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# Bits and Pieces

OF HARDIN COUNTY HISTORY

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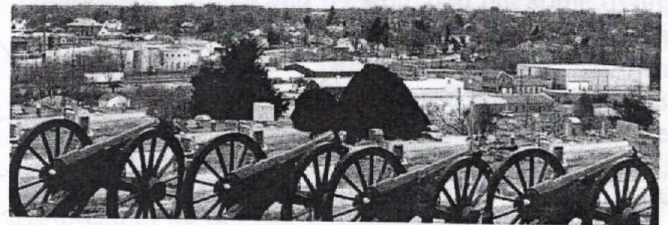
## BATTLE OF ELIZABETHTOWN LOCAL HISTORIANS STUDY AND REFLECT ON C.S.A. GENERAL MORGAN'S 1862 CHRISTMAS RAID

By Dr. Larry Hall, HCHS Treasurer

Two weeks before Morgan's Christmas Raid, John Hunt Morgan was in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. He had just been promoted to Brigadier General. His marriage with Martha Reddy was the social event of the year at Murfreesboro. Four Confederate generals, a fifth general, Lianitis Polk, who was also an Episcopal bishop, performed the marriage. Also present was President Jefferson Davis.

A week later the new General Morgan's brigade passed in review. The General waved goodbye to his new bride and Morgan's Brigade, of over 4000 men, moved north toward Tompkinsville. A cold Christmas Eve near Glasgow was made a bit cheerier by capturing a wagon train of goodies meant for the Christmas enjoyment of the Union garrison in Glasgow. Morgan's Brigade skirted Glasgow and the Union garrison at Munfordville on Christmas Day and entered Hardin County December 26, 1862, Lightning Elsworth, Morgan's telegrapher, sending messages dictated by General Morgan. That afternoon the stockades and bridges were destroyed over Bacon Creek and Nolin Rivers. Morgan camped a few miles south of Elizabethtown the night of the 26th.

Elizabethtown had been occupied by the 91st Illinois Voluntary Regiment, which had been mustered into being the 1st of September and had been assigned to guarding the L&N Railroad. About half of the regiment was on leave in Louisville and had returned to Elizabethtown early this very morning of December 27. No doubt this was the reason the raid was made during Christmas. Rumors had been heard that Morgan was advancing north and almost all the remaining Illinois infantry was sent to the stockades guarding the trestles just north of Elizabethtown. Only one company had been left in the town. Another six companies had just returned to duty from Louisville putting the total in

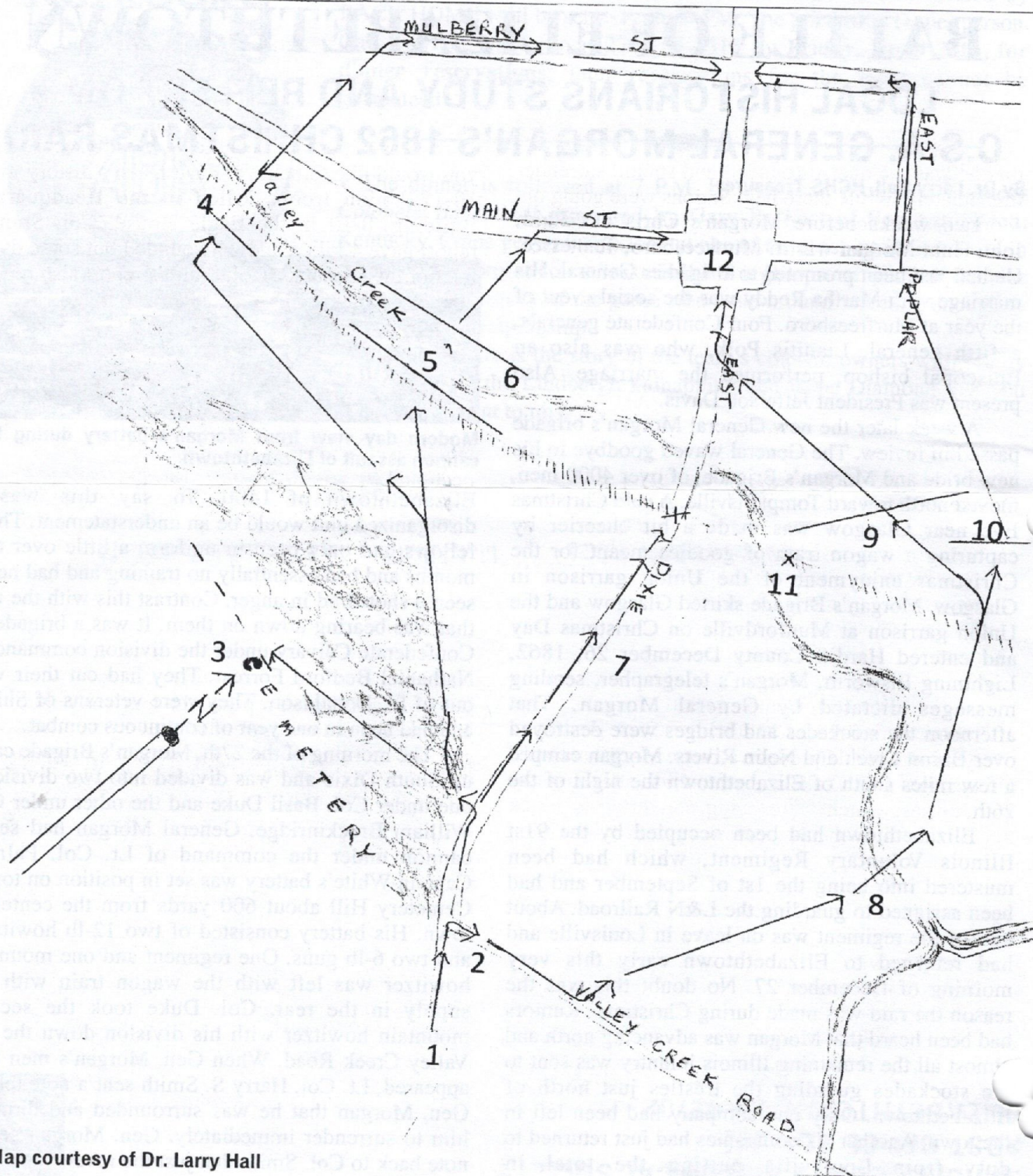


Modern day view from Morgan's battery during the cannon assault of Elizabethtown.

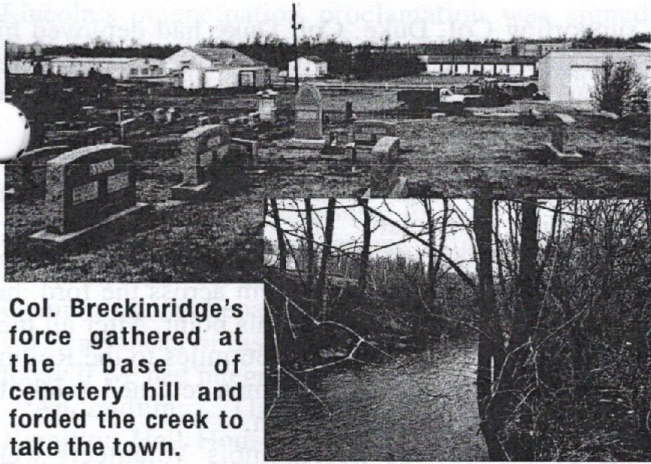
Elizabethtown of 1400. To say this was a disorganized unit would be an understatement. These fellows had only been in uniform a little over two months and had essentially no training and had never seen a shot fired in anger. Contrast this with the unit that was bearing down on them. It was a brigade of Confederate Calvary under the division command of Nathaniel Bedford Forrest. They had cut their way out of Ft. Donaldson. They were veterans of Shiloh and had been in one year of continuous combat.

The morning of the 27th, Morgan's Brigade came up South Dixie and was divided into two divisions, one under Col. Basil Duke and the other under Col. William Breckinridge. General Morgan had seven cannon under the command of Lt. Col. Palmer. Captain White's battery was set in position on top of Cemetery Hill about 600 yards from the center of town. His battery consisted of two 12-lb howitzers and two 6-lb guns. One regiment and one mountain howitzer was left with the wagon train with the supply in the rear. Col. Duke took the second mountain howitzer with his division down the old Valley Creek Road. When Gen. Morgan's men first appeared, Lt. Col. Harry S. Smith sent a note telling Gen. Morgan that he was surrounded and directed him to surrender immediately. Gen. Morgan sent a note back to Col. Smith that just the reverse was true

LEGEND			
1	Gen. Morgan's troops advanced to Etown from Rhudes Creek	7	Col. Palmer's parrott fun opens artillery bombardment, rolls down Dixie Avenue to railroad track firing as it goes
2	Col. Duke's division turns onto Valley Creek Rd	8	Col. Duke's division crosses Valley Creek mounted
3	Cpt. White's 4-gun battery	9	Col. Duke's unmounted battle line
4	Col. Breckinridge's mounted regiment	10	Col. Duke's mounted troops
5	Col. Breckinridge's dismounted force wade through Valley Creek	11	Col. Cluke's mountain howitzer destroys unoccupied block houses & covers unmounted infantries advance
6	Col. Breckinridge's troops reformed battle line	12	Col. Smith occupying buildings along Main St and the square



Map courtesy of Dr. Larry Hall



**Col. Breckinridge's force gathered at the base of cemetery hill and forded the creek to take the town.**

that he was the one surrounded and should surrender immediately. While these negotiations were going on, Morgan's men continued to deploy with Col. Duke's regiments on the right. They dismounted. Col. Cluke's regiment was formed in the battle line on the north side of the railroad track in the vicinity of what is now Central Avenue and east of Poplar Street. On the left Col. Breckinridge's regiments were dismounted and formed ranks below Cemetery Hill across the meadow below the hill in the area where the animal shelter is now located. They waded through Valley Creek in water up to their waists. They reformed in the area of the city parking lot, Quince Alley, Davis Street. The second regiment on the left continued to the Leitchfield Road. The regiment on the right continued around the town to Bardstown Road completely surrounding the town meeting at Mulberry and Dixie Avenues.

Col. Smith's reply was that it was the Union officers' duty to fight. With this reply the parrott gun, which was set up on South Dixie, fired immediately before the battery on Cemetery Hill opened up fire. 107 shots were fired in 20 minutes. Each gun firing every minute would produce a shot every 12 seconds. On the right Col. Cluke's regiment was attacking two warehouses, which were being converted to block houses. He thought these were occupied by Union troops. These block houses were along the railroad tracks just to the east of South Dixie. One was built where the small park is now located. The other was close to the back of Herb Jones' car lot. No Union soldiers were there. Cluke's men continued the attack up South Dixie into the center of the square. The parrott gun was deployed in the center of the tracks and South Dixie. Col. Duke's mountain howitzer was placed on the railroad embankment covering Col. Cluke's advance. Col. Breckinridge's regiment began at a brisk run up South Main Street and captured a house, which was filled with Union troops on the edge of town with essentially no losses. They divided

and as they advanced they stayed close to the sides of the buildings as the men came into the square. At this time white flags from the citizens began to go up all over town. The cannonade stopped and the Union soldiers were quick to lay down their arms. The artillery fire had been centered on the building where the Union headquarters was, which is where the Union Bank Building is now and also on the Eagle House, which is where Kentucky Crafted is currently located, as well as the building where the old First Hardin Bank was, which was known to have Union troops stationed. Morgan must have had great reconnaissance because they knew which buildings to target.

The casualties in the battle vary as to whose facts you would like to believe. Basil Duke's history gives 10-12 Union troops killed in the Headquarters Building, 8-10 in the Eagle House. Col. Smith's report gave 4 killed and 24 wounded but some dying later of their wounds. Col. Smith's report also reports 200 of Morgan's men killed or wounded. Morgan reported for his entire raid that 2 were killed, 28 wounded and 64 missing. When Morgan entered the town, his men were received graciously, in fact, enthusiastically. At least two of his officers commented on the Pro-Southern feeling in the town, which was probably tired of being continuously occupied by Union soldiers. Morgan sent people to look for maps that he needed but at this point he did have some logistic problems of transporting his men a mere 5 miles to his real mission—the trestles over the L&N. Gen. Morgan, early on the morning of the 28th, started north over the railroad tracks arriving at the trestles at approximately 8 a.m. According to Col. Duke, the trestles garrison under Lt. Col. Courtland Matson, surrendered after approximately two hours. According to Union reports, the garrison held out for 8 hours and did not surrender until 4 p.m. There were



**Col. Duke's firepower, situated on the railroad embankment not far from the town's railroad bridge, protected Col. Clukes advance on the town.**

two stockades both under the command of Col. Matson. Both trestles were defended by approximately 600 men. The defenders had no artillery. He combined his force to defend the first stockade. Morgan's "fire brigade" set the two trestles, which ran for approximately 1000 feet of track, and were 80-90 ft. high. Gen. Morgan's men stayed and guarded the fire to make sure that it completely destroyed the trestles. Morgan's men then returned to Elizabethtown and picked up the supply wagons. They marched then to the Rolling Fork River. It must have been very late at night. Certainly the brigade was too tired and it was too dark to cross the river. They camped along the road that night. Next morning of the 29th one regiment was sent to New Haven to capture the stockade and burn the railroad bridge across the Nolin. A second regiment was sent to Boston to destroy the stockade and bridge across Wilson's Creek. A third body, under Col. Cluke with 2 guns, was sent to destroy the bridge across the Rolling Fork. Morgan's main body began to ford the river at daybreak in front of the Hamilton Hall house, where the senior Colonels were holding a court martial over how one of the officers had handled prisoners. At about 11 in the morning a shell burst close to the house. Col. Harlan, who had been at Gallatin, Tennessee when Morgan was confirmed to have been in Kentucky. With approximately 3000 men he took a 40-hour train ride to Munfordville where he was reinforced with 2 regiments of Calvary and continued on Morgan's trail to Elizabethtown and on to Younger's Creek. The court martial had just been completed when Col. Duke became painfully aware that a large Union force was near. He had about 300 men in the rear guard. His pickets were soon pushed through the area of the Hamilton Hall house and Duke fell back to a ravine approximately 200 yards from the river, which was an ideal place to defend. Soon Harlan had a line of 2500-3000 infantrymen flanked on his right by several hundred cavalry marching in battle formation supported by a 5-gun 6-inch parrott battery, which was placing accurate shells into the rear guard's horses and ford in the river. Col. Cluke's regiment was about to attack the stockade of the L&N over the Rolling Fork when he heard the artillery fire coming from the Hamilton Hall house area. Immediately he turned his regiment, like a good officer, and headed toward the artillery fire. He had forded the Rolling Fork at Hall's Bend off Lower Colesburg Road. Col. Cluke's regiment numbered 400-500 men and at a distance was difficult to see how many men were actually coming down on Gen. Harlan's left flank. On seeing this, Harlan stopped the advance and moved his men back. Soon Col. Cluke's regiment was in the ravine

supporting Col. Duke. Col. Duke had deployed his men to advance on the artillery battery, which they did and were able to silence the guns and kill several of the gunners, giving Cluke's brigade time to ford the river. Col. Duke was wounded and Col. Breckinridge took command. He evacuated the remaining rear guard. The two pieces of artillery were then positioned to fire on any advancing federal troops who tried to follow them across the ford, but no federal troops pursued at this point. After all they had just force marched some 36 miles to the Rolling Fork River. All of Morgan's men returned safely to Bardstown the night of the 29th.

Addendum: the 91st Illinois Volunteers were captured and paroled. They got on a train and headed to St. Louis. When the train stopped as it went through Illinois, approximately 2/3 of the regiment left the train to go home. Approximately 1/3 of those who went home did return to St. Louis. The other 1/3 are still AWOL.

Addendum: The Sulphur Fork trestle was 500 feet long and 90 feet high. Broad Run trestle was 500 feet long and 80 feet high. Fort Sands and Fort Boyle were built after Morgan's Raid and were never attacked. There were stockades guarding the trestles. There is some question as to how Morgan approached the trestles. I feel that he went via the railroad using his two mountain howitzers carried by horse along the railroad right of way. The area has been excavated with metal detectors and only small 3-inch cannonballs, which would have been fired from horse artillery, have been found. If Morgan had come by Wooldridge Ferry Road on the eastern slope of the hill overlooking the trestles, evidence would have been found of his using his heavier artillery. The old railroad cut and grade as well as the masonry work and columns of the trestles, earthwork and fortifications remain.

Addendum: Morgan's troops spent a leisurely afternoon in Elizabethtown buying from local merchants paying with Confederate money, which was of no value in Kentucky. James B. McCreary, a member of Morgan's command and later Governor of Kentucky, stated that he was lavishly entertained by several ladies and townspeople.

Addendum: Col. Duke was wounded by a shell fragment while crossing the river. The shell fragment entered his left mastoid cavity resulting in profuse bleeding producing a concussion (loss of consciousness). He was placed in a buggy and taken to Bardstown where the shell fragment was removed and he recovered without any further difficulty.

Addendum: John M. Harlan had been a successful Louisville attorney and a slaveholder who had brought servants into the Union Army with him. After

Lincoln's emancipation proclamation was signed, Col. Harlan resigned from the Union Army over reasons of health. The real reason for his resignation, and many other Kentucky Union Army personnel, was because of his pro-slavery leanings. Many Kentuckians believed in both Union and slavery. After the war he was appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court. Upon the court he became a staunch supporter of former slaves. In 1883 he wrote the Minority Opinion against Separate but Equal (segregation). He was way ahead of his time. Think where we would be today if we had integrated 100 years before we did.

Addendum: The Rolling Fork skirmish at Hamilton Hall House was where President Andrew Jackson stayed waiting for the waters of the Rolling Fork River to recede so he could safely cross in route from Nashville to Washington D.C. It was the ancestral home of both the Hamilton and Hall families from that area.

Addendum: Col. Harry S. Smith surrendered his sword to General Morgan. It was customary for an opposing officer to return the surrendering officers' sword if he considered the surrendering officer to have fought well and had done his duty. This was not the case with Col. Smith. Gen. Morgan took his

sword and gave it to Col. Palmer, Commander of Morgan's artillery, in appreciation of the job he had done in the Battle of Elizabethtown. Col. Palmer sent the sword to his family in Macon, Georgia. The artillery unit with Morgan was also from Macon. They kept records of every shot they fired and that is how we know there were 107 shots fired into Elizabethtown December 27, 1862. The sword stayed in Macon. The family donated the sword to the United Daughters of the Confederacy, who in turn allowed The Cannonball House to have the sword along with Col. Palmer's own sword and uniform.

In trying to obtain the sword for the opening of our History Museum, I visited The Cannonball House. They did not know they had this sword. I asked for the surrender sword. They instead brought me Col. Palmer's sword. They should have known this was a Confederate sword. After looking further in their attic, they produced Col. Smith's sword readily identified with his name on the blade. They allowed me to take pictures of the sword, but refused to allow the sword to be removed from The Cannonball House on an intramuseum loan. They then featured it on their website. I would hope someone in the future could acquire this sword for Elizabethtown.

## MONUMENT TO OUR UNION PROTECTORS SESQUICENTENNIAL MARKS BATTLE AND LOSSES

By Susan McCrobie, HCHS First Vice-president

June 6, 1929, the *Hardin County Enterprise* reported an effort was being made in Elizabethtown to secure fitting recognition and modest monument to the memory of the unknown soldiers killed in battle here, during the Civil War.

Elizabethtown resident, C.C. Wiseman, and Kentucky Congressman J.D. Craddock's efforts stalled when their request for information regarding the names of the soldiers, some buried locally, failed to gather the necessary affidavits required in order to mark the fallen.

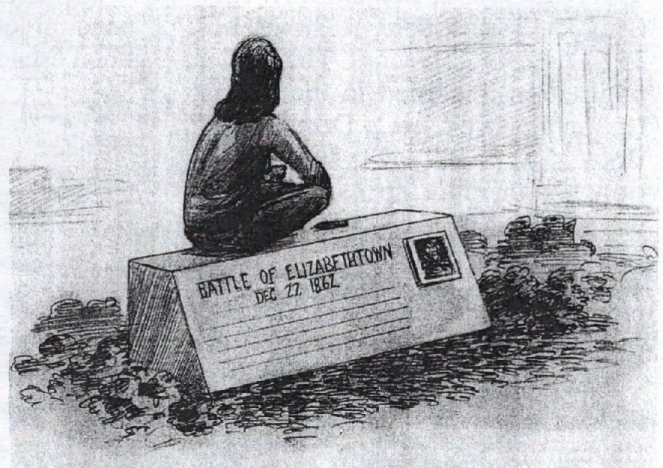
More time has passed and the troops defending the property and life of the residents of this humble town, targeted by enemy fire one-hundred and fifty years ago, still is bereft of a tribute to those who lost their lives in the line of duty.

Today, thanks to the Internet and its easy access to historic records and families interested in history, we know the names of the fallen.

And today, there is a renewed interest in erecting a memorial to those men of the 91st Illinois who stood in defense of Elizabethtown against cannonballs and raiding cavaliers.

Tax deductible donations towards the cost of the monument can be sent to:

**Battle of Elizabethtown Memorial Monument/HCHM  
201 West Dixie Avenue  
Elizabethtown, KY 42701**



**Proposed monument, commemorating the battle and the fallen, to be located on the northeast corner of the Public Square near the old Eagle House.**

# CIVIL WAR PROJECT GETS MOMENTUM

## *Deeds recreate 3D image of town and event*

By Susan McCrobie, HCHS First Vice-President

While the War of the Rebellion military reports, first and accounts carried in the newspapers, and family traditions give us a glimpse of local landmarks impacted during Morgan's 1862 assault on Elizabethtown, it undoubtedly through tireless research, evaluations and questions fielded around the roundtable discussion that we are gaining a modern day appreciation of our past.

How many times have you had the chance to circle the square in your vehicle? In your journey you are driving over the very spot where Private Isaac Henson of Greene County, Illinois and Company H, 91st Illinois Infantry drew his final breathe on the face of this earth, protecting the town. Henson lost his life in the upper floor stairwell of the Hardin County Courthouse as cannonballs cut through the cool December air and cut short his life. A 1847 plat of the city indicates the courthouse stood on the South Main facade of the H. B. Fife Courthouse in the 31W roadway.

That same city plat's fine print also reveals that lot 51 was lot 35 prior to December 6, 1820. That small details is extremely important to understanding just where Morgan's cannonballs took their toll.

City lot 35 in 1862 was located at the corner of [north] Mulberry Street and Lancaster [Vega] Alley. This is not the lot 35 where the Haycraft Riddle House occupied by G. Gunter took four cannon shots during Morgan's assault.

May 18, 1832, Benjamin H. Riddle and his wife, Gilly Haycraft Riddle, sold their home located on lot 35 to Daniel K. Haycraft. The deed for that real estate transaction, recorded in the Hardin County Clerk's Deed Book M, pages 414-416, shown to the right, spells out the approval by the General Assembly of changes in numbering city lots made by the Trustees of Elizabethtown.

The deeded description of the same lot conveyed to Haycraft by Riddle indicates that the structure on the lot was located on Cross Street among some of the

interesting details recorded. That same deed description gives clues that our lot 35 is actually known as lot 51 in 1862 and some two to three blocks closer to Morgan's cannons when tracking the path of the shots and distance covered before their impact on the town.

All buildings that received damage during the Christmas Raid and recorded by the Union forces in the Rebellion Record with the exception of one have been pinpointed using county court records and we are closer to beginning the paperwork and application for Civil War battle site designation.

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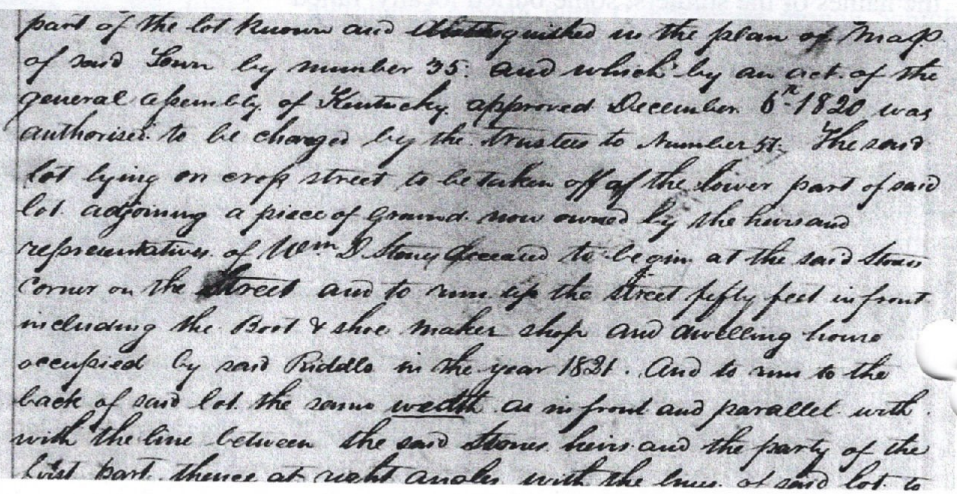
On a side note, I just had to check out the Haycraft connection as Samuel Haycraft Jr.'s journal does not mention cannonballs striking Haycraft's Riddle House but his History of Elizabethtown mentions the tin shop stove store of Mr. Frederick L. Mader on Main Cross Street in the Riddle House.

Samuel Haycraft Jr. and Daniel K. Haycraft were cousins.

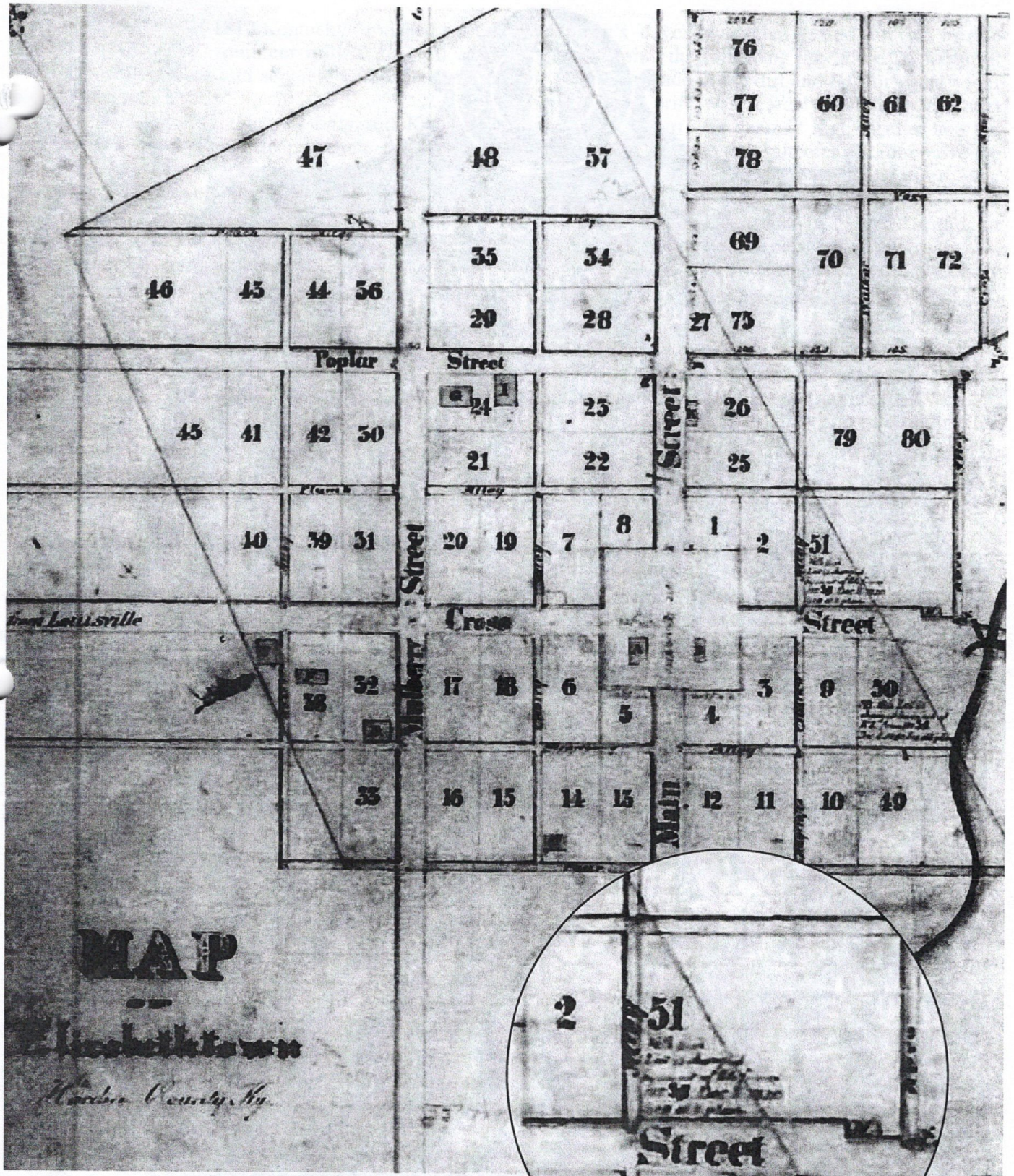
Benjamin H. Riddle's wife, Gilly, was the niece of Samuel Haycraft Jr.

Gilly's father was John Neville Haycraft and she was raised by her grandparents, Samuel Haycraft, Sr. and his wife, Margaret VanMeter. Gilly, sometimes wrongly identified as being this couple's youngest child and sister of Samuel Haycraft Jr is named in Margaret's 1843 will as a granddaughter.

Gilly Riddle relocated to Missouri before the American Civil War and lived there until her death in 1872.



part of the lot known and distinguished in the plan of Map of said Town by number 35. and which by an act of the general assembly of Kentucky, approved December 6<sup>th</sup> 1820 was authorized to be changed by the trustees to number 51. The said lot lying on cross street to be taken off of the lower part of said lot adjoining a piece of ground now owned by the heirs and representatives of W<sup>m</sup> D. Stony (deceased) to begin at the said town corner on the street and to run up the street fifty feet in front including the boot & shoe maker shops and dwelling house occupied by said Riddle in the year 1831. And to run to the back of said lot the same width as in front and parallel with the line between the said Stony heirs and the party of the last part thence at right angles with the line of said lot to



1847 Plat of the City of Elizabethtown recorded in the Madison County KY Clerk's Office. This plat notes the deviation in the original numbering of town lots on the eastern boundary. When looking at old deed descriptions, researchers must make allowances for the time period and numbering system in order to accurately locate plots.



Historical Marker pinpoints the spot of just one of the many early industries of Hardin County, Kentucky.

## MORE BANG FOR YOUR BUCK WITH EARLY COUNTY INDUSTRY

By Susan McCrobie, HCHS First Vice-President

Until 1819, Hardin County stretched as far south as the Green River. Much of the area was still unexplored and only the most enterprising of the county's residents were willing to venture into the wilderness to make a home and carve out a livelihood.

When a second war with the British was declared in June 1812, Mr. John Courts who had formerly lived in Virginia, was working a mill operation along Lynn Camp Creek north of the Green River in Hardin County.

Courts was no ordinary milling operation. Located

near two large springs that harnessed power to turn his mill stones, Courts ground charcoal, made on site, and mixed it with sulphur and another native mineral, saltpeter.

The finer grade black powder, milled on the creek, was used for rifles while the coarser grade was used for cannon and blasting powder.

By weight measure, black powder is made seventy-five parts saltpeter finely ground, fifteen parts charcoal, and ten parts sulfur. All ingredients must be fine ground separately as black powder is both highly corrosive and easy to ignite.

During the War of 1812 Kentucky furnished a total of 40 regiments of volunteer militia, as well as a number of battalions and separate companies, more than 25,000 men.

It is worth noting that not only did Kentucky provide the bulk of men to prosecute the war, her cave regions were nearly the only source of nitrate used to make gunpowder for the duration of the war as British vessels made it nearly impossible to secure the cheaper supplies from abroad.

The monetary value of Kentucky's crude saltpeter industry soared during these years. In fact, Saltpeter mining was one of the first major industries of the new frontier, and one of the principle objectives of exploring new territory was to find saltpeter caves.

Caves were mined by individuals and also commercially for national defense purposes during the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, and the Civil War.

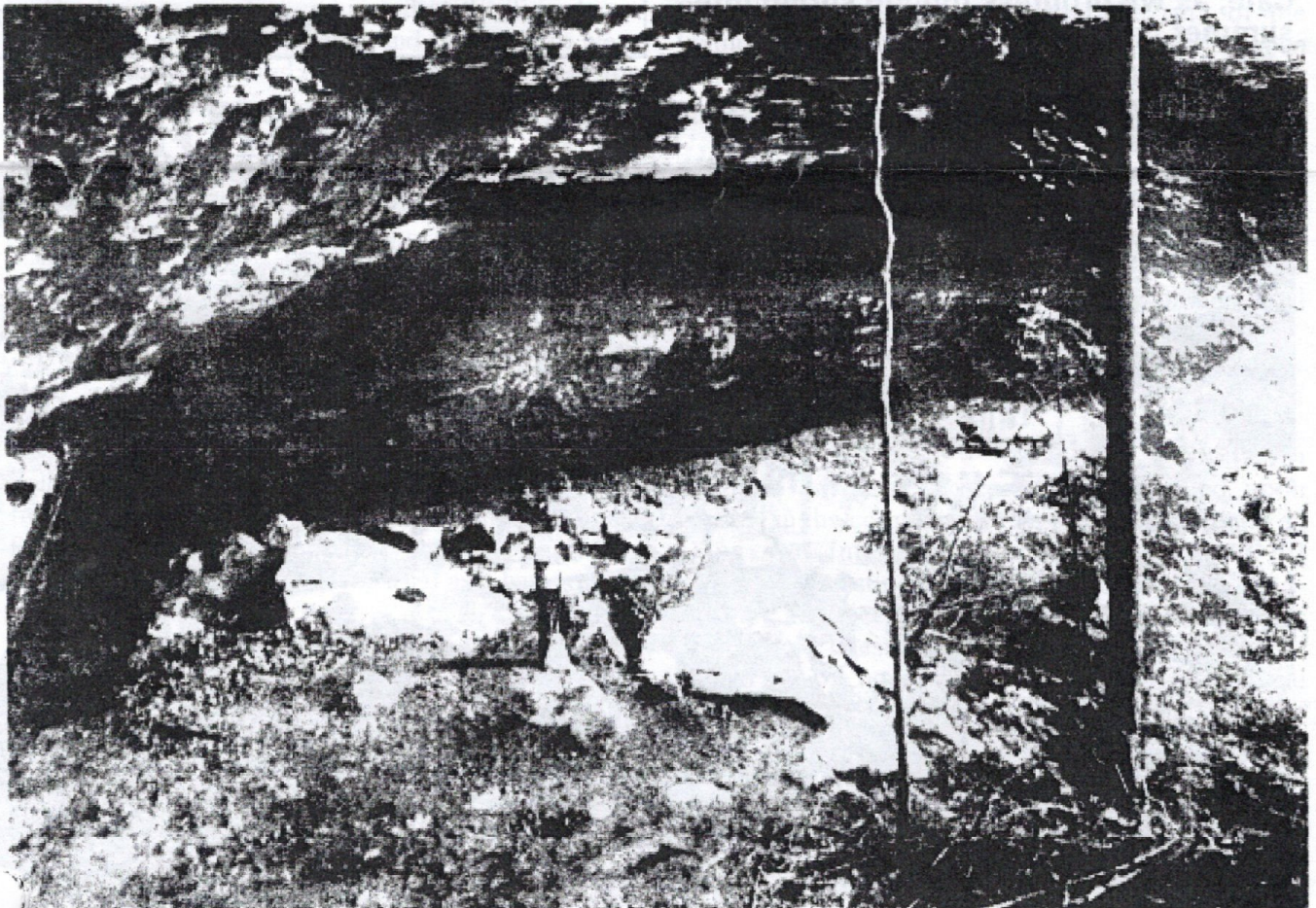
The overhangs of creek beds, carved by running water from the limestone/sandstone deposits of

Kentucky's caves was also tested for its nitrate potential using the following procedure: A footprint or mark was made in the dirt and left for twenty-four hours. If the print was scarcely visible by the next day, then the dirt was deemed high in niter and the tiresome task to leach the saltpeter dirt to remove the nitrates for use in making gunpowder was undertaken.

John Courts' will, dated 1817, is found in neighboring Barren County at Glasgow.

Two years later, in 1819, Courts' Hardin County land lying along Lynn Camp Creek that flowed into the Green River, and lands south of that river, were set aside by the Kentucky State Legislature to create Hart County. The county was named for Captain Nathaniel G.S. Hart, a Kentucky militia officer of the War of 1812 who died in the Massacre of the River Raisin.

Gunpowder milling was carried out at Lynn Camp Creek until just after the close of the Civil War in 1865.



Niter, or saltpeter, is an essential ingredient of gunpowder. The mining of this ingredient was an important industry in the Upper South and on the Upper Cumberland Plateau from the late 18th century until the late 19th century. This valuable ingredient was taken from the floors of Kentucky limestone/sandstone caves and along rock formations and overhangs of its creeks like Courts operation abutting Lynn Camp Creek.

Central Kentucky Art Guild [CKAG] members and the Elizabethtown/Hardin County Heritage Council are pleased to present a color sketch of a soon-to-be-painted mural in town during the HCHS April meeting.

Wes Kendall and Ron Frye, members of CKAG, designed, drew and painted this representation of the L&N train station along with a section of Dixie Avenue leading towards the Courthouse's east entrance. The scene is set in the 1870s and the mural will be peopled with many of the town's more famous characters and historical figures.

Mural Committee Chair, Mary Lou Hall, extends her thanks to Historical Society members for the seed money to get this project underway and invites all to watch the mural take form on the side of the former Western Auto building, across the parking lot from Cobbler Cafe, as we progress through spring into summer.



## Message From The President

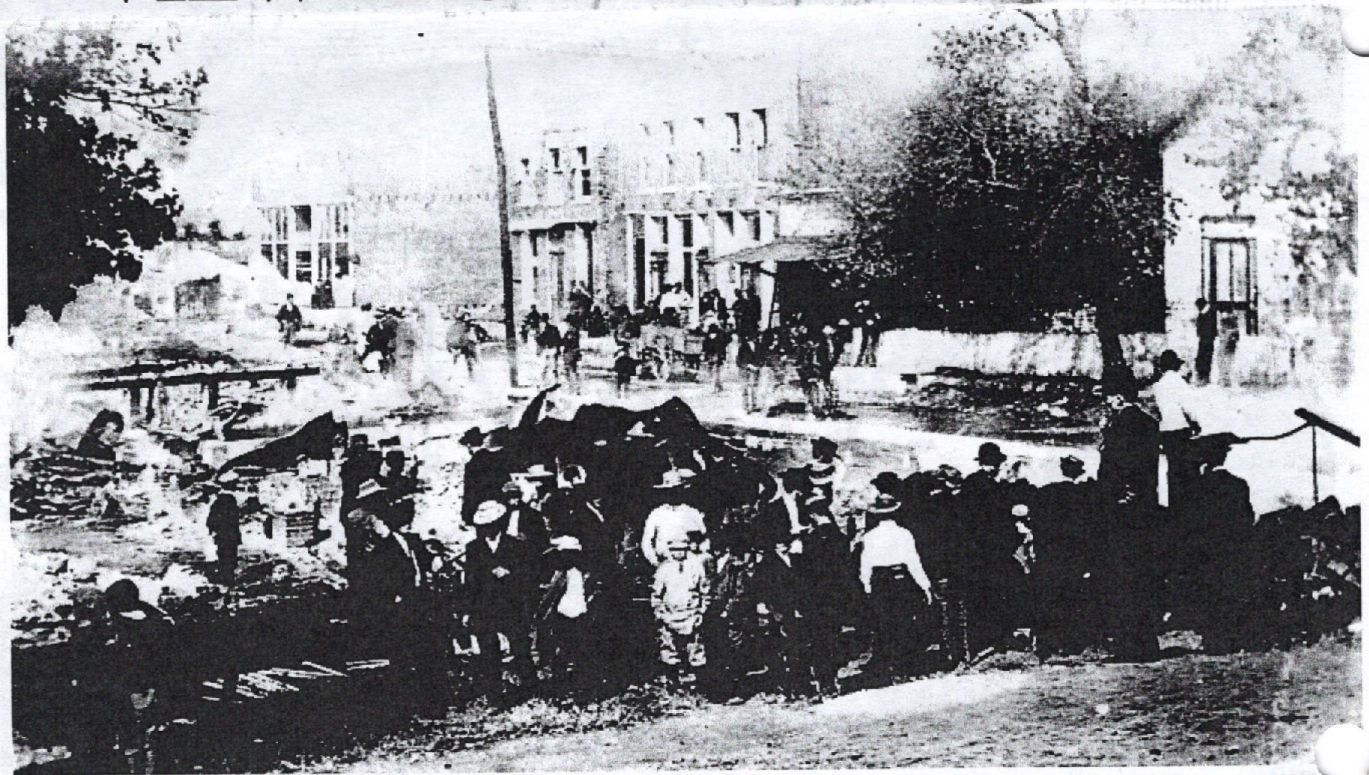
### Greetings to all members,

Just a reminder to all that after this issue, the newsletter will only be mailed to those who have paid their membership dues for the 2012 calendar year. Please continue to support YOUR Historical Society with your membership and don't miss out on the July newsletter with features stories on the War of 1812.

Make your \$10.00 check out to the Hardin County Historical Society and drop it in the mail today to P.O. Box 381, Elizabethtown, KY 42702.

-Judith "Judy" Cummins French

## VIEW FROM THE FLIP SIDE?



In 1908 a fire claimed a portion of the East Dixie business district. Ironically, the businesses on the opposite side of the street were still fairly new as that area of town was destroyed by a fire following the shelling on the area during Morgan's 1862 Christmas Raid. The same area, populated by town residents in the photo following the 1908 event, was the site of a more recent fire that facilitated the removal of Firestone from the downtown business district.

# *Plot and Plunder*

## VICTORIAN ERA FEMALE WRITER LEADS DOUBLE LIFE

By Susan McCrobie, HCHS First Vice-President

Samuel Haycraft, Jr. noted, in his personal diary, one special guest recently in town of some notoriety.

The Monday July 16, 1877 issue of the local paper reported that on Saturday last Miss Mary Gordon Duffee, a celebrated authoress and writer, came to the Hill Hotel to obtain items of early days. She remained until the 17th when she then traveled on to Louisville.

The lady in question, educated at the Tuscaloosa Female Seminary in Alabama and then sent to New York to finish her studies, had a natural talent for writing. She published several articles under the pen name of Mary Duff Gordon.

Her inquisitive nature and her accessibility to influential and well traveled people at her fathers' business

holdings of Duffee House, Washington Hall Hotel, Indian Queen Hotel, and Blount Springs Summer Resort afforded her subject matter regarding geology, agriculture and history that she used as a basis of her writing and poetry.

The arrangement also lead to more.

The hotel and resort business was one of the first casualties of the outbreak of Civil War in the south during 1861. Mary's brothers enlisted in the Confederate Army and she took on the position of postmistress for Blount Springs.

As postmistress during the fall of 1864, Duffee intercepted a shipment of \$100,000 in Confederate funds enroute from Montgomery to Quartermaster General Morgan in Nashville. Before Duffee was arrested and taken to Mobile under guard, as a postal embezzler she used Morgan's money to purchase livestock, food and clothing for the suffering families

and widows surrounding Blount Springs. Because she had used none of the funds for personal gain others were successful in their appeal to President Jefferson Davis for her release without trial.

Duffee wrote of her own experience of Wilson's Raid as having heard the approach of armies and skirmishing on the outskirts of Montevallo. In the fashion of a true Scarlett O'Hara, she tended to the wounded there with Emmie Bailey before deciding to return home, on foot. Before arriving back at Blount Springs, she came upon the ruin of the Oxmoor Furnace community where she has been earlier greeted there by great hospitality only to be

hungry, tired, and despairing of the overwhelming cost of war as she glimpsed chimney smoke from a fine home only a ghost of its former glory.

And more... Mary Gordon Duffee was a spy.

In 1928, when

historian Marie Bankhead Owens called upon Duffee, in the company of Lily Lykes, they found an aging, but interesting woman who showed off documents attesting to her Civil War espionage.

There had been a legend that when Duffee was staying as a guest at the William Mudd residence in Elyton and the home was commandeered as the local headquarters of General James H. Wilson's staff, she overheard the orders given to General John T. Croxton for his assaults on Selma and Montgomery. Somehow that intelligence she gathered made its way to Nathan Bedford Forrest's pursuing cavalry.

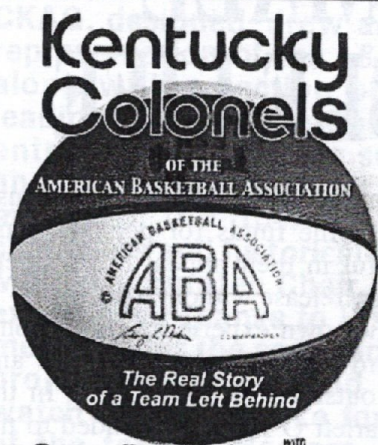
Duffee was also reported to have traveled to Kentucky as a Confederate spy.

Just when was Duffee's earlier visit to the Hill Hotel and what did she come back to collect? Perhaps that was the real story....

Duffee died in 1930. She was 86.

*Duffee's full account, including following the path of Wilson's troopers through Jefferson and Shelby Counties, consists of a series of 45 articles published in the Birmingham Iron Age, December 10, 1885 to December 23, 1886.*

# Historical Society announces next meeting



GARY P. WEST  with LLOYD "PINK" GARDNER

The Hardin County Historical Society will meet Monday evening, April 23, 2012, 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 Twylane VanLahr at 270-765-2515 by **Friday, April 20th, for dinner reservations**; later reservations for the meal cannot be guaranteed.

The dinner is followed at 7 P.M. by a special program, *Kentucky Colonels' Basketball* presented by Gary P. West of Bowling Green, Kentucky. Come get an inside look at one of the most intriguing times in the history of professional basketball and a glimpse at some of the best players in the history of the game who were around just long enough to win a world championship.

And then there is the story of the team's colorful owners with family connections to the Lindbergh kidnapping and Hope Diamond that you just will not want to miss.

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HARDIN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
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