

KENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Program Coordinator

Nancy Grall

Editor of Bulletin

Jo Ann C. Brown

KCHS MEETING

DATE Tuesday August 8
PLACE Trinity Church
4th & Madison
Covington
TIME 7 PM - 9 PM
PROGRAM Daniel Holmes
Castle

Betty Lee Nordheim will share her knowledge and research about the life of Daniel Holmes and the history of the Daniel Holmes Castle, site of Holmes High School. In addition, we will have music and refreshments. Parking available at the church.

Bulletin

August 2000

From the President.....

On July 25th, the Board viewed a proposal of a new web site for Northern Kentucky Heritage Magazine. There will be space to profile each of the 20 participant groups and link to those with web sites of their own. The groups having no web exposure will have a presence through this NKH site.

KCHS elections are upon us again and will be held at the September 12 meeting. You can participate by mailing in your choices for the Board. Officers and Directors are required to attend Board meetings to consider actions and proposals. Directing the KCHS through the many projects coming to the table is very exciting. Consider yourself for the Board. If you're hesitant, please contact me for background.....no obligation. You may choose a project and run with it. The Society needs your input. The address, e-mail and phone number are listed on this Bulletin.

KCHS ELECTION YEAR 2000

The terms of president, vice president, secretary and two directors expire this year, 2000. One or more nominations for each position are being accepted now up to time of election.

President (1 year term) _____

Vice president (1 year term) _____

Secretary (1 year term) _____

Nominations for two of six Directors

Director (3 year term) _____

Director (3 year term) _____

From the Program Coordinator.....

Thanks to Linda Carter, we have enjoyed more refreshments at more meetings this year. (We do appreciate those delicious homemade goodies, Linda.) However, Linda recently had an accident which crushed her wrist. She can no longer take charge of refreshments at KCHS.....and a lot of other things in her life. We need a volunteer to bring light refreshments. The treasury will pay expenses.

If you would like to do this or have questions, please call Nancy Grall, 647-7370.

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

Vignettes of History From The Villa Hills Millenium Publication

Many thanks to Michael Nail, Mike Cunningham and all of those who put together the Villa Hills History Book published by the Millennium Committee. Captured in its pages is a sampling of the memories of the people who made this community what it is today; a family friendly place, voted the most livable city in the area. While the city of Villa Hills is only 38 years old officialy, the community stretches back almost 200 years, and we discover that the early history of Crescent Springs and Villa Hills are entwined. These are only two stories from the many included in the book. If you are interested in more, please contact the Millennium Historical Committee , c/o Villa Hills City Building, 719 Rogers Road, Villa Hills , KY 41017. The Editor

Antebellum

The first settlers arrived in what is now the Crescent-Villa area in 1785. The Quaker couple, Robert McKay (McCoy), his wife, Mary, and their seven children made the lengthy journey from Frederick County in northeast Virginia. McKay was a revolutionary War soldier who fought under Mad Anthony Wayne. For his wartime service, McKay was given a plot of land in Kentucky County, Virginia. It was bounded by the Ohio River, Dry Creek, and Pleasant Run Creek. The depth of the property was not specified, but it is known that it extended as far as Madison Pike, and it is believed to have totalled 3,000 acres.

The McKays picked a spot overlooking the river on the present Reinhart farm and built a log cabin there. The river was the most important travel and trade route of these early settlers, and trails for horse carriages were made down the hills to reach it. Eventually three roads were cleared to the river, one in the vicinity of the Scott property on Highwater Road, another between Villa Madonna Academy and Madonna Manor, and a third near the WCKY towers.

As the McKay children began to marry, their mother, widowed by that time, deeded various parts of her land to them. Alice McKay married John Allen, and they lived in the area of the Thirs farm,

found off present day Buttermilk Pike. It is believed they owned most of the property that is now Crescent Springs.

Rachel McKay married Captain Levi Cleveland, who, desirous of setting himself up in some kind of commerce, had come to the area around the same time as the nine McKays. She and Cleveland, brother of Moses Cleveland, for whom the Ohio city was named, were given some acreage which includes the Toebben farm on Amsterdam Road. Captain Cleveland was buried at a plot overlooking the Ohio River in 1813.

The oldest house still standing in the area is the Toebben farm home, which was built in the 1830s by Rachel and Levi's son, Washington Cleveland. Washington's son, Joseph Cleveland, built the old Summe home which stood from the early 1840s till the very recent development of Amsterdam Village.

Three other houses of this period are the Kreylick home (St. Mary's House) on Villa Madonna grounds, the Stanley Foltz home on Swan Street in Crescent Springs, and the Robert R. Scott home on Highwater Road. The Scott home has been continuously occupied by members of that family since it was built.

By Mike Cunningham

Washington Cleveland's House



The Washington Cleveland house has withstood the passage of time extremely well. This is due to its remarkable sturdy construction.

The stone walls are 18 inches thick. Originally there were beautiful stone and brick fireplaces in each of the six rooms and in the basement. The brick was made in kilns which were located on the plantation.

All flooring and other timber, with the exception of the white pine used for the windows and doors, was hand-hewn from trees on the property. The flooring throughout is 2 inches thick and planed smooth on the top.

Presently about 16 of the window panes are original blown glass. The front door is the original, as is the staircase. The mantel pieces have delicate fluted wood trim, a decor echoed on the stair.

In the early days, the house had quarters for the slaves attached at the rear of the kitchen. That section has since been torn down.

By Sister Teresa

A Railroad's Child

The character of the Crescent-Villa region during the last third of the 19th century was shaped by the death of one institution, slavery, and the birth of another, the railroad.

The Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 had freed slaves only in the seceding states of the Confederacy. With the passage of the 13th Amendment to the Constitution in 1865, slavery was abolished throughout these United States.

Four families, the Clevelands, the Scotts, the Andersons, and the Griffings, controlled most of the land in the area in 1850. By 1883 there were about 35 families in residence, almost all engaged in farming. Representatives of only a few of these families still live in the area: Boh, Eubanks, Niemeyer, Ramler, Reinhart, Scott and Thirs.

If the end of slavery provided an impetus for selling land in this area, the opening of the Cincinnati, New Orleans, and Texas Pacific R. R. (Cincinnati Southern) line from Ludlow to Somerset, Kentucky, in July, 1877, provided an impetus for buying it.

During the first years, the nearest stations were at Kenton Heights and Ludlow, and unbreakable merchandise, such as groceries and newspapers, were tossed off as the train passed through Crescent Springs. The trains made unscheduled stops upon request. They began making scheduled stops there sometime in the 1890s, at which time a depot was built near the old firehouse's location.

The railroad found it to be good business to boost the growth of towns along its line. So it was that each Saturday prospective customers

were brought to the Crescent Springs land auctions being held by J. G. Anderson, John Bullock, and a Mr. Foage.

The region's main drawing card seems to have been its healthy environment. The air was fresh and the three area springs provided a readily available source of clean drinking water. Additionally, there was the emotionally satisfying prospect of living in a small town away from the vices of the city.

Although the move to the country entailed an increased cost in commuting to work, this was partially offset by the savings to be made by raising vegetables in home gardens. The region was overgrown with blackberry bushes which yielded nearly costless desserts.

The populace had ready access to the large cities to the north. By 1900, two morning runs and one noon run passed through Crescent Springs on the way to Cincinnati. There were early and late evening return runs. A 50 trip ticket cost \$2.25.

As the town increased in size, it accumulated more and more of the institutions and services one expects to find in semi-autonomous areas.

Sometime between 1883 and 1892, the town's first school was built. It was a one room wooden structure erected on Anderson Road where the hardware store presently stands.

Prior to that school's construction, children in the Crescent Springs area had attended the Lebanon school, found on the south side of Amsterdam Pike just west of the present Collins Road.

The Lebanon school, which opened before the Civil War, was

made of red brick, baked at the spot.

The pre-1892 formation of a Sunday School marks the beginning of organized religious activity in the community. The instructional classes and worship services held in the Crescent Springs school building were open to all denominations.

The organization of Crescent Springs Presbyterian Church in 1898 was an outgrowth of the Sunday School. At the July organizing meeting, the 38 charter members elected elders and deacons, and made plans to erect a church. The church was completed and dedicated in September 1901, nine months after the first pastor, Rev. Charles Diehl, was installed.

The first post office was located in the first house south of the railroad tracks on the western side of old Buttermilk Pike. It was run by a Mrs. Sacksmith. The mail bag was slung on a hook as the train passed through, and then taken to the post office for distribution.

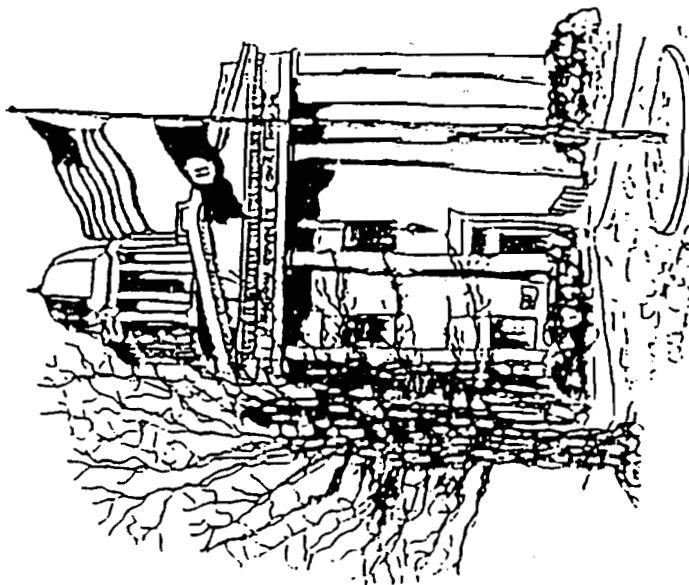
Mrs. Sacksmith was succeeded in the post by a Mrs. Welling, and around 1900 by a Mrs. Wahl. During Mrs. Welling's tenure as postmistress, the post office moved to the small red building on Western Reserve next to Kenny Kallmeyer's service station. The post office was discontinued in 1920.

Prior to the 1890s the only businesses in the area were a blacksmith shop, located next to the Stanley Foltz home on Swan Street, and the many dairies clustered around Buttermilk Pike from which the road received its name.

By Mike Cunningham

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Villa Hills Millennium Publication

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P. O. Box 641
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Erlanger Historical Society
Annual Heritage Day Celebration

Sunday September 17
Noon to 6 PM

At the Erlanger Railroad Park and
Depot Museum

Music
Drinks
Many Booths



John Boh 12/1/00
507 Russell Street
Covington KY 41011

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Dedicated to preserving our heritage as the "Gateway to the South"