

# Mary Breckenridge Banks Perkins (1891-1987)

By Jerry Long  
c.2026

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**Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Tuesday, 5 March 1996, p.1D:**

## The Teacher

By Glenn Hodges, Messenger-Inquirer

When Mary Banks Perkins was 5 years old, she was already dreaming of becoming a schoolteacher, pretending to run her own classroom at her parents' home in Woodford County.

"When my brothers and sisters were in school and I was the only child at home, I played school," she said in 1985. "I would get tin cans and line them up, have them sitting like children. I'd have switches and I'd be talking and telling those tin can children things like I'd seen the teacher doing when I visited school."

Perkins' mother and father, Lana and Luke Banks, were determined to give their daughter an education. When Perkins graduated from the eighth grade, they scraped up the money to send her to Kentucky Normal and Industrial Teachers Institute at Frankfort.

When Perkins graduated, she realized her dream and began teaching at Midway.

"My grandparents had been slaves and there weren't any schools for my father and mother when they were growing up," Perkins said. "I think that's why education was so important to them."



In 1914, the 24-year-old teacher took the most challenging job of her new career at a small school just opened in Patesville. It was about 12 miles from Hawesville in the southeast corner of Hancock County and served the black community known as Scuffletown.

To take the job, Mary Banks Perkins traveled to Cloverport by train and took a horse and buggy the rest of the way.

There were 16 black students in the school district, and Mary Banks Perkins began teaching them the first day the school opened.

Perkins boarded with the Will Poole family and the area was hilly, heavily wooded, much like a wilderness. But that didn't bother the young schoolteacher.

"I didn't have many children and I got along fine in the one-room school," she said. "It was the first eight-grade school I taught by myself. There were a few discipline problems but I didn't teach to the tune of the hickory stick. I used a switch and they settled down."

She immediately began making her mark as a teacher and attracted the attention of the white school superintendent of Hancock County schools. At the time, the county had two other schools for black students, one at Hawesville, the other at Lewisport and only four black schoolteachers.

After her second year at Patesville, the new school was closed due to declining enrollment. But the superintendent recommended her for a teaching position at the Lewisport school for black students.

He'd visited Patesville several times and told Perkins, "You've handled this school so well that I think you can handle the big one at Lewisport."

She took the job at Lewisport in the fall of 1916 and two years later, married widower Algernon "Gerner" Perkins in Lewisport and remained in the town as a teacher for many years.

"She was a good teacher and came into a school that had been run loosely," said Rose Pell Henderson of Lewisport, who also taught school in Lewisport and knew Mary Banks Perkins from her first years in the town. "(The school) had a discipline problem and she straightened it out. She whipped four or five students the first day of school."

As a teacher, not only did Mary Banks Perkins have the best interest of her students in mind, on more than one occasion she put her job on the line in their behalf.

In 1919, two of Mary's students, her stepdaughter Mabel Perkins and Ella Mae Hawes, passed the state board of education, qualifying to go to high school. They both went to the State Industrial Teachers Institute in Frankfort.

But Hawes could not continue school because of her parents' poor financial conditions. "Seeing this, I went before the school board and asked for tuition and transportation for Ella to attend school in Owensboro," Mary Banks Perkins said later. The board declined.

"I asked to speak before them and was granted the chance," Mary Banks Perkins said. She questioned them about building two new schools for white students, and none for blacks. "After hearing me, the board reversed their decision and voted to send Ella to school (in Owensboro) and pay her tuition and transportation."

The same situation happened again that year with two other students, Jim Jolly and Linwood Mason. And again, after consideration, the board also provided them with tuition, and continued this policy for the rest of Mary Banks Perkins' tenure at the Lewisport school.

Linwood Mason later went to dental school and returned home to Hawesville where he opened a dental office patronized by both blacks and whites. He continued as a dentist until his death.

Jim Jolly got a job as a typesetter/printer at the Hancock Clarion, and later worked at a newspaper in Paris, Ky., where he retired.

Perkins said she was replaced in Lewisport by the same superintendent that hired her, who claimed "I was turning out (too) many children who went on to pass the state test, graduate from high school and college.

"I felt the school system was trying to cut down on the number of children advancing, and the teacher that replaced me did not demand much of the children," she said.

Perkins was rehired for the Lewisport teaching position but faced more problems. Later, the board wanted to consolidate the Lewisport black school with the Hawesville school and tried to terminate her position, she said. She hired a lawyer, filed suit to stop the consolidation and won her case.

After Mary's husband died in 1958, she eventually moved away from Lewisport.

Many of Mary's old friends in Lewisport lost track of her over the years until a picture of her first class at Patesville ran with Hancock County historian Jack Foster's weekly column in the Hancock Clarion in 1985.

A few weeks later, Mary Perkins wrote to Foster, giving an account of her experiences as a black teacher in Hancock County. At that time, she was 94 years old and living in a retirement home in Milwaukee.

After leaving Lewisport, she went to Lexington to live, entering the nursing facility at Milwaukee in April 1980. Before she died there on March 25, 1987, a detailed story of her early teaching career in Hancock County was written by Foster and published in the Clarion.

Perkins never gave up her quest to make sure black children in Hancock County got a good education. And she could be proud that her stepdaughter Mabel returned to Hancock County and became a teacher in Hawesville and Lewisport.

Perkins continued her personal crusade even after she left the county. She continued to correspond with Rose Henderson who said her letters always contained the same request – that the Hancock County School Board hire more black teachers.

[This article has 3 photographs 2 of which are reproduced on pages 4 and 10 of this file.]

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**Hancock Clarion, Hawesville, KY, 12 September 1985:**



By Jack Foster

Someone dropped off a picture at the Clarion recently showing a very young Mary B. Perkins with her class of eleven at Patesville. Judging from Mrs. Perkins' clothes a good guess might be around World War I. Written across the side of the picture obviously in Mrs. Perkins handwriting was: "My first school at Patesville in Hancock County (colored) Mary B-" (and it looks like it might be Banks.) On the back of the photograph was a Midway, Kentucky address, but in writing to her there the letter was returned stamped "addressee unknown, forwarding address expired."



Mrs. Mary B. Perkins and her first class in Hancock County. Taken at the Patesville Colored School. Mrs. Perkins is in a nursing home in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and it is hoped she can tell more about this school, the pupils, and her further teaching experiences in Hancock County.

A check was made with Mrs. Flora Hardin and Mrs. Rose Pell Henderson to see if they could supply more information about Mrs. Perkins. Neither knew how to locate her. But Reverend Susie Bell of Hawesville checked around and got her address from Lucille Mason. And here it is: Mrs. Mary B. Perkins, Marian Catholic Nursing Home, 3333 West Highland Avenue, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 52308. She will be sent a copy of this paper to see if she will add her own comments. Reverend Bell said her information is that Mrs. Perkins is "alert and sharp" and apparently interested in hearing from her old friends in Hancock County.

Mrs. Henderson recalls that Mrs. Perkins married a widower named Gerner Perkins who lived in a small home only yards away from the ancestral Smith home (now the Temple farm) south of Lewisport near Thomas Lane.

This home was in a cluster of homes occupied in pre-Civil War days by slaves. Mrs. Henderson remembers that it was very shady where she would play with the Perkins children when she visited in the Smith home. Gerner Perkins had two girls and a boy by his first wife, and Mrs. Henderson said the son moved to Louisville and was a waiter at the Old Brown Hotel dining room. She worked for a while for Mrs. Bess Hayden Collins in Louisville, and they would sometimes dine at the Brown. When they did Perkins would "make a big fuss over them."

Mrs. Henderson remembers also that Mrs. Perkins was assigned to the Lewisport Colored School when there were lots of deportment problems. Mrs. Perkins apparently knew how to handle the situation, for Mrs. Henderson said she "straightened things out" mostly by the use of the "hickory stick." She also recollects that although it was customary in those days to call black adults by their first names, that she always called Mrs. Perkins Mrs. Perkins because her dignity and

poise deserved it. Others who taught about the same time in Hancock County recall that at teachers' meetings Mrs. Perkins always sat in the back of the room.

The R.I. Glover inventory of one room school houses in Hancock County compiled in the 1930's says the Lewisport Colored School was 24' x 36', had a porch 6' x 12', and had one door and six windows. There were 15 double desks No. 1, 5 double No. 3, 3 double No. 5, 1 single No. 2, and 1 recitation seat 6' long. It also said the bell was a "hand bell" and the stove was a "Red Jacket."

The land appears to have been deeded to the Hancock County School District No. "D" the trustees of which were Richard Smith and Jno. Dulin. The land came from Stephen and Bettie Emmick for a consideration of \$50.00 and the record showed that it had previously been in the estate of George Emmick. And Hancock County Clerk E.P. McAdams swore all this was true on April 10, 1896.

Have you memories of the Lewisport Colored School, or any other item from the past in Hancock County that you will share? Write the Hancock County Historical Society, County Administration Building, Hawesville, Kentucky 42348 or call me at 295-6637.



### **Hancock Clarion, Hawesville, KY, 24 October 1985:**

#### **So It's Been Told – Footnotes to Hancock County history**

By Jack Foster

Back to the classroom: Mrs. Mary B. Perkins has responded to the picture and story in the September 12, 1985 column about the Patesville Colored School. She reports that the picture was taken in 1915 and that she was 24 years old at the time. She adds that she had previously taught at Midway and Shelbyville, Kentucky before taking the assignment at Patesville. She added that Hancock County School Superintendent Rice was so pleased with the way she had handled the school at Patesville that he reassigned her to the Lewisport Colored School where previous teachers had "failed to handle" the classroom properly. She said the schools were from grades one through eight, common for the one room schools of the day.

She pinpointed the location of the Patesville Colored School at the crossroads of the "main highway to Hawesville (no doubt Route 69) and "the other highway" that went to Patesville (Route 144). Then she took a stab at identifying her pupils, not an easy chore after 70 years. The first four pupils in the front row were Morton children and the last two were Davis'. She believes the second from left was Pete Morton's son and the third was Matthew Morton's son. And in the second row Number 1 is a Davis, number 2 is James Morton, number 3 is Myrtle Morton, number 4 is Ara Morton and number 5 is Ann Davis. The Mortons were cousins except for the number two pupil in the front row who was Matthew Morton's grandchild. All of the Davis' were brothers and sisters, and the families of all the pupils were "crop farmers" working on the farms, Mrs. Perkins remembers, during World War I.

Mrs. Perkins asked that all be thanked who "contributed" information about her, and that if anyone had specific questions she would try to answer them. A bit of arithmetic says this lady is 94 years old.



**Hancock Clarion, Hawesville, KY, 5 December 1985:**

**So It's Been Told – Footnotes to Hancock County history**

**By Jack Foster**

From Bonnie Bishel Langenhahn, N82W1585 Valley View Drive, Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin 53051, a volunteer writer and discussion leader at the Marian Catholic Home, 3333 West Highland Blvd., Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53208, comes a letter. This is the home where Mrs. Mary Perkins, former teacher in black schools in Hancock County now resides. Mrs. Langenhahn said she has interviewed Mrs. Perkins over a period of time going back to 1984 and has written her "life journal." Quotes from this "life journal" will be run in next week's column, but this week's column will quote from a letter to the Hancock County Historical Society apparently dictated to Mrs. Langenhahn. It is repeated that Mrs. Perkins is 94. Mrs. Perkins' letter follows:

"In 1914, I wrote a letter to James Lamb, the Superintendent of Hancock County, inquiring about a vacant position for teaching. I received a letter saying there was a vacancy in Patesville, Kentucky and that I could have that position.

I went to Patesville in the fall of 1914. I also received information about boarding. Mrs. Will Poole provided me with information about my new position when I arrived at her home.

Patesville was ten miles from any railroad. I had to travel from Midway . . . to Cloverport, Kentucky and then travel to Patesville by horse and buggy. I was met at Cloverport station by a young man named Ernest Momon.

I started teaching on the first day Patesville school opened. The students enrolled in the first through eighth grade. There were about 16 children in the district. Many of the students in the district were unable to attend any school because of the distance they had to walk. Most of the children on the photo we received were in school nearly everyday and I sent you most of the names I could remember. (See columns dated 9-12-85 and 10-24-85).

There were also two other colored schools in Hancock County. Professor Sam Sweeny and Assistant Professor Katie Momon worked in Hawesville. Professor Dunn worked in Lewisport. These schools had many students attending.

The superintendent of Patesville School advised me that after my second year of teaching the school it would be closing due to declining enrollment. He commended me for my work at Patesville and wanted to place me at Lewisport for the next school year. He believed I could handle the children at Lewisport after seeing my progress at Patesville. He held the position open for me. After I returned from Midway I accepted the position in the fall of 1916. I remained there until 1924, (nine years).

In 1919, I had two girls to pass the state board of education test to go to high school. They both went to Kentucky State Industrial Teachers Institutes. One girl was named Mabel Mason and the other Ella Mae Hawes. Mabel continued on in the school while Ella discontinued because of her elderly parent's financial condition. Also at this time Hancock County was building two new high schools for whites which would bring the number of schools to three for whites and none for blacks.

Seeing this, I went before the county board asking for tuition and transportation for Ella to attend school in Owensboro. They declined. I asked for a chance to speak before them, and I was

granted the chance. I told about building schools for whites and none for blacks. After hearing me, the board reversed their decision and voted to send Ella to school and pay her tuition and transportation.

The following year the same situation arose with two other students named Jim Jolly and Linwood Mason. After short mediation, they were provided tuition. This situation continued during and after my tenure of teaching at Lewisport.

Linwood Mason went on to dental college. He finished, returned home to Hawesville and opened up a dental office. He was patronized by both whites and blacks. He continued in dentistry until his death.

James Jolly worked in the "Clarion" office and became a typesetter/printer. He was so efficient he moved to another paper in Paris, Kentucky. He worked there until his retirement. The paper in Paris, Ky. printed a big article about James' services and how they hated to lose him.

I was replaced by the same superintendent that hired me because I was turning out many children who went on to pass the state test, graduate from high school and college. I feel the school system was trying to cut down on the amount of children advancing.

The teacher that replaced me did not demand much of the children. After R.I. Glover replaced the previous superintendent, I was rehired for the teaching position in Lewisport. After rehiring me the board wanted to consolidate Lewisport with Hawesville County school and terminate my position. I hired a lawyer and filed suite to stop the consolidation process. I won the case and returned to my job to teach another year. I then moved to Midway, Ky. and taught for three years and retired."

Just as a teaser one item will be quoted from Mrs. Perkins' "life journal": "From the time I was a child in Midway, Kentucky (about 1895) I wanted to be a teacher. When my brothers and sisters were in school and I was the only child at home, I "played school". I would get tin cans and line them up, have them sitting like children. I'd have switches, and I'd be talking and telling those "tin-can children" things like I'd seen the teacher doing when I visited school."

Have you memories of days gone by in Hancock County that you will share? Or pictures or documents? Share them by writing the Hancock County Historical Society, County Administration Building, Hawesville, Ky. 42348 or call me at 295-6637.



**Hancock Clarion, Hawesville, KY, 12 December 1985:**

**So It's Been Told – Footnotes to Hancock County history**

**By Jack Foster**

This will be the concluding chapter of Mary Perkins' memories as a teacher in the black schools of Hancock County from pre-World War I days including part of the "Great Depression". Part of the following may be repeating a bit from previous columns, but this is just as Mrs. Perkins told it to Mrs. Bonnie Bishel Langenhahn, Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin who interviewed Mrs. Perkins at the Marian Catholic Home, Milwaukee, Wisconsin where Mrs. Perkins now makes her home. Since Mrs. Langenhahn is also a photographer it is hoped she will take a picture of Mrs. Perkins to run in this column. Here is the interview:

"My parents tried to educate all of us, and my brothers and sisters went to school until they got tired of it. In my teens, I knew how to do laundry and other chores, but my mother wouldn't let me learn how to cook.

"You learn to cook, the next thing you'll be wanting to marry," she said.

My grandparents had been slaves, and there wasn't any schools for my father and mother when they were growing up. I think that's why education was so important to them. After I graduated from eighth grade, my parents sacrificed to send me to the Kentucky Normal and Industrial Teachers' Institute at Frankfort. I got so I didn't want to go because I had to be away from home, and I always was a mother's child. When my father came to visit me one time, I cried and went on and he started to take me back home, but my uncle was with him.

"No, leave her here," my uncle said, "and we'll go talk to Lana" (my mother's name).

So mama let me come home at Thanksgiving.

"Now, listen here!", she said. "You're goin' to stay there until you finish! So you might as well go back and study and get through - - that's the only way you're going to get out - - because if you fail, I'm gonna send you back!"

My mother was positive about things, so I went back and graduated from the Teachers' Institute. I'd taught in Midway and Shelby before I came to Patesville. It was about 1914.

The school was way back in the sticks, surrounded by woods. What roads there were bad. My brother came to see me one time.

"Talk about pioneer days!", he said, "This sure is pioneer days!".

Another time my sister came to visit.

"I wouldn't stay down here - - " she said, "snakes and wild animals crawling around!". She wanted me to come home.

"I believe I'll trust it," I said. "If these people can stay down here, I can, too." So I stayed. I didn't have very many children, and I got along fine in the one-room school. It was the first eight-grade school I taught by myself. There were a few discipline problems, but I didn't teach "to the tune of a hickory stick" - - I used a switch and they settle down.

I boarded out with the Pool's in a small house where they lived with their three-year-old boy. It was the first time I'd boarded in the country. We had three or four rooms with a kitchen and a coldhouse outside. And they had a stable for one cow.

It was like a wilderness where we lived, and there weren't any fences. Cows would roam in the fields, but people had them trained to come home at night.

Mr. Pool was a cook for a company that was cleaning out creeks. They moved around, and he was away from home during the week. On week-ends, he brought some groceries and helped with cooking.

Mrs. Pool was a little dark woman and kind of heavy. She did some sewing, but mostly embroidery and crocheting. In the morning she'd milk the cow and fix my breakfast, then I'd eat and go to school. I didn't have far to go because the playground and Pool's lot joined. Sometimes Mrs. Pool went to help people clean and then she'd leave her little boy with me at the school.

She churned, made butter and buttermilk and anything else she could produce from the cow. But we ate rabbits!

When Mrs. Pool came home in the afternoon, we went out and set traps for rabbits. Back in Woodford County I couldn't get rabbits except in hunting season, but there was restrictions because they were scarce around Midway. Hancock County had plenty of big rabbits, and Mrs. Pool taught me how to help her set traps. We'd go where a lot of trees and bushes were growing, find one that was tall, pull it down and have it hooked so we could stick a piece of apple on it. We

hardly ever set but two traps – I'd set one and she'd set one. After we'd left, a rabbit would come and bite the apple, and that would throw the trap. It threw the rabbit way up and he'd be hanging up on that fork in the tree in the morning when we went to check the traps. They had such large rabbits around Patesville, sometimes they looked like dogs hanging in the trees.

I helped trap them and take them down from the trees, but I never helped skin them. Mrs. Pool knew how to fix them - - fried, boiled or baked. All the week, we ate rabbits everyday. I never did get tired of them because she could cook them different ways - - and I sure would like to have some rabbit now!

The superintendent came to Patesville a few times during the two years I taught there, to see how I was getting along

"You've handled this school so well, he said, "I think you can handle the big one at Lewisport. We haven't been able to get teachers who can do that."

"I have to consider it," I said. "I don't know about going down there."

"I'm going to hold that place at Lewisport open and let you think on it," he said. "I want you to go there."

So I went to visit an old school friend in that area and decided to go to Lewisport.

I'd been teaching in Lewisport for some time and had married a widower, Algernon Perkins, when the school board started bringing on high school work. The whites didn't have high schools, and neither did the colored; they were putting in high schools for whites in Hancock County, and not for colored. So I went to the next school board meeting. The school board consisted of seven white men, and I was the only colored person there.

Since they weren't going to give colored students a high school, I asked the board to let them go to the next town, Owensboro, to take high school work. At first, they voted it down.

"Will you let me speak?", I said. (As previously reported her pupils were allowed to go to high school in Owensboro)."

Have you memories, documents, or pictures of days gone by in Hancock County that you will share? Write Hancock County Historical Society, County Administration Building, Hawesville, Ky. 42348, or call me at 295-6637.



### **Hancock Clarion, Hawesville, KY, 2 January 1986:**

#### **So It's Been Told – Footnotes to Hancock County history**

**By Jack Foster**

Mail bag, two longs and a short, dinner bell: Response keeps coming in from the stories about Mrs. Mary Perkins who began teaching in the black schools of Hancock County in 1914. Who can recall what was going on nationwide in 1914 or thereabouts? For one thing in 1914 the Ford Motor Company raised the basic daily wage rate from \$2.40 per nine hour day to \$5.00 for an eight hour day. In 1913 the United States blockaded Mexico in support of the revolutionaries. (Does that sound familiar) ? In 1916 the first telephone call from New York to San Francisco was completed by Alexander Graham Bell and Thomas A. Watson.

But back to Mrs. Perkins: Oswald Jett, 3411 Greentree Road, Lexington, Kentucky 40502 reports he has one hundred pages typed on his volume II of his "Pioneer Days in Hancock County"

... Volume I is due off the presses anytime. Mr. Jett takes issue with the Patesville Colored School location as reported in the "Clarion." It could not have been at the corner of Routes 144 and 69 for other landmarks were there, and it was not primitive and "wild" as Mrs. Perkins indicated. He believes it was north of Patesville possibly at Arrington Corner where Bethlehem and Concord Churches once stood. Arrington Corner was once part of the Old Cloverport-Rumsey Road. Mr. Jett feels it was on what is now Route 144 all right, but closer to Patesville. Can a reader help us pin point this historic Hancock County schoolhouse?

He also suggests that the Wisconsin interviewer of Mrs. Perkins did not know that a coal house was a necessary adjunct to all the one room school houses in Kentucky. The story referred to it as a cold house.

And a note comes from Mr. Gregg Swem III, 1568 Cherokee Road, Louisville, Kentucky 40205, nephew of Hancock County's own Margaret Beauchamp Crutcher. Mr. Swem has been guest columnist and has furnished information for others and is an enthusiastic friend for any and all ways to preserve history. He urges that some steps should be taken to publish Mrs. Perkins' memories a suggestion that will be passed on to Bonnie Langenhahn, Editor, "The Write Age" N82 W15855 Valley View Drive, Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin 53051 who interviewed Mrs. Perkins originally. This magazine, which comes out twice a year, called "The Write Age", is compiled of writings of "elders" who write simply to preserve their memories, to capture a bit of history that otherwise would be lost, or as an "escape" from "bingo games" and "kazoo bands." They believe that they can provide a meaningful service and still be creative. Readers who might be interested in this unique magazine can write Mrs. Langenhahn at the above address.

Mrs. Langenhahn has prevailed on Mr. Joe Martinovich, staff artist of "The Write Age", to take some photographs of Mrs. Perkins as she looks at 94. It is hoped that Mrs. Perkins will share some more of her memories with the "Clarion" readers. They are indeed unique and it would be sad indeed to lose them.



Mrs. Mary Perkins, long time teacher in the black schools of Hancock County.

She now lives at the Marian Catholic Home, 3333 West Highland Blvd., Milwaukee, Wisc. 53208, and would welcome letters from her Hancock County friends and former pupils. – A Joe Martinovich photo courtesy of the "The Write Age."



**Hancock Clarion, Hawesville, KY, 20 February 1986:**

So It's Been Told – Footnotes to Hancock County history

By Jack Foster

Mail bag, two longs and a short, dinner bell: Dorothy Watkins, who has written the column "Climb Your Family Tree" appearing in the "Hancock Clarion" for seventeen years qualifies as a pioneer in the preservation of local history. She called to clear up the apparent mystery about the location of the Patesville Colored School where Mrs. Mary Perkins taught in 1914. Mrs. Watkins said she will cover this whole subject in more detail in her and Claribel Phillips' upcoming "History of Hancock County."

She said that there was a black community (colored was the more commonly used word in those days) at the intersection of what is now known as State Road 144 and Goering Road. This community was called "Scuffletown". It boasted not only the Patesville Colored School but a Patesville Colored Baptist Church and a number of homes occupied by blacks. She added a footnote about the church. They had but one song book and the preacher lead the singing from that book teaching the congregation the songs.

The men and women of the church were famous in those parts for their cooking and were in great demand to prepare a meal for family reunions, parties, and other public functions, according to Mrs. Watkins. And a last note about the congregations' singing. On singing nights blacks and whites alike came from miles around to hear.



**Hancock Clarion, Hawesville, KY, 13 November 1986:**

So It's Been Told – Footnotes to Hancock County history

By Jack Foster

J.D. Holland, Rumsey, Kentucky, recalls his school days in Lewisport in a recent letter. Mr. Holland was born in 1910 so he is talking about school days around the World War I era. He remembers going to Annie Morton's "private school" and then later going to the "old" Lewisport Grade School. A teacher he mentions as one of his favorites was Miss Sarah Perkins from Maceo. He also said that Miss Mint Reynolds was a good teacher, but acknowledged that "you had to mind her."

He talks about marble games over by Mr. Steve Thrasher's barn (near the school). . . and the reason the games were over there was because they wanted to play "keeps" and "keeps" were not allowed on school property. He admitted he was not a very good shot, so it is surmised that he did not get to "keep" many of his marbles.

Mr. Holland also had some kind words to say about Mary Perkins, the black lady who taught in the Lewisport Grade School. He said that Mrs. Perkins' husband, Algernon (who went by a number of nicknames) made concrete blocks and worked colored glass in them, and that he was a "real artist" at this and wondered if any of his works of art are still around. And one more memory of Mr. Holland's: He said that his father Dud had a black man working for him named Frank Landers and trusted him not only as a "bossman" for his farm projects but also entrusted him with the payroll. Mr. Landers' wife, Minnie, substituted in the colored school. More of Mr. Holland's memories later.



**Hancock County, Kentucky: A Pictorial History,  
(Hudson, KY: Tawana Publishing Co., 2004) p.202:**



Lewisport Colored Grade School located off Pell Street back of Joe Pell's house. Later renovated into a residence.



**Woodford County, Kentucky 1900 Federal Census, p.100A:**

Banks, Lincoln	head	Mar 1861 Black m. 19 years – farm laborer	KY-KY-KY
“ Lina	wife	Jun 1861 Black m. 5 children 5 living	KY-KY-KY
“ Ella	daughter	Aug 1881 Black s.	KY-KY-KY
“ Alfred	son	Jul 1884 Black s.	KY-KY-KY
“ Len J.	daughter	Aug 1886 Black s.	KY-KY-KY
“ Martha	daughter	May 1889 Black s.	KY-KY-KY
“ Mary B.	daughter	Aug 1891 Black s.	KY-KY-KY



**Daviess County, KY Marriage Book #31 , p.88:**

Gernon Perkins married Mary Breckenridge Banks on 23 October 1918 in Daviess County, KY. Groom age 33, born Breckinridge County, KY, resident Lewisport, KY, son of George & Lucy Perkins. Bride age 27, born Woodford County, KY, resident Lewisport, KY, daughter of Link & Lina Banks.

[Note: Breckinridge County, KY Colored Marriage Book 1894-1914, pp.338-339. Algernon ('Gernon') Perkins married first Sallie Warfield 23 December 1903 in Breckinridge County, KY. Groom age 18, born & resident Breckinridge County, KY, son of George Perkins & Lucy Loyd. Bride age 18, born & resident Breckinridge County, KY, daughter of Charles & Mary E. Warfield. Sallie Warfield Perkins died 17 January 1914 in Louisville, Jefferson County, KY. She was buried in the Hardinsburg (Black) Cemetery, in Hardinsburg, Breckinridge Count, KY. Algernon Perkins & Sallie Warfield had three children – Mabel L., George K. & Mary. Algernon Perkins & Mary B. Banks had no children.]



**Hancock County, KY 1920 Federal Census, Lewisport, p.59B:**

Perkins, Gernon	head	34 m.	farm laborer – rents	KY-KY-KY
“ Mary	wife	29 m.		“ “
“ Mabel	daughter	16 s.		“ “
“ George	son	12 s.		“ “
“ Mary	daughter	8 s.		“ “



**Hancock Clarion, Hawesville, KY, Friday, 13 December 1929, pp.1 & 5:**

483 Pupils Have Perfect Attendance Record

.... Lewisport, colored, Mary B. Perkins teacher, number enrolled 25, pupils: Franky Lander, Samuel Pate, Mattie L. Adams, Myrtle S. Adams, Elizabeth P. Lewis, Francis M. Adams and Christinia Lewis.



**Hancock County, KY 1930 Federal Census, Lewisport, p.250A:**

Perkins, Algernon	head	44 m	Negro – insurance agent	KY-KY-KY
“ Mary	wife	38 m	Negro – teacher public school	“ “
“ Mary E.	daughter	18 s	servant	“ “

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**The Lexington Leader, Lexington, KY, Wednesday, 5 November 1930, p.16:**

### Colored Notes

Lincoln Banks, & well known and highly respected citizen. died this morning at his residence in Midway. He leaves his wife, Mrs. Lina Banks; five daughters, Mrs. B. Crittenden, Cincinnati; Mrs. Lou Jane Gaines, Milwaukee; Mrs. Mattie Mack, Springfield, O.; Mrs. Mary B. Perkins, Levinsport [sic], Ky., and Miss Willina Banks, Midway; two sons. Albert Banks, Lexington, and Leslie Banks, Cincinnati, and other relatives. Funeral arrangements will be announced later.

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### Kentucky Death Certificates

1930 - #28854: Lincoln Banks died 5 November 1930 Woodford County, KY; farmer; born 15 March 1876 Woodford County, KY; son of Sam Banks & Janes Gaines; buried Midway Cemetery; informant wife, Lina Banks, Midway, KY.

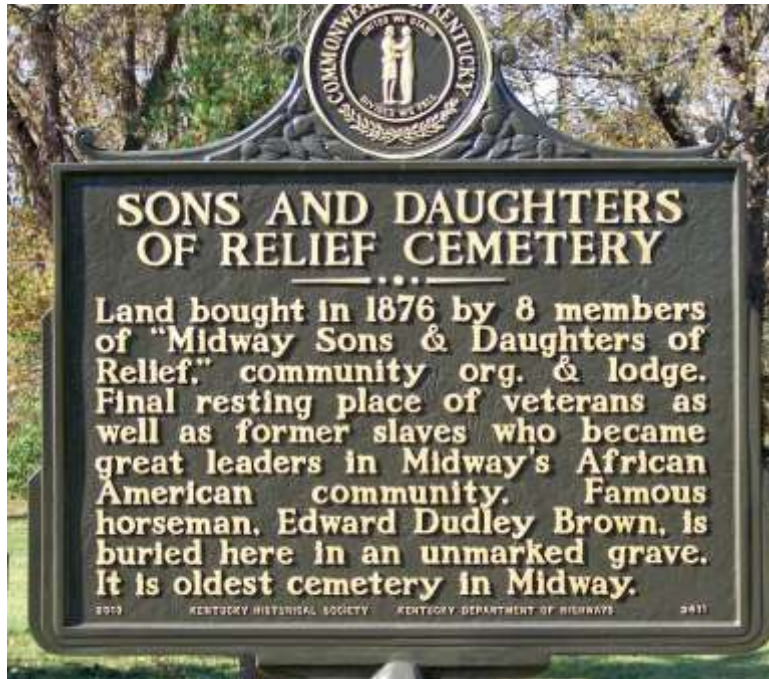
1940 - #30162: Lina Banks died 30 December 1940 Woodford County, widow of Lincoln Banks; born 31 December 1868 Fayette County, KY; parents – “don’t know”; buried Midway, KY informant, Leslie Banks; Midway, KY]

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### Find A Grave:



Sons and Daughters of Relief Cemetery  
Midway, Woodford County, KY



Historical highway marker erected in 2013 by the Kentucky Historical Society and Kentucky Department of Highways; located on Wausau Place, in Midway, Woodford, KY.

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**Hancock County, KY 1940 Federal Census, Lewisport, p.38A:**

Perkins, Algernon	head	54 m.	Negro – farm manager	KY
“ Mary B.	wife	28 m.	Negro – teacher public school	KY

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**The Lexington Leader, Lexington, KY, Thursday, 2 September 1948, p.6:**

**Opening of School Delayed at Midway**

MIDWAY, Ky., Sept. 1 (Special) – Opening of the elementary division of the Midway Negro school has been delayed until Sept. 13 because construction work now in progress cannot be completed in time for the originally scheduled opening Sept. 6. announced today by O. B. Wilder, superintendent of the Midway school district.

Students of high school age who ordinarily would attend the Midway Negro school will enter the Simmons High school at Versailles Monday, Sept. 6, Wilder said.

Richard Saunders is the new principal of the Midway school. **Mrs. Mary Banks Perkins has been named as a new teacher.** Mrs. Rosarine Johnson Black has resigned as a teacher to accept a position in New York.

[Note: Midway Negro Elementary School]

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**Hancock County, KY 1950 Federal Census, Lewisport, sheet 22:**

Perkins, Algernon	head	64	m.	Negro – farmer	KY
“ George	son	41	s.	Negro – hotel cook	KY

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**Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Monday, 24 November 1958, p.8A:**

**● Negro Deaths**

**Algernon Perkins**

Algernon Perkins, 66, farmer, died at 9:30 a.m. Monday in his home at Lewisport, following a lingering illness.

Born in Breckinridge County, June 23, 1892, he had lived in Lewisport for 50 years. He was a member of the Braddus Memorial Methodist Church, Lewisport.

Surviving are his wife, Mrs. Mary Perkins; two daughters, Mrs. Mable Mason, Hawesville, Mrs. Mary P. Goldsmith, Louisville; one son, George K. Perkins, Owensboro; grandson, John L. Mason, Las Vegas, N.M.

The body is at the Haynes Funeral Home, 1019 W. 7th St.

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**Lewisport Cemetery, Lewisport, Hancock County, KY:**



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**The Lexington Leader, Lexington, KY, Friday, 28 November 1958, p.15:**



Algerson Perkins died Monday morning at his home in Lewisport, Ky. after a long illness. Survivors are: His wife, Mrs. Mary B. Perkins; two daughters, Mrs. Mable Mason, Hopkinsville and Mrs. Mary P. Goldsmith, Louisville; one son, George K. Perkins, Owensboro and one grandson, John Mason of Mexico. Services were to be held at 2 p.m. today in Louisville.

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**The Lexington Leader, Lexington, KY, Tuesday, 21 June 1960, p.20:**



Leslie Banks, formerly of Midway, died Monday at his residence in Louisville. He was a native of Woodford County, a son of the late Lincoln and Lina Banks, and was a member of the Pilgrim Baptist Church, Midway, where he served as a deacon. He was a member of the Masonic Lodge of Georgetown. Survivors are two sisters, Mrs. Mary Banks Perkins and Mrs. Willina Patterson. The body is at the Cunningham Funeral Horne.

Services will be conducted at 2 p.m. Thursday at the Pilgrim Baptist Church, Midway, by the Rev. E. G. Smith. Burial will be in the No. 1 Cemetery at Midway. The body will be taken from the funeral home to the residence in Midway Wednesday afternoon.

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**The Louisville Defender, Louisville, KY, Thursday, 7 June 1962, p.16:**

[Note: The following article refers to the commencement on Sunday, 3 June 1962 of the Kentucky State College, in Frankfort, KY; in 1972 the college was renamed Kentucky State University.]

#### 50th Anniversary

Members of the 1912 classes who returned to the campus to observe their 50th anniversary were Mrs. Mary B. Perkins, Midway, Ky.; Remus Lucas, Chicago; Mrs. Rosa R. Guthrie. Columbus., Ohio, and Mrs. Anna C. Turner, Richmond, Ky.

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**The State Journal, Frankfort, KY, Sunday, 21 November 1965, p.11:**

[Abstract: Mrs. Mary B. Perkins, of Midway, Ky. was president of the Midway Community Service Organization.]

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**Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Saturday, 10 March 1979, p.2C:**

George K. Perkins, 71, of 2526 W. 10th St., Owensboro, died Thursday, March 8, 1979, at Owensboro-Daviess County Hospital. He was born in Breckinridge County and was retired from Fleischmann's Distillery.

Survivors include his stepmother, Mary B. Perkins of Midway, Ky.; a sister, Mabel Mason; and a nephew, John Mason, both of University City, Mo.

Services are at 2:30 p.m. Sunday at Ross Chapel United Methodist Church, Hawesville. Burial in St. Paul Cemetery. Visitation after 6. p.m. today at Gibson and Son Funeral Home, Hawesville.

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**U. S. Social Security Death Index**

Name:	Mary Perkins
Social Security Number:	400-90-5965
Birth Date:	27 August 1891
Issue year:	1973
Issue State:	Kentucky
Last Residence:	Milwaukee, Milwaukee, County. WI 53208
Death Date:	March 1987

[Note: This is Mary Banks Perkins (1891-1973; she died 25 March 1987)]

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NOTABLE KENTUCKY  
AFRICAN AMERICANS  
DATABASE



**NKAA**



<https://nkaa.uky.edu/nkaa/items/show/2862>

## African American Schools in Hancock County, KY

In 1887, there was "a bill for the benefit of Hawesville colored school in Hancock county."-[source: *Journal of the House of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky*, 1887, p.1210]. In 1895, Hancock County had four colored districts with one school in each district and one teacher at each school, according to the *Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of Kentucky, 1895-1897*, pp.404-407. Two of the schools were made of log and two were frame buildings. The schools were taught for five months, and there were a total of 101 students 1895-96, and 133 students 1896-97. In 1918, the charter for one of the Hawesville colored schools was repealed; the colored schools were consolidated [source: *Acts of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky*, 1918, p.406]. By 1925, there were two colored elementary schools [source: *Kentucky Public School Directory*, p.67]. Mrs. Mary B. Perkins was a teacher in 1928, she lived in Lewisport, and Mrs. Carrie J. Poole was the teacher in Hawesville [source: *Proceedings of the Kentucky Negro Educational Association*, April 18-21, 1928, pp.51 & 52]. In 1930, there were 42 students regularly attending the two colored schools in Hancock County, and two high school students were attending school elsewhere [source: *Kentucky Public School Directory, 1930-1931*, p.64]. In 1940 the Negro teacher in Hancock County was Mary B. Perkins [source: U.S. Federal Census]. By 1944, there were 34 children enrolled in the one colored school in Lewisport, and there were 13 high school students attending school elsewhere [source: *Kentucky Public School Directory, 1944-1945*, p.359]. During the 1956 school term, the Hawesville and Lewisport Schools began to integrate [source: *Kentucky Public School Directory, 1956-57*, p.430].

