

# Harrison Heritage News

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(Left) The Old Stone Jail, Cynthiana, Ky. This image showing the original jailer's residence (later demolished), was found too late for publication in the last issue (Nov-2005), which featured the recently restored jail. Photo, 1960, William A. Penn.

## German W.W.II Prisoners in Harrison County

Donald C. Hill

W. W. II caused a huge shortage of workers in the United States, and that created seasonal problems for farmers. Dad needed help cutting and housing the tobacco, in order to beat the fall frosts. This type of work was too heavy for me, during the war years, as I was just six years old when the war started in 1941 and ten when it ended.

I think it was in 1943 when Dad learned about the German prisoners-of-war camp near Paris, Kentucky. These men were made available by the military for day labor. The first year, military police stood guard with rifles, at each end of our tobacco field, while the prisoners worked at Dad's direction. It was evident that they had never seen tobacco growing in fields before, much less worked in tobacco, as they had to be taught every job that was expected of them. I must give them credit; they didn't seem to mind the work, and learned quickly. I don't know how many prison-

ers Dad used that year. It was a strange and exciting situation for me and surely for Mother and Dad, also. The enemy was among us.

Mother cooked huge dinners for them, and they ate in the shade of our big oak tree, just outside of our yard. She served cold pitchers of milk, and they ate and drank like they never tasted anything so good. Mother seemed to enjoy preparing and serving the food, and I'm sure she felt it was a treat for them after eating prison food. Even though only a couple knew a few words of English, they all seemed appreciative. Some of the prisoners were sullen, while a couple were outgoing and tried to be friendly. Still, I wasn't sure they could be trusted, so I kept a safe distance.

The next year, Dad drove to Paris and brought five prisoners home, and

*(Continued on page 3)*

## President's Corner

Bob Owen

At our September meeting, Jill Morgan gave a presentation on her publishing operation. She reprints popular children's books that have gone out of print. She described how she went about identifying candidates and getting permission to reprint them. Her operation seems to be successful in preserving stories and getting them to the current generation of young readers.

I attended the second reading of the request to rezone land north of city limits on US 27. The plan by the owner seems to be to have the land rezoned for development and seek annexation of the land into the city. I recommended this be deferred until after the Battlefield Study had been completed. Beth Hutchinson made an eloquent presentation for preserving the historical significant land. In the end the Planning and Zoning Board decided to conduct further review and voted to hold the issue over for next month's meeting.

If this land is developed as planned, the area previously occupied by Camp Frazier during the Civil War will be forever lost to historical

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## Harrison County Historical Society News

Bob Owen, President  
Billy Fowler, Vice President  
Janie Whitehead, Secretary  
Dorothy Slade, Treasurer

### **Meeting Sept. 15—Business—**

President Bob Owen reported the reenactment was a success with a good turn out; several books were sold there for the museum. Bob's recent presentation on the HCHS at a DAR meeting gained several new members. Billy Fowler's committee anticipates having a recommendation on a memorial to George Slade at the next meeting. Beth Hutchinson, Cynthiana Renaissance Director, requested a letter of support for a Community Action Grant that she is pursuing on behalf of the city. The grant is a non-matching grant for money to purchase the Fifth/Third Bank building (old National Bank) on main street. Her proposal is to move the museum into the building and create a design center for use by city residents and businesses in the basement of the building. **Program—Jill Morgan of Purple House Press**, who along with her husband, is a local publisher of out-of-print children's books, made a presentation on her business and illustrated her talk with several examples of original books along with reprints. The membership was very interested in their publishing venture and Jill answered many questions.

### **Historical Society Calendar**

**October 20**—Jane Thomas on history of the Harrison Memorial Hospital and the future projected building and expansion plan.

**November 17**—John Downs, Site Identification and Registration Program Director and Military Sites Coordinator, Kentucky Heritage Council, on efforts to preserve Kentucky's Revolutionary War and Civil War sites, including those in Harrison County.

**December 10**—No meeting. Potluck with Cynthiana-Harrison County Museum—6 p.m. First Methodist Church.

## Cynthiana-Harrison County Museum

112 S. Walnut St., Cynthiana, Ky. 41031

Hrs: 10-5 Fri-Sat

Martha Barnes, President

Thanks to all who participated in the Taste of Harrison County. While the volunteers welcomed visitors to the museum, the museum staff and the historical society shared a booth at the courthouse during the "Taste." The Taste of Harrison County has grown to be an outstanding event for the community.

Thanks especially to Helen Jean Wigglesworth for creating the beautiful afghan for our raffle and to her brother, J.T. Penn for masterminding our tent.

We continue efforts to build up our coffers to pay utilities, rent, etc. but as well to assist in our efforts to move the museum to the theater building. It truly is a wonderful historical building in a great location. Man and woman and youth power as well as funding are needed to make the move. Volunteers to staff the museum also are needed. Would you be willing to have your name on a volunteer list just when there is a necessity for additional help? Thanks to those faithful who come each week at their chosen times. One need not be a true historian nor a trained tour guide - one simply needs the willingness to meet and greet museum visitors. Can you help?

Due to leakage problems, a few of our exhibits-particularly military and education- are in need of some refurbishing. Our military exhibit is impressive with representations of most all wars involving Americans. Donald Hill's interesting article in this newsletter tells of German prisoners in Harrison County during World War II. My father spoke of having a number of these prisoners working in tobacco on our farm. A Cynthiana Democrat article on August 30, 1945 reports that "sixty German POWs are working on Harrison County farms in groups of five or ten." Our World War II veterans truly represent the greatest generation. Our museum keeps our memories ever green - lest we forget.

As well, our education displays help us to remember the way we were. Each of us has special memories - some good, perhaps some not so good - of those "good old golden rule days." Museum school memorabilia covers a large period of time - from pictures of early one room schoolhouses to Neville Haley's model of Harrison County High School to KCTCS Licking Valley Campus groundbreaking items.

Museum curator Harold Slade recently celebrated a birthday. On that first Saturday in October, the birthday one received a wonderful surprise. The donors of the special items had no idea that they were "making Harold's day." The couple from Northern Kentucky brought in a large number of Raggedy items - most of which they specifically collected or purchased for the museum. What marvelous additions to our growing display of Raggedy Ann and Andy-Gruelle pictures and items - yet another aspect of our community's history to preserve and share.

*(GERMAN PRISONERS—Continued from page 1)*

this time there were no guards. They had earned the trust of the military, and everyone was more at ease. Later, it will be obvious why I know exactly how many prisoners were used that year. I felt sorry for them in a way, being away from their country, homes, and families, and their sadness showed sometimes. One very large prisoner in particular, seemed to like me and showed it by looking at me and smiling. One day, he was helping Dad hand off a load of tobacco from the wagon and up to the men in the barn who were hanging it. As usual, I was on the wagon, too. When I turned around, this prisoner had taken out his billfold and started showing Dad and me pictures of his wife and children. As I recall, there was a girl and boy, not much different in age than me. He spoke softly and hesitantly in German, as he pointed them out to me, but I got the message. I looked up at him, and he was smiling through tears. It left a permanent imprint in my memory. I felt sorry for him, but there was no way that I could communicate that to him.

At the end of one work day, when it was time for Dad to take the prisoners back to the camp, he asked me if I would like to ride along. I jumped at the chance before realizing there were already six in the car, counting Dad. When I saw the lack of a seat, I hesitated to get in, but one of the men in the back seat opened the car door and motioned for me to get in. I was ashamed to show I was afraid, so I got in the car. This meant I had to sit on his knee all the way to Paris, which was a distance of about ten miles.

To say I was scared would be putting it mildly! I was so scared I literally was stiff, as I sat as far forward on the man's knee as possible. I don't think I moved a muscle, and for sure, I took very short breaths. I kept imagining his knife blade being jammed into my ribs. It would've been somewhat better had I been in the front seat with Dad. He never knew how frightened I was. It was totally different being out in the field with them, as opposed to being in the back seat of a car with three of them. It was a great trip home that night. I was still alive, and I could breathe normally again!

*Donald Hill is a 1953 graduate of Harrison County High School. His father, Ottis Hill Sr., rented the Ross Farm on Steffe Lane off Ruddle's Mill Pike at the time of this story. Mr. Hill and his wife Sue now reside in Versailles, Ky.*

*(PRESIDENT'S CORNER—Continued from page 1)*

preservation.

Our presenter for October will be Jane Thomas speaking about the history of the Harrison Memorial Hospital and the future projected building and expansion plan. All members are encouraged to attend and to bring a friend. Our November presenter will be John Downs of the Kentucky Heritage Council. He will speak on the role of the Council.

## Harrison County, Kentucky, History Web Links

Know some others? Send to editor.

- [www.cynthianaky.com](http://www.cynthianaky.com) - Harrison Heritage News back issues from vol. 1 no. 1 are archived under Community Life/Historical Society link. (Internet search engine [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) searches these back issues.) Church photos, history and other information is on this site. HHN annual index in Dec or Jan issues.

- [www.battleofcynthiana.org](http://www.battleofcynthiana.org) - Battle of Cynthiana Reenactment Information -

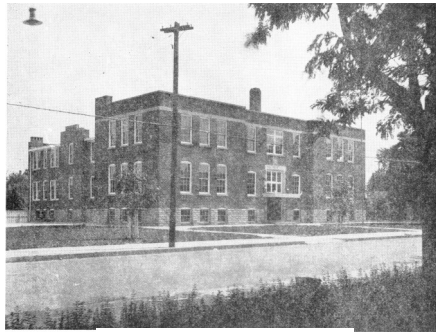
- [www.ramsha1780.org](http://www.ramsha1780.org) - Hinkson and Ruddle Station Historical Society:

- [www.savehandyheritage.org](http://www.savehandyheritage.org) - Promotes preservation of the Handy House; Brown/Frazer/Handy family ownership history; Civil War and Camp Frazer connections; early barn; slave quarters; photos of site.

- [www.harrisoncountyky.us](http://www.harrisoncountyky.us) - "a site...to use as an aid in the genealogical & historical research of Harrison County, Kentucky and its people." There is much information on Harrison County history, local communities, postcard views, a valuable research checklist, and to be added are "families" and "data bases". There are many links to other Web sites with Harrison County links.

# HISTORY OF THE CYNTHIANA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

From 74th Annual Report of the Cynthiana Public Schools, Year Ending June 30, 1946,  
courtesy of Earl Pfanstiel.



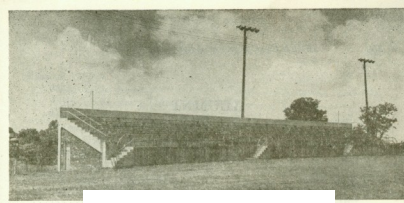
MARSHALL SCHOOL

The public schools of the City are a continuation of Harrison Academy, which was founded in 1804, under a legislative charter approved December 22, 1798. The trustees were given six thousand acres of land on the south side of Green River, with the stipulation that same would revert to the State unless a school with at least twelve scholars was set up within ten years.

A stone building on what is now the Old Cemetery was the first location. In 1810 the school was moved to Pike and Church Streets. There is no account of the first building on this site; very likely it was some converted private residence; but a school building was erected in 1820. This building was used until 1851. In 1852 a two story, sixty by thirty foot, brick building was built. The Free Masons owned the second story, and the two lower rooms were used for school purposes. Classic and higher branches were offered, and no Principal was elected who could not teach them.

On May 14, 1872, the City Council passed an ordinance to establish a graded public school in Cynthiana. The trustees of the Academy and the Masons sold their interests in the old school building to the City Council.

The Council at once established a public graded school, with a



STADIUM AT LAWSON FIELD

course of instruction not inferior to that of the Academy. In 1873 a south wing was added to the building, with four more rooms. A north wing was added in 1884. In 1888-89 the yard was graded and walks and shrubbery were provided.

In January, 1908, a new building was completed at a cost of \$60,000. This school was located at Bridge Street and Clifton Road. This building was destroyed by fire on January 21, 1918.

In October, 1919, a new building was occupied. It is still in use [*Ed. This was written in 1946*] for the upper six grades. A building for the lower six grades was erected at the northwest corner of Pleasant and poplar Streets. It was occupied on January 9, 1922. It was of nine rooms; and together with an addition of four classrooms and an auditorium erected in 1929 it makes up the present Marshall school.

The schools of the City were once under the joint control of the City Council and the Board of Trustees, but in 1878 this control passed to a body of eight trustees. At present there are five members who are elected from the City at large, forming a corporate body under the legal name: The Board of Education.

The Board of Education also has control over the Banneker School for colored chil-



BANNEKER SCHOOL

dren. Up to January 1, 1894, a colored Board of Trustees had operated the Colored Schools, but on that date all schools were put under the same Board. Various converted buildings were used by the Colored School before the erection of the present modern building. The Banneker School building was constructed by the Public Works Administration [WPA, a federal program] at a cost of approximately \$36,000 and was dedicated in 1937. It is by far the best school building in the City, and it is spacious and well equipped. As it contains a fine combination auditorium and gymnasium it makes an excellent community center for its section of the population. The grounds are large and furnish good playground space.

The latest addition to the facilities of the Board of Education is the modern athletic field one-third of a mile south of the High School. The field was purchased and fitted up during 1940 and 1941 with the assistance of the Works Projects Administration. There is an excellent football field [*Lawson Field*] with concrete stadium and floodlighting [*Ingles Stadium*]. The stadium seats about seven hundred and has dressing rooms with all conveniences.

## **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.

## **RAILROADS IN HARRISON COUNTY, KY**

*Railroads in Harrison County, Kentucky* by George D. Slade. This book traces the building of the Covington & Lexington Railroad through the county; the barbecue celebrating the arrival of the tracks to Cynthiana; L&N's development and the county depots and bridges; Southern Railroad in the county; the role of the county's railroad in the Civil War, W.W. I and W.W.II.; "railroad people" Mr. Slade knew growing up in the 1920s and '30s; rail crossings safety issues; many illustrations including photos and floor plans of Harrison County depots; photos of bridges; historic photos of railroad scenes, section crews, excursion ads, and vintage maps. 82 pages, introduction, endnotes. Paperback, TO ORDER BY MAIL: second printing of fifty published by the Historic Midway Museum Store, 124 E. Railroad St., Midway, KY, 40347; \$18.90 includes shipping/handling; call for shipping on multiple copies. E-mail pennwma@aol.com or call 859-846-4214. Also available in Cynthiana: The Gourd Patch, 120 S. Main, Cynthiana, Ky. 859-235-0050 (no mail orders this location).