

THE COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY'S 200TH BIRTHDAY
JUNE 1, 1992

The Kenton County Historical Society



1792
the Celebration
1992
Kentucky

August 1992

Kenton County Historical Society

P. O. Box 641
Covington, Kentucky 41012

R E V I E W

August 1992

ANNOUNCEMENT: A SUMMER OUTING

On Saturday, August 8th, at 1:00 PM, the Kenton county Historical Society will host a lunch and tour of the passenger train at the Railway Expo, 315 West Southern ave., Latonia. 1:00-2:00 PM a brown bag lunch in the railroad dining car; at 2:00 PM tours conducted by interpreters.

Everyone is asked to bring their own food and drink (there are carryouts nearby). \$4.00 per adult and per child to cover the dining car rental and to cover the tour. Please call 491-RAIL to make reservations so that enough tour guides will be available. Give number in party, etc.

BOONE-KENTON-CAMPBELL ATLAS

A reprint of the 1883 atlas for the three counties is in the works. It will show old towns with streets and in the outskirts property owners. Many businesses churches, commercial sites can be seen. "Class A Library Bound," limited edition, for distribution by September 1992. \$15.00 plus \$4.00 for shipping. Checks to Boone County Historical Preservation Office, P. O. Box 900. Burlington, Ky 41005. Call (606) 334-2111.

BEHRINGER CRAWFORD MUSEUM

The exhibit, "Tales of a Wilderness Passage: Artifacts of an Inland River Voyage," will continue through September 13th. The exhibit is presented in conjunction with the Cincinnati Tall Stacks and the Kentucky Bicentennial Celebration. Admission \$2.00 adults; \$1:00 per child. The Northern Kentucky Historic Back Roads Booklet (sponsored by the Bicentennial Committee) is available (\$5.00 plus \$2.00 for postage). Behringer Crawford Museum. P. O. Box 67. Covington, Ky 41012. Purchase copies for their maps, illustrations, historical data, and as a souvenir of Kentucky's 200th birthday celebration. Copies also available at the Convention and Visitors Bureau, Covington.

LOVELL AND LAIDLEY--FROM KANAWHA SALT FAMILIES

"These salt producers, in order to protect themselves from outside importations, did a surprising and revolutionary thing. They banded themselves together into the first monopoly or 'trust' in America, with the lawyer Joseph Lovell as originator. Formed in November 10, 1817, this organization was known as the 'Kanawha Salt Company'...."

----Pioneers and Their Homes on Upper Kanawha

Whether the first trust or not, lawyer Lovell did come from a "first family." Joseph Lovell, Jr. was born in 1793 in London to Joseph Lovell (soon deceased) and Lady Shapton. He came to America in 1804 with his family (including stepfather Major James Bream), studied law at Richmond, came to Charleston in 1814, married Betty Washington Lewis, (a granddaughter of George Washington's only sister), engaged in merchandising, politics, salt manufacturing, and practiced law. The Kanawha Salt Company remained preeminent salt producers in the Ohio valley until the early 1850s when poor management, new competition, the 1861 flood, and the disruptions of the Civil War undercut the company's superior position.

A number of Lovell's descendants resided in Covington, Ky. His oldest living son, R. C. M. Lovell, was a salt dealer and then a coal merchant. His second oldest living son, Howell Lewis Lovell (1824-1900), was born in Charleston and attended the University of Virginia. After the Civil War he joined Rich, Lovell, Buffington in the tobacco business in Cincinnati on Water street. Soon in 1873 Rich retired and Lovell and Buffington expanded with the erection of a five story factory at 235-237 Scott street in Covington. When first occupied in 1875, 125 workers were employed, according to The Ticket newspaper (7-27-75). In 1893 boosters proclaimed that the company employed 80, produced 2,000,000 pounds annually (including the "Fountain" brand), with gross revenue at \$3 million (Ky Post, 3-18-93).

According to Ruth Woods Dayton in her Pioneers and their Homes on Upper Kanawha (1947), the Laidley family came to the Kanawha valley somewhat later. James Madison Laidley (1809-1896) purchased 366 acres from the widow of

Joseph Lovell, Jr., in 1850. His father, James Grant Laidley (a lawyer), served in the War of 1812, and his grandfather, Thomas, served in the Revolutionary War. One of James Madison Laidley's ten children was Frederick Alexander Laidley (1841-1931). While his father had been a prominent lawyer, a member of the Virginia legislature, and a wealthy salt manufacturer, Frederick achieved possibly greater prominence along the great stretches of the Ohio river valley.

Frederick was born at present-day Huntington (founded in 1871), attended public schools in Charleston, ran a store, and manufactured salt. Then during the Civil War he "took charge" of the Annie Laurie (built in 1864 for the Cincinnati-Charleston trade) when it engaged in the movement of troops. In 1867 he sold his interest in the Annie Laurie (Way's Packet Directory). The same year in Cincinnati he was listed as an agent for Kanawha salt. By 1869 he had taken up residence at 308 Garrard street in Covington. Involved in a succession of partnerships, Laidley in the 1870s also achieved prominence in Cincinnati pork packing.

After the Civil War various packet companies were joined to form the Cincinnati, Portsmouth, Big Sandy and Pomeroy company. This "White Collar" combine not only eliminated competition. From 1873 to 1881 it enjoyed a contract with the C and O Railroad to carry freight and passengers between the river terminus at Huntington, West Virginia and the various river ports. By 1886 the White collar line had consolidated with the Cincinnati-Memphis Packet company on the lower Ohio. In 1887 the old Louisville-Cincinnati Mail Line (in which Laidley had a controlling interest) joined the Cincinnati-Memphis in the combine.

In the early 1880s Laidley bought stock in the White collar line. In 1890 he and his partners took over and Laidley soon became President and General Manager. In response to the long term decline of river business, Laidley concentrated on the old Louisville-Cincinnati trade. In doing this Laidley was preserving and advancing a segment of trade which had long been distinctive between the two big old river cities. The old Louisville-Cincinnati Mail line was often said to be the pioneer packet company, and the first to schedule daily trips between cities (by 1831). And (circa. 1830-1870) the line had a U. S. Mail franchise contract (until awarded to railroads).

In the heyday of steamboat service, the line had run the best steamboats. But a collision (1868) involving the America and the United States helped cause the later consolidation. For the trade in the later 1890s Laidley acquired the City of Louisville, the City of Cincinnati, and the Indiana. They were new, fine boats, noted for speed. In fact the Louisville set a long-standing speed record. Then with business in steady decline, expenses up, the smaller boats (Loucinda and Kentucky) were used; the Louisville and the Cincinnati were retired at the Cincinnati wharf when wrecked by the Great Ice Gorge, January 1918. This disaster effectively ended the career of the then sickly and elderly Captain Laidley.

Previously the Memphis trade had been "abandoned"; about 1906 the Pomoroy Co. was sold to Gordon C. and Mary Becker Greene. However, after the ice disaster, the Louisville and Cincinnati Packet Co. was sold to a group headed by Pittsburg millionaire John W. Hubbard. The new owners ran such boats as the America, Kentucky, John W. Hubbard, Queen City, and the Cincinnati. But Commodore Hubbard's business went bankrupt, and in 1931 remnants including the Kentucky and the John W. Hubbard were sold to the Greene line. This line soon featured the Tom Greene and the Chris Greene. Despite other investments, passenger service between Cincinnati and Louisville was soon eliminated. And later, packet service upriver was called off. In recent years the Greene line has operated the Delta Queen as a tourist boat.

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"Commodore" Laidley was one of the early members of the Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce. Laidley, a salt merchant, relocated to Cincinnati after Chicago had surpassed Cincinnati in pork packing (early 1860s), but before railroads had eliminated general river transporting. From the 1880s into the 1970s Laidley and his descendents occupied a great Italianate mansion (the Lowry-Laidley house) at 404 East Second street, Covington. At 326 stands a "huge Second Empire mansion...built between 1877 and 1886" (Lovell-Graziani house) for H. L. Lovell, Sr. (Langsam, Licking-Riverside District). And in 1886 H.L. Lovell, Jr. married into the Fallis family. Daniel Fallis, a banker who spent childhood in Virginia, had in 1861 purchased the Porter-Fallis-Lovell mansion ("Mimosa") at 412 East Second from merchant Thomas Porter. Thus descendents from old Virginia families resided in Covington across the bridge from Cincinnati. (John Boh)

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