

# 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  
(11TH, 12TH, & 13TH IN SERIES)**

**January 1995**

**KENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

**P. O. Box 641  
Covington, KY 41012**

**PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT**

**On Tuesday, January 3rd, 7:00 PM, at the  
Kenton County Public Library (Erlanger  
Branch), Mr. L. K. Patton will discuss THE  
ORIGINS OF POPULAR SUPERSTITIONS.**

**Mr. Patton will analyze the fascinating  
origins of many superstitions including mar-  
riage superstitions. He promises to report  
some surprising conclusions. Mr. Patton has  
collected anecdotes and other information in  
the course of many years as a teacher and re-  
searcher.**

**A Ft. Thomas resident, Mr. Patton is past re-  
cipient of an Ohio Teacher of the Year award.  
He is a member of the Kentucky Civil War Round  
Table, the Filson Club, the Christopher Gist  
Society, the Kentucky Historical Society,  
among others He is a founder of the Kentucky  
Covered Bridge Association.**

**The program will be sponsored by the Kenton  
County Historical Society and will be FREE AND  
OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.**

**Tuesday  
January 3rd, 7:00 PM  
Kenton County Public Library  
Erlanger Branch  
3158 Dixie Highway (next to Krogers)**

# HISTORY OF COVINGTON

BY O. J. Wiggins

(Eleventh in a series herein transcribed)

Daily Commonwealth, June 14, 1884

(Official Record Continued)

March 22, 1836--The committee appointed to settle with the City collector for 1835 reported.

We find charged to the Collector:

For revenue tax.....	\$1,224 74	
For capitation tax.....	142 50	
For dog tax.....	24 00	
For State tax.....	10 00	
		1 391 24
Credits.....		1 129 75
Balance.....		\$261 49
Delinquent list.....	63 50	
Compensation, 5 per cent on \$1,045 11 revenue tax.	52 25	
Commission, seven cents on each poll tax.....	14 00	
Commission, 14 per cent. on dog tax.....	1 82	
		\$131 57
Balance in Collector's hands.		\$129 92

March 20--The Covington Bucket and Engine Company was created by an ordinance with the following members to assist in extinguishing fires: W. W. Leathers, James Hopkins, W. A. Kennedy, Platt Kennedy, Jacob Lemar, Radsford Casey, David Wade, James Hardin, John Gray, Thomas G. Gray, Thomas Hinton, John Stephens, James Littlefield, Adam Clore, John Wolf, Jacob Musselman, Wm. Turner, W. Everson, James Chery, M. L. Hardin, Wm. Arthur, Benjamin Arnold, Hanson Bowen, Theodore Wade, W. L. Grant, Thomas More, F. H. Rittenhouse, Spencer Miller, Robert Stewart, Joshua Newhall and their associates.

April 5--Joseph Guest, of Cincinnati, was allowed sixty-two dollars for his services as Surveyor of the city of Covington for the year 1835.

April 7--The committee appointed to settle with G. B. Marshall, City Treasurer, for the year ending April 5, reported:

Balance in Treasury for past year	\$ 77 15
Taxes received of Collector for 1834.....	409 06
Taxes received of Collector of 1835.....	1,327 75
Received upon license.....	411 00
Fines.....	92 68
Debts.....	74 62
State tax on taverns.....	10 00
Rent on markets.....	35 90
Rent of Poor-house.....	4 00
From City Marshall.....	3 08
City loan.....	25,000 00
Total.....	\$27,475 25

**DISBURSEMENTS**

Repairs on market space.....	\$1,159 .89
Scott street.....	1,000 00
Madison street.....	1,000 00
Poor.....	235 25
Jail and work-house.....	1,475 10
Bank stock and railroad stock....	750 00 (1)
Sundries.....	10,371 98
Total.....	\$15,992 22
Balance on hand.....	\$11,483 03

The Treasurer was allowed seventy-five dollars for his services for the year.

April 7--Under this date the members of Council elected April 2 met and organized. They were: First Ward, Milton Lamb and William W. Wade; Second Ward, John T. Levis and Calvin A. Littlefield; Third Ward, M. M. Benton and William Hopkins; Fourth Ward, Lewis Roach and Frederick G. Gedge. John T. Levis was chosen as President.

April 12--The following officers were chosen for the year 1836:

City Marshall--Jesse Gray.

City Clerk--Hamilton Martin.

City Treasurer--Geo. B. Marshall.

Keeper of the Jail and Poor house--Wm. Wason (sic).

Street Commissioner--Wm. Wason (2).

City Assessor--Hamilton Martin.

Assistant City Assessors--John A. Goodson and Carey Clemons.

Sexton of Graveyard--Elijah Owen.

Clerk of Markets--Joseph Clark.

Wood Measurer--Jesse Gray.

It seems that Messrs. Gray, Wason and Martin each held two offices.

April 26--The sum of \$46 was appropriated to dig a well at Third and Garrard streets.

#### ENDNOTES

1. February 1835--"Northern Bank of Kentucky at Lexington chartered, with four branches, and \$3,000,000 capital...."(Lewis Collins, History of Kentucky, revised by Richard Collins, 1874, vol. 1)

2. William Wasson's daughter, Mary, married John A. Goodson. John and Mary Goodson's daughter, Mary Jane, married John G. Carlisle (W. H. Perrin et al, Kentucky, A History of the State, vol. 7, 1887). William Wasson, 57, Grocery, born in Pennsylvania (1860 Census). Wasson died in 1863 (obituary, C. D. E. 8-13-63).

## HISTORY OF COVINGTON

BY O. J. Wiggins

(Twelfth in a series herein transcribed)

Daily Commonwealth, June 28, 1904

(CONTINUED)

May 30.--Hamilton Martin was allowed \$29 for his services as Assessor for the year 1836. The rate of taxation for the year was fixed at 35 cents on the \$100 valuation, and a tithe of 50 cents was levied on each free white male inhabitant.

Milton Lamb was appointed Superintendent of Public Works subject to the Committee on Internal Improvements, with allowance of \$1 per day for his services.

June 27.--One hundred dollars was allowed to defray expenses of delegates appointed by the citizens to represent Covington at the Railroad Convention to be held in Knoxville on the 4th of July. P. S. Bush(1), G. B. Marshall and John B. Casey were appointed to draw the money and pay it over to the delegates who attended the convention.

An election was ordered for July 9th. to fill vacancy caused by resignation of Mr. Wade and Moses V. Grant. Pliny Bliss and Moses Arnold were appointed inspectors.

July 23--Mr. Wade was reported elected, and took his seat. It seems he resigned and was re-elected.

The resignation of R. Ernst Culbreth as City Attorney was accepted and Wm. T. Turner was appointed pro tem.

August 5.--The Committee on Ways and Means, to whom was referred a petition for the paving and grading of the lower end of Greenup and Third streets signed by two-thirds of the property owners on said streets, reported after setting forth the facts of the petition:

"Your committee hold that the owners of property fronting on any street have a right, which is secured to them by the charter, to petition for the improvement of said street, and the Council when so petitioned are in duty bound to make the improvement, if the situation of the public works, funds, and the season will permit. For the purpose of informa-

tion on the subject your Committee have obtained from the Treasurer a statement of the amount of funds on hand, and have made themselves acquainted with the available means as well as the liabilities of the city, the result of which may be given as follows:

Amount of funds to the treasury....	\$10,300
Probable revenue tax.....	2,500
	12,800

**Appropriations and Liabilities.**

Due upon bank stock.....	\$9,000
Due upon road stock.....	1,500
interest on loan due 5th of Sept .....	1,500
For engine, hose, carriages, etc. .....	1,800
Completion of grading Scott and Madison streets.....	800
Curbing, paving &c., same	2,657
Grading and paving each side of Garrard and Fourth streets... .....	925
	\$19,772
	\$6,972

Thus it will be observed that the liabilities of the city, over and above the funds on hand, including the revenue for the present year, will be about \$6,972, in order to meet which it will be necessary to dispose of at least seventy shares of bank stock, being the only available means to which the city can resort for the refreshment of her Treasury. The installments upon the stock held in the Covington and Lexington Turnpike Road will have to be set apart for that purpose, as by the 16th of May next the whole stock is required to be paid, which will be before any revenue can be collected for 1837. Your Committee deems the bank stock available means, consequently it would be deemed impolite to rush the stock into the market in its present glutted condition, as from the fact of the superiority in numbers of vendors of stock over purchasers, a discount instead of a premium would, in the opinion of your Committee, be the inevitable result."

The report then goes on to recommend that

the stock be held for a more favorable market, and the improvements petitioned for be postponed until the ensuing spring, which was adopted.

The sum of \$925 was allowed Mur[?]ch & Agnew, of Philadelphia, for a new fire engine.

Alexander Hughes was chosen Street Commissioner to fill the unexpired term caused by the resignation of William Mason (sic).

"It was ordered that public notice be given that an election will be held at the Engine house on Saturday next for the purpose of recommending to the Governor of a person or persons for Mayor, and Messrs. Crockett, Jimison and Ticknor hold said election."

"Further ordered, that the Committee on Law be instructed to forward to His Excellency, the Governor, the names of the persons receiving the highest number of votes."

August 20. "The Committee on Law, who were directed to certify to the Governor of this Commonwealth such person to be commissioned Mayor of this city as may be nominated by the people, would report that they forwarded to His Excellency the name Moses V. Grant, he having received the said nomination (2)."

Thomas A. Johnson resigned as Clerk of the markets; and Thomas Hinten was appointed.

The sum of \$200 was allowed for the purchase of a hose reel for the fire department.

October 5.--The regular meetings of the Board was fixed for the second Thursday in each month, instead of Wednesday, as heretofore.

Jesse Gray resigned as City Marshall, and E. F. Fowler was elected to fill the unexpired term.

#### ENDNOTES

1. In 1830 proposals were made for railroads between Cincinnati and Lexington and Cincinnati and Charleston, South Carolina. As a follow-up to the date in February 1836 when the Kentucky legislature approved the right-of-way for the latter, which had sparked loud celebrations in the streets of Covington, on June 27 council appropriated a hundred dollars to cover expenses for a representation to the "Railroad Convention" on July 4th at Knoxville (John Burns, "History of Covington to 1865," unpublished).



Philip S. Bush, born in Kentucky, Cashier at Covington bank, residence at the Bank; E. S. Bush, born Kentucky, clerk at Covington bank, residence one mile south of Covington; John S. Bush, born in Kentucky, engineer, boards at P. Bush's (1839-40 street directory).

William Ernst, a native of Bucks county Pennsylvania, in 1836 was employed as a clerk in Lexington by the Northern Bank of Kentucky. In 1838 he came to Covington as appointee to be teller at the Covington branch of the Northern Bank of Kentucky, a position he held until 1849. That year he became Cashier, and in 1867 the bank's president. In 1836 William Ernst married Lydia A. Bush, daughter of P. S. Bush, his predecessor at the Northern Bank of Kentucky, Covington branch. William and Lydia Ernst had nine children including the following seven: Catherine B., John P., Sarah E., James C., Richard P., Edward H., and Alexander B. Ernst. William Ernst was also president of the Covington and Lexington Turnpike company and one of the organizers of First Presbyterian Church in 1841 (Perrin). Richard Pretlow Ernst (1858-1934) was a member of Covington City Council (1888-1892) and a Republican U. S. Senator from Kentucky (1921-1927). Like the P. S. Bush family, the William Ernst family resided in an apartment adjoining the Bank of Northern Kentucky, Covington branch building (Records from the City of Covington Historic Preservation office compiled by Walter Langsam).

2. The first three Covington mayors were these: Mortimer Benton, elected, 1834, resigned, 1835; William Southgate, appointed, 1835; and Moses V. Grant, elected August 1836, resigned February 1845. Moses V. Grant was the younger brother of John and Squire Grant, prominent pioneer settlers in Campbell county. Their mother, Elizabeth was a sister of Daniel Boone. The fourth and fifth Mayors of Covington were B. W. Foley, elected, 1845; and John A. Goodson, elected, 1860 (Burns, miscellaneous papers; Burns, "History of Covington to 1865").

# HISTORY OF COVINGTON

BY O. J. Wiggins

(Thirteenth in a series)

Daily Commonwealth, July 5, 1884

(Continued)

1837

May 25--The rate of taxation for the year 1837 was set at 35 cents on the one hundred dollars valuation on real estate and ---- cents on drugs and groceries and on dry goods, \$35 for the first class, \$25 for the second class and \$15 for the third class. A tithe tax was also assessed of \$1 on each free male citizen over twenty-one years of age.

June 24.--Hamilton Martin was allowed \$70 for his services as Assessor and for making out the Assessor's books.

July 16--Samuel Balleau was elected Sexton at the Covington cemetery (1).

August 17--The City Collector was allowed a payment for all collection of taxes on real estate, and ten per cent on dogs and cats.

August 31--James Childers was elected Market-master.

March 1--A resolution was passed by Council recommending M. V. Grant to the Governor to be appointed Mayor (2).

1838

April 12--An ordinance was passed requiring Council to elect four Fire Wardens, one for each ward, on the first Monday in April of each year, whose duty it was to examine all buildings, stoves and flues in the city, and in time of fire to take general supervision in aiding the firemen.

G. B. Marshall was allowed \$75 for his services as City Treasurer the preceding year.

The following were reported as having been elected to Council at the annual election held April 7, 1838: B. S. Leathers and Milton Lamb from the First Ward; Thomas A. Phillips and Jonas Harlow from the Second Ward; and C. A. Little and William Hopkins from the Third Ward. The returns from the Fourth Ward were thrown out because signed by only one Inspector, when law requires two. An election was ordered in this Ward for the 21st inst.

Wm. Hopkins was elected Chairman and Hamilton Martin was elected City Clerk.

May 3.--B. W. Foley was chosen City Attorney; Wm. Hall was elected City Jailer; James C. Clark, Street Commissioner; Samuel Balleau, Sexton of the graveyard; F. G. Gedge, Assessor; and G. B. Marshall, City Treasurer for the year 1838.

James G. Arnold and F. G. Gedge were chosen to represent the Fourth Ward.

June 4--An ordinance was passed establishing a general system of wharfage in the city and creating the office of Wharf Master.

James Clark was elected Wharf Master.

Samuel Starling was elected City Marshall.

June 8--Mr. Starling declined to serve as City Marshall and Mr. Hathaway was chosen.

June 9--Mr. Hathaway refused to serve and Willis Payne was chosen.

June 11--The tax levy was fixed at forty cents on each hundred dollars valuation, besides the tithe on each free male over twenty-one years old.

June 19--Council having employed M. M. Benton to assist City Attorney B. W. Foley in the suit of the city against the Kennedys in relation to the wharf property, Mr. Foley sent in his resignation and Council very promptly passed a resolution explaining that they meant no disrespect to their attorney in employing additional counsel and refused to accept Mr. Foley's resignation.

The City Marshall was usually chosen City Collector, but Mr. Payne, declining to serve, Jonathan Hathaway was chosen City Collector.

August 2--Dr. Felix B. Webb was contracted as surgeon and physician at the Covington Poor house or Hospital for twelve months at \$20.

October 12--The following entry appears: "Sundry citizens petitioned the Board to take necessary steps to have a street opened on the west part of the corporation line to be called Washington street. Referred to the Committee of Internal Improvements.

October 25. The following gentlemen were

appointed Fire Wardens: Daniel Savill, Robert Semple, John T. Levis and Samuel Stewart.

Nov. 22. B. W. Foley offered his resignation as City Attorney, which was accepted, and M. M. Benton chosen to fill the vacancy.

December 25--The annual election was ordered for Saturday, January 5, in pursuant with an amendment to the city charter.

December 31--The boundaries of the wards were fixed as follows:

First--All that part of the city situated north of Third street and east of the alley between Greenup and Scott streets.

Second--All that portion of the city west of the alley between Greenup and Scott streets and north of the alley between Third and Fourth streets.

Third--All that part south of Third street as far west as Market street and south of Market space to Scott street and east of Scott street.

Fourth--All that part west of Scott street and south of the alley between Third and fourth streets (3).

#### ENDNOTES

1. Samuel Billev, Sexton and Jailer, born in Virginia, residence south of Fifth street (1839-40 directory).

2. Wiggins' chronology here is confusing. This resolution on March 1, 1838 may have had to do with Grant being appointed to a second term since, according to Wiggins, Grant was first nominated for Mayor in 1836.

3. The City of Covington has 2000 inhabitants; a branch of the Northern Bank of Kentucky with a capital of \$350,000; an insurance office with a capital of \$500,000; one Methodist, one Presbyterian, one Catholic, and two Baptist churches; a Cotton factory; a rolling mill; and nine tobacco factories employing 100 (Segment from "A Brief Sketch of Covington," 1839-40 directory).

(Transcription and endnotes by John Boh)



**THE NORTHERN BANK OF KENTUCKY,  
COVINGTON BRANCH**

Northwest corner, Third and Scott streets  
Built circa 1836 originally as a two story  
building.

CHOESBECK

265 238  
242 261  
183 196  
100 187  
CAMPBELL ST.

237  
236  
188  
200  
SANDYBROOK ST.

327 381  
355 348  
248 251  
248 233  
344 343  
347 340  
284 272  
257 281  
331  
333  
288  
286

230 228  
232 226  
203 207  
206 200  
222 221  
224 OFFICE 218  
213 214  
210 217  
286  
280  
276  
270

188 182 171  
186 178  
134 161 153  
133 115  
170 170  
168 165  
157 158  
154 161  
180  
163  
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281

120 122 121  
132 123 118  
13 78 119  
80 77 115  
120 105  
108 103  
87 88  
84 81  
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282  
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281  
281

60 61  
64 63  
60 61  
64 63  
35 34  
37 38  
40 39  
31 30  
34 33  
44 40  
45 40  
38 38  
282  
281  
281  
281

ENGINE HOUSE  
NORTHERN BANK OF KENTUCKY; COVINGTON BRANCH  
(built circa 1836)  
CITY HALL  
(1843)

1851 map  
"CITY OF COVINGTON"

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CELEBRATING NORTHERN KENTUCKY'S HERITAGE  
(II)

Saturday--March 4th, 1995  
NORTHERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

Members of several historical societies in the region of Northern Kentucky have been making arrangements for another history day now scheduled for Saturday March 4th, 1995 on the campus of Northern Kentucky University. Needless to say, we are hoping that this day will be successful in the manner of the successful history day held last February 19th, 1994.

The purpose again will be to celebrate Northern Kentucky's History, and the work of its heritage organizations and individuals. And since in 1995, Northern Kentucky will also be celebrating the city of Newport's Bicentennial, the Newport committee has made this history day an important event in their 1995 schedule.

The agenda for history day, 1995, now includes an opening speech on the 1937 flood and a closing talk on the history of military fortifications in Northern Kentucky (unconfirmed), and workshops on Native American archaeology, preservation of rural cemeteries, Newport's past in memorabilia, Northern Kentucky's gambling era, architectural preservation efforts in Newport and Bellevue, and another tour of the NKU Library/Archives.

Again various organizations and individual will display publications, artifacts, and memorabilia.

**Kenton County Historical Society  
P.O. Box 641  
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