CYNTHIANA
Harrison, County

History

Nestling in a valley of the South Fork of Licking, in Harrison county, Kentucky lies Cynthiana. Hither came actors one hundred and fifty years ago,

"To fret their little hour upon the stage,
And then to be seen no more."

Few stones remain to mark the place where they played their last act - when death extinguished the footlights, and the weary actors crossed from Time to Eternity.

Perrin, in his history of Harrison, Nicholas, Bourbon and Scott counties, says - It suited the convenience of a few of these old worthies, in 1793, one year after Kentucky became a state to establish a county seat on the South Fork of Licking. In the meantime, Benjamin Harrison one of the earliest settlers on the site of Cynthiana had applied to the General Assembly of Kentucky to set up the county of Harrison, with the little settlement of Cynthiana as its metropolis. Both acts went through in the month of December, 1793, the new county, in honor of its sponsors, was denominatred Harrison, its county seat being named in honor of Cynthia and Anna, two daughters of Robert Harrison who devided the original one hundred and fifty acres of land on which the settlement was begun.

It is not certainly known just when or where the first settlement was made in Harrison county. Probably at Hinston's station in 1775. There is an old church building, still in use by the Baptist of the Indian Creek neighborhood, which was built in 1790. This church, located about four miles from Cynthiana on State route No. 36, is believed to be the oldest church building, still in use, in the state.
Points of Interest

It is not easy to fix precisely the date or erection of Cynthiana's first Court House, she has had three. It was probably about the year of 1810. Prior to that time court was held in various private houses. The present stately Colonial edifice was erected in 1851, its predecessor having been destroyed by fire in the same year. It has been said of our Court House - "Any town may have expensive new buildings which in time become unsightly, but few have such a beautiful and artistic building as Cynthiana's old Colonial Court House, one of the very few in the state that have preserved the old county records intact - time worn records bearing the handwriting of such statesmen as Henry Clay, who in 1801 was admitted as attorney of the Quarter Sessions Court." The Court House, located at Court Square and Main street, is one of the first objects to meet the gaze of tourists on U. S. route No. 27.

The oldest brick house in Cynthiana, erected in 1805, is directly across from the Harrison Hotel. It is now being used as a filling station. Coming down Main street, we notice an old brick house, once the home of Joseph Deeba, Governor of Kentucky - 1824 to 1828. Again on Main street, we have a brick building erected in 1812, as staid on a stone coping at the top. Turning now to the right, off of Main street, at Pike, we find an old fashioned mansion, facing across the river to the west, built in 1807, still in an excellent state of preservation, and still occupied as a residence.

We now call your attention to the oldest house in Cynthiana, built of logs in 1790 directly back of the Court House. This old building is rich in tradition. It has been used successively as a residence, court house, law office, printing office and photograph gallery. In it Henry Clay once defended a man accused of murder. Also in it Guthrie's arithmetic, the first
to be published west of the Alleghenies, was printed by Adam Kenan, and in this same shop Bishop Kavanaugh and the Honorable A. Dudley Mann (afterwards a famous French diplomat) served as apprentices. The first newspaper in Cynthiana, "the Guardian of Liberty" was also published there. This old house was remodeled recently by the addition of a left wing, also of logs, but the right wing still stands first as it did one hundred and forty-six years ago.

The Old Cemetery

Located just as one enters Cynthiana coming from the North on U. S. No. 27, the ground embraced within the limits of the Old Cemetery was reserved for that sacred purpose when the town was laid out in 1793. Visiting this ancient burial ground one is impressed by the mutability of time, by the quaint old tablets, some of them tottering to their fall, others lying prone upon the earth, and still others as erect as the day they were placed there, in some instances more than a century and a quarter ago. Doubtless men and women are sleeping there in "unmarked" graves of even greater antiquity.

Battle Grove Cemetery

As time went on, the citizens of Cynthiana and Harrison county, realizing the need of a new cemetery, purchased thirty-six acres of ground about a mile from the Court House on the Millersburg road, now State Highway No. 38. When the question of a name came up, some one mindful of the battle so recently fought on the site during the war between the states, suggested "Battle Grove," and so it was named. The new cemetery was dedicated with appropriate ceremonies, in November 1868. The natural lay of the land, assisted by the wise planning of a competent topographical engineer, has resulted in alloting
to Cynthiana one of the most beautiful abiding places of the dead to be found in the entire country. Many handsome monuments grace its undulating terrain; some of them historical, which we will mention later.

The Catholic Cemetery

Situated on an eminence, after one coming from the north on U. S. highway No. 27, crosses the concrete bridge over Indian creek, the Catholic Cemetery will attract the tourist attention. From its heights, looking to the Northwest, a magnificent landscape view unfolds itself.

Ruddell Station

Under the name of Hinkson's Fort, this was settled in 1775, probably the first to be made in what is now Harrison county. In the summer of 1780, a formidable force consisting of six hundred Indians and Canadians under the leadership of Col. Byrd, of the British Army, marched from the Ohio towns to attack the settlements in Kentucky; they brought with them several pieces of artillery, the only time perhaps, that artillery was ever employed against the pioneers by the Indians. The approach of the enemy was not discovered by the garrison until the sound of the fifing awakened them to their danger. A parley was held at which the garrison agreed to surrender, with the proviso that all prisoners were to be under the protection of the British. However, as it turned out, Byrd in making this promise, promised more than he was able to perform; as no sooner were the gates thrown open than the Indians rushed in, and seizing men, women and children claimed them as their prisoners. In this way members of families were separated. From here Byrd marched to Martin's station, five miles distant, which likewise surrendered without a blow.
The ease with which they had taken these two stations so elated the Indians, that they now proposed to attack Bryan's and the settlement at Lexington. Byrd, however, refused having been by that time become disgusted with the tactics of his Indian allies, and realized that he could not control them. Some prisoners were murdered at the time of the surrender, others probably during the march back to the Indian towns in Ohio. Among the prisoners was John Kinkson. It is to be noted, however, that he succeeded in making his escape on route, and made his way to Lexington, from whence he eventually returned to the old settlement, and lived to be the progenitor of the Hinkson family in Harrison county.

**Higgins Fort**

This place, located about two and one-half miles from Cynthiana, on a high bluff overlooking South Licking, was attacked by a body of Indians in the early morning of June 12, 1786. Unaware of the approach of the Indians, two men who had stepped from their cabin were shot down. Shutting the gates of the fort hurriedly, the small garrison held a council of war, at which it was determined to send to either Hinkson's or Harrisons (Cynthiana) for help. One of the garrison agreed to make the attempt, and jumping from the bluff into a thicket of trees, which broke his fall, succeeded in getting across the river. Here he turned and waved his hand to his comrades who were anxiously watching. In about an hour he was back accompanied by a body of horsemen, well armed, only to find that the Indians had immediately decamped, after seeing that the man had gone for help. Both places mentioned above are off the main highways, but are accessible from the Old Lair Pike. Tourists through Cynthiana will be able to visit both within two hours.
The Old Covered Bridge

Spanning South Licking on U. S. highway No. 62, this was opened for traffic in 1837, and consequently celebrated its centennial of constant use next year, 1937. Cynthianians are proud of their old bridge, now said to be the oldest in the state, and propose to celebrate its centennial in fitting style. Greenup R. Remington, a long time resident of Cynthiana, was the contractor. It was patterned after a plan perfected by one called the wooden Span, which called for heavy upright oak timbers, with the addition of other oak timbers hewn in the form of a crescent and bolted together. Anchored on each bank by massive piers, with two supporting piers in midstream, this old structure has stood the test of storm and flood. It has a length of two hundred and seventy-five feet, but is narrow according to present day standards. It is today as solid as the rock of Gibraltar, and with continued care, would doubtless last out another century. However, it is now under the supervision of the State Highway Department, and will doubtless soon give way to the eternal march of progress.

War History

Cynthiana and Harrison county furnished a company to the Mexican War. They were engaged at the battle of Buena Vista, where some of them made the supreme sacrifice. In 1848 there was erected a monument of their services, which, first standing in the Court House yard, was removed to Battle Grove Cemetery in 1868, with the names inscribed of those who died of minister disease, or were killed in action.

Confederate Monument

Harrison county, like many others in the border states, sent about an equal number to the opposing sides in the war between the states. During the
war, Cynthiana, usually held by the Federals, was twice attacked by General John H. Morgan, the famous Confederate partisan. The first time, in 1862 he easily brushed aside the opposition, and captured the town. Again he came, in 1864 made short work of all opposition in the city; and in addition captured and entire regiment sent by train from Cincinnati to oppose him, cutting them off at Keller's bridge. On the next day, the Federal General Burbridge, with five thousand men approached from Mt. Sterling, and the battle was joined on the present site of Battle Grove Cemetery. Here Morgan was defeated, but not captured, as with the majority of his command he succeeded in making good his escape.

Shortly after the close of the war, in 1867, the Confederate Memorial Association was organized, its purpose to erect a fitting memorial to the Confederate dead who fell in action at the two Cynthiana battles. This monument to be erected in the southland, stands in addition to the second entire regiment by train from Cincinnati to oppose him, cutting them off at Keller's bridge. On the next day, the Federal General Burbridge, with five thousand men approached from Mt. Sterling, and the battle was joined on the present site of Battle Grove Cemetery. Here Morgan was defeated, but not captured, as with the majority of his command he succeeded in making good his escape.

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"In the future numerous monuments will be erected to those dead; yes, every national cemetery, every federal monument, every titled officer, are memorials of our dead. And as their histories recount the deeds of McClellan and Grant, and Hooker; they will do honor to our Lee and Jackson, Johnson. When that day comes, a great happy republic, might in its perfect unity, will guard with omnipotent and pious care a true liberty."
Harrison Chief

Two and one-half miles from Cynthiana, on the Old Lai Pike, the home of Harrison Chief. Known by tradition to all lovers of the saddle horse, this grand old sire was the progenitor of all that is excellent in the saddle horse of today. Bred and owned by the late James W. Cromwell, he died in 1896, aged twenty-four years. The stall which he occupied is still standing.

Modern Cynthiana

Located on the L & N railroad, six miles south of Covington, and thirty miles north of Lexington, at an altitude of seven hundred and eighty feet, and at the intersection of U. S. highways Nos. 27 and 62, and State Highway No. 36, Cynthiana may well be termed the gateway to the famous Blue Grass region of Kentucky. With a population approximating four thousand five hundred, increasing slowly, but surely from year to year, our thriving little city, not boasting any factories, derives her support from a surrounding territory rich in livestock and agricultural products.

Churches

Church of the Advent, the only one in Cynthiana still using its original house of worship, was erected in 1854. A stone building located on North Walnut street, and unique from the fact that instead of an architect's plan being used in its construction, a model, in miniature, was used, said to be a replica of a noted old church in England. On the same street, as the Episcopal Church, diagonally across, we find Saint Edwards Church, a large building, Cathedral style, erected in 1873. Next we have the Presbyterian Church, located diagonally across from the Harrison hotel, on Main street.
Our other church buildings are of more modern architecture. The Christian Church termed in some localities "Disciples of Christ", is worshipping in a handsome edifice of "native" stone. On the corner of Mill and Main streets, and fronting on U. S. highway No. 27, this superb church building is well worth the attention of visiting strangers. The Methodist congregation is domiciled in a fine building of pressed brick, corner of Pike and Church streets. The Baptist congregation claim as their home a handsome structure of cream colored brick, with Corinthian pillars, corner of Church and Pleasant streets.

Cynthiana boasts three banks and a Building and Loan Association, all owning handsome quarters, and with aggregate deposits of $2,364,000.

FRATERNAL ORDERS

Saint Andrews Lodge No. 13 F. A. M., has been established in Cynthiana for a century and a quarter. With its affiliated orders, Royal Arch Chapter and K. T. Commandery, it is established in a handsome building on South Main street. I. O. O. F., almost one hundred years in Cynthiana, meets on the third floor of the Farmers National Building. A thriving Knights of Pythias lodge have their quarters on the third floor of the Harrison Deposit Bank Building. The Elk lodge holds its social activities on the second floor of the Harrison Deposit Bank building.

CLUBS

Our Women's Club, with its affiliated branches, has recently erected a beautiful little Club House on south Church street, around this center many, and varied social activities are carried on. Our Rotary International with a present membership of thirty-five or our foremost business men, is con-
stantly working in their quiet way for the betterment of our community. Our Business Men's Club, with a membership of two hundred and twenty-four, working through committees, is constantly planning for the good of the city.

**Public Buildings & Schools**

We have an up to date, and well equipped High School, supplemented by the Marshall school for the lower grades; also in connection with the High School, a first rate library.

Our Government building, located on the corner of Walnut and Pleasant streets, was erected in 1913, and too much cannot be said in praise of its architectural beauty. It is conceded on all sides to be one of the prettiest in all central Kentucky.

The Harrison Memorial Hospital, located corner of Pike and Miller streets is well equipped to care for the needs of the town and county. The Harrison Hotel, corner of Main and Pleasant streets, fronts on U. S. No. 27. A modern structure of forty rooms, this hotel is under local management, and caters to the wants of guests in every particular. As for restaurants, they are to be found scattered all over town, with menus suiting the most discriminating palates.

Our Municipal Building, dedicated in 1929, is a handsome structure, and has been much admired by visitors. In its construction, provision was made to house our Fire Department; a large room was also set apart for a Public Library, which has gotten well under way, at present it contains thirty-five hundred books, and the number is being increased from time to time.

Cynthiana's retail merchants, in all lines, are enterprising, and are able to supply the wants of their most discriminating customers. We have one wholesale grocery, which commands a large trade in central Kentucky towns.
We also have two flouring mills, and the Kentucky Cardinal Dairy, the latter making cheese and butter. Located in Cynthiana are Standard Oil, Texaco and Spur filling stations, in addition to a number of private stations. We have agencies for the Ford, Chevrolet, and numerous other cars.

On U. S. No. 27, across the river from the little settlement of Lair, the Old Lewis Hunter Distillery is in operation, with a capacity of ninety barrels per day. "Old Lewis Hunter" is a famous brand of whiskey, dating back to the "Sixties", at which time, Lewis Hunter established a small distillery on the same spot.

Harrison county, noted for her contribution of a high grade of livestock to the markets of the country, is also rated as one of the foremost counties in the production of burley tobacco. Cynthiana, with her eight looseleaf sales houses, combining a floor space second to none, excepting Lexington, furnishes exceptional facilities for marketing this staple. Some one has said, and truly said, There is no better place to live "in ole Kentucky" than in Cynthiana and without fear of contradiction that all visitors who once come under the spell of her charms will want to linger yet a while within her gates.