

Bulletin of the Kenton County Historical Society

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

November/December

2005

PROGRAMS

Dr. Thomas Clark *A personal tribute to the late Dr. Thomas Clark; his books, lectures, impact on Kentucky, etc., will be presented by Karl Lietzenmayer and John Boh. Also, a 1996 KET documentary on Clark will be featured. The program will be at Trinity Church, 4th and Madison, Covington.*

"Kentucky's Civil War" Book Signing at Battery Hooper, Ft. Wright *Various authors, including Dr. Ramage of Northern Kentucky University, will be on hand. The event will take place at the Dr. Ramage Civil War Museum, Fort Wright.*

Tuesday October 11, 2005 7:00 PM

Annual Christmas Party — Amos Shinkle House Tour *Host Bernie Moorman will give a tour of the Amos Shinkle house and carriage house and discuss Shinkle's impact on Covington. Bring a dish and share in the society's annual Christmas Party. The Shinkle house is located at 215 Garrard, Covington. The tour/party will begin at 7:00PM.*

The Bulletin

Published bi-monthly by

The Kenton County Historical Society

P.O. Box 641, Covington, Kentucky 41012-0641

email: nkyheritage.kchs@Juno.com

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Mary Elise Regan, Dr. Joseph Gastright,
Edward Whitehead and
Robert Webster (Bulletin Editor)

Karl Lietzenmayer (Ex Officio) Charles Reckley (Associate)

Covington Book Project Update

The special committee working on the history of Covington book continues to make steady progress and is still accepting volunteers.

Interested persons should make contact with the committee via the new email set up specifically for the project:

covingtonhistorybook@fuse.net

You can also view the updated list of topics by going to the Kenton County Historical Society website:

www.kenton.lib.ky.us/~histsoc
and clicking on "Covington Book Project"

LATONIA LAKES RESORT

Once A Kenton County Summer Get Away

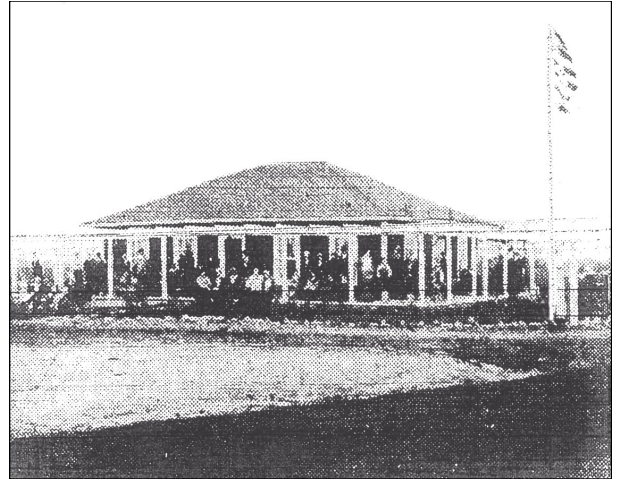
The tiny community of Latonia Lakes, now with about 300 year-round residents, was originally developed as a summer resort and weekend get away destination. It is located on the eastern side of Taylor Mill Road, about five miles south of Interstate 275. The cities of Covington, Independence and Ryland Heights, as well as small pockets of unincorporated Kenton County, surround the tiny community.

As its 1930 newspaper advertisement stated, it was "Kentucky's Beauty Spot". Promoted to residents of the hot, dirty, noisy and over populated cities of Covington, Newport and Cincinnati, it offered a place to cool off, relax and meditate for a price far less than similar resorts located further away.

The resort officially opened in 1931. Within the first four weeks of its existence, more than 900 home sites, each priced at just \$77 had been sold and more than 40 small cottages had been built in the summer colony. At the time, the development, headed by the firm of Schaub and Ott, was the fastest growing real estate project in the region. In the second month, a beautiful new clubhouse was erected and lots in the first phase of the subdivision had been sold out completely.

In the second season, several tennis courts had been built and summer residents enjoyed weekend parties at the clubhouse. Families would show up on a Friday afternoon and stay until late Sunday evening, when they had to make the twenty mile drive back to town. Many would make their vacation plans to spend a week or two at their "summer home". Fish were abundant in each of the four large lakes on the property and swimming and boating were available in the crystal clear waters as well.

At the resort's peak, nearly 300 cottages were eloquently situated across the incredibly well-maintained property. Many of these homes, nearly identical in design, were built overlooking the four lakes. The typical cottage had two-bedrooms, bath, kitchen and screened porch.

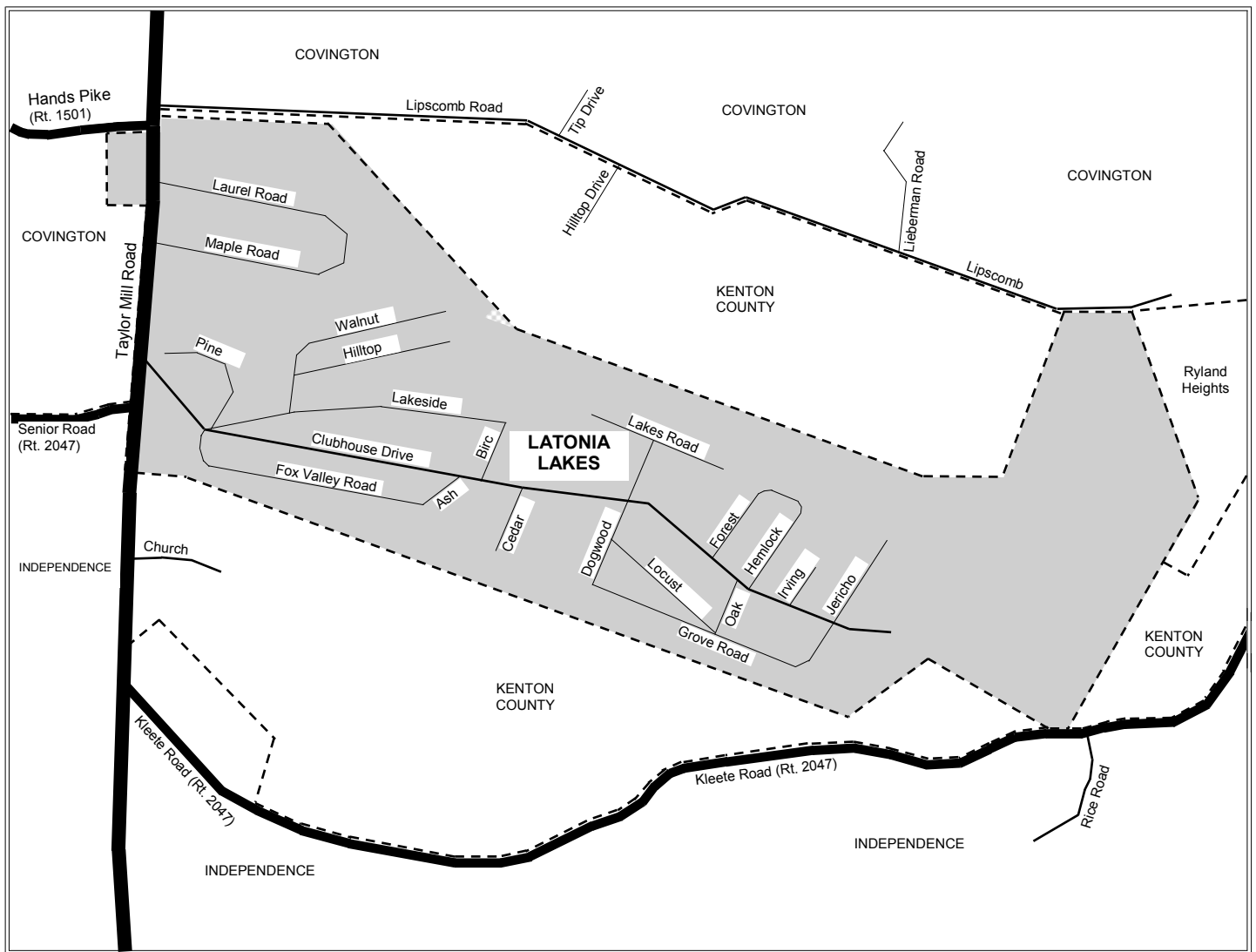


Top photo is the original clubhouse, during a weekend party at the summer resort.

The bottom photo is of the clubhouse as it exists today.



The construction of new homes strongly diminished during wartime years and the entire development began a slow but steady decline. Many who had purchased lots were forced financially to leave them vacant. Lack of additional revenue to the project caused immediate disrepair to many of the resort's wonderful amenities. Property that was to become the third phase in the development also remained vacant. Eventually, families that were unable to sell their properties simply abandoned them.



Today, only 124 homes remain in the tiny neighborhood. The tennis courts are long gone and there is no boating or swimming permitted in the one remaining lake on the property, not that anyone would dare venture into the murky waters anyway.

Several attempts to annex the tiny town of Latonia Lakes by both Covington and Independence have been rejected by the tight-knit residents. Apparently keeping with the original plan of a get away resort, they would much rather keep their small, independent status.

A large portion of the once thriving resort suffers from common urban decay because of a lack of sufficient tax dollars for necessary repairs to the roads and infrastructure, coupled with an average annual income per household of only \$23,000. The clubhouse, currently being renovated, still

serves as a neighborhood meeting place for the community and each summer, a large picnic is enjoyed by the residents.

The original newspaper advertisement is shown on the following page.

“900 Cottage Sites Established at Latonia Lakes,”
The Kentucky Post, 14 June, 1931, page 9

“Latonia Lakes Advertisement,”
The Kentucky Post, 27 May, 1932, page 4

“Latonia Lakes Clubhouse,”
The Kentucky Post, 29 May, 1932, page 2

2000 United States Census, Internet
<http://factfinder.census.gov>

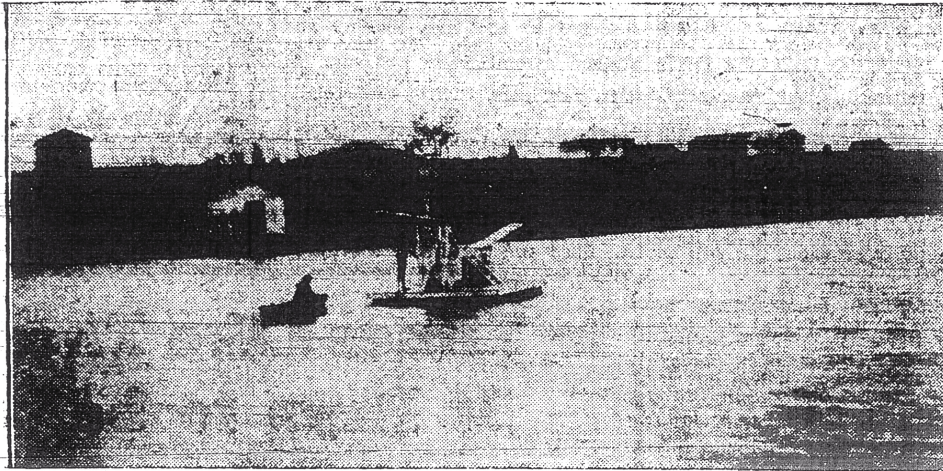
**DRIVE
OUT SUNDAY**

To Kentucky's Beauty Spot

LATONIA LAKES

**DRIVE
OUT SUNDAY**

Enjoy Real Contentment This Summer



Carefree happiness is yours, swimming, boating or fishing, in this, the larger of the four Latonia Lakes. Crystal clear spring water. Sandy beaches.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO SWELTER IN THE HOT CITY DURING THE SUMMER

By buying a lot at LATONIA LAKES you can have your own summer home at a resort which offers everything to be found at the most expensive summer places. Think of it! A place to send your wife and children away from the heat and dirt of the city to enjoy all the healthful recreations and sports which LATONIA LAKES offers. Can you afford not to take advantage of this unusual opportunity?

ALL LOTS SAME PRICE

\$12.50 Down

Free and Clear
Warranty Deed

\$77

\$3.50 Per Month

This property insured to us
by Title Insurance and
Abstract Company.

Lots at Latonia Lakes are Limited. An opportunity of a lifetime, either for a home or investment. Don't wait! Come Out Now! See for yourself what Latonia Lakes offer. Then try to duplicate it at many times the price that we are offering.

Only 5 Miles From Covington—How to Get There

Take Madison Avenue through Covington out Decoursey Ave. through Latonia on Winston Avenue, passing to the left of the Latonia Race Track into Taylor Mill Road. Follow the arrows out Taylor Mill Road direct to Latonia Lakes.

**Representatives on Property Daily Till 9.
Office: 1319 First National Bank Bldg. MAin 6875.**

A VISIT WITH A KENTON COUNTY HOBBYIST EXTRAORDINAIRE

Some people have model railroad layouts; others baseball card collections but Bill and Jane have outdone them all! I have agreed to withhold their last name to keep the location here in Kenton County a secret. They are somewhat apprehensive of advertising their address for fear of being inundated with unwelcome visitors – especially when they are away! But I would like to share my fascinating visit to their home.

Several months ago, my son invited me, along with some of his other friends, to the home of Bill and Jane. Their home and yard were filled with collections, gadgets and mechanical jokes. Bill seemed to get such a kick from showing his fantastic presentation and his wife equally enjoyed seeing everyone have such fun perusing the layout. Typical of Bill's mechanical pranks, he makes a convincing demonstration that human feces in a slop jar provides fuel for this small engine. On the jar he's printed, "Fact— human and animal waste give off methane gas. This is a slop jar or a thunder jug or Grandpa's shiskie pot."



As the readers can ascertain from the many photos I snapped that night, no one I know has ever come close to putting together such a mechanical menagerie. The antique cars alone are wonderful: several model As; Ts; a WWII Jeep with a vintage machine gun mounted in the rear; a 1920s wooden-sided enclosed truck; and a huge steam tractor sitting in the side yard! One of Bill's model Ts has a manikin behind the driver's seat.

Bill has re-created a 1920 gas station; an 1890s blacksmith shop and a turn-of-the-century general hardware store. The turn of the 19th century, that is! In the general store are huge collections of tongs, blacksmith tools, and forges. On one wall sits a number of oil *bottles* – yes motor oil came in bottles before it was canned. The attendant simply pumped the screw-top quart bottle full of oil from a barrel & screwed on the metal funnel-like top. He would then simply pour it into your engine and use the same bottle over for the next guy! Seems a lot more environmentally friendly than throwing the millions of plastic bottles in a land fill as we do today.



There is the required antique gas station lighted sign. Ah yes, it all lights up after dark! The car they usually drive is called a Shay. It was a factory production car that was being made to be sold at Ford dealerships.

Bill not only collects and displays but also is knowledgeable about the mechanics and uses of his collections. He proudly described how he acquired a very run-down Model T Ford and restored it to practically pristine condition. This vehicle now has joined his fleet of 8 to 10 historical vehicles (I lost count!).



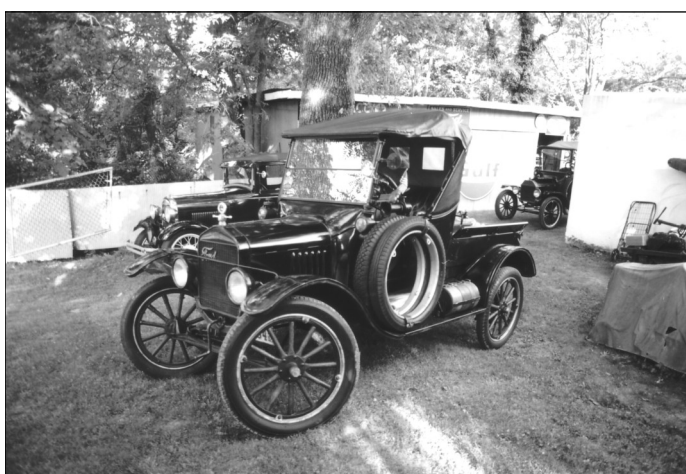
He seems to know the whereabouts of almost every piece in his vast collection. Over in one corner, half covered with weeds languished the deteriorating remains of a farm wagon. Bill admitted it had been neglected as he told the complete story of the wagon's history and what he had hoped to do with it but failed. It now sits there for "atmosphere," filling out the replicated small town laid out in his back yard.



Interior of the General Store fully stocked, including a vintage Coke-a-cola cooler at lower right. Note checker board awaiting players at lower left.

I wondered what the close neighbors thought of his large display and he seemed to indicate there was little concern among close residents. Most neighbors, he said, are not even aware of the collection and those who are don't mind it a bit. His wonderful specimens were certainly enjoyed by us that night.

There is hardly a piece of history that Bill has overlooked and seldom has anyone enjoyed a hobby as much as Bill and Jane.



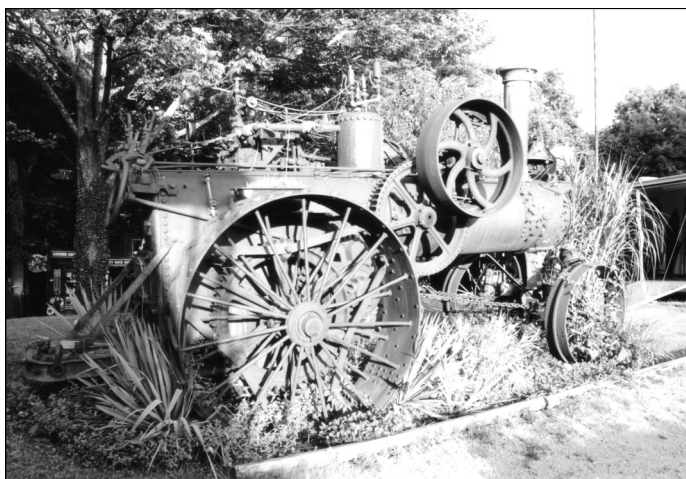
Bill's finished model T, which he acquired as a "fixer-upper." Purchased without an engine, Bill produced a working power plant from pieces of T engines on his property.



One of Bill's beautiful model As, fully restored. In the rear is another model T, soft top.



In some of his garage space rest 2 model T enclosed trucks.



In his side yard is proudly displayed a steam tractor placed there many years ago.

Then and Now



Left is the farm house of Thomas Montegue and family, whose farm occupied approximately half of present Devou Park. After his dairy herd contracted a disease and was lost, the bank foreclosed on his farm and the Devous acquired his property from the bank. The farm house became the original clubhouse for the Devou golf course. Right: After a fire (1920s?) destroyed the structure, the present clubhouse was built on the same site.

"Then"-courtesy nkviews.com "Now"-staff photo

Monthly Mystery Photo

November



December



LAST ISSUE'S ANSWERS:

September was:
Madison Pike (3-L Highway, Ft. Wright)

October was:
354 Highway Avenue, Ludlow

THIS ISSUE'S ANSWERS:

November is:
6th and Russell Streets, Covington

December is:
510 West Sixth Street, Covington

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www.kenton.lib.ky.us/~histsoc

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Dedicated to preserving our heritage as the "Gateway to the South"

KENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

November/December 2005



INSIDE:

Latoia Lakes Resort
Once A Kenton County Summer Get Away

**A Visit With A Kenton County
Hobbyist Extraordinaire**