

Harrison Heritage News

Published monthly by Harrison County Historical Society, PO Box 411, Cynthiana, KY, 41031

November 2004



Vol. 5 No. 11

In This Issue

Claysville, Ky., History Notes - 1

Contacts: William A. Penn - editor
pennwma@aol.com
George Slade - gslade@setel.com

Claysville History Notes

George D. Slade

[Falmouth Outlook, October 31, 1924]

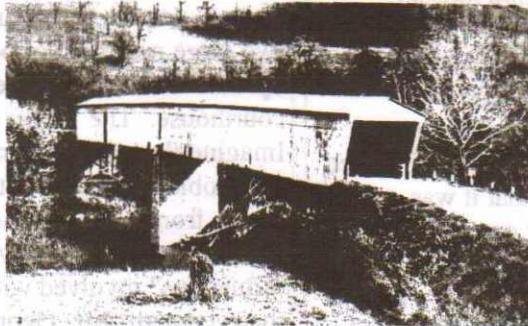
Claysville, Oldest of Villages

(Mrs. R. L. Whalen)

Here in Claysville, one of the oldest among Harrison County's villages, autumn is sending out her fiery banner. It takes only a small stretch of imagination to picture the gay trees on the cliffs as Indian warriors. In 1799-1800, Claysville, then a few houses, was laid out as a city by Eli Kern, and it was later incorporated. It was the most important shipping place in the county. The first coal burned in Cynthian was shipped here and hauled to Cynthiana in wagons. Probably the first school in the county was taught here by Miss Hannah Olds, later Mrs. Jackson, whose descendants still live near. Mr. Gudgame was another teacher of the early days.

The oldest house in Claysville was torn down and rebuilt by Mr. Harry Linley. It was of brick, made at the old brick yard in the "bottom" near Claysville, and was built as a residence by Mr. Curran, father of Dr. Curran, who, growing up here, lived, loved, married, practiced medicine, gained many friends, and died here.

The oldest residence yet habitable is one built and occupied for years by the Whiteheads, now occupied by W. R. Cooper and family. Here, too, is the mound spoken of in a former article.



The Claysville, Ky., covered bridge, 304 feet long, was built in 1874. A fire destroyed the structure in 1953. Postcard c. 1950.

One of the first things to attract my attention was a large square building built of the native limestone, enduring as time itself. It has had many uses, it seems, but was originally built and used for a carding factory by a Mr. Rollins.

For the entertainment of guests who usually came by boat - though many came overland also - was a hotel, still standing and habitable, owned by Wm. Jackson. Of course, in these good old days, every hotel boasted a bar, and this was no exception. There were said to have been some murders on this street but whether there was any connection between them and the barroom I didn't inquire. Anyway, it leaves us a heritage of really good ghost stories which I may tell you some day.

The needs of the hotel bar, as well as of a few private ones were supplied by the Underwood distillery over the river. There were two large boat yards here, also a large warehouse for the storing of goods shipped on or to be shipped out. Not only goods from Harrison County, but from all the upper

counties were brought here for shipment. It must have been a gay picture, the large well-fed horses and heavy wagons with their darky driver and white overseers, loading or unloading the salable products at this warehouse.

There is a covered bridge here now, but at the time I am telling of, there was a ferry boat large enough to transport a six-horse team.

There are three tobacco factories, owned by Curran, Whitehead and Jackson; also a cigar factory.

Just a little way out, not far enough to keep the scent from drifting back, was a tan yard. The name of the owner, even the scent, is forgotten history now.

Pole Durbin, father of Daniel Durbin, well-known lawyer of Cynthiana, was the largest slave owner around here. He also took the first newspaper. Old Dr. Martin, who died a few years ago at Poinsett, and who was, perhaps, among the most beloved Harrison County physicians, lived here for a number of years. His old home is still standing, being used as the center part of a barn.

This is all. A village with a past, but no future! But as I took from my window at the

(Continued on page 3)

Harrison County Historical Society

William A. Penn, Editor

Meeting Report- October 21

Ben Mansur, Artist

Business meeting: There will be no December meeting. The historical society will hold a joint potluck with the Cynthiana-Harrison County Museum December 4 at the Methodist Church. The committee formed to interview veterans will meet in the next few weeks. 23 members were present.

Program: Ben Mansur, Harrison County artist and sculptor, and a teacher of art at the Maysville Community College, gave a slide presentation and lecture on his art pieces. He explained what inspired him to make each piece, and noted that it was important for him to always portray emotion. Illustrated were several large wood sculptures including one of a horse pulling a sled with a large bird flying overhead. Mr. Mansur is also well known for making custom doors and pictured quite a few, including some in Cincinnati, Chicago and Vicksburg, all made of fine wood, some carved and some with stained glass windows by Guy Kemper, a stained glass artist in Lexington.

Next Meeting - November 18, 2004

The program will feature Donald R. Palmer, beekeeper, about bees and honey. Be sure to plan to attend this meeting at the Cynthiana library 7 p.m.

[Correction: The editor regrets posting the wrong date for the October meeting in the last HHN; it should have been Oct. 21, not Oct. 15.]

New Book: Historic Battle Grove

New Book: Historic Battle Grove Cemetery - Self-Guided Tour

A thirty-page, spiral bound guidebook, by Charles Feix, which describes 22 monuments and includes a guide map, is \$5.00 at the cemetery office. To order by mail, send \$7.00, which includes postage and handling, to: Battle Grove Cemetery, 531 East Pike Street, Cynthiana, Kentucky 41031.

CYNTHIANA-HARRISON COUNTY MUSEUM

112 S. Walnut St., Cynthiana, Ky. 41031 Hrs: 10-5 Fri-Sat
Martha Barnes

"Be Lucky - Go Happy" : Political Buttons Donated

This 2004 Presidential election is now history. Perhaps this year there were not as many problems with the tabulation of votes. Yet, the media did inform us of citizens waiting in line for hours and hours, voting machines not working, and other kinks. Why so many problems in this technological age? Is it our large numbers of people? Is there too much information available?

At the Cynthiana-Harrison County Museum, we have two large metal ballot boxes in our collection. One was donated by Jim Bob and Hallie Martin - the other was found at the courthouse. The large one has three padlocks attached to it. Imagine the problems involved with that type of voting! Maybe the problems existed but the citizens did not learn about them. It seems from what we know that perhaps Cynthiana and Harrison County traditionally have not had a great number of problems or "situations" involved with political campaigns and elections. Are there enough, Mr. George, to merit a paper on the topic? It is interesting to note that our population truly has remained consistent. Campaign buttons are an interesting part of our museum collection. Pin-back campaign buttons (according to World Book Encyclopedia) have been used to support political candidates since 1896 during the presidential race between William McKinley and William Jennings Bryan.

Faithful museum supporters such as Hattie McKee, Emily Dedman, Steve Slade, George Slade, Charlie Switzer, and others have contributed a wide assortment of campaign buttons. The presidential buttons have the candidates' pictures and slogans. Do you remember any of these slogans, "LBJ for the USA," "Fighter for Ford," "They're for You, Ike and Dick," "(George) Wallace for President," "Stevenson for President," "Carter/Mondale," "Clinton/Gore '96" ? Collecting political buttons actually is a great way to remember history.

Besides the presidential buttons in the museum, there are many Kentucky gubernatorial as well as local buttons and advertising items. Remember "Waterfield for Governor," "Be Lucky - Go Happy," "Brown-Collins' Team," "Above All/Stovall," "Collins for Governor," etc. If you or someone in your family has run for office, you might want to consider if the museum has a representative item from that campaign - whether it was successful or not. According to Compton's Encyclopedia, little attention was paid to political advertising until 1952, when Dwight Eisenhower successfully ran for the presidency. Advertising executives directed Ike's campaign. Much of his campaign consisted of a flood of spot announcements on television. Maybe we should return to the wearing of political buttons instead of so much media advertising.

(CLAYSVILLE HISTORY NOTES continued from page 1)

ghostly moonlight, I seem to see again, the guests. The adventurer, upon whom the hotel bar could show no effect, the salesman, the buyer, light users of "Old Kaintuck," the gambler in flashy clothes, the down-river farmer, and a goodly smattering of our own, smoking, drinking, though not so often heavily, gambling, telling stories; oh, oh, for one night to turn back the pages of time and really see Claysville as she was!

Cromwell's Comments on Claysville (from Cromwell's Comments by John M. Cromwell, ed. William A. Penn and George D. Slade):

Forgotten

[Claysville, Ky. Newspaper, 1890]

November 14, 1929

As I turn this in methinks I hear the editor exclaim, sotto voce, "here comes that man Cromwell again with "more old newspaper stuff, and this time sailing under false colors." But really, Mr. Editor, I had clean forgotten that there ever was a CLAYSVILLE NEWS until reminded of the fact by Mrs. S. T. Rudder, who sent me a copy. Now, as there are doubtless hundreds of people in Harrison county likewise of short memory, why "hide my light under a bushel?"

THE CLAYSVILLE NEWS

Claysville, Ky., Nov. 1, 1890

R. W. Musser, Publisher. Price 5 cents

For sale at the Claysville stores,

And at Pollmeyer's, Cynthiana

I may say in passing that, thus far, I have only found one man in Cynthiana who recalls this old paper of four decades ago, and of course that would be my good friend and near neighbor, James W. Snodgrass.

Cynthiana Advertisers

Harmon Pollmeyer; The Louisville Store; Fennell Bros.; A. and M. Berman; W. L. Northcutt; Givens and Shawhan, and P. Douglas and Son.

Claysville Advertisers

Foster McDowell, Livery, Sale and Feed Stable; M. Catherwood, Carpenter and Builder; W. H. Carr, M. D.; James Rice, Lunch House; John W. Routt, Cash Store; John W. Holland, Mail and Hack Line; J. W. Snodgrass, General Store and Produce, also dealer in Leaf Tobacco.

Population

Our editor not only numbers them but actually names them by families; result, 134, all white.

Under biographical sketches we find Jas. W. Snodgrass, Ollie Duncan, still a resident of Claysville; Stephen Barnes Curran, founder of the Curran family in Harrison county, born near Claysville. He represented his county in the Legislature, 1848-49, died 1882, his son, Dr. W. H. Curran, then living; Eliza Jackson, born in Vermont, 1793; Joseph Whitley, flatboatman, said to have made 777 trips up and down the Licking, died 1880; Nimrod R. Whitehead, born 1805; died 1878. Founder of the Whitehead family, once very numerous in the county. We now come to one, which out of respect to the memory of our editor, we quote: "Daniel Musser, born in Pennsylvania 1796, died in Cynthiana, 1851. Kept a hatter shop in Claysville several years, about 1830, in a building still in good condition," and owned by Wash Whitley. Married in 1826 to Mary, daughter of Joshua Jones from Baltimore, who came to Cynthiana in 1817. Father of R. W. Musser."

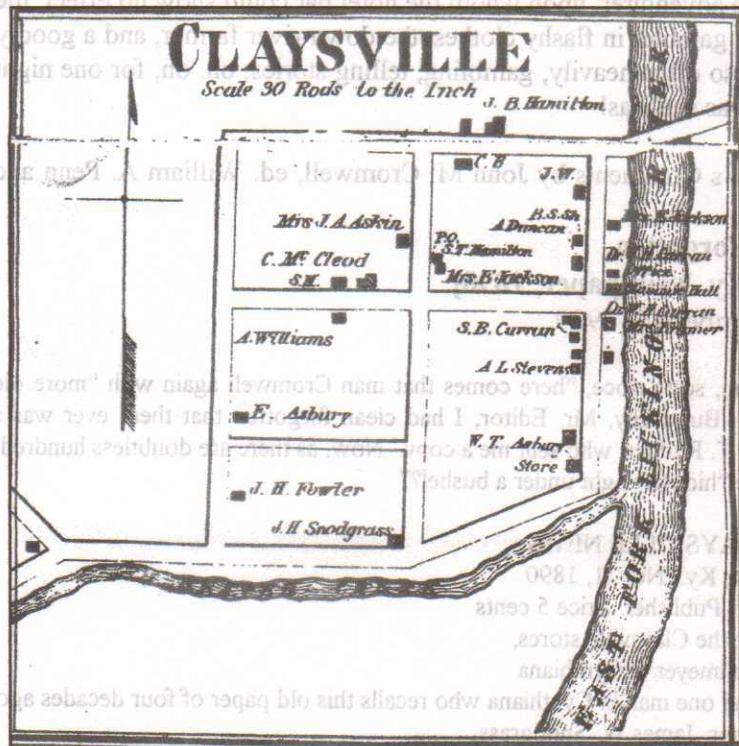


(left) This early frame Claysville commercial building stands next to a road leading to a former river landing. Not only goods from Harrison County, but from all the upper counties were brought here for shipment in the 19th century
Photo, 1984, William A. Penn.

And now Mr. Musser, from his vantage in Claysville, tells us what Cynthiana needs: Streets named on every corner, and houses numbered; several more boarding houses; to buy the first toll gates on every turnpike coming into town; a telephone to Claysville, and more factories - why the more? He then goes on to recite the needs of Claysville. A railroad from Cincinnati via Claysville and on to the South; a planing mill, woolen factory, tobacco factory, coal yard,

(Continued on page 4)

(CLAYSVILLE HISTORY NOTES Continued from page 3)



Map of Claysville, Ky., 1877, D. G. Beers.

Alas! Like many another good man, Mr. Musser, in getting out this first and only issue of the Claysville News, was indulging in a dream of Utopia, and again like many another good man, success for him, seemed always to lie just over the next hill. I remember Mr. Musser very well, and admired him for his many admirable qualities. Peace to his ashes.

Just about to close when I espied, tucked away in an obscure corner of our old Claysville News, an effusion from the pen of Jas. G. Wall, styling himself "autocrat." Mr. Wall, as many who read this will recall, was a unique character about town. He had a classical education, and was well read in the law; but in my recollection never practiced. He frequented the Court House and occasionally wrote in the County Clerk's office. His leisure time of which he had plenty and to spare, was mainly devoted to writing skits on various and divers subjects, some of which found their way into print; but mainly he would read them from a scrap of paper wherever he could find an audience. These writings were chiefly noted for the use of high sounding phrases, as an instance - I once heard him make use of the words, "vehicular conveyance." Mr. Wall, it will also be remembered, had an abnormally large head, always wore a cap, which had to be made to order, and wore a shawl instead of an overcoat.

burg, a church building. Mr. Musser did not live to see it, but with the exception I believe of the railroad and water transportation of coal, Claysville is now doing pretty well, thank you.

Under "Cynthiana cards" we find about two dozen names of business and professional men. We quote a few - C. A. Webster, owner. F. W. N., publisher, Cynthiana Times; National Bank of Cynthiana, J. S. Withers, Cashier; Cynthiana Democrat, J. A. Brown and Son, publishers; Daniel Durbin, Atty.-at-law, an old Claysville boy; Farmers National Bank, J. G. Montgomery, Cashier, another Claysville boy; Harrison Courier, E. D. Veach, publisher; Hope Redmon, photographer; S. R. Boyd, Atty.-at-Law; T. H. Hood, Drugs; W. Tom Burns, grocer.

In his announcement Mr. Musser says, "This issue of the Claysville News is an edition of 960 copies. Its object is to show the people, both at home and abroad, the condition of affairs here and call attention to our natural advantages." Editorially - under the caption of "aggregate man" - he indulges in a bit of philosophy, closing as follows: "Now after almost a hundred years Claysville invokes the powers of the press, that mighty engine of progress, to show forth its dormant but ample resources. This in itself is an effort, or the beginning of an effort. Let us note its effects and ramifying results. Will the blast from the Claysville News awake her from her slumber? We shall see."

Harrison County, Ky., Genealogy Queries

Nicholson/Fightmaster - Seeking information about James Nicholson, cabinetmaker and chair maker, who lived near Leesburg in 1830, as well as his son John Quincy Nicholson (married to Mary Fanny Fightmaster) who was a farmer in District 106 of Harrison Co., Ky., in 1880. Please respond to : Christopher Grote, 620 Franklin St., Hinsdale, IL 60521; or email: cgrote@rush.edu.

Harrison County, Ky., History on the Internet:

- www.cynthianaky.com - 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.) Church photos, history and other information is on this site.
- Battle of Cynthiana Reenactment Information - www.battleofcynthiana.org
- Hinkson and Ruddle Station Historical Society: www.ramsha1780.org

CHRISTMAS GIFT SUGGESTIONS

What better way to please a friend or relative at Christmas than to give them a book about the history of their home town and county.

If they already have Cynthiana Since 1790, give the index listing 3,500 names.

Stop in the Museum on Fridays and Saturdays to browse through the gifts; Some publications are only \$10 or less, such as Cromwell's Comments and the reprint of the Cynthiana Democrat 1896 history edition, and Col. Moore's writings on Cynthiana history.

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 Fridays and Saturdays 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.

**GIVE A MEMBERSHIP TO THE HARRISON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY TO A FRIEND FOR
CHRISTMAS**

**Send a \$5.00 check to: Harrison County Historical Society
PO Box 411, Cynthiana, KY 41031**