

Remembering the past and the present

Bracken County Sheriff's Department

By: Lynn Darnell, Editor of *The Bracken County News*, published in the May 7, 2009 issue

May is Law Enforcement Memorial Month. Bracken County has been very fortunate in its 213 year existence to have had only four officers killed in the line of duty. Those officers were Deputy Constable John Holton in 1845, Augusta town Marshall Richard D. Lane in 1882, Brooksville Chief of Police Nimrod Showalter in 1915, and Augusta Patrolman Charles W. Campbell in 1938.

Bracken County, the 23rd county organized in the state of Kentucky, was established in 1796 from parts of Mason and Campbell County. It was named for William Bracken, an early pioneer and surveyor who first came to the area in 1771 and later settled here. Bracken County originally encompassed land all the way to southern Nicholas County, north to the Ohio River, west to the Licking River, and east to Dover.

In research information provided by the Bracken County Historical Society, a P. Davis was listed as sheriff of Bracken County in 1801, his signature was found on the back of a summons. He and other Bracken Countians were appointed to the position of Sheriff of Bracken County. In approximately 1850, the position of Sheriff went from an appointed one to an elected one, and was good for a term of four years, with the sheriff being unable to succeed himself. During Mike Nelson's term as sheriff, the law was change to allow for a sheriff to succeed himself, and Mike was subsequently re-elected to four more terms as sheriff. He served as sheriff for 20 years until his retirement at the end of 2006, when present sheriff Charles "Chuck" Rechten was elected.

Sheriff Rechten began his law enforcement career in 1973. He graduated from the Cincinnati Police Academy and served on the Cincinnati Police Department until 1982 when he became Commonwealth Detective for Bracken, Mason, and Fleming Counties. He served as Commonwealth Detective until being elected sheriff in November of 2006. He was always interested in police work and thought it would be the best use of the talents given him. He has always had a desire to stop someone from profiting at other peoples expense and catching people who think they are getting away with something. Sheriff Rechten graduated from Covington Catholic High School in 1969 and is the son of the late Peggy and William Rechten. He and wife, Heather, live in Brooksville. He is the father of one daughter, Nicki Jones, and two sons, Chris and Gus, and has one granddaughter, Madison Jones.

Sheriff Rechten presently has three full time deputies, Chris Baker, Johnnie Mac Riley, Jr., and Herb Rumford. After working for the Internal Revenue Service in Cincinnati Deputy Baker made a career change to law enforcement to help the public. In 2004 he graduated from the Department of Criminal Justice Training Center on the campus of Eastern Kentucky University in Richmond. In December of 2008, he became a sheriff's deputy after serving on the Augusta Police Department for four years. He and wife, Andi, have two children, Zaine and Paige. He is a graduate of Holmes High School and is the son of Wanda and Buddy Baker.

Johnnie Mac Riley, Jr., began his law enforcement career in 1996 with the Falmouth Police Department after graduating from the Department of Criminal Justice Training Center in Richmond. Deputy Riley served on the Cynthia and Mount Olivet Police Departments before joining the Brooksville Police Department in April of 2003. A year later he joined the Sheriff's Department. He is a 1984 graduate of Bracken County High School and the son of Joann and Johnnie M. Riley, Sr. He is married to Lisa M. Riley and has a son A.J. Deputy Riley is currently on active military duty with the Army National Guard's 299th Chemical Company out of Maysville and will be deploying to Iraq in the summer. He joined the Army after high school in 1985 and is currently an E-4.

Before joining law enforcement, Herb Rumford enlisted in the US Marine Corps on May 13, 1968 and served in Vietnam from May 30, 1969 to April 7, 1970. He was honorably discharged

on May 12, 1974. He became a law enforcement officer in 1985 because he always liked helping people and graduated in 1988 from the Department of Criminal Justice Training Center in Richmond. He has always tried to make a difference in some peoples' lives, especially the younger generation. Rumford completed his GED in 1984 and is the son of the late Herbert and Marjorie Rumford. He is married to the former Peggy High. He has two daughters, Tammy Williams and Maranda Peoples, one son, Herbert Rumford, Jr., and three stepchildren, Sandra Strunk, Travis Golden, and David Nickerson. He has three granddaughters, Jordan Rumford, Natasha Williams, and Makala Rumford, and three grandsons, Evan Peoples, Shane Williams, Jr., and Bradford Peoples.

Serving as the Bracken County Sheriff's Clerk is Janet Rankin Morris. She began her career in law enforcement as a part time bookkeeper for the Sheriff's Department in 2007 before taking over as clerk in January of 2009. She is a 1975 graduate of Mason County High School and the daughter of Lela Rankin and the late Hubert Rankin. She and husband, Dean Morris, live in Augusta and have two children, Kristin Layne Morris age 24 and Bradley Dean Morris age 21.

The Bracken County Sheriff's office is open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays and from 8 a.m. to 12 noon on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Anyone needing to do so may reach the Sheriff's Department at 606-735-3233 during business hours or by calling the Bracken County Dispatch at 606-735-2700. Officers can be contacted by email from their website, www.brackencountysheriff.com.

Records provided by the Bracken County Historical Society's 3rd Floor Girls on Bracken Countians appointed Sheriff. They were: Richard S. Thomas, William Woodward, Isaac Day, R. (Rudolph) Black, Samuel Meranda, John McDowell (reported to have hung slave Betty), William O. Blackerby, and J.T. McKibben.

The following sheriffs and dates of service were obtained through Sheriff's Bond Book 1878-1894 and from Payments to Treasurer - State of Kentucky by the Bracken County Sheriff found in the Bracken County Historical Society's 3rd floor archives: 1869 J.W. Bowman, 1870 George L. Bradford, 1874 E. Hamm Jr., January 1878 Sidney A. Donovan, July 1878 George L. Bradford, 1879 George S. Adamson, January 1883 H.M. Hargett, August 1883 W.J. Irwin, 1889 W.J. Hook, December 1892 Thomas Sheehy, 1896 G. Henry Fronk, November 1896 Maurice Hook, April 1900 Robert Breeze, 1902 B.F. McAtee, December 1905 Joshua Cummins, December 1909 Thomas R. Robertson, 1914 L.M. Brothers, and 1919 C.F. Ernest.

The following sheriffs and dates of service were obtained through election records found in the County Clerk's office: 1922 Everett Moore, 1926 George Gibson, 1930 Brady Case, 1934 Henry E. Wood, 1938 W. R. Boughman, 1942 R. A. Poage, 1946 Tom Kinney, 1950, Hamer K. Jett, 1954 Ralph T. Dean, 1958 Kenneth W. Jett, 1962 Robert "Bob" Kelsch, 1966 Ralph Dean, 1970 Dwayne "Pie" Jett, 1974 Roy A. Jett, 1978 Dwayne "Pie" Jett, 1982 Kenneth H. Garrison and 1986 Mike Nelson.