

Harrison Heritage News

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William A. Penn, Editor
423 Mill Rd Pl
Midway, KY 40347

Old-Fashioned Christmas Trees

William A. Penn

Before there were Christmas tree lots and big-box stores selling fine evergreen trees such as Norway spruces or artificial trees, a Christmas tree could be obtained on about any farm in Harrison County - that is, a cedar tree. Perhaps there were Christmas tree farms then, or other retail outlets that sold fancier evergreens, but while growing up, I do not ever remember my father buying a Christmas tree. Although not as popular today for holiday decorating, in the 1950s and earlier the cedar tree was, and still is, plentiful, inexpensive, and, I think, very attractive.

Farmers joke that a cedar tree - the *juniperus virginiana* or Red Cedar - can grow on a flat rock, so I suppose that is why they are found everywhere in our county. Besides their use as Christmas trees, cedars are used to manufacture pencils and wooden crafts are often made from the aromatic pinkish red wood.

My family's source for a cedar Christmas tree was usually the farm where my mother, Evelyn Byrd (Faulconer) Penn, grew up near Rutland. She lived there with her parents, Alfred and Anna Rachel (Hanna) Faulconer, from 1925 when she was 10, until graduating from Renaker High School in 1934. We could also find cedars all over my grandfather Alec Penn's farm, which was a couple of miles closer to Renaker, where my father, W. O. Penn grew up with his brothers Cromer and Walden, and his mother Zella Jane (Pickett) Penn. But the old Hanna farm, as my mother still called it, named for her grandfather William C. Hanna who lived there in the late 1800s and early 1900s, was our favorite Christmas tree cutting farm.

I've forgotten who owned the Hanna farm then, but my parents obtained permission, and off we would go, sometimes joined by our neighbors on Battle Grove Avenue, the Stewarts. It was a simple task to find suitable cedar trees, which were as common as thistles. It did require a little search for one that had good green color, was full, the proper height, and was covered with little blue "berries." After cutting the trees for both families, we looked for bittersweet in a hollow on the Penn farm, which always grew over a huge pile of old tree trunks and field rocks. Dad would find mistletoe in the trees along the Renaker-Rutland road, sometimes shooting it out of treetops with a shotgun. Often there was snow on the ground and whenever we came upon an iced-over creek or pond, we children would venture out on it as far as we felt safe and "skate" and play on it.

Visiting the old Hanna me to explore old vacant houses mother's tales of growing up on old wagon road where she walked thicket where a deer hunter mistak-Trixie, the same pony who would they rode by a nearby cemetery; house that has since been torn ing on the back of a horse with her Alec Penn's mill down the road (probably about 10 years old), sit-wasn't interested in him at the (That same old mill is now distory Center.)



In the Bleak Mid-Winter

Sheep on the Penn Farm, Renaker, Ky. Photo c. 1965, Wm. A. Penn

place was also a chance for and barns and hear again my that farm. She pointed out an with her dog, Sport; saw the enly shot and killed her pony, rear up frightened every time peeked in the old Hanna down; and was told about rid-father taking sacks of corn to where she first saw my dad ting on a fence. She said she time, but instead his pony. played at the Kentucky His-

As soon as we returned to our house in Cynthiana, we set up the freshly-cut cedar tree and decorated it, always putting on top a heirloom Christmas decoration - a star that my mother had carefully saved from when she was a child on the Hanna farm. The Christmas tree meant a lot to my mother, and for the last year or two of her life she left one up year round (no longer cedar, but artificial), perhaps to bring back pleasant memories of the days of playing with Sport, riding Trixie, and cutting Christmas trees with her daddy on the old Hanna farm at Rutland.

Harrison County Historical Society

Jane Adams Whitehead

Covered Bridges Topic of November Meeting

The Harrison County Historical Society met at 7 P.M., November 20, 2003, at the Cynthiana-Harrison County Library. The program on Covered bridges of Kentucky was presented by Brenda Plummer, past president of the Flemingsburg Historical Society and museum. Three bridges are still present in Fleming County, with the most prominent being the often-illustrated Goddard bridge, where a church can be seen when looking through the bridge. Brenda brought photographs and displays that illustrated the theme of her talk. She also talked about an effort by local preservationists to make sure bridge restorations do not result in so much of the old wood being replaced that the result would be practically a new bridge.

Potluck Planned December 13th By Historical Society

In lieu of a December meeting, which normally would fall on December 18th, there was a joint meeting of the Harrison County Historical Society and the Cynthiana-Harrison County Trust for a potluck dinner at the Cynthiana United Methodist Church December 13, 7 pm.

Harrison County, Ky., History on the Internet:

Harrison Heritage News back issues are archived on the Historical Society link found at cynthianaky.com. (Internet search engine www.google.com searches these back issues.)

Battle of Cynthiana -
www.battleofcynthiana.org

Hinkson and Ruddle Station Historical Society:
www.ramsha1780.org

Cynthiana -Harrison County Museum

Martha Barnes

Christmas Wishes

The staff of the Cynthiana-Harrison County Museum join me in extending best wishes to all of you for happy holidays and a wonderful new year. We sincerely invite you to come visit the museum and to become a part of our volunteer group. We offer these "Christmas Wishes" in the words of poet Lois Ann Williams -

Christmas Wishes

Lois Ann Williams

May the songs of Christmas
Come softly to your ear,
And tell again the meaning
Of this blessed time of year.

May the bells of Christmas
Chime their tunes so bright and fine,
Ringing out their cheer and hope
At this Christmas time.

May the peace of Christmas
Fill your heart with strength anew
As you know what God gaveth
When He sent His gifts for you.

May all the gifts of Christmas
Be a means of sharing love,
Like the gift of Christ, our Saviour,
Sent with love from God above.

May the joy of Christmas
Dwell so deep within your heart
That throughout the year to come
It never shall depart.

May the love of Christmas
Fill your heart and soul.
So peace on earth, good will toward men
Will be your greatest goal.

L.L.L. HIGHWAY

George D. Slade

I have heard many stories as to the meaning of the Ls in the L.L.L. HIGHWAY that passed through Cynthiana, Kentucky during the 1920's. For those who know, or think that they know, I submit the following information taken from local newspapers, on microfilm at the Cynthiana-Harrison County Public Library:

The Cynthiana Democrat, Sept. 29, 1921. THREE MARKERS "L.L.L." LOUISVILLE, LEXINGTON, LATONIA. – Many people have wondered what the letters "L.L.L.," painted in white on certain telephone poles in the city and county meant.

The letters stand for "Louisville, Lexington and Latonia" Highway. The "trail" follows the Midland Trail from Louisville into Lexington, then down the Lexington pike into Paris then to Cynthiana, Falmouth and Latonia. The letters indicate to the tourists the route of the new highway. From Cynthiana the highway led to Latonia on a direct line. The bands have a white field. Below and above are orange stripes, under which appear an L or R, which indicates the direction of a turn in the highway when near a curve.

The Cynthiana Democrat, July 23, 1925. – L.L.L. ROUTE TO OPEN IN AUGUST – Direct Lexington-Cincinnati Highway Construction Completed – New Road to Be Shortest in Seven Years. – Detours Are Eliminated – (*Lexington Herald*) - The Lexington Automobile club has been notified that the northern end of the L.L.L. highway, the heavily traveled route between Lexington and Cincinnati, has been completed in concrete and will be opened about August 5, furnishing for the first time in seven years, a direct, through highway between this city (Lexington) and Cincinnati.

This route is by the way of Paris, Cynthiana, Falmouth, Nicholson, Independence and Covington, and will reduce the route to Cincinnati to 96 miles. At present and for many months motorists have turned off at Nicholson and crossed over to Kingston, a distance of four miles to reach the old Dixie highway and detour around the construction north of Independence on the L.L.L. route. The total mileage of the present route is 110 miles.

The L.L.L. – Louisville, Lexington and Latonia – is the best known highway in Kentucky. It is the only highway extending through Kentucky that is accurately and completely marked across the state, and the marker is published in every guide and map in the country. The Kentucky Motor club, which has since ceased to function, originated the highway five years ago as a route between three race tracks and pole banded the road at their own expense. (Note: There is more to this article but it has to do with the Dixie Highway, under construction at the time).

(I was born in 1916 and, as a boy in Cynthiana, I always heard the L.L.L. referred to as the Louisville, Lexington, Latonia Highway. Now, what I would like to have is a map or a copy of a map mentioned in the article. I recall my Dad and others talk about a Cynthiana company that went broke building the first section mentioned in the article. I believe that the name was Cynthiana Construction Co.)

George D. Slade
303 East Pike St.
Cynthiana KY 41031-1633
Ph. 859-234-3147
Email gslade@setel.com

Harrison County, Kentucky, Historical Publications
available from Cynthiana-Harrison County Museum, 112 South Walnut Street, P.O. Box 411,
Cynthiana, KY 41031 (859-234-7179); open Friday and Saturday 10 AM - 5 PM:

- Boyd, Lucinda, *Chronicles of Cynthiana*. This is a reprint of the rare 1894 edition, which includes family histories, the famous account of David Sheely and his ghost, and other historical sketches and scattered accounts of persons and events connected with Cynthiana and Harrison County. 262 pp. Hardbound. \$20.00.

- June 1896 *Cynthiana Democrat* reprint. This was a special edition with biographical sketches and photographs of prominent men and women; many photographs of buildings; city/county government, church and school information is included. 24 pp. Paperback, 12"x18". \$5.00

- *Cynthiana Since 1790*. Virgil Peddicord (1986). Mr. Peddicord attempted to list the owners/businesses located on each lot from the founding of the city through the mid-1980s, including subdivisions added through 1923. 171 pp. (See separate index below). Paperback. \$20.00

- *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. He was born in Harrison Co., but his family soon moved to Lewis Co., Mo.; in 1849 he moved back to Harrison Co., and he wrote much about life in Cynthiana in the early 1850s; he joined the CSA army in 1861 and fought in battles at Lexington, Mo.; Pea Ridge, Arkansas; and Shiloh, Tenn. The book includes several family obituaries and two letters that contain Moore genealogy. 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. 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 (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). A fine writer and historian, Mr. Cromwell covered many topics, including fairs, horses, fires, churches, businesses, cemeteries, government, Civil War, social events, and the Licking River. Sometimes he quoted old county histories, updated the information, and then added his personal reminiscences of interesting personalities from his career as banker and mayor. 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.

Membership Form - Harrison County Historical Society

Send to: Harrison County Historical Society, P. O. Box 411, Cynthiana, Kentucky 41031

Membership fee \$5.00 (includes Harrison Heritage News) due annually January 1

Name _____ Address _____

City _____ State: _____ Zip Code _____