

OPINIONS

The opinion page does not reflect the views of the KyNewsGroup.

A Tribute to Charles Mattox - Heaven is a Lot like Kentucky

THE CAPTIVITY OF JAMES BEATH AND CUTHBERT STEELE

Editor's Note: At the suggestion of many readers, we will be re-running Charles Mattox's columns within our publications. Follow along and enjoy his legendary work at capturing our local history.

June 1780, in present day Nicholas County.

The large buck deer bounded across the meadow, and James Beath dropped him with a well-placed shot through the large deer's heart.

Beath was among the best hunters in the small, fortified station known across the northern Kentucky frontier as John Strode's Station (present day Winchester, Ky.), and nearly all the hunters sought this company when the supply of meat ran low.

"Aye, Jimmy, a mighty fine shot," Beath's friend Cuthbert "Cud" Steele told his friend as he gave him a slap on the back. Beath's two other companions; 16-year-old Van Swearingin and Jonathon Orchard agreed.

The four were just west of the Licking River and the Lower Blue Licks Spring. The countryside was beautiful, and the wildflowers were in full summer blossom.

The four hunters tethered their horses and walked to where the deer lay. They carried their muskets and butchering knives as they went. Within five minutes of working together the men skinned and quartered the deer. When they sent Orchard back for the horses to load up, a gunshot dropped him.

Shawnee warriors were in their midst.

Beath grabbed his musket, but was instantly shot in the shoulder. Steele raised both hands palms outward.

Van Swearingin ran.

The group of a dozen or so Shawnee warriors laughed at the foolish youngster-as he was surrounded and there was no possible hope for escape, but after several of their shots failed to hit their constantly dodging target, who was only

a few feet away, they became more concerned. After nearly 30 full seconds, Swearingin finally ran directly between two warriors and leapt across a deep ravine, and although he dropped his musket in the process, he did miraculously manage to affect his escape and soon disappeared completely into the lush forest.

The warriors were not happy with letting the young prisoner escape.

Their entire mission could be compromised. They scalped the lifeless body of Orchard and began tormenting Beath and Steele, and questioning them about the young lad who escaped.

Through the interrogation Beath and Steele learned that the group was a small foraging party from a larger British and Native American force that were marching toward Isaac Ruddle's Station, also commonly called John Hinkston's Fort.

Colonel Henry Bird (Byrd), commander of the British 8th Regiment, led the enemy force. After firing two cannon shots at Ruddle's Station and negotiating several times with the renegade white frontiersman Simon Girty, who was among the British and Indian force, the inhabitants agreed to surrender on the condition that they would be protected.

The British and Canadian rangers could not stop the various Native Americans from harming the defenseless inhabitants, and some accounts state as many as 20 men, women and children were killed on the spot before Col. Bird restored order.

The group then advanced on John Martin's Station, located along Stoner Creek. The inhabitants of that station also surrendered.

Over 430 Kentuckians were

taken prisoner and force-marched northward where many prisoners were divided out among various Native American tribes. Many other prisoners eventually made it to British garrisons at Detroit and Montreal.

Beath and Steele were taken to a Shawnee village; some accounts say the village was Piqua.

Beath was forced to carry heavy loads of plunder on his wounded shoulder throughout the journey, but Steele flatly refused and when a warrior kicked him for his insubordination, he punched the warrior in the face and knocked him down.

The action nearly cost him his life.

Beath continually thought of his wife and their five children and his desire to see them again compelled him to continue when the fatigue of his journey drained him.

Upon arrival at the village both men were forced to run the gauntlet.

Beath was repeatedly struck on his wounded shoulder and nearly collapsed from the pain.

Steele deliberately fought his way along one side of villagers and then back along the other side of the gauntlet, taking a terrible beating as he went, but showing fearlessness in the eyes of his enemy.

Some warriors wanted to burn the two men at the stake.

Others were impressed with their bravery.

It is known that the Shawnee Chief Blue Jacket was present during the debate on what to do with the men.

Eventually, they were adopted into the Shawnee tribe as brothers, though they did not like the thought of being away from Kentucky.

Both returned to Kentucky

after three years, as did many of the surviving captives of Ruddle's and Martin's Stations.

Beath never forgave the Shawnee for the pain and humiliation they subjected him too and he held them responsible for the loss of one of his children who died while he was gone. Beath's brother-in-law, John Douglas, was killed at the Battle of Battle Run in southern Fleming County in August 1782. The widow Douglas and the presumed widow Beath lived together with a total of eight children to care for and their hardships were many until the "ghost" of Jimmy Beath returned home to them.

James Beath would never

forgive the Shawnee.

In 1787 Beath would be among a group of frontiersmen who would capture the legendary chief Blue Jacket. Beath would treat the Shawnee leader with as much cruelty as he had been treated with, especially as they traveled through Nicholas County.

But that, too, is another story, dear reader.

For now, just know that a man named James "Jimmy" Beath often walked the landscape of Nicholas County.

And he walked pretty tall.

It should also be known that Van Swearingin survived after being lost in the woods for seven days before finally being saved by a hunter from

Fort Boonesboro.

"He was the poorest looking creature you ever seen," his friend Lazy Bill Clinkenbeard would say to Rev. John Shane in an interview years later of his friends appearance when he went to fetch his buddy home to Strode's Station. "The only thing Van had to eat in those seven days was the hind quarter of a squirrel he had stolen from a hawk."

Lazy Bill and Jimmy Beath would often ride together along the Kentucky frontier of Nicholas County.

Van Swearingin would accompany them.

If the Good Lord is willing, we'll also ride with them in future columns.

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
BATH CIRCUIT COURT
DIVISION I
ACTION NO. 25-CI-90105

PENNYMAC LOAN SERVICES, LLC PLAINTIFF

v. NOTICE OF COMMISSIONER'S SALE

CHRISTIAN ETHAN RAY SAYLOR, ET AL DEFENDANTS

By virtue of a Judgment and Order of Sale entered in Bath Circuit Court on October 23, 2025, to raise the sum of \$151,111.91, interest, fees, and the costs of sale, I will expose for sale to the highest and best bidder at the Courthouse door, in Owingsville, Bath County, Kentucky, on Saturday, February 7, 2026, at the hour of 12:00 p.m., the following described property:
Property Address: 27 Bait Shop Road, Salt Lick, Ky 40371
PVA Map Number: 080-20-06-09.02

BEING THE SAME PROPERTY conveyed to Christian Ethan Ray Saylor and wife Nichele Saylor, by deed from Clifford M. Casey and April Lynn Curtis, dated July 31, 2023, of record in Deed Book 261, Page 39, Bath County Clerk's Office.
This property is sold subject to all real estate taxes, easements, and off-sales of record; and reference is hereby made to the office of the Bath County Clerk.

The terms of the sale shall be ten (10%) percent cash or check at the time of sale and the balance on credit of thirty (30) days with privilege of the successful bidder to pay in full at the time of sale. The successful bidder requesting credit must execute bond with approved surety bearing interest at the rate of twelve (12%) per annum from date of sale until paid, which bond shall have the full force and effect of a Judgment and should execution be issued thereon, no replevy shall be allowed. A lien shall exist and shall be retained by the Commissioner on the property sold as security for the purchase price.

/s/ Earl Rogers III
Hon. Earl Rogers III, Master Commissioner
Bath County
Campbell, Rogers & Stacy, PLLC
Attorneys at Law
154 Flemingsburg Road
Morehead, KY 40351
(606) 783-1012
(606) 784-8926 fax

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Most Rowan County elected Officials and their staffs, have earned our respect, trust, and appreciation.

Next week we will return to a half page format for our ads printed in the Bath/Menifee, Fleming and Rowan County newspapers. We appreciate your continuing input and support.

They are still telling stories, we are told by our readers, but every word of these ads is provably true. What will your excuse be to the Rowan County Taxpayers when the right person finally reads these ads?

Will a Senior United States District Court Judge order the Rowan County Fiscal Court and Rowan County Attorney "Taxpayers" to pay MILLION\$ for knowingly utilizing a false affidavit in its defense of a federal lawsuit it could have won legitimately? The aggravating factor (legal term) is the multitude of public reminders the Fiscal Court and County Attorney ignored, or failed to face, considering the devastating damages they inflicted, and failed to make restitution.

Both the Lower Court, and 6th Circuit, believed the content of the affidavit, as evidenced in their explanations of their rulings. Did 3 high powered Lexington (Fayette County) Attorneys lie with no apparent motive, or did one Morehead (Rowan County) Attorney lie with obvious motives?

It is our belief that the fraud committed will toll the statute of limitations in this matter.

***\$1,185,000.00 CASH REWARD**

A bonus will be added too, if you bring us the proof of what we know is the truth.

Do **Most** people realize that **ATTORNEY (C)** accurately described the Fiscal Court's reason for denying our Variance as POLITICS/PAYBACK?

"Would you let someone build a fence on your property?"

-- (Their property, but 10 feet of our front lawn)

Fiscal Court

Bluegrass Trust

Which the county has NEVER "mowed, weeded, or maintained" (or 90% of the rest of the properties, as well).

Do **Most** people realize that **COUNTY ATTORNEY NOW DENIES** saying "POLITICS & PAYBACK"?

When County Attorney denies saying Politics and Payback, and having signed an affidavit to that effect, do **Most** people realize that Lexington **Attorney (D)** put in **WRITING** that Attorney (A) confirmed that **COUNTY ATTORNEY** made the statement that **HE NOW DENIES** making?

BRAVO 7 - F.D.N.Y. - LEADING TO THE TRUTH - 911 - ALSO

false testimony

Paid for by Bluegrass Dutch Trust

PLEASE CONTACT BY TEXT OR CALL - (702) 591-2799

* For U.S. District Court admissible evidence of