

# The Cane Ridge

Spring 2023

# Bulletin

www.caneridge.org

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curator@caneridge.org



## Come Home to Cane Ridge

Cane Ridge Day, June 24, 2023

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| Registration                                     | 9:30 am  |
| Hymn Singing and the Cane Ridge Story            | 10:00 am |
| Dedication of Trees to Honor Trustees            | 11:30 am |
| Bring your own picnic lunch and tour the grounds |          |

The Cane Ridge Meeting House  
1655 Cane Ridge Road (Hwy. 537)  
Paris, KY 40361  
(859) 987-5350  
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Photo ca. 1947

## April 1 Opening Day Celebrates History



*Chuck Kemp, pastor of Clintonville Christian Church, accompanies singing*

The Opening Day service on April 1, 2023, saw about 25 gather to celebrate the history of Cane Ridge and hear of the life of Richard C. Ricketts, who served the Cane Ridge congregation in 1867 for a brief period. Those gathered enjoyed a reception in the Museum, following the service, the first since the Covid 19 pandemic. We will celebrate the closing of the 2023 season on Tuesday, October 31 at 10:00 am.



*James Trader, Curator, receives the offering from Trustee Anne Fuller*

## SPEAKER

The Curator is available to preach or speak to a fellowship group about Cane Ridge throughout the year. Please contact Cane Ridge to schedule a speaking engagement as early as possible. Honoraria or Donations for the ministry of Cane Ridge are expected, and, depending on the amount of travel required, mileage and housing may be necessary.

## GIFTS TO CANE RIDGE

Gifts to continue the mission and ministry of Cane Ridge should be sent to:

Cane Ridge, P.O. Box 26, Paris, KY 40362-0026

*The address at the right was given on April 1, 2023 during the opening day service at Cane Ridge.*



# Notes from the Ridge

By James H. Trader, II

## Richard C. Ricketts, Kentucky Evangelist

Richard C. Ricketts, sometimes spelled with one or two t's, was a Kentucky boy, born in Mason County, near Maysville, on February 14, 1807. This was 6 years after the Cane Ridge Revival, 3 years after Barton Stone left the Presbyterians and founded the Christian Church, and the same year that Stone sought baptism by immersion. Richard's mother was a Presbyterian, but his father was, what one biographer referred to as, "a man of the world," although both had been sprinkled as Presbyterians. He was described in his later years as being about five feet, nine inches tall and weighed about 130 pounds. He was of thin, wiry, nervous, bilious frame, sallow complexion and a decided predominance of the "light percent of French" over the Saxon in his personal appearance and manners.

In 1865, a member of the Millersburg Christian Church, Miss Nannie Burroughs, gave this description of Richard. "[He wore] the tall silk hat and the high-heeled boots of the period. She thinks of him as 'Old Brother Ricketts,' remembering two sons who became preachers, - R.C. Jr. (Dick Ricketts) and Ben. Not a large man, he was nevertheless distinguished looking and always immaculate in dress.... Mr. Montgomery Pickett treasures his own boyhood memory of "Uncle Ricketts" in the old Beasley Church as late as 1883. Earnest, magnetic, tender, he held the attention of his audience to the exclusion of all else, as indeed the youthful R.C. Ricketts is said to have held it fifty years before. His "trumpet call to Repent!" gave many a listener pause, and earnest seekers after light found it in his clear and forceful preaching."

Richard's father was named Rucliff (or Rueliff) Ricketts and his mother was Mary Ricketts, being cousins from the eastern part of Maryland, interestingly, is the same general area from which came Barton W. Stone. They settled on Jersey Ridge in Mason County.

M.C. Tiers relates of Richard's early life that he was used to hard labor and engaged in farming pursuits under the supervision of his father. He received some education and entered a business-house and had time to obtain a knowledge of the Bible

When Richard was 16 or 17 he resided in Maysville, in the home of a Methodist, who took him to church regularly. Richard joined the Methodists but within two years, Alexander Campbell came to Maysville and preached in the Methodist Church. This would have been when Campbell, a former Presbyterian who had joined with the Baptists, was in the process of founding the Disciples of Christ.

Richard said of hearing Campbell, "I had been reading the New Testament with care for some months and had some preparation of heart for further

teaching. Brother Campbell preached on that occasion as I had never heard a man preach before. He greatly enlarged the circle of my spiritual vision, and enabled me to appreciate more fully the privilege of 'searching the Scripture'." Richard was immersed a few months later by Elder Jesse Holton at Lawrence Creek.

Jesse Holton taught Richard in the Academy and saw in him a gifted public speaker. We should here note, that Jesse Holton was also one of the ministers who spoke at Cane Ridge. Richard was ordained by the Church to the work of an evangelist on April 21, 1833. D.S. Burnet, a noted Disciple preacher and pastor of the Maysville Church, was present to lay hands on this new minister. This was a year after the Disciples and the Christians had united in Lexington. He began preaching in Kentucky and Ohio and brought his parents and many of his schoolmates into the



fold.

He married Cornelia Desha, daughter of Col. John Pickett, on May 7, 1835 (although other reports say it was February 21 of 1836) and became the pastor of the church at Maysville and at the congregation at Mays Lick where Cornelia was from. However, other reports place him at Maysville from 1833-1842. Still another report says Richard was part-time at May's Lick in 1836. R.C. Ricketts, Jr. was half-time pastor of the May's Lick congregation in 1861 and 1862. They moved their membership to the Lawrence Creek Christian Church and then to the church at Maysville. He is reported to have had 6 or 8 protracted meetings in the Mason County area between 1845 and 1865.

Richard and Cornelia would have 8 children, only 2 of whom survived: Richard Clarke and Mary Ricketts Daugherty. It appears that Richard Clarke died prior to his father's own death. The Russellville, Kentucky paper reported in 1879 that Richard Ricketts of Midway, Kentucky, at one time a minister and temperance lecturer, fell dead in Sedalia, Missouri. In a notice that appeared in the Danville, Kentucky newspaper, Elva Ricketts, granddaughter of Richard and daughter of the late Richard Clarke Ricketts, was burned in December of 1888, when, standing with her back to a fireplace, her clothing caught on fire. Unable to put out her dress, she ran to a small branch about 100 yards distant and jumped in. The article says, "though badly burned, she is not thought to be in a dangerous condition."

While in Maysville, Richard preached the first sermon in the new church building on Christmas Day in 1835, although the building would not be completed until the following February. A report from the Maysville church history says that Richard had a saddle and harness shop on the northeast corner of Second and Main Streets

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# Richard Ricketts, Kentucky Evangelist at Cane Ridge

in the city. In October of 1839 Richard, along with John T. Johnson, Benjamin Franklin Hall and Absalom Adams held a meeting from Monday until Thursday and brought 13 members into the fold.

Richard and John Rogers of Carlisle, held a protracted meeting at May's Lick in January of 1835 and about 20 confessed the name of Jesus and that Richard brought about 18 to obey the gospel at Red Oak, Georgetown and Brown County, Ohio. Overall, about 50 were brought to the Disciples at May's Lick.

In 1836, Richard reported to Alexander Campbell's Millennial Harbinger that he had preached in Mason County and Brown County, Ohio and had many additions, as well as starting a church at Higginsport, Ohio. A report in 1838 says Richard was preaching in the lower end of Mason County and immersing at almost every meeting. John Allen Gano reports in the same year that Richard, John T. Johnson, D.S. Burnett, Benjamin Franklin Hall and others were doing great work in Paris, Millersburg, Georgetown and May's Lick.

A report in the Millennial Harbinger in 1838 gives an indication of the opposition that our young movement faced in those years. After reporting that John Allen Gano and Richard Ricketts spoke at an "interesting" meeting at May's Lick, the reporter said, "The good cause we think is still gaining momentum in this section, notwithstanding all opposition." Much of the reporting in those days spoke of opposition and of those who spread false rumors of what the Disciples preached and taught. In 1846, John T. Johnson wrote of a meeting at Midway which was led by Richard and L.L. Pinkerton where 30 were added. He closed his report with, "Yet our enemies say the reformation is a miserable failure!!!" (with three exclamation points.)

John Allen Gano spoke highly of Richard and a dozen other evangelists who were doing the Lord's work in that area in 1838. He particularly noted the annual meeting for that area in August of 1838 when over a 1000 communicants were present on the Lord's Day and that the total number in attendance was around 4000.

Benjamin Franklin Hall reported in 1839 in Lexington, that Richard and a man named Kendrick from Tennessee, had conducted a meeting there. "The meeting continued ten days. Our meeting-house was generally crowded, and always full. Many of the different denominations were generally in attendance, and heard with apparent interest. Much prejudice was removed, and misunderstanding of our sentiments corrected. There were, during the meeting, twenty-five accessions made to the cause of Christ—twenty-two by confession and immersion— one from the Baptists, and two from other congregations. The cause is advancing gloriously in this country, as far as proselyting is concerned."

One report has it that he became the first full-time pastor of Georgetown Christian Church beginning October 24, 1835.

Around February of 1840, Richard conducted a meeting at Lawrence Creek Meeting House. It was reported that some fifty-odd obeyed the Lord.

In addition, he made numerous preaching tours throughout the region and even

into Arkansas and Louisiana. Noted evangelists of the day often commented on Richard's able assistance as they preached at the various meetings and revivals, among them John T. Johnson, Aylette Raines, Benjamin Franklin Hall, Asa Runyon and many others. In March of 1840 a report was made that a meeting in Cincinnati had lasted from January 16 until March 18, with only two exceptions and that Richard labored industriously, scattering the good seed of the kingdom with a liberal hand, and gathered in glorious harvest for their reward. G.W. Rice reported that in that meeting about 150 persons, men and women were added to the church because of Richard and brother J. Challen.

In January of 1841, John T. Johnson wrote of a tour of 12 days spent partly at Paris, Cane Ridge and Millersburg. Johnson and Gano spent a few days in Paris and then separated, Gano for Millersburg and Johnson to Cane Ridge, where he and Richard gained 8 new additions. More than 25 were added in Millersburg in that time.

Alexander Campbell reported in 1841, that he had traveled through the Mason County area where John T. Johnson, John Allen Gano and Richard Ricketts had immersed around 100 people there. Johnson reported that a protracted meeting of seven days at May's Lick that year had added 81 to the flock with Richard as the evangelist.

In June of 1841 Richard and John Calerman, along with John Rogers of Carlisle, labored in the area of Fleming, between Flemingsburg and Mount Carmel. Richard himself reported that a church had been organized in Poplar Springs in 1829 but the church had split and been dissolved because of a dispute over the charter. He noted that between 25 and 30 members languished under these "unfortunate circumstances; and without knowing any thing about these melancholy facts, took the boldness and Christian affection the sure ground." A brother Warder helped bring about a change and the "congregation flourished while the Bible as the only rule of Christianity was announced.... The simple and ancient order of things being restored, the people heard, loved the truth, and embraced it."

John T. Johnson again worked with Richard for about a month in Flemingsburg, Maysville and May's Lick in 1843. He reported that John Rogers and John Smith also aided their efforts and almost 75 were added to the churches.

Richard reported of a meeting in Maysville in 1844 where he and James Challen welcomed 25 new members, of them, some were Methodists, others Presbyterians, and there was one Roman Catholic and perhaps one Lutheran.

John T. Johnson reported that in January of 1845 in Maysville, "Our meeting has progressed most gloriously. We had four confessions last night, making thirteen up to this time. This morning brother Ricketts buried those four by baptism, and raised them to walk in newness of life. What a delightful picture it was! The scene was lovely."

In 1845, Richard was on the ground for quite some time in Little Rock, Arkansas where about 95 persons were added to the cause. They preached for about two weeks in

the Baptist Church. It was noted by Richard and John T. Johnson that "The citizens of Little Rock were not to be deterred or dictated to. Like the noble Bereans they examined, were convinced, and obeyed. Our success was gradual and constant, and beyond all calculation. It was a source of astonishment to all, and a matter of rejoicing to a great number.... We left them rejoicing, with gratitude for your kindness in sending them help."

In 1847 he moved to Danville, KY until January of 1852 when he moved to Woodford County, near Midway.

About 1848, Richard was called to preach 2 Sundays a month at the Nicholasville Christian Church. The dates of all of these pastorates are probably overlapping and it is quite possible that he served more than one church at the same time, alternating Sundays with other pastors, and spending quite a bit of time on the road.

In August of 1848, Richard led a meeting near Danville, in a place called Cane Run. The reporter notes that there were 20 additions but he also said, "I believe there would have been 20 more, if brother Ricketts could have spoken a week longer. It was thought to be the finest impression ever made in that county; which has been for some years completely under Presbyterian influence."

James Challen reported in 1849 that Richard had visited Cincinnati and Carthage, adding 20 in the Cincinnati church and 4 at Carthage. Cincinnati's congregation had grown to over 600 at that point.

Challen and Richard hosted a meeting in Washington and Maysville in June of 1849 that saw 40 additions and a brother Young reported to Alexander Campbell, "Cholera seems at present to have ceased in Maysville. One member of our congregation in Maysville died of it, and one in Washington, but upon the whole, we have great reason for gratitude that the scourge of nations has so far fallen but lightly upon us."

Alexander Campbell was on a tour through Kentucky in 1849 and took the stage to Danville. He notes that, "[We] safely arrived at the residence of Brother Ricketts", whose praise as an able, eloquent, devoted and successful evangelist, is in all the churches where he has labored. We enjoyed, with him and his Christian lady, all that Christian hospitality and conversation, with due repose, which could contribute to our happiness."

In 1850, it is likely that Richard became pastor at South Elkhorn Christian Church in Lexington. In 1851, it appears that he shared the pastorate with William Morton. At a revival at the South Elkhorn church in September of 1852, Richard and John T. Johnson led a revival which brought 6 people into the fold. He was pastor of the South Elkhorn church until 1856.

In 1853, Alexander Campbell was called upon to dedicate the new Versailles Christian Church Building in Woodford County and Richard followed the Dedication Service with a protracted meeting.

From an 1855 report by John T. Johnson, "According to engagement, Bro. Ricketts and myself visited Ruddell's Mills, in Bourbon

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# Richard Ricketts, Kentucky Evangelist, at Cane Ridge

County, to make an effort of some days, and to dedicate the new house. We commenced our labors under very favorable auspices, with the assistance of Bro. John Rogers, their valued minister. We had, too, the assistance of his estimable father, Samuel Rogers, in some of his eloquent exhortations. I had a severe cold, and Bro. Ricketts had to take the laboring oar in preaching. In six days we had 30 additions. I was compelled to leave; but the prospects were so flattering, that Bro. Ricketts was induced to remain. The meeting continued a week longer with 60 additions. It was a most delightful meeting, and is of immense value to the cause in that region. Besides all this, a subscription of some \$800 was raised, to pay off the entire debt for the house." Would that we could retire debts with such an offering today. The history of the Ruddles Mills church notes that "A dedication service was conducted by brother R. C. Ricketts, Sr., to one of the largest congregations ever to assemble at Ruddles Mills. There were 66 additions.

Prior to the Civil War, Richard was one of many ministers who preached at First Christian Church in Paris.

Dates are in dispute about when Richard became pastor of the Cynthiana Christian Church but it is likely 1863 or 1864.

One account says that his time at Cane Ridge was in April of 1867. Whether this was a single visit or a longer period is unknown. We know he was in the neighborhood because in 1868, Richard preached one Sunday a month at North Middletown Christian Church, and in 1869 he preached the fourth Lord's Day in each month in the church.

While serving at Midway he was one of many founders of the Midway, Kentucky Female Orphans School, now Midway University. He is said to have given \$10,000 toward its support. He was a trustee of the school from

1856 until his death in 1892. A scholarship of \$2000 was named the Richard C. Ricketts Scholarship as part of the endowment since 1877. When L.L. Pinkerton died, Richard gave the devotional part of the funeral service. In the Louisville Daily Journal in February of 1859, it was reported that Elder R.C. Ricketts was in Louisville soliciting aid to rebuild the school which was destroyed by fire. The article noted, "the orphan school had educated free of charge many valuable young ladies who are now engaged as teachers in various parts of the state.... Its location on the Louisville and Lexington railroad,... and it has an invested fund in bank stock of \$30,000 and a fund of \$20,000 in the hands of subscribers, the interest of which is appropriated to the support, maintenance, and education of orphaned females."

Just as Richard had preached the first sermon in the church at Maysville in 1835, it was fitting that he preached the last service on the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 1876. He was on hand for the dedication of the new building.

In 1887, on May 11, Richard presided at the marriage of the pastor of the Maysville congregation, Edward Lindsey Powell to Miss Lida Smoot, a relative of Richard's. Powell, a noted evangelist had served churches in Virginia and Hopkinsville, Kentucky prior to his service in Maysville and would later serve at Woodland Christian in Lexington and First Christian in Louisville.

The reports of Richard's evangelistic work continue, mostly throughout central Kentucky and Ohio. The list of evangelists he worked with reads like a who's who of early Disciple preachers. The evangelistic meetings which reported numbers of any kind usually grow into the double digits and occasionally top 100. As was often the case in that time, Richard was a local boy made good. His natural talents were apparent early on and he made

the spread of the gospel his life's work.

After the death of Cornelia, Richard married Mrs. Louthan of Palmyra, Missouri in May of 1880. He moved from Midway to Missouri at about that time, however, he returned to Maysville later and remained there until his death on January 25, 1892.

John S. Shouse and C.L. Loos, president of Kentucky University, preached the service. His body was moved to Lexington for burial in the Lexington Cemetery. In an article from Maysville's Evening Bulletin, we read that Richard was a member of the Board of Curators of Kentucky University and noted as one of the oldest and staunchest friends of the University. The article goes on to say, "For sixty years of active ministry and service his name was a familiar household word among the great brotherhood with whom he identified, and among whom he earnestly labored in the cause of religion and humanity. His spotless character and unselfish work endeared him to the brotherhood who loved him in life and will honor his name in death. His memory lives today, enshrined in the hearts of all who knew and loved him, and will live upon the pages that history which he helped to make and which he has become a part. Richard C. Ricketts was one of the few men left whose life belonged to the pioneer period and to the later years of the religious movement in which he was an active participant."

The Lexington Leader noted that, "Elder Ricketts will live longest in the history of Lexington because he was the intimate associate of Alexander Campbell, the founder of the Reform Church. He was associate with Campbell at Bethany College and was with him during the greater part of his church work in this city. He himself was a staunch apostle of the faith of his friend."

## Thank You to All Who Donated in 2022

The Trustees of Cane Ridge thank all who gave in 2022 to preserve the Shrine, Museum, House and Grounds and to help to provide for the future. Those who write checks or gave identified cash are listed below. There are many others who gave cash when visiting Cane Ridge. We would like to thank those persons, too. In addition, many gave freely of time and talent through special projects. Thanks to all who helped.

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 New Horizon Community Church, Florence  
 First Christian Church, Frankfort  
 First Christian Church, Glasgow  
 First Christian Church, Hopkinsville  
 Bethel Christian Church, Kevil  
 First Christian Church, Lawrenceburg  
 Woodland Christian Church, Lexington  
 Antioch Christian Church, Lexington  
 North Lexington Church of Christ, Lexington  
 Crestwood Christian Church, Lexington  
 Arlington Christian Church, Lexington  
 Central Christian Church, Lexington  
 Cramer & Hanover Church of Christ, Lexington  
 First Christian Church, Liberty  
 Midway Christian Church, Midway  
 First Christian Church, Mt. Sterling  
 First Christian Church, Paducah  
 Clintonville Christian Church, Paris

First Christian Church, Paris  
 Paris Christian Chapel, Paris  
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## The Cane Ridge Bulletin Spring 2023

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Website: www.caneridge.org

### CURATORIAL STAFF

Curator: James H. Trader, II  
Assistant Curator: Linda Faris

### SCHEDULE

Summer Season-April 1-October 31  
Open Monday-Saturday - 9 am-5 pm  
Sundays 1-5 pm

Winter-November 1-March 31  
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