

Kenton County Historical Society

Quarterly Review

March 1979

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CITY HALL AND COURT HOUSE, COVINGTON, KY.

Memberships available at \$5 per annum. Contact the Treasurer at 18 Silver, Ft. Mitchell, Ky.

COVINGTON'S FIRST CITY HALL

Covington's first City Hall and Courthouse stood at the corner of Third and Greenup Streets. The cornerstone was laid on June 24, 1843 along with that of the Trinity Episcopal Church.

The ground level was arranged for the Mayor's office, Council Chamber, and a repository for the archives of the city fire companies and all other municipal purposes. The main level consisted of a large hall where public assemblages were held. The wooden gentleman topping the structure was the product of a subscription drive in 1844. The statue represented George Washington, who won over Daniel Boone despite the local newspaper's support of the latter. The City Hall served Covington's municipal purposes nearly thirty-six years.

But in 1848, the Courthouse served a different purpose. It was called into service for use as a hospital to care for the sick and wounded returning from the Mexican War. Colonel G.R. Morgan arrived in the area in July, 1848 with the United States 15th Infantry. His orders to a staff officer were to obtain quarters for the sick. The officer was sent to the

military hospital in Newport, but it was already overcrowded. He then went to Cincinnati, but for some unknown reason was turned down. After learning of their predicament, Mayor Bushrod W. Foley of Covington tendered the use of the City Hall. The physicians of the city promptly volunteered their professional services, and many of Covington's citizens offered their aid as nurses. At one time there were between eighty and ninety sick soldiers housed in the Courthouse.

The main room of the City Hall and its north wing were finally completed in June, 1850. However, in just eighteen years after the north wing was completed, the City Hall was condemned. A resolution was adopted at a meeting in the West End to halt any appropriation of money for the permanent improvement of the building. The City Council failed to acknowledge the petition and awarded a contract for the renovation of the building to M.P. Smith for \$19,380. Although the repairs were completed, the renewed health of the old City Hall was shortlived.

Soon plans were underway for the construction of a more commodious Courthouse. Although the new Courthouse was completed, circa 1879, the old City Hall remained as the focal point for public assemblages for several more years. The statue which adorned the cupola of the old Courthouse for some thirty years was placed in position at the southeast corner of the Courthouse yard as a constant reminder of the city's past.

Library

The Library Committee (Mike Averdick) reports the following gifts to the society:

Tanner's Map of Kentucky "with its roads and distances from place to place along the stage and steamboat routes", 1845. this very fine gift was donated by Ruth Dixon.

A "Souvenir Programme Commemorating the visit of the President of the United States" (Franklin Delano Roosevelt). This unusual gift was presented by Mrs. Frank E. Riley.

Record of Distribution and Sale of Lots in the town of Losantiville - donated by Mr. Gil Kinsbury.

Several recent issues of the Filson Club Quarterly and the Register of the Kentucky Historical Society were donated by David L. Ringo.

An incredible variety of rare materials were donated by Elizabeth Furber. A selection follows:

Two tracts by the Kentucky Anti-Race Track Commission entitled "Tragedies of Race Track Gambling in Kentucky" and "Racing Association Answered".

Abstract of title (1888) for the Erlanger Syndicate Property.

A collection of Covington High School Graduation Exercise Programs, 1870-1906, excepting 1873, 1875, and 1891.

Invitation to the "Chamber of Commerce Banquet, June 17, 1887" celebrating the "New Chamber Rooms" at 632 Madison Street.

Stock certificates for the "Grand Roller Skating Rink of Covington, Kentucky".

"Early History of Covington" (4p., n.d.,)

Constitution of the Kenton County Humane Society at Covington, 1896.

"History of Erlanger" by Childress (from Kentucky Post 2/16/1924.

Sesquicentennial Stories by M.W. Lafferty, 1942.

"100th Anniversary of the city of Covington, 1914

Also:

Miscellaneous clippings, handbills, notices of balls and other events, newspapers, and photographs were presented by Ms. Furber. Part of this collection is currently on display at the Main Library at Covington.

Programs

A number of fine programs were presented during the year:

Mr. Don Barlow presented a paper entitled "The Development of Banking in Covington Prior to 1880", based on the newspaper accounts of the day.

Mr. Larry Duba delivered a fine presentation on the "Life of Simon Kenton".

Mr. Berney Kues presented a fascinating program on the "Civil War in Northern Kentucky", with special regard to the defenses of the area.

Ms. Fran Whitson presented an ancestor's account of a delightful 1884 river boat journey.

In April, the Kentucky Historical Society will be our guest speakers.

The Friends of Devou Park will present a program at our May meeting.

For our June meeting Ms. Pat Wolcott and Ms. Marilyn Fuchs will conclude their three-part program "This Old House", a wonderful slide presentation with commentary on the historic county homes.

Mr. Jim Kiger is currently working on two papers for the society, one on the German Odd Fellows and the other on Northern Kentucky's Representatives in Congress.

KENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
 Financial Report of
 Income and Distribution
 Sept. 1, 1978 to Mar. 1, 1979

INCOME

Individual Memberships (60)	\$272.50
Contributions	1.47
Project Sales	26.50
	<u>\$302.47</u>

DISTRIBUTION

Postage and Stationery	\$201.42
Entertainment	4.98
Miscellaneous	4.60
	<u>\$211.00</u>
CASH BALANCE	91.47
	<u>\$302.47</u>

Cash Balance (to Sept. 1, 1978)	\$286.39
Cash Balance (current)	91.47
	<u>\$377.86</u>
TOTAL CASH Mar. 1, 1979	\$377.86

Oral History

Since last summer Mr. Ralph Murray, a native of Latonia, has interviewed four people with memories of the Old Latonia Race Course: Louis Marshall, Leonard Conner, Carroll Burdick and Clarence Gering. Unfortunately, Mr. Gering, who possessed a small library of racing history, has since passed away. Ralph had planned to present Mr. Gering with materials on "Gowell", a horse that came to symbolize for some fans "second effort". Now Ralph will give these mementoes to the Kenton County Public Library. Ralph also hopes to interview other veterans of Old Latonia including a groom and a gardener.

Surname File

The Society in connection with the Kenton County Public Library has begun organizing a surname file for genealogist. This file is a "who is hunting whom" type file. Information concerning the family will be typed or printed on 3" by 5" cards and filed alphabetically by surname.

When filling out these cards, print the surname in capital letters. Give all his information, such as when born, when married, where he lived, occupation, names of parents, etc. Then put his wife's maiden name and all

her information the same. Next list their children, giving the same information and capitalizing the surname, be sure to add your full name, address and the present date. This date is important as the file will be kept for years and if someone reads the card 10 years from now, he needs to know that the name was inserted that long ago. It is our hope that genealogists and other members of the society will work with us in establishing and promoting this project.

PUBLICATIONS

At the February meeting the Publications Committee was organized. Committee members are: John Burns, Joyce Sanders, John Boh and Don Barlow, Chairman. The function of the committee is to oversee all materials published by the society, primarily our newsletter. The Kenton County Historical Society "Quarterly Review" will be published at the end of March, June, September and December.

The committee is planning to publish the Kenton County cemetery records which were compiled by Pat Wolcott's committee. These records are complete with an index and contain some ninety small family and church plots. The books, when printed, will sell from \$12.50 to \$15.00 apiece. However, due to the high cost of printing and binding this material, it will be done on a "pre-order basis" only.

The Publications Committee is also planning to publish a roster of its members. Copies will be printed at a minimal cost and be given to each member of the society as soon as the arrangements can be made.

The illustration on the front page is from a collection of sketches by a man named Kilburn. In the 1850's, he sketched "the principal features" of Covington and Newport for an illustrated publication of the day. A collection of Mr. Kilburn's sketches was purchased by the Tuesday Club in 1915 and given to the Public Library of Covington. The prints are now in the Kentucky and Local History Collection of the Kenton County Public Library.

The Society has arranged for two sketches to be reproduced on note cards. The sketches are of the "Licking Suspension Bridge" built in 1853 and "Covington's first City Hall and Courthouse" which is represented on the front page of this newsletter. The note cards are currently available at the Hallmark Gallery Shop, 12 West Pike Street, Covington. Proceeds from the sale of the cards will be used by the Society to further develop and preserve our area's rich history.

BEGINNING AT 'THE POINT'

In 1977, Mr. Allen Webb Smith published perhaps the most informative and best documented history written about this area's beginnings. His book, Beginning At The Point, is a documented history of Northern Kentucky and its environs from 1751 to 1834 (the year Covington was chartered). The book includes a chronology of events leading to the establishment of Covington and biographical sketches of some of the area's more prominent citizen's.

Thanks to the generosity of Mr. Smith the book may now be purchased from the society for only \$4.00, with half of the cost being donated to the society.

To order your copy fill out this form and send to "The Kenton County Historical Society"
18 Silver
Ft. Mitchell, Ky. 41018

NAME _____
STREET ADDRESS _____
CITY OR TOWN _____
STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____

Beginning At the Point _____ Number of copies

*Please make checks payable to "The Kenton County Historical Society "

MEMBERSHIP AND DUES STATEMENT

The dues year is form September 1st to August 31st; therefore anyone presently in the society has paid for 1979. The membership form below is for you new members who wish to join and participate in our growing society.

NAME: Miss, Mrs., Mr., or Ms. _____
STREET ADDRESS _____
CITY OR TOWN _____
STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____
PHONE AREA CODE _____ NUMBER _____ COUNTY _____

MEMBERSHIP:

INDIVIDUAL	\$ 5.00	_____	(check one)
STUDENT	\$ 2.00	_____	
CONTRIBUTING	\$ 10.00	_____	
BUSINESS, INSTITUTIONAL OR PROFESSIONAL	\$ 15.00	_____	
SUSTAINING	\$ 50.00	_____	
LIFETIME	\$100.00	_____	

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