

# BULLETIN

of the

## Kenton County Historical Society

organized in 1977; non-profit member,  
Historical Confederation of Kentucky,  
Publisher of the new regional magazine,  
Northern Kentucky Heritage



**INSIDE SEE:**

**HISTORY OF COVINGTON**  
**BY O.J. WIGGINS**  
**(14th in a series)**

**February 1995**

**KENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
P. O. Box 641  
Covington, KY. 41012

**PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT**

On Tuesday, February 7th, 1995, <sup>7:00 PM</sup> at the TANK garage meeting room, 3375 Madison avenue, Mr. Earl Clark will give an audio/visual presentation on THE HISTORY OF NORTHERN KENTUCKY STREETCARS.

Horse or mule drawn streetcars were phased out after electric street cars were introduced in 1890. Since then the public has also seen trolley and bus transportation. From the beginning streetcar routes were linked from downtown Cincinnati across various bridges, along routes images of which are still within public memory.

In addition to Mr. Clark's talk, TANK General Manager Mark Donaghy will give us a TOUR OF THE GARAGE INCLUDING A VIEW OF THE OLD STREET CAT, "KENTUCKY," which is being restored by TANK craftsmen. A rare example of a single truck street car, the "Kentucky" has been on permanent exhibit at the Behringer Crawford museum, Devou Park.

This program will be sponsored by the Kenton County Historical Society and will be free and open to the Public.

Tuesday, February 7, 7:00 PM, TANK garage, 3375 Madison pike.

NOTE REFERRING TO AN ENDNOTE IN LAST ISSUE: Even though the Covington directory of 1839-40 states there there was one Catholic, one Methodist, two Baptist, and one Presbyterian church at that time, as far as formal church establishment goes, the church histories give slightly different dates.

**TREASURER**

The Kenton County Historical Society is looking for someone to act as treasurer, one who would handle a checking account and attend occasional meetings in the evening. Send name address to KCHS.

# HISTORY OF COVINGTON

By O. J. Wiggins

(Fourteenth in a series)

Daily Commonwealth, July 12, 1884

(continued)

The first public performance of the service of the Episcopal Church in Covington took place on Sunday evening, May 8th, 1842, Bishop Smith (now deceased) officiating (1).

The building occupied on that occasion and on several succeeding Sundays was a small frame edifice on the northwest corner of Madison and Fifth streets, used last by the Presbyterians as a temporary meeting house. Afterwards the congregation -----room in the third story of the brick building on the south side of Market Place, between Scott streets and Market street. A meeting of sundry citizens convened in the above mentioned room on the 24th of November, 1842. Upon motion, George M. Southgate, Esq., was called to the chair, and Thomas Bird appointed Secretary of the meetings, when the following resolutions were adopted:

"Resolved, That a parish to be called Trinity Church, Covington, be organized.

"Resolved, That John K. McNickle, Charles A. Withers, George M. Southgate, John W. Stevenson, J. W. Venable, J. L. Newby, Jackson Sparrow, J. W. Clayton, and Thomas Bird be appointed vestrymen of said parish, to serve until Easter Monday or until their successors be appointed, of whom George M. Southgate shall be senior warden and Jack Sparrow junior warden. Upon motion J. K. McNickle was appointed Treasurer, and J. W. Venable, Secretary (2).

"Resolved, That we hereby express our appreciation of, and consent to, the doctrines, discipline, and worship of the Protestant Episcopal church in the United States, and to the constitution and canons of the General Convention, and also of the constitution and canons of the Episcopal church of the Diocese of Kentucky, and also that George M. Southgate and Thomas Bird be a committee to submit a copy of these proceedings at the next conven-

tion of the Diocese, to be held in Lexington on the Second Thursday of May, 1843, for their approval, and then and there apply for admission of this parish into union with said constitution."

Signed: George M. Southgate, John K. McNickle, C. A. Withers, J. L. Newby, J. W. Clayton, J. W. Venable, William J. R. Brockenbrough, (,) Jackson Sparrow, Thomas Bird, James Clayton, Ellen Sparrow, M. L. Littlefield, S. Clayton, and Eliza W. Milstead.

At a following meeting it was resolved: that Rev. G. G. Moore be called to the rectorship of Trinity Church of Covington, at a salary of \$500 for the year next ensuing. Mr. Moore accepted the call and entered upon his duties soon afterwards.

At another meeting held December 16, 1842 it was decided to erect a church building, and George M. Southgate and Thomas Bird were appointed to the building committee.

The lot of ground on which the main part of the present church is now situated was purchased from J. Phelps, Esq., for \$350.

Mr. Moore, the rector at this time (the early part of 1843) made an eastern trip for financial aid. He collected a small amount of money, and, after deducting his expenses, \$97 remained which he paid to the Treasurer. In addition to the above he ordered books for the Sunday school and parish library to the value of \$---.

A new building committee consisting of Messrs. McNickle, Newby, and Southgate was appointed. A plan of the church was submitted May the 2nd 1843 by Dr. Bird, which was adopted. After a great deal of work on the part of the vestry, the corner stone was laid off the 24th of June, 1843 with appropriate ceremonies by the Masonic Fraternity. In the cornerstone were enclosed a parchment copy of the organization of the parish, names of the vestry, names of commissioners, building committee and builder; J. L. Newby was person appointed to lay the cornerstone. Following are the contractors who did the work: Mr.

Littlefield, brick work; Mr. Kean brick and stone, Roach and Kidd, carpenter's work; Mr. Clinkenbeard, painting and glazing (3).

The Bishop of the diocese visited this parish the first part of November, 1843 and performed the rite of ordination on the Reverend G. G. Moore in the Baptist church. April 15th, 1844, Trinity Parish and Saint Paul's of Newport, were unified, with Reverend Moore as rector of both.

Divine services were performed in Trinity Church for the first time on the 30th day of June, 1844. At this time many members of the congregation dissatisfied with Mr. Moore, and he resigned as rector from both parishes October 1st, 1844.

At a vestry meeting December 2, 1844 Reverend Lounsbury was called to the rectorship at a salary of \$300 per annum. He accepted the call and assumed chores January 1, 1845.

In May 1845 the rector made an eastern trip for the purpose of collecting money to assist the parish. He raised \$600. At a meeting of the vestry April 27, 1846, it was resolved to make the church more comfortable \$384 worth of improvement off it. The amount was raised by contributions and a subscription of \$25 entitled the contributor to a warranty deed for one pew. A new organ was placed in the church May, 1846, and the old one taken away in part payment at \$50 leaving a balance of \$125 on the new organ.

At a meeting May 6, 1846, Mr. L. Daugherty handed in a list of subscriptions amounting to \$510, all good. A vote of thanks was tendered Mr. Daugherty by the vestry for his industry and perseverance (4).

At a meeting of the vestry June 23, 1846 it was moved and seconded that the original church debt in total \$1,200, be funded and all the debts against the church be liquidated, and that sum be borrowed for a term of five years and a mortgage given the same. This was unanimously agreed to. The committee appointed to borrow the money reported as a subsequent meeting that they had been unable to make the negotiations and they were dis-

charged.

It was resolved that the vestry unite with a strong resolve to remove the church from its then perilous condition. Messrs. Ball and Bird were appointed a committee to solicit subscriptions in the shape of notes from \$25 and upwards from six to twelve months after date bearing interest at 8 per cent., to be used to liquidate the debt; and said contributions be secured in stock of Trinity church property.

At this meeting Mr. Lounsbury presented a communication resigning the rectorship of the church. The communication was laid on the table.

At the next meeting of the vestry, December 21, 1846, the rector again presented a communication offering his resignation, to take effect January 1, 1847. This resignation was accepted.

Rev. G. W. Ridgley, of Philadelphia and Rev. Mr.----of Coles Mouth, Va., were both called to the vacant rectorship, and both declined.

At a meeting (go) the vestry January 29, 1848, Rev. G. G. Moore was unanimously recalled to the rectorship (as) a salary of \$300 years, inclusive of missionary fund.

The entire debt of the church May 13, 1848, was \$1,519 37.

#### ENDNOTES

1. The organization of Trinity occurred within a common time frame when other Covington churches were established. The first Catholic church, St. Mary's Mission, was erected in 1834 on the southwest corner of Fifth and Montgomery streets. In 1827 the first Methodist society was organized in Covington. In 1831 "Covington's first Sunday School" was sponsored in the log school house on what became the public square. In 1832 the Methodists built their first church, a brick structure, probably the first church built in Covington, on the west side of Garrard, fifty feet north of Third. In 1838 First Baptist church was organized. The Baptists built the first of their two church buildings at the present site on West Fourth in 1843, the same year that Trinity laid the cornerstone for its first church. In 1871 they built the present building. Some members of the first Baptist congregation organized a second Baptist church, located on Craig street, but its history is somewhat obscure,

and it was said by one reference to have disbanded in 1850. Even though the 1839-40 Covington directory stated that there was then one Catholic, one Methodist, two Baptist, and one Presbyterian church, in terms of visible establishment, church histories suggest otherwise. The Presbyterians date their organization to late 1841; by the end of January 1842, William Ernst had erected a temporary frame church for the Presbyterians, which the fledgling Episcopal congregation also used that year. The First Christian church organized in 1837, and 12-15 members began to meet in a building owned by James Arnold, the first Elder. The church was incorporated in 1865 at which time the present site on West Fifth street was purchased for a new church. After a big fire on March 5th, 1893, which involved the city block, destroyed their first church building there, the First Christian congregation erected the present church building for which Trinity Episcopal donated \$50 and offered other assistance (Myron A. Bailey, "Early Churches of Kenton County," unpublished; "Semi-Centennial of First Presbyterian Church, 1841-1891," Covington, Ky.).

2. Thomas Bird, 37, druggist, born in England (1850 Census). Thomas Bird, drugs, 404 Madison, home 639 Sanford (1869 directory). In the 1840s Dr. Bird had a drug store on the southeast corner of Market Square (C. J. 11-15-73). Thomas Bird, druggist, 412 Scott, residence 639 Sanford (1886-87 directory).

He should not be confused with the lives of members of another family named Bird, or with their legacies: the Bird drugstore which operated in the 1890s at the southwest corner of Southern and Winston; the imposing "Bird" building which still stands there; Dr. R. Lee Bird (born in 1863), Covington physician, county public health official, staff member at Booth hospital, drug store proprietor, businessman; Thomas Jefferson Bird (1842-1920), a farmer and early settler in Latonia, and a Confederate soldier under Kirby Smith; nor with Thomas Bird (circa 1802-1884), a farmer who settled in Kenton county but was born in Virginia (Covington Historic Preservation Office records, compiled by Walter E. Langsam). R. Lee Bird, medical student, boards 810 Madison (1886-87 directory).

A person named Thomas Bird was one of 15 men listed as donors to the Kentucky Colonization Society (C. J. 12-4-52). Thomas Bird, druggist in Covington, "has just received the agency for Dr. Wistar's Balsam of Wild Cherry," price \$1.00 per bottle (L. V. R., 3-29-45). Thomas Bird, 57, apothecary, born in England (1870 Census). "It is recorded" that he was 30 years old when he settled in Covington as a druggist. For many years Thomas Bird resided at the corner of Seventh and Greenup "at the edge of old Covington." For a while he worked with Henry M. Manfred in a drug store business at Lower Market Place. "In later years" his store was located at the southeast corner of Fourth and Madison. "By medical professionals of the region" he was not "designated" a medical doctor, even though "there is some

vague record of his graduation from the Dublin School of Medicine." Although known as Dr. Bird, upon his death on November 4, 1890, he was listed in the church records as "Mr." Thomas A. Bird (Sketch from The Story of Trinity Episcopal Church in Covington, compiled and researched by George F. Roth, published by Trinity church, revised edition 1991).

Jackson Sparrow was born near London, England, resided in Covington fifty-one years, was a devoted member of Trinity church, and died at the age of 86 in 1884 (obituary, D. C. 4-22-84). His wife Ellen Sparrow died in 1882 (death notice, 2-23-82). Jackson Sparrow of Sparrow and Dowton, baker, Greenup street, opposite Market Space (1834 Directory); Jackson Sparrow, born in England, baker, residence Greenup opposite Market Space (1839-40 directory); Jackson Sparrow, 51, no occupation (1850 census). Jackson Sparrow's pallbearers were Thomas Bird, John Stevenson, Charles Withers, L. D. Croninger, Fred Wolcott, and R. C. Ross. Sparrow was buried in Linden Grove cemetery (D. C., 4-23-84).

The family of George Maris Southgate (179?-1867) came from Richmond, Virginia. His descendents became related through marriage to descendents of Thomas Kennedy (1741-1821), who had sold his farm to the proprietors of the original town of Covington. George M. Southgate was the grandfather of Dr. Louise Southgate, physician. He was half brother of Richard Southgate, an extensive holder of land grant property in Northern Kentucky (Mrs. Vera Reuscher, "A History of the Southgate Family," Christopher Gist Papers; Allen Webb Smith, Beginning at the Point, A Documented History of Northern Kentucky and Environs, the Town of Covington in Particular, 1751-1834, printed locally, 1977). George M. Southgate died at Walton, Kentucky at the home of his son, Dr. Bernard Southgate, and was buried in Linden Grove cemetery (Mrs. Stephens L. Blakely, "Chronicles of Trinity," Christopher Gist Papers).

John White Stevenson (1812-1886) was born in Richmond, Virginia; he came to Covington in 1841 and became law partner with Jefferson Phelps. He represented Kenton County in the state legislature in 1845, 1846, 1848; he was Representative in Congress, 1857-1861 (From sketch in Lewis Collins, History of Kentucky, revised by Richard Collins, 1774, volume II). In 1867 Stevenson was elected Lieutenant Governor; after Governor Helm's death five days into his term, Stevenson became Governor; in 1868 he was elected to fulfill the term; he later resigned with campaign and election to the U. S. Senate (sketch from The Story of Trinity...).

John W. Stevenson and James T. Morehead, attorneys, Market Space (1845 Covington directory). Thus Stevenson, who was to be Kentucky's twenty-fifth Governor (1867-1871), practiced law with Morehead, who had been Kentucky's twelfth governor (1834-36), and who in "his later years" practiced law in Covington. Like Stevenson he succeeded a deceased Governor (Breathitt). Morehead was Kentucky's first native



born Governor and was a relative of Governor Charles S. Morehead (1855-1859) and Governor Simon Bolivar Buckner (1887-91). James T. Morehead (1797-1854) died in Covington but was buried in Frankfort cemetery (J. Winston Coleman Jr., et al., Kentucky Governors).

John W. Stevenson, attorney, east side of Greenup between Third and Fourth, home east side of Greenup near his office (1860 directory); John W. Stevenson, attorney (Stevenson and Meyers), home east side of Garrard between Third and Fourth (1867-68 directory). John W. Stevenson, attorney (Stevenson and James O'Hara, Jr.), 326 Scott street, second floor, home northeast corner of Fourth and Garrard (1876 directory).

May 10, 1831--Thomas Carneal and wife Sarah sold the house where they lived on Second street to John K. McNickle of Pittsburgh; and the Carneals sold lots located between Second street and the river and between Scott and Madison streets to John K. McNickle of Pittsburgh who would build and operate there (Smith).

C. A. Withers, born in Virginia (Withers and Carpenter), Cincinnati, boards corner of Greenup and Market Space (1839-40 directory). C. A. Withers, born in Virginia, age 44, commission merchant (1850 census). Charles Withers, 53, born in Virginia, railroad superintendent (1860 census); Charles A. Withers, Supt. K. C. R. R., home s. w. c. Greenup and Market Space (1860 directory). Charles A. Withers, formerly superintendent of the Kentucky Central Railroad, died in Waynesville, Ohio while visiting family (C. D. E. 8-11-63).

Eli M. Bruce married Sallie E. Withers, February 1, 1854. Their children were Mattie, George S., and Charles W. Bruce (Bruce genealogy). Kentucky Congressman Eli Bruce was a friend of John Hunt Morgan. In April 1868 to allow former staff members and friends to pay their respects, John Hunt Morgan's body was laid out, on its way south, at the home of Mrs. Charles Albert Withers Sr., mother of Morgan's last adjutant (James Ramage, Rebel Raider, the Life of General John Hunt Morgan, the University Press of Kentucky, 1986). Mrs. Eli Metcalf Bruce, boards, 630 Sanford (1869 Directory).

C. A. Withers, tobacco dealer, 630 Sanford; Mrs. C. A. Withers, widow, 630 Sanford (1869 directory). The elder Withers was the first Superintendent of the Kentucky Central railroad and for whom Withers park in Covington was named. He married Hilda (Matilda) Lynch from Lynchburg, Virginia. Their son, Major C. A. Withers, at the age of 18 volunteered for the Confederate army and fought with John Hunt Morgan. After the Civil War the younger Withers became a cotton broker in Augusta, Georgia, and later was an editor with the Cincinnati Commercial newspaper. After retirement, he resided in Cincinnati at the Hotel Emory, but died at Booth hospital in Covington at the age of 82 in 1923 (obituary, K. E. 3-24-1923).

Mrs. Withers (1877 city atlas); Matilda Withers, boards, 327 Greenup (1886-87 directory); Matilda Withers' building, southwest corner of Park Place (formerly Market Space) and Greenup ("A Further

Plea for Parks in Covington," 1903, a pamphlet). Withers park (1916-17 directory); Withers park, Government Place from Scott to Greenup (1928-29 directory). In 1967, because it was deemed a threat to health and safety, the City Commission ordered the four story brick, then known as the Randall apartment building, southwest corner of Park and Greenup, demolished (Covington Housing Department records).

February 18, 1832, "John W. Clayton advertises that he has taken the house lately occupied by J. R. Clinkenbeard, on Greenup Street, and will continue his business" (Smith). John W. Clayton, tailor, Fourth street near Greenup (1834 Directory). John Clayton, on Market Square, born in England, residence between Third and Fourth and Greenup and Garrard (1839-40 directory). Clayton built the frame house which still stands at 528 Greenup (Covington Preservation Office records, compiled by Walter E. Langsam). J. W. Clayton, 50, merchant, born in England (1850 census).

John W. Venable: "...visit the painting room of John W. Venable, corner of Greenup and Market Space--and ... not fail to admire the skill of the artist and the accuracy of his portraits" (L. V. R. 11-11-43). "Mr. John W. Venable, an accomplished artist of our city, has collected his paintings together for exhibition, at his new room, on the corner of Greenup and Third streets....His friends and the public are respectfully invited to call...." (L. V. R. 6-1-44).

J. L. Newby "was later added to the committee to apply for admission of the Parish" into the Diocese of Kentucky. He presented the application at the fifteenth annual convention of the Diocese of Kentucky at Christ Church, Lexington. The parish was admitted and Newby took a seat as the first lay delegate from Trinity Church (The Story of Trinity...).

3. Presumably for the first church building, which was a frame structure, masonry work was nevertheless required for the foundation walls and chimneys.

Calvin A. Littlefield, bricklayer, west side of Public Square (1834 directory); C. A. S. Littlefield, Kenton County, Covington, (1840 Census); T. A. Littlefield, 50, bricklayer, born in Maine (1850 Census). On November 24, 1842, M. L. Littlefield was one of the signers of the resolutions for the organization of Trinity church (The Story of Trinity ...).

Joseph Keen, Brick-Layer, residence near the Licking (1839-40 directory). Joseph A. Keen, brick maker, north side of Pike between Main and Philadelphia (1860 directory). Joseph A. Keen's grandfather was a soldier in the American Revolutionary war. "Joseph A. Keen was an early settler in Kenton County and made the first brick house in Covington in the early days. He owned about six acres...bounded by Main, Philadelphia, Pike and Ninth streets....here he lived and for many years operated a brick yard..." (E. Polk Johnson, A History of Kentucky and Kentuckians, volume 111, 1912).

E. Clinkenbeard, house and sign painter, born in Kentucky, residence Market Space (1839-40 directory)trinity

In 1843 the cornerstone was laid, and Roach and Kidd did the carpentry work on the first Trinity church building, a frame structure (Mrs. Blakely, Chronicles of Trinity). When Covington erected its first permanent city hall, which was dedicated in 1843, Roach was the lumber contractor, and Mr. Kidd "was commissioned as architect" (John E. Burns, "History of Covington to 1865," unpublished). Lewis Roach, carpenter, head of Madison (1834 directory). Peleg Kidd, carpenter, born in Kentucky, residence on Fifth street (1839-40 directory); Peleg Kidd, 42, born in Kentucky, "Master Carpenter" (1850 Census).

4. Levi Daugherty, age 49, born in Kentucky, real estate agent (1860 census). Levi T. Daugherty, real estate agent, east side of Scott between Fourth and Fifth, home Fourth between Madison and Russell (1860 directory). Levi Daugherty was born in Bourbon county, became a businessman in Cynthiana, married "Miss N. P. Stewart" of Cynthiana, relocated to Covington some fifty years before his death. In Covington he worked in manufacturing and merchandising but in later years was known for his work in the real estate market. His funeral was from Trinity (obituary, D. C. 12-22-80).

(Transcription and endnotes by John Boh)

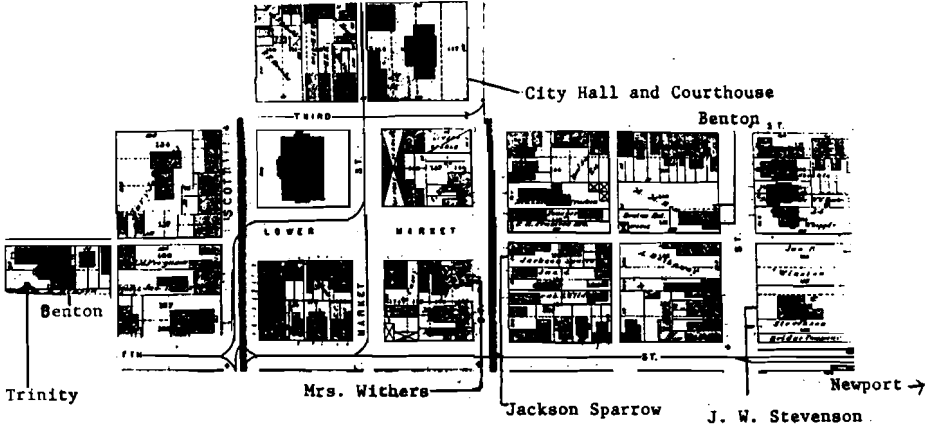


Old Withers property facing 325-27 Greenup & 139 Park  
Demolished in 1967

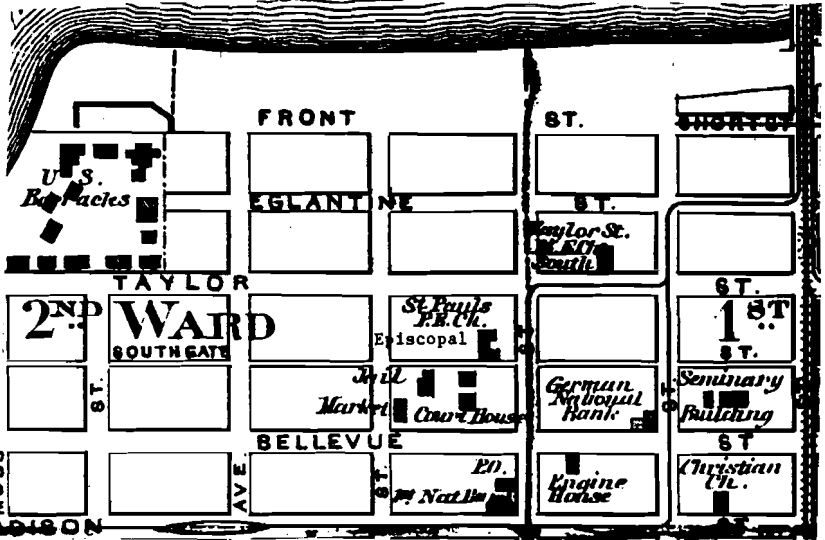


once occupied by the Withers & Bruce families  
Recently known as the "Rugby"  
now 622 Sanford

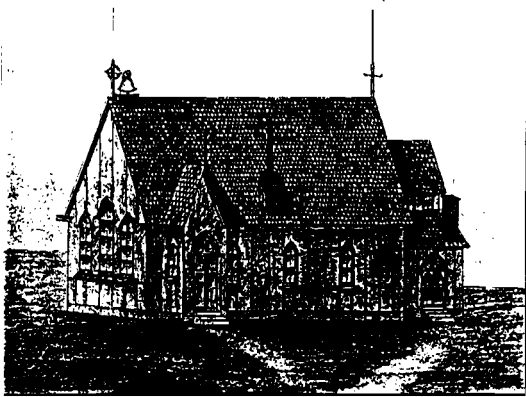
Covington in 1877 City Atlas



Newport in 1883 County Atlas



← Covington



the first Trinity church

## DECEMBER BOARD MEETING

Concern over monthly meeting attendance was one of several priority topics discussed by the Board members. The effort involved in planning monthly programs has, with some exceptions, not been rewarded by sufficient interest by attendance figures.

Several suggestions to remedy included planning meeting locations at various places which might include a tour of an interesting location along with a speaker. Such locations as Carnegie Arts Center, Villa Madonna Academy, Carneal House, Behrenger/Crawford Museum, an historic church or the like were suggested.

John Boh felt that more input from the general membership needs more encouragement. He suggested that open business/planning meetings be held several times per year to offer more opportunities for the entire membership to set priorities for the Society. The board wants to promote activity among more Society members on aspects of local history that interest them. A general questionnaire published in the Bulletin was another suggestion as well as phone canvassing of members.

### Projects Report:

• Oral History - Shawn Ryan will attend a January 19th meeting to organize the gathering of oral history primarily of area's senior lawyers.

Behrenger/Crawford Museum Display - KCHS has been asked to design and assist in gathering a display for 1995 on famous Northern Kentuckians. Input from the membership is encouraged. Please send any suggestions on a postcard to the KCHS po box or phone Karl Lietzenmayer at 261-2807 and he will include your ideas to the discussion.

History Booklet - KCHS has entered an agreement with Elder Photographics to prepare the writing of what hopes to become a series of local history single-subject booklets (of about 80 pages each). The first booklet will be a complete story on John Boebing and the Suspension Bridge. Joe Gastright, Shawn Ryan, L.K. Patton, and Karl Lietzenmayer are contributing material. KCHS will assist in marketing these booklets and will be able to gain profits from the sales for the treasury. The first booklet is planned to be ready for Summer 1995 in time for Tall Stacks. Other topics include the story of local steamboat building, Newport gambling, Covington's Riverside. The board needs capable writers for this project. Any member who can contribute should send a note to the Society or call 261-2807. Even out of town members can be involved.

Northern Kentucky Heritage Magazine - Subscription revenue is barely keeping pace with publication costs. NKH did not reach its goal of 400 subscriptions by January 1995. More marketing ideas for the magazine were considered. Stories from various counties in our region have been received. Betty Foster has become the circulation manager and will eventually handle much of the subscription details.

**Kenton County Historical Society  
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