



Harrison Heritage News

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A Little Like Lincoln

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

The 16th U.S. President's links to Harrison County have been documented in past issues of the *Harrison Heritage News*. Dr. George R.C. Todd, brother of Mary Todd Lincoln, took a Harrison County bride, and their daughter grew up in Cynthiana and was well-known as the city's first female U.S. Postmistress. President Lincoln was known to have reviewed reports of Confederate General J.H. Morgan's raids on the county seat and Lincoln read of Union attempts to capture the general and to defend Northern Kentucky, including Harrison County.

Is there more that remains to be discovered about Lincoln's connections to Harrison County? Maybe the proper question is, how much did the people of Harrison have in common with the life story of Abraham Lincoln? It is a question with several answers, and there are stories yet to tell.

The Chickens Knew—Lincoln biographer Carl Sandburg wrote that "moving was natural to [Lincoln's] blood; he came from a long line of movers; he could tell about the family that had moved so often that their chickens knew the signs of another moving; and the chickens would walk up to the

mover, stretch flat on the ground, and put up their feet to be tied for the next wagon trip." We do not know if the chickens were from Harrison County, and cannot confirm their existence, but many of Lincoln's human contemporaries from Harrison were on the move and followed a roughly parallel path to that of young Abraham Lincoln.

As Lincoln's family moved to Indiana in 1815, so did a small group of settlers from near Cynthiana. These pioneers moseyed over to Posey County in southwest Indiana and made new lives for themselves. There the small group came to be known as "the Forty-Four." They may have been a little homesick for they gave the name of "Cynthiana" to their new Hoosier home. Their story has been documented in the local histories of Indiana and more will be told of them in an upcoming issue of the *Harrison Heritage News*.

Prairie Bound—In 1830, a "footloose" Abraham Lincoln, just days past his 21st birthday, left his Indiana home in Spencer County and followed his father, step-mother, and their extended family to Illinois, eventually settling in Springfield. In that same year a group of settlers, maybe not so "footloose" as Lincoln in that many were married with children, left Harrison County behind and settled in the Prairie State. No special number was given to them by the history books, but dozens of Harrison County natives can be

identified using U.S. Census records alone, a rare happenstance, indeed, and all due to an apparent misunderstanding on the part of two census takers in Edgar County, Illinois. These settlers' stories can be pieced together using resources that are mostly online at Ancestry.com or Google.com, or even in a library near you. To learn of their lives, one needn't travel as far as they did to live them. Just turn to page four.

At War in Washington—A Harrison County native of Lincoln's generation, just three years his senior, also followed a political path to success and rose high in the ranks of the early Republican Party in Illinois. He like Lincoln, served in the Black Hawk War of 1832, and later became a friend of Lincoln and his wife in Illinois. He has been described as one of Lincoln's last personal friends to serve in Congress during the Civil War. Who was this man and what was his story? Look for it in a future issue of the *Harrison Heritage News*.

While news reports of poultry raised in Harrison County have had their fantastic aspects, such as the 1919 story about Mrs. Ross' fully-formed four-legged chicken (Just think what Colonel Sanders could have done with that), none have ever been seen such as those that Lincoln saw. But many from Harrison saw what Lincoln did and their stories will be told in this issue and those to come.

Harrison County Historical Society

Billy Fowler, President
 Bob Owen, Vice President
 Marilynn Bell, Secretary
 Dorothy Slade, Treasurer

Program Notes



Above - David Hurst as "Grandpa Jones" performed for the Feb. 17 joint library/historical society meeting at the library.

Photo, Sharon Fowler.

Ruddle's and Martin's Stations Historical Assoc. (RAMSHA) is planning the annual meeting, "Gathering 2011," for June 25. Volunteers will continue clean up of the Christian Spears Cemetery in April.

To become a member send \$15 individual/\$20 family to: Ruddle's & Martin Stations, 618 Buckeye Hills Rd., Falmouth, Ky. 41040. For more information contact Don Lee, President, at the above address or e-mail: hdlee9936@aol.com.

Harrison County History Calendar

March 17 - Historical Society - Randall Boyers

March 19 - History Day at Northern Ky University - lectures, workshops, and publications for sale by museums and historical societies in Northern Ky., including Harrison County. E-mail editor for more information.

April 21 - Northside Elementary 5th Grade Class

June 25 - Ruddles and Martin's Station Historical Assoc. "Gathering 2011" site to be announced.

President's Corner

Billy Fowler
billyfowler@kymail.com

February has brought more cold weather and snow and something else that I cannot remember from earlier this winter. A few warm days! But at least it is one more winter month out of the way. I do not know about the rest of you, but I am looking forward to more of the warm days.

We have been talking about the Handy House for so long that it just seems to be part of our normal discussions. One thing that is not normal is a recent donation. We received \$9,000 from Verizon Wireless (dba Celco Partnership). I have been working with representatives from the Kentucky Heritage Council/State Historic Preservation Office, Celco Partnership and Verizon Wireless for nearly a year to draft an agreement that assures everyone the money will be spent wisely and as intended. The check has now arrived and been deposited in the Historical Society's account.

Since the weather is starting to improve and now that we have a little money, some people are expecting immediate action. Well it just does not work that way. The donation, much like a grant, comes with stipulations as mentioned earlier. Without boring you with a lot of details, let me just say that the money must be spent on some specific stabilization issues. That is not a problem since the first thing that should be done is to stabilize the structure to prevent further deterioration. Also much like we have done for so long, we must continue to think farther into the future. The first thing to do with the money is attempt to grow it. Our secretary Marilynn Bell is already looking for a grant that we can use this money to match. Hopefully we can at least double the amount before we even think about spending it. This does not mean we will sit idly by hoping for something to happen. We will start doing some work on the grounds a little later in the spring probably using our own personal money as we have been doing for years. We have not given the house as much attention as we would have liked since the city erected a fence around it about a year-and-a-half ago. The fence, though it kept us from cutting the grass, vines and weeds from growing right up to and up the side of the house, it did not keep vandals away. The result is that we will again have to clean up the area immediately surrounding the house and deal with the damage caused by the vandals.

If you think these things are depressing you are correct, but not nearly as depressing as the years of struggle that for so long seemed to be going nowhere. What I hope you and the rest of the community understand is that if we could endure that for six-and-a-half years just to finally get an agreement that we can do something, we will endure these things and continue onward.

Cynthiana-Harrison County Museum

Martha Barnes, President www.cynthiana-harrisoncountymuseum.org.

Preserving and Interpreting Local History is Important

Whether or not one is a sports fan, it is difficult to overlook basketball at this time of year. Our local high school teams - both boys and girls - are challenged to prepare for end of season games and tournament times. As well, most of us are watching our favorite college teams. Local UK fans are reminded of the success of native son, Joe B. Hall. Our museum displays a tribute to him.

Just last week, museum visitors came hoping to find information about the Oddville girls team who won a state championship. We were able to share that information including a scrapbook full of clippings. Our museum exhibits recognize all types of sports - the ones with which we all are most familiar but also the Olympics and cricket.

As I think about people, I wonder if they know why Joe B. Hall Court is so named. After school groups visit, the museum volunteers, while they wait for the bus on a given day to bring the second or third group of students, consider the students. The young people show great interest and demonstrate good behavior. We realize there is so much for

them to learn and so much for us to preserve and share.

When the young visitors come (usually 4th or 5th graders), they are very interested in the military sections and impressed with the docents especially those who are veterans, some World War II. They can see their uniforms and equipment, hear or read their stories.

Great numbers of veterans have served in foreign countries. Some of our locals had hardly traveled out of the county before going abroad to fight. While watching KET programs (How wonderful they are!) about European countries, I marvel at the stately old buildings several hundred years old. I think of American buildings - the buildings in our own community. Some of those buildings which are being destroyed are hardly one hundred years old. Why? Are they built so poorly? Do we have no skills? Do those buildings have no character, no history? Are we desperate for more parking lots? What about preservation efforts? We need to support those few who seem interested and who work diligently to preserve. We must strive to do more.

Rattling Spurs

Bill Penn, Editor

150 Years Ago - February 1861

National - Texas voted for secession. A convention of seceded states met in Montgomery, Alabama, to adopt a Confederate constitution and inaugurate Jefferson Davis president and Alexander Stephens vice-president. President-elect Lincoln arrived in Washington. (Long - *Civil War Day by Day*, 30-41)

Kentucky - Peace Conference assembled in Washington, with six Kentucky commissioners. The Kentucky legislature refused to consider a state convention that Unionists feared would vote on secession. (Register KHS (35-3) 214.)

Harrison County - Representative Wm. C. Cleary sponsored pro-Southern legislation when he proposed resolutions and amendments that favored asking Lincoln to withdraw Federal troops from the seceding states; that the Federal government not take "compulsory action" against seceding states; that the governor authorize a special vote for a state convention in Frankfort to make recommendations concerning Kentucky's "honor," or in other words, whether the state should secede. The resolutions failed to pass, but Cleary was thereafter associated with the secessionist movement and thus a potentially disloyal citizen. (House Journal, 1861, (Called Session) 209, 214, 216, 217-243.)

Northern Kentucky Regional History Day

Northern Kentucky Regional History Day is scheduled for Saturday, March 19 with workshops, lectures and displays related to local and regional history from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the NKU Student Union. \$8 at door or \$6 in advance.

- 7:30 a.m. - Set-up for presenters and display tables on first floor of Northern Ky. University Student Union

- 8:00 to 10:00 a.m. - Registration and display area open on first floor of Student Union

10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. - Opening presentation :
"German-Americans in the Civil War from Cincinnati & Northern Kentucky"

- 11:15 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. - Workshop Session No. 1 on the first floor of the Student Union

- 12:15 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. - Workshop Session No. 2 on the first floor of the Student Union

- 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. - Displays open. Philip Naff will join me at a HCHS display table with historical society publications for sale and membership information.

To learn more about History Day at NKU's Highland Heights campus, send your name, e-mail address and postal address to watkinsan@nku.edu or visit this web site, the source of this announcement:

<http://www.nku.edu/~hisgeo/projects/historyday/index.php>