

# Bulletin of the Kenton County Historical Society

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July/August

2003

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## July Program – A Presentation & Discussion of Classic Radio Tuesday, July 8<sup>th</sup> – 7 p.m. Trinity Episcopal, 4<sup>th</sup> & Madison, Covington

Robert W. Newman, president of *Radio Listeners' Lyceum* [RLL], will begin with a short introduction to classic radio and re-enact [with assistance of KCHS member Karl Lietzenmayer] a 1944 comedy skit "Christmas At The Blue." This skit was originally performed by Wendell Miles and Don Prindle. Their new show was about to go on the air for Hires' Rootbeer, beginning January 21, 1945 on NBC Blue Network [now ABC]. The show lasted only a few months. Robert will then play excerpts of a number of comedy shows and entertain requests from those in attendance.

Mr. Newman has been collecting, re-enacting and lecturing about classic radio for many years. RLL files now contain 10,000 cassettes of classic radio broadcasts, which are published in their catalog. Robert was asked by the Andrew Jergens Company to transfer & enhance old-time radio programs they had sponsored which were still on transcription disks. He also supplied the radio tapes used in the movie *Driving Miss Daisy*.

Robert is coordinator for the Cincinnati Old-Time Radio & Nostalgia Convention, held each April. He has received several awards for his work: the first Stone/Waterman Award [named for Ezra Stone & Willard Waterman – the second "Gildersleave"] and the Parley E. Baer Award.

## No August Meeting

## September Program:            ELECTION OF NEW OFFICERS Discussion of Greater-Cincinnati Amusement Parks – Robert Wimberg

## October Program:    Slide Discussion of Cote' Brilliant Neighborhood – Michael Sweeney

## *September Elections Cause Consternation for New Officers – Search For Treasurer Beginning*

The Society's treasurer for the last four years, Dan Carter, is not seeking re-election. Dan has done a meticulous and consistent job in managing the meager funds of the Society. In office through the decision to discontinue the "Senior Rate," Dan focused the Board's attention to the need for closer examination of future expenditures.

The proposed Covington/Kenton County history book now has \$10,000 support to insure the end product is high quality. Other projects include the Northern Kentucky Encyclopedia.

These and on-going publications need careful nurturing from a dedicated Board of Directors. The Officers and Board members ask that our members "step to the plate" and run for a Board position. Some of our members will be contacted personally to ask for their commitment.

The Kenton Society, like most similar groups, is best described what it is not: it is not a sewing club, a social club, a hobby, nor an amusing past-time. Indeed, it is some of all these and more – primarily concerned with discovering what our community was to understand ourselves.

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President, James Kiger; Vice-president/Programs, Dr. Joseph Gastright; Treasurer, Daniel Carter; Secretary, John Boh; Board Members: Emily Bailey, George Gressle, San Juan Romero, Ron Einhaus, Karl Lietzenmayer (Bulletin Editor)

[www.kenton.lib.ky.us/~histsoc](http://www.kenton.lib.ky.us/~histsoc)

# Letters

Dear Editor,

Some update on the Coppin/Lonneman house story in the last *Bulletin*:

There were two different Kentrup families that lived in the 100 block of Fifth Street, Covington. The house at 115 West Fifth belonged to my mother's cousin Ray Kentrup. Ray and his wife had five children. I went to school with one (Mary Cecilia who married a Bezold from Campbell County). Another one of his children was Ray Kentrup Jr. who was Postmaster at the main Covington Post Office.

The house at 111 West Fifth belonged to Jim Kentrup, Adolph's son. Adolph was my mother's uncle (my grandmother's brother). Jim Kentrup and his wife Mary lived there with their only child Cathy. They moved to Cincinnati and established a boat maintenance company on Delhi Pike. One of his clients was Dave Thomas, *Wendy's* founder. Mr. Thomas bought the Delhi property for one of his restaurants, which I believe is still there.

Later, Mr. Thomas hired Jim to take care of his boat in Florida. Jim and his wife were responsible for having the boat ready at a moment's notice to take out any number of guests for a few days to longer.

Jim's footprints are in the cement on our back porch - 1929.

Carole Lonneman

## *Northern Kentucky Heritage* *Spring/Summer Issue Dedicated to Lewis & Clark*

**An extra 1,000 copies were produced of *NKH* Volume X, Number 2 due to anticipated interest from groups celebrating the Lewis & Clark Expedition Re-enactment and the coming of Tall Stacks 2003 to Cincinnati later in October. The titles are:**

- **Big Bone Lick: the Thomas Jefferson/Lewis & Clark Connection**
- **The Louisiana Purchase and the Eastern Legacy**
- **York, The Slave Who Went With Lewis & Clark**
- **Nine Young Men From Kentucky**

**Also included is:**

- **H.T. Harrison, Civil War Spy Discovered in Covington**

**Along with these stories are book reviews and news from other area heritage groups. This and other back issues can be ordered for \$7.50 [including shipping] through the Society.**

Errata –Greenup County is located WEST, not east, of Boyd County (“Earl Nichols: A Northern Kentuckian in World War II,” *Bulletin*, May/June 2003). Greenup County was formed out of part of Mason County in 1803. The city of Ashland (population in 1990, 23,622) was originally in Greenup County until Boyd County was formed in 1860. Greenup is the county seat of Greenup County. Other cities include Russell, Raceland and Flatwoods. In 1888 a Chesapeake and Ohio railroad line was completed on the south side of the Ohio River along with a railroad bridge into Cincinnati. The line enters Kentucky at Ashland. It passes through the northern reaches of Boyd, Greenup, Lewis, Mason, Bracken, Pendleton (northeast corner of), Campbell and Kenton counties where it enters Covington toward Cincinnati. See *Kentucky Encyclopedia*—John Boh

# History of Boone-Kenton Lumber Company

Patricia A. Hahn

## The Beginnings

In 1919, John R. Edgett and Blain Fulton opened the Edgett & Fulton Lumber Company at 219 Crescent Avenue, Erlanger, Kentucky [old numbering – now 3219]. The company dealt primarily in hardwood for floors, furniture, etc. This was somewhat seasonal so the company started a regular lumber company by erecting a small office. The Fultons were born in Pennsylvania and came to Erlanger to raise their family of twin sons Ralph and Bruce<sup>1</sup> Both worked in the lumberyard before serving in WWI. Bruce was a prisoner of war for over a year; Ralph was killed in combat.<sup>2</sup> Bruce remembers one large drayage horse that pulled the lumber wagon around the yard and was kept in a stall at the company.



**Boone Kenton Lumber - 1919**

## McNay

On April 15, 1924, Russell C. McNay purchased the Lumber Company and the name was changed to Boone Kenton Lumber Company, Inc.<sup>3</sup>

Russell C. McNay was President and General Manager of the Company; Allen H. Gaines was Vice President; Blaine Fulton was Secretary-Treasurer.

In 1929, the Boone-Kenton Lumber Company gained the reputation as one of the most modern equipped in or about Northern Kentucky. Still located on the Southern Railroad today, the company has the advantage of downtown yards in possessing ample real estate to grow.<sup>4</sup>

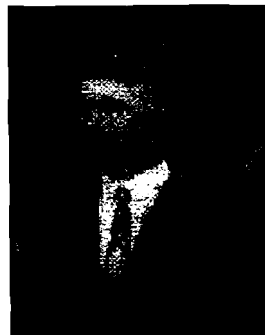
McNay was also very active in his community. He was president of the board of the Highland Cemetery and a charter member of the Erlanger Rotary of which he served as the president and secretary; he served as President of the Covington Chamber of Commerce and as president of the Kentucky Retail Lumber Association. He was a chairman of the Booth Hospital Advisory Council and the only lifetime member of the board. He was an active member of the Erlanger Baptist Church

R.C. was a Mason and member of Scottish rite, a Shriner and member of the El Hassa Temple. A father of two daughters, he was a veteran of WWI. His second wife was Irmadele Mitchell McNay. Irmadele was a very stylish lady and always had a new hat. When Irmadele passed away, the Erlanger Historical Society was the recipient of the hats and clothes as well as magazines and papers collected by the McNays.

When the school board wanted to purchase the old Erlanger Fairgrounds for the new Lloyd High School, Mr. McNay was one of the local residents to loan the school system the needed money.

In 1936 R.C McNay and his wife Irmadele Mitchell McNay purchased their home at 140 Commonwealth Avenue from A.B. Rouse who served in the U.S. Congress. The McNays lived there for the rest of their natural lives. Mr. McNay passed away on July 22, 1973. When Irmadele passed away, June 15, 1993 the house was donated to the Erlanger Baptist Church. Unfortunately, the Rouse House was lost to the community as the church razed the house in 1999 and the land is now the Church parking lot.

McNay was a very active businessman, not only as president and general manager of Boone-Kenton Lumber Company, but also as director and officer in five other lumber companies, He was first vice president of the First Federal Savings and Loan and a director of the Covington Trust Company and president of the Dixie Building & Loan Association in Elsmere. On July 6, 1959 McNay decided to sell the company and prepared a statement of intent to dissolve Boone-Kenton Lumber Company, in order to pay the stockholders.<sup>5</sup>



**Blaine Fulton**

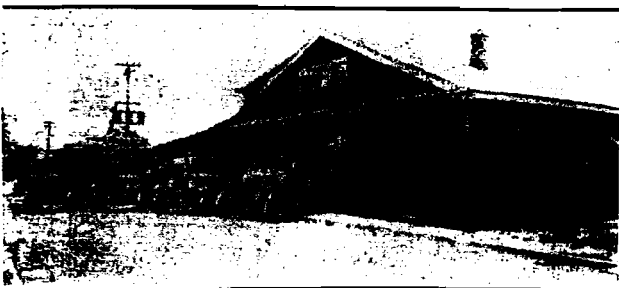


**R. C. McNay**

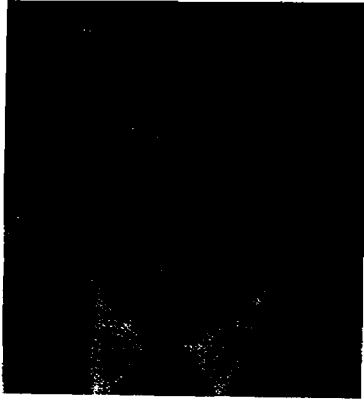
## Warren Kelly

On December 6, 1960, articles were filed by Warren E. Kelly, the new owner, to form a new corporation. The name of the corporation would be Boone-Kenton Lumber and Building Supply Company, Inc. The nature of the business would be somewhat expanded to include processing, dealing, manufacturing, installing, transporting or otherwise working in or with building materials of every kind.<sup>6</sup>

"Gene" Kelly was a son of a Baptist minister and was known for his energy, ambition and business sense. He started in the trucking business, hauling water, feed and concrete, then branched out into other enterprises. In addition to owning of the Boone-Kenton Lumber and Building Supplies Company, he owned Wildwood Motor Inn, and was an investor in the Florence Ramada Inn. Kelly was a Director of the Northern Kentucky Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Erlanger Rotary Club, Boone County Businessmen's Association and the Northern Kentucky Homebuilders Association. He was owner of the Boone Creek Development Company and a stockholder of Boone State Bank [purchased by the 5/3 Bank in the 1980s]. Gene owned the Kelly-Green Farm, Big Bone Church Road, Union, Kentucky and raised Tennessee walking horses.<sup>7</sup> Mr. Kelly passed away August 13, 1976 at the age of 48.



**Boone Kenton Lumber Company 1929**



**Warren E. (Gene) Kelly Herbert Works**



### **Herbert Works**

Herbert Works owned stock in the lumber company as early as 1960. Upon the death of Mr. Warren E. Kelly, Mr. Works who was involved with Mr. Kelly in many of his endeavors, became the President, Secretary, and Treasurer of the Corporation.<sup>8</sup> Mr. Works has served on the Board of Directors of the Kentucky Retail Lumber Dealers Association and is on the Board of Directors of the Bank of Kentucky. Mr. Works is the General Manager of the Boone-Kenton Lumber and Building Supplies Company, Inc. Herb was one of the major contributors to the Erlanger Depot renovation, now home of the Erlanger Historical Society.

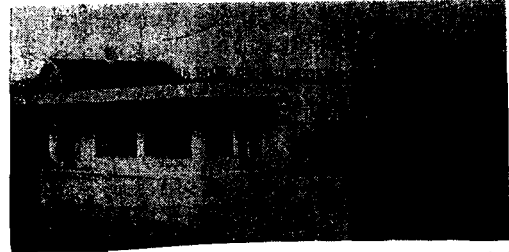
### **1931 Fire**

Boone Kenton Lumber Yard was plagued with fires throughout the years. A blaze in March, 1931, started shortly after 7 p.m. Defective wiring in the main building was blamed. When Erlanger firemen, under Chief Andrew Scheben arrived, the building was a mass of flames. South. Ft. Mitchell, Elsmere and Covington Departments assisted the Erlanger Firemen. The combined fire departments fought The Boone Kenton Lumber Yard Fire for 18 straight hours in an effort to contain the fire.<sup>9</sup>

High winds fanned the blaze and every building was burned to the ground. All machinery was destroyed along with two trucks and an automobile. The flames, which leaped high in the air, could be seen for miles around, and attracted thousands of spectators to the scene and resulted in a traffic jam for 2 miles along the Dixie Highway. Buses traveling north and south were delayed several hours. Kentucky Governor Sampson, returning to Frankfort from a Covington speaking engagement the previous day, was among those delayed. Trains were held up and 28 pairs of wires were burned along with the Southern Railroad signal system. Even boxcars on sidetracks of the railroad were

destroyed. The city of Erlanger was without lights and phones. Firemen were served coffee by proprietors of restaurants along Dixie Highway.

While the firemen battled the lumberyard blaze nearby residents grabbed their garden hoses and buckets to battle the destruction of their homes. Several homes had blistered paint and the trees were scared for years to come.



**Boone Kenton Lumber Company 1962**

### **1966 Blaze**

Thirty-five years later on June 20, 1966 another blaze swept through the Boone Kenton Lumber Company, the flames leaping 150 feet into the Northern Kentucky sky. Three trains were held up 1½ hours. This fire's destruction amounted to several hundred thousand dollars. Four buildings and three trucks were total losses. Paul Hahn, an employee of Boone-Kenton Lumber, was en route home from coaching the First National Bank's Baseball Little League team when he saw the fire from the highway. Hahn unlocked the buildings and helped remove three trucks and office equipment and files out of the buildings. He closed double fire doors, which protected the mill and office from severe damage. Erlanger Fire Captain Clayton Van Camp, said teen age boys also helped the first firemen on the scene evacuate equipment.

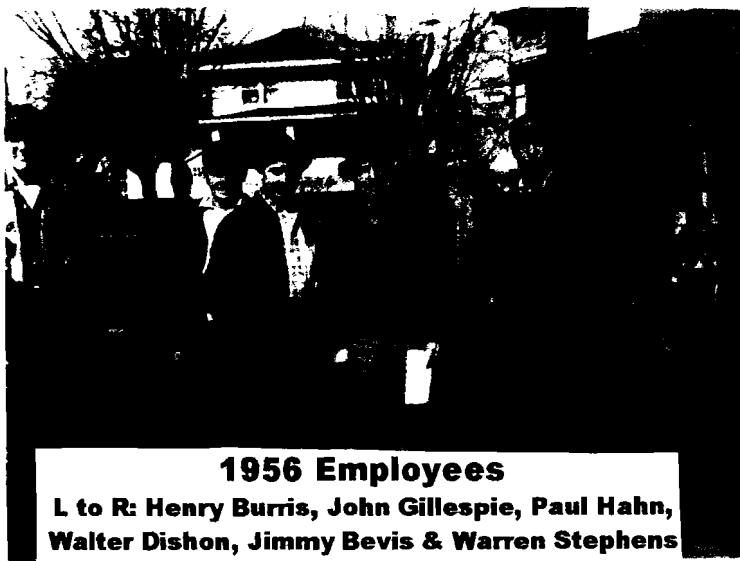
Covington, Crescent Springs, Elsmere, Florence, Fort Wright, Independence, Park Hills, S. Fort Mitchell and Taylor Mill responded to the fire, adding up to 150 firefighters and 11 pumpers at the scene. Three firemen were taken to St. Elizabeth Hospital.<sup>10</sup>

Erlanger Fire Chief, Fred Ficke, 68, a veteran of 46 years, said the 1966 blaze was the worst fire in the city since the 1931 Boone-Kenton fire. Warren E. Kelly said he had insurance and would be open for business in the morning and he was. Employees were answering phones, cleaning the offices, while firemen and insurance estimators tromped through the charred lumberyard the next morning.

### **1972 – Fire Strikes a Third Time**

Once again on February 29, 1972 fire broke out at Boone Kenton Lumber. Flames from the burning building lit up the entire Dixie Highway. Cans of paint began exploding, sending big balls of fire rolling upward. But firemen confined the blaze to two buildings, the display store office building and an adjoining multi-use building. Flames did not reach several warehouses. Erlanger, Florence, Elsmere, Fort Mitchell, Southern Hills, Park Hills and Crescent Springs Fire Departments responded to the fire. Once again the statement of Herbert Works, was, "We are not out of business. We'll rebuild and in the meantime we will move in a trailer and work out of it."

In 1993, the Erlanger Historical Society recognized The Boone-Kenton Lumber Company as the oldest company in the city, celebrating 74 years of continuous operation – now approaching its 85<sup>th</sup> year.

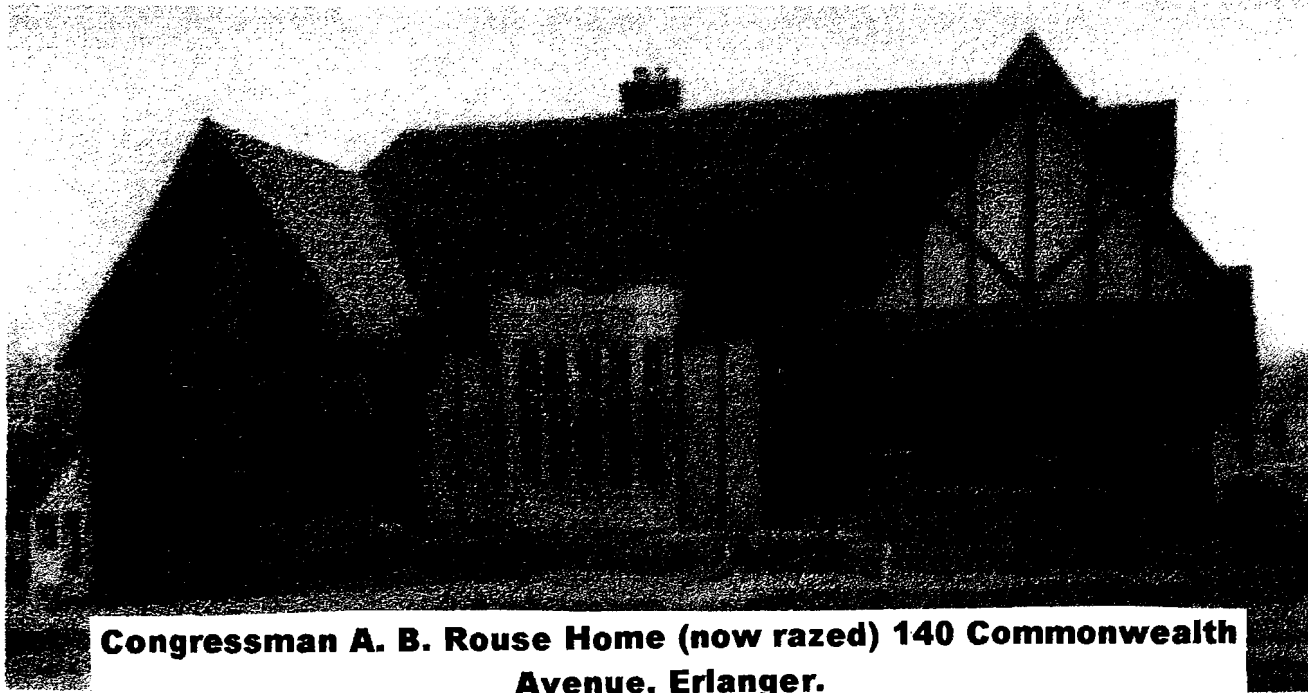


**1956 Employees**

**L to R: Henry Burris, John Gillespie, Paul Hahn, Walter Dishon, Jimmy Bevis & Warren Stephens**



**2003 Counter Employees  
Larry Stephens & Janice Hellman**



**Congressman A. B. Rouse Home (now razed) 140 Commonwealth Avenue, Erlanger.**

**Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup> Edgett & his wife Mimie had one daughter – Grace & resided at 107 Erlanger Road. Blaine Fulton and wife Hannah lived at 201 Erlanger Road. Sons Ralph and Bruce were born in 1919. The Fultons had three daughters: Cora M. born in 1913, Ruth V. in 1917 and Anna L. in 1925.

<sup>2</sup> The Erlanger/Elsmere Veterans of Foreign Wars Society is named in Ralph's honor.

<sup>3</sup> Stockholders were:

R. C. McNay	of Erlanger	80 shares
A. H. Gaines	of Walton	20 shares
W. L. Gaines	of Walton	05 shares
A. M. Edwards	of Walton	05 shares
J. R. Edgett	of Erlanger	20 shares
Blaine Fulton	of Erlanger	20 shares
J. B. Respass	of Erlanger	05 shares

Omega M. Rogers, a prominent lawyer in the area, was retained as the company attorney. He and his wife Katherine lived at 319 Erlanger Road. Milton L. McCracken was an estimator for the business and notarized the articles of incorporation. Milton and his wife Edna M. lived at 208 Erlanger Road.

<sup>4</sup> *Kentucky Post*, \_\_\_ 1929, p. \_\_\_

<sup>5</sup> Book #17, Page 11, Kenton County Court House.

<sup>6</sup> Book #17, page 492, *Ibid*. At the time of purchase Mr. Kelly lived at Route 1, Hands Pike, South Ft. Mitchell, Kentucky. Warren E. Kelly was the sole incorporator, and was subscribed to 500 shares of stock.

<sup>7</sup> Gene had three sons, Tom, Patrick and Russell and an adopted daughter Sherry. His brothers, Kenneth & Edwin own Kelly Brothers' Lumber Company, Latonia (Covington).

<sup>8</sup> Herbert Works was born in Covington and now resides in Walton. Herb has two sons, Wayne and Gene, two daughters, Kimberly and Vicky and two stepsons, Bryson and Mark. He also has two grandsons.

<sup>9</sup> *Kentucky Post*, March 21, 1931, p. 1 "Erlanger Lumber Company Swept by Fire: Loss Placed at \$75,000". A 500-gallon per minute Erlanger pumper equipped with a large hose bed and a 200-gallon water tank, the top of the line for that day was purchased in 1929. A 12 cylinder Studebaker engine powered this vehicle.

<sup>10</sup> James Simpson, 24, 312 McAlpin Ave, Frank Fahrendorf 59, 211 Buckner Street, Elsmere and Wallace Allen 45, 95 Arcadia Ave. Lakeside Park.

# Announcing The "Encyclopedia of Northern Kentucky"

## At a Glance:

- **Publisher:** The University Press of Kentucky
- **Expected Date of Publication:** 2007
- **1,000 pages; 1,200+ entries**
- **2 Co-Editors, 3 Associate Editors, 20 Topical Editors, 500 Contributors**
- **25+ Student Assistants from Northern Kentucky University, Thomas More College, and Maysville Community College**
- **11 Counties: Boone, Bracken, Campbell, Carroll, Gallatin, Grant, Kenton, Mason, Owen, Pendleton, and Robertson**
- **Total Budget of \$712,000**

## Endorsed by:

- **The University Press of Kentucky**
- **The Thomas D. Clark Foundation**
- **Forward Quest**
- **Northern Kentucky University**
- **Thomas More College**
- **Maysville Community College**
- **Dr. Thomas D. Clark, Dr. John E. Kleber, Dr. James C. Klotter, and other scholars**

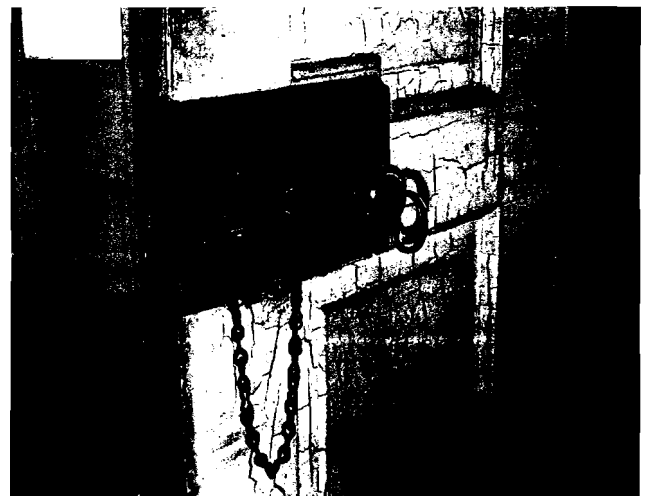
## Mission Statement:

Despite its rich historic past, Northern Kentucky lacks a comprehensive history. *The Encyclopedia of Northern Kentucky*, patterned after two popular works of the University Press of Kentucky--*The Encyclopedia of Kentucky* and *The Encyclopedia of Louisville*—sets as its mission the following:

- 1) **To chronicle the historical, geographical, political, social, cultural, scientific, and economic events and conditions of the eleven counties of Northern Kentucky—Boone, Bracken, Campbell, Carroll, Gallatin, Grant, Kenton, Mason, Owen, Pendleton, and Robertson—from earliest times to the present.**
- 2) **To present this information in 1,200+ understandable, encyclopedic entries written by 500 knowledgeable authors.**
- 3) **To make this important resource available to a wide audience including: the general public; teachers and students of elementary, middle, junior high and senior high school levels; professors and students of community colleges, senior colleges and research universities; government officials; adult learners; and others.**

**Mystery Photo** – This photo showing an enormous “box lock” with an eight to ten inch key on a chain was seen at a recent Society meeting.

**Come to the next meeting and find out the details !**



## Then ... and Now

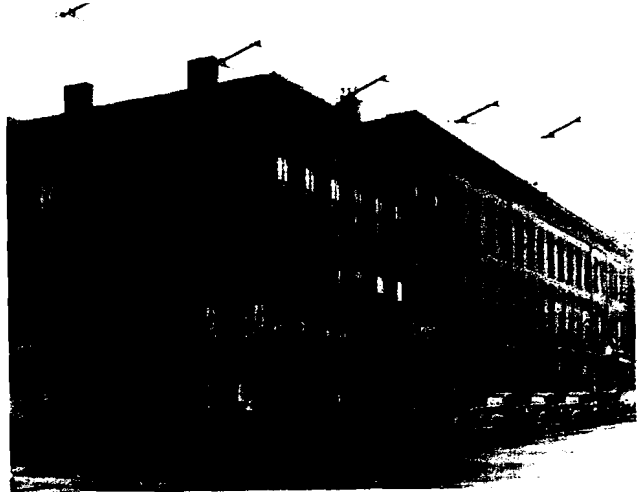
Pictured below are two views of the **Boone Block** on the north side of Scott Street, near Fourth Street, Covington. The building was erected c. 1872 and was considered prime office and retail space at the time and for decades afterward.

The building housed the offices of such prominent Covingtonians as William Goebel (assassinated governor) and John Griffen Carlisle (U.S. Senator and Treasury Secretary in the Cleveland Administration).

By mid-twentieth century, the building had been converted into efficiency apartments and the corner building was razed to allow parking for a drive-up liquor store.

The "then" picture was taken in mid-1930s showing the original corner structure. Both buildings were designed in the Italianate style.

Today the upper floors are vacant and un-inhabitable, while the street level retail space has been greatly changed



1930s View (courtesy "Memory Project")



Present (courtesy Ron Einhaus)

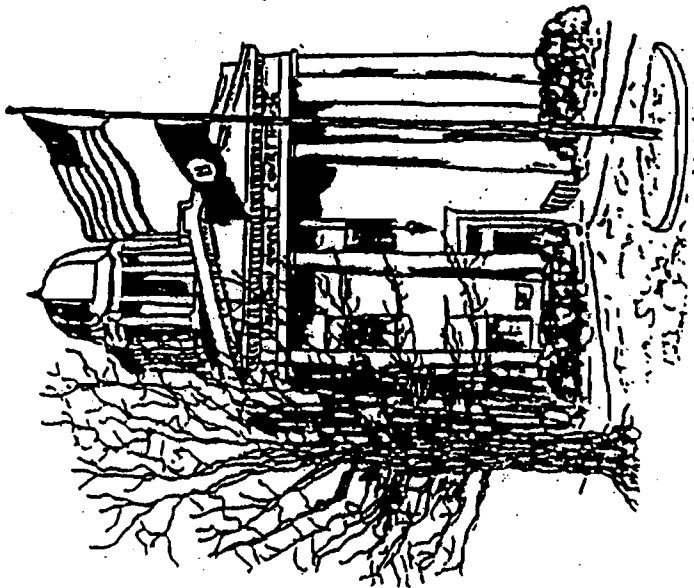
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Dedicated to preserving our heritage as the "Gateway to the South"

**KENTON COUNTY  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

*July August 2003*



**INSIDE:**

- Boone-Kenton Lumber Company
- Boone Block