

Harrison Heritage News

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

November 2005



Vol. 6 No. 11

Contacts:

www.harrisoncountky.us/historical-society
 Bill Penn, editor
pennwma@aol.com
 Bob Owen, President,
robert_owen@bellsouth.net

Last HHN index: Dec-04 (12-04)

New Harrison County Web Site
www.harrisoncountky.us/historical-society
 Phillip Naff

President's Corner

Bob Owen
 President, Harrison County
 Historical Society

Two of my favorite places in the world are in Kentucky: Boone County and Harrison County, the birthplaces and former homes of my maternal grandparents.

My interest in Harrison County history and genealogy begins with my grandmother, Florence Evelyn (Elmore) Norman (1895-1981). From the period of 1900 thru to 1919, before the Elmore family moved to Boone County, my grandmother grew up in the northwest corner of Harrison County on her father's farm in a bend of the South Licking halfway between Berry and Boyd. In 1900 her father and mother and all the children had moved to Berry from Antioch, the ancestral home of the Cummins family since 1793, from which her maternal grandparents were descended. Her paternal grandfather, Beresford Fitzgerald Aylmer (1825-1880) was an Irish Protestant Famine immigrant, who came with the railroad to Harrison County in 1854 and ended up marrying the daughter of Abraham Langley (1791-1863), himself a native of the county who lived over near Sunrise (Langley Road is named for the family). My grandmother never actually knew her own grandparents and so, beyond just a few rough diagrams of the family tree, I had a lot of work ahead of me when I first started

tracing my family tree.

Just after I moved to Indiana and close enough to make day-trips down to Cynthiana to do research, I began to put a lot of the pieces to the family puzzle together and in the process gathered and photocopied a lot of information. Back then almost all research had to be done thru the mails or on site. Now I hardly have to do more than let my fingers do the walking on the internet to find records. But even so, most of what is found on the internet regarding Harrison County is usually part of some larger record group, like the U.S. Census or other such records at the state or federal level. There wasn't an awful lot of material to be found on the web that focused on Harrison County's history or people in particular, and so began the genesis of my website.

I am still relatively new to web publishing and so the website I established at WWW.HarrisonCountyKy.US earlier this year more or less began as a simple checklist of research resources of interest to anybody involved in the research of their family tree in Harrison County, and it is the most 'developed' of any of the sections of the site.

Since then I have added six other sections, each devoted to a segment of life in Harrison County. The several portions are dedicated to 'History,' 'Communities,' 'Schools Days,' 'Families,' 'Cemeteries & Mon-

(Continued on page 4)

At our October meeting, Jane Thomas provided a history of the hospitals in Cynthiana. She had interesting pictures of the old hospitals. Following her presentation, Molly Smith presented a video on the hospital expansion program. Jane Thomas has been selected as chairperson of fund raising from clubs and social organizations.

The membership discussed the issue of preserving some aspect of Camp Frazer. It was decided that a letter be sent to property owner, Jess Burrier, requesting that he set aside a small portion of the land which includes the emplacements identified in 2004. Per the direction of the membership, I prepared and forwarded a letter to Mr. Burrier. Copies were provided to Judge-Executive Peak, Mayor Wells, and the Planning and Zoning Department for further distribution to the Planning and Zoning Committee. The third and final review of Mr. Burrier's request for rezoning will be addressed by the Committee on November 21st. Interested parties should attend the 7:30PM meeting at the fiscal court chambers at Sheriff's office at 113 W. Pike Street. Again, if this land is developed as planned, the area previously occupied by Camp Frazer during the Civil War will be forever lost to historical preservation. To learn more about the Civil War history of Cynthiana, see Tanya Coleman at the Cynthiana Chamber of Commerce and ask to review the study, *The Battle of Cynthiana: A Civil War Resources Preservation Plan, Cynthiana, Harrison County, Kentucky*. It would provide a lot of

(Continued on page 4)

NOTES ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN EARLY HARRISON COUNTY, KY.

Lloyd Rogers

(Editor's note: About 1984 the Harrison County Historical Society considered publishing a new county history and various topics were assigned to history-minded citizens. The late Cynthiana attorney, Lloyd Rogers, submitted information on the formation of local government, from which these notes are extracted.)

Harrison County was erected in the first General Assembly in 1793, taken primarily from Bourbon and Scott Counties and extended to the Ohio River. Several counties were taken from its original boundaries: Campbell 1794; Pendleton and Boone 1798; Owen 1819; Grant 1820; Kenton 1840; Robertson 1867.

The first court of Harrison County was held in February 1794—Robert Hinkston, first sheriff, Benjamin Harrison, Hugh Miller, Henry Coleman, Samuel McIlvain, Nathan Rawlings, and Charles Zachary, Justices of the Peace. Sworn in February 1794 and formed first County Court, elected William Moore, Clerk; Richard Henderson, first County Attorney; Daniel Lindsay, first Coroner; Archibald Hutchinson, Thomas Perkin and William Hall qualified as Magistrates. Henry Coleman, first surveyor; Benjamin Harrison, Deputy, also John Little and Edward Coleman, Deputies.

Some of the things which Harrison County Court did during the period between the first and second Constitutions of the state are as follows:

At the First Court of Harrison County held in 1794 “a ferry was granted to Benjamin Harrison across the Licking River; he was also appointed Commissioner of Tax.” Among other business done was a tavern license granted to Robert Harrison in Cynthiana, for



(above) The Harrison County courthouse built in 1816 burned in 1851, and was replaced by the present structure in 1854. Print, c. 1882, Perrin's *History of Bourbon, Scott, Harrison & Nicholas*....

one year; also one to William Harrison; a ferry to Robert Harrison across South Licking, near the mouth of Gray's Run, where the present bridge is. At the next session of the court held April 1, 1794, called the Court of Quarter Sessions, the tavern rates were fixed as follows: whiskey, half a pint, 6d; breakfast, 1s; dinner, 1s 3d; supper, 1s; bed, 6d; corn and oats, 2d per quart; stable and hay for one horse, twenty-four hours, 1s. The court agreed with Robert Harrison to build a stray pen, “ten panels square, nine rails high, staked and ridged.” The court also agreed with Thomas Rankin to erect a “pair of stocks” on the public ground in Cynthiana.”

At the session of the Court held October 1797 an order was passed to repair the Courthouse. While the records give no evidence of the erection of a courthouse other than to say that at the June 1794 session of the Court, it was “ordered that public building for the County be erected. Some records indicate a Courthouse was built about 1794.

The second courthouse was built in 1816. (See Perrin, page 220). “The plan was reported by a board of commissioners, comprised of Gresham Forrest, William Brown, William Moore, James Kelley, and Thomas Holt, and was as follows: Brick, up-

on a stone foundation, fifty feet in the clear, with a chimney at each corner. The first story twenty feet high, the second one in proportion, with “hip” roof, and cupola in center. Gallery over court room reached by two flights of stairs from opposite sides; the building entire cost about \$12,000. A clerk's office was erected on the square with two apartments, each sixteen feet square, and fire-proof.” The 1816 courthouse burned in 1851. It was replaced by the present courthouse which was completed in 1854.

The town of Cynthiana lends a bit of irony to the history of Harrison County in that it was fixed as a seat of justice by the Harrison County Court of Quarter Session April 1, 1794, although it was created a town by the Legislature while still a part of Bourbon County. Chapter XXXV, Acts of the First General Assembly of Kentucky, “an act to establish a town on the lands of Robert Harrison in the County of Bourbon approved December 10, 1793.” The first Trustees were Benjamin Harrison, Chairman, Morgan Van Matre, Jeremiah Robinson, John Walls, Sr., and Henry Coleman. The town had been laid out on the lands of Robert Harrison, who dedicated the ground called the Public Square to the County of Harrison, which was made a county by the same 1793 assembly, carving it out of Scott and Bourbon Counties. It was named Harrison County in honor Benjamin Harrison, the first chairman of the Board of Trustees of Cynthiana and a representative in the Legislature from Bourbon County. The name “Cynthiana” was given to the new town in honor of Cynthia and Anna, two daughters of Robert Harrison.

(PRESIDENT'S CORNER—Continued from page 1)

information on the battles and Camp Frazer, the fortifications, and the role of the old Falmouth Pike in the First Battle of Cynthiana..

During a recent meeting of the Rotary Club, I spoke for the Historical Society and requested the attendees consider joining the Society and attending the November meeting. I did receive some positive feedback and one joined on the spot.

Our presenter for November will be John Downs of the Kentucky Heritage Council. He will speak on the role of the Council what it is and what they do. John was present at the last session of the Planning and Zoning Commission and spoke on behalf of Camp Frazer.

Remember that there will not be a December meeting. Members should attend the Museum dinner instead. Looking for a Christmas gift? Give a membership to the Historical Society.

(Harrison Co Ky Web Site Continued from page 1)

uments,' as well as 'Postcard Views.' which is devoted to an extensive collection of vintage postcards loaned to me by Charles Feix.

The 'History' pages include texts about Harrison County from the 1847 & 1874 Collins histories of the state, as well as large portions of the 1882 Perrin history of the county, which includes biographical sketches of notable citizens of the period. I've also added a mosaic of images of the 1877 landownership map which you can click on to see close-ups from that very useful resource. An index that I have compiled of all the 'doughboys' and marines who served from Harrison County during World War I is a special feature of this section.

In 'Communities' I hope to have a little history of each of the rural communities of Harrison County. Right now I only have a selection of items of information on Antioch, Colemansville, Kelat, Oddville, & Sunrise, but hope to add more in the coming months.

The 'School Days' pages include senior class rolls from all of Harrison County's rural high schools from before the 1950 consolidation and class pictures, documents, diplomas, yearbook pages and other items of interest. I hope to expand these pages to include even more information and pictures from early grade schools and old one-room school houses of the nineteenth century. As my grandmother grew up in Berry I have always had a special interest in that school, and her sister was the first graduate of the then-new Berry High School in 1916.

With the 'Families' section I have pages devoted to old individual or family photos, family Bibles, as well as links to other sites on the web with information particular to Harrison County.

'Cemeteries & Monuments' will include as much information about the many cemeteries of Harrison County, including photographs of grave markers. If a the cemetery is paired with a church, I would like to include information about the church and it's history or role in the community. The pages devoted to Colemansville Christian Church are [*continued next col.*]

such one example. Forrest Gill has generously contributed his history of the Colemansville Christian Church as well as information he has collected on the interments in the church's cemetery.

With the help and encouragement of Charles Feix and Harrison County Court Clerk Linda Furnish I am currently at work transcribing the general marriage indexes of the Harrison County Court Clerk's office, as well as creating new general indexes for those marriage records not referred to by the current indexes. Hopefully, by January, I will have a good portion of them online, as well as in print for those who can't always access a computer.

The addition of *Harrison Heritage News*, the monthly newsletter of the Harrison County Historical Society, which is now archived at the site, has greatly expanded the depth of material at WWW.HarrisonCountyKy.US. Be sure to visit the newsletter archives, which now features a clickable index of past issues. I have also developed a web presence for the Harrison County Historical Society on the web, which will have the most up-to-date listing of society and museum events and information on their publications and how to join.

If you have any materials or suggestions to improve the site, please let me know. Despite rumors to the contrary and being a cousin unto myself, I only have one pair of hands, but I can always add a good bit more content (photos, images of records or documents or their texts) to improve the site to make it even more informative and interesting. I personally have found the work on this website to be a lot of fun and a learning experience, which is what genealogy and family history, and having an interest in history in general, is all about. I hope you do, too.

Contact Phillip Naff at:

phillnaff@comcast.net

**Or- 4716 Andover Square, Indianapolis,
Indiana 46226
(317) 547-3157**



(left) Phillip Naff of Indianapolis has applied his research of Harrison County into a web site: www.harrisoncountyky.us.

Harrison County's Lost Buildings



(Top) Front view of the Samuel McMillian house; (below left) two-story section downstairs left side room - view from front door; (bottom right) downstairs room on right of two-story section. The door on right of fireplace leads to kitchen. Photos, 1976, William A. Penn

Samuel McMillian House. This early stone residence stood on the former Griffith farm, five miles south of Cynthiana on the west side of the Leesburg Pike, across from the Griffith Tavern, now owned by the University of Kentucky. The house was near an old abandoned roadbed that passed on the west side of the property, part of a pioneer north-south road through Broadwell. According to Katherine Wilson's *This Old House*, Samuel McMillian built the house starting in 1784 and finished in 1789, and is believed to be the oldest house built in Harrison County. The book describes the interior: "The two-story section had two rooms below and two above, each huge room running from the front to the back of the house [see photos above]. The wooden framework around the outside of the front door was carved with a delicate leaf pattern. Over the door was a lovely fan window. The front door opened into the living room. Against the right wall of this room was a stairway which climbed to the third floor, with two landings en route. The slender cherry rail was supported by delicate cherry spindles. On the left wall was a huge cherry mantel delicately carved with the Greek key design." Lucinda Boyd wrote that this house was where David Sheely's ghost was last sighted: "...as the day broke and threw barely sufficient light in the room to make a moving object visible, [they saw] an object rise, dressed in a long white robe, and pass slowly from the fire-place to the door, and disappear." The house was demolished, apparently for its stone, a few years after these photos were taken.