

KENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Quarterly Review July 1979

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1978-79

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Memberships available at \$5.00 per annum. Contact the treasurer at 18 Silver, Ft. Mitchell, Ky.



John W. Stevenson

Covingtonians In History

John W. Stevenson

John White Stevenson was born in Richmond, Va., May 14, 1812. His mother, Mary Page White died at his birth. His father, Andrew Stevenson was a member of the Virginia Legislature for many years, and was Speaker of the House of Delegates. Andrew was engaged in the practice of law in Richmond. Though a young man he was a prominent member of the Bar, and devoted great care in his son's education, giving him every advantage of private schooling.

When in 1821, he went to Congress as a Representative from Virginia, he took John with him so that his education might be conducted under his direction. At the age of fourteen, John was entered into Hampden Sidney College. There he remained until the end of his sophomore year when he was entered in the University of Virginia. He graduated at the age of eighteen and was immediately placed under the care of Hon. Willoughby Newton with whom he studied law and was later admitted to the bar.

Stevenson received additional training by such men as Thomas Jefferson and James Madison at an early age. The time he spent at Montpelier and Monticello, almost as a member of their families,

produced a marked influence on his character.

It was Mr. Madison who advised Stevenson to leave Virginia and settle in the west. He at once followed his advice and located in Vicksburg, Mississippi. There he began the practice of law. It was a hard struggle. The brilliancy of the advocate was so sought after by the indigent population than the actual necessities of life. He remained there but a short time and then moved to Covington, Ky. in 1841.

The choice of the location proved to be a fortunate one for him and he soon rose to distinction in his profession. In 1845 he was elected to the Kentucky Legislature and was re-elected in 1846 and 1847. His services in the Legislature gave evidence of his abilities as an attorney and legislator.

This was shown by the people in 1849 when he was elected to the Kentucky Constitutional Convention which was charged with the duty of altering and amending the State Constitution. His line of study and his thorough knowledge of government allowed him to take a leading position at the Convention.

Stevenson served as a United States Congressman representing Kentucky's Sixth District from 1857 to 1861. In this sphere of public service he maintained his well-earned reputation. In debate he was impressive and held the attention of the House by the powerful presentations and faith in his political principles. He was chosen Lt. Governor in 1867 and later installed as Governor due to the death of Governor Helm. In 1868, he was elected Governor of Kentucky in his own right. He resigned as Governor just before his term of office expired in order to represent Kentucky in the United States Senate. In the Senate, he was recognized as a leader and commanded great influence and admiration.

When his term expired he returned to his home at the Northwest corner of Fourth and Garrard Sts. with his wife of nearly forty-five years, the former Miss Sibella Winston whom he married in June of 1843. Their union was blessed with six children—John, Samuel, Andrew, Mary, Judith and Sallie. Samuel died at an early age in February, 1854.

Stevenson continued his law practice in 1877 and was appointed Chief Counsel of the Kentucky Central Railroad and numerous other corporations from Kentucky and the east coast. Stevenson was Chairman of the National Democratic Convention in 1880, at the request of Samuel J. Tilden who was defrauded of the Presidency four years earlier.

When the convention was over Stevenson returned to his lucrative practice until his retirement from business in 1884.

Hon. John W. Stevenson died two years later at his home at Fourth & Garrard on August 10th, 1886 at the age of seventy-four, leaving his widow and five children to mourn his loss.

The biography on John W. Stevenson was extracted from an article entitled "Sketch of the life of the late John W. Stevenson" which appeared in the August 12th, 1886 issue of the Kentucky State Journal Newspaper.

The series "Covingtonians in History" will appear periodically in the society's newsletter to memorialize prominent Covingtonians in our city's history.

This Old House

The following was submitted by Marilyn Fuchs to explain how and why Pat Wolcott and herself created their wonderful presentation of "This Old House."

The project, "This Old House", a 3 part slide presentation of historic homes of Kenton County, was the product of circumstance. Mrs. Wolcott (Pat) and I were driving along during one of our many trips to the courthouses of Kentucky when I chanced to say, "Oh, Pat, look at that old house, I wonder who built it?" Soon we began compiling a list of the old houses we knew and that list grew as others contributed. Interviews by telephone and in person followed. Many people gave us leads and clues to choice pieces of history. One person who proved a great asset to this endeavor was Miss Elma Taylor. After 42 years teaching generations of Kenton Countians, she provided us with many leads and introductions as we traveled strange, new areas of the county. Even as a native of Kenton County, many roads were new to me and lent to the spirit of adventure. During the winters of 1976 and 1977, Pat and I trudged through waist-deep snows while dealing with the technicalities of the camera, lightmeter and tripod. All through the sultry summer of 1977 we drove over hot, dusty country roads. Pat and I began to feel like two politicians as we shook hands, talked and interviewed the county's people. Countless hours were spent in the courthouses at Independence, Alexandria and Covington in order to check deeds, wills, marriages and early maps. Both of us gave up many Sundays with our families in order to complete this work. At the very beginning of this work, Pat and I had agreed to concentrate on the rural and agricultural areas outside the city of Covington. This was due to the fact that these were the areas first settled by the pioneer families from Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina and Pennsylvania, many on land grants. Also, we felt the homes in the city of Covington had been photographed by others for slide presentations and we didn't want to duplicate that work. It was time, we felt, for the county people to be represented in some recorded way for posterity. In giving the programs before the Kenton County Historical Society, we hoped to bring attention to this new organization and its need for new members. Since Pat and I provided the funds for

Welcome

The "Quarterly Review extends a warm welcome to our new members:

Mr. William M. Martin, Covington
Mrs. Ray W. Underwood, Edgewood
Mrs. John P. Sweeney, Edgewood
Mrs. Donald L. Adams, Edgewood
Mrs. Judith A. Hayes, Independence

this entire venture, we decided to charge a small fee when presenting "This Old House" to other groups. This was to defray the cost of film, processing and fuel for our travels. We now charge \$12.00 for this program. Some of the organizations and clubs who have seen this Slide presentation are: Daughters of the American Revolution, Parents and Teachers Association, Senior Citizens, Lions, Opti-Mrs., Homemakers, Business and Church Women, and another County Historical Society. All of these groups seemed to find the program educational and enjoyable. Most said they will ask us back for the other series. Was it worth all the time, energy, expense and work? Indeed it was. Pat and I gained immeasurably in education, acquaintances and friendships with the people of Kenton County. But most of all, we gained knowledge of the pioneers and the early history of our county through, "This Old House".

Oral History

Recently Mr. Dan Hurley of the Cincinnati Historical Society requested from us a letter of support for a grant proposal before the National Endowment for the Humanities entitled, "The Cincinnati Neighborhood Studies Project." His request was appropriate because if approved Cowington would be one of the "neighborhoods" involved. The proposal not only aims for citizen participation but also, specifically, for furtherance of the goals of the local historical societies.

The study of metropolitan Cincinnati neighborhoods would involve the use of existing library information together with the collection and development of more materials, including Oral History tapes. A portion of the grant money would pay for a small number of supportive staff workers. It appears that the success of this project could provide a significant boost to our local history program in Kenton County.

Elections

The time has come once again for all society members in good standing to nominate and elect new officers. On the last page of the newsletter you will find a nominating ballot. All members are eligible to be nominated. The office of President, Vice-President, and Secretary are one year terms. The office of Treasurer is a two year term. One member will also be selected to the Board of Directors, which is a three year term.

The ballots are to be mailed to the Election Committee, who will in turn select two or three nominees for each position. Please mail the ballots no later than August 14, 1979, the committee needs the time to count the ballots and make their decision.

The election is to be held during the September 4th, 1979 meeting at the Kenton County Public Library. Ballots will be issued, collected, and counted during this meeting only. So please make plans to attend if you plan on voting.

The "Quarterly Review" would like to extend its deepest appreciation and gratitude to: Mr. John Boh, Mr. Paul Hartman, Ms. Cheryl Kues, Ms. Virginia Reynolds, and Mr. Gary Edmondson, for the exemplary service they have given the society during their respective terms in office.

KENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY FINANCIAL REPORT OF INCOME AND DISTRIBUTION MAR. 1, 1979 to JUNE 30, 1979

INCOME	
Individual Memberships (17)	\$ 85.00
Contributions	\$ 13.55
Project Sales	\$ 125.50
	<u>224.05</u>
DISTRIBUTION	
Postage & Stationery	\$ 173.40
Entertainment	\$ 6.25
Newsletter Costs	\$ 22.89
Project Purchases	\$ 40.00
Miscellaneous	\$ 9.85
	\$ <u>252.39</u>
CASH BALANCE	\$ (28.34)
	\$ 224.05
Cash Balance (to Mar. 1, 79)	\$ 377.86
Cash Balance (current)	<u>(28.34)</u>
TOTAL CASH June 30, 1979	\$ 349.52

Due to the length of our first two articles the library committee report will not appear in this issue of the "Quarterly Review". We will publish a complete report from the committee in our next issue.

NOMINATING BALLOT

PRESIDENT (1 yr) _____
VICE-PRESIDENT (1 yr) _____
SECRETARY (1 yr) _____
TREASURER (2 yr) _____
DIRECTOR (3 yr) _____

PLEASE NOMINATE ONE PERSON FOR EACH OF THE FIVE OFFICES AND
MAIL BY AUGUST 14th to:

THE KENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ELECTION COMMITTEE
c/o KENTON COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
5TH & Scott St.
Covington, Kentucky 41011

MEMBERSHIP AND DUES STATEMENT

The dues year is from September 1st to August 31st. Therefore the dues
for 1979 - 1980 are due, so if you haven't mailed yours we're sure you will want to do so.

NAME: Miss, Mrs., Mr., or Ms. _____
STREET ADDRESS _____
CITY OR TOWN _____
STATE _____
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	_____	

*Please make checks payable to "The Kenton County Historical Society"
18 Silver
Ft. Mitchell, Ky. 41018