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HISTORY
Bracken County

Bracken county was formed in 1796 from part of Campbell and Mason counties. It is situated in the northern part of the state on the Ohio River and is bounded on the north by the Ohio river, on the east by Mason county, on the west by Pendleton county, on the south-west by Harrison county, and on the south-east by Nicholas county. It consists of one hundred thirty thousand, five hundred and sixty acres of land with 96.5% of this farm land. The lands are high and the surface rolling and hilly, the richest lands are in the eastern part, and the rest back from the river is strong oak land that produces large quantities of the famous fine "Mason county Tobacco."

Bracken county derived its name from two creeks, Big and Little Bracken, and these creeks were called in honor of William Bracken who settled on the banks of one of them in 1773 and is supposed to have been killed by Indians at an early date in the settlement of Kentucky.

Captain Philip Buckner was one of the early settlers of Bracken county. He was a Virginian who took an active part in the Revolutionary war, furnishing large quantities of money. In return he was given "Land Office Treasury Warrants" for this section of Kentucky and part of Ohio. His first trip through what is now Bracken county was in 1781, but his family moved down the river to what is now Louisville, then Bare-Grass, Kentucky. Soon he returned to Virginia and interested others in this new territory. In 1797 he returned to the present site of Augusta and made a colony, giving six hundred acres of land for the city to be erected on and vested the title in Trustees. He was an engineer and the lots are today as they were marked off

at that time. He purchased at public auction two squares and donated one for educational purposes and the corresponding one for a court house. Commissioners were appointed to draw an accurate plan for a court house on this lot and a fine old Colonial building was completed in 1800. This building remained until it was raised to the ground in 1936. At present the lot remains deeded to Bracken county by Philip Buckner for a court house and it is the only site in Bracken county now unoccupied which can be made into a historic shrine. Captain Buckner also gave away many farms in this county and Mason county for a sorril colt or a spotted calf or fifty cents. (This is a matter of court record in Mason and Bracken county.)

In 1799 Bracken Academy, one of the best literary institutions in the west, was established by Philip Buckner and in 1822 it became the first Methodist College in the world. Rev. Martin Ruter, DD, and Rev. Jos. S. Tomlinson, DD were among its first presidents. Rev. Henry B. Bascom, DD (afterwards a Bishop of the Methodist E. Church South) and Rev. Burr H. McCown, DD, were among its professors. The library contained twenty-five hundred columes. This college building was destroyed by fire January 29, 1852, but was rebuilt in plainer style and has been occupied mainly by a high school. The bottom on which Augusta is situated is a large burying ground of theancients. A post hole cannot be dug without turning up human bones. They have been found in great numbers and of all sizes everywhere between the mouths of Bracken and Locus Creeks. Among the Indians there is no tradition that any town was located near here and that any battle was ever fought here. A scientific writer in William Gibbs Hunts Western Review, published at Lexington in February 1820, makes repeated allusions to this large cemetery. He mentions a clay rattle found, formed into theshape of

a parrot, or cockatoo's head, hollow within and having a few loose balls of clay which produced the sound. He was in the possession of two iron bracelets, four of which was found on the left arm of a female skeleton found there.

In 1833 Squire David Brooks succeeded in passing the necessary legislature to move the county seat from Augusta to Brooksville where it still remains. It is situated in the back part of Bracken county and is on the main highway number 10, known as the Old Buffalo Trail. A court house and jail were erected here and a small town soon grew up. In 1870 an excellent new brick court house was erected, and other corresponding buildings have since been built to replace those constructed at the time of the change of the county seat.

On September 27, 1862 a battle was fought at Augusta between one hundred and twenty-five home guards under Col. (Dr.) Joshua Taylor Bradford stationed in brick houses about ~~the~~ hundred of Col. (Dr.) Basil W. Duke's regiment of Morgan's Confederate Cavalry who fought in the streets and were forced to burn nearly all the buildings in two squares in order to dislodge the home guards who soon surrendered.

POPULATION: The county's population in 1920 was ~~xxx~~ ^{10,210} ten thousand two hundred and ten, with foreign-born whites constituting only 1.1% of the entire population. The number of males between eighteen and forty-four years of age was one thousand nine hundred and seventy-four and the number of females between the same age-limits was one thousand nine hundred and thirty-two.

ALTITUDE: Augusta is the principal town with a population of approximately two thousand. The Chesapeake and Ohio Railway connects Augusta with Covington, Newport, Maysville and the Atlantic seaboard. Bus lines connect Augusta, the metropolis with Cincinnati, and Maysville while a taxi service provides Brooksville, the county seat, with communication with the chief railroad point.

The county has many miles of highly surfaced roads, and soon the Mary Englis Highway will be completed and will pass through Augusta from Newport to Jaysville, Kentucky. Augusta has a high school and a graded school and the county is covered with school trucks so that all children have an opportunity to attend school. In Augusta there is a Methodist, Christian, Baptist, Nazarene, Catholic and Presbyterian church. The Odeon Theatre has an evening and matinee show at a nominal cost of twenty-five cents. The high school has a gymnasium and basket ball is enjoyed throughout the winter season. The river provides an excellent bathing beach, which is a source of enjoyment to both old and young during the summer. Tennis courts are also to be enjoyed in the park. This park is the old lot deeded by Philip Buckner to Bracken county for a court house and is now unoccupied. It consists of nearly two acres of land in the heart of Augusta facing historic Main Street which was the early avenue of approach to the settlement by the Colonists who arrived at the Augusta landing. The Garden Club and the DAR have petitioned Commissioner Bailey Wooten to establish this public square as a public shrine and these two clubs will assist in beautifying it. At present there are three hotels in Augusta, The Park View, the Mary Englis, and Bradford Inn. Among the leading industries in Augusta is the Shoe Factory which employs approximately one hundred and seventy-five persons, The Neider Factory, which employs forty-five people, The Kentucky Mutual Telephone Company and the Kentucky Power and Light Company.

Brooksville: This is the present county seat and has a population of approximately six hundred people. It is a banking town. There is no railroad here at present. The Dixie Bus Line between Cincinnati, Ohio and Maysville, Kentucky provides Brooksville with communication with these points. The principal highways radiate from here, thus placing the county seat on direct road routes to the capitals of the bounding counties on the east, south and west. With the present use of automobiles and the excellent roads, Brooksville is no longer handicapped by transportation means. Here we have two hotels, the Home and the Central, but there are no tourist camps. The Lyric theatres has an evening and matinee show and the nominal fee of twenty-five cents is charged.

Bibliography

Interviewed Mrs. Marion Lauderbach, great grand daughter of Captain Buckner who gave me the early history of Bracken county, especially Augusta, the first county seat, from papers she had written and books in her library. These statements can be verified by records of Land Office, Richmond, Virginia, Frankfort, Kentucky, Brooksville, Kentucky and Maysville, Kentucky.

Mr. W. T. Breeze, Brooksville, Kentucky was interviewed and gave some facts about Brooksville.

History of Brecken county, from History of Kentucky, by late Lewis Collins, Judge of Mason county court.

Collins History of Kentucky.