

Fort Harrod Revisited

It is the settlement of Fort Harrod, 1774, which gives Kentucky cause for celebrating its 200th anniversary. The old fort has been restored and is authentic in its details. Visitors to Old Fort Harrod State Park in the center of Harrodsburg can see how the State's pioneers spent their days.

Sites of interest include the oldest cemetery in Kentucky, the Lincoln Marriage Temple, the Mansion Museum and, in summer, the outdoor drama, "The Legend of Daniel Boone."



Fort Harrod

Settlers' Welcome Refuge

In a recent interview Col. George M. Chinn, deputy director, Kentucky Historical Society and curator of weapons for the Kentucky Historical Military Museum, described the early years of Harrodsburg this way.

"Under the elected leadership of James Harrod, a party of hearty adventurers left Fort Redstone 90

miles up the Monongahela River from Fort Pitt, in canoes." Chinn was very emphatic about the "election" of the leader by these early frontiersmen.

Chinn continued, "They traveled in canoes down the Monongahela to the Ohio River to Landing Run (now Oregon).

"They traveled overland only seven

miles," said Chinn, "until they reach a big spring and on each side of the creek they laid off the site of 'Harrods Town' or what later became known as Harrodsburg. This trip took roughly 3½ weeks. They supplemented their provisions for the trip by hunting the plentiful game along the way. They chose to travel in the spring because the leaves on the trees offered them protection from being detected by the Indians."

Chinn said the wives and children followed a year later. "They traveled through Cumberland Gap along what is now known as the Wilderness Road under the able leadership of Daniel Boone and other prominent frontiersmen," he said. "These early settlers carried only the most elementary tools with them for building what they needed at Fort Harrod."

Chinn described the early life in Harrodsburg: "Most of the early homesteaders lived in log cabins with dirt floors. They had the most primitive furniture. A log split in half with legs formed a bench and two or three logs split and joined side by side formed a table. The earliest beds used buckskin stuffed with a crude mattress roped with cornshucks. In the winter, bird feathers might be substituted for warmth."

Deerskin Windows
Chinn suggested the earliest windows were in most instances deerskin greased with bear fat to make the skin slightly transparent. The early homesteaders "used gourds as vessels for carrying water, and as dippers. The hunter's knife, which he carried in his belt, doubled as a table knife which was used along with wooden forks and spoons. The old boys," Chinn said, "would whittle these utensils as a pastime. The whittling also served to teach the boys a trade."

"The food supplies of these first homesteaders," according to Chinn, "depended primarily upon the skill of the frontiersmen with the rifle or at trapping and fishing."

The first spinning wheel was brought over the Alleghenies to Fort Harrod by Anne McGinty in late 1775, according to "Kentucky in Retrospect," published by the Kentucky Historical Society. Her family also brought the first hogs, chickens and ducks to Fort Harrod.

"The women," said Chinn, "made dyes from pokeberries, walnuts and oak bark to give color to their weaving."

'Deeply Religious'
Chinn described the early inhabitants of Harrodsburg as "deeply religious people, but their distance from a church placed the emphasis of Christian instruction in the home. The early homesteaders were mostly

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Hub Of History

State's Romantic Past Is Recalled In Harrodsburg

BY BETTY ELLISON
State Travel Writer

When Kentucky was a couple of hundred years younger, stockaded Fort Harrod proved to be a welcome refuge for the pioneers from Indians who, more than once, chased James Harrod, Daniel Boone and their companions into the safety of the fort.

Fort Harrod, built in 1774 on a site surveyed by Harrod and Boone, proved a haven for settlers pouring into the western country through Cumberland Gap and over the Wilderness Road. In 1974, the fort's gates will swing open in a wide welcome to visitors as Kentucky celebrates the 200th anniversary of the founding of Fort Harrod.

Fort Harrod has been built again at Harrodsburg. Authentic as to details, the wooden enclosure contains blockhouses, cabins, even a log schoolhouse. Rude buildings are stocked with handmade utensils and farm implements, and the hastily-put-together furnishings of the pioneer era. The fort makes up a portion of Old Fort Harrod State Park, on US-69 and US-127 in the center of Harrodsburg.

Much of Kentucky's romantic past is recalled here. The Lincoln Marriage Temple, just inside the entrance to the park, which was designed to represent an early-19th-century Kentucky church, contains a large and highly valued relic. The mellow brick building shelters the log cabin in which Abraham Lincoln's parents, Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks, were married on June 12, 1806. The one-room cabin was removed from its original location in Washington County to the present site in 1911 by the Harrodsburg Historical Society.

The Mansion Museum, in a house built in 1830 by Major James Taylor, stands across from the Lincoln Marriage Temple. It houses mementoes associated with the great periods of Kentucky history, with Lincoln, the Confederate cause, and with George Rogers Clark. Appropriate other exhibits are in the Gun and Music rooms.

Fort Harrod's Pioneer Cemetery, older than any other burial ground in Kentucky, contains the graves of more than 500 early settlers. George Rogers Clark isn't among them, but his

contribution to Kentucky's beginnings is honored by a monument at the entrance to Old Fort Harrod State Park.

Each summer the park amphitheater comes alive with an exciting outdoor drama, "The Legend of Daniel Boone."

Students of period houses find a treasure trove in the town of Harrodsburg. Examples of Georgian and Greek Revival architectural styles are numerous, and experts consider the details of many houses, such as Diamond Point, among examples of the state's finest craftsmanship.

Seven miles northeast of Harrodsburg is the restored Shaker colony of Pleasant Hill. Though it's been many years since the 1805 founding of the Believers' Colony there, the Shakers' gentle influence is still being felt in the 19th century village.

A hub of history, Harrodsburg has witnessed the beginning of the movement west, the Civil War, a communal social experiment and, now, is combining them all in a gala celebration of Kentucky's Bicentennial.


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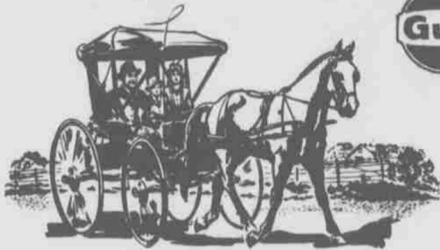
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