

# Butler County, KY Sketches

By Jerry Long  
c.2024



**Historical Sketches of Kentucky, by Lewis Collins  
(Maysville, KY, 1847) pp. 221-222:**

## BUTLER COUNTY.

Butler county was organized in the year 1810. It is situated in the south-west part of the State, and lies on both sides of Green river. It is bounded on the north by Ohio and Grayson; east by Warren; south by Logan, and west by Muhlenburg. The taxable property of the county in 1846, as reported by the auditor, is \$501,483 ; number of acres of land, 163,441 ; average value per acre, \$1,45; white males over twenty-one years, 793; children between the ages of five and sixteen years, 1,162. Population in 1830, 3,055 ; in 1840, 3,898. The surface is hilly ; the soil second rate, but productive. Besides Barren river, which flows through the county, it is watered by a number of fine mill streams.

The towns of the county are—Morgantown, Lockport and Roduster [sic – Rochester]. Morgantown is the seat of justice, and is situated on the left or southern bank of Green river, one hundred and fortyone miles from Frankfort—contains a court-house and jail, post office, one school, two lawyers, three doctors, six different trades, and one hundred and ten inhabitants. Incorporated in 1813. Lockport is a small village, containing thirty inhabitants, situated on the Green river, at lock and dam No. 4. Roduster is also a very small village, containing about thirty inhabitants.

This county received its name in honor of General Butler, of Pennsylvania, an officer of the revolutionary war, who distinguished himself, on more than one occasion, in a remarkable manner. He commanded the right wing of the American army under General St. Clair, in the memorable and disastrous battle with the Indians on one of the tributaries of the Wabash, near the Miami villages, in the now state of Ohio. He was wounded early in the action, and before his wounds could be dressed, an Indian who had penetrated the ranks of the regiment, ran up to the spot where he lay, and tomahawked him before his attendants could interpose. The desperate savage was instantly killed.



**Hartford Herald, Hartford, KY, Wednesday, 31 March 1875, p.3:**

FROM BUTLER COUNTY.

A Pleasant Description of a Pleasant and Little Town.  
Morgantown, Ky., March 26, '75

Editor Herald ; – Again I solicit a space in your excellent paper, (which is becoming better and better every issue) for a few items concernin this little town. It is situated on a commanding eminence, and presents a very neat appearance. It is about a quarter of a mile from the river and about 200 feet above its level. It has several very neat structures, two drug stores, two dry goods stores, and a large house in course of construction for dry goods and groceries.

The court-house is an excellent building and makes a very fine appearance, being situated on a gentle rise in the center of the town. This building was erected at an original cost of \$18,000, and is far superior to some buildings erected at double the cost. There is a very neat church here, owned by several denominations, and an excellent school, conducted by the affable, mild and talented Prof. Finley, who is the smallest man I ever saw to contain so much brain power as he does. The society is excellent and refined, the ladies are handsome and agreeable, the gentlemen are thorough-going and energetic; an oath is seldom heard, and drunkenness is seldom seen. There is not a single bar-room in the town, nor for miles around. There has been a great many changes taken place in this town within the last five years, and all the changes are for the better; and all of this, or almost all of it may be attributed to the absence of whisky. All the angry brawls and rowdyism that used to characterize the place are no more, and every person seems to be acting and living as though the good of his country rested on himself alone. Hoping I have not wearied you too much, I remain, as ever, an earnest reader of the Herald, and most truly hope It will prove a financial success to all concerned.

H. B. T.



**Hartford Herald, Hartford, KY, Wednesday, 13 November 1878, p.2:**

**Reminiscences of Butler County.**

Mr. W. T. Ricketts, who is assisting Mr. C. Kelley, clerk of the Butler Circuit court, in making out a cross index to the office, related to me to-day the following facts :

That the first court held for Butler county, was at the dwelling house of John Tyler, near where the present town of Woodbury now is located, on the 14th day of May, 1810. The Hon. Wm. Wallace, Daniel Hay and Thos. Wand were qualified as judges and held the court. Jonathan Hobbon was appointed clerk, and executed bond with Solomon P. Sherry, John I. Crittenden, Samuel Caldwell, Samuel Work and Posey Edwards as his sureties in the penal sum of \$10,000. John Breathers was appointed attorney for the Commonwealth.

The next court was held on the 12th November, when the first grand jury was impanelled, composed of the following named persons : John Porter, foreman, John Carson, Joshua Shelton, Mark Whittaker, Jos. Howell, Simon Newman, Jacob Borah, Jesse Gough, Amos Morris, James Tyler, John Read Sr., John Harlen, John Shary, Moses Thompson, Wm. Nelson, Wm. Davis. Jesse Davis, Wm. Moor, John Doolin, Gilbert Shelton, Allen Givcns, Rob't Read and Jesse Shelton.

The first presentment that was found was against James Waters, for swearing two profane oaths on the 12th November, 1810, by uttering the words, "By God, by God."

The first lawyers that practiced before the court were John Breathett, John J. Crittenden, Solomon Shary, Samuel Caldwell and Samuel Worth, and a few years later, we find the names of Joseph R. Underwood, Elijah Hise, J. H. McHenry, Dillis Dyer, John Calhoon, Jos. T. Morehead, Philip Thompson, Asher W. Graham, E. M. Ewing, Francis Peyton, Warner L. Underwood and W. V. Loving, all of whom became distinguished lawyers and politicians; some became Governors of the State. Hobson held the office of clerk until the 13th May, 1811, when he resigned and Robert Morrison was appointed and held the office until the 25th March, 1837, when he resigned and J. H. Jennings was appointed and executed bond in the sum of \$10,000, with John H. McHenry, John M. Austin., G. R. Hines, Nelson Harreld and Wm. L. Skillern as his sureties. John Breathett was allowed by the court \$100 for his services the first year as Commonwealth's attorney. (Will Joe Haycraft serve for that amount?) He held the office for a short time and then A. R. Macy was appointed. Robert Morrison was a good clerk in his day, and accumulated considerable property, consisting principally in land and negroes, but impaired his mind by the use intoxicating drink until he was forced to resign his office, and was declared by the court to be of unsound mind, and a committee appointed to take care of him and his property. He was never married, and after resigning lived on his farm near Morgantown with his negroes until his death, which happened in June, 1850.

Wand, Hay and Wallace served as judges of the court until May, 1815, when Hon. Benjamin Shackelford was appointed. He served until August, 1821, and Hon. H. P. Brodenax was appointed and served till Sep. 15, '30. and Asher W. Graham was appointed and served until March 1833, and Ab. McLean was appointed and served until September, 1841, when John Calhoon was appointed; and since that time several distinguished judges have served.



**The Green River Country From Bowling Green To Evansville,  
W. P. Greene (Evansville, IN: J. S. Reilly, 1898), pp.59-72:**

**BUTLER COUNTY.**

THE County lying next to Warren on the waters of Green River is Butler. Butler county was organized in 1810 out of portions of Logan and Ohio counties. It has an area of about four hundred and fifty square miles and a population estimated at fifteen thousand. The county is divided into two parts by Green River, which runs through its territory about forty miles. The bottom lands are very productive, producing corn and tobacco and wheat. It has an inexhaustible supply of coal and timber. The Cincinnati Cooperage Co. and the T. J. Moss Tie Company deal in the timber business, buying and shipping ties and staves, besides numerous parties are continually buying and running saw logs to Evansville and other timber markets. The Aberdeen Coal and Mining Company and the West Aberdeen Company are doing the principal coal business. They own boats and barges and mine and tow coal to Bowling Green and other points. There are yet fine fields of coal untouched and in abundance with free navigation along Green River, which sweeps around the foot of the coal hills for a hundred miles. Rochester and Woodbury are two flourishing towns in the county, besides a number of small villages—Brooklyn, Reedyville, Fileville, Sugar Grove, Huntsville and Forgyville. Rochester is situated at the mouth of Mud River and on the bank of Green River and is a thriving commercial point nearly as large as Morgantown. The following table shows the marketed products of Butler county for 1889:

BUTLER COUNTY PRODUCTS.

Farms, Number .....	1,901
Acreage .....	101
Livestock, value .....	\$470,120
Value of products .....	\$396,660
Corn, Bushels .....	658,622
Wheat, " .....	33,810
Oats, " .....	103,166
Peaches, " .....	22,723
Apples, " .....	122,337
Irish Potatoes, " .....	20,228
Sweet Potatoes, " .....	10,248
Wool, Pounds .....	20,068
Honey, " .....	10,996
Tobacco, " .....	263,632

LIVE STOCK.

Horses, Number .....	3,141
Mules, " .....	1,322
Hogs, " .....	20,900
Sheep, " .....	7,970
Chickens, " .....	115,740
Hay, Tons, .....	2,906
Eggs, Dozen, .....	343,399

G. H. MILLIGAN, is a distinguished physician of Butler county, located at Round Hill and whose practice extends over a portion of Butler, Edmonson, and Warren counties. He was born and raised in Warren county, Ky., at Glenmore, site of the present lock, now being constructed. He is m graduate of the University of Louisville, and is one of the leading and progressive men of the section in which he lives. Dr. Milligan is a man of large means and wields much influence in the affairs of the country around and is greatly interested in its development.



Dr. G. H. Milligan



Joe D. Tanner, Circuit Court Clerk

JOE D. TANNER is a native of Butler county. He received his education in the schools of his native county, and has been identified with the people and their interests since manhood. He is the present circuit court clerk of the county, to which office he was elected in 1896. Mr. Tanner is a gentleman who stands high in the respect of the people of his county, who have chosen him to serve them in one of the most important offices in their gift. Personally Mr. Tanner is a gentleman of pleasant manner and agreeable presence. His moral worth and integrity of character has endeared him to his associates and these qualities will still carry him on to further eminence among his fellow citizens.

### MORGANTOWN.

Morgantown, the county seat of Butler county, is situated on the left bank of Green River, one hundred and sixty-five miles above its mouth. The county seat was located here soon after its organization in 1810. The population of Morgantown is about one thousand.

It has a flourishing trade with a large extent of country on both sides of the river and is the shipping and principal trading point for a number of interior towns and villages. Under the local option law of the state saloons are excluded.



Landing at Morgantown

There are a number of general stores and shops and the business men and merchants of the place are active and enterprising. The town has three churches and one seminary of learning, at which tuition is free for a period of five months in the year. The Morgantown Deposit Bank, located here, has a large patronage throughout the county.

The general moral tone of the town is excellent and a Union Sunday school conducted under the superintendency of Mr. John M. Carson, assisted by a devoted corps of teachers, is one of the most flourishing on Green River.

The Green River *Republican*, published by H. B. Morehead, Esq., an all home print paper and the only newspaper published in Butler county, is published here.

The industries consist of one large roller flouring mill, a marble shop, saddlery shop and two livery stables.

There are four physicians and six lawyers.

Mr. W. A. HELM, of Morgantown, Ky., is one of the most prominent lawyers of the Green River country, being the oldest practicing lawyer at the Morgantown bar. He is forty years of age, and has been reasonably successful in business. In 1894 he was a formidable candidate for the Democratic nomination for Congress in the Third district of Kentucky. In 1896 he took the stump for Wm. J. Bryan for president, and has been more or less active in politics for many years. He was a delegate from his district to the Democratic National Convention in 1892, and refused to

vote for the nomination of Mr. Cleveland. He has been for many years a director and attorney for the Morgantown. Deposit Bank.



Judge W. A. Helm



Col. Speed Guffy

The MORGANTOWN SEMINARY, conducted by the Messrs. Turner and Glasgow, is an educational establishment that does great credit to the great enterprise of its founders. These two young men are exceedingly well fitted for the task which they have undertaken, being possessed of exceptional educational attainments and social qualifications. The school under their management is destined to become an important factor in the progress and development of the county.

The new Baptist Church in course of construction, will, when completed, be one of the most attractive church edifices on Green River. It is built of brick, and the auditorium, pulpit and interior work are in hardwood finish, making a most beautiful appearance.

The people of Morgantown are noted for sociability and those qualities which tend to make social life pleasant and agreeable. There is no place on Green River where Sabbath observance is more strictly maintained than here. The Sunday schools and churches are Sabbath institutions that claim the attention of the people on the holy day.

SPEED GUFFY, attorney at law, is a native of Butler county, Ky. He was educated in the common schools of the county, and graduated at the Morgantown seminary. He studied law with his father, B. L. D. Guffy, at present one of the judges of the Kentucky court of appeals, and was admitted to the bar in 1889, engaging in a lucrative practice in his native and surrounding counties. Mr. Guffy stands in the front rank of the legal profession in the state.

McCLAIN TAYLOR is one of the leading attorneys of Butler county, his residence being at Morgantown. He is a native of the county, and received his education in the public schools and at Auburn college. After completing his education he applied himself to the study of the law, and was admitted to practice in 1890. As a lawyer Mr. Taylor stands high in the profession, and is noted for his broad and comprehensive knowledge of the law in all its branches. Mr. Taylor is the present master commissioner of the Butler circuit court, the duties of which position he is specially qualified to fulfill, on account of his familiarity with legal proceedings and his ready understanding of legal issues involving important interests. In politics Mr. Taylor is a Democrat and has always taken a very prominent part in the councils and deliberations of his party. His activity in this regard



has commended him to the members of his party in so strong a manner that he has at different times been urged to accept nominations for important offices in the gift of the people. In 1897 he was prevailed upon to accept the nomination for county attorney on the Democratic ticket, and although defeated at the polls, such was his popularity and activity in the canvass, that the usual majority of the opposition was reduced very nearly one-half. It may be said to the credit of McClain Taylor that as a partisan he is devoid of acrimonious feelings and treats his opponents with the most uniform courtesy and consideration. As a public servant he has obligation to those whom he has always illustrated the character of one who realized his obligation to those whom he served, discharging his duties with fidelity and scrupulous regard for the interests of the people.



McClain Taylor, Attorney at law



Col. A. H. Tuck

**A. H. TUCK**—Is a native of Butler county. He was born and raised on a farm a few miles from Morgantown, the county seat. He received his education in the common schools of the county and took a teacher's course in the Morgantown Normal college. In 1887 he was appointed chief deputy in the office of the county court clerk, which position he still occupies. Mr. Tuck is a young man of splendid business qualifications, excellent moral character and occupies a high social position among the people of his town and County.

**DR. E. A. CHERRY**—In the profession of medicine and surgery the people of Morgantown and Butler county are especially fortunate in having the services of a man who is so highly gifted, both by natural and professional attainments as is Dr. E. A. Cherry. Dr. Cherry stands at the head of his profession in this section and is frequently called into consultation in critical cases far outside his own field of practice. He has performed with great success many surgical operations. Dr. Cherry is a native of Warren county, Kentucky, that has produced so many men of note scattered throughout the Green River country. He graduated in medicine at the university of Louisville, medical department, in the class of 1890. He is a post graduate of the New York Polyclinic institute, at which institution he took a thorough and complete course in 1896. He located at Morgantown in 1892, where he has built up a remarkable practice in both branches of his profession. He has made a special study of surgery, to which branch he pays special attention. Dr. Cherry is extremely social in disposition, and though a very busy man, finds time to take a prominent part in the social life of his town. He is a strong democrat and an aggressive one but never allows politics to interfere with his professional duties. In all matters pertaining to the public interests of his town and county he is an active worker.



Dr. E. A. Cherry



Morgantown Deposit Bank

The MORGANTOWN DEPOSIT BANK – This bank was organized under special charter of the state in 1880. It has an authorized capital of one hundred thousand dollars, a paid up capital of fifty thousand dollars and a surplus of fourteen thousand dollars. Its first president was T. C. Carson, and its first cashier was Jerome T. Moore, since deceased. Its present officers are: T. C. Carson, president, and John M. Carson, cashier. The bank transacts a large business in this section in deposits and exchanges and in making investments for its patrons, and enjoys the confidence of the people at home and abroad. Mr. Carson, the cashier, is prominent in the business affairs of his town and county and takes great interest in promoting the cause of education and in the work of the church and Sunday schools, and altogether, is a type of the reliable Christian gentleman.

MRS. J. D. RENDER, whose portrait appears herein, is the wife of Mr. J. P. Render, a member of the Aberdeen Coal and Mining Company, and its efficient general superintendent. Mrs. Render is a lady of fine presence and high mental attainments. Although extremely devoted to the circle of her home and the care and education of the children of her household, she yet finds time to discharge all the duties she owes to society, of which she is an acknowledged leader. With her, however, home is her first care, and her affections are centered upon those who are closely connected to her. Master Claron Render is a youth of much promise—bright and active in temperament and studious in habit. He is strongly attached to his parents and inherits many of their sterling qualities.



Mrs. J. D. Render & Claron Render



Aberdeen Coal & Mining Company's mine opening & miners



## ABERDEEN.

### SITE OF THE ABERDEEN COAL AND MINING COMPANY'S COAL MINING PLANT.

The town of Aberdeen is located on the property of the Aberdeen Coal and Mining Company, 163 miles above Evansville, and thirty-seven below Bowling Green. The population is principally composed of the employees of the mines. The buildings of the town consist for the most part of comfortable cottages, with gardens attached, which the employees occupy at a nominal rent.

Schools and a house of worship are maintained and many artisans and farmers owning farms in the neighborhood, are settling in the town, the population of which is thus last increasing. The Aberdeen Coal and Mining Company own and operate a large store here, doing an extensive business in general merchandise and handling the produce of the country around. There is no more important, available nor widely distributed element of wealth in the Green River valley than her great coal deposits. Her resources in this line in their importance and value equal that of any other territory in the world. She has within her boundaries as fine coal as ever was taken from the ground—equal in every way, either as a gas, coking or blacksmithing coal, to that of the finest Pittsburgh. Very little development has yet been made, and this in a great measure can be accounted for by the fact that the locks in Green River are too small to make the transportation of this great natural deposit by water profitable. The increase in the size of these locks is considered at length under another head in this publication, and we do not care, in this article, which is intended to show up the importance of the Aberdeen Coal and Mining Company, to go into the question to any great extent. But it is a matter that must sooner or later be taken up by the government and adjusted. No firm in the valley are pushing on their work, or doing more to place before the public the superiority of the coal mined in this section than is this company, which was organized in 1890. The company holds sixteen hundred acres of land and are operating a drift mine—working vein No. 3. Employment is given to two hundred miners, and the company operates two tow boats, the J. T. Carson and I. N. Hook, and twenty barges. Besides the mining business the company is engaged in the cross-tie trade, getting out about 4,000,000 cross-ties annually. They own timber rights on twelve thousand acres of land on the upper Green River—but they also have agents established at Henderson, Kentucky, Mt. Vernon and Evansville, Indiana. The officers of the company are I. B. Wilford, president, and J. D. Render, general superintendent. Mr. I. B. Wilford's office is in Bowling Green, and here, his son, R. M. Wilford, attends to the local trade for the company. I. B. Wilford was born and reared in Cadiz, Kentucky, and began life as a merchant. In 1870 he went into the flouring mill business, and since then has built and operated mills in that city, and has recently completed and has now in operation a mill in Henderson, Kentucky. He came to Bowling Green in 1885, and in the fall of 1893 bought an interest in the Aberdeen Coal and Mining Co. The members of the company each invested in Aberdeen, Kentucky, over five thousand dollars, and are building a town at that place that promises in the near future to be a thriving little city. Mr. Wilford owns a magnificent home in Bowling Green and holds a large interest in asphalt lands, which he is now interested in having developed. He is public spirited and is and has been interested in many enterprises in Bowling Green and throughout Kentucky. In the fall of 1892 he built the Wilford building on Park Row—a magnificent stone structure three stories high—the finest building in the city.

J. D. Render was born and reared in Butler county, and for a number of years clerked for both the courts of that county. He was one of the original organizers of the Aberdeen Coal and Mining Company, and much of the prosperity that has attended the company has been due to his

exertions. He has at all times been thoroughly alive to the mining interests in this section, and is pushing forward with that untiring zeal that makes success an absolute certainty.



I. B. Wilford, pres. Aberdeen Coal & Mining Co., residence Bowling Green



J. D. Render, general sup'td Aberdeen Coal & Mining Co., residence Morgantown

R. M. Wilford, Jr., one of the firm, was born in Cadiz, Kentucky, and has been recently admitted to partnership in the company. The Aberdeen Coal and Mining Company is doing more to develop the resources of the Green River valley than is any other institution. Messrs. Wilford and Render are live and energetic business men and deserve much credit for their success. The coal they take out, as said before, is equal to any mine on earth. Their supply is unlimited. The field in which they are operating is bound to become in a few years the source of fuel supply, both for us and the land to the south and west of us. The capacity of this mine is one million bushels per annum. The main office of the company is at Morgantown, Kentucky. The analysis of the Aberdeen coal shows the following elements:

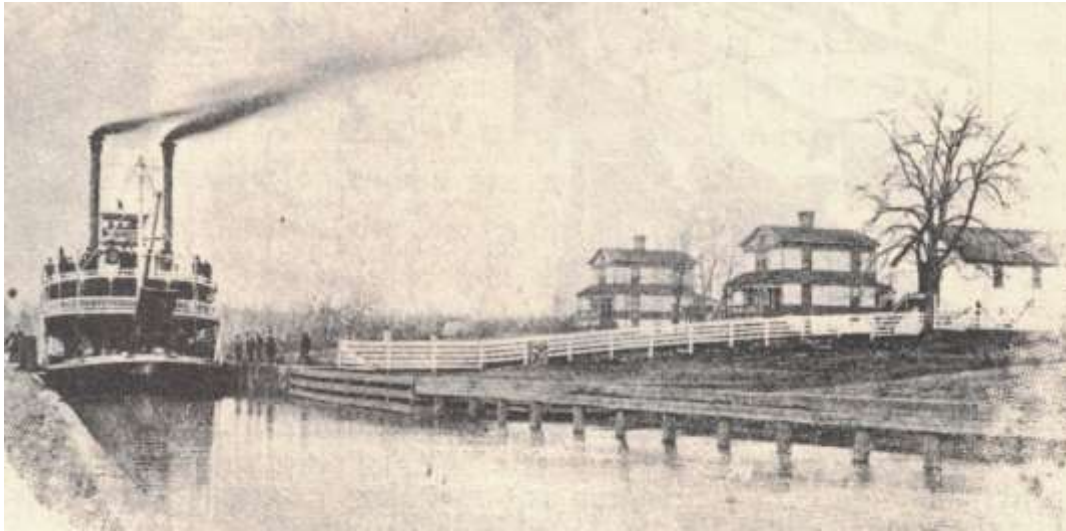
ANALYSIS.			
	Coal, per ct.	Coke, per ct.	
Water . . . . .	6 40	20	Sulphur . . . . .
Volatile matter . . . . .	44 61	1 80	Ash . . . . .
Fixed carbon . . . . .	41 51	93 78	
			J. S. CARY, Dept. Chem. W. C. Ex.

### ROCHESTER.

This enterprising little city is situated at lock number three on Green River, one hundred and twenty-six miles above Evansville by water. Mud River, one of the principal affluents of Green River, enters the latter stream a short distance below the town, and separates it from the hamlet of Skylesville on the opposite side. Rochester is surrounded by a good farming country adapted to the growth of cereals, grass and tobacco. The bottom lands of the Green and Mud rivers adjacent are specially noted for their fertility, producing abundant crops of corn, oats and grass.

The population of Rochester is about one thousand, including the hamlets of Skylesville and McCrearysville. The town was settled in about the year 1837. Since its first settlement the town has been noted as an important trading and shipping point, during its entire history, having been the center of a heavy timber business, as well as the market for a large extent of country on both sides of the river. The merchants and business men of the town are active and enterprising,

and are entitled to special mention on account of the order and neatness in which their places of business are kept. The merchants of the place dealing in general merchandise are: Gibbs Bros. and James, also operating a large store at Rockport; Kinninmonth Bros. and Hays Bros. Those dealing in special lines are: Lee Long & Co., dry goods and clothing; Pool Bros. and H. P. Boggers, groceries; J. D. Smith, drugs and staple groceries; Strother Bros., drugs; Miss May and Lizzie Willis, millinery; Mrs. Oma Ewing, dress making. There are two hotels, two livery stables and one flouring mill. The physicians of the town are Dr. W. C. Strother, W. C. Hunt and W. P. Westerfield.



View of lock and dam at Rochester and steamer Gayoso, of E. O. & G. R. Trans. Co.



Interior of Gibbs Bros. & James store, Rochester

The Methodist and Christian denominations have each a commodious church building. The Baptists have a flourishing congregation, but no house of worship. Judge A. J. Gillett, Magistrate and Police Judge, holds the scales of justice at the town hall, and sees that the town ordinances are faithfully observed., while Mr. T. N. Belcher, City Attorney, prosecutes with zeal and fervor all violators of the public order.

One of the chief matters of interest in Rochester is its public school, open ten months in the year. The school building is commodious and well adapted to the needs of the town. It includes a High School, grammar and primary department, all of which are provided with the necessary apparatus for effective teaching. The school is in charge of Prof. N. T. Groves, principal, assisted by competent teachers in each department.

PROF. N. T. GROVES, of the Rochester schools, is of Welsh descent, and has inherited from his sturdy fore-fathers the positiveness of character and that sense of the importance of detail, which are indispensable in the qualifications of the instructor of youth. Although still under sixty he has been a teacher thirty nine years, always earning and eliciting the commendations of the patrons of the institutions in which he has taught. He has taught in the schools of Keokuk, Iowa, Walla Walla, Washington, Tell City and Newburgh, Indiana, Stephensport, Kentucky, and San Francisco, California. He was called to the school at Rochester in 1894. During the three years he has been at the head of the school he has literally formed the school and made it the pride and the boast of the town of Rochester and the model institution for all the surrounding country. Prof. Groves is one of the most competent, instructors in the whole Green River section. He is not alone an educator, but a trainer, a builder of character as well. He looks after the morals and manners of his pupils, training them to habits of truthfulness, moral worth, orderliness and cleanliness. His school and recitation rooms are models of cleanliness and order even the vestibules of the various rooms, which are used as hat and cloak depositories, are kept in scrupulous order and neatness. The rule in fact, seems to be, throughout the entire building, grounds and environment: "A place for everything and everything in its place." Prof. Groves is doing a noble work for Rochester, and in fact for the counties 'which border the river, and it should be, and no doubt is, a source of gratification to him to know that his work is appreciated by its beneficiaries



Prof. N. T. Groves



Dr. W. C. Strother

GIBBS Bros. & JAMES—One of the most enterprising firms of the entire Green River section is that of Gibbs Bros. & James. L. and D. Gibbs are natives of Muhlenburgh county, and have been in business on Green River since 1885, a period of thirteen years. They first opened a store at Rockport, Ohio county, where they transacted a large business in general merchandise until 1892 when they sold out. In the spring of that year they established a business at Rochester, associating with themselves Mr. P. W. James, of Louisville, under the firm name of Gibbs Bros. & James. In 1895 the brothers reopened their store in Rockport, under the firm name of Gibbs Bros. & Co., Mr. D. Gibbs taking charge and managing the enterprise, Mr. L. Gibbs remaining in



charge of the business at Rochester. Both of these establishments do a very large business, and it may be safely predicted that their volume will not grow less, under the fine business tact of the Gibbs Brothers.

W. C. STROTHER, M. D.—The physicians of the Green River section will compare favorably in attainments and professional ability with these of any portion of Kentucky. There have been some eminent men in the medical profession, who have lived and made their homes on Green River. The town of Rochester has had and now has its quota of men of this character. Among others we mention especially Dr. W. C. Strother, a young physician who enjoys a reputation for ability in the practice of medicine equal to any of the younger members of the profession and who is scarcely second to those who have been a life-time in the practice. Dr. Strother was born in Rochester, Butler county, April 25, 1870, and received his primary school training in the common schools of the county, and attended the National Normal University of Lebanon, Ohio, for a period of two years. While securing his education, the doctor taught in the schools of his native town four sessions, acquitting himself in this capacity to the satisfaction of his fellow citizens. He graduated from the Louisville Medical College, class of 1897, after attending three full courses and began the practice in his native town the same year, entering at once upon a successful and remunerative business. Dr. W. C. Strother is the son of Dr. J. F. Strother, one of the most prominent physicians of Butler county, who was a successful practitioner for more than forty years. He died July 16, 1893, universally regretted by the entire community in which he spent a useful and helpful life.



W. Fred Long



Ferry at Rochester

W. FRED LONG—Among the many prominent and promising young men of the Green River country none stand higher and are more deservedly popular than he whose picture we here present and whose biography we write. He is known, honored and loved by all and his face is familiar in all western Kentucky. Mr. Long was born just across Mud river, in Skylesville, July 13, 1864. His father, Major W. J. Long, Sr. is one of the oldest and most dearly beloved men of Butler county. He married Miss Martha V. Askew, daughter of Rev. Childers Askew, one of the pioneer Methodist preachers in Kentucky, in 1858. Two children were the fruits of this union, Miss Effie, one of the prettiest, brightest and most intellectual young ladies of the Green River section, and W. Fred, the subject of this sketch. Uncle Jack Long, as he is familiarly known by his host of friends, emigrated from Virginia and settled in Butler county in 1855, where he was prosperous in



his undertakings, and was engaged in farming. In 1861, when the war dogs began to bay, when President Lincoln issued his first call for volunteers, Uncle Jack laid down his personal interests and went forth to defend his country. He enlisted in Company E, Eleventh Kentucky Volunteer Infantry and served as first and second lieutenant for three years and three months, was honorably discharged, came home, raised a battalion of state troops and was appointed major commanding the barracks at Bowling Green. When the war closed he moved to St. Clair county, Ill., where W. Fred, was graduated in the public schools, and in 1880 he entered a commercial college, being awarded a diploma after a few months of close application. He learned telegraphy, and was for thirteen years employed by the following railroads: Ohio & Mississippi, Newport News & Mississippi Valley, Mobile & Ohio, St. Louis Iron Mountain & Southern and Ohio Valley as agent and operator, having charge of the principal stations, such as Beaver Dam and Uniontown, Ky.; Lebanon and East St. Louis, Ill.; Dyersburg and Memphis, Tenn.; Bald Knob and Beebe, Ark. In 1895 Mr. Long retired from the railroad service to occupy a more lucrative and responsible position with the National Building and Loan Association of Louisville, Ky., the largest financial institution of the kind in this part of the United States, as special agent for Kentucky. Mr. Long was married to Miss Lena Rivers Hays, oldest daughter of Mr. James R. Hays, at Rochester, Ky., May 27, 1884. This union was blessed with five children—Joseph E., Josephine, Pearl, Viola and Marguerette. Mrs. Long died in 1891, and Mr. Long was again married to Miss Ella Butterworth Smith, daughter of R. N. Butterworth, of Dyersburg, Tenn., April 11, 1893. Mr. Long's second marriage has been blessed by the birth of one daughter, Miss Mary J., a bright and lovable child. Mr. Long is an active Christian worker, taking great interest in Sunday school and Epworth League work. He is a member of the Board of Stewards of the M. E. church, South, at Rochester. He is also a member of the Masonic, Odd Fellows, and Golden Cross societies, and is well-known as a republican, well posted in the affairs of state and nation.

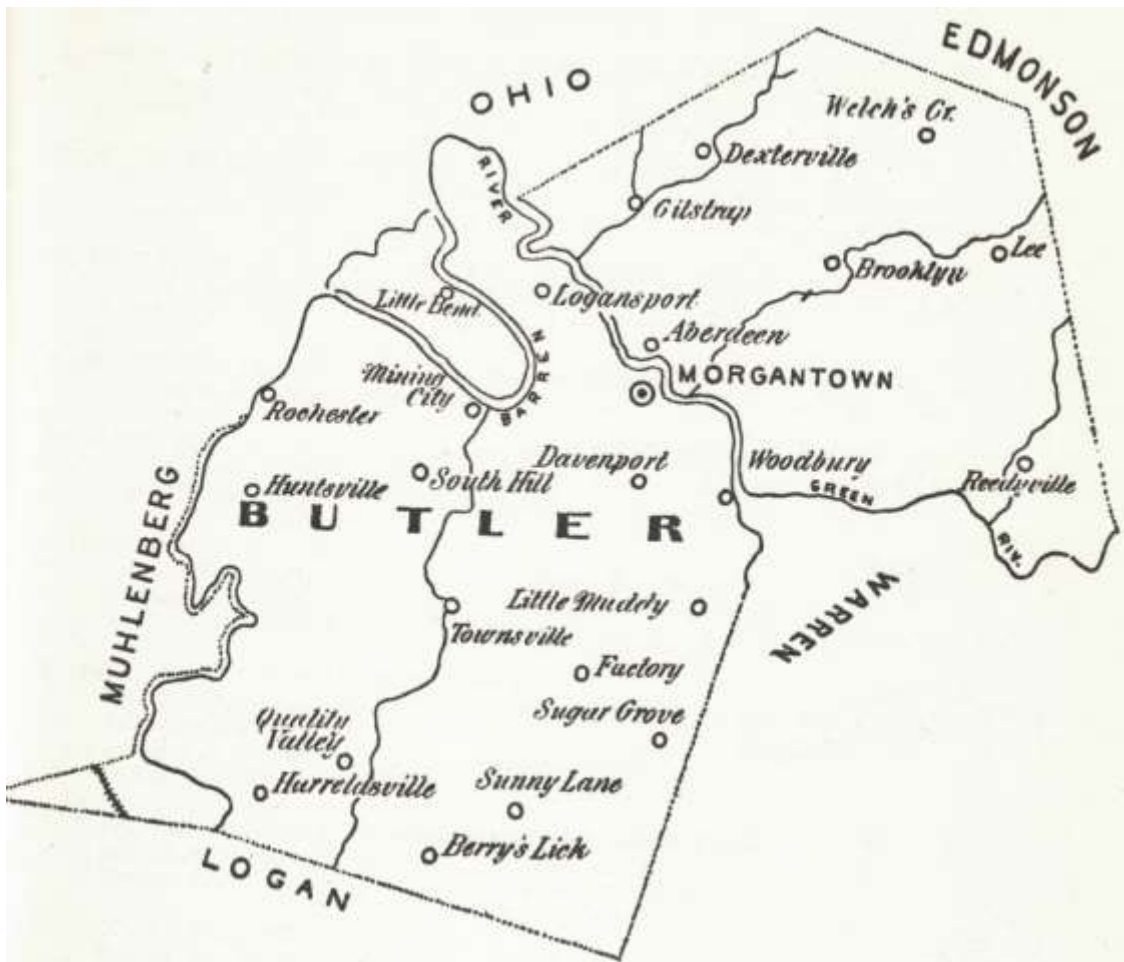
#### WOODBURY.

The town of Woodbury is in Butler county, and is situated at the junction of Green and Barren Rivers, one hundred and seventy miles above the mouth of Green River. Lock No. 4 on Green River is located here. The town has a population of two hundred souls. There are two general stores doing a considerable business in dealing in domestic goods and farm produce. C. H. Meek, the largest dealer in his line, has been in business here fourteen years. M. W. Kuykendall, general merchant and druggist, also carries an extensive stock. There are two grocery stores, a livery stable and two hotels. There is one church building occupied by Methodist and Baptist congregations. Woodbury is the shipping point for Sugar Tree Grove, a trading point eight miles inland.

#### HUNTSVILLE.

Is in Butler county, and is situated about four miles inland from Rochester, which is its shipping point. The population is about two hundred and fifty. It has two churches—Methodist and Baptist—and a free district school. Huntsville is well located and enjoys a thriving business in the midst of a productive section of the country. The merchants of the place are: Hunt & Bro., general merchants; B. A. Vaughan, dealer in hardware, groceries and furniture; A. T. Gardner and J. Hunt & Bro., groceries.





**Kentucky Gazetteer and Business Directory For 1895-1896,  
**R. L. Polk & Co. & A. C. Danser, Detroit, MI & Louisville, KY, 1895:****

ABERDEEN – in Butler county, 2 miles north of Morgantown, the county seat, nearest banking and shipping point. Mail daily.

BERRY’S LICK – in Butler county, 11miles south of Morgantown, the county seat and bank location. Ship to Auburn, 12 miles south. Population 50. T. M. Conner, post master.

Conner Thomas M, carpenter.  
 James R T, justice.  
 Lee A & Son, general store  
 Norris Robert, blacksmith.

Orange H P, constable.  
 Stahl R P, carpenter.  
 Thomason M M, constable

BROOKLYN – in Butler county, 5 miles northwest of Morgantown, the county seat and nearest bank location. Population, 25.

DAVENPORT – in Butler county, 4 miles south of Morgantown, the county seat, shipping point and bank location. James E. Sharer, postmaster.

Kitchens Bros, carpenters.  
Morris Edward, coal miner.  
Nell John, Blacksmith.

Sharer Fannie, music teacher.  
Shelton Harvey, justice.

DEXTERVILLE – Butler county, 7 miles north of Morgantown, the county seat and bank location.

Fleener N, general store

Howard G B, general store.

FACTORY – a small place Butler county, 7 miles south of Morgantown, the county seat, banking and shipping point. Population 40.

Clay Morris, blacksmith.  
Pendley D H, general store.

Thompson, Samuel, saw and flour mill.

GILSTRAP – Butler county, 6 miles from Morgantown, the county seat and banking point, and 2 ½ from Wilson’s Landing, its shipping point. W. M. James, postmaster.

Barton H C, saw and grist mill.  
James Wm Masby, blacksmith and notary.

Ragland John W, genl store and saw mill.

HARRELD SVILLE – in Butler county, 22 miles southwest of Morgantown, the county seat, and 8 northwest of Lewisburg, its nearest shipping and banking point. Population, 50. W. P. Westray, postmaster.

Pogue J J, blacksmith  
Tatum Dr. John Van S, dentist.

Tuck W J, general store and distiller.

HUNTSVILLE – Butler county, 15 miles southwest of Morgantown, the county seat and bank location, and 4 south at Rochester, its nearest landing on Barren river. Population, 150. H. T. England, postmaster.

Brother John M, carpenter.  
Brown T P. saw and flour mill.  
Gardner A T, grocer.  
Hunt B, general store and shoemkr.  
Hunt Daniel, logger.  
Hunt Miss Erdine, music teacher.  
Hunt W, general store.  
Mann S H, mason.

Mayhugh Rev B T.  
UMahugh E N, justice.  
Mayhugh J R, blksmlth and carp.  
Neely C H, Insurance agent.  
Smeozey J F, hotel.  
Taylor I N, saw and flour mill.  
Thompson George W, flour and saw Mills.  
Vaughan & Mefford, blacksmiths.

Lee – Butler county, 15 miles southwest of Morgantown, the judicial seat, and 10 from Caneyville, its shipping point. F. M. Embry, postmaster.

LITTLE BEND – A postoffice in Butler county.

LITTLE MUDDY – in Butler county, 8 miles from Morgantown, the county seat and banking point, and 4 from Woodbury, its shipping point.

Cole C M, postmaster, general store

Newton W A, saw mill

Noris Mrs. E, music teacher

LOGANSPORT – Butler county, 4 ½ miles from Morgantown, the county seat, banking and shipping point. Population 35. L. V. Morris, postmaster.

Bellamy James L, saw and flour mill.  
Graves G W, blacksmith.  
Grubb, J W, physician.  
Kimberlin Rev R (Presbyterian).

McKiney A, physician.  
Morris L V, general store.  
Whitaker J E, justice.

MINING CITY – On Green River, in Butler county, 6 miles west of Morgantown, the county seat and nearest bank location. Population, 100. A. R. Pollock, postmaster.

McKenney Miss Eliza, music teacher.  
McKenney Wm, blacksmith.

Pollock A R, general store.  
Smith E M, lawyer.

MORGANTOWN – in Butler county, of which it is the seat of justice. Goods can be shipped direct via Green river. Has a bank and weekly newspaper. Population, 700. Stage to Cromwell and Beaver Dam, daily. G. B. Phelps, postmaster.

Abbott Mrs., milliner.  
Apling Rev T M, (Methodist).  
Baldwin E A, staves and heading.  
Bilcher Thomas, notions.  
Bilcher W O, general store.  
Blaine Wm M, lawyer.  
Briggs Joseph, barber.  
Brown C T, planing mill.  
Butler, J L. county clerk.  
Cherry, E A, physician.  
Cherry Miss Mary, dressmkr.  
Cole J C, propr Pine Lawn Hotel.  
Davis H M, lawyer.  
Dockery A T, lawyer.  
Dowell Wm, staves.  
Dunn R S, lawyer.  
Eberman J B, machinist.  
Eberman J R & H, confectioners.  
Emnet James, physician.  
Finley Rev Win J (Prot Methodist).  
Flournoy L C, lawyer.  
Gardner A E, physician.  
Gibson H R, flour will.  
Green River Republican, H B  
Morehead Publisher,  
Guffy B L D, lawyer.  
Halingn Wm, shoemaker.  
Harrold J E, drugs and Groceries.

Helm W A, lawyer.  
Hope Buel, jeweler.  
Howard J A, meat market.  
Howard N T, lawyer.  
Hughes S C, lawyer.  
Janus E P, general store.  
James H A, lawyer.  
Johnson W W, barber.  
Kelley Wm, confectioner.  
Kimberlin J F, lawyer.  
Kimberlin Rev M H (Cumberland  
Presbyterian)  
Kittinger W T, drugs and groceries.  
Kuykendall E C, general store.  
Leach G W, hardware and blacksmith.  
Lee W F, physician.  
McIlwain G R, jeweler.  
McIntyre L W, photographer.  
Moore & Andrews, carpenters.  
Morehead H B, publ. Green River  
Republican.  
Morehead R B, physician.  
Morehead H II jr, photographer.  
Morgantown Deposit Bunk (capital  
\$50,000). T C Carson pres,  
J M Carson cashr.  
Morgantown House, S W Shelton propr.  
Neel Columbus, sheriff.

Neel C W, ties and staves.  
 Neel Elwood, lawyer.  
 Neel James A, meat market.  
 Neighbors L B, carpenter.  
 Neighbors Wesley, carpenter.  
 Phelps G B, lawyer.  
 Phillips J F, groceries and hardware.  
 Pine Lawn Hotel. J C Cole propr.  
 Prentice G A, lawyer.  
 Richmond House, W C Smith propr.  
 Ricketts W T, assessor.  
 Rone C C, marble works.  
 Shelton S W, propr Morgantown House.  
 Smith B F, groceries and hardware.

Smith W C, propr Richmond House.  
 Snodgrass F M. surveyor.  
 Sowders Miss Belle, milliner.  
 Spalding I A, lawyer.  
 Tanner J A & Co. general store.  
 Taylor E E, physician.  
 Taylor F G, General Store.  
 Taylor Jesse T, drugs and groceries.  
 Taylor McLain, lawyer.  
 Taylor & Guffy, lawyers.  
 Thatcher Anthony, lawyer.  
 Thatcher M H, circuit clerk.  
 Thompson S Jay, lawyer.

QUALITY – Butler county. Ship to Rochester, 12 miles north. Population, 75.

Caldwell D, general store.  
 Forgy, H H, general store.  
 Forgy, J N, blacksmith.

Greenwell J R, grocer.  
 Harper Richard W, physician.  
 Mayhugh E N, blacksmith

REEDYVILLE – Butler county, 14 miles east of Morgantown, the county seat. Ship via Greencastle. Population, 75.

Edgar R M, general store.  
 Gott M P, dry goods.  
 Hamilton A C, carpenter.

Skaggs F., Blacksmith.  
 Willis John, general store.

ROCHESTER – Butler county, on Green river, 16 miles west of Morgantown, the county scat and bank location, and 14 south of Beaver Dam, its nearest railroad shipping point. Population, 500. M. W. Doolin, postmaster.

Brown W E, live stock.  
 Bunch Henry, blacksmith.  
 Cole J J, hotel.  
 Dobbs T M, livery.  
 Gibbs James & Bro, general store  
 Groves N T, teacher.  
 Hays J F, grocer.  
 Hays M F, livery.  
 Heminway Charles, carding mills.  
 Hunt Wm C, physician.  
 Kinmouth Bros, grocers.  
 Manley Bros, blacksmiths.

Manley R E, barber.  
 Poole W P & Bro, grocer.  
 Slaughter S. dry goods.  
 Smith C P, saloon.  
 Smith D, hotel.  
 Smith J D, druggist and grocer.  
 Westerfield W P, physician.  
 White T A, grocer.  
 Willis Pearl & May, milliners.  
 Willis & Strother, druggists.  
 Woods T F, hotel.

SOUTH HILL – Butler county, 8 miles from Morgantown, the county seat and banking point, and 7 from Rochester, its shipping point by water. John W. Holman, postmaster.

Beliles Amos, general store.

Holman John W, groceries and drugs.



SUGAR GROVE – Butler county, 5 miles from Clark’s Landing, its shipping point and 10 from Morgantown, the county seat and banking point. T. H. Tuck, postmaster.

Cansey, Eugene, flour and saw mill.  
Cansey W J & Sons, carpenters.  
Galloway M H, phys and genl store.

Hampton J O, wagonmaker.  
Tuck P F, druggist.  
Tuck & Tuck, distillers.

SUNNY LANE – Butler county, 12 miles south of Morgantown, the county seat and nearest bank location. Ship via Woodbury. Population, 100.

Cohron & Bridges, general store.

TOWNSVILLE – Butler county, 14 miles southwest of Morgantown, the county seat and bank location, and 11 south of Rochester, the nearest shipping point by water, on Green River. Population, 100. Russell G. Brown, postmaster.

Brown Rev R G (Baptist), general store  
& lumber

Cartwright S W, blacksmith.  
Givens M L, live stock.

WELCHS CREEK – Butler county, 14 miles northwest of Morgantown, the county seat and bank location, and 8 south of Caneyville, its shipping point.

Coy Monroe, staves.

WOODBURY – On Green river, Butler county, 5 miles southeast of Morgantown, the county seat and bank location. Ship direct by boat. Population, 250. C. H. Meek, post master.

Bryson B J, general store.  
Dulare J C, hotel.  
Ellis J B, gunsmith.  
Ellis JH H, carpenter and jeweler.  
Embry Rev J H (Methodist).  
Howard X, groceries and liquors.  
Hudwall & Cole, flour mill.  
Hunt M M. shoemaker.

Kuykendall M W, general store.  
Lykins Chestfield, blacksmith.  
Marrs A S, meats.  
Meek C H, general store and Steamboat agent.  
Neighbors J W, cooper.  
Wand Elwood R, physician.



**The Kentucky Encyclopedia, John E. Kleber, editor,  
The University Press of Kentucky, Lexington, KY, 1992, p.147:**

### BUTLER COUNTY

Butler County, the fifty-third county in order of formation, is located in the Western Coal Field region of Kentucky. Its 431 square miles are bordered by Muhlenberg, Ohio, Grayson, Edmonson, Warren, and Logan counties. The Green River flows through the southwest part of the state. The county was formed from parts of Logan and Ohio counties on January 18, 1810. It was named for Gen. Richard Butler, a Revolutionary War soldier from Pennsylvania, who was killed by Indians at St. Clair's Defeat in 1791.

Richard C. Dellium and James Forgy were the first to settle in what is now Butler County, near Berry's Lick in 1786. Salt was produced at Berry's Lick using horses to draw water from wells, some of which were over three hundred feet deep. The eleven justices of the peace who first governed the county recommended Morgantown as the county seat. In the 1830s the state built locks and dams on the Green River to improve navigation. Barges and steamboats on the Green carried goods to market and provided mail service. Showboats brought entertainment to river towns. Slate mined at Indigo Bend on the Green River, eleven miles from Morgantown, was used to make school writing tablets. Rochester, Woodbury, and Morgantown became busy river towns and are still the largest communities in the county. In the late 1800s and early 1900s Morgantown and Rochester both had seminaries. At one time Brooklyn, Aberdeen, and Mining City were also sizable communities.

Although only a few skirmishes took place in Butler County, the Civil War slowed development and divided the citizenry. One of the first Union soldiers to be killed in western Kentucky was from Butler County. A stone monument on Big Hill, a short distance from Morgantown, marks the site where Granville Allen died in a skirmish on October 29, 1861. After the war, veterans from Confederate and Union forces joined to raise funds for a Civil War monument. The monument, dedicated on May 30, 1907, lists the names of Butler County citizens who fought in the war. It stands in front of the courthouse and is one of the few monuments in the state that honors both Confederate and Union soldiers.

After the war, Butler County again experienced growth. But riverboats were replaced by railroads, and as Butler County had no railways, access to markets was limited. In the early 1920s the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers moved its Green and Barren River Maintenance Corps from Woodbury to Owensboro, causing the decline of the economy in Woodbury. In 1965 Lock and Dam No. 4 at Woodbury washed out and in early 1980 Lock and Dam No. 3 at Rochester was abandoned by the Corps of Engineers. Thus, the Green River was closed to traffic.

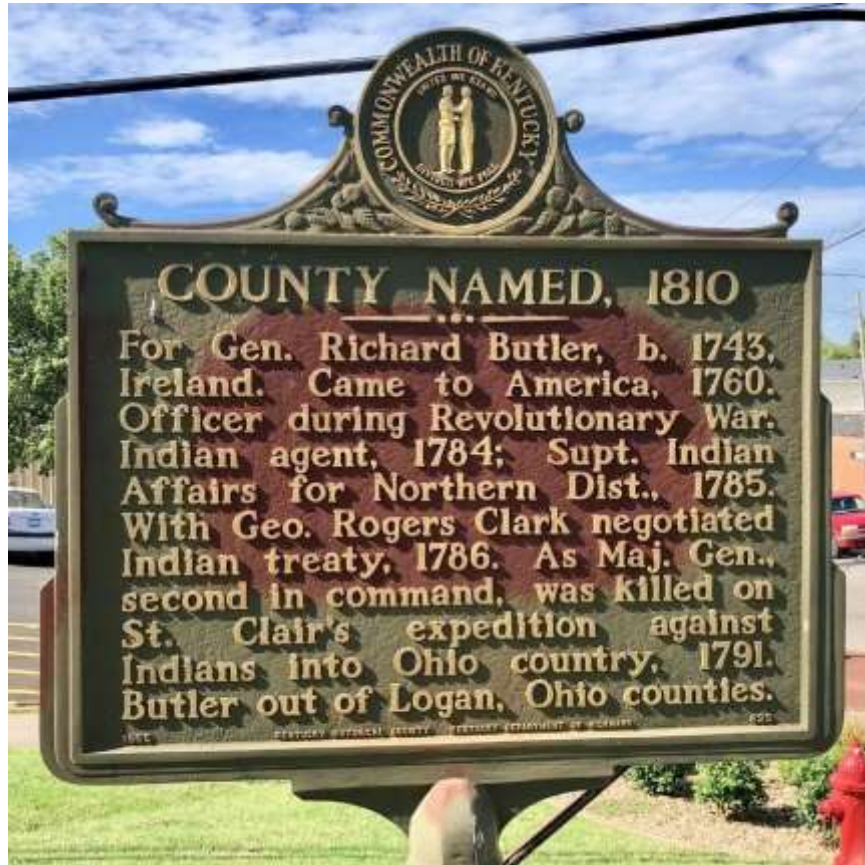
In 1926 a hard-surface road (KY 403) was built from Morgantown to Borah's Ferry at Logansport. In 1949 the Morgantown-Aberdeen bridge across the Green River and a straighter, paved highway to Beaver Dam and Owensboro (US 231) were constructed. The Butler County High School was completed in 1952. In 1953 the county's economic outlook improved as the Kane Manufacturing Company, a clothing factory, brought three hundred jobs to Morgantown. The Green River Parkway linked Butler County to the nationwide interstate road system in 1970. A coal mining boom in 1974 gave a boost to the economy of the county by providing jobs and tax revenues. With the development of the industrial park in Morgantown during the mid-1970s, the county now has seven manufacturing businesses, including the Sumitoma Company and the Kellwood Company. The local economy is diversified among industry, mining, and agriculture.

Butler County's more notable citizens include: B.L.D. Guffy, chief justice of the Kentucky court of appeals; Claude Bloch, one of only four Kentuckians to achieve the U.S. Navy rank of admiral; John M. Moore, Methodist bishop, one of three presiding bishops when the three Methodist denominations merged to form the United Methodist church, and one of the organizers of Southern Methodist University; and Gov. William S. Taylor (1899-1900). During the 1920s Maurice Thatcher was a U.S. representative from Louisville (1923-33), and John W. Moore a U.S. representative from Butler County (1925-29).

The population of the county was 9,723 in 1970; 11,064 in 1980; and 11,245 in 1990.

See Butler County Historical and Genealogical Society, *Butler County, Kentucky History* (Morgantown, Ky., 1987); Bennett F. Bratcher, *History of Butler County* (Morgantown, Ky., 1960).

Lois Russ



Butler County Courthouse, Morgantown, KY.  
Picture by Jerry Long on 6 June 1991

