

KENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P. O. Box 641, Covington, Kentucky 41012 (859) 431-2666

E-Mail: nkyheritage.kchs@juno.com

Bulletin August/September 2001

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Program Coordinator

Dr. Joseph Gastright

Editor of Bulletin

Jo Ann C. Brown

KCHS MEETING

DATE Tuesday Sept. 11
TIME 7 PM
PLACE Trinity Church
4th & Madison
Covington
PROGRAM A Hey Day At
Holmes: the 40's

A trio of Holmes Alumni will discuss the years of Holmes' undefeated football team: Bruce Ferguson, former Boone County Judge-Executive, Betty Lee Nordheim, retired Holmes art teacher, and Don D. Davis (Quarterback).

From the President.....

The financial state of the Society was recently very precarious. The last issue of *Northern Kentucky Heritage Magazine* went over budget and for the first time in memory, the KCHS treasury was absolutely bereft of coin! To add to the chaos, the Society computer crashed taking the phone off line and losing most e-mail addresses. Hence, your messages have not been promptly answered since I'm accessing remotely from another computer. Board member George Gressle will be soon installing new equipment.

On the positive note, the Society-sponsored tour of the Covington Odd Fellows Building came at a very appropriate time. Public interest and attendance was impressive as approximately 400 persons including 62 Northern Kentucky Heritage League members. [NKHL is not part of NKH] The NKHL pre-planned their July program to be included in this tour. Everyone who toured the building were impressed by the structure's interior and its historic importance. I want to publicly recognize the many docents placed throughout the building to explain various aspects as the public passed through. Kroger on Madison donated the refreshments, a welcome relief on that hot day. They were served in the recently vacated "girlie bar" in the ground floor retail space. The Society realized \$1,678, plus 7 new members and \$248 in sales (maps, magazines, etc.). MANY THANKS TO OWNERS, TONY MILBURN, KELLY AND DAMIEN SELLS AND TO ALL FOR MAKING THIS TOUR SUCH A SUCCESS!

New marketing efforts for *NKH Magazine* will soon begin with the efforts of Carol Wenger and Charles Reckley. A goal of 1000 subscriptions is realistic for a nationally recognized publication like this, but the subscription rate has been flat for several years. Increasing the number of subscribers is the only long-term way to keep NKH out of the red. The marketing end of this publication has been neglected.

The Board is vigorously recruiting new officers and Directors for the fall election. New faces with fresh ideas are one of the ways KCHS will grow and remain strong. The vision of the KCHS Board has produced more projects than available volunteers, and many interesting possibilities are waiting for persons to begin working on them. Consider getting more involved! A minimal commitment yields maximum reward.

Editor's Note: To reread the history of the Odd Fellows Hall, dig out your November 1999 issue of the Bulletin. For extra copies, please call the KCHS or e-mail joannb859@aol.com

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

Aunt Nellie's Farm Kitchens ---227 West Southern , Covington, Kentucky

by John Boh

Many people will remember it as the Liberty Cherry and Fruit Company. It first appeared in the 1916 Covington Directory and was listed at the northwest block of Eighteenth and Madison, near the Stewart Iron Works. Before Morris Bettman started Liberty Cherry in 1914, the Bettman-Johnson Distillery on Sycamore Street was engaged in similar production (1910 Cincinnati Directory).

In 1917 Bettman offered his plant at its new location (2nd and Madison, southeast corner) to the government for war emergency (vegetable processing) and was the largest cannery in Northern Kentucky. A couple of years after the 1937 flood, Liberty Cherry relocated away from the perilous Ohio River to the former Yate-Lahner Lumber Yard at the railroad tracks in Latonia, 227 West Southern Avenue.

In 1918 Edgar Bettman was President and Treasurer, and Henrietta Reedy was Secretary. In 1943 Arthur Bettman was President, Thomas Bell, Vice President, Henrietta Reedy, Secretary. In 1961 Beatrice Foods purchased Liberty Cherry, followed in the 1980s by American Brands, and then Aunt Nellie's Kitchens. Yet, as of 1991, the Liberty emblem was still used, according to plant manager, Frederick Good. Both the Aunt Nellie's and Thriftway or IGA label, for instance, may come from the same production line. [As of 1991,]only Gray and Company in Oregon was a larger producer than Aunt Nellie's.

The Covington plant pro-

cessed and packaged glace fruit (for fruitcake) and maraschino cherries for retail and industrial uses, and also a mince meat product.

Cherries come from Oregon or northern Michigan, are machine pitted at Traverse City, Michigan, and are processed and packaged in Covington. Pineapples are imported from Mexico, rather than Hawaii. Mexican pineapples can better withstand processing rather than the more delicate Hawaiian variety. Citron, a type of tree melon, comes from Puerto Rico.

Bettman's original crew hand pitted cherries. Now things are mechanized, batches are larger, and the operation multiplied, even without the cherry pitting.

As of 1991, there was no chemical formula, only a "feel." Cherries are 25% impregnated with syrup which also forces water out which takes more than a day. Then they were packaged and sealed to avoid contamination. Glossy fruit is 75% impregnated (corn syrup has replaced sugar in processing) but can be packaged dry because the syrup is a preservative. Syrup is constantly recycled after purification. Besides first processing waste under the floor of its newer, spacious, temperature controlled redwood warehouse, the company pays the Kenton County sewage district a surcharge. On the other hand, Harry Welte, retired, could recall when raw waste was dumped into the Ohio River. The plant manager observed that despite great concern, maraschino cherries present no greater danger than jello

from food coloring. In the future the company will have to invest in larger labeling in order to carry required nutritional information. At that time the company made no nutritional claims.

The average factory worker service in 1991 was 18 years, office workers, 23 years, with a total of 70 production and office personnel. Beatrice Foods brought in the teamsters Union which has worked out quite well, according to Good. Marketing is now handled by the parent company office. Over-the-road trucking is preferred to bureaucratic railroad dispatching. According to Welte, in the old days materials and products were trucked between the railroad depot at Pike and Washington and Second and Madison.

A final note: The former plant at Second and Madison has been demolished in order to modernize Covington's RiverCenter area. It was last occupied by Premier Industries. Old maps suggest that the main building was originally constructed for the Argonaut Cotton Mill which the Covington Street Directories list at this site from 1892 to 1914.

Editor's Note: Article was written in 1991 and printed in the 1991 Bulletin. Aunt Nellie's Kitchen is no longer at the same location.

Election September 11

The annual election of officers and Board members is held at the next meeting, September 11. We will elect 2 Directors for 3 year terms. You can see by the roster on the front page the terms of each Board member and officer.

Karl Lietzenmayer will not run for president this year. Nominations for officers are as follows:

President	Jim Kiger
Vice President	Dr. Joe Gastright
Secretary	John Boh
Treasurer	Dan Carter

Nominations for the 3 year term for Directors are:

Emily Bailey, Kathy Romero, Joe Gastright, and Karl Lietzenmayer. Nominations for all positions will be accepted from the floor upon agreement of the person nominated.

Just a little bio on each candidate that would be new to the Board: Jim Kiger is a retired principle of River Ridge Elementary School, Villa Hills, although he still does some work for the Kenton County Board of Education. He is married with one son, and has been a member of KCHS for many years. He previously served two terms on the Board a number of years ago. His major historical interest is German heritage and the Civil War. He belongs to the Sons of the Union and Sons of the Confederate. Kathy Romero is married to Board Member San Jaun, and is a retired teacher in special education at Ft. Wright School. She has many interests, but the major one is genealogy

Announcements

The African American Heritage TaskForce is in the process of relocating its offices. The mailing address will remain the same. The temporary telephone number is (859) 491-1484.

The African American Heritage TaskForce Annual Meeting is scheduled to be Saturday, September 29 at 1 pm at the Flemingsburg Public Library. After the election and a business meeting, Prince Brown of NKU will speak.

There will be transportation from the Northern Kentucky Community Center, leaving at 11 am. For more information about the meeting or the transportation, please call Joyce Ravenscraft, (859) 689-4647

Help recognize Historic Businesses in Your Community!!!

Are there any historic businesses serving your community? The Kentucky Historical Society offers special recognition to for-profit businesses that have operated in Kentucky for 100 years or more. Since 1996 over 260 long-term businesses have been honored via the Society's Kentucky Centennial Business Program. Deadline For Application is September 1. Call Jim Wallace at (502) 564-1792.

Congratulations to Crestview Hills on your 50th Anniversary!!

Letters to the Editor

I always enjoy the KCHS newsletter. But this month's issue got to me a bit.

Your Bulletin regarding the 12th Street. I was at that meeting for the mitigation process. I can't see anything but improvement happening to 12th Street. We're not dividing the city with a speedway. Do you not see invisible divisions all over this city already? Take Latonia residents. Most of them do not consider themselves living in Covington. There is a line right across the underpass where James Avenue ends and Decoursey begins. How about Madison Avenue? East vs. West. I am on the Mitigation committee to help the process along and hope to make the finished product a nice addition to that neighborhood and to our city. I think as president of KCHS that should be your main goal. Not to antagonize people and get them up in arms. I hope you'll reconsider and put your knowledgeable efforts into helping the project instead of hampering it.

Thanks for listening.

Bev Wedding

Editor's note: I agree that to say the new proposal would divide the city is a stretch. But in fact, upon entering 12th Street right off the I-75 Expressway, is not a pleasant driving experience, not a good impression of Covington. Are there any other ideas out there among our members? Let us hear from you.

I read with interest your write-up in the last NKH (also printed in a past Bulletin) Magazine on Jimmy Lee Eldred.

In the 1940s, I used to take my niece to the Heile-Tranter Dance Studio to learn to tap dance. I remember Jimmy Lee accompanying the dancing on the piano. At the time, I remember thinking what a wonderful pianist he was.

I also had written my nephew's son....and mentioned what I read in the July Bulletin about the KCHS Meeting on July 16th. (Ms Krienbrink's discussion of Civil War Forts). He was very interested and wished he could have been there. Unfortunately (for him) I always receive the Bulletin after the fact!

I enjoy reading the KCHS Bulletin - each very interesting.

Regards, Natalie Rosenfeldt,
Southfield, MI

From Preservation Kentucky, Inc.

Dear Fellow Preservationists:

On behalf of the Preservation Kentucky, Inc. Board of Directors, I would like to thank the Kenton County Historical Society for sponsoring our annual meeting and regional reception at Jack Quinn's Ale House and Pub on April 20, 2001. We had an excellent turnout for the meeting and reception, and we appreciate your support of Preservation Kentucky's efforts to promote the preservation of Kentucky's historic resources through advocacy and education.

Again thank you for your sponsorship, and we look forward to working with you to promote historic preservation in Kenton County, Northern Kentucky, and Commonwealth of Kentucky.

Sincerely, Janet L. Johnston, Chair

Heritage Day

Sunday, September 16 Noon till 6PM

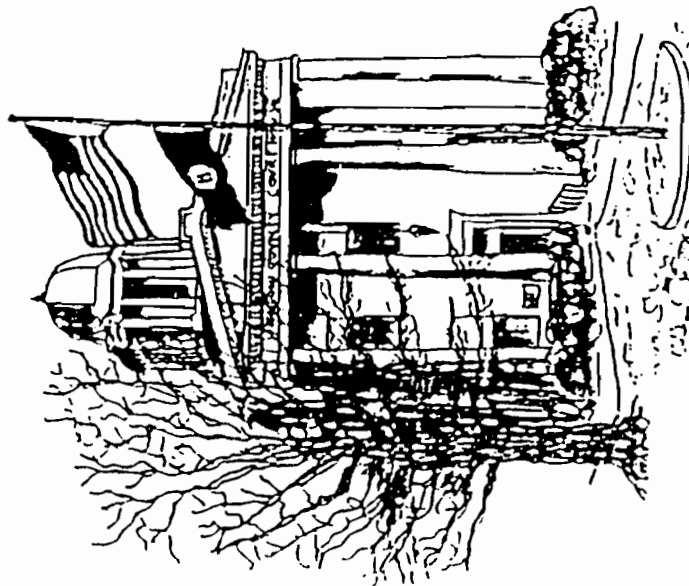
**Erlanger Railroad Park
at Erlanger Road and Dixie Hwy.**

Bring the family - bring the kids

Booths Games Food

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Kenton County Historical Society
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