

KENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Jo Ann C. Brown

MEETING

DATE Tuesday, April 9

TIME 7 PM

PLACE Trinity Church

4th and Madison

Covington

Our program this month is being presented by Sister Therese Wolking, OSB. She is the archivist for the Villa Hills Historical Society, a very active group. She has done extensive research on the area of Villa Hills.

Bulletin

April 2002

Thomas More College Lecture – April 6th

Dr. Daniel Richter will present "Facing East from Indian Country: A native History of Early America" on the campus Saturday April 6th at 1:30 p.m. There is no charge.

Dr. Richter is a professor of history at the University of Pennsylvania and a TMC graduate. He has written a book of that title.

An earlier work on Iroquois won a prize from the Organization of American Historians. Phi Alpha Theta Honorary History Society and the History Club are sponsors.

For information call: (859) 344-3394

Shortened 2002 History Day Well Attended

Even though this year's event was without lunch or closing speaker, it was attended by 118 pre-registrants and almost an equal number of walk-in participants. Numerous societies sponsored tables, including some first-time arrivals, such as: Villa Hills History Group, Harrison County Historical Society. Joe Reinhart & Linda Mardis marketed their books & sold signed copies. Representatives from the Kentucky Historical Society also maintained display tables. KHS donated a \$500 grant to help finance the event – one unique in the state.

Thanks goes to: George Gressle, John Boh and Joe Gastright for spending most of the day tending the brisk sales at the Kenton table. Dan Carter, San Juan & Kathy Romero, Peggy Lietzenmeyer and President Jim Kiger helped staff the registration desk.

If the participants missed the usual lunch, it was not apparent. Many of the Heritage groups donated door prizes which were awarded at the end of the event.

Covington History Book Project Continues

The task force of Society members continue to meet monthly. A senior NKU history major, Leigh Ann Ripley will be contributing research time to the project. The group is requesting participation from members & friends of KCHS to contribute ideas & data concerning the full range of Covington/Kenton History.

Covington 12th Street Update

During most of 2001, meetings were held by consulting parties (including Kenton Society) for a Mitigating Review under Section 109, required by the Federal Highway Act when historic properties are involved in highway projects. Some of the proceedings have been reported in past *Bulletins*.

The process has been halted by the Federal Highway Commission in consultation with the Kentucky Heritage Council. Apparently, the data used was out of date and number of structures to be razed was considered excessive. New alternatives are now being formulated. Our board has been on record as opposing the 12th Street widening as proposed. There has still been little or no press coverage of this difficult struggle.

WEB SITE <http://www.kenton.lib.ky.us/~histsoc/>

Trophy Acquisition Brings Story Into Focus Life of R. J. Dibowski (1875-1928)

by Karl Lietzenmayer

The Society was recently alerted to a piece of Covington's past being offered on Ebay – the on-line auction. The Kenton Society decided to finance its acquisition and was successful.

The artifact is a trophy given to R. J. Dibowski for "Best Decorated Building" during Covington's Centennial Celebration in September 1914. Mr. Dibowski was also secretary of the city festivities. The trophy will reside in Behringer/Crawford Museum.



This is the trophy awarded to "R. J. Dibowski - for Best Decorated Building - Covington Centennial, September 12-14, 1914"

Photo by George Gressle

In 1914, R. J. Dibowski operated a café at #6 Pike Street – "That Neat Little Place." ¹ [The building still stands and was used as a dress shop after Dibowski left – "Casse Frocks" still appears in the entrance floor.] His father, Charles A., operated the "Odd Fellows Hall Exchange" at 12 East 5th Street. Growing up, Richard and his brother Gustave "Gus" worked in their father's establishment. ²



RICHARD J. DIBOWSKI'S

CAFE AND
RESTAURANT,

"THAT NEAT LITTLE PLACE"

6 Pike Street,
Covington, Ky.
PHONE SOUTH 997.

The Dibowski Café on the corner of Pike Street at Madison was apparently very popular, but by 1920 he had given up his café and entered into an entirely new enterprise – totally different from the restaurant business. He formed an association with the Wadsworth family and with them in 1920 became an organizer of the Wadsworth Electric Company located at 20 Pike Street. ³ Within two years, Wadsworth had erected its new facility on the site of the 11th Street site of the old St. Elizabeth Hospital. At this writing, the relationship between the Dibowski and Wadsworth families is not understood.

In the 1920s, Dibowski was widely known throughout Kentucky and became a director of the Associated Industries of Kentucky. In early 1928, the Association appointed Richard [because of his position as Secretary of Wadsworth Electric] to a Committee of 40 Kentucky businessmen to confer with Governor Fiem D. Sampson about the status of Kentucky industries. ⁴

Before he could conclude these duties, Dibowski died suddenly at his home, 20 Wallace Avenue, aged 53. His eulogy in the newspapers called him the "Dean of Scoutmasters." R. J. was scoutmaster for troop #8 stationed at St. Paul Evangelical Church, 11th & Banklick, Mr. Dibowski's church. His body lay in state at the church accompanied by an honor guard of scouts. Two uniformed scouts from each Northern Kentucky troop were ordered to report at the church to serve in this capacity. ⁵

The funeral procession included a large number of automobiles when the body was transported from St. Paul's to its resting place at Spring Grove Cemetery. Several hundred Boy Scouts formed a rigid line of khaki on Pike Street as the entourage passed onto the cemetery. ⁶

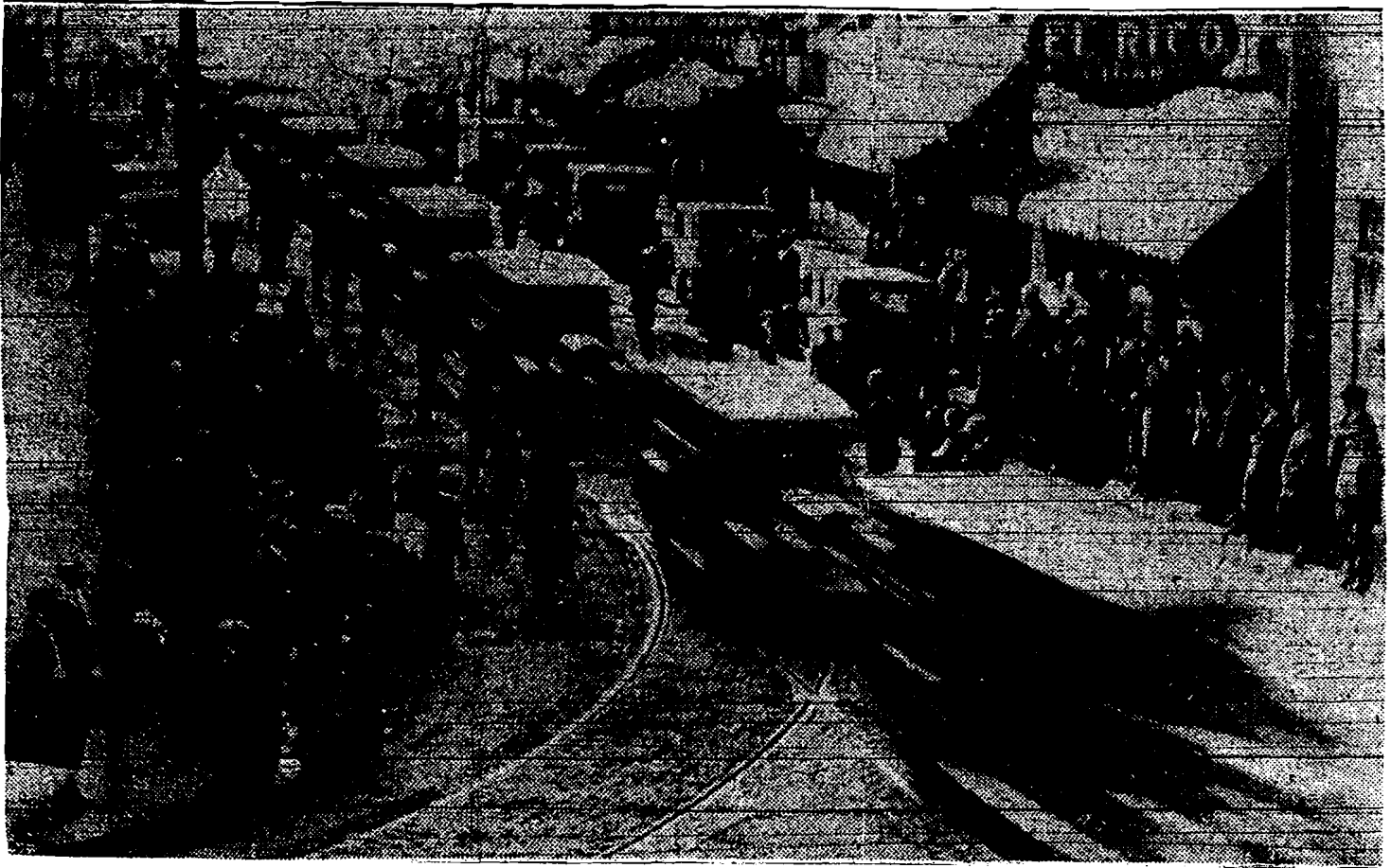
Richard Dibowski was survived by his widow Anna Oberschmidt Dibowski, a sister, Bertha O. Dibowski, and his brother Gus. No children were listed in his obituary. ⁷

Endnotes

1. Covington City Directories, various.
2. Covington City Directories, 1890.
3. *Ky. Post*, 9 Jan 1928, page 1.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ky. Post*, 10 Jan 1928, page 1. St Paul Church burned in 199s.
6. *Ky. Post*, 12 Jan 1928, page 1.
7. *Ky. Post*, 9 Jan 1928, op. cit.

Contributions Requested to Fund Trophy Acquisition

The Covington Centennial Trophy was acquired from an E-bay auction for \$53. Any members or friends of KCHS who can assist in underwriting this cost are requested to send your tax deductible check for any amount to the Society treasury. Please indicate "Trophy" on the check or envelope.



Kentucky Post photo of Dibowski funeral percession on Pike proceeding toward Madison. Scouts form rigid line on both sides as final tribute to their beloved scoutmaster on his way to resting place at Spring Grove Cemetery

January was Renewal Time

Please do your part to help the all-volunteer staff, and make renewal letters unnecessary. Send check to:
Kenton County Historical Society
P. O. Box 641
Covington, Kentucky 41012

Rates are as follows:

Membership in Society and Bi-annual Northern Kentucky Heritage Magazine.....	\$22
Senior membership in Society and Bi-annual Northern Kentucky Heritage Magazine.....	\$17
Bi-annual Northern Kentucky Heritage Magazine only.....	\$15
Membership in Society only.....	\$10

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INSIDE:

A Centennial Trophy

Kenton County Historical Society
P. O. Box 641
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Dedicated to preserving our heritage as the "Gateway to the South"