

The Kenton County Historical Society



6-9/11

June

Kenton County Historical Society

P. O. Box 641
Covington, Kentucky 41018

R E V I E W

June 1991

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING AND PROGRAM
(free and open to the public)

On Thursday evening, July 18th, 7:00 PM, at the Kenton County Public Library, Dr. Louis Thomas will speak on the topic...

THE OHIO RIVER VALLEY: ENTRANCE INTO THE INTERIOR

The talk (with slides) will focus on the era before steamboats and on activities as well on the Ohio river tributaries.

The talk is scheduled for the same week that the "Always a River...." barge will be docked at Cincinnati (July 15-22). Sponsored by six states, for the summer, this exhibit barge will display local river life and will be open for touring to the public from both sides of the river.

Communities up and down the river will be sponsoring related activities, and Dr. Thomas' talk will be one of ours.

Dr. Thomas' talk will be:

Thursday evening

July 18, 7:00 PM

Kenton County Public Library

Fifth and Scott streets

Covington

The Kenton County Historical Society is a non-profit organization incorporated in 1977 in the state of Kentucky.

Annual membership is only \$5.00 per person. Activities include monthly meeting-programs, publications, historic sites, and library support.

Please note that we recommend for your consideration the purchase of THE CELESTIAL CITY (see enclosed form).

THE HEMINGRAY GLASS CO 1848-1933

In 1848 about five blocks from the river on Hammond street in Cincinnati, Ralph Gray (born in Eng.) and Robert Hemingray (born in Penn.) established a glass works. By 1853 they were manufacturing glass articles in the vicinity of the river on the Covington side at Second and Madison, while retaining a Cincinnati store. In 1857 Ralph's younger brother Anthony (born in Penn.) and Robert's older brother Samuel (born in Eng.) joined the partnership. But in 1861 Anthony left, and after Ralph died in 1864, the company became Hemingray until purchased by Owens-Illinois during the Great Depression.

As recalled by a recent archaeological report, which analyzed the Covington site prior to construction of RiverCenter, the beginning of telegraph use about 1847 gave reason for company production of insulators. However, beginning in the early 1870s, new Hemingray patented procedures over two decades reflected emphasis on production of telegraph pole insulators.

The industry had switched from wood to coal as primary fuel, and the site near the river provided access. Economical barge transport brought raw materials and shipped finished products. The report added that Hemingray seemed to get sand from Missouri and lead from Illinois.

In 1851 Cist reported that the company produced tumblers, decanters, packing bottles, lamp glasses, apothecary shop furniture, perfumery glass, lightning rod and telegraph insulators. Another source listed chemical apparatus, pickling bottles and fruit jars. 1870 tax records listed flatware, greenware, laternware, fruitware. The company's raw materials included sand, soda, pearl ash, vitre, coal (85,000 bushels), wood, arsenic, lime, feldspar, lead, clay. The company employed 138 males over age sixteen, four females over fifteen, and sixty-seven children

that year. After the Civil War glassmakers (craftsmen) appear to have unionized including eventual affiliation with the Knights of Labor. The greatest number of American born workers from elsewhere came from Pennsylvania:

In the later 1800s natural gas became available in Indiana (only to be depleted by 1900). In 1888 Hemingray purchased a site in Muncie and proceeded to relocate manufacturing. However, his obituary indicates that Robert Hemingray died in 1898 at his residence at 211 Garrard, and his son Daniel was listed in 1894 as a traveling salesman for Hemingray living at the northeast corner of Seventh and Greenup. The two other sons, Ralph and Robert Jr., did relocate in order to oversee production.

Floods in Covington in 1883 (66 ft. crest), 1884 (71 ft.) damaged company property extensively as did a fire in 1872. But such major flooding did not directly cause the final closing of the Hemingray office in Covington in 1919.

Like a Covington predecessor, John McNickle, who had organized the Covington rolling mill in 1831, Robert Hemingray (a talented innovator) was born in Pennsylvania (near Johnstown) near the edge of the upper Ohio river valley. For the location in Muncie (100 miles north of Covington, northeast of Indianapolis) river transport was less important. Nevertheless, Muncie is located on the White river (west fork) which cuts diagonally southwest (through Indianapolis) to the Wabash river which empties into the great Ohio river.

(by John Boh)

OHIO



HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Kentucky's fourth historic preservation conference sponsored by the Kentucky Heritage Council will be held in Covington, September 26-28, 1991.

In 1991 the Kentucky Heritage Council is also celebrating its 25th anniversary.

Housing, rural preservation, old churches will be some of the topics for discussion and interpretation.

The conference will also be celebrating Northern Kentucky's importance to the rest of the state. Reservations for overnight accommodations are available at Embassy Suites Hotel (RiverCenter), and Quality Hotel Riverview.

September 26-27-28 (Thursday-Friday-Saturday)

More details forthcoming or you may contact:

The Kentucky Heritage Council

677 Comanche Trail

Frankfort, Kentucky 40601

(502) 564-7005

NOTES

On Tuesday, June 12th, Mr. Karl Lietzenmayer gave an authoritative talk on James T. Earle, the last mayor of Latonia before annexation by Covington. Some twenty-five people, including about eight of Earle's relatives, attended. Many photographs and a few maps were displayed, most of which were donated or loaned to the Kenton County Library for copy. Mr. Lietzenmayer also donated a typed, referenced paper which had some 15 pages of text.

Mr. Ted Harris also donated an original paper on the history of black Elks. In coming months he will give a talk on the same topic.

We thank Mr. Lietzenmayer and Mr. Harris.

On Saturday, June 29th, the Kenton County Historical Society hosted a regional meeting of the Historical Confederation of Kentucky. Persons from Gallatin, Kenton, Campbell, Boone counties and from the Northern Kentucky Heritage League represented their organizations. Topics covered included the local history program of HCK and the current preparations for the Kentucky Bicentennial. In the afternoon, Mrs. Mary Haas from the Northern Kentucky Bicentennial Committee gave a brief rundown on current Bicentennial proposals and opportunities. Ms. Jeanne Suchanek from the HCK office gave us information and advice.

Kenton County Historical Society
P. O. Box 641
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Kenton County Sesquicentennial-1990
State of Kentucky Bicentennial-1992

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