

'Legacy' appeals to those interested in local history

"Legacy of a Pioneer Kentucky Family: Their Spirit Flows Free" by Robert D. Hoyt. Bowling Green: Southern Kentucky Printing, 2012, 177 pages, \$15.

"This book is the result of a request by my wife to compose some uncomplicated description about the history of a piece of property we were blessed to receive more than thirty years ago," Robert D. Hoyt explains in the preface to "Legacy of a Pioneer Kentucky Family: Their Spirit Flows Free," his new self-published book.

"Actually the request was made quite a few years past, and again, and again before the inertia of complacency was replaced by a working interest in the subject," Hoyt continues. "Once started, however, initial curiosity soon turned into a genuine enthusiasm that, after untold hours of searching for and reading hundreds of property deeds, became an obsession to make the story as whole and inclusive as possible."

The result is a virtual treasure trove of genealogy and historical significance. Many readers will no doubt be as fascinated as I was to reflect upon the many photographs and illustrations scattered liberally throughout the volume. It should also be noted that the cover is "Pioneer Autumn," a beautiful painting by Theresa Hoyt, Robert's wife.

The log cabins and tools common to a bygone era captured my

interest and imagination, as did the inclusion of pictures of overgrown graveyards that literally used to dot the landscape all over the rural South. Many of these scenes mirrored those I recall from childhood adventures with my father, who loved to explore family cemeteries (many dating from the early 1800s) in my native Tennessee.

I was especially intrigued by the plethora of headstones the author included to augment and support the text. Where the engravings were illegible, Hoyt was careful to provide the depicted inscriptions. I was equally impressed with the precision the author exhibited in making subtle distinctions that a less conscientious researcher might have overlooked.

Witness the following:

"The location of the Manning Cemetery as described in deeds Bk 96 Pg 532 and Bk 102 Pg 33 is actually the Manning Cardwell Cemetery," Hoyt explains in characteristic fashion. "It is located at the far east end of the then Manning property."

The following passage from Chapter II, "William and Patience Mannen," further exemplifies the attention to detail that the author maintains throughout the book. In an entry dated "1812: Jan. 21," he notes the following:

"The first evidence of the Mannen's purchasing land in Warren Co. KY, was a transaction in which William and son Hardy

(Wm Harden) purchased 300 acres for \$900 from Sarah Lapsley (Bk 6 Pg 27)," Hoyt writes. "This 1812 land purchase would be in keeping with Bandkehrhart's suggestion that William and Patience Mannen arrived in Warren County, Kentucky, in 1810."

"Legacy of a Pioneer Kentucky Family" consists of 15 relatively easy-to-digest chapters and, as mentioned previously, is a veritable goldmine for genealogists. As far as I know, I have no connection to any of the people Hoyt is writing about, yet the more immersed I became in his prose, the more familiar the characters in the book seemed to become to me. It was as if I was somehow reading my own personal history.

"Conrad Harris and Paul W. Zoiner became partners in the stove manufacturing business in the mid-19th century and were immensely successful in designing new and improved parlor and kitchen stoves," Hoyt writes in Chapter IX. "It can be speculated that on the basis of Mrs. Long's background and discomfiture in her new surroundings that this was likely one of her possessions when they arrived. With heavy, possibly abusive use, it fell victim to its treatment and disintegrated."

"Robert Hoyt said he wanted to do something nice for his wife, the former Theresa Lachowsky, and her family," according to Carol Rolf in an article she wrote about the book in ArkansasOnline. "That 'something' was to work on the Lachowsky family genealogy, with the ultimate goal of publishing a book that would trace the family's history back to Poland."

If you are interested in learning more about local history, including what life was like for the first settlers to this region, I encourage you to get a copy of "Legacy." You won't be disappointed.

"Legacy of a Pioneer Kentucky Family" is available directly from Robert D. Hoyt at 270-842-0529. He can also be reached by email at robert.hoyt@wku.edu.

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