

Kentucky

Fall 2010
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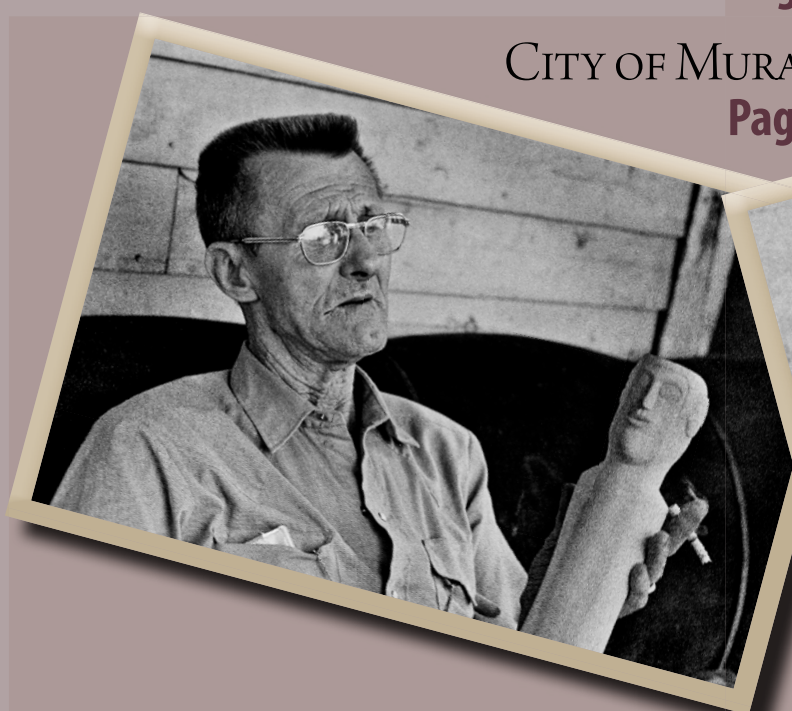
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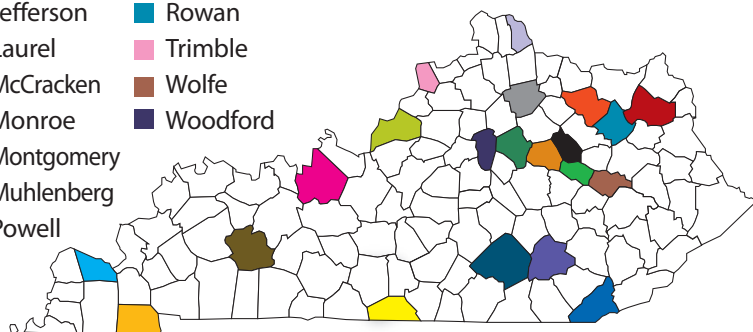
Presumption of Art

Paducah today is a city of murals, but the first paintings proved that history can be a matter of interpretation.



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On the cover: Portraits included in Guy Mendes' book, *40/40*.

Celebrating Kentucky's Cultural Diversity

The changing season, illustrated by the many shades of brilliant autumn colors, is a timely reflection of the cultural variety found in Kentucky. As host of the 2010 Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games,[™] Kentucky had the opportunity to show our guests why we claim to be “the horse capital of the world.” But hosting the Games also gave us the chance to show off much more than our love of horses.

The Kentucky Experience pavilion at the Kentucky Horse Park was an opportunity for everyone, Kentuckians included, to discover the diversity of the Commonwealth's unique history while enjoying great music, inspired art, our trademark beverages, Kentucky stories, and through it all, Kentucky hospitality.

This issue of *Kentucky Humanities* offers another glimpse of that rich cultural diversity. We're sharing an excerpt from Guy Mendes' new book of photo portraits, *40/40*. You may have a difficult time deciding which story, image, and unique personality you think best represents Kentucky's incredible creative spirit.

We're also pleased to introduce you to Judge Joseph Holt, America's judge advocate general, and the work underway to restore his Breckinridge County home. In her article, author Susan Dyer explains why Holt, a nearly forgotten but once-prominent Kentuckian, deserves the Commonwealth's recognition for his work to encourage Kentucky to stay in the Union and his service to Abraham Lincoln.

No one could forget the iconic photograph of the raising of the Stars and Stripes atop Mt. Suribachi, Iwo Jima. But did you know that Fleming County native Franklin Sousley was one of those six young Marines in that famous photograph? Sousley's story is one of triumph, tragedy, and keeping a promise to his mother to return home a hero. Ron Elliott's article begins on page 24.

And while few people have ever heard of John Fulton Folinsbee, it was his mural painting in the 1930s that began Paducah's now outstanding reputation as a city of murals — three city blocks of them. John E.L. Robertson's tale reveals what can happen to an artist — or anyone else — who suggests that Kentuckians should be told how to represent their history.

Past or present, famous or unknown, Kentucky is all about our wonderful people, places, and stories. The Kentucky Humanities Council hopes you enjoy this issue of *Kentucky Humanities*, in print or online at www.kyhumanities.org. And if it inspires you to share your story, please contact our editor, Marianne Stoess, Marianne.stoess@uky.edu. We love to hear from our readers.



Virginia G. Carter
Executive Director
Kentucky Humanities Council

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Virginia G. Carter".

The Kentucky Humanities Council offers businesses the opportunity to invest in Kentucky's greatest resource — *ITS PEOPLE.*

An educated, literate community strengthens Kentucky's workforce.

Educated, well-rounded individuals contribute to a stronger workforce and a more desirable location for businesses. The Kentucky Humanities Council works with scholars and educators throughout the state to develop programs with these goals in mind. We have invested \$14 million in the Commonwealth's communities helping them build a stronger Kentucky.



Programs sponsored by the Kentucky Humanities Council reach all areas of the Commonwealth and teach a wide array of skills.

The Kentucky Humanities Council sponsors programs reaching every county in the state. From Kentucky Chautauqua® and Prime Time Family Reading Time® to our Speakers Bureau and Museum on Main Street, we have programs and services designed to benefit all ages and all education levels.



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For 38 years, the Kentucky Humanities Council has been telling Kentucky's stories. Our programs, designed to share Kentucky's rich heritage, culture, and tradition, have touched the lives of more than 15 million people. We continue to find new and innovative ways to reach our audience, taking programs into classrooms and awarding grants to support the good ideas of community leadership.

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TELLING KENTUCKY'S STORY | *council pages*

Kentucky Humanities Council welcomes new board members

Cora Wright Hughes and Jane Gentry Vance were elected to the Kentucky Humanities Council board of directors at the annual board meeting held in April. Each will serve a three-year term, with a second three-year term optional. As members of the twenty-three-person volunteer board of directors, Hughes and Vance will help set council policies, award project grants to community organizations and participate in fund-raising to help the Council meet the growing demand for its programs.



Cora Wright Hughes

Hughes, currently serving as the Fine Arts Extension Agent with the Muhlenberg County Cooperative Extension, earned a bachelor's degree in music from Western Kentucky University and a master's in education from Eastern Kentucky University.

In March 2007, she began her career as a Fine Arts Extension Agent with the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension. While working for the Greenup County Cooperative Extension, she received the Cultural Diversity Award and the Col. Bill Williams Cultural Award.

Hughes came to the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension following nearly five years working as a program coordinator with the UK Opera Theatre at the University of Kentucky School of Music. Prior to her work at the University of Kentucky, she spent twenty-five years as a music specialist in Bourbon and Fayette County schools.



Jane Gentry Vance

Vance is a professor in the University of Kentucky Department of English and the Honors program. She earned a bachelor's degree from Hollins College in Virginia, and a master's degree from Brandeis University in Massachusetts. She went on to earn a Ph.D. in English and American literature from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

Vance has authored and published many collections of poetry including *Portrait of the Artist as a White Pig*; *A Year in Kentucky: A Garland of Poems*; and *A Garden in Kentucky*. Her work has also been published in notable anthologies and journals including *Harvard Magazine*, *Southern Poetry Review*, *American Voice*, and *Humanities in the South*.

Prof. Vance has received many awards for her work including the Kentucky Arts Council's Al Smith Individual Artist Fellowship for poetry (1992 and 2003); Virginia Center for Creative Arts Fellowship; a Yaddo Fellowship and a Voices and Visions grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the American Library Association.

She began her teaching career at Georgetown College and has been a member of the University of Kentucky faculty for more than thirty-five years. A native of Kentucky, Vance was named Kentucky's poet laureate on April 24, 2007.

Jane Vance has worked with the Kentucky Humanities Council for many years and has been a popular speaker in the Council's Speaker's Bureau. She also took part in *Our Lincoln: Kentucky's Gift to the Nation* in Lexington and in Washington, D.C.

Applications now accepted

The Kentucky Humanities Council, Inc. invites museums, libraries, and historical societies in towns of fewer than 20,000 residents to host the **Smithsonian Institution** traveling exhibit, *New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music*.

Beginning March 2012, the Kentucky Humanities Council will bring the Smithsonian Institution's Museum on Main Street traveling exhibit, *New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music*, to six communities.

The application deadline has been extended and applications will now be accepted through November 10, 2010. Communities will be selected and notified by December 31, 2010.

The modular, free-standing unit requires 800 square-feet of display space with nine-foot ceilings. Additional space is recommended to show local artifacts and special exhibits.

Six communities will be selected to host the exhibit locally as part of the Museum on Main Street project — a national/state/local partnership to bring exhibitions and programs to rural cultural organizations. Museum on Main Street is a collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution and the Federation of State Humanities Councils. Support for Museum on Main Street has been provided by the United States Congress.

For information about *New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music*, or to download an application to host the exhibit, visit:
kyhumanities.org/newharmonies.html.



Six Kentucky counties selected to host traveling Smithsonian exhibit

The Kentucky Humanities Council, Inc. will be sponsoring a tour of the Smithsonian traveling exhibit, *Journey Stories*, at the following Kentucky locations in 2011 and 2012:

Clark County

May 28, 2011 - July 9, 2011
Bluegrass Heritage Museum, Winchester

Harrison County

July 16, 2011 - August 27, 2011
Cynthiana-Harrison County Museum/
Chamber of Commerce, Cynthiana

Pulaski County

September 3, 2011 - October 15, 2011
Somerset Community College/Carnegie
Community Arts Center, Somerset

Rowan County

October 22, 2011 - December 3, 2011
Kentucky Folk Art Center, Morehead

Campbell County

December 10, 2011 - January 21, 2012
Fort Thomas Military Museum,
Fort Thomas

Calloway County

January 28, 2012 - March 10, 2012
Wrather West Kentucky Museum/
Murray State University

Journey Stories is an exhibit illustrating the important roles travel and movement played in building a diverse American society. Through the use of images, audio, and artifacts, *Journey Stories* tells the tales of how we and our ancestors came to America. Everyone has a story to tell about their journey to America — from Native Americans to new American citizens. Our history is filled with stories of people leaving behind everything — families and possessions — to reach a new life in another state, across a continent, or even across an ocean. The reasons behind those decisions are plentiful. Many chose to move, searching for something better in a new land. Others had no choice: enslaved Africans who were relocated to a strange land where they bravely asserted their own cultures, or Native Americans, who were often pushed aside by newcomers.

2010-2011 Whole Humanities Catalog is available

The 2010-2011 Kentucky Humanities Council's Whole Humanities Catalog features forty Kentucky scholars and writers offering presentations on a variety of topics, including history, music, and culture. In addition, there are twenty Kentucky Chautauqua® historical dramatists who tell the stories of Kentuckians who made great contributions to the Commonwealth.

To obtain a copy of the catalog call 859.257.5932 or download it from our Web site, kyhumanities.org.

Schedule a performance for your business, organization, or classroom today!



Remembering Martin F. Schmidt **September 26, 1918 - March 6, 2010**



Martin was truly a "Humanities Hero," as we named him in our recent *Report to the People of Kentucky*. His name is on our Scroll of Honor, reserved for our most generous contributors. His financial support was outstanding all the more because we knew that it came with his approval for our work — the highest compliment we could hope for. Martin not only helped secure the future of our signature program, Kentucky Chautauqua®; he supported our series of New Books for New Readers and made possible the publication of *Into the Wilderness* by Jim Holmberg, a volume about the Lewis and Clark expedition. In addition, Martin contributed to our mission of Telling Kentucky's Story by serving on the board of directors and by participating as a speaker in our Speakers Bureau. We knew Martin as a scholar, a careful researcher, and a man who relished Kentucky's history.

The Kentucky Humanities Council will always be grateful to Martin F. Schmidt as a friend and as a Kentuckian. His loss is a loss to Kentucky.

Yes, they too were Kentuckians

A look at some well-known, and not-so-well-known, people in Kentucky history

Nancy Green

1834-1923 • Montgomery County

By James C. Claypool

Nancy Green, an emancipated slave from Montgomery County, Kentucky, became one of America's best-known corporate symbols when, in the early 1890s, she was employed by a Chicago flour company to portray a stereotypical black cook named Aunt Jemima. In 1889, Chris Rutt and Charles Underwood of the Pearl Milling Company in Illinois developed a product they called Aunt Jemima (the first ready baking mix) and founded a business known as the Aunt Jemima Manufacturing Company.

Chris Rutt had come up with the name Aunt Jemima after hearing a song by that name performed by two blackface minstrel entertainers, Baker and Farrell, who sang it wearing an apron and kerchief appropriate to the character. In 1890 R.T. Davis purchased the struggling Aunt Jemima Manufacturing Company. Davis, a clever marketer, immediately started searching for an African American woman to portray a Mammy archetype and to promote the Aunt Jemima ready-mix flour brand. He found Nancy Green, "just the person" to play the part. Green had a robust, wholesome look, was the right size in height and weight and had distinctive and strong facial features that photographed well. She was also outgoing, a gifted storyteller and, as a bonus, she was a good cook. In short, Green and the Aunt Jemima advertising caricature she was called upon to portray were the perfect fit.

Davis used the opening of the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893 as the moment to introduce his flour brand's new spokeswoman to the public. Posing before what the Davis Milling Company advertised as "the world's biggest flour barrel," Nancy Green, costumed as Aunt Jemima, became the exposition's hit attraction. Smiling and greeting guests, Green captivated audiences with her singing and storytelling while helping to dispense mouth-watering ready-mix Aunt Jemima pancakes. In recognition of the Aunt Jemima exhibit's popularity, Green received a medal and a certificate from expo officials. It was later reported that the

Davis Milling Company sold one million pancakes to visitors at the show.

Green, the first of seven African American women to portray the Aunt Jemima character, spent over thirty years as the live spokesperson of a corporate product line that grew to include a variety of syrups, buttermilk pancake and waffle mixes, and frozen lines of waffles and French toast. She toured the world making hundreds of public appearances, remaining ever true to the character she portrayed. Green, who was known for her charitable activities and good-heartedness, was never highly paid, nor were her successors. Green spent most of her extra money promoting anti-poverty programs in America's poorest African American communities, bristling at any suggestion that her role as Aunt Jemima was an insult to her race. Green remained employed as the Aunt Jemima corporate symbol by Davis Milling until her death in 1923.

The Quaker Oats Company purchased the Aunt Jemima brand name in 1926 and reintroduced the Aunt Jemima character at the 1933 World's Fair in Chicago. Over the years, Quaker Oats has relied upon a combination of live appearances by the women employed to portray Aunt Jemima, radio and television ads, and catchy jingles to expand the brand's market. In 1989, the image of Aunt Jemima was updated by giving her pearl earrings; her headband was removed. Today, the trademark image of Aunt Jemima appears in products that annually earn more than \$350 million. The image of Aunt Jemima is that of a humble cook, ever cheerful and smiling, the indisputable master of the household kitchen. It is altogether fitting that Nancy Green, born enslaved in Kentucky, overcame all adversities and can still be commemorated as having been the original Aunt Jemima, the advertising icon that has now lasted for over a century.

Adapted from James C. Claypool's book, *Our Fellow Kentuckians: Rascals, Heroes and Just Plain Uncommon Folk*, which is a talk offered by Claypool through the Kentucky Humanities Council Speakers Bureau.

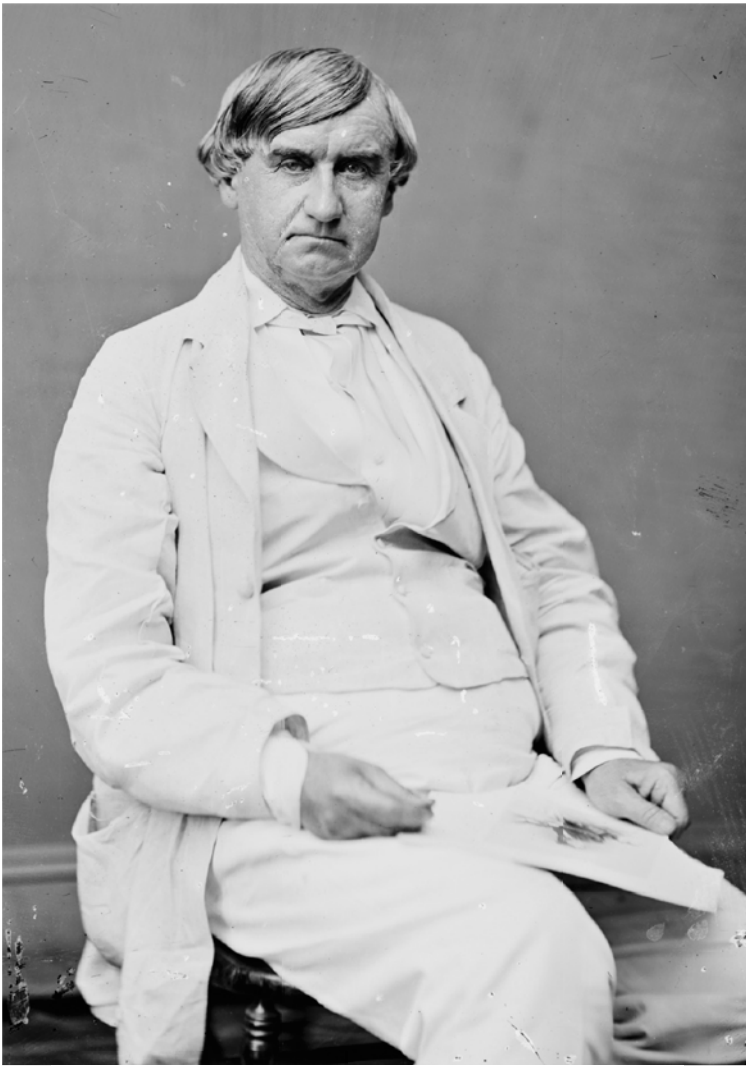


Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress

Kentucky's Judge Joseph Holt

America's First Judge Advocate General

By Susan B. Dyer

According to Dr. James C. Klotter, state historian of Kentucky and professor of history, "During the time of the Civil War, most Americans knew the name Joseph Holt (1807-1894), but now it is almost forgotten." Judge Holt's history is now being reclaimed.

Joseph Holt served as commissioner of patents, postmaster general, and secretary of war under President James Buchanan and judge advocate general under President Abraham Lincoln.

A successful attorney and loving husband, he worked tirelessly for a nation that would grievously neglect him after the Civil War. The country forgot how Holt stayed with President Buchanan when numerous cabinet members resigned at the beginning of the Civil War. However, Joseph Holt never gave up and became one of the first strong leaders to assist in the War, and served as secretary of war until President Buchanan's term ended.

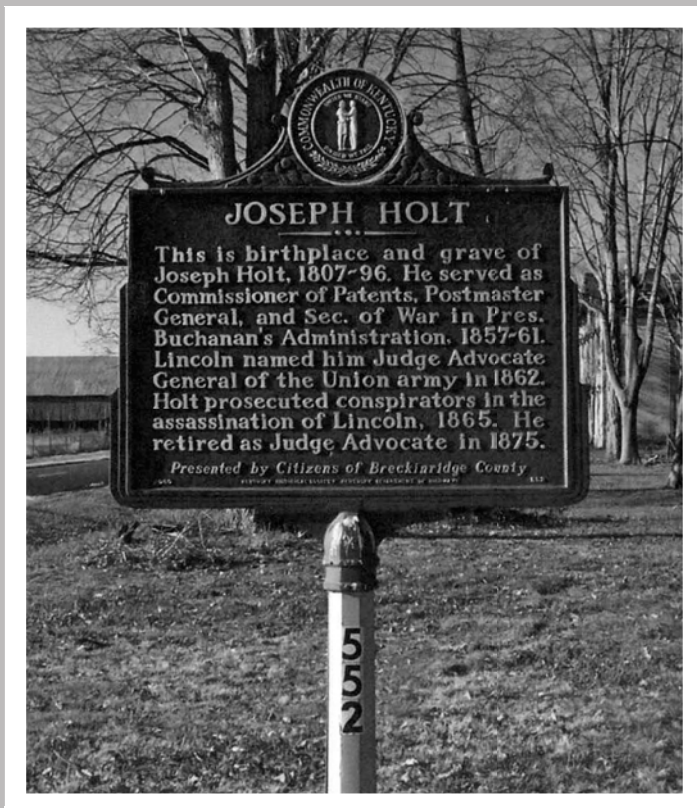
President Lincoln was so impressed with Holt that on September 3, 1862, Holt became the first person to hold the position of judge advocate general. Eventually, Holt would have the tremendous responsibility of prosecuting the conspirators who had slain the president who had appointed him.

Contemporaries called Holt his own man, a person who asked no favors and owed no one. Even though he had many opportunities, he never ran for public office. He was a gifted individual who as a young man at Centre College enjoyed the debate team and loved delivering messages to audiences. Holt captured their attention with his spell-binding delivery, a gift that prepared him well for life as one of the most successful lawyers of his era.

Wherever he spoke, Holt drew crowds. On the topic of slavery, Joseph Holt stated:

"Another incalculable disadvantage resulting from slavery is that it affords a continual course of contention between the states in favor of slavery and those opposed to it. We can see the coolness between this state (Kentucky) and Indiana. The animosity, though weak, will grow and it will have a tendency, a mighty tendency to sever the Union. But the Union is the very life of our government and without it, we could not exist as an independent nation. Thus, it must be a disadvantage to the United States to encourage slavery, since it has a powerful tendency to destroy this government, to destroy this Union which has been formed for our preservation."

Though a slaveholder, Holt argued that slavery was contrary to all principles of justice, every precept of reality, every feeling



The Joseph Holt state marker is located in Breckinridge County, Kentucky.

Photo courtesy of Susan B. Dyer

of humanity, and every sentiment of honor. Color determined whether a man or woman was free or slave. He favored a gradual end to the institution, but an end, nevertheless.

Joseph Holt's talks emphasized his strong, independent condemnation of laws for imprisoning people for debts. He also stressed the need for Kentucky to develop free schools throughout the state and hoped citizens would understand the advantages of establishing free public education for all.

After attending Centre College, Joseph Holt agreed to tutor the sons of "The Old Duke," Robert Wickliffe, while studying law under Wickliffe's supervision. In June of 1828, Judge Paul I. Booker dispensed the oath to Holt allowing him to practice as a counselor and attorney-at-law. For the next two years he worked in a partnership with Ben Hardin, famous lawyer and politician.

Soon after, Holt started his own practice, becoming very successful in Elizabethtown. He traveled widely and gave an influential speech at Hardinsburg prior to the 1828 presidential election. His speech indicated his strong support for the New Court and the party of Andrew Jackson.

Having prospered with his Elizabethtown practice, Holt turned to the more inviting, intriguing, and faster-paced city of Louisville. Moving to Louisville in 1831, he proudly hung his shingle on Jefferson Street between 5th and 6th Streets. This move was the catalyst that enhanced Holt's popularity with the powers in Frankfort.

Appointed commonwealth attorney by Governor Breathitt

in 1833, Holt held the office until his friend died in 1835. He was not reappointed. Having no political ties with the new administration, Holt set off for the Democratic Convention in Baltimore on May 21, 1835.

A delegate from the Jackson Wing of the Democratic Party, Holt carried with him letters of introduction to Martin Van Buren, the choice of this branch of the party. However, the party did not agree on the nomination for vice-president. Richard M. Johnson of Kentucky, promised the nomination by Jackson, found strong opposition in the Virginia delegation. The southern men opposed Johnson for vice-president because he had a slave mistress and mulatto daughters. They wanted W.C. Rivers as their candidate.

Johnson's name was placed in nomination; however, some delegates blocked the move to make it unanimous. Several others attempted to speak, but the chair refused them. At this critical point, Holt was recognized from the floor and began speaking for his fellow Kentuckian.

Stillness filled the room as Joseph Holt satisfied their attention with well-chosen words. His speech touched the audience's deepest emotions, as he offered a heart-felt message in his dramatic style. His words caused the delegates to recollect the values and ethics of their great nation.

Holt began by stating the principles for which the party stood. He presented the western idea of democracy. He stated, "If, Mr. President, you at this moment transport yourself to the far west, you would find upon one of her green and sunny fields a person who had sprung from the people, he was one of them, and his heart in all its recollections, its hopes and its sympathies was blended with the fortunes of the toiling millions ...

"When this nation was agonizing and bleeding at every pore, when war had desolated with fire and sword your northern frontier ... He rallied about him the chivalry of his state and dashed with his gallant volunteers to the scene of hostilities resolved to perish or retrieve the national honor." Holt had vividly described Johnson's heroism in the War of 1812.

With the speech of Joseph Holt, nomination was secured for Johnson. Two Kentuckians linked together, Indian fighter of the War of 1812, and orator, helping bring the Democratic Convention of 1835 to a successful end. After Holt's brilliant delivery, the delegates who had attended the convention wanted to meet the man.

The results of the 1835 Democratic Convention in Baltimore, Maryland, resulted in the nomination of Martin Van Buren of New York for president and Richard M. Johnson of Kentucky for vice-president. Twenty-nine year old Joseph Holt's words soon graced the headlines of all the important papers of the day. The story spread across newspapers about the convention's success in building strong principles for the nation to support in the 1836 election.

In 1835, Joseph Holt decided to move south to seek his fortune. Arriving in late fall at Port Gibson, Mississippi, he resided there for two years. He then moved to Vicksburg, where he thoroughly enjoyed the competition of the Southern bar.

Over the next several years Holt's law practice thrived. His reputation grew, drawing observers who were entertained by his unique, skillful, and powerful talks. His performances left juries spellbound. One of his most noted cases was *Vick Newitt vs. the Mayor and Alderman of Vicksburg*. The case involved land Newitt had suggested dedicating to the public as Front Street and Commons. The case carried into the highest courts with Holt, the winning lawyer, representing the city, and the losing side represented by the noted orator Sergeant S. Printiss. This case helped Joseph Holt build a highly respected law practice, completing his dream of becoming wealthy in four or five years, and retiring.

Soon, hard work alone brought dull living and a strict, routine life. Joseph longed for social company to share his success. The long and lonely evenings passed slowly. Joseph, now thirty-two, wanted a spark in his life. He remembered a young girl named Mary Harrison whom he had met earlier in Bardstown. Kentucky called Holt home to search out his many acquaintances. None of the other girls in Kentucky had caught his attention as she had. Joseph and Mary were married on April 24, 1839.

The Holts purchased a home on 233 East Walnut Street in Louisville where Mary remained for many months of the year while Joseph practiced law in Vicksburg. Mary traveled south each fall and visited Joseph when she could. Their relationship was bound together by letter writing.

However, Mary soon became ill, and Joseph retired from a fast-paced office and demanding schedule. This gave him time to recuperate from signs of consumption. Mary, however, was more fragile and not as fortunate. Holt grieved for two years after Mary's death. Trying to ward off the depression, he traveled to Europe to see the world.

Upon returning to Kentucky Joseph Holt once again found love. He pursued, courted, and managed to win the heart of former Governor Charles Anderson Wickliffe's daughter, Margaret. They were married on April 2, 1850, and afterwards traveled to Europe for a wedding trip lasting from 1850 through 1852.

The couple returned to Louisville, where they remained until Holt moved to Washington, D.C., in April 1857 after receiving an appointment as commissioner of patents from President Buchanan.

In 1859, President Buchanan commissioned Holt the postmaster general of the United States. All across the country papers praised the appointment. In general, they stated that Holt would be fair, honest, and dependable, that he would not be led astray, and that his high intelligence would allow him to head the United States Postal Service in a professional way. Leading newspapers quoted his works, stating, "It would be impossible to induce him to swerve from the path of rectitude. His oratory, his rare endowments of mind, and his high moral attitudes made him one of the most single exceptions to political preferment,"



The Smith-Harrison House was the home of Joseph Holt's first wife, Mary Harrison Holt. Joseph and Mary were married on April 24, 1839.

Photo courtesy of Susan B. Dyer



Wickland was the home of Holt's second wife, Margaret Wickliffe Holt. She was the daughter of Governor Charles Anderson Wickliffe of Bardstown.

Photo courtesy of Susan B. Dyer

they argued. "The nation had reason to rejoice," the newspapers expressed, "for Joseph Holt would fail in nothing he undertook."

Without solicitation upon his part, the news stories emphasized he was next invited to accept the office of commissioner of patents, and through his faithfulness, efficiency, and devotion to the complicated duties of that position, he had impressed President Buchanan. Upon the death of the postmaster general, the chief executive had invited Holt to assume that arduous office. The new postmaster general, they said, wanted to do justice, and to promote the national interest to all areas of the nation. This high praise translated into great success in cleaning up the corruption in the postal system and saving the nation more than one million dollars by having mail delivered two days sooner to most designations.

On December 31, 1860, only a short time before the controversial new president would take the oath, secretary of war John Floyd of Virginia resigned. The following day, the president placed Joseph Holt in charge of the war department on an interim basis. Holt entered upon the duties of the office at once, while continuing to perform as postmaster general. Shortly afterwards, the president asked Holt to accept the post permanently, but Holt argued that he should not do so, saying that it would probably lead to an angry and fruitless debate. Holt believed he could serve the administration quite well under the provisional appointment that he held. However, after further conversation, he acquiesced, though apparently with reluctance.

On January 9, 1861, Senator Slidell of Louisiana offered the resolution and asked for immediate confirmation by the Senate:

"Resolved that the President be requested to inform the Senate whether John B. Floyd, whose appointment as Secretary of War was confirmed by the Senate on the 6th of March of, 1857, still continues to hold said office, and if not whether said office has become vacant; and further to inform the Senate how and by whom the duties of said office are now discharged, and if an appointment of Acting or provisional Secretary of War has been, how, when, and by what authority, it was so made and why the fact of said appointment has not communicated to the Senate."

Later, as the heat for war grew hotter, Slidell stressed, "We want to know who secretary of war is, & if the secretary of war is the person who the public prints suppose to be exercising those duties. I say & say that gentleman could have obtained the approbation of the Senate. We would not be secretary by and with the advice of the senate."

The resolution was adopted with yeas thirty-five, and nays seventeen. On Thursday, January 17, 1861, the following message was received from the president of the United States:

*"To the Senate of the United States:
I nominate Joseph Holt, of Kentucky, to be Secretary of War of the United States, in the place of John B. Floyd, resigned."
(Signed) James Buchanan*

Having been confirmed as secretary of war, Holt worked endlessly to keep the country from turmoil. Numerous memorandums came across Holt's desk daily. Each note, telegram, letter, and personal interview was taken into consideration. All correspondence was carefully examined and professionally answered in quick response to the concerns of the day.

Only two months later the nation would be at war. The Civil War broke out in April 1861. Joseph Holt was instrumental in preventing the secession of his beloved Kentucky. He diligently worked giving speeches, writing, and publishing the pamphlet "Policy of the General Government the Pending Revolution, Its Objects, Its Probable Results If Successful, and the Duty of Kentucky in Crisis."

Joseph Holt's voice was heard across Kentucky as he delivered talks encouraging Kentuckians to stay in the Union and presenting insight into the consequences they might face should they choose to secede. His words made people think, as families, including his own, were torn apart. The Civil War was dividing not only a nation, but also the basis upon which it was built, the family. Holt asked the people of Kentucky to appeal to their neighbor, to protect their patriotism and to protect their country's flag, the flag of freedom, in life or death.

Joseph Holt helped establish a recruiting station across the river from Louisville, in Jeffersonville, Indiana, called Camp Joe Holt. The camp was established for the purpose of signing up Kentucky troops, since the state had declared itself neutral. The Kentucky Unionists, encouraged by Joseph Holt, meanwhile worked to keep Kentucky from seceding.

When the Union army was defeated at Bull Run on July 21, 1861, the North knew the war would be long. After enthusiasm wore down, Lincoln had a difficult job of arousing people's support. Lincoln knew that to be successful, he needed the support of Kentucky, Missouri, Delaware, and Maryland. "My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and it is not either to save or destroy slavery." By having a moderate position, Lincoln kept all of the border states in the Union.

President Abraham Lincoln had much respect and confidence in Joseph Holt. Holt joined the army as a colonel, but on September 3, 1862, President Lincoln appointed him the first judge advocate general of the Union Army. Holt became chief of the bureau of military justice for the United States. He helped secure the capital in Washington during Lincoln's inauguration, and helped devise the plan to employ

former slaves as soldiers in the Union Army, giving Lincoln the needed troops to be successful in the Civil War. Congress recognized this plan by an act of July 17, 1862, that authorized President Lincoln to receive into service to the United States persons of African descent.

During 1864 Lincoln offered Holt two positions, secretary of the interior and attorney general, but Holt declined both. In addition, Judge Holt was one of many considered for the Republican vice-president ticket.

The 150th anniversary of the Civil War will be observed in 2011-2015, giving more recognition to Judge Holt's important role during this historical era in our nation. Searching the records, skimming the archives, and visiting the past shows that Judge Holt's work still encourages the nation to work together instead of dividing, to unite to work for a solution, to heal and join together their talents, to continue the good works the world deserves.

With the Lincoln Bicentennial Celebration in Kentucky, Judge Holt's impressive home in Breckinridge County has been saved because of grants received through the Lincoln Bicentennial Commission and the



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Efforts to restore the home of Judge Joseph Holt are underway. Located in Breckinridge County, the Holt House is listed on the Kentucky Lincoln Heritage Trail as an official Lincoln site.

Photo courtesy of Susan B. Dyer

Kentucky Heritage Preservation Office, making it possible for the Breckinridge County Fiscal Court to purchase the home. Massive efforts from state representatives, state senators, the Kentucky Heritage Council Preservation Office, the Kentucky Lincoln Bicentennial Commission, the Kentucky Historical Society, Preservation Kentucky, local citizens, county judges, and the people, all helped the Holt House win acknowledgements from Preservation Kentucky as *One of the Most Endangered Historic Places in Kentucky*. It has become a Legacy Project of the Kentucky Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission, was named by the Kentucky Historical Society and the Kentucky Heritage Preservation Office as being on the Kentucky Lincoln Heritage Trail, and is an official Lincoln Site in Kentucky.

On August 15, 2009, Judge Holt's home in Breckinridge County was spotlighted on the Kentucky Lincoln Heritage Trail with a Community Day that was one of the most successful events of Kentucky's Lincoln Bicentennial Celebration. The Breckinridge County Fiscal Court is partnering with the Kentucky Heritage Preservation Office and the Kentucky Historical Society, working closely with a steering committee for the planning of new public uses of the home and long-term renovation. With the work of many Kentuckians it will be possible to restore Judge Holt's home, the only place he really loved and the only place he called home.

Now is the chance to revisit history and explore the spirit and the heart of the man Joseph Holt, Kentuckian, hero, attorney.

Our state historian, Dr. James C. Klotter, said it best when he stated, "Holt deserves better than history has given him."

About the Author

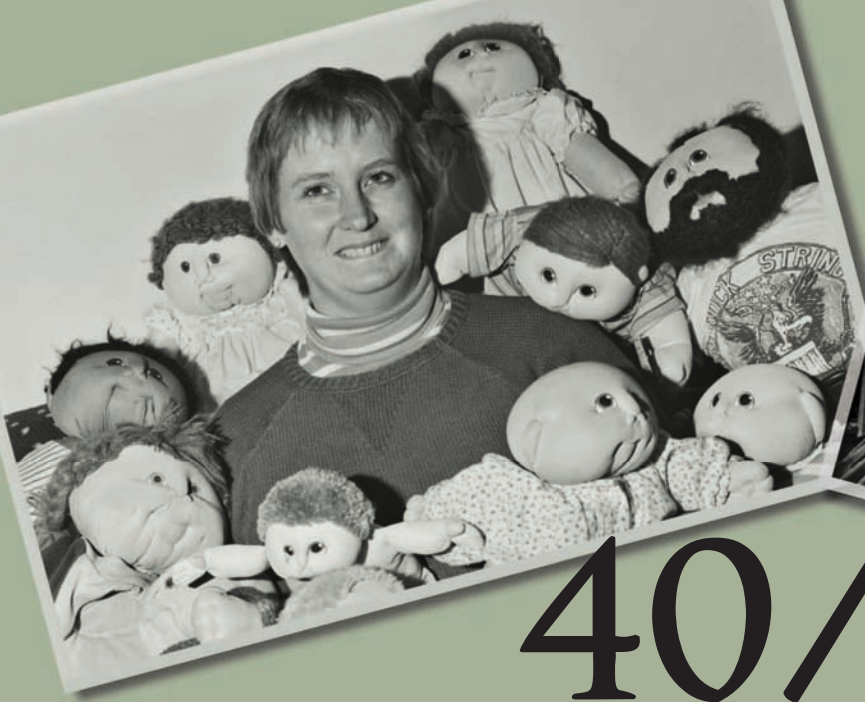
Born at Fort Knox, Susan Dyer was educated at Western Kentucky University with a B.S., M.A., and Rank I in Education. Formerly a language arts teacher, Susan has been included numerous times in *Who's Who Among America's Teachers*.

Dyer lives in Breckinridge County, Kentucky, with her husband. They have two sons. Undertaking two projects at the same time, she has written the sensational story of Judge Joseph Holt, Judge Advocate General under President Lincoln, while working with various groups to save and restore Holt's boyhood home as part of the Lincoln Bicentennial Celebration.

Susan has received the following honors in relation to her work with the Judge Joseph Holt House: Outstanding Citizen of the Commonwealth, by the Kentucky House of Representatives, 2008; Volunteer of the Year, Breckinridge County Chamber of Commerce, 2008-2009; Cooperative Hero, *Kentucky Living* magazine, March 2010; and most recently, an Ida Lee Willis Memorial Foundation 2010 Service to Preservation Award.

For Further Reading

Lincoln's Advocate: The Life of Judge Joseph Holt; by Susan B. Dyer, Acclaim Press, Morley, Mo., 2009.



40/40

PORTRAITS BY GUY MENDES 1970-2010

40/40 is a book of black and white photographs published in October 2010 by the Institute 193 in conjunction with the Ann Tower Gallery. 40/40 brings together forty portraits made over a forty-year period. The images offer a unique chronicle of the times personified by a remarkable group of artists, writers, musicians, friends, and family members, Southerners mainly, from Kentucky and Louisiana and points in between.

BACKSTORY

If some photographs are like poems or songs, then some photographic portraits are like odes — odes on the “intimidations of mortality” to borrow Ed McClanahan’s corruption of Wordsworth. Susan Sontag’s statement “All photographs are momento mori” would second that emotion. But at the same time, there are ways that portraits can serve as exaltations and exclamations, as testament to the strength and perseverance of fellow travelers who have helped show us the way. Portraits can also function like ballads, story songs that tell of deeds and doers, of places and powers, of laughter and tears.

Since 1969 I have photographed family members, friends, and a wide assortment of people who might appear normal at first glance, but actually they are seers, soothsayers, spirit guides, mentors, and muses. They are the stars of my own personal firmament, denizens of a delightful demimonde who have inspired and amazed me and made me laugh. Thankfully, all of them were extremely giving when I asked to take their picture. These portraits, in turn, pay homage to lives that shine like a light for me across the fullness of time.

RALPH EUGENE MEATYARD

POWELL COUNTY • 1970



When I first met Gene he was wearing knickers, a woolen stovepipe hat, had an odd camera with two lenses around his neck, and seemed to be photographing nothing but air. Den Berry, a friend's precocious seven-year-old, pulled me aside and said in a low voice: "He makes really strange pictures!"

It so happened there was an exhibit of Gene's work at Doctors' Park in Lexington, and the photographs were unlike any others I had seen. I think that in various ways, I've been searching for Gene Meatyard ever since. I started hanging out at his shop, Eyeglasses of Kentucky, on Saturday mornings, looking at work on the walls of the waiting room that doubled as a small gallery. Saturday afternoons were spent on long, meandering car trips with Gene and Bob May, Gene's long-time friend and fellow traveler.

Gene believed that a photographer needed to make several different kinds of pictures, including experimental work like multiple exposures and slow exposures that yielded figures in motion. So I followed suit and made some very Gene-like photographs, including this multiple. Gene appears to reach out and touch himself. Is it his alter ego? Is he feeling his way, like a blind man? Or comforting himself? He was fighting cancer at the time. He had lost weight and his thick, black hair. But he didn't talk about it; he just went on about his business. He would be gone in two years, at the age of 47.

SUSAN KINGSLEY

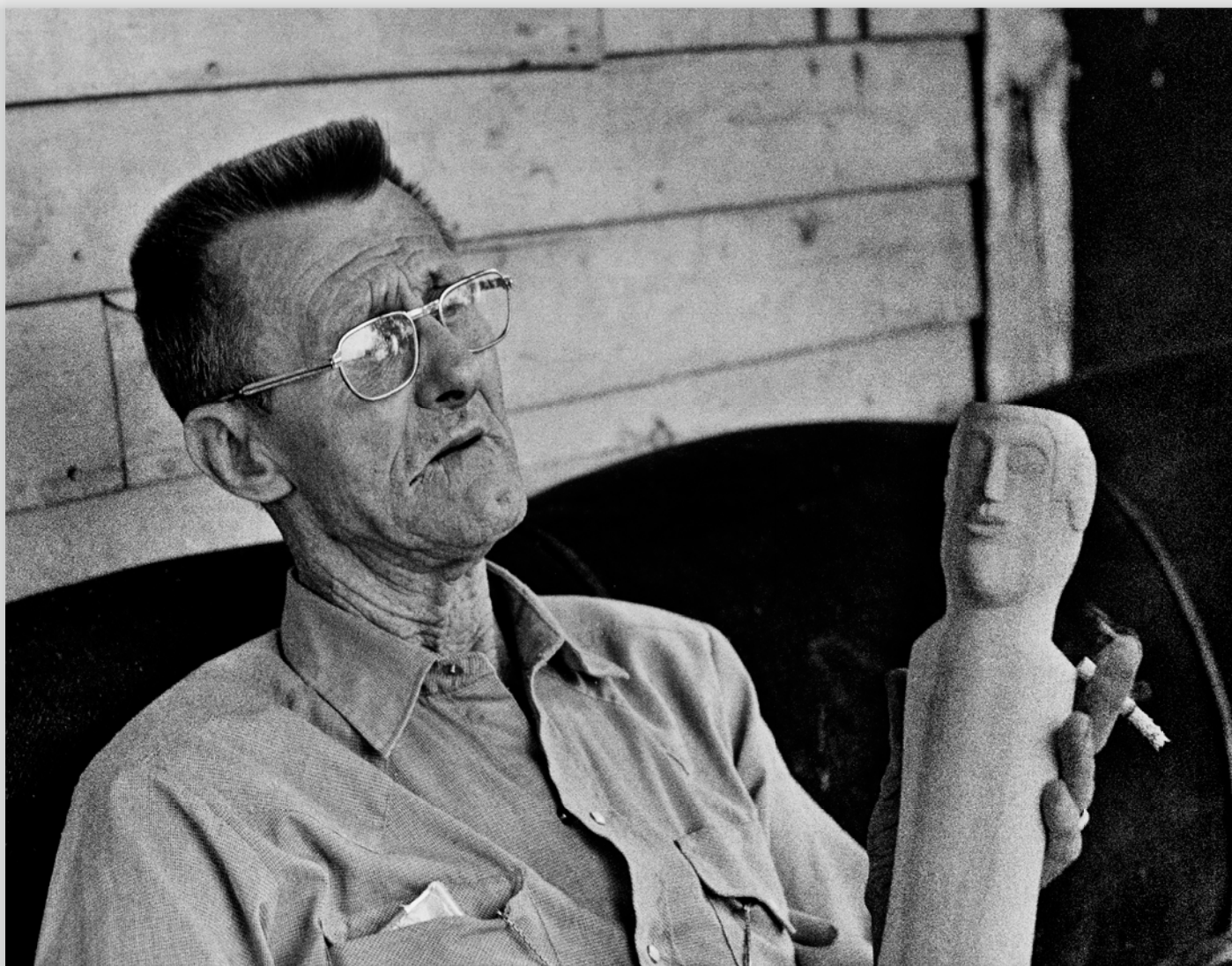
FAYETTE COUNTY • 1972



Before there was Ashley Judd, there was another actress with deep Kentucky roots, Susan Kingsley, one of the most dynamic performers I have ever seen on stage. Here she is hunkering down in a friend's apartment. At this moment, her career lay ahead of her and it would take her a long way from her home in Middlesboro, in the coalfields. After college she worked at Actor's Theatre of Louisville, where she was cast in Marsha Norman's first play, *Getting Out*, about a teenage girl who is paroled after serving eight years for robbery and manslaughter. The play moved to New York in 1979, where I was fortunate enough to see it. Susan parlayed an authentic voice with remarkable body control: her character's anger and fear were expressed physically, her limbs in perpetual motion. Anyone who saw her as Arlie will remember it always.

EDGAR TOLSON

WOLFE COUNTY • 1975



I don't have nuthin but a bad name ... and I wouldn't have that 'cept people give it to me." At the time Edgar Tolson said that to me he had become one of Kentucky's best-known artists. He was living in a small house up on a hill above Campton, a quiet place apart from his home in town, where his wife, Hulda, and a number of his eighteen children still lived. "I like living up here," he said, "drinking this sody pop, eating these baloney sandwiches — living just like the Indians!" But Edgar was much more complicated than that, and very good at crafting his own persona. He left school after sixth grade and tried his hand at farming, masonry and logging, until his leg was crushed in an accident. He met his first wife at church, and even worked for few years as a preacher, until whiskey, women and trouble with the law brought an end to that. After he suffered a stroke in 1957 that left him in bed for eighteen months, he began carving the figures that would bring him fame, if not fortune.

When Edgar died, the service was held in a double-wide trailer. The hearse was a pick-up truck, because four-wheel-drive was needed to get up the steep hill to the family plot. There you'll find a bronze of one of Edgar's male figures affixed to the top of his tombstone. Gaunt, staring out into eternity, it looks a lot like Edgar himself. Late in life Tolson reported having a recurring dream in which his "dolls," his children and grandchildren, all gathered around his bed, pointing at him and condemning him, saying "You made me! You made me!" All he could offer in response was, "I guess they're right."

COWBOY STEVE

FAYETTE COUNTY • 1976



It came as if by magic out of the cool Madison County night — a high, wide and handsome sound, staking claim to a young boy's imagination. Every Saturday night brought live music by some of the greats: Roy Acuff, the Carter Family, Uncle Dave Macon and the Fruit Jar Drinkers. The Grand Ole Opry faded in and out of a second-hand Crosley Showbox radio in Madison County, giving form to a world far different from that of a poor auto mechanic's son. It wouldn't be too long before young Steve Taylor would strike out for Lexington, the first stop on the road to Nashville. But thirty-something years went by and Cowboy Steve could still be found at the Adams House Restaurant on South Broadway, cleaning up after frat boys and art students. Steve did make it to Nashville on two occasions, but it was to see the Opry, not to fulfill his dream of singing and playing alongside the likes of Loretta Lynn and Conway Twitty. Because Cowboy Steve was black he was forced to stay on the fringes.

In the face of such overwhelming odds, his choice was clear — he would start his own radio station. His first attempt was in an old garage, with a soup can on a string for a microphone. He even persuaded other musicians like Esco and Jackie Hankins to join him. "The only way you could listen to that 'station' was through the cracks in the wall," Esco said later. But in 1963 Steve sent off for a build-it-yourself, three-watt transmitter, and WSEV was born. His voice was a bit muffled, laced with static, and the range was only a couple blocks, but by God, he was on the air, every day for almost fifteen years. Sometimes when I'm passing his Jefferson Street address I can still hear strains of "Six Days on the Road" or "Tramp on the Street," and I hear his voice, over the theme song, "Shuckin' the Corn," saying, "This is Cowboy Steve Taylor, signing off. God bless."

HARLAN & ANNA HUBBARD

TRIMBLE COUNTY • 1982



When I first walked down the mile-long green portal that was Payne Hollow I didn't know what to expect. I had met some people who said they were "getting back to the land," but they were amateurs compared to the Hubbards, who had been back for a long time. The Hubbards' house was handmade, simple but elegant. It was fashioned out of wood salvaged from the Ohio River, which ran by just down the hill. The house was most remarkable for what it didn't have: electricity and running water.

Harlan and Anna married in 1943 in Fort Thomas, a northern Kentucky river town near Cincinnati. Within a year they began a seven-year shantyboat trip down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers to the bayous of Louisiana, eventually returning to what had been the first stop on their journey, a cove on the Kentucky side of the Ohio River. There, in Trimble County, they built a place apart from the modern world and lived on the fringe of society, staying for over thirty years, tending goats, raising gardens, fishing and foraging among the debris that flowed past the mouth of their hollow, and making art and music.

MINNIE BLACK

LAUREL COUNTY • 1988



The Queen of the Gourd People was eighty-nine when this picture was made. We were in her Gourd Museum, which was housed in the old general store and gas station she had once run with her long-deceased husband, William. It was a hot summer day and sweltering inside, but she stood calmly for the long exposures that the view camera required, surrounded by fanciful creatures, musical instruments, self-portraits, even a bust of President Eisenhower. Minnie rarely made the same thing twice. She said it was because the bees mixed the pollen different every year, resulting in different sizes and shapes of gourds.

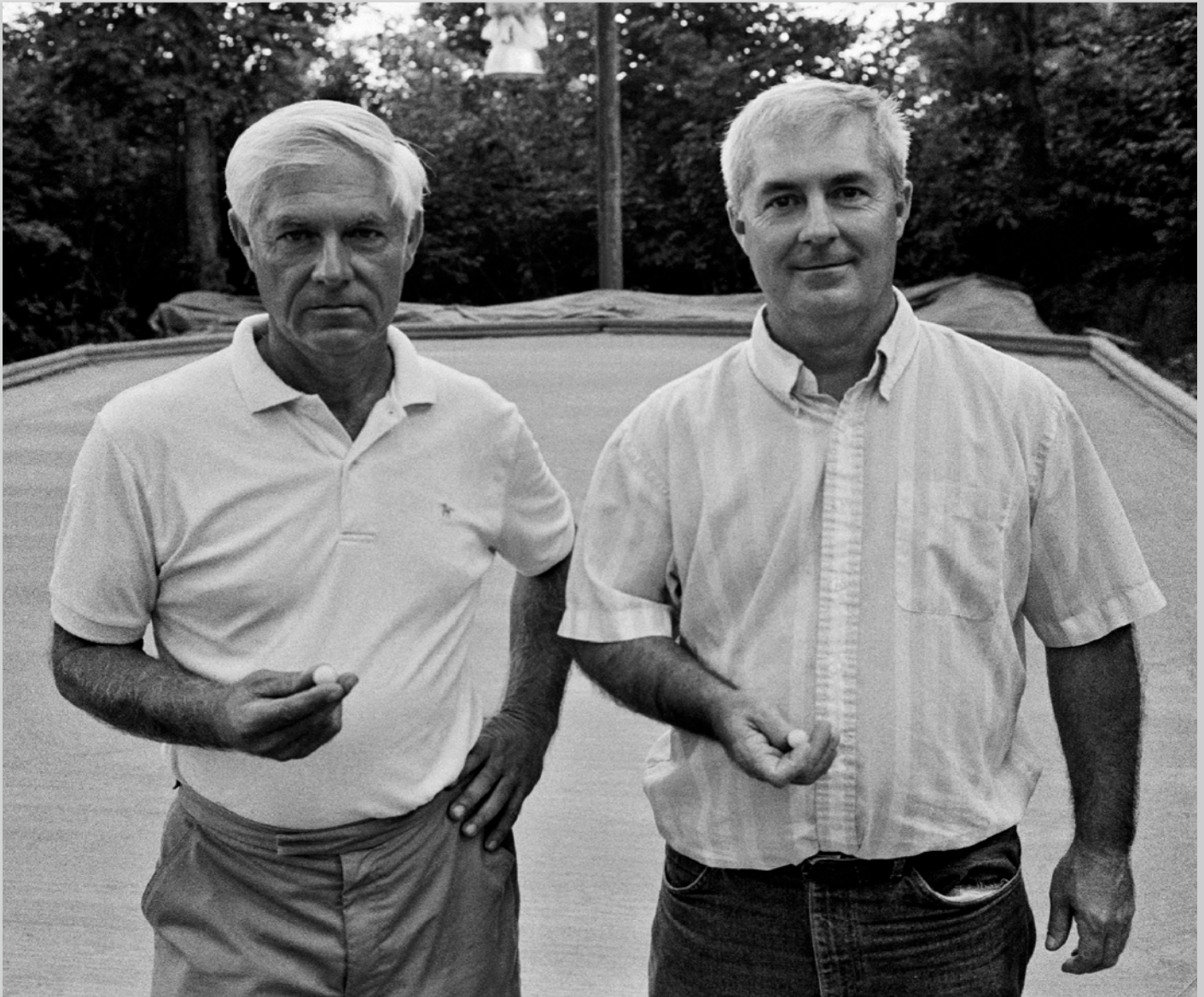
I last saw her in 1994 and she was still going strong, but she died two years later. Finally, the big basketball-sized gourd she had started long ago could be finished. On one side it read "Born, Feb. 18th 1899." The opposite side was blank except for the word "Died ...". A third side featured a picture of Minnie smiling and holding a large gourd. And on the fourth side she had burnished this couplet:

Let it be said as I lie in my casket,

"She raised a gourd as big as a bushel basket."

LARRY & RICHARD BOWMAN

MONROE COUNTY • 1998



Since I didn't know my way around Monroe County, I arranged to meet Richard Bowman at his one-chair barbershop near the town of Summer Shade. I arrived a little before quitting time. Richard finished his last six dollar haircut of the day, and we headed for the family farm on Radio Station Road. There, in the middle of a thicket of trees, lay the Bowmans' marble yard, a thirty-by-fifty-foot sandy playing field lit by a bank of lights. Richard and his brothers Larry and Michael are among the world's greatest Rolley Hole marble players. The game goes back to pre-Civil War times, and perhaps to the Cherokee people before The Removal. It involves hand-made marbles of flint or agate, a marble yard with two holes, and a lot of skill and strategy similar to chess.

Michael Bowman doesn't say much, but he can hit another marble at thirty feet. Richard is a clever strategist, and Larry is not only an expert roller, he's a master yard builder who tamps down the soil and tops it off with just the right amount of fine river sand. The Bowmans learned Rolley Hole from their father, so the game has been played on this farm for one hundred years, but few of the younger family members have taken it up. It's only fully grown men down on their knees, looking to knock an opponent "out of edge," or, better yet, crack their marble in two with a power shot.

MARTHA NELSON THOMAS

JEFFERSON COUNTY • 1987



Martha Nelson Thomas reinvented the doll. She had wanted to be a painter, but she needed a source of income, so she began making her Doll Babies. Each one was a unique, handmade work of art complete with adoption papers and an introductory letter. They were all Martha's children, and she loved to place them with good families. At the Guild Gallery in Lexington the parents held family reunions, and there was a waiting list for those wanting to adopt.

In 1978, a man in north Georgia also claimed to have invented a new kind of doll. In reality, he had sold some of Martha's Doll Babies in a craft store, but he had inflated the price, so Martha took back those that hadn't sold. The man wrote her a letter that said, "If I can't sell your dolls, I'll sell some just like them." He ultimately sold his company for thirty million dollars. The legal case lasted an agonizing five years, but in 1985 Martha finally won a settlement, firming up copyright laws for artists in the process. Now, photographs I had taken of her in 1975 with some of her Doll Babies could serve as proof of copyright. Back then, lawyers for the defense maintained she couldn't claim copyright because she hadn't signed her dolls, to which Martha responded, "I wanted them to be as real as possible, and there's no place to sign a baby."

FRANKLIN SOUSLEY: AMERICAN HERO

By Ron Elliott

From the instant the photographer snapped the shutter, the image of the Marines raising the Stars and Stripes atop Mt. Suribachi on Iwo Jima stirred American patriotism. Since that day in February 1945, what we see in Joe Rosenthal's photograph is the physical embodiment of American courage, teamwork, and victory. In one sense, the names of the men do not matter. While the iconic nature of the photograph has melded the men into a single historic unit, they remain six individuals and each was an American woman's baby boy.

For the record, the six men pictured are: Mike Strank (Pennsylvania), Harlon Block (Texas), Ira Hayes (Arizona), Rene Gagnon (New Hampshire), John Bradley (Wisconsin), and Kentuckian Franklin Sousley. Bradley was a Navy corpsman, trained to attend to battle wounds; the other five were United States Marines.

Franklin Runyon Sousley, born at the Fleming County hamlet of Hilltop on September 19, 1925, the second son of Duke and Goldie (Mitchell) Sousley, suffered some childhood trauma. In 1929, Franklin's older brother, Malcolm, died from complications of appendicitis. In 1933, another brother, Julian, joined the family. When Duke Sousley died the following year, nine-year old Franklin and his mother were left alone to tend to the farm chores and look after a baby. Working together in the fields and making ends meet during the Great Depression, Goldie and her son developed a close bond. Any attempt to describe their close-knit relationship would be an understatement.



A native of Fleming County, Franklin Sousley was a U.S. Marine pictured in Joe Rosenthal's iconic photo of the Stars and Stripes being raised on Iwo Jima.

Photo courtesy of Ron Elliott

The famous photo features six Americans — Mike Strank, a U.S. Marine from Pennsylvania; Harlon Block, a U.S. Marine from Texas; Ira Hayes, a U.S. Marine from Arizona; Rene Gagnon, a U.S. Marine from New Hampshire; John Bradley, a U.S. Navy corpsman from Wisconsin; and Franklin Sousley, a U.S. Marine from Kentucky.

Photo by Associated Press/Joe Rosenthal



As a single-parent farm boy, Franklin did not have much time for extracurricular activities, but he did play on Fleming County High School's baseball team. His dancing ability made him popular with the girls and everybody enjoyed the red-headed, freckle-faced teen's sense of humor and playfulness. Old timers around Flemingsburg still giggle about the time Franklin and a buddy fenced in some cows on Hilltop General Store's porch. A dose of Epsom salts ensured the intended result.

When young Sousley received his high school diploma in May 1943, he knew that his call to military service would soon arrive. He elected to fill the time working at a General Motors defense plant in Dayton, Ohio. Although Goldie's remarriage helped her finances, Franklin's employment at GM gave him a brief exposure to the world outside Fleming County and allowed him to help support his mother and younger brother.

Franklin didn't have to wait long for Uncle Sam's "greetings." When the draft notice arrived in December, he opted to join the Marine Corps instead. By mid-January 1944, Sousley was on a train headed for boot camp in San Diego where he'd become what his Parris Island trained counterparts called a "Hollywood Marine." The wartime demand for manpower was such that boot camp lasted only six weeks. In March, Franklin was assigned to the Fifth Marine Division then being formed at California's Camp Pendleton. Placed in Company E (Easy Company in military parlance) Franklin met and forged friendships with the other men who were destined to become flag-raisers. Sousley was particularly friendly with Ira Hayes despite the Pima Indian's reputation as a "loner."

Allowed a brief furlough in August, Franklin and his girl, Marian Harding, agreed to marry and run a dairy farm when he returned. Stepping aboard the train to return to California at the end of his time at home, he shouted to his mother, "When I come back, I'll be a hero."

On Franklin's 19th birthday, September 19, 1944, the Fifth Marine Division boarded transports bound for somewhere closer to the Pacific war. The destination turned out to be Camp Tarawa on the big island in the Hawaiian Territory. Here, Easy Company learned that when they hit the beach at "Island X," their assignment would be to turn left and assault a mountain.

The objective of the Marines "island hopping" campaign was to gain air bases close enough to allow bombing of the Japanese home islands. By the fall of 1944, Eniwetok, Tarawa, Guadalcanal, Saipan, and Tinian were under American control. Japan was indeed within range of the B-29s based on the latter two islands.

A glance at a map will show that the only thing standing between Tinian and Japan is twelve hundred miles of water and a tiny speck of volcanic ash located at the mid-way point. That dot of land, Iwo Jima, known as "sulfur island" to the Japanese, is so inhospitable it does not even offer fresh water. Only eight square miles in area, the island is worthless except for its location and the fact that Japanese aircraft based there allowed advance warning of American bombing raids. Japanese fighters could harass the B-29s coming and going. Additionally, in American hands, Iwo Jima would provide an emergency landing strip for damaged bombers. For these reasons, the Americans had to have the island: for the same reasons, the

Japanese could not relinquish control. So important was Iwo Jima that the Japanese government made the island a part of the prefecture of Tokyo — a part of the home islands over which no foreign flag had ever flown.

By this point in the war, the U.S. Navy had decimated the Imperial fleet, so Japanese soldiers sent to Iwo Jima knew that the Americans would be coming and that there would be no rescue. Hoping to make the war so costly that the Americans would sue for peace rather than invade Japan proper, each defender swore to kill ten of the enemy before giving his own life for the Emperor.

In January 1945, while the Japanese were digging tunnels into Iwo Jima's volcanic rock, the Fifth Marine Division entrained for the port city of Hilo where they boarded attack transports. Only the "big brass" knew the destination, but no one doubted that this time was actually "it." After a practice landing at Maui, the ships rounded Diamond Head and docked in Pearl Harbor. Here the Marines were given a day of liberty on Oahu. Franklin Sousley used the day to see Waikiki Beach, buy a Zippo cigarette lighter engraved with his name, and have the Marine Corps' globe and anchor emblem tattooed on his arm.

Everyone knew they were headed for combat when the ships left the Hawaiian Territory in late January. Two days out, the

destination was revealed — they were headed for Iwo Jima. Franklin and Easy Company studied the maps and models of the pear-shaped island with an extinct volcano — Mt. Suribachi — at the stem of the southern tip. The officers pointed out Easy's landing beach nearest Suribachi on the east side of the island and the many Japanese fortifications identified by aerial reconnaissance. Easy Company's assignment was to move inland and turn left to cut the mountain off from the rest of the island. The Marines were assured that the pre-invasion naval bombardment would minimize resistance and that they could take the island in three or four days. The rookies like Franklin may have believed that, but the veterans, having faced the determined and clever Japanese before, knew better.

After rendezvousing with two more Marine Divisions at Eniwetok, the mighty armada arrived off Iwo Jima in the early morning hours of February 19. The Marines were fed the traditional D-day breakfast of steak and eggs before hitting the beach beginning at 8 o'clock. As the Japanese put up no initial resistance, some thought that the massive bombardment had indeed been effective. The Japanese, however, had hunkered down in underground fortifications and waited until the Marines came ashore. When the beach was packed with men and equipment, "all hell broke loose."

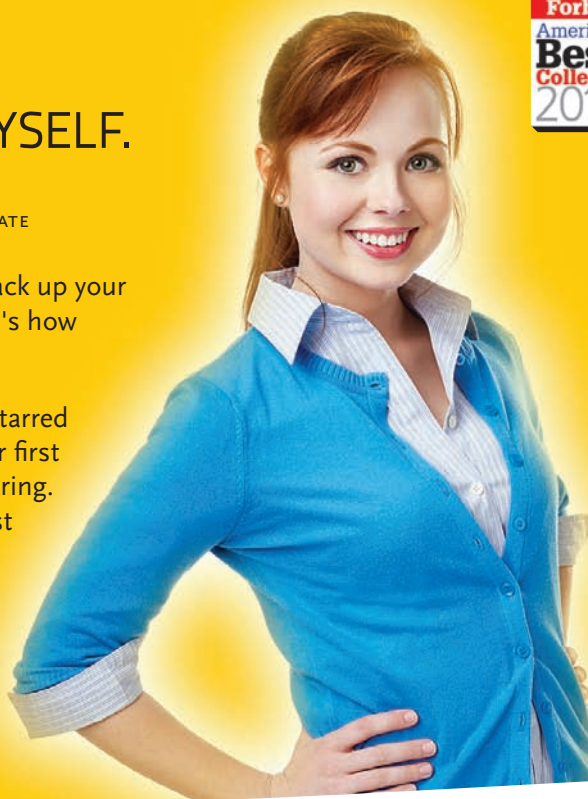
"I JUST HAD TO BELIEVE IN MYSELF. I KNEW THIS WAS THE TIME."

- GALADRIEL STINEMAN, 2007 NKU COLLEGE OF INFORMATICS GRADUATE

Sometimes chasing a dream is scary. Like when you pack up your things and move to L.A. to be an actress. Because that's how dreams are made.

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To find additional information and maps of the battle at Iwo Jima go to www.iwojimahistory.com.



The United States Post Office released a stamp featuring the flag raising on Iwo Jima in July 1945, just months after the event. More than 137 million stamps were sold.

Despite the fact that the Japanese could observe every movement from atop the mountain, in the face of enemy missiles of every type and caliber, the Marines pressed inland. By dark on D-day, what remained of Easy Company was in its assigned position in the center of the island about four hundred yards north of Suribachi's base. In the morning, D+1 in military terminology, while the other Marine divisions pressed north in a cold rain, Easy Company faced left toward the mountain. Reaching the base would take three days of hard fighting and result in many casualties.

On the morning of D+4, Friday, February 23, a small patrol probing the mountain found it — amazingly — undefended. For reasons known only to them, the Japanese had fled north during the night. Easy Company's commander sent a forty-man patrol up the mountain with orders to establish an observation post. One of the

men carried a small American flag. Encountering no resistance, they reached the summit about 10:30 a.m., tied the flag to a short pipe that had been part of a damaged Japanese rain collection system, and hoisted it aloft without fanfare. Old Glory flying over Japanese territory was a great moment in American history: when the Marines watching below and men on the ships surrounding the island spotted it, everyone broke out in cheers. Marine photographer Lou Lowery recorded the event for *Leatherneck* magazine.

In response to a request from the mountaintop outpost, Easy Company's commander assigned runner Rene Gagnon to take fresh radio batteries up and detailed Mike Strank's squad consisting of Ira Hayes, Harlon Block, and Franklin Sousley to accompany him with a spool of telephone wire. As an afterthought, he ordered them to put up a flag "big enough for everybody on this cruddy island" to see.

Two Marine photographers and Joe Rosenthal of the Associated Press happened to overhear the order and decided to follow along to photograph the replacement flag raising. When they met Lowery on his way down, the Marine

emphasized the competition between the military and civilian photographers by taunting, "You missed it Joe, I already shot the flag-raising." Then he added, "Hell of a view from up there though." Rosenthal decided to press on.

When he reached the top, he found Sousley and Hayes dragging a heavy iron pipe up from within the volcano's crater. Knowing the men were going to put up a larger flag, the photographers scattered to find a shooting location. Joe Rosenthal built a rock platform while Bill Genaust, a movie photographer, stood next to him. About noon, Rosenthal climbed on his perch as the Marines started forward with the pole. Seeing the men struggle with the heavy pipe, runner Gagnon and Navy corpsman John Bradley jumped in to help. Just as they took position, Genaust said, "Am I in your way Joe?"

"No, you're OK," answered Rosenthal, turning toward Genaust. Then catching the movement in the corner of his eye,

he yelled, “There it goes,” swung up his Speed Graphic camera and clicked the shutter. Genaust recorded the event with his few feet of movie film. “Did you get it, Joe?”

“I don’t know,” said the AP man, “I didn’t even have time to look through the view finder.” In his uncertainty, Rosenthal asked the men to gather under the flag for what he called a “gung-ho” shot. About twenty Marines raised their weapons in the air; smiled and shouted as Rosenthal snapped the one picture he could be sure of. Referencing that picture, Franklin later wrote his mother, “Look for my picture because I helped put up the flag.”

Rosenthal’s film was developed on Guam the next day where it created an immediate sensation. Transmitted to the States by radio telephone, it appeared in many major newspapers in this country on Sunday, February 25. The impact on American morale was instant: after more than three long years of war against a seemingly unbeatable foe, here, at last, was visual evidence that the U.S. could win. For many Americans, seeing that flag go up was the moment of retribution for Pearl Harbor. A cry went up for the identification of the men in the picture and even President Roosevelt got in on it when he demanded that the flag raisers be returned to this country to participate in a war bond fund-raising drive.

Meanwhile, the battle for Iwo Jima raged. By the time it was over, nearly seven thousand Americans were dead along with nearly all of the twenty-two thousand Japanese defenders. Among the dead Marines were flag-raisers Mike Strank, Harlon Block and Franklin Sousley. Strank and Block lasted a week after the flag-raising; both were killed on March 1. On March 21 as Easy Company assaulted its final objective, a single bullet struck Sousley from behind, killing him instantly. Five days after Franklin’s death, on the thirty-sixth day of the battle that was predicted to last three or four days, what was left of the Marines left Iwo Jima.

Word moved slowly through military channels. Since Franklin had written to his mother about being in a picture putting up the flag, and Goldie had seen Joe Rosenthal’s picture, she assumed her son was one of the faceless men. Still, she’d had no word from him for six weeks. As the days dragged on, she suspected the worst but hoped against hope that her suspicions were wrong. Finally, on April 9, the dreaded telegram arrived. So stricken was she that the neighbors, who lived a quarter of a mile away, heard her screaming all through the night.

To this day, the myth persists that Joe Rosenthal posed his iconic photograph that won him the Pulitzer Prize in 1945. Among the contributors to the myth is, ironically, Rosenthal himself. Upon his arrival on Guam a few days after he left Iwo Jima, he was congratulated on his flag-raising picture. Asked if he posed it as Lou Lowery (the Marine who photographed the first flag-raising) had previously accused, Joe, speaking of his “gung-ho” shot, the only flag-raising picture he was sure he’d snapped, answered, “Sure. Of course I posed it.” That issue is still in question today despite the fact that Bill Genaust’s movie

film clearly shows that Rosenthal captured an instant of a spontaneous event.

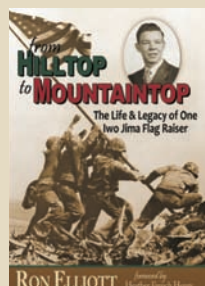
Franklin Sousley was buried in the Fifth Division’s cemetery on Iwo Jima, where he would rest for three years. When the government decided to repatriate the bodies of those killed on Iwo Jima, his mother opted to have his remains returned for reburial in the Elizaville cemetery. In an impressive ceremony there on May 8, 1948, the Reverend Gilbert Fern’s eulogy stated Franklin Sousley’s legacy perfectly: “When Franklin left here, he had a date with destiny ... He gave not one whit more than the other sixty-six Fleming County men or the thousands of other American men and women who died in this war. They all had courage; they all gave their lives; all were heroes. Franklin gave no more than any one of these — no one could — but it was his fate to become an enduring symbol of every man who fought and died for his country.” The Kentucky boy who said he’d come back a hero kept his promise.

About the Author

Ron Elliott, a native of Lincoln County, Kentucky, is a graduate of Stanford High School, Eastern Kentucky University, and the University of Kentucky with degrees in math and computer science.

Ron’s background includes involvement with the historic Apollo missions, which placed Americans on the moon, and a stint on the faculty of Kentucky’s Community College system. A history buff from childhood, his interest in history was heightened by having a relative involved in the assassination of Kentucky’s 1900 would-be governor, William Goebel.

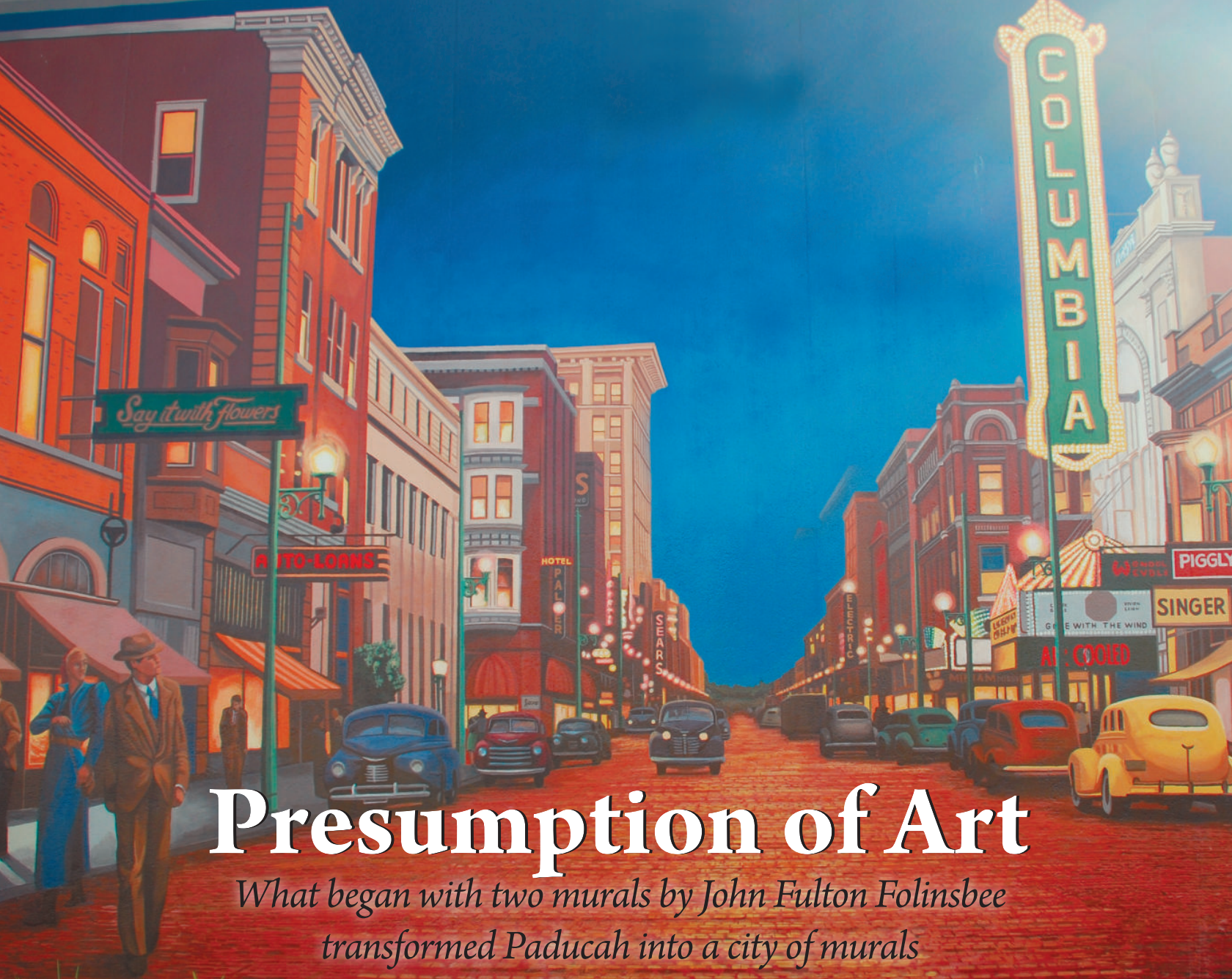
Mr. Elliott’s story-telling ability and wealth of knowledge make him a popular speaker for literature classes, writing seminars, genealogical workshops, and historical society meetings. Coupling those attributes with his remarkable research skills and a witty writing style produces well-accepted books, including *Assassination at the State House*, *The Silent Brigade*, *Inside the Beverly Hills Supper Club Fire* and *Through the Eyes of Lincoln* as well as numerous magazine articles in such publications as *The Filson History Quarterly* and *Kentucky Living*. Mr. Elliott is a popular member of the Kentucky Humanities Council’s Speakers Bureau.



For Further Reading

From Hilltop to Mountaintop, Ron Elliott, Acclaim Press, Morley, Mo., 2010.

Iwo, Richard Wheeler, Zenith Press, Osceola, Wis., 1994.



Presumption of Art

What began with two murals by John Fulton Folinsbee transformed Paducah into a city of murals

By John E.L. Robertson

Paducah, Kentucky, is a city of murals. In 1938-1939, John Fulton Folinsbee and his son-in-law, Peter G. Cook, painted a pair of 6.5 x 10.5 foot murals for the city's new federal building. At the time, Folinsbee was recognized among the best artists in the nation. However, his choice to focus on the city's industrial development, rather than its role in the nation's westward expansion, stirred opposition among local residents. At that time, no one could have predicted Paducah's dedication to murals in the years to come.

The most controversial decision regarding murals in the city was triggered by the Treasury Department's Public Buildings Administration, which decided to commission celebrated landscape artist John Fulton Folinsbee to create murals for the

new post office. Folinsbee, a member of the New Hope School of impressionists painters, arrived on the morning train from Louisville on October 27, 1938, with his new son-in-law, artist Peter G. Cook. Local columnist, historian, and biographer of Irvin S. Cobb, Fred G. Neuman reported in *The Paducah Sun Democrat* for October 27, 1938, that the pair were "here to study the background and leading lines for a couple of upright murals to ornament the walls of the Federal Court room in the new post office." They had "arrived Wednesday and conferred with students of local history preparatory to motoring over the city today taking pictures and making notes." The artists came to Paducah under the Fine Arts Division of the United States Treasury and "are studying Paducah of the past and present from every possible angle." They found Paducah "thick with historical lore and modern-day interest."

Neuman next gave the citizens of Paducah an introduction to the credentials of the artist. “Mr. Folinsbee, member of the National Academy of Design and National Arts Club among other organizations, is widely experienced in murals. The large canvas he completed last winter and now one of the items of interest in Freeland, Pa., is typical of his art. It has elicited much favorable comment from critics. Acceptance of his landscape paintings at the coming World Fairs is additional evidence of his skill. His assistant, Mr. Cook, is a graduate of Princeton University and adept at brush work.”ⁱ

Paducahans could expect that the murals would focus on “eras of the past as well as the present moment.” Among possible topics “rivers and traffic spans will share in the pictures, as will the Industrial life and spirit of energy of the new Paducah.” This predication hit a raw nerve among many in Paducah, as they wanted the murals to depict the contribution of Paducah to the western expansion of the nation. Neuman seemed to reinforce the Folinsbee approach by commenting that Paducah’s present status with the mammoth

shops of the Illinois Central Railroad, then among the largest in the world and the leading employer in the Commonwealth of Kentucky, intrigued the artist. Neuman concluded his *Sidelights on Paducah* column with the observation that “whatever designs are finally settled upon, the murals will have a strong leaning toward life in Paducah, Mr. Folinsbee assured those with whom he consulted.”ⁱⁱ

Immediately the artists were confronted by self-appointed custodians of local culture. The opposition assumed the label “citizens oversight committee.” To some Paducahans, the government program seemed another effort by “Northerners” to dictate taste to those in “Southern” states. Martha Grassham Purcell, representative of the Woman’s Club of Paducah, resented the implication that Paducahans had to be led to the sacred trough of proper art by “Yankees.” When she learned that the topic of the murals was to be decided by the artist, and he proposed to show industrial progress rather than depicting her perception of proper Paducah history, she rose to the challenge. “It appears that Mr. Folinsbee cannot paint

ⁱ *The Paducah Sun Democrat*, October 27, 1938, p. 8. Folinsbee was paralyzed from the waist down at age fourteen by an attack of polio in 1906. This attack also weakened his right arm but he persevered in painting. Thus, Cook was essential to the Paducah project. For the sketches and murals, Google John Fulton Folinsbee, *Catalogue Raisonné*, JFF.981, 1938/39, study not used; JFF. 828, 1939. *The River*; JFF. 826, 1939, *Early Town*; JFF. 998, 1939, sketch Rail yard, not used.

ⁱⁱ *Ibid.*

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John Fulton Folinsbee, who was one of the best artists in the nation at the time, and his son-in-law Peter G. Cook, painted two 6.5 x 10.5 foot murals for Paducah's new federal building in 1938-1939.

#7 JFF catalogue raisonne 826, *The River* [the packet is *The Paducah*].

Photo courtesy of John E.L. Robertson

figures ... If Mr. Folinsbee cannot paint figures, there are those in Paducah who can ..." She wanted George Rogers Clark depicted as the "Hannibal of the West."ⁱⁱⁱ Others, such as former Paducah resident Irvin S. Cobb, renowned war correspondent, newspaper reporter, writer, humorist, and actor wanted to see Clark surrounded by lots of dead Indians who opposed the inevitable expansion of the white nation to the ends of the earth.^{iv}

In 1938, Paducah was proud of its progress. In the last two decades of the nineteenth century the community had grown faster than others in Kentucky, achieving second-class status in 1902. The presence of excellent railroad service from the Illinois Central and the Nashville, Chattanooga, and St. Louis lines brought conventions and shows to the community. Citizens felt optimistic about the future and confident in their ability to overcome adversity. The opera house and other theaters had regular performances by leading companies in the nation. However, in 1937, Paducah was tested to the limits of its endurance: a great flood that proved even more daunting than two raids by Confederate cavalry under General Nathan Bedford Forest in 1864. From its inception in 1827, the site of the town at the confluence of two great rivers, the Tennessee and the Ohio, continually faced flooding. Over the years, the general trend was that the rivers brought increasing quantities of angry water to invade the community. Efforts to make the rivers more useful for steamboats also had the collateral effect of dredging channels deeper and making currents swifter. The flood of 1913 was the highest to date, leading many to believe that the worst possible event had happened, been dealt with, and caused the city only slight damage. However, 1937 proved otherwise. A massive storm encased the community in ice, causing power and telephone and telegraph lines to fall. For a time the city was isolated. Shortly after, the river began to rise. Winter flooding was exceptional. This proved to be the single greatest shock that Paducah has experienced. In 1913, waters did creep into the downtown area but the flood only lasted a short while and the damage was slight. In 1937, more than twenty thousand refugees were forced to leave Paducah. The city, from the river outward for twenty-

ⁱⁱⁱ Mrs. Purcell was a remarkable woman. She taught school at thirteen. She graduated from the National Normal School at Lebanon, Ohio, and the Southern National University at Huntington, Tennessee, and later, taught there. Both a writer and scholar, Mrs. Purcell published *The Settlements and Cessions of Louisiana* and *Stories of Old Kentucky* plus shorter studies of Paducah and Livingston County. Mrs. Purcell was the consummate club woman and contributor to various state and local organizations. During World War I she formed and led many service groups, collected and published a history of McCracken County in the war, and served as chairman of history in the Woman's Club in the First Congressional District of Kentucky. She was a staunch member of the DAR and UDC. She was not one to be regarded lightly.

^{iv} In fact, George Rogers Clark had secured to Virginia its claim to the entire Ohio Valley in 1777-1778 by capturing the British posts that gave Virginia and the new United States the old Northwest Territory with all land between the Mississippi River and the Appalachian mountains north of the Ohio River up to the Canadian border. However, Clark was driven from Fort Jefferson at what is now Wickliffe, Ky., in 1780 by the Chickasaw. That left Virginia to claim all of the land to the Mississippi River, but unable to occupy the area from the Tennessee River to the Mississippi until the Chickasaw claim was relinquished by treaty in 1818.

eight city blocks, lay submerged. Refugees were sent as far as Knoxville, Tennessee, seeking shelter. Paducahans had been tested and had endured. They were not in a mood to put up with further intrusion upon their sensibilities.

The first sketches submitted by Folinsbee in November 1938 received the approval of the Paducah Post Master, Fred Acker, and Edward Rowan, head of the Section of Fine Arts, but raised the hackles of the oversight committee. One of the 6.5 x 10.5 foot murals focused on the river and did not offend the community. However, the other depicted a railroad yard scene which one would have thought would not offend anyone in Paducah as at that time the Illinois Central shops were located in Paducah. The 1938 sketch for the mural is a powerful image depicting a dynamic industrial city rather than the bucolic frontier scene desired by the local ladies. The mural project was a project of the Public Administration of Harold Ickes, not the

Right: John Fulton Folinsbee's mural sketches drew complaints from many Paducah citizens, who wanted paintings dedicated to the exploits of George Rogers Clark.

JFF Early Town catalogue raisonne JFF.826.

Below: In 1996 a community effort was developed to have culturally apt and historically accurate murals displayed on the city's floodwalls. One of the floodwall murals shows a bird's eye view of Paducah in 1873.

Photos courtesy of John E.L. Robertson



Works Project Administration. A protest went to the Kentucky office of the WPA in Louisville. Surprising enough, the ladies did not address the complaint to George H. Goodman, the head of the WPA for all Kentucky, as he was from Paducah. Instead, it came to the desk of Adele Brandeis, niece of Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis who served on the Supreme Court from 1916 until February of 1939. She wrote Rowan about the issue. The committee disliked the emphasis on industry. Brandeis noted Cobb's objection and included newspaper clippings emphasizing "You are really up against a mass feeling of flouted pride in the neglect of the historical significance of the Winning of the West." Rowan replied, "How anyone can believe that a scene depicting a group of Indians shooting at white men from behind trees will prove more 'uplifting' than the dignified design which Mr. Folinsbee has created is beyond me." In 1938 *The Louisville Courier-Journal* was one of the premier newspapers in the United States. On Tuesday, November 29, 1938, in Section One, p. 2 a brief article with heading from that paper's Washington bureau the previous day proclaimed that "Paducah Women Win Fight To Alter Mural Design" in Senator Alben W. Barkley's hometown — at least in part. "The United States Treasury announced its capitulation today to the extent that it has requested John F. Folinsbee, the painter of the murals, to make one of his paintings conform to the wishes of the women's organizations who wanted the settlement of the North-

west depicted. It has turned down a sketch emphasizing the Illinois Central yards at Paducah, and the Treasury is happy because the women raised such a ruckus. "Happy" seems to be overly optimistic.

"You can say," declared Edward B. Rowan, assistant director of the section of the fine arts, "that we are delighted by the interest the people of Paducah have shown. It reflects a most healthy appreciation of contemporary art and artists. It is a fine day for art when so many people become stirred. Our business is getting pictures for people which mean something to them." The irony of this damage control by Rowan to the present generation is that few residents of Paducah have seen the murals. Most do not even know of them, or realize that they are the work of an artist who won numerous national awards and was very highly regarded in his time. Rowan's concern came as "protests poured in on the Treasury because the women objected to the two murals scheduled for the Paducah building when sketches showed they were to picture the commercial and industrial development of the city. The protestants thought historical subjects would be more appropriate. Many themes were suggested, with most of them centering around the exploits of George Rogers Clark."

The floodwall murals include United States Vice President Alben Barkley (left) and Irvin S. Cobb (right), a Paducah author, movie star, humorist, TV personality, and World War I correspondent.

Photo courtesy of John E.L. Robertson





Rowan concluded by saying “we asked Mr. Folinsbee to change the plan for the second mural so that it will depict an historical scene rather than one including the Illinois Central yards. We found the first mural quite satisfactory and have accepted it.” Rowan overestimated his concession to the ladies.

The paper in Paducah for November 29 affirmed on page 9 that Folinsbee had been asked to revise his murals. Paducah club women sent a letter to Rear Admiral C.J. Peoples, director of the procurement Division of the Treasury. In the letter Mrs. Purcell wrote: “May I claim your interest in a movement that means much to Paducah. Several weeks ago our postmaster, Mr. Fred Acker, brought to me a letter from Mr. John F. Folinsbee, who requested suggestions for murals he had been commissioned to paint in the federal courtroom of Paducah’s new post office. Mr. Acker asked me to write the artist and tell him of our historic past. *I did so*, [Italics added.] making some tentative plans but asking to be told more about the mural as to size, number, et. cetera.”

Mrs. Purcell further noted that Folinsbee replied stating: “Our murals are probably going to be based on the river life and industrial development of Paducah, rather than early History.” Purcell immediately contacted “social, cultural organizations of both women and men and asked for expressions on the subject. The response was 100 per cent from women’s clubs for our pioneer

When the Paducah murals were originally discussed some citizens felt George Rogers Clark should be included. Years later both George Rogers Clark (right) and William Clark (left) were featured on the floodwall murals.

Photo courtesy of John E.L. Robertson

history alone to be perpetuated in the above-mentioned murals. These various groups wrote both you and Mr. Folinsbee.”

Purcell’s final plea to Folinsbee was “We are not unmindful of our industrial achievements nor unappreciative of same, but it has been truly said: ‘Human beings are not made of reason alone, but of imagination and sentiment and nothing is wasted which gives right direction to sentiment which opens the proper feelings of the human heart.’ ” The remainder of the letter gave a brief but detailed history of Paducah and the significance of George Rogers Clark and his younger brother, William, to the development of Paducah and to the opening of the American West. “Our federal domain was won from the Atlantic to the Pacific under the leadership of men from our Mother Virginia. Two of these, the Clark brothers, the Hannibal of the Northwest and the Pathfinder of the Pacific region, were instrumental in carrying the American frontier 2,000 miles westward. They are among our immortals.”



This section of the floodwall murals features Paducah's "Ambassadors" welcoming the three river queens — The Delta Queen, the Mississippi Queen, and the American Queen. This marked one of the few occasions when all three river queens were in the same location.

Photo courtesy of John E.L. Robertson

The result was that Folinsbee adjusted the subject of one mural to include General William Clark [younger brother of George Rogers] and Meriwether Lewis [of the Corps of Discovery in 1805] chatting in front of the old courthouse in Paducah [that did not exist before 1827]. That effort failed to pacify Mrs. Purcell as she felt the courthouse was depicted in the wrong location. Local historian Fred G. Neuman noted

both Folinsbee and Mrs. Purcell were wrong as to historical accuracy. He was correct. However, in his opinion the Folinsbee scene was acceptable. The mural was finished in July and installed in September. ^v

Later in his biography of his father-in-law, Cook recalled the encounter between Folinsbee and Paducah:

Paducah in those days was a twenty-four hour train ride from New York, with a change in Louisville. We went out by sleeper, getting on at Trenton one morning and arriving in Paducah about 9:00 A.M. the next day. We went directly to see the postmaster, who was in charge at the new Federal Building.

The postmaster greeted us cordially and offered us a drink, which due to the early hour we politely declined.



"Well, I'll tell you," he stated, "I never have a drink unless I'm by myself or with somebody." He poured a liberal bourbon into a glass, settled back, and inquired, "Now, what can I do for you?"

We explained our mission, and asked for suggestions as to where to look for suitable subject matter for the murals. He had two very good suggestions: the river front and the railroad roundhouse, two important aspects of Paducah commerce. We chose both and went off to do our sketches.

*As it turned out, the waterfront was fine with the ladies in charge of the Historical Society, but they vetoed the railroad idea as too commonplace. We substituted a version of Lewis and Clark standing under an oak tree, no doubt planning a negotiation with Indians, which **nonsense** [boldface added] proved to be highly acceptable to the Historical Society. So the Paducah Post Office (now a*

The most recent addition to the floodwall murals was completed this summer. The mural honors Boy Scout Troop One, the seventh troop in nation, and was painted by artist Herb Roe.

Photo courtesy of John E.L. Robertson

federal court house) got Lewis and Clark, and the round-house sketches turned out to be the basis for one of Folinsbee's great paintings: Paducah Trainyard." ^{vi}

Some in Paducah continued to object as late as the fall of 1941 when Mr. S.A. Fowler protested to Walter Myers, the Postmaster General. Fowler wanted to replace the work of the nationally recognized Folinsbee with that of a Paducahan who painted in 1870. Many in Paducah believed it would be appropriate to use Robert Wilkins' work from 1927. [The papers of Walter Myers at Northern Indiana University do

^vBy the 1930s it became obvious that the Depression reduced the role of art in public life dramatically. A Presidential Commission in 1933 reminded President Franklin Delano Roosevelt that the public did not have access to painting and sculpture. This view was reinforced by former classmate of Roosevelt, George Biddle, who suggested public projects in public buildings. [The National Commission on Fine Arts objected; they wanted to keep art "classical" in style rather than a grittier realism depicting local scenes.] Biddle worked with Edward Bruce and got the Treasury Department to sponsor art in federal buildings. The result was "the Section" that sponsored mural decorations in new post office buildings nation-wide. On October 16, 1934, Henry Morgenthau, Secretary of the Treasury, formalized "the Section" and attached it to the Office of Supervising Architect, Public Buildings. Bruce, Edward Rowan, and Forbes Watson oversaw the functioning of the project.

^{vi} Peter Cook, *John Folinsbee*. New York: Kubaba Books, 2001.



What was originally envisioned as twenty panels covering one block has become an art initiative that covers three city blocks in Paducah.

Photo courtesy of John E.L. Robertson

not contain this letter.] However, Folinsbee's work endures, while the other paintings disappeared.

It would seem that Paducah retained its interest in murals portraying the community's role in the opening of the west. By 1961 a local group put together twelve panels for installation in the post office section on the first floor of the federal building. This project was a collective effort from the beginning. Like Mrs. Purcell and her generation, they were Paducahans who felt that they could and should preserve for posterity the pivotal role the city played in American history. Eugene Paro and his wife provided cohesive leadership and over seventy-five residents worked on various parts of the project.^{vii}

In the spring of 1996, Robert Dafford and his associated artists came to Paducah at the urging of Bill and Meredith Schroeder and Schroeder Publishing. This initial mural led to an ongoing community effort that involves private and public entities. Top-

ics displayed on the murals are to be both culturally apt and historically accurate. Initially, Paducah's Floodwall Mural Advisory Board envisioned twenty panels covering one city block. Today, three blocks are complete except for a small section behind the IC steam engine and cars just off Kentucky Avenue.

About the Author

John E.L. Robertson is professor emeritus, University of Kentucky Community College in Paducah. He was an officer in the Marine Corps, worked as official on the Illinois Central Railroad for fifteen years, taught history for Paducah Junior College and Paducah Community College. After retirement from Paducah Community College, he taught economics for the College of Business at Murray State University. He is the author of several books, numerous articles in history and economics, and is a published poet. In 2008 the Kentucky Historical Society recognized Robertson with the "Award for Lifetime Dedication to Kentucky History."

^{vii} *The Paducah Sun-Democrat*, Sunday, September 10, 1961, p. 1 & 6 Section A. "Although Paducah had no professional muralists, there was a group of amateurs who were interested in this type of art. The painters were Beulah Tucker, Polly Newman, Virginia Smith, Nancy Paro, Bess Locke, Mabel Williams, Virginia Reed, David Reed, Mary Pat Boswell, Opal Reid, Morris Boswell, Dorothy Gaylor, French Helsley, and, teacher, Admiral E.E. Paro. Oddly enough, the individual who painted the most on the project was Randolph "Cutworm" Reid, husband of Opal. He added the gray background on each mural. Governor Bert Combs "visited the project during the 'construction period.' He commented that it was in keeping with Kentucky's policy of furthering the arts and in the preservation of our state's history. Senator John Sherman Cooper of Kentucky added: "I was particularly impressed with the determination, courage and cooperation of the community in organizing and carrying out the work, but not surprised, as these are the qualities we have come to expect of our fellow Kentuckians ... I certainly believe this merits the attention of other communities in our state."

The 1940 Election

By Georgia Green Stamper

Last year I read about two brothers who got into an argument over the presidential election and ended up shooting each other. No one in my family ever shot each other in a political argument as far as I know. Unless the Civil War counts. Then it was brother against brother in lots of Kentucky homes. But on Daddy's side, I do descend from a mixed political marriage, and election discord is part of my heritage.

To be honest, my grandparents' political differences probably did have their beginnings in the Civil War. Pawpaw's father fought in uniform for the Confederacy, but many of Mawmaw's relatives stood firm by the Union.

However he may have arrived at his political persuasion, Pawpaw Green would vote for a yeller dog if it ran as a Democrat, and his esteem for FDR approached idolatry. He even slept with a photograph of Franklin Roosevelt nailed above his marital bed. He'd clipped the picture from a newspaper and framed it, and it decorated their bedroom wall for as long as anyone now living can remember. When Pawpaw died in 1970 at the age of ninety-three, FDR was still with him, hanging over the cherry double bed. How Mawmaw Green may have felt about sleeping under FDR's gaze for decades has been lost to history.

What we do know is this. When the United States saw fit to give Mawmaw the constitutional right to vote in 1920, she registered as a Republican. By then she was forty-one years old. Forty-one years old — that takes my breath away, and for her sake, this granddaughter has never passed up an opportunity to vote.

Perhaps she went Republican to distinguish her thinking from her husband's, to celebrate the independent spirit of women's suffrage. She was an intelligent woman, a schoolteacher in her youth, and her circumstances as a farmer's wife had given her little chance to do anything other than rock babies, cook, and survive.

Why ever, according to the family stories, my grandparents' household was perennially tense during presidential elections. Matters didn't reach a crisis, however, until 1940 when FDR sought an unprecedented third term and the GOP yielded to its suicide wish and nominated the dark horse Wendell Willkie.

Willkie was the worst sort of Republican in Pawpaw's opinion. Willkie was a turncoat, a man who'd been a Democrat until 1939, who'd given money to FDR's previous campaigns! Pawpaw placed him in the same category as Benedict Arnold. Moreover, Willkie — president of America's largest electric holding company — had the audacity to question the legality of TVA. TVA had brought rural electrification into Pawpaw's Kentucky home. "When nobody else would," Pawpaw always added. Willkie had never held political office either, and Pawpaw was

aghast that anyone would even consider voting for such an inexperienced and misguided man.

Mawmaw, on the other hand, was uneasy about electing Roosevelt for a third term. Willkie's slogan resonated with her: if one man is indispensable, then none of us is free. And maybe he did have a point about the government funded TVA unfairly competing with private utilities. It didn't hurt that Willkie was handsome and young (only forty-eight) and from nearby Indiana, too.

And finally, listening on her radio late into the night, her imagination had been captured by Willkie's out of nowhere selection on the sixth ballot at the GOP convention. (His nomination is still considered one of the most dramatic ballot scenarios in our political history.) Maybe he'd been touched by Destiny's hand, Mawmaw said.

So it went throughout the fall and into the weeks leading up to the November election. But there came a night when Pawpaw could not take this silly babble about Destiny any longer. Pushed to the brink of reason by his wife's stubborn support of wishy-washy Willkie, Pawpaw shouted, "I cannot sleep with that Republican!" And he stomped out of the house and moved into the tobacco-stripping room, a tiny dusty shack attached to the barn.

My cousin Bob recalls that Pawpaw slept in the stripping room for at least three nights. What Bob does not remember is whether Mawmaw removed FDR's picture from her bedroom wall during Pawpaw's absence.

In time, Pawpaw returned to the house. Sleeping with a Republican was apparently less uncomfortable than lying with dried tobacco and a quilt on the stripping room's hard, dirty floor. FDR was re-elected, and my grandparents continued to live together until death did them part after fifty-two years and a houseful of descendants.

I don't recall discussing politics much when my husband and I were dating. But as it turns out, we've rarely agreed on a candidate in over forty years of marriage. Presidential elections have often been as tense for us as they were for Mawmaw and Pawpaw Green. At the end of the day, however, we remember that the stripping room floor is not a comfortable place to sleep.

About the Author

Georgia Green Stamper is a seventh generation Kentuckian. A graduate of Transylvania University, Stamper is a former high school English and theater teacher and speech team coach. Her work has been published in the literary anthologies *New Growth*, *Tobacco*, *Daughters of the Land*, and *The Journal of Kentucky Studies*. She writes a bi-weekly column, "Georgia: On My Mind," for *The Owenton News-Herald*. She is a regular commentator for NPR member station WUKY affiliated with the University of Kentucky and a popular member of the Kentucky Humanities Council's Speakers Bureau.



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