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, January 13, 2000

LOOKING BACK

Compiled by Historian John E. Leming, Jr.

THE BRACKEN RECORD BROOKSVILLE KENTUCKY

APRIL 4, 1877

Locust Mills News:

The first day of April was very disagreeable here, unpleasant and cold. Miss. Maggie Houston has returned to this community and we welcome her back and hope she will remain among us.

Captain W.A. Pepper has converted the old Cherry Grove Chapel into a dwelling house, and Mr. Ed. Feagan occupies it at the present.

The mumps are spreading very rapidly between this point and the city of Berlin. We also noticed quite a number of gents from Brooksville were here fishing last Saturday, we do not know what success they had but know that they are very patient young men. Mr. Oliver Redden and Miss. Sophia Pennell were united in the holy bonds of matrimony on March 29th. We congratulate them and hope they live to see many happy anniversaries, and realize it to be the happiest day of their lives. - Lottie Lee

New Concord News: X X X

One day last week a very serious accident happened to the little son of Mr. John Brush. Who was living at his Grandfather's, Mr. Abraham Frees. While the child was left in a room alone, it got hold of a powder flask, partially filled with powder. It was gotten into the fire, which immediately exploded, flashing in the child's face, burning it very badly.

X Some few nights ago, Mr. B.C.

X West had the misfortune of having nearly all of his meat stolen from his smokehouse. Somebody must have been hungry, and obviously had no friends.

One evening last week, Messrs. James and Cogle West, set fire to a small prairie near the old mill known as "Burns Mill" on Locust Creek. The mill was full of tobacco and was in much danger of being lost by fire, but the wind turned in its favor, and no damage was done. Cogle said it was a frightening scene for some time. Friends, remember this is March, and because of high winds, you better be careful with fire!

Uncle Fuller

X A Maysville item: James Lyons of this city, on Wednesday evening of last week, accidentally fell overboard from the steamer Bostona and barely escaped drowning. X Before he could be rescued, he had drifted down opposite the St. Charles saloon, where he was picked up by a skiff from a nearby barge, in time to save his life.

The only marriage license issued by our County Clerk this week was to Mr. William Ruf who will marry Miss Caroline Myer. The obituary notice of Miss. Corina Gillispie, deceased, will appear next week, it was unavoidably crowded out of this issue.

Married - By the Reverend George B. Poage, at the residence of the bride's parents, on the 27th day of March, 1877, Mr. John Harber to Miss. Ida J. Poe, all of this county.

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LOOKING BACK

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APRIL 4, 1877

Our old friend, T.M. Dora, Esq. of Germantown, has been solicited by the Bracken County Democracy, to become a candidate for Representative in the lower house of Legislature. The selection is a first rate one, Mr. D. is first rate in all qualities that go to make an honest and sensible gentleman, and we are sure he will make a good representative.

X On Saturday night last, two men left Rowan County with two stolen horses, they came through Flemingsburg Sunday and boarded the Bonanza at Foster, Bracken County on Monday, with the stolen animals, on their way to Cincinnati. One of the men was John R. Taber, commonly known as "Jack Taber" a name not unfamiliar to readers of the "Republican" and the other, John P. Martin, both reside in Rowan. The wife of Martin took passage on the Bonanza from Augusta Monday evening, hoping to meet her husband at Foster. Marshall Heflin and Jailer Weedon were also passengers on the boat, "shading" Mrs. Martin. After the boat left New Richmond, Taber was arrested and Martin was safely "hauled" at an early hour on Tuesday. The prisoners were brought back here Tuesday night and on Wednesday they consented to return to Rowan for trial. The horses were recovered.

Later dispatch - A report has reached us via Maysville that John

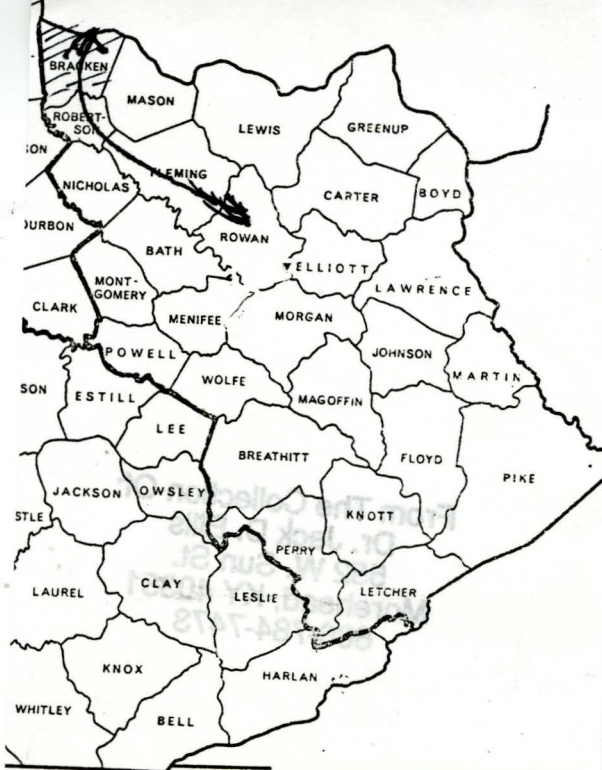
R. Taber of Rowan County, the horse thief who was arrested here Monday on the steamer Bonanza, was lynched at Morehead.

X Marshall Heflin and his Deputies, recently raided a Negro gambling den in the Goddard house building, securing fourteen Negro prisoners, three of whom were women.

Mr. James Lyon has opened a first class restaurant at Augusta, serving all hours for ladies and gentlemen. Oysters any style are served. Second Street near Upper at Augusta.

X On the 30th of March, an infant daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jos. H. Whisner of this place died, an obituary by a friend of the family is as follows: Leona, infant daughter of Joseph H. and Lide Whisner, ceased to breathe just as the day was dawning, March 27, 1877 at her parent's residence in Brooksville Kentucky. At the tender age of just six months, merely a bud in her mothers arms, ere it able to bloom and shed influence over a little brother. It was snapped from its parent's stem to be transplanted in the heavenly climate. Grieve not fond parents for your little pet, the whopping cough and distressing pneumonia pains shall never more disturb her. Live to meet this little dear one some day, for soon the call may come to all of us. - A.M.C.

The annual meeting of the Union Agricultural Society of Mason and Bracken Counties, for the purpose of electing a President, and Directors to serve for the upcoming year, will be held at the town hall, Germantown, Saturday, April 7, 1877 At 2 o'clock PM.



Route taken by the
men with two
stolen horses.
They were caught
in Bracken County -
returned to Rowan
and lynched

Rowan County horse thieves
stole two horses in Rowan
and made their way to the
Ohio River before being
caught

Local Trivia

Trail through Rowan

The Sheltoewe Trail started near the present site of Portsmouth, Ohio and traversed southwest to the Cherokee country in Tennessee.

History

About the Author



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

Morehead Memories:

People & Places

A Lynching in Rowan County

By Jack D. Ellis
Special to The Morehead News

If a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right... he shall surely live. Eze 18:5,9.

Evidence of early Rowan County's lawless and violent reputation was evident by an article that appeared in the "Bracken County Record" dated April 4, 1877.

The crime committed

John R. (Jack) Tabor was a Rowan resident who had resided in the Cranston area of Rowan County. Mr. Tabor had been in trouble with the law on several occasions.

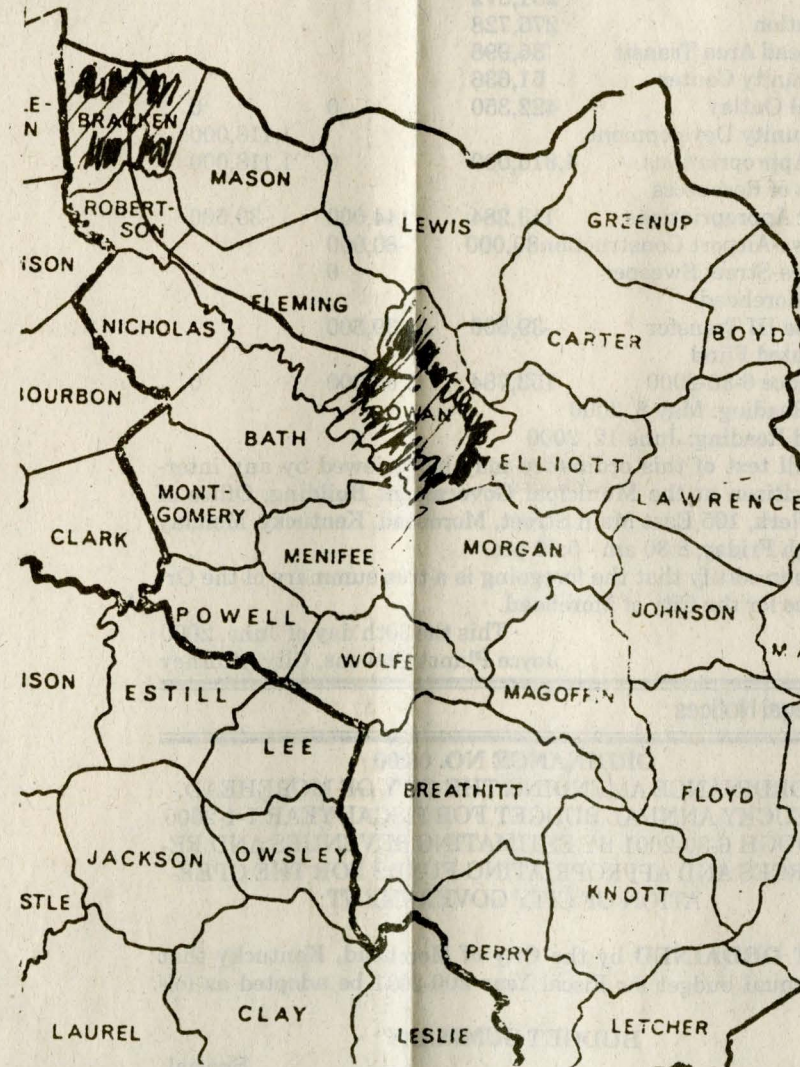
On a Saturday night in early April 1887 after getting drunk on their homemade moonshine, Tabor and Martin hatched a plan to steal two horses and skip the country. After stealing the horses, the two men headed north toward the Ohio River.

on he hired a driver to make the weekly round trip but in 1877 he was making the run himself.) His wife always ran the store during his absence. When Mr. Alderson passed the Mt. Pisgah Church in northern Rowan County, there was a woman who stopped his wagon and paid her passage to Maysville.

Suspicion aroused

Mr. Alderson always stopped in Flemingsburg overnight and Mrs. Martin stayed at a local inn and Colonel Alderson, famous for squeezing a penny, slept in his wagon while the horses rested that night. They were off again at daybreak on Tuesday morning and arrived in Maysville about noon.

When the steamboat docked at Foster, Jack Tabor and John Martin boarded with the two stolen horses. After the



Rowan County horse thieves stole two horses in Rowan and made their way to the Ohio River before being caught.

reached back to Bracken County in about one week after the men were returned to Rowan County. Also the report used the word "lynched" which was not a word used when a prisoner was legally hung as the result of a trial.

No Indian tribes made their homes in this "Dark and Bloody Ground," but rather used this area for hunting, fishing and fighting. There is

much evidence such as primitive flint axes, and arrowheads to indicate Indians traveled and fought in this area. However, there is a great deal of evidence that the Indians established several trails throughout our region.

Turnpike authorized

Lewis Collins' History of Kentucky records that the first road through Rowan County was a turnpike. In July 1809 (the year Abraham Lincoln was born) the state authorized the first turnpike in Kentucky.

The road was intended to link up with the Greenbrier Road in Virginia near the Kanawha River (Charleston). It was said, "The road would save a considerable distance in traveling from Kentucky to the Eastern states."

Turnpike tollgate in

Rowan

The road known as the "Dirt Turnpike" was reported to be well graded and with toll gates established at several intervals. The second toll gate was authorized three miles west of what later became Gearhart Pond.

It can be said that the path of the first railroad through Rowan County in 1881, the construction of U.S. 60 in 1925, and the construction of I-64 in the 1970s, all followed approximately the same trail established by the first dirt turnpike through Morehead and Rowan County in 1809.

Mud Hole on Morehead Main St.

NOTE: The first sidewalks in Morehead were wooden, and you could say the first paved streets were wooden also. There was plenty of wood in Rowan County, so wood poles were cut and thrown in the mud holes.

the Ohio River. On Sunday, they were seen passing through Flemingsburg. By Monday morning they reached the Ohio River at Foster, a small town down river from Augusta in Bracken County. It was their intention to board the Bonanza, a paddle wheeler, headed 42 miles down river to Cincinnati. There they would sell their stolen horses at the stock sales.

The Bonanza was not due at Foster until Wednesday, so the two men camped on the dock waiting for the arrival of the steamboat. Also a part of their plan was for John Martin's wife to come to Maysville and board the Bonanza. She would then meet them down river when the boat docked at Foster. There the three would continue on to Cincinnati together. Martin's wife booked passage on the Bonanza on Tuesday right on schedule. But she evidently caught the attention of the local Marshall since he had just been notified of the two horses stolen in Rowan County. Also he had been told that the woman waiting to board the boat was from Rowan County.

When the Bonanza left Maysville headed down river, Maysville Marshall Heflin and Jailer Weedon were also on board. They were determined to "shadow" Mrs. Martin, believing she was involved in the crime. How did the Marshall in Maysville find out so quickly about the stolen horses in Rowan County? There were no railroads or any form of fast communication in Rowan County in 1877.

The news spreads

Warren Alderson, owner of one of the two general stores in Morehead in 1877, was a church-going man. He arose on Sunday morning and attended church services held in the Rowan County Courthouse. As he came out of the meeting, he saw the sheriff ride up on his horse. The sheriff told Mr. Alderson that two horses had been stolen in the Cranston area on Saturday night, and described the stolen horses to the storekeeper. He then asked to keep a look for them.

Before daybreak on Monday, Mr. Alderson left Morehead in his wagon on his weekly trip to Maysville, Kentucky hauling freight, mail and passengers. (Later

County and gave him a description of the animals. He also mentioned that his passenger was Mrs. Martin from Rowan County on her way to Cincinnati. Evidently the Marshall knew of Martin's reputation so he became suspicious and he decided to follow her. His suspicions paid off much to the detriment of the two horse thieves.

When the steamboat docked at Foster, Jack Tabor and John Martin boarded with the two stolen horses. After the boat returned to the middle of the Ohio River, Martin and Tabor met with the "suspicious" woman. While they were talking, the Marshall and jailer examined the two horses and they matched the description of the stolen animals.

Criminals arrested

The Marshall then arrested the two horse thieves and ordered the captain of the sternwheeler to return them to Foster and the Marshall, the jailer, and the two thieves embarked with the stolen horses. The two men and the woman were returned to Maysville on Wednesday night and were placed in jail. However, on Thursday morning the two men consented to return to Rowan County for trial, along with the two horses which were returned to their owners.

Jack Tabor lynched

Evidently people in Rowan County were in no mood for leniency, and Jack Tabor's previous brushes with the law had caught up with him. His punishment was swift and sure. According to a dispatch one week later in the Bracken County Record, Jack Tabor, the horse thief who had been arrested on the steamer Bonanza, was lynched. It cannot be determined for certain that Jack Tabor's death was due to a trial by his peers or taken from the jail and lynched. But it is the writer's opinion that there was not enough time to hold a trial, and the report used the word "lynched." Here are the exact words used in what the Bracken County paper called "A Later Dispatch."

"A report has reached us via Maysville that John R. Tabor of Rowan County, the horse thief who was arrested here Wednesday on the Steamer bonanza was lynched in Morehead."

It seemed the report

caught.

reached back to Bracken County in about one week after the men were returned to Rowan County. Also the report used the word "lynched" which was not a word used when a prisoner was legally hung as the result of a trial. Therefore, it is this writer's opinion based on the evidence, that Jack Tabor was removed from the Rowan County Jail and lynched by the "Tiger" guard. The Tiger guard was an extreme vigilante radical group of the Home Guard. The Home Guard was a group of citizens in Rowan County organized to protect life and property during and after the Civil War. It could have been that group; or just some citizens who were tired of the criminal element in the county, and they were determined to make an example of Jack Tabor. I'm sure there were other lynchings in Rowan County, but his is the only evidence this writer had found so far of a lynching in Rowan County. Also, please remember that lynching was seven years before the start of the Rowan County War which brought this county its reputation for violence.

Turnpikes and toll gates

The earliest road or trail through what is now Rowan County was an important Indian trail. It was called "Atheamiowee" by some Indian tribes meaning "path of the armed ones." It was also called "Sheltowee" meaning warriors path by other tribes. It was known by the early settlers as Sheltowee. The trail was used chiefly by the Cherokee and Shawnee tribes as the main highway that they used when engaged in their endless wars.

Trail through Rowan

The trail started near the present site of Portsmouth, Ohio and traversed southwest to the Cherokee country in Tennessee. It entered Rowan County in the northeast near where Highway 377 crosses into Lewis County. The trail traversed Rowan County near Morehead and moved west crossing the Licking River near Crossroads (now Farmers).

There is no evidence to believe there were prehistoric tribes or permanent Indian settlements in Rowan County.

No Indian tribes made their homes in this "Dark and Bloody Ground," but rather used this area for hunting, fishing and fighting. There

the cost of the road was paid for by subscription with a cost to the state of \$23,243 for the road from Mt. Sterling to Catlettsburg.

Turnpike tollgate in

gigantic mud hole. Poles were cut and thrown into the mud to keep wagons and cars from sinking up to the axles. Extra poles were stacked beside the street for anyone getting stuck.