

BULLETIN

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Kenton County Historical Society

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Historical Confederation of Kentucky,
Publisher of the new regional magazine,
Northern Kentucky Heritage



INSIDE SEE:

HISTORY OF COVINGTON
BY O.J. WIGGINS
(5th in a series)

June 1994

**Kenton County Historical Society
P.O. Box 641
Covington, KY 41012**

June 1994

PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

On Tuesday, June 7, at 7:00 PM, at the Kenton County Public Library (Erlanger Branch), June Krantz will speak on:

THE PRE-HISTORY OF NORTHERN KENTUCKY

Her talk will include segments on the Ordovician period and on Native American culture up to 1492. Mrs. Krantz will also refer to the collections and programs of the Behringer-Crawford Museum where she is active as a volunteer.

Mrs. Krantz will bring some hands-on objects for display, and she will show slides with her talk.

The program is sponsored by the Kenton County Historical Society. This educational program will be FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.

Tuesday Evening
June 7, 7:00 PM
Kenton County Public Library
Erlanger Branch
3158 Dixie Highway (next to Krogers)

Northern Kentucky Heritage

This new regional magazine covers (not exclusively) Boone, Campbell, Carroll, Gallatin, Grant, Kenton, Owen and Pendleton Counties. The first issue is out and the second issue was published in May. We ask for your support in this effort to promote and publish the history and genealogy of Northern Kentucky. We note that you might be able to buy a gift subscription for someone!

Subscription with membership in the Kenton County Historical Society - \$25.00

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Subscription without membership - \$20.00

Kenton County Historical Society, P.O. Box 641, Covington, KY 41012

HISTORY OF COVINGTON
by O. J. Wiggins
Daily Commonwealth, May 3, 1884
(Fifth in a series herein transcribed)

Note-By mistake an address published on the 19th was credited to the late Hiram Martin, when it should have been H. H. Martin, President of the Pioneer Association, who is still living.

PERSONAL REMINISCENCES--HENRY TURNER

Among the early pioneers at Covington still residing in our midst is Henry Turner, a respected and energetic businessman at the age of three score and ten (1). He was born in Henry County, Ky., September 4, 1812, and came to Covington when only eleven years old, in 1824 to learn his trade as a tobacconist from David Musselman and his son William, who at that time resided in the old Baker house, operating a cigar store in the front room, and a factory in the frame addition in the rear. Mr. Turner has constantly resided in Covington since that date (2). He went to school to James Adams in the log school house that stood about where the Court Avenue entrance to the Courthouse is now, and he remembers very distinctly Lorenzo Dow, the celebrated preacher of that day. He used to preach in the school house, and one Sunday, the house being full of women and children, and the men as usual grouped on the outside, Brother Dow stood in the doorway expounding his text, when a good old sister who was noted for her volubility, got to whispering. The preacher stood it as long as he could, but at last losing patience he suddenly struck the door three resounding raps, and in the intense silence that followed this unlooked for proceeding, he pointed his finger solemnly at the disturber and drawled out in measured tones "in Heaven There was silence for the space of half an hour, there were no women there." The men folks enjoyed it greatly, and used his word as a text against their better-halves ever after (3). Moses Dalton made a strong fight against M. M. Benton for Mayor in 1834 but Mr. Benton beat him (4). Hamilton Martin followed Alexander Connelly as postmaster and the office was on the north side of Lower Market about fifty yards east of Scott Street (5). The first public well was on Greenup Street, in front of the present Courthouse.

H. F. BOWEN

Hiram French Bowen, another respected pioneer came to Covington in 1825 at the age of three years, and is still living here in the enjoyment of health, prosperity, and the friendship and esteem of his fellow citizens that over half acentury of daily communications has only served to cement.

His father, Alexander Bowen, removed to Covington from Bracken county in the fall of 1825 with his family, consisting of his wife and children, viz; John M., aged 18; Charles H., 16; James A., 13; Ann, 11 (afterwards married to Dr. Abraham Johnson); Dulcina, 9 (afterwards married to William Martin, still living in Springfield, Ohio); Matilda, 7; Alexander Hensford, 5; Hiram F., 3; and Louis, a few months old. There was one child born in Covington, Lizzie, in 1827, who afterwards married Thomas Brasher. The family lived first on the Banklick

Pike, in the Algyer house, that is still standing, south of Fifteenth on the west side of Banklick Street, and Mr. Bowen remembers quite well the quarter mile race track beginning close to his father's house and running to about where the Highland Pike now is, and John Hardin's wonderful horse, "Possum," that always ran just fast enough to get beat.

Mr. Bowen's father died in 1831 and the family then moved to Robert Kyle's house at what is now Pike and Madison, and Mr. Bowen recalls with gusto what a splendid watermelon patch he used to tend just east of what is now Madison Street, south of Sixth. The patch was surrounded by a fine growth of broom corn, covering the spot now occupied by the Farmers and Traders Bank. Where the dwellings stand at the southwest corner of Pike or Cooper street and Scott was a splendid spring at the bottom of a deep gully that existed there. It was noted for its clear and cold water (6).

Mr. Bowen went to school to a Methodist preacher named Pitcher, in the brick house on Madison Street, in the rear of the present blacksmith shop of Fred J. Meyers Manufacturing company, No. 423 and 425 and afterwards stemmed tobacco in the factory of John B. Casey (7) until a good sized lad, when he went to work at the Carpenter trade with Harvey Poor and his brother, John Bowen, who with Peleg Kidd (8) and John A. Goodson (9) were the most prominent contractors and builders of the day. Mr. Bowen worked on Scott-Street Methodist church (10) as a journeyman, and afterwards went into business for himself, and by a long life of sobriety, energy, and industry has amassed a competency. Mr. Bowen served several terms in both Council and School Board, held the office of City Assessor from 1857 to 1863, and that of Sheriff from 1863 to 1866 (11).

The first engine-house in Covington was a frame building that stood about where the Third-Street gate of the Courthouse now is. It was eventually sold to the late Michael Moore, and by him moved to Philadelphia Street, where it still exists under the name 404. The City Council met in the second story and the fire engine was kept below. The first engine was the "Coffee Mill" which is described as an oblong box about 4 by 6 feet, from which the water was forced by a long handle pump, worked by twelve men, a distance of 30 feet. The second engine was the "Washington," worked something on the principal of a railroad hand-car. This only required eight men to operate it. Then came the "Neptune," and then the "Kenton," which was worked something like a rowboat; but in a few years the hand engine gave way to steam and the old volunteer firemen to the paid system now in vogue. The favorite way of raising funds to purchase an engine is to hold a fair, and these fairs were usually very remunerative and gained quite a reputation for pleasure.

Alexander Connelly was the first Postmaster and among the eccentricities of the early days is recalled his habit of delivering letters. Before starting to the market every morning, he would fill his hat with mail and en route would accost the owners, deliver the letters, and collect his twenty-five cents on each. His memory was keen, and he knew everybody, and he never made a mistake in stopping a person without finding their letter. In those days envelopes were not

used. The paper was simply folded and sealed with wax. The postage was collected on delivery.

Samuel Lawrence was a noted scape grace of the times and the story is told of how John Gray, another prominent citizen, (grandfather of R. H. Gray) blew him up for purloining his wood. Mr. Gray suspected Lawrence of visiting his woodpile, and he charged a stick with powder. The result was a surprising explosion in Lawrence's cookstove, and a permanent safeguard around Mr. Gray's wood pile (12).

ENDNOTES

1. William Turner, tobacconist, born in Kentucky, boards at Musselman's (1839-40 Covington street directory); Henry Turner, tobacconist, east side of Greenup between Tenth and Robbins street (1860 directory); Henry Turner, tobacconist, home north side of Lynn between Scott and Greenup, foreman, W. P. McLaughlin tobacco company, 46 Pike Street between Washington and Russell (1867-68 directory); Henry Turner, lottery office, 96 Pike Street, residence, 18 West Tenth (1876 directory); Henry Turner tobacconist, agent Kentucky State Lottery Office, 96 Pike Street, home 1113 Banklick (1882-83 directory).
2. In 1827 David Musselman was elected town trustee; in 1829 and in 1830 William Musselman was elected (Allen Webb Smith, Beginning at the Point, a Documented History of Northern Kentucky and Environs, the City of Covington in Particular, 1751-1834, printed locally, 1977). William Musselman, tobacconist, Fourth Street between Greenup and Garrard (1834 directory); William Musselman, tobacconist, born Maryland residence corner of Fourth and Sandford (1839-40 Directory); B. Musselman, tobacconist, home west side of Madison between Seventh and Eighth (1867-68 directory); in 1827 David and Margaret Musselman were among the ten members of the Town's first Methodist society (Smith). Mrs. Mary Baker, west side of Greenup between Second and Third Streets (1860 directory); Mrs. Baker may have relocated or resided in the house after Musselman.
3. James Adams, born in New Hampshire, grocer, Greenup between Second and Third Streets (1839-40 directory); "Pioneer surveyor" James Adams and Dr. Platt Kennedy followed James Arnold as teachers in the town's little log schoolhouse located at the public square. Lorenzo Dow was a "famed itinerant frontier preacher," who never formally entered the ministry, but was "closely associated" with the Methodist denomination. Since the log schoolhouse, used ordinarily as a church also was once too small for the popular Dow, he, therefore, conducted "Covington's first large scale open air religious meeting," in 1825. He was born in Connecticut and died in Washington D. C. in 1834 (John E. Burns, "History of Covington to 1865," unpublished).
4. In Covington's first Mayoral race in 1834 Mortimer Murray Benton defeated Moses Dalton (Daulton), 118 to 114. Dalton was then "one of Covington's more prominent residents" (Burns cites the Cincinnati Daily Enquirer, March 29, 1863, which had quoted a paper issued April 12, 1834). However, Dalton is not listed in the 1834 Covington street directory.
5. In 1834 the first city council elected Hamilton Martin "clerk of the city" (Wiggins in D. C., 5-31-84). In the early 1840s the post office was kept in one of the little frames on the north side of Market-space" (C. J. II-15-73). In 1841 Hamilton Martin was appointed Postmaster. Covington Postmasters through Martin's term were these: Henry Buckner, 1815-17; Robert Perry, 1817-20; Aaron Gano, 1820-23; Guy W. Wright, 1823-24; James G. Arnold, 1824-26; Alexander Connelly, 1826-41; Hamilton Martin, 1841-46 (Covington Sesqui-Centennial Souvenir Program, 1965, cited in miscellaneous papers of John E. Burns). Having served as Covington Postmaster, Martin appears to have relocated to Cincinnati; Hamilton Martin of Hamilton Martin and Co, with Thomas Lindsay, 3 Main street (1853 Cincinnati directory). Hamilton Martin, tobacconist, 138 1/2 Betts (1860 Cincinnati directory); by 1863 he is no longer listed in Cincinnati either.
6. The Farmers and Traders Bank was located at the southeast corner of Sixth and Madison until about 1903. This bank erected the current building at the northeast corner of Sixth and Madison, and relocated there before merging with First National Bank of Covington in 1910. With the merger First National Bank relocated from 515 Madison to Sixth and Madison (Our 100th Anniversary ... First National Bank...., 1963; and street directories). The location of the spring was later the site of the Covington Lager Beer Brewery (advertisement, D. C. May 3, 1884)
7. In 1876 the Fred J. Meyers Wire works had a store at 73 East Twelfth and factory at 30 East Tenth (1876 directory); in 1886 the company, which was started in 1856 by John Mieth, was described as

manufacturer of architectural iron work, iron store fronts, stairs, shutters, located at 419, 421, 423 Madison avenue in two brick buildings, one of six stories 47x 150 feet and another having two stories 23x190 feet (Leading Manufactures and Merchants of Cincinnati and Environs, 1886). In 1893 a \$450,000 fire there, was called the largest in Covington's history (K.P., 3-6-93), and also destroyed the First Christian church, which was then replaced by the present church building on West Fifth Street (paper entitled, "Early Churches in Kenton County," Myron A. Bailey). John R. Casey, tobacconist, corner Market and Greenup Streets (1834 directory).

8. Harrison Poor, carpenter, age 37, born in Ohio (1850 Federal census for Kenton County). Peleg Kidd, carpenter, born in Kentucky, residence on Fifth Street (1839-40 directory); John Bowen, Hiram's brother, and Poor and Kidd were members of the first Covington fire company (Smith); in 1833 Covington had erected a frame engine house, on the second floor of which was held town meetings (Burns); Covington decided to erect its first permanent city hall west of Greenup Street north of Third Street and "Mr. Kidd was commissioned as architect" and listed as carpenter while Lewis Roach was "lumber contractor"; it was dedicated in 1843 (Burns). In 1843 the cornerstone was laid and "Roach and Kidd" did the carpentry work on Trinity Episcopal's first church's building (Stephens L. Blakely, Chronicles of Trinity, Christopher Gist Papers); Peleg Kidd, age 42, "Master Carpenter," born in Kentucky (1850 Federal Census for Kenton County)

9. John A. Goodson, carpenter, head of Madison (1834 directory). In 1834 John A. Goodson (circa 1791-1867) was elected to Covington's first city council; he made the press for the first seal of the city; he was reimbursed for lumber used in "preparing" the city's new workhouse (Smith); he served in the Kentucky Legislature representing Campbell County in 1835, 1836, 1837, 1838, 1839 and Kenton county in 1840; he served in the State Senate 1851-53 (Lewis Collins, History of Kentucky, revised by Richard Collins, 1874, volume II); he had been "a soldier under Andrew Jackson;" in 1857 Major Goodson's daughter, Mary Jane, married John G. Carlisle (W. H. Perrin et al, Kentucky, A History of the State, vol. 7, 1887); in 1859 Goodson defeated Amos Shinkle for Presidency of the city council, 826 to 778 (C. J. 1-8-59); in 1860 Goodson, representing the main Democratic and the "radical southern" Breckenridge wings, ran for Mayor against B. W. Foley who represented the Constitutional Union party; the "board of contest," which had to recount votes, declared Goodson the winner (C. J. 8-4-60; C. J., 9-22-60; and Burns). As Mayor Goodson declined an invitation to attend a public reception in Cincinnati for President-elect Abraham Lincoln (C. J., 2-16-61). Major Goodson's son, Captain John A. Goodson (1849-1910) served the city as a fire captain, as city Marshall, and worked to reorganize the city's police department, was a gauger for the Internal Revenue, and was generally active in the Democratic Party organization (K. P., 2-8 and 2-9, 1910).

10. In August 1843 the cornerstone was laid for the Scott Street Methodist Church; the congregation relocated from probably the first church erected in Covington in 1832, which was located on the west side of Garrard, fifty feet north of Third Street. In 1845 the Methodist Church South was organized; in 1846 the Scott Street Methodist congregation voted to in favor of this southern wing. Some dissenting Covington Methodists then formed Wesley Chapel (Bailey). The Scott Street M. E. Church South was located at 530 Scott Street (Sanborn insurance map).

11. Kenton County Sheriffs up to and including Bowen were these: Leonard Stephens, 1840-42; James G. Arnold, 1842-44; Jonathan Hathaway, 1844-46; T. J. Tupman, 1846-48; Lewis Klette, 1848-50; John Dedmon, 1850-52; Phil. F. Brown, 1852-54; William H. Wood, 1854-58; William E. Ashbrook, 1858-62; Hiram F. Bowen, 1862-66 (Wiggins in D.C., 12-13, 1884).

12. Samuel Lawrence, shoemaker, 694 Wester Row (1853 Cincinnati Directory); "John Gray, grocer and ginger cake maker," (Wiggins, D. C. April 19, 1884); in 1826 John Gray was appointed city assessor; in 1828 he was elected a trustee; in 1829 he was chosen to be chairman of the trustees as well as treasurer; in 1833 Gray was appointed Clerk of Markets (Smith). John Gray, grocer, Greenup, opposite Market Space (1834 directory); Mrs. Deborah Gray, born in Virginia, grocer on Greenup between Third and Fourth (1839-40 Directory). Richard H. Gray, attorney, northeast corner Fourth and Scott, residence Grant Station, Kentucky (1876 directory). The incident of implanting gunpowder in fire wood to fend off thievery took place at a time when kitchen cook stoves were being introduced to replace open hearth cooking (Burns).

(transcription by Joe Gastright; endnotes by John Boh)

THE COLLECTED PAPERS OF THE KENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, 3 VOLUMES, INDEXED, LOOSE LEAF BOUND

CONTENTS: VOLUME I -- Kenton County Historical Society Articles; Bridge Fell 70 Feet Into The Licking River; Covington's First City Hall; John W. Stevenson; John G. Carlisle; Independence; Latonia Springs; Churches of The United Church of Christ; The Making of The Kentucky Central; Trouble in Latonia; Mayor Rhinock; Mortimer Murray Benton; The Amos Shinkle Estate; Madison Avenue Christian Church; Ninth Street United Methodist Church; Shinkle United Methodist Church; St. Benedict Parish; Acknowledgements; Index.

VOLUME II -- Gowell-Symbol of Second Effort; The Baker-Hunt Foundation, Covington, Kentucky; History of Covington Schools; John Robert Kelley; X-Ray Genius; Tough Times For Early Kenton County Libraries; The Philosophy Behind The Baker-Hunt Foundation; Dan Beard -- Modern Frontiersman; The Queen; The "Chronicc Want" of Cincinnati: A Southern Railroad; Louisville and Cincinnati River Packet Trade: Heart Of A Region; History Of The Catholic Church in Ludlow, Kentucky: The Developmental Years 1870-1935; The Covington Elks; History of Covington (Blakely); History of Covington, Kentucky(Harrison); Index.

VOLUME III --Author's Note; Frontier Adventure; The Point In The War of 1812; The Underground Railroad and The Men who Made It Obsolete; Governor Magoffin's Neutrality Proclamation, A Failed Political Ploy; Local Troops On The Battle Fronts; Illustrations. \$30.00 including mailing

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An archaeological investigation of nineteenth century Covington

**Kenton County Public Library
Covington Branch
Fifth and Scott**

May 30- July 31, 1994
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