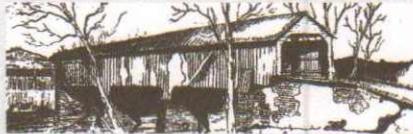


Harrison Heritage News

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In This Issue:

- George Slade explains ropewalks. p.1.
- What became of Cynthia and Anna Harrison? Cynthiana was named after them. p. 3.

History Notes

George D. Slade (gslade@setel.com)

The Ropewalk and Hemp

“Also that we had a rope-walk along about the same time and that it was up and down Pleasant Street between the Harrison Hotel corner and Mrs. Huerkamp’s corner.” (North side of Pleasant Street, between Main and Walnut Streets). The foregoing was found in a John M. Cromwell’s “Comments” column of 1928. He was describing early merchants and manufacturing concerns that existed during the early years of Cynthiana’s history. Some early documents at the courthouse refer to what is now Pleasant Street as Rope-walk Street.

Some would ask, “What is a ropewalk?” In those days rope was made from locally grown hemp. Harvesting and processing the hemp so that the fiber could be isolated from the stalk for use in making rope and fabric was time consuming and labor intensive. Most of this was accomplished with slave labor.

In late summer or early autumn, after the hemp had matured, it was cut and placed in long rows on the ground to dry. It was necessary to turn the hemp two or three times daily to attain even drying. After the hemp was thoroughly dry it was tied into bundles and set into shocks for curing. Usually in November, after cold weather had arrived, the hemp was removed from the shocks and spread upon the ground to “rot.” Rotting was usually completed within six weeks. When the fabric came loose from the stalk it was time to take the hemp back up. After the crop had been rotted, dried and stacked it was necessary to remove the fiber from the wood. This was accomplished by “breaking” the stalks and “hacking” the fiber. Most hemp brakes resembled huge wooden rail jaws, hinged at one end with a handle at the other end. Closing these jaws on the rotted hemp separated the fiber from the wood.

Rope making was performed in a long narrow building called a “ropewalk.” These buildings might be 15 to 20 feet wide and 500 or more feet in length. Spinning the rope was quite similar to spinning yarn using a spinning wheel. The spinner carries a bundle of dressed hemp round his waist, the two ends of the bundle being assembled in front. Having drawn out a proper number of fibers with his hand, he twists them with his finger and fixing this twisted part on the hook of a whirl, which is driven by a wheel put in motion by an assistant, he walks backwards down the ropewalk, the twisted part always serving to draw out more fibers from the bundle around his waist. There is much more to the completion of making rope. I have described this much of a ropewalk to show that it is basically a huge spinning wheel. Whereas a foot pedal provides energy for operating a spinning wheel, horsepower provides the energy for operating a ropewalk. (At the time that I was in high school it was not illegal to grow hemp. Farmers stopped growing hemp because there was no market for it. My dad grew tobacco in a field along the river near the A. Keller railroad crossing. Hemp plants by the thousands grew wild along the fence rows and along the riverbank. Some young folks from town gathered hemp and laid it in the sun on top of their cars to dry. As soon as it was dry enough to burn they made cigarettes and smoked it. They would get “higher than a kite.” They urged me to try it. Don’t know why, but I never did. This what they now refer to as “industrial hemp.” Though there was no market for hemp in the 1930’s, it is now perhaps Kentucky’s main cash crop, despite its illegal status.

Hemp, like alcohol, has been used as a narcotic since the first history was recorded. It is in the mulberry family but there is only one species, *Cannabis sativa*, and a number of strains, some more potent than others as a narcotic. It is kind of like drinking six-percent beer or 100 proof bourbon. Both will get you drunk. You just need to drink more beer than bourbon.

For further reading, see Hopkins, James F., *A History of the Hemp Industry in Kentucky* (Univ. Press of Kentucky, 1998).

Historical Society Minutes

Jane Adams Whitehead

The historical society met March 21, 2002, at the Cynthiana/Harrison County Library at 7 p.m. The minutes and treasurer's report were read and approved. Vice President Tonya Coleman opened the meeting with Old Business. Mr. Harold Slade, representing the Nominating Committee, presented the slate of new officers. The Harrison County Historical Society voted all as approved: The new

The next meeting will be at 7 p.m. in the Cynthiana library, on Thursday, April 18, 2002.

Laurie Hensley, R.N., will discuss a UK healthcare research project she is participating in, that involves doctor/patient relationships.

officers for 2002-2004 will be: President Larry Moss, Vice President Tonya Coleman, Secretary Jane Adams Whitehead, Treasurer Hallie Martin.

Mr. Bill Penn gave a report on the Northern Ky History Day at NKU on March 9. Mr. John Hicks agreed to answer a query to the society. A letter from the Kentucky Attorney General was read about grant funds available for preservation of Kentucky cemeteries.

Program: Mr. Bill Penn introduced Joe Brent, a Versailles Civil War sites consultant who discussed the process for preserving and interpreting Cynthiana's Civil War sites. He is working on a National Register nomination for Keller's Bridge Battlefield for the Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Brent stated the next step for Cynthiana should be the preparation of a master plan for preserving the battlefield sites.

Cynthiana -Harrison County Museum Martha Barnes

It was Mark Twain who gave us the saying "little one horse town" which we sometimes use in reference to small communities. I remember a discussion with my father regarding this quote which had been used by a journalist to describe our fair city of Cynthiana. Daddy said that it was most inappropriate because Cynthiana and Harrison County have always had many horses.

Truly, this is worth pondering. What indeed is a little one horse town? Historically, it does seem that this area has always had an abundance of horses. However, the Cynthiana-Harrison County Museum has few horse related items. Several photos of outstanding Harrison County horses have been given to the museum by Hattie McKee. Bill Penn has loaned a wonderful pair of old saddlebags and a buggy whip. The military and agriculture sections of the museum, of course, contain items related to horses.

The most impressive exhibit related to Harrison County horse heritage is that of the Fennell Company. Joseph Fennell, born in New Jersey, was a citizen of Cynthiana most of his life. With the outbreak of the Civil War, Mr. Fennell volunteered his services to the Confederate cause. Cavalrymen in Fennell's unit who were forced to mount trotters discovered that their steeds were frequently lamed by self-inflicted leg wounds. Fennell, a saddlemaker by trade, devised a light weight leather sleeve which protected the horses' lower legs. Following the war, George A. Scott, a standardbred breeder and racer, convinced Fennell to improve and market the "boots." The boot was patented in 1883 and was soon being sold throughout the world. When the business was at full capacity, it employed 67 people in Cynthiana. The factory was located on the second floor of the building across from the Harrison County Courthouse (site of the "Especially for You" store).

The Fennell family operated the business until the early 1960's. The horse boots presently are for sale at the R. E. Fennell Company located at the Red Mile Track in Lexington, Kentucky. The current owners of the business hve donated the following items for museum display: a framed boot designed and manufactured by Mr. Fennell, an early catalog of Fennell's horse supplies, an advertisement of the invention of a tailset by Mr. Fennell, and a current catalog of Fennell's Horse Supplies. Jim Lee has donated another of the Fennell horseboots to the museum.

What additional items might be available for display at the museum to prove that truly Cynthiana is not nor has it ever been a "little one horse town"?

HARRISON COUNTY GENEALOGY: CYNTHIA AND ANNA HARRISON

According to tradition, and as related in Lucinda Boyd's *Chronicles of Cynthiana*, Cynthiana, Ky., was named for the daughters of Robert Harrison, Cynthia and Anna. Mrs. Boyd speculated on the adult lives of the two young girls after the Harrison family moved from our infant town, but then concluded, "...but what does it matter, since...a handful of ashes and dust is all that remain of the beautiful children for whom our town was named." However, Kathie Harrison has constructed an online Harrison Family webpage (<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~irishrose/robhar.html>), that has much information on Cynthia and Anna, condensed below. Robert Harrison moved from Cynthiana to Portsmouth, Ohio, Fayette County, Ohio, and on to Sullivan and Greene Counties, Indiana. Visit the Harrison Family webpage for more information. [B. Penn]

1. ROBERT² HARRISON (WILLIAM¹) was born about 1755 in Virginia?, and died 1822 in Greene County, Indiana. He married REBECCA VANMETER. She was born about 1758 in Virginia, and died Unknown in Greene County, Indiana.

Children of ROBERT HARRISON and REBECCA VANMETER are:

2. i. CYNTHIA³ HARRISON, b. 1782, Cynthiana, Harrison County, Kentucky; d. Unknown, Illinois.

3. ii. ANNA HARRISON, b. 1784, Cynthiana, Harrison County, Kentucky; d. 1847, Lewis County, Missouri.

iii. JOSEPH VALENTINE HARRISON, b. 1786, Cynthiana, Harrison County, Kentucky; d. Unknown, Daviess County, Indiana; m. (1) LEWE STINSON, 1812, Fayette County, Ohio; d. Unknown; m. (2) MARGARET PITZER, March 09, 1818, Daviess County, Indiana; b. Unknown, Clermont County, Ohio; d. Unknown, Daviess County, Indiana; m. (3) PIMELA ROBERTSON, December 12, 1835, Daviess County, Indiana; d. Unknown.

iv. ARY HARRISON, b. 1796, Bourbon County, Kentucky; d. Bef. 1829, Scioto County, Ohio; m. JOHN MOORE, August 08, 1816, Scioto County, Ohio; d. Unknown.

v. VIENNA HARRISON, b. 1798; d. Unknown; m. (1) WILLIAM CAREY, January 16, 1818, Scioto County, Ohio; d. Unknown; m. (2) JOHN MOORE, April 19, 1829, Scioto County, Ohio; d. Unknown.

More About VIENNA HARRISON:

Fact 1: January 16, 1818, Married in Scioto County, Ohio (pg. 22) Scioto County Marriages

Fact 2: January 16, 1818, Phillip Moore was a witness to this marriage

vi. CLARISSA HARRISON, b. January 14, 1802; d. Unknown, Scioto County, Ohio; m. ZINA GUNN, November 25, 1821, Scioto County, Ohio; d. Unknown.

vii. PERMELIA HARRISON, b. December 11, 1804; d. Unknown, Greene County, Indiana; m. JESSE STAFFORD, April 1820, Daviess County, Indiana; d. Unknown, Greene County, Indiana.

Residence: Iowa & Kansas

2. CYNTHIA³ HARRISON (ROBERT², WILLIAM¹) was born 1782 in Cynthiana, Harrison County, Kentucky, and died Unknown in Illinois. She married (1) MAJOR JOHN BELLI March 21, 1800 in Adams County, Ohio. He died Unknown. She married (2) PHILLIP MOORE January 10, 1812 in Adams County, Ohio. He died Unknown.

More About CYNTHIA HARRISON:

Fact 1: March 21, 1800, Marriage performed by Samuel Jackson, M.G. (pg. 132) Deed Book Adams County, Ohio

Residence: Portsmouth, Scioto county, Ohio

Children of CYNTHIA HARRISON and JOHN BELLI are:

i. ELIZA⁴ BELLI, d. Unknown; m. MOSES GREGORY, October 22, 1826, Scioto County, Ohio; d. Unknown.

More About ELIZA BELLI:

Fact 1: October 22, 1826, Consent for marriage by Phillip & Cynthia (Sinth) Moore

ii. CYNTHIA BELLI, d. Unknown

3. ANNA³ HARRISON (ROBERT², WILLIAM¹) was born 1784 in Cynthiana, Harrison County, Kentucky, and died 1847 in Lewis County, Missouri. She married (1) ABSOLEM FORREST 1805. He died Unknown. She married (2) ZEPHENIAH DUNN September 25, 1808 in Highland County, Ohio, a son of JEREMIAH DUNN and ELIZABETH? He was born Abt. 1775 in Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, and died 1846 in Lewis County, Missouri.

More About ANNA HARRISON:

Burial: 1847, Lewis County, Missouri

Fact 1: September 25, 1808, Marriage performed by Morgan Vanmatre (VanMeter) in Highland County, Ohio

Child of ANNA HARRISON and ZEPHENIAH DUNN is:

i. CYNTHIAN⁴ DUNN, b. Abt. 1816, Ohio; d. Abt. May 1836, Lewis County, Missouri; m. PETER COTTRELL, January 28, 1836, Lewis County, Missouri; b. Unknown, Lewis County, Missouri; d. Unknown, Lewis County, Missouri.

More About CYNTHIAN DUNN:

Burial: Abt. May 1836, Lewis County, Missouri

Fact 1: 1836, Died a few months after marriage, with no surviving issue.

SOURCE: <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~irishrose/robhar.html>. Visit this Web page for more Harrison information.

Genealogy Queries

Send queries to Harrison Co. Historical Society, address on p. 1, or Email editor hmms@att.net. Queries will be published as space permits.

LAIR - Seeking information on Harrison County Lair family and Lair farm ["The Cedars."] Writer has Lair farm photo. Virginia See, P. O. Box 217, Mexico, Indiana 46958.

CRISP - My ancestors were Confederate and they emigrated from Texas to the American settlement of Santa Barbara, Brazil, South America, in 1867. Samuel Smith Crisp was my two-great-grandfather's brother and I am told that Samuel was shot and he died fighting in the Civil War, near Cynthiana, Kentucky, on July 18, 1863 [1862?]. My two-great-grandfather Richard C. Crisp was also fighting there. Both of them enlisted into the Company F of the Eighth Confederate Regiment Texas Cavalry, though they also served in Company B. I have read that there were two battles of Cynthiana, therefore Samuel may have died on July 18, 1862, not 1863. Writer is seeking any information about Samuel and Richard Crisp in Cynthiana, including any records of their service there, or of the burial site of Samuel Crisp, and information on the Battle of Cynthiana in July 1862. [Note: the editor is sending information on the Battle of Cynthiana in 1862 to the writer, but does not have any other information.] Adilson Luiz Battaglia Crisp, Rua do Rosario, 532, apt. 41-Centro, 13400-183-Piracicaba-SP. , Brazil.

WHITLEDGE/HUMPHREY/BOSWELL - Seeking information on Lyna Whitledge, Thomas Whitledge, and Susana (Whitledge) Humphrey. Their guardian was Francis Callis[or Calliz] who gave them room, board and taught them a trade. I have many of their letters and journals starting in 1789-1850. Deposition from Sally Todd in Whitledge heirs vs Francis Callis at Bourbon County Circuit Court in 1803. Also mentioned in the collection are: John Humphrey, Peggy Collins, William Boswell, George Scrogin, James Ford, Charles William's Tavern in Bourbon Co., Ky., William Simpson's Tavern, William Cogswick's Tavern in Harrison Co., Ky., Roland T. Parker's Tavern, Clarksburg, in Lewis Co., James P. Wilson, Thomas Whitledge Day Books 1809-1820. Lyna Whitledge wrote about his wife and a slave girl who spun thread out of flax and combined with blue yarn for clothes for the winter (1803). Places mentioned: Paris, Leesburgh, Bourbon County, Harrison County, Lewis County. Additional information is wanted on the names and places mentioned. John R. Mudd, 103 Hickory Drive, Hermann, Mo. 65041; E-mail : jmudd@ktis.net.

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.

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

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

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