



Photos submitted

Memorial plaque above the entryway of the Presbyterian Church in Greensburg, completed in 1890.

The church gifted by John G. Barret



Green County Public Library Genealogy
Laura Johnson

Hanging above the entryway of the Presbyterian Church at the corner of Main Street and Hodgenville Avenue in Greensburg is an ornate, arched plaque depicting the words, "To the memory of John and Mary Barret by their son John G. Barret."

Who were this generous benefactor and his parents? What was the family's significance in Green County?

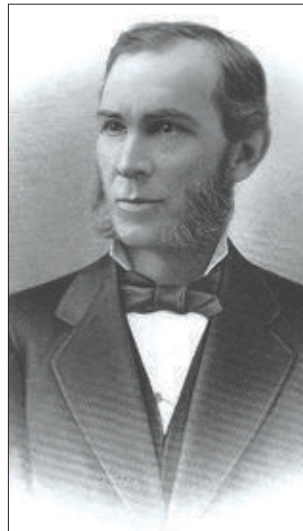
Born on August 27, 1829, John Garnett Barret spent his childhood days and adolescence in Greensburg. As a young man, in 1852, he graduated from the University of Louisville with a law degree.

John G. Barret married Ann Rodes in 1855 and the couple resided in Louisville where he became a successful attorney, prominent businessman, and banker. He was an organizer of Citizens National Bank and served as its president. Barret also assisted in organizing the National Stock Yards Company, later known as Bourbon Stock Yards Company, of which he was president from 1875 and he was a founder of the Louisville American Printing House for the Blind.

By 1889, John G. Barret was sixty years old. He had built a financially comfortable life for himself, his wife, and their children: Amanda, Clifton Rodes, and Henrie.

As an active worker in the Presbyterian Church, Barret had long been a charitable donor to his church and community. Among his other achievements, he also founded the Louisville Central Presbyterian Church.

It is unclear today what prompted John G. Barret to build the church in Greensburg when he did. The new limestone structure replaced an original brick church which had been built in 1829 and by at least 1873, fundraising efforts were necessary to manage repairs of



John G. Barret, from the Manuscripts & Folklife Archives at Western Kentucky University.

the brick building and make it comfortable for the congregation, especially during the winter months. Perhaps he just saw the need for a modern church and an ideal opportunity to honor his parents, John and Mary Barret.

John Barret had been a prominent Greensburg citizen. He was appointed as Green County's deputy court clerk in January, 1803. He then became the county's second court clerk, an important position he held for nearly 50 years. He was the only clerk to work from the old limestone office in Greensburg, built about 1818 and used until 1843. He also served the county in other capacities, including election officer and as sheriff for a short time in 1809.

John Barret and Mary Wood were married on May 16, 1818 in Barren County, Kentucky. They had eight children born to them: William Francis, 1820; Elizabeth Wood, 1823; Martha America, 1826; John Garnett, 1829; Virginia, 1832; George Twyman, 1835; Mary Washington, 1837; and Daniel Thompkins, 1839.

John Barret and Mary Wood had each migrated from Virginia with their parents and siblings.

Mary was born in 1798, the daughter of William J. Wood and Elizabeth Twyman.

Born in 1785, John was the first child of Francis Barret and Elizabeth Lowry. Francis was a veteran of the Revolutionary War, during which he was a prisoner for

about sixteen months.

Francis and Elizabeth married in 1784 in Virginia. They moved to Kentucky about 1798 and spent many years living in Cumberland County before coming to Green County in 1832. Unfortunately, in July of 1833, a cholera outbreak hit Greensburg, infecting them both. They died several hours apart and were buried in one grave at the family cemetery near John's home.

The John and Mary Barret house is located off of Hodgenville Avenue in Greensburg, 360 yards northwest of the Presbyterian Church. They purchased the lot in 1814 from trustees of the town. The first stage of the brick home was built shortly thereafter. An addition was built to the right of the original in the 1830s or 1840s.

John Barret's death on April 6, 1860 left the church without its oldest elder. Greensburg Sessions minutes state he had been an active and zealous supporter of the church whose loss would be deeply mourned and whose memory would be tenderly cherished.

Mary Wood Barret died March 8, 1883 in Greensburg. She was laid to rest next to her husband at the Barret Cemetery.

Just six years later, John G. Barret funded the construction of the Presbyterian Church. It was planned and built under the supervision of Curtin & Campbell, architects from Louisville, at a cost of about \$10,000 and was outfitted with new furnishings and a heating apparatus.

Ill health prevented John G. Barret from seeing the ongoing construction himself until he visited Greensburg in October, 1889.

Completed in February of 1890, the church was officially dedicated on the second Sunday in June. Alas, John G. Barret had passed away on May 14, 1890.

Built over 130 years ago as a memorial to his parents, the church Barret generously gifted still pays homage to the rich history of our county and its past residents.

Greensburg-Green County A proud past — A promising future

Way Back When

BY CAROL DIAL
SPECIAL TO THE R-H

Nov. 30, 2011

Film crew in town

- A Kentucky Life crew was in Greensburg to film a Civil War round table discussion at the Old Courthouse.

Mexican national deported - Marcial Tello Mejia is being deported after striking Tim Everly with a machete.

Christmas parade - Summer shade United Methodist Church's float won first place in the 2011 Christmas On the Square Parade.

Low jobless rate - The October jobless rate of 8.7 percent was the lowest since an 8.6 rate in November 2008.

Nov. 28, 2001

Santa arrives

About 1,000 people welcomed Santa into town during the Christmas On the Square Festival.

Name the Street contest - Students are asked to submit names for the street leading to the new elementary school during the Name the Street contest.

Red Cross donation - Residents of the Summersville community raised \$1,000 for the American Red Cross.

Bank name changes - The Peoples Bank and Trust will be known as the Central Bank USA, Inc. Dec. 1.

Nov. 27, 1991

Tobacco prices good

- Burley sales on the Greensburg markets broke a seven-year record with an average price of \$182.36 per hundredweight.

Health department grant - A Community Development Grant of \$191,000 will be used to build a new facility for the Green County Health Department.

Firefighter injured - Jody Warner was injured when he fell through the second story floor of the Rev. and Mrs. Gary Ervin's home that was destroyed by fire. Two other firemen, Bill Matney and Billy Squires, suffered from smoke inhalation.

Local businessman dies - Gordon Kelly Durham, 67, owner of Durham-

Mudd Insurance Co., died Nov. 21.

Nov. 25, 1981

Gas spill

- A tanker-truck overturned on Hwy. 61N spilling approximately 100 gallons of gasoline. The road was closed five hours for clean-up.

New road foreman - Virgil Walker, Jr. was chosen as Green County's Road Department foreman.

Million dollar market - Monday's burley sales in Greensburg sold for \$1.4 million.

Little Barren, Reia Ledbetter - We had our first snow flurries yesterday.

Dec. 2, 1971

All-Ky. City competition - Greensburg has advanced to the finals in the annual All-Kentucky City competition.

Two injured - Ronnie D. Milby and Udell Thornton were injured in a two-vehicle accident near Summersville.

Christmas stars late - Delivery of twelve

new Christmas stars for the City of Stars has been delayed.

Anniversary - Mr. and Mrs. Allie Pierce were married sixty years ago on November 29.

Dec. 1, 1961

Gambling investigation - Circuit Court Judge Philip Bertram has asked for an investigation of gambling in the county.

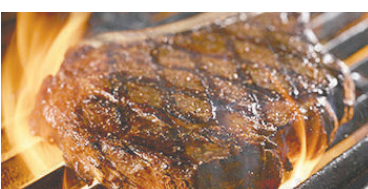
Our Boys in Service - A2/C William D. Clark is serving in Alaska, while his brother, PFC Robert L. Clark, serves in Hawaii. Pvt. Billy G. Smith is serving at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

Exie - I hope we don't get so busy with gifts and giving that we forget the true meaning of Christmas and the first Christmas.

Obituaries - W. M. Curry, 24, Nov. 22.; Everett M. Wilcoxson, 75, Monday; Glen C. "Buddy" Biggs, 37, Marengo, Ind., Nov. 23; Robert Louis Rayburn, 71, Wednesday.



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