

# Bits and Pieces

of Hardin County History

A PUBLICATION OF HARDIN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

VOL XXIV NO. 1

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SPRING 2005



Courtesy Brown-Pusey House

R. L. Marshall in his automobile, the first in Hardin County

## ROBERT L. MARSHALL

Robert L. Marshall was a jeweler in Elizabethtown for forty years. His place of business, located in a corner of the Public Square, now [2005] occupied by a part of Town & Country, a ladies' apparel shop, was almost a landmark on the Square. Wardlow Berry was a Marshall's business partner for many years.

Marshall was born and spent his early years in Larue County, coming to Elizabethtown about 1885. According to his obituary, he had developed from a modest beginning into one of the most

substantial and successful merchants of the town. His business talents and a scrupulous attention to duty overcame meager means and great physical infirmities.

His studious mind led him into a wide fund of information, especially on scientific subjects, and he was the inventor of several mechanical devices. One of his inventions, according to material at the Hardin County History Museum, was a new and useful improvement in distance finders, for which he applied for a patent in 1899. A very refined version of this distance finder, now called a range finder, is in use by the United States military forces today.

Marshall owned the first automobile in Hardin County. He enjoyed his new "machine" and drove it proudly. However, he reluctantly disposed of it, as he observed that its operation frightened horses along the streets.

Marshall also had one of the first new radios back about 1920 and had an antenna wire strung from the roof of his building across the street to the courthouse. Reception on his radio at times left much to be desired, however. My mother related that before she and my father were married in 1922, they would often go to Marshall's store to listen to the radio, and that they would sometimes listen for several hours without hearing a sound from the new contraption.

Marshall, aged sixty-one and a bachelor, died March 11, 1924, a victim of "Bright's disease." As a mark of respect, business houses of the town were closed during his funeral service.

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**R. L. Marshall**  
The Leading  
Jeweler. —  
Elizabethtown, - Kentucky.

Keeps a full line of Gold and  
Silver Watches; Silverware of  
all kinds; Diamonds; Rings;  
Cuff Buttons and a large assort-  
ment of Clocks.

Repairing of all kinds prompt-  
ly done; Satisfaction Guaranteed.

NORTH SIDE PUBLIC SQUARE.

*The Elizabethtown News, Jan. 25, 1901*

# LINCOLN'S AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL LETTER

In 1859 Republicans in Illinois were urging Abraham Lincoln to try for the nomination for President. So that Republicans elsewhere could know the facts of Lincoln's life, J. W. Fell, a resident of Springfield, asked Lincoln for a "sketch" of his life. Lincoln complied, his only request being that, if used, the article must not appear to have been written by himself. Joseph J. Lewis of West Chester, Penna., used it in preparing an article on Lincoln, published in the *Chester County Times*, Feb. 11, 1860. The article was widely copied in Republican papers. The text, which was written Dec. 20, 1859, in Lincoln's own hand, follows:

*I was born Feb. 12, 1809, in Hardin County, Kentucky. My parents were both born in Virginia, of undistinguished families--second families, perhaps I should say. My mother, who died in my tenth year, was of a family of the name of Hanks, some of whom now reside in Adams, and others in Macon counties, Illinois. My paternal grandfather, Abraham Lincoln, emigrated from Rockingham County, Virginia, to Kentucky, about 1781 or 2, where a year or two later, he was killed by indians, not in battle, but by stealth, when he was laboring to open a farm in the forest. His ancestors, who were quakers, went to Virginia from Berks County, Pennsylvania. An effort to identify them with the New England family of the same name ended in nothing more definite than a similarity of Christian names in both families,, such as Enoch, Levi, Mordecai, Solomon, Abraham, and the like.*

*My father, at the death of his father, was but six years of age; and he grew up, literally without education. He removed from Kentucky to what is now Spencer county, Indiana, in my eighth year. We reached our new home about the time the State came into the Union. It was a wild region, with many bears and other wild animals still in the woods. There I grew up. There were some schools, so called; but no qualification was ever required of a teacher, beyond "readin, writin, and cipherin" to the Rule of Three. If a straggler supposed to understand latin happened to sojourn in the neighborhood, he was looked upon as a wizzard. There was absolutely nothing to excite ambition for education. Of course when I came of age I did not know much. Still somehow, I could read, write, and cipher to the Rule of Three, but that was all. I have not been to school since. The little advance I now have upon this store of education, I have picked up from time to time under the pressure of necessity.*

*I was raised to farm work, which I continued till I was twenty two. At twenty one I came to Illinois, and passed the first year in Illinois in Macon county. Then I got to New Salem at that time in Sangamon, now Menard County, where I remained a year as a sort of Clerk in a store. Then came the Black Hawk war and I was elected a Captain of Volunteers, a success which gave me more pleasure than any I have had since. I went the campaign, was elated, ran for the Legislature the same year (1832) and was beaten--the only time I ever have been beaten by the people. The next, and three succeeding biennial elections, I was elected to the Legislature. I was not a candidate afterwards. During this Legislative period I had studied law, and removed to Springfield to practice it. In 1846 I was once elected to the lower House of Congress. Was not a candidate for re-election. From 1849 to 1854, both inclusive, practiced law more assiduously than ever before. Always a Whig in politics, and generally on the Whig electoral tickets, making active canvasses. I was losing interest in politics, when the repeal of the Missouri Compromise aroused me again. What I have done since then is pretty well known.*

*If any personal description of me is thought desirable, it may be said I am in height six feet, four inches, nearly; lean in flesh, weighing, on an average, one hundred and eighty pounds; dark complexion, with coarse black hair and grey eyes. No other marks or brands recollected.*

Yours very truly,

A. Lincoln

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## MARY HELM OVERCAME HANDICAP



Mary Helm

Mary Helm was born May 18, 1845, a daughter of John L. and Lucinda Barbour Helm. As a child in a large family of doting parents of undoubted wealth and position, Mary Helm could look forward to a happy and gay social life and ultimate marriage to an eligible young man. This was the dream of most young girls in her position in her time. When she was a small child, her father, John L. Helm, became Governor of Kentucky for the first time in 1850, and his family became the "first family of Kentucky."

However, the position thus achieved was tempered for Mary by an accident which left her a cripple for life. Her brother pulled from under her a chair in which she was about to be seated. As a result her spine was broken and she became a hunchback, a little over four feet tall. The action, however, appeared to have little effect upon her activities and certainly none upon her mental vigor. If she had

bemoaned her fate and lived out her life in bitterness and resentment, little would be known of her at this date. Her natural sweetness of disposition, her concern for others and her religion, which became her solace, guided her life otherwise.

Always active in the Methodist Church, she, with her sister Lucinda, became very active in the Women's Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South when it was organized in 1878. Mary became an officer in the Society's affiliate with the Louisville Conference. Lucinda moved to Nashville and was the organizer and leading figure in the Parsonage Society and the Women's Home Missionary Society.

Mary spent half of each year working at an executive position in the publishing house of the Methodist Church in Nashville. The rest of the time she was at Helm Place engaged in writing religious articles or addressing church groups. She was always both a forceful and entertaining speaker.

The late W. H. Marriott, long-time editor of *The Elizabethtown News*, who knew her well, said of her, "She had rare gifts of mind and heart. She inherited from her parents executive powers which gave her leadership in every field she entered. She combined them with a sweetness of nature and a well-rounded Christian life."

After Lucinda's death in 1898, Mary moved to Nashville and took up the work which had been so ably started by her sister, and remained with that organization until 1910. She then moved to Louisville to be with her family where she remained until her death in 1913.

(Source: *Elizabethtown Examiner*, Feb. 4, 1976; *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society*, Jan., 2001; Arabel W. Alexander, *Life and Work of Lucinda B. Helm*, Nashville, 1898)

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## "BUD" DAVIS'S WORLD WAR II EXPERIENCE

It is rare that we find a first-hand account of a wartime experience. In the early months of 1945, 2d Lt. Hardin Y. Davis, better known as "Bud," was stationed at an Eighth Air Force Bomber Station, somewhere in England. He was a bombardier on a B-17 Flying Fortress, in the 487<sup>th</sup> Bomb. Group, participating in heavy bombardment missions in the air offensive against the enemy over Nazi Germany.

A letter dated Feb. 21, 1945, to his mother, Mrs. Elizabeth Davis, at that time living in Upton, recounts his experience on one of the bombing missions:

*Dear Mom,*

*Wrote you a V-mail yesterday but since that was the first time I'd written for four or five days and as I have quite a bit to tell, thought I'd write a longer letter to you today. . . .*

*Slept late this morning and really enjoyed it. Heard the orderly come in about three to wake up another crew but didn't even hear them go out. We got up around ten. I shaved, washed and washed my head. Must take a good shower this afternoon late. There will be no hot water until then.*

*The weather today is very pretty for English weather and fairly warm. There is a mission out, and from what I hear it has prospects of being rough.*

*Will tell you about our deal of last Saturday. Our formation caught flak pretty rough over the target and our ship worst of all. We managed to sweat the trip out until we got over our lines and a little east of Brussels. The pilot decided then that it was best to let the plane go instead of trying to land it. We had had a wing fire all the way from the target which kept flaring up despite all efforts to extinguish it. When the plane was banked for any reason, the fire would get worse. Evidently gas was spilling on it. There was a bad undercast which prevented us from considering a landing at Brussels, our reason for going toward that place. The crew was told to meet in Brussels as soon as possible after landing. Five of us went out the nose, four from the waist. I was next to last from the nose, the pilot being last. The radio operator was last from the waist. The crew discipline was fine. Everyone was calm and there was no excited talking over interphone. When everything was ready, we jettisoned the waist and nose doors. No one was eager to jump into space but no one hesitated. The wind and slip stream grabbed you like a giant once you left the inside of the plane.*

*Everyone received quite a jolt when the chute opened. I know I was stunned for a split second. It was a very pleasant feeling to know you were floating safely to earth.*

*Just before jumping, I hooked my pair and the navigator's G. I. shoes on the parachute harness. When the chute opened and my downward plunge was abruptly halted, the shoe strings broke and three of the shoes went sailing down like big rocks or something. For some reason one shoe was still hanging on when I reached the ground.*

*Our altitude was eight or nine thousand when we left the ship. Couldn't see the ground for the undercast. Have never been in a place as quiet. Don't know how long it took me to reach the ground. Didn't have any sense much of falling or which way I was drifting until I went through the undercast. After my chute opened I watched the plane to see the pilot's chute open. Saw his and the radio operator's, too. The plane was still going when the undercast of clouds engulfed me. The pilot had put the plane on automatic pilot. These clouds were not thick, was in them less than two minutes by estimation. There was a peculiar odor in them, moldy and damp. When I broke through them I was something less than 300 feet from the ground. Was drifting quite a bit and soon saw I was headed for a grove of small trees. Couldn't do anything about it so as I entered them, I crossed my legs to protect myself. Shut my eyes. BOOM, I hit the ground, right on my back. Fortunately the ground was soft and spongy and I wasn't even jarred bad.*

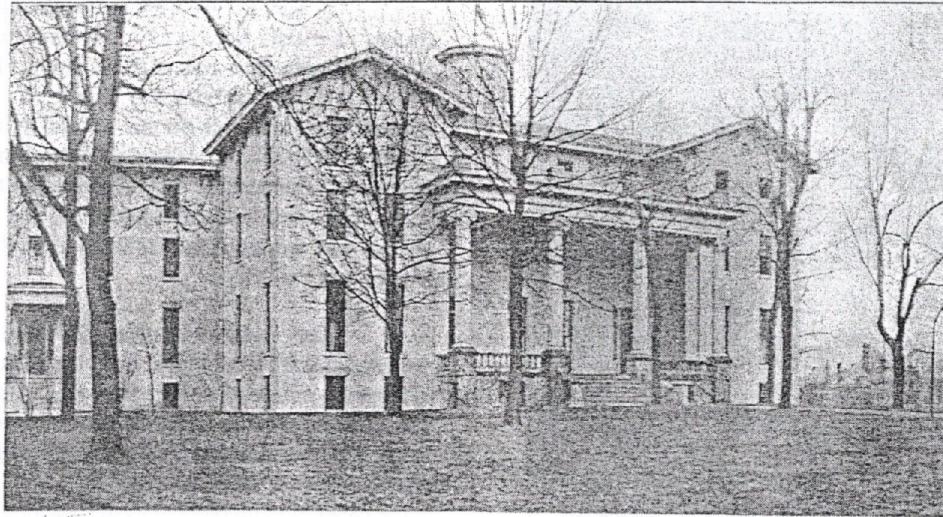
*While I was pulling my chute from the trees, three men arrived from different directions. One had a big knife. They couldn't decide if I were an American or German. They spoke French so we couldn't get much across to each other. Did understand one enough to know he was offering to take me to a telephone. The three men, one must have been in his seventies, took me to this chateau. The lady there could speak English. She contacted a nearby American air base for me and they sent after me. This woman was the wife of the village burgomaster, Comte (Count) Jose de la Sera. She was a countess. Her husband came soon but he could speak no English. They would have gladly kept me if I had been unsuccessful in finding Americans. I wanted to get to Brussels as we had decided to do before leaving.*

*When I was taken to this fighter base, the pilot and navigator had already gotten there. The second day afterwards the whole crew rejoined in Brussels. Weren't able to get transportation back to England for two days because of the weather so we got into town a couple of nights. Enjoyed our time in Brussels quite a bit.*

*Expect we will be given new equipment this afternoon to replace the part we lost - which was the biggest part of it. . . . We will probably be in the blue again tomorrow. The pilot has 22 missions, the co-pilot 20, and the rest of the crew has 21. We are well over the hump. Shouldn't be too long in finishing the remainder. . . .*

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EDITOR'S NOTE: We are grateful to Jane Davis and her children for permission to print this letter.



Hamilton College, ca. 1920

## MOTHER'S STORY - CONCLUSION

*(EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the fifth and final installment of the story that my mother, Susan Margaret Settle, who was born in Elizabethtown in 1900 and spent her entire life in this place, wrote of her early life.)*

In September, 1918, Dad and I went to Lexington, Ky., where I entered Hamilton College. This was a two-year college with a high school department. I entered as a freshman in the college department and left in June, 1920, having been called a "senior" the last year I was there. Dad and I went to Lexington on a train which left Elizabethtown about 11:30 AM. We changed trains in Louisville and arrived in Lexington about 5:00 PM. We went directly to Hamilton on North Broadway where arrangements were made for my enrollment, my reservation having been made months in advance.

I chose Hamilton over Logan College at Russellville, which was a Methodist-affiliated school, because Hamilton was in a larger city and I thought I might have more advantages there than in a town about the same size as Elizabethtown where I had been reared. We did have advantages in Lexington not available in smaller places, such as operas with the very best stars, exhibits of various kinds, and lectures by well-known people.

I shall never forget the thrill I had when the conductor called, "All out for Lexington." I had seen from the train window a man riding on some vehicle behind a horse stripping seed from bluegrass.

I loved Lexington, and the two years I spent at Hamilton were two of the happiest of my life. My clothes were as nice and as plentiful as those of any of the other girls. We were allowed the same privileges and the rooms were about the same. We furnished our curtains, scatter rugs, easy chair if we wished, sheets, pillow cases and blankets.

I had ten dollars a month for spending money. We of the college grade were allowed to go to town in pairs or more on either Friday afternoons after classes, or Saturday mornings. There were several stores off limits to us, such as the Lexington Drug Store where the boys from the University of Kentucky and the town boys hung out. We college girls were allowed to take a walk each afternoon, in pairs or more, for a few blocks around the college location.



Some of our classes were held on the campus of Transylvania College with which Hamilton was affiliated. I had a Spanish class there, also biology and botany, and a class in Bible literature.

We were allowed to have only a certain number of correspondents, and the list of those had to be sent in by our parents and approved by the lady in the office, who looked carefully at each letter which came in or went out. We were not supposed to mail anything from any point except the Hamilton office, although we often slipped letters into the box at Transylvania or when were on a walk. I had a boy friend in Lexington who wrote to me quite often and sent his letters to me by a mutual friend who was a

day student at Hamilton. I mailed mine to him on the outside.

On Sundays we went to the church of our choice. I usually went to a big Methodist church which as I remember was on High Street. That is where I met my Lexington boy friend. We were allowed to go to church parties but had to have a chaperon from school. We could go out on Sunday afternoons if some adult lady approved by the school called for us and brought us back. My boy friend had an aunt who was most accommodating in this respect, and the boy had a car.

Many times some other girl, usually my roommate, and I would meet this boy friend and one of his friends in town and go for a ride. One afternoon we went to Nicholasville and were in a hail storm with the hailstones being as large as golf balls. I never before or since saw such hail. This came out in the paper, and no one believed the stones were so large. We could not say, "Oh, yes, they were, for we saw them."

When school was out in 1919 I went home to Bethel, Ky., with my friend, June Crouch, and this boy friend came for me and I spent two days with his aunt in Lexington. By the time school was out in 1920, I was going with Edmund and LeeLand had another girl whom he married that year.

I do not know why I chose the University of Kentucky for my last two years, because at that time it was highly recommended for boys but sort of frowned on for girls. My first roommate there was Clarice Bellew who came, I believe, from Hickman. My second year I had a single room. My first Hamilton roommate had been Lacy Hinkle of Bardstown with whom I stayed about two weeks. Then I moved in with the daughter of the principal, Katherine Hendricks, a girl much younger than I, but who had a front room which I much desired. My second year at Hamilton I roomed with June Crouch of Bethel and Nancy Clay of Mt. Sterling. We had a large front room and were great friends and visited one another several times.

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## EPILOGUE

Margaret was graduated from the University of Kentucky in June, 1922, with the degree of Bachelor of Arts. She returned to Elizabethtown, married, and taught English and French at the Elizabethtown High School for a number of years. She continued to reside in Elizabethtown until her death in January, 1997.

M. J. J.

## AN INDIAN STORY OF 1790

(By E. T. Carrico, Stithton, Ky., for *The Elizabethtown News*, Dec. 19, 1902)

Perhaps about the year 1790 Robert Samuels and Peter Kennedy were traveling from the fort where Brandenburg now is, to the one in Severns Valley where Elizabethtown now stands. The object of their journey from Severns Valley to the Ohio River and return was to look out for signs of roving bands of Indians, at that time very troublesome, being supplied with arms by the English in Canada to harass the settlers of Kentucky, though at the time Great Britain and the United States were nominally at peace. These acts of bad faith on the part of the British, by the way, had much to do with bringing on the war of 1812.

The two scouts, Samuels and Kennedy, having seen no indications of an alarming character, had perhaps grown careless. In any event, they had stopped and made a small fire, as near as can be ascertained, not far from the present Stithton school house in what is now Thos. McNulty's field. It was a cold drizzly morning and the temptation to cook a warm breakfast perhaps overcame the ordinary caution of the pioneers. The smoke was seen by a band of six Indians and a renegade white man, who were on Indian Hill near where W. B Jones now lives.

The savages had very nearly surrounded the white men before their presence was discovered. Mr. Samuels caught up his rifle, but Mr. Kennedy never even waited to secure his gun, and both men ran for their lives, pursued by the yelling Indians.

At a point about where the turnpike passes near what is known as the "old Hawkins place," Mr. Samuels was shot through the thigh, a musket ball passing through the larger muscles. Mr. Kennedy passed him at that time and eventually made his escape after temporarily concealing himself in a small cave farther on toward Mill Creek. Mr. Samuels

"flashed" his gun at one of the Indians who was shooting at him with a bow and arrow, but the rain had wet the priming and the piece misfired. Before he could resist further, he was taken prisoner.

The Indians with their captive crossed the Ohio as soon as possible and made their way to Canada. Every night during the journey, the unfortunate prisoner was made to lie down and a pole was laid across his breast and his wrists were securely tied to the ends. His ankles were then tied to stakes or saplings and so secured that he got what rest he could.

After the arrival of the party in Canada, whether at once or after some time is not known, the Indians sold their captive to an Englishman for a small consideration, I believe a gallon of whisky, and Mr. Samuels was to work perhaps three months for the Englishman by way of reimbursement. But it seems that the Indians reconsidered the matter, and the life of the Kentuckian was again in danger. However, by the assistance of the Englishman he finally escaped and returned to Kentucky where he lived to a good old age, leaving a large family of descendants. Mr. Felix Samuels living near Stithton is a grandson, and to him I am indebted for most of the facts in this sketch, though I can remember hearing his father, James Samuels, tell this and other incidents of the early settlements in this country.

The tombstone of Robert Samuels is still to be seen [1902] in the burying ground at Old Mt. Moriah church in Nelson County. The dates of birth, Sept. 20, 1769, and death, Feb. 17, 1845, are plainly legible.

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# PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

(From The Elizabethtown News, Oct. 3, 1872)

Not long since we made a note of the fact that this church was so far completed that it would be immediately used for the purpose of holding Divine Services. Last Tuesday we had the pleasure, in company with Brother J. K. McKallip, the pastor, of going entirely through the building and making a thorough examination of it. The result of that visit, with our corresponding conclusions, is given below.

It is a large, airy, and commodious building, well lighted, and when entirely finished will be by far the finest church in our little town. The pews, made of black walnut and white ash, oiled, with paneled ends, are neatly and tastily arranged, all placed so that a full view can be had of the minister. The ceiling is high, and, like the walls, of a pearly white color, so that the reflection of the light in the absence of the shutters is almost dazzling.

The pulpit, the most prominent feature in the whole church, is one of the neatest and most tastily arranged of any we ever saw. It is composed almost entirely of oiled black walnut, elaborately carved, veneered in front and on the ends with curled black walnut. The platform on which the pulpit stands is elevated about twenty inches, the front of which is of the same material as the pews—made to correspond. It extends beyond the curved arch some feet,

giving the minister and audience a full view of each other. Opposite the pulpit, and on a slightly elevated platform, is the place for the organ and choir stand. Dr. Baldwin has kindly tendered the church the use of his until one can be purchased. It is now in position, and is used each Sunday. The pulpit is furnished with a neat sofa and a couple of cushioned arm chairs. There is a table in front of the pulpit with carved ends, composed of black walnut, oiled.

The chandelier, hung from the center of the ceiling, has twelve lights, placed pyramidal fashion. There are besides four brackets placed on the walls, each having two lights. The total cost of the chandelier and brackets was only \$51. Arrangements are being made to procure carpets, shutters, and stoves, and when procured and placed, this church will be by far the most tasty of any ever built at this place, and will reflect great credit on its people.

The building is not yet completed. The corners of the front will each have a small spire, while the central spire will be fifty feet high from the top of the church. Two small spires will be placed on it about half way up. The design is one of the neatest we have ever seen, and it but remains to complete it to make it a most attractive church.

(NOTE: The above account was most likely written by H. A. Sommers, editor of *The Elizabethtown News* and devout member of the Presbyterian Church.)

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Once again, our April 25<sup>th</sup> Meeting will be held at the State Theater Gallery. From the reports I received, everyone seemed pleased with our caterer Back Home Restaurant. So, Back Home will again be providing the meal for a cost of \$7.50.

Sandy Harmon from Henderson, KY will be our presenter for the next meeting. Ms. Harmon portrays Lily May Ledford, one of the Coon Creek Girls, in this Chautauqua Series Presentation. Ledford from the Red River Gorge Area of Kentucky traded a box of crayons for a broken down fiddle when she was a youngster in the 1920s. She appeared on WLS Radio in Chicago in the 1930s and for many years entertained audiences at Renfro Valley. In 1939 she performed in the White House for President Roosevelt and the King and Queen of England.

The Hardin County History Museum currently has a display depicting the Glendale Community. A special thanks goes out to Larry Brawner and Reverend Mike Bell for putting this display together. Larry is a retired school administrator for the Hardin County Schools. You probably have seen some of his old photographs that appear in the *Hardin County Independent*. My earliest recollection of Larry Brawner was when he played on the state tournament basketball team for Glendale High School in 1956. I think all of you are familiar with Brother Bell. He has been the pastor at the Glendale Christian Church since 1970. That's quite the accomplishment, Brother!

We will have the History Museum open after our meeting for you to view the Glendale Display and some of the other items that have been recently added.

I look forward to seeing everyone on April 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Kenneth L. Tabb**  
**President**

# ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING

The Hardin County Historical Society will meet Monday evening, April 25, 2005, at the STATE THEATER GALLERY, 209 W. Dixie Avenue, in downtown Elizabethtown. The buffet dinner, catered by BACK HOME, will be served at 6:30 PM. The price is \$7.50 per person.

The program will be presented by Sandy Harmon of Henderson, portraying Lily May Ledford, one of the Coon Creek Girls. Mrs. Harmon is a professional musician. Her mother says Sandy was singing before she could talk. She has since pursued an active career in the music industry. In addition to performing all over the eastern United States, she has made recordings, appeared in movies and television, and hosted her own live show at the Windy Hollow Music Jamboree.

This program is funded in part by the Kentucky Humanities Council, Inc., and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

For dinner reservations, telephone Meranda Caswell at 765-2515 by NOON, Saturday, April 23. If you find later that you can attend, phone Meranda, as we occasionally have cancellations.

**DUES FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR 2005 IN THE AMOUNT OF \$10 ARE NOW DUE. YOU MAY PAY AT THE APRIL MEETING, OR MAIL YOUR CHECK TO THE ADDRESS BELOW. MEMBERSHIP IN THE SOCIETY IS OPEN TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS.**

**PLEASE PAY YOUR DUES NOW.**



HARDIN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
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