

The Kenton County Historical Society



April 1992

Kenton County Historical Society

P.O. Box 841
Covington, Kentucky 41011

R E V I E W

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ANNOUNCEMENT: MEMBERSHIP MEETING WITH PROGRAM
(free and open to the public)

On Tuesday evening, April 7, 7:00 PM, at the Erlanger branch of the Kenton County Library, Mr. Robert Stevie will give an audio/visual (slides) presentation on,

GERMAN IMMIGRATION AND STEAMBOAT HISTORY

Many German immigrants reached their destinations by steamboat. And many immigrants contributed to American steamboat industry. Mr. Stevie's collection of slides will explore these themes in anticipation maybe of this year's upcoming TALL STACKS spectacle. Mr. Stevie is President of Elder Photographic, Inc., Cincinnati. There will be a brief business meeting before the program.

Tuesday evening

April 7

7:00 PM

Erlanger Branch,

Kenton Co. Library

(next to Krogers,

across from Van Leunen's)

Public Meeting Room at Library entrance.

BEHRINGER CRAWFORD MUSEUM

Discover the centuries of history carried by the waters of the Ohio river. In connection with the Kentucky Bicentennial and Tall Stacks, the Museum will display a series of exhibits entitled THE OHIO RIVER: AVENUE OF CHANGE. The first exhibit will be, THE MYSTERY OF THE SPALAWHATHEEPI: THE GENESIS OF THE OHIO RIVER VALLEY (March 29, 1992-June 7, 1992), which will explore prehistorical natural life and also Native American life along the Ohio river and its tributaries. The public is invited to see the display at the Museum in Devou Park.

ORGANIZING SCHOOLS FOR BLACK CHILDREN, 1866-1872

The first recorded attempt at the education of blacks in Covington, Kentucky was in September 1866. The Freedmen's Aid Society had established a school consisting of 44 boys and 48 girls with Miss. Wolf as the teacher. On July 9, 1869, in Louisville, Kentucky, the Freedmen's Bureau of schools for Kentucky held a State Education Convention. The delegates elected to attend that convention from Covington, Kentucky were Isaac Black and J. W. Grant, but twenty other blacks from Covington also attended. At that convention Major Stone from the Freedmen's Bureau stressed the need for blacks throughout the State of Kentucky to establish their own schools because the Freedmen's Bureau would soon stop funding the efforts of the Freedmen's Aid society. Two schools were already in existence at the time but independent of the Freedmen's Aid Society. However, there was a need to combine their resources. On August 4, 1869, a meeting was held to organize a school board to take charge of the schools. There were two tickets with three names each placed on the agenda representing each church to be elected. The Methodist Church on Third Street (now Ninth Street United Methodist) had the names of King Gray, Jerry Moss, and Alexander White; and the Baptist Church on Bremen Street (now First Baptist on East Ninth) had the names of Jacob Price, Mr. Skillman, and Mr. Robinson.

On June 19, 1870, the Freedmen's Bureau proposed to build a school and allotted \$15,000 for the purpose, provided the Covington City Council and school board provide a suitable lot. Neither the City Council nor school board took action on the proposal. With the need for additional space being paramount, the black school board consolidated the two schools and on September 18, 1870, when the Methodist Church moved from Third Street to a building on Madison Street, a larger school was organized and a corps of competent teachers employed. On September 24, 1870, the black citizens of Covington, Kentucky decided to petition the City Council at their next meeting to act on the earlier request of the Freedmen's Bureau

and donate a suitable lot to build a school. The November 17, 1870 Cincinnati Daily Gazette gives this account: "there are seventy-four black children in daily attendance at the school lately opened in the Methodist Church on Madison street, between Second and Third Streets. Miss Perkins, a black woman has charge of the school." However, by early January 1871, the school was closed due to lack of funds but was reopened by late February 1871.

The lack of funds was a major concern for black people in Covington, Kentucky trying to keep their school open. This concern prompted them to use a different approach in seeking funds. On February 13, 1871, they partitioned the Covington School Board on the division of school funds. In their petition, they requested that the school board provide a separate school for the education of black children, the expenses to be paid out of the revenue derived from the taxes on property owned by black people. The petition was referred to the Committee on Law of which Judge Pryor was Chairman. At the meeting of the school board on February 17, 1871, the committee submitted a report, the substance of which states, "the school board has not the authority to act in the matter, not having possession of the funds referred to in the petition. The account of taxes paid by the black people of Covington is quite small, not exceeding fifty or sixty dollars annually, and this money is in the hands of the Sheriff, and can only be reached by proper application to the County court." Based on that decision by the Covington School Board, the school continued in the Methodist Church and raised the necessary funds by other means. In September 1871, the black school board decided to hire a Principal for their school with John McCleod being selected. In early 1872, William L. Grant had a meeting with several black leaders from Covington concerning a school building, the results being the Seventh Street school and an elementary school on Scott with a annex.

The Construction of a school building for the education of black children at the close of the Reconstruction period was the result of hard work that began in September 1866.

(By Ted Harris, Covington, Kentucky)

HISTORICAL CONFEDERATION OF KENTUCKY (NORTHERN REGION)

A meeting of organizations in the Northern Region has been scheduled for June 20, 1992 at the Boone County Library, Florence. The agenda will include a review of events since our meetings last year; discussion of the remaining activities for Kentucky's Bicentennial celebration; other reports and discussions. It is hoped that each historical/cultural organization has considered joining, or renewing membership, in HCK, an affiliate of the Kentucky Historical Society. Membership is \$15.00 per year, \$40.00 for three years. As you know, with membership an organization (or individual) receives for free the bimonthly Circuit Rider magazine, The Directory of Historical Organizations, Speakers Bureau, and Publications Survey.

THE KENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY IS A NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION INCORPORATED IN KENTUCKY WITH THE PURPOSE OF PRESERVING AND DISPLAYING LOCAL HISTORY. MEMBERSHIP IS \$5.00 PER PERSON PER YEAR. ANYONE INTERESTED IN LOCAL HISTORY, GENEALOGY, ETC. IS INVITED TO PARTICIPATE.

CORRECTIONS (SEE LAST MONTH)

In 1905 the Houston, Stanwood, Gamble Company built its new boiler building on a lot on the east side of Philadelphia street (200 block). The McDonell Company purchased Republic Steel in 1907. The original city of Covington extended south to Sixth.

OLD CHURCH, 200 BLOCK OF MADISON, COVINGTON



(later a tobacco warehouse, and The Reliance Textile and Dye Works 211-215 Madison Ave. Demolished in the 1930s)

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

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