



Harrison Heritage News

Published monthly by

Harrison County Historical Society, PO Box 411, Cynthiana, KY 41031

Award of Merit - Publication or Journal, 2007 Kentucky History Awards

July 2008

Vol. 9 No. 7

Pioneer Life in Harrison County (1793-1850)

Col. Douglas A. Harper

Introduction: The past few issues of the Cynthiana Democrat have had their "Living" columns chock-full of announcements of reunions, some for high school classes, others for family reunions. The roads must be hot in Harrison with all the comings and goings to see old friends and renew family ties. For some though, to attend a family reunion in the modern era, it may seem something like an old-fashioned expedition with a lot of planning, packing up the car, taking the kids, booking rooms in motels, and heading off for some place in the country where, only God knows why, some progenitor of your family line decided to settle down and raise a family!

But imagine those early explorations and settlements in Kentucky, when families from the east packed up their life's belongings and headed westwards across the mountains, perhaps never to see their families back home again, or to even hear news of births, deaths, marriages and other events involving those once near-and-dear? The hardships they endured and the lives to which they were accustomed have not been experienced by many today. We buy SUVs with off-road capabilities, but hardly ever leave the pavement, and "rough it" in relative luxury, with RVs and campers.

In an effort to give attendees at the annual Cummins reunion (held at Antioch Mills the past two years) a flavor of what life may have been like back then, Havilandsville native, Oddville High School and U.K. graduate, and Air Force veteran Doug Harper wrote the following texts to present to his Cummins cousins. Some of your own ancestors may have shared their times and experiences in pioneer-era Harrison County. So read, learn, and enjoy.
Philip Naff

My ancestor, Joseph Cummins and his wife, Lydia Fleming, were married in Bourbon County, Kentucky, on August 22, 1793, 215 years ago. They set up housekeeping at Antioch Mills, where their thirteen children were

born from 1794 to 1819. It is now Pendleton and Harrison Counties, Kentucky, but was Bourbon County at the time of their marriage.

The purpose of this article is to give some idea about the sort of country they were living in during that time. Indians did not reside in Kentucky, but tribes north of the Ohio River hunted in Kentucky and raided the early settlers upon their arrival in the late 18th century. The Indian menace peaked along the frontier on June 22, 1780, when Colonel Henry Byrd led 600 to 1,000 British Regulars, Canadian volunteers, and their Indian allies across the open traces toward Paris. Captain Isaac Ruddle commanded the small Hinkston fortress. When he saw the superiority of the British forces Ruddle agreed to surrender, provided that the British would be in charge of the prisoners. Colonel Byrd could not control his Indian allies who zealously seized prisoners and tomahawked a few while separating families for the return march northward. Aware that Martin's Fort was another five miles to the east, the invaders proceeded toward Stoner Creek. This time Colonel Byrd overruled his allies and the Martin's Fort residents surrendered to the British while the Indians seized horses and other booty. After destroying the fort, the Indians departed with the Ruddle's Fort victims, while the British returned to Canada with a few hundred prisoners from the other battles. These two disasters evoked General George Rogers Clark's retaliatory expedition into the northwest. The Byrd party moved up the South Licking River and crossed near Berry, Kentucky, just some six miles west of where my ancestors would eventually live at Antioch Mills.

Although the Indian menace abated, many settlers remained cautious, and with good reason. The following year, incoming settlers sighted Indians along the banks of the Ohio and Licking Rivers. Indians continued to steal horses along the overland routes. Even in the 1790s, easterners continued leasing their Kentucky lands for fear

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Harrison County Historical Society

Bob Owen, President
 Billy Fowler, Vice President
 Janie Whitehead, Secretary
 Dorothy Slade, Treasurer
 Bill Penn, editor: pennwma@aol.com

Program Notes - June 19, 2008

The Eastside Elementary Fifth Grade History Club has twenty plus members who along with Social Studies Teacher Jeff Kinney go to school early each Wednesday to participate in the club. Most of the members prepared individual projects for a state-wide competition held in Frankfort by the KY Historical Society. Some of the members prepared multiple projects for the competition. There were several awards won by the Eastside Club members at this very prestigious competition. Five members of the Eastside Elementary Fifth Grade History Club attended our meeting and shared with us a few of their fantastic projects. All of this group of children should be commended for the effort and dedication that they put into this voluntary undertaking.



(above) Eastside Elementary Fifth Grade History Club representatives presented the June historical society program. Photo left to right front row - Andrew Norfleet, Jeremy Ward, Gus Madsen, Chelsea Best, Casey Newcomb with Jeff Kinney in the back. Photo, Sharon Fowler.

Harrison County History Calendar

- July 17** - Show and Tell Historical Society program.
August 21 - Meet at Zeppelin Threads on Main St. Heather Ladick and Ben Farmer will give a tour of the ca. 1812 brick building which contains the business and their home.
September 18 - Meet at the Handy House for a tour and refreshments on the back porch.
Oct. 16 - Lester Horwitz, author of *The Longest Raid of the Civil War*, about John Hunt Morgan's 1863 Indiana-Ohio Raid.
Dec. 5, Friday, (note corrected date) - Potluck 6 pm First Methodist Church - bring a dish. Joint meeting of historical society and museum.

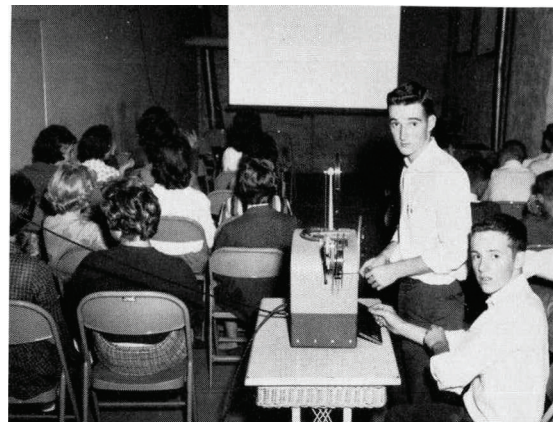
President's Corner

Bob Owen
 robert_owen@bellsouth.net

We are in the summer doldrums and everyone is concerned about the rising costs for fuel, food, etc. Many people have decided to forsake the summer vacation trip. Let me suggest you consider visiting some of the historical highlights of Kentucky. Since you will not have so far to go the fuel costs will be less and the Kentucky State Parks offer reasonable rates to stay the night. Kentucky offers a host of historical sites. You can contact the state government, visit our Chamber of Commerce, research opportunities at the library or talk to family and friends to develop ideas. The other night, I watched a wonderful show on KET about the Bourbon distilleries of the state. The Chamber of Commerce has pamphlets on various places of interest and on the Bourbon Trail. Check it out.

For those of you senior citizens, you might want to take the Kentucky History class at the Licking Valley Community College. The class visits many historical sites and will greatly improve your knowledge of the state. And as a senior citizen, you qualify for a scholarship which makes the class free. Check with the college.

I want to commend the staff at the museum for getting our news letter out each month. They put it lots of time and energy and we greatly appreciate this effort. And again, thanks to Bill Penn and Philip Naff for their editorial contributions. They would love to include the writings of others, so if we have any budding authors out there, contact them about getting your writings included.



Correction: In the *Harrison Heritage News* June 2008 issue (9-6), the caption in the CHS projection room photo on p. 7 (reprinted above) reversed the names: Julius Shirley is standing and Bobby Shirley is seated. The original yearbook had no captions and the editor's memory failed in this instance.

Cynthiana-Harrison County Museum - Our 14th Anniversary

Martha Barnes, President

Happy Anniversary! My, we surely have come a long way - this July marks the 14th anniversary of the Cynthiana-Harrison County Museum. The museum first opened on July 22, 1994. The first annual meeting of the Cynthiana-Harrison County Trust, Inc. was held on June 8, 1993. The purpose of the trust according to its by-laws is "to organize and operate, without profit to the corporation, an association of individuals to establish, equip, staff, and furnish facilities for the display and maintenance of items of historical significance to the citizens of Cynthiana and Harrison County, Kentucky, for social, recreational, scientific, educational, historical and other charitable betterment of the community, and such other comparable purposes and functions as may evolve over time...."

At that first annual meeting, nine directors were elected. (Each of the directors is elected for a three year term.) The officers are to be elected from the nine directors. Among those nine original directors elected in 1993, four remain active - Bob and Mary Grable as secretary/treasurer, Robert Poindexter as our faithful landlord, and myself. Our 2008 annual meeting was held on July 11. Our nine directors are Neville Haley, Bob Grable, Larry Moss, Mary Grable, Kenny Simpson, Dorothy Slade, Donald Hill, Harold Slade, and Martha Barnes. Our museum volunteers are vital to the museum's existence. They give of their time, talent, and treasure to the museum - expecting no reimbursement other than the satisfaction that they are contributing to the continuation of the museum, the

preservation and sharing of Cynthiana and Harrison County's history, and the betterment of this community. We always need more volunteers - of all ages.

We especially are grateful to our city and county governments and various civic organizations and individuals who faithfully support the museum. Gratitude is due our local media. WCYN and The Cynthiana Democrat have supported the museum since its inception. Once again, WCYN assists in our anniversary celebration by broadcasting live. Rick Chasteen brings his Coffee Break program to the Walnut Street location. Fourteen door prizes will be given away this year. In 1994, George Slade and I developed the idea of "Museum Musings" as a promotional tool. For that many years, our local newspaper has faithfully publicized the museum. Local Cable Channel 6 continually runs an advertisement for the Cynthiana-Harrison County Museum.

Although Robert's wonderful old theatre building provides approximately 4,000 square feet of space for museum displays, our collection fills almost every nook and cranny. Recent acquisitions include a galley proof press, a scale model/dollhouse of a house which once stood on Walnut Street, a cane bottom/back wheelchair, an Atwater Kent and other radios, additions to Neville's and Harold's Cynthiana layout, etc, etc. Who would have ever imagined such a collection! We continue our dedication to preserve and share the history of this special community. Welcome, visitors, volunteers, and supporters. Come help us celebrate! Happy fourteenth!

Harrison County, Kentucky, Historical Publications

available from Cynthiana-Harrison County Museum, 124 South Walnut Street, P.O. Box 411, Cynthiana, KY 41031 (859-234-7179);

- 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 (William A. Penn). 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
- Writings of Colonel William M. Moore,(1837-1927) compiled by Andrew B. "Andy" Peak (2002). Includes 1921-1922 articles he wrote for the Cynthiana Democrat about his life. 10 family photographs; index; paperback, 71 pp. \$10.00/\$3.00 shipping. Limited supply.
- 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. 70 pp., new index, paperback. \$15.00 (An index is available for earlier editions, which had no index).
- Cromwell's Comments, by John M. Cromwell (1862-1951) is a reprint of Cromwell's 1928-1941 Cynthiana Democrat columns on the history of Cynthiana (Harrison Co., KY). William A. Penn and George D. Slade, editors. Paperback; preface; 2 maps; 21 photos; 4 illus.; annotated; index; 200 pp. (Cynthiana Democrat, 2002), \$10 plus \$3 shipping.

Shipping/handling for above books: Please include a handling and shipping fee of \$4.00 for first book (unless otherwise noted above), \$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/money orders payable to "Cynthiana-Harrison County Museum." No credit cards. Prices/fees subject to change.

of the Indian menace. Yet settlers continued to pour into the West. A peace treaty between the United States and the allied Indian tribes of the Northwest was signed in Greenville, Ohio on August 3, 1795.

Bourbon County was established in 1785 as one of the counties of Virginia in what is now Kentucky. It was subsequently broken up to form as many as thirty other counties. Kentucky became the fifteenth state of the United States on June 1, 1792, with nine counties. Falmouth was established as a town in 1793, and Harrison County was established from Bourbon and Scott counties effective February 1, 1794 and Pendleton County was formed from Bracken and Campbell Counties in 1799. It seems that Joseph Cummins was a resident of Bourbon, Harrison, and then Pendleton County during his life and did not move once. Although at one time the Cummins owned thousands of acres of the lands surrounding Antioch, they chose to place their log cabin home on the Pendleton-Harrison county line, and it was said that the children were born in one county (where the bedroom was) and lived in another, all within the confines of that little cabin! (After the children were born, surveyors determined the actual line to be where it is today, leaving descendants with an interesting story, nonetheless)

Richland Precinct, in the northern part of Harrison County, and in which Antioch Mills is located, is hilly, rough, and broken, with a general slope to the northeast and the area is laced with a number of small streams. Early on there were no turnpike roads, just a number of dirt roads. The people were industrious and prosperous with the chief crop of tobacco. Several horse-powered mills were in use in the early days. A water mill was built in Havilandsville about three miles northeast of Antioch Mills. There were a number of distilleries in the precinct, one owned by Joseph Woolery (a daughter married a Cummins), and there was one near Mt. Gilead Christian Church.

A number of churches were in existence from 1830 onward. Methodist churches were at Curry, Barlow, Benson and Crow Chapel. Mt. Gilead and Antioch were Christian Churches. The first building in Antioch Mills was built in 1867. It was a blacksmith shop. The town built since 1878 had two stores, an undertaker, a milliner, a post office, a carpenter shop, four teachers, a music teacher, a school, a physician, a pump maker, a flour mill, a saw mill and a church with about fifty people.

The countryside teemed with wild animals. The buffalo, deer, elk, rabbit, wolf, fox, squirrel, ground hog, and even bear, and wildcat found salt licks, sulphur springs, cane, wild rye, clover, pea vines, wild herbs, flowers and buffalo grass for pasturage. The dense woods and tall cane protected wild turkeys, pheasants, partridges, and owls. For centuries, the Indians had followed the traces left by migratory animals through lands that Daniel Boone came to label as a hunter's paradise only in 1769.

The area first beckoned the hunter and then the farmer.

It provided the settlers with meat, furs, hides, and fat for tallow. Many streams flowed across the land and springs gave good water supplies. Thickets had blue and black ash, honey locust, walnut, wild cherry, buckeye, burr oaks, maple, laurel and hickory. Trees provided the early farmer-settler with more than just shelter. Honey locusts had large thorny spikes, but bore pea like pods that tasted sweet and made excellent beer. Yellow poplar was widely used to construct log cabins, for walls, roofs, door hinges and pegs to hold the pieces together and on which to hang clothes. At times clean hickory ashes served as a salt substitute, and sassafras from the laurel tree made tea the common beverage. Finally, the maple supplied molasses and sugar. Orchards were rare, but Indians had often rested along the traces and thrown out seed that developed into plum groves prior to settlement. Black locust flourished all over the area, the nectar collected by bees gave the settlers a good source of sweets for cooking, and eating. (This year would have produced a bumper crop since the trees were so full of bloom). The black locust also made wonderful wood for split rail fences. Sweets or desserts were also made from blackberries and raspberries that grew in the wild.

There were no forts or stations in the area around Antioch to which Joseph Cummins and his family could go for protection. There is no mention of schools or churches in the early years of the family's life around Antioch. In 1798, Barton Stone began preaching in Cane Ridge, Bourbon County. In 1801, the Great Revival in Kentucky began and the Christian Church was formed. The Antioch Christian Church began in 1848 with 56 charter members. George Cummins, Joseph and Lydia's son, was a deacon. The simple log church cost \$300 in those days.

The normal movement of settlers to Kentucky was in the spring, when a plot of corn would be planted to provide for bread the next winter. Some flour might have been brought with them when they first made their settlements, but not much. When meal or flour was not available dry deer meat and turkey breast was often used as bread and only bear meat was called "meat." They always hungered for a harvest of potatoes, pumpkins and squash. Just think of how delicious those first potatoes must have tasted and what joy reigned when the first ear of corn was harvested!

Home utensils consisted of a few tin plates and vessels, but mostly wooden dish ware or hollowed out squash or gourds. Iron pots and knives and forks were rare and had to be brought in by packhorse over the mountains from the East. The only knife that most households had was a hunting knife. Instead of chairs, they used blocks of wood or benches for seats. It would be a while before the little refinements of life, such as tea, coffee, silver or porcelain could be found around the area.

Clothing was simple and consisted mostly of homemade woven materials. They were either linen or half wool for the women. Men frequently used clothing like the Indian

with a hunting shirt over buckskin trousers or pantaloons and moccasins. The shirt might be made of half-woolen material, rarely of linen or deerskin. Moccasins were made of tanned deerskin and were of one piece, seamed in the front and at the heel. They reached halfway up the calf, were tied tight with leather straps, and could be made in a few hours.

It should be remembered that Joseph and Lydia raised their family during what is now called the Little Ice Age, a period of very cold climate between 1560 and 1850 that brought dire consequences to many people. The colder weather impacted upon agriculture, health, economics, social strife, emigration, and even art and literature.

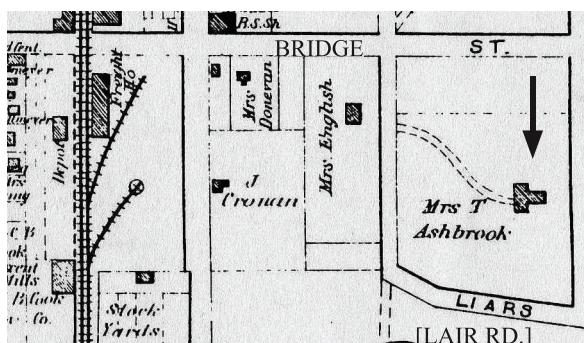
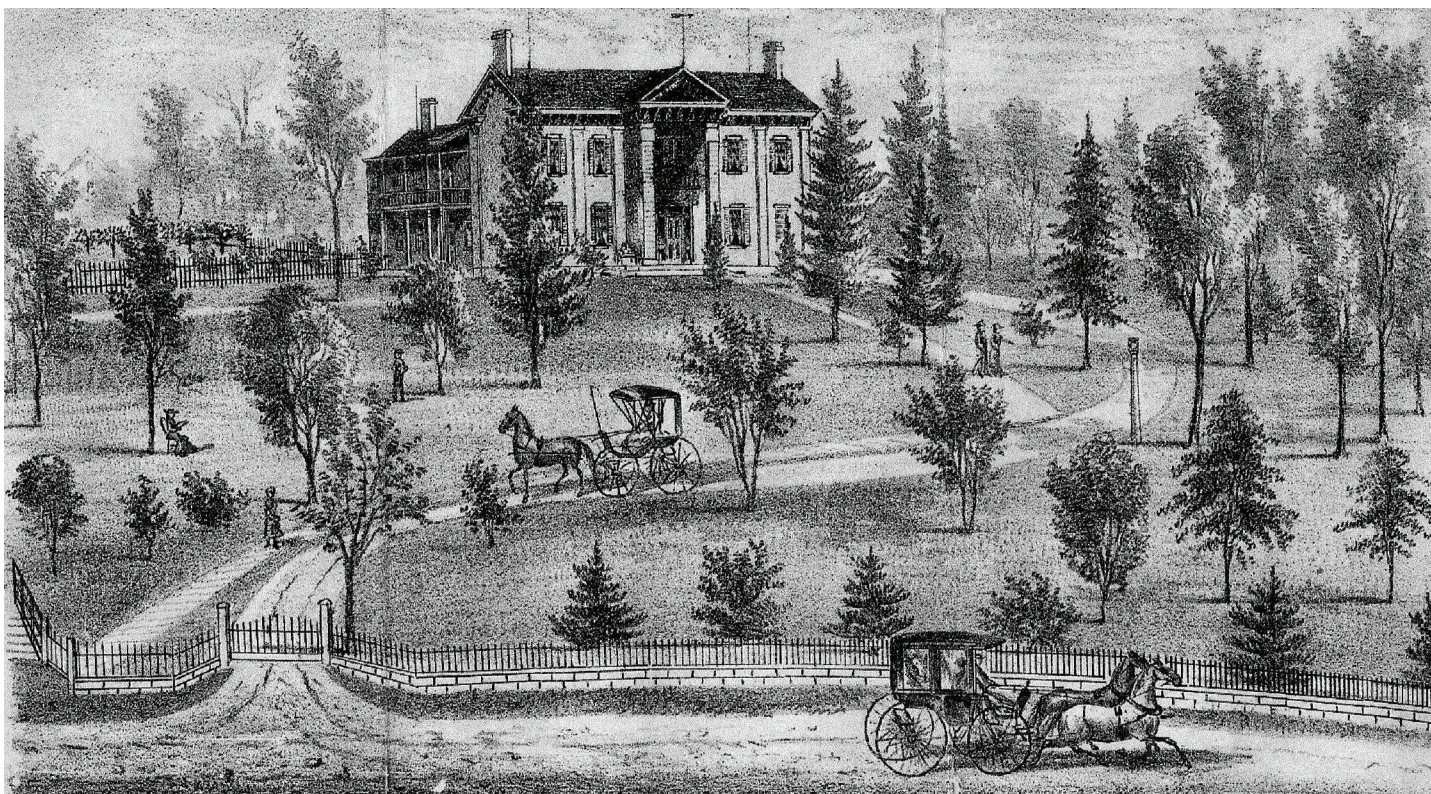
From all indications Joseph and Lydia Cummins raised their family of children quite well since all thirteen grew to be adults. They all married and produced the 140 grandchildren of Joseph and Lydia. It might have been rough by today's standards, but it seemed to be good living in the early 19th century for the Cummins family. They did quite

well without huge discount stores, drug stores or hospitals just around the corner, DVDs, TVs, fast food, bottled water or automobiles. . . or having to pay \$4-a-gallon for gaso-line!

Resources: 1882 *History of Bourbon, Scott, Harrison and Nicholas Counties, Kentucky* by W. H. Perrin; *Kentucky's German Pioneers* by H.A. Ratterman (2001 (Reprint)); *The History of Bourbon County, 1783-1865* by H.E. Everman (1977 (Reprint)); *Kerr's History of Kentucky* (1922), *McConnell Springs Founders Day 2008* by Doug McLaren, and *Kentucky in Retrospect in Kentucky History 1792-1942* by Mrs. Wm. Preston Drake, Judge Samuel M. Wilson and Mrs. Wm. Breckenridge Audery (1942).

[*Editor's Note:* For more information on the Antioch Mills area see: <http://www.harrisoncountky.us/communities/antioch-mills.htm>.]

Harrison County's Lost Buildings



Thomas V. Ashbrook House. This house was located on the later site of Cynthiana High School (CHS), facing west at the southeast corner of Bridge St. and Old Lair Pike (see map). Thomas V. Ashbrook built the imposing residence in 1860. In the Second Battle of Cynthiana, Gen. Morgan watched his men attack the depot from a meadow across the road from the house. It was demolished in 1905 after his widow's (Mrs. Artie Ashbrook) heirs sold the property for the site of a city school. CHS was demolished in 1975 and a housing project now occupies the site. Sources: *Cynthiana Since 1790* (Peddicord); engraving from Perrin's *History of Bourbon, Scott, Harrison, and Nicholas Counties, Ky.* (1882); map is detail from Beers map of Harrison County, Ky. (1877).

The Genealogy Box



A supplemental newsletter for genealogy and family history research in Harrison County, Kentucky.

By Philip Naff
(philnaff@comcast.net)

Writing the “1-Hour Autobiography”

Many people take up genealogy and family history research for various reasons, usually from the point of having just started a family to having recently retired and taking up family research as a new hobby.

No matter where you come from, almost any genealogy or family history that you will research will have one person in common . . . You! Every family history has a beginning, and why not begin your research with that which is most familiar to you, your own life story.

Decades were spent in getting the technology of film development down to one hour or less, and now no one needs it, everything is digital. While the length of the life that is the subject of an autobiography may vary from twenty to a hundred years, the brief time hour it takes to write it a “1-Hour Autobiography” may last a hundred or more, and so the effort will definitely be well spent, and the only technology needed is as simple the old pen or pencil and a piece of paper.

One good way to begin your research efforts is to write a “1-Hour Autobiography” using the following set of questions or framework of suggestions regarding elements of your life. The project can usually be completed within an hour (Unless you are a modern-day Benjamin Franklin or Leonardo DeVinci!!!).

Begin with your name. Simply write “My name is . . .” Tell how you got your name, what it means, your nicknames, etc. If you were named for your father, mother, aunt or uncle be sure to make note of it.

Now write everything you know about where you were born: the name of the hospital or the address of the house or the location of the farm. Add details about the weather, the time of day, and the day of the week. When and where were you baptized/christened, if such was the case?

List the names, birthplaces, and birthdates of your parents and brothers & sisters, and make note of where any of them were born, married or perhaps died.

Name the schools (pre-, kindergarten, grade, high, private, public, military, or religious) that you attended, including colleges or universities, and when you attended and/or graduated.

List the organizations you joined as a youth--Cub Scouts, Brownies, Boy Scouts, Girls Scouts, 4-H. Did you take part in high school athletics or play for the marching band? What about after-school clubs and activities?

List the date, location, and other significant details of how and when you met your children’s Mom/Dad and/or of your marriage(s). Then list your children and their birth dates. Mention important changes in your family--a child’s marriage, deaths, divorces, moves, and jobs. Remember, keep to the bare bones of your life story. You only have one hour, so stick to the facts (You

can leave the skeletons in the closet . . . for now!).

Try to write in a brief narrative paragraph or paragraphs of how you have spent your adult life, at work, as a homemaker, or in volunteer efforts. Any military experiences?

And that’s all there is to do!

After completing this little exercise not only will you have a nice introduction to any genealogy or family history research project that you may complete, but you will also have discovered that what you consider important to your own life story is much the same as what you will be looking for in order to fill out the life stories which make up any genealogy or family history that you research.

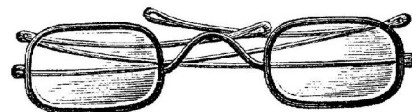
You no doubt would be able to prove each one of the biographical elements of your story by documentation such as birth certificates, marriage certificates, diplomas and the like. However, to locate these documents, all you probably have to do is go a desk drawer, safety deposit box, or closet. In researching the lives of others you will have to use other resources, both private (family) and public (libraries & courthouses), which is what learning about family history research is all about!

~

Notable Quote

Biography in a Nutshell - Born, welcomed, caressed, cried, fed, grew, amused, reared, studied, examined, graduated, in love, loved, engaged, married, quarreled, reconciled, suffered, deserted, taken ill, died, mourned, buried and forgotten.

The Cynthiana (Ky.) Democrat,
Special Edition,
June, 1896



Biographies @ HarrisonCountyKy.US

A New Resource for Harrison County, Kentucky History & Genealogy Research

By Philip Naff
(philnaff@comcast.net)

[This month new pages were added to the author's website at www.HarrisonCountyKy.US/biographies. The texts which follow form the introduction for the new site, which may be of some aid in your own research, whether you have an interest in Harrison County, or not.]

Today when one considers what the natural subject of a published biography may be, one's own very humble ancestors do not often come to mind, and one typically thinks of texts written about the great feats and noble minds of the men and women who made America (Although, nowadays, many biographies are written by and about people who are known more for having had their foot in their mouth than anything great or noble!). Sometimes a halfway decently written obituary is all that any local or family historian can hope for when it comes to locating any kind of narrative about his research subject. Yet many biographies in fact have been written about people that neither you nor I would have ever thought would have been the subject of one before taking up a genealogical quest.

A majority of these biographical sketches, at least those found and transcribed for the new site at HarrisonCountyKy.US, were originally published after the Civil War, beginning around the time of the nation's Centennial. Some of these compendiums of submitted biographies have been derisively referred to as "mug books," published by "vanity presses" who were prepaid to include the profiles of their "subscribers." As the editors and publishers were paid to include the biographical content, little review may have been done to check for accuracy. Many thousands of Americans had done their part in writing the chapters of a uniquely American history and now they had the opportunity to have their own part in it recorded for posterity, and so they did.

Signs of Their Times - Viewed with a jaundiced eye of the 21st century citizen it might seem that most of the biographical sketches published in the 19th and early 20th centuries were about well-off, well-bred, white guys. Many subjects were, indeed, wealthy, educated, in a profession or trade, or at least a landowning farmer. They were of European descent, mostly from England or Scotland, some from Germany or France, and likely to be descended from a Revolutionary War patriot, a Mayflower passenger, or perhaps even an early pioneer or settler. All seem to have been red-blooded

heterosexual males; if they were gay, it wasn't told, and if it was, only the old-fashioned sense of the word was intended. If the subject was a woman, then she was probably only referenced by her relation to her husband, even a dead one, or perhaps by her relation to a successful son or father, yet many women came to a marriage with an established pedigree of their own, which often was considered well worth mentioning . . . even if only her paternal line! After the Civil War African Americans may have applied themselves equally as hard at earning a living as any of their contemporaries and achieved similar successes, but apparently need not have applied to have a sketch published, for, so far, the collection of Harrison County profiles doesn't include a biography for any African American subject.

Despite the failures of these texts, at least as far as 21st century American sensibilities are concerned, the facts contained in them can be a treasure trove of historical and genealogical information, some of which may not be readily available anywhere else. For example, the research of a female line of descent can stall completely with the inability to find a marriage record for her, but the biographical sketch for any married male almost inevitably provides this information about her family name and lineage. While African Americans are not the subjects of sketches themselves, information about a slave-owning family's background can provide clues to more fully develop an African American pedigree.

Truth Be Told? - A good dose of skepticism should be applied before accepting any account as entirely authentic. Many texts follow a particular formula or format and the actual author of each sketch is unidentified. We cannot determine today who supplied the information then, whether it was the subject himself or close family members or acquaintances, or determine just how reliable the informant's own information, research, or memory, was known to be.

A majority of sketches are relatively brief, but packed with names, relationships, and dates, which may or may not be entirely accurate, and such information about the individual's family may not be all-inclusive. For instance, details about the subject's wife and children may be recorded, but the fact that the subject may have



been married more than once, and/or had children by other spouses, may not be mentioned.

Also, be aware that while you may be able to confirm many details mentioned . . . and you should try to . . . there may be several facts which can never be confirmed. This does not necessarily mean they are not true, it could just be that the biography is the only evidence left of the event itself to fall into the hands of the modern researcher. Try not to infer too much about the individual by what may be missing from a profile; for example, if the first wife or their children that you discovered through other records weren't mentioned, it does not mean that a slight was intended or that a rift in the family existed just because their existence wasn't acknowledged.

A majority of sketches were published contemporarily with the lives of their subjects, but in many cases the information about parents and other ancestors postdates the deaths of those earlier generations, and so should be used cautiously.

If you can find a biographical sketch for your ancestor, you should consider yourself fortunate, but you shouldn't consider your research to be over. If you are like many, by the time you find a biographical sketch for your research subject, you probably already have collected a basic set of primary resource materials, records which were contemporarily with the lives of those you are

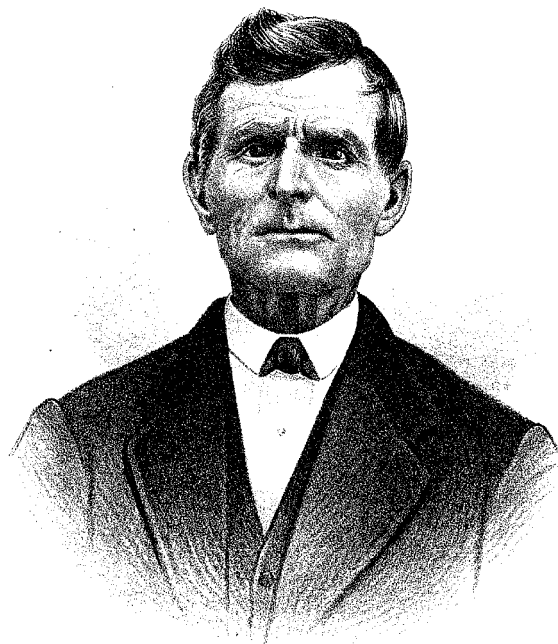
researching, such as U.S. Census records, marriage records, maybe even a few birth and death records. Whether early in your research or late in the game, your work may have just begun. At best, the biography will confirm everything you have found so far, and add even more details about their lives which you never would have thought to look for or which may never have been recorded anywhere else. With time and research, the facts presented may be confirmed in their entirety, or at least pass as plausible and authentic.

From my own experience, many of the biographical sketches which touch on the personages of my family tree have been found to be entirely accurate or "almost there." For example, so far no fault has been found with the sketch published in 1882 about my 3rd-great-grandfather, George Cummins, except for the spelling

of his name in the sketch (Cummings). The spelling of the family name alternates between Cummins and Cummings in contemporary county records, but Cummins is considered the correct version. The profile of his brother, John Cummins, published in an Illinois county history, helps to confirm the spelling of the family name, along with additional details, and provides a very welcome bonus, an image of John Cummins (see below), which is the only known image of any of the thirteen children of their parents, Joseph and Lydia (Fleming) Cummins.

In researching my 2nd-great-grandmother, Corilla (Langley) Elmore it was discovered that two of her brothers had profiles or sketches published during their lifetimes, in 1882 and 1901, both full of details, yet with some were contradictions (Ironically, the shorter bio was more fully accurate, yet the longer one contained

details found nowhere else). Both sketches agreed that the brother's grandfather was Isaac Langley, but one text recorded that he had drowned in Kentucky's Dix River, while the other said Isaac had died of the cholera. While the causes of death were details not to be found anywhere else, his probate records were later to be discovered on file in Mercer County, Ky., which is bordered by the Dix River, thus confirming the one account. Both brothers' sketches reported that they were each one of the twelve children of Abraham Langley, one bio



even named all twelve, but the list didn't include the name of my own ancestor, who was the sister of the subject of the sketch! The upside of the sketch was that it listed siblings whose names did not appear in any other local record, but which were confirmed by a Bible record discovered some years later. And then one wonders about the details left out. Neither mentioned that the widow of Isaac Langley, their grandmother, had remarried, or that their oldest brother what was born "out of wedlock."

Sources – A majority of the nearly 600 biographical sketches which fill out the content of these pages were found in Kentucky resources, i.e. local and family histories devoted to Kentucky, its counties, cities, communities, and people. W.H. Perrin's 1882 *History of Bourbon, Scott, Harrison and Nicholas Counties, Kentucky* was

an obvious resource with which to begin, and it supplied 271 of the sketches (They were already part of the texts available online at www.HarrisonCountyKy.US/1882-history). *Chronicles of Cynthiana* by Lucinda Boyd was also a useful resource for locating local bios. The five volumes of Kerr's 1922 *History of Kentucky* supplied the second largest supply of biographies of "persons of interest" to the Harrison County researcher. Gresham's 1896 *Biographical Cyclopedia of the Commonwealth of Kentucky* was also consulted, as well as several histories of Kentucky counties. In addition, profiles of prominent men were found in random issues of two late 19th and early 20th century Harrison County newspapers, the *Cynthiana Democrat* and the *Log Cabin*, in addition to the 1896 and 1905 special commemorative editions of each.

You Can Help - More texts which touched on the lives of those originally from Harrison County were found in volumes devoted to the histories of Arizona, California, Colorado, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Ohio, Oregon, and Texas, or some smaller political divisions thereof. No doubt people from Harrison County settled in parts of the other thirty-five states as well, it is just that their biographies have yet to be brought to my attention . . . and this is where you can help. Do you know of a biographical sketch of a person who had ties to Harrison County, whether they were born or died in the county, whether they married a native or who had in-laws from Harrison County? Maybe the subject of the sketch was descended from a native or resident of the county? Maybe their education or career brought them to the county for just a short time, perhaps working the land to earn the money to move further west, ministering to the faithful, attending a local school, or apprenticing in a local law firm or medical practice in the county? Please let me know of any texts you may have discovered so that they may be added to the site and shared with others.

More Biographies on the Web – HarrisonCountyKy.US is by no means contains comprehensive supply of biographies relating to Harrison County research. To view a list of biographies for anyone whose biographical sketch includes a reference to Harrison County and which are not included at HarrisonCountyKy.US, you should visit the home page of the Kentucky Biographies Project (www.rootsweb.com/~kygenweb/kybiog/search.html), a site originally established to collect and transcribe historical biographies published in histories of Kentucky. The site features a search form. Leave the



first name and surname boxes empty, and use the scroll box to bring up the name of Harrison County. Click on the "submit" button and nearly 450 entries will be listed for you, of which 300 focus on Harrisonians.

Ancestry.com offers a searchable database of the contents of Perrin's 1882 *History of Bourbon, Scott, Harrison, & Nicholas Counties, Kentucky*, however, it may require a subscription to access it. Ancestry also offers searchable databases for many other histories which contain biographies, and so does HeritageQuest.com.

Perrin's texts have also been posted online at www.HarrisonCountyKy.US/1882-history, and one can simply browse the pages to see the biographies in their original context.

Hardcopies - You can get your own hardcover reprint of Perrin's 1882 history (Southern Historical Press (1999)) which includes an every name index of approximately eight thousand names, for only \$55 plus \$5.00 shipping and handling from William A. Penn (pennwma@aol.com). To order contact him directly by e-mail or at the Historic Midway Museum Store, 124 East Railroad Street, Midway, Ky. 40347 (Phone: (859) 846-4214).

The texts of *Chronicles of Cynthiana* by Lucinda Boyd are available at www.HarrisonCountyKy.US/chronicles-of-cynthiana, or a hardcover reprint of the original can be purchased from the Harrison County Historical Society. Just visit the society's website and click on "Publications" for details or look for the most recent list of publications in the *Harrison Heritage News*. *Chronicles of Cynthiana* and the 1896 and 1905 commemorative editions of the *Democrat* and *Log Cabin* are also available at the Cynthiana-Harrison County Museum.

For originals of any other texts you may discover, one can always search at Alibris.com, Biblio.com, or Abebooks.com, but be ready to see some prices which may cost you more dearly than you might expect.

Only the Nose Knows – No doubt, some white lies or tall tales have made their way into the text of biographical sketches, some intentionally, while others are there by accident, but they won't necessarily be as plain as the nose on Pinocchio's face. Only the genealogist's eye for detail and own nose for uncovering the truth will determine the reliability of information provided by any sketch. Through solid research you may be able to locate even more about the family than was ever told, or that you ever knew possible.

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What is research but a blind date with knowledge?

Will Henry