



# Harrison Heritage News

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## *Literature of the Licking*

### **A Little Bit of Bluegrass in China**

Excerpts from Yang-Kwei-tze ("Foreign Devil") by Kathryn Blair Simmons

By Philip A. Naff (philnaff@comcast.net)

It was while I was watching the Beijing Olympics this past summer that I was struggling to come up with an idea for a story that would seem a fitting one to tell for this issue. It was in watching of all those modern day Marco Polos, the many athletes who had traveled halfway around the world to discover their own latter-day fortunes of gold, silver, and bronze, that brought to mind a story that has been sitting on my bookshelf for nearly thirty years now. The story is packaged in a rather slim volume, only 109-pages long, but it contains an interesting tale of a Harrison County native who spent three years in China, not as a treasure seeker in any usual sense of the word, but as an English teacher in China looking for unique experiences, and perhaps even a little romance.

Her tale begins long before Peking became Beijing or China turned Red. Our Marco Polo was Harrison County native Ann Kathryn Blair (1898-1977), daughter of a former state legislator, lawyer, and undertaker Roger P. Blair (1874-1940) and his wife, Hattie (Oder) Blair (1880-1940), of Colemansville. Kathryn grew up in the country towns of Berry and Colemansville in northeastern Harrison County and was a graduate of the Berry High School's in 1917, in only its second year of operation. She earned a degree from Transylvania College in 1920. Before entering Columbia University to earn her masters, she returned to Berry High to teach for a couple of years. Later, when she was teaching at a college in Evansville, Indiana she was asked to take an appointment in the University of Nanking to teach English. In only a few months she had departed Vancouver, Canada aboard The Empress of Asia and arrived in Shanghai in October, 1924, and was soon on her way to Nanking (Today's Nanjing).

Accounts of her experiences were published several times. The following excerpts are from the book she published many years later, exactly when, I cannot be sure, certainly before her death in 1977. It is fashioned something like a diary, with texts written as one might compose

a letter. After only a year in China the Cynthiana Democrat published excerpts from her letters home in September, 1925, forming a virtual 7,000-word journal of her first year abroad. That her hometown newspapers published her stories may have given impetus to the private imprint of Yang-Kwei-tze in later years, the title of which when translated means "Foreign Devil," the name given to all foreign travelers by the Chinese of the time.

Her stories of the sights she saw in China ranged from charming to grimly bizarre. The following excerpts are presented here to give the reader a flavor of her experiences in China.

A signed duplicate of the photograph to be attached hereto must be sent to the Department with the application, to be affixed to the passport with an impression of the



Kathryn Blair Simmons passport photo.

### **School Days**

"Never have I had such stage fright as when I walked into my first class in my first Chinese school. It was a class of ninety boys in English literature. There they sat, every eye turned my way. All looked alike and all looked formidable! The principal introduced me. I smiled. They just looked and looked. I grabbed the roll book from the desk for support. After looking at it I felt more distressed than ever. Such names, and all backwards! You say the family name first. I did have enough presence of mind to

continued on p. 4

# Harrison County Historical Society

Bob Owen, President  
 Billy Fowler, Vice President  
 Janie Whitehead, Secretary  
 Dorothy Slade, Treasurer  
 Bill Penn, editor: pennwma@aol.com

## Program Notes

### Meeting August 21, 2008

The meeting was held at Zeppelin Threads on Main St. Heather Ladick and Ben Farmer gave a tour of the ca. 1812 brick building which contains the business and their home. Business meeting: President Bob Owen announced an upcoming open house Sept 28 at Duncan Tavern. Denise Marshall to be our November speaker. There is a new Fleming County Covered Bridges Museum in downtown Flemingsburg. It is open Saturdays from 10 am - 2 pm.



Above: During the August 12 meeting, members sit in the back yard of the 1812 brick building on Main St. where Zeppelin Threads is located.

## Harrison County History Calendar

**Oct. 16** - Lester Horwitz, author of *The Longest Raid of the Civil War*, about John Hunt Morgan's 1863 Indiana-Ohio Raid. He toured Cynthiana battlefields several years ago with the Morgan's Men Association. (photos of Mr. Horwitz and his book)

**Nov. 20** - Denise Marshall will discuss her fourth grade class and their learning of local history.



## President's Corner

Bob Owen  
 robert\_owen@bellsouth.net

The October meeting of the Society will be back in the library in the Charles Feix Room where we normally meet. I want to thank Heather Ladick and Ben Farmer will be hosting us last month and providing the tours of their old building.

A reminder that on Sunday, November 2nd, the Cynthiana Arts Council in conjunction with the Licking Valley Community College will be hosting a Kentucky Chautauqua presentation by Mel Hankla as Simon Kenton. The presentation tells about the life and times of Kentucky frontiersman, Simon Kenton. This is an excellent presentation and it is free to the public. The presentation lasts about an hour and a half and the presenter is in period costume. I have to correct my last month's item on this in that the presentation will be conducted at 3:00 P.M. at the Endicott Meeting House (currently know as the Indian Creek Baptist Church) across the road from Indian Creek Christian Church on Millersburg Road. The church has heating and an indoor bathroom. There is plenty of parking and refreshments will be available. I strongly encourage your attendance at this event. Bring family and friends; they will enjoy it.

I mentioned last week that Sharon Fowler has been taking some excellent pictures of the building and places around Cynthiana and has placed these pictures in binders at the museum. I recommend you visit the museum and see these wonderful pictures. One of her latest additions is pictures of the viaduct.

I would like to bring an important item to your attention. Roger Slade and James Smith and their families and friends have been trying to make the Rohns Opera House a viable business. It appears that the public is ignoring them and is not attending either movies or special events in the numbers necessary to pay the costs. As a result, they are currently not showing movies, but plan to reinstate them later in the year, perhaps November. They have invested a lot of time, money and sweat into the Opera House and have provided quality, low cost entertainment. I encourage you to take part in some of their offerings and encourage them. They have reinstated the Ghost Walks which for September are held on Saturdays nights at 7, 8 and 9 PM and in October will be conducted on Friday and Saturday nights at 7, 8, and 9 PM. Brochures describing the walks are available at the Chamber of Commerce and at the Cynthiana-Harrison County Library. Show your support; attend a Ghost Walk.

# Cynthiana-Harrison County Museum

Martha Barnes, President

The "Taste of Harrison County" proved to be a productive day for the museum. Many of those festival-goers chose to include the museum as a part of their day's activities. We welcome visitors, but especially those local folks who admit that they have been planning to come to the museum. The 14 year old museum - the new, old museum in the Walnut Street Rohn Theatre - is impressive. We fear that some guests to the old museum found it uninviting and decided not to return - but our new digs are bright, light, spacious, and inviting.

On the day of the tasty festival, we also sold a great number of books - Cromwell's Comments and Lucinda's Chronicles. Need a gift - birthday, wedding, holiday, a thank you, a thinking of you, or a welcome to the community gift? Remember the publications for sale at the museum. Prices range from \$5. to \$20. How reasonable is that - and they are available right here in river city!

Contrary to the belief of some, our gentle, rural community has much to offer - and its history is important. Prize-winning historian David McCullough states, "For at least 25 years, we have been raising young Americans who, by and large, are historically illiterate. The found-

ing of our nation, the Civil War, World War II - they all should be common knowledge, but they are not. A recent survey shows that fewer than half of American high school students know when the Civil War occurred. We can learn from the past that there is no such thing as a 'self-made man or woman' - we all are influenced by people around us. We learn from the past that every action has consequences, and we have to be very careful about leaping to conclusions from first impressions. Integrity and character do count in the long run. The idea that no one has ever lived in more difficult or dangerous times is untrue. Others have weathered more horrendous storms; we can take heart from them."

The historian Daniel Boorstin expressed the importance of history is this way: "Trying to plan for the future without a sense of the past is like trying to plant cut flowers."

We encourage you to visit the Cynthiana-Harrison County Museum, 124 S. Walnut Street. The museum is open on Fridays and Saturdays, 10 A.M. - 5 P.M. or by appointment. 859.234-7179. Special thanks to all our faithful volunteers and supporters!

## Harrison County, Kentucky, Historical Publications

available from Cynthiana-Harrison County Museum, 124 South Walnut Street, P.O. Box 411, Cynthiana, KY 41031 (859-234-7179);

- 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. 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. 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). 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.

ask a boy near the front to call the roll for me. Then I started having each boy read a few lines from his text, but saw I would run out of time before all read. “Good,” I thought, ‘That will give me something to start with tomorrow’ . . .

“The boys wear long gowns and little acorn caps with colored buttons on them. These they refused to remove in class because of ‘Chinese custom.’ Every time I tell them to do something they dislike, their inevitable refusal is: ‘Not Chinese custom.’ I am doubtful of some of them. The first spare time I have I shall read a book on customs through motives of self protection.

“. . . I’m getting quite a thrill out of my boys . . . at first I was simply petrified when I had to face them . . . and they had a good laugh every time I called the roll. So did I. My ability to laugh at myself has been quite helpful over here where I make so many blunders.”

### **Grim Scenes of Hard Lives**

“Every day I see unusual things that should make me feel like an outsider, but don’t. Daily I see old women hobbling along on their tiny, bound, misshapen feet; they have suffered since babyhood and are actually proud of their tiny formless feet. Very few young girls have bound feet now. One of the Manchu emperors issued an edict against the practice and it could only be done on the sly, hence the number of old women sporting feet three inches long while the girls have regular size feet, nothing like as huge as mine, but fairly large. In fact, the boys refused to borrow my shoes for a class play because my feet were so large!

“. . . I’ve been sitting by the window looking at my view, one of the many graveyards in the city. It doesn’t sound pleasant, but it is. A Chinese graveyard isn’t at all the gruesome thing we make of cemeteries in America. Here they are recreational grounds for grown ups; children play among the graves. And one ambitious soul, a student, who evidently has been reading Physical Culture Magazine, goes to the top of the hill in this particular spot and does his ‘daily dozen’ promptly at six a.m. each morning.

“The Chinese place their dead on top of the ground, then cover them with dirt. Formerly they threw baby girls out there for dogs to devour. If they did this before the baby

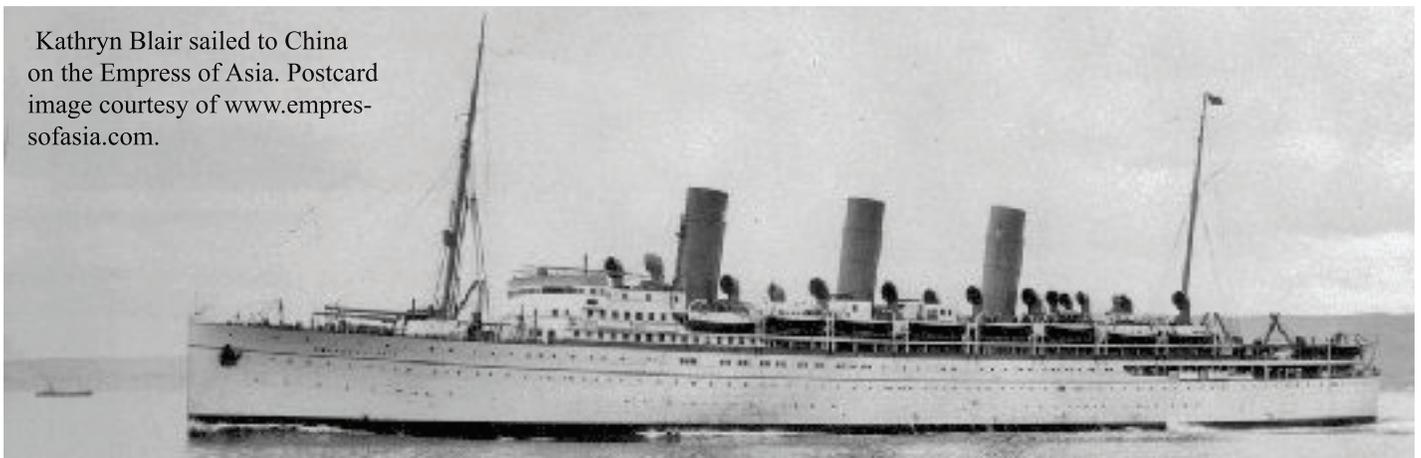
was twenty-four hours old, it was not a crime. Now there are baby towers, usually on the wall, where the baby is put to die of exposure, out of the reach of dogs. However, this practice is gradually dying out in this part of China, largely through the efforts of the missions.

“Another glimpse of these many sided people. Men carry boy babies around in the streets, and are delighted when anyone notices them. I saw gorgeously dressed, solemn-faced little fellow in his father’s arms in a silk store yesterday. I chucked him under the chin, hoping to get a smile. I did, but not from the baby. The father was so delighted to have me notice his son that I was afraid he was going to adopt me in another minute or so. Babies are dressed in red, which is also the bridal color.

“The bride’s dress is of beautiful bright red satin, gaily embroidered in white. She is carried to her husband’s home in a red satin chair or carriage, which resembles a hearse in shape and is practically that, for in a real Chinese home the bride is a slave to the mother-in-law or to her husband’s older wives. A Chinese woman doesn’t begin to enjoy life until she has a daughter-in-law to abuse. Some Chinese men love their wives and pamper them somewhat, but never to the extent that American wives are humored. The boys tell me they do not want foreign wives because they all boss their husbands and spend their money for clothes. Many of our middle school boys are married and most of them are engaged to girls they have never seen. Those who belong to the more progressive families are allowed to choose for themselves. These boys cast shy glances at the occupants of a girls school in an adjoining compound. They try to call, but the principal is quite strict and many a would-be love affair is nipped in the bud. When they occasionally have joint meetings, however, the antics calculated to charm feminine hearts are identical in American high schools. They ask me most eagerly for information on boy and girl friendships in America. I tell them as much as I can, whether it is pedagogical or not. It’s no use trying to give the fine points, however, for kissing is an unknown pleasure in China. They don’t even hold hands!

Continued on p. 5

Kathryn Blair sailed to China on the Empress of Asia. Postcard image courtesy of [www.empressofasia.com](http://www.empressofasia.com).



### Home Life

“The weather is so cold that I don’t expect to be warm all the way through again before spring. The cold is a humid cold that goes right to the bone. Our houses are big and not easy to heat, especially with coal at \$36 a ton. We have no heat in the classrooms, and to see me setting forth clad in galoshes, a couple of sweaters, and a heavy coat, one would think I was on my way to a polar expedition instead of to a classroom. I wear my galoshes unhooked, to the wonder of the Chinese and the annoyance of our choir director, who has prejudices against signs of flapperism . . .

“But to get back to houses. The Chinese houses are not so large as ours. They have no windows on the outside, are built close together—even in the business section, and are mostly just one story high. They have a system of courtyards with houses within houses, but even these I am told have no windows. Neither do they have heat in winter. The natives merely add more garments, the outer usually lined with goat, wool or fur. I wondered why my boys seemed so fat at once, and someone explained the system of dressing for the cold weather. I’m told that the poorer classes sew themselves in for the winter. I don’t blame them. I wouldn’t bathe in one of their unheated houses either. Men with money can go to public bath houses which are for men only. Women had no place to go until the woman’s club opened bath houses for them, and even there the police tried to close them because they were ‘liable to draw bad characters and create a disturbance.’ The women persevered and have been able to keep three permanent ones going.

“Every day or so one of the boys comes in for a chat and tells me things about his country. Today our chat was about matrimony, and the following customs struck me as being quite unique: A widow has hard lines. If she is honorable she never remarries . . . The number of wives a man has depends upon his pocketbook. A poor man has one; a rich man has as many as he fancies or can support, though only one has the title ‘wife.’ The others are called concubines, but their children are treated as legal heirs. Often a concubine has the love and gifts of the husband while his “wife” has the title and the pleasure of bossing the others. Me for No. 1!

### Keeping in Fashion

“Where do we buy clothes? My gracious, . . . Shanghai is a second New York, filled not only with American shops, but French ones too. Since the prices are very high, I can’t keep in style on my salary, but manage to get along. Shoes are higher than anything. They are mostly of European make and unsightly to the American eye. Fortunately[,] I brought along a supply from home and the Chinese make very good ones if they have a model. For dresses, coats and suits we show a Chinese tailor a picture and he does a fine job very reasonably. Hats are a problem though. Like

shoes they are very expensive, but here Chinese ingenuity fails. They can’t make hats for Yang Kwei-tzes. The Foreign women of Nanking are quite resourceful in this matter. Every year they have a White Elephant Rummage Sale in the community club house. For the first hour many hats and other garments get new owners, so everyone has a change of costume at least. Mr. Tinford [A missionary with whose family Kathryn boarded] says he always follows the wrong woman from church after the yearly rummage sale! Maybe that remark caused the perfectly absurd sermon on ‘Love and Family Duty’ that our last Sunday’s preacher delivered . . .

“But I’ve gotten away from the rummage sale. After the foreigners have shopped their fill, the doors are open to the street crowd, who pile in regular bargain sale style. In a scant thirty minutes the building is cleared of all merchandise, but the streets are a sight to behold. Ricksha men strut along in ladies’ hats and high-heel mismatched shoes, carrying everything from corsets to old collars. What they want with all those articles one cannot imagine. Mrs. Tinford thinks they use corsets and collars to pad the soles of their home-made shoes. At any rate, the rummage sale is a great success.

### Politics in China in 1924

“Nanking is filled with soldiers and we are under martial law . . . The only inconvenience we suffer is that of delayed mail. The railroads are in the hands of the soldiers, and river boats are slow.

“The war situation seems to be more of a personal affair than any great political movement. There are three principal leaders in our section who are called marshal or general, impartially. In the South around Hangchow and Canton there are others, but they seem busy fighting each other and haven’t yet bothered anything north of Shanghai. The three we have are named Wu, Chiang, and Feng. Whichever is in control around Peking has control of the governmental bodies. When one is in, the others are trying to get him out. If a big leader is defeated or thinks he soon will be, he either goes into a Buddhist Monastery [sic] for scholarly reflection or to a foreign country for travel and education—usually taking public funds along, so they say.

“. . . Thirty thousand soldiers are expected here tomorrow. The local Chinese fear looting. The city has been heavily policed by the excellent civil governor, so I think things won’t be to serious. Being under martial law from seven P.M. till morning, we are supposed to stay off the streets, and the Chinese certainly live up to it. The streets are actually deserted, and it’s next to impossible to get a rickshaw. We foreigners go about unchallenged, for Chinese soldiers never bother “Yang Kwei-tzes,” which translated into English means, “Foreign Devils.” They are helped into this frame of mind by the presence of two American gunboats, a British man-of-war, and a Japanese

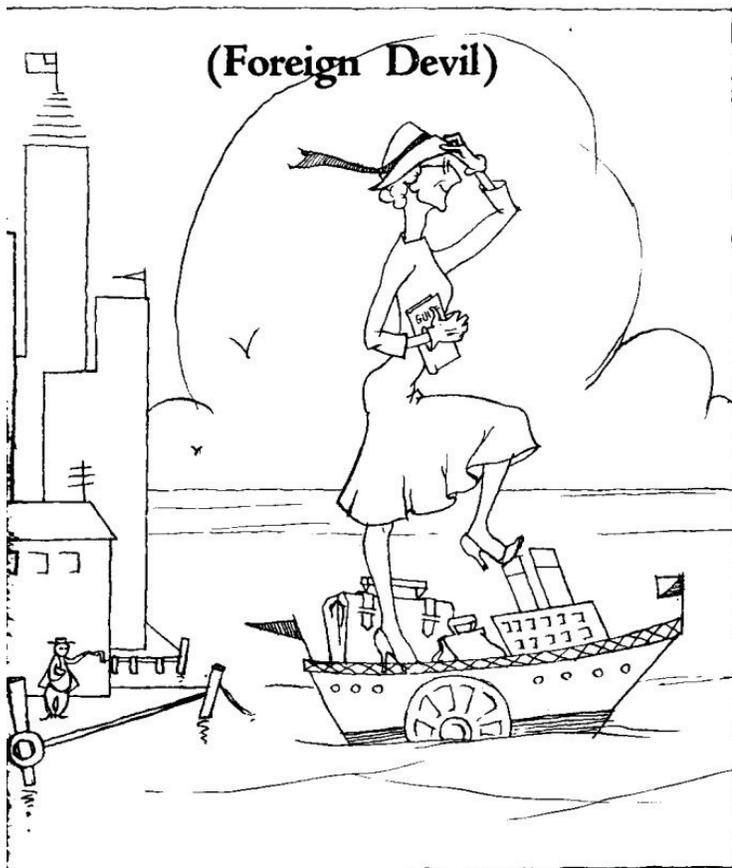
battleship or two in the harbor, less than an hour's journey from us. So it seems we are safer in China than the Chinese. Queer, isn't it?"

She left China before her three year contract was up, and it was forced upon her by a similarly odd political and military situation described above. If it weren't for those American gunboats in the harbor, she may not have

escaped when she did or have escaped alive.

Kathryn Blair Simmons was still a teacher when she retired, but she never ceased in her travels overseas. She and her husband, J. Francis Simmons, were still traveling when they met their deaths in the horrible crash of 747s on Teneriffe Island, in the Azores off of the coast of Spain.

## YANG KWEI-TZE



by KATHRYN BLAIR SIMMONS

(above) Cover of the book, *Yang-Kwei-tze* ("Foreign Devil") by Kathryn Blair Simmons

(below) 1916 photo of Kathryn Blair in a class showing the first three years of Berry High School classes, 1916-18.

First row (Left to right): Joe Brown, Louise Caldwell (Class of '17), Blanche Elmore, Catharine Elmore ('16).

Second row: Kathleen Billiter ('18), Prof. Lowell Sharron, Alvin Kendall, Lutie Earle ('17).

Third row: Kathryn Blair (Class of '17), Avonia Cochran, and Thomas Raymond Boyers.



# The Genealogy Box



A supplemental newsletter for genealogy and family history research in Harrison County, Kentucky.

By Philip Naff  
([philnaff@comcast.net](mailto:philnaff@comcast.net))

## What is an Obituary and How Do You Find One?

One wouldn't necessarily associate the word "perverse" with genealogy, but there are definitely some perverse aspects to genealogy and family research, especially as evidenced by the glee expressed whenever a genealogist finally locates the much-sought-after obituary of a distant family member or research subject (These same emotions can also be stimulated by death certificates, funeral records, and tombstones!).

Obituaries were, and still are, the "vehicles" which have brought news of an individual's death to their contemporaries, yet today an informative obituary is the record source which helps, more than any other, to bring family trees to life, with all the details they can offer about family relationships, occupations, and all the other the elements of any individual's life story.

[Dictionary.com](http://Dictionary.com) defines an obituary as "a published notice of death, sometimes with a brief

biography of the deceased." While most of us recognize an obituary when we see one, not all newspapers over the past three centuries were so careful as to publish any "notice of death" for all of those who may have been known to its subscribers.

As a general rule, if you can find a reference to an individual's passing in indexes of death certificates, funeral home records, or tombstone inscriptions, you will often be able to find some mention of that person's death using this information to search local newspapers in the days or weeks after their death.

In some newspapers an obituary column may be filled by what are called "death notices" in the classified ads section, "funeral notices," or news items in the local news or community columns. In some cases, not a single word of a death can be found, and the report of a death might be relegated to nothing more than an entry in a list of burial permits issued.

Sometimes only if you were well-known or established in your profession, or perhaps died in a tragic accident or were suicide, did you rate the full treatment of an obituary or news item. At the other end of the spectrum, one rural Ohio River community published brief notices in the news sections of the paper, and then full biographies of the deceased, often written by surviving family members, in the "in memorium" section of the newspaper's classified ads, sometimes in the same issue, sometimes a week or so later. Success in locating an obituary, or a stand-in for one, all depends on what the editorial policies of the newspaper were at the time of its publication.

**Harrison County Newspapers**—The archive of newspapers available for use in the search for obituaries is extensive. The most referenced 20<sup>th</sup> century

newspapers are the *Log Cabin* (1896 - 1960) and the *Cynthiana Democrat* (1869 - Present), both of which have been microfilmed and are available for review at the Cynthiana-Harrison County Public Library (Visit [cynthianalibrary.org](http://cynthianalibrary.org) to view a list of their holdings). If you can't make it to Cynthiana, and since the C-HCPL does not make its microfilmed collection available for interlibrary loan, you may want to consider looking to the University of Kentucky in Lexington either to purchase or borrow these same microfilms (A list of Harrison County titles held by U.K. is available online at [tinyurl.com/4jtvyd](http://tinyurl.com/4jtvyd)). The Kentucky Historical Society in Franfort also has a limited collection of microfilmed newspapers.

During the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries the county never seems to have lacked for local coverage with titles such as the *Guardian of Liberty*, the *Advertiser*, the *Gleaner*, the *Western Visitor*, the *Cynthiana (Weekly)News*, *Town Talk*, the *Harrison County Courier*, the *Cynthiana Times*, and the *Cynthiana Democrat* serving the county's needs. Unfortunately, the complete runs of only a few of these titles have survived long enough to have been preserved or microfilmed, and so the number successful searches within this period can be limited.

Preservation issues are not the only cause of some serious gaps in the timeline of newspaper coverage of the county; at times history itself has interfered with modern research efforts, such as when the pro-secessionist *Cynthiana Times* ceased operations during the Civil War with the arrest of its editor, A.J. Morey. The paper did not resume publication until October, 1865 as a paper "entirely independent of sectional or preconceived prejudice in politics."

You can read more about newspaper censorship during the war in William A. Penn's *Rattlin'*

*Spurs and Broad-Brimmed Hats*, the story of Cynthiana and Harrison County during the Civil War. Chapter 9 of W.H. Perrin's 1882 *History of Bourbon, Scott, Harrison, & Nicholas Counties, Kentucky*, articles in the 1896 and 1905 special editions of the *Cynthiana Democrat* and *Log Cabin*, and the March 1, 1928 *Cromwell's Comments* column (pp. 9-10 of the anthology) are also good sources for information about the history of newspaper publication in the county. Also, look to the January, 2008 (Vol. 9, No. 1) issue of the *Harrison Heritage News* for diagrams prepared by George Jacobs which trace the history and genealogy of Harrison County newspapers and their editors.

I've looked up a few thousand obituaries in a hundred or so newspapers and so have picked up a few tricks with this kind of research. The following tips may help you to make a successful obituary search with any newspaper, especially using Harrison County resources.

**Research Aids**—Few aids for the research of Harrison County's newspaper archive existed until 1996, when Eric C. Nagle ([FordNagle.com](http://FordNagle.com)) published *Vital Records from Newspapers of Harrison County, Ky., 1836-1900*. Articles found in the *Western Visitor*, *Cynthiana (Weekly) News*, *Town Talks*, the *Log Cabin* were searched for birth, marriage, and death citations and then extracted or abstracted to compile this unique volume. Items from 1836, 1839, 1851-57, 1866-1873, 1875, 1878, 1884, 1885, 1887-88, 1896-1900 are included. The bound version comes with an index and the text of the volume is also offered on a CD-ROM, which is searchable.

**Never Too Soon**—When searching for an obituary, even though it may seem an unlikely or unusual occurrence, be sure to include the issue of the date of death among the newspaper issues you examine. Depending on

whether it was a morning or evening paper, and the time of day the paper went to press, your subject's obituary may actually have been published the day of death, at least according to the date cited on the paper's front page. Such a "timely" publication may have occurred because the person's death was expected, when the family or undertaker may have been prepared for the swift placement of such an announcement. Such an occurrence can be common with dailies, but it is much rarer with weeklies such as the *Cynthiana Democrat* and the *Log Cabin*.

**Sometimes Late, Sometimes Never**—Look at least three issues beyond the date of death of your subject, whether it be a daily or weekly newspaper. Most of the time an obituary can be found in the first or second issues following the date of death, but occasionally more diligence is required to find that elusive obituary.

On occasion you may have located a definite date of death for a person, but you may have no clue that the person was not have been a resident of the county for a long period before their death, and so, depending on where they were when they died, it may take longer for the news of their death to reach the local paper of their hometown or county, and so you may have to make a more extended search.

Every now and then a relative or family friend may write a personal obituary "in memorium" to their loved one which may not appear until a month or more after the subject's death, so you may want to extend your search timeline to catch a hold of such treasures.

Not until early in the 20th century did many newspapers run an established obituary column in every issue for their readership. Today the *Cynthiana Democrat* publishes obituaries on page six, and has done so for decades. But newspapers of old, like the world

they served, were smaller, and operating on shorter deadlines, and so a death may have been reported by word of mouth (then via telegraph & telephone, when those came along), or by post (in a time when letters were delivered twice a day), instead of by the local newspaper, and so depending on a number of factors, timing, space, costs, etc., not everyone had an obituary or death notice published. Luckily, at least for 20th century newspaper research, such occurrences are rare.

**All Deaths Are Local**—Even when a newspaper maintains a regular obituary column, be sure to check the columns of news for the communities or neighborhoods in which your research subject resided. Sometimes you may not know in which column to look until you have already found an obituary elsewhere, but U.S. Census records should be of some help in determining where a person lived before they died. Also, the location of the cemetery where they were interred should serve as a good clue as to their past or last residence(s).

These local news columns were often written by resident "stringers" and often contain even more information than the formalized obituary itself, and were written in an even more personal style, perhaps by someone who was family or a friend of the deceased. For many decades both the *Democrat* and the *Log Cabin* maintained community columns for just about every town and community in Harrison County. These columns should not be overlooked if you have the time for a more extensive search. In some cases, these local news columns may even be the only source of the news of your research subject's death.

**Calendars of Events**— Sometimes, no matter how hard you try, you can never come up with a date of death for a person that gives a month and day that will allow you

to locate an obituary for the person, at least without a lot of time scrolling through a lot of microfilmed newspapers. Many tombstones only indicate the years of birth and death, and for some communities or counties there are no vital records indexes of any kind, whether they be indexes of death certificates, funeral home records, or local newspapers.

If you are still stuck with only the year of death before you begin an obituary search, one possible solution to finding an obituary without looking through an entire year of newspapers, is to examine the first couple of issues of your research subject's local newspaper for the year immediately following the death. Often a paper will publish a calendar of local events for the preceding year, which includes the dates of the marriages, births, and deaths which occurred in the local community or county. The *Cynthiana Democrat* and the *Log Cabin* have both published such calendars over the years. See if you can find the exact date of death using these local calendars of events, and if you do, finding the obituary should be a lot easier.

**Double the Pleasure, Double the Fun**—Until 1960 Harrison County had at least two newsweeklies in print, and so for most research subjects there is the opportunity to at least double the effectiveness of your quest for an obituary. *The Cynthiana Democrat* was and is nominally a Thursday paper, while the *Log Cabin* had a Friday publication date for most of its run. After the merger of the two weeklies, the texts of the obituary columns of both papers became virtually identical, even down to the page and column citations . . . but look in both anyway, if for no other reason to confirm the information found in either! (The obituaries of a great-great-aunt come to mind; in one paper she was reported to have been buried in Battle Grove

Cemetery, while the other cited Pythian Grove Cemetery as her final resting place. Her grave was eventually located in Pythian Grove.)

**Obituaries on Page 2 . . . and 4 . . . and 7 . . . and, uh, 9?**—Be sure that you've seen all there is to see regarding all the deaths reported in any issue of a newspaper. Too many times the maddening practice of spreading an obituary "column" over several pages in one issue of a newspaper has been seen, without any reference given to the column's continuation on another page or any indication that there may be more obituaries in the same issue. Skim over a few issues before and after the one you need to search, to see what trends are apparent.

**The Paper on Your Neighbor's Doorstep**—When no newspaper archive exists for the locality of your interest or if it fails to yield any results, you may want to consider searching the newspapers of a neighboring county, or even those of urban centers nearby.

Many rural county newspapers have often published brief summaries of the news of their neighbors, including deaths (maybe even full obituaries, especially if the deceased had ties to their own communities). Lists of microfilmed newspapers for these counties bordering Harrison are also available at the aforementioned U.K. site, and the earliest available papers of several counties have been abstracted and indexed, such as the multi-volume set offered for sale by the Grant County (Ky.) Historical Society, for example.

For Harrison County subjects, you may wish to search Cincinnati (Oh.) newspapers or those of Lexington (Fayette County) or Covington (Kenton County) in Kentucky. Even though separated from Harrison's borders by a county or two, the newspapers of these population centers also have published the obituaries of

Harrisonians over time. The benefit of searching these larger publications is that many have had much longer runs than their rural cousins, have been preserved, microfilmed, and even been indexed, and their indexes have been placed online, such as the Cincinnati-Hamilton County Public Library's Newsdex ([www.newsdex.cincinnati.org](http://www.newsdex.cincinnati.org)) or the Kenton County Public Library's Northern Kentucky Newspaper Index (<http://tinyurl.com/5fthxf>).

**Obituaries Must Be Paid For**—It would seem that death is not the ultimate price to pay after all, especially if you want a few kind words written in your favor after you "go," as evidenced by the text below, which was discovered in the February 27, 1919 issue of the *Cynthiana Democrat* (Page 6, col. 5). Similar warnings were published in other Northern Kentucky newspapers over time, so if you ever wondered about that ever-elusive obituary of Great-Aunt or Uncle, or other beloved and esteemed ancestor, might never have appeared at all, no matter how hard you have searched, this article might explain why they can't be found today:

"It seems to be necessary to state again that *The Democrat*, as well as all other well regulated newspapers, charge for publishing obituaries. Persons continue to send them in with request for publication and seem offended when they do not appear. It should be remembered that the charge is five cents a line, which is one cent a word. Therefore, please count the words and send check or cash with the request to publish, otherwise we shall be obliged to omit the obituaries. *The Democrat* prints notices of deaths as prom[p]tly as possible after the information reaches us and usually full details are given. We of course make no charge for this because it is a matter of news."

# The 1896 Special Edition of the *Cynthiana Democrat* & the 1905 Souvenir Supplement of the *Log Cabin*

New Online Resources for Harrison County, Ky. History & Genealogy Research

By Philip Naff  
([philnaff@comcast.net](mailto:philnaff@comcast.net))

[This month new pages are being added to the author's website at [www.HarrisonCountyKy.US/newspapers-and-obituaries](http://www.HarrisonCountyKy.US/newspapers-and-obituaries), pages which contain the complete texts, or nearly so, of two special editions of Harrison County newspapers which were published over a century ago.]

In June, 1896 the *Cynthiana Democrat* published a "Special Edition," a 24-page edition chock-full of photographs of Cynthiana and its business establishments, biographical sketches of its businessmen, government, and church leaders, as well as descriptions of its government, school, and church facilities.

Then, nearly a decade later, on November 11, 1905 the *Log Cabin* Printery of Cynthiana, Kentucky followed up with a "Souvenir Supplement" of the *Log Cabin*, a 32-page issue with content similar to that of *The Democrat's* 1896 edition, and it also included a page devoted to Harrison County's second largest community, the "city" of Berry.

Both issues are "must-sees" for anyone interested in life in Cynthiana or in the county as it appeared just a little over a century ago.

Indexes have been posted to the website for some time, and they include the names of every individual mentioned in the special editions (Each edition has its own online index). Once you find your research subjects name, take note of the page numbers and then click on table of page number links in the banner at the top of each page for that issue. Once there, scroll down the web page to find the reference your research subject or simply perform a word search of that page.

The editor of the 1896 edition of the *Cynthiana Democrat* had in mind that the paper should be used by future generations, realizing great changes were to come, but that his contemporaries were not to be pitied but

were rejoicing in the times in which they lived. He wrote:

"When this edition of *The Democrat* shall be fished from the depths of some old cedar chest one hundred years from now, and new generations shall gaze on the faces of people long since laid in peaceful slumber beneath earth's emerald robe, it would be interesting to hear the comments and listen to the speculations upon what an unfortunate people we were. All the pride and glory of our little city will have been swallowed in the

advancement of the ages. All marvels of electricity will have been eclipsed. The systems of locomotion revolutionized, the art of photography metamorphosed, printing brought to a mere matter of pushing the button.

"We live in perfect comfort. We have all the necessaries and a great many luxuries of life, and, so far as temperance, morality and religion are concerned, the world has never seen our equals. When the time for departure from this existence shall arrive, the majority of us will be ready for the journey, and will, we

hope, leave for the benefit of those that are to come the testimony of lives that have been well spent and work that shall live after us."

While it is unlikely that you will find a copy of either edition in a cedar chest today, reprints of both the *Log Cabin* and the *Cynthiana Democrat* have long been available for purchase for only \$5 each through the mails from the [Harrison County Historical Society](#) or onsite at the [Cynthiana-Harrison County Museum](#). So if you would like to hold a little history in your hands, please consider purchasing either edition (or even both) for your genealogy or local history library. With your copy in hand, you, too can feel as important as former *Log Cabin* editor J.M. Wilson, Jr. (Pictured above) must have felt when he posed with an edition of his newspaper! ;-)

