

KENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P. O. Box 641, Covington, Kentucky 41012

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KCHS MEETING

DATE Saturday April 10
TIME Noon til 4 PM
PLACE Oxley House
Independence
PROGRAM Tour of Oxley House
and Museum

DIRECTIONS

Drive east on I-275.
Take Independence Exit, Rt 17
(3-L Highway).
Turn right off exit to Rt 17.
Continue on Rt 17 past construction
at top of Independence Hill where
new homes are being built.
Continue 1 mile more and you will
see Oxley House on the left and the
Schadler home next door.
Park in church lot across Hwy.

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From the President.....

Now that the new publication "Newport Barracks: Kentucky's Forgotten Military Installation" has been printed, I want again publicly thank member Rita Hudepohl Stevie for mentoring this project. She coordinated our work with that of Campbell County's Society. This has truly been a worthy project. Most of all I thank her for her generous \$1000 contribution toward the publication costs. This resulted in a 50% subsidy of these costs.

In addition to the potential of publishing John Burns' Covington history, another new project is developing. Martha Thrasher has assembled negatives of 20 historic photos of Crescent Springs, collected originally for use in the city's Bob Evans Restaurant. She has kept them together for our archival copying before returning the negatives to their owners. They will be added to the Kenton County Library's photo collection.

From the Program Coordinator.....

The gracious president of Independence Historical Society, Miss Zona King, will guide our tour back to 1847. Mayor Schadler restored this old Louisiana-styled house to its original state; no electric or running water, completely furnished with such things as a corn husk bed. Learn why it's called Oxley House.

We meet at Mayor Schadler's home next door to Oxley House. We will lunch first at noon. Please bring your lunch. The drinks and dessert will be provided. After a short meeting, we will begin our tour. For more information, call Nancy Grall at 647-7340.

Announcing.....

OLD TIME RADIO & NOSTALGIA CONVENTION

in the Marquis Room, The Radisson, 11320 Chester Rd. Cincinnati, O.
April 23-24, 1999 Hours: Friday 9 AM - 9PM Saturday 9 AM - 4.
Featuring Bob Hasting (Archie Andrew, McHales Navy), Rosemary Rice (Archie Andrew, I Remember Mama), Fred Foy (announcer on the Lone Ranger, Sergeant Preston, Green Hornet), Clive Rice (Bobby Benson), Peg Lynch (Ethel & Albert), and Barney Beck (sound affects artist on The Shadow, Superman, Bob & Ray, Nick Carter).
Admission \$7 per day, Saturday dinner \$30, Dealer tables, \$40 each.
For more information and registration call or write Bob Burchett,
(606) 282-0333, 10280 Gundpowder Rd. Florence, KY 41042

An Irish Covington Family by Nancy Montague Grall

My great uncle was Captain Henry Ethelbert Bush of Covington's Fire Company No. 5 at 17th and Scott. For 63 years, Captain Bush was married to one of this world's most comforting and loving of women, Katherine (Katie) Rohan, sister to my grandmother, Margaret (Maggie) Rohan Montague. Henry and Katie were both born in Covington.: Henry in 1855. Kate in 1858.¹

Uncle Henry and Aunt Katie were married in 1877 and had eight children. Their home, an imposing three-story brick, stood at 20 East 12th Street just behind St. Mary's Cathedral.²

T'was mighty modern!
Henry and Katie's house had one of the first indoor bathrooms in the city and cold, running water as well. That precious lavatory was built right under the staircase in the front hall. For many a time, their nieces, nephews, and grandchildren were staying with them. Along with the eight children of their own, there was always a waiting line at the door under the front staircase. Their granddaughter, Toddy, told me this story so many times that I feel like I was in that lavatory myself.

Uncle Henry and Aunt Katie were the best of parents and were surely meant for each other. In their day, they were known as great dancers. They won many a prize for their graceful waltzing.

Uncle Henry, a fine moral example to anyone who knew him, was known as Cap' Bush. He joined the Covington Fire Department in February 1883, and stayed with Covington's fire department for 47 years. He became captain, and was

a tower of strength to the men of old Company No. 5.

Department and family stories abound in telling of Cap' Bush's heroism as a fireman. One day a toddler, a curious little fellow, fell into an outhouse hole. He went under more than once. It was an oft-used facility, but Cap' Bush didn't hesitate to dive in and rescue the child. This happened more than once to several children. Another harrowing rescue performed by Cap' Bush was reported by the *Kentucky Post* :

.....one of the narrowest escapes was when he [Bush] leaped into a pond at 17th and Greenup Streets in 1884, to save a man who fell through a hole in the ice. Bush lost track of the hole after reaching the man and nearly drowned before he located it again.....

Bush has been in the hospital seven times as a result of accidents, but he still retains his courage."³

Henry Bush was of medium size all around, and didn't look like a man of courage. An anonymous poet's lines describe his character.

He wasn't cheap or shallow,
but his course ran deep,
And it was pure. You know the kind,
Not many in life you find
Whose deeds outrun their words so far
That more than what they seem, they are.

Captain Henry Bush died in 1943 at age 88. All of Covington's fire engines - every last one - were present at Cap' Bush's funeral. He

had served under five chiefs: W. H. Glore, Joseph Meyers, John Lemker, George Lytle, and Edward Griffith. Katie mourned her husband of 63 years and was heard repeating Emily Bronte's lines,

No later light has lightened up
my heaven:
No second morn has ever
shone for me:
All my life's bliss from thy
dear life was given --
All my life's bliss is in the
grave with thee.....

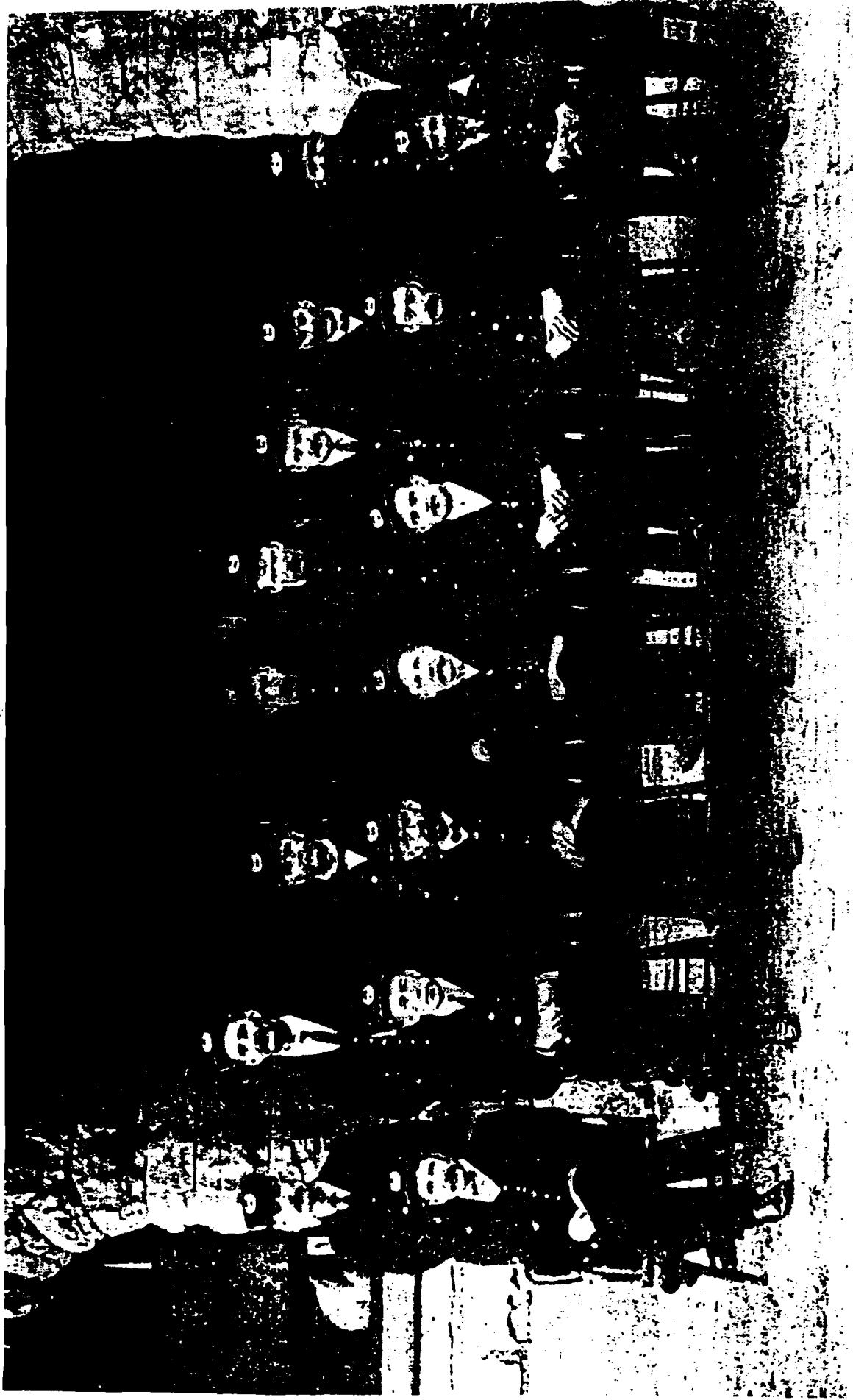
She always added, "in the grave, Henry, with thee."

She lived only three more years and died at age 88. Her daughter Kate inherited the great old brick house and sold it to the Cathedral. The Church got that much needed parking lot where people park to this day to do their Sunday worshipping of God. Though their home is gone, that great Covington fireman, Captain Henry Ethelbert Bush and his loving wife, Katie, will never be forgotten in the hearts of their family.

And Katie's sister, my grandmother, Maggie (known as the "pretty one") - well that's a curiously interesting story for another day.

Endnotes

1. Kenton County records. Katie and Maggie were daughters of Patrick J. Rohan of County Cork, Ireland. With his red hair and delightful way, Patrick was the first comedian Irish families called to cheer them at wakes. Patrick made a profession of this practice, stopping at the saloon with the mourners after the wake until the wee hours.
 2. The house was built by a doctor. St. Mary's began in 1890s.
 3. *The Kentucky Post*, 29 April 1927.
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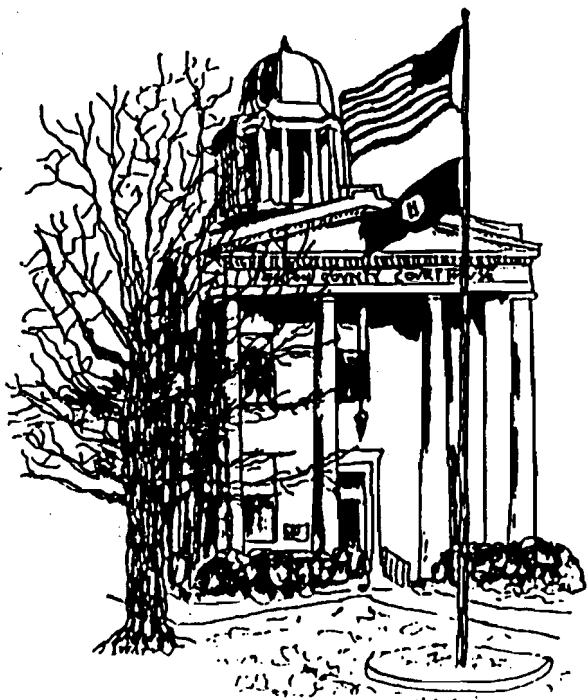


These firemen of 1910 had become fixtures, as their political boss held on year after year; he was a hard John J. Craig. **Top row, from left: Captain Henry Bush, Big Joe Whittaker, Assistant Chief Tom Davy was the Chief), Gus Schuler, Pete Halloran, Charlie Payne, Zip Fleishmen, Pop Hilker, Herman Hut row: Matt Reed, Captain William McAvoy, Henry Deye, Bill Kathman, Captain Joe Broderick, Captain Engineer Johnny Kingsley, and Jake Holmes.** *Alcohol, Henry started w/ Fire Dept in 1883, F. 2. 1.*

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P. O. Box 641
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Dedicated to preserving our heritage as the "Gateway to the South"