

# BULLETIN

of the

## Kenton County Historical Society

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Publisher of the new regional magazine,  
Northern Kentucky Heritage



### INSIDE SEE:

HISTORY OF COVINGTON  
BY O.J. WIGGINS  
(8th in a series)

September 1994

**Kenton County Historical Society  
P.O. Box 641  
Covington, KY 41012**

**September 1994**

On Tuesday, September 6, at 7:00 PM, architect Andrew Piaskowy will conduct a tour of Trinity Episcopal Church, 326 Madison Avenue, Covington. Mr. Piaskowy was involved in the recent church renovation, from which he will show before and after slides.

The Cornerstone for the First Trinity Church building was laid in 1843. Stories of subsequent construction and other renovations at the same site over the years evoke an interesting tale of the evolution of one of Northern Kentucky's most prominent congregations.

This was the church of Kentucky Governor John W. Stevenson. The church's history involves important local figures and events, as well as interesting religious and cultural sidelights. For example, Mr. Piaskowy will be able to show carvings executed by an all female woodcarving club.

The tour will be free and open to the public and will be sponsored by the Kenton County Historical Society.

Before the program there will be a brief business meeting including the election of officers for the next year.

Tuesday, September 6, 7:00 PM  
Trinity Episcopal Church, 326 Madison Avenue, Covington.

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**Northern Kentucky Heritage**

Our new regional magazine is now one year old. The next issue starts the second year. Now is the time to renew your subscription to receive the next issue due out this fall. Subscribe now so that no issue will be missed. Some features articles include: "Covered Bridges of N. Kentucky", "KKK Murder in Owen County", "The Last Mayor of Latonia, KY", three "Sam Hill Stories" and more.

Subscription with membership in the Kenton County Historical Society - \$25.00

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Kenton County Historical Society, P.O. Box 641, Covington, KY 41012

## HISTORY OF COVINGTON

by O. J. Wiggins

Daily Commonwealth, May 24, 1884

(8th in a series herein transcribed)

The earliest record now found at the City Clerk's office is the following: "A meeting of the Trustees for the town of Covington convened at the store room of Mr. A. L. Gaines (1) in said town on the 9th of October, 1832. Present: William W. Southgate, Chairman, and Messrs. Cary Clemens, John B. Casey, Alexander L. Greer and Thomas Callant. Absent: Messrs. Gustavus Fisher and Isaac Martin."

The records of this meeting are attested by M. M. Benton, Clerk, and the minutes show that Messrs. Callant and Clemens, in conjunction with the Health Officer, were instructed to visit every house in town and abate nuisances; to procure a suitable room for use as a hospital for the unfortunate who may be attacked by malignant Asiatic cholera, and to borrow not to exceed \$1,000, if necessary for the support of the poor so attacked; "and for payment of the same the faith of the town will stand pledged" (2).

Market days were set for Tuesdays and Thursdays from daylight till 10 o'clock a. m., and a long ordinance containing 14 sections was passed regulating the markets.

Hamilton Martin and John Gray were candidates for Clerk of the Markets and Mr. Martin was elected, having received 3 votes to Mr. Gray's 2.

The resignation of Mr. Callant as Street Commissioner was received and the Board adjourned sine die.

The Board met again on the 23rd day of December, at the house of Gustavus Fisher, and Mr. John B. Casey presided.

At this meeting "Rolling Alleys" were subjected to a license of \$6 for three months and a forfeiture of that license forever should the alley be kept open after 10 o'clock at night or on the Sabbath day.

The public school-house was ordered sold at auction to be removed from the public square within ten days after January 5th, the date of sale.

Cary Clemens was allowed 87 1/2 cents for furnishing a rope for the public walk; and also the sum of ten dollars for keeping the well in repair for one year.

A committee was appointed to settle with Maj. Jefferson Phelps for rent of the lower ferry.

### 1833

At a meeting held July 1, 1833, a committee--Messrs. Clemens, Casey, Greer, and Fisher was appointed to contract for the building of an engine-house on the public square.

On February 25 a meeting was held at the law office of Phelps and Benton. Jefferson Phelps was allowed \$50 for attending to the town interests in the suit of Samuel Kennedy against the Trustees, then pending in the Scott Circuit Court.

This was the first attorney's fee allowed.

The town fire engine and apparatus was placed under the exclusive control of the fire company.

The subsequent meetings were held at "the office," as the clerk puts it; evidently the office of Phelps & Benton (3).

At the meeting April 17, 1833, Mr. Casey reported \$6 25 as realized by the sale of the market stalls.

Mr. Benton reported the school house sold to Calvin Littlefield for \$18 25, on three months credit.

Calvin Littlefield was granted a contract for keeping public well in repair, at \$20 per year.

Mr. Greer reported that after examining the list of subscriptions and cutting out irresponsible parties that the committee finds a balance due Mr. Clemens for building the Market-house of \$119 78. This is ordered paid out of any money in the Treasury one year from completion of said house.

The contract of the committee with Cary Clemens to build the engine house for \$225 was confirmed. The clerk was allowed \$6 for a record book. He was also allowed \$2.50 for making tax books for 1833 and \$5 for taking enumeration of inhabitants of the town. Also \$5 paid C. R. Langdon for printing for the Board. At the meeting April 18th the clerk allowed \$25 for his services for the year 1832; also \$5 for collecting show license for that year.

At an election held in a room of Mr. Cary Clemens, on Market Space, April 6, 1833, Trent Adams, Ross L. Thomas and A. Johnson acting as judges, the following Trustees were chosen: Cary Clemens, Wm. Hopkins, Hamilton Martin, John A. Goodson, John T. Levis, Cassius B. Sandford (4) and Geo. M. Southgate. On the 18th day of April the Trustees-elect took the oath of office before G. Fisher, Justice of the Peace. On the same day the Trustees chose Mr. Southgate Chairman and Treasurer. John Gray was appointed Clerk of the Market for the year 1833, and M. M. Benton Clerk of the Board.

#### **May 4, 1833**

Appropriations of \$10 each were made for digging a public well on Scott street near the market, and on Madison street.

Mr. Southgate resigned as Treasurer, and Mr. Cary Clemens was appointed.

Mr. Westerman was granted contract at \$18 to paint the Engine house.

At a meeting held May 10, 1833, Wm. W. Wade was appointed Tax Commissioner and John B. Casey and Jefferson Phelps were appointed Assistant Assessors.

On the evening of May 21 the Trustees met for the first time in the new Council Chamber over the Engine-house (5).

W. W. Wade declined to act and Andrew Ross was appointed Tax Commissioner for 1833.

The bond of Treasurer Cary Clemens, with John Gray as surety, and the bond of Clerk of Markets John Gray, with Cary Clemens as surety, were accepted, which was an equitable arrangement surely.

#### **PERSONAL REMINISCENCES**

From memoranda made by the late Hiram Martin, Esq., it appears that his parents were intimate friends of the renowned pioneers, Daniel Boone and Simon Kenton, and Mr. Martin mentions some interesting traits of those men that are not generally known, although historians are not altogether silent of the subject. Their bravery and prowess were beyond dispute, but their industry in anything but the chase, both for wild beasts or wild men, is somewhat questionable. Indeed Mr. Martin relates that Boone thought a door unnecessary except as protection against redskins and when the door of his stable fell from its wooden hinges he

closed the doorway by piling poles across it. He never had a gate or a pair of bars on his farm. His fences were made of poles and bark, and the only way ingress and egress was a "stingap." He was noted for his hospitality, and all the idle loafers of the neighborhood made his house their headquarters; and so great was his kindness of heart, and child like improvidence that he would stop his plow in the furrow to lend it to a neighbor when his corn needed plowing the most. He dreaded a contentious man and gave up his land to any interloper who attacked him with fictitious or trumped up title. His education was of the most limited nature, and his idea of religion unpronounced, although he would occasionally go to hear a Methodist minister named Whitaker, who rode a circuit in Kentucky at that time. Mr. Martin says Boone was a moral, honest, brave and truthful man; but he would---adventures a little when narrating them to attentive listeners. As a sample of the charity exercised by this child of nature, it is related that the same landsharks who robbed Boone and his friend, Edmon Rittenhouse (6), of their farms were about to take that of a poor widow named Nesbitt, when these two men, who could not have their own, brought up that of the widow, paying for it in hides and furs, so that she might have a home unmolested. Simon Kenton was the counterpart of Daniel Boone in character, but he had more business intelligence, and, as Mr. Martin puts it, more regard for the comfort of his family. His little farm showed neglect, but not so much as that of his friend. He used a stile to get in and out of his yard, while Boone passed by slipping a pole and stepping over a fence below high enough to turn hogs. Kenton probably owed his slight superiority over Boone to his wife who had the business head of the family. She kept things straight, tended the garden, and after the ground was broke, sewed the flax seed, pulled, rotted, swingled, hackled, spun, wove, and made up into clothes the flax crop all with her own hands. About the first of May she would attack the sheep, and by the first of November her family would be wearing the fleccc. This estimable woman, upon the death of Kenton, married George Norton, an experienced pioneer, but a man who kept poor all his life by overreaching himself in land contracts. He and his wife, formerly Mrs. Kenton, were buried about where Byrd and Wheeler street now intersect, which at the time of their death was on the farm of Capt. William Martin (7).



copy of a snapshot taken

August 13, 1994

Old Gaines Stagecoach Inn  
Nicholson road  
Walton, Kentucky

## ENDNOTES

1. In May 1818, Abner Gaines, who resided and operated a tavern in Williamstown, announced opening of a scheduled stagecoach route between Lexington and Cincinnati (Allen Webb Smith, Beginning at "the Point," A Documented History of Northern Kentucky and Environs, the Town of Covington in Particular, 1751-1834, printed locally, 1977). An old Gaines' stagecoach inn still stands near Walton, near where Route 16 from Covington through Kenton county intersects Highway 25 from Florence (Kentucky Historical Highway Marker). This Federal style house, also owned by John Pollard Gaines (1795-1858), who was born in Virginia, and who came to Boone county as a youth (K. P. and T. S. 7-14-1967, p. 6-K). He served in the War of 1812, practiced law in Walton, and represented the Boone County district in the state legislature. While engaged in the Mexican War he was in 1847 elected to Congress. In 1850 President Fillmore appointed him Governor of the Oregon Territory (1850-53), where he died on his farm (National Encyclopedia of American Biography, volume 8; obituary, C. J., 1-30-58).

2. October 1832--"Asiatic cholera visits Louisville, Lexington, Frankfort, Maysville and other towns, generally very lightly in the number of its victims" (Lewis Collins, History of Kentucky, revised by Richard Collins, 1874, volume I).

3. Mortimer M. Benton, attorney, Fourth street between Scott and Greenup; Jefferson Phelps, attorney, Greenup (1834 directory).

4. General Thomas Sandford (1762-1808), owned a farm at the present site of Ludlow, but drowned in the Ohio river at the age of forty-six (Smith). In the early 1800s his sons, Alexander and Alfred, represented Campbell county in the state legislature (Collins, volume II). In 1866 another son, Cassius B., was elected Mayor of Covington (Papers of John Burns).

5. "The first engine house in Covington was a two-story frame building 50 feet west of Greenup street on the Public Square. The City Council met in the second floor and the fire engine was kept below...." Lots 114, 115, 116, and 117 in the original plat of Covington came to be the location of the "Public Square and later Courthouse Square." However, the square was "never formally dedicated to the Public" (Smith).

6. "Among the First Settlers of Kenton County was Edmond Rittenhouse (a relative of the great American mathematician and astronomer, David Rittenhouse, of Pennsylvania) and family, who, in March, 1793, came down the Ohio in a flat-boat to the mouth of the Licking, and up that stream to Bank Lick creek, on which he was about to settle, 11 1/4 miles from the Licking; but the hostility of the Indians compelled him to remove immediately to Ruddle's station, between Cynthiana and Paris. He came back in 1795, and located on the west bank of Licking....." Another who sought refuge at Ruddle's station was John Martin who later settled a short distance from Rittenhouse. His son, William Martin, married Margaret Rittenhouse. William Martin had nine children: Isaac, John, Peter, Adam, William, Hiram, Enoch, Norton, "and another" (Collins, volume II).

(Transcription by Joe Gastright; endnotes by John Boh)

## CORRECTIONS OF PREVIOUS ENDNOTES --

2nd in series, footnote # 4: Mortimer M. Benton became first Mayor in 1834 (not 1830).

2nd in series, footnote # 8: other information indicates that here Wiggins was referring to the "Ashbrook Day House" at the southeast corner of Pike and Banklick (not the "Ashbrook house" at the northeast corner of present-day Robbins and Russell streets, also shown in the 1877 Atlas)

2nd in series, footnote # 16: the Methodist preacher probably was not "John G. Light, shoemaker, Greenup between Third and Fourth" (1834 directory). Rather he probably was George C. Light, one of a number of preachers who entered the Methodist ministry in the 1830s in Kentucky (Collins, volume I).

5th in the series, endnote # 6: The Farmers and Traders Bank built the current bank building at the northwest (not northeast) corner of Sixth and Madison, which later with a merger in 1910 became First National Bank.

5th in the series, endnote # 8: the author of "Chronicles of Trinity"<sup>45</sup> in the Christopher Gist Papers is MRS. Stephens I. Blakely.

## CELEBRATE CAMPBELL COUNTY'S BIRTHDAY

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1794 - 1994

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1. The book may be bought at the offices of the Campbell County Historical Society in Alexandria. 19 East Main Street on the second floor of the Court House on any Tuesday during regular office hours: 12 noon til 8 PM.
2. The book may also be purchased over the counter at all three branches of The Campbell County Public Library: Newport, Fort Thomas, and Cold Spring. Call your library for their hours.
3. Finally, for those that can not pick up the book in person, you can order a copy by mail for \$15 (book, postage and handling). Send address with check or money order (no cash please) to The Campbell County Historical Society, 19 East Main Street, Alexandria, Kentucky, 41001.

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### QUERY

I would like to know if any of your members have done research on any of the following names:

Meiman (also spelled Meimann, Maimann, Meymann)

Abeling

Peppersack

Brandewiede

Thyben (also spelled Theiben, Tieben)

I would be glad to trade what information I have been able to collect, or offer it to you for your files. I have traced some of the Meiman family back to the mid-1700's, others to about 1500 (in Germany).

Very truly yours,

Joseph G. Meiman

121 Jean St.

Ramsey, NJ 07446

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