

# Bulletin

of the

# Kenton County Historical Society

Website: www.kentonlibrary.org Email: nkyheritage.kchs@juno.com P.O. Box 641, Covington, Kentucky 41012-0641 (859) 431-2666

## January / February

2009

#### I Bet You Didn't Know

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

January 2, 1778: Gov. Patrick Henry of Virginia issued orders to raise 350 troops for the protection of Kentucky settlers.

January 8, 1815: Gen. Andrew Jackson and 5,500 Kentuckians defeated the British at the Battle of New Orleans.

February 8, 1778: Daniel Boone and 27 Boonesborough salt makers were captured by Indians at the Upper Blue Licks.

February 12, 1909: President Theodore Roosevelt laid the cornerstone for the Lincoln Memorial near Hodgenville on the 100th anniversary of Lincoln's birth.

"On This Day In Kentucky" — Robert Powell

Published bi-monthly by The Kenton County Historical Society Membership, which includes the Bulletin, \$20.00 per year
PresidentRonnin Einhaus Vice-PresidentDonald Fowler TreasurerW. Terry Averbeck SecretaryJohn H. Boh
Board Members: Paula Farrell, George Gressle, Richard Johannemann, Mary Elise Regan, Robert Webster (Bulletin Editor), Alex Weldon, and Ex officio - Karl Lietzenmayer

# **Upcoming Programs**

## Behringer-Crawford Museum

The Behringer-Crawford Holiday Toy Train exhibit continues until February 1st while the museum's *New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music*, a Smithsonian Institution traveling exhibition, will end January 9th. An upcoming exhibit, with a date not finalized as of yet, will be on Northern Kentucky's famous Gourmet Strip, a history of the legendary Dixie Highway restaurants. For more information, contact the museum at www.bcmuseum.org or at (859) 491-4003.

## Used Book Sale

Purchase nearly-new or used books, movies, music and more for prices under \$4.00. Proceeds benefit the Friends of the Kenton County Public Library, a volunteer organization that raises funds for the Library through membership and book sales. For information on becoming a Friend of the KCPL or volunteering at book sales, please call (859) 962-4060. To be notified of future book sale dates sign up for the Library's e-calendar at www.kentonlibrary.org/events. Location: Erlanger Branch, 401 Kenton Lands Road Date: January 11th – 19th

## History Day 2009

Details are being finalized for History Day 2009. The event, the highlight of this region's historical society community, will be held once again at Northern Kentucky University. It has been scheduled for Saturday April 4, 2009 in the brand new NKU Student Union Building. More information will follow in the March/April Bulletin. For further information, please contact John Boh at (859) 491-0490.

ARTICLES FROM BACK ISSUES ARE INDEXED ON OUR WEBSITE!

# "New Deal" Activities in Northern Kentucky

#### John Boh

2008 is seen as the 75th anniversary of the New Deal. As elderly citizens still recall, President Roosevelt was elected in November and inaugurated in March 1933. He immediately declared a "national" bank holiday. Congress went into special session. Roosevelt began delivering his hope-filled "fireside chats". After banking reform legislation, new strategies and start-up programs tried to alleviate hardships. Between 1935 and 1943, the New Deal very much aided continuing education in Kentucky. The National Youth Administration helped place thousands of students in part-time jobs at high schools for tuition and other expense money and made similar efforts for college students. It also provided vocational training and guidance. The Civilian Conservation Corps set up training and work camps for military-aged youth. For older workers, the WPA in the 1930s and early 1940s granted \$162 million in Kentucky. In 1938, WPA employment in Kentucky reached 72,000.<sup>1</sup>

#### Soil Conservation, Forestry

Started in 1933 and ended in 1942, the CCC provided military transition between the wars. Beside army officers, in many of Kentucky's 44 camps, Soil Conservation Service personnel supervised farm aid, farm and timberland conservation, wildlife protection, fire fighting and forestry development and management. As recounted from an interview by local history columnist Jim Reis, the CCC camp at Walton, in Boone County, started in 1935 with 23 enrollees, but soon had over 150. They were volunteers, about half from local communities. Where the Walton-Verona School now sits they built a camp barracks. Daily activities started with early breakfast and flag raising and ended with evening recreation. Pay was some \$30 per month with six-month assignments. Seventy-one local farms, totaling 10,600 acres, in a number of counties received soil erosion guidance and other aid.<sup>2</sup> The CCC was a "program for young men," ages 17 to 28. Ambitious and enthusiastic, they were often ready to serve far away from home.<sup>3</sup> In the aftermath of the 1937 Flood in Maysville, the National Guard helped protect city residents and over 100 CCC workers aided in cleanup.<sup>4</sup>

#### Parks And Recreation

The Works Progress Administration started in 1935 and ended in 1942. Before the WPA, for a short time in 1933, the "emergency" Civil Works Administration gave jobs to unemployed persons mostly to work on streets, sidewalks, sewers, playgrounds, schools and airports.<sup>5</sup>

Devou Park was a big work area. After the Devou family donated land for a Covington park, two entry roads were built. Prisoners Lake had opened by 1924. A golf clubhouse was built, burned and then rebuilt. In 1932 the Rotary Club established Rotary Grove to honor deceased members.

In 1932, William P. Devou employed a municipal planner, L. Segoe, to design a full-scale development. A "Memorial Recreation Building" would be located so as to command the whole park. Besides the improved nine hole golf course there would be twelve tennis courts, a swimming pool, a major and a minor ball field, children's playing areas, picnic areas, "miles of foot walks and bridal paths, and a tree nursery." East of the Memorial Building would be constructed an outdoor amphitheater for band concerts community festivals, pageants and other festivities. A new golf clubhouse would be built; the existing one would serve the tennis courts. Paths and foot walks, through previously undeveloped woods, would connect many points in the Park, including a Civil War fort and a view of Cincinnati from an overlook.

By November 1938, of the \$140,000 in improvements for parks and playgrounds throughout the city, the WPA would pay \$97,251. Devou Park would cost a total of \$70,000. The Board of Park Commissioners requested construction of an acousti-

cal band shell "in the natural amphitheater of the park"; a shelter house-refreshment stand; "wading pools" in West Covington adjacent to Devou Park; and "roadways" between the Clubhouse and Sleepy Hollow Road.

In the years 1936 to 1939, the Devou Trust provided some of the matching funds. This enabled the Park Board to receive WPA grants, and to employ "several hundred persons." Workers improved roads, built additional retaining walls, a "central refreshment stand," and completed the Band Shell in 1939. Begun at Goebel Park, WPA-sponsored free concert programs were moved to Devou.

In 1938 the Board of Park Commissioners made requests to the WPA for the city's other playgrounds including: Repairing and remodeling an existing Goebel Park shelter house; constructing "swimming pools" in the Hermes Avenue playground; a shelter house and two swimming pools for the "colored playground" at Twelfth and Maryland; a shelter house at the Fifteenth and Eastern playground; a shelter house at the Nineteenth and Jefferson Streets playground; major excavation, a shelter house, and two swimming pools at the 30<sup>th</sup> and Decoursey playground; a shelter house and two swimming pools at 47<sup>th</sup> and Decoursey. Of the city's financial obligation, a portion would be material and equipment supplied "in-kind."<sup>6</sup>

In 1941 the *Kentucky Post* published a frontpage photo of a new Devou Park shelter house with restrooms built under the supervision of city engineer Lawrence E. McCartt, "at the top of the Western Avenue steps.<sup>7</sup>

#### Schools

For a new African American elementary and high school in Covington, officials applied for \$61,000 in Rosenwald funding. When it failed, they scaled back plans reducing the estimated cost from \$383,000 to \$190,000. The new Lincoln Grant School on Greenup Street opened in 1932 prior to the WPA.<sup>a</sup> Always friendly to African American education, Newport Superintendent Anderson Owens had promised to replace the tiny Southgate School. However, the project failed, as Newport voters did not give it the two-thirds approval required.<sup>9</sup>

In 1934 Dayton dedicated a new football field built with the aid of the WPA. Belleview dedicated soon-to-be-called Davis Field in 1936. Plans and construction beginning in the early 1930s, the Holmes football team played its first game under newly added lights in 1936.<sup>10</sup> Elementary and secondary consolidation efforts in the 1920s eventually resulted in construction of a new Crescent Springs elementary school and a new high school in the vicinity. Budgeted in 1935, the Kenton County Board of Education and WPA funded the Dixie Heights and Simon Kenton High Schools.<sup>11</sup> In 1939, New Deal projects included the new high school in Alexandria costing \$147,500 and the Newport High School stadium (opened in 1939). For the latter, federal funds totaled \$48,706 with the education system providing around \$65,000. In Covington, WPA projects would include the First, Third and Fourth district school buildings.12

#### Firehouses, Post Offices

In 1933, Covington was building a new firehouse at Altamont and Parkway and making plans for one in Latonia. Also, Newport's new main firehouse was constructed through the WPA and opened in 1935.<sup>13</sup> In 1938, Congressman Brent Spence announced plans for a new federal courthouse and post office in Covington. A nationwide competition would select the architect. By 1940, new post offices were also under construction in Ft. Thomas and Williamstown.<sup>14</sup> In the late 1930s, the new Grant County Courthouse was a WPA project.<sup>15</sup> In Crescent Springs, formerly unemployed WPA workers and department volunteers built the first firehouse at present-day Poage Park.<sup>16</sup>

#### **Roads and More**

In early 1936 it was announced that WPA projects would provide 300 jobs. Thirty-three Kenton County projects would employ 1,168 men and 168 women. Twenty-seven projects in Campbell County would employ 908 men and 136 women. Pay would be \$55 to \$85 per month. Early roadwork in Kenton County included improvements on Horsebranch, Wolf's and Wayman Roads.<sup>17</sup> In another headline, the WPA promised 118 jobs. The WPA would provide \$13,603 and Covington \$5,433 for sidewalks, curbs and the like. Covington would disburse \$1,013 of \$9,059 for the new Eleventh District School playground. The WPA would aid Bellevue in construction of curbs and sidewalks along LaFayette Avenue.<sup>18</sup> James E. Wampler, assistant district director of the local WPA office announced jobs in Carroll and Trimble counties employing 129.<sup>19</sup> In June 1940, Arthur F. Bentley reported projects including two wading pools in Latonia and a partial fireproofing of Highlands High School. The WPA had finished constructing a 930-feet long sewer connection for the new Latonia Terrace public housing site.<sup>20</sup>

In 1935, a section of what became Mary Inglis Highway was to be constructed adjacent to St. Francis Cemetery at Dayton, Kentucky.<sup>21</sup> The old streetcar bridge between Newport and Covington was closed in 1934. The new vehicular World War Veterans Memorial Bridge between Covington and Newport was dedicated already in July 1936.<sup>22</sup> By 1918, Ludlow had built an underpass that eliminated the old highway and railroad intersection, but a separate parallel tunnel to shield pedestrians from moving vehicles became a "major project" in 1935. The tunnel is the Veterans Memorial Underpass honoring Ludlow veterans; many from WWI were then out of work.<sup>23</sup>

In 1941, with war on the horizon, the federal government dropped out of funding improvements on Highway 27 from Alexandria to Falmouth, including a river and a railroad bridge, but only after improvements had been completed between Cold Spring and Alexandria.<sup>24</sup> Another WPA job was an underpass on Monmouth in Newport.<sup>25</sup> By 1933, the Dixie Highway had been widened to four lanes between Covington and Florence, but it intersected at Erlanger with the railroad tracks. Besides a new railroad underpass, the Erlanger sewer system was also WPA work.<sup>26</sup>

#### 1935-1940

In 1940, a WPA administrator gave a full report on work completed or under construction in three counties for the period July 1, 1935 to January 1, 1940:

In almost exclusively rural Boone County, WPA work included 7.75 miles of roads, highways and streets; 13 culverts of 242 linear feet; 10 schools and 146 sanitary sewer connections.

In Campbell County, 80 miles of highways, roads and streets; 30 bridges and viaducts comprising 1,051 linear feet; 236 culverts of 4,978 feet; 60 miles of ditch and pipe; 33 miles of sidewalks and paths; 31 miles of curbs; 18.49 miles of gutters; three schools; one gymnasium; one recreational building; five hospitals; one penal institution; two firehouses; nine garages; 73 public buildings; 85 storage buildings; two stadiums; 12 playgrounds; four athletic fields; one pumping station; two sewage treatment plants; 6.76 miles of water mains, aqueducts and distribution lines; 794 water consumer connections; 14.15 miles of storm and sanitary sewers; 90 sewer service connections; and 402 sanitary lavatories.

In Kenton County, 102 miles of highways, streets and bridges; 29 bridges and viaducts of 388 linear feet; 276 bridges and viaducts of 5,211 linear feet; 276 miles of ditch and pipe; 15 miles of sidewalks and paths; 25 miles of curbs; 10.7 miles of gutters; two schools; one recreational building; one armory; one public building; one stadium; two parks; twelve playgrounds; four athletic fields; two swimming pools; one pumping station; one sewage treatment plant; 2 miles of water mains, aqueducts, and distribution lines; 1,449 water consumer connections; 29 miles of storm and sanitary sewers; 108 sewer service connections; 490 sanitary lavatories; and .07 acres of unclassified drainage.<sup>27</sup>

#### Rural

With the glut of farm products on the market, the Agricultural Adjustment Administration tried to limit production in order to increase market prices.<sup>28</sup> In 1938, Boone County tobacco farmers voted overwhelmingly for quotas under the new Tobacco Control Act of 1934. Residents also participated in New Deal home and farm mortgage protection and soil conservation programs. In Boone County, which in 1930 was still 93.2 per cent farmland, "outlying" residents signed up for rural electrification aid.<sup>29</sup> Mary Hood Gillespie organized adult education programs for women in Florence, Hebron, Constance, Burlington, New Haven, Walton and Verona. New Deal programs then were advocating greater domestic selfsufficiency in hard times.<sup>30</sup> Kentucky farmers had it hard, but wage earners in Covington and other industrial locales were more vulnerable than farmers who could live off the land.<sup>31</sup>

#### Politics

During the New Deal, Congressman Brent Spence (descended from a pioneer Campbell County family) served Northern Kentucky. He chaired the congressional banking and finance committee and supported New Deal policies.<sup>32</sup> On July 8, 1938, Roosevelt himself appeared at the Latonia Race Track in a rally before 40,000 for Alben W. Barkley, running for the Senate against A. B. ("Happy") Chandler. In a notable incident, Chandler, a fellow Democrat, had "talked" his way into the parade car. He waved and beamed a wide smile, with Barkley seated on one side and FDR on the other.<sup>33</sup>

3. Jim Reis, "A Young Man's Ride Out of Town for the CCC," *Pieces of the Past*, 2, *KY Post*, 1991, pages 227-229

4. Jim Reis, "Mason County Survived Hard Times... Earthquakes, Epidemics Took Toll," *KY Post*, November 24, 1996, page 4K

5. Blakey, pages 55-57

Robert D. Webster, "Prisoner's Lake," *Bulletin of the Kenton County Historical Society*, May/June 2008; "General Plan For Ultimate Development Of Devou Park," Devou Park files; "City, Park Board Push Work Plans" *KY Post*, November 1, 1938, page 1; Ross C. McClain, "Sixty Years of Devou Park... 1910-1970," Christopher Gist Society, presented November 24, 1970; Jim Reis, "Weekly Concerts Draw Big Crowds to Devou Park," *Pieces of the Past*, 1, KY *Post*, 1988, pages 183-185; "Park Board Lauds Concert Series... Improvements in Natural Amphitheater Will Add to Summer Events, Members Point Out... McCartt, Walsh Praised," *KY Post*, January 1, 1939, page 1
 "New Shelter House Ready for Sunday," *KY Post*, April 12, 1941, page 1
 Jim Reis, "A Symbol of Hope For Blacks... 7<sup>th</sup> Street School Broke New Ground," *KY Post*, January 15, 1996, page 4K

9. Ted H. H. Harris, "Southgate School Newport, Kentucky (1866-1955)," *Northern Kentucky Heritage*, vol. IV, No. 2, Spring/Summer 1997, pgs 34-42 10. Jim Reis, "Holmes Fans Beat Odds to Build Football Field in the 1930s," *KY Post*, June 21, 1999, page 4K

Jim Reis, "Looking Back on Dixie High... First Name Proposed for Suburban School was Roosevelt High," *KY Post*, November 1, 1999, page 4K
 Jim Reis, "Sports Complex Gave Boost to Newport's Image and Pride," *KY Post*, October 10, 1994, page 4K

13. Jim Reis, "The Right Site Was Picked, 'Home' for Newport Firefighters Dates to Mid-1860s," *KY Post*, August 28, 1995, page 4K

14. Jim Reis, "Depression Brought New Post Offices... Three Were Built Here Under FDR's Program," *KY Post*, January 2, 1989, page 4K

15. Jim Reis, "Grant County, History Marked by Lots of Action, Variety of Events," *KY Post*, March 24, 1986, page 4K

16. Mike Cunningham et al., The Bicentennial Celebration 1776-1976... The Crescent Villa Community

17. "New Projects to Make 300 Jobs" *KY Enquirer*, February 1, 1936, page 1 18. "Jobs for 118 Assured by Federal Projects," *KY Enquirer*, June 20, 1936, page 1

19. "Two New WPA Road Projects Under Way," *KY Post*, June 21, 1940, pg 5 20. "New WPA Projects Under Way Here, Ft. Thomas, Covington Work Started," *KY Post*, June 18, 1940, page 5

21. Jim Reis, "Costly Price of Progress... St. Francis Cemetery Fell Victim to Railroad, Highway," *KY Post*, May 8, 1995, page 4K

### Would You Like To Be Published In The KCHS Bulletin or Northern Kentucky Heritage Magazine?

The Kenton County Historical Society is always looking for stories for its award-winning Bulletin and Northern Kentucky Heritage Magazine.

To submit an article, send a paper copy by mail, or email it as a Word document attachment. Articles for the Bulletin should be no longer than 500 words and must have at least two references. Stories for the magazine should be at least 5,000 words and have endnotes. Related photographs would help greatly in the article's inclusion.

> nkyheritage.kchs@juno.com. P.O. Box 641, Covington, KY 41012 (859) 431-2666

Feel free to contact us with any questions you may have about submitting an article.

25. Jim Reis, "Sports Complex Gave Boost to Newport's Image and Pride," *KY Post*, October 10, 1994, page 4K

26. Wayne Onkst, editor, *From Buffalo Trails to the Twenty-First Century: A Centennial History of Erlanger, Kentucky*, Erlanger Historical Society, 1996, page 36, 37

27. "Report Is Made on WPA Projects...Three Local Counties are Included," *KY Post*, July 10, 1940, page 5

28. Blakey, pages 113-115

29. Jennifer S. Warner, Boone *County: From Mastodons to the Millennium:* A Story of he Geography, People and Events that influenced the Tip of Northern Kentucky, Boone County Bicentennial Committee, 1998, pages 261-264

30. "Lutes Organized Boone Extension Homemakers Clubs," *Boone County Recorder*, June 12, 1991

31. George T. Blakey, page 13

32. Jim Reis, "Brent Spence, the Man... Bridge Honored New Deal Democrat's Years of Service," *KY Post*, August 15, 2005, page 4K

33. Jim Reis, "The 'Race of the Century'... Chandler, Barkley Vied for Roosevelt's Attention in Tight Senate Race," *KY Post*, February 28, 2005, page 4K (see also *Northern Kentucky Heritage, VI, No. 1*)

<sup>1.</sup> George T. Blakey, *Hard Times & New Deal in Kentucky*, *1929-1939*, The University Press of Kentucky, 1986, *pages* 19, 23-24, 26-27, 59, 90-93, 199 2. Blakey, pages 80-81, 196

<sup>22.</sup> Jim Reis, "Controversy Plagued Bridge over the Licking," *Pieces of the Past*, 2, *KY Post*, 1991, pages 171-173

<sup>23.</sup> Jim Reis, "Viaduct a Ludlow Fixture... Project Took Efforts of Many to Build," *KY Post*, June 18, 2001, page 4K

<sup>24.</sup> Jim Reis, "Opening a Picturesque Trail... Dedication of New U. S. 27 Ended Years of Frustration," *KYPost*, September 12, 1994, page 4K

## Kenny Price Musician — Songwriter — Actor

#### Robert D. Webster

James Kenneth "Kenny" Price was born in Florence, Kentucky, on May 27, 1931, and grew up on a Boone County farm. He learned how to play guitar at the age of four and by age 14 was playing live music for WZIP radio in Newport, Kentucky.

From 1952 to 1954, Price served with the United States Army during the Korean War, reaching the rank of corporal. While stationed in Korea, Price auditioned for a USO show, and before being discharged, had decided to become a professional musician.

Back in Northern Kentucky, Price studied briefly at the acclaimed Cincinnati Conservatory of Music before getting his big break — landing a job as a musician on Midwestern Hayride, a country music program taped on Cincinnati's WLWT television. Price would eventually take over as the show's host, remaining in that position until the program went off the air in the early 1970s.

Price first recorded for Boone Records, then moved to RCA in 1969, where he stayed until 1976. For much of his early career, Price worked with Ray Pennington, a Clay County, Kentucky native who played a similar style music. Three years later Price was appearing on Buddy Ross' local television show *Hometown*.

Price's first big hit record came in 1966, with "Walking on the New Grass," which landed in the top ten on the Billboard's Country Music Charts. Soon, Price was a frequent guest on the very popular television variety show, *Hee Haw*. The show was cohosted by musicians Buck Owens and Roy Clark and featured country music and humor with rural "Kornfield Kounty" as a backdrop. It was taped at WLAC television as well as at Opryland USA in Nashville, Tennessee. *Hee Haw* started on CBS as a



Northern Kentucky country music star Kenny Price

summer 1969 replacement for *The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour.* A quintessentially American show, its appeal was not limited to a rural audience. Indeed, it was widely watched in all large markets, including New York and Los Angeles.

Price continued writing and recording, releasing several other top twenty hits. Successful records included "Happy Tracks," "Northeast Arkansas Mississippi County Bootlegger" (a top 20 hit in 1969), and "The Sheriff of Boone County" (a pop crossover that hit the top 10). His novelty number "The Shortest Song in the World," written with record producer Ronny Light, enjoyed minor airplay – especially locally – after its release on album in 1970. In 1976, Price relocated to Nashville after he became a *Hee Haw* regular. He performed well as an overall-wearing, country-hick in various comedy sketches during the show's long run. He will most likely be remembered best as the bass vocalist for the beloved Hee Haw Gospel Quartet, which included Grandpa Jones, Buck Owens, and Roy Clark. The foursome performed on nearly every episode, allowing the program to take a short break from its typical gags.

Price and fellow *Hee Haw* cast member Lulu Roman got their own short-lived spin-off series called *Hee Haw Honeys*, which ran from 1978-1979. Price and Roman guest starred on two episodes of *The Love Boat*. He later had a small role in the film Cold Justice, which was not released until after his death.

Kenny's wife, Donna Price, wrote a few memorable tunes for him, including the hit "Let's Truck Together." In the mid-1980s, Kenny and Donna starred in their own Nashville Network (TNN) travelogue series called *Wish You Were Here*, where they would travel across the United States in their RV and show you all the places you can go.

Standing six feet tall and weighing nearly 300 pounds for most of his professional career, Price was nicknamed "The Round Mound of Sound". Many of his comedic songs made reference to his size – "The Heavyweight" is an obvious example. In later years he dropped a significant amount of weight and lampooned himself in the song "The Boone County Weight Watchers of America."

Price never seemed quite able to cross the threshold from mediocre to big-time country icon, despite having 34 chart singles over his 15-year career. He died of heart failure in 1987, and is buried at Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Erlanger, Kentucky.

References:

Kenny Price biography, wikipedia.org Country Music Televison website/artists/price\_kenny wikipedia.org/wiki/Hee\_Haw

#### Kenny Price Discography

One Hit Follows Another (1967 - Boone) Southern Bound (1967 - Boone) Walking on New Grass (1969 - RCA) Happy Tracks (1969 - RCA) The Heavyweight (1970 - RCA) Northeast Arkansas Mississippi County Bootlegger (1970 - RCA) Charlotte Fever (1971 - RCA) The Sheriff of Boone County (1971 - RCA) A Red Foley Songbook (1971 - RCA) Sea of Heartbreak (And Other Don Gibson Hits) (1972 - RCA) Super Sideman (1972 - RCA) You Almost Slipped My Mind (1972 - RCA) 30 California Women (1973 - RCA) Turn on Your Light and Let It Shine (1974 - RCA) Heavy Duty Country (1979 - MRC) The Best of Both (1980 - Dimension) A Pocket Full of Tunes (1982 - Summit) Features nine Price originals. The closest thing to a greatest hits album in his catalog, all newly recorded. The Hee Haw Gospel Quartet (1984 - Hee Haw) Gospel (1986)



# **Dr. James E. Randolph**

#### Kenton County Public Library Archives

James E. Randolph was born on January 17, 1888, in Pike County, Missouri. The grandson of a slave, Randolph first attended Lincoln University at Jefferson City, Missouri, and later earned a medical degree at Meharry College in Nashville, Tennessee in 1917.

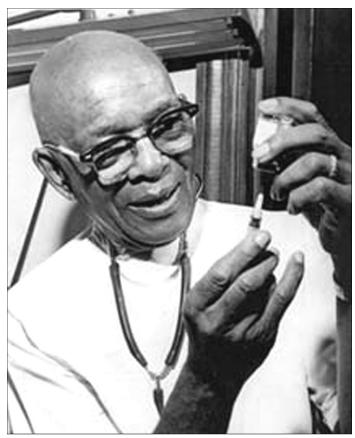
Randolph began his medical practice in Shelbyville, Tennessee. It is there where he met his first wife, Sarah. In 1922, the Randolph couple moved to Covington, Kentucky, where James established an office at 1038 Greenup Street. Both with office visits and house calls, Dr. Randolph operated his medical business for 28 years. In 1950, he moved his practice to 1002 Greenup and continued his career for another thirty-one years.

Sarah Randolph died on January 21, 1959 at the age of 60. James later married Loretta Spencer, of Frankfort, Kentucky. She died in 1975.

Over his long career Dr. Randolph delivered nearly all African-American babies born in Covington between 1922 and 1958. The pioneering physician made house calls for \$9.00 – office visits were \$7.00. If someone was not able to pay, that was OK. "If he would have collected all the money owed him, he would have been a millionaire," said Eastside resident Mary Northington.

Randolph became the first African-American physician to be on the staff at St. Elizabeth Hospital and was the first African-American physician to be a member of the Campbell-Kenton Medical Society.

At age 93, Randolph moved to the Baptist Convalescent Center in Newport, Kentucky. He died there on May 23, 1981. Three nieces and three greatnieces survived him. Services were conducted at St. James A.M.E. Church in Covington, with burial at Mary Smith Cemetery in Elsmere, Kentucky.



Covington's Dr. James Randolph

During his lifetime, Randolph saw a neighborhood park named for him and received the LaSalette Academy's Gold Medal for service to the community in 1976. In 1997, he was posthumously inducted into the Northern Kentucky Leadership Hall of Fame. Dr. Randolph was an active member of St. James A.M.E. Church in Covington, and also served as President of the Kentucky A.M.E. Organizations of Lay Members.

In the community where many were named for the humble physician, residents prefer to remember him for his generosity and his caring for others. Today, a historical marker celebrates Dr. Randolph's incredible life. It is located near his life-long church, at 120 Lynn Street, Covington.

# Andrew Lonneman (1912-1988) and the Development of the St. Vincent de Paul Society

#### Karl Lietzenmayer

It was a cold January day in 1946 as Andrew Lonnemann began a new job armed with a gallon of paint, a hammer, some nails, and some plywood. He was working at 1132 Greenup Street at the bidding of Rev. Edward Klosterman, then pastor of Mother of God Church, who asked Andrew to set up a salvage bureau for the St. Vincent de Paul Society and operate it. The Society was interested in establishing a store where contributions could be sorted, displayed and sold or distributed in an organized way. They needed a person who would devote his full time to the project. The priest offered Lonnemann the job and after much contemplation, Andrew accepted.

"I had an offer to become a tenor in a professional quartet," he said, "and I was real excited – until I found out I would have to be on the road about six months of the year!" He thought a long time before making the decision to accept Father Klosterman's request. Even though singing was his dream, a voice inside was telling him his place was at home with his young family.<sup>1</sup>

"No one had any idea how the store would fair; I personally didn't think it would last a year," remembered Mr. Lonnemann. He started small and did much of the "dirty work" himself. Within a year, he was able to repay the \$250 loan the Society has advanced to start the project. More importantly, people were being helped. As general manager of the original store, Lonnemann has looked at some of the worst in life. Yet he remained optimistic. The store - now with multiple locations - still enables people with modest means to shop with dignity. Andrew felt poor people should not have to find clothes and furniture in "something that looks like a rummage barn."<sup>2</sup> Besides supplying reasonably priced furniture and clothing, the money that is raised from sales is used beyond operational expenses. Each year, thousands of dollars help families through crises by paying heating, hospital and medical bills or by sending



Andrew Lonneman, circa 1930

them grocery orders. Even from the beginning, the Salvage Bureau was financially independent after using only \$250 of the \$900 allotted by the Society for the initial start-up. This was due to Mr. Lonneman's dedication and partly to the use of rent-free property through the kindness of the late Dr. Charles Farrell.<sup>3</sup>

As the success of the operation continued to grow, so did the number of employees. A truck driver for pick-up and deliveries; a retired bookkeeper; and several salesladies were soon added. A

Continued on page 10

## A Look Back at The Headlines

An on-going feature reliving local headlines This issue features: The Kentucky Post – June 17, 1937.

#### Strike Continues

Employers and employees of Triangle Paper Company, located at 1301 Madison Avenue in Covington, remain deadlocked in their effort to reach a settlement and end the strike which began nearly a week ago.

#### **Commencement Address**

Dr. Howard Thurman, president of Howard University, Washington, D.C., recently delivered the commencement address to the graduating students of William Grant Negro High School, Covington.

#### **Roller Rink**

The Covington Roller Rink, upstairs of the northeast corner of 5th and Madison, Covington, announces it will close for the summer and will reopen September 1st.

#### **Pool Opens**

Rosedale Pool will open for the season this Saturday. This favorite of children and adults alike is located at the southern end of Virginia Avenue.

#### Movie

Bing Crosby is featured along with Louis Armstrong and his famous swing band in the new motion picture "Pennies For Heaven" now playing at the Liberty Theater.

#### Swim – Dine – Dance

Pleasure Isle, located on Route 17 just five miles south of Covington, will feature live entertainment nightly all summer long. Enjoy a day of swimming or just relaxing by the pool. Stay for a fine dinner and an evening of dancing. Admission is only 25¢.

#### Andrew Lonneman — Continued

Newport store was opened at 9<sup>th</sup> and Putnam in October 1946. Andrew often hired employees with physical handicaps and frequently assisted them in securing house loans or other personal problems.<sup>4</sup> By 1966, there were 26 employees working in three locations: 712 Sixth Avenue, Dayton; Newport at 9<sup>th</sup> and Putnam; and the Covington store on Pike Street. Today the Salvage Bureau has four locations in Northern Kentucky – Falmouth, Crescent Springs, Newport and Dayton – with the main warehouse in Crescent Springs.

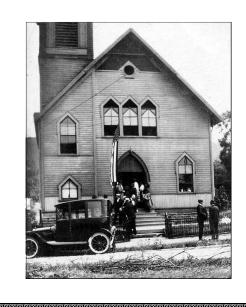
In addition to meeting the material needs of people in trouble, the Society tries to address the needs of lonely people in hospitals and nursing homes. Members make regular visits to local institutions. The Society's women members are particularly active in this area. Although the Society was originally formed as a group of Catholic laymen, it has expanded to include both women and non-Catholics.<sup>5</sup> Andrew Lonneman would be pleased to see the seeds of his work bearing continual fruit in this community.

- Ky. Post, Sherrie O'Rear, "St. Vincent de Paul Society", n.d. 1982.
  Andrew and Mildred had 4 children 2 boys; 2 girls.
  O'Rear, *Ibid*.
- 3. *The Messenger*, Kathryn Toerner, 6 Feb. 1966.
- 4. Personal Interview: Carole Lonneman, daughter, October 2008.
- 5. The Society was formed by layman Frederick Ozzanam.

#### Andrew Lonneman, circa 1970



## Then and Now



Left and right: Views of West Covington's St John's Congregational Church

> Left photo circa 1925 Right photo 2008

Many thanks to Ron Einhaus



# Mystery Photo

Can you identify the mystery photo below? The answer can be found at the bottom of the page.



#### **ANSWER:**

Section of the Carroll Bell Tower, Covington.

Kenton County Historical Society P.O. Box 641 Covington, Kentucky 41012-0641 Web: www.kentonlibrary.org Email: nkyheritage.kchs@juno.com

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION U.S. POSTAGE PAID Covington, KY 41011 PERMIT NO. 297



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

Dr. James E. Randolph Andrew Lonneman / St. Vincent de Paul Society
Kenny Price
Other Stories Inside:
"New Deal" Activities in Northern Kentucky
Feature Story:
Devou Park Amphitheater
January / February 2009
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
<b>KENTON COUNTY</b>