

Kenton County Historical Society

Quarterly Review

December 1979

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J G Carlisle

Memberships are available at \$5 per annum.
Contact the Treasurer at 2843 Ashland Ave.,
Covington, Kentucky.

John G. Carlisle

by John Boh

In John G. Carlisle, who was born in 1835, Kenton County produced a native politician who wielded power almost without interruption from the Civil War up to nearly the turn of the century. During the War between the States he lost some popularity by voting in the Kentucky Legislature to keep the state neutral. In the second Cleveland administration of the 1890's, his political career was finally ended because as Secretary of the Treasury he could not cope with the grave economic difficulties that faced the nation and because he did not appease the rising strength of populism that engulfed his own party.

Carlisle's background had some similarity to those of popular heroes like Andrew Jackson and Abraham Lincoln. His family name seems to have had some prominence through the occupancy of local offices like Justice of the Peace. His ancestors included Revolutionary War officers, and John G. Carlisle himself married the daughter of an officer who had fought with Andrew

Jackson. However, John had to spend half his adolescent life helping his recently widowed mother raise his ten or eleven younger brothers and sisters on the family farm below Covington.

And the fact that his early education was meager in the formal sense, though he was always a dedicated student, had both positive and negative implications for his political career.

His career began in the Kentucky Legislature where he shared the viewpoint of the poorer farmers and laborers of the county. But when he voted for neutrality for his border State, he offended the pro-Union sentiments not only in the county but also in Cincinnati to which his constituency was economically connected. After the Civil War he recovered office but had to fight the harsh terms, and often unjust politics, that the Union victory had brought to the Southern States. It seems, in fact, that at first he was declared loser and only later declared winner after it was found that the Union, or Republican, dominated election machinery had conspired against his probable election. In the end, Carlisle stated that while a Confederate victory always generated a feeling of pride within himself, he never once spoke or acted against the Union flag.

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Christmas Gifts!

BEGINNING AT THE POINT by Allen Webb Smith

In 1977 Mr. Smith published perhaps the most informative and best documented history about this area's beginnings. His book, Beginning at the Point, is a history of Northern Kentucky and its environs from 1751 to 1834 (the year Covington was chartered). The book includes a chronology of events leading to the establishment of Covington and biographical sketches of some of the area's more prominent citizens.

Available at \$4.00 per copy plus \$1.00 for postage and handling.

KENTON COUNTY CEMETERIES, VOLUME 1 by the Kenton County Historical Society Cemetery Committee

In 1977 the Society embarked on a project to locate and copy private family cemeteries (and a few forgotten cemeteries) throughout the county. The hard work of the Society has resulted in a typed Manuscript of 147 pages including a 25 page name index prepared by the staff of the Kenton County Public Library. Scheduled publication in March 1980. LIMITED ED.

Available at \$15.00 per copy (\$13.00 to members) plus \$1.00 for postage and handling.

Send you check today to: Publications Committee, Kenton County Historical Society, 5th and Scott Streets, Covington, Kentucky, 41011

renew

The dues year is from September 1st to August 31st. If you have not renewed your membership please do so today. WE NEED YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT! If you have already renewed, ask a friend to join. Bring him or her to the December Social at the Baker Hunt Foundation. It will be a good time for us to get to know each other a little better-- to share interests.

NAME: Miss, Ms., Mrs., Mr. _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY OR TOWN _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____ COUNTY _____

MEMBERSHIP: Individual...\$5____ (check one) Business, Institutional or Professional..\$15____
Student.....\$2____ Sustaining.....\$50____
Contributing\$10____ Lifetime.....\$100____

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: KENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
2843 Ashland Avenue
Covington, Kentucky

John G. continued from page one-

After the War he was elected to the State Senate and then to the office of Lieutenant Governor. In 1876 he first was elected to Congress. Within a few years he began a period of six years as Speaker of the House of Representatives. A key issue in those days was the taxation on imported goods into this country. Carlisle and others contended that this tax artificially raised the price on goods that the farmer and laborer needed because imports could not compete, and therefore reduce the prices of domestically produced goods. Carlisle claimed to want to use the Tariff only as a source of Federal income but not to protect domestic manufacturers from foreign competition.

Carlisle came to be rated as one of the better Speakers who ever presided over the House of Representatives. He was a consummate parliamentarian who practiced the art to its last detail. He refused to relax the rule on quorum so that the Democratic Party usually needed near unanimous consent to get a measure passed. This self taught man was not given to compromise on this or other matters of the Constitution. Not given to emotional oratory or other common methods for controlling men and events, he largely failed as Speaker and central figure in his party to get programs enacted.

As Secretary of Treasury in the second Cleveland Administration, Carlisle failed to solve problems relating to the regulation of currency and recovery from economic depression. As a believer in certain natural economic laws, he came to be associated in the public's eye with corporate and banking interests. On October 22, 1896, Carlisle could not make a speech in Covington without the threat of physical violence.

Carlisle is to a degree a forgotten man because his was not a magnetic personality. He did not pursue popularity; he left few letters and papers for historical study. In public speeches he was cold, deliberate, precise, logical. Rather than appeal to moral and religious teachings, he stated his case in the simplest terms of justice and equity. Possibly he was a martyr of his limited, self-taught viewpoint and to harsh economic times. He is now buried in Linden Grove Cemetery.

Décember Meeting



THE SOCIAL EVENT OF '79
WE MEET AT THE HISTORIC
BAKER HUNT FOUNDATION,
EXHIBITS, A TOUR, &
REFRESHMENTS

620 GREENUP ST, COVINGTON
7 TO 9 PM
DECEMBER 4TH
RSVP. CALL SHERYL KUES
331-3624

bring
a friend or two

AS A COURTESY TO THE MEMBERS OF THE
SOCIETY, THE KENTON COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
HAS PROVIDED THE ATTACHED FLYER.

new book

In 1977, the Society embarked on a project to locate and copy private family cemeteries and a few "forgotten" cemeteries throughout the county. The hard work of the Society's Cemetery Committee has resulted in a typed manuscript of 147 pages including a 25 page name index prepared by the staff of the Kenton County Public Library.

As the project is complete, the Society is now making this invaluable resource available to individuals and libraries.

The Society is now taking pre-publication orders for KENTON COUNTY CEMETERIES, Vol.1. The Society will publish the volume at 15.00 (plus 1.00 postage and handling) upon receipt of the first fifty orders. Members of the Society will receive a \$2.00 discount. Libraries can be billed. See attached order form.

In Memory

Often in an organization one person will contribute with an energy disproportionate to the contributions of the other members. During the past year, Larry Duba, Program Committee Chairman, displayed such dedication by developing a series of programs for our monthly meetings. Although our Secretary, Sheryl Kues, had been a friend of this Delhi, Ohio, native during his student days at Thomas More College, most of us knew Larry only too briefly. Since the Kenton County Historical Society cannot change the fact of his tragic death, it can only be indebted to his memory and grateful for his brief membership.

oral history

Taped interviews so far produced by the Oral History Committee are located in the Kentucky and Local History section of the Kenton County Public Library in Covington. Behind locked glass, they are enclosed in folders which number five volumes, with the call number KR 907/K370. They can be found in the catalog under the society's name. These recollections are available for in-library listening. Subjects include: West Covington, Piner, Fiskburg, Independence, Morningview, the old Latonia Race Track, and Devou Park.

LIBRARY

The Library Committee reports the following gifts to the Society:

Formation of the Union, 1970, and a copy of Prologue were presented by Ted Harris.

A Guide to Genealogical Records in the National Archives, Northern Kentucky, 1970, by the Chamber of Commerce, and four Registers of the Kentucky Historical Society were left at the library by an unknown donor.

Several recent issues of the Filson Club Quarterly and the Register of the Kentucky Historical Society were donated by David L. Ringo.

Several files of materials on early local families, historic houses, and other items of interest were presented by Allen W. Smith.

Mrs. James Tully brought in a Revised Index Map of Northern Kentucky dated 1939 and two snapshots of the Holmes Castle dated February 19, 1928.

Seven 8"x10" glossy photographs of a log cabin in Kenton County were made by Joyce Sanders and presented to the Society.

A fine collection of 80 glass negatives, circa 1900, made by Mr. August J. Koenig, were presented by the Von Handorf family in memory of Mr. Andrew Stratman. Prints have been made for the photograph collection of the Kenton County Public Library.

Sandy Cohen presented a massive volume of Sanborn Insurance maps showing the physical plant layouts of whiskey manufacturers in Kentucky and surrounding states, circa 1950.

Dr. Joe Gastright contributed a fine photograph of the Holmes Castle and an accompanying essay by Ms. Cheryl Baldrige. Joe also presented a biographical sketch of Vactor T. Chambers, noted 19th century scientist, born in Boone County in 1830 and who resided in Covington from 1854 until his death in 1883.