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# Kentucky

*humanities*

Spring 2013  
Kentucky Humanities Council, Inc.

## American El Dorado

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# COMING SOON!



*Trish Clark as  
Mary Todd Lincoln*



*Duane Murner as  
Caleb Powers*



*David Hurt as  
Lilley Cornett*

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The impact is *dramatic.*

# Kentucky

Spring 2013

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By James M. Gifford, Ph.D.



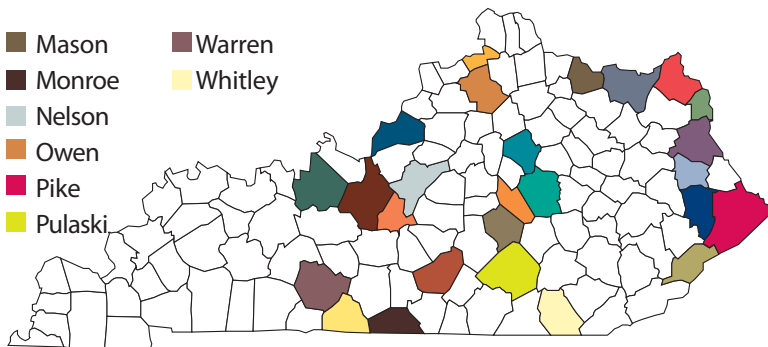
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### A Continuous Search for Equality

By Christopher Copley

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# Heroes & Villains

**K**entucky's history yields a full measure of larger than life heroes. From Daniel Boone and his exploration of the Kentucky frontier, Loretta Lynn and her journey from coal miner's daughter to country music legend, Mary Breckinridge and the Frontier Nursing Service, to Pee Wee Reese and his World Series win with the Brooklyn Dodgers, we Kentuckians love to celebrate our heroes.

We are delighted to bring you the story of a not-so-well-known Kentucky hero, Raymond E. Cox. Following up on a request from the Cox family, James Gifford brings the life of the World War II hero and POW to the forefront on page 20. Gifford works with the Cox family to continue his research of the life of Raymond Cox, reminding us of our duty to express our appreciation for all of our veterans and the importance of documenting the stories of our patriots while they are here to share them with us.

Fayette County eighth grader, Christopher Copley, calls attention to the potential each of us has to act heroically as we continue our journey toward equality for all people. Copley's winning essay, which he read at Lexington's Martin Luther King Unity Breakfast in January, is on page 30.

Although he is not a hero in the typical sense of the word, we all owe a bit of gratitude to Bowling Green's Duncan Hines. While working as a traveling salesman, Hines and his wife spent thirty years traveling across the United States, dining at local restaurants at a time when there were no published standards overseeing kitchen sanitation and food safety. What began as a listing of restaurant reviews in their annual Christmas card distributed to friends and family became a career as a nationally known traveling food connoisseur. James Claypool tells the story of how Hines went from a college dropout working in the printing and advertising business to the famous name on a box of cake mix.

While some Kentuckians are remembered for their courageous and heroic acts, others are known for their villainous behavior. Ron Elliott tells the devious tale of Hardin County natives Philip Arnold and John Slack, who masterminded a tremendous diamond hoax, knowingly robbing investors of millions of dollars. It remains a mystery where Arnold's ill-gotten treasure landed. Some believe it is buried near his Elizabethtown home.

And somewhere between hero and villain we find Kentucky's William 'Bull' Nelson. His military genius drew the respect and admiration of many political leaders including President Lincoln, but his brash demeanor, offensive manner, and daring tactics drew the ire of many, including his own volunteers. Nelson's brazen behavior led to his controversial murder at the hand of Jefferson Davis, but his name lives on at Kentucky's Camp Nelson.

We invite you to 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).



**Virginia G. Carter**

*Executive Director*

*Kentucky Humanities Council*

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Virginia G. Carter".

# Yes, they too were Kentuckians

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

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## Duncan Hines

By James C. Claypool

1880-1959 • Bowling Green, Kentucky

**H**e traveled, cooked, and wrote his way to fame — his name was Duncan Hines. The son of Edward L. and Cornelia Duncan Hines, Duncan Hines was born in Bowling Green, Kentucky, in 1880. He graduated high school, after which he briefly attended what was at the time known as Western Kentucky State Normal School in his hometown before dropping out to take a job in the printing and advertising business in Chicago, Illinois. From 1905 until 1935, Hines was a traveling salesman for Rogers and Company Printers. He and his first wife, Florence, traveled nationwide for thirty years, stopping along America's archaic highway system to dine at restaurants, some good and some bad. At the time, there were no published standards governing kitchen sanitation or food safety. Food poisoning was quite common and travelers ate out at their own peril.

In 1935, Hines and his wife sent their friends a Christmas mailing that listed 167 restaurants they ranked as "superior eating places." Out of this list grew Duncan Hines' first book, *Adventures in Good Eating* (1936), and his career as a traveling food connoisseur was launched. In 1938, Hines published a companion work, *Lodgings for a Night*, and expanded his knowledge base further in 1939 with the publication of his first cookbook. It was at this point that restaurants and inns across America began enticing customers with signs proclaiming that their establishments had been "Recommended by Duncan Hines." Hines' endorsement and his reputation of not taking any compensation for his recommendations helped usher in a new era of consumer trust in America's restaurant and lodging industries.

By the 1940s, Duncan Hines had become an American celebrity. He was featured on a daily Mutual Network Radio broadcast, and his weekly opinion column appeared in 100 newspapers nationwide. It was estimated that 20 million readers regularly read Hines' column. Understandably, restaurants and lodging facilities clamored to get his endorsement, which was known to be based on thoughtful and fair evaluation. For many businesses it could well have been the difference between

success and failure. On one occasion, Hines visited a small café in Corbin, Kentucky, operated by Harland Sanders, long before Sanders would become a celebrity in his own right, and proclaimed it to be "a good place to eat."

In 1947, Hines formed a partnership with Roy Park known as the Hines-Park Food Corporation, a business venture that made both men millionaires. The new corporation featured an ever-expanding line of kitchen-related products ranging from pickles to appliances. At its zenith, the company had nearly two hundred Duncan Hines brands on grocery store shelves and marketed fifty different kitchen tools and appliances. In the mid-1950s, Hines-Park Foods sold its highly profitable line of Duncan Hines cake mixes to corporate giant Proctor and Gamble, which expanded the business to the nationwide market and added a series of related baking products. Today, the Duncan Hines brand, which since 1998 has belonged to Pinnacle Foods, features a line of cake, brownie, muffin, and cookie mixes and canned frostings.

Florence Hines died in 1939. Duncan moved back to Bowling Green in 1940, remarried in 1946 and lived there with his second and then third wife until he died from lung cancer in 1959. He and Parks founded the Duncan Hines Institute, a facility that conducted food research and provided students with scholarships to study hotel and restaurant management. Hines is fondly remembered by the residents of Bowling Green, Kentucky, as both personable and generous. Soon after his death, his hometown named a portion of U.S. Highway 31 West north of the city the Duncan Hines Highway. The Kentucky Library & Museum at Western Kentucky University has become a repository for Hines artifacts and information about his career and has erected a permanent display commemorating the contributions he made to American culture.

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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.



## Two new members elected to Kentucky Humanities Council Board



**Elise H. Luckey**

Elise H. Luckey and Elaine A. Wilson were elected to the Kentucky Humanities Council board of directors at the November, 2012 Board Meeting. They will each serve a three-year term, with a second three-year term optional. As members of the twenty-three-person volunteer board of directors, Luckey and Wilson will help set council policies, award project grants to community organizations, and participate in fund-raising to help the Council meet the growing demand for its programs.

Elise Hendrickson Luckey has spent more than two decades working in education. She is the founder and co-director of the Lindsey Wilson Bonner Scholar Program, a service-learning initiative made up of seventy-eight undergraduate students who perform a minimum of ten hours of community service each week for a nonprofit or government agency in the Columbia area. In addition, Luckey serves as an adviser to the John B. Begley Scholars Program, which includes Lindsey Wilson students who are awarded the college's top merit-based scholarship.

Prior to her work at Lindsey Wilson, Luckey taught special education for more than ten years in Adair County schools and was a linguistics teacher at a Louisville school for dyslexic children.

A graduate of Lindsey Wilson College, Ms. Luckey also holds a master of arts degree in exceptional education, K-12, from Western Kentucky University as well as a Rank I in secondary education from Western Kentucky.

A resident of Somerset, Elaine A. Wilson has served as the Director of Cultural Diversity at Somerset Community College since 2007. Prior to her work at the college, she spent thirty-four years working at Oakwood Training Center in Somerset.

Ms. Wilson is a licensed Nursing Home Administrator, a member of the NASW Academy of Certified Social Workers, and a licensed real estate associate. She is actively involved in the community, serving many professional and civic organizations. She is a member and former chairman of the Somerset Board of Education, president of the Pulaski County Public Library Board of Directors, member and immediate past chair of the Somerset Noon Rotary Club, treasurer of

the University of Kentucky Alumni Association Board of Directors, member of the Lexington Singers Board of Directors, the Judicial Campaign Conduct Committee, and the Kentucky Association of Blacks in Higher Education in addition to working with many other community organizations. She previously served as a member of the Kentucky School Boards Association's Education Foundation, the United Way of Kentucky Board of Directors, the Wilderness Road Girl Scout Board, and as a member of the Board of Directors for the University of Kentucky.

Wilson earned a bachelor's degree in social work from the University of Kentucky and a master of science in social administration from Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio.



**Elaine A. Wilson**

## Have you experienced Kentucky Chautauqua®?

The Kentucky Humanities Council sponsors nearly 400 Chautauqua programs in communities throughout the Commonwealth each year. Our current roster includes twenty-three one-person dramas who tell the stories of famous Kentuckians including Henry Clay, Daniel Boone, and Harland "Colonel" Sanders, and some Kentuckians who are not so famous, but have incredible stories to tell such as Camp Nelson veteran Rev. Newton Bush, and Private William Greathouse, a Kentucky militiaman who participated in the War of 1812. To find out how you can bring Kentucky Chautauqua to your community and for a complete listing of Kentucky Chautauqua performances taking place throughout Kentucky visit [kyhumanities.org](http://kyhumanities.org).



## **Prime Time Family Reading Time® comes to Kentucky Libraries**

The Kentucky Humanities Council, in cooperation with the Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives, the Appalachian Regional Commission, the Gannett Foundation, and the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities, will bring Prime Time Family Reading Time to fifteen Kentucky libraries this year.

Prime Time Family Reading Time helps families bond around the act of reading and talking about books. In each of six weekly sessions, a discussion leader and storyteller lead programs that demonstrate effective reading techniques. The books introduced to children ages 6 to 10 and their parents explore timeless issues of humanity — fairness, greed, courage, coping, and determination — while helping them understand the dynamics of making life choices. The program is free and includes meals, transportation, and educational childcare for younger siblings.

Multilingual Prime Time programs are tailored to the needs of non-English speaking families. Books are translated in the appropriate languages; storytelling and discussion are supported by trained translators and team members. The Kentucky Humanities Council has hosted programs in English, Spanish, Japanese, Kirundi, Mandarin, French, Arabic, and Swahili.

For additional details and registration information please contact the library in your area.

### *2013 Prime Time Family Reading Time Sites*

#### **Allen County Public Library**

March 21 – April 25  
106 West Public Square  
Scottsville

#### **William B. Harlan Memorial Library**

April 2 – May 7  
500 West 4th Street  
Tompkinsville

#### **Letcher County Library Bookmobile**

April 5 – May 10  
Eolia Missionary Baptist Church  
1554 Highway 806  
Eolia

#### **Johnson County Public Library**

May 21 – June 25  
444 Main Street  
Paintsville

#### **Nelson County Public Library Main Branch**

June 11 – July 16  
201 Cathedral Manor  
Bardstown

#### **Lewis County Public Library**

June 13 – July 25  
27 Third Street  
Vanceburg

#### **Louisville Free Public Library Newburg Branch**

July 1 – August 5  
4800 Exeter Avenue  
Louisville

#### **Lincoln County Public Library**

August 22 – September 26  
201 Lancaster Street  
Stanford

#### **Corbin Public Library**

September 5 – October 10  
215 Roy Kidd Avenue  
Corbin

#### **Breckinridge County Public Library**

September 12 – October 17  
308 Old Highway 60  
Hardinsburg

#### **Nelson County Public Library Bloomfield Branch**

October 1 – November 5  
34 Arnold Lane  
Bloomfield

#### **Louisville Free Public Library Western Branch**

October 7 – November 11  
604 South 10th Street  
Louisville

#### **Gallatin County Public Library**

October 7 – November 11  
209 West Third Street  
Warsaw

#### **Garrard County Public Library**

October 22 – November 26  
101 Lexington Street  
Lancaster

#### **Louisville Free Public Library Southwest Branch**

November 5 – December 10  
10375 Dixie Highway  
Louisville

\* Dates are subject to change



# American El Dorado

*The Great Diamond Hoax of 1872*

*By Ron Elliott*

**S**an Francisco's famous fog crept up from the bay on a cool November evening in 1870. Just keeping pace with the swirling mist, a pair of roughly dressed prospectors trudged up from the ferry wharf toward the financial district. Had anyone been watching, he would have observed that the taller of the two men clutched a buckskin pouch tightly to his breast. Upon arrival at an office door, one of the men rapped, knowing by prior telegraphic arrangement that California businessman George Roberts was inside despite the late hour.



Roberts greeted the men warmly, as he had been acquainted with Philip Arnold and his cousin John Slack, both natives of Hardin County, Kentucky, since they had arrived, separately, in the gold rush days back in '49. Arnold, clearly in charge, told Roberts that he knew they should be at the bank, but citing the lateness of the hour, asked to deposit the pouch snuggled to his bosom in Roberts' vault for safekeeping. When Roberts demanded to know what was in the package, Arnold unequivocally refused and got up to leave. Dissuaded by Roberts and Slack, Arnold agreed to leave the pouch provided Roberts promise not to inspect its contents.

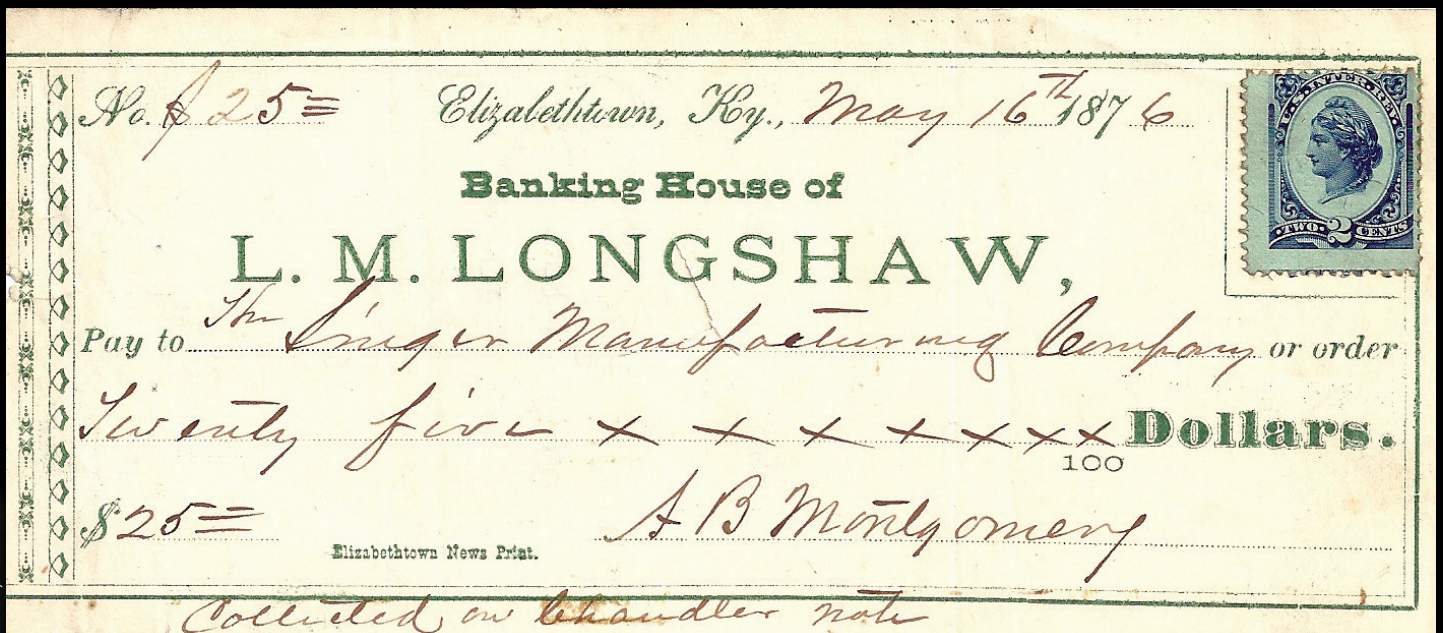
A quintessential student of human nature, Arnold played the hand perfectly. The door had hardly closed on the two Kentuckians before Roberts upended the pouch over his desk. His eyes grew as big as saucers at the sparkling array of colored stones that tumbled out. Some were colorless, but flashed green and pink and blue in the flickering gas light; others were green, some were pale red while still others were a darker crimson. Although Roberts knew nothing about gem stones, he knew he was looking at valuable property.

Roberts wasted no time in contacting his friend and business associate, William Ralston. While Ralston's title was head cashier, he was the titular head of the Bank of California and, having already gained great wealth from Nevada's Comstock Lode, a man who knew an opportunity when he saw one. Ralston immediately summoned Asbury Harpending, another Kentuckian who, at age 31, had already made and lost several fortunes speculating in various mining enterprises. The three businessmen quickly determined that they must find out where the prospectors, with whom they were all acquainted, got these stones and find a way to cut themselves in on the deal.

That proved to be no simple task. Arnold, who took no apparent notice of the fact that Roberts had violated his trust by peeking, would admit only that he and his cousin had found the stones "somewhere within a 1,000 miles to the east" but flatly refused to even discuss the location. Likewise, he emphatically rejected the idea of selling any part of his "diamond field." After Ralston pointed out that gaining title to the site, presumably on government land, and developing the property would require more financial resources than the two miners possessed, Arnold reluctantly confessed that he might — just might — consider taking his friends into a partnership in return for financing. Slack, however, readily agreed to sell his share in the enterprise for \$100,000.

Ralston insisted that someone whose judgment he trusted be conducted to the diamond field to determine the genuineness of Arnold's find. Arnold and Slack agreed to escort a mining expert of Ralston's choosing to the site, provided that the man consent to being blindfolded for as much of the trip as was necessary to ensure he would not learn the actual location. An expedition was made and the expert returned to Ralston's office raving about the richness of the field where acre upon acre glittered in the sun. Not only were there diamonds just lying on the ground, there were also rubies, sapphires, and emeralds just waiting to be picked up — a true "el Dorado" right here in the American West! The expert noted that "while it might not pay to go looking for diamonds, if one saw such stones lying on the ground, it would be worthwhile to pick them up."

Ralston and Harpending proposed that Arnold and Slack return to the diamond field, gather a couple of million dollars worth of stones and return them to San Francisco as a measure of good faith. To illustrate their own good intentions, the investors would give Slack a down payment of \$50,000.



Courtesy of Ron Elliott



Photo courtesy of Ron Elliott

*Clarence King led the government-sponsored Fortieth Parallel Survey. The geological survey team was instrumental in revealing the hoax.*

While the prospectors were away, Ralston and Harpending would arrange the necessary business details. Several weeks later, in August 1871, a large bundle of stones was delivered to Harpending's home on Rincon Hill where he, Ralston, Roberts, and an additional investor, William Lent waited. Harpending cut the bindings and dumped "a dazzling many-colored cataract of light" on the felt surface of his billiard table.

Philip Arnold had, of course, a few tricks up his sleeve. During lulls in his gold mining career, he had worked briefly as an assistant bookkeeper at a California diamond drilling company. In that capacity, he had access to industrial grade diamonds and reading materials with which to educate himself on how and where diamonds might actually be found. Additionally, during his wanderings, he had traded with Native Americans to obtain some stones they collected — rubies, sapphires, and emeralds. These stones comprised the stock he had initially deposited with Roberts to bait the hook. The \$50,000 paid to Slack funded a trip to Europe for he and Arnold to purchase about \$3,000 worth of less-than-perfect uncut diamonds and assorted other uncut stones. Most of the gems obtained were scattered in the "diamond field" Arnold had selected in the Northwestern corner of Colorado Territory, while the balance were what was delivered to Harpending on Rincon Hill. Arnold's choice of site was ideal:

the weather allowed access only for short periods during the spring and fall; the geological composition of the land was such that diamonds might actually occur naturally there and, finally, the location was in Apache country.

Struggling to restrain their excitement, the California men made several decisions. A company was to be organized with Roberts, Ralston, Harpending, and Lent, as investors, owning three-fourths of the stock while Arnold, as discoverer, retained the other quarter. Slack, having already sold out, was merely an employee. One-tenth of the stones already in hand were to be taken to New York for evaluation. If they were pronounced genuine and valuable by Tiffany, the greatest American authority on precious stones, Arnold and Slack would escort an expert mining engineer to the site to make a thorough examination and survey the property pursuant to gaining title. When that trip was complete, Slack would receive the other \$50,000 he'd been promised.

In the Big Apple in October, the first order of business was to hire a first-class lawyer, Mr. Samuel Barlow. Through Barlow's good offices, General Benjamin Butler, dubbed the "Beast of New Orleans" for his activities while Union Army commandant of that city, was added to the legal staff. Despite Harpending's lingering Confederate sympathies, the value of Butler, a member of Congress and hence able to help procure whatever legislation might be necessary to obtain title to government land, was obvious.

Barlow also arranged for not only Mr. Charles Lewis Tiffany, but former Union Army commander and Presidential candidate George B. McClellan (to add window dressing) and New York newspaper editor and future Presidential candidate Horace Greeley (publicity agent) to join the Californians in a meeting at the attorney's home. Without ceremony, Harpending dumped out the stones they had brought. Tiffany sorted the rubies, sapphires, emeralds, and diamonds into separate heaps and held them up to the light, looking every bit the ultimate connoisseur. "Gentlemen," he announced at length, "these are beyond question precious stones of enormous value. But before I give you the exact appraisement, I must submit them to my lapidary and will report to you further in two days." Two days later, as promised, Tiffany presented his report valuing the stones he had inspected at \$150,000. Simple multiplication valued Arnold and Slack's last haul at \$1.5 million! One can only imagine how Philip Arnold gulped at that announcement.

As the investors hoped to open an office in New York with General McClellan in charge, the San Francisco and New York Commercial and Mining Company (they dared not mention diamonds) was incorporated in California with capitalization at \$10,000,000. The company engaged Henry Janin, the country's foremost mining expert and consulting engineer. Janin had "experted" more than 600 mines without a single mistake and no investor had ever lost a cent because of any bad judgment on Janin's part. Harpending, Arnold, Slack, and a couple of others

were to accompany Janin to the mystical American “El Dorado” where untold fortunes waited to be gathered.

At this point, Arnold, again with perfect timing, balked. Saying that he was placing his property at the mercy of others without proper security, he demanded \$100,000. When this requirement was satisfied and spring weather set in, Janin, Arnold, Slack, Harpending, and Alfred Rubery, a British friend of Harpending’s, would set out for El Dorado. During the delay, Arnold sold out his California property and moved his family back to Elizabethtown. The diamond party departed New York in June 1872. Leaving the train at Rawlins, Wyoming, they hired an outfit and struck out into the trackless wilds. After four days of seemingly aimless wanderings, Arnold climbed a nearby rise for a better view. He returned to announce that he had his bearings now; they would reach their destination that afternoon. Although Arnold’s roving path had consumed four days, they were actually within twenty-five miles of the departure point.

Within minutes, everyone in the party began finding gems, mostly small diamonds but also rubies, emeralds, and sapphires. Harpending would later say that the fact that there were not a few pearls mixed in as well must have simply been an oversight. While Arnold and Slack simply stood around, the others gathered stones in profusion until darkness halted the search. That night, the hardships of the trek were forgotten and good fellowship abounded around the fire. Henry Janin, as enthusiastic as anyone, opined that there was no use in searching for more gems; obviously “El Dorado” was genuine. He spent the next two days, surveying and marking the surrounding region with an eye to gaining mining rights to the entire area. Unwilling to leave such vast riches unprotected, the party left Rubery and Slack on guard when they departed.

When the expedition returned to New York and Janin filed his favorable report, saying that he could see no difficulty in extracting a million dollars a month from the field, the news spread across the country like the wind. Resisting all pressure to offer stock to the public, Ralston, Lent, and Harpending agreed to let twenty-five California businessmen — friends — each purchase \$80,000 worth of stock thereby raising \$2,000,000 working capital. No one knew that Rubery and Slack, neither of whom had any financial interest, had abandoned the field as soon as the others were out of sight. Now that the secret was out, Arnold seemed more willing to sell; he demanded and received another \$100,000. When Harpending paid him an additional \$300,000 for his remaining share of the company, Arnold’s take was \$550,000, not a bad return for his small investment.

Rumors swirled across the country that summer of 1872. Most believed that this fabulous American El Dorado was located in either Arizona or New Mexico (those in the know did nothing to discourage that belief) and many prospectors departed for those territories. Several diamond mining companies were organized in California and the amount of money Harpending, Ralston,

and Lent could have taken in had they merely offered to sell stock publicly is incalculable.

Of course, the bubble must burst. Due to pure happenstance, Clarence King, leader of the government-sponsored Fortieth Parallel Survey which traced a swath of largely unexplored territory either side of the route of the Transcontinental Railroad, encountered an old friend and fellow geologist, Henry Janin, on a train bound for Oakland. King was returning to San Francisco for the winter while Janin was on his way back from the diamond field. King had heard the rumors and knew that if this American El Dorado did exist and that if he, himself, had not discovered it, his reputation would be damaged. Janin’s presence on that particular train gave him a clue as to the diamond field’s location. He quickly used his knowledge of the country to determine the actual site and, despite the lateness of the season, set out with some of his men to disclose this obvious hoax.

Arriving at the diamond field late in October, 1872, even these scientific personnel were struck with “El Dorado fever.” Just as the previous parties had done, they immediately started picking up gem stones. One of the men recorded that each man, “went to bed that night dreaming of the untold wealth that

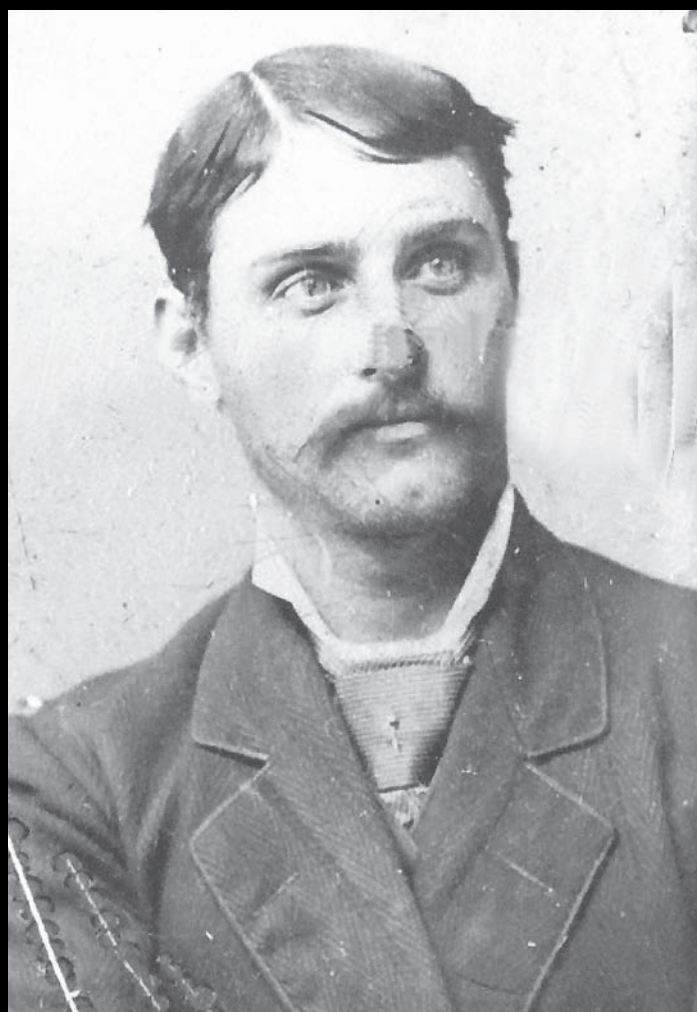


Photo courtesy of Ron Elliott

*Phillip Arnold, a native of Hardin County, was the mastermind behind the elaborate hoax.*

might be gathered.” In the cold (the temperature was recorded at 11 degrees) light of day the next morning, reality set in and the government geologist noted that he found a steady ratio of 12 rubies to one diamond, a very unnatural occurrence. Scientific tests soon proved that the entire setup was, indeed, a hoax.

While involved in additional testing on the morning of November 7th, the men were startled when “a stout party, city dressed and looking very much out of keeping with the surroundings” appeared riding a fine-looking horse. Despite the efforts of all concerned to keep the location secret, they had been followed by a New York jeweler named Berry.

When Berry inquired, “I say, gentlemen, have you found any carats around here?” King knew that the jig was up and that he had better expose the fraud before Berry stole his thunder. King immediately set out for San Francisco and sought out his friend Henry Janin. All through the night, King tried to convince his friend that he’d been had. Despite Janin’s protests, King finally convinced him that Arnold had fooled him as badly as everyone else.

It must have been a somber meeting of the San Francisco and New York Mining and Commercial Company the next morning at Ralston’s office in the bank. King and Janin broke the news, King stating that, “the diamond fields upon which are based such large investment and such brilliant hope are utterly valueless and yourselves and your engineer, Mr. Henry Janin, the victims of an unparalleled fraud.” At the suggestion that holding his report a day or so might be worth his while, King declared, “there is not enough money in the Bank of California to make me delay the publication a single hour!” Janin made several lame attempts to defend his inability to detect the hoax, but another company-sponsored trip to El Dorado by King and Janin and others shattered the shell and the company was disbanded.

Much later investigations revealed that John Slack had taken his share of the proceeds and settled peacefully in New Mexico where he died, leaving an estate worth \$1,600, in 1896. In the meantime, Philip Arnold was living high and wide in Elizabethtown. He purchased a fine home on the outskirts of town as well as several farms, all in his wife’s name, and began dealing in thoroughbred horses, sheep and swine. Informed that he’d been indicted by a San Francisco grand jury, Arnold told the *Courier-Journal*, “I have employed counsel myself — a good Henry rifle — and I am likely to open my case any day on California Street. There are several scalps I would like to string on a pole — I don’t include Janin, your expert.” The terms of that indictment were never revealed, possibly squashed by the embarrassment of the financiers involved.

In December 1872, upon his return home from a trip to New Orleans, Arnold was amazed to find that all his property had been impounded by the sheriff. Investigation revealed that the authorities were acting pursuant to an attachment

issued in the wake of a civil suit filed against Arnold and Slack by William Lent. Lent sought \$350,000 compensation as Arnold had, “procured from parties unknown to plaintiff a large quantity of precious and valuable stones, known as real diamonds, rubies, and emeralds in the rough and planted and scattered and caused to be planted and scattered in and upon certain lands in a certain district known as Colorado Territory to give said land the appearance and character of mineral lands in which said precious stones would naturally occur... .” After Lent’s attorney stated that, due to apparent local bias, he did not believe his client could have a fair hearing in the County Court (much to the chagrin, no doubt, of the Hardin County Judge,) the case was transferred to Federal Court in Louisville. Before it was called, however, Arnold settled privately, paying Lent \$150,000. “I did not owe the above named gentlemen one cent, but I paid the money to purchase my peace and to get loose from this most powerful and world-renowned ring,” Arnold told the newspaper. Despite the fact that he was well-respected in Elizabethtown, many saw the settlement as an admission, however tacit, of guilt.

With the California investors apparently satisfied, Arnold may have thought he would be able to sit back and enjoy his wealth, but that was not to be. His legal troubles continued when, on a trip to Louisville, he was arrested at his hotel in August 1874. This difficulty turned out to be a suit, seeking \$75,000, filed by another California mining investor, L. L. Treadwell, who evidently thought that if Arnold was willing to pay off Lent, he might be willing to pay off Treadwell as well. As he avowed that he never had any dealings with Treadwell at all, Arnold was, in fact, not willing. Other than an extended stay in the Jefferson County jail and attorney fees, not much came of this action, but it surely disturbed Arnold’s peace of mind.

In the wake of the Panic of 1873 (which was called the “Great Depression” at the time,) Philip Arnold invested enough money to keep a local bank, owned by friends, afloat. This action created the banking firm of Arnold and Polk in 1875. By then a pillar of the community, Arnold and his family lived peaceably enough until another difficulty arose in June 1878 when Arnold’s bank filed suit against a rival, the Banking House of L. M. Longshaw. Longshaw refused to pay the \$360 interest on a loan accommodatingly given him by his competitors, “Messrs. Arnold and Polk, the popular and highly-respected bankers.” This was a small matter until H. N. Holdsworth, an employee of Longshaw, wrote a letter to a Cincinnati banking center critical of Arnold’s bank as well as him personally. Feeling defamed, Arnold upped the ante by filing a new suit for \$25,000 against Longshaw and Holdsworth. When Arnold and Holdsworth met on Elizabethtown’s public square a few days later, shouts soon gave way to violence which culminated in Arnold’s beating Holdsworth severely with a heavy cane.

Matters did not rest at that juncture for very long. On August 16, 1878, Arnold and Holdsworth encountered each other in a tavern. Despite friends' attempts to defuse the situation, Arnold pounced on the smaller man, threw him to the floor and rained fists on Holdsworth's head until a local constable pulled him away. As Holdsworth was helped to his feet, Arnold aimed a contemptible kick in his direction. Bloodied and furious, Holdsworth went to his office in the bank, washed away the blood impairing his vision, retrieved a double-barreled shotgun, checked the loads and started back toward the saloon. Arnold and a friend were standing on the sidewalk out front when they saw Holdsworth approaching. Quickly taking in his adversary's intent, Arnold drew a pistol from beneath his coat and fired twice. Normally a dead-eye shot, Arnold, perhaps surprised that Holdsworth had the courage to come back, missed both times as Holdsworth ducked behind a tree. As Arnold advanced toward Holdsworth's refuge, he fired another shot into the tree. Holdsworth fired his first barrel, missing Arnold completely but wounding two bystanders. With Arnold now only a few feet away, Holdsworth fired again, tearing a fist-sized hunk of flesh from Arnold's shoulder. As Holdsworth dropped his weapon and ran, an enraged Arnold fired his remaining three shots hastening Holdsworth's retreat and seriously wounding yet another bystander.

The resulting lawsuits came to little as Arnold contracted pneumonia as a complication of his wound and died on February 8, 1879, thus ending his troubles. But the diamond hoax story did not die. When Philip Arnold returned to Elizabethtown in the summer of 1872, he had somewhere in the neighborhood of \$500,000 in his pocket, a nice piece of change even today. He had some expenses, of course, in purchasing the gems with which he "salted" the diamond field and he did pay Lent \$150,000 and acquire lots of Hardin County real estate. Where did the rest of the money go? His will gives no hint: "I give and devise to her [his wife, Mary] absolutely and in fee the whole of my property both real, personal and mixed." Hence, there was no accounting. Upon her death in 1904, Mary Arnold's will used the exact same phrase to bequeath her estate to her daughter, although she noted that she had already given \$10,000 to each of their other four children. Around Elizabethtown, the rumor persists that Arnold must have buried his treasure somewhere around his home. That structure, now the Lincoln Trail Domestic Abuse Refuge, and the surrounding property have been well explored over the years with no trace of any money being unearthed.

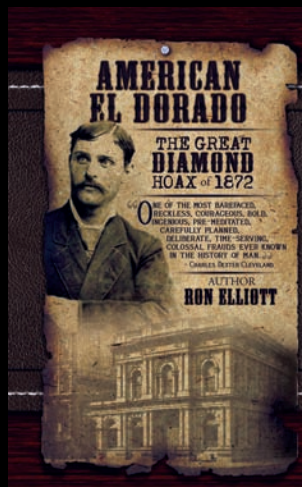
How could anyone pull off such a scam? Then, as now, greed is powerful motivation. President Truman, a history buff, liked to say that "the only thing new in the world is history you don't know." This is true, Harry maintained, because human nature never changes. One would think that maybe Bernie Madoff, in view of Truman's observation, had read about the great diamond hoax and hoped many others had not.



Photo courtesy of John Snell

*Phillip Arnold returned to Elizabethtown in 1872. Rumor has it that Arnold buried his ill-gotten treasure somewhere near his home.*

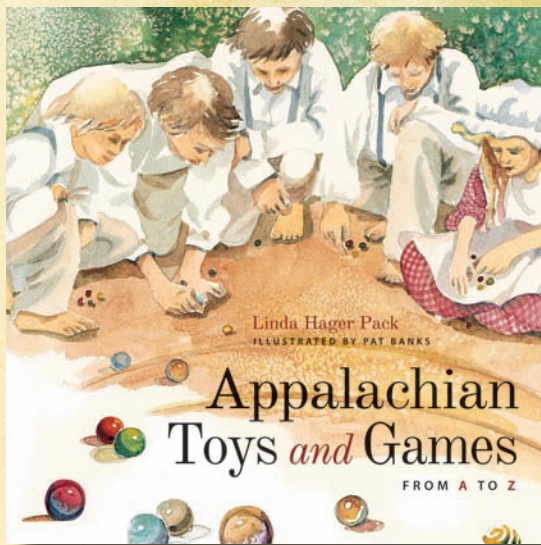
## About the Author



Ron Elliott, a native of Lincoln County, Kentucky, is a graduate of Stanford High School, Eastern Kentucky University, and the University of Kentucky with degrees in math and computer science.

Ron's background includes involvement with the historic Apollo missions, which placed Americans on the moon, and a stint on the faculty of Kentucky's Community College system. A history buff from childhood, his interest in history was heightened by having a relative involved in the assassination of Kentucky's 1900 would-be governor, William Goebel.

Mr. Elliott's story-telling ability and wealth of knowledge make him a popular speaker for literature classes, writing seminars, genealogical workshops, and historical society meetings. Coupling those attributes with his remarkable research skills and a witty writing style produces well-accepted books, including *Assassination at the State House*, *Hilltop to Mountaintop*, *The Silent Brigade*, *Inside the Beverly Hills Supper Club Fire* and *Through the Eyes of Lincoln* as well as numerous magazine articles in such publications as *The Filson History Quarterly* and *Kentucky Living*. Mr. Elliott was the recipient of the DAR's 2012 Literacy Award and is a popular member of the Kentucky Humanities Council's Speakers Bureau.



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# Dd

## IS FOR DROP THE HANDKERCHIEF

*A tisket, a tasket, a green and yellow basket,  
I sent a letter to my love, and on the way I dropped it.  
A little child picked it up and put it in his pocket.*

And it continues:

*A little child picked it up and put it in his pocket,  
his pocket, he put it in his pocket.*

The words to this game flittered up hillsides, caught on treetops, and were carried off by breezes as mountain children sang out in schoolyards, churchyards, or anywhere there was enough space and enough young'uns to play this skipping-singing game. All that was needed was a hanky or any ol' cloth from the bag of rags that Mom was always a-savin'.

The rules of the game were easy to follow.

A child was chosen to be IT, she was given the handkerchief that was to be dropped during the game, and all of the other players formed a large circle.

The rules required that the children in the circle face the center while they sang the game's rhyme: "A tisket a tasket, a green and yellow basket." That way they had no way of knowing if IT dropped the hanky at their feet while she skipped her way around the outside of the circle. IT dropped the handkerchief behind a child standing in the circle! When the chosen child realized that the handkerchief had been dropped behind him, he picked it up and the chase was on!

Now this is where it got tricky. If the child with the handkerchief caught IT, then the child was safe and IT took another turn at dropping the handkerchief. If IT reached the empty space first, then IT was safe and the child with the hanky became IT and took a turn at dropping the handkerchief.

It has been said that even though skipping was required to play this game, boys often participated for two reasons: first, they got to run, and second, they got to chase girls.

# Gg

## IS FOR GAME OF GRACES

The Game of Graces is an old game that was probably best known in Virginia. It is believed that the game got its name because it encouraged gracefulness in movement. Even though the game was considered a good way to teach young ladies to be graceful, boys also enjoyed an occasional game with the sticks and hoop.

The Game of Graces required four dowels or sticks about eighteen inches long and a wooden hoop about nine inches across. The hoop was often wrapped in brightly colored ribbons. The ribbons made the hoop look pretty while sailing through the air, gave it a cushion, and made it easier to catch. It took two players to play Graces, and each player was given two dowels. The object of the game was to pass the hoop back and forth between the two players without dropping it. The first player would cross her sticks in the shape of an X, place the hoop over her sticks, and toss the hoop into the air to her opponent. The second player followed the trailing ribbons with her eyes and moved her body into position to catch the hoop. She could slide, step, skip, reach, stretch, and move in any direction; she could use both dowels or simply bring the hoop down with one. But when she was ready to throw the hoop back to her opponent, she first had to cross her sticks in an X, place the hoop on her sticks, and toss.

The game could be quite lovely to watch, especially if the participants were graceful.







# L

## IS FOR LIMBERJACK

The limberjack was a fascinating toy. It was a jointed wooden figure that danced, kicked its feet into the air, and twirled its arms up over its head. It looked like a puppet and acted like a dancing doll but worked like a foot-tapping, leg-slapping, hand-clapping rhythm instrument.

It was called by many names: slapjack, jiggerman, limberjim, limberjill, clog doll, dancin' dan, paddle puppet, and yankee-doddle dancer. The doll was held with its feet resting "just so" on the end of a bouncy board, waiting to spring into high-kicking action when the board was made to vibrate. The rhythmic tap-tap-tapping of the doll's wooden feet added to the excitement of any lively fiddle music. Plus it was a sight to watch the limberjack dance a jig on his own private bouncy stage!

To operate the limberjack, a child had to sit down and place one end of the bouncy board or paddle under her leg. She held onto the stick in the back of the limberjack, lowered him so his feet just barely touched the free end of the board, and then vibrated the board by gently bouncing it with her free hand. Wa! Lah! The limberjack was ready to be a toy or a rhythm instrument.

The limberjack had a long history in Europe before it made its way to the Appalachian Mountains, where it was given birth by the simple blade of a pocketknife. The English name "limberjack" came from the toy's loose, limber method of dancing and from the European name used for Everyman: Jack. Limberjack. The limberjack was, indeed, a fascinating toy!

# Pp

## IS FOR PICK-UP-STICKS OR JACK STRAWS

*One, two, buckle my shoe.  
Three, four, shut the door.  
Five, six, pick up sticks.*

We are all familiar with this old nursery rhyme. But did you realize that it included the game of Pick-up-Sticks? Or that the game has been in the United States since our young country was only 13 colonies?

The game has been called *Selahtikàn* by Native Americans, *Spellicans* by the British, *Spilikins* by the Canadians, *Jerk-Straws* by many Europeans, *Jackstraws* by the Hawaiians, and *Pick-up-Sticks* and *Jackstraws* by people in the United States. The origin of *Pick-up-Sticks* is unclear. Some believe that its roots lie deep in the Native American culture, where the game was played with straws of wheat. Others believe that the game of *Spellicans* originated in ancient China, where sticks of familiar shapes (spears, saws, snakes on a staff, etc.) were first made out of ivory. What is certain is that this game made its way into the Appalachian Mountains and into the hands of its young'uns.

The game of *Pick-up-Sticks*, as we know it today, developed from straws of wheat and splinters into the thin straw-shaped pieces of wood that we are familiar with. There was usually a black helper stick and twenty-four brightly colored playing sticks. The playing sticks came

in six colors and were assigned point values according to those colors.

To begin play, the bundle of playing sticks was held about a stick's height above the table and released haphazardly into a pile. The person releasing the sticks took the first turn at attempting to remove one stick at a time without causing any of the other sticks to move. This had to be done with one's hands unless the player was fortunate enough to remove the black stick, which she was allowed to use as a helper. A player's turn continued as long as she was able to remove sticks without disturbing any of their neighbors. Each player got to keep every stick she was able to remove successfully. Play moved to the left, and the person with the most points at the end of the game (after all of the sticks had been picked up) was the winner.

The game of *Jackstraws* was perhaps a forerunner of *Pick-up-Sticks* in some mountain communities. Like the ancient Chinese *Spellicans*, the Appalachian *Jackstraws* were familiar hand-carved replicas of tools and utensils. Included in the different designs were likely to be mallets, hatchets, spades, anvils, shovels, saws, rakes, gourd dippers, and so forth. There was little difference between *Pick-up-Sticks* and the *Jackstraws* played in the mountains. A peg with a bent nail hooked in its end took the place of the black helping stick, and points were normally assigned to the *jackstraws* according to the difficulty involved in removing them from a pile.

You'll have to agree that picking up miniature mountain tools and utensils would be much more fun than just picking up straws and splinters.



# Ss

## IS FOR SLINGSHOT

There were three things most self-respecting mountain boys usually had in their possession: a Russell Barlow knife, a pocketful of marbles, and a slingshot. A slingshot was sometimes considered a toy and sometimes considered a hunting weapon. It could be used for shooting rocks at targets, or, if a boy was really good with a slingshot, it could be used to hunt small animals for food. Some boys carried their slingshots in their pockets and some hung them around their necks; but no matter where a boy kept his slingshot, it was always at the ready.

A boy had to invest a considerable amount of time to collect the necessary materials to make a slingshot. First he would make a trip into the woods to find a perfect Y-shaped forked branch for the body of the slingshot; usually a branch from a dogwood tree was the wood of choice. Then he could only hope to find some rubber from a red inner tube; a black inner tube wasn't as desirable because it lacked the elasticity of the red. Lastly, he was on the lookout for a good piece of leather (and yes, it had to be leather) to use for the shot pocket. Fortunately for our mountain boy, the tongue of an old shoe usually worked just fine.

When it came to actually shooting the slingshot, some skill was involved. A shoot was better when it was made with the body at a right angle to the target, feet apart, and weight balanced on both feet. It was the hand up front that actually controlled the slingshot rather than the hand that was releasing the stone. These skills were learned quickly and the slingshot was used wisely. Most of the time.

# Eastern Kentucky's Raymond E. Cox

## *POW and Unsung Hero of World War II*

By James M. Gifford, Ph.D.

**T**hroughout the twentieth century, American school children learned about heroes at an early age. For example, they learned of George Washington whose physical courage and perseverance enabled him and his small rag-tag army to defeat the large, battle-tested British army and win American independence. They also learned that heroism could emerge from moral courage, like Abraham Lincoln's resolute efforts to abolish slavery in America. Many of the stories their teachers and parents read to them were tales of heroism.

As these children grew older, they read about heroes in their school books and in the books they checked out of public libraries. Long before Fess Parker became "Davy Crockett, King of the Wild Frontier," they read about Crockett and other frontiersmen fighting to the death at the Alamo. Similarly, in the history of the Ancient World, they learned about 300 Spartans fighting to the death against the invading Persians at Thermopylae Pass and saw parallels with American history and began to realize that heroism was a part of the human condition.

But heroism became less fashionable as the century unfolded. By the middle of the twentieth century, cynics argued that there were no more heroes. Members of several generations of Americans began to think that heroes, rather than defending society, rebelled against it. Their anti-authoritarian model was Marlon Brando in the 1953 movie, *The Wild One*. When asked what he was rebelling against, Brando's motorcycle boy responded, "Whattya got?"

Time passed, and Americans became obsessed with physical comforts and addicted to entertainment. Some "dressed for success" and sought salvation in upward mobility and high-tech gadgets. Others conducted themselves as if self-indulgence, criminal behavior, and vulgar talk were virtues.

And then came September 11, 2001, and Americans realized that we still needed old-fashioned heroes. We had to defend our nation against cowards who had sent a challenge written on the caskets



Photo courtesy of Ethel Stafford

*Born in Toler, Kentucky, Raymond E. Cox joined the United States Army on January 13, 1942.*

of innocent people in the bright red blood of American heroes. Those cowards believed that we were too weak, too spoiled, and too divided to respond, but policemen, firemen, soldiers, and everyday folks stepped up and demonstrated great courage and resolve.

Now, as we continue to fight a long battle against international terrorism, our society has spawned new heroes, like the men and women who serve(d) in Iraq and Afghanistan.

As we move into an uncertain future, we realize that heroism can be learned and some of our best teachers are the men and women who fought and won World War II and who made up the "greatest generation." If we look to these men and women for models of behavior, we can learn how to be heroes. You don't have to look far, because millions of American families produced heroes. One such hero was Eastern Kentucky's Raymond Cox.

"When we were little, Daddy never talked about the war very much," said Ethel Stafford, Raymond Cox's daughter and a retired teacher and school administrator. However, as Ethel and her brother Ray and sister Nancy got older they began to realize that their father Raymond E. Cox had been a World War II hero.

Raymond Cox had a typical Appalachian background. He was born in Toler, Kentucky, February 11, 1920, raised in eastern Kentucky, and attended school in Sprigg, West Virginia. At age sixteen he began working in the mines for Crystal Block Coal Company. He made fifty-eight cents a ton, and it took him about two hours to load a ton.

On December 7, 1941, Japanese planes attacked and severely crippled the American fleet at Pearl Harbor. The next day Congress responded with a declaration of war against Japan and three days later Germany and Italy declared war on the United States. A month later, on January 13, 1942, Raymond Cox joined the army and took basic training at Camp Walters, Texas. He was assigned to Company E of the 47th Infantry Regiment of the Ninth Infantry Division and received further training in amphibious landings.

In November 1942, the Ninth Infantry Division boarded ship in Newport News, Virginia, and twenty-eight days later Cox was a member of General Dwight Eisenhower's forces that invaded North Africa. Using Higgins Boats made out of plywood, part of the Ninth went ashore with little resistance at Safi, a small harbor about ninety-one kilometers south of Casablanca. By early 1943, Cox's unit had moved for the Safi area in French Morocco, some 800 miles eastward to Algeria, probably in the vicinity of the Tunisian border. There the division reformed and went into the desert thinking they were going to fight a battalion of Italian troops.

That morning, Cox told First Lieutenant David Conroy that "we would go out and kick the hell out of them Italians and get back for supper." Conroy laughed and observed that if they didn't they'd get "a quick ticket to hell."

Victimized by faulty intelligence, Cox and his fellow soldiers of the 47th Infantry Regiment soon found themselves "eyeball to eyeball" with two units of Germany's Fifth Panzer Army, which had been sent from Sicily to reinforce Tunisia against the pincer attack developing from the Allied armies. Within fifteen minutes, Company E lost 179 men. Cox and 242 others were taken prisoner by the German Army.

"We walked through the desert for five days," said Cox, "with one loaf of bread and one drink of water a day. The water tasted of gasoline, where they kept it in gasoline cans." They arrived at a little village on the Algerian coast and the prisoners were "fenced

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in" for the night. The next morning they were loaded into boxcars and taken to Tunis, Tunisia, where they spent more than two weeks in a "bombed-out" school building with Allied bombs falling around them all night.

The Allies foiled three attempts by the Germans to fly these prisoners out of Tunisia to a POW camp in Germany. Finally, in the middle of the night, the Germans marched the prisoners to a cow pasture, loaded them in groups of fourteen into JU-52 transport planes, and took off at daylight.

Because of excellent Allied intelligence, American and British fighters intercepted the transport planes over the Mediterranean Sea and forced them down near Palermo, Sicily, and their German captors turned the prisoners over to Mussolini's Fascists.

“They took us to the snow line in the mountains where we didn’t have any beds and only half a blanket,” Cox remembered. The men at POW camp 98 in the mountains near Palermo received 150 grams of bread per day with water boiled over greens. Cox was held in this camp for thirty-three days and nearly died of starvation. Many others did not survive.

Finally the survivors were taken to the Italian mainland and transported by train to Camp 59 in Central Italy, where the prisoners received “a little more to eat ... just enough to keep us from starving.” For four months the POWs lived on 150 grams of bread, a small ladle of soup, and a thin slice of cheese each day.

Cox was there until September 1943 when, aided by Yugoslavian partisans, 2,200 POWs escaped and scattered into the Italian countryside. “I couldn’t walk but about fifty yards without sitting down and resting,” said Cox, who had lost almost sixty pounds. “On the second day, I barely got outside the ring the Germans had formed, where they were combing prisoners out of the mountains.”

Cox survived because he was befriended by an Italian family. Primo Mecossi and his wife and daughters hid the young American in a cave, fed him, and warned him when German and Italian soldiers were searching the area. Cox was often on the move to avoid recapture. He spent eleven months eluding the Nazis and the Blackshirts and he learned to speak Italian so that he could ask for food and help. Only two Italian families ever refused assistance and one of them suffered reprisals from the Italian underground. During his months as a fugitive, he saw

two of his fellow escapees killed by German soldiers and several more wounded and recaptured.

In the spring of 1944, American paratroopers dropped behind enemy lines to assemble the escaped POWs, who were loaded on PT boats and taken to larger ships. Cox missed that opportunity. He later told his adopted son Aaron that Primo gave him a bicycle and he rode until he reached the Polish forces who were part of the great Anglo-American effort to push the German army out of Italy. The Poles took Cox to an Allied field hospital where he got his first “good cigarette” in sixteen months. He reported that he smoked until he got sick and more than thirty years later he said, “And I ain’t caught up to this day.”

He was returned to North Africa and finally arrived in the United States on August 2, 1944. He had been a prisoner of war from March 1943 to June 1944, and he was extremely anxious to get home. One of his friends who made it to the Allied lines with him left and returned to the Italian countryside to marry an Italian girl whose family hid him from the Germans.

Cox’s ordeal had also visited misery upon his family. He had been a prisoner of war for more than a year, and his family thought he was dead. On March 28, 1943, his mother received a telegram that her son Raymond, who was missing in action, was “a prisoner of the Italian government.” The telegram was sent by the War Department based on information provided by the American Red Cross. In July, she received a card from the Prisoner of War Bureau that stated briefly:

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*I am alright. I have not been wounded. I am a prisoner of the Italians and I am being treated well. Shortly I shall be transferred to a prisoner's camp and I will let you know my new address. Only then will I be able to receive letters from you and to reply.*

*Raymond E.  
April 17*

Then they received another letter which had been sent by a Catholic priest in Italy to the priest at the Catholic Church in Williamson, West Virginia.

*June 21, 1943  
Mr. Edward B. Cox  
Louisa, Ky.*

*Dear Mr. Cox:*

*I was down in Merrimac, WVa. looking for you to convey to you the information that your son, Raymond Cox, is a prisoner of war in Italy.*

*I am the Catholic priest here designated by the Holy Father, Pope Pius XII, to convey this message.*

*You can answer 25 words on the back of the enclosed papers. Please write the same thing on the white paper and on the yellow one, and send your answer to:*

*The Chancellor  
Cathedral Residence  
Wheeling, W. Va.*

*And the message will be delivered to your son in Italy. Prisoners are well treated in Italy.*

*Sorry I could not see you personally. Sincerely,*

*Rev. T.J. Keating,  
Sacred Heart Church  
Williamson, W. Va.*

A year passed. Then his parents received the following letter, dated June 26, 1944. It was written on English air mail stationery and bore an English crown stamp with a postmark that read "Poczta Polona 127."

*Dear Mother and family:*

*I am o.k. and free. I am with the English now. In a few days I will be with the U.S. Army. I stayed with an Italian family for 9 months. The people here sure were good to the ex-prisoners.*

*I have a good chance of coming home. I hope so anyway. I don't have an address. I will write more in a few days.*

*Love to all.  
Raymond E. Cox A.S.N. 35261675*



Photo courtesy of Ethel Stafford

**Raymond Cox (second from the right) was a member of Company E of the 47th Infantry Regiment of the Ninth Infantry Division.**

The handwriting was clearly her son's and Mrs. Cox and her family were overjoyed.

After four months of processing and debriefing in Italy, Cox was shipped home — arriving in Boston and then being sent to Pine Camp, New York. From there he returned to Mingo County, West Virginia, on a furlough, where he had to convince several friends that he was not the ghost of a soldier they believed to be dead.

In his absence, Cox's family had moved back to eastern Kentucky. While visiting them, he met Eloise Hall who worked at a hospital in Louisa. Ten days later they started dating and soon fell in love and planned to marry.

Cox, who still had an obligation to active duty, was assigned to Camp Croft, South Carolina. On November 20, 1944, Raymond's mother and his fiancé left Louisa for Spartanburg, South Carolina. Raymond and Eloise were married on November 22, and lived in Spartanburg until Raymond was discharged from the army on October 13, 1945. In less than a year, they returned to Mingo County, where Ray worked in the mines until he was disabled in 1969.

Raymond Cox was a devoted husband and loving father to Raymond E. Cox, Jr., Ethel Lee Cox, and Nancy Carolyn Cox. Later Raymond and Eloise adopted Aaron Ray Cox.

Raymond Cox was a hard worker and a good friend to

the young men who worked in the mines with him. He also served in Company D of the West Virginia National Guard at Williamson, West Virginia, until he retired on December 6, 1976. During his years as a miner, the family lived in Matewan and later Red Jacket, West Virginia. Raymond and Eloise moved to Russell, Kentucky, in 1986 to be closer to their children.

As the years passed, Cox's war experiences affected his nerves and emotions. Beginning in the early 1960s, he received medical treatment from the Veterans Administration hospital in Huntington, West Virginia. He also spent some time at the Veterans Administration hospital in Chillicothe, Ohio, in 1963. His father's death intensified his post-traumatic stress syndrome and he had a nervous breakdown. The VA then sent him to a hospital in Salem, Virginia. He was there for nine months before returning to his family. At that time, according to his wife, "he accepted Jesus Christ as his personal savior." After another brief stay in the Salem hospital, he returned home and worked in the mines for five more years. He retired in 1969 because of health problems and died October 22, 1994, of lung cancer. Throughout his life, he suffered terrible physical and emotional stresses from his painful experiences as a POW.

After World War II ended, Raymond Cox and Primo Mecossi corresponded for several years, then lost touch with one another. After Raymond died, his family, with the assistance of John Trowbridge, former director of the Kentucky Military



Photos courtesy of Ethel Stafford

*Raymond Cox (right) arrived back in the United States on August 2, 1944, after being a prisoner of war for more than a year.*



*Giannina Rossi pictured with her son, Dominic Mecossi. Giannina was a young child when her family hid POW escapee Raymond Cox from German and Italian troops during World War II.*

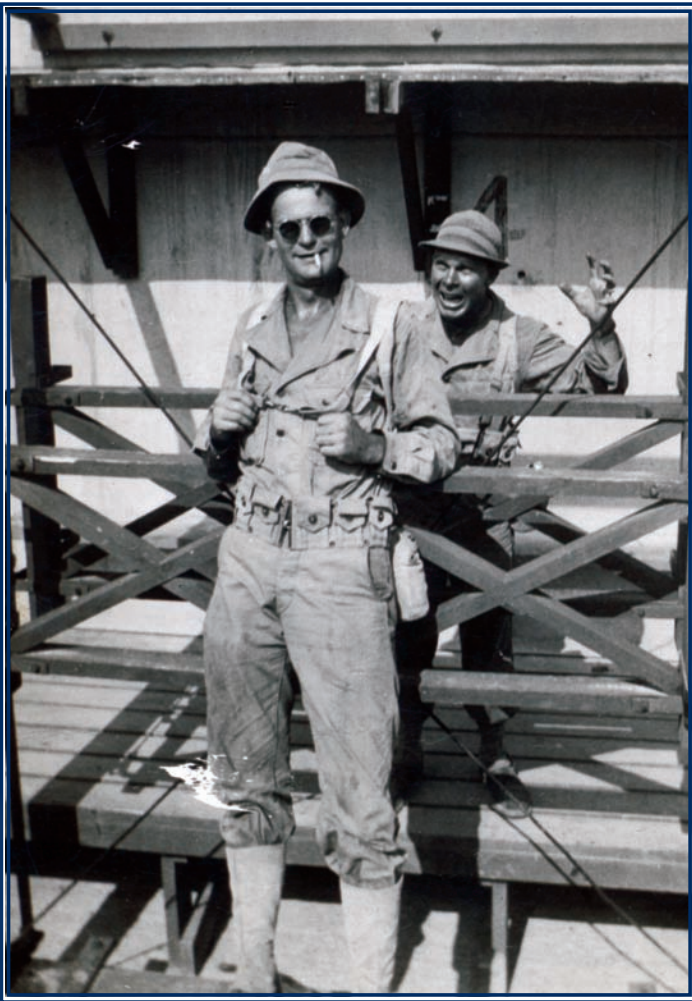
History Museum, were able to contact Giannina Rossi, the youngest daughter of Primo Mecossi. Giannina remembered her family's assistance to Raymond Cox, the young American escapee. She even remembered "sitting on his lap" when she was a little girl.

Today Raymond's widow and children are corresponding regularly with Giannina through an Italian interpreter, and they have learned that former escapees have organized to provide educational assistance to the descendants of the brave Italians who befriended them, fed them, helped them escape detection, and, in many instances, saved their lives.

On October 27, 2006, a ceremony was held at the Jesse Stuart Foundation where Colonel Patrick Dolan, State Chaplain of the Kentucky National Guard, presented Eloise Cox with the Prisoner of War Medal on behalf of her late husband. Command Historian John Trowbridge introduced Colonel Dolan and commented on Cox's military exploits. This ceremony was attended by more than forty persons, including three World War II veterans who lead the assemblage in the pledge to the flag.

"It was a grand day!" said Cox's daughter Ethel Stafford. "Daddy would have loved it."





Photos courtesy of Ethel Stafford

*While visiting his family in Kentucky, Raymond Cox (front) met Eloise Hall. They later married, had three children, and adopted a fourth.*

### **Epilogue**

After Raymond died his family asked me to help them piece together his remarkable war story. Using his family's memories, scrapbooks, and other historical resources, I have compiled this brief account of his life and wartime experiences. I continue to research his life and am still trying to locate his debriefing records because they will help to clarify and expand the memories that he shared with friends and family. Possibly some of the 2,200 men who escaped from Camp 59 with Raymond Cox are still living and will read this story and add exciting new details to my sparse account of that heroic episode. I would urge all families not to wait until their veteran is gone before trying to record his/her story. Each day, many of these men and women who served their country in a time of great peril pass away and often their special stories go with them.

Raymond Cox's story is incomplete. Since it is based on long-ago memories, there are doubtlessly some historical inaccuracies, but I am presenting it here as my sincere

thanks to millions of unrecognized World War II heroes and especially as an encouragement to Kentuckians to express their appreciation to all veterans. Raymond Cox marches through this story as a representative of every Appalachian soldier, just as every Appalachian soldier represents soldiers from all over America. They were all members of the greatest generation, and they helped America fight and win a war that spanned the entire globe. Men and women like Raymond Cox were patriots for what they did and heroes for what they were willing to do.

Patriots and heroes, I salute you.

### **About the Author**

James M. Gifford is the CEO and Senior Editor of the Jesse Stuart Foundation, headquartered in Ashland, Kentucky. Gifford holds a Ph.D. in history from the University of Georgia and has published widely in historical, literary, and educational journals and has won professional awards as a teacher, author, editor, and publisher.



*Eloise Cox was presented with the Prisoner of War Medal on behalf of her late husband at a ceremony held on October 27, 2006 at the Jesse Stuart Foundation in Ashland, Kentucky. More than forty people were in attendance, including three World War II veterans who lead the assemblage in the pledge to the flag.*

# WILLIAM 'BULL' NELSON

## *Kentucky's Controversial Quarterdeck General*



Photo courtesy of Donald A. Clark

*By Donald A. Clark*

**D**uring the summer of 1837, Dr. Thomas W. Nelson enrolled his “rough and high tempered” son, William, in the collegiate course of study at Norwich University in Vermont, trusting that the renowned military school would launch his thirteen-year-old on a career of esteemed service to the nation. Two years later, Bourbon County Congressman Garrett Davis secured a warrant for the young Maysville native to become a midshipman in the U.S. Navy.

After five years of sailing in the South Pacific, Nelson attended the newly established land-based school in Annapolis, Maryland, and received his appointment as a Passed Midshipman in 1846. Nelson served with distinction in the Mexican War, received a promotion to lieutenant in 1855, and by 1860, he had completed a total of twelve years at sea and eight years in other assignments.

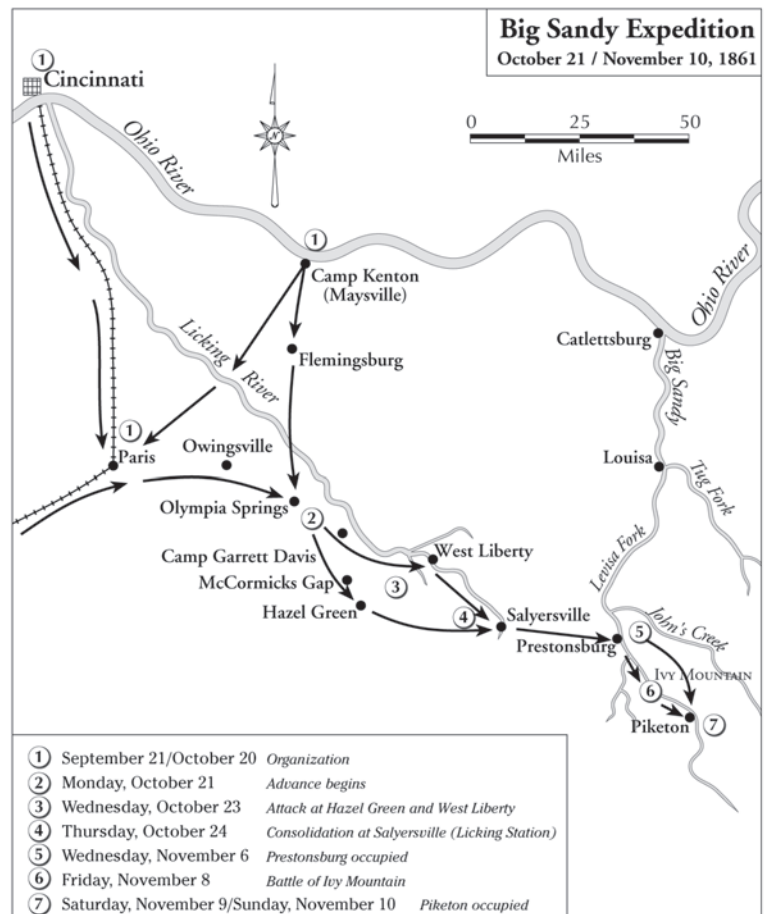
Nelson reported for duty at the Washington Navy Yard in August, 1860. Three months later, Abraham Lincoln’s victory triggered a rash of resignations by southern naval officers. Nelson intended to uphold his oath to the nation and had the “impulsive temperament peculiar to the South” that made him well suited for measuring the loyalty of those who attended high-level social functions.

People took notice of this meticulous dresser who always stood ramrod straight. The 6-foot-4-inch dashing tar weighed 300 pounds. He had a deep booming voice, long curly black hair, and piercing black eyes that gave the edgy appearance of someone willing to accept any challenge. One newspaper reporter captured the essence of that look, describing Nelson was “a go ahead, driving person, full of impatience and energy . . . a profane man, with as little of the gentleman about him as well can be.”

Admiral Daniel Ammen stated Nelson wanted “to be useful to his country rather than great,” and that was readily apparent after the surrender of Fort Sumter. Nelson returned to Kentucky to gather information on how to keep the state in the Union, and on May 4th, he walked into the Executive Mansion with a plan to arm Union Home Guard companies with 5,000 altered muskets from the Washington Armory. Abraham Lincoln believed he had found a man with the pedigree and native intelligence, the experience and daring that would inspire young men to fight and die for their nation. Joshua Fry Speed confirmed that assessment when he informed the President, “No one can serve us better . . . He is true, active . . . with an air & manner well adapted to this region.”

Secretary of the Treasury Salmon P. Chase was responsible for Kentucky and Tennessee, and the distinguished Cincinnati supported Nelson’s arming and assembling a brigade of volunteers at Camp Dick Robinson in Garrard County on August 6, 1861. Nelson became Brigadier General of U.S. Volunteers on September 16th and he received orders to conduct a campaign against a buildup of Rebel forces in the Big Sandy Valley of Eastern Kentucky. Some of the twelve-month militiamen refused to join the march because it meant extending their enlistment to three years. A patriotic talk from Nelson did not dissuade them and in exasperation he shouted, “I will publish you in every paper in the state for the God Damned infamous act.” That caused Orderly Sergeant Thomas W. Parsons to make the first known threat against Nelson when he yelled back, “For a trifle I would publish you with a cartridge.”

Such rough-edged banter had no impact on the advance that reached Ivy Mountain on November 8th. At 1 p.m., the Rebels opened fire on the lead company that was investigating a burned out bridge crossing at Ivy Creek and the West Levisa Fork of the Big Sandy River (present day Ivel, Kentucky). Nelson charged forward on a “splendid charger . . . saber drawn . . . shouting . . . orders” as he jumped off the horse, looked through his field glass, and exclaimed, “The God Damned cusses are firing at me.” Using



a borrowed musket he climbed “upon a (conspicuously located) rock . . . and shouted to the men urging them on, and telling them that if the Rebels could not hit him they could not hit any of them.” Well after this fight, Assistant Adjutant General (AAG) Oliver D. Greene heard that some of Nelson’s raw volunteers so “hated him, they tried to kill him.” Three musket balls reportedly went through Nelson’s hat and he supposedly replied, “Oh, never mind, they’ll like me better by and by.” True or not, the expedition ended when the Rebels retreated to Pound Gap on the Kentucky-Virginia border.

Nelson went on to Louisville to join the Army of the Ohio under Brig. Gen. Don Carlos Buell who gave him command of the Fourth Division. Nelson established Camp Wickliffe five miles east of Hodgenville and began training the men in earnest. Reactions to Nelson’s rough manner varied. Lieutenant Colonel Nicholas Longworth Anderson, a Harvard-educated Cincinnati who served with the Sixth Regiment Ohio Volunteer Infantry, found Nelson to be a military genius whose “faults were those of a commander anxious to secure the highest efficiency of his troops by the most rigid discipline of his officers.” Colonel Stanley Matthews was a highly regarded barrister in Cincinnati and he informed his wife that Nelson “is coarse, savage . . . and continually insulting everyone with his bits of blasphemy.”

Matthews impressed Nelson in a way that caused him to ask for an honest evaluation. Major General William B. Hazen noted that Matthews’ evaluation provided unintentional foreshadowing of



**The Battle of Pike-ton [Ivy Mountain] November 8, 1861.**

Courtesy of Sheila Gallagher, Boston College Becker Collection CW-FHS-KY-8/11/61

Nelson's demise. Matthews declared, "You are two different men," most see the outside man who gives offense, and only few know the magnanimous inside man. One day Nelson, "your offensive manner" will cause some vain individual who is unfamiliar with the inside man to shoot the outside man.

Soon afterward, Matthews remarked that Nelson was trying to become "more agreeable." The volunteers had "caught a large part of his heroic and unconquerable spirit" and one private commented, "General Nelson has the confidence of the whole division, and more than this, is really liked by most of the men, notwithstanding the coarseness, the regular quarterdeck style of his manners." This soldier was particularly impressed with how "Old Buster" performed "an act of genuine kindness" when he came across an ailing youngster in need of a genuine loaf of bread. The bake store wanted ten cents and the sickly volunteer had a mere five cents. Nelson at once handed him twenty-five cents to buy five loaves of bread and he headed for the bakery to give it a "blowing up" that ensured bread sold for five cents loaf thereafter.

To welcome in the New Year the bands played "exquisite music" for troops who were "highly elated in the prospect of a speedy march" against the enemy at Bowling Green, Kentucky. Nelson met with Buell in Louisville on January 3, 1862, to discuss plans for the advance, and on his return to Camp Wickliffe, he discovered some camp guards were sound asleep. To correct that problem, Nelson wore no insignia when he

rode out alone in total darkness through knee-deep mud and freezing rain to test the vigilance of the men and the officers who commanded them.

A sympathetic writer at the *Cincinnati Commercial* noted that Nelson's "even and amiable temper is not always proof against provocations furnished by the stupidity and carelessness he is required to control and punish." Fortunately, that "master spirit" was transforming that "chaotic mass of undisciplined men . . . into soldiers." For drunks that meant the buck and gag whereas thieves could expect an excruciating hanging by their thumbs.

Nelson's sole intent was to make the Fourth Division second-to-none in the ironfisted business of war and it came as no surprise to AAG Oliver Greene that Buell chose those soldiers to lead the advance against Bowling Green. Nelson's frequent arrest of incompetent officers made his quarters look like a "second hand sword store" and the *Cincinnati Commercial* commented that with so much "Nelson on the brain" this march would be akin to "Old Buster" leading his own funeral procession. That sardonic prediction faded when the men of the Fourth Division entered Nashville ahead of all the other troops. On April 6-7, 1862, those proud "ironclads" achieved stellar acclaim at Shiloh and when Buell recommended Nelson's promotion to Major General it seemed certain this quarterdeck general was destined to attain great prominence.

Walter Haldeman was a Southern sympathizer and noted newspaperman with an entirely different opinion. This old



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*William Nelson was wounded at the battle of Richmond on August 30, 1862. Thirty days later he was killed at the Galt House in Louisville.*

Maysville acquaintance characterized Nelson as a “puffing land porpoise in regimentals.” He was pleased to hear Nelson gave added weight to that comedic description when he engaged Brig. Gen. John Pope in an absurd argument over who was the first to enter the abandoned town of Corinth, Mississippi, on May 30, 1862. During the subsequent advance against Chattanooga, Nelson’s fortune took another turn in the wrong direction when he became a pawn in a poorly executed plan that led to the Confederate invasion of Kentucky in mid-August 1862.

The outmaneuvered Don Carlos Buell stated, “No man seemed to me so suitable for the emergency.” This loyal subordinate arrived in Lexington on August 24th to complete the organization of a brand new army, and six days later, the commander at Richmond, Kentucky, wrongly committed the 6,500 raw levies against 12,000 Confederate veterans. Nelson arrived on the field as the fighting was nearing an end. To save the untrained men from chaos he engaged in brutal actions that incensed a public that was stunned and angered by this terrible setback. Historian Nathaniel S. Shaler had no first-hand knowledge of Nelson or the situation, but that did not stop him from characterizing him as “able but erratic” and therefore unqualified for the frenzied nature of independent command.

Those who served with Nelson held a very different opinion. Adjutant Charles C. Gilbert believed Nelson’s disposition “marked him out for exercise of separate command.” AAG Greene recalled the “most extraordinary thing about him . . . was his military ability; it was a source of wonder to us West Point gentlemen.” One of them was Major General Hazen who said Nelson had no equal when it came to “quick perception and industry, so necessary . . . in the field.”

The North had become fed up with the haughty behavior of West Point trained generals and those feelings were at the forefront when Nelson relieved a fellow Union general named Jefferson C. Davis on September 22, 1862. One week later, the unalterable might of their vain dispositions put them on a fixed path that mirrored a Greek tragedy. Nelson would not apologize to anyone who shirked his duty and the humiliated Davis believed the only recourse to defending his honor was to shoot that outside man in the heart.

Abraham Lincoln said nothing about the shocking murder of a good and loyal acquaintance. The most likely reason for that incongruous behavior was explained when he told Stephen Douglas — with public sentiment “nothing can fail; without it, nothing can succeed.” On September 30th, friends of Nelson were paying their last respects in Louisville while patrons of the *Cincinnati Times* read a malicious interpretation of how a tyrannical and unqualified naval officer had “forced Davis to engage in justifiable homicide . . . if the final military decree should prove different, it will not overcome public sentiment for a man who was wrongly pushed beyond his endurance.” Over the course of the next two years, those thoughts helped Davis



Courtesy of Donald A. Clark

escape any action against him. This made the murder one of the most abnormal cases of injustice in U. S. military history.

Nelson wanted Camp Dick Robinson to serve as his last resting place, but by 1872, most of the significance had disappeared. When workers dug up his remains and removed the covering from the glass plate on the coffin, they discovered “Old Buster” was still in “a wonderful state of preservation.” To the dismay of everyone, exposure to air and a jarring ride to the Nicholasville rail depot reduced the notorious “Bull” Nelson to a “handful of dust” that was placed in the family plot at Maysville Cemetery.

## **About the Author**

Donald A. Clark is a graduate of Centre College of Kentucky who served as an infantry officer in Vietnam. Over the course of the next forty years, he owned and operated various business enterprises until retiring to devote all his energies to a lifelong interest in American history. His published works include *The Notorious “Bull” Nelson: Murdered Civil War General* (Southern Illinois University Press) and articles that have appeared in *Filson Club History Quarterly*, the *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, the *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, and *Gateway Magazine*.

# A Continuous Search for Equality

*Each year, in conjunction with their Martin Luther King Unity Breakfast, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity's Alpha Beta Lambda Chapter Education Foundation invites Fayette County middle school students to submit entries for its Unity Breakfast Essay Contest. The theme of this year's essay contest was "Unity: A Continuous March toward Equality." Christopher Copley, an 8th grader at Bryan Station Middle School, was awarded the top prize for his essay.*

By Christopher Copley

**U**nity is a continuous search for equality. It is what we strive for in a society that contains such diverse groups of people. We often classify and organize everyone in different groups, based on anything about them that is different. We fixate on these diversities and differences and this clouds our minds of the real problems. The real problems that are going on in the real world, like debt, unemployment, and the economy, are blocked out by these differences. The differences, they circle in our minds, on a continuous loop that seems to never end. We must unite; forget all of these little differences, to make the world a better place.

Unity is a continuous march towards equality. Throughout time, we have come closer together. We are starting to see everyone as equal, no matter what differences there may be about them. The civil rights movement, women gaining many rights, and many other movements concerning equality, have been big steps toward equality for everyone, but this is only a little step compared to the mile-long set of stairs we are climbing. We may be getting closer and closer, but we still aren't there. Many people may say that we are at the top, that everything is equal. But it is not truly equal unless we can just forget about the differences that pull us apart, but instead just realize the similarities that bind us together.

We need to get to the point where race, gender, nothing matters anymore but what is on the inside of a person. We need to get to the point where the only thing that matters is how a person acts or who they truly are on the inside. We have many problems in our society, but trying to agree with each other can be clouded by little differences that don't matter. Unity is the long and hard journey toward equality that we will continue, until the barriers are broken, and we are all one.



Photo courtesy of Rich Copley

# The Past Is Never Dead

By Georgia Green Stamper

“The past is never dead. It’s not even past.” William Faulkner wrote that. I’m not sure I know what the line means. Faulkner’s mind was complex and his words nuanced and layered. But he was born in Mississippi in 1897 where the Civil War could break loose again at the turn of a prepositional phrase over supper most any night of the week. And I was born in Owen County, Kentucky, where we identify the names of fields on our farm by the names of men a century dead.

So I think I may know what Faulkner was talking about. At least, I remembered his words last Memorial Day weekend when my father’s family gathered at the Poplar Grove Cemetery, as it has done for over 100 years, to decorate the grave of our Uncle Laurel who died in 1906 at the age of two.

Later, our grandparents, Frank and Rushia Green, were buried beside their firstborn child, and we come now to honor them, but it is Laurel’s story that began the ritual. In ways I cannot quite explain, I believe his brief life strengthened and shaped who the Greens became as a family.

Mawmaw and Pawpaw Green were blessed with long and productive lives. Pawpaw lived well into his 90s and mowed his own lawn with a push mower through the last summer of his life. Mawmaw died fifteen years before he did, but still — though she did not marry until her mid-twenties — she lived to see seven of her eight children reach middle age, lived to see grandchildren grown and married, and cradled great-grandchildren in her arms.

Laurel’s life, however, ended soon after it began. In 1906, when he was two years old, he took ill with dysentery, and within a few days he died of dehydration. For the rest of her life, my grandmother blamed herself for his death. He had wandered from her in the yard and eaten nameless wild berries, and she was sure the fruit — and her inattention — had caused the diarrhea. The doctor said probably not, and dismissed her guilt. Even so, I was a more careful mother because of Mawmaw’s often-repeated story.

“But Laurel is my only child,” I hear Mawmaw crying.

“You will have more,” the doctor said, as he placed nickels on the boy’s eyelids, closing them forever.

I do not know if he spoke in platitudes, or if he spoke with the certainty of a country doctor who had stood by generations of such deathbeds and had glimpsed the future many times over. But he was right. They had seven more children, including five more sons. Each was healthy and smart, and lived a good, long life. Today, Mawmaw and Pawpaw Green have over 100 living descendants, and it’s likely their biological seed will endure until the end of time.

Yet every May for over a century, our family has placed flowers on Laurel’s grave, honoring, grieving, the life this one child did not

get to live. In the beginning, of course, it was our grandparents who came. They pulled brambles and weeds away from his grave, and helped others in the farm community clean the cemetery on top of the ridge, pulling it back from the hayfield it yearned to be.

Later, Laurel’s brothers helped with this spring work. My cousin Bob, the oldest of the grandchildren, recalls coming as a child with his uncles and with Pawpaw to tend the grave. Now, hired grounds keepers with modern mowing equipment do the work for us, and we no longer need to come with a scythe. Instead, we come only with flowers.

My cousin Kaye places a single red rose on Laurel’s grave because that is what her daddy, my Uncle Woodrow, always did. Each of us places something, nothing much, something simple, an iris maybe, but something. This year, we were all mindful that Uncle Nevel, my grandparents’ second child, was absent. He made this pilgrimage with us a year ago. He was 101 and a half last May, sound of mind and making jokes, but his body was frail and we would lose him in August.

There are historical plaques for houses that stand stout and firm for a century or more, but I’ve never heard of an award for a family that decorates a child’s grave continuously for over 100 years. We’re probably not the only family in Kentucky, though, that holds such a record. I admit, it’s not too hard for us to gather because we’ve not scattered far geographically, and we enjoy the talk and food that always follows.

Still, I’m not entirely sure why we do it. We come, I know, because we loved our grandparents, and maybe because we remember finding the nickels that closed Laurel’s eyes hidden in a little sack in Mawmaw’s drawer when we were children. We come because we are parents and grandparents ourselves, because we understand loss, and are thankful it was Mawmaw’s and not our own. We come because we love each other, to renew our vows in a silent ceremony by a tombstone.

And maybe, it has something to do with our hope that we, too, can build families that endure, that will stand stout and firm and together for a century or more.

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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 work has been published in the literary anthologies *New Growth*, *Tobacco*, *Daughters of the Land*, *Motif I & II*, and *The Journal of Kentucky Studies*. She 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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