

Harrison Heritage News

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View of Berry, Ky., looking north on the CSX railroad. The present Farmers National Bank Berry Branch is on the far left. Photo, William A. Penn, 2004.

The Little Red Schoolhouse

William A. Penn



On Pike Street, third house east from Miller St. (north side) stands the old Little Red School House, where a total of 796 children, (including Steve Slade and me) attended between 1935 and 1966. Miss Sarah Lail converted a red garage behind her residence into a private school for kindergarten, first and second grade, which was given its quaint name by Mrs. J. R. Jones.

I recall the one-room school had a large blackboard, little tables and chairs, a piano Ms. Moody played, and a big box of wooden toy blocks. During recess we would play games in the sloping back yard like Red Rover, enjoy a wooden slide, and line up for a drink of water in paper cups from a cistern.

I have a photo of my graduation from the Little Red Schoolhouse held at the CHS auditorium. Everyone is seated wearing identical red capes and white clothes and little caps. Miss Sarah died in 1980.

....(See also "Little Red Schoolhouse", *Cynthiana Democrat*, Dec. 22, 1977).

(right) Miss Sarah Lail, photo, 1977, *Cynthiana Democrat*. (top, schoolhouse, 1997, George Slade.



BERRY BANK ROBBERY OF 1920

George D. Slade

If you read the *Cynthiana Democrat* dated July 22, 2004, you know about the Berry, Ky. bank robberies of 2000 and 2004. Do you know about the Berry bank robbery of 1920?

On Saturday evening, November 15, 1997 about 6 o'clock in the evening, I received a phone call from a Steve Slaughter of San Diego. He was requesting information relating to a bank robbery that had occurred late in the year 1919 or early 1920 at. I told him that I had never heard of it but would attempt to get this information.

He furnished me with his name and address and proceeded to inform me about the robbery as his uncle had told it to him. The uncle's name was Tom Slaughter, alias "Tom Wilson." His Uncle Tom and an accomplice robbed the bank. It was not a holdup and was accomplished on a Friday night. A railroad-crossing bell was ringing nearby helping to overcome the noise that they made while breaking into the safety

deposit boxes. After getting a hotel room at Frankfort, they examined their loot and found that they did not have much of value to them. They took what they wanted and wrapped the remainder of the loot in a newspaper. This they left beside a stone wall on their way out of Frankfort.

At the library, I began my search in the *Democrat*, on microfilm in the first November issue of 1919. Finally, in the April 1, 1920, issue I hit pay-dirt. The headlines read, "YEGMEN ROB Safety Deposit Boxes At Union Bank of Berry Friday Night." A long story follows. In the May 27, 1920 issue of the *Democrat* the headlines read, "THANKS YEGMEN Looters of Union Bank of Berry Return Spoils." The "yegmen" were never apprehended.

Since the above incident there have been other robberies (holdups) at the Berry Bank. The December 14, 2000 issue of the *Cynthiana Democrat* carries

(BERRY BANK ROBBERY - Continued on page 3)

Harrison County Historical Society

Larry Moss, President
Janie Whitehead, Secretary
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CYNTHIANA-HARRISON COUNTY MUSEUM

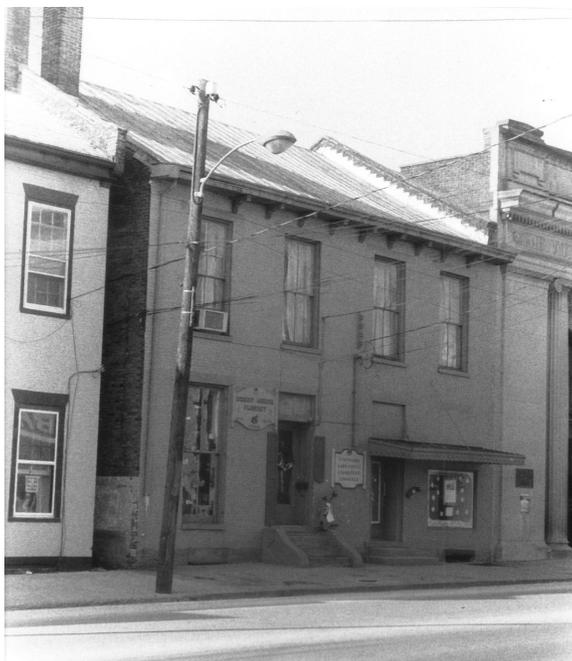
112 S. Walnut St., Cynthiana, Ky. 41031 Hrs: 10-5 Fri-Sat

Martha Barnes, President

Haleys to Entertain at January Meeting

Next Meeting of the Historical Society to be January 20th, 7 pm at the Cynthiana-Harrison County Public Library. The program for January will be Neville and Thelma Haley sharing their musical talents. The Haleys are talented singers who perform gospel and other music, and have appeared on local radio stations. Be sure and attend this first meeting of the new year and show support for the Society.

HARRISON COUNTY'S LOST BUILDINGS



John Spohn House - 1850 - John Spohn built this S. Main St. residence and butcher shop in 1850, and operated a slaughter house on the river. He was an officer in Cynthiana's first organized fire department in 1876. This building later housed restaurants, boarding houses, a hotel, and numerous other businesses. A front room featured built-in arched cupboards. The building was demolished in the 1990s for a drive-up for the adjoining bank at 201 S. Main. Photo, 1985, William A. Penn.

New Year's Goal - Move Museum to Rohs Theatre Building

My New Year's wishes for museum volunteers and supporters are for health, happiness, and abundant blessings. I also wish for additional volunteers. We should add to our list of those who are willing to be on standby as well as those who would be regular volunteers. We desperately need to involve our young people.

Another wish - actually another goal for the museum - is to move forward with our plans to locate the entire museum in the old Rohs Theatre Building on Walnut Street. Robert Poindexter owns the building, and he has graciously offered to rent the building to us. Our museum probably would not exist without Robert's support from the very beginning. According to Mr. Peddicord's book (*Cynthiana Since 1790*), the building was constructed after 1920 to house the Rohs Theater. The theater operated until 1940. Since then, the building has been used for American Legion meetings, a skating rink, a barber shop, and storage. It is an architectural gem. We need extra funding, volunteers, and expertise. Ever onward! At the end of 2004, our community lost two architectural gems. Located next to the city hall, the brick house which was painted green was razed. As early as 1860, the house was occupied by the J. A. Eveleth family. One of the museum's Civil War relics, a cannonball, was found on that property. After Mrs. Eveleth's death in 1906, the house was occupied by members of the R.M. Collier family, Claude A. Riggle, and Comprehensive Care. The other architectural lady to be destroyed was the Whaley house on Walnut Street. The large white frame house was built by R. B. Whaley, Sr. in 1900 for a total cost of \$1,800. Mr. Whaley lived there until his death in 1934. Subsequent owners were Robert Pope and the Cynthiana Christian Church.

In a more positive happy New Year tone, the Handy House committee is to be commended for their perseverance. They are diligent in their research and their efforts to save the house. Surely, our community should be able to boast of having a fine recreational park with a historical gem as its focal point. The committee chaired by Marilyn Bell needs our support. Recent restoration and preservation in Harrison County is being considered throughout the nation this month. "The Oaks," the Coleman-Desha (Duffy) house, which has been so lovingly restored by Wesley Newkirk and his late wife, is a feature article in the most recent edition of *Early American Life* magazine. Please reflect on these things. We must preserve our history so that we might remember, educate, make the most of each day, and move forward. Happy 2005!

BERRY BANK ROBBERY continued from page 1

a front page headline “MASKED GUNMEN ROBS BERRY BANK, LEAVES STOLEN CAR.) In part, the article reads, “Police are continuing their search for the masked man who robbed the Farmer’s National Bank in Berry on Friday. About 12:50 p.m., a tall thin man walked into the bank, brandished a handgun and ordered one of the tellers to begin filling a bag with the money, said Det. Robert Wilson of the Kentucky State Police who is heading the investigation. The man described as being 40 to 50 years old, 5-foot-9 to 5-foot-11, wearing brown coveralls, a blue toboggan hat, red bandanna and black boots. He got away with an undisclosed amount of cash. Police recovered a black 1984 BMW on Berry-Robinson Road that had been stolen earlier in the day.”

The Berry Bank robbery, mentioned at the beginning, occurred July 15, 2004. Information taken from the *Cynthiana Democrat* states that according to KSP Detective, Lt. Kevin Nally, a masked man entered the bank at around 9:45 a.m. with a white bag and demanded money from the teller. After receiving the money he ran down the street, around the corner, jumped into a car and took off.

Here We Go Again! – *Cynthiana Democrat* Oct. 14, 2004. – Headlines read, “THREE NABBED IN BERRY BANK HEIST.” This one occurred Thursday morning, October 7, 2004. The newspaper article did not state the time of the robbery but it must have occurred early in the morning. The article says that the three alleged participants were arrested in Cynthiana at about 9:10 a. m.

The Ghost Boy at the 1812 Building

George D. Slade

It was the fall of 1893. A very popular band was giving a concert at the Opera House. A number of folks from out of town attended and some stayed the night at local hotels. One couple with their ten-year-old son and his shepherd dog, Teddy, had a room at the Hamilton Hotel (“1812 building” Main St. across from Joe B. Hall Court). The couple left the boy and his dog in the room while they attended the concert. When they returned Teddy had been alerted and met them at the door barking but settled down when he realized who was there. The boy was lying fast asleep on the bed, fully clothed.

The mother was preparing to get the boy unclothed and into bed. Just then a lot of noise was heard outside, downstairs. The man opened the door and saw flames leaping high into the sky about a block away. People were running in that direction. Someone shouted, “Wills’ Livery Stable is burning.” The stable was at the northeast corner of Pike and Walnut Streets. After a short time the couple returned to the hotel.

Going up the steps, they could see that the door to their room was ajar. When they entered the room the dog, Teddy, was there but the boy was nowhere to be seen. The dog went to the clothes closet and whined. They opened the door but nothing was there except their luggage and some coats. They looked under the bed. He was not there. The man went to the door and called out. There was no answer. He went downstairs and searched the grounds, then to the lobby. The man at the hotel desk said that he had not seen the boy and most folks had gone to the fire. The man then returned to the scene of the fire and searched through the crowd, but no person had seen the boy he described. He and his wife spent the remainder of the night searching without success.

When daylight arrived and the word was spread, hundreds of townspeople joined in the search, looking into outbuildings, cellars and cisterns. No leads were found. The dog was very protective of the boy and would have attacked anyone trying to harm him. Why did Teddy go to the closet and whine when the parents returned from the fire? The boy or his remains were never located, but this is not the end of the story.

Dora Jewel, my wife Helen’s aunt, at one time in the 1920s managed the Central Hotel at this location. Dora related that one afternoon she went to the back room, adjoining the alley. As she opened the door to the room a young boy, wearing knee length, knickers style pants, black stockings and a white shirt, walked through the outside wall, across the room and exited through the inside wall. She said that this occurred a number of times during her tenure at the hotel This is not the end of the story. (*THE GHOST BOY* continued on page 4)

(The Ghost Boy continued from page 3)

Recently, a lady* told a story remarkably similar to that of Dora's. She took me to the location and said that one afternoon she went to the room to get something. As she opened the door a young boy walked through the outside wall across the floor and through the inside wall. I asked if he was dressed in knee length knickers pants, black stockings and a white shirt. She looked at me in astonishment and answered, "Yes. How did you know? This is the year 2004 and still probably not the end of the story. (George D. Slade). *Sally Cammack



Left. The “1812 Building” on Main St., Cynthiana, Ky. The ghost of a young boy has appeared in this former hotel, now the location of the Gourd Patch gift store. On the left is the old Renaker Drug Store. Photo, 1960, William A. Penn.

Harrison County, Ky., Genealogy Queries

McNees - I am looking for information about my family. My great grandmother was Pauline Baltzell McNees Fison. She was born in 1854 and died in 1916. Her father was Dr. William T. McNees, who I believe was a physician in the Civil War. Pauline is buried in the Battle Grove Cemetery in Cynthiana, Kentucky. I have learned from family letters that she attended school in Berry. Pauline married Rev. Sherwood Fison in 1877. I would appreciate any additional information readers might be able to provide. Susan Fison, Anchorage, Alaska. Reply email to: fisons@alaska.net

Daniel LETT to Rebecca CARSON in October of 1818 The first couple are my third great-grandparents, and I am trying desperately to learn more about both of their families. I am hoping that I can find the full marriage records, such as bonds and licenses, to learn more about their collateral families. I would also be interested in any wills that might be available for the period, as well as militia records, tax records, other land records, etc. Reply to email: sabromav@aol.com or Sherri Abromavage, 1836 East Park Place, Jeffersonville, IN 47130.

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.

Membership - Harrison County Historical Society- Due in January

Send name and address with dues to: Harrison County Historical Society, P. O. Box 411, Cynthiana, Kentucky, 41031. Membership fee \$5.00 (includes Harrison Heritage News) due annually January 1.

Early American Life Magazine Features Coleman-Desha House

The February 2005 "35th anniversary" issue of *Early American Life*, a nationally circulated magazine, features an extensive article on the Coleman-Desha House, located on the Oddville Pike. Meticulously restored by Elizabeth and Wesley Newkirk, the house was built in 1812 by James Coleman and was later purchased by Gov. Joseph Desha, an ancestor of the Duffy family. However, according to the magazine's website, www.ealonline.com, this issue is now sold out of extra copies available from the publisher. The current issue with "Restoring A Kentucky Landmark:" may still be found at some newsstands. Borders Bookstore in Cincinnati did have copies. (Note: the EAR website mistakenly includes Historic Midway Museum Store as a dealer, but the magazine is no longer sold there).

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. All proceeds are used for purchasing trees and other beautification projects in the historic cemetery. Visitors may also borrow the guidebook at the office.