COMMUNITY

Eugene Minihan prominent businessman of his day

Photos by Cecil Lawson, courtesy of the Tom Byron Collection, and from the Owingsville Outlook



Eugene Minihan operated a harness and saddle shop on North Court Street, next door to the present day office of attorney Kim Hunt Price. Minihan is probably located on the left, along with his laborers and apprentice saddle makers.

By Cecil Lawson KyNewsGroup cecil@kynewsgroup.com

The City of Owingsville took another step in memorializing its long history recently with a public dedication of a roadside historical marker recognizing local businessman Eugene Minihan and the Kentucky Spring Seat Saddle.

Minihan, who lived from 1856 to 1918, was originally from Cincinnati but settled in Owingsville to produce harnesses, horse tack, and his famous custom-made Minihan Saddle for over three decades.

Minihan opened his business in Owingsville sometime in the 1880s. The 1880 Census showed Minihan residing in Owingsville as boarder at the home of James Ficklin and listed "Saddler" as his

The Owingsville Outlook, which first began publishing 1879, showed him advertising his business in 1884, in the earliest extant copies of the newspaper, all the way

through 1915 (copies of the Owingsville Outlook for 1915-1918 are not available in pub-

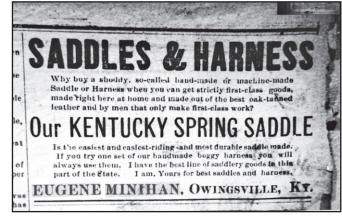
A map of Owingsville from Sanborn and Co. have a "harness shop" at 103 Jefferson Street (now North Court Street) in 1886.

lic records).

Following his marriage to Maggie Kinney in 1887, the two continued to reside in Owingsville but made frequent trips to visit their families in Cincinnati and Covington. The Outlook frequently reported these visits at the time and noted that Minihan would acquire stock for his business during his trips to Cincinnati.

The Great Fire of Sept. 19, 1893, apparently caused no damage to Minihan's shop. The fire started in the livery stable of Peed and Hazelrigg, located on North Court Street only a few feet away from Minihan's and consumed several major businesses down-

Of several small articles written about Minihan in the Owingsville Outlook, two stand out. The April 6, 1899, edition recounts an incident in which William Shrout, of



Minihan was well-known in his lifetime for creating a unique, custom-made spring seat saddle. He advertised his services weekly from the open of his business in the 1880s through his death in 1918 in the Owingsville Outlook, one of the predecessors to this publication.

Upper Slate Creek, brought a heron to Owingsville which he had "wing-clipped." A local Black resident, Jim Jackson, was showing the bird around town, took it into Minihan's business, and sat it on the counter. "When Eugene got in reach the bird made a fierce thrust at his head and struck him a little above the eyebrow, both mandibles penetrating to the skull about an inch apart. The bird held on grimly, requiring a considerable effort on Eugene's part to pull it loose. The physician who dressed the wounds said there would be no ill effects from them. It was rather lucky for Eugene that the bird's aim was high, else he would have lost an

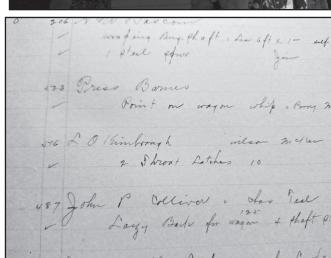
eye, if not worse." Another article, "Eugene's Fame," dated July 19, 1900, said a reporter stopped by Minihan's shop the previous week "and saw him packing for shipment two of the handsomest saddles he ever saw. They were his celebrated Kentucky Spring Seat saddles and he was expressing them to H. H. Hagan, of Guthrie, Oklahoma. He received \$35 each for them. The week be-

fore he shipped one to Burks, Gordon Co., Virginia, to Samuel T. Heninger, who wrote to Eugene remitting for the saddle and saying it was the easiest saddle he ever used."

Local resident and historian Tom Byron, himself a horse enthusiast, discovered in his family's warehouse on North Court Street several large ledger books belonging to Minihan in which someone recorded his daily business transactions with customers, bank deposits, and wages for laborers. These volumes cover the years 1897 to 1907.

A perusal of these ledgers reveal that Minihan's shop was a very busy local establishment in its day. This era was the height of "horse and buggy" days, and everyone relied on businesses like Minihan's for harnesses and saddles, as well as repairs and new parts for wagons, carts, and buggies. Advertising reveals that Minihan also sold farm equipment, including horse-drawn plows.

The ledgers show that Byron's own grandfather and great uncle, E.L. and A. T. Byron, who owned the warehouse down the street from Minihan's shop, were frequent customers of Minihan's, along with L. O. Kimbrough, who owned a drug store on Main Street. The building's pediment still bears



One of several large ledger books from Eugene Minihan's shop, dated from 1887 through 1907, containing daily transactions at Minihan's business, now in the possession of Tom Byron of Owingsville. Local drug store owner L. O. Kimbrough, purchased 2 "throat latches" from Minihan's shop at 10 cents each. Minihan not only made his famous saddle, but also provided for the everyday needs of people in the horse-and-buggy era.

Kimbrough's name today. Minihan was one of the most prominent local businessmen of his day. His comings and goings were followed in the social pages of the Owingsville Outlook, he was a member of fraternal orders like the Knights of the Maccabees and the Ancient Order of United Workmen,

and for a time he served as Mayor of Owingsville.

Minihan passed away March 19, 1918, and is buried at St. Mary's Cemetery in Fort Mitchell, Kentucky, in a plot belonging to his wife's

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INSPECTION PERIOD FOR THE 2025 BATH COUNTY PROPERTY TAX ASSESSMENT ROLL

The Bath County real property tax roll will be opened for inspection from May 23 through June 9, 2025. Under the supervision of the property valuation administrator (PVA) or one of the deputies, any person may inspect the tax roll.

This is the January 1, 2025, assessment on which state, county, and school taxes for 2025 will be due about September 15,

The tax roll is in the office of the property valuation administrator in the county courthouse and may be inspected between the hours 8-5 Mondays, 8-4 Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday, 9-11 Saturday's (May 31 & June 7); (other times by

Any taxpayer desiring to appeal an assessment on real property made by the PVA must first request a conference with the PVA or a designated deputy. The conference may be held prior to or during the inspection period. Written documentation supporting your opinion of value will continue to be required. However, you will be instructed on the best method to submit your documentation after contacting our office regarding your request to have a conference. More specific instructions regarding how conferences will be held this year are available online at www.qpublic.net/ky/bath and will be posted at the entrance to the PVA's office, located at: 17 W Main Street; Owingsville KY 40360.

Any taxpayer still aggrieved by an assessment on real property, after the conference with the PVA or designated deputy, may appeal to the county board of assessment appeals. The appeal must be filed with the county clerk's office no later than one workday following the conclusion of the inspection

period which will be June 10, 2025. Please contact the county clerk's office to receive instructions on the method the office is using to accept appeals this year and to obtain a form that can be used to file your appeal. Any taxpayer failing to appeal to the county board of assessment appeals, or failing to appear before the board, either in

person or by designated representative, will not be eligible to appeal directly to the Kentucky Board of Tax Appeals.

Appeals of personal property assessments (Tangible) shall not be made to the county board of assessment appeals. Personal property taxpayers shall be served notice under the provisions of KRS 132.450(4) and shall have the protest and appeal rights granted under the provisions of KRS 131.110. The following steps should be taken when a taxpayer does not agree with the assessed value of personal property as deter-

mined by the property valuation administrator. Taxpayer must list under protest (for certification) what he believes to be the fair cash value of his property.

Taxpayer must file a written protest directly with the Department of Revenue, Office of Property Valuation within 30 days from the date of the notice of assessment

This protest must be in accordance with KRS 131.110 (4)

The final decision of the Department of Revenue may be appealed to the Kentucky Board of Tax Appeals.

Jacky S. Watson Bath County Property Valuation Administrator Bath County

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