

Bits and Pieces

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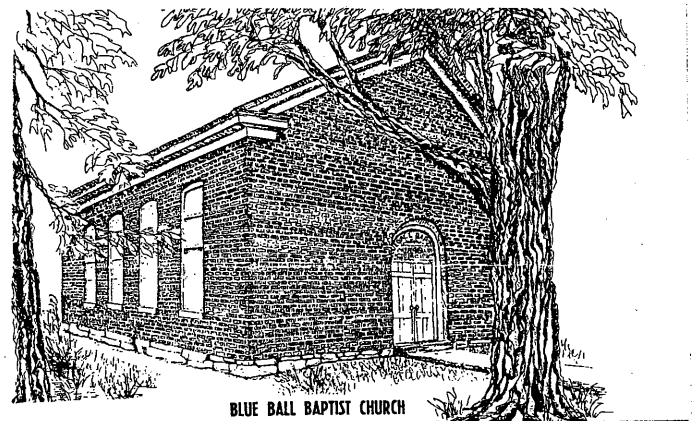
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BLUE BALL BAPTIST CHURCH

The Blue Ball Baptist Church building is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. It is the only pre-Civil War brick church building in Hardin County except those in Elizabethtown. In 1849 Daniel Holman sold 2-1/4 acres of land to the church trustees for the sum of one dollar. John Holbert was employed to erect the building. Bricks used in the project were fired on the location. It is located in the northwestern part of Hardin County, between highways 220 and 1357.

The building not being completed, the church was organized on June 20, 1849, at the home of Daniel Holman. Charter members were Daniel Holman, Francis Hill, Henry Willyard, Robert Nall, Elizabeth Nall, Mary E. Nall, Daniel W. Nall, Harrison Holman, Isaac Richardson, Mary Wortham, James Holman, Lucy Holman, Lucy Hobbs, Martin S. Hill, Mildred Hill, Nancy Hicks, Jacob Woodring, Thomas Morrison, Lucinda Morrison, William Hicks, Leticia Richardson, Ellen Holman, Thomas H. Thomas, and William Tarpley. Articles of Faith and Rules of Decorum were adopted.

Blue Ball Baptist Church became a thriving institution, as evidenced by



BLUE BALL BAPTIST CHURCH
Blue Ball Baptist Church

published reports, and continued to be a force in the community until the early 1920's.

The church became inactive during the period from 1926 through 1949; however, the building remained in use for weddings and funerals. On December 4, 1949, the church was reorganized and has remained a viable institution since that time. A frame addition has been made to the back of the brick building.

A large cemetery adjoins the church.

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John James Audubon in Elizabethtown and Hardin County

No authentic evidence has ever been discovered concerning the residence of John James Audubon in Elizabethtown. Such a lack of documentary material concerning the great ornithologist would naturally lead one to believe that he had no connection with this city, except for the fact that Samuel Haycraft, Jr., author of *The History of Elizabethtown*, makes this statement in a discussion of early merchants: "Audubon & Rozier were also merchants in town at an early date. Their clerk was James Hackley...." (page 108).

Haycraft does not state the year of the establishment of Audubon and Rozier's Elizabethtown store. The lack of documentary records indicates that it must have been of short duration. Theories have also been advanced that the firm, Audubon and Rozier, in Elizabethtown might have been an itinerant business enterprise. It is not at all unlikely that the two young impractical business men might have arrived in Elizabethtown with a Conestoga wagon filled with merchandise which they sold for a short period, either from their store on wheels or from a building which they likely rented for a short time and when their stock of goods was sold, moved on to a new field of exploitation.

Constance Rourke in her biography entitled *Audubon* (1936) states:

They (Audubon and Rozier) purchased goods and by the autumn of 1807 had made the journey to the falls of the Ohio. Audubon liked the little town (Louisville) there with its back against the wilderness and they sold their goods with some success, making trips along neighboring trails as peddlers and scouring the country as far south as the village of Nashville to consider a location for a future store.

The most convincing statement made by Haycraft regarding the firm is that James Hackley was the clerk. This would not, however, rule out the supposition that they placed merchandise in a rented building in the town and hired Hackley as clerk while they continued as itinerant peddlers, restocking on their infrequent trips through the place.

On a visit through Hardin County Audubon recorded in his own handwriting various notes concerning the life and habits of passenger pigeons which he observed in the year 1813 while he was in West Point, Kentucky:

Whilst waiting for dinner at Young's Inn at the confluence of Salt River with the Ohio, I saw at my leisure, immense legions [of passenger pigeons] still going by, with a front reaching far beyond the Ohio on the west, and the beech wood forests directly on the east.

(Source: The above account was taken from "John James Audubon in Hardin County and Elizabethtown," by R. Gerald McMurtry, *Hardin County Enterprise*, Jan. 14, 1937.)

Simon Bolivar Buckner in Elizabethtown

The Buckner family arrived in Kentucky from Virginia in 1803. Immigrating to what is now Hart County was Philip, whose son Aylett was the father of Simon Bolivar Buckner. Philip and his family settled near what is now Bonnierville, and Aylett, after his marriage, acquired land nine miles east of Munfordville, later known as Glen Lily. His interest in the iron ore of Hart County and his desire to become an ironmaster had much to do with his selection of this farm site.

Aylett Buckner apparently was a frequent visitor to Elizabethtown, as among other relatives, two of his nieces resided there--Eliza Slaughter, wife of Dr. Harvey Slaughter, and Jane Leedom, wife of Samuel V. Leedom--who were daughters of his sister Ann (Mrs. Jesse Wood). However, the only record of Aylett's having visited Elizabethtown was in 1819, when it is said that because he was noted for his fine appearance, personal charm, and magnetism, he was called to Elizabethtown as the best man to help entertain David Crockett when the latter visited there. This source states also that in this same place, he publicly whipped a personal enemy on horseback through the streets of the little town.

Following his purchase of the Hart County farm, Aylett Buckner operated the Aetna Furnace near the Green River. Later, along with Samuel Leedom and Cadwallader Churchill of Elizabethtown, he established the Muhlenberg Iron Works and moved his family to Muhlenberg County. This venture was fairly successful until the death of Jacob Holderman, one of the managers.

Simon Bolivar Buckner, called "Bolivar" by his family and friends, was a familiar figure in Elizabethtown in the years before the Civil War, and for a few years thereafter.

Following the demise of the Muhlenberg Iron Works venture, Aylett Buckner moved his family, with the exception of Bolivar, to Arkansas, where he had, before his entry into the ironworks business, purchased a large cotton plantation, which

he operated successfully until his untimely death in 1851 at the age of fifty-eight.

Meanwhile, Bolivar, having availed himself of the meager schooling available in Munfordville, entered a seminary in Hopkinsville. In 1839 he learned of a vacancy at the United States Military Academy, and upon application to his Congressman, received an appointment and entered upon his studies there on July 1, 1840, at the age of seventeen. He ranked eleventh in his class of twenty-five when he graduated on July 1, 1844. He served in Mexico during the Mexican War. Following his service there, he was transferred to the U.S. Military Academy as an instructor. Meanwhile, he was given a leave of absence of one month, which he spent in Hart County and Elizabethtown, among friends and relatives of his childhood days. He also visited his parents in Arkansas. He continued his Army service. In 1850 he was married to Mary Jane Kingsbury, daughter of Major Julius B. Kingsbury, with whom Buckner had previously served, and Mrs. Kingsbury. The Buckners' daughter Lily was born in 1858 in Louisville.

In March, 1855, Buckner resigned from the Army to devote his time to help direct his father-in-law's business and to engage in other pursuits of civil life. His father had died at his Arkansas plantation in 1851, leaving his mother and his widowed sister alone there.

The widow Buckner returned to Kentucky in 1858 and came to Elizabethtown. She acquired property at the corner of Race Street and Main Cross Street (Central Avenue and E. Dixie Avenue), extending from Main Cross to Plum Alley, 193 feet along Main Cross. A handsome brick residence was located on the property. She also owned a lot across Race Street containing a stable. Mrs. Buckner and her widowed daughter Mary Tooke, together with Mary's two sons, occupied this property for some years. Bolivar visited them in this home on many occasions. During the Civil War Mrs. Buckner, because of what she termed the

despotism in Washington, was forced to leave her home, and she again sought refuge among her friends in Arkansas. She died January 6, 1862, in Arkansas, where she was buried. Later her remains were moved to the Buckner plot in the Frankfort Cemetery.

Bolivar Buckner's exploits in the Civil War are well known and will not be outlined at this time. He was, of course, thoroughly familiar with the Elizabethtown area, and made visits there as often as possible. His wife and daughter visited relatives in Elizabethtown frequently during the war.

In 1869 Buckner and his sister Mary Tooke disposed of their mother's real estate in Elizabethtown, selling the house and lot to James H. Bryant and Ernest Wedekind and later the stable lot to Jack and Ben Vertrees, persons of color.

Following the war, Buckner was engaged in various business pursuits in Louisville, Chicago, New Orleans, and elsewhere. (See "How General Buckner Recovered his Fortune," *Bits and Pieces*, Vol. XIX, No. 4, Fall 2000.) The family maintained a home in Louisville. However, a number of Buckner's relatives and friends lived in Elizabethtown. Mrs. Buckner had visited there often, and both of them liked the people in that city very much. Also it had good rail service and was about half way between his business interests in Louisville and his farm in Hart County. During 1872 and 1873 he and his family lived much of the time in Elizabethtown in a high-class boarding house located at the corner of South Miles Street and East Dixie Avenue.

For some time Mrs. Buckner's health had been of concern to the family. She had been suffering from tuberculosis for years. She had tried a change of climate and had had the best possible medical attention in her last years, but all to no avail. She died slowly but peacefully in Elizabethtown on January 5, 1874.

The funeral for Mrs. Buckner was held at Elizabethtown and burial took place in the Elizabethtown City Cemetery. Many years



Elizabethtown Residence
of Mr. & Mrs. S. B. Buckner, 1872 - 1873

afterwards, on October 19, 1892, her daughter, then Mrs. Morris Belknap of Louisville, had her mother's remains removed to her own lot in Cave Hill Cemetery in Louisville.

Mary Tooke, disposing of her property in Arkansas, came to Kentucky. In 1870 she was living with Jane Leedom in Elizabethtown. By 1877 she was living with her brother at Glen Lily. She was mistress of the home, and she and her niece Lily Buckner made their home known far and wide as a delightful rural retreat. Lily Buckner married and went to Louisville to live in June, 1883. Just a few months later, on October 10, Mary Tooke died at Glen Lily, and interment took place at Elizabethtown.

In 1885 Bolivar Buckner was married to young and beautiful Delia Claiborne in Richmond. They made their home at Glen Lily. Bolivar Buckner died in the home he loved on January 10, 1914, after a distinguished career as a military leader, businessman, governor, and candidate for vice president of the United States

M. J. J.

(Sources: Stickles, Arndt M., *Simon Bolivar Buckner, Borderland Knight*, Chapel Hill, 1940; public records of Hardin County; author's files.)

Early Flat-boating on the Rolling Fork

(The Elizabethtown News, January 5, 1932)

People who have noticed the ordinary sluggish and small stream called the Rolling Fork river, east of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad, will be surprised to learn that in early days of the 1800's steam boats were known to come up this river as far as the mouth of Beech Fork, and during this period of time John H. Hart was accustomed to shipping cattle and hogs by steam boat from Hart's Ferry Farm [located in the Youngers Creek Valley in Hardin County]. Rolling Fork was then a real river, and before steam-boating time on this stream it was the custom of the farmers in the rich valley of the Rolling Fork to ship products by ferry boat every year to New Orleans, stopping on the way at Memphis, Natchez and Vicksburg, to dispose of part of their products.

The flat-boats were from 40 to 60 feet long. They were constructed with keels drawing about 6 feet of water when loaded. They were generally launched after loading at the first freshet that came. There were two side oars, or sweeps, and a rear sweep with a paddle-end, and each required from two to three men to operate it. The crew consisted of from ten to twelve men, according to the size of the boat. The boats were laden with cured meat, corn and other products of the farms, often including many barrels of cider. The propeller was a matter of current, and the oars and sweeps were merely used to guide it. The noted ferry boatmen were the Crawfords, Harneds, Troutmans and Johnsons.

As soon as a loaded boat started on its way to New Orleans, the keel for another one was laid, and the negroes on the farms, under superintendency of one of the younger men of the family, started to plant another crop.

After they had disposed of their products in the cities along the Mississippi River, they sold their boat in New Orleans for lumber and walked back home, following the old Navajo Indian trail through Mississippi. The journey home required at least two months, and they encountered, generally, many friendly Indians. On the way back home from one trip, one of the Harneds sold to an Indian chief a barrel of cider for a hunting pouch made of buckskin and beautifully braided. It is probable that several carried guns while on the journey to kill game for food, as the country abounded in deer, wild turkeys, pheasants and much smaller game. It was an awful journey to the pioneer to carry that boat down the Ohio, through Mississippi, and on to New Orleans, and then to walk back home, a distance of about 800 miles. These men, however, were rugged and accustomed to all kinds of hardships. The construction of the boat was not a simple thing, but it seems inconsistent to look at the small Rolling Fork now on which it would be difficult to operate an ordinary row boat and think it was wide enough and big enough to carry a flat boat 60 feet long and 150 feet across.
