

KENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Bulletin

June 1996



INSIDE:

Austinburg, A Covington Neighborhood

NOTICES

Kenton Officers From 1776 TO 1888

In 1884, in the Daily Commonwealth newspaper, O. J. Wiggins listed over 100 names of court officers and legislators primarily from Kenton County but also Campbell County before 1840 when the region was one county. Recently John Boh compiled brief, biographical "abstracts" of each and arranged them alphabetically. It could be a wonderful help for your research.

Cost: \$2.00, including mailing.

Needed: Computer Skills and Time

KCHS has numerous handwritten research projects which we would like to publish. We need someone who can enter this data onto computer disk so that we can transfer them to publishing form. If you have the time and no computer, the Society's computer is available. Please call Karl Lietzenmayer, 261-2807 or John Boh, 491-0490 (H), or 292-2124.

FOR SALE

✓Kenton County 1860 Index —Reduced from \$15 to \$10

✓George Roth History of Trinity Church, Covington- hardbound, 300 pages, indexed, 20 pages of black and white and color pictures and illustrations. Cost \$10 plus \$2 postage.

✓7 X 7 Color 1947 Photo of the Kentucky Parlor Streetcar.

Kenton County Historical Society membership dues are \$10 per year; \$5 for students and Senior Citizens.

Subscriptions to Northern Kentucky Heritage Magazine, a semi-annual magazine of regional history covering ten counties, are \$12 a year for members; \$15 a year for non-members

To subscribe to the magazine or become a member of KCHS, please mail check to KCHS, P. O. Box 641, Covington, KY 41012

KENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Publisher of award-winning
Northern Kentucky Heritage Magazine

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K.C.H.S. MEETING NOTICE

DATE	Saturday, June 8
TIME	11 A M
PLACE	Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption
PROGRAM:	Tour of the Cathedral

Meeting will be in the Blue Room. Tour will include some of the special features of interest to history buffs. An average of 200 people tour this historic church every day.

AUSTINBURG, A COVINGTON NEIGHBORHOOD

The Austinberg area of Covington can be identified by the presence of St. Elizabeth Hospital on the southeast and St. Benedict's Church at its heart. Once outside Covington city limits without services such as sewers and paved streets, the growth of Austinburg was influenced by the influx of German Catholics fleeing city taxes, landholders turned developers, railroads, and the Civil War.

The Austinburg area began with the purchase of a sizable tract of land lying along the Licking River. It was bought by Seneca Austin and his wife, Julia, on January 1, 1844 from S. C. Parkhurst for \$3,732. Austin set up gardens along the river bank on which he grew vegetables for sale in the markets of Covington and Cincinnati. The Austin house was set in a bend of a large creek which entered the Licking River just south of present-day 17th Street just about where the flood wall sits. A map from 1850 shows terraced walks along the riverbank by the side of the elegant house.

The farm stretched from just south of present 16th Street to just north of Wallace Avenue. To the west, Richard Southgate's land cut across Austin's where the streets change direction from 16th to 18th. Access to the farm was over the land of Onerias Powell, the man who had surveyed the original town of Covington back in 1815. The present 15th Street was known as Powell Street at the time. Covington city limits were at 12th Street.

In the late 1840's, German Catholics were settling in the land just outside the city of Covington to avoid the city taxes. In October 1850, Austin subdivided the land just north of his house to take advantage of this new interest. The subdivision included Austin Street (17th Street) and Burnett Street (16th Street) as well as five short cross streets running roughly north and south: Mary (Maryland Street), Edward (Eastern Avenue), William (Oakland Avenue), Julia (Glenway Avenue), and

Water (now the floodwall). In 1851, Covington annexed all of the land from 12th Street to the Wallace Farm. Lot sales in the Austin subdivision were modest through the 1850's.

Robert Patton developed a subdivision just north and west of Austin's and built a fine house on Garrard Street just north of 16th Street. Before financial problems chased him away, Patton was on the Covington City Council and served as Mayor. During the late 1800's, nationally famed Congressman and Speaker of the House, John G. Carlisle lived in the Patton house. It still exists as one of the treasures in the neighborhood.

The recession in the late 1850's turned into boom years during the Civil War. The Covington and Lexington railroad which ran at the edge of Austinburg prospered with war traffic. The Welsh and Craig packing house was developed on the river just above the Licking Iron Works. Lots in Austinburg and in the subdivisions just to the north sold steadily throughout the war period. Development would have been even greater if Southgate's property had been on the market, but his will wasn't settled until 1867. The sale of his property was hindered by stipulations in the will.

The first saloons were built along Edward to serve the new population. In the early 1870's, Jasper's Distillery and Benzinger's Slaughterhouse were located on lower Burnett at Water, but in 1875, a disastrous fire struck both the distillery and the adjacent slaughterhouse.

Fourth District School had been opened a few years before and became the first public institution in the neighborhood. But Austinburgers were not happy in the early 1880's. There were few public improvements and few city services. The people got involved in politics and were quite successful in electing neighborhood politicians to represent their concerns.

Well over half of the 150 or so lots in the Austin subdivision were developed by 1880, and construction was prospering in the newly available Southgate land south of 15th Street.

By 1883, 80 or 90 families from the overcrowded St.

Joseph Catholic Church at 12th and Green Street in Helentown, had moved to Austinburg. That year a large lot, number 6 in section 8 of Southgate's tract, was purchased for a new parish dedicated to St. Benedict. Within 2 years, a combination church and school was opened on 16th Street on the site of the present Holy Family School building which replaced it in 1927.

During the mid- 1880's, the Chesapeake and Ohio railroad pushed its tracks through the neighborhood all the way from the Atlantic. K. C Junction at 17th and Madison connected the C&O with both northern and southern markets through the Kentucky Central Railroad. With the completion of the railroad bridge to Ohio in 1888, this was heralded as the busiest section of track in the country, and it remained one of the most used for over 50 years. Railroad jobs were for many years the most lucrative available to the residents of Austinburg.

Civilization finally arrived in Austinburg during the late 1880's. Water pipes were laid in 1887. About the same time, sewers were installed and the streets were paved. Brick sidewalks followed in the early 1890's along with natural gas service.

Now in 1996, Austinburgers are coming together to create a Nineteen-Ninety's sense of community. The Austinburg Neighborhood Association was created in September of 1995. Their goal is to improve the quality of life of residents and instill a sense of pride in their community.

Dr. Joseph Gastright contributed most of this article.

**The Northern Kentucky African American
Heritage Task Force**

**Cordially invites you to attend an
Open House to visit their new location at the**

**William H. Martin III
Northern Kentucky Community Center
824 Greenup Street, Room 205
Covington, Kentucky**

**Thursday, June 13, 1996
5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.**

**Guest is Dr. Roy Peterson
Secretary of Arts, Education & Humanities Cabinet
Commonwealth of Kentucky**

Comments from Dr. Peterson at 6:00 p.m.

Program & Refreshments in the Gymnasium.

**Please RSVP by June 7th to:
Betty Brandon-Mitchell 606/491-9291
Virginia Bradford 606/342-9678**

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

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