

BULLETIN

of the

Kenton County Historical Society

organized in 1977; non-profit member,
Historical Confederation of Kentucky,
Publisher of the new regional magazine,
Northern Kentucky Heritage



INSIDE SEE:

**HISTORY OF COVINGTON
BY O.J. WIGGINS
(4th in as series)**

May 1994

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

May 1994

PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

On Tuesday, May 10, at 7:00 PM, at the Kenton County Public Library (Erlanger Branch), Mr. L.K. Patton will speak about:

KENTUCKY LANDMARKS, LEGENDS, AND LORE.

Mr. Patton will recall folklore and legends, and odd facts and rare documents about the Commonwealth. A Ft. Thomas, KY resident, Mr. Patton is a commercial art teacher and past recipient of an Ohio Teacher Of The Year Award. He is a member of the Kentucky Civil War Roundtable, as well as of the Filson Club, Christopher Gist Society, and Kentucky Historical Society. Mr. Patton is founder of the Kentucky Covered Bridge Association.

Rare documents will be on display from his personal collection.

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

Tuesday Evening
May 10, 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 is scheduled for this Spring. 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

Senior citizen and student subscription with membership in KCSH - \$20.00

Subscription without membership - \$20.00

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

THE HISTORY OF COVINGTON

By O. J. Wiggins

DAILY COMMONWEALTH

April 26, 1884

The history of Covington would not be complete without a short sketch of General Leonard Covington to whose name the city was named, and of Simon Kenton after whom the county was named, and who were among the most prominent and respected men of their times.

GENERAL COVINGTON

Drakes' Dictionary of American Biography gives the following account of Gen. Covington: "Leonard Covington, Brig. Gen. U.S.A., was born in Aquasco, Prince George County, Maryland, October 30, 1768; died at French Mills, November 14, 1813. (1) He received from Washington, March 14, 1792, commission as Lieutenant of Dragoons, joined the army under General Wayne, distinguished himself at Fort Recovery and the Battle of Miami; was honorably mentioned in Wayne's official report (2); was promoted to rank of Captain in July, 1794, and retired to the pursuit of Agriculture. Many years a member of the legislature of Maryland; was a member of Congress from 1805 to 1807 (3); was appointed in 1809 Lieutenant Colonel of a regiment of cavalry. In August, 1813, he was appointed Brigadier General and ordered to the northern frontier. At the battle of Chrysler's Fields he received a mortal wound, and died two days later. He had a reputation as one of the best officers in the service" (4).

SIMON KENTON

He was born in Fauquier county, Virginia, on the 13th day of April, 1755. His father was a native of Ireland and his mother was of Scottish parentage. Their straightened circumstances deprived their children of the advantages of early education; but they possessed what was of greater value in that early day--health of mind and body, and a perfect knowledge of woodcraft(5).

When Simon was about 16 years of age a friend or companion named William Veach (Leachman) became his successful rival in a love affair, and the discarded lover, mad with chagrin and disappointment, attended the wedding unbid, and pushed himself between the bride and groom while they were conversing, whereupon Veach, aided by his brothers, roughly ejected Simon from the house. Not long afterwards Kenton and Veach meeting alone, the former gave Veach a terrible beating, and, supposing him dead, fled in consternation and remorse to the wilderness. He went to Ise's (Ice's) Ford on the Cheat River, a branch of the Monongahela, and after working long enough to secure a rifle, travelled with a party to Fort Pitt.

In 1771 he made the acquaintance of George Yeager and John Strader. From the former he first heard of the luxuriant cane land called by the Indians Kaintuck-ee and in company with these two he started down

the Ohio to see this land. They went as far as the Kentucky River and back to Big Kanawha, where they went into camp until 1773, when Yeager was killed by the Indians and the other two escaped. After enduring many great privations, they reached a place of safety(6).

In 1773-4 he served against the Indians under Dunmore, and while hunting and trapping on the Big Sandy, in company with Thomas Williams, in 1775, he concluded to again look for Kain-tuck-ee.

Starting down the Ohio River in their canoe, Kenton and Williams put in for the night at the mouth of Cabin Creek, about eight miles above Maysville. Next morning they discovered the rich soil and the abundant growth of the cane land. Overjoyed at their good fortune, the hardy pioneers determined to settle there and selecting a site, established a camp and cleared ground for planting about a mile from the present town of Washington in Mason County.

In 1776 the Indians became troublesome and broke up Kenton's camp, sending him and his companions into McClellan's fort, now Georgetown. Kenton, going to Booneborough to warn the inmates, was appointed a spy by Daniel Boone, and while serving under that noted leader was so fortunate as to save Boone's life. In a sortie against the savages, Boone's leg was broken, and an Indian was in the act of scalping him when Kenton shot the red man and carried his gallant leader into the fort.

Kenton was prominent and active against the Indians until September, 1778, when he was captured while running off horses from the Indian village of Chillicothe. His captors were greatly enraged, and they inflicted upon their prisoner unutterable cruelties. He was made to run the gauntlet eight times, and three times tied to a stake to be burned. He was beaten and otherwise mistreated for eight months, when through the intercession of Logan, the celebrated chieftain, he was turned over to a Canadian trader named Druyer (Drouillard), as a prisoner of War. Kenton was by this trader taken to the British garrison at Detroit, from whence he escaped with two others, with the contrivance of a Mrs. Harvey (Mrs. Edgar), a trader's wife. Upon reaching Louisville, which they did after many hardships, Kenton set out to join forces under General Clark. He engaged vigorously in active warfare against the Indians, and in 1782 he commanded a company in this army that rendezvoused at Covington to proceed against the Indian villages in Ohio (7).

Upon the disbanding of the volunteers he settled his lands on Salt River, and soon had quite a settlement around him. He returned to his old home in Virginia in 1783 to bring his father to Kentucky and was overjoyed to find his old rival, Veach, alive and well.

On the way back, death deprived him of a father, and the remains were buried at Redstone(8). The rest of the family reached his settlement in safety. In 1786 Kenton parted with 1000 acres to Arthur Fox and William Wood, who laid out thereon the present town of Washington Ky.

The Indians made their last hostile incursion into Kentucky in 1793, when Kenton waylaid them and killed six of their number. After this Kentucky, which had been the dark and bloody ground of Indian warfare for

over twenty years, enjoyed a period of tranquility. Kenton had secured many large and valuable tracts of land, but he was no match for the thrifty traveler of civilization, and as emigrants continued to pour into this beautiful land of the cane he lost his property acre by acre and he was imprisoned for debt, for nearly a year on the spot where he made his first settlement.

In 1799 he moved to Urbana, Ohio a broken and beggared man (9). In 1805 he was elected brigadier general in the Ohio militia, and in 1810 enrolled himself among the church militant of the Methodist faith. In 1813 he took part in the battle of the Thames under Gen. Shelby (10). In 1820 he moved to the Mad River, and in 1824, at the age of seventy, he set out for Frankfort to petition the legislature to release the mountain lands, that had been seized for taxes. In Frankfort he was treated with every mark of esteem and respect. He was taken to the capital and seated in the Speaker's chair amidst the plaudits of his enthusiastic countrymen. His lands were released and soon after Congress granted him a pension of \$250 (\$240) per year. He returned to his peaceful home in Ohio (11), where he lived to the age of eighty-one, dying April 29, 1836(12).

Historians who have mentioned this good and brave man, bear the highest testimony to the simplicity of his life, the benevolence of his character, and the unselfishness of his actions, and they unite in urging upon Kentucky, the common debt of gratitude that should grant a resting place within her borders to this pioneer of civilization.

Memories of SIMON KENTON

There is still standing a beech tree in Pendleton Co., across the Licking from Benton Station, that bears the almost obliterated inscription, "Simon Kenton 1793" and the Simon Kenton Pioneer Association has in its possession two specimens of the pioneer's signature in the following documents:

Articles of agreement entered into this 31st of July, 1787 between Meredith Helm and Simon Kenton of the one part, and Richard Taylor of the other part; witnessed that the sd Helm and Kenton have undertaken to locate for sd Taylor three thousand acres of land by virtue of military warrants in that tract of country reserved by the State of Virginia for the military on the northwest side of the Ohio, and do oblige themselves to show the beginnings of the first locations and to direct the surveys, and in case the said locations or any part thereof when run out should interfere with prior claims, then to lay or cause them to be laid on other lands vacant. The said Taylor is to be at the whole expense in surveying and obtaining legal titles to sd lands, after which we, said Helm and Kenton, are to be permitted to chain out one thousand acres, being one survey, and to take therefrom three hundred and thirty three and one-third acres, which is to be to them a full compensation for their trouble of locating and directing. The survey of the three thousand acres aforesaid, which said three hundred and thirty-three and one-third, the said Taylor obliges himself, his heirs, &c., to make legal title thereto, as soon as he obtains patents himself.

P. S. The 333 1/3 acres being the one-third of one thousand acres land is to be divided according to quality and quantity.

Meredith Helm
Simon Kenton
Richard Taylor

Attest,
Edmund Lyle

On the back of the document are the following endorsements;

For value received I assign my part of the within bond to Meredith Helm, as witnesses my hand or seal this 10th day of November 1793.

Attest, Simon Kenton
John Gutridge

N.B. (This is an endorsement of some kind by Meredith Helm, but so worn by time and careless handling as to become almost obliterated --Ed.)

For value received I assign unto Simon Kenton the part of land as assigned unto him in the within agreement consisting of one equal half of the third part of the thousand acres, as witness my hand this 17th day of

April 1800. M. Helm

Attest,
John Kenton

For value received I assign my part of the within land unto Adam Penuwit to be considered as part of an offset against a bond of mine in his possession for land in Kennedies Bottom, the two to be valued by disinterested men chosen by the parties, the remainder to be discharged in the land out of Captain George's survey on Paint Creek (13), when a division takes place, and in case said Kenton can not make said land he is to pay up on some other lands as witness my hand this 17th of April 1800 (13).

Attest,
M. Helm
John Kenton

N B. This land mentioned to be considered 175 acres in the upper and lower of Kennedies Bottom.

The second document reads as follows:

Received September 24th, 1806 of M. Helm, secr'y \$6.60 for surveying and chain carrying of eight hundred and eight acres of land, being part of a warrant of 2,666 2/3 acres in the name of Strowder settled by me.

Simon Kenton

Attest, M. Helm.

ENDNOTES

1. Aquasco is in southern Maryland. Prince Georges County Maryland is immediately east and south of the District of Columbia. French Mills was in New York; in 1820 Covington's remains were relocated to Sackets harbor, Jefferson County, New York, at the eastern shore of Lake Ontario; his own place of burial is also called Mount Covington (Allen Webb Smith, Beginning at "The Point", A Documented History of Northern Kentucky and Environs, the Town of Covington in Particular, 1751-1834, printed locally, 1977.
2. 1792-1795, Covington distinguished himself against Native American forces. Covington, Indiana is named in his honor for his strategic efforts along the Wabash river; located at the Stillwater river 15 miles east of Greenville, Covington, Ohio, in Miami county, honors his distinguished military actions as subordinate to General Anthony Wayne, including in the battle of Fallen Timbers, August 20, 1794. The treaty of Greenville of 1795 signified the end of this period of early Indian wars (Leonard Jamison, Akron, Ohio, "Another View," unpublished papers in Covington Library). In the summer of 1793 Wayne's forces trained at Cincinnati. "In order to train under the worst conditions possible he (Wayne) sent four companies of Light Dragoons across the Ohio to a wooded camp just west of the Point, there to ride and charge through the rough country of that vicinity. Lieutenant Covington was in charge of one of the units--this was the only time Covington (was) at the Point...later named Covington in his honor." (Smith).
3. In 1790-1792, at Philadelphia "he studied law for several months, served as a casual aid to Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson." In 1787 the Covington family in Maryland was one of the several prominent families there supporting the new federal constitution and Bill of Rights. During his political career Covington was known as a Jeffersonian Republican. From a Maryland agricultural family, Covington and his brother, Alexander, also acquired "farming interests" "north of Monticello," in Rappahannock county, Virginia where is also found the Covington River (Jamison). Covington was a man well educated for his time. A distinguished military leader, "he was given short biographies in some older Encyclopedias of American Biography" (Charles S. Adams, "General Leonard Covington," Christopher Gist Papers).
4. At the end of 1808 danger of war with England was increasing. Seeing the need to strengthen the Federal military forces, in 1809 Jefferson appointed Covington Lieutenant Colonel, Light Dragoons, then the "only regiment of Dragoons in the American army." Covington departed from the vicinity of a later-named Covington, Virginia to inspect and advise regarding the various frontier forts in Virginia, later Newport, Kentucky and down river the forts and trading posts in Tennessee, a state where Covington, Tennessee was later named in his honor. In January, 1810 he arrived at the seat of Mississippi territorial government and continued training new troops and other efforts to protect the Natchez trace area. In June 1810 he took charge of the Dragoons and command of Ft. Adams located some 20 miles south. In October, 1810, after a revolt against the declining Spanish authority, the U. S. assumed control and in December Covington's forces occupied a section "west of the Pearl river," Baton Rouge and vicinity, wherein was later located Covington, Louisiana. In March 1811 Covington was assigned to command a garrison at Ft. Stoddard on the Alabama river. There in response to the continued Spanish threat he further enhanced American military strength with training and maneuvers, thereby maintaining peace through the winter of 1811-1812. Covington, Georgia was later established along the mail route that provided communications for the fort. After war was declared with England Covington, in September, 1812, received new assignments. In March 1813 his forces took possession of territory west of the Perdido river including the fortress and town of Mobile. After a Spanish surrender in April, 1813, and with the territory secured for the time being, Covington was ordered north. Later Covington county, Alabama and Covington county, Mississippi were named in his honor (Jamison). During his trip north Covington again inspected frontier Army and trading posts. Back in Virginia he visited with Jefferson. After hurried consultations in Washington and elsewhere, Covington departed, and on July 28, 1813, arrived at Sackets Harbor. On August 1 he was promoted to Brigadier General. Two weeks after the Battle of the Thames Covington's force embarked from near Sackets harbor (Jamison). Covington was wounded in a field on Chrysler's farm located north of the St. Lawrence river and died later (Adams).
5. Fauquier county is in northern central Virginia in a westward line from of Prince Georges, Maryland.
6. "1771. Simon Kenton made his debut in what was to be his own name-county; he and John Strader with George Yeager, stopped here (at the Licking river) returning from the Falls of the

Ohio..." (Smith).

7. "May-June 1779. Here rendezvoused the Kentuckians when they obeyed the summons of Col. John Bowman, County Lieutenant of Kentucky County, Virginia, gathering with their rations of parched corn and public beef, about three hundred strong under Captain Benjamin Logan, Josiah Harlan, Levi Todd and John Holder. They camped one night on the Banklick Creek and went down to the mouth of the Licking where Major George Michael Bedinger was appointed adjutant; thence they crossed the Ohio and proceeded against the hostile Shawnees and the Town of Chillicothe. After the fighting they returned to the site of Covington..." (Smith), Bedinger was patriarch of Northern Kentucky's Bedinger family. Major Bedinger's son, Dr. Benjamin F. Bedinger (1797-1871), by 1830 at "the Point" had one of the few brick houses in Covington, located at the southeast corner of Front and Garrard streets, in the same block as the present Kennedy-Southgate house (Smith). Indeed his family and Kennedy family became related by marriage (Perrin; 1877 atlas). Dr. Bedinger soon gave up medicine for farming (obituary, C. J. 9-16-1871). Dr. Bedinger's son, also named George M. (1826-1906), grew up in rural Kenton county; in 1850 he married Hannah Flemming, daughter of Thomas and Diana Kennedy Flemming; in 1867 he moved to Erlanger where he was a prominent lumber and tobacco dealer; he continued to farm until 1883 (W.H. Perrin et al, Kentucky, a History of the State, vol. 7, 1887). Dr. Bedinger purchased the home of the pioneer, Bartlett Graves, on present-day Commonwealth avenue, Erlanger, Kentucky, which his son, George M. Bedinger soon occupied, and which burned in 1895 (Jim Reis, K. P., 5-17-93). In 1779 Simon Kenton, having been transferred from the Indian captivity to British incarceration escaped and made his way to Louisville in July, 1779 after much hardship. Soon he visited Clark at Vincennes. (Lewis Collins, History of Kentucky, revised by Richard Collins, 1874, vol. II). In August 1780 George Rogers Clark, and a thousand men gathered at "the Point" before proceeding against the Shawnese villages at Piqua and Miami (Smith). Kenton led a company of Kentuckians from Harrod's station. Chillicothe, Pickaway, and other towns and crops were burned (Collins). In the Fall of 1782 Kenton commanded a company under Clark in retaliation for losses at the Battle of Blue Licks (Collins). In November 1782 on returning from their invasion of Shawnese villages, Clark's men honored Captain Victor McCracken who had been carried back on a stretcher, and when dying had asked to be buried in Kentucky. In addition, they agreed to hold a commemorative reunion at the mouth of the Licking in 50 years (Smith). The Indians were crippled by Clark's invasion. In 1787 Kenton was involved in another campaign which burned Chillicothe. A Major in Wayne's's army, Kenton, nevertheless, was not at the Battle of Fallen Timbers (Collins). This was due to illness (Jahns).

8. The Salt river northwest from Harrodsburg, empties into the Ohio down river from Louisville. Redstone (Brownsville), about three miles south of Pittsburgh on the Monongahela river, was a "most convenient embarkation point" during high water for settlers going down from the upper Ohio river (Reginald Horsman, The Frontier in the Formative Years, 1783-1815. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston).

9. Kenton and family and other Kentuckians first settled near Buck creek which empties into the Mad river. Here Kenton started a store and planned a mill on the creek, and here his second wife Elizabeth named Springfield which is 12 miles south of Urbana. Not far away in the valley at New Pickaway Town, Kenton "the condemned man" had run the gauntlet. While Covington, Ohio in Miami county is located on the Stillwater river which enters the Great Miami from the northwest, Urbana, Ohio in Champaign county is at the Mad river which flows from the northeast, past Urbana and Springfield and enters the Great Miami, also at Dayton, Ohio. From Judge Symmes Kenton once acquired 1000 acres, located "north of" Buck creek, which did not carry a clear title from Symmes, and which Kenton eventually lost to his partner. Kenton was illiterate, and quite careless with his own land transactions, even though he craved very much to achieve social recognition through ownership of large tracts. Despite losing so much of his own land, and even having to relocate, Kenton had vast knowledge, keen memory, and many acquaintances, which still provided in his declining years opportunities for various speculations as well as requests to testify even for a fee in court and elsewhere regarding frontier land titles.

10. Urbana was a training and departure point for military forces, including Governor Shelby and his Kentuckians, in the War of 1812. Providing shelter from the Indians as well, Urbana became a boom town (Patricia Jahns, The Violent Years. Simon Kenton and the Ohio-Kentucky Frontier, New York: Hastings House, 1962). "In 1813 the gallant old man joined the Kentucky troops under Governor Shelby....and was in the battle of the Thames. This was his last battle..."(Collins).

11. In November 4, 1832 the reunion, vowed in 1782 by Clark's men, took place near the mouth

of the Licking river. Kenton, the "most prominent of the survivors," since Boone and Clark and many others were dead, on suggestion from friends, Kenton sent from his home at Urbana an "Address to the Citizens of the Western Country," inviting all veterans of the Indian wars and the War of 1812 to participate in the celebration.

Unfortunately, Asiatic cholera suddenly attacked Cincinnati. Yet "many" came. However, "Simon Kenton was taken sick at the house of Mr. Doniphan, in Clermont County, Ohio, while on the way to Covington, and prevented from attending" (Smith).

12. Kenton died near where he came close to being tortured to death 58 year years before (Collins). First buried "near the headwaters" of the Mad river, in 1884 his remains were relocated to Oakdale cemetery, Urbana, Ohio, where he is honored with a nice monument (Smith).

13. Paint creek flows into the Scioto river near Chillicothe, Ross county, Ohio. Kenton also became interested in land in Missouri where Daniel Boone had moved (Jahns).

(Transcribed by Joe Gastright; footnotes by John Boh)



STATUE OF SIMON KENTON
George Rogers Clark Park
Riverside Drive and Garrard Street

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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The City of Covington
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An archaeological investigation of nineteenth century Covington

Carnegie Arts Center
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May 6 - May 28, 1994
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Saturday 12:00-4:00

Sponsored by
The City of Covington
Behringer-Crawford Museum
Northern Kentucky Arts Council

Kenton County Public Library
Kentucky Heritage Council
R.G. Archaeological Services

Campbell County's 200th Anniversary

Campbell County is celebrating its 200th anniversary in 1991 and to kick-off that observance the Campbell County Historical and Genealogical Society has published the first comprehensive history of the county.

The book includes 160 pages of stories, pictures and maps of the people, places and events that have made Campbell County such a historic area.

To mark the publishing of the county history the historical society sponsored a reception from 6 PM to 8 PM Tuesday, Nov. 23 in the society's office on the second floor of the Campbell County Courthouse on Main Street in Alexandria.

The historical society had the Campbell County history books available for purchase at the reception and all eight authors of the county history were expected at the reception to answer questions about the research and to personally autograph copies of the book.

The county history book cost \$12 if bought in person or \$15 by mail. The book also is sold during regular business hours at the three branches of the Campbell County Public Library - which are in Newport, Ft. Thomas,

History of Grant County Kentucky Published in 1993 by The Grant County Historical Society

A fascinating collection of articles about the people of Grant County Kentucky and the surrounding area. The articles are written by several serious amateur historians and genealogists whose roots go back to the earliest settlement of this area.

There are over 10,000 places and names alphabetically indexed in the last 45 pages of this handsome 596 page hardbound book. Only 1500 copies were printed and nearly 1000 of those have already sold. If your ancestors passed through the Northern Kentucky area this book is a serious part of your history.

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