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Portal to the Past

NOSTALGIC LOOK at FASCINATING ARCHITECTURE

By John R. Lay, Hardin County Historical Society

Have you ever considered why early bridges were covered? There are several theories as to why they were covered during the 19th century. A favorite is the plausible explanation that in covering the bridge the entrance resembled a barn, making it easier to drive animals across, especially horses, which tended to balk when crossing high over running water.

Covered bridges were used to protect the floor boards from a harsh climate. The covering kept oiled timbers dry and less slippery through rain and snow extending the life span of the floor from 10 to 80 years.

Hardin County was known to have one of these relics from days before roads were paved and multi-lane Interstates crisscrossed the nation connecting communities and providing passage to a wider world.

This woodworking masterpiece was built simply to allow folks to cross from one bank to the next. A great advancement in transportation when considering that a simple log, or several laced together side-by-side, once allowed only foot traffic across the many abundant streams in the county with little opportunity for the hauling of produce unless fording when the water was low.

For courting couples, this covered bridge like others across the state offered a rendezvous site away from prying eyes of chaperones and the perfect opportunity to steal a kiss in the dark during an afternoon ride.

Hardin County's Covered 'Kissing' Bridge was located off the Bacon Creek Road at a small community known as Yeagersville at the mouth of Valley Creek and Nolin River.

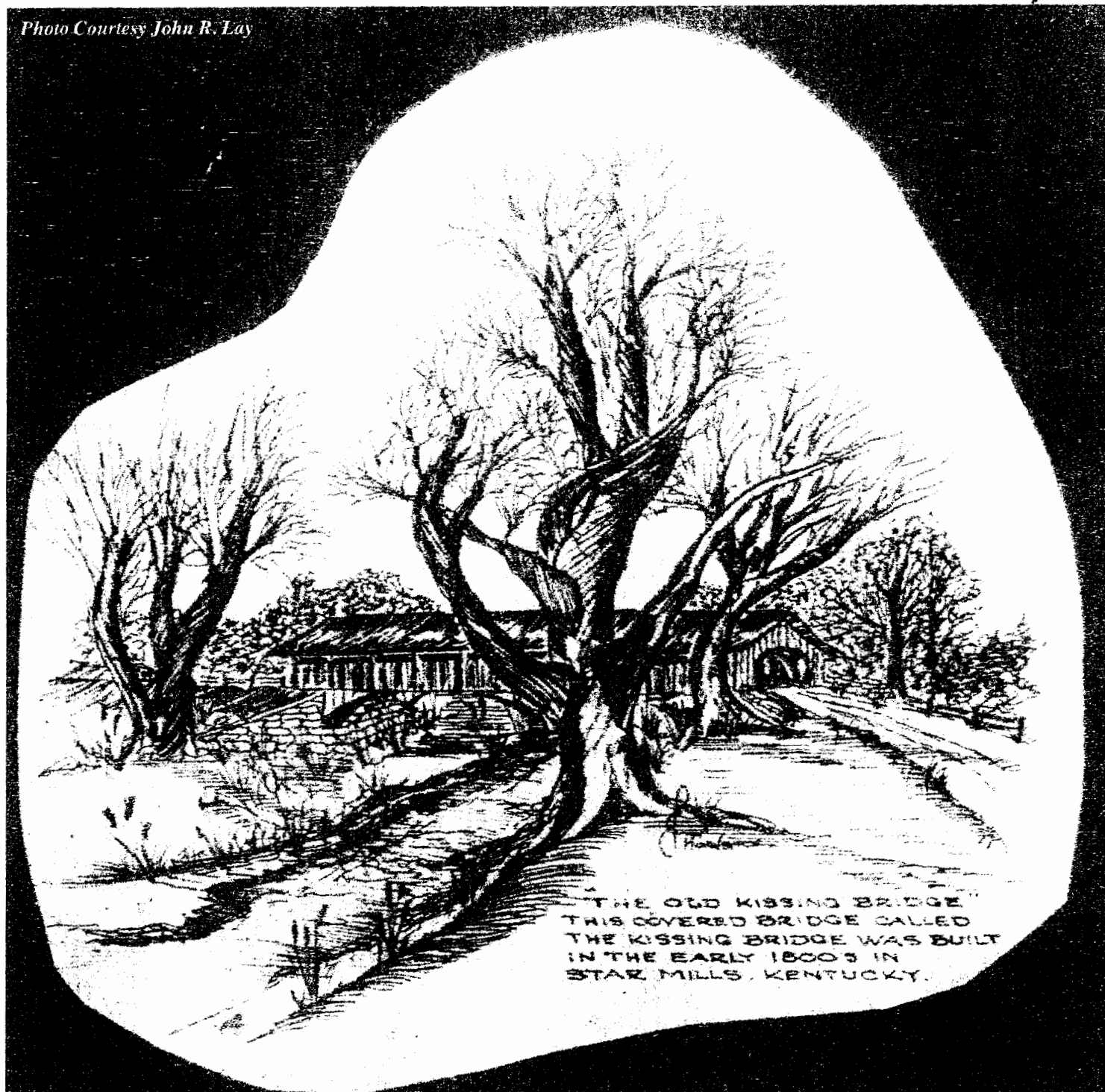
Before this covered bridge was built, folks used a spot to cross the Nolin River called Watson's Ford or the Blind Crossing. A simple roadbed was installed out of logs spaced



The visible remains of a ford known as the "Blind Crossing" or in 1834 referred to as Watson's Crossing. This rock bed was used for crossing the Nolin River above the Star Mills Community. A county court order for the building of a bridge, for decades known by the local populace as the "Kissing Bridge," led to the discontinued use of this early county transportation convenience.

*Photo Courtesy
John R. Lay*

Photo Courtesy John R. Lay



"THE OLD KISSING BRIDGE"
THIS COVERED BRIDGE CALLED
THE KISSING BRIDGE WAS BUILT
IN THE EARLY 1800'S IN
STAR MILLS, KENTUCKY.



"We crossed the river by a wooden bridge, roofed and covered on all sides, and nearly a mile in length. It was profoundly dark; perplexed with great beams crossing and recrossing it at every possible angle; and through broad chinks and crevices in the floor, the rapid river gleamed, far down below, like a legion of eyes. We had not lamps; and as the horses stumbled and floundered through this place, toward the distant speck of dying light, it seemed interminable."

British author Charles Dickens, on crossing a covered bridge in Harrisburg, PA, during his 1842 tour across America.

and-filled with stones, creating a hard surface just beneath the water for ease in navigation.

Rural communities needed something more convenient and reliable than river fords or log foot bridges to transport both harvest and citizens during all types of weather if the area was to prosper and expand.

At a point in time in the county's history the County Court decided a bridge was needed at this crossing to improve transportation. On April 20, 1846, the county appointed Nathaniel Pike, Sylvester Boorman, and Richard Richards commissioners and charged them with the task of planning for the erecting of a suitable bridge across the Nolin River at the mouth of Valley Creek. They determined the cost for construction and reported their findings on the matter.

It was two years later, October 9, 1848, that a report on the bridge was delivered. A site was selected and a bid of \$1,500 was entered into the court records for bridge construction.

Several years later, January 21, 1851, a contract was finally made for bridge construction to Richard Percefull at \$1,285.

The covered bridge was built spanning the Nolin River a few yards downstream and the old Blind Crossing was closed.

Sadly, even greater advancements in transportation lead to the replacement of the great wooden beams and overhead enclosure spanning the waterway around 1902.

The iron trusses of the Champion Bridge Company at Star Mills for \$3,000 replaced Hardin County's woodworking masterpiece built before Civil War. A civil engineering feat, both aesthetically pleasing and architecturally sound fashioned from crude tools, virgin timber and the ingenuity of local craftsmen fell victim to progress.

Tuesday 21st January 1851

Tuesday 21st January 1851 Court met according to adjournment

Presents
William C. McClain, Richard McKimmon, John Miller,
Chairman, Howell, John C. Williams

It being Reported verbally to the Court, that Richard Percefull had become the undertaker of the bridge across Nolin near the mouth of the Valley Creek at the sum of \$1285, and also hundred dollars, having been levied in October 1849, of being now in the Sheriff's hands, as a part of the funds appropriated for that purpose. It is ordered that the same be paid over to the said Richard Percefull on his depositing in the Clerk's office his bond with John J. Helm, Security for the completion of the job, on upon his the said Percefull, executing bond with such security as may be approved of by the Court, at the next term.

Photo Courtesy Kenneth L. Tabb
Hardin County Clerk

ABOVE: 1851 Hardin County Court record appropriating funds for the building of a bridge near Star Mills.

BELOW: Stacked stones at the edge of the Nolin River off Bacon Creek Road, just upstream from Star Mills are the only trace of the Kissing Bridge used in horse and buggy days.



Photo Courtesy John R. Lay

Clues to Sonora's Unique Beginning Previously Buried Come to Light

DISCOVERY SPARKS HUNT FOR ANSWERS

By John R. Lay, Hardin County Historical Society

Most towns are named after the founder or first people to settle in the area. Some are named for the area's geographical characteristic or something/someone of importance associated with its early history. It has been reported that a few years after 1858, when the Louisville and Nashville Railroad was built and running from the points constituting the line's name, a gentleman looking Mexican made his appearance at a populated stop along the line some 13 miles south of Elizabethtown. The gentleman, a railroad contractor, made such an impression on the inhabitants of the area that they agreed to change the area's handle from 'Bucksnot' to that of his native State in Mexico, Sonora. That name stuck as the area developed into a reputable town, one with a post office established in 1859, a permanent railroad depot constructed just after November 1860, followed by the town's incorporation in 1865. In 1881 the town of Sonora had an impressive population of 300 inhabitants and as reported a few years later in the 1896 newspaper the distinction of being the largest shipping point outside of Elizabethtown between Louisville and Horse Cave and in the shipment of livestock, grain and produce probably the largest of any station between Louisville and Bowling Green.

The name of the railroad contractor who loaned the use of his homeland's name for the area is not known and until recently the name of the man who made settlement of the 'populated' area possible was also forgotten.

Carolyn Wimp, John Lay and Elvin Smith, Jr. were intrigued when Larry Fulkerson of Sonora told them he knew of a couple of cemeteries in Sonora that they didn't know existed. Fulkerson's declaration proved to be a fascinating discovery of

the town's origin, a reminder of its original founder and two family burying plots along the eastern most edge of the town that has been dubbed Smith Cemetery No. 1 and No. 2.

In 1827, Rufus Smith purchased 190 acres from Granger's Great Tract in the area today known as Sonora. He made several more purchases of land from Granger's Great Tract including 460 acres in 1832 until he held title to over 1000 prime acres that bordered the turnpike road.

County Court records show that Smith sold tracts of land from his holdings beginning in 1845.

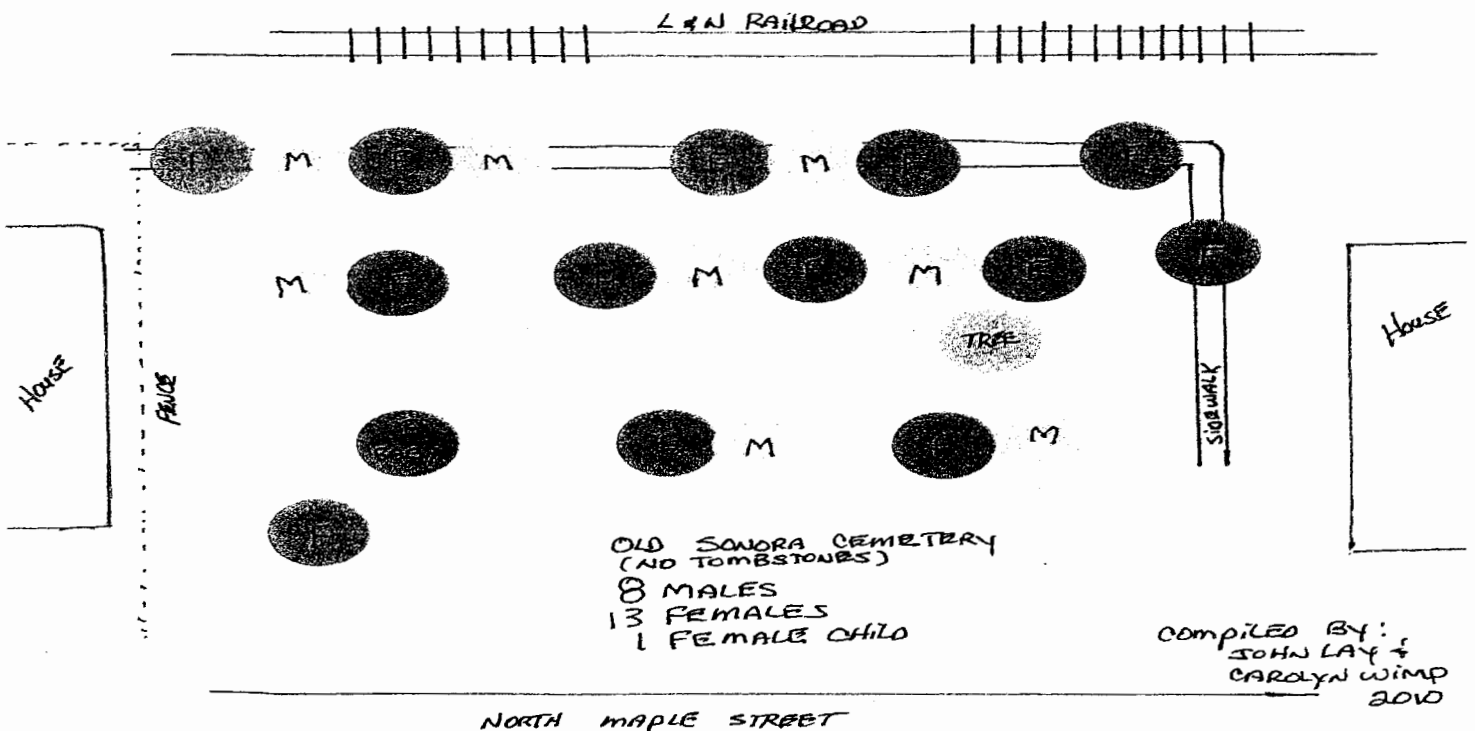
In 1860 when he sold land to the Louisville and Nashville Railroad beginning at the south end of the depot the town was already known as Sonora Station according to the deed even though Smith owned the majority of the area's acreage.

During the years of the American Civil War, the elderly Smith sold off several small tracts of land in the town, some referred to as lot numbers located along the railroad, to different individuals.

By 1867, Smith's holdings known as lot 34 and 35 were transferred by his heirs to the town's doctor, James Owsley. Several more deeds were made by the heirs during 1867 transferring title from the town's original owner to others listing the parcels by lot number, street name or adjacent to the railroad.

On July 18, 1870 the trustees of the town of Sonora filed a plat of the town with Virgil Hewitt, Hardin County Clerk. Five streets and the railroad are named with only 18 lots identified by number on the grid even though more than twice that total is recorded in county deed transfers by that date in time.

The Friday, June 29, 1888 issue of the Elizabethtown News reported that the funeral of Smith's widow, Dianah, had taken





Photos Courtesy John R. Lay

Left Top: Smith Cemetery No. 1 is situated along Maple Street (originally known as Sycamore Street) overlooking the L & N Railroad and the site of the old depot.

Left Bottom: Tombstones once marking gravesites at Smith Cemetery No. 2 are now piled along the perimeter fence of the once overgrown family burying grounds.

Right Top: Tombstone of J.S. Williams, son-in-law of the town's founder. Williams was a retail merchant in the town of Sonora before being elected Sheriff of Hardin County.

Right Bottom: Tuesday, June 25, 1911 Elizabethtown News article announcing discovery of etched stone slabs at old cemetery site in Sonora.

place at the Sonora Methodist Church followed by burial in the family cemetery located in Sonora. The newspaper also added that her husband and 6 children preceded her in death and she leaves 4 children.

By the turn of the 19th century, few Sonora residents remembered the Smith family. Things may have been different if Rufus had lend his name to the area; Smithland, Smithton, Smithville or some other derivative of the quite common moniker. One of the cemeteries was also forgotten while the other dotted with standing granite stones fared somewhat better.

In July of 1911, David H. Highbaugh was excavating in front of his home working on concrete pavement when he unearthed three stone slabs that had been intended for tombstones. The oldest, dating back 111 years, held the inscription of Rufus Smith. Stones for Leland Bland and W.T. Bland were also uncovered. While the property's deed description indicated the presence of a graveyard, Highbaugh's discovery was the first to put a name to some of Sonora's first residents interred.

Almost one hundred years later those stones are no longer evident. A survey of burial sites at Smith Cemetery No. 1 location was taken using dowsing rods, a process commonly known as grave witching. The cemetery appears well laid out with a population of 8 males, 13 females and one female child.

Smith Cemetery No. 2 is a short distance north of the older family burying grounds. Tombstones from that hallowed spot are heaped into a pile alongside a fence and the final resting place of those who they once marked are now known only to the maker.



Mr. D. H. Highbaugh has just completed a nice concrete walk from his front veranda to the street and all along in front of his property which adds very much to the appearance and convenience of his place.

Mr. C. L. Bland has completed a porch in front of his property and is now laying a concrete walk to the street. It looks like the concrete fever has struck our town pretty hard and there is more to follow.

While excavating in front of Mr. D. H. Highbaugh's residence for his new concrete pavement some very old relics were found. Three stone slabs which had been intended for tombstones it is supposed were unearthed with inscriptions on them dating back one hundred and eleven years. One name was Rufus Smith born 111 years ago and was the grandfather of of C. R. and W. A. Wood who are now business men of this place. Another was Leland Bland who was born 99 years ago, and was the father of Henry Bland who formerly lived near here and was the first assessor in that section. The other one bore the name of W. T. Bland, who was a son of Leland Bland and is a relative of the Blands of this vicinity.

John Ireland

SONORA MAN SHAPES TEXAS HISTORY

EX-GOV. IRELAND DEAD.

SAN ANTONIA, TEXAS, March 15.—
Ex-Gov. John Ireland, of Seguin, died here to-day of neuralgia of the heart. He was born in Hart county, Kentucky, in 1827, came to Texas in 1853, served in the Confederate army and after the war served in the Legislature, on the Supreme bench and two terms as Governor. Twice he came near being elected United States Senator, being always a staunch Democrat. In recent years he had given his attention to railroad construction, but sustained financial reverses.

He lived in Elizabethtown for many years and drove a stage coach for Mr. Samuel B. Thomas. He has several relatives living near Sonora.

March 26, 1896 Seguin, Texas newspaper story on the demise of the 18th Texas Governor and the end of a celebrated career of public service.

By Susan McCrobie, Hardin County Historical Society

In 1827, as the new year unfolded, Hardin County natives, Patrick and Rachel Newton Ireland welcomed a baby boy into the world. John Ireland, whose name in early county history has been almost forgotten, began laboring as a farmer, like his father, yet quickly showed an aptitude for learning and desire to serve the public that destined him for greater things.

By age twenty, John secured an appointment as deputy sheriff of Hart County. After the end of one year, he was appointed constable of Hart County; however, because he was so young an act of the legislature was necessary to make him eligible for service. He served as constable for three years to much acclaim.

For a period of time Ireland resided in the Sonora community. There, by day, he drove a route on the stagecoach line owned by Elizabethtown millionaire, Samuel Beale Thomas and, in the evening, he began studying law.

By 1851, Ireland was at Munfordville earnestly pursuing his law studies with Robert D. Murray and Judge Henry Wood. He ultimately was admitted to the bar in 1852.

In 1853, he moved westward to Seguin, Texas and established a law practice in the newly incorporated town. His reputation in the area grew favorably and in 1858 he had a successful bid for mayor of the town.

By 1861, when Lincoln was sworn in as President and a wave of secession was moving across the southern tier of the nation, Ireland a delegate to Texas' convention voted in favor of succession before joining the Confederate Army.

Enlisting as a Private and the thirty-four year old Ireland quickly advanced to the rank of lieutenant colonel. He won



John Dee Wimp

Local Man Prominent in Early

Hardin County is distinguished in many ways, but in none more than by the brilliant men she has produced and shared with the state as shining examples of leadership and ingenuity. John Dee Wimp, longtime general manager of the Shelby County Telephone Co., Shelbyville, Ky. is one prime example of a hometown boy done well.

Wimp entered the telephone business in 1901, in the shops of the Cumberland Telephone & Telegraph Co., at Nashville, Tennessee. After a thorough course in all the departments he returned to Sonora, Kentucky, his former home, and helped organize and build the plant for the Sonora Telephone Co., of which he was part owner for some three years.

In early years, telephone companies were privately owned and served selected areas. From the earliest days, the popular and lucrative telephone industry attracted many entrepreneurs to establish service operations and sell subscriptions.

After disposing of his interest in the Sonora Telephone company, Wimp became manager for the Cumberland Telephone & Telegraph Co. at Elizabethtown, and several other smaller exchanges in counties adjoining Hardin. He remained in this position for about four years, leaving Elizabethtown and Hardin County, for a time, when he was awarded the contract to build the entire system of the Grayson Telephone Co., at Leitchfield. When this work was finished he relocated to Shelbyville to act as assistant

A drought hit Texas in 1883, bringing to head a long-simmering conflict between the landless cattlemen of the open range and those who were establishing permanent ranches fenced with barbed wire. By fall, fence cutting caused \$20 million in damages, lowering property values by \$30 million. Gov. Ireland called a special session of the legislature to deal with the issue.



justice of the Texas Supreme Court from 1875 until the Constitution of 1876 reduced the body from five to three sitting judges. He was unsuccessful as a candidate for the 1876 United States Senate and the 1878 United States House of Representatives races.

In 1882 and again in 1884, Ireland was successful in his bid as Texas Governor. As governor he continued many of his predecessor, Oran M. Roberts' economic policy although he reversed policies for the rapid sale of public lands and the state's purchase of its own bonds at high prices. He urged persistent enforcement of criminal laws and reduced the number of pardons. His administration was marked by the Fence-Cutting war of 1883 and saw strikes by the Knights of Labor in 1885 and 1886. He worked to develop state institutions and to protect state lands. During his terms the University of Texas was established, and the cornerstone for the Capitol was laid. It was Ireland who insisted that the building be made out of pink Texas granite rather than imported Indiana limestone like many statehouses.

After his retirement from the governorship, Ireland returned to a practice of law in Sequin until his death on March 15, 1896 with only a single interruption of an unsuccessful race against John H. Regan for the United States Senate in 1887.

laurels in that most brilliant wartime effort including the defense of the eight hundred mile Texas Coast in September 1862, repulse of the Federals at Corpus Christi, captured fleet of Captain Kittredge including flag and arms. Though Ireland was an Infantry officer he once plunged waist deep to capture a Federal vessel off Padre Island. When the war came to a close there in Texas, he traded his command of the 8th Texas Regiment defending Galveston for a highly successful career in Texas politics.

He was a member of the Texas Constitutional Convention of 1866 and served as a district judge in 1866-67 before being removed by Philip Sheridan as an 'impediment to Reconstruction.' Ireland was elected to the House of the Thirteenth Legislature and to the Senate of the Fourteenth Legislature. As a legislator he was adamantly opposed to granting lands and subsidies to railroads. His relentless work against the grant to the International-Great Northern Railroad won him the sobriquet 'Oxcart John.' Ireland served as associate

IRELAND'S FAMILY

John Ireland married Platt Wicks Faircloth in 1854. On August 8, 1855 the couple had a daughter, Matilda. Mrs. Ireland died the following year. The widower quickly became acquainted with Anna Maria Penn of neighboring Reutersville, Texas. The following year the couple were married and that union was blessed with three daughters.

Later in life, Ireland adopted Patrick Ireland Carpenter, son of his daughter, Matilda, and her husband, Evan Shelby Carpenter, making the child a legal heir. Evan served as secretary to Governor Ireland and was the great grandson of Isaac Shelby, the first and third governor of Kentucky.

A three year old Patrick Ireland Carpenter died in 1880. At the time of his death in 1896, Matilda Ireland Carpenter was the only surviving child of the ex-Texan Governor.

Kentucky Telecommunication Systems

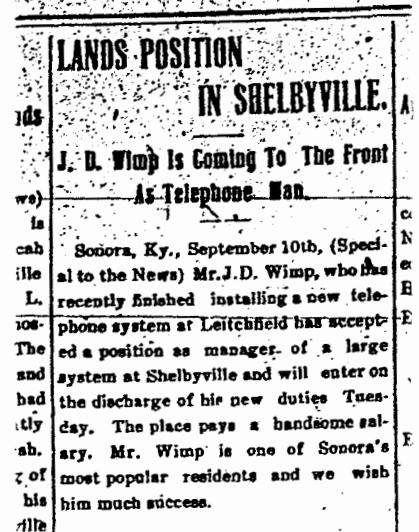
manager for the Shelby Co. company. In July, 1911, he was made general manager of this corporation.

Mr. Wimp was born in Elizabethtown, Ky., March 15, 1876 to James Abell Wimp, a Meade County native, and his wife, the former Eugenia Lloyd Kendall. There were 11 children born to this couple. John Dee's brother, Robert Clarence was the grandfather of Carolyn Wimp.

On June 20, 1907, while still in Elizabethtown with the Cumberland Telephone & Telegraph Co., Mr. Wimp married Cassandra "Cassie" Morrison, the daughter of M.F. Morrison of White Mills. Soon after their vows were exchanged, the Wimps moved to Hopkinsville, Kentucky where J.D. was working on another telephone exchange for only a short time before settling in Sonora.

Before engaging in the telephone business, John Dee was connected with an implement and lumber company at Sonora.

The front page of the Friday, September 11, 1908 *Elizabethtown News* carried the news of J.D. Wimp's advancement in telephony.



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MAMMOTH CAVE FOR GOVERNMENT. Congress Will Be Asked to Buy It For Free Use of People.

Big Petition Is Being Circulated.

A number of patriotic Kentuckians actuated by fears that Mammoth cave may shortly be acquired by corporate interests and another long period of extortionate charges prevail similar to the conditions which once existed at Niagra Falls, Hot Springs and other points of interest to tourists, are circulating an immense petition asking Congress to turn the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky into a national pleasure ground for the people of the United States.

Under the terms of the will of the late George Croghan, who owned the Mammoth Cave, it was left to his 11 nephews and nieces for life, with instructions that after their death the cave is to be sold at public auction to the highest bidder. This was many years ago, and now only a few aged men and women of the original 11 remain alive.

So, in the natural course of human events, the Mammoth Cave will soon pass into other hands, and as it is a practical monopoly the people of Kentucky are averse to seeing it controlled for profit by a private corporation. A preparation, asking that steps be taken in the direction of acquiring Mammoth Cave and the land above it for a national park free to all the American people and their guests from foreign shores.

The committee in charge of the petition has accordingly sent broadcast a request that everyone favoring the project send a postal card bearing his name and address to Mr. Burns W. Beall, Horse Cave, Ky. The names thus received will be added to the petition and all the original cards will accompany it to Washington when the bill is introduced in the house. It is not expected that there will be any serious opposition to the plan, and Mammoth Cave will no doubt soon regain its old prestige as one of the seven wonders of the modern world.

September 8, 1908 Elizabethtown News announces petition to Federal Government to acquire Mammoth Cave for preservation of one of the seven wonders of the world.

Book Review

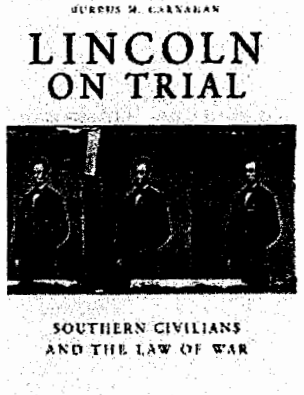
Matthew Rector,
Hardin County History Museum
Civil War Specialist

LINCOLN ON TRIAL: Southern Civilians and the Law of War

Author: Burrus M. Carnahan
Publisher: The University Press of Kentucky

As it has been noted many times, Abraham Lincoln is one of the most written about figures in American history. Some books are complementary of the man, a few or not. The following review is for a book that is seemingly unbiased. In "Lincoln on Trial: Southern Civilians and the Law of War," Burrus M. Carnahan addresses some controversial actions approved and/or examined by President Lincoln and his administration during the Civil War. As the title suggests, these actions had great consequences on portions of the southern population during the conflict.

By providing context, background and corresponding examples about various (and often tragic) events, the author produces a good source for those seeking a better understanding. This book would interest those who enjoy lively debates about Lincoln-providing ammunition to both sides. "Lincoln on Trial" is not lengthy and won't bog a reader down in legal jargon, allowing for a diverse audience. In addition, Carnahan's background in military and international law gives him credibility.



GRAY GHOST: The Life of Col. John Singleton Mosby

Author: James Ramage
Publisher: The University Press of Kentucky

"Gray Ghost: The Life of Col. John Singleton Mosby" is a well researched biography about one of the Confederacy's most celebrated leaders. Author James A. Ramage has written an exciting narrative about this fascinating figure in American, and not just Civil War, history. Ramage previously wrote about John Hunt Morgan and he makes comparisons and contrasts between the two in this book. Gray Ghost is a must read for those that have had a passing interest in John S. Mosby, but have never had an opportunity to read about him. Some may be surprised at his pre-war and post-war adventures.

It is often apparent that Ramage has a great admiration for Mosby and at times his narrative comes across rather biased. Yet, this attention wasn't always distracting. Additional maps would have been useful during the narration as he discusses many actions taken in "Mosby's Confederacy"—however this may not be the fault of the author and seems to be a trend recently among various publishers. These easily overlooked observations should not detract one from reading this biography!



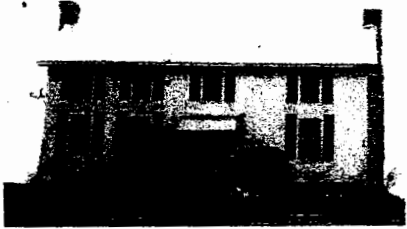
Did You Know?

Dr. John Croghan, the oldest child of William and Lucy Clark Croghan and nephew of George Rogers Clark, on a trip to England, first heard about the existence of Mammoth Cave. Upon his return home to Locust Grove, in Louisville, he bought the Mammoth Cave Estate, including several slaves, from its owner, Franklin Gorin.

In 1839, Dr. Croghan began to extensively develop and explore the cave, exploiting it commercially as one of the great wonders of the world. He built roads, improved buildings and constructed a large hotel to lodge tourists. Much of the mapping of the cave and planning for commercial improvements to the cave was done at Locust Grove in Louisville. In fact, during 1842 one of the slaves purchased in the estate deal, Stephen Bishop, was sent to Locust Grove for two weeks to draw a map, from memory, of the cave system. Bishop was given full credit for this work in "Rambles in the Mammoth Cave, During the Year 1844."

Dr. Croghan also established an underground tuberculosis hospital in the cave. He believed that the stable temperature and humidity and apparent dryness would have a curative effect on patients. Volunteer patients lived in the cave in small stone structures with canvas roofs. The experiment was a failure. Within a few months, a few of the invalids died and many others left the cave. Ironically, Dr. Croghan died six years after the experiment—a victim of tuberculosis. This was the second industry established inside the cave, the first being a saltpeter leaching factory during the War of 1812.

In his will, Dr. Croghan left Mammoth Cave to his nine living nieces and nephews directing it would not be sold until the death of the last surviving heir.



Snapshot of the home while still used by the David T. Miller family.



Side view of the home after the clabberboard removed in 2010.

Family Skeleton Exposed OWNER DESIRES TO PRESERVE OLD BONES

By John R. Lay, Hardin County Historical Society

Some of Hardin County's first brick and log homes were built in the Youngers Creek area, the Hamilton house, the Hart and Anthony Vernon homes to name a few. To that list of early homes we must add the old Miller home located on the hill overlooking Younger's Creek.

This home is still owned by the Miller family. James Wesley 'JW' and Joy Carroll Miller are in hopes of restoring the old log structure. They have stripped off the wood siding and removed the old lattice and plaster from interior walls to expose the timbers.

A log cabin expert recently examined the structure and dated the original standard 16x18 home to be erected just after 1810. Several additions including a dog trot enclosure, second story and an additional stone chimney followed.

Title to the property indicates that Walter Cissell was the owner during the time of the cabin's construction. No record exists to verify that Cissell did the raising of the structure before selling his interest.

By February 11, 1888, Charles and Mary Belle McCague, owners of the home and surrounding 250 acres, passed title of the place to David Garrett Miller from the Colesburg community for \$2,750. One interesting note on the deed is that of a still house. The stone remains of that building are still visible on the wooded hillside below the front of the home. Many early citizens often distilled corn for their personal use.

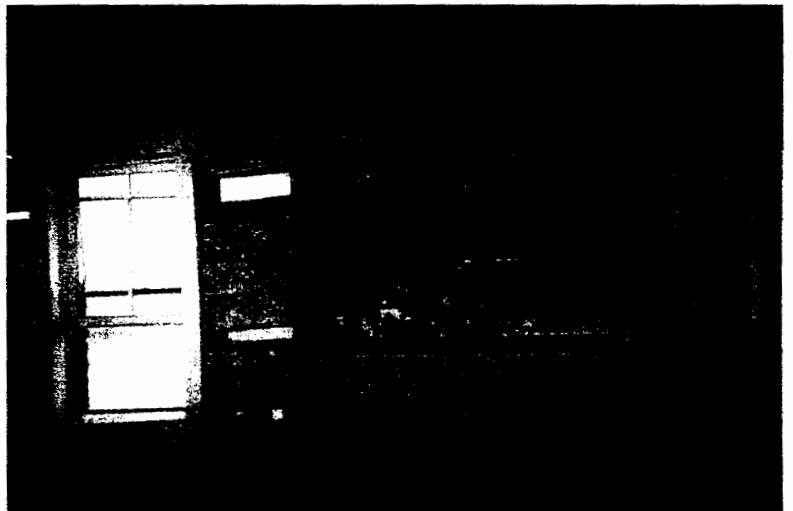
The property has been in the Miller family handed down from son to son for the past 122 years. During that time the owners purchased additional acreage to increase the farm's size to an impressive 330 acres.



An old cream separator stands outside the old home.



Stairwell leads to a second floor addition to the original standard size log dwelling.



A simple wooden mantle frames one of two stone fireplaces that heated the home for close to 200 years.

Well-Known and Highly Respected Father-Son Share Given Name

By Susan McCrobie, Hardin County Historical Society

Press Williams is a name found recorded in Hardin County history more than once and spanning a period of time surpassing one hundred years. Noah Preston 'Press' Williams was a celebrated officer in the Confederate Army between his greater service as a soldier in God's Army. His son, also a Noah Preston, was a farmer and a favorite of residents in the southwestern portion of the county.

Press Williams was born in 1829. Very little is recorded of his appearance on earth. In fact, his exit in life is the scant information we have naming the time of his birth. It is thought that he was the son of Green Berry and Margaret Klinglesmith Williams.

The first known record for Williams is that of his impending nuptials on December 10, 1856 to Francis E. Hill as recorded in the office of the Hardin County Clerk.

From the writings of the diary of the Honorable Samuel Haycraft, we can safely say that Williams had an above average education as he served as a school teacher. Haycraft makes note of Professor Williams making off with some of John LaRue Helm's horses during a wartime raid.

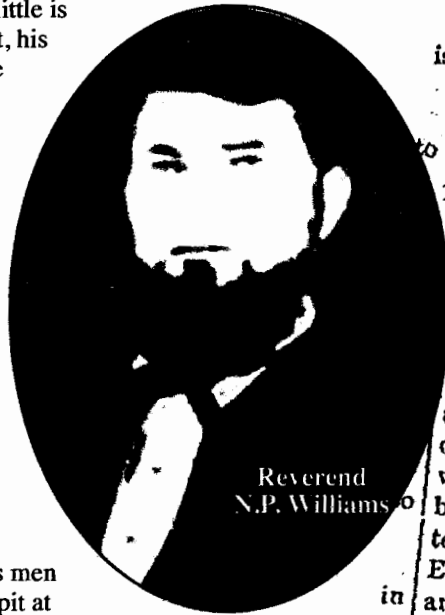
In 1863, when many of Hardin County's men were at war, Williams was found in the pulpit at the Blue Ball Baptist Church. The philosophical reasoning of war must have weighted heavily on Preacher Williams and resonated from the church as he recruited able-bodied men from the area for service in the Confederacy and lead them off to war in 1864. His leadership skills so well defined that those men, Charles Dent French, Eljapta Vertrees, A.G. Hoskinson, Ed P. Klinglesmith, Horace Klinglesmith, Franklin Pierce Klinglesmith, Henry Ament, Isaac Carlton, Abraham Carlton, W.L. Barnes and Francis Marion Klinglesmith, to name a few, elected him Captain of their 14th Kentucky Cavalry unit (also known as the 15th) under command of Adam Rankin 'Stovepipe' Johnston.

Rev. John R. Clark has searched the National Archive Civil War records as well as local records for many of Hardin County's Confederates in order to mark their final resting spot. Clark recalls that he has seen the names of 12 to 15 men in Williams' unit and notes that he had discovered, during his search, only three Captains from Hardin County serving in the Confederacy; Clay Hayes from Vine Grove, Gabriel Slaughter DuVall from Glendale and Press Williams.

After the fighting ended, Williams returned to his congregation and duties for a couple of years. During his time serving as minister there are a significant number of marriage returns in Hardin County and some in Meade and Breckinridge counties that reflect the name of N.P. Williams as official presiding over the rites.

According to Clark, the rigors of war were hard on many men and lead to an early death. Williams was one of the statistics, dying in 1869 at forty years of age; leaving behind his wife and children, one being a five year old namesake. His earthly remains lie beneath the sod of Holbert Cemetery #2 on White Lane in the county.

And what of the second Press Williams? He died in 1944, a few months shy of his eightieth birthday. He is buried in the Howe Valley Cemetery.



Reverend
N.P. Williams

A GREAT BIRTH- DAY CELEBRATION!

Over 400 People Gather to Help Uncle Press Will- iams Be Happy.

By far the largest crowd seen in the Western part of the county this year attended the birthday celebration of "Uncle Press" Williams at Rough Creek Sunday. It is estimated that over four hundred people were present, and almost every family in the entire country was represented. "Uncle Press" was in his glory and was up early to bid a hearty welcome to all who attended. The day before he had come to Elizabethtown to "spruceup" for the day and incidentally to purchase 75 pounds of candy for distribution to the children. The exercises were opened by a welcome address from H. B. Fife to which J. K. Board responded. Judge W. A. Barry then followed on "How Uncle Press Would Appear as a Benedict" after which Frank Corley sprung the great surprise of the day by presenting Uncle Press with a marriage license to Miss Kittie Vandyke. The effect was killing and the old man was overcome by the surprise. Then came the principal address of the day which was made by Atty. George Holbert. He held the entire audience spellbound and it was pronounced to be one of his best efforts. A splendid basket dinner was served and the day was one long to be remembered.

HER TWO BROTHERS

The June 13, 1911 edition of *The Elizabethtown News* carried a front page story of 'Uncle Press' Williams. This Preston Williams was the son of Preacher N.P. Williams. The younger Williams remained a bachelor, living with his elder, spinster sister, Mattie, until his death February 12, 1944.



Message From The President

To converse with historians is to keep good company; many of them were excellent men, and those who were not, have taken care to appear such in their writings.

-Lord Bolingbroke

Since we last gathered in April, a number of notable events have occurred locally, nationally and internationally. Six days before we met on April 26, an explosion on an oil rig in the Gulf of Mexico began spilling oil into the Gulf and Atlantic; it is still spilling oil. Super Saver won Kentucky Derby 136 with a familiar "Bo-Rail" jockey on board. H. W. Longfellow's famed poem, "Paul Revere's Ride" turned 150. The country of Greece faced bankruptcy. Five paintings worth more than 100 million Euros were stolen from the Musee d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, including a Picasso and Matisse. World Cup Soccer began in South Africa. The President of Poland died in a plane crash; the future Queen of Sweden wed. Juan Antonio Samaranch, Lynn Redgrave, Lena Horne, Rue McClanahan and Dennis Hopper all passed away. And it got hot in Hardin County...and at the time of the July meeting will probably still be hot in Hardin County!

While I cannot really affect any of the events listed above, I can provide at least one evening of respite from the heat among friends of common purpose. Additionally, I can bring the temperature down a few degrees by having a speaker discuss an environ which maintains a steady 54 degrees year round.

We will be joined on July 26 by Jerry Bransford, a Glendale resident and Mammoth Cave tour guide, who will be regaling us with stories of "The Bransford Guides of Mammoth Cave". Mr. Bransford is the ninth member of his family to serve as a tour guide to the cave, a tradition started with his great, great grandfather Mat Bransford, a slave, in 1838. The Bransford family has served the world's largest cave system of over 350 miles with great enthusiasm, care and dignity for many years, and Mr. Bransford will reflect on that legacy and his own experiences.

I hope to see all of you there for this great evening and please bring a friend!

-Jeff Lanz

Book Review...

Dr. Harrison has done yeoman work in showing the myriad records of families whose ancestors claim to have passed on tales of the Civil War. Kith and kin at family gatherings keep alive this most important era of America. To delete this period from Kentucky history leaves little for historians to discuss.

Any futile attempt to improve on the UK Press and Dr. Harrison's literary work wastes the time of historians.

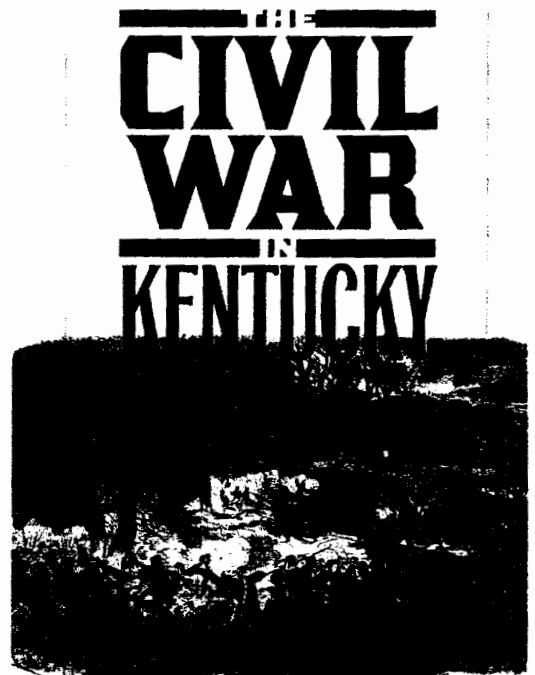
-James Allison Jones, AB, MA

Lowell H. Harrison, professor emeritus of history from Western Kentucky University, is the author of several books, including George Rogers Clark and the War in the West. He is co-author of A New History of Kentucky and editor of Kentucky's Governors.

Harrison, in this book, examines Kentucky as a border state and its fascinating experience with a type of Civil War politics that few other states witnessed during the period.

Civil War in Kentucky was fought differently than in other states. Aside from the Battle of Perryville in 1862, the area was dominated by skirmishes and guerilla warfare rather than major battles. As fighting spread across the state, Kentucky served as a valuable middle ground for supply transportation as well as a broader base of military operations. Lincoln himself often referred to the pivotal role of the state in winning the war.

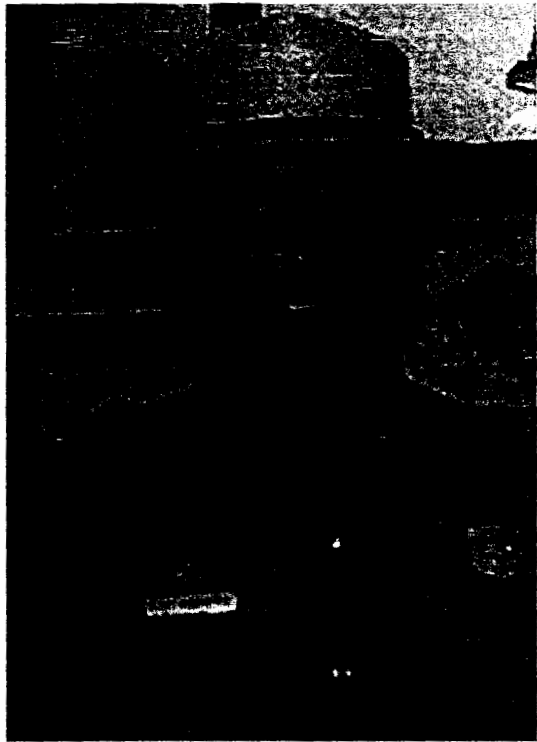
Finally, Harrison goes further than simple political and military topics when digesting the fare of Civil War in Kentucky. He takes on the human aspect of those dealing with the two sides of war; recorded stories of citizens openly claiming their political leanings and towns torn in the face of conflicting loyalties as no true enemy can be identified when burying your brother, son, or neighbor.



LOWELL H. HARRISON

The Civil War In Kentucky
By Lowell H. Harrison
Publication Date: January 8, 2010
\$16.00 paper
ISBN: 978-0-8131-9247-5

Historical Society announces next meeting



Jerry Bransford
Retired Mammoth Cave Tour Guide

The Hardin County Historical Society will meet Monday evening, July 26, 2010, at the STATE THEATER GALLERY, 209 West Dixie Avenue, in downtown Elizabethtown. The buffet dinner, catered by BACK HOME, will be served at 6:30 PM. The price is \$8.50 per person. Call Judy French at 735-9698 or email jmfrench9@windstream.net by **Friday, July, 23rd, for dinner reservations**; later reservations for the meal cannot be guaranteed.

The dinner is followed by a program by Jerry Bransford, Retired National Park Service Seasonal Tour Guide, on *Resuming the Family Legacy at Mammoth Cave*.

Join us as Jerry shares his fascinating story of earlier Bransfords, beginning in 1838 with the slave Materson "Mat" Bransford who mapped the uncharted wilderness by the torch light.

Mat Bransford's sons, grandsons and great-grandsons continued to lead cave tours into the 20th century and in 1930, eight Bransfords worked as guides. Over the years they walked, crawled, leapt, and inched their way through the hundreds of miles in the cave to delight visitors with this iconic natural wonder before being relieved of duty when the national park purchased the cave in 1941.

Listen as Jerry tells about how a short tour in the 1840s could last 15 hours and how the beauty of the cave is forever linked with a fascinating history marked by the pain of slavery.

HARDIN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
POST OFFICE BOX 381
ELIZABETHTOWN, KY 42702