

Northern Kentucky Views Presents:

The Bracken Sentinel

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THE SPOTLIGHT IS ON THE "BRACKEN SENTINEL"

So rare that nothing was known about the BRACKEN SENTINEL, published in Augusta, Ky., in the early 1820s, except for a brief notice in the Kentucky Acts, 28th Assembly, the finding of five issues by our member, Miss Marie Dickore, who placed them in our archives, gives us the spot light today in newspaper history. Some information about this recent acquisition may prove interesting.

The dates for these five issues are all of Vol. I, 1820 — No. 13, April 22; No. 16, May 13; No. 30, August 19; No. 32, September 2, and No. 33, September 9. The paper is printed on a Royal sheet of beautiful hand-made linen rag stock and the typography is charming and clear. The publisher was C. D. M'Manaman.

Mr. Clarence S. Brigham, Director of the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass., in his bibliography of newspapers before 1820, stated, page 365, Vol. 24, 1914 Proceedings of the Society:

[Augusta] Bracken Sentinel, 1819.

No copy located. Established evidently in the year 1819, since it was first authorized to print State advertisements, Jan. 7, 1820 (Ky. Acts, 28th Ass'y, p. 822).

However, since our issue of April 22, 1820 is No. 13, the date of the first issue must have been January 28, 1820. And it was published on Saturdays.

Besides being a rarity these five BRACKEN SENTINELS are of especial interest because they present an illuminating picture of the financial situation in this region of the Ohio Valley in 1820. News from all parts of the world, some editorial comment and small items from correspondent newspapers gave the reader of that day information. However the advertisements and the local news items are of greater importance to us. For example, in the April 22nd issue we find a list of 94 names of men and women who had letters in the Augusta post office and were asked by Postmaster Thomas Chalfant to collect them (and probably pay the postage as was the custom of that time). Many of these names are of

settlers in the Little Miami Valley, in Clermont and in Brown counties, Ohio. On the whole, we learn that the BRACKEN SENTINEL was read by folks in those regions, in the Augusta region and in Cincinnati. Evidently it did not serve other Kentucky regions.

WHERE THE PIONEER CROSSED THE RIVER

Augusta was the place where pioneers coming down the Ohio and planning to settle in the Little Miami valley, stopped, rested, got their wagons and horses, and took Baude's ferry across to the mouth of the Bullskin Creek. From here they followed the "Round Bottom Road" to Felicity, Bethel, Williamsburg, along the southern bank of the East Fork to Batavia, Perintown, and Milford, thence to Newtown. It was a main-travelled road in its day.

Barter was a general practice and the medium of exchange was whatever the purchaser had that the seller wanted. According to the advertisements in the BRACKEN SENTINEL such things as country sugar, young apple trees, lamb's wool or second shearing, feathers, flax seed, corn, oats or wheat, were acceptable. And the price is a bit lower when "Good Money" is offered or notes on the Miami Exporting Co., Bank of Cincinnati, those of Lebanon, West Union and Columbus, "Kentucky banks in general", Indiana banks also "in general", United States paper and specie. A. C. Gross advertises that he will take in exchange for his work as a saddler corn at 37-1/2 cents, oats at 25 cents per bushel if delivered at his shop. He was also willing to accept "flax and tow linen, linsey, pork, bees wax, tallow, whiskey and notes on any of the Banks of Cincinnati (the Farmers and Mechanics excepted)."

CREDIT CONDITIONS

Credit tried the souls of early business men but patience was a very necessary virtue in this young country. James Armstrong, in his notice that he had purchased an interest in the only carding machine in Augusta, stated that wool would be carded "for eight cents per pound if paid in Specie or Specie-paying Bank notes," or "ten cents in Current Bank Notes of this State or Ohio." He also announced "a small

supply of DRY GOODS, which together with my former Stock, I will sell low for GOOD MONEY; and those who have accounts standing will try and pay them, or give their notes, as they are all due. I have curtailed my Credit Business — and as there is no means of collecting Cash in reasonable time, the people will excuse me when I am not willing to sell Goods at a credit of one to three years.”