

# Kentucky

\$5

Spring 2015  
Kentucky Humanities Council, Inc.

*humanities*



**INSIDE:** 2014 Annual Report



# TheatreFest!

## Summer Camp for Kids



## Summer Camp 2015

A week of action-packed instruction in acting, movement and voice culminating in a showcase for family and friends!

**Ages: 8-18, Cost: \$75**

**Session Date - June 16-20**

## TheatreFest!

**2015 Summer Series**

***Moonlight and Magnolias***

by Ron Hutchinson

June 19, 20, 25, 26 • 7 p.m. CT

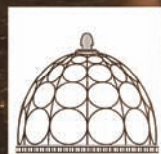
June 28 • 2 p.m. CT

***Dearly Departed***

by David Bottrell and Jessie Jones

July 10, 11, 16, 17 18 • 7 p.m. CT

**V.P. Henry Auditorium**



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# Kentucky

Spring 2015

## humanities



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# 8

### In Search of the Humanities

Prime Time is the Right Time for Kentucky Humanities Council

By Duane Bolin

# 17

### The Birth of Bourbon

A Photographic Tour of Early Distilleries

By Carol Peachee



# 24

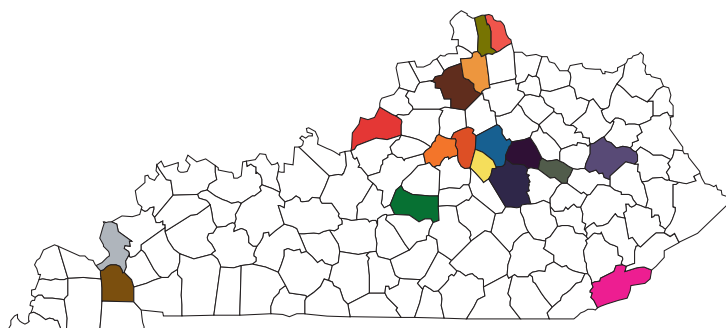
### A Promise Moon

The Underground Railroad in Kentucky

By Stephen Allten Brown

#### In this issue

- |           |            |
|-----------|------------|
| Anderson  | Livingston |
| Campbell  | Madison    |
| Clark     | Marion     |
| Fayette   | Marshall   |
| Grant     | Morgan     |
| Harlan    | Owen       |
| Jefferson | Powell     |
| Jessamine | Woodford   |
| Kenton    |            |



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# Treasures of the Commonwealth

**N**ow that we've dug out from the record snowfalls of winter and experienced the pelting rains of spring, it's time to look forward to new growth and all of the splendor that the Commonwealth has to offer. We can sometimes lose sight of all of our year-round riches when the weather is at its dreariest, but make no mistake, Kentucky's great treasures are in abundance no matter the season! In this issue of *Kentucky Humanities*, we offer a glimpse of some of Kentucky's great treasures.

Jane Gentry Vance, Kentucky poet laureate, was a valued member of the Kentucky Humanities Council Board of Directors and a staunch supporter and believer in our mission of *Telling Kentucky's Story*. A true Kentucky treasure, Jane is immeasurably missed by her colleagues and friends and is remembered fondly for her lively spirit and beautiful words. Her dear friend, and fellow Kentucky poet laureate, Joe Survant shares a story of his time with Jane on page 12.

Perhaps one of the most well-known gems of Kentucky is our bourbon. We are privileged to share with you a few photos from Carol Peachee's book *The Birth of Bourbon*, published by the University Press of Kentucky. These exquisite photos, beginning on page 17, were taken from some of Kentucky's early distilleries and remind us of the vast growth of the bourbon industry in Kentucky and the beauty to be found throughout the Commonwealth.

No matter where on earth you live, books are one of our greatest treasures. Murray State professor Duane Bolin shares his love of books and the joy he derived working with Prime Time Family Reading Time®, a family literacy program sponsored by the Kentucky Humanities Council, on page 8. A six-week reading, discussion, and storytelling program held at public libraries, Prime Time teaches parents and children to bond together around the act of reading; it teaches parents and children to read and discuss humanities topics such as fairness, greed, honor, and deceit; and it helps parents and children learn how to select books and become active library users.

Many of you, undoubtedly, remember the image of Rosie the Riveter, which became a popular symbol of American women during World War II. But did you know that the woman who inspired the image was born in Kentucky? On page 5, James Claypool tells the story of the Bobtown, Kentucky, native who came to personify the "We Can Do It" girl. This story and many more remind us that the "wealth" of our Commonwealth stems from many places; whether our people, our poets, or our preferred beverage of choice. All are treasures to be unearthed.

We hope you enjoy this issue of *Kentucky Humanities* and the stories we'll tell both in print and 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).



**Ben Chandler**

*Executive Director*

*Kentucky Humanities Council*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ben Chandler". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.



# Yes, they too were Kentuckians

*A look at some well-known, and not-so-well-known, people in Kentucky history*

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## Rose Monroe

By James C. Claypool

1920-1997 • Bobtown, Kentucky

*“The ‘We Can Do It’ girl wasn’t me.”*

*— Rose Will Monroe “Rosie the Riveter”*

**T**he quintessential symbol for the special contributions women made to America’s industrial production efforts during World War II was “Rosie the Riveter,” a contrived female publicity stunt that the federal government capitalized on to the fullest. Rose Will Monroe, who was born in Bobtown, Kentucky, in 1920, was working at the Willow Run Aircraft Factory in Ypsilanti, Michigan, building B-24 and B-29 bombers for the U.S. Army Air Forces in 1943 when she was noticed by actor Walter Pidgeon while he was making a bond drive appearance at the factory. Rose would become the personification of an unnamed girl portrayed in a poster, entitled “We Can Do It,” by illustrator J. Howard Miller for Westinghouse done in 1942. Miller’s poster (modeled by Geraldine Doyle, also a Michigan factory worker) profiles a female worker wearing a red polka-dotted bandana, defiantly flexing the muscles in her right arm, proclaiming “We Can Do It.” However, Miller’s work, and the iconic woman shown, should not be confused with the much broader image that the government created and would promote as Rosie the Riveter. The first, Miller’s poster, dovetailed into the other, and though they are two separate concepts they have remained intertwined and fundamentally inseparable.

The name Rosie the Riveter became the wartime symbol for the willingness of women to leave their homes and join in the fight that was taking place. A popular song written early in 1943 by Redd Evans and John Jacob Loeb and performed by Kay Kaiser entitled “Rosie the Riveter” made it easy to transition this fictional character into the government’s new female publicity agent, Rose Will Monroe. Following her discovery by Walter Pidgeon, Monroe appeared in a film promoting the purchase of war bonds shown in theatres nationwide and for a short time did publicity for other government bond drives

and promotions. It did not last long. The bonds were sold, Rose kept on working, often in jobs normally reserved for men. She drove a cab, founded and ran a construction company and, deviating from her “males-preferred” work choices, operated a beauty shop. At age 50, she fulfilled a lifelong dream and began to fly airplanes. It almost cost Rose her life, as in 1978 she crashed a small prop plane during takeoff and suffered injuries from which she never fully recovered. Monroe died at age 77 in her home at Clarksville in Floyd County, Indiana, and was buried in the Floyd County Cemetery.

Rosie the Riveter, a symbol representative of the 20 million women who worked in war plants, remains an American cultural icon. Despite the confused association with the “We Can Do It” female factory worker created in J. Howard Miller’s poster, Rosie the Riveter took on a life of her own, far removed from the one Rose Monroe led later. Rosie the Riveter has been the subject of pop art, has been written about in books, magazines and newspapers, has been portrayed in educational television programs about Rose Monroe in World War II and was portrayed in a Norman Rockwell painting featured on the cover of the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1943 that was auctioned by Sotheby’s for \$4,959,500 in 2002. Given what she overcame — a widow working in a factory while having to raise two daughters, doing men’s work in times when this was quite uncommon — it is altogether fitting that Rose Will Monroe was chosen to represent the American female factory workers who helped to win the war by making America the “arsenal of Democracy.”

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Adapted from James C. Claypool’s book, *Our Fellow Kentuckians: Rascals, Heroes and Just Plain Uncommon Folk*, and the subject of a talk offered by Claypool through the Kentucky Humanities Council’s Speakers Bureau.



## Four new members join the KHC Board of Directors



**Bette Cain Bravo**



**Barbara Bailey Cowden**



**Katherine P. Frank**



**D. Joleen Frederick**

Bette Cain Bravo, Barbara Bailey Cowden, Katherine P. Frank, and D. Joleen Frederick have joined the Kentucky Humanities Council Board of Directors.

Bette Cain Bravo has contributed to civic and arts organizations for many years. She co-founded *Fort Mitchell Living* and worked as the magazine's co-editor, volunteered and served on the Board of Trustees of the Cincinnati Association for the Blind, and served on the Board of Trustees of the Diocesan Catholic Children's Home, founding the home's auxiliary organization, Halo, which provides enrichment activities for the residents.

Bravo earned a B.S.N. in nursing from the University of Florida and worked for 30 years in a general surgeon's office. She later returned to school and earned a master's of theology in 2002.

A native of Independence, Kentucky, Bravo currently resides in Grant County. She is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Elsa Heisel Sule Charitable Trust Foundation, Impact 100 Cincinnati, the Cincinnati Woman's Club and the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Barbara Bailey Cowden has worked in local television for more than 35 years, as a reporter, producer and anchor at WKYT-TV. She currently co-anchors WKYT Midmorning and WKYT News at Noon.

A native of Harlan, Kentucky, Cowden graduated from Harlan High School and went on to earn a bachelor's degree from the University of Kentucky. While attending graduate school, Cowden worked as a general assignment reporter for *The Harlan Daily Enterprise*, and taught journalism at Asbury College and UK.

Cowden has worked with numerous charities and community groups. She co-chaired the Bowl for Kids' Sake for Big Brothers/Big Sisters of the Bluegrass and was a member of the organization's executive committee for eight years as well as serving two years as president. Cowden has also been involved with the Lexington Junior League, Center for Women, Families and Children board, Ronald McDonald House board, Bluegrass Tomorrow board, Kidney Foundation of Central Kentucky,

St. Agnes House board, Lexington's Aging Services Committee, the Lexington Emergency Planning, United Way of the Bluegrass, and the Lexington Chamber of Commerce.

Katherine P. Frank was named dean of the Northern Kentucky University College of Arts and Sciences in April 2014. Prior to joining the faculty at NKU, she served as dean of humanities and social sciences at Indiana University East and Colorado State University-Pueblo, where she was the chairperson of English and foreign languages.

Frank's research interests include Romantic and Victorian English Literature, rhetoric and composition, literary theory, the scholarship of teaching, and academic leadership. She has published numerous academic articles and won the Indiana University East Distinguished Faculty Service Award.

A native of Durham, North Carolina, Frank earned a B.A. in English from Bates College, magna cum laude, and an M.A. in English and Ph.D. in English from the University of Washington.

D. Joleen Frederick is a life-long resident of eastern Kentucky. She earned her bachelor's in English at Transylvania University, and her juris doctorate at the Brandeis College of Law at the University of Louisville.

Her distinguished law career includes serving as a staff clerk for the Committee on House Administration, attorney for the U.S. Congress Committee on Education and Labor, criminal staff attorney for the Fayette County Circuit Court, attorney for Mountain Telephone, the city attorney of West Liberty, assistant county attorney, and the Morgan County Attorney. She has also worked in the private sector, serving clients in Eastern Kentucky for nearly 30 years.

Frederick has been involved in many community service organizations, works in the development of arts and humanities in area schools, the preservation of local cultures, and rural economic development. She is currently the vice chair for the Legal Committee of the National Telecom Association, was president of the Rotary Club of West Liberty, and served as regent for the Daughters of the American Revolution for three years.





## Smithsonian traveling exhibit coming to Kentucky

People around the country are drawn to compete in a broad range of sports ranging from basketball to bowling. Still more gather on the sidelines to cheer for their favorite athletes and teams. Nowhere do Americans more intimately connect to sports than in their hometowns. The Smithsonian's Museum on Main Street program will celebrate this connection in the new traveling exhibition ***Hometown Teams: How Sports Shape America***.

***Hometown Teams*** captures the stories that unfold on the neighborhood fields and courts, the underdog heroics, larger-than-life legends, fierce rivalries and gut-wrenching defeats. For more than 100 years, sports have reflected the trials and triumphs of the American experience and helped shape the national character. Whether it is professional sports or those played on the collegiate or scholastic level, amateur sports or sports played by kids on the local playground, sports are everywhere in America.

This project gives communities an opportunity to share these stories, celebrate local legends and collect memorabilia from the community. With the support and guidance of the Kentucky Humanities Council, selected local towns will develop complementary exhibits, host humanities programs and facilitate educa-

tional initiatives about sports and ideals such as team work, fair play, leadership and respect.

The Kentucky Humanities Council invites museums, libraries, and historical societies in towns of fewer than 20,000 residents to host this Smithsonian Institution traveling exhibit.

Beginning March, 2017, we will bring the Smithsonian Institution's Museum on Main Street traveling exhibit, ***Hometown Teams***, to six Kentucky communities as part of the Museum on Main Street project — a national/state/local partnership to bring exhibitions and programs to rural cultural organizations. Museum on Main Street is a partnership of the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service, the Federation of State Humanities Councils and state humanities councils nationwide. The United States Congress and the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet provide support to the Museum on Main Street project.

Applications will be accepted through June 30, 2015 and communities will be selected and notified by December 31, 2015.

Community organizations interested in hosting the ***Hometown Teams*** exhibit should visit [kyhumanities.org](http://kyhumanities.org) or contact the Kentucky Humanities Council at 859.257.5932.



# In Search of the Humanities

## Prime Time is the Right Time for Kentucky Humanities Council

By James Duane Bolin

**E**velyn's older sister's Facebook post put it quite succinctly and really quite accurately. As a comment to one of my posted photographs of the interior of our new writing and reading cabin, Rebecca wrote: "The Bolins wanted more bookshelves, so they built a cabin to house the shelves." Becca always gets it right.

Our family began to understand the addiction years ago. Daughter Cammie Jo's reaction embarrassed me at first. I was not embarrassed by my daughter, mind you. I was embarrassed by me. It was just that she laughed out loud. Evelyn and Cammie Jo had dropped off Wesley and me at a large out-of-town bookshop while they checked out another store before looking for books themselves.

After 30 minutes or so, I saw them coming through the front door, but it was too late. There I stood red-handed, uh, book-handed, with an already too high stack of books under my arm. Cammie Jo took one look, and that was when she laughed out loud. And then she simply said with an inflection that only she could give, "Daddy!?!!" I guess it was the fact that I had only been in the shop for a few minutes, and already I had found a pile of books that I could not live without.

Thomas Jefferson wrote, "I cannot live without books," and I know what he meant. I cannot, however, understand how Mr. Jefferson could have given up two whole libraries of books, even for the reason of establishing the Library of Congress. What a selfless man!

So, you can see when Evelyn and I had an opportunity to participate in the Kentucky Humanities Council-sponsored





PRIME TIME Family Reading Time® program again, we jumped at the chance. Prime Time is a literacy program for children, but it is also a way for the whole family to learn to love books and public libraries. Prime Time is designed specifically for under-served families with children aged 6 to 10. Pre-reading activities are also available for preschool children aged 3 to 4. The program helps low-income, low-literate families bond around the act of reading and talking about books. It models and encourages family reading and discussion of humanities topics, and aids parents and children in selecting books and becoming active public library users.

Families are provided with three carefully-chosen books each week for six weeks. They read these books together during the week and then come to a public library on a designated evening during the week. A trained storyteller leads a spirited reading of each book and a humanities scholar then facilitates a discussion, drawing in mothers, fathers, and children around humanities themes in the books. A full meal is provided before each weekly session.

Books meant a great deal to Desiderius Erasmus. “When I get a little money, I buy books,” the reformer wrote, “and if there is any left over, I buy food and clothes.” We live in a world where families sometimes find hearty meals hard to come by and new clothes are difficult to purchase. But there is also a poverty of the mind. Children will often opt for smartphones and iPads rather than good, old-fashioned books. Thanks to Benjamin Franklin, public libraries fill a great void in our lives.

And home libraries can still be encouraged over other less essential frivolities. Evelyn’s mother used to nod knowingly and say that we were “book poor.” Books threaten to flow into the hall at my Department of History office at the university. At home, books greet visitors at the front door, and line the walls of our front parlor, our family room, the study, the long hall, and even our bedrooms. We have an overflowing collection of books in our kitchen and dining room. We have found, along with James Axtell, one of my historian friends, that book-lined walls provide excellent insulation, warmth for body and soul on cold winter evenings.

An eloquent tribute to books can be found on the dust jacket of Garrison Keillor’s volume of stories and letters, *We Are Still Married*. Keillor includes “a few lines about the great and ancient invention you hold in your hand, the Book itself. Slow to hatch, as durable as a turtle, light and shapely as befits a descendant of the tree. Closed, the objet d’book resembles a board. Open, its pale wings brush the fingertips, the spore of fresh ink and pulp excites the nose, the spine lies easily in the hand. A handsome useful object begotten by the passion for truth. The apostle Paul was not the host of a talk show, or else we’d be worshiping famous people on Sunday mornings; he wrote books, a Christian thing to do. The faith of Jews and Christians rests on God’s sacred word, not on magic or music, and so technology burst forward into publishing, Gutenberg ... making books similar to ours in the fifteenth century. Ages before the loudspeaker and the camera, came this lovely thing, this portable garden, which survives television, computers, censorship ... and rotten authors. Along with







the Constitution, the blues, and baseball, the democracy of letters is a common glory in our midst, visible in every library and bookstore. These stacks of boards contain our common life and keep it against the miserable days when meanness operates with a free hand and save it for the day when the lonesome reader opens the cover and the word is resurrected. The day can come next month or a hundred years from now, a book will wait.”

The shelves at our house and at my office, all full of books, represent a lifetime of reading. When a student asks me, “Have you read all of those books,” I respond simply with a line my colleague, Dr. Melissa McEuen, a professor of history at Transylvania University, once gave me, “I have read some of all of them, and all of some of them.”

Now, it was Wesley’s turn to laugh at me. He laughed one evening when he saw the foot high stack of books on the night stand by our bed. My night stand stack of books represents a future of reading pleasure. Unless, of course, the stack topples onto me in the night and I succumb to a death that could be worse, I think. After all, I would be surrounded by Evelyn and all those books.

And as Evelyn and I have worked with the Prime Time Reading Family Reading Time program on two different occasions now — once in Marshall County and last year in Livingston County — the most fulfilling thing is to see how the program surrounds entire families with books. As Evelyn and I sat with a mother and daughter over a meal one evening before the reading and discussion time, the mother caught us off-guard with something she said in the course of our conversation. She was so excited about the books she and her daughter had read together that week.

I think the book she had been particularly enamored with was Maurice Sendak’s *Where the Wild Things Are*. That wonderful, caring mother looked at Evelyn and said, “That’s the first book I’ve ever read cover to cover.” Evelyn and I cried on the drive home from Smithland that night. But we cried tears of joy because someone else had been introduced to the unfathomable joys of reading. Someone else knew exactly what Thomas Jefferson meant when he said, “I cannot live without books.”

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## About the Author

James Duane Bolin teaches in the Department of History at Murray State University. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the Kentucky Humanities Council. Contact Duane at [jbolin@murraystate.edu](mailto:jbolin@murraystate.edu).

For information about how you can sponsor or participate in Prime Time Family Reading Time at a Kentucky library, visit [kyhumanities.org](http://kyhumanities.org) or contact the Kentucky Humanities Council at 859.257.5932.



## 2015 Prime Time Family Reading Time Sites

Madison County  
Public Library  
Richmond Branch  
March 11 – April 22  
507 West Main Street  
Richmond

Nelson County  
Public Library  
Bardstown Branch  
June 9 – July 14  
201 Cathedral Manor  
Bardstown

LaRue County  
Public Library  
March 24 – April 28  
201 South Lincoln Boulevard  
Hodgenville

Martin County  
Public Library  
September 1 – October 6  
180 East Main Street  
Inez

Jessamine County  
Public Library  
April 6 – May 11  
600 South Main Street  
Nicholasville

Louisville Free  
Public Library  
Shelby Park Branch  
September 9 – October 14  
1250 Bardstown Road  
Louisville

Nelson County  
Public Library  
New Haven Branch  
April 7 – May 12  
318 Center Street  
New Haven

Louisville Free  
Public Library  
Shawnee Branch  
October 5 – November 9  
3912 West Broadway  
Louisville

Rocky Adkins  
Public Library  
(Elliott County)  
April 10 – May 15  
PO Box 268  
Sandy Hook

Gallatin County  
Public Library  
October 12 – November 16  
209 West Market Street  
Warsaw

Letcher County  
Public Library &  
Cowan Elementary School  
April 28 – June 2  
220 Main Street  
Whitesburg

Garrard County  
Public Library  
October 13 – November 17  
101 Lexington Street  
Lancaster

Johnson County  
Public Library  
May 12 – June 16  
444 Main Street  
Paintsville

Louisville Free  
Public Library  
Okolona Branch  
November 3 – December 8  
7709 Preston Highway  
Louisville

*Dates subject to change. Check [kyhumanities.org](http://kyhumanities.org) for updates.*

# PRIME TIME

## FAMILY READING TIME™







*Jane Gentry:  
A Memory*

*By Joe Survant*



**O**ne perfect October Saturday in 2012, Jane and I went wandering, looking for two old places: Eskippakithiki (which Jane called “Indian Old Fields”), the last Shawnee town in Kentucky, and Pilot Knob, where Daniel Boone first saw the Bluegrass, a scene idealized by Thomas White’s painting. I was particularly interested because of a book I was working on, and Jane because she had heard of them since childhood, but had never seen them. It was one of those fall days that completely denies the fact of coming winter — clear, blue, warm, and endless. We couldn’t believe our luck after a cool rain the day before.

First came Eskippakithiki in Clark County, on Lulbegrud Creek, that improbable name taken from *Gulliver’s Travels* by one of Boone’s party. Of course, nothing is left now of the town and trading post of over 1,000 people but an historical marker looking blankly into a large, empty field. We parked and walked up to the sign, pausing to take our pictures with it, then leaned on the fence trying to imagine the life once lived here by Piqua and Shawnee, Ottawa and Miami, and the occasional French or English traders. Neither of us had much to say. Our imagining used up our words.

Next came Pilot Knob in Powell County. It was harder to find, and harder to reach. With an elevation gain of over 700 feet, the steep Pilot Knob Trail is a good hike on a warm day, and Jane, anticipating wet ground because of Friday’s rain, had worn rubber shoes, not suitable for an uneven, uphill hike, or for coming down. At the top, the trail ended on a sandstone

ledge with a long view of the bluegrass and the area where Eskippakithiki once stood, the same spot from which Boone first saw “with pleasure the beautiful level of Kentucky.” Here, the wind picked up and we moved back from the edge to sit, look and talk. Confronted with so much time and history that day, our conversation drifted into the darker side of place, the awareness of loss that brings, as Wordsworth noted, “thoughts that lie too deep for tears.” Then, almost at the same time, we realized that we were starving, having had only a small snack that Jane had packed since an early breakfast in Versailles. We went as quickly as we could back down the steep path to our car, detouring from our rush to Winchester only long enough for me to collect a rock from Lulbegrud Creek, and to marvel, once more, at the cloudless blue lid of sky.

We had only one more of these outings, this time for Jane to show me the area around Athens and to inspect an old row house she’d bought there and hoped to restore. The next time I saw her, she told me of her diagnosis with the same cruel disease that had taken my wife, Jeannie, two years before.

There is a disturbing quality of loss. People and things can grow more luminous when they are gone. Jane Gentry’s poetry acknowledges this, and her absence embodies it. Anyone who knew this gifted, elegant woman will agree. Jane’s poetry, while celebrating the places and things of her life, was always, more deeply, an elegy for the people she loved who were connected to them. In my memory of that perfect day, we still climb that knob together and look out, imagining history, and Jane still shines through her words:

## *From “Hungry Fire,” A Garden in Kentucky*

Finally in the white ash of the kitchen  
the firemen at daylight uncovered his  
body curled in its first posture  
on the floor beside the oven. Nearby  
I pried up the overturned sink cabinet  
and found, still in the wire drainer,  
his supper plate, without a chip or smudge,  
of the blue-willow set Lily bought in 1917,  
as noted in her diary, from a traveling salesman.  
He washed his plate and fork, perhaps his last  
act of order, put Silly and Marie, his dogs, outside  
to safety, perhaps as Randy, needing money,  
was walking in the kitchen door.

On my shelf of blue glass, the plate now stands  
indistinguishable except to those who may see  
in it a blaze of balance, of wholeness,  
a family rooted in a place of dusty paths,  
dirt roads with grass down the middle, of barns,  
gardens, neighbors, cattle, itself a miraculous  
duration, itself rare, not its loss. For in that plate’s  
round continence, three small blue men among blue  
trees, flowers, houses, cross a blue bridge  
toward the sea, toward distant mountains, a comfort.  
Deep in its scene, far beneath its glaze,  
on the other side of the world in fact, stands  
a white house. Its windows catch the morning  
sun among green trees where guineas will clatter  
themselves to sleep in the long peaceful fire of sunset.

*This poem is printed in its entirety on the following pages.*

# Hungry Fire

By Jane Gentry

The flames ate the house from the bottom up, sought with their tongues around the chimney, then devoured whole an order of place, time, and generations: Sparta, Kentucky, 1990, the infinite regression of mothers and fathers from the single person, only child — James Joiner Fielder, 49 years old the week before, the age his father died. We predicted the fire: he drank himself to sleep most nights, after stoking to red heat his wood stove; he baked tuna casserole from his own recipe or fried steaks at three in the morning, leaving the burner on, forgetting to eat; the wiring, new in 1927, frayed, unraveled. When his mother, Hope, died, he divided himself in two and piece by piece gave all her things away: the cut-glass punch bowl, “before some bastard steals it,” the pillow-cases from her bed, embroidered by Aunt Molly: “Go to Sleep like the Flowers”; her jewelry, her clothes. His own things he kept, though there was little room for him in the house. He farmed as well as Pick, our grandfather, better than his uncles. He knew where his ground was rich. His big-leafed tobacco grew taller than his neighbors’ because he knew when rain was coming and set his plants in time.

He loved machinery—the older; the more useless, the better: the Case steam engine Pick bought in 1919, the thresher from the thirties, the metal-wheeled tractor from the twenties, and the ’42 Ford cattle truck, sunk to the rims behind the barn, its cab grown full of ragweeds. He spent his last afternoon on his John Deere, pulling his brand-new wagon around and around the two blocks of Sparta. The men at the store shook their heads, laughed, admired the wagon. He always wanted Hope to watch him. If he went to Southern States in Winchester to buy a part he’d call her twice, at least, before returning. And twice during the year of her small strokes she came downstairs in the morning to find a Sparta boy in his bed on the side porch. She asked her cousin once, a worldly man in from the army, “Can you tell me exactly what a homosexual is and if I know any?” As they looked out over the long lawn toward the draw-chain gate, he answered, “No,” she knew none. But with all this, the fire still stunned us, a catastrophe unthinkable, yet simply an explosion into the present moment of the workings of the years, the entropy of this peculiar order.



But in this house the order, though old,  
was fresh still, undiscovered and guarded  
by his ownership: in the parlor secretary  
the letters to Pick about his sons' drinking  
and cockfighting, from wise Dr. Lovell  
who birthed them all; in the dining-room  
press the twelve tin cups of the picnic set  
that went to Boone's Creek on Sundays;  
Lily's iron skillets and pots on wide shelves  
in the back-porch pantry, among the ranks  
of canning jars; the packet of blue-backed deeds  
in the desk under the front stairs tracing  
the ownerships and boundaries of seven farms  
Pick gave his sanity and strongest years  
to getting for his children; the stack  
of unquilted quilt tops Lily made from pieces  
of their worn-out best ("Something from nothing,"  
she always said); all the lacework, the fine-  
stitched nightgowns and petticoats laid  
in tissue in the cedar chest Uncle Walter built  
in the penitentiary; the black pages  
of photographs, some the only remnant of faces  
once as familiar as our own in the mirror—  
all broken, rendered into elements,  
inchoate ashes, by those bright tongues  
that made each room a hell to bring  
the house down into its own foundations.  
It settled finally into the rock hole that held it up  
and defined those spaces where we walked in air,  
those lifted rooms that held our lives' beginnings.

At first it hissed. It could have been put out then.  
Then it crackled as it fueled past return, then  
it sang and roared in the destruction  
that he required of his sin, depriving us  
(heirs, too, as he was) of secrets written  
in the secret order of this house. He blamed  
us for our impotence to save him from sodomy  
there on the dining-room floor

under the watchful faces of Hope's Haviland  
looking down from the places in the cupboard.  
Before he passed out loathing himself, he paid  
Randy Perkins, already having forgotten the wave,  
the irresistible wave of desire that rolled over  
him always unexpectedly, carrying him away  
from himself, away from the order Hope left  
him in the hope that it could save him.

As Virgil writes, "Gods of my country!  
I follow, and where you lead there I shall be!  
Preserve my house, preserve my little grandson! . . .

And now we heard the roar  
Of the fire grow louder and louder through the town  
And the waves of heat rolled nearer ever nearer."  
On that first springlike day, smoke and heat  
still wavered into the clear March sky  
from the hopscotch of rubble I prodded through:  
a stack of pink-flowered saucers melted together;  
the blackened shards of the meat platter; a few  
orange and blue flowers of the Chinese tea set  
that stood in its tray on the sideboard  
the eight years since Hope died;  
the blue enamel tea kettle filled with water  
from the firemen's hoses, still in its spot  
inside the kitchen fireplace; the nested  
tablespoons fused, rusted, their silver gone;  
his brand-new typewriter, the keyboard  
bones of flimsy fingers warped by heat.  
This is ruin, what comes of siege, invasion:  
not one stone left upon another. Shining  
towers, broad streets: the eastern windows  
that caught the morning sun and threw it back  
to travelers on the road; the cool, generous  
hall where the spiral stairs lifted; the parlor  
where sunlight pooled through the bay window  
onto the bright garden of the old carpet.  
The company-best of that room dismantled  
by the quick ferocity of flames:

Pick's life-size portrait, heavy in gold leaf,  
hanging beside the framed papers of Thunder,  
his Walker foxhound. Twisted metal, the stem  
of the organ lamp, its globed roses exploded,  
marks their places. The books stood in the shelf  
as the glass shattered in front of them: *The Royal  
Road to Romance*, *Songs That Never Die*, the volumes  
of *The American Educator*, the Bible where Lily  
recorded in her veiny script births, marriages,  
deaths, the time of day, the dates, the years.  
The coffin-shaped Steinway, its legs thick  
as elephants', all its strings snapped, tangled  
in the cellar hole, collapsed into the pit.

Prodding with the bent poker he used last night  
to stir his logs, I lifted and turned all the pieces  
I could move, searching for whatever might remain,  
for something left intact that might raise the house  
again, reorder in their orbits the scattered atoms  
that made the pattern here. I longed to find  
Harmonia's necklace, the one beautiful thing  
intact, a miracle of survival in the ruins  
from which could be drawn all that was lost at Thebes,  
fractal of the wholeness here dissolved:  
the circle of talk around the bedroom fireplace  
winter nights; the talk of women, white and black,  
shelling peas for canning on a summer morning;  
Lily singing "Amazing Grace," thinking of a grave  
at Black's Station while she ironed; he, Johnnie,  
and I at hide-and-seek, racing out into the cold  
rooms from the safe hub of women at the hearth:  
"A bushel of wheat, a bushel of rye,  
all not ready, holler I!"

Finally in the white ash of the kitchen  
the firemen at daylight uncovered his  
body curled in its first posture  
on the floor beside the oven. Nearby  
I pried up the overturned sink cabinet  
and found, still in the wire drainer,  
his supper plate, without chip or smudge,  
of the blue-willow set Lily bought in 1917,  
as noted in her diary, from a traveling salesman.  
He washed his plate and fork, perhaps his last  
act of order, put Silly and Marie, his dogs, outside  
to safety, perhaps as Randy, needing money,  
was walking in the kitchen door.

On my shelf of blue glass, the plate now stands  
indistinguishable except to those who may see  
in it a blaze of balance, of wholeness,  
a family rooted in a place of dusty paths,  
dirt roads with grass down the middle, of barns,  
gardens, neighbors, cattle, itself a miraculous  
duration, itself rare, not its loss. For in that plate's  
round contenance, three small blue men among blue  
trees, flowers, houses, cross a blue bridge  
toward the sea, toward distant mountains, a comfort.  
Deep in its scene, far beneath its glaze,  
on the other side of the world in fact, stands  
a white house. Its windows catch the morning  
sun among green trees where guineas will clatter  
themselves to sleep in the long peaceful fire of sunset.

*This poem is reprinted with permission from the Louisiana  
State University Press.*



# The Birth of Bourbon

## A Photographic Tour of Early Distilleries

*Photographs by Carol Peachee*



Warehouse and pump house, Old Prentice Distillery, Anderson County. A waterwheel once powered an adjoining distillery at this site. It also is the site of the old pump house used by Old Prentice.

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Old Crow complex, Woodford County. This photograph of Old Crow Distillery was taken in 2013. Abandoned in 1987 and salvaged by various companies for stone and wood, the site has been purchased recently for the development of a small craft bourbon distillery.





Old Crow Distillery buildings, Woodford County. From the road in autumn one can see the main distillery in the center, the grain elevator building to the left, and the remains of one of the warehouses in the left foreground.





Old Taylor Distillery, Woodford County. A full view of the distillery shows the lengths that Taylor went to to create his distillery castle. The main attraction is of limestone block; the oven house to the left and offices to the right are of brick. A grain house is in the far right corner, and the water tower, with its crenellation, is in the middle background.









Peristyle colonnaded pergola, Old Taylor Distillery, Woodford County. From within the art nouveau-style pergola, with its colonnaded promenade feature, one looks toward the distillery.



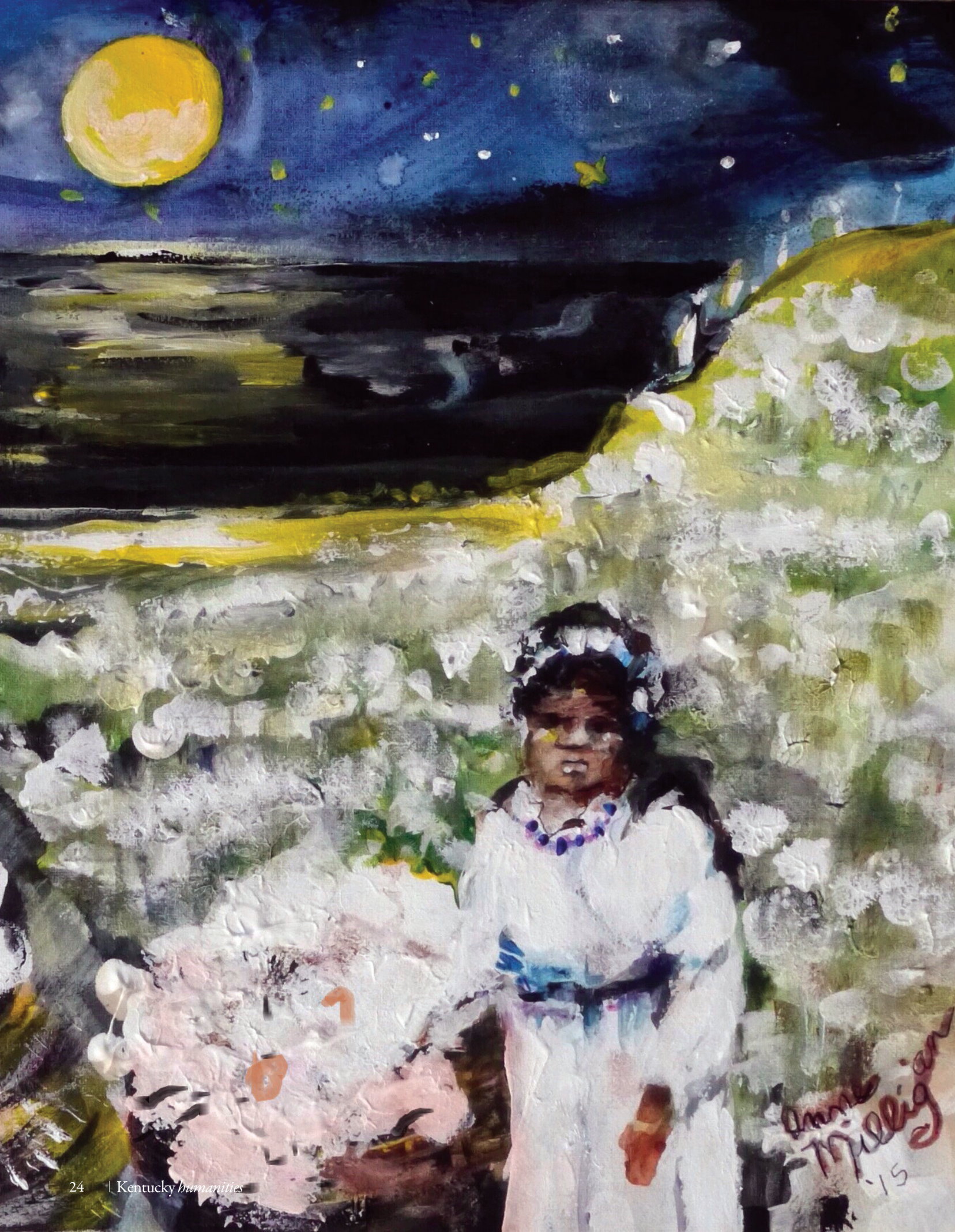
Two stills, Burks' Spring Distillery, Loretto. In the basement of the still house, the original 1805 foundation of Burks' Mill, are two copper stills that replicate the size and design of the stills used by the Samuels family throughout their distilling history.





Barrels on a run, Old Oscar Pepper Distillery/Labrot and Graham Distillery, Woodford County. The historical warehouses of Old Oscar Pepper Distillery are the backdrop for the well-known 1934 Labrot and Graham elevated barrel runs, constructed after Prohibition and continued to be used today. They are famous for being completely gravity-driven.





Ann  
Milligan  
-15



# A PROMISE MOON

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD IN KENTUCKY

By Stephen Allten Brown

**A** research grant to explore the Underground Railroad in Kentucky inspired the historical fiction novel, *A Promise Moon*, the story of a brave slave woman's grueling odyssey as she seeks freedom in the north. My findings revealed that most escaped slaves received little or no help until reaching a free state. The Underground Railroad was primarily a northern line, helping escaped slaves move north once they crossed the Ohio River. I wondered why escaping slaves received so little help until they were already free.

Rachel, the central character in *A Promise Moon*, understands that: "The reward for returning an escaped slave was more money than most people made in two years from honest work."<sup>1</sup> The majority of people were employed in agriculture in the 1850s and the wages of a farm worker averaged about \$10 a month. "The reward for information was enough money to tempt an abolitionist's conscience: 200 dollars, enough to buy a working farm with fertile soil." The average person would have had to work almost two years and save all of their money to equal the reward for

turning in one escaped slave, so the economics of slavery presented more of an incentive to capture escaped slaves than help them. Money is only part of the story, however.

The fine for aiding an escaped slave was \$1,000 and six months in jail, so if the reward money didn't tempt a person's conscience, then the penalty for aiding an escaped slave might deter their compassion. In the 1850s, a fine of \$1,000 was equal to 10 years' wages for the average agricultural worker, a compelling deterrent, but add the threat of jail and the loss of income incarceration represents, and lack of support for escaping slaves becomes obvious. Or is it?

Perhaps the most compelling reason for a lack of support would be an escaped slave's unwillingness to ask for help — it simply wasn't safe. Economic incentives for turning in an escaped slave, coupled with the deterrence of a fine equal to 10 years' wages and six months in jail for aiding or abetting an escapee meant no escaped slave could risk asking for help. Despite such overwhelming obstacles, however, between 100 and 1,000 slaves escaped from Kentucky

# A PROMISE MOON



Artwork by Anne Milligan

every year, depending on northern or southern estimates.

Escaped slaves who were captured risked “being marched to cotton ... marched to the slow death,”<sup>2</sup> marched to the Deep South where the life expectancy of an enslaved person was five to seven years. Given the likelihood of capture and the severe penalty such an attempt would incur, only a desperate enslaved person would risk attempting to escape. In *A Promise Moon*, desperation comes with the inevitability of a family being sold apart. “When the last person was sold, the mourning began ... It wasn’t the first time someone she loved had been sold, and it wouldn’t be the last time, either. Samuel, their first-born, started to fuss ... He’d be walking soon. And then what? Working in the fields as a scarecrow until he’s old enough to pick worms off tobacco leaves. Spending his life in a field with mosquitoes so thick, he’d disappear from view if he was more than 10 feet away ... ‘This our last

chance, Joe,’ she whispered. ‘I don’t want our baby raised a slave.’ ”<sup>3</sup>

How, then, did enslaved people manage to steal themselves free? “Follow the Drinking Gourd” is a catchy tune, but the Big Dipper is merely a starting point for finding the North Star. An imaginary line, five times the distance of the two outer stars in the Big Dipper’s ladle, and running from top to bottom, will pinpoint the North Star — approximately. The North Star is dim and difficult to find, but it is about halfway between the top of the Big Dipper’s ladle and the lopsided “W” of Cassiopeia. The only way to be certain of viewing the North Star, is to wait for several hours and follow the arc of the nearby stars, since only the North Star appears to stay in one place. Staying in one place for very long was not an option for escaping slaves, however. “Joe had told her about patrollers, or “pattyrollers,” people who watched the roads and rivers for escaped slaves.”<sup>4</sup>

Bounty hunters with tracking dogs posed a greater threat than pattyrollers. “A gust of wind rocked her off balance, the kind of breeze that favors tracking hounds. She had an onion in her pocket to rub on her feet, but dogs could follow the faintest of trails. A bloodhound could track a runaway slave from the scent lingering on a downwind tree.”<sup>5</sup> A bloodhound has a sense of smell 60 times more acute than a human and can pick up a scent that is 12 days old, so the importance of rivers and their ability to wash away smells was tantamount.

“‘Rivers flow to the south,’ she assured him. They followed the contours of the land as it sloped downhill toward a river. ‘All we got to do is throw a stick in the water and see which way it floats. Downstream is south, so we’ll just turn our backs to that stick and keep on to the North.’ ”<sup>6</sup> Most Underground Railroad routes in Kentucky loosely followed the rivers. “He moved toward low places, followed the signs water leaves behind. A gentle rain left unevenly spaced clumps of pine needles as it trickled to the bottom of a hill. A hard rain moved fallen trees so the narrow branches pointed the way to a lake. Gully washers formed ditches that cut arrows into the earth.”<sup>7</sup>

In addition to serving as a navigational aid, rivers provided escaped slaves with food. “Chokecherry bushes still had their bright red fruit, so sour the birds refused to eat them until late in the winter when nothing else was left ... Rachel found a





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patch of wild onions on the morning of the second day ... Cattails grew in the marshy lowlands left behind when the river changed course, and the base of the stems could be eaten raw if they were chewed long enough. She foraged enough food to chase away the hunger pains and chewed on wood sorrel to anesthetize the sores forming in her mouth from a poor diet.”<sup>8</sup>

After the Emancipation Proclamation took effect on January 1, 1863, “The North” became a moving target, especially since most of the Civil War was fought on Confederate soil. For strategic purposes, the Union Army controlled the rivers, so if an escaped slave could reach the nearest U.S. Army encampment, there was hope for asylum. Joe, another central character in *A Promise Moon*, takes advantage of this de facto North. “This here’s Camp Nelson. That’s the Kentucky River you just swum across.”<sup>9</sup> Camp Nelson became the largest camp for U.S. Colored Soldiers in Kentucky and also served as refugee camp. “More than half of the people he saw were women and children, but their lethargy was gone, the dim-witted façade of enslavement absent. There was uncertainty and fear on some faces, but also hope, and something else he hadn’t see much of: people smiling. Children old enough to work were playing instead.”<sup>10</sup> Typically, children too young to work in the fields, age 5 and younger, were turned out into the fields to act as scarecrows.

Camp Nelson provided more than just a place of refuge; the camp gave some people an identity. “A military man wrote ‘Joe’ in the camp book and freedom took a giant step forward. ‘What’s your last name?’ He looked at his hands. They didn’t look different but they belonged to a free man. ‘I’m a free man.’ The man behind the table wrote, ‘Freeman.’ He turned the camp register around so Joe could see his name: Joe Freeman ... Freedom gave Joe an identity.”<sup>11</sup> Camp Nelson provided a school house and a hospital for soldiers and their refugee families, at one time providing support for more than 3,000 inhabitants.

U.S. Colored Troops from Camp Nelson saw action in the Siege of Petersburg, Virginia, and this battle is described in *A Promise Moon*. “They were in place when the expected explosion ripped through Pegram’s Salient, a forward Confederate position jutting into land the Union considered its own. The massive crater created by the explosion forced a break in Confederate lines. Frightened Rebel soldiers forgot to remove the ramrods from their rifles and sent the metal rods flying like spears. Too much black powder in the pan and the explosion could singe a man’s eyebrows off his face; too little powder and nothing happened. Prepackaged cartridges took some of the surprise out of each shot, though, and a well-trained soldier could fire five rounds a minute. Joe and his men bit off the paper twists of their cartridges and spit them toward the enemy before they fired. No ramrods came flying from their ranks.”<sup>12</sup>

Despite overwhelming odds and nearly impossible conditions, some enslaved people managed to make it to “The North.” These remarkable people deserve proper credit for their resourcefulness, tenacity, and extraordinary acts of courage. With my latest novel, *A Promise Moon*, I hope to have shed more light on these escaped slaves’ remarkable accomplishments and bring an increased appreciation for the heroes and heroines who stole themselves free.

## About the Author

Stephen Allten Brown organized living history events while serving as the Education Specialist at the Abraham Lincoln Birthplace in Hodgenville, Kentucky. A research grant from the National Park Service sparked his interest in the untold stories of the Civil War. He enjoys demonstrating rail splitting, and delights in sharing the fascinating history of Kentucky with people across the state. He is a member of the Kentucky Humanities Council’s Speakers Bureau. For more information on *A Promise Moon* visit [singingrockpublishing.com](http://singingrockpublishing.com).

1. *A Promise Moon*, Chp. 5, pg. 43

2. *Ibid.*, Chp. 1, pg. 4

3. *Ibid.*, Chp. 1, pgs. 6-7

4. *Ibid.*, Chp 5, pgs. 42-43

5. *Ibid.*, Chp. 1, pgs. 12-13

6. *Ibid.*, Chp. 15, pgs. 148, 149

7. *Ibid.*, Chp. 12, pg. 123

8. *Ibid.*, Chp. 2, 3, pgs. 23-24

9. *Ibid.*, Chp. 12, pg. 125

10. *Ibid.*, Chp. 12, pg. 130

11. *Ibid.*, Chp. 12, pg. 130

12. *Ibid.*, Chp 21, pg. 226



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# My Hat



By Georgia Green Stamper

**T**his week an old friend who lives on the other side of the continent dropped back into my life. We were classmates and sorority sisters during our college days at Transylvania College (now University), but we haven't seen each other in over 40 years.

Reunions are as sweet as ripe fall pears when you've reached our stage of life. We've talked non-stop about the old days, the new days, and many of the ones in between.

But we haven't talked about the wide-brimmed felt hat I wore to the Freshman Tea. Because I can't, even now, do so without blushing.

The early '60s were a confusing time to come of age, especially in Kentucky. (Mark Twain, you may recall, said he wanted to die in Kentucky because everything happens 10 years later here than in the rest of the country.) *Time* magazine was running cover stories about the sexual revolution on America's college campuses, psychedelic drug use, and student sit-ins for civil rights in the south.

My college handbook, on the other hand, told me in no uncertain terms that I was expected to wear a skirt, never slacks, to class, and that all Transylvania students were expected to "dress for dinner" each evening in the college dining hall. That meant high heels and nice dress for co-eds, jackets and ties for males.

The handbook was mailed to my home weeks before any classes began, and I crammed so that I wouldn't break any of the many rules. Freshmen were to be in their rooms studying from eight until ten each weeknight. Lights were to be turned out at

eleven. Even an upperclass woman had to sign out and state her destination whenever she left the dorm after six p.m. Of course there was a strict curfew, nine during the week and midnight on Friday and Saturday nights. And if a boy were ever caught in a co-ed's dorm room — well, the handbook didn't spell out the punishment but I inferred she would be drawn and quartered by the Dean of Women on the lawn of Old Morrison Chapel.

We freshman arrived on campus on a hot September Sunday, and our first official event was a late afternoon tea at the college President's home. Growing up on a tobacco farm at Natlee, I'd always taken my tea with ice in a tall glass usually slouched on the front porch glider. But I understood that "a tea" was not about what we'd be drinking. I'd been in a small tizzy over what to wear.

Mother, however, assured me she knew what one wore to a tea at the President's house. She'd attended college in the early 1940s, and knew about such things. A nice day dress would be appropriate, but of course, I'd have to coordinate a matching hat. "One always wears a hat to a tea," she said. Having seen all those photographs of Queen Elizabeth in *Life* magazine, I knew she was right.

So off we went to purchase my debut college outfit at the best store we could think of, Wolf Wiles Department Store down in Lexington. Stores like Wolf Wiles don't exist in the suburban shopping mall world that most Americans know today. It was a little like the better Manhattan stores I've ambled through in later years, quiet and elegant, except the clerks weren't arrogant. It might be better compared to a contemporary boutique except it was



huge, rambling over multiple, long, wide floors plus a mezzanine. The faint scent of expensive perfume permeated its every nook.

I settled on a fitted, navy sheath dress with discreet red piping in just the right places. I have to say that in memory it was one of the more flattering dresses I ever owned. Then it was time to select the hat.

I felt like Cinderella dressing for the ball when I sat down in one of the satin chairs in front of a long bank of mirrors in the hat department. The kind saleswoman brought one headpiece after another for me to try. Finally, she and Mother and even several passers-by agreed that the simple, unembellished — but large — navy felt hat was perfect for my height (tall) and for my dress (straight and narrow.) With its wide brim dipping asymmetrically to the top of one eyebrow, the hat was sophisticated and chic. I never felt as glamorous, before or since, as I did the moment I decided to buy that hat.

You have guessed how this story ends. I was the only girl at the Freshman Tea who wore a hat. Standing at least 5' 10" or more in my heels and dramatic headgear, I was not even able to fade into the shadows.

Lest you think I'm exaggerating my faux pas, let me share that decades later classmates at reunions would make remarks about their first impression of me, saying they had thought I was a professor "in my hat." Apparently, everyone who was at the tea remembers my hat. And not in a good way, though I think I probably did look good. I was out of step when blending in was the assignment we'd been given that afternoon.

I wish I could say that I laughed off the incident, that I was indifferent to being different. But I was mortified, perhaps as much for Mother as for myself. I'd never known her to be dead-wrong before. Despite her intelligence and wisdom, I had arrived in this new cosmopolitan world I was entering looking like a country bumpkin who was trying too hard.

Off balance, I continued to make missteps that fall, and I never again was the self-assured girl I'd been in my small high school. I've often regretted the confident edge I lost that first afternoon at college, and wondered if my life would have turned out ever so altered if I hadn't worn a hat to the Freshman Tea.

Yet it may have been good to learn at the outset how very much I had to learn. After 40 years, I've concluded that grasping the scope of one's ignorance is about what a college education amounts to.

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## About the Author

Georgia Green Stamper is a seventh generation Kentuckian. A graduate of Transylvania University, Stamper is a former high school English and theater teacher and speech team coach. Her published works include *Butter in the Morning* and *You Can Go Anywhere*. She also writes a bi-weekly column, "Georgia: On My Mind," for *The Owenton News-Herald*. She has been a regular commentator for NPR member station WUKY affiliated with the University of Kentucky and a popular member of the Kentucky Humanities Council's Speakers Bureau.





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