

KENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

E-MAIL skgheritage.kchs@juno.com

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Dr. Joseph Gastright

Editor of Bulletin

Jo Ann C. Brown

MEETING

DATE Tuesday, October 8

TIME 7 PM

PLACE Trinity Church
4th and Madison
Covington

PROGRAM Everything You
Wanted to Know About the DAR

Ruth Korzenborn has been a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) for many years. She will give us insight into the history of the organization and, through genealogy, you might find yourself a candidate for the DAR.

Bulletin

October 2002

Notes from the Editor.....

At the September meeting, the election of officers and 3 Board members was held. We are fortunate that last year's officers agreed to serve again. George Gressle and Jaun Romero also agreed to serve as Directors. We were not able to fill the third spot on the Board of Directors. The term of officers is one year, with the exception of the treasurer, which is 2 years. Board of Directors' term is 3 years.

The membership also voted for the amendment to the by-laws stating that the dues for Seniors and Students be raised to \$10, the same as general membership.

The new Canon Copier we are leasing with the Behringer-Crawford Museum is working beautifully! It cuts the printing time in half, and without the hassles of jamming paper. It even folds.

Patrica Hahn, treasurer of the Erlanger Historical Depot, has let me know that documents have been prepared, and were accepted by the Kentucky Heritage Council National Historical Register status for Crescent Avenue which includes the Erlanger Depot built in 1877. The paperwork has been sent on to the Department of the Interior.

I handed in my resignation as editor of the Bulletin beginning with the January 2003 issue. I've been editing the Bulletin since February 1996. I had never appreciated local history, but through the stories and the association with members, I have gained a new insight to its importance.

Now for my bird's eye view:

The numbers of people interested in historical preservation are few. I am disappointed that small communities in Kenton County want to start their own historical societies, Villa Hills, Ft. Mitchell, Erlanger for instance, rather than being active in Kenton County Historical Society. The people in these communities would add so much to the body of historical work for the County as a whole.

The Kenton County Historical Society has a large membership but about 7 or 8 people are doing the work. They do most of the planning for History Day held in March annually, and they work tirelessly publishing historical papers and books. KCHS is not the Covington Historical Society. Much of the work does center on Covington, but that's because the small group doing the work live in Covington. Those in the suburbs could contribute greatly to the total work of the historical preservation of Kenton County. -π

History is not just buildings and politicians, but families and how their roots have influenced our lives today. There is much history that is missed for many different reasons. We congratulate The Northern Kentucky African American Heritage Taskforce as it celebrates it's 15th year. It was organized to document and celebrate the accomplishments of African-Americans and to fill out the missing parts of history in Northern Kentucky.

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

Living History: Robert Scott

by Bill Thomas

Robert Scott has farmed in Villa Hills all his life. He lives in a home on Highwater Road in Villa Hills that was built by his great-great-grandfather in 1840. He has lived in that home and farmed the land around it his entire life and he is now 89 years old.

It took 75,000 bricks to construct the home and each brick was made on site. Each room is 16 feet by 16 feet and each had a 24-inch wide grate that was used for heating purposes. A basket was placed in each grate and wood or coal was placed in the basket. The home has a stone foundation and a two-room cellar. The bricks are held together by lime mortar.

Robert Scott's great grandfather was a preacher at Dry Creek Baptist Church from 1841 to 1871. His church still stands but is now a home on Turkeyfoot Road next to the Lakeside Park City Building.

At one time Robert Scott farmed 109 acres in what is now Villa Hills. Today, he owns only 2 acres where he grows tomatoes, peppers and peaches. He sold 107 acres to developers a few years back for 4 million dollars. His children received much of that money. The remainder is being held in trust and will be distributed as a gift to Scott, Simon Kenton and Dixie High Schools upon Mr. Scott's death.

Mr. Scott served on the Kenton County School Board for a number of years. Scott High School is named in his honor.

Robert Scott bought the farm from his mother after his father died of a stroke in 1941. He had a degree in Agriculture from the University of Kentucky and had

lived on the family farm since returning from Lexington in 1934. Tuition at UK was \$66 a year when Mr. Scott was a student.

The original owners of the property were Robert and Mary McKay. They lived in a log cabin a short distance up the road from the current location of Mr. Scott's farm and settled their property in 1785. Their deed was a gift from the state of Virginia (Kentucky didn't exist until 1792) and granted the McKays all of the land between creek #22 (Pleasant Run Creek between Ludlow and Bromley) and creek #23 (Dry Creek, which follows Amsterdam Road to the river) from the banks of the Ohio River south through what is now Kenton County.

Robert McKay had fought in the Revolutionary War and the State of Virginia gave soldiers land in Kentucky in return for their service.

At one time the McKay family owned most of what is now present day Villa Hills, Fort Mitchell, Fort Wright, and Lakeside Park all the way to the 3L Highway.

"Dag gone if my great grandfather didn't marry one of the McKay girls," said Robert Scott. "Robert McKay had died and my great grandfather made an agreement with Mrs. McKay to build a 2-room log cabin and clear ground for a home near the McKay home. Mrs. McKay didn't want her daughter too far away. He also agreed to put up a rail fence and plant a number of grafted trees."

When the McKay daughters married, they were given land to start their own farms. One daugh-

ter married a member of the Samford family and they were given land at the bottom of Orphanage Road near the 3L Highway. Another married a man named Allen and was given land where Crescent Springs is today, and a third daughter married a member of the Kyle family and was given land in the Fort Wright area where Kyle's lane is today.

The McKay family graveyard still exists in the front yard of a newer home overlooking the Ohio River in Villa Hills. Robert Scott's great-grandfather, grandfather, father and mother are buried in Highland Cemetery.

"This was a totally rural area when I was growing up," remembered Mr. Scott. "There were about five houses here. The street was gravel and used to run straight down the hill from the house to the Ohio River. My father would walk the road each day on his way to attend Hughes High School in Cincinnati. He walked over 5 miles to school and then back again each day. Dad would use the footpath on the Southern Bridge to get to Cincinnati. He graduated from Georgetown College in 1889 at the age of 19."

Robert Scott worked on the farm growing up. He picked raspberries, peaches, and tomatoes and took the crops to market in Cincinnati. The Scotts purchased their first car in 1913 and their first truck, a Model T Ford, in 1917.

Robert Scott's older sister and brother attended the Lebanon School, a one-room school house known as the Little Red School House. Mr. Scott attended the

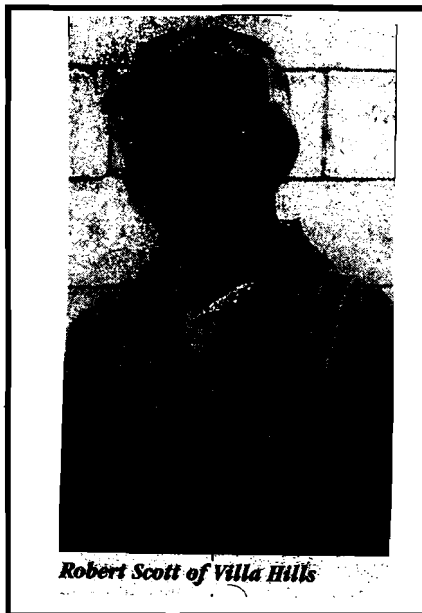
Lebanon school in first grade and then to school in Crescent Springs. He remembers walking barefoot to school in first grade in warm weather.

"After first grade I went to school in Crescent Springs," said Mr. Scott. "We would ride to school on a Model T that had 15 seats on the inside. The older boys would sit on the headlights and stand on the sides of the Model T. It was our school bus. I went to the old Crescent Springs School through seventh grade. We got a brand new high school in 1925. It was located where the Toebben office building is located on Butter-milk near I-75. It was a wonderful school. All the high school students were taught together in one room. The principal taught us math."

The students at the new Crescent Springs School were often uncomfortable in class. The boys had to wear a tie and either a sweater or a coat to school every day. The girls had to wear silk stocking that cost \$1 a pair.

After graduating from the University of Kentucky, Robert Scott returned to the farm and eventually took over farm operations.

"I used to pack tomatoes and sell them for 50 cents a bushel at Pearl Street Market on Sycamore in Cincinnati," he recalled. [Pearl Street ran along the Ohio River.] "I'd hack the truck up and sell right out of the truck. This was in 1933 to 1939. I was also milking cows. I'd get to the Pearl Street Market and sell to peddlers from 3:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m., and then rush home and milk the cows until the milk was picked up around 7:00 in the morning. I had 6 or 8 cows back



then. It was too much. I stopped going to the market and eventually let the cows loose to calve. I kept a bull and would sell the calves each fall when they were big enough."

Mr. Scott remembers milking the cows when he was a kid. "I didn't like it. I'd have to get up at 5:00 a.m. each day. My father would shake my bed and tell me I had 10 minutes to get downstairs or he was going to let me have it. I remember milking those cows and putting my head on them and falling asleep. My father would yell, 'Robert, you awake?' and I'd pop up and start milking again. And I hated that darn smell on my hands from milking the cows. In the winter my father would make me take the ax to chop holes in the ice on our pond so the cows could get a drink. Those ice chips would shoot up and hit me in the face and they hurt. Seems like I always had to hurry to get ready for school."

He and his friends used to play a game called Shinny that was a little like hockey without ice. The boys would cut tree roots that had come out of the ground along

creek beds and were shaped a little like golf clubs. Then they would put two boxes in the road about 49 feet apart and a tin can in the road between the two boxes. The boys would divide into two teams. Each team would try to use the root stick to knock the tin can into the other team's box. "I guess we called the game Shinny because we would get whacked the shin so often," said Mr. Scott.

Mr. Scott remembers another time in 1929 when the driver of their "school bus" told all the kids to pack a lunch on the last day of school for an outing. The bus was a truck with a roof and curtains in the windows, but it was still not big enough to hold all the children. The older boys sat on the headlights and stood on the running boards outside the truck.

"Believe it or not, the driver took us all the way to Frankfort with two boys sitting on the headlights and others holding on while standing on the running boards," laughed Mr. Scott. "We were never stopped."

This story was originally printed in Inside Your Town as part of their new "Living History" monthly feature. They interview residents of area communities who grew up during the Great Depression in this area. The focus of "Living History" is on the childhood memories of our senior citizens. Bill Thomas, Editor of Inside Your Town, tells us he enjoys interviewing these older residents. Oral history is an important part of preserving history. KCHS urges members to also get involved with oral history. Get in touch with any of the officers or Board member.

Kenton County Historical Society
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Covington, Kentucky 41012

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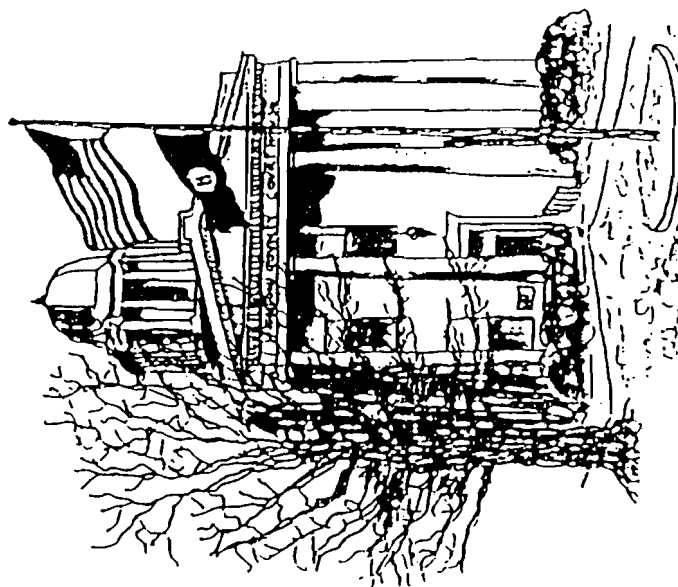
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Dedicated to preserving our heritage as the "Gateway to the South"

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