

KENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Bulletin

January 1997



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NOTICES

Volunteers Needed

Computer Skills KCHS has had some response to the call for someone to enter data onto computer disk, but the handwritten research projects which we would like to publish are voluminous. We still need more people who can enter this data onto computer disk so that we can transfer them to publishing form. If you have the time and no computer, the Society's computer is available.

Do you have an interest in old photos? The Society wants to collect, label, preserve, and keep old photos, which may have historical significance, in our files for possible use in the magazine or other historical display events. We need someone who has ideas on how to publicize the need for old photos; someone to collect, label and file the photos.

Could you stock Northern Kentucky Heritage Magazine in a store near you? The Magazine can now be purchased at bookstores and gift shops in the area. Several people have volunteered to restock and collect money from the sales each month in several stores, but we need a few more volunteers. N. K. Heritage Magazine is being sold at the following stores:

Barnes & Noble, Florence	Ohio Bookstore, Main St., Cincinnati
Madison Stationary, Cov.	Visitor's Center, Philadelphia St., Cov.
For Love of Books, Latonia	Beringer Crawford Museum Gift Shop
Blue Lick State Park in Robertson County, near Mt. Olivet, Ky.	

Suggestions for additional locations will be welcome.

If you have the skill or the interest for any of these of these projects, please call Karl Lietzenmayer, 261-2807 or John Boh, 491-0490 (H), or 292-2124.

FOR SALE

✓George Roth History of Trinity Church, Covington- hardbound, 300 pages, indexed, 20 pages of black and white and color pictures and illustrations. Cost \$10 plus \$2 postage.

✓7 X 7 Color 1947 Photo of the Kentucky Parlor Streetcar.

Kenton Officers From 1776 To 1888----- In 1884, in the Daily Commonwealth newspaper, O. J. Wiggins listed over 100 names of court officers and legislators primarily from Kenton County but also Campbell County before 1840 when the region was one county. Recently John Boh compiled brief, biographical "abstracts" of each and arranged them alphabetically. It could be a wonderful help for your research. Cost: \$2.00, including mailing.

KENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Northern Kentucky Heritage Magazine

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There will be no KCHS meeting in January.

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From the Formation of High Schools to a College

(Last of the series - Education and Faith: The Emergence of Catholic High Schools in Northern Kentucky - 1914-1940)

by David K. Schroeder

While Covington Latin High School offered a course of study for the academically gifted, Bishop Howard saw a great need for new schools that would reach out to the other young men of the diocese. The founding of Covington Catholic High School in 1925, and Newport Catholic High School in 1929 fulfilled this need.

By 1925, Bishop Howard realized the necessity of a central Catholic high school for boys to serve the episcopal city of Covington. The Brothers of Mary, who staffed St. Joseph Commercial High School, agreed to open a four-year academic high school for boys in the city. Again, Msgr. Henry Tappert offered the use of Mother of God School building as a site for the new school. In September of the same year, 37 pupils were admitted into the first class. The new school was christened Covington Catholic High School.³⁵

Covington Catholic grew quickly. In 1926, St. Joseph School for boys graduated its last class and merged with Covington Catholic. In 1929, the school received accreditation from Kentucky as a class "A" school. Also in that same year, Covington Catholic graduated its first class of 17 pupils. Enrollment in 1929 reached 128: 17 seniors, 22 juniors, 32 sophomores, and 56 freshman. Tuition at this time amounted to the sum of \$50 per year.³⁶

Covington Catholic offered a four year curriculum. The first two years emphasized classical courses. In the junior and senior years, students could choose to continue their classical education or begin a course in commercial subjects. High school diplomas were given to all students who completed either course. Required courses included four years of English, Latin and religion; two years of German, bookkeeping, shorthand and typewriting; a year and a half of algebra, geometry and history; and one year of chemistry and physics.³⁷

Founded as a central high school, Covington Catholic drew students from throughout Kenton County. The first three graduating classes proved this point. Of these 58 students, 62% were parishioners of the Catholic churches of Covington; 8.6% from St. Boniface and St. James parishes in Ludlow; 26% from the suburban parishes of Blessed Sacrament in Ft. Mitchell, St. Joseph in Crescent Springs, St. Anthony in Forest Hills, and St. Henry in Elsmere; 1.7% from Immaculate Conception in Newport; and 1.7% could not be determined.³⁸

In the years between 1929 and 1933, a major redevelopment occurred in the Catholic high school system in Newport. In 1929, the pastors of all the Campbell County parishes met and established a new high school for boys to be known as Newport High School.³⁹

With the establishment of Newport Catholic, Corpus Christi High School discontinued operation in 1930. A commercial high school took its

place. St. Stephen High School ceased operation in 1933. Thus, Newport Catholic became the central high school for boys in Campbell County.⁴⁰

NCHS opened at St. Stephen School, Washington Avenue, in 1929. The faculty consisted of Sisters of Notre Dame and the Rev. Urban Horstman. The Rev. Joseph J. Whalen was appointed the first principal followed by the Rev. Louis G. Fey in 1930.⁴¹

Like Covington Catholic High School, Newport Catholic thrived. In 1933, the first class of 11 graduated. In the following year the school moved to larger quarters in the former Immaculata Academy buildings on West 4th Street. In 1941, enrollment reached 207. This continued growth necessitated the moving of the school a second time. New quarters were found at Corpus Christi on Isabella Street.⁴²

Central Catholic high schools for girls were never formally organized in northern Kentucky. The sisters' academies continued to enroll the majority of female students. These academies tended to draw students from the elementary schools in which their orders taught. In addition, academies often catered to specific ethnic groups. This resulted in the total lack of defined boundaries for these academies. Young Catholic women were not required to attend the academy nearest their home. They could choose to attend any academy, parish high school, or commercial high school. Thus, the academy, and not the central high school, remained the principal form of secondary education for Catholic young women in northern Kentucky.⁴³

Central Catholic high schools were a part of a wider movement toward organization in education. During this same period, the public schools of the area also underwent similar centralization. Small county school districts were merged and minimum standards of education were developed. Teacher training, class size, record keeping and physical facilities became important issues.⁴⁴

An important development in this period in regard to common school standards was the movement toward accreditation from the state. Catholic high schools and academies sought accreditation from Kentucky throughout the 1920's and 30's. By the end of the period, each of the Catholic secondary schools in the area were accredited by the state. In addition, many became affiliated with the University of Kentucky, Catholic University of America, and the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. Such recognition by secular sources validated northern Kentucky Catholic secondary schools and permitted their graduates to enter state colleges and universities without difficulty.⁴⁵

With the movement toward accreditation came the necessity of better teacher training for the sisters who taught in the schools. In the 1920's, the state certified teachers who had undergone a minimum of 18 weeks in a college department with specific coursework in education. In order for a school to be accredited, the faculty had to be certified. This need for certification resulted in the Sisters of St. Benedict of Covington establishing Villa Madonna College in

1921. In 1929, Villa Madonna College became a diocesan institution under the sponsorship of the Sisters of St. Benedict, Notre Dame, and Divine Providence. VMC was open to members of the three religious orders and qualified lay women.⁴⁶

Perhaps the greatest accomplishment of Villa Madonna College was the standardization of teacher training within the diocese. In the past, each religious order trained its members according to its own traditions. Villa Madonna established a common curriculum for the sisters of the three main religious orders. This common teacher training eventually filtered down through both the Catholic high and elementary schools. Although each school continued to maintain its individual flavor and control, Villa Madonna College created a unity within the diocesan school system that previously had not existed.

Women religious were the backbone of the Catholic school system. The academies, commercial high schools, parish high schools, and central high schools could not have existed without their devotion and dedication. Sisters were the majority of Catholic school teachers in northern Kentucky during this period. Their desire to educate children and their willingness to labor with little compensation made Catholic schools financially possible.⁴⁷

Women religious served not only as teachers, but also as principals. Upon them rested the curriculum, discipline, maintenance, and financial concerns of these institutions. Sisters held positions of responsibility that lay women were not frequently offered. The Catholic secondary school system of northern Kentucky owes much to the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, St. Benedict, Notre Dame, and Divine Providence, who laid the foundation of these academic institutions.

The period between World War I and II witnessed the full development of Catholic secondary education in northern Kentucky. The establishment of commercial schools, parish high schools, central high schools, and Villa Madonna College, completed the Catholic school system which originated in the 1840's.

Catholic secondary schools were successful for a number of reasons. They offered curricula that were competitive with their public counterparts and accredited by the state. Catholic high schools were affordable, and thus, open to a large percentage of working-class families. These schools were locally based and governed, and therefore, responded effectively to the needs of each individual community. Most importantly, Catholic high schools offered Catholic children the opportunity to further their education in a comfortable setting that accepted and embraced their religious and cultural traditions.

Mr. Schroeder is archivist with Thomas More College and the Diocese of Covington.

³⁴Ryan, *Diocese of Covington*, 381; *Blue Grass 1929: Covington Catholic High School*, (1929: Covington, Kentucky), 20.

³⁵Kentucky Post, 2 June 1929, p. 12.; 8 September 1928, p. 1.; Bluegrass 1929: Covington Catholic High School, 21.

³⁶Kentucky Post, 2 June 1929, p. 12.; 26 August 1975, p. 9.; 5 June 1926, p. 3.

³⁷Kentucky Post, 2 June 1929, p. 12.

³⁸Bluegrass 1929, 23-27; Blue Grass 1930, 28-34; Blue Grass 1931, 34-40.

³⁹Ryan, Diocese of Covington, 939.

⁴⁰The First Century of Corpus Christi Church; Newport, Kentucky, (1945), 25.

⁴¹Ryan, Diocese of Covington, 936-37.

⁴²Ibid., p. 937.

⁴³Notre Dame Academy on W. Fifth St. in Covington is a good example of the diverse area from which the academies drew attendance. For attendance figures on NDA in 1928 see: The Kentucky Times-Star, 9 October 1928, p. 6.

⁴⁴Jay P. Dolan, The American Catholic Experience (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1985), 291.

⁴⁵Ryan, Diocese of Covington, 421, 431-32, 456; Kentucky Post, 18 February 1929, p. 3.; Kentucky Times-Star, 30 September, 1931, p. 6.; Kentucky Post, 2 June 1929, p. 12.; Kentucky Times-Star, 15 June 1932, p. 1.

⁴⁶Sister Irmina Saelinger, O. S. B., Retrospect and Vista; The First Fifty Years of Thomas More College. (Thomas More College, 1971), 3,11-12. In the 1945/46 school year VNC became a co-educational institution, Ibid., p. 26; In 1968 the institution became officially known as Thomas More College, Ibid., p. 67.

⁴⁷Ryan, Diocese of Covington, 454.

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Fred Hollis

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