

KENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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KCHS MEETING

DATE Tuesday, July 13
TIME 7 PM to 9 PM
PLACE The Syndicate
18 East 5th Street
Newport, KY
PROGRAM Stars of the Beverly
Hills Supper Club
PRESENTER Earl Clark

All about the famous stars, such as Frank Sinatra, who performed at Beverly Hills, and some historical facts of the elegant club from 1935-1962. Schillings then bought and reopened the club. It was a thriving supper club until the fatal fire in 1977.

Bulletin

July 1999

From the President.....

I want to publicly thank some of our volunteers who are doing essential jobs for the Society.

Emily Bailey and Patricia Bogenschutz are busy putting John Burn's manuscript of the History of Covington on computer disc.

New member Barbara Begg is entering a manuscript onto disc from the staff of Mason County Museum . the history of May's Lick, for publication in a future issue of Northern Kentucky Heritage Magazine.

Please let us know if you also can give your time to enter material onto computer disc.

Watch for the Dick VonHoene Show on Intermedia, Channel 6 the 2nd Wednesday of the month. KCHS Program Coordinator Nancy Grall appears about 11 AM to discuss upcoming programs. Earl Clark accompanied Nancy on the last program, previewing our July program.. This is valuable publicity for the Society.

From the Program Coordinator.....

A big thank you to Ted Harris for his lecture on The Underground Railroad. We also had a splendid performance of songs of the Underground Railroad by The Northern Kentucky Brotherhood Quintet . Thanks, men, for giving your talents on such a hot evening. And grateful thanks to Karen and Peter Rafuse for lending their Carneal House veranda for this interesting program.

We're really looking forward to our July program, "Stars of Beverly Hills Supper Club" told by a true collector of historic memorabilia, Earl Clark.

The Syndicate's decor includes memorabilia of Prohibition days. In order for the KCHS lecture and meeting to have this excellent space in the Flamingo Room at the Syndicate, we ask everyone to order a dessert and beverage. Or to make it a very special evening, have dinner there before the lecture! The Syndicate assured me that we can order a delicious dinner for about \$20. Please make your dinner reservations by calling Sharon at The Syndicate, 491-8000.

Come to the Syndicate in your diamond studded Tees.

Or just come in your BVDs,

Come to the Flamingo Room to get something to eat,

The dessert will be sweet,

Come earlier, and dinner will be the very best,

Earl Clark will tell you the rest.

Nancy Grall, 647-7370

WEB SITE <http://www.kenton.lib.ky.us/~histspc/>

A Bit of History on The Arthur Historic Apartments

by Jo Ann Brown

The Arthur Apartments are two grand apartment buildings in Covington, Kentucky, on the northwest corner of Sixth and Greenup Streets.

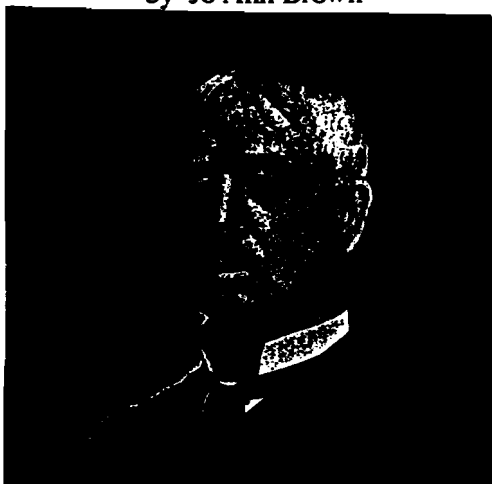
Construction for the first three-story building was begun in 1904 by Sidney Arthur, son of Honorable William E. Arthur. It sits 30 feet back from the street "on a high terrace." At the time it was built, each of the twelve five-room apartments had "a large, airy porch of its own."¹ The apartments have since been broken up into much smaller apartments. The back of the apartments are as attractive as the front. They originally looked out upon 90 feet of lawn with trees and bushes still remembered by one of the long-term (52 years) residents. The parking lot of the Kenton County Library has taken much of it.

Known in Covington as "pretentious" and elegant, it has housed many well-known citizens, among them the late well-known artist Lela Cooney. She and her attorney husband owned both apartment buildings for many years. She created the twelve paintings which are in the hallways of the apartments.²

The Arthur home, one of the oldest homes in Covington, was torn down to build the "swell structure."³ Built by Thomas Kennedy, he lived there till he died, when William E. Arthur bought it.

William E. Arthur was attorney, politician, judge, state representative, and Congressional Representative. His "life was guided and governed by the highest principles of integrity and honor."⁴ He was born in the City of Cincinnati, Ohio, March 3, 1825, the son of William, born in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, in 1798, and Eliza (Parsons) Arthur, born in Maryland.

William E.'s grandfather, The Rev. William Arthur, was a native of



William E. Arthur

Scotland and a minister in the Presbyterian Church. He came to America in 1793 ministering in Pennsylvania, Maryland, New York, and Ohio where he spent his final days in Zanesville, Ohio.

Rev. Arthur's son, William, was educated at home and took up the study of law. However, he preferred the commercial world and became a successful merchant. He moved to Covington in 1832 when William E. was seven years old. He died just two years later.⁵

The widowed mother made sure her son received a good education through private tutors as well as private schools, particularly in Hartford County, Maryland, his mother's old home. He chose the profession of law and studied under the Honorable John W. Stephenson and Honorable James T. Morehead, both distinguished members of the bar of the state and active in the public affairs of Kentucky. (Stephenson was at one time governor.)⁶

In 1850, William was admitted to the bar, and immediately began the practice of law in Covington where he showed his strength and versatility as a trial lawyer. His abilities gained recognition as an eligible candidate for public office, and in 1856, was elected to the office of commonwealth attorney for the Ninth judicial district. He

kept this position for six years.

In 1866, William E. Arthur was elected judge of the Ninth judicial circuit for a term of six years, but after presiding on the bench for two years resigned the office. In 1870, he was elected to the Forty-second Congress of the United States, from the Sixth congressional district of Kentucky, succeeding himself in 1872. While in Congress, Arthur was instrumental in getting the first Federal building erected south of the Ohio River after the Civil War. The cornerstone, located on Garrard, was laid on America's Centennial, July 4, 1876.⁹

In August 1877, Judge Arthur was elected to the circuit bench of the Twelfth judicial district, and here he continued in service until January 1, 1893. At that time, he continued the practice of law until his death in 1897.¹⁰

William E. Arthur married Ada Southgate, daughter of Hon. William W. Southgate, in 1855 when he was 23 years of age. She died three years later leaving no children. In 1861,¹¹ while active in politics, he married Etha Southgate, Ada's younger sister. They were very active in the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, and had two children, Sidney and May. Etha died in 1906.¹²

Sydney was born August 26, 1862. His family "afforded him an excellent educational advantage." He attended the Chickering Institute of Cincinnati and in 1884 attended Dartmouth College, graduating in 1887. He then went on to Cincinnati Law School, graduating in 1890, and immediately began the practice of law in Covington.¹³

On December 14, 1905, Sydney Arthur, at the age of 43, married Mary Thayer of Charleston, West Virginia, daughter of William T. and Ann E. Thayer.¹⁴

As was stated earlier, the old Arthur home was torn down to build

From the President.....

For our August program, the Society will join with other sponsors in a conference for R.E.S.P.E.C.T. (Reaching Every Student, Parent, & Educator Curriculum Training) at Holmes High School on Saturday, August 7. Mr. Bobby Delaughter, Mississippi prosecuting attorney will be the keynote speaker. His subject will be racism in schools and community.

Mr. Delaughter sucessfully prosecuted the murderer of Medger Evers, and will discuss this famous case which inspired the movie "Ghosts of Mississippi."

This project has been initiated by Church Women United of Covington. They are soliciting contributions to help fund this important project. Please consider supporting this vital community program. Donations in any amount would be gratefully accepted. Send to:

R.E.S.P.E.C.T.
c/o Covington Community Center
P.O. Box 1020
Covington, Kentucky 41012

For more information from the internet, visit:
www.kenton.k12.ky.us/MULTIED/respect.htm.

Program begins at 9:00 a.m. and runs until 3:00 p.m.

Free box lunches are provided for those that are registered.

Please call 291-6255 and register before July 17.

the first Arthur Apartments. Within a few days of the marriage, it was reported that Mrs. Arthur had bought Mrs. Lillie Dempsey's boarding house to tear down and replace with a second matching apartment building. Mrs. Dempsey had paid \$11,000 for the home just 2 years before, and it was rumored that a large profit was made when she sold it. The house was described as the Kirtley home, "another famous landmark.....one of the few houses left standing in the city which thoroughly represent in architecture the 'before -the-war' period in the history of the south." It was large and roomy with white pillars. "Many famous men have been entertained in this big house.....with merry gatherings, where violins sounded in the spacious parlors."¹⁵

The Arthur Apartments included well appointed kitchens, so that the ladies bought fine pans for their cooks to use as well as good china and linen. When the cooks had the day off, residents had the convenience of eating breakfast and dinner in the Arthur cafe. Tables were covered with white tablecloths. An African-American waitress was assigned to each table.¹⁶ Evidently not enough people were using the cafe; it was losing money. Therefore, it was reported in the Post on January 5, 1906, that "no cooking would be permitted in the apartments."¹⁷ Un-

fortunately, the Post did not report on the results of this unprecedented management rule.

In November and December 1912, a number of suits were filed against the Arthurs "and others" to collect money owed on the Arthur and Thayer apartments, among them the Western Southern Life Insurance Company. Finally it was thrown into receivership. In April, the properties were up for bids at public auction on the courthouse steps. They were sold for a record total of \$73,280 to an attorney agent for a "syndicate."¹⁸ However, the deal did not go through and the property was auctioned off again for a price of \$65,650 to Covington building inspector, George Lubrecht and Thomas Phillips of Ft. Mitchell.¹⁹ That was on June 17, 1913. On June 21, it was reported that Mrs. Mary Thayer Arthur was granted a divorce from Mr. Arthur.²⁰

Sidney Arthur must have still had some kind of stake in the Apartments. In March 1927, fireman fought a blaze in the basement storerooms of the apartments destroying all contents. Sydney contributed \$25 to the police and firemen's fund "in appreciation for their efficient work."²¹

Managers Pat and Patty David are still collecting information about the Arthur Apartments. Any additional information from readers would be greatly appreciated.

Notes

1. Kentucky Post, May 7, 1904, pg. 1
2. Interview, Patty David, June 19, 1999.
3. *Ibid.*, KP, 5-7-04.
4. Johnson, E. Polk, History Kentucky and Kentuckians, pg. 997, New York, Lewis Publishing Co., 1912.
5. *Ibid.* pg. 998-999.
6. *Ibid.*, pg. 999.
7. *Ibid.*, pg. 999.
8. *Ibid.*, pg. 999.
9. Kentucky Post, August 24, 1914. pg. 2.
10. *Ibid.*, History of Kentucky.
11. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*
15. Kentucky Post, December 5, 1905, pg. 2.
16. Interview, Patty and Pat David, June 24, 1999.
17. Kentucky Post, January, 5, 1906, pg. 7.
18. Kentucky Post, April 24, 1913, pg. 3.
19. Kentucky Post, June 17, 1913, pg. 3.
20. Kentucky Post, June 21, 1913, pg. 1.
21. Kentucky Post, March 10 & March 12, 1927.

To the Editor

I really enjoyed the June bulletin as my wife is direct descendent of the Rich's (Leslee Dale Rich). Waurega was her grandmother and she grew up out in Piner on Rich road. Keep up the good work!

Dave Hatter

Kathy said your meeting Tuesday [May 11] was fantastic!.....I saw the mention of the Stewart family in your newsletter. Interesting....I had always wondered if the Masonic Temple was on the former Stewart property. Now I know it isn't. By the way, it was R. C. Stewart, Jr. not J. C. Stewart who lived at 1531 Madison Ave.

Sherry Jobert

President's note: The Stewart home was partially on Temple property and partially on Kroger lot.

HANDSOME NEW FLAT BUILDING



The Erlanger Historical Society needs a person to serve as host/hostess at the Depot Museum each Saturday May through September noon to 4 PM. Compensation \$35 a day. Call Mary McClure: 727-8730

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