

William Arnold Log Home

William Arnold Log Home



Located 1.4 Mi.

Off I-75

Exit 154

Behind Baptist Church

Main Street

Williamstown, KY

The William Arnold log home was built C 1799 from huge poplar logs. It was moved by the city from it's original site on High Street onto the current site in 1986. It was rebuilt, log by log, as a memorial to the founder of Williamstown, and sheriff of Grant County. It has been furnished with donated Grant County items, by the Grant County Historical Society. You'll find such items as, primitive furniture, early photographs, and maps. Many Grant County ancestors are memorialized on engraved bricks on pathways to the house and military memorials.

William Arnold was born in East Jersey in the late 1750's and at the age of sixteen he moved to Virginia and volunteered for for the Virginia Line to serve in the Revolutionary War. He served three tours in the war according to family traditions, he held the rank of Captain and was a personal friend of General LaFayette. They served together at Yorktown. Arnold after that, returned to his Virginia home.

He left Virginia for Kentucky around 1783, and settled on it's frontier. He had spent three years fighting the British and now peace had come, and he was looking for a better life on the frontier. That was not to be, he spent the next seven years fighting in the Indian Wars.

Sometime after he returned to his Virginia home from the war he contracted marriage with a Lucy Pryor, a native Virginian. By the late 1780s two

children were born, a son John Arnold around 1788, and a daughter Sarah, born around 1789.

By 1790, there was constant friction between the Indians and the settlers living on the Ohio River frontier, and settlements deep into Kentucky. As friction increased and Indian attacks grew more frequent, the settlers petitioned General Henry Knox, Secretary of War, for protection.

In July, 1790, Knox sent a dispatch to Fort Washington, which stood on the present location of Cincinnati.

William Arnold and Samuel Anderson, among others from Northern Kentucky were part of this expedition. Arnold was commissioned a lieutenant in Captain James Caldwell's Company of a regiment commanded by Colonel Horatio Hall of the Kentucky Militia.

Mr. Arnold fought in many battles, and was finally wounded severely, which left him unable to work for the remainder of his life.

William Arnold owned land in Fayette, Mason, Bourbon, Campbell, & Pendleton Counties.

In 1798 the County of Pendleton was established from parts of Bracken and Campbell Counties. Commissioners met on June 4, 1799, at Thomas Anderson's home to select a sheriff and a county clerk. The next day, Arnold was present for the selection of Justices of the Peace in Campbell County, Arnold was chosen as

Possessioner and Justice of the Peace in the third district. This district, in the western part of the county, is the present Grant County. He remained in this position for a number of years.

Mr. Arnold realized the importance of an education, and for that reason he was instrumental in organizing the Grant Seminary, the first educational facility in Williamstown, in 1821. The Seminary was located on the property where the Arnold log house now stands.

On February 12, 1820, a group of aggressive men separated from Pendleton County and established the new Grant County. At that time, William Arnold was sworn in, as the first Grant County Sheriff.

Mr. Arnold donated two and one half acres for the county's public buildings. He provided timber for houses for three years free of charge, firewood and stone for seven years. Water for the community was obtained from a large spring located on the site. This spring is located on the very spot where the Williamstown Baptist Church now stands, directly across Main Street from High Street. The spring still runs and is piped off the foundation of the church.

Williamstown was first named Philadelphia. After realizing there was another town by that name, it was renamed William's Town.

According to family legends, Mr. Arnold and LaFayette were personal friends from the war years at Yorktown, In 1824,

the General stopped to visit and have breakfast with his friends, while passing through Williamstown on his tour of Kentucky. The town was sufficiently large to muster a cheering crowd of pioneer citizens.

You may visit this historic home on Saturday afternoons, 1-5 p.m., in the Summer months.

Pioneer Day is held at the William Arnold Log Home, the 2nd Saturday in July.

Special group tours by appointment:

(859) 824-2051

There is no admission charge to the log home.