

# Bulletin of the Kenton County Historical Society

P.O. Box 641, Covington, Kentucky 41012-0641 [nkyheritage.kchs@Juno.com](mailto:nkyheritage.kchs@Juno.com) (859) 431-2666

**MARCH/APRIL**

**2008**

## History Day March 15 At NKU

The annual Northern Kentucky History Day will occur on Saturday March 15<sup>th</sup> on the Northern Kentucky University Campus. Display tables set-up is scheduled from 8 to 9 am. Participant registration is 9 to 10 am, affording time to visit the many anticipated display tables.

Dr. James Ramage, NKU Regents Professor of History, will be the opening speaker at 10:15, discussing material from his forthcoming book, "U.S. Grant: The Rise and Fall of His Public Reputation."

The committee released the workshop subjects as follows:

- Civil War Military Hospitals in Northern Kentucky, Jack Simon
- "Echoes of War, A Thousand Year of Military History in Popular Culture, Dr. Michael Adams.
- Navigating The Ohio River From Lewis & Clark To Present, Chuck Parrish
- Covered Bridges in Bracken & Other Kentucky Counties, Susan Rich
- Where Ethnography Meets History: Using Multidisciplinary Approaches To Interpret The Margaret Garner Story, Dr. Delores Walters, Underground Freedom Center
- Beginning Genealogy – Mysteries of Your Heritage, Karen Everett
- Lewis & Clark And Big Bone, James Duvall & Don Clare
- A Discussion of Morgan's Longest Raid, Lester Horwitz
- Quest For Freedom: A General History of URR In The Midwest, Dr. Eric Jackson

A tour of the NKU Archives has also been arranged by archivist Jennifer Gregory. Closing activities are scheduled for 1 p.m. and no lunch will be offered on campus. Numerous door prizes will be offered at that time. The registration fee is \$6 at the door, \$5 in advance. For registration and information call Martha Pelfrey (859)441-7667 or John Boh (859)491-0490 or send your check with name and address to **History Day, PO Box 641, Covington, Kentucky 41012-0641.**

## April Meeting A Discussion of the Covington-Sauerland Connection

On Tuesday April 8<sup>th</sup>, 7 p.m., at Trinity Episcopal Church (4<sup>th</sup> & Madison Ave, Covington), Joe Gastright will show slides and discuss Sauerland in the hills of northwestern Germany. From Sauerland came original families of Covington's first German Catholic parish, Mother of God Church. Joe will give names of some of the local families and identify a great web site for doing genealogy in this area.

## NKAPC Web Site

The Northern Kentucky Area Planning Commission has been engaged in a survey of historic structures in the county. Now they are developing a web site that will permit access to their study maps and include descriptions of the historic structures surveyed.

## Kenton County Public Library Local History and Genealogy Website

The website contains many indexes, abstracts and digital images to assist genealogical research including: Kenton County Public Library Newspaper Index, Kenton County Census Indexes 1810-1880; Kenton Co. Birth Abstracts 1852-1859 and 1876-1877; indexes to the Sacramental records of St. Patrick Church in Covington, St. Boniface Church in Ludlow and St. James Church in Ludlow (indexes to the Cathedral, St. Augustine and St. Benedict records will be available soon); Early abstracts of St. Elizabeth Hospital Patient Records; 1834 Covington City Directory; Kentucky Union Civil War Veterans Burial List and much more. The site also lists many of the major local history/genealogical resources available at the library.

President, James Kiger; Vice-president/Programs, Dr. Joseph Gastright; Treasurer, Dan Carter; Secretary, John Boh, Board Members: Emily Bailey, George Gressle, Charles King, San Juan Romero, Editor: Karl J. Lietzenmayer, one open seat.

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

In addition, the site contains the library's *Urban Community History Project*. This project documents the history of Kenton County's urban neighborhoods (Bromley, Covington and Ludlow). The neighborhoods that are complete and ready to view include: Bromley, Ludlow, and the following Covington neighborhoods: Devou Park, Lewisburg and West Covington. Each neighborhood page contains histories of the churches, schools, major businesses, notable buildings and homes of the area. The site also includes over 200 historic and vintage photographs.

**Erlanger Historical Society**  
**P.O. Box 18062**  
**Erlanger, Kentucky 41018**  
**Meetings: 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday 7:00 pm**  
**@ Erlanger Depot, Crescent Avenue**

#### **EHS Map Recipient**

The Society has received an 1890 Erlanger map; an illustrated 1887 Kentucky history by F.A. Battey and W.H. Perrin; an invitation to a celebration of President Cleveland; and an 1860 surveyor instrument. All were donated by Robert Squiar and Suzanne Cress, grandchildren of Thomas Buckner. Buckner settled in the Erlanger environs in 1831 and a son built a home at 30 Commonwealth – now the Linnemann Funeral Home.

In addition to the Wednesday meeting times, the Depot Museum is also open each Saturday, March through November, noon to 4 pm.

**Villa Hills Historical Association**  
**P.O. Box 175917**  
**Villa Hills, Kentucky 41017-5917**  
**Meetings: 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesdays**

#### **VHHA Present at History Day**

The Villa Hills History Association has reserved a table at History Day, March 15<sup>th</sup> at NKU. They will make available the "Millennium Book" recently published.

#### **Hooper Battery**

In July 2002 the Ft. Wright property near Highland Pike, owned by Fern Storer, was donated to Northern Kentucky University. The University plans to sell the property; however, part was the site of Hooper Battery and the city of Fort Wright, NKU staff and some KCHS members are interested in its preservation.

Hooper Battery was built by the Union in the Civil War as one of the fortifications for defense of Northern Kentucky and Cincinnati. Construction of the system began in 1861, and by September 1862 when Confederate General Braxton Bragg invaded Kentucky there were seven batteries and Fort Mitchell completed.

General Lew Wallace strengthened the defensive line by organizing a force of 72,000 men (22,000 regulars and 50,000 "squirrel hunters" militia) and positioning them in Fort Mitchell, the batteries, and newly constructed rifle pits. The eight-mile defensive line ran from Ludlow to Fort Thomas, and trees and undergrowth were cleared south of this line for a 2,000-yard field of fire.

On September 10, 1862 Confederate General Henry Heth appeared south of Fort Mitchell [near present Beechwood Road] with a division of infantry, artillery and cavalry. He had orders to make a demonstration against Cincinnati. Pickets exchanged rifle fire, but decided not to attack and withdrew to Lexington on the night of September 11. Records show that four Union men were killed and three wounded; two Confederate soldiers were wounded and sixteen captured.

When the entrenched Union men observed the Confederates were gone the next morning, someone began singing "John Brown's Body." Others joined him and the song spread from regiment to regiment until voices reverberated through the hills and valleys: "John Brown's body lies a-mould'rin' in the grave, but his soul is marching on!"

General Wallace's published victory proclamation declared, "In coming time, strangers viewing the works on the hills of Newport and Covington will ask, 'Who built these entrenchments?' You can answer, 'We built them!' If they ask, 'Who guarded them?' you can reply, 'We helped in thousands!' If they inquire the result, your answer will be, 'The enemy came and looked at them, and stole away in the night!'"

In 1863 and 1864 the Union army continued to strengthen the defenses. Battery Hooper was situated on high ground at the edge

#### **ECHOES OF THE PAST**

**A HISTORY OF THE  
COVINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOL  
SYSTEM**

by Betty Lee Nordheim  
Hardcover, 144 pp., 61 photographs,  
Preface, \$15.95  
Call Community Relations at 392-1124

of a ridge east of Fort Mitchell, and provided a direct line of sight to the Licking River Valley through a break in the hills. Battery Hooper was probably constructed in 1863 after General Heth's demonstration in 1862. Battery Hooper, Fort Wright and the other works brought the total to four forts and 23 batteries armed with eighty cannon by the end of the war. By November 1864, Battery Hooper had two 32-pound cannon.

#### Who was Hooper?

The first assumption was that 'Hooper' referred to the battery commander – as is the case in naming most of the sites. Preliminary investigation indicates this is not so. Presently known data indicates the name is possibly that of the property owner or a significant supporter of the battery construction.

Many references mention one William Hooper, assumed to have been a banking and insurance executive in Cincinnati during the mid-to-late 1800s. According to the 1894 Chamber of Commerce Annual Report, this Hooper died on July 18, 1894 at 82 [an advanced age for the time]. In 1840, he was an officer or director of the Franklin Bank and in 1851 a board member of the Washington Insurance Company. At one time he was a major property holder in East Walnut Hills (Cincinnati suburb).

He evidently played a role in investigating the 1857 failure of the Ohio Life Insurance & Trust Company [in which many local investors lost money] and was the featured speaker at the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Mercantile Library Association in 1860. William Hooper erected a costly mansion with frescoed ceilings on his 23-acre estate in Cincinnati's Woodburn neighborhood, overlooking the Ohio River.

Additional research is required to confirm what role Mr. Hooper actually played in the establishment of this battery.

#### The Battery's Fate

The Storer family filled in behind the battery site, creating a level lawn, and a small existing sinkhole may be the collapsed powder magazine. Battery Hooper is one of seven remaining batteries, including Battery Shaler in Evergreen Cemetery, Erlanger and Battery Bates in Devou Park. None of the forts are preserved

Dr. James Ramage, NKU History Professor was informed of the Storer family donation by Thomas Fugate, Civil War Sites Coordinator with the Kentucky Historic Preservation Office [part of the Kentucky Heritage Council]. Dr. Ramage learned that the city of Ft. Wright was interested in preserving the site and attended a July meeting with Larry

Klein, City Administrative Officer. Others attending this meeting were Peggy Guier, attorney for the Heritage Council, Jeannine Kreinbrink, Behringer/Crawford Museum Archeologist, and Kathy Romero, Kenton Historical Society member and Ft. Wright resident.

The group discussed the value of site preservation and proposed that two acres of the site, including the battery and the existing dwelling, be set aside. Green space is needed around the battery to demonstrate its significance and the dwelling can be used as an interpretive center. Exhibits could include facts about Fort Wright and other fortifications on the line of defense.

#### Civil War fortification sites

Coombs	Kenton
Bates	Kenton
Fort Perry	Kenton
Hooper	Kenton
Hatch	Kenton
McRae	Kenton
Fort Whittlesey	Campbell
Holt	Campbell
Shaler	Campbell
J. L. K. Smith	Kenton
Rich	Kenton
Fort Mitchel	Kenton
Kyle	Kenton
Fort Wright	Kenton
Carlisle	Kenton
Burbank	Kenton
Buford	Kenton
Fort Henry	Kenton
Larz Anderson	Kenton
Wiggins	Campbell
Johns Hill	Campbell
McLean	Campbell
Harrison	Campbell
Beech Woods	Campbell
Groesback	Campbell
Phil Kearny	Campbell
Fort Burnside	Campbell
Lee	Campbell

Source: Civil War map, published 1877  
(28 batteries and forts are shown on this map)

## *Pioneer Family Leaves Photographic Legacy*

David E. Schroeder  
Local History Librarian, Kenton County Public Library

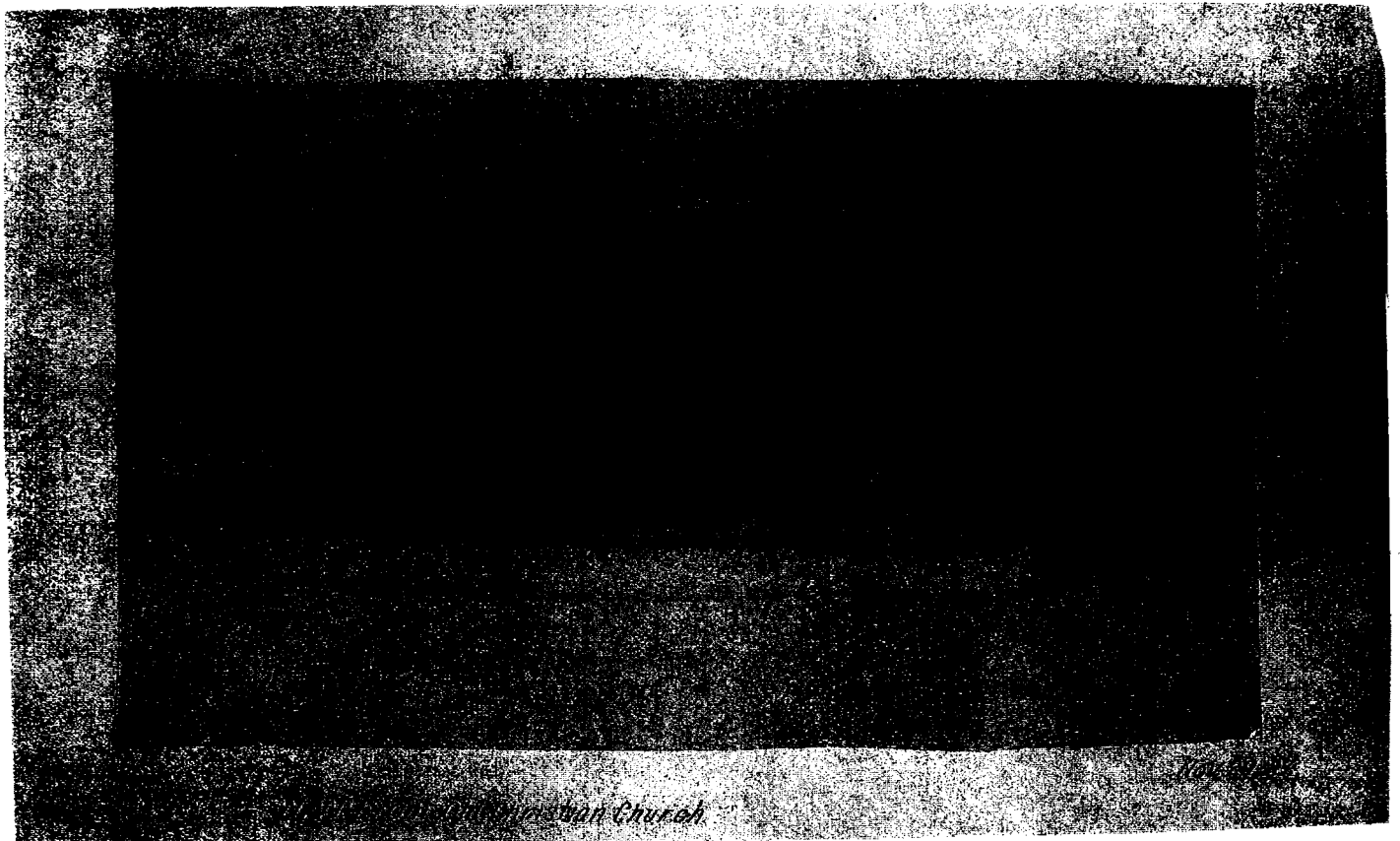
Community and family history are sometimes preserved in the most unusual ways. Recently, the Kenton County Public Library received a donation of three albums of black and white and hand-tinted photos that once belonged to the Ritchie family of Ludlow, Kentucky. Columbus, Ohio resident Donald Bogart came into possession of the albums a number of years ago. He had no connection to the family, however he found the images fascinating. From notations in the albums, Bogart knew the photographs had a Northern Kentucky connection. He decided to go online to see if he could find anything about the Ritchie family. His search led him to the Kenton County Public Library's web page.

The staff of the library had recently finished work on a web page detailing the history of Ludlow. On this site, Bogart discovered that the Ritchies were early influential residents of the town. This discovery led the Columbus resident to donate the three albums to the library.

## **The Ritchie Family**

The first Ritchie to live in the United States was Casper Ritchie Sr., a native of Switzerland who immigrated to the United States in 1834. His wife was Elizabeth Wasser Ritchie, a native of Scotland. The couple had two children, Casper Jr. and Jacques. By 1835, the family was residing in Cincinnati and Casper had found work as a machinist. The family quickly prospered in their newly adopted country.

The oldest Ritchie child, Casper Jr. did very well. He established several businesses in Cincinnati and soon accumulated a degree of wealth. Casper Ritchie Jr. wished to raise his family in a more rural climate than Cincinnati could offer. In 1860, he left the Mount Adams neighborhood of Cincinnati for Ludlow, Kentucky. In that same year the Ritchie home, at the northwest corner of Elm and Locust Streets, was completed at a cost of \$20,000.00. The two-story brick structure sported a small wrought iron porch covering the main entrance. Casper built a two-story porch across the rear of the home to catch the cool breezes from the Ohio River. Ritchie purchased a boat to commute between his businesses in Cincinnati and his Ludlow residence.



*Methodist Church*

✓ **KCHS REMINDERS** [For your refrigerator bulletin board]

**Next Programs**

**March 15, (Saturday)**

10<sup>th</sup> annual History Day, Northern Kentucky University. 8:00-9:00 am—table display setup. 9:00-10:00 am—registration (\$6.00 at the door) and visiting displays. Then an opening speaker followed by two sessions of concurrent workshops. Closing activities at 1:00 pm will include door prizes and an optional tour of the NKU archives.

**April 8 (Tuesday)**

Trinity Episcopal Church (4<sup>th</sup> & Madison Ave, Covington). 7 p.m., Joseph Gastright will show slides and discuss Sauerland in the hills of northwestern Germany. From Sauerland came original families to Covington's first German Catholic parish, Mother of God Church. Mr. Gastright will also give names of some of the local families and identify a great web site for doing genealogy in this area.

**May weekend event**

Gaines House picnic

**June weekend event**

Spring Grove Cemetery tour

**KENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
VOLUNTEERS JOB DESCRIPTIONS**

[Call, write, email or send in this sheet with your interest and we will contact you with details]

**CIRCULATION MANAGER**

Entering address changes and gift memberships, new and renewal memberships/NKH subscriptions as they are received. Estimated time involved is minimal—2 to 3 hours per month. Prepare at least one annual mailing notice to all expiring members with a follow-up in a reasonable time frame. Print out the appropriate mailing address labels for each mailing—usually in ZIP order for bulk mailing. Other volunteers will apply the address labels, fold and sort for mailing.

**MAILING VOLUNTEERS**

Help with KVCHS bulk mailings KCHS. These include the bi-monthly Bulletin mailed on the last week of February, April, June, August, October and December. Other mailings will include *Northern Kentucky Heritage* magazine mailed twice a year several subscription expiration notices. Each mailing takes 2-3 hours

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[To: Secretary, KCHS, P. O. Box 641, Covington, KY 41012-0641 email--jhboh @juno.com]

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

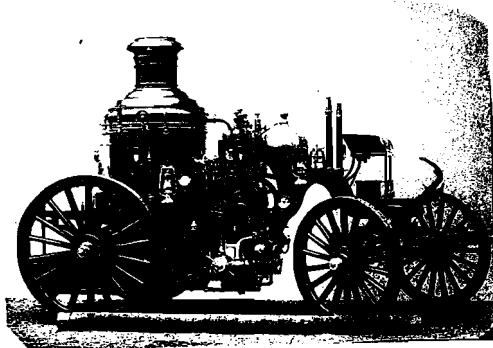
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Message \_\_\_\_\_

The Ritchie family was typical of those residing in the Ludlow area before the arrival of the Cincinnati Southern Railroad (Queen and Crescent RR). Many wealthy Cincinnatians built homes in Ludlow to get away from the overcrowded and unhealthy conditions of the city. The Ritchie family had two maids and a hired hand to take care of the needs of the family and the home. The family included Casper Ritchie Jr. and his wife Elizabeth Moore. They produced 10 known children.



The luxury of the Ritchie house was impressive. On the grounds was a brick two-story building that housed the stable, a place to store the carriages and a laundry. In 1864, Ritchie constructed a one-story addition to the house for his large book collection. One year later, a glass greenhouse was added to the property. For many years, Casper Ritchie Jr. hired a gardener to grow exotic plants for his household in this greenhouse.



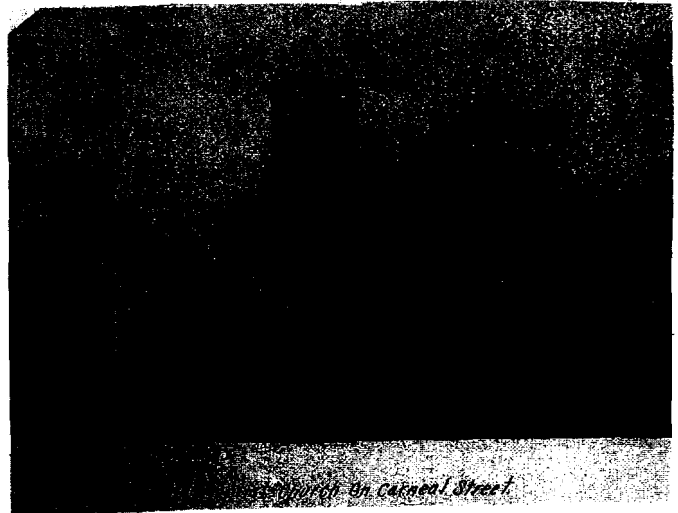
*North-East From Roof*

The Ritchie family was active in Ludlow community affairs for many years. Casper Ritchie Jr. was one of the charter members of the Ludlow Independent Fire Company and donated a considerable sum of money to purchase the first fire apparatus. Casper Ritchie III served for a number of years on the Ludlow City Council. Members of the family attended both the First Baptist Church and the First Presbyterian Church.



*Harvey, Glenn, Casper, Lily, Mary, Arnold, Lily, Mrs. Ramsey, Jesse, Harvey, Father, Casper, Louise*

The arrival of the Cincinnati Southern Railroad in the 1870s changed the sleepy well-to-do village of Ludlow forever. The railroad constructed a bridge across the Ohio River at Ludlow connecting the city to Cincinnati. This bridge allowed blue-collar workers to reside in Ludlow and work in the Queen City. The result was a large influx of German and Irish immigrants to Ludlow. The Ritchie home was soon surrounded by modest frame and brick residences but despite the changing environment, the Ritchies retained their grand home and grounds for another seven decades.



*View of Ludlow on Central Street*

Perhaps the most well known Ritchie was Edgar, son of Casper and Glenna Ritchie. During the First World War, Ritchie entered the United States Army and became a First Lieutenant in the 355<sup>th</sup> Infantry and a graduate of Fort Benjamin Harrison Officer Training School. Ritchie was killed in action on September 15, 1918 in Beney, France. He was the first of seven Ludlow residents to make the supreme sacrifice during the Great War. When the Ludlow branch of the American Legion, established in 1919, was named for Edgar B. Ritchie. The Post remained active until the late 1960s.



Christmas Day. Wed. Dec. 25-01.

The Ritchie home remained in the family until the mid 1940s. Luly Ritchie was the last family member to occupy the home, dying in 1943. The next owner was Mr. and Mrs. George T. McCauley. George McCauley was a chiropractor. In 1958, the home and six additional pieces of property were purchased for \$84,000.00. The buildings, including the Ritchie home, were demolished and a Kroger grocery store and parking lot were constructed on the site. Today, convenience stores occupy the site.

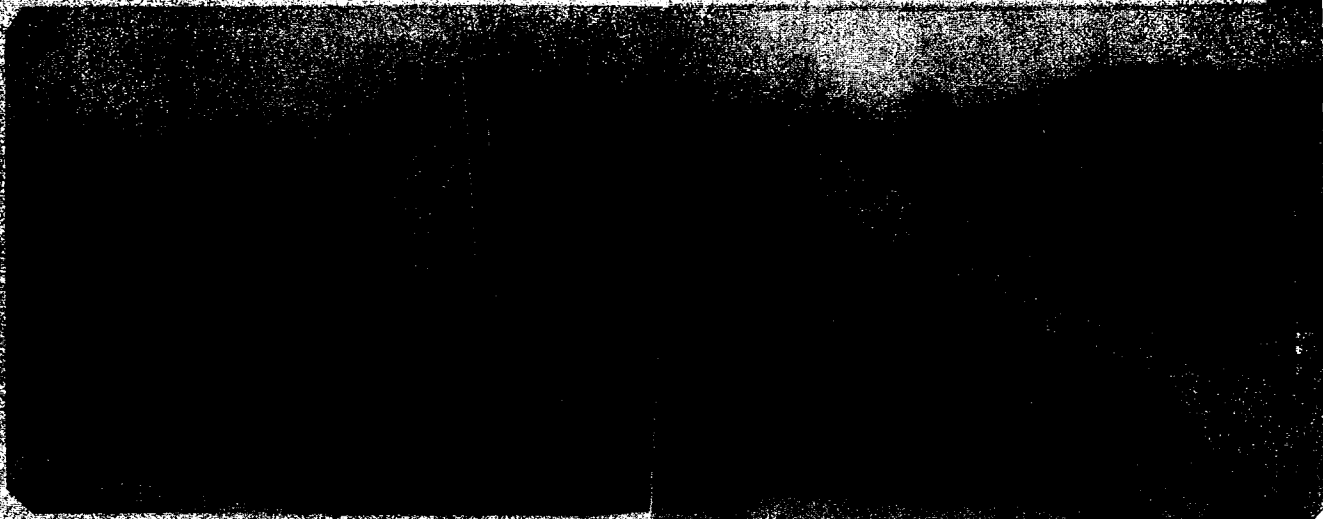
### Album's Contents

The Ritchie family albums contain a treasure trove of information concerning the City of Ludlow's past. The albums contain over 200 photographs of the Ritchie family, the beautiful Ritchie home, the family greenhouse and spacious grounds. Other photographs depict the old Ludlow Public School, the construction of Ludlow's First Christian Church, the laying of the cornerstone of the old Masonic Temple, the railroad yards, and the First Baptist Church.

### Sources

*Paul Tenkotte, Rival Cities to Suburbs, University of Cincinnati Dissertation, 1989, Vol. I, pp. 314-336 (KCPL); News Enterprise, July 31, 1958, p. 1.; John Hunnicutt, History of the City of Ludlow; Ludlow File at the Kenton County Public Library; United States Federal Census; Kentucky Death Certificates; Spring Grove Cemetery Records, Cincinnati, Ohio.*

Robert D. Ritchie



McKinley & Hobart's Election

From Arnold's Atlas. Nov 6 '96

A view of Elm Street from the west. The Ritchie home is on the left side. The Christian Church stands on the right. The railroad tracks pass below the hill behind the church



A view of Ludlow "from the hill" below Devou Park and West Covington. It shows Elm Street, the main thoroughway east-west. The Christian church stands out near the middle. The Cincinnati Southern Railroad tracks are in foreground. The railroad through Ludlow was constructed in the 1870s



*Building new shops at Ludlow.*





Kenton County Historical Society  
P. O. Box 641  
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Dedicated to preserving our heritage as the "Gateway to the South"

# KENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**Bulletin**

**March/April 2003**



**INSIDE:**

**Battery Hooper**

**Ludlow's Richie Family**