

A Quarterly Publication
Of the Hardin County
Historical Society, a
Non-Profit Organization.
Originated in 1931

Bits and Pieces

OF HARDIN COUNTY HISTORY

www.hardinkyhistoricalsociety.org

Michael L. Bell, compiler

VOL. MMXVIII NO. 2

ISSN 1536-1867

Spring 2018

**SONORA MERCHANT CHARLES FRIEND, A SOURCE OF HANKS FAMILY INFORMATION
FOR LINCOLN BIOGRAPHER WILLIAM H. HERNDON...AND NEPHEW OF DENNIS FRIEND HANKS**

By SHERRILL WILLIAMS

On August 20, 1889, Charles Friend, a dry goods merchant in Sonora, Hardin County, penned a letter to William H. Herndon, the former Springfield, Illinois law partner of Abraham Lincoln from 1844-1860. Herndon, after the 1860 presidential election, had started collecting Lincoln memorabilia and compiling stories connected with Lincoln's early years and background, this, of course, in preparation of writing and publishing a Lincoln biography. Since Charles Friend was a half-nephew of Dennis Friend Hanks, the first-cousin of Abraham's mother, Nancy Hanks Lincoln (and the boy who moved in with Thomas, Sarah and Abraham in their Pigeon Creek, Indiana cabin after Nancy Hanks Lincoln and Thomas and Elizabeth Hanks Sparrow had died of "milk sickness"), Herndon apparently hoped Charles could answer questions such as those concerning the parentage of Lincoln's mother, etc. Just exactly when this correspondence between Herndon and Friend was first initiated is unclear, but by March 1891 William Herndon was dead. Also, it should be noted that this August 1889 letter was written nearly two years after Herndon (through a New York publishing company and along with a co-author named Weik) had published his Lincoln biography.

The aforementioned Charles Friend was a grandson of Charles and Sarah Huss Friend (md. 1804), and a great-grandson of the early Phillips Fort settler, Isaac Friend. His Grandfather Charles (1777-1844) was, by all accounts, the father of Dennis Friend Hanks, the illegitimate (or "base-born") son of Nancy Hanks (later Sparrow), an aunt of Abraham Lincoln's mother, Nancy Hanks Lincoln. Concerning this non-marital relationship between his Grandfather Charles and Nancy Hanks Sparrow, grandson Charles, in his August 1889 letter to William Herndon, wrote:

Sonora Ky 20 Aug 1889

Dear Sir

Yours of 10 Inst received 10 Oct this morning. Where could have been? There never wer but One family of Hanks in this County that I ever hear of And they wer all women. I never heard anything against the women except Nancy. Judge J. F. Cessna Cousin of my father told me that Uncle Isaac Friend (Jr.) was once in love with her and at a party at night after a log rolling in the day he (Isaac) was laying with his head in her lap and swore that he felt the Child kick in her belly when talking to the boys about this matter Later he learned that his brother Charles Friend had done the work for her. Dennis Friend Hanks was the boy that did the kicking which kicked Uncle Isaac out of marrying her. I hav written Uncle Dennis several time and asked him what relations he bore to President Lincoln and he will never answer it. The first letter he ever wrote me he sayed "My mother was a Hanks she says your Grandfather was my father this don't doubt." Evry old person

that I ever talked to on the subject agree by saying that Nancy Hanks Denis' Mother was A Lincoln's mother.

(At this point in Charles's letter he lists three Hanks sisters, one of which was Abraham Lincoln's mother, and then names the man each married. These were: 1. Nancy Hanks md. Thomas Lincoln 2. Betsey Hanks md. Thomas Sparrow and 3. Pollie Hanks md., first, Jessey Friend and, second, Livi Hall. After listing these couples, Charles continues his letter::

These women wer all Sisters Uncle Jessey Friend moved here to Paris Ill and died there one of his daughters married a Mr Hatfield and returned to K. Thomas Sparrow raised Uncle Dennis

A Lincoln calling Dennis Cousin can be accounted for easy enough, In this County all bastard Children are taught to call their mothers Aunt, and of course he would naturally call Lincoln Cousin, I have asked Denis if his mother was not a Sister to Betsy Sparrow if they wer there would have to be 2 Nancy's sister in one family which I cannot believe, Know I am right I heard my brother-in-law A.H. Redman of Glendale Ky. ask Old Uncle Abe Enlows if he was A. Lincolns father, there was present New Dr. Holt Mr W.H. Holt and myself. The old man drew himself up to full height over 6 feet and stroked his long white beard and sayed it was an honor to be thought to be father of President, but sayed he I never touch more than her hand in my life never had carnal knowledge of her or intercourse with her in my life. She was older than I, I was only 15 years old when Lincoln was born, Redman spoke up and said you mean to say you could not have been. No sir don't be too

SONORA. In Hardin county, on the L. & N. R. R., 18 miles south of Elizabethtown, the county seat and bank location, and 55 from Louisville. Population, 450. Tel., W. U. Exp., Adams. Mail, daily. J. A. Raine, postmaster, Allen J B, blacksmith. Allen Martin, blacksmith. Allen W O, railroad and express agt. Brunt T J, general store. Crow James, confectioner. Dyer E F, grocer and hotel. Friend Bros (Charles and John C), dry gds. Friend Mrs Margaret, milliner. Grinsted J R, horticulturist. Hoover A J, harness and undertaker. Huchison J R, boots and shoes. Lambeth W W, physician. Mason M, blacksmith. Mason & Co (Polk Mason, Martin Williams) flour mills. Medcalf Walter, drugs, **Morrison E A**, Carpenter. Morrison & Raine, undertakers. Owsley James, physician. Phillips Josiah, general store. **Raine J A**, Postmaster. **Rowe & Rogers** (A G Rowe, W B Rogers), General Store and Millinery. Sonora Flouring Mills, Polk Mason & Martin Williams proprs. Spurrier & Bading (Benjamin Spurrier, Albert Bading), general store. Stuart & Morrison (Alice Stuart, Belle Morrison), milliners. Sullivan & Highbaugh, general store and live stock. Tarpley J, physician. White F, carpenter. Womack & Hoover, harnessmakers.

The 1887-88 KENTUCKY GAZETEER listing for Sonora, Kentucky, businesses includes "Friend Bros," a dry goods store owned and operated by brothers, Charles and John C. Friend. By this time the railroad town of Sonora had a thriving business community and a population of 450 people.

This photo is of the railroad crossing at Sonora, Hardin County, and probably was taken ca. 1900, perhaps by local amateur photographer Edward Cuthbert Thurman III. The building on the right is the Bogue and Wood Drug and Hardware Store, one that also advertised a restaurant. It is unclear as to whether "Friend Bros" was still in operation by this time, but Sonora would have looked much the same when Charles and John C Friend had there store here in the late 1880's. When the town of Sonora was established, the first businessman to build and operate a store on the site of the Bogue and Wood Store was J. R. Rider, and it's likely that it was Rider who built the building that later housed this Bogue and Wood Store.



fast I could have been his father as well then I as at any time since up to the present time, I believe that he was the son of Thomas Lincoln, and this whole matter grew out of a name being the same as mine, But he was named after his grand father Abraham Lincoln who was killed by the Indians not far from where now stands Shepherdsville at the old Salt mills on Salt River. Though if he was an illegitimate child he was one of 3 mens son Geoerge Brownsfield Wm Cessna or Charles Friend. Certain Circumstances would point to Charles Friend that boys grand father (pointing at your correspond) was the father of her first child Dennis F Hanks, but the Friend are of low heavy set people and so are the Cessna's both being of the same Pennsylvania stock. His shape features & likeliness point to the Brownfields."

I will say here I saw the remains of President Lincoln "in state" at Indianapolis and if any one had have taken me to the coffin and sayed there lies Your friend Geo. Brownfield Jr. I would have sworn before any Jury that it was he. The resemblance was that close. Judge Jonathon Friend Cessna told that his father Wm Cessna told him that one if not both of Thomas Lincolns testicles we not larger than a pea. He Wm Cessna also sayed that Chas Friend was father to Denis a half not whole brother of A Lincoln but did not believe it possible that Thomas could have been his father.

The main subject of this story, Charles Friend of Sonora, was a son of Fielding Friend (1806-1852), a man who, at various times, had been a stage coach driver, Louisville merchant and hotel owner, Elizabethtown merchant and hotel manager (the "Perciful House" on Main Street) and then finally, a merchant and resident of West Point, Hardin County. It would be in West Point that Fielding Friend would die, his death coming during the cholera epidemic of 1852. Surviving Fielding was his wife, Elizabeth Cully (Culley) Friend, and their six children.

At some point in time, Fielding and Elizabeth's son Charles Friend (born January 20, 1841) moved to LaRue County (formed from Hardin County in 1843), as that county's 1860 Census lists him as a nineteen-year-old storekeeper living in the household of James Nayler, a sixty-four-year-old Hodgenville cabinet maker. In this same household was Charles's eight-year-old brother, Richard Friend, and his ten-year-old brother, James Friend. Apparently, Charles would reside in Hodgenville throughout the Civil War and at least a short time after, as evidenced by a letter he wrote to his half-uncle, Dennis Hanks, on January 17th, 1866. This letter was postmarked from Hodgenville, and was sent to his uncle who was living in Coles County Illinois. This 1866 letter appears to have been in response to an earlier letter sent from Dennis. In this letter, recorded here in its' entirety, Charles wrote:

Hodgenville Jan 27th 1866

Dear Sir

Yours of the 18th Inst was handed me a day or two since by the Post Master of this place. And would say in answer that I am a Grandson of Charles Friend who lived on the Greensburg Road 3 miles S.E. of this place (Hodgenville). Grandpa has been Dead 21 years last Aug. My Father (Fielding) whom you seem to have forgotten, is also Dead he Died in Oct/ '52 at West Point Ky. Leaving My Mother & Six Children. I'll give you the names agreeable to age: Harriet. M. Charles, John C. Robt, James E, and Richard C. the oldes My Sister is married to a Mr. A.H. Redman and Has two Children Chas. & James Grandpa at his death left a widow and 9 Children three of whom are dead, Harriet Fielding & Elizy. Uncle Richd & Robt live on the old place Uncle Jno Aunts Kitty & Matilda all Live in this county Aunt Harriet Mayfield died in Missouri last August Grandma is still living on the old place with uncle Robt the old Lady is Eighty Three years Old I carried your letter out to Uncle Robt's

but grandma was not at home. Uncle Richard said he remembers you well. Grandma remembers you for she has often told me of you and said that she would like to see you and would write if she knew where to direct to. I passed through your town last Sept. and had I have known that you lived there I would have given you a Call. Wer you in Indianapolis Ind. Last Winter when the corpse of A Lincoln was in state there. If you was we was clost to gether I was there and seen the President. The old Man Geo Brownfield is dead but some of the Children live on the old place. Jacob Elliot lives on the old Homestead, and Jno lives in Mo. Thomas Creal is dead & Richd lives 3 miles from this place on the place of A Lincoln Birth. You say in your letter that you are a Cousin of the late President.

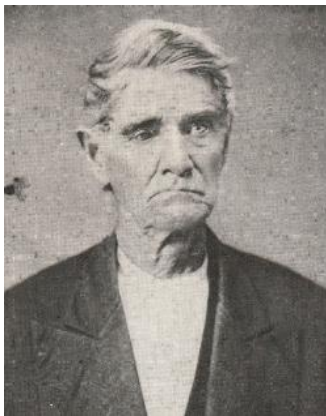
The old settlers of this place was under the impression that you was half Brothers you Mother being same. Old Uncle Wm Cessna is still living. Some 87 or 8 year of age J. F. Cessna his son lives in this place was Judge of the County before the War. he remembers you.

Nothing More only I Remain

Yours Truly

Charles Friend

The year that Charles Friend, along with his brother, John C. Friend, started their dry goods store in Sonora could not be verified, but they were advertising their "FRIEND BROS" dry goods business in the 1887-'88 KENTUCKY GAZETEER, By this time, Sonora (established about 1859 on land owned by Rufus Smith) was a thriving railroad town of 450 people, and its likely Charles and his wife Margaret were among these 450 residents. Mrs. Margaret Coleman Friend's obituary, published in a local newspaper after her April 2, 1912 death from tuberculosis, mentions that the couple had "formerly lived at Sonora," as well as Madisonville. The obituary also makes note that she (with her husband Charles) "had returned to Hardin County to spend their declining years at Glendale." They were members of the Christian Church, and she was buried in the cemetery of the Glendale Christian Church. Charles outlived his wife by over ten years; his death coming on October 12, 1922. He, too, would be buried in the cemetery of Glendale Christian.



These two men (William H. Herndon and Dennis Friend Hanks) corresponded with Charles Friend concerning information connected with the Hanks family of Hardin County, Ky. The photo at left is that of Herndon, the Springfield, Illinois, law partner of Abraham Lincoln, and a native of Green County, Ky. The photo at right is that of Dennis Friend Hanks, the "base-born" son of Charles Friend and Nancy Hanks (later Sparrow) of Hardin County, Ky. Herndon, due to various financial misfortunes and alcoholism, would die nearly a pauper, while Dennis Hanks (born near what would become Buffalo, Larue Co., in 1884) would die from injuries suffered after falling from a wagon while returning from a Charleston, Coles County, Illinois, celebration held in his honor.

Remarkable Old Man (Elizabethtown News)

Mr. Charles Friend of Glendale, who is 80 years old and never would betaken to be over 70 was in town yesterday. He still writes visiting cards for the young people and so steady his hand and so perfcet his eyes that they almost look like they are engraved. Whenever he takes a notion that he wants to go to Hodgenville, he walks there and back, a distance of ten miles each way. We do not think there is a man in the whole county of his age who can write anything like as well. (from the Courier Journal 01 February 1920, Sunday, Page 21)

SCRAPBOOK SAGA

BY KENNY TABB

Every now and then I receive a call about history or genealogy. The call I am going to share with you had to do with a scrapbook. It appears the caller had found a scrapbook in his garage attic in a suburb of Orlando, Florida. The scrapbook had to be at least 55 years old. The caller was sure the owner would want this scrapbook. For some reason he had originally called the Hardin County History Museum and talked to the volunteer. The volunteer had given him my number and referred him to me. Upon receiving the call, the caller started explaining what he had found and said that this person's mother must have been a saint, since she had kept everything this person did in high school and college. It didn't take long before I knew who the scrapbook belonged to based on what he told me.



Midshipman McCloy L (left) and Miller

The subject of this scrapbook was **Thomas**

Hayes Miller. I told the caller that his Dad was Harry Miller, a former Mayor of Elizabethtown and a U.S. Marshal. The caller wanted to know if he sent the scrapbook to the museum, would I try to contact Tom and get the scrapbook to him. I agreed. After a little searching, I located Tom Miller in Hawaii and sent him the scrapbook.

Now to let you know a little more about Tom Miller, I will tell you that after graduating from Elizabethtown High School in 1958 and playing on an undefeated football team, he attended Virginia Military Institute before being admitted to the Naval Academy. It just so happened that another EHS graduate from 1957 would be in the same class at Annapolis. Murphey McCloy had joined the Marine Corp out of high school and spent two years in the Marines before being admitted to the Naval Academy. Both Miller and McCloy graduated from the Naval Academy in 1963. Tom Miller joined the Navy and Murphey McCloy opted to join the Marines. Tom Miller spent 27 years in the Navy and had an illustrious career retiring as a Captain. Murphey McCloy spent 36 years in the Marine Corp and retired as a full colonel. As a side note, Keith Carradine portrayed McCloy in the movie "A Rumor of War".

Courier Journal January 2, 1950 "Harry M Miller tonight was elected Mayor of Elizabethtown by the Council in place of J. W. Atwood. He was unopposed. Atwood, elected in November, decided not to qualify for the office.

Elected to the Council with Miller in November were Willard Winfrey, Jesse Murray, Claude L. Vertrees, Jr., Kenneth Hagan, and Ross Cardin. Tonight's meeting was the second of the new City Council.

Floyd Holland, who served several years as police judge, but was defeated for re-election in November, was appointed attorney He succeeds Damon Cooper.

John James Audubon in Elizabethtown and Hardin County

No authentic evidence has ever been discovered concerning the residence of John James Audubon in Elizabethtown. Such a lack of documentary material concerning the great ornithologist would naturally lead one to believe that he had no connection with this city, except for the fact that Samuel Haycraft, Jr., author of *The History of Elizabethtown*, makes this statement in a discussion of early merchants: "*Audubon & Rozier were also merchants in town at an early date. Their clerk was James Hackley*" (page 108).

Haycraft does not state the year of the establishment of Audubon and Rozier's Elizabethtown store. The lack of documentary records indicates that it must have been of short duration. Theories have also been advanced that the firm, Audubon and Rozier, in Elizabethtown might have been an itinerant business enterprise. It is not at all unlikely that the two young impractical business men might have arrived in Elizabethtown with a Conestoga wagon filled with merchandise which they sold for a short period, either from their store on wheels or from a building which they likely rented for a short time and when their stock of goods was sold, moved on to a new field of exploitation.

Constance Rourke in her biography entitled *Audubon* (1936) states:

They (Audubon and Rozier) purchased goods and by the autumn of 1807 had made the journey to the falls of the Ohio. Audubon liked the little town (Louisville) there with its back against the wilderness and they sold their goods with some success, making trips along neighboring trails as peddlers and scouring the country as far south as the village of Nashville to consider a location for a future store.

The most convincing statement made by Haycraft regarding the firm is that James Hackley was the clerk. This would nothowever, rule out the supposition that they placed merchandise in a rented building in the town and hired Hackley as clerk while they continued as itinerant peddlers, restocking on their infrequent trips through the place. On a visit through Hardin County Audubon recorded in his own handwriting various notes concerning the life and habits of passenger pigeons which he observed in the year 1813 while he was in West Point, Kentucky:

Whilst waiting for dinner at Young's Inn at the confluence of Salt River with the Ohio, I saw at my leisure, immense legions [of passenger pigeons] still going by, with a front reaching far beyond the Ohio on the west, and the beech wood forests directly O11 the east.

(Source: The above account was taken from "John James Audubon in Hardin County and Elizabethtown," by R. Gerald McMurtry, *Hardin County Enterprise*, Jan. 14, 1937.)

This article is a reprint from Bits and Pieces – Volume 21 #1

A Note from the President.....



It's hard to believe we're already three months into the New Year. Spring has been a bit unpredictable this year, but summer is just around the corner. I want to share with you, and brag a little, about two pieces of history that I am very proud of in our community.

I recently read a July, 1932 article from the *Elizabethtown News* where the author (unknown) was reflecting on the beauty and peacefulness of the Cunningham Garden located behind the Brown Pusey House. One of the highlights at that time was a colony of goldfinches. Due to their love of dense shrubbery found in the garden they chose it for their home. These small colorful birds filled the garden with sweet, melodic sounds producing an immediate feeling of calm and relaxation. The writer also commented on the breath taking colors and abundance of flowers, as well as the deep, lush green of the shrubs carefully selected by Mrs. Sallie C. Pusey.

In those days you would likely find a 4-H Club meeting, a Boy Scout group or a local church society meeting in the garden. Today you will likely find tourists, a wedding party or a family photo shoot, and on Thursday evenings from June-September, the Tavern in the Garden, a family-oriented musical event. Although some of the activities may have changed over time, the beauty and peacefulness can still be enjoyed by its visitors today.

The Brown Pusey House has been available for community use since 1922 and for over 30 years it has been a part of the Charles W. Logsdon Historic Downtown Walking Tour that brings to life some of the early citizens of this community. To keep a totally volunteer event going for 30+ years is no small feat and these folks deserve our support and gratitude. I hope you will plan to attend our July 30 meeting, or "Picnic in the Garden" as we celebrate the beauty of this historic site and revisit some important events in our history. Don't miss it!

Twylane Van Lahr

**Back Home Catering is preparing
our April 30th Meal at a price is \$12.00
Dinner at 6:30 and Program at 7:15.**

Menu is:

Bourbon Glazed Chicken Breast or
Honey Glazed Ham
Mashed Potatoes, Green Beans

Contact Information:

President Twylane Van Lahr
twylanebph@windstream.net

Vice President, Josh Cooper
jcooperCooplaw@bbtel.com

Treasurer, Jon Anderson
jon.anderson@burbacpa.com

Secretary, Kelly Easton
kellymeaston@bbtel.com

Bits and Pieces Editor Mike Bell

Garden Salad

Rolls and Dessert

Tea, Lemonade & Coffee

Call the Brown Pusey House at **(270) 765-2515**
make your reservation by Thursday April 26th

Steve Wade will be our speaker at Nolin RECC building on April 30th. Steve will present information concerning **Harry Holdsworth** and maybe some additional information on his Hardin County roots.

To give you a preview of whom he will be speaking, we share a passage from **DIAMONDS, RUBIES AND SAND** by Margaret Settle Richerson and Mary Josephine Jones: “Ill feeling ran high between (Philip) Arnold and (Harry) Holdsworth. On June 19, 1878 when they chanced to meet on the street of Elizabethtown, Arnold attacked Holdsworth ‘...with a cane striking several blows and holding a pistol in the other hand.’”

The South Kentuckianm 20 Mar 1883, Tuesday, Page 2, reported: “Harry Holdsworth, cashier in the banking establishment of Hotopp & Holdsworth of Elizabethtown, Ky skipped out last week, a defaulter to the extent of several thousand dollars.”

Call the Brown Pusey House at **(270) 765-2515** to reserve your place to see what happens **NEXT!**

You may purchase a copy of **DIAMONDS, RUBIES AND SAND** for \$6.00 from the Society. Check out all the list of Society publications available at the Museum or at the Brown Pusey House on line

www.hardinkyhistoricalsociety.org

HARDIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P. O. BOX 381
ELIZABETHTOWN, KENTUCKY 42702
Nolin RECC
Meeting April 30
Dinner 6:30 Program 7:15

