

KENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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KCHS MEETING

DATE Saturday August 7
TIME 8:30 - 3:30
PLACE Holmes H. S.
PROGRAM RESPECT

All day workshop intended to help teachers, student, administrators and community members address and celebrate diversity in the classroom and our community. Bobby DeLaughter will speak at 9 am.

Bulletin

August 1999

The August KCHS program is to join a conference on racism, R.E.S.P.E.C.T., at Holmes High School Auditorium on Saturday, August 7 at 8:30 AM. Mr. Bobby DeLaughter, assistant prosecuting attorney Hinds County, Jackson, MS will discuss the reopening of the Medgar Evers murder case on which the film "Ghosts of Mississippi" is based. He will discuss successful methods for educating our community in tolerance. Please plan to attend and learn what we as individuals can do to stop the subtle racism that abounds in Northern Kentucky. Mr. DeLaughter's talk begins at 9 AM. The entire day is free. If you wish to have lunch please register by calling Karen Cheser, 344-8888 Ext. 106 or e-mail: Kcheser@kenton.k12.ky.us by 7/31.

Nancy Grall, Program Coordinator

The KCHS Board has long been aware that racism in our community reaches back to the historical roots of Covington and surrounding areas. The segregated schools were just the tip of the iceberg. Lynching was common in the early days and as late as 1899, thirty-one years after the Civil War. Recently in Covington we have had cross burnings and murders, all rooted in the lack of tolerance for different races and cultures.

When R.E.S.P.E.C.T. [Reaching Every Student, Parent and Educator through Curriculum Training] came to our attention, the Board felt it was important for KCHS to have a presence in this day of active introspection initiated by Church Women United, and to support it financially. Other support has come from local churches, corporations and businesses.

Advice was solicited from the superintendents of Covington Independent and Diocesan Schools, and Sheldon Rox, Commonwealth of Kentucky's Commission on Human Rights on the day's educational format.

Mr. Bobby DeLaughter, assistant prosecutor from Mississippi [who reopened the Medgar Evers murder case] will discuss methods for eliminating racism and will show portions of "Ghosts of Mississippi," the film based on the prosecution and conviction of Byron De La Beckwith 20+ years later.

The afternoon speaker is Dr. Larry Bell, national speaker/educator and former Director of Multicultural Education for Prince Georges County near Washington, DC.

The focus of this free conference is for educators, but is open to community leaders and the general public. [Teachers will be given six hours of continuing education credit for participating.] Fifteen elective workshops are also available, including one led by STAR, local students working toward eliminating racism in their schools. Take-home educational materials are available to all.

JoAnn Brown, Editor

WEB SITE <http://www.kenton.lib.ky.us/~histsoc/>

Leah Konicki Resigns As Historic Preservation Officer

The Importance of this Position to the Development of a City

The Kenton County Historical Society would like to thank Leah Konicki for her work as the City of Covington's Historic Preservation Officer for the last twelve years. Ms. Konicki resigned as of July 2, and will be missed. During her tenure, Covington enjoyed such preservation triumphs as the restoration of the old Bavarian Brewery, now Jillian's, the old Hermes building, now Jack Quinn's Irish Pub, and the beginning of rehabilitation of the old Northern Bank building, known as the Mosler Safe building, which will become a branch of the Bank of Kentucky.

Some months ago one of Covington's City Commissioners spoke of scrapping the position of Historic Preservation Officer, or combining it under one person covering Covington, Newport and Bellevue—cities which, though smaller, already have very active preservation positions of their own. It is time to review the Office of Historic Preservation and its importance to our city and, in fact, to our region and our state.

Covington has 15 National Register Historic Districts, which is quite a large number for a city of its size. Some of these districts are comprised of grand antebellum homes such as those in the historic Licking Riverside neighborhood; some contain fine examples of 19th Century Italianate commercial structures; others are made up of a diverse architectural collection of homes where families have lived and worked and loved and died for generations. Taken as a whole they color Covington as a rich and interesting place, a genuine com-

munity.

In recent years the Disney Corporation has manufactured a "replica" of 19th century-style American Main Street town, and people are flocking to it. Desperate for an image that this kind of town calls to mind, the feeling of community, they are waiting in line to purchase a chance to "live" there.

Here in Covington we have the real thing. We just need sufficient vision for the future, a vision which does not destroy what can never be replaced. All the gold in Disneyland will never create the real thing.

The Kentucky State government in Frankfort and planning entities throughout this region agree on the importance of "cultural" or "heritage" tourism as a boon for economic development. Nationally it is recognized that these tourists have abundant disposable income and they are willing to part with it, but they want to experience something meaningful and real, something that has developed over time, something that they can't find at every other expressway exit.

Covingtonians don't need to create artificial mega-projects to lure these tourists. At the dawn of the new millennium, a diverse and livable historic community is *itself* a tourist attraction. Those of us lucky enough to live and work here get to call that same place home.

The City of Covington's Office of Historic Preservation is one of the most important tools in crafting that vision for the future, a vision which takes full advantage of our irreplaceable asset, and at

the same time enriches and protects our home.

Covington has an extremely active Historic Tax Credit program. One of the most important jobs of the Preservation Officer is helping developers put together Historic Tax Credit packages to bring our old treasures back to life. (Hopefully, if the Home Owners Tax Credit legislation passes Congress, that tax benefit, now only available to commercial property owners, will extend to home owners also, thus requiring even more help from the Preservation Officer.)

The City enjoyed the second highest number of tax credit projects in Kentucky, surpassed only by Louisville, according to information just released by the Kentucky Heritage Council. However, comparing the number of designated historic structures in Louisville's 32 historic districts with the number of structures in Covington's 15 districts, Covington has five times more tax credit projects per historic building than Louisville.

There were a total of 16 tax credit projects in Covington during 1998, out of a total of 72 projects for the entire state. These 16 projects represent a total dollar investment in Covington of nearly 9 million dollars. Among those projects were Jack Quinn's Irish Pub, Scalea's Italian Restaurant and Deli and the Mosler Safe Building which is now under rehabilitation to become the downtown branch of the Bank of Kentucky.

After Covington, the next highest number of tax credit projects was in Lexington-Fayette

**A Few Historic Buildings
Demolished Over The Years**

**Covington Courthouse and
City Hall** (1900-1970)

Covington Post Office (at site
of present county jail sky-
scraper)

Stevenson House at Fourth and
Garrard--home of Governor
John W. Stevenson

Bakewell-Arnold Mansion,
Seventh and Dalton Streets--
built by prominent Cincinnati
speculators, later the mansion
of James G.
Arnold, wealthy Covington
businessman, former city and
county official, and builder of
the Park Hotel at Sixth and
Philadelphia.

Holmes Castle--replaced by
Holmes High School

Hathaway House--overlooking
the Ohio River; demolished just
decades ago; occupied by
strident local abolitionist,
Reverend Henry Hathaway.
Obviously it would fit in well
with today's interest in the
struggle of slavery and the
new Freedom Center to be built
on the Cincinnati side, meant
to draw visitors and tourists.

From the President.....

I call attention to two books
by James Howard Kunstler, *The
Geography of Nowhere* (1994) and
Home from Nowhere (1996). After
attending two local lectures by Mr.
Kunstler, I took time to read his
works. It is important that all
Society members, students of
history, and the shapers of public
policy (governmental officials,
city planners, and indeed, zoning
czars) read these books.

The cover comments
describe succinctly his important
theme: "A wonderfully entertain-
ing, useful and provocative account
of the ravaging of the American
environment by the auto, suburban
developers, blind zoning and
corporate pirates." Mr. Kunstler
verbalizes the unspoken revulsion
of so many Americans to much of
our surroundings, and explains how
it all happened and what we must
do to recover.

The author's definition of
the word "charm" (that which
makes our physical surroundings
worth caring about) got my atten-
tion. Why do so many structures
we build today lack charm?
Kunstler explains that since World
War II we have (unintentionally to
be sure) been destroying "commu-
nity," misusing public space, and
disjointing our places of residence
from all social activities, requiring
us to connect only by car.

Building suburbia after
World War II, which replaced
towns and cities in this country,
was a self-destructive act. This
living arrangement that Americans
now think of as *normal* is bank-
rupting us economically, socially,
ecologically and spiritually. Car-

clogged highways, strip malls, tract
houses (with garages displayed
prominently), franchise fry pits,
parking lots, junked inner cities and
ravaged countryside are not *symp-*
toms of a troubled culture, but
rather the primary *cause*.

Whether or not we like
suburbia, we cannot continue this
pattern of living. We will have to
initiate viable public transit, mixed
use housing and accessible public
space as well as other recommen-
dations made by Kunstler in his
works.

After reading his books, I'm
certain you, like I, will gain critical
insights on our culture and begin to
understand the development enig-
mas with which we have lived.
Each book is only \$12, one of the
best investments one can make in
understanding who we are and
why. The titles again: *The Geogra-*
phy of Nowhere, Simon &
Schuster, soft bound (1994) and
Home from Nowhere, Simon &
Schuster, soft bound (1996). James
Howard Kunstler lives in Saratoga
Springs, New York.

Comments on these from
subscribers are welcomed and will
be printed in subsequent *Bulletins*.

KCHS PUBLICATION PRICE LIST

Title	Member Price	Non-Member	Mailing Fee
Collected Papers	\$25	\$30	\$6
1860 Census Index	\$10	\$15	\$2
1880 Census Index (vol. I)	\$20	\$25	\$2
1880 Census Index (vol. II)	\$20	\$25	\$2
1990 African American Census for Kenton County (except Covington)	\$ 2	\$ 4	\$1
Wallace Woods	\$ 5	\$ 6	\$1
West Side Walking Tour	\$ 5	\$ 6	\$1
Trinity Church	\$10	\$15	\$2
Wiggins' list biographies (106)	\$ 2	\$ 4	\$1
Linden Grove Cemetery (vol.I)	\$35	\$40	\$4
Linden Grove Cemetery(vol.II)	\$25	\$30	\$3
Northern KY Heritage (subscrip')	\$12	\$15	\$0
Selective Issues of NKH	\$ 6	\$ 7.50	\$1
Newport Barracks	\$ 9 for Kenton & Cambell members	\$10	\$1

Member News

Dorothy Wieck, long time member of KCHS, has moved to the Atria Summit Hills rest home, 2625 Legends Way, off Thomas More College Parkway.

She is a former Treasurer and former member of the Board of Directors of KCHS, compiler of the popular Kenton County Federal Census indices, prominent genealogist and advisor, long time Covington resident, widow of businessman, Theodore Wieck.

Dorothy, born in 1908, will be 91 years of age on August 4.

Thanks to Elizabeth Chavez (former KCHS Treasurer and Programs Chairman) for alerting us about Dorothy.

Dr. Joseph Gastright's health is improving.

News from Around the Area

The National Underground Railroad Museum in Maysville has purchased the Bierbower Home, a historic house where slaves hid beneath the floor of the kitchen before resuming their journey northward. The purchase was financed by a state grant. The museum presently located at the Welcome Center, 115 E. Third St., will be moving to the new location at 38 W. Fourth St. after renovations are completed.

The Erlanger Historical Society still needs a person to serve as host/ hostess at the Depot Museum each Saturday May through September noon to 4 pm. Compensation \$35 a day. Call Mary McClure: 727-8730

County with a total of 5. The 20 remaining counties participating in tax credit projects have only one or two.

In addition to tax credit projects, the Preservation Officer represents the interests of Covington's heritage at the local, state and national levels, oversees the Urban Design Review Board, and assists home owners and business owners with technical information about best practices for refurbishing their buildings.

The Preservation Officer handles the Historic Marker program which now includes 30 markers, as well as the Historic Plaque Program marking the date of a building's construction. The number of Historic Markers has doubled in the last ten years since the City began sponsoring the project by paying half the cost. The Historic Plaques Program was originally a Kentucky Bicentennial project intended to recognize the wealth and variety of historic buildings in the neighborhoods of Covington. It is meant to point up the fact that not every house has to be a Hearne House or a Carneal House to make an important contribution to the historic fabric of our community.

Covington's Preservation Officer also works closely with the city's Housing Department to provide technical assistance and preservation oversight for their programs. This cooperative relationship also helps to bring vacant buildings which have become eyesores back to become contributing parts of the community once again. The presence of a certified preservation person on staff streamlines Housing's review process by allowing projects to be

reviewed in-house rather than having to go to the The Kentucky Heritage Council in Frankfort.

Not only does this cooperative relationship between Housing and Preservation help to reclaim vacant and blighted buildings, it creates jobs. A new construction project is typically 50% labor and 50% materials, while a rehab project will be 60 to 70% labor. This means jobs, and a significant impact on the local economy. Materials may be purchased from anywhere, but carpenters, electricians, plumbers and painters are hired locally. Their earnings are then recirculated within the community.

In light of the importance of this position to the continued preservation of our community's heritage, and the protection of our most visible art form, our architecture, we must not let the desolusion of this office occur.

All of Northern Kentucky benefits from an energized historical core. Even if you are not a Covington resident, please let the Mayor, Commissioners, and City Managers know how much you appreciate what they have done in the past through their support of the Office of Historic Preservation, and how critical you believe it is that they continue to support our community in this way.

Mayor Denny Bowman
Commissioner Jerry Bamberger
Commissioner "Butch" Callery
Commissioner Jim Eggemeier
Commissioner J. T. Spence
Greg Jarvis, City Manager
Tom Steidel, Asst. City Manager

City of Covington
638 Madison Avenue
Covington, KY 41011
Phone: 292-2127
Fax: 292-2137

Incidentally, Covington's City Hall at 638 Madison is housed in an adaptive reuse of an historic building, the old Coppin's Department Store.

Recent Major Historic Tax Credit Projects in Covington

Bavarian Brewery, now Jillian's
\$11 million total project
\$8 million for building rehab
\$5 million more added by Jillian's
200 jobs created

The Hermes Building, now Jack Quinn's Irish Pub
\$1.6 million
40 new jobs created
This carefully rehabilitated pub has been returned to its original use, and is now a draw for the entire Greater Cincinnati area. This building was among many that the Covington Business Council wanted to tear down to create a paved park.

The Northern Bank/ Mosler Safe Building
currently under reconstruction to become the downtown branch of the Bank of Kentucky.
\$2.5 million for rehabilitation
35-40 new jobs created
This 1837 Greek Revival building is the oldest commercial building in Covington.

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INSIDE:

**Leah Konicki Resigns
Theme: Historic Preservation and
Urban Renewal**

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Dedicated to preserving our heritage as the "Gateway to the South"