

# KENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P. O. Box 641, Covington, Kentucky 41012 (859) 431-2666

E-MAIL [nkyheritage.kchs@juno.com](mailto:nkyheritage.kchs@juno.com)

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## KCHS MEETING

**DATE Tuesday, July 9**

**TIME 7 PM**

**PROGRAM Disciple of Daveneck**

**PLACE Trinity Church  
4th and Madison  
Covington**

**Thomas J. Lippert will present a  
slide presentation on the life and  
career of his grandfather, Leon  
Lippert.**

**Refreshments provided.**

## Bulletin

**July 2002**

### Meeting Notes.....

The July meeting will be on July 9th, presenting the program Disciple of Duvenek, a slide presentation by Thomas J. Lippert about the life and work of his grandfather, Leon Lippert (1865-1947).

Lippert was a life long resident of Newport, Kentucky who studied at the Cincinnati Art Academy. For 20 years, he attended life classes presented on Sunday mornings by Frank Duvenek.

Lippert was a noted portrait painter and maintained a studio in Cincinnati for sixty years (1887-1947). Lippert was known for his paintings in local churches: St. Stephen's in Newport, Sacred Heart in Bellevue, St. Joseph in Cold Springs and in the now closed Corpus Christi in Newport. Two of his paintings "Fountain Square" (1929) and "A Life Study of John Cole" (1907) will hang in the Cincinnati Art Museum when the Cincinnati Gallery reopens next Spring.

Mr. Lippert will have copies of his well-illustrated biography of Leon Lippert for sale at the meeting.

### Board Notes.....

At the June 24th Board meeting, the Board approved an ammendment, to be presented at the July meeting. It would require the membership fee to be only one type of fee of \$10. This would simplify bookkeeping for membership. The vote on this ammendment would be at the September meeting.

George Gressle is dilligently working on the data base for KCHS membership and subscriptions to NKH magazine using new software. By December 1, he thinks it will be complete and up to date. You may have noticed dates on your Bulletin label this month. These are membership expiration dates. If you have a problem with the expiration date, please let us know. If the expiration date on your label is past, please send in your renewal.

August is our summer recess with no meeting. Please note that there will be an election of 3 Directors and Officers at the next meeting September 10. Carol Wenger has resigned from the Board, and San Juan Romero and George Gressle's terms are expired as well as the offices of Secretary, Vice President, and President. San Juan and George are willing to run again, but we welcome other nominations from the membership. Please call the KCHS phone number.

In July, postal rates go up with additional changes for bulk mailing. We will have to seal each piece, an extra step for those who fold and label. Please consider volunteering to help with the bulk mail.

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## Organizing Schools for the Education of Black Children, 1866-1872

by Ted Harris

The first recorded attempt at the education of blacks in Covington, Kentucky, was September 1866. The Freedmen's Aid Society had established a school consisting of 44 boys and 48 girls with Miss Wolf as the teacher.

On July 9, 1869, in Louisville, the Freedmen's Bureau of schools for Kentucky held a State Education Convention. The delegates elected from Covington to attend that convention were Isaac Black and J. W. Grant, but twenty other blacks from Covington also attended. The Freedman's Bureau would soon stop funding the efforts of the Freedmen's Aid Society. Major Stone, of the Freedmen's Bureau, stressed the need for blacks throughout the State of Kentucky to establish their own schools.

Two schools were already in existence at the time. However, they were independent of the Freedmen's Aid Society. There was a need to combine their resources. On August 4, 1869, a meeting was held to organize a school board to take charge of the schools. There were two tickets with three names each placed on the agenda representing each church to be elected. On the ticket from the Methodist Church on Third Street (now Ninth Street United Methodist) were the names of King Gray, Jerry Moss, and Alexander White. Representing the Baptist Church on Breman Street (now First Baptist on East Ninth) were the names Jacob Price, Mr. Skillman, and Mr. Robinson.

On June 19, 1870, the Freedman's Bureau proposed to build a school and allotted \$15,000 for the purpose. The condition was that the Covington City Council and school board provide a suitable lot. Neither the City Council nor school board took action on the proposal.

The need for additional space was paramount, so the black school board consolidated the two schools and

on September 18, 1870, when the Methodist Church moved from Third Street to a building on Madison Street, a larger school was organized and a corps of competent teachers employed.

On September 24, the black citizens of Covington petitioned the City Council at their next meeting. They asked them to act on the earlier request of the Freedmen's Bureau and donate a suitable lot to build their school. The November 17, 1870 *Cincinnati Daily Gazette* gives this account:

"There are seventy-four black children in daily attendance at the school lately opened in the Methodist Church on Madison Street, between Second and Third Streets. Miss Perkins, a black woman has charge of the school."

However, by early January 1871, school closed due to lack of funds, and reopened by late February 1871.

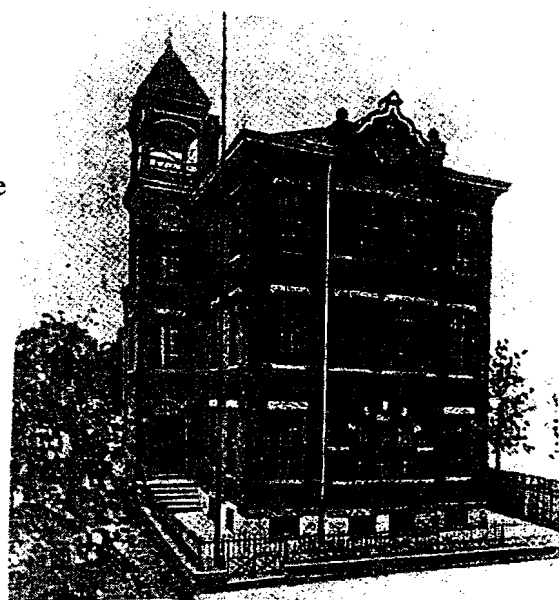
Trying to keep their school open without proper funding was a major concern for black people in Covington. Their concern prompted them to use a different approach in seeking funds. In their petition, they requested that the school board provide a separate school for the education of black children, the expenses to be paid out of the revenue derived from the taxes on property owned by black people. The petition was referred to the Committee on Law of which Judge Pryor was Chairman. At the meeting of the school board on February 17, 1871, the committee submitted a report, the substance of which states, "The school board has not the authority to act in the matter, not having possession of the funds referred to in the petition. The account of taxes paid by the black people of Covington is quite small, not exceeding fifty or sixty dollars annually, and this money is in

the hands of the Sheriff, and can only be reached by proper application to the County court."

Based on that decision by the Covington School Board, the school continued in the Methodist Church. They raised the necessary funds by other means. In September 1871, the black school board decided to hire a Principal for their school with John McCleod being selected. In early 1872, William L. Grant had a meeting with several black leaders from Covington concerning a school building, the result being the Seventh Street School and the elementary school on Scott with an annex.

The construction of a school building for the education of black children at the close of the Reconstruction period was the result of hard work which began in September 1866.

*This article was reprinted from the April 1992 Bulletin*



*Seventh Street School - "Colored" There is "colored school" indicated on a 1877 map of Covington but it is unclear if this is the one.*

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## More about Colored Schools - an excerpt from *Echoes of the Past:*

### *A History of the Covington Public School System*

by Betty Lee Nordheim

Kentucky was one of three states in the entire Union at the time of the Civil War which never prohibited the schooling of African American children. In March 20, 1876 an amendment to the City Ordinances stated that Covington schools should be maintained through taxation and colored children be taught the same courses of study that white children were taught but in separate schools.

However, even before this amendment was passed, Covington was educating its black children. In 1873 one room of the old Second District School building on Greer Street was allocated for use by one black teacher, a woman, and her students. This school building had been vacated by the white children when they moved into their new building in 1871. By 1879 the enrollment had grown enough to require one principal who was male, two teachers (female), and a janitor for the instruction of 229 students. The average cost was \$6 per student per year. This was about one-half what was being spent to educate a white student.

In February of 1874 the Kentucky legislature approved an act to establish a uniform system of Common Schools for the education of the black children, but not one the same level as white children. Taxes were to be collected from African American property owners for this purpose, and a separate Board of Trustees of black men was to be set up to run the schools. The length of the school year could be shorter, even as brief as two or three months. The black teachers had to pass an examination just as the white teachers did. However, the examination could not be extended beyond spelling, reading, writing and common arithmetic. A school taught by a teacher competent to teach these subjects was considered to be a lawful school.

Covington had already begun educating

its black children in 1873, a year before the passage of this act, but without the above differences. Instruction was delivered in a similar manner in all Covington schools administered by the Board of Education.

There were two conditions which Covington accepted as the rulings of the state act. First, it was not lawful for a white child to attend a Common School provided for the black children, nor for a black child to attend a white school. Second, no school house erected for a "colored school" could be located nearer than one mile of a school house erected for white children, except in cities and towns, where it could not be nearer than 600 feet. Covington did abide by these two rulings for almost the next hundred years. The act of 1874 also stated that "white and colored schools shall be forever kept and maintained separately." This stipulation was followed until the integration of the schools in 1964.

Growth continued, and in 1888 a new red brick school was constructed for the black children. The enrollment by then was 319. This building on Seventh Street between Madison and Scott, was considered a equal to the other "modern" schools recently built for use of the white children. It was known as the Lincoln Elementary School. Five teachers handled grades one through six, and the principal taught a few high school subjects. More teachers of the elementary and second-

ary courses were added as the school population grew. By 1893 the number of students had grown to 439 being taught by nine teachers as a cost of \$9.15 per child per year, and a kindergarten for black children was in operation by the following year. In 1895 a separate high school known as the William Grant High School was established and housed in the same building, and graduation programs were begun.

In 1909 a manual training department was opened for boys only in Lincoln Grant. Due to space restrictions, it could not operate in the Lincoln Grant building so it was placed in the Fourth District School, and a teacher was hired for \$900 per year.

The black children in Covington continued to attend school in the building on Seventh Street until 1932. At that time a new school, funded by a bond issue and containing both the elementary and high school grades, was constructed on Greenup Street between 8th and 9th Streets. It retained the names of the original school. The "colored school" had basketball and football teams. It played only other teams of black players. The new building housed a gymnasium in which the basketball games were held. Any football games were played at the stadium of out-of-state teams. This building was used as Lincoln Grant and later as the Twelfth District School until 1976 when it was closed, finally sold, and turned into a community center.

*The editor has taken the liberty to use the word "black" in place of 'African American.'*



*Lincoln Grant School on Greenup Street - 1932*

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P. O. Box 641  
Covington, Kentucky 41012

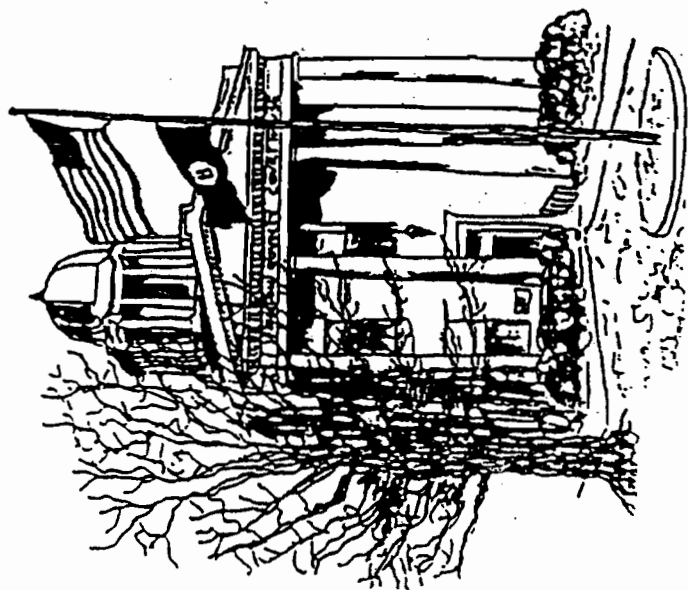
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HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

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**INSIDE:**  
**History of Colored Schools in  
Covington**