

Harrison Heritage News

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*Merry Christmas
and Happy New
Year*

In This Issue:

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Courthouse in the

Rattling Spurs

Bill Penn, Editor (hmms@att.net)

Book Reviews: Two Kentucky Civil War Books

Reinhart, Joseph R., **A History of the 6th Kentucky Voluntary Infantry U. S.** (2000, Beargrass Press, 8420 Oxford Woods Court, Louisville, KY 40222) hardcover, 473 pages.

I first met Joe Reinhart when I was an auditor for REA-USDA and he was a CPA in Louisville. Now retired, Mr. Reinhart has written this fine regimental history of the 6th Kentucky, which was recruited in Louisville and surrounding areas. To document this Union regiment's participation in a number of important battles from Shiloh to Atlanta, Mr. Reinhart has effectively interspersed the soldiers' own words taken from unpublished diaries and letters. Numerous maps and illustrations are included. This is one of the few Kentucky regimental histories in print and should be of interest to any Civil War buff.

Sickles, John, **The Legends of Sue Mundy and One Armed Berry: Confederate Guerrillas**, (1999, Heritage Press) paperback, 92 pages.

I met Mr. Sickles and learned of his book this year at a seminar on Kentucky Civil War guerrilla warfare. I intended to research Sue Mundy's theft of famous horses during raids at Midway, Ky. Sickles wrote about that raid as well as Mundy's associations with One-Armed Berry, Frank James, William Quantrill, and Henry Magruder. Mundy has a local connection in that he joined Morgan's Raiders and was wounded at the Battle of Cynthiana in 1864. Later, he joined other soldiers scattered after the battle and formed a guerrilla gang that became notorious throughout Kentucky late in the war. Mr. Sickles sets aside many myths about Sue Mundy and has pieced together the facts of his raids that centered around Harrodsburg and Bardstown, but extended into the bluegrass. Guerrilla warfare in Kentucky is finally receiving attention by Civil War scholars.

History Notes

George D. Slade (gslade@setel.com)

A. Keller Dam

The A. Keller Dam spans the South Licking River about one and a half miles north of Cynthiana, Kentucky. A Mr. Lamb (or Lamme) probably built the first dam at this site during the early 1800's. He needed a dam to store water for turning a water wheel, which would in turn furnish power for a flourmill he was also building. Lamb also kept a general store and carding factory at this location. He ground flour and cornmeal, hauled it to Claysville and shipped it hence to New Orleans by flat boat.

Mr. Lamb sold this property, including the dam, to Abram Keller who, in 1840, converted to a distillery. The mill was used for grinding the grain for making the mash that would be fermented, distilled and made into whiskey. Keller sold the distillery to Cook and Ashbrook in 1861. It later became Ashbrook Brothers. The whiskey made here continued under the brand name of "Old A. Keller." In 1922 my family lived near the distillery. Due to "Prohibition," production of whiskey here had ceased but bottling continued. Besides "Old A. Keller" another brand bottled here was "Chicken Cock." There was a picture of a game chicken rooster on the label.

It is quite probable that other dams had been erected at this site but I have found no records of this. About 1899, J. R. Poindexter built the present dam for the Ashbrooks. Before the dam was completed, a part of it was washed out by a flash flood and had to be rebuilt. The cost of this dam is not known.

With the passage of the Volstead Act in 1919, which prohibited the production and sale of alcoholic beverages in the United States, the distillery stopped production, although bottling continued. In 1921 Raphael Goldberg purchased the distillery property which included the dam. He then sold it to the corporation, "The Blue Grass Stock Food and Fertilizer Company." I do not know if this company went into production at this location.

On November 28, 1922, the feed and fertilizer company sold the dam, a plot of ground at each end of the dam, and an easement for reaching the dam to the City of Cynthiana, Kentucky. The amount paid was \$2,500. This information can be found in Harrison County Deed Book No. 89, Page 18. The city depended on this dam for its water reserve until the great drought of 1930. At this time the river at Cynthiana held but a few puddles of stagnant, horrible smelling water. This prompted the building of Terry Dam in 1933.

Historical Society Minutes

Jane Adams Whitehead

The Harrison County Historical Society met at the library at 7 P.M. November 15, 2001. Following the business meeting, a large audience of about thirty-five members and guests listened intently as Rev. Mike Hayes presented an interesting and timely program on his trip to New York and Ground Zero and his experiences as he witnessed to people there on behalf of his church.

The next meeting of the Harrison County Historical Society will be on December 13, 2001, 7 PM, at the sheriff's office, corner Pike and Poplar St. Judge-Executive Dean Peak will speak.

The speaker for the December meeting will be Harrison County Judge-Executive Dean Peak, who will discuss various options for remodeling the interior of the Harrison County courthouse. Judge Peak will also discuss the courthouse annex and its planned functions. **Note the special date of December 13 and different location this month at the sheriff's office in the former K.U. building across from the Old Jail, corner Pike and Poplar Streets.**

HARRISON CO., KY., HISTORY ON THE WEB:

www.cynthianaky.com (back issues of this newsletter, local history articles)
www.battleofcynthiana.org (description of battles, list of units, and reenactment information.)

Cynthiana -Harrison County Museum

Martha Barnes

The skyline of Cynthiana is changing with the construction of the new justice center directly behind the existing Harrison County Courthouse. As historians, we wonder about the utilization and the future of the courthouse.

According to William B. Scott, Jr. and John W. Carpenter in their book, *Kentucky Courthouses*, Harrison County's third and present courthouse was begun in 1851 and completed in 1853. In 1856, the clock and bell were added to the cupola. The building was renovated in 1877 at a cost of \$1,800. By 1915, the court had outgrown the facility and later voted to add wings in 1916 to the building, which were a source of much controversy.

The Cynthiana-Harrison County Museum has a number of photographs of the courthouse in various stages and seasons. The museum also displays four of the original clock weights. The weight powered clock machinery was later replaced with the present electric motor driven mechanism. Harold Slade reconstructed one of the old light fixtures from the courthouse lawn. Museum folks call it the lamp post - and it sets atop one of the display cases. Our beautiful, old Harrison County Courthouse is an important part of our heritage. We must preserve and use it wisely.

The staff and volunteers wish to offer season's greetings to the readers of Harrison Heritage News and to all historians. We welcome new members and we encourage you to volunteer at the museum. Happy Holidays!

Harrison County Slave Cemetery Preservation Society

John Hicks, a member of the Harrison County Historical Society, has formed the Harrison County Slave Cemetery Preservation Society to preserve and interpret the slave cemeteries in the county. The society's first project is the Desha slave cemetery on the Elks Club farm, Oddville Pike. Work at this site will probably include clearing and mapping the site, locating graves, replacing and restoring grave markers, reconstructing fences, and identifying those buried there.

The group is identifying other slave burial sites in the county, and Mr. Hicks is hopeful that related projects connected to preserving Harrison County's African American history will be planned in the future. The Kentucky Heritage Council encourages cemetery preservation and has made grants available for this purpose.

The society welcomes the public to their meetings, which will be the second Thursday, 7 PM, of every month, at the Cynthiana public library. The next meeting will be December 13. We hope to have Mr. Hicks speak to our historical society sometime next year about this project, and to find out how we can support this important work.

Harrison County, Ky., Courthouse in the Civil War

Citizens debating secession, an artillery crew firing at the Rebels, soldiers shooting from the windows, dead soldiers in the courtroom, and battle-weary prisoners pondering their fate - all this took place in and around Harrison County's courthouse in the Civil War.

The Harrison County courthouse was central to the fierce action during both of John Hunt Morgan's raids, known as the First Battle of Cynthiana (July 17, 1862) and Second Battle of Cynthiana (June 11-12, 1864). At the time of the Civil War, the red brick courthouse, completed in 1853, did not have its present wings (added in 1916) or white paint (painted in 1938).

Courthouse Meeting - 1861 relating to the Civil War was not military, but instead a divisive factional struggle between those who supported the South and those who remained loyal to the Union. On September 21 and 23, 1861, citizens attended a large courthouse meeting and debated the secession issue. Attending was Lucius Desha, Harrison County's state representative, whose two sons, Jo and Ben, had already recruited Confederate companies from the county. As a committee member appointed to draw up resolutions, Mr. Desha advised his fellow citizens to obey the laws and seek mutual protection. The language in the resolutions (no copies have been found) may have also encouraged Kentucky's neutrality. On September 23, the resolutions were approved. The language in the resolutions (no copies have been found) may have also encouraged Kentucky's neutrality. A few weeks earlier in the state legislature, Desha had supported a few Unionists believed the advocates of neutrality. The Harrison county judge, county clerk, and sheriff no doubt supported the resolutions, for they were arrested by Federal troops only a week later, charged with treason.



In this drawing, dated 1882, the Harrison County courthouse retains its Civil War appearance. (Perrin).

Desha fled the state briefly to avoid arrest, but the following year he was taken into custody by Federal soldiers at his home, The Oaks, for Confederate recruiting and other charges, held at the courthouse with some other civilians, and taken to Camp Chase, Ohio, for 100 days. Over sixty Harrison County citizens of the county were arrested for minor offenses interpreted as disloyalty and placed in prison during the Civil War.

First Battle of Cynthiana - During the First Battle of Cynthiana, July 17, 1862, Union commander Colonel Landram ordered Captain Glass and his artillery crew, with a 12-pounder cannon, to a location on the courthouse yard. Being only a block north of the covered bridge, the cannon covered Morgan's expected point of attack. Glass fired grape shot with great effect, "showing its mark at every shot," as it fired toward Morgan's men charging across the covered bridge onto Main Street. The cannon was captured before Landram could move it to his main line at the depot, where the most intense fighting was taking place. Some of the Federal soldiers retreated from the depot toward the safety of the courthouse, only to find themselves surrounded. After the town was captured, the Confederates marched the Union prisoners to the courthouse. Their parole was made out later that evening. The Rebels burned 300 Union muskets at the courthouse after breaking them over the wheels of railroad platform cars. After Morgan's Raiders left the state, Federal soldiers held about thirty Confederate prisoners at the courthouse, who were possibly left behind as wounded or missing. Federal soldiers forced some local farmers, suspected to be pro-South, to provide food for the prisoners.

Second Battle of Cynthiana - During the early morning attack on June 11, 1864, by Morgan's Raiders, Union soldiers fled north along the railroad tracks from the depot to the Rankin Hotel on Pike Street and other nearby buildings, including the courthouse two blocks west. A reporter from a Cincinnati newspaper accompanied the 168th Ohio and found himself in the middle of the fighting. He witnessed a company of Union soldiers falling back toward the courthouse, where they began firing out the windows at the "rebels swarming up the streets on foot." About seventy men from various Union companies made a stand on the second floor of the courthouse, but after

being surrounded they held out a white flag and surrendered .

After the first day's battles, during which Morgan had captured the town and General Hobson's reinforcements by train at Keller's Bridge, some of the Rebels were drinking, celebrating, and plundering. A Union soldier, Adjutant Edmund Wood, watched from the courthouse clock tower for most of the afternoon and evening. He and a staff assistant were hiding in the courthouse when the Confederates surrounded the building, but escaped detection when they hid in the dark recesses of the clock tower. From this vantage point overlooking downtown, Wood could hear the Confederate soldiers "making a great deal of noise down stairs, breaking guns, and swearing." Wood reached the clock tower by way of a ladder in the jury room. "I shinned across on the stringer. There were no floor boards. At two different times I saw a rebel soldier come up and look all around and go down again." Wood saw buildings on two sides of the courthouse square in flames and the courthouse yard was "strewn with goods taken from the burning buildings" as Morgan's men helped themselves. The fire burned "half a square each side of the courthouse—south and east." "One of [the Rebels] made a speech from the courthouse yard, telling the citizens...it was good enough for them that the town was burned, and would teach them to whom they owed their allegiance."

The hiding place had one drawback, the earsplitting noise from the large clock bell which "struck the hours regularly." Wood and his friend finally sneaked out undetected about midnight. Crawling on the second story floor, Wood said, "I passed over the body of one dead man, came to the doors leading to a wide stairway...crawled downstairs on [my] hands and knees to the [north] door" and escaped down the alley toward Poplar Street, to the Licking River.

General Burbridge's troops arrived the next day, June 12, 1864, and defeated Morgan's Raiders at the present site of Battle Grove Cemetery. The Federals held nearly 300 captured Confederates at the courthouse overnight and took them to Fort Clay in Lexington the next day. General Morgan escaped. Squads of Federal soldiers gathered the Union dead from downtown and carried them to the courthouse for identification before the bodies were temporarily buried in the Old Cemetery on North Main Street.

Memorial to Abraham Lincoln - For the occasion of the funeral of Abraham Lincoln in Washington, on April 19, 1865, the Cynthiana city council ordered that the courthouse front be draped in black.

Civil War Reunions - The fifth Reunion of the Confederate Orphan Brigade was held at the court house, August 6, 1886. On January 19, 1917, Confederate veterans again assembled at the courthouse and heard a presentation by the pastor of the Cynthiana Christian Church, who was chaplain of the Thomas H. Hunt Camp, United Confederate Veterans, in Lexington. The Jo Desha Chapter, Daughters of the Confederacy, entertained the veterans with lunch inside the courthouse. Music was provided by the owner of a "Pathephone, playing patriotic airs during the lunch." Other reunions were held in the city, probably at the courthouse, in 1898 and 1914, and included Union veterans.

Prepared by William A. Penn for the Cynthiana-Harrison County Chamber of Commerce. Source: Penn, William A., *Rattling Spurs and Broad-Brimmed Hats: The Civil War in Cynthiana and Harrison County, Kentucky* (1995).

Publications available from Cynthiana-Harrison County Museum, 112 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.

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

Penn, William A., *Index - Cynthiana Since 1790*. Mr. Peddicord did not prepare a comprehensive index for his book. This supplemental index prepared for the Museum contains about 3,500 names and a city street map. 30 pp. Paperback. \$3.00 Please include a handling and shipping fee of \$4.00 for first book, \$2.50 for each additional book. Prices and availability subject to change.