

New history book on Oldham County debuts with three signings

Cover depicts scenes of county in early days

By Helen E. McKinney
Contributing Writer

(March 2010) – La Grange, Ky., artist Breck Morgan paints pictures from his mind’s eye – realistic, folksy scenes of Oldham County’s landscape where his ancestral roots run deep. He prefers to create scenes of the county in its early history, a time when life was simpler and moved at a slower pace.

Morgan, who lives on Hwy. 524 between La Grange and Westport, resides on a farm close to the river. He aspires to paint scenes that represent familiar Kentucky landscapes; scenes such as rolling hills, the rambling Ohio River and views that “look like Kentucky,” he said.

Although he prefers to paint in acrylics, Morgan said he has “done a little bit of everything.” Over the years Morgan has produced carvings, sculptures, oil paintings, scrimshaw, built furniture and created murals. A section of a river view mural he painted several years ago for Goshen couple Bob and Elizabeth Martin’s home is now on the cover of the latest book about Oldham County history.

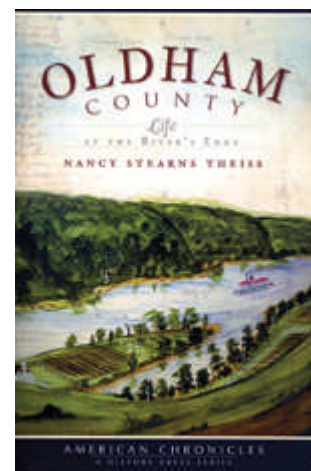


Photo provided

The front of the book depicts Morgan’s interpretation of what Eighteen Mile Island might have looked like in 1840, one of the artist’s favorite time periods. The back cover of the book is from a miniature painting representing buildings in the town of Westport.

**The jacket cover of
the new Oldham
County history
book was created
by local artist
Breck Morgan.**

The Oldham County Historical Society’s Executive Director, Nancy Theiss, authored the book. It is a compilation of recent articles she has written for the “Neighborhoods”

section of the Louisville Courier-Journal in a weekly column titled “The World Beneath Your Feet,” oral histories from the Living Treasures program at the History Center, as well as the archives stored at the La Grange facility.

“Oldham County: Stories from the River’s Edge” was published by The History Press, based in Charleston, S.C. The book sells for \$19.99 and can be purchased through any major bookstore.

“It is different from our other publications because it covers 200 years of history and the stories, oral histories, and events are not in previous publications,” said Theiss, an Oldham County native. She said The History Press contacted the History Center asking if someone there would like to write a book. “I responded and they accepted the proposal.”

An exciting, undiscovered history of Oldham County and its people lie within the pages of “Oldham County: Stories from the River’s Edge.” These stories have been preserved through court documents, old newspapers and other artifacts available to Theiss.

When it came time to choose a scene for the cover of the book, “The History Press asked me, as the author, if I knew of a local artist whom I would recommend for the jacket cover,” said Theiss. She was aware of Morgan’s work and knew it would “fit perfectly with the title and theme of the book, so I recommended him and the editors were ecstatic about his work.”

Morgan, who has never had formal art training, credits God for his talent by stating, “The Lord paints through me.” He majored in interior design at the University of Louisville and took many art history classes which greatly influence his artwork.

From March 27 through Aug. 1, the Oldham County Historical Society will feature an exhibit, “From The River’s Edge: The Primitive Artwork of Breck Morgan.” The exhibit will showcase approximately 75 artistic pieces of various media created from his youth until now. “It will be exciting to see them altogether for the first time,” said Morgan.

The Oldham County History Center museum gift shop will carry new specialty items related to “Oldham County: Stories from the River’s Edge.” Available will be two new wooden decorative Cat’s Meow pieces, “The Riverboat” and “The Railroad Train.” These pieces contain a small quote from the book to identify a particular story with the special piece. Notecards depicting scenes from the jacket cover of the book designed by Morgan will be available, as well as other themed items.

Morgan’s folk art artwork can also be found at The Ruby Rooster in Shelbyville.

• *For more information on Breck Morgan’s artwork or to contact Morgan please call (502) 225-4018. For more information on “Oldham County: Stories from the River’s*

Book Signings

- **March 6:** 2 p.m. at Barnes & Noble at The Summit Shopping Center, Brownsboro Road, Louisville
- **March 13:** 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. at Showcase Oldham County at the YMCA Soccer Complex in Buckner
- **March 27:** Noon - 2 p.m. at the Oldham County History Center, 106 N. Second Ave., La Grange

Edge,” contact Nancy Theiss at the Oldham County History Center at (502) 222-0826 or ochstryctr@aol.com.