I Bet You Didn’t Know

Tidbits of Northern Kentucky History

How long will it take you to guess the name of this Northern Kentucky town? On land donated by pioneer John McCollum, the town’s first post office was named Everett’s Creek in 1837 by Isaac Everett. A month later, it was renamed Crew’s Creek, which may suggest its proximity to what is now Cruise’s Creek, located just to the south. The following July it was renamed again, this time Bagby.

On October 7, 1840, this town’s name was changed for the final time. Earlier in the year, Kenton County was formed from part of Campbell County and this town was named the new county seat. The newly named town marked Kenton County’s “independence” from Campbell Co.

Today’s city of Independence stretches from the Boone County line on the SW past Taylor Mill Road to the East, making it the largest city by area in all of Northern Kentucky.

Latest News

A successful yearly meeting of the Society was held last month at the Kenton County Public Library in Covington. The group was brought up to date on the expansion of the Behringer-Crawford Museum in Devou Park and was also presented information on the upcoming construction of a new bridge for Interstate 71-75 through Covington. The primary purpose, however, was the election and appointments of officers for the Society’s next term. Officers are: President—Ronnin Einhaus, Vice President—Donald Fowler, Treasurer—W. Terry Averbeck, and Secretary—John H. Boh. Directors: Dr. Joseph Gastright, George Gressle, Richard Johannemann, Mary Elise Regan, and Robert Webster.

Upcoming Programs

Tuesday December 12, 2006 7:00PM

The Society’s yearly Christmas party will be held at the historic Amos Shinkle Townhouse – Bed and Breakfast, located at 215 Garrard Street in Covington. All members and their guests are welcome. The Board will supply hors d’oeuvres and drinks, but feel free to bring a festive dish if you’d like. Join us for a fun time, a tour of a wonderful home, Christmas carol sing-alongs and much more! For additional information, please contact the Society at (859) 431-2666.

January 16th, 17th, and 18th, 2007

Representatives from the Society and the Kenton County Library will collect and/or scan and return old photos in order to archive them in the library’s permanent collection. Further details, including exact locations and times, will be printed in the next Bulletin. Please help us preserve local history by bringing in your treasured or historic photos.

Saturday February 17, 2007

This is the tentative date for the annual History Day at NKU. Be sure to mark your calendars. More details will follow in the next Bulletin.
George Hurrell, eventually named by his peers, the “Grand Seigneur of the Hollywood Portrait,” fell into the art of photography almost by accident, originally learning how to use a camera so that he could photograph his own paintings. He single-handedly invented the “glamour” portrait. It was Hurrell, with his Rembrantesque lighting and his daringly dramatic poses that transformed the Hollywood star, not simply into a figure of high fashion, but into a kind of erotic icon. The visual power of his portraits shaped the careers of many stars as much as it did their actual films. He photographed hundreds of celebrities during his sixty-year career.

George Edward Hurrell was born in Covington, Kentucky, on June 1, 1904. His mother was born in Germany, of Catholic parents. His father, Edward Eugene Hurrell, was a shoemaker, a U.S. citizen born to a mother from Dublin and a father from London. Though the city of Covington is proud to claim him as their own, there is little evidence to support him ever living there. Hurrell was actually raised in Cincinnati.

By the age of eight, Hurrell had developed a strong interest in painting and drawing. In 1920, at the age of sixteen, Hurrell left home and moved to Chicago on a scholarship to study both painting and graphics at the Art Institute of Chicago. He quit after a few months and transferred to the Academy of Fine Arts, working odd jobs during the day and attending classes at night. A job as a hand colorist in a photography studio led him to his first photographic work, but after three weeks of photographing hats, shoes, and iceboxes, he dropped out of school altogether. He stayed in Chicago for a while, going from studio to studio and learning a bit more with each stop.

In 1925, Hurrell was hired by Edgar Payne, founder of the Laguna Beach (California) Museum of Art, to photograph paintings. After several trips to California, Hurrell decided to move west to continue his art studies. He moved to Los Angeles and soon began photographing people as a hobby. One of his first subjects was famed aviatrix Poncho Barnes. Through her, he met silent-screen star Ramon Novarro and agreed to take a series of photographs of him. Novarro was greatly impressed with the results and showed the images to co-workers at MGM Studios, including actress Norma Shearer. Shearer was at the time trying to escape her wholesome image and find a more glamorous and sophisticated look. Shearer asked that Hurrell photograph her in poses more provocative than her fans had ever seen before. She was desperate to show her husband, MGM top executive Irving Thalberg, that she could generate
enough sex appeal for the title role in the 1930 movie, *The Divorcée*. Hurrell’s photos landed her the role. Thalberg was so impressed with Hurrell’s work that he signed him to a contract, making him MGM’s head of portrait photography. Over the next decade, Hurrell photographed every star who was contracted by MGM Studios and his strikingly dramatic black and white images were used extensively in the marketing of these stars. His work set a new standard for Hollywood portraits and even inspired a name never used before in the craft — glamour photography.

In 1933, a dispute with MGM publicity head Howard Stickling caused Hurrell to leave MGM and open his own studio on Sunset Strip. The stars flocked to him for portraits. He continued to photograph Hollywood’s leading celebrities as well as work on other commercial work. Among the performers who were regularly photographed by Hurrell during these years were Greta Garbo, Myrna Loy, Robert Montgomery, Jean Harlow, Joan Crawford, Clark Gable, Carole Lombard and Norma Shearer. Shearer, it was said, had refused to allow herself to be photographed by anyone other than Hurrell.

In 1935, Hurrell leased a New York studio and worked in the fashion industry with various publications, including *Esquire* magazine. He returned to Hollywood in 1937, under contract with Warner Brothers Pictures. With them Hurrell photographed among others Bette Davis, Ann Sheridan, Errol Flynn, Humphrey Bogart and James Cagney. In 1941, Hurrell opened another studio, this one in Beverly Hills. Greta Garbo was his landlord at the time. In 1942, Hurrell moved to Columbia Pictures where his talents were used to help build the career of Rita Hayworth. During WWII, Hurrell joined the first Motion Picture Unit of the U. S. Army Air Force. He made training films and photographed various generals at the Pentagon. Once discharged, he returned to Hollywood only to find out that his unique style of glamour portraiture had fallen out of style. He relocated to New York and worked for a variety of fashion magazines for a few years. He also applied his talents for dozens of advertisement firms in the city.

In 1952, Hurrell returned to Hollywood and started a television production company with his wife, Phyllis. The company was located on the Disney lot and was somewhat successful. His photographs were used in advertisements for Johnson and Johnson, Hunts, Sunkist, Kellogg’s, and many other nationally recognized companies. Traveling back and forth to both coasts, he also produced several television commercials for the J. Walter Thompson Advertising Agency in New York. Hurrell returned to Southern California permanently in 1956, eventually moving back into the film business as a unit still man. As a freelance still photographer, he worked on the production of several television shows including *The Danny Thomas Show*, *MASH*, and *Gunsmoke*.

An exhibition of his work at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1965 caused an incredible revival of interest in his style. Suddenly, displays of his glamour-style portraits were being showcased worldwide. Soon, a new generation of celebrities were requesting his services in Hollywood. From 1969 to 1976, Hurrell’s still photographs were used...
in several films, including Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid (1969), The Towering Inferno (1974), and All The President’s Men (1976). Commissioned portraits included Liza Minnelli, Paul Newman, and Robert Redford. Hurrell also photographed such stars as Raquel Welch, Farrah Fawcett, Brooke Shields, Bette Midler, and John Travolta.

George Hurrell officially retired in 1976, after publishing The Hurrell Style, with text by Whitney Style. That publication was followed by other commemorative books and special-edition prints of his work. Though retired, he would still take photographs of someone if he was particularly interested in them. Sharon Stone was just one of the stars he felt compelled to work with. Stone posed for him several times during the 1980s. Other celebrities photographed by Hurrell late in his career included Ronald Reagan, Harrison Ford, Margaux Hemmingway, Michelle Pfeifer, Molly Ringwald, Michael Douglas, Kathleen Turner, and Paul McCartney.

Among Hurrell’s last works were production stills featuring Warren Beatty and Annette Benning for the film Bugsy and the cover artwork for the Natalie Cole album Unforgettable. In 1992, Hurrell took a series of photographs of the actress Sherilyn Fenn. In these portraits, Hurrell recreated his famous style of the 1930s, with Fenn posing in costumes, hairstyle and makeup of the period. During the last years of his life, Hurrell worked with producer J. Grier Clarke and producer-director Carl Colby on Legends in Light, the first major retrospect of his work. In a review of a show at New York’s Library at Lincoln Center in 1990, Andy Grundberg wrote in the New York Times, “His pictures came to define Hollywood glamour photography, not to mention the dreams of millions of star-struck moviegoers.”

After a short illness, George Hurrell died of cancer on May 17, 1992, at Valley Presbyterian Hospital in Van Nuys, California. He was 87 years old. He is survived by his wife, Elizabeth, three daughters, Daphne, Vicki and Alexandra, and three sons, George, Jr., Mike, and Clancy.

References:

Hurrell’s Hollywood Portraits, Mark A. Vieira, 1992
The Hurrell Style, John Day, 1977
The Portfolios of George Hurrell, Gene Thornton, 1991
Hurrell Biography, www.hurrellphotography.com
George Hurrell, wikipedia.org
Kenton County’s “Pest House” and Tuberculosis Sanatorium

By: Mary Kay Bell

The world has certainly seen its share of major epidemics in its long history. From the 1600s well into the 1800s, catastrophic plagues such as influenza, yellow fever, measles, typhoid, scarlet fever, and malaria left tens-of-thousands dead in the United States alone. In 1793, 500 people were killed in less than four weeks from an Influenza outbreak in Virginia. In 1852, more than 8,000 New Orleans residents lost their lives in a yellow fever epidemic that crippled the entire nation. In 1918, more were hospitalized from influenza than from World War I wounds. And now, HIV/AIDS has become the plague of today’s generation.

Smallpox

Kenton County, unfortunately, has not been exempt from these major epidemics. The mid 1800s saw a tremendous rise in local outbreaks of smallpox, an extremely contagious viral disease. So scared was the public that often it was difficult to find someone to care for the infected patients. In many instances, it was simply a family member. In highly populated urban areas, diseases such as smallpox, cholera and later, tuberculosis were known to spread very rapidly. It wasn’t worth taking the chance of allowing patients with those diseases to be near “normal” people. By the 1870s, the answer for such highly contagious diseases was to quarantine those patients, many times against their will, in special houses located outside the crowded city. In Campbell County, it was the Campbell County Infirmary, built in 1901 and located on what is now the site of the Lakeside Heights Nursing Center. In Kenton County, it started with a four-room house situated just off Kyle’s Lane in rural Covington. This special place where many patients went to die, usually suffering through much less than professional care, was termed the “Pest House.” The original structure and the 95-acre farm on which it sat were donated to the city sometime prior to the 1870s, exclusively for use as an asylum for smallpox patients. The term Pest House comes from the term pestilence, meaning any usually fatal disease or epidemic. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, if a person was told he was going to the Pest House, it was usually a death sentence. At first, it was only the poor and indigent that were taken there but in May of 1875, the local Board of Health ordered, “All cases of smallpox will be taken to the Pest House.”

Earlier, in an 1872 Covington Journal article it was stated, “The Pest House, belonging to the city and located near the Widow’s and Orphan’s Home, has been placed under the charge of the Sisters of the Saint Elizabeth Hospital, who have spent several hundred dollars fitting it up comfortably for the reception of new patients. The institution will hereafter be known as Lazarus Hospital. At the present time it contains six cases of smallpox.” In a Ticket article dated December 16, 1875, “The new Pest House has been completed. The main building contains eleven rooms and has a capacity for fifty patients if necessary. Besides this, there is a new stable, new cistern, a dead house—a receptacle for deceased patients just before burial—and a house for the disinfection of clothing, all enclosed by a smooth fence fifty-feet everywhere distant from the buildings.” In 1876, the Covington Journal reported, “Seven more souls infected with smallpox were taken by open wagon to the Pest House south of the city limits.” With every issue of the newspaper, more and more people were being taken to the Pest House.

Various names were attached to the facility during its history, including the Lazarus Hospital and the Branch Hospital. Most people, however, referred to the place by its unofficial name. Even on the 1883 Atlas of Kenton County, the only name shown is “Pest House.” Smallpox cases slowly diminished and a September 2, 1899 Covington Journal report stated that the hospital had closed, discharging the last of its patients. By 1912, however, more cases developed and the Pest House was forced to reopen.
In 1929, Kentucky Post reporter, Paul Garber, became infected with smallpox and was able to report on the conditions of the Pest House from the inside. He informed readers that his care was from kind, caring people working in a sub-standard facility. He attacked city commissioners for allowing the building to decay over the years but reported that his care was far better than that given smallpox patients in the late 1800s. At that time, “Care of smallpox patients included small rooms with iron bars on the windows and an armed guard to make sure patients never left their rooms. For food, they would toss a loaf of bread, a can of beans, and a coffee pot into the room.”

As the smallpox epidemic subsided once again, Northern Kentucky was hit with an equally serious disease. Tuberculosis, also known as TB, Consumption, Wasting Disease, and the White Plague was hitting epidemic numbers around 1910. In the fall of 1908, Dr. Robert Elliston Carlton organized the first anti-tuberculosis association from his Latonia office. The goal of this group was to spread public awareness of the disease, make suggestions on how to curb it and to coordinate treatment of those already ill. Dr. Carlton also received a patent for his specially-designed hospital bed for TB patients.

In 1915, Kentucky saw 604 deaths from the terrible disease. One year later, over 4,000 cases were reported statewide. The four-room Pest House became the last resort for a new generation of diseased patients. As more and more cases were reported locally, talks to build a special tuberculosis hospital surfaced as early as 1912. Adequate funds, however, never seemed to be available for such a project.

In 1933, Latonia’s Anti-tuberculosis League opened a clinic offering free chest x-rays to anyone who wanted them. X-rays were the best way at the time to detect the terrible disease. Among the doctors involved in the effort were Charles J. Farrell, Orrin Lye Reynolds and H.C. White. It wasn’t until 1937 that minor renovations were made to the old Covington Pest House and its use was exclusively deemed for tuberculosis patients.

Many feel that tuberculosis was as bad during its peak as AIDS is today, with regard to the fact that at the time, nothing could be done for the dreadful disease and that everyone was afraid of coming in contact with someone who had it. The disease had no respect for people. From age 4 to 96, rich or poor, tuberculosis would hit them all.

**Tuberculosis Sanatorium**

By the late 1940s, the remodeled Pest House was simply no longer adequate for the number of new cases in the area. In 1948, the building of a new hospital was finally made possible when voters approved a $400,000 bond and the state of Kentucky contributed $150,000. Federal funds in the amount of $200,000 were also granted under the Hill-Burton Act. The project was started in 1949 and finished in 1951. Dedication of the Covington-Kenton County Tuberculosis Sanatorium took place on April 16, 1951. The first 17 patients were admitted to the facility on the same day, being transferred from the Pest House across the street. The new hospital, constructed on what was then named Sanatorium Drive, was the dream of many, including Dr. Charles J. Farrell, who became the facility’s first medical superintendent and who held that position for 25 of the 28 years the hospital remained open. Sanatorium Road would later be named Farrell Drive in his honor.

The hospital had four floors. Located in the large basement area were the engineering department, laundry, and morgue. The first floor contained the admitting department, administrator’s offices, the supervisor of nurses’ office, Dr. Farrell’s office, and
the X-Ray department. Also on the first floor was a huge modern kitchen, food storage area, large cafeteria, and meeting room. The second floor was used for patients, specifically the women and children. The second floor also housed a large surgical room, dental laboratory, and nurses’ lounge. There were two large bathrooms for patients, one at each end of the long hallway. A small kitchen and dishwasher was also contained on the second floor where patients’ dishes were cleaned and sanitized after each meal. There was also a recreation area at the end of the hallway, for those patients who were allowed out of bed. The third floor, similar to the set-up of the second floor, was used for the men and teenage boys.

Surgery was an option for treatment of many, especially during the first 10 years and before better medication was developed. Removal of a lung was commonplace. Without surgery, bed confinements were as long as five years. Dr. Marc J. Reardon performed most of the surgeries at the hospital, assisted by surgical nurse, Faye Fogle. These operations began at the Sanatorium on June 6, 1951. All patients, however, were not candidates for surgery, as many had the disease in only a small part of their bodies. Bed rest and medication worked for many of them. Since some patients were required to stay for years, many turned to crafts such as painting, leatherwork, crocheting and other needlework to pass their time.

Many doctors from the area donated time at the Sanatorium, including Dr. Alvin Poweleit, eye, ear, nose, and throat specialist. He made his rounds nearly every weekend. The Ladies Committee of the Covington Elks sponsored Christmas parties for the patients for many years. After Dr. Farrell’s retirement, Dr. Phillip Schwarer took over the position of medical superintendent. Dr. Farrell died in June of 1977 and was buried at Fort Mitchell’s St. Mary’s Cemetery.

Nurses at the facility were paid very little by today’s standards. And, they had no insurance. They were told that if they became infected with tuberculosis, they would be cared for at the hospital for the same fee as the other patients—free of charge. Luckily, with proper precautions such as surgical masks and utensil sanitations, only one nurse became infected during the hospital’s history. She was surgical nurse, Faye Fogle. Luckily, she was able to recover from the disease.

With better medications, there were fewer and fewer cases of tuberculosis reported in Kenton County by the mid 1970s. In 1976, all tuberculosis patients were moved to the second floor of the Sanatorium and the third floor was remodeled and converted into a mental health and comprehensive care facility.
The Covington-Kenton County Tuberculosis Sanatorium finally closed its doors in the latter part of 1979, at which time the entire facility was converted to mental health care. Today, the building has been transformed into the NorthKey Community Care’s Children’s Intensive Services Hospital, serving children with serious mental health issues.

Tuberculosis remains one of the most deadly and common major infectious diseases, though generally confined to underdeveloped countries. However, there has been a steady increase in the number of outbreaks occurring in developed countries including the United States. About 90% of those infected have symptomatic latent tuberculosis infection, also known as LTBI. Hopefully, with today’s medications, Kenton County will not be forced to open another “pest house” or specialized hospital to treat patients with tuberculosis and other such dramatic diseases.

About the Author
Mary Kay Bell retired from nursing after 28 years, six months, and eleven days at the Sanatorium. Recently, she found herself at various doctor’s offices for medical tests. When she told staff members she was a retired nurse, many would ask her where she worked, but few had ever heard of the TB Hospital.

Mary grew up in Scott County, Tennessee, the youngest of eight children. Her three sisters finished college and became teachers. Mary graduated high school in 1940, married Paul Bell and moved to Northern Kentucky. Paul was drafted and served our country in World War II with the U.S. Navy. One of Mary’s sisters, still living in Tennessee, contracted tuberculosis. With Paul off to war, Mary took her two children and moved back to Tennessee where she took care of her sister and her children. Mary gave her sister the bed rest she needed, keeping the chil-
First spotted by Owen Powell, of Bedford, Kentucky, the creature was over six feet tall and covered with pitch-black hair. "Not quite a dog, a panther or a bear," he said. "It was in my hog pen."

Powell sent his dogs after it—a German Shepard and a collie. Both came back whimpering to their master.

It was June 3, 1962, and soon Trimble County sheriff, Clem Curtis, began receiving other reports of this "thing," as the locals called it. Then, reports of strange animal deaths started trickling in as well. For the next few weeks, dozens of more calls came in. "The beast is wreaking the farms, climbing in barn windows and doing unspeakable things to calves and heifers," people reported. Then, on June 13, a footprint the size of a human hand with four stubby toes was found.

A zoologist from Hanover College was brought in to investigate. He took moldings of the footprints and told neighbors that it looked like a dog's print, but agreed that no dog could do the menacing that had been reported.

The sheriff's department put on an all-out manhunt on June 18, 1962, searching the entire countryside where the most reports had come from. Neither hide nor hair of the beast was located.

Over four decades later, longtime residents in Trimble County still argue about what this huge, mysterious creature was. Was it a dog—or was it really Kentucky's Bigfoot?

Most of the reports came from a tract along Kidwell Road. The large area that was so heavily searched was between Kidwell Road and the Ohio River. This basic location is opposite the town of Bethlehem, Indiana.
Update on the History of Covington Book

The first deadline for articles submitted to the Covington history book project is January 1, 2007. Currently, we remain on schedule as we are receiving articles covering from pre-historic times up to and including 1815, the year of the city’s founding.

Our committee has recently met with Covington’s mayor and are pleased that he joins in our excitement over the project.

We are still in need of general photographs from our membership and would be interested in talking with anyone who may have interesting photos we can use in the book.

For further information on the project, including a list of all topics to be included, please go to the Society’s website:

www.kenton.lib.ky.us/~histsoc/
then click on “Covington Book”.

Once completed, the book will be approximately 250 pages in length, 8½ x 11 in size and include a nice, full-color glossy jacket.

If you have any questions about the project, or if you would like to offer any assistance on the book, please e-mail the book committee directly at:

covingtonhistorybook@fuse.net

Be Published In The KCHS Bulletin!

The Society is always looking for interesting Kenton County stories for its Bulletin. E-mail your article in Microsoft Word format to:

nkyheritage.kchs@juno.com.

You can also send a printed copy by mail to: P.O. Box 641, Covington, KY 41012-0641

Articles should have at least two references.

A Look Back at The Headlines

An on-going feature reliving local headlines from the Kentucky Post.
This issue features: August 10, 1966.

Construction is well underway along both sides of Covington’s West Fifth Street. On the south side of the road two floors have been completed on a $1.9 million senior citizen high rise apartment tower. That project is scheduled to be completed by September 1967. On the north side of the street, work continues on a $4.5 million IRS data service center. That project, covering over 280,000 square-feet of space, is said will employ 2,300 people at its peak.

A fire that began shortly after 5:00 in the morning trapped a woman and her two young daughters for a while before firemen could free the trio from the burning building. The blaze was at 822 Scott in Covington and did extensive damage to the first floor. The three victims were checked at the scene, but were not taken to the hospital.

Both locations of Remke’s market, 2501 Dixie Highway in Fort Mitchell and 19th and Holman, Covington, have chuck roast for 39¢/pound, green beans—2 pounds for 35¢, and giant-size Ajax laundry detergent for 65¢.

The Marianne in Bellevue is one of many theatres showing The Ten Commandments staring Charlton Heston and Yul Bryner. All tickets are $1.00. There is a double-bill at both the Madison and Florence. Elvis Presley stars in Harum Scarum, followed by Doris Day and Arthur Godfrey in The Glass Bottom Boat. Television shows to watch this evening (not reruns) include: Dick Van Dyke, Green Acres, Beverly Hillbillies, Patty Duke, and I-Spy.

Many Northern Kentuckians were across the river last night enjoying a Reds victory over the San Francisco Giants at Cincinnati’s Crosley Field. The two teams were tied at 2 before Vada Pinson’s seventh-inning single drove in Sammy Ellis. Manager Dave Bristol told reporters he was, “...happy to pull off the 3-2 win.”
Then and Now

Entrance to the Erlanger Depot, home of the Erlanger Historical Society and Museum.

Mystery Photo

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

ANSWER:

Entrance to the Erlanger Depot, home of the Erlanger Historical Society and Museum.
Dedicated to preserving our heritage as the “Gateway to the South”

Other Stories Inside:
- Kenton County’s “Pest House”
- Northern Kentucky’s “Bigfoot”
- And Tuberculosis Sanatorium

Feature Story:
Shirley Temple, photographed by Covington-born George Hurrell. Our Feature Story is on Hurrell, who became Hollywood’s premiere photographer to the stars.