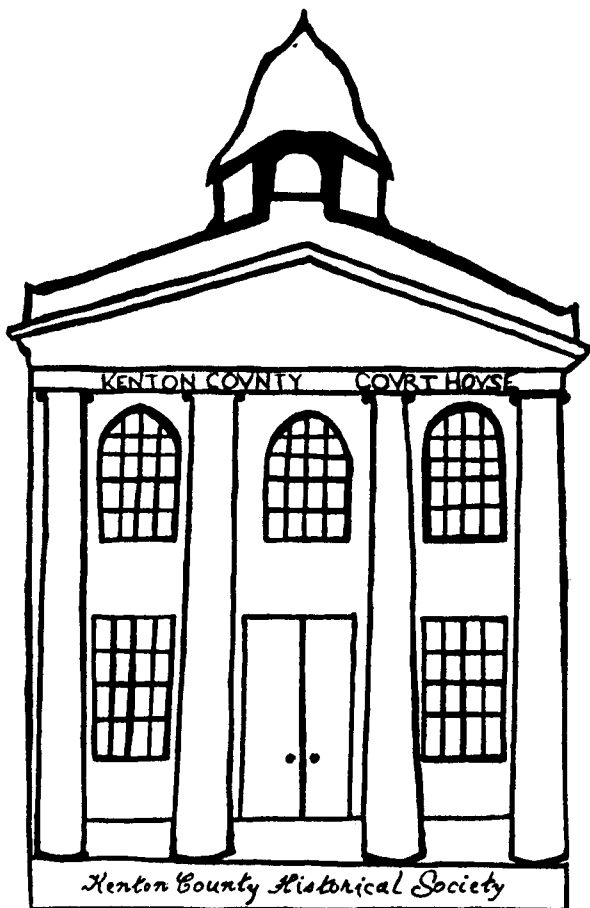


KENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
(organized in 1977; non-profit;
member, Historical Confederation
of Kentucky)



January 1993

Kenton County Historical Society

P.O. Box 641
Covington, Kentucky 41012

R E V I E W

January 1993

PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

On Tuesday, January 12th, 7:00 p. m. at the Erlanger branch of the Kenton County Public Library, Ms Leah Konicki will talk about...

THE SEARS MAIL ORDER HOUSES BUILT IN NORTHERN KENTUCKY

Ms. Konicki knows the locations of many such houses. From surviving catalogues and other records, she is able to identify and describe styles, financing, costs, construction details and the like.

Sears also had a local sales office. And the manufacturer of Sears doors and sashes was located in Norwood.

Ms. Konicki is a historic preservation specialist for the city of Covington. The program will be sponsored by the Kenton County Historical Society.

It will be free and open to the public.

Tuesday

January 12th

7:00 p. m.

Erlanger Branch, Kenton County Public Library

3130 Dixie Highway (next to Krogers)

ANNOUNCEMENT TO THE MEMBERSHIP

An amendment to the by-laws has been moved at a meeting of our Board of Directors on October 21. The proposed amendment will be entertained at our next General Membership meeting on January 12. It would raise annual dues per membership per year from \$5.00 to \$10.00. But if approved it probably would not take effect until 1994. Please come to our meeting on January 12, and give us your opinion and vote.

THE CINCINNATI AND COVINGTON COAL SUPPLY

In the Ohio valley the coal industry grew with the increasing demands of population and of native industry. In the 1840s the potential of coal helped attract settlers to the Cincinnati area, rather than to California or to the Southwest. By 1850 coal consumption in the Queen City of the West was increasing each year by 100,000 tons (Ambler).

But as demand increased so did financial losses due to annual river stoppages resulting from low water levels after drought, and from ice jams during winter freezing. An alternative appeared in 1852 when the first shipment of coal by railroad to Cincinnati arrived by way of Zanesville, Ohio (Ambler). And after the 1850s the Louisville and Nashville railroad gave increasing access to Kentucky coalfields (Clark).

In the 1830s dam building for Licking river navigation had commenced, only to be thwarted by an end to funding. In 1854 the completion of a section of the Kentucky Central railroad from Paris to its Covington terminus provided alternative transportation. However, in 1868 when coal was mined on the north fork of the Licking river and dispatched toward Covington by barge (5000 bushels), a Paris, Kentucky paper surmised that maybe the Licking river improvements needed to be resurrected (Cincinnati Daily Enquirer, January 1 and 17, 1868). But it remained a fact that massive fuel needs could only be satisfied by delivery on the Ohio river from Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia.

The industry considered nine feet of depth a necessity. The early coalboats measured 160 to 175 feet long; 24 feet wide, 8 feet deep; were constructed of wooden frame with one and one-half inch sheeting; held a maximum 25,000 bushels; were floated in pairs tied together; were operated by crews of as many as 25; were steered by "long sweeps or oars"; were accompanied by "two skiffs" to help with emergencies and with tying of ropes for landings. "Most" were built at Pittsburg on the Allegheny, then floated around to the Monongahela for loading. Down river after unloading they were "knocked down," sold for very significant sums to be used for building, road paving, and fuel. However, for suppliers and consumers the biggest concerns remained not the containers, but rather the river stage, snags, and other hazards. In 1854, for instance, in a storm between Pittsburg and Wheeling, 17 lives, 70 coalboats, and "sixteen hundred thousand bushels of coal were lost"(Ambler).

But later years did bring modern long distance "towing." In the early 1830s coal at least once was propelled by steamer from Pomeroy to Cincinnati, and in 1845 a small sternwheeler delivered three small barges from Pittsburg to Cincinnati. Then about 1850 the Lake Erie pushed (rather than pulled) containers of coal from Pittsburg to Cincinnati and Louisville. Soon recognized everywhere as the only efficient mode, it required a sternwheeler (not sidewheeler) which could change course with precision, move briskly, pushing an assemblage of barges up ahead. Another element was barge construction. They were not dismantled, but rather were reloaded with other freight (iron, consumer items, etc.) for the return trip. And soon a round trip from Pittsburg to Cincinnati and Louisville was reduced to 7 to 10 days, to New Orleans, 35 to 40 days (Ambler).

Soon came also operators with more capital who employed villages of miners, laborers, barge builders, boatmen, who streamlined productivity, thereby lowering market prices. In 1848 a Pittsburg "coal baron," William Hughey Brown, entered into a new partnership (Lloyd, Black and Brown), and soon began shipping Pennsylvania coal first to Cincinnati and Louisville, and then also to New Orleans and to St Louis (from which gas was manufactured). And during the Civil War his personal fortune from coal and coke was further enhanced by large Army and Navy demands (Ambler).

The last years of the 1800s saw the greatest prosperity for "post-bellum coal companies and individual operators and shippers on the upper Ohio." But in order to avoid the financial hazards which hit some companies "in the early nineties," the Monongahela River Consolidated Coal and Coke company (known as the "Combine") was formed in 1899. Most, but not all, of the "independent owners and operators in the Pittsburg district" agreed to cash and/or stock deals for their companies, and word had it that they agreed not to re-enter the market for a decade, and not to promote local river interests over "those of local railroads." Nevertheless, volumes of coal distribution continued to multiply. In 1907 the 17 million tons from Pittsburg and Kanawha (from where the Combine supplemented resources) almost doubled "the annual average for the five-year period" before the Combine was instituted (Ambler).

There were also other economies of scale. In the same year the towboat Sprague propelled a mass of 60 coalboats and barges measuring 925 feet long, 325 feet wide, covering

"seven acres of surface," and carrying 70,000 tons (Ambler). In the same decade a smaller operator out of West Virginia once sent the J. T. Hatfield with a tow of 22 barges and 7 coalboats, containing 13,320 tons, for which it was calculated that it would have taken 266 railroad cars carrying 50 tons each (Hatfield file, Kenton County Public Library). Finally, by about World War I Pittsburg suppliers did more or less withdraw to their own district, now partitioned by new dams built on the Upper Ohio (Ambler). In 1895 the Cincinnati-based Ohio River Valley Improvement Association was also founded (James T. Hatfield was a charter member). In 1910 Congress passed the River and Harbor Act, after which numerous dams were constructed. To mark the end of the era in 1929, President Hoover in Eden Park overlooking the river dedicated an oblique celebrating completion of certain of the Association's goals (Hatfield is listed on the Executive Committee), including the "canalization" of the river to a depth of nine feet (Oblique, Eden Park; Hatfield file, Kenton County Public Library).

After withdrawal of Pittsburg suppliers, river traffic became more "localized" as Cincinnati and Covington residents consumed primarily West Virginia and Kentucky coal (Ambler).

During the Depression years the Hatfield conglomerate afforded Montgomery Coal of Covington (owned by the Rusk family) some extra financial aid and credit (James Morrison, present owner of Rusk Heating). When Hatfield purchased controlling interest in the Campbell's Creek co. (1928) the industry was about to enter a period of mechanization in the mines, which benefited Hatfield. Then of course World War II created a special demand (Henson).

When the floodwalls were constructed after World War II, the Montgomery Coal company abandoned its old coal yards below West Second street, but maintained its old "branch office" over the railroad tracks at 21 West Nineteenth street. Then in the early 1970s the Rusk family sold off its coal and oil delivery business in order to concentrate on sales and service of comfort heating and cooling systems, with office on West Third street (Kentucky Post, December 27, 1972). As late as August 1991, remnants of the old coal office were torn down (Housing Department file, city of Covington).

When the Hatfield-Campbell's Creek company was sold to the Amherst Coal company (1950) the Federal Government was looking to build modern, fixed, concrete dams in order

to facilitate contemporary traffic. And for today's coal and petro-chemical industry, modern steel barges, propelled by diesel engines, can carry tremendous quantities compared to railroad cars or trucks.

--"Cannel" derives from the Scottish word for candle. A good quality coal, it was suitable for fireplaces because of its high, steady flame. It came from Canneltown, West Virginia and other sources within that distance of Charleston (Henson). Other minefields in West Virginia: Campbell's Creek--5 miles up river from Charleston; Coalburg--16 miles east of Charleston (see maps); Raymond City--at the Pocatalico river which empties into the Kanawha down from Charleston (S and D Reflector, June, 1965).

--The weight of coal was set by the Kentucky legislature at 80 lbs per bushel (Cincinnati Daily Enquirer, 3-10-1864). But seven years later the legislature updated specifications: Youghiogeny, screened--72 lbs. per bushel; Kanawha semi-cannel, screened--76 lbs.; Pomeroy, screened--80 lbs.; and add four pounds for unscreened. In this issue Pittsburg ("Youghiogeny") was quoted at 16 cents per bushel by cart; 11 cents per bushel by barge. Campbell's Creek semi-cannel and Coalburg was priced the same; Pomeroy lower; Cannel grade was priced 2 cents higher (Covington Journal, 2-11-72).

--J. T. ("Tobey") Hatfield was a charter member of the Ohio River Valley Improvement Association; once president of the Great Kanawha Improvement Association; once president of the Hazard Kentucky Coal Exchange (1916-1930); often called to Washington for coal conferences; founder of the Covington Council of the Boy Scouts; etc. (Hatfield file, Kenton County Public Library). His son, James Hatfield Jr., passed away on 1968; he was General Manager of the Hatfield division of the Amherst Coal company of Cincinnati (S and D Reflector, March 1969). On November 25, 1992 Virginia Thorpe Hatfield, surviving daughter of James Tobias Hatfield (1865-1938) passed away, leaving a niece, Ruth Noone of Cincinnati, and a nephew, James T. Hatfield III of Indian Hill (Kentucky Post, November 26, 1992).

--For very many years the Hatfield public office in Covington was located at 728 Madison avenue, next to the theater. In Cincinnati the executive offices for the Hatfield-Campbell's Creek company (purchased by Hatfield in 1928) were in the Union Trust building. The company's "Kanawha river operations were centered at Reed West Virginia..." which was formerly Dana, and after 1950, Port Amherst, West Virginia (S and D Reflector, March 1967).

(John Boh)

--In 1903 the Campbell's Creek Coal company moved its office from Rochester, New York to Cincinnati, and incorporated under the laws of the state of Ohio. But years before, Stephen F. Dana had "established an extensive retail sales department" and river terminal in the Queen City (Henson).

--1905 directory: The Campbell's Creek Coal company. S. F. Dana, President; E. O. Dana, Vice-president; R. P. Gillham, Secretary and General Manager; producers and shippers by rail and river...organized 1865; incorporated (in Ohio) 1903...Campbell's Creek domestic lump coal for grates, stoves, and furnaces; domestic nut for ranges, cooking, and laundry stoves; LeHigh clinkerless Anthracite...slack coal; rail dept. by any railroad, foot of Baymiller, Licking pike, south of Twelfth, Newport; particular attention to coal dealers trade; river dept. Cincinnati harbor foot of Niagara, Kanawha harbor at Point Pleasant; coal sold by barge load; delivered to all river ports; general offices in the Mercantile Building, Walnut street (1905 Cincinnati directory).

--in 1913 Hatfield became associated with the coal and transportation interests of Cincinnati Julius Fleischmann; in 1924 the Hatfield-Reliance Coal company was formed (Fleischmann died in 1925); in 1928 the Hatfield company acquired control of the Campbell's Creek Coal Company (Kentucky Post, July 21, 1938).

--The J. T. Hatfield (1904-1934) the flagship (and other Hatfield towboats) delivered coal from Hatfield ports at Pomeroy (Ohio), Plymouth, Point Pleasant, Huntington, Reed (West Virginia) to Hatfield ports at Ripley, Cincinnati, Maysville, Newport, Covington, Warsaw, Carrollton, Louisville, Madison, Jeffersonville, and New Albany (Hatfield file, Kenton County Public Library).

--In 1950 the Amherst Coal company (and the Logan County Coal company) of Charleston acquired control of Hatfield-Campbell's Creek (Cincinnati Times Star, July 22, 1950).

--In the 1992 Cincinnati Suburban Directory and in the Covington and Vicinity directory, Hatfield Terminals, Inc. is listed. James T. Hatfield III, President; 865 Mehring Way, foot of Baymiller street (see local directories).

--After the death of James T. ("Tobey") Hatfield in 1938, and even after the sale of the Hatfield-Campbell's Creek company in 1950, the Hatfield family has continued involvement, more or less, in the coal business to this day.

(John Boh)

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P. O. Box 641
Covington, Ky 41012

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