

Betty Moneyhon and the Third Floor Ladies provided the following article on one of the "forgotten" areas of the County.

COMMUNITIES GONE, BUT NOT FORGOTTEN - BROWNSVILLE

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Brownsville was along the Little Willow Creek, which came from Bracken County into Pendleton County. There were homes along the creek as early as 1818, but the village itself began in the 1840's with the general store of Henry Browning.

Toliver Browning married his cousin, Mary Browning, in October 1792 in Culpepper County, Virginia. Mary's brother, Caleb Browning, married Anna Moore in Culpepper County also, but the date was not recorded. Both couples were married by John Pickett, a Baptist minister, who had been in prison for preaching without a license since the state church in Virginia was the Church of England before the Revolutionary War and Pickett had refused to be licensed by the Fauquier, Virginia County Court.

Mary and Toliver, with Mary's parents, James and Susanna Hickman Browning, Caleb and Anna and other members of their family came to Clark County, Kentucky in the early 1800's. Caleb and Anna moved on to Pendleton County, and later Toliver and Mary settled on Mill Creek in Pendleton County, buying eighty acres in 1821 for \$65 and selling the eighty acres in 1824 for \$400. Toliver and Mary moved to land on Little Willow Creek.

Henry Browning, Toliver and Mary's oldest child, was born in Virginia in 1795. Henry married Maria Fields in 1818 in Bracken County with Levin Fields as bondsman. Henry bought ninety acres for \$90 on the waters of Little Willow Creek in Pendleton County in 1821, although he had paid taxes as early as 1818. The deed said he was living on the land. These ninety acres were part of Daniel Coleman's 40,000 ¼ acres which had been conveyed to Coleman in 1788. Coleman's land extended almost as far as Falmouth.

Over the years Henry purchased additional land in both Pendleton and Bracken Counties on Little Willow Creek. His land was bounded by Adam Downard, Daniel T. Vaughn his father Toliver, William Atwell, John Wiley, and James King.

William Atwell married Ursula Fields in 1821 in Bracken County with Levin Fields as bondsman. Levin Fields was listed in the first tax record in Bracken County in 1797. He later bought land on Little Willow Creek in 1824.

Henry Browning began his general store about 1837 and had accounts with William Bisop (Bishop), William Atwell, Charley Brosaker, and Robert Pebworth among others. By 1853, Henry and his son, William Toliver, were in business together as H. Browning and Son. Much of the merchandise that was sold in the store was purchased in Cincinnati from George Overaker. They paid \$13.78 for 1 barrel of sugar, \$6.00 for 1 box of saleratus (baking soda), 1 box of Fine Tobacco for \$6.00 and 2 barrels of flour for \$8.50. In 1858, they purchased from William Resor and Company sugar kettles and odd lids.

William Toliver Browning, who was called "Dutch" and signed his name "W. T.", married Matilda Jane Anderson in August 1832. Matilda's mother was Frederica A. Holton sister of Augustus F. Holton, who signed his name as "A. F." "Dutch" and Matilda were married by Brother Robert Elrod, a "hard sell" Baptist minister, who served the Willow Creek Baptist Church for many years as well as the Falmouth Baptist Church. The Elrod's lived on what is now Wallace Road, and the Elrod Cemetery is on that road.

W. T. began his blacksmith shop in Brownsville, a prosperous business with several forges running. In the 1860 census of Bracken County, he is listed as a merchant with Abner Coleman, Isaac Elrod and Isaac Elliott listed as blacksmiths, as well as Joshua Ingles, a black man. Thomas Ware was listed as a carpenter with D. D. Elliott as his apprentice. Robert Pebworth was listed as a miller in the 1850 census, and he came to build the mill in Brownsville for John Hook. W. T. was also the postmaster in the general store, as well as prizing tobacco and shipping it to Cincinnati for people in the neighborhood.

By 1860, Brownsville was a busy neighborhood. There was the blacksmith shop, the general store and John Hook's mill. There were homes up and down the creek which was the road. What was sold in the store? Here is a list: children's shoes at 20c (cents), 1 ball candle wick at 5c, peppermint drops also 5c, 5 lbs. coffer at 15c a lb., a curry comb 10c, bed cord 25c, 1 gallon molasses 75c, sugar at 10-c a lb., cambric 13c a yard, 1 "pare" boots at \$3.00, and 1 silk hat at \$3.50. There was a great deal of bartering of tallow, beef hides, sawing 445 feet of plank, 26 bushels corn at 35c a bu. and 5 ½ days of work.

John Hook's mill was a steam mill grinding corn and wheat, and later as a saw mill. Riley Browning, a son of Elijah Browning, Henry's brother, also owned a mill on Willow Creek which used

water power and had a dam and a mill race. His mill was built by Elijah Lea of near Pin Hook for Joseph H. Cushman, a brother of Riley Browning's wife, Mary Cushman.

There were many roads coming into Browningsville. The road near the Downard and Watson Cemetery, the road coming down from what is now Wallace Road along the creek from the north, and the carriage road going up the hill to what is now the Browning's Corner Road.

The 1860's in Browningsville and the neighboring areas were turbulent times. Discussions around the stove in the general store centered on slavery, new states coming into the Union as slave or free states, abolition, new churches and where families had their loyalties.

Many of the early Baptist church members had followed Alexander Campbell in the late 1829's and 1830's. Many of the Browningsville residents had become Campbellites (followers of Alexander Campbell) and so they met as a church in the log school house across the creek from the general store in 1860. Early members of the church were Joseph M. Clayton and his wife, Mary Elizabeth Wyatt, Augustus F. Holton and his wife, Sallie Browning, Perry E. Browning and his wife, Rebecca Miller, William T. Browning and his wife, Matilda Jane Anderson, George Miller and his wife, Lucy Miller, their son, Toliver Miller and his wife, Elizabeth Miller, and W. A. Fields and his wife, Mary. Other early members were Oliver A. Cleveland and his wife, America, A. A. Wood and his wife Nannie, Patrick Crawford and his wife Lucretia, Dudley D Elliott and his wife Mollie, Frank M. Crawford and his wife Phoebe Holton, daughter of A. F. and Sallie Holton Laben Woods and his wife, Martha. Other families were the Kings, Hamilton, Flynns, Wileys, Brownings, and Fields.

When it rained, the high waters of Little Willow Creek made going to church difficult. The Browningsville Christian Church met in the school house, until they were given a plot of ground in 1869 by Lorenzo Colvin and his wife, Elizabeth North, in nearby Pendleton County in a grove of oak trees. The church built a frame building high on the hill where the church stands today. The church then took the name of Oakland because of the location in the oak grove. William P. Houston was the first minister.

Who lived near and in Browningsville in the 1860's? Usually the census takers went from house to house in a neighborhood. These families were from both Bracken and Pendleton Counties along Little Willow Creek: Elijah Fields, Susan "Sukey" Browning Fields, Thomas Ware, D.D. Elliott, Henry "Harry" Browning, W. T. Browning, Joseph Brewen, Abel King, Boone Stump, John Hook, Hugh and William Atwell, Willis, Abner and William Owen, the Casey's, Courtney's Riley Browning, Joseph Clayton, the Wyatt's, Toliver Miller and Lucy Browning Miller, Elijah Browning, Isaac Sellers, John Fields, Robert Peabworth, Thomas C. Browning, Perry "Dick" Browning, A. F. Holton, Catherine Elliott, Eli Watson, John Miller, and the Ellis, the Elrod and the Downard families.

Many of the homes were of logs which were weather boarded and plastered later. Water came from springs, but wells and cisterns were also dug. Everyone had large orchards and large gardens, and turkeys, chickens and sheep were raised. Families owned horses, cows, and had yoke of oxen. The main crops were corn, wheat, and tobacco. Cattle and hogs were raised. The grist were ground at Browningsville at John Hook's mill. The women made their own cloth, dyed with walnuts, spinning and weaving making woolen cloth and linseed. All the clothes for the family were made at home, except the Sunday clothes. Shoes were purchased. Calico and prints were extra and rare. People made their own carpets.

Food was cooked at a large fireplace in the kitchen, as stoves came later. Pots were hung on hooks over the fire, and Dutch ovens were used. There were large coffee pots, and rye was sometimes used for coffee. Families used tallow candles and grease or oil lamps.

The men would hunt possums, coons, and wild turkeys. The wild pigeons would come once a year when the mast (acorns) was on the ground.

Soon after the Browningsville Christian Church was founded in 1860, the War between the States began. It was indeed a troubling time for families. In August, 1861, Home Guards were organized to see that neutrality was observed and to protect against guerrillas and bushwhackers who were roaming the countryside.

On September 26, 1862, Morgan's men under the command of Colonel Basil Duke were on their way to Augusta on the old Brooksville Road. On the 27th there was a desperately fought battle between Duke's men and the Home Guards. After the battle, Morgan's men dispersed by different roads. Some of them went through Browningsville.

The soldiers were hungry and asked Matilda Browning to cook her hams in big kettles in her yard. Neighbors came to fix other food. The soldiers rested in the yard and by the time they had eaten, it was almost dark. They robbed every house in Browningsville, burned John Hook's mill and robbed the general store. Before the soldiers left, they made the men line up and searched them for money and valuables. The black blacksmith, Joshua Ingles, had his hands in his pockets and when he raised them, his wallet dropped to the ground. In the dark it was unnoticed, and it was the only money left in the village.

Browningsville had many Union sympathizers but cousins sympathized with the Confederates cause and joined the Confederate Army serving in the Orphan Brigade. The 18th Kentucky Volunteer Infantry was recruited during the winter of 1861-62 and mustered into the United States service on February 8, 1862. It had many young men from around Browningsville. On August 30, 1862, they were in the battle of Richmond, Kentucky, and several were killed, wounded or captured.

In a letter dated April 16, 1862, Frank Browning of Bement, Illinois wrote to his brother, W. T. Browning, to say, " I was truly sorry to hear of your loss by the guerrillas as they must have been in the neighborhood all day as they came on you so early in the evening. . You could have improved you a good farm with the money them Devils got from you."

March 6, 1865, Bracken County and other counties were authorized by special legislation to raise a bounty fund to aid enlistments and provide substitutes to the Union Army. On March 10, on a hand written slip of paper, W. L. McKibben, Treasurer, recorded he had received from F. L. Cleveland the following amounts of money for the Bracken bounty fund from: W. T. Browning, \$50, James R. Cummings, \$50, Jos. Ingles (Cld), \$40, and Pvt. Frazer \$10. On April 9, 1865, General Lee surrendered and on the 13th General Joseph E. Johnston surrendered. The long war was finally over, but families also had to make peace with each other.

W. T. Browning was the Postmaster at Browningsville from March, 1875 through September, 1878. For two quarters, the receipts were \$1.67 and 95c, but remember a letter could be sent for 1 penny. Dr. Charles O. Riggs had his home and office in Browningsville in 1884. Dr. Samuel W. Lucas, Dr. J. H. Barbour and Dr. VanHook were doctors earlier.

The Third Precinct meeting of the Pendleton County Sunday School Union was held in Galloway's Grove near the Palestine Baptist Church on June 16, 1888. Promptly at 10 A.M. the Browningsville Brass Band led the march to the grove.

The Browningsville school had been moved away from the creek in about 1873 or 1874 nearer to Holton's Corners (now Neave) and was known then as the Regan School. Many children from Browningsville attended that school. The land for the school had been given by the Holton family. Abner Holton had a general store at the corner of #539 and #22. In the 1890's, the Browningsville children and other children from that neighborhood attended the school which was called the Holton School. The teacher was Miss Luella Aulick, and there were sixty-five children in her one-room school. Some of the children who attended were Freddie Browning, Isie and Doccia (twins) Galloway, and ten other Galloway children including two Jesse Galloway boys (one had red hair), and the Holton children. Other families were Barnes, Blades, Buckley, Burbridge, Cummins, Downard, Elrod, Eales, Fishback, Hesler, King, McAtee, McGerty, Ramsey, Rigg, Ross, Sims and Wilson.

Z. Frank Browning, W. T.'s daughter, was a fine seamstress and in 1897, she had a millinery shop in the general store building in Browningsville. Her letterhead read, "Office of Miss N. G. Browning, Milliner and Millinery Good. Browningsville, Neave P. O. Kentucky." She moved her shop later to Pearl (now Willow) and then to Brooksville. She made many wedding dresses and hats and beautiful blouses with many tucks and lace. In 1915, she married Perry T. Cook. Mr. Cook had been a magistrate and a Justice of the Peace when the present Bracken County Court House was built.

Browningsville declined after the turn of the century, and families moved away from Little Willow Creek because of high water and the coming of the automobile. Browningsville is gone, but it is not forgotten by the descendants of the many families who lived there.