

KENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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KCHS MEETING

DATE TUESDAY FEB. 13

TIME 7:00 PM

PLACE Trinity Church
4th & Madison
Covington, Ky.

PROGRAM Suspension Bridge
Seen in Suspension

Dr. Gastright will show videos of the famous bridge in places we have never seen before. The C-SPAN television program "C-Span's School Bus" (education for young people) came to Covington to film the Suspension Bridge including views of the bridge from inside the towers.

Bulletin

February 2001

From the President.....

At the January Board meeting, a lengthy discussion ensued over the long term future of *Northern Kentucky Heritage Magazine*. In the eight years of publication, only cursory interest among the region's heritage groups has been generated outside of Kenton County. The Board thought there were many reasons accounting for their lack of interest. Most are focused on their own area and publications; others may think it is a Kenton magazine and don't feel ownership in it.

To counteract this and insure the long-term existence of NKH, the Board felt that eventually, the magazine needs to stand apart from KCHS and have its own Board made up of elected members from other societies as well. Two new volunteers will be personally contacting each participant group at least twice each year. This may help call attention to their stake in this enterprise.

The plan discussed may take several years to implement since a closer relationship with the 15 other groups will first have to be strengthened.

On other subjects, a separate committee was formed to begin development of Covington/Kenton history. Vice President Joe Gastright is chairing this, and plans to include participants who are not KCHS Board members. They will meet monthly to discuss approaches, financing, and content.

Volunteers for History Day Registration Needed

The Annual History Day is scheduled for March 10 at Northern Kentucky University in the University Center. Again this year, Kenton's Society will handle the bulk of registrants. If you are planning to attend, please consider coming a little early to help with registration. Please call the office and leave your name. Or send an e-mail message or post card. Registration begins at 9 A.M., so any volunteer is requested to be at the University Center, NKU, at about 8:30 A.M.

Brochures of the day's details should be in the mail by the time this *Bulletin* reaches you. Only members in the tri-state area will receive this brochure since those out of town cannot be expected to attend.

Beginning With a Found Bottle: Traces of History

by Karl Lietzenmayer

An acquaintance of mine sent the Society a pharmacy bottle that he had discovered in a local construction site. The bottle was molded with the words "Heermance Pharmacy, Covington Ky" and the monogram "MH" overscribed below. In the 19th Century, individual druggists were expected to compound most prescriptions according to the doctor's order, work that is done by the drug companies today.

With only that bottle to start with, the library was searched for evidence of this firm. A survey of city directories showed the Heermance Pharmacy at the southwest corner of 4th & Scott Streets in Covington from 1871 until 1893. A typical entry read:
Heermance, M., City Drug Store, dealer in drugs, medicines, chemicals etc.
also sealing wax manufacture, family grocer and daily market.

Sealing wax was used by many families when home canning was the best way to preserve food before refrigeration. The canning containers, usually pottery, not glass, would be sealed by pouring wax around the lid in a trough molded in the clay container.

The directories also revealed that the M. stood for Mary and that her husband Henry was listed as "druggist and agent" for Mary. Newspaper references revealed that Henry died in 1893, at age 66, with an overdose of morphine. According to the report, Henry began his pharmacy career in Walnut Hills. The Covington business was managed by his wife Mary, apparently also a druggist.

Henry had been despondent for some time, probably over financial problems but there also seemed to have been "domestic unpleasantness" according to the newspaper account.¹ The family moved their residence frequently in their later years, all within a 3 or 4 block area of downtown Covington.

Mary seems to have moved almost every year or two after her husband's suicide and died in 1901 after a long illness, age 71.² What is left unsaid in these accounts is most curious. Since there was only one daughter, there are no local family descendants to discuss the more intimate details of their lives after so long a time.³ The remains of these once prominent Covington entrepreneurs are laid to rest in Linden Grove Cemetery. Other than a few entries in old city directories and some empty medicine bottles found on construction sites, not much of their legacy remains.

The building at 4th and Scott, still standing, was erected in 1865 as the Masonic Hall, and housed a corner druggist up through the early 1960s. Thompson's Pharmacy succeeded Heermance's.⁴ It is most probable that Thompson's also had molded medicine bottles. The picture below was taken around 1905. Many thanks to Jack Doll for this picture.

1. Kentucky Post, 8 May 1893, page 4.
2. Kentucky Post, 19 August 1901, page 3. Covington City Directories, various.
3. Daughter, Mrs. J. B. Woodson, of Chattanooga, Tennessee.
4. City Directory, 1906. Harry G. Thompson, druggist.



News items on history you may have missed.....

News from the Kentucky Historical Society.....

Bank of Kentucky wins award

The Bank of Kentucky is among winners of the Cincinnati Preservation Association's Preservation Awards for 2000.

The Bank of Kentucky was cited for its rehabilitation of a building at 231 Scott Street, Covington, which opened in 1836 as the Northern Bank of Kentucky, the first bank building in Covington.

It was in danger of being bulldozed three years ago to make way for the new Kenton County Justice Center. Critics called it an eyesore. Historic preservationists called it a gem and saved it from demolition with intense lobbying efforts of city, county and civic leaders.

The building is one of only two surviving pre-Civil War banks in Kentucky.

The cost to purchase and renovate the building topped \$3 million, according to bank officials.

In addition to a bank, the building was used as a distillery before the Mosler Lock Co. bought it in 1918 and put its name on the lintel above the recessed entrance. For 25 years, beginning in 1971, the building was used by Kentucky Motors as an auto-parts warehouse.

The Cincinnati Preservation Association was established in 1964 as the Miami Purchase Association for Historic Preservation and renamed in 1992. It is a private non-profit organization serving the Greater Cincinnati.

This year's awards recognized 13 projects and individuals for their outstanding achievements in historic preservation.

From The Kentucky Post, date unknown. Members of KCHS were among those working towards the preservation of this building.

Saturday, March 3, 2001 is the date for the Kentucky History Awards dinner sponsored by HCK and KHS. The dinner will be held at the Kentucky History Center in Frankfort. The keynote speaker will be Barbara Franco, executive director of the Historical Society of Washington D. C.. (We encourage all of you to read Barbara's article on the subject of relating to our communities in the most recent issue of AASLH History News.)

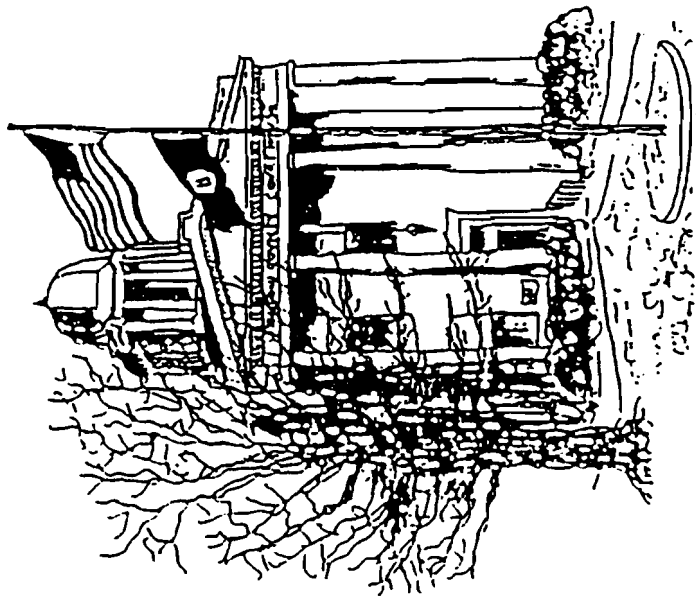
The *Register of The Kentucky Historical Society* (Vol. 98, No. 2) has published articles of certain interest to KCHS members. The first, "Creating Windows of Opportunity: Issac E. Black and the African American Experience in Kentucky, 1848-1914," was written by Ted Harris, former Vice President of KCHS, member of the Kentucky African-American Heritage Commission, and the Governor's Underground Railroad Advisory Committee. The article is too long to reprint here, but the following opening paragraph may interest readers to locate *The Register* for the complete story. A copy can be obtained through a local Kentucky library or call KCHS; Karl will give you the KHS address.

On April 18, 1914, Isaac E. Black, an African American attorney, died at his home in Louisville. His death attracted little attention except for a small notice in a local newspaper. Yet his life had been remarkable. During the era of segregation, Black had become an attorney under the mentorship of Lt. Gov. John G. Carlisle, one of Kentucky's most respected statesmen. Later in the century, Black had formed Kentucky's first black law firm with his friend and fellow activist, Nathaniel Harper—the state's first African American lawyer and judge. Moreover, in Black's years as a resident of Covington, he had served at the forefront in many of the challenges facing Kentucky blacks. Significantly, those conflicts also had trouble-filled, personal dimensions. Black had been a conservative Republican during a period when most African Americans were Liberal Republicans, and his political views had run contrary to those of other black leaders in Covington, a dissonance which brought him considerable consternation in later years. Nevertheless, he consistently found a variety of means for self-expression and community activism.

The second article of interest to history buffs is by Scott A. Merriman, "An Intensive School of Disloyalty: The C.B. Schoberg Case Under Espionage and Sedition Acts in Kentucky during World War I." It is the story of how "the tensions and fears of wartime threatened First Amendment rights." Prominent citizens of German descent in Covington, Cincinnati, and all over America were convicted and sentenced under the Espionage and Sedition Acts of 1917 and July 1918. "Between July 1917 and July 1918, nearly two thousand indictments and nine hundred convictions occurred under these Acts." The Schoberg case is unique because it was based on evidence gathered by electronic surveillance.

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