

Northern Kentucky Views Presents:

Leitch Station in
Campbell County,
Kentucky

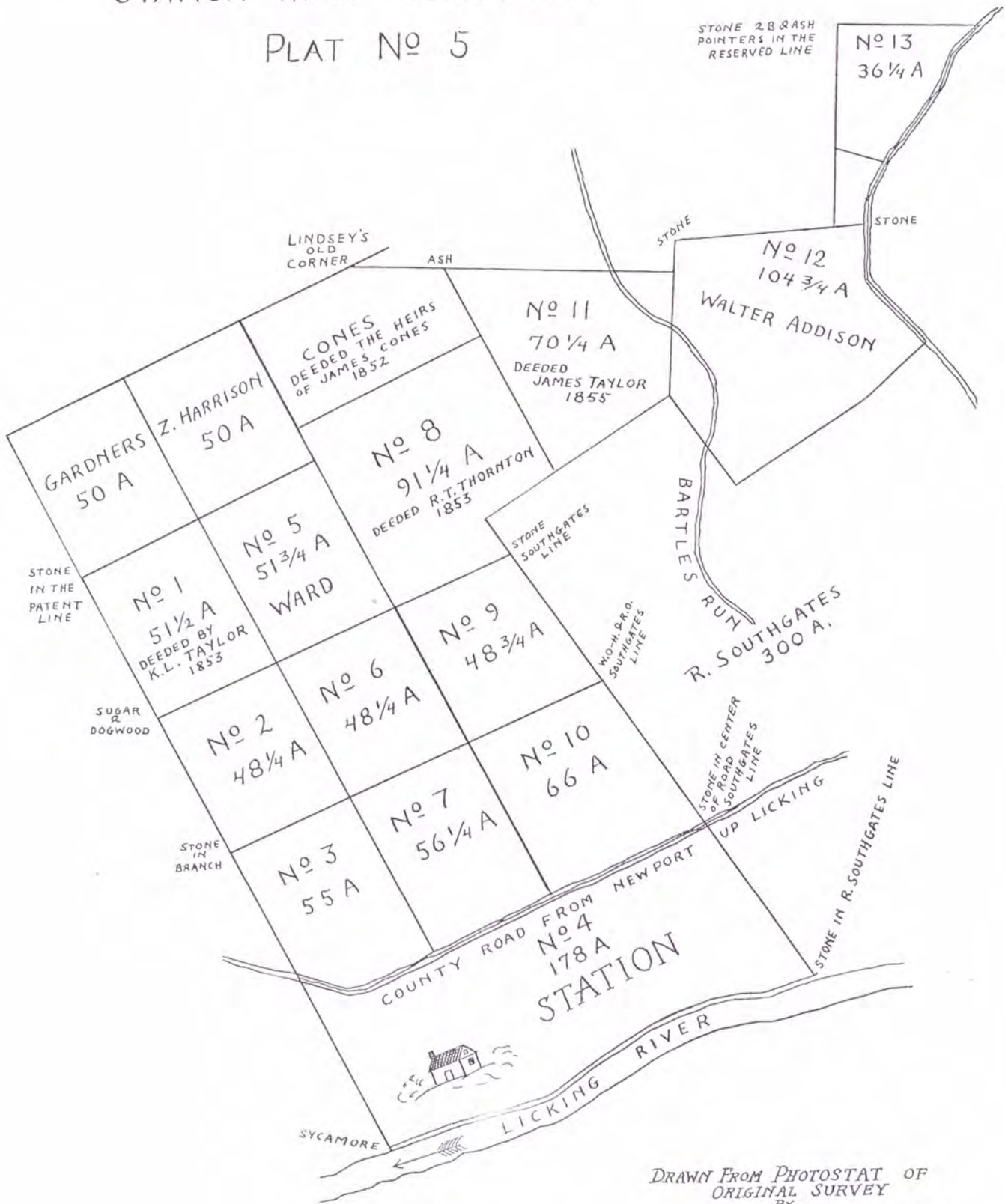
By

Helen Bradley Lindsey

LEITCH'S

STATION TRACT 906 1/4 ACRES

PLAT No 5



DRAWN FROM PHOTOSTAT OF
ORIGINAL SURVEY
BY—*BAYLESS HARDIN*

Leitch Station In Campbell County Kentucky

By HELEN BRADLEY LINDSEY

The story of most, if not all, stations established on the frontiers has been one of tragedy, but so far as found the story of Leitch Station, in Campbell County, Kentucky, is unique so far as Indian attacks are concerned. It is true that death was an early visitor to that Station when "Mr. Fowler's oldest son was killed by an accident".¹ He was a lad of sixteen years and his father's main dependance and his death was the cause of Mr. Fowlers removal from the Station to Cincinnati. No deaths by Indian attacks have been recorded.

As to the existence of the Station itself, there are several authentic statements regarding it. The first is to be found on the Monument erected to the memory of the founder of the Station, by his wife, May 1853, in Evergreen Cemetery, in Campbell County, Kentucky. On east side:

In Memory of
Major David Leitch
who was universally beloved
for his
benevolence, generosity
and many virtues
This monument erected
by his devoted wife
May 1853

On the north side of the Monument is this inscription:—

MAJOR DAVID LEITCH

Who was born at Glasgow in Scotland
Sept. 11th. A. D. 1753. At an early age he mi-
grated to America with an older brother
and settled at Richmond, Virginia. A brave
and patriotic republican. While quite young
he took part in the struggle for American
independence as aide de-camp to General
Lawson. In the year 1785 he came to
Kentucky and settled near Lexington
subsequently he came to his estate
on the Licking River near Newport

¹From Memoirs of Benjamin VanCleve, one of the single men at Leitch Station 1791.

called Leitch's Station. There he erected a block-house to protect himself and his associates against the Indians at which place he died Nov. 7th A. D. 1794. He was also a member of the first convention of Kentucky.

Will of David Leitch—Recorded at Alexandria, Kentucky, Court House, Will Book "A" p I.

IN THE NAME OF GOD AMEN. I David Leitch of Mason County and State of Kentucky being of Sound mind and Memory do make and Ordain this my last Will and Testament.

First, It is my Will that all my Just Debts be paid, After the payment of which Just Debts—I give devise and bequeath unto my well beloved wife Ketturah all and singular my Estate both Real and personal of every denomination to my said wife Ketturah forever.

And for the purpose of the above devise and that the same may be rightfully carried into effect, I do Ordain constitute and appoint John Fowler now living in Lexington (Kentucky) Daniel Weisiger of Frankfort and James Taylor of Mason County af's'd to be my executors of this my last Will and Testament to carry the same into effect according to Law—Further I do hereby constitute and appoint my beloved wife Ketturah to be Executrix together with the Executors aforesaid for the purpose aforesaid. In witness whereof I have hereunto subscribed my name and affixed my seal this 8th day of November 1794

DAVID LEITCH

seal

Executed in the
presence of
Joseph Strong S Na U S Legion
David Nesbit
George Gordon

Mason January Court 1794

This last Will and Testament of David Leitch was proved by the Oath of David Nesbit a witness thereto and Ordered to be Certified.

Mason County to wit;

Personally appeared before us two of the Commonwealth Justices of the Peace George Gordon and made oath that David Leitch the within testator, signed, sealed acknowledged and pronounced the within as his last Will and Testament—and that he was in his proper sense at the time so far as he knew or believed.

Given under our hands this 28th day of April 1795

GEORGE MITCHELL

THOMAS YOUNG

Still further evidence of the establishment of Leitch Station is found in the Memoirs of Benjamin VanCleve, in which he states;²—

“A tract of land of several thousand acres on the East bank of the Licking River beginning about six miles from its junction with the Ohio belonged to Major Leech. In order to form a settlement thereon & to have a farm opened for himself he offered an hundred acres for clearing & fencing of each ten acre field with the use of the cleared land for three years. The majority of the settlers were to make choice of the corner of his tract where three times the quantity of land due to the settlers was to be surveyed into lots & then the settlers to draw by ballot for the first choice. My father allowed me to engage as one of the settlers (I being then 18 years old). He calculated on assisting so that we might each get at least 100 acres. It was about the middle of *March 1791 that I left home. The settlers consisted of four men with families & four of us single men. We first erected what was generally termed a station. Each family occupied a Block house & I am now uncertain whether we put up stockades or not.* We were very industrious & progressed with our clearing for Corn until about the last of April when one of Mr. Fowlers sons was killed in an accident. He was a lad of about 16 years old & the old Gentlemans main dependence and the family become discouraged and moved away.

Mr. VanCleve further states; “The Indians had now become so daring as to skulk through the streets at night & through the gardens around Fort Washington. On the 21st of May the Indians fired on my father where he was at work on his outlot in Cincinnati & took Josph Cutter within a few yards of him. The alarm was given by halloing from lot to lot until it reached Town. I had just arrived from Leaches Station. . . . on the first day of June my father was killed by them” . . .

“After the funeral of my father I returned & planted my corn & attended to it, but was obliged to divide my time & bestow the greater part at Cincinnati for the benefit of the family . . .

On the 8th of August 1791 I set off for Kentucky in the Quarter Master Generals employ with Van McHenry. . . .

“On the 25th of November we were discharged. . . . I built my camp between Licking and the Ohio about three miles from the river at Cincinnati; ---during this time I sold my improvement at Leaches Station for a mere trifle”.

All this occurred before Kentucky became a State in 1792, and was still a part of Virginia.

²Historical and Philosophical Society Quarterly, Vol. 17, Nos. 1 and 2 (January, June) 1922.

General James Taylor, who married the widow of Major David Leitch, also records the establishment of Leitch Station in his manuscript "Reminiscences".³ "In December 1790, Major David Leitch, who resided at that time on a good farm in Fayette County near Bryan's Station, married Miss Keturah Moss who resided with her mother Mrs. Farrer and her step-father, on an adjoining farm. In the spring of 1792 the Leitch's moved to a large tract of land about six miles from the mouth of Licking in what is now Campbell County, where Major Leitch had built a *Station and Block-house* on the banks of the Licking in the previous year."

Major Leitch owned 2/3 of 13800 acres on the north-east side of the Licking, Captain William Kennedy owned the other one third".⁴

"Major Leitch built a "snug hued-log house" on a hand some rise from the *stockade* near the second Falls of that river. The house was still standing in 1847, about 150 yards east of the *Stockade and Block-house*. The logs of the house were hewed down inside, had a stone chimney. The house was one and a half stories high, they had a good garden and lived comfortably with two colored servants and several white men Major Leitch had brought with him to clear the land and one man to kill game for the settlement. Also they had several men to guard them from Indian attacks".

"Early in 1794 Major Leitch set out on a surveying trip with a party to whom he had sold land. They were caught in a severe cold rain-storm and had to stay out all night in the rain. Major Leitch took a severe cold and died in eight or ten days after his return to the Station. He was attended by his brother-in-law, Captain Gordon and by the surgeon from the Army Post".

Mrs. Mary Keturah Jones, wife of Thomas L. Jones and granddaughter of General James Taylor and wife Keturah Moss Leitch Taylor, in her "History of Campbell County" also mentions Leitch Station.

"Major David Leitch, a Scotchman and a revolutionary officer came with about twenty followers in 1789, built a block-house with pickets and established Leitch's Station on the Licking about six miles from the mouth. Major Leitch located a large body of land, gave leases to settlers for improvements, and sold portions to Thomas Lindsey, Bernard Stewart, Archer, Reese, Digby and others."

"About the same period, William Kennedy, also a Scotchman and a Kentucky Surveyor, with his son James and his son-in-law, Benjamin Beall, came to Flag Spring. James Kennedy played finely on the fiddle; he had been a class-mate at school of Scotland's great poet, Robert Burns, who had often listened

³The Reminiscences of General James Taylor are now in possession of Mrs. Jouett Taylor Cannon, Frankfort, Kentucky, to whom the compiler is indebted for the above extracts.

⁴William Kennedy, born in Scotland, was an officer in the Revolutionary War, and a Surveyor. He came to America circa 1765, and died Mercer County, Kentucky, 1800. His Will dated June 12, 1799; probated February 1800. He married first in Scotland and by this marriage had one son James Kennedy born May 31, 1760, at "Old Cumnock", Ayreshire, Scotland, and died Oct. 23, 1826, at "Cassillis", Campbell County, Ky. He joined his father in Kentucky Sept. 8, 1787, after a separation of 22 years and six months. William Kennedy married second, in Charlotte Co., Va., Mary Lindsay, widow, Sept. 1778, by whom he had one daughter, Jeannette Hamilton Kennedy, wife of Benjamin Beall. William Kennedy owned large tracts of land in Mercer County and also in Campbell County, Kentucky.

while he played "Highland Mary". These were the first actual settlers who formed the nucleus for the population of our now flourishing county".

"Notwithstanding the perils of the wilderness, Major Leitch in 1791, brought his young bride of seventeen (Miss Keturah Moss) to visit their intended home at the Station. Miss Moss was one of the earliest pioneers to Kentucky, emigrating from Virginia in 1783 to Bryan's Station. She was reared under the discipline of those fearless women whose courage has become historic. An instance of Mrs. Leitch's heroism is worthy of mention. In 1791 Major Leitch and his young wife were going in company with Mr. Thomas Lindsey and others with a military escort from the mouth of the Kentucky towards Frankfort. Mr. Lindsey had fallen behind more than a hundred yards, when the guard saw an Indian; they encircled Mrs. Leitch, and urged her to hurry on, as they feared other savages in ambush, but she declared she would not desert Mr. Lindsey, and turning her horse's head, she refused to move until Mr. Lindsey came in sight, when she waved to him to hasten, which he did in a gallop".

Another instance of Mrs. Leitch's bravery, as related by members of John Brown Lindsey's family, was when as a lad of about fourteen years he, in a company returning from Cincinnati to Leitch Station, boy like was lagging behind, and Mrs. Leitch noting his absence, turned her horse and started back after him, and saw an Indian creeping up on him. She gave the alarm and the Indian disappeared and that was the last time an Indian was seen in that locality.

The earliest church in this vicinity was the Baptist Church at Columbia, now a part of Cincinnati, and was attended by people from Leitch Station and neighborhood as late as 1798, when Thomas Lindsey, Benjamin Archer and others withdrew from that Church to form a Society on Licking. (From the Minutes of the Columbia Baptist Church, now in the Ohio Historical and Philosophical Society, University Library Building, Cincinnati, Ohio.)

The following land transactions are of record at the County Seat of Campbell, Alexandria, Kentucky.

Commonwealth of Virginia to David Leitch, 18 April 1785, 13800 acres. David Leitch to William Kennedy, December 5, 1795, "land lying in Fayette County, being on the bank of the Licking 5 miles in a straight line from the mouth" David Leitch 9,200 acres; William Kennedy 4600 acres. Reference; County Court of Mason.

Campbell County Records Deed Book "A"

A part of the Leitch tract of land was bought by Bernard Stuart who held the title bond of Timothy Bull from David Leitch and assigned by Timothy Bull to Bernard Stuart. The deed from James Taylor to Bernard Stuart was June 1801. In 1809 Stuart sold this land to William Caldwell on title bond. The deed was later executed to Sarah Caldwell, widow of William. Deed Book "W", Alexandria, Ky.⁵

⁵ Some of the sales made by David Leitch may have been recorded in Fayette County, Ky. A search of Mason County Records did not show any deeds made by David Leitch and those in Campbell County were made by James Taylor the acting executor of David Leitch's estate.

September 14, 1801, James Taylor deeded to Thomas Lindsey, senior, 325 acres, part of the 13,800 acre tract of David Leitch. (Book "B" p 256, Alexandria, Ky.) This farm is mentioned in the Will of Thomas Lindsey as "being the land which I bought of David Leitch during his life time". The land is described as follows;—Beginning at a Black Walnut, White Walnut and Sugar tree, being one of the Patent corners and also corner to John Williams and Edward Taylor line, thence with said line s 60 w 73 to a Walnut and an Ash being another of the Patent corners and corner to said Taylor thence with another of his lines n 30 w 150 to an elm and two Sugar trees on the north side of a small drain and corner to Bernard Stuart thence with his line s 72 w 124 to 2 large Beech trees corner to said Stuart thence s 16 e 265 to an Ash and an Elm on the east side of a dry drain thence north 74 east 250 poles to a Lynn and two Beeches corner to Joseph Kelly and Thomas Reese line thence north 16 west 138 poles with his line to a Beech and Ash, another of his corners in the old line thence west 20 poles to the place of beginning. (Bk "B" p 256)

James Taylor to Thomas Reese, 100 acres part of the 13800 acre tract of David Leitch. Deed Book "B", p 45 Alexandria, Ky., described as follows;—Beginning at a Beech in the Thomas Lindsey line on the south side of a hill in the resurvey line thence north 74 east 180 poles to two Beech trees in Joseph Kelly line thence south 16 east 90 poles to an Ash and two Buckeyes in Benjamin Archer's line, thence with his line south 74 west 180 poles to a Sugar tree corner to said Archer in resurvey line thence north 16 west 90 poles to beginning.

October 8, 1798 James and Keturah Taylor sold to Benjamin Archer 200 acres part of the 13800 acre tract of David Leitch in which mention is made of Thomas Reese corner William Edwards line and William Germans corner.

The accompanying map shows the division of the Station Tract of 906½ acres. The Station Lot No. 4, of 178 acres was later divided among the heirs of General Taylor and held by them for many years.