

Opinion

A father's love still stands beneath the creeping green carpet over Kentucky history

By
Emily Burton Sherman



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I slowed down on the last mile, giving the ghosts following me time to disperse. The forest was quiet but never still and I doubted I was really alone. My hike near Kentucky Lake that afternoon had already startled a lone coyote, a meandering family of skunks and a few unimpressed deer.

I'd expected to run into other hikers, had brought a bag to pick up the trash people trailed behind them on their excursions down dirt paths, but I hadn't expected to catch the gleam of white peaking between the trees on a hillside near the lakeshore.

The afternoon sun slanted through a ring of yellow poplar and maple, walnut saplings and a mass of wild grapevine. A white cross of broken PVC pipe was just visible at the crest of the hill, but there was no trail to the top. Still, a road sign beckoned and the climb was mostly clear of underbrush. An inexplicable black trash barrel marked the turnoff. I was three miles deep on a long trail

and far past any paved roads. Neither the trash barrel nor the plastic cross matched the hike's expectations.

The cemetery pre-dated the lake by enough years that any etched names had eroded into smears on the few remaining small, square gravestones. Still, I brushed away a bit of moss in hopes of identifying whose fairy ring I'd stumbled upon. The entrance sign said "Vickers Cemetery" under the care of volunteers with Between the Rivers Inc.

Fieldstones and wooden grave markers were popular in the 1800s when much of the Vickers family buried here had died. Several fieldstones still stuck out from the bramble marching over the hill. Someone more recently had tried

to mark the graves with PVC crosses, but they had also fallen sideways and broken.

Family records for the Vickers are available on a variety of websites and presumably in county records for the more adventurous. But I wasn't sure who I sat with that afternoon, only that their plots were guarded by an enormous four-pronged tulip poplar that had likely started growing there as Hooverilles grew in Central Park.

Among the rambling green of wild sorrel and Virginia creeper a few rough headstones still listed askew and nameless. A short records search afterwards unearthed some of their names - Joel Vickers, his wife Irene Mitchusson Vickers, her nephew Mark Mitchell and an aunt, Sarah Gardner. Or that's the story you get when you scratch the surface digitally. Few of them have a marker let alone a true headstone to verify their identities and connections.

Yet one resident still stood out in family records - Joel and Irene's daughter Mary Ann Vickers Clark. She had been a

young bride, married less than five months, when she caught the bloody flux. Dysentery.

Today we fight back with antibiotics and Pedialite. In 1853, Mary Ann would have likely been given thin broth or tea made from dried blackberry roots, syrup of Ipecac, and if her family could access it, laudanum. If not, maybe some brandy to ease the pain of the agonizing stomach cramps.

Nothing worked. Mary Ann died at 22, leaving only her widower behind. It was April of 1853, just when she would have started planting potatoes in the family garden.

Google's AI system Gemini - admittedly a poor source - noted with finality that, "her husband [John Clark] later remarried in Trigg County to continue his own family line. As a result, Mary Ann's legacy remains tied strictly to her parents, Joel and Irene, inside the small family plot at Vickers Cemetery."

Along my path homeward I passed the wide barren rootballs of wooden old men who had fallen into the winding

creekbed after their feet had eroded out from under them. Their trunks might have altered the current's path but certainly did not stop it. There is no stopping the progress of the waterway. Yet they left their mark, however temporarily.

If anything can be said of the Vickers family after so many years sinking deeper into a forgotten hill on the edge of Land Between the Lakes, let it be that they remembered one another long after the world had forgotten their homesteads. Let it be said that they likely fought every day to build a life for themselves on land we now take for granted.

Let it be said that they loved their children.

I discovered Mary Ann's resting place on a Father's Day weekend

when a phone call to my own father had to suffice as a personal connection for the time being. Yet the stillness and joy of the cemetery followed me home. Here was a family at peace, in a place as close to heaven as one could get on a clear Kentucky afternoon. Beneath the creeping green waves slowly reclaiming space, there remained a poignant reminder of a father's devotion.

Joel Vickers died at least a decade or more after his daughter Mary Ann, yet was laid to rest beside her. He is still with her today. History has nearly forgotten their names but it doesn't matter. They haven't forgotten each other.

And the oaks around them continue to grow true.

OPINION DISCLAIMER:

The views and opinions expressed in columns and letters to the editor are those of the individuals quoted and do not necessarily reflect the views or position of this publication or its affiliates.

BUDGET APPROPRIATIONS ORDINANCE ORDINANCE NUMBER 06-1-26

AN ORDINANCE RELATING TO THE ANNUAL BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR JULY 1, 2026 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2027 for the City of Drakesboro, Kentucky.

WHEREAS, a budget proposal and message was presented to the legislative body on the 21st day of May, 2026; AND,

WHEREAS, a public hearing was held on the proposed budget on the 21st day of May, 2026.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED BY THE LEGISLATIVE BODY OF DRAKESBORO, KENTUCKY THAT THE FOLLOWING BUDGET IS ADOPTED FOR THE FISCAL YEAR June 15th, 2026 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2027 AND THE AMOUNTS STATED ARE APPROPRIATED FOR THE PURPOSES INDICATED.

	General Fund	Municipal Road Aid	LGEAF	Other Fund	Totals
REVENUE					
Taxes	\$ 58,165.00				\$ 58,165.00
Utility Assistance Project	\$ 3,000.00				\$ 3,000.00
Charges for Service				\$ 1,169,662.00	\$ 1,169,662.00
Intergovernment Revenue	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 10,200.00	\$ 4,000.00		\$ 21,700.00
Transfer In	\$ 2,210.00		\$ 8,200.00		\$ 8,200.00
Unappropriated Funds /prior year				\$ -	\$ -
Miscellaneous	\$ 4,800.00				\$ 4,800.00
Total Revenue	\$ 75,675.00	\$ 10,200.00	\$ 12,200.00	\$ 1,169,662.00	\$ 1,267,737.00
EXPENDITURES					
General Government	\$ 66,975.00	\$ 10,200.00	\$ 12,200.00		\$ 89,375.00
Utility Assistance					
Project CV-#20C-074	\$ 3,000.00				\$ 3,000.00
Fire Department	\$ 4,500.00				\$ 4,500.00
Park Department	\$ 1,200.00				\$ 1,200.00
Water Department				\$ 261,807.00	\$ 261,807.00
Sewer Department				\$ 143,931.00	\$ 143,931.00
Gas Department				\$ 705,074.00	\$ 705,074.00
Alcohol Beverage Control				\$ 58,850.00	\$ 58,850.00
Total Expenditures	\$ 75,675.00	\$ 10,200.00	\$ 12,200.00	\$ 1,169,662.00	\$ 1,267,737.00

DATE OF FIRST PUBLIC READING May 21, 2026.
PUBLICLY READ AND ADOPTED ON SECOND READING May 21, 2026
ADOPTED THIS 15th Day of June, 2026
Approved BY Eddie Brake Mayor
ATTEST Karenton Stoudemire, City Clerk

This Ordinance shall be in effect upon publication as required by KRS Chapter 424.

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Leader-News

ORDINANCE NO. 26-02

AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING THE ANNUAL BUDGET FOR THE FISCAL YEAR

WHEREAS, an annual budget proposal and message have been prepared and delivered to the legislative body; and,

WHEREAS, the legislative body has reviewed such budget proposal and modifications have been made accordingly

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY the City of Powderly, Kentucky as follows:

SECTION ONE: That the annual budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026 and ending June 30, 2027 is adopted as set forth herein:

	General Fund	Police	Roads/ Sev	Select/Building	ABC	Sewer	Total
Revenue	409,015.00						409,015.00
General Fund	409,015.00						409,015.00
Police		17,605.00					17,605.00
Sewer Department						203,421.00	203,421.00
Roads/Severance			25,006.00				25,006.00
Select/Building				33,010.00			33,010.00
ABC					16,000.00		16,000.00
Total Revenue							704,057.00
Expenditures							
General	390,800.00						390,800.00
Police		11,500.00					11,500.00
Sewer Department						187,650.00	187,650.00
Roads/Severance			16,000.00				16,000.00
Select/Building				40,000.00			40,000.00
ABC					15,000.00		15,000.00
Total Expenditures							660,950.00

SECTION TWO: This ordinance becomes effective immediately upon passage and publication as required by law.

DATE OF FIRST READING: May 19, 2026.
PUBLICLY READ AND ADOPTED ON SECOND READING: June 16, 2026.
ADOPTED THIS 16th DAY OF June 2020

ATTEST: Amber Oates, City Clerk
 Bobby Crager, Mayor

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