

for the Record

Devoted to Kentucky's State Archives and the Historical Record

Winter 2004

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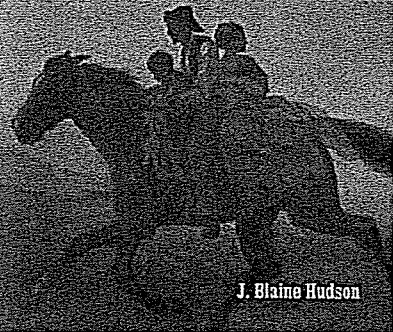
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I N S I D E *Newly Available* *Friends' Awards* *Hidden Research Gems:* *Friends Annual Meeting*
at the *Recognize Exceptional* *Kentucky's* *and*
State Archives *Performance* *Federal Court Records* *Public Archives Symposium*

Fugitive Slaves and the Underground Railroad in the Kentucky Borderland



J. Blaine Hudson



Research on Underground Railroad in Kentucky Featured at 2003 Archives Symposium

Featured speaker at the annual Public Archives Symposium in November was Dr. J. Blaine Hudson, Professor of Pan African Studies and Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, University of Louisville. Hudson spoke about the research for his book, **Fugitive Slaves and the Underground Railroad in the Kentucky Borderland** (McFarland and Company, 2002) and reexamined a story which is becoming better known to Kentuckians and Americans generally, thanks to efforts like his own in recent years. Hudson's book has been called "an important documentary of the movement of fugitive slaves north across the Ohio River and of the network of people who aided them." One reviewer noted that in his book, "history comes alive with accounts of individual fugitives and their experiences, often in their own words," and judging by the number of questions from the capacity audience following his presentation, listeners found it a compelling story.

Georgetown is Site of Friends Annual Meeting, Symposium

Georgetown College's Conference and Training Center was the site of this year's annual business meeting and luncheon in November of the Friends of Kentucky Public Archives, Inc., as well as of the organizations' yearly Public Archives Symposium. At the business meeting, Friends President Paul Coates provided a year in review report, State Archivist Richard Belding discussed major issues facing the Public Records Division, and state and local government officials were recognized for exceptional contributions in the management and preservation of public records in their care. Recognized at this year's meeting with 2003 awards were Auditor of Public Accounts Edward B. Hatchett, Jr. and Barren County Clerk Pam Hodges Browning. Also recognized was a 2002 award winner, Corine Cox Woolums, Woodford County Clerk, who was unable to receive her award last year. Elected to lead the Friends in 2004 were Jim Powers, president; Robin Rader, vice president; Jane-Rives Williams, secretary, and Bill Ellis, treasurer. Newly elected members of the board of directors are Col. Al Alfaro, Betsy Morelock, and David Schroeder.



Hatchett Honored

State Auditor Ed Hatchett expresses his appreciation to the Friends for his award and endorses its efforts to protect and preserve public records in Kentucky.

Check out the KDLA 2003 Annual Report now available online at: <http://www.kdla.ky.gov/AR.htm>

**Archives Research Room
Hours and Closings**

KDLA's Archives Research Room is located at 300 Coffee Tree Road, off State Highway 676 in Frankfort. The Archives Research Room is open to the public from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. It is closed on Saturday, Sunday and on official state holidays.

Ample free parking is provided outside the KDLA building.

Special closings,
Please mark your calendars!

- April 9 (Friday afternoon) Good Friday
- May 31 (Monday) Memorial Day

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Newly Available at the State Archives

The Public Records Division (PRD) has just received an original **Register of Prisoners of the Kentucky State Penitentiary at Frankfort**, dated 1825-1847. This volume was presented to PRD by Mr. Rick Myrtue of Sunrise Beach, Missouri, who had purchased it from an internet auction service. Upon receipt of the book, Mr. Myrtue suspected that it might be a public record and contacted PRD with an offer to transfer the volume to us, asking only for the costs involved in his original purchase. Through a timely gift from the Friends of Kentucky Public Archives to cover these costs it was possible to acquire this record, and it is now available for research use.

The Register contains entries for prisoners incarcerated in the State Penitentiary as punishment for the commission of felonies. Each entry includes the name of the prisoner, date of reception into the prison, term of confinement, crime, date of release (if applicable), date of death (if applicable), date of pardon (if applicable), date of escape (if applicable), and remarks ("served out time," "pardoned," or other brief comments). There are a few entries dated as early as 1825, but most of the volume lists those prisoners received into the institution from 1830 to 1839. The dates of release of those prisoners continue to as late as 1847.

Although the amount of information listed for each prisoner is not extensive, the register still provides valuable insights into the prison system of the era. George Dunbar (alias George Thornton) began serving 10 years for highway robbery in September 1827 but escaped in June 1828. He was brought back in August 1828, only to escape again in September 1833. Brought back once again, he was eventually pardoned in July 1836. William Abrams was sentenced to four years and six months for "stealing slaves" in March 1827, escaped once but was returned and had three more years added to his sentence, and was finally pardoned in 1834. There are several entries for prisoners listed as "free man of color" or "negro," including Martin (no surname listed), who served two years for "aiding slaves to escape."

Prison life was undoubtedly harsh, and the remarks sometimes state "died of typhus" or "died of consumption," or merely "died." If they stayed healthy, most prisoners served out their full terms, there being few instances of early release except through a governor's pardon. Many governors did use their discretionary power in this area quite freely, and a number of the prisoners listed in the Register were recipients of their largesse. As noted above, some prisoners attempted to gain their own early release through escaping, but almost all of them were caught and brought back to the penitentiary sooner or later.

Our current collection of Registers of Prisoners at the Frankfort Penitentiary covers the years 1848-1938, so the newly accessioned volume is an especially valuable addition. Some of the later registers contain more comprehensive information, such as physical descriptions of the prisoners and the county from which they were sent, but the new volume is still an exceptional resource that was previously unavailable for the years 1825-1847.

The Public Records Division and the Friends of Kentucky Public Archives appreciate the efforts of Mr. Myrtue in finding the appropriate home for this important public record.

For The Record
Vol. 5, No. 1
A publication of the
Friends of Kentucky
Public Archives, Inc.
P.O. Box 4224
Frankfort, KY 40604

Officials Recognized

The Friends' annual Awards of Merit presentation underscore the exceptional efforts of state and local government officials to protect and preserve public records in their care. Receiving awards from State Archives Director Richard Belding at this year's annual meeting were 2002 winner Corine Cox Woolums, Woodford County Clerk, left, and right, 2003 winner Pam Hodges Browning, Barren County Clerk. Also receiving a 2003 award was Auditor of Public Accounts Edward B. Hatchett, Jr., shown on page 1.



Hidden Research Gems: Kentucky's Federal Court Records

Available at the Southeast Regional Branch of the National Archives near Atlanta, Georgia, Kentucky's U.S. District Court records are a rich resource, largely overlooked by or unknown to genealogists. Fourteen rolls of microfilm of these records are now available, covering the years 1887-1932, including an index, and containing thousands of naturalization records filed with Kentucky's Western District in Louisville. Each roll costs \$34, and the entire set could be acquired for the Archives Research Room for \$476. Your donations would not only help us add new, complementary sources to our Archives Research Room microfilm collection, but would acquaint our customers with valuable, generally unexplored genealogical sources. Please consider a directed donation today to support purchase of this special collection!



Friends of Kentucky Public Archives, Inc.

Enhancing Research at the State Archives

The Archives Research Room at the State Archives always has equipment or supplemental resource needs for which state funds are not available. This is truer today than ever before, with the state's current fiscal crisis. Private donations have long played a key role in permitting the State Archives to fill these important gaps. Gifts to the Friends are tax deductible. Please make your check payable to: Friends of Kentucky Public Archives, Inc., and mail it to the address on the Friends' membership form, below. We thank all of you who have provided assistance in this way throughout the past year. It is much appreciated!

The Friends of Kentucky Public Archives, Inc., is a not for profit membership organization of private citizens concerned with helping the Public Records Division of Kentucky's Department for Libraries and Archives fulfill its role as a vital information link between people and government. The Friends' organization supports the management, preservation, and use of Kentucky's historic public records and serves as an advocate for the Kentucky State Archives, which the division manages. For further information, contact the Friends at P.O. Box 4224, Frankfort, KY 40604.

Yes, I would like to renew my membership in/become a member of the Friends of Kentucky Public Archives, Inc.

My check for _____ made payable to the Friends of Kentucky Public Archives, Inc., is enclosed. Membership benefits include a quarterly newsletter, a membership pin, and invitations to workshops, special events, the Kentucky Archives Institute, the Public Archives Symposium, and the annual meeting. Gifts to the Friends beyond the basic membership are tax deductible.

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____ Telephone: _____ E-Mail Address: _____

Membership levels: _____ \$15 Individual/Family _____ \$25 Libraries, Genealogical and Historical Societies _____ \$250 Life
 _____ \$50 Sustaining _____ \$1,000 Corporate _____ Gift to the Clark Endowment

Please clip and mail to: Friends of Kentucky Public Archives, Inc., P.O. Box 4224, Frankfort, Kentucky 40604 * We appreciate your support.

Friends members, guests enjoy annual meeting, luncheon, and Public Archives Symposium in Georgetown

