

KENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P. O. Box 641, Covington, Kentucky 41012 (859) 431-2666

E-MAIL nkyheritage.kchs@juno.com

President

Karl Lietzenmayer

Vice President

Dr. Joseph Gastright

Treasurer

Dan Carter

Secretary

John Boh

Board of Directors

Carol Wenger

Linda Carter

Emily Bailey

George Gressle

San Juan C. Romero

Charles King

Program Coordinator

Dr. Joseph Gastright

Editor of Bulletin

Jo Ann C. Brown

KCHS MEETING

DATE Wednesday October 10

TIME 7 PM

PLACE Baber Hunt Foundation

620 Greenup Street

Covington

Ted Bushelman, President of the Airport Board, will discuss the history of the airport mistakenly called Cincinnati Airport by Ohioans, but we all know the correct name is Cincinnati Northern Kentucky International Airport, and has had tremendous growth.

Parking off 7th St. off Greenup

Bulletin

October 2001

From the Editor.....

We were sorry to have had to cancel the September meeting which would elect our new officers and Board. We are still shocked and saddened over the reason for the meeting's cancellation. So many words and pictures have overwhelmed our brains and hearts, but I still must mention how much the attack gives us pause to reflect: how blessed is this nation for its beautiful land; most important are the nation's people, their creativity and ingenuity. Our nation has built a great democracy which continually struggles for fairness and freedom for all. Those terrorists who hate our prosperity and way of life have not seen the sacred struggles throughout our short history. They fail to see that a taste of freedom helps to bring out all the great gifts that God/ Allah has given.

The October 10th meeting will elect the officers and Board members. Emily Bailey is willing to stay on another 3-year term, and Karl Lietzenmayer is willing to be on the Board for 3 years. Officers to be elected are Jim Kiger, President (1-year term), Joe Gastright, Vice President(1-year term), John Boh, Secretary 1-year term), and Dan Carter, Treasurer (2-year term). We thank them all for their willingness to administer Kenton County Historical Society.

From Karl Lietzenmayer.....

Elections for KCHS have once again arrived. I will be handing over the president's baton to a new leader, Jim Kiger. I must devote more time to the Northern Kentucky Heritage Magazine (NKH).

NKH Magazine subscriptions have been flat, 650 subscriptions, for several years and the bills are getting harder to meet. A subscriber and college friend, Charles Reckley, has volunteered to develop marketing for NKH. He has set a goal to double the subscribers in just one year!

The magazine gets little readership support from other heritage groups in the region. NO OTHER PARTICIPANT SOCIETY MENTIONS NKH AS A REGULAR PRACTICE IN THEIR PROMOTIONAL LITERATURE! Thus while 97% of Kenton members subscribe, only 20% of Campbell County members take the magazine and from there the subscription rate drops to 5% of all other groups.

Let us know what you think. Would it be healthier for NKH to be independent from the KCHS? I would value your comments.

On October 11, Mike Sweeney will make a presentation on the Cote Brilliant Neighborhood at Holy Spirit School (previously St. Francis Parish School) at Chesapeake and Grand Avenue. Cote Brilliant in which Holy Spirit is located is in danger of being razed for a shopping Center. The meeting is at 7:30 PM.

Arrangements have been made to join the Campbell County Historical Society for its meeting on November 8 at 7:30 PM at the Cold Springs Branch of the Campbell County Library. The library is located on Alexandria Pike across from St. Joseph Catholic Church. Our meetings are joined because we will have a presentation from Ken Williams who is the new editor of "The Register," published by the Kentucky Historical Society.

WEB SITE <http://www.kenton.lib.ky.us/~histsoc/>

Historical Connections and Ideological Divisions

by Alexandra Weldon

Pre-Civil War Covington

Covington experienced tremendous growth during the period 1840 - 1860; primarily due to the large influx of German immigrants, estimated to have numbered up to 200 a day. The population of Covington itself grew from about 2,000 in 1840 to about 12,000 by 1853.¹

The original 150 acres comprising early Covington were initially platted in 1815. The Old Plat of Covington ran from the Ohio River south to 6th Street, the Licking River on the east and west to present Washington Street. The original plat was a simple grid pattern laid out as a continuation of the Cincinnati grid. The north-south streets match up perfectly.

Initial development was slow, in part due to an 1815 flood and a national depression in 1819. It was not until after the construction of a cotton factory on the original public square in 1828 did settlements really begin. Nevertheless, Covington remained a small town, and by 1830, its population only numbered 715 residents.²

In the decades following the development of the steamboat in 1820, Cincinnati became one of the fastest growing cities in the United States. Partially because the Ohio River channel is closer to the Cincinnati side, Covington did not really benefit from this growth until the mid-1830s, when a steam ferry was established connecting the two cities in 1833.³

In 1835, the "New Lexington Pike" (present US 25) was

completed, and Covington became an important link between the products of the Bluegrass and Cincinnati markets. By 1840, few lots in the original plat remained available for development.

1840

The exploding population caused the city to expand south and west by annexing adjacent lands. In 1841, the city limits reached Willow Creek on the west and 12th Street to the south.⁴ By 1843, Covington had annexed the remainder of the lands which comprised the Western Theological Institute's First, Second, and Third Subdivisions, bringing the city's southern boundary to 15th Street, from the Licking River west to Willow Run. These annexations more than doubled the city's area. A major contributor to the development and growth of Covington after 1835, was the Western Baptist Theological Institute.

Western Baptist Institute

In October 1833, a general meeting was held in Cincinnati to unite the current Baptist leaders from west of the Alleghenies. These men considered themselves neither northern nor southern, but representatives of the new Western Baptist brethren. 109 delegates gathered, most from Ohio, but also from Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois, as well as seven representing the East. For the most part, the western delegates were Northern men as well, primarily from New England, who had come west as missionaries of their Baptist faith. Their Yankee roots gave them anti-

slavery sentiments. Their position on this issue, in direct opposition to the southern delegates, ultimately destroyed their attempt at establishing a united Western Baptist Church.

One of the primary goals of the Western Baptist Convention was that a "theological institution be established in some central portion of the Mississippi valley."⁵ Eventually, a site for this effort was chosen in Covington, Kentucky. In 1835, the Western Baptist Education Society, formed a year earlier, purchased approximately 370 acres just south of what was then the small town of Covington. Part of this property was the Thomas Sandford Estate. Sandford was the first congressman from Northern Kentucky and his home became the Institute's housing for its president.

For several years, development of the property was stalled because of a lack of funding, and the land was simply farmed. In 1838, a member of the Society's executive committee, Ephraim Robbins proposed the Society lay out town lots with public improvements to generate the much-needed funds. Between 1839 and 1841 approximately 73 acres were sold in large tracts to raise money to develop the three subdivisions that were platted on the remaining land. Twelve acres were retained for the school and a new public square, identified either as "College Square" or Theological Square" on early maps, and approximately 22 acres were reserved for a cemetery. The Western Baptist Theological Institute's First, Second and Third

Subdivisions extended south from lots facing 9th Street to roughly 15th Street and west from the vicinity of present day Garrard Street to present day Kavanaugh Street. These subdivisions included over 1100 building lots and followed the grid system established by the Old Plat of Covington.

The public square was graded and landscaped and construction of the school buildings had begun by 1842. The general classroom building faced present 11th Street and became the home of St. Elizabeth Hospital until ca. 1914. Improvements outside of the school grounds included fences, sidewalks, and paved streets. Lot sales were brisk and an 1843 account states that about 150 buildings had been constructed within "two squares of the public grounds."⁶

Besides development of city lots and school grounds, the trustees of the Institute included the design and development of a public cemetery, possibly on the site of an earlier burial ground. W. C. James, a Baptist historian, described the plan:

An interesting and useful appendage of the property and one which shows the completeness of the plans which the executive committee had for the little city, of which the seminary was to be the center, was the Linden Grove Cemetery, located at the extreme southwestern limit of the whole tract....The whole area of 22 acres was tastefully laid out and adorned with forest trees, shrubbery and evergreens....The owners of the property hoped to make it one of the most beautiful

cemeteries in the West.⁷

The Institute began its classes at the new seminary in September 1845. Even though this was to be an institution fair to both the northern and southern factions, the make-up of the faculty and students was primarily from north of the Ohio River. This and the apparent anti-slavery sentiment of the school's faculty caused great mistrust among the southern members. The national Baptist Church had tried to remain neutral on the moral issues surrounding slavery but the reality of the time revealed a great division among its brethren, leading to the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention in May 1845.

After much controversy and legal entanglements, the conflict between the trustees was finally mediated by then U. S. Supreme Court Justice McLean in 1853. During the conflict, the seminary had continued under the auspices of the Kentucky trustees, but it was closed in 1853 when the assets of the Institute were divided equally between north and south, as per McLean's arbitration. The southern seminary moved to Georgetown College in Kentucky, and the still unsold portion of Linden Grove Cemetery and any unsold building lots were divided and put up for sale. Mercifully, Superintendent Robbins did not live to see his grand plan for the seminary and the city dissolve. He died in 1845 and an impressive white marble monument was erected to mark his grave at Linden Grove Cemetery.⁸

The Coming of the Railroad

To further hasten the eventual disappearance of the seminary's presence in Covington, the Kentucky Central Railroad

(now CSX) was completed in 1853, bisecting the square. School buildings were demolished and surrounding areas were subdivided. All vestiges of the city's remaining public square soon disappeared. Regardless of the fate of the seminary, the Western Theological Institute did leave its mark on the city of Covington. Spurred by the railroad and the new Suspension Bridge (opened 1867), the city's growth continued through the 1860s.

The subdivisions the seminary had laid out continued to be developed, and were eventually absorbed into the ever-growing city, and most of the streets that had been named after the Institute's trustees retained their historic names.

Linden Grove Cemetery

The most important surviving element of the trustees' grand plan is Linden Grove Cemetery. Except for a small Catholic cemetery outside the city limits (old St. Joseph in Buena Vista), Linden Grove remained Covington's only cemetery until almost 1870.⁹ At that time, several cemeteries were opened far outside the city limits. To this day, Linden Grove Cemetery remains the only local cemetery completely incorporated within the city fabric.

Linden Grove Cemetery predates Cincinnati's Spring Grove by two years, and Louisville's Cave Hill cemetery and St. Louis's by several years. Linden Grove can be seen as a transition from the orderly layout of earlier formal cemeteries and the naturalistic designs of rural cemeteries of the 1840s, a forerunner in cemetery design west of the Alleghenies.

Cemetery design was in a state of flux, and the designers of Linden Grove attempted to incorporate both formality and romanticism into their design. Perhaps the 1843 newspaper account was correct in stating Linden Grove Cemetery was "very far in advance of any thing of the kind in the western country."¹⁰ Ironically, the duality of its design embodied the progressive ideals of the Western Theological Institute's trustees in their attempt to unite two diverse schools of thought.

Endnotes

1. Leah Konicki, Moser Family Houses National Registry Nomination, Covington (2000)
2. *Ibid.*
3. Rita Walsh, Lee-Holman Historic District National Registry Nomination, Covington (1996).
4. Konicki, *op. cit.*
5. W. C. James, "A History of the Western Baptist Theological Institute," Publications of the Kentucky Baptist Historical Society, ed. W. J. McGlothlin, DD, Louisville: Baptist World Publishing Co. (1910).
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*
8. Ephraim Robbins (1784-1845) born in Suffield, Connecticut.
9. Covington's original "Pioneer Cemetery" at 6th & Athey was closed after Linden Grove was opened. Graves from this small cemetery were moved to Linden Grove.
10. "Linden Grove Cemetery," *Licking Valley Register*, 9 SEPT 1743, p.3.

Letters to the Editor

I always enjoy reading the Bulletin but I don't think the president meant that [the widened] 12th Street was going to divide the city.

For 2 years I lived at 620 West 12th Street until the floods came into all the basements. With the cars and [increased] population the streets have to be made wider....I'd like to see condos built [on 12th] that would look nice for Covington and for background, some nice gardens....

I am 84 years old and I remember 12th street in years past.

Ruth C. Ashcraft

Crescent Springs, KY

P.S. My father worked at Bavarian Brewery for a long time in the barrel shop. Grandfather was a stable boss for the horses and wagons.

Dear Ms. Ashcraft,

I wish something could be built to replace what will be razed on the south side of 12th St. from I-75 to Scott! It seems there will be no room on the south to build anything.

The plan shown at the mitigation meetings I've attended shows an approximately 45 foot grassy median planned for the middle of 12th.

This simply opens the back yards of the next street to view and necessitates, it seems to me, the construction of a wall. That, to me, divides the city. For some reason, the DOT refuses to limit the median to 12 feet, which is all that is required for a turn lane. If that were done, about 30 feet of the south side properties could be used to construct appropriate structures.

What is most disappointing,

the press has not covered these meetings. For projects like this, the devil is in the details and we may end up with something no one has bargained for.

Karl Lietzenmayer

President 2001

Please celebrate the forthcoming German American heritage month this coming October which has been celebrated since 1989 and originated in Cincinnati.

Vielen Dank!

Don Henrich Toltzman

HCK Annual Meeting

November 2 -3

Maysville, Kentucky

Experience the history and hospitality of Mason County and the surrounding area at the HCK Annual meeting in November. A pre-meeting tour Thursday, November 1 will take you to Augusta in nearby Bracken County, home to Kentucky's Clooney family. In Augusta, we'll tour a historic district, shop in quaint shops along the Ohio River and have dinner at the Beehive Restaurant, one of the state's best eateries. On Friday morning a walking tour of Maysville and stop at the Mason County Museum will explore the history of our host city.
