

Harrison Heritage News

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Contacts:

Bill Penn, editor
pennwma@aol.com
Bob Owen, President,
robert_owen@bellsouth.net
Phillip Naff, Web manager;
philnaff@comcast.net

Last Cumulative Index: See Dec-2005. See Web site for archived newsletters.

Cynthiana's Old Jail Open for Tours

Grand Opening April 26, 2006



After years of much work by the Cynthiana-Harrison County Chamber of Commerce, and local government officials, the Old Jail has been restored and will be opened to the public. The opening ceremony will be at 2 p.m., Wednesday, April 26, 2006. Shown in photo is the jail as it appeared c. 1960 when the jailer's house was still standing.

President's Corner

Bob Owen

The Camp Frazer issue continues to fester. I received word last week that the rezoning of the Burrier property is on the agenda for the April meeting of the Planning and Zoning Committee. The meeting is on Monday, April 17th, at 7:30 p.m. in the meeting room at the Sheriff's office.

Hopefully you saw the articles in the Lexington Herald and the Cynthiana Democrat about historic battlefields being in danger from development. In addition, there was a picture of the George Slade plaque presentation to the Cynthiana-Harrison County Public Library. The library is going to mount the plaque in the history room.

Another landmark has disappeared. Millersburg Military Institute (MMI) announced it was changing its name and its course of study and would no longer be a military school. This represents a break in the long history of the school. Unfortunately the current war in Iraq and Afghanistan has made military schools unpopular and MMI

Lincoln's Connections to Cynthiana

Bill Penn



Abraham Lincoln had several ties to Harrison County. Kentucky Historical Society.

Although Abraham Lincoln seldom visited Kentucky as an adult, and never visited Harrison County, he had several ties to Cynthiana.

Harrison County historian Phillip Naff has one important connection to Lincoln on his Harrison County Web page (see address top of this page). He states "The first 'postmistress' in Cynthiana history was Miss Mattie Dee Todd (Sept. 19, 1853 - Jan. 12, 1909), niece of Mary (Todd) Lincoln, wife of the

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Harrison County Historical Society

Bob Owen, President
Billy Fowler, Vice President
Janie Whitehead, Secretary

March 16th Meeting Notes:

DAR Program: Mary Mac Barnett of the Daughters of the American Revolution gave an informative presentation on the DAR's history and current projects. Local DAR members have for years documented Harrison County's history and genealogy.

Slade Memorial Plaque: Dave Kennedy brought the George Slade memorial plaque that will be dedicated later in the library.

Handy House: Billy Fowler reported that the city commission granted an indefinite extension to continue the work of the Handy House Committee. Last year the fiscal court granted us approval to go on until a Section 106 is completed on the project. The city's action matched the fiscal court action of last year.

By-Laws: HCHS officers will present revised laws for a vote at the May meeting.

Cynthiana Battlefields Endangered: The Civil War Preservation Trust has placed Cynthiana as one of the top 20 most endangered battlefields. The Chamber is working on finalizing a master Civil War preservation plan necessary for future state/federal battlefield acquisition and preservation funds.

Harrison History Calendar

April 20—7 pm Harrison County Historical Society Meeting—Program—George Jacobs will outline a history of the Cynthiana Democrat.

April 22—4th Annual Raggedy Ann Festival at the Museum.

April 26—2 p.m. Wed. grand opening of the newly renovated Old Jail.

May 18—Janie Whitehead, a HCHS officer, will make a presentation on old houses and buildings of Cynthiana.

May 27—Grist Mill Day at Museum.

June 15—Show and Tell—bring a historic artifact, book, or photo to show.

Cynthiana-Harrison County Museum

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

Hrs: 10-5 Fri-Sat

Martha Barnes, President

4th Annual Raggedy Ann Festival April 22

It's Raggedy Ann and Andy celebration time again. Our community's 4th annual Raggedy Ann Festival will be held in Cynthiana - the cradle of Raggedy Ann - on Saturday, April 22, 2006. We urge all of you to attend and support this event. It indeed is a fun time for the young and young at heart - but as well this is a fantastic opportunity for us to preserve and promote a part of our local history.

R. B. Gruelle was born on February 22, 1851 in Cynthiana (Anyone know where in Cynthiana?) He later moved to Arcola, Illinois where his son Johnny was born on December 24, 1880. Johnny Gruelle grew up to become a well known political cartoonist and illustrator. Around 1908, he began producing features for children. Gruelle created the Raggedy Ann doll in 1915 and he published the first stories in 1918.

Last year, several out of town visitors to the festival (and Raggedy Ann and Andy have a huge following) remarked that we needed more Raggedy Ann and Andy items in our museum. Thanks to Harold Slade and several faithful donors, we now have an impressive and growing Raggedy Ann and Andy display.

Carol Hudson and her husband, Richard of Walton, Kentucky took special interest in our Raggedy efforts and contributed a number of special items. Using wooden blocks from the Hudsons, Mr. Slade spelled out "Our Raggedy Ann and Andy Corner." Other items from the Hudsons are copies of the Gruelle "Gruelle" genealogy, sheet music, lunchbox, videotape, pewter casting, Hallmark keepsake, crafts pattern, and a printer's tray with an assortment of brass printer's blocks of letters and Raggedy Ann dolls.

Of course, dolls and illustrations are a significant part of a Raggedy collection. Joni Gruelle Wannamaker, granddaughter of Johnny Gruelle, presented several original drawings and a Raggedy doll to the museum with the promise of more donations. Marilyn Bell contributed a pair of dolls autographed by Joni. Ann Slade has loaned 3 of her Raggedy dolls as well as a handmade plaque and a coloring book. In addition to a large pair of Raggedys, other small ones are displayed in a swing handcrafted by Neville Haley.

We hope to have other Raggedy Ann and Andy items but especially dolls loaned to our museum corner for the festival or perhaps for a longer period of time. This is another aspect of our history which the museum is able to preserve and share. Come for a visit - and remember to mark May 27 on your calendar. That Saturday will be our ninth museum grist mill day sponsored by the Kelly family. Pat Henderson of Michigan (the daughter of one of Mr. Slade's army friends) contributed a 30 year old baby spread and a 5 knob rack both decorated with Raggedys. T-shirts and photographs from previous festivals enhance the corner including one special fellow's certificate of recognition as a member of the Raggedy Man Hall of Fame. A number of books add to our museum collection both for reference and enjoyment.

(LINCOLN'S TIES TO HARRISON COUNTY Continued from page 1)

former President. Mattie Dee was the only daughter of Dr. George Rogers Clark Todd (1825-1900) and Miss Anna Curry (1828-1901). Mattie Dee's mother was the daughter of a wealthy Cynthiana judge and lawyer, as well as a War of 1812 veteran, Major James Rolland Curry, and his wife, Martha Bracken. Mattie Dee's father was a relative newcomer to the county, having been born in Lexington, where he obtained his medical degree from Transylvania University. Dr. Todd was the seventh and youngest child of Robert S. and Eliza Todd (his mother died with his birth) and thus a brother of Mary (Todd) Lincoln. Miss Mattie Dee Todd died in 1909 was buried in Battle Grove Cemetery beside her mother; their shared marker can be seen from Pike Street as you pass the cemetery from either direction. (Read more about her and the history of the Cynthiana Post Office in the April 2001 and October 2002 Harrison Heritage News. Her grave is also featured in the Battle Grove Cemetery's walking tour.)"

A quick glance at the index of my book, *Rattling Spurs and Broad-Brimmed Hats* (1995), reveals Lincoln would have read about Cynthiana on several occasions. The first was when Lincoln authorized in May 1861, 5,000 guns to be distributed to Union Home Guards and the train delivering them was turned back by Cynthiana men supporting the Southern cause.

Lincoln would have also read Federal army dispatches about Morgan's Raiders in Cynthiana on July 17, 1862. Two years later, after General Burbridge's defeat of Morgan's troops at the Second Battle of Cynthiana, June 12, 1864, Lincoln sent a congratulatory telegram: "Have just received your dispatch of action at Cynthiana. Please accept my congratulations and thanks for yourself."

A Cynthiana attorney, W. W. Cleary, was for several months implicated in the

plot to assassinate President Lincoln. Cleary was friends with several former Confederates who fled to Canada. In April 1864 President Jefferson Davis appointed a commission of civilian agents to go to Canada with Cleary as their secretary. The commission was supposed to help negotiate the return of Confederates who had escaped there, secure guns in New York for fueling an insurrection at a Union prison camp, and other mischievous activities. However, the plot was canceled as being unworkable.

Cleary and the commissioners were in Canada when Lincoln was assassinated. Federal spies were aware of their activities and accused them of meeting with Booth, who visited Toronto under the pretense of planning a stage appearance. Cleary and other commission members were indicted for conspiracy to assassinate Lincoln, however President Johnson revoked the rewards for Cleary and three others in 1865. Cleary did not return to Harrison county until April 1869.

For a planned revision of my book, I am researching further Cleary's involvement, and have found he kept a diary, wrote a pamphlet in his defense, and apparently provided affidavits in depositions concerning his activities.

Most of the more recent books written on Lincoln's assassination (*Blood on the Moon* is one) mention Cleary's involvement. Some of the authors believe Cleary and the CSA commission were unaware of the Lincoln murder plot, whereas others implicate them, if only on circumstantial evidence.

(PRESIDENT'S CORNER—Continued from page 1)

was unable to get the number of students it needed to remain a viable institution.

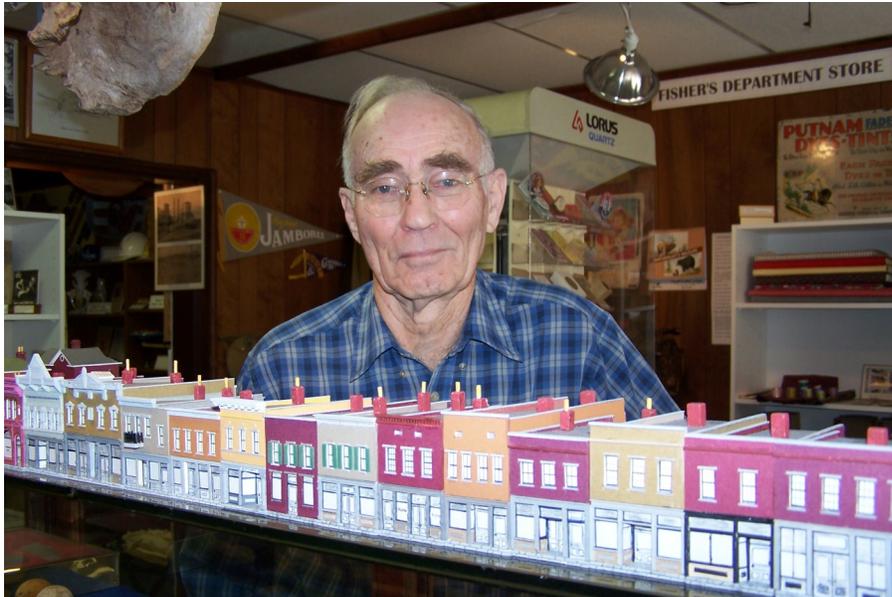
Finally, Bill Penn will be speaking to the Cynthiana Rotary Club during the second week of June. Bill will be giving a historical presentation.

Thanks to all of you who have paid your 2006 dues. IF YOU HAVE NOT PAID YOUR 2006 DUES, PLEASE PAY THEM AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

Cynthiana Circa 1900 Being Reconstructed

A Photo Tour of the Miniature Town

Cynthiana's historic downtown is being rebuilt building-by-building by Harold Slade, Neville Haley, Donald Hill, and others including Dorothy Slade, J. T. Penn and Kenny Simpson.. Photos below and next page show the progress so far on the 8' x 12' table, a popular exhibit in the Cynthiana-Harrison County Museum's Annex in the old theater building on Walnut Street. It is open on Friday and Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The museum's extensive collection of period photos of downtown buildings are displayed near the model town.[editor]



Left: Harold Slade poses with a nearly-completed scale model of Pike Street in Cynthiana.

Below, The courthouse before wings (built by Neville Haley) and parts of Main Street and Pleasant Street. The Cynthiana Presbyterian Church is in the foreground, bottom right (see close-up photo next page). This is Mr. Slade's favorite model that he has made, and took him the most time to construct. Photos, Phillip Naff, 2006.





(Above): Donald Hill built the model Cynthiana covered bridge from wood taken from the original bridge. On the right is the Cynthiana Presbyterian Church, made by Harold Slade, showing the architectural detail of the original.



Memorial Plaque Honoring Historian George Slade (1916-2005) was recently presented to Cynthiana-Harrison County Public Library officials by the historical society. Left to right, representing the Harrison County Historical Society, Harold Slade, museum curator; Billy Fowler, vice-president; Janie Whitehead, Secretary; Charley Feix, library board chairman, and Pat Barnes, library director. Photo, Phillip Naff, 2006.