

West-Central Kentucky Family Research Association Owensboro, KY (WCK:FRA) File (1968-2014)

By Jerry Long, Owensboro, Ky.

Thomas W. Westerfield (1926-1980) was the first director of the Kentucky Room at the Daviess County Public Library. He was also an avid genealogist and was the founder of the West-Central Kentucky Family Research Association (for short WCK:FRA). He had conceived the idea for the organization and named its two publications, The Bulletin and The Kentucky Family Records. In a memorial to him by WCK:FRA it was stated "In his work at the library he observed persons working on the same families who did not know each other, and he envisioned an organization to bring them together to share data and to help each other." The group was organized at a meeting at his home with three other founding members, Michael James Edgeworth (1927-1981), Margaret Simons Alford (1930-2008) and Elizabeth Smith Cox (1901-1999), in May 1968.



Thomas W. Westerfield 1926-1980

On 10 January 1969 Thomas W. Westerfield, president of WCK:FRA, was the speaker at a meeting of the DAR chapter at the Owensboro Public Library. At this meeting he outlined the purposes of this new organization as: To encourage and to further genealogical research; to collect and to preserve family genealogical records of

Western Kentucky; and to encourage public officials to make genealogical records available to persons who wish to do research. In 1969 he published the first of five volumes of Kentucky Genealogy and Biography. This series was a reprint of the biographical sections of Kentucky: A History of the State, originally published by J. H. Battle, W. H. Perrin & G. C. Kniffin in 1885-6. This made available information from this scarce and previously unindexed cornerstone of Kentucky genealogy.

Beginning in September 1971 the Kentucky Room at the Daviess County Public Library in Owensboro became the repository for the books purchased by West-Central Kentucky Family Research Association (WCK:FRA). In the library board minutes of 21 July 1971 it was noted that a research and genealogy group had asked permission to place their collection in the library. It was agreed that the group would place their books in the Kentucky Room on an indefinite loan and with the stipulation that they could be withdrawn with a 30-day notice. Their books are catalogued by the library and contain a label of ownership by West-Central Kentucky Family Research Association. By the end of November 1971 WCK:FRA's first installment of thirteen books had been delivered to the library and by April 1973 a total of one hundred eighty volumes, not including periodicals, had been placed in the Kentucky Room.

For the period between July 1976 and April 1978 the placement of books in the library by WCK:FRA was temporarily halted until new guidelines and policy were worked out between the group and the library board. The interruption had been initiated by the library board's request that the group give up ownership of all books placed in the library and their proposal of a new guidelines policy that placed restrictions on what could be accepted. Several on the library board believed a private collection should not be maintained in a public library. A compromise was worked out and it was agreed that the books placed in the library by WCK:FRA were like before on indefinite loan and could be removed with a 30 days written notice, but the library could reject any materials that did not fall within their new guidelines policy. Margaret Alford, one of the four founding members of West-Central Kentucky Family Research Association, has served the group since its inception as librarian, acquisition chairman and editor of their publication *The Bulletin*. In 1985 Mrs. Alford reported that the group had donated about \$30,000 in books to the Kentucky Room. A recent count of WCK:FRA books in the collection showed a total of 1,712. In addition to this they also have 495 hardbound and 51 loose bound volumes of periodicals. The total cost of these materials would be in excess of \$50,000.

In 2011 the organization, West-Central Kentucky Family Research Association, moved from Owensboro, KY to Calhoun, McLean County, KY. In addition to the group's files, the collections of the Society of Kentucky Pioneers and of the McDowell Publications (materials of the late Samuel McDowell) were relocated to Calhoun. In 2014 the West-Central Kentucky Family Research Association ceased to exist. The group's collections subsequently became part of the McLean County History & Regional Family Research Center (540 Main Street, P.O. Box 291, Calhoun, KY 42327).

The organization had published a wealth of genealogical data in their long time publications, The Bulletin and the Kentucky Family Records. They also published over forty other books of census, cemetery, family bibles and county records on Daviess County and surrounding counties, including Breckinridge, Butler, Edmonson, Grayson, Hancock, Hardin, McLean, Muhlenberg and Ohio. In 1992 in commemoration of Kentucky's Bicentennial they published the book, Kentucky Honor Roll of Ancestors. Their members devoted many hours volunteering to microfilm the pre-1900 Ohio County Circuit Court files.

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WEST-CENTRAL KENTUCKY FAMILY RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

P. O. Box 1465

Owensboro, Kentucky 42301

July 5, 1968

Dear Fellow Genealogist:

You and your friends are invited to join the West-Central Kentucky Family Research Association which was formed in May 1968 for the following purposes:

- a. To bring together persons who are researching in family history and to promote fellowship and co-operation among them.
- b. To foster, stimulate and share ideas, information, methods and practices in family research.
- c. To collect, preserve, and make available to interested persons material on family histories with special emphasis on research material concerning past and present families in the counties of Breckinridge, Hancock, Grayson, Ohio, Butler, Muhlenberg, Logan, Todd, Christian, McLean, Webster, Henderson, and Daviess in the Commonwealth of Kentucky.
- d. To encourage those officials in charge of public records and genealogical collections to preserve them and make them readily accessible to interested persons.
- e. To encourage respect for and the preservation of the family unit.

Since we wish to encourage family members to enjoy family research together, the membership fee of \$5.00 per year will cover as many members of a family living in the same household as may desire to participate. Members may upon entering the association pay the fraction dues for the remaining quarters of the membership year which begins in April. Membership registration forms for your friends may be obtained by writing the association or by sending us their names and addresses.

A "SURNAME FILE" is being prepared to bring together persons working on the same families and to promote the exchange of material between them. Your membership registration will be used to add your family names to the file immediately.

Several interesting projects and programs are being planned for the near future, and your suggestions and participation will be welcomed. The activities will be designed for the beginner as well as for the more experienced.

If you desire to become a member, please complete the enclosed membership registration form and return it with your dues by mail or bring it in person to the next meeting which will be held July 12 at 7:00 pm. Location: Blue Flame Room, Western Kentucky Gas Company, 608 Frederica, Owensboro, Ky.

P. S. If you register before the August meeting you will be listed as a Charter Member.

Sincerely,
Mrs. H. C. Alford

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KENTUCKY FAMILY RECORDS, Volume 1, 1970 (West-Central Kentucky Family Research Association, Owensboro, KY):

Forward

The publication of KENTUCKY FAMILY RECORDS was one of the projects proposed by the West-Central Kentucky Family Research Association at the time of its organization. This was put into effect at the earliest date possible. It was hoped that through this medium we would be able to help one another by sharing our records.

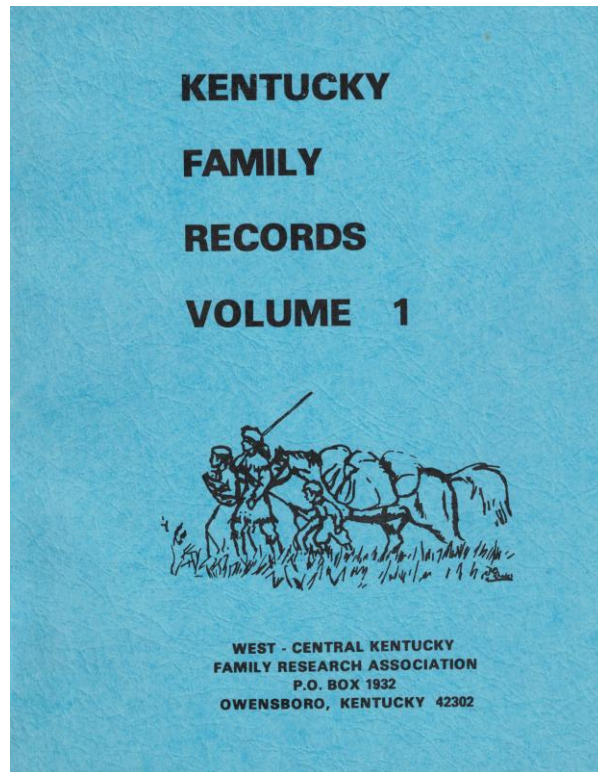
Descendants of early Kentucky settlers are now scattered over every state in the union. Many of them are members of this association and are eagerly searching for information that will enable them to establish proof of their lineage. We may hold the answer to many of their problems or have access to such records. Also, some one could be in a position to supply that missing link we need to complete our record. An exchange of data can be rewarding.

It is vitally important that we collect and preserve all genealogical material available. Sources of such information are decreasing with each succeeding year. Our concern over this matter can best be shown by an effort to salvage all that remains and by encouraging others to do likewise.

We wish to express our appreciation to the members who have submitted data for publication. More contributions from your files will be needed so we urge each of you to support this project. Without your cooperation we cannot function.

Your words of encouragement and expressions of gratitude for our endeavor have been an inspiration for further dedicated service.

Elizabeth S. Cox, Editor August, 1970



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The Bulletin, West-Central Kentucky Family Research Association, Volume 19, Summer 1981, Owensboro, KY, p19:

IN MEMORY
MICHAEL JAMES EDGEWOJITH
3 April 1927 - 24 January 1981

Michael J. Edgeworth, of 127 17th Street, Owensboro, died on 24 January at the V.A. Hospital in Louisville, KY. He was the child of Myron Edgeworth of Kankakee, IL and Georgia Tapscott of Owensboro, as were Nancy Ruth and Myron, Jr. Mike's father was president of Lehigh Stone Company in Illinois until his death in 1942. His mother than returned with her children, to Owensboro and entered the Florist business with her mother and two brothers, James A. and Terril Tapscott.

Mike graduated from Owensboro Senior High about 1945 and was president of his class. He attended Blackburn College, Indiana University, University of Kentucky, Kentucky Wesleyan College. He served in the United States Marine Corps. He worked for Airlines in ticket sales, as timekeeper at Owensboro Sewer Pipe Company, as payroll clerk for various pipeline construction companies, and was part owner of Tapscott Florist with other family members. His interests were duplicate bridge, stamp collecting, stock market, antiques, history and genealogy. Mike was a diabetic along with his sister, his uncle Terril, and grandmother Nancy Ruth Tapscott. He suffered poor health for many years. He was never married. He is survived by his brother, Myron, sister-in-law, niece Harriet and nephew Myron H. Edgeworth.

1968, Michael Edgeworth was one of four individuals who organized West-Central Kentucky Family Research Association. His knowledge of the families of Daviess and surrounding counties was tremendous. He had done much abstracting of courthouse records, and when his health permitted, contributed regularly to "Kentucky Family Records" with cemeteries, family and court records. His collection of genealogical materials is to be presented to WCK:FRA by his brother, Myron, and family.

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The Bulletin, West-Central Kentucky Family Research Association, Owensboro, KY, McDowell Publications, Winter 1999, p.40:

ELIZABETH SMITH COX
January 1901 - 15 September 1999

Elizabeth Smith Cox, 98, of Calhoun, McLean County, KY died Wednesday, 15 September 1999, at the Riverside Manor Health Care Center in Calhoun. She was born in Guffie, McLean County, KY, graduated from Beech Grove High School and attended Western Kentucky State Teachers College in Bowling Green. She obtained her teaching certificate, after which she taught at several one-room school houses, including Guffie and Licks Branch. She was a member of Oak Grove United Methodist Church.

Mrs. Cox was a member of the Captain William Rowan Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution for over thirty years. She presented many historical programs pertaining to McLean County. She received the National Seimes Microfilm pin and several letters of award from National and State officers. She served as Registrar of the Chapter for many years and was a Kentucky Colonel.

In May of 1968, Mrs. Cox was one of the four founders of our West-Central Kentucky Family Research Association. (The other three were T. W. Westerfield, Michael J. Edgeworth and Margaret S. Alford.) She served as Editor of Kentucky Family Records from its beginning in 1970 through 1988 when failing eyesight made it necessary for her to give it up. She and a coworker copied almost all of the cemeteries in McLean County, and her work made possible the publication of two volumes of cemetery records by WCK:FRA. With Mike Edgeworth, she made possible the annotated publication of the 1860 Census of McLean County (the first census of the county and another WCK:FRA book). She was a "walking history book" and always ready and able to help anyone in area family research. She compiled a book "Guffie Through the Years".

Survivors include her daughter, Dixie Wayne Cox Crawley (Mrs. Herb Crawley); a granddaughter, Kathleen Crawley Vandiver (Mrs. Joe Vandiver) and a grandson, Tommy Crawley. Services were held at 11 a.m., Monday, September 20th, 1999 at Muster Funeral Home, in Calhoun, Kentucky. Burial was in Calhoun Cemetery beside her husband, Edgar Lee Cox, who died 15 August 1994.

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The following picture of Mrs. Elizabeth Smith Cox (1901-1999) was taken on 4 March 1981 on my visit to her home at Guffie in McLean County, Ky



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Margaret Alford (1930-2008)

Daily News, Bowling Green, KY, Friday, 20 June 2008, p5A:

Margaret S. Alford, 77, of Bowling Green died at 9:17 a.m. June 19, 2008, at The Medical Center. The Hopkins County native was a homemaker. She was a teacher at Western Kentucky University and Auburn University in Auburn, Ala. She was a member of Ray's Branch Church of Christ, a help-meet to her husband and a loving mother to their three children. She was a member and co-founder of the West Central Kentucky Family Research Organization, a secretary and treasurer of the Green River Union

Cemetery and a member of Richardsville Homemakers. She was a daughter of the late Royce E. Simons and Daisy Shelton Simons.

Funeral is at 2 p.m. Sunday at J.C. Kirby & Son Funeral Home, Lovers Lane chapel, with burial in Green River Union Cemetery. Visitation is from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday and begins at noon Sunday at the funeral home. Expressions of sympathy may take the form of contributions to American Cancer Society, Greenwood Courtyard, 2425 Scottsville Road, Ste. 123, Bowling Green, KY 42104-4457. Online condolences may be made at www.jckirbyandson.com.

Survivors include her husband, H.C. Alford; two daughters, Sue Martin and her husband, John, of Berea and Linda Baker and her husband, Ken, of South Lake, Texas; a son, Steve Alford and his wife, Kelley, of Lexington; and seven grandchildren, Evan, Amanda, Andrew, Sky, Danny, Daisy and Jake.

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Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 3 July 2019, p2B:



Dorothy "Dot" Smithson, 92, of Owensboro, passed away Tuesday, July 1, 2019, at her home. She was born March 21, 1927, in Daviess County to the late Russell S. and Ruey Ethel Swift Shifley. Dot was a member of Settle Memorial United Methodist Church and was retired as a librarian with the Owensboro Independent School System. Early in her career, she taught at Stanley Elementary School and then became librarian at Goodloe Elementary and Foust Elementary schools before retiring in 1991. Dot received her Master's Degree in Library Science from Kentucky Wesleyan College. She was a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution, loved genealogy and was active with the McLean County History Museum and the Regional Family Research Center. She also was preceded in death by her husband, David W. Smithson, on July 24, 2012; and her brother, Russell "Rick" Shifley.

Surviving are her sons, Anthony Smithson and wife Toby of Hilton Head, South Carolina, Denny Smithson and wife Julie of Hilton Head and Mark Smithson and wife

Susan of Louisville; eight grandchildren, Blair (Amy) Smithson of Owensboro, Ben (Sibyl) Smithson of Brooklyn, New York, Matthew (Julie) Smithson of Gypsum, Colorado, Andrew Smithson of Chicago, Gregory (Jordan) Smithson of Nicholasville, Chay (Amy) Smithson of Louisville, Sara Smithson of Asheville, North Carolina, and Zach (Carolyn) Stern of Sugar Hill, Georgia; and one great-grandchild, Norah Smithson of Gypsum.

The service for Dorothy Smithson will be 2 p.m. Saturday at Glenn Funeral Home and Crematory. Burial will follow in Owensboro Memorial Gardens. Visitation will be from 4 to 8 p.m. Friday and from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday at the funeral home. Memorial contributions may be made to Hospice of Western Kentucky, 3419 Wathens Crossing, Owensboro, KY 42301.

[Note: For several years Dot Smithson served as editor of the Kentucky Family Records.]

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WCK:FRA BULLETIN, VOLUME 25 -5- SPRING 1992

HONOR ROLL

*1792
the Celebration
1992
Kentucky*

A BICENTENNIAL PROJECT TO HONOR YOUR ANCESTOR(S) WHO WERE IN KENTUCKY WHEN WE BECAME A STATE (1792) AND/OR YOUR EARLIEST KENTUCKY ANCESTORS!!

We invite each member to prepare a short paragraph or sketch about each of your ancestors who were in KENTUCKY when we became a state in 1792. If you do not have ancestors who were here at that date, please prepare the sketch about your earliest KENTUCKY ancestors.

A form is included with this BULLETIN to aid you in the preparation of your sketches. You may make as many copies of this form as you need. Please prepare the sketch for each of your early KENTUCKY ancestors - male or female, child or adult!! You may fill out as much or as little of the items on the form as you wish, but please see that your ancestor is represented!!

Jerry Long, our Genealogical Records Chairman, is directing this Project. The forms may be mailed to WCK:FRA, P. O. Box 1932, Owensboro, KY 42302, or they may be turned in at the desk at the KENTUCKY ROOM, Owensboro-Daviess County Public Library where Jerry works. Additional forms will be available at the KENTUCKY ROOM, at WCK:FRA Meetings or Workroom, or by mail.

This HONOR ROLL of KENTUCKY ancestors will be prepared for listing or publication in Volume 16 of KENTUCKY FAMILY RECORDS later this year. Early response to this project is desirable.

The project will be "kicked-off" locally at our March 12th meeting (7:30 p.m. at Owensboro Area Museum). The theme of this meeting will be "Celebrating Kentucky's Bicentennial by Recognizing and Honoring our Pioneer Kentucky Ancestors." It is requested that you bring your sketches to this meeting for a DATA-EXCHANGE.

Let's have 100% participation by all members in this project to honor our early KENTUCKY ANCESTORS!!

Correspondence of Jerry Long

e-mail to Margaret Alford (msalford@mindspring.com), 20 March 2000:

Mrs. Alford:

A couple of weeks ago I received a contribution of \$500.00 for WCK:FRA and at our recent meeting turned the check over to June Tron. The contribution was received from one of my cousins who I have been communicating with. Her name is Alita Crume Wilson, of 1863 Elizabethtown Road, Leitchfield, KY 42754-9156 (she does not have e-mail). After she saw the pictures of the WCK library in the recent issue of the Bulletin she decided to make a contribution in honor of her parents. She specifically asked that her name not be used if any formal announcement of the donation is made. She said if there is an announcement it would be okay to print "In memory of Earl & Eloise Walker Crume".

Considering the size of this donation I thought it would be nice to acknowledge it and print what she suggested. I have already thanked her personally on the phone but I was wondering if WCK:FRA would address a thank you to her.

I hope all is going well. Miss seeing you!

Bye for now,

Jerry Long

j-long@prodigy.net

e-mail from Margaret Alford (msalford@mindspring.com), 20 September 2002:

Dear Jerry:

I will be happy to review your book. It may be that it will have to be mailed to me as I do not know when I will be in Owensboro next. I will communicate with Norma about that however.

I do not know the total value of the books and periodicals which WCK:FRA has placed in the KY room. We have a card file, but even it may not be complete. We formerly had a running total of what had been voted and spent in book purchases, but that was discontinued some years ago. That did not reflect the total value anyway, as it would not have included gift books by individuals and publishing companies or the value of exchange publications, binding, etc. It is a record which needs to be made, but I probably will never have time to ever do it.

I have printed out your KY room article and will enjoy reading it, I am sure. I well remember research in the little room in the old Carnegie library building when we first moved to Owensboro in 1965.

I am very proud of what you have done and are doing for the cause of genealogy. I enjoyed your article recently in KY Ancestors about the Kelley cemetery.

The WCK:FRA board has voted some money for books. If you have specific suggestions I would be pleased to consider them. Since I am not over there so often, I can't keep up with what you do have.

Best wishes and thank you for thinking of me.
Margaret Alford

e-mail : To Margaret Alford (msalford@mindspring.com), 7 May 2007:

Mrs. Alford: I have attached some notes about Sam McDowell in case you need something more for the "Bulletin". I will certainly miss him. If you have any trouble opening the attachment please let me know. Best wishes, Jerry Long

e-mail : To Dot Smithson (dot1927@adelphia.net), 7 May 2007:

I have attached a couple of pages of notes on Sam McDowell. I have also e-mailed them to Mrs. Alford in case she needs something more for the "Bulletin" and also to the editors of the Ohio County and Owensboro newspapers. If you have any trouble opening the doc please let me know. Best wishes, Jerry Long

e-mail : From Dot Smithson (dot1927@adelphia.net), 8 May 2007:

Hi Jerry, That is a great article. I had no idea Sam had accomplished so much. Margaret has already E-mailed me that she will use the article in the Bulletin. Thanks a lot. Dot

e-mail : From Margaret Alford (msalford@mindspring.com), 9 May 2007:

Thank you, Jerry, for the write-up about Sam. It was well written - even though I have not seen him much since we moved over here, I will miss him too. He did so much in every phase of genealogy. I will use the article in the next Bulletin. Margaret Alford

e-mail : To Selma Wiesenberg (samw@wdsfla.com), 9 July 2008:

She is going to compile the "Bulletin" newsletter for West-Central Kentucky Family Research Association. She asked about the Kentucky Room's new book list. I e-mailed her the list for 2008.

e-mail : To Selma Wiesenberg (samw@wdsfla.com), 21 October 2010:

Selma: When Mrs. Alford was compiling the "Bulletin" for WCK:FRA I would send items related to the Kentucky Room at the Daviess County Public Library that she would occasionally use. I have attached (.docx file) a notice about a recent collection that has

been added to the Kentucky Room. I thought some of WCK's members may be interested. If you cannot open it please let me know. Best wishes, Jerry Long, Kentucky Room, Daviess County Public Library, 2020 Frederica St., Owensboro, KY 42301, Phone 691-1883,

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Left to right: unknown, Barbara Hilyerd, Norma Williams, June Tron (standing), Dot Smithson and Margaret Alford.