



Bulletin of the Kenton County Historical Society

Website: www.kentoncountyhistoricalsociety.org Email: info@kentoncountyhistoricalsociety.org
P.O. Box 641, Covington, Kentucky 41012-0641 (859) 491-4003

May / June

2015



**The Rolling Hills of Forest Lawn, Erlanger:
From Slave Plantation
to Upscale Restaurant to a Lovely Cemetery**

Theodore F. Hallam: Erlanger Pioneer

Linden Grove: Covington's "Central Park?"

The Rolling Hills of Forest Lawn, Erlanger

From Slave Plantation to Upscale Restaurant to a Lovely Cemetery

Karl J. Lietzenmayer

If it weren't for signs identifying Forest Lawn Memorial Park, anyone entering its gates from Dixie Highway [US 25/42] would be hard pressed to know they were entering a cemetery. No grave markers are visible from the highway – only gently rolling hills. When one looks closer, the markers are visible, as flat stones even with the ground. Forest Lawn's garden look seemed unusual to people when first initiated in 1935, but the site had an extensive and varied history long before it became a cemetery.

In 1831, Thomas Buckner purchased 550 acres from Robert Johnson and John D. Watkins, the original owners of the Virginia land grant. Buckner built a large home known as Beechwood on the rear of his property and operated it as a slave plantation. Buckner was from an early Kentucky family, related to Simon Bolivar Buckner, Confederate officer and a post-Civil War Kentucky Governor. Elsmere's Buckner Street commemorates this early resident.

After Thomas' death, his son Hubbard sold the property to Caleb Stone Manly in 1851. The history of Forest Lawn actually begins with Dr. Manly. A physician, Dr. Manly moved to this area about 1850 from the Deep South to be near his daughter, who was attending school in Cincinnati. He formed a practice in Covington with an office on the north side of 11th Street between Russell and Washington. Manly liked the area so much, he purchased Buckner's plantation. He chose a spot near the Covington-Lexington Turnpike [Dixie Highway] on which to build a large Federal-style mansion.

Dr. Manly had a strong interest in botany and introduced many new trees and plants to his farm. The cypress trees still growing around the lake in front of the property are reminders of his work. While Manly owned the property for only eight years, Erlanger residents will forever enjoy the improve-

ments he made. Manly sold the property to James P. Garvey in 1858 and moved to Covington. In those days, the commute to Covington from such a distance as Erlanger was a significant journey and since he was a physician, the property may have become burdensome in his advancing years. Manly died in February, 1866.

James Garvey, of Cincinnati purchased several additional parcels of land which connected to the Manly property. Courthouse records show a deed transfer in September 1864 to Garvey from an Asabel Hathaway. Garvey made his fortune in tobacco and probably bought the property for a summer residence. He was wealthy enough to spend his summers at his Erlanger estate and the winters in Florida. Garvey made several trips to Florida for health reasons, as he became an invalid for the last eight years of his life.

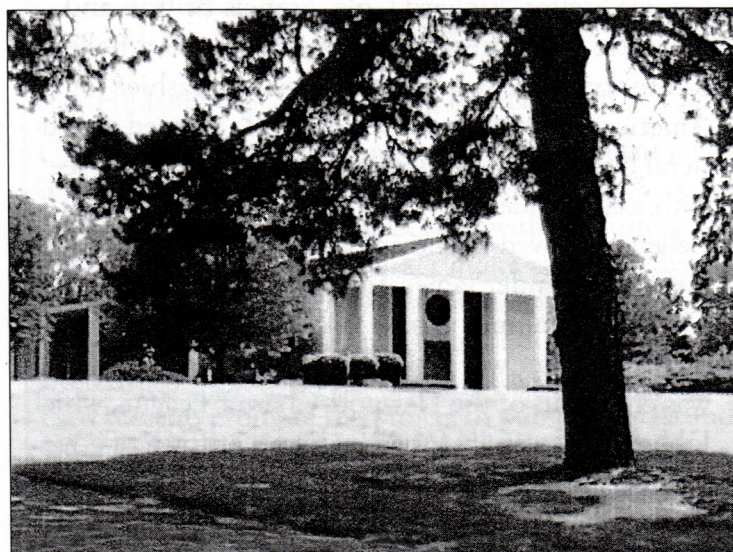
After the Southern Railroad opened in 1877, Garvey opened a lumberyard nearby. He and his partner, Dr. Charles Judkins, organized the Erlanger Land Syndicate to develop the area. Much of Erlanger was developed by this firm. Garvey died in March 1896 (age 78) at the home of one of his sons in Anderson, Indiana. Garvey's sons, Clayton and Clifford, owned the American Wire Nail Company in Covington and later moved the business and themselves to Anderson, Indiana. Two sons, Edgar and Clarence, resided in Erlanger; another, William, was an orange grower in Lee County, Florida. A sixth son, Wallace, became a Chicago real estate broker. Garvey Avenue in Erlanger commemorates this family.

The family sold the estate to Anna Elizabeth Bedinger in 1900 for about \$18,000. Elsmere's Bedinger Avenue commemorates her. The house remained Bedinger home until 1913, when the property again changed hands – to Covington-born Col. Thomas Richard Cody in March 1865.



Cody was a showman and restaurant owner who operated concessions at Latonia Race Track and the Cincinnati Zoo. He had many friends in high places and his restaurants were noted as elaborate, with fine china, furniture and silverware. His many ventures included a restaurant he opened in 1908 at 3rd and Court Streets in Covington. The restaurant was extremely elaborate with a large basement for storage of wine, beer and other items; stained glass windows and fine fixtures adorning the main dining area. A large banquet hall occupied the second floor.

Cody moved the restaurant to the Erlanger right after purchase; many of his Covington clientele followed. Most came for the food, which included his personal burgoo recipe and mint juleps; many others came for the music. Cody played in a quartet billed as "Cody, Aggleston, Becker and Heile." A typical day's events included his famous burgoo lunch, baseball games and horseshoe tournaments,



Top: Winter scene of the beautiful lake at the front of the Forest Lawn property.

Bottom: View of the cemetery's mausoleum.

On the cover: Present-day view of Forest Lawn Memorial Park from Dixie Highway

Photos courtesy: Forest Lawn Cemetery

and a chicken dinner. Other days there were magicians, baby shows, barbecues and music.

In January 1926, the Covington Elks honored Cody as its most outstanding member. Former U.S. Attorney Thomas Slattery served as toastmaster for the ceremonies. Some of the others who “roasted” Cody at the dinner were Kenton County Circuit Judge Frank Tracy, Kenton County Attorney Orie Ware and David Richards, exalted ruler of the Newport Elks. A pop band led by Harvey Brownfield played as well as 20 pieces from the Cincinnati Symphony, providing classical pieces.

Cody operated the restaurant at the Erlanger estate into the mid-1930s. When Cody advertised the property for sale, there were rumors that a nursery or new race track would be constructed. When the nurseryman backed out, Cody hired Stevens Blakely to file suit against him, but the suit was quickly dropped when a group of investors led by Newport funeral director George Stetter acquired the property in 1935. Cody died the next year, age 71.

The new venture took the name now known as Forest Lawn Memorial Park to be organized into a cemetery. The incorporators were: A. L. Heger, George Stetter, Richard Cole, Francis Britton and Margaret Ann Heister. George Stetter was a Bellevue, Kentucky native, who first worked as a cashier for American Express in Cincinnati. He learned the funeral business in 1910 after becoming an employee with Ben Vonderhaar. Vonderhaar, who lived in Bellevue, moved his business to Newport in 1919 in Newport founder James Taylor’s former mansion. The funeral home became known as Vonderhaar and Stetter. Stetter was active in Newport politics, and was chairman of the Newport Charter League, which lobbied successfully for a city manager form of government. He was chair of the committee which chose the first Newport city manager. Stetter labored tirelessly to “clean-up” Newport’s mob connections. He died in February 1950, age 71 and, of course, is buried at Forest Lawn.

Before the proposed cemetery could be established, much work on the property was required. The old slave houses from the Buckner days still stood



Interior of the Forest Lawn Mausoleum

Courtesy: Forest Lawn Memorial Park

and had to be razed as well as old roads replaced. The first burials occurred in January 1937. Meanwhile, project backers strove to explain the concept of a “memorial park.”

Community sunrise services at Easter, now an annual event, were first held at Forest Lawn in 1942. A mausoleum was built in 1989 and opened for burials in 1991. The memorial park covers about 70 acres; the front 40 are in Erlanger and the back 30 wrap around the shopping complex on Dixie Highway within Edgewood. Initially, an Erlanger ordinance prevented burials within the city. As a result, early burials were made on cemetery property outside Erlanger.

More than 10,000 burials have taken place at Forest Lawn on 43 acres of the property. Among those buried are singer Kenny Price from the old “Hee Haw” TV show; politician Judson Lincoln Newhall, US Representative from Kentucky’s 6th District and former director of music at Covington’s Holmes High School; and Ralph Fulton, namesake of the Ralph Fulton Veterans of Foreign Wars Post in Elsmere. The VFW Post sponsors an annual Memorial Day parade which ends with services at Forest Lawn.

James S. Owen, George Stetter’s grandson, sold the cemetery to StoneMor Partners, LP in 2008. He and his wife no longer reside in Kentucky. According to the StoneMor web site, the company man-



Winter view of the original home, now the general offices of Forest Lawn Memorial Park

Courtesy: Forest Lawn Memorial Park

ages 303 cemeteries and 98 funeral homes throughout 28 states and Puerto Rico from their home office in Levittown, Pennsylvania. Their stock is traded on the New York Exchange and is currently valued at about \$28 per share. Lawrence Miller is the CEO.

The original home is now used as cemetery offices and at present is in need of some repair and remodeling. The cemetery intends to keep this historic residence intact as much as possible so that it will continue to enhance the charm and serenity of the Forest Lawn Memorial Park.

References

Wayne Onkst, *From Buffalo Trails to the 21st century: A Centennial History of Erlanger, Kentucky*.

Jim Reis, *Pieces of the Past*, Kentucky Post

StoneMor Partners web site

Interviews (March 2015) with Laura Miles, Family Service Advisor, Forest Lawn Memorial Park

Letter to the Editor

Re: "Hildenbrand", *The Bulletin* (March/April 2015).

Once again, Don Tolzmann has done an excellent job in tracing the career and accomplishments of one of the civil engineers closely associated with the history of the Roebling Bridge. Two other interesting facts that he might have included: 1) John Roebling had Hildenbrand prepare attractive renderings of the proposed Brooklyn Bridge, perhaps as early as 1867. Roebling used these to promote the project to public officials and potential investors. 2) Hildenbrand was also the project engineer for the Pike's Peak Cog Railroad. It was completed in 1891 and continues in service today. It is the highest railroad in the U.S., and the highest cog railway in the world.

Correction to the above article:

In the photo on page three, the person on the RIGHT is Wilhelm Hildenbrand and the person on the LEFT is Charles Roebling,

Theodore F. Hallam: Erlanger Pioneer

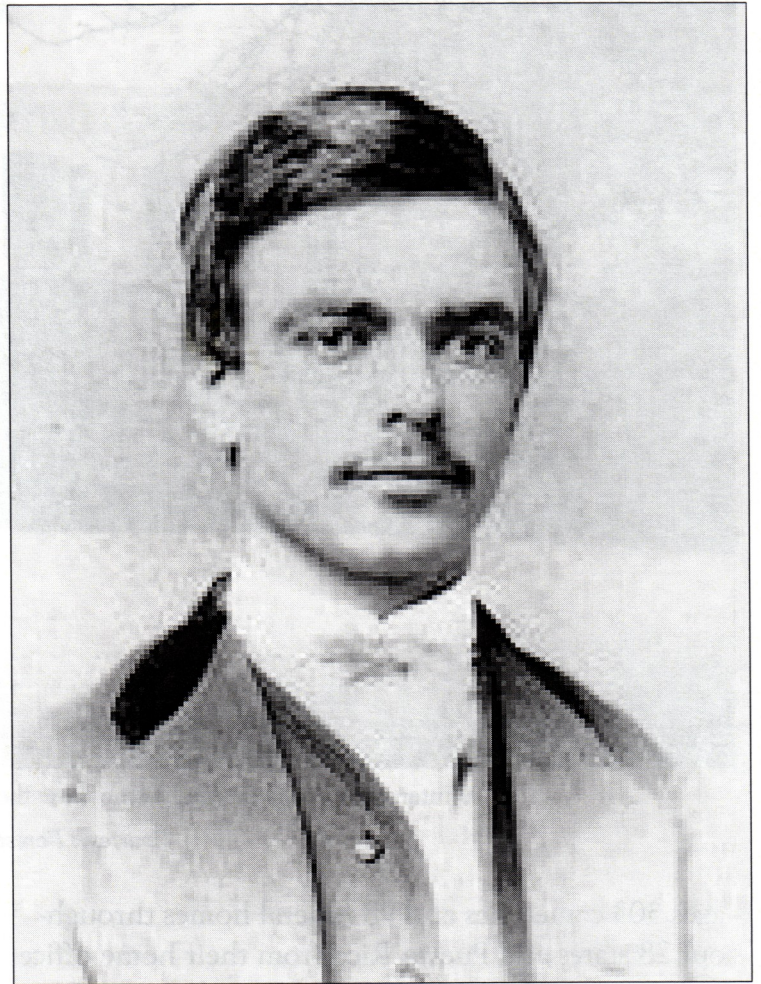
Patricia A. Hahn

In late 1888, a large barbecue was held in a field west of Graves Avenue by the Democratic Party, in honor of Grover Cleveland's candidacy for President. Many local and statewide Democratic politicians, including Senator Joseph Blackburn and Speaker of the House, John G. Carlisle, spoke to thousands of people who attended from all over Kentucky and southern Ohio. "Old Fashioned" Kentucky burgoo was served from 500-gallon kettles while 20 oxen, 40 sheep, and 200 lambs were served to the enormous crowd. Presiding at this event, the largest in the area up to that time, was Theodore F. Hallam. Hallam was recognized as one of the best orators in the state. He also had many Erlanger connections and spent much time at Sugar Grove, home of his father-in-law, Dr. John H. Stevenson.

Theodore F. Hallam, born March 13, 1844, was descended from a 15th century English bishop of Salisbury, Robert Hallam. His parents were James Russell Hallam and Clarena Minerva Bailey Hallam of Pennsylvania. James R. Hallam was an attorney and served as circuit court judge in Kenton County. The family moved from Owenton, Kentucky where Theodore was born to Williamstown, and then to Newport. At the age of 17 in 1861, Theodore F. Hallam joined the Confederate Army. He fought at the Battle of Shiloh. Near the end of the war he held the rank of captain and was assigned to Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States.

After serving in the Confederate Army, Theodore worked as a Washington correspondent for the *Cincinnati Enquirer*. In touring the Civil War battlefields, his first dispatch published here won him immediate acclaim. He recorded in one passage: "*The battlefields are one vast commons; fenceless and fallow, a great prairie brought into relief by lonely chimneys standing like tombstones over the ashes of deserted homes.*"

Hallam then came to Covington. He studied law and practiced in Covington as senior partner of



Portrait of Theodore Hallam.
courtesy: Kenton County Public Library

the law firm of Hallam and Terrill, with offices on Scott Street in Covington, and in Cincinnati.

Theodore F. Hallam married Betty Stevenson, daughter of Erlanger families Dr. John H. Stevenson and Alice Elizabeth Timberlake Stevenson, on September 18, 1875. Theodore F. Hallam was a politician full of passion for the Democratic Party as "whip" in the Kentucky Legislature: elected to the General Assembly and later to the Senate.

William Goebel & Hallam

At the turn of the twentieth century, Kentucky was one of the most violent states in the un-



Above: Photo taken about 1888 at the Timberlake Home. (From the left): Alice Timberlake Stevenson, Theodore Hallam, Alice Hallam, Thomas J. Stevenson, Mary Stevenson and Katherine Earle Stevenson. Below: Alice Hallam (1879-1954).

Courtesy: Kenton County Public Library

ion. Kentuckians fought, dueled, and killed. As the son of German immigrants, William Goebel, was not your typical southern politician, but was gaining power in the Party. Goebel believed in abolitionism and civil rights for women and blacks. Of course, these beliefs were completely opposite from Theodore F. Hallam and his southern Democratic friends. William Goebel killed Mr. Hallam's good friend John Sanford in self defense, but that gave Mr. Hallam an even greater reason to dislike William Goebel. Democrats nominated Goebel "a yaller dog" for governor.

Someone asked Theodore Hallam if he intended to vote for Goebel. "So how come you're against Goebel now?" someone asked. "Indeed," Hallam answered. He had said he would vote for "a yaller dog," then added, "but lower than that ye shall not drag me!"¹ Speaking in that same town later, Goebel fired back, saying that Hallam, a lobbyist for L&N, was "a drunkard and debauchee" with "the face of a cancerous beefsteak." Goebel, of course, was



elected and murdered before he ever got to serve as governor. His murderer was never found. And we think politics is rough in these times! [See: *Northern Kentucky Heritage*, XXI, #2 for piece on William Goebel]

The Family

Theodore and Bettie Stevenson Hallam had one daughter. Alice was born in Covington in February, 1879. Alice was known not only as a writer but also as an astute critic, interpreter and lecturer, delivering at one event the whole of Shelley's "Prometheus Unbound" by memory.² Alice studied music in Paris and England. While in Switzerland she acquired her unusual staff which was an alpenstock³ and was tipped with the foot and horn of a chameau, a little mountain goat. She was seldom seen without it. Folks who remember Alice remember her as living in the Timberlake home on Stevenson Road, carrying her alpenstock and frequently catching the train to go shopping in Lexington.

Theodore F. Hallam was a barrister and a wit. An article cannot be written without telling one of the stories about him. Artist Henry F. Farney was a friend of Hallam. Farney was traveling the East coast and ran into a friend, who knew Farney was from Covington, Kentucky, so he said "I was in Cincinnati years ago and had to wait for a train. To kill time I walked over the Roebling Suspension Bridge to Kentucky. Being a lawyer myself, I was attracted to the courthouse. There was a probate case on trial involving the disposition of an estate. The attorney who was defending this will was a short, squat man with dark skin and hair... very plain of feature, witty, ingenious and exceedingly ready with the law. I was so interested in the conduct of the case, I let my train go and heard the entire case." "Why that's easy," said Farney, "that man was Theodore Hallam." It was often said, "In Covington, just across the river from Cincinnati, lives the Hon. Theodore F. Hallam, one of the best and most brilliant of Kentucky's lawyers and with a wit of the highest order."

On May 1, 1905, the Hon. Theodore F. Hallam passed away with his devoted wife and daughter by his side. Services were held at Trinity Episcopal Church, Covington, conducted by Rev. Frederick A

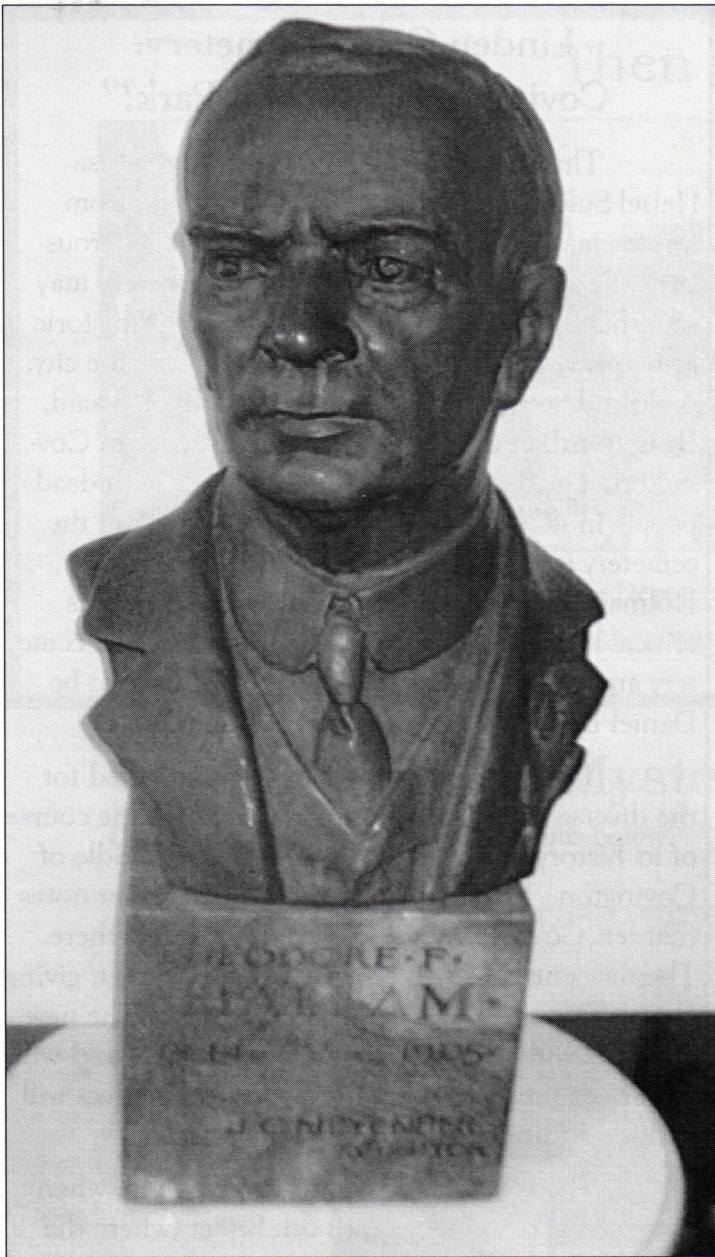


Grave of Theodore Frelinghuysen Hallam (1844-1905)

Courtesy: the author

MacMillan. Nearly the entire Bar of Kenton and Campbell Counties attended the funeral.

Mr. Hallam was very proud of his service with the Confederate Army. A Company from the Tandy Prior Camp came in uniform to the funeral. The casket was draped with a confederate flag formed of flowers and sent by the Confederate veterans. It was an exquisite piece of work. Four honorary Confederate pall bears were appointed, and active pall bears were: W. H. Mackoy, Frank P. Helm, Martin M. Durrett, Col. John B. Taylor, W. W. Brown, and W. D. Spalding.



Bronze bust of Theodore F. Hallam

Courtesy: the author

Hallam was laid to rest at Highland Cemetery, in the Timberlake, Stevenson, and Hallam plot #148, Section 5. Also buried there are members of the Thornton Timberlake family (moved from the old Elizabeth Street Cemetery when Hallam Heights was being developed about 1890); the Stevenson family; and the Hallam families.

The Kenton and Campbell County Bar Associations raised money to have a bronze sculptured bust of Theodore F. Hallam cast, to be placed in a prominent place in the Kenton County Courthouse. On May 1, 1906, the \$500 sculpture, by John May-

enberg, was placed on exhibition at the Art Club in the Harrison Building on 4th Street in Cincinnati. It was later moved to the Kenton County Courthouse.

In 1970, when the Covington Court House was being renovated, it was only fitting that this great man's bronze bust find its way back to the city where the memory of his family and himself have long been perpetuated by the street names of "Hallam," "Alice," "Stevenson," and "Timbelake." The family once owned much of the land which is today Erlanger, Elsmere and Edgewood. [For story of the Timberlake family, see: *Northern Kentucky Heritage*, XV, #2, p. 29 & XVI, #1, p. 2] In 1992, when the Erlanger Historical Depot Museum was being organized, the bronze bust of Hallam was once again moved. Today it sits in a prominent place at the entrance of the Erlanger Depot Museum.

References

Harper's Magazine
The Kentucky Post
 Covington City Directories
 Highland Cemetery
 Ancestry.com
 Onkst, Wayne "From Buffalo Trials to the 21st Century"
Encyclopedia of Northern KY

Endnotes

1. Yaller Dog Democrats was a political term applied to voters in the Southern United States who voted solely for candidates who represented the Democratic Party. The term originated in the late 19th century. These voters would allegedly "vote for a yellow dog before they would vote for any Republican"
2. *Prometheus Unbound* is a four-act lyrical drama by Percy Shelley. It is concerned with the torments of the Greek mythological character.
3. Alpenstock: A long wooden pole with an iron spike tip used by shepherds for travel on snowfields in the Alps since the Middle Ages.

Question

There seems to be confusion as to the location of the Hallam home in Covington. The author would be grateful for any clarification. City Directory residence is listed as 1035 Scott Street. The *Encyclopedia of Northern Kentucky* says 1035 Scott Street. In death Memoriam it says "pallbearers please meet at the Hallam home at Sterrett and Greenup." And an article by Chester F. Geaslen says the residence was next door to the Covington Post Office.

A Look Back at The Headlines

An on-going feature reliving local headlines.

This issue features:

The Covington Journal – March 12, 1870.

Local Headlines

The “Earthquakes” have decided to celebrate with a parade for the anniversary of the Battle of Algiers's Plains on the 2nd of April.

The number of passengers transported over the Louisville, Cincinnati and Lexington railroad in the month of February, 1870, was 27,456.

The news system has been abolished in the Fourth Street Presbyterian Church. On and after the 1st of next month all seats will be free.

The St. Aloysius Benevolent Society celebrated their third anniversary on Sunday last by a procession. Subsequently, they attended high mass at the St. Aloysius Church, corner of Seventh and Bakewell streets, and listened to a sermon delivered especially for their benefit by Bishop Troebbe.

The colored people of this city have in hand arrangements for uniting with their brethren of Cincinnati in a “Grand Jubilee,” over the Fifteenth Amendment, to take place within a week after the Proclamation shall have been issued. There will be a procession with music and flags and banners.

HICKEY'S SHOE STORE

616 Madison Street, Covington
now selling

Ladies' good lasting gaiters...\$1.00

Splendid calf boots for gents...\$3.50

Boys calf boots...\$1.50

Linden Grove Cemetery: Covington's “Central Park?”

Thanks to a \$35,000 grant from the Elsa Heisel Sule Foundation, a \$5,000 donation from former mayor Chuck Scheper, and other generous gifts, the 172-year-old Linden Grove Cemetery may soon have a new easy-access entrance. This historic cemetery could become a “central park” for the city. As John Dietz, Cemetery Board secretary, has said, “It is an urban oasis, the largest green space in Covington. I’ve described it before as a park with dead people in it!” Presently, the only way to enter the cemetery is through a hard-to-find alley off of Holman Street near 15th Street. Dietz says, “It is critical having people to be able to get into the cemetery and be able to use it because you’d have to be Daniel Boone to find the entrance right now!”

The grounds has already become noted for the diverse collection of trees planted over the course of its history on the 25 acres right in the middle of Covington. Marshall Slagle, Board Chairman notes that few Covingtonians, however, know it is there. The new entrance will be on West 12th Street, giving access from the area’s main thoroughfare. The new entrance will be adorned with wrought iron and will feature columns with granite signs. The project will include additional parking and landscaping.

The cemetery was dedicated in 1843, when the original city cemetery on 6th Street (where the CSX rail line now crosses) became inadequate. The known graves from 6th Street were moved to Linden Grove, including Thomas Kennedy (owner of the farm that became Covington). Civil War veterans (both Union and Confederate) as well as notables like William Southgate and Speaker of the House, John G. Carlisle are also buried there.

The grounds fell into neglect by the 1950s and became a dumping ground for debris from I-75 construction. Later, it was overgrown with weeds and high grass. Through a new inter-local agreement that created a board to oversee the cemetery, many improvements have been made. Additionally, the federal government placed the cemetery on the National Registry of Historic Places. The board hopes to raise about \$100,000 to finish the project of making this Covington’s “Central Park.”

Then and Now



Erlanger Depot, circa 1910 and present.

Left photo courtesy Kenton County Public Library. Right photo courtesy Bob Webster.

Mystery Photo

Can you identify the mystery photo below? The answer can be found at the bottom of the page.



ANSWER:

Covington High School, 12th and Russell streets, circa 1907.

March/April 2015

ARTICLES FROM BACK ISSUES ARE INDEXED ON OUR WEBSITE!

Published bi-monthly by

The Kenton County Historical Society
Membership, which includes the Bulletin,
\$20.00 per year

President..... Donald Fowler
Vice-President..... Robert Webster
Treasurer..... W. Terry Averbeck
Secretary..... John H. Boh

Board Members:

Dennis Harrell, Mike Holliday,
Katie Hushebeck, Richard Johanneman,
Elaine Kuhn, Sheryn Labate,
and Karl Lietzenmayer (Ex Officio)

I Bet You Didn't Know

*Tidbits from Kentucky's heritage
for every day of the calendar year*

March 20, 1944: Blue Licks
Battlefield State Park property was
conveyed to the United States
government for a national shrine.

March 22, 1782: Capt. James
Estill was killed by Indians at little
Mountain (near Mt. Sterling).

March 27, 1798: Frontiersman
Simon Kenton married Elizabeth
Jarboe.

April 21, 1816: A small steam-
boat left Hickman Creek in Jessa-
mine County with cargo headed for
New Orleans — recorded as the first
commercial steamboat on the Ken-
tucky River.

April 30, 1789: George Washing-
ton was inaugurated in New York as
the first president of the United
States.

"On This Day In Kentucky" — Robert Powell

Programs and Notices

Celebrating the Covington Bicentennial

April 24 to August 30, 2015, Behringer Crawford Museum
"Buffalos and Bourbon," an exhibit celebrating the Covington Bicenten-
nial; about people, places and events in Covington history; artifact-
inspired stories; unusual and lesser-known Covington-related stories and
places

Saturday, May 16, 1:00 to 3:00 p. m., Kenton County Public Library
(Covington, 5th and Scott) – authors' book signing and sales of *Gateway
City, Covington Kentucky, 1815-2015*; a celebration of the new Coving-
ton bicentennial history book; with editors Paul A. Tenkotte, James C.
Claypool and David E. Schroeder and with some of the chapter authors

Week of July 14 (Tuesday) - the Covington Bicentennial celebration
will be linked by flyovers, other publicity and festivities (coordinated
through Cov200 during the week) to the Major League Baseball All Star
Game in Cincinnati at Great American Ball Park; the Major League All
Star game is typically a weeklong celebration bringing in millions of
dollars in publicity and business for the host city and surrounding areas

Also, from the Cov200 website, watch for details:

Largest Neighborhood Cookout, June 2015 - citywide neighborhood
cookouts: COV200 "will rally the entire city" to the streets for a city-
wide block party; socialize with friends, newcomers and other
neighbors; celebrate our community; show off grilling techniques and
potluck recipes; watch for details

June 20-21 - Old Seminary Square Garden Tour

July 4th - Peaselsburg 4th of July parade commemorating the Covington
Bicentennial