



Bulletin of the Kenton County Historical Society

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January / February

2008

I Bet You Didn't Know

Tidbits of Northern Kentucky History

I bet you didn't know a Covington man was among the soldiers involved in the original ceremony and internment of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Washington's Arlington National Cemetery. The festivities took place on November 11, 1921, and Pvt. Calvin Bailey, Co. L, 12th Infantry, was among the members of that notable military escort.

On the 50th anniversary in 1971, Bailey, living on Alexandria Avenue in Latonia, attended the ceremony and learned he was the only man still living from the famous group. Learning of his presence that day, President Richard M. Nixon tracked him down and presented him with a special medallion commemorating the event.

Strolling Down Memory Lane — Gealson

Published bi-monthly by

The Kenton County Historical Society

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Upcoming Programs

Schedule Announced for the 2008 Northern Kentucky History, Art, and Culture Lecture Series

After another successful season, the 2008 schedule has been released. The theme will be "Living Together In The Tri-State" and each program will once again be held at 2pm each Sunday at the Baker Hunt Art and Culture Center, 640 Greenup Street, Covington. Cost is \$50 for 9 lectures (\$25 for students) or \$7 per individual lecture at the door (\$4 for students). For additional information, contact Baker Hunt at (859) 431-0020.

January 13th — Immigration Overview — Paul Tenkotte

February 10th — German Heritage — Dr. Heinrich Tolzmann

March 9th — Hindu/India — Dr. J.K. Bhattacharjee

April 13th — Muslim — Dr. Ferhan Asghar

May 18th — Italian — Judge Ronald A. Panioto and Phil Ciafardini

June 8th — Irish — David Schroeder

September 14th — African-American — Dr. Prince Brown, Jr.

October 12th — Appalachian — Dr. Andrea Watkins

November 9th — Latino — Sr. Juana Meddez

Saturday April 5, 2008 History Day at NKU

The date has been set for this year's History Day at Northern Kentucky University. Various lectures will be scheduled and dozens of booths will be manned by local historical societies and organizations. More details will follow in the March/April edition of this Bulletin but for now — mark your calendars. For additional information, contact John Boh at (859) 491-0490 or at jhboh@juno.com.

ARTICLES FROM BACK ISSUES ARE INDEXED ON OUR WEBSITE!

Behringer - Crawford Museum

Recent Expansion and Grand Opening

By: Robert Webster and John Boh

Congratulations are certainly in order for the staff and management of the Behringer-Crawford Museum in Covington, as well as its loyal members and the entire Northern Kentucky region it so proudly serves.

The museum dates back to 1949, when a very unusual collection of items gathered by West Covington's William Jacob Behringer needed a new home. Behringer was well known as a naturalist and big-game hunter. He traveled extensively and collected geological specimens, animal relics, and Indian artifacts. He died in 1948 and left his entire collection to the city of Covington. George Lyon, city manager at the time, suggested that a museum be built in the old William Devou mansion. The man Lyon and others picked as curator to run the new Behringer Memorial Museum in Devou Park was Ellis Cummins Crawford. With Behringer's collection as the principal element, Crawford opened the museum on July 4, 1950.

Crawford was an accomplished archeologist, botanist, zoologist and taxidermist. Through his efforts, several Indian mounds were excavated in Boone County, including the Rogers site in 1955 and the Gaines site in 1957. Artifacts uncovered from those digs were also on display in the museum.

Ellis Crawford retired as curator in 1970 and at his retirement dinner, Covington Mayor Claude Hensley announced that the museum would be renamed the Behringer-Crawford Museum. Crawford died in 1972 and Ray Tanner took over as curator. His term ended quite abruptly in 1978, however, when the museum closed its doors falling victim to city-wide budget cuts. Almost immediately, plans were being made for the reopening of the wonderful museum. A youthful group called Friends of Devou Park presented a new Master Plan to Devou Park Trustees. After a new agreement with the city, a new



A replica of the Roebling Suspension Bridge and an interactive packet boat are just two of the main exhibits in the "Rivers" area of the new Behringer-Crawford Museum in Covington.



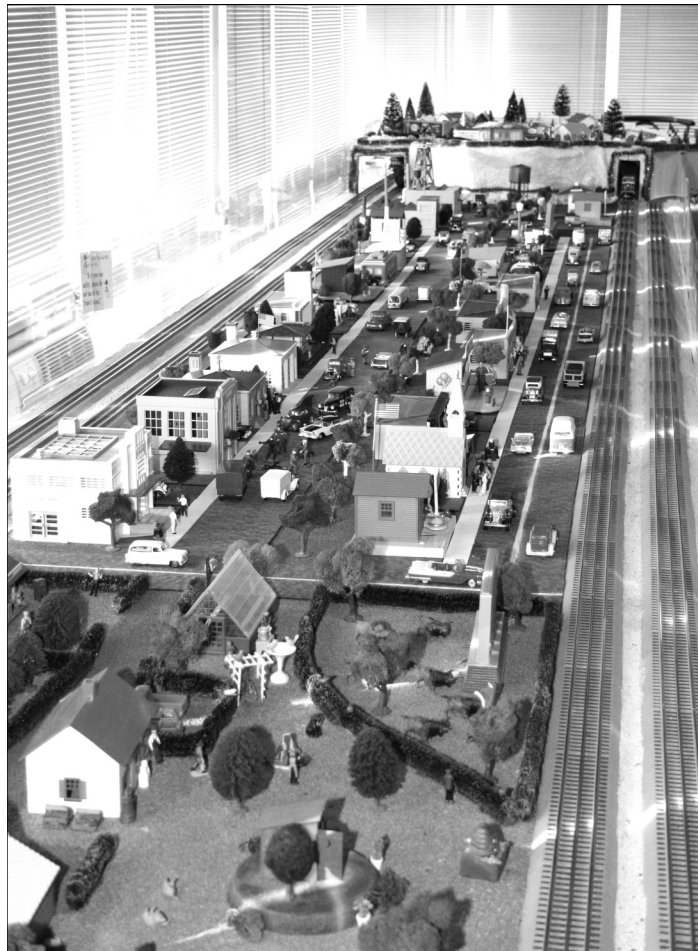
Board of Trustees, and the hiring of Greg Harper as Executive Director, the museum reopened in July of 1980.

With an earlier focus on curiosities, oddities and prehistory, the Behringer-Crawford Museum offered programs that were more inclusive, with greater professionalism and more collaboration. Physical improvements included adding fire safety components, handicapped accessibility, and the reconstruction of the long-gone Devou home veranda. The museum built several galleries to display the various collections in paleontology, archeology, natural and cultural history. It added the Junior Curator, other new school programs, and hired a Programs Director.



Above: Completely-restored trolley car on exhibit.

Right: Small section of the expanded Holiday Train exhibit — always a favorite at the Behringer-Crawford Museum.



In the 1990s and thereafter, the annual Holiday Train interactive exhibit generated great attendance. Started in 1993, the Fresh Art auction became an elegant and lucrative fundraiser. The annual Coffee Cup Concert Series was started in 1999, aimed for long-term rather than immediate profits. In 2001, trustees approved an agreement with artist Wolfgang Ritschel, allowing donor privileges in exchange for substantial donations of both funds and artwork. In 2004, the museum started another annual fundraiser, its very successful Labor Day Fireworks celebration at the park's scenic Drees Pavilion which replaced the old Memorial Building.

Meanwhile, major plans were being discussed for an expansion of the museum itself. Among other things, talk was to bring the streetcar, *Kentucky*, fully restored, back to its home at the museum with the construction of some type of shelter. As more ideas were gathered, it was clear the museum would need much more space. It organized more elaborate fundraising options and began searching for design firms, architects, and construction companies.

In 1996, architect Jack Gore submitted a plan for the new project and, in 2000, the board hired Century Construction for the building of the addition. Groundbreaking was held on June 27, 2000, mainly for the "shell" of the new facility. After many months of funding shortfalls, trustees approved a new mission statement in August 2005 and, soon after, the com-

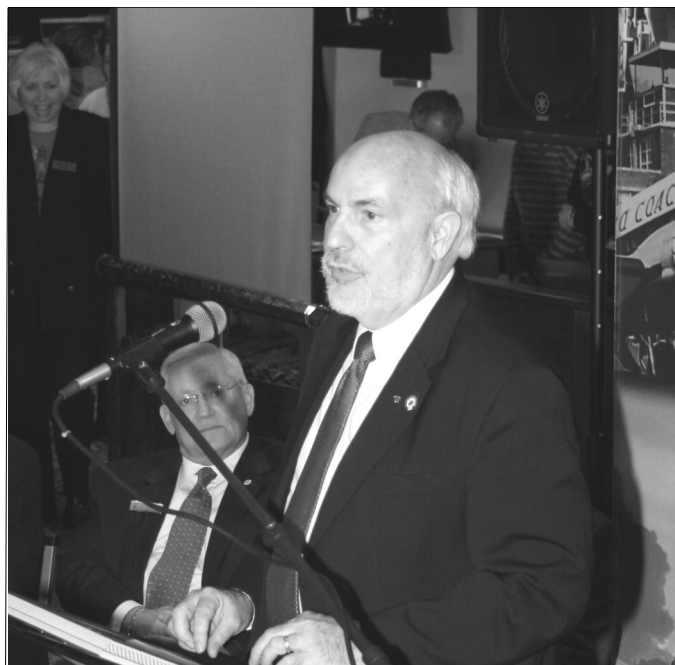
pany Murphy Catton of Walton, Kentucky, was given the job of designing and fabricating the permanent exhibits for the new museum with a budget of just over \$1.2 Million. By 2006, thanks to the lobbying and leadership of President Gary Johnston, Executive Director Laurie Risch and others, major funding began arriving including over \$2 million from Frankfort, a \$98,000 Federal grant, and nearly \$1 million from anonymous and other private donations.

Visitors in the past two years have enjoyed innovative temporary exhibits. The Wine exhibit drew local producers and displayed Northern Kentucky's wine heritage. The Coaches Corner was another self-sustaining exhibit inspired and organized by volunteers, drawing crowds of coaches, players, school groups and fans. And, a WWII veterans exhibit included the displaying of numerous military and "home-front" artifacts.

The long-awaited expansion, now totaling \$5.3 million, was unveiled publicly on December 2, 2007. It has added 15,000 square feet of new exhibit space



Left: Covington Mayor Butch Callery presents Behringer-Crawford Museum Executive Director, Laurie Risch, with a special proclamation for the museum as well as a Key to the City.



Right: Senator Jack Westwood speaks at the grand opening ceremonies and presents the museum with a special proclamation.

and storage areas to the museum, while keeping the original building intact. A new public entrance is utilized, making it no longer necessary for patrons to scale the steeply-graded original walkway to the front door. Elevators and ramps are also included for ease of movement by all who visit.

While many of the original pieces and exhibits of the old museum remain, a totally new theme was used for the museum's expansion project. For many years, local historians acknowledged that Northern Kentucky's unique history was written as a result of rivers, roads and railways, as well as its international airport. "Rivers, Roads, Rails and Runways" will not only present to each visitor a broad history of transportation, but more importantly, how those means of transportation affected and shaped the lives of this region's inhabitants over the course of time.

There are a number of large items featured in the newly opened museum, supported by dozens of smaller exhibits in each area of the building. The four themes are basically separated by floor. Featured in the "Rivers" area is an interactive packet boat and a replica of the Roebling Suspension Bridge people can

actually walk across. Various smaller exhibits show life as it was when the Ohio River was filled with paddle boats. "Roads" includes a 1959 Buick Electra which is parked at a 1950s-style drive-in theater. Continuously running on the wide screen is the 1959 thriller, *Road Men from the Moon*. Smaller exhibits show how many of this region's earliest roads replaced abandoned trails used by the mighty bison in search of local salt licks such as those at Boone County's Big Bone and Campbell County's Grant's Lick. Early Indian trails are also displayed.

Featured in the "Rails" section is a magnificent miniature train display. The main exhibit in this area is the wonderfully restored *Kentucky* trolley car which once rode the streetcar rails of the region. The "Runways" area of the museum tracks the history of commercial flight in the area, including the move of Cincinnati's main airport, Lunken Field, to what is now the Northern Kentucky Greater Cincinnati International airport near Hebron.

In the main entry, Nick Clooney narrates the museum's "Introductory" video, giving visitors an overview of the new museum's contents and purpose.

When the project is finished, the *Kentucky's* passengers will include a WWI soldier in a uniform once worn by John Voss of Latonia, a jockey on his way to the Latonia Race Track, a housewife going shopping – wearing a dress from the Schott family, and a young boy on his way to the Ludlow Lagoon amusement park.

A permanent display of hobbyist Ray Faragher's garden-gauge trains is also on the not-yet-completed list. While most of the exhibits were finished by opening day, a few of the smaller features are not yet completed. It is estimated that the rest of the project will be completed in a matter of weeks. The Legacy Building (Devou Home) currently houses Wolfgang Ritchel's artworks on exhibit, with many local street scenes featured, but the "Tourism" and "Immigration" galleries are not yet ready. Also, the WWI-era Stewart Iron Works truck, manufactured in Covington, is not quite ready for display.

The Behringer-Crawford Museum has been, and now will certainly continue to be, a wonderful asset



The ribbon-cutting ceremony at the grand opening of the new Behringer-Crawford Museum.

for the entire region and is well worth a visit. It is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Sundays, and is closed on Mondays. Admission price is only \$7 for adults, \$6 for seniors ages 60 and over, and \$4 for children. You can receive further information by contacting the Behringer–Crawford Museum staff at (859) 491-4003.

NOW AVAILABLE

The Kenton County Historical Society is proud to announce the release of our latest publication. Bob Webster, who recently authored *Northern Kentucky Fires*, has done it again. Now available is his:

The Balcony Is Closed

A History of Northern Kentucky's Long-Forgotten Neighborhood Movie Theaters

The book contains historical sketches on over 100 theaters that once filled the various neighborhoods of this region. It presents a wonderful time-line – from the first public showing of a “moving picture” in the area – through the transformation of “talkies” – to the unfortunate closing of the last area neighborhood cinema.

The book also includes a little-known and incredible story connecting Covington with Marcus Loew of MGM Studios and Loews Theaters. Famous movie houses featured include the Lyric, Madison, Liberty, Gayety, Stadt, Broadway, Family, Shirley, Hippodrome, Cinema X, Riverview, Dixie Gardens, Russell, Washington Opera House, Colonial, Kentucky, and dozens more!

The 60-page, black and white publication has more than 30 photographs and illustrations and a beautiful full-color cover. It is available from the Society for only \$19.95 (includes shipping). For your copy, contact: Kenton County Historical Society, P. O. Box 641, Covington, KY 41012. Note: there are a limited number of *Northern Kentucky Fires* still available for \$20.00 each!



A History of Northern Kentucky's
Long-Forgotten Neighborhood Movie Theaters

Robert D. Webster

Kenton County Historical Society

USS Kenton

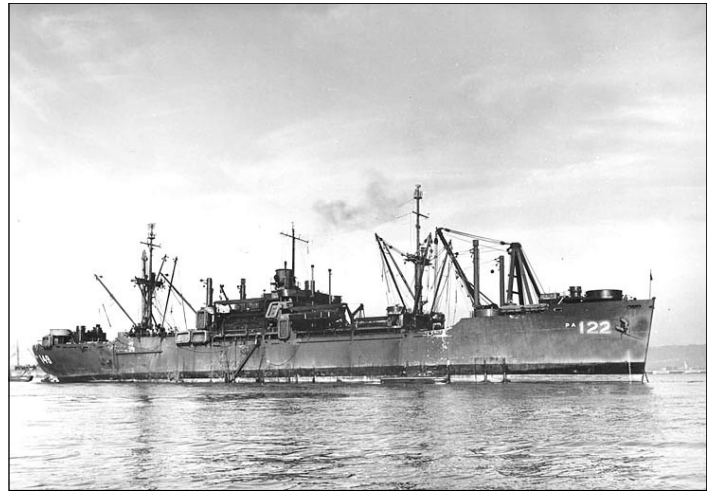
Special Thanks to: Michael J. Edwards

The USS Kenton (APA-122) was a Haskell-Class attack transport of the US Navy, built and used during WWII. She was of the VC2-S-AP5 Victory ship design type and was named for Kenton County, Kentucky.

The USS Kenton was launched on August 21, 1944, by the California Shipbuilding Corporation of Wilmington, California, under a Maritime Commission contract sponsored by Mrs. Paul A. Everett — acquired by the Navy on October 31, 1944, on a loan charter basis. She was commissioned on November 1, 1944, at San Pedro, with Captain V. B. Tate in command.

Following shakedown along the California coast, the Kenton departed Seattle on December 27, 1944, carrying 1,500 Army troops to Pearl Harbor, arriving January 4, 1945. After amphibious training maneuvers to prepare for operations in the Western Pacific, she cleared Pearl Harbor February 18, 1945, with troops and equipment for the Philippines on board and arrived at Leyte Gulf via Eniwetok and the Palaus on March 10, 1945.

After landing rehearsals, the Kenton departed Leyte on March 27th to participate in the Okinawa invasion. She reached Kerama Retto April 1, 1945, unloaded Seabee construction equipment, and proceeded on April 3rd to Hagushi Beach, Okinawa, to discharge troops and cargo. During an air attack on April 6th, Kenton's guns claimed two of the seven enemy planes that were shot down. She completed unloading on April 9th, embarked 95 battle casualties, and sailed on April 10th for Guam, arriving the 14th. She sailed April 16th on a cargo run to the Philippines, then proceeded to Ulithi, Western Carolines, April 29th to embark casualties for passage to the United States. Returning to Guam on May 24, she embarked additional casualties and proceeded the next day to San Francisco, arriving June 12th.



USS Kenton

Kenton departed San Francisco July 6th with troop replacements for the Philippines. She reached Tacloban, Leyte, July 29th, cleared Leyte Gulf on August 1st, and returned to Seattle August 19, 1945. The USS Kenton returned to Japan August 29th, via the Philippines to Yokohama, arriving September 24th. As a unit of the "Magic-Carpet" Fleet, she took on 1,527 homebound troops, departed September 29th, and arrived in San Francisco October 10th. After two additional "Magic-Carpet" cruises to the Western Pacific between October 1945 and January 1946, the Kenton departed Portland, Oregon, January 28th for the East Coast. Sailing via San Francisco and the Panama Canal, she arrived at Newport News on February 16, 1946, and was decommissioned at Portsmouth, Virginia, on March 28th and transferred to the Maritime Commission the following day. Her name was struck from the Navy List on April 12, 1946.

The USS Kenton was placed in the National Defense Reserve Fleet and in 1967 was berthed in James River, Virginia. In 1956, the USS Kenton was withdrawn from the Reserve Fleet as part of a Repair Program, GAA-Arrow SS. Co., and then returned. On April 9, 1973, she was sold to Union Minerals and

Continued on page 10

Kentucky Federal Savings and Loan

A Brief History

By: Alex Weldon

In an effort to bring attention and foster appreciation of local buildings constructed during the mid-twentieth century, the City of Covington has recently begun to recognize at least one example of a well designed and well maintained mid-century modern building during its annual Preservation Awards ceremony. In 2006, the 1958 Kentucky Federal Savings and Loan Association building at 1046 Scott Boulevard was awarded this honor.

Research on the background of this building uncovered that this financial institution was, in fact, not a modern phenomenon but the culmination of a deeply rooted tradition. On September 28, 1885, a small group of local businessmen, primarily of German origin, held a formal organizational meeting at the rear of Henry Schmidt's grocery store, located at the corner of Trevor and Garrard Streets (now 1221 Garrard Street), to elect the first officers of the Kentucky Perpetual Building and Loan Association. Henry Linnemann, a funeral director, was chosen as president. He was to retain this position for the next 32 years. Other officers were William Schickmann, vice-president, and Henry Schmidt, secretary. Directors were: B. Beinförde, B. Hagedorn, A. Kreidler, John Wolliscroft, Henry Remke, B. VonHone, W.E. Miller, Ben Lusse, Chris Peal and Joseph Adams.¹ The establishment of this association was part of a national trend. The 1880's witnessed a boom in the economic growth and stability of the country; during that decade, as a result of falling prices, rising real income and high interest returns, the country experienced an almost 40% increase in new businesses. Money for the construction of new homes and businesses was much in demand and the number of thrifts, as building and loan associations were often called, exploded.²

Prior to the development of building (or savings) and loan associations in this country, most available home mortgages required assets of at least 50% of the



Present-day Kentucky Federal Savings and Loan

loan, and they were only for a five-year period, after which time they had to be repaid in one lump sum.³ This practice was designed to cater to the wealthy and prevented many working Americans from purchasing or building their own homes. To counter this burdensome system, many local groups or clubs developed their own loan associations to assist their neighbors and friends. The practice of establishing collective organizations for the sole purpose of providing financial assistance to members was not new; benevolent associations such as the Odd Fellows' and other fraternal orders were often begun as member-owned insurance groups, wherein a lifetime of dues resulted in not just burial money, but also pensions for surviving widows and children. Credit unions are another form of collective banking, providing loans to their members for numerous "prudent and productive" purposes.⁴

In most circumstances, a thrift operated in the following manner: A person became a thrift member by subscribing to shares in the organization, which were paid for over time in regular monthly installments. When enough monthly payments had accumulated, the members were allowed to borrow funds to buy homes. Because the amount each member could borrow was equal to the face value of the subscribed shares, these loans were actually advances on the un-

paid shares. The member repaid the loan by continuing to make the regular monthly share payments as well as loan interest. This interest plus any other fees minus operating expenses (which typically accounted for only one to two percent of revenues) determined the profit of the thrift, which the members received as dividends.⁵

A major difference between the B&L associations and commercial banks, besides the types of mortgage loans they offered, was their role in society. B&L's were not-for-profit cooperative organizations, usually established and managed by a board of local businessmen directly elected by the membership. Their small size, often with less than 200 members, was a result of the well-defined population they served, perhaps a single parish or neighborhood. Finally, the leaders behind these associations often believed that they were part of a broader social reform movement; not only were they helping people own their own home; they were teaching and promoting thrift and mutual cooperation.⁶

In Northern Kentucky, this aspect of social responsibility was perhaps the most compelling reason for the proliferation of building and loan associations – continuing the time-honored German tradition of the *bauverein*, the German word for a building association. It was a cultural expectation of every German working man to put aside an amount, be it large or small, of every pay period in a savings institution. This “‘methodical thrift’ was considered a first essential to good citizenship – when a young man who was to succeed became a member of ‘some financial institution’ upon leaving school and obtaining his first employment – to do otherwise branded him with a fatal future, for frugality was a family watchword.” The leaders of the German American community of the east side of Covington certainly felt a moral imperative to establish a local *bauverein* as soon as they had the ability to do so.

The association eventually moved into a wood frame office building immediately next door to 1221 Garrard Street (now demolished); this was to be the home of the Kentucky Perpetual Building and Loan Association until 1915. At that time, the association built a one-story brick office building at 1209 Scott

Street (now demolished). By 1927, the association once again needed larger accommodations and purchased a commercial property located at the northeast corner of Eleventh and Scott Streets; this building was a converted three story brick residential structure and it, too, was soon inadequate for the needs of the association. In 1941, this building was replaced with a “modern office structure.”⁸

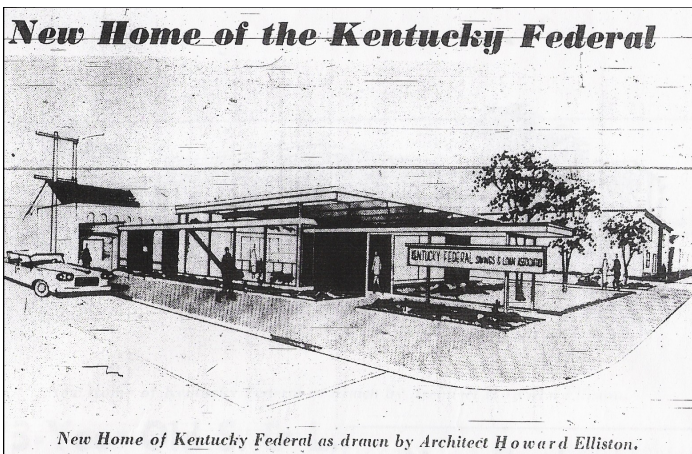


Building at 1221 Garrard Street

Five years before the construction of the new building, the organization had received its federal charter, the first in Northern Kentucky, and its name was changed to Kentucky Federal Savings and Loan. A federal charter guaranteed that the institution's deposits were insured by the Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corporation (FSLIC). By this time, the institution was no longer simply a neighborhood endeavor but a professional organization staffed by trained personnel. The board, however, continued to be made up of local prominent businessmen whose names still resonate as familiar in our community: Clement Scheper, George Klaene, George Howell, William Hoppenjans, Frank Anthe, L. F. Muthing, John B. Theissen and William Wehrman, to name just a few.⁹

The national housing boom of the post WWII years was also experienced locally and, in 1957, under the leadership of president F.J. Anthe, the burgeoning Kentucky Federal announced the need for a larger and more up-to-date facility. Two adjacent houses were razed and plans were drawn for a contemporary

office building with on-site parking. This \$100,000 building was designed by architect Howard Elliston. Not only was it to have twice the office space of the previous building, the new headquarters was to include clerestory lighting, terrazzo floors, air-conditioning, a large service area, a ladies' lounge, a directors' conference room and entrances from both the street and the parking lot. Hall-McAllister and Stockwell engineers supervised the construction which was completed in July, 1958.¹⁰



Kentucky Federal in 1957

Kentucky Federal has continued its operation in this location for almost fifty years. Because of the quality of the building's design, it continues to project what the directors in 1958 certainly were promoting – that this is the home of an institution that is not only forward thinking, but also an established and vital member of the local community.

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¹*Kentucky Post*, 4 March 1955, p.7A.

²Rothbard, p.162.

³Dickens, <http://www.answers.com/topic/building-and-loan-associations>.

⁴<http://www.dvafcu.org/asp/history.asp>

⁵Mason, <http://eh.net/encyclopedia/article/mason.savings.loan.industry.us>

⁶*Kentucky Post*, 21 March 1941, p.1.

⁷Mason, <http://eh.net/encyclopedia/article/mason.savings.loan.industry.us>

⁸*Kentucky Post*, 4 March 1955, p.7A.

⁹*Kentucky Post*, 4 March 1955, p.7A.

¹⁰*Kentucky Times-Star*, 15 February 1958, pp.1A & 2A.

Sources:

Kenton County property deeds.

Covington City Directories

U.S. Census: 1880.

Would You Like To Be Published In The KCHS Bulletin!

The Kenton County Historical Society is always looking for stories for its Bulletin.

To submit an article, either send a paper copy by mail, or email it as a Word document attachment.

Articles should have at least two references.

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Feel free to contact us with any questions you may have about submitting an article.

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Internet: <http://www.dvafcu.org/asp/history.asp> Credit Union History.

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A Look Back at The Headlines

*An on-going feature reliving local headlines
from the Kentucky Post.*

This issue features: June 18, 1976.

Covington Retreats in Annex Fight

Covington pulled its troops out of South Taylor Mill in what Mayor George Wermeling called a "gesture of good will." At the same time, Taylor Mill Attorney Frank Wichmann filed suit challenging the recent 2415-acre annexation. Wichmann asked Judge James Gilliece to void Covington's annexation ordinance passed June 10 and to prohibit the city from entering the area until the state Supreme Court can finally decide the annexation question.

Wermeling has given orders to city departments to assume a position of "being on-call." That means Covington Police or firefighters will only enter the South Taylor Mill area if requested by someone who lives there. Routine patrols that began nearly a week ago will cease for the time being.

Firemen "Unready" For Airport Fire

In a report on the fire at the Greater Cincinnati Airport last June that killed two firefighters, much of the investigation was centered around the fact that staff of the Airport's Department received little training on fighting "structure" fires, receiving much more intense training on controlling fires involving aircraft. Also brought to light was the fact that firefighters arriving from other neighboring communities, over 100 in all, did not know the two airport men were in danger until their bodies were found. The investigation into what has been determined to be an arson fire at the airport's terminal building on June 15, 1975, will continue.

Temporary Signs Go Up

Maintenance workers at Northern Kentucky University were busy installing temporary signs at the entrances to the Highland Heights campus early to-

Continued from page 5

Alloys Corporation for \$91,560 to be scrapped. At 10:45 EDT, on October 9, 1973, she was withdrawn from the Reserve Fleet and sent to the breaker's yard. All that remains of the USS Kenton is her brass builder's plate. During her commission, the Kenton received one battle star.



"Builder's Plate" for the USS Kenton

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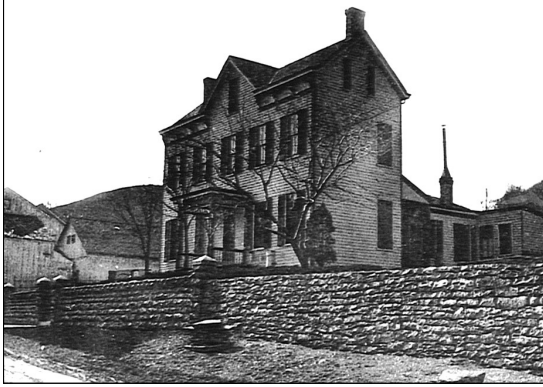
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Kenton

day. The college becomes a university tomorrow. A special ceremony will take place at 6:30 with acting president, Dr. Ralph Tesseneer, handing duties over to president elect, Dr. A. D. Albright. Signs were donated to the university by the Donaldson Art and Sign Company of Covington.

Drive-Ins Open

All local drive-in theaters are now open for the season. Ron Howard stars in *Eat My Dust* at the Dixie Gardens and George Hamilton plays *Evil Knievel* at the Pike 27. A triple feature is running at the Riverview including *Lipstick*, *Once Is Not Enough*, and Charles Bronson in *Death Wish*. The Florence Drive-In is showing a children's double feature with *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* and *One of our Dinosaurs is Missing*.

Then and Now



Left: Homestead and dairy barn of Louis and Anna Trenkamp once located at 792 Highland Avenue in Covington. Part of the property was lost to the I-71/I-75 expressway at the far rear, the Baptist Tower nursing home occupies most of the land. Note that much of the original wall in the foreground still exists today. “Then” photo is courtesy of the Kenton County Public Library Archives. “Now” photo is courtesy of Ron Einhaus.

Mystery Photo

Can you identify the mystery photo below? The answer can be found at the bottom of the page.



ANSWER:

Interior view of Kampsen's Grocery Store,
located at 24th and Warren in Covington's Peaselburg district.

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Dedicated to preserving our heritage as the “Gateway to the South”

KENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

January / February 2008



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The Behringer/Crawford Museum
Recent Expansion and Grand Opening

Other Stories Inside:

USS Kenton

Kentucky Federal Savings and Loan