

## BEACHAM RHODES - KENTUCKY PIONEER

On a cold crisp morning in February 1789 Robert Stockton and Beacham Rhodes packed their gear, mounted their horses and rode out of Stockton's Station with their two dogs trotting along behind. These two young men were off on a hunting trip to hunt buffalo, deer and bear on Fox Creek and its territories which was about thirty miles to the east of Stockton's station. The purpose of the trip was to "secure furs and peltries" to trade for coffee, sugar, tea and shot which French boats brought from St. Louis and Vincennes to Limestone. At this time of the year there were usually no hostile Indians to contend with, so it seemed that this would be a good time to make this trip.

As this part of Kentucky was not yet settled, there were no roads and the two men had to pick their way along the old Indian trails and animal traces to reach their destination. Sometimes the going was slow and sometimes they could make good time. By the end of the second day they reached the Fox and as they went along they could see many signs of game. They made camp in a clearing near the river and since they were weary from the trail, fixed themselves a good supper and soon wrapped themselves in their blankets and fell asleep by the fire, planning to arise before dawn and have a full day of hunting.

The next day was very successful. What they had heard was correct. there was much game, and they were experienced hunters so by the end of the day they had already killed a good supply. After supper the two men sat around the campfire recounting the days work and making plans for another good day of hunting tomorrow. Planning to get up early they again wrapped themselves in their blankets and soon were sound asleep.

Sometime in the middle of the night the two men were aroused by the dogs barking and as soon as they awakened they could see that two Indians with rifles had come into their camp. Both men reached for their rifles but were too late. Both Indians fired and Robert Stockton fell dead on the spot. Beacham was sorely wounded by a rifle ball in the hip, but the dogs caused so much confusion that he was able to crawl away from the fire and into the darkness before the Indians could capture him. Looking back, he could see that his partner was beyond help so Beacham dragged himself as quickly as his wound would allow, to the river where he hid in a drift, hoping that the Indians would not pursue him. The Indians were having to fight off the dogs who were coming at them ferociously, so they took the horses and left the site.

Beacham stayed hidden in the river until daybreak, then after carefully observing to make sure the Indians were gone he started the long trek back to Stockton's station. His wounded leg would not allow him to travel very fast and he lost all track of time. After seven days he had reached Weaver's Ford. The pain was so great and he was so weary that he could not go on so he took shelter under a cliff. Soon he could hear dogs barking and could hear shouts of men. It was another hunting party, and Beacham revealed himself to them. After telling his story, the men took him back to the stockade. The men of the station lost no time in forming a posse to find Robert Stockton and to pursue the Indians.

When they reached the campsite they found that Stockton's dog was guarding his body and the torn earth showed signs of many a battle where the dog had fought off wolves and panthers that were trying to get at his master's body. The men buried Robert Stockton at the site and covered the grave with a large flat stone.

Today as you drive along Kentucky route 32 between Flemingsburg and Morehead you will see a historical marker along the road near Plummer's Landing which gives a brief account of this incident and directs you to the site where Robert Stockton's grave can still be seen.

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The Beacham Rhodes in this story, which is based on an account in Collins, Richard H. History of Kentucky: 1878<sup>1</sup>, is a pioneer ancestor of the RHODES family, of which this account is about.

Apparently Beacham recovered from his wounds as there is an entry in the Mason County KY clerk's order book<sup>2</sup> dated May term of that same year, 1789, which says that George Stockton commissions Joshua Barnes, Lackan Dorsey, Beacham Rhodes and Daniel Carroll to appraise the estate of Abner Baker, deceased. Also in the next year, 1790, Beacham is listed as a member of the Mason County Militia. On page 169 of American militia in the Frontier Wars - 1790-1796, by Murtie June Clark, he is listed as a spy in the Mason County Virginia Scouts. (Kentucky was a part of Virginia until 1792) This list was certified by Henry Lee and Arthur Fox JP.<sup>3</sup>

George Stockton was the builder of Stockton's Station, near where Flemingsburg KY now stands. He was also the father of Robert Stockton who was killed by the Indians. George Stockton, John Fleming, Stockton's half brother, and Michael Cassidy were among the early explorers of that area of Kentucky. According to the History books George Stockton moved his family to Stockton's Station in 1787.<sup>4</sup>

We first see Beacham Rhodes on a list of the militia of Chester County PA in the first part of 1783<sup>5</sup>. Historical accounts of some of the Rhodes children indicate that Beacham was a native of Maryland and Chester County PA borders on Maryland. From documentation to be shown later we know that he was born in 1762 which means that in 1783 he was 21 years of age, and old enough to be a member of the militia. It is not known, at this time, how Beacham Rhodes came to be in Mason Co. KY six years later in 1789, but The Stocktons, Flemings, Cassidys and others who came to that area of KY in that time period came from the area of Virginia which is now West Virginia, along the Monongahela River.

The territory in that part of the country was claimed by both Pennsylvania and Virginia at that time. Berkley County, Virginia, and Cumberland and Westmoreland Counties PA provided many of the people who migrated to the northeastern part of Kentucky. It is possible that Beacham migrated to western PA or VA during those years and became acquainted with George Stockton who convinced him to settle in Kentucky. We know that Beacham had a son, Silas, born in 1785<sup>6</sup>, and he probably did not go to KY until 1787 when Stockton's Station was established.

Not much is known about when and to whom Beacham was married, but the fact that he had a son born in 1785 suggests that he was married in about 1784. Information in the LDS Ancestral file, submitted by Lawrence Comstock<sup>7</sup>, indicates that his wife was Margaret McCartney. Later, there is some indication that his wife's name was Sarah. This is revealed by a deed for land which he signed in 1819 in which he names his wife, Sarah. Although as yet we have no proof, we believe that Margaret McCartney was the wife who accompanied Beacham to Kentucky and that she was the mother of all of his children. Margaret apparently died sometime between ca1805 and 1818, and Beacham apparently married Sarah (nee unknown) sometime after Margaret died.

Some pioneer families came into Kentucky by floating down the Ohio River in Flat boats and landing at a place called Limestone which is the present site of Maysville KY. Others traveled down the Valley of Virginia (Shennandoa Valley) and came through the Cumberland Gap along the Wilderness Road. Still others traveled over the mountain ranges from what is now West Virginia directly into northeastern Kentucky. At this writing it is not known which route The Rhodes family, and others who migrated to northeastern KY, followed, but it appears that the Beacham Rhodes family went directly to Stockton's Station and lived there almost from the beginning of that Station's existence.

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1. Collins, Lewis, History of Kentucky, Vol.II. Covington KY. 1878: Collins & Co. (Reprinted)

2. Court Clerk's Order Book; Mason Co. KY, 27 May 1789: Original on file in Mason Co. KY County Clerk's office.

3. Clark, Murtie June, American Militia in the Frontier Wars 1890-1796. Baltimore. 1990: Genealogical Publishing Co.

4. Cottrill, R. S. "John Fleming, Pioneer of Fleming Co. KY" The Register of The Kentucky Historical Society. Vol. 49, No. 168. (July 1951). pp193-201.

5. Pennsylvania Archives. Series V, Vol. 5 p682

6. A deposition by Silas Rhodes, dated 1815, for presentation in the case of Cassaday VS Fowler, Case #2923: Original records on file in the Fleming Co. KY Courthouse Archives.

7. LDS Ancestral File - 2S48-68 Family Sheets submitted by Lawrence Comstock.