Harrison Heritage News

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

January 2003

Vol. 4 No. 1

In This Issue:

- A Baseball Story -1
- Museum - Winter Fun - 2
- Methodist Church History Part II- 3

Editor:Wm. A. Penn
penmwma@aol.com
Note: The Dec-02 newsletter was cancelled due to no meeting.

History Notes

George D. Slade (gslade@setel.com)

"STRIKE THREE"

At one time Cynthiana had a professional baseball team in the Bluegrass League. The park and grand stand was located across the river near what later became the cheese plant. The locals, named the "Cobblers," with a coach by the name of Shoemaker, won the pennant in 1923 with 55 wins and 43 losses. There was not enough attendance to support the team and it soon folded.

Folks still had a great interest in baseball and various teams were formed from time to time, one of these being the Cynthiana Merchants. Games were played at what was known as Daniel's Bottom now (2002) City-County Recreation Park. The hill on the western side was the grandstand. There was no need to try to collect admission charges because the grounds were open on all sides. Players furnished their own equipment and uniforms were furnished by local merchants with the privilege of having their firm's name displayed on the back of the player's shirt.

Wagering on the outcome increased interest in the games. The players were not barred from betting Games were scheduled with surrounding towns and communities and sometimes drew quite a crowd, especially on Sunday afternoons.

Cynthiana had a rather good southpaw pitcher by the name of Strauder Feeback from over around Hooktown. The catcher was Ernest McIlvain, local gasoline service station owner and operator. Others were Joe Biancke, John Grayson, Marshall Bell and Ollie Clifford. John L. Cummins, auctioneer, was an umpire.

In those days Cynthiana was on Central Standard Time, two hours behind what it is today in summer. By 7:00 p.m. the sun was nearing the horizon. Piqua, a community in Robertson County was scheduled to play the "Merchants" at Cynthiana on a Sunday afternoon. The game was to start at 3 p.m. Beyond Claysville one of the autos carrying the Piqua team was involved in an accident that caused considerable delay. They were quite late in arriving, but after consultation, a decision was made to play ball. The game got underway with Feeback pitching and McIlvain catching. By the eighth inning clouds had moved in and darkness was approaching rapidly. Betting on the game had been heavy and everyone wanted it to be completed.

Going into the top of the ninth inning, Cynthiana held a one run lead. Daylight was disappearing fast. Piqua loaded the bases with two out. Thunder could be heard in the west. The Piqua batter worked the count to 3 and 2. McIlvain walked to the mound to talk to Feeback. He said, "Strauder, I'm going to keep the ball. You go through the motions of pitching. I will hold my mitt in the strike zone and "plop" the ball there at the right time." He returned to his position behind the plate. The umpire yelled, "Play ball!" Feeback wound up and whizzed his arm forward as if throwing the ball. McIlvain "plopped" the ball in his mitt. The umpire yelled, "Strike three!" The batter threw his bat onto the ground, rubbed noses with the umpire and yelled, "Are you blind? Couldn't you see that ball was way too low for a strike?"

Cromwell's Comments to be Published

George W. Jacobs, Cynthiana Democrat publisher, will soon publish a book of John M. Cromwell's newspaper columns from 1928-1940, with the title, *Cromwell's Comments*. This is a joint publishing project with the Cynthiana-Harrison County Museum, who will receive all profits from the publication. Mr. Cromwell wrote his weekly column about Cynthiana's history and often included personal reminiscences of interesting people he knew in his occupations as bank teller at the National Bank, and later, as city treasurer and mayor. The book, edited by Harrison County Historical Society members George D. Slade and Bill Penn, will be about 200 pages, with two maps and about fifteen pages of photographs. The book has a name/subject index and has been annotated by the editors. Copies will be on sale at the Cynthiana-Harrison County museum. The Democrat will announce the publication date.

Historical Society Minutes

Jane Adams Whitehead

The Harrison County Historical Society met at the library on Thursday, November 21, 2002. The minutes and treasurer's reports will be reviewed at the next meeting. Bill Penn was named acting secretary. Oral History Project – Larry Moss reviewed the project to interview W.W.II veterans by a committee of the historical society. New P.A. Speaker – Larry Moss announced that a new public address system had been purchased and thanked Neville Haley for heading that project. Harold Slade asked that the newsletter be available for distribution before each meeting. Robert Poindexter, representing an Awards Committee, presented a plaque to Larry Moss as the recipient of the 2002 Harrison County Historical Society award for his dedication as serving as President of the organization. No December 2002 Meeting – The members voted not to have a meeting in December.

Mrs. Esther Ammerman presented a program in which she reviewed her experiences during W.W.II as a pilot in the Women's Air Force Service (WASP). She gave a brief history of women who had been in aviation before W.W.II, and mentioned the formation of WACS, WAVES, SPARS and Women Marines. Mrs. Ammerman received flight training in a Piper Cub and was accepted in the WASP program as an U.S. civil service employee. (Alumni received veteran's status about 1978.) At flight school she was issued men's GI overalls that were much too big for her. Later, she attended navigation school and learned to fly B-26 bombers, which were used to pull targets for B-24 gunners. Besides gunnery practice, WASP pilots would fly military personnel around the U.S. and ferry planes. Mrs. Ammerman even had flying time in B-29 bombers, the largest bomber of that era. She handed out photos of some of the airplanes she had flown, and a copy of Life magazine from 1943 about the WASP pilots.

No December 2002 (v.3 no.12) Newsletter:

Due to the cancellation of the December 2002 meeting, a newsletter was not published that month.

January Meeting: *The next meeting of the Historical Society will be Thursday, January 16, 2003. There will be a showing of Confederate paper money, large-size U.S. paper money from 1862, and paper fraction U.S. currency 1863-1873.* ***Dues:*** *2003 membership dues of $5 should be paid this month. Please mail a check to the address on page one, or bring to the next meeting.*

Cynthiana -Harrison County Museum

Martha Barnes

WINTER FUN

Following the theme of Cynthiana-Harrison County's wonderful Christmas parade ("When All is Sled and Done"), the museum staff decided to decorate the annex window in a similar fashion. In addition to our tree and our lovely old Santa (which was rescued from J. & R. Drugstore by George Slade and Harold Slade), we gathered an assortment of sleds and other items associated with winter fun. As soon as pioneers were settled, their need to travel grew even greater. People needed to be part of a community. Settlers needed supplies and services provided by others. Most of all, they needed other people.

Winter was the best time to travel. It was also the best time to socialize. The harvest was finished, the pantries were full, and there was not as much work to be done. Roads or paths were usually covered with snow. It was easy to glide over the smooth surface. People traveled in sleighs, cutters, carioles, and sometimes on toboggans pulled by dogs. They went to parties, visited friends, and made trips to the homes of relatives. The early sleighs in which people traveled were nothing more than boxes on runners or logs tied together. The later sleighs and cutters were beautifully made. They had soft seats and fur lining. During the Christmas season horses were decorated with bells and bright ribbons. Land travel was somewhat enjoyable and romantic. For some people, it was an opportunity for sport. Settlers were constantly challenging each other to races in the snow. Among the sleds or sleighs on display at the museum is a three foot sled used by Burton Kimbrough as a boy. The rounded runner made it very difficult to steer on icy surfaces. Robert Poindexter has loaned his Western Clipper sled with "Rosebud" embellished upon it. Mr. Poindexter also brought in a toboggan which is quite lengthy. Janice Herrington's donation is an old sled which was probably used to carry a small child across the snow. Another mode of transportation on display is Jim Bob Martin's little wooden farm wagon.

Of utmost importance to those traveling in winter were sleigh or buggy blankets or robes. The museum has three handsome robes in its collection. The robes are from the families of Hattie Jennings McKee, Burton Kimbrough, and William Wallace Hehr. A foot warmer (a gift of the Sarah Renaker estate) is displayed as is a pair of most unusual gloves donated by Mrs. Earl Roberts. Ice skating was another source of winter fun and travel. Burton Kimbrough and David Cordray have loaned ice skates which are very different from what one might purchase today. Mr. Cordray's skates are marked with an 1888 patent date. Other items in the museum annex window were loaned by Neville and Thelma Haley, Esther Ammerman, and Harold and Dorothy Slade. Thanks to those who helped to prepare the display. The staff, directors, and members of the Cynthiana-Harrison County Museum wish much happiness and many blessings for each of you for the new year.

Methodist Church in Harrison County (Part II)

[Part I was in issue 3-11, November 2002)

George D. Slade

Fourth and Present Church Building - 1905

In 1904 the trustees decided to replace the third church building. The Cynthiana *Log Cabin,* June 4, 1904, stated: "The congregation of the Cynthiana Methodist church has now subscribed about $12,000 for the new church building, and it has been definitely decided to tear down the old structure within the next few weeks and begin the erection of a $20,000 structure as soon as contracts and plans can be made." The building committee was composed of J. F. McDaniel, Lark Garnett, C. A. Renaker, William Kendall, Clarence LeBus, Orie LeBus, J. W. Renaker and Bazil Berry.[4]

As the Methodists were planning for a new church building, the city was planning for a new school building. The school needed the church lot. Some members of the school board said that the property could be purchased for $3-4 thousand. Should the Methodists sell, their new church would probably be erected on the Poindexter property at the corner of Church and Pleasant Streets. Mr. William Addams thought the city should purchase the church property, as it would mar the appearance of both of the handsome new buildings to rebuild the church on the present site. It seems that the city representatives and the church folks could not make a deal. On January 14, 1905, it was announced by the church building committee that the contract for erecting the new stone structure had been awarded to the firm of Poindexter and Humphrey. [Somehow it turned out to be constructed of brick.] The noted architect J. H. Coxhead of Buffalo, New York drew the plans.

The cornerstone of the new church building was laid July 4, 1905. It contains the roll of the officers of the church, Sunday School, Epworth League and Missionary Societies. It also contains a Bible, hymn book, discipline, some coins, Cynthiana papers and religious papers. The city chose a site on Bridge Street to build the new school, which was later replaced by the Cynthiana High School, later destroyed, and is now the site of Clifton Village. The Cynthiana *Log Cabin*, May 25, 1906, announced that the construction of the new church building was complete. The newspaper gave the following detailed description of the church including location and donors of the stained glass windows.

The dome memorial windows, in the main auditorium, were given by Mrs. Fannie Garnett and Mrs. Mattie Lake in memory of T. A. Garnett and John K. Lake. Two single windows on the same side were in memory of Reed M. Martin, given by Mrs. Martin, and of Henry and Lucy Williams, given by Miss Arkie Hemphill. Three windows on the Pike Street side were given by the Women's Home Mission Society, the Epworth League and the Woman's Foreign Mission Society. Mrs. Mattie Lake donated the furniture and windows in the infant class room.

Two memorial windows in the choir loft were given by Mrs. Frank Gray and Mrs. H. M. Carr, in memory of Mrs. Mary A. Beale and Mrs. Maggie Beale Ridgeley. The organ was donated by the ladies' organizations and the Epworth League donated the pulpit furniture.[5]

The church was dedicated May 27, 1906 before a crowd estimated to be 950. On this festive day, Bishop H. C. Morrison, of New Orleans, consecrated the church, as the choir sang sacred music and solos were sung by Mrs. Orie LeBus and Miss Carrie Fitzwater. The choir at this time included Mrs. Orie LeBus, Mrs. F. P. Clary, Mrs. Gertrude Smith, Misses Sidney Haviland, Carrie Fitzwater, Fannie O'Brien, Messers. A. T. Fitzwater, C. J. Rouse, Geo. Levi, Edward Blair, C. T. Wickliffe, H. A. Woody, and Miss Violette Renaker, organist. A guest organist, Miss Phillips, of Nicholasville, played at the dedication.[6] Church trustees in 1906 were Lark Garnett, C. A. Renaker and John F. McDaniel. Stewards were John F. McDaniel, C. A. Renaker, Lark Garnett, George Levi, Orie LeBus, J. W. Renaker, W. B. Rouse and D. R. Kimbrough.

The city, having built a new school on Bridge Street, had no further need for its property on Church and Pike Streets, bordering the Methodist property. The former church lot facing Pike Street was divided into two lots, No. 1 on the east and No. 2 on the west. On April 14, 1909, at public auction, lot No. 1 was sold to H. D. Frisbie Jr. and lot No. 2 to J. R. Poindexter, who resold it to Mrs. Emma Boyd. Both buyers said that they planned to build homes on the lots later that year.

Church Additions 1938-1994

The church made a substantial addition when in 1938 an annex was built and the main church building interior was redecorated. On January 14, 1950, at public auction, the trustees purchased [*continued on p. 4*]
[*Methodist History Pt. II continued from page 3*]from the estate of Helen D. Boyd Rucker lot No. 2 for $10,500.

This is the lot adjacent to the church property on the east side. The dwelling on this lot was for a time used as a Sunday School annex.[7]

Since the 1950s the church has made several changes. An extensive remodeling and improvement program was begun in March 1954. This work was completed in February 1955. At this time a new organ and air-conditioning system was installed in the church. The church removed the dwelling on the lot adjacent to the church property in 1965 and began erecting an educational building, which was completed and dedicated in 1967. On December 28, 1994, the trustees purchased from James S. Whaley lot No. 1 for $54,500. Recovery of the lot for which the church had paid one dollar in 1831, and lost on a mortgage claim in 1872, was now complete.[8] In 1957 the residence at 304 E. Pleasant Street was purchased as the Methodist Church parsonage during the ministry of Rev. Kenneth Clay. In 1979 the church sold this parsonage.[9]

The history of the women's organization of the Cynthiana Methodist Church began with the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, organized on September 14, 1881. About 1908 this group merged with another to form the name Missionary Society. In 1922 the church formed a second society known as Adult Number Two. In 1939 a children's society was formed. By 1940, the group was called Woman's Society of Christian Service. In 1968, when Methodist denominations merged to become the United Methodist Church, the name of the group was changed again to United Methodist Women. The United Methodist Women are organized under group names, formerly known as Circles. Some Circles have ceased to exist, including the New Circle, Lair-Hemphill Circle, Youth Circle, Day Circle, and the Martha Kendall Circle. Active Circles in 1976, now called groups, were: Bird Lebus, Dorothy Rees, Alline Linehan, Etta Ammerman, Belle Bennet, Mary McDaniel, Wesleyan and Patti Allen.[10]
[Editor's Note: This concludes the First United Methodist Church history. Please send corrections or clarifications to this article, or any newsletter article, to the address below. The Harrison Heritage News welcomes other church histories from Harrison County. Send a photocopy to William A. Penn, Editor, Harrison Heritage News, 423 Mill Rd. Pl., Midway, KY 40347, or email to the new email address of pennwma@aol.com.]

---

[1] Harrison County Deed Book No. 36, p. 204, December 23, 1873.
[2] Harrison County Deed Book No. 39, November 22, 1877.
[3] Harrison County Deed Book No. 44, p. 313, November 13, 1882.
[4] *Log Cabin*, May 25, 1906.
[5] *Ibid.*.
[6] *Ibid.*
[7] Harrison County Deed Book No. 111, p. 504, January 14, 1950.
[8] Harrison County Deed Book No. 204, p. 151, December 28, 1994.
[9] *The Cynthiana Steeple*, May 17, 1983.
[10] Wilson, Mrs. A. T., "History of the United Methodist Women," (pamphlet dated June 1976).

Great Gifts: Buy a Friend or Relative a Harrison County History Book

These publications are available at the Cynthiana-Harrison County Museum, 112 S. Walnut St., Cynthiana, KY 41031, which is open all day Fridays and Saturdays: Lucinda Boyd's ***Chronicles of Cynthiana,*** a reprint of the rare 1894 edition ($20); ***Cynthiana Democrat June 1896*** reprint, with many period photographs and biographical sketches ($5); Virgil Peddicord's ***Cynthiana Since 1790***, a detailed listing of the owners of every lot in Cynthiana up to 1923 ($20; index $3); ***This Old House***, by Katherine Wilson, first published as a series in the Democrat in the 1960s, Ms. Wilson tells the history of 26 early Harrison County homes and their owners. 70 pages with photographs and index ($15);. For more information and shipping charges, call the museum 859-234-7179.
Note: William A. Penn's *Rattling Spurs & Broad-Brimmed Hats* is temporarily out of print.

Genealogy Queries

Wills - I am seeking any information on Leon Wills, a W. W. II veteran who died July 21, 1982 (born Nicholas Co., KY?). His father was Clarence T. Wills and mother was Edna Harney (born in Harrison County, KY.).
Send queries to: William A. Penn, 423 Mill Road Pl., Midway, KY 40347, or e-mail pennwma@aol.com.

Annual Index - Harrison Heritage News *for Vol. 3 (2002) will be in the February 2003 (V. 4 No. 2) issue. The last index, in the January 2002 issue, was for volume 1 and 2 (2000-2001).*