

Harrison Heritage News

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BLACK HISTORY ISSUE
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www.harrisoncountyky.us/historical-society. Visit for index, back issues, events, genealogical and historical records.

Joseph Frazier, African American from Harrison County, Served on U.S.S. Benton in the Civil War Bill Penn



U.S.S. Benton

Joseph Frazier, an African American from Harrison County, joined the U.S. Navy during the Civil War. This fact came to light when his name was on a list of "Kentucky African Americans in the Navy During the Civil War" by John M. Trowbridge, in the Winter 2004 Kentucky Ancestors, genealogical quarterly of the Kentucky Historical Society.

According to the article, approximately 18,000 black men and over a dozen black women served in the U. S. Navy, and 414 listed their home as being Kentucky.

Joseph Frazier enlisted in Chicago, Illinois, on July 27, 1863, and was rated by the Navy as a Landsman, occupation as cook, on the *U.S.S. Benton*. Other statistics: Age—24, 5' 6", and black complexion. "Landsman" was the rating for new recruits, and performed the most menial and dirtiest jobs on the vessel. However, as cook, Frazier was not only contributing to the crew's wellbeing, he was risking his life, for if the ship sank, from either

enemy fire or accidents, he was vulnerable to suffer the fate of any other crew member.

The *U.S.S. Benton*, with 18 guns, was an ironclad considered to be the most powerful of all the Union vessels in the western gunboat flotilla on the Mississippi River. She was 186' long and 75' wide at the beam, and drew 5' of water. During the war, the ironclad was in the March 1862 assault on Island No. 10; engaged the C.S.S. Arkansas in the Vicksburg campaign; and participated in sorties at Milliken Bend and against Confederate batteries at Hayne's Bluff and Grand Gulf.

Further research will be done on Frazier, to determine if he had been a slave of a Frazier or Frazer family (the spelling of the two surnames was often incorrect) in Harrison County, or was a free black.

To view period photographs of the *U.S.S. Benton* and read more about the ironclad visit the Web page: www.missouricivilwarmuseum.org/lironclads.htm, a source for this article.

President's Corner Bob Owen

At our January meeting, Historical Society Vice President Billy Fowler gave a presentation on how they documented the Handy House history and got it on the National Historical Register. Billy had lots of interesting pictures that they used to support their effort. Another job well done by our Vice President.

With regard to the Camp Frazer issue, Billy Fowler and I met with landowner Jeff Burrier; surveyor Pat Darnell, and Planning Commission Administrative Officer Linden Smith on the Burrier farm at the site of the emplacements. After discussions, Mr. Burrier directed his surveyor to draw out a proposal that displayed the land in question. We later heard that Mr. Burrier had received the plat and wanted to discuss it with his attorney prior to sharing it with the Historical Society and the Planning Commission. As of February 6, 2006, we had not heard any more from Mr. Burrier. We will continue to work with the owner in an attempt to get this land set aside for preservation.

For February, we will have a "show and tell" in which individuals will bring items and tell us about them. In March, we will have either a presentation by the DAR or Millersburg Military Institute. Depending on which one presents in March, the other will present in April. IF YOU HAVE NOT ALREADY PAID YOUR 2006 DUES, PLEASE PAY THEM AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

Cynthiana-Harrison County
 Historical Society
 Bob Owen—President
 Billy Fowler—V.P.
 Janie Whitehead—Secretary
 Dorothy Slade—Treasurer

Cynthiana-Harrison County Museum

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

Martha Barnes, President

Calendar of Upcoming Meetings and Events

February 16, 2006—Harrison County Historical Society monthly meeting 7 p.m

Program: "Historical Show and Tell." Bring something that helps tell the story of Harrison County's past—a photo, antique, family collectible, or family oral history.

March, 16, 2006—Harrison County Historical Society Meeting 7 p.m. Library

The program will be on the Millersburg Military Institute—its history and mission today. Speaker to be announced. Bring a friend to hear about MMI, our neighbor in Millersburg, and former CHS opponent in the old CKC—Central Kentucky Conference.

Program Notes—Meeting Jan. 19, 2006 Handy Farm on Nat'l. Register

Billy Fowler presented an informative program on the historic Handy Farm, which was recently listed on the National Register of Historic Places. (See Jan. 2006 issue for a complete summary of the listing.) He reviewed the process required to list the property, and passed around the completed application and listing information. Thanks go to Billy and Sharon Fowler for their successful efforts, and to others in the community who contributed time and information for the project.

**MEMBERSHIPS ARE DUE—
 \$12/HOUSEHOLD**

Bob Owen recommended everyone should see the UGRR Museum in Cincinnati. While in Italy recently, he visited a museum that had information on Clementine Biancke, whose family immigrated to the U.S. and lived in Cynthiana. He is planning to send the museum information he has found on the Biancke family.

Special thanks to Phillip Naff, our Harrison County Historical Society web manager, and Charley Feix for their scholarly work in this issue. The editor welcomes the submission of articles and photos on our county's history.

Thoughts on Winter

"If winter comes, can spring be far behind?" Central Kentucky certainly has had its share of mild weather this winter. There is speculation as to February - perhaps that's when winter will offer its typical display of cold and snow.

Those involved with weather reporting are historians. As a part of our daily updates, we receive the record lows, highs, etc. We have one of those weather records posted in the museum. It seems that "the coldest temperature ever recorded in Kentucky was 34 degrees below zero on January 28, 1963 in Cynthiana, Kentucky."

Perhaps one of the very best weather predicting devices (and it is not Doppler or whatever) hangs in the museum. An "Olde Kentucky Weather Wood" actually is a small round piece of wood hanging from a string. The weather wood should hang 6 1/2 inches from the house. It has an accompanying card with directions. For example, if the weather wood is swaying, it is windy. If it is wet, it is raining. If it is black, pollution is bad or it could be night time. If it is hard to see, it is foggy. If your weather wood is gone, call the police...your weather wood has been ripped off.

I have heard a number of people say, "We don't have winters like we used to." That probably means different things to different people. At present, the intensity of the weather for most means what gear on the SUV is necessary or how high can one afford to push the thermostat.

My childhood memories of winter are so unlike those that today's children will have. I am confident that most of you readers will agree. When we truly had a snowstorm, we stayed home, especially those of us who lived in the country. Our parents made certain that there was enough firewood or coal. Sometimes we heated only portions of the house. Food was available as we had harvested and preserved throughout the year. We played cards and board games, we read - sometimes together, we made snow cream (no fear of contamination), we learned new skills, we sledged (on real wooden sleds) on hills and roads, *and* we went to bed early. My, I must be getting old.

A trip to the museum evokes these memories - memories of those hard times, hard work - as well as memories of the good times - perhaps kinder, gentler times. It is important that we share our past so that we may better understand and appreciate the future. Visit the Cynthiana-Harrison County Museum, Fridays and Saturdays, 10 A.M. - 5 P.M.

"No winter lasts forever; no spring skips its turn." - Hal Borland

HARRISON COUNTY AFRICAN AMERICAN MARRIAGE RECORDS

PHILLIP NAFF

Given that February is Black History Month and also home to Valentine's Day every year, the topic of love and marriage seems to be a fitting one for this issue. As the proof of true love leaves little evidence on file, except for a marriage record perhaps, I thought it best to confine myself for this article to the subject of African American marriage records and indexes in the Harrison County Court Clerk's Office.

Marriage indexes compiled and used at the Harrison County Clerk's Office were compiled to fill a much more practical need beyond genealogy; they were needed just to be able to find one record out of the thousands that had piled up since the office opened in 1794—nearly nine thousand by the early 1890s. It was then that the clerks realized they could no longer depend upon the rough mix of marriage record books on hand, some indexed, some not, to find what might be needed to fill a request, and so they began a process of locating and identifying with a unique document number all the old marriage records they could lay their hands on.

"*General Cross Index to Marriages – Colored, 1866-1949*" and the larger *General Cross Index to Marriages, 1794-1893*" are the two oldest indexes compiled in the 1890s, and they are still in use today. In transcribing, editing, and improving these indexes for the modern researcher, I learned a little about the types of marriages records and the history of African American marriages in Harrison County.

African-American Marriage Records

While marriage records are some of the earliest recorded documents to be found in the county court clerk's office, only a very few of those recorded before the Civil War are for African-Americans.

A great majority of African Americans in the county were slaves, however marriages of slaves went unrecognized by Kentucky law. Such marriages were known to have occurred, largely depending upon the receptiveness of the slaves' owners to their requests. Also, a few churches in Kentucky were known to allow slaves as members, and a slave marriage could obtain a church's blessings, if not the local court's.

The 1800-1860 U.S. Census Slave Schedules give evidence of a fairly large slave population in Harrison County, with the 1850 & 1860 enumera-

tions giving a count of over three thousand slaves in the decade before the Civil War, more than a fifth of the entire population. Yet the only official evidence to be found for marriages among Harrison County slaves is meager at best.

Marion B. Lucas writes in *A History of Blacks in Kentucky* that "slave nuptials varied from receiving permission to marry and immediately cohabitating, to extensive, elaborate wedding celebrations. The broom ritual was probably the best known marriage ceremony among slaves . . . and 'jumping over the broomstick' was often part of the observance."

However, while slave marriages were not allowed there were a few "free persons of color" in the county whose marriages were recorded in the county clerk's office. Only two marriages in *General Index to Marriages, 1793-1894* are noted as involving couples "of color," that of Jarrard & Mint (No surnames), who were married on Feb. 22, 1825, being the oldest of all the African American marriages indexed which records an actual marriage date. Interestingly enough, it appears that the marriage records of free African Americans were not separated from those of the general population until the '*General Cross Index to Marriages – Colored, 1866-1949*' was compiled in the early 1890s, when all of those marriage records were separated from the rest and indexed as a group (Doc. Nos. 804-821).

Emancipation

With the emancipation of the slaves in 1865 it was deemed necessary to begin a separate index for the African American population. Slavery had ended, but segregation was just beginning. The first book which served as an index of Harrison County African American marriages is in a red binder entitled *Marriage Register 1865-1884*, which included entries documenting the couples' names, license & marriage dates, and the minister's names.

Lucas writes that "state laws prohibiting legal marriages for blacks and mulattos remained in effect until February 14, 1866. Then an 1866 law declared cohabitating blacks legally married and their children legitimate if they paid a fifty-cent fee and recorded with a county clerk their intention to remain husband and wife. Those paying the court clerk an additional twenty-five-cent fee received a marriage certificate." These entries entered into the court's records are often referred to as *Declarations of Freedmen, Declarations of Marriages, or Negro Cohabitation Certificates*. Given the fee involved, many a marriage may

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(AFRICAN AMERICAN MARRIAGE RECORDS Continued from page 3)

have gone unrecorded altogether.

In the years after the Civil War, nearly fifty African American couples came forward and stood before the court to have their "unions" officially recognized and they are listed in "General Cross Index to Marriages - Colored, 1866-1949." In the 1890s the information from the court order books was gathered up and the resulting list was indexed at one time (Doc. Nos. 1-8 & 826-865) with placeholder cards in the box of loose marriage records and references in the indexes noting the record's existence. The following text is that of the first such entry to be recorded in the court order books:

Harry Talbott and Emily Talbott, his wife of color, came into the clerk's office and made declaration that they had been married on the 12th day of May 1855, and had lived together as man & wife from that time to the present, and desired to continue so to live until death should separate them, and record of the said declaration made as directed by the statute in such case made & provided, which is done.

In almost all the citations of these marriages, the bride either shares her husband's name or no maiden name is recorded for her at all, reflecting the fact that few slaves had family names before the Civil War, whether permitted or not.

An End to Segregated Records

Reflecting the culture of the period of the late 19th & early 20th centuries, African American marriage records were filed and indexed in a separate set of record volumes, yet actually, if it weren't for this "records segregation" there would be little about the actual records themselves to differentiate them from those of the larger population of the county. The same forms for certificates and licenses were used for African American marriage licenses and certificates as for the larger population. (It is interesting to note that antebellum marriages of free persons "of color" which were recorded may actually have been integrated with all the other marriage records of the county, and that it may not have been until 1892 that those older antebellum records were pulled and segregated with the post-Civil War African-American marriages, and then indexed in a group (Doc. Nos. 804-821).)

From 1866 thru 1941 the marriages of African Americans were kept in separate books and boxes, yet inexplicably, the clerks stopped this practice at the end of 1941, just before America's entry into World War I. From 1942 thru 1947 African American marriages were indexed and filed alongside those all other marriage records in the county. Yet African

American marriages were also indexed simultaneously in the "Colored" index. In 1947 a whole new general marriage index for the county's post-war brides and grooms was opened and all segregation of African American marriage records, and the indexing of them, came to an end . . . just as the Civil Rights era was beginning to gain ground in the rest of America.

| 1800-1940 Harrison Co., Ky. U.S. Census Statistics for African American Residents | | | |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Year | Population of the County | | |
| | African-American Slaves | Free African-Americans* | Total Population of County |
| 1800 | 406 | 19 | 4,350 |
| 1810 | 1,105 | 9 | 7,752 |
| 1820 | 2,137 | 90 | 12,278 |
| 1830 | 2,788 | 104 | 13,324 |
| 1840 | 3,384 | 93 | 12,742 |
| 1850 | 3,185 | 146 | 13,064 |
| 1860 | 3,289 | 149 | 13,779 |
| 1870 | -- | 2,378 | 12,993 |
| 1880 | -- | 2,932 | 16,504 |
| 1890 | -- | 2,467 | 16,914 |
| 1900 | -- | 2,422 | 18,570 |
| 1910 | -- | 1,750 | 16,873 |
| 1920 | -- | 1,234 | 15,798 |
| 1930 | -- | 1,022 | 14,859 |
| 1940 | -- | 941 | 15,124 |

* The statistics for 1800 & 1810 free colored persons actually are for "all other free persons," some of whom presumably were "free colored," the classification used by the U.S. Census of the 19th century.

Marriages of Free African Americans in Harrison County Before the End of the Civil War:

William Ayers/Mary Ann Linum 1841; Samuel Dorsey/Mary J. Morton 1843; Henry Berry/Fanny Madkins 1846; Levi Peyton/Mary Evaline Moore 1848; Peter Mahorney/Elizabeth Mahorney 1851; John Willet Pritchett/Martha Ann Tuck 1851; Peter Ayers/Susan Gant 1852; Stephen Sandusky/Sally Stephens 1853; Joseph Dailey/Fannie Dailey 1853; William Ayers/Hanna Jane Hasteman 1857; Hiram Jones/Susan Ayres 1859; Charles Haseman/Catharine Lynum 1859; Richard O. Sicle/Julia A. Burle 1859; Samuel Howard/Ellen Montjoy 1859; John Savage/Sarah Lynam 1863; Marcus Van Hook/Susan Ayers 1865.

HARRISON COUNTY CIVIL WAR U. S. COLORED TROOPS

Charley Feix

The following African Americans from Harrison County, Ky., served in the Union army during the Civil War as U.S. Colored Troops. Because of the use of aliases utilized to disguise their identity from their former owners and very little, if any, mention of these individuals in our local newspapers, it is very difficult to properly identify all of those who served. *Listed below: soldier, name, company, and U.S. regiment.*

- ALEXANDER, WILLIS** - Company C., 117th Colored Infantry
ALLEN, BENJAMIN - Company A., 117th Colored Infantry
ALLEN, MOSES - Company A. 117th Kentucky Infantry Regiment
BELL, JAMES CHRISTOPHER - Co. A., 117th Colored Infantry
BERRY, DAVID F. - Company A., 117th Colored Infantry
BERRY, EDWARD - Company M., 5th Colored Cavalry Regiment
BLACK, GILBERT (Alias) GILBERT WILSON - Company F., 100th Colored Inf. (6)
BOLIN (6) / BOWLIN (4), THOMAS - Company G., 117th U. S. Colored Inf. Regiment
BRIGHT, WILLIAM (6) - Company A., 117th Colored Infantry
BROWN GRANT/GRANDISON - Co. A., 117th Colored Infantry
BROWN, GRANDISON / GRANT - Company A., 117th U. S. Colored Infantry Regiment
BRYANT, GEORGE THOMAS – Co. E. 117th and Co. K., 124th U. S. Colored Inf. Regiments
BRYANT, SAMUEL- Company A., 117th U. S. Colored Infantry
CARROLL, PLEASANT - Company B., 117th U. S. Colored Infantry Regiment
CASON, BENJAMIN - Company B., 117th Colored Infantry (6)
COLEMAN, JOSEPH C. - Co. D., 117th Colored Infantry (6)
COLEMAN, PHILLIP - Company F., 109th Colored Infantry
COURTNEY, JAMES - Company B., 12th U. S. Colored Heavy Artillery
CRAIG, JOHN - Company L., 9th U. S. Colored Cavalry Regiment
CRAIG, PERRY - Company E., 116th U. S. Colored
FLEMING - Company E., 124th Colored Infantry Regiment
DERRICKSON, GEORGE A. - Company J. 117th Colored Infantry
DORSEY, JOHN B. (ALAI) BROWN, JOHN – Co. I., 118th U.S. Colored Inf. Regiment
DUKE, JOHN D/T - Union Soldier
DUKE, SIMON (Alias) Simon Hamilton – Co. A., 72nd U. S. Colored Inf. Regt.; Co. M., 13th U. S. Colored (Heavy) Artillery
ECKLAR, JOHN - Company G. 100th Regiment, United States Colored Infantry
ELLIS, EWING - Co. A. 117th U.S. Colored Infantry t (6)
EWING, ABRAHAM - Company B. 117th U. S. Colored Infantry
FIELDS, NOAH - Company E. 117th U. S. Colored (6)
FRAZER, ROBERT - Company F., 117th U. S. Colored Infantry
FRAZIER, JOSEPH—U.S. Navy, Landsman, U.S.S. Benton, enlisted Chicago, IL Jul. 27, 1863, cook.
GAITHER, NATHEN - Company B. 117th U. S. Colored Infantry
GARNETT, RUEBEN - Company A. 117th U. S. Colored Infantry
GIVENS, HARRISON - Company B., 117th U. S. Colored Infantry
GIVENS, WILLIS - Company A., 117th U. S. Colored Infantry
GREEN, WILLIAM - Company C., 114th U. S. Colored Infantry
HAMILTON, JOHN - Company C., 100th U. S. Colored Infantry
HARRISON, WILLIAM - Company A., 117th Ohio Volunteer Infantry Regiment
HEDGE, OLIVER - Company K., 124th Colored Infantry
HUMBLE, BEN - Company A., 117th U. S. Colored Infantry
JACKSON, WILLIAM - Company F., 117th U. S. Colored Infantry Regiment
JOHNSON, BEVERLY - Co. K., 100th U. S. Colored Inf.
JOHNSON, HENRY - Union Army
JOHNSON, WESLEY - Company I., 125th U. S. Colored Infantry Regiment
KING, THOMAS - Company A., 117th U. S. Colored Infantry
LEE, ELIAS - Company D., 117th U. S. Colored
LYONS, DANIEL (Alias) DANIEL STOKER – Co. L., 6th U. S. Colored Cavalry Regiment
MARTIN, GREEN - Company C., 117th U. S. Colored Infantry
McCLINTOCK, JAMES - Company E., 117th U. S. Colored Infantry Regiment
McKINNEY, WARSH - Co. C., 100th U. S. Colored Infantry
McNESE, ROBERT - Company I., 100th United States Colored Infantry Regiment
MILLER, ISHAM(4) - Co. A., 117th U. S. Colored Infantry
MILLER, SILAS - Company A., 117th U. S. Colored Infantry
MOSES, GREEN - Company G., 13th Kentucky Infantry
NUTTER, ANDERSON (6) - Company E., 117th U. S. Colored Infantry Regiment
HAYS, JAMES - Harrison Co.1890 Census, Broadwell, Emily Nutter, widow of James Hays.
PAYTON, ASHER (Alias) William Fox – Co. C., 100th U. S. Colored Inf. Regt.; and Company D., 9th U. S. Colored Heavy Artillery Regiment
PERRIN HENRY - Company A., 117th U. S. Colored Infantry
PRICE, GEORGE W. (Alias) PIPER, GEORGE W. – Co. A., 72nd U. S. Colored Inf. Regt.
PRICE, PATRICK (Alias) PRICE WILLETT - Company A., 72 U. S. Colored Infantry Regiment and Company M., 13th U. S. Colored (Heavy) Artillery
ROBERTSON, JOE - Company A., 117th United States Colored Infantry Regiment
ROBINSON, WILLIAM “WILL” - Company F., 100th U.S. Colored Infantry Regiment
SHAWHAN, ALEXANDER - Company B., 124th Kentucky Infantry Regiment
SMITH, ROBERT - Company C. 117th U. S. Colored Infantry
TALBOTT, LEVI - Company C. 117th U. S. Colored Infantry
WALKER, JAMES - Company C. 124th U. S. Colored Infantry
WALL, CORNELIUS - Company B., 117th U. S. Colored Infantry Regiment
WALTON, JAMES - Company D., 117th U. S. Colored Infantry
WASHINGTON, FRANK (Alias) Frank Howard – Co.L., 6th U. S. Colored Cavalry Regiment
WIGGINS, JEFFERSON - Company D., 117th U.S. Colored Infantry Regiment
WILLIAMS, HENRY - Company F., 124th U. S. Colored Infantry Regiment
WILLIAMS, NOAH - Company D., 117th U. S. Colored Infantry
WILSON, PHILLIP - Company F., 100th Regiment, U. S. Colored Infantry Regiment
WITHERS, HOCKINS – Colored Union soldier.
WOODARD ELAS/ELIJAH WOODS [?] - Company I., 117th Kentucky Cavalry Regiment