

The Morrow Saga/ by Charles Hartley, local historian

Part 6 -- To Court We Go

Nathan Morrow enlisted in the Union Army on his birthday, July 7, 1862. Following three years service, including his capture and reparation, he finally mustered out on August 4, 1865 at Louisville almost a month after his 21st birthday. A short train trip brought him back to Shepherdsville.

When he and his brother William had enlisted, they had both still been wards of their guardian, their Uncle Will Shane who had complete control of their estates.

After Will Shane died in December 1862, W. B. M. Brooks was appointed in January as administrator of his estate, and J. M. Shanklin, George C. Shanklin and R. K. Summers were appointed to appraise his personal estate and any slaves, and report back to the court.

On the same day, both William and Nathan Morrow apparently appeared before Judge William R. Thompson and agreed to have Sheriff Wesley Phelps assume their guardianships. We know that Nathan's unit was on duty at Nashville at that time, and it may be that both brothers received leave and briefly traveled by train to Shepherdsville.

It didn't take the appraisers long to list the little that William Shane had possessed. On January 26th it was recorded in the county will book that he had several notes due him by different people, some household and farming implements, and some livestock, much of which was left in the hands of his widow. No slaves were listed, and no real estate either.

Finding that Shane had little estate to manage, W. B.

M. Brooks filed his motion in April to resign as executor, and had fully settled his account as administrator by the middle of May when the court ordered the sheriff to assume that responsibility.

Brooks had sold what little was available, raising \$514.95 in sales. He had collected on notes from James Maddox valued at \$33; and after paying court fees, showed a balance on hand of \$544.95.

When Sheriff Phelps examined the Shane estate records he found that the assets of the estate would amount to about \$750 if all the debts due Shane could be collected, but was doubtful of some.

He also gathered together the records Shane had kept for his wards, and quickly discovered that Shane owed his wards considerably more than his estate was worth. As a legal matter Shane's estate needed to be sued to obtain what was owed to the Morrrows' estates, and he turned to local lawyer, and current State Senator Richard H. Field to handle it.

In June, and on behalf of Phelps, Field petitioned Bullitt Circuit Court in a suit against Ann E. Shane, William Shane's widow and their children Susan Belle Shane and Phillip Lee Shane, to appear before court and permit Shane's estate to be audited and his assets be distributed. Under court order, the cause was submitted to the master commissioner Charles R. Samuels.

After balancing Shane's debits against his credits, Samuels reported that there was a balance of \$493.42 that could be credited to Shane's indebted-

ness to his wards.

Phelps next petitioned the court to appoint a commissioner to certify his settlement of Shane's guardianship of the Morrrows. This was done with W. R. Thompson certifying in April 1864 that there was a balance due by Shane's estate to the Morrrows of \$1217.71.

While we have no direct evidence of this, it seems likely that someone was keeping the Morrrows advised of these proceedings, and before returning to Bullitt County, Nathan wrote to William who was then stationed in Texas, and together they agreed that they needed to hire an attorney to represent them.

Two of the best lawyers in the county were brothers Richard H. Field and Abraham Hamilton Field, and the boys agreed to approach R. H. Field to represent them. Field, a former slaveholder himself, and the state senator representing Bullitt County, had remained loyal to the Union during the war, and understood the intricacies of their estates.

On August 10th, Field filed a petition in equity in the Bullitt Circuit Court in which William and Nathan were plaintiffs and the various defendants would be Wesley Phelps, curator of the estate of William Shane; and Woodford McDowell, David L. Brooks, Alonzo C. Kinnison, Henry B. North, and W. B. M. Brooks, the various sureties of Shane's guardianship of the boys. They also intended to include the administrator of James H. Anderson, recently deceased, as soon as one was appointed.

The petition outlined the

history of the guardianship, detailed Shane's first settlement presented to the county court in January 1858, and challenged certain aspects of it.

In his 1858 settlement, Shane had claimed to have received as income a total of \$726.90, and to have expended for the wards a total of \$972.45, and claiming that their estate was indebted to him for the difference of \$245.55. In their petition, they charged that it was illegal for him to charge that sum to them.

They also objected to a credit allowed Shane for \$113.85, purporting to be for "necessaries furnished including \$50 paid Wilson for which voucher is to be furnished." They claimed that no voucher could be found and asked that it be disallowed.

A third objection was given to \$116.40 that had been received by their mother from the estate of their father, and which had been claimed as income by Shane. They charged that it "formed no part of the income of their estate received by their guardian and should not have been expended by their guardian."

Field had wisely included each of Shane's guardian sureties as defendants, as responsibility for the balance of what was owed William and Nathan Morrow would come from them, and it needed to be sorted out as to who owed how much.

Henry B. North was the first to reply, saying that he owed nothing as the guardian bond he had signed was blank and invalid. This was the bond

signed to replace A. C. Kinnison as surety.

Wesley Phelps replied to the court that he had carried forward the balances found in William Shane's 1858 settlement, and was not responsible for any errors that might have been in them.

David L. Brooks denied that there were any errors in Shane's settlement, and further claimed that since he did not sign the North bond, he was not longer a surety for Shane.

Woodford McDowell, who had been replaced as surety by Brooks, Anderson and Kinnison, claimed that there was no cause for action against him.

Alonzo C. Kinnison claimed to have been released as surety by the bond signed by North, as shown in county court order book records.

And Susan Anderson, sister of J. H. Anderson and his administratrix, claimed that there were no errors in Shane's settlement, and that the release of Kinnison from the surety bond was a release for Anderson as well.

But in August 1866, Field moved the court to set aside his clients' petition, and that they be given permission to file an amended petition. It seems that they had just learned of the bequests of Theodocia Purcell, and needed to include this in their suit against the sureties.

Next time we will continue with this amended petition, and the court's decision.

Witherspoon selected PV police chief

BY STEPHEN THOMAS
THE PIONEER NEWS
PIONEER VILLAGE
— J.C. Witherspoon has served 20 years in law enforcement, joining the Pioneer Village Police Department in 2016.

Witherspoon has worked most of the jobs involving a police department, including patrol, detective, communications and administration.

The last six months have been different even for Witherspoon. He served as PVPD assistant chief under chief Dave Greenwell, then as interim chief while Greenwell dealt with ongoing health issues.

The interim title was dropped by mayor Gary Hatcher following a letter of resignation provided by Greenwell, official as of Feb. 6.

Witherspoon, a Louisville native and long-time Bullitt County resident, was officially announced publicly as chief by Hatcher during the city council's February business meeting.

According to Witherspoon, dropping the interim titled allowed him to begin implementing police services under his own direction. One of his most immediate ideas was increasing patrols.

Witherspoon assured the council that police cruisers would be more prevalent throughout the city limits, with a handful of council

members agreeing that they had already noticed.

Greenwell, a former Bullitt County sheriff, was selected as chief by Hatcher in 2024, following the death of chief D.J. Reynolds. Witherspoon was promoted to assistant chief at that time.

Witherspoon provided his first police report to the council as chief, acknowledging 143 service calls by the department during the month of January.

In other business: - Pioneer Village was the first Bullitt County city to meet following the issuance of a proposed comprehensive plan from the Bullitt County Planning and Zoning Commission.

City clerk Micheale McCauley said the commission wanted city officials to approve the objectives, goals, and future land use listed within the plans.

Due to the size of the plan, at 71 pages, city attorney Mark Edison said he would review it to pinpoint the goals and objectives. He would send a list to McCauley to share with the council members.

The council voted unanimously to table an approval vote until the next business meeting.

The council unanimously accepted two bids for upgrades to the city's walking park.

A bid was accepted by RLH Reynolds to place a 225-foot sidewalk that

would connect the park to Acacia Drive at a cost of \$69,247.

The council selected the bid over other bids from Egart Concrete (\$72,985) and Maddox Construction (\$74,654).

The other project, to place a pavilion, received only one bid. The council accepted an estimate from Couch Construction of \$19,500.

- To grow something, you first have to plant a seed. City resident Russell Wilson did just that, addressing the council about the possibility of providing a community garden.

Wilson suggested a 100x40-foot space designated in the new walk park that the city would agree to water, while also providing a storage shed for various tools and equipment.

"The garden can be only accessed by the city of Pioneer Village," Wilson suggested.

According to Wilson, each participating resident would be responsible for their own sections and to remove debris. He suggested coordinating fall cleanup dumpster days with the end of the growing season. He added that no illegal plants, chemicals, or pesticides would be allowed.

Wilson requested funds from the city to provide a shed, water, and about 70 yards of topsoil. He estimated the soil cost at \$3,250.

Hatcher said the



Mayor Gary Hatcher with new police chief J.C. Witherspoon

suggested shed would not stay in place due to its size and not withstanding wind storms. Council member Shane Nichols suggested a deck box.

Council member Doreen Garrett suggested tabling the issue until the next meeting, allowing for further research. Wilson said if the council waited, the cost for the topsoil and other items could increase.

Hatcher mentioned that if the council decided to allow the garden, they would need to put Wilson in charge of it. He said that residents

would need to bring their own tools at least until a storage location was determined.

Council member Jim Burke said the city could get the soil now to get started. He suggested adding a sign that posted all rules.

The council approved the 100x40 garden location, with Wilson in charge, and to provide six inches of topsoil, by a 5-1 vote, with Garrett in opposition.

- As of the February business meeting, McCauley reported 12 delinquent city property taxes totaling \$2,452.45.

She said a second

certified letter would be sent to property owners during the first week of March. The next step for the city will be to sell liens on the properties.

- McCauley mentioned that the city has a new website location, cityofpioneervillage.com.

The city also has a new working email address, pioneervillage1974@gmail.com.

- The next Pioneer Village City Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 25, 7 pm, at Becknell Hall on Summitt Drive. The public is invited to attend.

Looking for a unique place to visit close to home?

Check out the treasures, including bound volumes of

The Pioneer News dating back to the early 1980s, at the Bullitt County History Museum.

It is open weekdays in the courthouse.

the Bullitt County Courthouse.

The history museum recently celebrated its 20th anniversary in the courthouse.

There will be special activities during Spring Break for visitors to participate in. There might even be a prize for the best scavenger hunter.

Watch the March 27 The Pioneer News for the details.