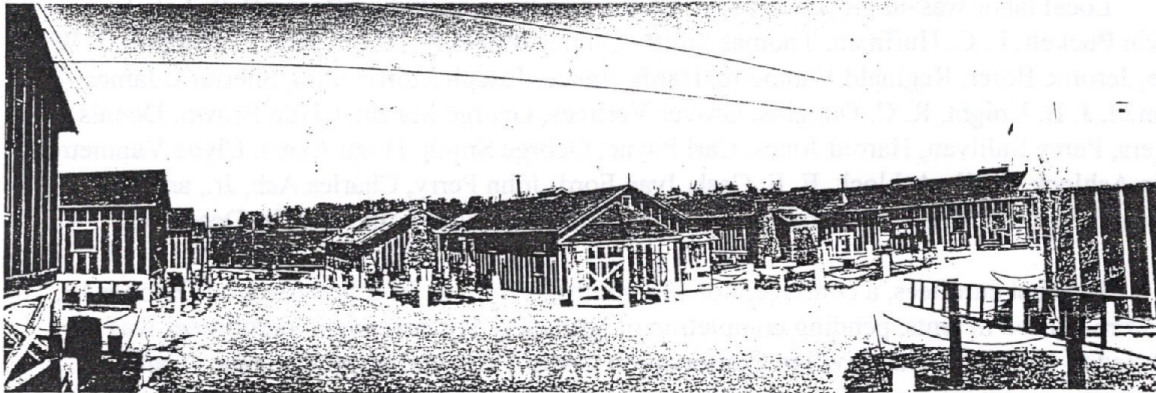
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CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS CAMP 1515 CAMP HELM ELIZABETHTOWN, KENTUCKY



The date was March 4, 1933. Franklin Delano Roosevelt was inaugurated President of the United States. More than thirteen million people were unemployed in the United States. Because he considered this an emergency, President Roosevelt, only two days after his inauguration, called a meeting of high government officials to create a Civilian Conservation Corps. The plan was to put 500,000 unemployed youths to work, primarily on forest preservation and the conservation of America's natural resources. It would later often be referred to as "Roosevelt's Tree Army."

The boys to be enrolled were unemployed, between the ages of 18 and 25, and unmarried. They were to come from families on relief. The enrollment period was for six months, with the opportunity to reenlist for six-month increments not to exceed two years. Each enrollee was paid \$30 a month, of which \$25 was sent to his family. The remaining \$5 could be used by the enrollee for personal expenses of his choice. Room, board, clothing and tools were provided by the government. The enrollee was expected to work a 40-hour week and to follow camp rules. While serving, each enrollee was taught a new skill. Unemployed school teachers were recruited to conduct classes for members to better their education.

In early October, 1933, it was announced that a CCC camp would be located in Elizabethtown. The site selected, according to a newspaper at that time, was "on the land of Hays Burnett, on the North Dixie, near the city limits." (That site is now the Rolling Acres residential subdivision, and includes Walnut Hill Road and Pinecrest Circle. At that time, it was the site of a nine-hole golf course known as the Walnut Hills Golf Course.) It was necessary for the community in which the camp was located to furnish the land, free of charge. The City of Elizabethtown agreed to lay a water line to the area, and Hardin County agreed to pay the rent on the site in the amount of \$25 per month.

Construction of five barracks, one mess hall, a recreation building, an administration building and a storehouse were contemplated, in addition to necessary roads within the camp's boundaries. Cost was not to exceed \$15,000. With the addition of this camp, there were now 28 camps in Kentucky.

Local labor was employed to construct the buildings, including Banus Belt, J. T. Irwin, Calvin Puckett, L. C. Huffman, Thomas Smith, Quince McBride, H. L. Clark, J. T. Mann, J. W. Blue, Jerome Borer, Reginald Vanmetre, Hardy Vance, Joseph Morris, Pink Sherrard, James Bunnell, J. B. Knight, R. C. Duggins, Grover Vertrees, George Martin, Clyde Brown, Dennis Rogers, Percy Sullivan, Harold Jones, Carl Payne, George Smith, Hugh Akers, Clyde Vanmetre, Irwin Ashlock, Leslie Ashlock, E. E. Cash, Ivan Ford, John Perry, Charles Ash, Jr., and H. C. Brown, carpenters, and J. B. Goranflo, plumber. Buildings were completed by December.

The first enrollees, a contingent of 135 youths, arrived in Elizabethtown on October 12, and were housed in tents, pending completion of barracks. The permanent enrollment was expected to be 200. It was Civilian Conservation Camp 1515, and given the name "Camp Helm." It was run by Army Reserve officers, so the camp was well organized and disciplined. For thousands of boys all over the country, the CCC was a source of employment and an opportunity to financially aid their families, many of whom were at the time without any means of support.

To many of these boys it was a means of building up their physical strength through healthy outdoor exercise and clean comfortable living quarters, with lots of good wholesome food. Social contacts and friendships were made. Many were given the opportunity to travel to distant parts of the country. For instance, many enrollees from Hardin County, most of whom had never left Kentucky, were sent to forestry camps in Idaho.

The boys of the camp were received cordially by residents of Elizabethtown. A number became affiliated with local churches. A newspaper reported a surprise party given by local citizens at the camp on Christmas Eve, 1933. H. E. McCullum, a Hardin County auctioneer, brought his Harlaphone system and entertained with carols and other selections. Dr. R. T. Layman, local physician, gave an address of welcome, and J. F. Nall, local businessman, gave an inspirational talk on the spirit of Christmas. The camp basketball team, which included several former high-school and college players, was given the opportunity to practice in the Elizabethtown High School gymnasium.

The camps operated under the Soil Conservation Service of the Department of Agriculture. Enrollees at Camp Helm worked on the land in Hardin and eight other nearby counties. They planted many acres of pine trees, some of which can still be seen today. They built dams across erosion ditches, made terraces, and undertook other conservation projects. Usually the camp members did the work, and the farmer furnished team or tractor work necessary to throw up fills, and such materials as posts, sand or gravel for the construction of terrace outlet dams.

The government furnished all cement, reenforcement steel and labor necessary for the construction of dam in outlet ditches. They were also responsible for removing and replacing fences where this fell into their line of work. Many other things could be worked out with the land owner if he showed a cooperative spirit. His farm work was not interrupted.

John South, an 89-year-old Hardin Countian, now a resident of Elizabethtown, served in this camp for two years. He said he joined because he was looking forward to the opportunity of "going out West somewhere," but instead never left his home county during his entire period of service.

A photograph of the 1515th Company, taken April 23, 1937, identifies the following as members:

1st Lt. Carlyle W. Schuermeyer, Commander
 2d Lt. Walteer B. Morrow, Junior Officer
 Joe Blankenship, Camp Educational Adviser
 John I. Taylor, M.D., Civilian Contract Surgeon
 W. Forrest Smith, Project Supt.
 Joe D. Vaughn, Engineer
 Walter C. Scott, Agronomist
 Robert M. Flowers, Foreman
 Harold Holderfield, Foreman
 William C. Hampton, Foreman
 Gordon Layman, Blacksmith's Helper

LEADERS:

French, P., ECW Clerk
 Hibb, C. A.
 Johnson, E., Senior Foreman
 Jones, F., 1st Cook
 Lair, L. W., 1st Cook
 Newman, J. Mess Steward
 Preston, K., Storekeeper
 Riley, E.
 Short, W.

ASST. LEADERS:

Buskill, E., Infirmary Attendant
 Collins, J. W.
 Crowley, D. J.
 Engle, E.
 Fletcher, B. H., Army Truck Driver
 Heath, L. R., 2nd Cook
 Jeffries, H.
 Lasley, G.
 Madden, J.

Miller, R., 2nd Cook
 Queen, W. D., Company Clerk
 Rhodes, J., 2nd Cook
 South, J. G.
 Pierce, S. E., Asst. Ed. Advr.

LOCAL EXPERIENCED MEN

Albritten, B.
 Bennett, J. M.
 Buckles, C. T.
 Gilkey, J.
 Johnson, E.
 Martin, C. G.
 Masden, E.
 Patterson, T. T.
 Skees, J.

MEMBERS

Allen, J. H.
 Amos, A. R.
 Anderson, N.

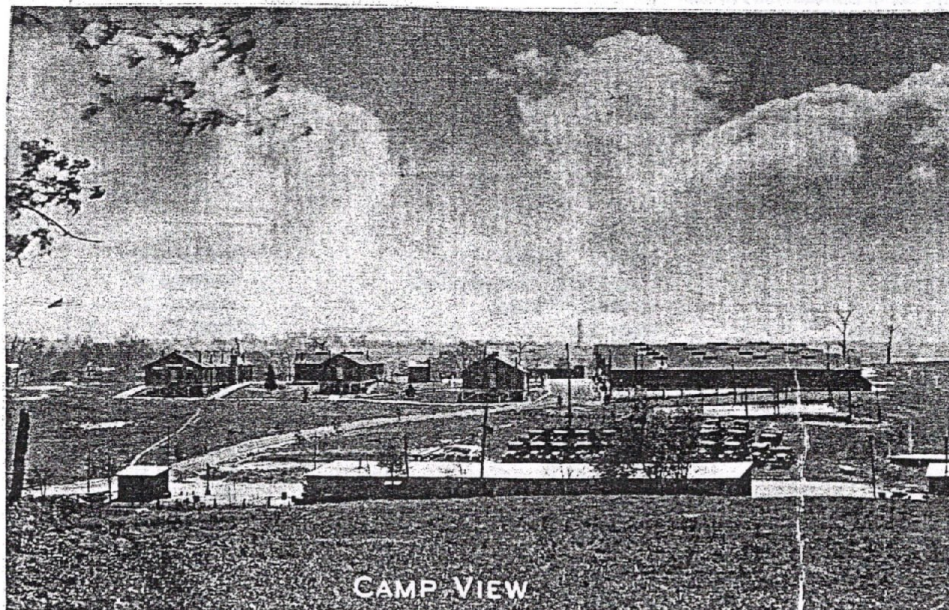
Anderson, S.
 Anderson, W.
 Bailey, C. L.
 Baird, C.
 Barnes, C. H.
 Biggs, C. E.
 Bears, G. E.
 Bowling, K.
 Braden, T.
 Brown, G. H.
 Bryant, J. J.
 Bumgardner, D. H.
 Byrd, I.
 Byrd, J.
 Carr, L.
 Chelf, H.
 Clark, J. F.
 Coffey, E.
 Coomer, O.
 Cordell, B.
 Cotton, W.

MEMBERS, contd

Craycroft, R.
Curry, F. W.
Curry, R.
Dooley, L. A.
Drury, S. B.
Dunkin, L.
Durr, H.
Ellis, S.
Frakes, L.
French, J. A.
Gaither, E.
Gibson, P.
Gilbert, T.
Gonterman, C.
Green, C.
Green, D.
Gunning, E. W.
Hale, H. W.
Hardesty, W. M.
Hardwick, O.
Helton, K.
Jacobs, L.
Jackson, D.
Jeffries, L.
Johnson, R. V.
Jones, J. B.
Jones, J. A.
Judd, W.
Kilby, L.
Lawson, H.
Lawson, J.
Leake, R. T.
Lloyd, M.

Logsdon, B.
Love, C. J.
Lynch, C.
Lynch, R. L.
Lyons, W.
Martin, H.
May, C. H.
Miles, J.
Miller, W. L.
Miracle, L.
Monhollen, E. L.
Moore, P.
Moore, R.
McCubbins, R.
Nevels, G.
Nickols, J. E.
Osborn, O.
Perkins, L.
Pierce, O.
Porter, H. M.
Powell, M.
Powell, W.
Ramey, M.
Reynolds, C. F.
Reynolds, W.
Risden, M.
Roberson, R. H.
Roberts, A.
Roder, E.
Rogers, I.
Rogers, L. W.
Russell, E.
Russell, J. C.

Sanders, E.
Santrock, G. O.
Sheffield, W. R.
Skaggs, W.
Slaven, N.
Smith, H.
Sprowles, C. L.
Stephens, H.
Stephens, L.
Thomas, L. H.
Thompson, C. C.
Thompson, F.
Tinch, M.
Troutman, G. I.
Troutman, M. H.
Tucker, C.
Tucker, F.
Vandiver, S.
Van Metre, C. S.
Wallen, W. L.
Waters, N.
Waters, T.
Watson, A. V.
Wheatley, J. H.
Watson, R. W.
Whitehead, E.
Whitehouse, W. C.
Willyard, J.
Wilson, W.
Wright, L.
Young, E.
Young, L.



(Illustrations and Roster of Members courtesy of John G. South)

MOTHER'S STORY

(EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the third installment of the story my mother, Susan Margaret Settle, who married Edmund Richerson, wrote of the early years of her life in Elizabethtown.)

I thought the house was lovely when finished and furnished with so much new furniture. There were lace curtains to most of the long narrow windows downstairs, with the inside shutters in three rooms, and draperies in the large room which Mamma always called "the reception hall." Sometimes the piano was in this room and at other times it would be in the other front room which we called the library. This room would today be called a den, as it had two bookcases, a large table, fireplace, closet, comfortable chairs and three windows. It opened into a bedroom, once the dining room, used most of the time by Mamma and Dad, with the downstairs toilet adjoining. However, Dad always shaved in the kitchen before a mirror beside the sink. Before we had a bathroom, we took baths in a round zinc tub in the kitchen in water warmed on the stove. If we had been outside and maybe gotten chiggers, Mamma would put some coal oil in the bath water.

Elizabeth and I shared the front room upstairs on the right when one stood outside in front of the house. The walls were blue, there were tie-back organdy curtains, and some sort of grass matting on the floor. The furniture was birdseye maple, consisting of a princess dresser with a large mirror, a dressing table with a matching stool, a double bed, and a sewing rocker. We thought this room very pretty.

After Elizabeth died I had this room to myself until I married, after which time Edmund and I occupied it from October 10, 1922, until August 1, 1924, when we moved to 209 Elizabeth Street where I am now still living alone (1976). When we moved from my parents' home we were given the furniture out of my bedroom and some other pieces also. Mary Jo was born in my room at 209 S. Miles at 9 P.M. on Sunday, November 25, 1923. Margaret Settle was born in the front room at 209 Elizabeth at 6 A.M., September 29, 1930. Dr. R. T. Layman was in attendance both times.

When I was in the fourth grade I began music lessons under Miss Mattie Collins, and we got a lovely R. S. Howard piano. I have never been more

than ordinarily musical, but Dad was. He could read music and pick out tunes on the piano and sing in a fine tenor voice, always singing in the church choir and leading the singing in Sunday School. At one time he conducted a "Singing School" at the Methodist Church which met once each week and was well attended. I must have taken piano lessons for eight or ten years.

One summer I took from Lelia Kennady and practiced four hours each day. Lelia lived next door to us, and she practiced eight or ten hours a day. I also had a beautiful inlaid Gibson mandolin and took lessons from Allen Ament. When I went to college at Hamilton in Lexington I took voice lessons, but really had no voice to speak of, and all the money spent trying to make me a musician was to no avail. My cousin, Grace Holbert Stamper, had a beautiful coloratura soprano voice. She was for years a paid soloist in one of the big churches in Chattanooga and gave several concerts.

I can remember when I was growing up of having seen men in town with monkeys on leashes and small hand-turned organs. These monkeys would dance about the streets and then pass their little hats around the crowd, which was sure to assemble, for money. I have seen bears on leashes dance on the streets for any money they could get. These have disappeared from the Kentucky scene just as have the gypsies who went south each fall and camped near Claysville. We children were very frightened of the gypsies, and our mothers kept more than an ordinary watch over us until they left town, because the belief was that these people would kidnap children.

Also gone are the hoboes who once rode the freight trains and came around to the houses asking for a handout. Mamma always provided a sandwich, as did Edmund and I to the few we had after we moved to Elizabeth Street. Also gone are the umbrella menders, and scissors and knife sharpeners of bye-gone days. Gone, too, are the times of sitting around Showers & Hays or Sweets' drug store enjoying a soda of some sort, or later a Coke.

We almost always had a rope swing from the limb of one of the big trees in our yard. I can remember thirteen trees in the yard, with several between the sidewalk and the street. Once when Dad hitched our horse to one of these outside trees, he broke loose and ran away, going to where the Community College is now located.

In the sidewalk to the right when one comes from the house are two small imprints of feet which were made by Mary Belle's feet when she was about five years old (1910-1911). Dad picked her up and stood her in the newly-poured concrete. The prints are visible to this day (Sept. 1976).

Usually in June Mamma took us for a week's visit with Grandma and Grandpa Holbert at Vertrees. She seldom went more than once each year as we went in a surrey drawn by two horses which she hired in Cecilia. (We traveled to Cecilia on the train.) The roads were very bad and the trip took about four hours. It was great fun down in the country, so far away that we could not hear a train whistle. The nearest neighbors were the Jess Tabers who lived on down the "big road" and across Vertrees Creek. We were allowed to wade and play in this creek. This is where Uncle Oscar and Grandpa took their horses two or three times each day to drink.

We were not allowed to go in Rough Creek nearby because it was too deep, nor could we go in the big spring at the foot of the hill, as it was too cold. We could sail bark and leaf boats and be always on the watch for snakes as the spring on one side was bounded by huge rocks. All the water used at the house was carried up this steep hill from the spring. On the screened-in back porch was a bucket of water with a gourd dipper from which any thirsty person drank.

Grandma had a cellar in which she kept her milk, butter, canned goods, etc. Uncle Oscar always raised some peanuts which were kept upstairs over the kitchen in a room reached only by a stairway from the dining room. There was a staircase in the front hall leading to a hallway and two bedrooms upstairs. Mamma came down this front stairway, from the upstairs room she shared with Aunt Mag, to be married in the parlor to Dad at high noon on January 25, 1899. Brother Davenport, husband of Aunt Nervie, officiated, and neighbors from miles around were there despite the rain which poured in torrents. The only person I ever heard of who was there from Elizabethtown was Mr. L. A. Faurest, Sr. However, there may have been others as at that time Dad was a

very popular school-teacher-turned-politician. Mamma and Dad drove to Cecilia where they boarded an Illinois Central train for Louisville for a week's honeymoon. No Settles that I know of attended.

Grandpa did not have a pond on his farm but there was a large one near the Taber home where we could fish and go frogging. Uncle Oscar and Aunt Sadie lived with Grandpa and Grandma. One year Uncle Oscar made each of us a wooden gun—that included Grace, Belle, Holbert Waldeck, Elizabeth, Mary Belle, Justus Shipley, Charles Myers and me, as we always played together. Charles was Aunt Sadie's nephew from Louisville who spent every summer with her, and Justus was a son of "Cousin Minnie" Taber Shipley who often visited his grandparents, the Jess Tabers. Holbert was Aunt Cora's niece, and Grace and Belle were my cousins.

Usually while we were at Vertrees the thresher would come by, stopping at each farm to thresh the wheat. At each place the men ate dinner, and it took much, much cooking for them. All the neighboring ladies went to each house to help out. It was a time of great excitement for us children, although we were not allowed to go near the threshing.

I remember well Grandma's chicken house, with the "two-holer" behind it out of sight of the home. I also remember her ash hopper, the smoke house with adjoining wood shed, the big garden and the big barn and carriage house across the road in front of the house. Late each afternoon we searched all the out-buildings for eggs. Grandma raised ducks and turkeys and traded some of them, as well as eggs, at Cralle's store for sugar, salt and things not produced on the farm. Once each year, at Christmas time, Mr. Cralle would stock bananas. It was great fun to go to the store, walking barefoot down the dusty road.

Grandpa had a dog named Coolie which lived to be more than 20 years old and a horse called Old Fanny which lived to be 36. He had an animal burying ground down on Vertrees Creek.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

This article appeared in Bits and Pieces several years ago. It is being rerun at this time by popular request, and also because the speaker at the October, 2004 meeting will be Sallie Ward, Matt Ward's sister, as portrayed by Virginia S. "Suzi" Schuhmann of Louisville.

THE TRIAL OF MATT WARD

One of the most celebrated trials in Kentucky history took place in Elizabethtown during the April term of the Hardin Circuit Court in 1854.

On November 2, 1853, William H. G. Butler, principal of the Louisville High School, was shot and killed by Matt Ward, son of Robert J. Ward, Sr., who was at that time regarded as the wealthiest man in Kentucky. The prominence of the two men who were engaged in the difficulty, the circumstances under which the killing occurred, and the eminence, in the legal profession, of the many lawyers who were employed to prosecute or defend, made it one of the most notable trials in the history of Kentucky.

Great excitement prevailed in the city of Louisville as a result of the tragedy, and for that reason a change of venue was granted to the defendant to the Hardin Circuit Court. Jesse W. Kincheloe of Hardinsburg, the Circuit Judge at that time, presided. Alfred Allen, also of Hardinsburg, was the Commonwealth's Attorney, and was assisted in the prosecution by R. B. Carpenter of Covington, Sylvester Harris of Elizabethtown, and T. W. Gibson of Louisville. Eighteen lawyers were employed by the defense, among whom were John J. Crittenden of Frankfort; Thomas F. Marshall of Woodford County; George A. Caldwell, Nathaniel Wolfe and T. W. Riley of Louisville; and Gov. John L. Helm, C. G. Wintersmith, J. W. Hays and R. B. Hays of Elizabethtown.

The indictment in the first count charged Matt F. Ward and his brother, R. J. Ward, Jr., with shooting, with malice aforethought, W. H. G. Butler, in the city of Louisville on the second of November 1853, which shooting caused his death on the third day of said month. The second count charged Matt F. Ward with the shooting, and R. J. Ward, Jr., with being an accessory. The defendants were lodged in the Hardin County jail and held without bail.

The trial of such notable persons caused quite a stir in Elizabethtown. It was reported in the

press that several stages and hacks had arrived from Louisville the day prior to the trial and that more were expected. All hotels were said to be filled. Members of the Ward family, as well as Mr. Crittenden, were guests in the home of Samuel Beale Thomas, Elizabethtown's only millionaire.

On April 18, 1854, the trial was called and the defendants were taken from the jail to the courthouse, accompanied by their family, some of whom were weeping audibly. Matt Ward was suffering from the effects of rheumatism and walked with a crutch.

On motion of defendants' counsel, separate trials were granted, and the prosecuting attorney elected to try Matt Ward first. In the selection of the jury, after exhausting the regular panel of twenty-four, an additional forty men were called. Twelve men acceptable to both sides were seated: Greene Walker, T. M. Yates, James Crutcher, George Stump, R. McIntire, John Young, Thomas Thurston, J. C. Chenowith, Asa Buckles, W. Eidson, Abraham Neighbors, and Richard Pierce.

It was testified that the shooting had occurred about ten o'clock in the morning at the school building in Louisville, in the presence of the whole school. Twelve of the high school boys were called as witnesses for the prosecution, and they testified substantially as follows:

On the day prior to the shooting William Ward, the youngest brother of Matt Ward, who was a pupil in the school, had some chestnuts during the class, and he and a classmate by the name of Al Fisher had a disagreement about them. Mr. Butler spoke to them about the disturbance and told them not to make so much noise. Nevertheless, William continued to talk to Fisher about the trouble. Butler spoke to them again, and after the class was finished he asked Fisher what they were talking about. Fisher told him it was in reference to some chestnuts, and he admitted that he had eaten some during school

hours when he knew that it was against the rules; thereupon, Butler gave him five or six licks on the legs with a leather strap. Fisher then told Butler that William Ward had also eaten some chestnuts at the same time, but when Ward was asked about it, he denied it. Several of the other boys said they saw him eating the nuts, and the teacher then told William that he had evidently told a lie, and that he would have to be whipped. Butler then gave Ward about the same number of licks with the strap that he had given Fisher.

Shortly after the whipping William Ward left the schoolroom, saying that he was going to tell Matt Ward and that Matt would give Butler hell. The next morning shortly after nine o'clock, a servant of the Wards called at the school building and left word for the books of the Wards to be sent home. About ten o'clock Matt Ward, Robert J. Ward, Jr., and William Ward came into the schoolroom together; William took a seat and the other two remained standing. Matt inquired for Mr. Butler and when he came in, Matt said to him: "I have a little matter to settle with you. Which is the most to blame, the little contemptible puppy who begged chestnuts and then lied about it, or the boy who let him have them?" Butler asked Ward to go into his office and he would explain the affair, but Ward declined, saying the classroom was the place to answer the question.

Butler refused to answer without an explanation. Ward then said, "Why did you call my brother William a liar?" Butler said he was not disposed to answer the question without an explanation. Ward then said, "You are a damned liar and a damned scoundrel." He then made a motion as if striking at Butler, who sallied back a little. Butler then raised his right arm and moved toward Ward. Ward drew his hand from his pocket, presented a pistol to Butler's left breast and fired. Butler dropped immediately, exclaiming, "Oh, my wife and child! My God! I'm dead!" Matt Ward then drew another pistol, and Robert J. Ward drew a knife. Mr. Sturgus, the assistant teacher, came out of his recitation room, and Robert said, "Come on, I'm ready." Sturgus retreated to his room, and soon came out again, and Robert advanced toward him with the knife. Sturgus ran back into his room and escaped out a window.

During the conversation between Ward and Butler, Ward spoke loudly and Butler in a low tone. There was no person present except the scholars and Sturgus. The pistol seemed to stick in the wound, and Butler knocked it out after he got up. Butler stepped



(From the Editor's files)

An artist's sketch of the murder

into Sturgus's room, and finding no one there, came out and passed out of the schoolroom. After the shooting, the Wards left the schoolroom. The students accompanied Butler outside, and after walking about a block, Butler asked to lie down, whereupon the boys took him up and carried him to Col. Harney's. Dr. D. D. Thompson arrived about 10:20 AM and attended him there, and Butler expired shortly after the doctor's arrival.

Dr. D. D. Thompson, a physician, testified as to the cause of death. J. J. Gilmore, a gunsmith, testified as to having sold Matt Ward a pair of loaded pistols on the day previous to the shooting.

The Commonwealth introduced twenty-one witnesses, a great many questions were asked without any apparent object in view, and many statements were made which would not be competent under modern rules of criminal evidence. The prosecution then rested its case.

The defense introduced more than seventy witnesses, most of whom testified as to Matt Ward's character. Among them were Secretary of the Treasury James Guthrie, two members of Congress, the Mayor of Louisville, and many other men of great distinction.

Ward pleaded self-defense. Testimony was to the effect that he was physically weak and in feeble health; he suffered from rheumatism and ordinarily walked with a crutch; he was well educated, a graduate of Cambridge College; and he had traveled widely abroad and written extensively of his travels. Robert Ward, Jr. was permitted to testify to substantiate the plea of self-defense, that Butler had struck the first blow.



Clear certain as I burnt old Jason Ward's Barn.

What say you Jurymen? I all this respect-able Jury say, dear case of Michaelson's cannot hold out against such odds as just assault from the crowd out that they are in favor of his acquittal.

I cannot agree with the influence of the Jury. As that is the case, I will have to agree. I cannot disagree with the whole people as I might have misunderstood the evidence.

A clear case as clear as my Mother was a virtuous woman who had 6 children and was never married.

Clear, certain, and that's why, Jesus John H., look me on here, he knew that I could swear any way.

A clear case, that's what I got this 'ere fact as 'olles for.' 'er knew I ran away from... ultra County for false swearing.

Confound it, it is as clear as can be.

Any way Tom says.

I got on the Jury to clear them.

Any way to get real free, I say.

Clear, certain, any way for a dime.

- 1. T. M. Yates Foreman.
- 2. J. Young
- 3. J. C. Chesaweth
- 4. B. M. Intire
- 5. G. Walker
- 6. B. Stump

THE WARDS' HARDIN COUNTY JURY.

- 7. W. Eilson
- 8. T. Thorton
- 9. R. Piene
- 10. A. Strighbers
- 11. A. Biddle
- 12. J. Biddle

After all of the evidence had been introduced, the judge did not instruct the jury as to the law governing the case, as the presiding judge is required to do under the present law. The law was left for each lawyer who argued the case to read and comment upon and construe or misconstrue to benefit his side of the case.

The first argument for the prosecution was made by R. B. Carpenter. He was followed by Thomas F. Marshall for the defense. The sixth and seventh days of the trial were taken up by Sylvester Harris and T. W. Gibson for the prosecution and Nathaniel Wolfe and John L. Helm for the defense. John J. Crittenden closed the case for the defense with an eloquent oration, dealing almost exclusively with the facts in the case. Commonwealth's Attorney Alfred Allen closed the arguments for the prosecution.

The court defined "murder" and "manslaughter" and the case was submitted to the jury at about five o'clock on Wednesday. On Thursday morning about nine o'clock they returned into court a verdict of "not guilty as charged in the indictment." This verdict rendered by the Hardin

County jury in this trial was in all probability one of the most outstanding miscarriages of justice in the annals of Kentucky courts.

When news of the verdict reached Louisville, an angry mob gathered at the courthouse there. Feelings ran high, as Butler was a respected and beloved educator. Louisvillians felt it was unfair that the Ward boys should get off free just because of the enormous expenditure of their father's wealth. However, during that period in the "pistol toting age" a man killed for honor and the aristocratic Ward family considered themselves honorable.

The mob marched up to the Ward mansion and threw rocks through the windows, then burned the effigies of Matt and Robert, Jr. The effigies were erected so close to the house that the mansion caught on fire and the firemen had difficulty in making their way through the rioters to save the house. After this terrible night the Ward family quietly slipped out of Louisville and went to New Orleans to live until the emotions of the citizenry of Louisville had subsided. Then they came back to their home, but the family never shone splendidly again. The fortunes of the Ward family declined. Col. Ward never had the

business success he had formerly enjoyed, so the family slowly sank into virtual poverty and lost the esteem and prestige it once enjoyed. In summing up the effects of the tragedy, it might be said that the gun that killed Butler also killed the Ward family financially and socially.

In addition, the presidential aspirations of John J. Crittenden apparently were dashed by his participation in this trial. He had been elected to the United States Senate just three months prior, and it was widely speculated that he would be the next President of the United States. However, following the trial, his popularity was at its lowest ebb. He was denounced by the press both within and without the state. Newspapers in Boston, Pittsburgh, Detroit and

Cincinnati were especially critical. Meetings were held throughout Kentucky denouncing the verdict and demanding Crittenden's resignation from his recently-won Senate seat.

Charges that the jury had been "bought off" were heard both in Elizabethtown and in Louisville. Later events indicated that this accusation was probably well founded. In July, 1854, the Hardin Circuit Court grand jury indicted McIntire, Chenowith, Eidson and Yates, four members of the jury, on the charge of perjury. However, on December 1 the trial of Yates resulted in his acquittal, and the indictments against the other jurors were then dismissed.

M. J. J.

(Sources: Files of *Louisville Journal*, *Daily Democrat*, and *Daily Courier*, Louisville newspapers, April, 1854; L. F. Johnson, *Famous Kentucky Tragedies and Trials*, Lexington, 1972, pp. 163-179; Cole, *The Trial of Matt F. Ward for the Murder of Prof. W. H. G. Butler*, Louisville, 1854; Kirwan, *John J. Crittenden: The Struggle for the Union*, pp. 285-287; Collins, *History of Kentucky*, Vol. I, pp. 72 & 74; Hardin Circuit Court Order Book, 1854.)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Once again, we will have a buffet meal at our next meeting. I know that some of you did not like the box lunch in a rather cramped setting of our last meeting.

Our meeting that will be held at the Holiday Inn on October 25th at 6:30 PM will provide more room for our members. The only downside is that the cost of the meal will be more (\$9.75).

I look forward to seeing the presenter, Suzi Schuhmann who is portraying Sallie Ward.

I look forward to seeing everyone.

Kenneth L. Tabb

VENE P. ARMSTRONG

The chances are that you never heard of Veneranda Politza Armstrong, even though he was a state representative in the Kentucky Legislature from Hardin County. He is not mentioned by either Samuel Haycraft or Daniel E. McClure in their writings about local history. Richard Briggs has written extensively of him in his *History of West Point*, and he is mentioned three times in Collins' *History of Kentucky*. The latter two invariably refer to him as Vene P. Armstrong.

He was born in Washington, D. C., in 1824 to poor parents and spent his early life there. In later years, he liked to boast that, as a lad, he had delivered newspapers to the distinguished Kentuckian, Henry Clay.

Armstrong came to West Point as a young man when it was a thriving river port and became an important man both there and in Louisville commencing in the mid-1840's. In the days before the railroad and few roads of any kind, trade was carried on primarily by water. West Point was situated at the confluence of the Ohio and Salt rivers. The latter was navigable for 22 miles upstream to Pitts Point at the juncture of the Rolling Fork.

He purchased a large boat at Pittsburg,, had it stocked with various types of fine merchandise from the eastern shops and then floated the boat down the Ohio River to West Point. There he anchored and operated it as a store boat. The town proved to be a good location and center of trade for the ambitious young man. After a few years he gave up the store boat and purchased a general merchandise business in West Point. There he prospered, especially during the Civil War, selling all types of home-made clothing and equipping soldiers with warm socks and other apparel.

His business was very successful. He served as Master of the Masonic Lodge and was a member of the Board of Trustees of West Point. He was elected state representative for Hardin County on the American party ticket in 1857 and served two terms. He was appointed postmaster of West Point in 1861.

He left the post office position in 1862 and moved to Louisville. There he established a pork-packing business with Joseph Mitchell under the firm name of Mitchell, Armstrong and Co. It was while he was in that business that he was awarded an important government contract. Collins' *History of Kentucky* states: "Vene P. Armstrong of Louisville [is] announced as the authorized agent of government for purchasing hogs in Adair, Barren, Breckinridge, Edmonson, Grayson, Hardin, Hart, Larue, Meade, Metcalf, Nelson and other counties; will pay in cash, not in vouchers as many fear. He is the only one authorized to buy the hogs from Jefferson and Bullitt counties, except the small lots to sausage brokers and in the market houses."

Armstrong had made a fortune at West Point beforeand during the Civil War and continued to prosper greatly in his pork-packing business. His firm was the only one of its kind not located in the Butchertown neighborhood, which had been so named for the many firms doing business in meat packing there. His was located at 14th and Maple streets near Union Station in Louisville.

His first wife was Mary Jean Perkins of Louisville. The date of the marriage is not known. They had one son, W. O. Armstrong, who later migrated to Missouri. In about 1866 Armstrong built a house on the northwest corner of Third and Ormsby, then out on the fringes of town, which is still standing. Mary Jean died in the late 1860's.

"*Sensation in Society*," a headline in the *Courier-Journal* of June 24, 1876, was the first anyone knew of the marriage of two of the most prominent persons in Louisville. Vene P. Armstrong and Mrs. Sallie Ward Hunt were married June 23 in the parlor of the bride's home.

Armstrong retired from active business in 1876 and boarded at the Galt House in Louisville. He became ill and died there in April 1877. He was buried in Cave Hill Cemetery in Louisville.

(Source: *Hardin County Independent*, July 25, August 1, 1991.)

ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING

The Hardin County Historical Society will meet Monday evening, October 25, 2004, at the Holiday Inn, 1058 N. Mulberry Street, Elizabethtown. The buffet-style dinner will be at 6:30 P.M.; price is \$9.75 per person. The program which will follow was arranged through the Kentucky Humanities Council, Inc.

The program will be a Chautauqua presentation of Sallie Ward, as portrayed by Suzi Schuhmann of Louisville. Sallie Ward was born to the role of Southern belle, and she played it incomparably. The daughter of a wealthy family, she grew up in a Louisville mansion and, after attending a French finishing school in Philadelphia, embarked on one of the nineteenth century's most memorable social careers. Pretty, quick-witted, unconventional, and spoiled, Sallie enjoyed widespread popularity not only in Louisville but in fashionable haunts along the eastern seaboard and in Europe. Her behavior could be scandalous—she once wore bloomers to a Boston ball—but was often trendsetting. She introduced fancy dress balls and opera glasses to Kentucky, and was one of the first ladies of high station to use cosmetics.

Married four times—divorced once and widowed twice—Sallie Ward found time to hold frequent benefit balls for the poor. Her doings were hot news for more than half a century. She enjoyed it all, and advised her family not to bury her until three days after her death, in case she was just resting.

Come and join us for this amusing and entertaining historical drama of Kentucky. For dinner reservations, telephone Meranda Caswell at 765-2515 by NOON, Monday, October 25th. Membership in the Society is open to all interested persons.



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