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Anne Fitzgerald Interview - Part 1 (Boone County)

Boone County, Kentucky

Anne Fitzgerald

Robert M. Rennick

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Anne Fitzgerald Interview Part 1
Boone County

Anne Fitzgerald is a local historian that has lived in Boone County, Kentucky since 1941. She and her husband studied the local history of Boone County together before he passed away. She has helped author and self-publish books, such as *Kentucky Cemeteries*, and compiled a record of marriages in Boone County dating all the way back to the early 1800s. This interview between Robert Rennick and Anne Fitzgerald takes place on May 21, 1979.

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TRANSCRIPT

Robert Rennick (RR): You said there was a crossing?

Anne Fitzgerald (AF): There was a tollhouse, you know where that road goes up the hill? The crossroads, at the traffic light and the roads cross. On the right-hand side, was the toll gate house. On the left-hand side was a mill. Kind of a mill stream, you know a stream down there.

RR: That is left-hand, going West?

AF: As you go toward there.

RR: And today there's nothing there?

AF: No, they tore it all the houses down.

RR: Now would people today know about Limaburg?

AF: The Florence brothers, they lived there, and they ran a store up there.

RR: Is that section still called that?

AF: Well, it doesn't have any name now. Oak Brook is a subdivision they put on the hillside there.

RR: What's that called?

AF: Oak Brook.

RR: Oak Brook?

RR: The date of establishment of many towns is not known. James Taylor, who also established Newport, laid out the small river town called Taylor's Port. Walton was first called Gaines's Cross-roads. Abner Gaines built one of the early houses there. Legend has it that a ship captain,

Walton, gave Mr. Gaines financial assistance in building the house. No record of the captain has been found, but it seems logical that the town was renamed for him.

RR: Now in the Boone County Recorder, Thursday, April 14, 1966, page one, column two. There's a brief article on the Weneda Post Office, once in Boone County. It was in North Bend, says that mail came down the Ohio side of the river by train, was dropped off, and someone with a boat brought it across to Boone County. At present, the exact location of the post office is not known. It is not known when it ceased to be operated. In 1903-1904, the school census mentioned the following families—Rather, the following families gave their address as Weneda: John Greene, Buddie Jones, Lee Peffer, Buddy Keaton, Chris Lowman, Hubert Cropper, William Cropper, Frank Stephens, Ben Eggleston, John McCloud, Jake Riteman, and Herman Goerler.

RR: So the flashing light then, is that the junction?

AF: It's not a flashing light, it's a stop light.

RR: Stop Light?

AF: I keep saying flashing light because it used to be a flashing light but then they made it a regular stop light.

RR: At the junction of 237 going North, and 18. And the Beechburg Golf Club is nearby on the Northwest side of that. Gunpowder Creek is the road going to the South. Oak Brook development is on the South side of 18.

AF: Well, as we go from here to—it's on this side. I guess it is South, the South side.

RR: Boone Woods Park? Is that a park?

AF: That belongs to the county. Yes, you know where the bank building is that you pass? Well, you probably didn't notice it. On the road to Burlington, just before you get into Burlington, there's a bank building, an old bank building.

RR: Yeah, I remember that.

AF: Well, that park is right in that area.

RR: I've got a few questions, you might be able to help me with.

AF: I'm going to answer one other question for you. You asked if the Florences were here, well that would be right. I just looked at an index I made here of the marriages. John Florence married Nancy Robinson in 1814. So, I would say that was before 1830 when they made the name of the town Florence. The family was definitely in the county before that name was given to it.

RR: I wonder why they didn't record a reason for the name, such as they did with Maddentown?

AF: A lot of what you're talking about with Maddentown, you find those in court records and you pick up little things like that from the court records. Towseytown, for instance—you didn't ask about Towseytown—is at the end of Lawrenceburg Ferry Road, and a man by the name of Towsey owned the land there. He had a store right across the river from Ohio.

RR: Indiana or Ohio?

AF: It could be either Indiana or Ohio. They're both right close together. Yes, it would be Indiana, Ohio is further up, toward Cincinnati.

RR: Now what was his first name?

AF: Who? Towsey? There were several of them in the county. Either Erasmus or Joel, I would have to look it up for you, I don't know right off. It mentioned it in one of those papers.

RR: I've come across it somewhere.

AF: It's in that paper I think, where you saw it.

RR: In a list earlier, maybe.

RR: What is the economic base of Florence now? Is there manufacturing here?

AF: Oh, you mean industrial section? Or what is the value of the place?

RR: No, I mean is there industry here? Is it primarily trade?

AF: Oh, yes, it's industry only in recent years, since '45. Maybe since '60. I've been here since '40, which is a long time but doesn't mean anything. You haven't been into the industrial area of Florence? Not on I-75 towards Royalton, but not on 75 but on US-25.

RR: I'm never sure where I am, whether it's Florence or Elsmere.

AF: You know where you had this light up here, if you turn to the right on that light, you would've gone up into the industrial area here in the county. It's along the road US-25 about half way to Walton.

RR: The opposite direction of Elsmere?

AF: Elsmere's down this way.

RR: The industrial section is South—is West of Devon (Deh-vun)?

AF: It's Devon (Duh-von). Yeah, it's East of Devon, mostly. Because this is 25, here is the road 25 going all the way to Walton. And it's on both sides of 25.

RR: South of Devon? Of course a little further to the East there you've got the Kenton County line.

AF: Well they have a little bit in Kenton County, but not too much. The railroad track comes there, in this area between Kenton County and the 25, and I-75. It's mostly the buildings on both sides. It's more above Devon and toward Florence. See here's your industrial road. I can't read it.

RR: Yes, that's a 10 mile marker.

AF: Well anyhow, from there up to Florence, it's almost solid industrial.

RR: Is there any connection between Devon and D-E-V-O-U and people who donated the park?

AF: Devou park? No, I don't think so.

RR: I often wondered if it was a typographical error.

AF: No, it's not a typographical error. Devon has always been there since I been around. Devon, at least as long as I've been around, and Devou has been Devou. A man named Devou left the land, and the park got its name from the man who left his property as a park.

RR: Is that William Devou?

AF: Don't wait until a person gets as old as I am and then expect them to remember. Especially not being of this area. Now you've seen the 1883 atlas of Boone County, so you know that most of these names on the atlas that you were asking about. Most of them were from before 1883.

RR: Now that Devon, is that a family name?

AF: You should've talked to my husband before he died. I don't remember seeing the name of Devon, but let me look in the marriage records that go from 1789 to 1879 and see. I don't remember seeing the name Devon in here. If nobody got married by that name then it's not likely. Wait, yes, there is a Devon, back in the early 1800s. It probably was (a family name). That was before 1835, but I can look and get the exact date.

RR: Good, that would be helpful.

AF: You would like the exact date?

RR: So I have post office records that tell me when these post offices were established.

AF: Yeah, I realized you can get those, but I've never gotten them.

RR: Yeah I got copies of some several years ago, at the Kenton County Library. Post office records for all three counties, they're available there to anyone who wants to use them.

AF: Well, my problem is just finding the time to go there. Now if you'll excuse me, I'm going to look up the name Devon.

RR: This is a very good map.

AF: They'd give it to you up there on the Burlington Pike. It's a West Shell map

RR: West Shell?

AF: A lady—they put out a little one which I like so much, and I asked her if they had anymore, because mine had gotten dirty. And she brought this green one back

RR: West Shell Realtors? Now that's a thought.

AF: -they were here in 1833.

RR: So she married, the Devon girl married in 1833?

AF: You asked me about the Devons and I said I'd look in my marriage records. The Devon girl and John Porter were married in April 1833.

RR: John what?

AF: Porter, P-O-R-T-E-R.

RR: So they were here that early?

AF: They were here that early.

RR: Are there any Devons left?

AF: Well I looked in the index in census records, and I didn't see any in the 1850 census. But I can check another book. I'm not really sure where she came from, since it just seems to be the one girl.

RR: It's a very unusual pronunciation.

AF: There were two ways of spelling it

Tape cuts out

AF: You see I kept my records from the original bond, where they had written it. And this old handwriting, you have to read it as it looks to you.

silence again

AF: No there don't seem to be any in Boone County. They were in Mason County, Devons were. And in Greenup. Well, it could've been D-E-V-A-R, or it could've been D-E-V-O-R. Devors were in LaRue County in the 1850s. But there weren't any in Boone County.

RR: So what are you referring to?

AF: This 1850 census of Kentucky. It's a company that published it for 56 dollars.

RR: Accelerated Indexing Systems, Inc.

AF: Not perfect by any means, but it's a big help.

RR: Copyrighted 1976, editors were Ronald Burn Jackson and David Schafermeyer.

AF: German name, I would say.

RR: Accelerated Indexing Systems, Inc. 3346 South Orchard Drive, Bountiful, Utah 84010.

AF: Mormons, may be Mormons. But they, the Mormons, have collected really wonderful records on families. Now they put out an 1840 census record as well as an 1850, but I just haven't bought it because I didn't feel like I could afford it.

RR: 56 dollars.

AF: Yeah, it's kind of expensive. But you know, for people doing research for money, they will and do buy them.

RR: They get their return on it.

AF: I don't know whether there's anything else you wish to ask me.

RR: Verona, V-E-R-O-N-A. I haven't been able to find anything on it.

AF: No? You know where it is?

RR: Southern part of the county.

AF: Let me see, I don't think there's anybody by that name, but I can check and see. This gives you a pretty good view of the people who were in the county. I don't think I ever remember seeing that as a family name. They must've gotten the name from some other source. He had to get his name from some other source.

RR: Like the city in Italy? Like Florence?

AF: Well you see the people who settled there may have come from places like that. Still, Boone County was settled by the Scots-Irish around Walton, Verona, and that area of Kentucky. But around Florence and between here and Burlington was settled by the Germans from Germanic colony, or you may say Madison County, Virginia or Orange County, Virginia. And they came directly over here from Germany. From Spotswood as I remember, they had them to work in Ironworks in Virginia, in Spotsylvania County and Orange County and then Madison was taken over. Culpeper was taken off of Orange and Madison and was taken off of Culpeper and all were in that Germanic area of Virginia. Then they came directly to here as soon as they served their seven years there, a lot of them just came here and settled. They settled here, we are told, because the land here was similar to the land they had come from.

RR: You mean in the old country?

AF: Well, in Virginia, anyhow. Of course, where they settled in Virginia, they had no choice because—well what kind of slaves do you call them?

RR: Indentured servants.

AF: Indentured slaves, yes. I did have a map. A man by the name of Carpenter was a surveyor and he mapped out the area that they settled in the Germanic section of Virginia and we had all the names of the people who settled there. And they were almost identical to the names we had settling here in Kenton County. We had the Carpenters, the Chrislas, the Smiths, practically the same names that were in Virginia, they just carried them down into this area. Yale was another one I guess, well Mr. Yale married into that family. Can't think of the girl he married, but he married into the German families who had settled here. From here to Burlington, and East and West, if you go on those two roads you find that area in which these people settled, the Germans. Came from the Alsace-Lorraine area in France and Germany. See they had money, as I understand it. They went to England to get passage, where the ships were going from London. They wanted to get passage, and for some reason or another, the captain didn't take off when he should've and they used up all their money. He took them on, but made them slaves for seven years, to work off their debt for coming over. As the way I understand it, history isn't my first love, I enjoy what I know about the people, and the history of the people I'm not too sure about. You would be probably?

RR: Yeah, I'm more interested in the history of them and the social, like the life they lived. Now what about Verona?

AF: Just a little town, not many houses, take a crossroads and put houses on either side, and that's it. Not too many, about a mile or so of houses.

RR: A mile of houses?

AF: Well, I'm just guessing.

RR: Do they still have a store?

AF: Yes, they still have a store, or at least they did the last time I was up there, which was 4 or 5 years ago.

RR: What about Walton? What's there?

AF: Now Walton is a much bigger town. I don't know what kind of class city it is but they have offices there that run the town. It's pretty good size, I might be able to find that in that place name book. Are you familiar with that book?

RR: What's that?

AF: That Place Names Book of Kentucky

RR: That doesn't have population, it just has the town name and where's they're located.

AF: That's right it does.

RR: It's more of a gazetteer. What we're trying to do is get this information.

AF: Like what the population is?

RR: Right, and history of it.

AF: Well the newspaper might be able to tell you, the Walton Advertiser. I would say it's probably as big as Burlington, you know how big Burlington is. Well it might be bigger.

RR: How big is Burlington?

AF: Well now I'm not sure since it's grown so much. When I came to Florence how big do you think it was?

RR: You said 1940? I'd say fewer than 2,000.

AF: In 1941, there were 620 people in the town of Florence. There are about 15,000 in this area now. 1941 was the year after they'd taken the census. And I don't know about 1950 but there were more in 1950, but it wasn't too many more but since '50, it's just boomed

RR: Thinking back to Bullitsville or Bullitsburg. Which of these was called Mitchellville?

AF: I would guess it was Bullitsville rather than Bullitsburg. I can get my atlas and see.

RR: There was also a Corneliusville name applied to it.

AF: Corneliusville?

RR: C-O-R-N-E-L-I-U-S ville.

AF: Well, I've never heard of that.

RR: Now this was not Bullit's Bottom?

AF: No it was not Bullit's Bottom. Bullits Bottom, more than likely Taylor's Port was near Bullit's Bottom. But Sand Run, where it enters the Ohio River is near Bullit's Bottom. Let me get my atlas and see.

tape goes silent

RR: Now who was Anne Lutz?

AF: She was Roy Lutz's daughter she was taking college work. This is the version. Here's Petersburg here, and we were talking about Towseytown, it was here where the Lawrenceburg ferry crossed.

RR: That was above Petersburg?

AF: That was above Petersburg.

RR: That was the mouth of?

AF: That's the mouth of the Creek there.

RR: Is that Second Creek?

AF: Here's Sand Run, and Bullit's Bottom is down there in that area there as I understand it in the court records.

RR: Above Sand Run?

AF: Yeah, in the low area. Some of the old houses are still there.

RR: Near the lower part of the bend?

AF: I would say its this part of the bend. Now here's Bullitsville, and here's Hebron.

RR: So, it's due west of Hebron?

AF: Well, no. Here's Mitchellsville would be. Yes at one time, it was Mitchellsville turnpike, but this isn't the railroad but at one time they gathered a company to start a railroad in this area. Let's see Mitchellsville...Francisville...

RR: Corneliusville?

AF: I never heard of Corneliusville.

RR: There's Carlson's precinct.

AF: There's Rabbit Hash down there. There's Taylor's Port but that's going down in the wrong direction. Mitchellsville – Dry Creek Road ... Constance.

RR: That's another one I haven't been able to find anything about.

AF: I'm not sure. None of the owners of the land there seemed to have had the name of Constance. I guess they just had to have a name for a Post Office and called it that.

RR: Yeah it's just below Anderson Ferry on the Ohio River. According to the 1880s.

AF: Taylor's Port is in that area.

RR: In the bend?

AF: Yeah in the bend, in the bottom lands where the tornado hit a couple of years ago.

RR: What's in Taylor's Port now?

AF: Nothing. Just a small settlement, mostly rural mobile homes and that sort of kind of thing.

RR: Do they still have a store?

AF: I don't remember seeing a store. They did have a cemetery we can look at, but I do remember there was just a group of houses, and those mobile homes in that area and that's all I remember seeing there. I don't remember anything but that.

RR: Is Belleview still called that or is it called Grant now?

AF: It's called Belleview. The Post Office is Grant and the little town is called Belleview, and a little further down from there is McVile. That was at the landing, they called it Rice's Landing then.

RR: The same as McVile? Who was Mack?

AF: I told you asked the wrong person. McVile, they used to have Dam 38 along there. It was a little settlement where these people who took care of the dam lived. You remember Dam 38? Well, they destroyed it when they built the dam down in Gent, Kentucky. They destroyed that one after they built this one. They did that just a few years ago.

unintelligible

RR: Grant?

AF: Grants are everywhere. That's where he bought land and where they settled down in there. This cemetery is a Grant Cemetery.

RR: Below McVile?

AF: Yes, right close to it. We still haven't gotten Mitchellville. I think Francisville and Mitchellville must have been the same at one time.

RR: Is that Ferry still operating at Constance? Anderson's Ferry?

AF: It was a few years ago, and it may still be. Last summer, or the summer before that, I think it was still running. I'm not sure if it is since they opened the bridge to Indiana but it was before they opened the bridge in December of this past year. Whether it is this year or not, I'm not sure, but I think I've heard some people say they used it. Does that help any? Do you suppose Gainesville and Mitchellville were the same?

RR: Gainesville?

AF: You see we have here from Bullitsville Post Office, we know that's below Hebron. And it says Mitchellville - Dry Creek Turnpike going West. It never says who was living on that side over there. I don't know, I can't answer that question for you. Mitchellville Creek Road, it must be. It comes over here to Gainesville. Evidently Gainesville must have at one time been called Mitchellville.

RR: Are there any Mitchells listed?

AF: I'm pretty sure there are Mitchells in the county, but I don't think they were right in that area on this map. In the 1800s... I can go look up the exact date, but there was a Washington Mitchell. There were lots of Mitchells. That don't tell you just exactly where they lived, but you can find it in the others but they must've lived in that area.

RR: Where was Piatts's' Landing?

AF: There were two. One was on East Bend Bottoms.

RR: Was that the same as Belleview and Grant?

AF: No, it was near Big Bone Lick. The other must be in the Hamilton Precinct. The buildings were right in this area of the river all the way around the bend near Rabbit Hash.

RR: Like Rabbit Hash? Near the mouth of Lick Creek? Just above the mouth of Lick Creek?

AF: Yes, it would've been in that area. They (Piatts) owned this land all in around here. Jacob Piatts, there were two Jacob Piatts. One lived over in what we call East Bend and the one lived in North Bend and they both had boats that crossed the river.

RR: There was a Robert Piatts?

AF: The Robert was right in here, but there were two Roberts. The Robert Piatts that went to Cincinnati belonged to the North Bend Piatts. Many of them were near the Lawrenceburg Ferry. This gives it a name with Jacob owning the land on top of the hill here.

RR: This is Second Creek? Just above the Lawrenceburg Ferry?

AF: Yes, here's Boone County. Let me give you a magnifying glass. And I'll answer that phone.

RR: Here's something in an article in a paper by Mrs. Aura Tanner and others. Limaburg, unpublished paper from the Boone County Historical Society, November 17, 1950. Page 8, talking about Limaburg. Had to find another name for a Post Office. Someone suggested Lima, but since Lima, Ohio was so near, a postal official there and inspector suggested Limaburg instead. The Post office was established in 1885.

RR: That was Second Creek.

AF: That was the way I remembered it, but I wasn't sure. On this one, did it really give the name of it?

RR: It's not Garrison, that's the next Creek up.

AF: I knew it wasn't Garrison.

RR: What they ordinarily called Piatts landing, or were there two there two Piatts Landings?

AF: Well, what I think they called Piatts Landing is in East, this one down here in East Bend. I think because the Boats would come there because there was a hotel ...

TAPE ENDS