



CAPTAIN JOHN FOWLER

of

VIRGINIA AND KENTUCKY

Patriot, Soldier, Pioneer, Statesman, Land Baron
and Civic Leader

BY

ILA EARLE FOWLER

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To The Memory Of My Husband

WILLIAM T. FOWLER

Without whose aid, inspiration and
encouragement these pages
could never have
been penned.

FOREWORD

Among the early settlers of Kentucky who became leading citizens of the District and, later, of the State, none has more richly deserved a full-length biography than Captain John Fowler, of Lexington.

A soldier in the Revolution and in the Indian wars that followed it, an enterprising landholder and man of affairs, a member of one or more of the Kentucky conventions which preceded statehood, of the Virginia Legislature, and of the Virginia convention of 1788 which ratified the Federal Constitution, postmaster of Lexington, a representative in Congress for ten years, from 1797 to 1807, and the founder and proprietor of "Fowler's Gardens," the once popular and widely celebrated social resort in the environs of Lexington, these are but an abbreviated summary of his many claims to distinction.

Now, at long last, Ila Earle (Mrs. W. T.) Fowler, an earnest and accomplished delver into early Kentucky history, both secular and religious, has essayed the task of composing a compact, yet complete, sketch of the life and activities of this many-sided Kentuckian. How well she has succeeded in this praiseworthy undertaking will be clearly apparent to every reader of the following pages.

It has been our privilege to read them in manuscript, in advance of publication, and the wonder is that Mrs. Fowler, spurred by a desire to collect every scrap of information about her subject that might be obtainable, should have discovered so many unsuspected sources of knowledge and have amassed so much new and enlightening material. This material has been used with discriminating taste and a commendable degree of restraint, with the result that a much needed and most welcome addition to the biographical literature of the Commonwealth has here been succinctly and attractively presented.

One cannot but hope that the fine example thus set by the author may find speedy and acceptable emulation by other competent writers in the field of Kentucky history and biography.

Samuel M. Wilson

Lexington, Kentucky
November 1, 1942

PROLOGUE

Kentucky's Sesquicentennial challenges her sons and daughters to add all available knowledge concerning those who were the builders of the proud old Commonwealth. To this end, I present the following sketch of the life of one of the pioneers who lived intimately with the heroes of the past and bore well his part in carrying the burdens of Kentucky's early years.

Lexington was the center of the activities of Captain John Fowler, and it is largely in local source material that the record of his life has been found.

Lexington history in general has been so well covered that one hesitates to enter and possess any of the land. The main roads and highways and thoroughfares of its history are all splendidly paved, bordered with facts of interest, and all lead hither and yon into yet wider fields of history--some wander back into the old colonial confines, others win on to connect with highways that point to the newfound land of the golden West or the sunny South.

In any country there always exist alluring little byways passed unnoticed by the ambitious

historians who had large vision, planned on a broad scale, and filled in their canvasses with brilliant color. These lesser paths were the ones trodden by the rank and file of men and women who made the Commonwealth what it is. Into one of these we invite you to stray and take a view of the life and work of one who was not a President, a Governor, a Senator, a General, a Major, not even a Colonel. For it was the unique distinction of this Kentuckian that he was always called merely Captain John Fowler.

Following our bypath back into Virginia we find him an ambitious schoolboy, a Revolutionary soldier, a young plantation owner, and an active Freemason. Then at an early day he rode horseback into Kentucky, and we see him a civic leader, a frontier soldier, a patriotic political partisan, a business man of varied interests, and a friend to many, high and low.

Captain John Fowler was an actor in all the changing scenes of Kentucky history from 1783 to that day in 1840 when Collins lists him as one of the seventeen surviving Revolutionary soldiers of Fayette County. Before that list was in type he had passed on from the State he had helped to create to another world. He saw and knew the patriots of his time from Washington, Jefferson, Patrick Henry, and Henry Clay on down to John Robert Shaw, the well-digger of renown. He knew well the giants of pioneer time in Kentucky, Boone, Harrod, Kenton, and Logan. And, more than that, he was friend and companion of all the great and near great who

preceded and followed him into Kentucky's Valhalla.

In considering a title the obvious choice was simply CAPTAIN JOHN FOWLER. Another that might well have been chosen was "Captain John Fowler and His Friends." Yet another could have been one often used by his contemporaries, "Captain John Fowler, Virginia Gentleman."

Another secondary title that intrigued me as I hunted here and there for the scattered facts of his life and perused the documents that remained after a century had passed was "Lexington's Forgotten Man." This was precluded because, although he had been forgotten by the general public, the historians who have been busy about the task of re-creating Lexington remembered him because they so often encountered the record of this or that activity that claimed his time and effort.

Indeed the inception of this study was inspired by the question of one of these: "No one has written anything about Captain John Fowler. Why don't you do something about it?" --Well, I did, and here is the result!

Ila Earle Fowler

Lexington, Ky.
October 15, 1942

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CHAPTER ONE

A VIRGINIAN IS BORN

BEGINNINGS

John Fowler was born April 27, 1756, in Chesterfield County, Virginia; married Millicent Wills in Richmond, before 1779; removed to Kentucky, 1783; died in Lexington, August 22, 1840.

His father was John Fowler, Sr., his mother Judith Hobson Fowler, daughter of Matthew Hobson of Henrico County. This John Fowler's father was Godfrey Fowler whose will was probated in Henrico in 1743. Godfrey Fowler, in turn, was a son of John Fowler who came to James City with John Coale in 1655.

By 1750 the Fowler family had plantations of more than 3013 acres on the north side of the Appomattox River, lands which later were built over by Colonial Heights, a suburb of Petersburg. John Fowler was born on a plantation of 600 acres which his father had bought in 1751 from Isaiah and Obedience Burton. This joined the lands granted to his great-grandfather, the immigrant, which lay on Pokashock Creek, Town Branch, and Cattail Branch. Petersburg was a loading station for tobacco and the Fowlers had a wharf on the north (or west) side of the Appomattox.

Matthew Hobson was a member of St. John's

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Church, Richmond, and his will (1773, Henrico County) names the three sons of John and Judith Fowler as Bernard, William, and John; and the three daughters, Judith, Tabitha, and Pollina.

BOYHOOD DAYS

In John Fowler's boyhood, smith-made iron work, candles, cured meat, soap, and furniture were all supplied by the labor of home-apprenticed lads or the negroes on the place. Shoes, dresses, coats, quilts, and bedding were fabricated and assembled in the shop or the loom room. In the woods fresh meat ran wild on foot; the fish swam in the clear streams ready to be caught; fur-bearing animals carried a currency on their backs, and another currency grew in the tobacco fields.

For the rest, he lived the life of a normal Virginia lad who, from the age of sixteen, owned a negro of his own, named Will; had a horse and gun and fishing tackle; had no doubt that he would be a land owner; had a natural and alert interest in the government of his colony by those sent over from the mother land.

In company with other small Virginia boys he went to school clad in buckskin knee breeches, tricornered hat, and pewter-buckled shoes, and learned the Rule of Three, compound interest, ratio, money weights, and land measures. He probably attended William and Mary College and gained a high regard for legal forms during the time of the great George Wythe, a Signer of the Declaration and teacher of Thomas Jefferson and later of Henry Clay.

The first twenty years of John Fowler's life

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spanned the period between Braddock's defeat and the Declaration of Independence. He was nursed on the colonial pride of an Englishman which turned into the stubborn pride of an American colonial who detested a tyrant. He belonged to a generation that was nurtured on stories of Virginia's practical common sense and prowess in battle and grew up with the resounding cry of "Away with the Stamp Tax" ringing in his ears.

He and his brothers, Bernard and William, heard fully discussed the sympathies of Virginia with Massachusetts and New England. Years later, in 1817 when presiding at a banquet in Lexington, Kentucky, he was to hear General William Henry Harrison give a toast to his native town: "To Petersburg: The seed bed of patriotism, the nursery of heroes."

War was always imminent in the backyard of His Majesty's Colony of Virginia, on a small but bloody scale. To John Fowler the first real life story the frontier told was that of Braddock's Defeat in the year before his birth. He heard how eagerly the Virginia militia had marched for three weeks from Alexandria to Cumberland into the Big Woods along with British Regulars. He visualized the stirring scenes; camps, camp fires, red coats, boots and saddles, wagons and wagoners, the ring of anvils, sound of axe on hardwood, scrape of spade on hard earth roads, beating drums and flying banners, as they assailed the waiting wilderness.

He heard how the forest closed around them while anxiety at home spurred farm work through the summer until suddenly from out the somber silence, from the spent storm, the news of ter-

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ror broke as harried and hurried runners limped homeward bearing the dire tidings of that "red year of British disaster." Then it was, on July 14, 1755, Virginians buried European military theory in the grave of Edward Braddock and drove their wagons over it. From that obliterated grave rose a new courage, the child of defeat and desperation. Above that lonely spot in the wilderness there flew always thenceforth a beckoning banner, invisible, yet as real to colonial inner vision as the Cross in the sky that led the Emperor Constantine.

RISING TIDE OF REBELLION

The Treaty of Paris which ended the French and Indian War was signed when John Fowler was seven years old. From 1763 to 1769 he heard the name of Pontiac as it echoed in Virginia from the sylvan forrest west of the mountains. By 1774 Cornstalk had risen to Indian power and gone down in defeat at the hands of Virginians at Point Pleasant.

New land taxes laid by Virginia and the odious acts passed by England in 1770 were topics of conversation by every fireside along the Appomattox. No need then to study Civil Government or Public Economics in schools. Every cross-roads store was a forum of public opinion. Governmental problems were argued at every dining table. At no other time in our history has the Case of the People versus the Government been so closely considered, so cogently briefed, and so firmly decided as this question of Colonies versus Overseas Power.

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NEIGHBORS AND FRIENDS

On September 14, 1755, farther up in Virginia, in the Shenandoah Valley was born John Marshall, of judicial destiny. At "Laurel Branch," fourteen miles from Petersburg, lived James Scott of the clan Buccleugh, who had supported the Pretender and came perforce to America after the Battle of Culloden in 1746.* His grandson, General Winfield Scott was born there in 1786.

Another young man in Goochland County was also a neighbor, as neighbors went in the brave days of old. This was Charles Scott, born 1739, a commander at seventeen under Braddock, to become a Brigadier General in the Revolution, commander over Captain John Fowler in Kentucky Indian Wars, a Woodford County neighbor, Governor of Kentucky in 1808, and partner in many land transactions.**

Other neighbors were the Randolphs, the St.

*AMERICAN BIOGRAPHIES.

**From "House of Fowler," p. 30 (print 1940). Line of John Fowler the immigrant: He was the son of Rev. Christopher Fowler, a Presbyterian preacher, who married Elizabeth Burgess. He was born 1611, died 1676. He was the son of William Fowler, court poet of James VI of Scotland (James I of England). This William was the 2nd son of Thomas Fowler who was 2nd son of Sir Richard Fowler II who d. 1477. Sir Richard II was son of Sir Wm. Fowler of Ricot, Oxford, who was fourth in descent from Sir Richard Fowler, a hero of the Third Crusade whose seat was at Foxley, Burks.

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George Tuckers, the Markhams, the Brays who came very early to Virginia, the Batts who came from London to Chesterfield County in 1653, the Branch family, the Burtons, Archers, Goodes, Traylor, Pankeys, Sallees, Godfreys, Andersons, and others.

SOLDIERS ENLIST FOR THE REVOLUTION

By 1776 Bernard Fowler was First Sergeant in the North Carolina Regiment of Col. Summers.* By 1777 William Fowler was Captain in Virginia under Colonel William Davis.**

The third brother, John Fowler, in October, 1777, at the age of twenty-one, was sworn in as First Lieutenant of the Chesterfield Company*** of First Lieutenant David Patterson, under Major (afterward Colonel) Robert Goode who remained his lifelong friend. This regiment was usually considered a separate command but was at various times under Steuben, Lafayette, and Lawson.

In the spring of 1779 Goode's regiment, called "The Regulars," was ordered into active service and marched through Petersburg toward Portsmouth, remained in Williamsburg for some time, then went to Hampton, where they saw the British fleet standing outside.****

While John Fowler and his comrades were marching up and down the Virginia coast, under

*N.C. Archives, 11,129 and 15,813.

**Co. Va. papers, vol. 2, p. 286 and others.

***John Fowler pension papers.

****Wm. McLaurin pension papers, vol. 8, Va. Mag. p. 97.

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the very eyes of the enemy, George Rogers Clark, who had set out from Williamsburg in October, 1777, was building Fort Jefferson on the far western frontier on the Mississippi River. Williamsburg was a parade ground of marching soldiers and a center of camps.

Real war was creeping up on Virginia, heading in from the northeast and beating back from the south. The New Year of 1781 dawned dark and gloomy for the Old Dominion. The treasury was depleted; arms and ammunition were scarce, and, to crown all, Benedict Arnold's invasion began. By the night of the third of January he had landed at Hood's, marched as far as Bland's Ordinary on the way to Petersburg--and bustle and confusion reigned in all households.*

Through the spring many troops were sent south to reinforce Greene, some who answered the new call being without arms. And they were expected to meet three British armies of veterans, already inured to American conditions and commanded by able generals who could strike at will.**

George Mason wrote to his son that all roads and rivers were in the enemy's control.***

From January until June, Lt. John Fowler saw extremely active service. The militia was embodied, ordered to Manchester, near Richmond, and thence to meet General Benedict Arnold at Westover; thence they marched through Smithfield

*LIFE OF JOHN RANDOLPH, by Hugh A. Garland, p. 16.

**Andrews' "Old Dominion."

***Col. Va. papers.

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into Portsmouth, where they approached near the line of the enemy. General Phillips arrived in March and took command of the enemy and marched them to Manchester, the Virginia militia retreating all the way without a skirmish. The warehouses of tobacco were burned by the enemy, after which they returned to Hog Island and thence to Petersburg where they joined Lord Cornwallis who had succeeded Arnold and had about 8,000 men. He immediately advanced toward Richmond. The Marquis de Lafayette retreated before him for 70 or 80 miles on the north side of the James River above Richmond.*

Just then Lt. Fowler and his men had the advantage of training for a short time under Baron Steuben, who at the head of less than a thousand men stubbornly disputed the British advance on Petersburg for two hours, "during which time they gained but one mile and that by inches."

Lafayette, in spite of this resistance, was pushed to the Rapidan, which he crossed at Ely's Ford. Cornwallis then moved toward the mountains. A raiding party under Symcoe destroyed the magazines at the mouth of the Rivanna. Another expedition under Tarleton dispersed the state legislature, which had removed to Charlottesville, but was deterred from pushing on to Staunton by militia gathered in the mountain passes.**

It was at this time that John Fowler was introduced to General Lafayette who had so much confidence in him as a partisan officer that he

*Pension No. 1258, S-31033, Oct. 20, 1832.

**McAlister's VIRGINIA IN THE REVOLUTION, p. 9

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selected him to accompany his aide, Major Langborn, within the enemy lines. After Cornwallis' return to Richmond, part of his army being in Manchester, a skirmish took place in an old field belonging to Sam Branch between Colonel Symcoe's Legion of the British and a part of Colonel Goode's force, in which John Fowler was severely wounded by a broadstroke on the head and was taken prisoner along with Col. Goode, Major Langborn, and several privates. He was left on the ground weltering in his blood until taken up by the enemy and carried to Richmond where he remained insensible for two days. Three or four days after he arrived in Richmond the enemy evacuated the city, leaving him on parole while they retreated toward Williamsburg.*

This skirmish was coincident with the famous ride of Jack Jouett to save Thomas Jefferson. While John Fowler lay insensible in Richmond, Jouett was riding the shortest paths on "the best nag and the fleetest of foot in seven counties" to reach Monticello. (June 3, 1781) In 1783 the Virginia legislature voted a pair of pistols to Jouett for his exploit and in 1803 John Fowler, coming back from a session of Congress, brought to him the sword that Virginia had voted him at the instance of James Monroe, a sword that cost \$150.00.**

As the legislature dispersed, a certain member from Fayette County, Kentucky, one Daniel Boone, was captured by the Tories but soon es-

*John Fowler pension papers.

**Va. State Papers.

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caped or was paroled.*

The woods were full of notables. During those fateful first days of June another party in flight included the great orator, Patrick Henry, Col. Wm. Christian, Benjamin Harrison, and John Tyler; two of them to become ancestors of future presidents of the United States.** "Greatness in retreat rarely presents an imposing appearance." And the story goes that this distinguished party was not so welcome in the home of a plain spoken woman of the hills who berated them roundly for fleeing like cowards.

All the world knows how Cornwallis retreated down the peninsula to Yorktown, how Lafayette followed step by step, encircling him, how the French ships, under Rochambeau, stood outside, their tall masts showing seaward under the cliffs, how the militia closed in on the quarry, how a little drummer boy in a red coat mounted a ladder to the embattled wall beating a parley for a truce, how Cornwallis surrendered on October 19th, ending the long struggle.

And far away westward, on the head of the middle fork of Elkhorn Creek, a little company of less than a hundred men looked proudly on their new stockade and drew up a compact for the citizens of a town called "Lexington" in the wilderness, in the westernmost district of Virginia.

*Bakeless' DANIEL BOONE, p. 247-8.

**Oliver Perry Chitwood's JOHN TYLER, p. 8.

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THE WAR ENDS

Then the Virginians gained relief from military domination and began to recoup their losses. Among many others the records of Chesterfield County show these items of property requisitioned for the army; John Fowler, Jr., 1350 pounds of beef; William Fowler, timothy clover for public use, and 110 gallons of rum; John Fowler, Sr., payment for 650 pounds of beef.

Each soldier had to re-establish himself and the minds of many turned to the new West. Among these was John Fowler. He was twenty-seven years old. He had behind him a creditable revolutionary service, had received his discharge in the fall of 1781, and sometime before 1779 having married Millicent Wills, he set up house-keeping on the three hundred acres of land given him by his father and mother. He owned a lot in Manchester and had bought 700 acres more with houses, barns, and orchards. He and his wife had 23 negro slaves and such a lot of household belongings that it seems he had misinterpreted the prosperity following the Revolution and burdened himself with far too many worldly things. So it is small wonder that early in 1783 he and his wife assigned all this in a deed of trust to his brother, Captain William Fowler, and his cousin, Matthew Cheatem, to pay debts incurred by his expanding investments.*

*Chesterfield County, Va., records. The names mentioned in the deed of trust are: Miles Gelden of Henrico, assignee of Edward

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Witnesses to this document were John Baker, John Flournoy, James Bray, later a Lexington tavern keeper, and Winter Bray.

The list of household furniture, farming implements and live stock shows what a well-to-do young couple thought necessary for beginning housekeeping in Virginia. A few items were: a four-wheel phaeton and harness; 24 oxen and an ox-cart; wagon, harness, and gear for four horses, 7 horses named; 20 head of cattle, 40 head of hogs; 13 head of sheep; 5 beds and furniture; a dozen tablecloths; dozen towels; 22 leather bottom chairs; a harpsichord and chamber organ (gifts from Millicent's father); a buffet (spelled Boufat); a dressing table and glass; 2 looking glasses; dozens of glassware and Queensware pieces; many pieces of ironware; loom, flax and wool wheels; a gin; money scales; and other kitchen and farm articles in keeping.

Some of the land was sold and conveyed; personal property not. Part of this was brought to the Kentucky home founded in Woodford County by 1786.

Longwood; John Tabb of Amelia; John Powell of Louisa; James Lyle of Manchester; Benjamin Branch, executor of Thomas Branch; Nicholas Davis of Beaufort; Valentine Winfrey of Chesterfield; George Kleinkoff; James McHeard of Richmond Town; John Tayloe Griffin of Goochland; Thomas Calder of Henrico; George Anderson; George Read of Williamsburg; Thomas Turpin of Powhatan; John Trabue of Chesterfield and William Fowler.

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In that summer of 1783 John Fowler came to Kentucky, obtained many land warrants both alone and in partnership with others, had many of these surveyed, and located the place where he wished to live. In 1784 he returned to the West, there to live until 1840, with many trips back to the East during the years until after 1807.

CHAPTER TWO

A KENTUCKIAN IS USHERED IN

WESTWARD HO!

As the young Virginian, Lt. John Fowler, came into Kentucky on his first trip in 1783, it is likely that he came down the Ohio River on his first visit to Virginia's new county, 700 miles from his boyhood home. The Wilderness Road was his route as he returned in 1784. The country now with thinned forests and patterned fields in cultivation gives scant signs of the impenetrable wilderness through which the narrow trails then made their tortuous way. The grasslands now grazed over by thoroughbreds and fat cattle then provided grazing for uncounted herds of buffalo and deer.

In the summer of 1784, on his second (or possibly third) trip back to Virginia, John Fowler wrote to Henry Lee. Of his few existing letters, three are to Henry Lee who came to Kentucky earlier. Lee was a colleague in the Virginia Legislature from the Kentucky District, and was with him in the Federal Constitutional Convention in Virginia in 1788 and in Indian campaigns--a staunch and loyal friend ever.*

*KENTUCKY BIOGRAPHIES, p. 276.

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15th Aug. 1784
Washington C. House

Dear Henry:

I am all safe so far except being almost ruined with the great rains. I find that all our entries on forfeited lands will fall through; however get the opinion of Capt. Greenup and if he thinks so pray withdraw our entries and make the best you can of the warrants; the terms you'll have them entered on I will most cheerfully abide by pray If you have not closed the bargain with--Colo (or Mr) --Mitchell loose no time till its done. Purchase it at all events. I shall be out in November next if not sooner May Guardian Angels protect you my friend Farewell

John Fowler*

(folded cover)

John Fowler

Mr. Henry Lee
Lexington
Marked Capt. Fowler's letter.

It was out of such problems, difficulties, and dangers as hinted here that a Virginian of that day was reborn as a Kentuckian and entered a new life.

The first Kentuckians came in, a resistless band. The stage was set for trouble. One of the pawns in the great game between European

*Draper Manuscript photostat--31CC-5, State Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin.

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empires and the newly organized United States was Kentucky. Yet Virginia did not see how high a stake was to be played for, and Congress was occupied with post war problems while the new states held together with only the "rope of sand, The Articles of Confereration." This new state must wait on the doorstep. Virginia had granted titles in a commonwealth greater than ancient Rome or Greece. On the way, however, there were mountains and rivers to cross, forests to fell, and a living for each day to be wrested from nature by hard licks and harder sacrifices.

As the westward moving waves of immigrants rose from toward the coast they trickled through the gap and down the river in a thin stream gradually overflowing. Succeeding waves rose higher to beat against the mountain barriers and to surge across it in summer tides. The Revolution released a steady tide that flowed on and on.

John Fowler came in on the post revolution wave of 1783-4 and was firmly established when the second wave rolled in in 1787 and the tidal wave of 1792 surged in with tens of thousands of eager immigrants on its crest.

KENTUCKY PROBLEMS

John Fowler took an active part in the two pivotal deliberations of early Kentucky history, the statehood conventions at Danville and the convention in which Virginia ratified the Constitution of the United States. He was in two of the ten Danville conventions and carried the report of one to Virginia. Meanwhile he

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served three terms in the Virginia Legislature.

THE PETITIONS

Of the statehood conventions the petitions were a potent feature. "The right to peaceably petition" had been dearly bought and the Kentuckians had paid their part of the price. Therefore, they burned midnight candles and raced their quill pens to record the heartbeats of their embryo state. Copies were multiplied and distributed everywhere and hard-riding messengers bore them through the wilderness to Richmond where the Council "hemmed and hawed" over the complaints they contained.

As early as 1781, 300 petitioners reminded the mother state that westerners could take the choice of land in Mexico under Spain, move into the Ohio valley and challenge the Indians alone, or swear allegiance to Virginia in the hope of becoming in time a separate state.

John Fowler signed three of the fourteen petitions recorded after 1783 and joined in several open letters. The dates of these were 1787; August, 1789; and November 2, 1789. With Benjamin Logan and Joseph Crockett he wrote a letter to Governor Randolph about the necessity of ammunition and its scarcity.*

Levi Todd made complaint of inadequate provision against enemies and stressed the necessity of extraordinary exertions, and hoped that Colonel Logan, Colonel Crockett, Colonel Robert

*4 C, 79, Filson C. P., "Petitions of the Early Inhabitants of Ky. Jan. 5, 1786."

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Todd and John Fowler, Esq., would be asked for information as to this state of affairs.*

John Fowler joined with John Logan, John Steele, Henry Lee, and Robert Breckinridge in a letter to Governor Randolph, which stated that the provision for the defense of Kentucky was not sufficient; that county lieutenants had advertised for persons to furnish supplies to scouts, with no results.**

On December 19, 1786, he signed a petition with Richard Trebell, Joseph Crockett, John Jouett, and Andrew Hynes to Governor Randolph. They recommended that the public stores intended for the district of Kentucky be divided, part to be carried to Fort Pitt or Redstone to be forwarded down the Ohio with the spring floods so as to be received before the savages took the field. They thought the lead might be sent through the wilderness, although they considered the dangers from the Chickamaugas and the Cherokees were greater on that route. They wished the Law Books and Public Papers to be sent by the Ohio route. It was six years later that these books and papers were brought out by the wagons of John Fowler.

THE COUNCIL RELIES

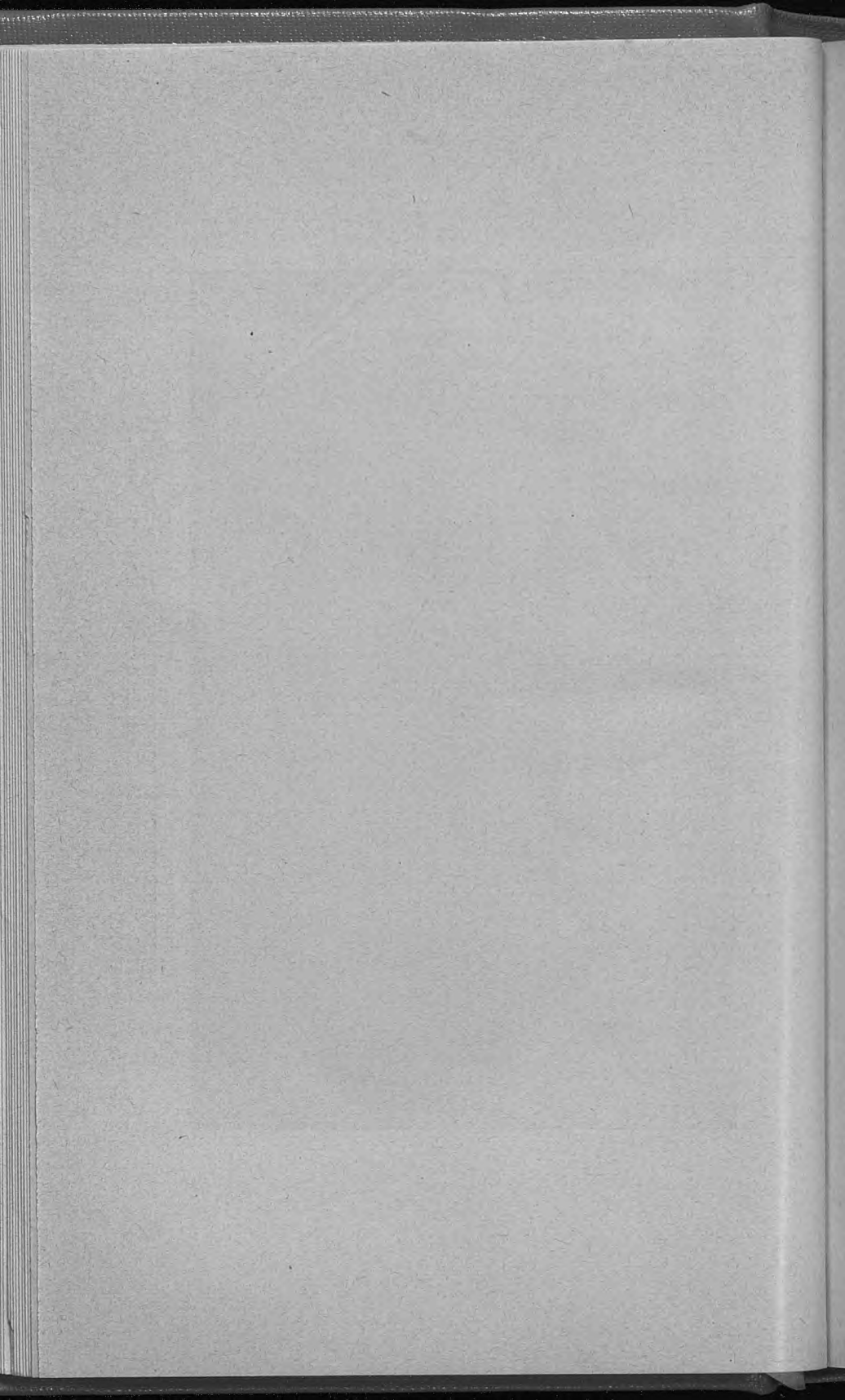
Often the replies of the Virginia Council seemed to say, "Erring sisters, depart in peace." Virginia forgot her own once defenceless position and brushed aside many of the requests of

*Filson C. Publication 14, 40 194, Dec. 7, 1786.

**C, 4, 456.



CONSTITUTION HALL, DANVILLE, WHERE THE FIRST KENTUCKY CONSTITUTION WAS SIGNED IN 1792, AND WHERE THE EARLIER NINE CONVENTIONS WERE HELD.



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the western district with salty words that chafed their kindred Kentuckians.

Colonel Levi Todd was notified that no further funds could be appropriated for the supply of men ordered into service.* The United States Secretary of War advised that Brigadier General Scott be instructed to use all necessary measures for adding efficiency to the calls for aid of the Kentucky militia.**

The Council stated that in many instances rangers had been called out unnecessarily, and gave express and positive instructions to commanding officers to regulate the number and time of those so called by true and accurate information and not by uncertain reports and alarms. They warned against "violating the public economy," and said that undue alarm was "reflecting on the character of any commanding officer, etc." One word added and the Kentuckians would have been accused of fomenting trouble with the Indians in order to collect the pittance allowed them when in the field.

Two groups of citizens were organized to further the cause of separate statehood, their names were "a roster of the intellectual and political leadership of the district."*** The first was The Political Club of Danville with its branches in every community. The second was The Society for Promoting Useful Knowledge,"

*Council Order Book, Archives of Va., p. 258.

**Order Book, Archives of Va., 1787-1789, Aug. 3, 1789, Jan. 1789.

***John Mason Brown, POLITICAL BEGINNINGS OF KENTUCKY.

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in other words, propaganda of the period. The membership of these interlocked, John Fowler belonged to the latter society and of the other members, at least five were partners in land grants with him. More than half of them were fellow members in deliberative and legislative bodies with him. Every name appears with his in deeds, fiscal court, and other documents, most of them over the full period of their lives.

STATEHOOD CONVENTIONS

John Fowler came into Kentucky with the confidence of his compatriots and was recognized as a citizen while still toiling over the rough roads and writing to Henry Lee, "I will be out in November next, if not sooner." In the elections to the first conventions the voters were warned out by men on horseback and the voting was by militia districts in November, 1784. Those elected with him were Levi Todd, Caleb Wallace, Humphrey Marshall, and William Ward, and the body met on the 27th day of December.*

John Fowler and Thomas Marshall were elected to the Virginia Legislature and twenty-five others met in Danville on May 2nd and 3rd to discuss the increased hostility of the Indians, to decide that a constitutional separation from Virginia was expedient, and to prepare an address to the people of Kentucky and a petition to the Virginia Legislature which their repre-

*John Mason Brown, POLITICAL BEGINNINGS OF KENTUCKY; Staples, PIONEER LEXINGTON; Collins, HISTORY OF KENTUCKY.

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sentatives were to present. The need of a printing press and a post office system were stressed and another election was ordered.

This was to be in September but Clark's campaign up the Vermilion River and Colonel Benjamin Logan's to the headwaters of the Mad River intervened so the members were not free to attend a convention until January, 1787, by which time they were really hitting their stride. Actual warfare with the enemy had whetted their knives and sharpened their pens. John Fowler, back from the Virginia Legislature, was a member of this body along with three of the early judges of the state and two future governors.*

This fourth convention had been authorized to "name the day," to take effect before June, 1787, if Congress should assent. It passed resolutions for separation upon "terms of the Act." This Act was repealed by the Virginia body and a new election ordered. After the convention was concluded and the petition prepared, John Fowler was a delegate with Colonel John Campbell, Captain John Jouett, James Henderson, Colonel Joseph Crockett, Richard Terrell, George Jackson, John Rogers, and Andrew Hynes to present it and to bring back the reply which was embodied in the Virginia Resolutions of 1787.

The most astounding Kentucky document extant dates from this time, the paper in which Wilkinson lists the leading men of Kentucky, with their alleged prices. In this John Fowler appears as "zealous adherent of our cause and a man of influence," his price on a par with that

*Kerr's HISTORY OF KENTUCKY, p. 237.

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of Innes, Sebastian, and Wallace, that is, \$1,000.*

The sixth convention at Danville overlapped the Virginia Convention for ratification of the Constitution of the United States. It met on July 28, 1788, and the other in Richmond, Virginia, closed its sessions on the same day.

The Virginia convention was held in the theater on Broad Street in Richmond between 13th and 14th, where later, on December 26, 1811, occurred the disastrous fire which snuffed out the lives of seventy people, including the Governor of Virginia. The Monumental Church now on this spot was built in 1812 as a memorial.**

In this fateful building from June 2 to July 27th the debates held Richmond spellbound, for on Virginia's decision hung the fate of the nation, the momentous question whether this constitution should be ratified or the whole tedious business be gone over again. In the truly distinguished group there met were two future Presidents, the future great Chief Justice, and many other state makers who spoke, listened, and voted aye and nay in this debate, "the greatest held in America in the 18th century."

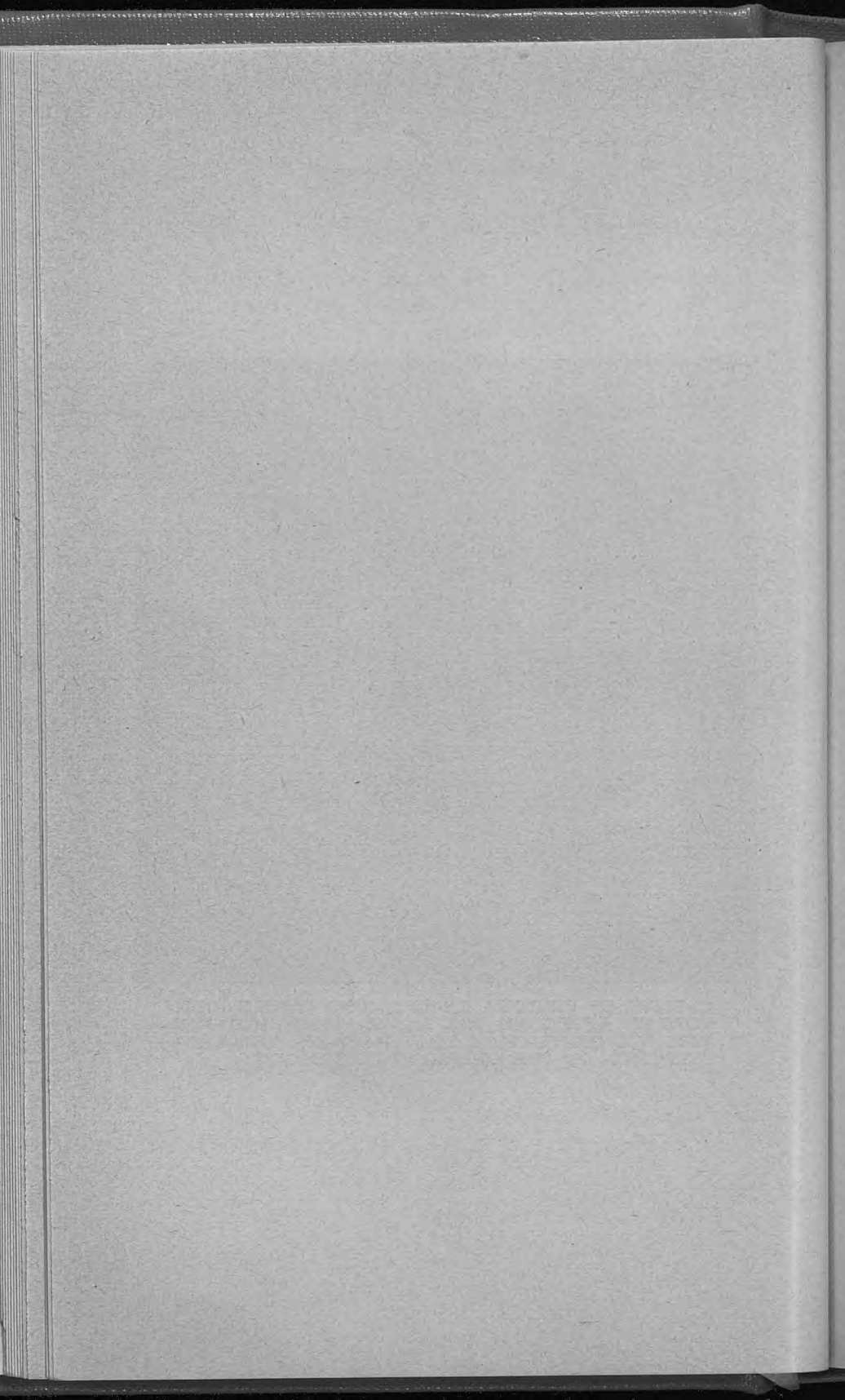
Nine-tenths of the Kentucky people believed they held the balance of power and fully intended to send a solid delegation of opposition. Their spokesmen were the triumvirate composed of Patrick Henry, the emotional orator; George

*Temple Bodley's Introduction to Littell's POLITICAL TRANSACTIONS, pp. xlvi, xlv, xl.

**A Tour of Historic Richmond, Jefferson Hotel booklet, p. 11.



CAPITOL OF VIRGINIA AT RICHMOND WHERE JOHN FOWLER ATTENDED THE LEGISLATURE AND THE VIRGINIA CONVENTION THAT RATIFIED THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES IN 1788.



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Mason, constitutional statesman, and Richard Henry Lee of "Chantilly."*

In the five volume edition of Elliott's DEBATES ON THE RATIFICATION, 663 pages of the third volume are given over to the arguments propounded. Delegate Patrick Henry's speeches occupy one-fourth of that space. There were 168 delegates. Of these there is no record that 146 spoke at all. Up to June 3rd neither Virginia nor New York had ratified. The first states to ratify were the smaller ones and those with fixed boundaries. Virginia was the largest in area and population, even after ceding the Northwest Territory. The vote of Massachusetts had stood 187 to 168, close enough, while Virginia finally stood 80 to 88 and on the reversed vote, 89 to 79.

The Kentuckians were greatly influenced by their own struggle for independent statehood. They were for twenty years Virginians, rebellious Virginians, at times, we must admit; threatening Virginians at times toward their brothers to the eastward, yet listening intently for some concession that would show that the eastern Virginians were really interested in them; anxious to help solve all the problems that were common to all Virginians on both sides of the mountain ranges that divided them.

John Fowler was by heritage and tradition a Tidewater Virginian, but he took a firm stand with the up-country and western groups. He had cast his lot with the pioneers and their cause was his cause. On the final count Robert Brec-

*Hendrick's LEES OF VIRGINIA, p. 355.

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kinridge, Humphrey Marshall, and Rice Bullock voted for the Constitution and against the other Kentuckians. They returned to a disgruntled constituency that felt they were to be at once the hinterland and the frontier of Virginia.

HOME IN WOODFORD

John Fowler had grants and patents for more than 100,000 acres of the best land in Kentucky. In addition, he bought and sold more than 100,000 acres. In locating a home, he selected the Pisgah neighborhood in Fayette County, nine miles from Lexington, in the area that was erected into Woodford County six years after he settled there. He owned at this place, first and last, 400 acres. It formed a long strip from near the gate of Buck Pond to Shannon's Run.

Thus his first Kentucky ambition was to become a land owner and country gentleman in as virile and cultured a community as ever existed on the continent from coast to coast. He bought this home place of 174½ acres from John Crittenden, who cut it off from his 400 acre settlement right of which 200 acres were sold to Stephen Collins and 25½ acres to Thomas Marshall.*

In the summer of 1786, John Fowler was "improving" on the land already bought, to which he obtained a deed. Across the fields rose the dwelling of Marquis Calmes, from the Shenandoah Valley, where his ancestor of the same name had

*Burnt records of Fayette County, 5,357, Aug. 9, 1786.

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been one of the founders of Frederick County, where he had sat on the Court with Lord Fairfax, Morgan Morgan, Isaac Parkins, and Samuel Earle. Toward the south John Crittenden lived on his 1,000 acre pre-emption.

On another side was Buck Pond, recently built by Colonel Thomas Marshall, with whom John Fowler had lived, and with whom he had patented some thousands of acres of land. These three were the nearest neighbors of John and Millicent Fowler during the ten years they lived in Woodford County.

Toward Shannon's Run were the homes of Stephen Collins and Samuel Stevenson, while just across the rising ground to the northeast were the Dunlaps, Gays, McIlvains, and others who were building homes and erecting Pisgah Church. Woodford Presbyterian Church was built just northward from that on the large estate bought in 1790 by Robert Alexander, late of Scotland and Henrico County, Virginia, a princely patrimony then and now.

Four years later,* Stephen Collins sold 100 acres of his land, the part that lay on Shannon's Run, to John Fowler. In 1791 Fowler sold to John Lockridge 110½ acres, including the improvements on which Lockridge lived, and in 1795 Fowler and Collins sold 119 acres back to Crittenden. In 1798-1800 Fowler sold 100 acres where Rankin lived on Shannon's Run to Thomas Rankin. This Lockridge and Rankin land passed

*Woodford County, Book A, Oct. 26, 1790; Books A-C.

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into the possession of John and David Young in 1800 and 1821.

Lines called for in these deeds are: Shannon's Run, Colonel Marshall, Samuel Stevenson, Crittenden, S. Collins, John Williams, corner to Thomas Rankin and corner to Marquis Calmes. Witnesses to these various deeds were, Robert Alexander, John Williams, Dorsey Pentecost, William Martin, Charles Scott, and John Crittenden. A roll call of noted pioneers!

Each deed recites that the land is a part of John Crittenden's 400 acre settlement and the Fowler-Crittenden deed states that 119 acres is that laid off for Miriam Collins, wife of Henry Catlett, exclusive of the 25½ acres sold to Thomas Marshall, which may well have been the plot upon which the Buck Pond house was built.

About this time, 1784-1786, it was that he "lived with the family of Colonel Thomas Marshall."* In the summer of 1786, when John Fowler was getting settled on his place, he was elected to the fourth Danville convention. He was off either on an Indian campaign or a journey to Virginia, for he wrote to Captain Henry Lee at Limestone, in care of Captain McConnell:**

Dr. Sir:

I received yours of Mr. Fox and will do the utmost of my power (to) comply with your requisitions. The money you mentioned Marshall would leave with Clarke for me he has failed to do it.

*John Fowler's Depositions in 1814 in case of Marshall vs. Wilkinson.

**Wisconsin Library, MS. 6BB45.

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And I believe I shall have the mortification to start without one shilling except I can borrow a small sum of Jean Juitt and get Genl Wilkinson to repay it for me, your bond I have left with him with directions not to part with it but try to collect enough for the support of my Family in my absence. I will be very much oblig'd to you to pay him what you can as soon as you return from the expedition as he has assumed to pay about ten pounds for me--one favor I have to request and that is that you will if to be had furnish Capt. McConnells of this neighborhood with ten gallons whiskey for his company of Militia--pray if you can dont fail complying with this request as I have promised him you would certainly do it for me. You can deliver it him at Limestone or in the neighborhood as its for his company going on the expedition. You may purchase it at any price you please. Its not Capt. McConnell of Lexington but the one who lives about four miles from my house wishing you a successful expedition. Adieu

Y. mo. ob.

John Fowler

INDIAN CAMPAIGNS--WAR ON THE SIDE

Captain John Fowler was in command of a company in the first campaign against the Wabash Indians in 1791, and was also paymaster for the troops under Wilkinson and Scott. There were 800 mounted volunteers, and George Nicholas wrote from "Spring House," June 20, 1791, to James Madison, Jr., of Orange County, Virginia, that "Never a body of better looking men assembled nor men better disposed to act well." He

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added that they returned well pleased with their officers and stated that the expedition, while not a bloody one, was very important in locating the Indians, serving notice on them of stronger attacks to come and strengthening the feeling of Kentucky solidarity.

One-half of the 800 men stayed on one side of the river at the lower Indian towns and one-half crossed over and went under Wilkinson to the upper towns. They followed an Indian path that was overhung with grass. They killed a number of Indians in their canoes. Some of them got to the top of their huts on the other side and fired at the Kentuckians wounding two, killing none.* Among the Indian prisoners taken were a number of squaws bearing such intriguing names as Green Willows, Roasting Ears, etc.** These were taken to Vincennes and released in September, 1792.

On August 3, 1791, John Fowler collected at Richmond \$120 as his compensation and had the accounts for pay and rations for the Kentucky militia referred to the Auditor for settlement. James Wilkinson's account was 10/15/6 for purchase of a boat to convey provisions to the different stations and for tools for the use of the guards. Samuel Clinton's account for fifty-seven days horse hire to guards at the mouth of the Kentucky one shilling per day. The pay of General Scott as Lieutenant Colonel commanding was allowed and pay for the soldiers at the rate of six rations and pay at six pence per

*Draper Manuscript, 12CC234 (Jillson).

**American Papers on Indian Affairs.

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ration and \$12 a month for forage. The Virginia Council present were the Governor, Mr. James Wood, Mr. Robert Goode, Mr. James McClung, Mr. John Steele, and Mr. Miles Selden. It appears that payment in money was not made in full as on August 4, the treasurer was advised to borrow from any funds having sufficient money eighteen pounds to be paid to Mr. Fowler as part of the allowance made to him, to enable him to return to Kentucky.

While John Fowler was in Richmond on this business another campaign by Kentuckians consumed most of August. L'Auguille and other villages on the Eel River were destroyed, two men lost and much damage done to the Indian towns and some prisoners taken. These two campaigns raised high hopes that were to be dashed to the ground in St. Clair's bitter defeat.

TEN YEARS IN WOODFORD COUNTY

The busiest years in the life of John Fowler were the ten years he lived in this county. They are also the most important historically because of the pioneer incidents and unique experiences in the new country. Yet, after the lapse of a century and a half it is the period of which the surviving record contains only rows of figures and lists of names in old deeds and documents.

In this period he established his home, located his land grants and warrants, and began his speculation in land which fills many a dim page of deeds, surveys, and lawsuits. He was a member of two of the Danville conventions planning for Kentucky statehood; member of the Vir-

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ginia Legislature; and of the Virginia convention that ratified the Federal Constitution. He was in the first Indian campaign of 1791, and there is strong indication that he was in at least two more, 1793 and 1794. Meanwhile, he was wagoning with John and George May between Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Richmond, Virginia; and Lexington, Kentucky.

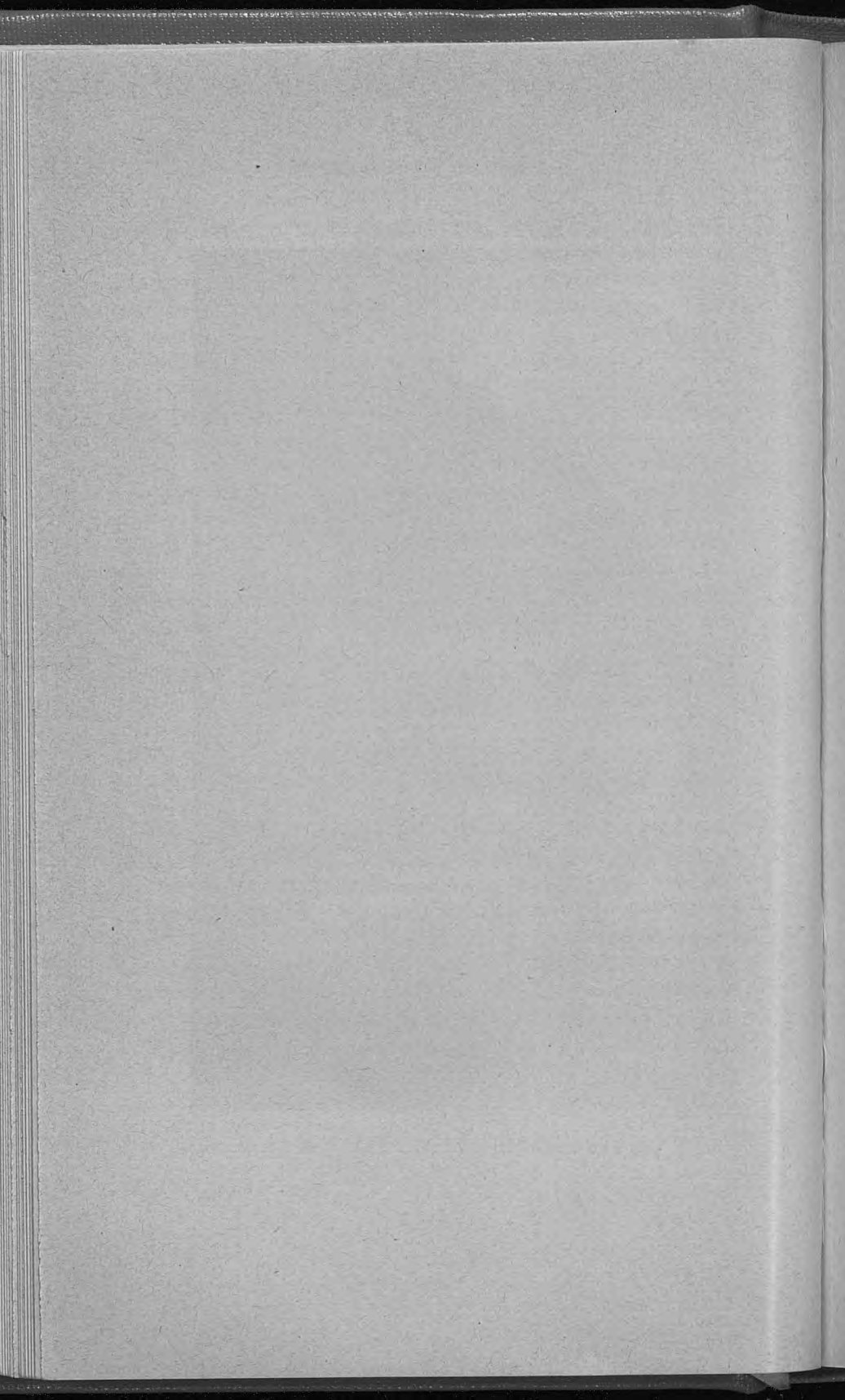
He was treasurer of the new Transylvania Seminary, attending meetings of the Board in Lexington from 1789 to 1792. In 1789 he was ensign of the Light Infantry of that city; in 1788, with Green Clay and Richard Clough Anderson he organized the first Masonic Lodge in Kentucky.* All this meant many trips back and forth, a distance of some ten miles, on horseback--a mere whiff of gasoline now--then measured in mud and mire and tedious time. On one of these trips he mixed pleasure and duty, when at Mr. Stephen Collins' tavern he received the entries for a horse race.

And with all this, he was a Gentleman Justice of the Woodford County Court from 1789 to 1794; was also one of the organizing trustees of Frankfort and received the money for the first lots sold there. For three years he and Daniel Weisiger were clerks of the Courts of Oyer and Terminer. And in 1792 he was commissioned to bring back to Kentucky the Kentucky Land Grant papers, etc. from Richmond, Virginia.

*Coleman's MASONRY IN THE BLUEGRASS, p. 33.



SECOND CAPITOL OF VIRGINIA, BUILT IN 1794, NOW
THE CENTRAL BUILDING FLANKED BY WINGS.
FROM HERE JOHN FOWLER BROUGHT TO JOHN
JOUETT THE SWORD VOTED HIM BY THE LEGISLA-
TURE.



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MILLICENT FOWLER'S FRIENDS

When John Fowler was absent on campaigns, on legislative matters, or business journeys, Millicent, his wife, either spent the time with neighbors, or had neighbors staying with her.

"Wilkinson lived opposite Mrs. Dupuy near Versailles, kept a coach and four with two riders seated on the black horses. He sold out to Humphrey Marshall and lived a year or two with John Fowler."* It is doubtful if the time was as long as two years, but it is certain that Joseph Biddle Wilkinson, born December 4, 1785, in Fayette County was godson of John Fowler.

In 1789 (May 18) Ann Biddle Wilkinson wrote to her father in Philadelphia, saying that she had intended to write and send it by Captain Fowler the week before. And on September 25, 1789, she wrote that "Mrs. Fowler spends a great deal of her time with me," this evidently in reply to some question from her people as to her loneliness.

In 1793 Mrs. Fowler was staying with Mrs. Innes for safety and protection. A guard was kept at Innes Station and it was far safer there than on the open farms. It is likely that she also stayed at the Wilkinson home (Love House) during part of 1791-1792, for Wilkinson kept soldiers on guard who were on the lookout for hostile Indians.

On January 5, 1793, James Wilkinson wrote to Innes, and ended his letter, "My dear Ann who

*Staples' PIONEER LEXINGTON, from Draper MS., 11CC247.

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enjoys good health and great content in our situation, begs to be remembered cordially to Mrs. Innes and Mrs. Fowler, if with you. I beg leave to make my respects to the ladies." He also said that his wife was sending to Mrs. Innes "a fashionable hat with trimmings," which must have been bought in Philadelphia.

On October 3, 1793, Wilkinson wrote, "My dear Ann who had predetermined to take her chance at the Post alone until the Issue of our project was attained, has, in consequence of your kind and friendly proposition--agreed to accept your invitation--proposes to land at Louisville from whence she will communicate with you through the good offices of our friend Sebastian...she begs you to present her in terms of affectionate regard to Mrs. Innes and Mrs. Fowler."

Mrs. James Taylor was another friend. In a penciled note on the edge of John Fowler's printed Congressional letter of 1803, Mrs. Mary Keturah Taylor said that she remembered Captain and Mrs. Fowler very well, and had often heard her grandmother, Mrs. James Taylor, say what an elegant and cultured lady Mrs. Fowler was.* She was a distant relative of the wife of William Leavy and "an amiable and hospitable member of our society."**

The bonds between the women who shared the wilderness dangers were stronger than blood ties. The men were loud in praise of the new country and eager for adventure. To the women

*Scrapbook owned by Mrs. J. T. Cannon.

**Register of the Kentucky State Historical Society, vol. 40, No. 131, p. 128.

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it meant sleepless nights and sad separations from loved ones in Virginia. On March 2, 1791, Samuel Meredith, Jr., wrote from North Elkhorn to John Breckinridge: "Tell Mrs. Breckinridge I am persuaded that if she could get a sight of your tracts of land at the season just approaching she would not content herself in Albemarle afterwards...to borrow Lewis Craig's phrase in comparing the Kingdom of Heaven, he says it is a 'mere Kentucky of a place.'"

Despite this, Eliza Meredith, in writing of her last visit to her mother, said that it almost tore her heart out to make the parting.*

John May, writing to Innes said he doubted if Mrs. May would come out next year. "I have not required it of her, as I see that it is extremely disagreeable to her. But I find she is endeavoring to reconcile herself to it, and I have expectations she will voluntarily come out in the fall."**

Millicent Fowler was well dowered by her father, William Wills, surgeon of Richmond. In a deed of gift, April 14, 1768, he gave her eight slaves*** and also his harpsichord and organ. She also had lands in Virginia and three

*Breckinridge papers, April, 1790, vol. 6, p. 936.

**She did not come out and his last trip ended March 20, 1790, when he was murdered on the Ohio River by Indians.

***Deeds of 1779-1802. Jenny, Peg and her children, Dublin and Molly; Maje, a son of Frank; Rose, daughter of Fanny; Betty and Chloe, daughters of Grace.

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lots in Richmond, on Shockoe Creek, where the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad station now stands.

Her husband's provision for her welfare is shown in deeds of trust, the largest in 1800, when he placed practically all his lands in trust for her benefit.*

That Millicent Fowler was with her husband in Washington, D.C. is shown by deeds signed by her in Richmond, Virginia, during those years. In 1801, John Fowler, writing to Breckinridge, said, "Mrs. Fowler is with me and is pleased to send her regards, etc."

The new city in the Potomac flats presented a dreary aspect when Abigail Adams looked across a rough rail fence to "the yellow, tenacious mud" that was Pennsylvania Avenue and had to hang the family wash in the East Room of the White House.

Nevertheless, she gave elegant parties to which all members of Congress and their wives were invited, and John and Millicent Fowler shared in this hospitality, for there was no distinction of party. "All were received with equal civility," and no persons absented themselves from political motives.**

"Invariably the biggest social event of the year"*** was held at the house of a fellow member, John Peter Van Ness. His wife was Marcia

*Deed Book, 1769-1774 and 1779 to restored deed of 1801.

**Letter of Abigail Adams in 1818, in Niles' Register.

***"American Republic," Washington, D.C., Jan., 1941, p. 8.

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Burns, daughter of "the obstinate Mr. Burns who refused to sell his log house to the government thus hindering the enlargement of the White House grounds.

He did sell enough of his considerable property to provide a sumptuous house where they entertained lavishly and enjoyed the novel convenience of "hot and cold water." Their mansion also included elegant mantels of Italian marble and a conservatory of rare plants.

Even amid such splendor the Fayette County Congressman and his wife were quite at ease for their own home at Lexington was noted for hospitality in a town where the social graces and charms of a cultured society were taken for granted.

AS A FREEMASON

In October, 1780, John Fowler is listed as a member of the Masonic Lodge at Williamsburg, Virginia.* In 1789 he was chosen, with Green Clay and Richard Clough Anderson, to bring a charter and found Lexington Lodge, the first one west of the Alleghenies. By 1794 he is noted as Past Master of the new lodge. And on through the years he is referred to as Brother John Fowler in Masonic documents and in the newspaper accounts of that order.

The Williamsburg membership included five of the faculty of William and Mary College, including the president of the institution. Oth-

*William and Mary Quarterly, vol. I, July, 1892.

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ers were St. George Tucker, James Monroe, Beverly Randolph, James Innes, Peyton Randolph, John Markham, and many other leading men of Virginia.

The annual meeting day, when dues were settled and officers elected, was the 24th of June, the Feast Day of St. John the Baptist. "Then the Lodge was full; and the items in the accounts of sugar, glasses, rum and brandy seem to indicate that there were many hours spent in the tavern of Gabriel Maupin where the Lodge met."*

THE NECESSITY AND USEFULNESS OF RELIGION

Extended search has not revealed the names of John and Millicent Fowler on any church roll examined. Their Woodford County home was between Pisgah for which their neighbors, the Stevensons, gave the land where the log church was built in 1785, and the Woodford Presbyterian Church, of which there are indications of existence as early as October, 1790.**

On September 30, 1785, John Fowler deeded two acres of land adjoining Alexander Ramsey on Stoner Creek for Sugar Ridge Presbyterian Church. William Wills was one of the trustees of this church.***

His principal gift in this line was Concord Presbyterian Church, the first in Nicholas

*Ibid., vol. X, p. 12.

**Rev. C. E. Mount, from Minutes of Transylvania Presbytery.

***Clark County, Ky., deeds, Book 7, p. 186.

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County, 10 miles northeast of historic Cane Ridge, 3 miles southeast of Carlisle. This church was represented at the second convocation of Presbyterians held in Kentucky, July 12, 1785, preceding the formation of Transylvania Presbytery.* The meeting house had been erected on his lands and on November 1, 1802, he conveyed by deed 93½ acres "without any manner of condition" to the church trustees for the "consideration of three shillings" and "the necessity and usefulness of religion to civil society."

By 1856 part of the land had been lost by an old claim. The rest was leased to farmers and the income used by the church. In 1804 Barton W. Stone formed the society of the New Lights and they and the Presbyterians used the church jointly until it passed into the hands of the Disciples who decided to sell all but 8 or 10 acres. The 63 acres sold brought \$1,870.85, after producing an income for fifty-four years.**

TREASURER OF TRANSYLVAVIA

The most convincing proof of John Fowler's adherence to the Presbyterian Church is the fact that he was from 1787 to 1794 Treasurer of Transylvania University when that struggling young school was in the hands of the Presbyterian pioneers. He left the service of the

*The first convocation held March 30, 1785.

**Original minute books of the church in Library of Historical Foundation of Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, Montreat, N. C.

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Board at exactly the same time the conservatives resigned in consequence of the election of Harry Toulmin, and Samuel Blair was elected in his stead.

Judge Harry Innes was chairman of the Board when the bond of John Fowler for 2,000 pounds was signed by his bondsmen, Walter Carr, William Lewis, John Coburn, and Thomas Allen. It was then sealed and delivered in the presence of Gabriel Maupin, Jr.*

The Board present were: Harry Innes, Levi Todd, John Edwards, Robert Johnson, John Craig, Willis Green, James Garrard, William Ward, Robert Todd, Thomas Lewis, James Overton, John Crittenden, Christopher Greenup, and James Speed. John Coburn was also a member and Abraham Hite was elected in the place of James Wilkinson who was on a campaign, and Richard C. Anderson was selected in the place of John Brown. These trustees and later ones appointed were friends and neighbors of John Fowler, associated with him in business, some of them serving with him on the Woodford County Court.

The scheme of a lottery was worked out but was evidently not carried to a conclusion. The treasurer in 1790 paid John Bradford 15/2. Mr. Innes was requested to furnish a list of loans paid him for transporting the Library and philosophical apparatus to the district and it was ordered paid.

By October, 1790, the personnel of the Board had changed. Isaac Shelby, George Nicholas, and

*Original bond in unbound documents in Transylvania Library, No. S-2, indexed by Unger.

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Richard C. Anderson were out. James Overton and Abraham Hite had died. John Hawkins, Robert Barr, Peyton Short, Ambrose Dudley, James Crawford, Thomas Young, Willis Green, and E. Payne were new members.

The committee to audit the treasurer's books was composed of Johnson, Hawkins, and Greenup. He was ordered to pay Isaac Wilson any sum of money he may receive, not exceeding fifty pounds, which they would use every endeavor to obtain "and doubt not it will be procured." In April, 1791, John Fowler presented his report which was ordered to lie on the table.

Just as Kentucky achieved statehood, conservatives and liberals met in battle array and the liberals won. February 5, 1792, a committee was appointed to confer with Rev. James Moore, principal,* a rebel from strict Calvinism and "the rising hope of liberal thought." To quote the minority, "the mad and misguided majority" passed a resolution to VOTE THEN for president and proceeded to elect Harry Toulmin. Whereupon most of the dissenting trustees resigned and the treasurer with them. John Fowler's name appears on the accounts of the University as late as 1824** when he was paid for writing a mortgage, when the school borrowed \$5,000 from the city to purchase the Medical Books, one of the prize treasures of the Library to this day.

At the stormy Toulmin meeting a committee was appointed to look into the treasurer's ac-

*Master of "Flute and Violin," story by James Lane Allen.

**Fayette County deeds, Book U, p. 83, et seq.

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counts. The minutes of succeeding meetings were devoted to the squabbles that arose and the clerk failed to record what report was made.*

WOODFORD COUNTY COURT

A Gentleman Justice of a new County

The first court in the new county of Woodford was organized at the house of Mr. Caleb Wallace on the 5th of May, 1789, the commission issued by James Wood, Esq., Lieutenant Governor of Virginia. John Craig and Richard Young, gentlemen, administered the oath of allegiance and oath of Justices of the Peace to Thomas Marshall, Sr., and he administered same to John Fowler, John Craig, Sr., Richard Young, Robert Johnson, James Wilkinson, John Matthias, William Cave, George Blackburn, John Finney, William Trotter, and William Steele.

Richard Young was made Sheriff with Bartlett Collins and Richard Fox as deputies. Cave Johnson was appointed clerk. The minutes were signed by Thomas Marshall who was recommended to the heads of William and Mary College as a proper person for surveyor.

At the next meeting, May 6, James Craig was made deputy clerk. The oath of Oyer and Terminer and Chancery was presented to seven of

*The vote stood: For Toulmin--Breckinridge, Coburn, Dudley, Johnson, Lewis, A. Parker, J. Parker, Trotter, Wilson; against--Hawkins, Morton, Campbell, Crawford, L. Todd, R. Todd, McDowell.

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the Justices including John Fowler, and to John Watkins. The latter and William Cave were appointed Coroners, Robert Johnson, Escheater and Colonel of militia, and James Hughes, County Attorney.

At the September term, 1789, the oath to support the Constitution of the United States was tendered to John Fowler, gentleman, who in open Court refused to take the same. He had taken seriously the matter of opposition to its adoption by the Virginia convention and had perhaps expressed himself so forcibly that his colleagues determined to see how far he would carry his opposition. He evidently thought better of it, for, when the February term rolled around, in open Court at the home of George Moffett he "took the Oath prescribed by an Act of Congress to support the said Constitution of the United States" and thereafter did loyally support and defend same.

The Court at times sat in Shannon Meeting House. In 1790 the permanent place was fixed at "the falling spring" at the head of Glen's Creek, and four acres of ground were bought from George Briscoe for public use, including a jail and prison bounds.

In December, 1790, there were added to the Court: Marquis Calmes, John Grant, Charles Scott, Sr., Bartlett Collins, James M. Marshall, John Crittenden, William Henry, Robert Alexander, and Bennett Pemberton.

John Fowler was chosen as guardian by William Beard, an orphan. He was one of the appraisers of the estate of William Grinstead. His attendance at Court was regular until the summer of the campaigns against the Indians on the

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Wabash. Several times he served with groups appointed to obtain signatures of sick persons and to take depositions. In 1792 he was appointed to make the settlement of the county with the Sheriff. On several occasions he acted alone as Justice, once to administer the oath to Richard Stevens of Pennsylvania, concerning the importation of slaves.

During his service, all the wills, deeds, mortgages, and settlements contained in books A and B were recorded. Many of the younger members did not attend half the courts in course, due to Indian campaigns and business away from home. Thomas Marshall and Marquis Calmes were nearly always present and acted as clerks.

The morals of the community were under strict Court surveillance as well as the observance of the Sabbath. John Peyton was fined for hunting with his gun on that day. Others were presented for profane swearing, as prominent a man as John Crittenden being so accused, but coming clear. Those unfortunate girls who bore illegitimate children were cited to appear, two at one Court.

Poor Isaac Wisem was accused of having in his possession "a man's hat that was supposed to be on a man's head when a Tomahawk was struck twice through it and many other things that give a strong suspicion that he was with the Indians at the taking of several boats on the Ohio River." (The trial, April 6, 1791) Doubtless he had only indulged in loose talk, as in that day when such suspicions were a death warrant, he was found to be of unsound mind, instead of guilty.

The marks of stock were recorded in Court,

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as "undercrop on left ear," "slit in right ear," etc., a necessary precaution when all were turned loose to fatten on mast during the summer and fall months.

Among those recommended for militia officers in 1789 were Thomas Herndon, Lowel Woolfork, Robert Sanders, Joseph Delaney, Samuel Kirkham, William Lindsay, Samuel Grant, Benjamin Craig, William Thomas, Thomas Moseley, James Finney, Jeremiah Craig, John Whitaker, Jacob Stucker, Bartlett Searcy, John Payne, James McBride, David Flournoy, Thomas Wood, Richard Thurman, Elijah Craig, Jr., Richard Taylor, John Vaughan, Josiah Wooldridge, George Gray, Benjamin Henry, Rhodes Thompson, Henry Herndon, William Kelly, Benjamin Bledsoe, James McClure, Thomas Mitchell, Edward Spencer, and Ezekiel Hayden.

In 1790, among others, John Fowler was recommended for Captain; Reuben Twyman, Lieutenant; and William Bowman, ensign.

Among the attorneys admitted to the bar were Humphrey Marshall; Thomas Arnold; Reuben Searcy; Levi Todd; and James Hughes, who on August 3, 1791, appeared for John Fowler in the case of Thomas Hawes against David Leitch and John Fowler.

Among ministers granted licenses to celebrate marriages were James Dewpee and Joseph Reading. The Court set tavern rates, and tavern licenses were granted to James Farquhar, William Samuel, Nicholas Lewis, also to James Roberts in Frankfort.

Viewing roads was a steady occupation. Among them, one from Robert Mackey's on Cane Run to Shannon's Mill; another from Shannon's to Falling Spring, and from there to General Charles

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Scott's place, where he established a tobacco warehouse and laid out a town to be called Petersburg. Others were from Johnson's Mill to Lexington; and from Major Steele's Ferry on Kentucky River to Nathaniel Sanders' mill. Mention is also made of "Town Fork Road" and where Weekley's Path crossed Todd's Road to Falling Spring. Another was from Johnson's Mill to Upper Dry Run, thence to Stamping Ground, thence to Captain Thomas Hicklin's. Another road was planned from Captain Thomas Herndon's to James Stevenson's, crossing Elkhorn at Tolliver Craig's Mill. Others were from near Castleman's school house to William Thomas' Mill; one from the courthouse to the mouth of Rowe's Run; and from Daniel Trabue's millseat to Rowland's boatyard on the Kentucky River.

Scarcity of money is shown by the payment of debts in tobacco, even those owed by the county. Notes and debts were constantly being sued on. That there must have been a scramble for the fees and perquisites of public office is indicated by the number of offices created and the way they were passed around in families and among friends. Witnesses in Court were paid either by the county or the participants in trials, a regular rate of twenty-five pounds of tobacco for each day's attendance being the fee.

John Fowler was absent from the Court from August 6, 1793, until August 5, 1794, which was the last time he appeared there. Between the latter date and November 10, of the same year he removed to the vicinity of Lexington, to the farm he had bought from Captain Nathaniel Wilson, the tract long to be known as Fowler's Gardens.

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This date is fixed by the will of David Leitch, dated November 8, 1794.* He appointed Daniel Weisiger of Frankfort, James Taylor of Mason County, and John Fowler, "Now living in Lexington," as executors with his wife, Ketura Leitch. By March 20, 1795, John Fowler advertised in the Kentucky Herald for claimants against the estate to appear and present their claims. Major Leitch was a comrade of the Light Infantry of Lexington, a partner in land warrants, and a close friend of John Fowler. The town of Leitchfield, Kentucky, is named for Major Leitch, being located on the survey made in his name.

In this summer of 1794 men were massing for what they believed would be the last necessary battle to clear the Indians from the lands north of the Ohio. They were right in their vision, for this Battle of Fallen Timbers gave them all the relief they hoped for, and opened up the vast fertile region of southern Ohio to white settlers.

In July General Charles Scott led 1,000 well armed and equipped volunteers attired in hunting shirts and leggings, carrying rifles, tomahawks, knives, pouches, and powder horns, the last Kentuckians to go into battle thus picturesquely equipped.

Captain Fowler and his wife, instead of enlarging their first pioneer home in Woodford removed to the growing town of Lexington. Frontier life was at a turning point and a political career in a larger sphere beckoned to him.

*James Taylor scrapbook belonging to Mrs. J. T. Cannon.

CHAPTER THREE

ELECTED TO CONGRESS

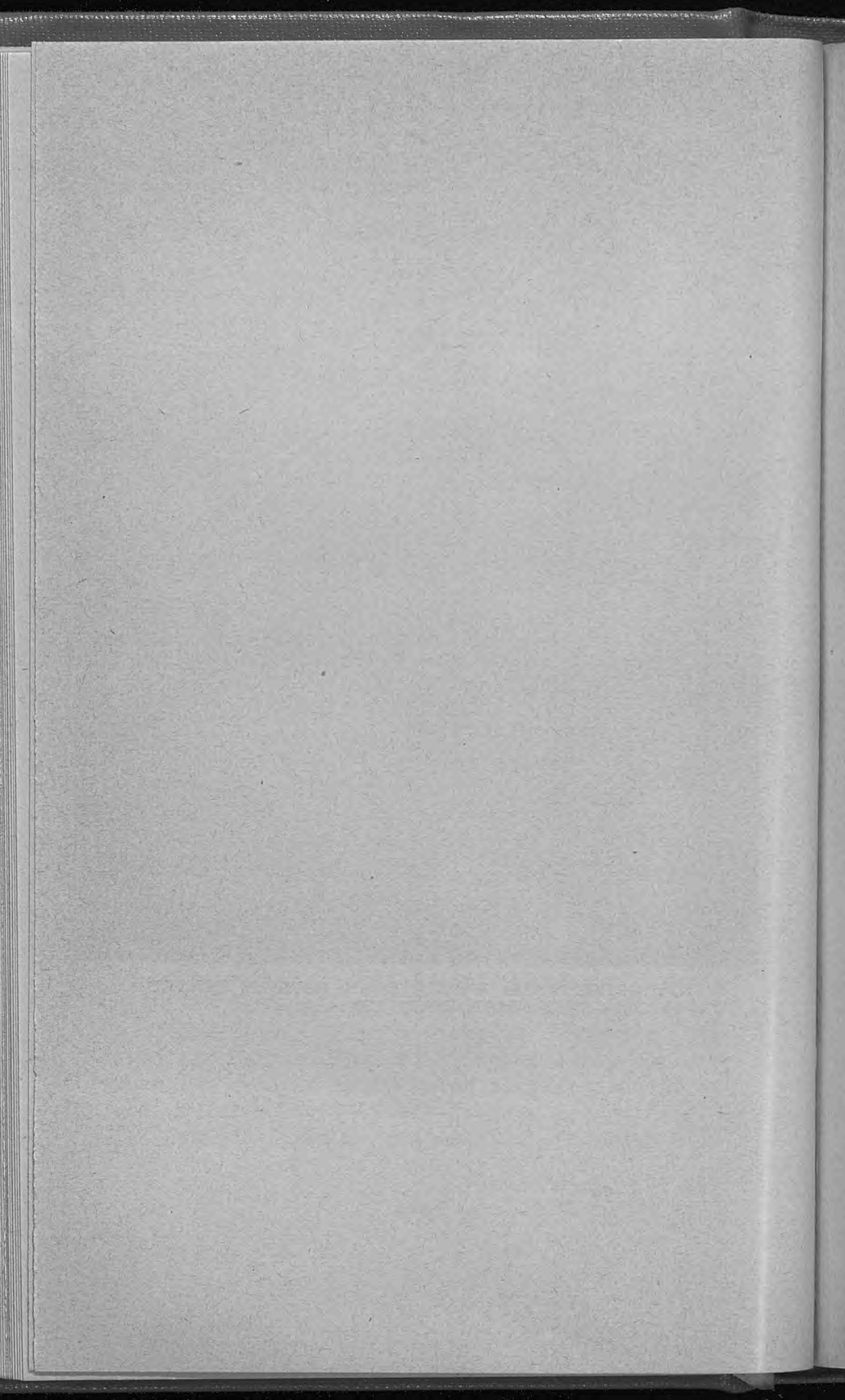
IN CONGRESS

By 1797 Captain John Fowler was a popular citizen of Fayette with thirteen years of public service in Kentucky to his credit. His close friends held public office and his own ambition was to go to Congress. John Brown was United States Senator, Breckinridge was in the state legislature, Harry Innes and Caleb Wallace were judges. He made the campaign, was elected without opposition and began the first of five terms, twice being elected when he was absent from the state.

His war record, legislative experience, and loyalty and efficiency in partnership land ventures recommended him to both ex-soldiers and business men. That he had endeared himself to poorer men by an ardent generosity which gained him many votes is shown by the testimony of the doughty well digger, John Robert Shaw, who was disappointed in further employment by Fowler's election to Congress. Being pressed by creditors, he says: "My distresses reaching the ears of Captain Fowler, he immediately came to town and desired me to bring him an account of the different debts which I owed; accordingly I did, and he became responsible for them all.



CONGRESS HALL, WHERE JOHN FOWLER SERVED
IN CONGRESS FROM 1797 TO 1800.



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Here I cannot help digressing from the thread of my narrative to introduce to that kind, that generous, and to me incomparable friend; but panegyric must be thrown away upon him; because his virtues as a man, as a citizen, and to sum up the whole, as an enlightened patriot, are so universally known."*

Fowler was forty-one years old and young Henry Clay was just arriving in Lexington at the age of twenty. Clay came as a follower of Jefferson, and he was imbued with the Kentucky ideal of liberal, popular government. In this the two men saw eye to eye until the rise of Andrew Jackson on the horizon of republican-democracy.

The first session of the Fifth Congress began on May 15th and John Fowler arrived on May 30th, took the oath to support the Constitution of the United States, and cast his first vote on June 1st.** This was on a question of friendship with the French nation and the best means of maintaining it without being involved in the great disturbances created by the French Revolution. On February 1st, Monroe had been recalled from France. Napoleon's brilliant Italian campaign had come to an end.

Among fellow members of the House were Samuel J. Cabell, Carter B. Harrison, and General Daniel Morgan of Virginia; Harrison Gray Otis of Massachusetts; Matthew Lyon of Vermont; Edward

*George L. Fowler's reprint of LIFE AND TRAVELS OF JOHN ROBERT SHAW, p. 183, his letter, 1805, to constituents.

**House Journal, p. 14.

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Livingstone and Philip Van Cortlant of New York; John Rutledge, Jr. of South Carolina, and Joseph McDowell of North Carolina.

Early in this session a bill was passed calling on the states to arm, equip, and have ready to march at a moment's notice 80,000 militia, Kentucky's quota being 1,542. This created a panic among the people who dreaded muster days, drilling, and recruiting. The Kentucky Gazette assured them that the law was only "for the more effectual preservation of peace in the ports and harbours of the United States and in waters under their jurisdiction," and did not portend any immediate war for the states.

Among measures considered were contracts for carrying mail, establishing and changing Circuit Courts in Kentucky and Tennessee, appointment of a commissioner of the Northwest Territory, and the XYZ affair.

Adams' messages to Congress were concerned with the delays of Spain in putting her treaties with the United States into effect. He was also disturbed by the intrigues of foreign agents to alienate the Indians. A little later he found the threatened war with France over her continued privateering made the Spanish affair "of less moment."*

His administration from the first was embarrassed by a "powerful and well organized opposition," and John Fowler was not the least determined of the bloc.

*Messages and Papers of the Presidents, p. 1246, et seq.

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BACK IN KENTUCKY

During his first year in Congress county academies were established in Kentucky and eight of his former colleagues of the Woodford Court were trustees of the academy in that county.

Kentucky was considering a new constitution. The arguments on both sides were as bitter and blasting as those on the Spanish question. The Alien and Sedition Laws in Congress precipitated the first constitutional crisis of the nation. The "Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions" sounded the bugle call to States' Rights. First of a long line of militant statements, they marched into print and shouted from forums during the next sixty-two years until silenced by the canon of the Sixties.

Thomas Powers claimed to be agent for Carondelet, and "Mr. John Fowler, Congressman from Kentucky, and a man of high repute, knowing of (H) Marshall's charges, wrote to Judge Innes:* 'In a conversation between Mr. Powers and myself on the subject of his mission to Kentucky, he observed, among other details, that Mr. Sebastian advised him to leave the country, that Nicholas and Innes were displeased with his project and might take measures to have him arrested.'"

To a Congressman, congressional terms must seem very short, for already in 1798 John Fowler was busily building his fences for another election, and John Brown was saying in a letter

*Temple Bodley's Introduction to Littell's POLITICAL TRANSACTIONS, p. xcl. (Reprint)

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to Jefferson, "Fowler and Davis will I expect be re-elected without much opposition."*

On October 17th, after a muster under command of General Robert Todd, a large company met at Mr. Brent's to partake of a repast prepared for the occasion. Sixteen toasts were given, among them, "Thomas Jefferson and the virtuous minority in Congress"; and a volunteer toast to "George Nicholas, James Madison, John Fowler and Thomas Davis and other steady friends of liberty."

Other toasts that were given expressed the principles of Captain Fowler: The United States; Perpetual Union on the Principles of Equality; Navigation of the Mississippi at any Price but That of Liberty; Trial by Jury; Free Press; No Standing Army; May the Atlantic States be Just, the Western States be Free, and all be Happy; No Paper Money, No Tender Laws, and No Legislative Interference With Private Affairs; No Alliance, Offensive or Defensive, With any Foreign Power; A Well Regulated Militia, the Only Proper Mode of National Defense; and "The Commonwealth of Kentucky, the fifteenth luminary of the American constellation, may it reflect upon the original states the light it has borrowed from them."

At Georgetown on the 22nd of October, at Mr. Theobald's tavern, one of the toasts was, "The three patriotic representatives from Kentucky. May they continue to deserve well and merit the

*Register of the Kentucky State Historical Society, 1937, p. 18, (Thomas Terry Davis), date Sept. 15, 1798.

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suffrage of their constituents."

On the 31st of that month it was 14 degrees below freezing but Captain Fowler's heart was warmed by such appreciation and he felt little anxiety over the election. His confidence was rewarded by a large majority, the vote in Fayette alone standing 793 for Fowler, 275 for Richard M. Johnson, and 36 for P. Thomas. Johnson, then a young man, was already popular, yet Fowler polled nearly three times as many votes.

In the next session, William Charles Cole Claiborne took his seat from the new state of Tennessee and Thomas Sumpter from South Carolina; Peter Muhlenberg from Pennsylvania; Henry Lee and Samuel Goode from Virginia; John Earle, Wade Hampton, and Benjamin Huger from North Carolina.

LEXINGTON IN 1800

In 1800, when John Fowler had been nearly four years in Congress, and the body moved from Philadelphia to Washington, the town of Lexington had doubled its population in ten years and had 2,000 people who were well supplied by merchants with fine kid shoes and gloves, feathers, furs, silk, beadwork, embroideries, and every accessory of fashion. Local tanners, saddlers, hatters, dyers, ropemakers, and iron workers were busy with orders.

What if the foreign news was six weeks old when the Gazette printed it. World events thrilled and stirred them even more than now when instantaneous air service weaves a net of news around the world every five minutes. Everything was keyed to the same wave length and they felt no lack. In fact there was none.

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Socially, their manners were courtly, their conversation was elegant. When they danced it was to a stately measure. They were waited on by soft voiced servants who emulated their own graciousness. Their food was not only bountiful but tasty and beautifully served on china, glass, fine linen, and silver. They dressed with care and taste in lovely materials made up in the best style. If there were low taverns or high jinks on the frontier their names were not mentioned in polite society, or, a little later, at brilliant parties where "The American Fair" were entertained and toasted at Fowler's Gardens.

In a letter from Washington, D.C. to Breckinridge, February 9, 1801, Fowler said:

Dear sir:

I enclose you the papers of today which contain all the news worth relating. I wrote you very pressinglly some time since to come to this place without delay. The Senate being notified to meet on the 4th of next month. I still flatter myself you are on the road but lest you should not, the enclosed paper will give you much entertainment.

Please to my respects to Mrs. Breckinridge--believe me with sincere regards

Yr. Mt. Ob. Servant
John Fowler

And again--on March 5th:

Dear sir:

The President has called the Senate to meet

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on the 4th of March and I suppose a special notice has been directed to you, as the members present have been individually notified here in writing. It is uncertain how long they will be kept in Session, but at all events I think it of the utmost importance that you should be here as soon after as you can properly make the journey. Several of the most important appointments are to be made, and I am persuaded their nominations will be delayed until the Republican members will have time to take their seats.

The public mind is under great anxiety respecting the election of President, the federalists will die hard, but must and will give way to the majesty of the people. They will not dare to risk a dissolution of the Government. The enclosed paper will give you a view of our political situation.

I cannot close without again pressing you to come forward without delay.

Accept my best wishes and believe me with sincere regards

Yr. Mt. Ob. Servant
John Fowler

In the United States there were over six million people and the 75 post offices had increased to 903. In the first session of the Eighth Congress Kentucky's quota of two Congressmen was increased to seven, and there were added George Michael Bedinger, John Boyle, Matthew Lyon, Thomas Sanford, and Matthew Walton.

This Congress suspended the debts and duties of Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio, Indiana, and Mississippi, on petition of their respective legislatures. Thus did the new West assert itself

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as a powerful entity in the body politic. Kentucky still held a balance of power and was considered the bulwark of liberty in the West. "Scuffling for Kentucky votes" gave her statesmen a unique position in the council halls of the nation. The vital questions of the next two years were navigation of the Mississippi, the negotiations that led to the Louisiana Purchase, the Chase impeachment trial, and the Yazoo speculations.

1801

In 1801 Fowler defeated a strong opponent in James Garrard, receiving three times as many votes, 7,125, to Garrard's 2,050, and Thomas' 1,351.*

He arrived in Washington on the first day of this session and writing to a friend in Frankfort,** he said: "We look forward to the 11th of February with great composure. We dread no event that can possibly prostrate our hopes unless something of an extraordinary kind should take place, which is not at present contemplated. Indeed, it is more than possible that Mr. Jefferson will ultimately have an unanimous vote."

This proved to be extreme optimism for on that fateful eleventh, the election was thrown into Congress as the only body that had power to make the choice between Burr and Jefferson.***

*Gazette, Aug. 10.

**Gazette.

***The vote stood: Jefferson, 73; Burr, 73; Adams, 65; Pinckney, 64; and Jay, 1.

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As the House retired to their own chamber for balloting, once again John Fowler stood with a group charged with the destiny of a nation. He had anxious moments when the vote stood: 8 states for Jefferson; 6 for Burr; 2 divided; and it took 9 states to win.

On and on until the 36th ballot the deadlock stood; Kentucky, Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York, like a stone wall for Jefferson; South Carolina, Delaware, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire for Burr; Maryland and Vermont were divided.

When some members wished to present other reports, there was a hoarse cry from the House, "No business until the election is over."

At the 36th ballot this division still stood, then came the hoped-for break. Morris was absent and Lyon handed Vermont to Jefferson. The four members from Maryland who had steadfastly voted for Burr put in blank pieces of paper and the four Republicans gave Maryland to Jefferson. South Carolina and Delaware put in blanks and the long strain was ended.

The result, after so much hope and fear and prophecy pro and con, settled the inquietude of the West and for eight years the word of Jefferson became law and gospel to the great majority of Kentuckians.

"Every patriot palpitated with anxiety" during the ordeal. Once it was over, the winners voiced their delight in announcing "the glorious triumph of liberty, philosophy, patriotism, benevolence and truth over despotism, illiber-

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ality, malevolence and vice."* What a glorious side to be on!

Joy took many forms. By January 1, 1802, The Greatest Cheese in America, weighing 1,235 pounds, for the "Greatest Man in the World," was made by the personal labors of free-born farmers of Cheshire, Massachusetts, "without a single slave to assist," for the elective president of a free people.

Kentucky paid homage in words instead of cheese. A great gathering of people in Frankfort were fired with "the recollection" that on this spot "the first legislative stand was made against the obnoxious Alien and Sedition Laws!" "A handsome assemblage of ladies graced the meeting with their presence and heightened the general vivacity."**

In 1803 John Fowler, elected without opposition, took his seat on January 31st. On February 28th he addressed a letter to his constituents.***

To Constituents--1803

Washington

February 28, 1803

The Constitutional term for which I have been elected by your suffrages to the Seventh Congress, expires in a few days. I believe it to be my duty to communicate such matters of a

*Gazette

**Gazette, Feb. 3, 1802.

***Taylor scrapbook, letter addressed to James Taylor, Esq., Campbell County, Ky.

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political nature, in which the general welfare of the union, and of my constituents in particular, are concerned. My usual mode has been to communicate concisely what appears to me to be of the first importance, and to refer for the details on the subordinate transactions to the common vehicles of information, the public papers.

If my memory is correct, in my letter addressed to you at the close of the last session, I noticed the very flourishing state of the public revenues, the measures recommended by the President, and adopted by Congress, to release the people from the severe oppression of taxes with which they had been loaded during the few years of error and madness, in which our government was entrusted to men either incompetent or unworthy of public confidence. Great alarm was attempted to be raised by the fallen party--ruin to our finances, and distress to our country were pretended to be foretold. The event has proved these to be false prophecies. I will give you a few facts and you can draw your own conclusions.

The present administration will have been in office two years on the 4th of March. In the year beginning with the 4th of March, 1799, and ending with September 1800, the last year of John Adams' administration, the expenditures of government, exclusive of public debt, interest and reimbursements, amounted to 7,180,000 dollars. In the year beginning and ending in the same months of 1801 and 1802, being the second year of Thomas Jefferson's, the expenditure was 4,045,000, leaving a saving in public expense of 3,035,000 a year. In the last two years of the

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former administration, the expenses of government amounted to the enormous sum of 22,954,930 dollars!

Taking the average of the 2 years of the present, to be double the expense of the first year, it would amount to only a little more than 8,000,000, which represents a difference characteristic of the 2 parties, say 15,000,000 saved to the public, from waste and corruption --indeed from employment to the public danger and ruin. The estimate of the secretary of the treasury of the public expenses for the ensuing year is under 3 millions. The management of the finances in every other respect, is equally prosperous and wisely regulated. During the late administration it was customary to leave in the hands of public officers in the customs, loan officers, purveyors, contractors, navy agents and paymasters, vast sums of public money which were employed in private speculation. This was done to promote adherents, and to reward those who deserted the old principles of 1776, or went to the most violent lengths in hostility to republican government. Vast sums lay in this way, when the public were imposed upon to borrow money at 8 per cent. It has not been brought completely home to the individuals, but there is strong ground to believe that A GREAT PART of the public's OWN MONEY, which was thus suffered to be in the hands of public officers, was lent to the public at this enormous interest.

A complete stop has been put to this traffic and corruption, and a system laid down, by which every individual officer is obliged to account, at short periods, for the money in his hands,

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and to repay it to the treasury, where there are not disbursements on the public account to be made from it.

Seven months after the present administration came into office, the amount in the treasury was only 2,943,918 dollars, because about that period, the measures of the former administration had ceased to operate, and the present had begun to go into action. In one year after that date, that is, on the first of October, 1802, there was in the treasury 4,539,675 dollars; besides which the government had paid upwards of NINE MILLIONS of the public debt, including interest. And what is highly flattering to the public feeling, and creditable to our country and government, I have good ground to believe that steps have been EFFECTUALLY taken to discharge by anticipation, all claims upon us for the foreign debt, up to the month of June, 1804. No nation on earth ever exhibited in so short a space, so many evidences of a happy government wisely and successfully administered.

There is one subject of very considerable importance, particularly to the state which I have the honor to represent, that has occupied the attention of the executive and both houses of Congress in the present session; it is already familiar to you by the general attention which it has excited--the conduct of the Spanish intendent at New Orleans.

Much clamor has been employed, but more pains have been bestowed to misrepresent and mislead than to inform the public correctly on the subject. I shall endeavor to communicate what is the state of the case, without regard to preju-

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dices of any kind.

By our treaty of 1795 with Spain, we obtained through the friendly disposition of the Spanish government a privilege of storing our produce intended for sale, in such warehouses as could be secured at New Orleans. This privilege was limited to THREE YEARS; but under this provision that if the Spanish Government should find it not convenient to let our produce be deposited at New Orleans after that period, that some other fit place be provided in lieu of it.

While the war existed the necessities of the Spanish colonies compelled a relaxation of their very rigid colonial laws, for they do not admit any nation whatever to trade with their colonies in peace. The period expired to which our privilege of deposit was limited, about the time at which the present administration came into office, and the usual custom of colonial law was generally revived. In the Spanish colonies (customs) prevail different from all the rest of the world. Their governments have no control over matters of trade, their functions are wholly of a political, juridical or legislative character. But all the authority for regulating and controlling trade, is vested in an officer wholly independent of the governor. This officer is called the INTENDENT.

The Spanish intendent at New Orleans, construing the general proclamation concerning trade as excluding US, like all other nations from commercial intercourse, and finding the period of our privilege of deposit expired, and that his court, which alone had power of fixing another place, had not done so, took it upon himself to execute in the most rigid manner,

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the general restriction principle and to deprive us of that place, without another being provided for the deposit of our produce.

This is the fair state of the business as it respects the Spaniards, as it respects us, the injury is a very serious one, but our executive had information of the transaction, and had taken the most active and decisive measures to procure redress.

At present it appears more probable that this project with the conduct of the Spanish intendant to produce a war, with whom the proposers neither know nor care; it was not right they wished to obtain, nor wrongs to redress, but a WAR, by which the country might be involved in trouble, and they might expect to obtain jobs, or scramble into office. The advocates of war, however, have shown how little they knew of the western people, for they asserted that we were ready to violate our duty to procure redress and right before the subject had been taken up by those who always make a noise without regard to the merits of the case. Negotiations on the subject of the Mississippi had long before commenced; additional instructions and dispatches were sent to our ambassador at Madrid and to the court of Spain by the Spanish Ambassador. Mr. Monroe is already well known and no man is better qualified by actual knowledge of the western country, to be intrusted with this important negotiation. When he was ambassador to France before, he very pointedly intimated to our government the negotiations that were then carrying on between France and Spain for the re-cession of Louisiana to the former; and I am informed, from very good

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private authority, that had his advice been taken at that period we might have had, not only New Orleans but the whole of the Mississippi on both sides, in our possession.

It has been charged by the opposition that we of the West were ready to violate our duty to the federal government...that we were disaffected and that the French when they should settle in Louisiana would find in the western states numbers ready to join them and to separate from the Union!

Such aspersions were not suffered to pass unnoticed and the authors of these calumnies were told what every western man knows to be true, that the character of a free American citizen, who chooses his own legislature, and lives uncontrolled except by the laws which they make, is too precious to be changed for that of a subject of any power on earth.

Whatever may be the issue of the negotiations I do not see the least reason to apprehend danger or injury from the colonization of Louisiana; our population is too far advanced ever to admit of their being dangerous neighbors; and as a friendly, sociable and intelligent people, I see rather great advantages to our side of the river.

The only evil we can apprehend is from the jealousy which will be sought to be kept alive by the enemies of our government within ourselves, particularly in the seaports of the Atlantic States.

It is not necessary for me to inform you that OHIO has been added to our Union as the 17th state.

A circumstance took place here during the

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last session, in the supreme court; it was the issuing of a mandamus to the secretary of state for the delivery of certain commissions of justices of the peace, signed by John Adams, "in the last moments of his administration." The court has denied a few days since it has jurisdiction in the case.

I am with respect,

Your faithful servant,

John Fowler.

Spanish troubles were not yet ended. By December of 1805 the President spoke boldly of Spain's duplicity, saying to Congress that "The depredations which had been committed on the commerce of the United States during a preceding war by persons under the authority of Spain are sufficiently well known to all. These made it a duty to require from the government indemnity for our injured citizens." Negotiations had no effect and their conduct authorizes the "inference that it is their intention to advance on our possessions until they shall be repressed by an opposing force."

He considered the present crisis in Europe favorable for pressing United States claims. "Formal war is not necessary--it is not probable that it will follow; but the protection of our citizens, the spirit and honor of the country requires that force should be interposed to a certain degree. It will probably contribute to advance the object of peace...leaving Congress the decision, etc."

In regard to the negotiations with France mentioned, on October 17th, Jefferson called Congress into extra session to tell them of the

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acquisition of Louisiana for \$2,000,000 and to ask their support. John Fowler, with other western compatriots, was jubilant. They saw that France was elbowed off the continent, England checkmated and the trade of the great river forever secured.

Robert Livingstone of New York and James Monroe of Virginia went out to buy the small "island" of New Orleans as the golden key to the wide water gate of the Mississippi, and behold, Napoleon threw upon the bargain counter the spreading thousands of acres of the rich valley with the jewel box of old romantic New Orleans thrown in, hoping wistfully to "give Britain a rival who would humble her pride."

The West and South were happy. The northern federalists were not. Josiah Quincy earnestly voiced the opinion that this acquisition of unneeded territory was a "death blow to the constitution," and anyway, "the first great love of my heart is the Commonwealth of Massachusetts." Not so said Mr. Poindexter of Mississippi: "It is the high road between the eastern and western states."

John Fowler, when he came to Lexington in 1783, had already done his bit toward winning the independence of the colonies. He now had a decisive part in the Louisiana Purchase, the outstanding event in Jefferson's eight Presidential years, the first step that widened the domain of the United States. He saw Florida added in 1819, and at the age of eighty-three he presided over a meeting in Lexington which called for Kentuckians to aid the Lone Star nation of Texas, a movement he was sure would add that star to the flag of his country.

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POPULAR IN 1805

Barbecues and celebrations were the order of the day in 1805. One of the toasts given to the Congressman by G. R. Tompkins, Esq. was, "John Fowler, our worthy representative in Congress, who nobly braved the 'times that tried men's souls.'" "

The principal celebration was begun with 17 rounds of artillery fire, and continued by an elegant dinner, the toasts punctuated with discharge of fire arms. General Charles Scott was president of the occasion and General Todd and the Honorable John Fowler, vice presidents. John Fowler's toast was, "May the people of the western country court commerce and ever shun war." Thomas Bodley honored General Scott as "a soldier of 1776, a terror to our enemies and a friend to his country." Another volunteer toast by Captain Satterwhite was, "To John Fowler, our representative in Congress, an old patriot and a firm republican." The gallant gentlemen expressed a sincere wish that on the next Fourth the ladies might be permitted to participate in the celebration. The happy day ended with a splendid ball at Travelers' Hall and it may be assumed that the ladies did participate in this.

Burr had passed through in May and had taken "the greatest pains to conciliate every one around him." He had gone on to Natchez, promising to come back and spend part of the summer at Olympian Springs. His absence or presence had little effect on the majority of people in the western country at this time, however deep some might dip into any imperial schemes of his.

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John Fowler wrote to his constituents thus:

Washington City, 5th March, 1805.

FELLOW CITIZEN,

The second session of the eighth Congress closed on the 3d inst. Honored as I have been, by the confidence repeatedly reposed in me by you, my fellow citizen, and particularly when my absence from Kentucky, on two different occasions, manifested that the confidence was the effect of what you thought an uniform republican conduct in the discharge of my trust, and not any personal influence; I, as on former occasions, undertake to give my constituents a comprehensive view of the public transactions and of our national affairs at the close of this session.

Mr. Jefferson's first period of election closed with the eighth Congress. On the 4th inst. he was again sworn into office for four years more; and George Clinton of New York, at the same time was sworn into office as Vice President; they were both elected under the recent amendment of the constitution, designating the candidate for each office, and had 162 votes each, the federal candidates had 14 each.

The affairs of the nation, generally, prosper beyond example, and daily afford the most agreeable demonstrations of the efficacy and excellence of representative government, administered as it has been for four years past in its true spirit. With foreign nations we hold terms pacific without debasement; and with dignity, we are neutral in the strictest sense of the word; as to the views and passions of the nations that are at war, to which Spain has been

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added within the present year, we yield nothing.

Though every man must deplore the ravages of a war, which appears to menace all Europe; yet when the evil is inevitable, it is not unnatural for us to derive some consolation that its effects, affecting our peace or prosperity, may directly lead to consequences very favorable to our national interests, whether it was owing to that jealousy, to which human policy is prone, or that the machinations of some of the nations of Europe, which envy or repine at our prosperity, a disposition was shown by Spain, to interfere with our rights to Louisiana; and though the abandoned objections raised against our title, (of which official notification was given to our executive in the course of last year); yet this relinquishment was accompanied by other objections to the limits, under which we claim in virtue of our treaty.

We may fairly claim as our southern boundary the river of Palms, (Rio de la Palmas) which rises in the eastern summits of the mountains that border on the gulf of California--which line may be considered as extending west to the Pacific; the line of the treaty of 1783, on the north, and on the east the Lost river, or, as it is called by the Spaniards, (Rio Perdido). This latter boundary, Spain brought into question, upon grounds, the details of which are too complex and voluminous for a single letter. Our executive, with his usual sagacity, which has been often considered, by those who see only the surface, as accident, or good fortune, had anticipated the rupture between Spain and England, dispatched Mr. James Monroe to Madrid, where he must have arrived before the war had

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actually taken place; for the purpose of negotiating amicably the settlement of the boundaries of Louisiana, so as to prevent disputes in future; and as the country of Florida, can be of no great value to Spain, and may be taken by an adverse belligerent power, I infer, that Mr. Monroe will have had it in his instructions to obtain the peninsula of Florida from Spain. This is obviously necessary to the compactness of our territory, and to our security, as a point of defence against the future jealousies of nations who may be disposed to form pretexts for involving us in war.

The liberality which our government has experienced from that of France, still further strengthens the belief, that the negotiations with Spain, may be much accelerated by the continued good offices of that power, at a period when they are both at war with Great Britain; and when the seizing upon Florida by that power, would be pernicious to both France and Spain, which is a circumstance by no means to be coveted by us.

The liberal professions of the British government towards the United States, and the correct deportment of the minister of that country, now here present, are very strong contrasts to transactions which took place a few years ago, and which we cannot soon forget; but at the same time her ships of war have acted towards our commerce, our seamen, and even in one of our harbors, in a manner that is totally inconsistent with these professions, or with the ordinary maxims of civility, or the law of nations. By a return from the department of state, in the recent session of Congress, it appears that im-

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pressments had been made from aboard American vessels of upwards of 1500 persons in the short period of 18 months. These circumstances, and certain partial restraints and impositions in our commerce with that country, betray symptoms of a very unaccountable policy on the part of that nation, considering that the United States furnishes more to her revenue than any other nation on earth.

Our foreign export trade must necessarily increase in consequence of the war, and the produce of Kentucky must be in greater demand in the West Indies, and indeed all American produce, in consequence of Spain being involved in war. In 1803, the shipping employed in our trade amounted to 952,000 tons, of which 788,000 tons were American bottoms. In the year 1793 our whole tonnage was but 450,000, so that the increase in thirteen years amounts to 500,000 tons.

Our import trade is equally flourishing; the value of goods imported in 1803, after deducting what was for re-exportation, amounted to \$35,000,000, the revenue of that year amounted to \$11,300,000, and in the last year must approach to \$12,000,000.

This great revenue arises principally from the duties on goods imported, as our constitution forbids duties on goods exported, but it merits notice not alone on financial grounds, but as evidence of the rapid growth of our population, and as a contradiction of the vain alarms uttered by those, who predicted that Louisiana would prevent the peopling of our western states; that unprecedented sales have been made of the public lands of the United

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States within her former boundary.

From the time the land offices were opened, to the end of September, 1803, there was sold of the public lands of the United States 919,724 acres, from that period for one year, 314,253 acres, being altogether 1,233,977 acres, and the sale, and the revenue from them are expected to amount in the present year, to nearly double the amount of the last.

Meanwhile the executive has concluded with the Piankeshaws, Fox and Sac Indians, various treaties, by which the Indian title is extinguished over vast tracts, on both sides of the Mississippi, particularly in the Indiana territory, lying along the Ohio and Wabash.

A law has been passed in the recent session, for the sale of the reserved sections of public land in the state of Ohio; they are to be put up at public sale and not to be sold for less than eight dollars the acre; it is generally understood that these tracts are in a state of high cultivation.

Laws have been passed for the purpose of preventing by an early settlement of titles, the extension of speculation in Louisiana, for this purpose three boards of commissioners are appointed; one of which is for upper Louisiana, and the other two for the lower district. This law quiets possession to actual settlers on the 20th December, 1803, and to confirm to each 640 acres. All claims to landed property, are to be exhibited to the commissioners who are to decide summarily, and submit their proceedings to Congress.

These particulars relate either to revenue or land, some political occurrences have taken

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place likewise, which merit notice. A new territorial government has been constituted over the district, the boundaries of which formed by the lakes Michigan, Huron and Erie, and by an artificial line, running east from the southernmost bend of Michigan to the state of Ohio; this new territory is called Michigan, and Detroit is to be the seat of government, its functions commence on the first of July next.

The lower district of Louisiana, called Orleans district, has undergone change of government by a law of this session; that district takes the second grade of government on the 4th of July next, and is to be in full operation by October. It is said here that much pains has been taken to render the citizens of Louisiana discontented, and with some success; however it is said among the members of Congress, that the effect has been to prove, that if a people have submitted patiently under a despotic colonial government, and are not content to await patiently, the slow but certain approach of a representative government, and become discontented even in the first embrace of civil liberty, that other motives beside good sense, or a due sense of the blessings that have been procured for them, actuate them; it is hoped by me, that now they are about to have a legislature elected by themselves, they will display more unanimity, and await like their fellow citizens of the other territories, for the advancement of their population to 60,000 persons, when they will be entitled to assume the dignity, and exercise the functions of a state.

Concerning our own state, only two circumstances have occurred during the late session.

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A law has passed extending the time of returning transcripts for the sale of lands for the direct tax, three months. The supervisor is to make his return of unredeemed lands to the clerk of the federal court, and the three months are to be calculated from the end of two years after the sale of the land.

The other circumstance is the introduction of the amendment proposed by our legislature to be made to the constitution of the United States. It was offered to the Senate, and printed, but could not be acted on, the Senate was so much occupied by the impeachment of judge Chase.

The trial of that judge commenced on the fourth of February, and continued with little intermission, to within three days of the end of the session. The constitution requires, that to convict on impeachments, there shall be two thirds of the votes. Upon two of the charges there were eighteen votes for guilty, and sixteen for guilty; on one charge nineteen guilty, and fifteen not guilty. These numbers not being the majority required, he stands, under the constitution, acquitted.

There is one matter, which I recollect, that merits particular notice. The hostility against the African piratical state of Tripoli, which we have been obliged to carry on in retaliation for their depredations on our commerce, was last summer converted into a rigorous blockade; and at the close of the season, by a very active and daring attack on the ships, boats, harbor, and town of Tripoli was made. The result, though unsuccessful in obtaining the relief of our citizens in captivity, was such as to strike

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terror into the Barbarians. The heroism and gallantry of our seamen have never been surpassed. A considerable reinforcement has since arrived, and reasonable expectations are formed, that as soon as the spring opens and the weather renders the approach to Tripoli practicable, that the Bashaw will be brought to reasonable terms.

I can add nothing more on our public affairs, that appears to me of sufficient interest or importance, and shall therefore conclude with assuring you of my most grateful and respectful acknowledgements, and with my most ardent wish for your future welfare and happiness.

JOHN FOWLER

In 1806 J. H. Daviess wrote again and again to President Jefferson exhorting him to be careful, telling him details of the "Burr conspiracy," warning him that he was surrounded by spies and conspirators, "some of the closest to you"--and on a separate sheet the names, Breckinridge; Fowler; Adair; Wilkinson; Clay, the Lawyer; Burr; and Harrison.*

Once again, if this is meant as a charge, John Fowler was in pretty good company for the most part.

A letter to Judge Harry Innes is one of the last recorded activities of John Fowler in Congress that is now available.

This was written from City of Washington,

*Innes papers, copy in the Kentucky State Historical Society.

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March 4, 1807, and said:

My Dear Sir:

Your favor under date the 15th December came to hand in due time. I should have promptly returned you an answer, but consulting with Messrs. Thompson and Clay they promised to state (in their opinion) the public sentiment as to your conduct on the subject of Gayoso's proposition, and your forbearing to communicate to the executive at an early period I could give no information satisfactory to you or myself. I therefore postponed writing you, not wanting respect or friendship but to gain information as to the public opinion. First impressions were unfavorable, altho your reasons in my opinion were laudably actuated as I am confident you were from the best of motives and I am happy to add this seems to be the received impression latterly. Messrs. Thompson, Clay and myself were decidedly of opinion that to apply for an enquiry was unnecessary, nothing was to be gained and some of Marshall's friends if he has any (of this I much doubt) might have seized on such an opportunity of wounding your feelings. At this time or hereafter in my opinion you have nothing to apprehend on the score of an impeachment or even an enquiry into your conduct except it should be your own solicitation. I was told during the time Humphrey was in the City that he used his influence with some of the federal members to degrade and injure you, but without effect, for he is even despised by his associates in politics. The better to convince you of the confidence of the executive they have knowing your connexion with

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Colo. Todd appointed him Judge of the seventh circuit Court of the United States and I am informed have removed J. H. Daviess from office and appointed Mr. Bibb in his place.

The conduct of General Wilkinson in sending Bollin and Swartwout to this place for trial as concerned or confederates in Burr's conspiracy seemed to be generally approved and a disposition prevailed to indemnify him, but a continuance of excess of interfering with the civil authority has rendered him very unpopular, altho the executive shew a strong disposition to support him, how far his conduct may have been governed by their directions is yet to learn.

I flatter myself to be with you by the first of May, in the meantime you will have seen Messrs. Hughes and Clay who will satisfy you further on the subject of your enquiries here.

Mrs. Fowler is with me and enjoys tolerable good health. She wishes with me to be affectionately tendered to Mrs. Innes and all the family connexions. Please to accept our best wishes and believe me sincerely

Yr. friend and servant
John Fowler

When this Congressional letter was written, two Virginia boys, Meriwether Lewis and William Clarke, were on a great adventure, an expedition which toiled for a year and more,* exploring the vast terra incognita beyond the Mississippi, and enduring incredible hardships until at last they saw "the waves like little moun-

*May, 1804 to November, 1805.

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tains rolling out in the sea," that wide Pacific ocean, an illimitable breadth of shining water.

For a Kentucky citizen and public man there was plenty to think about in the expanding nation, plenty to think about in foreign affairs, and time to think about home in the West after ten years of service in Philadelphia and Washington. Now in 1807, Fowler turned back toward Kentucky and the quiet and privacy of home, to an ordered life among old friends, and to the building up of financial instead of political fences.

And on the way, riding horseback through the old field where he had fallen wounded and insensible in June, 1781, he rode with his old commander Colonel Robert Goode, Judge Todd, Hubbard Taylor, Thomas Bodley, and other friends to dinner at Colonel Goode's, then to Petersburg to see his kin once more, and back to the West for good--to his Kentucky.*

*Pension papers. His father, John Fowler, Sr., died 1810; his brother William, in 1800; his brother Bernard, in Kentucky, about 1814.

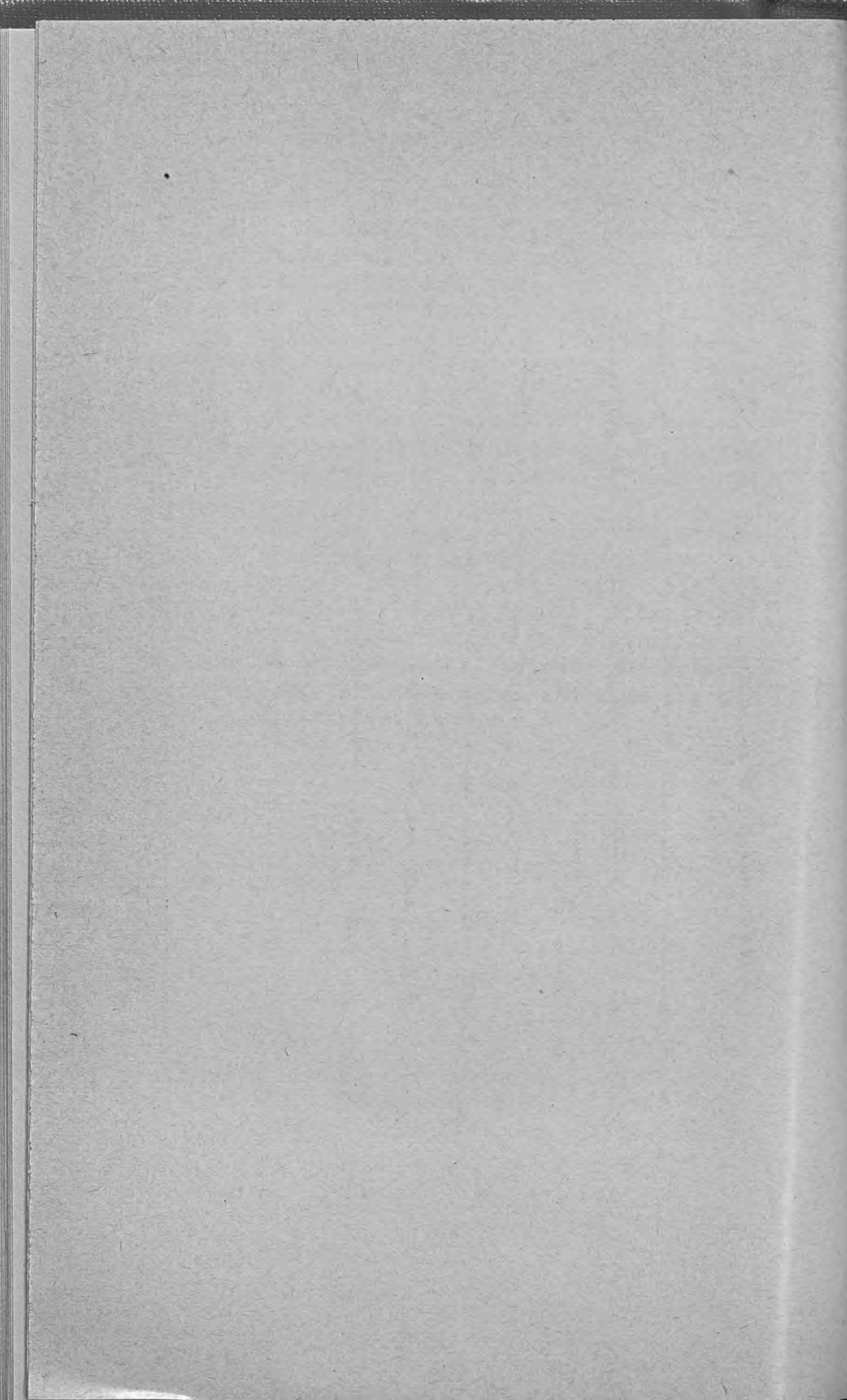
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John Fowler

JOHN FOWLER TO JUDGE HARRY INNES—A TYPICAL
SIGNATURE OF JOHN FOWLER DURING HIS MIDDLE
YEARS.



CHAPTER FOUR

MAKING A LIVING

VARIED OPPORTUNITIES

John Fowler tried practically every means of making a living that were open to the pioneer, including farming, wagoning, stock raising, holding public office, land speculation, and trading in money which was subject to such fluctuations in weight and value that special scales were used.*

He did not practice law, yet he attended to much legal business for himself and others and was often named as an arbitrator in legal disputes. In Every Virginia county between the Kentucky border and Richmond are records that show he was "attorney in fact" for dozens of his neighbors. There is no record that he did any surveying--that standby of the early settlers. He was, however, an expert on boundaries and on many occasions he met with others to establish boundary lines and settle disputed titles. He had another characteristic of the legal profession of which it has been said that "Lawyers work hard, live well and die poor."

*Ads in Gazette.

CAPTAIN JOHN FOWLER

WAGONING AND SUPPLIES

The Kentucky pioneers were not satisfied with home-made furniture and coarse garments. The Lexington stores responded by displaying a tempting array of luxuries.* The wagons of John Fowler and John and George May toiled through Cumberland Gap loaded with wares, and over the Virginia roads to Redstone Old Fort, unloaded into boats and loaded again at Limestone for another hard haul. Housekeepers ordered the wagons to bring mahogany candlesticks, table sliders, snuffers silver, glass, and china. One old pioneer interviewed by Draper said, "The first tea cups and saucers I ever saw were at Captain Fowler's house."**

John May, writing to Judge Harry Innes, June 30, 1788, about goods ordered from the East, said that he could probably have them "carried out by some of the delegates who may have goods of their own to move." In October he said, "I have forwarded the goods mentioned in the enclosed account by Mr. Fowler's wagons which are westward bound." He said that other goods were sent by George May's wagons, and adds, "Both Mr. Fowler and my brother will have a list," which indicates that John Fowler was with his wagons as he returned from the Convention.

The invoice of merchandise included calicoes, Marseilles quilting, needles, nun's thread, nankin, cotton stockings, neat nankin, black calimanco shoes, fingered kid gloves, negro

*Ads in Gazette.

**Draper Manuscript, 11CC250.

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Cotton, china teacups, sugar dishes, etc.*

George May came to Kentucky first in 1779. John May had come with Colonel John Todd in 1775-6. The Todds and Mays were very intimate with John Fowler who visited John May's residence near Petersburg in 1788, when May gave him part of his baggage which Fowler stored at Redstone Old Fort.**

OTHER MEANS

The sums made by John Fowler in the service of Virginia and Kentucky were not negligible in the various legislative offices he held, and as Captain and paymaster of militia troops.

One example of the wide spread results of signing security notes is found in a Clark County record,*** where John Fowler and Jesse Bledsoe signed as security on a replevin bond for Charles Scott (General and Governor) and were sued by John Rhea. To secure them for the \$771.51 involved, Scott deeded them the balance of his military land in Ohio, with a mortgage upon another 50,000 acres. In this deal John Fowler obtained title to the newspaper in Russellville, Logan County, and in 1818 sold this to the Rhea family who have ever since

*Innes papers, 26-1 and 7,77.

**Deposition of John Fowler in 1820 regarding the lands of John May, identifying his son, John, and a daughter, Polly, who had married Daniel Eppes.

***Clark County deeds, Book 10, p. 12.

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owned and controlled it.*

He had wells dug on his Mason County lands, one a very deep well on Bank Lick Creek to procure salt water, another known as "Fowler's Lick," besides many wells to procure pure water.**

He laid out one town,*** probably the town projected by English promoters at the Three Forks of the Kentucky River, of which elaborate plats exist, one of the streets being named "Fowler Street."

He speculated in money and had a set of scales for weighing coin. From 1773 to 1801 the fluctuation of values made this a game of profit and loss. Some of the many pieces in use in 1801 were: shillings, pounds, 2 bits, half Joes--in 1773 two of these were worth $4/10/3$; moidores--2 of which were worth $3/26$, French crown--about \$3.00; half Joannes--about $2/8$; 8-shilling piece; doubloons, and "light money."**** "Money talked," then as now, and in Kentucky's early days much of the money spoke Spanish.

John Fowler was appointed by James Wilkinson to receive the moneys for the first lots sold in Frankfort and was named (1786) by the Virginia Legislature as one of the trustees. His influ-

*Logan County deeds of 1818.

**John Robert Shaw's life. Also deeds in Fayette. Another "Fowler's Lick" in the mountains was named for James Fowler, the Indian scout and scouting companion of Isaac Shelby.

***Statutes of Ky. Book Catalogue, 1792

****Innes papers.

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ence in Virginia may well have been potent in securing the passage of this bill. He was in Richmond in August of this year, writing to Henry Lee. The Virginia leaders knew him well and were kindly disposed to him. His fellow legislator, Stephen Pankey, was father-in-law of his brother, Bernard Fowler, and Col. Robert Goode was his old Commander. Others were brother Masons in the Williamsburg Lodge. Fellow trustees of Frankfort were Caleb Wallace, Thomas Marshall, John Craig, and Robert Johnson, all neighbors in the Versailles community, besides Benjamin Roberts of Jefferson County.

John Fowler may have removed to Franklin County for a short time when he and Daniel Weisiger were clerks to the Directors of Public Buildings. This was in 1793, about the time that Millicent Fowler was staying with Mrs. Innes at the Fort,* and her husband was listed with 1 white male, 8 blacks, 2 horses, 2 cattle in that county.**

Wilkinson, in 1787-88, made the round trip, via New Orleans and Philadelphia and "returned to Lexington, in a coach and four, attended by a retinue of slaves."*** This was purely "front," as there is ample evidence in his correspondence of his strained credit and need of ready money.

*Wilkinson's letter to Innes.

**Register of the Kentucky State Historical Society, vol. 24, No. 70, p. 100.

***Kerr's KENTUCKY, p. 248.

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LAND DEALS

The best remembered activity of John Fowler was his speculation in land. This promised marvelous returns but much of the potential profit was swallowed up by interminable law suits in both lower and higher courts. Overlapping claims were the basis of some suits; others were caused by conflicting grants and surveys. Sometimes he lost because the original owners had forfeited their rights by failing to comply with the regulations. In most deeds he guaranteed titles and many times had to make good. "Going to law" was a costly proceeding that yet had little terror for him or his compeers, to judge by the voluminous cases docketed, postponed, tried, and appealed.

The McBride land furnishes a perfect pattern of the land litigation that plagued the pioneers. It joined his home place in Woodford, lying along Shannon's Run from the present Versailles Pike on beyond Mt. Vernon Church on Leestown Pike, which is, in fact, built upon it.* When James McBride was killed by Indians about 1788, his heirs sold his land claims to John Fowler, which involved thirty years of constant "lawing" over forfeited rights coupled with imperfect surveys.**

Land dealing was the "Big business" of early days in Kentucky. They traded in warrants and grants, and surveyed and unsurveyed acreage as

*Woodford County deeds, Book C, p. 304; Dec. 12, 1796.

**Fayette and Woodford deeds and suits.

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blithely as little boys trade "alertaws" and "commonneys" in the springtime.

John Fowler had land grants in Bourbon, Fayette, Hardin, and Woodford, from 1787 to 1811; a total of 78,078 $\frac{1}{8}$ acres, on Green, Big Sandy, and Licking rivers and Hinkston, Elkhorn, Flat Lick, Slate, Tyger's, Poage's, and Sinking Fork creeks.

He had 14,259 $\frac{1}{2}$ acres in Old Kentucky grants in Greenup, Fayette, Montgomery, Bath, and Fleming, on the Main Licking River and Flat, Plumb, Triplett's, Tygert's, Indian, Salt Lick, Slate, Greasy, and Bank Lick creeks. In Old Virginia grants he had 37,298 $\frac{1}{8}$ acres--a total of 51,299 $\frac{5}{8}$.

In Fayette entries in the years 1783-1786 he located thousands of acres of land in 76 entries. Foster and Fowler in 1786 entered 3,375 acres. In the same year Fowler and Allen entered 3,681 acres. With David Leitch he entered 3,681 $\frac{3}{4}$ acres; with Thomas Marshall, Jr. he entered five bodies of land; and with Thomas Marshall, Sr., three entries. Other partners of his in land entries were: Massie; Massie, Jr.; Orr; Overton; Pettis; S. Searcy; Trotter; and Campbell.

In Jefferson County there were two entries totaling 1,500 acres. It is well nigh impossible to figure his exact acreage. It runs well over 100,000 acres and he traded in as much more. The fractions of acres which they were careful to include are amusing when it is considered that many surveys overlapped by scores of acres.

From January 21, 1793, to July, 1794, he drew 37/10/6, as clerk of the court of Oyer and

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Terminer; and in 1795 the sum of 60 pounds for "going into Virginia concerning the business of the Registrar's office."* His report of this shows that he brought all the papers the Virginia office would release. These were the Land Grants, Warrants, etc., which made a sizable load for more than one wagon. These documents were vital to the settlers for they proved the ownership of the land and set out the boundaries of the various farms.** They were brought well guarded for at that time wagons and horseback riders moved through the wilderness in companies and were always well armed with knives, pistols, and guns.

About this time, too, 25/16/0 was paid to Daniel Weisiger and John Fowler as clerks to the Directors of Public Buildings.

John Fowler had a tobacco warehouse in Montgomery County where inspectors were appointed.*** Between 1792 and 1810 forty-two, or more, such warehouses were established on the Kentucky River by legislative acts. The difference between Kentucky prices of \$2.00 for tobacco and the New Orleans price of \$9.50 per hundred was not so great because the middleman absorbed the

*Littell's Laws, vol. 1, p. 232; Register of the Kentucky State Historical Society, vol. 30, p. 93, and vol. 31, p. 205.

**Littell's Laws, vol. 1, p. 232; Register of the Kentucky State Historical Society, vol. 30, p. 93, and vol. 31, p. 205.

***Register of the Kentucky State Historical Society, 1932, p. 16; Executive Journals of Gov. of Ky.

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danger to life, the risk of river losses, and the fluctuation in prices and grades of "firsts, lugs and trash."

In 1812, Morrison and William Bobb, parties to a suit for the purchase price of a negro woman, Lucy, agreed to refer the case to John Fowler and William Morton, who filed a report in favor of Bobb.*

In a deed of emancipation, in 1820, Kitty Haley, Larkin Haley, and Samuel Ayers, representative of Susannah Haley, deceased, acknowledged receipt of \$200 paid by Charlotte according to a deed of trust to John Fowler, given on March 9, 1818, for the purpose of completing her emancipation.

The wording of the deed is as follows:

Now, I, John Fowler, do by these presents

*John, Jacob, and William Bobb were from Philadelphia. They ran a flaxseed oil mill and dealt in leather, hides, and furs. Jacob died unmarried; John returned to Philadelphia in 1811. John Bobb married Mary Ann Springle, daughter of Jacob Springle; William Bobb married her sister, Dorothy Springle. William and Dorothy Bobb had three children: John, Sarah, and Isabella, the latter b. April 6, 1811. She married William Tillou, son of a French Huguenot, Peter Tillou. Their one daughter, Sarah Frances Tillou, married William T. Sprake and their daughter, Betty Sprake, married John S. Randolph. Sarah Bobb married Abram Howe before 1831. (Suits and deeds, Bobb's Heirs vs. Bobb-Springle Heirs, Book H, p. 342, 1814)

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emancipate and set free the said Charlotte a yellow woman aged about 37 years and declare that from henceforth the said Charlotte may be considered a free person to all intents and purposes, this 30th October, 1820.

John Fowler (seal)

Test. Chas. Humphreys; Chas. Humphreys, Jr;
C. Valtenair.*

Many other deeds of trust, orphan guardianships, and powers of attorney attest the high regard his contemporaries had for his business ability and integrity.

Farming occupied much of his time; first in Woodford County, then at the Gardens where he kept flocks of sheep, droves of hogs, horses, and cattle, and at Mansfield.

One of the leaks in his finances was caused by his efforts to better the breeds of cattle. In 1818 he owned the bull Buzzard which Mr. Smith brought from England. This animal proved disappointing, as did some of the others imported. On the whole, these importations proved of immense benefit to breeders, yet there were losses and in these John Fowler shared. Promotion of shows and fairs, while aiding the progress of agriculture, did not always redound to the monetary success of the promoters. Records show that he did his full part in the improvement of domestic breeding and manufacture and

*Book U, p. 140. Free Charlotte, for whom Charlotte Court is named--friend of "King Solomon."

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agriculture in the county and region roundabout.

BUSINESS FOR OTHERS

A few instances, culled from many, will suffice as examples of the great amount of business which John Fowler transacted for others.

From Philadelphia, in 1797, when he was newly elected to Congress, he sent a statement of taxes due on lands of James Odier, Jean Toussant, and Augustine Bouesquet, merchants of that city --56,000 acres of land, including 10,000 acres entered by John Pringle's heirs. In 1800 this land was sold for \$22,400 to Peter Samuel Dupont de Nemours of the Republic of France and City of Philadelphia, forming part of the early holdings of the Dupont family.*

In another deal he sold 1,450 acres on Cedar Creek for Abner Scott of Stafford County, Virginia, part of one of his own surveys. He transacted much business for Jacob Rubsamen of Henrico and Chesterfield counties, also for John and Jordan Harris who were connected with his family.**

He was agent for George Muter in Lexington, Green Clay in Madison, and William Trigg in Frankfort for the sale of lands on the Kentucky,

*Patent from Patrick Henry, Jan. 4, 1786 to John Young and John Phillips and by them sold to Odier and Bouesquet.

**Register of the Kentucky State Historical Society, 1925, p. 233.

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Green, and Tennessee rivers and toward the Kentucky mountains.*

In 1787 John Lanthois manumitted a slave, Anthony, who made John Fowler his trustee and voluntarily put himself back into service with his old master.**

Sarah von Phul, about to contract marriage with John Jordan, Jr., to keep her patrimony from becoming the absolute property of her husband, as the law then allowed, constituted John Fowler a trustee, to have and to hold for her and her issue the legacy of her grandmother, Catherine Groff of Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

FOWLER'S GARDENS

One of John Fowler's efforts to make a living, as well as to promote the general welfare of Lexington and the blue grass region, was known by the name of "Captain Fowler's Gardens" for thirty years and more. And today this is the longest survival of his name in common use in the present housing center which is located on part of the grounds where he established this popular and well known commercial recreation center at the time of his return from Congress. The part now so known is where he established one of the first race tracks in the country roundabout. Here horse shows, cattle shows, and agricultural fairs were held for years, and he was one of the moving spirits.

*Ads in Gazette, Nov. 26, 1796, and other dates.

**Circuit Court, Book A, p. 129.

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He was thus one of the earliest promoters of racing, as well as of agricultural progress and improving cattle breeding.

The Race Course at the Gardens is mentioned as early as 1814 and as late as 1840. This track was laid out on the northwest end of the garden area and adjoined land bought 1828-1832 by the Racing Association to which they added four acres and 128 poles in 1835 from the original race track of Captain Fowler.*

The description leaves no doubt of the exact location of this lot which was sold by Farmer Dewees to the Association. "Beginning at a stake, south side of orchard, part of land now used as a race course, being the same lot deeded May 12, 1814, by John Fowler to Wm. MacBean and by MacBean to DeWees."**

"Captain Fowler's Gardens" were for twenty years (1810-1830) more noted than any other commercial recreation center in the Bluegrass Region. There were as many as twelve competing gardens or places of suburban entertainment advertised in glowing terms during this time, but his gardens outdistanced them in beauty and accommodations and had only one surviving rival, Maxwell's Springs.

No plot of ground in or around Lexington had a more varied history. To no other spot did more prominent men hold title by deed or mortgage, sooner or later.

It lay north of East Main and east of Walnut,

*Book 12, p. 586, Oct. 10, 1835.

**DeWees also sold to Luke Usher a tract adjoining the race course in 1814, Book I, p. 1246.

CAPTAIN JOHN FOWLER

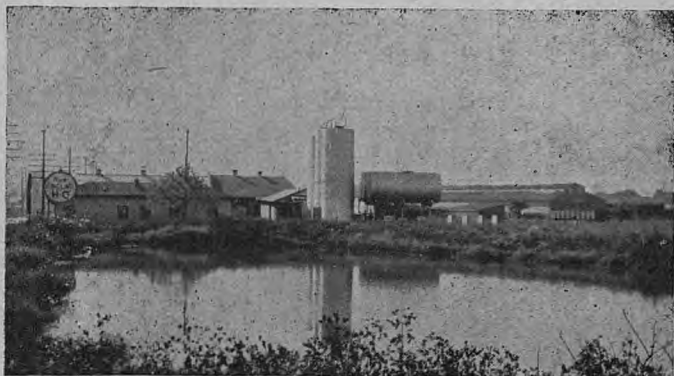
extending from the Barr property to Stroud's Road. Northeastward it touched Ellerslie, ancestral home of Margaret Wickliffe Preston, and Mansfield plantation, in which latter historic farm Captain Fowler owned one-third interest for twenty-five years before Henry Clay bought it. The upper and highest part of the little lake that was the head of Town Fork touched the divide between the headwaters of Hickman and Elkhorn creeks. It sloped rather rapidly toward the Commons (Water and Vine streets) which formed the bottom of the natural bowl that holds Lexington, jewel of the bluegrass.

This once sylvan retreat is now cut through by numerous rights of way, the principal ones being Third Street, Seventh Street, the Winchester Pike, and the Chesapeake and Ohio, and Belt Line railroads.

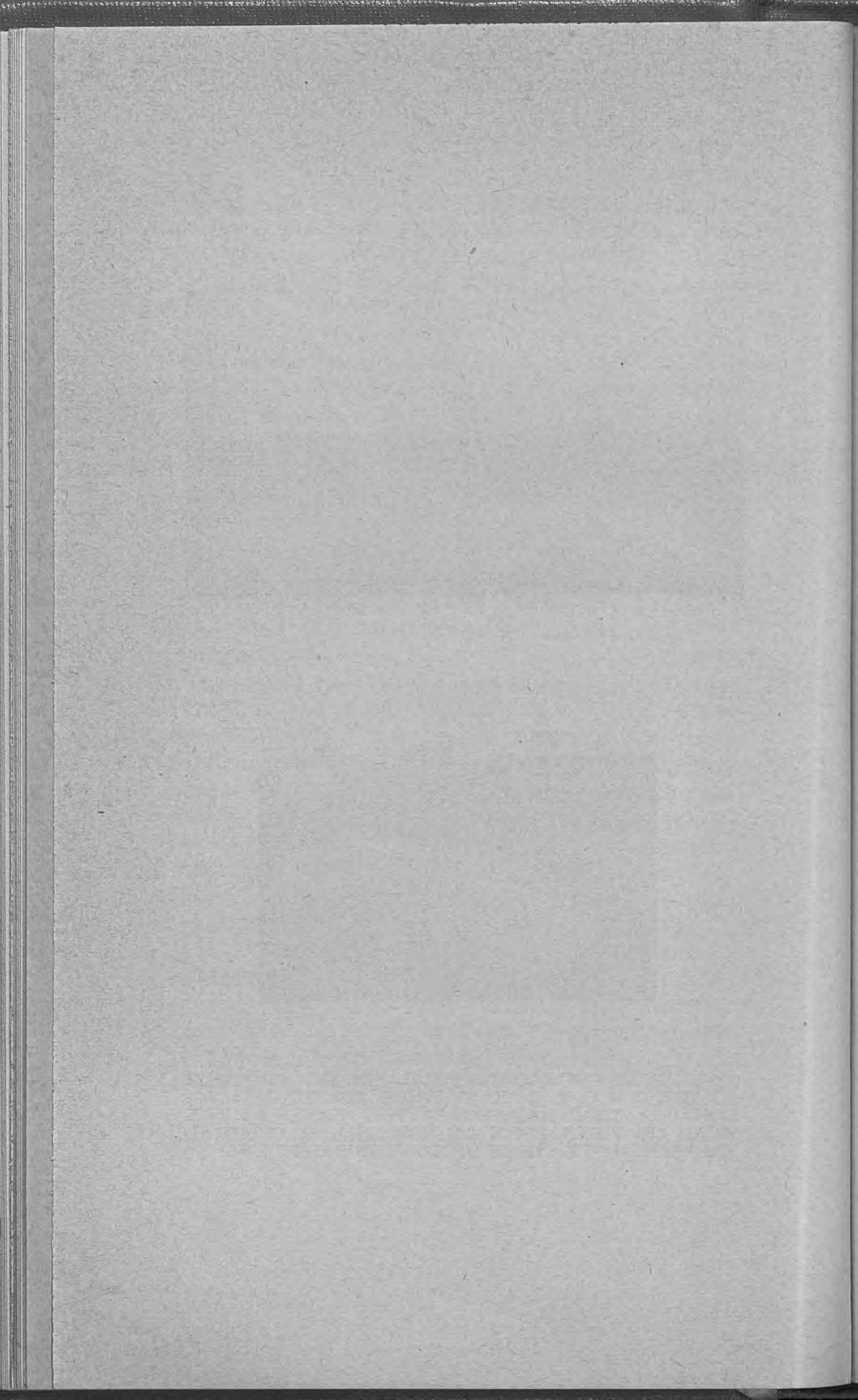
The original boundaries and their many changes survive in yellowed deeds. The glow of its history illuminates the dimming pages of old newspapers. Its life story is scattered through the records of recreation, agricultural improvement, business promotion, and, brightest of all, in political annals. Business may produce the bread and butter of Kentuckians, but politics has always provided the caviar and pie, ice cream and cake, sugar and spice of life.

"Town Fork ran through the garden and a spring that ran back of the house furnished the chaser for many a Bourbon quaff, and the mint that grew along its banks lent flavor to numerous juleps drunk in toast to Kentucky's illustrious son, Henry Clay."*

*MASONRY IN THE BLUEGRASS, Winston Coleman,



TWO VIEWS OF "SCOTT'S POND" ON THE GROUNDS AT THE C. & O. R. R., EAST THIRD STREET, LEXINGTON—ALL THAT REMAINS OF THE "LAKE" AT THE HEAD OF TOWN FORK OF ELKHORN, A CENTRAL AMUSEMENT FEATURE OF FOWLER'S GARDENS.



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This might well be amended by adding that anathemas to the name of the Great Compromiser mingled with toasts as the years went by and Clay became the hope of the Whig Party. Many of the frequenters of the Gardens, along with their proprietor, Captain John Fowler, adhered strictly to the Republican-Democratic principles that had attended Kentucky's birth, when she sprang full panoplied from the Jovian brows of her elder statesmen. These became staunch adherents of "Old Hickory" Jackson as his star rose in ascendancy in the lurid skies above the Battle of New Orleans. They heard with ill-concealed glee the diatribes of John Randolph against the Sage of near-by Ashland. And in April, 1826, they listened with bated breath to hear the results of the duel rumored to be imminent between these eminent gentlemen. Some of his neighbors broke entirely with Clay, but Captain Fowler was politic enough to preside at banquets in the same year given in honor of the two giants of the West, Jackson and Clay. And about 1828 tact and suavity could go no farther.

Pageantry

Lexington was early on wheels and continued so. Carriages, barouches, landaus, coaches, all manner of wheeled vehicles were always popular. The romantic town also reveled in parades and processions, horseback riders, soldiers of the infantry or cavalry, color, and noise. These

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parades gave flavor and variety to a scene that was always constantly changing with the times and with the personages.

On the glorious Fourth there were drummers and fifers but no bands, in the time of Samuel D. McCulloch.* There was always plentiful food, and the Masons waited on tables, especially on the ladies. After the feasting the fragments were gathered up for the poor who were always out in numbers "to see the Fourth of July."**

This was the pattern for the honors accorded "Old Hickory" when he came in 1832, his coach drawn by four white horses, while he shook hands with 10,000 men, women, and children, bringing the presidential war into the enemy's camp by invading the precincts hitherto sacred to Henry Clay.

The Gardens were the scene of this vast parade, where the immense procession ended. Among the marchers were the military, the Orders, footmen, horsemen, and bearers of banners inscribed with boasts and taunts and blazoned with slogans--their poles surmounted with game cocks lustily crowing.

Of all the colorful processions that marched to the Gardens those of The Tammany Society outdid all others in sheer audacity and capering high spirits. The parent Tammany was organized in New York in 1789 as a burlesque on the aristocratic society of the Cincinnati. Its possi-

*McCulloch's REMINISCENCES, 1871, Library of Congress.

**Scrapbook of Clark County events, at Kentucky State Historical Society.

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bilities intrigued immensely the hardy sons of the West and Lexingtonians seized upon it as a useful adjunct to the Liberal element.

The months were renamed as Months of Colds, Snows, Plants, Flowers, Heats, Horns, Fishes, Corns, Traveling, and so on. And each month these Sons of Tammany or the Columbian Order were required to be punctual in their attendance at the Council Fire of the Great Wigwam, precisely at the going down of the sun.

They paraded with fuss and feathers, literally brandished tomahawks and scalping knives, erected totem poles, and otherwise disported themselves with a glee that was called "fiendish" by their outraged opponents. On October 12, 1815, their march started with a great gathering at the courthouse where Brother Nelson R. Nicholas delivered a "Long Talk," after which they proceeded to Brother John Fowler's Gardens and partook of a sumptuous dinner prepared for the occasion. Among the toasts was one proposed by "the genial host, Brother John Fowler, Father of the Grand Council: 'Ocean to its utmost limits, the grave of naval tyranny,'" accompanied by music, "Decatur and Victory." Brother Henry Clay proposed "The Memory of James A. Bayard" to the tune of "Dead March."

In 1816 (October 11) they partook of an elegant repast at the Gardens. Toasts began with America's "tutelary saint" and ended with "The Fair Squaws of Columbia--May they always have good companions, soft moccasins, dry wigwams, and plenty to eat."

The development of this wilderness flower in

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Lexington was the one, different, indigenous growth that lent flavor and variety to the oft-times stuffy and pompous proceedings of political and social life.

LAND OF THE GARDENS

The land was part of the estate of Colonel John Todd, who came to Kentucky with a high heart, noble courage, and wide prospects all of which ended for him at Blue Licks Battlefield on August 19, 1782. Colonel Todd's little daughter, Mary Owen Todd, later Mrs. James Russell, inherited and her trustees, James Wilkinson, John Coburn, and James Overton, sold 306 acres to Nathaniel Wilson of Mason County. The tract touched Walnut Street and some of it was sold to Robert Megowan.

Nathaniel Wilson died soon after, and his widow and children were represented by Dr. Basil Duke who sold 198 acres to Captain John Fowler, who had bargained for it with Wilson and who had been living on it since 1794.* By that time it was bounded by the land of John and David Barton and John Bobbs.

Planned first for a country home, by 1812 it was turned over to lessees and Captain Fowler moved to town. The house faced Stroud's Old Road. Part of it was one story and part two story; some, if not all, built of brick. There was a large peach orchard, another of apple trees, while cherries, plums, raspberries, goose-

*Deed Book D, p. 423; Deed Book C, p. 403.

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berries, strawberries, and grapes grew in abundance.

He built a large ball room and auditorium, also barns for farm and show animals, added pavilions for fairs, barbecues, and outdoor political and patriotic meetings. There were ample fireplaces and Franklin stoves for many celebrations were held there on the eighth of January and the twenty-second of February. There were hundreds of white and colored candles for lighting. The place was planted with flowers and shrubs, and Rafinesque notes in his diary, in 1825, that Captain Fowler, Mr. Clay, Mr. Megowan, and Mr. Ward had given him many seeds, plants, and bulbs.

The lot speculation of 1813-14 resulted in cutting the estate in two. New streets laid out were Orchard, Pindell, Fowler, and Wood. Lots sold at swollen prices, the whole number from this tract bringing \$40,000 on paper. By 1819 they had dwindled to around \$16 per acre and many of them came back into Captain Fowler's possession throttled by a strangling string of mortgages. This was the Depression Year and Lexingtonians saved each other by "going security" the one for the other. Thomas Bodley and Thomas Fletcher signed Captain Fowler's notes and saved the Gardens, and he returned the favor on several occasions.

The tract, thus decreased in size and pushed eastward and northward, grew in popularity as the agricultural development of the country progressed. It was the era of fairs, barbecues, and political celebrations of an expanding agricultural country.

The first full-fledged fair was held at

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Sanders Gardens September 23, 1814. In 1817 and 1819 and for many years thereafter "animal exhibitions were held at Fowler's Gardens."* The Agricultural Society continued active with Captain Fowler as president or vice-president for many years. In 1817 "the venerable, patriotic Shelby presided as president of the society."

Domestic manufactures vied with the stock and horses and cattle. "Speed the Plow and Shuttle" was a favorite toast at banquets and the Kentucky Society for the Encouragement of Domestic Manufactures was a twin sister of the Agricultural Society. Members wore home manufactured garments and considered it sound policy and patriotism to use and foster the fabrics and skill of our own rather than be debtors to foreign countries.

Luke Usher, active theater manager, had charge of the Gardens in 1815, and Mrs. Usher cared for the ladies and furnished dinner or other refreshments on moderate terms at this "delightful spot." And in 1829 James Stivers advertised the "decent and agreeable entertainment at this delightful Country Retreat" for ladies and gentlemen.

By 1835 the place was advertised for its splendid pasturage, and in this year John S. Hart, who had bought the dwelling house and seven acres, was killed by lightning while sitting under an apple tree. It was then that Henry Clay came into possession of it in connection with Mansfield. He retained Mansfield and sold the Garden tract in lots, Isaac Scott

*Rancke's LEXINGTON.

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living there at a later time, and giving his name to the pond or lake.

The cutting of lots proceeded until now most of the acreage is covered with buildings and cut through with streets. The lake at the head of Town Fork, once large and lighted and set with canoes and pleasure craft, has dwindled down to the little pond that may be seen beside the Winchester Pike on the grounds of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad just beyond the plant of the McCormick Lumber Company on Third Street.

Captain Fowler moved from Woodford County to the Gardens tract in 1794. Eighty-five years later is the last reference found in Fayette County deeds that connects the Gardens, orchards, and race track with the pioneer past. A lot is described as "the orchard tract."* The heyday of the Gardens was between 1813 and 1835, a period of 22 years. The main tract can be traced in deeds for 160 years through time and change. Aspendale and Bluegrass Park brought renewed commercial activity to the section and now again "Fowler's Gardens" becomes a familiar word, linked with the activities of the United States Government in its municipal housing projects.

All the pageants passed. The pomp and ceremony of a free citizenry honoring presidents, senators, and distinguished visitors "is one with Nineveh and Tyre." The silks and the satins rustled into silence. The brocade coats and small clothes fell into tatters and went with winter winds. The confusion and noise of

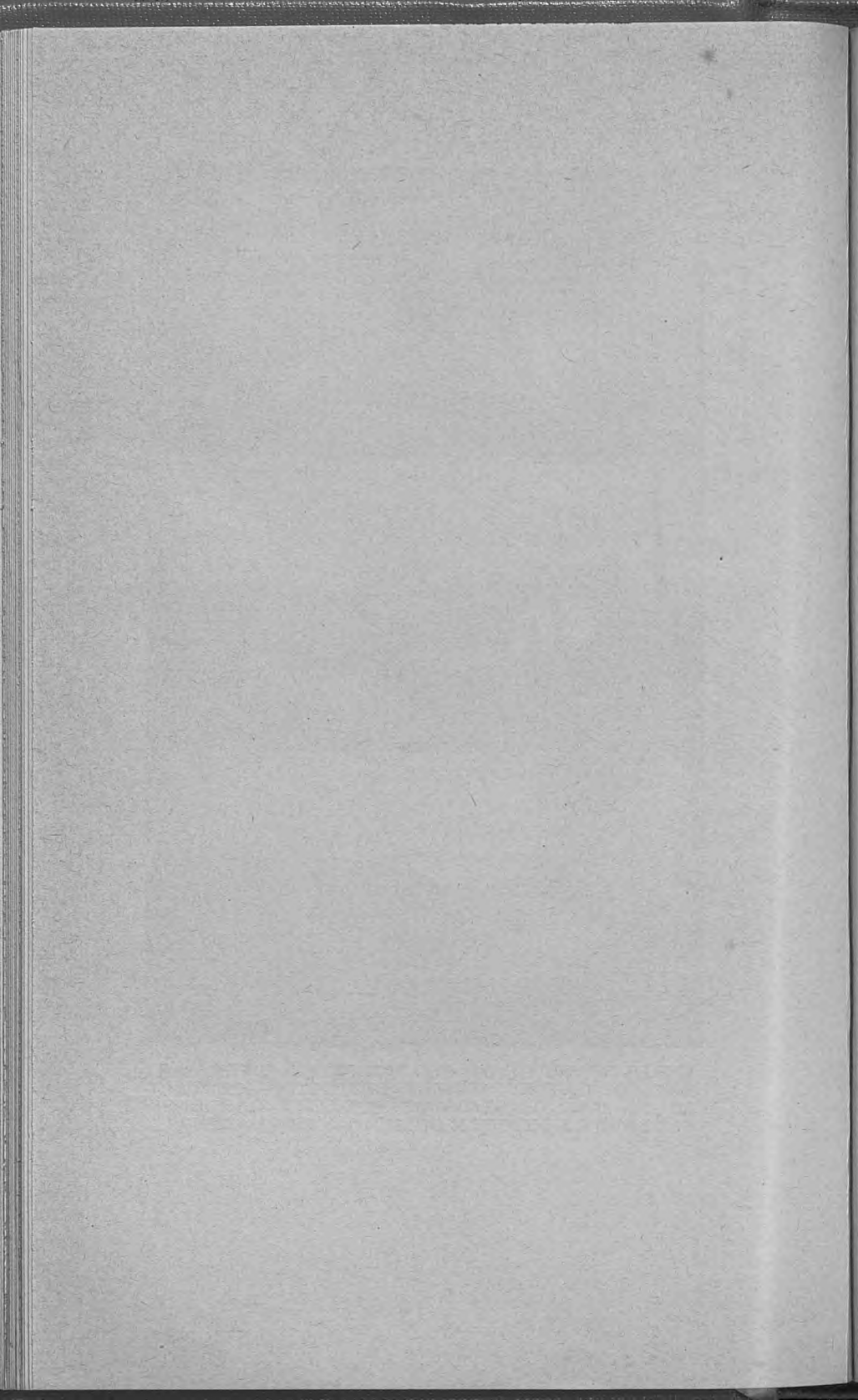
*1879.

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crowds all out to go a-fairing or "to see the Fourth of July" melted under summer suns. The prancing horses are a faint memory. The carriages are rust and dust. The worker and the player passed. The good earth beloved by that generation in the past shelters and nurtures another generation on its broad bosom.



THREE VIEWS OF AN OLD HOUSE NEAR THE EAST
END OF SEVENTH STREET, LEXINGTON—CERTAIN-
LY ON THE GROUNDS OF FOWLER'S GARDENS—
PROBABLY A KITCHEN OR SERVANT'S QUARTERS.



CHAPTER FIVE

A SOLID CITIZEN

GUBERNATORIAL ASPIRATIONS

In 1811 Captain Fowler announced his candidacy for Governor of Kentucky, following a similar move by Gabriel Slaughter.

In addressing the Free Men of Kentucky as Fellow Citizens, Captain Fowler stated that he had devoted some portion of his life to the service of his country and had on many former occasions experienced the partial, and to him highly honored regard of his fellow citizens, so he was the more inclined again to offer himself to their confidences, "Conscious that the trust heretofore confided to me, so far as my limited talents extended, has not been abused, it will be one of the greatest pleasures of my life to add to my own conviction the testimony of my countrymen."

And he closed by saying, "Believing that my fellow citizens will think for themselves, and will do with me as they deem right, I remain, with sentiments of unalterable attachment,

Their obedient servant

John Fowler"

By March 24, 1812, he again addressed the Citizens of Kentucky, saying that he had deter-

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mined not to solicit the honor of their suffrage, and stated the reasons which induced that determination. He said, in part:

"That you have thought better of me than I deserve, I will believe and be ready to acknowledge; for my will to do you good, has ever been greater than my power, and calculating on a continuance of the same friendly regard which has been manifested by some of you on former occasions, I may have been too sanguine in supposing that with a great number of you, and even by a majority, I might have been favorably remembered. But this is not my inducement to the present step. With the present salary none but a wealthy citizen can prudently accept the office of Governor; for he must either live in a manner wholly unbecoming his station, or depend in a great degree on his private resources. It being my misfortune to be far from wealthy, the duty which I owe to myself and my family, forbids me to sacrifice the little means which may render the decline of life tolerable, without better prospects of rendering more services to my country, than my abilities for the office can promise. When I was first announced as a candidate, the impression was a common one that from the increased population, resources and respectability of the state, and from motives of justice and public policy, the salary of the office would have been made more commensurate with its duties, dignity and importance; and being deceived in this expectation, I have been compelled, however reluctantly, to withdraw my pretensions.

"I remain, respectfully, your obt. servant
25th Feb. 1812
John Fowler"

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Governor Slaughter's announcement was in the same high style.

The reasons given are simple enough and while Captain Fowler might have borne his banner to victory over Governor Slaughter, another figure arose on the horizon of politics--that figure of Isaac Shelby that always overshadowed his compeers. War had been declared and the fear of its consequences made imperative the call for Shelby who had been the first Governor of the infant state and who had been more or less in retirement at Traveler's Rest for sixteen years. He defeated Slaughter by a large majority--so strong was the influence of a founding father of his state.

POSTMASTER OF LEXINGTON 1814-1822

Captain Fowler was appointed Postmaster of Lexington by President Madison, January 1, 1814, and his commission issued April 1. He had served with Madison in the Virginia convention of 1788. He succeeded English-born John Jordan, Jr., who had removed from Richmond, Virginia, to Lexington and had died September 9, 1813. The office was kept then in a building adjoining the Gazette office on West Main Street, and later in a room in Captain Fowler's home, No. 70, East Main.

By 1816 stage coaches had superseded post riders on many routes, and the next year a line of mail stages started from Louisville via Lexington to Wheeling, West Virginia, where connection was made with eastern stages, making three trips a week. The story of the mails of

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the time is one of hardship for riders, delays for readers, and financial stress for postmasters.

In 1818, Captain Fowler notified the public through the Gazette that letters received "must be paid for on delivery," only those who had quarterly accounts were exempted. A little later he advertised that "no person will be credited at the post office on any pretense whatever."

Lexington was the commercial center of the West and the mails were bulky. Advertised letters at the end of each quarter numbered from 600 to 825, representing a loss to the postmaster.

Papers were sometimes nine to eighteen days late. In 1816 the newspapers were alarmed at the rate charged for postage and quoted Thomas Jefferson to the effect that newspapers should be carried free, calling the exorbitant rates "a tax on light and knowledge."

By 1818 the post office in Lexington was so in arrears that Captain Fowler had to raise \$4,000, which he did in the space of four days by means of notes and mortgages.* Had he resigned then, he might have weathered the depression that was closing in.

The panic of 1818 took the final toll of his resources. This was the first time in his energetic life that he failed to recoup any and all losses. He sold property at a loss, took back lots which had been sold at swollen prices

*Fayette records, deeds and mortgages of that date.

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in 1814, and struggled on until 1822, when the arrears of the post office reached a staggering sum, and he was removed from office.

Congressman Samuel H. Woodson, writing from Washington to Messrs. Winter and Morton, February 3, 1822, said:

"I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 18th. relation to the removal of Capt. Fowler and the appointment of a successor to the office of Post Master of Lexington...

"Your sentiments and mine coincide perfectly on that subject.

"I am highly indignant at the manner in which the appointment was made...I am always at my post and ready to encounter responsibility. Under this state of feeling I immediately addressed a letter to the Post Master General requesting information as to the causes leading up to the removal and appointment. He responded to it enclosing correspondence between himself, Majr. Barry and Capt. Fowler on that subject. He states his object to have been to save the government from the continued and increasing defalcation of Capt. Fowler which amounted to \$9,000, to save the securities and as much as possible to save the feelings of Capt. Fowler...a blank commission was transmitted to Maj. Barry with authority to fill it up with the name of some gentleman worthy of confidence.

"Mr. Ficklin was recommended by Maj. Barry as highly meritorious...I am myself entirely a stranger to Mr. Ficklin."

A side light upon the post office affairs is found in the memoir of Lexington and Vicinity,

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by William A. Leavy.* Graaf Von Phul, younger brother of Mrs. John Jordan, Jr., "became Deputy Postmaster first with Mr. Jordan, afterwards with Capt. Fowler till the year 1819. With him I was very intimate, he was a young man of considerable reading, of taste and fine sensibility and felt deeply the news of his death, his body was found in the Ohio at Louisville on his return from St. Louis, believed to be his own act, in the fall of 1819. He corresponded at that time, being much exercised on the subject of Religion, with his friend Revd. John Breckinridge."

William T. Carty was also an assistant of Captain Fowler according to Walker's Sketch of the Lexington Post Office.

ON BOARD OF TRUSTEES

On October 3, 1813, Captain John Fowler was elected as town trustee, and again on January 1, 1814, with John Bradford, Thomas Wallace, Lewis Sanders, George Trotter, Jr., Edward Howe, Samuel Ayers, Alexander Parker, John Hull, William Poindexter, and Gabriel Tandy. He continued on the Board until 1818, serving as chairman through 1817, with Robert Megowan as clerk. Other members then were Stephen Chipley, Caleb W. Cloud, Andrew McCalla, Thomas Barr, William Logan, Charles Humphreys, and John Fisher.

Ordinances related to ringing the bell, hauling dirt, city paving, and sales of hay,

*Register of the Kentucky State Historical Society, vol. 40, No. 132, p. 264.

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also appointment of Inspectors whose duty it was to enforce the ordinances regarding fire buckets. Buying and selling raw hides of horned cattle, horses, sheep, hogs, and dogs was prohibited, with fines of \$5 and \$10. It was ordered that no provisions be bought or sold before daylight, or before the market opened.

In 1817, John Fowler, Samuel Ayers, and S. Chipley were a committee to sell all materials of the old market house at auction, and David Hardesty, clerk of the market, was to remove the scales to the upper market house on Water Street. He was one of a committee that advertised, on behalf of the trustees for a record book of great value to the city, thought to have been misplaced in 1802-1803.

From 1814 to 1818, the trustees bought five pieces of property and sold at least fourteen pieces.*

Five watchmen were appointed for the town, one to be Captain of the Watch, whose duty it was to attend at the watch house at 10 P.M., cause the church bell to be rung, call the roll of watchmen, send them on tour of the wards, and call the roll at daybreak--all for \$320 a year. The plain watch received \$275, for which they were responsible for slaves on the loose, free negroes, and all disorderly persons and houses. Fines and lashes were the penalties, and the Captain was responsible for all punish-

*County Court Books, H, p. 200; I, p. 172; K, p. 428; O, pp. 140, 258, 259, 295; P, pp. 299, 333; R, pp. 483, 427.

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ments and prosecutions. The fire company were all volunteers.

In 1816 the Board invited Henry Clay to attend a banquet in order to express its pride in the Treaty of Ghent, joy at his return, and pleasure in his many services. In his eloquent reply he stated that this esteem of Lexington was "peculiarly gratifying." John Bradford presided with John Fowler, Esq., and Charles Wilkins, Esq., at this event when more than one hundred gentlemen sat at table.

PRIDE AND PROMISE

While Captain Fowler's personal fortunes were fluctuating through these years, Lexington in 1812 saw her sons march northward to the River Raisin and in 1813 to The Thames, and joined in preparation for a great battle to the south to safeguard the Louisiana Purchase of Jefferson. Boom times came on with the war and the town and county were a hive of industry, Yet the buzzing carried many rumors born of uncertainty and the slow mail that kept the busy people guessing at these far away events that affected their peace of mind.

Finally, on February 1, the Gazette published heartening letters, one from Captain Alney McLean to General Robert Ewing. It reported that on the morning of the 8th of January, at dawn of day, was fought one of the most glorious actions of any war. The British had made a desperate charge on the American breastworks which was gallantly repulsed. They even got to the breastwork in two places, although "they were mowed down by our cannon and muskets, like oats

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by a cradle. One column charged near me--and when the battle was over the whole face of the earth was strewn with them. Our loss was four killed, ten or twelve wounded."

Lexingtonians heard that General Jackson had entered the city of New Orleans, crowned with laurel, girls strewing flowers in his path, while a solemn Te Deum was sung, and an immense paper flag was floated bearing the words: "Tennessee: Jackson and His Heroes--Kentucky: Bravery and Valor--Louisiana: Glory and Safety." Such was the news on every tongue. Such was the swelling pride in the achievements of American arms.

Meanwhile the fate of Napoleon was questioned in sympathy or through the slurs of the reading public. Was he an eagle chained on his "lone rock," or was he a tyrant deserving his fate? Sentimentalists reveled in the newspaper accounts of his elegant wardrobe sold in Paris --discarded scarlet coats, gold fringed epaulettes, colorful velvets, rich brocades. Quite a contrast to the ragged homespun in which the Kentucky heroes had fought at Chalmette.

Kentucky's war prosperity occasioned much scoffing by Easterners who tried in vain to stop the great immigration to the state. They invented a mythical disease as a scarecrow, calling it the "Kentucky Plague," warning that it carried off for its victims men in the prime of life, and flung them down homeless in an unknown land.

1816--PROSPERITY AND ELEGANCE

Patriotic festivities usually began on the

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22nd of February, but this year a committee, composed of Captain John Fowler, T. T. Barr, Joseph H. Hawkins, John Lowry, and George Shannon, invited General William Henry Harrison to attend a banquet in his honor on February 1st. Several strangers of distinction along with such a numerous company attended that all could not be accommodated in Postelthwaite's long room without the addition of a side table. Captain Fowler presided, with General Bodley and Captain Gaines as vice-presidents. General Harrison proposed a toast to "The Town of Lexington, the seat of science, elegance and correct taste, and what is of more importance; of correct Republican principles." Another was to Captain Fowler's native town of Petersburg, Virginia.

At another banquet where Captain Fowler presided, Captain January gave two toasts, the first to Henry Clay, the second to "John Fowler, the friend of the people who was never absent when his services were required."

At this time Captain Fowler was considered an indispensable member of the community, always included among attendants at school exercises and among those recommending machines of progress and invention which began to be numerous. One of the latter, demonstrated at the courthouse, was a machine for using hot water in handling flax and hemp and converting it into linens, sailcloth, thread, or fine twine.

He was president or officer of the Agricultural Society and that of Domestic Manufactures. The Lexington Library was a going concern and Captain Fowler presented it with many books. The cornerstone of the Asylum was laid, second

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in the country. On the streets they talked of the new charter of the Erie Canal planned at Albany, New York. On August 21, a meeting of the original supporters of the Alien and Sedition Bill of 1798 was held on the Harrodsburg Road, with barbecue for the hungry, speeches for the partisans, and excitement for all.

Sanders Manufacturing Company was incorporated, with Captain Fowler as one of the commissioners. The company offered over 100 English cattle for sale at the White Gate on the Leestown Road. Ninety men signed a statement against dueling, Captain Fowler not being one of these, from whatever cause. Neither did he join in the petition of citizens against gambling about this time.

Lexington profited by the constant stream of movers' wagons going westward and was considered "the most elegant and fashionable city in the West with great numbers of carriages 'going on wheels' and the 'Athens' intellectually, while the ease, grace and charm of its social life made it as polished as any in the East."

The community supported watchmakers, hairdressers direct from the Court of France, blacksmiths, and whitesmiths. There was pottery from Jessamine County ovens; French paper hangings of classic design depicting Rome, Greece, and Homeric subjects. Of philanthropic interest was a Society for the Relief of Distressed Foreigners; and they heard with heightened interest that a Negro Colonization Society had been formed in Washington City with Henry Clay as its head.

There were numerous indications of the rapid flight of time. Ann Innes and Richard Apperson,

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as executors, were offering the farm of his old friend, Judge Harry Innes, for sale. John Jouett, of the mighty frame, fleet ride, and loyal heart, was advertising his well known farm at Indian Fields in Clark County along with his stock and ten or fifteen negroes trained to trades. He was "whistling for the port" which he reached in 1822. Colonel Christopher Greenup, sixty-seven years old, passed. He was a soldier, a member of Congress, Governor, and confidential friend of John Fowler in his first land ventures. Some one said "he had been the most useful man in Kentucky."

"A GAME CALLED YHOUEKER"

In this prosperous year of 1816 the taverns were particularly enticing and games of chance were many and varied. Captain John Fowler, on or about February 27th, was engaged in a "game called Yhoueker" at the Old Ironsides Tavern of Elijah Noble on Short Street, with one Abraham Corn and lost some twelve or thirteen hundred dollars. There was some dispute in the bar in Noble's presence as to the fairness of the "gambling transaction" and Corn compromised by taking a note for \$600, with Conelius Coyle as security.

On a similar occasion, it is said that a gallant friend met Henry Clay on the street next morning and being reminded of that gentleman's "debt of honor," replied, "Forget it. The pleasure of the game repays me for any inconvenience." But Mr. Corn was not of that kidney. He sold the note to Daniel Talbott, who sold it to John Ward who sold it to John Boggess and

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Cader Hutchins. In the meantime Talbott died and Benjamin Stout became his administrator. All these joined in a suit when Fowler protested the payment of the note. The suit went against him but in the Court of Judge Benjamin Johnson he was granted an injunction to stop payment at what he termed would be "a sacrifice of property," for the note had been sold for far less than its face value. Among the witnesses were William Ward and Elijah Noble, the latter in testifying was careful not to state where the said games had occurred. The claimants thought that "a gentleman of Captain Fowler's high reputation and known integrity could not afford to protest the note." It was settled thus far by this injunction in 1820.* By that time everybody owed everybody else and they had signed each others notes until there seemed no way out of the tangled labyrinth, except through an informal moritorium.

1817--YET A RISING TIDE

The Battle of New Orleans (Chalmette) occasioned a new holiday which was gloriously celebrated at Benjamin Lampheer's large and elegant inn, the Indian Queen, corner of Main and Cross streets. John Fowler, Esq., and John Bradford, Esq., were presidents, assisted by William Leavy, Esq., and G. R. Tompkins, Esq. As usual there were many toasts, one "To the Memory of General Scott," by Captain Fowler; one To Isaac Shelby, by J. H. Hawkins; one To the Heroes of

*Circuit Court Record.

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the Raisin, by John Bradford; and one To Perry's and McDonough's Victory at the Lakes, by William Leavy.

If the orators of that time seem perfervid it may well be remembered that they were goaded on to answer such assertions as that of Mr. Sullivan of the East who said of Kentucky, "Our Vesuvius is in the West," while, in Boston, Representative Nast had lumped Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, and Tennessee "as a nation of Cyclops, who, instead of following the pursuits of agriculture are occupied in building up a Vesuvius which shall overwhelm the government and the people of the United States."*

HIGH TIDE

The beginning of 1818 marked the high tide of Captain John Fowler's financial success and his influence as a citizen. At the age of sixty-two he was Postmaster and had been a member of the Board of Trustees for four years and was then chairman, in effect, mayor of the town.

He was established at his pleasant home at 70 West Main with the street well paved beyond his doorway. Between this and his Gardens, was the projected Botanical Garden of Rafinesque to which he contributed, along with Messrs. Clay and Megowan, many seeds, shrubs, and plants. His evenings at whist in Wickliffe's tavern passed pleasantly. He had in charge extensive farming and breeding operations, and a grist-mill on Town Fork between the lake and the town

*Boston Patriot, quoted in Gazette.

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turned busy wheels to make practical contribution to the food supply of the community.

He owned twenty-five or more negroes at his home, on his farm at Fowler's Gardens, and at Mansfield. His home, presided over by Millicent Wills Fowler, was the center of a hospitality that radiated far and wide. Culture, charm, and good breeding met around the mahogany dining table and shone by the light of sconces reflected by mirrors, while carpets softened every footfall. The walls were decorated with French wall paper on which gilt framed paintings hung, and soft draperies shaded the windows. It was said on the streets that gas lights might come into general use, but the soft glow of candles better suited such a time as this.

After he established the Gardens, Captain Fowler bought part of outlot 22, 75 feet front and 200 feet back from John Fisher.* This was a three story house fronting on Main Street, and his improvements included flowers and shrubs, an excellent garden, smoke house, wash house, and nice brick office or study.** This was about where the present Sears and Roebuck store is located.

He sold this in 1815 and bought of Robert Todd's heirs the home Todd had occupied. Two of these heirs, Thomas Jefferson Todd and Eliza Todd, later wife of General William O. Butler, were minors. After Captain Fowler had lived nearly twenty-five years in this home, a suit

*Deed of 1812.

**Ad of May 19, 1821.

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was brought by these two against him and he lost his equity in it and it was bought by James E. Davis, in 1838. After that it passed through a number of hands until sold about 1870 to J. O. Harrison who used it as "a pleasant and convenient residence"* until in 1886 he sold it to the United States government for a post office. It was 70 feet front beginning six feet from the west corner and extending to Mrs. Maria Dudley's lot on corner of Main and Walnut.**

As an echo from the past and a memory of land deals, he wrote to General James Taylor, Newport, Kentucky,*** the following letter:

Lexington 31 Mar 1818

Dear Sir:

Many years ago I sold to General Nathaniel Massie**** as the agent of my brother William a military survey on the Ohio River containing upwards of 700 acres as a part of the warrant for his own services. It was located and surveyed not far above the mouth of the little

*Harrison papers in Library of Congress.

**Fayette Court, Post Office deeds of 1886.

***Taylor scrapbook.

****General Nathaniel Massie led thirty families to Manchester about twelve miles north of Maysville, Ky., and founded the first settlement in Adams County, Ohio, 1790. He and his son were partners in a number of land grants in Kentucky with John Fowler. His was the first settlement in the 4th Military district and the 4th in Ohio. Howe's HISTORY OF OHIO, p. 223.

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Miami. The same difficulty in this case as was in the case of Samuel Taylor of Virginia. The title cant be made and a compromise is proposed with the present claimant under Massie. I have to request the favor of you to ascertain the value of this survey acres and give the earliest information you can with convenience. I will remunerate any expense you may be charged with in obtaining the information requires. Mrs. Fowler is well pleased to present complts to Mrs. Taylor and accept my best wishes,

Your friend

John Fowler
From John Fowler, P.M.
(instead of stamp)

MEETING LAFAYETTE AGAIN

The high tide of Captain Fowler's prosperity rose in 1818-19 and its receding billow was 1822. The high crest of sentiment and remembrance was in 1825 when he was named as a member of the two committees* to welcome Lafayette, who, as boy to boy, had selected him to accom-

*Others on the general committee: John Bradford, Wm. Morton, Dr. Richard Pindell, Dr. Walter Warfield, Alexander Parker, Wm. Leavy, James Lemmon, Charles Norwood, and Col. James Trotter. Entertainment committee: John Postelthwaite, Charlton Hunt, Nathan Payne, Thomas Shelby, Daniel Bradford, Richard Chiles, Joseph Logan, Maj. Joseph Robb, Benjamin Dudley, Elisha Meredith, Col. Leslie Combs, Maj. Peter P. Lewis, Capt. Patterson Bain, John C. Richardson.

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pany his aide on a perilous trip within the British lines which left him with an honorable scar and cost him his liberty for the while.

When it became known that the old hero would visit Kentucky, John Fowler thought like many other Lexingtonians that the official reception should be held in their town instead of in Frankfort.* They urged that the seat of the famous University and the Asylum, and the well organized, equipped, and disciplined military corps entitled them to the honor. Besides, the name of the county and, above all, the population of 6,000 to Frankfort's only 2,000, made it imperative that they have the first call.

Louisville, Frankfort, Versailles, then Lexington, so the journey shaped up to the climax of "48 hours of uninterrupted entertainment." Some become heroes "too late in life." A very few revisit the scenes of victory. Fewer still return to hear the loud acclaim of posterity. Lafayette was one of this latter elect band.

Captain Fowler shared with Lafayette the backward look to the pen of Jefferson, the sword of Washington, and the legions commanded by the gallant French youth fifty years before. Together they scanned the prospects of the western country. Seven hundred miles from Monmouth, Brandywine, and Yorktown they viewed this new state founded on the principles established on those battle fields. They gazed into a future that foretold a self-governing people extended to populate the prairies and cross the high

*Gazette, letters of citizens to the Governor.

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Rockies to the Golden Coast.

Days and weeks of anticipation grew into hours of certainty as "the fortunate friend of liberty in America and Europe" neared the town. On the night of May 15th, Lafayette and his son, George Washington Lafayette, his secretary, Lavasseur, and other honorees were at the Keene home on the Versailles Road.

On the 16th, as the procession came in, the rain that had been falling for days continued until the hour of ten when suddenly the sun shone out as they came atop the rising ground where the town came into view with its roofs and spires shining in the morning glow. Ten thousand people met him in the "Big Road"; along Bryan Station Road and Boonesboro Road still the people came, while other hundreds milled around in town like a circus crowd.

Versailles Road became High Street, dedicated to a high day. It was Old Soldier's Day, grander than their wildest dreams could have prefigured, replete with uniforms, drums, bugles, prancing horses, all the panoply of glorious war on a peaceful holiday bent.

To the handsomely decorated hotel at Mrs. Keene's they flocked to show their scars and display relics of days long past. General A. Bowman, General T. Bodley, and General John McCalla escorted him. General Leslie Combs was spokesman for the old comrades. Flowers of May-time showered down from windows. Ribbons, flags, and handkerchiefs bearing the picture of the Nation's Guest fluttered in the breeze while ladies toyed with snuff boxes similarly adorned, which were in every reticule.

In the streets the hunting shirts mingled on

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an equality with nankeen and blue cloth. Marquis Calmes and General Samuel South were perhaps the only ones who met the great republican General in the buckled pumps, silk hose, and small clothes of the bygone times. It was too warm for coonskin caps. Beaver hats were worn by most men, anyway. It was a great day for the Lexington hatters, merchants, milliners, and mantuamakers.

On the company moved to Transylvania to review the scholarly attainments of the youth there. John Fowler at sixty-nine was as hale as Lafayette with his sixty-eight years, and he was at home on the Transylvania campus as well as at the picnic ground at the junction of the two Frankfort roads.

The military were resplendent in uniforms of blue and scarlet, black and white with plumed hats. There were the Fayette Hussars, Woodford Troop of Hourse, Georgetown Troop, Lafayette Guards. To these were added cavalry, mounted riflemen, town trustees, judges, two Governors, the president and professors of Transylvania; the social, economic, and political societies; citizens on horses and on foot; black servants galore, all agape at the wonders of the day.

The soldiers escorted Lafayette to call on Mrs. Henry Clay and Mrs. Charles Scott. At the latter home, especially, John Fowler was quite at ease, for the General and Mrs. Scott had been Woodford County neighbors in Indian times when he had followed Scott on northern campaigns and Mrs. Fowler had stayed with Mrs. Innes or Mrs. Wilkinson, the women watching as well they might, and waiting as well they must.

That night at the Grand Ball the members of

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our Revolutionary committee were not far away from their hero and Mrs. Fowler and other wives who were presented there saw the castellated cake and either looked on or took part in the Old Virginia Reel or the stately minuet. Next morning at the Grand Masonic Hall, John Fowler was on double duty as one of the pioneers who had brought the charter from Virginia thirty-seven years before and as a soldier of the days gone by.

During all these festivities the subdued hum of voices, the tears, and smiles gave a more eloquent and fitting welcome than loud huzzas which were not heard as the procession moved to the tavern where John Bradford, editor and publicist, made the address.

In the Kentucky background all was not sweetness and light. There was the impending trial of Isaac B. Desha for the supposed murder of Francis Baker. There was the sordid cause celebre of the Beauchamp trial for the murder of Solomon P. Sharp and accusation of complicity against Patrick Henry Darby and others.

The bitter disputes over "old Court" and "new Court" were echoing from every forum and reverberating through every courthouse in Kentucky.

For the time these anxieties and arguments were pushed aside while the main purpose of the celebration went on. Aside from the great enjoyment of greeting the beloved guest, they were intent on showing him "the real advancement of our State of Society in the West." He knew well how the elder generation had fought. They showed him how well they were developing

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the arts of peace and how adept they were in social amenities.

The tumult and the shouting died away amid the glad acclaim of "a grateful and free people, as he ascended the barouche" to continue his triumphant journey toward the Ohio River. And John Fowler bade farewell to this concrete reminder of his Revolutionary past and he entered on fifteen remaining years, a time for memory and dreams and a time to challenge his best philosophy and wisest thought.

CHAPTER SIX

ANTI-CLIMAX

LATER YEARS

After Lafayette's visit nothing quite so glamorous could come again. Life settled into routine and everyday matters took precedence. Yet high days could be enjoyed even if they did not reach the sentimental climax attained during the great Frenchman's short stay.

On July 12, 1826, the whole city turned out to honor Henry Clay at Noble's Inn where a large company sat down to dinner. Captain Fowler, Captain Postelthwaite, Dr. R. Pindell, A. F. Price, and Richard Higgins were vice-presidents and Colonel Abraham Bowman presided, while Rev. C. W. Cloud gave the blessing.

On December 28, 1827, a large and respectable gathering of the friends of General Jackson was held at the courthouse. Captain John Fowler was elected president and Oliver Keen, Esq., secretary.

On motion of Major William Taylor Barry a resolution was adopted to appoint delegates to represent the friends of General Andrew Jackson at New Orleans on the approaching eighth of January, to participate in the celebration of the anniversary of the battle there in 1815, and to honor "the Hero" and the great achieve-

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ments of our countrymen under his command. The gentlemen elected were: John Norton, Esq., Walter Dunn, Esq., and Dr. William Cochran.*

As 1828 came in the politicians fought and scratched. Diatribes were exchanged between Jackson men and Clay men. Here is one of the less abusive of 16 verses, entitled "Jackson's Deathbed Confession":

O, Johnny Q, my Joe John,
How altered is my breath
And surely I can see, John,
The chilling damps of death.
The WEST my eyes are closing, John
Farewell, for I must go,
Disgraced to lay, 'neath KENTUCKY'S CLAY,
John Adams, Q, my Joe.

Much of the campaign literature of that time would be unprintable now. No wonder it was a great day for duelists!

Racing in Lexington was well under way and there was talk of buying a track right alongside Captain Fowler's old track out by Stroud's Road.** At Locust Hill Course, in Danville, there were races in October, with 80 horses in training. On October 22, the Association had a five-day race, and the Jockey Club was active, with meetings at Mrs. Keene's Hotel. All their

*From Paris Advertiser--copied from Gazette of Dec. 29, 1827.

**This race course deal was made in 1832 and soon after 15 acres of his old race course at the Gardens was added by purchase.

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proceedings were under strict rules and regulations; a far cry from 1789 when John Fowler had informally received the entries at Mr. Stephen Collins' tavern for one-day trials.

In 1829 the glorious Fourth was celebrated by a large party of ladies and gentlemen at Noble's Inn, and a dinner party at Fowler's Gardens, with, strange to say, no toasts.

In 1830 an old friend and neighbor, Marquis Calmes, was feeling the approach of age and advertised for sale all his land, 253 acres, three miles from Versailles, a frame house and all necessary appendages, apple and peach orchards, several fine springs, and a beautiful pond of stock water fed by a durable spring. How well Captain Fowler knew that place, hard by his first Kentucky home.

The steamboat era was in full swing. The "Sylph" and the "Volante" were plying between Frankfort and Louisville, starting with "the first rise in water." The superb steamboat, "Versailles," built expressly for the Kentucky trade, had a "ladies' department conveniently and handsomely arranged, and was not surpassed in neatness and elegance by any boat on Kentucky waters."

John Fowler had seen Edward West's first trials of his miniature steamboat on Elkhorn in Lexington and now, after some twenty years, he heard rumblings in the distance of locomotive power for Central Kentucky. He had lived from the French and Indian War long enough to see the puffing steam engines come in, and now he saw the world emerging from a plodding past to a flying future.

In the 1830 census, John Fowler's list in-

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cluded twelve slaves, still a considerable retinue. During the next year and the ones immediately following he was always on hand at every patriotic celebration, and his fellow townsmen continued to honor him with honorary offices of president, vice-president, and toastmaster. But the continued whittling down of his land holdings, along with other causes, led to dwindling income until downright failure stared him in the face.

One might well ask the cause of his failure and that of many other Lexingtonians of his day. An inclusive reply might be "signing security notes," but there were other basic reasons. First, the newcomers into this land, so full of opportunities, traded in land and yet more land. For two decades this land speculation flourished. Then came into court the overlapping surveys and disputed titles that involved law suits that made Kentucky unpleasantly notorious. Currency fluctuated up and down. Cincinnati grew into a city. The river trade robbed the inland towns. Banks broke. Lot speculation succeeded land speculation. By 1818-1820 they were paying for the War of 1812, the usual belated hangover, and woe to the older men caught in this financial quagmire.

The town, by 1830, was run entirely by the youngsters born about 1800 and by the 1812 veterans. They incorporated it and the 6,084 citizens marched steadily on toward the roaring Forties and the Bloody Sixties, while the slow steps of the old "Revolutioners" were sadly out of time. They existed only to add color to parades and oratory to banquet tables.

The oldsters shook their heads over the rapid

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and radical changes. Thomas Bodley wrote to Mrs. Anne Innes, "Our People of Lexington are all RAILROAD MAD, they have subscribed \$793,000 of the stock. I hope it will succeed but would rather see the money laid out in McAdamizing our roads."*

1832--A PENSIONER

Captain John Fowler made application for a pension on September 7, 1832, before Judge Thomas M. Hickey, under the 1832 Act of Congress. The sum allowed was \$320 per annum, with \$640 paid him in arrears.

Those who made affidavit as to his standing and character were Caleb W. Cloud, a physician and surgeon who preached gratuitously at the Independent Methodist Chapel he had built in 1820 at 14 West Main Street, and William R. Morton.

Thomas Bodley made affidavit to a circumstance which occurred in 1807, just at the close of Captain Fowler's ten years in Congress. He, in company with Colonel Robert Goode, John Fowler, Judge Thomas Todd, and Hubbard Taylor, was riding from Manchester, Virginia, to the residence of Colonel Goode for the purpose of dining with him. On the road, Colonel Goode called to Captain Fowler and observed, "Fowler, I suppose you remember this place." Fowler said that he did. Colonel Goode then stated the circumstances of their having been attacked on that ground by a detachment of British horsemen

*Innes papers, 31.2.

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and that Fowler was cut down by a stroke of a broadsword, left on the ground for dead, and afterward taken prisoner with some others whom Goode mentioned.

The occurrence made a strong impression on General Bodley as he had been intimately acquainted with Captain Fowler for many years (22 to be exact) and he then saw for the first time the scar on Fowler's head, which was, he said then (1832) plain to be seen. It may well have been an impression as it shows a remarkable modesty in John Fowler not to have mentioned this when he was a candidate for office at a time when the scars of such wounds were an open sesame to popularity and votes.

1833--TERROR AND DISTRESS

As the springtime of 1833 blossomed toward summer verdure, there was the sadness of extreme illness in the home of Captain John Fowler. His devoted wife of fifty-four years was gravely ill of cancer of the face and her friend and companion of many years, Mrs. Maria Beckley, was also nearing the end of her days, with a dropsical affection.

Greater than any private sorrow, a terror was coming swiftly from the South where the Asiatic cholera was raging. Physicians and citizens hoped and believed that Lexington would be spared. However, there cannot be any doubt that numbers died in solitude for want of friendly succor. The streets were deserted. The market place was desolate. Had it not been for the activity of the city authorities and the humanity of the charitable, the horrors of fam-

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ine would have added to those of pestilence. To complete the desperate condition of things, three physicians died, three more were absent, and of the rest scarcely one escaped an attack of the disease himself. The clergy, active as they were in attendance at the bedside of the sick and dying, were insufficient to meet the demands for their services. Some of the most respectable citizens were hurried off to the place of interment in rough deal coffins, placed in carts, without funeral procession or religious ceremonies. The graveyards were choked. Coffins were laid down at the gates by the score, in confused heaps; and among them, horrible to relate, corpses wrapped up only in the bed clothes in which they had but an hour or two earlier expired. There they lay, each waiting his turn to be deposited in the long trenches which were hastily dug for the necessities of the occasion.*

Among the prominent victims were General Thomas Bodley, Dr. Henry E. Innes, Rev. Caleb W. Cloud, Joseph Towler, John Postelthwaite, Dr. Richard Pindell, Sr., and Samuel Blair. Besides these and other old friends and neighbors Captain Fowler lost three servants.**

By July 4th a solemn thanksgiving service was held in the Rankin Church at Short and Walnut, because the pestilence was almost over. No attempt was made for the usual reunion of

*Davidson's HISTORY OF PRESBYTERIANISM IN KENTUCKY.

**Report of committee, Leavy, Layton, McKinney, and Gough.

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Revolutionary soldiers. Captain Fowler would have been absent at any such celebration for on Tuesday evening, the ninth of July, his wife died, and on Friday morning, the twelfth, Mrs. Maria Beckley, "an aged and respectable lady," died too at his residence.*

AN OLD MAN

The old, old men with kindly, gentle graces,
Resting beside the road, their milestones run;
Old men who carry on, their eyes agleam,
Clinging to shattered fragments of a dream.

D. W. Hickey

Lafayette died in France at dawn on May 20, 1834. The news traveled slowly. The Gazette said, on July 2, that there had passed on an "Apostle of Liberty who left a space that can be filled by no man living." All Lexingtonians wore a band of crape on their left arms for thirty days after the news came.

On July 26, the citizens met to pay belated tribute to the memory of this friend of America whom they all remembered in his hale and hearty age as he appeared ten years before. Henry Clay, Jr., was the speaker, and the celebration was in Erwin's Woods, three miles out. Captain John Fowler was eighty, one of nine Revolutionary officers who, with the other old soldiers averaging seventy-six years of age, met at nine in the morning on Short Street opposite the

*Western World, Lexington Paper, and Frankfort Paper report.

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Public Square. They marched on foot in the midst of dust and under a burning sun, without refreshments of any kind. The Masons conducted them to Broadway after they marched back to town after 1:15. The lodge passed a glowing resolution of thanks to them. It was a Masonic Day, with 20,000 people as audience. The Masons formed a lane through which the procession marched--ladies, town council, and citizens. Bells were tolled, business was suspended, and seven bands of music played while minute guns sounded a requiem.

In 1835, at the celebration of the Fourth at Maxwell Spring, Captain Fowler presided, assisted by Messrs. William McBean, John Peck, William Dunlap, and James E. Davis as vice-presidents. The infantry, the rifles, and the guards all marched to the PATRIOT GROUND in the grove. Hon. George Poindexter of Mississippi and the Honorable Henry Clay of Kentucky spoke. Captain McCalla read the toasts. Each was responded to by a round of artillery. When volunteer toasts were called for, Captain Fowler offered his, with a far away gleam in his eye--carrying farther back than any--to "The Memory of John Hancock," with the secure prerogative of age to dwell on the inspiration and ideals of early youth.

In the next year another old friend, in the person of William Morton passed to the bourne from which no traveler returns.

Texas in 1836 rose as a bright, particular star, and Kentucky "settlers," well armed, were going out to help the new Republic. On April 22, a Texas meeting was called, and Captain Fowler was chosen president, Richard Higgins,

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vice-president, Edwin Bryant and Thomas B. Holt, secretaries. Suitable resolutions were drafted and it was voted to memorialize the Governor of Kentucky to recognize the Texan Republic as free, sovereign, and independent. Collections amounting to \$1,000 were taken for clothing and provisions, many women responding to the excitement. Major Edward Wilson was to lead the emigrants and thirty enrolled at once for the adventure.

In 1837 things moved on as usual. Another friend, Colonel Abraham Bowman died. So many old comrades passed that Captain Fowler, one of the few remaining, became an institution. On all high days he was president and chairman. His interest, energy, and endurance were remarkable.

In 1838, on New Orleans Day, he was again president of the occasion, with John Norton as secretary, Daniel Bradford, vice-president, and D. C. Overton, C. J. Sanders, and Francis McNear, assistant vice-presidents. At sunrise a salute of twenty-six guns was fired and at three o'clock a large and respectable meeting was held at Mr. Giron's. After a mighty feast, twenty-six toasts were drunk, ranging in subject from "This memorable day" to "The American Fair--unsurpassed by any on the globe." By this time they really warmed to the subject and eloquence waxed fervent.

They called Thomas Benton "an intrepid hawk" and said "he possessed too noble a spirit to injure even a feather of the pedantic tom-tits who endeavor to disturb his repose." Of Andrew Jackson they said, "If his friends forget him, his enemies will not."

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To crown all there was this patriotic outburst which we may well repeat today: "May this day which we meet to commemorate not only teach a salutary lesson to tyrants but convince true patriots what valor can accomplish in freedom's cause. Since the destiny of the world depends in great measure upon the good or ill success of our government, let us trust that this ennobling thought, even of itself, will stimulate all to deeds of pure, disinterested patriotism. Our skies are clear, our climate is healthful, our soil is fruitful, and thus peculiarly blessed by heaven, may we duly appreciate these favors and never mar their enjoyment by the spirit of party strife or prejudice."

They departed somewhat from this latter injunction when they came to speak of "self-styled Whigs," and in a mock toast to General Harrison said if such as he "wish to deliver America of her liberties, they must get a more expert granny than the hero of North Bend. We remember his mode of accouching--it was an abortion--he burnt the provisions of the soldiers for fear of the Indians when there was not one Indian in 40 miles of his camp--BIG MAN ME."

To the Ladies of Chillicothe: "We admire their just retribution in presenting a PETTI-COAT to Granny Harrison for court martialing Cochran, who, like Jackson, took the responsibility and saved the fort that Harrison had destined to the enemy, as he did the provisions to the flames."

They paid their respects to the "Duke of Town Fork" and accused him of saying, in introducing Daniel Webster, that Webster had fought at Bunker Hill, when that gentleman had not

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been born at the time of that battle.

"Our Senators in Congress, Clay and Crittenden --The first identified himself with the Abolitionists and the shin-plaster barons--the latter in his opposition to the spread of intelligence by moving for the stoppage of the Express Mail."

They began with denouncing "Federal shin-plasters; Whiggery; Stop Banks, alias Wars, pestilence, famine and scourging" and went on to "Nick Biddle--when the devil was sick the devil a monk would be, when the devil got well the devil a monk was he. The people remember how polite Old Nick was until he got the bastard U. S. Bank established in Pennsylvania, and now he is the only ostensible opposer of paying specie."

And on and on, remembering all the pioneers and statesmen, good and bad, until evening fell, "So with perfect good will and harmony" they adjourned to meet again on the eighth of January, 1839. And the president for the day, the lonely Revolutionary Captain, went home to rest a little easier on past laurels, to think a little more benignly on past losses.

In 1839 the same pattern prevailed in celebrations and in the continued progress of the town. The great feature of the Fourth of July that year was laying the cornerstone of the new Medical Hall of Transylvania, and the Masonic Lodge took part "in an imposing manner according to ancient usage." On September 11, the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Lexington Light Infantry was held at Love's Woodlands, adjacent to Maxwell Springs, with an address by General John McCalla, and participation of all old soldiers and their younger comrades. Captain John

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Fowler had been ensign when Wilkinson organized this historic company in 1789, and it was another high day of reverence for old age and past services.

RETROSPECT

Politics were hot, tempers warm, and words hasty and intemperate. But John Fowler was living a sheltered life. His actual wants were provided. Property had slipped through his fingers year by year. The business of land speculation was outmoded. A new generation ruled. Wise ones saw ahead a still further expansion of territory with the settling of Texas.

On the streets there were cheery greetings from old friends and from their sons and daughters, from many who remembered the hospitality of his home.

As he walked along the streets of Lexington, a venerated and venerable figure, he would sometimes meet another figure from the past, the "stormy petrel" of early Kentucky politics, and with his judgment softened by age and his natural urbanity, he half forgot his deposed word that "when Humphrey Marshall moved into the (Woodford) neighborhood the peace of the community was destroyed."

For upon that leonine warrior of words and deeds had fallen old age, too, as he walked "placidly and serenely always with the long staff he carried."* Whether these two ever walked and talked together, their minds cer-

*Quisenberry's HUMPHREY MARSHALL

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tainly traveled the same paths until their thoughts were entangled and lost in the cane brakes of the previous century.

And when the older Virginian died, the eighty-year-old survivor might well have shed the ready tear of age for the man who, with Colonel Crockett, had given him his first lieutenancy in the new county of Fayette.

THE LEXINGTON HE WAS LEAVING

Of old comrades who had marched with Captain Fowler on the many public occasions in the past and shared the thrill of hearing the fervid toasts to "Our Revolutionary Heroes," only twelve survived.* These were: Francis Epperson, Thomas Clark, Cornelius Sullivan, Abraham Ferguson, Lyttleton Geter, Joseph Mosby, John Graves, Randall Haley, James Laffoon, Daniel Cowgill, Francis Faulconer, and James McDowell.

Of the old friends and boon companions of 1783, only General Henry Lee of Mason County survived. Robert Scott, another friend who saved his personal property for him in 1818, lived on until 1843 in Ohio.**

When he first saw Lexington in 1783 it had a stockade, a few cabins built in the woods, and perhaps thirty families. In 1840 Fayette County had a population of 22,191 and the Lexington he was leaving had 7,000 people. It was a veritable hive of industry, for home manufactured

*1840 census--two widows survived also, Sarah ocoman and Elizabeth Scruggs.

**Will of 1843, Fayette Court.

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goods were yet in full production while intensive factory promotion had begun. It was, as always, a highroad to the greater West and the city moved on wheels of pleasure and commerce as the world went by on the wheels of covered wagons that made up the emigrant trains.

POLITICS TO THE LAST

The life of Captain John Fowler seems to have been singularly free from the intense partisanship and vituperation of his times. In the most serious crisis of his career, the post office matter, Congressman Samual H. Woodson wrote that one of his prime motives was "to spare the feelings of Captain Fowler."

But just as the scene was closing in and the curtain rolling down, he became the center of a hotly contested fight during the candidacy of General William Henry Harrison for the Presidency. Jonas Cunningham had bought the Gazette from Daniel Bradford on March 26, 1840, and immediately jumped with both feet into politics. Once again the "black cockade" bloomed to plague its erstwhile wearers.

Cunningham secured and printed a letter from Captain Fowler, written June 27, which said:

Dear Sir:

In answer to your letter of this date I will say that I was in Congress as a member, during the great struggle between Jefferson and Adams, and know the fact that Wm. H. Harrison, then a delegate from the North Western Territory, was upon the side of Adams. He was a Federalist and wore the Black Cockade. I do not recollect

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his speech upon the reduction of the United States Army, though I have a file of the Aurora, in which his speech appears against the reduction of the army.

My health will not enable me to answer more fully with regard to the exciting scenes of that memorable period of our history.

Respectfully, your humble servant,
John Fowler.

This letter was addressed to Captain Henry Daniel and had evidently been solicited. It became a center of attack. Local opposition paid little attention to it, but papers in Maysville and Louisville attacked it in violent terms. On July 2, the Gazette carried a reply to these and spoke in the highest terms of Captain John Fowler's veracity. Later, another editorial stated "but a single topic is touched upon in Capt. Fowler's letter...General Harrison's federalism--to this he bears unequivocal testimony. Nor is he alone--old men in other quarters are coming forward to establish the same fact." And in replying to a charge that the letter was ghost written, "Captain Fowler wrote every word of his answer."

Cunningham followed this with numerous incidents given by aged persons interviewed, minus names. There is much more to the same effect: (a little will suffice) "The testimony of Capt. Fowler is so strong and direct and his character is so high that it can no longer be questioned that Gen. Harrison belonged to and acted with the old federal party."

"Captain Fowler served in Congress at the same period that Gen. Harrison did, was present

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in the House of Representatives as a member from Kentucky; voted on the 10th of January, 1800, to reduce the standing army of the elder Adams, and tho now upwards of 83 (85) years of age distinctly recollects the facts which he states, and the position which Gen. Harrison then occupied."

July 16, the Gazette deplored the false and scurrilous attack upon Captain Fowler in the Louisville Journal, stating that "neither of the Whig papers here had ventured to assail him --nor to republish the articles...because all, even the most violent, know and feel that it is an outrage upon an old and honorable old man which cannot be justified by truth or propriety ...not one whig has doubted his veracity...the harshest word is that he is old and might be mistaken." It went on to speak of "the gray head of a Revolutionary patriot," and said he was and always had been a high-minded and honorable gentleman. "Even within a few weeks the members of a fire company of this city paid him a tribute of respect, by calling their engine by his name."*

*Captain McCullogh's Recollections, MS. in Library of Congress. The first fire engine he remembered was the "Resolution," commanded by Capt. Levin Young. There were two other hand-rail fire engines added, "'Transylvania,' commanded by Prof. Everett of Translyvania and the other officered by Dr. Caleb W. Cloud..." Not one could throw a stream over a (then) modern two-story house. As the town increased new hand-rail engines of more power were purchased,

CAPTAIN JOHN FOWLER

On July 8, in the opposition paper, D. C. Wickliffe, Jr., had a balanced and restrained editorial in which he said, in part, "The Kentucky Gazette of last week contains a letter from Captain John Fowler, in reply to one from Henry Daniel, esquire, with regard to General Harrison's federalism. The heaving of the political billows produces some strange scenes and this is not the least among them. We have known Capt. Fowler from our earliest childhood and long after his venerable person shall be gathered to his fathers will his image be present in our mind. His life has been an eventful one and full of food for philosophic reflection. That the few days allotted to him in the course of nature may be happy is our sincere wish."

We may regret that the veteran of so many vicissitudes allowed his name to be used. But it was a stout old heart that beat in his frail form, and perhaps he felt no regret, but rather gloried that he could make this one last gesture to help the despairing Democrats whose "Democratic Associations" could not cope with "Tippecanoe and Tyler, too." They were burdened heavily with "Van, that used-up man." Yet they gallantly rode their hopeless cause toward that November debacle of Harrison's 234 electoral votes to Van Buren's 60.

"among which were the 'Kentuckian,' one called 'John Fowler' and one 'Lyin' after its maker. The John Fowler was generally considered the best of the three because it could throw two side streams, whilst neither of the others could throw more than one stream."

CAPTAIN JOHN FOWLER

John Fowler had more than lived out his era. His party went into eclipse for many years, just after he passed on. The history of his state had become a saga, her story an epic, her makers giants among men, and he had been a part of all that made Kentucky--a proud boast.

DEATH COMES FOR THE CAPTAIN

In 1838, the Main Street home at Number 70 was listed for taxes in Captain John Fowler's name, but in the Directory of that year James E. Davis was the occupant, while the record reads: "Captain John Fowler, Ayers' Alley, E. Water Street." This was a passage that ran from General McCalla's corner, Number 73, to Water Street and the apartments there belonging to the General were occupied by mechanics and other respectable workmen. Rancke says that Captain Fowler died in the home which he had occupied for many years and the newspapers stated that his funeral was from there.

Thomas M. McCalla was named administrator of Captain Fowler's estate, in September, 1840. He made no return and, in 1846, R. Pindell had himself appointed. No return by him, either, has been found, only one correspondence with the Pension Department.*

*Fayette order books: Adm. Bond, April 13, 1846, Richard Pindell and Thomas S. Redd, for \$240...att. Wm. R. Bradford, D.C. Book 3, 76, Sept. 14, 1840, John M. McCalla, adm., Harry I. Bodley, bond \$240. Ord. B. II, p. 38, Daniel Bradford and Thomas McLea attest death of Cap-

CAPTAIN JOHN FOWLER

His landed estate can be traced through the county records, but whatever was left of his household property cannot be traced. Shortly before his death he left his portrait in care of James Taylor, Jr., to be sent to his godson Biddle Wilkinson, in New Orleans. Taylor left it with Daniel Bradford and wrote to Wilkinson concerning it. (See Addenda)

CAPTAIN FOWLER'S PORTRAIT

The picture of Captain John Fowler in the Masonic Hall at Lexington is a replica of a picture of a portrait claimed as that of John Hopkins Fowler, of Paris, Texas, who was born December 23, 1796, in Smith County, Tennessee, reared in Caldwell County, Kentucky, and died in Paris, Texas, October 12, 1873. This picture is on page 64 of ANNALS OF THE FOWLER FAMILY, by Mrs. Glenn Dora Arthur, printed in Austin, Texas, in 1901. On page 155 the author says "the portrait of Colonel John H. Fowler of Paris, Texas is very old looking, for the oil and varnish are badly cracked. It was done by Huddle, a Paris boy, who did also the portraits of the Governors of Texas, which hang in the Supreme Court Library of the Texas Capitol. The oil portrait by the same artist and owned by Mrs. Peterson, of Paris, was better work, but it was burned with the Peterson Hotel of that city. The old portrait copied in the record belongs to the widow and daughters of

tain John Fowler, Revolutionary Pensioner.
Sept. 15, 1840.

CAPTAIN JOHN FOWLER

John Littleton Fowler, the only son of Colonel Fowler."

AFTER

When Captain John Fowler died on August 22, 1840, the Kentucky Gazette of Thursday, August 27, placed ten heavy black lines between the twelve columns of its two large editorial pages, a space accorded to few whose death notices appeared in that paper.

The leading editorial was headed, CAPT. FOWLER'S FUNERAL, and it was as follows:

"On Sunday last almost the whole population of this city turned out to pay the last tribute of respect to the remains of Captain John Fowler. The procession was formed between three and four o'clock; the Lexington Light Infantry, the Lexington Artillery, the Lexington Grays, and the Harrison Rifle Cadets, formed the military escort, the rest of the line being composed of the different Masonic Lodges of the city, the various Fire and Hose Companies, and a large number of our citizens.

"At a quarter past four o'clock the procession moved down Main Street to Broadway, up Broadway to Short Street, up Short to Mulberry Street, up Mulberry to the Winchester Turnpike, and along the turnpike to the Episcopal Burying Ground, where the body of the old Revolutionary patriot was committed to the earth with military honors.

"The deep respect and love felt by the whole community for the departed was evidenced by the vast numbers who attended, and by the sorrowful

CAPTAIN JOHN FOWLER

deportment with which they followed his remains to their last resting place. None could witness the long and mournful procession without feeling convinced that Captain Fowler stood high in the affections of the citizens of Lexington, and that they had spontaneously assembled to tender to his remains all the honor it was in their power to bestow. And the unanimity with which all concurred in this design was rendered the more striking from the fact that he stood unconnected here by the ties of relationship. Peace to his ashes, for a warmer heart was never stilled by the icy hand of death."

OBITUARY

"Died--At his residence in this city, on the 22nd inst., Captain John Fowler in the 85th year of his age. It is not often that we are called upon to record the death of such a man as John Fowler. He lived beyond the term usually allotted to man, but up to the last moment of his life he retained the faculties of his mind unimpaired, and spoke of his approaching dissolution with the calmness of a philosopher.

"John Fowler held a Captain's commission during the Revolutionary war,* and his declining days were made comfortable by the bounty of the government. In the earlier days of his eventful life he was in affluent circumstances and his house was then the abode of hospitality which he dispensed with a princely hand. He

*Lieutenant in Revolutionary War, Captain in Indian Wars.

CAPTAIN JOHN FOWLER

was, perhaps, the last among us of the pure-hearted, unostentatious Virginia gentlemen. His manner and address were highly fascinating, yet it was easy to perceive that they were the result of his native benevolence of heart, and owed nothing to more artificial refinement.

"His circumstances toward the close of his life became altered, and the usual spirit of the world was exhibited towards him. Many who had feasted at his table and held themselves honored by his notice, turned from him as if he had perpetrated some deep crime. But there were those who clung to him with fidelity to the last, and perhaps no man was ever borne to his grave by more true and devoted friends. John Fowler was the first member of Congress from this District, and was always elected by triumphant majorities. He was a member during the great contest between Jefferson and Burr, and was the unflinching friend of Mr. Jefferson. During his long life he never lost sight of the cardinal principles of the democratic creed. In him there was no variableness nor shadow of turning.

"His knowledge of the political history of the country and of its prominent men was full, and his conversation was interesting and instructive. He seldom erred in his recollection of facts, and those who knew him well reposed unbounded faith in his statements. He could have had no PERSONAL enemies in the world, such was the kindness of his disposition. He may have had POLITICAL enemies--and yet no one deserved less to have them, for although firm in his political opinions as any man who ever breathed, he was mild and courteous to those

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who differed with him.

"We do not design to extend our brief notice to a biographical sketch. His life, if written by one competent to the task, would afford a rich and instructive volume. The object of this slight obituary notice is simply to record some of the qualities by which this extraordinary man was distinguished. He is now in his grave, and never again shall we behold his venerable form or listen to his instructive tongue. Years may come and go--age may follow age--generation succeed generation, ere such a man as John Fowler will again be seen. He made no claim to the brilliancy of genius or splendor of elocution by which the multitude is usually captivated--he could merely boast a judgment which passion seldom warped, and of a heart as free from guile or deceit as it is given mortals to possess. If the fervent prayers of his friends could avail on high, his disembodied spirit would now and forever dwell with its God in peace and joy."

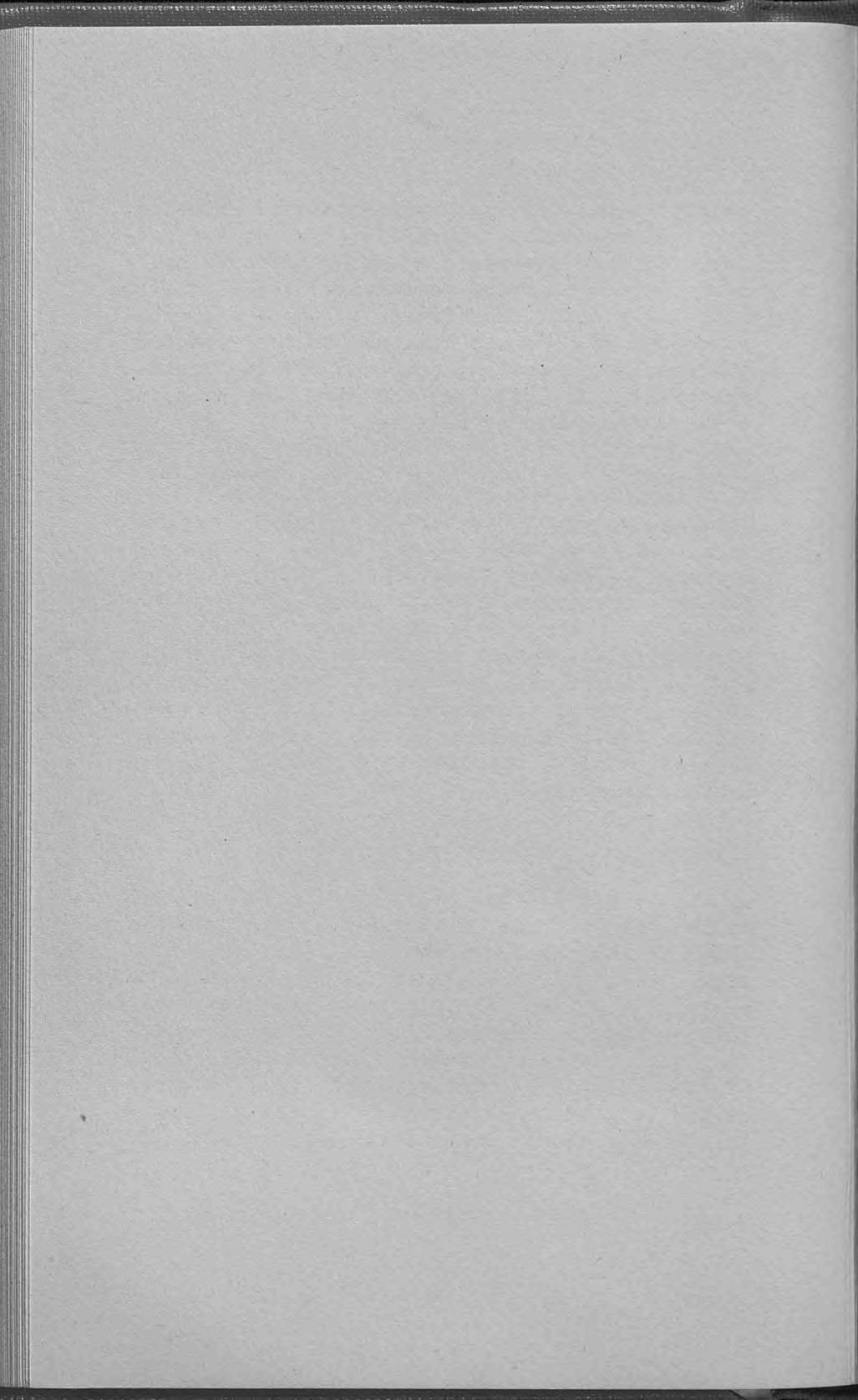
The editor of the opposition paper, D. C. Wickliffe, in a shorter and more restrained eulogy said:

OBITUARY

"In this city on Saturday evening the 22nd inst. Capt. John Fowler, aged about 85 years. The deceased was one of the first inhabitants of Lexington and for many years represented Kentucky in the Congress of the United States. He was universally beloved and respected for his noble and generous nature. Benevolence and

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charity were his predominant characteristics, and the many acts of pure kindness and generosity, and the innumerable cases of distress he has been the means of relieving will long be held in grateful remembrance by those who experienced them. He was followed to the grave by an immense procession, composed of the Masonic Fraternity, the Military and Fire Companies and a large concourse of citizens."



ADDENDA

EARLY BURIALS IN EPISCOPAL CEMETERY

A descendant of the Wills family, Mrs. Walter Downing, says that her aunt, Mrs. Melinda Walters Borpy of Somerset, about 1880, visited the Episcopal Cemetery and saw there Millicent Fowler's tombstone then standing. If so, there were burials there some three years before this cemetery was formally established. It might well be that the crowded burial grounds of cholera victims were abandoned and those who did not die of the dread disease were buried in this new spot. Undoubtedly, Captain Fowler was buried there in 1840.

MRS. MARIA BECKLEY

I have not allowed myself many surmises, but it is likely that Mrs. Maria Beckley was the widow of John Beckley, who died in his 50th year, Clerk of the House of Representatives early in May, 1807 (Washington Commonwealth of date of May 7). He was Clerk of the Richmond, Virginia, (Henrico County) Court in 1779, Clerk of the House of Delegates in Virginia, and Clerk of the Virginia Convention for Ratification of the Constitution. Mrs. Beckley does not fit

CAPTAIN JOHN FOWLER

into any of the names in Fayette County records. From 1810 census on a female of her age as given 1820-30 is listed in the home of Captain and Mrs. Fowler. This is in keeping with his well known generosity of the couple and reminds us of another friend of Captain Fowler who must have often been in his mind--John Beckley.

NOTE--Case of Innes vs. Marshall--John Fowler's Deposition. Innes papers, vol. 22, part 2, p. 6-129.

John Fowler and John Bradford summoned to appear before Judges of Mercer Court on the second of March, 1815. The date of summons was January 7, 1815, and 22nd year of Commonwealth, and signed Thomas Allen "to testify on behalf of Harry Innes," plaintiff. From Bath County John Jouett and Cuthbert Banks were summoned. Added to these were Maj. Thomas Bodley Capt. Robert Moseley Col. Crockett W. McKee James Hughes (below copied verbatim, was written in a poor hand and abbreviated. All these later depositions copied hurriedly and in poor handwriting).

6 - 239 - June 4, 1814. Deposition of Capt. John Fowler.

Capt. John Fowler--was member of Convention of 1788 to adopt the Federal Constitution--John Brown wrote to him in favor of the new Constitution--In 1788 first knew the plaintiff as good character as any man--never heard any sentiment against the American Government from plaintiff--lived in Col. Marshall's family--Innes was intimate in the family--thinks the

CAPTAIN JOHN FOWLER

intimacy destroyed by the suit of Wilkinson vs. Marshall--Wilkinson and Col. Marshall lived intimate for several years--for some time after H. Marshall and Wilkinson differed--After H. Marshall became connected, etc., and took part in business, etc., the peace of the neighborhood destroyed.

John Jouett's deposition at same time.

CAPTAIN JOHN FOWLER'S PORTRAIT

Biddle Wilkinson, Esq.

Dear Sir,

The late Captain John Fowler of Lexington (who died the 22nd of August last) a few days before his death requested me to take charge of his portrait and to inform you that he had left it to you as a memento of the great regard he had his "godson." I placed the picture in the care of Daniel Bradford, esq. of Lexington, Kentucky for safe keeping who will retain the same subject to your order.

Very Respectfully Your

Obt Ser

Jas. P. Taylor, Jr.

Newport Sept. 4, 1840

A letter of March 8, 1939, in reply to an inquiry concerning this portrait, from James Wilkinson, Atty. at law, 1835 Canal Bank Building, N. O., states that he never heard of the portrait. He was 83 years old the day he wrote. His father was Joseph Biddle Wilkinson and his grandfather also Joseph Biddle Wilkinson. The grandfather to whom this requested

CAPTAIN JOHN FOWLER

bequest was made was alive in 1840 and lived until about 1864.

Mr. Wilkinson is the author of WILKINSON, SOLDIER AND PIONEER.

1820

CHARLOTTE

A Deed of Emancipation B. U--p. 140

WHEREAS, Catherine or Kitty Haley, Larkin Haley and Samuel Ayres, by their covenant dated 9th March, 1818 conveyed to John Fowler the title to a yellow woman slave named Charlotte, formerly held by Susannah Haley In trust for the purpose of being Emancipated as soon as the said Charlotte should have furnished or paid \$200.00, having formerly paid \$400.00 to said Kitty Haley, Larkin Haley and Samuel Ayres, rep. of Susannah Haley, deceased, and said Ch. having latterly paid the sum of \$200.00 with interest, making the whole sum originally stipulated, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged.

Now, I John Fowler do by these presents emancipate and set free the said Charlotte, a yellow woman, aged about 37 years, and declare that from henceforth the said Charlotte may be considered as a free person to all intents and purposes.

This 30th day of October, 1820.

John Fowler (Seal)

Test.

Chs. Humphreys

Chs. Humphreys, Jr.

C. Veltenair.

CAPTAIN JOHN FOWLER

Catey Haley acknowledges receipt of \$200.00 and the \$400.00 formerly paid, and deed is recorded in regular form.

Nov. Cr. 1820

This Deed of Emancipation from John Fowler, Charlotte was produced in open court and proved by the oaths of Ch. Humphreys, Chs. Humphreys, Jr 2 of the subscribing witnesses, thereto and ordered to be recorded and the same is truly recorded in my office.

J. C. Rodes, C.F.C.

EPILOGUE

Besides the references given in footnotes, many books have been consulted to find any fugitive data on the life of Captain John Fowler. Among these are: histories of Kentucky by Kerr, Johnson, Wilson, and Collins; Perrin's county histories; Wilkinson's Memoirs; Letters of Ann Biddle Wilkinson; American Biographical Dictionary, and many others. Much use was made of the old newspapers, Kentucky Gazette, Reporter, and Observer. The files of the historical magazines of the Filson Club, Kentucky and Virginia societies have been consulted.

The basis of the necessary research has been the original records and deeds of Fayette, Clark, Woodford, Franklin, Jefferson, Logan, Lincoln, Mercer, and Scott counties of Kentucky; and Chesterfield, Henrico, and Amelia counties of Virginia. Among the places visited were: the Census Bureau and Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.; county courthouse and Virginia Archives Department at Richmond; Library of the Filson Club, Louisville; Carnegie and Transylvania libraries, Lexington, Kentucky; Kentucky State Historical Society at Frankfort.

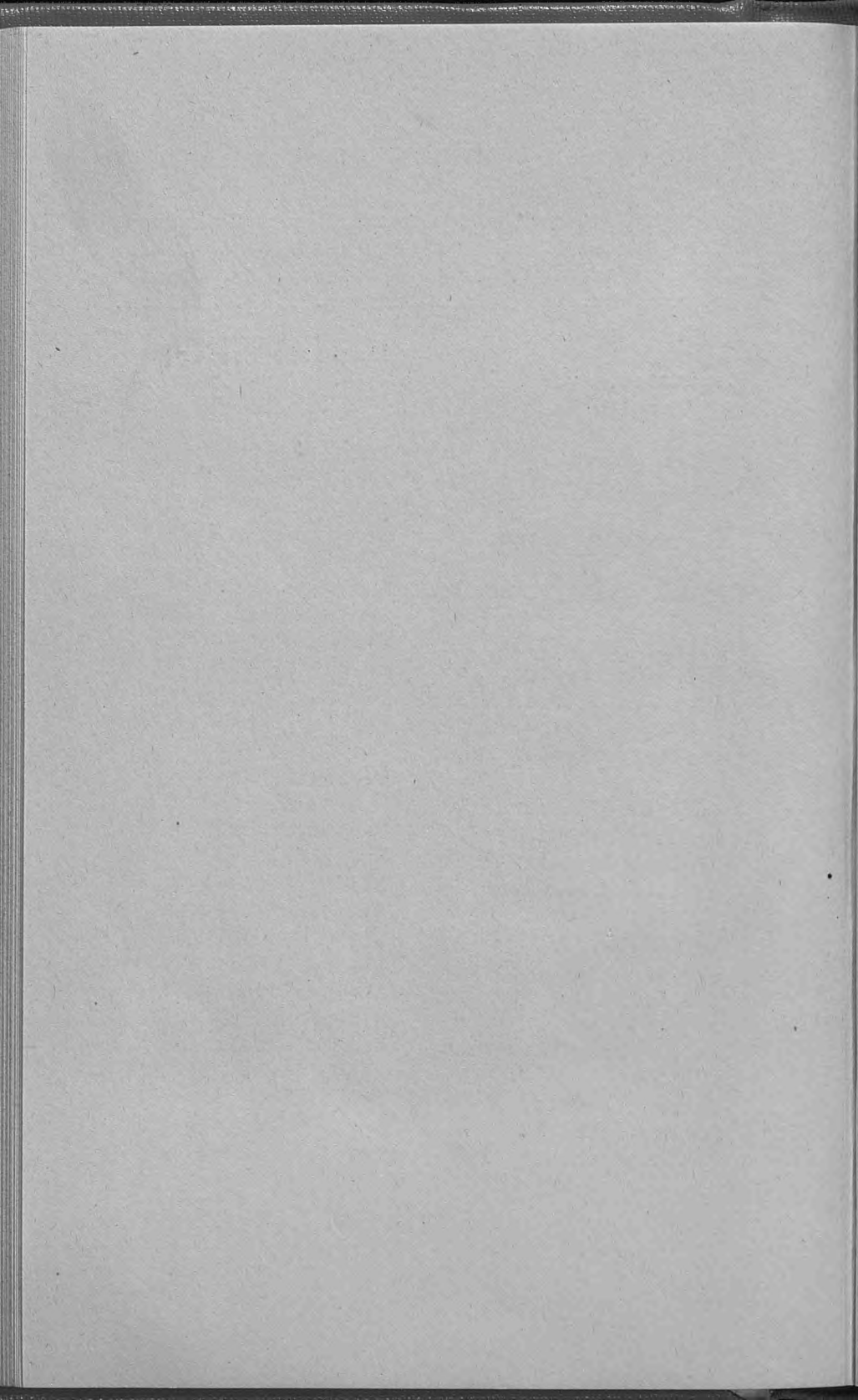
Among those to whom my thanks are due for

CAPTAIN JOHN FOWLER

personal interest and aid are, Mrs. J. T. Cannon, Judge Samuel M. Wilson, Miss Carrie Hunt, Mrs. Charles Norton, Mrs. W. T. Lafferty, Mr. Winston Coleman, Mr. Frank Dunn, and Dr. W. R. Jillson.

Ila Earle Fowler

Lexington, Ky.
October 15, 1942



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