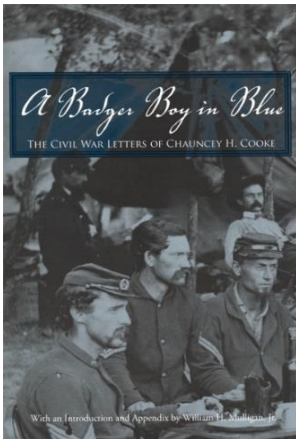


Jackson Purchase Historical Society

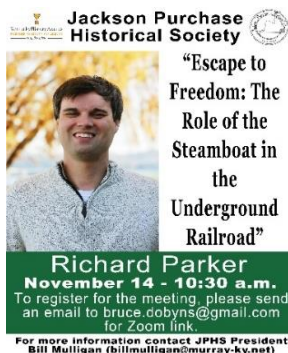
President's Report July 2020-June 2021

The last year has been particularly challenging for the Society. Of course, we have not been alone in that. As the pandemic unfolded, we adopted a meeting-to-meeting approach in line with public health guidance. We cancelled a planned luncheon meeting for July, which would have brought back a former Society standard. In September we began meeting via ZOOM, a relatively new technology. This allowed us to resume contact with our members and carry out our mission. We met remotely in September, November, January, and April.

On September 19 Society president Bill Mulligan spoke on his book, *Badger Boy in Blue: The Civil War letters of Chauncey H. Cooke*. Cooke enlisted in the Union Army at age 16 and



found himself in Columbus, Kentucky. His letters home tell the story of his experience in the Army and experiencing life away from home the first time. He came from a family of abolitionists, but it is clear from his comments that living in the North, he had never met an African American. His comments provide a series of insights into the motivation of soldiers as well as the cultural attitudes of the Civil War era. In 2012, *Wall Street Journal* listed *Badger Boy in Blue*, as one of the five best books on homesickness. The presentation discussed the process by which Mulligan found the letters and developed them into a book. He also described meeting Cooke's grandson while searching for his grave.



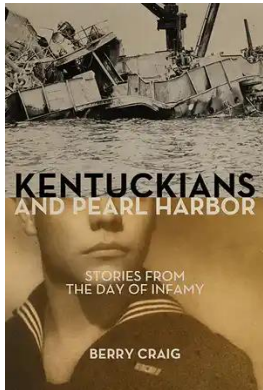
On November 14 our Vice President, Richard Parker, spoke on the steamboat's role as a means of escape in the Underground Railroad. The program was entitled "Escape to Freedom: The Role of the Steamboat in the Underground Railroad." Parker said, "The Jackson Purchase is surrounded by the Tennessee, Ohio, and Mississippi Rivers." Parker discussed how the rivers acted as an interstate for slaves moving North seeking their freedom. Thousands of slaves worked on steamboats on the waterways throughout the South, and these rivers provided slaves a quicker and easier escape

than venturing overland. Parker is the author of *The Wild World of the Jackson Purchase* and several articles in the *Journal of the Jackson Purchase Historical Society*. His most recent

contribution to the Society's *Journal* won the 2019 Dr. Lonnie E. Maness Award for the most outstanding article.

We began the 2021 year on January 23 with a presentation on Kentucky Foodways by Bobbie Smith Bryant. Bobbie Smith Bryant is no stranger to the Jackson Purchase Historical Society or the Jackson Purchase region. She has spoken at several meetings and published in our *Journal*. Her talk highlighted ways in which food is an important part of any culture and regional variations in what is eaten and how it is prepared are meaningful aspects of people's lives at various seasons of the year and in the celebration of various holidays and life events. It built on her book, *Passions of the Black Patch: Cooking and Quilting in Western Kentucky*, and offered a lot of insight into western Kentucky's distinctive cooking style.

On April 10, well-known historian Berry Craig discussed his latest book, *Kentuckians and Pearl Harbor: Stories from the Day of Infamy*. Craig presented the stories of a variety of



Kentuckians who were at Pearl Harbor using an impressive array of newspapers, unpublished memoirs, oral histories, and official military records. He offered a ground-up look at the day that Franklin D. Roosevelt said would "live in infamy." He presented the untold, forgotten, or little-known stories of ordinary people ~ military and civilian ~ on the most extraordinary day of their lives. Craig concludes by exploring the home front reaction to this pivotal event in American history. From Paducah to Pikeville, people sprang to action. He is the author of many books on the history of the Jackson Purchase and

Kentucky and a frequent contributor to our meetings.

As we go to press plans are underway for a meeting in June. In administrative news, Dieter Ullrich assumed the role of website manager. The website is one of our main interfaces with the public. It has benefitted from good management and Dieter is continuing that. We have added recordings of the programs we have held on Zoom as well as other videos. Our Facebook page also continues to draw a lot of views.

In the fall we learned that the 2019 issue of the *Journal* received an Award for Excellence in Publications from the Kentucky Historical Society (KHS). This is our third award from KHS in the last four years. Congratulations to our editor Jim Humphreys for his outstanding work. The *Journal* has been an important part of our activities for many years and previous editors established a solid reputation.

The citation reads: "The 2019 *Journal of the Jackson Purchase* includes meeting minutes, original essays, an interview, and book reviews. Essays explored the Night Riders and their campaigns of intimidation, the World War I exploits of a Sedalia, Kentucky native, the role of the United Daughters of the Confederacy in spreading the Lost Cause narrative, and oral history methodology showcased through the coursework of Murray State University and West Kentucky Technical and Community College students. The breadth of topics and their

relevance to the Jackson Purchase region today make the 2019 issue especially strong. The dedication of the Jackson Purchase Historical Society to include advanced undergraduate work and to review scholarly books of general interest to the region is also commendable.”

The Second Annual Dr. Lonnie E. Maness Award for the outstanding article in the *Journal of the Jackson Purchase Historical Society* in 2020 was awarded to Dr. Brian K. Clardy for his article, “Blood at the Root: A Historiographical Commentary on Lynching in America.”



Clardy is a graduate of the University of Tennessee at Martin, where he was a student of Lonnie’s. He is Associate Professor of History at Murray State University.

A large part of our mission is to promote the history of the Jackson Purchase region. We were able to offer a letter of support and cost sharing to a project at the Calloway County Public Library to do oral histories of graduates of the former Douglass High School in Murray. The grant application was successful, and we will be working with library officials on implementation. We wrote to the Kentucky and Tennessee Senators and Congress members in support of continuing funding for the interpretation program at Homeplace 1850 and are working with the Land between the Lakes Associates to build support for their programs. We have written to the National Endowment for the Humanities in support of a project at the University of Tennessee at Martin to assess the impact of the COVID pandemic in West Tennessee. We are also working with Bobbie Smith Bryant on the planned Bicentennial History of Calloway County that will be published in 2022. Anyone who is interested in contributing is encouraged to contact her to see how they may become involved in the project. Led by our Secretary, Bruce Dobyns, we are reformatting the 1966 Sesquicentennial supplement that the Society partnered with the *Mayfield Messenger* to publish in 1966. We hope to publish this in 2022. The Society remains active and engaged.

It has been a challenging year, but with your support we have all risen to the challenge – the best is yet to be!

Bill Mulligan
President

