

# Reminiscences By Robert R. Pierce (1823-1893)

By Jerry Long  
c.2024



The following 19-part serial during 1890-1891 appeared under the title of “Reminiscences By An Old Timer” in the Breckenridge News, a weekly newspaper published at Cloverport, KY. No where is the author’s name given. However, the clues given in the text leave no doubt that the articles were penned by Robert R. Pierce (1823-1893), a noted resident of Cloverport, KY. A biography and obituary of Mr. Pierce can be found on pages 38-42 of this document.



Robert R. Pierce



## THE BRECKENRIDGE NEWS.

**Breckenridge News, Cloverport, KY, Wednesday, 10 December 1890, p.6:**

### Reminiscences By An Old Timer – Part 1:

We date our notes from the 14th of November, 1846, as far back as the personal observation of the writer extends, and not because of any notable event transpiring on that day – simply the appearance on the streets of Cloverport on that morning of a youth from Virginia, destined to take

part, to some extent, on the theater of action during an extended life; this circumstance impressing upon the writer's memory the date above given.

Cloverport contained then only a few hundred inhabitants. Col. David R. Murray, Willis Hambleton, E. Oberdorfer and John Millett were the principal merchants, and they carried comparatively small stocks of goods, the two former dealing in tobacco in connection with the goods business. Flannigan who has been a large and bold operator, had gone to the then truly Long Star state of Texas, with such effects as he could get together, having shipped on a steamboat said to have very little conveniently, arrived and departed between two days. Harrison, who had not been successful in the tobacco business the previous season, had left, and McCullough, an interested party from Petersburg, Va., was here settling up the business. John W. Johnson, also of Virginia, had arrived to begin business as Harrison's successor, and D.B. Harris, "old reliable," who had held the fort for some years as the largest stemmer and dealer in the county, was still here, and it was with him the youth alluded to had sought and obtained a position.

Mr. Geo. LaHeist, one of the old citizens, had built a house near the lower wharf, now occupied by Dr. Smith and family, but renewed and modernized by the present owner. Dr. Holmes owned and lived in the property now Mrs. McCrea's.

Mr. McPherson, John C. Babbage, E. Fisher, Lewis Fisher, Willis Hambleton, J. V. Murphy, Joe Smith, Silas Hawkins and A. J. Elmore were prominent citizens of lower Cloverport, and in Cloverport proper, on the upper side of the creek, Col. D. R. Murray, P. V. Duncan, Sam LaHeist, John Murray, John Gregory, Geo. H. Gregory, Owen and John W. Raitt, Dr. Sebastian, Dr. S. G. Scott and John Newton were among the prominent and active men of the time.

Among the young ladies of that day in whose society the writer enjoyed many pleasant hours were the Misses Murray, Allen, Davis, Sebastian, Witt, Kinson and LaHeist.

Horace Newton, the father of John S. Newton and sisters, and who made the first settlement at or near the mouth of Clover Creek, had died a few years previous, having bought the four lots now owned by the family and built the dwelling house in which they reside at present and the store house on the corner in which he was engaged in merchandising. John S. Newton was the first white child born in Cloverport.

George LaHeist, a man of remarkable traits, a Pennsylvanian as honest as the days are long, was the first postmaster, and the office remained in the family as long as either of the three brothers lived.

Col. David R. Murray had been among the number who first engaged in business here, conducting a general merchandise business and dealer in tobacco and other produce. Of the highest order of intelligence, strictly honest and honorable in all his dealings, he established upon an elevated plane, the business principles which were the rule of his life, and the impress of which remains to this day. He died in 1871, after an active life in public and private, at a ripe old age.

Gregory & Blain kept a wharf boat at the upper landing in connection with a wood yard. Owen Raitt kept a saddle shop on the corner where he now is, his brother, George, working with him. Willis Hambleton had a store where Bowmer & Hambleton's large storehouse now stands, and also dealt in tobacco. He lived on the Daniel corner, opposite Raitt's. P. V. Duncan clerked for him and afterward went into business on his own account. Joe Smith had a tailor shop opposite the old brick factory. E. Oberdorfer kept store on the corner now occupied as a bakery by Ballman, then an old brick building. The old Pate brick building stood on the corner at the lower wharf on which the tobacco warehouse of Skillman & Co. is now built. John W. Johnson afterward had a store here managed by Mr. Keen, who was taken sick and died near Hardinsburg while out buying tobacco for Mr. Johnson. Judge Babbage's saddle shop stood in the street near what is now Fisher's

corner. The hotels were the Exchange, kept by E. Fisher, and Murray's Hotel, kept by John Murray, the old buildings of which are still standing.

Uncle Jack Haynes, a remarkable man, and one of the most energetic of his day, at one time connected in business with Col. Murray, had moved to Ohio County, near what is now known as Willis' Mill, and embarked in the mercantile business. He was known as the hardest rider in the county, and always kept good saddle horses. Of him it is related that after purchasing a stock of goods in Louisville, whither he always went on horseback, he attended to shipping them on a steamboat, obtained his bill of lading just before the boat's departure, and when asked by the clerk who would be at Cloverport to receive them, replied, "I will be there," and true to his word, rode to the wharf here as the boat rounded in.

Merchants then did business on the long credit system, or in exchange for produce, collections being made only once a year when planters sold their tobacco. The area of trade embraced a much larger territory than at present, this being the commercial point and monied center for a large scope of country now having better facilities for getting to market.



**Breckenridge News, Cloverport, KY, Wednesday, 17 December 1890, p.4:**

**Reminiscences By An Old Timer – Part 2:**

At and succeeding the time heretofore mentioned, Cloverport had a large trade from Grayson Co., many teams being constantly employed in bringing in products of the county, such as flax seed, beans, chestnuts, jeans, linseys, flax linen, maple sugar, venison hams, and others wild game, and exchanging for salt, flour, whisky, and store goods, but little sugar, molasses or coffee being wanted. Of the two former articles they made an abundance, and but little of the latter was required. This trade extended to Caneyville and beyond, all of which has been cut off by the construction of railroads, which afford those people easy access to other markets.

The towns which then existed at the mouth of, and separated by Clover Creek, Cloverport the older, and Lower Cloverport, the new town, were even then jealous of each other, and strong prejudices were frequently manifested by the people in their respective localities; but Cloverport, under the leadership of Col. Murray, held for the time being, supremacy in many respects.

The Baptists and Methodists each had churches, the former a small building on the site of the present handsome edifice, the latter was what is now the parsonage. The Presbyterians had an organization and worshipped in the Methodist Church and shortly afterwards in the old storehouse of D. R. Murray, which was fitted up and donated by him for the purpose. Willis Hambleton was for a number of years superintendent of the Baptist Sunday School, as P. V. Duncan of the Methodist and D. R. Murray of the Presbyterian.

Elder Jas. H. Brown was the pastor of the Baptist Church for a number of years and lived on the lot now occupied by the Catholic Church. He was succeeded by Elder Wm. Head of whom Elder D. Dowden was a successor. In addition to the circuit riders, Father Taylor of Hardinsburg, preached occasionally at the Methodist Church. Rev. Wm. W. Simonson, a young minister of much promise, was assigned to the care of the Presbyterian Church and died while in the discharge of his duties. He was succeeded by Rev. Mr. McAfee, an Irish divine who also died while occupying that position, a position filled with much satisfaction to his church and to the community. Both he buried in the old Murray graveyard with neat tombstones above them. Mr. Oglesby, Obadiah

Newman, Ben Bates, Willis Hambleton and John Gregory, Sr. were deacons in the Baptist Church. Of the official member of the Methodist Church were P. V. Duncan and Jno. W. Raitt and of the Presbyterian Church, Marcus Allen, C. E. Chapin and D. R. Murray, were the ruling elders.

At that time facilities for traveling were very limited. A trip from Virginia to Ky., then designated the west, was quite an undertaking, and frequently performed on horseback. The route by public conveyance was either by stage from Gordonsville, 70 miles west of Richmond, and then the western terminus of what is now the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad, across the Blue Ridge and Allegheny Mountains, through the western portion of Virginia to the Ohio River at Guyandotte; or by rail and Aquia Creek steamboats to Washington City and Baltimore, thence by the B. & O. to Cumberland, Md., then its western terminus, and by stage over the national turnpike road to Wheeling, Va., and from either point by steamboat to Cloverport, either route requiring a week's time to make the trip.

The only railroad in Ky. then was from Lexington to Frankfort. The track was laid with oak streamers fastened in cross-ties, on which was the old strap iron spiked down—a fruitful source of "snake head." The road from Frankfort to Louisville was not completed till several years later. Stage lines from Maysville to Lexington and from Frankfort to Louisville were well patronized. From Louisville to Nashville, a turnpike road had been built by State aid, and constituted the great overland outlet to the South. Over this road, splendid stage coaches with the finest teams to be found, were run regularly, making fast time to and from Nashville. Sam Thomas was one of the firm of contractors. Immense trains of wagons brought produce over this thoroughfare, crossing Salt River at West Point, then one of the liveliest towns in the State, returning with goods for points along said road to Nashville and beyond, competing with transit boats then running up the Cumberland.

A small boat was running in the Louisville and Henderson trade, making semi-weekly trips, and another to Bowling Green weekly. There were however, a number of elegant boats plying in the trade between Louisville and New Orleans. The canal was then too small to admit the passage through the locks of these large boats. To travel on such boats was a luxury. They made no landing for less than \$5, and the writer once paid that price for passage from Cloverport to Col. Boyd's, a distance of 6 miles.

Mail facilities were of course quite limited and postage correspondingly high. Letters from Virginia were rated at 25 cents, but were not required to be prepaid. They were not charged by weight, but by single sheets, and it was the duty of postmasters to examine closely to ascertain if anything else was enclosed which would subject the letter to double or treble postage; a one dollar bill enclosed would cause such addition. There was no such thing as registered letters.

About a week was consumed in carrying letters between points in the East and West. The four-horse stage coaches were sufficient to carry the great through mails, and for routes of less importance two-horse coaches were used, and for routes of still less note, horse-back conveyance was resorted to. No boats then carried the mail and no "Star Routes" were existence. A line of two-horse coaches or jumpers, as they were sometimes called, carried a trip-weekly mail from Louisville to Shawneetown, supplying Hardinsburg, Cloverport, Hawesville, Owensboro, Henderson and Morganfield; no small intermediate offices had been established. They also carried a considerable number of passengers. Brannin and Summers and Sam Thomas were the contractors.

The Louisville Journal, published by George D. Prentice, was the principle paper taken along the line a few copies only of the tri-weekly, more of the weekly. No daily paper was then published in Louisville.



**Breckenridge News, Cloverport, KY, Wednesday, 24 December 1890, p.4:**

### Reminiscences By An Old Timer – Part 3:

The position occupied by the writer made it a part of his duty to ride over this county and portion of Grayson, Ohio and Hancock, for the purpose of buying tobacco to be delivered in the hand – that is without prizing – to the factory of D. B. Harris, for stemming. In pursuance of this duty he made in a short time the acquaintance of a large number of planters, and became to some extent familiar with the country necessary to be traversed.

Immediately around town but little land had been cleared for tobacco, consequently a ride of six or eight miles must be made before reaching a good tobacco section. This was found first within that distance in what was known as the Miller neighborhood, where a number of our best planters in the timber raised comparatively large crops. Among them may be mentioned Jack Miller, Mike and Barnet, three brothers, Winston Lowrey, David Smith, Seaton Elder, Atkisson and others, who were about the first sellers usually and this is to a great extent, established the market price for early purchasers, which prevailed with small variations throughout the county.

In an adjoining neighborhood, and nearer Hardinsburg, were Uncle Joe Robards, Henry Miller, Tice Miller, Calvin Hendricks, John DeHaven, Henry Walker, Milton Tate, Jolly, DeJernette, Brickey and others, all good tobacco growers. This leads on to Rock Lick and Long Lick, where we found a number of good planters, among them Thos. Lewis, James Mattingly, the Rhodes, Moormans, Thomas G. Owen, Summers, Deans, Robertson, Webb and other large planters and good handlers of the weed where crops always commanded as good prices as any that were grown in what was called the timber section of the county.

The Forks of Rough tobacco did not, as a general thing, stand quite so high with stemmers, but a number of the planters of this section raised desirable crops, among them were the Fraizes, Spencer, Bruces, Glasscock, Mercer and others. Also on Jewell's Creek and Lost Run were some good planters, among who were Pendleton and White Moorman, Henry Haynes, Mordocks, Paynes and others. The Cut-Off could also exhibit some fine crops, as also a portion of Ohio county adjoining, which were marketed at Cloverport. Phillips, Shrieves, Jones, Godsey, Willis, Reynolds and others were good planters of this section.

A large portion of Grayson County extending a considerable distance beyond the Falls of Rough, and embracing the Short Creek and Caneyville sections, found a market at Cloverport, though for stemming purposes this tobacco was not altogether so desirable. The same remark applied to Hancock tobacco, from which county large supplies were drawn, neither rating in those days quite as high as Breckenridge tobacco. The section of this county then noted for growing the finest stemming tobacco within reach was found in what was known as the "Barrens" embracing "Quality Corner," and extending to and beyond the Big Spring. This was truly barren of timber at that time except a small growth in some localities, but since on such as has not been cultivated, trees have grown to some size and cover much ground heretofore naked.

Among the many fine planters of that section may be mentioned Dr. Stewart, Nick Claycomb, Nelson Claycomb, Jordans, Bandys, Orendorfs, Ricks, Carter, Henry Washington, John Fisher, Daniel Shumate, Wm. Perrin, Bob & Willis Board, Richard Sutton, Caseys, Nalls and others equally worthy, nearly all of whom prided themselves not only on the quality, but the

handling of tobacco and delivering in good order. With the advantages in quality intimated, and in consideration of the greater distance to haul, it was not unreasonable that his tobacco should command somewhat higher prices than other sections, and dealers usually paid 25 to 50 cents per 100 pounds more for this than for tobacco grown in the timber.

Commencing usually at November County Court and continuing during the winter and spring, it was the custom of the planters to meet the buyers at Hardinsburg at every court and discuss the situation generally, and frequently after buyers had seen the crops, contracts were entered into for large quantities, the planter averring in the contract, notwithstanding the purchaser had examined the crop as best he could in the barn, then his crop was of a good quality, and agreeing to deliver the same in "good order, free from material injury by house-burn, spot, worm-eat, or other cause, payable on delivery for the crop." A failure to comply with the contract, it was well understood, would subject the planter to a "dock," and to this when resorted to he generally submitted with good grace when deemed reasonable.

It occasionally happened, however that exceptions were taken and prejudices created against the dealer that required years to eradicate. A circumstance of this nature occurred about the time of which we write that at a period thirty years later nearly cost the writer a seat in the legislature.

He having a pretty hard fight as the nominee of the Democratic Party, and while making a trip through the Forks of Rough, heard of a report that he had once "docked" immoderately a widow lady of that section. A son of hers was the accuser; said he delivered the tobacco and was witness to the fact. He was a good Democrat, but said he could vote for no man who has thus wronged a poor widow. Being an influential man in the neighborhood and inclined to avail of it, it was deemed best to see him personally at once, but he was obdurate, and would not admit of a possible mistake in the matter, and it looked as if that old "docking" scrape was to be used for all it was worth in the canvass.

However, the appointments had been made for speaking over the county, and McDaniels would soon be reached. On the appointed day the candidates met, the friends of each out in force, when the party alluded to was taken to one side with a few friends, and when asked again about the matter, said he could not be mistaken, and would relate a thing that would make it plain to all. "It was," he said, "the day that Conty was married, he was receiving tobacco for you; there was a great many wagons to unload and he was mad all day." The reply, quickly made, was that Conty was receiving tobacco for J. W. Johnson, and approved by several others, and from that meeting the nominee had no more active supporter than from the man who had before so bitterly opposed him.



**Breckenridge News, Cloverport, KY, Wednesday, 31 December 1890, p.4:**

#### Reminiscences By An Old Timer – Part 4:

Hardinsburg was at that time a small tobacco market. McClarty and associates had given up business. Vivian Daniel and S. V. R. Board were the principal merchants and dealers in tobacco, and they bought but little, perhaps none outside of their customers.

Col. Charles Hambleton and Mrs. Huston kept the two old hotels of the town, and for good, old-fashioned cooking, and of the best the county afforded, no man need go further; and two

Virginians, at least, never failed to do ample justice – the one to turkey, the other to pig's head, as prepared by the hostess of the Hambleton House.

Although the volume of business was not very large, the town could and did justly claim to have the very best society to be found in any place of its size in the State, and pointed with pride to such prominent citizens as Capt. Joe Allen, for many years clerk of the Co. Court under the old constitution when the officers were appointed; Judge Calhoun and Kincheloe, Jefferson Jennings and Frank Peyton, among the most celebrated lawyers of their day; Col. Alfred Allen who afterwards became celebrated as the prosecutor of Ward, and subsequently was appointed by President Johnson and went as consul to Foochow, China, accompanied by Crawford McClarty. One of the most noted personages was Father Taylor, an old-fashioned Methodist minister, who owned and run a horse mill and horse power carding machine for a living, and preached for the love of it, and because he felt it his duty to do so. He was exceeding popular with the young folks and was called upon to perform most of the marriage ceremonies in the county – indeed, a good many would scarcely think they were married unless Father Taylor officiated, and the writer 'happened' to meet him at a number of such appointments. John Wright, who died several years since in Illinois, a former citizen of Cloverport, was a nephew and Mrs. Walter and Mrs. Golf, of Cloverport, are nieces of his. Hon. H. D. McHenry, of Hartford, who recently died while a member of the Constitutional Conventions, married a daughter of Father Taylor's. Other prominent citizens were John McClarty, the father of Joe, who represented this county in Legislature, and of Clinton McClarty, who represented the Fourth district of Louisville in the Legislature at Louisville, Stanley Singleton, Vivian Daniel, Philip Lightfoot, Charles Hambleton, Nathan Board and others.

There were many young ladies of beauty, culture and refinement, dignified and attractive in social circles, among whom were the Misses Calhoun, McClarty, Peyton, Kincheloe, Jennings, Singleton and Hambleton, whom to know was to admire. While there existed the usual little jealousies and prejudices between Cloverport and the county seat, it was not permitted to present any obstacle to friendship and social pleasures, consequently the young people especially were thrown much into each other's society.

The roads of the county were in very bad condition – and in this regard the improvement generally has not been very marked to this day – that from Hardinsburg to Cloverport being perhaps the worst continuous ten miles in the county, and during winter and spring at times almost impassable. Yet over this road planters would manage to bring their tobacco to market, many of them camping out on the way and in town, regardless of the weather. The subsequent building of the turnpike road, rough though it be, and at a cost far greater than it should have been, was a tardy remedy in part for the evil so long existing, and it is much to the detriment of the business interest of the town and county that others have not been made.

Stephensport, the only other shipping point in the county, was about as inaccessible, on account of bad roads, as Cloverport, and the location of the latter, together with other important advantages, gave it decidedly the preference.

Holt's Bottom had not improved and settled up to any extent. Daniel Stephens, who owned a large body of land here, then lived at the crossroads, some distance from Hardinsburg, and shortly afterward erected a handsome brick residence adjoining Thomas Holt's farm, where he died some years since. No road had been opened from Cloverport to that locality, the people relying upon the river for getting to market, or a very poor road over the hill to Stephensport.

Quite a business along the river was cutting cord wood and delivering it to wood yards situated at convenient points where wood flats or boats were loaded, and from these flats steamboats obtained their supply of fuel, taking the flats in tow when going up stream to prevent

delay, a man accompanying them, and when unloaded the wood was paid for and the boats turned adrift in charge of the man, who steered by means of oars and landed them at the wood yard to be again loaded ready for the next steamer. Down stream boats would round in and lay alongside to take the wood on. These operations were called "wooding." And the price paid was \$1.50 to \$2.50 per cord. Large boats, such as the General LaFayette, Diana, A .L. Shotwell, Eclipse, and boats of that class, would take twenty to forty cords at one wooding. Very little coal was then to be had at any point between Louisville and New Orleans and wood yards were kept up all along the Mississippi River.

Considerable trading was carried on in horses and mules, which were brought in large numbers here and shipped south to supply the demand for cotton and sugar plantations. Dr. J. H. Thomas and Dudley Hambleton operated largely and made one or more trips every season, as did the Wathens of Mt. Merino, and others. Smaller traders took chickens and turkeys in large quantities. Beef cattle were also shipped south, and Texas cattle were brought in large numbers to be fed here for market until a law was passed prohibiting the same because of disease, said to be contagious, being communicated to Kentucky cattle.

Towboats were not in use at that time. Pittsburg coal and produce of all kinds were taken in large quantities on flat-boats, floated down by the current. These flat-boats were equipped with side oars, or sweeps, at steering oar and gouger, so as to propel or guide the flat as circumstances required. A skillful pilot was required for each boat, or pair of boats, and a crew of ten to twenty men, according to the size of the boat, engaged for the trip. A cabin, with bunks for sleeping on, was fitted up, cooking utensils provided and a supply of provisions taken on board, in charge of a regular cook for the crew. Upon arrival at New Orleans, or on the coast above, and the cargo disposed of and the boats sold as old lumber, the men took deck passage on some of the fine Louisville and New Orleans boats then running, and of such magnitude was this travel that the boats always made special efforts to secure it. In traveling on steamboats you were scarcely ever out of sight of one of these (so called) "broadhorns." The south via New Orleans was the only outlet to eastern or foreign markets. Drinkwater, McFall, Weatherholt and Patterson were regular flat-boat pilots and commanded good prices for their services.

John Vest, who was clerking for Mrs. Millett, and his brother and Fred Walter afterward embarked in the hoop-pole trade, and for several years did a lively business in that line in connection with the grocery business here.



**Breckenridge News, Cloverport, KY, Wednesday, 7 January 1891, p.4:**

### Reminiscences By An Old Timer – Part 5:

Tobinsport, on the Indiana side of the river, was the landing for that portion of Perry County known as "Tobin's Bottom," a large body of very fine land then only partially settled. Judge Tobin, from whom it derived its name, had settled years before near the upper end of the bottom, and erected a comfortable brick building – perhaps at that time the finest dwelling in Perry County outside of Rome, then the county seat. The judge was one of the most prominent men of that county, filling with much credit to himself and satisfaction to the people, various public offices of honor and trust, as has his son, Judge Robt. Tobin, at present a prominent citizen of the bottom. Another old citizen was Mr. Simons, the father of Hiram and Arad Simons, both now deceased.



Other citizens were James and George Weatherholt, who kept a store at the point a number of years and traded in cord-wood and produce; Cas. Cockerel, Horace Roff, Winchell, Thomas and James, Polk Drinkwater, Lamb Ryan.

Mr. Tate kept a wood-yard in the bend above. Cloverport supplied these people with their mail, no post office being established on that side for many years afterward. A ferry had been established, however between the two points, and besides this quite a number of persons owned skiffs, so that facilities were not wanting for the interchange of trade, which was of large proportions. John Gregory, now the oldest man in Cloverport, who moved here in 1836 from the neighborhood of Rock Lick, kept the ferry for many years. Of those living in Cloverport at that time, only himself and three others survive.

The county being sparsely settled, did not present a very inviting appearance, and even repeated trips to various neighborhoods failed to inspire a raw youth with that degree of enthusiasm that made it an unmixed pleasure to traverse its forests and ravines, its hills and hollows, its basins and plains. Everything seemed strange, the names of the people were strange, many sounded queer, the forests had a singular appearance, the species and growth of the trees were altogether different to the forests and piney old fields of Virginia. The creeks of any size were like so much still water not like the streams of other localities of that or any place near the river, and one was most singularly lost sight of altogether in many places. Every landmark, every object, seemed to indicate a new order of things.

But amid all these strange surroundings came that welcome cheer, the friendly grasp of hand, from the people at their homes – however rude and humble that home might appear that so soon make one forget for the time being that he is in a strange land and among strange people. "Makes the whole world akin." This feeling, the natural instinct of kind hearts, was evinced not only by the heads of families, but by the children as well, the grown-up boys and girls not excepted.

It did not take long to ascertain the cause to some extent, at least, of this feeling, for soon as your answer to the question, where are you from? Was given, most of them said, we, too, are from Virginia – different sections of the state, but a large proportion of the people of Breckenridge, more especially of Quality Corner, were Virginians; nor did it go long unannounced to a stranger. A. J. Elmore, now living in Tobin's Bottom, when first met with remarked that he was from North Carolina, "near the Virginia line," and probably makes that reply to this day, emphasizing the latter clause. Native Kentuckians, however, were in no wise less friendly and socialable, every ready to befriend and accommodate, and always expressed high opinions of Virginians.

It pleased the planters to have tobacco buyers riding out among them to look at tobacco, but if one happened to dock too heavily, or paid some one secretly a small premium, and it was found out he at once rendered himself unpopular with those offended.

One of the many incidents which seemed strange to the writer, occurred in Grayson County on his first trip to that section. He had been directed to the house of a certain planter, a leading man in his neighborhood, and reached there about night, meeting with a cordial reception and an invitation to remain over night, which was gladly accepted. It was the season for sugar making – a new thing again making sugar from water which dripped from trees, that had been tapped, into little troughs made for the purpose, and gathered in larger vessels and emptied into large iron kettles at the sugar camp in the woods. After supper we repaired to the sugar camp, where the fire had been started off – this frequently in the nature of a frolic, or party, and always a big time for the children; so most of the family went, including three daughters, all about grown, bright, pretty and fascinating. All enjoyed the occasion, and necessarily remained late, so that on returning to the house but little ceremony was required for retiring. The house contained one large room, with

a small kitchen detached; in this room were the three beds. The writer was assigned to one and told to retire, the old folks, with several children, took another, and the three grown daughters the other.

Next morning the family were up early; the two beds were made up and the room swept. Some had gone to the kitchen and evidently breakfast was being prepared. The visitor was still in bed watching an opportunity to get his clothes on when the girls should be all out at the same time – a thing, however, which did not occur. After a while one of the girls commenced setting the table, and seeing the case was reaching a crisis, he was in a very short while ready for breakfast, and was thoroughly satisfied afterward that neither of those girls had given him a passing thought, except perhaps to say, he must be a lazy fellow.



**Breckenridge News, Cloverport, KY, Wednesday, 14 January 1891, p.4:**

### Reminiscences By An Old Timer – Part 6:

As if to keep up the wondrous things "passing strange" to the writer, another incident may be related, which occurred at the Falls of the Sinking Creek..

A rise in the Ohio River had backed the water over the falls so that the creek could not be forded. On his route home from the upper part of the county, having learned the fact and been advised beforehand what to do, he called to parties who lived on the opposite side, and a lady, who had taken in the situation, was seen to approach, unfasten her canoe, or "dug-out," and boarding the same, with oars in hand, she paddled quickly across, ordered the saddle off, placed it in the canoe, had the rider lead his horse to the creek, get in himself and hold the bridle while she "pulled for the shore" on the other side, the horse swimming astern. This feat quickly and safely accomplished, was much to the relief of the one so generously accommodated, though the novelty of the thing and the perfect composure of the fair propeller had nearly banished fear. An invitation to remain with the family over night was promptly accepted and their hospitable entertainment highly appreciated.

The mother, a fair, sedate widow, and her three daughters just budding into womanhood, combining the fairness of the lilly and the color of the ripened peach, with faultless forms and a refinement of manner perfectly surprising, made an impression that years have not effaced. In the morning an elder brother, absent at night, was found equally hospitable and attentive. In due time those daughters were all married, and though the writer lost trace of them, it goes without saying that they made excellent wives and mothers.

In those days, while such incidents were rare, there were a number of most excellent families constituting the rule, not the exception, throughout the county, with flax-breaks, spinning-wheel and loom, making at home clothing for the family, plaid and plain linsey, jeans, tow linen, etc., in which all were clad. In many of these families were good looking boys with loveable sisters, the girls the emblems of purity and innocence, with beauty unadorned, found alike among the humbler class, as well as those more cultured all demonstrating the moral training and careful attention of devoted parents, mothers especially.

Society formed upon such a basis and sustained by such influences, must and will continue to assert itself; whatever disturbing elements may now and then arise; and thus the social qualities, high standard of morals and irreproachable character of the people are established and maintained

in all the relations of life. These qualities impressed upon the tablets of the heart, remain, and band together in fair memories and holy associations all through youth, manhood and old age.

Another strange device was encountered here. The writer had been accustomed in boyhood to taking "turns" of corn to mill on horseback; had baked and eaten many an "ashcake" while waiting for his turn; was familiar with the little tub-mills on small streams, where a head of water was procured by closing the mill race and then grinding till it all escaped, repeating the process again and again; these tub-mills noted for coarse meal and heavy tolls, grinding so slow that the miller would forget whether he had tolled or not, and to be on the safe side, would repeat the operation. He had been sent frequently a greater distance to the larger mills on larger streams, where the mill pond could usually be kept pretty well filled, and where large wheels were used on a different plan, called overshot wheels; but the dry land mills were something new to him, run by horse power. Here, however, most of the corn was ground that way, there being no others of consequence except Clifton and Falls of Rough.

A farmer would take his corn and his team and go to some of the many such mills over the county, there was one at Fisher's, one at Tobinsport, and others in different neighborhoods, and grind his own corn, leaving a certain amount of toll to pay the owner of the mill. Some mill owners furnished teams and did a regular business grinding for the public. Of this class was Weatherholt's Mill at Tobinsport, and the writer witnessed an unusual performance in connection with that. During a very severe winter the Ohio River was frozen over most of the winter, the ice being unusually thick. Barnet Fisher took a turn of corn on his horse and rode on it across the river, had it ground at Weatherholt's Mill, and returned the same way with his sack of mill.

An old sawmill, a rather poor affair, was in operation on the lower side of the creek, near where the colored schoolhouse now stands, run by Ed Pate, who was afterward a justice of the peace for several years, and when he died a few years since, was quite an old citizen. Of him it was said he was careless about saw logs, and frequently logs belonging to him and others were taken off by high water. Joe Cooper had bought the lot on which Oelze's Mill now stands, erected a small warehouse and stalls for the accommodation of teamsters, and took a small raft of very nice yellow poplar logs to Pate to saw on the shares. The river had been encroaching upon Cooper's lot; the bank was falling in, which worried him a good deal, and to add to his discomfiture, upon inquiring about his logs, Pate told him they had sunk to the bottom of the creek. Exclaiming that he had the worst luck of any man living, that even dry poplar logs of his sunk to the bottom of the creek, he returned home to brood over his ill-luck.

An old warehouse of considerable dimensions, a shed and perhaps one or two smaller buildings, stood then on the river bank in front of the George LaHeist property, between the street and the river, all of which have long since caved in.

At the head of the wharf, on the upper side of the creek, stood a two-story residence, now decayed and razed to the ground, built by Joe Green, who was the father of Dr. Norvin Green, famous for his connection with the Western Union Telegraph, and now President of that corporation, and who was born near here and grew up in this house, and attended old man Dobson's school here with Jas. Goff, John Newton and others.



**Breckenridge News, Cloverport, KY, Wednesday, 21 January 1891, p.4:**

Reminiscences By An Old Timer – Part 7:

Since the publication in regard to flat boating, a communication has been received from Mrs. Rachel B. Witt of Stephensport, relating to trip made by her grandfather, Henry Hardin, at a period antedating that of which we write. in 1816 he made a trip in a boat built by himself, using a whipsaw in getting the timber. The cargo consisted of corn, pork, lard, meal, chickens and a few horses, one of which he was to ride back home.

With this boat he started from the mouth of Sinking Creek (no town there at that time), having only one man to accompany him, and that man was so frightened at the sight of the turbulent Mississippi River that he declined to go further. His boat was of course a very small one, but floated safely to its destination, and after disposing of his load, and with such parties as he could meet with, most of them on foot, they made their way back as best they could through almost trackless swamps and forests, passing through what was then the Indian nations.

Of course he was glad, after such a trip, to get home again, and his faithful horse, when nearing the place, manifested equal interest, and it was with difficulty that he could be properly reined in. This was of course before there were any steamboats on the river, and such trips were attended with hardships and perils unknown to the present generation, and only among the earlier settlers, of whom the Hardins were especially noted for deeds of daring, could men be found adequate to such undertakings.

Recurring, however, to the times and things which came under the writer's personal observation, it may be said that few changes occurred for several years in the general aspect of affairs in the town or county. True, a gradual improvement was going on in some respects; more interest was being manifested in schools, which had been neglected, especially in the country, and the necessity for better buildings and more competent teachers was being discussed.

In the meantime a convention for altering or amending the constitution of the State had been called to meet in 1849. Col. David R. Murray, whose pronounced opposition to making the officers of the State elective, especially the judiciary, was announced as a candidate for the position of delegate, while Joe Smith, who was a member of the Legislature had taken an active part in calling the convention, also became a candidate, favoring strongly the election of all officers by the people. Henry Washington, a prominent citizen of the county, also announced himself a candidate upon the Smith platform. Shortly afterward the California fever, originating in 1848, developed in this county, and on the 27th of March 1849, Joe Smith, with two mules bought of Washington, started for the golden shore, leaving the race to the other two candidates. These gentlemen canvassed the county thoroughly. The result was a verdict by the people in favor of the position taken by Henry Washington, and although the evils predicted in consequence of so radical a change as was made by the convention were not realized to the extent feared by some, there are still many who question the wisdom of the policy pursued in regard thereto.

And yet a majority of the people will always vote for the largest liberty, and the present convention will make this change apply to the few executive officers or advisers of the "chief executive" now appointed by him. The popular cry of "a government for the people and by the people," as contradistinguished from that of party and protecting monopolies, is regarded as essential to the best interests of the masses and to the security of their liberties.

Henry Washington died after the constitution had been formed and submitted to a vote of the people, and Daniel J. Stephens was elected to succeed him, and upon that assembling of the convention for the purpose, signed the constitution.

The following were the first officers elected under the present constitution: Circuit Judge, Jesse W. Kincheloe; County Judge, Williamson Cox; Circuit and County Court Clerk, Joe Allen;

Commonwealth's Attorney, Alf. Allen; County Attorney, S. C. Chalfant; Sheriff; G. P. Jolly; John B. Bruner was the first county representative, succeeded by Dr. J. H. Thomas.

The departure of Joe Smith for California was followed three weeks later, say April 20, 1849, by five young men from the Mt Zion neighborhood – Jas. H. Moorman, at present a citizen of Cloverport; Jas. W. Moorman, son of P. C. Moorman; Richard S. Skillman, son of Abram Skillman; W. R. Mays and Alex. May, the latter now a citizen of Oakland, Cal. This party went by boat to Independence, Mo., and from thence took the overland route via South Pass, the "Freemont trail," and overhauling Smith, reached the Sacramento valley in just six months from the time they left Independence; and this was the first party from this section of the country, all except two being under twenty-one years old. They found game plentiful along the route, buffalo, bear, deer and smaller game; also some Indians by whom they were once attacked.

After establishing their claim, Smith was sent to San Francisco with \$500 to buy supplies for the mines but becoming sick, and perhaps discouraged, he determined in one month after his arrival to return home. He found a vessel about to sail, and making known his condition, and that he was a Mason, passengers and others made up an amount sufficient to pay his way; but on reaching San Diego, after a voyage of some eight hundred miles, his condition was such that he was left there with a nurse to attend him until he should recover or die; the latter was his fate, and there he was buried. He had taken the precaution to send the money with which he was entrusted to his wife by express, and it was in due time paid over by her to its rightful owners. Of the others, Richard Skillman died, W. R. Mays remained and was reported to have died in 1856, and the others, after remaining two years with varying success, returned home via Central America, passing through Nicaragua, where the large ship canal is now being constructed.



**Breckenridge News, Cloverport, KY, Wednesday, 28 January 1891, p.4:**

**Reminiscences By An Old Timer – Part 8:**

Farming in the old way was continued for several years in this and adjoining counties. While the reap hook had about run its course, nothing beyond the scythe and the cradle for cutting grass and wheat had been introduced. The Carey plow, with wood mould boards, was still in use, although the cast mould boards with points and the "rounder," was being brought into notice. The flail for threshing out wheat and oats was in use still for small crops, while for larger crops a yard, circular in form, was cleaned off and the wheat or oats taken from the stack and placed around in a ring, and horses rode and led around on it, men stirring with pitchforks, cut in the woods, in the meantime, until the grain was trampled out. This was called 'treading wheat.' Neighbors frequently joined in helping each other; boys usually did the riding, and as saddles were scarce, a sack of straw was frequently substituted. Four were ample for the purpose.

Not even a "groundhog" threshing machine had then been introduced here, indeed but little wheat was grown; the country was thought not to be adapted to its growth. It was frequently ruined by rust; and there was no remunerative market for it. There were no merchant mills along the river nearer than the Falls of the Ohio, and Louisville was a very poor market, our merchants supplying the trade here by purchases made either in Cincinnati or St. Louis. Many families throughout the country were accustomed to having "cake bread and coffee" every Sunday morning, some more frequently; but in truth they did not care for it. Corn was grown in quantities sufficient for home

consumption, some hogs were fed for market, also some beef cattle; but horses and mules received most attention. Any surplus corn convenient to navigation was shipped to New Orleans, or the coast above, by flat-boats, prices in the Southern market very rarely warranting shipments on steamboats.

Tobacco continued the staple product of the county as best adapted to the land cultivated and to slave labor, which it was supposed had been made a permanent institution beyond question by the passage and adoption of the new constitution, thus checkmating any scheme that might possibly emanate from the ideas advanced by Henry Clay upon the subject of gradual emancipation in his celebrated speech upon that subject in New Orleans.

While the number of slave-holders in this county was comparatively limited, yet some planters had quite a number, and a singular mania upon the subject was prevalent throughout the country. Those who owned large numbers were desirous of increasing them; those who had only a few wanted more, and many who had none were bending every energy to make money enough to buy one "nigger."

To this end "new grounds" were cleared and cultivated in tobacco while fresh, then neglected other land cleared in its place and served the same way. While the manure saved was applied to a small parcel of old ground for a "tobacco patch," the other portion of the farm, in many instances worn out by continual cultivation in corn, was abandoned. The numerous old fields and gullies on many farms to be found over the country now, fully attest the correctness of this statement.

The labor of a good many slaves was hired by the year, the party to whom they were hired agreeing to "feed and clothe them well, treat them humanely, pay doctor bill, head tax, and return them at the end of the year, unavoidable accidents excepted." Most of these were hired privately and usually permitted to select their homes, but others were put on the block every New Year's Day at Hardinsburg and hired publicly to the highest bidder, with the stipulation above mentioned, the money for the hire being due at the end of the year. These latter were usually hired by planters or others not regarded so favorably as masters, and whom the negroes were not so apt to choose for homes. Jack Howard, called the "blind preacher," although he could see a little, owned a man named Joe, whom the writer hired privately for D. B. Harris for a number of years at about \$100 per year.

It is evident that the farmers of the present constitution intended to fasten irrevocably, if possible, the institution of slavery upon the people of Kentucky. The writer of this learned this much, previous to the convention, by being present – a disinterested party – at a consultation held by a few prominent men and large slave holders of Henderson a matter he had not hitherto spoken of, and as not one of those participating in that consultation is now living, names will be omitted.

The question of gradual emancipation had been agitated together with other aspects of slavery as it then existed, and had awakened the pro-slavery men of Kentucky to the realization of possible danger in the future. Viewing the matter very properly as a right they possessed, under the constitution of the State and of the United States, to hold slaves as property – a right to be relinquished only upon their own volition, and not upon the demand or at the dictation of pretended philanthropists, who proposed to be keepers of conscience for slave owners – the people of Kentucky determined to protect themselves in these rights.

Under this state of case the convention met. Jas. Guthrie, a strong pro-slavery man, was made President. Hon. Archie Dixon of Henderson, representing the largest slave-holding county in the State, and other prominent delegates, in full sympathy, shaped the articles relating to slavery, and threw around the institution bulwarks that were supposed to be impregnable, and to further

secure its permanency, hedged about the constitution in such manner as to render any attempt to change it exceedingly difficult, if not altogether abortive; and it is here submitted that the convention now being held was not called strictly in compliance with the provisions of the present constitution. However, in the course of a few years, and in a way perhaps not dreamed of by those parties, which it is not necessary to recapitulate, or to criticise here, slavery was entirely abolished wherever it existed in the United States, without compensation to its owners.

Claiming nothing on that score – it was the right of might, as determined by the arbitrament of the sword – the people of the South do object to being taxed so heavily for the benefit of monopolird, and for indiscriminating payment of pensions, in place of pensioning only those justly entitled to it. As to the institution of slavery, it is questionable if there is now a living single man who would favor its restoration.

The South is now, aided by Northern capital, rapidly developing its hidden wealth, building railroads and furnaces, and in addition, will send to market this season about 8,000,000 bales of cotton, a quantity not approximated in slave times, thus building up what Henry Watterson objects to calling the "New South" upon a scale unexampled in the annals of history.

Kentucky is abreast of the times, and Breckenridge County is by no means slow in responding, led by her chief commercial center, Cloverport, for it is not to be denied that the railroad development of the county and this section had its conception and birth in Cloverport, and the initial steps leading since to the large railroad mileage of the county were taken and inaugurated in Cloverport and by Cloverport men. The formation of the company which afterwards built the L., St. L. & T. Railroad was here and by her citizens, R. R. Pierce being the first President and J. A. Murray the first Secretary. Behold what has followed.



**Breckenridge News, Cloverport, KY, Wednesday, 4 February 1891, p.4:**

**Reminiscences By An Old Timer – Part 9:**

Previous to or about 1850, John S. Lightfoot, who then lived on his farm beyond McGavock's, near the old Newton place, came into possession of a few hundred acres of land in the hills still beyond, upon which a peculiar coal of superior quality cropped out on the side hill, and from which he dug out and hauled to town coal at \$4 per load, and at that low rate it was thought to be too costly for general use, as wood – the fuel altogether used – was furnished at a very low cost.

This coal finally attracted the attention of some Eastern parties, and proved, upon investigation, to be of the finest quality of cannel coal, superior, perhaps, to the English of same character. The result was that about the year 1851 or 1852, Mr. Lightfoot sold the land, which had cost him a nominal sum, for \$10,000 to Abel Bennett and Samuel F. Headly, of New York. Mr. Bennett was a son-in-law of John Thompson, a celebrated banker of New York, and together they formed a company and bought some 6,000 acres of land additional, embracing what was supposed to be all the land upon which this coal could be found and much more really than has as yet been developed, as underlying these lands.

A charter was obtained, very liberal in its provisions, and which cannot be restricted, approved Feb. 9, 1854; and under said charter Gov. Powell appointed Prof. Benj. Silliman, Geo. D. Prentice and Bryant R. Young appraisers to examine said property and place a valuation upon

same. The appraisers accordingly visited said property, and after being duly sworn by Col. D. R. Murray, a justice of the peace, and upon full examination, made an elaborate report, in which they placed the value at \$4,000,000, at which sum it was capitalized and arrangements soon under way for getting the coal to market.

John S. Lightfoot bought the property in Cloverport now owned by P. S. Miller, and for a number of years, with his estimable wife, dispensed the hospitalities that made for them a reputation not yet forgotten by a number of those, among whom is the writer, fortunate enough to enjoy it.

Mr. Bennet continued in charge for a considerable time, with Davis Alton as superintendent, and by them was laid off the town of Bennettsville. A sawmill was erected and a railroad built from the river to that point, using the old-fashioned strap iron bought from some road in Ohio that was changing to the improved invention of the iron T rail, no such a thing as steel rails being then in use. This company also bought a considerable plat of ground on the river below town, seven acres of which from George LaHeist, seven acres from the Pate heirs, and twenty acres from Mr. Oglesby. A part of this was laid off into town lots, called Johnstontown, in honor of Davis Alton's successor as superintendent. A few lots were sold, but all canceled except one, bought by Jas. G. Weatherholt, which some of his family still hold, and the idea of a town there was abandoned.

Judge Gardiner, whose widow is now a citizen of this city, a skilled mechanic, and who proved a valuable man to the company, had charge of the sawmill and all matters pertaining to the operations there outside of the mines. A drum-house was built at the river for the purpose of transferring coal from the cars to flat-boats. In the meantime houses had been erected at Bennettsville for the miners and a number of them secured. Among those first employed may be mentioned Daniel Friel, Samuel Thompson and Nathan Hardman. Jas. H. Moorman had the first general store, T. F. Satterfield the next.

Active work was now commenced. Two small locomotives with a sufficient number of small cars were brought into requisition. Jas. T. Goff was placed in charge of the drum-house and coal yard, and the loading of coal onto flat-boats was conducted in a manner more satisfactory than under the revised and expensive English plan inaugurated by Dr. Kennedy. For a considerable length of time coal was brought in freely and transferred to flat-boats or barges, in pairs, each containing about 150 tons, and floated to New Orleans for sale. This part of the business was controlled by Fred Thompson and Mr. Angewane, the one a son, the other a nephew of John Thompson, the largest stockholder in the company.

Upon further investigation by experts as to the properties of this coal, it was found to be much more valuable for manufacturing into oil than for shipment. Then it was that two Scotch brothers, Wm. and John Carnes, took charge and proceeded at once to erect a necessary plant for that purpose, the process of which was complicated and known to but few, and much privacy was observed by them in prosecuting the business. They succeeded in a very satisfactory manner, though at a heavy expense, and operated quite largely for a time, making illuminating and lubricating oil, parafine, benzoin and naphtha, leaving a refuse valuable for certain purposes. Miller and Goff engaged in the manufacture of "coal oil liniment" from this oil, an article of valuable medicinal properties. After three fires, however, in rapid succession, and very disastrous, the Carnes became discouraged and went to Eastern Kentucky, not long after which John Carnes was reported to have died suddenly at Lexington.

After this Capt. Joseph M. Brown, of New York, one of the company who had given the matter close attention, came on for the purpose of rebuilding and continuing the business with



largely increased facilities. While maturing his plans and making preliminary arrangements, oil of somewhat similar quality was discovered in Pennsylvania, by boring or drilling down to a depth of 1,000 feet, more or less, when the fluid would flow to the surface in large quantities. Capt. Brown visited that section and his observation satisfied him that with the expensive machinery and labor required to extract oil from cannel coal, he could not hope to compete successfully with the oil wells and abandoned the enterprise here.

Work in the mines was suspended. The improvements were all left "to rot, to moulder and decay." The road went down, the locomotives were sent off and sold, even the old strap iron was removed and sold. Bennettsville was deserted and everything remained dead until Dr. Kennedy acquired control of the property, rebuilt the road at a heavy expense, as well as the town, and called the latter Victoria. He had the mines re-opened, re-established the business of shipping coal, sending it to foreign as well as home markets; and now that the L., St L. & T. Railroad has been built, shipment by river is a thing of the past. He finally disposed of something like a half interest to English parties, realizing a handsome sum before his death, and leaving his family an interest in valuable property.



**Breckenridge News, Cloverport, KY, Wednesday, 11 February 1891, p.4:**

**Reminiscences By An Old Timer – Part 10:**

The growth of Cloverport was given impetus by the opening up of the Breckenridge Cannel Coal Mines, and much benefit to the town was expected to accrue from that enterprise, nor was it disappointing in this respect. Persons from a distance began moving in and business was enlivened to a considerable extent.

T. F. Satterfield moved here from Princeton in 1853, and for a while kept the Murray Hotel, during which time Applegate and Carothers were building a new bridge across Clover Creek and boarded with him. Afterward he had a store at Bennettsville and subsequently for a number of years was engaged in business here, and died recently ripe in years and enjoying the confidence and respect of the community generally.

C. M. Dowell occupied the residence of which Dr. Warfield died possessed, lived there awhile, subsequently kept the Haynes Hotel, now the Cloverport, and afterward moved to Arkansas. Willis Y. Hardin, of near Big Spring, built the house now owned and occupied by Dr. Paynter. Willis was then regarded as a confirmed old bachelor, but was fond of visiting the ladies, and would tell them that he wanted to marry a widow with several children, so as to give them a fair start.

S. D. Haynes built the Haynes Hotel, now the Cloverport, kept it a considerable length of time, sold out and moved to Green River. W. H. Haynes, for a long time head sawyer at R. R. Pierce's saw mill in the bend of the creek, also moved to Green River, where he died a few years since. John A. Gregory and Henry Gregory, both recently deceased, were also for a number of years employed at this mill. J. R. DeHaven moved to town during this time, bought and improved the property where he now lives, and was for a term of years Marshal of Cloverport and afterward Police Judge.

W. H. Webb, now of Louisville moved to Cloverport from Long Lick, and was for a number of years engaged first in the mercantile and then in the tobacco business. D. Hambleton

removed about the same time from Sulphur Spring on Rough Creek, to Cloverport, and was for a number of years a prominent merchant and tobacco dealer, doing business a portion of the time for the firm of Will Watkins & Co., engaged in stemming tobacco at the old Harris stemmery, B. J. Adams having bought the property. Shortly after Hambleton, A. B. Skillman and W. H. Bowmer came to town, and the three formed a partnership and did a large business, especially in groceries, buying their supplies either in New Orleans or on the coast above, in lots of 50 to 100 hogsheads of sugar, and coffee and molasses in proportion. John C. Martin bought out John Millett and did a large business in dry goods, groceries, etc. P. V. Duncan also did a considerable business in goods in connection with his tobacco business. Baldorf & Bro. subsequently did a large business here in dry goods, drifting finally to Henderson, where they have made quite a success.

The merchants here alluded to all had the benefit of the Grayson trade heretofore mentioned and for which competition between them was quite spirited.

B. L. Duncan at one time did a large business here; he afterward moved to Indiana and then to Owensboro. His death is of recent date. William Witt, whose father formerly lived here, after living at Hartford and Fordsville, removed again to Cloverport in 1858, and is now one of the oldest members of the Cloverport Baptist Church, of which he has long been a deacon. John W. Raitt, who died a few years since, was long a valued member of the County Court, and for many years as a Justice of the Peace, did most of the business here in that line.

W. B. Jones, before the war, bought the property now the residence of W. H. Bowmer, by whom it has been handsomely improved – and afterward moved to Arkansas, where he died a few years since. This property, formerly known as the "the little red brick," was then noted as the home of two young ladies remarkable for their many traits of character, and in whose company the young men delighted to dwell. Their mother was Mrs. E. B. Allen, sister of Col. D. R. Murray and of Mrs. Elizabeth Sebastian, the latter of whom, the last of the family, died Dec. 12, 1886. The daughters were Misses E. E. and Laura B. Allen, the former of whom became Mrs. T. F. Satterfield, now living on her farm adjoining town, the other Mrs. R. R. Pierce. She died suddenly in Louisville, Dec. 6, 1874.

Of the Crittenden family, Col. Murray's last wife, none are left, white or colored, except Ex.-Gov. T. T. Crittenden of Missouri and "Gov." Garrett Crittenden, colored, of Cloverport, and the latter, though neither an ex-governor nor ex-congressman, cannot be surpassed by the former in point of politeness.

Dr. Richard W. Murray was for a number of years a practicing physician here. He now lives at Rockport, Ind. Capt. J. M. White, who built several and commanded a number of the finest steamboats in the Southern trade, and who was one of the most popular boatmen ever engaged in that trade, married Miss Jane Sebastian, who died some years since in New Orleans, as did he, more recently, in Cloverport. Dr. Chas. Gabbert practiced medicine here some time. He married Miss Mary Lightfoot and moved to Rockport, Ind., where he died a few years since. Dr. J. L. Nourse, a skillfull dentist, was for a number of years a resident here, and died some years since. Dr. Lewis, wife and son, located here after the war; all are now dead. Dr. Jas. T. Owen located here in 1871, and is actively engaged in the practice of his profession. A. J. Wilkinson and wife were for a number of years citizens. Both have passed away.

J. E. Keith married Samuel Heist's daughter, and settled here, and has been for several years a Justice of the Peace. John Steel, the father of Wesley, Daniel and Harvey, the latter now dead, was an old settler here and is remembered well by the older citizens. Geo. H. Gregory has been a resident since 1848, John C. Heist, one of the three brothers and postmasters, an old citizen, died several years since. Barnett Lillard moved here in 1856. He bought of Jas. Manion the house in

which he still lives. M. Hammon moved here in 1860. Jas. Manion had the contract for grading the road to Bennettsville, and while engaged at that secured funds and built the first Catholic Church here, a brick, which was torn down and a new church built by Father Higgins, who was quite a favorite with the people here.

Capt. J. Sawyer, an old sea captain and river man, and Ed. Cowden, his son-in-law, were engaged in business here some years. Both died some time since. Dr. W. B. White moved here in 1865 and engaged in business. Richard D. Witt, whose estimable and aged mother still lives, grew up with the town and remains with it. His brother, Add. Witt, finally settled in Hardinsburg, and it is said is making money – selling goods below cost – which he explains by saying that the "immense business done enables him to sell at such rates." Jasper Dyer has been here long enough to be classed as an old citizen, as has Jacob May. P. S. Miller will, for obvious reasons, not be named in that class, nor will Jimmie Wheeler, F. Fraize, former Sheriff and County Clerk, took up residence here in 1856. Dr. T. N. Warfield moved here from Hardinsburg in 1852, and died recently.

R. L. Newman came to Cloverport in 1851 and taught school in the old academy, and engaged afterwards in the drug business. Dr. Brown began the practice of medicine here in 1871. Henry Haynes and James England erected the building near Miller's livery stable, and engaged in general trading for several years, the former returning to Grayson County, the latter to Tobin's Bottom, where a son of his still lives. Both are now dead. James T. Miller and his brother, Isaac, moved here in 1856 and engaged in the grocery and feed business. The latter died a few years since. Lane Wood is an old resident. Jas. T. Skillman moved here in 1870. Other older citizens were James Henry and John Holder, Ed. Wells, Jonas Noakes, Allen Murphy, A. J. Johnson, Richard and James H. Rogers, Jas. L. Patterson, Barnet Bohler, Joseph Porter, John L. Cully, Lewis Moorman, James Moorman, John S. Wilkinson, Frank Roff.

In the narratives given it may be stated that the older citizens are named such as occur to the writer at the time, omitting many equally worthy and leaving out the younger and those who came later.



**Breckenridge News, Cloverport, KY, Wednesday, 25 February 1891, p.6:**

**Reminiscences By An Old Timer – Part 11:**

Our reminiscences, though covering a considerable length of time and touching upon many things of more or less interest, less perhaps to most of our readers, do not comprise fully by any means the various subjects that might be brought out, yet it may serve to refresh the memory somewhat in its retrospection of the long past.

While due prominence has been given to many of the men who have figured upon the theater of action here, the ladies – the old women, as we are wont to call them – have been referred to occasionally, but not to the extent that should characterize any attempt, however feeble, to portray the times and adventures of a period around which memory clings with a tenacity that will not let go.

Of these dear ladies, "mothers in Israel," how shall we write and what names shall we mention, or rather, who can be omitted without doing violence to our feelings? Who has not sat mute with delight as many of these have poured forth words of wisdom, of advice, of warning,

until they proved a benediction, and from which were drawn inspirations to guide, to bless, to point with unerring certainty to some event in the history of our lives when these lessons should loom up in our pathway to cheer us in our despondency, to subdue our evil propensities, and to make us better men and better women than we should have been but for having imbibed such precepts and such examples?

In the State of Virginia, in a lonely graveyard in the country, lie the remains of the sainted mother of the writer. Living still on the old place, keeping vigil, as it were, over that grave, are two of his sisters, both now in old age, and lovingly do they remember their brother here, the three constituting the one-half of six little children left to a widowed mother to care for.

Far from Cloverport now are some whose mothers are buried here, and these grown-up children avail themselves of every favorable opportunity to make a pilgrimage to the shrine of their affection – to the grave of a devoted mother. Others whose parents are old and infirm, filled with emotions of filial love, which must ever find a lodgement in the heart, show on every suitable occasion how deeply rooted those feeling are.

But ties of consanguinity are not all that bind. In some the milk of human kindness extends to all, especially to those in need or in distress. Of such may be mentioned Mrs. Oglesby, who died several years since, whose kindness and generosity fed the hungry, relieved the wants of many, even ministering to the suffering, she was not less social and friendly in all the relations of life.

The life of Mrs. Esther B. Allen, remembered by many, was a shining example of devotion to children, a warm heart for all relatives and kindness of disposition generally, especially solicitous for the welfare of her son, John W. Allen, whose widow and children reside at Hawesville. Mrs. Allen long since led the way to that life beyond, followed since by that son and a loving daughter.

Mrs. George LaHeist in whose family the writer was for some time treated almost as one of the household, was formerly Miss Harriet Blincoe, and enjoyed the confidence and high regard of all. She was a good neighbor and an excellent woman in every respect. With her have passed away her husband, two daughters and two sons, the whole of a once happily constituted family.

Mrs. Barnet Lillard was a lady of very pronounced traits of character, a good worker in any cause she espoused, and lived to a good old age.

Mrs. Col. Murray, who survived her husband a few years, was a remarkable lady in many respects, always took an active part in church matters, and ministers always found a good home at her house. She raised a large family of boys and all attained prominence in affairs of State, or of war, or of finance.

Mrs. Elizabeth Sebastian, whose husband, Dr. Charles Sebastian, died while on a visit to Long Lick soon after the writer came to Kentucky, was the mother of a large family of children, of whom Mrs. Mary Raitt, Mrs. Josephine Hinsdale, Mrs. A. R. Fisher, George C. and "Tip" Sebastian are now living. Mrs. Sebastian was the last one of the large Murray family of brothers and sisters. Who did not know "Aunt Besty," so kind and considerable to all, evincing so much interest in every laudable undertaking? Expressing herself freely upon all occasions, without giving offense to any, comforted and cared for in her declining years by a loving daughter and granddaughter, she passed peacefully away and will long be remembered.

Mrs. John S. Lightfoot, the mother of Mrs. Mary Gabbert, Dr. J. F. and Charles E. Lightfoot, and Mrs. Addie Dowden, was noted for her hospitality generally, and for entertaining preachers especially, was kind-hearted and generous, ever ready to help the needy and enjoyed the respect of the community at large.

Of others who performed well their part and have gone to their reward, may be mentioned, Mrs. Wright, the mother of Mrs. Goff, Mrs. John Murray, Mrs. Overton, Mrs. Margaret Scott.

Of those yet living are Mrs. McPherson, Mrs. Delia Fisher, Mrs. Geo. H. Gregory, Mrs. Skillman, the mother of A. B. and Jas. T. Skillman, Mrs. McCrae, Mrs. P. V. Duncan, and Mrs. Judge Babbage, the estimable mother of J. D. Babbage, the enterprising merchant and publisher of the Breckenridge News, the best weekly in the country. It may be said, however, that Mrs. B. is quite young for her years, and enjoys to an unusual degree, visiting among her children, relatives and friends. Indeed, it is not intended to class all as being very old.

Many well remembered names of old ladies all over the county occur to the writer, from whom he has been the recipient of much kindness, and who were conspicuous for filling full the measure of duties assigned them in their "day and generation;" but to mention Mrs. Capt. Jack Webb, Mrs. Capt. Joe Robards, Mrs. Jesse Moorman, Mrs. T. G. Owen, Mrs. Sumner Dean, Mrs. Winston Lowry, Mrs. Richard Carter, Mrs. Miller and a host of others, would still leave many equally kind unnoticed, but not forgotten, and omitted by name for want of space alone.

Hardinsburg was, in the times of which we write, famous as the home of a number of old or elderly ladies, who moulded the characters of children and grandchildren following after them upon the stage of action, leaving indelibly impressed upon them pure thoughts and holy affections. Living their allotted time on earth, faithfully discharging every duty assigned them in their sphere of action, most of these have passed away, leaving behind them names that will ever be remembered and life records worthy to be emulated.

Of these we may note Aunt Peggy Allen, Mrs. Huston, Mrs. Judge Kincheloe, Mrs. Peyton, Mrs. Charles Hambleton, Mrs. McClarty, Mrs. Lightfoot, Mrs. Taylor, Mrs. Calhoun, Mrs. Singleton, Mrs. Jennings, Mrs. Thomas, Mrs. Hensley, Mrs. Eskridge, Mrs. Rusher, Mrs. Hughes, Mrs. Williamson Cox, Mrs. Seaton, Mrs. Sam Board, Mrs. Nathan Board.

Of those yet living are Mrs. Sue Cox, Mrs. Perk Kincheloe, Mrs. T. M. Miller, Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Daniel, Mrs. Gardiner. Others doubtless merit notice, but all may not be named here.



**Breckenridge News, Cloverport, KY, Wednesday, 4 March 1891, p.1:**

**Reminiscences By An Old Timer – Part 12:**

For many reasons it was deemed advantageous to the citizens of both, that the two towns should unite, and after the matter had been discussed for several years and an argument reached in regard thereto, it was carried into effect by an act of the Legislature, approved Feb. 11, 1860, and "Cloverport" was made to include both. The usual provisions of a town charter were granted, including police regulations, and in accordance with same five trustees were elected, two from the upper side of the creek and three from the lower side; also a Police Judge, John C. Babbage being the first to fill that position. Afterward the office was held respectively by D. R. Murray, W. D. Holt, John R. DeHaven and E. Fisher. John W. Raitt was the first Clerk.

The excitement of the war, which followed soon after the organization under the new act, threw everything into confusion, and for a number of years but little attention was given to municipal matters. Although it was less disastrous here in all respects than in many other places, yet much feeling was manifested. The people were divided in sentiment, producing dissensions among friends and tending in some instances to the severance of family ties to a greater or less

degree. But the deplorable results of the war have in a large measure passed away, amicable relations restored all around, and there is no disposition on the part of the writer to remove the veil that covers alike the faults of either side.

In March 1870, the following Board of Trustees was elected, viz: A. B. Skillman, A. L. Simons, John S. Lightfoot, Isaac Miller and Fred Walter – the result of a disposition upon the part of the citizens to see that matters were given that attention which the interests of the town demanded. A. B. Skillman was President and John W. Raitt, Clerk.

On the 31st of October the Board adopted an excellent set of town ordinances, which were printed in pamphlet form, and did much towards restoring good order and a better management of affairs. In March, 1871, the Trustees elected were R. R. Pierce and A. J. Wilkinson on the upper side, and Fred Walter, Allen Murphy and Richard D. Witt on the lower side. The Board organized June 26th, with R. R. Pierce, President, John W. Raitt, Clerk, and W. H. Bowmer, Treasurer.

The first act of the new Board was to give the trustees of either side the control of the streets on their side, with power to work and improve at their discretion, each side using its own funds for that purpose. A good wharf had been built at the upper landing, as was done afterwards at the lower landing, but the streets were in bad condition, so much so that wagons sometimes were stalled in getting up the hill – then a considerable ascent – from the bridge to the corner, now Sulzer's. It had been the practice of the authorities – and is too much so now – to expend the revenues of the town by scattering promiscuously over the streets work of no permanent benefit.

At the suggestion of the writer, readily acquiesced in by his colleagues, it was determined to use the funds of the upper side in filling and graveling streets, the latter an experiment, beginning at the bridge. Accordingly a fill of about six feet was made in the lower part, first of dirt, then rock, and gravel on top. It was thought by many that it would be entirely too expensive, and Mr. Walter, who proved to be a splendid financier and an enterprising business man, expressed freely the opinion that "Pierce would bankrupt the town before he made the street to the corner."

It proved differently, however, the treasury was not depleted until the graveling process was continued up the street to where Skillman then lived and along the street by Miller's stable to the wharf, it being found, after getting to the corner, entirely unnecessary to use rock at all. One year sufficed to prove the adaptedness of the gravel for paving streets both as to cost and solidity, and Trustee Walter then graveled on the lower side from the bridge to the Vest and Walter corner. Time had but confirmed the fact that we have an abundance of good material at hand for streets. It has now been used on the principal street through the city and some others, and it is to be hoped this work will be continued until all the streets are made permanently good, and that sidewalks will not longer be neglected.

In March, 1872, R. R. Pierce, A. J. Wilkinson, Fred Walter, W. B. White and Jacob Mook were elected Trustees; R. R. Pierce, President, John W. Raitt, Clerk, W. H. Bowmer, Treasurer, Jacob Mook, a good citizen, died July 20th, after which J. W. Steel was appointed in his place.

At a meeting of Trustees held Aug. 14, 1872, a resolution was adopted to open the street up the hill by the Baptist church, so as to get a better way up the hill. This proposition was opposed vehemently by the people from Vest's and Walter's corner down through the lower end of town, as tending, in their opinion, to turn the trade to the upper side. Trustee Walter, assuming the responsibility of the expense himself, but which was afterward paid by the town, secured the services of an engineer to survey and make an estimate of the cost of opening this street, and at the next meeting presented the same, showing that it would cost much more than the town was able to pay, thus checkmating, as was supposed, the move for changing the way up the hill. The advocates of the proposed change, however, having consulted with Dr. Lewis, who traveled constantly, the

path along the east side of the hill, got in a resolution for that route; but it involved the obtaining of Gen. E. H. Murray's consent, as the road must pass over his lots. This consent the writer soon obtained. The road was made at a comparatively trifling expense, saving an outlay, every year for repairs to the old road – about \$100 – besides being much better for travel, and no one would now likely have it changed back.

In March, 1873, Trustees were elected as follows: R. R. Pierce, A. B. Skillman, John W. Raitt, J. R. DeHaven and R. L. Newsom. John W. Raitt remained Clerk of the Board until his death. W. H. Bowmer was Treasurer until 1881. A. R. Fisher was then Treasurer three years. R. R. Pierce remained in the Board until 1879, and A. B. Skillman until 1880. Some changes in others occurred, and no important changes in affairs took place.

By an act of the Legislature, approved Feb. 25, 1884, the town was incorporated as a city. The first election for city officers was held May 5, 1884, when W. B. White was elected Mayor for the term of two years; A. B. Skillman and W. H. Bowmer, Councilmen First Ward; W. G. Smart, Cy. Lillard and Wallace Gruelle, Councilmen Second Ward. The first meeting of the Council was held May 20, 1884, when Wallace Gruelle was elected Mayor pro tem. David R. Murray, Attorney, J. D. Babbage, Treasurer, and Hicks Wills, Marshal. James Hambleton was elected Mayor in 1886 and again in 1888, succeeded by R. B. Pierce in 1890.



**Breckenridge News, Cloverport, KY, Wednesday, 11 March 1891, p.1:**

**Reminiscences By An Old Timer – Part 13:**

Schools were maintained here for some time by subscription, supplemented by a small sum per scholar from the State. Miss Eliza Newton taught a juvenile school, it being the beginning of Judge J. A. Murray's tuition at school. R. L. Newsom taught awhile in the old seminary building. Nathan Harris and daughters had the first boarding school, which they made quite a success. Afterwards a school was taught by Geo. A. Hinsdale, who was a civil engineer, and assisted in locating the railroad to Bennettsville. Mr. Hinsdale married Miss Josephine Sebastian and went to Colorado, where he became prominent as a politician, and was at one time Lieutenant Governor. He died some years since. His widow and children are now residents of Pueblo, Col.

Rev. Mr. Sproule at one time had a very good school here and afterwards went to Texas. He was perhaps never seen on the street without an umbrella. Prof. J. W. Hegan had a good school here at the beginning of the war. He went from here to Elizabethtown, where he was engaged in teaching several years. He then entered the ministry and removed to Arkansas. Mrs. Boyd then taught a school, assisted by Mr. Crowe. Afterwards Mr. Cully of Brandenburg, taught here awhile, followed by Mr. Vineyard and Prof. Exall.

These schools however were considered inadequate to the wants of the community, but there was no building suitable for better. Accordingly an act of the Legislature was procured, approved Jan. 28, 1872, granting a charter to establish the Cloverport High School, and in accordance with same, a tax was voted almost unanimously on the 15th of July, same year.

A suitable location was found on the hill, lots purchased, and in the spring of 1873 the contract for the brickwork was let to Capt. W. W. Badger of Hawesville. Rogers & Murphy obtained the contract for most of the carpenter work. The building was put under cover during the

fall and completed the next summer. The desks were furnished by the Richmond, Ind., School Furnishing Co.

The two school districts were united and the school fund directed to be paid over to the Cloverport High School, but the amount thus secured being wholly insufficient for the end desired – a free common school for all within proper age – it became necessary to supplement in some way this school fund. Judge J. A. Murray, who as a member of the Legislature a few years previously, and of the Committee on Education, had given the subject considerable thought, conceived the idea of combining the common with the High School, and thus, by a supplemental tax of the district, render it possible to have schools adapted to the wants of small communities, reaching up to an academical education for all the people.

Upon consultation with H. A. M. Henderson, then Superintendent of Public Instruction, in regard to schools, this idea was advanced by Judge Murray and indorsed by Mr. Henderson, and is believed to be the first instance in which such schools were adopted in Kentucky. This supplemental tax, duly authorized, has been regularly levied, enabling the trustees to have a good school taught eight to ten months each year free to all within the district, studying in the common school and High School branches, and at a reasonable charge for those outside the taxed district.

The first session of this school opened on the 7th of September, 1874. Prof. W. B. Hayward, Principal; Virgie Wilson, First Assistant; E. Crow, Second Assistant; Miss Sallie Sterrett.

Beginning under favorable auspices, the school was well conducted, and the session closed in like manner, and was satisfactory to all connected with it. Prof. Hayward received the appointment as Principal for another session, but resigned early in the session and Dr. W. H. Anderson was chosen for the position. After him Prof. Arnold held the position one session, since which several others, among them, and to the satisfaction of the people generally, Prof. Robt. E. Woods, a former student and graduate of this school, who afterwards made quite a reputation as Principal of the school at Elizabethtown, and now holds a responsible position in the War Department, Washington City.

A necessary adjunct and most important factor in building up a town and county is a good home paper; but the establishing and maintaining such a paper upon a solid basis is attended with difficulties much greater than is generally supposed. As proof of this we need only to refer to the many unsuccessful efforts made here and at other places in that line. Hence the importance of sustaining for it, by advertising by speaking of its merits on all proper occasions and aiding in extending its circulation.

It is upon this paper you must rely to bring out the hidden treasure; to publish to the world the advantages of your location for enterprises of various kinds; the productive qualities of your land; the healthfulness of your climate, and many other things that will attract attention.

The circulation of a newspaper nowadays is not confined to the immediate locality in which it is published. It goes as fast as steam can carry it to every section of the country, to relatives and friends who have gone from among you and are now scattered over a vast extent of the country, and in this way is read by many strangers. It is also exchanged with many other papers; its columns are scanned by newspaper men, and many items are copied from it, thus giving your local affairs a prominence they could in no other way attain.

In this respect our people have been behind other communities in times that are past, for although quite a number of weekly papers have been started here, it was only to float for a time upon the surface and disappear beneath the waves of indifference and thoughtless neglect upon the part of the public, accelerated doubtless in some instances by lack of talent and energy of those engaged in the undertaking.



In the year 1876 the Breckenridge News was founded by John D. Babbage, and the first number was published in July of that year, with T. S. Givens as editor, succeeded by Wallace Gruelle. This publication began with perhaps less than a dozen subscribers and less than half that number of real friends to encourage him and to give him the benefit of their influence and good wishes. Indeed, there appeared to be but little inducement for such a venture, consequently the over-cautious hesitated to identify themselves, even in sentiment, with an enterprise, which was most likely to prove a failure.

The field was one the cultivation of which had been attempted and abandoned so often that it seemed to many imprudent, to say the least, to renew an effort in that direction. But gradually the prospects of the enterprise improved, public spirit began to be manifested, and substantial endorsement to some extent was given. The community availed more and more of the advantages it offered them by its publication, and thus it managed to live; but not until within the last three years has it been so fully appreciated as to insure what is now no longer a question – its complete success.



**Breckenridge News, Cloverport, KY, Wednesday, 18 March 1891, p.1:**

**Reminiscences By An Old Timer – Part 14:**

The last sheriff under the old Constitution was Vivian Daniel, by virtue of having been Magistrate with Nathan Board, who had formed or bought the office as Deputy. The first meeting of the Magistrates under the present Constitution was called and held June 2, 1851. Present, Williamson Cox, Judge, and the following Magistrates, via: David R. Murray, E. Fisher, Elijah R. Eskridge, Jas. A. Hambleton, Joseph Wheatley, Wm. D. Carwhile, Charles Alexander, George P. Duncan, Thomas W. Dyer, Isaac R. Malin, Richard A. S. Brashear, Jonathan P. Beauchamp, T. C. Dowell, Thomas Alexander, John H. Cashman, Peter W. Johnson, Griffin S. Dowell, Wm. Smith Jr., John M. Whitehead and Richard E. Sutton.

These were all commissioned by Gov. John L. Helm, as was Joe Allen, County Clerk, who gave bond in the sum of \$10,000, with Francis Peyton, J. A. Hambleton and Jefferson Jennings as securities. Gov. Helm also commissioned G. P. Jolly, Sheriff, who appointed S. V. R. Board and T. J. Jolly, Deputies; also Richard P. . Kincheloe, Jailer, who gave bond in the sum of one thousand "pounds," and Samuel C. Chalfant, County Attorney, John B. Jolly, Assessor, Joseph B. Ball, Surveyor, Philip Lightfoot, Coroner.

The following were Constables: W. A. Barton, John S. Newton, Ed Burton, George E. Dailey, John Davidson, Peyton Thornhill, Archibald McKaghan, Allen Basham and Henry D. Basham. W. T. Owen, now a resident of Owensboro, an ex-judge and prominent attorney, qualified as Deputy Clerk the 19th of May, 1851.

The first regular term of the Court of Claims was held in October, 1851. The amount of claims allowed at this term was \$2,130.90, one item of which reads, "Amount allowed John S. Newton for arresting and whipping a Negro slave, one dollar." The County Attorney was allowed for his services one year \$100. The County Judge was allowed at this time for holding quarterly court three terms \$9. Thirty to forty dollars per year was allowed for keeping paupers, there being then no poorhouse farm.

The business of the court was transacted in two days, with no adjourned term, and for the services thus rendered the Justices allowed themselves \$2 each, the modest sum of \$1 per day, payable out of the next year's levy. The salary of the County Judge was afterward fixed at \$100. The court levied a tax of \$1 each on 2.894 tithes as per Assessor's list, on which the Sheriff's commission was \$174.55, and the delinquent list allowed was \$204. There was no property tax.

Included in the claims allowed and appropriations made were quite liberal amounts for improving the roads, working bad hills, filling mud holes, etc., to be expended under the supervision of the Magistrates or some citizen of the vicinity, and which in many instances was not prudently done; the repairs made were of a temporary benefit, to be renewed with an increased amount at next court; and notwithstanding this continuous outlay, the reputation of Breckenridge County for bad roads was proverbial, and remains so to this day. This drawback to the county's prosperity can only be remedied by adopting a good system of improvement and measures that will insure an honest and prudent expenditure of funds appropriated for that purpose.

How few persons give that careful consideration to public affairs that they do to their personal interests! and yet how many such seek and accept trusts of responsibility in such matters simply to turn an honest (?) penny! It is estimated that enough money has been improperly or carelessly expended in this county in the past forty years to turnpike every mile of bad road in the county.

The question upon which the welfare of the county now depends in a great measure, is shall this state of affairs continue, or will there be a spirit of improvement exhibited in the matter more in accordance with the wants and necessities of the community? A splendid field opens up here for some Alliance man or other enterprising citizen to pave his way to local fame, if not to fortune.

John W. Allen was appointed a Deputy Clerk in 1854. John B. Bruner, who had previously served in the Legislature, was elected County Attorney in 1854, and after serving faithfully in that capacity, was for several terms State Senator, in which position he acquired much distinction, attaining to the office of acting Lieutenant Governor, which he filled with credit to himself and to the county and district represented. He was a man of great political tact, and withal conscientious in the discharge of his duties. Had his life been prolonged, he would doubtless have attained to a high round in the ladder of fame.

The office of Circuit Judge under the present Constitution was filled successively by Jesse W. Kincheloe, Jas. Stewart, George W. Williams, James Stewart, George W. Williams, Martin H. Cofer, James Stewart and T. R. McBath, the present Judge. Charles Wintersmith was Judge of the Common Pleas Court until the court was abolished by the Legislature. John Allen Murray was Judge of the Criminal Court until it was abolished. The office of Commonwealth's Attorney has been held successively by Alfred Allen, John Chapeze, Cicero Maxwell, Baker Boyd, Joe Haycraft, Wm. R. Haynes and Chapeze Wathen; Circuit County Clerk, Joe. Allen, G. P. Jolly, E. Board and Richard S. Skillman; County Judge, Williamson Cox, James A. Hambleton, E. R. Eskridge, Milton Board, N. McC. Mercer, Milton Board, A. M. Pulliam and Thos. Adkisson; County Clerk, Joe Allen, G. P. Jolly, James A. Hambleton, D. P. Heston, F. Fraize, G. P. Jolly, Will Miller and - Monarch; County Attorney, S. C. Chalfant, Jno. B. Bruner, James T. Morehead, Robert H. Bowmer, W. K. Barnes and Milton Board; Sheriff, G. P. Jolly, M. Board, Thomas Atkisson, Frank Fraize, G. P. Jolly, Jas. A. Hambleton, Thomas A. McGill, John R. DeHaven, C. W. Moorman, D. S. Richardson, Allie DeJernette; D. H. Severs and J. Stewart DeJernette; Jailer, Gen. Basham, Harrison Kennedy, John Slaton, Logan Pate and John Slaton.

The list of county officers as presented herein shows the strong disposition of those who once get office to hold on to it. Take the case of Judge Board, whom the writer knew as a lad on

his father's farm, not dreaming, perhaps, of leaving that occupation and engaging in politics and office-seeking, yet we find him developed into the most continuous and successful county office-seeker at the hands of the people to be found in the State. When he shall have served out his present term he will have been thirty-four years in office. This beats Benton's "Thirty years in the Senate," but is not in accord with the good old Democratic doctrine of "rotation in office," a beautiful figure in theory, but practically not approved of by those who don't wish to be rotated out of office.

Well, the Judge has made a faithful officer though, and for the sacrifices that such men make for the good of the public, a clause should be inserted in the new Constitution retiring an officer, after thirty-four years' service, on half pay.

G. P. Jolly is another veteran in office, having served the people of Breckenridge County even longer than Judge Board. His time of public service foots up thirty-five years, not counting the double office of Circuit and County Clerk, which if counted singly (singularly?) would add eight years more. But in the absence of a constitutional provision applying to such cases, the Government is very properly taking care of Mr. Jolly – not, however, as a pensioner by any means; he is required to work for what he gets. The emoluments of office held by Mr. Jolly have to a considerable extent been distributed among the needy in conferring favors when called upon, and that regardless usually of the political antecedents or opinions of the party favored.

Among the other office-holders, but few novices in that line may be found. Judge Mercer was County Judge two terms and County School Superintendent afterwards. W. K. Barnes was County Attorney for twelve years, and while the others held for shorter terms, it will be noticed that all the important county offices have been monopolized to a considerable extent by few persons.



**Breckenridge News, Cloverport, KY, Wednesday, 25 March 1891, p.1:**

**Reminiscences By An Old Timer – Part 15:**

Combinations, syndicates, trusts, rings, monopolies, capital against labor, call it what you may, in old times we used to express the same idea by saying, "a wheel within a wheel," a plan rigged to grind somebody, to take advantage of some one's necessities, schemes laid to plunder, if not openly, yet to get the advantage in trade. Has not this always existed? Are not the colossal combines of today but the outgrowth of this principle? May it not have emanated from the workings of some court-house ring, ready to run county matters with an eye to business, as well as for the good of the county – with good intentions and honest purposes biased, it may be, by selfish motives unconsciously evolved from the frailty of human nature?

"When self the wavering balance shakes,  
The scales are rarely right adjusted."

What difference in principle, however much in degree, from a combine, to control any article of prime necessity and advance prices to the consumer above that which the natural laws of supply and demand would justify, from that of buying the county claim of an official for services to be performed perhaps at a discount of twenty per cent, when ten per cent would be ample margin? But what would a county seat be without a ring? And what would the sharper with money do for a vocation if deprived of the privilege of watching the records of the Court of Claims – of manipulating publicly and privately matters pertaining to the welfare alike of the county and its

officers? And being thus fortified, ready to scoop up anything offering a good per cent on investment. And yet this is not necessarily an unmitigated evil; it is frequently mixed with good. The writer would not condemn all such transactions; many find it quite an accommodation temporarily, at least, to have such opportunities presented.

But this involves other evils. The influence of the ring is brought to bear upon the court, forestalling its action and inducing the allowance of large claims, frequently unjust ones, so that the ring may profit thereby. If \$500 is a fair salary for a county office and \$600 can be had through the influence of the ring, so much the better for him who discounts the claim, and the records show that selling the claim for salary is frequently resorted to, and in some instances about the first thing the occupant of an office does after qualifying is to transfer his claim for a year's salary on the margin of the record of his assumption of office. Should an officer die before performing this service, it is easy, through the influence brought to bear, to have the court allow for the full year, ostensibly for the benefit of the family, but really to go into the pocket of some shark on account of advances.

It is a measure calling for an appropriation of money to be expended at the county seat is deemed at all practicable, the ring goes to work, gets a few pliable magistrates pledged to its privately, then has one of such to introduce the matter, and at the proper time some one or more of the ring appears, disinterested, of course, apparently just apprized of such a matter, falls right into line, "advises" the court to adopt it, and if necessary, resorts to the practice of "wining and dining," or some other strategy equally reprehensible, to secure the passage of a measure by the Court of Claims that the people would not approve of, placing additional burdens on them, but enhancing the chances for gain to the ring.

Did anybody ever know a proposition introduced in the Court of Claims to increase the salary of an official, or to expend money at the county seat, to be opposed by the ring? An experience of some years as a member of that court failed to disclose any such action.

But passing over these matters, reference may well be made to an exciting subject, which developed in 1868 – that of building a court house. This matter, which had been discussed for some time, took shape when the Court of Claims appointed a committee to examine and report upon a plan to repair the old building. It may be remarked that some suggestions had been made as to the propriety of removing the county seat to Cloverport, and although not seriously entertained, or deemed practicable by the more thoughtful, was sufficient to excite the apprehensions of the people of Hardinsburg and other portions of the county opposed to it, causing however, no opposition upon the part of the magistrates from Cloverport to the proposition to repair the court house. But when these commissioners reported at the Court of Claims held Nov. 16th, 1868, in favor of and recommending a new building and the court accepted the report; much surprise and indignation was manifested, and it was thought by many that this action had been secretly contemplated by the ring in the beginning.

At the Court of Claims there were present the following magistrates, his honor, Judge Board, presiding; Williamson Cox, Thos. M. Miller, John W. Raitt, Allen Burton, Thos. L. Wheatley, Geo. P. Duncan, Thomas W. Dyer, George Stackhouse, James Drury, Jonathan B. Beauchamp, Griffin S. Dowell, Charles W. Robins, Edward DeHaven, Thomas J. Lewis, Richard E. Sutton, Allen J. Adkisson, Henry D. Basham, William Moorman. The commissioners who had been appointed to report on repairs were Green W. Beard, F. Fraize, Thomas M. Miller, G. P. Jolly, E. R. Eskridge, S. V. R. Board, to which were added two others, John W. Bruner and J. T. Haswell. This committee was instructed to report to an adjourned court upon a plan and cost of a new building, after which at the same meeting the court ordered the commissioners to put under contract

"as soon as possible the building of a new court house, without further orders from the court, upon such plan and style as they may determine."

This action of the court so aroused public sentiment that it was determined at once to prevent, if possible, the saddling of such a debt upon the people of the county at so critical a period in their lives, with burdens already heavy to bear. Accordingly when at the January term, 1869, the report of the commissioners was presented, stating that the contract had been let at \$38,000, and Judge Kincheloe moved its adoption, Gen. E. H. Murray, for the opposition, objected. After much wrangling and contention, a reduction of \$8,000 was secured, with some modification of plan; the report in that shape was finally adopted, and the same commissioners were appointed to superintend the construction of the building. Edgar Bennett then came into court and accepted the proposition as then shaped, on behalf of Bennett & Dix.

Much dissatisfaction continued to exist, and at a called term of court, held May 18th, 1869, it was ordered that the old court house should remain standing for the time and the new building be placed on the public square now appropriated for the jail; but at another called term, held June 23, 1869, it was decided to tear down the old building and put the new one on the same place. The citizens of Hardinsburg offered to pay \$1,000 for the old building and furnish a room to hold court free of cost, and it was said that fearing an injunction, the old building was razed to the ground during that night.

This called court also directed the sheriff to pay \$8,000 to the contractors on the first day of January 1870, the same amount to the same on the first day of January 1871, and the balance when the work was completed. A report of the commissioners made to the Court of Claims at a term held Nov. 22, 1870, recommended that the building be received and payment of balance be made, and states that "it is the best building in the State for the money," although it has been thought otherwise by many.

As regards the removal of the county seat, so far as the writer knows, no desire exists on the part of the people here to agitate the matter, and they would countenance no such move.

The result of a proceeding regarded by many as inopportune and unnecessary, was a determination that as many of those holding county offices as possible should be displaced and new men put in the new building. Accordingly at the next election N. McC. Mercer, then a citizen of Cloverport, who had taken an active part in opposition to the new building, was put up as a candidate for County Judge – although not aspiring to such position – and triumphantly elected, and succeeded himself for another term. It seems to be true, however, that even men taken from among the people, outside the rings, are naturally absorbed by the ring in the course of time – and the Judge was no exception to the rule – the effect of abrasion – and is now supposed to be "one of them." The trend of our present County Judge seems to be in that direction, as indicated by a certain deciding vote given after he had received the nomination but previous to the election.

In penning these lines, the writer "hath nothing extenuated, nor set down aught in malice," his purpose to "vindicated the truth of history." As to the parties concerned on either side in the whole transaction, its goes without saying that they are composed of our best and most reputable citizens, of strict integrity, and any apparent deviation from sound principles must be attributed to a more or less vitiated public sentiment, which sometimes influences our best men, and which condones, rather than condemns, error.



**Breckenridge News, Cloverport, KY, Wednesday, 1 April 1891, p.1:**

## Reminiscences By An Old Timer – Part 16:

By an easy transition from subjects not pleasant to contemplate, but which the writer could not ignore and yet be a faithful chronicler of events, to those more congenial to his feelings, reference is next had to the county's representation in the General Assemblies of Kentucky since the year 1806. The names enrolled will serve to remind some, and inform others, of those who have been instructed to make laws for the government of the people. These names are recorded at Frankfort, and they may yet be upon the pages of unwritten history. They are as follows:

Charles Polk, 1806-7; William Hardin, 1810-13, John Sterrett, 1811-24-25; Joseph Huston, 1813, died in office and vacancy filled by Wm. Hardin; James Moorman, 1814-15-16; Edward Chew, 1817-18; Robert Stephens 1819; David R Murray, 1820-21-22; David Stephens, 1826; Anselm Watkins, 1827-28; John Calhoon, 1829-30-40; Jefferson Jennings, 1832; Henry Washington, 1837; Alfred Allen, 1838; Ben Smithers, 1841-42; Charles Hambleton, 1843-44; Joseph T. Smith, 1845-46; Nathaniel S. Lightfoot, 1847; Joseph A. McClarty, 1848; John B. Bruner, 1849-50; Joshua H. Thomas, 1851- 53; Thomas Alexander, 1853-55; Gideon P. Jolly, 1855-7; William A. Barton, 1857-9; David C. Gannaway, 1859-61; Alfred Allen, 1861-67, but elected State Treasurer in 1866 an succeeded in the Legislature by Charles Alexander, 1866-67; John Allen Murray, 1867-9; Dudley Hambleton, 1869-71; Jonas D. Wilson, 1871-3; Thomas M. Miller, 1873-5; J.W. Drury, 1875-6; Thomas J. Lewis, 1877-8; R.R. Pierce, 1879-80; Green W. Beard, 1881-2; E. R. Pennington, 1883-4; Charles Blandford, 1885-8; Tice Jolly, 1889-90.

David R. Murray was elected State Senator while a resident of Hawesville, subsequently removed temporarily to Colorado during the excitement regarding the rich mines discovered there, but did not resign his position as Senator, and was recognized at Frankfort during the session as the "Senator from Colorado."

Hon. Lafe Green of Falls of Rough, was subsequently State Senator, one term, succeeded by Dr. Byers of Grayson county, and the position is now being ably filled by James S. Wortham, of Leitchfield.

The farm on Long Lick, the late residence of Thomas J. Lewis, deceased, was owned and occupied successively by Mr. Anselm Watkins, Dr. J. H. Thomas and Mr. Lewis, and each one of these represented the county in the Legislature. It might be a good investment for some aspiring gentleman to buy that farm and thus place himself in the line of safe precedents for political preferment.

Of the Representatives named, fifteen were residents of Hardinsburg, four of Cloverport, five from the Long Lick section, three from the Bewleyville section, two from Holt's Bottom, two from Quality Corner, two from the upper part of the county, two from the Union Star section, one from Clover Creek, and two from other sections. The average term of service is something over two years, although a number served longer, but it will be remembered that previous to the adoption of the present Constitution, sessions were held annually.

Previous to the election of Representatives in 1877, the "Grange" movement had taken shape – an organization somewhat similar to the present Farmer's Alliance. A long period of depression had existed and the farmers concluded to make some effort to better their condition – a proceeding of the greatest importance, and certainly demanded by every consideration. Accordingly steps were taken on this new idea; radial measures were proposed and to a considerable extent carried into effect; middle men were to be knocked out, buying all to be done from first hands; "Grange Stores" were opened in towns and different neighborhoods in the

country, on the co-operative plan; old merchants were ignored by many, notwithstanding these same merchants had supplied them with food and clothing on credit for years. These and many other matters introduced in the interest of reform, it was hoped, would soon bring about better times.

As a result of these things, a majority perhaps of Grangers were elected to the Legislature next succeeding, session of 1877-9; at any rate they had sufficient strength to shape business to suit their ideas, and it was known as the "Grange" Legislature. They reduced taxes, in the interest of the farmer, it was supposed, but singularly enough, neglected to reduce expenses at the same time – even collected in full the usual price for their own services, including mileage and stationery. The result was a deficit in the treasury, which the next Legislature – session of 1879-80 – was called on to provide for by increasing the taxes again and reducing salaries, fees and other expenses was did away with by the succeeding meeting of the General Assembly. In the meantime the Grange movement had been found not to work well; bickerings and dissensions arose; Granges differed as to the course to be pursued about various things; stores were not properly conducted; and finally the Grange was forced to give way to the old order of things.

But the prospects of the farmer have not improved. Everything raised for market he has been compelled to sell at unremunerating prices, while paying high for what he buys. With debts piling up, mortgages increasing, and want staring him in the face, it is not strange that he hopes by another move, now made, to extricate himself from these troubles. This time it is the Farmer's Alliance – an improvement, let us hope, upon the Grange move, but similar to it in many respects. It remains to be seen whether or not it will share the fate of its predecessor. We truly hope it may better the farmer's condition, but already there are indications of disagreement among themselves that bodes no good for the order.

One mistake appears common to various organizations – that is, running them into politics. The Alliance is no exception, and yet there is surely patriotism and sound principles in one or the other of the two great political parties sufficient to appreciate the needs of the farmer and laboring classes generally, and make laws accordingly. The creation of a third party will not avail. Elect to office good, honest men, competent to discharge the duties thereof; hold them to strict accountability in every respect; see that they are faithful to their trusts, and the interests of all – not of a class – will be promoted. Politics, when lugged in out of place, is the bane of all organizations for ameliorating the condition of mankind.

The writer has witnessed the rise and fall of societies, which but for the mixture of politics, might have accomplished much good. Temperance societies were at one time very popular, and it was understood that there were to be no politics in it, and yet no sooner than able to stand alone, it must be associated with politics; its downfall was a natural consequence. Teetotalism followed in its wake, but to be stranded upon the same rock. Prohibition, as at present conducted, will fare no better. Extremists do not have the patience requisite to accomplish great reforms; people must be educated up to these salient points.

What moral suasion fails to effect, it is poorly worthwhile to attempt by coercion. In the beginning good and evil were set before men; they chose evil rather than good because their deeds were evil. Teach them so that they may "cease to do evil and learn to do good," and this by degrees; don't aim to reform everything at once; don't look for perfection in anything. There are too many societies, in the church and out of the church, which causes divided effort, each tending to weaken or antagonize the other, whereas "in union there is strength." Concentrated effort, moral suasion, in place of divided councils, enforced morality. The law punishes offenders, but does not make men honest.



**Breckenridge News, Cloverport, KY, Wednesday, 8 April 1891, p.1:**

### Reminiscences By An Old Timer – Part 17:

Railroads in Kentucky may well be considered in these "Reminiscences," occupying, as is now the case, a position of pre-eminence in the county, although until within the last decade they had not assumed proportions in the State that would place them beyond infancy, thus being in line with that class of manufacturers supposed by many to need protection.

Previous to 1856, charters granted to railroads were much more liberal in their provisions than now, and those provisions were in the nature of "vested rights," which could not be revoked by subsequent legislation, whereas charters obtained since that time are subject to revision or repeal at the discretion of the Legislature, so that laws regulating the management of railroads are from time to time made and enforced. These laws, however, have in the main not been oppressive as yet, but there is a strong tendency toward making them more stringent.

Even as far back as the session of 1879-80, a bill was introduced in the Lower House by the member from Shelby, copied from a law then recently enacted in Missouri, appointing commissioners to regulate the management of all railroads and enforce compliance with the very stringent measures of said bill, and which would have greatly retarded the building of railroads in the State. This writer, who as a boy employed on a railroad in Virginia, and from observation since, saw at once the folly of an attempt by the Legislature to run the railroads of the State – a matter requiring the utmost skill and much experience to succeed – offered as a substitute a bill appointing commissioners with advisory powers only, to look into the whole matter, inform themselves on various points, and report to the next meeting of the Legislature. The nature of this substitute was spoken of to a member of the Senate, by a friend of his in the House, who was himself preparing to introduce a bill upon the subject, and who at once incorporated this idea, and the member of the House requested the author to hold it up that the Senator might bring it in, saying the credit would go to him any way, as author of the substitute, and from whom the idea was obtained.

The substitute was pressed, however, but defeated in the House, the member alluded to and other friends of the Senator voting against it that it might originate in the Senate, which it did – was agreed to in the House and became a law; which with such amendments as seemed from time to time to necessary, but retaining the original idea of advisory; leaving final issue when necessary to the courts, is the law now.

When railroad building was first begun in Kentucky, it was done by selling stock to raise the money. This stock was much of it subscribed for by individuals, and payment for same made by installments as called for, to be actually expended in constructing the road, and the progress made was slow. As it was found impossible to raise a sufficient amount in this way it was necessary to secure county aid. At that time no large syndicates or capitalists existed to advance money to railroads, consequently bonds were issued by counties and municipalities, based upon their ability, or supposed ability, to meet their obligations, and these bonds were sold at a heavy discount and in comparatively small amounts wherever they could be placed to the best advantage and the money used in prosecuting the work.

Many counties, in their anxiety to get roads, or upon false conception of the outcome, were seriously involved by a burdensome tax, and this accounts for much of the prejudice since



developed against railroads. Now the mode of procedure is altogether different. Immense amount of capital is now held for investment, and railroad bonds are much sought after, so that county aid and subsidies are not regarded as indispensable except so far as may be required to induce parties to take hold of an enterprise, much depending upon the merits and proper handling of the same in order to succeed without a tax.

As soon as a charter is obtained and a company is organized, a survey may be made and a contract entered into for the construction of the road; then the bonds are issued and so arranged that they can be sold or placed as collateral to raise money, a mortgage being given on the franchise and road, the same when built being to secure the parties who have furnished the money, the coupons or interest to be paid to the bondholder semi-annually. The stock is considered of nominal value depending upon the amount that is required to pay interest on the bonds.

The principle of voting a tax upon the people of a county or precinct for any purpose is a vicious one, to be tolerated only under peculiar circumstances, and as a general thing should be ignored. More especially is this true when, in order to carry the vote of a county for a railroad tax, one precinct unanimously opposed to it is thrown out in order to carry another with the county equally opposed; and still more wrong is inflicted when a precinct is divided because it cannot be carried as a whole. Breckenridge county may be congratulated for having secured so great railroad facilities with so small an outlay of money by tax or otherwise, and her Court of Claims will never entertain a proposition looking towards repudiation in any shape or form.

But few persons, perhaps, have an adequate conception of the railway mileage of the United States. The Interstate Railway Commissioners, in their report to Congress, say that it is "equal to many times that of any other country, and considerably exceeding that of all Europe combined. The railway mileage of this country is round numbers about 160,000 miles. The number of employees exceed 700,000, and with others connected in various capacities, aggregate not far from one million persons, or nearly one-twelfth of the adult male population of the country." This would indicate an investment in money of over \$8,000,000,000, the average cost of railroads in the United States being \$54,000 per mile. In Kentucky there were on the 1st of January, 1891, 3,041 miles of railroad, as against 1,530 miles in 1880. A very large proportion of this increase has been made since 1885, but little being done in the first half of the decade. The average cost per mile in Kentucky is \$48,650, showing an investment of nearly \$150,000,000, mostly the result of capital from outside the State.

Three years since the county of Breckenridge had 7 miles of railroad, now it has 78 miles, which is more than any other county in the State has except Jefferson, and involving an outlay of nearly two and a half million dollars.

The history of the L., St. L. & T. Railway, from its inception, will be given in our next and perhaps last number of these "Reminiscences."



**Breckenridge News, Cloverport, KY, Wednesday, 15 April 1891, p.1:**

**Reminiscences By An Old Timer – Part 18:**

Elected in 1879 to represent the county of Breckenridge in the ensuing session of the Legislature, the writer began to cast about for a subject upon which in addition to his general duties to make a record, not a record that many seek to insure them another term, or as a stepping stone

to something better, but one that while giving him an enviable reputation would redound to the interest of those represented.

At that time the city of Louisville had only limited facilities for obtaining coal. Dependent to a great extent upon Pittsburg for supplies, it frequently happened that in consequence of low water and ice, stocks were reduced and prices forced up to extortionate rates, as high as 30 to 40 cents per bushel, causing factories to shut down and bearing particularly hard upon the poorer classes, who were unable to lay in their winter supply during the spring and summer. Comparatively little Kentucky coal was then being mined. It occurred then to the writer that as coal could be reached at or in the vicinity west of Cloverport and nearer to Louisville than any other mines, the city might be induced to aid in the building a railroad that would insure them cheap coal at all times.

Under these circumstances he conceived the idea of procuring a charter to construct the "Louisville, Cloverport & Western Railway Company," to run from Louisville or West Point through or near Brandenburg to Cloverport and thence to any point in Western Kentucky, they might elect so to do.

This charter was written out without consulting any one, or disclosing his intentions even to his most intimate friends and no publicity was given to it until leave was obtained to introduce the bill. This course was pursued because the writer felt that the scheme would be pronounced wild and impracticable even by his best friends, and he did not care to ask them to indorse a project, which they would deem so visionary. This anticipation proved almost literally true – not a half dozen all told; believing that it could even materialize. Friends saw nothing to encourage hope of success. Opponents of the scheme treating it with derision.

But it proved as will be shown that the author of the project, who "solitary and alone put the ball in motion," built wiser than he new.

The charter was approved April 24th 1880. The incorporators named without consulting them were, P. Meguiar, L. C. Murray, Clinton McClarty, J. W. Richardson, Frank Ditto, L. T. Roberts, J. A. Crawford, James T. Miller and R. R. Pierce. Senator D. R. Murray gave his aid and influence in passing the bill through the Senate, and in his absence Senators Griffith, S. E. Hill and A. B. Montgomery, our present Congressman, placed the member from Breckenridge under obligations or various favors. Hon. Clint. McClarty of Louisville, H. C. Rawlings, of Meade, McAdams of Hancock, Rudy and McFarland, of Daviess, and Dorsey, of Henderson, were especial friends of the enterprise.

Col. J. C. Fawcett was at Frankfort during the session for the purpose of procuring a charter in connection with some Boston parties, from the Virginia line at Cumberland Gap in Louisville. An extension of a contemplated line from Richmond, Va. and his attention was drawn to the project of which we write. A thorough railroad man, he at once saw that the proposed road had merits, and after the adjournment of the Legislature, a correspondence with him resulted in his agreeing to join in promoting the enterprise.

According on the 22d of June, 1881, a meeting of incorporators was held at Cloverport, and books were opened for subscriptions of stock.

By this time more interest had been manifested by the citizens of Cloverport, who subscribed liberally for stock, thus giving an impetus to the ball, and they stood well by the project from that time. Maj. Miller and Judge J. Allen Murray at once took an active part in the matter. The former accompanied the writer to Owensboro via Pellville and Knottsville, then the prospective route. At Owensboro the first man consulted was Col. J. D. Powers and when our business had been stated and his co-operation solicited, he replied you are on the wrong route.

Change your program so as to have your line of road follow the river via Hawesville and Lewisport, and I am with you. Upon agreeing to give that route proper consideration, Col. Powers entered heartily into the work, and with entire confidence in the final result did to bring about the desired end.

Maj. Miller never lost faith, and continued a faithful worker to the end, expending a considerable amount of money, as well as much time to secure the building of the road.

Judge J. Allen Murray was a free effective worker, and the Breckenridge News was ever ready to lend its columns to advance the project. Others there were and many of them, well wishers and willing to aid, but who hesitated to take a very active part in a scheme, which as they thought gave so little promise of success.

However at the meeting of the stockholders held at Fisher's Hall, on the 14th August, 1881, an organization was effected by electing the following Board of Directors: Frank Ditto, James Crawford, J. D. Powers, T. J. Monarch, W. W. Tabor, Jas. T. Miller and R. R. Pierce.

The directors held a meeting the same day and organized by electing R. R. Pierce, President; J. D. Powers, Vice President and J. Allen Murray, Secretary.

Col. J. C. Fawcett was present and took an active part in the proceedings, and at his suggestion a consolidation was afterwards entered into with another company under the corporated name of the "Louisville, St. Louis & Texas Railway Company," confirmed by the act of the Legislature, approved January 13th, 1882.

It was determined to make a survey of the line from West Point to Henderson, and a call of 5 per cent was made for that purpose. Col. Broadhead was appointed chief engineer with Z. T. Herndon, assistant. The survey was begun at West Point, October 4th, 1881, the line running by Rock Haven, Brandenburg, Caseyville, near Union Star to the river, three miles above Stephensport and Holt's Bottom to Cloverport, a point named in the charter. From Cloverport the survey was continued down the river to Hawesville, passing one mile back of Lewisport, one and a half from Yelvington, on to Owensboro. From Owensboro a line was run back by Knottsville and Pellville to Cloverport, according to agreement, 5 per cent on subscription to stock being paid by subscribers upon that line.

Profile was made of the survey, and Col. Fawcett was appointed to conduct the financial operations in which he was assisted by Col. J. D. Powers.

In the mean time subscriptions were being solicited, right of way secured, and conditional aid in various ways obtained, chiefly through the labors of the writer; voluntary and only being asked as the projector of the enterprise in conformity with his long established views upon the subject purposely avoided having any provisions inserted in the charter that would authorize a vote to be taken for subscriptions by counties, precincts or municipalities.

For several years succeeding these transactions during which the activity engendered by a temporary promise of better times had given place to despondency and distrust, and it was impossible to promote new enterprises. The effort, however, was never relaxed, and was finally renewed with success, as will be shown in our next.



**Breckenridge News, Cloverport, KY, Wednesday, 22 April 1891, p.1:**

Reminiscences By An Old Timer – Part 19:

The feeling that had been aroused by enthusiastic meetings at all the principal towns and cities along the proposed line had been subdued, but during this long waiting and ineffectual efforts, hoping as it were against hope, with those hostile in feeling exulting over the apparent failure of what they were pleased to call, "Pierce's Paper Railroad," while true friends were despondent, the writer never relinquished his purpose, and perhaps a half dozen still hopeful; among them Col. Fawcett, who never gave up; Col. Powers, Maj. Miller and J. A. Murray amid difficulties and discouragement still pressed forward.

So preposterous seemed the undertaking that Judge Williams though anxious to have the road, said that "Pierce and Powers might as well try to build a road to the moon, as to expect capitalists to expend their money in such a scheme with no better basis than they can offer.

Two of the most prominent bankers in Louisville then, neither of them now, when asked to lend their influence simply by taking a small interest, said, "they could not afford to be identified with a project so likely to prove a failure," which of course might detract from their acknowledged reputation as men of sound judgment and business sagacity.

G. W. Beard said, "I can't think it has any chance of success when men invest their money they like to see a show for getting it back someday." (Bonds sold in New York a few days since for 103.) James Clark, of Louisville, President of the Farmers Tobacco Warehouse, said after the road was completed, "Pierce, I didn't think you would build that road sure enough, I thought it would be a failure."

These expressions convey an idea of the general feeling upon the subject.

Nevertheless, continued efforts were finally crowned with success, and in 1886 a contract was entered into with W. V. McCracken & Company to build the road. This contract was approved at a called meeting held at Louisville, October 19th, 1886, when R. R. Pierce resigned the position of President and accepted that of Vice-President and J. C. Fawcett was made President.

On the 6th of January, 1887, the writer had the pleasure of throwing the first shovel of dirt, thus beginning the actual work of constructing the Louisville St. Louis & Texas Railway. C. L. Cornwall, the Engineer in charge, threw the second shovel and then turned the work over to a boss, who had arrived with a half dozen hands to prosecute the work of grading the roadbed.

The work thus inaugurated was continued from that day, and after a while upon a much larger scale putting a stop to the sport made by many at its small beginning. It may be remarked that the route first surveyed was found to be impracticable for a portion of the way, and the present much better line was adopted. At the annual meeting of stockholders held in September, 1887, Major. W. V. McCracken was made Vice President and General Manager.

In April, 1888, J. C. Fawcett resigned as President and W. V. McCracken succeeded to the Presidency with Geo. A. Evans, of New York, Vice President. Geo. H. Lamkin was made Secretary in April, 1886, which position he still holds. J. D. Powers and R. R. Pierce are still members of the Board of Directors, the only ones of the charter members now officially connected with the enterprise.

The building of the Louisville, St. Louis & Texas Railway made possible the construction of the Fordsville branch from Irvington, with a spur to Hardinsburg, and also to the Falls of Rough, which was accomplished by voting a tax upon themselves by the Hardinsburg precinct and a portion of the old cut off and McDaniel precinct, amounting in the aggregate to \$60,000, \$49,000 of which is said was turned over to McCracken & Co., the other \$11,000 to the promoters of the enterprise for securing the road.

This amount the section upon which it is levied may find a good investment, and it is hoped that as a feeder to the main line it may prove remunerative to the builders.

The construction of this road adds very much to the prosperity of the county through which it passes, and the people generally viewing it in that light were anxious to have it, and many gave free right of way and other inducements.

At all points the writer was treated with much kindness while performing his labors along the line – more especially perhaps by those along the line through Meade County to Webster and finally located those people comprehending more fully the necessity for vigorous action in order to secure the benefits to be derived by its location.

Gus. W. Richardson loaned him a saddle home as long as he needed it. Albert Thompson, Jno. L. Henry, M. Lyddan. Edgar Bennett and many others in fact literally every one were ready to perform act of kindness – do anything deemed necessary to forward the enterprise, and nearly all along the line this feeling was manifested. In securing right of way however, some refused to give it free, and had to be passed, while some others thought professing willingness, hesitated or delayed signing, and when finally it become necessary to begin paying for same, nearly all who had failed to sign demanded pay. This action caused dissatisfaction with some who had given free right of way, and suits were instituted even by such, upon some pretext or other, and they think hard of the writer to this day for the part he took in the premises, while a large number rightly appreciating the benefits of the road have no regrets expressed or implied. And it is true, notwithstanding legal points will not permit such facts to be considered, that there is scarcely a tract of land through which the road passes that has been so damaged as to make it less valuable now than it was or would be, without the railroad.

In some instances when right of way had to be paid for, the parties have been not only reasonable – but liberal in their demands, while others have been deemed extortionate and a good many condemnation suits resulted. Perhaps however, all things considered, no railroad built in the State has had less trouble or less expense about right of way, damage suits, etc. And certainly no people have been treated better. Any unpleasant feelings that may exist between the owners of the road and any one along the line will give way to mutual interest and better understanding. The operation of the road will be so conducted as to make friends – not enemies of the people.

The writer feels under special obligations for kindness extended to him in his "labor of love," devoting as he has done, so much of his time and means to the work without compensation, for although many expressions of gratitude have occurred, substantial considerations have not been deemed essential, pecuniary obligations have not been asked of the people for the benefit of the project or of this enterprise. Although voluntary promises of contributions were made by some, conditioned upon certain things that have been fully accomplished, obligations thus self-incurred were promptly released, when it was related to the proposed beneficiary that it might embarrass proceedings essential to the success; those parties reaping the benefits, without incurring the promised outlay.

Only two presents were received that the writer can now call to mind. One a patent shoe buttoner presented by Mr. Whittlehofer, of Brandenburg. Duly appreciated and carried to this day, the other a gallon of native wine from Mr. Charles Tinus, duly appreciated and consumed long since.

Mr. Frakes, of Brandenburg and Mr. Bennett, of Stephensport, were always very moderate in their charges, and people through the country entertained the writer in the most hospitable manner, and he is under obligations to many that he regrets his inability to discharge, yet in towns with hotel accommodations, he would not ask a meal of private families, and has more than once gone without dinner when hungry for lack of money to pay the bill. This however, incidentally, is one among the many much greater privations and hardships which need not be mentioned, nor has

he any complaints to make on that score or any regrets to express. Success in the undertaking was the great end desired. That so fully accomplished is regarded as ample compensation for everything else.

He does not regret however, that under a misconception of facts, some formerly good friends have been alienated to some extent by what they think unfair treatment, but conscious of the integrity of his purpose and of the rectitude of his course, he trusts to the future for a due appreciation of whatever has been accomplished, with results in many instances as yet undefined.




**Kentucky: A History of the State, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition**  
**W. H. Perrin, J. H. Battle and G. C. Kniffin,**  
**F. A. Battey, Louisville, KY, 1886L**

HON. ROBERT R. PIERCE was born in Louisa County, Va., June 22, 1823, and is the fourth child in a family of six children born to Richard and Pamela (Cosby) Pierce, natives of Virginia; the former died when Robert was quite young, leaving his widow with a family of small children to rear and educate. The subject of this sketch remained at home with his mother until he was seventeen years, having in the meantime received a good common education. He then engaged as a laborer on the farm of one of the most systematic farmers of the county, both a practical and scientific agriculturist, with whom he remained two years, after which he spent a year as clerk in a store. He was next appointed local agent of what was then the Louisa Railroad, but now a part of the Chesapeake & Ohio system. In 1848 he came to Kentucky, and located in Breckinridge County, engaging in the tobacco business, which he carried on extensively, buying and shipping large quantities annually until 1882, when he became one of the prime movers in the construction of what is known as the Louisville, St Louis & Texas Railroad. The incorporation of the company has been effected, and organization completed with Mr. Pierce as president of the company. A route has been surveyed and negotiations are closed for the early building of the road. Mr. Pierce was elected to represent Breckinridge County in the Legislature, and served his constituents with ability. He was married, in 1850, to Laura E. Allen, by whom he had ten children, seven of whom are now living: Jessie R., wife of Nathaniel Wilson; Frederick H., unmarried; Robert B., married to Anna Duncan; Allie B., wife of Rev. Montgomery May; Eli Murray, married Tillie Weiger; Annie Laurie und William R. Mrs. Pierce died in 1874, and November 30, 1876, Mr. Pierce was married to Annie R. Thomas, a daughter of Dr. Joshua H. Thomas. He was a native of Montgomery County, Md., where he was born March 10, 1804, and was one of a family of ten children. He remained in his native State until he was twenty-five, when he went to Virginia. He had previously studied medicine in Cumberland, Md., and on his removal to Virginia at once began practice. He remained there until 1830, when he came to Kentucky and located in Hardinsburg, in this county. He purchased a farm near by and carried it on in connection with his practice. He was elected to the Legislature, in 1851-53. In 1857 removed to La Rue County, where he purchased land. In 1807 he moved to Hodgenville, the county seat of La Rue, where he has since resided, with the exception of five years spent in the banking business in Elizabethtown. He was married, July 10, 1826, to Lucy L. C. Colston, by whom he had six children, of whom Mrs. Pierce is the fourth. His wife died in April, 1850, and in September, 1851, he married Fannie Owen. Two children were the result of this union, a daughter and a son. Dr. Thomas has been successful in all his business ventures, and as a practicing physician ranked high in the profession. In politics he is a stanch Republican.



Breckenridge News, Cloverport, KY, Wednesday, 13 December 1893, p.2:



**HON. R. R. PIERCE.**

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**HIS DEATH OCCURS AT HIS HOME  
IN THIS CITY ON THE 8th  
INSTANT.**

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**Peacefully and Quietly He Passes  
Away Surrounded by His  
Relatives and Friends.**

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**A Sketch of His Life, a Tribute of  
Love and Resolutions of Respect  
by Those Who Have Known  
Him and Revere His  
Memory.**

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**A GOOD MAN GONE.**

The Hon. R. R. Pierce died at his home in this city last Friday, the 8th inst., at 3:30 o'clock p. m.

Mr. Pierce had been sick for several months, and it had been apparent for sometime that his taking off was only a matter of a little while. He was first taken with inflammation of the bowels, which was followed by a general breaking down of the system.

The funeral services were held at the Pierce residence Sunday afternoon, conducted by the Rev. Dr. J. B. Cottrell and the Rev. H. T. Lampton, after which the remains were deposited in their last resting place in the Cloverport City Cemetery. The pall bearers were A. B. Skillman, F. N. D'Hay, J. T. Skillman, Jas. H. Moorman, J. F. Keith and Dudley Hambleton.

We know no more fitting tribute to his memory than to make some extracts from a sketch of his valuable life which we published in these columns nearly a year ago, Jan. 11th 1893.

"Mr. Pierce was born in Louisa county, in the state of Virginia, in the year 1823 and was educated at what was known as "Old Field Schools," at that time the best patronized and most popular schools of any in the "Old Dominion."

At an early age he became a clerk in a country store. Afterwards he was depot agent at a point on what is now the Chesapeake & Ohio railroad. In time he was made conductor on a train on the road – also mail agent between Washington City and Richmond, Virginia.

The attention of the late D. B. Harris, one of the largest tobacco operators in the country, was attracted to the young man who was exhibiting the finest business capacities. It resulted in an engagement of his services to come to Cloverport and manage Harris' large tobacco business here. This brought Mr. Pierce to Cloverport in the year 1847. He has resided here from that day to this.

As before remarked, a more useful man never lived in any community. His tobacco operations were large for a great number of years, in which time he paid out large sums of money to planters and employed hundreds of hands in his stemmery. His fairness and justness as an employee was singularly illustrated in a successful race he made for the Legislature, some years ago. The laboring population of Cloverport voted for him, black and white, almost to a man, regardless of party affiliation, giving as a reason that he was a public benefactor and a just man.

During his career as a tobacconist, he engaged in other enterprises – merchant miller, farmer, etc. – driving everything before him with an energy and activity that was remarkable. He built several of the largest houses in the olden times of Cloverport. The large brick building on Front and Oak streets, in the West end; the large building where the postoffice is now kept, (now the Heyser House) which he rebuilt from an old frame; the handsome and commodious dwelling occupied by his son R. B. Pierce, on High street; the large store house of S. L. Sulzer; the large tobacco stemmery on Huston street, and other houses of various kinds not now remembered by the writer.

While a member of the Legislature he procured a charter for a railroad from Louisville through this section, called the "Louisville, Cloverport & Western." With such a man as Mr. Pierce this meant actuality – not a railroad merely on paper. He saw its possibilities, and after his service in the Legislature, with his usual untiring energy and indomitable perseverance, he allied himself with others, and his labor finally eventuated in the Louisville, St. Louis & Texas railroad and Fordsville branch, today recognized by its owners and all others as a splendid property, a benefaction to the country through which it passes.

Were that railroad the only life work of Mr. Pierce, it would be enough to crown him with honor and invoke the gratitude of the people. Who of us can estimate the anxiety suffered and the labor performed by the man to consummate his hopes? He quailed before no difficulty, yielded to no discouragement, submitted to all kinds of ridicule, and moved onward till success, beyond even his own most sanguine expectation, rewarded his labors.



How large the benefits that the people along this railroad enjoy? It matters little now that the Ohio freezes and dries up, the people can travel and ship every day in the year. Towns have sprung into existence where formerly the corn stalk grew. Business and shipping points are almost at every man's door. Sleepy villages now give forth the busy hum of city life.

He occupied his station in the grand achievement, which probably no other man could have filled, and without which it never would have been accomplished. Do we rightly and sufficiently appreciate the man and his work?

He has filled his space in his generation. He has surpassed the most of his fellows in the achievements of life. He has been useful and beneficial to his fellow men.

Cloverport especially owes him a large debt. Look about us, and the reason why is as apparent as the noon-day sun."

#### Tribute to the Memory of Mr. Pierce, by One Who Loved Him For His Worth

Of the irreparable loss sustained by the family, in the death of Hon. R. R. Pierce I will not here speak, but I have deemed it only meet to speak of him as a fellow citizen and of the loss sustained by the community of which he was so conspicuous, useful and honored a citizen.

Mr. Pierce is dead but his impress is indelibly and lastingly fixed on his town and community. Words are not to keep alive his memory. So long as the whistle of a "Texas" locomotive is heard, so long will his indomitable energy and unflagging industry be proclaimed and kept in memory in this community and along the line of the railroad; so long as the smoke rolls from the numerous chimneys of houses built by him in Cloverport, so long will his love for, and faith in Cloverport and his progressive spirit be known and talked of here; so long as the melodious bell of the Baptist church peals out its notes of invitation to come to Christ, so long will it be known and remembered that Mr. Pierce was a faithful man of God and zealous in the cause of Christianity. A monument over his last resting place may be reared by loving hands, but it is not needed in order to keep him in memory. His monuments have been erected by his own hands all about us and at every turn in our little city, his hand has carved, not his name, but his deeds in structures of brick, stone and steel; and his labors and upright, progressive life have carved his "memory lines" in the hearts of those who have lived with and near him, and who have learned to love and respect him.

One who loved him for what he was and for what he did, writes this as a tribute of the heart to his memory.

#### Copy of Resolutions Adopted by the Board of Directors of the Louisville, St. Louis & Texas Railway Company in Meeting Assembled, December 8th, 1893.

Louisville, Ky, December 8, 1893 – "Whereas, This board has just been advised of the death of Hon. R. R. Pierce, who had been a member of the Board from the organization of the Company.

Therefore Resolved, That this Board has received the information with sincere sorrow and that the Directors hereby express their high appreciation of Mr. Pierce's character as a man and an associate on the Board of Directors. They realize, in his death, the loss of a pleasant companion, and one who was active and earned in the interests of the Company.

Resolved, That these resolutions be spread upon the records of the Company, in the minutes of this meeting."

J. K. McCracken, Treasurer ; George H. Lamkin, Secretary.

Sad News For Fred Pierce.

The Daily Optic. East Las Vegas, N. M. says: Hon. R. R. Pierce, father of F. H. Pierce, of the Agua Pura company, died at Cloverport, Ky., this afternoon, at 2 o'clock. Mr. Pierce was a visitor to this city about two years ago, his son having for several years been one of our leading business men. The son will have the sympathy of the entire community, as soon as his affliction shall become known.

