

# Harrison Heritage News

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## Rattling Spurs

Bill Penn, Editor (hmmms@att.net)

### Cynthia and Anna Harrison Genealogy

What ever became of Cynthia and Anna Harrison, for whom our own Cynthiana was named in 1793? Did they have children? These and other questions about the children of Robert Harrison may be answered at the Harrison Family website prepared by Kathie Harrison:

freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/  
~irishrose/robhar.html

Robert Harrison(1755-1822) married Rebecca VanMeter (1758-?) and resided in Cynthiana. They later moved, first to Portsmouth, Ohio, then to Greene County, Indiana, where both died. Their children were: Cynthia (b. 1782), Anna (b.1784), Joseph Valentine (b. 1786), Ary (b. 1796), Vienna (b. 1798), Clarissa (b. 1802) and Permelia (b. 1804). From these dates we can see that the founders of the "Maiden City" name were 11 and 7 in 1793.

Cynthia Harrison married Major John Belli in 1800 in Adams County, Ohio; after his death she married Phillip Moore in 1812 (same county). With Belli she had two children, Eliza (married Moses Gregory, Portsmouth, Scioto Co., Ohio in 1826), and Cynthia (no data on her). Cynthia Moore died in Illinois, date unknown.

Anna Harrison married Absalom Forrest, August 3, 1805, in Harrison Co., Ky. After his death, she married Zepheniah Dunn in 1808, in Highland Co., Ohio. The Dunns moved to Daviess Co., Indiana, along with her brother Joseph, and a daughter Cynthia. In the mid-1830s they again moved, to Lewis Co., Missouri. He died in 1846. Cynthia married Peter Cottrell in 1836 and died that year with no children. [An article in the Democrat 9-17-25 with information contrary to the above quotes Mrs. Alis McQuilian who said she was a great-granddaughter of Robert Harrison, who she said had only one daughter, "Cynthianna," born 1815, and one son, Robert. This daughter married Membrane Blue in 1831 and died in Indiana in 1856. Although an internet Blue family genealogy supports the Cynthia (not "Cynthianna") Harrison marriage to Mr. Blue, it has nothing on her Harrison line with which to compare. We will follow up on this in a later article.]

## History Notes

George D. Slade (gslade@setel.com)

### The Cynthiana Depot

Before the coming of the automobile "the place to be" in Cynthiana was the passenger depot. For several years even after the advent of the motor car this was a favorite gathering place for the folks around town. I am sure that this was also true in the smaller communities of the county having railroad stations. Some of the regulars to meet each train would be the railroad agent, Railway Express employee and baggage attendant. Fritz Grater, postal employee, who hauled the mail from post office to depot and return, was always on hand. You could hear his model "T" truck coming down Walnut Street two blocks from the depot. He never took his foot off the "low gear" pedal. The morning and late afternoon trains were met by a number of newspaper delivery boys. They would be waiting for the daily papers from Cincinnati, Lexington and Louisville.

Usually you would see Gault's taxi parked near the north end of the depot building. Should it not happen to be there, you could get on the phone and tell the operator to connect you with number "nine," (Gault's Taxi).

Most of the time there were a number of folks who just "hung around" the depot. They were curious to see who was "inbound" or "outbound." One of these, I remember quite well, was Chuck Judy, a black man. Chuck went barefoot most of the time. One of his big toes was missing. His story was that a train ran over it. He had a great memory for recognizing faces. My uncle had been gone from Cynthiana for fifteen years, but when he stepped off the train here Chuck rushed up, to him, shook his hand, and said, "John, where you been?"

There were both happy and sad occasions at the depot. A long absent loved one, a service person home from he war, or a close relative stepping down from the train might bring tears of joy. Seeing the baggage car door open then a casket, bearing the remains of a loved one, loaded onto the wagon would bring tears of grief. Should the casket be draped with an American flag covering one killed in battle, the hurt would go deeper. Another sad day was the day it was decided to tear down the passenger depot at Cynthiana. This historic landmark was sacrificed, like so many others in the town, to provide a few parking spaces for automobiles. Amen. [Editor's note: This is an excerpt from an unpublished manuscript by Mr. Slade, "Railroads in Harrison County."]

## Historical Society Minutes

Jane Adams Whitehead

The Harrison County Historical Society met at the library at 7 P.M. September 20, 2001. New Business: The members discussed the possibility of changing the publication dates of the Newsletter to either every other month or quarterly, due to a recurring problem of getting a draft to be copied for distribution in the week preceding the monthly meeting. Also, the monthly postage for the Newsletter is a concern. No action was taken at this time.

**The next meeting of  
the Historical Society  
will be October 18,  
2001, 7 PM at the  
library.**

The program was presented by Bill Penn, who discussed the Civil War services of Harrison County's Provost Marshal Col. George W. Berry. Mr. Penn told about Col. Berry's Home Guard units established early in the war to protect the railroad and telegraph lines, and his appointment as Provost Marshal for the Sixth District. In this assignment, Col. Berry was in charge of recruiting for ten northern Kentucky counties, including Harrison. He fought with the Home Guards at the First Battle of Cynthiana July 1862 and again at the Second Battle of Cynthiana on June 12, 1864 where he suffered a mortal head wound. He died one week later. Mr. Penn noted that historians have been unable to locate Colonel Berry's grave site. Also, no picture of him has been found.

Janie Whitehead concluded the meeting by leading a tribute to those who died in the terrorist attacks at the World Trade Center and Pentagon September 11th. The members observed a minute of silence in their memory.

**HARRISON HISTORY ON THE WEB:**  
[www.cynthianaky.com](http://www.cynthianaky.com) (back issues of this newsletter, local history articles)  
[www.battleofcynthiana.org](http://www.battleofcynthiana.org) (description of battles, list of units, and reenactment information.)

## Cynthiana -Harrison County Museum

Martha Barnes

Our Harrison County historians tell us that this community has had its share - perhaps more than its share - of tragic fires. History also verifies that we have had outstanding, dedicated fire departments through the years.

The Cynthiana-Harrison County Museum, 112 S. Walnut, has a tribute to firefighters as a part of its displays. For a time, during the 1800's, the Cynthiana Fire Department was located on Walnut Street in a building on the north side of the present museum building. Several early photos show the firefighters along with their horses and equipment at that site.

The City of Cynthiana Division of Fire and Emergency Services has loaned a number of items to the museum. Among the items are a helmet used in the early 1900's, three fire nozzles, and the city's fire alarm box. The fire nozzles are of various types that were used on the end of hand-held fire hoses up until the early 1940's. Solid brass nozzles are no longer used because of their weight and expense. The smallest nozzle displayed at the museum was original equipment used on a 1918 American LaFrance Fire Truck.

The fire alarm box was originally used in the City Hall building when it was built in 1929. This device was connected to the outdoor siren mounted atop the City Hall. Its purpose was to notify the volunteer firemen of an emergency. At that time, each street within the city limits was given a designated "code" which could be identified by the number of long or short "blows" the siren would give. This system was used until the mid 1970's at which time it was determined that the code system was not adequate due to the growth of the community. The fire alarm box is still in perfect working condition.

A copper fire extinguisher which probably came from Adams & Moore is also on display. Inside the extinguisher is a glass bottle with a lead stopper which contains sulfuric acid. The outer section contains soda. When the extinguisher is turned upside down, the acid is released into the soda forming a gas which escapes through the hose thus extinguishing the fire. The extinguisher was loaned to the museum by Jim Bob and Hallie Martin.

Reminders of the tragic fire which destroyed St. Edward Catholic Church (December 30, 1965) are sections of stained glass loaned by the Feix and Morris families and the church bell clapper from Mrs. William Conway.

The staff of the Cynthiana-Harrison County Museum, 112 S. Walnut, wishes to express their gratitude to all those firefighters and other public officials who have dedicated their lives to making our community a better, safer place.

The Cynthiana-Harrison County Museum is located at 112 S. Walnut Street, Cynthiana, Kentucky. Mailing address: PO Box 411, Cynthiana, KY 41031. Hours are 10 AM to 5 PM Fridays and Saturdays. Telephone: 859-234-7179 (during Museum hours only), or call 234-1053, 234-5835, or 234-3147. We welcome volunteers.

## Fires in Cynthiana and Harrison County, Kentucky

George D. Slade

(Partial listing)

- # 1844 – Methodist Church, NE corner Church and Pike Streets. Built 1820, burned 1844.
- # 1851 – Second Harrison County Court House burned.
- # 1864 – Cynthiana Democrat, 12-20-1928 – Cromwell's Comments. – "THE GREAT FIRE – Saturday, June 11, 1864, General John H. Morgan marched for the second time on Cynthiana. While the battle was raging a stable opposite the Rankin Hotel on Pike Street was set on fire. From near the railroad the fire destroyed most of the buildings on both sides of Pike Street to Main. Turning north on Main Street, it extended to J. W. Renaker's Drug Store building but did not include the drug store. [Whalen Jewelers 2001]. Going south on Main it swept to the corner of Main and Bridge Streets It then jumped across Main but did not destroy the Northcutt Corner. Going south it made a clean sweep to, but not including, the old hotel building." [Whaley's Funeral Home 2001]. The fire finally burned itself out near the jail on Poplar Street. There were in all 27 buildings destroyed. Following the war W. S. Haviland made several trips to Washington seeking damages from the government but no claims were paid, regardless of what some historians have written.
- #1866 - Cynthiana News, 3-15, 1866. – "A fire occurred the past Sunday morning in Rairdon's kitchen on Walnut Street. The fire fighting "machine" was pulled onto the street but was soon abandoned as being unworkable. A bucket brigade extinguished the fire." [The editor reminded the city government that the "machine" was sadly in need of repairs and that more fire cisterns would be helpful.]
- #1869 – Cynthiana News, 9-2-1869 – "Sunday August 29, 1869 a fire at Colemansville destroyed the residence of M. Limberick, the Masonic Hall, Mr. Crouche's dry goods store and other buildings."
- # 1893 – Cynthiana Democrat, 4-19-1928. – Cromwell's Comments. "In the fall of 1893, Wills Livery Stable, at the northeast corner of Pike and Walnut Streets, burned. The flames soon spread eastward on Pike Street to the railroad consuming Henry Cromwell's machine shop, Maffett Brother's office and coal yard, a two story frame building and Thompson's and Martin's implement store. On Walnut Street it burned to but did not consume the Baptist Church." [Johnson McDaniel Furniture location 2001].
- # 1899 – Cynthiana Log Cabin, 10-27- 1899. – "Big Fire at Kelat – Eleven Buildings Consumed – The village of Kelat was again visited by a destructive fire Wednesday night October 25, 1899. Eleven buildings were consumed by the flames, including J. R. Brannock's store, wareroom, barn and turkey pen; a residence belonging to Dr. R. H. Lang; Dr. Lang's office and barn; the Post Office building; Elihu Wilson's blacksmith shop and two other buildings."
- # 1905 – Log Cabin, January 21, 1905. – "The mash house at the F. S. Ashbrook Distillery on North Main Street was destroyed by fire Sunday morning, January 15, 1905. Firemen, fighting the blaze, were severely hampered by near zero temperatures. Several suffered frostbite to hands and arms."
- # 1912 – Log Cabin, March 8, 1912. – "The William Addams residence, NE corner of Pike Street and Elmarch Avenue, was destroyed by fire, Tuesday, March 5, 1912. Firemen responded promptly and arrived in plenty of time to extinguish the blaze. However after dragging the hose to the attic, where the fire originated, due to lack of pressure, water only trickled from the nozzle. The house burned to the ground."
- # 1912 – Log Cabin, November 21, 1912. – "A disastrous blaze seriously damaged the H. D. Frisbie Furniture Co. building, on the east side of South Walnut Street, Also damaged were the A.O.U.W Lodge facilities." [Note: Ecklar & Carr Furniture Co. later occupied this building].
- # 1915 – Democrat, April 8, 1915. – "At an early hour Tuesday, April 6, 1915, the beautiful residence of the superintendent at Battle Grove Cemetery was burned to the ground. A train held up the fire equipment. When the firemen finally arrived and attached their hose to a hydrant, some 1000 feet away, there was no water pressure to fight the fire."
- #1918 – Democrat, January 24, 1918. "The public school building, on East Bridge Street, completed and occupied in January 1908, was destroyed by fire, January 21, 1918. Very cold weather, sleet and low water pressure hampered firemen in their attempt to fight the fire." This was during WW1 and some folks thought that German sympathizers had set the fire. This fire prompted the city to purchase a gasoline engine pumper fire truck.
- #1920 - Democrat, December 16, 1920. "Friday, December 10, 1920 a costly blaze swept the second floor of the Poindexter Building. [SE corner of Pike St. and RR.] The fire wrecked the Knickerbocker Manufacturing Co's. plant and damaged Sherwood Furniture store and Cynthiana Democrat's paper stock. The Knickerbocker Co. manufactures middy suits and bloomers."
- # 1922 – Democrat, March 9, 1922. – "The Connersville High School building, completed in 1920, was destroyed by fire Thursday, March 7, 1922."
- # 1924 – Democrat, September 18, 1924. – "The large iron-clad warehouse, property of Mrs. Mattie Renaker and occupied by Renaker Produce Co., located on the alley from Walnut to Main Streets, between Pike and Pleasant was completely wrecked by fire Saturday morning, September 13, 1924."

(Continued on page four)

(Fires in Harrison County - continued from page three)

- # 1925 – Democrat, “The handsome new three story business house of Shearle L. Frisbie on Pike Street, between Main and Walnut Streets, was heavily damaged by fire Tuesday, January 20, 1925. The loss will be heavy.” [Platter’s Restaurant 1998].
- # 1926 – Democrat, April 15, 1926. – “The big three-story warehouse of the Crown Jewel Milling Co. on South Main Street and the river was destroyed by fire Tuesday night, April 13, 1926.”
- # 1927 – Democrat, January 6, 1927. – “The historic old grandstand at Abdallah Park was destroyed by fire Monday, January 3, 1927. It was a conspicuous object from the L&N trains passing nearby, and many an old-timer recalled the days of its glory when the flowers of the trotting horse world would engage in speed contests over its fine mile track.”
- # 1928 – Democrat, April 12, 1928. – “Fire Wrecks Poindexter Block. – J.R. Poindexter and Son, Kentucky Utilities Co., Brannock Bros., S.L. Sherwood, Wick’s Music Store, American Legion and Democrat sustain losses. Fire Wednesday morning, April 11, 1928 destroyed half of the Poindexter Block at the SE corner of Pike Street and the L&N Railroad.”
- # 1930 – Democrat, February 6, 1930. – “Burley No.3 Tobacco Warehouse, located at the north end of Main Street at Lincoln Avenue, was destroyed by fire together with 50,000 to 75,000 pounds of tobacco, Thursday, January 30, 1930.”
- # 1930 – Democrat, April 17, 1930. “ ‘The Cedars,’ Lair homestead, destroyed by fire, Tuesday morning, April 15, 1930. Charles Lair built this historic house in 1828. Ruddles Fort stood just back of this house.”
- # 1932 – Democrat, August 4, 1932. – “Fire, starting in the basement of the store of B. B. Whitaker at Berry, Monday night, August 1, 1932 destroyed 12 buildings and contents.”
- # 1933 – Democrat, December 28, 1933. – “Fire, Thursday night, December 21, 1933 destroyed about 350 sacks of parcel post packages, most of which were Christmas gifts. A burning car on the L&N southbound train 31 was rushed to Cynthiana after the blaze was discovered at Yuma, near Falmouth. The Cynthiana Fire Department, notified by telephone, that the burning car was being brought here, had the fire fighting apparatus at the Bridge Street crossing when the engine and mail car arrived and fought the blaze there for some time.”
- # 1934 – Democrat, November 1, 1934. – “Wednesday, October 31, 1934, fire, following an explosion, destroyed Hall’s Dry Cleaning and Pressing plant on Pike Street. For many years this location was occupied by Deschler’s Barber Shop and later by Flannagan and Turner.”
- # 1934 – Democrat, April 12, 1934, - “Fire Friday, April 6, 1934, destroyed a medal clad warehouse and two frame houses and damaged another and the plant of the Home Ice Co. on South Church Street.”
- # 1936 – Democrat, September 3, 1936. – “W. G. Wigglesworth Tobacco Warehouse, North Main Street, was destroyed by fire, August 31, 1936. – A firewall on the south side prevented the fire from spreading southward.”
- # 1940 – Democrat, November 28, 1940. – “Cynthiana Motor Co., South Walnut Street, was swept by a blaze, Saturday night, November 23, 1940. More than 50 automobiles and trucks, all office equipment, stock, tools, batteries and other equipment was destroyed along with the large brick, steel and concrete building.”
- # 1946 – Democrat, February 21, 1946. – “Fire, discovered about 5:30 AM, Wednesday, February 20, 1946, caused heavy damage to the Doctors Building [Later Elks Building] on the west side of Walnut Street, between Pike and Pleasant Streets.
- # 1949 – Democrat, June 2, 1949. – Saturday, May 28, 1949, fire destroyed the log residence of Lawrence Rankin on the Shady Nook Pike. The home was constructed of pine logs and rock brought from Rockcastle County.”
- # 1950 – Democrat, June 29, 1950. - “Fire raged through five buildings on the east side of Walnut Street, between Pike and Bridge Streets, Friday night, June 23 and early Saturday, June 24, 1950. Swept by the flames were a three story furniture store, liquor store, restaurant, hardware company warehouse and club rooms of the DAV.”
- # 1953 – Democrat, October 1, 1953 – “Tuesday, September 29, 1953 at 12:15 PM sparks from a brush fire ignited a drift under the Claysville covered bridge, which in turn ignited the bridge which was destroyed by the fire. This was the last covered bridge in Harrison County.”
- # 1960 – Sunday, July 10, 1960 the McLoney Tobacco Warehouse and farm supply store, on the east side of South Church Street, was destroyed by fire. This was one of the most spectacular fires in Cynthiana’s history. Fire trucks arrived from Falmouth, Paris, Georgetown, Scott County and Mount Olivet to assist the Cynthiana Fire Department.
- # 1966 – Flames destroyed the 92 year old St. Edwards Catholic Church, Thursday, December 30, 1965. While roof repairs were being made, a fire broke out under the roof of the church near the rear and fanned by stiff winds, swept quickly to the top of this landmark structure, the steeple acting as a chimney.
- # 1968 – Democrat, “The Salem Country Store was completely destroyed by fire early Sunday morning, April 7, 1968.”
- # 1985 – Democrat, July 11, 1985. – “Fire, which started about 10 PM, Monday July 8, 1985, destroyed historic Monticello Mansion.”
- # 1994 – Webber Sausage Plant, Williamstown Road, was gutted by fire Tuesday, February 1, 1994, ending Webber’s operations here.

Note: The complete story on these fires can be found at the Cynthiana – Harrison County Public Library, on microfilm, in the Kentucky Room. Items may be added, as they become available. For additions or corrections, call me at (859)-234-3147 or email [gslade@setel.com](mailto:gslade@setel.com)