

There Are Places I Remember

ONE-TIME COUNTY RESIDENT SHARES TIDBITS FROM HER EARLY FAMILY LIFE NEAR GLENDALE

By Susan McCrobie, newsletter editor

Mary Frances Peters was born near Glendale in Hardin County, Kentucky, on November 6, 1914, to Frank and Ruby Wooldridge Jeffries, one of five children.

She started her education in a rural country school here in Kentucky. In 1920 the family moved to Iowa, and she attended rural country schools and later attended Guthrie County High School in Panora taking the teachers course offered there.

Sometime during her life, she penned a collection of memories of her early life in Kentucky that she called "**Under the Sugar Tree.**"

Recently, following the death of Mary Frances, a daughter has passed along the treasured tales to the Hardin County Historical Society.

In Mary Frances' own words, "*This story book is dedicated to the memory of all the wonderful people who make up the story, to my family, to all little children everywhere, and to all the grownups who once were children.*"

The short stories, told from a child's perspective, give glimpses into the history and development of Hardin County as well as into the daily lives of her inhabitants.

The following is one of the stories, printed in its entirety, with an examination of the story as it relates to our local history.

Aunt Emma and Uncle Grundy Lewis

Daddy's family never had a lot of money-maybe some of them did-but Grandma and Grandpa Jeffries didn't.

Grandma Jeffries had come from a very proud, aristocratic Southern family. Grandpa's family went back to the pioneer days, probably to the time that President Lincoln's parents lived in our county. They



The Ruby and Frank Jeffries family. Children left to right: Paul, Mary Frances, Helen, and Marjorie. Photo taken ca. 1919 before the family moved from Kentucky.

were hardworking people who never seemed to accumulate much money. Grandpa Jeffries never wanted a lot of finery. He was always happy with the necessities in life and Bible to read.

Grandma Jeffries' sister, Emma, had married a well-to-do man named Grundy Lewis. He was not a farmer and lived in a grand big white house in the nearby town of Glendale. We used to drive by and admire the house from the street.

Well, one day Aunt Emma invited us to come for dinner the following Sunday. So we all dressed up in our Sunday best clothes, got in our new surrey and headed for Glendale a few miles away.



A.G. Lewis and Son farm supply store in Glendale. This photo, showing the front of the business that faced the L&N Railroad, is thought to have been taken around 1900. The building today houses the Glendale Antique Mall and sports a tall flat facade rising from a long covered porch.

accessed the worth of Aunt Emma's husband, Alfred Grundy Lewis, she was wrong about his lack of farming roots.

When Grundy Lewis died, both his death certificate and obituary listed his occupation as a farmer. To the agriculturally centered community of Glendale he was that and more.

Lewis operated a farm near Glendale for many years before retiring and moving into the town.

He also operated a farm supply store in the town, selling McCormick and Empire binders

and mowers, Hamilton cultivators, Hoosier grain drills, Oliver chilled plows and other farming implements as well as buggies, wagons, harness, seed, fertilizer and seed.

More likely than not, Mary Frances' new surrey came from Uncle Grundy's Farm Supply Store.

The store operation was on the east side of the railroad in Glendale at the crossing. It was open for business before 1890. Grundy Lewis sold the operation to his sister Cordelia's husband, Edgar Walker, sometimes around 1920-the time that Mary Frances' parents moved to Iowa.



Landmark Comes Tumbling Down

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—Enterprise photo by Leon Blakey

An Elizabethtown landmark is being torn down at 252 West Dixie avenue. The Victorian-style home was built around the turn of the century by Granville Watkins, who operated a grocery store where the Taylor Hotel now stands. Four generations of the Watkins family have lived in the home. Mr. Watkins' one daughter, Daisy, married Dr. J. C. Montgomery, a dentist and trader. They were the parents of one daughter, Mildred Ellen, who in turn had one daughter, George Ann.

LAMENT FOR A DEAR OLD HOUSE

Who likes to see a house destroyed
When it has lived its usefulness
Away? To stand by powerless
And watch machine and man employed
To smash a house to nothingness?

There must be much more gentle ways
A house can die. My heart complains
At crashing in of window panes
As walls collapse and chimney sways
And all is rubble that remains.

I turn away from wrenched off doors,
Unended stairs and twisted sills
Half-buried where the plaster spills,
And fractured beams and two-by-fours
With which the opened basement fills.

Oh, how I wish it had been spared,
The old, old house demolished here,
The dear old house, yes, it was dear,
Where dreams were shaped and love was shared.
Beg pardon, if I dry a tear.

The photos show the house is gone;
The only view is empty space;
Of house remains no shape nor trace
Where once we warmed to its embrace.

But gone, you say? No, it lives on —
My heart still claims its homing place.

—Norman R. Boe



Courtesy of the Kentucky Historical Society

This sketch of the home that Benjamin Helm built on Main Street was made while owned by Samuel Haycraft, Jr.

Haycraft purchased the home in 1822 and lived in it until his death in 1878.

The house burned in 1882.

By 1803, Helm's new Elizabethtown home was completed. It must have seemed a very lavish home as most houses in the area were still of log construction.

The large brick house was 50 feet long and 25 feet wide. It had a deep cellar under the entire structure. The walls of the first story were 18 inches thick and the second story was comprised of 13-inch thick walls. The floors were of blue ash, laid upon massive sleepers that were also cut from blue ash timbers. The plaster work, performed by master tradesmen from Lexington, was more than an inch thick and polished to a high gloss. Charles Sawyer, an Englishman, was the bricklayer. Robert Huston did the carpentry work on the home.

Magnolia trees were planted on both sides of the homes' portico aiding in its grand appearance.

On the 17th day of May, 1803 Helm married the widow Whitaker in Bardstown and delivered her to his new Elizabethtown home. Her toddler son, Washington, became the cherished stepson of Helm. The boy's deceased father, Robert Henry Whitaker, had lost his life in a house raising accident.

Helm's new father-in-law, Benjamin Edwards, was a former Revolutionary War Lieutenant. Edwards had relocated his family to Nelson County in 1798 after serving in the Virginia legislature and in the United States House of Representatives.

The alliance with the well educated, landowning, aristocratic Edwards' family positioned Helm in a select class of men who dominated Kentucky and later, national politics.

From 1800 to 1817, his position in local county politics as the Hardin County Court Clerk, Clerk of the Quarter Session Court, and Clerk of the Circuit Court gave Helm opportunity to form a first name

basis relationships with the likes of lawyer James Buchanan, later the 15th U.S President, and Ben Hardin as they worked with the local court to resolve disputes.

Local leadership in the town and county were on hiatus as Helm served in the Second Kentucky Mounted Volunteer Militia during the War of 1812. Benjamin Helm, putting to use his administrative abilities, served as the adjutant of Captain Aaron Hart's Company under Lieutenant Colonel John Thomas. The unit and men was commissioned into service from September 29, 1812 until October 30th of the same year.

While Benjamin Helm never applied for a military pension in his later years, having no need for the money as he was in affluent circumstances, the applications of many Hardin Countians that did provide insight into Helm's military service.

Private John Bush's War of 1812 Kentucky military service discharge carried the signature of Adjutant Benjamin Helm of the Regiment of Kentucky Mounted Volunteer commanded by Col. John Thomas in the Company of Aaron Hart. This pension application reports these men as being on duty at the Walbash River with Bush's discharge on the 25th day of January 1813.

Following his fight with the British and Indians in the Northwest Territories, the forty-five year old Major was taken sick on the journey home and carried on a litter between two horses for a march of two days. Once back in Elizabethtown he resumed his duties with the local courts and farming.

In 1818, Helm was chosen by common consent as the first bank president of the old Union Bank of Elizabethtown.

In 1832 he was the builder and largest contributor

Title to the house was transferred to James Hillary Bryan, a neighbor, who lived in a sprawling red brick home on College Street at its intersection with Miles [Brown Funeral Home.]

The Helm heirs made the deed over to Bryan on November 2, 1882.

At the time of Bryan's death in September 18, 1884, he was said to have owned more real estate in town than any other person.

During his two year period of ownership of the Helm home, the house and its miscellaneous contents abandoned by the Helm family fell into a sad state of disrepair.

The 'old barn of a place' was used to house hay and required much attention to return it to its previous glory when acquired from Bryan's heirs by C.W. Terry and his wife, the former Julia Phillips.

The home underwent some major renovations during the Terry ownership. By 1936, it had a new front porch, the two one-story wings were torn away, and several small buildings on the grounds were razed as well as the old kitchen slave quarters at the rear of the mansion.

Title to the home passed from Mrs. C.W. Terry to her grandson,

Horace Terry Bird, upon her death.

According to Bird's widow, the former Polly Blair, who still resides in the home and her daughter, Harriet Clagett, when the Terry family purchased the home a sideboard was among some of the personal content still left in the dwelling. The massive size of

the piece most likely is the reason why it was left behind and never carried off during years not kind to the house. It has become a treasured piece of the homes' history and resides in the large dining room,

A portrait of a young child painted and signed by Katherine Helm, granddaughter of Governor John LaRue Helm, is showcased at the foot of the grand staircase in the spacious front foyer just above a petticoat table. This is one of two portraits done by Katherine Helm that can be found in Elizabethtown. It is believed the young child is a member of the Helm family. The second portrait is of Malvina Warfield Cunningham that hangs in the Brown-Pusey House dining room.

Among the many prized handcrafted furniture pieces in the house, Mrs. Bird enjoys a sitting chair and table from the Governor Helm mansion.

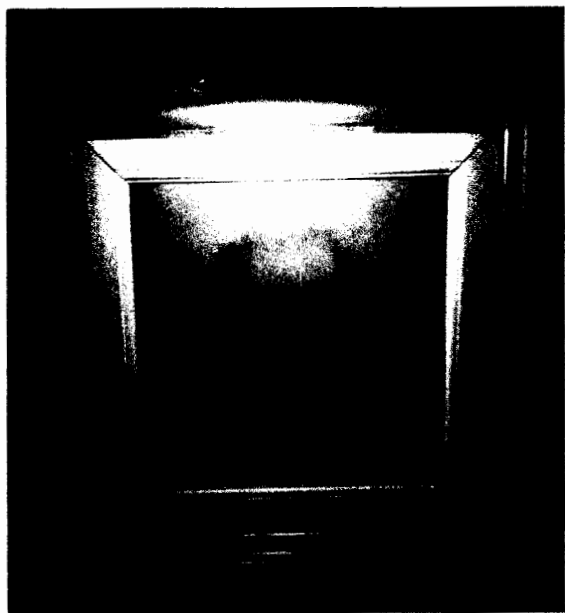
Slave Quarters on Terry Place Being Razed

Old slave quarters on the rear of the Terry property on Helm street in Elizabethtown are being razed this week in order to clear a roadway from Helm to College and extend College to Miles.

The slave quarters were built at least 125 years ago, and the brick and timbers (yellow Poplar) are in fairly good condition.

The front room of the old structure was used as a kitchen for the main house, the next a loom room and a third the cook's room. Other small buildings erected about the same time, already have been torn down, according to Mrs. Charles Terry, owner.

Courtesy of The Elizabethtown News

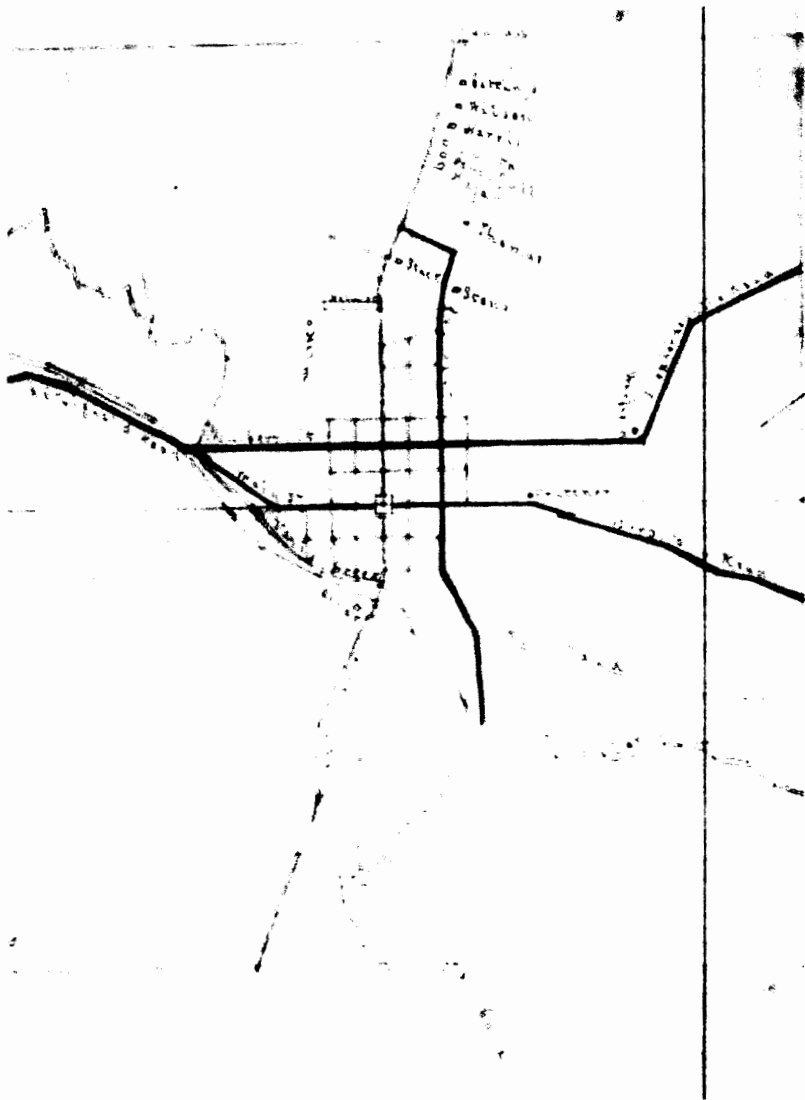


Photos Courtesy of The Bird Family

Top: Close-up of Katherine Helm's painting of an unnamed family member.

Right: Helm's art hangs in the front hallway of the Helm Street Mansion.





Courtesy of the Hardin County Clerk, Kenneth L. Tabb

Post Civil War Map Defines Town's Growth

An act of the Legislature of Kentucky on February 27, 1867 extended the boundary of Elizabethtown. Thomas H. Duncan completed a survey of the growing town for its Trustees; it was recorded on May 31, 1867/

The Benjamin Helm home, still outside the town's boundary, is named on the plat recorded in Deed Book 8, Page 324 in the Hardin County Clerk's office as well as other prominent homes owned by Samuel Beale Thomas [Poplar,] Major James Crutcher [Main,] and Dr. Roderick Warfield [Mulberry.]

The four houses built by Hezekiah Smallwood ca. 1830, along the Turnpike [Dixie] are noted on the map along with the names of their original owners: Hagan, Percifull, Smith and Harris.

Also found with the recorded plat is a description of the boundaries that mentions land owners, alleys, creeks, the railroad, and even a gate on Slack's land where the pike turns.



Courtesy of the Hardin County History Museum Photo Archives
The Roderick Warfield house once stood at 420 N. Mulberry Street, east of town.



Message From The President

Greetings to all members,

I hope that everyone has survived the winter in good or better condition. We all know how crazy Kentucky weather is and this year was no exception.

Jeff and Charlie Lanz (of course with Jane's help also) have notified some Society members that they need to pay their dues for 2013. We now have membership cards to make remembering this easier. Membership cards will be given out to present members at the April meeting or mailed as necessary.

The Society has signed and numbered copies of Ron Elliot's book on Philip Arnold, America's El Dorado, to sell. The Hardin County History Museum has the book or you may contact me at 270-735-9698 to find other locations around town where the book can be purchased.

Our April meeting would be a great opportunity to bring along a friend or two to enjoy a good dinner, meets lots of great people, and hear very interesting stories of Bourbon and restoration.

On final note, our plaque honoring Mary Jo Jones will be installed at the museum in the coming months. The inscription for the tribute to our departed county historian and fellow Society member will be presented at this meeting for the consideration of members.

I hope to see your all at the State Theater in April.

-Judith "Judy" Cummins French