

# Pulaski County Historical Society

304 South Main Street  
Somerset, Kentucky 42502-0036  
606-679-8401

Hours: Monday Through Saturday 10:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.

Pres. Jerri Brown V.P. Wanda Bullock Sec. Joyce Mize Treas. Fayrene Gilliland

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## Board of Directors

Vivian Abbott Wanda Bullock Fayrene Gilliland Joyce Mize  
Jerri Brown Dexter Alexander Wanda Harper Jeff Renner Bruce Singleton

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## Staff:

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Jerri Brown Wanda Bullock Melvin Hurst Larry Martin Kathy Martin Betty Doss  
Nancy Weaver Babe Hughes Kay Spillman Wendell Butt Louanna Purcell Lisa Ware

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## Pulaski County Historical Society Meeting

Date: Monday 6:30 PM June 7, 2010

Place: Pulaski County Library community room

Speaker Roger Tate

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Roger D. Tate Professor, History Somerset Community College. He chaired the Division of Social Sciences. Roger is a long standing member of the Pulaski County Historical Society. He is also a board member of the Mill Springs Battlefield Association and is on the History Committee of the First Presbyterian Church. Roger is married to Ylan Dao Tate for 37 years. They have a son, Curtis Tate, Washington D.C. and a daughter, Melanie Tate Nix, Shelbyville, Kentucky

Mr. Tate will be speaking on the Synopsis of the life and career of John Sherman Cooper. Mr. Cooper was born in Somerset, KY and lived here until he became active in politics. Come to our meeting and learn more of Mr. Coopers life.

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The society is a non-profit organization. The officers and staff are volunteers. The primary goal is to collect and preserve the records of Pulaski County and materials relating to its history.

A newsletter is mailed to current members in May and November. Any member can submit a query of 50 words or less. Notices of family reunions are also welcome. **Dues are \$3.00 per year, January through December. Enclose SASE** if membership card is needed.

**CHECK MAILING LABEL FOR DATE DUES EXPIRE.** It is very important to get your dues in if you expect to receive the newsletter. The staff does not do in depth research. A basic fee of \$5.00 each family is required for a search of family books and files. Photo copies of original marriage bonds and consent forms for years 1799 - 1871 will be duplicated and certified by the staff for \$1.00 each. The historical society business meeting was held in June 2009. One new director, Dexter Alexander, was elected at that time.

**When sending mail to the historical society, note the NEW ADDRESS.**

**Pulaski County Historical Society 304 South Main Street Somerset, Kentucky 42501**

We have a new volunteer, Beulah Baugh, that will be working with us. welcome aboard Beulah

A query. Looking for info. on Richard G. (Gentry?) Robinson born 1809 and died 13 December 1887. Buried at Science Hill, Pulaski Co., KY. There was no will or probate. He may have married as early as 1837 or never married. Please Help!! Janet Haddock 4192 Sardis Road Hazlehurst, MS 39083-9153

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT AND EDITOR JERRI BROWN

Well it is time for another news letter from the Pulaski County Historical Society. Our visitors have really increased the year and half since we moved to our new location. We are still having many many more patrons since we moved. Everyone is still impressed with our new library and our office. We are still getting several books donated to us. We have lots of Somerset High year books that have been donated but we still need them from the old surrounding schools, like Ferguson, Nancy, Eubank, Burnside and Shopville. Also we are needing pictures of Burnside High School and Eubank High School to hang in our Historical Gallery of Schools. If anyone has these and would donate them to the historical society, they would be greatly appreciated.

Our next big project is printing a book on the old post offices of Pulaski County along with the post masters / mistresses. We plan to have a little biography on each of them. Also we want to add a family recipe maybe handed down from the post masters family plus a photo of him / her and pictures of all the post offices we can find. Plus the horse back mail carriers. We think it will be a very interesting book. If anyone has any information on any of these especially pictures of the post office or masters and would share it with us, we would be grateful. There has not been a deadline set for this project. So far we have been active in coming up with projects that needs to be done. We are now having a work day scheduled for the last Monday of the month. We have only met once and it was productive.

The Rexroats were in town again this fall bringing an update on their Rexroat families. They also brought a couple crates of Florida oranges and 4 boxes of chocolates. They bring them up for the volunteers. We all really enjoy them.

One project the directors are working on is getting the Revolutionary War monument moved from the grounds of the old library building to be moved to the court house grounds with the other war monuments. It has been overlooked on the decoration days when the other monuments are decorated. The DAR had it set many years ago. It has been quite an ordeal, getting permission from everyone involved. It needs to be done as they have been forgotten soldiers too long. Thanks to Larry and Kathy Martin for bringing it to my attention and I took it before the board and hopefully it will soon be in its proper place. Fortunately we have two DAR members, Joyce Mize and Fayrene Gilliland, on the board that has been working with those involved and hopefully we will soon see it in its proper place among the other war memorials.

There is a Cemetery Committee appointed by the judge and magistrates working on finding and locating old forgotten cemeteries. It isn't the historical society project but two of our volunteers, Wilma "Babe" Hughes and Wanda Harper, and one of our society member, Gene Heath are on the committee. That is a worthwhile project and one that needs to be done. I am sure if anyone is aware of any forgotten cemeteries and brought to their attention, they would appreciate it. You may send the information to the Pulaski Co. Historical Society at 304 South Main Street.

The board voted to donate a bronze sculpture to the new library. Bruce Singleton took on the task of having one made. It is finally here. It is a grandfather and grandson sitting on a bench reading a book. It is probably about 5 feet long and maybe 5 feet high. It will be sitting on the front porch of the library where the security camera will be on it at all times. Hopefully it won't be vandalized. Now all we need is to get it bolted down to the porch. It was quite a task for Bruce to find someone and getting what we wanted made. Thanks Bruce for your hard work.

Charlene Phelps has been working on a book of the Jacksboro Trail from Virginia leading into Kentucky where so many came that route into Pulaski County. She so graciously contributed an article for our news letter. I am very grateful. Glenda Adams is confined to her home due to illness of her husband. She volunteered to do some typing at home so I gave this article to her for our news letter. Charlene requested that it was to be typed as is. So Glenda didn't change anything. Thanks to both these ladies.

Jerri Brown, President, office manager, Pulaski County Historical Society

## SUBLIMITY SPRINGS

When Dr. Christopher Columbus Graham came into the wild and beautiful Rockcastle River gorge it was so moving and inspiring, the magnificence and grandeur of the narrow riverbed strewn with huge boulders appearing to have been tumbled and tossed by a giant hand from the bluffs above, and landscaped with holly and rhododendron and laurel and oak and poplar and hemlock placed wild around the boulders, and rich velvety violets on the banks, so profuse, like garlands crown the sparkling waters of the river, that his thoughts were undoubtedly of the sublime---'This is the ultimate beauty, and it is sublime, and I shall call it Sublimity.'

Dr. Graham came from Harrodsburg where he had operated the famous Graham's Springs for some years. Of all the mineral or chalybeate springs popular throughout Kentucky, Graham's Springs was foremost. It was a grandiose four story hotel with landscaped grounds where plantation owners of the South came to escape fevers, and where guests came from St. Louis and other cities of the country, a place to socialize and to meet prominent persons of the day.

In 1855, however, Graham sold the Springs to the Federal Government for an old soldiers' home for \$100,000.00. The entrepreneur then came to Rockcastle.

Sublimity Springs was quite different from Graham's Springs. A narrow swath of land formed by the Springs Branch which tumbles from the Bee Cliff and a dry branch some three hundred feet eastward forms a semicircle which give ample space for the hotel, the slave quarters, and other buildings. The stable stands on the bank of the river before one reaches the Springs Branch and the hotel.

Graham's hotel, a large structure about fifty feet by one hundred feet with some twenty rooms, accommodates the guests and Dr. Graham's family. A large hallway separates the guest rooms into five on either side of the building on both the upper and lower floors with the exception of the dining room on the first floor. A veranda type porch, a part of the front gable, gives a view of the river flowing to the Cumberland. A three room batten siding house serves as slave quarters and as cook facilities.

In front of the hotel, the land slopes to the river and a road leads down to a shoal which affords a crossing to Graham's Mill on the opposite side of the stream. To reach the mill, the traveler must paddle upstream along the bank for a distance and then drift diagonally across to the landing.

Graham's Mill was the center of the enterprises on Rockcastle. The sawmill provided timbers for hotel structures at Rockcastle Springs Resort two miles downstream and for timbers to build coal boats in the shipment of coal to Nashville. During the 1850's the development of coal on the Upper Cumberland was the foremost enterprise of Pulaski, hence Graham's settlement on the river.

Several workers were required to fell the timbers, to snake them to the mill, and to work the mill overall. As such there were dwellings around the Springs where workers lived while some of them resided at the hotel.

In 1858, Dr. Graham was instrumental in getting a state road into and through the site. The State appropriated \$500.00 for the road on the Pulaski side and the same for the Laurel side, the largest outlay for a road in the county prior to the time---The Somerset-London and Sublimity Road.

As Dr. Graham was the popular host of Graham's Springs often his guests at Sublimity were friends and associates from the Bluegrass who came to hunt and to fish. The wild and beautiful Rockcastle River gorge and the lofty ridgeland above offered the hunter game of every kind---from grouse to partridge, from deer to fox, and from bear to bobcat---and panther roamed the ridgeland after mid-century. Bass and walleye were abundant in the river.

In a July 1859 issue of the Lexington Observer & Reporter, the advertised rates for the hotel were the following: Gentlemen, or Lady per day, \$0.75; per week \$5.00; Horse, per day \$0.50; per week \$3.00.

Even in the remote area of the county, Graham's enterprises evolved into a town, the Town of Sublimity, with a post office being established in 1860. Dr. Graham was a Sunday School teacher, the local doctor, and overall a benefactor to the community. Although his time on Rockcastle was only a mere presence he left an indelible imprint on the beautiful gorge.

Dr. Graham left Sublimity in 1858 and by 1861 became the resident physician at Crab Orchard Springs in Lincoln County. Josephus Campbell was the proprietor of the hotel and in 1860 purchased the property. Then in 1866, Campbell left to manage Rockcastle Springs Resort. Afterwards, Christopher Pitman and C.C. Jackson of Laurel County owned the Springs.

The demise of Sublimity Springs came about during the winter of 1877-1878, the 'year of the tide,' in which the Cumberland and Rockcastle froze over and from a January thaw the ice floes crushed everything in their movement, thus destroying the mill.

Silence surrounded Sublimity Springs for almost two decades until 1905 when it came alive again. Martha Littrell Bolton, whose husband had been killed, operated a boarding house at Sublimity as a means of livelihood. The slave quarters became her home. Her guests were fishermen who traveled a distance to fish the river and rivermen who drifted crossties from Livingston to the Gulf of Rockcastle where they place the ties in rafts for the Burnside market.

At most seasons of the year, Martha Bolton boarded fishermen who would stay as long as a week with her. The river was an excellent stream for bass fishing. From the boarding house upstream for a half mile, the fisherman could easily catch four or five bass.

The 'tie drift' as the rivermen called it began around the first of February and lasted about two weeks. On their way downriver the men boarded with Martha Bolton for three or four nights. But their task was not yet finished when they reach Sublimity: it was necessary for them to go back upriver to free the crossties that had gorged up on the rocks and boulders of the Narrows. The rivermen called this task 'rolling the river.'

After having walked the banks of Rockcastle for some five to ten miles, Martha Bolton's boarding house was a refuge for the rivermen. Most any night during the 'tie drift,' the dwelling accommodates at least six men: a large bedroom overlooking the river has four beds; the center room, or sitting room, has two beds; and the third room is the dining-kitchen area. A double fireplace between the kitchen and sitting room warms the house. Warm food and a warm bed during a cold February night seemingly transforms the plain boarding house to the beauty and style of Graham's hotel.

At any time during the 'tie drift,' there were so many rivermen working up and down Rockcastle, particularly at the Gulf, that they slept on the floor in any house available. At the home of George Sears, one had to step over the men sleeping on the floor after an arduous day on the river.

In addition to George Sears, other men dealt in crossties: Robert Bolton, Jephtha Hail, Tom Heath, C. C. 'Squire' Randolph, and Bailey Hail. These enterprisers purchased the ties which had been seasoned out during the summer for fifteen cents and then sold them at Burnside for twenty-five cents. In 1925, George Sears and his son, Bill, run the last 'tie drift' from Livingston to the Gulf. Once more Sublimity was silent.

Almost a century after Dr. Graham began Sublimity Springs, the young men of the CCCs came to Rockcastle to build the first bridge to span the river in the region. In 1936, the CCCs made a base camp at Bald Rock in Laurel County. Jim Wallace was the senior foreman on the bridge project and Denes Rizardi, an Italian stonemason, was the foreman on the pillars.

Some of the trainees who built the bridge were Russ Evans, Clyde Beal, Ray Tucker, Chester Mills, Chester Vaughn, Chester Lewis, Sim Downs, and Mark Gibson. Tom C. Mayne, Paul Sprouse, Ray Mullins, George Buchanan, and others worked on the abutments.

The bridge would become a magnificent structure. Two pillars built of red sandstone hewn by hand standing more than thirty-five feet above the riverbed support three spans of steel extending for two hundred and twenty-five feet across the gorge from the Pulaski side to the Laurel side of the river. The pillars rest on a foundation made of the same hewn stone embedded ten feet below the riverbed. The outside of the pillars, or the face, is constructed as a batter. Each pillar is some twenty-eight feet in width at the base sloping inward to twenty-four feet as it rises upward. In the same way the thickness of each pillar is considerably more at the base than at the top, or some six feet at the riverbed and four feet at the top.

The new stonemasons created sculpture for the wild and beautiful river gorge. In erecting the pillars, the batter design along with a concave finish on each stone form an artistic as well as supportive structure. The stones hewn twenty inches in height and of varying lengths, some as long as forty-eight inches and others considerably less, make an intricate design for each pillar. The stones which form the outer edges of the pillars are rounded edges which shed logs and other debris coming downstream at high tide.

The red sandstone for the pillars came from two quarries: one at the top of the hill on the Laurel side of the river; the other below the Bee Cliff on the Pulaski side. From Rizardi's crew of fifteen trainees, eight of them chiseled stone all day. Russ Evans and Clyde Beal worked at this task. At times it required three or four days to finish a single stone to perfection while other days as many as two or three stones were finished. Rizardi would not accept a stone with a chisel mark except to be used as filler.

After completion of the pillars and abutments, two obstacles confronted the builders: how to transport the ninety-foot center span from the L&N at London to the site and how to overcome an elbow curve in the downhill road. The builders ingeniously devised a method of using two dump trucks, one a lead truck and the second one, bed-to-bed, running backward.

Near the bottom of the hill, the Caterpillar operator had extended the road by excavating an arm into which the lead truck headed as it came down the steep incline, thus positioning the second truck direct toward the site. Ray Tucker, a trainee, drove the back truck to the river where the men had constructed a long-arm derrick of stiff timbers to lift the steel onto the pillars.

Today, Sublimity Springs is again silent, tranquil, and especial place when snow covers the gorge, when autumn leaves invite migratory birds for a rest, and when May beckons visitors to a lovely camping place—Bee Rock Park.

Now, campers can enjoy and relax in the residual beauty of Sublimity Springs: at the entrance, three camp sites overlook the river where Graham's hotel and Martha Bolton's boarding house once stood.

As always, the magnificent bridge stands silent, untraveled, only a walking bridge for viewers of the wild and beautiful Rockcastle River gorge forever a tribute to the young men of the CCCs.

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Excerpts from Chapter XIV, Book II Dawning of the Cumberland , La Riviere Chaouanon

Excerpts from Lexington Observer & Reporter

Bill Sears, Interview at the site, June 1988.

CCC men at Cumberland Falls Annual Convention, October 1990 and 1991.

Researched, written and submitted by Charlene Phelps

**MASSENDALE ONE MORE NAME ADDED TO THE FALLEN OFFICER'S MEMORIAL**  
Taken from the Commonwealth Journal September 3, 2002, by, Carol Coffey, CJ News Editor

“The killing was one of the most cowardly committed in the county in years.”

That is how the local newspaper described the murder of Somerset Police Patrolman McKinley Massengale on Halloween night in 1929.

Massengale's name is on both the state and national fallen police officers memorial.

His nephew, Bill Massengale, has researched the murder and what happened to the perpetrator after the fact.

Massengale, who was 33 when he was killed, had been on the police force for four years. He was walking toward the door of a restaurant on South Maple Street operated by Jim Hill.

The shooter, identified as Ian Hunter, 23, fired through a glass pane in the front door of the restaurant. Massengale was shot in the chest.

According to the published report of the shooting, Massengale “tumbled backward from the door and fell to the pavement. He died instantly.”

Hunter was subsequently arrested in Wayne County at 11:00 p.m. the next night and placed in the Boyle County jail. The newspaper said Hunter confessed to the shooting.

Also arrested was Alfred Thurmond. Thurmond was taken into custody roughly an hour after the shooting. He was arrested at his home on North Vine Street. The newspaper said he, too, made a full confession and said he was hiding with Hunter.

Thurmond apparently changed his story. He said he didn't have a pistol and Hunter forced him to flee after the shooting.

The newspaper went on to explain other circumstances surrounding Massengale's shooting. On the Thursday evening before the murder, patrolman Sam Waddle and Jim Jasper went to Hill's restaurant because they suspected that he was selling whiskey. When they entered the restaurant, newspaper reports say the officers found moonshine whiskey and placed Hill under arrest.

While the officers were continuing their search of the restaurant, Thurmond entered the restaurant. When the officers began taking Hill to jail, Thurmond followed them to the square. There, he spoke briefly with Hill and asked him to secure a bond.

At approximately 12:30 a.m. officers Waddle and Jasper met officer Massengale on the square and told him about the raid at Hill's restaurant.

A short time later, the three officers met Mat Coomer, a special watchman assigned to the high school building on Halloween night. The four went to the restaurant while Waddle reached in his pocket to retrieve the keys he took from Hill when he was arrested.

Massengale looked inside the door of the restaurant and saw there was no light inside. However a street light illuminated the building enough so the officers could see who was inside.

As the officers were looking through the window, either Hill or Thurmond fired three shots at Jasper and two shots at Waddle.

The police returned fire.

Waddle reported that he saw a man run from the side door of the building through the back door and jump a fence. Waddle said he fired several shots and the person, who was later identified as Thurmond. Jasper said he noticed a sliding door in the back of the restaurant that was ajar. There was a man standing in the doorway. Jasper reported that he fired several shots at the man, but the door quickly closed. The bullets he fired stuck in the door.

Waddle said he emptied his pistol and retrieved Massengale's pistol and emptied that pistol as well. Bloodhounds were taken to the scene and tracked Thurmond to his home.

Thurmond initially denied having seen Hunter when he was arrested. However, officers found four people who saw Thurmond and Hunter together 30 minutes before the shooting in front of Bobbitt's Garage on South Main St., which was one block from where Massengale was shot.

Thurmond stuck to his story when he was questioned at length on Friday, the day after the shooting. He told the police that he had not been near the restaurant and hadn't been with Hunter either.

At approximately 4 p.m. Friday afternoon, Thurmond confessed to chief detective for Southern Railway, S.S. Morrow, chief of police Robert Warren and city attorney Gladstone Wesley. He told them he had been in the restaurant at the time of the shooting.

Railway brakeman Harvey Thompson reported to seeing someone fitting Hunter's description on a freight train at Norwood Hill early Friday morning. The person left the train at Moreland. Thompson reported that there was blood on the person's face and his cap appeared to be torn.

Law enforcement authorities in all central Kentucky counties were notified to be on the lookout for

Hunter. Sheriff Edwards and several deputies went to Lincoln County on Saturday to search for him.

There were rewards totaling \$400 offered by Saturday for Hunter. The money was gathered from city, county and state law enforcement agencies. The description of Hunter and the reward were broadcast over stations in Louisville and Cincinnati on Saturday afternoon.

On Saturday, W. B. Denney was visiting family members in Wayne County when he was told by John and Allen Kelley that they knew where Hunter was hiding. The two asked Denney to relay the information to Somerset officers as soon as possible. Denney returned to Somerset and gave the information to sheriff Edwards and chief Warren. The officers accompanied Denney back to Wayne County to the home of George Copenhaver. Initially, Copenhaver denied that Hunter was in the home, but after the officers told him they were going to search the premises, Copenhaver called to Hunter, who was hiding in a loft.

Hunter did not resist arrest and denied any knowledge of Massengale's murder.

Hunter maintained his innocence while being transported to the Boyle County jail. However, just before arriving there, Hunter "broke down and confessed" to Edwards and Warren.

Hunter said that Thurmond had forced him to go to the restaurant after Hill was arrested. He said that he was drunk at the time and would have shot anyone who walked through the door. He said he fired two shots ---one through the door and one through the front window.

After the shooting, Hunter said he returned to the back of the restaurant and went into an attic room where an undertaking for African-American's kept coffins and supplies. Hunter said he hid between two coffins until the police left the building.

Hunter said he made his escape from authorities about 15 minutes after the shooting took place. He and his brother said they walked all the way to Wayne County.

After being taken into custody, Hunter told the police he hid his pistol at Copenhaver's home. When officers returned, they located the weapon and identified it as a Smith and Wesson .38 special. The bullet removed from Massengale's body was removed and identified as a .38 caliber. The pistol was not loaded when it was found at the Copenhaver's home.

During a thorough search of the Hill's restaurant, police found several "secret compartments filled with empty whiskey bottles, kegs and half gallon jars."

In the attic, police found "a keg with a rubber tube attached. The tube dropped down through the wall to a faucet that supplied the restaurant with whiskey as needed. The faucet was hidden in a wall compartment. The trap door in the kitchen led to a secret basement filled with bottles. "

Hill was charged with having liquor in his possession and released on a \$300 bond. However, he was arrested on a federal warrant after the shooting. His bond was set at \$1,000.

Hunter was eventually given a life sentence after a Pulaski County jury returned a guilty verdict against him. He was facing the death penalty.

His lawyer called Hill the "master mind" in the case.

Thurmond was tried at a later date. He, too, received a life sentence after being convicted by a jury in Rockcastle County. Hunter testified in Thurmond's case.

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In 1929 a Civil War Veteran, 83 married here Friday. Mr. William J. Singleton, 83 years old, a retired farmer who lives near Eubank, and Mrs. Ore E. Padget, 35, of Clarence, were married at the court house Friday Afternoon by Judge Napier Adams. Mr. Singleton served with the 13th Kentucky Cavalry in the Federal Army in the Civil War and this is his second marriage. It is the third matrimonial adventure for the bride.

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Thanks to our readers we have a few queries this time. We didn't have any our last newsletter. I appreciate you taking your time to send the queries.

A Shooting: Negro shot. P. F. Smith, contractor for the railroad work just below town, attempted one cold morning of last week to make his hands work. All went well except one, who became insolent, and finally threw a rock at Smith knocking his hat off. Smith then drew his pistol and fired at the scoundrel



twice, both shots striking him, one in the arm the other in the back. Both being flesh wounds, the negro was not badly hurt; but remained around the shanties of Smith, swearing vengeance on him and threatening to burn his store and house. Hearing of these threats Smith loaded up his double barrell gun with the intent of putting the negro beyond the power to execute his threats, but on a second thought, he decided to get out a peace warrent against him, and on the trial of it, the negro was sent to jail in default of security to keep peace. 1876

Shooting, Irishman shot. Tom Jeffreys, who keeps a drinking saloon on Section 85, was awakened one night last week by a couple of drunken Irishmen who wanted to come in and replenish the dying spirits within them. The hour being very late, Jefferys refused to get up and admit them, whereupon they proceeded with a fence rail to knock the door down. As they were battering against it, Jeffreys put his pistol through a crack in the house and fired, the load taking affect in the abdomen of one of the intruders producing a wound that will probably prove fatal. 18 December 1876

A follow up on the Surber murder in the last newsletter. I had two responses to the account and wanted to know more. The follow up is also in Ron Holt's exerpts from the Somerset newspaper of 21 November 1876

The greatest Object of interest since we last wrote has been the trial of the writ of habeas corpus before the County Judge, which was sued out by the Surber Sisters. Our readers will remember that they were charged with the bloody murder of their sister in law some time since, and that since suspician was directed to them, they had been confined in jail. In appearance, the young women are more than ordinarily comely, for their station in life, while one of them is decidedly good looking. When we saw them, and thought of the awful crime with which they are charged, we could scarcely believe it possible for them to have committed it. The trial occupied two days. The judge released two of the sisters, the younger ones, without bail and sent the oldest back to jail.

Death Maj. William N. Owens, for many years a Prominent public man of the county, died last Tuesday, from the effects of a paralytic stroke. He at one time represented Pulaski in the Legislature and during his life filled creditably many other minor offices in the gift of the people. He was buried with Masonic ceremonies in the Somerset cemetery. 1876

William Fox, the first county clerk, lived in a one room log house near Sinking Creek. He was the county clerk from June 25, 1799, until he resigned March 16, 1846. During these 47 years he built at least 2 other homes, both brick, and at his death he owned 21 town lots. Fox kept a tavern for several years, the first tavern in Somerset.

His six children were: Fontaine Fox, William Montgomery Fox, Amanda Goggin, Jane Pickering Caldwell, Elizabeth Fitzpatrick, and Sophia Ann Kindrick. His will, which may be found in the Pulaski County Courthouse, is a most interesting document which divided his enormous property, slaves, and livestock among his children.

William Fox was buried in the cemetery which at that time belonged to his estate, but after his death, it became the City Cemetery. The Fox family reserved a part of the grounds for the family graveyard. Some graves on the lot are said to be graves of Fox's slaves. These are marked with pieces of stone and have no other identification.

A white stone shaft marks the spot where this pioneer was laid to rest and has this following epitaph which is barely legible: Erected in memory of William Fox. Born in the state of Virginia, Hanover County, March 1, 1770. Died in Somerset in the state of Kentucky, October 19, 1885. Clerk of Pulaski County and Circuit Courts from June 25, 1799 until 1845. An impartial, public officer, faithful citizen, a kind friend, an affectionate husband and parent and an honest man. His wife was buried by his side.  
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A great deal of petty thieving is going on in this vicinity and a Louisana Bulldozer committee to look after the thieves would be a considerable help. William Vanhook, for stealing hogs, somebody else for pistol stealing and a man named Randall for stealing ready made clothing, are some of the cases that have occupied the attention of the County Judge during his term. 1876 Pulaski County News