

# **GREATER JEFFERSONTOWN** **HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER**

August 2013

Vol. 11 Number 4

## **August 2013 Meeting**

The August meeting will be **Monday, August 5, 2013**. We will meet at 7:00 P.M. in the meeting room of the Jeffersontown Library at 10635 Watterson Trail. The Greater Jeffersontown Historical Society meetings are now held on the first Monday of the even numbered months of the year. Everyone is encouraged to attend to help guide and grow the Society.

## **August Meeting - Lessons From Rosenwald Schools**

Julia Bache will discuss the Rosenwald School movement and how Julius Rosenwald, part owner of the Sears and Roebuck Company, and Booker T. Washington partnered together in the early 1900s to build over 5,000 schools. There were seven Rosenwald schools in Jefferson County and one of those was the Alexander-Ingram School in Jeffersontown. She will also speak about how to take part in historic preservation. Please visit Ms. Bache's work in the Jeffersontown Historical Museum. It will be displayed through noon on August 7<sup>th</sup>.

Julia is a sixteen year old high school student who has recently taken an active stance in historic preservation as a part of her Girl Scout Gold Award Project. With the guidance of L. Martin Perry, she nominated the Buck Creek Rosenwald School to be on the National Register of Historic Places, becoming the first high school student in Kentucky to do so. She then helped educate the public about preservation through a traveling museum exhibit that she created in partnership with the National Trust for Historic Preservation. She has also been speaking to various audiences throughout Kentucky about preserving Rosenwald Schools. Ms. Bache has been a Girl Scout since first grade. She is also a costumed interpreter at Historic Locust Grove and enjoys researching her family's genealogy.

## **October Meeting**

Monday, October 7, at 7:00 P.M., Anne Bader is going to talk about what they discovered around slave housing on the Claiborne property near Middletown.

## **June Meeting**

At the June meeting Steve Wiser, local historian, author, and architect presented "Street History of Louisville, People for Whom the Streets Are Named."

Louisville was founded by a group of settlers led by George Rogers Clark that came down the Ohio in 1778, and first settled on Corn Island in the Ohio at about where 4<sup>th</sup> Street meets the river. The river then was shallow during the summer and animal trails led to river crossings for the buffalo, elk, and deer. These trails became streets named Preston and Frankfort. The animal trails became Indian paths that became settler paths and roads into the area.

Frankfort Avenue was an old ridgeline the animals would follow to the river, and Preston Highway went out to the old salt licks to the south and was part of the old Wilderness Trail. Taylorsville Road probably started this way.

The Louisville Survey of 1774 also contributed to street names. Early surveyors such as John Floyd, Hancock Taylor, Thomas Bullitt, William Preston, Arthur Campbell and others all received or bought land grants of 1,000 – 2,000 acres. John Connelly, who received his 2,000 acre grant from the British for his service in the French and Indian War was in the area before George Rogers Clark. His grant covered the area along the river that is downtown Louisville. But you won't find a Connelly Street anywhere. When Clark asked Connelly whose side he was on in the Revolutionary War he chose the British and Connelly was run off to Canada. Campbell was also a British citizen, but he answered Clark's question correctly.

Flat Lick Road started out in Mount Washington in Bullitt County went northwest and crossed Floyds Fork, where it now ends. From that point it continued along what is now Zoneton Road and on to Mt. Washington Road to connect to Preston Highway, the old Wilderness Road. And on the Wilderness Road was a salt lick called "Flat Lick" located on the northeast corner of Preston and Fern Valley Road. Flat Lick Road went all the way into Louisville to the area of the Jefferson County Courthouse. The 1859 map of Louisville calls it the "Flat Lick and Preston Street Plank Road." (See the article in the Jan. 9, 2013, *Courier-Journal* Southeast Neighborhoods Section.)

Even though Louisville is named for King Louis XVI of France, there is no street or avenue named for him.

Jefferson Street, of course, is named for Thomas Jefferson, our third president and was governor of Virginia when Jefferson County was named.

Clarks Lane that runs between Preston Street and Poplar Level Road was named, of course, for the George Rogers Clark family, and Poplar Level was named for a stand of poplar trees in that area.

What about 1<sup>st</sup> Street? In most river cities the numbered streets run parallel to the river, but in Louisville they run perpendicular to the river. No one Steve Wiser has talked with could explain this but Steve has a theory. John Connelly's property ended where Beargrass Creek flowed into the Ohio River at about 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. The peninsula formed where the Bluegrass flowed into the river was called The Point. The street east of 1<sup>st</sup> is Brook Street, but there is no prominent Brook family in Louisville's history. Steve has learned that there was a surveyor named Brooks working in Louisville in 1813 and he may have named it after himself, or it may have been named Brook because a creek ran in that area and emptied into the Beargrass and then the military stepped in and decided the next street should be called 1<sup>st</sup> Street.

Steve showed several old maps of Louisville documenting how it grew. By 1884 Louisville had an arm that expanded south out to about the University of Louisville area, otherwise dense growth went west and east along a line just past where Central Park is now located, the site of the Southern Exposition held in 1883-1887. To the west there was the Portland area along the river that went out to about Market Street. The main area we know as the West End was still out in the country. The East End extended out to a little past Cave Hill Cemetery that was started in 1848, and to a few blocks to the southeast where dense population growth ended.

**(Ed. Note:** 1880 Louisville population – Approx. 124,000; 1890 – Approx. 161,000, the 10<sup>th</sup> largest city in the US).

By 1913 Louisville had grown out to the south with our parks and parkway system. Gen. John Breckinridge Castleman owned the land in the area of Eastern Parkway between where Newburg and Poplar Level Roads intersect with Eastern Parkway. He donated the right-of-way for Eastern Parkway where it has the treed median in it.

Castleman served in the Confederate Army, rode with John Hunt Morgan's Raiders, had the 5-gaited champion at the Chicago World's Fair, and was present for the dedication of the statue of him on his horse located at Cherokee Road and Longest Avenue in the Highlands – before he was history.

Col. Meriwether Lewis Clark, Jr. wanted to make sure that Southern Parkway started at his race track – Churchill Downs, so he used his influence to get it located where he wanted it. He served in the Confederate Army, created the Louisville Jockey Club and started the Kentucky Derby in 1875.

Many think Taylor Boulevard was named for our twelfth President, Zachary Taylor, but there is nothing to support that. Taylor's parents were prominent Virginia planters who migrated to Kentucky in the late 1700s in his youth. Again, there was a surveyor named Taylor who worked on placing the road and some guess he named it after himself.

A lot of streets are named for destinations – Frankfort Avenue, Shelbyville Road, Bardstown Road, Lexington Road, Brownsboro Road, Westport Road, Market Street, and Taylorsville Road.

Several streets were given patriotic names, especially when the Butchertown area was being developed in the 1828 – 1830s timeframe. Jackson (President Andrew Jackson), Washington (President G. Washington), Franklin (Ben Franklin), Adams (both Presidents – John and Quincy), Buchanan (President James Buchanan), Madison (President James Madison), Monroe (President James Monroe), Hancock (John Hancock, signer of the Declaration of Independence), and the Kennedy Bridge, the first structure in the USA to be named for President John Kennedy after his assassination in November of 1963.

**East End Streets** - Wenzel and Logan were named for property owners. Preston and Campbell were named for the surveyors, and Floyd Street is pretty much self-explanatory with the all the Floyd family around. Shelby is named after Kentucky's first Governor, Isaac Shelby, and Clay Street for Henry Clay.

**Politically Named Streets** – Grinstead Drive was named after Mayor and County Judge James Fontleroy Grinstead. It was changed from Daisy Lane that was changed from Transit Avenue. Barrett was named for a merchant, so he really doesn't belong in this list; Baxter Avenue, John G. Baxter, Democratic mayor 1870 – 1872, and 1879 -1881; Payne Street, Payne headed up the Charter Committee that changed Louisville's status from a town to a city in 1828 when Louisville's population surpassed 7,000. Several other committee members also named streets after themselves. Bradley is named for William O. Bradley, the 32<sup>nd</sup> Governor of Kentucky and the first Republican governor. Blackburn Avenue named for

Luke P. Blackburn, a Democrat, Kentucky's 28<sup>th</sup> Governor and a physician, who was considered the yellow fever expert of his time. Bowling Avenue in St. Matthews is named for their long-time mayor, Bernard Bowling, Sr. Barbee Avenue was named for John Barbee, Louisville Mayor 1855-1856, a member of the Know Nothing Party.

There are several streets named for men connected to the *Courier-Journal*. Watterson Trail, of course, is named for Henry Watterson, founder and editor of the paper from the late 1860s to 1919 when he retired. He bought 100 acres from Joseph Hite where he built his summer home. Much of that 100 acres is now Watterson Woods subdivision. Prentice Avenue named for George Prentice, who was founder of the *Louisville Daily Journal*, one of the precursors of the *C-J*, and the person who persuaded Watterson to leave Tennessee and come to Louisville. Walter Haldeman, for whom Haldeman Avenue is named, was founder of the *Louisville Daily Journal*, the other half of the *Courier-Journal* that was formed in 1868. Haldeman was also a founder of Naples, Florida in 1888. Bingham Way is named for the Bingham family. Robert Worth Bingham bought the *Courier-Journal* in 1820.

Guthrie Green/Guthrie Street was named for James Guthrie, a Kentucky mover and shaker, was appointed Commonwealth Attorney in 1820, was instrumental in getting the Portland Canal built, a Kentucky State Senator, President of the University of Louisville from 1847 to 1869, and President Franklin Pierce's Secretary of State in 1853.

Brandeis Street is another street that encompasses the family not just the man, Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis, who served on the Court 1916-1939. His cremated remains are buried next to the front door of the Brandies School of Law on the Belknap Campus of the University of Louisville.

You would think with Abraham Lincoln being a Kentuckian there would be a major thoroughfare named for him in its largest city's center. There is not. Just Lincoln Avenue, a couple blocks north of Algonquin Parkway that runs between Taylor Blvd. and Seventh Street Road and Lincoln Court in the Camp Taylor area.

Douglass Boulevard and Douglass Loop in the upper Highlands area are named for George Douglass, who was the president of Western Union and has the distinction of having fired Thomas Edison when Edison worked for Western Union, some of that time was spent here in Louisville.

Some confusing street names are Breckinridge Street and Breckenridge Lane, and Blankenbaker Lane and Blankenbaker Parkway. All named for property owners. The Breckinridge family was deep into the nation's politics, was very prominent in Virginia and Kentucky politics, and was related to the William Preston family through marriage. Where Breckenridge came from is not clear. And the Blankenbakers, after which the Parkway is named, owned land around the intersections of Blankenbaker Parkway, Blankenbaker Road and Bluegrass Parkway. Of course before Blankenbaker Parkway, there was/is Blankenbaker Road, a block off the Parkway. Some of GJHS members have Blankenbaker relatives.

In 1908 government did its thing and for some reason all the street address numbers were changed in Louisville and the 1909 directory carried both numbers.

There are a number of street name changes in Louisville, some we have mentioned. A few others are:

<u>Old</u>	<u>New</u>
Green Street	Liberty Street
Prather or Dunkirk	Broadway
Walnut Street	Muhammad Ali Blvd.
Milk Street	Oak Street
Avery Avenue, "C" Street	Cardinal Blvd.
Finzer Parkway	Cherokee Parkway
Workhouse Road	Lexington Road
34 <sup>th</sup> St. from Market south to Duvalle	Louis Coleman, Jr. Drive
5 <sup>th</sup> St. between Zane & Ormsby	Garvin Place
Pipe Line Lane	Zorn Avenue
Ashbottom Road	Crittenden Drive
Beargrass Street	Story Avenue

Green was changed to Liberty Street during WWI as a patriotic move supposedly, but Green Street had several brothels on it and the city wanted to change its image since it was in the downtown area.

## Streets in the Clifton and Crescent Hill area.

- Mellwood Avenue was named for the former Mellwood Distillery located there.
- Frankfort Avenue named for the state capital. It was the old Shelbyville Pike with its tollgate at Frankfort and Jane Street.
- William Street/Pope St./H St., now Emery Street was originally named for William H. Pope, who laid out this section of Louisville.
- Payne Street, as pointed out before, was named for W. B. Payne, head of the Louisville Charter Committee in 1828.
- Stoll Avenue for Albert A. Stoll, who was the School Board president in 1885.
- Spring Street was named for a never failing spring that had a bed of watercress close to the L&N Railroad tracks.
- Peterson Avenue was named for Joseph Peterson whose former home is a community landmark on the street.
- Vernon Avenue named after W. S. Vernon, a member of the 1828 Louisville Charter Committee.
- Keats Avenue named for George Keats, a brother of the poet, John Keats, and a member of the 1828 Louisville Charter Committee. George Keats Speed was a grandson.
- Ewing and Jane Avenues were named for Ewing and Jane Speed, children of George Keats Speed whose ancestral home was formerly located at Ewing and Frankfort Avenues and was called Chatsworth.
- Angora Court off Payne Street was named in recognition of the Whalen goat farm that was in this area of Clifton, also known as Billy Goat Hill, for the several hundred goats loved climbing the rocky cliffs on the farm.
- Haldeman Avenue named for W.H. Haldeman, the publisher of *The Louisville Courier* which later merged with *The Louisville Journal* to form *The Courier-Journal*. He also was a founder of Naples, Florida.
- Clifton Avenue was formerly called Cavewood because it had a cave at the fringe of the woods to the rear of the Taylor-Rudd home on Payne Street.
- Franck and Rastretter Avenue were named for property owners who resided on the streets. The Rastretter house, built in 1848, still stands today. The Rastretters operated a dairy farm.
- Blackburn Avenue was named after Kentucky Governor Luke Blackburn, 1879 -1883.
- Birchwood Avenue was named for George Birchwood, a longtime livestock dealer at the Bourbon Stockyards.
- Kennedy Avenue was named after Thomas S. Kennedy whose grand estate once stood there.
- Stilz Avenue was named for Henry Stilz who had a truck garden farm there.
- Galt Avenue was named after Dr. William C. Galt and his son, Norbourne. They sold the property on which the original famous Galt House Hotel was built in 1835 at Second & Main in downtown Louisville. The builders named it after Galt. The Galts moved to a farm in the Clifton area. Their original residence was across the street from the hotel.
- Grinstead Drive was named after Mayor (1907-1909) and County Judge James Fontleroy Grinstead. It was changed from Daisy Lane that was changed from Transit Avenue. Cherokee Golf Course was once a large daisy field and residents would ride their horse carriages out to view the daisies in bloom.

While Steve was doing research for this presentation he came across a *Courier-Journal* article from August 27, 1944 about the super highway system planned for post-war Louisville, long before President Eisenhower proposed the interstate highways we have now. We have the Watterson Expressway, I-264 ( Henry Watterson), the western part of which is now called the Georgia Davis Powers or Shawnee Expressway, for Kentucky State Senator Georgia D. Powers. I-265 is named for Gene Snyder, Kentucky's Third/Fourth Congressional Representative for twenty-two years, who obtained funding for the road. I-64 and I-71 are not named for anyone.

The name of York Street downtown is muddled. Some say it was named for William Clark's slave, York, others say it was named for a family named York.

Prather Street, now Broadway, was named was named for Thomas Prather, one of Louisville's first millionaires who did a lot for the state. He died in 1828. Not sure why they changed it to Broadway in the 1850s.

Jacob Street was named for John Jacob, a business partner of Prather's.

William Garvin, Garvin Place, was a popular merchant in Louisville, who died in the famous collision between the steamboats *America* and the *United States* on December 4, 1868, two miles above Warsaw in Gallatin County.

Witherspoon Street was named for John Witherspoon, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Movie star Reece Witherspoon is a direct descendant.

Bowman Field was named for Abram Hite Bowman, who founded the airfield in 1919 after the government seized the land under the Alien Property Act of 1917 from Mary Caldwell, a descendant of John Floyd. She had married a German, Baron Von Zedwitz. The property had been in the Floyd family since the 1700s.

McAlpine Locks and Dam #41 on the Ohio River was named for William H. Alpine, the first civilian head of the U.S. Corps of Engineers in Louisville. He was not a member of the Corps of Engineers before being appointed the civilian head of the Corps in Louisville.

Standiford Field, Louisville International Airport, was named after Dr. Elisha D. Standiford, 1831-1887, who had owned the land. He was born near Louisville, was a physician, served in the Kentucky State Senate, 1868-1871, served as 5<sup>th</sup> District U.S. Congressman, 1873-1875, and was president of the L&N Railroad 1875 – 1879.

William Richardson Belknap died in 1914, and left a lot of money that was used for educational purposes, building a school and a neighborhood around it, the Belknap neighborhood, which is bounded by Bardstown Road, Douglass Boulevard, Dundee Road and Newburg Road. The school building, William R. Belknap Elementary at 1800 Sils Avenue, was architecturally significant and placed in the National Register of Historical Places in 1982. All the interior door handles were a brass bust of Belknap. There was also \$60,000 to buy land for the University of Louisville's Belknap Campus.

When the Norton Commons subdivision was built the developer, David Toms, told Steve they really struggled on how to name the streets and finally settled on using a wild flower theme. Steve used this example to show how land owners and developers still name the streets they build, not some government agency.

Bridges in the area are named for George Rogers Clark, which is the Second Street Bridge, the bridge next to it is the Kennedy Bridge, which carries I-65, is named for JFK. The I-64 bridge is named for Supreme Court Justice Sherman Minton from New Albany, Indiana, who was still alive when it was named for him. As far as the new bridges **finally** starting to get under way, someone suggested "Disaster" might be a good name; "Fiasco" was another name that drew a good bit of laughter. Steve wrote an article in the *C-J* a while back and he said he suggested that since we have a Supreme Court Justice on one end, maybe Louis Brandeis would be good for the east end bridge. Then we would have justices on each end with a president in the middle. Steve commented that one thing was a good bet; politics will be involved in the naming of the new bridges.

Steve asked if anyone had a street named for a family member. Anne Tobbe Bader said the Tobbe family did. Brennan Callan said many of the streets perpendicular to Preston Street downtown are named for his and GJHS member Sallie C. Smith's early family. Sallie is a DAR member and has been instrumental in getting male family members recognized with SAR grave plaques. And we have Ruckriegel Parkway named for long-time J'Town mayor Daniel Ruckriegel.

Steve Wisner's family comes from the southwest county area and Wisertown Road, off Old Third Street Road, is named for John Wisner, who had a farm in the area that is noted on the 1858 Jefferson County map.

Someone thought Blue Horse Avenue, actually an alley located off Frankfort just before Story Avenue, was named after Mary Alice Hadley's, Hadley Pottery logo. Your editor could not confirm this on line. The only logo I could find, and on pieces we have is, "M A Hadley" painted in Hadley blue on the pieces. The Blue Horse, I think, comes from one of their designs and that was painted on the door of the business..

**Contact Us** - Our e-mail address is [jtownhistsociety@aol.com](mailto:jtownhistsociety@aol.com). The telephone contact is your newsletter editor, John Ulmer, 502-491-6463.