

Canewood Estate Was French-Indian Grant

Most Distinguished Pioneer Farm Lies North Of Winchester

BY C. FRANK DUNN

"Where in the world" is the most distinguished pioneer estate in Kentucky—unknown to present-day writers and unsung for more than three-quarters of a century?

It is Canewood, the 6,000-acre French and Indian War military grant of Col. or Gen. Nathaniel Gist, located in Clark county, six miles north of Winchester on the Paris pike.

The mansion has been gone for nearly a century, but the log kitchen, with its original stone chimney and the log weather-boarded slave quarters and barn still stand in a row facing the site of the Gist mansion. A stone structure marks the mansion site and, peering down in its depths, one sees the old cellar that once held "much good liquor."

Story In Kentucky Gazette

H. H. Gratz, son of Benjamin Gratz, who married a daughter of Col. Gist, described the place in his Kentucky Gazette in 1876, as follows:

"CANEWOOD. We take the following graceful article from the Clark County Democrat. There

were some inaccuracies as to names and dates, which we take the liberty of correcting, as they were within our personal knowledge:

"During a very pleasant visit last week at Mr. James D. Gay's, we went to see Canewood, where Governor Charles Scott was buried. It is a beautiful spot and worthy to be the dwelling of the refined, elegant people that once called it home. The mothers of two candidates for the Vice Presidency, and the wives of a United States Senator and of Gen. Jackson's and Abraham Lincoln's chief private counsellor were reared there. It is now the property of Mathew D. Hume. The old smoke-house, hexagonal in shape, is still standing. A magnificent elm and other forest trees remain in full vigor. The graveyard is hardly distinguishable from the surrounding pasture. The cellar, in which much good liquor has been kept, still marks the location of the handsome residence, in which so liberal and generous a hospitality was once dispensed.

"This property fell to Judith Gist as dower in the lands of her husband, Nathaniel Gist, who had been granted 6,000 acres in Clark for his military services during the Revolutionary War (error—French and Indian War). Half of the sur-

vey was sold in 1782 to Thomas Lewis for 900 Pounds lawful money, which was \$1.50 per acre. He left quite a family of children: Franklin P. Blair Sr., Jesse Bledsoe (who in a document filed in Fayette County Court called him Gen. Nathaniel Gist, "husband of Mrs. Judith C. Gist"—thus the reference to "General" earlier in this story), Benjamin Gratz, Capt. Nat. (G.S.) Hart and Dr. Joseph Boswell married at Canewood.

"After Governor Scott's term as Chief Magistrate expired (governor 1808-1812), he married Mrs. Gist and ended his days at Canewood. He was a fair type of the race that settled Kentucky—brave, bold, self-reliant, fond of fun and careless about the accumulation of wealth. He was a hard drinker, a profane swearer and given to telling prodigious yarns. Whilst on a visit to Virginia, he described Kentucky as covered with trees so thick that a man could hardly pass between them, and said that some of the deer had horns 13 feet across. When asked how these deer got between the trees, he replied that that was none of his business. Another story was as follows: He said he was walking through a cornfield and stuck his cane down to leave it there and ascertain how fast the stalks were growing. A few days afterwards he went to get his cane and found a nubbin of corn coming out of its top. (Author's note: When the Democrats were beaten in Kentucky in 1855, a local editor wrote, "We shall take our defeat very coolly. It was a maxim of old Governor Scott of this State that, when the people get wrong, let them alone until they get d---d wrong, and then they will get right.")

Buried At Canewood

"The old governor died about 1820 (error—died Oct. 22, 1813, aged 74) and was buried at Canewood. (Collins' History erroneously states that he died in Woodford county—he had sold his pioneer plantation, "Petersburg," at Scott's Landing, Woodford county, to George Yellott in 1808 and removed to Frankfort. Gov. Scott's "Petersburg," you may recall, bid for the State capital in 1792 after the opening sessions of the Legislature had been held in Lexington.)

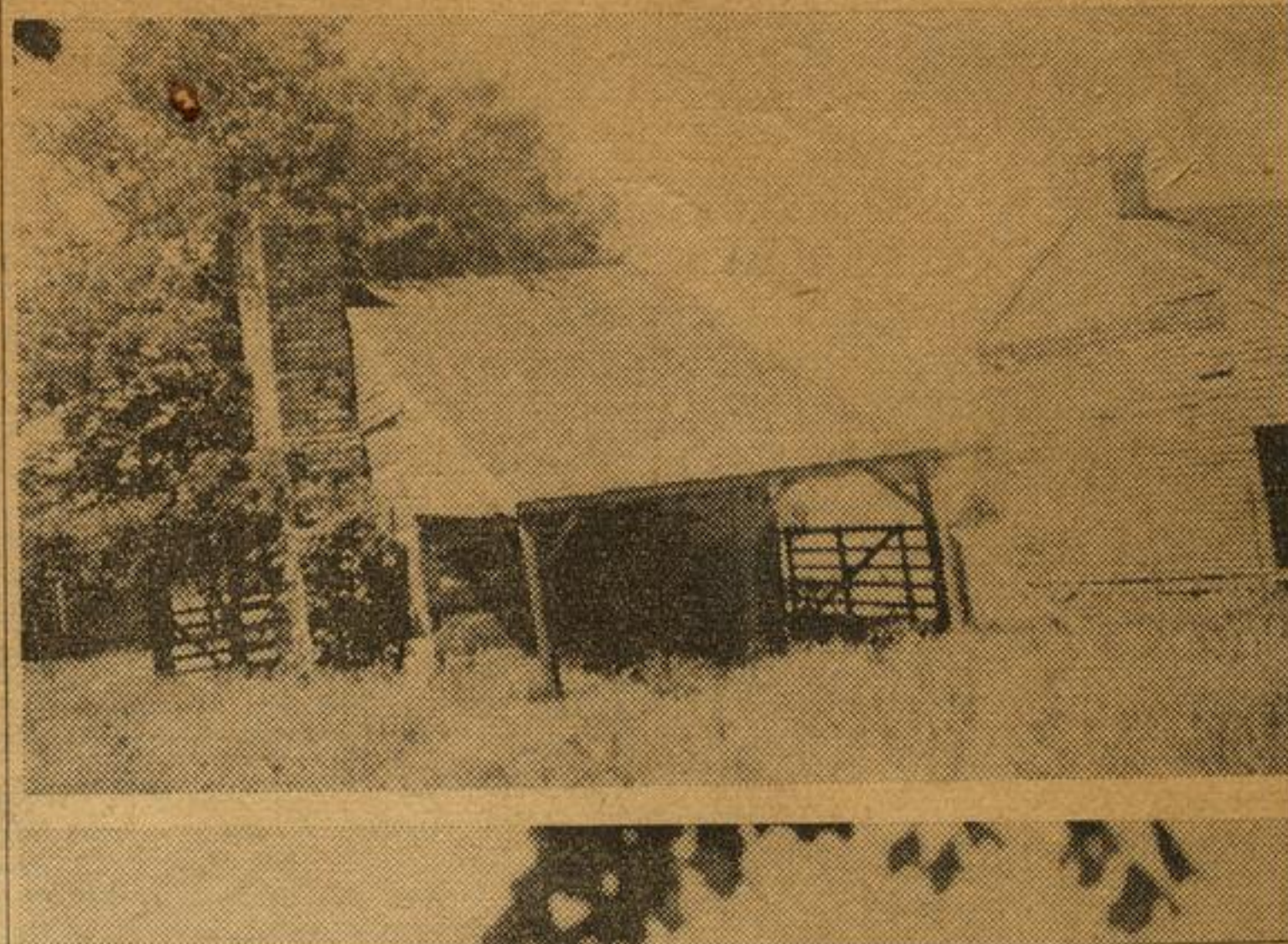
"Governor Scott's remains were afterwards taken to Frankfort at the instance of the State (1854) and now rest in the beautiful cemetery on the hill. He was a soldier in the Revolutionary War and did much gallant service. Mrs. Scott lived until 1833, when she died of cholera whilst on a visit to Lexington. Canewood came into the hands of Benjamin Gratz, who had bought the interest of the other heirs in the dower. It was occupied by servants for many years. Beverly, a very respectable, decent darkey, was the overseer. He lived in nice style and had a daughter who kept well posted in polite literature, and knew all that could be gleaned from newspapers and magazines of the outer world.

"Canewood has a very interesting history, which we hope some day to gather up and lay before our readers. We wish our friend of the Lexington Gazette would put in shape his venerable father's recollections before it is too late."

References Are Checked

Curious to know, as you probably are after reading the reference to "two candidates for the vice presidency," etc., I looked up histories and other sources and came up with: The two vice presidential candidates were B. Gratz Brown (1872) and Francis P. Blair Jr. (1868). The United States senator was Jesse Bledsoe, and the chief private counsellor of Presidents Andrew Jackson and Abraham Lincoln was Francis P. Blair Senior.

Shortly before H. H. Gratz published his interesting story of Canewood, he happened to disclose in a genealogical article on the Bristows who built Canewood and when. He said that Archibald Bristow emigrated to Kentucky with Col. Nathaniel Gist in 1790. He was a carpenter by trade and assisted in building the old Canewood mansion in Clark, where Gov.



since the Scotsman left, it is bad to be without a leader.

We think we have an excellent new pastor who seems thoroughly consecrated to the church in all its departments and preaches good sermons. The other Presbyterian churches, four in number, seem to be flourishing.

I go nearly every Sunday and to the general meeting of the women once a month. Yesterday we had our junior choir the second time with thirty members. It is a good way to interest the youngsters. Horner helps with the she looks well. Fanny has not been well for some time. I hope you are all as well as usual, at least, with love to your girls. Aunt S.



C. H. Bryan,

MT. STERLING, KY.



William Wilson
son of Dr. Fox
Aunt Clay (by first marriage)