

Harrison Heritage News

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In this issue:
200th Anniversary
of Cynthiana post
office with history
and listing of all
known Harrison post

Rattling Spurs

Bill Penn, Editor (hmms@att.net)

Harrison County Genealogy Assistance Available in April

Charley Feix, a Cynthiana historian and genealogist, will be available to help researchers during April from 2-4 P.M. on Thursdays in the Christine Burgan KY Room of the Cynthiana-Harrison County Library (859-234-4881).

Women's History Month was in March so we belatedly recognize Cynthiana's three female postmasters: Mattie D. Todd (1874), Bettie S. Moore (1895), and Jackie Hill (2001).

Green Lights and Red Faces

Former CHS teacher Earl Pfanstiel recently told me this story he heard from relatives in Bracken County dating to the early days of automobile transportation. A couple made their first trip from Brooksville to Cynthiana driving their Model T and couldn't help but notice the pretty lights on some of the street corners. "Aren't they pretty. There's a green one, and over there is a red one. And it isn't even Christmas; what could they be for?"

It was only after they returned to Brooksville and talked to friends about the pretty lights in Cynthiana that they learned of the new traffic lights, something they had never before seen.

George Slade tells me that the first Cynthiana traffic light installation was reported in the May 3, 1928, *Democrat*: "It is understood a traffic light, on trial, will be installed at Main and Pike streets where it is badly needed at all times, and especially on Saturdays and court days when the rush of automobiles makes it practically impossible to cross the streets."

By the way, the traffic signal was the invention in 1923 of Garrett Morgan (1877-1963), an African American born in Paris, Ky., who also patented in 1912 the gas mask used by both firefighters and W.W.I soldiers.

History Notes

Manufacturing in Cynthiana Prior to 1925

By George D. Slade

EARLY 1800s - Brickyards - Most production used in local construction. Tanneries - Animal hides prepared for local use and for export. There was a tannery across Main Street from the Christian Church, operated by "Uncle" Billie Thompson. Flouring mills - Used local and imported grains to produce flour, meal and animal feed for local and export trade. Two early large mills were Cook's (later Crescent) and Peck's (later Crown Jewel). There was a rope walk along the north side of Pleasant Street, between Walnut and Main. This was used to make rope from hemp.

EARLY 1800s TO EARLY 1920s. The production of Bourbon whiskey was, by far, the largest industry in the city and county. At one time there were thirty distilleries. Barreled and bottled whiskey was exported to all regions of the U. S. and some foreign countries. Production ceased during "prohibition."

1816-1825. Samuel Patton operated a woolen factory on the west side of Walnut Street, just north of Pleasant Street.

1818. Callent and Addison established a cotton factory on the west side of Walnut Street near what is now Penn Street.

1850. Henry Cromwell began the manufacture of carriages, wagons and plows on the north side of Pike Street between Walnut Street and the railroad. At one time he employed thirty people.

1883. Shortly after the end of the Civil War, Joe Fennell started the production of boots for trotting horses. He patented his product in 1883. At the highpoint of production the factory was located across Main Street from the Court House and employed sixty-seven people. Though no longer owned by the Fennell's, the Fennell horse boot is still being manufactured adjacent to the Red Mile race track in Lexington. You can see a Fennell horse boot and read about it at our museum.

1906. August 13, Cynthiana Overall Co., located at what is now 208 N. Poplar, began operations employing thirty young women and had orders for 450 dozen pair of overalls. Closed December 18, 1909.

1920. The Knickerbocker Co., employing sixty people, was manufacturing middie suits and blouses at SE corner of Pike/railroad.

Mid-1920s. Rouse Potato Chip Co. was making chips at the SE corner of Oddville Avenue and the railroad.

1923. Atkinson Automatic Timer Co., manufacturing an improved version of timers for Model T Ford automobiles, began operations on the north side of Pike Street between Walnut Street and the railroad.

Historical Society Minutes

Jane Adams Whitehead

The Harrison County Historical Society met at the library at 7 P.M. March 15, 2001. President Robbie Toomie is considering a tour of Ruddles Mills for interested members. He also reported Mayor Wells will bring up before the Recreational Dept. a request from the historical society to use the unused corner of the ball field by the boat ramp as a site for interpretive signs for the Civil War driving tour's covered bridge site.

Dave Kennedy will head a committee

**Noted KY Historian
Dr. James C. Klotter
will speak at the next
meeting, April 19, 2001,
7 PM at the library.**

gathering nominations for the National Register of Historic Places. Bring suggestions to the next meeting, but they must meet federal criteria.

After the business meeting an informative program on early American photography was presented by Robert Poindexter. Mr. Poindexter illustrated his presentation using photographs from his personal collection of family and Civil War images. He explained the various photographic methods used during the 19th century including daguerreotypes, ambrotypes, and tin-types.

Dr. James C. Klotter Next Speaker

Dr. Klotter will discuss at our next meeting "The Breckinridges: Divided Families in Kentucky During the Civil War." A native Kentuckian, Dr. Klotter was the former Executive Director of the Kentucky Historical Society and is now the State Historian and Professor of History at Georgetown College. He is the author, co-author, or editor of a dozen books including, *A New History of Kentucky*, *The Breckinridges of Kentucky*, *History Mysteries*, and was associate editor of the *Kentucky Encyclopedia*.

Please Report Address Changes

Due to the many address changes because of 911 requirements, members should notify Harold Slade any changes for mailing the newsletter.

Cynthiana -Harrison County Museum

Martha Barnes

Tourism can prove vital to a community. As the economic situation nationwide seems somewhat dismal and as the agricultural and industrial strengths of our community seem uncertain, the importance of tourism to Cynthiana and Harrison County increases.

The staff members of the Cynthiana-Harrison County Museum have continually stressed the tourist appeal of the museum. Each year, the number of visitors increases - especially the number of tourists from out of town and out of state. Efforts to promote the Civil War heritage of the area continue. As one reflects upon what might have been, thoughts go to the old covered bridge which served as the gateway to the city of Cynthiana for a number of years. If only those "leaders" who were so adamant about destroying the bridge had had the foresight to preserve it - Wow! What a tourist attraction we would have had right here in "river city." Truly, Cynthiana and Harrison County would have had great significance in the world of tourism.

Although the actual bridge is gone, it is vivid in the memories of Harrison Countians. The museum harbors various reminders of that wonderful structure. Paintings of the bridge by Herbert Allen Moore and Robert Poindexter are a part of the museum's art collection. Eugenia Moss, Harold Slade, Charlie and Vivian Pollard, Esther Ammerman are among those citizens who have donated sketches or photographs of the old covered bridge. Views of the interior as well as the bridge during flood stage and dismantling are on display.

The covered bridge was built in 1837. The builder was Greenup Remington who was said to have used plans of noted designer Lewis Wernwag of Pennsylvania. A framed picture of Mr. Remington hangs in the museum. The bridge was significant in the county's Civil War history since Confederate General John Hunt Morgan used the bridge to enter Cynthiana both in 1862 and 1864. After his defeat, many of his men used the same route to escape.

In 1934, a crew directed by the state came into Cynthiana to take measurements and make drawings of the covered bridge as a part of the Historic American Building Survey. Just a few years ago, Donald Hill, one of our faithful staff members, used the museum's copy of those measurements and drawings to construct a model of the bridge built to scale. Another model of the old covered bridge is made of ceramic material and was donated by the Cynthiana-Harrison County Library. Its mate is in the library.

The bridge was closed to traffic in 1944 with the dismantling process starting in 1946. The remains of the bridge were finally pushed into the Licking River in December 1948. The present concrete structure (the John Hunt Morgan Bridge) was built in 1949.

A section of one of the bridge's beams is on display and was loaned to the museum by Jim Bob and Hallie Martin. Jim Bob gave another piece of the old wood to Neville Haley on behalf of the museum. Mr. Haley handcrafted 14 covered bridge models and donated them to the museum. The models were sold at a cost of \$50 each - and the profits (thanks to Jim Bob and Neville) were given to the museum. Although it certainly is not like having the "real thing," the staff of the Cynthiana-Harrison County Museum is striving to keep the old covered bridge as a part of our history to remember and share.

Cynthiana, Kentucky, Post Office 200 Years Old
 April 1, 1801 - April 1, 2001
 George D. Slade

During Cynthiana's early history, mail came to Cincinnati by boat, stage or horseback. From there it was brought to Falmouth by horseback. A courier, riding a horse, picked up the mail there and brought it to Cynthiana. Later, mail from Cincinnati was carried by stage coach through Williamstown. The coming of the railroad in 1854 revolutionized the delivery of mail. I recall that in the 1920s, in town, there were two deliveries of mail daily, except Sundays. A letter could be mailed in Lexington or Cincinnati in the morning and delivered in Cynthiana that afternoon. This came to an end when passenger trains stopped running.

A post office was established April 1, 1801, with James Coleman as postmaster. The first woman postmaster (or postmistress) was Mattie D. Todd. Though a Democrat, she was appointed to the position by a Republican president due to the influence of her cousin, Robert Lincoln, son of Abraham Lincoln. She served for twenty-one years until 1895. At this time President Cleveland appointed Bettie S. Moore to the position. These two were the only women to have served as postmasters at Cynthiana for nearly 200 years until the recent appointment, in March 2001, of Jackie Hill. [See note 1 below]

For many years the post office was located in a business establishment, such as a general store. An ad in the 1900 business directory reads, "Post Office News Stand - Dealer in American and Foreign Newspapers, Magazines, Periodicals, Books, Stationery, Cigars, Tobacco." Some of the locations of early post offices were north side of Pike Street, near Main; southeast corner of Main and Pleasant; under the old National Bank on Main Street; across from the court house on Main; southwest corner of Pike and Walnut; north side of Pike midway between Main and Walnut; south side of Pike second door west of Rohs Opera House. It was from the latter location that the post office was moved into the new government building on Walnut Street.

In 1896, there were twenty-nine post offices in Harrison County, ranging from Antioch Mills to Venus. These were usually located in a general store. Folks in the vicinity of the store came there to pick up their mail. (The Sylvandell post office is on display at the Harrison County Museum.) At this time, there are only two post offices in the county, the other being in Berry.

The first rural route was established in April 1900, with George Samhammer as carrier at \$400 per annum. In addition to the mail, he was permitted to carry all kinds of merchandise, for which he made a small charge. In April 1902, five rural routes were established and on July 1902, the office was designated second class with W. M. Maffett as postmaster. City delivery was established December 1, 1910.

Construction of the new government building at the corner of Walnut and Pleasant Streets began in June 1913. The building was completed in August 1914. The post office was moved from Pike Street to the new location September 9, 1914. L. M. Lebus was postmaster at this time. One of the most interesting features of this building is the postal inspectors tunnel on the second floor. The inspectors could enter this from ground level without being seen by anyone in the building. From the tunnel, the inspectors could view all the interior of the building without anyone knowing of their presence.

With more automobiles and the need for parking space, businesses began locating south of town. The post office followed suit. A new building was erected on the north side of Ladish Road. After 77 years at Pleasant and Walnut, on May 20, 1991, the post office was moved to this location.

Lucinda Boyd published her book, *Chronicles of Cynthiana*, in 1894. She ended the book by writing, "To the historian of 1993 - Answer this letter and tell me all that has been done since my soul shook off the dust that encumbered it here on earth. I shall come for my letter December 10, twelve o'clock at night, 1993. I shall find the post office, move it where you will." At the designated time more than 300 people were awaiting Lucinda at the new post office. Exactly at 12 midnight she arrived on the back of a black horse, wearing a black dress, a black bonnet and a black veil. She accepted her letter from historian George Slade and rode away into the darkness.

Following page: The source of this list of Harrison County post offices is: *Kentucky's Bluegrass: A Survey of the Post Offices, Vol. 2*, by Robert M. Rennick, pp. 61-74. (1994), \$12.50, available at bookstores. This book includes a paragraph on each post office, listing its location and a brief history. Sources include the Records of Appointments of Postmasters and post office Site Location Reports (both, National Archives). The book includes ten other counties.

Note 1. For a list of postmasters 1801-1927, see Cromwell's Comments, *Cynthiana Democrat*, August 2, 1928.

Harrison County Post Offices - 1801-2001 (and period of operation)

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|--|---|
| Alberta - 1897 - 1904 | Leesburg - 1817 - 1917 |
| Antioch Mills (Antioch) - 1872 - 1904 | Leeslick - 1888 - 1901 |
| Avena [9 m. nne of Cyn.] - 1882 - 1908 | Marysville - 1816 - 1821 |
| Baptist [9 3/4 ne of Cyn.] - 1888 - 1906 | McLoney [near Alberta] - 1890 |
| Beckboro [Jones Shop] - 1888 - 1890 | Mouth of Raven - 1829 - 1834 |
| Berry's Station (Berry) - 1856 to present | New Town - 1816-1824 |
| Branch [Durbintown] - 1880 - 1904 | Oddville - 1851 - 1903 |
| Breckinridge (Tricum) - 1879 - 1883; 1890 - 1909 | Paxton - 1865 - 1874 |
| Broadwell - 1833 - 1900 | Poindexter - 1876 - 1932 |
| Buena Vista - 1848 - 1864 | Raven Creek - 1849 - 1863 |
| Claysville - 1825- 1917 | Renaker - 1886 - 1906 |
| Colemansville - 1831 - 1878 | Richland - 1872 - 1884 |
| Colville - 1867 - 1870; 1888 - 1910 | Robertsons Station (Robinson)-1855 - 1982 |
| Connersville - 1849 - 1904 | Robinson - 1832 |
| Curry Run - 1849 - 1883 | Rutland - 1852 - 1904 |
| Cynthiana - April 1, 1801 to present | Scott's Station - 1853 - 1856 |
| Dunaway [14 1/2 nw of Cyn.] - 1892 - 1903 | Selma - 1890 - 1905 |
| Ecklar's Mill - 1840 - 1841 | Shadynook - 1875 - 1933 |
| Georges - 1816 | Smitsonville - 1872 - 1902 |
| Havilandsville - 1842 - 1926 | Sylvandell (Sylvan Dell) - 1873 - 1913 |
| Hinton - 1877 - 1900; 1906 - 1966 | Travellers Rest - 1833 - 1842 |
| Kelat - 1884 - 1905 | Venus [Salem]- 1881 - 1904 |
| Lairs Station (Lair) - 1860 - 1920 | <i>Source: See bottom of page 3.</i> |

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 - *I 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 on Harrison County history and genealogy. 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 from the editor. 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. 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. Mr. Maybrier would like to borrow the missing yearbooks to copy.