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APPENDIX A

HISTORY

The following is a reprint of the History Chapter from the "2023 Comprehensive Plan: Bridging Hopkins County" for use as a reference for grant writing and general knowledge. This chapter was prepared by the Hopkins County Joint Planning Commission.

Hopkins County, the 49th county of Kentucky's 120 counties, was formed in 1806 from parts of Henderson and Christian Counties. The figure below identifies the location of Hopkins County relative to some national cities. The county was named for General Samuel Hopkins who fought and distinguished himself in the battles of Trenton, Princeton, Monmouth, Brandywine and Germantown. He was born in April 19, 1753 and died in Henderson County, Kentucky in 1819. General Hopkins married Elizabeth "Betty" Goode Bugg in Mecklenberg County, Virginia on January 10, 1783. In 1797, General Hopkins, a native of Albemarle County, Virginia, moved to Kentucky to settle on the Green River. He served several terms in the Kentucky State Legislature and was a member of Congress. Hopkins left his government post to lead troops against the Kickapoo Native Americans on the Illinois and Wabash Rivers. At the end of his campaign, he settled on a farm in what is now Henderson County.
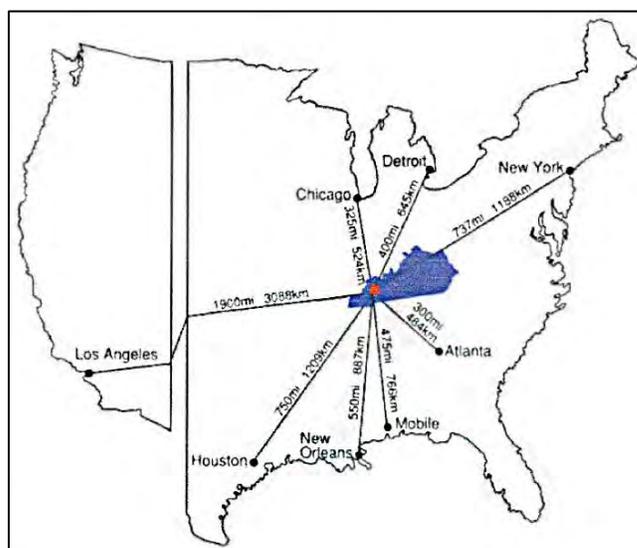
Figure: Distances to major cities

The figure below locates Hopkins County within the Commonwealth of Kentucky.
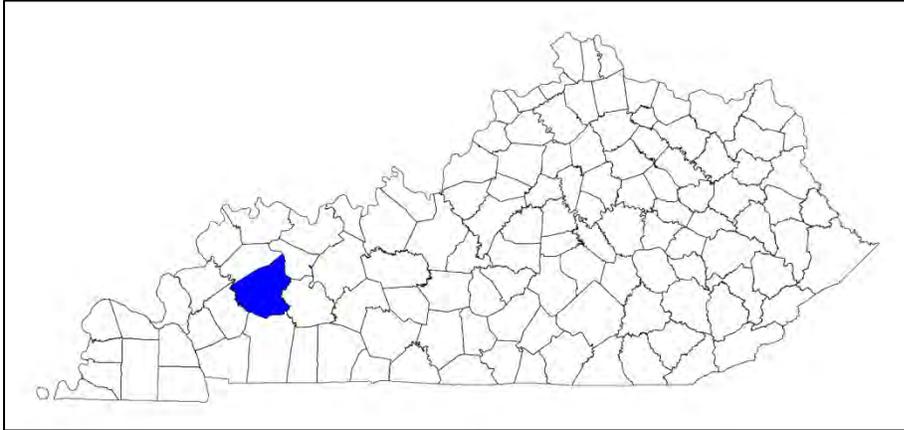
Figure: Location of Hopkins County in Kentucky

The earliest settlers of Hopkins County were Native Americans who were attracted by the lush vegetation and abundant game. Other settlers were Revolutionary War veterans who had received land grants from Virginia. It has long been held that Frederick Wilhelm Baron Von Steuben, the Prussian general who had instructed the Revolutionary army at Valley Forge, was a settler of Hopkins County. No evidence to indicate that he ever set foot in Kentucky has been found. He did, however, retain record title to his military warrant in Hopkins County until his death. His heirs lost the property through litigation after his death in the 1830s.

Hopkins County was home to Ruby Laffoon, who served as chairman of the first Insurance Rating Board in 1912, circuit judge in 1921 and 1927, and Governor of Kentucky in 1931, winning by the largest margin of any previous Kentucky governor. Upon leaving office in 1935, Laffoon returned to Madisonville to practice law.

The present Governor of Kentucky, Steve Beshear, is a native of Dawson Springs. Governor Beshear was elected in 2007 and re-elected in 2011. He earned his bachelor's degree and law degree from the University of Kentucky and served in the U.S. Army Reserve.

HOPKINS COUNTY HISTORY

Hopkins County has nine incorporated cities and several communities spread throughout its 554.4 square miles. The nine incorporated cities include: Madisonville (the county seat), Dawson Springs, Earlington, Hanson, Mortons Gap, Nebo, Nortonville, Saint Charles and White Plains. Other communities within the county bear unique names and hold interesting histories.

- Anton: named for Anton Burcken, a native of Dusseldorf, a large timber operator in the vicinity.
- Ashbyburg: originally a tobacco inspection port at the mouth of Pond River upon the military lands of General Stephen Ashby, a general in the Kentucky Militia and the son of Revolutionary War soldier, Captain Stephen Ashby.
- Barnsley: originally called Walton City; its namesake is a city in the West Riding region of Yorkshire, England.
- Beulah: either scriptural or from the French "beau-liew" meaning beautiful place; originally known as Pulltite.
- Carbondale: little known; unmistakable Sinclair gas station sign to let travelers know where they are.
- Charleston: named after a freed slave named Free Charles who kept a tavern; one child, Aaron, carried handmade basket of slabs of gingerbread that were favorite local treats, known as Aaron's Foot.
- Coiltown: named for William D. Coil, developed first coal mines in the vicinity.
- Dalton: originally named Garnettsville, Post Master General thought it too long so G.T. Bell chose "Dalton" for an unknown reason.
- Daniel Boone: named by Theodore R. Toendle for Daniel Boone, originally called Underwood or Rocky Gap.
- Fiddlebow: named after an unusual tree in which a limb grew out of the side, resembling a fiddle bow.
- Government: little known.
- Hecla: named for Hecla Coal and Mining Company opened in 1873 by Joe F. Foard of
- Virginia. Incorporated in 1882 but never had a post office.
- Hell's Half Acre: known as one of the wildest spots around; soldiers set up residence at John Lynn's house during Civil War; law enforcement refused to go near the land; desirable place for guerillas; notorious for gambling, drinking, betting at the ball diamond and race track, axe fights, questionable women, pranks and mysterious tales.
- Ilsley: originally called Crabtree after land baron Thomas Crabtree; noted for a little store called the Hot Cat; later the name was changed to Ilsley for Edward Ilsley, a capitalist interested in the development of the coal industry.
- Jewel City: had no name for many years; Joseph Clark set up a tile factory which became an instant success due to poor drainage conditions in the area; later named the village after the daughter (Addie Jewel) of the longest resident, Maggie Spainhoward.
- Kirkwood Springs: named for James L. Kirkwood who developed a health resort around the waters of a mineral springs.
- Manitou: known far and wide for its foulsmelling, mineral-laden water; originally named Tywhopity and inhabited by Native Americans; named by W.L. Gordon for Manitou Springs, Colorado. Also called Steuben's Lick for F.W. Baron Von Steuben, and Winslow.

- Olney: formerly known as Iron Bridge Community; named for Richard Olney, a Massachusetts lawyer, Attorney General and later Secretary of State in President Cleveland's cabinet.
- Rabbit Ridge: named from Chester Wyatt who built a tiny store when Highway 109 was being built; with not enough stock, one traveler commented that even a jack rabbit traveling through the area would have to bring his lunch with him – therefore, rabbit ridge.
- Richland: located on Richland Creek; known for its abundance of game, virgin forests, fertile lands for farming, mineral water, coal and oil.
- Shakerag: controversy stems in the location of and name of Shakerag; one story is that women would pretend to hang clothes on a line and shake rags or aprons to warn moonshiners that agents were nearby.
- Sixth Vein: named for the number six coal bed but actually located on the number four.
- Tweddleville: named after Alfred "Tweddle" M. Stevens.
- Vandetta: some believe it was named Vendetta but was mis-spelled.
- Veazey: farming community settled pre CivilWar by four Veazey brothers and two sisters.
- Wick's Well: named for entrepreneur Lum Wick.
- White City: name given by miners to the village around Moss Hill Mines because all of the houses were painted white.
- Wolf Hollow: named for the wolves that howled in the area.

DAWSON SPRINGS HISTORY

In 1855, Mr. and Mrs. Riley P. Dawson purchased 250 acres of land lying near the Tradewater River for $1000.00. In conjunction with Bryant Dawson, they decided to establish a town on their plot of land and lured the railroad with the offer of rail right-of-way and ground for a depot. In anticipation of the railroad's completion, the Dawsons plotted a town into streets, lots, and alleys – all constructed around the railroad. When the rail was completed, it ran through the town, known as Tradewater Station. By 1874, Dawson was officially listed as the name of the town with the US Post Office. It was incorporated as Dawson City in 1882 and became Dawson Springs in 1898. Washington "Cap" Hamby, a veteran of the Confederate cavalry and a local businessman, was digging wells for a cistern in 1881 when he hit a strong vein of Chalybeate, iron rich water. This discovery led to a dramatic increase in business and population for the city. Its population grew from 130 people in 1880 to more than 1000 in1885. The mineral springs drew crowds by the thousands from all over the South; ticket sales to Dawson Springs reached 51,000. This influx of patrons to the mineral waters resulted in a boom for the city. The vacation spot became so popular that the Pittsburg Pirates held training camps in Dawson Springs from 1915-1917. Today, a replica of the stands and ball field are enjoyed by all. The present Governor of Kentucky, Steve Beshear, is a native of Dawson Springs. Governor Beshear was

elected in 2007 and re-elected in 2011. In 2013, Dawson Springs was named Kentucky's first Trailtown.

EARLINGTON HISTORY

St. Bernard Mining Company, the first commercial coal operation in the county founded the city in 1870. Originally known as Caleb Hall's Post Office, it was changed to Earlington in honor of John Bayliss Earle, a Madisonville attorney who helped pioneer the coal industry in western Kentucky. The town consisted of churches, a bakery, hotels, a dentist, a tin shop, groceries, doctors, drug stores, a photo gallery, a newspaper office and an iron works and foundry. Nine mines and one hundred and fifty coke ovens made Earlington the busiest mining and railroad station in central western Kentucky. Two artificial lakes, then the largest in the state, were built to provide water for coal washers, coke ovens, trains and electricity. When the Evansville-Henderson-Nashville railroad laid tracks through Earlington, it became one of the most important rail centers between the Ohio River and Nashville.

HANSON HISTORY

Founded in 1869, Hanson was named for Henry Hanson, an engineer who laid out the town. It originally consisted of 50 acres donated by Judge Robert Eastwood and the Reverend Roland Gooch. At one time, the town consisted of several tobacco factories, sawmills, stores, a bank, a hotel and a pharmacy. In the late 1880's, the E. McCulley College of Hanson was established. The Hanson High School was erected in 1897. Early in the 1900's, a fire destroyed everything east of the tracks, including the tobacco factories, sawmill operations and the Christian Church.

MADISONVILLE HISTORY

Madisonville was founded in 1807 on forty acres donated by Soloman Silkwood and Daniel McGary. The city was named for James Madison, the US Secretary of State and later the 4th President. In 1807, Silkwood built the first courthouse as a log structure. In 1820, a second frame structure was erected then replaced with a brick one in 1840. Fact can often become clouded with the passage of time and the lack of substantiating documents. The following are two believed facts concerning the courthouse: 1) the courthouse was burned by Confederate troops as they passed through western Kentucky in 1864 and 2) J. Smith Waller, MD of Hanson stated in Brigadier General Adam R. Johnson's The Partisan Rangers that "At Madisonville, the courthouse suffered the same fate that had befallen these temples of justice at Princeton and Hopkinsville, that is, it was burned." He

stated that this occurred "from the 20th day of November until this date, which was the 13th of January". The members of the court continued to meet in the courthouse from December 1864 through May 29, 1865. On May 30, 1865, they met in the "Old Clerk's Office" as it appeared that the courthouse of Hopkins County, Kentucky had been destroyed by the rebels and that there is now no courthouse for the use of the courts of said county. This would be six weeks after Lee's surrender on April 14, 1865. A fifth courthouse was built in 1892 and the sixth and current was built in 1936.

In 1846, Madisonville had twelve doctors, five schools and two churches. By 1847 the population had grown to 450 residents with five stores, four taverns and six lawyers. Over the next few decades, the town became a bustling center of activity with coal as its base. In 1879 the Evansville-Henderson-Nashville railroad was bought by the L & N Railroad and vastly improved the marketing of coal.

The town voted dry in October 1942 and remained so until the wet-dry vote in 1992. Paved sidewalks, water and sewage services, the lake and electricity and telephone service throughout Madisonville are attributed to D.W. Gatlin, Mayor from 1911-1913. To this day, Madisonville hails itself as "The Best Town on Earth".

MORTONS GAP HISTORY

Thomas Morton settled land located in a natural ridge in 1804. During the stagecoach era, farmers often left crocks of buttermilk for travelers along the roadside known as Buttermilk Road. In 1872, the town was officially established by the Diamond Mining Company and was incorporated in 1888. By the late 19th century, Mortons Gap was home to 150 residents.

NEBO HISTORY

Named after the Mt. Nebo from which Moses viewed the promised land, Nebo was founded by Alfred Townes. A post office was established in 1840 with Townes serving as Post Master. Throughout the area, Townes became well known for his invention of a tobacco screw press. Tobacco was clearly the largest and most productive industry in Nebo. At one time, Nebo was recognized as one of the leading loose-leaf tobacco markets in the world. With the increase in tobacco production, John R. Green built a tobacco factory; another was built by Rueben Rogers. In 1871 John W. Cox built two large tobacco stemmeries to form Cox & Jones, which did extensive business with European markets.

The tobacco industry thrived with seven tobacco factories in operation until the early 1900's when the Nightriders, made up of a group of disgruntled farmers, banded together to fight the independent tobacco buyers who

monopolized tobacco buying. As a result of the skirmishes, the Nightriders burned tobacco in the barns and factories and destroyed machinery. By the 1930's with the arrival of the Depression, tobacco was no longer the major cash crop of Nebo. In August of 1932, a fire destroyed all businesses on the south side of Main Street with only the bank left standing.

NORTONVILLE HISTORY

W.E. Norton, a wealthy settler, purchased 2000 acres of land near the L&N and ICC railroads junction with hopes of bringing prosperity to the area. Incorporated in 1873, the town was originally named Norton, then Norton Village and finally Nortonville.

By 1900, the town consisted of a post office, a general store, a railroad station and depot, a tobacco warehouse, one church and a few houses. In 1902, W.S. Elgin, a tobacconist from Hopkinsville, W.B. Kennedy and Frank Fisher from Paducah, purchased 2000 acres from the Norton heirs to found the Nortonville Coal Company. Mining became a major source of income, bringing change to the town's economy.

ST. CHARLES HISTORY

The town was founded as a coal camp around 1872 on land deeded to the St. Bernard Coal Mining Company. Originally named Woodruff, after J.I.D. Woodruff, the name was changed to St. Charles when incorporated in 1874.

WHITE PLAINS HISTORY

Founded in 1853, White Plains was originally called Little Prairie. The name evolved from the treeless plain on which the town was situated. The Cherokee Native Americans burned over the area each year to provide lush grasses for buffalo and deer. In 1870, the railroad from Paducah/Elizabethtown to Louisville ran through the community. At the time, there was a settlement in Christian County called White Plains. Little Prairie was the drop-off for White Plains' mail. As the railroad community developed, the area became known as White Plains Station and then as New White Plains. By 1900, White Plains had several brick stores along Main Street and approximately twenty-four residences. Around the turn of the century, the "New" was dropped in favor of White Plains, with the Christian County White Plains becoming Fruit Hill.