

# KENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**Bulletin**

**November 1996**



## **INSIDE:**

**Education and Faith: The Emergence of Catholic  
High Schools in Northern KY** *(Second in a Series)*

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## 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: Volunteers**

**Computer Skills** 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.

**Do you have an interest in old photos?** The Society wants to collect, label, preserve, and keep old photos, which may have historical significance, in our files for possible use in the magazine or other historical display events. We need someone who has ideas on how to publicize the need for old photos: someone to collect, label and file the photos.

If you have the skill or the interest for either of these projects, 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.

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# KENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Publisher of award-winning  
Northern Kentucky Heritage Magazine

## OFFICERS

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### K. C. H. S. MEETING

**DATE** November 5  
**TIME** 7 PM  
**PLACE** 254 Latta Avenue  
Ludlow, Kentucky  
**PROGRAM** Tour and story of the Latta House,  
home of Stephanie and Steve Helmer

The Board meeting is at 6 O'Clock

**DIRECTIONS:** From I-75 in Covington take 4th or 3rd street (Route 8) west. Take Highway avenue into Ludlow to Butler street (Huntington Bank is on the corner). Turn right and park in the bank lot. The Latta house is on the other side of the street.

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**Education and Faith**  
**The Emergence of Catholic High Schools in Northern Kentucky**  
*(Second in a series)*  
by **David K. Schroeder**

The economic prosperity of the 1920's ushered in a new period in Catholic education in northern Kentucky. A Secondary school education was no longer seen as a luxury, but an opportunity for economic advancement. Fewer northern Kentuckians needed their young children to work and supplement the family income. In addition, numerous Catholics had achieved middle-class status. Thus, funds were typically available in many families to permit the further education of their children. These social and economic changes facilitated the growth of the Catholic school system in Campbell and Kenton. Counties.

Holy Cross Parish in Latonia was again at the forefront of the movement. In the early 1920's, the pastor and parishioners of Holy Cross decided to establish a four-year academic high school in Latonia. A four-year institution permitted the children of the parish to continue their liberal arts academic education. Unlike the commercial high school at Holy Cross, the academic high school primarily focused on the traditional subjects of English, science, mathematics, history, foreign languages, and civics.

The Sisters of St. Benedict staffed Holy Cross High School while continuing to teach at Holy Cross Elementary School and Commercial High School. In 1924, John Bramlage was the first Holy Cross graduate, and by 1926 a graduating class of 10, 5 boys and 5 girls received diplomas.<sup>11</sup>

By 1929, both the elementary school and high school had outgrown all available space. The pastor and parishioners decided to take on the additional financial burden of erecting a new high school. Architect Charles Hildreth designed the new school at its site on Church Street between 36th and Southern Avenue. The completely modern building contained 17 classrooms, a library, study room, cafeteria, auditorium, and commercial rooms. It was dedicated on September 28, 1930 by Bishop W. Francis Howard.<sup>12</sup>

Other parishes in northern Kentucky also saw the necessity of establishing Catholic high schools in the area. In 1922, the Rev. Mathias Leick, pastor of Corpus Christi Parish in Newport, established a high school in conjunction with his parish.

Located on Isabella Street between 9th and 10th Streets, Corpus Christi High School was dedicated on September 16, 1922 and provided all the modern conveniences demanded by a first class institution. The \$80,000 classical building, designed by architect Edward J. Beiting, contained eight classrooms, a gymnasium, and club rooms for the parish societies. It was staffed by the Sisters of Divine Providence of Kentucky. In 1927, the school graduated a class of 16.<sup>15</sup>

St. Stephen Parish of Newport also established a high school in 1922. The school, founded by the Rev. Delaney of St. Stephen Parish and staffed by the Sisters of Notre Dame, was opened to both boys and girls from various Newport parishes. In June 1926, St. Stephen High School held its first graduation exercises

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when 14 students received diplomas.<sup>16</sup>

In 1928, the Rev. Clement J. Bocklage, a strong advocate of Catholic education, was appointed pastor of St. James Parish in Ludlow. In September of that same year, Bocklage founded St. James High School in a two-room concrete addition to the church on Elm Street.<sup>17</sup>

Unlike the other Catholic high schools and academics in northern Kentucky, St. James High School was primarily staffed by lay teachers. Miss Mary Ruth Kelley held the office of principal from 1928 to 1938. Operating a high school with a staff of lay teachers was a massive financial commitment. However, the people of St. James rose to the task.

By 1929, St. James High School had an enrollment of 29 in the freshman and sophomore classes. In 1932, when the first diplomas were given to six young ladies, the faculty consisted of Father Bocklage and four lay teachers, and the high school was accredited by the State of Kentucky.

St. James High School drew the majority of students from St. James and St. Boniface Parishes in Ludlow, but it also drew students from the parishes of St. Ann, St. Patrick, St. Aloysius, and Mother of God in Covington's west-end as well. Even though the school served students from a number of congregations, the responsibility for financing the school rested entirely upon the people of St. James parish.<sup>18</sup>

The curriculum at St. James High School compared favorably with its public counterpart. In 1930, Ludlow High School offered three distinct courses: classical, scientific and commercial. St. James' curriculum offered a selection of courses nearly identical to the classical and scientific courses at Ludlow High. Ludlow High School furnished a larger range of commercial electives including courses in manual arts, home economics, shorthand, typing, and bookkeeping. St. James' strengths included coursework in three foreign languages (compared to two at LHS). In addition, St. James High School maintained a 9/1 student teacher ratio, compared to a 24/1 ratio at LHS.<sup>19</sup>

The last parish high school to be established in northern Kentucky prior to World War II was St. Henry High School in Elsmere. Elsmere and her sister city Erlanger boomed in the 1920's. As St. Henry Elementary School grew, the people of the parish realized that a Catholic high school would be needed to complete their educational facilities. In 1933, the high school began with one grade. By 1936, a complete four year institution was in operation and staffed by the Sisters of Benedict. As the school prospered, it began to attract students from the surrounding suburban parishes.<sup>21</sup>

In 1937, the first graduation class of 12 received diplomas at St. Henry High School. By 1939, the school was accredited by the State of Kentucky as a class "A" institution.<sup>22</sup>

The parish high schools of Campbell and Kenton Counties thrived during the 1920's. These schools provided the opportunity of a Catholic high school education to hundreds of students. Parish high schools, unlike most academics, were open to boys, and hundreds of young men took advantage of the opportunity. In addition, several of these new schools were located in neighborhoods such as Erlanger and Elsmere, Ludlow and Latonia, areas that were not conveniently

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located near the girl's academies or St. Joseph High School. Having a Catholic secondary school around the corner or down the block fostered local ownership and pride in these institutions.

*Mr. Schoeder is archivist with Thomas More College and the Diocese of Covington.*

*Next month in the series: The Influence of Bishop Francis W. Howard*

<sup>11</sup>Jim Feldman and Bev Lonneman, *Holy Cross Church 1890-1990* (Covington: Published by the parish), 34.

<sup>12</sup>*Kentucky Post*, 16 October 1929, p. 1; *Kentucky Times-Star*, 29 September 1930, p. 1.

<sup>13</sup>*Holy Cross Church: Latonia, Covington, Kentucky*, (1940: Published by the parish), 12.

<sup>14</sup>*The First Century of Corpus Christi Church: Newport, Kentucky*, (1945), 23, 25.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 23, 35; *Kentucky Post*, 14 July 1922, p. 1.; 13 September 1928, p. 1.; 15 September 1928, p. 1.; 20 May 1927, p. 1.; 30 April 1928, p. 1.

<sup>16</sup>*Centennial: St. Stephen Church 1854-1954, 1954; Kentucky Post*, 3 June 1926, p. 1.; *Kentucky Times-Star*, 8 June 1931, p. 3.

<sup>17</sup>Ryan, *Diocese of Covington, 667-668*. As the school grew, additional classrooms were acquired in the parish rectory and a parish owned cottage.

<sup>18</sup>*State of Kentucky: Dept. of Public Instruction: Annual Report. St. James High School, Ludlow*, (27 October 1932: Sts. Boniface and James Parish Archives).

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*: D. B. Hubbard. "History of Education in Kenton County." M.A. Thesis, University of Kentucky, 1931. pp. 138-39, 142.

<sup>20</sup>*State of Kentucky: Dept. of Public Instruction: Annual Report. St. James High School*, (27 October 1932: Parish Archives).

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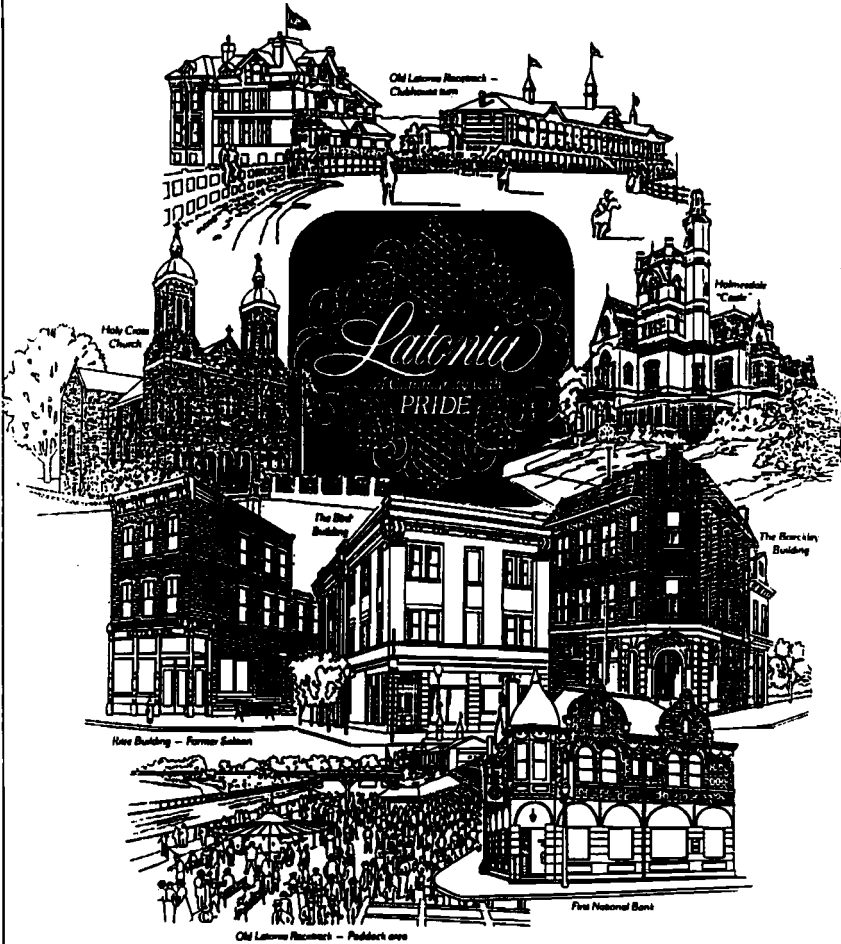
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## Note to members & friends: Public Forum with QUEST

A **tentative** date has been set for November 7, 7 PM, for a panel made up of representatives from preservation-minded groups, including KCHS, to discuss and to question QUEST leaders. QUEST is an ad hoc body which has publicized widely a number of far-reaching "visions" for the future of Northern Kentucky. This forum will be open to the public and will be held at the Northern Kentucky Community Center (the former Lincoln-Grant school), 824 Greenup street, Covington. Questions from the audience will be welcomed. A final date will be announced at the KCHS meeting (November 5th), or call Lisa Gillham, 581-8612.

Black and white drawings by Charles Gillham  
of each of these historic locations  
in the Latonia area of Covington  
are now available in the form of note cards.

**\$1.25 each** (one building per card)  
or a full set of 8 for **\$8.00** (plus \$1.00 shipping)  
A percentage from each sale goes to Northern KY Heritage Magazine.



To order, call Karl Lietzenmayer at (606) 261-2807  
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