

# Kentucky

Spring 2023  
Kentucky Humanities

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**INSIDE: 2022 Annual Report**

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# Kentucky

Spring 2023

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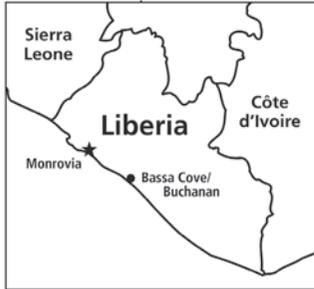
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# Beginning the Next Chapter

Last year we celebrated the 50th anniversary of Kentucky Humanities. For half a century Kentucky Humanities has been *Telling Kentucky's Story*. As the calendar turns to 2023, we enthusiastically embark on the next 50 years.

One of our favorite ways of sharing the stories of Kentucky, its people, history, and culture is with *Kentucky Humanities* magazine. This issue has a variety of stories we are excited to share with you.

Georgia Green Stamper has been a long-time friend and supporter of Kentucky Humanities as a member of our Speakers Bureau and a contributor to *Kentucky Humanities* magazine. As you may know from previous issues, she is an exquisite storyteller. On page 8, Linda LaPinta reviews Stamper's newest collection of personal essays, *Small Acreages*. *Small Acreages* was named to the Longlist (one of 10 titles) considered for the PEN/Diamonstein-Spielvogel Award for the Art of the Essay.

The American Colonization Society was founded in 1816. Beginning in 1820, many enslaved people in Kentucky were sent to Liberia. Susan Lindsey tells us more in her article, "From Bluegrass State to Africa: Kentucky and the Colonization Movement," on page 16.

In 1836, Kentucky native Richard Mentor Johnson was the Democratic nominee for vice-president on a ticket with Martin Van Buren. Johnson's wife, Julia Chinn, received national attention as part of a smear campaign against her husband. Dr. Marshall Myers tells the fascinating story of Julia Chinn on page 16.

Kentucky is blessed with an abundance of natural beauty. Cumberland Falls is certainly one of the most beautiful places in the state. On page 19 Terena Bell shares her poem "On Seeing Cumberland Falls."

Once upon a time tobacco was the king crop in Kentucky, tobacco farms littering the landscape of the Commonwealth. Late spring and summer often meant hours in the hot sun harvesting tobacco for many Kentuckians, including Ken Hixson. His story is on page 20.

Paducah native Brent Leggs is now the executive director of the African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund and National Trust for Historic Preservation senior vice president. His story is remarkable and his connection to home is strong. Linda LaPinta tells us about Leggs and his work on page 22.

Each March we observe Women's History Month. In celebration, Dr. James M. Gifford honors his grandmother with his article "In Praise of Appalachian Women." Read about the incredible Clara Moore Clark on page 26.

On page 29, Bobby Walter takes us back in time when people would gather in their homes around the television to enjoy live performances of classical music. What was once a common occurrence—orchestras performing on network television—is now of little interest to television executives.

And finally, Georgia Green Stamper shares with us one of her family traditions, Decoration Day, when families gathered to decorate the graves of deceased family members. Her story is on page 34.

I hope you enjoy this issue of *Kentucky Humanities* and that you will share it with your friends in print or online at [kyhumanities.org](http://kyhumanities.org). We want to hear your Kentucky stories as well. If you have a story to share, please contact our editor, Marianne Stoess, [Marianne.Stoess@uky.edu](mailto:Marianne.Stoess@uky.edu).



Bill Goodman

Executive Director  
*Kentucky Humanities*

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill Goodman" with a long, sweeping underline.

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## Four New Members Elected to Kentucky Humanities Board



**Sara Hemingway**



**Keith McCutchen**



**Lou Anna Red Corn**



**Wayne G. Yates**

Sara Hemingway, Keith McCutchen, Lou Anna Red Corn, and Wayne G. Yates were elected to the Kentucky Humanities Board of Directors at the October 2022 Board Meeting. They will each serve a three-year term, with a second three-year term optional. As members of the 23-person volunteer board, Hemingway, McCutchen, Red Corn, and Yates will help set council policies, award project grants to community organizations, and participate in fund-raising to help Kentucky Humanities meet the growing demand for its programs.

Sara Hemingway has served as the executive director of the Marilyn and William Young Charitable Foundation since 2004. Located in Owensboro, the Marilyn and William Young Charitable Foundation is a capacity-building resource designed for opening minds, supporting the development of new skills, and linking efforts to ensure economic opportunity, well-being, and prosperity for citizens. Hemingway is an active participant in the Owensboro community, serving as a founding board member of Impact 100 Owensboro, a founding member of RiverPark TBA (Tomorrow's Broadway Audience) Executive Board, president of the Junior League of Owensboro, and a volunteer for the St. Stephen Cathedral.

Pianist, composer, conductor, Keith McCutchen is an associate professor of music at Kentucky State University where he conducts the Jazz Ensemble, teaches music theory and history, and composition and piano. As director of the Kentucky State University Concert Choir, McCutchen completed two national tours including concerts in Washington D.C. and New York. McCutchen's compositions have been performed at the World Choir Games in Seoul South Korea, American Choral directors conferences throughout the United States, and have been recorded by the St. Olaf Choir and the American Spiritual Ensemble. As a jazz pianist, McCutchen has been a guest with numerous artists including Vocalist Mel Tormé, Diane Schuur, Saxophonist Stanley Turrentine.

McCutchen has also been a guest with two National Endowment of the Arts Jazz Masters; Bassist Richard Davis and Saxophonist, Jamey Aebersold. His CD, *Beginnings*, is available on iTunes.

Lou Anna Red Corn was appointed Fayette commonwealth's attorney in 2016 and was elected to a six-year term in 2018. As a member of the Osage Nation, Waxakoli District, Red Corn is the first Native American to serve in this position in the state of Kentucky. Her distinguished law career included roles as assistant commonwealth's attorney, Assistant Public Advocate for the Department of Public Advocacy in the Stanton field office, and Adjunct Law Professor at the University of Kentucky. She is an active member of the Lexington community, serving on the University of Kentucky College of Law Visiting Committee, the Rotary Club of the Bluegrass, the American Cancer Society, the Fayette County Bar Association Board of Governors, and the Paul Laurence Dunbar and Clay's Mill Elementary School PTSA's.

Wayne G. Yates is an administrator at the Adsmore Museum in Princeton, Kentucky. Originally built in 1857 and purchased by the Smith-Garrett family in 1900, the Adsmore Museum gives visitors an authentic and interactive opportunity to spend a day in the life of an early 1900s family living in western Kentucky. Prior to his work at the Adsmore Museum, Yates spent 20 years as a regional training coordinator for Eastern Kentucky University's University Training Consortium Department for Community Based Services. He has also worked as an adjunct instructor for Business Technology at Hopkinsville and Madisonville Community colleges, as well as an instructor at Daymar College/Owensboro Junior College of Business in Marion, Kentucky. Yates is an active community leader, serving as a board member for many organizations including the Caldwell County Long Term Recovery Group, the Princeton-Caldwell County Chamber of Commerce, the Caldwell County Free Clinic, and the Princeton Tourism Commission.



## The Smithsonian is Coming to the Commonwealth!

Does your town have a story of innovation or invention to tell?

*Spark! Places of Innovation* explores the unique combination of places, people, and circumstances that spark innovation and invention in rural communities. Inspired by an exhibition from the National Museum of American History, the exhibit features stories gathered from diverse communities across the nation. Photographs, engaging interactives, objects, videos, and augmented reality bring a multilayered experience to reveal the leaders, challenges, successes, and future of innovation in each town.

*Spark! Places of Innovation* will highlight innovation in rural America from the perspective of the people who lived it! Their words, images, and experiences gathered through an ambitious crowdsourcing initiative will be the heartbeat of the exhibition. Technical, social, cultural, artistic, or a combination of all of these—every innovation is as unique as each community. Explore the diversity, ingenuity, and tenacity of rural Americans in *Spark! Places of Innovation*.

*Spark! Places of Innovation* will be the springboard for diverse local programming in the humanities, sciences, and arts. Visitors will be inspired to learn how innovation has shaped their own communities and how they may be innovators themselves. Community members will come together in conversation about their past, present, and future.

### Exhibit Schedule

06/17/23 - 07/22/23 at the Boone County Public Library, Burlington

07/29/23 - 09/02/23 at the Bluegrass Heritage Museum, Winchester

09/09/23 - 10/14/23 at the Boyle County Public Library, Danville

10/21/23 - 11/25/23 at the Owensboro Museum of Science and History, Owensboro

12/02/23 - 01/13/24 at the Bath County Memorial Library, Owingsville

01/20/24 - 02/24/24 at the Gateway Regional Art Center, Mount Sterling

03/02/24 - 03/30/24 at the Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill, Harrodsburg



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"Humorous, perceptive, and poignant, Georgia Green Stamper's essays are perfectly crafted gems ..." —GWYN HYMAN RUBIO

# Small Acreages

NEW AND COLLECTED ESSAYS

Georgia Green Stamper



Reviewed by  
**Linda Elisabeth LaPinta**

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### About the Book

*Small Acreages* was named to the Longlist (one of 10 titles) considered for the PEN/Diamonstein-Spielvogel Award for the Art of the Essay.

Lexingtonian Georgia Green Stamper's latest collection of personal essays, *Small Acreages: New and Collected Essays*, is exquisite. Rarely has this reviewer read writing that captures character with such clarity, humor, and compassion, much less writing that so poignantly analyzes and apprehends the parallel disposition of place. Stamper's upbringing as an only child amidst numerous relatives on her family's farm in rural Natlee, Owen County, Kentucky, positioned her as a keen observer who sat smack in the center of a society that, for seven generations, cultivated the Commonwealth. Her subsequent experiences as a student of literature at Transylvania University, as a wife, as a mother of three, and as a grandmother of six broadened her understanding, as well as honed her ability to put into words, personal tales that elucidate larger truths. In capturing her people's past, and in telling the stories of historical figures with whom she is empathetic, Stamper illustrates her readers' heritage too.

Take "Cousin Mae and the Hudson-Jones Reunion," a laugh-out-loud account of Stamper's Grandfather George Hudson's snit over the renaming of the Hudson family reunion, a Labor Day weekend staple since 1932. According to George, the fault fell square at the feet of Cousin Mae, his wife's best friend. Of Silas Hudson, George's father, who died in 1907 and in

whose memory the event began, Stamper writes, "Although we've heard proud stories about his preaching and lawyering, in our opinion his sixteen children were his most remarkable accomplishments. With an admirable sense of fairness, he fathered eight with his first wife, Polina Abbott, and eight with his second, Zorelda White." That said, it seems Cousin Mae stood up at the inaugural reunion and proposed that the Hudson gathering be named the Hudson-Jones reunion to include the neighboring Jones family, many of whose members had married Hudson kin. The "polite divide" between the families manifested as shared shock that day. "Those named Jones, possibly embarrassed, said nothing," Stamper notes, adding, "those named Hudson, definitely irked, said nothing either." It seems both families succumbed to polite public acceptance of Cousin Mae's proposal, while George, at least, continued to fume. Stamper states, "After my grandfather's death, my mother took up his grudge, as any good Kentucky clanswoman would do.... And

so she would fret until the end of her life. By then, seventy-five years had passed since Cousin Mae thrust a hyphen onto Silas Hudson's descendants," and no one who attended the reunion any longer bore the surname of Hudson or Jones.

"On Mothering," another essay sure to make readers smile, begins, "After reading a parenting experts column in the newspaper that makes it sound so easy, followed by receiving phone calls from my daughters who make it sound so hard, I realize, in retrospect, that I was a mess of a mother. I plucked tacky, plastic Halloween costumes off the rack at Kmart for my children. Fed them inorganic anything. Dressed them in environmentally destructive polyester because it didn't need ironing. Well, it's a miracle my kids didn't turn out to be sociopaths."

The piece continues with descriptions of Stamper's daughters, the eldest of whose kindergarten teacher voiced alarm when the child drew stick figures sans anatomical parts. Stamper's second daughter depicted figures in admirable detail, yet unnerved adults in other ways. The author's third child grew up to be a Ph.D. in clinical psychology who could "spot a sociopath from a distance of fifty yards."

"Shepherds in Bathrobes" serves as a particularly touching tale about the "no-nonsense farmers, recruited from the Adult Men's Sunday School class," to read passages in an annual Methodist Church Christmas pageant when Stamper was a girl. In previous years, the shepherds' performance had been a "silent tableaux," but one year the pageant director surprised the men by assigning them written paragraphs to recite. When the second shepherd

stepped forward to read, only the word "The" emerged from his mouth. Stamper, states, "He looked at the floor. He cleared his throat. In an instant I understood. Shepherd Number Two could not read, at least not well."

"That's when the good thing happened," she writes. "Without a look passing between them, the other Shepherds began to read the lines for him, their tongues turned to silver, and then they seamlessly moved on to their own. The Wise Men joined in too."

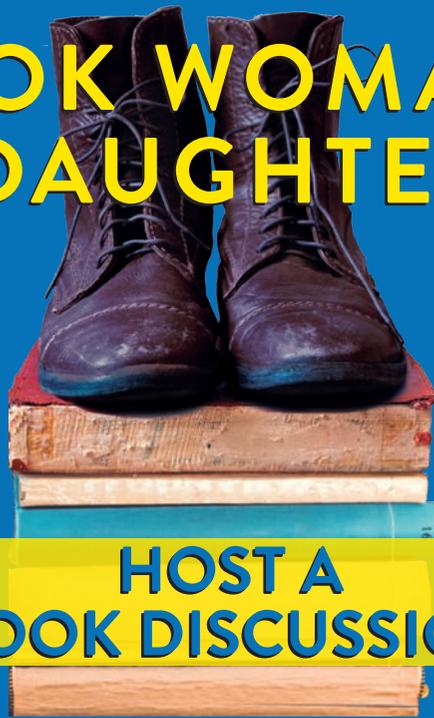
Other essays in *Small Acreages* speak of quilts as embodiments of security, of everyday heroes, and of average angels. Admirably and remarkably, though, Stamper's heartfelt sentiments wrought in beautifully crafted sentences refute sentimentality. Instead, they demonstrate how close observation through the lenses of love, wisdom, and humor can confront and defy—or embrace and accept—life's realities.

## About the Reviewer

Linda Elisabeth LaPinta is a Louisville-based writer and oral historian whose publications focus on writers, women's history, and social justice, often with Kentucky subjects. In addition to numerous book reviews and feature articles published in regional and national magazines and newspapers, under her maiden name, Beattie, LaPinta has published four books with the University Press of Kentucky. Her fifth book in press with the same publisher is *Kentucky Quilts and Quiltmakers: Three Centuries of Creativity, Community, and Commerce*.



# The BOOK WOMAN'S DAUGHTER *a novel*



By

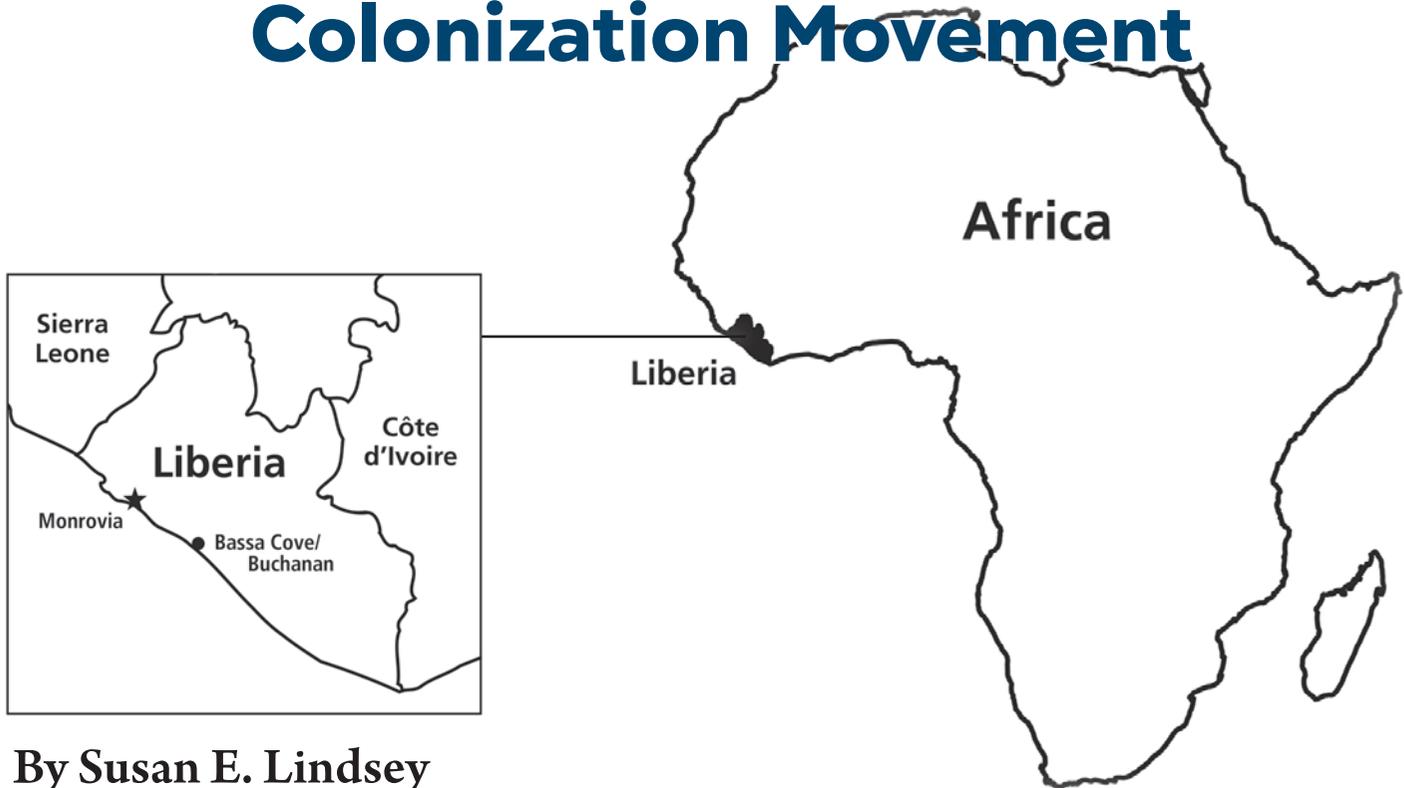
KIM MICHELE  
RICHARDSON



HOST A  
BOOK DISCUSSION



# From the Bluegrass State to Africa: Kentucky and the Colonization Movement



By Susan E. Lindsey

**G**. W. McElroy, an agent for the New York Colonization Society, stood on the Staten Island wharf and watched the *Luna*'s crew weigh anchor and set sail for Liberia, on Africa's west coast.

That hot summer day in July 1836 marked a new beginning for the Black people on the ship, including many from McElroy's native state of Kentucky: single father Tolbert Major and his two little boys; Tolbert's brother Austin, also a single parent, and his three small children; their 32-year-old widowed neighbor Agnes Harlan and her seven children; and a woman named Tyloa Harlan. All of them had been recently emancipated from slavery on plantations near Hopkinsville. Rachael and Robert Buchner, other formerly enslaved Kentuckians, had boarded with their seven children. Also on board the *Luna* was the Haynes family—John, a free Black man from Nicholasville; his wife, Mary; and their four children.<sup>1</sup>

Agent McElroy had once supported the abolitionist cause, but had become frustrated with the lack of progress and turned to colonization, the movement to resettle free black people outside the United States.<sup>2</sup> He had signed on as an agent for the New York Colonization Society and headed to Kentucky to secure passengers for the society's next departing ship. After months of hard work and planning, McElroy finally obtained freedom and a chance to migrate for 56 people from Kentucky and northern Tennessee. In early summer, McElroy and his charges set off from southwestern Kentucky and traveled along the Cumberland River to the Ohio River, then on to Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, New York City, and finally Staten Island.

Now McElroy watched as the *Luna*'s crew unfurled thousands of yards of canvas. The sails snapped and popped in the wind. Soon the brig skimmed a smooth path across the bay and out to sea, carrying its passengers to new lives.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Names of the Major and Harlan emigrants from the Major Collection of Letters from Africa, McLean County Museum of History, Bloomington, IL. Other emigrant names are from a letter to the editor of the *Commercial Advertiser*, signed "B.," July 8, 1836, and "Brig *Luna*'s Company, Arrived at Bassa Cove, August 1836," *Senate of the United States, Second Session of the Twenty-Eighth Congress*, Vol. 9, no. 150 (Washington, DC: Gales and Seaton, 1845), 269–271.

<sup>2</sup> Background information from letters to the *Commercial Advertiser*, June 27, 1835; October 5, 1835 (republished in the *New York Spectator*, December 31, 1835); and July 21, 1836.

<sup>3</sup> Letter to the editor from G. W. McElroy, *Pittsburgh Gazette*, June 10, 1836; and the *Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Young Men's Colonization Society of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Colonization Society, 1837), 19–20.

## The National Colonization Movement

In the last days of 1816, a group of white men met in Washington, D.C., and founded the American Colonization Society. Their stated purpose was “to promote and execute a plan for colonizing (with their consent) the free people of color residing in our country, in Africa, or such other places as Congress shall deem most expedient.”<sup>4</sup> The first ship of settlers, the *Elizabeth*, sailed for Liberia in January 1820.

The group was a private organization—never a government agency—and was funded by membership dues, subscriptions to publications, donations, and a one-time grant from the U.S. government to resettle people rescued from slave ships.

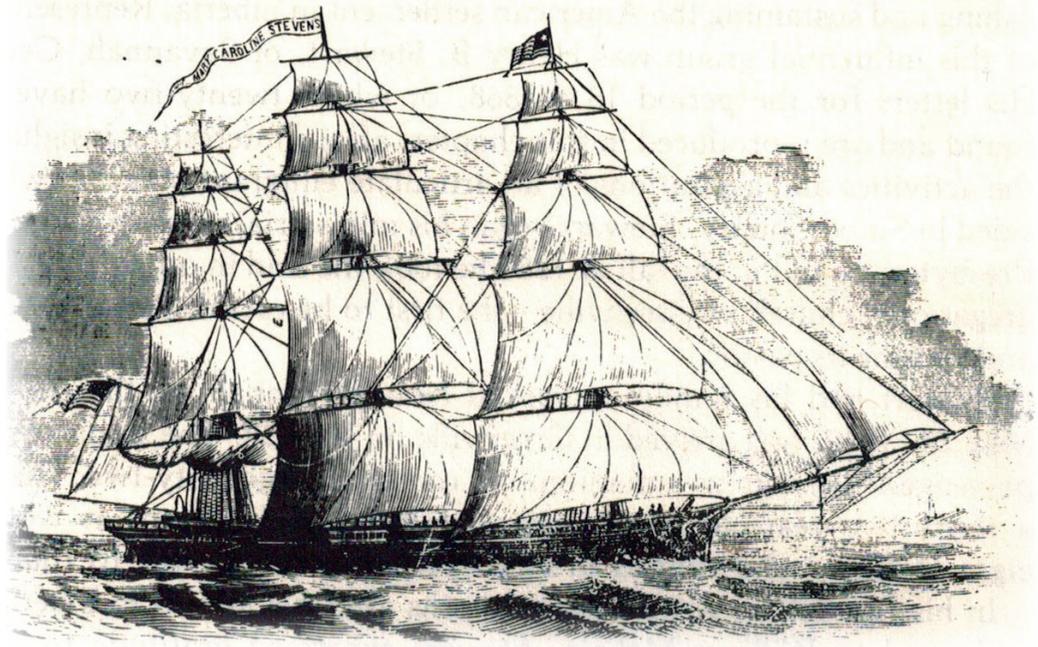
Colonization society founders proved the adage that politics makes strange bedfellows. Some were philanthropists, clergymen, and abolitionists who supported colonization out of the best intentions. They believed that Black people would be safer and have better opportunities in Africa than they did in the United States.

Other founders were slave owners; this group supported colonization primarily because of racism and a deep-seated fear of Black people. Some slave owners used colonization to rid themselves of enslaved people who were difficult to control or those who had reached the end of their most productive years. Some even sent their own children of mixed ethnicity to Africa.

Other colonizationists felt that such a colony would help “civilize” Africans and convert them to Christianity. Some felt that colonization might redress the sin of slavery and assuage white guilt over having enslaved generations of Africans. Others believed that if formerly enslaved people settled on the African coast, they could help interrupt the slave trade.

Organizers skirted the issues of slavery and its abolition. Henry Clay, Kentucky’s Great Compromiser, chaired the inaugural meeting. He stated, “It was not proposed to deliberate upon or consider at all, any question of emancipation, or that which was connected with the abolition of slavery.”<sup>5</sup>

In a speech to the House of Representatives on January 20, 1827, Clay made clear that his motivation in supporting



colonization was to rid the country of free Black people: “Of all classes of our population, the most vicious is that of the free colored. . . . Contaminated themselves, they extend their vices to all around them, to the slaves and to the whites.”<sup>6</sup>

Clay became president of the American Colonization Society in 1836 and served in that capacity until 1849.<sup>7</sup>

Many white women also supported colonization. Although only about 10 percent of all slave owners were women, 21 percent of slave owners who emancipated and colonized enslaved people were female. Women were also more likely to engage in multiple acts of manumission and typically freed a greater proportion of their enslaved people.<sup>8</sup> These women sometimes made public statements in support of colonization, organized auxiliary colonization societies, and raised funds to start schools in Liberia.

The Black community had mixed reactions to the idea of colonization. Some enslaved and freeborn black people supported it and held a romanticized notion of returning to the land of their ancestors. Many more Black people were skeptical of the society’s motives, repelled by the notion of colonization, and reluctant to leave family, friends, and all that was familiar.

Moving to Liberia was risky. On average, malaria killed one of every five settlers within their first year in the country.<sup>9</sup> They also risked contracting tuberculosis, dysentery, leprosy, typhoid fever, hepatitis, and countless other diseases. They faced danger from leopards, baboons, crocodiles, snakes, drought, dust storms, and tropical heat and humidity.

<sup>4</sup> American Colonization Society, “The Constitution of the American Society for Colonizing the Free People of Colour of the United States,” Library of Congress digital archives. (Hereinafter referred to as the American Colonization Society Constitution.)

<sup>5</sup> Henry Noble Sherwood, “The Formation of the American Colonization Society,” *Journal of Negro History* 2, no. 3 (July 1917).

<sup>6</sup> Henry Clay, *The Life and Speeches of Henry Clay: Vol. I* (New York: Greeley & McElrath, 1843), 282.

<sup>7</sup> Sherwood, “Formation of the American Colonization Society.”

<sup>8</sup> Eric Burin, *Slavery and the Peculiar Solution: A History of the American Colonization Society* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), 49–50, 52.

<sup>9</sup> Claude Clegg, *The Price of Liberty: African Americans and the Making of Liberia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 68, 69, 160, 230.

In 1833, William Dudley of Kentucky sent seven of his emancipated people to Liberia aboard the *American*. Six of the seven died within a year, five from whooping cough and the sixth from an unknown cause.<sup>10</sup> In 1836, within four months of the *Luna's* arrival, Lewis Harlan (Agnes Harlan's oldest child), six of the nine Buchners, and several other *Luna* passengers had died of malaria.<sup>11</sup>

However, people in the United States of the 1830s faced many of the same threats. Malaria was common in the southern states, and tuberculosis, yellow fever, typhoid, measles, and cholera took countless lives each year. Women born between 1800 and 1819 in the south-central United States had a life expectancy of only 33 years. Mothers and fathers made the sad but often accurate assumption that half their offspring would not survive childhood.<sup>12</sup>

Prospective emigrants may not have been aware of the risks of life in Liberia, but they had other reasons to oppose colonization. Some believed it undercut attempts at reform within the United States and distracted from the struggle for freedom. Others felt that they shouldn't have to leave the country of their birth, particularly since many of them had fought alongside white men during the American Revolution and the War of 1812.

Throughout its history, the American Colonization Society emphasized voluntary emigration and did not forcibly deport or exile individuals. The phrase "with their consent" is part of the organization's founding documents. However, many slave owners and some state and local governments *did* make emancipation conditional on emigration.<sup>13</sup>

By the time the American Colonization Society finally ceased operations in 1913, about 16,000 Black Americans, most of them

formerly enslaved, had migrated to Liberia. Forty-five percent were female, and many of them were widows or single mothers with small children. At the time, it was the largest out-migration in U.S. history.<sup>14</sup>

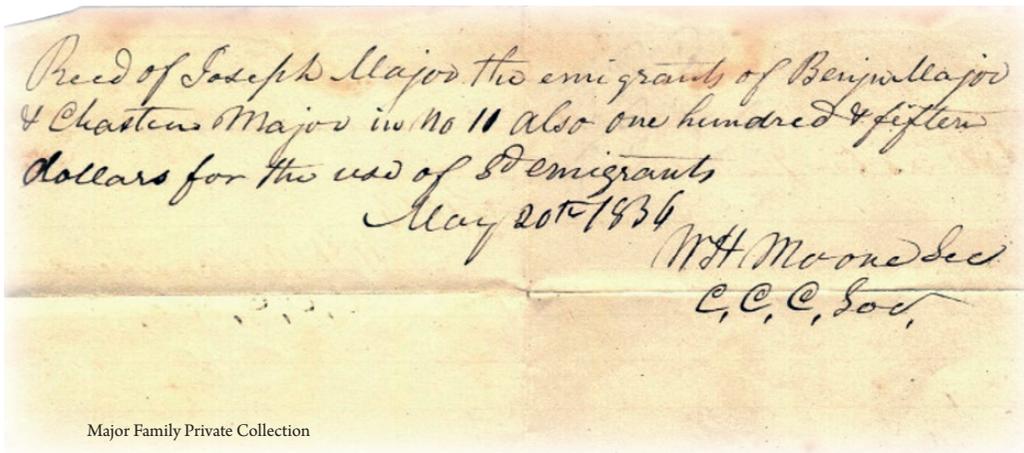
## The Colonization Movement in Kentucky

From 1810 to 1860, enslaved people comprised between 20 and 24 percent of Kentucky's population. Most of them lived in the Bluegrass Region around Lexington, in the Louisville area, and in southwestern Kentucky.<sup>15</sup>

White Kentuckians were divided over slavery. Many supported schemes for gradual emancipation, often with the stipulation that the formerly enslaved people leave the state. They feared that free Black people would encourage slaves to revolt or compete with white people for jobs. Some supported abolition, and a statewide abolition society had been founded in 1808. Many, particularly those growing tobacco or hemp, relied on slave labor and had no interest in seeing it end. Very few white people, even zealous abolitionists, supported equal rights for Black people. Most of the white population of the South (and many in the North) believed that it was impossible for them to peacefully live side by side with free Black people.

A Cincinnati newspaper reported on a convention held in May 1835 in Shelbyville. One of the resolutions from the meeting read, in part, "Any scheme of emancipation that will leave the blacks within our borders is more to be deprecated than slavery itself."<sup>16</sup>

Kentucky eventually had 31 colonization societies (exceeded only by Virginia, which had 34, and Ohio, which had 33). These included the state-level Kentucky Colonization Society founded



**This small piece of paper is a receipt for human beings, the former slaves of Ben Major and his brother Chastine. It was issued to Joseph Major, another of Ben's brothers, by the Christian County Colonization Society: Recd of Joseph Major the emigrants of Benjm Major and Chastine Major in no 11 also one hundred & fifteen dollars for the use of sd emigrants.**

Major Family Private Collection

<sup>10</sup> Tom W. Shick, "Emigrants to Liberia, 1820–1843: An Alphabetical Listing. Liberian Studies Research Working Paper No. 2." University of Delaware, 1971.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Clayne L. Pope, "Adult Mortality in America before 1900: A View from Family Histories," in *Strategic Factors in Nineteenth Century American Economic History*, Claudia Goldin and Hugh Rockoff, editors (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 286.

<sup>13</sup> American Colonization Society Constitution.

<sup>14</sup> Bell Wiley, ed., *Slaves No More: Letters from Liberia* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1980), 3; Clegg, *Price of Liberty*, 6, 266.

<sup>15</sup> John E. Kleber, ed. *Kentucky Encyclopedia* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1992), entry by Bruce K. Johnson, 280; Lowell L. Harrison, *The Antislavery Movement in Kentucky* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1978), 2.

<sup>16</sup> "Gradual Emancipation in Kentucky," *African Repository* 11, no. 8 (August 1835): 256.

in Frankfort in 1829, as well as societies in Louisville, Lexington, Versailles, New Castle, Nicholasville, Danville, Russellville, Hopkinsville, Maysville, and elsewhere.

Colonization agents traveled the state to speak with slave owners and potential emigrants. Those people interested in migrating were instructed to arrive in Louisville on a specific date; they then traveled downriver to New Orleans for departure to Liberia. (The Majors, Harlans, and others working with colonization societies from other states may have departed from Charleston, New York, Newark, or other ports.) Coordinating the emancipations and travel to Louisville and scheduling the ships' departures was no easy task. It was also not cheap. The cost of colonization included fees for passage and six months of temporary housing, supplies, and medical care after arrival. The national society also had to purchase land from indigenous people, erect buildings, maintain agents in Liberia to help distribute provisions, and sometimes even finance defense against attacks from indigenous people.

Those who wished to emancipate enslaved people for migration had to first gather information about colonization and Liberia, write to one of the colonization societies, coordinate emancipations with other slave owners so families could stay together, secure funds for passage and supplies, sometimes persuade enslaved people to emigrate, and move the emigrants to the port of departure. On occasion, they had to go to court to fight local emancipation restrictions.<sup>17</sup>

There was strong interest in colonization in the early years of the Kentucky Colonization Society. In 1833, the ship *American* carried 122 Kentuckians to Liberia. The *Saluda* transported 53 from the Commonwealth in 1840, and the *Barque Union* took 20 in 1841. The *Luna*, which sailed in 1836, carried 28 Kentuckians, but their voyage was coordinated by the New York Colonization Society, rather than the Kentucky affiliate. On the roll of emigrants through 1843, only 16 of the 188 who came from Kentucky were listed as having been freeborn; most were emancipated slaves.<sup>18</sup>

Interest waned for a few years until Rev. Alexander Cowan was appointed Kentucky Colonization Society agent in 1844.<sup>19</sup> In an attempt to drum up renewed interest in colonization from Kentuckians, Cowan decided to call a new settlement "Kentucky

Bafa Leone Western Africa  
Sept. 1858  
Dear Sir. We have all landed on the shores of Africa. & got into our houses. We have been here 3 weeks. So far I am well pleased & so far to my master in Illinois. Remember me affectionately to him. That none of us have been taken with the fever yet. We have a prospect of war with the natives. I hope it will be settled without bloodshed. To South Major & his family I want my love & compliments. It rains here almost every day more or less. When the rain is over we can out to our garden as the soil is sandy. We don't get our farms laid out yet. Each of us will get 10 acres. which will be ours when we clear 2 for every 10. that is 8 acres. we have a Sunday school here 3 missionary white men 2 baptist & a Methodist. as it respects living here it is altogether different to that in America here we have Palm oil & vice. sweet potatoes plantain. & Banana.

**Shortly after arriving in Liberia, Tolbert Major wrote a letter to his former owner: Dear Sir, We have all landed on the shores of Africa and got into our houses. We have been here three weeks. . . . none of us have been taken with the fever yet. We have a prospect of war with the natives. I hope it will be settled without bloodshed . . .**

in Liberia" and name its major town Clay-Ashland in honor of Henry Clay and his home. A 40-square-mile tract of land was purchased, and the settlement was established in 1845.

From 1853 to 1858, emigration from Kentucky increased. During that time, 347 freeborn and emancipated black people migrated to Liberia, according to annual reports of the American Colonization Society.

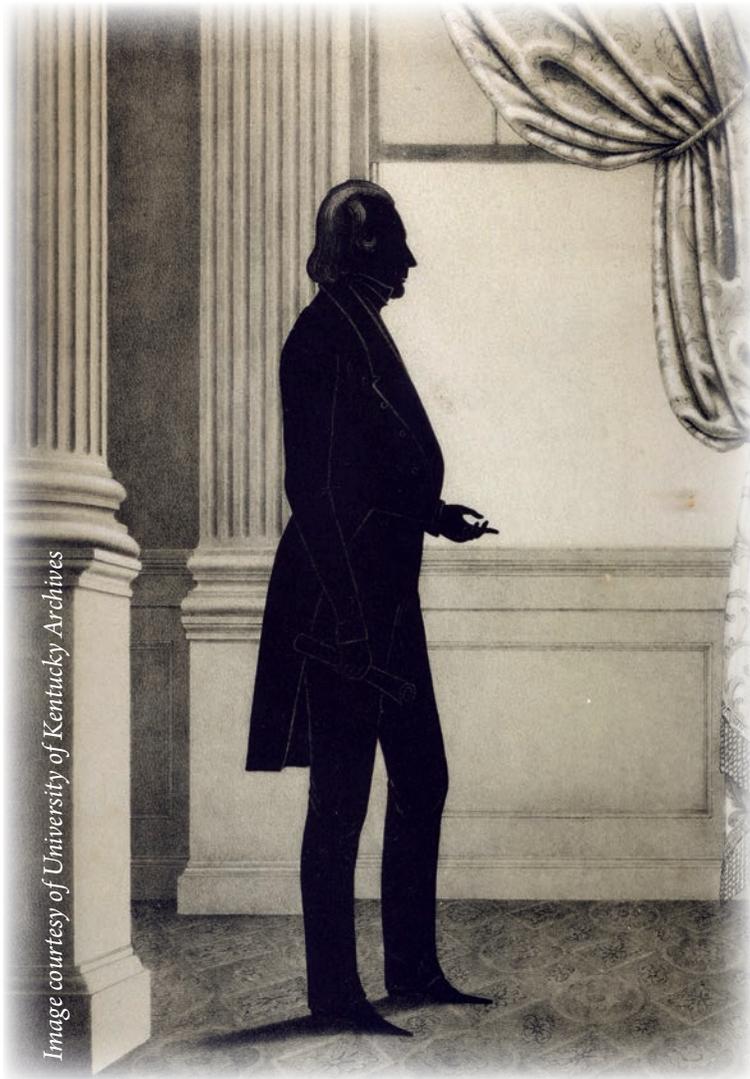
The Kentucky Colonization Society ceased operations in 1859. It had lasted 36 years. During that time, the society sent between 658 and 675 freeborn and newly emancipated black people to Liberia.<sup>20</sup> Kentuckians who freed people for

<sup>17</sup> Burin, *Slavery and the Peculiar Solution*, 105, 110.

<sup>18</sup> Shick, "Emigrants to Liberia."

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> The total number of emigrants from Kentucky is higher. Some Kentucky slave owners chose to work with colonization societies outside the commonwealth, so Kentuckians who migrated through those societies are not represented in this number. In addition, the roll of emigrants has some inaccuracies. The state of origin listed for several of the *Luna's* passengers is incorrect. The Majors, Harlans, and Buchner families are all listed as being from Virginia and the Haynes family from Georgia, but they were all from Kentucky according to other documentation. See Shick, "Emigrants to Liberia."



made colonization on a wide scale impractical. In 1854, he said, “If all earthly power were given me, I should not know what to do as to the existing institution [of slavery]. My first impulse would be to free all the slaves and send them to Liberia—to their own native land. But a moment’s reflection would convince me that . . . in the long run, its sudden execution is impossible.”<sup>22</sup>

## Conclusion

The motives of colonizationists and viewpoints about colonization change as they are viewed through various perspectives—Black and white, proslavery and antislavery, American and Liberian—and at various times—from four decades before the Civil War, through the war, during Reconstruction, and in modern times.

Did formerly enslaved people voluntarily go to Liberia or were they deported or exiled? Were the settlers immigrants or invaders? Was the American Colonization Society racist, patronizing, paternalistic, proslavery, and manipulative? Or was it abolitionist, antislavery, well intentioned, and humanitarian? A case could be made for any of these positions, for all of these positions.

“Colonization, then, was an amalgam of humanitarianism, racism, commercialism, missionary purpose, and even diluted abolitionism,” historian Randall Miller wrote. “However impractical it appears in retrospect, it was not a wild visionary scheme. Short of war, there was no other means of ending slavery in the South.”<sup>23</sup>

The colonization movement did have some successes. It secured emancipation for several thousand enslaved people who may never have been freed had that option not existed. It started to shift white viewpoints about the capabilities of Black people as the Liberian settlers began to govern themselves, found businesses, churches, and schools, and build a nation. Finally, efforts of the Liberian settlers helped end the slave trade along the Liberian coast, and in this way, formerly enslaved people saved thousands of others from lives of bondage.

## About the Author

Susan E. Lindsey is the author of *Liberty Brought Us Here: The True Story of American Slaves Who Migrated to Liberia* (University Press of Kentucky, 2020), which tells the story of the Major and Harlan emigrants. Portions of this article were first published in her book. A long-time resident of Louisville, Kentucky, Lindsey now lives in Portugal. She can be reached via her website, [SusanELindsey.com](http://SusanELindsey.com).

**Henry Clay, Kentucky’s Great Compromiser, chaired the inaugural meeting of the American Colonization Society. He became president of the society in 1836 and served in that capacity until 1849.<sup>24</sup>**

colonization included Ben Major of Christian County, the man who had freed Tolbert and Austin Major and their children, as well as his neighbor, George Harlan, who had freed Agnes Harlan and her children.

Abraham Lincoln, arguably Kentucky’s most famous native, supported colonization, but his motives for doing so have long been debated by historians.<sup>21</sup> Although Lincoln detested slavery, he also thought that Black and white people could not live together peacefully. He supported gradual emancipation and voluntary colonization but also understood that cost, distance, and logistics

<sup>21</sup> For two in-depth discussions of Lincoln’s motivations, see Phillip W. Magness, “Abraham Lincoln and Colonization,” Essential Civil War Curriculum website, February 2016, and Phillip Shaw Paludan, “Lincoln and Colonization: Policy or Propaganda,” *Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association*, Vol. 25, No. 1, 2004.

<sup>22</sup> Abraham Lincoln, Speech on the Kansas-Nebraska Act, Peoria, Illinois, October 16, 1854.

<sup>23</sup> Randall M. Miller, *Dear Master: Letters of a Slave Family* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978), 28–29.

<sup>24</sup> Sherwood, “Formation of the American Colonization Society.”



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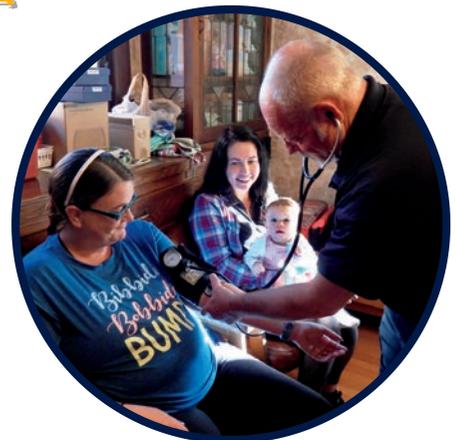
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# The Vice President from Kentucky and His Mistress



**By Dr. Marshall Myers**

**S**he managed his plantation with such organization that she baffled the neighbors with her skill. She handled her owner's money, assigned various jobs to the enslaved people who worked in the home, and ran the plantation in his absence, including paying salaries and acting as a physician to the Choctaw Indian Academy on the grounds. That included managing the sometimes-difficult students and paying the school's faculty.

She acted under the authority of her husband to take care of his plantation that grew hemp, corn, and livestock. To that end, she handled all the decisions that were entrusted to her by her husband, and kept him aware by letters of the many activities at the plantation. When he was there, she played the piano to help him relax in his hectic world. He listened intently as she played intricate pieces with the skill normally reserved for the accomplished.

Her portrait marks her as delicate, and unassuming, with just enough curl in her black hair to make her interesting. Her eyes showed a kind of innocence and yet also a touch of sophistication. Her light skin, like her in-laws, had the touch of youthful smoothness about it.

She amazed others by hosting a barbecue for the famed French soldier and American hero, Lafayette. He was served a sumptuous meal on silver trays with various kinds of cheeses and hors d'oeuvres. Those who attended were from the mighty and lowly of the community, but all were hosted by beautiful young women in fine and colorful dresses with hoops in gala fashion.

She faithfully attended Great Crossings Baptist Church, built on land donated by her husband's family. She, a regular attender, probably went more often than her spouse. "Married" to an important landowner, she made her care and concern a part of her character.

In all, she ran the events at the Native American school, the plantation itself, and all the Academy on the property.

Her name was Julia Chinn and she was truly an amazing woman.

Yet Julia Chinn became the object of a national political smear campaign of 1835-36, indeed a vicious one that had much to do with her husband's future. The State of Virginia, for instance, clogged up the Electoral College because of her, leaving it up to the Senate to confirm the vice-presidential nominee.

One popular cartoon of 1836 shows Richard Johnson, the object of their scorn, along with his two daughters, looking at his dead wife's picture and bemoaning his children's fate. The political graphic appears with a radical abolitionist and a black man who both swear allegiance to Johnson's cause. While the script is largely inaccurate, it substantially influenced Johnson's vice-presidential bid, bleeding over unto the campaign of Martin Van Buren, his running mate for president.

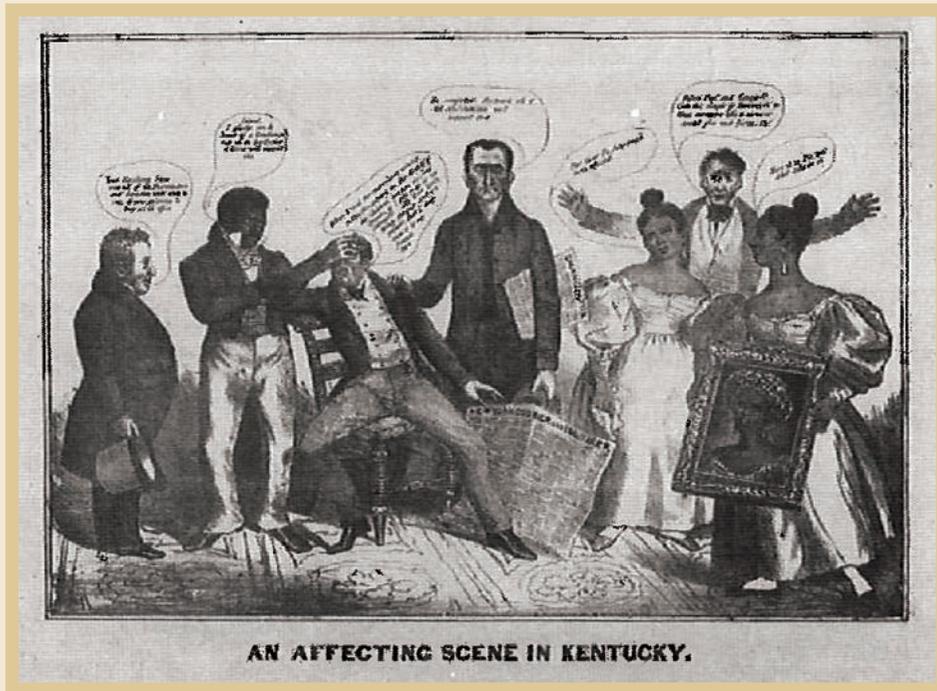
What was so wrong with Julia Chinn? Shouldn't she be a beacon to all women whose husbands were in national politics?

Julia Chinn was one-eighth black.

In the language of the day, she was an "octoroon." Although inaccurate, she was also an inferior breed of human beings, they thought. Because of her Black blood, according to Kentucky law she was potentially an enslaved person. Julia did have a Black great grandparent, and to much of the world, then, she was a slave.

Even though many white slaveowners in the South had their own "concubines," most at least kept their "discretions" secret. Richard Johnson, her "master" at Blue Spring Plantation didn't.

Such information even in that day was "political poison." Probably her mother was the product of the union with Richard Chinn, Henry Clay's law partner, an important white citizen of nearby Lexington. Her mother was not necessarily a willing participant.



A part of the smear campaign against vice-presidential-hopeful Richard Mentor Johnson, this cartoon was published in 1836 depicting Johnson and his two daughters looking at his deceased wife's portrait.

Julia Chinn was born at the Blue Springs, the Georgetown plantation: some say in 1790; others put the year, based her on the birth of her daughter, Imogene, about 1796 or 1797. Julia and Richard Johnson then began their sexual relationship about 1811 when Julia was about 15 or 16.

But by Kentucky law, Julia's lover was not obligated to treat his daughter any differently than the other enslaved people. In fact, he did not even have to acknowledge himself as the father, nor was he required to treat her with any kind of favor.

Johnson, however, did give her his last name and insisted that his daughter be literate. In truth, though, Julia, Imogene, and the other daughter, Adaline, born later, were quite privileged with work-time spent cooking, cleaning, and making fine long dresses, not the cheap linsey-woolsey dresses other enslaved women wore. The three worked in the house, rather than laboring in the fields with the other enslaved people, who were a bit envious of her clothes and her so-called "equality" with whites. After all, she was just a slave, they reasoned.

Richard Johnson tried to gain her acceptance of the Washington, D.C. social circuit, but he had little success. He, himself, was a handsome, attractive, well-built man who punctuated his good looks with a brightly covered scarf tied around his neck. He walked with a slight limp, the product, perhaps of his war days, particularly at the Battle of Thames in the War of 1812, where he reputedly slayed Shawnee chief Tecumseh.

Johnson, a war hero, then balanced the Van Buren-Johnson ticket since Johnson soon became the champion of the common man. In politics, Johnson was a liberal Democrat who was against

pauper's prisons and offered broad support for women's issues. In a word, Johnson was a "progressive" out of time. In fact, some speculate that his relationship with Julia was part of his politics of "amalgamation" of the races he so often advocated.

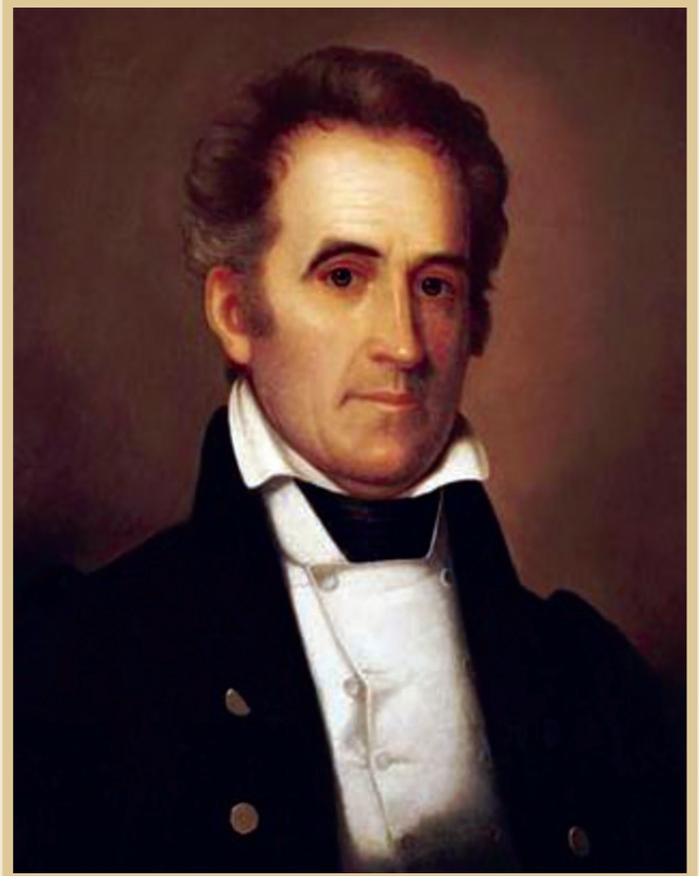
Great Crossings Baptist Church is still actively promoting the faith it has long represented, although the section for the enslaved is not there. In the southwest corner, just above the section for the enslaved was the pew where Julia Child and her husband sat.

The church probably doesn't have the open authority to discipline its members as it had then. But the church building itself was a scant two miles from the Blue Spring Plantation where most of her fellow enslaved people resided in crude cabins for as many as three families each. The structures had fireplaces with pots and pans, and little or no accoutrements so often a part of white homes.

Amid the squalor of the cabins, slavery even in this gentle form, was something that few today can look back on with longing and nostalgia.

Being enslaved was a tough life, with the burden often more on the slaves who lived a short lifespan of about 30 years. Enslaved people existed on what they could hunt on Sundays (possums, racoons, and fish), and several handfuls of ground corn, with a slice of fatty pork. Their future, with the hope they sometimes had, resided in churches like Great Crossings.

Was Richard Johnson a white man who ignored his own mother's wishes, and clung to a young enslaved girl with no legal rights? Julia Chinn essentially became the "Mistress of Blue Spring Plantation." In point of fact, Johnson never freed her, telling people that it would not be "appropriate." Perhaps, he



Portrait by Rembrandt Peale

Richard Mentor Johnson was the ninth vice president of the United States, serving from 1837 to 1841 under President Martin Van Buren.

thought he would lose her if she had a choice?

She died young, probably in her 30s amid a cholera epidemic, nursing patients and Native Americans on the plantation.

After Julia Chinn's death, Johnson wasted away, shuffling along amid confusion and doubt. Yet before he passed away he took another enslaved girl as his mistress.

Did he truly grieve Julia's untimely death?

Or was he just another white slave owner in Kentucky who followed the law?

## About the Author

Retired in 2012, Dr. Marshall Myers was coordinator of composition and full professor at Eastern Kentucky University in the department of English. He has published more than 300 articles, scholarly pieces, poems, and short stories. Dr. Myers has authored two books on the Civil War in Kentucky: *Great Civil War Stories of Kentucky* and *Neither Blue Nor Gray*. His book, *Only in Old Kentucky: Historic True Tales of Cultural Ingenuity*, continues the theme of early Kentuckians "making do" in their circumstances. Raised in rural Meade County, Dr. Myers received a B.A. in English from Kentucky Wesleyan College, an M.A. in English from Eastern Kentucky University, and a Ph.D. from the University of Louisville.



Photo by Dr. Monica Udvandy

Established in 1825, the Choctaw Indian Academy, located in Scott County, was the first federally controlled residential/boarding school for Native Americans in U.S. history.

# On Seeing Cumberland Falls

By Terena Elizabeth Bell

When in rare silent mood I see gallons overflow,  
I witness God in His splendor:

white frothy waves regenerating eternal —  
too far to touch, too close to breathe.

Manmade lakes hail west Kentucky's glory, yet fail  
in surpassing nature's own creativity:

Barkley is flat, but the Cumberland —  
God rise.

## About the Author

Terena Elizabeth Bell is a writer. Her debut short fiction collection, *Tell Me What You See* (Whiskey Tit), published December 2022. Bell's work has appeared in more than 100 publications, including *The Atlantic*, *Playboy*, *Yale Review*, *Smithsonian*, and *The Offing*. A Sinking Fork, Kentucky native, she is a graduate of Governor's School for the Arts.



# Tobacco Memories

By Kenneth R. Hixson

**G**eorgia Green Stamper’s article in the Fall 2021 issue of *Kentucky Humanities*, entitled “A Tobacco Kind of Christmas,” is an interesting and entertaining look at the final stages of displaying and selling a product—THE product, tobacco—once so economically important and so closely identified with the Bluegrass state.

Personally, my family—families—were also an integral if small part of the production. My mother’s aunts, uncles, and cousins plied their agricultural talents at their Bourbon County farms, while my father’s father was deeply involved in raising crops in central Kentucky from the mid-1920s until his death 40 years later. This Fleming County native had early-on relocated to Fayette County; where he lived and raised crops and cattle on an edge-of-town farm, until it was sold and subdivided shortly after World War II.

From there, he took his tobacco raising know-how to a large horse farm with an annual tobacco allotment in excess of 20 acres. And my father, although gainfully employed elsewhere, was also there when possible, providing both crop attention and upkeep of the equipment.

When I reached my early teens, it was a given that I, too, would be involved. Not unlike many my age, I began in the late spring by pulling early growth plants from their light-weight canvas covered beds. The next chore was to ride along-side one other field hand on a low-level “setter,” from which we transplanted

the young plants into the recently plowed field rows. Shortly thereafter I was charged with driving our cultivator-equipped tractor down those rows; destroying weeds and loosening the soil around the plant stalks to accelerate their growth.

And sometime—usually in July—I helped with topping or removing the blooms by hand from the now shoulder-high plants, thus hastening their ripening prior to the harvesting or cutting scheduled to take place shortly thereafter.

Tobacco cutting was a physical chore: not a pleasant one for someone unaccustomed to all day, outside work, or with physical or medical concerns. And it could also be most uncomfortable to those affected by hay fever, brought on by the seemingly ever-close-by ragweed. But cutting was also a rural *sport*, which tended to somewhat offset the disadvantages. It wasn’t quite like an urban activity such as tennis or baseball, but often as competitive. It involved jamming a circa 52-inch-long hardwood stick into the ground at a slightly forward angle, then placing an 8-9-inch-long metal spear atop. Next, slicing off a burley stalk at near-ground level with a lightweight, thin blade hatchet—or “knife”—elevating the stalk horizontally above the spear, and forcing it downward. Finally, repeating the process with four or five additional punctured stalks to complete and support the stick vertically. It was hard, somewhat dangerous work, but I enjoyed it, often competing to out-distance others plying their skills similarly in rows alongside me. And, of course, afterwards

## Tobacco harvesting tools:

1. A knife is used to cut the tobacco plants at the base; 2. A metal spear is placed atop a wooden stick and tobacco plants are punctured with the speak and then stacked on top of one another to fill the stick; 3. Once the wooden stick is laden with tobacco plants, it is hung in a barn for curing; 4.-7. Hay fever was often a side effect of harvesting tobacco. Workers often implored the use of nasal filters while working in the tobacco fields.



relating—and often exaggerating—the quantity of sticks so cut. After this cutting process, the loaded sticks were usually left standing overnight before being collected and piled, in wait of a flatbed vehicle to transport them to the barn in which the crop was to be housed for curing.

And when not in the field actually cutting, piling, or loading, I worked in the barn. While perhaps not as strenuous as the cutting process, housing was nevertheless a hot, difficult, and somewhat dangerous task. The arriving loaded sticks were selected individually, then handed upward to a receiver standing precariously above on a pair of 14-foot-long, 4-inch-wide wide horizontal rails spaced some 42 feet apart. He in turn passed them to one or more receivers standing on the tier, or level above his own.

This passing continued until the highest pairs of rails were reached, the sticks positioned, and the stalks spread evenly so as to best hang freely. As the top-rail hangers obviously had to handle only a portion of the vehicle's total load, it was the position many—including myself—literally clambered to occupy.

Barn curing was a rather slow process. The recently housed, somewhat ripened but yet moist and still mostly green-in-color tobacco would not be ready for further processing for several more weeks. To accelerate the curing, the approximate 2-foot-wide, full-height side doors on those barns so equipped were opened daily during dry weather. Charcoal—and later propane-fired stoves—were also sometimes positioned inside the barn on the ground level, their hot exhausts drifting upward, furthering the curing process. When curing was determined to be sufficient—and the tobacco then became pliable, or *in case*, thanks to

dampening weather, the loaded sticks were carefully removed from the rails by a reverse handling process not unlike that of having “hung” them in the barn initially. As this took place during the late fall months, those of us of school-age were, of course, usually gone during the day and often only nominally involved in the late afternoons and on weekends.

This same, often limited involvement existed also in the final phase of crop processing, or stripping. It occurred after the now-cured tobacco was moved to a single-level “stripping room,” usually attached to the curing barn. Here, over work benches, the stalks were removed from the wooden stick, the leaves stripped from the stalks and then tied into roughly 2-inch diameter “hands” or groupings of leaves of like texture and color. These now-graded products were placed once more onto a stick and their flared leaf tails compressed to conserve space and facilitate handling, ready now to be trucked to an auction warehouse and sold as described in Georgia Green Stamper’s earlier article.

Tobacco today is still grown, harvested, and processed in the Bluegrass state in a manner not too unlike that described herein. But its position as the once-vital Kentucky agricultural product is now—and somewhat sadly—relegated to history.

And along with it, many teenage memories.

## About the Author

Ken Hixson is a Lexington, Kentucky, native and a graduate of Henry Clay High School and the University of Kentucky. His tobacco-growing experiences were mostly working with his grandfather on Fayette County’s Spendthrift Farm. He lives in Lexington and is a former Kentucky Humanities board member.



# Paducah Native Re-Configures Preservation for the 21st Century



By Linda Elisabeth LaPinta

**S**ince registering for the third grade, and probably even earlier, Paducah, Kentucky, native Brent Leggs has savored sense of place. He has prized opening people's eyes to what's important in the relationship of place to race and identity, as well as to the fact that mind shifts can occur when people reassess the depth and breadth, in short, their perspective, of history. Early in the 1980s, Leggs's mother took her twin sons, of which Brent is one, on a "professional development exercise" to register themselves for school. When asked his address, Leggs replied, "741 McGuire Avenue." Not satisfied with his response, a school administrator asked for his apartment number. The soon-to-be third grader stood firm with his answer until she realized her mistake. Because Leggs is Black, she assumed his family lived in the low-income housing that defined one end of McGuire, as opposed to discerning that they dwelled in one of the single-family homes that populated the more upscale end of the thoroughfare.

The same diplomatic patience Leggs displayed on that day, along with his passion for historic preservation and social justice, his dazzling abilities to command masterly strategic planning, and his accomplished project execution, has served him in good stead. Today, as founding director of the African American Cultural Action Fund, the largest segment of the National Trust for Historic Preservation in Washington, D.C., for which he is senior vice president, Leggs leads the nationwide effort to preserve and restore places of significance to Black history, which, he points out, are structures and other sites of consequence to all people's history.

How Leggs realized his fervor for historical preservation is a story that's somewhat convoluted, certainly serendipitous, and also just plain cool. His plan to attend the University of Louisville where his Cardinal sports heroes thrived tanked when he earned a more generous scholarship to the University of Kentucky (UK). In Lexington, he parlayed the undergraduate degree he earned in marketing into an MBA in finance, after which he realized his bent for studying history and the human condition trumped his interest in the corporate world. A conversation with the chair of UK's graduate program in historic preservation energized him, and that administrator's promise of a scholarship sealed the deal. However, the serendipitous

factor (providence, perhaps) arrived as an invitation for Leggs to conduct a statewide inventory of historic Rosenwald Schools in Kentucky.

Built in 15 mostly southern states in the early 20th century, Rosenwald Schools resulted from noted 19th-century Black educator Booker T. Washington's vision of educating Black children, in partnership with Progressive Era philanthropist Julius Rosenwald's willingness to fund those schools. When Leggs realized his parents had attended Rosenwald Schools, he recognized that the infamous Washington's educational plan had directly impacted his own life, a revelation that begged the question, "What is my social responsibility in preserving and sharing this history?"

He answers his own crucial question by differentiating between acknowledging defining historical moments and examining physical evidence of the past by "touring history." Leggs claims the latter leads people to comprehend the fact that historic places encompass collective memory. More inclusive communities and societies, he stresses, result from interacting and learning from shared history.

From UK Leggs leapt from one significant National Trust position to another, both in Washington, D.C., and in Boston. His professional trajectory soared. Yet in 2017, he comments, "Charlottesville happened. Two years before, when a White

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In January 2022, just one month after tornadoes leveled much of Mayfield, and surrounding Kentucky towns, Executive Director of the African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund and National Trust for Historic Preservation Senior Vice President Brent Leggs announced Mayfield's St. James AME Church, founded in 1868, as the first recipient of emergency funding from the Action Fund's new \$20 million initiative to preserve Black churches in the United States.

the plan wasn't quite right." That occasion materialized when Charlottesville occurred, Leggs recirculated his proposal, and a Board member said he thought the president of the Ford Foundation would love Leggs's ideas, an observation that proved more than accurate and that, in November 2017, permitted the National Trust, under Leggs's leadership, to launch the African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund.

Action Fund projects, such as the preservation of early 20th-century entrepreneur Madam C.J. Walker's estate in Irvington, New York; jazz musicians and composers' John and Alice Coltrane's home in Dix Hills, New York; and Hinchliffe Stadium, one-time headquarters of a Negro League baseball team in Paterson, New Jersey, extend nationwide. However, southern-state Action Fund projects proliferate more than do Fund efforts elsewhere, due to the plethora of sites of significance to the history of the enslaved people who, for several hundred years, lived, or whose descendants still live, mostly in the South.

In addition to some of the state's Rosenwald schools, one of

national killed nine members of Emanuel African American Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, I thought that was a missed opportunity for the National Trust." At the time, he wrote a multi-million-dollar proposal delineating how the Trust might step in. "However," he says, "the moment to implement



Photo by Betsy Hatfield, Preservation Kentucky

Between 1917 and 1932, 158 Rosenwald Schools and related educational buildings were constructed in Kentucky, including 12 training schools. This school was built in Crestwood, Kentucky.

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“My current work that focuses on race, place, and identity discloses the untold stories of Black contributions to American history. It took me decades to be able to make the connection between my own upbringing and the work I am doing today.”

– Brent Leggs

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Leggs’s favorite Kentucky preservation efforts is Paducah’s Hotel Metropolitan, a Green Book site where Ella Fitzgerald and Cab Calloway, and even Ike and Tina Turner, performed. Another, Cherokee Park in Aurora, Kentucky, is among the only state-owned recreational spaces for the Black community during the Jim Crow era. On the heels of the tornadoes that razed most of Mayfield, Kentucky, just prior to the 2021 holiday season, Leggs announced the town’s 1868-built St. James AME Church as the first recipient of the Action Fund’s just-launched \$20 million initiative to preserve Black churches throughout the United States.

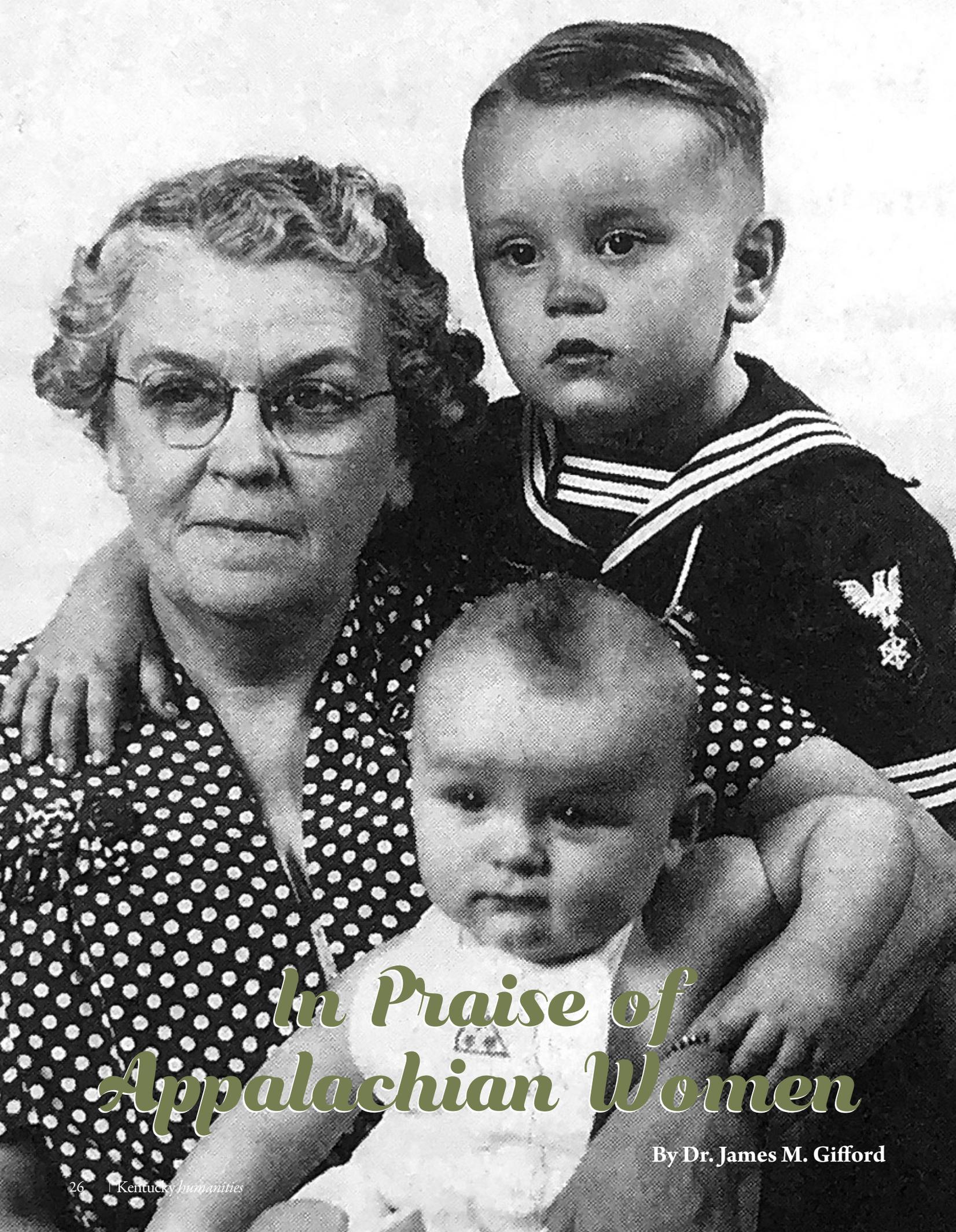
In January 2017, the year in which Leggs founded the Action Fund, President Obama signed an executive order establishing several Birmingham, Alabama, civil rights landmarks as a collective National Monument, among them the A.G. Gaston Motel, an accommodation built as a luxurious retreat for minorities during segregation that subsequently served a pivotal role in the city’s—and nation’s—civil rights movement. Leggs’s organization has also worked with the city of Richmond, Virginia, and numerous other state, private, national, and international entities, to memorialize Shockoe Bottom, the site of Richmond’s slave trade, as a Site of Conscience. In Atlanta, Georgia, the Fund targeted the city’s Sweet Auburn Historic District, once known as “the richest Negro street in the world,” with a preservation-focused revitalization plan. These examples represent a small segment of the hundreds of African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund projects completed or in process. Hundreds more, all requested by community members, are set to focus on cultural assets or on such broad endeavors as Sites of Enslavement and the Fund’s Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Cultural Heritage Stewardship Initiative to, in partnership with the National Endowment for the Humanities, extend technical assistance to “protect, preserve, and leverage” as many as eight historic campuses. In addition, Leggs’s efforts extend to focusing on inclusive solutions to revising historical narratives to encompass diverse perspectives.

As Action Fund endeavors expand at seemingly lightning speed, Leggs’s energy doesn’t lag; it increases. He also remains adamant about wanting people to perceive his sector of the National Trust for Historic Preservation as “a fund for our nation,” as opposed to being an organization working solely for the benefit of Black Americans. He states, “I want to empower all Americans to create a more just and equitable society.” A recent example of such empowerment occurred in May 2022, when President Joe Biden signed into law one such initiative, the execution of the Fund’s Brown vs. Board of Education Project, to expand interpretation of the 1954 landmark Supreme Court legal decision that established the unconstitutionality of racial segregation in public schools. Now, in six national parks in South Carolina, Delaware, Virginia, and Washington, D.C., all visitors may read a complete account of that ruling.

As in demand as Leggs is these days, he returns home to Paducah as frequently as possible to kick back, wind down, and recharge. “My mom passed away in 1990,” he says, but my brother, my sister, and my dad and his wife, as well as my nephews and nieces, remain my connection to my hometown.” He adds that his friendships extend far beyond his DNA to his high school pals with whom he “reunions” regularly. That what’s most meaningful derives from place and identity is the home-grown truth southerner Brent Leggs manifests not only in his high-powered career but in his whole-hearted personal life.

### About the Author

Linda Elisabeth LaPinta is a Louisville-based writer and oral historian whose publications focus on writers, women’s history, and social justice, often with Kentucky subjects. In addition to numerous nationally published magazine and newspaper feature articles and book reviews, LaPinta has published four books with the University Press of Kentucky under her maiden name, Beattie. Her fifth book in press with the same publisher is *Kentucky Quilts and Quiltmakers: Three Centuries of Creativity, Community, and Commerce*.



*In Praise of  
Appalachian Women*

By Dr. James M. Gifford

**M**y father was an alcoholic who deserted us when my brother and I were infants. My mother was mentally and emotionally handicapped. She was incapable of gainful support and sat at home in rags while my aging grandmother, Clara Moore Clark, taught and supported us.

As a little boy, I imagined that my grandmother was like Jesus—she knew how to love, and she knew how to forgive; she lovingly sacrificed herself for others. She had a gentle soul and a determined spirit, and she developed an unwavering sense of responsibility, an uncompromising integrity, and an unflinching courage that enabled her to meet a lifetime of difficulties.

She was a brilliant child, and her father and mother wisely encouraged her love of learning. Her postsecondary training at Morgan school and one year at Peabody earned her a Licensed Instructor's degree in June 1911. For the next five decades, she was a teacher.

In 1947, I was a homeless three-year-old child when I entered my grandmother's life. She was living in an old house that her aunt had given to her. She had already raised six children on a teacher's salary—a salary that was only half what the other teachers made, because she “only” had a two-year degree (from one of America's greatest teaching training institutions), and they had four-year degrees. But she was the smartest person I have ever known, and she was a great teacher, too.

## *Seven Rules for a Good Life*

**By Clara Moore Clark (1977)**

Love God

Love People, all People

Try to Stick to your Code of Honor

Don't Nurse grievances

Make Each Day Count for Something

Don't Pretend,—Even to Yourself —

Give, until it Doesn't Hurt

(Not necessary money, but love, friendship, understanding, a smile, or just a pleasant word)



*When Author James M. Gifford (middle row, far right) was in the 8th grade in 1957-1958, his grandmother, Clara Moore Clark, was his teacher (back row, left).*

*Left: After raising six children on a teacher's salary, Clara Moore Clark raised her grandsons Jim (age 3) and Dan (6 months) Gifford from the time they were little boys.*

The old house we lived in was a large, crumbling, antebellum structure on the edge of town. One of the back rooms had a dirt floor. Perhaps the greatest difficulty in growing up there was that it was so far from town, school, and church. When we were little boys, we walked home with our grandmother at the end of the school day. Occasionally people would stop and give us a ride. But, for the most part, we walked everywhere we went. That made me painfully aware of our poverty. Other people rode. We walked. I learned a very basic lesson from walking everywhere as a child: You can't quit 'till you get where you're going. It was a lesson that has served me well throughout my life.

I lived with my grandmother for 17 of the next 22 years. My Social Security records prove that I began working when I was 12 years old. I worked my way through grades 6-12, college, and eight years of graduate school. In 1977, I earned a Ph.D. in history from the University of Georgia. My education was the secular equivalent to baptism by total immersion. I got more than a degree. I got an education. For five years, I studied in the UGA library until it closed at midnight. During those years of intense study, I learned much about writing and history.

When my grandmother lay on her death bed in 1978, I felt helpless. She had saved my life, but I could not save hers. For a week, I prayed for God to take me and give my remaining days to my grandmother. When it became obvious that I could not die for her, I determined to live for her. Everything I have ever done that



*Clara Moore Clark earned a Licensed Instructor's degree in June 1911 after studying one year at Morgan school and one year at Peabody.*

## *Christmas Thoughts*

**By Clara Moore Clark (1977)**

What do I think as I sit here at home  
And wait for a friend or a neighbor to come?  
I think of my children and grandchildren, too —  
Of how smart they all are  
And how good looking, too —  
Of how each is a part of their Grandad and me,  
And I'm proud of those sprouts on the old Family Tree.  
If I were in need, why I'd like to think  
That they all would come running  
As quick as a wink!  
And that's what I think!

is of value is a tribute to my grandmother, Clara Moore Clark. We walked everywhere together when I was a little boy—to school, to church, to the library, to the store. Now she walks the golden streets of Heaven, and I pray that I will walk with her again someday.

Almost every Appalachian family has a woman of great character like my grandmother. In a nation that has recently suffered a global pandemic, runaway inflation, and the fear of war, the love and patience of Appalachian women can be a serum against the plague of conflict and confrontation that is weakening the very fabric of our nation.

### *About the Author*

James M. Gifford is a widely published author who has served as the CEO and Senior Editor of the Jesse Stuart Foundation, a regional publishing house, for the last 37 years. Dr. Gifford wrote this essay about his grandmother as his tribute to Women's History Month (March).

# The Non-Televising of Orchestral Performances on Commercial Broadcasting Channels

By Bobby Walter

Since the 1920's, live performances of classical music—especially symphonic music and opera—have served as a mainstay of broadcast programming, despite the gradual erosion of publicly televised performances in the 20th and early 21st centuries.

On March 20, 1948, at 5 p.m., the Philadelphia Orchestra made broadcast history as the first American orchestra to perform on network television. The conductor at that time was Maestro Eugene Ormandy (Jeno Blau), a Hungarian-American, who developed a love of music early in life when he began playing the violin at the age of three. Ormandy conducted the Philadelphia Orchestra in *Rachmaninoff, Symphony No. 1* at the Academy of Music in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, that evening.

Ormandy was a member of the CBS Radio conducting staff and was one of radio's first conductors. He conducted several symphonies for commercial programs for the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) upon his arrival in America.

In 1936, Ormandy (called the "most little maestro") became associate conductor of the Philadelphia Orchestra under the direction of Leopold Stokowski. In 1938, Ormandy was

On March 20, 1948, a concert given by Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra became the first televised symphonic concert in the United States. The concert was televised live in conjunction with CBS affiliate WCAU-TV, Channel 10, in Philadelphia.

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promoted to permanent head conductor of the Philadelphia Orchestra.

Under Maestro Ormandy's direction, the Philadelphia Orchestra became renowned for its warm romantic sound, and it developed an ensemble rapport that has been compared to a good varsity team. Ormandy personally hired each of the 104 musicians who played under his baton.

He conducted the Philadelphia Orchestra for an unprecedented 44 years, retiring as chief conductor in 1980. He continued to appear as conductor laureate with his colleagues for many years. Sadly, Ormandy conducted his final symphonic concert as conductor laureate on January 10, 1984, with the Philadelphia Orchestra.

In 1948, when the Philadelphia Orchestra made broadcasting



*Maestro Eugene Ormandy was a Hungarian-American, who developed a love of music when he began playing the violin at the age of three.*

history as the first American orchestra to perform on national television, the performance was one hour long, produced by WCAU-TV, a Philadelphia affiliate of the Columbia Broadcast System (CBS), and broadcast live from the Academy of Music. The orchestra performed the overture of Carl Maria von Weber’s *Der Freischutz* and *Symphony No. 1* by Sergei Rachmaninoff.

The National Broadcasting Company (NBC) had planned to televise a one-hour long performance of Richard Wagner’s works by the NBC Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Maestro Arturo Toscanini at 6:30 p.m. Evidently, CBS countered with the Philadelphia Orchestra for the same evening, airing 90 minutes earlier.

Before 1947, the number of U.S. homes with television sets could be measured in the thousands. By the late 1990s, 98 percent of U.S. homes had a least one television set, and those sets were on for an average of more than seven hours a day.

NBC also began broadcasting regularly scheduled programs—those determined before the start of a new season—including scenes captured by a mobile unit and on May 17, 1939, the first televised.

Television’s progress was further slowed by a struggle over wavelength allocations with the development of FM radio and a battle over government regulation. In 1941, the Federal Communications Commission’s (FCC) ruled that the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) had to sell one of its two radio networks. That ruling was later upheld by the Supreme Court in 1943. The second network became the new American Broadcasting Company (ABC), which would enter television early in the next decade. Six experimental television stations—in Chicago, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Schenectady, New York, as well as two in New York City—remained on the air during the war. However, full-scale commercial television broadcasting did not begin in the United States until 1947.

### *Decline in Broadcasting*

There are several reasons as to why orchestral concerts are no longer being broadcast on major commercial networks.

The national television fees for professional musicians and associated stage labor are higher than the market can bear. When you multiply the rates by at least 100 musicians and a dozen stage crew members, the cost equal to the advertising revenue that can be produced.

Perhaps what is most responsible for the decline, however, is the sound quality more so than the image, although, the image is certainly problematic. Over the years this issue has been mostly resolved as there are now plenty of models with adequate sound reproduction. The art of sound reproduction



*People gathered around televisions in their homes to watch live symphony performances.*



Live performances of classical music have served as a mainstay of broadcast programming since the 1920s.

proposes to bring a full orchestra into our living room, stated Michael Chanan in his article “Television Problem with (Classical) Music.” Also, Chanan stated in his article “The Politics Music” that “television, it seems, is bowing out of this market.”

### *History of the Philadelphia Orchestra*

On November 16, 1900, under the direction of Fritz School, the Philadelphia Orchestra gave its first concert at the Academy of Music. The orchestra was chartered on March 21, 1948. In addition to performing the first symphonic concert in the history of television, the orchestra also offered a broadcast transcription service available to radio stations across the country and to the Voice of America for overseas transmission. (Craven, Robert R. *Symphony Orchestras of the United States: Selected Profiles*. Greenwood Press, 1986.)

“Amahl and the Night Visitors” (a one-act opera) by Gian Carlo Menotti, an Italian-born American composer, was performed and recorded by NBC in 1951 in conjunction with the NBC Opera Theatre at Studio-8 at Rockefeller Center in New York. However, on December 23, 1942, “Hansel und Gretel” was the first completed opera in the United States to be broadcast on television by WRCB in Schenectady, New York.

Ormandy—for a decade-long period beginning in 1955—attempted to court the networks to secure a national

broadcasting platform for the Philadelphia Orchestra. He abandoned this course in the mid-1960s and his attention shifted to the orchestra’s strengths: recording and touring.

### *Toscanini’s NBC Symphony (1937-54)*

*Arturo Toscanini, NBC Symphony Orchestra, “The Television Concerts 1948-52”*

On the same day the Philadelphia Orchestra made broadcast history as the first American orchestra to perform on network television, Maestro Arturo Toscanini conducted the NBC Symphony Orchestra in Wagner, *Lohengrin*, Prelude to Act 3 within Studio 8-H, Radio City in New York City at 6:30 p.m. The Wagner Concert was the first of series of 10 live telecasts on NBC between 1948 and 1954, the year of Toscanini’s retirement. Toscanini opened a new era in the evolution of musical performances. *Life* magazine published a featured article on Toscanini entitled “Rival CBS Program Featured a Maestro Who Ate Cough Drops.” (Toscanini was known for sneaking cough drops into his mouth during a concert, but his back usually hide the transaction from the audience.)

Moreover, over the past 30 years since the 1980’s, classical music concerts attendance declined, resulting in a looming threat of scrapping public arts funding for small and large agencies and



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orchestras. A great majority of past live concertgoers are now subscribing to live streaming/online streaming services from companies such as Medicitv and IDAGIO, etc.

In the 1950s, non-concertgoers could watch orchestral performances live on PBS, while concertgoers had the sonic experience of attending live music in a great concert hall, in enjoying the live energy of crisp bows scraping the strings, ringing of the wind sounds, and the visceral feeling of low and high frequencies moving through one's body.

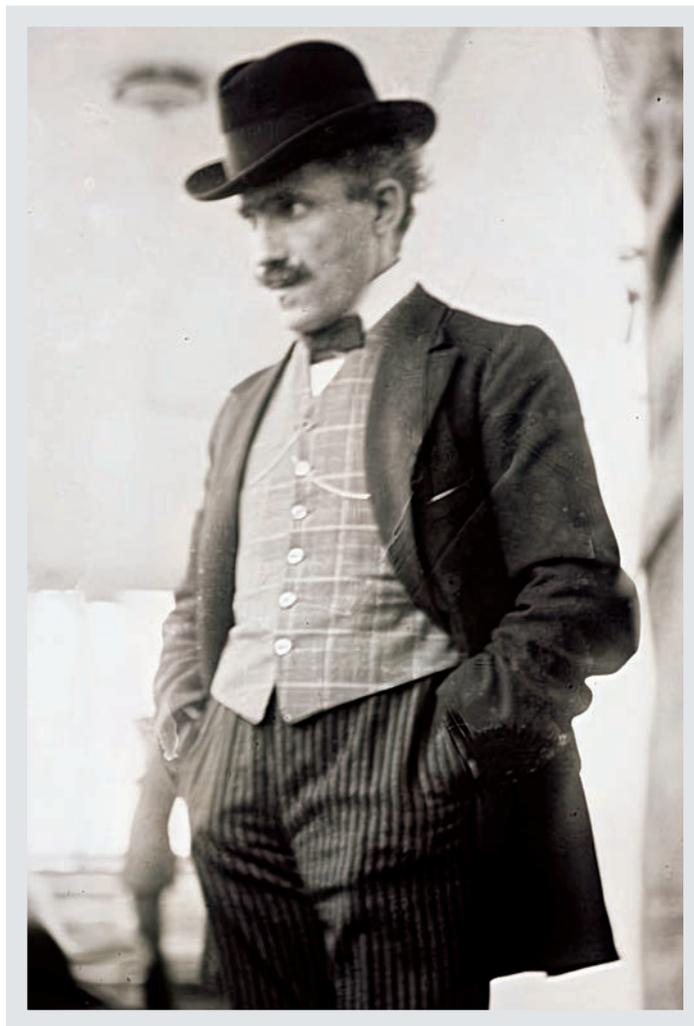
Less public interest in orchestral performances is because of the lack of exposure, interest, and the non-appeal of classical music to some clients. The best way to expose future musicians to music is within the private and public schools. School teachers can motivate students to join a band or orchestra through peer influence. Due to budget restraints over the past decades, numerous schools have discontinued music programs and courses within their schools.

A large majority of professional orchestras have begun partnering with public schools in order to bring community music programs to the youth, demonstrating instruments and teaching music skills and theory. These community outreach programs are primarily funded by grants from organizations including the National Endowment for the Arts, private and public donations through the orchestras, and public school systems.

The hope is that these programs and the exposure to music will encourage students to pursue a music degree or to seek advanced training to become a professional musician.

In conclusion, the average orchestral film score recording for 60-90 minutes can cost from \$30,000 to \$1,000,000 and beyond depending on the performances and locations. At the present, more Americans listen to classical music broadcasts or recordings (including online) than attend live classical performances. An estimated 18 percent of the U.S. citizens listen to classical music broadcasts or recordings.

However, concertgoers can continue to enjoy the recorded live performances on the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS, a federal-funded "non-commercial" broadcasting agency) and the online digital orchestral performances for the time being.



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

*Maestro Arturo Toscanini was among the most acclaimed and influential musicians of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.*

### *About the Author*

Bobby Walter is the reference/distance education librarian at Kentucky State University in Frankfort, Kentucky. He has been a professional librarian for more than 30 years. For leisure, he plays the violin with the Lexington Community Orchestra, New Horizons Orchestra, and Yuletide Ensemble in Lexington, Kentucky. In addition, he enjoys reading, technology, music, research, and traveling.

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Photo by Ernie Stamper

# Decoration Day

By Georgia Green Stamper

Long before Memorial Day rose from the ashes of the Civil War to honor veterans fallen in battle, my Kentucky kin were observing a late spring holiday that we called Decoration Day. Scholars are hazy on when or why rural Kentuckians—maybe other southerners too—began decorating the graves of all their dead relatives on a designated day, but the custom has echoes in other cultures around the world and was well established hereabouts by the early 19th century. I suspect Kentuckians began doing it when the first pioneer mother buried the first lost baby on a lonely hilltop in the wilderness.

What I know for certain is that my Grandfather Hudson's code of honor required strict observance of Decoration Day. Leaving your family's graves undecorated on that occasion would have been almost as shameful as letting your parents die alone in the poorhouse. And so, we would rise early on that May Sunday, my grandfather and I, to clip bushels of dew-touched iris and peonies,

flowers he grew in his yard for the sole purpose of honoring our deceased clan. Before the day was over, we would transform the New Columbus cemetery into a Monet painting. Indeed, had Monet been related to us, even by marriage to our second cousin, we would have decorated his final resting place, too, because we didn't want any of our own to be left out.

Gran died when I was nine years old, but I can still recall his childlike delight in Decoration Day. Except for Christmas, it was his favorite holiday. To be precise, the Sunday closest to May 31st—the official date of Memorial Day in his lifetime—was the day he enjoyed because over time this had become an informal community homecoming, a spontaneous reunion among the tombstones.

To those from the city, or from the north, I suppose a cemetery might sound like an odd setting for a jolly get-together, but it seemed appropriate to me then, and still does now. I always thought the dead could hear us talking and laughing and were

as glad for our bringing a party to them as for the pretty flowers.

On that one Sunday of the year, I was allowed to skip Sunday School to go early to the cemetery with Gran and help him distribute the blossoms. If he had been taking me to the circus, I could not have been more excited. My parents would come later, after church, but Gran and I arrived early so we wouldn't miss talking to anyone who happened by. He liked to get there before the out-of-towners arrived, and he wouldn't leave until twilight had settled over the graves.

In my memory, these May Sundays with Gran were always perfect, warm, spring days. It never rained, the wind never blew, and we never got hungry or thirsty. The tall, tender grass, recently cut with a scythe by volunteers, crunched beneath our feet like new-mown hay and filled us with the smell of spring. It was so beautiful to me, with the farmland stretching away as far as I could see, I wondered why all the dead people in the world didn't choose to be buried there. I tried to picture the bones of my dead relatives rising out of their graves on Judgment Day but decided they might skip their resurrection to keep on sleeping on the ridge.

Gran was a tall, erect man, six-foot-two, maybe more, and only Nat Lee's granite tombstone, sculpted into the shape of a giant tree trunk, towered higher than him. In his wide-brimmed fedora, he was easily spotted by all comers. They would hail him from a hundred or more yards away, and he would break into such a large smile that all of us knew he had never been more delighted to see anyone before in his life. This scene would be repeated countless times before the day was over as he greeted one best friend after another.

Inevitably, after pleasantries and catching up, the talk would turn to reminiscing about those buried beneath our feet. Gran was an able storyteller, and across those annual Sundays he recounted the history of about everyone who was laid to rest on the ridge. Some of the stories were heroic, of early settlers or war veterans. Some were of success, of unique achievement or influence or wealth. Others were sad. There was his favorite aunt whose babies all died in childhood and a teenager he'd known who drank bad water and got typhoid fever. He told me about his unmarried sister, six

feet tall in her stocking feet, taken too young by tuberculosis, and about the promising, but wayward fellow who squandered all his opportunities.

Walking through the cemetery with Gran was both a history lesson and a crash course in his philosophy of life. I learned from his stories whom he respected, and why, those he disapproved of, and those he loved despite their shortcomings. He told me about old jokes and pranks played a half century earlier. He told me about parties and childhood crushes. He taught me the names of the old families, the pioneers, about a place and its culture. He taught me who I was—and who he hoped I might become.

So come Decoration Day, you'll find me on the ridge with a box of plastic flowers moving from one side of the cemetery to the other like a postman delivering letters. My friends from the city, or from the north, don't understand this peculiar obligation I feel to decorate the graves of long-dead kin, and I admit that the party is not what it used to be. But Gran will be there, and that is what matters to me.

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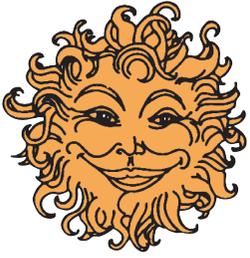
## About the Author

Georgia Green Stamper is a Kentucky writer whose published works include *Butter in the Morning* and *You Can Go Anywhere*. Her newest book, *Small Acreages*, is now available from Shadelandhouse Modern Press. She is a graduate of Transylvania University.



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*Decoration Day was a tradition George Hudson, also known as Gran, delighted in passing down to his family members.*



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