

The Kenton County Historical Society

7-91



July

Kenton County Historical Society

P.O. Box 641
Covington, Kentucky 41019

REVIEW

July 1991

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING AND PROGRAM
(Also free and open to the public)

On Wednesday evening, August 14, 1991 at 7:00 PM, the Kenton County Historical Society will present two speakers:

Roger Adams will read a major research paper entitled, "PANIC ON THE OHIO!: THE DEFENSE OF COVINGTON, NEWPORT, AND CINCINNATI, 1962." Mr. Adams, a recent graduate of Northern Kentucky University, has done much original research, and he will also have sketches and water colors of fortifications.

Ted Harris will read from his recent paper on B. F. HOWARD, A FOUNDER OF THE NATIONAL BLACK ELKS.

There will be a question and answer period after the talks.

Wednesday evening
August 14
7:00 PM
Kenton County Public Library
Fifth and Scott streets
Covington.

OFFICIAL MEMBERSHIP

For only \$5.00 per year you can become an official member of the Kenton County Historical Society. Check payable to the Treasurer, KCHS, address above.

HISTORY OF THE COVINGTON ART CLUB

The Young Ladies' Art Union was organized on March 14, 1877 by a group of eight students, namely Edith M. Linn, Clemmie Abbott, Carrie Gedge, Lily B. Gedge, Lucy M. Wright, Laura Charles, Mary B. Price, and Jeannie D. McKee, with the object, as stated in the first constitution "of inciting the members to greater effort in the various branches of Art." A regular program was prepared for each meeting and exhibitions were held every six months.

On January 3, 1887 the Young Ladies' Art Union changed its name to the Covington Art Club.

In 1891 the Art Club joined the General Federation of Women's Clubs and on October 8, 1894 it became a charter member of the State Federation of Women's Clubs, being one of nine clubs that helped organize the Kentucky Federation of Women's Clubs.

In April 1900 the Constitution and By-Laws were amended to include the departments of Music and Civics.

In the 1900s the Art Club was primarily interested in playgrounds and parks. The first playground was opened in July 1901 and for twenty years was maintained under the auspices of the Club. Children were taught to sew as well as to play, and school gardens were established. With the city's aid, public clean-up days were instituted, club members making an annual house-to-house canvas to secure the cooperation of householders in this good work.

For several years an active interest was taken in the Hindman settlement and other mountain schools of Kentucky. Barrels of clothing and supplies, traveling libraries and traveling picture galleries were sent out.

In connection with the Smoke Abatement League a vigorous campaign was waged against the smoke nuisance. Visits were made to the city council in the interest of more sanitary conditions in our dairies and through the diligent work of the Covington Art Club a law was passed which provided that all milk sold within the city must be pasteurized.

In 1906 the Art Club added three more departments specified as Arts and Crafts, Literary, and Music. In 1912 the Home Making Department was formed.

The women of the Club investigated the jails between the years 1915 and 1920 and forced the improvement of conditions there.

In 1921 fifty scarlet oak trees were planted in Devou Park and formally presented to the city of Covington.

In 1923 the Garden Circle, Bible Circle and Junior Department were organized and in 1924 the Dramatic Circle was added.

In 1923 the Club members decided to buy a piece of property to be used as a clubhouse. Prior to this decision the Club had met in private homes, in the public library, the Old Ladies Home, and various churches. The location selected was at the northeast corner of Court avenue and Fourth street and was known as the Hermes building. The property was purchased from C. A. J. Parker but never occupied by the Covington Art Club. In 1925 Mr. Walker offered to take back the property, refunding all money paid, with six per cent interest on the amount, also making a gift of \$6,000 as a memorial to Mrs. Walker, who had

been a leader and President of the Club for several terms. The Club accepted his offer.

On February 1, 1926 Articles of Incorporation were filed in the office of the Secretary of State of Kentucky.

In March 1926 it was voted to buy the property at 604 Greenup street for a clubhouse for the sum of \$25,000.00. This property was purchased from Miss Kate Scudder, who had been a member of the Club since before the turn of the century. Courthouse records show that the three-story dwelling was built in three sections. The third floor was added in 1867 and the diningroom and kitchen in 1870. One of the first owners was a family by the name of Crawford.

In 1927 the Literature and Booklovers Department was added. This department started a library which was given the name the Jeanie B. McKee Booklovers' Library as a memorial to Miss McKee, who was a charter member. Valuable books from Miss McKee's library were added to the club library as well as books from Mrs. A. E. Stricklett in memory of her husband, Senator A. E. Stricklett. Senator Richard P. Ernst donated a gift of stock valued at \$500, the income of which was to be used to maintain the library.

In the early 1920s a new insignia was designed by Miss Mary Nourse, long a member of the Art Club. This insignia is a circle with the initials C. A. C. blocked within, and is still used today on our bulletins and yearbooks.

In 1972 the Home Life department started its vision program screening the eyes of pre-school children in the Covington Public schools, Kenton County schools and church schools for the Ky Society to Prevent Blindness. This program is still going on at the present time. It is safe to say that an average of 1800 children are screened yearly.

In 1973 the clubhouse at 604 Greenup was proposed for historical marking, and it is now on the historical register.

At our 100th anniversary in 1977 Covington Mayor George Wermeling proclaimed March 14, 1977 as Covington Art Club Day, and a congratulatory telegram from President and Mrs. Jimmy Carter was read at the anniversary luncheon.

In March 1986 severe winds ripped through Covington and neighboring areas, seriously damaging the clubhouse and property. The roof and third floor were demolished and water damage was heavy. Trees and shrubs were uprooted and had to be replaced. As the house was on the historic register it had to be restored to its original condition. The cost was in the neighborhood of \$100,000 but was entirely covered by insurance.

At the present time the departments are seven in number, namely Arts and Crafts, Bridge, Drama and Music, Garden, Home Life, Literature Booklovers, and Needlework. These departments are responsible for providing the programs, lunches and teas during the year. An art exhibit is given by the club, drawing entries from the public as well as from club members.

Besides their activity in the Art Club a large percentage of the members are engaged in volunteer work in hospitals, nursing homes, charitable institutions and civic projects.

The motto of this club is "Not as though already attained."
(Compiled by Dorothea L. Eichelberger, March 13, 1989)

1920 FEDERAL CENSUS MICROFILM ACQUISITION

Patrons are invited to make contributions to the Kenton County Public Library by purchasing microfilm rolls of the 1920 census which will be available soon. Orders for complete sets of population schedules and orders for both population schedules and soundex for Kentucky placed before January 1, 1992 will be priced at the reduced cost of \$12.50 per roll. You are invited to purchase rolls for the public library (consult the staff) which will make possible maximum early acquisitions of 1920 microfilm rolls. Visa and Mastercard accepted; checks made payable to AGLL Microfilm Sales and Services.

NOTES

Charles King, Kentucky and Local History Librarian, reported that the historical papers, photos, slides of the late John Burns are being processed.

On Thursday evening, July 18, Dr. Louis Thomas, Professor Emeritus from NKU, delivered a talk (with slides) on his topic, "The Ohio river Valley, Entrance into the Interior," before about twenty-two people. Flatboat and keelboat transport was featured, and he also distributed a bibliography list pertaining to this and to the general "Always a River" theme being displayed on the barge docked at the serpentine in Cincinnati at the very time of our program. Dr. Frank Steely from NKU, Phyllis Radcliff from the Museum Center in Cincinnati, and Jane Purdon from the Northern Kentucky Heritage League were among those in attendance. We thank Dr. Thomas and those in attendance for participating.

Kenton County Historical Society
P. O. Box 641
Covington, KY 41012

Kenton County Sesquicentennial-1990
State of Kentucky Bicentennial-1992

Non-Profit
U. S. Postage
PAID
Cov., Ky 41011
Permit # 297