

# Morehead Memories - People and Places

## Carving Out a County

By Jack D. Ellis

The carving of a county out of the isolated region of Eastern Kentucky in the mid-1800s was an extremely difficult task.

First, there were already 103 counties in Kentucky, and each county was jealous of their own political territory. But the residents in the Triplett and Licking Valleys felt separated from their county government.

To get their county courthouse in West Liberty or Flemingsburg, required a hard 30-mile one-day journey there, an overnight stay and then the long journey home.

Since most every farm was self-sustaining, and mills for grinding corn were nearby, residents of what would become Rowan County rarely made the journey to the county seat. Also, those residents in that area felt disenfranchised because they had little impact on their county government.

Since the Kentucky General Assembly had taken a position that a county could be formed in order that even the furthestmost resident of the county could get to the county seat and back home in one long day's wagon ride. (If that were the criteria today, there would not be more than a dozen counties in Kentucky).

### Rowan County established

When Fleming County was established in 1792, the land area of what is now Rowan County was a part of Fleming and Morgan counties. It was even before Fleming was formed (1791) that Jacob Powers and Barnett Simmons came here from Virginia.

Both had wealthy land owners and slave holders there. It cannot be determined if they brought slaves with them from Virginia. Jacob Powers was the grandfather of H.M. Logan who was one of the first general store owners in Rowan County.

At that time, other prominent residents were Lewis D. Lee (gave land for Lee Cemetery), Ben Evans who owned a huge boundary of land at what is now East Main and around Eagle Lake (old timers called that Evans Branch). Ben Evans was the father of Mrs. Boone Logan.

Other residents and landowners in the Morehead area who preceded the formation of Rowan County included: Tom Trumbo, who lived on the south side of Triplett Creek and owned a large tract of land.

Also, Mrs. Polly Cassity owned a large tract of land at the west end of Morehead, that later was called the J.W. Riley farm. Others were Mrs. Lizzy



## About the author

Dr. Jack D. Ellis is a retired Morehead State University Library Director and a retired minister.

"It shall be known as Rowan County in honor of the distinguished Kentucky jurist and lawyer, Judge John Rowan. (Rowan was the uncle of Stephen Foster who wrote 'My Old Kentucky Home' while visiting Rowan at Federal Hill in Bardstown).

"Rowan, a distinguished jurist, was also a U.S. senator from Kentucky from 1824-1830. The boundaries of Rowan County shall be as follows: Beginning at Elk Lick on the Licking River in Fleming County near Fielding Cooper's farm as running up Licking River in Morgan County to the mouth of Miners Creek; thence up said creek to the head thereof; thence down a creek called Laurel to the mouth of Bates Branch to the head of twin branches of Caney Creek to the line of Carter County to the boundary of the line between Carter and Fleming counties; thence to a point which the boundaries between Fleming and Lewis intersect each other; thence to the boundary between Fleming and Lewis counties to the head of the east fork of Fox Creek; and thence with the dividing ridge between the waters of Fox and Triplett Creeks to the beginning."

Those boundaries have been changed only once when Licking River changed its course in Farmers in the early 1900s.

Rowan County was the 104th county in the state and was 77th in size compared to other counties. At its formation, it comprised about 1,203 farms ranging in size from a few acres to several thousand acres.

It had a population at the beginning of approximately 2,000 people and its economy was based entirely on agricultural and timber at its forma-

The county was divided into four districts, and each district was to elect two justices of the peace and one constable. Each district shall also be an election district. The first election district commissioners appointed to lay off the boundaries of those four districts were Dixon Clack, Isaac E. Johnson, B.F. Powers and M.C. Royce.

Election officers were also chosen and plans were made for an election of a slate of county officials including: county judge, circuit court clerk, county clerk, sheriff, tax assessor, jailer, surveyor, two justices of the peace and one constable.

The first officials elected to office in Rowan County were James Black, jailer and Isaac Johnson, sheriff. (The first elected representative from Rowan was Harrison G. Burns, who served from 1859-1861). William Black was the first county judge. Black was from Elliott County and Houston Logan was the first county clerk.

### John Hargis mapped Morehead

In 1854, Col. John Hargis, who had recently purchased much of the land from Mrs. Oxley, began mapping out the town of Morehead.

He stepped off the lots for the courthouse, county jail, city hall and jail. Rowan County was to use the Fleming County jail until a jail was built in Morehead. Col Hargis also began stepping off lots and streets for the new town of Morehead. (Blame him for Morehead's narrow streets).

Although Morehead was founded in 1856, it was not incorporated until Jan. 6, 1869. The newly-elected county judge William Black, together with the justices of the peace, made the final determination of the plots of ground on which the city and county government would erect their public buildings.

They also had the responsibility of determining a method of

paying owners for their land. The payment for those public buildings was raised by a capitation tax on all persons in the county, but not to exceed \$2 per person per year. (Considering there were about 2,000 people in the county at that time, that was a substantial sum).

Rowan County was to use Fleming County's jail until they could build one of their own. Two brothers who were early homesteaders in the Licking River area loaned the county \$1,200 to build the first jail. Their names were Sam and Joe Meyers and they were evidently not good businessmen, because the records show the county defaulted on the loan and never did repay the full amount and the Meyers' never did foreclose on the jail.

### Post Civil War citizens

Following the Civil War and before the Rowan County War (1884-1887), there were many prominent pioneer citizens arriving in Morehead. Among those early arrivals were: James E. Clarke, father of Mrs. J.W. Riley (1869), Dr. Banfield (1870), Z.T. Young (1873), H.M. Logan (1874), Warren Alderson (1875), "Grandfather" Carey (1875), Harry Burns (1876), James Moody (1880), Cloy Powers (1881), Mr. Hamilton (1882), Dr. Raine (1887) and Frank C. Button and mother (1887).

The founding of Rowan County brought heated political debate, and the election of county officials brought hot county races. People would fight over their political passions quicker than their love passions.

In years between formation of the county and the Civil War, Rowan County established a political structure that was evenly divided between the political parties of the day. In the presidential election of 1856, the vote was 237 Democrat and 116 Union American Party.

1860 saw a similar pattern of voting (189 Democrat vs. 121

American Union). But from 1864-1900, Rowan voters went Republican in the presidential elections every time except 1880 when the Democrats won 289-181. However, beginning in 1900 through 1952 (Eisenhower), Rowan County went Democratic eight times and Republican six times.

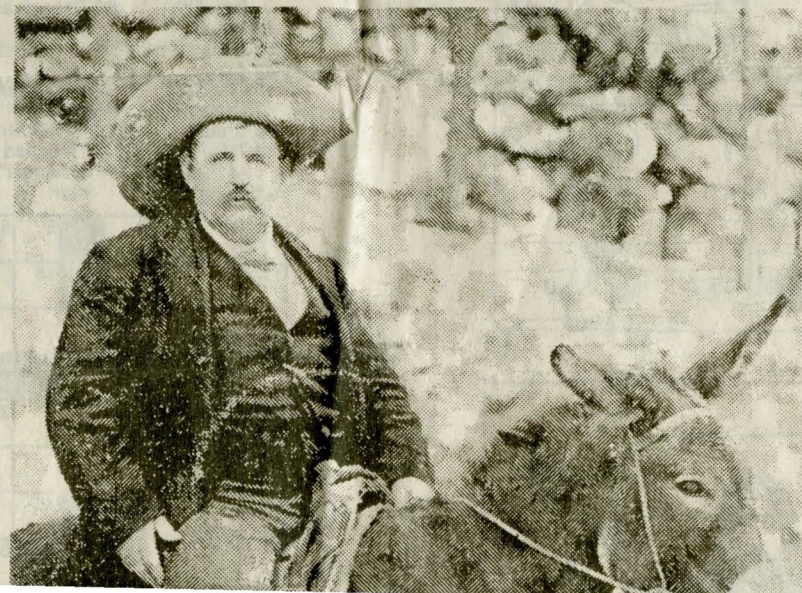
Also, through the remainder of the 20th century, Rowan Countians have divided their voting for president almost

equally.

Throughout the 20th century Rowan has had more Democrats registered than Republicans. However, most Rowan Countians voted for the man rather than the party, and as a result many Republicans have been elected in Rowan County over the past 100 years.

Kentucky has long been a hot bed of politics, and in 1900, the state's newly elected governor

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Also, Mrs. Polly Cassity owned a large tract of land at the west end of Morehead, that later was called the J.W. Riley farm. Others were Mrs. Lizzy Oxley, grandmother of George and William Nickell, owned a tract of land in what is today the center of Morehead.

She also owned all the land up North Wilson Avenue to the head of the hollow (old time residents know North Wilson as Oxley Branch). Mrs. Oxley lived at a site that would today be near the corner of Main Street across from the old courthouse.

#### **First post office opened**

Other pre-Rowan County residents included E. Houston Logan, father of Mrs. Queen Clark, who lived on the Frank Nickell farm later owned by Dr. A.L. Blair.

Also, Ben Johnson built his house near the corner of Carey Avenue and Main Street (that house was occupied later on by Dan Caudill).

Elias Bradley, James Black, and an old Virginia aristocrat, Dixon Clack, were extensive landowners in the Clearfield area (Clack Mountain was named for Clack).

In 1828, the first post office opened in what is now Morehead. It was established on Nov. 8, 1828, and H.L. Powers, grandson of Jacob Powers, was the postmaster. The name of that early post office was Triplett (changed to Morehead July 22, 1856).

In 1854, Col. John Hargis arrived in the tiny village of Triplett and purchased a large plot of land from Mrs. Oxley. In talking among themselves, those early leaders in the Triplett and Licking Valley wanted their own county.

They proposed through their representative in Frankfort that a new county should be established with a new seat of justice. A meeting was held at the home of Clack and a petition was submitted to the state general assembly and was approved in 1856.

#### **Legislature established Rowan County**

The act of the general assembly that authorized the 104th county in the state clearly spelled out the boundaries for the county, eg:

"By an enactment of the Kentucky Legislature, a part of Fleming and Morgan County shall be set aside for the formation of a new county, beginning May 1, 1856.

in the east fork of Fox Creek, and thence with the dividing ridge between the waters of Fox and Triplett Creeks to the beginning."

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#### **Commissioners select site for Morehead**

The designated site of the seat of justice for the newly-formed Rowan County was to be on the east fork of Triplett Creek at a point agreed upon by the commissioners, and to be between the residences of Dixon Clack and B.F. Powers.

The name of the new seat of justice was to be Morehead, in honor of James T. Morehead, who was the first native-born Kentuckian to be elected governor in 1834.

The commissioners selected to locate the site for the city of Morehead were Harvey T. Wilson, William Mynhier, George Crawford, Mason Williams and William Grannis. (Many of these men are ancestors of today's Rowan Countians).



**This is George Nickell, county judge of Rowan back in those good old days (1875).**



# Memories -

Continued from Page A10

William Goebel, was assassinated in what may believe was politically motivated. Also it was a political argument that started the Rowan County Tolliver-Martin feud on election day 1884.

It began with an election brawl that involved many men who had been drinking. Shots were fired and one man was killed and another badly wounded. Each political faction blamed the other and the feud was on, that lasted three years with 22 men killed.

Republican Cook Humphrey was sheriff and Democrat Z.T. Young was county attorney. Judge Stewart, a republican, was accused by both sides as being biased against them. But for three years, Rowan had no elected officials in government. Craig Tolliver was elected town marshal and the war continued.

In 1886, Rowan was almost abolished because of the feud, but cooler heads prevailed. However, throughout the history of Rowan County, there have been more good, bad, indifferent and colorful county officials.

## Rowan raises "Hell" and Christmas trees

One of Rowan's early political leaders was T.B. Tippet. Thomas Byran Tippet moved his family from Lock, Ohio, to Morehead in 1882. They settled in a log house he built west of Morehead (near intersection of Rt. 32 and Main Street).

Mr. Tippet entered the timber business, specialized in cross ties and barrel staves. In 1887, T.B. Tippet moved into a new house in Morehead near the intersection of what is now Third Street and Tippet Avenue (named for that family).

It was then that Tippet entered politics. He was elected city judge in 1888, then was elected state representative in 1892. During his first term in Frankfort, the governor came into the meeting of the house of

representatives and spoke to the assembly.

After speaking, he asked each representative to stand and give a report on what the main agriculture products that were raised in their county. They reported in alphabetical order with each representative giving large boring reports.

Just before Rowan County was scheduled to report, the governor said "Please gentlemen, we do not have time for such lengthy and detailed reports." He said, "Just be more brief, and now we will hear from the honorable representative from Rowan County."

With that, Tippet arose, and mindful that everyone knew about Rowan's recent feud, and that Rowan was one of the state's poorer counties, said very calmly, "Your honor, Rowan County raises hell and Christmas trees."

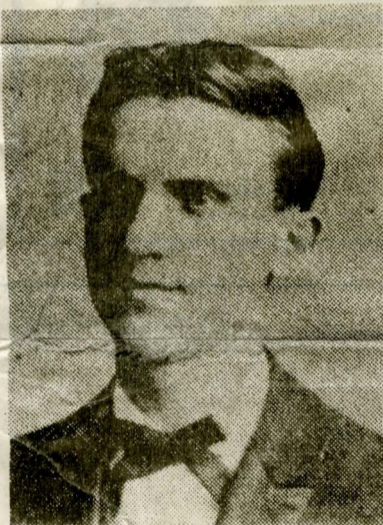
T.B. Tippet also served as Rowan circuit court clerk for 24 years and was one of Rowan's longest serving officials.

Judge James M. Carey was one of Rowan County's dominate political, business and social leaders. He was born Nov. 23, 1825 in the Farmers section of Fleming that later became Rowan County.

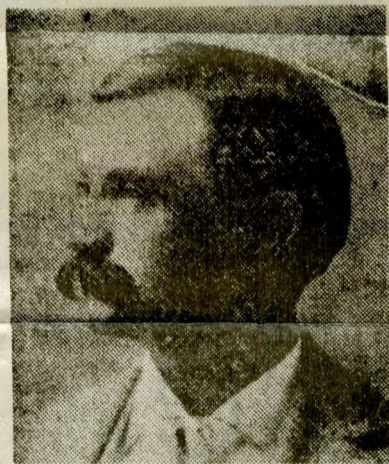
Carey served in the Army during the War with Mexico. After his discharge, he returned to Farmers where he married Pamela Brian who bore him five children: Nannie, Sara, George, Ulysses and James Madison.

When the Civil War began, James Carey returned to the Army and served as a captain in Company B of the 24th Kentucky Regiment of the Union Army.

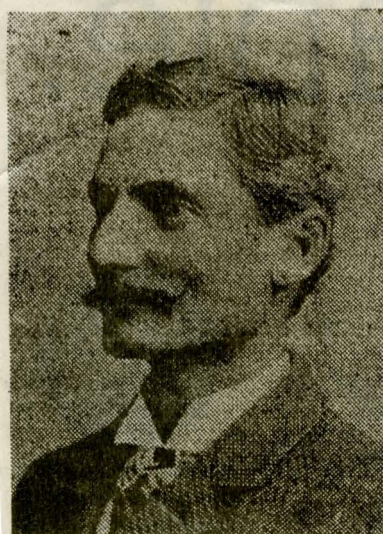
Following the Civil War, he returned to Rowan County and moved his family to Morehead. He was elected county judge in 1876, serving in the position for two terms. Judge James Carey died in Feb. 19, 1913, in Morehead and is buried in the Lee Cemetery.



Z.T. Young, Rowan County Attorney in 1884.



J.W. Riley, Rowan County Attorney in 1898.



T.B. Tippet, Rowan County representative and circuit court clerk (1898) for three terms.



County Judge Elijah



## Local Trivia

### Early Rowan County

■ In the 1860s, wildcats and foxes were so abundant and destroyed so many sheep, the state placed a bounty on them.

# History

SECTION C

THE MOREHEAD NEWS, March 17, 2000

## About the Author



Dr. Jack Ellis is a retired Morehead State University Library director and a retired minister.

# Morehead Memories:

## People & Places

### Carving Out a County II

By Jack D. Ellis  
Special for The Morehead News

"Though the beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase." (Job 8:7)

Life for many of the 2,282 residents of Rowan County in the 1860s was poor, primitive and pristine. The timber industry had not yet arrived, and the large tracts of virgin timber were virtually untouched.

Large families lived in one-room log cabins that offered little shelter from the elements. But according to E.S. Montgomery, born April 2, 1859, in southern Rowan County, life was rough but rewarding.

In 1934, the 75-year-old Montgomery wrote in the historical edition of the Morehead Independent about conditions in Rowan County in the 1860s.

Mr. Montgomery said he grew up in a one-room log cabin in the Elliottville area of Rowan, then called Bristow. They did not have kerosene or even candles for lighting, but relied on an open fireplace and a large pine knot stuck in the jam of the fireplace for light.

Also, since cooking stoves were unknown, all their meals were cooked on that open place in iron kettles and skillets. Those iron skillets,

covered with a lid and heaped with hot coals around them, in that large six-foot wide fireplace, made an excellent oven for baking bread.

#### Family food all came from farm

Most of their bread was made from corn that was ground on a "gritter." Every family had a gritter which was made by taking a piece of tin about two feet square, punching it full of holes with a nail, and fastening it to a board with the rough side up, like an old-fashioned wash board.

Then they took an ear of corn at the roasting ear stage and rubbed it up and down on the gritter.

That made grits that could be boiled in an iron pot, or when it dried, it could be used to bake corn bread.

The corn harvested in the fall was dried and ground in a homemade hand mill. However, Alex Fletcher and his son Jerry, put in one of the first stem mills in that part of the country.

It was located at Elliottville, and soon replaced the homemade hand mills. Progress had arrived at Elliottville.

Any family income came mostly from selling ginseng, trapping foxes, wildcats and coons. That brought money

that was used to buy salt and sugar at one of the stores in Elliottville.

One of those stores was a branch of Warren Alderson's Morehead store. At first that store was run by Mr. "Sad" Turner, and later on it was operated by Colonel Alderson's son-in-law, Jerry Fletcher.

The family drank tea that was made from spicewood, sassafras or birch bark boiled in water and sweetened with sugar tree sap. According to Mr. Montgomery, "it made a delicious tea, enjoyed by all the family."

#### No tomatoes eaten

Since there was no market or even a road to market, each family raised only what they could consume. Their vegetables consisted mostly of beets, beans, corn, Irish and sweet potatoes.

Some tomatoes were grown, but they were very small and were never used for food, because many people thought they were poison.

They were called "love apples" and used only for decoration because of their brilliant color. Every family raised chickens, but rarely ate them. They were used mostly for egg production.

Meat for the family came from their razor back hogs that were fattened on "mast," which was the name used for the abundant acorns and chestnuts in the woods.

All hogs, sheep and cattle



Corn was the crop of choice by early Rowan settlers. It could be grown successfully in small, cleared patches and was Kentucky's major cash crop before tobacco. Photo: W.P.A. collection, Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives.

ran on the open range. Therefore, each animal had to be marked so that each owner would be known.

That was done by clipping the ear of the animals with the owners' unique registered mark. Those marks were known as "over bits," "under bits," "swallow forks," "crap of," and "split ear."

Every family had their own unique mark that was registered at the county clerk's office by which they could claim their own animals that

ran on the open range.

In the 1860s, wildcats and foxes were so abundant, and destroyed so many sheep and pigs that the state placed a bounty on them.

The state paid \$1.25 for each fox and \$2.50 for each wildcat destroyed. Therefore, many men made their living by hunting and trapping.

Also, pheasants were so numerous that many times they would nest in the chicken nests and when they gathered eggs, they sometimes found

pheasant eggs instead of chicken eggs.

#### Fire kept at all times

Families all kept fire in the fireplace at all times in winter and summer. At night they would "bank" the fire by pushing thick oak bark under the hot ashes.

That usually kept the fire smoldering all night. If the fire did go out, they would usually go to the nearest

See CARVING on C-2



## Carving From C-1



During Rowan's Centennial celebration, these lovely local ladies posed in clothing dating back to the 1860s. Seated is Sidney Lane. Standing, from left, are Terry Caudill, Beulah Williams, Edith Crosley and Marguerite Jayne.

neighbor and borrow fire, carrying it home in an iron pot.

However, if it was raining they had to resort to flint and steel to get a spark of fire. Every family was equipped with flint and steel for fire building.

The family clothing was made from homemade wool carded and spun at home by the women. Their socks and stockings were made from a material woven on a homemade loom.

There was also a woven woolen fabric called "jeans" for men, and a still lighter fabric called "liney" for women's clothing. Much of that same material was also woven into patterns for blankets.

Families raised their own flax and wove it into a fabric for their summer clothes. They also wove the material for their own towels and sheets. They had very little money to buy anything from Alderson's store and made most everything at home.

Families usually slept in two large beds with ceiling high posts. Sheets were draped around those posts to afford some privacy during the endless drama of backwoods

birth, life, death and sickness.

Under each bed was a trundle bed that was pulled out at night. Therefore, there was not much open space at night to stop on the worn surface of those puncheon floors.

### Shoes a luxury

Shoes were really a luxury in the family, and boys not big enough to work usually went without shoes.

In the winter time, in order to listen to a fox chase at night, many of those "shoeless" boys would heat a board in the fireplace and go outside and stand on it in their bare feet and listen to the chase.

(Even as late as 1930, Edith Cline, who taught school in that same area of Rowan, said she had only one family in that school that had shoes).

Shoes were made from home-tanned leather, and there was usually one man in the community that was a shoemaker.

Their shoe strings were made from the dressed hides of a coon or groundhog. Shoes were a luxury in rural Rowan in the 1860s.

In the summertime when the children completed their chores, they would play under the rock cliffs that were so abundant in that area.

Although marbles were rare and guarded jealously, they did play marbles on the soft dry ground under the rock cliffs. Also, they played what could be called "virtual" horseshoes.

Since they had no horseshoes, the children used flat smooth rocks. They would toss the rocks toward a stake driven in the ground in the same manner as horseshoes. Of course, no one ever got a "wringer."

### No schools

In the early 1860s, there was no school for the children to attend. But by 1870, there was a school district established in southern Rowan County.

About the only requirement to teach was the ability to read, write and cipher, as well as a willingness to teach the children.

There were very few books, and practically no writing material (including paper). Consequently, the lessons were taught and studied orally. Therefore, with the

loud babble of the children's voices as they recited their lessons, it's a miracle they ever learned anything.

Mr. E.S. Montgomery recalled in his statement that "he learned to write on the smooth wooden floor of their cabin."

He said, "His first writing instrument was a beet stem and it was a proud day for him when he could write his name quickly enough so that the letter "n" was still visible by the time he finished the "y." It seemed that beet juice was a kind of disappearing ink.

On the last day of the three-month term of school, the children received a special treat from one innovative teacher. It was a pot of sorghum boiled in an open kettle in the school yard.

Each child came the last day of school equipped with a wooden paddle made weeks before the occasion. After the sorghum was cooked, each child would reach their long paddle into the pot and twist as much sorghum around the paddles as it would hold.

That was a delicious way to end a school term and this account of early life in Rowan County.

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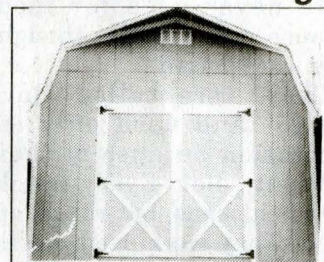
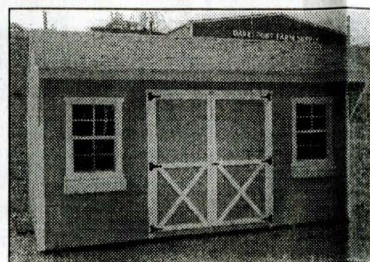
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## Local Trivia

### Early Rowan County

■ During the 1920s, political races in Rowan County became competitive, organized and heated.

# History

THE MOREHEAD NEWS, APRIL 7, 2000

## About the Author



Dr. Jack Ellis is a retired Morehead State University Library director and a retired minister.

# Morehead Memories:

## People & Places

### Rowan County Government Part III

By Jack D. Ellis  
Special to The Morehead News

"All who have meditated upon the art of governing mankind have been convinced that the fate of the empire depends upon the education of youth." (Aristotle 338 B.C.)

During the late 1940s people in Rowan County and Kentucky, seemed to lose interest in politics and government. However, during the decade of the 1950s there was a move to re-ignite an interest in voting. In 1950 the Kentucky Farm Bureau had goals of renewing the public's interest in county government and voting.

The Rowan County Farm Bureau was a member of the Kentucky Farm Bureau. That county farm organization had a membership of 400 active members. It was the only farm organization in the county, and was organized March 23, 1946.

Although their goal was to promote the interests of agriculture in the county, they were also interested in promoting civic and community activity. One way they hoped to accomplish that task was by use of a "votemobile."

#### "Votemobile" emphasized importance of voting

Perhaps because of the success of the Kentucky Bookmobile project in renewing an interest in reading, the Farm Bureau believed a "votemobile" would renew interest in voting. The "votemobile" was a little red white and blue van.

Its purpose was to tour

carried such slogans as, "Your vote is your voice — let it be heard," and "Vote in the August 5 primary," and "Free to all over 21." (18-year-olds could not vote.)

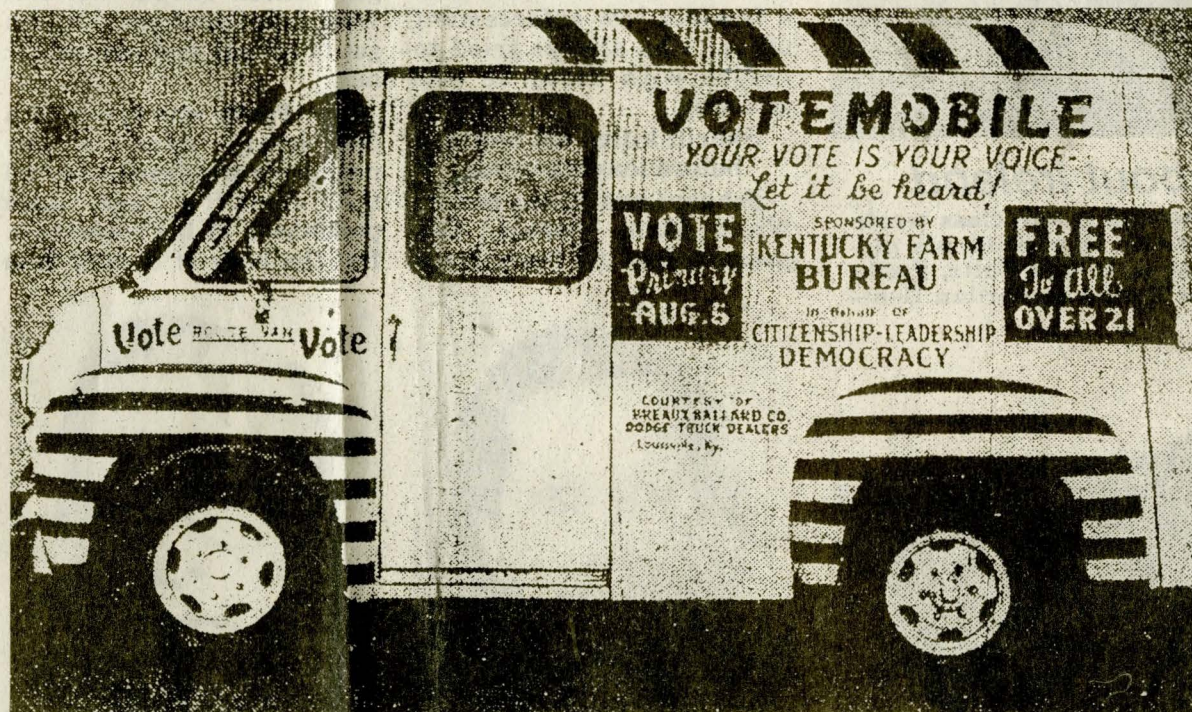
The "votemobile" appeared at Sharkey on Aug. 2, 1950 at a Rowan Farmers Field Day. It was a non-partisan, non-political attempt to get out the vote. It was successful in Rowan County because it seemed to generate a renewed interest in local government.

#### 1950s brought heated elections

Many voters flocked to the polls in the 1953 election. Also the local elections were hotly contested. That was especially true in the Nov. 3, 1953 county election. In that election, W. T. McClain (Democrat) won over I.E. Pelphrey (Republican) by 311 votes, Austin Alfrey (R) won against James E. Clay (D) by only 11 votes. Kenneth Lewis (R) appeared to have won the race for sheriff until the absentee votes were counted. Those absentee votes gave Carl Jones the majority by 19 votes.

In the 1953 race for County Court Clerk, Ottist Elam (D) led the ticket by defeating Ray Moore (R) by 660 votes. Also, that year Mrs. Juanita Wilson was elected as Tax Commissioner. Therefore, she and Mrs. Elam were tied for the third female to be elected to a major office in Rowan County. (The two other women were County School Superintendents Cora Wilson Stewart and Lyda Messer Caudill.)

The county election in 1953



Kentucky Farm Bureau "Votemobile" in Rowan County during the 1951 election.

for Coroner. In the race for magistrate, Jesse McDaniel (D) won over Isaac Caudill (R), George Ellington (R) won over Warren Flannery (D), J. A. Hamm (D) won over C. W. Johnson (R), and Elmer Kinder (R) won over T. D. White (D).

In 1953 the Republicans captured the County Attorney's office and two of the four magistrates with the Democrats sweeping the other offices.

In 1953 Austin Alfrey with his friendly, outgoing personality and deep resonant voice was elected County Attorney for the first time by a margin of 11 votes. However, he succeeded in being re-elected three more terms until he was defeated by James E. Clay in 1966. Mr. Clay was County Attorney until 1974 when he was elected District Judge.

election Woodie announced he was a candidate for "Tick Commissioner."

The reason he was running was because he had contracted tick paralysis as a result of a bite by the tick "Demacentse Venuslus Andersonie." His platform was complete elimination of ticks. Although he recovered from tick fever, he was unsuccessful in his campaign. Woody sad he lost the election because he failed to get the endorsement of Bob Taft, Albin Barkley, John Sherman Cooper, and the residents of "Podunk Holler."

Woodie said, "I understand that I must file an expense account of my campaign spending within 10 days of the election." His campaign

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Woodie declared he came out pretty well even if he lost the election. He succeeded in getting Bob Bishop to cancel

his account at the drugstore, and was able to get three teachers placed by Superintendent Ted Crosthwaite. Woodie declared following the election, "I want every winning candidate to know now that I voted for them."

#### Woodie the crime crusader

Woodie considered himself an active crusader against crime in Rowan County. In his typical humorous style he called for the county grand jury to indict Jim Brammer for running a "checker dive" in his hotel lobby.

Woodie claimed it was an every night affair, and there was a lot of yelling, jumping on furniture and spitting. Also, Mayor Kennard threw his cigarettes on the rug and never stamped them out. Mayor Kennard said the reason he didn't use the ashtray was, "It was being used by the tobacco chewers."

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#### Sad saga of sheriff Sam Green

Sam Green served one term as County Judge and two terms as Sheriff of Rowan County. His last term as Sheriff was scheduled to end at midnight Dec. 31, 1961.

Sheriff Green was getting

See MEMORIES on C-4



"All who have meditated upon the art of governing mankind have been convinced that the fate of the empire depends upon the education of youth." (Aristotle 338 B.C.)

During the late 1940s people in Rowan County and Kentucky, seemed to lose interest in politics and government. However, during the decade of the 1950s there was a move to re-ignite an interest in voting. In 1950 the Kentucky Farm Bureau had goals of renewing the public's interest in county government and voting.

The Rowan County Farm Bureau was a member of the Kentucky Farm Bureau. That county farm organization had a membership of 400 active members. It was the only farm organization in the county, and was organized March 23, 1946.

Although their goal was to promote the interests of agriculture in the county, they were also interested in promoting civic and community activity. One way they hoped to accomplish that task was by use of a "votemobile."

#### "Votemobile" emphasized importance of voting

Perhaps because of the success of the Kentucky Bookmobile project in renewing an interest in reading, the Farm Bureau believed a "votemobile" would renew interest in voting. The "votemobile" was a little red, white and blue van.

Its purpose was to tour Kentucky heralding the theme of democracy and the importance of voting in preserving that democracy. It

carried such slogans as, "Your vote is your voice — let it be heard," and "Vote in the August 5 primary," and "Free to all over 21." (18-year-olds could not vote.)

The "votemobile" appeared at Sharkey on Aug. 2, 1950 at a Rowan Farmers Field Day. It was a non-partisan, non-political attempt to get out the vote. It was successful in Rowan County because it seemed to generate a renewed interest in local government.

#### 1950s brought heated elections

Many voters flocked to the polls in the 1953 election. Also the local elections were hotly contested. That was especially true in the Nov. 3, 1953 county election. In that election, W. T. McClain (Democrat) won over I. E. Pelphrey (Republican) by 311 votes, Austin Alfrey (R) won against James E. Clay (D) by only 11 votes. Kenneth Lewis (R) appeared to have won the race for sheriff until the absentee votes were counted. Those absentee votes gave Carl Jones the majority by 19 votes.

In the 1953 race for County Court Clerk, Ottist Elam (D) led the ticket by defeating Ray Moore (R) by 660 votes. Also, that year Mrs. Juanita Wilson was elected as Tax Commissioner. Therefore, she and Mrs. Elam were tied for the third female to be elected to a major office in Rowan County. (The two other women were County School Superintendents Cora Wilson Stewart and Lyda Messer Caudill.)

The county election in 1953 saw Rube Thomas (D) win over Elmer Planck (R) for Jailer, and Clark Lane (D) won over Meredith Stucky (R)



Kentucky Farm Bureau "Votemobile" in Rowan County during the 1951 election.

for Coroner. In the race for magistrate, Jesse McDaniel (D) won over Isaac Caudill (R), George Ellington (R) won over Warren Flannery (D), J. A. Hamm (D) won over C. W. Johnson (R), and Elmer Kinder (R) won over T. D. White (D).

In 1953 the Republicans captured the County Attorney's office and two of the four magistrates with the Democrats sweeping the other offices.

In 1953 Austin Alfrey with his friendly, outgoing personality and deep resonant voice was elected County Attorney for the first time by a margin of 11 votes. However, he succeeded in being re-elected three more terms until he was defeated by James E. Clay in 1966. Mr. Clay was County Attorney until 1974 when he was elected District Judge.

Herbert Bradley, one of Rowan County's most successful political office holders, was a former school teacher who entered politics. His first elected office was School Board member. Following that race, he was elected Circuit Court Clerk in 1952.

Mr. Bradley, a staunch Republican, held that office until his death in 1966. His daughter Corinne Castle served out his unexpired term until Wathan Armstrong (Democrat) took over that office.

#### Local man ran for "Tick Commissioner"

Woodie Hinton, local humorist, philosopher, political analyst, and "a poor man's" Will Rogers, used to have a heyday in his column in the *Rowan County News* at election time. During one

election Woodie announced he was a candidate for "Tick Commissioner."

The reason he was running was because he had contracted tick paralysis as a result of a bite by the tick "Demacentse Venuslus Andersonie." His platform was complete elimination of ticks. Although he recovered from tick fever, he was unsuccessful in his campaign. Woody sad he lost the election because he failed to get the endorsement of Bob Taft, Albin Barkley, John Sherman Cooper, and the residents of "Podunk Holler."

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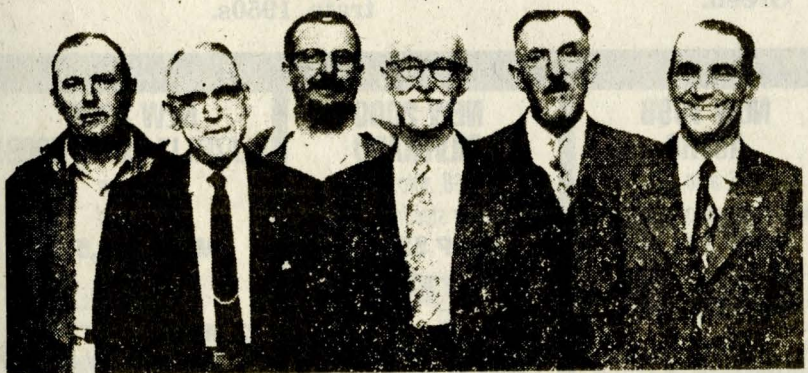
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#### Sad saga of sheriff Sam Green

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Sheriff Green was getting

See MEMORIES on C-4



The strongest farm organization in Rowan County is the Farm Bureau numbering as members practically every rural land owner. From left, front row: Dave C. Caudill, treasurer and past president; E. B. Sluss, director; Leland Hall, director and past president. Back row: James L. Kidd, secretary; Adrian Razor, county agent; and Bert Dean, president.



### Memories From A-4

ready to eat New Year's Eve dinner when city patrolman Carl Johnson called his house and said he had a warrant for the arrest of Orville Perry for spouse abuse and asked Sam to help him serve the warrant. Sam told his wife to keep his supper hot, he would be back in a few minutes.

The local police knew the reputation of Orville Perry. He was a convicted felon who had served time in two federal prisons, but Sheriff Green had been on friendly terms with Orville and anticipated no problems. Sam was known as a fearless law enforcement officer who always tried to reason with those he was arresting.

**Sheriff killed six hours before leaving office**

Johnson and Green met on West Main Street and proceeded to the Perry home

on Lexington Street in West Morehead. The house was dark and quiet, as the two men cautiously approached. The Sheriff went to the rear of the house and knocked on the back door and identified himself and said they had a warrant for Orville Perry's arrest.

Before he was through speaking, he was shot point blank with a 20 gauge shotgun through the door killing him instantly. Carl Johnson ran around the house and was met with a blast that struck his gun which saved his life. Wounded, Patrolman Johnson got to his car and radioed for help.

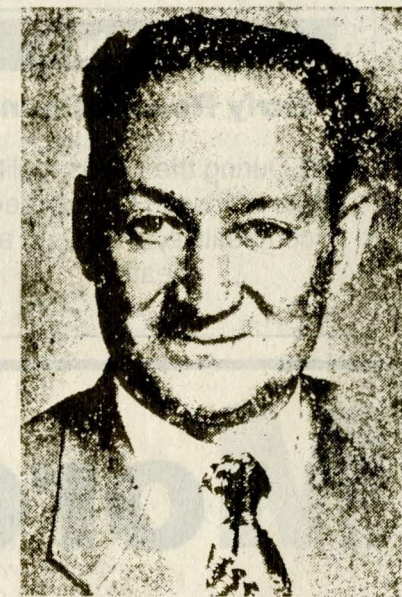
Mr. Perry was arrested a few hours later in the neighbor's woodshed. He had the Sheriff's gun and pocketbook in his possession. But the body of Sheriff Sam

Green was found in the rear doorway of the house, becoming the second county law enforcement official to be killed in office in Rowan County.

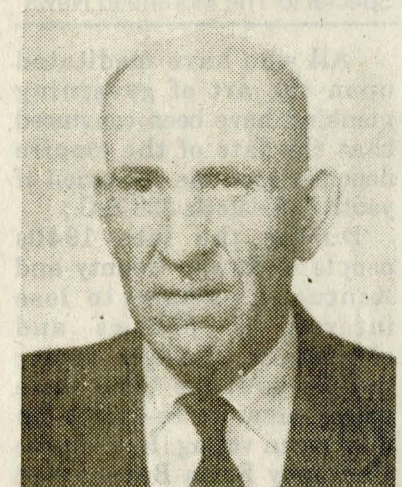
The first was Deputy Sheriff Baumgardener who was killed during the Rowan County feud in 1885.

Sheriff Sam Green did not have to respond to that request by Carl Johnson. He could have just said, my term as Sheriff has ended, but he did not, and was tragically killed just six hours before his term as Sheriff expired. His killer who never showed any remorse, was sentenced to life imprisonment.

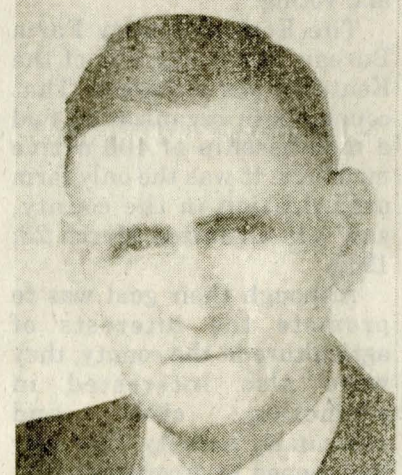
But the saga of Sheriff Sam Green was a sad day in Rowan history. It could be said that he was one county office holder who gave his life for his county.



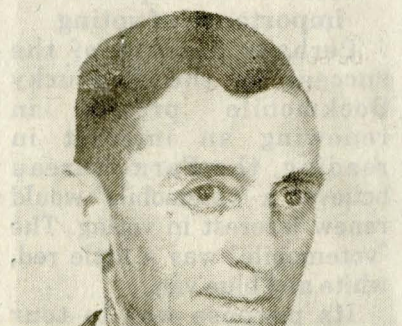
Sam Green elected county judge and sheriff. Killed while serving a warrant six hours before leaving office as sheriff.



Rube Thomas, jailer, 1950s.



Herb Bradley, circuit court clerk, 1954-1966.



Juanita Wilson, tax commissioner, 1954-1976.



Austin Alfrey, county attorney, 1954-1966.



Otis Elam, county clerk, 1954-1976.



### Writing poems about Ireland

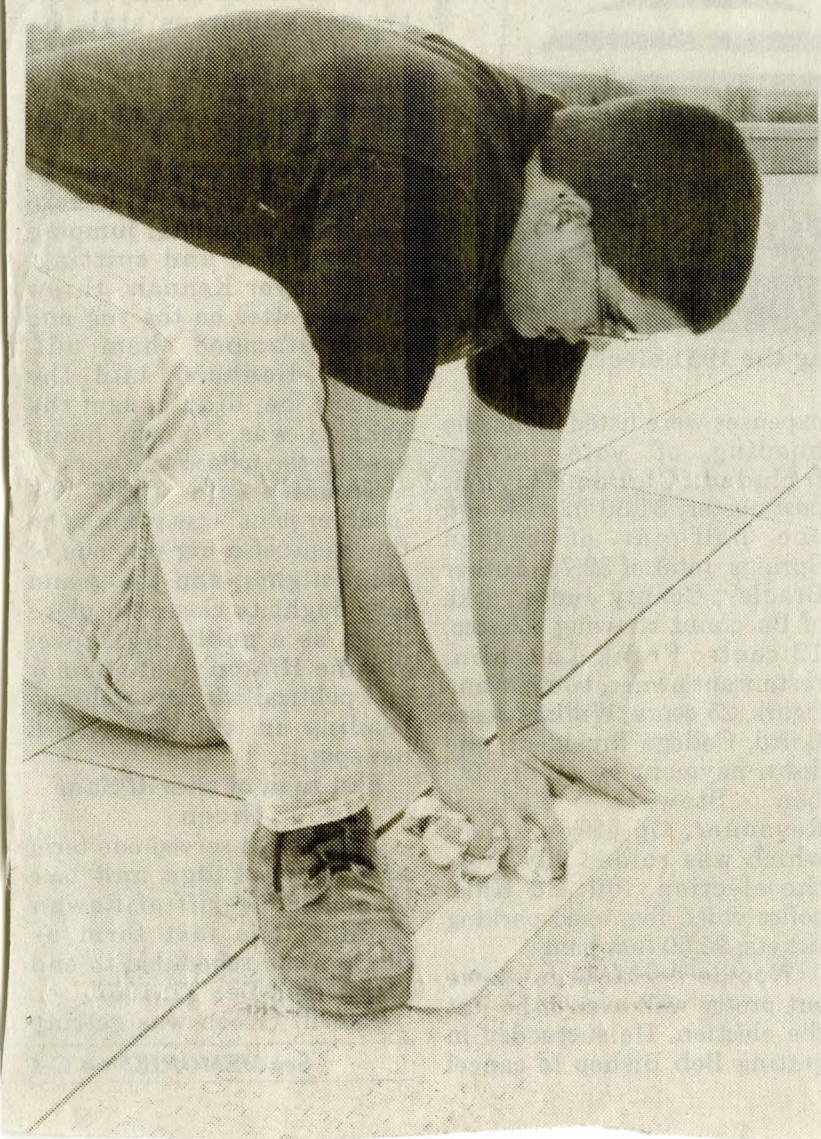
Students in Phyllis Quisgard's second grade class wrote poems about Ireland on St. Patrick's Day. Students pictured: Sarah Parker, Gerard Staton, Devon Fultz, Emily Littleton, Hali Leadingham, Lisa Kennedy, Jordan Bentley and Adam Rummage.





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Juanita Wilson, tax commissioner, 1954-1976.

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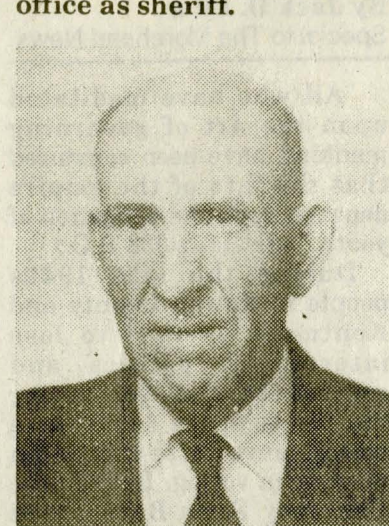


Austin Alfrey, county attorney, 1954-1966.

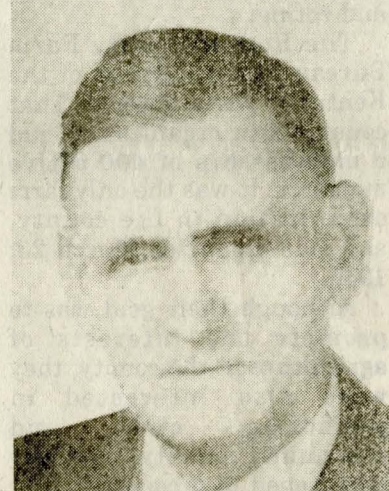
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Otis Elam, county clerk, 1954-1976.



Rube Thomas, jailer, 1950s.

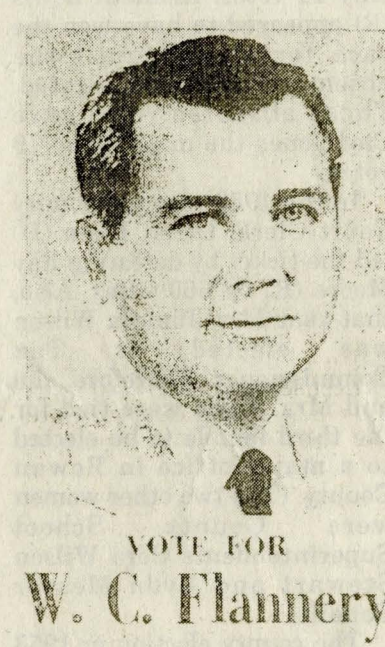


Herb Bradley, circuit court clerk, 1954-1966.

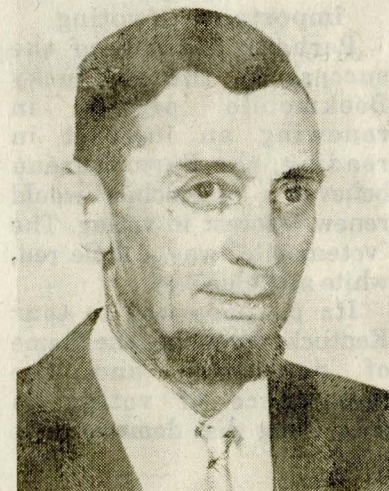


## St. Patrick's Day

rd's second grade class wore Patrick's Day. Students pic-Morgan Lockmiller, James Myle Bradley, Matthew Lewis, son.



W. C. Flannery, judge, 1962-1970, 1978-1986. First official action as county judge was to sign an arrest warrant for man who murdered sheriff Sam Green.



Jesse McDaniel, magistrate, 1950s.

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