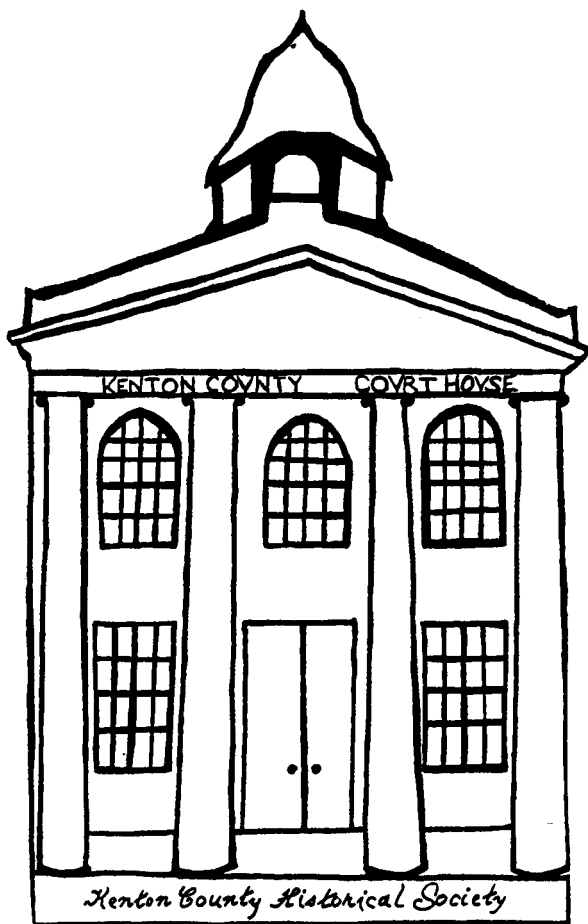


KENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
(organized in 1977; non-profit;
member, Historical Confederation
of Kentucky)



March 1993

Kenton County Historical Society

P.O. Box 641
Covington, Kentucky 41011

R E V I E W

March 1993

PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

On Tuesday evening, March 2nd, 7:00 p. m. at the Kenton County Public Library, Erlanger branch, Dr. Joe Gastright will speak on...

AMOS SHINKLE AND THE BUILDING OF THE ROEBLING BRIDGE.

As a newcomer to Covington, Shinkle got involved in the bridge project after it had been advanced by earlier political and business leaders. With his wealth, influence, and experience as a coal merchant and boatman up and down the river, Shinkle had the capacity to see the bridge project through to completion.

Shinkle eventually made a name for himself in politics, banking, real estate development, philanthropy, and others enterprises, including early development of public utilities.

Dr. Gastright is knowledgeable about many aspects of Northern Kentucky history.

The program will be sponsored by the Kenton County Historical Society. It will be free and open to the public.

Tuesday

March 2nd

7:00 p. m.

Kenton County Public Library

Erlanger Branch (next to Kroger's)

MEMBERSHIP

For only \$5.00 you can become an official member of the Kenton County Historical Society. Send check to the treasurer. The Kenton County Historical Society was organized under the sponsorship of the Kenton County Public Library and other community leaders to promote local and family history. Please note that by a vote at a recent public meeting the dues have been raised to \$10.00 beginning in January, 1994.

GOLDEN SPIKE YEARS IN NORTHERN KENTUCKY

"While on the subject of cemeteries, I must mention one known as the Old Craig street burying ground. It, too, was once a quiet, lovely, though comparatively small place.... But, again, railroads invaded the sacred spot and now no trace is left. It was located near where Craig street joins Sixth...."

-Mrs. Eleanor Childs Meehan, An Octogenarian's Personal Recollections of"Old Covington" (1924)

* * * * *

In 1849 the Kentucky legislature revised as earlier charter, which then gave authorization for the "Lexington and Covington" railroad; supporters eventually arranged financing, including Covington's commitment of some \$300,000; in the early 1850s construction began; tracks were laid to Paris; for the remaining distance the roadbed was leased from the Maysville-to-Lexington system. By the end of 1854 trains operated between Lexington and the Covington terminus at Pike and Washington streets. Passengers and goods transgressed the Ohio to Cincinnati by ferryboat, etc. As of January 1, 1861, under new joint stock company ownership, the system was called the Kentucky Central railroad.

The location of the river terminus gave victory then to Covington over Newport. Rivalry between these two adjoining cities was intense in those years after the legislature had created (as of April 30, 1840) Kenton out of Campbell county on the western side of the Licking river (Joseph Gastright, The Making of the Kentucky Central).

In another commercial rivalry, between Cincinnati and Louisville, the latter held sway with the Kentucky legislature in the matter of railroad right-of-ways. In the heyday of the steamboat Cincinnati had enjoyed the position as commercial center for the river trade in the Ohio valley. But when Louisville interests established a direct line to southern markets (by 1859) with the Louisville and Nashville railroad Cincinnati's position was declining.

Cincinnati had failed in the 1830s to establish a railroad link to Charleston, South Carolina. Years later the Civil War terminated old market connections by river with the South. Therefore, despite the Kentucky Central, Cincinnati found itself isolated compared to growing railroad cities, Louisville, St Louis, and Chicago (Charles Ambler, A History of Transportation in the Ohio Valley). Cincinnati needed a railroad bridge. But even its first vehicular bridge south, the Roebling suspension bridge, did not open until 1867.

In 1869 the Louisville and Frankfort railroad's "short line" was completed to Milldale (now Latonia) where it joined the Kentucky Central railroad tracks; the short line then became the Louisville, Cincinnati, and Lexington railroad. And after another contest of wills, Newport won the right to the first railroad bridge erected from Northern Kentucky to Cincinnati (completed in 1872). The tracks were extended from Milldale across the Licking river to Newport. But Louisville interests continued to impede railroad connections south. Then in 1881 the Louisville and Nashville purchased the financially drained short line system.

After the Kentucky Central's ownership and financial status became mired in legal and political controversy (which was not settled in court until the mid 1870s), Cincinnati found the legal and financial resolve to build its own line, the Cincinnati Southern railroad, which crossed the river to Ludlow, Kentucky on a second railroad bridge, completed in 1877 (Gastright).

The third railroad bridge to Cincinnati from Northern Kentucky (approached over the old Craig street pioneer cemetery site), involved more directly the east-west Ohio river valley corridor. Stretching back a bit, an 1853 map shows the early Baltimore and Ohio railroad, connecting like an umbilical cord, the cities of Washington and Baltimore, through the Potomac valley in Virginia, to a terminus at Wheeling on the Ohio river. The same year a Pennsylvania railroad connected the East with Pittsburg (then Wheeling's great rival). But like the Pennsylvania line, the Baltimore and Ohio extended its lines west (from Wheeling and from its later terminal at Parkersburg) in directions north of the Ohio river (toward Columbus and toward Cincinnati respectively).

The Chesapeake and Ohio railroad also built east-west, and between 1872 and 1881 operated a western terminal on the river at the new railroad city of Huntington, West Virginia. Just as the Pittsburg and Wheeling terminals had generated certain patterns in the steamboat trade, the Huntington port became the source of prosperous business along the river for Cincinnati's "White Collar" combine. At the same time the Chesapeake and Ohio soon arranged an indirect train route to Covington by way of Maysville to Paris and Lexington, and then from Lexington to Covington by way of the Kentucky Central which the Huntington interests purchased (Gastright).

At the same time the Chesapeake and Ohio advanced west with construction of a more direct route to Covington and Cincinnati, a roadbed along the Ohio river bank on the Kentucky side. The tracks were laid on a new bridge over the Licking river into Covington near East Fifteenth street where the line circled north toward the Ohio river (Gastright).

By the early 1870s it was proposed that Covington provide up to \$500,000 to finance construction of a railroad bridge. It also came to be referred to as the "free bridge" because a vehicular roadbed would be constructed adjoining which would have minimal toll rates. Finally, the Daily Commonwealth (October 5, 1881) reported that "the Cheasepeake and Ohio and Kentucky Central interests have determined on a new bridge to be built within two years ... for railroad purposes, with foot and wagon passages additional."

However in 1884 advance efforts were still being made, then in the name of the "Covington and Cincinnati Pier Bridge Company." Incorporators included Samuel W. Young, Charles B. Pearce, Horace B. Walbridge, Jonathan B. Herne, and Henry Worthington. On June 18, 1884 the Daily Commonwealth editorialized, "it is whispered around, with strong appearance of probability, that Messrs. Young, and Walbridge of Toledo, O., and perhaps Mr. Pearce of Maysville, ...are really figureheads for Mr. Huntington, the head of the Cheasepeake and Ohio...." The next day the paper commented that while both local men were "respectable," Hearne and Worthington had not been sufficiently involved directly in the day-to-day welfare of the citizens not to be suspect. Hearne the Cincinnati and Covington banker resided at Fifth and Garrard in Covington. Henry Worthington, an iron manufacturer, was President of the Licking Rolling Mill, Eleventh street and the Licking river, with residence at 76 West Fourth, Covington, and with company office in Cincinnati (Covington street directory).

Opposition was so strong (including from the "river interests") that the state legislature had to override Governor Knott's veto (Kentucky State Journal, March 15, 1884). Corporate spokesmen argued that the new bridge would provide redress for the high toll rates at the Roebling suspension bridge (Daily Commonwealth, June 18, 1884). Harry Mackoy recalled that the Bridge Pier company eventually became the Covington and Cincinnati Elevated Railway and Bridge company and the railroad bridge was finally built in 1888 "with the assistance of Cincinnati and Eastern capital." Mackoy also recalled that Covington completed installation of an

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elaborate new waterworks system, completed in November, 1889 (with inlet and reservoir system located in Campbell county); electric lighting was installed, and the streetcar system "was electrified by Cleveland capitalists." But the the great economic expansion in this era ended with the economic panic and depression of 1893-1896 (Mackoy, Cincinnati Times-Star, Centennial edition, April 25, 1940).

* * * * *

Located in a growing residential area, with no room for expansion, Covington's pioneer cemetery on Craig street came to be considered obsolete. In 1872 the decision was reached, even more ominously, by city officials to order removal of bodies, with a portion of the new Highland cemetery (circa. 1869) set aside for those families and friends so inclined. In 1872 most ("1700"), but not all ("27"), of the remains were removed when concerns for the rights of the original owners of the grave yard led to second thought and then in 1876 to court action. In 1879 an Appeals court finally ruled in favor of the city and progress. Soon Sixth street, which had been cut off by the cemetery (located between Craig and Johnston streets), was dedicated through. New lots thereby created earned over \$10,000 at "public sale." In 1883 the railroad right-of-way was "dedicated through" (Charles S. Adams, "Old Covington Cemeteries," Christopher Gist Papers).

In the 1920s the railroad built another trestle structure adjoining the first Chesapeake and Ohio railroad bridge trestles on the original piers. The original trestles were then sold to the state Highway Department which converted the bridge bed to vehicular highway use. Improvements for the new railroad side included eliminating the steep incline to the bridge (Jim Reis, Kentucky Post, July 1, 1985). The railroad tracks were elevated back into Covington on fill dirt and on iron trestles for this purpose. And in these and future years such improvements also eliminated street-rail intersections in the name of safety. Needless to say, such work also changed the landscape at an around such pioneer sites as the Craig street burying ground.

(John Boh)

BEHRINGER CRAWFORD MUSEUM

Northern Kentucky's natural and cultural history museum. Membership: family--\$30.00; individual--\$15.00 Publications: The Celestial City. A History of the Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption--\$10.00 for members, \$12.00 for non-members, \$2.00 for shipping; Northern Kentucky Historic Back Roads Booklet--\$5.00 plus \$2.00 for shipping. Also visit the museum shop for other books, booklets, artifacts having to do with natural and cultural history. Behringer Crawford Museum/P. O. Box 67/Covington, Ky 41012.

PUBLICATIONS FROM THE KENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

- 1810, 20, 30 Census Index--\$20.00 including mailing
- 1840 Census Index--\$15.00 including mailing*
- 1850 Census Index--\$25.00 including mailing*
- 1860 Census Index--\$15.00 including mailing*
- 1870 Census Index--\$25.00 including mailing*
- 1880 Census Index (2 vol.) \$25.00 per vol.*including mailing
- The Collected Papers of the Kenton County Historical Society (3 volumes, loose leaf bound) \$30.00 incl. mailing.
- From Gentlemen Farmers to City Folk. The History of Wallace Woods, Covington...--\$2.50 plus \$1.00 for mailing.
- *index of Kenton County Federal Census

NEW KCHS MAGAZINE TO BE LAUNCHED IN 1993 !

Beginning in April, the Society will begin a new bi-annual publication, making available to the public worthy historical papers of local and regional interest.

The KCHS is running a contest to name this publication. It will be computer prepared in magazine format. The publication will be sold by subscription. Some examples of forthcoming subject matter: "James T. Earle, Last Mayor of Latonia", "B.H.F. Hellebusch (1825-1885)", "Life of John Uri Lloyd" and many more. There will be three to five major papers in each issue. The material will be chosen from any a number of sources, not only the members' own work. Footnotes, references and photos and illustrations are to be encouraged. The prize for the winning title will be one year's subscription free. To enter, merely tear off at the dotted line below and fill in your suggestion and address and mail.

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