



Bulletin of the Kenton County Historical Society

Website: www.kentoncountyhistoricalsociety.org Email: info@kentoncountyhistoricalsociety.org
P.O. Box 641 Covington, KY 41012 (859)491-4003

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Successful Reuse of Historic Buildings

Lafayette's Half Dollar

WWI — Post War Commemorations

Successful Reuse of Historic Buildings

Karl Lietzenmayer

One of the major issues in the preservation of historic buildings is adapting these structures for new uses and occupants. Sometimes things work easily but often significant investment and re-design is required.

Beginning in earnest with the turn of the 21st century, we have witnessed a dramatic change in the demographics of Newport, Covington and other urban core areas such as Cincinnati's *Over the Rhine* (OTR). This is a national mass movement. The walking tour company, *Legacy Tours*, maintains an office at 14th and Vine streets in OTR. They point out that as recently as 2005, over 500 police calls were made to that corner! Now, however, there are young families walking their babies on far safer sidewalks and numer-

ous restaurants and businesses cater to middle class customers. That is not to indicate there aren't still homeless nearby, but these areas are gentrifying quite rapidly.

There had already been businesses re-locating in urban centers several decades previous to 2000, such as the high-tech firms along Pike Street near Russell in Covington and similar locations in Newport. Now there are more middle class young people moving in to urban centers – in some cases a generation or two removed from their own families leaving for suburban living! These new residents find urban core locations convenient to shopping and other venues by walking or bicycling. The restoration of street-car service in OTR is an indication this movement is





not just a flash in the pan. Even New Orleans, with no lack of streetcar services, is re-establishing other lines that were removed in the post-war period.

The flight to the suburbs of post World War II days was swift, since family mobility was greatly enhanced by wide ownership of automobiles. The many businesses left behind in the urban core suffered unless they too relocated. Most residential and businesses sold their urban core structures, which were left intact. For historians, this turned out now to be a gold mine for restoration. Had the middle class

Left: The completed Hellman Lumber Company renovation
Photo courtesy Duke Energy

Top: One of many restaurants inside the new Hotel Covington
Photo courtesy www.covingtonhotel.com

Right: The renovated Ice House Building, Scott Blvd.
Photo courtesy Aparium.com

On the cover: Lobby view of the Hotel Covington
Photo courtesy www.covingtonhotel.com



stayed, they would have built new structures in many cases, and the historic buildings would have been lost. A town like Williamsburg, Virginia was left on its own when the Commonwealth moved the capital to Richmond. The Colonial Capitol became a backwater and was able to be restored in the 20th century to create one of America's most important historical areas. What follows below is a celebration of some Northern Kentucky success stories:

Hellman Lumber: The Center for Great Neighborhoods in Covington has finished a \$2.2 million renovation to its new headquarters in the former 1877 Hellman Lumber building at 321 West 12th Street (MLK Blvd.). The old building, vacant for a decade or more, will also house eight artist studios. The building will be available for rent by community organizations. Artists include a potter, photographer, graphic designer and Covington's Carnegie Arts Center, Scott Street, which will use the studio sets for live productions. A wood-working shop is also included in conjunction with the Carnegie.

Bavarian Brewery Building: Also on 12th Street, Covington, the former brewery has been purchased by the Kenton County Fiscal Court and will be rehabbed into an administration center. The Kenton County Historical Society is anticipating space in this massive structure for storage and will develop an historic display for visiting county residents. The Fiscal Court is interested in selling the older Court Street building, designed by Carl Bankemper. KCHS presently uses part of the former jail on the 8th floor for storage.

K of C Hall: According to an article in *River City News*, the former Knights of Columbus Hall at 11th and Madison, Covington will again see activity. A company called Delish Dish Catering and Events has leased the structure from present owner CovWorx LLC.

John R. Coppin's Building: A 110-room boutique hotel is now open in the former seven-story Coppin's Department Store at 7th and Madison Avenue, Covington. A history of



Photo taken during the transformation of Covington's historic Boone Block. The project was completed in 2017.

Photo courtesy the Business Journal

the building and the Coppin family will be included in each room binder. Along with the Coppin history, other tourist attraction information – such as the Flood Wall Murals and Riverside Historic District information, eateries and entertainment venues will also be included.

Covington Ice House Building: Housed in a building on Scott Street, Covington – across an alley from the Boone Block – that saw one of the first technological processes of manufacturing ice, the staff of a company called PPS scuttles between modern computers and decades-old reel-to-reel devices preserving historic footage – including every NASA space shuttle launching. The company collects and preserves ancient technology: large videotape machines the size of 1950s cars; old videotapes with equipment to play them; cassettes and reel-to-reels.

Boone Block, Scott Street, Covington: This building housed the offices of some of the

movers and shakers of the 19th century – John W. Stevenson, governor; William Goebel; Thomas Sanford and others. The upper floors were converted into apartments by the early 20th century but had been left vacant for decades with the only first floor retail a drive-through liquor store. With the financial fund raising of The Catalytic Fund, this building has been rehabbed into 10 high-end condos, starting at \$250,000. Nine have been sold at the time of this publication.

The Bradford Building, Scott Street, Covington: This long vacant building at Park Place and Scott, developed by Bradford Shinkle in the early 20th century, has recently been acquired by a developer. Plans for development are anticipated.

Green Line Carbarn, Newport: The new Riff Distillery is planning a \$7.5 million project to renovate the historic building and build a new structure as well that can store bourbon and rye whiskey with office space.



Artist's rendering of the completed renovation of Covington's Bradford Building.

Photo courtesy River City News

First Presbyterian, Newport: Built in 1894 on Overton Street and abandoned in 1985. David Hosea purchased the church five years later and redesigned the building into two condominiums. The Stained glass windows and large pipe organ were kept and incorporated into the design.

St. Anthony Roman Catholic, Bellevue: This Gothic Revival structure was completed in 1894 to serve Irish Catholics of Bellevue and Dayton. The parish was closed in 2003 and merged with nearby Sacred Heart Parish. After several vacant years, the Ashley Commercial Group purchased it for condominiums. The units feature many of the original architectural details, including the stained glass.

Main Street United Methodist, Covington: This structure was built in 1888, with financial assistance of Amos Shinkle. The church was closed in 2004 and was sold to the Leapin Lizard Lounge, an event center and arts venue.

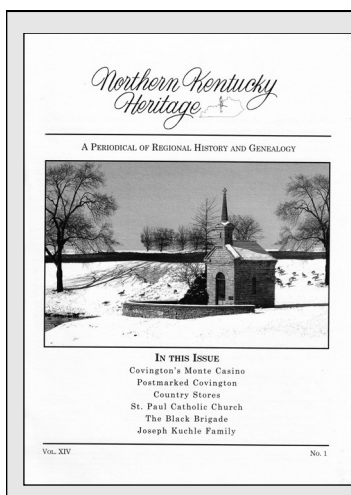
First Christian (Disciples of Christ) Ludlow: The first religious congregation to be established in Ludlow, organized in 1840, this Gothic Revival structure was completed in 1896. By 2005, the congregation had dwindled to a dozen members. Ludlow was searching for new quarters to house city government and police department and the city purchased the church



Top: Interior of a unit at St. Anthony Lofts, Bellevue
Photo courtesy Sibcy Cline Realty

Bottom: Interior of the Lippin' Lizard Lounge, once Main Street Baptist Church, Covington
Photo courtesy www.weddingwire.com

and converted it into a new city hall. The exterior was left completely intact as was the sanctuary, which became council chambers. The former classrooms were remodeled into city offices and police department.



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Lafayette's Half Dollar

Dan Knecht

In 1824, General Lafayette, the French hero of the American Revolutionary War, was making a grand tour of the United States, having been invited to do so by the president of the United States. The General was greatly loved by the American citizens and everywhere he went he was honored.

It is reported that in May of 1825, while traveling through Kentucky from Georgetown to Covington, General Lafayette dined and rested at an inn and stage stop in Florence, Kentucky. The inn was located along Main Street opposite Girrard Street.

The story is told that General Lafayette paid for his meal and rest with a half dollar coined in 1820.¹

Mr. A.M. Yearly, former Mayor of Florence, came into possession of this coin in 1900 through heirs of the Williams family. In the 1950s, the coin was known to be in the possession of Dr. George Tanner, grandson of Robert Tanner, Jr. and Sherry Tanner.

In 2013, the coin was in the hands of Sherry Tanner Green, the great grand-daughter of A.M. Yearly. Her father, Dr. George Robert Tanner, lives in Harrison County, and has many other items given to him by his grandfather, A.M. Yearly. Framed along with the coin is a letter which reads:

Thomas Madden, one of the men who assisted in laying out the town of Florence, owned the first tavern in the village and a family by the name of Williams had charge of it.

During 1824, the Congress of the United States made a request to President Monroe that he invite the Marquis De Lafayette to visit the United States. He arrive in New York on the 13th day of August. He visted every state and most of the large cities. On his way from Lexington, Kentucky to Cincinnati, Ohio, by



Lafayette's 1820 Coin
Photo courtesy the author

stagecoach, he stopped and dined at this tavern in Florence and left this silver half dollar as pay for his meal. Mr. Yearly came into possession of this coin in 1900, through the heirs of Mr. Williams. He holds it as a keepsake in memory of the commanding equestrian statue erected in the center of Paris, in the grounds of the Louvre.

On the base of that statue we read this inscription: "Erected by the school children of the United States in grateful memory of Lafayette – Statesman, Soldier, Patriot."

Facts

In 1824, what is now the city of Florence, Kentucky was known as Maddentown. Thomas Madden was a lawyer who owned land in Boone County. He lived in Covington but one of his holdings was an inn and stage stop in Maddentown which was run by the Williams family.

See: General Lafayette on page 10

WWI - Post War Commemorations

John Boh

WWI brought military victory and turned America into a world power. The Wilson administration's insistence on loyalty had local officials and private citizens report disloyal speech and actions and refusals to actively support the war effort. Many accused were denied constitutional due process. Loyalty superseded freedom of speech. German Americans were persecuted, their public culture even wiped out. Despite these uncomfortable realities, however, the WWI victory and sacrifices are of course commemorated annually.

During the American Centennial in 1876, pioneer gatherings commemorated the American Revolution and the early American pioneers and settlers – many not long ago deceased. Newport and Covington businesses spruced up their premises with flags and other decorations. Decades later in the midst of WWI, patriotic fervor made Flag Day in 1918 a large celebration, with an estimated 7,000 on Newport streets watching a parade. However, vile anti German sentiments accompanied Flag Day.

Flag Day was used to promote various causes in 1918, like selling savings bonds. Flags now are displayed year round from porches and building corners, which in part seems to obscure the annual celebration of Flag Day. Also, June 14th often falls in the middle of the week.¹

The American Legion was started in Paris months after the Armistice with an organizational meeting in March 1919 by a group of 20 officers from the American Expeditionary Force. Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. initiated the idea. The son of the former Rough Rider and President, Theodore Jr. died in France in 1914, leading infantry troops. Originally only for WWI Veterans, the American Legion later embraced veterans of WW II, the Korean and Vietnam wars. The Latonia Post No. 203 of the American Legion celebrated its 50th birthday in May 1988 at their location at 38th and Winston Avenue, just



American Legion Parade at Pike and Madison, Covington
February, 1908

Kenton County Public Library

south of Ritte's Corner, Latonia. A large memorial bronze plaque in the building, originally displayed in Covington's city hall before it was torn down, lists the men from Kenton County who lost their lives in WWI. Post No 203 has recently displayed a banner outside the building recognizing wars up to the present fighting in the Middle East.²

Veterans Day dates back to WWI and was first called Armistice Day, the official end of hostilities on November 11, 1918. Right away celebrating the Armistice became a tradition, with the backing of the American Legion. In 1926, Congress called on President Coolidge to make annual proclamations

that November 11th was a national day of observance. Participation in 1926 was widespread, not only on November 11th but on other days during the year, and throughout Northern Kentucky large crowds gathered for speeches, concerts, and other special commemorations, such as one church celebrating members of their congregation who gave their lives.

In 1938, Congress made Armistice Day a legal holiday. In 1954, President Eisenhower signed a law changing it officially from Armistice to Veterans Day, also to honor veterans of WWII and Korea. For a few years in the 1970s, it was celebrated on the fourth Monday in October, but Veterans Day now again is November 11th on the calendar.³

On the last Monday in May, Memorial Day (unlike Veterans Day) commemorates those who lost their lives. Memorial Day was the name commonly used after WWII and became official in 1967. It now celebrates the soldiers of all American Wars. Memorial Day seems to have evolved from Decoration Day, commonly known as such before WWI. It started with decorations of veteran's graves and other activities. Civil War veterans were slowly dying off. A big commemoration occurred in 1910. Younger veterans of the Spanish American War joined in festivities. First Presbyterian Church on West Fourth Street and the James A. Garfield Post of the G.A.R. asked members for donations of flowers to decorate soldier's graves after a parade in late May 1910 to Linden Grove Cemetery. Some celebrants took the opportunity to decorate graves from the Revolutionary, Mexican and Spanish American wars. Festivities included picnics, speeches and at St Joseph's Orphanage, fundraising for Widows and Orphans. A separate day in early June was designated for decorating Confederate graves.

In 1921, sadness still filled the air as soldiers and sailors were still being returned to American soil for reburial. Backed by the American Legion and others, May 30th 1921 was planned to be the "biggest and best" – a time of special festivities. The Women's Auxiliary of the American Legion in Louisville wanted to rename Memorial Day as "America Day" and provide flowers for those buried in Europe or still missing, as well as for graves at home. In Northern Kentucky, Spanish American War veterans would

get much attention and around 28 Civil War veterans were expected to participate. Confederate Captain C. H. Lee from Falmouth, and Union Captain Joseph H. Weber would be honorary parade marshals in Covington. In Boone County the American Legion Boone Post would decorate graves throughout the county. People would parade from Covington and Newport to Linden Grove and Evergreen cemeteries. American legion posts in the two biggest cities, as well as at Ludlow, Bellevue, Dayton and Ft. Thomas, would join the ceremonies. Arrangements were being made for "Gold Star Mothers" (of deceased) to ride in automobiles. *The Kentucky Post* that day featured a front page image of the American Cemetery in Montfaucon, France.

The body of Lawrence Farmer of Dayton, just married before going overseas, was returned in June 1921, as was that of Albert Leroy Gahr, after whom an American Legion post was named in Dayton. The body of William Theissen, former manager of Covington Auto supply and the son of Covington attorney, H. C. Theissen, was returned from France on May 1921.⁴

Endnotes

1. Jim Reis, "Fervor for the Flag," K. P., June 13, 2005
2. Jim Reis, "Latonia Post Celebrates 50th Year," K. P. May 30, 1988
3. Jim Reis, "Armistice Day in the 1920s," K P, Nov. 11, 2002; Wikipedia
4. Jim Reis, "A Day to Honor Valor, Decoration Day Was Big in 1910," K.P., May 29, 2000; Jim Reis, K. P. "Memorial Day, 1921" and "Young Lives Cut Short in World War I," K P, May 28, 2001

Want to be Published?

We are always looking for material for the Bulletin, as well as Northern Kentucky Heritage magazine

To submit an article, send a paper copy by mail, or email it as a Word document attachment. Bulletin articles should be no longer than 500 words and should have at least two references. Magazine articles should have several references and endnotes, as well as images or graphics. Email us if you have any questions.

nkyhist@zoomtown.com.
P.O. Box 641, Covington, KY 41012

A Look Back at the Headlines

An on-going feature reliving local headlines.

This issue features:

The Covington Journal – May 31, 1856

Pic Nics To-day

The teachers and scholars of the Sabbath School connected with the Scott Street M.E. Church South, go to a Pic Nic excursion to-day.

There will be a Pic Nic gathering at the Fair Grounds of the Kenton County Agricultural Society, near Independence. A large crowd is expected.

The “Merry Bachelors,” with their friends and guests, proceed, per steamer Champion No. 2, to a beautiful grove near Petersburg, where they will spend the day. A joyous time is anticipated.

Singular Freak of Nature

There is now one exhibition at Cooper's Hall, in this city, a remarkable curiosity. It is a calf with a head shaped like that of a full blooded bull-dog. The ears, tail, and legs also resemble those of a dog. The calf is two weeks old, and apparently healthy. It came from a cow twenty-two months old, in the upper end of this county. We advise the curious to call and see this *lusus naturae*. This is the last day in Covington.

New Ice Cream Saloon

The subscriber wishes to inform the residents of Covington and vicinity, that he has opened an ICE CREAM SALOON, in connection with his bakery establishment. The saloon will be open from 9 A.M. until 12:30 P.M., Sundays excepted. All of my cream I warrant to be of the best quality, pure and unadulterated. Any cream not giving the most perfect satisfaction I wish returned, and the money will be refunded.

Thomas E. Brickley
Scott Street between Fourth and Fifth

General Lafayette: continued

General Lafayette did travel by stagecoach from Georgetown to Cincinnati with a stop every 10 miles or so to rest and change horses. Gaines Tavern was a stop near Walton and Madden town would have been the next stop 10 miles further north and 10 miles from Covington. So, it is likely this silver half dollar did belong to Lafayette.

In 1900, the school children in the United States did raise money for a statue of General Lafayette. This included those from Florence, Kentucky, where A.M. Yearly was the principal.

So, Lafayette and the coin would have had special meaning to him.

Endnotes

1. This story is taken from the autobiography of A.M. Yearly

Owen J. Carpenter

Owen J. Carpenter (1854-1944) was a businessman in Covington, operating a distillery and selling wines and whiskey. In 1888, he began investing in property development. In 1937 he wrote an account of some of his real estate ventures, and the following is one of them.

THE GREENUP STREET LOT CO.

During the summer of 1890, A. G. Simrall obtained an option to purchase the entire block of ground between Greenup Street and Mackoy Avenue, and between 20th Street and the northern line of the grounds of the old Robert Wallace homestead place, long known as Wallace Woods.

This Wallace Woods tract was subdivided into building lots in 1895, which is the Robert Wallace subdivision; the plat of which was recorded May 7th 1895, by which action Greenup Street was extended to Wallace Avenue.

Then and Now

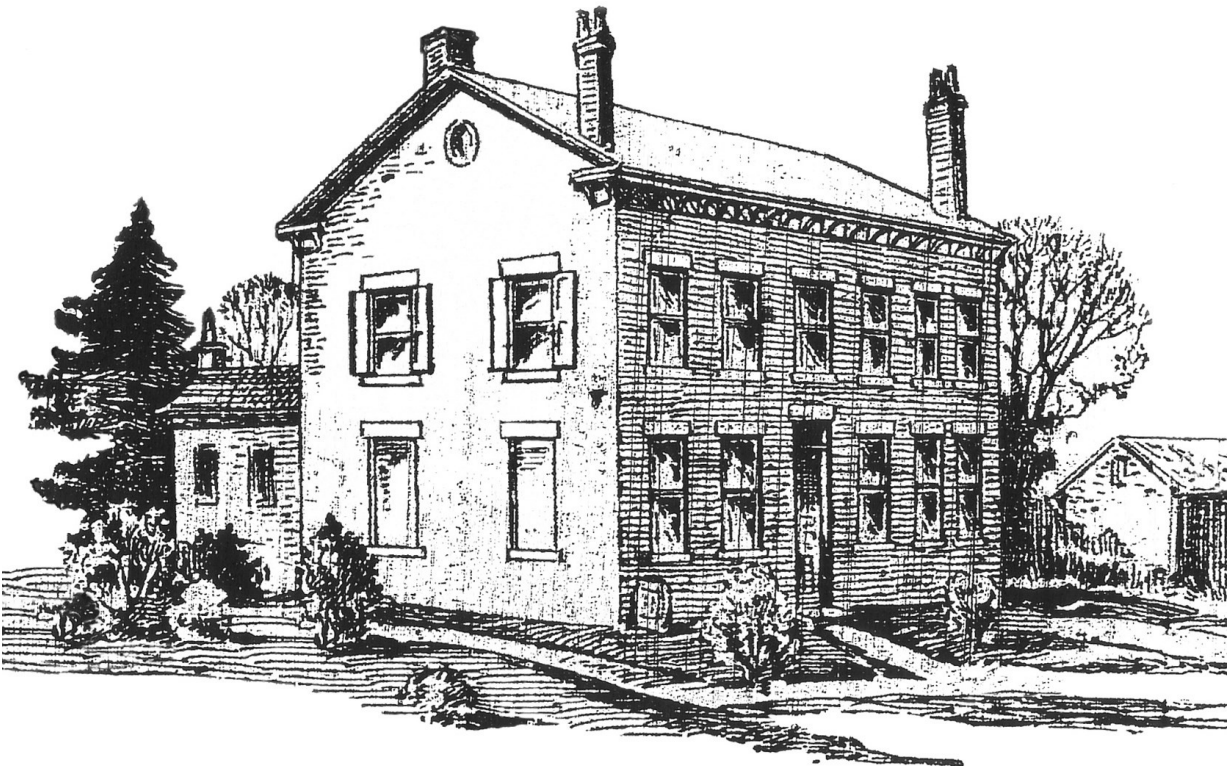


Covington's riverfront in 1982 and present-day

Courtesy the Kenton County Public Library

Mystery Photo

Can you identify the Mystery Photo? The answer can be found at the bottom of the page.



Answer:

Sketch of the residence hall at Monte Casino, overlooking Covington.

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I Bet You Didn't Know

*Tidbits from Kentucky's heritage
For every day of the calendar year*

January 4, 1815: The Kentucky Militia reached New Orleans with 2,500 men under the leadership of General John Thomas.

January 13, 1864: Famed songwriter Stephen C. Foster, died.

January 15, 1973: The tiny *Morehead and North Fork RR*, the shortest in Kentucky history, made its last one-mile run.

February 3, 1966: Teachers across the state staged a one-day walkout.

February 12, 1809: Abraham Lincoln, the 16th President, was born near Hodgenville, on the south fork of the Nolin River.

February 27, 1849: The *Covington and Lexington Railroad* was chartered.

From: *On This Day In Kentucky*, by Robert Powell

Programs and Notices

Kenton County Historical Society

A program on the history of streetcars by Earl Clark (an old friend of the KCHS) is scheduled for Saturday, January 13, 2018 in the Erlanger library at 10:30 AM. Clark is the co-author with Terry Lehmann of *The Green Line, The Cincinnati, Newport & Covington Railway, An Illustrated History of Public Transit in Northern Kentucky*.

Northern Kentucky Regional History Day is scheduled for a second year at the Boone County main library, Burlington Pike, on **Saturday, March 3rd 2018**. Eleven or more speakers/programs should be on the schedule. Handicapped parking will be in the library parking lot plus shuttle service connecting nearby parking lots. This year Save-This-Date post cards will be on hand at libraries and for other distribution. For details, they will refer you to Facebook and other media and websites. Also, you may call for details. The KCHS number is 859-491-0490.

May 12, 2018 (Saturday) – Arnold Taylor will offer a presentation on the history of public water supply in Covington.

Behringer Crawford Museum

The annual Holiday Toy Trains are running on 250 feet of track with the ever-popular hands-on buttons for children.

A special exhibit will be “Wahoos Whimsical Wonderland” based off the book titled *The Holiday Adventures of Wiley Wahoo and Me*, a holiday book locally written and illustrated by Diana Grady. The book chronicles two dogs’ adventures visiting Greater Cincinnati landmarks as they partake in holiday traditions. This season, the book comes to life in Wahoo’s Winter Wonderland! It’s a whimsical, animated holiday attraction featuring a candy cane forest, animated ice skating dogs and more! Plan for other special holiday exhibits.

The Behringer Crawford Museum is also having *Polar Express* readings, Santa visits, and more, scheduled during the holidays. And, visit the annual holiday Dickens Village exhibit. The exhibits will end January 14.