

Writer and Painter Harlan Hubbard Embraced the Simple Life

Harlan Hubbard, a native of Bellevue, is well-known for his painting, writing, music and landscapes of northern Kentucky and the Ohio River. Hubbard believed in living a simple life similar to the studies of Henry David Thoreau.



After marrying Anna Eikenhout in 1943, the couple built a shanty boat on which they traveled down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers and through the Louisiana bayous, ending the voyage in 1951. After their voyage, the Hubbards lived in a house that they built on the shore of the Ohio River in Trimble County. They passed their time by keeping house, gardening, reading aloud, playing music and welcoming guests.

Hubbard's first love was painting, and he produced hundreds of artworks, mostly landscapes. However, he is better known for his writing such as his books about his river voyage, "Shantyboat" (1953) and "Shantyboat in the Bayous" (1990). Also, he relates an account of their life in their house in Trimble County in his book "Payne Hollow" (1973). These books provide a detailed description the simple lifestyle of the Hubbards.

Oral history interviews with Harlan and Anna Hubbard can be found at <http://passtheword.ky.gov>.

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