

# Bulletin of the Kenton County Historical Society

P.O. Box 641, Covington, Kentucky 41012-0641 [nkyheritage.kchs@Juno.com](mailto:nkyheritage.kchs@Juno.com) (859) 431-2666

September/October

2004

## PROGRAMS

**September 14, 2004 7:00 pm**

W. Terry Averbeck will present a slide show and oral report  
on his recent "retracing" of the Lewis and Clark Trail.

The program will be held at Trinity Church, 4th and Madison, Covington.

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Melissa English, Urban Appalachian Council, will present:

"Appalachian people—  
from the settlement of the mountains to the migration to the cities".

Appalachian values and attitudes will be discussed, as will stereotypes of Appalachians  
that exist to this day. Ms. English will briefly describe the history and programs of the UAC,  
which celebrates its 30th anniversary this year, and will answer questions from the audience.

The program will be held at Trinity Church, 4th and Madison, Covington.

### Important Reminders

- Sunday, September 5th will see the Behringer Crawford Museum host a fireworks party as a fundraiser at the new Drees Pavilion. It's the "best view in the area" of the WEBN/Toyota Fireworks. For reservations, call Linda Robinson at 859-491-4003 or email her at lrobinson@bcmuseum.org. Sponsorships & corporate table rates are available. Individual admission is \$100 per adult, \$25 per child. Ticket prices pay for food, drinks, entertainment, children's activities and shuttle service. (Drees Pavilion, Devou Park, 6:00 – 10:00 p. m.).
- Saturday, September 11th, the Behringer Crawford Museum will host its 12th annual freshART auction at the Museum. \$40 per person in advance, \$50 at the door. Call 859 491-4003. Patrons will bid on art created earlier the same day. Patrons can also bid on other art pieces hanging in the Cohen & Hubbard galleries created days or weeks before for the museum's silent auction. The event includes hors d'oeuvres, dinner, auction, gourmet desserts & specialty coffees. (Behringer Crawford Museum, Devou Park, doors open at 6:00 p. m.).

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**The Kenton County Historical Society**  
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email: [nkyheritage.kchs@Juno.com](mailto:nkyheritage.kchs@Juno.com)

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# John H. Felthaus, Civil War Veteran

(1844-1914)

By: Kathleen Romero

John Felthaus' parents emigrated from Hanover, Germany in 1840, part of the wave of German immigrants that poured into America during that decade. John was born on October 10, 1844, in Covington, Kentucky. He was one of three sons of Herman Felthaus and Catherine Sieffers.

In 1860, while only sixteen years old, John lived under the guardianship of Mr. and Mrs. William Becker. They owned a tobacco shop at 526 Madison Avenue in Covington. John was an apprentice, learning the tobacco trade. It was common in those days to live with someone who was well established in a particular business in order to learn a trade. Learning the tobacco trade would come full circle for John, as we will see later.

On September 12, 1864, at age twenty, John joined the Union Army to fight in the Civil War as part of the 53rd Kentucky Volunteer Regiment. During service, seven of the enlisted men were mortally wounded while two officers and 29 enlisted men were lost by disease.

On December 20, 1864, John's Regiment participated in the Saltville, Virginia raid, in an effort to destroy the South's salt making capability. With the severity of the cold December weather, John sustained frostbite to both feet while participating in this raid.

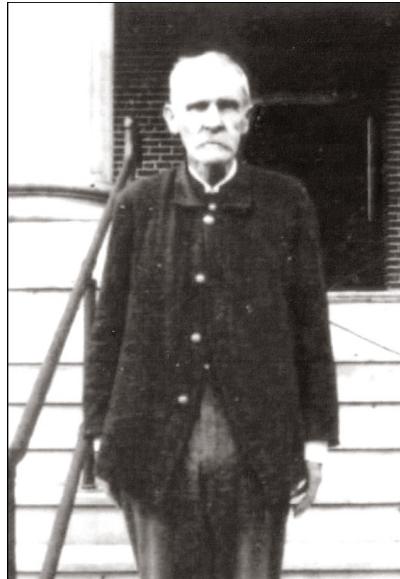
In the latter part of August and the first part of September, 1865, John was in Louisville, Kentucky, camped out in low swampy ground. As a result of that, he contacted malarial fever and typhoid. He was taken to a hotel where he lay sick for two weeks. He almost died because the only available surgeon was gone at that period of time. The result of the illness damaged his liver, spleen, lungs, and kidneys.

## Mustered Out

John was mustered out at Louisville, Kentucky on September 15, 1865 with an honorable discharge. John had enlisted as a private and came out as a corporal. Total time spent in service was one year and sixteen days. As a civilian, he returned to the same tobacco business, located then at 536 Madison Avenue, Covington.

## Marriage

John Felthaus married Bernadine Romer on May 5, 1874. The ceremony took place at St. Aloysius Church, Seventh and Bakewell Streets, Covington. After they married, the couple resided in West Covington and continued to attend St. Aloysius Church. Bernadine was born in Oldenburg, Germany in 1846. Her parents, Herman and Agnes, emigrated here in 1864, during the war. Her father



was a bricklayer. The family lived on Bakewell Street in Covington. Herman was on the building committee for the first St. Aloysius church, which was built in 1865. He was also a Covington city commissioner. Bernadine was the oldest of four children.

John and Bernadine Felthaus had a total of five children—three sons and two

daughters. John gave up the tobacco business and became a Deputy County Sheriff at this time. By December, 1882, John was made a police Lieutenant for the Covington force. Twenty men were added to the force at that time. John and his family lived in the Main Strasse area of Covington, in a home located across the street from St. Aloysius Church.

## Pension

On June 22, 1893, John first applied for his Army pension, only to be turned down repeatedly. Friends would come forth and testify that they were with him constantly in the army and reported that he was a good soldier and a good decent man who had to endure much suffering and pain. They told of how he was healthy when mustered in only to come out frail and sickly. They continued with reports of how he could now only do light work for long periods.

## Suspension

The police and fire departments were going through a major reform which consisted of new rules and regulations, including for the first time, the requirement to wear uniforms. A crackdown on the drinking of alcohol was also put into place. This was a time known as the progressive era and such reforming impulses were common all across the country. John and six other officers were relieved of duty on September 18, 1894 for drinking alcohol. His army friend, Michael Bolan, was also suspended. When one thinks about how many were on the force, between twenty and thirty, six is a very significant number. Friends of the deposed police officers and fire-fighters protested and demanded a meeting immediately. However, the majority of the regular citizens welcomed

the changes. The public expected reform with the election of Mayor Joseph Rhinock. Evil had thrived in Covington because of the carelessness of the old Board of Police Commissioners. They accepted corruption by not suppressing it in its infancy. The police force was reorganized under Rhinock and the cluster of gambling dens and pool-rooms surrounding the “main entrance to the city” were closed down.

The new uniforms arrived at the cost of \$7 each, but the officers found them distasteful. Some of the new rules reforming the department were: absolute dismissal for intoxication while on or off duty, reprimand for indecent, profane, or harsh language, and sleeping while on duty. Entering houses of prostitution, gambling houses or rooms, saloons or sporting houses of any description while on duty was also prohibited unless in the discharge of duty.

John was able to return to the force after a short dismissal. He and his brothers had, by then, started their own tobacco business, but John was glad to be return to police work. The police department in general, including Chief Goodson, disliked the changes that were made. The City Commissioners threatened to charge Chief Goodson with dereliction of duty. He was asked why the officers were not wearing their uniforms and replied, “Because I told them not to.” Many officers were also seen drinking. No charges were ever brought against Chief Goodson, but on November 20, 1895, he resigned after 18 years of service.

### **John's Family**

William, the first-born son of John and Bernadine, died on September 19, 1902. He had studied at the Catholic Institute in Cincinnati preparing for the priesthood. He fell victim to lung trouble and went to El Paso, Texas to study in a drier climate. It was a lonely funeral for William. In the heavy mist of a cold, damp September rain, only the undertaker, gravedigger and hearse driver were present—no friend to drop a tear. William was laid to rest in Concordia Cemetery, El Paso, Texas.

Bernadine died at the age of 58 years on January 17, 1904. She died in her home at 269 East Sixteenth Street, Covington, Kentucky from stomach problems. She is interred at Mother of God Cemetery, Covington.

Eighteen years after his original application in 1912, John's first pension check finally arrived. He was living with his son, Stanley, after retiring from both the police force and the tobacco business. He moved into the Old Soldier's Home in Dayton, Ohio around 1911. On April the 26, 1914, at the age of 70, John passed away at the Old Soldier's Home in Dayton. He had received his pension for only two years. His first-born son and beloved wife preceded him in death. “A good decent man”, his friends would always say. He is buried at Mother of God Cemetery, Covington. Two grandsons of John, Lawrence and Bob Felthaus, live in Kenton County today.



Gun Salute, Sons of Union Veterans  
Photos by Ron Einhaus

### **Dedication of Memorial**

Now, 139 years later, we can reflect on the life of this Civil War veteran. A special ceremony was held on Sunday, July 11, 2004 to unveil a new marker for John, who was not previously recognized for his service for the North in the Civil War. Research by Kathleen Romero, great grand niece, uncovered his records and his plight for benefits and designation.

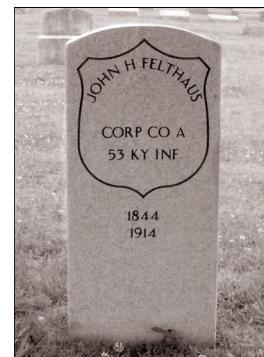


Kathleen Romero



Lawrence and Robert Felthaus

by the Sons of Union Veterans, Sheriff Chuck Korzenborn played Taps echoed by Dustin Einhaus, Morehead State University Music Education Major. Many of the descendants of John H. Felthaus were present for the ceremony. John's new marker is shown here. Complete pictures from the event are available at:



<http://www.roneinhaus.com/felthausceremony.html>

Continued on Page 4



Felthaus Family at Memorial Dedication

### Epilogue

Chief Goodson took a job as the County Detective after he retired, then became Court Deputy. He was known for organizing the wards and police beats of the city, making the police department so effective that many criminals were driven out. His son died three weeks before his death, which heavily preyed on his mind. He passed away in 1910 and his body laid in state at the Elks Lodge. He was buried at Linden Grove Cemetery, Covington.

William S. Williams, who was in the 53<sup>rd</sup> with John, was the last Union Army Veteran to pass away. He died in November of 1937, at the age of 91. He enlisted at the age of fifteen. A statement expressing the one-time soldier's philosophy of life was "Drink plenty of good whiskey and coffee and work hard".

Mike Bolan, John's army friend, also became a police Lieutenant and eventually became a secret service agent for the United States Treasury Department in the Southern District of Ohio. He guarded President Teddy Roosevelt during a visited here in 1906. Mike passed away four months after his friend John.

### Appendix

#### *Saltville Raid*

On Tuesday, December 20, 1864, the Federals came into Saltville, Virginia by two routes—one from Glade Spring and another from Chilhowie, through Lyon's Gap. Saltville residents had heard of the immense number of soldiers gathered together for the purpose of destroying the salt works and was rather upset by the overwhelming thousands of troopers that were coming. Salt was scarce in the Old Dominion for two years. Now it would be practically nonexistent, leaving suppliers of Lee's army with no means of preserving what little meat they could lay their hands on. The salt was shipped by rail or wagon to the hungry men in the trenches outside Petersburg and Richmond.

The Federals, under General George Stoneman, cautiously edged their way into town. At every moment, expecting the defenders to break through with their shrewd strategy and annihilate the troops by the hundreds. But, nothing happened, except the reports of rifles and cannon

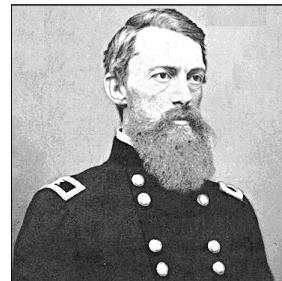
discharges. There were only a few hundred soldiers defending the salt works and most of the defense was simply the noise of exploding shells. Old men and boys, hungry and naked, tired and weary, outnumbered and overpowered, fled to the mountains or surrendered. Adding to the misery, it was extremely cold. Saltville was easily captured in a very short time. This raid was a boost to General Stoneman's career.

Anxiety existed among the inhabitants when the invaders approached the town, but the Yankees did not molest private homes nor willfully destroy. They took food, clothing, horses, and whatever they could find that was actually needed. In some cases, when the soldiers approached a home for food or water and were told of sickness and physical distress, they apparently apologized and quietly went away.

The Yankees reported that they had completely destroyed the salt works and had so blocked the wells that no salt could be made until new wells were dug and pots procured. But, after a careful survey, it was found that the wells could be opened and that the Yankees, in their haste, had overlooked about half the kettles. Several weeks later, the furnaces were up and running and salt was once again being furnished to the various Confederate States.

#### *General Stoneman (1822-1894)*

General Stoneman retired from the army in 1871 and moved to California. He served as governor of California from 1883 to 1887. His wife, Mary, hated political life. Stoneman and his wife settled on a 400-acre estate in San Gabriel Valley. He supported prison reform and staunchly believed in rehabilitating prisoners through parole—so much so that in the last few weeks of his term, Stoneman granted 260 pardons and commuted 146 prison sentences. In 1885, a fire, thought to be set by political enemies, destroyed his ranch home. Mary was devastated and even more so when she learned that he let the insurance lapse so there was no recovery available. His Civil War mementos and most personal possessions were destroyed. He later became estranged from his wife over an alleged affair. He died in September, 1894, at his sister's home in Buffalo, New York of complications from hemorrhoid surgery. There were no military pallbearers at his funeral and his two sons were not present. The army remembered him by naming a park, Stoneman Park, after him in the town of Pittsburg, California. Mary received a monthly pension of just \$50.



Brig. General George Stoneman

#### Sources.

- Kenton county Library
- Covington City Directories
- Census records
- Diocese of Covington Archives
- Death certificates
- Archives, Washington DC.
- A compendium of the war of the rebellion
- Adjutant General's Report
- Book Development of policing in Covington Decedents Lawrence & Robert Felthaus
- Kentucky Post
- The California State Military Museum (Internet)

# Oral History Comes Alive Over the Internet

By: Sharon Kelly-Pigg

For the past twelve years, I have been researching my family history. What started as a day project with my twelve-year old daughter Jennifer in the summer of 1991 has turned into a lifetime of intrigue. Not knowing much about any of my ancestors, I have been overwhelmed with the information that you can find in public records and books in local libraries and most importantly the material that can be obtained from relatives. Most of my material has come from unknown relatives who are also searching for answers—answers to the same questions that I have.... Who were my ancestors? When did they come to America? Why did they come to America? What were their personalities?

In my search, I have found long lost cousins of my father, whom he knew as children by researching my paternal great grandmother's funeral visitors book. I looked through the book and noticed some children's handwriting under the pages titled "Family." Intrigued, I asked my father if he knew the two children who had signed the pages. He thought about it for a few minutes and then announced to me that they were his cousins. I had never heard him speak of these children before. Immediately, he started talking about the times that they visited his grandmother (his Nanny) and the fun that they had. The endeavor was not easy but I found the children. Searching local newspapers, city directories and criss-cross directories, I found the family. It took a few weeks for the family to respond to my search, as I could not acquire a telephone number for them and relied on a good old-fashioned letter. To my delight, my father and his cousins reunited one evening on a riverboat restaurant in Northern Kentucky. His cousin, Alma (known as Amy), flew in from Costa Mesa, California and her two sisters, Carolyn and Norma, living locally, also joined us.

## Fascinating stories

I could write a book on similar findings on my family. Stories that include my fifth great grandfather, Jeremiah Gullion, fighting in the Battle of Blue Licks with Daniel Boone. How the Gullions were some of the first residents of Lexington, living on Mulberry Street. Another story that my paternal grandmother, Martha Jane McDole Kelly, was descended from Blackfoot Indians and still another story that both my paternal and maternal family lines had intersected in the past, coming to Kentucky together from the same two Virginia counties (Fauquier and Albemarle). One of the most fascinating stories that proves oral history should be pursued, comes from my

mother's family line. For years, I heard her cousins convey the story that their grandfather, Henry Schwartz, had been sold for a nickel after his birth. How sad I thought, one of my ancestors sold for a nickel! Bits and pieces of information were handed down to them. I knew that he was born in Jasper, Indiana on November 16, 1858 to German immigrants, that his mother, Anna Linger, had died during childbirth, and that a family member bought him for a nickel from my great great grandfather. His father remarried and had eleven more children.

Fascinated with the nickel story, I was determined to find the other Schwartz family, if indeed they even existed. After all, this was oral history. Most researchers warn you about oral history. How it can be twisted and retold into an entirely new story. However, something inside me told me this was true—that he did have a family that we never knew.

Through my cousins, Joan Pickett McClanahan and Al and Norbert Hartmann, I pieced together additional information on the elusive Schwartz/Linger story. Joan told me that Henry was born John Henry and that his father's name was Nicholas. Norb continued to tell the story about the nickel. I researched all the other information that Norb had conveyed to me and all the facts were 100% accurate.<sup>1</sup>

Realistically, I knew that I should travel to Jasper to do further research. However, I really didn't have time to travel so I turned to the Internet. Years went by as I corresponded with various Schwartz families in the state of Indiana, but nothing produced fruit.

## Wouldn't give up

I was determined not to give up and continued to put out queries. I also researched all Schwartz queries on various websites. Finally, I contacted a woman living in Arizona who told me her family story and I noticed some similarities in the names. She immediately discounted the similarities telling me that her great great grandfather, Nicholas Schwartz, was only married once. Her Nicholas had purchased a farm in Cannelton, Indiana (south of Jasper) and farmed the land during the warm months and mined coal on the same property in the cooler parts of the year. She told me that she didn't think that we were related. How she immediately discounted all the similarities is surprising to me.<sup>2</sup>

I continued to send her emails to inquire further, but she repeatedly refused to believe our similarities. One evening as we were instant messaging back and forth via the Internet, she told me that she had a picture of one of Nicholas's sons' family. She called the family the Matthew Schwartz family. I asked her to send me a copy of the picture so that I could see if his likeness would be of my John Henry (after all, they were half-brothers). She had scanned the picture in the past and sent it as we spoke

Continued on Page 6

on the Internet. As I sat in front of my computer monitor, the photo unveiled slowly on my screen. I couldn't believe what was appearing! She was sending me an original photograph of my grandfather (as a boy), along with his dog and his parents and siblings. I had one just like it in my possession. My picture was hidden away in a box in my closet—mine was the copy; hers the original. Of course, the proof of the family connection was immediate to me, but still, not to her. Even though we had two pictures taken of the same family, on the same day, there was still denial on her part. She were not aware that her great great grandfather had been married previously, or anything about his first-born son. My cousin, Joan had further proof—another picture taken at the same seating. It appeared that my grandfather, Arthur Herman Schwartz, who at the time appeared to be about nine years old, had tried to still his dog and had lost his hat in the process, which I am assuming prompted another picture to be taken. Below are the two pictures, the first picture is in my family's possession and the second belongs to the family from Arizona. I'm certain I found *my* Schwartz family.



Matt Schwartz and Family,  
son of Nicholas Schwartz (original)



Matt Schwartz and Family,  
son of Nicholas Schwartz (our copy)



Schwartz Family

I now know that my great great great grandfather, who was also named Nicholas Schwartz, brought his family from Prussia to America, around the year 1837. My great great grandfather, Nicholas, was born on March 3, 1833 in Germany, and died on April 7, 1912 in Cannelton, Indiana.



Edwin Schwartz and Family

Rosemary Brown, the woman from Arizona, sent me additional photos of the Schwartz's, as well as some pictures of the family farm. Two of those are shown above.

1. John Henry owned a theatre on Main Street, Covington, Kentucky and lost the theatre because he did not have a receipt for chairs he purchased. His wife, Helen Bach Schwartz, owned a bakery on State Street, in Cincinnati's Price Hill. Her cousin was a priest at St. Lawrence Church in Lawrenceburg, Indiana.

2. Her great great grandfather had the same name as mine. She had eleven children. Living so close to Jasper, how could he not be the same Nicholas that I had been unsuccessfully searching for years?

## Then and Now

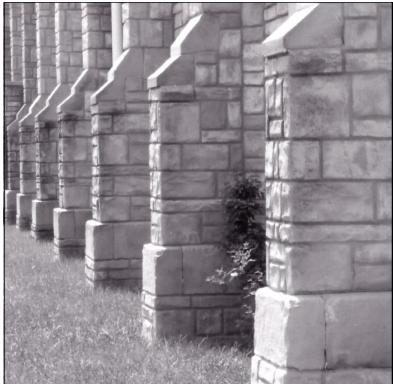


The photograph on the left is the Adams Dry Goods Store, which was raised in 1907. The image was likely taken just weeks before it was demolished, hence the many "Forced to Vacate" signs which decorate the façade. This view is looking northeast from the corner of 7th Street and Madison Avenue, Covington.

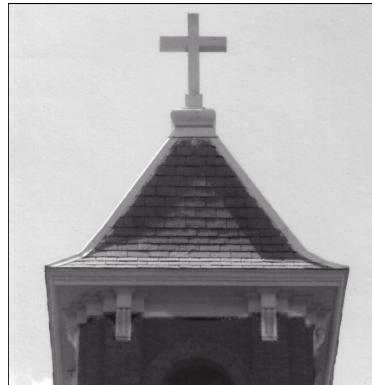
After demolition, the Coppin Department Store was erected on the same site (center photo). Today, (right) the old Coppin building has been renovated and serves the City of Covington at an office building and City Hall. The complete Coppin story was featured in Volume V, No. 2 of Northern Kentucky Heritage.

## Monthly Mystery Photo

*September*



*October*



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

July– St. John’s, Pike Street, Covington  
August– St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church, Latonia

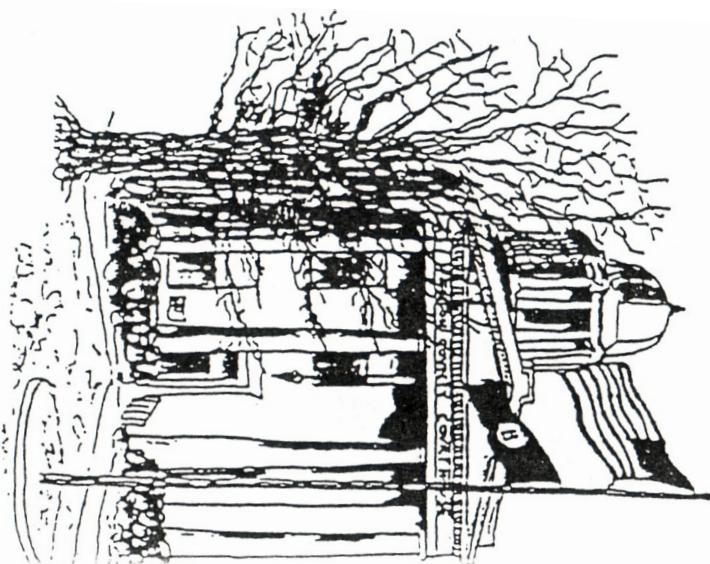
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Dedicated to preserving our heritage as the "Gateway to the South"

# KENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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INSIDE:

John H. Felthaus—Civil War Veteran  
(1844-1914)

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