

Bulletin of the Kenton County Historical Society

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

September/October

2005

PROGRAMS

Sep-

Yearly Election of Officers—Tour of Trinity Church Karl Lietzenmayer will conduct a guided tour of this historic Covington church following the yearly election of society officers.

tember 13, 2005 7:00 PM

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. A 1996 KET documentary will also be featured. The program will be at Trinity Church, 4th and Madison.

O c -

"Kentucky's Civil War" Book Signing at Battery Hooper, Ft. Wright Various authors, including Dr. Ramage of Northern Kentucky University, will be on hand.

tober 11, 2005 7:00 PM

The Bulletin

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The Kenton County Historical Society

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

email: nkyheritage.kchs@Juno.com

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Vice-President.....Ronin Einhaus
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Edward Whitehead and
Robert Webster (Bulletin Editor)

Karl Lietzenmayer (Ex Officio) Charles Reckley (Associate)

Special Survey Enclosed

You have probably noticed that
this month's bulletin is thicker than usual.
That's because there is a very special insert included in this issue.

Please take a few minutes and complete
the enclosed membership survey.

Only with this information will we be able to
better the society as a whole, gain new membership,
and provide new and more enjoyable programs.

Complete the entire survey and return it in the
self-addressed, stamped envelope provided.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

German St. Paul Evangelical Church in Covington And Its Successor, United Church of Christ

Compiled By: Karl Lietzenmayer

Preface

The United Church of Christ is relatively young and partly for this reason relatively unfamiliar. The UCC, as it is known, resulted from a merger of two American denominations – the Evangelical and Reformed and the Congregational Christian Churches. As with many other denominations, both had much in common, but these groups had the wisdom to recognize it. The new denomination was born June 25-27, 1957. It was, as the dates indicate, a slow delivery but a successful one, nonetheless.

Evangelical-Reformed Church

Both branches of the UCC reach back to the initial Protestant movement. The Evangelical and Reformed Church had a slightly older history. The roots of the E & R Church trace to 16th century Germany, swept up into the scattered sparks of theological upheaval begun by Luther, Calvin and Zwingli. King Frederick III (called “the Wise”) of Germany authorized a unified confession of faith, which served as an official position for the Reformed churches. Two young biblical scholars were commissioned to draft a reformed catechism: Zacharias Ursinus and Caspar Olevionus, who jointly authored the Heidelberg Catechism (1563). This became the great condensations of the Christian Gospel of that age. The reformed Church moved into colonial America and contributed cultural enrichment to our young nation. In 1934 it merged with the Evangelical Synod of North America, which had a more pietistic-personalistic emphasis.¹

Congregational Church

The Congregational wing of the UCC Church is slightly younger by a few years. The Congregational Church traces itself to 16th century England. The first such church in England was formed in Norwich (1581). Robert Browne, pastor of that church, gave the first public formulation for the denomination in his *Reformation Without Tarrying for Anie*. The book was widely circulated and because of its influence, early Congregationalists were dubbed “Brownists.” The Pilgrim fathers were Congregationalists. The American contingent came through Holland. Members of the Scrooby Meeting House, Nottinghamshire, settled in Massachusetts in the 1620s. The Salem Church was representative of American Congregationalists. Congregationalists became known for their ecumenical outlook and in 1931 merged with the Christian Church whose church government was similar.²

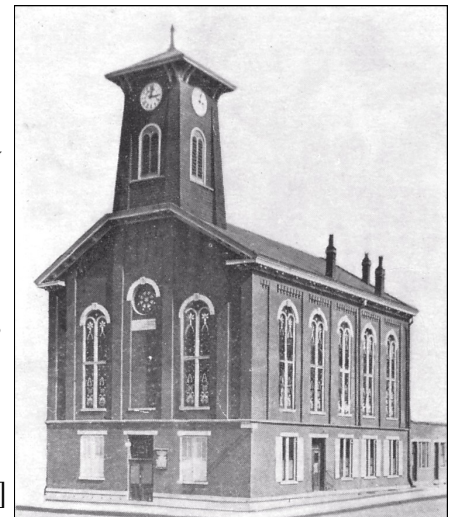
German Evangelical and Reformed Church in Covington

In the spring of 1847, a small number of Protestant Germans came together in Covington to organize an Evangelical congregation and build a church.³ The first religious service took place August 29, 1847 in a small frame church at Eleventh Street and the alley between Banklick and Russell Streets. The members elected Rev. Henry Christian Dolle as pastor.⁴ The congregation soon outgrew its modest quarters and a cornerstone for a new church was laid July 1, 1867 and by April 1868 the red brick building that stood for so long at the corner of Eleventh and Banklick was finished.⁵ The frame building was used as an education building.

Reflective of lack of education and social isolation in the West, in the first quarter century of the existence of the congregation, the church had much misfortune with its pastors. As the 75th Anniversary Booklet states, “The good ones remained only a short time [because] of small support

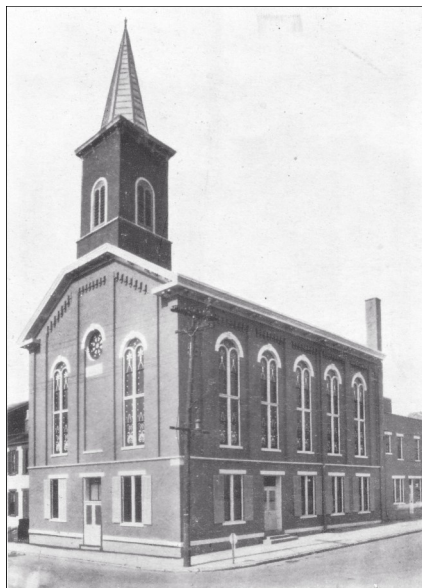
received. The no-efficient were hard to get rid of which often brought on bitter controversies.”⁶ An administrative crisis in 1858 over retaining of a somewhat illiterate but charismatic pastor led to a division in the church. The minority attempted to get control of the church property and a long, drawn-out legal entanglement ensued.⁷

Members split from St. Paul’s in 1862 who desired a German education then provided only in Catholic Parochial Schools. The more forceful organization of the Reformed Church also appealed.⁸ Also, St. Paul’s members were not adverse to beer drinking since leading members were brewers: Mr. Geisbauer of the Covington Brewery, Deglow and Riedlin of the Bavarian Brewery, Lang of Lewisburg Brewery, and Brenner of Brenner Brewery.⁹ Except for these trying years, the congre-



gation has enjoyed good and caring pastors and in general has grown in numbers and accomplishments.

By the 25th anniversary, many improvements were made to the buildings. In 1875, the roof was covered with slate.¹⁰ In 1898, Frederick Brenner, heir of brewer John and Caroline Brenner, presented the church with \$2,000 for a new organ. The old organ was donated to St. John's Congregational Church in West Covington. By 1900, modern times called for replacement of the numerous heating stoves with a central furnace. Gas lights were replaced with electric in 1913. The parsonage at 1121 Banklick Street was sold in 1919, and in 1923 a new parsonage was purchased at 1521 Holman Street. At that time, the tower had become unsafe and was rebuilt, but without the clock.¹¹



The Evangelical and Reformed Churches were combined in 1934, and this church became a member of the Southwest Ohio Synod. Many additional improvements were made to the buildings, not the least of which was the expansion of the education facility.

New Location

By their 100th anniversary, the church was literally bulging with people. Finally, on March 4, 1957, the decision was made to move, since the old church could no longer provide the necessary space for this growing congregation. On June 24, 1962, 7.2 acres at 429 Fort Henry Drive was purchased for \$30,000.



Another five years passed before the church had funds to begin building and groundbreaking was held May 21, 1967. The organ was renovated and moved from the old church; chimes were added in 1970. The resultant structure can now accommodate a congregation of 400.¹² When it was finished, there were less than 200 members and a lot of vision and hope.

Fate of Banklick Church



The old structure was sold to an African-American congregation known as All Nations Temple. It is not clear whether the building was still in operation as a church when a fire broke out on September 24, 1990, completely gutting the century-old structure.¹³ A long-standing landmark on Banklick Street is now a memory and only pictures remain. The old church's location was on the center beat of the city, since Banklick Street was then the main avenue from town to the south, which ran through Latonia as Banklick Pike or Old Lexington Pike [now KY Route 17]. It is difficult to imagine that such a narrow street was once a main thoroughfare, but it was adequate in the days of horse and wagon.



1. Pictorial Directory, St. Paul United Church of Christ, Lookout Heights, KY [1987]. See also, *Britannica Encyclopedia*, "Evangelical & Reformed Church."

2. *Ibid.*

3. The only records of the original congregation is the cash book from 1847-1861. According to that, Carl Geisbauer was treasurer; Trustees: Carl Wolf, Valentine Hagen, Henry Uhlhorn, Ludwig Kattan, recording sec.

4. Seventy-fifth Anniversary Booklet (1847-1922) of the Evangelical Protestant St. Paul's Congregation, page 3.

5. Hundredth Anniversary Booklet (1847-1947) of St. Paul Evangelical & Reformed Church, page 5.

6. Seventy-fifth Anniversary Booklet, *op. cit.*, page 5.

7. *Ibid.*

8. *Kenton County Historical Society Quarterly Review*, summer, 1985.

9. *Ibid.* 10. *Ibid.* 11. Seventy-fifth Anniversary Booklet, *op. cit.*, page 5.

12. "St. Paul United Church of Christ Pictorial Directory" (1987), page 6.

13. *Kentucky Post*, 24 Sep 1990.

Ma Perkins

Best-Loved Radio “Soap Opera” Involved Local Actors

By: Karl Lietzenmayer

Among the great homespun philosophers of old-time radio, none is remembered with more affection and pathos than Ma Perkins. Flowing into kitchens each afternoon to a slight variation of “My Old Kentucky Home,” *Ma Perkins* was one of radio’s most popular daytime serials, spanning almost the entire life of network broadcasting.



Actress Virginia Payne in the early years as Ma Perkins

The program was first heard as a local feature on WLW, Cincinnati, August 14, 1933. After a 3-month trial, sponsor, Procter & Gamble, brought the serial to Chicago in a coast-to-coast NBC slot. It premiered there December 4, 1933 and was sold to CBS in 1942. *Ma Perkins* had rare double network status for six years, doing a 1:15 P.M. stint for CBS and the NBC show two hours later. At the height of its fame, the serial was also heard in Canada, Hawaii, and throughout Europe.

In an incredible stint, Ma, herself, was played the entire 27 years of the show’s running by Cincinnati Virginia Payne, never missing a single performance. Miss Payne, just



Virginia Payne in the later years

23 years old when the program first aired, was 50 when it ended. She was the daughter of a Cincinnati doctor, breaking into radio at WLW. There, she played *Honey Adams*, a singing Southern heroine in an early radio epic (Jane Forman is said to have been Honey’s singing voice) and, in the summer of 1933, she was tapped for *Ma Perkins*.

Unlike her fictional heroine, Virginia Payne was highly educated. She held two degrees from the University of Cincinnati. Her convincing performance boosted sales of Oxydol and soaring ratings competed with nighttime shows. 1

A Covington man, Charles P. Egleston, played the character Shuffle Shober, Ma’s partner for all but the last two years of the show. The character possessed many of Ma’s personal qualities: tough honesty combined with an instinctive understanding of the human spirit. Charles P. Egleston (sometimes spelled Eggeston or Egelston) was the son of Charles R. L. Egleston and Anna B. Egleston, born in Covington, July 17, 1882.2

Throughout his father’s working life, Charles R. L. Egleston, is listed as a traveling salesman or as a clerk and left his wife a widow about 1911. The Egleston family appears in Covington directories from 1898 through 1934.3



Charles P. Egleston, at right

As one surveys the family’s fate through the directories, Charles P. declares himself a student until after 1900, when he is usually listed as a clerk or traveling salesman after his father’s profession. However, it is a bode of his future career in radio that in 1908 he declares his profession as “actor!” He worked as a salesman or clerk until the 1931 directory, which shows his occupation as “radio announcer.”4 His obituary was not found at this writing, since the newspaper indexes are incomplete for the 1950s and 1960s.

CBS acquired sole possession of the show in 1948,

Story continued at right

Covington Slave Murder/Suicide

Karl Lietzenmayer

Ever since the re-awakening of the story of Margaret Garner, more information about the plight of those enslaved is coming to light. It would be assumed that Margaret's story was not terribly unique, in that other captured slaves would have rather died than return to that condition. Below is a discovery of just such an event that happened in our own community 157 years ago. The following is taken from "The Bugle," an anti-slavery newspaper in Salem, Ohio, June 2, 1848. Apparently there were two such incidents described here. More research into these events is necessary for clarification. The author thanks Dr. Ann Butler, Kentucky State University, for sharing this with us.

Murder and Attempted Suicide

We learn that a Mr. Rust, living back (south?) of Covington, on Tuesday, brought a slave man and woman with two children to the jail in that place (Covington) and put them in a cell for safekeeping, intending to send them "down the river" at the first favorable opportunity.

In the morning, it was found the man had cut the throat of his wife and children and attempted to kill himself by cutting his own throat. He was alive at the time of our information, and it was thought that he might recover. What his motive was, we have not learned, but it is not hard to find one sufficient.

To a slave who, despite his debasement, has the heart of a man in his bosom, the sugar fields of the South are a hell, to be gladly escaped from by death. We can well imagine that in the dim light of *his* reason, it seemed to him a *holy* deed to place those whom he loved in that grave where there is no master's whip, and all are free alike in the eye of the Great Master of all....

Since writing the above, we have learned that the supposition we have made is true, and that the wife was not only willing, but anxious to die. It is thought that the man will die [as well]. It is to be hoped so. The catastrophe of this new enactment of *Virginius*, should be no other than death [see below]. Our horror of the deed changes to admiration and our heart throbs at it.

We learn that the slave man and woman concerned in the *Virginius* tragedy over the [Ohio] River, were to be sold down the river while the child was to stay behind. They were quite opposed to going down the river, but would have been quiet had their child been along. The trader proposed that they should all come together and stay together till they were shipped, when the child could be taken back again to Grant County. The slaves were not informed of this arrangement and only discovered it by accident as they were placed in jail. They then resolved upon the dreadful deed and the mother cut the throat of the child herself, the husband cutting hers and then attempting to complete the great sacrifice, by the immolation of himself.

and *Ma Perkins* continued there until its demise on November 25, 1960. When the show was finally canceled, it was Virginia Payne who summed it all up, touching the highlights in an emotional farewell:

"Ma Perkins again. This was our broadcast 7,065. I first came to you on December 4, 1933. Thank you all for being so loyal to us these twenty-seven years.

The part of Willie has been played right from the beginning by Murray Forbes. Shuffle was played for 25 years by Charles Egleston, and the last two years by Edwin Wolfe, who was also longtime director. The Fay you have been hearing these past few years has been Margaret Draper, and the part was played for many years by Rita Ascot. For 15 years our Evey has been Kay Campbell: Helen Lewis plays Gladys, and Tom Wells has been played by John Larkin and

Casey Allen. Our director is Richard Leonard. Our writer for more than 20 years has been Orin Tovrov.

Ma Perkins has always been played by me, Virginia Payne. And if you'll write to me, Ma Perkins, at Orleans, Massachusetts, I'll try to answer you. Goodbye and may God bless you." ⁵

1. John Dunning, *Tune in Yesterday – The Ultimate Encyclopedia of Old Time Radio (1925-1976)*, Prentice-Hall Inc., Englewood Cliffs, NJ (1976), p. 383.
2. *Daily Commonwealth*, 17 July 1882, p. 4
3. Covington City Directories, Kenton County Public Library. In 1898, the Eglestons are shown living at the southeast corner of Willow and Mullins, Covington. Later they resided at 909 Scott Street for many years, and in the 1931 directory were living at 222 East 16th Street.
4. Williams Directory 1931.
5. Dunning, *op. cit.*, p. 385.

Black Brigade Historic Monument Sought

By: Molly Lynn

Pressed into service so suddenly and mysteriously when police rounded them up at bayonet point, the free blacks mostly from Cincinnati's Bucktown that made up the "Black Brigade" thought they were being driven back into slavery.

Pre-dating the 54th Massachusetts Colored Infantry Regiment, the "Black Brigade" helped construct the defenses of Cincinnati in 1862 and the pontoon bridge over the Licking River near Latonia [see *NKH* vol. XII, no. 2]. Despite that critical contribution, the Black Brigade remains largely unknown today.

The commanding General Lew Wallace ordered the mayor of Cincinnati to have black men rounded up and organized into a construction gang. They were marched across the Ohio River on a hastily erected pontoon bridge as were most of the other local militia from Ohio.

Once in Northern Kentucky, however, the Black Brigade was quickly detoured to other jobs. Instead of digging trenches, clearing trees and building breastworks, they were set to work cooking and doing laundry for Union troops stationed at Ft. Wright.

That went on for a couple of days until Col. William Dixon, a Cincinnati with abolitionist sympathies, learned of it. He organized the 500 men into a construction unit and allowed them to return home for a night to gather their belongings and tell their families about the important task they had been given. The next morning, Dixon returned at 5:00 AM to find 706 men waiting for him.¹

Over the next several weeks, the brigade constructed various hilltop fortifications and dug trenches from John's Hill to Ft. Thomas, Campbell County. "This was one of the most magnanimous activities in the history of race relations: the story started with them being treated like animals, forced into pens across from City Hall [Cincinnati]." Dr. James Ramage said, "They would have liked to have volunteered to fight, but were not allowed because to obey the order of Gen. Wallace, you had to go to your polling place to volunteer, and free blacks could not vote."²

Cincinnati had struggled for years with conflicts between its strong Abolitionist movement (led by Eli Coffin) and industry that relied heavily on raw materials produced cheaply by slave labor in the South.

Just a few weeks before the Brigade was formed,

the same police who had rousted its members from their homes had nearly rioted against the black community, and been deterred from violence only after being distracted by the Confederate threat of General Henry Heth's 8,000-man force.

Former Ohio House majority leader William Mallory Sr. and David Day of Day Designers & Associates want to erect an historical monument to publicize this little-known brigade. The two are seeking backers for the monument to be erected near the new National Freedom Center, Cincinnati. Mr. Day has drawn plans for a 21-foot-tall bronze column relating the story.

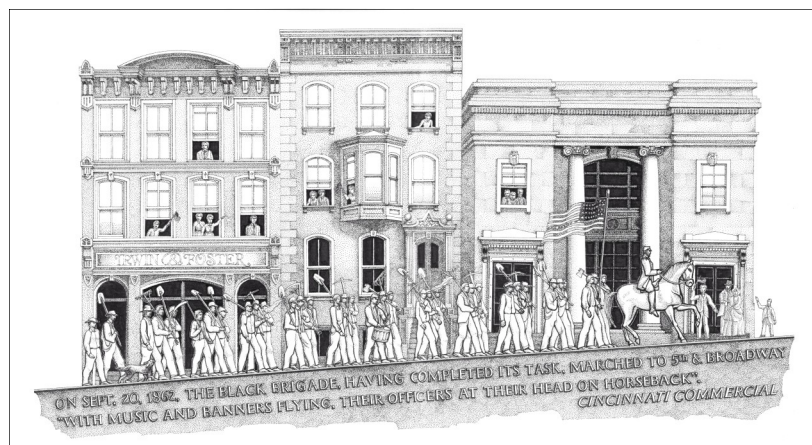
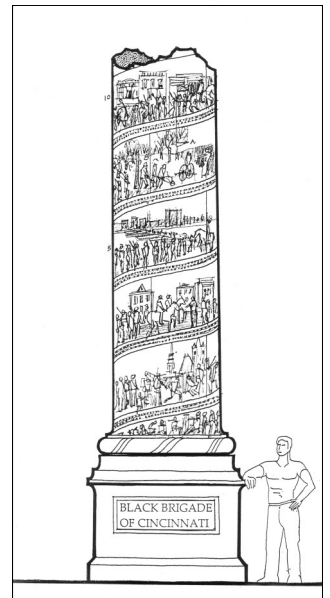
For more information and to contribute to this project, contact David Day, Designer & Associates, Inc., 1310 Pendleton Street, Studio 704, Cincinnati, Ohio 45210. Telephone (513) 621-4060.

Interview: David Day, CEO David Day Designer & Assts., Cincinnati.
Dr. James Ramage,
Prof. of History, NKU.

*Artist's rendering
of the proposed monument.*

*Right: a depiction of the
basic design and
height of the statue.*

*Below: an enlargement
of one particular
area of the
running
storyboard.*



Then and Now



Left and above are two "then" views of Latonia's Ritte's Corner. The view at right is how the famous corner looks "now"



"Then"-courtesy Kenton Co. Public Library
"Now"-courtesy Ron Einhaus

Special Thanks

Personal Diaries Find A Home

A special thanks is extended to William Longstreet, who recently awarded the Kenton County Public Library with a collection of personal diaries recorded by his grandfather. The diaries were written between 1931 and 1942 and include several newspaper clippings and photographs that relate to events recorded in the diaries. Collections such as these are vital to the preservation of family histories and also make wonderful research material for other topics. We are fortunate to have people like Mr. Longstreet who realize the value of such items and show them their proper respect.

Glass Bottle Donation

Karl Lietzenmayer has made a nice donation to the Cincinnati Historical Society in the name of the Kenton County Historical Society. The donation is a collection of rare glass bottles of long-gone Cincinnati businesses. These historic bottles were recently discovered in his 809 Scott Boulevard apartment building, left by a tenant, and are embossed with the following names:

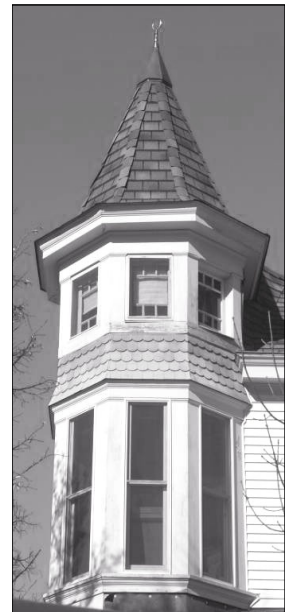
Cincinnati Soda Water & Ginger Ale Co.
Queen City Bottling Works
The Anchor Bottling Works, Cin. O.
J. C. Meinhardt & Bros. Co. Cin. O. and
Eagle Bottling Works, Cincinnati, O.

Monthly Mystery Photo

September



October



To find out where they are, go to:
www.roneinhaus.com/KCHSmysteryphoto.html

July was: 1622 Scott Blvd., Covington
August was: 418 Highway Avenue, Ludlow

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

KENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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