

# Bulletin of the Kenton County Historical Society

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*January/February*

**2005**

## PROGRAMS

**January 11, 2005 7:00 pm**

***Baker-Hunt Estate.** We will have an onsite tour of how life really was around the turn of the century through the many original furnishings of the Baker and Hunt families. The tour will also include the classrooms and display areas.*

***Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption.** This remarkable cathedral will be open to our group for a guided tour. The cathedral museum, housing many interesting artifacts of church history, will also be included.*

**February 15, 2005 7:00 pm**

*This year held on February 26th, again at Northern Kentucky University.*

***Heirloom Appraisals.** Tim Dwight, of the Motch Jewelry Company, is scheduled to do appraisals.*

### Newsletters Now Indexed

Sheri Myers, Extended Collections Services Librarian at NKU, is preparing an online index of the Kenton County Historical Society's membership publications. The index begins with the first newsletter, from August of 1978, and will eventually include publications up to the present day. The publications are indexed by volume, as well as by the title of the volume's main article. Included in the index is a scanned image of the original paper document.

To see the index, go to:

[www.nku.edu/~myerssh/KCHS/KCHSIndex.html](http://www.nku.edu/~myerssh/KCHS/KCHSIndex.html)

This indexing project really adds power to the work of the Society. Many within Kenton's Society had an incomplete idea of what had already been researched. It seemed that occasionally, the Society researchers were re-inventing the wheel, as it were.

#### **The Bulletin**

Published bi-monthly by

#### **The Kenton County Historical Society**

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# Battery Hooper Day

## An Update on Preservation of the Civil War Battery

By: Kathy Romero, Ft Wright Resident and Genealogist    Photos by: Ronnin Einhaus



September 30, 2004 was a beautiful, crisp autumn day for the archaeological excavation at Battery Hooper. The site is located on what is commonly known as the Storer property in Fort Wright, soon to become a city park. Fern and Sheldon Storer bought the house and its 14 acres in 1941, when Sheldon's electrical business brought them from Kansas to Kentucky. They immediately knew that the move was right for them. It was farmland at that time. Sheldon brought back a tree from every state that he visited and planted it on the property. Fern was food editor for the Kentucky Post from 1951 until 1976. The specific plot of land that Battery Hooper rests upon has been traced back to an 1881 land purchase by Joseph Schlosser. Schlosser purchased 175.5 acres from Mary and John Myers in that year.

The Storer family had great pride in their land. They knew about the Battery because friend and neighbor,



Chester Gleason gave them a framed picture of what the battery looked like. Gleason, a local historian, happily taught them about the Civil War munitions battery that was right in front of their house. Both Fern and Sheldon were education minded and thoughtfully left the land and house to the Northern Kentucky Foundation for scholarship funds. Sheldon died in 1989. Fern died on May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2003, at the age of 96. The city of Fort Wright bought the land from the Northern Kentucky Foundation with the intent of creating a park and preserving the battery. The foundation sold the Storer property to the city with the same intention of creating a park and having the battery preserved for future generations.



On Battery Hooper day, students came in buses from St. Agnes, Park Hills Elementary, and Bishop Brossart schools. It would have made Fern and Sheldon proud to see all of the students and citizens being educated about the Civil War history that took place in their own yard. Looking at the students and seeing how interested they were, learning hands on, was an experience one will never forget. A ten-year-old girl from St Agnes said, "I like learning like this." The teachers were sure that they would be bombarded with questions when they got back to the classrooms.

Modern, non-destructive techniques called remote sensing were used at the site prior to the excavation. These techniques send signals into the ground and read changes and disturbances under the ground. It is similar to radar or sonar. The remote sensing has identified several interesting locations in the yard for archaeological testing. Students from NKU carefully mapped, measured, and dug in layers, so nothing would be missed. Citizens who signed up for the excavation worked alongside the students from the university, as well as the school children. Every-





one got to try their hand at excavating. In addition to learning about the Civil War, everyone learned about archaeology and many came away with an appreciation of how exact they must be and how patient one has to be to be an archeologist.

Professor Kreinbrink, with her expertise, taught the students how to dig, what to look for, and how to be ever so careful in handling what we found. Many wonderful items were uncovered, including a shooter marble in perfect condition, a Civil War button, a cuff link from a Union uniform, several pieces of pottery, a horse shoe, a soft lead pencil, and many nails dating from the eighteen hundreds. Students put the special treasures in a zip-lock bag. Other items were first placed in a bucket, then they were sifted through a screen so that nothing would be lost. The digs were quite successful, in that they uncovered what appears to be a cistern, the dry-laid stone foundation of what appears to be the powder magazine, and possibly a section of the parapet or one of the two gun emplacements.



Bob Clements organized several re-enactors. Lewis McVay, of the Mid-States Living History Association, along with Rick McNutt, Bernie O'Bryan, Stephen Clifford, and Ken Wilson, all of the Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War, each participated wearing Civil War uniforms. Many of them brought their own collections of artifacts and maps to share with the school children. Bob, an Edgewood native, demonstrated how a Civil War soldier would use a bayonet. White tents were put-up and a lady dressed in a Civil War era dress sewed a stripe on a uniform. One of the tents had a display telling how a soldier would write a letter, as well as his likely writing instrument. Then the letter was shown going through the necessary chain of command to be delivered. Cincinnati was the largest city in the region at that time so letters from this area went out faster than many other places.

Bethany Sterling, from the Behringer-Crawford Museum, lectured on the Civil War in Northern Kentucky and enabled the students to view the line of sight across





the Licking River with binoculars. In 1862, soldiers would have seen 2000 yards of clustered trees, limbs, and trunks improvised as a barbed wire-like barrier.

Dr. James Ramage, Professor at NKU and author of several Civil War books, was beaming with delight when he said, “This area is

worth preserving. It is a living monument to the sacrifices the soldiers and the greater community made for their country. This is truly a hallowed ground.”

Professor Kreinbrink is currently writing a proposal for getting the excavation completed. The city of Fort Wright will solicit contributions and grants for this phase. Target date is the spring/summer of 2005, to coincide with the opening of the existing house to the public. A generous resident and retired woodworker has volunteered to construct display and exhibit cases for the many artifacts that were found. Other volunteers from the area will staff the museum.

Battery Hooper has been preserved thanks to concerned citizens, the city of Fort Wright, NKU, and the Behringer-Crawford Museum. As Ken Crawford, History student at NKU put so well, “The community has come together again, just like in 1862, to create a lasting monument to a time when people united during another time of crisis.”

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## November Program Highlights

Joe Gastright introduced our guest speaker, David Dick, whose main topic was the book *Jesse Stuart The Heritage* (2005, Plum Lick Publishing, Incorporated, P. O. Box 68, North Middletown, KY 40357-0068). David and his wife Lalie (business manager for their work including Plum Lick Publishing) also autographed and sold some of their other books. He has been writing books for twelve years. They include *The View from Plum Lick*, *Follow the Storm (Original Addition)*, *Peace at the Center*, *A Conversation with Peter P. Pence*, *The Quiet Kentuckians*, *The Scourges of Heaven* and *Follow The Storm: A Long Way Home*. Lalie co-authored *Home Sweet Kentucky* and *Rivers of Kentucky* (2001) which is a primary source for the current “Rivers” exhibit at the Kentucky History Center, Frankfort.

David Dick was born in Good Samaritan Hospital on February 18, 1930. He is the son of a physician in Cincinnati who died when David was 4 years old. Then his mother took him back to his parents’ native Kentucky in Bourbon County. David spent four years in the Navy. At the University of Kentucky he earned a M. A. in literature. Beginning in 1966, he worked at CBS for nineteen years. At the age of 50, he re-joined the faculty of UK and eventually became director of the journalism school. In 1996, David Dick (who resides in an 1850s house on an ancestral farm) left UK.

In 1906, one of Kentucky’s renowned authors, Jesse Stuart, was born in severe poverty in a one-room log cabin in Greenup County. His father, Mitchell, could not read. Jesse became a person with extraordinary ambition. Starting with hardscrabble farm labor as a boy, Jesse’s capacity for constant hard work provided means for him to work his way through college. From youth he wrote compulsively producing, countless poems, especially sonnets, short stories and larger works. He is best known for his autobiographical poems and prose. He worked his way through college in hand-to-mouth circumstances. Along the way his odd jobs included being a janitor on a college campus. One job had him witness up close the dangerous work around a blast furnace in a steel mill. Willing to hitchhike or finagle transportation for short and long trips, he often returned home to help on the family farm.

His ambition and determination to rise above poverty and obscurity saw him become the youngest school superintendent in Kentucky. His dedication to education, literature and the celebration of his native land saw him earn a M. A. degree. His audacious personality saw him win a Guggenheim Fellowship. His aspirations to be an “American Robert Burns” saw him spend time in the great poet’s native Scotland and do some exhausting touring of England and continental Europe.

He graduated from Lincoln Memorial College in Tennessee. He attended George Peabody College for Teachers. But across the street from Peabody was Vanderbilt University, his real second home. There southern “agrarians” of literature including Robert Penn Warren became his teachers. Not just as a writer, Stuart also made a reputation for himself on the lecture circuit around the country as a hard driving salesman for his poems and short stories (also sold to popular national magazines) and popular books under the tutelage of his publisher.

Stuart seemed to work himself to an early death, though he managed to survive into his late 70s (1906-1984). Although physically rugged he seemed to have been born with a weak or defective heart. For many years after his first serious and nearly fatal heart attack, and subsequent ones, he relied heavily on medications. He managed to be very productive. He survived not only exhausting work schedules and debilitating health problems, he withstood the setbacks that are inevitable when an individualist, with strong views about politics & education, also becomes famous.

In the epilogue Mr. Dick lists 64 “books” (including some novels) by Jesse Stuart from *Harvest of Youth* (poems, 1930), *Man with a Bull-Tongue Plow* (poems, 1934), *Head o’ W-Hollow* (Short Stories, 1936), *Beyond Dark Hills* (“Autobiographical,” 1938) to a recent collection published by the Jesse Stuart Foundation (2003). It also lists two textbooks co-edited by Stuart. Of all works listed, four were published after his death.

By: John Boh



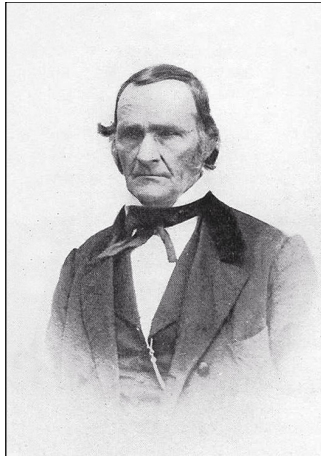
## Jesse Grant Home on the Market

On November 15<sup>th</sup>, the Kenton County Historical Society received a letter from the current owner of the Jesse Grant House, located at 520 Greenup Street, Covington, indicating that the structure is for sale. Raymond Buse, Jr. purchased the home twenty years ago and had spent two years restoring the property. Today, the first floor has been serving as the offices of Buse Financial Services, with apartments on the second and third floors.

Mr. Buse has decided to move his business to a Clermont County, Ohio location on property he owns there. He is concerned that the property be purchased by new owners who understand and respect the heritage of the building, hence the reason for his letter to the Society. For this reason, we are publishing a short piece on the Grant family and their connection to Covington.



Hannah (Simpson) Grant



Jesse Root Grant

Jesse Root Grant was born of Scotch descent, on January 23, 1794 in Deerfield, Pennsylvania. He was named for Jesse Root who was, for many years, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Connecticut.

Jesse's mother, Rachael (Kelly) Grant, died when he was eleven years old – a loss with which his father, Noah, could not cope. His inability to properly care and provide for his children eventually broke up the family. The younger children were adopted by neighbors and the two eldest, Jesse and his sister Susan, were left to fend for themselves. Jesse secured a job as a tanner's apprentice from which he earned enough money to feed and clothe himself.

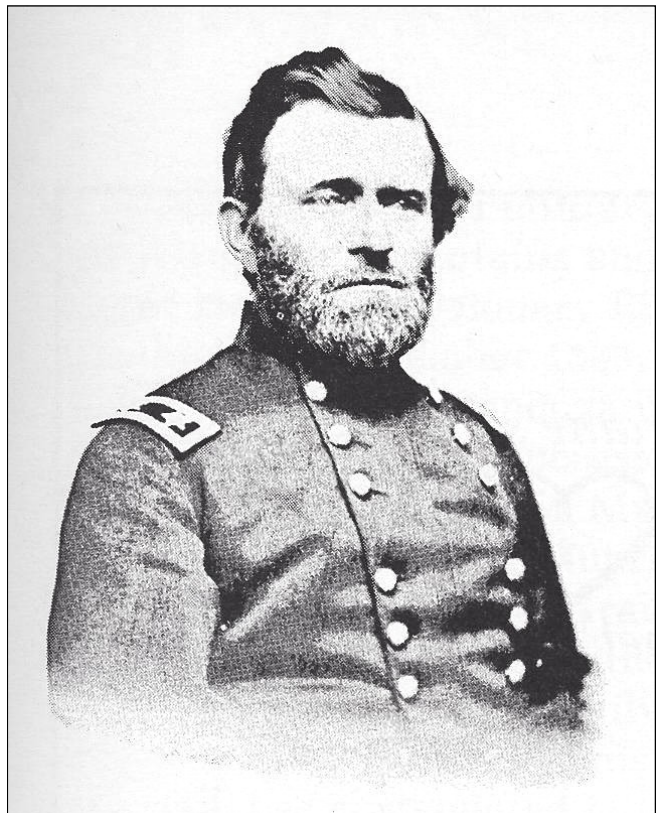
In 1808, Jesse moved in with Judge George Tod, a friend of the family who resided in Youngstown, Ohio. He lived with the Tods for two years and while there, befriended the Judge's son, David, who later became the twenty-fifth governor of Ohio.

At eighteen, Jesse moved again – this time to Maysville, Kentucky. There he became a tanner's apprentice to his half-brother, Peter Grant, and soon thereafter graduated to a first-class tanner.

In 1821, Jesse moved to Point Pleasant, Ohio because he would neither "own a slave nor live where slaves were owned." While there, Jesse opened his own

tannery. It was also at Point Pleasant that he met and married Hannah Simpson. Ten months later, on April 27, 1822, the Grants were blessed with the birth of a son, Hiram Ulysses Grant.<sup>1</sup>

Jesse, having only six months of formal education to his credit, wanted something more for his son but, being of limited means, could not afford to send him to college. However, in 1839, with the help of Congressman General Thomas L. Hamer, Jesse secured an appointment for his boy to attend West Point Military Academy. Ulysses decided to reverse his original name and enroll as Ulysses Hiram; his appointment was erroneously made in the name of Ulysses S. Grant, the name he eventually accepted, maintaining that the middle initial did not stand for anything.<sup>2</sup> Some think that the "S" stood for his mother's maiden name "Simpson." The former explanation seems more plausible.



Ulysses S. Grant

In 1840 the Grant family moved to Bethel, Ohio, where Jesse continued his tannery business. Twelve years later, Bethel voters elected him as the village's first mayor.

In 1854 Jesse moved his family across the Ohio River to Covington, Kentucky, where he opened a leather good store on Madison Avenue. During the Civil War, U. S. Grant's family lived with his parents in the house. Jesse sent his fifteen-year-old grandson, Fredrick, to a private school run by Mary Bullock, located a few doors south of his home.<sup>3</sup>

Before the present First United Methodist Church building was constructed in 1866-67, the Grant family probably worshiped in the "abolitionist" Methodist congregation's church at 419-421 Greenup Street (circa 1850-1867). Funded greatly by the very wealthy Amos Shinkle, the new "Union" Methodist Episcopal Church across from the home of Jesse Grant and family also seemed to be a celebration of the end of the Civil War.

On February 16, 1866, Jesse Grant was appointed postmaster of Covington by President Andrew Johnson. He was re-appointed when his son, Ulysses, became president. Jesse served in that capacity until his retirement in 1872, near the end of his son's first term. Jesse Root Grant died June 26<sup>th</sup>, 1873. Funeral services were held in the Union Methodist Church [First Methodist] at the corner of Fifth & Greenup – directly across the street from the Grant home. He is buried in Spring Grove Cemetery, Cincinnati.

The General's family stayed at his parents' home during much of the war. He worried about his father's safety in Covington, given Jesse's outspoken Republican views.<sup>4</sup> A letter to his father in April of 1861 illustrates:

*Galena (Illinois) April 21, 1861*

*Dear Father,*

*We are now in the midst of trying times when every one must be for or against his country, and show his colors too, by his every act..... Whatever may have been my political opinions before, I have but one sentiment now. That is, we have a Government, and laws and a flag, and they must all be sustained.*

*There are but two parties now, traitors and patriots, and I want hereafter to be ranked with the latter, and I trust, the stronger party. I do not know, but you may be placed in an awkward position..... My advice would be to leave where you are if you are not safe with the views you entertain.*

*Yours truly  
U. S. Grant*

At the time, Ulysses was about to accept his first command in the Union Army – a company from Galena. He wrote to his father frequently and also to his youngest sister Mary – both residing at the Covington home.

The Grant House, at 518-520 Greenup Street, was built in 1850, but additions were made both in 1865 and 1870. The Grants purchased the home in 1859. Though the Grants owned both sides of this duplex, the family resided only in the north side and rented the other. The home has a Greek key molded door frame and fireplaces in every large room. Many notable figures of the period visited the Grants there, including General William Sherman, General George Armstrong Custer, Senator Benjamin F. Wade, as well as U. S. Grant and family.<sup>6</sup>

1. Chuck Bricking, "Covington's Heritage," n.d., n.p., p. 17 – 18.
2. Encyclopedia Britannica, "U. S. Grant" (1990)
3. Kentucky Historic Marker. "CLAYTON-BULLOCK HOUSE - Two-story frame built in 1839 by John W. Clayton. His daughter Mary Bullock ran a private school in this home at which U. S. Grant's 15-year-old son Fredrick attended during the Civil War."
4. Jean Edward Smith, "Grant," Simon & Schuster, New York (2001) p. 101.
5. Letters of Ulysses S. Grant to His Father and His Youngest Sister 1857 - 78," Edited by his nephew, Jesse Grant Cramer, G. P. Putnam & Sons, New York (1912) p. 24.
6. Bricking, *op. cit.* p. 18.

## NOTICES

Volunteers will soon be needed for  
the house and museum  
at Battery Hooper in Fort Wright  
(see story in this issue).

If you are interested,  
please contact Kathy Romero at:

(859) 331-2499  
akingcobra12@aol.com

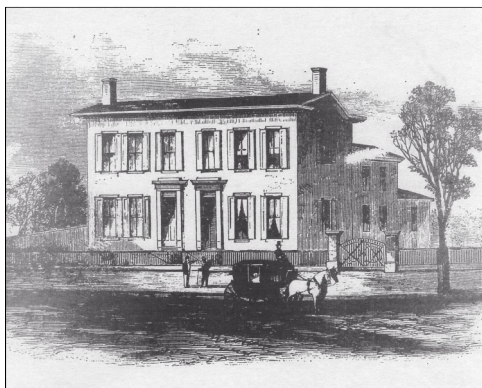
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A preliminary outline  
has been established for the  
History of Covington Book Project.

Please go to the following website to  
view the outline and to make any  
suggestions on other items to include:

[www.kenton.lib.ky.us/~histsoc/](http://www.kenton.lib.ky.us/~histsoc/)  
(Click on "Covington Book Project")

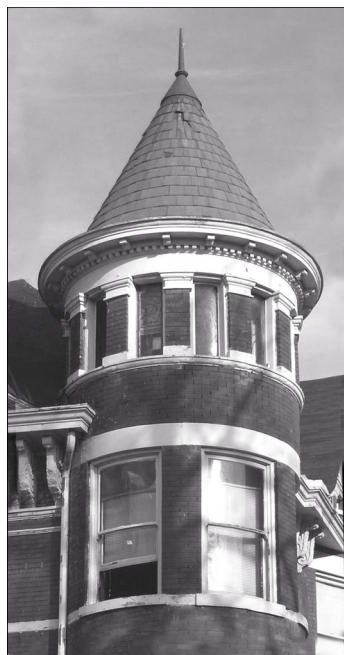
## Then and Now



This is the Jesse Grant home (see story in this issue) as it appeared in approximately 1850 and how it looks today.  
The home is located at 520 Greenup Street in Covington.

## *Monthly Mystery Photo*

*January*



*February*



To find out where they are, go to:  
[www.roneinhaus.com/KCHSmysteryphoto.html](http://www.roneinhaus.com/KCHSmysteryphoto.html)

November– Cathedral  
December– First Baptist–5th Street, Covington

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Dedicated to preserv-

**INSIDE:**

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