

# Harrison Heritage News

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Historic Harrison  
County Dates

## Rattling Spurs

Bill Penn, Editor (hmms@att.net)

**Reminder - Have You Renewed your 2001 Membership?** If not, write a check today and send it to the above address - only \$5.00 per member. Or, bring payment to the next meeting. If you are not a member and enjoy receiving this newsletter, send us the membership fee and have the newsletter delivered to your home.

**Cynthiana Post Office to Celebrate 200th Birthday** - The Cynthiana post office has been in continuous use since James Coleman was appointed postmaster, April 1, 1801. In honor of this anniversary, we will feature the history of Cynthiana's post office in the April newsletter, along with a list of all known Harrison County post offices. This list will lean heavily on *Kentucky's Bluegrass: A Survey of the Post Offices, Volume 2*, by Robert M. Renick (paper, 164 pp., maps, illustrations, 1994). This book includes the history of post offices in eleven counties, including Harrison County. Volume 1 in this series includes ten other Bluegrass counties. He plans to compile the post office history of all Kentucky counties. It is available from your favorite book store.

**Harrison Black History Project** The editor inadvertently overlooked Black History Month in February's issue. A project I would like to complete this year, and forgot to mention at the last HCHS meeting, is an inventory of sources on Harrison County's African American history. As a beginning, this could include items in the Harrison County Museum, public library, and county clerk records. We should seek out and make copies of black history and genealogy information to place on file in the library Kentucky Room. It goes without saying that Harrison County's black history has been neglected and that an emphasis should be placed on more research in this area.

## History Notes

George D. Slade

### DO YOU KNOW ABOUT?

By George D. Slade

**Date of Nancy Maynor Sheely's Murder** - Harrison County Circuit Court Records show that David Sheely was charged with murdering his wife Nancy, date of said murder being June 13, 1847. The lettering on Nancy's tombstone in Mt. Pleasant Cemetery reads, "Murdered June 6, 1847." Which is correct?

**Man Buried Alive** - *Cynthiana Democrat*, Nov. 16, 1933  
"The entire community was somewhat stunned last Friday by the announcement that a man was to be buried alive in Cynthiana. That same evening, armed with picks and shovels, two men commenced to dig a grave on the site of the old miniature golf links [across from City Hall]. Inquiries made of a curly headed blond lad, elicited the information that his name was Harvey Joe Massey and he was digging his own grave." Earth was removed to a depth of five feet. Saturday afternoon at 2:30 o'clock, Harvey announced that he was ready to be buried and would stay buried for a period of seven days. He then reclined in a rough wood coffin. His manager nailed on the lid. The coffin was lowered into the grave and covered with earth. Massey was buried in such a way that one could see and talk with him. He was removed from the grave the following Saturday afternoon and taken across the street to the City Hall gym. Just to prove that he was still fit, a large stone was placed on his chest and broken with a sledgehammer.

**Winter 1917-1918** - The winter of 1917-1918, in this area, has not been matched in severity by any other that I have found in my research. I often heard my father and grandfathers tell of their many (continued on page 4)



## Historical Society Minutes

Jane Adams Whitehead

The Harrison County Historical Society met at the library on February 15, 2001. President Robbie Toomey discussed possible goals for the HCHS in 2001. Suggestions included:

-National Register listing of historic buildings.

-Civil War park near site of covered bridge for Civil War driving tour stop, if

**The next meeting of  
the Historical Society  
will be Thursday,  
March 15, 2001,  
7 PM at the library.**

approval is received to use the land.

Other business: The historical society will not have the July 4 program this year.

Program - Bill and Leslie Penn presented a program of traditional English and Irish music played on fiddle, mandolin, guitar and flute. They discussed the types of tunes and their historical settings, and how tunes came to Kentucky with Celtic origins.

March Program: Robert Poindexter will display and discuss his collection of early American photographs. Don't miss this one.

Officers:

Robbie Toomey, President

Tonya Coleman, Vice-President

Jane Adams Whitehead, Secretary

Hallie Martin, Treasurer

**Do you have an interest in history and genealogy? Join us in our efforts to preserve, interpret and study the history of Harrison County.** Membership is only \$5.00 per calendar year. Mail checks to the Harrison County Historical Society. We meet the third Thursday of each month 7 PM in the library.

## Cynthiana -Harrison County Museum

Martha Barnes

### Agricultural Displays Hog the Museum Collection

Since the first settlers arrived in this area which was to become Harrison County, agriculture has been of utmost importance to this community. As time passes by, farming changes. The number of farms and farmers, the dependence upon agriculture, the care of the land, the types of crops, the methods of farming - all these have been altered. Nevertheless, Harrison County continues to be an agricultural county.

The Cynthiana-Harrison County Museum has a great number of displays related to agriculture and its significance to the community. For a number of generations, farmers prided themselves on being practically self-sufficient. The butchering of hogs for meat supplies was one activity in which many Harrison Countians participated.

As a child, I remember hog killing as carefully planned days with an almost festive air. The weather had to be just right. Each person had a particular job - mine seemed to be to "stay out of the way" and perhaps to help grandmother and mother with lunch preparations for all the family and many helpers.

One of Neville Haley's wonderful museum pieces is a model of "hog killing" complete with miniature pig. George Slade has written an essay on "Hog Days" which is available to readers at the museum. George describes the various preparations for the butchering and subsequent preparation of the meat. He recalls the bladder being saved for the children. "Why? Well, we washed it, blew it up tight, tied a string around the opening, and we had a balloon."

Harold Slade has several lovely silhouettes on display at the museum. These life-size creations are works of art. One silhouette represents Ezra Florence as a child helping his "mammy" make lye soap. The silhouette is the backdrop for a huge cast iron kettle with its stand which was made by Mr. Florence from the rim of a Model T Ford wheel. The kettle was also used for making apple butter, boiling clothes, making burgoo, and especially during hog killing for making lard.

Other hog related items on exhibit are several sausage mills, lard presses, a sausage press or stuffer, lard paddles, a hog de-snouter (was that humane or what?), a scraper (to remove bristles from the hog after it was scalded), a meat saw, black cast iron pots, and a gamboling stick (which was inserted through slits in the slaughtered hog's legs for hanging).

The museum has a collection of items related to Webber's Sausage Company/Webber Farms which had its beginnings in this county: various advertising materials, lard cans and buckets, photos, and a written history of the company. At present, the company has no operations in Cynthiana.

The Cynthiana-Harrison County Museum, 13 S. Walnut, is open on Fridays and Saturdays, 10 A.M. - 5 P.M. Come see the way we were and be thankful for that sausage and biscuit you had for breakfast.

**MUSEUM GRIST MILL DAY IV  
SATURDAY, MAY 26, 2001  
10 A.M. TO 5 P.M.**



## Historic Harrison County Dates - 1793-1900

George D. Slade

- 1793 Cynthiana chartered as a town December 10; Harrison County formed by act of General Assembly December 21.
- 1805 Oldest brick house built on northwest corner of Main and Pleasant
- 1817 *Guardian of Liberty* newspaper established; ceased publishing in 1818.
- 1818 Methodist Church, Pike and Church Streets, deed.
- 1820 First City School on Church Street built.
- 1820 Methodist Church, Pike and Church Streets, first building.
- 1833 Cholera epidemic breaks out; first Christian Church built on site of present church.
- 1837 Covered Bridge on Main Street built.
- 1845 Methodist Church, Pike and Church Streets, second building.
- 1847 David Sheely, an innocent man, executed by hanging Nov. 19.
- 1850 Cynthiana *News* established.
- 1851 First City School on Church Street demolished.
- 1852 Larger second City School built on Church Street.
- 1853 Court House completed. St. James A.M.E. church built first church.
- 1854 May 18, first train, Covington-Lexington Railroad, completed to town limits; May 24, first passenger train, Covington to Cynthiana; June 8 barbecue at Cynthiana to celebrate first passenger train arrival.
- 1855 Church of Advent Episcopal cornerstone laid.
- 1856 First fairgrounds established on north side of White Oak Pike, 1 mile west of Pleasant St. bridge; clock installed in Court House.
- 1857 Macedonia Baptist built first church; moved in 1881 to corner Bridge and Church St.
- 1861 April 22, first Harrison CSA vols. under Jo Desha leave; became Co. C, 1st Regt. Inf.
- 1861 September: Union Camp Frazer established in Cynthiana by 35th Ohio to guard railroad; first Harrison County Union volunteers mustered in as Co. H. 18th Ky.
- 1862 July 17, 1st Battle of Cynthiana on John Hunt Morgan's first Kentucky raid.
- 1864 June 11, 2nd Battle of Cynthiana - Morgan attacks Cynthiana and Keller's Bridge.
- 1864 June 12, 2nd Battle of Cynthiana - Morgan defeated by Burbridge on Millersburg Pike; in July many enslaved Harrison African Americans join 117th US Colored Inf. at Covington.
- 1867 First Baptist Church of Cynthiana organized.
- 1868 First school for African Americans established on S. Church near river; Battle Grove Cemetery dedicated Nov. 4, site of 2nd Battle of Cynthiana.
- 1869 *Cynthiana Democrat* started with James M. Parrish as publisher.
- 1870 Methodist Church, Pike and Church Streets, third building.
- 1873 South wing added to City School on Church Street; Death Valley Scotty born Cynthiana, Kentucky.
- 1875 Abdallah Park fairgrounds established; St. Edwards Catholic Church dedicated.
- 1883 Monticello mansion erected by E. J. Megibben.
- 1884 Tornado at Colemansville March 25.
- 1884 North wing added to City School on Church Street.
- 1885 Pleasant Street bridge built.
- 1886 Ebenezer Methodist Episcopal organized; Old stone county jail built on West Pike Street.
- 1894 Standpipe erected near site of present Harrison Co. High School
- 1894 First City Negro School built on Water St; later moved to Penn St. in 1920; torn down and rebuilt in 1937 as Banneker School, E. O. David, principal; closed 1962; Biancke's Restaurant established on Pike St; Lucinda Boyd publishes *Chronicles of Cynthiana*.
- 1895 *Log Cabin* newspaper established.



DO YOU KNOW ABOUT (continued from page 1)

experiences of that winter. Snow and sleet covered the ground for weeks with snow drifting against gates so that they could not be opened. Temperatures plummeted below zero many nights, making the watering and feeding of livestock a serious problem. Many birds and animals died. Snow and severe cold lasted from early December 1917 to early March 1918. For days, all travel on the roads came to a halt. Trains were running as much as twelve hours late. Rural mail carriers failed to make their rounds many days.

January 21, 1918, the City School, on the south side of East Bridge Street, was completely destroyed by fire. Horse-drawn fire fighting equipment was hampered in getting to the scene of the fire by heavy sleet and snow that had been on the ground for six weeks. A biting, sleety snowstorm was in progress at the time of the fire. The school building was a total loss.

February 9, 1918, the river ice broke with a flood, taking out the iron bridge across the river at Wood's Crossing, one mile south of Cynthiana. The *Cynthiana Democrat* reads, "immense cakes of ice were swept up on the river bank. Some of the cakes were 2 feet thick, 20 feet long and 10 feet wide. The road on the west bank of the river at Cynthiana was completely blocked with ice."

The water in the standpipe had frozen to a great depth during the two months of below zero weather. When the thaw came on February 7 and 8, 1918, the water being pumped into the standpipe forced a column of ice out the top, where it towered to a great height, standing straight up. When the sun played on and through it, the prismatic effect was brilliant. This spectacular site was visible from all the surrounding countryside.

**Publications available from Cynthiana-Harrison County Museum, 13 South Walnut Street, Cynthiana, KY 41031 (859-234-7179); open Friday and Saturday 10 AM - 5 PM:**

- Boyd, Lucinda, *Chronicles of Cynthiana*. This is a reprint of the rare 1894 edition, which includes family histories, the famous account of David Sheely and his ghost, and other historical sketches and scattered accounts of persons and events connected with Cynthiana and Harrison County. 262 pp. Hardbound. \$20.00.

- June 1896 *Cynthiana Democrat* reprint. This was a special edition with biographical sketches and photographs of prominent men and women; many photographs of buildings; city/county government, church and school information is included. 24 pp. Paperback, 12"x18". \$5.00

- *Cynthiana Since 1790*. Virgil Peddicord (1986). Mr. Peddicord attempted to list the owners/businesses located on each lot from the founding of the city through the mid-1980s, including subdivisions added through 1923. 171 pp. (See separate index below). Paperback. \$20.00 - *Index - Cynthiana Since 1790*. Mr. Peddicord did not prepare a comprehensive index for his book. This supplemental index contains about 3,500 names and a reference city street map. 30 pp. Paperback. \$3.00

*NEW - This Old House* by Katherine Wilson. Now back in print, this book tells the stories of twenty-six early Harrison Co. houses and the families who have occupied them. Much material on Harrison Co. history. Exterior and interior b & w photos of each house. Originally printed 1956-1957. 70 pp., new index, paperback. \$15.00

Please include a handling and shipping fee of \$4.00 for first book, \$2.50 for each additional book; you will be notified if special shipping fees apply. No shipping fee on *Index - Cynthiana Since 1790*, if ordered with the book. Make checks payable to "Cynthiana-Harrison County Museum." No credit cards. Prices/fees subject to change.

Back issues of the Harrison Heritage News are available. Fee is the actual photocopying cost plus shipping.

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**Cynthiana High School Yearbooks CD-ROM** - Lowell Maybrier has copied all available CHS yearbooks from 1914 to 1962 onto a CD-ROM. Forty-one annuals are included: 1914, 1919-1930, 1934-1941, 1943-1962. Every original page and photograph is included. The CD-ROM is available for \$22.00, including postage, from Lowell Maybrier, 117 Hopewell Drive, Paris, Kentucky 40361.