

A Quarterly Publication
Of the Hardin County
Historical Society,
a Non-Profit Organization.
Originated in 1931

Bits and Pieces

OF HARDIN COUNTY HISTORY

www.hardinkyhistoricalsociety.org

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VOL. MMXVIII NO. 1

ISSN 1536-1867

WINTER 2019

THE HARDIN COUNTY REPUBLICAN MEETING HOUSE & CHURCH

BY SHERRILL WILLIAMS, GARY KEMPF & ROGER GRIMES

On November 16, 1816, near the confluence of the Middle Creek and the Nolin River, about five miles west of what would be chartered as the town of Hodgenville in February of 1818, the *HARDIN COUNTY REPUBLICAN MEETING HOUSE* was founded, organized and constituted as a *Separate Baptist* church at a meeting in the home of Walter W. Williams and his wife, Ella Owsley Williams. Credited as founders of this meeting house and church would be the Reverend Thomas John Chilton, Elder William Summers, and the aforementioned Walter Williams. Rev. Thomas Chilton, a highly-prominent statewide *Separate Baptist* leader, had apparently come to Hardin County from Adair County at some time between 1810-1815, and would serve as the church's first pastor, occupying this position for at least fourteen years until his resignation, retirement and removal to Todd County, Kentucky, in or about 1830. Evidence of Rev. Chilton's prominence and statewide leadership is shown when, in 1801, he had been one of five men chosen to represent the *SEPARATE BAPTIST* at their meeting with the *ELKHORN ASSOCIATION of REGULAR BAPTIST* at Tate's Creek in Madison County, Kentucky. Another of these five representatives was Moses Bledsoe, Thomas Chilton's father-in-law.

Reverend Chilton and Elder Summers would appoint Walter "Watty" Williams as the church's first clerk, an office Williams would dutifully occupy until his resignation in July 1829. Williams (born in Loudon County, Virginia in 1778) was a farmer and miller who had, at some time after 1816, constructed and operated *WILLIAMS MILL* near this same confluence on the Nolin. It is unclear just how long Williams operated his mill here, but by 1851 another mill was operating at this location, one jointly-owned and operated under the name *EAGLE MILLS*. The *EAGLE MILLING COMPANY* would remain in business until 1929, at which time a log jam caused the Nolin River to change its' course away from the mill. According to Hardin County historian John Lay, only a few stones from the mill's foundation can be seen today.

In Hardin County Deed Book "C" can be found the June 27, 1815 deed by which Walter Williams "of Garrard County, Kentucky" purchased, for \$4000, 500 acres from John and Elizabeth McIntire of Fleming County, Kentucky. Mentioned in this deed was also a house and buildings, with the tract described as being "on the waters of Nolynn and Middle Creek in Hardin County." Twenty-three years prior to this transaction, on September 28, 1792, John McIntire had purchased this same property from William Montgomery. When LaRue County was formed by the state legislature in March 1843, the stream known as Middle Creek became a

significant portion of the Hardin County/LaRue County boundary, and much of the Williams property, including their house, was now located in LaRue County. For the record, Walter Williams was also a slave-owner, this proven by a May 18, 1830 transaction by which he purchased from his father, John Williams Sr., thirteen slaves. The names, ages and purchase price of these slaves are recorded in Hardin County Deed Book “M” (page 69}. The slaves’ names were: *Road (age 56, \$250}, * Adam (age 35, \$350), *Lige (age 26, \$400), *Abram (age 41, \$300), * Isaac (age 12, \$250), *Sam (age 6, \$200), *Crisse (age 75, \$50), *Silvy (age 72, \$50), *Betty (age 58, \$200), *Bess & child (age 35 & 1, \$300), *Patience (“yellow girl” age 16, \$300), *Moriah (age 8, \$200), and *Christina (age 17, \$300).

Walter Williams’s mother (the wife of John Williams, Sr.) was Anne Bayne Owsley, a daughter of Thomas and Mary Middleton Owsley. Walter’s wife, Ella (“Elly”) Owsley Williams (born in 1790 in Lincoln County, Kentucky), was a daughter of Henry and Martha Bayne Owsley. On the early membership rolls of the *REPUBLICAN MEETING HOUSE* can be found numerous Williams, Baynes, Owsleys, and Middletons. Walter and Ella Williams’ graves can be found in the *Williams-Coombs Cemetery*, a family plot located on a ridge a few hundred yards southeast of the *Big Spring Cemetery* located near the junction of state route 222 and the Middle Creek Road between Hodgenville and Glendale.

Walter Williams, Thomas Chilton and William Summers, along with several others present in the Williams home that day—as an “*organized body of Baptists of the Church of Christ on Middle Creek*”—signed an agreement stating they would “*give ourselves to God and to one another, to become a church of the Separate Baptist order,*” and would, they added, “*cheerfully agree to be constituted a church upon the scriptures of the Old and New testaments making them the rule of our faith and practice to which we the undersigned doeth all agree.*” Those signing this decree were Walter and Elly Williams; Thomas, Sally, Betsy and Lydia Bayne; Andy and Salley Walters; William and Peggy Brown, Joseph Kirkpatrick, Ann Martain (Martin?), Rachel Harris, Josiah Dodge (probably the son of the Rev. Josiah Dodge), and Susannah Middleton. Other business conducted that day included receiving Charles Middleton “by experience.” The participants at this meeting also agreed to write a “friendly address” to both the Nolynn and South Fork Baptist congregations.

Along with those signing this original decree, other early members of the *HARDIN COUNTY REPUBLICAN MEETING HOUSE* (as noted in the church’s early minutes and spelled as found in these minutes) were:

Faithful Cloyd, Jacob Rust, John Williams, Anne Burch, Margaret Maxfield, Ebsworth Owsley, Catherine Owsley, Nancy Letcher, Israel Standiford, Nancy Tyre, Archibald Letcher, Samuel, Minty, John Bayne, Thomas Morrison & Mrs. Morrison, Nancy Bowlin, Tacy Williams, Salley Owsley, Susan Williams, Meschack (a “man of color”), Thomas Chilton Jr. (a son of Rev. Chilton, and later an Elizabethtown attorney, newspaper publisher and congressman), Peggy Chilton (Margaret Bledsoe Chilton, the wife of Rev. Chilton and daughter of Moses Bledsoe who, along with Thomas Chilton Sr., was a leader of the state’s separate baptists), Lee Chilton (daughter of Rev. Chilton who would later marry John C. Williams, a brother of Walter Williams), Nancy Ray, Mrs. Bowlin, Betsy Middleton, Salley Johnston, Thomas T. Owsley, James Jeffries, Nelly Jeffries, Judy Matherly, Stephen Sampson, Andrew Clark, George Readman (Redmon?), Delilah Readman, William Readman, Wilmoth Dye, Ann Chasteen, Sary O’Daniel, Amy Merifield, Elizabeth Dye, Juley Ann Worley, Polly Payton, William Winchester, Francis Chilton, James Wright, William Bayne, Hannah Clark, Margaret Parrish, Thomas Ray, Matildy Brown, Curren Ray, Lewis Brown, Agathy Bigler, John Duncan, Harriot Mitchel, John C. Williams (brother of Walter), Minor Chilton, Dinah (a “woman of color”), Thomas (a “man of color”), Betsy Williamson, Elijah Middleton, Ann Readman, Nancy Readman, Betsy Readman, John Carrel, Ann Owsley, William Williamson, Salley Carrol, Henderson Duncan, Milley (a “woman of color”), John Gipson, Betsy Gipson, Sylvester West, Rebeckah West, Susan Martin, Sophia Dodge, Samuel Kezert, Roxanna Kezert, Sylvania Williamson,

Isham Jeffries, Jane Jeffries, Anderson Jeffries (a later church clerk), Mary Jeffries, Elijah Jeffries, Elizabeth Jeffries, Lewis, George (a “man of color”), Susan Crady, James Haycraft, John S. Hanna, Eliza Jeffries, John Willhelm, Sarah Willhelm, Lemuel Matherly, John Hicks, Edmond Branch, Margaret Ann Stiles, Jane Metcalfe, Charles Metcalfe, William Martin, Sally Martin, Sally Johnson, Jane Johnson, Ann Middleton, Mary Hodges, William Jeffries, Charlotte Jeffries, Winea Letcher, Chloe Williams, Fanny Carrell, Chloe Carrell, Nancy Carrell, Nancy Coombs, Jane Williams, Peter Dowdle (a “man of color”), Harry Martin (a “man of color”), Mariah Williams (a “woman of color”), Demas Stiles, Susan Middleton, Matilda Rhodes, Kitty Ann Jeffries, Michajah Middleton, Mason H. Owsley, William Cessna (father of Elizabeth Cessna, the 2nd wife of John C. Williams, and a granddaughter of Jonathan Cessna), John Friend, Rebecca Friend, Elizabeth Williams, Margaret Cessna, Jonathon F. Cessna, Nancy Cessna, Thomas Coombs, James Rivers, Isaac Friend, Elizabeth Friend, Sally Dye, Elizabeth Smith, Catherine Crail, Frances Gupton, Elmina Gupton, John Chelts, Peggy Chelts, Elizabeth Howard, Rosanna Worley, Sebina Jeffries, Elizabeth Hanna, Rachel Lampkin, Henry Lampkin, Judeth Jeffries, John Jeffries, Ann Hanna, Wilson Poke, Roseann Poke, Anderson Jeffries, Cadwallader W. Grimes, Hannah Haycraft, Jenkins Ward, Milton Dye, Melinda Dye, William Redmon, Eliot Middleton, Elizabeth Middleton, Ceinth Ann Wright, Sally Crady, Elizabeth Crady, Juliet Redmon, Asberena Lafolette, Margaret E. Price, James Barnet, Nancy Wright, Delvina Chelts, Catherine Chelts, Jackson Chelts, Mary Ellin Dye, Darky A. Payton, Amanda Waide, Joseph Crail, Susan Barnet, and Mary A. Crail.

The congregation’s earliest services were conducted in the homes of individual members, likely on a rotating basis. Evidence of this can be found in the church minutes when, on May 21, 1817, it is recorded the congregation met in the home of Brother Thomas Bayne. How long these home meetings were conducted is unclear, but nine years later, on the first Saturday of July 1826, Ebsworth Owsley and Walter Williams were appointed “to superintend the recovery and repairing of the meeting house.” This would indicate that for some time prior to Williams and Owsley’s appointment the congregation had been using a building specifically designated for their religious services. There has been nothing found to indicate where this earliest meetinghouse was located however, nor can it be verified as to when the congregation established themselves at the site where the *BIG SPRING BAPTIST CHURCH & CEMETERY* would later be constructed and established.

Several significant events involving the *REPUBLICAN* congregation occurred in 1843, beginning in February when the congregation agreed to “terms of union” with the South Kentucky and *Nolynn Associations of Separate Baptists*, and the *South District and Tate’s Creek Association of United Baptists*. Walter Williams and Alexander Gupton (the church’s pastor at this time) were appointed to serve as delegates to confirm this union at a meeting held at Mt. Salem Meeting house in Lincoln County. The following month, March 1843, LaRue County was formed from land taken from the southeast portion of Hardin County. Since Middle Creek and the Nolin River now formed a portion of the boundary between the two counties, those *REPUBLICAN MEETING HOUSE* families living on the eastern side of Middle Creek now found themselves residents of newly-created LaRue County.

This creation of LaRue County surely played a key role in the congregation’s decision to change the meetinghouse’s name from the *HARDIN COUNTY REPUBLICAN MEETING HOUSE* to the *BIG SPRING MEETING HOUSE* in September 1843. Too, this may indicate the *HARDIN COUNTY REPUBLICAN MEETING HOUSE* congregation had been meeting on the property that would later be occupied by the *BIG SPRING BAPTIST CHURCH* and *Cemetery* in LaRue County. Further evidence that the *REPUBLICAN* congregation had been meeting on this property prior to this name change can be found in the church minutes for March 1844 when Rev. Alexander Gupton, James Jeffries, and John C. Williams were appointed to “examine” the

meeting house and report a plan and cost for repairs. Three months later, in June of 1844, the *BIG SPRING CHURCH* congregation agreed to add the word “Baptist” to the church’s name, this provided the *United Baptists* were in agreement. The minutes fail to reveal what the *United Baptists* decided at that time however, as terms of agreement were not reached until at least in April of 1852, at which time the *BIG SPRING* congregation agreed to “lay down” the name “*Separate*,” and become known as “*United Baptist*.” With this agreement *BIG SPRING BAPTIST CHURCH and MEETING HOUSE* applied for admission into the *SALEM ASSOCIATION OF UNITED BAPTISTS*.

Like most Baptist churches of this era, members were excluded for immoral conduct as well as other activities deemed to be unacceptable behavior. For example, Sally Walters and Amy Merifield were excluded in 1838 for having “attached themselves to the *UNITED BAPTISTS*.” In 1848 Walter Williams was appointed to get Henry Lamkin to answer reports of “dancing and unbecoming expressions.” Lamkin failed to attend the hearing however, and the church declared “nonfellowship.” And Z. T. Heady, in 1858, was declared in nonfellowship “for carrying on a distillery.” Sometimes members were offered chances to redeem themselves, such as the slave Peter who agreed to meet before the next meeting and work a day repairing the building.

The 1840s and 1850s seem to have been a time of significant growth for *BIG SPRING BAPTIST CHURCH*, both in terms of outreach to individuals and neighboring churches, as well as its’ own increased membership. Although lengthy, we at Ancestral Trails decided to include here the church’s 1855 membership listing with the hopes it may help some of our members in their never-ending effort to locate ancestors.

1855 BIG SPRING BAPTIST CHURCH MEMBERSHIP ROLL:

WHITE MALES: Walter Williams, James Jeffries, John Dixon, Benjamin Jenkins, John Fisher, Shelton Jeffries, Joseph Williams, John Dean, Dewit C. Wood, John A. Covert, Walter W. Coombs, W. H. Williams, John Dougherty, Zach Heady, Henry Thomas, John Williams Sr., Henry Williams, James Dougherty, William Jeffries, William Phillips, Philip Purdy Phillips, Thomas F. Coombs, George W. Williams, Huston Wilson, Stephen T. Mudd, W. L. Morris, Thomas J. Brunk, George W. Williams, James Watson, James Thompson, Joseph Thompson, Thomas Dean, Jackson Williams, Israel Standiford, Lorin Jenkins, Will Wheat, B. W. Owsley, Sam Spriggs, Colly Marshall, Henderson Lilburn Spratt, James B. Dixon, Mark Marshall, J. H. Williams, Joseph Woodring, Mell Peterson, David J. Phillips, Clinton Jenkins, James Collins, Robert Watson, Anthony C. Hornback, Charles Hornback, William J. Simpson, R. T. Hornback, A. W. Simpson, Samuel H. Phelps, Robert A. Phelps, Samuel Herron, Walter W. Williams, Harvey Brownfield, Colmore Miller, Claudius Perry, W. D. Wood, John Robinson, Richard Dorsey, William Dorsey, Isaac Pirtle, John W. Creal, Jesse Morris, Letcher Coombs, Joseph B. LaRue, Josiah Phillips Jr., John Brawner, Henry R. Carr, Samuel S. Wilson, Thomas R. Bland, Ovel Nall, Horace W. Allen, W. H. Middleton, David W. Phillips, James W. Jenkins, Burr H. Jeffries, Samuel Gipson, John S. Jones, George Turnum, Robert Martin, Elijah J. Barnes, William Daugherty, James Fairleigh, James C. Churchill, David J. Thurman, Gabriel Tichenor, Samuel Porter, Jacob H. Keller, Phillip J. Phelps, Benjamin W. Phelps, George L. Dixon, James G. Sympach, Washington C. Sympson, William T. Hornback, Andrew Long, Elisha D. Hornback, Henry T. Hornback, Joseph Arnett, Anthony P. Howard, John Duncan, John J. Dorsey, J. Wesley Harkness, William H. Alden, Francis Aldridge, Samuel B. Perry, Mark Brown, William Medcalf, Robert C. Perry, Charles Daugherty, Lewis Fisher, Thomas Munford, Robert E. Rachford, Silas Johnson, Fonrose Moton, Thomas W. Woodring, James Moton, Lewis Porter, Thomas LaRue, Wood English, Francis Parepoint, John W. English, James H. Bland, Bell Kurtz, Everett W. Bland, John C. Moton, Anderson Jeffries, James S. Dougherty, Walter W. Coombs Jr., Andrew Long, Asa S. Perry.

WHITE FEMALES: Ellen Jeffries, Elizabeth Williams, Barthena Dixon, Jane Johnson, Kitty Ann Jeffries, Elizabeth Middleton, Darky Ann Morgan, Polly Robinson, Sally Bland, Sally Jenkins, Ann E. Medcalf, Kitty Ann Middleton, Keziah Dougherty, Sally Willet, Francis S. Tumbull, Mary Williams, Sally Jeffries, Nancy Wood, Matilda Dean, Melinda Dye, Virginia A. Spratt, Julia Fisher, Susan Fisher, Sarah Coombs, Elizabeth Pendleton, Arabell Thomas, Lettite Robinson, Sallie Brunk, Jemima Stuart, Cinthia Williams, Lucy Slaughter, Elizabeth A. Covert, Jane Phillips,

Chloe Coombs, Martha Fisher, Grace Morris, Corintha Williams, Elizabeth Watson, Susan Dillingham, Joanna Jeffries, Sarah Standiford, Elly Williams, Mae Woodring, Mary Collins, Elizabeth Long, Patsy Weldon, Elizabeth Denny, Elmira Wheat, Rachel Watson, Lydia McDowell, Susan Thomas, Sarah Wood, Kitty Ann Pendleton, Matilda Gray, Bettie Middleton, Susan Morrison, Alice Owsley, Sarah Owsley, Thomasiana Owsley, Amanda Fogle, Mary Thurman, Amanda Dye, Lucy Jeffries, Louisa Robinson, Martha Ales, Martha Allen, Matilda Spriggs, Nancy Thompson, Mary LaRue, Mary T. Thurman, Victoria Barnes, Nancy Long, Martha Watson, Harriet Thomas, Susanna Burten, Sarah Long, Susanna Phelps, Lucy Ann Simpson, Martha Middleton, Kesiah Johnson, Martha Lucas, Lydia Barnes, Lacy L. Dougherty, Emerine Dougherty, Harriet Gore, Marion Jenkins, Charlotte Herron, Matilda Perry, Virginia Pemberton, Rosannah Pike, Alice Roof, Nancy Ann Dougherty, Martha Elly Coombs, Louisa Pike, Lydia W. Perry, Mariah E. Williams, Nancy Long, Elizabeth Spratt, Mary Belle Williams, Malvina Winders, Sarah Blanc, Milly Williams, Nancy Phelps, Mary Bethel, Sally Brownfield, Catherine Parepoint, Julia Fisher, Josephine Thurman, Catherine Cotton, Martha Dillingham, Jane Morris, Amanda Leaser, Susan A. Brawner, Sarah Philips, Nancy C. Philips, Mary Wilson, Frances E. Slaughter, Mary Morris, Sallie Wooton, Jane Carr, Lucy Leaser, Sarah Martin, Elizabeth Fairleigh, Mary Leaser, Belle Leaser, Margaret Owsley, Anna Perry, Jemima Stuart, Harriet A. Duly, Dorcas E Phelps, Mary Sympson, Mary F. Duly, Virginia C. Duly, Maria B. Twyman, Elizabeth Howard, Eliza Robertson, Anna Duncan, Mary C. B. Duncan, Rachel Morrison, Elizabeth Buckles, Margaret H. Funk, Eliza P. Stuart, Martha L. Wood, Mary F. Morgan, Lucy J. Morgan, Ellen M. Harkness, Mary J. Kamplin, Sarah J. Leaser, Alice Watson, Martha E. Covert, Julia A. Rogers, Louisa Fisher, Eliza Johnson, Hannah S. Holderman, Sarah F. Fairleigh, Anne A. Munford, Mary E. Carr, Lydia A. English, George Ann Fairleigh, Grace M. Hamilton, Louisa Williams, Mary Dye, Sarah H. Munford, Susan Dunn, Charlotte Standiford, Arayda Munford, Phebe Moton, Mary H. Kurtz, Mary Ann Moton.

COLORED MALES: George, Dennis and Thomas Williams; Meshack Johnson, Elijah Williams, Peter Dowdle, Peter Dorsey, Jim Philips, Dock Fisher, Jarret Philips, Legrand Williams, Bird LaRue, George Philips, Robert Sprigg, Alfred Sturgeon, William Lucas, David Hill.

COLORED FEMALES: Judy and Mariah Williams, Charlotte Jeffries, Cynthia Cunningham, Diner Monin, Fanny Williams, Fanny Jr. and Vina Williams, Minerva Philips, Bettie Williams, Sarah Ann Stiles, Narcissa Churchill, Rebecca Perry, Mahala Hardin, Charlotte Utesler, Cintha Morris, Elizabeth Fisher, Mariah Patterson, Ellen Phillips, Amanda Churchill, Betty Herron, Villetta Williams, Susan Gay, Ann Slaughter, Clary Reed, Sarah Howlet, Jennet Stuart, Kate Thompson, Esther Dorsey, Norah Williams, Nancy Philips, Maria Jeffries, Kitty Barnes, Narcissa Churchill, Martha Lucas, Rebecca Hill.

In April of 1853, a committee from *SEVERNS VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH* (Samuel Haycraft Jr. and George L. Miles) made known to the *BIG SPRING* congregation that they had called Rev. William L Morris to “the pastoral charge” of that church. Rev. Morris had been pastor of *BIG SPRING* since the previous pastor, Alexander Gupton, had “abandoned the Church abruptly” in December of 1851. Despite the call from *SEVERNS VALLEY*, the *BIG SPRING* congregation did not consent to give him up, and extended their call to Rev. Morris. To this extended call, Rev. Morris accepted.

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A reference to construction of a new meeting house is recorded in the minutes, when, in October of 1855, a committee was directed to build a “frame house” rather than “the anticipated brick.” Perhaps the original meeting house had been log, and this newly-planned frame building is the one that would precede the brick building that served the congregation until 1932 (shown in the accompanying photo). Or perhaps the congregation went back to the original plan to build a brick building and the frame was never built. Regardless, the date of construction of the later brick has not be determined.

Unfortunately, records of the church’s activities during the Civil War are not available. To what extent the congregation was divided in their sympathies cannot be determined with our available information. Although not church-related, it is claimed there was a brisk skirmish between Union and Confederate cavalry forces on the grounds of the church at some time during the war. Whether these were regular Confederate forces or “guerrillas” is unclear. An interesting “sidebar” concerning one of the congregation’s members is known however. Horace W. Allen, a *BIG SPRING CHURCH* member listed on the preceding 1855 roll, served in the Union Army during much of the war, and was wounded at the Battle of Perryville on October 8, 1862. In the early months of 1865, Lt. Allen, along with twenty or so other soldiers (several of whom were LaRue Countians), was employed by the secret service as a “guerrilla-hunter” by Union Maj. Gen. John M. Palmer. Serving as third-in-command under Captain Edwin “Bad Ed” Terrell of Shelby County, Allen and these so-called “decoy guerrillas” were employed to track down, capture and/or kill guerrillas terrorizing this region. Horace Allen would be involved in the capture and mortal wounding of the notorious guerrilla William Clarke Quantrill at the James Heady Wakefield farm in Spencer County in April of 1865. Although never substantiated, Horace claimed he fired the fatal shot that would lead to Quantrill’s death weeks later. Allen would survive the war, but due to his activities as a guerrilla-hunter, found it best to leave the state after the war. He removed to Ohio where he died in the Old Soldiers and Sailors Home at Sandusky in the early 1900s. Here, Allen was buried in the Veteran’s Cemetery.

On April 9, 1886, the Kentucky General Assembly approved the following act regarding the *BIG SPRING BAPTIST CHURCH*, and the establishment of a public cemetery on the church grounds. It reads:

“Whereas, some twenty-five or thirty years ago the neighbors of the BIG SPRING BAPTIST CHURCH in LaRue County, Ky., by public donation purchased two acres of land adjoining the farms of Wesley Cofer and John and Leslie Combs, and caused the same to be conveyed to Wesley Cofer, Peter Stewart and John C. Williams in trust for a home for poor widows who were out of a home in said neighborhood and they caused to be erected on said lot a small cabin which was then occupied for a few years, but which, within the last twelve or fifteen years, has fallen unto disease, and the cabin thereon has rolled down and has been for a number of years unoccupied; and whereas; all of said trustees have been dead for at least twelve or fifteen years, leaving no successors, and said trust has entirely ceased, and no one is left to convey the same; and whereas it is the desire of the neighborhood that said lot of ground be sold and the proceeds arising thereof be applied to the purchasing of ground for a public burying ground at said BIG SPRING CHURCH, to be free for the general public as a place of burial, now, be it enacted by the general assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky that W. W. Williams, Taylor Watkins and Jarret Woodyard be, and they are hereby appointed and empowered and are authorized to sell and convey by deed of general warranty said two acres of ground aforesaid, and to purchase with the proceeds arising therefrom a public burying lot, to be located at the BIG SPRING CHURCH, LaRue County,

Kentucky, or to exchange said two acres for such burying lot to be located at said church; and when so purchased to be under the supervision and control of the trustees of said church for public use of said community as a burying place forever, and that deed to said two acres of land shall pass to the purchaser, the fee-simple and thereto same. This act to take effect from and after its passage, approved Apr. 9, 1886.”

On October 13, 1886, the transaction regarding these two acres was signed by W. W. Williams, Jarrod Woodyard, Taylor Watkins (these three on behalf of the *BIG SPRING CHURCH* congregation) and Wesley F. Cofer.

At the turn of the Twentieth Century, B. F. Hagan, a very prominent and popular minister, was pastor at both *BIG SPRING* and neighboring *NOLYNN BAPTIST* churches. An 1899 membership count shows *BIG SPRING* with 121 members, *NOLYNN BAPTIST* with 162 members, and *HODGENVILLE BAPTIST* with 157 members.

The last recorded minutes for *BIG SPRING BAPTIST CHURCH* are dated June 3, 1932. The church closed its’ doors for the final time that same year. Of course, it was probably dwindling attendance and enrollment that caused its’ decline and closing, but the fact that the end came during the heights of the Great Depression may also help explain its’ demise. Standing empty and abandoned for thirty years, the old red brick building fell into disrepair and was torn down in or about 1962. The cemetery, however, continues to have occasional burials, and is well-maintained due to the efforts of the Heady family a few decades ago. It is probably safe to assume that all the members of *BIG SPRING BAPTIST CHURCH* are gone to their heavenly rewards now and, sadly, buried with them are stories and history that we can never know.

Although some of the church minutes remain (and can be found in the archives of the LaRue County Genealogical and Historical Society library in Hodgenville, and at the Ancestral Trails Library in Elizabethtown), others were destroyed in a house fire. An old postcard found in the surviving minute book explains the missing minutes’ disappearance. This postcard, dated November 22, 1922, was sent from Anderson Jeffries of Highland Park, Ky., to Frank Gardner of Elizabethtown, Ky. On this card, Mr. Jeffries (a former *BIG SPRING CHURCH* clerk) wrote: *“The old Big Spring Church Book has been in my keeping for over forty years. I desire to return it to the church, and left it in Mrs. Sally Patterson’s keeping. Please get and give it to the church. There is [sic] 15 years of the seconds between this old book and the present one missing—burned up in my house in 1877. Regards to yourself and wife, I am very well.”*

2019 DUES YOUR MEMBERSHIP IS IMPORTANT

please don’t let it end! Association dues are \$15.00 and are effective for the calendar year.

Please pay at a meeting or mail to:

Hardin County Historical Society
P. O. Box 381
Elizabethtown, KY 42702



Although dated Feb. 1955, this photo was obviously not taken at that time, as the trees were still in full foliage. The photographer was standing near the junction of the Middle Creek Road and State 222 near the LaRue/Hardin line. To the right, about three miles north, is TONIEVILLE, a small village that developed after the H & E (Hodgensville & Elizabethtown Railroad) constructed a depot there in 1888. A mile or so to the left (south), at the confluence of Middle Creek and the Nolin River, once stood EAGLE MILLS, a gristmill that likely traced its' origins back to WILLIAMS MILL and its' builder and owner, Walter Williams. LaRue County Deed Book 3, page 62, reveals the earliest mention of a mill at this site, one dated November 23, 1851. But WILLIAMS' MILL probably predates this by several decades. Behind the church can be seen several of the gravestones in the cemetery, and beyond the stones are trees lining the banks of Middle Creek. A large spring—"Big Spring"—flows into the creek just beyond the cemetery and trees. In this spring dozens of baptisms were conducted over the years, and, of course, the community's children would wade and swim. Nothing of this old brick church building remains today, having been abandoned in 1932 and dismantled in 1962. Across the highway, on the left side of 222 just south of the church, stood the old *BIG SPRING* one-room schoolhouse.

VETERAN OF CONFEDERACY DIES AT HIS HOME *LIFE-LONG FRIEND WAS BEING BURIED AT TIME OF AGED MAN'S DEATH....(COURIER JOURNAL) August 13, 1912...Hodgensville, KY* Nicholas Brashear, aged 70 years, a Confederate Veteran, died at his home near Barren Run, this county. He is survived by his widow and several children. Mr. Brashear's death occurred Saturday morning at 11 o'clock, while the funeral services of Jack Hornback, aged 70 years, whose death occurred the day previous was being conducted at historic Barren Run Baptist church, of which they were both members for more than a half century. Mr. Hornback and Mr. Brashear were schoolboys together and fought side by side in the war. They lived within a mile of each other, and were separated by death but for a day, and now sleep in the same churchyard. Within the past twelve month the only five veterans of Barren Run section have been interred in the Barren Run church burying grounds.

Note: The Twice a Week Messenger (Owensboro) Aug 17, 1912 reported that the graves of Jack Hornback and Nicholas Brashear are ten feet apart in Barren Run Cemetery

THE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION HAS AN EXCELLENT COLLECTION OF BOOKS AND BROCHURES OF HARDIN COUNTY HISTORY. LISTED BELOW, YOU WILL FIND A FEW OF THE SELECTION. CALL (270) 401-7874 OR MAIL YOUR ORDER TO P O BOX ELIZABETH-TOWN.

A HISTORY OF ELIZABETHTOWN by Samuel Haycraft 1779 to 1869 hb \$24.00 This hard-back describes Elizabethtown's history in detail from 1779 to 1869 by tradition and the recollections of the author regarding Elizabethtown's prominent residents, structures, businesses and occurrences.

A SERIES OF MONOGRAPHS CONCERNING THE LINCOLNS AND HARDIN COUNTY by R Gerald McMurtry hb \$18.00

BARNEY, A FORGOTTEN HERO—THE STORY OF COMMODORE JOSHUA BARNEY AND HIS CONNECTION WITH ELIZABETHTOWN, KENTUCKY by George K Holbert pp \$3.00

Chronicles of Hardin County, 1766-1974 Bicentennial Edition compiled by Mrs. Thomas Durham (Guy) Winstead , pp Price: \$10.00

Diamonds, Rubies and Sand - The story of Philip Arnold of the Great Diamond Fraud and his Connection with Elizabethtown, Kentucky by Margaret S. Richerson & Mary Jo Jones sc Price: \$6.00

East Side Chronicle 1928 price: \$3.00 A school journal published by the sophomore and junior classes of East Side High School telling of life at the high school. Includes articles from the students, pictures of a few of them, and old advertisements of the time.

Elizabethtown by Meranda L. Caswell sc Price: \$20.00 This is a pictorial history in the Images of America series. It looks at various areas of the city, its people, and educational opportunities, stressing the development of these areas of the town from the late 1800's to about 1925.

Elizabethtown & Hardin County 1869-1921 by H.A. Sommers , 2001 , 199 pp, pb Price: \$20.00 This book is the complement to Haycraft's and takes up where he left off describing the history of Elizabethtown from 1869 to 1921 in great detail.

Elizabethtown City Directory 1932-1933 Price: \$5.00 See who is living in Elizabethtown according to the telephone directory.

Elizabethtown, Kentucky 1779-1879 by R. Gerald McMurtry Price: \$3.00 This pamphlet discusses the first 100 years of Elizabethtown's existence.

Facts about Elizabethtown and Hardin County, 1923 compiled by Leroy Martin Price: \$5.00 This paperback tells little odds-and-ends facts about Elizabethtown during the 1920 time period.

Hardin Heritage - The Historic Architecture of Hardin County, Kentucky by Hardin County Planning and Development Commission pp Price: \$10.00 This paperback provides an inventory of the important architecture of Hardin County.

George Armstrong Custer in Elizabethtown, 1871-1873 by Mary Jo Jones , sc Price: \$3.00

James Buchanan in Kentucky, 1813 by R. Gerald McMurtry Price: \$3.00 This pamphlet details the 15th President of the United States James Buchanan's short stay when he lived in Elizabethtown, Kentucky.

The Carrie Nation - J.R. Neighbors Incident by Mary Josephine Jones ,Price: \$3.00 This pamphlet describes the incident between a temperance leader, Carrie Nation, and Elizabethtown saloon keeper, J.R. Neighbors and the aftermath.

The Civil War in Hardin County, Kentucky by Mary Josephine Jones Price: \$10.00 This book reflects on the War between the States and the impact on Hardin County from the election of Abraham Lincoln to Union occupation and Confederate Raids.

Nostalgia - The Olde Bethlehem Academy by Edith Ray hb Price: \$25.00 This book provides the history of the Bethlehem Academy, a Catholic girls' boarding school. The book reflects on the Academy's operation, closing and subsequent restoration of the building.

Sarah Bush Lincoln by Elizabethtown's Woman's Club Price: \$1.00 This is a brochure telling of the memorial in Sarah Lincoln's name that is in the town square and why it was erected also including a copy of the marriage license of Thomas Lincoln and Sarah Bush Johnston.

September 1900 Supplement to The Elizabethtown News pb Price: \$8.00 This publication celebrates the new millennium in Hardin County with pictures, advertisements and articles from September 1900.

The Kentucky Lincolns on Mill Creek by R. Gerald McMurtry hb Price: \$18.00 This book provides an insight into the Lincolns' lives in Kentucky, including pictures of their home and the grave yard where some members of the family now rest.

The Lincoln Migration from Kentucky to Indiana, 1816 by R. Gerald McMurtry pb Price: \$5.00 This paperback chronicles the life of the Thomas Lincoln as he moves his family from Kentucky to Indiana.

The Lincolns In Elizabethtown, Kentucky by R. Gerald McMurtry Price: \$3.00 This pamphlet describes in detail where the different members of the Lincoln family lived in Elizabethtown, how long they lived here, and what they did during the time they were here.

The United States Army at Fort Knox by Matthew Rector pb Price: \$20.00 This is a pictorial history in the Images of America series. The work covers the beginning of Fort Knox and World War I and its aftermath in the period, 1903-1931; the history of the development of and armor build-up period, 1932-1940; World War II, 1941-1945, and post World War II, 1946-1958.

Two Centuries in Elizabethtown and Hardin County, 1776- 1976 by Daniel E. McClure, Jr. , hb Price: \$75.00 This book presents the History of Elizabethtown and Hardin County through a series of short stories from the Native Americans and Pioneers to World War II and Elizabethtown Community College.

Who Was Who in Hardin County by Hardin County Historical Society Price: \$15.00 pp Compiled in 1946 by various members of the Hardin County Historical Society. This book contains sketches of 177 early residents of Elizabethtown and Hardin County, ranging from the pioneer settlers of 1780 to prominent residents of the early 20th century.

GLIMPSES AND GLEANINGS OF GLENDALE by Larry Brawner and Michael L. Bell. Cost \$15.00 pp A collection of photos and stories pertaining to the community of Glendale.

EARLY HISTORY OF VINE GROVE, KENTUCKY by Paul W. Urbahns. Cost \$25.00 The basic story of the town's early development and its transitions

YOU CAN DOWN LOAD AN ORDER FORM FROM THE HISTORICAL SOCIETIES WEBSITE www.hardinkyhistoricalsociety.org



Message from the President.

Happy New Year! I hope you had a great Christmas and New Year with your family and friends and realized how blessed we really are and how fortunate we are to live in Hardin County. I am excited about the opportunities ahead of this Society in 2019 and the chance we have to give back to this great community.

The response to our open house weekends this past summer at the **Lincoln Heritage** was very encouraging. The visitors we talked with were interested in the history of the cabins and the school house located at Freeman Lake. I would like to continue opening the cabin this summer but that will require help from our membership.

I hope you will sign up from 1-4pm on either Saturday or Sunday, the first weekend of June, July, August or September. I have cheat sheets and photos available that help explain the history and importance of the Lincoln Heritage House. Bring a friend and spend an afternoon at the lake and meet some of the great people who visit our county and its historic sites. You can call me at the number below or see me after the dinner meeting on January 28th.

Our guest speaker is **Don Elmore**, who will be portraying Governor Simon Bolivar Buckner the 30th Governor of Kentucky. Governor Buckner was born near Munfordville, KY and has ties to Hardin County. It should be an interesting program and I believe you will be informed and entertained. Several of Mr. Elmore's family still live in Hardin County and will be joining us for dinner. Don't forget to call **270-765-2515** and make your reservation. Meal is \$12 per person. Hope to see you there.

Twylane Van Lahr

DR. STINSON LAMBERT Whose office is in the Smith Building (Owensboro) is one of Owensboro's prominent physicians and surgeons. He was born in Hardin County, KY in 1852, where he received his early education, after which he entered Hableton College, Elizabethtown to complete his literary training. In 1875, he entered the Hospital College of Medicine of Louisville, from which he graduated with honors, being elected salutatorian by his class. February 1879, he enter upon a special course of training for the diseases pertaining to the eye, ear, nose and throat under the tutelage of Dr. Dudley S. Reynolds of Louisville, and then to further advance his knowledge in the profession he took a bacteriological and microscopical course under the training of Prof. C Pope of Louisville, when he returned to Hardin County and practiced successfully for fifteen years. In 1893 the doctor moved to Owensboro, where he has since resided, conducting a large and successful practice, being widely known as a successful and skilled surgeon. He is a member of the Hardin County Medical Society, the Muldrough Hill Medical Society, the Kentucky State Medical Society and the Owensboro Medical Society, and his wide experience in the treatment disease and his remarkable successful career mark him a noted figure in the ranks of those who pursue the healing art. He is a medical expert for a number of insurance companies and is at present city physician. *CLIPPED OWENSBORO MESSENGER-INQUIRE 19 DEC 1895*





OUR **PROGRAM** FOR THE JANUARY MEETING WILL BE **DON ELMORE** PORTRAYING CONFEDERATE GENERAL AND KENTUCKY GOVERNOR **SIMON BOLIVAR BUCKNER**. MR ELMORE IS A HISTORIAN FROM SOMERSET THAT WILL SHARE THE LIFE AND TIMES OF THIS MUMFORDSVILLE NATIVE AND FAMOUS KENTUCKIAN

BREAKFAST MENU for January 28th at the NOLIN RECC

Call (270) 765-2515 to RSVP before 1/25.

Cost is \$12.00 with dinner being served at 6:30 and the meeting beginning at 7:15.

HARDIN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P. O. Box 381

Elizabethtown, Kentucky 42702

Meeting: January 28th

Nolin RECC

Call (270) 765-2515 to RSVP

before 1/25

Meal at 6:30