

THE HOPEFUL ENCLAVE
BOONE COUNTY, KY.
1805-1920

THE FREDERICK TANNER ESTATE
1833

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FRANKFORT, KENTUCKY
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THE HOPEFUL ENCLAVE

I end with a tribute to the land of my ancestors. A land that has changed beyond recognition. A land of family farms which has become one of shopping malls, restaurants, motels, factories, office buildings and residential complexes. Its meadows have become six-lane highways and hundreds of acres of paved parking lots.

For more than a century and a quarter the area evolved slowly in accordance with changes in agricultural practices. Then, in the course of my lifetime, it was overrun by alien forces and a way of life disappeared.

This land of my ancestors was a triangular area of perhaps ten square miles with its apex at the Town of Florence, loosely bounded by the roads to Burlington and Union with its base near Gunpowder Creek. I prefer to call it the "Hopeful Enclave". Hopeful Lutheran Church, on the road connecting the two perimeter roads, was the focal point in its early years. Now, with its adjoining cemetery, is about the only reminder of its past.

It is especially significant to me because I was born therein and lived in or near its borders; both sets of grandparents and countless other ancestors and relatives lived there also. My parents were married there on a June evening in 1911. My grandmother was stricken and died while attending an evening service. My parents, all my grandparents, my brother, most of my aunts and uncles, great-grandparents and many other relatives are buried there.

It was here that, as a child, that I encountered a moving experience at a revival. A thunderstorm took out the electricity and our only light

was flashes from outside, followed by thunder. The evangelist burst into "Nearer My God to Thee" and we all joined him. The storm subsided and several car lights were directed through the open windows. The service was completed in their faint light.

Beginning with Ephraim Tanner in 1806, some of my ancestors have been officers in the church including both grandfathers, my father, an aunt (organist) and several uncles and cousins.

About a dozen German families from Madison County, Virginia, made the six-week trek down the Shenandoah Valley, through Cumberland Gap and up the Wilderness Road, arriving in Boone County Nov. 25, 1805. They settled on extensive land grants of Robert Johnson. Perhaps the most important members were George Rouse and his nephew, Ephraim Tanner.

Initially, church services were held in various cabins with Ephraim reading from a German book of sermons. A church constitution was adopted Jan. 6, 1806. The signers were: George Rouse, John Rouse, Fred Zimmerman, John Beemon, David Beemon, Ephraim Tanner, Michael Rouse, Jacob Rouse, John House and Simeon Tanner. George, Jacob and Michael Rouse were brothers; Ephraim and Simeon Tanner were George's nephews and John House was a brother-in-law of the Tanners. In 1807 George Rouse donated an acre of land for a church and an unheated structure was built thereon.

Others from Virginia settled in the area. Most noted was Frederick Tanner, father of Ephraim and brother-in-law of George Rouse. He purchased 160 acres of Robert Johnson land from Allen Crisler on December 8, 1813 for \$480. He moved to Kentucky over the winter.

Church history records that Federick, son Aaron and daughter Jemima; daughters Anna (Aylor), Elizabeth (Hoffman) and Milly (House) too first communion in May, 1814.

There were 22 signers of a German-language church constitution in 1815. Among them were Frederick and sons Ephraim, Aaron and Simeon and sons-in-law Benjamin Aylor and John House. Brother-in-law George Rouse was one also.

Frederick was the patriarch of the Tanners. He died in 1833 survived by twelve children and nearly a hundred grandchildren. The sales to settle his estate were major events. The attached detailed analysis thereof is a graphic illustration of farm life in first half of the nineteenth century. His descendants were legion.

Among Frederick's children, Ephraim appears to have had the most. Thirteen of his fourteen children married, producing 116 grandchildren-- 82 with the "Tanner" surname, plus 12 Aylors, 9 Carpenters, 7 Surfaces and 6 Aydelottes. Not all of them lived to become adults.

As might be expected, there was a great deal of intermarriage. Choices were limited. One married a neighbor, someone they met at church or at the brief schools, someone who came to visit a relative. There were numerous stories of girls who came West "looking for a man." Or of a hired hand who liked the cooking.

The extent of intermarriage may be illustrated by some personal examples. Three of the four grandparents of my maternal grandfather, W. P. Utz, were first cousins--all grandchildren of Frederick Tanner. Matthias Rouse did not get to Kentucky. At least six of his children did. One was Frederick Tanner's wife; another was George Rouse. Six of my sixteen great-great-grandparents were descendants of Matthias. There were other cases of such close relationships.

There were cousins of varying degrees all over the enclave. In social gatherings many people would be addressed as "cousin".

George Rouse was to be a different story. By 1821 he had acquired over 500 acres in the Hopeful area. In 1823 he formally deeded the acre to the "German Lutheran Church" so that they could proceed with construction of a new building.

In 1824 he began to liquidate his holdings by selling fifty acres each to sons Julius, Elisha and Lovell and 65 acres to son-in-law Adam Utterback. By 1831 he had deeded 50 acres each to sons Rolen and Simeon; 41 acres to son-in-law Ephraim K. Tanner and 60 acres to son-in-law Isaac Tanner. July 15, 1834, he sold his last 128 acres (his home place) to the Rev. Jacob Crigler, the new pastor at Hopeful, and shortly thereafter left for Rolla County, Missouri. He was about 68. One wonders why he chose to follow the frontier. A number of his children went to Missouri also.

The Rev. Jacob Crigler had married Frederick Tanner's daughter Nellie, George Rouse's niece. He had succeeded the Rev. Carpenter who had died the previous year. There being no parsonage, the Rev. Crigler lived comfortably on his farm adjoining the church grounds. He held first communion on October 26, 1834—the first church record in English rather than German. He supervised the building of a brick church in 1837. This edifice, with addition of a vestibule, was used for 80 years.

Most of the lands of the early settlers were divided among their children, either before or at their death. Some of the resulting plots were too small for efficient farming and were purchased by others.

Examples were: In 1833 Frederick Tanner's 183 acres were divided among 11 children. His son, Ephraim, sold 300 acres to his children. The 236 acres remaining at his 1846 death were divided—63 acres to his widow Susannah and parcels from $9\frac{1}{2}$ to $16\frac{1}{2}$ acres for the children. Upon Susannah's

death in 1870, her land was divided into small acreages. Another of Frederick's sons, Jacob, died in 1862. His 193 acres was split into eleven plots, with the children drawing lots. In 1855 Rev. Crigler's widow died. Her 130 acres was divided into ten plots ranging from 12 to 14 acres. The heirs drew lots.

The optimum size family farm in the era was between 50 and 100 acres. One man with two horses or mules (possibly a third for buggy use) could operate such acreage. An ambitious family with sons might manage more. As the population grew, some had to leave the enclave--going to Missouri, Kansas, Illinois and other states.

Family size declined. In the first half of the nineteenth century, ten children or more was quite common. Near the close of the century the number would most likely be less than five.

The population of the area appears to have been relatively stable. The 1883 Atlas shows nearly 100 residences therein--about a third of whom had Rouse and Tanner surnames. The 1920 Census lists residents by road. There were 131 families comprising 454 members in the Florence district that might fit the general area:

	Families	Persons
Burlington Pike	45	157
Union Pike	30	101
Hopeful Road	13	51
Gunpowder	<u>43</u>	<u>143</u>
	131	454

Despite this dilution by time, in 1920 about 20% of the heads of families bore surnames of "Rouse" or "Tanner".

With family size of 3.5 in 1920, it is likely the total population was little changed. There was one difference. Like the rest of the county, there was a sharp drop in the number of blacks.

This enclave was atypical--it had no central hub. There was no development around the church, except the cemetery. The only dwelling nearby was the former George Rouse house which Jacob Crigler used as his home in lieu of a parsonage. A parsonage was built near Limaburg and a later one on the Burlington Pike not far from Florence.

Stores and post offices were located at the three corners--Florence, Florence Cross Roads (later Limaburg) and Pleasant Ridge (later Gunpowder). About the turn of the century RFD service out of Florence began. Children attended four schools--Florence, Pleasant Ridge, Pleasant Valley and Limaburg.

The two best roads (Florence to Burlington and Florence to Union) developed into toll turnpikes with gates about a mile out of Florence on each. The lesser roads were sometimes impassable, especially after the Spring thaws. They were maintained by overseers who received limited funds from the county.

Many of the early settlers were buried on the land they had carved out of the silderness. Often at a high spot that would be enclosed by a rock fence. Typically, it would include the graves of the parents, any young or unmarried children. Deaths of children in the early years of life were quite common. Some of the married children might be there also. Some had elaborate monuments; some headstones of field rock.

As the farms were subdivided (among the heirs) or sold, maintenance became a problem. Weeds, vines and tree roots would damage the stones. Animals would burrow under them. Maintenance would be performed by only a few family members, or not at all.

January 27, 1868, M. Hamilton sold 4 acres and 27 poles of Larkin Vaughn land to Ephraim K. Tanner, Aaron Tanner and Martin L. Rouse, Trustees of Hopeful Church, for use as a cemetery and burial ground.

March 5, 1868, the General Assembly granted a charter to the Hopeful Cemetery Co. The three purchasers were made original trustees of the new corporation with an outline of their powers and responsibilities.

Burials in the family cemeteries declined sharply with the establishment of a buying ground with systematic maintenance. Some remains were moved from the family cemeteries. More funerals were held at the church rather than at home. It was convenient after the service to transport the body across the road to the grave. A vault was constructed so that bodies could be stored until extremely cold weather moderated.

Perhaps the largest of the family cemeteries was on the Ephraim Tanner farm, a mile from Florence just off the road to Union. He was part of the 1805 migration. Ephraim died in 1846 with the graveyard site being included in Susannah's dower.

Susannah House Tanner was a true matriarch of the frontier. She was born Nov. 20, 1784 and married Ephraim at 16. At age twenty, ~~in~~ advanced pregnancy, she made the seven-week wagon trip to Boone County with three children under four years of age. A son, Simeon, was born three days after they arrived. She had fourteen children to live to adulthood. She apparently lived independently after Ephraim's death. The 1870 census lists her household as including two black domestics. She died December 20, 1870.

Ephraim's children became apprehensive about the cemetery upkeep and ten of the heirs made a deed dated June 31, 1855, conveying any interest they might have to Susannah. It was their hope that the triangular plot 245' by 334' by 221' "be held sacred as a family burying ground and the said heirs...agree to preserve the same, to keep it fenced and improve and embellish it."

My grandfather, W. P. Utz, came into possession of some of Susannah's land, including the cemetery, about 1900. He was one of her many great-grandchildren. While there were no more burials, several of the descendants would meet at my grandfather's once or twice a year and "clean up" the cemetery.

In 1931 I made a detailed listing of stones and markers then existing. That list is now in the Historical Society at Frankfort.

I was able to identify 73 separate markers, 24 of which were unmarked rocks and 8 were rocks with initials on them. It was the custom to bury children in short graves, one behind the other in the rows. I found 28 "short" graves and 45 "adult" ones. The earliest record was a rock with "1833 J.T." carved on it. The latest date was "1895" on a stone for Moses, the tenth child of Ephraim.

Ephraim and Susannah occupied a spot at the end of the first row. As best I could determine, five of their children, six of their sons- or daughters-in-law and 11 of their grandchildren were buried there also.

My grandfather died in 1938. His farm was sold and the cemetery suffered from neglect. Some of the descendants brought a court action in the 1980's resulting in a restoration.

The public schools in Boone County evolved into nearly fifty districts in the last half of the century. Four of these extended into the enclave. The Florence district (which included the town) was a two-room school; the others only one teacher. A majority of the students attended either Florence or Pleasant Ridge. The average district in Boone County in 1892 had an enrollment of 42 and attendance of 27.

Pleasant Ridge , No. 9, appears to have been above average. A picture taken about 1892 includes 38 children. They were a motley crew—some with fancy dresses, white shirts and ties; others barefoot. Perhaps they knew in advance of the picture taking and some appeared in their Sunday best. They appear to range in age from numerous 6- and 7-years old to a few that might be 15 or 16.

By 1892 the school term had increased to five months. School started in the Fall and ended in February before the Spring thaws made the roads more difficult for walking. Also, March 1 was the conventional moving date for farmers, before the new crop year began.

Some teachers held "pay schools" for an additional several months after the regular term ended.

Slavery was accepted in the area. Most of the residents prior to the Civil War were from Virginia or descended from Virginians. The first two ministers at Hopeful, Rev. Carpenter and Jacob Grigler, were slave owners. Grigler's slaves worked his fields in sight of the church.

The rolling land, bisected by creeks and branches, was not conducive to large-scale farming. Perhaps half the farmers owned a few slaves—it was a rare farm that had as many as ten.

The freeing of the slaves, except for monetary loss, had little effect on the life styles.

The Civil War did not materially affect the area. Some of the young men went South to fight for the cause of their ancestors, some fought for the Union, a number were not liable to military duty because of having furnished substitutes to serve in the Union army or navy. Some raiding parties appeared, appropriating horses, foodstuffs and other material. One resident, Larkin Vaughn, achieved immortality by being killed while a spectator to a skirmish near Florence Sept. 17, 1862. The area became quiet as military activity moved on toward the South.

Like most agricultural areas in the nineteenth century, each farm attempt@d to be as nearly self-sufficient as possible, raising food for their families and livestock. They made much of their clothing and other necessities. Their purchases were limited.

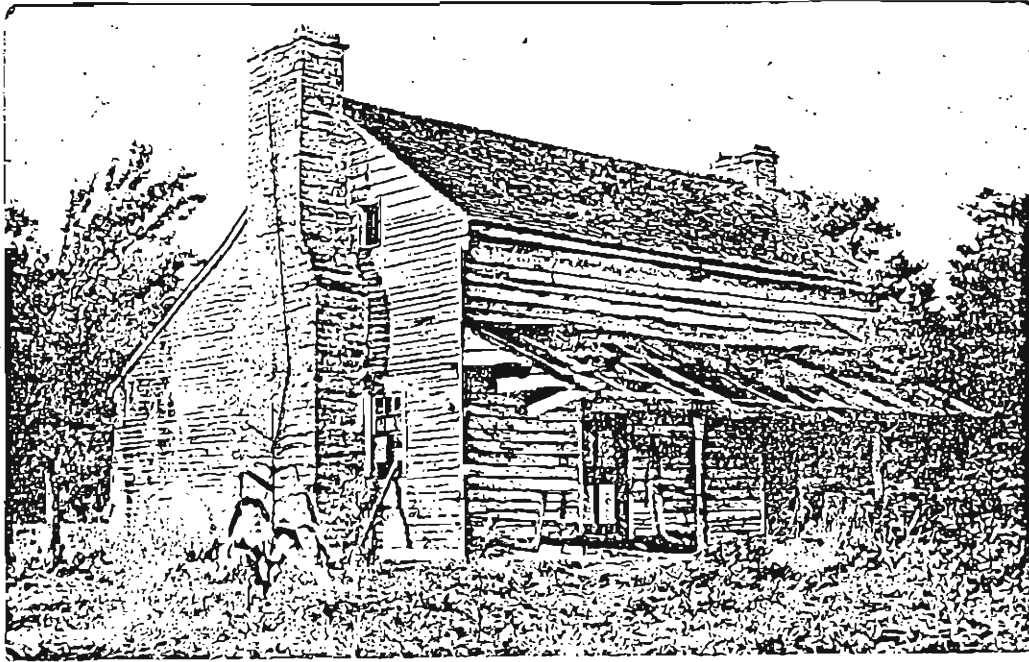
The enclave had one advantage. It was within ten to fifteen miles of Cincinnati, one of the great manufacturing river towns of the century. It was a meat packing center. They could drive their hogs and cattle to market in Cincinnati. With the completion of the Southern Railway in the 1870's, they needed only to drive them the few miles to Erlanger.

They could make the day-long round trip by wagon to Cincinnati to market crops and to buy supplies.

Professor Yealey gives details of one such trip by Ephraim Tanner. He went to Cincinnati with $46\frac{1}{2}$ bushels of wheat for which he received \$18.60. He paid 75¢ toll for ferry crossings. He purchased a barrel of salt for \$2.93; 10 gallons of whiskey for \$2.30; a whiskey barrel for 50¢; 4 yards of silk for \$2.75; and a side of sole leather for \$2.40. (The inventory of his estate in 1846 included a "still and apparatus...\$10)

The return trip, climbing the steep hill out of Covington would be very difficult. By 1850 the improved surface on the toll turnpike would make the trip easier. The completion of the Suspension Bridge in 1867 expedited travel to Cincinnati.

Ephraim and Susannah's house is pictured on the following page.

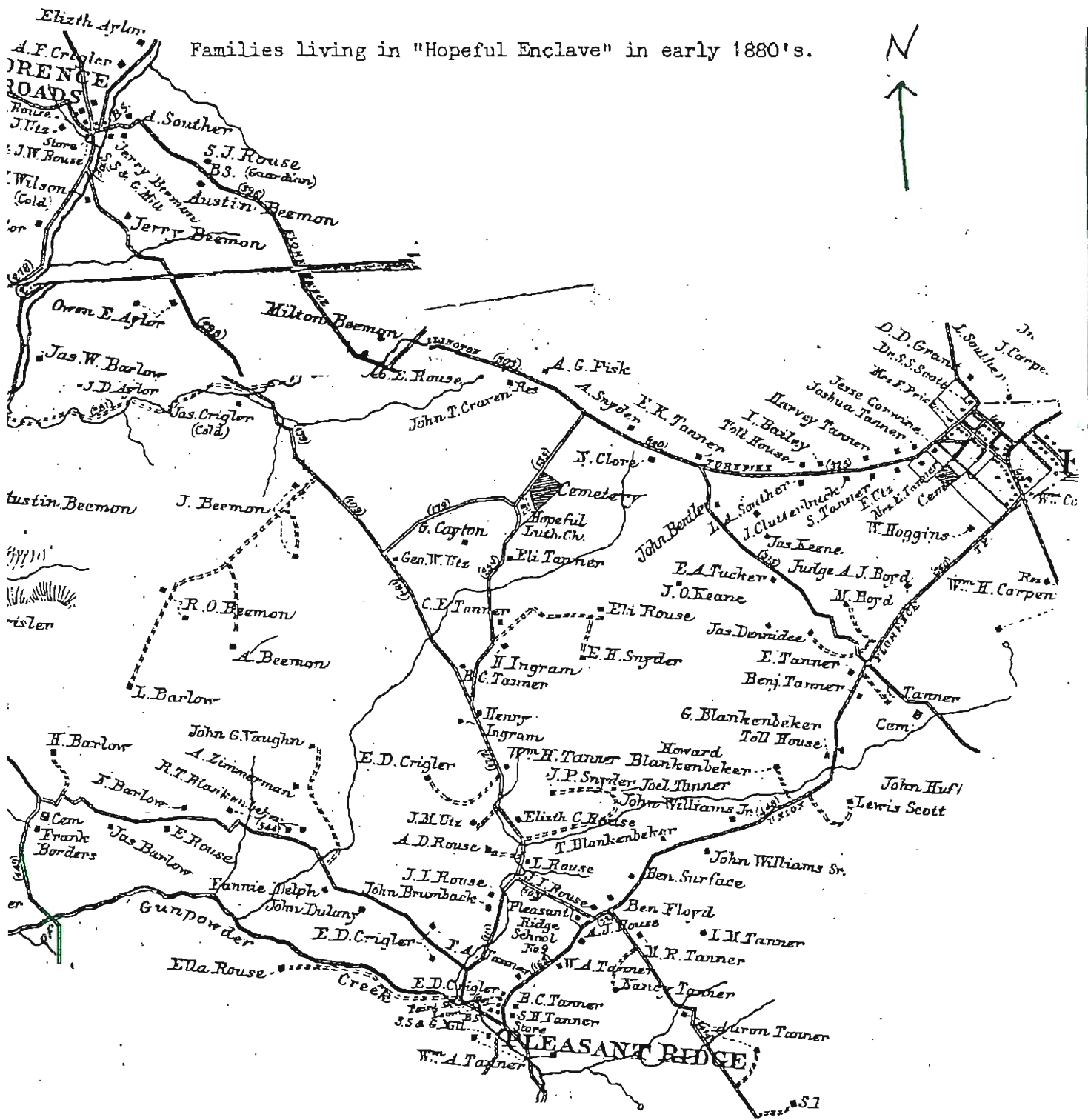


This picture was taken in 1911 of the century-old house. It was being used for storage. In the Depression my grandfather let a homeless family live in it for about a year.

The house had two interior stairways with triangular steps at the top leading out to the respective upstairs rooms. These rooms were not connected—one was for boys, one for girls.

The stone chimeneys were sold in the 1940's and it was converted into a barn. The entire structure was later razed.

At this writing, 1993, there are at least 100,000 people, the author included, who could trace their ancestry back to this building; being the sixth, or seventh, or eighth generation descending from Ephraim and Susannah's one hundred sixteen grandchildren.



Families living in "Hopeful Enclave" in early 1880's.

Copied from Atlas of Boone-Kenton-Campbell Counties
 D. J. Lake & Co., Philadelphia 1883