

A Wilderness Mystery



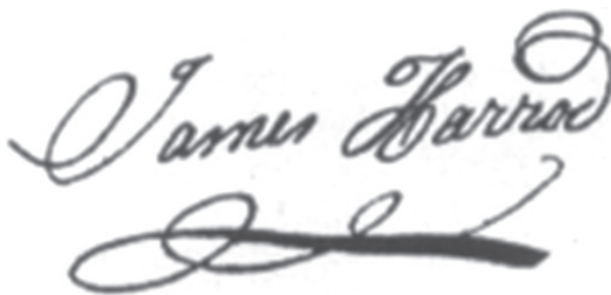
By **SAM TERRY**
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While the legacies of pioneer explorers such as Daniel Boone, George Rogers Clark, and Simon Kenton are well-known, James Harrod's story remains one of Kentucky history's great mysteries. February 21 will mark the 226th anniversary of the disappearance of the founder and namesake of Kentucky's first settlement.

Only three and a half months before Kentucky achieved statehood, Harrod set out on a hunting expedition and was never heard from again. The theories about his disappearance were plentiful and wide-ranging.

Many presumed Harrod was either killed by Native Americans or became sick and died in the wilderness while hunting. Some claimed Harrod abandoned his family and went to another part of the country. Another theory suggests Harrod had been previously married in Pennsylvania and abandoned his second family to return to his first family. Two hunters claimed they recognized him in an Indian camp near Detroit, Michigan. Harrod's sister gave a legal deposition claiming he came to live with her.

Fifty years after his disappearance, Harrod's friend, Henry Wilson, claimed that the pioneer told him he felt like his wife was too intimate with some of



the men in the settlement. Another claimed his wife wasn't very loving. To the contrary, other settlers said Harrod "nearly worshipped" his wife. Shortly before his disappearance, Harrod wrote a will bequeathing his estate to "my beloved wife" and the couple's daughter.

Harrod's wife, Ann Coburn McDonald Harrod, and their daughter Margaret believed James was murdered by a man named Bridges with whom he left to go, not on a hunting trip, but to find Jonathan Swift's reputed silver mines with his friend Michael Stoner. At one point, a gunshot was heard in the woods and Bridges appeared to suggest that Indians had killed Harrod and it was too dangerous to go look for him.

Later, Bridges appeared in Lexington selling furs and he also sold a set of silver buttons engraved with an "H" them. The shop keeper sent them to Ann Harrod who said they were her husband's buttons.

Friends searched the area where Harrod was last seen and found bones wrapped in sedge grass in a

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cave. Some claimed the bones were wearing Harrod's shirt and the buttons were missing; others said there was no shirt at all. Regardless, Bridges abruptly left Harrodstown when the search party returned with their report.

Ann Harrod married a third time but oddly had her last marriage annulled on the grounds that her second husband, Harrod, was still living. There is no conclusive documentation that Ann ever heard from her husband after his disappearance.

Ann applied for a pension based on Harrod's Revolutionary era service and claimed that he had died in a hunting accident and that his clothes had been found in a nearby river.

Two hundred twenty-six years later, the disappearance of James Harrod remains a mystery. The settlement first named Harrodstown was eventually renamed Harrodsburg in honor of the pioneer.

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are actually done in the workforce. They learn more soft skills, conduct actual business, learn to stay on task and get a gut level understanding of what makes an honest day's work."

"Soft skills," crucial to any path a student chooses to pursue, are broadly defined as social and emotional intelligence and a good attitude. It's those soft skills that get us to work on time in the morning, allow us to be good team players and take criticism without collapsing. Without soft skills, our "hard" or job-specific training is useless in the real world.

At Great Onyx Job Corps in Mammoth Cave, students aged 16 to 24 get a big helping of soft skills with their training in welding, carpentry, urban forestry, computer technology, office administration and painting. As part of the nationwide Job Corps program, the free school serves students from all over the country whose families are below the poverty line, offering high school completion and academic remediation as a foundation for specific career paths. "Some have completed high school, some have some college, and some need a GED," says work programs officer Kim Rice. "We give them the opportunity to be strong, productive citizens and make a decent living. We work with the International Painters Union, the International Brotherhood of Carpenters, and a lot of other organizations to offer work-based learning and help with job placement."

As Rice and others point out, having a skilled trade is useful insurance even for those who may eventually decide on advanced degrees or want to pursue a career in the arts. (One Job Corps carpentry program grad who started with his GED went on to be Chief Justice at the Idaho Court of Appeals.) Vocational education can lead to a stable blue-collar income, whether as a primary

goal or a fallback position.

"I tell kids who are planning on college to take part in these programs because a degree is no guarantee of a job, and it can only help them handle future debt," says Barren County Judge / Executive Micheal Hale. "It's important to have not just a plan, but a backup plan."

Partly thanks to Hale's tireless advocacy, and partly thanks to its WKU satellite campus, Barren County offers a lot of vocational ed. "We try to attract businesses that will hire our grads," Hale says. "And we constantly talk to businesses, large or small, about offering job shadowing, co-op, or apprenticeship opportunities. I tell people to just take a chance on one of those kids. They work, they get engaged with adult life, the next thing you know they start being involved in community projects. I just recently signed on some student interns for the county, two in my office and one in the Property Valuation office. They're working out really well." After seven years of effort, Hale says, Barren has just become an official work-ready county. "That puts us on the A-list for businesses."

Area counties get a boost from WKU-Glasgow's Learn-and-Earn program, in which students receive soft skills training and are matched with potential employers to interview for entry-level positions. The program, which is also

open to students from area community colleges, offers employer-funded scholarships for the following semester to those who work and keep their grade point average up.

"We have had tremendous success," says Regional Chancellor Sally Ray. "Akebono Brake Company, one of the first companies we started working with, has had 100-percent retention of their student employees. The program is in its infancy, but it has enormous potential; it's a win/win. In the first 18 months, we generated over \$150,000 in student scholarships; many would not be able to stay in school without this program."

There's more than one way to skin the workforce cat. Hart County Judge / Executive Terry L. Martin is excited about helping students train for film industry jobs. "We'll see whether the incentives get restored after they figure the state budget out, but meanwhile, there are over 200 films approved to shoot in Kentucky, of which 20 to 30-percent will get made," he says. "They will need a lot of behind-the-camera help, and students can take a certified online program through Asbury College. I would love to see this in our high schools. It's a new industry, and the job might last six weeks but films attract more films as people see what we can offer, and a trained

workforce can make a major difference."

At the state level, besides the 53-site ATC network, the Kentucky Innovation Network offers mentoring and guidance to beginning entrepreneurs; there's a KIN office located in Bowling Green. Established entrepreneurs and people in many different roles, meanwhile, can help their communities and themselves by, as Hale puts it, "taking a chance on one of these kids." In Tompkinsville, Old Mulkey State Park Director Shelia Rush is thrilled to have two fresh new interns from the MATC.

"I've partnered with the tech center in the past and was happy to turn to them and say I had a need," she says. "I know they'll bring a great deal. I have never had a high school student here I didn't learn from." Specifically, they need to bring internet and social media skills this time. "I'm going to start them on Old Mulkey, then do some work for the Tourism Commission, then get them to work on our annual Celebration of Quilts and Quilting, and then turn them loose on the Monroe County Bicentennial plans. They're young and excited and the tech comes naturally to them; one is already certified in Microsoft Office and the other in something I barely understand. I told Ms Rowland upfront that I promise to give these students a real life experience that they can put on a job application."



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er ladies in church, they don't feel like the program is for them," said Magistrate Roger Deckard. "But it is, and there's no shame in it."

"We have people in this community who only draw \$400 a month in Social Security because of the wages they were making when they retired," observed County Attorney Wes Stephens.

"Community Outreach had been distributing the commodities and also receive other donated food and pick up donations from Wal-Mart," said Gary Miles, Executive Director of Feeding America Kentucky's Heartland in a phone interview.

"We became aware of some serious policy and rules violations taking place at the store (the Village Shop on Celina Road). Ms. French went down there with a helper and verified a serious policy violation that caused us to terminate their contract and contact the County Judge / Executive. The food was already being distributed at a county facility, with the county's help, and we'll be down there with our trucks on the last Tuesday in February as usual. This is one of 42 counties we serve, and we absolutely want the program to continue."

Though Miles would not specify the policy violation, he did mention that Wal-Mart donations not distributed for free through the organization's food pantry were routinely sold in the thrift shop. Village Shop workers confirmed on Wednesday that there would no longer be much food for sale until garden season, when they expect to receive the usual fresh produce -- much of it given away for free -- from the Mennonite communities.

Representatives of Community OutReach, an organization founded in 1983 that also operates a 12-bed short-term emergency homeless shelter, did not respond to a request for comment by press time.

The next commodities distribution will take place on February 27 at the county barn as well as at the usual locations in Fountain Run and Gamaliel.

Super Crossword

Answers

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