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By Otis M. Mather, Hodgenville, Ky.

THE MAN MULDRAUGH.*

Little can be said authoritatively of the pioneer whose name is perpetuated in the unique geological formation extending from the heart of Kentucky to the Ohio River and known as Muldraugh (or Muldrow) Hill. According to the best available information, he was John Muldraugh, who at an early date in Kentucky history settled on or near the eastern extremity of the eminence which bears his name, now in Marion County. Through the kindness of the Secretary of the Kentucky Historical Society I have received a copy of certificate of the Land Commissioners, of date February 11, 1780, by which John Muldraugh was awarded 1,000 acres of land, "lying on both sides of the Rolling fork of Salt River about six miles below the Shawnee Ridge, running up and down said River for quantity, to include his improvement," on account of marking and improving the same in the year 1776. That he was a man of some consequence may be inferred from the record of the second meeting of the Militia of Nelson County, held on the 29th day of September, 1791, at which "John Muldraugh was assigned as Captain, taking place of Charles Kennett moving

*Original records show that the pioneer spelled his name John Muldrough. The name of the hill has so long been written Muldraugh that I adopt that spelling in this article.

away." The duties of this position, important at that time, he discharged at least for several months. The records show that he made a report as Captain at the end of the year 1791. Nelson County was then practically the entire territory from Salt River to Green River. Captain Muldraugh's militia district embraced the southeastern part of the County, which is now known as Marion County.

I have been informed that John Muldraugh left children, and that some of his descendants are now living in Marion County, but none of the name Muldraugh.

THE HILL.

It is not improbable that the name Muldraugh Hill was first given to the particular hill on which Captain Muldraugh lived or which was owned by him, and that gradually the appellation was extended to the entire range, stretching east to west a distance of approximately seventy-five miles, from Calvary, in Marion County, to West Point, on the Ohio. Depositions in Hardin County show that as early as the year 1805 the extreme west end of the eminence, on the south side of Salt River, near its mouth, was known as *Mulders Hill*.

The peculiar feature of this noted formation, technically called an *escarpment*, is that it is a one-sided mountain range. Binding closely its entire length upon

the channel of Rolling Fork and main Salt River, the crest of Muldraugh Hill forms the dividing ridge between the waters of Salt River on the north and the waters of Green River to the south. From the river bottoms on the north the ascent is abrupt to an average height of some 400 or 500 feet, but there is no corresponding descent on the south. When the traveller from the north has climbed the steep hill he finds himself on a plateau sloping slightly toward the south. The creeks flowing into Rolling Fork and Salt River from the south are short, consequently much the greater part of the territory which lies between those rivers and Green River drains into the latter stream. Nolynn River is the largest stream in this territory. Its headwaters are in the northern and eastern portions of LaRue County, in some places not more than two or three miles from the Rolling Fork of Salt River, but these branches after uniting to form Nolynn, flow southwestwardly about seventy-five miles to fall into Green River just above Brownsville, in Edmonson County.

The French traveller, F. A. Michaux, who rode on horseback from Louisville to Nashville in 1802, thus records his impressions of the Muldraugh Hill country:

“Ten miles on this side (northward from Skaggs’ inn) is *Mulders* Hill, a steep and lofty mountain that forms a kind of amphitheatre. From its summit the neighboring country presents the aspect of an immense valley, covered with forests of an imperceptible extent, whence as far as the eye can reach nothing but a gloomy verdant space is seen,

formed by the tops of the close-connected trees and through which not the vestige of a plantation could be discerned.” (Thwaites’ *Early Western Travels*, Vol. 3, p. 213). Collins, in his *History of Kentucky* (Vol. 2, page 540), remarks: “In the Geology of Marion County appears a singular phenomenon—first demonstrated by the surveys made in locating the Muldrow’s Hill turnpike, and afterwards by other surveys. The southern boundary line of the county is the dividing ridge of Muldrow’s Hill, separating the waters of the Rolling Fork and Salt river on the north, from those of Pittman’s creek and Green river on the south. This hill or elevation is more than 500 feet above the bed of the Rolling Fork . . . The face of the country south of the Rolling Fork—extending from Casey county around to the Ohio river—is considerably higher than in the counties to the north, bordering on the same stream. This exceptional peculiarity in the formation of the earth in this region gives force and interest to the theory of Volney—who contended that a large portion of central Kentucky was once the bed of an immense lake extending into Indiana and perhaps into a portion of Ohio; which broke through its southern wall or bank, and thus formed the Ohio river. The Silver Creek Hills in Indiana correspond in elevation to Muldrow’s Hill in Kentucky; and being opposite and on the west side of the Ohio river, may have formed a portion of the southwestern border of the supposed lake.”

FIRST SETTLEMENTS IN KENTUCKY.

However interesting the topography

or the geology of Muldraugh Hill may be, our present concern is with history rather than description. The object of this paper is to inquire as to the first white men who explored the region south of Muldraugh Hill, and, following this inquiry, a brief mention of some of the earliest settlers and stations in this part of Kentucky. The occupation of this territory, including as it does the northern part of the extensive region known as the "Barrens," may be said to be a secondary step in the settlement of Kentucky.

After the beginning at Harrodsburg, in June, 1774, further settlement of Kentucky was interrupted for a few months by Dunmore's War. Though this war is said to have been incited by Governor Dunmore for the purpose of turning the attention of the Virginians from the oppression of the English to the danger from the Indians in the west, its fortunate conclusion before the actual breaking out of the Revolutionary War, had a favorable effect in encouraging settlements in the Ohio Valley, and ultimately was of vast benefit to the colonists in the War against Great Britain. Following the battle of Point Pleasant, at the mouth of the Kanawha, in October, 1774, the Ohio River was opened to passage by the whites.

Under the protection of Colonel Richard Henderson and his visionary Transylvania Company, a number of settlements were made in central Kentucky in the years 1775 and 1776. Before the end of the year 1778 General George Rogers Clark had established a few families on Corn Island, from which they moved the next year to make the

fort on the main land, which was the beginning of Louisville. By the end of the year 1779 stations were scattered throughout the central and northern portions of Kentucky from the mouth of Limestone (Maysville) almost to the mouth of Salt River.

But at the foot of Muldraugh Hill the earliest settlers halted. Its precipitous cliffs and rocky slopes temporarily barred the way to the fertile plains and valleys beyond. It is not probable that on the first day of January, 1780, the smoke ascended from the stick chimneys of a dozen cabin homes in all the vast region between Muldraugh Hill and Green River. Not until there were in readiness immigrants in sufficient numbers to erect forts or "stations" was the time ripe for the occupation of this isolated territory. This time came in the Spring of the year 1780.

THE LAND LAW OF 1779.

Notwithstanding the natural obstacle to the settlement of the region over the crest of Muldraugh Hill, the great influx of settlers early in 1780 soon drove homeseekers into that territory.

There were at least two causes for the flood of adventurers at this particular time. One was the Virginia Land Law of 1779, the other was the "hard winter" of that year. Each of these had an important bearing upon the settlement of Kentucky.

As a rule, the settlers who had arrived in Kentucky before the Fall of 1779 held their lands by an uncertain tenure. The earliest surveyors, Colonel Thomas Bullitt and his party, who explored and surveyed on Beargrass, and

Hancock Taylor and his party, who were in central Kentucky, in 1773, were engaged to survey on military warrants issued to officers and soldiers of the French and Indian War. The benefit of some of the most important of these surveys was lost when the holders of the warrants entered the service of the British in the Revolutionary War.

The settlers who came in 1775 and 1776 under the auspices of the Transylvania Company awoke to find their land grants worthless when Virginia declared illegal and void the purchase made by Colonel Henderson from the Cherokees.

The Land Law of 1779, for the first time, afforded to the public practically unlimited opportunity to acquire title to lands west of the Alleghenies. Recognizing the priority of right of those who had opened the way by establishing the first settlements in Kentucky, this law justly discriminated in their favor by permitting them to hold their possessions on payment of smaller amounts than were required of others. Briefly, this law provided that any actual resident in good faith before the first day of January, 1778, should be entitled to four hundred acres of land, including his settlement, at the price of \$2.50 for each hundred acres, and in addition should have a pre-emption right to one thousand acres more on payment of the State price of forty pounds paper money (then equal to about \$40.00) for each hundred acres; while from all others was required the full State price, as given above.

Under this law Treasury warrants were issued for millions of acres of land

in Kentucky, to be located by the holders of the warrants at their discretion.

THE "HARD WINTER."

Among the first generation of Kentuckians, the season of unprecedented cold which prevailed from the last of November, 1779, to the following March, was always remembered and spoken of as the "hard winter." During this time the Ohio and its tributaries were sheets of ice. The immigrants who had come down the river or crossed the mountains in the Autumn of 1779 were happy to shelter themselves temporarily in the hospitable stations on Beargrass and on the waters of the Licking, the Kentucky and Salt River, and to add to the scanty stores of those stations such supplies as could be brought in from the frozen forests by means of trap or trusty rifle.

Toward the end of March, 1780, many boats on the upper branches of the Ohio, which had been built the preceding Fall, and had been tied up through the Winter, began to move down stream. We are informed by an early writer (Collins, Vol. 2, p. 366) that "during the spring of 1780, 300 large family boats arrived at the Falls, and as many as 10 or 15 wagons could be seen of a day, going from them."

From the Virginians and Pennsylvanians who in this year of 1780 and in the few next succeeding years came down the Ohio in their crude house boats and landed at the Falls, the northern part of the watershed of Green River was chiefly peopled. True, some of the first settlers who for a time had been at Harrodsburg or other of the older stations came at an early date to establish them-

selves permanently in the region south of Muldraugh Hill, but these constituted only a small percentage of the population.

THE SPIES.

But though the Green River country was not occupied until about six years after the first settlement at Harrodsburg, in the meantime it had been thoroughly explored. As the whole of Kentucky had been a hunting ground for adventurous Virginians and North Carolinians, so for two or three years before 1780, hunters from Harrodsburg and other settlements crossed Muldraugh Hill in search of big game, and in this way spied out the land.

The earliest explorers of lands in the Green River section were probably some of the Long Hunters, who, after crossing Cumberland Gap in 1771, spent a year hunting through this region. A party of them had a camp for several months on the Caney fork of Russell's Creek, at a point now in Green County, near the road leading from Greensburg to Columbia. Here they built a rude hut in which to store the skins of wild animals killed, from which the stream was thereafter known as Skinhouse branch. The extent and success of the efforts of this party may be inferred from an inscription left by one of the hunters after the skins were found to be ruined from a leak in the bark roof of the hut—"2,300 Deer Skins Lost. Ruination by God."

Among those of the Long Hunters who were at the camp on Caney fork were James Knox, Joseph Drake and Henry Skaggs (or Skeggs). Which of

these was the head of the party is a question on which authorities differ. The names of Knox and Drake appear often in pioneer Kentucky history. Henry Skaggs was in Kentucky as a hunter and explorer before Daniel Boone crossed the Cumberland mountains. He was an intelligent but eccentric bachelor, whose home was in the woods. His intimate knowledge of Indian life and his tact in dealing with the red men were of vast benefit to the early settlers in the Green River country. Skaggs spent his last days as a member of the family of a Mr. Edwards, who about the year 1790 settled on the south side of the river in the vicinity of the present village of Pascal, in Hart County.

Depositions of Squire Boone, dated September, 1797, which are in the office of the Clerk of the Hardin County Court, show that he made a number of journeys through the Nolynn valley from 1778 to 1780. In one of these depositions he states that in 1778 he was passing through the country from Cumberland (Tennessee) to Kentucky. Because of his early acquaintance with this region his services in locating lands here were much in demand by holders of Virginia Treasury warrants. Evidence is not wanting that these services were financially profitable to him.

Edward Bulger and Silas Harlin entered lands in the Green River valley, though they resided at Harrodsburg. Bulger made an improvement, perhaps about 1779, on "a branch of Green River called Elk Garden, and about fifteen miles from Gordon's lick" (Hughes' Ky. Reports, 21). This stream which was called Elk Garden is prob-

ably the same which took the name Nolynn about the beginning of the year 1780. Both Bulger and Harlin were among the earliest settlers at Harrodsburg, Harlin being one of James Harrod's original company of 31 which arrived in May, 1774. Doubtless both often crossed Muldraugh Hill and ranged the "Barrens" many months before settlers entered the country south of the Hill, though of this they left no record. The voices of these two brave men were forever silenced in the bloody battle of Blue Licks, in August, 1782.

I find in Hardin County depositions of David Glen and John Cowan, two of Harrod's company of May, 1774, which show that they were hunters and explorers in this territory. In a deposition given by Glen July 14, 1796, he says "that some time in May or June, 1780, he was in company with a certain William Stewart exploring the Green River country and that they travelled from the Long Falls of said river northeast about three miles" and saw Crow's Pond and other ponds which they "adjudged to empty into Green River." John Cowan, in a deposition dated April 2, 1798, "at the forks of Nolynn about 300 yards above Mr. Hodgen's new mill," says that he was at that very place in April, 1780, in company with a certain Joseph Early, and that "they went to the head of the creek and saw other forks, but none so large as this." Hodgen's new mill was located near the mouth of South Fork, four miles below his old mill, where Hodgenville now stands.

Thomas Harbeson, a resident of Mercer County, in a deposition dated August

15, 1797, says that "in April, 1780, he, together with Samuel Johnson and James Brown (brother to Col. Patrick Brown) were going out to hunt on the head of Sinking Creek, now called Pittman's creek, and passed up a creek now called Salt Lick creek, but at that time he knew no name for it," and "he believes it had none at that time, for he was perfectly acquainted with this part of the country, it being his usual hunting ground." Salt Lick Creek is now the dividing line between LaRue and Marion counties.

In a deposition given by Abraham Haptonstall February 12, 1802, he says that "in the month of June, 1780, himself and Hubbard Taylor and Hancock Lee, several others being present, came to a spring on Bacon Creek" (a branch of Nolynn) and marked trees. He was asked, "What reason have you to believe this creek to be same that you made the improvement on?" and replied—"From the size and beauty of it and from the quantity of barrens that lie adjoining and the distance travelled betwixt said creek and the South Fork of *Nolinn*, and its being the last creek that runs through a large tract of barrens on east side of *Nollin*, and further that I never discovered any barrens from the mouth of said creek down *Nollin* to Green river, to the best of my knowledge." This deposition is interesting not only because of its description of the country, but because of the witness who testified and the persons mentioned as being with him in this region in 1780. Hancock Lee was the founder of the old settlement on the Kentucky River, below Frankfort, known as Leestown.

Hubbard Taylor is well known in the political life of early Kentucky. He was one of the first Representatives of Fayette County, and later was Senator from Clark County. Abraham Haptonstall first appears in Kentucky history in 1769, when, in company with Colonel Richard Taylor and his brother Hancock Taylor, he made a voyage from Pittsburgh down the Ohio and the Mississippi to the mouth of the Yazoo, said to be the first trading voyage past the Falls of the Ohio (2 Collins, 358). He came out as an assistant to Hancock Taylor when the latter was sent by Governor Dunmore to survey lands on the Kentucky, in 1773, and was with Taylor when he was mortally wounded by Indians, in 1774. Haptonstall attempted to remove the bullet with his pocket knife, but failed. He rescued Taylor's notes of surveys and they were later legalized by an Act of the Virginia Legislature. As late as the year 1814 Haptonstall was living in Jefferson County (2 Collins, p. 358).

Among others who should be mentioned as explorers of the Green River country were Benjamin Lynn and John Severns. But as they both settled in this territory they will be discussed in connection with other early settlers.

These are only a few of the many who doubtless traversed and hunted over the region from Muldraugh Hill southwardly to Green River before it was occupied by a single white inhabitant.

FIRST SETTLEMENT SOUTH OF MUL- DRAUGH HILL.

Filson's map of 1784 gives, with tolerable accuracy, the locations of many sta-

tions in the Blue Grass region and near Beargrass, but fails to indicate that Filson had any knowledge of the few struggling settlements which had theretofore been made south or west of the Salt River valley. Muldraugh Hill is not shown on this map. The greater part of the territory between Salt River and Green River is thus described: "Here is an extensive tract called Green River Plains, which produces no timber and but little water, mostly fertile and covered with excellent Grass and Herbage." This is the region which became known as the "Barrens" or Kentucky Meadows.

Though, of course, exact figures are not available, my guess would be that by the end of the year 1784, as many as 400 or 500 settlers, young and old, had established themselves in the territory embraced between Green River on the south and the Ohio River and Muldraugh Hill on the north. These were widely scattered, among at least half a dozen different stations, chief of which were:

1. Pittman's station, on the north bank of Green River, five miles west of the present town of Greensburg, which was probably settled in the Fall of 1779 or Spring of 1780;
2. Skaggs' station, on Brush Creek, now in Green County, settled about 1781;
3. Hardin's settlement (now Hardinsburg), settled by William Hardin, in April, 1780;
4. Barnett's station, near Hartford.
5. Severns Valley; and
6. Nolynn station.

The scope of this paper will not per-

mit detailed discussion of the settlement of the four stations first named. They were probably first reached by boats by way of Green River and the Ohio, and not by crossing Muldraugh Hill.

The Severns Valley station and Nolynn station were twelve miles apart, and both were within a few miles of the crest of Muldraugh Hill. Severns Valley station became Elizabethtown; the Nolynn settlement was the beginning of Hodgenville. These two stations were established near the same time, about the end of the year 1780, and for a number of years thereafter they were frontier posts southward from Louisville and were as "cities of refuge" for settlers who before the end of Indian warfare ventured into the territory immediately southwardly and westwardly.

As has been indicated, only a small part of the region south of Muldraugh Hill had been occupied or "improved" before the passage of the Virginia Land Law of 1779. In the record of the claims before the Commissioners appointed by Virginia, which held its first session at St. Asaph's or Logan's Fort, in Lincoln County, in October, 1779, many settlement and pre-emption certificates were awarded to settlers in other portions of Kentucky, but comparatively few for lands in the Green River section. Practically the whole of this part of Kentucky was taken up in large tracts on the Treasury warrants provided for in the Act of 1779. Perhaps not as many as a score of persons had valid claims to lands in this territory between Muldraugh Hill and Green River on ac-

count of actual settlements on improvements thereon before 1779.

THE SETTLERS.

On or about the day when John Hancock and other patriots in Philadelphia subscribed their names to the Declaration of Independence, a flat boat containing eight Virginians landed on the south bank of the Ohio at the mouth of Salt River. As shown by depositions which are in the office of the Clerk of Hardin County Court, this company consisted of Samuel Pearman, Francis Shane, William Sevan, John Ross, Robert Sweeney, Samuel Brinton, Robert Brinton and William Woodward. In a deposition given by Francis Shane he says that the company landed at the mouth of Salt River "some time in the last of June or first of July, 1776," and "Pearman began to chop and make some marks there. Afterwards we came higher up said river and Pearman made an improvement," and the other men also erected cabins. This statement of Shane is corroborated by a deposition of Pearman, also in Hardin County. The erection of these crude huts was doubtless the first overt act of white men indicating an intention to claim from the savages any part of the land south of Salt River.

This company did not remain long to occupy their improvements. Pearman says he went back to Virginia, and came down the Ohio again in 1780. On his second trip he apparently asserted claim to the land which he had marked four years before and evidently succeeded in establishing his right to it, for the records of the Hardin County Court show

that at the July term, 1798, "On the application of Samuel Pearman, a town was established on his land, at the mouth of Salt River, to be known by the name of West Point;" and by that name it is known to this day. How many of the others who were in the company of 1776 returned to reside in Kentucky, I am unable to say.

Of the few whose settlement and pre-emption claims to lands south of Muldraugh Hill were adjudicated by the Commissioners of 1779, two are of special interest in connection with the present inquiry. These are the claims of Benjamin Lynn and Andrew Hynes. For the privilege of examining copies of the records of the Commissioners in advance of publication in the Register of the Kentucky Historical Society, I am indebted to Mrs. Jouett Taylor Cannon, Secretary-Treasurer of the Society.

These records, under date October 30, 1779, show:

"Benj. Linn this day claimed a right to a settlement and pre-emption to a tract of land lying on the north side of Green River in the fork of a creek, about 40 miles from this place (Harrodsburg) and 12 miles from Pottinger's cabin on the Rolling fork, near 35 miles south of Bullitt's Salt Lick, by improving the same and residing in this country ever since the year 1776. Satisfactory proof being made to the Court, they are of opinion that said Lin has a right to a settlement of 400 acres of land, including the said improvement, & the pre-emption of 1000 acres adjoining, and that a certificate issue accordingly."

See p. 28, Register Kentucky Historical Society, Jan., 1923.

To one not acquainted with the country or with the history of Lynn, it would be difficult, from the description thus given, to locate his lands. But to the resident of LaRue County, it is clear that this was the first settlement in the vicinity of Hodgenville. This town is located just below the junction of several small creeks which form Nolynn River, and it is just twelve miles from New Haven, on Rolling Fork River, near which place was the cabin of Samuel Pottinger. The distance and directions from Harrodsburg, when the Court was in session, and Bullitt's Lick are not far wrong. The fact that these distant stations were mentioned to identify Lynn's settlement indicates that he had chosen a tract of land remote from any other known settlement, and also that Nolynn Creek had not then been named.

Again, on the 20th of November, 1779, when the Commissioners were in session at the Falls of Ohio, the following entry appears in their records: "Andrew Hines this day claimed a pre-emption of 400 acres of land at the State price, lying on the waters of Green River, about 12 miles from Benj. Lynn's land, partly a northwest course, by making an actual settlement in the month of May, 1779." Satisfactory proof being made, a certificate was ordered to issue for 400 acres, "including the said settlement." See page 53, Register Ky. Historical Society, Jan., 1923. Though the main channel of Green River is between thirty and forty miles south of Elizabethtown, this tract of land is evidently the same on which that town was

later laid out. As Hynes' settlement was 12 miles from Benjamin Lynn's, "partly a northwest course," so Elizabethtown is 12 miles a northwestwardly course from Hodgenville. Hence, we have the original entries for the lands on or near which these two towns stand, in October and November, respectively, 1779.

Benjamin Lynn came to Harrodsburg in the year 1776. On the 2nd of January, 1777, he became one of Colonel Harrod's company of 30 men who went from Harrodsburg to the Ohio River, eleven miles above Limestone, to get the 500 pounds of gunpowder which General George Rogers Clark had procured in Virginia for the relief of settlers in Kentucky. On July 9th, 1777, Lynn married, at Harrodsburg, Hannah, sister of John Severns (or Sovereigns), on which occasion, according to Collins, "there was great merriment." In his earlier days Lynn was noted as a hunter and as an explorer. He and his brother-in-law John Severns were together at the camp on the knoll, just above where Hodgenville now stands, probably about the summer of 1779, when the disappearance of Lynn is said to have given rise to the name of the stream, Nollynn. The incident from which this name originated, according to Lynn himself, as stated in a letter of his son-in-law, John Chisholm, dated September 16, 1846 (Draper Mss. 37 J 105) was as follows: "I heard Capt. B. Lynn say (he) as he supposed was the original cause of the name. There was 10 men and himself hunting in the Barrons, exploring that portion of the country, and had concluded to spend a few days at that camp. And they were to meet every night at

the camp. Capt. Lynn, on the first day's hunt, early in the day came on a fresh trail of Indians, followed them that day throughout, wishing to see where they were bound, continued on the trail so far he could not reach the camp at night. The second night, when the company would reach the camp at night one by one came singly, they would say—"No Lynn yet;" that was the talk until Lynn came, and they call (ed) their camp No Lynn; and the creek continues the old name."

A deposition in Hardin County shows that in the month of November, 1779, Lynn and John Severns were together at a Camp which they called "Camp Destruction," on the stream flowing into Green River, which since that time has been known as Lynn Camp Creek.

In later life, Lynn became well known as a preacher of the Separate Baptist Church. He established a number of churches in the Rolling Fork and Green River sections of Kentucky. He was one of the first ministers to whom authority was given by the Nelson County Court to perform the marriage ceremony. The records of that Court show—"April 14, 1789. On motion, ordered that Benj. Linn have license to celebrate matrimony according to law."

After many years' service in the locality with which his name is now associated, Lynn went to southern Kentucky, to make his home with his brother, and there he died. He is known in history as the "Hunter-Preacher" and as the "Daniel Boone of Southern Kentucky."

The name which is now written Sev-

erns appears in many of the old records as *Soverns* or *Sovereigns*. John Severns came to Harrodsburg from the Monongahala country, as early as the year 1775. As has been seen, he was in company with his brother-in-law Benjamin Lynn exploring in the Green River region at an early day. He was a surveyor, and about the year 1779 was engaged on the waters of the stream which flows southwardly from Elizabethtown into Nolynn. According to depositions which are in Hardin County, this stream and its valley until the Fall of 1779 were known simply as "the Valley." At that time they took the name *Severns Valley*. John Severns lived on the waters of this stream for several years, until about the year 1790, when, it is said, "he penetrated the wilderness of the Northwest Territory, and settled with his family on the south branch of the Patoka river," in Indiana, at the place now known as *Severns Bridge*, three miles northeast of Princeton, "being the first white resident of the country now comprised within the limits of Gibson County." Of his subsequent life and of the services of his wife, Mary, as a "medicine woman" among the early settlers of this part of Indiana, an interesting account is given in Tarrt's *History of Gibson County*, published at Edwardsville, Ill., in 1884.

Colonel Andrew Hynes, on whose land Elizabethtown was laid out, after Hardin County was organized, and for whose wife, Elizabeth, the town was named, was one of the trustees appointed by the Virginia Legislature to lay off Louisville, on its establishment as a town, in 1780. In 1788 he was named in

another Act of the Virginia Legislature as one of the original trustees of Bairdstown (*Bardstown*). Leaving *Severns Valley*, he became a resident of *Bardstown*, where he died about August, 1800, while Representative of Nelson County in the General Assembly of Kentucky.

Haycraft in his history of Elizabethtown says "that about the fall of 1779 and winter of 1780, the early settlers were Captain Thomas Helm, Colonel Andrew Hynes and Samuel Haycraft, each of whom built forts and block houses." In a deposition of Ben Helm, son of Captain Thomas Helm, dated 1815, he says that he "became a settler in *Severns Valley* in the month of November or December, 1780." As he was only thirteen years of age in 1780, he doubtless came with his father. It is further stated in Haycraft's history (p. 121) that his father, Samuel Haycraft, Sr. "in 1780 settled on the hill above the Cave spring (near Elizabethtown) in a fort which he built and in which several families resided." It would therefore appear that Andrew Hynes, who in November, 1779, obtained a certificate for 400 acres for "making an actual settlement in the month of May, 1779," was the first settler on the land where Elizabethtown stands. However, there were at least three others who made improvements or entered land in *Severns Valley* as early as the year 1779. These were John Severn, whose cabin was probably the first in the Valley, Elisha Freeman and Thomas McCarty.

At a meeting of the Commissioners

held at Falls of Ohio on November 23, 1779, the following entries appear:

1. "Elisha Freeman this day claimed a preemption of 400 acres of land at the State price, lying on the first right hand fork of the creek that Soverns cabbin is built upon, in Soverns Valley, a branch of Green River. Satisfactory proof being made to the Court that the said Freeman made an actual settlement in May, 1779, they are of opinion that the said Freeman has a right to a preemption of 400 acres of land including sd. Settlm't & that a cert'e issue accordingly."
2. "Thomas McCarty this day claimed a preemption of 400 acres of land at the State price, lying on the head of a branch, the north branch of Soverns Creek, a branch of Green River, in Soverns Valley, by making an actual settlement in April, 1779. Satisfactory proof being made to the Court, they are of opinion that the said McCarty is entitled to a preemption of 400 acres including the sd. settlm't & that a Cert'e issue accordingly." (Register of Ky. His. Society, Jan. 1923, page 57.)

Both these entries imply knowledge of a prior settlement in the Valley by John Severns.

It may be said with reasonable certainty that the first settlers in Severns Valley were John Severns, Andrew Hynes, Elisha Freeman and Thomas McCarty, and that all these had built cabins there as early as the Summer of 1779. If there was another settler in the Valley before the year 1780 it was

Banam Shaw, who became prominent in the early history of that locality and was ruling elder of the Severns Valley Baptist Church in 1792. In a deposition of John Essery, who was one of the first trustees of the town of Shepherds ville, he stated (1806)—"Soverns Valley was settled by Shaw in the year 1779."

But though Severns and Hynes and others may have built cabins in "the Valley" in 1779, and Benjamin Lynn may have made an improvement on Nolynn about the same time, it is not likely that any of them were permanently located on the southern slope of Muldraugh Hill before the Spring of 1780.

The three forts in Severns Valley—Hynes', Helm's and Haycraft's—according to the best evidence, were erected in the year 1780, while the fort on the land of Phillip Phillips, which was the first on Nolynn, was probably not built until the beginning of the year 1781.

In a deposition of Daniel Linder, one of the earliest settlers of Severns Valley, dated June 2, 1814, he was asked—"At what time do you believe that Nolin station was settled?" His answer was—"I suppose in the year 1780 or 1781, of which I am not certain."

It is not probable that families were settled permanently in either of these localities before the erection of fortifications for their protection.

From the time that forts were built in Severns Valley and on Nolynn until danger from Indian attacks had past, these two stations were closely allied. Their interests were the same, they worshipped together, their soldiers fought

under common leaders. Until Hardin County was organized, in 1793, there was little difference in the population of Severns Valley and that of the settlement on Nolynn. It is not possible to state just how rapidly the settlements increased in population during the first few years, but some indication of their growth may be noted in two depositions which may be seen in Hardin County.

In a joint deposition of Daniel Linder and John Hart, two of the early settlers of the Valley, they were asked the question—"What number of settlers was there in Severns Valley in 1782?" Their answer was—"We are of opinion there was upward of twenty."

John Handley came to Severns Valley as a surveyor in the year 1780. In a deposition given by him in 1814 he was requested to state the number of inhabitants in Severns Valley and Nolynn in the year 1783, prior to the 16th day of December of that year, and he replied—"I cannot say with any probable certainty the number of inhabitants in Severns Valley and Nolin on above date, but I believe there were a pretty good company of Military at each of those stations at that time."

Among the men who came to these remote settlements were many who possessed qualities of physical and moral courage and leadership. Without disparagement of others, I refer briefly to only a few, in addition to those who have already been mentioned.

Like Andrew Hynes, Phillip Phillips, who built the fort on Nolynn, had the distinction of being prominently identified with the civic life of three counties—Jefferson, Nelson and Hardin. He

was one of the early Justices of the Peace of Jefferson County, taking the oath of office on April 7, 1784. Two days later he was sworn as Captain of the Militia of the same County. After the organization of Nelson County, in 1784, he served for some time as Sheriff of that County. When Hardin County was cut off from Nelson, Phillips was appointed one of the three Justices of the Court of Quarter Sessions of Hardin, taking the oath of office February 26, 1793. The other two Justices were Thomas Helm, one of the first settlers in Severns Valley, and Joseph Barnett, founder of Barnett's Station, who "travelled upward of seventy miles to sit on Court." Haycraft, in his History of Elizabethtown, says (page 22)—"Hon. Judge Phillip Phillips was . . . a gentleman of large estate—lived on Nolynn, about ten miles from the Valley—was a man of much influence and figured for several years in Church and State to a considerable extent; afterwards moved to Tennessee, where he died."

John LaRue, a native of Frederick County, Virginia, came to Kentucky in 1776, and built his first cabin on Brash-ear's Creek, now in Shelby County. Returning to Virginia, he married there, and about the Fall of 1784 located permanently near the Knoll, on Nolynn Creek, within the limits of the county which now bears his name. He was the owner of many thousands of acres of land, in various parts of Kentucky. For some time prior to his death, which occurred in January, 1792, he was ruling elder of the Severns Valley Church. He left four children. His daughter Rebecca married George Helm, son of

Thomas Helm, of Severns Valley. Their oldest son, John LaRue Helm, was twice Governor of Kentucky.

Robert Hodgen, the owner of the plantation on which Hodgenville was laid out on the establishment of that town, in 1818, was a native of Pennsylvania. He moved from that colony to Virginia, and there married Sarah LaRue, a sister of John LaRue. These two men came together to Kentucky in 1784. In 1788 Hodgen obtained from the Nelson County Court license to erect a mill on Nolynn, where Hodgenville now stands, which was probably the first mill in this part of Kentucky. He took an active interest in public affairs, serving as Sheriff, Presiding Judge of County Court and as Representative of Hardin County in the General Assembly of Kentucky. At the June Term of the Hardin County Court, 1797, Robert Hodgen was granted license to keep a tavern at his home on Nolynn. If we may judge from the Baedeker-like entry of the elder Michaux under date January 31, 1796, it may be inferred that Hodgen had an agreeable place of entertainment before this tavern license was granted. This writer says (Vol. 3, Thwaites' Early Western Travels, page 88)—"Sunday the 31st passed by Huggins Mill on Nolin river (good lodging)." Robert Hodgen died in February, 1810.

General John Thomas came to Nolynn in 1783, after service as a Captain in the Virginia troops in the Revolutionary War. His wife was a daughter of Robert Hodgen. He was made Captain of the Militia soon after his removal to Kentucky, and rendered gallant service

in St. Clair's campaign against the Indians, in 1791. In the year 1810 he and Samuel Haycraft, of Elizabethtown, were opposing candidates for Representative of Hardin County in the General Assembly. Haycraft obtained a certificate of election but Thomas contested on the ground that Haycraft held another office at the time of his election, and Haycraft was held to be ineligible. He then resigned the office previously held, and the same candidates made the race again, which was a heated contest and which resulted in the election of Thomas by only a few votes. In the year 1814 Gen. Thomas was appointed by Governor Shelby Major General of the Kentucky Militia, and was given command of the Kentucky troops who were destined to take part in the battle of New Orleans. Before these troops reached the field of battle, Gen. Thomas became seriously ill, and the command devolved upon Brigadier General John Adair. Gen. Adair's vigorous defense of his men, in the controversy with Gen. Andrew Jackson growing out of the latter's charge of cowardice against the Kentucky troops in this battle doubtless led to Adair's election as Governor of Kentucky in 1820, and this to his election as United States Senator a few years later. Gen. Thomas, though superior officer of Gen. Adair at the time of the battle of New Orleans, and though never, so far as I have been able to learn, accused of inefficiency, has scarcely been mentioned in Kentucky history. On his retirement from the military service at the close of the war of 1812, he returned to his farm on Nolynn, where he resided until about

the year 1828, when he moved to the State of Indiana. He died at the home of one of his sons, near Terre Haute, about 1835.

Colonel Patrick Brown was one of three brothers who came from Virginia to Kentucky. James Brown, one of these three, was killed in the battle of Blue Licks, in August, 1782. William Brown, another of the brothers, is known in Kentucky history for his *Journal of the Wilderness Road*, of 1782, which has been published more than once. Following his brother Patrick, William Brown located on Nolynn, about three miles above Phillips' fort, on a farm owned jointly by the two brothers, where William spent the remainder of his days, and where his body lies buried. Patrick Brown was active in public and military affairs. In the year 1791 he performed distinguished service as Major in the unfortunate St. Clair campaign. In August, 1792, he was commander of the combined militia forces of the Severns Valley and Nolynn stations which pursued the last organized band of Indians that raided this part of Kentucky and which was annihilated by Col. Brown's men on a small stream in Bullitt County, then known as Brown's Run. In 1799 Colonel Patrick Brown represented Hardin County in the second Constitutional Convention of Kentucky, but refused to sign the Constitution promulgated because it failed to provide for the emancipation of slaves. Col. Brown later moved to Indiana, and died near Madison in that State about the year 1835.

The Reverend Joshua Carman, probably a native of New Jersey and believed

to be a direct descendant of John Carman, who arrived at Plymouth, Massachusetts, on the ship "Fortune," in November, 1621, came from Virginia with his kinsmen, the LaRues, and at an early date became prominently identified with the religious life of the people of Severns Valley and Nolynn. Colonel Reuben T. Durrett, in his sketch of "Ancient Louisville," mentions Carman as one of the first preachers at the Falls of Ohio. In the year 1787 he became pastor of the Severns Valley Baptist Church, which was organized June 17, 1781, and whose membership was made up of residents of Nolynn as well as from the people of the Valley. This church is yet in existence, and it is the oldest in the State of Kentucky. Its original record book, which is preserved in the fire-proof vault of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, of Louisville, is interesting now as secular as well as church history. The first pastor of this church was the Reverend John Gerrard, a son-in-law of Jacob Vanmeter, one of the founders of Elizabethtown. Gerrard was captured by the Indians, in March, 1782, and was never again heard of. Although the membership of the Severns Valley Church consisted largely of slaveholders, Joshua Carman was an uncompromising emancipationist. Under his leadership and that of Josiah Dodge, his disciple and successor in the pastorate, the slavery question was the subject of constant debate in the congregation, which at length, on February 27, 1796, solemnly resolved that it could not as a church have fellowship with those who held the righteousness of perpetual slavery.

For a time the Severns Valley Church withdrew from the Salem Association, which tolerated Slavery, and found a more agreeable affiliation in the Green River Association. After a number of years' service with congregations in which slavery was a subject of controversy, Joshua Carman, together with Josiah Dodge, organized an Emancipation Church, about six miles from Bardstown, which is said to have been the first organization of this kind in Kentucky. Its existence was brief. Later Joshua Carman moved to Eastern Ohio, where doubtless his advanced ideas upon the subject which two generations later almost wrecked the Union met a more generous approval than he had found in Kentucky.

Without further mention in detail, I incorporate two lists of names, showing, as completely as I am able to give, the names of the first settlers in Severns Valley and on Nolynn, embracing probably nearly all who had located at these stations down to about the first of the year 1785 and some who arrived later. Where practicable, the approximate date of arrival of each settler is shown.

SEVERNS VALLEY LIST.

Bladen Ashley;
 Christopher Bush;
 Rev. Joshua Carman;
 ——— Dyer;
 Elisha Freeman (about 1779);
 Jacob Funk (about 1781);
 Rev. John Gerrard (1780);
 Jacob Harris;
 Samuel Harris (1781);
 John Handley (1780);
 John Hart (1780);

Miles Hart;
 Silas Hart;
 Samuel Haycraft (1780);
 Ben Helm (1780);
 Charles Helm (1780);
 John Helm (1780);
 Thomas Helm (1780);
 Andrew Hynes (1779);
 Peter Kennedy (about 1781);
 Daniel Limber (1780);
 Thomas McCarty (1779);
 Jacob Linder;
 Christopher Miller (before 1783);
 Nicholas Miller;
 Samuel Miller;
 Claudius P. Raguét;
 Abraham Raimer;
 Edward Rawlings (1780);
 Stephen Rawlings (1780);
 Andrew Reed (before 1783);
 Banam Shaw (1779);
 Osborn Sprigg;
 John Severns (about 1779);
 Joseph Stover;
 Swank Thomas (before 1783);
 John Swank;
 Isaac Vanmeter (1780);
 Jacob Vanmeter, Sr. (1780);
 Jacob Vanmeter, Jr. (1780);
 Dan Vertrees;
 Isaac Vertrees;
 John Vertrees (1780);
 Samuel Watkins.
 (44 names)

NOLYNN LIST.

Daniel Ashcraft (before 1783);
 Jediah Ashcraft (before 1784);
 John Ashcraft (before 1783);
 Jacob Ashcraft (before 1784);
 Abner Bozarth (before 1783);
 James Bozarth (before 1783);

Jonathan Bozarth (before 1783);
 John Bozarth (before 1783);
 Patrick Brown (before 1783);
 William Brown;
 Edward Brownfield;
 Solomon Casinger;
 William Cessna (before 1783);
 James (or Joseph) Defevers;
 John Deremiah (before 1783);
 Josiah Dodge;
 Isaac Dye (before 1783);
 James Dye (before 1783);
 Job Dye (before 1783);
 Shepherd Gum (1783);
 Coonrad Kastor (before 1783);
 Banner Friend;
 Joseph Kirkpatrick (1781);
 Robert Hodgen (1784);
 Isaac LaRue (before 1784);
 Jacob LaRue;
 John LaRue (1784);
 James Logsdon (before 1783);
 Thomas Logsdon (before 1783);
 William Logsdon (before 1783);
 Benjamin Lynn (1779);
 Michael Miller;
 Phillip Phillips (about 1781);
 Gen. John Thomas (1783);
 Coonrad Walters, Sr. (about 1784);
 Coonrad Walters, Jr. (about 1784);
 John Walters (about 1784).

(37 names)

It is believed that these two lists include most of the heads of families at the two stations down to the time when settlers in this vicinity began to locate on their own farms.

AFTER 1785.

For several years after the Severns Valley and Nolynn stations were estab-

lished they were regarded as outposts. In the "Kentucky Gazette," of Lexington, notice was given, under date February 26, 1791, that various posts on the frontier "are to be immediately occupied by the guards for the defense of the district," naming among others, Mouth of Salt River, to have 19 men, and Sovereigns Valley, 10 men, and Hardin's settlement, 12 men.

In the first assessment of Hardin County after its organization, which assessment was made in the Fall of 1793, the county was found to have 318 tithables, indicating a population of probably 1500. The county was approximately 140 miles long, and had an average width of nearly 50 miles. The territory which was then Hardin County now includes eight entire counties and parts of four more.

When Hardin County was organized it had no town in which to establish a county seat. There was a sharp rivalry between the people on Nolynn and the inhabitants of Severns Valley over the location of the Court house. This continued for several years after the county seat had been definitely located in the Valley, and was the pretext for many a fist fight. Especially was this true on election days. Samuel Haycraft, who was born in 1795, says that he remembers seeing "about twenty couple fighting at once at the end of Main Cross Street near where the bridge (in Elizabethtown) now stands."

The name Elizabethtown does not appear in the records until the May term of the Hardin County Court, 1795. On the 4th day of July, 1797, the town was duly established by order of that court.

Not until twenty-one years later, in the year 1818, was Hodgen's Mill legally changed to Hodgenville. John Hodgen, one of the sons of Robert Hodgen, procured the establishment of the town on the lands of his deceased father, and caused it to be named for his family. As said by the brilliant Ben Hardin in his celebrated speech at Hodgenville just before LaRue County was organized, John Hodgen "with a prophetic eye" caused a public square to be left in the center of the town. In 1843 the last county to be formed out of the territory of Hardin and the only county formed from any part of its territory east of Severns Valley, was established by an Act of the Kentucky General Assembly and was called LaRue, with Hodgenville as its county seat.

In the first and second decades of the last century Hardin County was the home of a number of persons who later achieved greatness. Among these were John James Audubon, the ornithologist, who was a merchant in Elizabethtown for some time, and the celebrated Duff Green, who became the staunch friend and adviser of **President Andrew Jackson**. Green came to Elizabethtown as a teacher, but later became a partner in a mercantile firm at that place.

About the year 1802, Thomas Lincoln moved from Washington County to Hardin, where he remained until the year 1816. His first location in Hardin County was on Mill Creek, several miles north of Elizabethtown. Near the Mill Creek farm which Thomas Lincoln purchased, his widowed mother located with a married daughter, and there she died. Her body is buried in the graveyard of

the old Mill Creek Church. In 1808 Thomas Lincoln left Elizabethtown, where he had been engaged as a carpenter from the time of his marriage in 1806 and located on a farm on the South Fork of Nolynn, now in LaRue County, to which he obtained an imperfect title and which he later lost in litigation. In a log cabin on this place his son Abraham, the future President, was born, February 12, 1809.

In the year 1813 Hardin County had the rare distinction of being the home of two persons destined to become Presidents of the United States—Abraham Lincoln and James Buchanan. In that year the latter, then only twenty-one years of age, located at Elizabethtown, partly for the purpose of looking after some lands in Hardin County in which his father had invested, and partly with a view of practicing law in the new country. After measuring his own legal attainments with those of Ben Hardin and other able members of the Elizabethtown bar, he decided that his prospect for professional success would be better in his native State, Pennsylvania.

LYSTRA.

I conclude with a brief mention of Lystra, a city which was planned to adorn the heights of Muldraugh Hill in the extreme eastern part of LaRue County, and which was designed to be one of the most magnificent in the world. On the wall of the entrance to the old Capitol Building at Frankfort, now occupied by the Kentucky State Historical Society, hangs a map published at London, England, in 1794, on which Lystra is indicated as a central and chief city

of Kentucky. Detailed plans of the city are yet on sale in rare book stores. One of these plans might be an interesting exhibit, but I content myself by quoting from Collins' History of Kentucky (Vol. 2, page 646):

"Lystra was the name given by some English speculators to a paper town laid off in 1794, on the south side of the Rolling Fork of Salt River, between Salt Lick and Otter creeks. The plan was one of the most beautiful in the world. It was the choice spot of 15,000 acres of land purchased, and was laid off in 25 large blocks or squares, the center of each being a kind of park. In the center of the plat was a circular park, surrounded by an avenue 100 feet wide. The four indented or semicircular quarters of the four blocks whose corners are embraced in this park, were dedicated to public use—as sites for a church, col-

lege, town hall, and place of amusement. The streets were each 100 feet wide; the houses upon streets running N. and S. were required to be set back 25 feet from the line, but upon streets running E. and W., to be built on a line with the streets. . . . "

Within the last few years I have driven over the lonely road which traverses the primeval forest where this magic city was to rise. It is fifteen miles southeast of Hodgenville and about ten miles from the nearest railroad station, on the Knoxville division of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad. In the immediate vicinity is Gleanings, a post-office and country store on the southern bank of the Rolling Fork River. Lystra was only a dream.

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