



Bulletin of the Kenton County Historical Society

Website: www.kenton.lib.ky.us/~histsoc Email: nkyheritage.kchs@juno.com
P.O. Box 641, Covington, Kentucky 41012-0641 (859) 431-2666

March / April

2007

I Bet You Didn't Know

Tidbits of Northern Kentucky History

This small town, located along the Licking River in what is now Kenton County, was first settled sometime prior to 1807 by Nathaniel Vice, Jr. in what was then Campbell County. For a short time, in 1827, it was even the county seat of Campbell County.

By 1850, Canton was a thriving little town, with streets named for three famous early Americans – Washington, Jefferson and Madison.

The first post office to serve the rural area was established on January 2, 1855 as New Canton. In 1859, a local resident named George Watson moved the post office one mile up stream and gave it its permanent name.

Today, the town of Visalia hasn't grown much since the mid 1800s. It sits about halfway between Independence and Alexandria, at the intersection of Kentucky Highways 177, 10 and 536.

Latest News

History Day 2007, held at NKU on February 17th, was a success despite the early morning snowstorm. Hundreds attended the various lectures and visited the many booths and exhibits. A special thanks to members of the attending historical societies and organizations, as well as all volunteers and participants who braved the weather.

Upcoming Programs

Sunday, March 11, 2007 2:00PM

The 2007 Northern Kentucky History, Art and Culture Lecture Series continues with the third of their nine programs, this one on Northern Kentucky Artists and Murals. The program will be held at the Baker Hunt Art and Culture Center, 620 Greenup Street in Covington. Cost is only \$5.00 and pre-registration can be made at nkyhistory.com

Friday, March 16, 2007 7:00PM

Dr. Jonathan Reynolds, Associate Professor of History at NKU and coauthor of *Africa in World History: From Prehistory to the Present* (2003) and author of *Trading Tastes: Commodity and Cultural Exchange to 1750* (2006), will give a presentation titled, "Crossing the Borders of African and World History". The program will be held in the Science Lecture Hall at Thomas More College.

Sunday, April 15, 2007 2:00PM

Northern Kentucky Churches will be the fourth program in the 2007 Northern Kentucky History, Art and Culture Lecture Series. The program will be held at the Baker Hunt Art and Culture Center, 620 Greenup Street in Covington. Cost is only \$5.00 and pre-registration can be made at nkyhistory.com

Published bi-monthly by

The Kenton County Historical Society

President.....Ronnie Einhaus
Vice-President.....Donald Fowler
Treasurer.....W. Terry Averbeck
Secretary.....John H. Boh

Board Members:

George Gressle, Richard Johannemann,
Mary Elise Regan, Edward Whitehead
and Robert Webster (Bulletin Editor)

Karl Lietzenmayer (Ex Officio)
Charles Reckley (Associate)

ARTICLES FROM BACK ISSUES ARE INDEXED ON OUR WEBSITE!

St Ann Church — West Covington

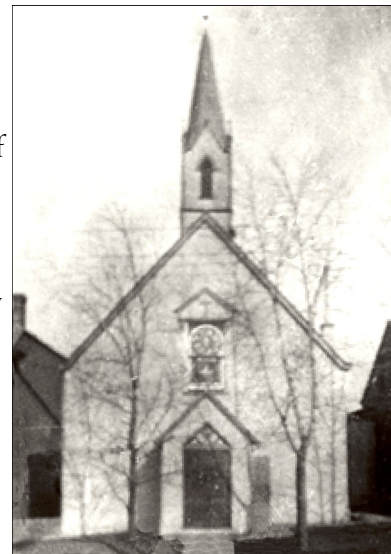
By: James C. Kelly

In the mid 1800s, just before the great Civil War, residents of the Catholic faith were rapidly growing in number in the small town of Economy (later to become West Covington and then part of the city of Covington). They grew tired of the hour-long journey to St. Mary's Cathedral in Covington, as well as to Saint Patrick's of Cincinnati, which required a trip across the Ohio River by means of a ferry. In addition, the number of Catholic settlers was steadily increasing in the area and they felt the need of a resident priest to look after their spiritual welfare.

In order to answer the question confronting them, many local families began holding meetings to gather information and discuss by what ways and means the local Catholic community could acquire their own priest, and hopefully, their own church. With each gathering, members became more interested and enthusiastic about the possibilities. Finally, a special committee was appointed to meet with the Bishop, the Right Rev. George Carrell. At first, the Bishop was inclined to turn a deaf ear to their request, feeling that they were not able to support a pastor with their meager resources. This committee, however, knowing their great need, was not ready to accept the Bishop's negative decision. The group began soliciting funds and returned to the Bishop in only a few short weeks with the same request. Seeing their true devotion and determination, the Bishop gave his permission for the building of a new church to serve the needs of West Covington Catholics.

Early records indicate that the first priest to say mass in what is now West Covington was Very Rev. Father Butler, then Vicar General of the Diocese. Early one Sunday morning, a messenger was sent to the Cathedral to bring a priest to the home of John Casey, Sr., who resided on Short John Street, to answer a sick call. Father Butler answered the call, bringing with him the necessary articles for saying

mass, and in the home of Patrick Callahan, next door to the Casey home, Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was offered up. After this, and for the next several years, Mass was read regularly in the one-story frame house of the Burns family, at the corner of High and Main Streets (High and Parkway), which was rented for that purpose. This home still stands today.



St. Ann Church, circa 1890
Courtesy: Kenton County Public Library

James and John Slevin of Cincinnati donated a plot of land for the new church. Bishop Carrell laid the cornerstone for the church on the first Sunday of June 1860. Construction of the church continued as finances allowed and eventually spanned a four-year period. Members of the congregation performed much of the work. The new church was dedicated on December 11, 1864, by Bishop Carrell. Rev. Father Stanislaus of Birmingham, Pennsylvania, gave the Sermon on that wonderful occasion. Rev. W.T. D'Arcy attended the people from March of 1862 until February of 1864, during which time the congregation was somewhat small, especially with regard to the men. As with many other communities, most of the men in St. Ann's congregation had taken up arms during the great Civil War.

The first resident pastor was Rev. Adrian Egelmeers, who succeeded Rev. D'Arcy in 1864. He rented a cottage from John Clark, father of Charles Eugene Clark, on David Street (now a section of Highway Avenue). He resided there for about two years, at which time he built a red brick cottage on the south side of the newly completed church.

In 1865, Father Egelmeers oversaw the construction of a two-story, red brick school and secured as its teachers, the Sisters of the Order of Saint Francis of Oldenburg, Indiana, who had charge until the Sisters of Notre Dame de Providence of Newport, Kentucky, were secured by Rev. L.G. Clermont. By the end of 1874, school enrollment reached 150 students. Father Egelmeers was in charge of the parish from February of 1864 until May 17, 1875, when declining health forced his retirement. He returned to his native country of Holland after his retirement.

Rev. L.D. Wille succeeded Rev. Egelmeers in May of 1875. Father Wille came to St. Ann Church after having given many years of hard work in missionary services for the diocese. That work brought asthmatic troubles that followed Father Wille to his position with St. Ann. He was pastor from May of 1875 until his death in November of 1886.

The Rev. James Kehoe, who was called from the assistant pastorate of St. Paul Church, Lexington, Kentucky, succeeded Father Wille. He became pastor in December of 1886 and served the parish until June 27, 1888, the time of his death. During his tenure, at which time the membership became too large for the church, Father Kehoe founded the St. James Parish in Ludlow, allowing the growing number of Catholics from that city to attend their own parish.

Rev. L.G. Clermont, from Ashland, Kentucky, succeeded Father Kehoe on July 21, 1888. He was pastor until March 31, 1903, when he resigned due to ill health. Father Clermont did much toward the success of St. Ann. He placed Cathedral glass in all of the windows of the church and also had the building painted and frescoed. His greatest contribution to the church, however, was securing two relics of Saint Ann, one from Rome in 1887 and one from Jerusalem in 1891. These relics were placed in a small shrine in the church. St. Ann Parish soon became known throughout the region for its shrine to the grandmother of Jesus. The shrine was the focal point of the annual Novena to St. Ann. This novena drew thousands of worshipers each July. The Novena closed each year with a candle-lit procession of the faithful through the city. It was also during Rev.



St. Ann Church, circa 1932
Courtesy: Kenton County Public Library

Clermont's term as pastor that the church membership was faced with the problem of the giving-way of the front wall of the school building. The original school was eventually torn down to make room for a safer and more modern structure, dedicated on September 20, 1908.

Rev. B.A. Baumeister was assigned as pastor of St. Ann to succeed Rev. Clermont. He took possession in April of 1903 and remained pastor until July 17, 1905, when he resigned. Father Baumeister worked energetically to build up the fine parish. He built a much-needed sacristy, installed furnaces in the church and parish house, and upon retiring, left a nice sum of money to the treasury of the church. Rev. L. de Wageneare succeeded Father Baumeister on July 17, 1905 and remained in that position until June 22, 1909, when he was appointed to the rectory of St. Paul Church in Lexington, Kentucky. During his term as pastor, he remodeled the pastoral residence and oversaw the completion of the new school building on Hayman Street (now Altamont Road). He also purchased a residence for the sisters, located on the south side of the parochial residence.

Rev. W.B. Ryan took charge of the church on June 22, 1909. Father Ryan took over much debt when he came to St. Ann. Successful fund-raising events helped to reduce the debt considerably in the

early months of his term. The church membership had also grown substantially in recent years and committees were organized to investigate the possibility of building a new and bigger church. It was also during Father Ryan's term as pastor that the church celebrated their 50th anniversary celebration they called their Golden Jubilee. The event took place on September 18, 1910.

During the celebration, a special tribute was made to the family of John Feighery, long-time members of St. Ann Church. John received his ordination in 1879 and became the pastor of St. Edward Church in Cynthiana, Kentucky. In two short years there he worked hard in enlarging the membership and also built their first school. Before his third year at St. Edward, he was stricken with pneumonia. He died on January 10, 1891. Father Thomas B. Ennis succeeded Rev. Ryan in 1917. Under his guidance, the old church building was demolished and a new Gothic Revival church was constructed in 1931-1932. Bishop Francis W. Howard dedicated the new church on June 19, 1932. The original cornerstone from 1860 was laid in the new church.

In 1940, Monsignor Joseph Deimling was appointed pastor of St. Ann Parish. Father Deimling oversaw the construction of a new St. Ann School on the northwest corner of Highway Avenue and Altamont Road. The lot had been home to a WWII memorial, removed sometime prior to the start of construction. A large street fair had also been held on the lot and generally drew a sizable crowd. After the school was built, the fair continued for many years, moved from the street into the schoolyard. Construction began on the \$120,000 school in 1956. The building was dedicated on October 6, 1957. Also, a new church bell was dedicated during this term. Father Deimling was in charge of St. Ann until 1977, being succeeded by Father Louis Jasper. Father Jasper was in charge of St. Ann until 1987.

West Covington Catholics, as well as many other residents, began moving to the suburbs in the years following World War II. By the early 1970s, St. Ann School began experiencing declining enrollment. By 1976, only 80 students filled the classrooms. In 1977, the Sisters of Divine Providence

were forced to withdraw from the school due to a declining number of teachers in the diocese. By 1969, the school enrolled just 69 pupils and was staffed by three lay teachers. St. Ann School closed in 1981, leaving no school, public or parochial, in West Covington, as the 11th District Public School had closed in 1979. Children, Incorporated used the school as a children's daycare facility until 2005. Just as school enrollment suffered, especially after the 1970s, church membership was also falling steadily. After Rev. Deimling left in 1977, Rev. Louis Jasper took charge. The church would have several other priests over the course of the following seventeen years (see below for a complete listing). In 1994, Rev. Robert Rosing took over as an interim priest to prepare the church for the introduction of a Pastoral Administrator.

St. Ann lost its permanent priest in 1995 and was placed under Pastoral Administrator Sr. Berenice Janszen, who held the position for under two years. St. Ann then acquired two temporary priests, Rev. Mark Steidle (1996-1998) and Rev. James Gerrity (1998-1999). In 1999, Bishop Munch designated the church a Mission under the care of St. John's Church in Covington. Father Douglas Fortner took charge as the administrator and pastor at that time and continues to hold that position today. Deteriorating badly, the school building was razed in the spring of 2006. With the current membership and financial situation, the future of St. Ann Church is beginning to look doubtful.

Rev. W.T. D'Arcy	1862 to 1864
Rev. Adrian Egelmeers	1864 to 1875
Rev. L.D. Wille	1875 to 1886
Rev. James Kehoe	1886 to 1888
Rev. L.G. Clermont	1888 to 1903
Rev. B.A. Baumeister	1903 to 1905
Rev. L. de Wageneare	1905 to 1909
Rev. W.B. Ryan	1909 to 1917
Rev. Thomas B. Ennis	1917 to 1940
Monsignor Joseph Deimling	1940 to 1977
Rev. Louis Jasper	1977 to 1987
Rev. Joseph Broering	1987 to 1989
Rev. Raymond Steinhauser	1989 to 1994
Rev. Robert Rosing	1994 to 1995
Sr. Berenice Janszen	1995 to 1996
Rev. Mark Steidle (temp)	1996 to 1998
Rev. James Gerrity (temp)	1998 to 1999
Rev. Douglas Fortner	1999 to present

The Story of Goetta

By: Don Heinrich Tolzmann

Goetta is a unique regional food found only in the Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky area. Transplanted from Germany, it was originally considered a peasant dish, meant to stretch-out servings of expensive meats such as pork and beef over several meals to save money. The modern popularity of goetta in the heavily German-populated tri-state area, however, has led it to be called “Cincinnati Caviar”.

The word “goetta” is derived from the Low German (Platt Deutch) *gotta* (umlaut over the “o”) or *grutze* (umlaut over “u”) in High German (Hoch Deutch), which is related to the English word *goats*. The Low German term *gottwurst* (umlaut over “o”) or *grutzwurst* in Hoch Deutch refers to a sausage consisting of pork, beef, oatmeal (pinhead or steel cut) and spices. The recipe and the term were brought by German immigrants from northwestern Germany, especially Hanover, Oldenburg and Westphalia, to Northern Kentucky and to nearby German-American communities in the Ohio valley.

Regional variations of goetta are still produced across Germany but are known by other terms, especially by the Hoch Deutch term *grutzwurst*. An obvious example is Pennsylvania German *scrapple*, which consists of similar ingredients but which uses cornmeal rather than oatmeal.

Originally, goetta, like *scrapple*, was prepared as a loose porridge that was scooped up with bread from a bowl, thus indicating its probable medieval origins as a farmhouse food. By the 19th century, however, the recipe in northwestern Germany had developed into the firmer loaf-like texture that was brought to Northern Kentucky.

Today’s most common recipe includes pork (and sometimes equal parts of pork and beef), steel cut oats, bay leaves, rosemary, salt, pepper, and thyme. It is prepared by cutting one-inch slices from its loaf and frying them in a skillet over medium heat, often in the oils left over from frying bacon.



Packaged loafs of Glier's Goetta.

Modern goetta is traditionally eaten as a breakfast food, but is often served at other mealtimes and even as a snack food. Goetta is featured at dozens of local restaurants, church events and German-American functions. More recently, new products such as goetta burgers, goetta dogs and goetta pizza have been seen in the goetta capitol of the world, especially at Goettafest, a summer festival celebrating this unique food held in Covington’s MainStrasse Village. Covington has a rich heritage of German immigrants and this yearly celebration, including a German-based Renaissance festival, has been held since 2004. While nearby Newport on the Levee also hosts a Goettafest, Covington’s is the original. Cincinnati currently has no specific festival celebrating goetta.

Goetta is produced locally by several commercial meat packing companies and a few smaller individual meat markets. The most popular brand by far is Glier’s Goetta, produced by Glier’s Meats of Covington, the largest goetta plant in the United States. More than 1,000,000 pounds of the product is produced at Glier’s annually, representing ninety-nine percent of all goetta consumed in the United States. Another popular brand is that of Ft. Wright’s Finke’s Market, which makes about 50,000 pounds annually. When Finke’s operated their 824 Main Street, Covington store, they sold goetta to the nearby Irish, calling it “Irish mush”. Finke’s Meats has been selling goetta since 1876 while Glier’s Meats has been producing the unique product since 1946.

Una Merkel

By: Robert D. Webster

Una Merkel, popular movie actress and Broadway star, was born in Covington, Kentucky on December 10, 1903. In her career of more than sixty years, she appeared in dozens of feature films, as well as many Broadway shows.

A desire to entertain audiences was obviously deep-rooted in Una's childhood. There is evidence of her being on stage as early as age ten. On January 9, 1913, the *Kentucky Post* reported on a meeting of the Mother's and Teacher's Club of First District School. Before engaging in official business, the group was entertained by, "a wonderful speech on George Washington, written and presented by little Una Merkel." A few days later, the *Post* reported: "Covington dramatic and musical circles take note. A program by pupils of the Covington branch of the Goldenburg School will be given at the Odd Fellows Hall, Fifth and Madison, Covington. The children's class will perform an original musical titled, *The Fairy and the Imp*." One of the stars of the show was listed as little Una Merkel.

On November 27, 1916, Una took part in what was called, "the largest civic demonstration seen for many years in Covington." The celebration was the laying of the cornerstone at the new high school building at Holmesdale. Over 3000 children marched in a special parade, beginning at 4th and Madison and continuing south to the new campus near 25th Street. A brief history on each of the district schools was written and placed in special containers to be put behind the cornerstone. The representative from First District – Una Merkel. As the parade continued, groups of students from each of the city's district schools, First through Ninth and the Lincoln-Grant School, joined in the march. Merkel was reported to be the youngest official in the festivities.

In April of 1917, Merkel participated in an "Evening of Music" given by the Latonia Trinity M.E. Church as a fund raiser for a new piano. Merkel, who chose to do a dramatic reading, was just one of nearly

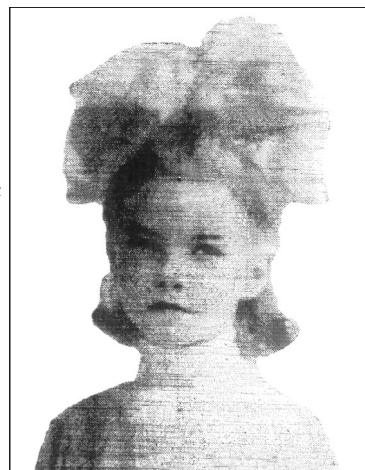
two dozen children who entertained the large crowd that evening. The photo seen here was printed on the front page of the *Kentucky Post* the following day.

Una took pride in Covington, her studies, and her family. She grew up in the family's large brick home at Fourth and Greenup Streets. She left Covington in her teens and stayed briefly with an uncle in Cincinnati before moving to Philadelphia and then to New York to study dramatics. Her first teacher was Tyrone Power's mother. From New York, she soon made the trip to Hollywood.

Once in Hollywood Merkel's talent was clear, but a little luck sure helped. For Merkel, her striking resemblance to famed actress Lillian Gish caught the attention of director D.W. Griffith, who made her Gish's stand-in in the films *Way Down East* in 1920 and *The White Rose* in 1923.

She appeared in several films during the silent era, but spent much of her early career back in New York working on Broadway with one-line and two-line parts. Her big break there came in 1927 when she was cast with Helen Hayes in *Coquette*, which ran for 22 weeks on Broadway. She returned to Hollywood and achieved her greatest success with the advent of "talkies".

Merkel played Ann Rutledge in the 1930 film *Abraham Lincoln* and during the 1930s, became a popular second lead in more than two dozen films, usually playing the wisecracking best friend of the heroine. Her witty retorts and comic flair made her a familiar face in a string of films, playing opposite such actors as Harold Lloyd, Charles Butterworth and



W.C. Fields. Filmgoers saw her as the on-screen best girlfriend of such actresses as Ruby Keeler, Janet Gaynor, Myrna Loy, Carole Lombard and Jean Harlow. Among her more famous films of the 1930s were, *Evelyn Prentice*, *Saratoga*, *Some Like It Hot*, *Broadway Melody of 1936*, *Biography of a Bachelor Girl*, and *Born to Dance*, where she costarred with Jimmy Stewart and Buddy Ebsen. She and Marlene Dietrich even tussled in a saloon fight in the film *Destiny Rides Again* in 1939.

According to friends, Una's loving relationship with her parents was always strong. Both mother and father lived with Una for various lengths of time while she was living in California. Earlier, while in New York, her mother shared her apartment. Merkel toured with the USO shows during World War II, sharing the stage with such greats as Gary Cooper and others.

Though her career went into decline in the late 1940s, she continued to work, though in less prestigious productions. She and aircraft executive Ronald Burla divorced in 1946. Una also dealt with a brief bout of depression after her mother's suicide while in New York. Never to give-up, Merkel made a comeback in the late 1950s with a Tony Award winning role in *The Ponder Heart*, and an Academy Award nominated role in *Summer and Smoke*. Her final role was in the 1966 Elvis Presley film, *Spinout*.

Una Merkel eventually received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame for her contributions to Motion Pictures. Her tribute can be seen at 6262 Hollywood Boulevard. When interviewed by Chester Geaslen for his *Strolling Down Memory Lane*, Merkel said, "Back in Covington I was an old-maid, bookish type. I was rather shy." She continued, "I always felt like the girl who knew she would never be asked to the dance, and quite frequently.....wasn't."

Merkel kept her ties with old friends in Covington throughout her long career. When a friend visited her in Hollywood, she reported to the *Kentucky Post* upon her return, "Una just wanted to hear all about her old home town." With such a busy schedule, Una was not able to visit Covington very often but when she did, she would always make time to visit



old friends and classmates.

When Una attended her father's funeral in Covington in 1969, she told local reporters that the next time she came home would be for her own funeral. She kept that promise. Una Merkel died in her Los Angeles apartment on January 2, 1986 at the age of 82. She left no survivors. Her body was returned to Covington and she was buried next to her parents at Highland Cemetery in Fort Mitchell. Newspaper accounts at the time of her death reported that hundreds of calls were received at Allison and Rose funeral home, who were charge of arrangements. Jackie Gleason sent a blanket of red carnations – his trademark – to drape across the casket. According to the *Kentucky Post*, Merkel is remembered, "as a lady who cherished her family and preferred to leave her star status in the fan magazines and film libraries. She was surely one of Covington's treasures.

Credits:

The Kentucky Post, January 10, 1913, Page 2
The Kentucky Post, January 18, 1913, Page 4
The Kentucky Post, November 27, 1916, Page 1
The Kentucky Post, November 28, 1916, Page 1
The Kentucky Post, April 10, 1917, Page 1
The Kentucky Post, January 7, 1986, Page 7K

Dr. Joseph F. Gastright, Local Historian

John Boh

Readers are probably aware by now that the Kenton County Historical Society lost a dear friend and colleague this past December 9th. For several years, Joe had a continuing battle with diabetes. He collapsed at his home and died the following day at St. Elizabeth Medical Center in Edgewood.

Born in Covington September 17, 1941, Joe also had Kentucky roots in Campbell County and Eastern Kentucky. Joe graduated from Covington Latin School. In 1963 he received a B. A. in chemistry with minors in mathematics and philosophy from Villa Madonna College (now Thomas More). Before graduating, he coached basketball and taught chemistry and mathematics at Bishop Brossart High School in Alexandria. Around 1960 Joe participated in a fossil dig at Big Bone that yielded a huge jaw bone since displayed at the Behringer Crawford Museum.

In 1970 he received his Masters of Education from Xavier University. In 1975 he was awarded a Doctorate in Education from the University of Cincinnati with specialties in educational research and secondary education. He was elected to the Covington Board of Education, and he and wife Carolyn were leaders in the Wallace Woods neighborhood.

He met his future wife while performing in a play produced by the students of LaSalette Academy, a now-closed all-girls school in Covington. Married in 1964, Joe and Carolyn (Pelstring) had three sons. After graduation, he worked as a chemist for National Distillers, then for the Andrew Jergens Company. Between 1966 and 1969 he taught physics and mathematics in the Kenton County School system. From 1971 until retirement Joe was employed in research, development, evaluation and testing specialties for Cincinnati Public Schools. He belonged to professional organizations such as the American Education Research Association. He wrote and presented many papers and articles such as "Closing the Achievement Gap..." before the Annual AERA Convention in Washington, D. C. in April 1987. He later returned

to teaching, including time at Hughes High School in Cincinnati.

Wallace Woods History

Since 1977, when the Kenton Co. Historical Society was incorporated, Joe regularly participated. Consulting his growing collection of old books, using original sources from the Kenton County Library, the Cincinnati Historical Society, and Kentucky courthouses, Joe developed a formidable knowledge of local history. Then, he wrote his seminal *Gentlemen Farmers to City Folks, A Study of Wallace Wood, Covington, Kentucky*, published in 1980 by the Neighborhood Studies Project of the Cincinnati Historical Society (soft cover, 64 pages, black and white photographs, numbered endnotes, insert map with details hand drawn).

His history recalled early pioneer land purchases along the Licking River and Banklick Road, the later rails, bridges, subdivisions and annexations. He touched on street and sewer construction, all in light of such outside forces as financial panics and economic depressions. One early factor was Latonia Springs, mentioned by the native of Mays Lick, then a Cincinnati, Dr. Daniel Drake. It soon drew people from Cincinnati to the "waters" near Banklick Creek.

Other KCHS Activities

In the 1980s Joe contributed articles for the membership newsletter on Latonia Springs and on "the Making of the Kentucky Central Railroad". Using visual aids, especially slides, when feasible his lecture subjects included Latonia Springs, "Licking River settlements," Daniel Henry Holmes, Judge George Gilpin Perkins, Kenton County's German immigrants and St. Benedict Church. In the 1980s he participated in two church tours and contributed his research on St. Benedict's. In the 1990s he contributed articles on Austinburg (with editor Jo Ann Brown) and, again, "Latonia Springs: Taking the Waters in a

Healthy Place.” His lectures included James Rodes Buchanan and Phrenology, “Amos Shinkle and the Building of the Suspension Bridge,” and “Building the Second Suspension Bridge” (presented also at Northern Kentucky History Day, 1998). By this time, Joe had written an original paper for presentation at the Fifth Historic Bridges Conference in Cincinnati (1997). It was entitled “Wilhelm Hildenbrand and the 1895 Reconstruction of the Roebling Suspension Bridge,” (14 pages including one of numbered footnotes; much derived from Roebling papers at the Rensselaer Polytechnic in New York state).

In 2001 Joe contributed an article to the Bulletin, “Land Speculation and Simon Kenton and Daniel Boone,” and he gave a lecture on that topic. He provided “never seen” views of the Suspension Bridge. This also was an outgrowth partly of an earlier on-site interview of Joe by C-Span TV. He also did “Early Roads I”, Early Roads II”, and the “Story of Bison.” Inspired by Joe’s expertise, the KCHS hosted a very enjoyable tour of pioneer and Civil War sites near Cynthiana, Kentucky. And then, too, Joe gave a program describing in detail his recent visit to his Gastreich relatives at Sauerland in Germany.

Joe served as KCHS director and was president many years. Cosponsored by the Historical Confederation of Kentucky and local heritage groups, Joe was a principle organizer and spokesman for a day-long “Rivers and Rails” conference, October, 5, 1985. Session topics included river landings with historian Carl Bogardus and Captain John Beatty, and lectures on railroads by Paul Tenkotte and by Joe. With well over 100 in attendance, this conference seemed to anticipate the recently successful Northern Kentucky Regional History Days at Northern Kentucky University. Since 1993, in *Northern Kentucky Heritage* magazine, Joe has contributed “Parks for the People” part 1 and part II, and the “Reconstruction of the Roebling Bridge”.

Preparing for the 1990 anniversary, he participated in planning meeting for the proposed, but failed, Kenton County Sesquicentennial history book. For the current Covington Centennial history book, Joe chaired planning meetings for a time. For a display on the Wallace Woods neighborhood September

29-November 17, 1996 at the Behringer Crawford museum, in addition to text and photos, Joe and Carolyn contributed artifacts, including a full-sized sofa. In the 1990s a very successful boat trip up the Licking River organized by the Campbell County Historical Society, besides pleas-



Dr. Joseph Gastright

ant weather and surroundings, owed much to Joe’s very informative commentary on the historical background and on significant points along the riverbank. In the recent years Joe advised for Covington Flood-wall Murals--especially the very first one, a portrayal of buffalo herds crossing the Ohio River at the mouth of the Licking.

Legacy

On March 3, 2001 Joe was awarded recognition from the Historical Confederation of Kentucky. An affiliate of the Kentucky Historical Society, the HCK recognized Joe’s long term contributions to Kentucky and local history. Besides other artifacts, Joe’s book collection is said to number 3000. They would include Humphrey Marshall’s *History of Kentucky* (1812), Lewis Collins’ *Historical Sketches of Kentucky* (1847), Richard Collins’ *History of Kentucky*, 2 volumes (1874), Newport native and Harvard scientist Nathaniel S. Shaler’s *Kentucky, A Pioneer Commonwealth* (1884) and *The Autobiography of Nathaniel Southgate Shaler* (1909). A regular at Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra concerts, Joe also had an extensive musical CD collection.

His study of Northern Kentucky history related to his interests in scientific skepticism (of phrenology, religious, ethnic and racial differences), chemistry (brewing, distilling, mineral waters), and geology (virgin forests, rivers, Indian, buffalo and pioneer trails, roads and bridges).

A Look Back at The Headlines

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

This issue features: Friday May 7, 1920.

Schools Reopen As Strike Ends

“Although Covington teachers asked for a raise of \$500 a year, they reported Friday they would accept the \$300 increase voted by the Board of Education. Two questions not yet made public are left to be answered, but it is understood that those questions will be easily resolved. City Solicitor, A. E. Stricklett was praised by many for his fine handling of the strike.”

Scouts Prepare For Big Field Meet

“Covington Scouts are busy preparing for the big field meet which will be held in the park at the foot of Garrard Street on Saturday. Through the courtesy of the park board, the Scouts have been permitted to erect a temporary wall scaling board and every day and evening, they may be found examining ways in which to climb the ten-foot high wall. Other festivities to be held during the camp include, review of troops formations, a knot-tying contest, friction fire burning demonstration, bugle-playing contest, flag-signaling contest, equipment race, pup tent pitching, first aid, craft building, and a retreat ceremony.”

Clean Up Plea

“Saturday is the last day of the ‘clean up and paint up week’ in Covington. Mayor Thomas F. Donnelly said that during the first few days of the campaign, many citizens commenced the week by chasing rubbish and all kinds of filth but now as the campaign is coming to a close, the work is slackening up. ‘There seems to be a desire to let the neighbor do it,’ the Mayor reported, ‘as there have been many reports of owners not cleaning their lots and rear yards.’”

209 Graduates

“Northern Kentucky high schools will graduate a total of 209 pupils this June, more than in any previous year.” While all schools did not report individual totals, we hear that Covington High School will graduate 55 and Ludlow and Bellevue will graduate 12 each. Newport will have a total of 50 graduates, Dayton will have 3, and Ft Thomas will graduate 30. Congratulations to all graduates.

Update on the History of Covington Book

Currently, the book committee reports that the project is on schedule. The book has been broken into four segments with regard to deadline dates for submission of articles. Below is a partial list of the unassigned articles for the first section of the book.

James Henry Beard – Artist
Colston Family – Early Pioneers
Christopher Gist – Historian
Clement Barnhorn – Sculptor
William Bullock
Bill Cappel – Baseball Player
Henrietta Cleveland – Founded St. Elizabeth
Covington Catholic School
George H. Dillon – Won Guggenheim

If you would like to submit an article on any of the topics above, please let the committee know as soon as possible. To view a list of all topics, please go to the Society’s website:

www.kenton.lib.ky.us/~histsoc/
then click on “Covington Book”.

If you have any questions about the project, or if you would like to offer any assistance on the book, please email the book committee directly at:
covingtonhistorybook@fuse.net

Be Published In The KCHS Bulletin!

The Society is always looking for interesting Kenton County stories for its Bulletin. Email your article in Microsoft Word format to:

nkyheritage.kchs@juno.com.

You can also send a printed copy by mail to: P.O. Box
641, Covington, KY 41012-0641

Articles should have at least two references.

Then and Now

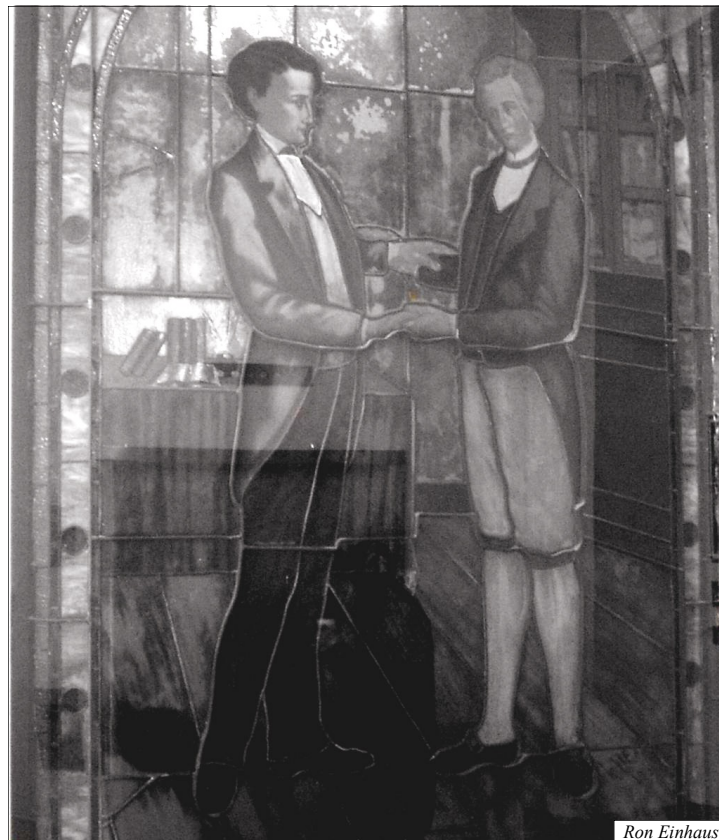


Left: Covington's Fire Company #1, located at 6th and Washington Streets (circa 1910).
Right: Today, that same structure houses Tickets Sports Bar.

Old photo: courtesy the Kenton County Public Library. New photo: courtesy Bob Webster

Mystery Photo

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



ANSWER:

Stained glass window at City Commission, City Hall, 7th and Madison, Covington.

Kenton County Historical Society
P.O. Box 641
Covington, Kentucky 41012-0641
Web: www.kenton.lib.ky.us/~histsoe
Email: nkyheritage.kchs@juno.com

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Covington, KY
41011
PERMIT NO. 297

Dedicated to preserving our heritage as the "Gateway to the South"

KENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

March / April 2007



Feature Story:

West Covington's Saint Ann Church

Other Stories Inside:

The Story of Goetta

Early Film Star — Una Merkel

Dr. Joseph F. Gastright, Local Historian