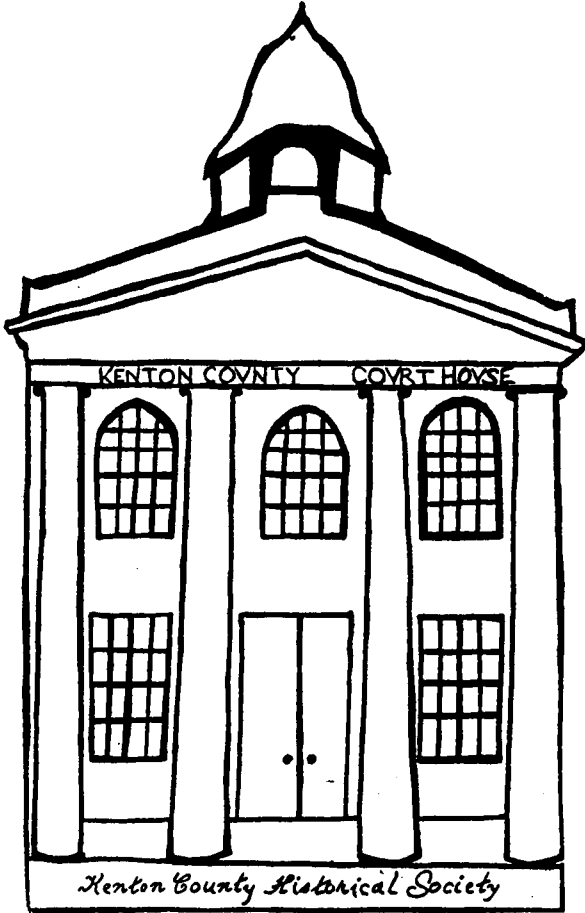


KENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
(organized in 1977; non-profit;
member, Historical Confederation
of Kentucky)



July 1993

Kenton County Historical Society

P.O. Box 641
Covington, Kentucky 41018

R E V I E W

July 1993

DEAR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS: THERE WILL BE NO MEETING OR PROGRAM IN JULY. HAVE A HAPPY FOURTH!

"NORTHERN KENTUCKY HERITAGE"--a new regional publication. Because of practical problems, it was determined at the April meeting of the Board of Directors of the Kenton County Historical Society to attempt to combine subscription with membership dues. Therefore, a motion was made at the May meeting (and also explained at the June General Membership meeting) to amend again the bylaws of the KCHS (Art. 1, Sec. 1-8) as follows:

- individual membership: \$25.00 (includes subscription)
- student membership: \$20.00 (includes membership)
- institutional: \$30.00 (includes subscription)
- professional: \$100-200.00 (includes subscription)
- business: \$100-200.00 (includes subscription)
- lifetime: \$150.00 (plus \$15.00 for subscription per year)
- subscription: \$20.00 per year for non-members

THIS AMENDMENT WILL BE CONSIDERED AT OUR AUGUST MEETING. THE NEW MEMBERSHIP/SUBSCRIPTION RATES WOULD GO INTO EFFECT IN SEPTEMBER 1993 WHEN THE FIRST ISSUE WOULD BE DUE.

Please note other considerations:

- It will be published twice yearly.
- Although published by the Kenton County Historical Society its purpose from the very beginning has been regional participation and coverage involving (as now determined) the regularly designated eight-county region of Boone, Campbell, Carrolton, Gallatin, Grant, Kenton, Owen, and Pendelton counties.
- In April it was suggested also to include for endorsement the name of the Historical Confederation of Kentucky, an affiliate of the Kentucky Historical Society. A check with the Frankfort office indicates the HCK Northern Region may be listed as endorser on cover or title page.
- A page has been set aside for genealogical queries.
- There will be space for advertising other publications.
- This new publication, "Northern Kentucky Heritage" will cover the northern region and therefore will be intended for regional and other subscribers.
- Articles have already been submitted; several are under consideration by the editorial board.
- Please send any papers to Karl Lietzenmayer, c/o KCHS.

THE TWO BRANCHES OF THE CULBERTSONS

"The Culbertsons of Kenton County, Kentucky are of two branches. The first traces its ancestry through immigrants who settled about the year 1800 at Edinboro, Erie County Pa. The second branch...traces its ancestry through immigrants who settled on the Licking river at Culbertson station (now Spring Lake)...about 1813 and later."

--Lewis A. Culbertson, Genealogy of the Culbertson and Culberson Families, 1923

Irish immigrant brothers James (1786-1834), William (1787-1871), Allen (1790-1856), and Robert (1793-1856) acquired adjoining property below Decoursey creek in the early 1820s (county tax records). Later, in July, 1836, was recorded the acquisition by William Culbertson of 103 acres described as beginning at the mouth of Decoursey creek (DB M, p. 119, Campbell county courthouse). James married Elizabeth Youtsey; William, Jane Reese, and then Nancy White; Allen, Esther Greer "of Covington"; and Robert, Maria Gregg (Culbertson Genealogy).

In 1879 Culbertson was the first "station" below Covington on the "Blue Grass route" of the Kentucky Central railroad, followed by Ryland, Visalia, Benton, Morning View, Demossville, Butler, Boston, Falmouth, Cynthiana, Paris, Lexington (Daily Commonwealth newspaper). But then an 1883 county atlas shows Banklick station, Decoursey station, and then Culbertson.

The vicissitudes of time including commercial development have altered the landscape. These include the Decoursey railyards at Decoursey creek which serve the through-tracks now of the CSX railroad.

Today the area around Springlake is still bordered to the west by sloping hills (including a town called Fairview), on the west side of which flows Decoursey creek diagonally north into the Licking river. The main north-south county road (177) follows the bank of the creek, while the Licking pike takes a side direction toward Springlake at the railroad tracks, which follow a small eastward loop in the Licking river.

But this family from Culbertson station also made its mark inside Covington. Partly this had to do with the fact that (before 1819) Allen Culbertson married Esther Greer "of Covington," possibly a sister of Alexander L. and Thomas Greer, fellow Irish immigrants (Culbertson genealogy). Thus in 1852 Alexander Greer and Joseph Keen "sold" lots 140 and

141 in Foote's addition to Allen and Esther (DB 17, p. 485). Perhaps related as well to Greer's financing of railroad developments, including the Covington Locomotive and Manufacturing company, in 1854 Greer mortgaged some valuable property, including the Greer Block, to James G. Arnold, Sam J. Walker, Thomas Greer, Susan Withers, and Allen Culbertson (DB 25, p. 326).

As for other family matters, in 1858 Greer sold to Allen and Esther's fifth child, William Wright Culbertson, a lot at the northeast corner of Seventh and Main streets for \$800 (DB 31, p. 227). But in 1862 the boy gave glory to the name of Culbertson of Kenton county when he died from wounds incurred at the Battle of Richmond, Kentucky. Previously Captain Culbertson had organized the Decoursey Creek Home guards. Months later he had been involved in guarding the Covington and Lexington railroad from a headquarters at Falmouth. His will (seemingly a letter to his mother) left his property in Covington to his mother Esther (a widow since 1856), and his share in the homestead at Culbertson station (or proceeds) to his surviving brothers and sisters (Will Book 2, p. 364). Then later his brothers George A. and John, as well as Alexander Greer, swore in county court as to the authenticity of the handwriting (Order Book 5, p. 516).

William Wright's oldest brother, James Greer Culbertson, (1819-1912) lived much of his life in Newport where he once "held the contract for lighting gas lamps." Born at Culbertson station, he was a cooper "by trade" and had also been a music teacher. But he passed away at another residence in Dayton, Kentucky where his grandson, Will C. Martin, was then City Clerk (Obituary, The Kentucky Post, 3-16-12).

James Greer (and Catherine Youtsey) Culbertson's sixth child (and Allen and Esther's grandchild), James Allen (born 1855), also benefitted from the nepotism of the Greer family. In 1878-79, for instance, James A. and John C. Taylor operated a shoe store out of Greer's building at the northeast corner of Fifth and Scott streets. But James A. in the end made a name for himself, out of the same building, as a consumer of shoe leather. On September 14, 1906 The Kentucky Post headlined its profile of his career: "'CULLY' WALKED AROUND THE GLOBE EIGHT TIMES." And at the time he was Covington's letter carrier with longest service. In 1876 he had started his career under Postmistress Mrs. S. S. Farrell, but soon took off four years (presumably for his shoe business). Then about 1880 he also helped move the Covington post office from the northeast corner of Fifth and Scott (in Greer's duplex

building) to its recent location (in the new Government Building at the southeast corner of Third and Scott). In 1906, even after his lengthy service, James Allen Culbertson was still walking "an average of 18 or 20 miles" a day at a salary of \$850 per year.

* * * *

By 1860, some six years after the Covington and Lexington railroad had gone into operation, there were five lumber dealers located in the immediate vicinity of the railroad terminal, including that of W. C. Culbertson at Pike street near Washington (street directory). Then in 1866 W. C. was located on the south side of West Seventh between Washington and Madison, and X. W. Culbertson was a bookkeeper at the northeast corner of Pike and Madison (Covington street directory). Culbertsons from Pennsylvania were residents of Covington "since 1860" and in 1875 D. C. and his brother X. W. also took over a business located at Second and Main originated in 1850 by A. J. Alexander. "Manufacturers of saw mill lumber and wood pumps...equipped with three steam boilers and a one-hundred and twenty-five horsepower engine...They ship their lumber to different points in the North, East, and West, while their pumps and tubing go all over the United States" (Leading Manufacturers and Merchants of Cincinnati and Environs, 1886).

In 1876 the company at Second and Main (near the city's public water works) was listed as Green and Company, but operated by D. C. Culbertson and James Hadden. John C. Green's residence was Hamilton, Ontario; Hadden's was Westminster, Ontario; Culbertson's was 1548 Scott street, Covington. In that year Cyrus A. Culbertson operated a pump sales office at 820 Madison and lived at 1527 Scott, and Lansing B. Culbertson was a "pump maker" living at 66 Lynn street. In 1878-79 the Hope Pump Works was operated from 820 Madison by Lansing B. Culbertson and Karl Berndorf. Rather than West Seventh. in 1878 the James A. Culbertson company, under James A. and William C. Culbertson, was listed on the north side of West Eighth between Washington and Madison (street directories). In 1886 it was described as a "planing mill and lumber yard, tenoner, mortiser, moulder, [with] scroll saw, rip saw, cut off saw" (Sanborn Map).

By 1909 the sawmill at the northeast corner of Second and Main was called C. Crane and company, Saw Mill and Veneer Mill; the pump manufacturing lots at the southeast corner of Second and Main was in the hands of the Vogt Planing Mill.

On West Eighth in 1894 the Culbertson millworks was operated as the Joseph Humpbert Lumber Yard along side the Piel Brothers Planing Mill and Sash factory. In 1906-07 the business at Second and Main was called the Covington Saw Mill; the one on West Eighth was Enterprise Lumber (22 West Eighth). By 1894 the James A. Brownfield company had moved from Pike street opposite the railroad depot to a new building (in recent years a wholesale grocery warehouse) at 31-35 West Eighth. In 1914 Brownfield listed itself as a manufacturer of mouldings, brackets, inside shutters, verandas (street directories and Sanborn maps). Then in 1907 was recorded the sale by the heirs of W. C. Culbertson, late of Girard, Pennsylvania, of the property at 18-30 West Eighth to Philip Vieth of Newport and Charles Zweigart of Maysville (DB 128, p. 199).

These Northern Kentucky dealers enjoyed the long distance connections provided by the Covington and Lexington railroad, then the Kentucky Central, and later especially the C & O and L & N systems (plus of course the nearby river transportation). The Culbertsons, the Brownfield company, and others (including the Ohio Scroll and Lumber company, Russell and Stewart, Covington), also operated during a period noted for machine-cut woodwork, and the ornate architecture of the Victorian era.

As prominent Covington manufacturers the Pennsylvania Culbertsons had many predecessors from that state who also relocated including John McNickle (Covington Rolling Mill), John Levis (Covington Cotton Factory), and Robert Hemingray (Hemingray Glass), to name three (census records).

Before the Civil War Alexander Greer earned a reputation in one or more instances for himself as a successful supplier of "saw-cut" lumber (John Burns, History of Covington). But there was no evidence found of a partnership between Greer and the Pennsylvania Culbertsons.

(by John Boh)

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*index of Kenton County Federal Census

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