

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Edwin H. Graves

- originally published in Volume XII, 1984 Journal

The purpose of the Jackson Purchase Historical Society continues to challenge us. Although the Society has enjoyed twenty-six years of exploring the history of the Jackson Purchase and encouraging the preservation and further education of the rich historical traditions of the region, much remains to be done. With the expanded development of the Jackson Purchase and the continuing movement of America's mobile society, a whole new generation of young people have come to the region, challenging us to help build a bridge between their experiences and ours.

I remain astonished that many local residents still know very little about our regional history. My own lack of knowledge would also be overwhelming except for the privileged contact I have with the Jackson Purchase Historical Society. From the personal contact with Society's members, articles in the Society's journal, and meetings of the Society, a colorful tabloid of the region has begun to emerge. But we need to expand the reach of the Society and meet the

challenge of those still unfamiliar with their own local history.

Some of this work has already begun. Over the past several years, the Jackson Purchase Historical Society has been a major supporter for the West Kentucky History Project undertaken by Dr. Joe Cartwright and Dr. Hughie Lawson at Murray State University and funded by the Kentucky Humanities Council. This has brought much attention to our region, and encouraged more interest in the wealth of historical investigation awaiting serious research. At our meetings, we have enjoyed two presentations resulting from these studies, "Geographical Origins of White Migrants to Trigg and Calloway Counties in the Ante-bellum period," and "The Economic Development of West Kentucky." The first study has been published in the Philson Club History Quarterly and is widely recognized in the academic community. The other study will also be published in the near future and add to the recognition we are earning.

We also see the archaeological resources of the Jackson Purchase drawing increased attention. The establishment of the MSU Wickliffe Mounds Research Center will add significantly to the systematic and professional study of the pre-

historic investigation of the region. The work of Mr. Ken Carstons and Mr. Kit Wesler will also add to the *historic* archaeological study of the Jackson Purchase. Many sites await the careful examination of professional archaeologists and, with the aid of trained volunteers, may tell us even more about the development of our area. Our March program should challenge us to lend a hand to this effort.

The architectural history of the Jackson Purchase is also receiving more attention. The studies carried out by the Kentucky heritage Commission has begun to reach deeply into our area. The work in Paducah is exceptionally noteworthy. The publication of *The Architecture of Paducah and McCracken County* by Camille Wells has gained much recognition. The support the society gave to Whitehaven on I-24 is a good example of the influence our numbers can have.

The society also gave its support to a Kentucky Humanities Council sponsored meeting in February to explore research and educational directions for the Land Between the Lakes' The Homeplace – 1850. This was a two-day meeting, where the society, represented by your president, participate din a review of the educational impact of The Homeplace for how the facility could join

with other like-minded organizations to further historical understanding and interest.

Our final meeting in June will take place at The Homeplace – 1850. There, Mr. Charles Tichy, Architectural Historian for the Tennessee Valley Authority, will present the results of a TVA study, aided by the Kentucky heritage Commission and the Tennessee Historical Commission, on the architectural significance of the retained structures at LBL. It will also give us an opportunity to explore the restored and reconstructed buildings at the Homeplace and enjoy some special educational experiences planned by the Homeplace staff.

As we look into the years ahead, we have to recognize the change that time brings to all of us. It is with great sadness that we will have to say goodbye to Dr. and Mrs. Hunter Hancock. They have been a source of strength to the Jackson Purchase Historical Society, and a beacon of knowledge and learning to the community. As we watch their parting, and the other changes that time brings, we have to recognize the challenge before us. The Society will continue, but we must reach out to fill the gap between us and those who need to know about the opportunities for learning and excitement the Society offers.

It is my hope that the proposal for a membership brochure can come to fruition. We need to let people of the Jackson Purchase know about the opportunities we offer, and give them an easy and convenient way to join the presentation and expansion of a historical understanding of the region in which we live.

It has been a privilege and pleasure for me to serve as your president during the 1983-84 year. I look forward to the work of the Society in the years ahead and the exciting possibilities awaiting us.

Bio: Edwin H. Graves:

Graves is an Education Specialist with TVA's land Between The Lakes as well as currently serving the Society as its president.