

Northern Kentucky Views Presents:

History of Boone County
The Civil War

by

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DESTRUCTION OF A MILL

The story of the Civil War has been written and many books have been printed. These books cannot be large enough to contain all the incidents of local interest. To many people the community happenings are of most interest. One purpose of the Boone County Historical Society is to record as many of these incidents as can be found.

Kentucky tried to remain neutral, but she finally abandoned this position and, being a border state, she soon became a recruiting station and battle ground for both the North and South. We find Boone County men enlisting in the Northern army and in the Confederate army. Sometimes brothers in the same family faced each other in battle.

Many slaves escaped or were stolen from their master and transported across the Ohio for enlistment in the U. S. Army. A bounty was offered for such enlistment. Reports indicate that this bounty was seldom collected. All captured slaves were ordered enlisted in Kentucky Regiments by the Provost Marshal of each County.

General Stephen Burbridge ordered the arrest of a number of citizens of Boone County because they had been reported as having sympathized with the South. Some of these were Dr. John Dulany, Spencer Fish, Henry Terrell, Warren Rogers, Edmond Grant, James T. Grant, Julius Rouse, and George E. Rouse. Mr. Fish will be remembered as owning a great many acres of land west of Shelby street in Florence. At a very early date he formed the Fish Subdivision to the city of Florence. The City Clerk is trying to locate a copy of the plat of this subdivision. He would be glad to know where one can be found. Dr. John Dulaney was a practicing physician who had a wide practice throughout Boone County during the War.

Boone County borders on the Ohio River for about forty miles and since sympathy was divided, information was constantly conveyed to military authorities on both sides. The Federal headquarters at Fort Mitchell received much information concerning actions of southern sympathizers in Boone County.

General Lew Wallace, who commanded all of the forces in the area, pressed all male citizens into the military services for the defense of Covington, Newport, and Cincinnati. Ministers of the Gospel and old men were not exempt from this service.

General Kirby Smith had marched his army in and around Lexington, Brigadier-General Health, with 5,000 confederate veterans from Smith's army was encamped at Corinth and several of his companies had reached Snow's Pond near Walton. At that time there were several mills in the county for grinding corn. The soldiers began searching for these mills.

Mr. Will Aydelotte told the writer that he was a boy of about ten years of age at the time. As he was helping his father cut wood along the Union-Florence road they saw many wagons drawn by four mules, loaded with ground corn and slabs of bacon, on their way to Snow's Pond. General Heath's army was preparing to move as soon as sufficient supplies were on hand. There is no doubt but that General Smith felt that this twenty-mile distance on the Ridge Road was the logical way to advance on Covington, Newport, and Cincinnati.

Another means of securing food was from the mill on the farm of Julius Rouse, two and one half miles from Florence on the Burlington Pike. Here the advanced companies of Smith's army received a great many loads of ground corn and wheat. On September 15, 1862, the owners of the mill were arrested on the charge of aiding the Confederates and the officers of General Wallace blew the mill to atoms.

In 1902 the writer, while plowing, turned up debris of this mill about 200 yards from where it originally stood. There was but one thought that entered his mind and that was the poem in McGuffey's Fifth Reader entitled "The Battle of Blenheim." In it the grandfather saw his grandson roll something large and round and repeated, "Tis some poor fellow's skull, and when I go to plow, the plow share turns them out."

After the day's work was completed, the mules stabled and fed, and supper over, and everyone seated on a wooden bench on the front porch, the writer told his story of what his plow-share had brought up. The owner of the land in 1862 still owned it at the time in 1902. He began the story of the mill "My father and I owned this mill and did general mill work, both in sawing lumber and grinding corn and wheat, until it was blown to atoms on September 15, 1862. We were arrested with several others and taken to Lawrenceburg, Indiana, and put in a prison camp."

The above statement suggested a question and answer procedure in an effort to get the details of the destruction of the mill. Here is the story.

Question. "Did you grind corn for Smith's army?"

Answer. "It was for the soldiers at Snow's Pond."

Q. "Where were you when the mill blew up?"

A. "I was standing on the back porch under guard and saw the mill go up and debris go in all directions."

Q. "What happened after the mill was blown up?"

A. The men returned and said, "We want to search your house as we understand you have a gun and pistol in your bedroom."

Q. "Did you show any disposition to prevent the search?"

A. "No, they seemed to know exactly where the gun and pistol were hidden."

Q. "What happened after the search?"

A. "They came out on the porch with gun and pistol."

Q. "What happened to the gun and pistol?"

A. "One of the men asked me if the gun was loaded."

Q. "State what you told him."

A. "I told him the gun was not loaded."

Q. "What did he then do?"

A. "He stepped of the porch and fired it into the air."

Q. "What effect did this have on you?"

A. "I was wishing all the time that it had been loaded to the end of the barrel."

Q. "What was the next procedure?"

A. "The officers then went to the barn and saddled a riding horse and had father and myself to accompany them which we did."

Q. "Where did they proceed with you?"

A. "On leaving the farm the officers had us to ride ahead of them to the Burlington and Florence Pike, then we followed the pike to Limaburg, and we were held there until two of the officers went beyond Burlington and returned with several men. Then we followed the Limaburg and Hebron road to the farm of (the writer here will blank the name). The officers were treated to a pitcher full of cold water and cake. A lengthy conversation took place, then we moved forward to Hebron. When we reached Hebron we turned left and followed the road towards Petersburg until we reached Bullittsburg

where we were halted again, and several officers reconnoitered and came back with several men. Then we began our journey forward and finally crossed the Ohio River and were put in a prison camp near Lawrenceburg, Indiana. Tents were used for sleeping and shelter."

Q. "What opinion did you have of a military prison camp?"

A. "Well it would do all right but every Sunday visitors came in roaming about they would pull back the flaps of our tents and stare at us as if we were wild animals."

Q. "How long were you in the prison camp?"

A. "About two weeks and then we were sent to Cincinnati and we sent for an influential citizen which resided at Hebron, Boone County, to come over and he came over and through him we took the oath of allegiance to the U. S. Government and were told then to go home.

After the return home an organization was established among a goodly number of these men in order when they became drafted they pooled their money and would purchase a substitute. Several of these men were drafted, but evaded service in this way, yet by skillful manipulation substitutes seldom received what was allotted for them. One man who was treasurer of the above organization told the writer that he had in his possession oft times as much as \$5,000 for the purpose of purchasing substitutes.

We had the opportunity to have a chat with William Aydelotte, a man that was born in Florence on September 14, 1851. Although old in years, Mr. Aydelotte's mind is keen and he can give much information in reference to Boone County, as we can readily see that he was ten years old when the Civil War broke out and remembers quite well that he and his father were cutting wood on the Union pike, when a company of Union soldiers were retreating back toward Ft. Mitchell, and in trying to cover their retreat kept firing along the Lexington pike. At the junction of Shelby Street and the Lexington pike Larkin Vaughn was shot and died as he was being carried to a nearby house.

He also stated that the Confederate soldiers did not attempt to go any farther than the intersection of the Union pike with the Lexington pike, then wheeled to the left and went out the Union pike with a dozen wagons. In about three hours they returned with their vehicles loaded with ground corn and wheat and a great number of sides of bacon. The camp was located at Snow's pond near Walton.

FIGHTING NEAR FLORENCE

During the Civil War, great excitement was caused in Boone County when Gen. Kirby Smith marched his army in and around Lexington. Brig. Gen. Henry Heath with 5000 veteran Confederate troops from Gen. Smith's army was camped at Corinth and several companies had reached Snow's pond near Walton, thus threatening the three cities of Cincinnati, Covington and Newport.

Had Gen. Heath moved immediately upon these cities no doubt he could have captured them, but he was prevented by orders from Gen. Smith who held until Gen. Bragg, who had the main army and was at the present time at Paris gave orders to move and Gen. Bragg failed to send such orders. In the meantime the people of Cincinnati were alert. Business houses closed and nearly all business suspended.

All male citizens, ministers of the gospel, old men, were forced into military service and drilling these undisciplined men was begun. Large earthworks were thrown up at Ft. Mitchell and at Ft. Perry in order to protect these three cities.

Gen. Lew Wallace was in command of all the forces around Cincinnati September 15, 1862, his pickets encountered the Confederate advance guard at Florence, where an engagement took place between these two forces, and one man was killed. The Confederates fell back as far as Walton. A skirmish took place near here and one company of Union soldiers was captured and the regiment put to flight, retreating back to the entrenchments south of Covington.

Gen. Wallace then ordered several regiments to proceed out the Covington and Lexington Turnpike and when they arrived near Walton Gen. Basil W. Duke, with a regiment of Morgan's Confederate Cavalry hastened up the Ohio River in order to make a crossing and threaten Cincinnati from the East, thus expecting to draw back the Union soldiers which were near Walton. The Union officers immediately sent two gunboats, the Belfast and Allen Collier to prevent this crossing, but the Confederates had howitzers and the gunboats fled down the river and out of range of the cannon fire.

A fierce battle was fought near Augusta, in which 125 home guards fought so bravely that Gen. Duke after losing 21 killed and 18 wounded fell back towards Brooksville and this ended any further threat by the Confederates.

The first house built in Florence was opposite the school at the junction of Oblique and Center Streets.

The writer has a record of the boy who lived in this house during the Civil War and helped carry Larkin Vaughn from the junction of Shelby and Main Streets when he was shot by a stray bullet from the advance guard of Gen. Wallace's army stationed at Ft. Mitchell. After the Civil War was over John Latham purchased this house and moved it to the corner of Oblique Street and Burlington Pike, when it was used as a barn. It was later torn down.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR

A. M. Yealey, the seventh child of Michael Yealey and Catherine Strebel, was born in Union County, Ohio, on January 29, 1873.

Michael Yealey, the father, was born in Germany on January 10, 1827, and Catherine Strebel, the mother, was born in Germany on July 5, 1833. Catherine came to Ohio in 1847 and Michael in 1854. They were united in marriage at Byran, Ohio, on October 24, 1854.

To this union were born eight children, four boys and four girls. Two boys and two girls are still living, in 1959.

A. M. Yealey received his grade and high school education in Union County, Ohio. His college work was at the National Normal University at Lebanon, Ohio; Wilmington College, Wilmington, Ohio; and the University of Cincinnati, Ohio.

After teaching for five years in Union County, Ohio, he established a good business in selling coal, lime, salt, flour, sand, and other commodities in Columbus, Ohio. The flood of 1898 ruined this business by wrecking the buildings.

On March 1, 1898, A. M. Yealey married Lucy Ann Rouse, the daughter of George Rouse, of Florence, Boone County, Kentucky. They lived with the bride's father and Mr. Yealey became a farmer and teacher.

After teaching in four rural schools in the county he became the principal of the school in Florence where he remained for twenty-nine years. In 1911 he established the first high school in Florence to be recognized by colleges.

In 1931, he and his son-in-law, Russell House, formed a partnership and built the Wild Wood Motel on U. S. Highway 42 on the southern limits of Florence.

After six years Mr. Yealey planned to open a hotel. His wife's health prevented this and selling his home he purchased the house at 268 Main Street. His wife passed away in 1942.

His longing for his chosen profession caused him to return to the school house. He taught in Florence from 1943 to 1945, and at New Haven for three years.

His children are Mrs. Willa House, Russell Yealey, and Georgia Y. Tanner (deceased). Grandchildren are Dr. G. R. Tanner and Mary Russala Yealey Demoisey. Robert Tanner, Sherry Tanner, and Rene Demoisey are great-grandchildren.

Realizing the need for the preservation of Boone County history, Mr. Yealey began to write articles for the Boone County Recorder, the Walton Advertiser, and the Stringtown Christian under the title of "Early History of Boone County."

The response from people who had once lived in Boone County was beyond expectations and to further the knowledge of the history of the area the Boone County Historical Society was formed. Mr. Yealey is the Historian of the society.

He took pride in Florence and served as its Mayor on four different occasions. During his first term of office, in 1908, the city's first sidewalks were laid on Main, Shelby, and Girard streets.

His church membership is at the Unionville, Ohio, Methodist Church which he helped to build during 1893.

Now, in 1959, Mr. Yealey is eighty-six years of age. He has taught school forty-one years. He is a very spry man and still writes on Boone County history for the local newspapers.