

A History of Covington Through 1865

John E. Burns

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Editor's Notes

John Burns was a retired social studies teacher from Covington's Holmes High School and board member of the Kenton County Historical Society when this editor met him in 1991. I had just joined the Society and I was already fascinated by our local story and intrigued by some of the oral presentations of Society meetings.

At the time, I was living in the James T. Earle House in Latonia and wanted to know more about this fascinating man and his family. John was very helpful walking me through some of the sources and ways to get at the information. This resulted in my first piece of research, eventually published in *Northern Kentucky Heritage Magazine* [see: Volume II, #1].

Later, after his death, I learned he had been working on a manuscript about the history of Covington, finished in 1986. Some of the Society members, such as Charles King, worked on preparing it to present to the University Press of Kentucky for publishing consideration. Mr. Burns, unfortunately, left off the page numbers from all of his references and this had to be corrected before the publisher would consider accepting his work.

There is an unnecessary amount of *Ibid* endnote numbers but these were kept intact and no attempt was made to consolidate the system. Unfortunately, the manuscript was never accepted by University Press. Mr. Burns left the manuscript copyright to the Kenton County Public Library where several of his typed copies have been prepared and bound for reference use.

Now that the internet allows greater access to information, the Historical Society decided to make his manuscript available on the Kenton Library web site, in time for celebration of Covington's 200th birthday.

His writing has, hopefully been improved by removing some of his literary habits of using some unnecessary phrases and the overuse (in this editor's opinion) of the past perfect tense. Care was taken not to alter the meaning and intent of his writing during this process. The Society hopes this addition to the local story will prove valuable to many. This work now includes an index for ease of use.

Be aware that the information in Chapter 1 – Prehistory of Covington – is based on information available in the 1980s and does not include paleontological research since that time.

Karl J. Lietzenmayer

**The Kenton County Historical Society
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Author's Note

History, by its very definition, must be a record and, because of this, I have tried to be guided by the belief the information contained in these pages should be based on primary sources whenever possible. Much of the information has never before been collected and presented in a formal history.

To construct this account, it was necessary to consult and sift through every conceivable type of primary as well as secondary, source. This indeed, was often a tedious but usually enjoyable task. Manuscripts, census returns, newspaper files, tombstones, courthouse and cemetery records, school and church records, personal letters and family records, legislative acts of state, county and city governing bodies as well as minutes and records of scores of other private and public organizations were consulted.

Quotes from these sources have been liberally used and every attempt has been made to faithfully repeat them in their original forms. Unseemly long sentences, incorrect grammar and spellings, erratic punctuation and archaic terms have all been preserved. To change them, it seems, would be to destroy some of the flavor of the times in which they were first written.

So too, may the unaltered quotes help Covingtonians gain a better historical perspective and greater awareness of the role their predecessors played in the affairs of the region, state and nation.

Furthermore, an attempt has been made to present the city's history as a part of and intertwined with, that of the state and nation. No community exists in a vacuum and neither does the subject treated in these pages. Full recognition must be given the fact that many local events have often had state and national influence, just as state and national events have often had a distinct bearing on local happenings.

An earnest attempt has also been made to include accounts and names of many everyday citizens, the people who contribute so mightily to the history of any city, state or nation, but whose lives are seldom noted in standard histories.

It is hoped this volume will be utilized in such a manner as to enhance and preserve knowledge of the community's background, as knowledge is basic to virtually every aspect of life in a democratic society. The study is admittedly imperfect and undoubtedly misses several aspects that should have been included. So too, errors may have been written in and, if such is so, it can only be due to the author's own imperfections and faulty research and presentation.

John E. Burns

John E. Burns
1986

Acknowledgements

I have become indebted to many individuals for their freely-offered help in compiling and recording this background of Kentucky's northernmost city. A special thanks is due the many librarians who patiently aided in the needed research. This is especially true for the staffs of the Kenton County (KY) Public Library and the Cincinnati Historical Society.

Particular recognition for many helpful suggestions must be given Michael Averdick of the Kenton County Public Library and to the late Allen Webb Smith, local historian and author of "Beginning at the Point."

In a very real sense, this book represents a team effort by these people, for without the contribution of their skills and efforts, it would be of far less consequence. For those contributions, I am truly grateful.

John E. Burns

John E. Burns
1986

Introduction

Kentucky is a land steeped in history. Parts of its story have been told many times over, but much has remained untold. Critics claim one of the most serious shortcomings of its written histories is the fact those texts usually present an extremely limited view of what comprises Kentucky and its past. The state's historians, the critics claim, have tended to be chiefly concerned with exploring the past of a few selected regions and then presenting their work as a history of the state.

The state is much larger than those few sub-regions and events occurring outside them, according to the critics, have frequently had a vital, though overlooked, impact on the state's development. Probably some of the most glaring omissions are those concerning the story of the state's most notable cities – Covington.

The omissions, some say, has been due to the fact that in many ways, Covington is atypical in the annals of Kentucky's past and does not always fit in with much of the state's mythology. They say its generations of citizens have consistently shown a tendency to be different and sometimes even aloof from other Kentuckians whom Covingtonians often regarded as being provincial.

The community was never a large slaveholding center and it abandoned its agrarian outlook at an early date. It became the state's leading center of urbanity during the nineteenth century and even today its citizens hold what are probably some of Kentucky's most metropolitan and cosmopolitan perspectives.

For an historian, Covington must be recognized as one of the state's most interesting communities. Its background, dating back to the ice age and beyond is unique for Kentucky. Being on the Ohio River, it acquired a vastly different heritage and outlook from that of other communities in the state, as its geography and history worked together to produce the modern city.

Covington, besides being the center of Kentucky's second most populace region, is a city of considerable architectural interest. Many claim its various neighborhoods provide some of the finest townscapes in the entire Ohio Valley. Certainly, its very geographic setting amidst curving hills lining the Ohio and Licking Rivers provide constant changes of vistas. Coming north along the Dixie Highway, once the traveler is past the garish strips of gasoline stations, gaudy fast-food places and equally gaudy shopping centers, he is treated to a sweeping panorama of a closely-packed European-type city nestled below the enclosing hills. The outstanding overlook from that highway's Big Bend offers a view matched by few other places.

The city played a prime role in the history of the state, and indeed, in that of the entire Ohio Valley. Inseparably linked to it are the names of many of the most honored stalwarts of America's history, for Covington knew the likes of Simon Kenton, Daniel Boone, George Rogers Clark, President John Quincy Adams, the Marquis de Lafayette and President Ulysses S. Grant, as well as a whole host of others. It has produced, or been home to, more men and women of nationally recognized artistic and creative ability than probably any other city in the Commonwealth. Every alumnus of college courses in American art, literature and dramatics has already been introduced to the products of Covington artists through studies of the talents of Beard, Barnhorn, Duveneck, Farney, Forrest and Drake – just to name a few.

When this artistic tradition is combined with the city's architectural, political and Gaelic and Teutonic background, one can readily understand its uniqueness for Kentucky.

Enclosed within the city's corporate limits there is a mix of neighborhoods ranging from those which are densely packed with recent migrants from the mountains and other rural regions, to those of the comfortable homes and broad lawns of Kenton Hills and Monte Casino. The inner city itself, has all the earmarks of age and of its European background. Quaint narrow streets are lined with tall, narrow Italianate homes on tiny building lots with tiny, private backyards. Since many of those older parts of town were substantially built and since each succeeding generation managed its own concept of modernization with a certain amount of discretion and taste, the community easily produces a feeling of comfort and a sense of continuity with the past.

Many of these older neighborhoods reflect a character and grace so frequently missing in the community's surrounding suburban sprawl. The homes represent periods of good craftsmanship, stained glass and decorative wrought iron. Quaint neighborhoods that were residential during the early nineteenth century remain residential today. It has been said this legacy of the past is the envy of many other cities which became sensitive to neighborhood preservation after it was too late.

Here though, are neighborhoods where the construction of steel and concrete skyscraper office and apartment buildings was prevented because it would mean the razing of century-old homes and where state highway officials have found citizens preferred narrow twisting streets and avenues to high-speed expressways. Here, entire neighborhoods impart a sense of the past and their protected existence is cited as the best example of true progress.

Still, the town has always been too progressive to be considered stodgy or even genteel and too sophisticated to be considered crude. Yet, it seemed only normal for it to preserve and display its cultural and historic heritage and to encourage whole neighborhoods to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Frequently however, those engaged in what has been called historic preservation were little more than novices who possessed only the slightest knowledge of the community's past. As a result, there have been instances of new and worthwhile construction being discouraged in order to save what was sometimes nothing more than dilapidated eyesores as virtually no effort was made to discriminate between "historic" and merely old. When criticized for such shortcomings, the offended preservationists would then speak of something they vaguely called "architectural significance." Once again thought, there seemed to be little or no ability to discriminate between the worthwhile and the bad. They, like many of the city officials of the late twentieth century, were doing more than nodding to the past – they were bowing.

Yet, to help understand any community, one must know something of the past. In a sense, Covington's history mirrors the history of America – the land of forests, thickets and roving bands of Indians, the arrival of white explorers, its settlement and growth as a "proprietary" community, its independence from that colonial condition, the trauma of growth and self-government, the influx of immigrants, urbanization and industrialization, and the suburban versus urban complexities of the late twentieth century.

Covington's history is a tapestry starting thousands of years ago with the formation of its hills, valleys and its streams. The Indians fought over the site and it served as a landmark for explorers who made particular note of it in their journals. Armies rendezvoused here, trained here and launched invasions of Indian territory from here. Eventually came its first permanent settlers with the arrival of Thomas Kennedy, his family, his farming and his ferry business.

From its very inception, the Covington site was a magnet for settlers from the older middle colonies and New England. To these, were added a number of southerners who were hardy enough to venture so close to the state's northern region and its proximity to the old Northwest Territory.

The Covington area might have been settled much sooner had it not been for its nearness to those homelands of scores of hostile Indian tribes. Its site on the banks of the Ohio, like other stretches of land along that stream, represented some of Kentucky's most dangerous land in which the white name might linger. As a result, many of the migrants found it safer to seek the state's interior. There, though not immune to devastating Indian raids, they would at least be in a location that forced the red men into making longer journeys in order to carry out their attacks and so be less apt to take the settlers by surprise.

In addition, the state's interior was less likely to experience the constant harassment of continuing small raids that would surely exist along the state's northern border. Hubbard Taylor felt this way in 1790, as did Stephen Trigg. Other Covington area settlers, such as the Rittenhouse family, who did not necessarily agree with this view, were temporarily driven away, while others, such as Captain Cruise, paid with their lives.

So too, the very nature of the pioneers involved must be considered. The vast majority of Kentucky's earliest settlers were farmers. They were producers rather than adventurers, explorers or traders and as such, were less prone to take unnecessary risks. Certainly, the banks of the Ohio offered far greater risks to their lives and property than did the state's interior.

If the local countryside seems more peaceful today, it is because those associated with its settlement were strong enough and persistent enough to effectively handle obstacles that would have stopped the more timid. Neither did they ever waver in their faith and devotion to the concept of a free and democratic society. Those coming from the East and from Europe viewed themselves as being absolutely free and they didn't countenance denying that freedom to others. They were patriots to the core and gave unstinting support to their new American nation.

All this stood in stark contrast to the Tory activity and sentiment found elsewhere in the state at the time of the Revolutionary War and to the strong support secession received in certain communities during the mid-nineteenth century.

The early course of events at the Covington site and the town's subsequent history were, of course, closely affected by its physical setting. It is located at 39 degrees 05' latitude and 7 degrees 30' longitude. The city lies

further north than entire sections of Illinois, Indian and Ohio; further south than much of Virginia, Maryland and Delaware; and further east than parts of the Atlantic coastal states of Georgia and Florida.

The Ohio River served as an east-west route and met the Licking Valley from the south at this point. The Licking in turn joined the Miami Valleys from the north to provide connections for relatively easy north-south travel. The Indians traveled these routes, the whites traveled them and in time, they became railroad entrances for the city. As a result, the site was not only a favored gathering place for the red man and a rendezvous point for military expeditions, but later became one of the state's chief focal points for commerce and industry and a bastion of loyalty that helped insure Kentucky's adherence to the Union cause during the Civil War.

To be sure, the path leading to events of today has not been smooth. The city experienced conflict over political, social, economic and moral issues. Whether the differences related to taxation, temperance, national expansion, slavery or any other controversial issue, they were passionately argued over and sometimes fought over.

As Covington grew, it, like all cities, reflected the outlook of its people. Initially, the town site was part of Virginia and, after the creation of Kentucky, it experienced a whole host of county divisions. First it was part of Fayette County, then Woodford, Scott, Mason, Campbell and finally Kenton. It survived depressions and booms, wars and floods and thrived through it all.

Because of the city's role in the state's development, its history is well worth every Kentuckian's attention. History, of course, may come in many forms. In these pages it takes the form of dates and quotes from official papers; social and economic statistics; stories of disasters and war-time emergencies; tales of nativism and internationalism; and accounts of archaic songs and poems, plays and concerts, parties and weddings and births and deaths. All of these, along with politics, education and scores of other topics are examined as facets of the community's development and its position in the overall history of Kentucky and the nation.

Probably more so than any other city in the state, Covington, with its varied ethnic background, has the atmosphere of a long-settled metropolitan community. It witnessed the metamorphoses of the Ohio Valley from a primitive forest land to a hub of industry and commerce and a magnet for throngs of European immigrants.

By the 1850s, Covington was truly a unique city for Kentucky. It was estimated that fully one-third of its population was foreign born and, as one individual noted, scarcely a day passed when large numbers of Irish and German immigrants did not come to make their homes here. A few years later, another citizen commented that the Irish migration "continues with fearful steadiness," while still another joked about the large and growing number of local German singing-type saloons, saying Covington could easily be thought of as "a land flowing with beer and harmony."

The European immigrants left an indelible mark on the community, yet through it all, the town maintained many typical aspects of an anti-bellum river town with its numerous Georgian homes and their wrought-iron embellishments. Wealthy river men built fine homes near the waterfront in a neighborhood that still retains the lingering spirit of Covington's riverboat heritage.

The coming of the steamboat and of steam-powered machines heralded the town's expansion in commercial and industrial fields. Its position was further enhanced by the coming of the railroad which set off a boom in these fields and contributed to a spectacular population growth. So too, was it furnishing key personnel to the nation's military, political, economic and artistic life and on at least one occasion was proposed as a new location for the state's capitol. It continued attracting scores of European immigrants and blossomed into a genuine attraction for those looking for the land of promise.

The advent of the railroad also helped account for the city's commercial hub moving further away from the river. The town's founders originally drew up a town plat that included a pair of wide market places which they envisioned as the local center of commerce. Their concept was followed for a period of time, but the location of the railroad terminus several blocks away prompted such a commercial boom in the terminal's vicinity that it quickly took the lead as the region's prime business center.

As the nation moved closer to the trauma of civil war, Covington became more and more exceptional among Kentucky's cities. It was probably the state's rowdiest and certainly its most style-conscious city. Its people were far more cosmopolitan in outlook than those of any other Kentucky city, and this is understandable. It was industrial and it was theater and concert going. It was home to artists and artisans and it was home to immigrants and to gracious living of the long-established well-to-do.

At some point during the city's development, its citizens seemed to develop a feeling of superiority over Kentuckians in other parts of the state. One of the points on which this was readily apparent concerned work habits,

for those living elsewhere were often viewed as being somewhat shiftless, or at best, slow to complete any task involving manual labor.

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Another, and probably most notable area of this superiority complex, came in the matter of speech. Other Kentuckians, whether from the mountains, the central part, or the western lowlands, were usually seen as speaking with a twang that sometimes proved unintelligible, but always amusing. Even certain food styles popular elsewhere in the state were frequently rejected as being fit for only those of the poorest tastes. Cornbread, possum, turnip greens and fat back frequently brought forth condescending smiles.

Still, the city and its residents have always expressed pride in their own position as Kentuckians. They thrill to the sounds of *My Old Kentucky Home*, and regard their position on the south side of the Ohio as a blessing unknown to those north of that stream.

If, as has been said by others, that the temperament and general disposition of Kentuckians make them the Irish of America, then surely the very center of that "Irishness" must be Covington. Here, like Kentuckians everywhere, the residents firmly believe their state is not only a physical entity, but an esthetic experience as well, and the envy of the rest of the nation. They boast of its landscapes and resources and true to their Gaelic heritage, have always displayed a penchant for explosive and confusing politics at the least expected moment and have even been known to wager on the outcome of a horse race. Again, as befitting their Gaelic background, they tend to use a tone of deference when speaking of either.

The town's tobacco and bourbon making days are part of the state's panorama of history. Its first streets were named for governors and the county in which it is located bears the name of the state's leading pioneer explorer and Indian fighter.

In light of all this, one can readily understand the sentiments of the nineteenth century newsman who said, "Covington is a part and parcel of Kentucky; her people have a common interest in the glory and prosperity of the State they love – whose laws and institutions they obey and uphold. Her prosperity *ought* to be a source of rejoicing to every citizen of the good old Commonwealth."

This, the journalist felt, was only appropriate for the city and earlier visit from the state's interior called "the Queen of Old Kentuck."

A History of Covington Through 1865

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John E. Burns

Chapter 1 Covington's Prehistoric Past

The story of Covington is a story of people who, over the ages, have lived, worked and played in this northernmost part of Kentucky. Here, an ancient culture thrived a thousand years ago and then vanished, leaving only the mysteries in its burial grounds to intrigue later investigators.

Even before arrival of those ancient inhabitants, the sea covered the land, known to paleontologists as the Paleozoic Era. In time, the waters began to recede and some of the first land of the present Ohio Valley appeared. Locally, this land was a huge pushed-up dome, known to geologists as the Cincinnati Arch. The City of Covington sits solidly astride that dome.

At that time, the Licking River did not join the Ohio at Covington. In fact, the Ohio did not exist. Instead, the Licking turned westward at Covington and flowed down the Ohio's present course. It then turned north in the Mill Creek Valley to a point near Cincinnati's Carthage Fair Grounds where it joined what geologists call the Ancient Cincinnati River.

The Ancient Cincinnati River continued north through today's upper valley on the Great Miami River, and numbered among its tributaries, not the ancient Licking, but also the ancient Kentucky River as well.

The Kentucky River followed much the same course as it does today, but instead of ending at Carrollton, it turned north in the present Ohio Valley to the lower reaches of the Great Miami's trough, then north of that trough to join the Cincinnati River. The Ancient Cincinnati continued northward to join another ancient river, the Teays River, whose ancient trough can still be observed.

The Teays was one of early America's great rivers. It had its origin in the Piedmont area of North Carolina, and flowed in a general northerly direction to the present Huntington, West Virginia area. From there the Teays followed the modern downstream course of the Ohio River to approximately Portsmouth, Ohio, where it turned northward again. When it reached present-day Chillicothe, it veered northwesterly across Ohio, and crossed into Indiana near Ft. Wayne. The Teays continued westward to the Ancient Mississippi – finally to the Gulf of Mexico.

The Covington Area's landscape was dotted with marshes and bogs but the earth was gradually beginning to dry. Great swamp forests came into being, while lush green vegetation spread throughout the countryside. Hordes of primitive insects inhabited the land and many, like later mammals, often grew to gigantic size. Scorpions and spiders scurried about, while numerous species of amphibians crawled or slithered over the forest and through the dark waters. Cockroaches measuring nearly a half foot in length vied for space with creatures resembling five-foot-long centipedes. Over all this darted giant dragonflies with wingspans of two and one-half feet.

As centuries passed, the weather began to grow cooler and the winters gradually began to lengthen. This marked the movement of great sheets of ice as they crept southward from the Arctic. During this time, there were at least four major glaciations in America, each separated by a warm interglacial period. In time, the ice of one of these great glaciers moved to a point just south of Covington's southern city limits.¹

The giant ice masses shoved unimaginable quantities of rock and soil. The land was scraped and soured and countless valleys and streams were filled. The Teays River was forced back to form a great inland sea.

The waters of the great dammed-up sea eventually overflowed at a point near Portsmouth and rushed westward in great torrents. The wildly rushing water cut deep notches and ravines throughout the landscape as it raced past the sites of Maysville, Augusta, Covington, Carrollton, Louisville and on to the Mississippi. This was the traumatic birth of the general outline of today's Ohio River.

A relatively warm period developed only to be followed the greatest of all ice sheets, the *Illinoisan*. This sheet covered all the northern and western portions of Ohio. The old Teays valley was now filled with rock and soil and fairly unrecognizable to all except geological experts.

As noted, the Great Ice Age was a time of recurring glaciations. Rock outcroppings were smoothed or striated during that time, hills were rounded and valley choked by sand, gravel and boulder deposits.

On level to gently rolling land the southern end of a glacier's maximum advance is usually marked by ridges and knolls made up of deposits of mixed clay, sand, gravel and boulders called terminal moraines. Such moraines are especially well developed north of the Ohio in Illinois, Indiana and Ohio.

One line of fairly distinct terminal moraines extends southward through Adams and Brown Counties, Ohio crosses into Kentucky, circles westward on a line running just south of Covington and then re-crosses the Ohio River into southeastern Indiana. All of that territory north and west of this line, including Covington, is glaciated, meaning it shows those peculiar deposits and marks which indicate it was once covered by a moving sheet of ice.

As each of the four great ice sheets melted and its great weight removed from the land, the land's crust tended to slowly rebound to its former approximate position of relative equilibrium. These fluctuations of climate produced marked environmental changes. During periods of cool and wet weather, there were large inland lakes which arose from behind giant ice dams; during the warm/dry periods, the lake levels lowered dramatically. Such a gigantic glacial dam at one time blocked the Ohio River where Covington now stands.

The ice had come down the Ohio's trough to Covington where it lodged into a solidly frozen dam high enough to raise the water level to an estimated five hundred fifty-three feet.² That in turn formed into a long narrow lake which is known to some geologists as the Ancient Lake Ohio; to others as Ancient Lake Covington.

The bottom of the Ohio River at this point, is 447 feet above sea level. Therefore, a 553 feet glacial dam would back up water to a height of 1,000 feet and cover an area of some 20,000 square miles.

This ancient lake was large enough and deep enough to submerge the Pittsburgh site under 300 feet of water. It extended the Monongahela River to a point near Grafton, West Virginia and up the Allegheny River to Oil City, Pennsylvania.³

Northern tributaries poured tons of water into the lake during spells of warm weather. The torrents rushing into Ancient Lake Covington during such times were equivalent to a rainfall of 160 feet a year.⁴

The ice melted with increasing speed as the brief spells of warm weather became longer and warmer. Now flood waters began flowing westward over the frozen barrier's top and increased the speed of melting. With the dam's lowering, there came the lowering of the level of Ancient Lake Covington until eventually the dam broke, releasing pent-up water in a sudden torrent.

This bursting of the dam was only a temporary thing, for the lake would be re-formed by additional cold spells. Warm and cold spells occurred repeatedly until Lake Covington was at last drained, and the Ohio's channel was finally and permanently cleared and developed its present shape.⁵

This final glacial retreat was marked by great floods. Streams flowing southward from the glacial front carried enormous volumes of water, as did northward-flowing streams such as the Licking. These waters joined with the water melting from the glacier itself, flowing along the glacier's edge. The end result was to further develop the Ohio Valley's modern-day drainage system.

This huge volume of water also played a crucial role in creating the present-day hill-top terraces found all along the Ohio. Much of the terraces, which rise from 50 to 150 feet above the river's present high-water-mark, consists of gravel and large stones. They also contain significant amounts of granite fragments which, like the gravel and stones, must have been deposited by the glaciers.

There has always been some disagreement over the glaciers' exact boundaries, and during the twentieth century's last quarter, a minority of scientists began to questioning of the long-accepted belief that glacial ice actually reached to Northern Kentucky. However, the exact southern limit of the ice is often difficult to determine in the immediate Covington area. This, scientists point out, it was here where the ice's gradual thinning reached its maximum and resulted in the drift's ultimate disappearance.⁶

The thinning ice and subsequent loss of weight tended to cause the glacier to have little or no effect on the local topography.⁷ Yet, till deposits, which are settlements of unsorted mixtures of gravel, sand, clay and boulders, are plainly visible in hillside cuts all along suburban stretches of the former Ft. Mitchell streetcar line. Gullies measuring two to five feet deep are common, invariably containing a few igneous or metamorphic stones of Canadian origin.

Other evidence of the southern limit of the ice sheet is offered by the great number of foreign boulders in local creek beds. If the bed is that of a northward flowing stream, then geologists maintain it is reasonable to assume the local limit of glaciations is at least as far south as the boulders associated with them.

Practically all of Northern Kentucky's creeks and ravines west of Banklick Creek, contain foreign boulders. The bed of Bullock Pen Creek, which flows eastward to Banklick, has many large crystalline boulders, prompting many geologists to declare the ice reached at least that far south.

Where the glaciers ended on the surface which slanted away from the ice, as at Covington, the loose particles that had been eroded from solid rock and transported by the ice tended to be carried down the rushing streams of melt-water.

All such water flowing from the melting ice was overloaded with such detritus which in turn formed bars, shoals and natural levees. These are all forms which occur in the filling of a valley by alluvium, or sand deposits formed by rushing water.

Such valleys become the alluvium-filled flat flood plains, or valley floors. Covington's central business district is built on such a terrace and is underlain with large deposits of sand and gravel.⁸

The Ohio River trench is not geologically old. The stream, west of Bromley, is a location where the stream's youth is evident. There, the bottom of the river's trench is not much wider than the river at high water. The bluffs on either side are unusually steep, and on the Kentucky side, are almost completely free of ravines or deep gullies. Even at points where the river trench is two to four times the river's width, there is still no indication of great geologic age.⁹

Because the Licking River flows north, much of its valley south of Covington was not filled in with glacial outwash. In many places its terraces are composed of silt rather than sand and gravel. Geologists explain this is due to the fact that during the time the Licking was dammed, its waters stood in a large pond-like situation. The mud carried into these reasonably quiet waters by the river itself, settled to the pond's bottom. At Covington however, the Licking's terraces are essentially of the same composition at the same level as the Ohio.¹⁰

Northern Kentucky's first urbanization took place in that portion of the Ohio Valley where the bluffs have retreated from the river to form a great flat expanse extending from a point above Dayton for about five miles downstream to a point below Bromley.

This pan-shaped depression extends with but few exceptions, southward for approximately four miles to the recessed bluffs, and bisected by the Licking. At both ends of this basin, the Ohio trench again narrows to a deep valley in which the bluffs on either side are but one-half to three-fourths of a mile apart.¹¹

Most of this basin terrace consists of sand and gravel, and is, or has been dug for commercial purposes, primarily at Ludlow and Bellevue. The underlying bedrock formation is in turn composed almost entirely of alternating layers of sandstone, shale and limestone. This is largely the result of the early sea and lake deposits of repeated calcareous ooze mixed with the sand and gravel. Furthermore, this bedrock, especially the limestone, is unusually rich in marine fossils.¹²

The ancient sea's relationship to the land is clearly shown in the rocks of this region. Many limestone beds are ripple-marked, indicating the water's shallowness, while fossil-laden rocks are found throughout the Covington area.

Large varied types of shale deposits are also evident in this area. One locally common type is the Latonia Shale, officially named by the U.S. Geological Survey for that section of Covington where it is found in abundance. Latonia Shale is readily recognizable because of its distinct bluish color and natural tendency to weather into a greenish-yellow or grayish-yellow.¹³

Throughout this northern tip of Kentucky may be found an important type of soil deposit known as loess. Most loess is a fine silt deposited by water and wind and appears to have been brought into this area at a later date than the glacial age.

Loess, exceedingly fine-grained, is made in large part of sharp-cornered mineral particles and fossil remains mixed with clay. Such soil will break into fragments, when dug and crushed in one's hand, producing a meal too fine to properly called sand and too coarse to be called clay.

Yet another outstanding characteristic of this loess is the tendency to pack into a mass exhibiting a certain rigidity. Because of this, it was used by local foundries for molder's sand. The bluffs on the south shore of the Ohio from Bellevue to Ludlow are well covered with loess, reaching a maximum thickness of thirty feet in Devou Park.

Devou Park also offers many examples of geologic phenomena known as limestone sinks or sinkholes. These are scattered throughout the park and are reminders of the great number of limestone caves which once existed under this section. The caverns were formed by the dissolving action of subsurface water, after which the dissolving power of downward seeping surface water caused the caverns' roofs to collapse, forming many sinkholes.

Yet other sinkholes formed without prior existence of a cavern. In these cases, it was simply a matter of percolating water enlarging a crack or fissure as it trickled downward.

As the ice age declined, the warmest spots developed near springs whose water had been warmed by the earth's interior heat. Often these springs contained a trace of sea water silt, or became in contact with salt-bearing rock. Such was the case of the springs at Big Bone Lick.

Many of Covington's earliest visitors were attracted by the local salt-laden springs. These visitors included mammoth, giant sloths, bison ten feet tall, beaver as large as bears, huge elk and other prehistoric animals seeking food and salt 10,000 to 30,000 years ago.

In addition to the gigantic animals there was also the tiny prehistoric ancestor of today's horse. Migrating to Eurasia by means of the long-vanished Bering land bridge, it became extinct in America.

Saline bogs and marshes dotted this part of Kentucky as they did before the ice age and it became the fate of many of the prehistoric creatures to become mired in them. Their bones at Big Bone Lick were covered by the shifting earth and have been preserved to the delight of modern-day paleontologists.

Many later-day hunters followed the Northern Kentucky game trails to these springs. Other hunters and explorers were attracted by the curious sight of tons of huge bones strewn about the countryside. Mann Butler, an early-day Kentucky historian, gave the following account of James Douglas, a surveyor who visited the site in 1773:

“Here Douglas remained, forming his tent poles of the ribs of some of the enormous animals, which formerly frequented this remarkable spot and on these ribs blankets were stretched for a shelter from the sun and the rain. Many teeth were from eight to nine, and some ten feet in length; one in particular was fastened in a perpendicular direction in the clay and mud, with the end six feet above the surface of the ground; an effort was made by six men in vain to extract it from its mortise. The lick extended to about ten acres of land bare of timber and of grass or herbage; much trodden, eaten and depressed below the original surface; with here and there a knob remaining to show its former elevation. . . . Through the midst of this lick, ran the creek and on each side of which, a never-failing stream of salt water; whose fountains were in the open field. To this lick, from all parts of the neighboring country, were converging roads, made by the wild animals that resorted (to) the place for the salt, which both the earth and the water contained.”¹⁴

Butler also told of other visitors to Big Bone and indicated the general lack of knowledge regarding the true age of the ancient remains when he wrote:

“When the McAfees visited this lick with Captain Thomas Pullitt, several Delaware Indians were present; one of these being questioned by James McAfee, about the origin and nature of these extraordinary bones, replied, that they were then just as they had been, when he first saw them in his childhood. Yet, this Indian appeared to be at least 70 years of age.”¹⁵

The gigantic size of the prehistoric bones amazed all who saw them and raised countless speculations of their origin. Perhaps no one was more astonished at the huge relics than General Richard Butler who headed a group that made a collection of the remains in October 1785. Butler could scarcely conceal his wonderment as he wrote:

“Much may be said on the subject of the big bones; some gentlemen are of the opinion they were not the elephant, but the rhinoceros; others . . . are of opinions they were a very dangerous and destructive animal of the carnivorous kind and that the destruction of them was a mercy to mankind. How just this . . . may be, I will not attempt to controvert, as I have neither seen the elephant nor rhinoceros, but it strikes me very forcefully that animals of such great size could by no means in their power catch a sufficiency of the animal food to sustain them, the country being woody, I think it was impossible for them to pass through with the rapidity necessary to catch buffalo and all other animal food for them is quite out of the question, as the quantity necessary to support them must require more than a good hunter could procure were he devoted to their service; but the herbage of the country has certainly been, and yet is, of the most luxuriant kind, and in the greatest abundance, which would always give them an easy and plentiful subsistence. I am rather, from these reasons, inclined to think them a granivorous [sic] animal, be it elephant or not.”¹⁶

Collections of the bones were eventually sent to many parts of the world. One of the largest of those early collections was taken to London where it remained an outstanding attraction until being destroyed during a World War II air raid. In 1795, William Henry Harrison made a collection of the relics, including a wagon-load of mastodon teeth requiring four horses to pull. Benjamin Franklin once expressed an interest in this locality and President Jefferson was so intrigued that he sent William Clark to Big Bone to collect bones for display in the White House.

Jefferson's interest in this area was based on accounts similar to those related by General Butler. He had also received reports of Indians who said their ancestors had seen the last of the mastodons leaving Big Bone going west. The animals, the Indians claimed, had disappeared over a hill now known locally as Mastodon Hill.

Another story Jefferson heard was a Delaware legend which held the great herds of giant animals had originally come to destroy the Native-Americans' game. The Great Spirit took pity on the Indians and seizing the lightning, descended to a nearby hilltop and hurled the lightning bolts among the animals until all except one were slain.

The lone survivor, according to the legend, was a giant bull mammoth, who turned his head to the lightning bolts and shook them off as they fell. One bolt however, managed to strike the huge beast in his side, causing him so much pain that he immediately leaped over the Ohio, Wabash, and Illinois Rivers and finally crossed the Great Lakes, where he was supposed to be still living.¹⁷

Such stories strengthened Jefferson's belief in the possibility that some of the giant creatures could yet be found in the far West, and prompted him to instruct Lewis and Clark to be especially alert for them during their famous explorations of the Louisiana Purchase.¹⁸

When none of the prehistoric monsters were found, Jefferson sent William Clark and a party of ten to record Northern Kentucky's natural history. This Clark-Jefferson Expedition was the first organized paleontological expedition in the New World. Some three hundred bones were collected and sent to Washington where they were installed in the White House.

Jefferson's collection was later divided into three groups – one for the Musee' d'Histoire Naturelle de France in Paris, where it may still be seen; one for the American Philosophical Society, and now in possession of the Academy of Natural Science of Philadelphia; and a third which was kept by the president for his private collection. Even though Jefferson experimented with the remains by grinding up samples to be used in his experiments, much of this collection can still be viewed at Montecello.

Jefferson's interest in Northern Kentucky's natural history prompted one of his severest critics, the noted poet William Cullen Bryant, to compose a poem urging the president to resign and go "dig for huge bones." Entitled *The Embargo*, it reads in part: "Go, wretch, resign thy presidential chair . . ., where the Ohio rolls his turbid stream (go) dig for huge bones, thy glory and thy theme."¹⁹

It was about the time of the glaciers' final retreat, or shortly thereafter, that some think Covington had its first human inhabitants. The slow retreat of ice began about 30,000 years ago and lasted some 20,000 years. Exactly when man first occupied the Covington site though is open to debate. Some paleontologists declare the first inhabitants arrived about 13,000 to 15,000 year ago, when descendants of those who had migrated to North America from Asia reached here. These migrants, they declare, were following the edges of the retreating ice, much in the same manner of the Eskimos of today.

Still others declare man was in the local area even before the ice sheets. Indisputable evidence of such pre-glacial inhabitants, they point out, has been found about eleven miles northeast of Covington in a depression which extends from Ohio's Little Miami River to Mill Creek. Their claim is given further credence by similar evidence uncovered near the community of Loveland, also on the Little Miami. Many anthropologists have pronounced these artifacts to be of a pre-glacial type.

In addition, there have been four such finds of ancient artifacts in Boone County and one in Campbell, all of which had been buried in strata laid down during the Glacial Age. Such evidence, some scientists declare, make it a certainty man was here during the time of the great ice sheets and possibly before that.

The discovery in Campbell was a fluted point found on a hilltop overlooking the steel mill on Licking Pike. It is now in Covington's Behringer-Crawford Museum. In Boone County one such find was made near Hamilton, Ohio, another near Camp Ernst on Gunpowder Creek, and two near Union, Kentucky.

Despite these finds, knowledge concerning such possible inhabitants is of the most tenuous and meager sort. Regardless of the time man first arrived, we do know he and his companions were extremely primitive beings who simply wandered throughout the area in constant search of food and shelter.

These early men averaged about five feet four inches in height, which the average woman stood but a fraction over five feet. For shelter they huddled beneath overhanging rock ledges, or made use of whatever natural caves they chanced upon. They knew nothing about agriculture, and except for a few primitive weapons, never developed tools. When food was scarce or difficult to acquire, these people were not adverse to eating one another.

In due time a different group came to the Upper Bluegrass. They were of a considerably higher social order than their predecessors, and proceeded to develop a distinct culture. We know them as the Mound Builders.

The first Mound Builders were the Adena People, so named for the estate of Ohio's governor Thomas Worthington near Chillicothe, where in 1902, their artifacts were first indentified. The Adenas appeared about 1,000 BCE and remained until about 700 CE. They engaged in agricultural pursuits and developed weapons which helped immensely in fishing and hunting. They also developed rudimentary metal working.

By c. 200 BCE, still another society appeared in the Covington area. This was the Hopewell Culture and its members also engaged in mound building. Even to this day, their mounds are to be found scattered throughout the Ohio Valley, and their artifacts indicate a highly developed culture with a belief in life after death. Apparently they believed the items used and loved in this world would be needed again.

The Hopewell Culture, like the Adena, was named for the estate where scientists first discovered the culture. This occurred during the 1920s on the farm of the Hopewell family in Ross County, Ohio.

Hopewell mounds are of many types and were used for many purposes including burial sites, defense arenas and ceremonial rites. One type, the Altar Mound, was normally located within or near an enclosure and contained altars of burned clays. It is thought they served primarily as places of sacrifice. Another type, known as Sepulture Mounds, contain human remains and seem to have served not only as burial places, but as monuments to the dead as well.²⁰

Seldom were many bodies placed in these mounds – sometimes only one – and rarely more than twenty. Although the usual number of burials ranged from two to ten, there have been some Sepulture Mounds opened which contained remains of more than 100 individuals.²¹

Construction of the burial mounds ordinarily consisted of laying the body on the ground and raising the mound over it. In cases of multiple burials, it was not unusual to place the bodies at several different levels. Various works of art, utensils, ornaments and weapons were usually buried with the body.

Still other mounds include what are known as Temple Mounds. They are ordinarily of outstanding regularity of form and devoid of altars and human remains. It is believed they were sites of religious rites and ceremonies.²²

In addition, there were several other types of mounds, including those thought to have been used as observation posts, signal stations and military fortifications. One class of these, the Lookout Mound, usually occupied commanding positions on hilltops, and is believed to have served as signal or alarm posts. Usually at the sight of an enemy, a large signal fire was kindled atop the mound to warn the people to seek protective shelter.²³

On the Kentucky bluffs about eight miles downriver of Covington and opposite the College of Mount St. Joseph are three such ridge-top Lookout Mounds. One in particular, when viewed from the Ohio side of the river, stands out in bold relief against the sky. The mound itself affords an unusual view of broad sweeps of the river valley below.²⁴

Many Hopewell mounds were constructed to form perfect geometric figures, including exact squares, circles, rhomboids, rectangles and other even more complicated designs (such as *Serpent Mound in Brown County, Ohio*). The people lived by hunting, fishing and farming and showed considerable skill at developing tools necessary for these pursuits. Artifacts such as jewelry, weapons, household utensils and statuettes tell of the excellence of their artisans and of a way of life far superior to the Indians who later lived in the Ohio Valley.

Hopewell artifacts often reveal carvings and designs of exquisite delicacy and a sometimes amazing amount of detail. Stone carving encased in sheets of mica and copper have been found in their mounds along with pottery and copper hatchets and axes weighing from four ounces to 38 pounds. In addition, there seems to have been an almost unlimited number of granite axes, obsidian knives and spear and lance points of quartz crystal.

The mound people worked copper and silver into remarkable medallions, ornaments and tools and actually used copper disks as a form of currency. They also manufactured copper figurines, bracelets, rings, anklets and earrings. Shell beads and fresh-water pearls, often of transparent green with an opaque enamel of red or white, were artistically fashioned, as were tortoise shell pendants. Designs duplicating the swastika and St. Andrew's cross were coincidentally commonplace.

It was in the making of their clay pipes that these people seemed to take the most artistic pride. The majority of pipe bowls were skillfully carved into fine miniature figures of animals or human heads and seemed to be prized possessions of all who owned them.

In addition, the Mound Builders worked leather and produced remarkable weaving, turning out good linen-like cloth which even the earliest of European settlers found difficult to equal. In fact, it may be said the Hopewell possessed what was America's most brilliant culture north of Mexico.

Even so, these ancient people lived a very harsh life. Nearly all suffered arthritis – in some cases so severe as to have a crippling effect early in their lives. It was common for their gums to be eaten away by infection.

Until June 1954, there had been no known evidence the Hopewell Culture had extended into Kentucky. At that time, the Northern Kentucky Archaeological Society under auspices of the Behringer-Crawford Museum uncovered such proof on a Boone County farm belonging to Harold Rogers. There, for the first time south of the Ohio River, were found artifacts and skeletal remains of the Late Hopewell Culture.

Another type of mound found in the area are those made of stone. Such mounds are far less common than earthen ones and are often little more than stone graves.

These stone mounds were once fairly abundant along a narrow stretch of land along both sides of the Ohio in the Tri-state. They could also be found along some of the Ohio's tributaries, but their area of largest concentration seemed to be contained in the stretch beginning about 50 miles upstream from Covington and extending to Huntington, West Virginia. They were most common in the eleven-mile stretch between Dover and Maysville. Some scientists think these graves may be relics of a separate "Stone Grave Culture" which existed parallel to the Hopewell people.

By the start of the tenth century, a new culture known as the Fort Ancient, appeared in the general area of Kentucky and Ohio.²⁵ Modern man has mistakenly named these people for a prehistoric fort which had been built by the more advanced Hopewellians in what is now Warren County, Ohio.

The Fort Ancient culture however, represented a step backward for early people of this region. These people did little copper work and their pottery was extremely crude. They fashioned a few tools of bone, such as awls and needles. For the most part, they relied upon mussel shells, stone and flint for their weapons and tools.

The diet of the Fort Ancient people consisted of corn, beans, pumpkin and squash all raised by the women in meager little garden plots. The men were hunters and considered most any forest creature fair game. In addition to deer and bear, they would bring home skunk, toad, otter, crane, swan, screech owl and wildcat. Evidence of such a diet can be found in the piles of refuse left behind by these people.

After a refuse heap reached a certain proportion, it was covered with a layer of earth and more refuse strewn on this. Another layer of earth was then added, more refuse, and so on until a mound several feet in height would be created, elevating the village above the surrounding countryside.

The Fort Ancients maintained a community life in their villages of crude huts and tepees of skin or tree bark. They had limited knowledge of weaving and dressed themselves in coarse cloth and animal skins. Arm bands, bracelets and necklaces made of bone, stone and mussel shells served as adornment.

Although most mounds were built north of the Ohio, there are records which show such mounds existed in what is now the center of Covington. One is located on what was once known as the Fowler farm at the end of West Eleventh Street. This is the location of a once-magnificent old Banklick Street home known as the Richmond House.

The Fowler farm has long since been subdivided with homes now showing the ravages of time. Even the magnificent old Richmond Mansion itself has fared poorly with time and in 1968 was partly hidden from public view by a church building erected on what had been the front lawn.

The Fort Ancient society lasted until European arrival in the Ohio Valley, then vanished. Reasons for their demise are not known.

A legend among certain northern Indian tribes explained the mounds by saying they had been built as part of a series of fortifications by a people from the south. Gradually the southern people extended their fortifications northward toward the Great Lakes. The northern Indians, fearful they would be deprived of the land south of the Lakes, they embarked on a long and bloody war against the invaders.²⁶

The northerners, more skilled in the use of bows and arrows, eventually exterminated those of the south and totally destroyed all their towns and forts, leaving only the mounds as mute reminders of the vanquished invaders.²⁷

Another legend related by Shawnee Chief Cornstalk, seems to lend support to the previous story. Chief Cornstalk also claimed the ancient inhabitants had been exterminated by the Indians and added they had been members of the white race. Furthermore, it was claimed the reason Kentucky was home to only a few Indian villages was because it was filled with ghosts of the slaughtered mound builders.²⁸

Many modern-day scientists think none of these catastrophes took place but believe the mound builders lived on to become ancestors of the Cherokees, Shawnees and other more developed tribes which existed at the time of European settlement. As research progresses, more evidence points to the possibility the local Ohio Valley Shawnee are actually a late Fort Ancient people. It is still important to remember that it is here in the Ohio Valley that the world's greatest concentration of prehistoric mounds exists.

Occasionally, Covingtonians receive unexpected reminders of their prehistoric past. One occurred in June 1975 when Kenton-Campbell sanitation District workers seriously damaged a prehistoric campsite and burial ground while working on a proposed sewer line a mile south of Old Kentucky Route 17 "chisel Bridge." The site was part of a 47 acre tract of grassy flatland between Banklick Creek and a newly-rebuilt section of KY 17. It had been leased from the state highway department the previous month by the Kenton County Fiscal Court for the development of Pioneer Park.²⁹

Highway Department officials were previously apprised of the site's archaeological importance, but reportedly failed to alert sanitation district officials that construction work in the area could possibly destroy vast

quantities of valuable antiquities. The work got underway and as the result was the destruction of graves, the crushing of several skeletons and loss of an unknown number of priceless artifacts dating back to possibly 5,000 years.³⁰ Archaeologists expressed dismay at what happened and severely criticized highway department officials.³¹

One district official responded to the criticism by saying what had been done did not overly impress him and that the concern by others was probably unwarranted! Nevertheless, sanitation district officials halted work and re-routed the sewer line to by-pass the now-mutilated site.³²

A month after this destruction of prehistoric graves, another group of highway workers gave up on a two-year battle against the area's geological make-up. Their struggle began in October 1973 when work on piers for the I-275 and I-75 interchange near Erlanger was halted because of movement detected beneath several of the pier bases. One had moved 13 inches out of line and three others between five and six inches.

After nearly two years of coping with the situation, a system of closed circuit television was employed to probe some 100 feet below the surface. The cameras revealed the columns had by then cracked near their base.

What had originally been touted as the largest highway interchange east of the Mississippi, had become the costly victim of an unusual ground situation, believed to date to eons before the great ice sheets. There was little the highway engineers could do to correct matters, so on 21 July 1975, the defective columns were dynamited and the designers returned to their drawing boards.

Other highway builders were being forced to deal with this area's geologic past. One of these occurred shortly after the 1978 completion date of a multi-lane portion of KY Route 17 near present-day Pioneer Park. There, in what some scientists thought was poetic justice, a newly-built section of the highway began sliding downhill toward Banklick Creek.³³

Such slides are relatively common in Northern Kentucky and many of them result from a loose terrain composed of unstable deposits from the ancient glacial melts. Beneath this is a stable and impervious bedrock more than 450 million years old.³⁴

When water get between the deposits and the bedrock, those deposits slide along any natural tilt of the rock. The water sources are many: dammed-up streams, land excavations and fills and poorly planned subdivisions.

This tendency for hills to move into valleys is a phenomenon geologists call "creep." Not only have highway engineers and subdivision developers often reduced the amount of earth resisting creep by cutting into valleys, they have also frequently compounded the chance of slides by adding fill to the hillsides or tops, thereby increasing the weight pressing down. By spring 1980, the local slide problem became so severe one official felt there was hardly a road in the eleven-county region around Covington that wasn't showing signs of hill slide damage.³⁵ It was only two years earlier that a 100-foot-long section of I-75 north-bound lanes slipped downhill toward Covington's Highland Avenue – the same location where an earlier slide claimed an entire section of the highway.³⁶ In another matter, highway workers were required in late 1978 to place what was then the largest slab of pre-cast concrete into position on southbound I-75 near the Twelfth Street overpass.³⁷

Despite all of man's efforts, earth scientists claim Covington's geologic past will continue to periodically jolt the technologists with powerful reminders of its own everlasting presence and man-made encroachments are just that and ephemeral.

Endnotes

¹ Opinion by many scientists, including Gerrard Fowke, Willard Rouse Jillson, Frederick G. Wright, Frank Leverett and Nevin M. Fenneman.

² Henry Howe, "Historical Collections of Ohio," volume 1, Laning Printing Co., Norwalk, Ohio (1898).

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Frank Leverett, "The Pleistocene of Northern Kentucky," Kentucky Geological Survey, Series 6, volume 31, Frankfort, KY 1929. Also: Willard Rouse Jillson, "The Extinct Vertebrates of the Pleistocene in Kentucky," Roberts Printing Co., Frankfort, KY 1968. Jillson & Leverett both determined the ice extended into parts of 9 counties along a 115 mile-long strip of the state's northern border. They maintain the ice stretched from Bracken County in the east to the western part of Oldham County.

⁷ Nevin M. Fenneman, "Geology of Cincinnati and Vicinity," Columbus (1916).

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

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- ¹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴ Mann Butler, "A History of the Commonwealth of Kentucky," Wilcox, Dickerman & Co., Louisville, KY (1834).
- ¹⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁶ *The Olden Times*, Volume 2, Number 10, October 1847.
- ¹⁷ Ele Bowen, "Rambles In the Path of the Steam-horse," Philadelphia (1855).
- ¹⁸ *University of Nebraska News*, Museum Notes Edition, Lincoln, NB, 24 March 1967.
- ¹⁹ Ibid.
- ²⁰ Gerard Fowke, "Archaeological History of Ohio," Columbus, OH (1902).
- ²¹ Ibid.
- ²² Ibid.
- ²³ Ibid.
- ²⁴ Ibid.
- ²⁵ There has been some disagreement as to the order in which the Adena, Hopewell and Fort Ancient cultures appeared in the Ohio Valley. R.E. Banta, in *The Ohio*, lists them in the order in which they appear in this treatment. Other writers seem to think the Fort Ancient culture was first on the scene and the last, the Hopewell, were still around at the time of Columbus.
- ²⁶ Alexander Scott Withers, "Withers' Chronicles of Border Warfare," edited by Reuben Gold Thwaite, The Robert Clark Company, Cincinnati (1903)
- ²⁷ Ibid.
- ²⁸ Richard H. Collins, "History of Kentucky," volume I, Covington, KY (1874).
- ²⁹ *Kentucky Post*, 24 May 1975 and 20 June 1975.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, 20 June 1975.
- ³¹ Ibid.
- ³² Ibid.
- ³³ *Ibid.*, 22 May 1978.
- ³⁴ *Cincinnati Enquirer*, 8 July 1979.
- ³⁵ *Kentucky Post*, 28 April 1980.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*, 29 May 1978.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, 7 October 1978. This record-sized slab measured 25 x 12 feet x 9" thick weighing 14.5 tons.

Chapter 2

Rendezvous at the Point

Throughout prehistory Northern Kentucky continued to be a favorite rendezvous site for Indians. The Shawnee claimed the area but war and hunting parties from many tribes north of the Ohio used the Covington site as an assembly point. This was especially true after European arrival. The area was a popular springboard from which the Native-Americans launched attacks on white settlements in the Kentucky interior. White settlers, in turn, used the Point in the same manner for military forays against Indians – particularly north of the Ohio.

The junction of the Licking and Ohio Rivers was favored because of its position as a north-flowing river (pre-glacial), midway between two streams entering on the north side of the Ohio – the Great and Little Miami Rivers.

Indian hunting parties favored this rendezvous as well. It was from here that tribal hunting parties departed up the Nepermine River, as the Licking was known to the Shawnee, or the Great Salt Creek as the earliest European explorers called it.

The names Great Salt Creek and Licking, are due to the number of salt licks along the stream bank. These licks are in reality salt-water springs, called “licks” because great numbers of animals came to lick the salty ground. Two of Kentucky’s best-known licks – Upper and Lower Blue Licks – are both on the Licking River.

Indian war parties in canoes concealed at the mouth of the Licking, would suddenly dart out with a surprise attack on early European settlers navigating the Ohio for new home sites.

At the time virgin forests covered virtually the entire region. Oak, beech, maple, chestnut, hickory and poplar made up over 80% of the tree stand, while the remainder were chiefly gum, basswood, pine, hemlock, sycamore, ash, elm, buckeye, walnut, birch, locust, cedar and cherry. It has been estimated the original tree stand averaged over 5,000 board-feet per acre.

Many of the trees were large enough for Indians to make a twenty-passenger dugout canoe from a single trunk. Even well into the nineteenth century, the trees were so large and numerous that their interlocking branches over the mouth of the Licking gave the appearance of an entrance to a watery tunnel.¹

All this was to change after European settlers began to enter the Ohio Valley. The first explorer, some historians claim, was Robert LaSalle, who led an expedition down the Ohio in 1669, reaching as far as the Licking.¹ Others dispute this, but it is certain that in fall 1692, Arnout Vielo, a Dutch fur trader from New York, made a successful journey down the Ohio with a group of Mohawks and Shawnee. Their travels took them past the Covington site on to the Mississippi.

In 1739, the first of several military groups visited the site of present-day Covington. This was a detachment of French troops under Charles LeMoyne III, second Baron de Longueuil, in a campaign against Mississippi Chickasaw.

Baron de Longueuil is also recorded as the first European to visit and explore Big Bone Lick. There he stood amazed at the sight of a vast treeless salt marsh dotted with bubbling sulfurous springs and covered with remains of prehistoric animal bones. The prehistoric bones so intrigued the French commander that he gathered a collection of them. Part of his collection may still be seen at the Musee’ National d’Histoire Naturelle in Paris.

The first European visitor to explore the Covington area in any depth was Christopher Gist, a well-educated son of one of the founders of Baltimore. Gist has been described as the most intelligent of Kentucky’s early explorers. Certainly his journals lend credence to such a claim. He was closely associated with George Washington and managed to save the life of the future president on two separate occasions.²

Gist abandoned the ease of eastern life for the rigors of the frontier as a young man and his survey of northeastern Kentucky was the first ever made. He was the first surveyor to enter the lands that would be organized as the first state west of the Alleghenies – Kentucky. Gist is also thought to be the first to export coal from Kentucky by taking several specimens of that fuel back to his employer, the Ohio Company of Virginia.³

As agent for the Ohio Company, Gist left Old Town on the Potomac, September 11, 1750. His mission was to explore the Ohio River region for choice lands. In the following year, with a young boy as his only attendant, he

reached the mouth of the Licking and went ashore. After Gist completed his mission, he returned and reported as follows:

“It is well watered with a great number of little Streams and Rivulets, and full of beautiful Meadows, covered with Wild Rye, blue grass and Clover, and abounds with Turkeys, Deer, Elks and most sorts of Game, particularly Buffaloes, thirty or forty of which are frequently seen feeding in one Meadow: In short, it wants nothing but Cultivation to make it a most delightful Country.”⁴

Gist later became directly involved in confrontation with the French which ultimately evolved into Europe’s Seven Years’ War. At the time of this confrontation, 1753, the French and English were engaged in spirited competition for control of the North American Continent. In fact, it has been recognized by serious scholars, that the first outpost in Kentucky was established in 1736 by French traders and was occupied by them and their Shawnee allies. Known as Lower Town, it was location on the banks of the Ohio a mile downstream from present-day South Portsmouth, Ohio.⁵

The French had long been inducing their Indian friends to attack explorers and settlements along the frontier and this in turn prompted the British to grant the governor of Virginia permission to react with force.

The Virginia governor immediately sent Gist and 21-year-old George Washington to the nearest French outpost to present demands they withdraw from the Ohio Valley. The ultimatum was ignored and within a year, the French and Indian War erupted in full scale. The long struggle continued until February 10, 1763, when the French finally agreed to a humiliating peace. Their Indian allies however, refused to give up the fight which to them, was a fight for their homeland. Early in 1763, the Indians again struck at the English assumption of ownership of the western territories in a new conflict known as Pontiac’s Conspiracy. Outpost after outpost came under Indian attack until a determined British offensive brought a peace settlement.

Most of the Indians though still showed little or no inclination to look kindly on white adventurers usurping their land. Nevertheless, the more hardy and adventuresome of Europeans continued to be drawn to the West and to Kentucky in particular.

In 1765, George Croghan, Britain’s Irish-born and Dublin-educated deputy Indian agent, came down the Ohio and, like Gist, stopped in Northern Kentucky to marvel at the remains around Big Bone Lick. He was amazed at what he termed “the place where the Elephants bones are found,” and carried away a large collection of the remains, including a tusk measuring six feet in length.⁶

Croghan returned the following year to gather another collection of bones and sent a large number of them to Benjamin Franklin, who was then in London.⁷ This 1766 visit was made while on assignment to distribute gifts among Ohio Valley Indians and was made in the company of two army engineers, Lieutenant Thomas Hutchins and a youthful Captain Harry Gordon.⁸

During these years, Kentucky was considered an extension of the British colony of Virginia and both the British and the Virginians were anxious to have the river flowing along Kentucky’s northern border fully charted. It was the duty of Hutchins and Gordon to make those charts.⁹

The party traveled the river’s entire length, and the resulting charts represented the first accurate geographical and topographical maps ever produced of that stream.¹⁰ The expedition’s findings were in 1787 used to establish Kentucky’s northern border at the river’s low-water mark, northern shore. That year, the Northwest Treaty Act recognized the mark as the territory’s southern border and again in 1792, when Kentucky entered the Union.¹¹

The result of the 1766 mapping expedition and later boundary decisions also figured prominently in a twentieth century dispute between Kentucky and its northern neighbors. In 1966, Ohio filed suit in federal court challenging Kentucky’s claim to the entire width of the Ohio and in 1967 Cincinnati City Council attempted to annex a large portion of the river in a futile attempt to thwart Covington from doing the same.¹²

Ohio argued that because of construction of dams, and changes in the course of the river itself, their state should be given part ownership of the stream. At one point, they suggested to set the boundary at midstream. All this was despite the fact that ever since an 1820 court decision had reaffirmed the 1792 boundary, the river’s entire width had been generally recognized as within the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

At the time of the 1820 decision, it was the general belief that the higher the river went, the further north went the Kentucky border.¹³ This was given recognition by at least one Ohio governor when he once charged that Kentucky’s river was flooding Ohio land and inquired of Kentucky’s governor where to send the bill for resulting damage.¹⁴

The 1966 lawsuit eventually reached the U.S. Supreme Court. On January 21, 1980, the court ruled, in a split 6 to 3 decision, the 1792 low-water mark, though currently under water, was still Kentucky’s northern border.

The court, however, left to the states to determine just where that earlier mark might be.¹⁵ Two months later, the Supreme Court again handed down the same decision in a separate but similar suit brought by Indiana.¹⁶

In July 1773, another party of surveyors, headed by Captain Thomas Bullitt and Hancock Taylor, descended the Ohio from Fort Pitt in canoes. While on their downstream journey, they were joined by another group led by James George and Robert McAfee. At one point, McAfee left the party and explored the Licking as far as present-day Falmouth. After surveying that area, he returned to the mouth of the Licking and rejoined the others.

In fall 1771, Simon Kenton, John Strader and George Yeager passed down the Ohio to the mouth of the Kentucky River in search of cane. Yeager, who could speak several Indian languages, had grown up with them and several times hunted with them in Kentucky canebrakes. On this trip they were unsuccessful in their search but did stop briefly at the Covington site and explored the Licking for a short distance.

Kenton often returned to this area and even sold 400 acres to James Taylor for a gray mare.¹⁷ Kenton's appearance on the wilderness frontier is an intriguing story. The tale had its beginning when he was a young lad of 15 in Fauquier County, Virginia, at a time when his sweetheart deserted him to marry an older man. Young Simon was furious at the desertion. On the day of the wedding he decided to attend the ceremony where he challenged the bridegroom to a fight. The challenged groom proceeded to give the youthful Kenton a thorough thrashing.

The boy smarted under this humiliation for the next year and shortly after reaching his sixteenth birthday, he challenged the man again. This time the outcome was different – so different that Kenton was convinced he had killed the man. He immediately fled for he was certain he would be charged with murder. He cut himself off from all former ties and for more than 12 years even his parents didn't hear from him.

Kenton traveled west, using many aliases until finally taking the name "Simon Butler," a name he used for several years. During his travels he met John Yeager, whose extravagant stories of Kentucky fired the imagination and brought Kenton to a firm decision to visit these fabulous lands.

After his first trip down the Ohio ended in failure as far as locating cane lands were concerned, Kenton decided to spend the next few years hunting and exploring along the Ohio in the vicinity of what is now the Kentucky-West Virginia border. With the outbreak of Lord Dunmore's War, he journeyed to Fort Pitt to offer his services and served under both Dunmore and then-Colonel Andrew Lewis in expeditions against Indians.

Once again, because of its exposed position, settlement in Kentucky came to a virtual halt. But despite Indian resistance and British royal meddling, interest in the West remained high. In addition, a spirit of radicalism was spreading among the Americans as resentment over British misrule grew and festered. Cries for a break with the mother country grew at a rapid rate.

Loyal Britisher Lord Dunmore, who had no great love for the Indians, nevertheless foresaw the possibility of using them to secure the West for England in case of an all-out military break between that country and her American colonies. Many American officers firmly believed Dunmore had received warning from his government of the possibility of such a break and had formulated a plan of action which would ultimately lead to an alliance of Indians with Britain.¹⁸

The American officers charged the royal governor of Virginia Dunmore was embarked on a campaign to ostensibly rid the West of troublesome Indian raids which was seemingly designed to convince the Native-Americans once and for all of the futility of stemming the westward flow American migrants. The impunity with which these advancements were being made was an abomination to Indians.

The royal governor's actions, known as Lord Dunmore's War, led to the bloody Battle of Point Pleasant. This encounter occurred October 10, 1774 on the banks of the Ohio in present West Virginia. Some regard this as the first battle of the American Revolution. In fact, the Sixtieth U.S. Congress gave the battle that distinction in 1908. The only thing that prevents most historians from agreeing with the Congressmen is that no shots were fired between American and British forces. It represents England's first attempt to defeat the Americans militarily and further represents the first time a British officer was openly disobeyed by a subordinate American commander.¹⁹

Long after the furious battle, it was discovered that Lord Dunmore was indeed secretly agitating the northwestern Indians against the American westward trek. For some time before the Revolution's first shots in Boston, while the Continental Congress was still in the act of weakening ties with Britain, Dunmore was plotting a scheme to ensnare Irish-born Colonel Andrew Lewis, commander of the Virginia frontier military, in a gigantic death trap at the junction of the Kanawha and Ohio Rivers. Lewis was deceived into gathering a large force there on the promise Dunmore would join him with an even larger force for a combined strike against Ohio Indians.²⁰

It appears Dunmore's promise was an empty one from the beginning. Such a suspicion is given further credence by the fact he sent Lewis such short notice of vital last-minute changes in campaign plans that there was little Lewis could do to implement them.

Lewis and his frontiersmen had no sooner set up camp at Point Pleasant, than Chief Cornstalk and his braves took advantage of a thick fog to cross the Ohio undetected and launch an attack on the American encampment. The battle raged throughout the day – from just before dawn to just before nightfall – when the Indians finally withdrew.²¹

Dunmore's last-minute change of plans and failure to join Lewis enraged the American commander who wanted an explanation. He promptly disobeyed his superior's instructions to stay put and marched for his camp. Dunmore sent a scout on at least two separate occasions to order Lewis to turn back but Lewis was in no mood to accede to such orders.²²

When Lewis and the Americans finally reached the English camp, they were astounded to find Dunmore in conference with several Indians who participated in the Point Pleasant attack, including Cornstalk himself.²³ The sight of the royal governor in company with their recent antagonists so enraged the Americans that the personal guard around Dunmore's tent had to be doubled to insure his safety. Yet there emerged a treaty which the Indians pledged not to go south of the Ohio for trade and to allow white settlers to pass down the river unimpeded.

The victorious outcome of Lord Dunmore's War was also of utmost national importance, for had the settlement of Kentucky and the West not occurred when it did, it is conceivable the treaty which eventually recognized American independence might have placed the new nation's western boundary at the Alleghenies.

The tide of migration now quickened. Land speculation flourished as settlement in Kentucky became reasonably safe. More outposts sprang up and the Indian saw his hunting grounds being steadily filled with migrants from the East.

In spring 1775, John Hinkson, a Pennsylvanian of Irish birth, and party of 14 came down the Ohio in flatboats, changed to canoes at the Covington site and proceeded up the Licking searching for land.

Hickson's group was shortly followed by William Miller and 13 additional settlers. These two groups traveled upstream as far as Lower Blue Licks where they joined forces.²⁴ Today, Hinkson and Miller are generally recognized as the first Europeans to conduct extensive and meaningful explorations of the Licking region.

About the same time Hinkson and Miller were exploring the Licking, serious fighting between American and British forces erupted in Massachusetts and on July 4, 1776, the American colonies announced their independence.

During the ensuing struggle, a large number of Indian tribes allied themselves with the British. The Indians now had a steady source of supplies which would enable them to intensify resistance to Kentucky settlement.

While the main British and American armies engaged in the East, the western frontier blazed into a furious action including all the horrors of full-scale Indian war. Here there was no Continental Army to oppose the Tory-led Indians who pillaged, scalped and burned their way through the Ohio Valley.

The frontiersmen not only successfully set the furious onslaughts, but also launched their own counter attacks and inflicted serious defeats on British outposts and their Indian allies.

During that same year of the nation's birth, Kentucky County was established by Virginia and a staff of county militia officers appointed. This was to lend more military stability to the Western settlements. The new county officers were:

David Robinson	County Lieutenant
John Bowman	County Colonel
Anthony Bledsoe	Lieutenant Colonel
George Rogers Clark	Major
Daniel Boone, Benjamin Logan, John Todd and James Harrod: Captains. ²⁵	

Kentucky settlements had been under attack for a considerable time before the Eastern fighting began at Concord and Lexington. The British carried on a continuous prodding of the Western Indians and liberally supplied them with weapons, ammunition and whiskey. By the end of 1776 and into 1777, the American situation in Kentucky and throughout the Ohio Valley was grave.

British plans for 1777 included a complete crushing of the frontier settlements. To aid them, they not only won over the Indians as allies, but also secured the services of such Western Tories as Indian-reared Matthew Elliott; Alexander McKee who had been a British deputy Indian Agent at Pittsburgh as well as a long-time friend of the Indians; and Simon Girty and his brothers, James and George. It was the fate of all these men to be consistently vilified in frontier histories.

The Girtys, who had been born in Pennsylvania, all became Indian captives while still young. James was adopted by the Shawnee; George by the Delaware and Simon by the Seneca. They grew to adulthood while living in the Indian cultures, and over time, became recognized by Indians as trusted leaders and counselors.

The most noted of the three Girtys was Simon who became a close companion of Simon Kenton and George Rogers Clark. He also rendered excellent service to Virginia's royal governor when he served as a scout during Lord Dunmore's War.

Simon and his brothers always remained loyal to the British Crown but now that the Revolution was under way, virtually all frontiersmen came to regard them (along with Elliott and McKee) as depraved renegades of the worst sort. Simon himself was consistently pictured as a bloodthirsty murderer of his own countrymen who joined the Indians as a fugitive from justice.

The name Simon Girty was associated with everything cruel and barbaric, yet his intercessions saved many captives of the Indians from certain death. He had an outstanding reputation for honesty among the Indians and the English. On one occasion, he went so far as to sell his vitally-important horse in order to pay a debt.²⁶

After the Americans won their independence, the British granted Girty a farm of 164 acres near Fort Malden, Essex County, Canada. There he lived on a half-pay pension until his death February 18, 1818. At that time a detachment of British soldiers from Fort Malden fired a salute of honor over his grave.

The two other Pennsylvania Tories, Matthew Elliott and Alexander McKee, also received much in the way of British honors and authority for service with the Indians. Both were warmly received when they volunteered their aid and McKee was promptly commissioned as a captain. He was assigned the responsibility of organizing Indian efforts on the western frontier and led many expeditions against the Americans.²⁷

After the Revolution ended in the East, McKee was promoted to colonel and continued to incite Indians. When the British eventually evacuated Detroit, he moved to Malden, Ontario where he died January 14, 1799.²⁸

Meanwhile all through 1777 – or what was known as “the year of the three bloody sevens,” British officers coordinated and intensified the Indian attacks. The situation steadily worsened throughout the next year until during the winter of 1778-9, George Rogers Clark, by then a lieutenant colonel, led an army of Kentuckians on an expedition from the Falls of the Ohio [Louisville] against British forts and Indians throughout what is today Illinois.

The Kentuckians struck and captured important posts at Cahokia, Kaskaskia and Vincennes which represented major triumphs for this infant republic. However, they were not able to strike at Detroit – the primary source of Kentucky's difficulties.

Indian raids continued with alarming frequency, so John Bowman, Kentucky's militia colonel, decided to attack the Indians themselves. He sent out notice to the settlers that they should “plant their corn and be in readiness to rendezvous in May at the mouth of the Licking.”²⁹

In April 1779, Captain Benjamin Logan answered the call with a company of 99 men gathered from Logan's, Whitley's and Clark's Stations. Captain Josia Harlan and Lieutenant John Haggin appeared with 60 men from Harrodsburg, and Ruddle's and Martin's Stations. Boonesborough sent 56 under Captain John Holder, while Captain William Harrod came up from the Falls of the Ohio with two bateaux and a company of about 60 men.

Troops from central Kentucky followed along the west bank of the Licking until they reached Banklick Creek, where they camped for the night. Early next morning they continued to “The Point,” as the Covington site was commonly known. Here the various groups mustered and laid plans for their march north. The men were well acquainted with the countryside they were to invade and comprised the first formidable offensive force ever sent from Kentucky whose primary target was northern Indians.

Before leaving “The Point,” the force, which finally totaled 297 men, received unexpected reinforcement when a group of Pennsylvania frontiersmen joined. The Pennsylvanians had been to Big Bone Lick where they collected a boat load of fossils, and were on their way home when they stopped at the Licking's mouth. When they learned what was taking place, the men abruptly changed their plans and decided to accompany the Kentuckians.³⁰

The raiders crossed the Ohio on May 28th and by the following evening reached the Shawnee town of Chillicothe, some 65 miles northeast. Great hopes had been held for the expedition, however, the entire affair proved badly managed. Although Chillicothe was plundered and burned, and the Indian commander, Chief Black Fish, killed, the campaign's final outcome was far from decisive for the settlers.

The Chillicothe which Bowman and his men attacked should not be confused with the modern-day city of that name in south central Ohio of Ross County. The name “Chillicothe” was the designation for one of the Shawnee's four tribal divisions who always inhabited a village of that name which was regarded the tribe's principle town.

When the tribe moved, there were several villages to be successfully occupied and abandoned, but all had the same name. The one attacked by Bowman's expedition was located on the Little Miami River in Greene County near Xenia. It is frequently called Old Chillicothe by the white man and was the place where Daniel Boone was held captive in 1778.

Other villages known as “Chillicothe” included one on the Great Miami River at present-day Piqua in Miami County; one near Circleville in Pickaway County; another on Paint Creek in Ross County. In addition Lower Town, or Lower Shawnee Town, at the mouth of the Scioto was known to the Indians as Chillicothe for a period of time.

When Bowman and his army returned to Kentucky, they again camped on the local grounds – this time a few miles south of The Point, where they divided their plunder. The value of what had been taken from the Indians was estimated at \$32,000 pounds in Continental money and included 163 horses. After each man received his share of the spoils, the group disbanded and each went his separate way home.³¹

In addition to Colonel Bowman, many other pioneer leaders made the Covington site a base for military operations. Any list of them would have to include such men as James Harrod, Hugh McGary, John Floyd, William McAfen, Levi Todd, Simon Kenton, George Rogers Clark and Daniel Boone. Kenton and Boone were especially frequent visitors to the area and many of Boone’s relatives, including his sister Mary and several of his nephews, came to make it their home.

Simon Girty, whose woodsman abilities easily matched Kenton and Boone’s, found the local area to his liking and often met and camped with his Indian followers at today’s Botany Hills of West Covington. Girty also experienced two of his most smashing victories here. One, known as “Roger’s Defeat,” represented one of the worst ever suffered by the white man in Kentucky.

In autumn 1779, Major David Rogers, a cousin of George Rogers Clark, was taking a group of supply boats to Pittsburgh when, on October 4th, he saw a small band of Indians cross the river to Kentucky. With a force of 60 to 70 men, Major Rogers decided to give chase and stopped his boats at what is now known as the Tacoma Sand Bar – 3 ½ miles upriver of the Licking’s mouth.³²

Rogers and his men no sooner entered the thick growth of the willows lining the bank than they were set upon by scores of screaming Indians all under the leadership of the renown Girty, his brother George and Matthew Elliott.³³

The small group of Indians Rogers had first seen were merely a decoy sent out by a much larger party composed of Seneca (Mingo), Wyandot, Delaware and Shawnee. The Indians’ full contingent totaled nearly 100 but at the time of the attack, over half were away hunting.³⁴

The Indians fired upon the white men at close range and then fell upon the survivors with tomahawks. Rogers and most of his party were either killed or captured. A few managed to escape in one boat and a few others succeeded in fleeing on foot.

Girty’s well-planned ambush, costing Indians but two killed and three slightly wounded, proved to have a far-reaching impact on the Virginia and western Pennsylvania militias.³⁵ Those troops would now be denied valuable military supplies which could be replaced only with the utmost difficulty. His triumph also took away some of the effectiveness of that year’s earlier victories of George Rogers Clark’s forces.

Another military operation saw the first cannon ever on Kentucky soil enter the state by way of Covington [The Point]. This was in summer of 1780, when Colonel Henry Byrd of the British army led a formidable force up the Licking River to attack Ruddle’s and Martin’s Stations.

Colonel Byrd left Detroit May 25th with six artillery pieces and 150 Canadian and British soldiers and about 100 Indians. By the time he reached the Licking’s mouth though, he had been joined by nearly 1,000 more Indians, commanded by McKwee, Elliott and Girty. Girty’s brothers, James and George, were also among those to join the invasion force.

Byrd’s reinforced command reached Ruddle’s Station June 24th and demanded immediate surrender. Members of the tiny wilderness outpost recognized the futility of resistance – especially in the face of the enemy’s cannon. Nevertheless, they refused to capitulate until Colonel Byrd promised them protection from the Indians.

The stockade gates were opened on those terms, but the Indians immediately rushed into the station to claim prisoners and engage in an orgy of killing. Colonel Byrd lost all control of the Indians who plundered and killed as they pleased. From Ruddle’s Station the force proceeded to march against Martin’s Station, about five miles distant. It too, fell without resistance.

Byrd’s invasion force with its cannon, might have taken every fortification in Kentucky had there been more cooperation between the Indians and their white allies. The British commander though, found the Indians unwilling to obey any order with which they might not agree and so decided to return to Detroit. Accordingly, he led British and Canadian forces back to that place on the Licking where they had left their boats and moved off toward the Ohio.

The jubilant Indians, who had parted with Colonel Byrd, now drove all the prisoners and captured horses back to a point near the mouth of the Licking, crossed the Ohio and dispersed.

Agitation for erecting a fort at the mouth of the Licking now became more intense than ever. Demand for a fort at this location had started after the 1778 siege at Boonesborough, and now in June 1780, the Virginia Council advised George Rogers Clark to build three such fortifications along the Ohio – one at the mouth of the Kanawha; one at the Big Sandy and the third at the Licking.

The Licking garrison would be under Clark's direct command and was to be composed of 50 Kentuckians plus a regiment of 100 men to be sent from Virginia. Clark though, gave his entire time to a fortification at the Falls of the Ohio and steadily ignored the Kentuckians' clamor for strongholds at the more widely used points of invasion.³⁶

On September 5, 1781, Clark was again advised of the necessity of such a fortification, this time by Benjamin Logan, John Floyd and John Todd the three county Lieutenants. By this time, the Virginia Legislature in Williamsburg had divided Kentucky into three counties – Jefferson, Fayette and Lincoln. The advice again fell on deaf ears.

In December, Governor William Henry Harrison of the Indiana Territory became the next person to instruct Clark to build three forts – one each at the mouths of the Kentucky and Licking Rivers and the third at Limestone (Maysville). Clark however was still not listening. Instead he concentrated on plans for patrolling the Ohio by boat and by June 1782 had completed work on two gondolas and a galley.³⁷

Clark also instituted a spy patrol on the river banks from the Falls to The Point. They were to watch for any sign of Indians and give warning to fortifications which might be endangered. The patrols consisted of two men each for two weeks at a time.

It soon became apparent the patrols would not suffice, so Clark put his galley into service. This 73 foot-long craft, which was to prevail for a period of time, was powered by 46 oars and carried 110 men, and one 2-pounder and six 4-pounder guns. It served principally near the mouth of the Licking. In time, however, the Indians lost their fear of the patrol and resumed their raids on Kentucky settlements with even more alarming frequency. Clark's galley was accordingly abandoned and it became necessary to wage more land campaigns against northern Indians. The Point subsequently achieved wide recognition as an ideal rendezvous for the avenging armies.

Clark led two expeditions from the Covington site, one in 1780 against the Shawnee of ancient Piqua and the Big Miami area and another in 1782. Both were thousand-men expeditions. Troops for the 1780 expedition were to assemble here on July 7th and in order to meet that date, Clark ordered a number of transport boats to be built at the Falls of the Ohio. The finished transports were placed under Colonel Thomas Slaughter's command and were soon underway, fully loaded with troops and provisions.³⁸

It was necessary for the craft to stay in shallow water on such upstream journeys so they could be pushed forward by long poles pushed into the riverbed. Because of this, the transports were grouped into two divisions, one which moved along the Kentucky shore, while the other followed the stream's north side.³⁹

On one occasion, a boat in the northern division was fired upon by a party of Indians who managed to inflict a number of casualties before other craft could come to their aid. On another occasion, one of the Kentuckians deserted and was presumed to have gone over to the side of the Indian.⁴⁰

Thomas Vickroy, a surveyor and soldier on this campaign, said on the first day of August Clark's troops crossed the Ohio from The Point and built two block houses. Those buildings, meant to house military stores as well as the sick and wounded, represented the first European-style structures ever built on the site of Cincinnati. Vickroy observed their erection and as commissary of the campaign, was left in charge until the troops returned 14 days later. A captain and 20 to 30 sick and wounded men were left with him.

Clark took two regiments commanded by Colonels Benjamin Logan and William Linn on this expedition, including artillery among his weapons. Simon Kenton served to lead the way into hostile territory. The raid, which was in retaliation for Colonel Byrd's incursion into Kentucky, failed to achieve the complete success Clark had hoped for. This, according to a Frenchman living with the Indians at Piqua, was because the Indians were well-aware of the troops' every move and were able to evacuate their towns in sufficient time to avoid any surprise attack.⁴¹

Clark continued making repeated and relatively unsuccessful requests to Williamsburg for an expedition against Detroit, a garrison he always wanted to attack. Early in 1781, Jefferson, then Virginia's governor, promoted Clark to brigadier general. Once again, Clark began plotting against the British post. Finally he managed to raise a force of about 400 men and three pieces of artillery which he passed down the Ohio from Wheeling in late July.

Shortly thereafter, Colonel Archibald Lochry followed Clark downstream with a force of 106 Pennsylvanians and 32 horses. Lochry wrote a letter to the general who detailed the size of his force, and sent five men ahead in a small boat with orders to overtake Clark and deliver it to him. The advance party however, was

captured by the Indians who decided to lay in wait for Lochry's main force. They concealed themselves on the north bank near present Rising Sun, Indiana.⁴²

On August 24th, near a small island about 31 miles downstream from Covington and 3 miles above where the Indians lay hidden, Lochry and his force decided to go ashore on the Kentucky side to butcher and cook a bison they killed.⁴³ When the Indians learned of Lochry's unexpected landing, they detached a large contingent of braves to the Kentucky side. They approached Lochry's force undetected and at a signal began pouring a murderous fire into their ranks from overhanging and thick wooded riverbank.

The Pennsylvanians tried to defend themselves but ran short of ammunition and fled to the waiting boats. No sooner had they pushed out into the low and sluggish stream than the remaining Indian force appeared on the Indiana shore and poured heavy fire into the boats. The men decided further resistance was useless and surrendered.⁴⁴

The Indian braves, numbering about 300, including George Girty, Alexander McKee and the renown Chief Joseph Brant, massacred Lochry and several other prisoners in a bloodletting that continued until one of the chieftains arrived and ordered it stopped. The Indians, suffering only a small loss, killed or captured every member of Lochry's command. Clark would again have to postpone his planned attack on Detroit. One American who died that day was John Phesant, an ancestor of General John "Black Jack" Pershing.

Less than two months later, on October 19th, Lord Charles Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown. Patriots in the eastern colonies were delirious with joy. When the news reached Kentucky, it was hoped that it might end the war. This proved to be mere wishful thinking, for the British and Indians would carry on for another year in the West.

In June 1782, a grand council of representatives of Wyandot, Shawnee, Ottawa, Chippewa Delaware and various other tribes was held at Wapatomica. Those in attendance including Simon Girty, discussed the white man's continued encroachment into Kentucky and talked of that region's great value to the Indian for hunting. Kentucky must not be lost, they declared. The white invaders must be expelled.⁴⁵

Meanwhile, the British became reasonably sure that Detroit was safe from American attack, and Captain William Caldwell and Alexander McKee organized a force of Canadian Rangers and more than 1,000 Indians to march against Fort Henry at Wheeling. On the march, the British received a report that Clark was assembling a strong force at the mouth of the Licking. They promptly changed their plans and decided to strike in that direction.

After making their new plans however, it was learned the report of Clark's position was false. This so discouraged the Indians in Caldwell's and McKee's contingent that most returned home. In spite of this, some 300 Indians and Rangers remained in the command, which by then had been joined by Simon Girty and a group of Indian followers. With these, Caldwell and McKee decided to strike at central Kentucky settlements.

Bryan's Station was hit on August 16th after the invaders leisurely retired up the Licking Valley, aware that the Kentucky militia would pursue. The Kentuckians, thinking the raiders were in full retreat, launched their pursuit and reached the enemy in a horseshoe bend of the Licking River at Lower Blue Licks. Instead of fleeing however, the invaders turned and gave battle.

In the ensuing fight on August 19th, the militiamen found themselves in a huge trap, contrived by Caldwell and McKee, and suffered a humiliating defeat. Among the ranks of Kentucky officers killed in that day's bloody battle were Colonel John Todd, Lieutenant Colonel Stephen Trigg, Major Siles Harlan, four captains and five lieutenants. A great cry for a retaliatory raid went up throughout Kentucky settlements and General Clark declared such an expedition to be absolutely necessary to bring peace to the frontier.

Clark himself was severely criticized for not building a fortification at the Licking's mouth, and among those critics were such frontier leaders as Daniel Boone, Benjamin Logan and William Henry Harrison. Had the fortifications been built, they declared, the Blue Licks tragedy would never have occurred.

Soon a force of 1,050 men was raised and gathered at The Point where they set up camp. Once again, as in the 1780 campaign, Simon Kenton was at the head of a company of troops. General Clark, in overall campaign, divided the large force into sub-commands and, as in 1780, placed one under Colonel Benjamin Logan; the other under Colonel William Linn. Here they drew up their final plans of attack, and on November 4, 1782 left the Covington site for their northward invasion, a march that was destined to be the last military movement of the American Revolution.

The Indians though, were well aware of Clark's movements and evacuated most of their villages in his path. As a result, there was no large number of casualties on either side. Kentuckians suffered one killed and one wounded while killing and scalping ten Indians, capturing seven others and liberating two white prisoners.⁴⁶

The expedition was a decided success in other ways. The force of Kentuckians not only destroyed Chillicothe on the Great Miami, but also laid waste to several other Shawnee strongholds of the Piqua area and

posed a decided threat to Detroit. It was claimed the expedition left two-thirds of the Shawnee towns in ashes and destroyed an unusually large supply of crops and provisions. Clark later remarked the supply of food and material destroyed far surpassed any amount the whites remotely suspected the Indians possessed.

The Indians however were certainly far from defeated. Although they never again invaded Kentucky in force, small bands continued to make periodic raids and downriver migrants were slaughtered or taken prisoner in ever-increasing numbers. The settlers would not be able to let down their guard for many years to come.

During the troops' return, as they began descending the hills on the north side of the Ohio, Captain Virgil McCracken, the lone Kentuckian suffering mortal wounds, suggested the survivors meet fifty years later on the Kentucky side of the river. There they could talk over the hardships of the campaign, its glories and commemorate old comrades who had died. The men all agreed and set the reunion for the weekend of November 4, 1832. McCracken died a short time after making his suggestion and "was buried near the blockhouse at the mouth of the Licking, on the Kentucky side."⁴⁷

Peace negotiations between American and English diplomats had been underway ever since Cornwallis' surrender at Yorktown and continued for nearly another year. There would be no more major military undertakings during these talks and, although the fighting had ended with Detroit still in British hands, the American frontiersmen, principally Kentuckians, made the British position there and on Lake Erie precarious.

On September 3, 1783, the Treaty of Paris officially ended the Revolutionary War. The treaty gave recognition to an independent America whose boundaries, Thanks largely to Kentucky frontiersmen, now included all the land between the Alleghenies and the Mississippi and north to the Great Lakes.

Besides major battles as Lower Blue Licks, the Licking continued to witness skirmishes resulting in death for a large number of pioneers and settlers. General Clark noted one such Christmas Day incident in his diary on 1776, which reads: "Dec. 25th. Ten men, going to the Ohio for powder, met on the waters of the Licking Creek by Indians, and defeated. John G. Jones, William Greden and Josiah Dixon were killed."⁴⁸

Elison E. Williamson, an early Covington resident, later recalled of numerous clashes occurring on the banks of that stream when he recorded:

"After the battle of Blue Licks and in 1786, our family removed to Higgins' block-house on Licking River, one and a half miles above Cynthiana. Between those periods, my father had been shot by the Indians, and my mother married Samuel VanHook, who had been one of the party engaged in the defence [sic] at Ruddle's Station in 1780, and on its surrender was carried with the rest of the prisoners to Detroit."⁴⁹

Higgins' fort, or block-house, had been built at the bank of Licking, on precipitous rock, at least thirty feet high, which served to protect us on every side but one. On the morning of the 12th of June, at day light, the fort, which consisted of six or seven houses, was attacked by a party of Indians, fifteen or twenty in number. There was a cabin outside, below the fort, where William M'Combs resided, although absent at that time. His son Andrew, and a man hired in the family, named Joseph McFall, on making their appearance at the door to wash themselves, were both shot down – M'Combs through the knee and McFall in the pit of his stomach. McFall ran to the block-house and M'Combs fell unable to support himself longer, just after opening the door of his cabin, and was dragged in by his sisters, who barricaded the door instantly.⁵⁰

On the level and only accessible side, there was a cornfield and the season being favorable and soil rich as well as new, the corn was more than breast high. Here the main body of Indians lay concealed, while three or four who made the attack attempted thereby to decoy the whites outside of the defenses. Failing in this, they set fire to an old fence and corn-crib and two stables, both long enough built to be thoroughly combustible. These had previously protected their approach in that direction. Captain Asa Reese was in command of our little fort. 'Boys,' said he, 'some of you must run over to Hinkston's or Harrison's.' These were one and a half and two miles off, but in different directions. Every man declined. I objected, alleging as my reason, that he would give up the fort before I could bring relief; but on his assurance that he would hold out, I agreed to go. I jumped off the bank through the thickest of trees, which broke my fall, while they scratched my face and limbs. I got to the ground with a limb clenched in my hands, which I had grasped unawares in getting through. I recovered from the jar in less than a minute, crossed the Licking and ran up a cow path on the opposite side. As soon as I had gained the bank, I shouted to assure my friends of my safety and to discourage the enemy. In less than an hour I was back with a relief of ten horsemen,

well armed and driving in full chase after the Indians. But they had decamped immediately upon hearing my signal well knowing what it meant. It was deemed imprudent to pursue them with so weak a party – the whole force in Huggins' block-house hardly sufficing to guard the women and children there. McFall, from whom the bullet could not be extracted, lingered two days and nights in great pain, when he died as did M'Combs, on the ninth day, mortification then taking place.”⁵¹

A large number of American historians who declare the Revolutionary War ended with Cornwallis surrendering at Yorktown, invariably neglect that the British in the West had other ideas on the matter. Here Britain hoped to regain much of what it had lost and kept forts at several locations, including Niagara, Mackinac, Detroit and on the banks of the Maumee River near present Toledo.

The western British forces openly encouraged Indian hostilities against American settlers and when even this segment of the English army eventually quit the war, its Indian allies continued to fight on. The Indians had not been signatories to the Treaty of Paris, and were still in no mood to accept their lands being traded away by a one-time ally. They continued their sorties and raids into Kentucky and made the lives of Kentuckians anything but peaceful. The Indians were bent on having the Ohio River as America's northern boundary.

Between 1783 and 1790, Indians along the Ohio killed, wounded or captured about 1,500 men, women and children, who were in Kentucky or on their way – including Abraham Lincoln, the grandfather of the 16th president.⁵² In addition, some 2,000 horses were taken by Indians and about \$50,000 of damage done to frontier property.⁵³

In July 1787, the Continental Congress organized the land north of the Ohio and west to the Mississippi into the Northwest Territory. Yet the paramount need of the local frontiersmen continued to be protection. It was apparent the militia alone could not cope with the Indians, so a plea for help was made to the new nation's leaders. President Washington responded with an order that a fortification be built within the territory's Symmes Purchase.

In response to the presidential order, the army, in 1789, commenced erecting such an installation on the Ohio's north side and opposite the mouth of the Licking.

The fort – known as Fort Washington – was built to house 1,500 persons and was guarded by cannon mounted at the blockhouses built at each of the four corners. It included a hospital, military quarters, a powder magazine and working facilities for such craftsmen as a blacksmith, clothier, carpenter, armorer and wheelwright.

The presence of the new command though had little initial impact on the Indians determination to halt American settlement of what they regarded as their lands. Continued successful raids made them bolder than ever. They freely ranged within sight of the fort and often stole the garrison's cattle and horses, including those tethered to the very walls of the fort itself. This prompted the garrison to take the precaution of using a small island in the Ohio River as a corral. The island, long disappeared, occupied the site of part of the Tacoma Sand Bar at present Dayton, Kentucky.⁵⁴

For a time there was some question whether the army would continue at Fort Washington. Provisions ran so low at one point that the 70 soldiers stationed there seriously considered abandoning the post. Such a move would be catastrophic for the settlers, so John S. Wallace, James Dement and a Mr. Drennon, three who had previously noted the abundance of game on the Kentucky side, decided to take it upon themselves to provision the garrison.

Accordingly, the three boarded a canoe and paddled about six to ten miles downstream into present Kenton and Campbell Counties, secreted their craft in the mouth of a small creek and soon managed to kill enough bison, deer and bear to provision the fort for six weeks. By then additional supplies arrived from Pittsburgh.

Although the army was steadily increasing in strength in the area, there were many Indians who remained unimpressed, one being a Shawnee chief known as Captain Blackbeard. During the year of Fort Washington's establishment, one of Ohio's land holders met with Captain Blackbeard on the north Ohio bank at about 16 miles downstream of Covington. The landholder reported the conversation as follows:

“The Chief (the others sitting around him) wished to be informed how far I was supported by the United States, and whether the thirteen fires had sent me hither. I answered them in the affirmative and spread before them the thirteen strikes which had in a flag then in my camp. I pointed to the troops in their uniform, then on parade, and informed the Chief that those were the warriors which the thirteen fires kept in constant pay to avenge their quarrels, and that though the United States were desirous of peace, yet they were able to chastise any aggressor who should dare to offend them and to demonstrate this I showed the seal of my commission, on which the American arms are impressed, observing that while the eagle had a

branch of a tree as emblem of peace in one claw, she had strong and sharp arrows in the other, which denotes her power to punish her enemies. The Chief, who observed the device on the seal with great attention, replied through an interpreter that he could not perceive any intimation of peace from the attitude the eagle was in, having her wings spread as in flight, when folding of the wings denoted rest and peace; that he could not understand how the breach of a tree could be considered a pacific emblem, for rods designed for correction were always taken from the boughs of trees; that to him the eagle appeared, from her bearing a large whip in one claw, and such a number of arrows in the other and in full career of flight, to be wholly bent on war and mischief.”⁵⁵

The number of raids and ambushes then taking place in the Ohio Valley alarmed the infant Republic’s new president, George Washington, who decided upon another expedition against the Indians. Washington however, found it impossible to send more federal troops here, so he authorized Major General Arthur St. Clair, Governor of the Northwest Territory, to raise a force of militiamen. St. Clair promptly responded, and gathered at Fort Washington a force of militia from four states. He placed Brevet Brigadier General Josiah Harmar in command.⁵⁶

The militiamen from Kentucky, commanded by Colonel John Hardin and Colonel James Trotter, like countless soldiers before, chose the Covington site as their rendezvous area. Here they encamped, laid plans, and then crossed the river to join Harmar.

Discord among the Kentuckians existed from almost the very beginning. Argument broke out between Trotter and was not settled until Hardin was awarded the chief command. Trotter was then placed in a subordinate position of authority.⁵⁷

Finally, on September 30, 1790, 1,453 men, including 320 regulars of the First Infantry Regiment and four companies of mounted militia, set out from Fort Washington. The men, though said to be poorly armed, counted six pieces of artillery among their weapons. Such firepower would be sorely needed, for they would be opposed by a formidable coalition of Miami, Shawnee, Potawami and Chippewa – all under the able command of an outstanding leader, Michikinikwa or Little Turtle.⁵⁸

As the invaders marched northward, Little Turtle slowly and deliberately lured them deeper into his own territory. He did this by gradually withdrawing and burning his own deserted villages. Those he did not burn were destroyed by the expedition.

By the standards of frontier warfare, the march was so far a success for the whites and represented all that Harmar had been ordered to do. The leaders of the Kentuckians however, continuously carried on a quarrel with the regulars, and insisted in a battle. Harmar unwisely gave in.

The invaders moved deeper into Little Turtle’s territory until they reached a point where the Indian chieftain decided to stop and give battle. Little Turtle turned his warriors about and flanked the frontiersmen. He struck hard at Harmar’s force and in the ensuing battle, killed 183 of the invaders and wounded 31 others.⁵⁹

Many of the casualties resulted when Hardin’s command was led into a well-executed trap. The Kentuckians became panic-stricken and all but nine disgracefully fled the field. General Harmar’s remaining troops were now completely ineffective against the ably-led Indians and were forced to retreat.⁶⁰

One of the last Kentuckians to leave the battlefield was nineteen-year-old Garret Burns, a native of County Carlow, Ireland, a great-nephew of Robert Burns the Scottish poet. Young Burns ignored Hardin’s cry of “Let every man do the best he can to escape,” and remained at the battle scene to help several wounded mount the available horses and begin their flight. It was only after all the horses were taken that he began his own escape on foot.⁶¹

Burns, who later settled in Campbell County, described the flight by saying: “I had run nearly a mile at full speed and was almost exhausted when a horseman galloped by. On the instant I seized the horse...by the tail and held on in spite of the owner’s remonstrances and threats, he having nothing but a light switch in his hand, and I holding on for life or death. When I got into camp, was so stiff that I had to be greased and roasted by the fire for some time, before I could stand on my feet.”⁶²

It was an important victory for the Indians, but because they allowed Harmar to retreat without further attack, he reported the battle as a victory for the frontiersmen. The facts concerning the crushing defeat however could not be concealed. Although Harmar managed to lead his army back to Fort Washington in reasonably good order, the defeat served to inflict a serious, though highly unjust, stigma upon his military reputation.

The Indians continued to resist the loss of their homelands and frontier armies continued to assemble at the Covington site – The Point.

Brigadier General James Wilkinson led 585 mounted volunteers from The Point in the summer of 1791. This force crossed to Fort Washington and left that post on August 1st to strike at Indian towns near the confluence of the Eel and Wabash Rivers in Indiana.⁶³

Once again, Garret Burns shouldered his musket and marched off to battle. The Indians fascinated him, and though in frequent combat with them, he never failed to note the smallest detail associated with them and lifestyle. He was well acquainted with most of the villages marked for attack and now, as a member of Wilkinson's command, would take part in the destruction of one settlement after another.

These settlements, according to Burns, were comprised of wigwams and cabins, the latter made of small logs built by the Indian women. Construction of the wigwams consisted of driving tall forked stakes into the ground in circular fashion and sloping them inward until the forks interlocked at the top. Poles were then laid across the stakes at regular intervals after which the entire framework was covered with large strips of tree bark, some of which measured four feet in width.⁶⁴ The only openings in the finished structure were a small entrance and an opening at the top through which smoke from small fires could escape.

Burns noted the bark for the wigwams was easiest to remove from trees during spring months when the sap was rising. At other seasons, he said, the Indians made a deep cut above the strip they wished to remove and pour boiling water behind the selected portion. Then an incision would be made lengthwise along the tree and the process of peeling the strip would begin.⁶⁵

The Indian men would peel the bark until it was deemed more boiling water was needed to further loosen it. This process was repeated until the entire bark was removed. The strip was then laid on the ground and weighted down with heavy stones until it kept its desired shape.

Burns' job was to destroy as much of the Indians' handiwork as he could. He and his comrades moved with amazing rapidity. After inflicting moderately heavy casualties on the Natives, and laying waste to many towns and gardens, Wilkinson's force returned to Kentucky by way of the Falls of the Ohio on August 21st. This remarkable expedition covered some 450 miles in only 21 days.⁶⁶

Meanwhile, President Washington decided the time had come to send an overwhelming military force against the unsubdued natives. St. Clair was promoted to Major General and given particular instructions by Washington as how to avoid Indian entrapment.

On October 3rd, St. Clair personally led a force from Fort Washington which included 600 regulars, 800 militiamen from Maryland, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania – and 600 unwilling Kentucky draftees.

Kentucky, where the settlers were by now well-aware of Indian fighting ability, failed to supply any volunteers whatsoever and the 600 who obeyed the draft law, represented but a fraction of the 1,000 actually called. This failure to respond was rationalized by Kentuckians as resulting from their mistrust of the regular army officers. Even among the 600 draftees, there was a large number who would desert before reaching the ultimate battle site. In fact, daily desertions quickly cut St. Clair's force of 2,000 to one of less than 1,500 men.⁶⁷

Such were the troops St. Clair was committed to lead against a powerful Indian alliance now composed of Delaware, Shawnee, Wyandot, Miami, Ottawa, Kickapoo, Chippewa and Pottawattami, along with a few representatives of the Mohawk and Creek.

The awesome Indian alliance had come about largely because of the efforts of Little Turtle in cooperation with the Shawnee chief Blue Jacket and Delaware chief Buckongahelas. Other formidable leaders of the Indians included Simon Girty and Shawnee chief Tecumseh.⁶⁸

Nevertheless, St. Clair felt confident of victory. He marched his army, including the dissatisfied and undisciplined militiamen, out of Fort Washington early in September and slowly made his way northward. Eventually, on November 4th, at a point on the Upper Wabash, the Indians opened fire and launched a full scale attack under Little Turtle's leadership. The Kentucky draftees, who caught the brunt of the full assault of 1,100 Indians, fled in sheer terror. Their panic quickly spread to other militia units who then joined the Kentuckians in their wild flight.⁶⁹

The first Regiment of Regulars was quickly called up from the rear where its members had been left to safeguard supplies, but it was already too late. As they advanced toward the battle site, they were met by hordes of fleeing militiamen. General St. Clair and General Richard Butler, the second in command, tried to rally the men and for a brief time some semblance of order was restored. The militiamen then began giving a better account of themselves, but as noted before, it was too late.⁷⁰

One of those taking part in some of the heaviest fighting was Jacob Fowler, an early Covington resident. On one occasion, Fowler saw one of the Indians taking refuge behind a nearby tree. He later recalled the event by saying: "He was loading his piece, squatting down as much as possible to screen himself. I drew sight at his butt and shot him through; he dropped and as soon as I had fired, retreated into our lines to reload by rifle."⁷¹

Yet another incident during that same battle was recalled by Fowler when he said, "I had been partially sheltered by a small tree, but a couple of Indians who had taken a larger one, both fired at me at once, and feeling the steam of their guns at my belly, I supposed myself cut to pieces. But no harm had been done and I brought my piece to my side and fired, without aiming at the one who stood his ground, the fellow being so close to me that I could hardly miss him. I shot him through the hips and while he was crawling away on all fours, Colonel Darke, who had dismounted and stood close by me, made at him with his sword and struck his head off."⁷²

The Indian victory turned into a complete route of St. Clair's army. It represented the greatest defeat in terms of men lost that any unit would ever suffer at the hands of the Indians in any one battle. From a force of 1,492, only 580 reached safety.

St. Clair's loss on 630 dead and 2812 wounded may be compared with the number of men lost at Custer's later defeat at Little Big Horn. In that battle there were 211 men annihilated.⁷³

The frontiersmen were dazed by their defeat and the Indians jubilant. St. Clair, like Harmar, now became the target for widespread criticism and resigned his commission. Five American generals had attempted to conquer the Indians – George Rogers Clark, Josiah Harmar, Charles Scott, James Wilkinson and Arthur St. Clair. Not only had all five achieved something less than complete success, but the Indians had actually become stronger and the tribes were cooperating more closely than ever before.

During all this time, Kentuckians were expressing a growing resentment toward Virginia. The settlers felt they were not being furnished enough protection against Indian depredations. A large number of Kentuckians always persisted in believing many of the Indian raids could have been prevented, had the much-desired Northern Kentucky forts been built.

Eventually, the parent state of Virginia abandoned all attempts to fortify Northern Kentucky. This led to charges the Virginia government was derelict in protecting its western settlements, and in effect was abandoning them to their fate. Kentuckians said if Virginia would not listen to their complaints, then maybe Kentucky would be better off as a separate state. In fact, R. S. Cotterill, in his "History of Pioneer Kentucky," maintained the failure to build the forts prompted the beginnings of Kentucky's struggle for autonomy.

It was true that, no sooner had the American colonies declared their independence in 1776, talk began of organizing Kentucky as a separate state. George Rogers Clark and his supporters, fearful that Daniel Boone might actually attempt to carry out such an action, petitioned Virginia to annex the western settlements. Virginia reacted by recognizing the area as a separate county as of December 31, 1776.⁷⁴

Kentucky's population grew steadily from that time until finally, in 1780 the Virginia Legislature deemed it advisable to further divide it into three counties – Jefferson, Fayette and Lincoln. The lawmakers appointed John Floyd, John Todd and Benjamin Logan as lieutenants of the respective counties.

The Covington site was included within the Fayette County boundaries from that time until Kentucky became a separate state. In fact, the original Fayette County has since been subdivided into 42 additional counties.

Three years after the division of Kentucky County, Virginia's western settlements were reorganized as a Judicial District and eventually on June 1st, 1792, Kentucky entered the Union as the first state organized west of the Alleghenies. At that time it was further subdivided into nine counties – Jefferson, Fayette, Lincoln, Nelson, Bourbon, Mercer, Madison, Mason and Woodford. The Covington site was then in Woodford County.

If Kentuckians were impressed by their new status as a state, it may be said the Indians certainly were not. Raids and depredations continued along the Ohio and in the northern reaches of the state. In addition, the British consistently violated the Treaty of Paris by maintaining armed posts in western territory clearly belonging to the new United States and by aiding and encouraging the Indians to continue their attacks on the Frontiersmen.

In the meantime, Major General Anthony Wayne, a dashing hero of earlier Revolutionary battles, was given command of the American Army. That was April of 1792, and within two months, he was at Pittsburgh collecting regulars and militiamen, preparing to come downriver for another campaign against Indians.

Volunteers for the militia came reluctantly at first, but their numbers increased as time passed. They came from Virginia, Maryland and New Jersey, but most came from Pennsylvania. They marched, drilled and held reviews. In time they began building river craft for their descent of the Ohio, and in April 1793, General Wayne ordered the long train of flatboats to begin the journey to Fort Washington. Among the new regulars was a young lieutenant of cavalry named Leonard Wales Covington.

When they reached their destination on May 8th, Fort Washington was too small for the men to properly train.⁷⁵ General Wayne thereupon selected a drill ground west of the fort and just east of the Mill Creek. These grounds became known in Cincinnati's history as "Hobson's Choice." Wayne's selection of that name for the site tells us something of how he felt about the terrain of his training ground, for in early American slang, "Hobson's Choice" was synonymous with no choice at all.

Wayne was very particular when it concerned the training of his troops, and he felt he must have the best ground for his cavalry drills. He therefore sent four companies of light dragoons to the Covington side of the river for a more suitable training site. Here, the men along with Lieutenant Covington as troop commander, set up a new camp and christened it with the classical name of *Bellerophontia*. The name was chosen in honor of one of the heroes in Book VI of Homer's "Illiad" which tells of "...the flawless Bellerophon (whom) the gods made handsome and showered with masculine charm."

All that summer the sounds of mock cavalry charges and the noise of drilling troops could be heard throughout The Point. There was such wheeling, drilling and marching as had never before been seen in all of Kentucky. This was a true army and not to be likened with such straggling forces as those under Bowman, Hardin and others. Here there was true military leadership and it quickly became apparent to the men their young lieutenant was truly a soldier's soldier.

Also at that time the local settlers became acquainted with the future general and the friendships which followed undoubtedly influenced the later choices of "Covington" as a name for their little settlement.⁷⁶

General Wayne, like other commanders before him, called upon Kentucky for volunteers. The frontiersmen however, felt they had learned a lesson twice-over from Little Turtle and were not anxious for another. Besides, the regulars, they thought, were not to be trusted in battle against the Indians. Kentucky furnished very few volunteers.

As a result of the settlers' reluctance to offer service, Governor Isaac Shelby instituted a military draft and raised 1,000 mounted militiamen in that manner. They were placed under General Charles Scott's command and sent to join General Wayne, who by then was already deep into Indian territory. The Kentuckians finally caught up with him on October 24th at some 80 miles north of The Point and the Ohio River.

Wayne's force had been moving in a methodic manner, and building a series of forts and blockhouses along the line of march. Now, after a few skirmishes, the men were ready to go into winter quarters. General Scott's Kentuckians were not needed, and were released to return home.

The campaign was re-activated the following summer and in July 1794, General Scott led about 16,000 Kentuckians – all volunteers this time – to join forces with General Wayne.

Late in June however, the Indians launched a full-scale attack against General Wayne at Fort Recovery, one of the fortifications he had erected. The battle, which lasted throughout the day, ended with the Indians soundly beaten.

Wayne resumed his march, reinforced by the Kentuckians who arrived on July 26th and advanced to within a short distance of the British Fort Miami [present Toledo], There, on August 20th, some 2,000 warriors under chiefs Blue Jacket and Little Turtle, again attacked, this time from cover of fallen trees which gave the Battle of Fallen Timbers its name.⁷⁷

The furious battle lasted barely 50 minutes, but they were 50 minutes in which heroic deeds became commonplace. Leonard Covington's action was especially outstanding, and an admiring Theodore Roosevelt later wrote in "Winning of the West:"

"It would have been difficult to have found more unfavorable ground for cavalry, nevertheless the dragoons rode against their foes at a gallop with broad swords swinging, the horses dodging in and out among the trees and jumping the fallen logs. They received a fire at close range which emptied a dozen saddles, both captains being shot down. One was killed and the other...wounded. The command devolved upon Lieutenant Covington who led forward the troops...and...the dragoons burst among the savages at a full speed and routed them in a moment. Covington cut down two Indians with his own hand."

Roosevelt might also have noted that the use of Covington's troops represented the first time the army ever used cavalry in force against the Indians. The battle's outcome was decisive, as the Indians were completely crushed and scattered. Many of them fled to the British Fort Miami for safety, but the British, who had armed and urged them to do battle with the Americans, now bolted their gates and turned the Indians away at the point of bayonet.⁷⁸

Garret Burns, one of the attacking Kentuckians, previously served with Harmar and St. Clair, declared, "Had the Indians been admitted, nothing would have prevented Wayne from storming the fort."⁷⁹

The British commander wanted no part of a battle with General Wayne's well-disciplined troops. During all this, Wayne's troops won the wholehearted admiration of the frontiersmen. One of their earliest and greatest admirers was Simon Kenton who even expressed admiration for the unusual makeshift fur-trimmed caps worn by many of the troops.⁸⁰

Unlike the dragoons' headgear, which consisted of a brass helmet mounted with a horsehair crest, Wayne's infantry wore caps decorated with strips of bearskin. Kenton and his men adopted this unique style of headwear for themselves and within a short time, according to one of Kenton's biographers, their adopted caps evolved into the famed pioneer-era coonskin cap.⁸¹

However, not all frontiersmen favored such headgear. Despite later myth, Daniel Boone was one who rejected them and seldom if ever wore one. Coonskin caps, he complained, were uncomfortable when it rained, and channeled water down his neck and back. Instead, he preferred wearing a Quaker-style black hat and always insisted on one having a wide brim.⁸²

After Wayne defeated the Indians, he spent several more months plundering and burning their towns and fields, and erecting more fortifications. The tribes' resistance was broken at last. The following summer they signed the Treaty of Greenville.⁸³

By 1792, Kentucky's northern border from the Big Sandy to the Licking, was receiving ever increasing numbers of migrants from the northeastern states. They came from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, and throughout New England. Many also continued coming to Kentucky from the Carolinas and other southern states by way of Cumberland Gap. These southerners however, were quite unlike those from the northeastern states in that they counted among their ranks large numbers of Tories fleeing the wrath and disdain of their patriot-neighbors.

⁸⁴According to Patricia Watlington's "The Partisan Spirit," central Kentucky was home to scores of Tories from Virginia and North Carolina who had long been loyal to England. Even while America was struggling for independence, she points out, the central part of the state experienced many loyalist acts. There it became commonplace for loyalist settlers to try avoiding fighting in the militia, usually by feigning sickness. It was also in that area one of the state's more serious Tory acts occurred when a loyalist from Bryan's Station warned British forces of an approaching American army.

Most of the southerners came to Kentucky by the Wilderness Road which followed Indian and buffalo trails from Cumberland Gap to a point in Rockcastle County from where, in 1775, Daniel Boone had blazed a route to the site of Boonesborough. Years later, this trail was extended to the Covington site.

Although the wilderness Road played an important part in the state's early development, it remains advisable to point out the tendency of many writers to overstress its importance. Its significance never did match that of the Ohio River route. The Ohio was long the favored way into Kentucky and those who traveled it were patriots to the core. The river was also the more dangerous route and although the threat of large scale Indian invasions no longer existed, there still was the steady harassment of small raids.

Nevertheless, Kentucky was lost to the Indian forever, as a steady stream of new immigrants poured in to fertile fields. The number of farms, villages and towns grew with great rapidity. The rule of the musket and tomahawk was at an end.

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- 67 Tebbel, John, *op. cit.*
- 68 Butterfield, Consul Wilshire, *op. cit.*
- 69 Tebbel, John, *op. cit.*
- 70 Ibid.
- 71 Gist, Charles, *op. cit.*
- 72 Ibid.
- 73 Tebbel, John, *op. cit.*
- 74 Calvin D. Linton, editor, "The Bicentennial Almanac, Thomas Nelson, Inc., New York (1975)
- 75 Thomas Boyd, "Mad Anthony Wayne," Charles Scribner Sons, New York (1929)

⁷⁶ Brig. General Leonard Covington (1768-1813). Killed at Battle of Chryslers Field; body moved to Sackets Harbor, NY in 1820. Beloved by his men who returned from battle and began naming towns after him. Besides Covington, Kentucky (the largest), there is a Covington in Virginia, Georgia, Louisiana, New York, Tennessee and Ohio. There is also a Covington County in Alabama. [See: *Ky. Enquirer*, 31 July 2011, p. B1].

⁷⁷ Boyd, Thomas, *op. cit.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ Charles Cist, *op. cit.*

⁸⁰ Patricia Jahns, "The Violent Years," Hastings House, New York (1962)

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Cincinnati Enquirer*, 16 August 1981.

⁸³ Boyd, Thomas, *op.cit.*

⁸⁴ Patricia Watlington, "The Partisan Spirit," University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill (1972)

Chapter 3 Frontier Adventures

Despite no permanent fortifications were ever erected directly on the original Covington site, many historians, including Richard Collins, make statements that might be interpreted as alluding to such an installation. One such reference can be found in William B. Allen's "A History of Kentucky," published in 1872. Allen wrote:

"Mr. M. Swing of Covington, Kentucky, one of the oldest residents, has in his possession a snuff-box carved from the horn of an ox and bearing the date 1782. It was made by Colonel William Pritchard, a young hunter in the dark and bloody days of Kentucky and in one of the principle forts erected by Daniel Boone. The fort was situated at the mouth of the Licking River, opposite Cincinnati, where Covington now stands, which was then a dreary wilderness. Young Pritchard, with a few soldiers and hunters, was at the time, besieged in the fort by the Indians and to while away the time during the siege, when not on duty, he carved this box, covering it with devices and emblems of the time. On the bottom is the date 1782."¹

The above quoted text is undoubtedly correct in everything except possibly the fortification's builder and location. Colonel Pritchard was probably one of the soldiers left at the blockhouse George Rogers Clark had erected on the Ohio side of the river during his 1782 expedition from the Covington site. Daniel Boone, of course, was a member of that force.

The Ohio blockhouse is also probably the same fortification Collins referred to when he described the burial place of that expedition's Captain McCracken as being "near the blockhouse at the mouth of the Licking, on the Kentucky side."²

The Indians had placed great value on the Covington area, not only for its military importance, but also because of the rivers of the region. The Shawnee were particularly attracted to river routes for two reasons: first, if the stream was deep enough, boats could be used for travel and second, if the natives were walking, they could stay along the banks and avoid steep hills.

On one occasion though, a group of Shawnee and Miami did choose a hilltop route and became involved in one of the greatest Indian battles to ever occur in the Upper Bluegrass.

The battle took place about 1749 in what is now Fort Thomas. The unplanned encounter was with a band of Cherokee who, according to an Indian legend, precipitated the fight when they betrayed a trusted shaman of the Shawnee and Miami. Another version says it was caused by the friction between the French and English.

The Cherokee, who had sided with the French, were passing through Northern Kentucky on their way home to Tennessee, when they met up with the Shawnee and Miami who were returning to their homes in Ohio from a joint hunting expedition in Kentucky.

The Cherokee were not familiar with the local territory and after a three-day battle in which they were severely defeated, retreated to the river valley where Newport now stands. There they paused only long enough to re-group and then fled southward by another route. The victorious Shawnee and Miami stayed on the hilltop where they treated their wounded and buried their dead. Only then did they resume their journey northward. Since then, the graves of some 500 to 600 fallen warriors have been found in the vicinity of Fort Thomas' Highland and Newman Avenues.

An interesting story is told of an encounter between a band of Indians and two early pioneers of the area. Captain William Lytle and his son, William, Jr., were camped with their horses, cattle and other possessions in the neighborhood of what is now Covington when they were set upon by a group of Indians who stole the horses.

The Lytles and a small, hastily-gathered posse gave chase, but the Indians escaped across the Ohio and were just emerging onto the north bank when the pursuers caught sight of them. The Indians taunted the white men with shouts that they were too late to catch them and should go back to camp. The Lytles called the Indians thieves and shouted to ask if they were not ashamed of their behavior. The Indians replied there was no shame at all for what they were doing, as they considered the horses but small payment for the use of Indian lands on the south bank of the river.

Wild life abounded in the area at that time. Thousands of parakeets with brilliant green and yellow plumage made their homes here and there were times when the sky would be darkened by thousands of passenger pigeons. In

fact, Ludlow's *Pigeon Point* received its name because of the thousands of passenger pigeons which once roosted there.

Wolves roamed the dense forest and often presented an ominous threat to the lives of the early frontiersmen. On one occasion, a Northern Kentucky pioneer woman on horseback was pursued by a pack of the ravenous animals. She drove her frightened horse at a furious pace and outdistanced the wolves only because she discarded much of her clothing, item by item. She first dropped her bonnet, then a glove, followed by another, and so on. The wolves stopped to sniff at each article of dress and so gave the fleeing woman time to reach safety, minus most of her apparel.

As late as 1792, another woman was involved in yet another of the Covington area's many dramatic adventures. In July of that year, a party of two men, one woman, and a small boy were canoeing down the Ohio when they were fired upon by Indians on the north shore. One of the men was killed, the other wounded and the boy taken prisoner. The woman, however, escaped by leaping into the river. Her voluminous dress, typical of that day's fashion, trapped a large amount of air beneath its folds, and served to keep the woman afloat. In that manner she managed to drift with the current for nearly two miles to a point of safety.³

The first white women to visit the Covington site, however, were 23-year-old Mrs. William (Mary Draper) Ingles and an elderly German woman [whose name has been lost to history]. In fact those two were the first white women to ever trod the soil of what would eventually become the state of Kentucky.

Mary Draper was born in Philadelphia and her 1750 marriage to William Ingles represented the first wedding of a white couple to occur west of the Alleghenies. The Ingles made their home on the banks of the Roanoke River at Draper's Meadows, a community founded in 1748 by the Draper and Ingles families – now known as Blacksburg, Virginia. It was there that one of the frontier's most incredible stories had its beginning.⁴

On July 30, 1775, Mary, her two children and a sister-in-law, Elizabeth, were taken prisoners by a band of Shawnee and forced to make a tortuous, lengthy march to a village at the junction of the Scioto and Ohio Rivers. The modern-day city of Portsmouth, Ohio now occupies that location.⁵

Mary's mother was tomahawked during the raid and Elizabeth was shot through the arm while attempting to flee with her baby. The Indians grabbed the baby by the heels and smashed its head against a nearby log wall. Two of the settlement's men were killed and two others seriously wounded while attempting to defend themselves and the women and children.⁶

While on their journey westward, the Indians stopped at the isolated cabin of an elderly frontier hermit. The natives became furious when they found the cabin contained nothing worth stealing and in a fit of rage, turned upon the old man and decapitated him.⁷

The Indians placed the old man's head in a bag and carried it as far as the next cabin, about a mile to the west. There, the lone occupant, a woman, was told to peer inside the bag and she would recognize one of her neighbors.⁸

After they arrived at the Indians' home village, Elizabeth was made to run the gauntlet, an event witnessed by Christopher Gist and some French traders who were visiting the Shawnee at the time. She survived the ordeal and was then sent on to another village.

Mary, however, was to suffer a different fate. She became a favorite in the eyes of the chief and was treated with an unusual amount of consideration by other tribal members. Her children, George (age 2 months) and Thomas (age 4) were taken from her and sent to different villages. Mary Ingles was then assigned the duties of an Indian squaw. All of this, including Elizabeth's forced running of the gauntlet, was done over the vigorous protests of Christopher Gist and the French traders.

In the following year (1756), Mary was taken down the Ohio past the mouth of the Licking and on to Big Bone Lick. Here she was to help in the preparation of salt supplies for her captors. While at Big Bone, Mary and another captive, the elderly German woman, managed to make their escape. It was a dangerous and almost impossible journey for the two women but after months of extreme hardships they miraculously reached their homes back in Virginia.

There has been much speculation of the identity of the "elderly Dutch [German] woman." One of the more reliable accounts states she was the wife of Henry Bingamin, and had been taken prisoner after the Indian raiding party left Draper's Meadows for their village at the mouth of the Scioto.⁹

After the two women escaped, they headed for the Ohio and followed it upstream. Whenever they reached a tributary, such as the Licking, that was too deep to wade, they simply followed it upstream until they reached a ford. There they would cross and return to once again follow the Ohio.

After a number of days, the two reached a spot opposite the Indian village at the Scioto's mouth. There they stole a horse and some corn from under the Indians' very noses and continued their journey.

Back at Big Bone, the pair's captors never did suspect an escape because of the near-absolute improbabilities of surviving it. They instead, thought the women had fallen prey to wild animals which roamed the vicinity.

At the Big Sandy River, Mary and her companion had difficulty crossing until they found a place some twenty miles upstream at the confluence of the Tug and Lavis forks. The driftwood at that point was so thick they could venture across. Their horse however, fell between the logs and drowned.

The chilled and crisp nights were spent sleeping under great piles of dead leaves, or huddled inside hollows of great trees, or possibly under overhanging rock ledges. At one time Mrs. Bingamin, crazed from hunger and exposure, blamed Mary for their difficulties and threatened to kill and eat her. Although Mary recognized the real danger she was in, she could not bring herself to leave the troubled woman. She eventually succeeded in calming the distraught woman through the use of extreme patience and understanding. They then resumed their journey, subsisting largely on walnuts, paw-paws, wild grapes and edible roots. They tore strips from their dresses to bind their feet which by then had become swollen and bruised by the rough terrain.

When the pair reached the mouth of the Kanawha River, they turned south and followed its course toward Draper's Meadows. Finally within 50 miles of their homes, the old woman became violent again and actually attacked Mary. Mary tore free and, this time, fled. She hid in the underbrush until after dark when she resumed her journey by moonlight.

In time, Mary reached a point her Indian captors had originally taken her across a deep stream. She found the canoe they had used buried under sand and leaves but there was no paddle. Mary quickly uncovered the craft, and used a broad splinter of a fallen tree to paddle across the river.

She found a vacant cabin on the opposite bank and spent the night there. The surrounding farm, which had been abandoned because of danger from warring Indians, furnished her with a small amount of corn and turnips that had been overlooked by the Indians and wild animals. About that time, Mrs. Bingamin appeared on the opposite bank and begged Mary to return and take her across. Mary regretfully refused and continued on her journey alone.

A new threat now appeared. The weather was turning cold and a light snow began falling. Mary's worries mounted. She now faced the most difficult part of her journey. She realized that, even though she was nearing home, there was a good possibility she would not live to see it. Her clothing in tatters, her half-starved body was tortured by frost. The terrain had become mountainous and difficult to traverse, but Mary continued to struggle on. She now began traveling only during daylight hours. At night, Mary made herself as comfortable as she could, sleeping much of the time in hollow logs and covering herself with leaves for warmth.

In time she reached the farm of Adam Harmon on the New River. There she was cared for by him and his family for the next few days, after which she was reunited with her husband. All together, the trip had taken 42 ½ days. Mary had in the meantime sent a rescue party for the old German woman, who by then was within 20 miles of safety. Eventually Mrs. Bingamin was reunited with her husband after which they re-settled in Pennsylvania.¹⁰

Elizabeth was released some six months later, after better relations were established with the Indians. George died in captivity but Thomas lived with his captors 13 years when his freedom was finally purchased for \$150. The Indians had previously absolutely refused to release him or even tell of his whereabouts. [Thomas was reluctant to return to white society as he became comfortable living as an Indian – editor]

When Thomas was returned, he could no longer speak English, and gave every appearance of being Indian. The youth was given extensive schooling in an effort to rehabilitate him to the world of the white man. It was reported he was never completely successful in dropping all of his Indian mannerisms.

The knowledge Mary acquired during her ordeal later proved extremely valuable to many explorers who would retrace her steps through the Ohio Valley and the northern part of Kentucky. During that grim adventure, she had passed the sites of present-day Covington, Newport, Maysville, South Portsmouth, Ashland, Huntington, Point Pleasant, Louisa and Charleston as well as a host of other towns.

Today it is commonplace for many of those communities that now lay along the route followed by Mary to frequently commemorate her 800 mile wilderness flight with dramatic productions of her life and epic adventure. Mary died in 1815 at Ingles Ferry, Virginia.

Another harrowing experience of the area was that of two survivors of the 1779 battle between the Indians and forces of Major David Rogers. That battle took place just upstream of the Licking's mouth and resulted in one of the worse defeats ever suffered by the white man in Kentucky.

Among the battle's wounded was Pennsylvania-born Captain Robert Benham, commander of one of the keel boats. The bones in his hip had been shattered by rifle fire but nevertheless he managed to painfully crawl into the branches of a newly fallen tree. There he lay concealed for two days. At the end of the second day, Benham shot

a raccoon which happened to pass nearby. As soon as the sound of his shot echoed throughout the forest he heard the call of a human voice.

The famished captain realized the danger that the sound of his rifle might attract any remaining Indians. He immediately reloaded and silently lay waiting for the expected enemy to come into sight. Benham was determined not to die without a fight.

Two more calls by the same voice were soon heard, followed by a not-too-delicate remark of impatience. Benham was now convinced the voice was a fellow Kentuckian and returned the call. His surmise was correct, for John Watson, another survivor of the battle, emerged from the forest. Watson suffered two broken arms.¹¹

The remainder of the pair's adventure was one of suffering and hardship but marked by the ultimate in cooperation. The very nature of their wounds made this cooperation necessary if they were to survive. Benham could fire his gun and so could kill an ample supply of game for food. The area abounded in large flocks of wild turkeys and Watson would drive them past Benham who would kill a few from each flock. Watson would then kick the game and necessary firewood to within Benham's reach after which Benham cooked it and fed himself and his friend.

Captain Benham also dressed both their wounds, using strips torn from their clothing. Drinking water was procured from the Licking with the aid of a hat which Benham placed in his companion's mouth. Watson would then wade shoulder-deep into the cold stream and fill the hat by dipping it into the water. Afterward, Benham made use of it as needed.

After several weeks their wounds healed enough to permit limited mobility. They then erected a small shed at the junction of the Licking and Ohio where they waited for rescue by a passing boat. The two men waited and watched in quiet desperation, for they would surely die if help did not come soon. Not only did they face danger posed by Indians who frequented the area, but also the winter was rapidly approaching.

On November 27, a flatboat appeared on its way down river. Benham frantically called and waved to its occupants. The boat crew however, suspected a trap and moved to the opposite shore where they continued downstream, much to the wounded men's despair. After the boat had gone about a half-mile, Benham saw a canoe set off from it, evidently to reconnoiter. Benham again began calling for assistance and finally convinced the cautious crewmen to land and take them aboard. The two were then taken to the Falls of the Ohio where they eventually recovered from their injuries.¹²

The men's rescue came none too soon, for what became known as the worst winter to ever befall Kentucky was about to begin. A cold snap had hit on November 1st and most of the frontier was in a deep freeze by the time of the rescue. The freeze continued without let-up until mid-February.

Initially, there was an ample supply of wild game but the animals quickly lost their food supplies as the relentless cold continued and the number of sleet and snow storms mounted. Turkeys and other birds froze and dropped from their perches. Buffalo and deer froze or starved as did inexperienced hunters and many isolated families scattered throughout the Ohio Valley. Still, when spring thaws finally ended, the memorable 1779-1780 winter, a flood of immigrants came with a resurgence of Indian resistance.

Captain Benham later went on to serve with Generals Josiah Harmar, Arthur St. Clair and Anthony Wayne in their Indian campaigns. He ultimately returned to the scene of his earlier sufferings and is credited with building, in 1789, Cincinnati's first hewed log house.¹³

On February 18, 1792, Benham established Newport's first ferryboat service across the Ohio.¹⁴ He proceeded to become one of the early proprietors of that infant town. That occurred in 1795 when for one shilling, he, along with John Roberts, John Cook, James Little, Samuel Bryan, John Bush and Thomas Kennedy purchased from James Taylor the property platted for the Town of Newport.¹⁵ Bryan, it might be noted, was Mary Boone Bryan's son and a nephew of Daniel Boone. Benham eventually died on a farm near Lebanon, Ohio in 1809. He was 59 years old.¹⁶

Settlers such as Benham continued coming westward, drawn here by such things as the opportunity for choice lands, the prospect of hunting plentiful game or in some cases, simply the sheer excitement of the challenge offered by nature and the Indians.

The Indians, despite their seeming cruelties and helpless captives, tended to see a touch of the divine in all of nature. They loved their children intensely, and when a white child was adopted, they showed the same type of care and affection. There was no racial or social animosity displayed and whenever forced by whites to return the child, the Indians would frequently cry profusely.

Neither were the earlier Indian wars racial in nature, or at least not on the part of the Indians. They did not fight the pioneers as red men against white men, but as allies of warring armies. Nor should the Indians be thought of as representing one united culture. They were many peoples, each tribe different from the others in the same

manner each European nation is different from its neighbors. There were different dialects and languages, and their tribal differences and loyalties, like European differences and loyalties, made some bitter enemies.

Yet another similarity existed between the Indians and Europeans that they too were immigrants to America, coming, it is believed, [at least partially] across what was once a land connection between Asia and North America where the Bering Sea is today.

The Indians' reputation for cruelty to their captives was given strong reinforcement during the French and Indian War when some 2,000 whites were either taken prisoner or kidnapped by them. Some of the stories later told by those managing to flee captivity sparked a bitter hostility among the whites and, as a result, any wartime brutality the Natives inflicted was frequently matched by that inflicted on them.

Many whites looked upon the killing of Indians, even during times of peace, as an acceptable pastime. Peaceful villages were frequently sacked and burned, and inhabitants massacred. Indian scalps were taken and there were even reports of the flesh being removed from slain warriors and fashioned into leather mementos.

One of the more wanton acts of murder occurred at the Covington site when a young boy was slain by a group of white pursuers. The tragedy began in Bourbon County, Kentucky, when a wild-looking white youth appeared at the cabin of a group of settlers. The boy's skin was deeply tanned by exposure to the weather and his dress was that of an Indian. His primitive manners attracted the curiosity of the frontiersmen. In broken English the boy told how he had been adopted and reared from infancy by an Indian warrior who never made any distinction between the white child and his natural son. The boy said it had been a very happy life.

He further related that a short time before his appearance at the cabin, he, his brother and father had been hunting on the banks of the Miami River in Ohio. In order to satisfy his sons' wishes, the father agreed to extend the expedition into Kentucky. They then built a bark canoe and crossed the Ohio. After reaching the Kentucky side, they buried the canoe in the sand near the mouth of the Licking. This was done in order to protect it from the action of the sun as well as from any potential thieves.

After journeying about 15 miles up the Licking, the trio decided to make camp. While encamped, the father saw and interpreted many signs as foretelling the death or captivity if they continued on. The father was eager to return north but his young sons pleaded with him to continue deeper into Kentucky. They took up the march again and continued through the night until reaching Bourbon County.

Soon they neared the house in which he now stood. The youth said he suddenly formed the idea of rejoining his own people and at the first opportunity slipped away from his father and brother, and came to the door of these settlers.

The boy's story was received with a certain amount of skepticism but it was said he would be believed if he would conduct the settlers to where the canoe was buried and show it to them. The youth objected, saying he could never betray his father and brother. The frontiersmen were insistent however, and the young man reluctantly agreed.

On their way north, the boy suggested they first view the location where the trio had encamped. Maybe this was a delaying tactic on the youth's part but if so, it was a total failure because as they approached the site, they could see the old warrior and a boy seated by their campfire. The young guide pleaded for the lives of his father and brother so the whites agreed to take them alive. In the ensuing tumult however, the old warrior was mortally wounded while the boy, showing his alertness and agility of a creature of the forest, fled to safety.

The weeping white youth barely had time to seek his dying father's forgiveness before being urged to lead the whites onto the site where the canoe was buried. It was their hope to reach it before the escaped Indian boy.

The white lad begged the frontiersmen to show mercy for his Indian brother. He pleaded he had already proven the truth of his earlier statements and his younger brother should be allowed to escape. His new acquaintances would not agree and once again forced him to act as their guide.

The Licking's mouth was reached in due time but there was no evidence the intended victim had arrived there as yet. Accordingly, the woodmen took cover and waited. Soon the Indian youth appeared and immediately began to uncover the canoe. The white men opened fire, killing him immediately. He was then scalped, a practice which many pioneers had adopted, and buried him on the spot.

The remorseful white youth remained in Kentucky for a short period and then disappeared. Some said he left to seek relatives in Virginia or Pennsylvania but others reported he became disgusted with "civilization" and returned to the Indian way of life.¹⁷

In spring 1775, Simon Kenton again journeyed down the Ohio in search of cane land, this time with Thomas Williams as a companion. While on a hunting trip near Maysville, they found the cane they had been looking for almost by accident and it covered miles of the richest land they had ever seen. The two pioneers were jubilant. They traveled throughout the area, exploring every nook and cranny of Northern Kentucky. The men discovered a hunter's paradise in the hills and valleys of the Licking where the immense herds of bison and elk

proved to be of astonishing size and numbers. Everywhere Kenton traveled in this rich domain he saw an abundance of game and the richest of land.

In 1776, the Indians who were urged on by the British, began to make frequent raids into the Kentucky settlements. The Indians were furious over the occupation of their beloved hunting grounds by the long knives, as they called the settlers, and were determined to not only drive out those already here but also to prevent others from coming to Kentucky.

During these early days of downriver migration to Kentucky, one of the more dangerous parts of the Ohio was along that stretch of water at and near the Licking's mouth. This was a favorite crossing point for Indian hunting and war parties alike. The natives also often maintained lookouts atop today's Dayton's Belmont Hill. When they sighted one of the pioneer's giant flatboats, they would hurry to the Licking's mouth and attempt to lure the travelers into ambush or on some occasions push out into the Ohio in war canoes to intercept the newcomers.

General William Lytle once related that in April 1780, a fleet of 63 boats filled with western migrants, including more than 1,000 armed men, was coming downstream when they learned a war party of Indians lay in wait for them opposite the Licking's mouth. The boats were therefore put ashore about ½ mile upstream and some 500 men went on to meet the Indians in battle. The expected battle failed to take place however, as the natives quickly saw they were outnumbered and made a hasty retreat up the Mill Creek.¹⁸

Such events however, were not confined to this stretch of water, as they occurred all along the Ohio. On another occasion, in early 1790, two white men hailed a passing boat from the north shore of the upper Ohio and implored the travelers to land and take them aboard. The men said they had been prisoners of Indians but had managed to escape.

The reluctant travelers finally agreed to come close enough for the whites to leap aboard. As soon as the boat approached shore however, a group of Indians rushed from the woods and began firing at its crew. The river bank was soon crowded with Indians who poured volley after volley into the boat. Every horse was killed and many of the men passengers were wounded. A woman was killed instantly when a rifle shot hit her in the mouth and one man was promptly shot through the forehead when he rose to wave the flag of surrender.¹⁹

The Indians quickly swarmed onto the beleaguered boat. They scalped all the dead and before the eyes of the four horrified survivors, began stretching the scalps over hoops, preparing them for drying. The natives dragged the boat ashore, scattered its cargo over the beach and, with their newly-taken captives, made camp for the night.²⁰

The next day, the Indians decided to lay in wait for another boat to appear. They did not have to wait long, for at about noon three more craft came in view. The Indians forced their prisoners to man the oars of the captured boat and set off in pursuit. The chase and exchange of shots was so intense that the fleeing whites abandoned two of their craft. Along with the cargo in each and transferred to the third craft while on the run. With the increased manpower for the oars, and after a chase which lasted more than an hour, they managed to make good their escape.

After the Indians gave up the chase, they returned to the abandoned boats and took them in tow. The cargo exceeded all the natives had hoped for, and included whiskey, flour, sugar and a large amount of chocolate. In addition, there were several fine horses on board.

Finally, the jubilant Indians turned their attention to the prisoners, and decided all should be burned to death. Two of the men captives were subjected to extreme tortures before being tied to the stake. At this time one of the men managed to escape his tormentors and eventually reached safety. The other, however, was not so lucky and died in the searing flames. A third man was eventually taken to Sandusky, where he was ransomed for 600 silver brooches.²¹

The remaining prisoner, a woman, was also sentenced to be burned. She had been tied to a stake when a chieftain suddenly displayed compassion for her, and ordered her released. He then conducted the woman to safety at Pittsburgh.²²

To be taken captive by Indians could result in anything from being released for a ransom to being put to a slow agonizing death. The prisoner might be adopted by the family of a warrior who had fallen in battle or he might be presented to one of the chiefs as a slave. Unwanted infants were frequently torn from their mothers and dashed against any nearby tree.

There were times when the natives merely scalped their victims and left them for dead. Sometimes such victims managed to survive and proceed to live long and useful lives. The ordeal of surviving a scalping usually required undergoing the painful experience of having a companion pierce the area about the skull with a shoemaker's awl, or similar instrument, so a healing scab could form and create scar tissue to cover the skull's bare and exposed portion.

It was the fate of many however, to be slain on the spot, after which the dead body would be severely mutilated. A local instance of this occurred when a company of army troops was encamped near a creek south of

Covington, and one of the officers, a Captain Cruise, decided to go for a short stroll in the woods. Bands of Indians were known to be roaming the region and the worst was expected when the captain failed to return in a reasonable time.

Captain Cruise was found the next day, brutally killed and his mutilated body lying in the creek. His company buried his remains near the stream which has ever since been known as Cruise Creek.²³

The inflicting of prolonged periods of pain though, was one of the highest objectives of the successful taking of prisoners. When first taken captive, the prisoners were usually driven hard over the trails. The weak, wounded and elderly were usually killed, as were any others who fell behind. At night, the prisoners were commonly confined by being forced to lay on the ground face-up, spread-eagled position with each of their outstretched arms and legs tied securely to stakes or saplings.

It was also a common practice for prisoners to be forced on long marches from one village to another, and to undergo extreme torture in each. The tormented individuals frequently had their fingers cut off one by one or maybe their eyes gouged out. It was the fate of many to be burned at the stake, after which it was not unusual for a tribal cult to boil and eat any remaining flesh.

The heart was considered the most desirable part of a victim to be eaten and most often was claimed by the warriors. Neither was it uncommon for strips of flesh to be torn from living victims and eaten raw, and so too, was the warm blood drunk. Even the heart was sometimes torn from a still-living, but bleeding and tormented captive.

It was a widespread custom for Indians of the Ohio Valley to paint the bodies of doomed prisoners black, while the bodies of those to be spared were painted red. Almost all were forced at one time or another to run the gauntlet during which they were struck with such deadly objects as heavy clubs, tomahawks and even axes. Guns loaded with powder charges were frequently fired from point blank range at the victims and were discharged in such quantities that the condemned would be black with powder burns.

As the Indians' excitement grew, so too would the loudness of their shouting and the fury of their strikes. The bodies of those who collapsed under the punishment were mangled and mutilated until death occurred. Others were disemboweling while still alive and their entrails strewn over the ground. In addition, it was commonplace for the dead bodies to be decapitated and the heads impaled atop tall poles placed about the village, all to the natives' delight.

When a victim was burned at the stake, the execution invariably took place over a low flame to prolong the agony, while the Indians increased their own pleasure by firing gun powder into the condemned's flesh and applying lighted torches to his body. Live coals and glowing embers were constantly heaped upon the victim until death finally ended his suffering.

On one occasion the noted Chief Tecumseh, who was then but 17 years of age, took part in such a raid on some immigrant boats. The boats were captured and all the passengers killed, except for one who was taken prisoner. The lone captive was then burned alive.²⁴

That was young Tecumseh's first sight of the burning of a prisoner, and it so revolted him that he persuaded his companions to never again execute prisoners in such a manner.²⁵

Boat chases on the Ohio were all too frequent, and one of the most spectacular involved William Hubble, a native of Vermont who later became closely associated with the founding of Covington. He was a veteran of the Revolutionary War and had migrated west to settle in central Kentucky.

In 1791 Hubble made a business journey to the East and during his return was selected to act as commander of a large Ohio River flatboat carrying a party of nine men, three women and eight children.

One evening in March, the travelers noticed signs of being watched by Indians and knew an attack was imminent. Accordingly, they drew up plans for the defense of their craft. The plans included arranging their trunks and other baggage about the host's cabin in such a manner to form a protective barrier behind which the women and children could conceal themselves while the men engaged any attackers in battle.

The boat continued downstream throughout the night without any further signs of danger. At about sunrise, the group heard a call for help coming from the shore. It was a plaintive plea for them to land and take aboard some white people who claimed to be in mortal danger. Hubble correctly surmised the call was an Indian trick and alerted the boat's occupants to prepare for an attack.

When the Indians saw their ruse was not working, they promptly launched a trio of war canoes in pursuit of the pioneers. In turn, Hubble positioned the men at pre-arranged posts, and ordered them to hold their fire until the Indians, who were firing volley after volley at the fleeing boat, were close enough that "the flash from the guns might singe their eyebrows."²⁶

As the war canoes neared, it was seen they carried about 25 or 30 natives each. The warriors quickly positioned their fast-moving canoes so that one was at the flatboat's bow, another at its stern and the third at the

larger craft's right side. From such positions they could rake the flatboat with murderous fire. It was then the whites opened a devastating fire of their own.

During the ensuing battle, several of the whites were wounded, including one with a leg torn so severely by shot that it hung by only the flesh. Hubble emptied his own musket, and then grabbed one belonging to one of the wounded. He was about to fire the second musket when its lock was suddenly torn away by the heavy fire. A moment later, another musket ball smashed through his right arm.

About that same time, Hubble noticed a group of Indians trying to board his craft at its bow. Despite his painful wound, he rushed forward, seized a pair of pistols and fired them point-blank into the boarding party. After emptying the pistols, he seized sticks of firewood and began clubbing more of the natives.

The resistance put up by the whites convinced the Indians to withdraw from the attack. Despite the fact there were only four men left who were capable of defending the craft, they had inflicted staggering losses on the Indians. The natives turned their attention to attack another flatboat coming into view.

After capturing the newly-arrived craft without any resistance from its occupants, the Indians decided to make a second attack on Hubble and his group. Hubble's party proved to be extremely effective with their limited firepower, and despite the Indians' superiority in numbers, again managed to drive them away.

Now only two of the flatboat men remained alive and uninjured. None of the women were hurt and it was initially believed the same was true for the children. Finally, after all had become quiet, one of the smaller boys asked Hubble to remove a bullet that had lodged under the skin of the child's forehead. Hubble removed the missile but then noticed the child had also been shot through the elbow. When the boy's mother asked why he had said nothing earlier, the child replied, "Because the captain directed us to be silent during the action, and I thought you would be likely to make a noise if I told you."²⁷

When the shot-riddled craft reached the safety of a settlement, the travelers learned that only the previous Sunday, the same war party had also attacked a detachment of 22 men who were ascending the Ohio from Fort Washington to what is now Maysville and tomahawked 21 of them to death.

The pioneers attempting to come into the Upper Bluegrass in search of free land during these years were now finding the land was not as free as the term implied. The Indians regarded it as part of their domain and were determined it would not be given up lightly. The early settlers had to fight to defend their homes and families, but that of course, was the same reason the Indians were fighting. The natives were prepared to die defending their land and many were prepared to die defending their land and many were destined to do just that.

Simon Kenton, who was a tall fair-skinned giant of a man with broad shoulders and deep-set blue-gray eyes, threw himself wholeheartedly into this fray. So began a series of adventures so incredible as to boggle the imagination. He was captured on numerous occasions and

"The cruelties he suffered...his narrow escapes from death in an [sic] hundred forms...his alternate good and bad fortune...form one of the most romantic incidents of real life, seeming more like an invention of the novelist, than a veracious narrative. He was eight times compelled to run the gauntlet, three times tied to the stake [and] once brought to the brink of the grave by a blow from an axe..."²⁸

Kenton served as leader of a river patrol in 1777 and 1778, ranging up and down the Ohio from the Licking to the Big Sandy, looking for signs of Indians. These spies served a limited, but invaluable service and on one occasion, led to Kenton's saving of Daniel Boone's life.

Boone's rescue came after the river patrol had given Fort Boonesborough advance warning of Indian attack. At one point during the attack, Boone lay prostrate on the ground with a broken leg when an Indian with raised tomahawk leaped upon him. Kenton sighted on the Indian and fired. Other natives then rushed the beleaguered pioneers, but Kenton swiftly lifted Boone and carried him to the safety of the fortification. The Indians kept up their siege for three more days but Boonesborough could not be toppled.

This man Kenton is recognized today as having done more to help open Kentucky for settlement than any other one man, including the more publicized Boone who was twice saved from certain death by an alert Kenton. Part of Boone's earlier recognition can be attributed to Kenton's own modesty, for he always referred to himself as being "second to the great Boone."

Unlike Boone, Kenton was almost constantly engaged in warfare with Indians from the time of his arrival on the frontier until the signing of the Greenville Treaty. He probably served in more expeditions against the natives and had more narrow escapes from death than any other person on the frontier.

Many of Simon Kenton's frontier adventures read like pure fiction. On one occasion, in September 1778, he, Alexander Montgomery and George Clark crossed the Ohio to drive off horses from the Shawnee village of Chillicothe, in present-day Ross County, Ohio.

The three men managed to secure seven of the Indians' best horses and dashed back toward Kentucky. When they reached the Ohio River at a point in what is now Brown County, Ohio and about 55 miles upstream from Covington, the horses balked and refused to cross the stream.

While the men were trying to drive the animals across the river, a group of pursuing Indians arrived. Montgomery was killed and scalped; Clark managed to escape across the Ohio, but Kenton was taken prisoner. Now began one of his more harrowing experiences.

To amuse themselves, the Indians stripped Kenton of all clothing and tied him in a prone, face-up position onto the back of a wild horse. They sent the rearing, kicking and plunging animal off through the woods and heavy briars. The Shawnee roared with laughter at Simon's plight and repeatedly called to him asking if he wished to steal more of their horses.

After a time, the Indians decided to return to Chillicothe. It was a three-day journey and during the nights they made sure their prisoner would not escape by stretching him in a spread-eagle, face-up position on the ground and tying his arms and legs to stakes. In addition, a pole was laid across his chest and his outstretched arms lashed to it. A rope was then placed about his neck, pulled taut and the other end tied to a tree. Kenton spent each of the three nights in this painful position, exposed to ants, gnats, mosquitoes and the weather.

On the journey's last night, a group of about 150 inhabitants came out from their village to greet the prisoner. The villagers spent some three hours singing and dancing about Kenton, stopping occasionally to kick and beat him. After this, they returned to the village and left their bleeding and battered captive to suffer through the remainder of the night.

The next morning Kenton was taken into Chillicothe where he was given a severe beating and forced to run the gauntlet. Then he was forced to accompany his captors to three more villages and was tortured and ran the gauntlet in each.

After running the gauntlet at the last village, the severely injured Kenton was taken to the village council house. By that time, he had been doomed to die and accordingly, his body was painted black.

About this time, Simon Girty arrived at the village and when he recognized the badly beaten prisoner as his old friend from Lord Dunmore's War, he proceeded to make a strong and impassioned plea for Kenton's life. Finally, the Indians gave in to Girty and turned Kenton over to his care and protection.

Kenton later said of Girty's timely arrival:

"When he came up to me, after the Indians had painted me black, I knew him at once...he flung his arms around me and cried like a child. I never did see one man so glad to see another. He made a speech to the Indians...and told them if they meant to do him a favor, they must do it now, and save my life."²⁹

Finally, in the fall of 1782, Kenton learned he had not killed his old love rival back in Virginia. For eleven years he had traveled under the alias of Simon Butler, but now the weight of possible murder was removed from his conscience. He once again became Simon Kenton.

After a settled Kentucky entered the Union, Kenton took up the life of a gentleman farmer in Mason County. There he lived in a large brick home with his wife and the two became well known for their generosity and hospitality. He was, of course, a man of considerable wealth as the value of his land holdings was virtually incalculable.

Kenton, who was the son of an Irish immigrant, never received much formal schooling, and possessed no knowledge whatsoever of legal forms, deeds, and land titles. As a result, most of the Kentucky land he claimed, and the wealth it represented, was eventually taken from him.

In 1798 the disillusioned Kenton left the Commonwealth and moved on to Ohio where he was soon made a brigadier general in the Ohio militia. Even though he now made his home north of the Ohio he remained a Kentuckian at heart and continued to make frequent visits to the Bluegrass state to visit friends and relatives. Even as late as 1813, he chose to fight alongside Kentucky troops at the Battle of the Thames, although he was then nearly sixty years of age.

Endnotes

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 - ¹⁹ Collins, Richard H., *op. cit.*
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 - ²⁶ *Ibid.*, Also: John A. McClung, *op. cit.*
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Chapter 4

A Wilderness Begins to Flower

Despite the rigors of everyday frontier life, and frequent disruptions of frontier warfare, migrants to the new western lands could not be stopped. In 1789, Major David Leitch, a cultured Scotsman born in Glasgow in 1753 and became an officer in the American Revolution, arrived here with about twenty followers and established Leitch's Station. The block-house with pickets was erected on the east bank of the Licking some six miles from The Point. There Leitch held title to 9,200 acres of land deeded him by the commonwealth of Virginia in April 1785. At the time, Kentucky was an extension of the Old Dominion.¹

The Indians provided constant harassment and their threats became serious enough at times to force the defenders of Leitch's little fortification to withdraw to Fort Washington for safety.²

Leitch's Station was typical of those built in the West at that time. It centered about a strong block-house which was the first building to be erected. After the block-house was finished, the pioneers built their cabins nearby and set up a picket of logs to enclose the entire group. The land was then cleared and crops planted.

During all this time, before crops matured, the people lived on wild fruit and game and what scant supplies they might procure from Fort Washington.

In December 1790, Major Leitch traveled to central Kentucky where he married Keturah Moss daughter of a Revolutionary Army officer. The teen-age bride was born September 11th, 1773 in Goochland County, Virginia and came to Kentucky with other members of her family in 1784.

While living at Leitch's Station, Keturah became one of that hardy breed of women whose names and deeds fill so many pages of frontier history. She spent much time at Fort Washington and was well acquainted with Generals Harmar, St. Clair, Wilkinson and Wayne. She was an active member of the struggling community and, along with the other ladies, spent long hours making knapsacks and other supplies for the soldiers, including those of General St. Clair's ill-fated march against the Indians.³

Major Leitch died November 7, 1794 and as customary on the frontier, Keturah's widowhood was of short duration. In 1795, she married James Taylor, Jr., founder of Newport and bore him several children. The marriage also united two of Northern Kentucky's largest land holding families.⁴

During that same year, Washington Berry purchased from Colonel George Muse's daughter, a tract of 1,000 acres where Dayton, Kentucky now stands. He paid one dollar an acre.⁵

The first survey of what is now Covington was one of 200 acres in the name of Colonel Stephen Trigg, who came to Kentucky in 1779 as a member of the court of land commissioners. He later took part in the Battle of Blue Licks where he suffered a fatal wound.

Britain's King George III had earlier authorized the Virginia governor to give this land to British officer < Colonel George Muse, in recognition of his services during the French and Indian War.⁶ Muse, who once taught military tactics to George Washington, was from the German province of Hanover which was then under British control. He and other Germans who served in the Royal American Regiment, had been recruited by the British Army for the American campaigns under the promise of large grants of choice land in the Ohio Valley. This was, in addition to their regular army pay.⁷

Accordingly, on February 14, 1780, Muse was given land Warrant Number 367 for 200 acres at the southwest angle of the junction of the Licking and Ohio Rivers. The property stretched from the Licking to about present-day Philadelphia Street and from the Ohio to a point just south of what is now Eighth Street.⁸

Over the years, many legends have grown concerning the owners of the original Covington site. One of the more persistent stories involves some mysterious and unidentified individual who supposedly acquired Muse's land for the price of a keg of whiskey and then, according to legend, sold it to James Taylor IV for a few pounds of buffalo meat.⁹

The fact is Taylor acquired the land directly from Muse, after which Hubbard Taylor, acting for his father, transferred it to Colonel Trigg. The younger Taylor later recalled he presented the land to Trigg as an inducement for him to consider a settlement which would be a companion to one Taylor planned for the Licking's eastern side.¹⁰

Trigg had just come to Kentucky as a member of Virginia's court of land commissioners. He was determined to make his home here in the West and on April 19, 1780, ordered the land surveyed. The survey was made by Robert Todd, Jr., and Robert Parker, who acted as the marker.

Hostile Indians were unusually active along the Ohio at that time and Trigg's land was crossed by two well-traveled trails coming south from Ohio. One turned west to Big Bone Lick, then southwest to the west back of

the Kentucky River and on to Kentucky's interior. The other followed the course of the Licking to its South Fork and continued southward from that point.

The local land was also a favorite meeting place for hunting parties and saw frequent battles between rival groups of hunters.

The natives placed a high value on the Covington site, and would bitterly resist any effort of whites to settle it. Many historians declare this resistance made the local stretch of the Ohio River the most dangerous part of that stream for migrants to the West.¹¹ Boat crews kept an especially sharp look out as they neared the mouth of the Licking and always double-manned the sweeps of their craft if they saw the slightest sign of Indians or the faintest wisp of smoke rising from among the trees.¹²

Trigg was known as a courageous man. He was not foolhardy though and soon began having serious doubts about settling in such hostile territory. Some of the tribes maintained villages just a few miles north and it was a certainty there would be near-continuous attacks on any settlement at The Point.

It had been only a few months since most of Major David Rogers' command had been slaughtered at Thomas Sand Bar and the new year of 1780 was not showing any prospects for improvement.

Todd's survey was hardly completed when Colonel Byrd and his marauding force of Indians swarmed over the land, soon followed by George Rogers Clark and his troops who rendezvoused here in July. Neither was General Clark giving any indication of complying with demands for a fortification at this location and Fort Washington and Leitch's Station would not be built for another nine years.

Accordingly, Trigg decided to retire to the comparative safety of Kentucky's interior. There, in the fall of 1780, he settled a small station about four miles from Harrodsburg.

So too, did Taylor decide to delay plans for a settlement here and also retired some hundred miles further into the interior. He later explained his and Trigg's decision to leave here when he declared:

“During several years, the Indians were very hostile near the Ohio; and the mouth of the Licking being in the war-path, neither...could make settlements on opposite sides of that river.”¹³

Unlike Trigg though, Taylor later returned to lay out a few lots in what would eventually become Newport.

The first winter which Trigg experienced in Kentucky proved especially severe. Hunger and even starvation became widespread and he could not be certain the same wouldn't occur during his second Kentucky winter. Furthermore, he now had the responsibility of heading a small station and was deeply concerned for its welfare.

About that time, Trigg found himself having to make a hard decision when he was presented the opportunity to sell his land for additional provisions in the form of 150 pounds of buffalo meat and tallow.¹⁴

The Point was far away now on Kentucky's northern border, Trigg reasoned, and at a place where the Indian situation was such that he might never have an opportunity to enjoy its ownership. He reluctantly agreed to accept the provisions.¹⁵

On February 9, 1781, John Todd, Jr., became The Point's new owner.¹⁶ He recently had been engaged in laying out the new town of Louisville and hoped to begin a similar project here.

The Louisville endeavor was carried out under protection of a reasonably strong fortification and some 150 troops sent there expressly for the settlement's protection. It soon became obvious there would be no such protection for the Northern Kentucky site.

Todd kept his land for about four months and on June 2nd transferred it to James Welch. It was not until May 7, 1785 that a copy of Trigg's survey was authenticated in order that Welch might make use of it as the basis for an application for a patent to the land.

The patent, which Welch finally received on September 20, 1787, read as follows:

“Beverley Randolph, Esquire
Lieutenant Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia

To all to whom these presents shall come, greetings: Know ye that by virtue and in consideration of a Military Warrant, No. 367, issued the 14th day of February 1780, being under the King of Great Britain's proclamation of 1763, there is granted by said Commonwealth unto James Welch assignee of John Todd, Jr., assignee of Stephen Trigg assignee of Hubbard Taylor for James Taylor who was the assignee of George Muse, a certain tract or parcel of land containing 200 acres, by survey, bearing the date of May

1785, lying and being in the County of Fayette on the point of land between the Ohio and the Licking and on the lower side and bounded as followeth, to wit:

Beginning at the beech and honey locust, thence South, down the Ohio, 84 degrees West, 24 poles; South, 71 degrees West, 94 poles; South 60 degrees West, 60 poles; South 82 degrees West, 92 poles to a beech and hoopwood on the river bank; thence South 5 degrees East, 127 poles crossing a small branch to a sugar and hoopwood; thence North 73 degrees East, 254 poles to the Licking at a maple and elm; thence down the same North 29 degrees West, 30 poles: North 17 degrees East, 72 poles; North 28 poles to the beginning.

With its appurtenances to have and to hold the said tract or parcel of land to the said James Welch and his heirs forever. In witness whereof the said Beverley Randolph, esquire, Lieutenant Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, hath hereunto set his hand and caused the lesser seal of the said Commonwealth to be affixed at Richmond on the 20th day of September, in the year of our Lord, 1787 and of the Commonwealth the Twelfth.

B. Randolph¹⁷

The custom of granting western lands to military veterans as part of their compensation was common at that time. Many of these veterans for one reason or another, found it impossible to settle their grants and sold them to others. George Washington once acquired some 3,051 acres of neighboring Hamilton and Clermont Counties, Ohio in that manner from two Revolutionary Army veterans.

Washington, who was familiar with this area as a result of his association with the Ohio Land Company, was issued his land patents on December 1, 1790. He died however, before he could file for federal patents on the holdings and so his heirs lost all claim to the lands. The law at that time recognized the state claims but also required all land claimants to file proof with the National Land Office for a federal patent. Washington failed to do this.

The Covington site acquired by Welch was at that time very heavily wooded with magnificent trees – beech, sugar maple, chestnut, oak and other varieties. It had the Licking on east, the Ohio on the north and great wooded hills forming a half-circle to the west and south. There was an abundance of buffalo, deer and bear, while the Licking provided easy transportation for corn and other products to and from Kentucky's interior.

Welch though, had come upon hard times and was in need of cash. When a new arrival to the West, Thomas Kennedy, offered to buy the land for \$150, or the equivalent of \$750, Welch quickly accepted. The Sale was consummated and the land deeded to Kennedy on December 9, 1801.¹⁸

Kennedy and his wife and three children, along with his brother Francis and his family, had arrived in the area on a flatboat from Pittsburgh. One of Francis Kennedy's daughters later said of their arrival:

"My father, mother and seven children landed at Cincinnati on the 8th of February, 189. The first persons we saw after landing were Mr. McMillan and Mr. Israel Ludlow, one of the proprietors of the place. There were three little cabins here when we landed, where the surveyors and chain carriers lived. They had no floors in those cabins...Mr. Ludlow came down to our boat and invited my father and mother up to stay in their cabin until we could get one built, but my mother thought they could remain more comfortably with their small children in their boat. So we lived in our boat until the ice began to run and then we were forced to contrive some other way to live. What few men there were here got together and knocked our boat up and built us a camp. We lived in our camp six weeks. Then my father built us a large cabin, which was the first one large enough for a family to live in. We took the boards of our camp and made floors in our house..."¹⁹

"The first summer after we came here, which was in 1789, the people suffered very much from want of bread and as for meat, they had none at all only as they killed it in the woods. That was all we had to eat."²⁰

It was only a few weeks before the Kennedy's arrival that Cincinnati, which was then known as Losantiville, received its first settlers. That was on December 28, 1788 and it is interesting to note the members of that hardy little band of pioneers chose to spend their first night in the area on the Covington side of the Ohio. Israel Ludlow, who had platted the Ohio settlement, kept a journal of the event and wrote:

“There were 20 of us, including Colonel Patterson and Mr. Denham, left Limestone [Maysville] on December 24. It was bitter weather. The river was full of floating ice and our big flat boats were in constant danger. The next day, that is, Christmas, we spent on the river, thankful indeed that the ice was so heavy it would make it impossible for the Indians to put off in their canoes and attack us...As it was we ate a hurried meal of cold meat and cold bread in the boats. That was a poor Christmas dinner.”²¹

“We did not reach Losantiville until the 27th. We...landed at the mouth of the Licking on the evening of the 27th. We did not go to the Indian shore, feeling the Kentucky shore was safer. The next morning we crossed over to our own property. What an anxious crossing that was and how our hearts rose when we reached the bank in safety. All of us feared we would be greeted by a shower of bullets from Indians hidden in the willow bushes.”²²

That tract of land on the Ohio’s northern shore was then known as the Miami or Symmes Purchase. In August 1787, John Cleves Symmes had obtained a grant from Congress for the purchase of one-million acres between the two Miami Rivers and bordering the Ohio. The account of land though, was later reduced to 300,000 acres.

Symmes was born at Long Island, New York and later moved to New Jersey from where he entered the Revolutionary Army. He eventually migrated with his family to the Northwest Territory where he was appointed a judge in 1788.

In January 1788, Matthias Denman of New Jersey purchased a portion of the land from Symmes and, along with Symmes, Israel Ludlow, Robert Patterson and John Filson, began surveying a town site the following September. The tiny town site located opposite the Licking’s mouth was then named Losantiville.

John Filson, who was a learned school teacher as well as an explorer, had contrived the name “Losantiville” from the Latin word *os* for mouth; *anti* meaning opposite; and the French word *ville* for town. The resulting combination was prefixed with the letter *L* for Licking. When taken together the name was intended to mean “the town opposite the mouth of the Licking.”

When the governor of the Northwest Territory, General Arthur St. Clair, arrived in the community, he made no effort to conceal his hearty dislike for its lyrical name, and promptly changed it to Cincinnati in honor of the Revolutionary Army Society of ex-officers to which he belonged.

Thomas Kennedy had been born in Chester County, Pennsylvania, the son of a Scotch-Irish Presbyterian and like most other newcomers to the West, was determined to carve out a niche from the wilderness for himself and his family. Less than a year passed after their arrival when Tom moved to the Kentucky side and he and Francis, who remained on the north bank, began their ferry service. Tragedy eventually overtook them when, near the close of the Indian Wars, Francis was drowned while ferrying cattle for the army.²³

Edna Kenton, in “Simon Kenton – His Life and Period,” tells how the same Thomas Kennedy once fell victim to Kenton’s fiery temper. Kenton was carrying a message from General Charles Scott in Kentucky, to General Josiah Harmar at Fort Washington. The day was bitterly cold and the river filled with ice when Kenton arrived at Kennedy’s ferry. Kennedy refused to undertake the hazardous crossing until Kenton offered him five dollars payment in advance and even then, Kenton had to perform a good bit of the work involved in the crossing.²⁴

Upon reaching the Ohio side, Kenton struck Kennedy on the head with a paddle, knocking him into the river. This was done by the hot-tempered Indian fighter in a fit of indignation at what he regarded as an unfair bargain. Kenton was greatly relieved when he later learning the ferryboat operator had suffered no great harm from the icy dunking.²⁵

At this point it might be worth noting that the founder of the American branch of the Kennedys was Thomas Kennedy, Sr., who was born in Northern Ireland in 1703. He migrated to Chester County, Pennsylvania as a young man, and in time became a person of considerable wealth. He married twice during his lifetime and fathered three children – Thomas, Jr. and Margaret by his first marriage, and Elizabeth by the second. The elder Kennedy died in 1788 and is buried in the Presbyterian churchyard at Brandywine, Pennsylvania.²⁶

Thomas Kennedy, Jr. was born in Chester County in 1741. His father always desired that his son become a Presbyterian minister, but young Thomas was not inclined in that direction. Young Thomas further disappointed his father when he fell in love with Mrs. Dinah (Davis) Piersel, a widow six years his senior and mother of three children.²⁷

The elder Kennedy attempted to thwart the romance by arranging to send his son on an extended journey to Ireland. However, the young man saw through his father’s plan and eloped to Philadelphia with the widow.

The newlyweds were later blessed with three children – Joseph, Samuel and Hannah – all of whom were born in Pennsylvania. When Thomas and Dinah migrated down the Ohio to Kentucky, it was Dinah’s children from her previous marriage who accompanied them.²⁸

E. Polk Johnson states that Joseph Kennedy, who had been born at Brandywine in 1768, preceded the rest of the family to the Covington site by a few months and became the first Kennedy to view the land which had been previously purchased for their new home.²⁹

Joseph was married four times during his lifetime. His first marriage to Nancy Cummins of Ohio bore him one child, Thomas D., born at Covington in September 1795. He had no more children until his last wife bore him seven, as well as bringing him two others from a previous marriage.³⁰

Joseph saw service as a soldier during the War of 1812 and took part in the Battle of the Thames. His son, Thomas D., also became enthused about the struggle with England and at 17 enlisted in the army. He later received a land warrant of 160 acres in recognition of his service.³¹

Thomas D. returned to Pennsylvania for his bride and was married there February 20th, 1817 to Nancy Davis. They returned to Covington by horse and buggy and settled on their farm west of the infant community. Eventually, he became Covington’s second city engineer and laid out many of the town’s early subdivisions. He served in that capacity until 1855.³²

Thomas D. and Nancy had eight children, one of whom was Thomas H., born February 3, 1833 and was elected city engineer, succeeding his father.³³

After Thomas Kennedy built his first log cabin and began ferry service, other farms and homes began to dot the neighborhood so that by 1794, settlers around the Covington site numbered about 70.³⁴

In the following year, the settlement on the Licking’s east bank was chartered as Newport and Campbell County Court awarded James Taylor the right to begin ferryboat operations between that town and the Ohio side. It was then the community on the Licking’s west bank, known informally as “The Point,” or “Kennedy’s Ferry,” acquired still another informal designation – “West Newport.”

About this time, one of early America’s most noted physicians began practicing medicine in the local area – Dr. Thomas Hinde. He was a personal physician to Colonial Governor Lord Dunmore of Virginia, Patrick Henry and a host of other prominent figures in American history.

Dr. Hinde, born in Oxfordshire, England in 1737, also attended General James Wolfe when he fell mortally wounded at the battle of Quebec. Still later, he served the American colonies in their struggle against Britain and then migrated to the Ohio Valley.

According to one early writer:

“Dr. Hinde had a large following in the Miami Country although he preferred to reside in Newport, Ky., where he had a beautiful country home ... In 1797 Hinde located on the Kentucky side of the Ohio River and became a very popular physician.”³⁵

Dr. Hinde, the area’s first physician, had the complete trust of the local settlers. Certainly, not every inhabitant was as eager to follow the doctor’s prescriptions as Squire Grant seemed to be when he wrote the following letter to a John Linsay:

“Captain John Linsay:

Sir – My family is extremely sick. The Doctor recommends spirits for some of them. You will oblige me, if you will send me some, to wit: six or four quarts. I have no suitable vessels to carry on Saddle-bags. Please to furnish two small jugs and charge them to your obedient Servant, &c,

November 2, 1806

Sq. Grant”³⁶

Dr. Hinde also became an outstanding civic leader and after Newport Barracks was activated [in 1803], acquired an unusually large medical practice with the military. He continued to make Newport his home until his death in 1829. On December 13, 1970, local citizens erected a marker to his memory on the Newport courthouse lawn.

Newport itself was built upon land the King of England granted to Colonel James Taylor IV of Caroline County, Virginia. It was in consideration of Taylor’s part in the French & Indian War. Taylor also owned several other large tracts of western land he had purchased from those who wanted to sell, for one reason or another.

Colonel Taylor, like so many other recipients of western land grants, never visited his newly-acquired holdings. Instead, his son Hubbard came in early 1780 to locate the land and to do the same for some of Colonel Muse's land. The younger Taylor said of this visit:

“In the fall of 1779, the land office in Virginia opened for the sale of land warrants. My father purchased some and some of his acquaintances also. I proposed to my father to permit me to come to Kentucky to locate his. Some friends put theirs into my hands to act with them as I thought best; and I procured the appointment of deputy surveyor for Kentucky and set out for the country...in February, 1780. The land office was to be opened for entries of location on the 1st of May that year. On my arrival in Kentucky, I located in April 1780, some military warrants for my father and George Muse on the Ohio, adjourning that river and the Licking at its mouth.

I was absent from Virginia about 15 months. Four months of the year 1780 was exclusively in the woods with six persons a part of the time, the balance with but four persons.”³⁷

In October 1791, Hubbard again stopped at his father's land – this time on his way to join General St. Clair at Fort Washington. Hubbard took occasion to lay out a few lots and sold the first two to Robert Benham. He also suggested the new town be named Newport in honor of the captain of the first ship to reach Jamestown, Lord Christopher Newport.³⁸

Admiral Newport, it might be noted, was chief of a flotilla of three ships that sailed from Blackwall, England, bringing settlers who would establish the first permanent English colony on this continent.³⁹

On the way to America, Newport experienced a near-mutiny led by John Smith, later the boy-friend of Pocahontas. The admiral was equal to the occasion though and had Smith put in chains for three weeks. He could have put him to death, but he recognized Smith's leadership capabilities and knew he would be needed in the new world. Smith was freed when the ships reached America.⁴⁰

The first child born to families in the tiny Newport settlement was Eliza Bartle in 1791.⁴¹ She became a life-long resident of Newport and grew to marry Elijah Pierce. Eliza died in 1876.⁴²

John Bartle, her father, had been born in New York City in 1745 and at age 44, migrated to Kentucky with a boatload of merchandise he intended to sell.⁴³

At one time Bartle had attempted to purchase the Covington site from James Welch who was then in a Pennsylvania debtor's prison. Bartle sent an agent with \$800 to make the purchase but Thomas Kennedy bought the land before the man reached Welch.⁴⁴

The new settlement named in Admiral Newport's honor received its greatest impetus when Hubbard's brother, James V, arrived to survey and lay out a series of town lots. James, who was born in Caroline County, April 19th, 1769, came here in 1792, but stayed only a month, spending much of that time at Fort Washington.⁴⁵

On May 3rd, 1793, James returned to the Newport site, this time bringing a boatload of household and farm utensils. It was later reported of his arrival:

“On the bright May morning...just about sunrise, as his boat was floating around the bend, (keeping the middle of the stream for safety) he was awakened by the sound of a bugle, the roll of fife and drum; it was the reveille of Fort Washington; he hurried to the prow and lo; he behind the stars and stripes.”⁴⁶

Taylor had three Negro slaves with him: Moses, Humphrey and a servant boy named Adam. Together, they maneuvered their boat to the Newport shore, and eagerly scrambled ashore. It was said to be the first time they “dared touch the shore since quitting Limestone [Maysville].”⁴⁷

Several log cabins already dotted the Newport site, so James decided to live aboard his craft until one of them might become vacant and available to him. This took about two weeks.

In the meantime, Taylor began cutting trees, clearing the underbrush and otherwise improving the site for an estate which he had previously named “Bellevue.” It would be his home for the remainder of his life.⁴⁸

Soon, the three Negroes accompanying Taylor began to tire of their lot on the frontier and frequently begged him to return to a more settled civilized community. Even Taylor later noted that other than himself and the three blacks, “there was not one person at the time, man nor woman, who wore shoes in Newport, all wore moccasins made of deer skin dressed.”⁴⁹

In time, Moses and Humphrey declared they could no longer stay in such a raw frontier settlement, for there were no other black people with whom they could socialize. They ran off.

Taylor lost little time in engaging a neighbor, the noted frontiersman Jacob Fowler, to help him trace the runaways. After about four miles of searching, they came across the prints of shoes and knew they had to be those of Moses and Humphrey. In but a short time, the disgusted runaways were caught and returned to the tiny settlement.

The Taylor family had a strong military tradition but it was James V who attained the highest rank – that of brigadier general. He was active in local military matters from the time of his first arrival. By December 1800, he was a major in the First Battalion of the 48th Regiment of Kentucky Militia and by July 1806, he commanded the 48th as a lieutenant-colonel.⁵⁰ His topmost rank of general came during the War of 1812.

General Taylor married the former Keturah Moss Leitch and fathered eleven children, the last of whom, Keturah and James VI, were twins.⁵¹

The younger James, like his father, was destined to play an extremely prominent role in Northern Kentucky business and civic affairs. He became one of the organizers of Covington's Northern Bank of Kentucky and served as its president for 25 years.⁵²

James VI also built one of the state's most impressive mansions when, in 1851, he constructed an elaborate hilltop home as a wedding gift for his daughter who, like her grandmother and aunt, was named Keturah. Young Keturah was the bride of Thomas Lauren Jones a promising attorney who shared offices with Wallace Carnahan on Covington's East Eighth Street.⁵³

The 22-room mansion, modeled after a castle the newlyweds had seen in England while on their honeymoon, was impressive in appearance and, over the years, resounded with the laughter and gaiety of a happy family and lavish hospitality.

In 1889, two years after her husband's death, Keturah sold the structure to Bishop Camillus Maes of the Catholic Diocese of Covington. It was renamed Mount St. Martin and used as the American Motherhouse for the Sisters of Divine Providence. After 1919 it served as a home for young working women and still later became a place of retirement for elderly women.⁵⁴

In 1975, the magnificent old mansion was pressed into use as a temporary home for Vietnamese war refugees, after which it was acquired by a group of developers who demolished it in 1977 and lowered the high hill on which it sat. A K-Mart shopping center is on the site today.

In April 1792, a scant six months after Hubbard Taylor sold the first two building lots in Newport to Robert Benham, a convention was held at Danville to craft a state constitution, for Kentucky was slated to soon enter the Union as America's first state west of the Alleghenies. Hubbard was selected as a delegate to that convention and helped frame a document that in many ways reflected the democracy of the frontier and yet in some respects distinctly favored a small, but growing number of landed gentry.

The new constitution guaranteed the vote to every free male over the age of 21, regardless of race or previous condition of servitude. It further declared the number of representatives to be elected in each county would be based upon that county's population and required all votes to be cast by ballot.

However, the governor and senators would be chosen by a college of electors whose numbers and members were to be determined in the same fashion as the county representatives. The constitution's numerous critics claimed this system of filling the state's highest offices virtually assured the growth of a "ruling class" something the critics said was totally foreign to principles of frontier democracy.

The new constitution did however, include provisions for a later popular vote on the question of holding another convention to consider constitutional alterations. Such a convention was held in July 1799, and approved many changes in the original document.

The state's second constitution created the office of lieutenant governor and decreed the governor and senators be elected by popular vote. Slavery was recognized, as it was in the 1792 document, but free blacks, mulattoes, and Indians would no longer be permitted to vote. Neither would the vote be allowed to those convicted of felonies such as bribery, perjury, forgery or treason.

In addition, the new constitution outlawed the ballot and required all votes to be cast personally *vive voce*. Now, each voter's political preference would be known to anyone within earshot.

During much of the time the earliest of the preceding events took place, the Covington and Newport sites were part of Fayette County. In 1785, the land east of the Licking became part of newly-created Bourbon County, while that west of the Licking, including the Covington site, remained in Fayette.

This situation lasted until 1788, when Mason and Woodford Counties were formed. Mason County extended eastward from the Licking all the way to the Big Sandy, while Woodford was bounded on the east by the

Licking, on the west by the Kentucky, and extended south to a point just above the junction of the Kentucky and Dix Rivers. The Covington site was now in Woodford County.

On June 1, 1792, Kentucky entered the Union and during that same year the northern part of Woodford was made into Scott County. The following year, a part of Scott was joined with the northern part of Bourbon and western part of Mason to form Harrison County, so Newport then lay in Harrison, while the Covington site was in Scott.

It was also during that year on December 7th, the General Assembly approved an act establishing a new town on fifty acres belonging to John Grant. The newly-created town was to be laid out on a site “lying on Main Licking between the mouths of the two Grassy creeks, in the county of Scott,” and was to be named Wilmington.⁵⁵

A year later, on December 17, 1794, Kentucky’s third General Assembly joined portions of Harrison, Scott and Mason Counties to form the new county of Campbell. This new county, though founded in 1794, did not begin official operation until May 10th, 1795. It was named for Irish-born Colonel John Campbell and included all of present-day Campbell, Kenton, Boone, Pendleton and Grant Counties, as well as a large portion of Bracken County. Robert Benham, Thomas Kennedy, John Hall, John Bush, John Cook, John Ewing and Thomas Corwin were named its first court justices, while Nathan Kelly served as the first county sheriff.

The first Campbell County court met June 1st and 2nd in John Grant’s home at Wilmington, the little one and ½ year-old settlement situated on the Licking’s west bank and several miles above The Point. Court members were not satisfied with the Wilmington location though and decided to hold their future meetings in Newport. Accordingly, the next session on September 7th, was conducted in the Newport home of Jacob Fowler.

The town of Wilmington, which was near present-day Morningview and just south of Cruise’s Creek has long ceased to exist.

During all this time, the community on the east side of the Licking’s mouth continued growing and prospering. New York-born Jacob Fowler, who earlier piloted Bowman and Logan with their troops to the mouth of the Licking for the 1782 linkup with General Clark, had built the first permanent home in the community during 1789.⁵⁶ It was a small, log cabin located on a site later occupied by Newport Barracks.⁵⁷ Fowler also operated the town’s first tavern.⁵⁸

Newport’s first lots, as was said, were laid out in 1791, and the town plans greatly expanded in 1793. By the end of that year, its population included the families of such prominent individuals as James Taylor, Jacob and Edward Fowler, Dan Lewis, Uriah Hardesty, Jacob Barrackman, James McClure, John Bartle and Robert Benham.⁵⁹

On December 14, 1795, the “Town of Newport” was granted its first charter by the state legislature and was officially designated the new county seat.

Seven trustees, including Thomas Kennedy who also acted as chairman, were named to serve the new town. They too, met in the home of Jacob Fowler.⁶⁰

In time, the Taylors granted Newport a parcel of land for its first courthouse. There, the Newport citizenry built a log cabin for that purpose and offered it to the county. It was erected through volunteer public subscription and stood at the corner of York and Bellevue Streets. Bellevue has since been renamed Front Street.

On June 10, 1797, county court met in the home of Newport’s Andrew Lewis, but remained in session only long enough to officially accept the new courthouse. Court members then adjourned after which reconvened in the new structure at noon the same day.⁶¹

There still continued to be occasions when it was considered more convenient for court members to meet at places other than the log courthouse. Such was the case on February 12, 1798 when they convened at William Anderson’s home, Newport, and authorized Thomas Kennedy, Richard Southgate and William Reddick to supervise the erection of a jail. The structure was to be built on the town’s public square, measure about 16 feet square and be of round log construction.⁶²

The court also ordered payment be made to Abraham Vastine and Thomas Reddick for the stocks and pillory which had been ordered the previous September.⁶³

At the same meeting, the court took official note of a state legislature provision which made available to each county a donation of six thousand acres “for the purpose of supporting a Seminary for instruction of youth.” Court members agreed to ask the state for such an allotment.⁶⁴

The log courthouse continued in service until 1815 when it was replaced by a two-story brick structure known as the Peace Palace. The Peace Palace was 40 feet square and surmounted at its center by a large belfry.⁶⁵

The new county of Campbell was in existence but a short time when the state, when the state legislature began carving it into smaller bits. In 1796, a portion was cut off to form Bracken County; in 1798 Pendleton and Boone Counties were cut from it; and in 1820 Grant was cut from Pendleton.

Grant County was enlarged in 1830 with a small strip of Campbell and again in 1833 it gained a portion of Harrison. Still later, it gained additional territory from Boone and Owen Counties. Finally in 1840, what was left of Campbell, west of the Licking was formed into Kenton County.

In time, Kentucky was divided into an unwieldy 120 counties, more than can be found in any state in the nation with exception of Georgia and Texas. The conventional explanation for this unusually large number has been that every person should be able to visit the county courthouse and be home by nightfall. It was argued that many relatively small counties were necessary for citizens to be able to do this during days of slow transportation.

That explanation for Kentucky's unusual number of counties may have some merit for the formation of some of the state's earlier counties. It seems, however, as time went by, more and more counties were created simply to satisfy private interests of certain speculators. These were speculators who owned large tracts of land in the area they wanted to separate. To accomplish this, they would attempt to attract prospective county seats with offers of free land sites for the construction of a courthouse or other public buildings. Such acts gave the donors the appearance of being public benefactors, which they were to an extent, but the gifts also greatly enhanced the value of their remaining lands.

There was another reason for creation of some Kentucky counties, for there were those that came into existence almost solely as a result of the desire to have them serve as monuments to the egos of incumbent governors or memorialize the governors' political friends and party stalwarts.

Happily though, none of this proved to be the case locally. Although John Campbell, for whom Campbell County is named, represented Jefferson County in Kentucky's first senate, he was more than a mere political officeholder. He was a bona fide hero of the American Revolution.

Campbell had come to America from County Tyrone, Ulster, Ireland and during the Revolution, rose to the rank of colonel. Furthermore, he was a veteran of the Battle of Point Pleasant and had been taken prisoner by Indians on Christmas Day 1776 while at Blue Licks. The Indians again took him prisoner at Roger's Defeat and this time held him captive for three years.⁶⁶

At various times, Campbell served as a college trustee; representing Kentucky in the Virginia Legislature; helped frame Kentucky's first constitution; in 1798 was elected Speaker of the Kentucky Senate. He was truly an outstanding Kentuckian in every sense.⁶⁷

When Campbell County was formed, the incumbent governor, Isaac Shelby, had already been honored by having a county named for him. The same was true for incumbent governor James Garrard, when Boone was formed. Governor Robert P. Letcher had just been elected to the state's highest office when Kenton County was formed, but local residents were insistent their new county be named for one of Kentucky's most noted frontiersmen, Simon Kenton. Governor Letcher had to wait two more years before the legislature created and named a county in his honor.

At the time of this writing, the nation has a total of five Campbell Counties, eight Boone Counties but only the one Kenton County. There are, however, two Covington Counties, both of which were named for General Leonard Covington. One is in Alabama; the other in Mississippi. There is also a Newport County – in Rhode Island. Its name, unlike that for the Kentucky city, was selected for its descriptive value.

The possibilities of the land at the Licking's mouth had been noted at an early date by General Richard Butler, one of the commissioners who participated in making the Fort Stanwix Treaty with the Indians.

In September 1785, Butler had led a party downstream for further conferences and treaties with the natives and on October 21st, stopped to kill two deer at the Tacoma Sand Bar. He recorded the event in his carefully kept log book, and continued on to write:

“Pushed on to the mouth of Licking Creek, which is a pretty stream; at the mouth, both above and below, is very fine bottoms. The bottom below the mouth seems highest and most fit to build a town on; it is extensive and whoever owns the bottoms should own the hill also.”⁶⁸

One of the area's early block houses was Tanner's Station, now the site of Petersburg. It was established by John Tanner in 1789, the same year Leitch's Station was established and at the same time Jacob Fowler was building the first permanent house in Newport.

Tanner though, had neglected to erect the all-important block house for the tiny community until tragedy struck. It was up but a few days after the settlement's beginning, that a group of Indians appeared and kidnapped his nine-year-old son, John, Jr.

The boy's captors subjected him to two years of physical abuse before selling him to an Ottawa chieftainess who proceeded to adopt him as her own son. He lived the life of a hunter and warrior until 1817 when the Michigan territorial governor helped him return to his family in Northern Kentucky.⁶⁹

Another local fortification was built by Daniel Boone's sister, Mary Boone Bryan, and her two sons. Mary, along with her husband William, had earlier been one of the founders of central Kentucky's Bryan's Station. After losing three sons and her husband through, she left the station and lived with relatives and in-laws in North Carolina.⁷⁰

The Bryans of that southern state were British sympathizers during the Revolution and some had actually taken up arms against the American colonists. None of this was to Mary's liking, so in time she returned to Kentucky and with two sons came down the Licking by flatboat. They were looking for a new home site and the local area appealed to them.⁷¹

Finally the trio stopped at a spot about 18 miles from The Point and built a fort and established their home.⁷² The tiny settlement was located on the Licking's east side and quickly became known as Bryan's Ford. Here, Mary spent the remainder of her life with her son, Samuel. She died in 1819 and was buried in a small family graveyard on the banks of the Licking.⁷³

Eventually, Mary's remains were removed to Oakland Cemetery at Grant's Lick and in 1930, the ⁷⁴Daughters of the American Revolution unveiled a memorial marker at her new gravesite.

Another early settler was Edmund Rittenhouse, a relative of the eminent German-American mathematician and astronomer, David Rittenhouse of Pennsylvania. In March 1793, Edmund and his family came down the Ohio on a flatboat to the mouth of the Licking and up that stream to Banklick Creek. After looking over the land, he selected a site on the creek about 1 ¼ miles from the Licking. Here he decided to settle, but hostile Indians soon drove him away.

Rittenhouse took refuge at Ruddle's Station but returned to the Covington area in 1795 and once again settled on the west side of the Licking. This time, he made his home about a quarter-mile below Three Mile Ripple.

On one occasion, Edmund and his friend, the noted Daniel Boone, saved the home of a destitute widow who was about to lose it to a group of "land sharks." Rittenhouse and Boone bought the land first, paying for it in hides and furs, and turned it back to the widow.⁷⁵

Others coming into the area at that time were the Martins, Sanfords, Hardins, and other hardy pioneers – all in search of land.

John Martin, who had been born aboard ship three days after his Irish Quaker parents began their voyage to America, settled about a quarter of a mile from the Rittenhouses and near present-day Holmes High School in Buena Vista. In 1797, his son William married Rittenhouse's daughter Margaret and on May 4th the following year, William and Margaret became parents of a son, Isaac, destined to become one of Covington's early civic leaders.⁷⁶

The marriage of William and Margaret represented what was most likely the first wedding within the bounds of present-day Kenton County. Of course, several marriages had occurred earlier in that part of Campbell which lay east of the Licking.⁷⁷

One of the earliest settlers of what is now Kenton County was John Grant, son of a Scotland-born immigrant. Grant, a nephew to Daniel Boone, settled on the banks of the Licking where he had a land warrant for 1200 acres about 13 miles upriver of the mouth. In time, that entire section became known as Grant's Bend in his honor, while the immediate area around his home became the tiny community of Wilmington.⁷⁸

Grant's parents were William Grant, Sr. and Elizabeth Boone Grant, another of Daniel's sisters. Like the Bryans, they too, had been among the founders of Bryan's Station.

John was soon followed into the local area by his brother, Squire Grant. Both took an active part in Kentucky military affairs and by July 1792, John held the rank of 2nd major in the 12th Regiment of Kentucky Militia.⁷⁹

As of May 1795, Squire served as a captain in the same regiment but by December became a lieutenant-colonel and commander of the 21st Regiment of Militia. Nine years later, in December 1804, Squire was a brigadier general in the 4th Brigade of the militia's 2nd Division.⁸⁰

The Grants were not only nephews to Daniel Boone, but also very close companions of the celebrated frontiersman and laid claim to kinship with the Red Douglas Clan of Scotland. Furthermore, they both built solid reputations as two of early Kentucky's more outstanding citizens.

Another early area home was a log house built in 1798 on what is now Ninth Street between Russell and Banklick Streets. During its existence, it was used as a home, school house and a haven for travelers seeking shelter from the elements. Simon Kenton was probably the best known person to ever rest within its walls.

This venerable old home, erected by Pressley Peak, stood until shortly after World War I when it was razed.⁸¹ Before its destruction however, its owners offered it to the city to be placed in one of the parks as an historical shrine. The offer was refused and a bit of pioneer Covington was lost forever.

The cabins these early settlers built were often of the crudest sort. Logs for the walls were notched on one side of each end and the other side hewn off to fit the notch of the adjoining log. After the walls were raised, mud or clay was daubed into the space between the logs. After this, long poles were placed on top of the rafters and a roof of clapboards laid over them and held in place by weight-poles. These weight-poles were laid on top and extended from one end of the cabin to the other. The floors, if any, were of puncheon boards hewn with a broad ax and laid upon log joists. Nails were scarce, so the floor boards were held in place with wooden pins.

The greater part of one end of the cabin was usually taken up by a fireplace fashioned from logs and sticks plastered over with mud or clay. Glass was scarce and expensive so the small windows, when they existed, were ordinarily covered with paper smeared with bear grease.

Many of the earliest cabins had no windows at all, for obvious reasons. Instead, their builders provided small holes or slots which served as rifle ports.⁸²

The first thing many pioneers did on arising each morning was to mount a ladder to their highest port, and peer through the cracks to check for Indians who might be lurking about. It was feared such Indians might be awaiting a chance to rush the cabin as soon as the heavy crossbar securing the door was lifted.

It was here in Northern Kentucky, the Indians conducted one of their last massacres in the state. Just north of Crittenden in 1805, a raiding party attacked the Bran family's home at the intersection of Bullock Pen Creek and a small stream since known as Brans' Branch. The Indians burned the little cabin after scalping the parents and children.⁸³

All the victims of this raid died except the mother who managed to crawl to the safety of a neighbor's home. She eventually recovered from her physical injuries but carried the psychological scars of her ordeal for the rest of her life.⁸⁴

Ordinarily, the settlers' cabins were relatively bullet proof and when provided with gun slots, rather than windows, would enable two or three people to hold off up to ten times their number of marauding Indians.

The danger of Indian depredations was greatly reduced after the signing of the Treaty of Greenville. The treaty provided for large cessions of northwestern Indian land to the United States and included the native surrendering all territory south of the Ohio. Pioneer families now came down the river in larger numbers than ever, following the Kennedys, Leitchs Fowlers Rittenhouses Martins and others to settle near the Licking's mouth.

So too were many of the earliest settlers of other sections of the state finding Covington area far more appealing than their original choice of home sites and were migrating into Northern Kentucky in increasing numbers. This was especially true for settlers of Bryan's Station.

Two of that station's founders – William Grant, Sr. and William Bryan – were brothers-in-law (each had married a sister of Daniel Boone). Boone was married to Bryan's sister, Rebecca. As noted above, Grant and his wife, Elizabeth, became the parents of William, Jr., John and Squire Grant who, like their aunt Mary Boone Bryan, made their homes in this northernmost part of the state.⁸⁵

Still others to migrate here from Bryan's Station included such individuals as Cave Johnson, John Tomlinson and the station commander, Captain John Craig. All settled at North Bend in present Boone County.⁸⁶

Craig and his wife Sally were parent of ten children and came here in 1793 with about a dozen other families. Two of their sons-in-law, Cave Johnson and John Bush, were destined to play prominent roles in Covington's development. Craig became a Campbell County representative in the state legislature within three years of his arrival.⁸⁷

Before most of these later families reached the local area however, Elison E. Williamson, born April 19, 1766 in North Carolina, was playing a prominent part in taming the Northern Kentucky wilderness. Young Elison came to Kentucky at the age of nine with his father and Daniel Boone and, like Captain Craig, was a survivor of the siege of Bryan's Station as well as surviving the attack on Higgens' Blockhouse. He subsequently became one of Boone's favorite hunting partners.⁸⁸

Williamson first arrived at the Covington site in 1785 to assist in cutting a crude road to the south and frequently served as a guide for people traveling over it. In 1786, he settled at a point on Banklick Creek about 8 miles out what is now Madison Pike [KY 17].

Williamson managed to secure a contract to supply General Wayne's army with venison and in the fall of 1791, built what he later claimed was the first home on the Covington site. His small cabin was located "twenty rods below The Point."⁸⁹ A rod, sometimes called a pole or linear perch, is a measure of length equal to 5 and ½ yards.

The following year, Pressley Peake erected what some claim was probably the second home in Covington and then sold it to Wes Miller. Miller in turn sold it to William Martin in 1804.

That home too, was a log structure and stood on the bank of the Licking just above modern-day Thirteenth Street. A law suit of 1818 gave the cabin's exact location as one mile and 52 poles from the Licking's mouth.⁹⁰

The preceding claims of Williamson and Peake are open to serious dispute however. It has been seriously verified that Thomas Kennedy and his brother Francis, began a ferry service across the Ohio as early as 1789. The two Kennedys spent the better part of that year on the Ohio side when Thomas and his family decided to cross to Kentucky. It is not known with certainty when he built a home on the Covington side, nor is it entirely outside the realm of possibility he and his family lived aboard a river craft for a period of time as was a widespread custom on western rivers. Regardless, by May 12, 1790, Thomas Kennedy was listed on the rolls of Kentucky taxpayers.

Unlike many other sections of Kentucky, the Covington area was populated to a great degree by migrants from what were the old Middle Colonies of the east. They came in large numbers from New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland and that part of Virginia known as West Virginia. The Ohio River, a much easier route but far more dangerous than the Wilderness Road, made this feasible.

Those settlers coming from the east and northeast, had to travel overland for extensive distances in order to reach the Ohio's headwaters. It was a trip commonly filled with peril, especially for the women and children and any others who might be poorly provided with basic necessities to make such a journey.

Many traveled to the Ohio in caravans of wagons and had little more to guide them than notches on trees and an occasional cut bush. If freezing weather overtook them, they made painfully slow progress over icy hillsides, ford ice-filled streams and endure freezing clothes on their bodies.

The wagons, frequently drawn by cows which also served to provide milk and sometimes meat, would be filled with family possessions and supplies needed to get started in a new home on the frontier. Tools, utensils, seed, clothing, bedding, rope, heavy chain, flour, meal, salt and a supply of handmade nails were carried by the well-planned traveler. Essential in all considerations were the limitations imposed by the capacity of the wagons and boats built for the down-river journey.

The roads and paths to be traveled westward were, in most cases, barely suitable for the heavily laden wagons and in some cases only pack horses could be used. In such instances it was standard practice for a family to employ a minimum of three horses. One was used to carry the kitchen utensils and a family member, usually the mother. Another carried items as farm and building tools, extra weapons, seed for planting and the family's food provisions.

The third horse was commonly fitted with two large wooden creels which hung over the horse's sides. The creels, resembling large crates, carried bedding, extra wearing apparel and any light furniture the family might decide to bring. The space between the two creels on the horse's back was usually prepared as a riding place for small children and even babies would be tied securely in place.

The family cow trailed along and provided milk for the morning and evening meals, while any surplus was carried in canteens for use during the day's journey.

The further west the families traveled the worse the roads became, so by the time the mountains were reached, they were barely passable for such heavily loaded horses. In many places the trail wound along the edges of steep cliffs and at other places were covered by rapid running or flooded streams which the migrants were forced to ford.

Climbing or descending sharp hills placed an extreme amount of stress on the lashings holding the equipment. The lashings frequently broke at such times, sending possessions – and even the children and babies – tumbling down the steep hills and ravines.

When the migrant families finally reached the Ohio or one of its navigable tributaries, they proceeded to build the necessary boats for their downstream journey. Some hired others to build the needed craft and, as a result, a thriving boatbuilding industry began along the upper Ohio.

THE BOATS on which settlers descended the river were of all descriptions and even included canoes. William B. Northcutt, who came here in April 1809, was typical of many who favored such craft. The most commonly used vessels though, were the huge flatboats usually made of green oak planks fastened to massive timber frameworks by means of wooden pins. These vessels were caulked with any readily available pliant substance and a cabin of sorts erected on the broad deck. Such boats were used only downstream and were guided by long sweeping oars mounted at each end. The oars were worked by men standing erect on the deck and laboring with great difficulty to keep the craft in the channel as well as guiding it past many difficult and dangerous snags.

The number of settlers coming down the Ohio during these years was so great that early Pittsburgh publishing houses found it profitable to issue navigational guides for the novice river travelers. One such guide provided the following advice to any hardy migrant about to undertake the down river trip:

“When provided with a good boat and strong cable of at least 40 feet long there is little danger in descending the river in high freshets, when proper care is taken, unless at such time as when there is much floating ice in it. Much exertion with the oars is, at such time, generally speaking of no manner of use; indeed it is rather detrimental than otherwise, as such exertion frequently throws you out of the current which you ought to continue in, as it will carry you along with more rapidity, and at the same time always takes you right. By trusting to the current there is no danger to be feared in passing the islands as it will carry you past them in safety. On the other hand, if you row, and by so doing happen to be in the middle of the river on approaching an island, there is great danger of being thrown on the upper point of it before you are aware, or have time to regain the current. In case you get aground in such a situation, become entangled among the aquatic timber, which is generally abundant, or are driven by the force of the water among the tops or trunks of other trees, you may consider yourself in imminent danger; nothing but the presence of mind and great exertion can extricate you from this dilemma.

As frequent landing is attended with considerable loss of time and some hazard, you should contrive to land as seldom as possible, you need not even lie by at night, provided you trust to the current, and keep a good look out; if you have a moon, so much the better. When you bring to, the strength of fuel and other necessities, should be laid in at once, and every boat ought to have a canoe along side, to send on shore when necessary.

Though the labour of navigating this river in times of fresh is very inconsiderable to what it is during low water, when continual rowing is necessary, it is always best to keep a good look out, and be strong handed... The wind will sometimes drive you too near the points of the islands, or on projecting parts of the main shore, when considerable extra exertion is necessary to surmount the difficulty. You will frequently meet with head winds, as the river is so very crooked that what is in your favour one hour, will probably be directly against you the next, and when contrary winds contend with a strong current, it is attended with considerable inconvenience, and requires careful and circumspect management, or you may be driven on shore in spite of all your efforts. One favourable circumstance is, that the wind commonly abates about sunset, particularly in summer.

Boats have frequently passed from Pittsburgh to the mouth of Ohio in 15 days, but in general 10 days from Pittsburgh to the falls [Louisville] is reckoned a quick passage.

Descending the river when much incommoded with floating ice, should be as much as possible avoided, particularly early in the winter, as there is a great probability of its stopping your boat; however, if the water is high, and there is an appearance of open weather, you may venture with some propriety, if the cakes are not so heavy as to impede your progress, or injure your timbers; the boat will in such case, make more way than the ice, a great deal of which will sink and get thinner as it progresses, but on the other hand, if the water is low, it is by no means safe to embark on it when anything considerable of ice is in it.

If at any time you are obliged to bring to on account of the ice, great circumspection should be used in the choice of a place to lie in; there are many places where the shore projecting to a point, throws off the cakes of ice towards the middle of the river, and forms a kind of harbour below. By bringing to in such a situation, and fixing your canoe above the boat, with one end strongly to the shore, and the other out in the stream sloping down the river, so as to drive out such masses of ice as would otherwise accumulate on the upper side of your boat, and tend to sink her and drive her from her moorings, you may lie with a tolerable degree of safety... This is a much better method than that of felling a tree on the shore above, so as to fall partly into the river, for

if in felling it, it does not adhere in some measure to the trunk, or rest sufficiently on the bank, the weight of accumulated ice will be apt to send it adrift, and bring it down, ice and all, on the boat, when no safety can be expected for it. The reflection here naturally occurs, how easy it would be, and how little it would cost, in different places on the river where boats are accustomed to land, to project a sort of pier into the river, which inclining downstream, would at all times insure a place of safety below it. The advantages accruing from such projection to the places where they might be made would be very considerable, bring them into repute as landing places, occasion many boats and passengers to stop there, who otherwise would not, and soon repay the trifling expense incurred by the erection.”⁹¹

River pirates lurking along the shores constituted one of the very real hazards faced by settlers coming down the Ohio. One of the tricks employed by these raiders, as well as by Indians, was to have a white captive or collaborator attempt to lure the traveler ashore by pretending distress. Pirates preyed upon keelboats and flatboats alike and by 1800 had actually organized a system of spies to keep them informed of boats carrying the richest cargoes.

When a boat did fall into their hands, the occupants were invariably murdered and the captured loot sold in downriver markets. The river cut-throats preferred to leave the keelboats alone however, unless the craft was known to have an unusually valuable cargo. The reason for their preference for flatboats is readily apparent when it is realized that keelboats were manned by tough, experienced rivermen who would never run from a fight with the pirates and who would often even provoke such a confrontation.

Such craft was so-named because of a heavy length of timber attached to the boat’s bottom in order to give protection against the innumerable snags and other obstructions. The typical keelboat was about 50 feet long and 12 feet wide, pointed at both ends and constructed of strong planks and boards. Its covered hold was capable of accommodating from 15 to 40 tons of cargo. When fully loaded, it could average about 15 miles a day, moving upstream and about one and ½ miles per hour downstream.⁹²

The keelboat’s narrowness allowed it to travel far up the Ohio’s tributaries, such as the Licking, where it saw frequent use. In fact, the first such crafts to be seen on the Licking were those in Colonel Byrd’s attack force.

Keelboats came into wide local acceptance shortly before the end of the eighteenth century. They were manned by a captain, who usually acted as steersman, and anywhere from 6 to 18 crewmen. The craft was laboriously propelled upstream by the crew who placed long poles in the stream bottom and propped the pole’s other end against their shoulders. The men then walked along narrow walkways called “running boards,” which extended the full length of the boat on both sides. When the end of the vessel was reached, the poles were lifted, carried back to the rear of the craft, and at the cry of “set poles!” the whole tedious process was repeated.

On larger streams such as the Ohio, the craft stayed closer to shore in shallow water. There, its forward movement was aided by crewmen seizing bushes or projecting tree limbs and pulling the craft forward.

In June 1794, mail transport began on the Ohio. The light, strong boats used in this endeavor measured about 24 feet long and were manned by a coxswain and four oarsmen, all of whom were armed. A tarpaulin was always carried for the purpose of covering the boat during wet weather.⁹³

Mail originating in the East and destined for the Ohio Valley was transported overland to Wheeling and then downstream. Down river boats traveled about 60 miles a day and operated in four relays between Wheeling and Cincinnati. Going upstream they could average about 30 miles a day. The craft met and exchanged their mail at the relay points of Marietta, Gallipolis and Limestone [Maysville].⁹⁴

The mail boats, which at times also carried passengers, always kept to the middle of the stream as protection against Indian attack. This was so successful that only one such attack was ever experienced by a mail boat crew. This occurred in November 1794 near the mouth of the Scioto and was the result of an incautious approach to shore to kill what the crew thought was a deer. It was instead an ambush.⁹⁵

Such man-powered mail boats operated only until 1798 when it was determined land travel between the East and West had become safe enough for the mail to be carried the entire distance on horseback. Travel over land was much faster, especially during winter when the boats were often delayed by massive accumulations of river ice.⁹⁶

The men who engaged in early commercial river traffic – especially the keel boaters – were often ex-Indian fighters who had difficulty adjusting to peace after the Indian wars lessened. Others were adventurers who simply loved the experiences of a river man’s life. For the most part, they were blunt and sincere. Their work was of the

severest type, and when they had time for relaxation, they usually engaged in sports and activities equally as strenuous as their labor.

These men tended to be a boastful lot but probably no more so than those frontiersmen and explorers who confined their activities to dry land. One of the keelboaters' most common boasts was they were "half horse and half alligator." Many bragged they could out-run, out-jump, out-swim, chew more tobacco and spit less, and drink more whiskey and stay soberer than any man about.

The keelboater had all the qualities of the frontier warrior. As a group, they were brave, hardy and openhanded men whose whole lives were a round of strenuous excitement. Their manner, language and dress were of a style all their own. They were self-reliant individuals who made free use of strong and forcible language – men who were hyperbolic in thought and deed. So many of their more outstanding deeds were often considered mere incidents of a border life, and to be ordinary as not be worth recording. The keelboaters' contemporaries did, however, often write of their good humor, frankness and practical good sense.

The keelboaters by necessity were of extraordinary physical development and strength. Furthermore, pride in their physical prowess tended to inspired a somewhat pugilistic disposition among them as a class. Each boat had its champion pugilist, entitled to wear a red feather in his cap. The feather served not only as a badge of its owner's position on that particular boat, but also as a challenge to all rivals.

These boatmen, though often pugnacious and general hell-raisers, also showed unmitigated contempt for the more serious wrong-doers of the river – the pirates and thugs who robbed and murdered for plunder. To this type of river pirate, the keelboater was an everlasting and fierce enemy.

MIKE FINK, a fabulous individual known throughout the Ohio and Mississippi Valleys, was undoubtedly the most celebrated of these keelboaters. There is scarcely a town on those rivers which does not have some tradition or story linked to him. At Covington his memory is kept alive by a riverboat restaurant, named in Mike Fink's honor.

Fink, who was born in Allegheny County Pennsylvania in 1770, was a man of great personal strength and courage who as a young boy earned the reputation of being one of the foremost Indian fighters in the West. It was during those formative years he displayed the admirable qualities of courage and fortitude for which he would later be so well known. His accuracy with a musket and his reputation for bravery made him the envy of his comrades.

By the age of 12, Mike had become such a marksman that he hunted game on a commercial basis and in 1786 became an army scout with the assigned task of tracing the Indians in advance of the westward moving army.⁹⁷

As the various Indian tribes made peace and the river valley became spotted with settlements, Fink commenced his boating career. He soon possessed a singular knowledge of the river. He knew every bar and bend, as well as every town, hamlet and farm. His very name became a sobriquet for outstanding rivermen for generations. To earn the nickname "Fink" on the river was to earn the riverman's highest compliment. Mike himself though was known among his companions on the Ohio as the "Snapping Turtle," and among those on the Mississippi as the "Snag."

Mike recognized little law other than his own and every farmer along the river strived to keep on good terms with him, otherwise there was little safety for their crops and cattle. Fink displayed a strapping respect for all rivermen, except the pirates. These he regarded as the lowest form of life and would often go out of his way to engage them in bloody combat simply for the sake of having something to occupy his time.

Mike Fink had his own sense of humor and constantly saw the ridiculous side of things. He once said of himself, "I can out-run, out-hop, out-jump, throw down, drag out and lick any man in the country. I'm a Salt River roarer. I love the winning and I'm chockfull of fight."

Mike always took his woman along on his trips but strictly forbid any conversation between her and other men. His favorite punishment for her when she violated any of his rules was to compel her to balance a cup of whiskey atop her head or sometimes hold one between her knees while he gave a demonstration of marksmanship by firing a rifle volley through the cup.

Because of such bizarre outbursts, far too many historians have made the mistake of seeing Mike Fink as a braggart and a ruffian. True, like David Crockett and other well known trail blazers, he was these things, but he was also much more. As wild and uncultivated as he appeared, he loved the wild outdoors and had a nature that exalted enthusiasm. The Ohio was his favorite stream and he knew every part of it.

Fink was the Simon Kenton and Boone of the rivers. Like those two, he loved the wilderness, but unlike them, he also thoroughly enjoyed the frontier villages and towns. It was his belief the local southwestern Ohio and

Northern Kentucky region had the “purtiest gals on all the rivers,” and because of that, the local families watched their daughters with more care than usual whenever Mike’s fleet of keelboats was in the vicinity.⁹⁸

Mike was very much like a product of his time – a pioneer in the truest sense who exercised an unbounded influence over his comrades. He was a rigid disciplinarian when it came to management of his own keelboating business. Woe to any crewman who shirked his duties. He was a businessman of uncanny ability and possessed a strong sense of loyalty to those who employed him. The valuable cargoes transported by him were always carried safely to their destination, secured by no other bond than Mike’s integrity. The same was also true for any passenger “however weak or however richly freighted” who might book passage on one of his crafts.⁹⁹

Fink’s admiration for other hard-working keelboaters was revealed in the story of Claudius Cadot, a young man who entered keelboating just after the War of 1812 in order to earn enough money to purchase a tract of land. Fink at that time was a captain in charge of a keelboat fleet belonging to John Finch’s company at Pittsburgh and Cadot hired out Mike at fifty cents a day.

The new boatman was a quick learner who never engaged in the usual river town sprees of his fellow keelers. Instead, he asked Captain Fink to keep his pay in the captain’s personal trunk. Fink agreed, but only if Cadot carried the key for, as Mike pointed out, Cadot would probably be the one to save the more money of the two. Fink’s prediction was correct and he came to admire Cadot’s thrifty, business-like ways that at the end of the novice’s first year of service, he paid him at the rate of 62 ½ cents a day, rather than the agreed 50.

Eventually, Mike decided to leave the local river valleys and went farther west. There, he became a successful fur trapper, working virtually all the region now included in Yellowstone National Park. Mike met his death in 1823 during a shooting fray at Fort McHenry at the mouth of the Yellowstone River.

AS NOTED before, the craft most favored by the great numbers of northeasterners seeking new home sites in the western country was the huge flatboat, commonly known as the Kentucky Broadhorn or Kentucky Boat and in some cases the New Orleans Boat, depending on its destination. These boats, with their great pointed covered hulks, were flat-bottomed and averaged about 40 feet in length; 12 feet in width. Some though, were as much as 100 feet long and capable of carrying loads up to 70 tons.

The average Kentucky Boat was about eight feet deep and powered by six oars which were frequently aided by sails. The sails were made of every conceivable material and, when the wind was favorable, could be seen not only on barges and flatboats but also on keelboats and frequently on canoes.

Two of the Kentucky Boats’ oars, located on each side, were about 30 feet long and had to be operated by two men each. There was also a large thirty-to-forty feet long steering oar at the stern. An additional steering aid was provided by the gouger, a small oar at the prow. The gouger and the steering oar could each be handled by one person. These craft which were usually built for only one downriver journey, were roofed over for the protection of passengers and cargo.

Some of the boats were built to include many of the comforts normally found ashore and a few of the more elaborate ones even boasted one or more fireplaces.

As time passed, many migrants began using a simple but effect instrument that would aid in keeping the craft from running aground in shallow water and from being hung-up on underwater obstacles.

Such a device was constructed by attaching a long hollow buckeye pole to the craft’s bow and letting it extend some eight to ten feet in front of the boat. Buckeye seeds were loosely strung along the pole’s length and a strip of rawhide, reaching about two feet below the boat’s bottom, was hung from the pole’s far end.¹⁰⁰

A large animal bone, usually a buffalo hipbone, was tied to the submerged end of the rawhide so that whenever it struck an underwater object, a vibration would be sent through the rawhide to the hollow buckeye log and on to the vessel’s deck. All these parts, of course, were chosen for their ability to transmit vibrations and alert the crew to the hidden hazard.¹⁰¹ The boats were usually dismantled after reaching their destination and the wooden planks sold or used to erect a more permanent structure ashore.

Some of those sturdy migrants were such individuals as George Michael Bedinger, a veteran of the 1779 campaign against the Shawnee; Johannes Piper, a north German from Savannah, Georgia; and Jan VanHook from Holland. Still others included Jacob Holmann, Abraham Rockenfeld, Jacob Kraut, Franz Kreilich and Stephen Reich.¹⁰²

Bedinger, of German parentage, first came to Kentucky from Shepherdstown, Virginia in 1791 and settled near Blue Licks. He was a veteran of the Battle of Blue Licks, and made the decision to re-locate after returning from Colonel John Bowman’s 1779 campaign. Bedinger’s stay in Northern Kentucky was brief however, for he soon decided to move on to Nicholas County where he made a permanent home.

Bedinger owned a number of slaves, but unlike most Kentucky slaveholders, taught his own how to read and write and adopted a policy of freeing them when they reached age 30. He consistently worked for the betterment of all slaves and, as a member of Congress, authored a bill which would prohibit bringing them into America after 1808.¹⁰³ Bedinger's son, Benjamin F., later became one of Covington area's most prominent physicians.

Orville James Wiggins, an early Covington postal employee, newspaper editor, educator and historian, whose father migrated here from Essex, Vermont, had close contact with many of these earliest settlers and often spoke with them concerning their personal experiences. One pioneer Wiggins contacted, wrote of the area's early homes and noted some of the changes in the later residences. He described the earliest cabins as follows:

“The trees were fallen [sic], cut in their proper lengths, dragged to the site selected, near a spring or stream of water, clapboards were rived, puncheons split, and when all was ready, the neighbors were invited to the house-raising. The tools required were skids, handspikes, axes, augers, gimlets, cross-cut saws and drawing knives... When the cabin was under roof, chimney built, the floor of puncheons laid, the door hung on wooden hinges and the latchstring out, it was ready for the reception of the family.”¹⁰⁴

He went on to describe the cabins' furnishings by saying:

“The furniture was of the most crude and uncouth style. It usually consisted of a bedstead, table, a few stools, benches or split bottom chairs and a small spinning wheel. The bedstead was sometimes made by boring holes in the logs in one corner of the cabin into which the ends of rounds poles were inserted. A forked stick answered the purpose of a support. The bottom was of clapboards. This was what was called a Continental bedstead...(and)... a sugartrough was frequently substituted in place of...(a cradle). The trusty rifle was always found to be suspended from wooden hooks, with bullet pouch and power horn ready for immediate use. It was an instrument of defence [sic] and pastime and old and young prided themselves on their skill as marksmen and but few of them would bring home a squirrel that was not shot through the head.”¹⁰⁵

BEARSKINS and buffalo hides were often used for bedding and as lap robes for protection from the cold when riding in wagons. For footwear, the earliest settlers, like the explorers and hunters, commonly wore moccasins. Each moccasin was usually fashioned from a single piece of dressed deerskin by gathering the deerskin about the foot and sewing a single seam along the top of the foot and another from the bottom of the heel to a point near or just above the ankle joint.

Flaps were left on each side of the moccasin and reached some distance up the leg. They protected the leg's lower part and when tightly bound with thongs, kept the moccasin's inside free of dust, snow and pebbles.

During cold weather, the moccasins were well stuffed with deer hair or dry grass and leaves to keep feet warm. Regrettably, there was no known way of waterproofing such footwear and, as a result, many pioneers were afflicted with all the winter ailments associated with cold, wet feet.

Deerskin, as might be expected, was the animal hide most commonly used for clothing. The cloth most often made by the pioneers though, was usually wool or linsey-woolsey. Linsey-woolsey was rough-textured cloth woven from wool which had been mixed with wild nettle, a plant that grew profusely on the frontier. In time, wool and flax abounded and it was then that spinning-wheels and looms became common household items.

Women of the frontier made their own dyes from material at hand. A dull yellow could be obtained from the inner bark of the white walnut, while the hulls of black walnuts furnished a rusty black.

A crude sort of lamp was often made by cutting a turnip in half. Each half was hollowed out, filled with melted lard or animal fat and the two halves rejoined and tightly bound. Small sticks, tightly wrapped in bits of cloth were stuck upright into the turnip and lighted.

Food was probably among the severest wants of the earliest pioneers. It is true the forest was full of wild game and rivers teemed with fish, but such a diet with nothing else becomes extremely tiresome. The housewife therefore gathered dandelions and other wild greens from the fields. In the case of the dandelion, every part was used. The leaves made a tasty salad or were served as cooked greens. The roots were made into a coffee-like drink, and the blossoms were used to make a savory wine.

Other products of the forest included many varieties of wild fruits and berries, including plums, grapes, cherries, strawberries, apples and peaches.

The wild grapes were not only used to make jellies, but the sap from their broken vines was frequently used by the women as a type of hair softener and conditioner.

Brown wrapping paper, when available, was soaked in a grape vinegar and used to ease pain associated with sore joints and muscles. The vinegar was strong enough to also be used for pickling.

Maple trees were wrapped in season, usually late February to early March and the sap made into maple syrup, maple cream, maple sugar or maple taffy. To make these products, the sap was boiled until in concentrated into rich syrup. If a cream, sugar or taffy result was desired, the syrup was further boiled to the necessary temperature and stirred and cooled in a manner designed to bring about the desired degree of crystallization.

For taffy, the final step consisted of pouring the boiling syrup over packed snow and allowing it to harden. The resulting "leather aprons," as the taffy strips were called, were removed from the snow pack and used as a chewy treat.

During the spring months, the pioneer women cut young and tender nettle and made it into either a porridge or broth. For flour, they often dug up bear grass roots which were boiled and dried. This was pounded into a substitute for flour and used in the household baking.

Indian corn, once planted and harvested, also became an important food item. This crop was easily converted into meal and whiskey and soon became a staple of the Ohio Valley. Hoe-cake, ash cake, Johnny-cake and pone, all made from corn, were commonplace terms on the frontier. These were all highly nutritious foods and could be kept for long periods of time. As a result, they were popular for carrying on extensive trips. The name "johnny-cake" came about as a contraction of "journey-cake."

Initially, corn was parched and ground by hand and horsepower. In time, the early Covingtonians began making an ingenious use of waterpower by simply attaching a mill-wheel between two boats anchored in the middle of the river. The current passing between the craft became a handy source of power without the necessity of a dam.

Broths, boiled meats and vegetables were cooked in iron pots which swung from a crane, while a long-legged skillet, called a "spider," was often used for frying or baking. Johnny-cakes however, were baked on a board slanted before the fire.

A constant hazard accompanying the cooking of meals at open hearths was posed by the possibility of the women's long homespun dresses being set afire by flying sparks and flames.

A few settlers, such as the Kennedys, brought elegant housekeeping utensils with them. Others whittled distinctive ladles, potato mashers, rolling pins, spoons, bowls plates and other items out of wood. Still others were satisfied with using much cruder utensils, such as the "trencher" plate. The trencher was nothing more than a block of wood which had its center hollowed out to form a shallow, oval trench.

Cups, dippers, bottles or jugs and in some cases, even cooking vessels were made from gourds gathered from the wild or grown for this purpose. The gourds' stringy, fibrous insides were also oftentimes dried and used as sponges or dishcloths.

SALT WAS SCARCE and expensive, so the local settlers made occasional journeys to Big Bone Lick where it could be extracted from the saline springs. The salt was obtained by boiling immense quantities of water and collecting the saline residue. Approximately a thousand gallons of Big Bone's waters made 20 pounds of salt.

About 1793, Samuel Bryan discovered another source of salt water – this one on the Licking's east bank. Bryan, in conjunction with John Grant and Charles Morgan, sank a well and started producing salt with which they supplied much of Kentucky's interior. The tiny village, which grew up at the location became known as Grant's Salt Licks, but is known today simply as Grant's Lick.¹⁰⁶

THE LITTLE MONEY the pioneers brought with them never seemed to last very long. Although the infant American government had adopted a monetary system of dollars and cents, many of the earliest area settlers continued to reckon in English pounds which at that time were composed of twenty shillings worth twelve pence each, each penny being equal to a farthing.

Probably the most common coin on the frontier was the Spanish eight-real piece which the Americans used as silver dollars. Each was worth approximately ninety pence.

The earliest troops at Fort Washington were paid in these Spanish silver coins. As the coins came into the hands of the settlers, they were cut into quarters and eighths to be used as change. When the dollars were divided into eight pieces, each piece was thought of as being worth 12 ½ cents or a little more than eleven pence, hence their common name of "eleven-penny piece," usually shortened to "levy."

The levies in turn, were often subdivided into 6 ¼ pieces worth a little more than five pence, and generally known as the “five-penny piece,” usually shortened to “fippenny” or “fip.”¹⁰⁷ Since the levy also carried the slang name “bit,” the quarter of a dollar was sometimes called “two bits.”

It even became a practice to cut the earliest of American silver dollars in the same way and to this day it is common to hear Covingtonians refer to 25 cents as two bits, 50 cents as four bits and 75 cents as six bits.

When settlers ran out of hard money, the usual practice was to substitute animal pelts for currency. A rabbit skin was equal to the five penny piece worth 6 ¼ cents; a raccoon skin equaled an eleven-penny bit or 12 ½ cents; a fox skin was worth two bits or 25 cents; and a deerskin was valued at four bits. Pins and needles were commonly used for smaller change.

The cutting of Spanish dollars was often done by smiths, some of whom usually managed to cut *five* quarters from each. They kept the fifth “quarter” for themselves.

The smith’s trickery soon brought repercussions. When merchants took the cut money east to replenish supplies, the coins found their way to the mint to be re-coined. It was there the westerners’ trick was discovered. Partly as a result of the ensuing outcry, the soldiers began receiving their pay in three-dollar notes. The notes were printed especially for the army payroll and soon became legally known as “oblongs.”

DESPITE SUCH OCCASIONAL lapses in morality, religious faith is invariably a strong factor in the lives of those living so close to nature, so in October 1794, eight of the local settlers gathered at William DeCoursey’s home on the Licking’s west bank and founded the Mouth of the Licking Baptist Church. The congregation later moved across that stream to Cold Springs.¹⁰⁸

In the very earliest days, it was customary for men of each church to rotate standing guard duty against possible Indian attack during church services. Furthermore, the local settlers often poisoned certain sections of their gardens in order to discourage Indian raids on the grains and vegetables. In the spring of 1795, the members of a church in nearby Dry Ridge were advised by church leaders that “Any Brother impregnating caches of wheat, corn and potatoes with Arsenic or other Subtil [sic] poison to trap Sauvage [sic] Indians shal [sic] give the Church full notice as to its whereabouts.”¹⁰⁹

The same correspondent who had described the area’s early homes for Orville Wiggins, also took note of the pioneers’ social life when he recorded:

“They had their own log rollings, house raisings, corn husking; their racing frolics, hunting and shooting matches and in the winter they had their apple parings and in the early spring their sugar makings. The old mothers had their quiltings and tea-parties. In nearly all their pastimes they cultivated habits of economy and industry.”¹¹⁰

Even the play of small boys often reflected the pioneers’ sense of the practical and included not only such competitive sports as running, jumping, wrestling, tomahawk throwing and target shooting, but also the imitating of the sounds of birds and animals. The boy who became proficient in this, found the talent was one well worth having, for he was able to coax the wild turkey or deer to within easy reach of his rifle fire.

The men frequently relaxed and at the same time practiced a useful skill by attempting to shoot out a candle flame at night at 50 paces or more. They claimed this helped improve their nighttime shooting ability whenever they might be called upon to fire at light being reflected from the eyes of a wolf, panther or other forest creature.

Wiggins’ correspondent further noted the changes which took place in frontier housing and commented on the home medical remedies being used at the time.

“In the second epoch of pioneer life, there was a marked change in their dwellings, which had been constructed of round logs and without windows and but one room and a loft, the approach to the loft being by ladder, sometimes in the inside but more frequently on the outside of the cabin. The loft was the sleeping apartment of the young members of the family, and it was also the store house in fall and winter... There were herbs, roots and nuts. The stock consisted of sage, horehound, mint, catnip, pennyroyal, snake root, spignut, wormwood, dock, alicombone, etc. This constituted the medical department, with the exception of Epsom salts and pills. The pills were made from the inner bark of the butternut tree, and it was said they acted as either a purgative or emetic (depending on how the bark was stripped from the tree...)”¹¹¹

THE PIONEER family had a number of home prescriptions for various ailments that might strike one of its members. These included a tea made of wild cherry bark and mixed with honey, used as a remedy for a cough. For a sore throat, one would apply fat bacon or pork to the outside of the throat and tie it in place with a rag. This was kept in place until the soreness disappeared. The patient might also gargle repeatedly with warm salt water or apple cider vinegar and perhaps hold a small piece of garlic in his mouth for several minutes, several times a day.

The accepted treatment for bruises consisted of washing the afflicted area with warm water and anointing it with tallow or candle grease. For insect bites, one would apply either common mud or possibly use a slice of onion or garlic juice, tobacco or honey.

Early migration into the local area continued to mount as choice lands on either side of the Licking developed into flourishing farms. By 1800 the county boasted of 1,903 residents, including 1,612 whites and 291 blacks. Twelve of those blacks, it might be noted, were free, while the remainder slaves.¹¹²

Newport's population at that time was 106, while neighboring Boone County, created just two years earlier, counted 1,534 settlers, including 325 slaves and 15 freedmen.¹¹³

About that time, according to Orville Wiggins, the cabins began to evolve "from the single to the double, or two rooms with a porch or passageway between. They were built like the former – of round logs – and after they were erected they were skatched down, which means they were hewn."¹¹⁴

"The double cabin came into vogue about the year 1800. The third style of dwellings was of entire hewed logs. They were more convenient and were more convenient and were one and half or two stories in height with kitchen and loom-house in the rear, separated from the main building by a porch or passageway...From the era of the hewn log house there was a decided change in the appearance of the country..."¹¹⁵

The simple log cabin though, remained the most common type of early home. Still, some of the more industrious settlers built what could best be described as log mansions, usually being of two stories with two rooms on each floor. The logs for these were from select large trees, finely hewed and carefully notched. The log walls were chinked with choice tree hearts mortared into the cracks with lime. Some families even whitewashed their finished home, while others preferred whitening only the mortar between the logs.

Homes made of lumber became commonplace in the riverfront settlements after the advent of sawmills. For a brief period though, it was sometimes less costly to erect houses of brick. This was principally true on outlying farms where the brick could be fired at the home site and work done by slaves. Many of these early brick homes are still found throughout the Upper Bluegrass area.

MAKING AND CANNING jelly and preserves were popular in such homes. Apples were made into cider or else packed in barrels and stored with pears and other fruit in the fruit cellar. Pumpkins and corn fodder were stored in the barn, while vegetables such as potatoes, carrots and turnips were buried in the dirt floor of an outbuilding. Cloth sacks of salted and smoked meats hung from the rafters, as did sacks of dried peas, beans, corn meal and flour. By hanging them from the rafters, the owner managed to keep them safe from rats and mice.

Popcorn was hung in the home attic to dry, as were long strings of onions and brilliant little peppers. Outside were stacks of countless cords of wood all split and sawed into proper lengths for the fireplace, while huge quantities of leaves and straw were sometimes banked about the outer walls of the foundation.

WINTERTIME AMUSEMENTS included entire families visiting each other for a week at a time. Such visits were usually marked by games and feasting. The women braided rugs, helped with the sewing and other household chores, while enjoying long hours of neighborly gossip. The men aided their host in mending fences and making repairs to the house and various out-buildings. The visitor would visit his own home each day to feed the stock and see that everything was in order. In time, the visit was returned and the cold winters were pleasantly interrupted.

Quilting bees were particularly popular social occasions for the women who saw them as opportunities to gather to talk and sew. The quilts made were usually of scraps of material thrifty saved over long periods of time. The scraps were cut and pieced into top parts that were often of a detailed and colorful design. One with no design at all and in which the patches were of any size or shape, was known as a "crazy quilt."

The quilt's colorful top was sewn to a solid piece of cloth that served as a bottom or reverse side, and the space between the two filled with cotton or wool and in some cases with corn husks or even old paper.

Construction of log cabins of solid-wall maple, oak, cherry, walnut or some other hardwood also remained less expensive for a while. Many of the hardwood trees were 150 feet high and even used to provide clapboard sheathing to make the cabins resemble the growing number of homes made of milled lumber.

AS TIME PASSED, THOMAS KENNEDY expanded his commercial interests to include the inn business. The inn also provided him an opportunity to indulge himself as an entertainer, for Kennedy possessed a certain ability at playing the violin and often entertained the army troops at Fort Washington.

Many newcomers to the West stopped at Kennedy's inn for supplies and information concerning the best lands still available for settlement. Kennedy himself, as was said, had finally secured the deed to his choice land in 1801 for \$750.

The inn proved so profitable he now erected another home – a huge stone residence, easily the most prominent structure at “Kennedy's Ferry.” The rooms were paneled with outstandingly designed woodwork. The walls were three feet thick and a great porch at the front permitted a full view of the river. There was also a stone barn, stone spring house, stone hen house, stone ice house and stone smoke house. The manor was located on the northeast corner of present-day Garrard Street and the alley just north of Second Street. Kennedy now moved his family into the new residence, but continued to operate his inn and ferry. The house remained a Covington landmark until razed in 1909. [His descendant, Dr. Louise Southgate, donated the property to the city of Covington and the city fathers decided to raze the structures rather than develop them for tours or other uses – editor]

The Kennedy ferry operations consisted of skiffs for foot passengers who were charged 12 ½ cents each. Large flats propelled by manually operated cars carried wagons, horses and stock. Fare for these was one dollar for a four-horse team, with other rates “in proportion.”

The ferry crossing involved a certain amount of risk and sometimes fatal accidents occurred, as in the fall of 1815 when the Reverend Samuel Lawner Blackman drowned. The newly married minister was crossing to Covington with his wife to accept a new pastorate. The ferryboat in operation then was described as a “crazy craft with sails and paddles.” Reverend Blackman's horses became frightened at the boat's movement and plunged overboard when the sails were hoisted. The minister became entangled in their harness and was struck by one of the horse's hooves. The panic-stricken animals pulled him overboard with them and he immediately sank from sight.

Most of the families coming westward were in search of new farm land and saw the forest as an obstacle which must be cleared before the land could be plowed and permanent homes built. Wild animals, of course, were numerous and included deer, mink, muskrat, otter, beaver raccoon, red and grey fox, black bear, panther and wildcat. In fact, probably more species of modern wild animals inhabited the Ohio River region than any other place in the United States.¹¹⁶

The forests were literally alive with squirrels and in September 1801, one of their huge migrations, this one from Kentucky to Ohio, took place just east of Newport. Virtually thousands of animals were killed by the settlers at times like these, and on this occasion it was estimated as many as 500 squirrels a day were killed.¹¹⁷

Fish abounded in the local rivers and constituted one of the pioneers' regular food sources. The clear and unpolluted waters gave forth a rich harvest which included bass, perch, herring, sturgeon, pike, jack salmon and catfish of many species ranging in weight from a few ounces to more than 100 pounds.

It was after the pioneers acquired domestic sheep and hogs that they found the depredations of wolves to be extremely costly. A law was therefore passed by the state legislature offering a bounty of from \$2.30 to \$3.00 for each wolf scalp. The scalps were also acceptable to the sheriff for payment of tax.¹¹⁸

The unbelievable riches of the area's farms, streams and fields though, were only for the settlers' own tables, as there was no market for the surplus. It is true, the military at Fort Washington – and later (after 1803) at Newport Barracks – provided a limited market for local farm produce, but it was not until an adventurous breed of rivermen began their commercial operations on flatboats and keelboats that the settlers' produce could be sent to markets of New Orleans and other emerging population centers. For a long period of time, they were the chief outlet for Kentucky's growing agricultural production.

Each springtime flood – or “freshet” – at communities such as embryonic Covington, saw immense quantities of pork, bacon, flour, whiskey and other products loaded on flatboats for New Orleans and the intermediate downriver markets. Keelboats were also used in this trade and the items they brought back were among the earliest imports of foreign-made goods into Kentucky.

As more migrants arrived, earlier arrivals such as Thomas Kennedy, James Taylor, Thomas Sandford and Richard Southgate prospered and grew wealthy.

SOUTHGATE, born in New York City in 1773, came to Kentucky while it was still a part of Virginia. In later years, he liked to recall how he once rode horseback from Newport to the Virginia capital in order to attend court. He dressed in what was then thought the proper manner for one of his great wealth and usually wore the round cloak, short trousers, long stockings and buckled shoes favored by so many of the wealthy of that time. His hair was always carefully braided into a pig-tail, or queue, and then tied in back with a silk ribbon.

Southgate was married to Ann Winston Hinde, the daughter of Dr. Thomas Hinde. At the time of his death in 1868, his wealth was estimated to be in excess of one and one-half million dollars.

THOMAS SANDFORD was born in Westmoreland County, Virginia in 1762, and came to Kentucky in 1792, at which time he settled on a site now within the community of Ludlow. He was the only member of the 1799 Constitutional Convention from Campbell County, and served several years in the state legislature.¹¹⁹

Sandford was a member of Congress from 1803 to 1807. He returned to his local estate, only to drown in an Ohio River accident on December 10, 1808. His three sons; Cassius B., Alexander. And Alfred were all destined to play prominent roles in Covington's early development.¹²⁰

HUBBARD TAYLOR, who had been a Revolutionary Army soldier at the age of 15, became one of Kentucky's leading citizens. He married Dr. Thomas Hinde's niece and was given a large portion of an extensive Clark County land grant which Dr. Hinde owned. Dr. Hinde gave him the land in exchange for surveying the entire grant. Hubbard decided to make his home on the central Kentucky land, saying, "I settled in canebrake and cut the first stick with my own hand."¹²¹

Hubbard was active in public affairs from the time of his first arrival on the frontier. He not only served as a member of the convention which formed the state's 1792 Constitution, but was elected to the first legislature from Fayette County. When Clark County was formed, he became one of the quarter-session judges for that county's court.¹²² During the War of 1812, he re-joined the military and achieved the rank of captain.

Hubbard was one of the 1805 presidential electors who re-elected Thomas Jefferson. He served again in 1809, 1813, 1817, 1821 and 1825 when James Madison, James Monroe and John Q. Adams were elected to the nation's highest office. Madison and Monroe, of course, served two terms.

On July 28, 1803, the Newport trustees, while acting for the Taylors, transferred a parcel of land to the federal government to be used for a military installation and induced officials to relocate Fort Washington to the Kentucky side of the Ohio. [The land under Fort Washington – present 3rd and Broadway – had become extremely valuable and Cincinnati no longer wanted the installation in their city - editor] Specifications were drawn up, and notices such as the following were published:

Notice¹²³

That having received instructions from the secretary of war, to cause to be erected at this place, the following buildings, to wit,

An arsenal for arms, &c. of brick – 80 feet long and 32 wide, to stories high, ten feet each in the clear, with a cellar and foundation of stone, under the whole, of five feet below the surface and 3 feet above with pillars under the sleepers of the lower story – the walls to be the length of two bricks and a half for the lower story, and two for the upper.

A brick Magazine for powder, requiring about 35,000 good brick and a barracks requiring about the same quantity.

Proposals will therefore be received by the subscriber, at the Post-Office in this place . . .

*James Taylor
Superintendent:
Newport, Campbell County (KY)
July 11, 1803*

One of the stone masons employed in erecting the installation was Thomas Metcalf, who eventually became Kentucky's tenth governor. Young Thomas later bore the nickname of "Old Stone Hammer" because of his work and undoubtedly secured the job because of his uncle, John Metcalf, who along with Daniel Mayo, had won the contract for the masonry work as a result of their low bid.¹²⁴

The stronghold was completed the following year, and the Fort Washington garrison transferred there. The new military post, known as Newport Barracks, quickly became the army's chief depot for military store. From here were sent the urgently needed supplies of ammunition, arms and provisions to General Harrison at Vincennes and Tippecanoe, as well as to other military expeditions throughout the Northwest.

The new base also overflowed with regular army troops from time to time, and on one occasion tents of the 4th US Infantry ranged from the banks of the Licking to as far eastward as Taylor's Creek. The regiment, composed principally of New Englanders, had been ordered to the Wabash by Secretary of War Abraham Eustis. They camped in and about the base for some six months before leaving to take part in the bloody Battle of Tippecanoe.¹²⁵

Newport Barracks would remain one of the army's chief permanent-type strongholds for many years to come [Until 1894 – editor].

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Chapter 5

The Point and the War of 1812

Although Kentucky would never again suffer widespread depredation at the hands of the Indians, the Point nevertheless continued to see service as a place of rendezvous for marching armies. This was during the War of 1812 and at a time when that conflict was not going too well for the Americans. The army was having difficulties in the East and doing little or no better in the West.

Just as military expeditions mounted at the Covington site had been a prime factor in causing the English to cede control of the Northwest Territory to the United States in the peace treaty ending the American Revolution, so too would expeditions from this same site – now of prime importance in maintaining that region as an integral part of America.

Before the outbreak of hostilities between the U.S. and England though, there had been a long period of time in which English was engaged in a European war with France. Britain had declared a blockade of Europe and threatened to attack any ship sailing to any European port. France, in turn, declared she would seize any vessel engaged in trade with Britain.

America was caught in the middle of the struggle between two European powers, but its resentment was directed chiefly against the British who proved to be far more arrogant and aggressive than the French in enforcing their blockade. In addition, the English also claimed the right to search the vessels of any nation for sailors whom she might claim as British subjects. England's ships often sailed right into American ports to enforce its policies and as a result, many American citizens were wrongly seized and forced to serve in the British navy. [The British considered any American immigrant from Britain still a British citizen, therefore subject to impressments in their navy - editor].

Neither had the English abandoned their hopes for an Indian buffer state which might serve as an effective barrier to their former colonies' western expansion. This was a principle cause of the war in the West and one which is often overlooked by those concentrating their attention on matters at sea and the East.

It seemed the infant American republic was being constantly harassed by the major European powers. There was a difference of opinion though, as just what power represented the biggest menace. Some said it was England and some Napoleonic France. Certainly, both had declared illegal blockades and both had seized American vessels of commerce. Napoleon had even gone so far as to seize American ships and sell them in French ports.

England though, had impressed double the number of American seamen that France had, and neither did France present any menace to the Northwestern frontier. Many westerners were convinced the British were arming the Indians and prodding them into open warfare against American outposts.

In November 1811, General William Henry Harrison, who was the military and civil governor of the Indiana Territory, encamped with a force of more than 900 militia and army troops near Tippecanoe Creek in northern Indiana. There he planned to meet in conference with the Indians. The natives however, were in no mood for talk and on the dark, cold, rain-swept morning of the 7th, launched an all-out attack under the leadership of the Prophet, a medicine-man brother of the famed Tecumseh.

The Americans, composed of the 4th U.S. Infantry, from Newport Barracks, the Indiana militia and 123 Kentuckians led by Major Samuel Wells, rallied to defeat the Indians in a battle that proved costly to both sides.¹

Probably the most important result of the battle at Tippecanoe though, was that it made the Indians more pro-British than ever and at the same time convinced the Americans of the correctness of their long-held belief that the British in Canada were behind most of the Indian troubles on the frontier.

The situation in the West was intolerable to the Westerner and proved to be the issue which tipped the scales in favor of war against the English. The conflict's outcome would decide once and for all whether the fledgling American nation would ever permanently expand into these great hinterlands

Some of the strongest advocates of war with England were Kentuckians. Cave Johnson's nephew, Congressman Richard Mentor Johnson was so incensed by the action at Tippecanoe he called for an immediate attack on Canada. Kentuckians were proud of their new nation and declared England must be punished for her insults to America.

On December 16, 1811 aroused members of the state legislature passed a set of resolutions condemning "the repeated, long continued and flagrant violation of our rights, as a free and independent nation, by Great Britain and France...which if yielded to, must end and in our entire submission to whatever they may think proper to impose."²

The legislators went on to say:

“The state of Kentucky, yielding to none in patriotism; in its deep rooted attachment to the sacred bond of the union; and in the heartfelt conviction that our posterity have a sacred claim upon us to transmit to them unimpaired, this God-like inheritance, cannot fail to...be insensible to those daring wrongs of a foreign power which lead to its immediate destruction.”³

The Kentuckians pointed out that England not only interfered with American shipping, but also persisted in “insulting our national honour by every means that lawless force and brutality can devise; inciting the savages to murder the inhabitants on our defenceless frontiers; [and] furnishing them with arms and ammunition...to attack our forces.”⁴

War with Britain was inevitable, the lawmakers said, and went on to promise the world that: “Kentucky, to the last mite of her strength and resources, will contribute then to maintain the contest and support the right of their country against such lawless violations; and that the citizens of Kentucky, are prepared to take the field when called upon.”⁵

In Washington City, President James Madison prevailed upon a reluctant William Hull to accept a brigadier general’s commission and sent him to take charge of some 2,000 Ohio militiamen then at Dayton, Ohio. Hull, who was territorial governor of Michigan, lost no time in ordered his new command northward and was ready on the march to Detroit when was declared.

About that same time, Newport’s James Taylor was acting as quartermaster general and paymaster of Newport Barracks, also took the field as a brigadier general. He assembled a small staff of associates, including Thomas Carneal and other Northern Kentuckians and hurriedly set out to join forces with General Hull.⁶

Taylor had been one of the West’s most influential men for some time and at one point, had pledged his own fortune and credit to supply the army. That was at a time when there was little assurance, other than faith, that the government would or could repay him.⁷

Taylor quickly proved to be an unusually capable officer and it was not long before he was appointed quartermaster general and paymaster general of Hull’s entire Northwestern Army.⁸

On June 18th, war was officially declared and within but a few weeks, the already-moving Hull arrived in Detroit. That was in early July and he immediately crossed into Canada to attack British installations.

By then, word of British victories elsewhere began arriving and Hull grew fainthearted. He abandoned the Canadian venture, and on August 8th withdrew to Detroit. A much smaller British force followed the Americans to the Michigan stronghold and on August 15th, called upon them to surrender. Hull refused, but quickly changed his mind when the British and their Indian allies moved to attack.

Taylor, Carneal and others vigorously opposed Hull’s plans to capitulate. At one point, Taylor refused his order to draw up the articles of Detroit’s surrender, saying he would have no part in such an unwarranted act.⁹ Taylor had never been an admirer of General Hull and had once actually been involved in plans to have him replaced in favor of General Duncan McArthur.¹⁰ Nevertheless, on August 16th, the surrender took place and with it, the entire Michigan Territory passed into British hands.

Sometime earlier, Thomas Carneal was dispatched to Frankfort, Kentucky to ask the Kentucky governor for reinforcements. He arrived August 5th and the very next day, a call was issued for Kentucky militiamen to assemble at Georgetown.¹¹ There they prepared for a march to the Point which would be the jumping-off place for Detroit.

Although time was crucial, the central Kentuckians decided there was much that needed to be done before starting on their relief mission. Questions of leadership had to be settled, provisions and equipment had to be arranged for, and after all that was taken care of, more time would be needed for parades and patriotic rallies. In fact, on the very day Detroit surrendered, the central Kentuckians were parading at Georgetown and listening to Henry Clay praise their patriotism.¹²

Finally, on August 19th, three days after the fateful surrender, the volunteers commenced their march to the Point and what they felt would be the glory of saving Detroit and plaudits for a subsequent conquest of Canada. Five days later, on August 24th, they arrived at the Covington site and went into a three-day bivouac.

Alias Darnell, one of the volunteers to meet there, describing the site as “Newport,” later wrote that the troops consisted of the 1st Regiment, commanded by Colonel John M. Scott; the 5th regiment, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel William Lewis; the 1st Rifle Regiment, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel John Allen; and the 17th U.S. Regiment of the regular army, commanded by Colonel Samuel Wells. The entire brigade was headed by Brigadier General John Payne.¹³

Wells had been promoted to colonel and given command of the 17th the previous March 12th.

It rained during most of the time the volunteers spent in marching here and the rain continued during much of their period of encampment. The men were fast losing their ardor for the campaign when they suddenly received news of the Detroit surrender. "This," wrote Darnell, "we could not believe until confirmed by handbills and good authority."¹⁴

Nevertheless. It was true! The British had taken not only the garrison but also a vast store of equipment, including 2400 stands of small arms and 25 cannons.

The immediate outcome of that capitulation, along with the fall of Fort Dearborn at the site of present-day Chicago and Fort Michilimackinac, was to deliver America's strongest western posts to the enemy and endanger the entire Northwest.

Hull himself, was taken prisoner but was later paroled and returned to face a court-martial for his handling of the campaign. General Taylor, who had violently opposed the surrender, was also taken prisoner and, like Hull, was later paroled. Taylor served as a witness for the prosecution during Hull's court-martial,¹⁵ after which he assumed his role of paying for and supplying the army as paymaster.

Hull was sentenced to be shot but the sentence was immediately remitted because of his Revolutionary War record.

In the meantime, the men encamped at the Point drew their arms and supplies and on August 27th crossed the Ohio on their northward march. Within a few days they learned a pro-British confederation of Indians led by Tecumseh had turned their attention to an attack on Fort Wayne. By then, Brigadier General Winchester's troops, including those from the Point, were at Piqua, from where a detachment commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Lewis was sent to the beleaguered Indians post's relief.

Tecumseh, understandably, saw certain British aims compatible with those of his own, for he desired to see all the northern lands secure for the natives. Tecumseh urged his fellow Indians to take pride in their heritage and avoid the ways of the white man. The white man's whiskey must be shunned and there would be no more selling of Indian lands without the consent of *all* Indians. Native Americans, he declared, must return to their old ways of life.

After Fort Wayne was made secure, General William Henry Harrison ordered Winchester and his troops to move closer to Detroit. In a short time, Harrison was selected over Winchester as the Northwestern force's overall commander. Winchester would continue on in a subordinate position and retain command of the army's left wing which was composed largely of the Kentucky volunteers.

It was early January and the ground was covered by two feet of snow. Such severe winter weather found the men in a deplorable condition. Many were clad only in light-weight summer garments, and were fated to experience a repetition of the hardships of Valley Forge. Deaths from exposure and disease became commonplace.

Soon a warm rain fell and turned the snow into a quagmire of slush and ice-glazed mud. Nevertheless, the men struggled on to the Rapids of the Maumee River. They arrived there on January 10th and stopped to await General Harrison's arrival.

Thirty-eight miles to the north, on the American side of an 18-mile-wide arm of Lake Erie and opposite Fort Malden, Canada, was the village of Frenchtown, now Monroe, Michigan. On January 14th messengers from Frenchtown alerted General Winchester to Indian plans to massacre the inhabitants of that town. Winchester acted promptly and dispatched 550 men, commanded by Lt. Colonel William Lewis, to the scene. Lt. Colonel John Allen then followed with 110 additional troops.

Lewis and Allen engaged the British and Indian forces on January 18th and drove them back across the River Raisin which flows into Lake Erie at Monroe. The Kentuckians fortified themselves within the walls of the liberated palisades and summoned aid from General Winchester.¹⁶

Winchester responded by bringing 250 regulars to Frenchtown but instead of assigning the men to quarters inside the fortification, he encamped them in an open and exposed position to the palisade's outside right. Neither did Winchester post guards on any of the roads by which the enemy might launch a counter attack. This oversight was especially serious in that Fort Malden was only 18 miles away and a march across the frozen waters could be made by its British garrison in a few hours.

On the morning of January 22nd, some 2,000 British and Indians commanded by General Henry Proctor struck the Americans. The Kentuckians, who were inside the stockade, managed to inflict a heavy loss on the enemy. The regulars however, encamped outside the walls, found it impossible to withstand the furious assault, which included fire from 6 British cannons. They fled in panic.

The Indians pursued the fleeing troops and slaughtered them without mercy. Two companies of Kentuckians left the stockade in a futile attempt to rescue the regulars but they too became victims of the Indians' violent onslaught. At the end of the conflict, some 400 Americans died and 547, including General Winchester, were taken prisoner. Only 33 managed to escape and return to the Rapids of the Maumee.¹⁷

The Kentuckians remaining inside the stockade continued to carry on the battle and repulsed repeated British attacks. On one occasion, Proctor moved one of the cannons to within 200 yards of the palisades, knowing that at such close range the cannon would be extremely effective against the stockade walls. Kentucky sharpshooters shot the horse which was slated to carry the necessary ammunition so the gun remained silent in its exposed position.

Finally, Proctor induced the captured General Winchester to call upon the remainder of the garrison to surrender. Although the Kentuckians were down to one keg of cartridges, they refused to accept any surrender terms which did not include provision for full protection from the Indians.

After lengthy discussions, the terms including the demanded protection, were agreed upon and the garrison's force laid down their arms.

Proctor marched the uninjured prisoners away to the safety of a British prison compound but left the sick and wounded behind – without any protection whatsoever. The next morning, some 200 Indian warriors re-entered Frenchtown and massacred every one of the defenseless captives. Some were tomahawked, some simply bludgeoned to death, and some were dragged to the stake and burned.

The entire left wing of Harrison's army had been destroyed. Had Proctor followed up the massacre with an all-out attack on Harrison's remaining force, he might have cleared the entire Northwest of American occupancy.

It was later reported that Proctor's victorious forces included two companies of runaway slaves from Kentucky and other slave-holding states.¹⁸

Generals Hull and Winchester have been treated far less kindly by their contemporaries and history than has General Harrison, yet up to this point of the war, Harrison had accomplished much less with much more. He was still south of the Maumee and the situation was critical.

Harrison was now in winter bivouac with about a thousand troops at Fort Meigs on the Maumee River and awaiting reinforcements sent from Kentucky. In late April 1813, Proctor and the renowned Indian chief Tecumseh, moved some 600 British regulars, 800 Canadian militia and 1,800 Indians to the fort's vicinity and began laying siege to it. On May 1st, they began a four-day cannonade in a futile attempt to bring about the fort's surrender.¹⁹

At the end of the artillery bombardment, early May 5th, Harrison's reinforcements – about 1200 largely untrained and undisciplined central Kentucky militia, descended the river. Harrison had previously sent the militia officers a plan which, if executed properly, would allow the reinforcements to reach and enter the besieged fort with a relative degree of ease.

The plan called for part of the militiamen to land on the river's south bank and advance on foot to the fort while the remainder would land on the north bank, take the British artillery in a surprise attack and immediately retreat across the river to the safety of the fort.

The undisciplined central Kentuckians though seemed to operate in total confusion. Eventually Harrison had to send out two sorties of his own troops to enable one of the contingents to reach the fort.²⁰

One of those sorties was commanded by Colonel John Miller and consisted of about 350 better trained regulars and militiamen and included a number of Northern Kentuckians led by Captain Uriel Sebree, later to be a member of Covington's first board of Trustees. They captured a number of British artillery batteries and while Miller was busily engaged in spiking the field pieces, chose to do battle with the combined British, Canadian, and Indian force four times their number in size.²¹

Despite the disparity in numbers, the Northern Kentuckians drove the enemy from the field and according to one observer: "It was impossible that troops could have behaved better than they did upon their sortie."²²

Sebree and his company later received a commendation in Harrison's official report of the day's activities.²³

The contingent of 796 men who had landed on the other side of the river were trapped though, when they ignored Harrison's plan of battle and chose to follow 19-year-old Captain Leslie Combs in a rash attack on the main British camp. Nearly 650 of them were either killed or taken prisoner, after which there occurred a repetition of the slaughter that had taken place at Frenchtown.²⁴

Hull's surrender at Detroit, when linked with other disastrous land campaigns, clearly demonstrated America's need to gain control of Lake Erie. This need was wisely recognized by American authorities and the task of building a fleet to gain that control was assigned to Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry.

Perry set about his job in a vigorous fashion and by August 1813, the new fleet which counted many Kentuckians among its crew members, was ready for battle. Perry sailed to Put-in-Bay, Ohio, near the line still held by General Harrison and on September 10th, opened what proved to be an outstanding American victory.

The British suffered a crushing defeat in which they lost every vessel of their squadron. This was the first time in British maritime history that an entire squadron of ships was lost. American ascendancy on the lakes was now complete and Canada was laid open to invasion.

One outstanding hero of Perry's momentous victory was a Northern Kentuckian, Captain John Norris of nearby Petersburg. Although Norris was in the army, he was one of 20 soldiers who volunteered to serve on Great Lakes naval duty and was assigned to the ship *Caledonia*.²⁵

Captain Norris fired the last shot of the Lake Erie battle and it was that shot which prompted the British ship *Hunter* to strike her colors. Norris and 19 others boarded and took charge of the stricken ship. They succeeded in getting the vessel to shore and later received \$300 dollars as prize money.²⁶

The influence of Perry's victory was tremendous. Not only did it raise America's naval prestige throughout the world, it also had a decisive effect on the war's military operations. It gave the American complete control of Lake Erie, at the same time forced the British to abandon Detroit, dismantle Fort Malden and retreat into Canada to seek a stronger position.

During that same summer, General Harrison again felt it necessary to call upon Kentucky for help and Governor Isaac Shelby responded by asking for 2,000 Kentuckians to volunteer their services. More than twice that number answered his call. They came from throughout the Commonwealth to meet at the Covington site and here Governor Shelby and the 4,000 army bivouacked before marching northward to join forces with General Harrison.

At that time, the land on the Licking's west bank had no formal name. It was variously referred to as "The Point," "Mouth of the Licking," "Kennedy's Ferry," and in several journals of the time as "West Newport," or simply "Newport," being considered by many a western extension of that time, but as yet unabsorbed.

This has led to a certain amount of confusion for some later-day writers in regard to which side of the Licking certain events occurred. A clarification of how this could occur is provided by Governor Shelby's orders calling for volunteers to "assemble at Newport." That Governor Shelby had the site of modern-day Covington in mind may be seen in an excerpt from the memoirs of Micah Taul, one of the soldiers of that 1813 command. Taul wrote:

"We were encamped at Newport, opposite Cincinnati a few days. Our encampment was on the ground where Covington now stands. It was then a farm and owned and occupied by a man by the name of Kennedy."²⁷

Among those in the encampment were prominent figures in Kentucky history such as Robert B. McAfee; William Whitley; future governors John Adair, Joseph Desha, and John J. Crittenden; and future vice-president and then congressman and colonel Richard Mentor Johnson. Johnson had left his congressional seat to return home and raise a body of troops whom he led into battle. He did this on two separate occasions during the war.

Shelby's contingent was a colorful group accompanied by a most unusual mascot – a pig. The animal joined the ranks at Harrodsburg and refused to leave the troops. When the men were ferried across the Ohio, this persistent animal plunged into the water and swam after the boats.

The pig stayed with the men all through their journey. When the soldiers returned to Kentucky, they presented the mascot to their commander as a gift. Governor Shelby promptly retired the beloved porker to a life of ease.

The massacre at Frenchtown shocked the entire nation and Shelby's troops had rallied to the cry "Remember the Raisin!" The men were filled with enthusiasm and eagerly sought an opportunity to avenge the murder of the American prisoners of war.

The march was a long one and when the Kentuckians reach Urbana, they stopped for a brief rest. The men then realized they were in the vicinity of Simon Kenton's home. Kenton's reputation was of heroic proportions and Shelby and his men, impressed by the nearness of his home, they could not pass up the opportunity to call upon the renowned frontiersman.²⁸

The Kentuckians stood in awe of the mighty Kenton and during the brief visit, virtually begged him to join them on their campaign. Kenton's wife had other ideas and refused to agree to her husband going off to battle again. She declared he had done his share of fighting and had experienced enough hair-raising adventures for a dozen men.²⁹

Kenton felt as able as ever and was rather piqued by all the respect and consideration his age and past experiences were garnering for him. Nevertheless, he gave in to his wife's wishes and watched the Kentuckians move on without him.³⁰ A day later, the old Indian fighter reconsidered his decision. He saddled his horse, grabbed his rifle and rode off after the battle-bound troops.³¹

Ironically, it was about that time a group of troops stationed in the vicinity of Kenton's home decided to attack and annihilate a number of friendly Indians living nearby. Kenton attempted to dissuade the soldiers but they would not listen. The determined Kenton, seeing his words were useless, took his rifle and said he would join the raiders but added he would shoot down the first man to fire a shot at the defenseless natives. The men immediately called off their planned attack.³²

GENERAL HARRISON, at the head of the five brigades of Kentucky volunteers and part of the army's 27th infantry, was vigorously pursuing the British and on October 4th, caught up with them at the Thames River, 80 miles from Detroit. The English were now forced to fight and, with their Indian allies, drew up a line across a narrow strip of land between a swamp and the river.

The battle began the next day when Proctor poured a volley of fire on an American advance. Kentucky's Colonel Richard M. Johnson's mounted rifles swept through the British line and completely routed it. Proctor himself, fled with a few followers and was never again seen on the field. The Indians however, under the leadership of Tecumseh, made a more valiant stand. They had taken a position in a marshy spot and were not easily routed. Johnson dismounted his men for the battle and though he managed to break through to the Indians' rear, they still would not yield but hurled themselves on the infantry in a furious assault. They were finally checked by Shelby and his men. It was during this fight, the Indians suffered an irreplaceable loss when Tecumseh was killed.

One of the regimental commanders at the Thames was Richard Montgomery Gano. He had previously served as a major in the First Battalion of Lieutenant Colonel John M. Scott's First Regiment and succeeded to the rank of regimental colonel when poor health forced Scott's retirement.³³

Gano compiled such an outstanding record during the war that he was given the rank of brigadier general at the end of the hostilities.³⁴ Along with his brother, General John Stites Gano and Thomas David Carneal, he became one of the founders of the "Town of Covington."

THE FOUNDING OF COVINGTON was to be one of General Richard M. Gano's last public endeavors for barely seven months after the first sale of town lots, he died at age 41, October 22, 1815.

The battle of the Thames resulted in the complete breaking of English power in the West. Michigan was recovered, the Indians were crushed, a large portion of Canadian territory was brought under American control and virtually all of what was known as Upper Canada was now menaced from the south and west. General James Taylor was in Washington City when the news of the Thames victory reached the capital. A large number of prisoners of war had been taken and Taylor promptly used his considerable influence to have them interned in Kentucky. Accordingly, a number of British officers were imprisoned at the Frankfort penitentiary while a large contingent of enlisted men were taken to Newport Barracks.³⁵

The confinement of the officers at the Frankfort penitentiary was largely the response to British actions in declaring a number of their American prisoners were in reality British subjects and sending them to England to stand trial for treason.

The War of 1812 was proving especially significant for Kentuckians and before it was over, they would suffer approximately 64% of all American battle deaths in that conflict. Some 1,200 of the total 1,876 dead were from the Bluegrass State.³⁶

Prior to the victory at the Thames, a detachment of Shelby's men commanded by Colonel Johnson made a visit to the Raisin battle site for the express purpose of burying their slaughtered fellow Kentuckians and countrymen who continued to lay where they had fallen.

The local inhabitants had not buried the slain because of fear of reprisals from the Indians. The Indians even opened the graves of those few who had been given burial and scattered the bodies about a wide area. Swine gorged themselves so that in time nothing remained but bones.

In the years that followed, the remains of those who had died at the Raisin were moved to different burial grounds on at least four occasions. The sites included cemeteries in Detroit and Monroe. The last time the remains were exhumed, they were placed in boxes with the intention of shipping them to Frankfort, Kentucky for burial.

In 1848, Monroe citizens accidentally uncovered remains of a dozen or so other veterans of the Raisin. The city officials promptly called a special meeting during which they declared: "We tender to Kentucky...our respect for their patriotic exertion in the cause of our country and our sincere sympathy for what she suffered."³⁷ ³⁸The remains of the dead veterans were placed in charge of Colonel Edward Brooks to return to Kentucky for reburial.

A few days after the Monroe meeting, Covington officials learned the remains would soon reach Covington and be temporarily committed to their care. Accordingly, Mayor Bushrod Foley and the president of the city council would officially receive the remains from Colonel Brooks and "make suitable arrangements for their disposal."³⁹

The remains arrived here on September 27th, at which time it was noted: “The citizens of the city of Covington, acting in behalf of their fellow citizens of the State at large, received...the gallant dead with all proper respect.”⁴⁰

A hearse drawn by four black horses was secured to carry the remains to what was scheduled to be a temporary burial site at Linden Grove Cemetery. On the day of the burial, businesses throughout the city closed as the cortege, described as being “the largest and most imposing ever witnessed” in Covington to that date, wound its way through the city’s streets.⁴¹ The funeral procession, accompanied by an army band playing baleful dirges, included city officials, veterans of the War of 1812, Covington and Cincinnati firemen and scores of private citizens who solemnly and respectfully escorted the remains to a Linden Grove vault “where they will remain until provision is made for their final interment.”⁴²

It is at this point that a mystery begins. The remains had been returned to Kentucky with the understanding they would eventually be re-buried at the state capital. It might seem likely such was the case but, as Clift points out in “Remember the Raisin,” no *official* record has been located that indicates such is a fact.⁴³ Despite claims made by Richard Collins and a few other historians that the Frankfort reburial took place, there is strong evidence the remains reached only as far as Covington and seemed to be forgotten.⁴⁴

This is given support by the fact that two years after their arrival here, Kenton County Senator John V. Leathers, on November 14, 1850, introduced a resolution calling for an investigation of the possibility of removing the remains from their “temporary” resting place in the vault at Linden Grove. They were to be taken to Frankfort and given a burial befitting them as honored war dead of the Bluegrass State. It was almost four months before Governor John L. Helm signed a bill making that possible.

It is here the story ends, for no further trace of them has been found. Were they removed to Frankfort? T would seem likely such was the case, but no *official* record can be located to indicate such is a fact. Or do they lie at rest in some lonely and forgotten spot in Covington?⁴⁵

The memory of those who died during the Battle of the River Raisin has been kept alive in the pages of Kentucky and American history. In addition, an impressive Massacre Victims Monument was erected in their memory at the massacre site on what is now Monroe’s East Elm Avenue, officially unveiled September 1, 1904.⁴⁶

AT THE TIME OF HARRISON’S VICTORY at the Thames, events were taking place in the war’s eastern theatre of operations that would lead to the death of Brigadier General **Leonard Wales Covington**. He was the same Leonard Covington who earlier trained on this historic site, so at this point it is entirely appropriate to take a closer look at the man for whom Kentucky’s northernmost city is named.

It is said by the general’s descendants that their family name evolved from the Gaelic translation of “Koblin,” a name brought to the shores of Ireland by Norse invaders in 831 AD. The Irish translation, “Covan,” changed to “Cova” with subsequent migration to Scotland and still later to “Cov” when the general’s ancestors moved to England.⁴⁷

The Cov clan settled about 65 miles north of London where, eventually, a community called Covington began to develop. That, according to one genealogist, was after the English version of the name witnessed the addition of “ing,” meaning people, and “ton,” meaning town.⁴⁸

General Covington’s American heritage began in 1646 when Nehemiah Covington left England for the British colony of Maryland. The Covingtons prospered and soon became one of Maryland’s leading families. It was in that colony, at Aquasco, Prince George County, that the future general was born October 30, 1768.⁴⁹

Young Leonard received a liberal education and on March 14, 1792, entered the army as a cornet of cavalry. General Washington commissioned him a lieutenant of dragoons the following year. Lieutenant Covington began a period of service under General Anthony Wayne’s command and after distinguishing himself at Fort Recovery and the Battle of Miami, was commended by General Wayne and promoted to captain.⁵⁰

On September 12, 1795, Covington resigned from the military and returned to Maryland to run a farm. He was repeatedly elected to the Maryland Legislature and from 1805 to 180 served in the Ninth U.S. Congress.

Eventually Covington decided to return to the army and on January 9, 1809, President Jefferson appointed him lieutenant colonel of light dragoons. Much to Covington’s delight, he was assigned to Newport Barracks.⁵¹ Promotions came rapidly. On February 15th he was raised to the rank of full colonel and the following year given command of Fort Adams on the Mississippi River. Shortly afterward, he proceeded to take possession of Baton Rouge and a part of West Florida.

During the War of 1812, Covington was ordered to the northern frontier and on August 1, 1813, President James Madison appointed him to the rank of brigadier general.

Meanwhile, in March 1813, Major General James Wilkinson was moved to Sackett's Harbor, New York. This man, whose name has long been tarnished by an unsavory reputation for conspiracy, had been commander at New Orleans before being transferred by Secretary of War, John Armstrong.

Armstrong proposed an attack on either of the Canadian cities of Kingston or Montreal. Wilkinson selected Montreal as his target, even though it was stronger and better defended than Kingston. He was to meet a column of troops under command of Major General Wade Hampton at Plattsburg, and march together on the city. There was a great deal of friction between these two commanders, and because of their reluctance to work together, the military operation became something less than a total success.⁵²

Wilkinson's army set sail down the St. Lawrence River in the middle of October. It consisted of four infantry brigades under Generals Boyd, Brown, Swarthout and Covington; plus a number of reserves and artillery troops. They sailed for two weeks under the very noses of the British and Canadians who were secure in their fortified towns and had to contend with small arms and cannon fire from those positions as well as having to run dangerous rapids. Chances for the campaign's success looked dimmer with each passing day.

Finally the faint-hearted Wilkinson called a top level meeting with his commanders. All favored continuing the operation – probably because there was no turning back. They were being closely followed by some 800 British regulars aboard vessels of the Royal Navy. General Covington put it this way: "We pressed from this place under great danger...but...we know of no other alternative."

Hampton had previously made his move from Plattsburg into Canada but had met with reverses and was forced to retreat back into New York.⁵³

On the afternoon of November 11th, the American force approached Chrystler's Field on the Canadian side of the St. Lawrence. It was decided to go ashore and attack the British troops following them.

The day of the battle was cold and bitter. Flurries of snow and sleet filled the air and the ground was a quagmire of half-frozen mud and slush. American and British troops faced one another across this sea of muck and for two hours wages a hotly contested battle. General Swarthout commanded the American right and General Leonard Covington the left.

American troops made one charge after another over the half-frozen field only to be repulsed on each occasion. Covington sat astride a snow-white charger and led his men in what had been described as a gallant attack.

While leading his troops in such a spectacular fashion, Covington presented an ideal target. Officers have always been favorite targets during battle, and the British sighted in on the general. He suffered a mortal wound.⁵⁴

The Americans re-boarded their ships after Covington was wounded and, though under constant harassment from the front and rear, made their way to French Mills, just outside the New York border. There, on November 14th, the general succumbed to his wounds and was buried. The troops went into winter quarters.

Seven years later, on August 13, 1820, General Covington's remains were removed to Sackett's Harbor, Jefferson County, New York, where they were re-interred. His final resting place has since been re-named Mount Covington in his honor.

In contrast to the northeast campaign, the War of 1812 was extremely popular with people on the western frontier. Shortly before adopting the name of one of the war's heroes for their new town, local settlers had occasion to celebrate another stunning American victory – and they celebrated with gusto! In October 1814 belated news arrived concerning the previous month's capture of the British fleet on Lake Champlain. The British retreated from their attack on Fort Moreau.

Riverboats, led by the *Triton* fired salvo after salvo. The *Triton* itself, had five guns and fired 18 broadsides from each. There was a steady thunder of musket and artillery fire from Newport Barracks, while the river seemed afire from the many brilliantly illuminated boats and barges. Citizens held impromptu parades over rutted lanes and equally impromptu-formed bands played throughout most of the night.⁵⁵

At such times, wives of soldiers become acutely aware of the hazards face by loved ones on far-off battlefields. One such local woman was Clara Pike, whose husband had been immortalized in American history as the discoverer and explorer of Pike's Peak. Zebulon Montgomery Pike migrated to this part of the country where he met and married Clara, daughter of Captain John Brown, a soldier of the American Revolution.⁵⁶

Captain Brown first came to neighboring Boone County from Somerset County, New Jersey shortly after the Revolution. He established his home at Sugar Grove, a small Ohio River community about 15 miles below Covington. Zebulon Pike became a frequent visitor to the Brown farm during his journeys up and down the Ohio and soon he and Clara made plans for marriage.

Clara and Zebulon were cousins, so the elder Brown refused them permission to wed. Pike was a lieutenant at the time and stationed at Fort Washington. In 1801, the two simply eloped and made their home in Cincinnati.⁵⁷

During the War of 1812, Pike again entered his country's service and rose to brigadier general. In time, he was given the order to attack York, Canada – now known as Toronto. The attack began April 27, 1813, but on the day before the battle, Pike's thoughts turned back to the Upper Bluegrass and his wife as he wrote her the following letter:

“My dear Clara, we are now standing on and off the harbor of York which we shall attack at daybreak in the morning! I shall dedicate these last moments to you, my love, and tomorrow throw all other ideas by my country to the wind. As yet, I know not if General Dearborn lands; he had acted honorable so far, and I feel great gratitude to the old gentleman: My sword and pen shall both be exercised to do his honor. I have no new injunctions, no new charges to give you nor ideas to communicate; yet we love to commune with those we love, more especially when we conceive it may be the last time in this world. Should I fail, defend my memory and only believe, had I lived I would have aspired to deeds worthy of your husband. Remember me with a father's love, with a father's care, to our daughter; and believe me, with the warmest sentiments of love and friendship.

Yours,
Montgomery”⁵⁸

Pike was fatally injured when an enemy magazine exploded. Before dying however, he heard cheers from his victorious troops as the British flag was lowered. The enemy flag was used to pillow the dying general's head. Shortly afterward, the wounded general was evacuated to Sackett's Harbor, but died while en route.⁵⁹

When Captain Brown died in 1824, Clara inherited her father's estate and after a while moved there. Gradually her fortune and estate dwindled. On March 4, 1845, fire destroyed a new house she had recently built and still owed \$700 on it. Clara herself was injured by the blaze which not only destroyed an entire trunk full of letters written by General Pike, but also his sword, uniform and the captured British flag which had been used as his deathbed pillow.⁶⁰

Clara died in 1847 and was buried on the estate in the family burial grounds overlooking the Ohio.⁶¹ The stone marker over her grave is inscribed: “Sacred to the memory of Clara H. Pike, widow of the late General Pike> She died at her residence in Sugar Grove, Boone County, Kentucky, in the 64th year of her age. She was willing to die and believed in her Savior. Therefore her home is now on High. In yon bright world of beauty may the loved ones all appear.”⁶²

¹ Richard G. Stone, Jr., “A Brittle Sword,” University Press of Kentucky, Lexington (1977).

² *The Weekly Register*, Volume 1; Number 19, 11 January 1812, published by H. Niles, Baltimore.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.* Indeed, as Stuart Sanders, Exec. Director of KHS, stated, Kentuckians contributed more men for the 1812 conflict than any other state.[editor]

⁶ *The Old Northwest*, Volume 2, Number 2; June 1976. Also: Newport Barracks papers at Cincinnati Historical Society.

⁷ Johnson, E. Polk, Volume 2, *op. cit.*

⁸ Jones, Mary K., *op. cit.*

⁹ *Appleton's Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, Volume 6, D. Appleton and Company, New York (1894).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ G. Glen Clift. “Remember the Raisin!” Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort (1961).

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Elias Darnell, “A Journal of the Kentucky Volunteers and regulars, 1812-13,” Lippincott, Granbo and Company, Philadelphia (1854).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Biographical Encyclopedia of Kentucky*, *op. cit.*

¹⁶ B. J. Griswald, “The History of Fort Wayne, Robert G. Law Company, Chicago (1917).

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- 17 *Ibid.*
- 18 Darnell, Elias, *op. cit.*
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- 21 James Wallace Hammack, Jr., "Kentucky and The Second American Revolution," University Press of Kentucky, Lexington (1976).
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- 23 Hammack, James Wallace, Jr., *op. cit.*
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- 29 *Ibid.*
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- 32 Howe, Henry, volume 1, *op. cit.*
- 33 Clift, G. Glenn, "Remember the Raisin!" *op. cit.*
- 34 *Ibid.*
- 35 *The Old Northwest, op. cit.* Also: Newport Barracks Papers at Cincinnati Historical Society; See: Dr. Joseph L. Donnelly, MD, "Newport Barracks: Kentucky's Forgotten Military Installation," Kenton County Historical Society (1999), Appendix 1, page 78 lists names of all prisoners.
- 36 Quisenberry, Anderson Chenault, *op. cit.*
- 37 *Covington Journal*, 29 September 1848.
- 38 *Ibid.*
- 39 *Ibid.*
- 40 *Ibid.*
- 41 *Ibid.*
- 42 *Ibid.*
- 43 Clift, G. Glen, "Remember the Raisin," *op. cit.*
- 44 Collins states in volume I of his "History of Kentucky" that Colonel Brooks reached Frankfort on September 20, 1848 with the remains of several Raisin veterans who had been uncovered during a street construction in Monroe.
- 45 Clift, G. Glenn, "Remember the Raisin," *op. cit.*
- 46 *Cincinnati Enquirer*, 2 September 1904.
- 47 Elbert E. Covington, "Covington and Kin," McDowell Publications, Owensboro, KY (1980).
- 48 *Ibid.*
- 49 *Ibid.*
- 50 Lawrence F. Kennedy, "Biographical Directory of the American Congress – 1774-1971," US Printing Office, Washington DC (1971).
- 51 Newport Barracks Papers at Cincinnati Historical Society.
- 52 Harry L. Cole, "The War of 1812," University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London (1965).
- 53 *Ibid.*
- 54 Francis F. Beirne, "The War of 1812," E.P. Dutton & Co., New York (1949).
- 55 William E. and Ophia D. Smith, "A Buckeye Titan," Historical & Philosophical Society of Cincinnati (1953).
- 56 Marjorie Byrnside Burress, "It Happened 'Round North Bend," Cincinnati (1969).
- 57 W. Eugene Hollon, "The Last Pathfinder," University of Oklahoma Press, Norman (1949).
- 58 *Ibid.*
- 59 Shortly after Pike's death, *Niles Register*, a magazine published in Philadelphia, gave an account of his death and the battle of York.
- 60 Donald Jackson, "The Journals of Zebulon Montgomery Pike," Vol. 2, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman (1966).
- 61 Hollon, W. Eugene, *op. cit.*

⁶² *Kentucky Times-Star*, Covington, 17 December 1943.

Chapter 6 A City is Born

There had been a small community developing about the Kennedy farm for several years and, as noted above, it has been estimated by 1794 some 70 settlers were living in the farm's vicinity within what is now Covington's inner city.¹

By May 1806, the number of residents on the west side of the Licking was such that Kennedy was prompted to begin a ferryboat service between Covington and Newport.² Kennedy's permit for his new ferry service directed him to keep the boat in good state of repair and allowed him one attendant. It also regulated the fees he could charge and set the rates at six and ¼ cents for foot passengers; 12 ½ cents for a man and horse; 6 ½ cents for small stock and 50 cents for a wagon and team.³

Four years later in 1810, Kennedy, along with Jacob Fowler and Daniel Mayo, secured permission to build a bridge across the Licking at an approved cost of \$360. The proposed bridge did not materialize however, for it was decided its actual cost would be far in excess of that sum approved.⁴

Kennedy continued to live in his large stone house until 1814, when he sold it and his farm to a group of developers. The initial sales agreement was for 150 acres and although the terms of the sale were agreed to in 1814, it was not until March 2, 1815 that the land was formally deeded over to new owners.⁵

The purchase price of \$50,000 though did not include Kennedy's ferry operations, his stone house, nor a 50-acre stretch of riverfront land in their immediate vicinity. Still, the buyers wanted this remaining property also, so on that same date of March 2nd, they signed a separate agreement to purchase it for an additional \$34,000.⁶

The men who headed the company which bought Kennedy's land, General John Stites Gano, General Richard Montgomery Gano and Thomas Carneal, were active developers of land and town sites throughout southern Ohio, southern Indiana and northern Kentucky during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Their plan for Kennedy's estate was to divide it into town lots which would be sold at public auction.

These individuals, as well as many of the others who subsequently planned and laid out additional large sections of the new town at the Licking, were not of the same type as the Simon Kentons, Christopher Gists, Leonard Covingtons, or even the Thomas Kennedys or John Grants. They were not drawn to the West by prospects of adventure, nor were they merely seeking land for themselves and their families. These men were capitalists in every sense of the word. Their motivation was profit and while others wanted land to till, they wanted land to develop into towns. The legacy left by them and others like them, is a developed and thriving nation.

The original survey of the land contained in the Muse warrant, and which had been made for Colonel Stephen Trigg, embraced all that land along the Ohio waterfront from the Licking to the foot of present-day Philadelphia Street and south to a point just beyond today's Eighth Street. The part the developers laid out for the original construction sites though, extended only to the northern edge of Sixth Street and to the eastern side of Washington.

Choosing a fitting name for the new community was not a difficult task. General Covington had once trained his troops on these now-historic grounds and his memory was still very much alive in the hearts of those who knew him. What had long been called Kennedy's Farm; Kennedy's Ferry; or The Point, would now be formally known as Covington.

Of all the Kentucky settlements on the Ohio River that have thrived, Covington is among the very few which can trace its history back beyond 1800.⁷ The Muse grant, Trigg's survey and the fact the site has been continuously inhabited since the day the Thomas Kennedy family arrived, all serve to put it in that class, along with Louisville, Newport and Maysville.

Although 1815 is the year generally accepted as the time of Covington's formal beginning, there are many who contend the town's beginnings should be more properly dated from that St. Valentine's Day of 1780 when Colonel Muse obtained his land warrant, while others stand firm in maintaining February 8, 1815 as the community's true founding date.

The latter date is when the Kentucky Legislature *officially* established Covington when it passed a bill entitled: *An act establishing the Town of Covington at the mouth of the Licking.*⁸

The introduction to the 1815 bill "establishing the Town of Covington" reads:

Whereas, it is represented to the present General Assembly that it would be advantageous to the State, and more particularly, to the inhabitants of the counties of Boone, Campbell and Pendleton, if a town were established on the land lately purchased of Thomas Kennedy by Richard M. Gano, Thomas D. Carneal and John S. Gano, situated at the

mouth of the Licking River on the lower side thereof; Therefore...(title)...is hereby vested in Uriel Sebree, Alfred Sanford, Joseph Kennedy, William Hubble and John C. Buckner, gentlemen trustees, for the purpose of a Town and out lots, and be established as such by the name of 'Covington'..."⁹

The Pennsylvania Germans had been moving into the area for some time and now one of them, John G. Buckner, would be serving as one of the new town's first trustees.¹⁰ Another trustee, Uriel Sebree, as was mentioned, had been commended for his performance in the defense of Fort Meigs during the War of 1812. Prior to that, the Virginia-born Sebree led a company of troops at the Battle of the Raisin where he was taken prisoner by General Proctor's forces.¹¹

Sebree had long been interested in political as well as military affairs. He had represented Boone County in the Kentucky House of representatives from 1806-1807 and in the state senate from 1813-1817.¹² Like so many of his contemporaries though, he was caught up in the great westward movement and in 1821, took up residence in Missouri where he became a county judge.¹³

Prior to receiving the judgeship, Sebree took part in which became known as the Yellowstone Expedition. The expedition was part of the federal government's effort to strengthen its control of the far-western frontier and had the mission of establishing military posts at the mouth of the Yellowstone River and at a Mandan village on the Missouri.¹⁴

The project, which had Vice President Richard Mentor Johnson as one of its strongest backers, was controversial almost from its very inception. Some saw it as essential to the nation's continued safety while others viewed it as being little more than a gigantic waste of money.¹⁵

Sebree, who was related to the vice president, was given command of the *Calhoun*, a steamboat built especially for the expedition by Johnson and his brother James. The vessel became part of a flotilla of four steamboats and a number of smaller craft such as barges and keelboats.¹⁶

In the spring of 1819, the flotilla left its Louisville assembly point and began its long westward journey, the effectiveness of which is still debated among American historians.¹⁷

Sebree and the other early Covington trustees were to act for the owners of the land on which the new town was platted and would count among their many responsibilities that of making title to the lots which were to be sold at public auction "or so many of the lots as the proprietors might approve."

The town plat was recorded in the Campbell County Clerk's office on August 31, 1815. Kenton County, it will be recalled, would not be formed from Campbell's western portion until 1840.

Among the provisions made for the town was one declaring "such parts of the town as lie between the edge of the lots and the Ohio River shall remain for the use and benefit of the town as a common." This provision was cited as late as 1968 by a group of citizens protesting the location of a commercial floating restaurant at that site.

In the meantime, Captain Robert Perry, a descendant of Irish immigrants and a veteran of the War of 1812, became the new occupant of Kennedy's great stone house. He had been persuaded by his friends, the Ganos and Carneal, to rent and operate the farm and ferries across the Ohio and Licking Rivers. Captain Perry stayed at the Point until the latter part of 1818 when he moved to a farm on Turketfoot Road.¹⁸

In time, General John Stites Gano made his home at another palatial estate erected at the Point. Gano, who played a significant role in the military history of the Northwest Territory, was born July 14, 1766 in New York City, the son of a Baptist minister. He left New York for the West in 1788 and landed at the junction of the Ohio and Little Miami on November 18th with a party of 17 men, 5 women and a boy.

General Gano's military background began in 1787 when he was appointed ensign of a company in New York City. He became a major in the 1st Regiment of Ohio's Hamilton County Militia in 1792 and a lieutenant colonel in 1797. His rank of major general was acquired in 1804 when Ohio's governor Edward Tiffin appointed him to that position in the 1st Division of the Ohio Militia.

Gano served as an engineer in General St. Clair's ill-fated campaign and during the War of 1812, he commanded the northern frontier's Ninth Military District as General-in-Chief during periods of General William Henry Harrison's absence. He moved to his Covington estate in 1818 and made it his home until his death on January 1, 1822.

After General Gano's death, his estate, amply described in the following newspaper advertisement, was put up for sale:

For Sale or Exchange

Mrs. Mary Gano will exchange for other property or sell low for cash the property, late residence of Genl. Gano, on Licking near its junction, in full view of the River Ohio, in the Town of Covington, opposite Cincinnati: the dwelling is brick, two stories high, large and commodious, containing nine rooms and two large halls, good cellars, attached to nine and a half acres of land in fine order, large brick stable, granary, carriage house, ice house, brick office, two brick negro houses, brick smoke house, a good spring of water, a collection of choice fruit trees and shrubbery. The situation is high, healthy and affords a good prospect: it would suit to receive in part, on exchange or purchase, a smaller house and less ground, Mrs. Gano's family now being small. The title is indisputable. Persons wishing to purchase or exchange may view the property and will please to apply at Cincinnati to

Danl. Gano

*April 22, 1824.*¹⁹

Kennedy himself, built and moved into what was later known as the William M. Arthur home at the north west corner of Sixth and Greenup, where he and his wife lived the remainder of their days.²⁰ He died August 1, 1821 at age 80 and was buried in the Craig Street burial ground. His wife preceded him in death by a scant four months, having died the previous March 21st.

In 1934, a plaque dedicated to Kennedy's memory was placed near the site of the stone house he had erected. The plaque, located in George Rogers Clark Park, was one of many enterprises undertaken in Covington at that time by the Public Works Art Project of the federal government's Civil Works Administration.²¹

The building lots in the new town were surveyed and laid out by Charles R. Powell after which they were officered for sale at public auction. The first were sold March 20th from the front door of the great stone house, now occupied by Captain Perry. Joseph Warner made the initial purchase when he paid \$385 for in-lot number 69.²²

It was decided to name the thoroughfares extending south from the Ohio River for governors in order in which they served. Going west from the Licking, they were named for Governors Shelby, Garrard, Greenup and Scott. The street west of Scott was left without a name pending outcome of the pending gubernatorial election. After the votes were officially counted, it was named for newly-elected Governor George Madison. This was now the community's most westerly street as the town plat ended at the east line of what later became Washington Street.

The one exception to the practice of naming the early north-south streets for governors occurred in the case of block-long Kennedy Street. It received its name in honor of Thomas Kennedy.

Another street which extends south from the Ohio, Court Street, did not come into existence until a much later date. At this early time, it was but a narrow alleyway connecting Second and Third Streets while that broad portion south of Third was designated as Market Space.

Market Space was bisected midway by another broad thoroughfare known as Lower Market Space – or Market Place – and which has since been renamed Park Place. The plot of ground on the north side of Third between Greenup and what is now Court Street was in time designated as a public square. The square in turn eventually became the site of the community's first two city halls.

Many visitors were impressed by the community's initial development. Barely four years after the first sale of the town lots, a visitor from New Hampshire noted in his journal that the new town, along with Newport, were both "considerable places, and present an elegant appearance."²³

Early Covingtonians were quick to recognize the profits to be derived from slaking the thirst if such travelers and as a result, taverns became one of the town's initial forms of business. Covington's first saloon, other than the inn operated by Thomas Kennedy, was conducted by John Smith in a large frame structure at the southeast corner of Front Street, now Riverside Drive, and Garrard.²⁴

In 1817, another saloon was established in the same neighborhood, this one in a large brick building erected that same year at the southwest corner of Front and Garrard. Neither of the two businesses offered any form of entertainment though and eventually lost much of their trade to Alexander Connelly when he later opened the Union Hotel at Second and Garrard. The Union has been described as the town's "first house of public entertainment."²⁵

In the summer of 1818, David Poor migrated to Covington and began erecting a frame house at a point about 200 feet south of the junction of the Lexington and Banklick Roads – today's Pike and Banklick Streets. He never finished the building but in 1820 furnished the part completed and opened it as a tavern.²⁶ When Poor died the following year, his widow took over the business, known as the General Green House and continued operating it for a number of years.²⁷

Laws in such pioneer communities were simple and direct and violation of them invariably evoked equally simple and direct punishment. Such punishment often consisted of tying the offender to a tree or post and inflicting a certain number of whip lashes on the bare back. As early as September 11, 1797 the county court ordered stocks, pillory and whipping post be erected in Newport.

In some cases of misdoing, a coat of tar and feathers was applied and the culprit driven from the community. A simple dunking in the Ohio or Licking River often sufficed for milder offences. In the latter punishment, the miscreant sat in a chair fastened to the end of a long pole that was worked up and down, much like a child's see-saw. In this manner the victim was dunked into the water one or more times, depending on the severity of the sentence. One such dunking stool was in Newport at the confluence of the Ohio and Licking.

In April 1800, a new patrol was appointed for all that part of Campbell County west of the Licking. Patrick Hume was appointed Patrol Captain and John Hume and Charles Tyler named as his assistants. The law required the men to devote a minimum of 12 hours a month to their new duties.²⁸

It appears Covington's first town patrol consisted of Willis Worrel, Peter Hardin and Bartlett Graves, Jr., all of whom served under Captain Jacob Hardin who was appointed to his job in January 1817. The following June, Elijah C. Boileau became the town's first constable when Covington was made into Campbell County's Second District.²⁹

THE COVINGTON-LEXINGTON TURNPIKE had been undergoing a limited form of improvement during all this time. The road itself was one of the earliest routes to Kentucky's interior and south of Covington, followed roughly what is now the Dixie Highway [US 25]. Many writers consider it an extension of Daniel Boone's noted Wilderness Road.

In great part, the route followed old buffalo trails and Indian paths, especially in Kenton and Grant Counties. Because it wound along the tops of north-south ridges, which actually form a rib of the Cumberland Mountains, it earned the early name of the Great Dry Ridge Route. The ridges it traverses form a great watershed, dividing the drainage systems of the Licking and Kentucky Rivers.³⁰

As early as 1785, Elison E. Williamson came here to help in cutting out the first road to the south, and in 1790, a few private interests began to make limited improvements to ease the rigors of wagon travel.³¹ Finally, on December 14, 1793, Governor Shelby signed a bill which provided for a wagon road from Frankfort to the Covington site. It was the first road act to ever be passed by the infant Commonwealth of Kentucky.

Work on the new road consisted largely of cutting off trees close to the ground and rounding off the remaining stumps. The road varied from ten to twelve feet in width and when finished was still not much more than a mere trail. Nonetheless it was a marked improvement over the old buffalo and Indian paths and travel over it began to increase.

Crude log huts which the owners held out to be inns, began to appear in increasing numbers along the road. They were of the most primitive type and usually offered a bill of fare consisting largely of bacon, Indian bread and whisky.

In 1818, Jacob Fowler and General James Taylor surveyed and made improvements to the road until it reached the point where stagecoach travel was possible.³² On May 6th of that year, Abner Gaines of Boone County announced opening of the first stage line to Covington.

Most of the early stagecoaches were usually drawn by four-horse teams except when carrying unusually heavy loads or when the road was in an especially bad condition. At those times, six-horse teams were used.

Initially, the narrow road ran southward past Robert Kyles' farm which then covered much of today's downtown Covington. It skirted his large watermelon patch and passed his home which stood near present Pike and Madison and then ran out Pike to Banklick. There it turned south to today's 14th Street and went directly west across what is now the southern end of Linden Grove Cemetery and on to the hilltops west of town.³³

Gaines charged a fare of ten cents a mile on his line and allowed each passenger 14 pounds of baggage. In figuring the charge for extra baggage, he considered 100 pounds being equal to another passenger.³⁴

One of the Front Street taverns along with Lewis C. Bakes' hotel, served as two of Covington's earliest stage offices. Bakes' Hotel was a sixty-room inn that stood at the corner of Greenup and the public square.

The beginning of stagecoach travel though, was not without opposition. Many of the hardy pioneers considered it a frill and totally unsuitable as a mode of travel. They had become conditioned to all the discomfort and hardship connected with travel by horseback and sneered at those who were so "decadent" to ride a stage. Such travel, they declared, was suitable only for women, the aged and infirm.

Traders who used packhorses to transport their merchandise also complained and said stagecoaches were bad for business. Some even claimed the clothing business would suffer as fewer clothes would be worn out by this soft and effeminate method of travel.

Still others attacked the stage lines as a menace to health. The long periods between stops and late arrivals at destinations would wreck the health of travelers. Saddlers and spurriers claimed they would be ruined and horse lovers cried the breed of good horses would be destroyed. Progress could not be halted though, and the stagecoaches with their colorful drivers would play out their role in Covington's history.

The driver, perched high atop the stage, faced all kinds of weather. If it rained or snowed or if it was hot or cold, he still had his schedule to keep, regardless of the time of day or night.

One winter morning, a southbound stage left Covington in zero weather. Snow drifts several feet deep were common that day, and in many places covered even the tops of roadside fences. Williamstown was not reached until mid-afternoon but despite the weather, the passengers insisted the coach continue to Lexington. They, of course, had some shelter from the icy blasts and were warmed by hot bricks wrapped and placed at their feet. None of this was true for the driver.³⁵

After a fresh team of horses was hitched to the coach, the driver resumed his exposed place, fortified only by a bottle of whisky. The wind was bitterly cold, but the journey continued.³⁶

At long last Georgetown was reached. There the horses followed their customary routine and stopped at the local post office. When the passengers alighted, they were astounded to find their driver was dead. He had frozen to death!³⁷

In 1819 the apparent NEED FOR A SCHOOL for the community's children was met when a small, log structure was erected on the public square. Prior to this, any Northern Kentucky parents wanting a formal education for their children had to rely upon the Newport Seminary.

Covington's little one-room log cabin would serve the people for the next 15 years, not only as a schoolhouse, but also as a Sunday place of worship and a courtroom each Saturday.

The following year's federal census revealed Campbell County counted a population of 7,022 including 897 slaves and 10 free blacks. Of the county's two cities, Newport's population had grown to 611, while Covington's reached 272, including 40 slaves and 6 free blacks.

Two of Covington's outstanding residents of that time were Mr. and Mrs. Patrick Leonard. Both were veterans of the American Revolution and both had led most interesting lives.

Patrick had begun his war time service as a member of the British Army but soon became convinced of the righteousness of the American cause. He thereupon deserted and joined the Continental forces. Soon he met his future wife who was to be known forever as "Captain Molly."

Captain Molly earned her nick-name when she took her first husband's place in battle after he was fatally wounded. She courageously fought as an artilleryman for the remainder of the encounter.

On the other side of the Licking, one of Newport's residents, John Cleves Symmes, a native of Sussex County, New Jersey and a nephew to the John Cleves Symmes of Ohio's Miami Purchase, was attracting world-wide attention because of his philosophical pursuits.

By 1818, the younger Symmes, who had been a captain and bone fide hero during the War of 1812, formed a theory that the earth was a hollow sphere and open at the poles for the admission of light to the interior. The earth, he declared, was habitable within its interior, where there would be found another six or seven concentric spheres also open at the poles.

Symmes wrote a paper concerning his theory and said:

"I ask for 100 brave companions, well equipped, to start from Siberia in the fall with reindeer and sleighs, on the ice of the frozen seas; I engage we find a warm and rich land stocked with thrifty vegetables and animals, if not men, on reaching 1 degree north of the latitude of 82 degrees. We will return the following spring."³⁸

Symmes delivered many lectures advancing his Concentric Spheres idea and in 1822 and 1823, petitioned Congress to outfit an expedition to test the theory.

One of Symmes backers was James Taylor VI – the son of General James and Keturah Taylor. Young James, who had some talent as an actor, was also a great enthusiast of the drama and in 1823 formed a Newport drama club and erected a theatre at the Newport barracks. Among the performances he put on was a benefit for Symmes and the proposed expedition.³⁹

Symmes died in Hamilton, Ohio on May 29, 1829 without having the satisfaction of conducting his expedition to either of the poles. Yet shortly after his death and in the same year, another of his ardent followers, Jeremiah N. Reynolds, succeeded in equipping and carrying out such a cruise to the southern polar region.⁴⁰

After many difficult weeks of sailing, the expedition reached such heavy ice barriers that its leaders became convinced they could go no further. Discouraged and forced to live on seal meat, they turned back. The crew mutinied when they reached Valpariso, Chili and set Reynolds and his financial backer ashore, stole his ship and put to sea as pirates. So ended the saga of one of the strangest expeditions to ever sail to the polar regions.⁴¹ Today a small monument to the memory of Symmes and his theory stands on Hamilton's South Third Street.

Symmes and Taylor were not the only local residents to dream of expeditions into the unknown for the same was true of former Newport resident Jacob Fowler, who had since established his home at Covington.

Fowler, who was a thoroughly experienced frontiersman, surveyor and Indian trader, was growing discontented with what he considered his too-sedentary existence as a settler and community leader. He harbored dreams of exploring the far West and in 1819, along with Moses Glenn, began laying plans for such a trip.

Finally on June 14, 1821, the pair struck out from Covington on what would prove to be one of the most significant journeys of exploration ever made into the great plains and mountains of the far West. They became the first white men to ever view large sections of many of today's western states and their servant, a Covington Negro named Paul, is generally recognized as being the first black man to ever cross the Rocky Mountains Great Divide.[other than York, William Clark's slave on the Lewis & Clark Expedition – 1803-6 -editor].⁴²

Fowler arrived back in Covington on July 27 the following year and spent his remaining days as a valued member of the community. His journal, which he kept throughout the journey, is still intact and is in the possession of the University of Chicago. It has come to be recognized as one of the nation's most valuable accounts of early travel into the far West and has proven an excellent primary source of information on the earliest days of that region's exploration.⁴³

The infant community of Covington was barely established when financial panic hit the nation. A land boom, accompanied by numerous unstable and speculative schemes, had existed throughout the West, and there had been a loud outcry for more and more paper money.

As a result, the Kentucky Legislature chartered 46 new banks in 1818 and gave them power to issue millions of dollars in paper money which they were not required to redeem in gold or silver. Such notes quickly became worthless and when linked with other faltering economic factors throughout the nation, helped bring on a financial panic of 1819.

The depression resulting from such irresponsible acts was one of the most disastrous to ever hit the nation. Thousands of laborers were thrown out of employment in the established eastern cities, and real estate values dropped to a fourth of what they had been.

Economic losses in the Ohio Valley became even more severe when the expected rise of the valley's rivers failed to occur that autumn. The Ohio River had no man-made dams as it does today and its depth fluctuated from a foot or so at extreme low stage to as much as 70 feet or more at flood. Rivermen had come to rely on the annual fall rise and after a winter of ice-filled water, on the spring rise when the river would once again literally teem with vessels. Now there came a series of extended low water stages during 1818, 1819 and 1820 with catastrophic results. In 1819 there was no autumn rise at all and navigation was virtually halted from April until the following February.

Locally, the land boom collapsed as it did elsewhere and prices collapsed even more dramatically. Many Kentucky investors and settlers lost their lands and homes as scores of people faced financial ruin. Cried for some sort of relief were heard throughout the state.

In 1820, the state revoked the charters of the 46 banks, commonly known as "the forty thieves," and passed a relief law which declared no one could foreclose on a mortgage for two years, nor take any other legal action to force payment of a debt unless the creditor was willing to accept the notes of any bank that was legally chartered in Kentucky.

With such a law in effect, the state entered the banking business for itself and in November 1820, chartered the Bank of the Commonwealth of Kentucky. The new bank was allowed to issue \$3 million worth of paper money but was not required to redeem it in specie. Such conduct outraged many Kentuckians and in 1823 the State Court of Appeals upheld a lower court's decision which declared the relief law unconstitutional.

The legislature, after making an unsuccessful attempt to impeach members of the Court of Appeals, decided to abolish the court which had displeased them and create a new court. A law to that effect was passed but the old court refused to recognize its constitutionality and continued to sit as a court. For a time, the state had two supreme courts and experienced what was undoubtedly its darkest and most tempestuous political period prior to the Civil War.

The political storm blew full force across Kentucky and gained velocity as it raged. The volatile 1825 elections were held under this “Old Court vs New Court” issue. Enraged voters turned against the new court advocate and gave control of the lower house to supporters of the old court and the following year elected a majority of that group to the Senate. The new court was abolished and all its acts annulled. Covington and Kentucky in general, settled into a relatively calm period of politics.

One person who always believed in the tiny village’s future was storekeeper Benjamin Leathers, who as early as 1819 also operated what has been called Covington’s first “banking institution.” Leathers set up his pseudo-bank in conjunction with his store. He often took furs and farm produce in exchange for his merchandise, but when buying, he frequently paid in scrip, or notes, promising to pay or redeem them at a designated time. Still other notes were to be paid on demand.

Leathers established his “bank” when fractional currency was commonplace. His promises to pay, or “shin-plasters” as they were commonly called, were issued in denominations of 6 ¼, 12 ½, 25, 50, cents and up. In fact, he issued so much scrip that the term “paid in Leathers” became an everyday term in this part of the Ohio Valley.

Notes of this early Covington money were printed on yellow paper and measured approximately 3 x 2 ¼ inches. A typical specimen read:

“Fifty cents – secured by mortgage on real estate – the Real Estate Bank of Covington, Kentucky promises to pay to John S. Gano or bearer on demand, fifty cents – Covington, January 10, 1819.

B. W. Leathers, Cashier.”

Still another read:

“The Office of Exchange and Deposit in Covington, opposite Cincinnati, promises to pay to J. Leathers, or bearer on demand, Five Dollars, in current notes of Ohio. January 19, 1819.

Platt Kennedy, Cashier

*B. W. Leathers, President.”*⁴⁴

On one occasion, when redemption demands were unusually heavy, Leathers paid the money and threw the redeemed notes into the fireplace. The chimney’s draft, however, carried unburned notes into the atmosphere and scattered them over the neighborhood. Before Leathers discovered what had happened, he had unfortunately redeemed many handfuls of the same notes two or more times as a growing number of citizens brought them in. Leathers promptly closed the doors of Covington’s first bank, but always vividly remembered what some called his “balloon currency.”⁴⁵

In 1974, largely as a result of the research of local historian Allen Smith, the discovery was made that Leather’s building was still standing in the community – the two-story brick structure at the northwest corner of Greenup Street and Park Place.

Throughout the financial depression of 1819, Covington’s growth continued at a steady pace. The town lots, not surprisingly, brought lower prices and some earlier purchasers were even forced into defaulting on payments. Nevertheless, the community’s growth continued so that the estimated 70 settlers living in the neighborhood about Kennedy’s Ferry in 1794 increased to 272 by 1820; 404 by 1826 and would reach 743 by 1830.

About this time, an aging SIMON KENTON returned to Washington, Kentucky near his old station which had served as a rallying point for his earlier explorer and settler friends. As soon as he arrived in the Kentucky village, he was arrested under the debtor’s law and cast into the sturdy town jail.

As was pointed out above, Kenton knew nothing of deeds and it seems the title he had guaranteed for some land he once transferred to another had proven defective. The recipient’s heirs now sued and won a judgment against Kenton.

The old Indian fighter was furious at the court’s decision and vowed to spend the rest of his life in prison before he would pay the heirs a dime. His indignation was all the more unyielding since he maintained he had never received payment for the land in question.

Simon had a considerable number of old friends who were equally indignant at his treatment. One of these was Thomas Williams, a former companion and now town jailer. As a result of this friendship, Kenton was soon

granted permission to come and go about the town as he pleased but was still required to spend his nights in a jail cell.

When the Marquis de Lafayette, who was on his farewell visit to the United States (1824-5), was informed of the old revolutionary soldier's plight, he expressed so much outrage that Kenton was released. This motivated Congress to outlaw imprisonment for debt.

Over the years, Kenton had seen representatives of the Virginia planter class migrate to Kentucky and rob and cheat the earlier frontiersmen of their lands. Kenton, like Boone and others, had little use for these land grasping southern planters – not because of their desire for land, for he could understand that, but because of the trickery and dishonesty used in acquiring it.

Kenton lost thousands of acres of prime Kentucky land to such people and now saw their families forming into the very nucleus of a growing class of landed gentry. The old pioneer, still as wily as ever, was determined to gain some measure of satisfaction. Accordingly, in 1824, he dressed in tattered garments and journeyed to Frankfort. When he arrived, he found he was jeered at by the town's youths, and held up to scorn as he walked through the streets of the thriving capitol of a prosperous state. No one recognized the aging man as the fabulous Simon Kenton.

Many Kentucky writers, following the example of a few early and less-than-accurate biographers, have erroneously pictured Kenton as destitute at the time he appeared in Frankfort. Actually, the old Indian fighter, although by no means wealthy, was relatively well-off by frontier standards and still controlled large land holdings in Ohio.⁴⁶ The story of his being in abject poverty is pure myth.⁴⁷

Yet another oft-repeated myth tells how Senator Fletcher of Bath County finally recognized Kenton and revealed his identity to the townspeople and fellow lawmakers. This persistent story has been repeated many times despite the fact Fletcher was a member of neither the senate nor the house at the time of Kenton's visit.

The truth is that Kenton personally contacted Mason County's Senator James Ward shortly after arriving in the capital and it was Ward who presented his case before the lawmakers.⁴⁸

Kenton knew some of the members of families who had earlier taken advantage of his lack of schooling, now occupied places of responsibility in the state government and in Kentucky society. He also knew his tattered dress would serve to recall the earlier land swindles to their minds, as many of them were well aware of the disgraceful manner in which their family estates were first acquired.

Soon Kenton's presence became known to all Frankfort, and overwhelmed the general citizenry that he was called upon to visit the capitol in person. There he could address a general assembly of townspeople, legislators and other influential government officials.

Everything was going just as Kenton hoped it would. He had come to Frankfort with the intention of having the legislature clear his title to some mountain land, the last of his Kentucky holdings of approximately 31,330 acres that had once included some of the state's finest lands.

None of the land now in question though had been part of Kenton's original holdings. Instead, they represented less desirable tracts he had been required to take in settlement for unpaid debts owed him.⁴⁹

As pointed out above, Kenton knew that many of the state's socially and politically elite were still quite cognizant of the manner in which their own family estates were first acquired and he thought they would probably eagerly agree to his request. They would do this, Kenton shrewdly reasoned, rather than risk any possible questioning of his feigned extreme poverty, thus having their own family background come under public scrutiny.

Just as the old Indian fighter had often displayed an uncanny ability to predict his earlier adversaries' actions in battle, he too was successful in judging what actions of the legislators would be. They complied with his request as he thought they would. The satisfied Kenton returned to Ohio to live out the remainder of his days.

The loss of so much prime land to scheming courtroom adversaries and the fact he had received no formal schooling whatever, helped Simon Kenton to place great value on education for others. This was vividly demonstrated in his later years when he became responsible for the schooling of many children of relatives and neighbors – including children of neighboring Indians. Schools were not free at that time but Kenton nevertheless gladly paid all the required fees.⁵⁰

In the year following Kenton's Frankfort appearance, Covingtonians had occasion to gather along the community's thoroughfare to cheer GENERAL GILBERT MORTIER DE LAFAYETTE as he passed through town. On May 19, 1825, this distinguished military leader, accompanied by Kentucky Governor Joseph Desha and a large retinue of Kentucky dignitaries, paid the town a brief visit and the people of Covington, like their counterparts throughout the nation, were eager to show their appreciation for his service to the new American republic during its struggle for independence.

Over the years, legends have grown throughout the area concerning families Lafayette allegedly visited a number of homes in which receptions were supposedly held in his honor. Virtually every town and hamlet along the general's route came to abound with such stories. In this respect, there is a similarity to the proliferation of the "Washington slept here" claims found throughout eastern seaboard states.

Locally, General Lafayette was said to have been entertained early in the day at Locust Grove, the 1500 acre estate of Leonard L. Stephens. [No evidence exists this is fact. Present local historians consider this urban myth – editor]. Stephens, whose home was about 12 miles from Covington on present-day Richardson Road, was the great-grandfather of Jerome Bristow Respass, who eventually became owner of the noted Highland Stock Farm.

It was also claimed a glittering ball and reception was held in the general's honor by Thomas D. Carneal at an East Second Street residence which Carneal supposedly erected in 1815. This story received wide circulation and even the Kentucky State Historical Society erected a marker proclaiming the story to be historical fact. [See: *Northern Kentucky Heritage Magazine*, XVI, #2 for the story of Lafayette's 1824-5 visit – editor]

Carneal never owned the East Second Street residence (which now bears his name) nor was he ever sole owner of the land upon which it stands. Actually, Joseph Warner purchased the home-site for \$385 on the very first day of lot sales in Covington, March 20, 1815. Accordingly, if Carneal built the house in 1815 he did so as a contractor but certainly not as the owner.⁵¹

Lafayette did however, stop for a brief visit at the tavern of Alexander Connelly on the northwest corner of Second and Garrard Streets. Connelly had purchased his large lot for \$800 in 1822 and erected a substantial brick home on it. Here, along with Arthur Connelly, he conducted his tavern and rooming-house which had one of the best reputations of any inn in Kentucky.

Connelly maintained his "house of public entertainment" up to the time of his death, after which the property was acquired by Amos Shinkle.⁵²

When Lafayette left Connelly's, he proceeded to the Ohio River (anxious to see Cincinnati) and was taken across that stream in an elaborate six-oared barge commanded by Midshipman Rowan of the U.S. Navy. The flag-bedecked barge was appropriately named the *Yorktown*,⁵³ and crossed the Ohio amid a 24-gun salute. A band played "Hail to the Chief," and the sky was etched with a dazzling display of fireworks as Ohio's Governor Jeremiah Morrow and General William Henry Harrison welcomed the general to the Buckeye State.

While Lafayette was in Cincinnati, Covington officials desired to have him return to their city for a formal reception. Accordingly, a committee of the town's leading citizens was formed with the avowed purpose of crossing the river to extend such an invitation. Unfortunately for Covington, it was discovered at the last moment the committee's more distinguished members would not venture across the Ohio because of the distinct possibility Cincinnati officials would serve them with warrants for non-payment of debts.⁵⁴

Meanwhile, the purchasers of Kennedy's land were experiencing severe financial difficulties as a result of the 1819 economic crisis. They failed to completely pay all the agreed upon price for the land and in time the stone house and adjacent grounds reverted to the Kennedys. It was Thomas' son, Samuel and his family who came to occupy the great house and run the ferry business.

The fact Kennedy had insisted upon a separate deed for his home and ferry business serves to attest to his foresight and business acumen. He was fully cognizant of the value and growth potential of the area and of his ferry business. The separate deed had paced a safeguard against the possibility of that business slipping from his control without adequate compensation.

Reverend John Todd and Robert Todd, who had been granted the 90 acres immediately west of the patent purchased by Kennedy, also laid claim to a strip of land between the Welch patent and the Ohio River. Kentucky's first governor, Isaac Shelby, had signed a document on February 25, 1793 which added this smaller strip to the Todd's larger holding. This parcel was later sold to Joel Craig in October 1804 and still later was added to New Jersey migrant James Riddle's large holdings west of the original town. [Much of Main Street area was the Riddle estate – editor]. In time, the small strip of waterfront would prove a source of contention between Kennedy and those who purchased his farm for its potential as a town site.

The large number of military warranties and land grants issued by Virginia and Kentucky during these years often overlapped and frequently led to confusion. One historian described the practice of giving such grants as "the greatest curse that ever befell Kentucky," saying as many as five or six patents sometimes covered the same piece of land.⁵⁵

Speculators became active throughout the state, grabbing these grants for a fraction of their true worth. Land was frequently sold and re-sold before it was ever surveyed and a public record made of its location. Neither were the surveys always correct, left as they often were, to individuals rather than public authority.

In the case of the person claiming unsettled land, he simply chose what he wanted and marked its boundaries with notches and slash marks cut into trees. Many of these claims had previously been given in part or in their entirety to someone else as a grant or had already been claimed, surveyed and recorded by an earlier arrival.

When such a condition existed, the land's occupant, besides possessing the land under his own title, frequently had to pay for several more deeds or risk losing his home and land. Such a confused state of affairs undoubtedly resulted when Governor Shelby granted a portion of what was apparently Kennedy's riverfront to the Todds.

Kennedy's initial sale of his farm to Carneal and the Gano brothers in March 1815 excluded the strip he once conveyed to Joel Craig on January 10, 1809 and which was conveyed back to him on that same date.⁵⁶ Still later, on June 11, 1827, Daniel Gano, Aaron G. Gano and John A. Gano received \$1600 from Samuel Kennedy for signing a quit-claim deed to that same portion of river front. The Ganos claimed it had not been included in either the Welch patent or the Thomas Kennedy deed, but had instead been properly patented by Governor Shelby to the Todds.

For a number of years, Covington could be regarded as a sort of proprietary town. Although the town had been established by the Commonwealth, the Covington trustees were in reality acting for the proprietors. As the community continued to grow, this lack of representative government became more and more obnoxious to the citizenry.

Finally, on December 14, 1825, the Kentucky General Assembly passed "An act to Amend the 'Act Establishing the Town of Covington at the Mouth of the Licking.'" Under this new piece of legislation, the office of town trustee became elective. Now the people had more voice in determining who would govern their city.

On Saturday, April 1st of the following year, the townspeople held the first election for those offices and chose William C. Bell, John B. Casey, Cary Clemons, Alexander Connelly, James B. Haden, William Wright Southgate and Newman Yates. The oath of office was administered by Justice of the Peace James Grimsley Arnold. Arnold also served as the first town clerk for which he was paid \$15 per year.⁵⁷

Connelly was selected to serve as chairman of the trustees and Cary Clemons, who had migrated from Maine, was named first town treasurer. As treasurer, Clemons was required to be bonded for \$500.

Jefferson Phelps became the first town attorney, Charles R. Powell, the first official surveyor and John Gray was named the town's first assessor. One of Gray's first official acts was to take a census and he counted a total of 404 residents in the fledgling community.⁵⁸

The new officials held their first meeting on April 7, 1826. At that time they passed a resolution appointing William Wright Southgate to the task of crossing to Cincinnati to seek out Aaron G. Gano, clerk of the former board of trustees and relative of two of the original town proprietors.

Southgate's assignment was to secure the return of several important documents and papers. Gano had taken many public papers with him and was now showing considerable reluctance in turning them over to the new officials. Southgate's mission was a failure however, as were similar attempts made over the next four years. As late as April 10, 1830, the Board again "Unanimously Voted that Immediate Application Should be made To A. G. Gano and Samuel Gano for to give up the Public Papers, Map and Documents Connected with this Town and have them Brought before the Board."⁵⁹

By that time another election had been held and John Harding, William Musselman, Joseph Paxton and George Payne were elected to serve with Casey, Clemons and Southgate – all of whom had been returned to office.⁶⁰

On July 8, 1826, the trustees met and enacted their very first set of laws. It was an ordinance calling for Covington's first city tax. The people were now required to pay 12 ½ cents upon "each milk Cow, mare or Gelding;" 12 ½ cents upon "each Hog over Six month old;" 6 ¼ cents upon each sheep; 50 cents upon each dog; and \$5 upon "each bitch or Slut."⁶¹ All of these taxes were to apply only to animals "suffered to run at large on the Streets or Commons." The tax law did however, go on to say: "If any person Shall keep more than one dog he Shall pay for every other dog the Sum of \$2."⁶²

The trustees turned their attention to enacting penal laws. It was an ordinance which prohibited cock fighting and prescribed a fine of \$10 for any offender. Board members also decided it was indecent for any citizen to bathe in the river between sunrise and eight o'clock in the evening. Anyone found guilty of such an act was subject to a fine of one dollar. Happily for one segment of the community's population, this piece of legislation did not apply to boys under the age of 12.⁶³

It was also decided there was too much careless shooting of firearms inside the town. If found guilty of this offence, an individual would now be required to pay a penalty of \$5.⁶⁴

William Barnes was appointed “Commissioner and Collector of Taxes,” after which the trustees voted to make the town’s first purchase to be paid for out of future tax collections. It was to be “a Suitable Blank Book to keep the records and Laws of Said Trustees.”⁶⁵

At a later meeting, the town fathers took recognition of the great popularity of cock fighting and modified the law prohibiting it to one which would permit such fights if they were held within an enclosure.

It would seem the tax leviers overlooked the homeowner – but not for long. The Board corrected its oversight seven months later enacted the city’s first real estate tax by placing a one dollar levy on each lot. The trustees took care of possible future disputes by adding: “Provided that where any lot may be divided into one or more parts that the person or persons owning the same shall pay in proportion to the part such person may own.”⁶⁶

Even as now, a sizable segment of the populace looked upon taxes with a certain amount of disfavor, and approximately one of every six made his objections known by failing to pay the animal tax. Protestations were so vehement that on April 22, 1827, the town fathers relented to the extent of passing the following: “Resolved...each family in the Town of Covington is hereby permitted to keep one Terrier Dog free from Tax for the purpose of Destroying the Rats and other purposes.” The Board then adjourned.⁶⁷ Of the total of \$331 in taxes levied that year, there remained some \$99 still unpaid two years later.⁶⁸

Meantime, the trustees noted the lack of various conveniences on the public square and contracted with William Harlow for the construction of a “necessary” at that place. The work was promptly done and on June 13, 1827, it was voted to pay Harlow \$36.75 for “a job well done.”⁶⁹

The year 1827 also witnessed the start of Covington’s official war on speeders. In order to slow down those who raced their horses in town and recklessly scattered chickens, pigs and pedestrians, a law was enacted on November 28 which said:

“...any person who after the 1st day of January next shall willfully gallop or strain a horse or mare or mule through any of the streets or commons of Covington shall be subject to a fine of Two Dollars, the parents, guardians, or masters of any boy shall be liable for the fine aforesaid upon a warrant from any Justice of the Peace of this country.”⁷⁰

Much of the land over which the fledging city was destined to spread, consisted of large tracts that had once been military warrants or grants and patents given by various Virginia and Kentucky governors. One of the parcels, belonging to Reverend John Todd and Robert Todd, consisted of 400 acres lying south of the original town and along the Licking. They had gained ownership of this tract by the same 1793 document in which Governor Shelby had given them a claim to a portion of Covington waterfront.⁷¹

The Todds lost little time in subdividing this larger tract into smaller parcels. The southern 200 acres were acquired by Pressley Pike while the northern half went to a trio of others, including Robert Kyle and Jacob Fowler. Fowler soon transferred 136 acres to the United States Bank, which was then in the process of gaining title to land throughout the nation in satisfaction of its mortgages.⁷²

Eventually, the entire southern portion of the original 400 acre tract came under control of Onarias Powell’s family. The latter-day street names of *Powell*, *Martin*, *Byrd* and *Brace* all commemorated the memory of members of that family.⁷³ Brace Street, later renamed Edward, is now that portion of Eastern Avenue north of Oliver, while Powell Street is now East 15th Street.

In the meantime, a nineteenth century seminary, WESTERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE, acquired the remainder of the tract. The school eventually resold several large sections to individuals whose subdivisions still bear their names.

The Institute went into the subdivision business for itself and sold nearly 700 lots in the area now bounded by Ninth Street, 15th Street, Banklick Street and a line just east of Greenup.⁷⁴ The area between Tenth and Eleventh and Madison and Russell was retained by Western Baptist’s officials and became known as College or Seminary Square. It was designated as the site for their seminary.⁷⁵

This 400 acre tract served as the base for a right angled triangular tract of 300 acres parented May 1, 1792, also to the Todds by Virginia’s Governor Henry Lee. This holding was later transferred to Humphrey Marshall.⁷⁶ This Todd tract was bordered on the east by a line running up the Licking River to a small creek in Latonia and northwesterly along the edge of acreage later patented to Rawleigh Colston. The line crossed Madison Pike at the sharp bend of that road. The southern triangular part of this tract embraced the later-day Wallace, Holmes and Levassor lands. Seneca Austin, for whom Austinburg is named, acquired the northeastern section of the tract, while the northwestern part was acquired by Richard Southgate.⁷⁷

Rawleigh Colston's patent of 5,000 acres, issued January 29, 1790 by Governor Beverly Randolph of Virginia, lay to the south and west of the Todd's triangular tract and included all of modern-day Latonia. Its northern boundary ran in a northwesterly direction from the mouth of the drain mentioned in the preceding paragraph to the headwaters of Willow Run Creek.⁷⁸

General James Taylor later purchased a large portion of the Colston holdings from Colston's executors. The land Taylor acquired included all of the Latonia site and extended across and beyond Banklick Creek. The new owner operated a mill on the tract's southern part and the road leading to it became commonly known as Taylor's Mill Road.⁷⁹

On June 23, 1785, Patrick Henry, then governor of Virginia, signed a patent granting Prettyman Merry the 2,000 acres west of Colston's patent and extending north to the Ohio River. As the western boundary line of Merry's property neared the river, however, it veered about the 90 acres granted the Todds, as well as James Riddle's tract of 580 ½ acres just west of the original town and on the Ohio River.

THE ORIGINAL TWO-STORY HOME built on the Merry tract still stands atop a small plateau off Bromley's Shelby Street and is known locally as *The Landmark*. Some 2,000 stones were used in the structure which has two rooms on each floor. A large fireplace was constructed in each of the rooms.

The home's cellar rafters, which still show their bark, were made of the trunks of ash trees split in half. The floors of each room are of white pine, while wooden pins and handmade iron nails are to be found throughout the structure. Black walnut was used for the door sills and at other points throughout the house, while the keystone on the home's eastern exterior wall was decorated with a stone likeness of an Indian's head. A small one-story frame standing just east of Merry's home once stood at its rear and was used as a slave quarters.

RIDDLE'S LARGE TRACT extended over what is now that part of town west of Russell and Banklick Streets, east of Willow Run Creek and north of Eleventh Street. Main Street, it may be noted, was then known as Riddle's Lane and still later as Ferry Street.⁸⁰

Riddle hoped to establish a town on the northern part of his tract that would be settled by many of the Irish immigrants beginning to favor the Covington area as home. The town, to be named *Hibernia* for the old Latin name of Ireland, was to initially consist of 70 acres located about ¾ of a mile below the Licking's mouth and fronting on the Ohio River.⁸¹

Riddle platted *Hibernia*'s building lots, all of which measured 100 by 200 feet and planned the east-west streets of Front, Second, Third and Fourth, as well as north-south streets of Main, Walnut and Vine.⁸² Walnut and Vine Streets lay immediately west of Main and extended north from Second Street to the river. Main Street which was to be 100 feet wide, stretched from Fourth Street to the river.

In May 1820, the General Assembly approved the plans for *Hibernia* and ordered Thomas D. Carneal, Alfred Sandford and John Skiles to be named town trustees. Two years later, on December 6, 1822, the law makers enacted legislation permitting Riddle to establish a ferryboat operation between the proposed *Hibernia* and Ohio.⁸³

From this point on, Riddle did little or nothing more to promote his planned *Hibernia*, despite the fact his land and ferry business were heavily mortgaged to the Bank of the United States. He began experiencing difficulty paying off the debt and eventually, on November 23, 1825, the land and ferry were deeded over to the bank in satisfaction of a \$26,000 debt.⁸⁴

The bank soon platted the section of its newly-acquired tract that lay between the original town of Covington and Willow Run Creek. Three north-south streets: Carneal Street, or Craig Road, now known as Johnson; Ferry Street, now Main; and Philadelphia Street were laid out, as were four east-west streets. The east-west thoroughfares were Front Street, soon to be West Third; Second Street, ultimately known as West Fourth; Third Street, soon bumped to West Fifth; and Fourth, now known as West Sixth. [Philadelphia was used, since it was home of the Bank – editor]

Thomas W. Bakewell and William S. Johnson later acquired many of the building sites from the bank and in turn sold a number of them to Samuel Russell and William Bakewell.⁸⁵

ABOUT THAT TIME, WILLIAM BULLOCK, an English investor visiting in the area, became infatuated with the land west of Willow Run Creek and purchased a large section of it – also from the United States Bank. He shortly thereafter sold to Israel Ludlow, Jr., the tract stretching from Willow Run Creek to a point beyond present-day Western Avenue. The new owner, who was the son of Israel Ludlow (a founder of Losantiville), immediately began subdividing the area and today all that part of Covington is known as Ludlow's Subdivision.⁸⁶

Young Ludlow eventually became one of the area's largest land owners. Much of the land now occupied by the community of Ludlow belong to him, as did what is today's Forrest Hill section of West Covington. Forrest Hill, then [and now again] known as Botany Hills, had earlier been a frequent camping site for such men as Simon Kenton, Daniel Boone and Simon Girty and his Indian followers.

After it came into Ludlow's possession, it became a favorite retreat for **Edwin Forrest**, the famed 19th century Shakespearian actor. While still an aspiring actor, Forrest would come to the wooded hillsides for the peace and serenity they offered. There he studied and practiced his stage roles. He became so enraptured with the location that he promised himself if fame and fortune ever came to him, he would acquire the land for his very own.

Forrest and Ludlow were close acquaintances and often engaged each other in friendly card games. One time while the two were on a Louisville-bound steamboat, they began playing a series of high-stakes poker. Ludlow experienced a run of bad luck and lost all his ready cash to Forrest. It is said he put up Botany Hills as a stake and immediately lost that also. Forrest was delighted with his sudden land acquisition and soon developed it into an estate that was said to be "the most beautiful site in the neighborhood."⁸⁷ The estate remained in Forrest's possession for the remainder of his life.

MANY STREETS IN THE CITY'S NEAR WEST SIDE bear, or have born, names closely associated with this early period. Crescent Avenue was once known as Bullock Street; the southern part of Western Avenue was named Ludlow Street; and it is readily apparent where the names for Russell, Johnson and Bakewell Streets originated. Philadelphia Street received its name because the home of the United States Bank was in that eastern city.

As pointed out earlier, the imagination of William Bullock was captured by the Covington area's landscape and after his return to England, he penned the following bit of verse in its honor:

"Where grand Ohio rolls his silver floods,
Through verdant fields, and darkly waving woods,
Beholding oft, in flowery verdure dressed,
The green isle swelling from his placid breast;
Here where so late, the Indian's lone canoe,
Swift o'er the wave, in fearless triumph flew,
Behold the stately steam-borne vessel glide,
With eagle swiftness, o'er the yielding time,
And where so late, its shelter, rude and low,
The wigwam rear'd beneath the forest bough.
Lo! Cities spring before the wondering eyes,
And domes of grandeur swell into the skies."⁸⁸

At another time, Bullock purchased an estate of some 1,210 acres in what is now Ludlow and proposed to establish a model city to be known as *Hygeia*. The estate and its manor, known as *Elmwood Hall*, had been built by Thomas D. Carneal in 1819. The grounds stretched along the river for 2 ½ miles and were maintained in park-like condition.

CARNEAL FIRST ACQUIRED a large portion of his Elmwood acreage from the heirs of Thomas Sandford who traded it to him for a large tract extending from present-day Fort Mitchell and Highland Cemetery to as far as the 3-L [KY 17] community of Sandfordtown [formerly at the intersection of Dudley Road & KY 17 – editor]

Carneal, who was one of the founders of Covington and once served in the Kentucky Legislature, married Sally Stanley, widow of William Stanley and daughter of Major Silas Howell of Morristown, New Jersey. The wedding was in February 1815 and shortly afterward, Carneal had set about adding to his already vast Northern Kentucky land holdings.⁸⁹ Among his new acquisitions were four tracts within whose boundaries virtually the entire city of Ludlow would one day grow. Two of these, one 279 acres, and the other 567 ½ acres were acquired in 1817. In late 1818, the Sandford property was acquired and in June 1820, Carneal's estate was rounded out with the addition of one more small purchase.⁹⁰

Carneal was a strong admirer of nature and turned his newly-acquired lands into somewhat of a sanctuary for birds and animals. At one time, semi-tame elk, deer, and bison contentedly roamed the well-groomed grounds.

When he eventually sold *Elmwood*, he returned to Covington where he had constructed a home on the south side of Second Street between Scott and Madison.

After social-conscious Bullock agreed in 1826 to buy Carneal's estate, the Englishman reportedly entertained such distinguished visitors as future-president James K. Polk, Henry Clay and New York's ex-governor DeWitt Clinton at the estate's mansion.⁹¹

There can be little doubt there was a great number of toasts drunk during such visits, if an earlier Cincinnati meeting of Clay and Clinton can be used as a criterion. Clay arrived on July 11, 1825 in that city aboard the *General Pike* while on the way to Washington City. Governor Clinton, who had come to Ohio for the July 4th ground-breaking ceremonies of the Ohio Canal at Newark, arrived two days later and stopped at the same hotel as Clay. The two men immediately struck a close friendship and on the evening of Clinton's arrival, they attended a dinner in the company of several dignitaries and friends.⁹²

After the meal was finished, toasts were made amid repeated cheers and applause: 1) to "our country;" 2) to the president of the United States; 3) to the memory of George Washington; 4) to the sages and heroes of the Revolution; 5) to the people of all nations; 6) to internal improvements and domestic industry; 7) to the canals of New York and Ohio; 8) to "our sister republics of South America;" 9) to Greece (which was then fighting for its independence from Turkish rule); and 10) to "our distinguished guest, Henry Clay."⁹³

At this point, Clay rose and gave a short address, after which he offered toast number 11 to Governor Clinton. This was quickly followed by toast #12 to Lafayette; 13) to General Jackson, "as a soldier and patriot;" 14) to ailing William H. Crawford, "an intelligent and independent statesman. May he be restored to health;" and finally, 15) to the governor of Ohio.⁹⁴

A newsman who attended the dinner later wrote: "We never recollect to have been present at a public dinner...where the company appeared to be more grateful and delighted."⁹⁵

Bullock described *Elmwood Hall* as it existed during his first visit and told of his later purchase of it in his *Sketch of A Journey Through The Western States of North America*, published in London in 1827. He wrote:

"The estate, or farm as it is here called, consists of about 1,000 acres, part of which is as fine arable land as ever was ploughed and part rich pasture land. It...stretches about two miles and a half along the banks of the Ohio and is about eight miles in circumference. It is scarcely possible to find a more beautiful, fertile and healthy spot. A ride round its boundaries embraces every variety of landscape. Its general feature is level, gently rising from the river into undulatory [sic] hill and valley, resembling the finest part of the county of Devon, excepting that the portion farthest from the river is clothes with woods to which, from the size of the trees, their beauty and variety, nothing in Europe can compare."

Bullock went on to say:

"The prospect from the hill and house, over this part of the valley of Ohio, the noble river winding through it, enlivened by the passing steam-boats, with colours waving, and signal guns echoing from the surrounding hills; its floating arks, laden with stores for the settlers on the shores, besides the sailing and fishing boats; on one side of the river, the beautiful rising city, with domes, pinnacles, public buildings and manufactories and on the other bank, the villages of Newport and Covington; together form such a view as would require a much abler pen than mine to do justice to.

Mr. Carneal, who is a considerable landholder, selected this desirable spot for his abode and at considerable expense, about six years since, erected the elegant mansion in which he now resides. It is considered the completest [sic] residence in the country and built of stone and brick, after his own designs, with three handsome fronts. The lofty apartments, which it contains, in point of beauty or convenience, are surpassed by few, even in the Atlantic cities, as no expense was spared for its completion. It is surrounded by every requisite for a gentleman's country-house, domestics' houses, barns, stables, coach-house, ice-house, dairy, etc.

I have not, since I left England, seen a house so completely furnished with all the elegances and refinements of society, nor a more hospitable and abundant board, which is wholly supplied from his own grounds. Better beef and mutton could not be

desired. Game is so plentiful, that it is easily and abundantly procured within half a mile of the house. Fish of the finest kinds, in great variety, are taken in the Ohio, within a still shorter distance, and kept alive in pens on the banks and a well-stored kitchen-garden, orchard and vineyard of twenty-five acres, planted with all the best vegetables and fruit of the United States contribute to the general stock; in short, every necessary and luxury of life, excepting tea and coffee, is produced on the estate. The house is situated on a gentle acclivity, about 150 yards from the river with beautiful pleasure grounds in front laid out with taste and decorated with varieties of magnificent plants and flowers to which we are yet strangers; it commands a full view of the river and all that passes on it. A more desirable spot for a family residence perhaps is scarcely to be found. The great variety of beautiful birds that are found here much enliven the scene. The first night I passed in this elegant retreat, the mocking-bird, with its lucid, ever-varying notes, continuing until dawn, kept me awake for some time with its melody; and in the morning are sunrise, the redbirds, or Virginian nightingale, was chanting his morning hymn, close to my bedroom window. In continued so long that I suspected, what proved to be the case, its nest and young were concealed in the honeysuckle on which he was singing. Another variety of honeysuckle in front of the house, within ten feet of the door, was the constant report of the ruby-throated humming birds, one of the smallest of that diminutive family, whose various evolutions, performed with the quickness of light, the eye finds it difficult to follow. The beautiful blue jay is so common as to be troublesome. The orange and black oriole that makes the remarkable pendant nest is here by no means scarce; its note is charming. Several varieties of woodpecker are seen close to the house and wild ducks were hourly on the horse-pond, whilst the farm yard abounds with *wild* pigeon, as tame as our domestic ones; and the quail, nearly as large as our partridge, swarmed in the gardens, orchards and pleasure grounds. The children of the family had their pet tame deer; and a pair of the gigantic elk or wappetti (nearly the size of horses), ranged through the meadows and returned to the house at milking hours with the cows. A few weeks before, Mr. Carneal had parted with a pair of American buffaloes, or bonassus,⁹⁶ which he had kept for some time, for the purpose of improving his breed of draft cattle.⁹⁷

Shortly after my return from *Elmwood*, I was informed that Mr. Carneal was on the point of changing his residence and that the whole would be sold. I could not resist the temptation of knowing the price and, after a few days consideration, I became the purchaser.⁹⁸

I now went to reside as a visitor with Mr. C. and remained a fortnight in examining the property and every day became more satisfied with my acquisition. I found on it every requisite for building; the finest timber, abundance of stone and lime, with gravel, sand, clay, etc. It appeared to me that a finer site for building a small town of retirement in the vicinity of a populous manufacturing city could scarcely exist. I made a little model of the land and determined to have it laid out to the best possible advantage, with professional assistance, on my arrival in England, and prepared to return home to collect my family and those of my friends, whose limited incomes made such a removal as I contemplated convenient and, on June 2, took my departure in a stage that had just commenced running on a new road to Sandusky, on Lake Erie."⁹⁹

Bullock was a naturalist, antiquarian and showman who had gained a degree of fame for his exhibits at Egyptian Hall, an outstanding London museum. He was now so enthused over his new project, that after he returned to England, he lectured throughout the London area in an effort to attract settlers to his dream town.

Bullock's elaborate plans for the model city included a brewery, two parks, a market, schools and churches, a public fountain, a bath, museum, a town hall, theatre, library and inns. The project never got beyond the planning stage and Bullock eventually sold *Elmwood* and left the area.

Bullock and the Ludlow site were later recalled by Mrs. Frances Trollope, when in 1832 she wrote:

"About two miles below Cincinnati, on the Kentucky side of the river, Mr. Bullock, the well-known proprietor of the Egyptian Hall, has bought a large estate, with a noble house upon it. He and his amiable wife were devoting themselves to the

embellishment of the house and grounds; and certainly there is more tasks and art lavished on one of their beautiful saloons than all Western America can show elsewhere. It is impossible to help feeling that Mr. Bullock is rather out of his element in this remote spot and the gems of art he has brought with him, show as strangely there, as would a bower of roses in Siberia or a Cincinnati fashionable at Almack's. The exquisite beauty of the spot, commanding one of the finest reaches of the Ohio, the extensive gardens and the large and handsome mansion, have tempted Mr. Bullock to spend a large sum in the purchase of this place and if anyone who has passed his life in London could endure such a change, the active mind and sanguine spirit of Mr. Bullock might enable him to do it; but his frank and truly English hospitality and his enlightened and inquiring mind, seemed sadly wasted there. I have since heard with pleasure that Mr. Bullock had parted with this beautiful but secluded mansion."¹⁰⁰

The purchaser of Bullock's estate was Israel L. Ludlow, Jr., who acquired the mansion and 710 acres in April 1831 for \$21,300. Five years later he purchased the remaining 500 acres for \$30,000 after which Bullock and his family returned to England. *Elmwood Hall* itself has since been owned by George Kenner, James Goodloe, Henry Jenkins, E. B. Webster and Ed Marjileth, who in 1920, sold it to Albert and Ede Thomas.

Shortly after Ludlow acquired the estate, he began selling off small tracts – at one time selling 42 acres to his brother-in-law, George Kenner. Kenner's purchase fronted on the Ohio River and was bounded on the south, east and west by today's Elm Street, Kenner Street and the Bromley town limits.¹⁰¹

Kenner, who was a Louisiana planter and slave-owner, liked to spend his summers in this area. By doing so, he not only could escape the humid Louisiana summer heat but could also conduct his annual business affairs with nearby Ohio concerns.

Neither did Kenner care to spend those warm days staying in local hotels, so in 1832 – the same year Frances Trollope published her journal – he erected a spacious and airy summer home on his 42 acre purchase. The home, known as *Somerset Hall*, was built in the center of an extensively landscaped plot of ground. Its north lawn was terraced and featured a flower-bordered walkway stretching from its front entrance to the river.¹⁰²

Kenner always brought his slave servants with him when he visited *Somerset Hall* and it always proved to be rather costly for him, as many of them promptly swam the Ohio to freedom.¹⁰³

The problem of runaways plagued Kenner even during his occasional winter-time visits. Such was the case in January 1846 when he posted the following notice:

\$400 Reward

ABSCONDED from the farm of the subscriber, on the night of the 7th inst., two negro slaves; one called TIM, a light black, about six feet in height, broad shoulders, about 24 years of age. The other called WILLIAM, a house servant and coachman, a very light mulatto, about 5 feet 6 inches in height, slender in form, about 30 year of age.

It is possible they will be seen together, having, it is believed, been skulking about Covington and the premises of their master since Saturday night with the intention of decoying the wife of William.

The above reward will be paid for the apprehension and delivery of said servants at the prison in Covington, or one half the sum for either separately, by their owner.

GEO. R. KENNER

Covington, Jan. 13, 1846.¹⁰⁴

In time, Kenner sold *Somerset Hall* to his nephew William Ludlow, son¹⁰⁵ of Israel, Jr.

WHEN ALBERT AND EDA THOMAS eventually acquired *Elmwood Hall*, they installed their newly-organized *Mrs. Thomas Candy Company* in the building. They maintained a great respect for the mansion and its past and did much to restore it to a faint semblance of its former glory.

In July 1971 though, the Thomas' liquidated their company and once again the stately old structure was put up for sale. Six years later, in 1977, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Gaither purchased it and returned it to its former use as a private residence.

FRANCES TROLLOPE, who had been so lavish in her praise of the Bullock estate, was an English woman who had come to America to seek her fortune. She decided Cincinnati offered the most opportunity and, accordingly, set about building what has been termed one of the most ornate but architecturally grotesque structures that city has ever seen. Her plan was to conduct a bazaar that would rival any in the nation.

Mrs. Trollope failed to recognize the true nature of the Westerner and insisted on stocking English imports for which there was little demand and at prices far beyond what the average citizen was willing to pay. Her business was doomed to failure from the start.

Frances Trollope returned to England a bitter and resentful woman. In her book describing her adventures in America, she spared no invective in her reproach of Cincinnati. It thoroughly rankled Cincinnatians. Her observations of the Covington side of the river however, were far less malicious. In fact, her feelings for the Upper Bluegrass might even be described as amiable and cordial, though not entirely without criticism.

She noted while traveling by boat between Louisville and Cincinnati in 1828:

“The scenery on the Kentucky side is much finer than on that of Indiana or Ohio. The State of Kentucky was the darling spot of many tribes of Indians and was reserved among them as a common hunting ground; it is said that they cannot yet name it without emotion and that they have a sad and wild lament that they still chaunt [sic] to its memory. But their exclusion thence is of no recent date; Kentucky has been longer settled than Illinois, Indiana or Ohio and it appears not only more highly cultivated but more fertile and more picturesque than either. I have rarely seen richer pastures than those of Kentucky. The forest trees, where not too crowded, are of magnificent growth and the crops are gloriously abundant where the thriftless husbandry has not worn out the soil by unvarying succession of exhausting crops. We were shown ground which had borne abundant crops of wheat for twenty successive years; but a much shorter period suffices to exhaust the ground if it were made to produce tobacco without the intermission of some other crop.”

While in Cincinnati, Mrs. Trollope noted:

“On crossing the water to Kentucky the scene is greatly improved; beach and chestnut, of magnificent growth, border the beautiful river; the ground had been well cleared and the herbage is excellent; the pawpaw grows abundantly and is a splendid shrub though it bears neither fruit nor flowers so far north. The noble tulip tree flourishes here and blooms profusely.

The river Licking flows into the Ohio nearly opposite Cincinnati; it is a pretty winding stream and two or three miles from its mouth has a brisk rapid dancing among white stones which, in the absence of better rocks, we found picturesque.”

Mrs. Trollope was in error concerning the pawpaw, for children to this day gather its wild fruit when it is in season. Frances Trollope liked to spend long hours in the woods but cared little for those north of the river. She made this abundantly clear as she continued:

“Though we kept steadily to our resolution of passing no more sylvan hours in the forests of Ohio, we often spent entire days in Kentucky, tracing the course of a ‘creek’ or climbing the highest points within our reach in the hope of catching a glimpse of some distant object. A beautiful reach of the Ohio or the dark windings of the pretty Licking were indeed always the most remarkable features in the landscape.

There was one spot, however, so beautiful that we visited it again and again; it was by no means free from mosquitoes; and being on the bank of a stream with many enormous trees lying on the half-cleared ground around, it was just such a place as we had been told a hundred times was particularly ‘dangerous;’ nevertheless, we dared everything for the sake of dining beside our beautiful rippling stream and watching the bright sunbeams dancing on the grassy bank, at such a distance from our retreat that they could not heat us. A little below the basin that cooled our wine was a cascade of

sufficient dimensions to give us all the music of a waterfall and all the sparkling brightness of clear water when it is broken again and again by jutting crags.

To sit beside this miniature cascade and read or dream away a day was one of our greatest pleasures.”

The caustic Mrs. Trollope though was still not without criticism of the Covington area for she continued her account by declaring:

“It was indeed a mortifying fact that whenever we found out a picturesque nook, where turf and moss and deep shade and a crystal stream and fallen trees, majestic in their ruin, tempted us to sit down and be very cool and very happy, we invariably found that spot pay under the imputation of malaria.”¹⁰⁶

Yet another of the English woman’s complaints centered about the large number of hogs and pigs which freely roamed the local streets. In this she was not alone for many townspeople were voicing the same complaint. In addition, there were loud protests against the widespread practice of slaughtering the swine on the thoroughfares.

The protests received partial acknowledgement in 1828 when an ordinance was passed prohibiting hog butchering on any public square where private families might reside. The penalty for violation of this code was set at a fine of \$5.¹⁰⁷

Mrs. Trollope was a devotee of the stage and counted Covington’s celebrated Alexander and Frances Ann Drake among the closest of her American friends.

THE DRAKES first came to Kentucky from Albany, New York in 1815. That was when the widowed actor, Samuel Drake, organized a troupe for the purpose of setting up a theatrical circuit for Lexington, Frankfort and Louisville. His troupe included his talented children: Julia, Martha, Samuel, Jr., James, Alexander and an accompanying teenage novice, Frances Ann Denny.¹⁰⁸

The company met with almost immediate success. Frequent tours throughout the backwoods of Kentucky, Ohio and Indiana led to their becoming closely identified with the pioneer western theatre. They always carried a number of stage sets on these tours and traveled by any available conveyance including wagon, flatboat – and whenever possible – steamboat.¹⁰⁹

Frances showed considerable promise and in 1820 decided to try her fortune in New York. Critics acclaimed her debut in that city and she quickly became recognized as one of America’s truly great actresses. It was then she married the already-renowned Alexander Drake.¹¹⁰

In 1824, Frances and her equally celebrated husband returned to Kentucky to act on their old circuit. However, touring the Kentucky hinterland no longer held the appeal it once had. Alexander and Frances longed for some of the amenities of life and in 1826 decided to make Covington their home. On July 31st they paid \$1,500 to town trustee William C. Bell for his spacious home at (present) 322 East Third Street.¹¹¹ Over the years, the Drakes’ Third Street residence served as home for some of Covington’s most noted citizens, including the Drakes and the James A. Beard family.

Mrs. Trollope delighted in visiting the Drakes at the Covington home. The Drakes returned her friendship and on at least two occasions assisted her out of financial difficulties by appearing in stage productions at her ill-fated Bazaar in Cincinnati.¹¹²

In 1828, the Drakes again made successful stage appearances in New York City but returned to their Covington home in order to be near the Cincinnati theatre which Alexander had earlier agreed to manage.¹¹³

Also in 1828, Mortimer Murray Benton first appeared as a public official. On December 23rd he filled in for James G. Arnold as clerk pro-tem for that day’s meeting of the town trustees. Benton, who four years later married Cary Clemons’ daughter, Angelina, would eventually become the town’s first mayor and became one of Covington’s most outstanding civic and political leaders.¹¹⁴

Another of the town’s early residents, John Mackey, later described Covington as it existed in June 1829. He recalled all the land west of Washington Street was covered with a dense forest of exceptionally large trees. James G. Arnold operated a small dry goods store in a frame house on the east side of Garrard between Second and Third Streets, while tobacconist John B. Casey was located in a small frame building on the south side of Lower Market (present Park Place). Other than eleven notable exceptions, every building in Covington was of frame construction. The exceptions were the large stone house built by Thomas Kennedy and ten structures of brick.¹¹⁵

Mackoy recalled the brick structures as including the home of William Wright Southgate at the eastern end of Second Street; that of Alexander Drake on the north side of Third Street, Mr. Gano's home on what is now a portion of Garrard Street and Dr. Benjamin F. Bedinger's home at the southeast corner of Front Street (now Riverside Drive) and Garrard. Dr. Bedinger's home also contained a large lottery office which by then was occupied by Samuel Kennedy.¹¹⁶

Public lotteries had been legalized by the state legislature of 1811-12 and had long been used for benefit of road construction, establishment of academies, improvement of waterway navigational facilities and other such enterprises.

Other brick structures existing in town during that summer of 1829 included the large structure Alexander Connelly had erected at Second and Garrard which housed his tavern and the Stinson House, later owned by G.W. Ball on the south side of Third, west of Scott Street.

Thomas D. Carneal's brick home was on the south side of Second between Scott and Madison. Raleigh Colston owned such a house on the west side of Madison between Second and Third and Benjamin W. Leathers, father of W.W. Leathers, owned the property at the northwest corner of Lower Market and Greenup. Covington's remaining brick structure was the home which Thomas Kennedy had erected at the northwest corner of Sixth and Greenup.¹¹⁷

The name "Sixth Street," seemed to local residents much too formal a designation for a place they had always called "Fish Gut," a name originally given to a nearby creek. It took them many years to drop the older but colorful name from their everyday vocabulary.¹¹⁸

During that same year, on December 31st, the lots on the south side of Second Street west of Scott be extended northward for an additional 50 feet and the western portion of Second be closed. A new street was extended westward to Madison from the northwest corner of Scott and appropriately given the name "New Street." All this was done at the request of Thomas D. Carneal, Edward Coleston and James G. Arnold, the three property owners affected.¹¹⁹ New Street has since been designated as part of West Second Street.

On NOVEMBER 28, 1827, Covington city fathers attempted to place the city in the transportation business by proposing a city-owned ferry to Cincinnati. The private ferryboat owners were alert to the dangers of such competition and immediately filed an injunction suit against the town.

Thomas Kennedy had founded the first ferry at this location and he and his family always claimed and used the ferry right and wharf except for seven years between 1815 and 1822. Legal ownership during that time was held by the proprietors of the new town and perhaps because they did hold it, Covington obtained its first graded street. The river crossing was important to the town and on August 25, 1817, a group of them successfully petitioned the trustees to grade Greenup Street from Front to Fourth Street to provide better access to the river. The contract for the work was awarded to Martin Hardin.

Kennedy died in 1821 and the following year his son, Samuel, regained control of the ferry for the family. Rates remained the same as when the senior Kennedy operated the service and flats were still used for the crossing.

The local ferryboat business had become competitive, for Pliny Bliss, a migrant from Massachusetts, started a horse-powered ferry in June of 1818. In 1815 James H. Hudson had announced: "The Cove Ferry is now furnished with excellent Flats, calculated to carry wagons and horses and Skiffs for foot passengers, with experienced and attentive Ferrymen. Every attention will be paid . . . travelers . . . landing them either above or below the Licking as they may wish . . ."¹²⁰

Pliny Bliss' new "Horse Ferry Boat No. 1" was the first local ferryboat not manually operated. It ran between Covington, Cincinnati and Newport and was described by Bliss as being "so constructed as to accommodate passengers with a safe, speedy and very comfortable passage; and will carry with perfect safety, at least two wagons and teams n ten or fifteen horses, with any reasonable number of persons."¹²¹

Even though his "Horse Ferry Boat No. 1" was a success from its inception, Bliss decided he could cut expenses and increase profit by building a smaller and more efficient craft. Accordingly, in 1823 he constructed a smaller boat to which he affixed a "circular and endless" chain. The two horses Bliss employed were unable to power the heavy equipment however, so the whole project was abandoned as a failure.¹²²

Undaunted, the following year Bliss built another and even more curious craft. It had no main deck and its bottom was floored. The boat's upper part was of slats bent like wagon bows to which siding and the upper deck were nailed. Light was let into this "cabin" through small windows, each containing three 8 x 10 inch panes of glass. The craft was powered by a rotary steam engine which received its power from a single upright boiler. Town kibitzers immediately christened the nondescript boat *Bliss' Chicken Thief*.¹²³ The *Chicken Thief's* career at Covington was a brief one, for it was soon sold to an investor who took the unique craft further south.¹²⁴

Samuel Wiggins promptly acquired Bliss' ferrying rights and, in partnership with the Kennedys, resumed the service Bliss had provided.¹²⁵

In July 1828, the city decided to press what it considered its right to operate a river crossing and leased a ferry right to James Hudson for a rental of eight dollars a month. Hudson had been in this business before and was not enthused about its prospects. He agreed to operate the service only until the city could find a permanent lessee.¹²⁶

Hudson operated the ferry for only a brief time when William Harlow leased the business for ten years. Harlow quickly became disillusioned about his new venture and a few months later, on December 19th, successfully petitioned the town trustees to release him from his contract. Evidently he had not been too prompt with his rent either, for the city instigated a law suit for payments in arrears.¹²⁷

The ferry operation then went to Jefferson Phelps, a trustee of the town as well as its legal advisor. Although Phelps' contract with the board was approved on December 23, 1828, rents dated back to December 19, 1821!¹²⁸ The latter was just before expiration of the ferry rights held by the town proprietors for the years 1815-1822.

If by this device the town proprietors meant to circumvent court action based on a possible claim of legal abandonment of town rights, they miscalculated. Suit was brought by other ferry operators, and Phelps was kept from operations between July 20, 1830 through the fall of 1831. This lawsuit was recalled a few years later when *The Licking Valley Register* noted:

"It will be recollected that some years ago the Trustees of Covington obtained from the County Court of Campbell a license to keep a ferry from Covington to Cincinnati; Kennedy's heirs claimed the exclusive right to the ferry passage and ground in front of the city. After years of litigation, the Courts decided that Kennedy's heirs were entitled to the ferry privilege, but the ground, to low water mark, belonged to the city. After this decision, Kennedy's heirs brought suit in the Scott Circuit Court against the Trustees and others and the City of Covington for damages; and that Court rendered a decree in favor of the plaintiffs for \$4,745.12, from which the City *et al.* appealed and the late Court of Appeals has reversed the judgment of the Court below with costs; and set aside the bond by Kennedy's heirs to keep the ferry and request them to give Bond and security to the City to run said ferry according to law"¹²⁹

The ferry business situation was now to become even more complicated. On September 23, 1831, *The Farmers' Record and Covington Literary Journal* appeared on the streets with the following notice:

The new steam ferryboat is announced to commerce running Sunday, September 25, From the foot of Greenup Street to a wharf between Walnut and Vine, Cincinnati, Under the proprietorship of F. Colston and J. Phelps.

The announcement of the new river crossing came as no surprise, of course, to Samuel Kennedy and he used the same edition of that newspaper to warn any "trespassers" against using the landing from the Licking to "a point 50 ¼ poles below the white oak tree on the south bank of the Ohio."¹³⁰

Nevertheless, the new service was inaugurated as announced and, except for the brief career of Pliny Bliss' *Chicken Thief*, represented Covington's first regularly scheduled steam-powered ferryboat. It operated from a wharf established at the foot of Greenup Street and continued the 12 ½ cent passenger rate.¹³¹

Public opposition to the Kennedys' claim of exclusive ferry rights existed from almost the very start of local ferryboat service. Now that the Kennedys had won a degree of support from the courts, they continued their success at removing all competitors. All except the owners of what later became the Main Street Ferry. The area was then outside the town limits and was not affected by the court action between Kennedy and Covington.¹³²

THE MAIN STREET FERRY, a large flatboat propelled by two oarsmen, was begun by James Riddle in 1822 and later operated by Jacob Hardin. Hardin had also served as captain of Covington's first town patrol. One fellow townsman described him as "knowing no fear, was stern in demeanor, firm and steadfast of purpose, a kind friend, a relentless enemy, a kind husband and father and cared but little for the world's goods."¹³³

In 1828, three years after the United States Bank foreclosed on Riddle's heavily mortgaged land and ferryboat operation, a Mr. Herd became lessee of the ferry, who substituted a horse powered craft for the old scow which had been in operation.¹³⁴

About the time Pliny Bliss sold his *Chicken Thief*, Charles Littlefield, described by townspeople as “a live Yankee,” migrated to Covington. He was a brick mason by trade and soon became one of the most respected citizens, eventually a member of the town council.¹³⁵ In 1834, Littlefield and Bliss entered a partnership to operate a ferry that made use of a submerged chain. The boat would need no horsepower, steam power or man power but would be moved by pulling the chain. This project, like Bliss’ earlier “endless chain” experiment proved a failure and was never put in operation.¹³⁶

THE MUDDLED FERRY SITUATION LED TO EVER-INCREASING AGITATION FOR A BRIDGE to link Covington with her Ohio neighbor and in February 1831, the U.S. Engineers reported the results of a two-year study which declared such a project to be entirely feasible. The engineers estimated the cost to be approximately \$300,000.¹³⁷ Certain Ohio interests though, were strongly opposed to such a structure for fear of a possible loss of business and population to the Kentucky shore. The *Cincinnati Gazette* editorialized against a bridge and openly charged the proposal was “an effort to build Covington at the expense of Cincinnati.” The ferryboats were saved for the time being and it would be another 35 years before the first local Ohio River bridge would open to general traffic.

Despite their critics, the ferries continued doing a brisk business. Their landing sites presented a lively appearance and according to one observer were “constantly crowded with carriages, wagons, buggies, drays, bipeds and quadrupeds – all jammed pell-mell together and waiting their turn to cross over.”¹³⁸

Another area early ferry was founded at Constance, Kentucky in 1848. In August 1817m its owner, Raleigh Colston, sold it and 103 ¾ acres of Kentucky riverfront to George Anderson for \$371.87.¹³⁹ Anderson and his family operated the business until 1841 when they sold it. The ferry changed ownership several times until March 6, 1865 when Charles Kottmeyer acquired it and slightly more than two acres for \$2,800.¹⁴⁰

The ferryboat Kottmeyer first acquired was powered by two horses, each tethered in a separate stall on either side of the deck. They walked treadmills which turned the independently-turning sidewheels. If the ferryman wanted to make a turn in the water, he simply halted one of the horses.

Kottmeyer converted the horse-powered vessel to a steam-powered operation in 1867 and eventually passed the business on to his son Henry. In 1947, two of Charles’ grandchildren, Henry Jr., and Oliver, replaced the steam boilers with diesel engines. From them, ownership was handed to Richard, son of Henry Jr.

As late as 1980, one of the Kottmeyer boats still in service was the *Boone No. 7*, a diesel-powered sidewheeler built by Covington’s former Stanwood Corporation as a replica of George Anderson’s first boat.

One objectionable feature of Covington’s early ferries was their inability to economically and safely transport large herds of cattle on their way to northern markets. So much danger and trouble was experienced in taking cattle across the Ohio in boats that drivers often chose to force their animals to swim. To do this, men in skiffs were usually posted above and below a chosen crossing. Starting from about where Pike and Madison now join, the drivers would urge the cattle relentlessly and rapidly on until the animals became warmed up and willingly plunged into the river. They would then be goaded to swim across.¹⁴¹

Another handicap ferries faced was the vagaries of the river itself. It was virtually impossible to operate with any degree of safety during high water or heavy ice. The river often froze during winter months and the thaws which followed could prove lethal to ice-bound boats. A contemporary account of such an ice break-up is provided by an early Covington newspaper writer.

The Licking had frozen on the night of December 2, 1831 and the Ohio on the eleventh. The frozen rivers were used as roads for heavily loaded wagons up to the very night the Licking “broke.” Warm rains set in and the melting ice and snow led to an inundation known as the “flood of ’32.” The reporter wrote as follows:

“On Saturday morning last (January 6), Licking River broke up and with such force, the Ohio being blocked up below with firm and solid ice, as to run obliquely across up stream so as to reach Cincinnati above the steam mill, and sunk the steamboats *Lady Washington*, *New Jersey* and *Chesapeake*. The two former are entirely lost, having drifted off. The other still lays at the wharf . . . Many a flatboat was crushed to pieces and every steamboat more or less damaged. The scene exhibited on Sunday morning was awfully sublime. To see the Licking River pouring its way through all obstruction and the ice in broken bodies tumbling piece over piece in tumultuous irregularity, and for want of its wonted outlet pursuing and forcing its way directly up stream, was a spectacle few or none have ever witnessed here before. In the afternoon the body of ice which had fastened up the river opposite here, gave way and the whole moved off in a most majestic manner. The river is on the rise and ice running, so as

to prevent boats from starting, but we anticipate a clear river in the course of two or three days.”¹⁴²

COVINGTON HAD REPLACED NEWPORT as the county’s largest town, by that time, with a population of 743 to Newport’s 715, as revealed by the corrected 1830 federal census. Campbell County’s total number of residents had increased to 9,883, including 1,033 slaves and 22 freedmen. Of that number, Covington contained 56 of the county’s slaves and 2 of the free blacks, while Newport counted 7w2 slaves and but one freedman.¹⁴³

Two years later, in August 1832, the town trustees became convinced the community was experiencing such extraordinary growth they directed Mortimer M. Benton to conduct a special census count. Benton’s count revealed the population had by then expanded to 1,433 – including 106 slaves and 3 “free persons of color.”¹⁴⁴

It was just three months earlier the tax commissioner reported the valuation of all realty in town stood at \$231,345.¹⁴⁵ Part of that year’s taxes went to erect a market house for the townspeople, yet when high water washed away the fragile Fish Gut Creek Bridge, the trustees called for a public subscription to pay for the structure’s replacement.¹⁴⁶

Many Covingtonians of the time were prone to spend their weekends in certain activities which prompted other townspeople to appear before the Board of Trustees for the purpose of “praying some measure to be adopted to suppress the Grog Shops or the practice of vending Liquors, together with rioters from disturbing the peace on Sabbath days.”¹⁴⁷

Another of the local social customs involved a good-natured hazing of newly-weds. These hazing, known as *cheverees*, consisted largely of earsplitting noise-making and innocent pranks played by large crowds gathered outside the newly-weds’ home, preferably on the couple’s first night. The bride and groom were supposed to respond by coming out to greet and treat the crowd.

As in the case of the “rioters” who disturbed the Sabbath, there were also those who failed to view *cheverees* in the same light vein as the participants. In the spring of 1831, a group of these irate citizens appeared before the trustees complaining of the noise attendant at most weddings. They presented a petition “for the purpose of raising a Guard to suppress riotous parties that assemble under the head of *Cheverees* who attend with noise and tumult the performance of Nuptial Ceremonies.”¹⁴⁸ The trustees took no action on the petition.

During that same year, the people of Covington offered special prayers of gratitude for being spared the smallpox plague which struck the Ohio valley. Platt Kennedy, Thomas Gallant and John B. Casey made up the Covington Board of Health and reported it was only by Divine Providence the town escaped being ravaged by the disease, as it had in 1829. Only one Covingtonian, a young woman, acquired the disease that year – and she contracted it in Ohio. The Board of Health and the Town Trustees immediately established a temporary pest house for her out in the county. It represented the first such facility ever established in the future Kenton County.

In addition to attempting river crossings and receiving complaints of noisy *cheverees*, the trustees of 1831 also concerned themselves with the community’s morals and succeeded in passing an ordinance which outlawed marble playing on Sundays. In June they voted:

“Whereas the peace of the Citizens of this Town has of late been much annoyed by Collections of Boys & Servants in the Streets and alleys of this Town playing at games of Marbles, balls, pitching cents &ct on the day of Sabbath . . . Therefore for the Suppression of Such unlawful assemblies for gaming on Said day, Be it ordained by the Trustees for the Town of Covington That if any person or persons Shall play at ball, Marbles, pitch cents, Dollars, Quoits or Shall play or practice any game or games upon the Holy Sabbath day Whatsoever Shall upon conviction thereof pay a fine not less than one Dollars nor more than five Dollars for every offence – to be recovered if minor or free persons, from their parents or Guardians – if Slaves or Servants from their Master or owners, together with costs or Suit before any Justice of the Peace – one moiety to the informer & the other to the Town – the act to take effect and be in force from and after the 8th day of July next . . .”¹⁴⁹

A few months after setting the above penalties for engaging in “any game or games” on Sundays, the trustees met at Jefferson Phelps’ law office where they agreed to ask the state legislature to empower them to require licenses of all “vendors of Lottery tickets.”¹⁵⁰

That same year also saw the trustees come to the aid of the newly-formed **Covington Volunteer Fire Department**. On December 9th, they met at Cary Clemons’ home and approved a purchase price of \$275 for a fire engine “provided the said engine proves upon trial and use to be a good and efficient one for its size and

dimensions.”¹⁵¹ Although there was a fire brigade under Chief Mackey as early as 1821, this represented the town’s first substantial offer of aid to the fire fighters.

Five months later, May 30, 1832, the trustees announced Clemons had been selected to construct “a temporary Engine House for the preservation of the Covington Fire Engine.”¹⁵²

Clemons completed the frame building in July, 1833 at a cost of \$225. It stood on the public square and faced Third Street, midway between Greenup and present-day Court Street. The town trustees, who had been holding their meetings in the town school house and at various members’ homes, now elected to conduct their sessions on the second floor of the new building. The fore engine was kept below. When the structure was eventually replaced, it was sold to Michael Moore and moved to what was then 404 Philadelphia Street.

A reminder of that early fire fighting company was uncovered in September 1945 when workers digging a pit at the rear of the Sixth and Washington firehouse, found a sandstone plaque inscribed:

Covington Fire Co. No. 1, Instituted 1833.

The plaque was being used to cover an abandoned cistern.¹⁵³

Actually, Fire Company Number 1 had been chartered in 1832, but was not until February 20th of the following year that the company adopted a constitution. Among the constitution’s 36 signers were such prominent individuals as John M. Bowen, John B. Casey, Alexander L. Greer, Cassius B. Sandford and C. H. Gedge.¹⁵⁴

The first engine was a type known as a “coffee mill engine,” and was simply called the “Coffee Mill.” It resembled an oblong box on wheels, measured about 4 x 6 feet and was operated by a crew of 12 men. The hand-drawn apparatus had side-mounted cranks that when turned, set in motion a rotary gear, the teeth of which scooped water from the box and forced it through a nozzle for distances up to 30 feet. The water was earlier drawn into the box by a hose and a long-handled pump.

Other equipment belonging to the department included a supply of leather buckets which were to be used in brigade fashion.

The “Coffee Mill” quickly became outmoded as Covington continued to grow and expand and was sent to Newport where it remained in service for some time.

The town’s second engine was the *Washington*. It worked somewhat on the principle of a railroad hand-car and required only 8 men to operate. After that, came the *Neptune* and then the *Simon Kenton*, both of which had pumps operated like the oars of a rowboat.¹⁵⁵

In 1833, a disastrous fire struck a large frame building on the west side of Scott Street at the northwest corner of an alley between Third and Fourth. The flames totally destroyed the building owned by John B. Casey and momentarily threatened to engulf the entire neighborhood. The firefighters, although unable to save the structure, were nevertheless credited with containing the fire and preventing what otherwise might have been a widespread holocaust.

Among the losses attributed to the fire was Covington’s first Masonic Lodge, Temple No. 64. The lodge, which held its meeting in Casey’s building since its founding in August 1820, met with difficulties from almost its very beginning and had long been considering surrendering its charter. The blaze hastened that decision. The fire not only destroyed all the lodge’s records but also demoralized the few active members, that they decided to disband.

Another factor probably involved in disbanding the lodge was the animosity of the Anti-Masonic Political Party. This was organized in 1826 in western New York after a member of the Masons was said to have been murdered for attempting to expose his organization’s secrets.¹⁵⁶

The resultant furor was nothing less than astonishing. The order was labeled as a conspirator against democracy and charged with acting as a subversive force in business, government and the courts. Agitation against it spread rapidly as the new party pledged to eliminate all such secret societies from the American scene.¹⁵⁷

The party met with so many local successes across the land that it decided to run William Wirt in the 1832 presidential race. It represented America’s earliest “third party” movement.¹⁵⁸

The Masons would not have another local lodge until August 1838 when Covington Lodge No. 109 was activated and the charter of Temple Lodge deposited with it as the old organization’s successor.¹⁵⁹

During its first year, Lodge No. 109 met in a building owned by James G. Arnold, its Senior Warden. The following year it moved to another of Arnold’s buildings – this one on Lower Market Space at a site later occupied by the post-Civil War post office & then Covington-Kenton County Municipal Building.

In 1834, the city passed an ordinance allowing \$2.50 to the first fireman who reached the scene of a night-time blaze with a filled water cask and \$1.00 for the same feat during daylight hours. One year later, another ordinance was passed appropriating \$275 for a new engine for the volunteers.

Meantime, another stagecoach line entered the town when the 1832 legislature granted C. P. Hogan of Williamstown a charter to operate between Georgetown and Covington. Hogan equipped each of his coaches with a

large horn which the driver would blow a loud blast when approaching any settlement. [*The original stagecoach charter was owned by Abner Gaines of Walton – editor*]

The line was a financial success from its inception and maintained an overnight stop at Hogan's Williamstown home. On one occasion, a passenger who had become ill was put to bed there and cared for throughout the night by Hogan. The next morning, the traveler's illness was diagnosed as smallpox – and Hogan contracted it!

The line continued service to Covington until the L&N Railroad was completed, at which time Walton was made the stagecoach's northern terminus. Passengers wishing to continue into Covington transferred at that point to the railroad.¹⁶⁰

One of the town trustees, Alexander Connelly, also served as postmaster at this time and maintained the community's post office in his tavern at the northwest corner of Second and Garrard. Each morning before starting to market he would fill his hat with mail and, while enroute to his morning shopping, would "accost the owners, deliver the letters, and collect his twenty-five cents each."¹⁶¹

Envelopes were not in use at that time. The letter was simply folded and sealed with wax. Postage was collected on delivery. The seeming informality of this still did not approach the time when the Point had no definite name. The lack of a formal place-name however, never deterred delivery of mail. A typical way of addressing mail to the earliest of local inhabitants is shown by an example of a letter sent in 1808 from King George, Maryland, to a prominent Campbell County resident. It was simply addressed: "Mr. Washington Berry, Near the Mouth of the Licking opposite Cincinnati." Even as late as 1823 mail addressed "Mr. Samuel Kennedy, Mouth of Licking River, Campbell County, Ky." was promptly delivered.

During the year that C. P. Hogan began his stagecoach line, Simon Kenton and other veterans of General Clark's 1782 expedition from The Point, started laying plans for their November observance of the campaign's 50th anniversary. In June 1832 Kenton sent out a notice saying: "I propose that we meet at Covington, Kentucky, on the 3rd: the 4th, being Sabbath, to attend divine service; on Monday meet our friends on the ground where the old fort stood; and then take a final adieu, to meet no more, until we shall all meet in a world of spirits."¹⁶² Late that fall, Simon and his wife set out for Covington, but allowed enough time to first visit Mason County where his deposition was wanted in a pending land suit.¹⁶³ Covington was joined by Newport in preparing a gala reception for the expected pioneers and when Kenton finished his deposition, he and his wife promptly boarded a steamboat for the reunion site.¹⁶⁴

About that same time however, a mild outbreak of cholera began tightening its grip on the area and was raging full force when the Kentons landed at Newport. Accordingly, Simon and his wife were advised not to linger but to start immediately northward for their home.¹⁶⁵ Kenton wanted desperately to meet with his old companions but he had his wife to consider. Regretfully, he crossed the Ohio and began their journey home. It was the last time he ever set foot on Kentucky soil.

THERE WERE A FEW OLD VETERANS who decided to ignore the cholera risk and on November 3rd to reminisce about their adventures of fifty years before. One observer of the event later wrote: "Well do we remember the day that the old pioneers met, and the horrific appearance of our almost deserted streets. Til this day, do we feel the great contrast between our anticipations of that meeting of the venerable and venerated fathers of the land, and the reality when it came. The anticipated joy had fled and in its place, mourning for departed friends, fears for those around us and gloomy anticipations for ourselves, had taken its place in the breast of almost every one. The Asiatic cholera was here."¹⁶⁶

The following day, the old veterans attended church services and then on Monday crossed the Ohio to visit the site of Ft. Washington. Later in the day, the small group attended a banquet given in their honor and silently departed for their homes. The long hoped for reunion had proven to be little more than a sad disappointment.

THE EXPENSES OF CONDUCTING A GROWING TOWN'S AFFAIRS continued to steadily mount and led to the passage of a rather unique piece of legislation on July 3, 1833. The order read: "On motion ordered that the sum of \$1,000 be the amount of revenue for the Town of Covington to be collected from the slaves and real estate in said town for the year of 1833."

Some of that year's expenditures included seven dollars paid to Hiram Martin for making a desk for the council chambers, ten dollars to Cary Clemons for making tables and benches and \$1.12 to Alexander L. Greer for candlesticks.

The board accepted and agreed to a proposal from Jefferson Phelps and Edward G. Bladen to build a steam ferryboat and contracted with Martin Hardin to grade and macadamize Greenup Street from Front to Fourth Street. Elijah Owens, who had earlier secured a permit to fence the graveyard, was told the fence work would have to be done at his own expense, or if he desired, he might collect a private subscription.

In other action, the board appointed Henderson H. Phelps, Nathaniel Price and William Elliott as judges and Hiram Martin as clerk of an all-important election to be held December 14th in the Methodist Chapel on Garrard. The voters would decide whether to seek a city charter.

Two months later, on February 24, 1834, the state legislature responded to the townspeople's wishes and passed an act incorporating and granting a charter to the City of Covington. A short time afterward, the people chose Mortimer Murray Benton as their city's first mayor.

BENTON, AGE 26, WAS BORN December 31, 1807 at what was then Ontario County, New York, in the tiny village of Benton, a community named for his grandfather, Levi Benton.¹⁶⁷

In 1817, Mortimer's family migrated to Indiana with him. He received a formal education in what were considered the finest public schools in existence and at age 17, entered into business as a trader on the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers between Cincinnati and New Orleans.¹⁶⁸ After some time, Benton decided to study law and this decision drew him to Covington. He arrived in 1828 and entered the law office of Jefferson Phelps where he worked and studied until being admitted to the bar in 1831. During part of that tenure with Phelps, Benton served as director of a small school located on the northeast corner of Third and Garrard Streets.¹⁶⁹

Benton quickly won recognition as one of Kentucky's ablest lawyers and that, along with his outstanding political ability and an inordinate pride in his adopted hometown, made him an easy choice for many as the city's first mayor. Nevertheless, he had a formidable opponent when Moses Dalton announced intentions to seek the office. Dalton, like Benton, was one of Covington's more prominent residents and also like Benton, took an exceptional pride in the new city.

The election was conducted in a small, log schoolhouse on the public square and proved to be exceedingly close as Benton won by a margin of but five votes. He later recalled the event when he spoke before a meeting of a local historical society, the Covington Pioneers Association. Benton said the election was held May 1, 1834 and recalled he had received 119 votes to Dalton's 114.¹⁷⁰

Later writers have often erred when referring to the date of Covington's first mayoralty election, usually saying it took place in April. One such account was written for the city's observance of its 100th anniversary. The writer stated the town board held their last meeting on April 10, 1834 and commented that:

"An election held in the city of Covington on April 5, 1834, for the purpose of electing a Mayor and Councilmen, for the office of Mayor, Mortimer M. Benton was declared elected. For Councilmen, William Hopkins, John T. Levis, William W. Southgate, John B. Casey, John A. Goodson, John Mackoy and James Grimsley Arnold were declared elected and took their seats after the administration of the oaths of office. Councilman Levis was called to the chair, Hamilton Martin was elected clerk, Edward G. Bladen, Marshal, and William W. Southgate, city attorney."¹⁷¹

At their first meeting, the new councilmen established four wards by dividing the city into nearly-equal segments. The First Ward commenced at the mouth of the Licking River, extending south to Third Street and west to an alley which has since become the portion of Court Street north of Third. The Second Ward lay immediately west and the Third was directly south of the First. The Fourth Ward was bounded on the north by the Second Ward and on the east by the Third and the Market Space. Market Space is now part of Court Street between Third and Fourth Streets.

Covington's new governing body was thrifty and refused to pay a 37 ½ cent hauling bill of R. Hughes. Its members considered the charge somewhat excessive and voted to pay Hughes a more conservative 25 cents. Isaac Martin's pay of two dollars for maintaining the public well on Madison during the years 1833-4 however, was approved. Actions of earlier trustees, on February 17, 1827, ordered "a committee be appointed to contract with same person to keep the public well in order for Twelve months at the lowest bidder and take bond for the same not to exceed \$15.00."

Covington was a "city" now and council members felt, since their community had this new classification, it must also have a city seal. They allotted \$16 to William Woodruff to produce the first official seal from a press made by John A. Goodson.¹⁷²

Council members also showed concern for the safety of the citizens and, as mentioned, appointed Edward G. Bladen as first city marshal. A few months later, June 20 1834, the first workhouse was established when the city rented school trustee Milton Lamb's cellar for that purpose. He was paid rent of two dollars a month.¹⁷³

The workhouse was in reality a jail and Lamb, formerly from Maryland, became the first jailer when he was appointed "Keeper of the Workhouse."¹⁷⁴ A short time later, \$29 was allotted for lumber to construct much-needed jail bunks and to purchase "a chain and two hammers wherewith the prisoners will be made to break rock."¹⁷⁵

On March 3rd of the following year, a log and frame house at Second and Greenup was rented from William Hopkins for \$48 a year for a poorhouse. That same month, on March 26th, Jesse Grey was appointed to the combined post of "Overseer of the Workhouse and Poor House."¹⁷⁶

It was the previous January, council enacted a "Poor Ordinance" which provided an overseer for each ward and required all relief beneficiaries to enter the poorhouse before being eligible for aid of any type from the city.¹⁷⁷

In other action during 1835, council reconsidered an earlier board refusal to pay Elijah Owens for fencing the graveyard and voted to allow him \$20 for the work. [The graveyard location was between Main and Russell at Sixth –editor]¹⁷⁸

It was also decided to give the city marshal "a list of respectable persons" from whom "four a night will be called on n turn to serve as night watch." The pay for performing this duty was set at seventy-five cents a night and would be paid from "any money in the treasury."¹⁷⁹

During that time, councilmen voted to turn the fire engine house around so it would face Second Street rather than Third and also appropriated \$75 "for the purpose of procuring and hanging a city bell."¹⁸⁰ This was in addition to the bell already in existence. It was also approved to pay John R. Stewart \$1.50 for beer, furnished the workers who turned the engine house around.¹⁸¹

Also, council decided someone must be responsible to regularly ring the new bell. Accordingly, the task was assigned the city clerk, after which a new rule was passed, pertaining to the clerk and council meetings. It declared: "At the hour appointed to meet it shall be the duty of the City Clerk to have the room in order and ring the bell."¹⁸²

By this time, the tax rate had increased to 40 cents for each \$100 of real estate evaluation, while every tavern owner was required to pay an annual tavern tax of \$15. Coffee houses were charged \$30 annually.¹⁸³

Through all this, Mortimer Benton had proven to be a popular mayor. The mayor term was then for only a year and the second mayoralty election was set for April 7, 1835. This time, Benton won an easy victory over his opponent, James Adams, receiving 76 votes to Adams' 20. The office paid a yearly salary of \$100.¹⁸⁴ However, the victor did not serve out a full second term but resigned because of pressures of private business on October 2nd.¹⁸⁵

Council immediately appointed fellow councilman William W. Southgate, who was also receiving a yearly pay of \$25 as city attorney, to serve as mayor *pro temp* until October 17th when a special election would be held to select a new head of the city's government. Southgate won the position in his own right with 116 votes to a combined total of 13 votes for the two others who chose to run against him.¹⁸⁶

Never did Benton lose his deep-seated interest in Covington affairs. He held numerous public offices over the years, including city attorney and member of city council. During the same election of October 17th, he was elected from the Third Ward to fill a vacant councilmanic seat.¹⁸⁷

As time went by, Benton eventually took a leading part n securing a charter for the Kentucky Central Railroad and served as one of the line's directors and as its attorney for a number of years. He ultimately became the railroad's president.¹⁸⁸

During the Civil War, Benton served in the legislature from 1863 to 1865 and in the latter year was chosen as a member of the upper chamber. His election to the upper house was contested by strong, states-rights interests ad his office taken from him and given to his Democratic opponent.¹⁸⁹

Benton, a tall, muscular, imposing figure, was unyielding in his beliefs in Covington and his nation. In such matters "he held to his convictions with a concentration of vital force intensified by opposition. No will power was ever so strong – he never temporized."¹⁹⁰

Meanwhile, the problem of coping with housing for convicted law breakers continued to be a vexing one for council members and they soon found it necessary to act again on this issue.

On September 5th of the same year Benton had resign as mayor, a bid of \$450 from Simon Robinson to furnish material and carpenter work on a new jail was accepted as was Joseph Paxton's bid of \$350 to furnish material and do the stone work. The poorhouse would be moved to the second floor of the new structure.

Three months later, December 15th, council set fees for the "keeper of the Poor House and Workhouse" as follows:

For putting each person in the workhouse.....	25 cents
For releasing each person from the workhouse.....	25 cents
For boarding each person per day.....	35 cents
For boarding each person in the poor house in health.....	25 cents
For attending and nursing each person when required.....	30 cents ¹⁹¹

As the city grew, so did the need for other government services and on January 26, 1836, the office of Street Commissioner was created. On June 4, 1838, another ordinance created a “General system of wharfage in the city,” and established the office of Wharf Master. James Clark became the first person to fill the job.¹⁹²

ON MARCH 9, 1837, THEODORE N. WISE, a recent Cincinnati Medical College graduate, came to Covington to begin a long and successful practice of medicine. Prior to this, he had been living with his widowed mother in Newport since that day in 1831 when they first arrived from Virginia.¹⁹³

Now that the youthful Dr. Wise was on his own, he found he was faced with expenses he had never before known. A monthly rent of \$2 for his first office on Greenup Street near Third and a \$1.25 weekly charge for room and board at Connelly’s Tavern. The tavern had by then gained a wide-spread reputation for setting a “splendid table.”

Dr. Wise did not stay at Connelly’s for any extended time, for by June 1st – less than three months after his arrival in Covington – he married 17-year-old Miss Missouri L. Arnold, a daughter of James G. and Margaret Arnold.¹⁹⁴

The town’s other physicians included Dr. Harvey Lewis (also operated a drug store at present Park Place and Court Street), Dr. John King, Dr. C. Reynolds and a Dr. Williams who Wise once described as a quack or “red pepper” doctor.¹⁹⁵

Dr. John Bennett, another of the area’s physicians, was one of the most respected. He was a veteran of the War of 1812, having enlisted in Colonel William Williams’ regiment in 1813 as an assistant surgeon.¹⁹⁶ Dr. Bennett was active in the community’s civic and political affairs and eventually represented the local district as a state senator.¹⁹⁷

WEDDING CELEBRATIONS, such as that of Dr. Wise and Missouri Arnold, often ranked among the community’s leading social events. Such was the case in May 1836 when John Shillito, a young Cincinnati merchant, married Mary Creighton Wallace, daughter of Robert and Jane Wallace.¹⁹⁸

The wedding took place at Longwood, the Wallace estate and, despite the fact the groom and his family were late, the ceremony turned out to be one of the year’s more gala events.¹⁹⁹

The newly-weds lived with the bride’s parents for a period of time after which they built their own home near what is now the intersection of Avenue and Greenup.²⁰⁰ For years the Shillito name was kept alive in the name of John’s dry goods store which grew to become Ohio’s largest department store – The John Shillito Company [now part of the Macy chain –editor].

EXPENSES INVOLVED IN OOPERATING THE NEW CITY seemed to mount steadily and in May 1837, Covington’s councilmen set a tax rate of 35 cents per \$100 real estate valuation or slaves owned by the citizens.²⁰¹ A month later, the rate was raised to 40 cents. All this was in addition to a \$1 tithe tax placed on every free male over the age of 21.

Also in May, the first local lodge of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows came into being when the Olive Branch Encampment No. 2 received its charter.²⁰² The second such lodge of IOOF in the state was destined to soon become one of the nation’s leading locals and would play a prominent role in the town’s social and cultural life well into the twentieth century.

Covington’s literary and art world was also showing marked signs of development as the town produced one of the most outstanding writers of the 1830s. This was Caroline L. Hentz, author of numerous novels and plays, whose first play *Delaro or The Moorish Bride*, became a successful Philadelphia stage production. She went on to achieve world-wide fame with her writing – the most successful of which was *Lovell’s Folly*. Her other works included production of *Lamora or The Western World* and *Constance of Werdenberg*.

During this time, the American stage lost one of its most noted personalities when Alexander Drake died on February 10, 1830. After spending a proper time in mourning, Drake’s widow, Frances Ann, married lawyer-poet George Washington Cutter. The marriage proved a brief and unhappy one and they secured a mutually agreed divorce.²⁰³

Frances Ann resumed the name Drake and continued her own stage career. She earned a reputation as the theatrical queen of tragedy and by 1831 was again starring at New York's elegant Bowery and Park Theatres. As an acknowledged star of the New York stage, the Covington actress mastered such roles as Lady Macbeth, Lady Randolph, Jane Shore, Elizabeth in *Richard III* and Constance in *King John*.²⁰⁴ In 1833 Frances Ann successfully toured England and, after her return, performed in the leading theatres of New York and Boston.²⁰⁵

EDWIN FORREST, owner of the large tract of land known as Forrest Hills [now West Covington's "Botany Hills" – editor] also received wide acclaim for his stage performances. Forrest's first great success on the New York stage came in 1826 while playing *Othello*. Prior to that, like Frances Ann Drake, he had spent considerable time touring the Kentucky hinterland. Neither was he a stranger to poverty during those earlier days. One of his biographers noted this when he said the young actor "once boiled corn as hard as Pharaoh's heart, to keep up life in the wilds of Kentucky."²⁰⁶

The town also boasted of a least two outstanding portrait painters, one of whom was the talented John Wesley Venable. Venable had maintained a studio at Greenup and Market Place since 1836 where he frequently conducted showings for the general public.²⁰⁷ Those who knew him best, described Venable as an artist of superior talent and one whose paintings consistently displayed a high degree of skill and taste.²⁰⁸

Venable's shows were of such quality and popularity that he eventually felt a need for more suitable quarters. Accordingly, by June 1844, he had moved a block north to Third and Greenup. The new location Though was not to his liking and the following month moved again – this time to a place on Scott between Fourth and Fifth.²⁰⁹ There, his shows continued drawing an ever-increasing number of patrons and appreciative viewers.

Another local artist of the time was J. F. Taylor whose studio was on the east side of Garrard, two doors south of Third. Showed a high degree of ability as a painter, his main interest seemed to be as a sculptor. Taylor's art attracted a large following but never seemed to provide him an adequate income. As a result, he often supplemented that income by working with plaster of Paris and offering to mold an image in that media of any person or subject at most reasonable rates. As might be expected, examples of Taylor's work could be found in many mid-nineteenth century Ohio Valley homes.

Venable and Taylor were both preceded on the local art scene by Ralph Letton who made his home just beyond Covington's southern edge. Letton was born June 29, 1778 at Rock Creek, Maryland and migrated to Kentucky about 1800. He did outstanding portraiture work and in 1818, in partnership with a relative, established a museum in Cincinnati. There he displayed his portraits and lectured on ancient and modern history.²¹⁰

Letton's museum also contained scores of life-size wax figures of famous persons, with hundreds of mounted birds and animals and literally thousands of mineral specimens, Indian artifacts, mammoth bones and other articles thought to be of scholarly interest.²¹¹

But Letton felt restricted by his duties at the museum, so accordingly in 1828 he obtained a tavern license for his home at Latonia Springs (or Lettonian Springs, as he preferred). Such a business, he believed, would provide a sufficient income while allowing him more time to devote to his painting.

One of Letton's contemporaries was John James Audubon. In 1820, he was working as a taxidermist for Cincinnati's Western Museum.²¹² Audubon was a brother-in-law to wealthy Covington landholder and developer Thomas Bakewell. When not engaged with his museum duties, Audubon would spend much of his time observing the wild bird life in the fields about Covington. He often collected the eggs of cliff swallows around the mouth of the Licking. When he found a flock of the swallows nesting in the walls of Newport Barracks, he would spend countless days and nights studying their nesting habits.²¹³

Young Audubon, destined to become one of America's most noted artists and naturalists, wanted to validate the long-held belief that these swallows did not migrate in winter, but instead buried themselves in mud and hibernated throughout that season.²¹⁴

Audubon was financially hard-pressed throughout his brief stay here. He and Thomas Bakewell had been business partners once before. It was his hope, when he first brought his wife and children to his brother-in-law's home, to re-enter the business world and settle in Covington.

The young artist had a restless spirit and soon found Covington's growing population no longer to his liking. Expanding cities, he felt, were not conducive to his painting the North American wild life. His overwhelming urge to paint wild flowers and birds triumphed over any business aspirations he had for the local area. The pull westward, not yet disturbed by civilization was too great.

Nevertheless, Covington's reputation as a burgeoning art center was attracting a certain amount of attention. In July 1842, artist and art teacher William Haydon decided to locate here and offer the community his services as an art teacher. Haydon was enthused about the city and his prospects. He felt the residents were among

the most enlightened in the Ohio Valley. This was reflected in his brief announcement of commencement of his classes. It made no exaggerated claims or promises, but simply declared: "In so enlightened a community, and where every branch of education is so happily appreciated, it is scarcely necessary to attempt to point out the advantages resulting from the acquirement of some knowledge of the liberal arts."

About the time John Venable first established his studio at Greenup and Market Place, all Kentucky grieved to learn of the death of Simon Kenton. The old pioneer died on April 9, 1836, and buried at a spot in Ohio he had previously selected.

Words of tribute to Kenton appeared in publications around the nation after his death and towns were named in his honor. He became a model for the heroes of many novels and, in time, Kentucky politicians began to quarrel with Ohio for the honor of providing a permanent burial site for his remains.

In 1848, Maysville established a new cemetery and assigned a prominent place at its center for the illustrious pioneer whose body, it was hoped, would be returned to Kentucky. Ohio resisted the move and from that time until the end of the Civil War, the two states sporadically contested for his remains.²¹⁵

In 1865, Kentucky again attempted to have Kenton's remains removed – this time to Frankfort. Ohio acted to appropriate some \$5,000 for a monument over a permanent grave at Urbana, where Kenton was finally re-interred on November 30, 1865. The monument funds were not used however, and it was not until 1884 that such a marker was finally erected.²¹⁶

AMONG COVINGTON'S EARLY RESIDENTS WAS HIRAM MARTIN whose family was closely acquainted with many of the celebrated frontiersmen, including Simon Kenton and Daniel Boone. Martin was a great admirer of Kenton and Boone but always declared that, of the two, Kenton seemed to show more concern for his family and home.

Neither of the two displayed much talent for farming, according to Martin. Even though the Kenton farm consistently showed signs of neglect, it was never, he thought, as run down as Boone's. Martin declared this slight margin of superiority was due to Kenton's second wife, "who was the business head of the family. She kept things straight."²¹⁷ Martin went on concerning the second Mrs. Kenton: "This estimable woman, upon the death of Kenton, married George Norton, an enterprising pioneer, but a man who kept poor all his life by over-reaching himself in land contracts."²¹⁸

Norton and his wife chose the Covington area for their new home and at their deaths "were buried about where Byrd and Wheeler Streets now intersect, which at the time . . . was on the farm of Captain William Martin."²¹⁹

Endnotes

¹ Ryan, Rev. Paul E., *op. cit.*

² *Cincinnati Enquirer*, 22 August 1965.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Deed Book D-1, page 303, Campbell County Courthouse, Alexandria, KY.

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Chapter 7 A New County

AS THE PEOPLE of that portion of Campbell County west of the Licking continued to grow in numbers and influence, there came a growing demand for that portion to be recognized as a separate political unit. Heavy agitation for such a division came from certain Democratic Party leaders who, on August 23, 1839, announced signatures were being gathered for a petition to that effect. This petition would be presented to the state legislature at its next session.¹

This splintering of Campbell County was not without opposition however and most of it centered in the proposed new county's more heavily populated northern part – in Covington particularly. The division's proponents concentrated most of their efforts in the county's rural and southern sections where they secured some 1,304 signatures for their petition. The petition was promptly presented to a receptive legislative body at Frankfort.²

Despite the fact there had been no popular election on the issue, the legislature accepted the petition as a valid reflection of the people's wishes. The law makers said it carried enough signatures to be equal to a majority of the eligible voters and was therefore the same as a favorable plebiscite.

Although the proposed division had been announced as early as the previous August, its opponents, led largely by local Whig political party leaders, were not stirred to action until January 20, 1840. That was when a stagecoach passenger from Frankfort "brought the intelligence that our county has been divided."³

"In the course of a few hours," said one observer of the event, "a great stir was perceptible . . . and the word passed round a meeting would be held that evening at the Methodist church."⁴

Opponents to the splintering of the county included some of Covington's most outstanding civic and political leaders. They were shocked at events taking place and viewed the division as being little more than an attempt by the Democrats to add to their agrarian and rural power base by splitting the urban vote. Among those taking an active role in organizing the protest movement were individuals as Bushrod W. Foley, John S. Finley, Mortimer M. Benton, James M. Clarkson, William Wright Southgate, P. S. Bush, Herman J. Groesbeck, Jefferson Phelps, James G. Arnold and Mayor Moses V. Grant.⁵

That first meeting of the protesters proved to be a spirited one and led to questioning the method used in preparing the petition sent to the legislature. The protesters felt the petition was not a valid reflection of the majority of the residents. Furthermore, they condemned the legislature's action in giving the petition a favorable reception and called for the question of the division to be put up to popular vote at the following August election.

Despite several such mass objections to how the county's proposed division was being handled, the legislators decided to proceed with the division. William Southgate felt many of the signatures on the petition were actually Boone County residents. The protesters, the Democrats charged, were only attempting to discredit Representatives John A. Goodson and Ezra K. Fish in the eyes of the voters.⁶

On January 29th, the state law makers passed an act declaring "from and after the thirtieth day of April . . . all that part of the county of Campbell . . . on the west side of the Licking River shall be . . . created into one distinct county to be known and called by the name of Kenton, in honor of Simon Kenton."⁷

Although the new county was spared the misfortune of being named for a political hack as was the lot of so many of the state's other counties, partisan politics had nevertheless played an all-important role in its creation. The Whigs may have occupied the governor's office, but it was the General Assembly's Democrats who had the way in this battle.

The happy choice of Kenton's name for the newly created political realm gives it the distinction of being the only county in the nation to bear the name of that intrepid pioneer.

During all this time, Newport had been serving as the local county seat because of its convenience for the greatest number of people using the courts. Nevertheless, there had been a strong agitation to return the seat of government to a more central geographical location, with much of it coming from landowners who hoped to profit from such a move.

In the early 1820s a commission was appointed to select a suitable site for a new county seat and soon decided in favor of Richard Southgate's land, located on the east bank of the Licking just above the mouth of Pond Creek. County court moved its sessions to temporary quarters at Visalia, while the new center of government was being built.⁸

The tiny community of Visalia was founded in 1818 by Nathaniel Vise who had visions of it becoming the permanent governmental center. He later moved west to found another town that also commemorates his name – Visalia, California.

Little time was lost in subdividing Southgate's land into lots and offering them for sale. A stone office was erected for the county clerk and William DeCoursey, Sr. was engaged to build a two-room jail "of hewed logs with two pens, about a foot apart with rocks pounded in between them."⁹

Politically active Southgate had only recently acquired the government site. It was once a part of Squire Grant's holdings and its new owner stood to turn a handsome profit on the acquisition.¹⁰

A large segment of the county's residents strongly objected to having either Visalia or the Southgate location as their county seat, saying both were too remote from most people the government was serving.

Constant arguing over this matter quickly erupted into a full-blown storm of protest when a new attempt was made to move the site from the Southgate property back to Visalia. Finally in January 1825, the state legislature elected a bill permitted the general public to settle the issue at an election scheduled the following August. Voters were to choose between the Southgate location, Visalia, Newport and a new nominee – Covington.¹¹

Newport emerged the winner and would remain the center of county government until the creation of Kenton County in 1840.¹²

During the brief time the county seat was absent from Newport, the old courthouse, or Peace Palace as it was known, was allowed to fall into disrepair. Eventually it was repaired and used for a host of activities, including service as a town council chamber, schoolhouse and public meeting hall.¹³

The fracturing of Campbell County might have been averted in 1838 had Campbell officials reacted favorably to a widespread clamor for a new county courthouse and jail. Many wanted this built in Covington and if this had occurred, it is likely the Democratic scheme for a totally new county may have quickly died.¹⁴

The split reduced Campbell County's size to a point where there are now but four smaller counties in the state. There are six counties smaller than Kenton.

State Senator William DeCoursey was virtually the only member of the General Assembly to publicly acknowledge the urban residents' generosity in resisting further protesting the obvious move to weaken their vote. This came in a letter from Frankfort to the *Western Globe* where he wrote:

"The law dividing the county passed both houses almost unanimously; and it gives me the highest gratification to see with what magnanimity and unanimity the citizens of Newport and Covington and their vicinities yielded up private interests, that their fellow citizens in the upper end of the county might enjoy equal rights and privileges with themselves. Surely there cannot, nor will not, be the least remains of bad feelings in the bosom of anyone within the bounds of old Campbell, after this high minded surrender. None but noble minds would have done it . . . This is certainly one of the wonders of the last day and affords cause of the most unbounded congratulations to every citizen of Campbell."¹⁵

DeCoursey's letter was seen by many as a hollow mockery of reconciliation when a short time later a rump session of Democrats seized control of what was left of Campbell County. The Whig's cry of anguish about this apparent trickery failed to stir any reaction from the governor, even though he too was a Whig.¹⁶

Once the legislative act creating the new county was passed, a committee was appointed which named the small, but centrally located village of Independence as the county seat. Even this was tinged with partisan politics. Most Whigs were concentrated in the county's urban north and democratic leadership wanted to inconvenience them as much as possible while rewarding their own largely rural constituents. It was believed by many that an unseemly amount of consideration was given the monetary benefits that could possibly accrue to individuals from having the county government located at the selected site.

Members of the committee expressed surprise that anyone would question their actions and called a public meeting of their own February 14th. At this meeting, they announced it was "with much regret" they had learned of the opposition and insisted everything they had done was done legally.¹⁷

After this, committee members, including Robert M. Carlisle and historian Lewis Collins (both active in partisan politics) brushed aside a clamor for a popular vote on the choice of a site for the county seat. They declared no such vote was wanted by the majority of citizens and would so inform the state legislature. The meeting was then declared closed.¹⁸

One Democratic supporter defended the party's choice of committee members by declaring: "In appointing commissioners to locate the county seat . . . the Legislature has but followed a *long established custom and regulation* . . . In the meantime we have only to say to Democrats, look out for the tricks of the enemy, who are quite as wily as the foe with which old Simon Kenton was wont to contend."¹⁹

The Democratic selected committee prevailed over its critics and on February 15, 1840, John McCollum conveyed five acres to the county for a public square and location of a new courthouse. In return for the site,

McCullum acknowledged receipt of the “sum of five dollars . . . and . . . the further consideration and advantage of having the seat of Justice for said County located upon or near the tract of land on which he resides.”²⁰

On April 18, 1840, amid “impressive ceremonies,” fires were lit on the newly-acquired grounds for the purpose of making bricks for the new courthouse itself. It was claimed at the time, that the building’s plans were among “the most pretentious designs of the day.”²¹

During its existence, the courthouse would serve as a setting for many spectacular and bazaar happenings until it was eventually razed in 1911.

On October 21st of the following year, its replacement, built by a Covington construction firm at a cost of \$29,500, was dedicated amidst a liberal supply of speeches and Kentucky burgoos.²²

The event drew nearly 5,000 Covingtonians who clogged Madison Pike with traffic and filled several special trains the railroad ran to Independence Station.²³ Never before had the tiny, rural county-seat town seen such a throng.

Meanwhile, William M. Pendleton was named the first clerk of the new county court and Jefferson Phelps received a one-year appointment as county attorney. The new jailer was Calvin W. Hills, while Leonard Stephens, who had migrated here from Bryan’s Station in 1807, was chosen first county sheriff.

Stephens had previously served Campbell County as a state representative from 1823 to 1826 and from 1829 to 1833 he had served as the senator representing Campbell and Boone Counties. At the time Kenton County was created, he was Campbell County’s senior Justice of the Peace.²⁴

On May 1st, a meeting was held at Elijah Williams’ home at Bagby Precinct near Independence.²⁵ There, James G. Arnold was appointed magistrate of the new county and sworn into office by Moses V. Grant, mayor of Covington. The first recorded court meeting held at Independence did not occur until the following October 26th.²⁶

One of the very first acts of the new Kenton County fiscal Court was to pass legislation regulating tavern rates. A list of those rates and their revisions of a year later follows:

Item	1840	1841
Breakfast	25 cents	25 cents
Dinner	25 cents	25 cents
Whisky per ½ pint	12 cents	3 cents
Brandy & Gin per ½ pint	25 cents	10 cents
Lodging per night	12 cents	6 ¼ cents
Grain per gallon	6 ¼ cents	6 ¼ cents
Horse at hay per night	12 cents	10 cents
Pasturage per night	6 ¼ cents	6 cents
Horse per night with grain	25 cents	18 ¾ cents
Cordial	-----	3 cents

For the first several years of its existence, Kenton County had no count judge. Court was conducted by the various justices of the peace until June 1851 when Solomon C. Perrin, Sr. was elected as the county’s first judge.²⁷

The carving up of established counties fast became a political pastime for governors and legislators who wished to either bolster their party’s membership in the general assembly or perpetuate for posterity their own name or those of party stalwarts and friends. They justified their actions by encouraging the myth they were bringing county government closer to the people.

Fortunately, Kenton County escaped the burden of having to bear the name of an undistinguished political hack but unfortunately a great number of its citizens were now further away from their courthouse than ever before. Although Independence was chosen as the seat of county government, the majority of the population centered in Covington and the county’s northern section.

The division and the method in which the county was formed, along with the choice of Independence as the county seat, sparked a controversy which raged for many years. In 1849, the critics continued to point to the change as a politically inspired effort to advance rural interests at the expense of those of the fast-growing urban area. They proposed a petition to the legislature asking the county boundary lines be re-drawn to recognize the rural-urban differences.²⁸

Under the proposed change, the Licking River would no longer be used to divide the two counties. Instead, the county of Kenton would consist of the area north of an east-west line extending from a point near Florence and running east to the Ohio River at the mouth of Four Mile Creek. South of that line would be a rural county with Independence as the county seat.²⁹

The proposed petition would set Kenton County's new boundaries as follows: "Beginning on the Ohio River at the mouth of Dry Run, thence with the Boone line to the Covington and Lexington turnpike; thence to Banklick Creek at about the south line of the farm of Lathem; thence to the mouth of Four-Mile Creek in Campbell County; thence down the Ohio River to the beginning – the county seat to be at Covington."³⁰

Nothing was ever done about the petition and the controversy continued to rage. Many Kenton Countians refused to visit their then-remote county seat unless required to by law and it was not until late 1851 that curiosity prompted a Covington newspaper editor to make such a journey. He noted his impression of the tiny hamlet with the terse statement: "We were agreeably disappointed in the place."³¹

Finally, on February 11, 1860, it was announced certain terms of the Kenton Circuit Court would henceforth be held in Covington. Seven days later (February 18) the state general assembly approved a law establishing an office for the recording of deeds and mortgages in the more populous city.³²

This made practically two centers of government for Kenton County and gave rise to the claim that it is one of only two counties in the nation with two county seats. The other, according to the claim, is its parent county, Campbell.

Campbell County's dual system of county seats came about after the seat of government was moved to rural Alexandria when Kenton County was created. The move, of course, placed an undue amount of hardship on the bulk of that county's population and led to a prolonged period of loud and persistent criticism.

The criticism continued until 1856 when the state legislature permitted the county court to again meet in Newport if the citizens of that community would bear all the expenses involved. The townspeople were happy to comply.³³

One observer, who claimed the original move to Alexandria had been made for "motives of political ambitions," praised the latest move, saying it was "an act of obvious justice and utility (that) two terms (of Campbell Circuit Court) are now held semi-annually at Newport."³⁴

In the meantime, Covington continued to expand and on December 10, 1840, the Committee on Law was instructed to prepare an amendment to the city Charter which would officially extend the town limits east on the Ohio River to the west side of Main Street. From there, the new corporation line ran south to High Street (11th Street) – then east to the Licking.

Seven months later, the city clerk reported a special census showed the town's population stood at 2,688 – a figure which included four free black males, five free black females, forty-one male slaves and 66 female.³⁵

A PATTERN OF EXPANSION was now set which would, with few exceptions, characterize the town's physical growth for the next hundred years. As the number of Covingtonians continued to increase, they would spill over its boundaries, build up suburban areas and rejoin the parent city. As a result, there grew up a united, prospering and ever-expanding community.

This process continued well into the twentieth century when there began a trend to incorporate the various subdivisions into separate and often inefficient miniature municipalities. One of the more negative aspects associated with these small bedroom communities developed during the latter part of that century when several began a scramble to annex large tracts of land. According to reported comments from some of their political office-holders, this building of what were sometimes called political "spite fences" was done for the sole purpose of stifling Covington's growth.³⁶

Critics have declared one of the principle reasons for the continued existence of the numerous satellites is the many ego-soothing political offices they provide. These offices, critics say, are frequently filled by self-serving individuals who display a marked and usually militant reluctance to see their positions abolished.

It has been claimed some political hopefuls have encouraged and defended a sense of independence among suburban voters in anticipation of creating a political base which might be used to the politicians' advantage.

Such petty actions have resulted in the area becoming one of the state's most politically fractured communities and predictably, brought about a dramatic loss of political power and influence at the state level.

As it happened however, a unified mid-nineteenth century Covington embarked upon a period of such exceptionally rapid growth that by the next federal census, it would be Kentucky's second largest city. While Covington and surrounding area was growing in population, so too did the problems usually associated with such growth. Lawlessness was increasing at an alarming rate throughout the 1830s and '40s. Stagecoach robberies on the Covington to Lexington route occurred with increasing frequency.³⁷

Despite the fact whisky drinking, gambling and brawling were commonplace in river towns such as Covington, it was not until April 1842 that the town experienced its first murder. Dick, a Negro preacher belonging

to Thomas D. Carneal, was killed by three white ruffians who broke into the slave's little shanty and robbed him of one dollar. They beat him so severely he died a few days later.³⁸

Covington was horrified by the crime and on April 27th, city council voted to post a \$200 reward for the capture of the slave preacher's murders.³⁹ Carneal matched this by posting another \$200 of his own money. However, it took until March 9, 1843 for the city to create the office of Police Commissioner. James Clark was named to fill the new position at an annual salary of \$100.⁴⁰

About a year later, on April 20, 1844, the community received an extra measure of protection when council created a Voluntary Night Watch "to be composed of 71 reputable persons invested with police authority."⁴¹ The patrol went about its work with enthusiasm and less than a month passed when a local newsman reported: "A very effective police has been recently organized in this city composed of our most gallant and brave citizens, young and active. They have already caused the arrest of several delinquents, both old and juvenile; and they are determined to break up the nocturnal ramblings and mid-night carousals of 'nice young men about town,' as well as pick up other rogues and suspicious persons found sauntering about at unseasonable hours. Delinquents, beware!"⁴²

FOR SOME TIME THERE HAD BEEN much debate concerning the possibility of Covington building a city hall. The reality of the city's growth seemed to warrant such a structure but did the majority of the citizens agree? There was not a city in all of Kentucky that could boast of such an amenity – and for that matter neither could Covington's northern neighbor, Cincinnati.

In the midst of all the debate, city council met on September 20th, 1842 and resolved to build the structure. George M. Southgate, John S. Finley and Lewis Roach were appointed as a building committee after which council declared the new structure should be "sixty feet deep" and have "fifty feet front with wings twenty feet each."⁴³ A Mr. Kidd was commissioned as architect and work began.⁴⁴

The foundation was finished the following month at which time the work was interrupted to allow any Covingtonian to voice opinions whether or not the building's completion should be delayed with perhaps a different city hall built on another site or if *any* hall should be built at all.⁴⁵ As it was, the planned building would face Greenup Street from the Public Square between Second and Third.

After debate and an election in which only 22 citizens voted to delay the project compared to 179 who wished to continue on the original structure.⁴⁶ On March 25, 1843, the city advertised for sealed bids for 300,000 "good, sound, well burnt brick to be delivered on the public square, commencing the first day of June and all to be delivered by the 15th day of July."⁴⁷ One half payment for these bricks was to be in cash upon delivery and the remainder to be in "City Scrip, due 12 months thereafter."⁴⁸

On that same date, the city also asked for bids for brick to be used erecting the structure's walls, saying payment would be "one-half in cash, as work progresses, and the other half in city scrip, to be receivable from the city revenue of 1844."⁴⁹ The bids were to be left at the law office of George M. Southgate and John S. Finley.⁵⁰

A month later, on April 29th, Southgate, Finley and Roach announced bids "for the carpenter work of enclosing the City Hall" would be received until May 6th.⁵¹

The building committeemen were as much concerned with the quality of work to be done as they were with the economics of the project and their awarding of the contracts reflects that concern. The contractors were all highly skilled artisans and included the following: Humphrey C. Watkins, brick maker; George C. Tarvin, brick mason; Peleg Kidd, carpenter; Hiram Bond, freestone mason; John Kearney and M. W. Wetmore, stone contractors; Lewis Reese, lumber contractor; and Edward C. Beard, painter and glazier.⁵²

Finally, on June 24th that year, the cornerstone of Kentucky's first city hall was laid amid a rather elaborate ceremony which also involved the laying of the cornerstone for Trinity Episcopal Church at 4th Street and Madison. The double ceremony was led by Kentucky's M. W. Grand Lodge of Masons and attended by several subordinate Masonic lodges from throughout Kentucky and southern Ohio.⁵³

To begin the ceremony, 300 Masons, including William W. Southgate, ex-governor James T. Morehead and Covington newspaper editor Richard C. Langdon, assembled for a brief time in the church, after which they were joined by city authorities, church officials and scores of interested citizens for a parade on the community's principal streets.⁵⁴ After passing under a specially built triumphal arch, the procession's members surrounded the entire foundation of the new building.⁵⁵

The day's officials ascended an elevated speakers' platform, after which a hymn was sung, a "Box of Deposits" sealed and placed in the cornerstone and a special prayer said. It was only then that John Finley rose and delivered the principal oration of the day.⁵⁶

The procession regrouped when Finley finished his talk and returned to the church to lay its cornerstone. After completing this second ceremony, the procession again formed and marched to the Covington Hotel where its

members “partook of an excellent dinner prepared by our worthy landlord L. C. Bakes.”⁵⁷ Richard Langdon Summed up the day’s events by saying: “Saturday was a proud day for Covington.”⁵⁸

The following October, the *Licking Valley Register* editor inspected the completed city building and declared in no uncertain terms:

“THE CITY HALL is one among the finest buildings in the country, beautiful in appearance And most substantially built of the best materials – Covington can boast of erecting the first Public edifice of the kind in the State; and in this we have gone ahead of the Queen City, with all her wealth, magnificence and commercial advantages – she has no City Hall.”⁵⁹

Cincinnati would not erect its first city hall until 1852.

THE NEWSMAN’S ADMIRATION for the esthetic qualities of Covington’s new city building though, was certainly not carried over to include the latest in women’s fashions. Editor Langdon detested the then-fashionable bustles so much that he was moved to write:

BUSTLES. – If young ladies, wearing these deformities, could but know the honest Opinion of men of sense, and hear the ludicrous remarks often made at their expense, they would as soon be caught with a cow’s tail around their necks as one of these things about them. It is certainly an evidence of a vain, foolish mind to wear a THING so ridiculous as a *Ladies’ Bustle* . . . They certainly are the most despicable thing that a virtuous woman could wear.”⁶⁰

Covington’s well-dressed ladies remained unimpressed by the newsman’s laments and continued subscribing to fashion’s dictates while Langdon continued to fume. A full two years later the still-fuming editor again struck out a women’s apparel when he challenged his readers to take a serious look at “the humbling, rolling walk and shuffle consequent upon tight lacing: the little sun shade which puts you in mind of a six penny bit hammered out and struck on the end of a rye straw, or a cookee [sic] on the end of a fork . . . and at last though, not least, the modern *BUSTLE’S* the invention of the nineteenth century, the acme of fashion, the artificial protuberance that makes Camels, Dromedaries and humpbacks of forms cast in the moulds of human perfection and puts one in mind of a beanpole with a great pumpkin fastened to it . . . and then laugh at follies by bygone days if you can”⁶¹

The local editor was not alone to be mystified by the ladies’ tastes in fashion, for if a news story appearing in the columns of the *Covington Journal* of that time is to be believed, the same was true of the western Indians.⁶²

According to that story a group of Indians were holding a special pow-wow encampment when a party of fashionably-dressed ladies and their escorts came from a nearby city to witness the event. The old warriors were immediately fascinated by the shape of the “white squaws” and were at a complete loss to know why their dresses did not fit them the same as they did the Indian squaws. After a while, the warriors managed to learn the secret of the bustle but could never understand the reason it was worn.⁶³

When the pow-wow ended and the natives returned to their regular tribal homes, they eagerly informed those who failed to attend the special encampment of just what they had missed. They described the bustle at great length and attempted to figure out why it was worn.⁶⁴ At length, a squaw rose from the circle in which the Indians were seated and taking a bag of feathers, walked about the group, giving her impression of how the white women walked. She then sat down and the others grunted in approval.⁶⁵

A warrior then rose and stated he thought the bustle’s purpose was to catch flies, for, he said, when the flies got to a string they will crawl around it to see what it is and in this case, will fall into the bag. When the bag becomes full, the whites take it off and burn it. The warrior then resumed his seat and he too received a grunt of approval.⁶⁶

Another rose and gave the opinion that the bustle was to catch perspiration, for when the perspiration would meet the string, it would then flow along it and into the bag. The filled bag would be removed and emptied. Another grunt of approval was heard.⁶⁷

At last the old medicine man, from whose decisions there were no appeals, gave a signal for silence. He then rose majestically and proceeded to declare white women did not have as good forms as Indian women and white men tended to favor good forms. Therefore, the white women wore those bags in order to make their men think they were well-formed.⁶⁸ Everyone grunted approval as the dignified old shaman resumed his seat. His must be the correct answer. After all, the medicine man could make no mistakes, could he?

WHAT SEEMED TO UPSET LANGDON the most however, were the careless habits of some of the town's church-going tobacco-chewers and he aimed some of his bitterest barbs in their direction. Such individuals, he declared, were responsible for causing man church floors to resemble those of "a stable where cattle have been stabled more than a temple of worship. We have to kneel without getting into a puddle of nauseous spit." ⁶⁹

The *Licking Valley Register's* editor possessed strong convictions concerning the manners and morals of his fellow Covingtonians and never hesitated to castigate those individuals whose behavior he found offensive. Such a case arose in February 1844 when a New York speaker conducted a temperance rally in the local market house and promised to pay 12 ½ cents an hour to any dissatisfied listener who might feel entitled to such payment for having sat through the event.

One disgruntled person in the crowd estimated to be 500 listeners stepped forward at the end of the New Yorker's lengthy lecture to claim the payment. Anti-bustle, anti-tobacco and anti-liquor Langdon was aghast and promptly cautioned his readers to: "Mark this man – he is a *tavern keeper* on Madison Street and no wonder he is opposed to the holy cause of Temperance." ⁷⁰

Still, editor Langdon was very conscious of the interest future generations would have in Covington's formative days. In one of his 1844 editorials, he advised his subscribers to save and bind all their issues of his weekly newspaper. Such bound copies, he declared, would be excellent histories as well as handsome additions to anyone's reference library. Langdon went on to state:

"A considerable portion of their contents are historical and there is as much reason for Preserving it as for preserving any other history . . . All this will be interesting at some future day . . . Let every number of every periodical work be destroyed and we take away from future generations nearly all knowledge of our doings, but what shall be contained in the records of the nation, or handed down to them in the uncertain stories of tradition." ⁷¹

On January 1st of that same year, Langdon brought out Covington's first daily newspaper, the *Daily Covington Register*. It was a short-lived venture of but 16 issues however – the last being on January 19th. The next day the *Licking Valley Register* said of its sister newspaper's demise: "It expired on yesterday morning after a short career of only 16 days. Brief indeed has been its duration . . . Its appearance was hailed as the harbinger of its future greatness and dandled as a sweet little cherub that would live and do well." ⁷² The writer went on to pen a quaint but rather sad little poem lamenting the daily's untimely passing.

AS THE TOWN'S SIZE INCREASED, so too did its prestige. More and more notable individuals including former president John Quincy Adams accepted invitations to visit the community. In Adams' case, the invitation was extended when he came west to participate in ceremonies connected with laying of the cornerstone of the Cincinnati Astronomical Society's observatory – an event slated for November 9, 1843. ⁷³

The former president's decision to accept Covington's hospitality delighted the local town folk and on the morning of November 13th, they turned out in force to give him a rousing welcome. It was also Adams' first visit to Kentucky and Covington's welcome was one "worthy of this occasion." ⁷⁴

A large throng of citizens met the former president at the public landing and joyfully escorted him and his carriage to the center of town where an even larger throng was gathered. Even though women of that day could not vote, it was noted the crowds contained "a very large sum of ladies all anxious to see and to welcome the great and good man who had been solicited to become their guest." ⁷⁵ Covington's hospitality, as one observer said, was truly "prompt and warm." ⁷⁶

When the former president alighted from his carriage, he was quickly flanked by William W. Southgate and ex-governor James T. Morehead, who proudly escorted him through the crowded streets, past the new city hall (of which Adams took special note) and down West Fourth Street to the Baptist Church where he was scheduled to deliver a brief address. A brass band led the way for Adams and his escorts and they in turn were followed by a throng of happy, cheering citizens. ⁷⁷

In his speech, Adams declared that the general interest and concern shown hi by Covingtonians raised emotions within him such as he had rarely felt before. He said he had always harbored a deep desire to see "this new empire of the West," and added:

"I can say in my heart that I consider this one of the happiest of my days. And I shall Look back upon this . . . as among the events of my life which I shall never cease to Remember while my heart continues to beat." ⁷⁸

Covingtonians were even more flattered when they learned the former president had accepted their invitation over a host of other western cities, including Louisville, Frankfort and St. Louis as well as from the state of Indiana. In addition, there had been a personal invitation from Henry Clay to visit with him at his central Kentucky estate. Adams had to refuse them all and left the area aboard the steamboat *Ben Franklin* shortly after his local appearance. He was bound upstream for Pittsburgh.⁷⁹

Ex-governor James Morehead was among that growing number of professional people being attracted to the bustling community. He had been the Commonwealth's first Kentucky-born governor and when he retired from politics, he chose Covington as the state's most promising place in which to practice law. He and John W. Stevenson had opened their law offices over the store of Cooper, Berry and Company on Market Place, August 3, 1844. For a time, the ex-governor taught classes at Covington Collegiate Institute. Morehead continued his Covington practice until his death on December 28, 1854 at age 57.

IN THE SAME YEAR MOREHEAD AND STEVENSON opened their office, city officials acknowledged a growing public sentiment to decorate the new city hall's cupola with a statue. When a Mr. Jones proposed to execute the work for \$300, councilmen agreed and adopted a resolution to permit either this work take place or else allow the appropriation of any money the townspeople might raise for the installation of a clock.

The adornment finally agreed upon for the city hall's top was a huge wooden statue of George Washington.

POLITICAL ACTIVITY had long since become a prominent feature of Covington life and as the new year 1845 opened, the town found itself embroiled in a spirited councilmanic campaign.

The election itself, held January 4th, resulted in the following being selected for office:

Lewis C. Bakes; H. M. Buckner.....	First Ward
Hamilton Martin; J.B. McNickle.....	Second Ward
James G. Arnold; Charles A. Withers.....	Third Ward
Frederick G. Gedge; John M. Bowen.....	Fourth Ward
John Wolf; William Ashbrook.....	Fifth Ward

The new councilmen named the popular James Arnold to serve as their president.⁸⁰ Others named to official posts that January included:

G. F. Laney.....	Marshal
George B. Marshall.....	Treasurer
A.H. Jameson.....	City Assessor
H.B. Clemons.....	Assistant City Assessor
Bushrod W. Foley.....	City Clerk ⁸¹

Foley held his office but a short time, for the following month Moses V. Grant resigned as mayor and Foley entered and won a hastily called election to choose a successor to the vacant mayor's office. In that election, held February 15, 1845, Foley defeated John Calvin 259 to 151 votes. Calvin was then selected to fill the office of city clerk.⁸²

Grant's, born in 1789 to William Grant Sr. and the former Elizabeth Boone, sister of Daniel Boone, was a younger brother of John and Squire, two of the area's earliest settlers. He had served as Covington's mayor since first being elected to that office on August 20, 1836.

Grant's lengthy tenure was marked by frequent clashes with council and many councilmanic calls for his resignation. In his last few years in office, he was beset with a series of personal tragedies that few officials have ever had to endure. On July 31, 1843, his wife America age 454, died of tuberculosis, leaving him and their five children, and less than a year later, on June 8th, his large farm was sold by the county master commissioner at public auction in order to satisfy a judgment in a law suit brought by Daniel Breck.^{83 84}

Within the same month of his resignation, misfortune again struck Grant – this time in the form of an uninsured \$8,000 loss from a fire which struck a steam-powered grist mill belonging to him. The blaze, suspected to be arson, was the mill's second fire in a ten-day period.⁸⁵

The year following his resignation, Grant (Covington's third mayor and its first native-born Kentuckian) met his death in Mexico during America's war with that country.

One problem confronting Mayor Foley and the other new officials when they took office, was that of whisky drinking among the town's relatively few slaves. This was a constant irritant to the slaves' owners and in February 1846, they succeeded in having council pass an ordinance making it illegal for any tavern owner to "sell, barter, give or loan intoxicating liquors of any sort to any slave or slaves other than to his, her or their own, unless

entitled for the time to the service of such slave or slaves, or unless permission to do so is first obtained from the owner or the person who may by contract be entitled to the service of such slave or slaves for the time being.”

The *Licking Valley Register* editor, although one of the community’s biggest boosters, was also one of the chief critics of its administrators, and never hesitated to point out what he thought were some of their worst shortcomings. On one occasion, he cited what he believed were consistently ignored needs for improved riverfront wharfs and for more police and fire protection.⁸⁶

The journalist complained that town officials apparently failed to comprehend the importance of these needs and attempted to explain their lack of comprehension by saying of the city: “...and like an overgrown loose-jointed youth whose rapid growth seems to prey upon his strength, the very rapidity of improvement seems to be the cause of that weakness and want of efficiency which, to some extent, seems to prevail in public matters.”⁸⁷

The editor always agreed with the officials when they declared there was no money to make the improvements he wanted but would then quickly point out the reason for lack of money was their own inability to wisely manage public funds.⁸⁸

The journalist particularly abhorred the practice of issuing scrip with which to pay city debts. He called it an example of the worst type of monetary waste and inefficiency and pointed out:

“It is a well-known fact that City Stock, or \$1,000 bonds, are at par, while City Scrip is hawked in the streets at from 20 to 25 % discount. Hence the City paying, as she does, in scrip for every dollar she expends; and 1/5 of the revenue, which is always anticipated by issuing scrip for everything, suffers a loss of 20 or 25 cents on every dollar she expends; and 1/5 of the revenue, which is always anticipated by issuing scrip, is absorbed in this discount.⁸⁹ This community pays then near 20% per annum upon every cent of appropriations for public purposes. The true remedy of this evil is to borrow \$25,000 at 5, 6 or 7 %; redeem all the scrip and catch up with the times, behind which we have fallen so far and hereafter pay cash and get work at cash prices. Such a course must be adopted sooner or later.”⁹⁰

DURING THE 1840S, THE TOWN’S SCHOOLS frequently conducted May Day celebrations on Botany or Forrest Hill in the western part of town. Picnics, political rallies and Fourth of July celebrations were also frequently held there, as well as at Algeyer’s Woods (present day 15th and Banklick Streets.⁹¹

Businesses were making more and more use of testimonials in their advertisements as were doctors and other professional people. Dr. Theodore N. Wise was one who quickly saw the advantage of taking testimonials from well-known local residents and often used them to help sell his services and his medicines. Typical of his advertisements was that for his “*CELEBRATED INDIAN MAGICAL EXPECTORANT*” in which he claimed his medicine, although not a cure-all, was “a speedy and effectual cure for coughs, colds, asthma, croup, consumption and all diseases affecting the lungs or breast.”⁹²

The advertisement then cited such local citizens as Hiram Bond, Abraham P. Rose and Simeon Perry as praising the medicine’s effectiveness after which Dr. Wise declared that he “would simply add that no remedy known to him has exercised such powerful influence in completely removing from the lungs all those diseases to which they are so liable.”⁹³ Ironically, it was but a short time later that Dr. Wise’s twenty-seven year-old wife, the former Missouri L. Arnold, died of tuberculosis while visiting in Mississippi.⁹⁴

ON THE NIGHT OF JUNE 14, 1847, A SPECTACULAR FIRE destroyed a frame building belonging to Daniel Senour on the north side of Market Space and occupied by a tobacco factory. The fire spread to another frame which served as the residence and grocery store of Robert Dunlop. It too, was destroyed.⁹⁵

The raging flames seemed completely out of control. Soon it appeared the brick home of Cassius B. Sandford, on the corner of Greenup and Market Space, would be consumed and, according to one observer, “was saved only by the timely arrival and prompt action of the Cincinnati Fire Companies, with their splendid Engines and ample supply of Hose.”⁹⁶

Such disastrous fires often led to increased public concern for improved fire-fighting facilities. One of the first to cry out after this blaze was the editor of the *Licking Valley Register* who proclaimed in no uncertain terms, “We want badly ...An increase of Fire Apparatus!”⁹⁷

Although a volunteer fire department had existed for some time and had been receiving financial aid from the city, the department was not *officially* formed until October 1843, when four fire wardens were elected, one from each of the then-existing wards. The ordinance required those elections though, had been passed in April 1838 and listed among the wardens’ duties, the examining of all buildings, stoves and flues in the city.⁹⁸

Hose Company Number One had been established on January 26, 1836 and on March 29th, council created the Covington Bucket and Engine Company.^{99 100} A few months later, August 5th, the same council voted to allow \$925 for purchase of a fire engine from the Philadelphia firm of Murch and Agnew.¹⁰¹

It would be another six years before the city authorized William Hopkins and a group of his followers to organize Fire Company Number Two. That was August 18, 1842.¹⁰² Company Number Three was formed on December 8th that year as was the Covington Hook and Ladder Company Number One.¹⁰³

That same December date also witnessed creation of the office of Chief Engineer of the Fire Department, a position corresponding to that of today's Fire Chief.¹⁰⁴ John T. Levis was elected to the new office, defeating Frederick G. Gedge and C. M. Rude. Levis' stay in office was a short one, for he resigned the following January 10th and was succeeded by Gedge in a special election against Rude.¹⁰⁵

The hose company, which had been organized with 12 members, continued to operate as a separate entity until 1849 when it merged with Fire Company Number One to become part of a newly-formed firemen's association.¹⁰⁶

The very idea of American volunteer fire departments had been originated by Benjamin Franklin, so it followed that many of the nation's cities had at least one fire company named in his honor. Covington was no exception. Here, the "Independent Franklin Fire Company," known more formally as Fire Company Number Two, was granted permission in February that year to carry five hundred members on its roster.¹⁰⁷ Fire Company Number Two was particularly proud of its elaborately decorated fire engine, the *Neptune*, and its equally elaborate hose carriage which had been christened *Queen of the Sea*.

One of the volunteers' very real needs was adequate quarters for their equipment. A measure of relief was obtained in May 1848 when the market house on Market Square was ordered enclosed as a temporary engine house while a new building was being erected at the junction of Seventh, Pike and Washington Streets.¹⁰⁸

The new firehouse was scheduled to be completed in November and would serve Franklin Fire Company Number Two. It was to be a two-story brick and would contain a spacious second floor meeting hall that would be made available for a wide range of civic activities.¹⁰⁹

Firemen of that time raised money in a variety of ways, such as by sponsoring dances, suppers, picnics, banquets and other social functions. One affair was the "Grand Ball and Supper of Franklin Fire Company Number Two," held at Cooper's Hall on the night of March 28, 1849. The hall would accommodate 200 couples and the admission tickets, which sold for \$2 each, would admit a "Gentleman and one or two Ladies." The fire company made it clear no male would be admitted unless accompanied by a "Lady companion."

Some fund-raising events were extended affairs, lasting a week or longer. Typical of these was the "Ladies' Fair" held two months later at the city hall. The fair was for the benefit of Covington Fire Company Number One and was described by an enthusiastic newsman as being "one of the most attractive affairs even gotten up in our flourishing city."¹¹⁰ The same newsman went on to note:

"The large, noble Hall, which is tastefully decorated, is nightly crowded with the beauty and fashion of our own as well as our neighboring city. The tables, which are exceedingly fancifully arranged, are loaded with a superabundance of almost everything calculated to please the eye and gratify the taste; and attended by some of the most fascinating of Kentucky's fair."¹¹¹

City councilmen also came to the aid of the company when, on October 11th, they appropriated \$500 to Lewis Roach to assist him in building a Number One Engine House.¹¹²

A fair was also held that year for the benefit of the newly-formed firemen's association and realized a profit of \$897.24. This sum was combined with the annual appropriation from city council and used to purchase firemen's hats, furnish the first firemen's new hall and acquire burial sites in Linden Grove Cemetery for members not otherwise provided for.¹¹³

A partial list of the volunteer fire companies existing in Covington at that time include:

- Covington No. 1
- Hook & Ladder No. 1
- Washington No. 1
- Relief No. 2
- Independent No. 3
- Franklin No. 2
- Independent No. 3
- Franklin No. 4

Invincible No. 5
 Northern No. 7
 Invincible No. 5
 Northern No. 7
 Marion No. 8
 Union No. 9
 Independent Western
 Independent Eagle¹¹⁴

There was also at least one German-speaking company of volunteers.

Disastrous fires were relatively common at that time, largely because of the widespread use of open fireplaces and individual room stoves for heat and use of oil lamps and candles for light. In April 1849, such a destructive fire took hold near the town wharf and consumed four buildings before being brought under control. An observer at the scene praised the companies responding to the alarm: “The Covington Firemen were quickly on the ground and did good service.”¹¹⁵

Sheer carelessness was also a frequent cause of such disasters as in the case of a storekeeper whose accidental death was graphically reported by an unsympathetic newsman who said of the victim and his death: “He went into his store, opened a keg of powder, sat down on it, lit a match and up man, keg and store all went. The store went into fragments and the owner ditto.”¹¹⁶

By 1852, the firemen’s association had grown to 90 active members, including 25 life members. Association regulations required a minimum of 12 years service with the fire department before becoming eligible for a life certificate.¹¹⁷

Despite the fact Fire Company Number Two, or the “Kentucky Fire Company” as it had come to be known, had been functioning since 1842, it was not until September 1849 that Daniel Senour became the company’s first formally elected president. His election prompted the *Covington Journal* to report the “new” company was “fully organized and ready for action.”¹¹⁸ Even so, the company did not receive a formal charter until March 6, 1850.

Fire company Number Two boasted three pieces of rolling equipment at the time of its 1849 organization. They were the fire engines *Simon Kenton* and *Henry Clay*, both of which were row-boat type pumpers and the hose wagon *Boone*. In addition, an attempt was made to discourage loitering about the fire equipment by adopting a company rule which forbade “playing cards, dominos or any game of chance in the Engine House.” Any fireman found violating the rule would be subject to “public expulsion.”¹¹⁹

Meanwhile, Covington Fire Company Number One had contracted with John Agnew of Philadelphia for a new horizontal type pumper. Agnew, whose products were noted for their outstanding quality and beauty, turned out a fire engine which all Covington was proud of. Christened the *Lafayette*, it was described by a local newsman as being “a beautiful piece of workmanship, elaborately finished and tastefully decorated.”¹²⁰

Such early fire engines were built with great care and engineering skill. The proud builders emphasized the beauty of their products with such adornments as silver-plated running boards and exquisitely carved panels of rosewood and mahogany, all of which prompted the volunteers who manned them to spend long hours polishing and caring for their engines.

During this time a great rivalry was growing between the various companies. With such equipment as the *Lafayette*, the *Neptune*, the *Simon Kenton* and the *Henry Clay*, the volunteers would dash off to any fire with a great deal of enthusiasm. Their eagerness to be first on the scene was virtually boundless and some were said to have actually started fires in order to allow their engines to reach them first.

On one occasion, police officer Clinton Butts joined one of the companies in order to confirm his suspicions the company harbored such an arsonist. His detective work was successful and the guilty individual was arrested and given a penitentiary sentence.¹²¹

Neither was it uncommon for the local companies to cross from Covington to Ohio or vice versa. An example of such inter-state cooperation occurred during the 1845 blaze which destroyed Moses Grant’s grist mill. It proved to be a disastrous occasion for the Cincinnati firemen as one of them drowned when he fell from the ferryboat bringing him across the Ohio River. Another Cincinnati suffered a broken leg when he was run over by one of the fire engines. Yet a third was severely injured while fighting the blaze itself.¹²²

On some occasions, the enthusiastic firemen would spend more time fighting one another than they would fighting the fire, as the following paragraph so graphically shows.

In 1851, the men of one of the Covington companies saw a great fire on the Ohio side of the river. It was a saw and planing mill going up in flames. The local men promptly ferried across only to find ten Cincinnati fire

companies ignoring the big blaze and fighting among themselves. The issue at stake was the question of who would use the nearby cistern.

The Covington volunteers, seeing more fun to be had from a good brawl, also ignored the fire and immediately joined in the gigantic melee. The saw and planning mill continued to burn until nothing was left but glowing embers. Many of the men reported it was the best fire they had ever attended.

Still, the fire fighters' behavior shocked the entire community and in Cincinnati led to the 1853 formation of a professional fire department to serve that city.

Such free-for-all battles represented only one of the hazards faced by owners of fire-endangered property of that time. The practice of insurance companies issuing their policy holders small identification plates to attach to the fronts of their structures was another risk. These fire marks, as they were known, served a very practical purpose for the companies issuing them. In many cities the insurance companies either maintained their own fire departments or supported one in preference to the others. Locally, it was common practice for the companies to pay or otherwise reward whichever fire department put out a blaze in a building bearing their mark. This, of course, virtually guaranteed continuation of the fierce inter-department brawls.

In addition, it often happened that if a burning building did not have a mark on it, the firemen ignored the blaze and returned to their homes. Neither was it unknown for them to deliberately set fire in order to reap the possible rewards for extinguishing them.

Today, these fire marks are extremely rare and any museum possessing a collection considers itself fortunate indeed. One extensive collection is part of the Historical Collection of the Insurance Company of North America at Philadelphia. Included among its more valuable specimens are some which were issued by early Newport and Covington insurance companies including the Clay Fire and Marine Insurance Company (1856-79) and United Life, Fire and Marine Insurance Company (1865-71), both of Covington.

The volunteers took a great deal of pride in their respective companies and delighted in out-performing other companies. These intense rivalries not only led to fights of vandalism against one another's equipment.

In addition to the ever-increasing instances of battles and vandalism, there were also frequent acts of insubordination – and there was little the authorities could do, short of ordering a company to disband.

One of the firemen's least questionable practice was that of engaging in water battles whenever a fire proved to be small or they had responded to a false alarm. Such antics were commonplace and could only lead to the eventual demise of the volunteer companies.

Even as late as the early 1860s, abandoned and often damaged fire equipment could be found on street corners where it had been left after the previous night's fire had been extinguished and the ensuing battle between the companies had subsided.

On one occasion, a group of firemen decided to amuse themselves by "washing out" what was said to be a house of ill repute on Sixth Street, just west of Madison. According to one account, it was on a cold December day when "just for fun, the firemen pulled their fire engine up to the house and threw a heavy stream of water into it."¹²³

A great rivalry existed between the Covington companies and those north of the Ohio and this sometimes led to the men staging raids on one another's engine houses. One such incident occurred in May 1849 when "some blackguards from Cincinnati came over to give the Covingtonians a specimen of rowdiness. They went to the engine house of the No.2 and after raising an alarm, attempted to get out the apparatus."¹²⁴

The Cincinnatians failed in their mission however, for as a newsman for the *Covington Journal* succinctly reported, the Covingtonians "arrived in time to prevent this."¹²⁵

The rivalry between Covington and Cincinnati companies was expressed at other times in friendly contests, as in December 1849 when the men matched the water throwing ability of their hand-powered pumpers. All Covington was jubilant when the local firemen vanquished their Ohio rivals in that contest. The *Neptune* and its crew won top prize among the engines, pumping water from an outside source while the *Henry Clay* defeated all opponents in the class of engines which supplied themselves with water.¹²⁶

The volunteers would also seize any opportunity which would allow them to don rakish dress uniforms and show off their latest firefighting equipment. One of the many such occasions occurred on September 9, 1851, when Kentucky Fire Company Number Two and the Covington *Independent Neptunes* eagerly accepted an invitation to participate in a Cincinnati parade.¹²⁷

The *Neptunes* appeared for the affair dressed in "natty" white trousers, blue shirts and straw-colored hats. Men of the dapper Kentucky Company were not to be outdone though and donned their own rakish uniforms which were of the same type white trousers worn by the *Neptunes* but included bright red shirts and "jaunty red hats."¹²⁸

Such occasions also called for the equipment to be lavishly decorated. Typical was that of the *Henry Clay* for a 4th of July parade. Patriotism was the decorators' theme and one spectator described the *Henry Clay* as being

“tastefully trimmed with flowers and evergreens and drawn by four horses, contained 34 charming girls, neatly attired, representing the 31 states, Nebraska and Washington Territories and Cuba!”¹²⁹

The rivalry between the various companies and departments often encompassed other segments of the community. Certainly such was the case when a Cincinnati news reporter felt obligated to keep his own community’s fire fighters informed of preparations being made in Covington for an upcoming Queen City parade. The newsman made frequent visits to the Covington companies where the volunteers often spent days and even weeks preparing for such public events. The Ohioan promptly reported on the Kentuckians’ preparations and wrote:

“It may be a gratification to the firemen of our city to know the kind of uniforms the firemen of our sister city, Covington, have adopted for the parade on the 30th of May next in this city. The Number Ones have adopted the real white round top hat, handsomely lettered with gold, designating their company, etc., white shirt, black belt and black pants. The Number Two, round top hat straw color with letters, etc., sky blue shirt trimmed with silver lace, belts, having on them in brass letters, the name of the several divisions to which they belong and white pants. The names of their apparatus are the *Washington*, *Lafayette* and *John T. Levis* belonging to the Ones; *H. Clay*, *Simon Kenton* and *Daniel Boone* belonging to the Number Twos.”¹³⁰

Sufficient and proper sources of water have always been of prime concern to fire fighters. This is as true today as it was in 1846 when the city felt obliged to construct more public wells. In that year additional wells were constructed at Greenup and Robbins; Seventh and Willard; and on Ninth Street between Madison and Washington.

In addition to the public wells scattered about town, there were also many cisterns constructed for the sole use of the fire department in combating conflagrations. One of these, a later day one of course, was located on Seventh Street near Washington and remained in serviceable condition until 1976 when it was obliterated by construction of the Seventh Street Plaza [since return to a normal street - editor].

Keeping the fire cisterns filled with water during any lengthy period of drought was always an arduous task and until the advent of steam fire engines, the job had to be done by manually operated pumps. The cisterns were filled with river water that had to be pumped through about 1500 feet of hose to the nearest cistern on Lower Market. That cistern would then be emptied by pumping its contents on to the next cistern and so on until all were filled.

It would not be until 1864 that firemen would be relieved of the toilsome work of filling the cisterns. That was the year Covington acquired its first steam-powered engine and abolished its volunteer fire department in favor of a full-time, professional fire-fighting organization.

Endnotes

¹ *The Western Globe*, Covington, 23 August 1839.

² *Ibid*, 22 January 1840 and 4 March 1840.

³ *Ibid*, 22 January 1840.

⁴ *Ibid*.

⁵ *Ibid*, 20 January 1840 and 4 March 1840.

⁶ *Ibid*, 22 January 1840.

⁷ Acts of the 1840 Kentucky General Assembly, Chapter 175.

⁸ *Newport Local*, 12 December 1878.

⁹ *Ibid*.

¹⁰ *Ibid*.

¹¹ Hartman, Margaret Strebel, *op. cit.*, Also: *Kentucky Post*, 13 December 1982.

¹² *Ibid*.

¹³ *The Graphic*, Cincinnati, 27 June 1885.

¹⁴ *Covington Free Press*, 8 December 1838.

¹⁵ *The Western Globe*, Covington, 4 March 1840.

¹⁶ Ireland, Robert M., “The County in Kentucky History,” University Press of Kentucky, Lexington (1976).

¹⁷ *The Western Globe*, Covington, 4 March 1840.

¹⁸ *Ibid*.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 22 January 1840.

²⁰ “Kenton County Centennial Souvenir Program,” June 14-23, 1940.

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- ²¹ *Kentucky Times-Star*, Covington, 21 October 1912.
- ²² *Kentucky Times-Star*, Covington, 21 October 1912.
- ²³ *Ibid.*
- ²⁴ Collins, Richard H., a speech delivered to the Covington Pioneer Association, 18 November 1876 and published in the *Cincinnati Commercial*, 19 November 1876.
- ²⁵ *Kentucky Times-Star*, Covington, 21 October 1912.
- ²⁶ “History of Kentucky Courthouses,” National Society of Colonial Dames.
- ²⁷ *Kentucky Times-Star*, Covington, 21 October 1912.
- ²⁸ *Covington Journal*, 30 November 1849.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, 25 October 1851.
- ³² Collins, Richard H., Volume 1, *op. cit.*
- ³³ *The Graphic*, Cincinnati, 27 June 1885.
- ³⁴ *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer*, 21 February 1857.
- ³⁵ *Daily Commonwealth*, Covington, 8 September 1884.
- ³⁶ *Kentucky Post*, Covington, 13 May 1981 & 11 June 1981. This editor has termed this suburban movement a “Fortress mentality” primarily to avoid Covington problems and taxes.
- ³⁷ *Licking Valley Register*, 12 November 1842.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, 30 April 1842.
- ³⁹ City Record Book “B.”
- ⁴⁰ *Daily Commonwealth*, Covington, 20 September 1884.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 6 October 1884.
- ⁴² *Licking Valley Register*, 11 May 1844.
- ⁴³ *Daily Commonwealth*, Covington, 20 September 1884.
- ⁴⁴ *Licking Valley Register*, 30 November 1844.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 29 October 1842.
- ⁴⁶ *Daily Commonwealth*, Covington, 20 September 1844.
- ⁴⁷ *Licking Valley Register*, 25 March 1843.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 29 April 1843.
- ⁵² *Daly Commonwealth*, Covington, 20 September 1884.
- ⁵³ *Licking Valley Register*, 1 July 1843.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 21 October 1843.
- ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 14 January 1843.
- ⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 18 January 1845.
- ⁶² *Covington Journal*, 31 January 1852.
- ⁶³ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁵ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁹ *Licking Valley Register*, 7 January 1843.
- ⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 17 February 1844.
- ⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 6 January 1844.
- ⁷² *Ibid.*, 20 January 1844
- ⁷³ *Cincinnati Gazette*, 14 November 1843.

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- ⁷⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁵ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁶ *Cincinnati Gazette*, 13 November 1843.
- ⁷⁷ *Cincinnati Gazette*, 14 November 1843.
- ⁷⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁹ *Cincinnati Daily Chronicle*, 13 November 1843.
- ⁸⁰ *Licking River Register*, 5 August 1843.
- ⁸¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁸² *Ibid.*, 1 March 1845, also *Daily Commonwealth*, Covington, 6 October 1884.
- ⁸³ *Licking Valley Register*, 5 August 1843.
- ⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 4 May 1844.
- ⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 1 March 1845.
- ⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 18 June 1847.
- ⁸⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁸⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁸⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁹⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁹¹ *Kentucky Post*, Covington, 4 July 1899.
- ⁹² *Licking Valley Register*, 5 August 1843.
- ⁹³ *Ibid.*
- ⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 22 October 1847.
- ⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 18 June 1847.
- ⁹⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁹⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁹⁸ Rider, Charles L., *op. cit.*
- ⁹⁹ *Daily Commonwealth*, Covington, 20 September 1884.
- ¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 14 June 1884.
- ¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 28 June 1884.
- ¹⁰² City of Covington Record Book "B".
- ¹⁰³ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁰⁵ *Daily Commonwealth*, Covington, 20 September 1884.
- ¹⁰⁶ *Covington Journal*, 21 August 1852.
- ¹⁰⁷ *The Register*, Kentucky Historical Society, Volume 51; Number 175.
- ¹⁰⁸ *Daily Commonwealth*, Covington, 20 December 1884.
- ¹⁰⁹ *Covington Journal*, 6 October 1848.
- ¹¹⁰ *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 1 June 1849.
- ¹¹¹ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹² *Ibid.*, 13 October 1849.
- ¹¹³ *Covington Journal*, 21 August 1852.
- ¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 16 March 1849.
- ¹¹⁵ *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 19 April 1849.
- ¹¹⁶ *Covington Journal*, 25 September 1852.
- ¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 21 August 1852.
- ¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 7 September 1849.
- ¹¹⁹ *Covington Journal*, 15 June 1850.
- ¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 30 November 1849.
- ¹²¹ Perkins, George Gilpin, "A Kentucky Judge," W. F. Roberts Company, Washington DC (1931).
- ¹²² *Licking Valley Register*, 1 March 1845.
- ¹²³ *Covington Journal*, 17 December 1853.
- ¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 1 June 1849.
- ¹²⁵ *Ibid.*
- ¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 7 December 1849.
- ¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 6 September 1851.
- ¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, 8 July 1854.

¹³⁰ *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 26 April 1849.

Chapter 8 Covington Expands Its Interests

THE YEAR 1828 is important in Covington history for it was then the city attracted its first full-fledged industrial plant. Still this is not to suggest manufacturing was previously unknown in the area. Small industries of one type or another had been in existence since shortly after the arrival of the very first settlers.

Samuel Bryan's salt works was in operation as early as the 1790s as was John Grant's grist mill and saw mill. In time, these were joined by tanneries, brickyards and other equally small enterprises whose production was governed almost entirely by demands of the local market.

One of these, the area's first commercial brickyard, was established just southwest of the town limits by New Jersey migrant Joseph A. Keen. The site is now generally bounded by Main, Philadelphia, Pike and Ninth Streets.¹

Yet another local enterprise was the Lamaire Tannery, operated by Pennsylvania-born Nicholas and Ohio-born Jacob Lamaire. The tannery, which was in full operation by March 1818, was located at the present southeast corner of Sixth and Scott.²

Also, local farm produce, including salted meats and whisky was being shipped to downriver ports in ever-increasing amounts. Virtually none of these operations though, gave employment to anyone other than their owners and possibly a few helpers. Now all this was about to change as the industrial tempo quickened and gave the city a period of spectacular growth.

In order to attract that first industrial plant, Thomas D. Carneal, one of the town's proprietors, offered seven free lots to the management of an out-of-town cotton factory if the plant was re-located here. The firm's management was quick to answer with the following letter:

Cincinnati, 9th June 1828

Thos. D. Carneal, Esqr.

Sir we declined accepting the offer made us by the Citizens of New-Port for a Scite [sic] to Erect our cotton factory in that place. We now make known to you that we will accept for one In Covington, Provided the Citizens and trustees will grant us the priveledge [sic] of leying [sic] pipes to bring water up from the River to our factory also to close up the Alley running between our Lots parallel with the River and have opened a free communication down the River by a Street to Riddles ferry.

The great object we have in view in securing a communication downe [sic] the River is to have It in our power to take choice of Ferrys[sic] in case of a necessity for doing so, which at present however we do not anticipate.

Your reply tomorrow morning will oblige us.

*Very much Respectfully,
Chs. Macalister, Jnr. ³*

All this was agreeable to the city fathers and the factory was built. Some years later, a Covington newsman described the plant as follows:

"In 1828, the Covington Cotton factory was established with 2,288 spindles, 1,600 of which operated from the beginning. The building was four stories high and 120 feet by 40 feet. There was a machine shop attached and the while establishment gave employment to 60 hands who turned out 2,000 yards of cloth weekly." ⁴

William Whitehead served as the factory's manager until he suffered a fatal job-related injury after which he was succeeded by his son-in-law, John Talbot Levis.⁵ Levis was a native of Delaware County, Pennsylvania and came to Covington and his new position in 1830. The 25-year-old proved to be a man of unusual ability and in a short time became one of the town's most prominent civic, industrial and political leaders.⁶

The same newsman who described the cotton factory also declared that in 1831 the town's first steam-powered flour mill was established by "Messrs. Hanson, Drew, Goodloe and Stewart; and it is said to have turned out forty barrels of flour per day." That same year also saw the opening of the Covington Rolling Mill, with a planned employment of 300.

Richard H. Collins, in his “History of Kentucky,” took note of Covington’s early industrial growth when he wrote: “The Town of Covington hardly began to grow . . . when . . . the erection of the Covington Cotton factory (began) on the west half of the square bounded by Front, Second, Scott and Greenup Sts., adjoining on the west the present entrance to the Covington and Cincinnati Suspension Bridge . . . The McNickle Rolling Mill, on the opposite square just across Scott Street was established about 1831; followed by other factories and of course, by a rapid increase of the population.”⁷

Covington’s industrial beginnings were not without problems though and quickly led to enactment of one of the city’s first laws regulating factories. On July 9, 1831, the trustees took note of several complaints concerning “a great nuisance in the alley bounding Mr. William Murphy’s Tobacconist Factory arising from the Tobacco stems and discharge from said factory which endanger the health of our citizens and particularly those living contiguous thereto.”⁸

Such complaints indicated a clear violation of the new city law and the trustees reacted by declaring: “said publick [sic] nuisance (must be removed) within three days . . . or the law will be enforced against him (Mr. Murphy) for noncompliance with it.”⁹

This was the early nineteenth century and Covington was making ever greater industrial, commercial and cultural strides. By August 1832, the town had grown to a point where the trustees felt justified in authorizing the erection of a public market house. It would be built on a previously selected site on the east side of Market Space.

The law makers also responded to a public clamor for additional sources of drinking water and on August 21st “ordered that the Citizens be allowed the liberty & privilege of digging a publick [sic] well at the corner of Fifth and Scott Streets.”¹⁰

As the town’s growth continued, its center of commercial activity gradually shifted from the Greenup Street waterfront to what is now Park Place and still later to Madison Avenue.

CYRUS P. BRADLEY, one of Daniel Webster’s Dartmouth College classmates, made some interesting observations of Covington at the time and set them down in the diary of his 1835 trip down the Ohio River:

Everybody knows something about Cincinnati; how it is the largest town in the West; How it has grown up from the very beginning within the memory of the present generation. Settlements were commenced here in 1790 . . . Swine are here in abundance – to be expected in this vast pork market. Remember Mrs. Trollop’s amusing experience of her adventures with the hogs in the streets of Cincinnati? The beasts were imprudent. They know enough to get out of the way of a carriage but a foot passenger must turn out . . . Then we walked down to the river and took passage on a steam ferry boat for the Kentucky shore . . . We landed in Covington, a flourishing village founded in 1815. Hard by, a little about, Newport.

Both these towns make a very pretty appearance from the opposite side of the river. There are very many beautiful houses here which stand, as it were, on tiers on the slope of a beautiful hill. This hill rises behind the village to a great height and the eminence is crowded with magnificent forest trees and a fresh verdure. This is a fashionable resort and the place is furnished with shady seats at convenient distances. Here Mrs. Trollope delighted to come and sleep and dream away the day and hither we directed our steps. The streets of Covington are regular and so laid out as to appear a continuation of Cincinnati. Covington does not appear so favorable on a near view as from the other shore – there are too many manufactories and too much coal smoke and coal smell. The latter is more offensive to me than the former. Indeed this bituminous coal is villainous stuff.¹¹

Even though alive with all sorts of industries, Covington would continue to welcome more “manufactories,” for the spirit of the times was in the hammer and the anvil, the forge and the furnace, and the finished output of the factory.

Despite the fact Samuel Slater had first settled in Pawtucket, Rhode Island in 1789, where he started America’s first industry, the United States had been slow in getting its own industrial revolution underway.

It was the War of 1812 that had not only given birth to a new and more secure West and had made the American people feel more like true citizens of a new nation but it also had pointed up how dependent the infant

republic was on Europe for factory-made goods. This in turn, led to a conscious American effort to encourage and protect the growth of its own industrial base. Before that time, almost the sole object of import tariffs had been to raise money to pay the expenses of government. Now it became important that such tariffs should also be used to afford protection to American manufacturers.

Ever increasing numbers of immigrants poured into the Ohio Valley after the war. They came by boat, wagon, horseback and on foot. Even the snow and ice of winter did not halt their westward migration. During the winter 1814, it was reported central New York saw a steady procession of ox-drawn sleighs carrying people west, while after the spring thaw of 1815, a record 1,200 migrants boarded flatboats on the upper Allegheny at Olean, New York. Most were headed for the headwaters of the Ohio where, at such points as Red Stone, Old Fort, Pittsburgh or Wheeling, they would embark on the long and often perilous journey to Kentucky and the West.

These migrants tended to be non-slaveholders who favored a high, protective import duty. As a result, there was a strong proclivity among those settling in the Covington area to put the national union before the state, in their thoughts and to think of what they called the country's betterment as whole.

A few migrants however, principally those settling in outlying rural regions and those coming from the South, said the state was the supreme governmental body and put the rights of the individual before those of the national government. They claimed such acts as passage of federal taxes for the mere protection of industries were unconstitutional and any state which chose to invalidate them was free to do so.

These two divergent views gradually increased in scope and intensity until the ultimate clash of the American Civil War. Tariff bills which would help growing industry in such cities as Covington would harm slaveholding agriculturalists south of here, said the anti-tariff faction. This feeling was reflected in a growing alarm felt by Covington's rival interests in Kentucky's interior as they witnessed the growing importance of the Ohio River cities.

By the early 1830s, Newport's Sidney Sherman, a man who helped draw up papers for the 1834 incorporation of that city and who would later become one of the outstanding leaders of the War for Texas Independence, established in Covington the first plant for manufacturing sheet lead west of the Allegheny Mountains, Sherman is also credited with being the first manufacturer to ever produce cotton bagging by machine.¹²

The industrial tempo of the community continued at a rapid rate and on January 9, 1836, a newspaper reporter proudly noted the local manufacturing establishments included a steam powered saw mill, an iron rolling mill, a nail factory and foundry, five tobacco and five cigar factories, a cotton factory, a cotton gin manufacturer, a rope walk, a flour mill, a distillery, and a bagging factory then in process of being erected as well as an extension being built onto the cotton factory. Their combined number of employees totaled more than 350.¹³

A few weeks after publication of the above list, the town's first brewery, the Covington Brewery, went into operation "at the termination of Scott Street, immediately South of Covington."¹⁴ This location is now the 600 block of Scott Street.

The brewery was run by a French immigrant, Peter N. Jonte, who proclaimed its opening by saying:

*THIS new establishment is now in full and successful operation and will keep on hand a constant supply of STRONG BEER and all other articles in the brewery line, of as good quality as can be had in the west.*¹⁵

Neither did local inhabitants neglect their love for the thoroughbreds and on the first Tuesday of May 1837, the spring meet of the "Newport and Covington Association for the Improvement of the Breed of Horses" commenced what was that year's earliest race meeting in the state.¹⁶

By May 1829, General Taylor was operating the then-flourishing Newport Race Track, which was situated on the site now covered by much of that city's downtown section. The track itself had been firmly established for some time and had been in full operation at least as early as October 1806.¹⁷

The Covington side of the Licking boasted yet another racing facility during the 1820s and 1830s. It was a quarter-mile track located on an expanse of land stretching along the western side of present-day Banklick Street from a point near 15th Street to about what is now 19th Street. John Hardin's horse, *Possum*, frequently raced there and according to one observer, "always ran just fast enough to get beat!"¹⁸

In addition to John Hardin and General Taylor, another of the area's more enthusiastic supporters of horse racing was Thomas Carneal, who by 1839 was serving as president of Ohio's year-old Buckeye Race Course.

BY THIS TIME, PETER JONTE'S BREWERY was operating at full capacity in a effort to produce enough beer to slake the growing local thirst. The Covington market for beer had reached the point that by early 1839, another brewery, the Spruce Beer Brewery, went into production.

Thomas Ryan operated the new brewery at Second and Scott "near the Rolling Mill" where according to his opening announcement, he would "be able to furnish inhabitants with that wholesome and delightful drink."¹⁹ Ryan welcomed all types of customers, including individuals as well as businesses. "Persons wishing to be supplied," he said, "can send barrels, kegs or bottles and they will be filled to order."²⁰

Later that year, the Sparrow and Ruff Candle Factory commenced operations at Second and Greenup. The factory owners not only boasted of manufacturing "the best articles in their line," but also promised to pay "the highest price . . . for country Tallow."²¹

The transformation of western river cities into centers of commerce and industry was accompanied by an influx of those seeking their fortune. Some had money for the stake, while others had nothing but optimism and a penchant for hard work. Nevertheless, both groups saw the burgeoning cities as places of opportunity and both were willing to gamble on the future.

This optimistic outlook was typified by a would-be investor who visited one of the fast-growing river cities. Upon his arrival, he promptly posted a notice in the post office which read: *WANTED – Money or business; d—n the odds.*²²

One of those seeking his fortune in Covington was John Singer, a free black who arrived here November 27, 1836. He came from what is now West Virginia.²³ The migration of free blacks into Kentucky was not an acceptable practice to white residents and Singer's arrival set off a storm of public comment, most of which, surprisingly, was in his favor. A few of the more rabid anti-blacks threatened him with physical harm but the threats quickly subsided when it became apparent the majority of the towns people seemed to favor the black man's position.²⁴

Singer was an accomplished barber and set up a shop on Greenup Street "nearly opposite Bake's Hotel." His personable manner and his skill at his trade soon won him a number of friends. Even some of his severest detractors came to admire what was called "his good conduct and courteous behavior."²⁵ Singer's defenders bitterly attacked the law which prohibited such free blacks from settling in the state and in 1842 successfully petitioned the legislature to enact a law granting him "the full privileges of an unmolested resident."²⁶

The petition bore the signatures of "nearly everybody in Covington," and led to the popular barber becoming the first free black to be granted the right of residence by a Kentucky legislative act.²⁷

DURING ALL THIS, the on-going debate continued to fester between those favoring higher import tariffs and those opposed. There was one area in which they were in agreement however and that was the need of additional sources of labor.

One labor source was to increase the number of indentured white servants. These were people who voluntarily placed or "bound" themselves in a position of servitude for a specified time – usually five to seven years. They did this in return for an opportunity to learn a trade or for some other type of aid – often a paid passage from Europe to America. The demand in the eastern states for indentured servants became so great that when the supply did not keep pace, more forceful methods were often employed to bring people from Europe. Prisons were raided and kidnappings of men, women and children became commonplace.

Indentured servitude did not prove to be satisfactory, however. Times of indenture eventually ran out plus the fact it was relatively easy for a dissatisfied servant to run away and meld into the general population. There also were cases where some even went so far as to bring suit against their masters for what they called illegal detention.

Many indentured servants were seen in the Covington area where they generally served out their contracts in an honorable fashion. Some did not find their lot satisfactory and did not hesitate to flee their positions. When this occurred, the master usually did not make too great an effort to have the servant returned for it was assumed the flight would be repeated.

There were laws prohibiting anyone from aiding or employing known runaways and many sarcastic notices appeared in local newspapers reminding prospective employers of that fact. The advertisements also served to mark the runaway as an individual who would not honorably live up to the terms of a contract.

The masters often expressed their contempt for the contract breaker in such notices by offering ridiculous rewards for their return. The following advertisements are typical:

*10 Cents Reward*²⁸

RAN AWAY from the subscriber, in Newport, Ky. on the 25th Feb. 1816, two

*Indentured apprentices to the Ropemaking business, named **JOSEPH & JAMES BUTLER, BROTHERS**; one about eighteen, and the other sixteen years of age. The above reward, but no charges, will be paid for their apprehension. All persons Are hereby cautioned against harboring or employing said apprentices.*

Daniel Mayo

Newport, Ky. March 1, 1816

* * * * *

ONE CENT REWARD²⁹

*RUNAWAY from the Subscriber, **CECILIA**, aged about 14 years. All persons Are warned not to trust or employ her as I am determined to put the law in Force against her. The above reward will be paid for her delivery to me – but No expenses paid.*

JESSE GRAY, COVINGTON

10th June 1840

Most other posted rewards were just as contemptuous as the above. Some were for as little as “one cent and no thanks,” while one individual, more generous than others, offered “a reward of 6 cents and a chew of tobacco.”

Most indentured servants, of course, were of the white race but there were a few exceptions. These were blacks and, like their white counterparts, they too were often prone to running away from their contractual obligations. Jacob Fowler learned this at a very early date when a black servant girl decided she no longer cared to remain in his service.

Unlike whites though, runaway blacks, because of their racial minority status, found it rather difficult to evade detection and arrest. As a result, the rewards offered for their return were usually considerably higher than those for white runaways. This can be seen in the following early-day advertisement for Fowler’s black servant who fled across the Ohio River to the Northwest Territory. It read:

FIVE DOLLARS REWARD³⁰

*RAN away from the subscriber on the 13th inst. A Negro Wench, name **NACKEY**, about 18 years of age. Whoever takes her up and returns her to MR. ISAAC ANDERSON, of Cincinnati, shall have the above reward, and all reasonable Charges paid by him upon her delivery, as he has agreed with me for the Remainder of her time of servitude.*

JACOB FOWLER

Newport, March 17, 1800

So too, were the rewards for return of runaway slaves considerably higher than those offered for the arrest of defected indentured servants. An 1844 Covington newspaper carried an advertisement telling of a slave who ran away from his central Kentucky owner and offering a reward of \$20 if the slave was captured in his own county of Boyle or in an adjoining county and \$150 “if taken in a more remote part of the State.”³¹

Another notice in that same newspaper offered a reward of but one cent for the return of a runaway apprentice. It read:

ONE CENT REWARD³²

*RAN AWAY from the subscriber, **HENRY FINCH**, an apprentice to the Saddlmg Business. The above reward and no thanks will be paid for his return. The public are forewarned from trusting or employing him.*

ANDREW ROSS, 3w3

Covington, August 10, 1844

THE USE OF CHILD LABOR was another common practice in Covington and Cyrus Bradley made careful note of this as he recorded his impressions concerning the children he saw in some of the local factories:

“There are very many boys employed in this horrible business, whom I pitied exceedingly.

They nearly forfeited all claim to my commiseration, however, by their imprudence, amusing themselves by throwing lumps of coal at strangers. I suppose they know no better.”

An important source of much of the child labor force was provided by the local courts where orphans and other homeless children were often bound out as apprentices. The courts invariably set the term of apprenticeship to run until the individual reached age 21.

These too would often run away or possibly be spirited away by others as the following advertisement placed in the Covington *Western Globe* indicates.

*ONE CENT REWARD*³³

*RAN AWAY, or was stolen off from me an indented boy named **EDWARD LONG**. He is about ten years old and has light hair and blue eyes, supposed to have gone to New Liberty or New Castle, Kentucky. All persons are forbid harboring him under the penalties of the laws.*

F. B. WEBB

Cov., Dec. 18, 1839

In 1849 the census revealed Covington had 2,026 inhabitants, including eleven free blacks and 89 slaves, 57 of whom were females. A breakdown of occupations showed the town had 104 people engaged in agriculture, 58 in commerce, 382 in trade and manufacture, 50 in water-borne transportation, 30 in the learned professions and one surviving pensioner of the American Revolution.

The city boasted of having the home office of a growing insurance company and contained a branch of the Northern Bank of Kentucky [*The 1836 bank building still stands at 3rd & Scott – editor*]. The number of tobacco factories had grown to nine while the yearly output of the McNickle Rolling Mill had increased to 1,800 tons of iron and [cut] nails. The Covington Cotton Factory's yearly yarn output was up to 300,000 pounds. The Alexander L. Greer and Company Flour Mill turned out 400 to 500 barrels of flour each week – an output easily matched by the rival Clarkson and Grant Flour Mill. Covington's meat packing industry was in its infancy but already was curing the pork from 8,000 to 10,000 hogs each year.³⁴

It was in 1839 that Moses Grant purchased the entire interest of his partner, James M. Clarkson, in what by then was called the Covington Steam Flouring Mill.³⁵ The city continued its rapid expansion and in 1841, the editor of the newly-established *Licking Valley Register* wrote:

“When we left this place some nine years since, it contained less than 1,000 residents – and here we are again, in the midst of a flourishing and enterprising little city of about 3,000 people – fully determined never to pull up stakes again, unless driven to it by causes we cannot control.

There is no place in the West more desirable for private residence – or one where capital can be safer invested, either in property or business . . . There is no spot in Kentucky blessed with so many flourishing schools as Covington; and none presenting so many advantages for a thorough education, to the sons and daughters of the sunny south . . .

We have a Rolling Mill, Cotton factory, Flouring mill, Hemp-bagging Factories, Rope walks, Brewery, Slaughter houses on a large scale and Packing Houses in which are slaughtered and packed upwards of 20,000 hogs per year.

And then comes our great staple, tobacco – it is almost incredible, but it is nevertheless true, that there has been and will be manufactured in this city, in the year 1841, upwards of 15,000 kegs and boxes of chewing tobacco equal in value to \$200,000; besides we ship hundreds of hogsheads and boxes of leaf to all parts of the chewing and smoking world. And then we have a bank – but we never see any of her notes – they are strangers even in the place of their nativity. We have a fair market six days in the week, well supplied with good and choice meats and fowl – but badly sustained with vegetables, . . .and we mention this fact by way of inducing some enterprising gardeners to locate in our vicinity . . . Our streets are well paved – and McAdamized in the centre; but the side walks we will not speak of, because they are not here . . .³⁶

Three years later, the *Licking Valley Register* again noted Covington's industrial growth. It described John McNickle's rolling mill and nail factory by saying: “This is an extensive establishment, employing from 75 to 120

hands. Ten tons of Iron are manufactured daily into sheet, nail and bar iron of all sizes . . . It consumes 600 bushes of Stone Coal and 300 of Charcoal.”³⁷

The Covington Cotton Factory, according to the *Register*, gave employment to “70 to 100 hands, of whom $\frac{3}{4}$ are female. . . The machinery is all driven by a Steam Engine of about forty horse power, to which requires annually, about 22,000 bushes of Stone Coal – besides which there are used about 500 gallons of oil, \$250 worth of Leather, \$500 worth of Paper and \$300 worth of Hemp Twine, annually.”³⁸

The writer further noted the young community had “no less than *twenty-two* establishments for manufacture of *Tobacco* and *Cigars* . . . (and) . . . one *Stemmery* . . . (which) . . . give employment to about 250 persons, great and small; and this too without taking into consideration all the Barrel and Keg makers, Box makers, etc., necessary to the prosecution of this extensive branch of home industry.”³⁹

Another flour mill, the Union Mill, was in existence by then and turning out an average of 1,200 barrels of flour each month. The local brewery had upped its monthly beer production to 190 barrels, while a newly-established pottery was turning out a monthly production of wares valued at \$150.⁴⁰

The work force at the cotton factory was composed mostly of boys, young women and girls, whose weekly wages varied from \$1.50 to \$3.25. The employees’ pay rate, which added some \$10,000 a year to Covington’s economy, was based upon “their age, size and experience.”⁴¹

The local tobacco and cigar factories were requiring an annual supply of 2,210,000 pounds of leaf tobacco. That was in addition to the half million pounds required by the town’s lone stemmery. The existence of this extensive tobacco manufacturing, of course, led to the rise of numerous plants to make the necessary barrels, kegs and boxes.⁴²

Covington’s 1844 business community also included: ⁴³

- 43 grocery stores
- 12 dry goods stores
- 11 tailor shops
- 10 shoemaker shops
- 10 master carpenters
- 7 blacksmith shops
- 6 taverns
- 6 house painters
- 5 butchers
- 4 brick yards
- 4 master brick masons
- 3 bakeries
- 3 coffee houses
- 3 watch makers
- 3 cabinet makers
- 3 cooper shops
- 3 livery stables
- 3 lumber yards
- 3 rope walks
- 3 drug stores
- 2 saddler shops
- 2 hatter shops
- 2 wagon makers
- 2 confectioneries
- 2 book stores
- 1 stone yard
- 1 turner’s shop
- 1 tannery
- 1 chair maker
- 1 gunsmith
- 1 tin shop

In addition to the above, Covington was also home to 11 lawyers, nine doctors, three printing offices, two monthly periodicals, two weekly newspapers and one monthly newspaper. The monthly newspaper was one of the Ohio Valley's most widely-read publications and boasted a circulation of 6,500 copies each month.⁴⁴

Another local enterprise was W. H. Scott's three-year-old mortuary on Market Space. There, Scott said, he would "keep a general assortment of ready-made coffins constantly on hand," and would "make coffins of mahogany, cherry, black walnut or any wood that may be selected." In addition, the undertaker promised, "A HEARSE can be had at all times."⁴⁵

ONE OF THE GREATEST HAZARDS faced by the town's residents during those years was disease and most feared was cholera. Outbreaks of this illness were commonplace and in 1848, unusually severe epidemics struck repeatedly in many of the other Ohio Valley communities.

Despite the fact Covington was spared the pestilence that year, the town's physicians still felt compelled to call a meeting for December 30th to prepare for any such calamity. As a result, a cleanliness program was organized in which streets, alley, drains, gutters and sewers were cleaned regularly. District boards were organized and authorized to enforce regular cleaning and disinfecting of private stables, cellars, outhouses, privies and littered backyards and lots.

In spite of all precautions, there were several cholera-related deaths during the spring of 1849 and by summer, a full-fledged epidemic was sweeping the city. Deaths from this dreaded disease became commonplace and funeral bells could be heard throughout the city virtually every day. The community's German population was especially hard hit and *Mutter Gottes Kirche* alone saw 129 of its members succumb to the illness. [*Frank Duveneck's biological father – Bernard Decker – was one of the parishioners who died in this cholera outbreak – editor*]

No one knew exactly what caused the disease but many thought it came from impure air. Accordingly, huge piles of coal were placed in the streets and set afire. It was believed the heavy clouds of smoke coming from these great coal fires would be an aid in checking the disease. The dark smoke drifted over and through the city so that in a short time, many of the buildings were soot-blackened.

Local newspapers printed health-care advice and called for re-establishment of a board of health. Newsmen lamented the number of daily deaths, but held out hope the plague could be eradicated if citizens would only follow their advice. Part of that advice was a warning against the eating of watermelons which one writer called "cholera bomb-shells!"⁴⁶

After noting the popularity of watermelons with his readers, the writer continued about the fruit: "They are regarded as unhealthy at all times and it is tantamount to an attempt to commit suicide to partake largely of them at this time."⁴⁷

For those who carefully followed all available health advice and still contracted the plague, the newspapers promised: "The disease is still, as it has heretofore been, quite manageable under proper and prompt treatment."⁴⁸ Still the illness and deaths continued and would not cease until the epidemic had run its course.

In late August, there was a noticeable lessening in the number of new cholera cases reported. One newsman called it "soul cheering" to see a return of "the rattle and clatter of business in the streets."⁴⁹

That same reporter welcomed the slow return of normalcy to the community but went on to say: "There are, however, traces of the disease which cannot be altogether obliterated. There are firesides made desolate; seats at the family table made vacant; faces that gave us joy to see, we will behold no more; voices whose melody made our hearts leap at the very sounds, now hushes in death. In fact, bosom friends and companions have been separated to meet not again until they meet where parting is no more."⁵⁰

Among the deaths were those of two children of Mortimer M. and Angeline Benton. Their infant daughter, age 17 ½ months, had died April 23rd and the next day a 3 ½ year-old son succumbed.⁵¹ It was just nine years earlier they had lost yet another infant daughter.⁵²

Such deadly epidemics undoubtedly influenced Covington's sympathetic attitude toward other communities suffering similar outbreaks. A typical outpouring of such sympathy occurred in 1853 when a particularly virulent outbreak of yellow fever struck New Orleans.⁵³ At that time, the local efforts to collect money and relief supplies for the victims received added emphasis when it was learned some victims were former Covingtonians who had moved to that southern city, one of them being Reverend Stephen H. Montgomery, OP.⁵⁴ It would be many years before science would know the causes of such illnesses and ways to control them.

MOST OF THE AREA'S EARLIEST PIONEERS were now reaching advanced years and a number of them idled away their time sitting on the tree-shaded benches in front of Madison Avenue's Virginia Inn. The inn, a

large frame building with double porches, was one of Covington's more prominent hostelrys. It was situated just north of Sixth Street.

Among the aging pioneers sitting along Madison might have been Jacob Fowler, one of Ohio Valley's most renowned explorers and Indian fighters. He had built the first log cabin in neighboring Newport and once owned much of the land later covered by Covington.

Fowler had lived a most remarkable life and was one of Covington's more celebrated citizens. In Covington, during his later years, he was often visited by historians and other scholars seeking first-hand knowledge of the earliest days of trans-Allegheny and trans-Mississippi migrations. One writer who interviewed the aging pioneer made no attempt to hide his admiration for the old Indian fighter as he wrote:

“There was hardly a battle fought in the early struggles with the Indians in which Mr. Fowler did not participate. He is now (July 1844) at the age of eighty – his eye has not waxed dim, nor his natural force abated. He can still pick off a squirrel with his rifle at 100 yards distance. He can walk as firmly and as fast as most men at fifty and I cannot perceive a gray hair in his head. His mind and memory are as vigorous as his physical functions.”⁵⁵

Fowler, who was married to a Newport widow, Esther Sanders, nee deVie, continued to live an active life for more than five years after the above was first written. He died at his Covington home in October 1849.⁵⁶

In 1845, two of Northern Kentucky's other old pioneers were called upon to serve as pall-bearers for the remains of Daniel Boone which were being brought from Missouri to be re-interred at Frankfort. They were General James Taylor of Newport and Covington's Elison E. Williamson. Williamson was a former companion of Boone and had made the journey from North Carolina to Kentucky with him. He had been deeply moved by Boone's death and at the time of the re-burial, expressed a strong desire for his own burial place to be as near that of his friend as the state would permit.⁵⁷

Williamson died August 11, 1850 but it was not until March 1860 that the legislature would appropriate the necessary funds to remove his remains from a Covington cemetery and re-bury them near Boone. On May 24th, John W. Menzies and Williamson's grandson, Preston Davis, accompanied the remains to Frankfort and their new resting place. Of the old pioneer, it was said, “He was a good woodman, a fearless man and a true friend.”⁵⁸

DANIEL BOONE HAD MOVED FROM KENTUCKY largely because of the treatment he received in the state's various courts and at the hands of many of the land-hungry late-comers to the state. As Kentucky attracted more settlers, Boone found himself being made the target of scores of law suits over his lands and he lost them all. By 1798 he was so weary and discouraged at having to contend with such suits and the accompanying antics of pompous lawyers that he decided to leave Kentucky and move further west.⁵⁹

Boone, like so many others, looked upon lawyers with sheer exasperation, regarding them as little more than vultures who fed upon the misfortune of others. He abhorred the idea that anyone might have a claim against him or his lands, saying he would rather die in poverty than possess even an acre that might have a claim against it.⁶⁰

Accordingly, before leaving, Boone deeded the last of his holdings – a large tract bordering the Licking – to his nephew, John Grant and instructed him to divide it among any who might press any further land claims against him. The renowned Daniel Boone then left Kentucky.⁶¹

MORE AND MORE OF THOSE WHO ONCE PLAYED A VITAL ROLE in the area's early days were now being called from their earthly labors, many of them dying during what today would be the “prime of life.”

Jefferson Phelps died November 11, 1843 and the following July, word was received of Cary Clemons' death at Monroe County, Illinois. He was 55 years of age.⁶²

On December 26, 1844, forty-four year-old William Wright Southgate, son of Richard, died. William, who had practiced law with Mortimer M. Benton, was a valued member of the community. He held public office during much of his adult life and had earned a reputation as a shrewd vote-getter.

In one hotly contested political race, Southgate's opponent had made a practice of playing a violin for all his audiences while out campaigning. Southgate quickly saw an opportunity to turn this to his own advantage by following his opponent by a day or two and speaking before many of the same audiences. He would then declare it was his opponent's practice to always play the violin left-handed before groups he did not particularly like. His opponent, of course, was truly left-handed but the largely unsophisticated audiences were not aware of this and rewarded Southgate with many votes that would otherwise have gone to his political rival.⁶³

About the time of Southgate's death, Richard Chester Langdon, editor of the *Licking Valley Register* traveled to New Orleans for health reasons, only to die in that city on March 5, 1845. Langdon, who possessed an inordinate amount of pride in Covington, was born at Vershire, Vermont on December 5, 1789 and migrated to the Ohio Valley with his mother and younger brothers in the fall of 1806.

On August 5th following Langdon's death, noted Indian fighter John Bush died at nearby East Bend, Boone County. Bush had been born at Winchester, Virginia on March 21, 1767, the son of German-born Phillip Bush. The elder Bush had served as a captain under George Washington at the time Washington capitulated at Great Meadows in a battle that helped spark the French and Indian War.⁶⁴

Young Bush migrated to Kentucky in 1788 and later took part in General Josiah Harmer's futile march. In 1794, he settled in Boone County where he spent the remainder of his long and useful life.⁶⁵

At times, the reveries of the old settlers who idled along Madison Avenue might be interrupted by a passing funeral procession on its way to the cemetery at Sixth and Craig Streets, where many of their comrades lay at rest. If the funeral was that of a lodge member, the procession would most likely be headed by a brass band playing dirges and sacred music. Fellow lodge members of the deceased always marched in the somber processions while dressed in full uniforms. After burial ceremonies, their return march was usually somewhat gayer with light and sometimes frivolous tunes.

THE CRAIG STREET CEMETERY had been originally established in 1815 on land then west of the city but by the 1840s almost entirely surrounded by the expanding community. The rear of sixty-five-foot-long lots on Willow Street, Now Kentucky Avenue, bounded it on the north, Breman Street, now (since World War I) Pershing Avenue, bordered it on the south and Craig Street served as its eastern boundary. The burial grounds spanned a portion of present-day Sixth Street and separated that thoroughfare into two segments [*today 6th doglegs under the CSX railroad because of the former cemetery – editor*]

New cemeteries were established with the passage of time and the old Craig Street grounds became neglected and overgrown with weeds. Eventually it was proposed a portion of c. one acre of the newly-established Highland Cemetery (Ft. Mitchell) be set aside for remains of the old pioneers which would be moved there. The plot was to be laid off "handsomely and appropriately," and be called "The Cemetery of the pioneers of the City of Covington." The plot would also contain a large monument to the pioneers' memory. The old burial grounds would be converted to a park.

None of this ever occurred however but instead, most of the graves were removed to Linden Grove. Nevertheless, the remains of some 1,700 early settlers were taken to Highland where they now lie in unmarked graves.

In time, the Sixth Street Market Square was joined to that portion of Sixth east of Craig and the remaining area of the old cemetery divided into building lots that were sold at a public sale in July 1883.⁶⁶ The C&O Railroad [*now CSX*] acquired a large part of the grounds, constructed a rail line, which was eventually elevated with fill dirt to allow a continuous Six Street and extended its tracks through that part of town.

The old pioneers sitting in the shade of Madison Avenue's maple trees during 1842, might also have noticed TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH being erected further down the street [*at 4th*]. It was being built on a 90 foot lot which a group of 14 men had just purchased for \$350.

That same year, the now-historic LINDEN GROVE CEMETERY was established at 1400 Holman Street and the remains of several of Covington's earliest residents were moved from the Craig Street burial ground to the new cemetery. Among the remains re-interred in this new park-like cemetery were those of Thomas Kennedy and his family.

Two days before Linden Grove's FINAL DEDICATION ON September 11, 1843, the *Licking Valley Register* noted: "The area . . . embraces about sixty acres of high table land . . . situated in the midst of the most quiet and romantic scenery, being surrounded on three sides by lofty hills and dark luxuriant forests."

At the time of its dedication, Linden Grove's grounds stretched westward from present-day Holman Street to the banks of Willow Run Creek. The city, however, eventually acquired its western portion in order to construct Kavanaugh Street and the western extension of 14th Street.

Even as late as the date of Linden Grove's founding, there were REMNANTS OF AN EARLIER CULTURE in the area. Mrs. Julia Becker, born July 6, 1839, recalled for a newsmen during Covington's 1914 centennial celebration that there had been a colony of about 500 Indians in the city's northwestern part when she

was a child. The Indians' chief occupation, she said, was raising corn and other vegetables and stringing beads. They were delighted to have the town's children visit them. One day, according to the elderly Mrs. Becker, the children saw the natives pack their belongings and board a fleet of flatboats that had come up river (? -*editor*) and landed at the foot of Main and Johnson Streets. The following morning, the woman recalled, the Indians were gone "and they never returned."⁶⁷

The Indians Mrs. Becker remembered from her childhood were probably part of those being removed from the Old Northwestern Territories of Indiana and Ohio to lands west of the Mississippi. In fact, all during the late 1830s and 1840s, there seemed to be a steady stream of Wyandot, Seneca, Miami and others arriving in the area to board westward bound steamboats.

A typical scene of the Indian removal occurred on July 20, 1843 when some of the last Ohio Wyandot boarded the steamboats *Republic* and *Nodaway* at Cincinnati for their trip westward. The Wyandot had been living on a tract of 109,144 acres in Crawford County but had ceded the last of their lands on March 17th of the previous year.

Another such scene occurred on October 10, 1846, when Chief Lafontaine of the Miami arrived in Cincinnati with his wife and children and accompanied by several tribal sub-chiefs and their families. They were soon followed by some three-to-four hundred additional tribesmen, all of whom were undergoing the removal process.⁶⁸

About that time, Covington was visited by an Ohioan, who, although impressed by the community's rapid growth, lamented the passing of its rural character. Twenty-five years earlier, he recalled, one could visit Covington and "in the course of a three minute walk, you were hidden among the original forest or sauntering through somebody's orchard or making your way across a place of sweet-smelling meadowland."⁶⁹

The visitor admitted though the pastoral quiet originally surrounding the infant town would often be disturbed by: "The voice of a roistering blade of a Kentuckian, striving to get clear of the half-horse-half-alligator tribe . . . But in a moment all was quiet again and you could pursue undisturbed your contemplative ramble – or your search for flowers, never a difficult nor an unrewarded one – or your chat with the birds."⁷⁰ The Ohioan went on to say:

"But this, or most of this is past . . . the corn fields have become commons and the garden-spots town lots; and the old farm-house has changed into a city residence, and is sadly shorn of its fruitful orchard and its broad fields; the settler's axe has been laid to root of the tree and the proud forest . . . has bowed its head, given up its honors and disappeared. Chanticleer has taken the place of Bob-o-link and the hum of machinery drowns the tinkle of the old rivulet. All is changed; and while looking upon it . . . the thought . . . springs up unbidden – 'God made the country and man the town.'"⁷¹

Unlike so many nature lovers of his own and other generations, the above writer was not blind to the beauty and other amenities associated with growing cities. To him, these were quite evident in Kentucky's burgeoning northern metropolis as he continued: "The Town, however, or rather the CITY OF COVINGTON, is no mean affair. It is been growing fast of late and has some of the disproportionateness and loose-jointedness of all rapid growth; but a few years now will give it much comeliness of appearance. Its natural beauties those of situation and surface are great and Art and Industry are fact improving them. We have been much interested in a couple of visits that we have recently made to the town, walking leisurely through its streets, sauntering over its commons, glancing at its dwellings and looking into its manufactories and workshops. It is a handsome, growing, thriving young city and will in a few years, partly in consequence of its proximity to Cincinnati and in some respects notwithstanding that fact, be in a place of commercial and manufacturing note."⁷²

The writer commented on the rapid increase in population and noted the community "is filling up with a good class of people, chiefly mechanics and small traders, among whom is a large proportion of Germans. Its slave population is getting very small and does not now, we are assured, include over 100 persons. Two weekly newspapers are published in the town, one for each of the great political parties. Its literary institutions are respectable in character and well sustained. They consist of a Female Academy, by which a fine brick building is to be erected this season; three private schools, all very well attended; and one public school, which numbers some 200 pupils. In addition to these is the Western Baptist Theological Institute, with its extensive buildings – the most conspicuous object in the town from this side of the river."⁷³

"Covington contains seven churches . . . (and) . . . a fine City Hall, the main room of which is of the dimensions of 54 by 60 feet. Some of the private residences are very elegant buildings, surrounded by beautiful and well-planted grounds. It has more graded and paved streets than any town of its size in the West. Its general health is excellent."⁷⁴

The construction trade was booming, as builders found it difficult to keep pace with the housing demand. The scarcity of available living quarters prompted one observer to note: "As soon as a house is vacated, there are half a dozen or more applications for it. We do not believe there is a garret or cellar unoccupied."⁷⁵

That was 1845 and by then the Covington Cotton factory's 2,400 spindles were turning out 325,000 pounds of yarn each year, while Walker and Blair's Bagging factory, which covered more than three acres, was producing cotton and hemp bagging "that is not surpassed in quality . . . by any . . . in this country."⁷⁶

A touch of the exotic was added to the town's ever-growing industrial community in April of that year when "Jackson & Benett, Silk Manufacturers" began operations. The firm needed the necessary raw materials to operate and notified the local populace with advertisements that read:

***WANTED**, a quantity of first quality of pea-nut cocoons for which four dollars, per bushel, will be given in CASH.*⁷⁷

Later that year, William B. Jackson and his brother established a silk factory in neighboring Newport, turning out an extra grade of silk. As at the Covington plant, all the cocoons were raised locally, so the finished silk, from cocoon to spinning and weaving, was completely a Kentucky product.⁷⁸

The Newport silk was of an extra-fine grade and in 1853 it won a Silver Medal at New York's World's Fair. This was top prize where the Newport entry was recognized as the highest quality of all Kentucky products exhibited.⁷⁹

THE ANNUAL IRON PRODUCTION at McNickle's Rolling Mill had reached 2,000 tons and included steam and boiler iron, railroad iron and close to ten tons of iron nails.⁸⁰

About that same time, a Mr. Whitley was operating rather extensive grape vineyards on the slopes of Forrest Hill. Although he experimented with several varieties of imported grapes, he devoted most of his efforts to cultivating the native American species.⁸¹

Whitley's vineyards were believed to be the only commercial operations of their type in the entire state at the time, and his product was reputed to be of an excellent quality.⁸²

A top-quality product was also being produced in the large brewing vats of Charles Geisbauer's brewery at Sixth and Scott.

GEISBAUER, an immigrant German, was born at Lorenzen, in the District Zabern, Department Niederrhein in Alsace and migrated to Germantown, Ohio in 1830. From there he came to Covington and in 1840 leased Pater Jonte's brewery. It was not long before he came to own the operation and quickly turned it into one of the Ohio Valley's best known breweries.⁸³

ANOTHER COVINGTON ROLLING MILL opened in 1845 when Edwin and James Evans came here from Portsmouth, Ohio to build the Licking Rolling Mill. The Evans later sold the plant and moved to St. Louis. There they built the first rolling mill in that part of the country and still later, in 1869-70, constructed the first rolling mill to ever operate in Chicago.

In time, R. M. Shoemaker leased the McNickle Rolling Mill and renamed it the Morell Iron Works. A newsman reported: "The location is pronounced by good judges to be superior to any West of the mountains."⁸⁴

COVINGTON'S LIVESTOCK YARDS were flourishing as more and more farmers drove their cattle to local markets. In a two month period alone (November 15, 1843 – January 15, 1844) there were 41, 287 live stock of hogs, cattle, sheep mules and horses to arrive here by way of the Covington and Lexington Turnpike.⁸⁵

Slaughter houses and meat packing plants were attracting the interest of the investor and in September 1845, John C. Schooley announced he had taken over the "large and commodious" pork and beef packing plant of Hughes and Morgan.⁸⁶

Three years later, the Riggs, Loose and Gaines Slaughter House was erected on Willow Run near its junction with present-day Pike Street. This structure, measuring 100 by 58 feet, was capable of processing up to a thousand hogs a day.⁸⁷

Yet another large meat packing plant was that of Thomas McCarthy & Company which bought its cattle and hogs directly from farmers throughout Kentucky and Ohio. Located on the Licking River near the end of 13th Street, it did an extensive amount of packing for both the American and European markets.⁸⁸

The best known of the town's packing plants was that of Milward and Oldershaw, also located on the Licking bank. Reputed to be the nation's "Largest pork establishment,"⁸⁹ the firm, which covered approximately 2 acres, was described as follows:

"Lofty and well ventilated cellars . . . are used for bulking the meat; and so excellently adapted are they to the purpose, that spoiled meat is completely unknown on these premises. The first floor . . . is used for cutting and packing barrel pork. On a level with this, and of the depth of 15 feet, are nine water-tight brick cisterns, each capable of containing 400 barrels of pork. In warm weather the pieces of pork are packed in these and immediately covered with pickle. By this method, there is but a slight chance of any of the meat being pronounced 'sour' by the inspectors in the various markets.

The rendering-house is furnished with large kettles, capable of containing 3,000 pounds each, while, for those who prefer to have their lard rendered by steam, Two of 'Wilson's patent iron tanks' are kept in constant work.

The slaughter-house, which will contain 4,000 hogs, is on the roof, the hogs Being driven up an inclined plane . . . The building measures 360 feet front and runs Back 160 feet. It is doubtless the largest building for the purpose in the United States."⁹⁰

The writer went on to say of this company:

"They do a large business on their own account but their avowed business is pork and beef on commission, for the home and foreign markets . . . Part of the premises consists of a large singeing establishment which was erected exclusively for the benefit of our friends on the other side of the Atlantic. This establishment put up and packed, last season, 11,746 hogs and more than 3,000 beef cattle for the European markets."⁹¹

A local newsman who visited the Milward & Oldershaw plant in October 1850 was amazed at what he saw and wrote:

"On the *top* – yes, on the top, on the *roof* of the new building, on the top of the *three-story* part – are pens sufficiently capacious to hold 7,000 hogs – which are to be slaughtered on the roof and thence let down for cutting and packing into the lower stories. Besides these pens, there is space enough on the roof to pen as many thousand more."⁹²

The hogs, as noted, were driven to the roof-top pens by way of an inclined plane. There, it was estimated up to 3,000 of them would be slaughtered each day and in order to be prepared for the increased production, the company was in the process of erecting another three-story brick smokehouse. In addition, Milward and Oldershaw rented a large building once occupied by Thomas McCarthy's firm and planned to use it during the company's four or five peak months of each year.⁹³

The newsman commented on what he considered to be excellent workmanship displayed in the construction of Milward and Oldershaw's slaughterhouses and declared: "There is more *saw-mill* lumber in this building than in any other building in America." Special praise was given the Alexander Greer company which supplied the lumber and Wood and Walthall Company for doing "the wood work of the whole building from basement to roof." Artisan Ambrose Ambrose, a migrant from Wales and German-born Frank Decker were especially praised for their respective brick and stone work.⁹⁴

IT HAD BEEN BARELY EIGHTY YEARS since that day in 1769 when James Watt first patented his steam engine and made England's Industrial revolution possible. Now Covington's own industrialization was in full flower. It had been an even shorter thirty years since that day in 1820 when an English directory, containing a glowing description of Covington's prospects, first appeared in London and Liverpool bookstores. The directory reported Covington to be "a new town finely situated on the banks of the Ohio, immediately below Newport on the opposite side of the Licking; the plain on which it stands is extensive . . . The great road to the Miami and Whitewater settlements from the interior of Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia and the Carolinas, passes through this place. Newport and Covington will enjoy a large share of the interior trade of Kentucky; as Licking River, n high water, is navigable for more than 100 miles."⁹⁵

The directory continued on the infant town: “There are large tracts of land to be sold on reasonable terms, which are well watered and in a healthy part of the state.”⁹⁶

Just a year before the above was published, the American frontier had been struck by the financial panic of 1819. Despite that crisis, Covington quickly moved into a period of remarkable growth. In less than 35 years after its “official creation” by the state and only 15 years after receiving its charter, it had become the state’s second largest city – surpassed only by Louisville – and many predicted it would soon surpass even that city.

When a civic-minded writer for the *Licking Valley Register* learned Covington had doubled its population between 1840 and 1845, he too, joined the ranks predicting it would soon be Kentucky’s largest city and wrote: “Our city must, in spite of all obstacles, soon be the first in the state.”⁹⁷

THE *LICKING VALLEY REGISTER* itself, had come into existence in 1841 and represented one of the town’s numerous publications founded during that decade. Others included *The Kent-on-Bugle*, *The Yankee Doodle*, *The Freedman’s Journal*, *The Western School Journal*, *The Daily Covington Register*, *The Intelligencer*, *The Christian Journal*, *The Covington Union*, *The Christian Journal and Union*, and *The Covington Journal*.

These publications of the 1840s had been preceded during the prior decade by other journals such as: *The Farmer’s Record and Covington Literary Gazette*, *The Covington Enquirer*, *The Western Visitor*, *The North Kentuckian*, *The Kentucky and Ohio Journal*, *The Western Globe*, *The Covington Free Press*, *The Conciliator*, *The Kentucky Watchman and Advertiser*, and *The Western Colonizationist and Literary Journal*.

The growing population was accompanied by an expanding market for the ever-popular LOCALLY-BREWED BEER. In April 1849, it was noted “a large stone brewery . . . just back of Newport, is now going up, at which a grand amount of brewing is to be performed.”⁹⁸ The brewery, owned by Peter Constans, was located on Monmouth Street near what was then known as “Gallows Gap.”⁹⁹

BY 1850, COVINGTON’S INHABITANTS HAD GROWN to 9,408. This was more than quadruple the census figure of a decade before – a phenomena quickly apparent to even the most casual of visitors. On one occasion, a visiting out-of-town newsman wrote the following for his hometown paper:

*COVINGTON. – We visited this flourishing city on Monday last . . . (and) . . . were so delighted with our ramble up and down the beautiful streets of that Queen of Old Kentuck . . . (and) . . . would state our surprise at the extraordinary Growth of Covington. It is perhaps, not an over estimate to say that at least 100 buildings are at this time in process of erection! – Everywhere can be seen evidence of enterprise and prosperity and in our opinion, at no distant day, it will be the largest and more flourishing city in Kentucky.*¹⁰⁰

Shortly after the above first appeared, another out-of-town newsman, this one from Owensboro, wrote for his hometown readers:

*COVINGTON. – This beautiful city is fast increasing in wealth, population and greatness. We were agreeably surprised to see the spirit of enterprise which seemed to animate its citizens. A vast amount of capital has, within the last few years, been invested in improving Covington and, judging from her present progress, it will not be long ere she will lead Louisville.*¹⁰¹

Even as the above was first written, workmen were laying the foundation for the Sterns & Company’s planning mill on Eighth between Madison and Washington Streets.¹⁰² Despite the fact when completed, the mill was one of the largest in the Ohio Valley, its total around-the-clock production could furnish but a fraction of the building materials needed by the town’s booming housing industry.

Covington had graded, paved and macadamized 24 of its streets for an accumulation of 11 ¼ miles.¹⁰³ As of June 1, 1850, it further boasted of eleven churches, fourteen common schools and an assortment of 27 libraries containing 11, 755 volumes.¹⁰⁴

Two months later, the Covington Library Association was formed to set up a public library which would be supported by subscription.¹⁰⁵ It replaced one that was formed in early 1846 after the editor of the *Licking Valley Register* had chided the town for its limited library facilities.¹⁰⁶ At that time, the editor boosted the concept of public libraries by saying: “Nothing adds more to the intellectual and moral improvement of society.”¹⁰⁷

Actually, local library facilities had existed since 1824 when the Covington Social Library was instituted.¹⁰⁸ The Social Library flourished for a time, but by 1845, its small but choice collection had dwindled to “but a few novels . . . and . . . other works of very little importance.”¹⁰⁹

Mortimer Benton had taken an active interest in setting up the 1846 association but little came of it. Now, after four years of seeming indifference, another association had been formed. About the time the 1850 group came into being, Andrew P. Laird opened another circulating library. His patrons were expected to pay a fee of 25 cents a month.¹¹⁰

However, it was the town’s industrial development that seemed to cause the most comment. The editor of the *Covington Journal* agreed with those who predicted a pre-eminence in that field for his town as he editorialized: “Covington is destined to be a great manufacturing city . . . (and) . . . will eventually defy all competition in the manufacture of iron, hemp and tobacco.”¹¹¹

Sometime later, the same journalist visited one of the town’s tobacco companies which made extensive use of child labor. William Bagby, an agent of the William B. Mooklar & Company plant, conducted the editor on a tour of the manufacturing facility after which the newsman wrote:

“We spent a very pleasant hour in examining the arrangements and peering into the mysteries of the business and we must say that we doubt if a more orderly, well-arranged manufactory for one so extensive, can be found in or out of the State.¹¹² In the ‘twisting room’ we found ourselves in the midst of an army of workers as busy as a swarm of bees without a drone. The ‘twisters’ were arranged around the room, so as to take the best advantage of the light, and behind them were rows of little fellows, boys from the age of ten upwards, industriously engaged in ‘stemming’ the ‘loaf’ and cutting the ‘wrappers.’ There was no noise and disturbance as is commonly seen and heard in such places, but all moved as orderly quietly and regularly through their tasks as a file of veteran soldiers at review.¹¹³

We next visited the press room. This room is situated upon the 2nd floor of the building and contains three long rows of iron screw presses of immense strength and power by means of which the inoffensive weed is, to use a homely phrase, ‘squeezed as flat as a pancake.’ To accomplish this requires three operations to each of which is devoted a row of presses.¹¹⁴

Messrs. Nooklar and Company are probably the most extensive purchasers of *fine* tobacco west of the mountains. They keep agents in Richmond, Virginia, Louisville and St. Louis, Missouri and at all the important sales of premium tobacco they are found among the highest bidders, securing the *best* article regardless of cost. By means of their agents they obtain a superior quality of all varieties of tobacco needed in their trade.”¹¹⁵

The editor then quoted an earlier writing, “The Sales of Premium Tobacco at Louisville,” which supported his view that the Covington firm was willing to pay premium prices for premium tobacco. The Kentucky State Agricultural Society, the source said, sponsored an exhibition and sale of superior quality tobacco which “induced great competition among buyers.” The local firm entered the bidding for the topmost grades and according to the writer:

“It is a matter of no slight credit to the liberality and enterprise of the tobacconists of Covington and particularly the purchasing firm that this tobacco was bought by a Covington manufactory, W. B. MOOKLAR & COMPANY. It is probably the finest manufacturing leaf ever produced in Kentucky and is intended by Messrs Mooklar & Co. for the special manufacture of their chewing tobacco, celebrated as the ‘Key Brand’ is destined to take the lead in the race for popularity. The Virginia fancier must look out for their laurels or they will see the heels of the ‘Key Brand.’”¹¹⁶

The writer went on to lament the lack of space to allow him to say more, but noted:

“The reader may, however, gather from our remarks a slight idea of what is certainly one of the model manufactories of the West.”¹¹⁷

MEMBERS OF THE TOWN’S LABOR force were justly proud of their wide-spread reputation for high quality workmanship. This also applied to the large number of packing plant and slaughter house workers who took

a further price in their own peculiar reputation for cursing. Like the keel boaters of an earlier era, they boasted of being champions in what they called “the art of cursing.” No one, they bragged, could “out cuss” even the most timid of the town’s slaughter house workers.¹¹⁸

The local industrial community had its reverses though, as in February 1847, when an extensive pork packing plant on Pike Street was destroyed by fire. Losses that day included not only the plant itself but also an exceptionally large supply of lard, bacon and barreled pork. In addition, a number of firemen were severely injured when a portion of a flaming wall collapsed on them.¹¹⁹

All the injured firemen were members of various Cincinnati companies who had crossed the river to help their Covington comrades fight the roaring blaze. Some had pulled their hand-drawn engines from as far away as two miles.¹²⁰ The Cincinnatians’ actions that day prompted a grateful Covingtonian to later write: “May they never want a friend when they need one, is our wish, and that of our whole population.”¹²¹

On the night of December 31, 1853, fire again struck the meat packing industry when the plant of the Milward and Oldershaw Company, since known as the Taylor and Company, was completely destroyed. The spectacular fire, which was constantly fed by vast amounts of lard and tallow, burned throughout the night and illuminated all of the three cities of Covington, Newport and Cincinnati.¹²² The fire ravaged plant was never rebuilt.

Nevertheless, Covington continued to grow in industrial importance but never succeeded in replacing Louisville as the state’s leading manufacturing center. Still, its iron works and furniture factories, textile mills and tile works, glass works and locomotive manufacture, as well as its more typical Kentucky industries of tobacco processing and whisky distilling flourished.

Covington’s once thriving distilling industry supplied the names for two of America’s cities, as Covington, Louisiana and Covington, Michigan were both named from whisky labels bearing the name *Covington, Kentucky*.

At one time or another, Covington could boast of being home of the largest exclusively X-ray machine manufacturing company in the United States; the largest iron fence works in the world; the largest tile works in the South; the largest wood carving plant in the South; one of the largest truck manufacturing plants in the United States; the nation’s largest manufacturer of external electric operating switches; and the largest sheet metal corrugating plant in the South as well as a multitude of other industries – large and small.¹²³

This industrial growth continued until after world War II, when the town witnessed an exodus of many industries to suburban and nearby rural areas. This post-war movement was typical of those taking place in many of America’s metropolitan areas as industries sought less costly space in which to grow.

Endnotes

¹ Johnson, E. Polk, Volume 3, *op. cit.*

² *Covington Daily Commonwealth*, 19 April 1884.

³ Town of Covington Record Book.

⁴ *The Ticket*, Covington, 23 September 1875.

⁵ *Covington Daily Commonwealth*, 15 April 1884.

⁶ “Biographical Encyclopedia of Kentucky,” *op. cit.*

⁷ Collins, Richard H., Volume 2, *op. cit.* NB: Actually McNickle’s Rolling Mill was established in 1832.

⁸ Town Record Book, page 116.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Notes from Drake’s Diary as reported in the “Covington Centennial Official Book and Program,” Covington, September 14-19, 1914.

¹² Tolbert, Frank X., “The Day of San Jacinto,” McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York (1959).

¹³ *Cincinnati Daily Gazette*, 9 January 1836.

¹⁴ As advertised in *The North Kentuckian*, Covington, 9 February 1837. The advertisement first appeared on 9 January 1836.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ “Spirit of the Times,” New York, 27 May 1837.

¹⁷ *Western Spy and Miami Gazette*, Cincinnati, 14 October 1806.

¹⁸ *Covington Daily Commonwealth*, 3 May 1884.

¹⁹ *Western Colonizationist and Literary Journal*, Covington, 24 May 1839.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Western Globe*, Covington, 8 November 1839.

²² *Ibid.*, 29 November 1839.

²³ *Covington Daily Commonwealth*, 21 October 1877.

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- ²⁴ *Ibid.*
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*
- ²⁸ “Liberty Hall and Cincinnati Gazette,” Cincinnati, 11 March 1816.
- ²⁹ *The Yankee Doodle*, Covington, 29 July 1840.
- ³⁰ *Western Spy and Hamilton Gazette*, Cincinnati, 19 March 1800.
- ³¹ *Licking Valley Register*, 17 August 1844.
- ³² *Ibid.*
- ³³ *Western Globe*, Covington, 25 December 1839.
- ³⁴ Shaffer, David Henry, “The Cincinnati, Covington, Newport and Fulton Advertising Directory for 1840,” Cincinnati (1839).
- ³⁵ *Western Globe*, Covington, 12 February 1840.
- ³⁶ *Licking Valley Register*, 21 July 1841.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, 27 July 1844.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁴² *Ibid.*
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 4 August 1841.
- ⁴⁶ *Covington Journal*, 24 August 1849.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 22 June 1849.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 24 August 1849.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 27 April 1849.
- ⁵² *Western Globe*, Covington, 4 March 1840.
- ⁵³ *Covington Journal*, 27 August 1853.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 1 October 1853. Rev. Stephen H. Montgomery was first pastor of St. Mary Catholic Church – now the Cathedral at 12th & Madison. St. Mary was then located on 4th Street between Madison & Montgomery Street – editor.
- ⁵⁵ Cist, Charles, “Cincinnati in 1859,” *op. cit.*
- ⁵⁶ Fowler died at Covington in 1850, according to Elliott Coues, editor of “The Journal of Jacob Fowler,” University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln (1970).
- ⁵⁷ *Covington Journal*, 26 May 1860.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁹ Beiting, Rev. Ralph W., “Soldier of the Revolution,” Modern Litho-Print Co., Jefferson City, Missouri (1977).
- ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁶¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁶² *Licking Valley Register*, 3 August 1844.
- ⁶³ Atkinson, Paul Lewis, “Kentucky, Land of Legend and Lore,” Kalko Productions, Cincinnati (1962).
- ⁶⁴ *Licking Valley Register*, 9 August 1845.
- ⁶⁵ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁶ Adams, Charles S., “Old Covington Cemeteries,” Christopher Gist Society paper read 27 January 1953. Copy of Gist Papers in Kenton County Historical Society Archives.
- ⁶⁷ Several years later, Eleanor Childs related a virtually identical report in her book “An Octogenarian’s Personal Recollections.” [Editor questions the arrival of flatboats **up river** unless they were towed by steamboats, which was a common practice]
- ⁶⁸ *Cincinnati Daily Gazette*, 12 October 1846.
- ⁶⁹ *Licking Valley Register*, 14 June 1845.
- ⁷⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁷¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁷² *Ibid.*
- ⁷³ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁵ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 27 July 1844.
- ⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 12 April 1845.
- ⁷⁸ Collins, Richard H., volume 1, *op. cit.*
- ⁷⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁸⁰ *Licking Valley Register*, 27 July 1844 and 14 June 1845.

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- ⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 30 November 1844.
- ⁸² *Ibid.*
- ⁸³ A German Language, "History of Covington," *op. cit.*
- ⁸⁴ Cincinnati Daily Enquirer, 12 November 1852.
- ⁸⁵ *Licking Valley Register*, 27 January 1844.
- ⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 20 September 1845.
- ⁸⁷ *Covington Journal*, 20 October 1848.
- ⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 5 January 1849.
- ⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 19 October 1850.
- ⁹⁰ Cist, Charles, "Cincinnati in 1851," *op. cit.*
- ⁹¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁹² *Covington Journal*, 19 October 1850.
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- ⁹⁵ *Emigrant's Directory*, Liverpool, England (1820).
- ⁹⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁹⁷ *Licking Valley Register*, 8 November 1845.
- ⁹⁸ *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 24 April 1849.
- ⁹⁹ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁰⁰ *Georgetown (Ky) Gazette*, as reported in the *Covington Journal*, 16 May 1849.
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- ¹⁰² *Covington Journal*, 23 November 1850.
- ¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 29 March 1851.
- ¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 2 November 1850.
- ¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 14 September 1850.
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- ¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 19 April 1845.
- ¹¹⁰ *Covington Journal*, 5 October 1850.
- ¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 25 May 1853.
- ¹¹² *Ibid.*, 12 June 1858.
- ¹¹³ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹⁸ Davenport, Garvin F., "Anti-Bellum Kentucky," Mississippi Valley Press, Oxford, Ohio (1943).
- ¹¹⁹ *Licking Valley Register*, 13 February 1847.
- ¹²⁰ *Ibid.*
- ¹²¹ *Ibid.*
- ¹²² *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 2 January 1854.
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Chapter 9

The Political Arena and America's Manifest Destiny

Many changes in America's national politics occurred during Covington's early years, and the changes were invariably reflected in the thinking of northern Kentuckians. New political groups came into being and new issues were discussed.

There had been the Republican Party of Thomas Jefferson and there had been the Federalists. The Federalists eventually died out and Jeffersonian Republicans split to become the National Republicans and the Democratic Republicans. The latter group was led by Andrew Jackson and was the forerunner of today's Democratic Party.

When Jackson was elected president in 1828, his opponents began to term themselves Whigs and found wide support among Covingtonians. They chose the name Whig to identify themselves with the spirit of patriots of Revolutionary times. Jackson was regarded as virtually a living legend. A hero of the War of 1812, he had come to symbolize the frontier belief that the average citizen could and should share in the governing of the nation. He had narrowly missed becoming president in 1824 when the election was thrown into the House of Representatives. There, Kentucky's Henry Clay assured his defeat by casting the deciding vote in favor of John Quincy Adams of Massachusetts.

Adams no sooner ascended to the presidency than Clay was named his secretary of state. Jackson was furious at what he thought had been a corrupt agreement between Clay and Adams. The appearance that such an agreement had actually existed was so damning that all denials proved unconvincing to the general populace. This was especially true for voters in the local area and four years later they joined with those of the rest of the nation to give Jackson a clear and undisputed victory. Campbell County, which still included Covington, supported the military hero by giving him 349 votes to 218 for incumbent Adams.¹

As Jackson's second term came to a close, the Whigs put forth William Henry Harrison for the presidency which the Democrats, as Jackson supporters were now known, selected Martin Van Buren. Van Buren and the Democrats were victorious but there was no clear choice for vice president as no candidate received a sufficient number of votes. As a result, the election was thrown into the Senate, which, by a vote of 33 to 16, selected Van Buren's running mate, Kentucky's Richard Mentor Johnson. Johnson, a veteran of the Battle of the Thames during the War of 1812, now became the first Westerner to occupy the nation's second highest office.

ONE OF JACKSON'S last acts before leaving office was to refuse to accede to an act passed to repeal his Specie Circular. Jackson had promoted the *circular* as a means of requiring all collectors of public revenue to take only gold or silver in payment. This produced any heated controversies in Covington. Here, as throughout the nation, there was a flood of paper issued by various banks across the country, much which proved worthless.

Jackson also opposed the second United States Bank, as did Van Buren, who thereby won the acclaim of a sizable group of Covington's radical wing of Democrats known as the Locofocos. These were Democrats who opposed the more conservative in their party primarily on banking and currency questions.

The local Locofocos represented a vociferous faction which sired its political views in the columns of the Covington *Union Democrat*, a newspaper strongly in sympathy with their stand. The faction vehemently opposed banks of any kind, especially the Second Bank of the United States and supported the position that the nation should sever all connections with such institutions. Party regulars declared banks of some type were a necessity.

THE LOCOFOCOS NAME originated in 1835 at a New York City meeting which had been called to dislodge the Democratic Party's conservative leadership. Friends of the entrenched leaders tried to disrupt the meeting by turning out the lights. The rebels however were well prepared for such an emergency, as they had brought along several of the recently invented friction matches, known as locofoco matches. They easily lit candles and proceeded with their meeting – an act which earned them their unique name.

The Covington dissidents, like their counterparts across the nation, were not only hostile to banknotes and paper money but also opposed legal monopolies. They urged reform in many fields other than currency management, and were strong supporters of an improved system of public education.

The Locofoco movement, largely urban in nature, represented one of many reform movements of its time. It had an especially strong appeal for Covington voters and though lasting a relatively short time, managed to leave an indelible mark on the town's history.

TEXAS HAD REVOLTED AGAINST MEXICO about this time and volunteers were being called to help in Texas' struggle. This was not the first time Texans had attempted to throw off Mexican rule. There had been two earlier revolutions – one inspired by an ex-Covingtonian.

Texas was a sparsely populated Mexican province which the Mexican government had been anxious to develop. Accordingly, large land grants were made to many Americans which resulted in thousands of frontiersmen establishing homes there.

Mexican law declared available land might be acquired either by purchase, by special agent or through an *empresario*. An *empresario* (colonizer) was one who received a large land grant on condition that within two years he would settle it at his own expense with no less than 200 families. Consequently, Texas became dotted with colonies of Americans, all subject to what the American residents considered harsh and unjust Mexican rule.

Many of these settlers came from Kentucky and throughout the Ohio Valley. They had responded to the lure of rich fertile land at extremely low prices. Large land grants had been made to men such as Moses Austin of Connecticut and Covington's Haden Edwards. These *empresarios*, like the others, set about sub-dividing their holdings and publicizing the land's attractions in American newspapers.

Edwards, who has been memorialized with a Texas county named in his honor, offered land at twelve and one-half cents an acre. He advertised his grant as containing "at least twelve million acres embracing the Trinity River, 150 miles to its entrance into the bay, with all its tributary streams – about one half of the Natchez River, with all its head waters – all the waters of the Navacetas and Santa Jacinta Rivers on their east sides, and other small streams discharging themselves into Trinity Bay, running about 150 miles north and south and 200 east and west."²

Such notices drew so many Americans to Texas that, in many respects, it soon became more American than Mexican. Many settlers were extremely patriotic Americans who always maintained Texas was properly a part of the U.S. They declared politicians had seriously violated America's "manifest destiny" in the Florida Treaty of 1819 which ceded to Spain whatever rights America may have acquired to Texas through the Louisiana Purchase.

Edwards, who was born in Stafford County, Virginia in 1770, settled his colony in and around Nacogdoches, and was one of those who felt Texas was American. He tended to view Mexicans as the real intruders. He made no attempt to hide his feelings and often openly showed his contempt for the harsh Mexican laws. As a result, Mexico revoked his grant and ordered him to leave Texas. Edwards was not to take this lightly.

On December 16, 1826, Haden's brother, Benjamin, rode into Nacogdoches and together they proclaimed an independent republic, calling it Fredonia. The Fredonians invited Austin and other *empresarios* to join them but Austin, who was loyal to Mexico at the time, used all of his considerable influence against the insurrection and sent troops to aid the Mexican authorities in putting it down.

Edwards' revolt created a sensation throughout the United States and stirred up an overwhelming amount of sympathy for the Americans in Texas. An alarmed Mexico burlled accusations of United States complicity in Edward's revolt. Mexico even hinted Mexican territory extended as far east as the Mississippi. The latter claim was a reaction to Edwards' contention that that the United States not only properly owned all of Texas, but owned it all the way to the Rio Grande.

Tension between Mexico, which was under an absolute dictatorship, and the Texas settlers mounted in intensity and in time another revolt broke out. Once again, independence was declared, this time on March 2, 1836, and an urgent appeal for help was sent out. When the call for assistance reached northern Kentucky, the local people responded with immediate action.

Among those responding was Massachusetts-born Sidney Sherman, a Covington manufacturer and Newport resident. He immediately sold his business interests and proceeded to raise and finance a company of 52 local volunteers. Many, like Sherman himself, had been migrants to Covington. One, Achelle Marre, was a sixty-year-old veteran of the Napoleonic Wars. Marre also claimed to have once served as a pirate under Jean Lafitte.³

Sherman put his men through a period of rigorous training at a camp he established at Newport Barracks. When they eventually finished this training and departed for Texas aboard the steamboat *Augusta*, they received cheers of large groups of people gathered on each side of the Ohio and Licking Rivers. The federal troops in the Barracks also joined in the cheering. Oddly, Sherman's company was enrolled in the Texas army, not in Texas, but in Kentucky at the Newport encampment.

Before the troops departed, they were presented a flag by the women of Newport who had made it from a design furnished by Covington's James H. Beard, a prominent artist and father of Boy Scout leader Dan Beard.⁴ The 6 x 3 feet silk flag was bordered by gold fringe and had a center of blue placed in a field of white. A nearly nude figure of the goddess of Liberty, carrying a sword and streamer bearing the words "Liberty or Death," were also part of the design.⁵ When volunteers paraded through the streets of Newport with their flag, a young belle of the community tossed her glove into their ranks. The color bearer, Newport's tall, 29-year-old Sergeant James Austin Sylvester,

picked it up and placed it atop the flag standard. It later developed this would be the only flag carried by any Texas troops at the Battle of San Jacinto. Actually it was the only flag of the entire Texas army.⁶

Eventually, the battle-torn, bullet-ridden banner was neatly repaired and placed in the halls of the Texas House of Representatives but not before the nearly-nude goddess of Liberty was modestly draped with long purple and white robes. The white dress-glove of the young lady from Newport remained atop its standard.⁷

An election was in progress at Nacogdoches when the Covington men arrived. Sherman's men reasoned that as long as they were going to fight for Texas they had the obligation to vote in Texas elections and demanded the right to do so. When their demand was refused, the men promptly aimed a cannon at the polling place. They were allowed to vote!⁸

The Nacogdoches affair was the first of many which served to give northern Kentuckians a reputation of being the "fightin'est" outfit in all of Texas. Shortly after arriving in Texas, Captain Sherman's troops reported to General Sam Houston, who was then in retreat from Gonzales to San Jacinto. The northern Kentuckians were destined to distinguish themselves throughout the upcoming battle and on the final day at San Jacinto, were among the first to open engagement.

DURING THE BATTLE OF SAN JACINTO, the local men were no longer under Sherman's command but were part of the First Regiment. Their old commander had earlier been advanced to colonel and given command of the newly-formed Second Regiment. During this battle, it was he who first sounded the cry, "Remember the Alamo! – Goliad and the Alamo!"⁹ For his outstanding role in helping secure independence for Texas, Colonel Sherman was later promoted to Major General.

Kentucky can also be justly proud of Sergeant Sylvester, who was primarily responsible for the capture of Santa Anna, Mexican president and general. Sergeant Sylvester's service record is at the Texas State Library in Austin and contains certification that he "was the individual who took the person of Santa Anna."¹⁰

There have been some who disputed Sylvester's accomplishment but in Galveston's Rosenberg Library is an original pamphlet listing those who fought at San Jacinto and containing this notation:

Presented to James Sylvester by General San Houston as a tribute for his gallant and vigilant conduct, first in the Battle of San Jacinto and subsequently in the capture of Santa Anna, whose thanks were tendered by Santa Anna, in my presence to Captain Sylvester, for the generous conduct towards him when captured.

*Signed: Sam Houston, Saint Augustine
August 3, 1836¹¹*

When General Houston presented the above document to Sylvester, he commissioned him a captain.

AFTER PEACE CAME, Sylvester was given a land grant of 640 acres in what is today the heart of the city of Dallas. Sylvester though, was a confirmed printer by trade and cared little for farming. He traded the future Dallas for an old gray mule and rode off to New Orleans where he secured a job with a newspaper.¹²

Sherman, who was once seriously considered for Sam Houston's job as commander of the Texas army, stayed on in Texas to become one of the state's earliest railroad builders. Today, the city of Sherman, Texas stands as a monument to his memory.¹³

In 1837, another economic depression struck the land, this one caused by over-speculation and a widespread crop failure, as well as a sudden drop in the British demand for American cotton. Unhappily for President Martin Van Buren, all this occurred about the time he took office, and as a result was often called "Van Buren's Depression."

Still, the depression seemed to have little adverse effect on the fortunes of local Democratic office seekers, for in August of 1839, Georgia-born John A. Goodson and Ezra K. Fish, both loyal Democrats, were elected to the legislature and William O. Butler of Carrollton, Kentucky, defeated Whig candidate and former Covington mayor William W. Southgate in a race for the U. S. Congress.¹⁴

Southgate, who two years earlier had defeated Jefferson Phelps for a seat in the U. S. House of Representatives, managed to retain his popularity with Covington and Newport voters though, as he easily carried the two urban centers by margins of 349 to 234 and 269 to 160 respectively. It was the rural vote which proved his undoing, as he lost heavily in the remainder of the congressional district.¹⁵

BY 1840, COVINGTON AND THE NATION WERE PRIMED for another presidential election. The Democrats re-nominated Van Buren, who was being accused by his political enemies of showing but little concern for

the people during the 1837 financial panic. However the party could not unite on the re-nomination of Kentucky's Richard M. Johnson as vice president.

Johnson had long been a hero to western frontiersmen and one of his strongest local backers was George Trotter, publisher of the Covington *Western Globe*. Trotter was an outspoken supporter of the Democratic Party and worked tirelessly in its behalf. He had backed John A. Goodson and Ezra K. Fish in their successful races for the legislature but saw the party's gubernatorial candidate, Richard French, lose to Whig nominee Robert P. Letcher after a particularly bitter and hard-fought campaign.

Trotter was a firm believer in the power of the press and reasoned that if the Democrats, including his personal hero, Richard Johnson, were to retain control of the nation's highest offices, newsmen such as him should become more active in their behalf.

Accordingly, Trotter announced he was suspending operation of the *Western Globe* from the end of April until after the November election. This, he said, would allow him to devote full time to a new publication he had started for the exclusive purpose of advancing the cause of Van Buren, Johnson and the Democratic Party in general.¹⁶

The publisher called his new journalistic effort the *Yankee Doodle*, taking the name from the popular Revolutionary song. His choice of names, he said, was meant "to awaken in the hearts of our country's defenders (the farmers) at a crisis like this, the inspiring association connected with this national air."¹⁷

Like Trotter, many Covingtonians enjoyed recalling Johnson's earlier days with heroic tales of his exploits in battles against the Indians. So too, did they relish telling of that Fourth of July 1818 when some 500 area settlers gathered at what is now Morningview, Kentucky, to celebrate the holiday with a festive barbecue of mutton, beef, wild turkey and deer. Among the day's speakers was their hero, "Dick" Johnson. To their delight, he did little more than exhibit his battle scars and tell of events of the War of 1812.¹⁸

Johnson had close ties to the Covington area and was a frequent visitor. His uncle, Cave Johnson, lived on a farm in neighboring Boone County and it was there the vice president had once camped and drilled a cavalry unit, moving on to the Point to muster for the battles.¹⁹

Furthermore, as a congressman, Johnson was an ardent supporter of expansion plans for Newport Barracks. In 1816, he proposed that the army set up a plant at Newport for the manufacture of small arms, and in 1817 he argued for the establishment of three additional military academies, one of which would be "in the vicinity of Newport, in the state of Kentucky."²⁰

Opposition to Johnson as a public office holder however, had been growing throughout his term as vice president and was based in large degree on resentment toward his open and flagrant keeping of three black mistresses.

Members of the pro-slavery element made no attempt to conceal their hearty dislike of Johnson. Their resentment stemmed not as much from his keeping mistresses as it did from the fact he had violated their code of silence concerning the slave-owners' wide-spread practice of bedding down with their slaves. Johnson opening admitted he had fathered two daughters by his slave housekeeper.

Southern slaveholders constituted a powerful force in the Democratic Party and in an unprecedented move, the party refused to nominate anyone for the 1840 vice presidential race. The choice instead, was left to the various state electors.

THE WHIGS AGAIN NOMINATED William Henry Harrison and John Tyler as his running mate. Local residents had an early inkling that Harrison would again be the Whig nominee when the noted New England statesman, Daniel Webster, visited Harrison's home at North Bend, Ohio and then came to Newport as a guest of retired General James Taylor.²¹

While in Newport, the "expounder of the Constitution," as Taylor called his guest, spoke before a large crowd at the foot of York Street. Webster's humble appearance seemed to please the audience. Many noted his boots were still covered with the mud and soil from his walk over Harrison's estate and he modestly held his own hat in hand while delivering his short address.²²

Webster never revealed the purpose of his visit but many area residents speculated the journey to North Bend was made in order to ascertain Harrison's availability for another try for the presidency. The Newport visit, it was thought, was "to feel the pulse of Old Kentucky – in short to make – doubly sure for a successful presidential campaign."²³

Locally, the campaign was a spirited one in which enthusiastic Harrison-supporters charged Nam Buren with being an aristocrat who cared little for the common people. Covington Whigs had no real platform that year but they did manage to stage a spectacular campaign with their slogan of "Tippecanoe and Tyler Too!"

The fact that Harrison's North Bend home was a 22-room residence and he did not favor cider as a drink, did not deter his supporters from sponsoring jubilant parades where they carried large casks of hard cider and replicas of

log cabins throughout Covington's streets. Hard cider and the log cabin became the Whigs' 1840 symbols after an eastern newsman sneered at Harrison's humble origins in the Ohio Valley. The newsman declared Harrison was the type who would be content to spend the remainder of his days in his log cabin with little more than a jug of hard cider.²⁴

The log cabin quickly became symbolic of the democratic man and a cabin raising became symbolic of Harrison's own soaring hopes and ambitions. Two typical raisings took place within less than two weeks of each other: one at Newport on June 6th and the other on June 17th at Israel Ludlow's farm just west of Covington's corporation line.²⁵

The jubilant Newport affair, held in a torrential all-day rain, represented the climax of "a feast of reason and flow of cider," while the "vast numbers" who attended the Covington raising listened "to the cause of our calamities as portrayed with burning zeal by the orators."²⁶ Both cabin raisings attracted large crowds who drank huge quantities of cider and feasted on beef, bacon, mutton, johnny cakes measuring from six inches to sixteen feet long and "other fixings to stay the stomach."²⁷

This campaign also gave America one of its more common expressions, "keep the ball rolling." The term came into use when a group of Harrison's Kentucky backers rolled a large paper machete ball all the way from the Bluegrass State to Baltimore where the national convention of Young Whigs was being held. There, the Young Whigs took up the cry "keep the ball rolling on to Washington."

During this campaign, local residents witnessed a journalistic battle between two new Covington newspapers. On April 10, 1840, the first issue of the *Kent-On-Bugle* appeared, published by Jacob Musselman from his Garrard Street quarters between Second and Third. This publication was edited by a committee of the Covington Tippecanoe Club. It was, of course, a rabid champion of Harrison and Tyler.

The name of Musselman's publication was a play on the local county's name and that of the then-celebrated *Kent Bugle*, a zealous supporter of Maine's Governor Edward Kent. It was said in song and story of that time that Maine "went hell-bent for Governor Kent," the Whig leader who played such a prominent part in the boundary dispute between that state and New Brunswick. Eventually the boundary was settled in the Webster-Ashburton Treaty.

The editorial policies of the local *Bugle* did not go unchallenged, for it was but a month later that George J. Trotter established the *Yankee Doodle* with the avowed intention of backing the candidacies of Van Buren and Johnson. Trotter encountered an unexpected difficulty however, and the first edition was a day late going to press.

When the *Yankee Doodle* finally appeared, it carried an editorial in which Trotter apologized for the newspaper's delayed appearance. He explained it was due to "the drunkenness of a journeyman printer," and went on to say:

"An apology to us, and protestations that he would never get inebriated again in our employ, induced us to look over it, although our paper should have been regular, and had much depending on it."²⁸

Regretfully, the printer did not mend his ways, and was eventually replaced by an individual whose habits were considerably more temperate.

The *Yankee Doodle*'s success at boosting Van Buren could be seen in the local election results. Despite the Whigs' failure to carry Kenton and Campbell Counties in that year's gubernatorial contest, Van Buren managed to defeat Harrison by 618 votes to 518 in Kenton and 466 to 355 in Campbell.²⁹

On the state and national scene though, when Van Buren's unpopular image of elegance and the 1837 depression were linked with the Whigs' theatrical campaign and Harrison's own personal popularity, it became too much for the Democrats to overcome. Harrison was elected by an overwhelming majority.

Harrison's term was brief. His inauguration took place on a raw, blistery March 4, 1841 where he caught a cold. Severe complications quickly developed and a month later, on April 4th, America's ninth president died.

All Covington grieved and on Sunday, May 14th, honored his memory by joining the rest of the nation in observing a day of fasting. Business was suspended and churches held special services. It was, as one local churchman said, "a calamity of a kind which has never before fallen upon this nation."³⁰

DURING THE WHIGS' TERM in office, the westward tide of migration continued, enabling the territories to rapidly grow in population. At this time, the Texas Republic was clamoring to be annexed, so by 1844, another emotion-filled election was developing and it was here in northern Kentucky the first meeting calling for that annexation was ever held on U.S. soil. The secret meeting, promoted by Lewis Sanders and his son George N., was held in February 1844 in a small tailor shop at nearby Ghent, Kentucky.³¹

Those in attendance at the Ghent meeting were called the “Mystic Thirteen.” They drafted resolutions which were sent to leading politicians asking their stand on the annexation issue. James K. Polk was the only one who bothered to send a reply.

George N. Sanders, one of the promoters of the meeting, who later served as American Consul to London during the early 1850s, has been somewhat of an obscure figure in history. During the Civil War, he managed to move in high circles in both Washington and Richmond and became somewhat of an unofficial member of the Confederate mission in Canada, taking part in what has become known as “the Northwest Conspiracy.” It was not until he became the subject for a congressional investigation that the Ghent story came to light.³²

Previous to the Ghent meeting, there were many Covingtonians openly expressing a desire to see their country become a full-fledged transcontinental nation. They were frankly in a militaristic mood and were organizing into numerous military companies. Companies such as the Covington Cadets and the Kenton Rifles were parading the streets in 1844. The formation of those two organizations was quickly followed by the Covington Artillery Guards, the Covington Jackson Guards, the Montgomery Guards and the Covington German Guards.

The various units enjoyed staging spirited processions. A favored parade route began at Fourth and Madison, east to Scott, north to Second and east to Greenup. At Greenup, the processions turned north to Front Street, east to Garrard, south to Third and then west to Greenup. At that intersection, the members marched south to Fourth, west to Scott and then south to Fifth. There, they turned west to Madison and back to the processions’ point of origin. Such a route seemed designed to allow the marchers to pass a maximum amount of exposure.

Military parades, of course, implied processions of equipment, banners and uniforms. It took money to supply the equipment and banners. Such needed funds were raised in a variety of ways, as at military soirees like that held on the night of July 4th, 1845 for the benefit of the Covington Artillery Guards. Sometimes tea parties were held such as on July 25th to raise funds to purchase a banner for the Covington Cadets. Both of these events, like scores of others, were held at city hall.

On September 22, Captain Daniel A. Grimm’s Jackson Guards held a fund-raising target shooting match. The general public, as well as other military companies, competed for prizes which included a silver watch, a pair of pistols, a shotgun, and a single pistol. No contestant was permitted to use his own firearm, but was required to use those provided by the Guards. A month later, the Montgomery Guards conducted a “Grand Civil and Military Ball” at city hall. A one dollar ticket admitted a “Gentleman and two Ladies. Refreshments furnished for the Ladies.”³³

Meanwhile, the Texans never gave up hope on surrendering their independence to the American nation and the Mexican government never relinquished its hope of recovering its lost territory.

The local slave-holding element generally favored Texas annexation because of the additional voice it would give their cause on the national level. Kentucky’s popular Henry Clay opposed the move, but for a different reason. He held such an act would precipitate what he believed would be a senseless war with Mexico.

Members of the Whig Party had become disenchanted with John Tyler who succeeded Harrison. They liked Clay’s position of avoiding what they viewed as a possible unnecessary war. Coupled with Clay’s well-known aversion to slavery, he felt assured of his party’s presidential nomination.

Democrats were listening to pro-annexation arguments of their old hero, Andrew Jackson, who supposedly was in retirement. They wanted a nominee who would carry out Jackson’s proposals but their former standard bearer, Martin van Buren, was expressing views similar to Clay’s. The Democrats were discontented and as a result, Van Buren was passed over and the nomination given instead to Jackson’s fellow Nashville, Tennessee resident, James K. Polk.

Locally, many anti-slavery citizens saw Polk’s nomination as a scheme to add more slave territory to the nation and the more outspoken of them urged support of Clay and the Whigs. Among those prominent Covingtonians supporting Clay was William W. Southgate. Southgate had served in Congress under Van Buren and had been an elector in 1841 and would be again in 1845. Also were John W. Menzies, William L. Grant, W; S; Grant, Mayor Moses V. Grant, John S. Finley, John Mackoy, H. B. Clemons, J. A. Levi, Alex Craig and Richard C. Langdon, whose *Licking Valley Register* also warned that “every evil passion, every sordid emotion is the ally of Locofocism.”³⁴

The hardcore abolitionists refused to be aligned with either party. They had their own candidate in the person of the Liberty Party’s James G. Birney and viewed Clay’s position as one which skirted their own unyielding position.

Birney had an excellent local appeal since he was a native Kentuckian who had been the Liberty Party’s candidate in 1840. Many local Whigs were themselves uncompromising abolitionists at heart and demurred from supporting Clay.

By the November election, it was apparent surging nationalism overshadowed the slavery issue. Although Clay managed to win Kentucky, his majority of popular vote was but little over 9,000. So too, did a small majority

decide that year's gubernatorial race when Whig candidate William Owsley narrowly defeated Carrollton's William O. Butler for the state's highest office.

As on so many other occasions, local voters differed from those elsewhere in the state as the Locofocos switched their support to Butler, enabling him to easily carry the county with 944 votes to Owsley's 605. The same phenomenon occurred in neighboring Campbell County where he tallied a 685 to 347 victory.³⁵

By that time, Kenton and Campbell Counties had also elected Herman J. Groesbeck and Ira Foot, respectively, to the state legislature. Both ardently supported the Locofoco Movement.³⁶

Despite presidential candidate Clay's immense popularity in his home state, many Kentuckians felt it was America's manifest destiny to expand, and that was especially true in Covington. Although Clay's Covington backers gave him an early lead of 508 to Polk's 423, the final returns for all of Kenton County showed Polk the victor by 920 to Clay's 687.^{37 38}

POLK WAS INAUGURATED as the eleventh president March 4, 1845. Within a short time, Congress adopted a resolution for Texas annexation. On July 5th, Texans ratified the resolution and came into the Union. Kentucky reared Zachary Taylor, then a brigadier general, promptly entered the new state at the head of a force of 1,500 men.

Kentucky's local Tenth Congressional election was scheduled. The Whigs met in district convention at Covington City Hall and nominated John P. Gaines by acclamation. The Locofocos, who were still very active in the Democratic Party, selected John W. Tibbatts as their standard bearer.³⁹

The Whigs recognized that a military background would be helpful to their candidate and presented Gaines as an ex-army colonel who helped capture British General Proctor during the War of 1812. That was patently false and it is to Gaines' credit that he refuted it.

Gaines did enlist in the army in 1813 as a youth and saw action at the Thames River battle but the damage was done. Such false claims about his military exploits, along with Gaines' less than firm stand on the Texas question assured his defeat. He was quoted as saying he had favored annexation only if it was done legally.

In August, John W. Tibbatts was elected to Congress and the *Licking Valley Register*, a zealous supporter of Gaines, lamented: "The Tenth District has again returned a Locofoco as her representative. – well, so let it be."⁴⁰

War with Mexico was now imminent and Covingtonians were excited at the prospect. Expansionist fever and a strong faith in their "Manifest Destiny" had taken over.

The Covington Artillery Guard had been ready for war for some time and as early as September offered its services to the federal government. This prompted lavish praise from an increasingly hawkish *Licking Valley Register*, which declared: "Well done, boys. Covington is 'true blue' – better 'game never fluttered.' We hope the Cadets, Riflemen and German Guards will follow the good example of the Artillery men."⁴¹

Mexican reaction to Texas annexation was quick and led to a series of events that culminated on May 13, 1846, when Congress declared war.

President James Polk issued a nation-wide call for 50,000 volunteer troops and Kentucky promptly responded with an offer of 10,000. Although not all were accepted, Kentucky did send 105 companies to join forces with General Taylor's army. This was double the state's quota.

The Covington area especially displayed a great enthusiasm for the conflict and supplied a large number of volunteers. One local observer said the declaration of war and call for volunteers "thrilled through the bosom of every citizen." He then added:

"Never have we witnessed so much enthusiasm, such an outpouring of patriotism. Night after night, has the city hall been crowded with citizens, to listen to patriotic addresses of our public speakers ... We are unable to depict in colour strong enough in language sufficiently glowing, the manifestation, exhibited at these meetings, on the part of our citizens, of true Kentucky patriotism."⁴²

Scores of locally prominent men began marching off to battle and included Lieutenant Aston Madeira, Major Robert Richardson and ex-mayor Moses V. Grant. Unfortunately, Grant became an early casualty when he contracted a fatal illness while serving in Texas with the First Kentucky Cavalry Regiment.⁴³ Boone County's John P. Gaines, a major with the same regiment, said even after being stricken, Grant continued his duties for another month before being confined to what became his death-bed.⁴⁴ The former mayor died October 5, 1846 at Fort Lavacs, a small Texas community near the Gulf of Mexico's Matagorda Bay.⁴⁵

Among companies of local irregulars to engage in heavy action was the Eighth Company, under Captain William M. Joyner. This company was comprised almost entirely of Kenton Countians and served as part of the Second Kentucky Infantry Regiment.⁴⁶

In neighboring Boone County, James Avery Pritchard of Petersburg, resigned the office of Boone County Sheriff and raised a company of volunteers who later became Company Nine of the Third Kentucky Regiment. Pritchard was elected captain and after receiving a silk American flag from the women of Boone County, led his men off to war.⁴⁷

On March 10, 1847, four additional companies of regulars of the 16th Infantry – all recruited in Kentucky – were placed under command of Newport's Colonel John W. Tibbatts.⁴⁸

Covington businesses, like those in many other cities with easy access to river transportation, prospered with orders for military supplies pouring in. "Almost every day," wrote one newsman, "we see and hear of boats passing down the river freighted with wagons &c. for the army."⁴⁹

The army also bought substantial numbers of Kentucky horses and mules and Covington streets were frequently filled with large herds of them being driven to the riverfront. There they were "embarked on board of stock boats . . . to be transported to some point on the Mississippi . . . and thence across the country to Mexico."⁵⁰

One of the war's most outstanding patriots was George Washington Cutter. He was also a poet of some merit and had been moved to compose a patriotic elegy entitled *E Pluribus Unum*. One critic described Cutter's poem as "beautiful and thrilling," and said: "It makes the blood course quickly through the veins while we read; it is a soul-thrilling burst of patriotism and will be deservedly regarded as one of our National songs."⁵¹

Cutter was Covington's City Health Officer in 1845 and had once served in the Indiana Legislature. He had raised a company of infantrymen and was commissioned their captain. This Covington unit, known as the "Kentucky Rangers," served as the Fifth Company of the Second Kentucky Volunteers, and distinguished itself in action at Buena Vista.

Before leaving for battle, Cutter attended a patriotic rally at city hall where C. S. Clarkson, a veteran of earlier battles with the Indians and British, presented him with a sword Clarkson had carried during the Northwest Campaign.⁵² Cutter's speech of acceptance was "soul-thrilling and burningly eloquent . . . [and] . . . called forth loud and repeated cheering. It was truly a noble burst of patriotism, uttered in language, glowing and eloquent. Indeed, the whole scene was one long to be remembered by all who had the honor to witness it."⁵³

Captain earned an outstanding reputation for bravery and daring during some of the war's heaviest fighting. At the Battle of Buena Vista he made an heroic rescue of his regimental commander who had fallen with a severe wound during a furious charge. Cutter was deeply impressed by events at Buena Vista and immediately began field impressions. They were later published as part of one of America's most popular nineteenth century books of poetry, *Buena Vista and Other Poems*.

Cutter was not the only Covingtonian impressed by America's victory, for when the news of the battle reached German immigrant Heinrich Horstmann, he promptly gave the name Buena Vista to the new community growing up in the vicinity of today's intersection of 26th and Madison Avenue.⁵⁴

Another local resident, James O'Hara, a son of an Irish immigrant, often spoke with unabashed pride of his cousin, noted poet Theodore O'Hara. The poet, who frequently visited his Covington relatives, later winning world acclaim with his tribute to the fallen at Buena Vista when he composed *The Bivouac of the Dead*.⁵⁵

On January 10, 1847, the war's very height, Major John P. Gaines, Captain Cassius M. Clay and eighty cavalymen were surrounded and taken prisoner by a force of 3,000 Mexicans. Gaines had since become a heroic figure in northern Kentucky and news of his capture stunned the local populace.

WHIG POLITICAL LEADERS were again casting about for a likely Congressional candidate and once again began to think of Gaines as their best choice. On June 8 they held a mass meeting at Covington and nominated him to oppose the Democrat's Lucius B. Desha. The election was held August 8th and despite the fact Gaines was being held in Mexico City as a prisoner of war, he emerged a solid victor.⁵⁶ When Gaines was eventually released by the Mexicans, he returned home and took his place in Congress. He served creditably and in September 1850 President Millard Fillmore appointed him governor of the Oregon Territory.⁵⁷

Gaines happily accepted the appointment and proceeded to sell all his locally-held assets. The sale realized \$75,000 which he converted to silver coins for the westward trip.⁵⁸ Gaines decided to avoid the arduous overland journey by booking passage for himself and his family on the U.S. store ship *Supply* scheduled to sail to the west coast by rounding the tip of South America. He and his wife were accompanied by one of their sons and two daughters on what they hoped would be a happy venture.⁵⁹ However, the journey proved to be a tragic one. Yellow fever struck the passengers and was contracted by both Gaines' daughters.⁶⁰ The disease prompted the ship captain to make an

unscheduled landing at St. Catherine's Island but before this could happen, one of the girls died. The surviving sister was taken ashore where she succumbed to the disease a few days later.⁶¹ The grieving parents buried both girls on the island and marked the site with an appropriate monument. They hoped to someday reinter the girls in either Kentucky or Oregon.⁶² The hope went unfulfilled for further tragedy would strike the family. After settling in Oregon, the son died of tuberculosis and Mrs. Gaines suffered a fatal injury from a fall from a horse.⁶³

Meanwhile, the Mexican generals who had entered the war against the United States with utter contempt for America's military ability, found themselves beaten on all fronts. Mexico's equally contemptuous politicians had also given up. They had originally welcomed the war, for they believed it would not only result in the return of Texas but would also stimulate Mexico's industry and force the extraction of a large indemnity from the U.S.

On February 2, 1848, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed, bringing the war to an end. Mexico lost its northwestern provinces and a territory more than five times the size of France became part of the United States.

Soon the local battle-scarred veterans returned to their homes. Many had become victims of various tropical diseases and the 15th U.S. Infantry, returning to Newport Barracks, was hit especially hard. By June 1848, the death toll among soldiers reached near-epidemic proportions. The sick not only overflowed the military infirmary, but also filled Newport's city hall which was pressed into service as a temporary hospital.

The entire community was alarmed by the situation. Citizens, both men and women, volunteered as nurses and doctors donated their services. Only after such unselfish service and numerous deaths did the scourge finally abate. Covingtonians in particular had been generous in their care of the sick and took many into their homes for more attentive care. These acts of generosity did not go unappreciated, as officers of the afflicted regiment later enlisted the aid of a Covington newspaper in order to "respectfully return their sincere thanks to the citizens of Covington, Kentucky for the kind and hospitable manner in which they have received and treated the sick."⁶⁴

The officers wrote:

"Kentucky hospitality is proverbial; but to the . . . soldier who reaches home only in time to die, kindness and attention is the only solace and comfort he can receive this side of the grave. The kindness of the citizens of Covington has been the means of saving the lives of many . . . and has smoothed the . . . (death) . . . of others too far gone to recover."⁶⁵

The officers who noted the regiment was composed of men from throughout the country closed their letter of appreciation by saying:

"To the friends and relatives of those who have died in Covington, we would say, that had they been at their own homes, they could not have been more kindly treated. So long as we remember the exciting scenes of the war, we cannot forget that Kentuckians are hospitable and generous and the different States represented by the 15th Infantry will let no opportunity pass to return that kindness which has been so liberally bestowed upon their returning soldiers."⁶⁶

A few days after the above was published, the regiment's enlisted men used the same newspaper to publish serious charges of negligence on the part of all but a few of the regimental officers. The men complained of spoiled food and unsanitary living conditions on the ships and riverboats which had served as their transport vessels. Little effort had been made to help the sick and dying while aboard the vessels, they said, and added: "We believe that it has been the culpable negligence of our officers that has been the cause of most of our sufferings, and not for the want of provisions being made by the general Government."⁶⁷

After the scathing denouncement of their officers, the men generously praised the people of Covington for their "kindness and attention," and said: "the ladies, especially, are worthy of the greatest praise and have endeared to us the name of generous Kentucky, before celebrated for benevolent people and fair ladies."⁶⁸

On one occasion, arrangements were made for what was hoped would be a joyous homecoming reception at the public landing for several of the volunteers of Captains Cutter's and Joyner's units. Their arrival, spanning a three-day period, was preceded by a gigantic parade on the streets of town and the gathering of large joyous welcoming crowds at the landing.⁶⁹

The steamboat *Paul Jones* was the first vessel to reach town and the welcome home ceremonies went off as planned.⁷⁰ The next morning another huge crowd turned out to greet the arrival of the second boat-load of volunteers. Just as was done the previous day, cannon were fired to announce the arrival of the boat. On this occasion, however, one of the guns exploded prematurely, resulting in the deaths of Joseph Fisk and Lewis Lemaire, severely injuring C. A. Littlefield.⁷¹

The town was stunned by the disaster but still managed to rally for another reception the next morning when the *North America* brought more volunteers home. Once again tragedy struck when another gun exploded and seriously injured two more participants! This time, William Gracey lost both arms and Jesse Doan lost his right arm and part of his left hand.⁷²

The injured men's plight so aroused the community that a voluntary subscription drive was held for their benefit. Covingtonians gave generously to the fund which was invested in real estate. The proceeds of the investment were designated as a source of income for the two men and their families.⁷³

The war had touched the lives of virtually everyone in the community. None were more affected than those families who suffered the loss of a valued member. One of those casualties had been young Richard Drake, a son of Alexander and Frances Ann Drake and step-son to George W. Cutter. He died at the Battle of Monterey.⁷⁴

THE CONFLICT WITH MEXICO WAS NO SOONER ENDED than gold was discovered in California and set off a new round of excitement throughout the world. That was 1848 and by the following year, gold seekers by the tens of thousands were pouring into that former Mexican province.

Many of the so-called "forty-niners" who came from eastern states used the Ohio River in their westward journey and as they passed downstream, they were joined by throngs of Southerners who had also given in to the lure of gold.

In order to reach the Ohio, many of the adventurers coming from the Upper South, traveled overland to such cities as Covington and Cincinnati where they boarded river craft of every description. Scores of Covingtonians joined the westward rush, while many others prospered here by selling supplies to the California-bound. One of the latter was Robert H. Bailey, who by March 1849 was selling hundreds of much-needed weapons to those bound for the gold fields. He operated a large shooting gallery and the Kentucky Rifle Factory on Fourth Street between Scott and Madison Avenues.⁷⁵ Bailey's enterprise prospered to such an extent that on July 1st that year, he relocated to larger and more elaborate quarters on Market Square.

Also during that time, one of Covington's more successful nineteenth century newspapers, the *Covington Journal*, began publication. It was published by Sam Davis from his second-floor office at the northwest corner of Market Square and first appeared on July 21, 1848.

Davis was exceedingly proud of his occupation and deeply disturbed when one of his editors later decided to take up the practice of law. Such a method of earning a livelihood, according to the publisher, could never be considered "quite honorable" when compared to newspaper editing.⁷⁶

The *Journal's* publisher kept in reasonably close contact with many Covington residents caught up in the gold rush and often wrote of their activities in his newspaper. Some had made their way westward on horseback, on foot, or in wagons, across the Great Plains, and over the Rocky Mountains and the Sierras in one of the greatest adventures in American history. Others made long detours by ship around Cape Horn, while still others sailed to various Central American ports where they made their way to the Pacific and boarded another ship for the remainder of their journey.

One Covingtonian who had crossed the isthmus at Nicaragua was W.T.A. Gibson who, unlike so many others, went to California to practice his profession – that of druggist. Gibson was amazed at the great throng of people who greeted his ship at the booming port of San Francisco. He described the scene as follows:

"As we slowly drew up, the wharf was crowded with a dense mass of anxious people, every eye set upon the passengers, each anxious to see if in all that crowd (we had 450 on board) there was one familiar face. Husbands were looking for wives and children; brothers for brothers; and friends for friends. The scene was one of deep interest and I stood riveted to the spot . . . my thoughts turned back to Covington and my own dear mother."⁷⁷

Gibson continued:

"I was very agreeably surprised to meet my old friend L. D. Croninger here. He was in fine health and had come in to buy provisions. He has returned to the mines where he is doing well. I have not yet seen any other person from Covington."⁷⁸

Croninger, destined to become Covington's first professional Fire Chief, had been prospecting for a considerable time before Gibson made his own westward trek and, though still optimistic about his chances of striking it rich, was hesitant to advise others to try the same.

"California is NOT *what it is represented to be in the States*," Croninger wrote, "and I would in all candor advise all my friends who may have thought of coming, to desist by all means. If they can make a living, *they are better off at home!*"⁷⁹

Croninger felt obliged to reassure those at home of his own personal optimism as he went on to say: “Do not think because I say what I do in regard to California, that I am homesick, for it is not the case; for I assure you, since I am in for it, I am determined *it shall pay me before I return!*”⁸⁰

Although he denied being homesick for Covington, Croninger nevertheless closed his letter with the words: “I send you enclosed a little gold dust . . . and . . . *be glad that you are at home!*”⁸¹

To some, the gold rush seemed pure madness. Men of all classes and conditions were affected by it, with only a relative few having any idea of the difficulties to be encountered. Many gold seekers were entirely unfit for the hard toil required in mining and wandered aimlessly about the mining areas until their food and money ran out. They returned to San Francisco to join the already vast herd of homeless or, in the case of the more sensible, turned to farming or business.

One Covingtonian noticed this state of affairs when writing from San Francisco:

“The population is made up of people of all nations and tongues and everybody speculated, from the shoeblack to the millionaire and from the turbaned Turk to the long-tailed Chinaman. A smart man with some capital can soon make as much money as he wants.”⁸² “There are more idle and discontented men in California than in any country in the world.”⁸³

CALIFORNIA WAS NOT THE ONLY MAGNET attracting northern Kentuckians westward for Texas continued to exert its share of allure for the adventurous. One of those adventurers was Roy Bean, a young habitué of the Cincinnati and Covington riverboat landings. Roy was born about 1823 to Francis and Anna Bean, operators of a small store in up-river Mason County, Kentucky. In time, the boy ran away from home and at age of 14, first appeared on the local waterfronts.⁸⁴ He soon became a riverboat gambler but in 1848 he and his brother Sam decided to organize a trading expedition to Chihuahua, Mexico.

Roy’s life in the far West became one bordering on the unbelievable. In addition to being a trader, he worked at various times as a California saloon keeper; as a gold prospector; and a Nevada saloon keeper. At one time he was suspected of being a Texas cattle rustler – once lynched by a mob, only to be saved by a friend who cut him down after the lynchers rode away.

After a long series of fantastically wild adventures, Roy became a justice of the peace and a saloon keeper in the little settlement of Langtry, Texas. It was there the former Covington riverfront habitué became renowned as Judge Roy Bean, “the law west of the Pecos.”

Roy’s brother Sam eventually became sheriff of Dona Ana County, New Mexico, reputed at the time as being the “toughest county” in the national. Yet another brother, Josh, also was attracted to the West, where he became alcalde of San Diego, California, and later served as that city’s first mayor.

During those years when Roy Bean was in the Covington area, the Whig Party dominated Kentucky’s state politics and between 1836 and 1850 held a monopoly on the governor’s office. In October 1848, the Whigs held another of their frequent mass meetings at the new city hall. There, they loudly cheered Leslie Combs and ex-governor James T. Morehead, both being principal speakers for the rally. It was a grand era for their party.

The 1848 presidential campaign was on, and the Whigs had nominated the hero of Buena Vista, Zachary Taylor to oppose the widespread appeal of the Democrat’s stalwart, Lewis Cass of Michigan. Cass, an ex-school teacher and veteran of the War of 1812, had taken part in defeating British General Proctor at the Battle of the Thames. Together with his Kentucky-born (Carrollton) running mate William Orlando Butler, gave him wide appeal in the Commonwealth.

Butler had served in the U.S. Congress from 1839 to 1843 and had narrowly lost the gubernatorial race in 1844. The *Covington Union*, with its slogan of “The Union – It must and shall be preserved,” gave him and Cass its unstinting support, as did the majority of Covington voters.

Cass and Butler offered a platform of little more than defending the conduct of the Mexican War from its critics and maintaining the federal government had no authorization to interfere with slavery. They declared the slavery issue should be settled at the local level, something which pleased Covington’s gradual emancipationists.

The Democrats became split when their rabid anti-slavery element found little in Cass’ stand to please them. Accordingly, they left the party to join forces with other anti-slavery members of the old Liberty Party to form the Free Soil Party.

In the meantime, Martin Van Buren was arguing that Congress possessed the power to exclude slavery from any new territory acquired from Mexico and declared he would never support anyone who said otherwise. The Free Soilers were delighted with Van Buren’s stand and accepted him as their nominee.

The Free Soilers adopted a firm stand on the slavery issue, proclaiming a platform of “free soil, free speech, free labor and free men.” Nationally, this appealed to many potential homesteaders, as well as to existing anti-slavery feelings and drained away enough Democratic votes to assure that party’s defeat. It was clear that issues were becoming far more important than mere party loyalty. The winning party proved to be the Whigs, who offered no platform at all, but depended upon the popularity of their war hero candidate.

Party schism wasn’t confined to the Democrats as there were many Covington Whigs who had never forgiven their party for overlooking Henry Clay as the nominee. Critics further claimed Taylor had no grasp of national issues and because he was a slave owner, many of the local emancipationists found little solace in his nomination.

These were serious handicaps for the local Whig leadership and when election returns were tabulated, it was found Cass and the Democrats had carried Kenton County with 1,228 votes to Taylor’s 985. Campbell County voters also preferred Cass and gave him 814 votes to 511 for Taylor.⁸⁵

Yet, Taylor’s popular appeal was immense in the remainder of the Commonwealth. He narrowly carried the Tenth District, of which Kenton and Campbell were a part, but defeated Cass in the statewide count 67,141 to the Democrat’s 49,720.⁸⁶

Covington Whigs felt elated at their party’s victory and almost immediately a group of them, including Simeon Stansifer, George C. Tarvin, James Pryor, William Wason, James Chandler, Dr. Asberry Evans, Franklin Piggs, former Democrat John A. Goodson, Robert Simons and William Banton, met at the mayor’s office to arrange for extending an invitation to the victorious Taylor to visit their city.⁸⁷

The local Whigs’ hopes for a visit from the president-elect met with little success however, so the party leaders turned their attention to involving Covingtonians in a reception planned for Taylor in Cincinnati. There they planned to again present their invitation.

At the time of Cincinnati’s reception, a large contingent of Covingtonians, including Fire Company Number 2 and a German volunteer company, crossed the river and played a prominent role in the festivities. However, Taylor could not be persuaded to come to Covington even though, one observer wrote: “Ample preparations had been made to receive him; and out people would have been grateful had circumstances allowed his coming over.”⁸⁸

The same writer comments on Taylor and those who had invited him to Kentucky:

“After what he had undergone, however, they could not press the invitation . . .
(for) . . . While the Cincinnatians were parading him bare-headed in the bitter
cold, and suffering from the effects of a recent injury, through the streets of
their city, he must have thought of what the frog said to the boys in the fable;
- ‘It may be fun for you, but it is death to me.’”⁸⁹

Although Taylor himself was a slave holder, once he assumed office he proceeded to surprise those Southerners prone to use the threat of secession as a weapon. He promised to personally lead troops into the field and hang such individuals as traitors!

Members of Covington’s pro-southern element were now becoming more conscious of their minority status. By the 1840s, the state witnessed a noticeable trend that seemed to favor gradual emancipation of slaves. There was also an ever-growing public demand for constitutional reform and this prompted the anti-slavery forces to add their voices to those calling for Kentucky’s third constitutional convention. They did so in hopes a new constitution might bring about the end of slavery.

Other critics continued that the implied powers the legislature derived from the constitution led to an excessive amount of time and money spent on countless bits of legislation holding little or no benefit or interest for anyone except the very few for whom the legislation was enacted.

An example of this personal legislation consisted of the large number of divorces granted by special legislative acts. Accepted practice at that time decreed anyone seeking a divorce would have to petition the legislature to nullify his or her marriage. In some cases, the individual was also expected to publicize the planned divorce and the reason for seeking it. This was often done with newspaper advertisements, such as the following:

***Mr. James Robinson** – You will take notice that I, Mary Robinson, or some person for me, will apply to the approaching Legislature to be for the State of Kentucky, for the passage of an act to divorce us, and restore me to all the rights and privileges of an unmarried woman, upon the grounds of your having, for at least six years, abandoned me, and not in that time made any provision for my support. You will also take notice that I shall, or some person for me, on the first Tuesday in November next, at the office of James G. Arnold, in the city of Covington, proceed to take*

the deposition of Abraham Moor, and others, to be read and used upon said application and shall continue the same from day to day (Sundays excepted) attend if you think proper.

MARY ROBINSON⁹⁰

October 15, 1842

These legal notices often supplied townspeople with zestful reading and served as the basis for many titillating bits of gossip. One of these was provided by an area farmer who used the *Licking Valley Register* to notify his wife “that I shall make application in the next Legislature . . . for a divorce from you, upon the grounds and causes following, to wit; Because of your having abandoned me and my house and home without any just or reasonable cause; and also, for taking and running off all my property, to wit – negroes, horses and other effects, to distant parts and places and selling and attempting to sell the same, without and against my consent and approbation. Also, for consorting and holding intercourse with strangers and suspected persons and other immoral and improper conduct and a total failure and refusal on your part to perform the duties of an honest and virtuous wife,”⁹¹

The complaining husband noted he was taking depositions from various citizens “to be used and read as evidence before the Legislature,” and added, “You can attend if you are proper.”⁹²

The public outcry for constitutional reform became so strong that the General Assembly found it impossible to ignore. Accordingly, in 1847 and again in 1848, the question of calling a constitutional convention was put to a popular vote and both times received a hearty public endorsement.

THE REFORMERS AND EMANCIPATIONISTS were jubilant. State leaders such as Henry Clay, Reverend Robert Breckenridge and Senator Joseph R. Underwood now spoke out louder than ever against the evils of slavery and urged local communities to select convention delegates who would work to see slavery brought to an end in Kentucky.

The *Covington Journal* disagreed with this course of action and, although favoring eventual emancipation, took the position that nothing, one way or the other, should be done about the slavery issue at that particular time. The newspaper editor declared: “We take it for granted that slavery is wrong in the abstract . . . (and) . . . is gradually losing weight and importance in Kentucky, from a variety of causes and will probably leave us in the best manner, at the right time and without the interference of the convention.”⁹³

The *Journal's* editor assumed the new constitution would contain provisions for later amendments and went on to say: “The people will then have it in their power to take away the constitutional prop from slavery at the right time.”⁹⁴

The convention was slated to get underway at Frankfort on October 1, 1849 but in the meantime, on April 20th, an enthusiastic meeting of Covingtonians “friendly to the cause of gradual emancipation” was held at city hall. There, they were to select delegates to a statewide emancipation convention scheduled for April 25th also to be held at Frankfort.⁹⁵

James M. Preston acted as chairman of the local meeting which saw a committee composed of Robert Wallace, George C. Tarvin, Reverend William Orr, Samuel M. Moore and William D. Holt draw up a set of resolutions declaring slavery to be “no longer advantageous to the State but on the contrary, a serious and blighting encumbrance.”⁹⁶

The local resolutions further declared Kentucky and other slaveholding states were falling behind the free states in economic and political importance and said “free and slave labor are incompatible with each other . . . (and) . . . under our present circumstances we have not an adequate supply of the former, nor the necessary security to depend on the latter.”⁹⁷

Those signing the document included Pfreston, Wallace, Tarvin, Orr, Moore and Holt along with James Deadman, Bushrod W. Foley, D. L. Fisk, J. B. Casey, John Colvin, Simeon Stansifer, Samuel Stewart, Mortimer M. Benton, Dr. Asbury Evans, William Ernst, James Ellis, Alexander L. Greer, James Robinson, John W. Menzies, A. D. Clemons, Jackson Ellis Reuben Brodus, John W. Clemons, George Redinger, Robert Summerville, Breal Foster, L. Winston and C. Carpenter.⁹⁸

Others to sign were Isaac Ball, Hiram French Bowen, George Gibson, Timothy A. Goodhue, H. B. Clemons, Isaac Martin, George W. Boyle, H. Ingram, John Gray, D. W. Ritchie, William Wason and Reverend Asa Drury,⁹⁹

Five days later, when the statewide emancipationist meeting was held, the delegates debated many proposals for inclusion into the new constitution. They eventually settled on the rather mild position of saying the new constitution should allow any future legislature to call a convention at any time for the sole purpose of considering emancipation. In addition, the delegates took a stand in favor of incorporating into the new constitution the chief

features of the 1833 anti-importation law. This law was one which prohibited importing slaves into the state for the purpose of re-selling them.

The emancipationists found themselves poorly prepared when time came for the all-important election of delegates to the constitutional convention. As vote results came in from around the state, it became evident their hopes for reforms favorable to their cause were dim indeed.

A writer for the *Covington Journal* took note of the delegates elected and said: “As far as we have noticed the names of gentlemen elected, we are not inclined to look for much addition to Kentucky’s reputation. We think, as far as we have seen, they stand thus:

First-rate men.....0

Second-rate men.....0

Third-rate men.....0

‘The rest will be somewhere below third rate.’^{100 101}

Locally. The August 8th election saw the Democrat’s politically ambitious John W. Stevenson selected as the convention delegate, while Campbell County voters chose reform-minded Locofoco, Ira Root, as their representative.

The convention got underway October 1st and almost immediately the pro-slavery delegates in attendance began setting up safeguards for the rights of slaveholders. The two dominant political parties, Democrats and the already-fading Whigs, were each fearful of suffering any political injury which might result from actively opposing the moneyed pro-slavers, and shied away from supporting anything remotely resembling an anti-slavery movement. Certainly Stevenson seemed to be affected by this fear when he spoke against re-enactment of the 1833 anti-importation law.

In what can only be described as being the weakest of explanations concerning his position on the slave-trade issue, Stevenson said:

“I am opposed to the law of 1833 going into the constitution; but while I Avow this sentiment, I am not in favor of the slave traffic. I am not in favor of traffic in human blood.”¹⁰²

Still, Stevenson did nothing to offend the interests of the slaveholders. Newport’s **Ira Root** was one of the convention’s strongest proponents of incorporating the 1833 law into the new constitution and declared that failure to do so, would result in “an influx of slaves here, and make the State the great slave mart of the Union.”¹⁰³

Root, who favored gradual emancipation, was quite mindful of his Northern Kentucky constituents when he told the delegation”

I should feel I had not discharged my duty, if . . . I should not endeavor to make the voice of a respectable portion of the State heard. My constituency feel a deep solicitude and interest in the principles of the law of 1833.”¹⁰⁴

The Newport representative praised Kentucky’s emancipationists as being “respectable, numerous and intellectual,” and cautioned against any attempt to stifle their loyal opposition. He went on:

“In my section of the country . . . there are diverse men, some of our most distinguished men, and slaveholders too, who look forward to the period when Kentucky shall be indeed redeemed and disenthralled by the irresistible genius of universal emancipation. It matters not whether it comes in ten, fifteen, twenty or a thousand years, they desire that our policy shall look forward to the period when Kentucky shall . . . possess within her borders a numerous body of free laborers – and when we shall be in fact a free state.”¹⁰⁵

The final document drawn up by the convention not only continued to safeguard all aspects of slavery, but also included provisions to expel every freed slave from the state and to deny permission for any other free blacks to enter the state. Also, the constitution’s framers were so incensed by a group of ministers who criticized the delegates’ actions, they also put in a provision denying any minister the right to serve in the General Assembly or as the state’s governor.

All corporations’ property worth more than \$200 million was made exempt from taxation. To insure their work would not be easily undone, the delegates continued the old requirement that before another constitutional convention could be called, the legislature must submit the proposal to the voters at two successive regular elections and the proposal must win approval at both!

The sad legacy of Kentucky's third constitution was it not only insured the continuance of slavery and its attendant evils but also, to a degree, subverted rule to the will of a propertied minority.

The new constitution was not without some redeeming factors though, largely because of efforts of men such as Ira Root. Root was one of the successful sponsors of provisions to prohibit dueling, to permit the election of judges and to place a ceiling on state indebtedness.

Root also played a major role in bringing about constitutional provisions for a state department of education. This served to correct one of Kentucky's major shortcomings by finally bringing into existence a constitutionally mandated system of free state-supported public schools.

The new constitution also corrected a major inequity when it met the patently clear need for a re-apportionment of representatives. Now the cities and more populated areas would have the additional representation they had been denied for so long.

An interesting sidelight connected with early planning for the convention occurred when it was rumored Louisville interests would attempt to have the state capital moved to that city. Many Northern Kentuckians promptly reacted to this talk by demanding that if Frankfort was ever replaced as the capital, that replacement must be Covington.

The *Covington Journal*, which took a dim view of the convention delegates, flatly stated: "The Convention will not be a strong body of men. The seat of government will remain in Frankfort."¹⁰⁶

Talk of moving the capital persisted and the *Journal* was soon championing Covington as the logical choice for any new capital site. While boosting Covington's attractions, the *Journal* declared: "If poor little Frankfort is to be swallowed, in the name of mercy, let it be by a thrifty city, rather than the Palenque or Palmyra of the Mississippi Valley."¹⁰⁷

The intent of the newspaper in speaking of Louisville as another Palenque or Palmyra was to imply the Falls City, as contrasted to Covington, was in the same state of decay as the wasted ancient ruins of Mexico and Syria. Nevertheless, the convention's work went on and finally, on June 11, 1850, the new constitution was signed and ratified.

Various aspects of the new document immediately drew criticism from many of Covington's political and civic leaders who declared bloodshed was now virtually assured for some future date.

During that same year of 1850, Whig governor, JOHN J. CRITTENDEN RESIGNED his office to become attorney-general in President Millard Fillmore's cabinet and was succeeded by John L. Helm, the Democratic lieutenant-governor.

Locally, the Whigs were not too concerned. They had just re-elected incumbent Bushrod W. Foley as Covington's mayor by a seven to one margin over challenger George M. Southgate and felt sure they could just as easily re-capture the governor's office.¹⁰⁸

Accordingly, on January 21, 1851, a mass meeting was held at city hall where 169 delegates were selected to attend the February 22nd state convention at Frankfort. Among those named were: Alexander L. Greer, James T. Morehead, John W. Menzies, Thomas Kennedy, James Southgate, William E. Arthur, William Montague, Frederick G. Gedge, William W. Grant, H. W. Leathers, S. H. Cambron, Cassius B. Sandford, L. Senour, J. Burns, A. J. Alexander and Lewis C. Bakes – all prominent Covington leaders.¹⁰⁹

Despite the fact the local Whigs named such a large number of delegates, there were only eleven who actually attended the convention. This seeming lack of interest, or possible over-confidence, was an omen of things to come, for the convention's gubernatorial nominee, Archibald Dixon, went down to defeat on election day.

In Northern Kentucky, the Democrat Lazarus Powell carried Kenton County with 1,187 votes to Dixon's 796. Cassius Clay, the fiery abolitionist, entered the race as an independent and received 11 of the county's votes, three of which were cast in Covington.¹¹⁰

Powell, was a popular figure with Covington voters and the local Tenth District had been one of only two districts to favor him in an unsuccessful 1848 race for the governor's office.¹¹¹

Although the Whigs never again captured the governorship, they did manage for a time to control most other state offices. Nevertheless, their party was in a process of disintegration.

On October 7th that year, Covington played host to the old war hero, MAJOR GEORGE WINFIELD SCOTT. Scott was the Whig presidential candidate and had come to Covington to stir up interest in his campaign. A large and enthusiastic crowd met the general at the Covington wharf and amid sounds of booming cannon and strains of a brass band, welcomed him to the city. A procession quickly formed to escort the general up Greenup to Eleventh then west to Madison and north to Eighth Street and the home of William B. Kinkead, a former judge of central Kentucky's

Nineteenth Judicial District. There Scott was met and welcomed by ex-governor James T. Morehead on behalf of the City of Covington.¹¹²

One of the parade's most outstanding components was Covington's row-boat type fire engine, the *Henry Clay*. It was drawn by four black horses and carried thirty-one young ladies, each representing one of the then thirty-one states. Each girl was dressed in white and carried highly decorative wreaths – except for the Kentucky representative. She wore symbolic robes of mourning for the recent death of Henry Clay, as the state's most prominent Whig.¹¹³

Covington's other fire units followed the *Henry Clay* in the procession after which came an open barouch carrying General Scott, Mayor Foley and Cincinnati's George Graham. In turn, this was followed by scores of carriages carrying veterans of the War of 1812 and the Mexican War and lastly came literally hundreds of cheering townspeople, all on horseback.¹¹⁴

Scott was deeply affected by the reception Covingtonians gave him and during his speech, he frequently referred to their hometown as "your beautiful and growing city." Near the end of his address, he said: "I have been gratified, citizens of Covington, to witness the flourishing condition of your young city, whose commencement I well remember and whose name recalls that of a beloved companion in arms – General Covington, who fought with me in the War of 1812 and whose body I followed to its last long rest from the field of battle."¹¹⁵

Scott also paid tribute to the young ladies aboard the fire engine and after his speech, walked over to where they were sitting and kissed all thirty-one of them. The general was escorted to ex-governor Morehead's home, where he rested briefly before going to Ohio.¹¹⁶

In the ensuing election, Kentucky was one of only four states carried by General Scott and even here his margin of victory was small, being 57,068 votes to Democrat Franklin Pierce's 53,806.¹¹⁷

Local Whigs received an additional shock when they learned Scott failed to carry Kenton County, for they had felt so very confident of a local victory. Here, he attracted but 975 votes to Pierce's 1,384 and his showing in Campbell County was even worse. There, Pierce's vote count of 1,098 nearly doubled Scott's 577.¹¹⁸

The loss of Kenton was probably due to a factor Whig leaders had not considered – their candidate failed to take an open stand on the Compromise of 1850. Through this compromise, the South secured an effective fugitive slave law and provided Covingtonians a source of an unusual amount of debate. The Whig Party itself, though in acquiescence with the Compromise, had been showing signs of disintegration over the slavery issue and Scott's silence on the matter did little to prevent the impending break-up. This seeming lack of concern on his part prompted scores of local party members to cast their votes for Pierce in the hope his support of the Compromise might be the final settlement of the slavery issue.

The cleavage between the North and South was widening dramatically. The political situation was one of unrest and agitation and those Covington Whigs who were more extreme in their thinking began joining forces with what could be called an emerging Unionist Party. These were the individuals who placed loyalty to the Federal Union above all else and expressed a fear the nation was falling apart over sectional differences. Their concern for the nation's unity was expressed in the motto of the *Freeman's Journal*, a Covington newspaper founded February 12, 1848, which declared: "*The Preservation of the Union is the Hope of Freedom.*"

W. Blanton, editor of the *Freeman's Journal*, explained the publication's politics as being Whig "or in other terms, Republican, in the sense of the term as understood in the times of Jefferson, Madison and Monroe."¹¹⁹

Most of the remaining Whigs joined the Democratic forces while the rest chose to align with the fast-rising Know Nothing Party and actually succeeded in electing Charles S. Morehead, a former Whig, as governor.

One of the area's most outspoken critics of the Southern cause was WILLIAM SHREVE BAILEY. He was employed as a printer and writer for the *Daily and Weekly News* of Newport, first published on March 7, 1850 as a daily. The newspaper's owner, a Mr. Ryan, thought Bailey's writings much too radical and suggested he buy out the publication if he wanted to continue his work. Bailey did just that!

When Bailey made his purchase, the newspaper's daily edition was known as the *Newport News* but soon adopted the name *Newport and Covington Daily News*. The weekly edition was renamed the *Kentucky Weekly News* and began publication under that name on August 4, 1851. It was, of course, an addition to the daily publication and, according to its masthead, was dedicated to "The Rights & Interests of the People – True Democracy – The Freedom of Kentucky & the Downfall of Slavery."

Bailey was not long in arousing the wrath of the pro-slavery element and at about 2 o'clock in the morning of October 9, 1851, his printing establishment was burned and destroyed. The fire's exact origin was never ascertained but pro-slavers were always suspected.

The day following the blaze, a fellow newsman declared: “The citizens of Newport are determined that the spicy little *News* shall not be killed off in this manner and they are already at work to make up a sum to set Mr. Bailey upon his tripod again.”¹²⁰

On October 14th, Covington and Newport citizens held a mass meeting at the Covington City Hall to denounce the burning and to appoint a committee in each of Covington’s seven wards to collect funds to rebuild.¹²¹ Bailey, with the help of such fair-minded friends, quickly re-opened his Newport printing plant, located just west of Columbia at what was then 40 Taylor Street [now Third].

Bailey also took the opportunity to establish another abolitionist newspaper, the *Free South* and expanded his anti-slavery crusade. The new publication was in addition to the *Newport & Covington Daily News* which was back in circulation and making incessant attacks on slavery and slave-holding interests. At one time, the *News* represented the only abolitionist newspaper in the state.¹²²

Despite his abolitionist stance, Bailey continued affiliation with the Democrats and as a member of that party won out over the candidate of the then-powerful American Party in an 1855 magisterial election.¹²³ Bailey soon after became a staunch member of the new Republican Party and was Kentucky’s only representative to the planning convention for the 1856 Republican National Convention.¹²⁴

The publisher’s enemies were relentless and in time his plant was attacked again and he found himself under a Campbell County court indictment for allowing Negroes to assemble at his home “for the purpose of amusement or political discussion.”¹²⁵ Such racially mixed gatherings were, of course, illegal in Kentucky at that time.

Through all this, one of Bailey’s friends, Ludlow’s M. Bently, was actively promoting education for Cincinnati’s Negroes. In 1855, Bently served as publisher of the *Herald of Freedom*, a Cincinnati newspaper printed by Peter H. Clark, a black engaged in local affairs of the Underground Railroad. Bently’s primary purpose remained the promotion of more and better schools for blacks of that city.¹²⁶

By that time, Covington had become a magnet for GERMAN IMMIGRANTS and the Teutonic language began to rival English. A newsman of that day noted the city’s rapidly growing immigrant population when he wrote: “Scarcely a day passes that a large number of Irish and German families do not immigrate among us; as well as many families from the interior of our own and other states of the Union.” He continued: “little doubt now remains of any Western city offering as strong inducements for immigration and liberal rewards for industry and enterprise as Covington.”¹²⁷

The German element, along with the Irish, who were arriving in ever-increasing numbers commanded an influential position in the city’s business, political and social life. By 1850, nearly one of five Kenton Countians was foreign-born – and still they came! In June 1854, a writer for the *Covington Journal* observed: “The exodus from Ireland continues with fearful steadiness.”¹²⁸ By then it was estimated fully one-third of Covington was foreign-born.¹²⁹

The assiduous migrants continued to grow in numbers and in public esteem and were having a pronounced effect on the community’s aesthetic tastes. The Germans and Irish both brought a penchant for hard work, which along with their craftsmanship, skill and thrift, quickly shaped Covington into a city unique for Kentucky. Their religion made an early and lasting imprint and the town gained a long-lasting beer-drinking, sauerkraut and corned beef and cabbage-eating, fun-loving *gemuetlichkeit* characteristic.

There was one element of the native population who looked upon the newcomers with alarm. These were members of the Know Nothings [The American Party], who had established their first Kentucky chapter or “wigwam,” at Covington. This new organization combined the functions of a political party with those of a secret fraternity, complete with password and secret handclasp. Its appeal was especially strong among Covingtonians favoring slavery, while still maintaining the Union. On the other hand, the Irish and German animosity to that servitude was well known.

The Know Nothings also appealed to the poorer working classes who feared alien job competition and to uneducated and superstitious fascinated and impressed by the group’s various signs and passwords. Yet there were many others who viewed the Know Nothings as a distinct alternative to the other parties which were fast becoming sectional in their appeal. For these Covingtonians, the organization represented a compromise party that could save the Union.

Know Nothing adherents were secretive about their plans and always claimed to “know nothing” when asked about their organization – hence their nickname. An example was provided by the *Covington Journal* editor when he first reported of a rumored “wigwam” being established in Covington. The editor, who had come to embrace Know Nothing principles, commented simply, “of the truth of the rumor we know nothing.”¹³⁰

Because of its appeal among those opposed to continued influx of foreign-born and its strong anti-Roman Catholic stance, supporters of the Know Nothings have generally been depicted as illiterate and semi-illiterate bigots. Bigotry was undoubtedly the motivating force for many of its members but other Know Nothings were sincerely concerned about what they saw as a need to protect the American culture from immigrants who kept alive old-world customs in their adopted country. It was not the foreign-born who concerned them so much as it was what the Know Nothings called “foreignism,” or the number of “foreign institutions” being transplanted to the United States.

American culture was not simply an extension of European culture but was in fact something new and unique in the world. It was distinctly American with its own set of values. Those values determined the society’s norms, or expected ways of behavior and the native-born citizen, just as native-born of all societies, fully expected the new influx of immigrants to conform to those norms. The nativist viewed those who violated those norms and who were slow to shed old-world habits and customs, as constituting a distinct threat to new-world culture.

The earlier waves of immigration were relatively insignificant when compared with the hundreds of thousands pouring into America in the late 1840s and early 1850s. The latter were of various beliefs and political persuasions and included a large number of radical socialists among their ranks as well as a number of followers of Karl Marx, who was then evolving his theories of communism. The Know Nothings could point with some validity to certain of their activities being decidedly anti-American.

Some of these radicals who had seen their own revolution fail in Germany in 1848, made repeated attempts to rouse American support for their cause in the Fatherland. They actively resisted assimilation and some went so far to propose creation of a semi-autonomous “Germania” or “New Germany” in the U.S. This was decidedly an affront to those conservative Covingtonians who saw such activities as not only anti-American, but also a threat to their nation’s policy of aloofness from Europe’s troubles.

Most alarming were the so-called “Free Germans,” a type of revolutionary intellectuals who looked upon America’s religious freedom as including the right to publicly denounce religions. They made no secret they hoped to see a complete and radical revision of America’s government as well as its religious, social and economic institutions.¹³¹

These free thinkers or *Freimannerverein* as they called themselves, rejected Christianity and condemned all legal oaths and anything which remotely resembled religious exercises in public schools. They denounced all laws that might close saloons on Sundays and insisted on practicing what they called “Continental Sundays.”¹³²

To the free thinkers, the Continental Sunday consisted of drinking beer throughout the day. In this they were joined by other more pious Germans whose Sunday activities were expanded to going from the *bier garten* to church and returning to the *bier garten*.

The *Freimannerverein* strongly opposed slavery and capital punishment and proposed America become a Germanized socialist republic in which formal Christianity was abolished. As the center of a world-wide revolutionary movement then, America would lead the world into becoming one universal, anti-Christian state, ruled by the masses.¹³³

The thought that anyone would want to re-mold the United States into an atheistic, socialist republic was abhorrent to those whose parents and grandparents had fashioned a new nation out of the American wilderness. It was beyond comprehension to even dream such radical political and social theories were now being brought to their shores. Part answer to this problem, the Know Nothings maintained, was to increase to twenty-one years the time required for immigrants to become naturalized citizens.

In the meantime, Know Nothing defenders consistently argued they were not in favor of stripping individual migrants of any constitutional right. A newsman for the *Covington Journal* presented the Know Nothing’s position when he wrote:

“We recognize to the fullest extent the right of foreign-born citizens to express Their opinions freely, to vote, to hold office – to do anything that a native-born citizen may do. But we have a right to demand that they shall exercise these privileges and duties as Americans – not as Englishmen, Irishmen or Germans.” We accord, to the fullest extent, all rights granted to adopted citizens. These rights, however, are granted on condition that they throw off their old nationality and become American citizens . . . We object to meetings of Irishmen and meetings of Germans on the same ground precisely that we would to a political meeting called and composed of native-born citizens alone. In political affairs we protest against all attempts to create classes, to excite the prejudice of one portion of the people against another portion, to all *clannishness* and any nationality save American nationality.”¹³⁴

This earnest desire to combat the importation of foreign influence is one of the important factors often overlooked in any discussion of American nativism. The American movement represented a reaction to those groups of German, Irish and other foreign influence who were reluctant to give up their own brand of imported nativism and who continued displaying a marked determination to remold America to their own tastes.

As with the foreign-born and their “foreign institutions,” so too did Covington’s Know Nothings make a distinction between individual members of the Roman Catholic Church and the temporal powers of the papacy.

The Popes of that time were not only spiritual leaders of the Roman Church but also headed a large political domain [The Papal States – editor]. As a result, it was a constant source of concern to American nativists if the loyalty and obligations owed by Catholic immigrants to the papacy superseded their feelings of loyalty obligation to their new country.

One of the day’s most common questions was “can a good Catholic be a good American citizen?” As one Covingtonian phrased it:

“If Popes and Bishops, as the *spiritual* advisors of the Catholic people, instructed them that the good of the church requires the alteration of the Constitution or the laws . . . so as to advance its power and authority, is there a Catholic in the nation, in full communion, who would refuse to place himself under the guidance of his saintly Councilor?”¹³⁵

The answer to the above, in the minds of many, was a resounding “NO” – not if the Pope continued as the temporal head of a political state.

In addition to what the Know Nothings called “Popery,” another source of much anti-Catholic feeling was the formation of numerous all-Catholic organizations which many native-born felt fostered bloc voting along religious and ethnic lines. The *Covington Journal* heartily condemned such groups and claimed:

*Irish or German political associations; Irish or German military companies; St. Patrick societies and Turner associations are all wrong in principle because . . . each, besides keeping up old-country ideas and prejudices, creates a special interest . . . and serves to build up a clannish power.”*¹³⁶

Initially, Know Nothing members attempted to affect their aims through manipulation of the established parties and the *Covington Journal* had once even urged John Rowan of Bardstown’s Federal Hill to become his party’s candidate for Kentucky’s gubernatorial office. Rowan, although flattered, declined, saying he would have been glad to be the Democratic candidate if the offer had been made at another time and under different circumstances. “But,” he wrote in his reply to the *Journal*, “I am unwilling to (be) their standard-bearer in the next contest, for the simple reason my wife is a Catholic!”¹³⁷

Rowan went on to express the belief he could never hope to win such an office because of the strength of Kentucky’s Know Nothings.¹³⁸

The rapid rise and spread of Know Nothingism was nothing less than spectacular. Its widespread appeal became quickly apparent as local political races in cities across the nation were won with comparative ease – and Covington elections were no exception.

Know Nothing members were elated by their victories and soon had visions of winning the White House. To do this, they felt a new image was needed and dropped their secret society features and openly emerged under their official name of the American Party. As the slavery issue began absorbing more public interest, the party focused less on the importance of nativism and began to stress strict adherence to the Constitution and need for preventing the break-up of the Union.

While the American Party was preparing for its entry into national-level politics, other organizations succeeded in attracting a following in the Covington area. One, the *Sag Nicht Society* was composed principally of German-born and, like the Know Nothings, was a secret order. It proclaimed its purpose was upholding religious liberty and defending the rights of the foreign-born. The organization took a strong stand against slavery opposed all forms of tyranny, whether that tyranny be over the body or mind and, like the Know Nothings, was strongly opposed to papal power.¹³⁹ Because the *Sag Nicht* conducted vigorous attacks on the Know Nothings, they received strong encouragement from the Democrats who hoped to capture the foreign-born vote.¹⁴⁰

Another organization to ridicule the Know Nothings adopted the name of “Know Somethings.” It too, was a secret political order but made up largely of those opposed to slavery. Its members were not permitted to name or discuss fellow members but they were free to talk openly of the society’s principles. One objective was to force the

Know Nothings into a more aggressive anti-slavery stand. This was a doomed objective for, although a large number of Know Nothings opposed slavery, the party continued to hold it was Constitutionally legal in those states where it already existed and urged a policy of compromise in the Territories.¹⁴¹

Once the American Party was formally launched into national politics, Aston D. Madeira, former editor of the Democratic *Weekly Kentuckian* and the *Covington Flag*, began a new Covington newspaper, *The American Sentinel*. Madeira had long ago abandoned the Democrats for the Know Nothings movement and as publisher and editor of the *American Sentinel*, took delight in denouncing his former party.¹⁴²

In the first edition, the Covington editor reprinted a story from the Philadelphia *National Argus* which scoffed at the Know Nothing's claim of being a national party, but which also unintentionally displayed how well it succeeded in building a broad base of support. The article read:

*The know Nothings profess to be a National Party having the same principles, policy and object in all parts of the country. But here at the North it is abolition all over, black as the ace of spades; while at the South it is the very tool and ally of the slavery-extensionists. Here at the North it not only proscribes Catholics, but even Protestants whose wives happen to be Catholics and in Maryland and Louisiana, many Catholics actually belong to the order! Here they profess a determined and universal hostility to foreigners, while in the West foreigners not only belong to the order but are in some places the leaders and organs! What a consistent, honest, patriotic National party this is! But there is one thing and one object in which all parts and members of this party agree, that is, in a voracious appetite for spoils. Office is the end and aim of all their desires and efforts, North, East, South and West. It is emphatically a National Party in that respect.*¹⁴³

Madeira accepted the *National Argus*' charges as being essentially true but denied the existence of any incongruity in the membership requirements of the various state organizations. Each organization, he said, was acting in complete accordance with its own state constitution. This resulted in the variety of membership one might expect to find in any national party.¹⁴⁴

Moreover, this variety of membership, Madeira claimed, was additional proof of the Know Nothing's attempt to create "a national sentiment which will override foreignism, not foreigners."¹⁴⁵

Even so, local opposition to the American Party was growing. On April 9, 1855, a group of Covington Irish and German-born met at Newport and organized a statewide counter-society of *Sag Nichts*.¹⁴⁶ Know Nothing contempt for the new group was obvious in the remarks of a party member concerning the efforts of two Kenton County *Sag Nicht* leaders to establish a Boone County council a short time later. The organizers were met by but "six or eight old fogies, three Irish Catholics and two beardless youths on the green side of sixteen."¹⁴⁷

The Irish, like the Germans, were frequent targets of Know Nothing ridicule. An example was provided by the *Covington Journal* in a short piece about an Irish woman who had given birth to a baby girl which on the Licking River suspension bridge. The *Journal* ended with the sardonic suggestion the child be named "Bridget."¹⁴⁸

The Know Nothings were at the peak of their power and included many of Covington's leading citizens. Not only did the party attract those who were anti-foreign, anti-Catholic or pro-slavery, but also counted among its adherents many who were sincerely concerned about the survival of the Union itself. Men such as Lewis Collins, William L. Grant, Thomas D. Kennedy, E. H. Phelps, John W. Finnell, Cassius B. Sandford, Vincent Shinkle, Bushrod W. Foley, L. D. Croninger, William E. Arthur, and John W. Menzies were all active in the Know Nothings and one citizen, E. B. Bartlett, played a prominent role in shaping the party nationally.

At the June 6, 1855 American Party National Council Convention at Philadelphia, Bartlett was elected as council's president. He liked to be known as "Always a Union man." Two months later he was elected president of the Kentucky council. The Kentucky council also chose another Covingtonian, Aston D. Madeira, as the state secretary.¹⁴⁹

Bartlett, who was among those favoring Henry Clay's Compromise of 1850, was described as being a person of "commanding" appearance and as a "fluent and graceful" speaker. He previously had been a member of the Democrats and took part in that party's 1852 national convention.¹⁵⁰ He had since served as Clerk of the Kenton County Circuit Court where his work earned him "an enviable reputation for accuracy, integrity and faithfulness."¹⁵¹

In January 1855, the American Party succeeded in carrying the entire Covington municipal ticket.¹⁵² This win, along with that year's election of Charles Morehead as governor was a significant victory for them. Now they began to focus on capturing the presidency itself.

The anti-foreign sentiments sweeping the state and nation seemed to affect all age groups and sometimes led to open violence. This was clearly demonstrated by events known as Covington's "TURNER REBELLION." It was May 12, 1856, Whitmonday, and the Covington Turner Society, organized the previous year, was having a picnic on Botany or Forrest Hill, west of town.¹⁵³ As the day wore on, events occurred which culminated in the Germans conducting a riotous march through Covington streets and the serious injuring of two lawmen. For years afterwards, hotly contested debates flared between the Germans and a large segment of Covington's native-born citizens over the events preceding the tumultuous march.

Many German confirmed that about three o'clock in the afternoon of that day, a crowd of about forty men, all claiming to be Know Nothings, began to drive the German society from the picnic ground. The Germans resisted and repelled the intruders but only after a pitched battle where pistols were fired and stones thrown.¹⁵⁴

Court hearings indicated the trouble at the picnic site consisted of the Germans being harassed by a large number of native-born boys, one of whom was allegedly beaten for stealing a glass of the Turner's beer.¹⁵⁵ The transcripts showed some 300 Germans staged a march through the streets of town. They paraded four abreast and included a company of musicians and four sections of armed riflemen in their ranks.¹⁵⁶

As the procession passed through an Irish neighborhood on the west side, and neared the corner of Fourth and Main Streets, its members were pelted with stones thrown by a group of teenagers said to be friends of the boy who was allegedly beaten.¹⁵⁷

Although many of the marchers were allegedly "drunk, enraged and reckless," some still managed to break ranks, catch one of the stone-throwers and beat him with "savage ferocity."¹⁵⁸ The victorious Germans rejoined the procession and continued their march through town. At Fourth and Scott Streets, they were halted by Covington marshal Clinton Butts. That was after a bystander pointed out one of the Turners as the one who had started the earlier melee.¹⁵⁹

When Butts and his deputy, John Harvey, attempted to arrest the accused, the Turners protested and the two lawmen were beaten. Harvey suffered deep cuts about his head, made with, he claimed, a saber or sword, while Butts (himself the son of German immigrants) suffered a gunshot wound which eventually resulted in one of his arms being amputated.¹⁶⁰

At this point about 200 Turners returned to their homes while a group of bystanders carried the injured lawmen to their respective homes. The remainder of the marchers, now consisting largely of Newport and Cincinnati Turners, reformed their lines and marched to the ferryboat landing. There, the Cincinnatians hoped to return to the Ohio side. The ferryboat captain, however, would not take them aboard, so the Germans proceeded to Newport in hopes of making the river crossing from that city.¹⁶¹

Meanwhile, Covington fire bells were rung and the whole community was informed of what had taken place. Passions ran deep and a large crowd hastened to Newport and followed the Turners to that city's ferry landing. The captain of the approaching ferryboat was warned by Covington's mayor, Bushrod Foley, not to land and the warning was strongly reinforced by the angry crowd. The captain turned the craft in midstream and quickly returned to the safety of the Ohio shore.¹⁶²

The Turners continued to stand their ground in the face of an increasingly menacing crowd and adamantly refused Mayor Foley's demands to surrender their weapons. At one point, a Newport officer took a sword from one of the Turners and broke it across his knee. The crowd cheered and began showering the Germans with a hail of stones.¹⁶³

The Turners responded with several ineffective gunshots and then marched to their Newport hall. There, they became virtual prisoners as the shouting crowd quickly surrounded the building and threatened to pull it in on the Germans' heads.¹⁶⁴

The Campbell County Sheriff and a large posse formed a strong guard around the hall after the crowd began showing a determination to storm the building. Some had already called for fire hooks to use in pulling down the structure.¹⁶⁵ Mayor Foley soon arrived at the scene and the Turners then surrendered five of their number who were promptly led off to jail. The remaining Turners spent the night in their hall.¹⁶⁶

At eight o'clock, the next morning the rest of the besieged Germans surrendered their arms, formed into a marching body and, under the sheriff's guard, proceeded to the Newport courthouse to undergo a hearing before that town's mayor, George B. Fearous. The mayor quickly ruled the Turners be returned to Covington where the alleged offence had occurred.¹⁶⁷

Accordingly, the defendant again formed a procession and, accompanied by Newport and Covington officers, marched to the Covington courthouse. There they were to appear before a special magistrate's court composed of Justices of the Peace, George M. Southgate and Benjamin Eggleston.¹⁶⁸

After hearing much damaging testimony against the Germans, the court released all but the five jailed defendants under a bond of \$1,000 each. Two wealthy Newport citizens, Daniel Wolff and Peter Constans posted bond for all.¹⁶⁹

During seven days of hearings before the examining court, all except thirty-two of the accused were dismissed. These thirty-two were bound over to the next term of the Kenton County Circuit Court under bonds of \$2,000 each. Once again, the bonds were posted by Wolff and Constans.¹⁷⁰ Mayor Foley took the bench after the magistrates' decision and proceeded to investigate the case of six others said to be directly implicated in the fray in which the two lawmen were injured. At the conclusion of his hearings, Foley dismissed two of the accused and, like the magistrates, bound the others over to the Kenton County Circuit Court. Two of their bonds were set at \$q250 each and the other two were placed under bonds of \$1,000 each.¹⁷¹

When the time for the trials arrived, all the defendants asked for and were granted a change of venue to the Campbell County Circuit Court.¹⁷² There, one of the defendants was acquitted during the first few days of testimony. This appeared to set precedent for acquittal of the others and prompted one Covingtonian to complain: "A monstrous outrage had been committed by a band of armed men on a public street, in the glare of day, and in the presence of many citizens and yet the perpetrators are likely to go unwhipped of justice."¹⁷³

The defendants were elated by the acquittal and seemed to agree with a remark made by the wife of an Ohio German during her testimony for the defense. She said, "I was never in Covington before that day: don't think I shall be again very soon, if I can help it."¹⁷⁴

As so often occurs in affairs involving as many people as this so-called Turner Rebellion, the identity of the criminally responsible person(s) was never learned.¹⁷⁵

The court hearings and trials were subsequently criticized by many to have been mishandled. The critics said it was wrong to have never questioned the 200 Covingtonians who dispersed to their homes after the melee at Fourth and Scott. It was further charged, the magistrate's court had seriously erred when it agreed to an early dismissal of those Turners said to have not been bearing arms. The lawmen's true assailant(s), the critics said, could have been in either group.

Part of the Turner philosophy included the belief that strenuous exercise and strict military drill helped build a healthy mind. During that first year's existence of the local organization, native-born Covingtonians were frequently astounded to see German military companies parading through the streets. To the American Party, this was another example of the "foreign institutions" threatening the American culture and leading to events as the Turner Rebellion.

One critic noted:

*The Germans of the United States have . . . the character of industrious, peaceable citizens . . . In their individual capacity (they are) civil and well disposed. But banded together in an exclusive association for the purpose of acquiring proficiency in the use of deadly weapons and of keeping up the customs and associations of the old country – many of which, to say the least, are not calculated to promote . . . a feeling of respect for our institutions – they evidently feel they have placed themselves in antagonism to the views and feelings of a large portion of the American people but at the same time knowing their power to be arrogant, insulting and overbearing.*¹⁷⁶

Many of the earliest Turners were said to be "free thinking" socialists and agnostics and it was because of this that much of the bitterest antagonism of the 1850s was directed against that organization.¹⁷⁷

AS THE 1856 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION drew near, the political gulf between North and South widened to the point where it seemed the nation's very existence depended on its outcome. In the North, a new and powerful party first appeared in 1854 and grew so rapidly, it was now recognized as the country's second major political party. Named the Republican Party, it represented a coalition of disgruntled Whigs, Free Soilers and anti-slavery Democrats – all of whom were united on the principle of opposing the spread of slavery into the Territories.

The new party nominated as its first presidential candidate, John C. Fremont. Though not a radical abolitionist, Fremont firmly opposed slavery's spread and personally favored a policy of gradual emancipation with federal compensation to slave owners.

The Democrats, who put forth James Buchanan, affirmed the Compromise of 1850 and threatened to dissolve the Union if the presidency should go to the newly-formed Republican Party. Preservation of the Union was uppermost in the minds of most Covington citizens and this, probably more than anything else, determined how they

cast their votes. Some felt the “Black Republicans,” as the Democrats were already calling the new party, was too much of a sectional organization with its greatest appeal to those in the North and East.

By then, Covington’s American Party saw themselves as occupying a middle ground between Democrats and Republican extremes. The *Journal* supported the American Party’s candidate, Millard Fillmore and warned Covingtonians: “The South threatens disunion in case FREMONT is elected. The North threatens continued agitation, (which will lead to disunion) if BUCHANAN shall be chosen.”¹⁷⁸ The newspaper went on to praise the American Party’s nominee as one “who, while not the candidate of the extremists of either section, commands by his moderation and unquestioned integrity, the confidence of all conservative men, North and South.”¹⁷⁹

Fillmore had been president once before, succeeding to the office upon Zachary Taylor’s death in 1850. He was a strong Unionist who severely criticized the sectional appeal of the Republicans and Democrats and, although detesting slavery, adopted the position it should not be interfered with in the western territories.

There was a segment of Covington’s Know Nothings who felt disenchanting with their party’s candidate. They could never forgive Fillmore for his earlier support of the Compromise of 1850, even though that support was based on the belief it might save the Union.

Locally, American Party members viewed the Democrats, who they accused of being captives of the *Sag Nichts*, as their chief source of opposition. The Republicans offered little or no threat and had few local proponents other than a minuscule number of former Free Soilers and a small number of Know Nothings who still hoped to alter the American Party’s stand on Slavery.

Ethnic slurs became commonplace as the campaign wore on and some of the earlier bigotry associated with the Know Nothings surfaced again in the *Covington Journal* when it declared the “objects of the Three Great Parties were:

The Know Somethings or Free Soilers – To take care of the niggers.

The Old Line Democrats – To take care of the foreigners

*The American Party – To take care of the American people and interests.*¹⁸⁰

Members of Covington’s political circles discussed and argued many issues throughout the campaign. The Republicans had no local organization and many were saying Buchanan was the worst sort of “doughface,” a term used to describe a Northern politician in agreement with the South. Buchanan declared the Southerners had no right to secede but then said the federal government had no right to stop them if they did.

The American Party’s self-proclaimed position of being an anti-sectional party had a certain amount of appeal and in a close local count, its candidate, Fillmore, carried the city with 861 to Buchanan’s 815.¹⁸¹

Countywide, the threats of disunion proved decisive as the Democrats attracted 1,643 votes to the American Party’s 1,246 and a meager 26 for Republicans, 17 of which were cast in Covington.¹⁸² Buchanan was destined to be the nation’s last Democratic president for 28 years.

The poor showing locally for the Republicans was largely because they had no local organization and threats of disunion made by Democrats. Many Covington citizens who might have cast their votes for the new party took the Democrats’ warning to heart and went for one of the other candidates.

On the other side of the Licking, the new party was received with but little more enthusiasm. Campbell Countians gave Fremont only 119 votes to the American Party’s Millard Fillmore’s 906 and James Buchanan’s 1,219.

In Newport, the election was marred by a shooting fray when a crowd of Know Nothings assaulted one of their former party members who came to the polls to vote for Buchanan. Several ineffective shots were fired during the assault after which the crowd followed the harried voter to his home and threatened to tear it down. One in the crowd, said to be a Newport City Councilman, even proposed sending for the fire department’s fire-hooks to use in pulling down his residence.¹⁸³

Fortunately for that voter, the threats were not carried out and in time the crowd dispersed without doing any further harm. Covington members of the American Party did not take their defeat lightly and blamed it on the ever-increasing number of foreign-born coming into the area. Many of the immigrants had voted for Buchanan simply because he was the son of an Irish immigrant.

The Fillmore supporters declared many of their own party members, like the hapless Newport voter, defected to the Democrats in hopes of securing some of the political spoils to be had from what the defectors saw as the dominant party.¹⁸⁴

A large number of party members switched to the Democrats but the cause was rather attributed to the Democrats’ effective use of threats of secession and possible civil war if Fremont were elected. Even Fillmore joined

in making such predictions and unwittingly contributed to his own defeat. Many American Party members believed the threats and voted for Buchanan.

The Republicans, who had made such an inauspicious showing locally, were well-pleased with their national strength. It was their first national political race and they felt confident enough to set up a local organization. Accordingly, 50 or 60 citizens responded to English and German language notices distributed about town and assembled at city hall to organize a “Republican Association of the Tenth Congressional District.” That was November 26th – three weeks after the presidential election.¹⁸⁵

The Know Nothing *Journal* chided the new Republican Association for its large number of foreign-born members but added: “those participating in the meeting manifested some enthusiasm and a resolute determination to stand up to the principles avowed by the Republican Party.”¹⁸⁶

A month later, the *Journal’s* view changed to alarm as the new association began to draw the interest of more citizens. The *Journal* refused to believe the local Republicans when they declared their sole object was to prevent slavery’s spread and warned its readers:

*The only effect of the organization will be to irritate and inflame the public and without securing any compensating benefit. We hope, for the sake of peace and quietness, that the organization will be abandoned.*¹⁸⁷

The new party was not abandoned but proceeded to attract a number of Covington’s abolitionists, old-line Whigs, former Free Soilers, anti-slavery Democrats and even many anti-slavery members of the Know Nothings. Most were practical men who recognized the serious handicap facing them because of their party’s growing image as one whose policies might result in the fracturing of the Union. Some detractors were charging them with wanting to allow freed Negroes full equality with whites.

To run under such an image meant sure defeat at the polls. Most Covingtonians opposed slavery but it was quite another thing they would approve of racial equality or break up the Union. As a result, it became commonplace for Covington Republicans for local office to adopt such party names as Independent Party, Reform Ticket, Citizens Ticket or some other label.

In the impending city election, American Party leaders refused to concede the rumor their party was in process of disintegrating and called for meetings in several city wards on November 28 to choose a slate of candidates. The result was an endorsement of candidates for 17 offices plus the seven councilmanic positions.¹⁸⁸

The Democrats ran a full slate of nominees as did an independent group calling its candidates the People’s Ticket. In the election held January 3, 1857, the Democrats won six offices and two council positions. The Know Nothings claimed victory in all remaining races.¹⁸⁹

What the American Party called its winning slate was composed chiefly of members of the People’s Ticket who the Know Nothings had endorsed. Many would later become staunch Republican Unionists during and after the Civil War.¹⁹⁰

The last great mass gathering of Covington’s American Party occurred on the night of June 19, 1858, when a gigantic public reception and torch light parade was held in honor of Senator John J. Crittenden’s visit to the community.

CRITTENDEN had been elected Kentucky’s last Whig governor in 1848 but, as was mentioned, resigned after two years to become attorney general in President Fillmore’s cabinet. Later he was selected to serve a six-year term in the U. S. Senate when Kentucky’s Whig legislators gave him their unanimous vote, which prompted the *Covington Journal* editor to declare: “At this result we are more than gratified – we are delighted.”¹⁹¹

After the Whigs declined, Crittenden became identified with the Know Nothings and they, along with thousands of others, turned out en masse to greet the man who had devoted so much of his political life to save the nation from threats of dis-union.

Amos Shinkle’s steamboat *Champion No. 2* brought the senator across the Ohio, while cannons at Covington and Newport fired continuous salutes. Some 2,000 citizens, carrying flaming torches and brightly lit lanterns of various colors, met Crittenden at the Covington landing. A brass band played “Hail to the Chief” and artillery continued its thunderous salute as the senator stepped ashore.¹⁹²

A procession quickly formed to escort Crittenden to the Eleventh Street campus of Western Baptist Theological Seminary where the reception would be held. The senator rode in an open carriage drawn by four iron-gray horses.¹⁹³

The line of march was marked by scores of streamers and banners bearing messages as “Welcome Home,” “Champion of the People’s Rights,” and “Well Done, Good and Faithful Servant.” Dwellings along the route were decorated with flags, while the windows and streets were filled with cheering people. Madison Avenue was described as being “one blaze of light,” and many of its buildings “were extensively and handsomely illuminated; from the windows of others, flags waved in profusion while from the dense crowd which thronged the sidewalks, rockets and fireballs shot into the air, thick and fast. The scene was brilliant and stirring.”¹⁹⁴

When Crittenden reached the seminary’s campus, his eyes were greeted with the same type of festivities. The school’s chief building [11th Street classroom, ns. btwn. Madison & Russell] sparkling with light and a large, flag-bedecked speaker’s stage, decorated with colored lanterns, stood in the center of the campus. Bonfires lit the grounds as some 5,000 well-wishers gathered to see and hear their political hero.¹⁹⁵

After ceremonies ended at the seminary, Crittenden was escorted to John W. Finnell’s home for a more formal reception of local friends and political leaders of virtually all factions. A pleasant touch was added when various singing groups appeared throughout the night. The singers included a chorus of Covington Turners who marched to Finnell’s home where they grouped themselves into a military-like formation and serenaded the senator with “several beautiful German songs.”¹⁹⁶

The Turners and Crittenden were in complete agreement on the need to preserve the Union and Finnell, eager to make political friends for the senator, invited the German society into his home to personally meet his guest.¹⁹⁷

Crittenden spent the weekend as Finnell’s house guest and attended Sunday services at the First Presbyterian Church where Reverend John M. Worrall was pastor. On Monday afternoon, after greeting hundreds of additional well-wishers, he departed for central Kentucky.¹⁹⁸

Crittenden and Finnell would later play key roles in shaping Kentucky’s decision to remain loyal to the Union during the Civil War.

The great outpouring of American Party members and old-line Whigs who had greeted Senator Crittenden gave new hope to local, die-hard American Party stalwarts. The party was showing signs of decline but hopes now again began to mount. One pleased party member was moved to plead: “Whigs and Americans stand firm to your party and to the Union. There is a great work for you to do.”¹⁹⁹

This same individual also sharply criticized what he called “the dis-union Democrats of the South,” and declared, “they are for the Union so long as they can hold power and retain the offices and then no longer.”²⁰⁰

Despite the American Party’s disastrous showing in the 1856 presidential election and its obvious decline at the national level, party members remained a potent force in Covington politics. Here, as in many other localities, they and the old-line Whigs continued to oppose the Democratic threats of dis-union but now became known as the “Union of the Opposition,” or simply the “Opposition.”

On November 24, 1858, the Opposition nominated a slate of 18 candidates for the upcoming city election. The *Covington Journal* was elated as it cried: “The Union of the Opposition for the Sake of the Union,” and “Americans and Whigs! Continue to work as you have . . . and a glorious victory . . . will crown your efforts.”²⁰¹

On January 1st, a record number of votes were cast in a city election as Opposition candidates captured 14 of the 18 offices they sought, including re-election of Bushrod Foley as mayor. Two of their losses were surprisingly close Democratic upsets when Amos Shinkle was defeated by former legislator John A. Goodson for Council President and Robert A. Athey lost the City Attorney’s race to W. P. Phelps.

The newly-elected officials had no sooner taken office than serious plans were drawn up for senatorial, legislative and gubernatorial elections scheduled for August. Delegates to the various parties’ national conventions were also to be chosen that year.

Among reasons for the Democrats’ failure to win more local offices was the effect of the recurring charge leveled against them by the editor of the *Journal*. The newsman accused the party’s leadership of attempting to capture the votes of the foreign-born by nominating a token number of naturalized citizens for relatively minor offices “as a matter of policy.” These offices and candidates, according to the editor, were never given serious consideration by the Democrats and consequently the “full strength of the party is never polled for them.”²⁰²

The editor estimated that over 2/3 of Covington’s Democratic votes came from the ranks of the foreign-born and asserted the potential Democratic candidates in at least one of the city’s wards might consider it “a misfortune to have been born in the United States.”²⁰³ This declaration came after Democratic leaders were said to have forced an American-born candidate from their party’s list of nominees solely because of his place of birth and then replaced him with a German-born candidate.²⁰⁴

Nativism, states' rights, slavery and a threatened break-up of the Union were issues affecting all Covingtonians and the town's interest in what was happening around the state and nation seemed a constant source of encouragement to publishers and editors, most of whom hoped to secure converts to their own particular philosophies.

Journalists reveled at the scores of questions raised by the political factions and the decade of the fifties saw the appearance of numerous Covington newspapers. In addition to the *American Sentinel*, they included:

<i>Covington Gazette</i>	Founded 1850
<i>Democratic Union</i>	Founded 1850
<i>Pike's Campaign Flag</i>	Founded 1850
<i>Kentucky Garland</i>	Founded 1853
<i>Weekly Kentuckian</i>	Founded 1853
<i>Covington Sentinel</i>	Founded 1856
<i>Covington & Newport Tri-Week Ledger</i>	Founded 1857
<i>Covington Weekly Globe</i>	Founded 1858
<i>Weekly Kentucky Flag</i>	Begun mid 1850s
<i>Covington Kentuckian</i>	Begun mid 1850s

One of the area's more avid pro-slavery publishers was Samuel Pike, former editor of the Maysville *Flag* who came to Newport where he briefly published the pro-slavery weekly before moving his operation to Covington. Pike was a strong supporter of the Fugitive Slave Law and during his long career, published newspapers in Kentucky, Ohio, West Virginia, Indiana and Illinois.

Many local editors, such as R. B. Carpenter and Aston Maderis of the *Weekly Kentuckian*, adopted a position they found increasingly difficult to maintain. In their first edition, these co-editors declared: "While we shall . . . stand boldly upon the platform of State Sovereignty, we shall frown upon every attempt to destroy our glorious Union"²⁰⁵

Such rhetoric would soon seem little more than a sham, as Maderis and others like him would join the South in open rebellion.

Covington, along with the nation, had witnessed a rapid expansion of ant-slavery feelings. Abolitionists were becoming more outspoken in denouncing the state's slaveholders while an ever-growing number of Kentucky's runaway slaves were finding it increasingly easy to secure aid during their flight. This was especially true in the state's northern border cities.

In reaction, a feeling began to take hold among the majority of Kentucky voters that the Democratic Party was the only party to offer a choice on the slavery question. By 1859, these same voters looked upon the Opposition as containing too many conflicting elements while the new Republican Party was seen as too sectional and containing too many radical abolitionists. Even many Covingtonians who were anti-slavery, felt these radicals represented the strongest threat to possible emancipation and transferred that feeling to the entire Republican Party.

Republicans were well-aware of this and of their own inability to win state office in slaveholding Kentucky. In order to keep their ideas before the people they met at Newport on July 29th to nominate a token number of candidates.

The meeting also produced a platform meant "to foster and encourage free labor, free schools and the mechanical arts." It called for the establishment of free schools in every district of the state, and proposed a state constitutional amendment requiring all elections be conducted by secret ballot rather than the *vive voce* method then in effect.²⁰⁶ Such secret ballots, the delegates sardonically noted, would greatly reduce the 'unhealthy influence of the landlord over his tenant at the polls."²⁰⁷

The delegates also recommended a law to make cities and counties liable for property damage or personal injury inflicted by malicious mobs. They claimed this would encourage everyone to become personally interested in the arrest and punishment of all "evil doers."²⁰⁸

As for slavery, the delegates declared: "As slavery exists only by State Legislation, t cannot extend to the Territories, nor claim protection from the general government; nor should the masses be taxed to support t for the benefit of the few."²⁰⁹

The Republican Free State Organization," as some called the local party, nominated J. R. Whittemore, of Campbell County for Congress and Abner Williams and A. P. Harrison, both of Kenton County, and William H. W. Luke of Campbell County for the state legislature.²¹⁰

The Opposition named Newport's Thomas Lauren Jones, son-in-law of James Taylor, VI to oppose Senator John W. Stevenson for the Tenth District Congressional seat and William L. Grant and Joseph L. Daniels to run against John Ellis and a 25-year-old newcomer to politics, John G. Carlisle, for the state legislature.

Stevenson and Ellis were both incumbent Democrats whose friendliness to Slaveholding interests were established, while Carlisle, a former Covington school teacher who had studied law under Stevenson, professed the same political beliefs as his former tutor. Carlisle had married John A. Goodson's daughter, Mary Jane in 1857, and the southern leanings of the Goodson family were daily becoming more pronounced.

The most openly pro-southern of the local candidates was John Ellis. Unlike the others, he did not hesitate to cast his vote with the Confederacy when the North-South rupture turned into armed conflict.

The Democrats selected Beriah Magoffin for governor, the wealthy son of an Irish immigrant who once ran for state office in 1855. The American Party candidate defeated him for lieutenant governor.

Local Opposition delegates attended their own party's convention with instructions to support Covington's William B. Kinkead for governor. When it became apparent Kinkead could not possibly win the nomination, John W. Finnell rose and placed the name of Boyle County's Joshua Bell before the convention.

Bell, like Magoffin, was the son of an Irish immigrant, but unlike Magoffin, was a zealous advocate of maintaining the Union. He received the nomination by unanimous acclamation. Except for the local Republican platform, the ensuing campaign touched upon few if any issues that might be considered peculiar to Kentucky.

On one occasion, Jones dropped out of the congressional race only to re-enter a short time later. To the casual observer, his party seemed as strong as ever at the local level as measured by its earlier municipal election victories. Party members toned down their anti-foreign rhetoric to merely opposing admission of paupers and criminals into America. Yet, there remained a stigma from their earlier position and from their 1856 presidential loss that could not be shaken. These images seemed to become more burdensome with each passing day.

The pro-slavery Democrats generally defended what they viewed as a constitutional right of any state to secede from the Union. Local party leaders met at Newport the evening of June 7th and passed a resolution declaring the Western Territories to be "the common property of these states (and) held in trust by the General Government for their equal use."²¹¹ In effect, the resolution declared the federal government had no right to interfere with slave-owners taking their slaves into any of the territories.

BELL AND MAGOFFIN, LATER THAT MONTH, CAME TO NORTHERN KENTUCKY for a debate before a disappointingly small crowd. Both candidates paid little heed to state issues and their debate consisted of little more than Bell attacking Democratic national policies and Magoffin defending them. Bell agreed the federal government had no power to prevent slave ownership in the territories but bitterly denounced those who claimed secession was constitutional.²¹²

While in the area, Bell stayed at Madison Avenue's Magnolia Hotel where he was greeted by a brass band and scores of well-wishers. His campaign was strongly backed by the *Covington Journal* and when he responded to the reception with an extremely brief note of thanks, an enthusiastic *Journal* newsman declared that even those few words created an excellent speech. "Mr. Bell," he explained, "can't open his mouth without saying a good thing."²¹³

Another point of contention between the two parties was what the Opposition saw as the Democrats' excessive spending of national monies. Even locally, Opposition candidates found occasion to level charges of financial irresponsibility when they accused Campbell County Democratic leaders of trying to attract a crowd to a planned rally at Alexandria by "luring" Newportites to the event "with a free ride, free music and free dinner – not a common dinner, but a dinner at the best hotel in town, costing 50 cents a head!"²¹⁴

KENTUCKY'S REPUBLICAN PARTY – still in its formative stage – had no candidate for governor. That did not deter its bolder members from speaking out about those running for office. One who frequently criticized the candidates was Madison County's Cassius Marcellus Clay who consistently proclaimed his opposition to slavery. He was a close friend of Newport's abolitionist newspaper editor, William S. Bailey and often appeared in the Covington area to promote his anti-slavery views.

On July 29th, after taking part in the Republican meeting at Newport, Clay came to Covington and spoke at the Seventh Street Market House before a gathering of "twelve or thirteen hundred persons . . . of an ultra Republican character."²¹⁵ According to one of his admirers, "it was a very remarkable political and popular demonstration."²¹⁶

In his talk, heralded by hundreds of posters placed throughout the city, Clay soundly denounced both Bell and Magoffin as being nothing more than "political quacks," According to him, they were "politicians, not statesmen . . . (who) . . . were in favor of measured, not principles."²¹⁷

The Madison Countian told his Covington audience slavery could never coexist with freedom, and in a moment of exuberance, declared he had been a Republican in "character" for twenty years.²¹⁸ Clay, like Bailey,

frequently denounced slavery as a threat to all free labor. He went to great lengths describing the benefits of a free labor system and said slavery “degraded – *not the African* – but the conditions of labor.”²¹⁹ Clay asked:

*Would the non-slaveholders of the South,” “be forever retiring with their scraggy horses and rickety wagons from the baleful presence of a slaveholding oligarchy under whose cold shade there could be no common schools – no social equality – no ownership of the soil valuable to those who themselves held the plough?”*²²⁰

The Madison Countian called upon Kentucky’s non-slaveholders to organize a national Republican victory in the next presidential election and appealed to Covington’s naturalized Germans and Irish “to recognize the political organization whose perpetuity and success depended upon the elevation of the condition of labor and who repudiated the doctrines of the so-called Democratic Party.”²²¹

If any of his listeners disagreed with Clay’s views they were careful to keep that fact to themselves and if they did speak out, they were careful to do so in a tactful manner, for Clay had a reputation for being absolutely fearless facing a hostile audience. Pro-slavery forces could never intimidate him – most had learned that at an early date.

On at least one speaking engagement, Clay had laid a bible on the speaker’s stand, saying, “For those who obey the rules of right and the sacred truths of the Christian religion, I appeal to this book and to those who only recognize the law of force, here is my defense.” He then produced a pistol and laid it alongside the holy book.²²²

It was such determination that prompted one local Democratic correspondent to react to an early announcement of Clay’s intention to speak at Covington by noting the abolitionist would certainly “elaborate upon his peculiar doctrine . . . but as freedom of speech is one of the first laws of the American people, he will have to be tolerated.”²²³

In reality, Clay was well received in Covington, where a large number of residents shared his anti-slavery views. These same citizens, many eagerly turned out to hear him speak, were not quite ready to support his views at the election poles.

ON ELECTION DAY August 1st, the Democrats scored a victory at the Kenton County polls in every state office race. John G. Carlisle and John Ellis defeated Opposition candidates for the state legislature by majorities of 696 and 553 respectively while the two Republican candidates polled but 40 and 21 votes.²²⁴

The only other local Republican candidate was in the district senatorial race and he attracted a mere 27 votes. Incumbent John W. Stevenson defeated the Opposition’s Thomas L. Jones in the Kenton County returns by a count of 1,706 to 950. Jones also lost heavily in his home county of Campbell, 1,242 to 689.²²⁵

For governor, Magoffin captured 1,641 of Kenton County to Bell’s 1,013 and carried the state by a majority of 8,904. In Covington, however, his margin was not nearly so conclusive. Here he garnered 862 to Bell’s 721 votes.

The Democratic victory was complete. They controlled the governor’s office and both houses of the legislature. The voting outcome was by no means an indication that Kentucky was in a mood to support either secession or the Southern States Rights segment of the Democratic Party. Most of the votes cast for Magoffin were from Kentuckians who were not only strongly opposed to secession but also feared the anti-slavery movement was growing in intensity. Politically that made them basically states rights voters but not to the extent of separating from the Union.

The new legislators and Magoffin himself, failed to understand this. They spent much of their deliberations merely responding to cries of slaveholding interests and the popular press concerning perceived dangers of the abolitionists. They did little to cope with the pending disruption of the Union and lost virtually all contact with the majority of Kentuckians. There was probably no state administration before or since so completely out of touch with the will of its constituents.

THE NEW OFFICIALS HAD BARELY TAKEN OFFICE when they began creating new counties to be named in honor of various party stalwarts. Of five such political realms they created, one was named for the governor, one for his lieutenant governor, and one for a political colleague in the state senate – the counties of Magoffin, Boyd and Wolfe. Even the county seat of the newly-created Magoffin County was renamed to compliment another of the governor’s political allies. – Salyersville!²²⁶

Two of the local winners of state offices – Carlisle and Stevenson – both ultimately earned reputations for clear decisive thinking, were at a stage of political development where neither seemed to grasp the full consequences of their actions as lawmakers. They were almost servile in catering to the pro-slavery element, yet neither would go so

far to advocate breaking up the Union. However, many of their words and deeds served to encourage others to disunion and prompted still others to seriously question the pair's loyalty.

The voters' disappointment with the lawmakers' failure to decisively address the issue of how best to preserve the Union, became evident at the next election when virtually all were replaced with overwhelmingly staunch Unionists.

Endnotes

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Chapter 10

Roads, Bridges, Commerce and Rails

THE YEARS BEFORE THE CIVIL WAR witnessed great interest in improving transportation. Roads were built, bridges erected, railroads came into existence and river traffic boomed.

After Jacob Fowler and General Taylor made their 1818 improvements to the Covington-Lexington Road, there was an extended period during which the road was neglected and little done to add to the comfort of those traveling over it.

Most Covington citizens though, didn't seem too concerned. The steamboat had come into vogue and local town folk had geared their business and commercial interests to river transportation. Covington prospered. Nevertheless, a significant part of the city's continued commercial growth can be explained in part by the alarm felt by Lexington over their land-locked city's relative decline in commercial importance.

After the advent of the steamboat, the region's chief trade route rapidly shifted to the Ohio River. Farm produce and manufactured items could be easily transported by river to and from Pennsylvania in the east and New Orleans in the south. River ports thrived while towns in the state's interior lagged behind.

The steamboat turned the great rivers into highways of commerce that brought wealth to the port cities. Lexington was not one of these however, but depended on roads for its lifeblood of trade. One of its main highways led to Maysville and another to Louisville. Both were in good condition and well-traveled but a third – between Lexington and Covington – was not so well kept.

In an effort to stay in the commercial race, Lexington sent a delegation to Cincinnati in April 1839 to discuss with interested citizens possible road improvements between the two communities. Steamboat men, along with Covington citizens found it to their interest to take part and help make the meeting a success. The funds to promote improvement of the Covington-Lexington Road followed.

After the much-needed road improvements were completed, Covington prospered more than ever. It grew in importance as an outlet for central Kentucky agricultural products, as thousands of hogs, sheep and cattle were driven here to market. Wagon traffic and stagecoach travel also increased heavily.

By late 1844, stage passengers paid five dollars and fifty cents for a one-way trip between Covington and Lexington. This included four dollars fare plus 50 cents for each of three meals to be had on a journey which the *Licking Valley Register* described as still including thirty miles of "the roughest road in the Union."¹

During that same year, the local post office announced Covington patrons could enjoy new and reduced postal rates. A one-page letter, known as a "single letter" which weighed no more than ¼ ounce could be mailed to any destination within 30 miles for three cents. It cost five cents to mail the same letter a distance of 30 to 100 miles; ten cents for 100 to 400 miles; and 15 cents for any distance exceeding 400 miles.

Rates were also in direct proportion for mailing "double letters," defined as containing two sheets of paper and not exceeding ½ an ounce, and "triple letters" (3 sheets) weighing no more than ¾ ounce. The new postal charges represented a reduction of more than 50% on those charged just two years previously.²

Kenton County's rural seat of government was still largely inaccessible for most it was supposed to serve. Complaints about its location at isolated Independence were commonplace. Finally, in spring 1846, the complaints led to Albert West Gilbert being hired to survey and extend Banklick Turnpike to the tiny village.³

The Philadelphia-born Gilbert had migrated westward as a ten-year-old with his parents in 1826. By his teens, he and his father were farming some 35 acres of the former estate of James Riddle. They rented the land from the Bank of the United States which had foreclosed the property from Riddle for non-payment of mortgage debt. The Gilberts prospered and Albert eventually became a civil engineer.⁴

Madison Avenue was partitioned by a nearly impassable ravine near present-day Holmes High School at the time young Gilbert made his improvements to the turnpike. The northbound road turned westward shortly before reaching the ravine and connected with Pike Street by way of Banklick Street. Pike Street, of courses, led out to the Covington-Lexington Road (present Dixie Highway – editor).

Since there were no bridges over the Ohio River (Roebling Suspension would not be completed until 1867 – editor), the city became a point where Cincinnati-bound shipments from central Kentucky were broken down for ferrying across the river. Goods bound for other points could be loaded directly onto steamboats at the Covington waterfront.

Passengers and freight crossing the Ohio had been ferried in either manually-propelled or horse-powered boats until 1831 when the first steam-powered ferry began operation. By 1848, there were four steam ferries running between Covington and the Ohio side and one flatboat and a skiff operating between Covington and Newport.⁵

This was the age of steam and Covington was reaping huge profits as it felt the full effect of James Watt's discovery. Rivers and factories combined to contribute mightily to the city's prosperity and growth. Neither did this go unappreciated by the local populace. The *Licking Valley Register* editor noted in the pages that:

*G.W. Cutter, Esq. of Covington, Kentucky has immortalized himself by the "Song of Steam" ..(and) .. To show that sensation it created in Europe, we quote the following paragraph from a late London paper of high literary character: "American Song – 'The Song of Steam,' which first appeared in an American paper (Licking Valley Register, Covington, Ky.) and was copied into the London Times, is very popular and is going the rounds. People are curious to know who the author is."*⁶

Cutter was the Mexican War hero who had written the popular *Buena Vista*. After the war's end, he served as a Treasury Department member during the Taylor and Fillmore administrations and became active in the Know Nothing Party.⁷

At one time, the Covington poet was acclaimed as having authored "some of the finest lyric poems in the English language."⁸ Among his works are *The Captive*, *Song of Lightning* and *E Pluribus Unum*. Of all his writings, none surpassed *Buena Vista* and *Song of Steam*. His poetry was twice collected and published in bound volumes – once in 1848 and again in 1857.⁹

Cutter was essentially a lyric poet who often wrote under the inspiration of the moment. Such was the case with his *Song of Steam* which was prompted by the sight and sound of the powerful steam-propelled machinery in Covington's growing number of industries. This occurred when Cutter was once "in the neighborhood of what was then called 'Factory Row,' where John T. Davis had his cotton factory. He looked at the immense wheels and cogs and shafts and pulleys and listened to the noise and whirr and rumble of the machinery. From there he wandered off to the McNickle rolling mill where they had an enormous trip-hammer and the power of steam so impressed him that he went home and wrote the poem – and a magnificent thing it is!"¹⁰

Cutter, like so many other of his temperament, was prone to impracticability. He became addicted to alcohol and was virtually penniless when admitted to a Washington D. C. hospital with a serious illness. There, on Christmas Eve 1865, he died at age 56.¹¹

AGITATION FOR A BRIDGE between Covington and the Ohio side of the river was a constant subject of conversation. Daniel Drake in his *Picture of Cincinnati* stated many people were enthused about such a possibility as early as 1815 but the river was a quarter-mile wide and nowhere had such an engineering feat been accomplished. The whole idea was laughed at by others who ridiculed it as "a hypothesis at once absurd and visionary."¹²

As time passed, many proposals for a span were advanced and in 1828, a company organized for the purpose of beginning construction of such a bridge. It received a charter the following year but dissolved shortly afterward.¹³

Some advocated building a draw bridge and once even the feasibility of a Y-bridge was discussed. A Y-bridge, the proponents said, could extend from the Ohio shore to near the Licking's mouth where one extension would run to Newport and the other to Covington.

If many people favored bridging the Ohio, there was a like number who opposed the idea. Such a structure would block river traffic, some said, which others argued the piers would displace so much water to cause frequent flooding of the cities. Eventually, the idea of a suspension-type bridge was advanced and found many supporters.

Business was prospering throughout the Licking Valley when, in 1845, a group of forward-looking Pendleton County citizens gathered at the little town of Falmouth to discuss how best to further promote the welfare of the Licking River region. The meeting resulted in plans for a larger, region-wide convention to be held the following October in Covington. Enthusiastic delegates from throughout the valley came to the Covington meeting where they passed a strong resolution calling for an Ohio River bridge at that point.

In Ohio it was a different story. The arguments that Cincinnati real estate values would suffer if such a span was built and that river navigation would be obstructed won out. Many Ohio boosters also feared a business and population loss to neighboring Kentucky. They were successful in their arguments and the State of Ohio refused to charter the bridge company.

Not all Ohioans agreed with their lawmakers' action. One Cincinnati who visited Covington shortly after the outbreak of the war with Mexico, wrote a glowing account of what he saw and of his hope to eventually see the river bridged at that point.

"Our Sister City across the river," he wrote:

"is moving on at a rapid rate in the search of improvement. A walk over the City will convince the observer that she is destined to become one of the most flourishing cities in the West. She is already engaged largely in manufacturing and her Commercial business has more than doubled itself within the last twelve-month. The number of buildings just completed and now in course of erection is larger, we believe, than in any previous year. Newport, too, is rising rapidly; and two things are only necessary to make these two cities go on with gigantic strides – a bridge connecting Newport and Covington, and also a bridge connecting Covington and this city. These works are perfectly practicable; and we hope to hail completion before many years shall pass."¹⁴

Arguments for and against the proposed bridge continued to rage for another three years before the Ohio Legislature decided to change its mind and grant the company a charter. That was March 26, 1849.

Unlike Kentucky, Ohio decided to insist on several restrictive clauses in the charter. One prohibited piers in the river; another governed the span's height and length. The terms were acceptable to the company but nevertheless, strong opposition to a bridge continued to exist.

In 1850, the bridge opponents succeeded in forcing the first amendment to the charter. The Cincinnati end of the span had to be between Walnut Street and Central Row (now Central Avenue). It also prohibited exit onto Cincinnati's Vine, Race, Elm or Plum Streets. This was extremely shortsighted legislation, for Covington's north-south streets were laid out to line up with the north-south streets of Cincinnati and except for the river, appeared to be continuous. The bridge builders had hoped to link two of those thoroughfares into one grand avenue.¹⁵

Ohio had acted out of fear, prompting the bridge architect, German-born Johann August Roebling, to remark in later years that the actions of that state deprived the area of one of the "finest and most significant avenues on this continent."¹⁶ Roebling continued:

*No avenue in any of the large capitals of Europe could now compare in beauty of grandeur with that long vista which would be presented by the line of Vine Street on one side, continued in a straight course by Scott Street on the opposite shore and connected across the river through the imposing arches of the great towers of the suspension bridge.*¹⁷

Six more years of monetary difficulties and indecision were to pass before the bridge company signed a contract with Roebling for erecting the span. That was August 18, 1856 and excavation work for the two piers began shortly thereafter.¹⁸

The actual signing of the contract took place only after a survey was made in order to ascertain the proposed span's potential income. An actual count of traffic using the ferry at the foot of Scott Street during the first seven days of April 1856 revealed that during the time of the count, the ferryboat crossed the Ohio 1,480 times and carried 29,311 passengers over twelve years of age. They also transported 369 horses, 382 cattle, 1,566 drays, 627 buggies and 450 other one-horse vehicles.

Much of the credit for revitalizing the bridge company and making it a success must go to Amos Shinkle, who had joined its board of directors on February 5th that year. Shinkle was a prospering Covington businessman and civic booster who strongly believed in the bridge's prospects. His spirit of enthusiasm and ability at working with monetary matters were just what the company needed.

Excavation for the bridge piers had barely begun when, on September 11th, the Irish laborers on the project went on strike for a pay increase of fifty cents a day. The strikers were immediately discharged from their jobs and replaced with Germans.¹⁹

The dismissed strikers were furious at the company's actions and at what they called the "damned Dutch" for taking their jobs. They vowed the Germans would never commence work and succeeded for a brief time in keeping that vow. It was only after bridge officials called upon law enforcement to protect their new employees that the Germans were able to begin work. The Irish were not re-hired.²⁰

The German willingness to act as strike-breakers and work for low pay only added to the contempt felt for them by the Irish. The Irish had long referred to indentured Germans as “Dutch slaves” and Dutch niggers,” and now began applying those names to anyone with Teutonic background.²¹ The term “Dutch” is a corruption of the Teutonic word *Deutsch*, meaning German, and even today is in common use throughout the Covington area as a synonym for German.

In response to their critics, the Germans liked to recall an earlier semi-annual admissions report for the poorhouse that indicated 18 of 21 admissions were foreign-born. Only one of those 18, they boasted, was German-born while thirteen were Irish.²²

The Irish quickly countered the boast by claiming it was only further proof of the Germans’ willingness to act as scab laborers and to work for slave wages. Less than a month after the Germans resumed excavation for the piers, one of Covington’s leading inn keepers, J. W. Robinson, gave evidence of his faith in the proposed span’s future when he invested in a hotel at the corner of Front and Greenup Streets and named it the Bridge Hotel.²³

Since 1850, the nation had been in the midst of an economic boom as the steady stream of California gold fueled a period of unprecedented inflation. Banknote circulation and bank loans reached record highs and monthly doublings of paper fortunes were commonplace.

Rampant over-speculation eventually began to take its toll and when an Ohio financial institution closed its doors in August 1857, many eastern banks panicked and suspended specie payments. In turn, that brought on a nationwide bank run and the panic rapidly turned into a full-fledged depression. Banks and businesses around the nation failed. The local bridge stock became worthless and its construction came to a halt. Kentucky and Ohio repeatedly authorized the company to issue more stock but no buyers could be found. The bridge seemed doomed.

ATTITUDES TOWARD the stalled Ohio River crossing continued to be mixed, largely because of the fate of an earlier suspension-type bridge across the Licking. Many Licking Valley enthusiasts had long endorsed construction of a new Covington-Newport span to replace the old, covered wooden bridge originally built in 1844-5 at the eastern end of Second Street, which was known locally as the “kissing bridge.”²⁴ Backers of the proposed Ohio bridge recommended the Licking River span also be a suspension type. Accordingly in February 1834, the Licking River Bridge Company was incorporated, although it was not until 1852, after many delays, that the state legislature authorized Newport and Covington to proceed with construction.

The Licking River suspension bridge project, costing \$65,000 and financed by a bond issue, was started April 17, 1853. Two months later, the *Covington Journal* noted the rapidity and quality of the work being done as it progressed under George C. Tarvin as superintendent. The paper reported:

*To get a proper idea of the strength and durability of the work, one must go and look for himself. The anchor irons are imbedded in a foundation 15 feet wide by 20 feet deep, composed of massive oak timber and stones.*²⁵

By the end of November, each of the eight wire cables were being strung between the two 93-foot-tall stone towers. The work was done by attaching a heavy rope to each cable in Newport, bringing the rope’s other end to Covington and securing it to a wagon pulled by six horses. With the aid of pulleys on the Covington side and rollers and drums on both banks and on steamboats in the Licking, each of the 902 feet cables was pulled into place.²⁶

Six of the cables were made of 350 strands of wire each, while the remaining two contained 308 strands. Their combined weight was 88 tons.²⁷

The bridge, which was designed by Charles Ellet of Philadelphia, was formally opened to vehicular traffic on December 28th when Tarvin and Covington Mayor Bushrod Foley, rode across it in a buggy,²⁸

Sightseers thronged the bridge walkways during the first few days the bridge was open and this provided a source of irritation to Newport residents. They claimed they were discriminated against because the tolls were collected on their side of the river. This made it necessary for them to pay a toll in order to walk to the center while Covington people could do the same free of charge.²⁹

The new span was in brief service, however, for at about 5:30 PM on January 16, 1854, it collapsed under 15 head of cattle and two men on horseback – Taylor Keyes and Henry Clarcom. Eight of the cattle drowned and Keys was slightly injured.³⁰ Clarcom’s horse managed to leap clear of the falling debris and carried its rider completely to the bottom of the river. When the animal surfaced, it swam safely to shore with Clarcom still in the saddle. Clarcom later declared he would not take “a thousand dollars for *that* mare!”³¹

Another narrow escape was that of the bridge toll collector. He had just stepped out of the toll house for a better view of the cattle when one of the heavy tower rollers crashed through the small office.³²

Ironically, another to escape injury was Joseph Mollridge, the cattle's driver. Mollridge had serious doubts about the bridge's stability and decided to linger on the Newport side while the cattle crossed the span. It proved to be a wise decision!³³

The collapse occurred when an anchor bar on the bridge's north side gave way at the Newport end.³⁴ The span turned bottom-up during the collapse and twisted the cables "as if they had been so many light cords."³⁵

The bridge towers and other masonry work remained undamaged and the span was quickly replaced with another suspension-type structure which lasted considerably longer.

Work on the stalled Covington-to-Cincinnati bridge continued at a stand-still. Meanwhile, Covington's Dr. Walker had achieved a degree of fame because of his invention of a mechanical calculator. One amazed newsman described the calculator: "It adds any numbers together with the utmost rapidity and most accuracy. It is constructed on the principles of a clock and will doubtless prove of immense value to all business men."

Among the businessmen who could probably use such a device were those brought into prominence by the steamboat. As early as August 1816, the Thomas J. Palmer Shipyards at Newport turned out boats and barges as fast as possible. Within ten years after the first steam powered vessel appeared on the western waters (1811 – editor), the boat building industry of the Upper Bluegrass was well underway. The first seven steamboats to ply local waters were built at Big Bone from where they were floated to the Ohio during times of high water.

Some of the early steam craft built in the Covington area were:³⁶

<i>NAME</i>	<i>WHERE BUILT</i>	<i>YEAR</i>	<i>TONS</i>
<i>Chesapeake</i>	Big Bone	1827	----
<i>Erin</i>	Covington	1833	100
<i>Newport</i>	Newport	1819	50
<i>General Robinson</i>	Newport	1819	238
<i>General Pike</i>	Big Bone	1824	150
<i>Henry Clay</i>	Licking River	1819	150
<i>Missouri</i>	Newport	1819	177
<i>Pilot</i>	Big Bone	1825	150
<i>Speedwell</i>	Big Bone	1827	80

The *General Robinson* had been named for the founder of Nashville and was the 56th steamboat to be built after the first such craft descended the Ohio in 1811. The *Missouri* was the 52nd and in between was the *Missouri* as the 54th western steamboat. It was owned by interests in New Orleans and was used primarily in the Red River traffic.³⁷

Many of these early vessels shared a common fate as they came to grief on a submerged snag. Such was the fate of the *General Robinson* near New Madrid, Missouri in 1823. The *Pilot* was lost below St. Louis and in 1828 the *Speedwell* was snagged near Wheeling in (present) West Virginia.

The *Missouri*, built for the St. Louis trade, operated until 1826 when it too ran afoul of a hidden river snag. The *Henry Clay* also met its end in 1826 when it was destroyed on the Mobile River, but the *General Pike* continued in service until, like Oliver Wendell Holmes' "Wonderful One-Hoss Shay," it simply wore out and was scrapped. The *Chesapeake* was never placed in operation.

Many boat owners and boat captains took an inordinate amount of pride in their boat's speed and over the years this pride led to the loss of scores of craft and literally thousands of lives. The desire for faster speed led to widespread practice of tying shut the boiler safety valves to increase steam pressure. The additional pressure not only made possible a higher speed but also led to a number of tragic boiler explosions.

One such tragedy occurred about a mile upstream from Covington on April 25 1838 when four boilers of the *Moselle* exploded simultaneously, resulting in heavy loss of life. The *Moselle*, said to be overloaded at the time, was carrying an estimated 250 to 300 passengers, most of whom were westward-bound German immigrants. Many individuals claimed its officials had fastened shut the boiler safety valves to increase its speed when shoving off. The boat had taken on the last of its passengers and had barely left the Ohio shore when the explosion took place.

The force of the blast was said to have been unprecedented in the history of steam! The vessel's for part was literally blown apart and the entire hurricane deck, human bodies and parts of bodies were hurled into the air and onto both sides of the river.

On the Ohio side, a fragment of one of the boilers crashed through the roof and second floor of a house, finally lodging on the building's ground floor. The roof of yet another house was pierced by the falling body of a passenger and the vessel's pilot and pilot house were hurled a quarter mile to the Kentucky shore. Many who escaped injury from the blast itself, were drowned when they panicked and leaped into the river.

Such disasters as the *Moselle* set off a widespread cry for increased safety conditions on the river and led to passage of what is known as the Steamboat Act of 1838. This called for rigid and periodic inspections of all steamboat machinery and high-pressure boilers, but granted little power to those in charge of enforcing it. As a result, it was largely ignored by riverboat interests.

Still, the 1838 Act represented the nation's first federal attempt at steamboat regulation and in 1852 was superseded by another law requiring all steamboats, pilots and engineers to be licensed.

River trade was booming and local business and industry cooperated to assure Covington a share of that boom. Riverboat captains favored the town as a home and river-related industries seemed to grow up overnight. Newspaper announcements such as the following began appearing with ever-increasing frequency:

A contract has been made with the A.J. Alexander & Co. of this city, by Messrs. Hicks, Holden, Lemaire & Co. to build one of the large class steamboats for the Southern trade. ³⁸

The boat referred to was the *Franklin Pierce* which was launched December 21, 1852. The afternoon launching was scheduled for two o'clock, "but the boat went off half-cocked and was in the water at one."³⁹

A.J. Alexander & Company not only built such craft as the *Franklin Pierce* but also dealt in lumber and owned several yards and mills throughout the area. In June 1850, the firm had expanded its operations when city council granted it permission to use the riverfront between Madison and Washington Avenues (? Washington Street is not near the Ohio – editor) as a site for its constructing sea-going ships. The company's first vessel, a barque built for an eastern shipping firm, was launched on December 27th of the same year. The *Covington Journal* described the event:

The barque built at the shipyard of A.J. Alexander & Co., at the foot of Madison Street, in this city, was launched yesterday afternoon. The arrangements for the launch were made under the direction of Captain Reed, who will probably command the vessel. ⁴⁰

*At least 5000 people assembled to witness the launching of the first ship built at Covington. And gracefully did the beautiful craft glide into her destined element amid the hearty and prolonged shouts of the multitude. This barque was built by Alexander & Company, under the immediate superintendance of Mr. Woodcock, an experienced shipwright . . . It is of 300 tons measurement and for beauty of model, excellence of materials and mechanical skill, will be hard to beat. She will be laden . . . with western products for Baltimore. Success to the **John Swasey!*** ⁴¹

We are glad to learn that Alexander & Company intend to make ship building a permanent business at this place. One of the members of the firm, Dr. William A. Irvine, a gentleman of experience and ample means, resides in the heart of the lumber region, in Pennsylvania and is extensively engaged in the lumber business. They will thus have facilities which will enable them to carry on ship building extensively and successfully.

Workmen are now engaged I getting out the timbers for another barque of about the same measurement as that of the one just launched; and we learn negotiations are pending for the building of a ship with 800 tons burthen at the same yard. ⁴²

On April 5, 1851 the *John Swasey* safely docked with its full cargo, not at Baltimore as previously announced but at the New England port of Salem, Massachusetts.

In January that year, the local shipbuilding firm suffered a severe setback when it was struck by a disastrous fire.⁴³ The owners quickly rebuilt, however and in March launched another barque, the *Salem*. The firm began work on a 350 ton barque for Ohio's Swasey & Company which ordered the ship to be designed especially for use in the African trade.⁴⁴

In a short time, Covington-made ships were to be seen in ports around the world and one, the *Salem*, became especially well known for its speed and beauty. Residents of the California boom town of San Francisco were long-accustomed to the sight of sleek sailing vessels, yet even they were impressed when the *Salem* glided into their crowded harbor. One California newsman decided to investigate the graceful vessel's background and was amazed at what he learned. He passed the information along to his fellow San Franciscans when he wrote:

*It may not be generally known to our readers that the bark **Salem**, which arrived at this port from New York on the 10th instant, was built more than 1,600 miles from the ocean, in the interior of the United States. She was launched at Covington, Kentucky, on the Ohio River and with all her spar standing, floated down the Ohio to the Mississippi and thence to the ocean. She is a vessel of superior model and great strength of construction, being built entirely of white oak, copper fastened and bolted; and the proof of her sailing qualities, she made (with one exception) the best passage from the United States to Valpariso, that has been performed this season.*⁴⁵

For several years afterward, Covington remained one of the Ohio Valley's leading ship and steamboat builders.

Covington also became one of the more important points for refueling of river steamboats. This enterprise owed its beginnings almost solely to Amos Shinkle, who realized the town's strategic location, being ideal for such an operation. Boats needed fuel and neighboring Cincinnati's wharves were the busiest for a thousand-mile stretch of river. So, in August 1846, he set himself up in the coal business.

AMOS SHINKLE'S ENTERPRISE prospered from its very beginning and soon required whole fleets of coal boats to meet the demand. The fuel was brought downstream from Pittsburgh and the Kanawah, making the Covington riverfront a lively place indeed, with such boats as the *Joe B. Williams*, *Smoky City*, *D. T. Lane*, *Iron Duke* and *D. W. Woodward* making frequent appearances. The company not only furnished coal for the community's needs but served for many years to make Covington a leading supplier of coal for Ohio River steamboats.

Amos Shinkle's rise to a position of wealth and influence has been viewed by many as a prime example of the workings of free enterprise. Born in 1818 at Brown County, Ohio to parents who had migrated west from Pennsylvania, he left home while still a teenager with but 75 cents in his possession.⁴⁶

Young Shinkle secured work as a cook on a flatboat and by thrifty management of his pay, was soon able to acquire a boat of his own. He went to the forests of eastern Kentucky where he felled acres of trees and fashioned the timber into furniture which he sold on the New Orleans market.⁴⁷

Shinkle's venture into furniture making and sales proved profitable and after accumulating a sizeable amount of cash, he decided to enter the grocery business. In this venture however, he made the mistake of extending generous credit to numerous individuals who failed to repay him. His grocery business ended in financial disaster.⁴⁸

Young Amos was not defeated, however. He had heard of the rapid growth taking place at Covington and decided such a fast-growing community must offer exceptional opportunities for one willing to work. He now strived harder than ever, saved what money he could from his defunct grocery business. With a total of \$1,500, the twenty-eight-year-old came to Covington to seek his fortune.⁴⁹

By the time of the Civil War, Shinkle had amassed a fortune from his coaling station and in the process acquired a fleet of steamers himself.⁵⁰

THE LICKING RIVER WAS SHARING in the booming steamboat traffic. As early as 1832, the steamer *Traveler* ascended that stream as far as Claysville in northern Harrison County. The event "caused great rejoicing" not only in that tiny community but also in nearby Cynthiana and the entire region.⁵¹

There were times, however, when the Licking became so filled with sand, mud and debris at its junction with the Ohio that wagons and teams of horses could cross "almost dry shod." This was especially true during summer months when the river's mouth had to be excavated from time to time to allow craft to enter and exit the stream. [Originally a slight falls existed at the mouth of the Licking – editor]

Finally, in 1837, Kentucky authorized a survey of the river for 230 miles from Covington to West Liberty. It was planned to make the stream navigable by clearing it of rocks, fallen trees and other obstructions. The channel would be deepened and widened and dikes and dams built.

Work on 51 ¼ miles of river between Covington and Falmouth commenced in October of 1837. A total of \$372,520 was spent on that section when, in 1842, a financial panic set in and the project scrapped. All work that had been started on the locks and dams was now abandoned.

Several years later, the young lieutenant in charge of the river's surveying would appear in Civil War battles at Belmont, Corinth and Vicksburg, as well as other places with names intimately connected with that epic struggle. He eventually was brevetted a major general.

On January 6, 1842, the same year the Licking River project was abandoned, Covington City Council appointed a committee to investigate the feasibility of cutting a canal from the Licking in the south part of town and diverting its waters to Willow Run. The Licking would then flow to the Ohio through the deep hollow of Willow Run Creek.⁵²

Much of the hollow proposed as a new route for the Licking has since been filled to provide a route for Interstate 71/75. The Kentucky end of the Brent Spence Bridge now extends over what would have been the re-located Licking River's mouth!

The Licking's steamboat traffic continued to be confined to shallow-draft vessels. Nevertheless, the next decade witnessed considerable increase in tonnage shipped on its waters. More boats capable of navigating over the river's shallow shoals were being built. Some, like one being finished in a Covington boatyard in May 1843, had hulls constructed at small Licking River towns such as Claysville and floated here to be finished. Owners of these craft were always optimistic at prospects of profits from bringing down the upper Licking's agricultural products and returning with various manufactured goods.⁵³

Traffic on the Licking always increased drastically during times of high water and during one such 1843 freshet, it was noted some 30 to 40 boats arrived here carrying products as tobacco, pork, lard, flour, whisky and iron. Some had come from points well in excess of 100 miles upstream.⁵⁴

Many Licking River craft engaged in business completely local in nature and one of the better known was the "new and fast-running steamboat *Licking Packet*" which began regular operation in November 1849.⁵⁵ The *Licking Packet*, built primarily for ferryboat business, was used for towing and other jobbing. Its owner, John Owen, announced his new business venture by proudly proclaiming: we are now ready to carry hogs, cattle, wagons, carts, drays, horses, etc. All applications for towing or pleasuring will be promptly attended to."⁵⁶ Owen's *Licking Packet* operated on regular schedule of 8 round trips at South Covington and Cincinnati, with a stop at the foot of Robbins Street.⁵⁷

In December 1849, the first steamboat to ever dock at Blue Licks reached that community and its arrival prompted a jubilant correspondent to write the following to the *Covington Journal*:

STEAMBOAT ARRIVAL AT BLUE LICKS!
Blue Lick Springs,
December 18, 1849

Dear Sir: Would you believe it? We have now laying at our landing a real, bonafide steamboat! The St. Francis. . . arrived here this evening . . . loaded with passengers. A goodly portion of the natives and about 125 Cadets, of the Western Military Institute made the hills echo with their loud huzzahs, as the boat landed. This is the first boat that ever attempted a trip to this place . . . It is worthy of remark that the river is not now more than 2 or 3 feet above fording.

*The arrival of the boat, we hope, will open the eyes of our present legislators, that they may at least do justice to the citizens of the Licking Valley. If they would only do one-half of what has been done for the Kentucky, Green and Barren rivers, we would have almost uninterrupted navigation the year round.*⁵⁸

Even though the state had long since abandoned its work of building locks and dams on the Licking, Covington and Licking Valley citizens still continued to clamor for such aids to that river's navigation.

In February 1850, newsmen commented on the fact that during a recent rise in the Licking's waters, several boats had navigated upstream for a distance of about 100 miles and brought back huge amounts of freight. Surely, they cried, its canalization deserved as much attention as the state's other rivers, or for that matter, the construction of a contemplated Licking Valley railroad.⁵⁹

There were also loud outcries for improved wharf facilities and at the February 17th, 1849 election, Covington citizens voted 312 to 131 to tax themselves fifteen cents per hundred dollars in order to make such improvements. It was not until June 1850 that actual work on the public wharf began.

The following December, city council voted to officially designate all the riverfront from the end of Fourth Street on the Licking to the foot of Main Street on the Ohio as a public landing. The councilmen also instituted landing fees ranging from \$1.50 to \$2.50 for every steamboat to dock in that area.⁶⁰

All other boats, including barges, flatboats, keelboats and rafts of timber were assessed \$2.00 a day for 100 feet of frontage plus \$1.00 for each additional 50 feet or fraction thereof which they might use.⁶¹

Also, each barge, keelboat, flatboat of any description or "Orleans boat" was to be charged an extra dollar a day if it measured over 12 feet wide. It would be the duty of the Wharf Master to collect the fees.⁶²

With few exceptions, Covington's riverfront did not see the development of the waterfront saloons, inns and second-rate hotels which became so common in other river towns. The local businesses which catered to river travelers were of considerably higher quality. Typical were such places as the Hammond House at Front [today's Riverside Drive - editor] and Greenup and the Farmers' Hotel at Third and Madison – both flourishing in 1852.

The Hammond House, soon to be renamed, stood on the site of the former Jefferson Hotel and opposite the ferry landing. The Jefferson had been acquired by John A. Offal and John Scribner who completely remodeled and redecorated the highly-respected hostelry and reopened it for business in May 1849. Little more than a year later, on the night of October 25th, 1850, the Jefferson caught fire and was completely destroyed.⁶³

Another riverfront hostelry was the opulent Beresford House, built in 1851 on the west side of Main Street “near the Ohio.” Owned by a Mr. Moreland and a Mr. Tompkins, its grand opening in September was marked by a large public dinner. One of those attending said of the elegant Beresford:

*It contains upon the first floor, two elegantly furnished parlors, a spacious dining hall, a bar-room, etc. In all between forty and fifty rooms . . . On visiting the house, one cannot fail to be struck by the uniform taste and architectural beauty displayed in its construction . . .*⁶⁴

All of this was a scant four decades after the first appearance of steamers on the Ohio. An intriguing story relating to the *Orleans*, the first steam propelled boat to be seen in this area, was related by P. S. Bush, an early Covington resident. In later years, Bush recalled:

*In the fall of the year 1811, after the embargo was laid ON English vessels and before the earthquake of December 1811, my father was residing on the Ohio river, nearly opposite General Harrison's farm at North Bend. The family was one day much surprised at seeing the young Mr. Weldons running down the river much alarmed and shouting “the British are coming down the river!” There had, of course, been a current rumor of a war with that power. All the family immediately ran to the bank –We saw something, I knew not what, but supposed it was a saw mill from the working of the lever beam, making its slow but solemn progress with the current. We were shortly afterwards informed it was a steamboat.*⁶⁵

William McGranaghan and J. Winton, both of whom lived in Newport in 1851, witnessed the original launching of the *Orleans* and briefly described the craft in a letter to an Ohio newspaper. They wrote:

In the fall of 1811, we were both present at the launching of the first steamer built on the Ohio river and on board her.
*She was built at the Pipetown shipyard at Pittsburgh; was intended for the Pittsburgh and New Orleans trade and called the **Orleans**. She was built after the fashion of a ship, with port-holes in the sides – long bowsprit – painted a sky blue. Her cabin was n the hold.*⁶⁶

The epic voyage of the *Orleans* marked the beginning of a revolution in river transportation. Now the river could be easily traveled in either direction and this, in turn, gave rise to great centers of commerce along its banks. Still early steamboat tended to be small and cramped. The great steamboats of legend would not appear until much later and would represent an effort of riverboat interests to combat the growing competition from railroads by stressing luxurious accommodations and services.

As it was, the early steam-powered craft brought about a quick end for keelboats on the Ohio. The smaller tributaries saw the keels remain in common use until the railroads and improved roadways made overland travel easier. On the other hand, Ohio River flatboats actually increased for a period of time, as the steamboat meant flat boaters would no longer have to return by the long and often dangerous overland routes.

Fountain and Roderick Perry operated one such transportation firm which continued using flatboats in the Ohio and Mississippi. Much of their trade was out of Covington and even as late as 1828, Fountain captained the flatboat *Bachelor's Joy* as it left Riddle's ferryboat landing [foot of Main Street – editor]. The craft was loaded with a cargo of tobacco, gunpowder, lard, pork and whisky – all products of the Covington area and all destined for downstream markets.⁶⁷

The steamboats, like all larger river craft, faced obstacles they could not overcome without some sort of aid. The obstacles were often the uncertainty of the river itself. Before completion of the Ohio system of dams in 1929, that stream was virtually useless for steamboats during a significant portion of the year. Extreme fluctuations in its volume were common and varied from roaring floods to times when the water was less than two feet deep. Often one extreme was closely followed by another, as in October 1908 when the river was less than three feet deep at Covington. Four months later, it soared to a depth of more than 54 feet.

Typical of the problems presented by prolonged periods of low water were those which occurred in the fall of 1838 when the Ohio water level was so low that transportation came to a virtual standstill. By September 1st only keelboats and flats could operate above Portsmouth and by mid-September the same condition prevailed throughout the Ohio's entire length.⁶⁸

By mid-October, there was enough rain to encourage area steamboats to attempt sailing downstream, only to find they could not cross the large sandbar at Warsaw, Kentucky. As a result, they exchanged passengers at that point with those boats coming upstream from Louisville, after which each craft reversed its route.⁶⁹

During the passenger exchanges, female passengers along with their luggage, were taken over the bar in flatboats which steamboats of that time often towed so they could carry extra fuel and excess luggage. The male passengers, on the other hand, were required to walk around the bar.⁷⁰

Being required to walk around sandbars though, was not uncommon for passenger during steam boating's earliest days, for low water frequently occurred and having passengers disembark would often lighten the boat enough for it to pass over the bar.⁷¹

Neither were the earliest steamboats "square-knuckled" as they were later and could easily be rolled or rocked back and forth. This motion proved to be an advantage when a boat run aground was attempting to free itself, or when a boat was attempting to scrape over a shallow place. At such times, the boat's captain simply required the passengers to move in unison from one side of the craft to the other to help in working his vessel over the obstruction.⁷²

During that 1838 drought, there were no boats to reach the local area from Pittsburgh until November 15th. The stream was open for but a few weeks. By mid-December, it was closed again from Portsmouth to Louisville, this time by ice. For seven months, from the first of August 1838 until the first of March 1839, there were no more than thirty days in which the Ohio was navigable for "steamboats fairly laden."⁷³

Ice presented an especially formidable problem and the river was frequently ice-bound during winter. Such a situation existed in late December 1852 when it froze over in nine days. It was estimated there were more than 100,000 people crossing and re-crossing on the ice between Covington and the Ohio side.⁷⁴

Riverboat interests invariably suffered severe losses when such freezes eventually broke and the ice began its downstream movement. The ice first broke early one morning but gorged after a brief time. It then broke again, crushing many flatboats and coal boats on the Ohio side and dumping some 150,000 bushes of coal to the river bottom.⁷⁵ Throughout the remainder of that day, ice carried scores of crushed rafts and flatboats past Covington in an awesome display of power.

One local writer described the gorge's first breaking:

*The movement of the ice presented a sublime spectacle. At first, unbroken, it rushed along in resistless power and with a peculiar rumbling noise, mingled with which could be heard the crash of boats on the Ohio shore and the shouts of spectators . . . Indeed, several persons were on the ice, crossing, when it started. These all reached the shore.*⁷⁶

Frozen tributaries could also provide their share of threats to vessels on the larger streams. An example of this was provided on February 24, 1856 when a Licking River ice gorge broke. The ice formed to a height of twenty feet at the river's mouth and when it finally broke, large chunks sped across the Ohio at a high rate of speed and sunk or severely damaged several steamboats moored there. Those included the *Yorktown*, *Madonna*, *Albertine*, *Bridge City*, *Salem*, *Crescent*, *Flag*, *Grapeshot*, and one that was under construction.⁷⁷ Many of the ruined craft were fully loaded that became a total loss. Even more tragically, nine Negro stevedores lost their lives while removing freight from one of the stricken vessels.⁷⁸

The steam vessels *Lancaster*, *Covington*, *Windsor* and the two *Champions*, No. 1 and 2, were moored at the Licking's mouth and several flatboats and coal barges tied-up immediately above them at the time the ice broke. One individual who witnessed the event said it occurred about 9 AM and went on:

The mass moved steadily onward, grinding the shore and crushing everything in its way, until coming in contact with the solid ice of the Ohio, it again gorged.

*About three miles of Licking ice thus moved down, and bringing within sight an immense mass which had accumulated at a gorge at Three-Mile.*⁷⁹

*At this time, the crowd of people on the banks numbered several thousand . . . All were anxious to witness the moving of the ice and all dreaded the consequences An unusual commotion in the water and the creaking of the boats gave warning of impending danger. Directly the cry resounded along the bank, "It's coming! It's coming!" The irresistible mass swept along with a crashing sound. Whatever offered resistance was either crushed or swept away! Heavy saw logs were tossed about as straws by the wind and the strong cables of the steamers parted like threads. The concussion with the Ohio ice was terrific. The moving ice from the Licking was scarcely arrested and steadily the restless mass ploughed its way through the heavy fields of Ohio ice, driving the latter with destructive force against the Cincinnati landing.*⁸⁰

*In the Licking, a coal barge was crushed and a loaded coal boat sank. Two barges, three coal tenders, three sand boats, three flats and a raft of saw logs were carried away.*⁸¹

The rapid running of the heavy ice made it impossible to cross the river with any degree of safety. On this occasion, an estimated 400 to 500 Covingtonians were stranded on the Ohio side where they were compelled to remain for the night.⁸²

Such disruptions to river traffic could seriously affect the economic life of river communities, as was the case locally during a severe January freeze in 1857. The freeze caught Covington coal dealers with their coal supplies at a low level and the river ice prevented boats from bringing additional supply.

Homeowners resorted to burning more and more wood and those fortunate enough to have a supply of coal resorted to placing explosives in their coal piles. This could not prevent theft of their fuel, but it did serve to give the thief cause to later regret raiding that particular coal pile.

The fuel shortage caused cancellation of many social affairs, public meetings, and virtually all week-night church services. Factories were forced into brief shutdowns, while school trustees closed all the town's schools and "suspended the teachers' salaries."⁸³

Covington also had its own particular problem in trying to keep the eastern end of its public landing area from washing away. At one time it was estimated there had been a gradual washing away at the Point of no less than 250 to 300 feet of riverfront measuring 100 feet in width.⁸⁴

To remedy the erosion was no easy matter and it undoubtedly was one reason for building the Covington-Newport Suspension Bridge further upstream than the site of the 1844-5 covered bridge.

In August 1852, city officials announced their decision to erect a massive stone retaining wall at the junction of the two rivers. It was hoped this would prevent further erosion of the banks.⁸⁵

The wall still stands, though much of it re-built and strengthened during the summer of 1979 as part of an "Historian's Walk" construction project. The walk was first proposed in 1976 by architect George Roth as part of Covington's observation of the nation's bi-centennial year.

Although the steamboat was the mid-nineteenth century king of transportation in the West, it was apparent to many that railroads would soon occupy that position.

THE STORY OF THE RAILROAD'S COMING to Covington is one of much indecision and many false starts. As early as January 27, 1830, a society with legislative corporate rights was formed to construct a rail line between Covington and Lexington.⁸⁶ Lexington interests decided it would be better to connect their city with the Ohio River at Louisville and killed the proposed Covington line by starting construction on a line to the Falls City. That decision was a serious mistake for the central Kentuckians, for the cost and problems involved in building across such terrain virtually assured their railroad would go no further than the steep hills and cliffs at Frankfort.

Also during 1830, E. S. Thomas of Charleston, South Carolina attended a meeting at Cincinnati where he proposed a rail line from here to Charleston. A committee, including Newport's General James Taylor and Covington's Dr. John W. King, was formed to foster the project, but it took the Kentucky Legislature until February 1836 to grant the proposed road a right-of-way through the state.⁸⁷ Even then, the right-of-way was given grudgingly and only after lengthy proceedings in which the project's sponsors were forced to make major concessions to various Louisville interests.

Covingtonians were jubilant and on February 25th evening, celebrated along gaily decorated streets illuminated by special candles and torches wrapped in flannel and paper. Bell were rung, bonfires blazed and cannon boomed.⁸⁸

The following June 27th council voted to appropriate \$100 to send a Covington representative to the July 4th "Railroad Convention" at Knoxville.⁸⁹

During the next few years there was little or no progress made toward the railroad's actual construction, yet townspeople maintained their high interest in the project. As late as January 1838, a group of them met at the local Methodist church and adopted a resolution urging local members of the state general assembly to give the project their full support.⁹⁰

The group, headed by Mayor Moses V. Grant, further resolved the law makers "vote for and use all proper and honorable means to procure passage of the Bill now pending . . . granting or extending banking privileges to the . . . Rail Road Company."⁹¹

Louisville interests however, continued to be extremely fearful their city would lose much of its trade if such a line were built. Those interests wielded considerable power with the state legislature and due in large measure to their opposition the line was never built.

This setback proved to be one of many which Covington would ultimately receive from parochial interests downstate and with little or no protestations from Northern Kentucky's own representatives.

Many surveys were made for the proposed road and in fact a small section was built from Charleston to Spartanburg, South Carolina. Today, that section is part of the Southern Railway System.⁹²

One proposal eventually did succeed though – a rail line from the mouth of the Licking through Lexington and on to Paris, Kentucky. The *Licking & Lexington Railroad* was incorporated for that purpose on March 1, 1847. The railroad's management did not specifically name Covington as the line's northern terminal and partly because of that, lost much of the support of the city's citizens.

In 1849, the *Licking & Lexington* was re-chartered as the *Covington & Lexington*. Support was now forthcoming from Covington citizens who seemed to regard the proposed line as their very own possession.

In other parts of the state, it seemed an alarm of danger had been sounded. Maysville interests were also attempting to build a rail line to the south and felt their project might now be endangered; other Kentucky communities which had been surpassed in size by Covington, began to express a certain amount of envy at Covington's rapid growth and increasing wealth and its quick rise to a position as the state's second largest city. Lastly there was more concern among some Louisville interests their town's position as Kentucky's prime city may somehow be threatened.

A number of newsmen in other Kentucky cities wrote disparaging accounts concerning Covington's proposed railroad and certain politicians from other parts of the state attempted to obstruct Covington's enthusiasm for the proposed line. In fact, this only served to strengthen the town's determination to have its ambitions fulfilled.

In November 1850, the editor of the *Covington Journal* ably replied to Covington's critics when he printed a rejoinder to an editorial appearing in the *Maysville Eagle*. He wrote:

There is in certain quarters of Kentucky, a bitter and narrow-minded prejudice against Covington. This prejudice, which has existed for years, had its origins in a feeling of jealousy. It is of that kind we sometimes see in an individual, who supposes he can only rise by the downfall of his neighbor and acts accordingly. This prejudice has been fanned and kept alive by local interests and is always resorted to as an unfailing resource, when argument fails, and all other means are exhausted to retard the rapid advance of Covington in population, wealth and improvement. In all demands made of the Legislature for enactments to meet the wants created by the growth of the city and county, this prejudice has to be met and overcome. In fact, until within a twelve month past, it was in many cases insurmountable. It is said Covington is an outlet for runaway slaves of all northern Kentucky . . . Again, it is said, that Covington is, in fact, a part of Cincinnati – identified in interest and feeling with that city. More recently, someone, with a little more liberality, admits that Covington is in Kentucky but contends it is a mere lodging place for business men of Cincinnati.

Despite this prejudice and these sneers, Covington has gone on in the career of prosperity. She can now point out within her borders the largest pork-packing establishment in America; two rolling mills – one of them the most successful establishment of the kind in the Union; her bagging and cotton factories; her saw mills and flouring mills; her planning machines; her ship building; her foundries; unequalled in the western country; her common

schools, munificently endowed; her numerous churches, in which her 10,000 inhabitants worship; and taking her position as the second city of the Commonwealth, laugh to scorn the sickly efforts to retard her rapid progress.

*We need not say that the feelings of jealousy and envy to which we have alluded are without just foundations; nor, that they are unworthy to be entertained by any liberal-minded Kentuckian. Covington is a part and parcel of Kentucky; her people have a common interest in the glory and prosperity of the State they love – whose laws and institutions, they obey and uphold. Her prosperity **ought** to be a source of rejoicing to every citizen of the good old Commonwealth.*

*Our sister city Maysville is making a mighty effort to construct a railroad to Lexington . . . In this we rejoice, as we have heretofore rejoiced when Maysville furnished any evidence of progress. In our opinion, the able editor of the **Eagle** is entitled to no small share of credit for producing the present flattering prospect by his vigorous and repeated efforts to arouse his fellow townsmen to the importance of the undertaking . . . But we are compelled to add, that in his **zeal**, he has lost his **discretion**. **He** has considered it necessary, in prosecuting his appeals in behalf of the work that ought to succeed on its own merits, to attempt to make capital out of the prejudice against Covington and to retail the second-hand sneers of less intelligent men. We respectfully suggest to our friend of the **Eagle** that such a course is unbecoming of him; it is unworthy of his talents and his reputation. If he believes that but one of the two roads can be built, let him, with his accustomed ability, advocate the Maysville road and at least attempt to show the superior advantages it possesses. If the people of Maysville really desire the question to assume that shape, and the **Eagle** shall so present it, we will endeavor to say a word – feeble though it be – for Covington.*

*The editor of the **Eagle** has placed himself in a false position, or he will not admit that Maysville can grow only by the downfall of Covington; nay, we opine, he will not even concede that Covington stands in the way of Maysville. Then may we ask him, in all sincerity, what he expects to gain by understating the importance of Covington and by the sneering remarks about it being only a lodging place for Cincinnati, or a mere channel through which the Queen City is furnished with beefsteaks? If it be true that Covington has no trade, no business, no population of her own and that her road, when brought to completion with the Maysville road, will sink to the insignificance of a county road, why in the name of all that is reasonable, should the people of Maysville be frightened out of their propriety when Covington commences the unimportant improvement!*

In relation to these matters, Covington seeks no controversy – indeed would gladly avoid it. The people of Covington entertain no feeling of ill will or jealousy . . . Why should they? They believe that both roads should be built and each be beneficial and productive. For themselves, they ask no special favors. All they want is fair play and equal rights. At the same time, they will repel every false accusation or unjust imputation and rebuke that narrow-minded spirit that finds consolation in fanning an unjust prejudice, or in retailing the witless sneers of distanced competition.⁹³

This was not the first time, nor would it be the last, Covington and the Covington area would have to content with unreasonable opposition to local improvements, especially those improvements which involved state financial aid. Local taxpayers have traditionally felt their area to be unduly discriminated against in such matters, whether it be in canalization of the Licking, construction of highways, or aid to education.

In the case of their railroad, Covington people were not to be denied. In 1851, Alexander L. Greer, who had been selected the railroad's president pro-tem, went to New York to effect the sale of \$100,000 worth of City of Covington bonds. The bonds had been issued to pay the city's subscription to the railroad company's capital stock.⁹⁴

In order to expedite the bond sales, Greer issued a circular giving Covington's financial growth picture as follows:⁹⁵

	<u>1845</u>	<u>1846</u>
Real Estate Valuation:	\$1,065,245	\$1,420,962
Population	3,567	4,030
Revenue	\$5,530	\$6,042

	<u>1849</u>	<u>1850</u>
<i>Real Estate Valuation</i>	\$2,759,837	\$4,408,918
<i>Population</i>	7,014	9,010
<i>Revenue</i>	\$17,865	\$34,000

In July 1851, workers began laying 78 miles of track to Paris and the man who had been Covington's first mayor, Mortimer M. Benton, was the *C&L's* first president. Throughout the railroad's construction, Benton saw to it that periodic excursions were run to the work sites in order for the general public to see and judge the progress being made.

The crews laboring at track laying were largely Irish and in November 1852m they took time out at a point between Covington and Falmouth to stage one of the most gigantic donnybrooks ever witnessed in Northern Kentucky.

On December 14, 1852, the *C&L's* first locomotive, the 20 ton *Covington*, was ferried across the Ohio from Cincinnati's Harkness & Company factory. The engine's arrival was greeted by shouting crowds of men and boys as it was towed through town and placed on the road's tracks. The locomotive, which was acquired to haul work crews and construction material, made its first run of just three blocks distance.⁹⁶

Three days before appearance of the railroad engine, it was announced the *C&L* had awarded a five-year contract for the manufacture of all its cars to the new Hart & Dryer Car Works, located on the banks of the Licking at what would later be the eastern end of 17th Street.⁹⁷

Work on the *C&L* moved rapidly ahead and in March 1853, another engine, the *Colonel Morgan*, arrived from the Harkness & Company plant and in June was followed by delivery of the *Bourbon*, this one manufactured by the Portland Locomotive Company at Portland, Maine.⁹⁸

The *Colonel Morgan* was named in memory of John Sanderson Morgan, a former company official who succumbed to cholera on June 17th the previous year. He was a native of Nicholas County and served in the state General Assembly before migrating to Covington in 1845.⁹⁹

Morgan was an early champion of railroad expansion in Kentucky and had been instrumental in the *C&L* receiving its state charter.¹⁰⁰

The line was soon ready to commence operations and on August 24th, local public railroad travel began with regularly scheduled round-trip service between Covington, DeMossville and Grassy Creek in Pendleton County. The train ran daily except Sunday and was met at the southern end by a stagecoach which linked it with Falmouth.¹⁰¹

Two days later, another locomotive, the *Falmouth*, arrived at the Covington wharf from the Portland company. Another boat carrying three locomotives for Indiana's *New Albany & Salem Railroad* was also docked at Covington landing.¹⁰²

In October, two more Portland-built engines, the *Harrison* and the *Pendleton*, were added to the *C&L's* rolling stock and on the 17th of that month rail service was initiated as far as the Pendleton County seat of Falmouth.¹⁰³

Covington was prospering as a manufacturing center and now it seemed also destined to become one of the pioneer cities of the West in locomotive building. The *C&L* would need additional locomotives and other equipment and Alexander Greer, in charge of the company's purchasing, saw no reason why he should not be the one to fill those needs. In 1852-3, he organized the Covington Locomotive Works.

ALEXANDER GREER ACQUIRED CONSIDERABLE wealth and influence since first coming to Covington in 1818. He was a native of County Down, Ireland and over the years had seen literally thousands of his countrymen follow his example, migrating to the New World. Between 1820 and 1850, Irish accounted for 42.3 % of all immigrants to America and during the 1850s, would represent another 35.2%.

Covington was the destination of a large number of Irish, who found the city had an almost insatiable demand for their labor. Earlier arrivals from the Emerald Isle welcomed them with open arms and fellow Irish such as Greer helped provide jobs they were seeking.

Soon, the entire area around the locomotive works took on a distinct Irish ambience as the immigrants quickly filled and even overflowed that part of town. It was the same neighborhood that James Riddle once hoped to develop into the Gaelic community of Hibernia.

Greer and his employees developed good labor relations and the wages he paid represented the highest many had ever known. This led to some to development rather free-spending habits – a form of behavior standing in sharp contrast to the thrift usually associated with the other major immigrant group of the area, the Germans.

This contrast came to be another point of contention between the two groups. The Germans stereotyped the Irish as being little more than wasteful spendthrifts, while the Irish viewed the Germans as the “damn Dutch,” and scab laborers, now expanded to include ridiculing them as being “tight with a penny,” and even miserly.

Greer’s new company, which he staffed quickly with large numbers of Irish, was located on the north side of Third Street and extended east and west of Philadelphia Street. Its large complex of shop-yards contained a dozen or so buildings, the largest of which was a five-story stone structure.

The plant was hardly finished when it received orders for ten locomotives. Two of the engines were for Ohio’s *Little Miami Railroad*; four were for use in Indiana and the other four designated for the *Covington & Lexington*.

Business prospects looked so good to Greer, he soon announced plans to also enter the railway car manufacturing business.¹⁰⁴ This would add to Covington’s burgeoning rail-connected industries as the Hart & Dryer Car Works was already in full operation.

In March 1854, the rail line took delivery of two small engines for use in road work, the *Pony* and the *Mule*. Both were manufactured by Massachusetts’ Boston Locomotive Works.¹⁰⁵

The first complete locomotive from the Greer factory was put in service in April and like the C&L’s first engine, was named appropriately, the *Covington*. The other three engines Greer completed for C&L’s order were the *Cynthiana*, the *Paris*, and the *Lexington*. They were finished and placed in operation in June, July and August respectively.¹⁰⁶

On April 29th, the *Covington* made its trial run over the C&L tracks. The engine, judged by “railroad experts” to be “in all respects one of the best engines ever placed upon a railroad track,” was decorated with a profusion of flags and a large wreath of flowers placed on its front. Its destination was Boyd’s and back.¹⁰⁷

Officials of Greer Company declared a company holiday and together with their employees and a brass band, marched in procession to the depot to board the train for the ceremonial run.¹⁰⁸

The townspeople were in a jubilant mood for the occasion and they watched the new train pull out of the station on its scheduled time. At Falmouth, the excursionists caught up with the regular train which was sidetracked to allow the faster and highly decorated *Covington* to pass.¹⁰⁹

That evening, Greer’s locomotive company played host to all its employees and their guests at a lavish banquet held at the *Magnolia House*.¹¹⁰ An early writer described Greer’s company and the *Covington*’s first trip as follows:

“COVINGTON” LOCOMOTIVE – TRIP TO “BOYD’S

It is known to our readers that the Covington & Lexington railroad is now opened 55 miles – within 5 miles of Cynthiana, county seat of Harrison. At the invitation of the proprietors of the Covington Locomotive Factory, we took, on Saturday, a trip to “Boyd’s,” 50 miles. The occasion of the party was the first trip of the Covington – the first locomotive built in Covington.

The Covington Locomotive Works have just got into operation and are on a very large scale, calculated to do an immense business. They have gone on so quietly that few, we believe, know really what has been done; most persons will be surprised by the result accomplished. The Covington Locomotive Company consists, we believe, of A. L. Greer, of Covington; D. A. Powell, of this city; Mr. Fagin (Feger), machinist for the Reading RR; Mr. Finch and two other gentlemen, making six partners with capital of \$500,000. The works are built on the most extensive scale, the principal building being of stone and 200 feet in length. They now employ 700, which is equivalent to the employment and support of 3,500 persons. Mr. Fagin (Feger) is superintendent and is an accomplished machinist. When under full headway, this establishment will get out a locomotive each week, having ten constantly on hand in construction.

*The Covington, whose maiden work was begun on Saturday, is a full certificate, both in work and appearance, to the skill and success of the Covington Factory. It is a fine, strong, handsome engine.*¹¹¹

Workmen continued laying track at such a rapid pace that the railroad was able to make its first scheduled run into Cynthiana on May 22nd.¹¹² The C&L operated an express train which left Covington at 8:00 AM daily and arrived at Cynthiana at 11:50 AM. The return express left Cynthiana at 1:30 PM and reached Covington at 5:20 PM.¹¹³

The express was so called because its only stops were at Benton, DeMossville, Butler, Falmouth, Callenville, Boyd's Station, Berry's Station, Robinson's Station and Garnett's Station! Passengers for places other than those rode the accommodation train which left Covington at 3:15 PM and arrived at its destination at 7:40 in the evening. It left Cynthiana on its north-bound trip at 6 o'clock each morning and arrived in Covington at 10:10 AM.¹¹⁴

The accommodation train brought many shoppers into Covington, as the railroad stressed the fact passengers could "leave home in the morning, pass five hours in Covington ... and return home before dark."¹¹⁵

Those passengers going from Covington to Lexington rode the express to Cynthiana, had dinner, and boarded a horse-drawn omnibus to Paris, where they arrived at 4:00 PM. This allowed a brief rest before boarding the five o'clock train of the *Maysville & Lexington Railroad* which would put them in Lexington one hour later.¹¹⁶ North-bound express passengers could leave Lexington at seven each morning and arrive in Covington at 5:20 PM.¹¹⁷

The *C&L*'s first regularly scheduled freight trains ran south on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and north from Cynthiana on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.¹¹⁸

Citizens living along the railroad's route were jubilant that now it was possible to travel between the state's ventral portion and its northern metropolitan area in less than ten and one-half hours. Accordingly, the citizens of Harrison County decided to honor the *C&L*'s opening by playing host to what they called a "Great Railroad Barbeque." The event was scheduled for June 8th and was attended by citizens from throughout central and northern Kentucky. The *C&L* canceled all regular runs that day and ran two special, half-fare trains to the Cynthiana celebration. They left Covington at six and seven o'clock in the morning and returned that afternoon at three and four PM.¹¹⁹

Like so many other public events of that time, the "Great Railroad Barbeque" featured the customary brass bands and a host of speech makers. Among the seemingly tireless speakers were Kentucky's Governor Lazarus Powell, ex-governor Thomas Metcalfe, ex-governor James T. Morehead, future governor John W. Stevenson, Indiana's Governor Wright, John W. Finnell, L. Desha, Leslie Combs and scores of others. Despite all the speeches, the event was considered an outstanding success.¹²⁰

By the end of September, the *C&L* tracks reached Paris where they were linked to those of the *Maysville & Lexington* thus providing direct rail service between Covington and Lexington for the first time.

Paris marked its link-up with Covington by staging a great celebration, which the *Covington Journal* remarked: *Leave Covington after breakfast and arrive in Lexington before dinner time! Think of that!* Even Covington's Hammond House, now owned by John Battersby, changed its name to the Railroad House.¹²¹

The first passenger train from Covington arrived in Paris on September 24th and a few days later a regular schedule was announced. The south-bound express left daily at 7:00 AM, arrived in Paris at 11:30 AM and in Lexington at 1:00 PM. The fare was set at \$2.00 to Cynthiana, \$2.40 to Paris and \$3.00 to Lexington.¹²²

Clayton and Grant's Omnibus Line announced it would call for all *C&L* passengers at their homes and transport them directly to the railroad terminal at Seventh and Washington, if prior direction were left at its office. This service was offered to all parts of Covington, Newport and Cincinnati.¹²³ [This can be considered the first taxi service – editor]

In November, a grim tragedy occurred when a *C&L* locomotive struck and beheaded Frederick G. Gedge, one of the city's more outstanding civic and business leaders. The tragedy, which happened between Ninth & Tenth Streets, shocked the entire community and on the day of Gedge's funeral all Covington businesses closed in tribute to his memory.¹²⁴

The new railroad was showing every sign of being a success and in August 1855, put two more engines in service. Both, the *Fayette* and *Kenton*, were manufactured at Cincinnati's Moore and Richardson Plant, successor to the Harkness Company.¹²⁵

On November 1st that year, *C&L* president Benton noted in his report at the sixth annual stockholders' meeting that "The passenger trains have been regular and though they have transported near 200,000 passengers, not one has sustained the least injury."¹²⁶

Three weeks later, on November 24th, a new post office, Morning View, had been established at *C&L*'s Mullins' Station in the southern part of the county. George H. Mullins was appointed postmaster.¹²⁷

Also at that time, the Covington Locomotive Works on Third Street began to openly show signs of severe financial difficulties and was soon shut down. The company had long ago diversified its production however, and by it closing, was manufacturing cannon as well as more traditional line of railroad equipment. One of the company's cannon was acquired by the Covington Fencibles. One of many local military companies and used in observing that year's Fourth of July. The Fencibles, who celebrated the holiday with a spirited parade through town, fired the cannon at sunrise, at noon and at sunset.¹²⁸

On December 15th, Cincinnati, A.D. Powell acquired the shut-down firm at a master commissioner's sale for \$100,000.¹²⁹ Powell did not complete the transaction however, and a week later it was back in the hands of the commissioner.

Finally, on April 4, 1856, a partnership headed by Daniel Wolff, operator of the Newport Rolling Mill, acquired the defunct locomotive works for \$70,000. This was \$180,000 less than the property's original cost.¹³⁰

The plant was renamed and as the Kentucky Locomotive and Machine Works expanded operations to include general foundry work and manufacture of boilers and engines for steamboats.¹³¹

The first locomotive turned out under the company's new owners was the *M.M. Benton*.¹³² That was May 1857 and in August, the *Benton* was followed by the *Samuel J. Walker*, named for the *C&L*'s treasurer. Both were freight engines.

All seemed to be going well, when suddenly on August 13, 1859, the supposedly prospering *Covington and Lexington* was called into court on a charge of defaulting on the interest on its bonds. On October 5th, the company went up for auction and was sold at a Fayette County commissioner's sale for \$2,125,000. Covington's William H. Gedge, made the successful bid.¹³³ The road was reorganized and in 1863 emerged from its legal entanglement as the *Kentucky Central Railroad*.

Benton, as might be expected, no longer held the presidency, but was succeeded by Pennsylvania-born John Talbot Levis. Levis, a descendant of French Huguenot immigrants, was an active civic and industrial leader who was associated at one time or another with such enterprises as the Covington Cotton factory and Licking Rolling Mill. He held office as a town councilman and was a prime mover in bridging the Licking. Levis also served on the local branch of the Northern Bank of Kentucky's board of directors from the time of its organization until the founding of the First National Bank becoming a director of that institution.¹³⁴

It is difficult to over-estimate the impact the railroad's advent held for Covington. Even the very location of the town's business district was due in large measure to the railroad. Initially, it seemed Covington's commercial district, like those of other river towns, would be at or near the riverfront. In nearby Ohio, there was an older and more firmly established competitor for the river trade and though at times there were as many as a dozen or more steamboats tied up at Covington, the town's riverfront was never as active as its neighbor's on the Ohio side.

Even so, as late as just two years before the beginning of laying *C&L* tracks, much of the local business life centered about today's Court and Park Place. In fact, Park Place – then, Lower Market – was still considered the principal business street, closely followed by Market Space [now Court Street between 3rd & 4th].

The commercial activity in that neighborhood, along with the town's multi-lingual background, prompted one 1849 writer to note:

*The Covington Markets are now well supplied (and are) equal to any in this country. Early in the morning, the Lower Market Space especially, is a scene of bustling, crowning life. The throng, with our mixed population, in chaffering and buying, makes it a sort of miniature Babel.*¹³⁵

The big impetus to the location and growth of Covington's downtown district in its present location came when the railroad terminated its line at Pike and Washington. There, all north-bound shipments had to be broken down for trans-shipment to Ohio by wagon (and ferry - editor). There too, passengers alighted to have their needs for goods and services met by an ever-increasing number of stores, restaurants and hotels.

Pike Street and Madison Avenue were both well-served by several inter-city omnibus lines which brought in large numbers of shoppers from nearby towns and farms. Some of these lines had fare as low as a penny a mile. Such low fares, according to one observer, "is produced by competition and is certainly cheap enough."¹³⁶

Factors as these, along with nearby convergence of Banklick Pike and the Lexington Turnpike and the filling of a deep ravine along Seventh Street between Madison and Scott in September 1849, made the neighborhood ideal for commercial growth.¹³⁷

That was just four years after a subscription drive had been held to raise funds for filling the ground on Seventh between Madison and Washington Streets and for erecting a market house on the site. The ordinance allowing for this was passed on June 19, 1845.^{138 139}

Those who raised funds for the Seventh Street project were H.C. Watkins, Frederick G. Gedge, William E. Ashbrook, John Wolf, and G. Carpenter, while W.H. Burgess, James G. Arnold and Hiram Bond acted as superintendents of the actual filling and grading of the new market space.¹⁴⁰

Some enthused individuals were evidently not too concerned over the source of fill material for such projects and this prompted councilmen to make it a crime to remove "any earth, stone or gravel from any street, alley, market space or any of the public grounds." Penalty for each offence was set as a fine of \$5.¹⁴¹

Another large hollow existed on Scott Street between Sixth and Seventh and on July 30, 1846, council asked for bids to install a culvert at the site and for grading of Scott from Sixth to the town's corporation line.¹⁴²

Covington at the time contained an unusually large number of such hollows and deep ponds, most having long-since been filled and paved over. One such pond at Third and Madison had been ordered drained in June 1844.¹⁴³

In addition to such improvements, the newly-formed Madison Street Maple Society embarked on what would prove to be a long-time successful project of planting and caring for hundreds of maple trees along the town's principal streets.

The decade in which the railroad first came to Covington was one of relative prosperity. Most Covingtonians had money to spend and were receptive to blandishments of the various traveling shows and circuses.

THE AMERICAN CIRCUS, which played here in June 1850, boasted a "mammoth Water Proof Pavilion, capable of safely and comfortably seating 3,000 persons." Circus-loving Covingtonians filled every seat. One of that show's earlier Covington appearances had been a two-day engagement in July 1841 when its owners, Noah M. Ludlow and Solomon F. Smith, declared:

This unrivalled company of equestrians and superb stud of well trained horses would also feature MAST. DIAMOND, the unsurpassed and unapproachable delineator of Ethiopian characters and negro dancing.

Admission was 50 cents for adults and 25 for children.¹⁴⁴

Traveling minstrel show were exceedingly popular at that time and even played at Covington's city hall. Typical of such shows was the Empire Minstrels which made a two-day appearance at city hall in December 1849. Admission to each of the performances was 30 cents.

On April 25, 1851 the combined Raymond & Company and the Van Amburgh & Company MENAGERIES came to town and for the admission price of 25 cents for adults and 15 for children, presented a show "consisting of all the rare animals now extant, numbering, in all, over **150 different specimens.**" The show itself was headed by "MR. VAN AMBURGH, The most renowned of all lion conquerors." In time, Van Amburgh came to use Covington as the winter quarters for his show.¹⁴⁵

Virtually all of America's great circuses, including such shows as Crane & Company's GREAT ORIENTAL CIRCUS, found Covington one of their more profitable stops. One of them, Dan Rice's "Great Hippodrome and Menagerie" paid a high tribute to the community when it played a special engagement here on June 7, 1853.

Rice had always been well received in Covington and had developed a great liking for the community. To show his appreciation for past receptions, he wrote Mayor Bushrod Foley sating he would donate the entire proceeds of that afternoon's show to the city. Covington, Rice said, could use the money in any public way the mayor saw fit.¹⁴⁶

WATCHING THE THOROUGHBREDS run at *Burns' Pasture*, or more correctly the *Queen City Race Track*, was another favorite local pastime. This track, not to be confused with a later one of the same name in Newport, was located in present-day Ludlow near where the Ideal Supply Company now stands. Its infield was about 200 feet southwest of the former St. Boniface Church and was a favored grazing place for cows and horses belonging to Mike Burns, a nearby resident – hence the byname of *Burns' Pasture*.

The race course, owned by John L. Cassidy and described as being "a beautiful one-mile track," succeeded in attracting racing fans from throughout the nation.

Not everyone considered the activities connected with horse racing to be cause for civic pride. Covington, despite its general and continuing reputation for having a tolerant attitude toward gambling and drinking, has also consistently displayed a surprisingly strong sense of the puritanical and the Ludlow track came in for its share of criticism.

On one occasion, in 1849, the *Covington Journal* editorialized against the race track and its patrons:

*The Queen City Course, as our Covington readers very well know . . . is patronized by Cincinnati loafers and gamblers, but located on the **Kentucky side of the river**, just below our city because this **course** would not be tolerated by the people on the other side . . .*¹⁴⁷

*By the way, we are told an entire week is shortly to be devoted to the sport peculiar to the course. We advise the heads of families living on Third Street (the thoroughfare taken by many going to and returning from the course) to keep their children off the street during the week, if they do not want them run over.*¹⁴⁸

Neither did the *Journal's* editor approve of the track management nor patrons referring to the racing plant location as Covington. Out-of-state newspaper announcements such as the following, caused the local editor to fairly bristle with resentment: "*This afternoon . . . one of the most animated trotting matches will come off over the Queen City course, in Covington, that has occurred since the opening of the track.*"¹⁴⁹

The *Journal's* editor could sometimes display a startling degree of inconsistency in his stand against gambling. Betting on election outcomes was a reasonably common activity in Covington at that time and it was not unknown for the newspaper to willingly serve as intermediary for those wishing to make such bets. Such was the case when the *Journal* announced in its editorial column what "*A responsible gentleman . . . authorizes us to say that he will bet from \$100 to \$1,000*" on the outcome of the ensuing election. The newspaper went on to notify its readers: "*Gentlemen disposed to invest can leave their names at this office.*"¹⁵⁰

The Queen City Race Track's owner, John L. Cassady, continued receiving both praise and condemnation for his activities, all of it depending upon the personal convictions of the ones doing the praising or condemning. His critics even managed to have him brought before an 1853 term of the Kenton County Circuit Court at Independence. There he was fined \$400 on a charge of permitting gambling on the race track grounds!¹⁵¹

Cassady thought the whole affair bordered on the ridiculous and succeeded in obtaining a new trial. This one resulted in another conviction and this time the fine was \$500!¹⁵²

Racing meets at Cassady's track often included trotting events as well as thoroughbred races. An announcement for the fall meet of 1852 was typical for such affairs and stated the trotting races to be run in mile heats; would begin October 13th, while the running races would start November 1st. The running races were scheduled with interruption on November 5th for a special "Trotting Sweepstakes" to be run on three-mile heats. He continued:

There are three stables of horses now on their way here, from Detroit < Chicago and the Lake region. There are also expected a stable from each of the following named places: Pittsburgh, Wheeling, Columbus, Dayton, Lexington and Louisville, beside several horses owned in and about Cincinnati and Covington ... In addition . . . I will, at any time as long as the weather permits, give liberal purses for trotting, pacing and running horses to contend for when considered equally matched.

*Jno. L. Cassady*¹⁵³

The weather that fall was extremely bad, forcing postponement of the meet's last ten days until November 8th or 9th. On November 7th, a Cincinnati reporter commented:

*We see by the advertisement that the horses will be called up at 2 ½ o'clock and 28 mile heats will undoubtedly be divided. It will be good policy for those who wish to see all the sport to be on hand early. The proprietor, John L. Cassady deserves credit for his exertions to render the sports of the turf deserving the patronage of a liberal public and we hope his efforts will be rewarded by an abundant return in the shape of "material aid."*¹⁵⁴

*A fine steamer will run the foot of Main Street to the track, from 12 to 3 o'clock.*¹⁵⁵

The "fine steamer" mentioned was Amos Shinkle's *Champion*, built in 1851 and for a fare of ten cents, transported racing fans to a grassy dock area near the track. From there it was but a short, pleasant stroll through a park-like setting to the race course itself. At the track entrance, a sign proclaimed: **Gate ticket with privilege of the stand: 50 cents; quarter stretch badges: \$1.**

On June 23, 1851, the track became the scene of a memorable hoax to ever be played in Kentucky. Billed as "The Great Buffalo Hunt," the event promised to be a show in which wild buffalo would be pursued and slain by war chieftains of the Ottoo Indian Tribe, all of whom would be mounted on "almost untrained horses brought by them from their native prairies."¹⁵⁶

The show's promoters were J. H. Wood and assistant W. H. Crisp – both of whom were thoroughly experienced showmen. Wood operated the Cincinnati Museum at the northeast corner of Cincinnati's Fifth and Walnut Streets. He boasted of having "500,000 curiosities" on display" there.¹⁵⁷

Crisp, a "conscienceless fellow," aided Wood in the museum's operation. For this presentation, he turned all his attention to insuring the buffalo hunt financial success.¹⁵⁸ The event was given widespread advance publicity and, according to one Ohio newsman created "*the greatest sensation we have ever known in this section of the country.*"¹⁵⁹

Another newsman, equally taken in by the show's promoters, declared: "*It appears to us as the most exciting exhibition which has ever taken place.*"¹⁶¹

The enthused newsman went on to describe the Indians said to be scheduled for the exposition as being experienced hunters. He declared:

*The Ottoe Indians are matchless for their unerring skill with their peculiarly formed bows and arrows. They will shoot at ninety feet and hit five cent pieces twice out of three times. They will ride without saddles . . . and will, while hanging by their legs with their heads under the bellies of their horses exhibit feats of skill with their bow and arrows more marvelous than any ever dreamed of by the most renowned circus rider who ever lived. The public may look forward to ... a day worthy of being remembered.*¹⁶²

Little did the newsman realize how prophetic his words were when he predicted the day would be "worthy of being remembered." The show and its cast served as popular topics of conversation for many years and even today there are local families in which tales of the "Great Buffalo Hunt" are part of their family lore.

The show's promoters created an exceptional round of excitement when they announced a standing wager of \$3,000 their "monstrous and ferocious" bull buffalo could defeat and kill any lion, tiger or leopard that could be produced to fight him.¹⁶³

On June 20th, a buffalo was paraded through Cincinnati streets in order to stir up more interest and the animal on parade did prove to be a temperamental creature. As the procession passed the corner of Fifth and Walnut Streets, "an Irishman, as bullheaded as the bull himself," reached out and touched the animal. The startled animal thereupon lunged at the man, later identified as Thomas Faney editor of the *Ohio Teacher*, and severely gored him.¹⁶⁴

The animal also charged a small girl. The child was tossed atop a nearby wagon wheel, "but the horn being entangled in her clothes," she was dragged back and forth under the buffalo's hooves and severely injured.¹⁶⁵

The two promoters couldn't have been more delighted, for this only added to the mounting excitement. Talk of the impending spectacular spread for miles throughout the tri-state area and even as far as Illinois and (present) West Virginia. Older generations were sure they could vicariously re-live the exciting days of their youth merely by attending the show, while younger generations, unless they had visited the trans-Mississippi region, hoped to see things they had only read or heard about. Buffalo hunts, wild horses and savage Indians were the all-absorbing topics of conversation.

One newsman wrote:

*What could be more delightful for the young than to see realized the athletic games and noble spirits of a race disappearing from the earth. The plains of Kentucky will once more, perhaps for the last time, be trampled by the buffalo and imprinted by the foot of the red man and the hills resound with the yell of the savage in the moment of victory . . . Thousands may never again have an opportunity of witnessing such a scene.*¹⁶⁶

Finally the great day arrived. Scores of steam ferries and pleasure boats, each flying at its masthead or bow, a flag bearing the inscription THE GREAT BUFFALO HUNT, docked at the Ludlow site. Throngs of eager people surged throughout the area and sought vantage points on rooftops, fences and in trees.

The *Covington Journal* reported that in order to reach the track. "Almost every mode of conveyance was resorted to: steamboats and omnibuses, buggies and carriage, carts and drays, and Shank's mare were brought into requisition. All sorts of people were there – church members and gamblers, loafers and ladies, the halt and the lame, the young and the old."¹⁶⁷

One of those attending later wrote of the scene:

*A tremendous rush was, of course, made for the "stand," for which an extra half-dollar was cheerfully handed over; and from this elevated position a number of the other sex were seen ready, with waving handkerchiefs, to join in the acclamations which awaited the nimble Ottoes.*¹⁶⁸

A large number of men in attendance came armed with revolvers. This was considered a wise precaution, for it was commonly feared the wild buffalo might make a charge at the audience.¹⁶⁹

Soon the “nimble Ottoo war chieftains” took the field – what a disappointment they proved to be! They totaled six in number and were recognized by many of the spectators as being from a theatrical group then playing in Cincinnati. Their “almost trained” mounts were six heavy work-horses that brought roars of laughter from the surprisingly good-natured crowd.¹⁷⁰

It was the release of the “monstrous and ferocious” buffalo that brought the greatest guffaws. The animal was the one Crisp had brought in from a farm near Columbus and was securely tied in a prone position on the bed of a large dray.¹⁷¹

The crowd watched nervously as showman Wood dramatically scrambled for safety after releasing the animal’s bonds. The great shaggy creature rose, shook himself and slowly ambled to him was a more restful spot. Instead of making a charge at the “noble red men,” the docile beast promptly laid down in the cool grass.¹⁷² The crowd hooted and jeered at the uproariously funny sight. They clapped, yelled and jeered but most laughed, for they realized how thoroughly they had been taken in.

The next day, a newspaper reported:

*A RICH FARCE – The richest farce of the season was the “great Buffalo Hunt” . . . When the Marshal of the occasion gave the order to loose the **wild** animal – the Indians being mounted on the swiftest kind of **dray-horses** – the crowd swayed back and broke for timber and fences. The animal was soon loosened from a dray to which he had been considerably tied, to save the life and limb of the anxious spectators, which seemed to annoy and excite him excessively, for he lay right down!*¹⁷³

The crowd retained its amazing sense of humor and called for the show to go on. Spectators called for the Indians to take up the hunt but the work horses refused to get any closer to the buffalo than 30 or 40 yards. Nevertheless, “the infuriated animal rose, shook his shaggy mane, looked about him fiercely and started off for a mud puddle [and] coolly laid down in water up to his eyes.”¹⁷⁴

Again, the crowd hooted and yelled, prompting employees of the show to fasten a rope about the buffalo’s horns and pull him from the pond. Two men then mounted the animal’s back and rode him a short distance from the water, all to the crowd’s delight, which by then was sending up a good natured cry of “Oh what a hunt – oh what a buffalo – oh what a humbug!”¹⁷⁵

Everyone wanted to see the show through if for no other reason than to see how complete the “humbug would be. “In this, the *Covington Journal* declared:

*Nobody was disappointed. The humbug was perfect! The buffalo wouldn’t fight and wouldn’t even run. Any old cow would have made as good a fight. The Indians shot a few arrows into the poor brute and left. The b’hoys (sic) then took the animal in hand and dispatched him with pistols, clubs and stones.*¹⁷⁶

The animal’s death came about after the audience had seen its docile manner. A large number of the armed spectators rushed into the field, “filling the air with smoke and bullets and completely riddling the poor animal.”¹⁷⁷ The crowd then tied a rope about the dead beast’s neck and dragged it away amid shouts and cheers.

Wood and Crisp were quick to take advantage of the excitement. They gathered some \$15,000 in gate receipts and quietly slipped away.¹⁷⁸

The *Journal’s* editor expressed complete disgust with the event’s outcome as he wrote:

*The cruelty of the sport, the folly of the people and the swindling nature of the proceeding, afford a theme for a paragraph, but what’s the use!*¹⁷⁹

What’s the use, indeed! The timid buffalo had been slain and the crowd was happy. The throng of 15,000 spectators,¹⁸⁰ a huge gathering for its time, dispersed “in the best good humor at the richness of the richest farce that ever a set of gudgeon killers started in this region.”¹⁸¹

As one jovial individual left the track, he was heard singing a rollicking impromptu jingle that was so reminiscent of those of the keel boaters of old:

*The buffalo bull fell down the hill
Ho, ho, O, hio,
If he hasn’t got up he lies there still,
Ho, ho, O ho.*¹⁸²

Roads back to Covington were clogged with animal, carriage and foot traffic, while the small steamboat *Champion* carried more than a thousand homeward bound passengers on one trip alone.¹⁸³ Such a massive crowd surged onto the Ludlow ferry platform at the western end of Cincinnati's Fifth Street that the platform and all sank into the river. Fortunately there were no serious injuries.¹⁸⁴

The track's management seems to have played no part in the hoax and was as chagrined at the outcome as was one of the track's chief critics, the editor of the *Covington Journal*. Never did the public seem disturbed and the closest thing to rowdiness on the fans' part came that night in Cincinnati.

There, a noisy group of youths paraded over the principal streets with a dray containing the slain animal. The procession stopped at Wood's Museum steps and into the exhibition hall.¹⁸⁵

Approximately 1,000 people gathered at the scene and for the first time, there were indications of resentment at the magnitude and sheer audacity of the swindle. Because the part-angry and part-joyous merry-makers "evinced a disposition to mob the museum," the mayor and police decided to intervene and dispersed them. There were eight arrests for disorderly conduct.¹⁸⁶

The Ludlow site, often referred as Ludlow's Farm, provided another resort for townspeople when in 1849, the WHITE HALL HOTEL opened near the foot of present Traverse Street. The hotel was served by road and steamboat and described as "the most delightful place of resort for gentlemen and ladies who wish to while away a few hours in the summer season in the country"¹⁸⁷

White Hall's management kept the inn's bar stocked with choice liquors and set a table which was "simply supplied with all the delicacies of the season." There were also four ten-pin alleys said to be "as fine ... as can be found in the Western Country."¹⁸⁸

White Hall quickly became a favorite lodging for out-of-town racing fans as well as a favored retreat for many fashionable Covington residents. More families were establishing homes in that vicinity and the sale of building lots was brisk. At one sale in June 1847 100 acres of Ludlow property "were disposed of in lots by the acre and front foot., 15 lots sold at from \$3.00 to \$6.75 per foot and eleven at the rate from \$130 to \$275 per acre. Total amount of sales: \$25,000."¹⁸⁹

Young Covington ladies were still as style conscious as ever. The *Licking Valley Register* editor once criticized their adoption of the bustle, now the *Covington Journal* chided the new and fashionable bloomers occasionally seen about town and at resorts like White Hall and the race track.

The bloomer was a trouser-like garment that ballooned full-cut over the legs, then gathered at the ankles in harem-like imitation. Over them, the young lady wore a knee-length dress which resembled an abbreviated tunic.

A women's liberation movement was afoot and bloomers, along with the growing use of cosmetics, were symbols of that movement. The *Journal's* editor didn't care for either. He scoffed at the bloomers and offered this advice to those who used make-up: "If ladies would eat meat but once a day, pickles once a week and sweetmeats but once a year – if they would take a cold bath every night and morning and walk five miles a day, they would have no need of cosmetics to make them beautiful."¹⁹⁰

PLEASURE BOATS such as the *Champion* were commonplace on the two local rivers as they carried well-dressed happy crowds on holiday excursions or while making runs to various outing and picnic areas.

Typical of pleasure cruises was the *GRAND EXCURSION* on the splendid steamer *Champion* run from the Covington landing on June 17, 1851. For a fare of \$1.50, a couple could enjoy a downstream, forty-mile round trip, while being entertained by the music of George Mayle's Cotillion Band as well as that from an additional "Band of Ethiopian Harmonists."¹⁹¹

Even larger ferryboats were often used for excursions, as on that year's July 4th when the *Rover* ran an all-day dance and picnic excursion to North Bend and President Harrison's tomb. The *Rover* left Covington at nine o'clock in the morning and arrived back at seven that evening.

Excursions were being run between Cincinnati and Big Bone Lick as early as 1825. Some were also for overnight visits as the following notice in the *Cincinnati Advertiser* indicates:

*THE Steamboat ELIZA will leave this port on Saturday morning next for **BIG BONE LANDING** on an excursion of pleasure. Ladies and gentlemen who wish to visit Big Bone Spring, will not perhaps have a better opportunity this season, as the **Eliza** will depart expressly for the occasion. Time of leaving, 7 o'clock A.M. from this port and depart from Big Bone at 3 o'clock on Sunday afternoon*

following for Cincinnati. Passage, going and returning, \$3. For passage apply at the counting room of

W. C. Rogers

*Gentlemen who wish to obtain the spring water can be accommodated by sending barrels in the **Eliza**, paying the necessary expense.*¹⁹²

BIG BONE'S WATERS had been widely believed to possess special curative powers ever since 1784, when John Filson wrote: "A medical spring is found near Big-bone Lick, which has perfectly cured the itch by bathing; and experience in time may discover in it other virtues."

Throughout the years people claiming near-miraculous results from the water's use and in time Big Bone grew into a plush resort, drawing visitors from throughout the eastern half of the nation. Such prominent Kentucky families as the Breckenridges, Clays, Crittendens, McDowell's and Marshalls came up from the state's interior in gilded carriages piled high with baggage and driven by negro coachmen dressed in the best of livery.

From north, east and west came happy parties, sometimes on private and ornate river barges but more usually on steamboats. They stayed at the Clay House, a rambling frame structure created early in the century and eventually named for Henry Clay.

Across from the Clay House, stood a row of bath houses, while nearby was a large open frame pavilion in a pleasant grove of oaks and elms. Here, the guests danced the minuet and Virginia reel to music furnished by negro musicians.

There were some who cared little for Big Bone's extra trappings, but still strongly believed in the curative powers. For them, "Latonian Spring," with its four separate mineral springs containing "salts, soda, sulphur and magnesia," was a popular gathering place, as was William Dollen's Eight Mile House, on the Covington and Lexington Turnpike.¹⁹³

Dollen's faithful followers were convinced of the truthfulness of their host's claim that his resort was favored with "one of the best and strongest *Sulphur* and *Mineral Wells* that can be found in Kentucky."¹⁹⁴

Big Bone lost its exclusiveness as a resort by the early 1850s and the subdividers began taking over. One investor purchased a large part of the resort area, chartered the Bigbone Hotel Company and proposed to divide the land into lots for individually owned summer cottages.¹⁹⁵ This represented an early attempt at Boone County subdivision development, a phenomenon that would reappear during the latter half of the twentieth century. Then, large parts of that county – especially in and around Florence – were turned into what critics have described as nothing more than a series of suburban tract developments, which are dotted throughout with look-alike shopping centers with their accompanying acres of oil-splattered parking lots.

Big Bone continued to lay fallow as a resort until July 2, 1960 when the site was acquired by the state for development into a state park. Kentucky did little or nothing with this new acquisition, as state park officials of that time pursued a policy of openly favoring sites located further into the state's interior.

In time, a small museum was erected at Big Bone and filled with remains of several prehistoric animals. The structure, opening in June 1975, was constructed of rough-sawed pine wood salvaged from various Covington anti-bellum buildings then being demolished. Ironically, many of the demolished buildings had been erected about the same time of Big Bone's decline as a spa.

The hastily constructed museum's size proved to be a disappointment to many Northern Kentuckians. They claimed the building's 35 x 68 feet measurement was nowhere close to being adequate for a museum of the national scope which they thought it rightfully should be.

That same summer, the Big Bone attraction drew as many as 10,000 visitors on weekends.¹⁹⁶ By then, a 1 ½ mile walkway into an outdoor diorama of the past had been opened. It wound past fiberglass replicas of prehistoric animals and natural features as marshes, bogs and saline springs.

The museum itself housed bones of ancient bison, mastodons, great ground sloths and other extinct animals as well as a composite mount of a bison skeleton. A "composite mount" meant various parts had been computer selected and matched.¹⁹⁷

Many of the bones placed in the museum that summer, had been unearthed during a five-year dig by University of Nebraska paleontologists between 1962 and 1967, taken to that university and studied. Negotiations at the time of the dig stipulated the bones would eventually be returned to the Park.

Despite the appeal such an attraction seemed to hold, many local civic leaders felt state park officials were reluctant to develop Big Bone to its fullest potential. In 1978, a travel writer for an Ohio newspaper expressed much the same opinion:

- Arbuckle & Corlis Madison Avenue
- David S. Parker #18 Madison avenue [old numbering – editor]

The Daguerreotype process was the world's first method of photography and was used by all these early photographers. Technical advancements came rapidly and by the 1850s, Covingtonians could choose from a wide variety of photographic styles and fads. The wet plate process was developed in 1851 and was quickly followed by many other innovations, such as Crystalotype, Ambrotype, life-size and larger-than-life-sized posters and the long-popular Melainotype (tintype).

Prices for Daguerreotypes dropped dramatically so by 1855, Josiah C. Robinson, one of the area's better and more reliable photographers, was making them for as little as 25 cents each. One of his announcements read:

***HURRAH FOR THE 25 CENT PICTURES!
COVINGTON MUST NOT BE BEHIND!***

STILL, LOWER AND BETTER! ROBINSON
*Forever! Daguerreotypes for 25 cents and
No pay in advance! Robinson does not exact
pay for Caricatures and failures.*²⁰⁶

Robinson made maximum use of natural light at his *Sky-Light Gallery* at the southwest corner of 4th and Scott and claimed his "mastery over the subtle materials" enabled him to produce "true and perfect proofs . . . Real *GEMS OF ART*."²⁰⁷

One newsman boosted Robinson's work by saying, he

*gets up Daguerreotypes as cheap as the cheapest, and as good as the best. In fact he defies competition.*²⁰⁸

*The Sky-Light Gallery's sharpest competition came from Newport's Charles Fontayne and Covington's William Southgate Porter, who organized a partnership to operate studios here and in Cincinnati. Their Covington studio, on Madison near Fifth, is fitted up in very handsome style.*²⁰⁹

Much of Fontayne and Porter's work was done for wealthier members of the community who seemed attracted by the pair's outstanding miniature photographs and the wide assortment of gold cases. Frames, lockets and breast-pins which they stocked.

The partners also pioneered in copy work and making enlargements and reductions. Probably the most unusual service offered was photographing deceased individuals. Such pictures, they said, would be "taken at the shortest notice."²¹⁰

In September 1848, Fontayne and Porter composed the most noted pictures of any American city of that era – a picture of the Cincinnati waterfront as seen from the Kentucky shore. The work consists of eight panels joined to form an elongated panoramic view of the Ohio city [a copy hangs in the reception desk of the Cincinnati Public Library – editor].²¹¹

STAGE PERFORMANCES were another popular diversion for the townspeople, during theatrical season. The Covington Thespian Society gave frequent dramatic performances at its hall at Fourth and Scott and musicales were common. Comedy shows seemed to be most popular and one of the best-liked were those performed by Wells' Minstrels. This show was "from Broadway, New York," and when in Covington usually played at Magnolia Hall, located on the east side of Madison between Pike and Seventh. Price of admission was 35 cents.

City Hall also continued to be the site of frequent plays, teas, musicales, recitals and other forms of public entertainment. Typical was the music festival sponsored by "The Ladies of Trinity Church" on December 23, 1845 evening. The program featured the Army Band from Newport Barracks and "several distinguished singers" who had volunteered their services.

Whenever poetry recitals were held, they were sure to include selections from works of **Sarah Howe**, a Newport poet whose writings attracted national acclaim and frequently appeared in publications as the *Ladies' Repository* and the *Herald of Truth*. One of her best known works was the dramatic poem *Boleshas II, or the Siege of Kioiv*. First published in 1847, it was based in incidents in the history of Poland.²¹²

The bulk of the Newport poet's work was written between 1839 and 1849 and included such other titles as *Let Us Go Up, Bend Softly Down, Hymn of Thankfulness* and *After A Tempest*.²¹³

JOSEPH TOSSO was probably the most noted entertainer to appear at a City Hall performance. This violinist, composer, music teacher lived in Covington for many years. Tosso, who was born in Mexico City to wealthy Italian parents, studied at the Paris Conservatory where his musical genius first began to flower and where he won acclaim as one of the school's most outstanding students.²¹⁴

In 1817, the young musician's family came to America [settling in Louisville – editor] and on July 1, 1820, he and his family visited Cincinnati. They were met at the Queen City's wharf by Thomas D. Carneal who insisted they enjoy the hospitality of his palatial Elmwood Estate in [present] Ludlow. Carneal thoroughly enjoyed playing host to notable visitors and the Tosso family certainly fit that category.²¹⁵ The Tossos stayed at Elmwood for ten days and departed for their Louisville home.²¹⁶

While in the Falls City, Joseph began courting Caroline D. Aarcambel, daughter of the French Consul-General, and despite his father's strong protest, married her in 1824. For that act of defiance, his father renounced him and cut him off from all family inheritance.

Joseph later became a personal aide to General Lafayette and rode [as part of an equestrian honor guard – editor] to the immediate right of Lafayette's open barouche during the famed general's visit to America [1824-5 – editor] traveling from Louisville to Cincinnati.

Tosso was fond of the Northern Kentucky area and soon [by 1827 – editor] made it his home. Here, he worked in his chosen field of music and became lionized as the composer of many popular songs of the time. The best known composition attributed to him is the famed "Arkansas Traveler."

On the evening of October 11, 1849, Tosso presented a well-publicized concert at the Covington City Hall and attracted what was described as "a large and fashionable audience" of patrons from both sides of the Ohio River. One who came to hear the talented musician later wrote: "All his pieces were warmly received. The *Arkansas Traveler* and *Sitting on a Rail* . . . in particular, were performed as only a Tosso can perform them – the audience were almost convulsed with laughter."²¹⁷

NOT ALL CITIZENS were drawn to such activities – many preferences ran in other directions. A large segment of the local drinking class chose to while away spare hours in the town's numerous saloons where, despite an 1845 ordinance making it illegal to sell alcoholic beverages on Sunday, a thriving business was done seven days a week.

Dice games and raffles were commonplace tavern activities, all to the dismay of the *Covington Journal* editor. On January 10, 1852, he termed it "disgraceful" when one saloon raffled off a large ox, after which the café's patrons began "betting on the *throws*." The spirited game came to an abrupt end when an equally spirited brawl erupted among its participants.²¹⁸

The shocked editor who sad chairs were freely thrown and several shots fired during the fracas, hoped town officials were paying attention when he wrote: "We trust all parties concerned will be made to answer for the outrage."²¹⁹

THOSE PREFERRING MORE SCHOLARLY PURSUITS, had the library of the Covington Fire Company Number One. The firemen kept the library open for the public every Wednesday and Saturday evenings from six to eight o'clock and on Saturday afternoons from three to five.²²⁰ The library formally opened on August 16, 1852 with 230 "valuable works" under the care of Jackson Sparrow, its first librarian.

Before accepting the library position, Sparrow had been a baker, then in partnership with John Ruff, opened a candle factory at Second and Greenup. His connection with the factory was brief for he soon returned to his bakery operation.

The firemen's institution was generally regarded as a public library and intended as such by them. One spokesman called this to Covington citizens' attention, and said, "We hope it will be patronized liberally and appreciated by our community."²²¹ Membership fees for the tiny library was \$2 per year or \$10 for a life membership. The firemen set the life membership at the low amount to encourage a large membership.²²²

ATTENDANCE AT POLITICAL RALLIES and special interest meetings were also popular at that time, and in February of the same year the firemen opened the library, Covingtonians were given a rare treat when Lajos, or Louis, Kossuth spoke in the large hall of the Magnolia Hotel on Madison Avenue.²²³ Kossuth had been one of the foremost leaders of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848-9 and was now in the United States attempting to gain support

for Hungarian Independence [from Austria – editor]. To people world-wide, he was the symbol of Magyar nationalism and local populace welcomed him with respect and sympathy.

Covington, probably because of its large immigrant population, was more cosmopolitan than other Kentucky communities of that time and an overflow crowd greeted the Hungarian patriot at the ornately decorated hall. The audience enthusiastically applauded his address on hopes for Hungarian independence and proceeded to give three cheers for America's freedom, followed by "three for Kossuth and three for Hungary."²²⁴

Kossuth struck a responsive chord with his local audience. The *Journal* editor, however, refused to print the text of his speech and cautioned townspeople against listening to any attempt to involve the U. S. in foreign affairs.²²⁵

The *Journal* did not hesitate to entertain its readers with accounts of the sensational New York divorce proceedings between **Edwin Forrest** and his wife. Forrest, who had become one of the world's leading actors, still owned a large estate here and was well-remembered in the community.²²⁶

The dramatic legal action was brought after Forrest accused his wife of being unfaithful and demanded she divorce him. Reluctantly after Forrest made his charge public, did she file the suit.²²⁷ The litigation involved numerous sordid details and the *Journal* seemed delighted to point out: "The witnesses for the defense testify strongly against her and if half that is sworn to, is true, she is not as discreet as a woman should be. The whole case is disgusting . . ."²²⁸

Forrest seemed to have a penchant for becoming involved in sensational news. After he achieved fame on the American stage, he traveled to England where he won that nation's acclaim. During one of his performances in London, he was jeered from the audience by William Macready, the noted English tragedian and a group of Macready's friends.²²⁹ Forrest was not one to allow such an insult go unrepaid. He attended a Macready presentation of *Hamlet* and roundly booed the performance.²³⁰

The rivalry between the two actors grew in intensity. Soon, the American public became emotionally involved in the dispute and gave wholehearted support to Forrest. It was as though Macready had insulted their national honor. The Americans' displeasure with the English actor took a grim turn when he visited New York a few years later. They vented their anger in jeers and biting newspaper editorials. All this helped fan the sparks of violence and led directly to the infamous **Astor Place riots** in which 22 persons died. American emotions were so tense during this time, that Macready's aids were forced to smuggle him out of New York and back to England.

On the lighter side, local populace strongly supported numerous SHOWBOATS to dock at the Covington waterfront. On July 8, 1852, one of the river's leading showboats the *Floating Palace* docked here and was greeted by a large turnout. Owners of the *Floating Palace* boasted their vessel was as fine as any of the nation's theatres. During this engagement, it featured the Spalding and Rogers Circus Fleet and lured potential customers by claiming the show "totally eclipsed all circus projects ever conceived in Europe or America."²³¹

The owners could not be accused of being overly modest concerning what they offered. They heralded the *Floating Palace* as:

*More elegant, spacious and sumptuous than any Theatre in the United States; and at night, when illuminated **within** by countless gas burners and **without** by a concentration of Drummond, Electric, Bengal and Locomotive Lights, dispensing an almost daylight brightness for a long distance, presenting a scene of almost fairy enchantment with luxury and splendor pervading all its appointments will arrive . . . amidst the stirring peals of the great CHIME OF TWENTY BELLS, varying in weight from 50 to 1,000 pounds and susceptible of the greatest harmony and adapted to the most silvery and measured music.*²³²

All Covington was amazed and spellbound by the boat's great number of lights. Gas lights were relatively new in the West and the local people hoped that soon their streets and homes could boast such amenities. Three months later, October 28th, city council granted sole rights to lay GAS PIPES under Covington's streets to a company headed by James Southgate. The franchise terms finally agreed upon granted the company the exclusive privilege of lighting the city until the year 1870 at which time the city would have the option to purchase the company. The price would be determined by a disinterested third party.²³³ Franchise terms also placed controls over the company's rates and provided the city with the right to purchase gas at half the price charged ordinary households.²³⁴

The work of laying the necessary pipe continued throughout 1853 and by year's end, the company had laid more than four miles of pipe, erected 116 street lamps and completed all necessary buildings for its operations. On December 28th, Covington's first gas lights were turned on and proved to be "a source of great jollification."²³⁵

The appearance of the new lights prompted one newsman to remark:

The event was a subject of congratulation, especially among those persons whose business calls them out after night – of which class, by the by, there is an astounding number for moral city like Covington. ²³⁶

In fact, it was so “moral” that on the previous May 24th, a group of anti-saloon people organized a local chapter of the all-male “Cadets of Temperance” for the purpose of changing the recreational habits of a large segment of the population.²³⁷

One segment of the population with habits in need of changing, according to an out-of-town newsman, was local attorneys. Their drinking habits shocked the reporter writing in the *Nicholasville (Ky.) Democrat*: “Difficulties and fights between the lawyers of Covington are daily reported. Naughty fellows! *We* fear they practice too much at the **bar!**” ²³⁸

Ponds, hollows and lakes continued to attract the attention of city officials and in July that year, council members proposed eliminating the large pond then covering the area bounded by Main, Bakewell, Fourth and Fifth Streets.²³⁹

As 1853 drew to a close, local civic leaders had good reason to be proud of the community’s accomplishments for that year. The editor of the *Covington Journal* was probably one of the proudest as he listed those accomplishments, some of which were:

- The opening of the *Covington & Lexington Railroad*
- Beginning a free, tax-supported high school [present Holmes High – editor]
- Recognition of Covington as a new Catholic Diocese.
- Gas light installation
- Spanning the Licking with a “splendid suspension bridge.”
- Beginning construction of a Louisville to Covington railroad.²⁴⁰

Covington residents had already seen what a railroad could do for their town’s economy and in January 1854, voted to authorize city council to endorse bonds up to \$500,000 for the Louisville to Covington line.²⁴¹

A few months later, Covington was visited by **John P. Gaines**, the former Northern Kentuckian who President Fillmore had appointed Oregon territorial governor. Gaines held the gubernatorial position until March 1853 and now returned to select 35 to 40 full-blood Durham cattle to improve Oregon stock.²⁴² The cattle selected were shipped to Arkansas. At Fort Smith, they were joined to a herd of common cattle and one of Gaines’ sons drove them across the western plains.²⁴³

The boom Covington was enjoying continued into the new year. The population was increasing at such a rapid pace the *Journal* noted in a May issue: “The demand for dwellings in Covington is unprecedented. We do not know of a tenable house vacant in the city.” ²⁴⁴

That year, the town witnessed the construction of its first 4-story building. The structure was built on Pike Street, opposite the popular Drover’s Inn.²⁴⁵

As the year wore on, Kentucky and the West in general experienced a short-lived **financial panic**. On October 17, 1854, Newport’s Safety Fund Bank of Kentucky failed and the next day Covington’s Kentucky Trust Company closed its doors. The Covington bank had a short time before completed construction of new quarters on Madison Avenue just south of Sixth.²⁴⁶ The brief crisis failed to shake the townsfolk’s confidence in their booming economy though and quickly ran its course. This was not until another crisis occurred in the city government.

On November 2nd, the president and 12 of the 14 council members resigned their offices, saying, in view of the voters’ recent rejection of a proposed property tax increase, council would be unable to pay the interest due on the city debt.²⁴⁷

Nine days later, November 11th, a special election was held to fill the vacant offices and to vote once again on the proposed tax increase. This time, the additional tax of 25 cents per \$100 valuation was approved by more than 3 to one. The crisis ended.²⁴⁸

AMONG LOCAL TRANSPORTATION COMPANIES was V. T. Perkins’ *Covington & Cincinnati Omnibus line*. Perkins, who maintained his office in the Cooper Building (northwest corner 6th & Madison), operated the line on a 45 minute schedule from 6 o’clock in the morning until six in the evening.²⁴⁹ The omnibus route began at the company office and extended south on Madison to Eleventh; west to Banklick and north to Pike Street. From there it turned east to Madison; north to Fifth; east to Scott; north to Lower Market Space [Court]; east to Greenup and north to the ferryboat.²⁵⁰ On the Ohio side, the vehicles operated north on Walnut to Fifth and reversed their route for the return trip to the Cooper Building. A fare of 10 cents included ferriage.²⁵¹

An interesting aspect with early omnibuses was the method passengers signaled the driver to stop for them. The driver sat high on the outside of the conveyance and out of his passengers' sight. When a rider wished to alight, he simply pulled a leather strap which dangled through an opening in the vehicle's ceiling. The strap's other end was tied to the driver's ankle and when he felt a tug, he knew it signified a passenger had reached his desired stop.²⁵²

One chief topic of conversation among omnibus passengers as they passed Fifth & Madison was the massive building being erected at that corner by the **International Order of Odd Fellows**. The huge structure, which replaced a tobacco warehouse which had long stood there, would soon become Covington's most outstanding landmarks.

The new structure's cornerstone (laid April 12, 1856), containing a specimen of each coin used at the time, along with specimens of bank bills from the Northern and the Farmers' Banks, a Christian bible, a then-current copy of the *Covington Journal* and the names of the various lodge and city officials.²⁵³ On October 19, 1857, amid impressive ceremonies featuring music by Covington's Union Musical Society, the finished building was dedicated.

The building contained 5 first-floor commercial spaces which were immediately occupied by:

- J. M. Fisher Family Grocery
- F. S. Case Medicine and Perfumery Depot
- Covington Post Office
- The deposit Bank
- Cropper & Curtis Book Store

Fifth and Madison became a prestige address.²⁵⁴

The third floor contained numerous small meeting rooms [for the IOOF – editor] and ante-rooms, while the second floor was given over to one of the finest concert halls in the West. [The concert hall's 25' ceiling was supported from above by threaded rods suspended from attic truss work. This unique structure suffered a severe fire in first decade of the 21st century, necessitating altered reconstruction of the interior – editor]. In the summer of 1904, the building's cornerstone was removed and opened when improvements were made to the structure. Memorabilia were added and the stone replaced in a location just below the floor of the second story.²⁵⁵

Over the years, the 54' x 86' concert hall witnessed countless political rallies, temperance meetings, suffragette meetings and church services. Numerous balls and dances were held there, as were grand opera, high school graduations, professional prize fights and a host of other activities, including a presidential reception and the lying-in-state of a slain governor. [Graffiti discovered in the building indicated Confederate and Union deserters were also held there pending court martial – editor]

Within a scant two years after its erection in 1856, the Odd Fellows' Building had acquired a hallowed position in the community. Newsmen were acutely aware of this and sometimes resorted to satire when reporting events connected with the building. One writer noted the number of beer-drinking affairs held there and attended sometimes-hypocritical city officials. With tongue in cheek he wrote:

*At the last session of the Covington Council, several of the members were exceedingly agitated. It grew out of a communication from the German Protestant Association petitioning for the privilege of selling beer at a festival to be given at Odd Fellows' Hall for the benefit of widows and orphans. Some of the City Fathers look upon Odd Fellows' Hall as one of the sacred spots of Covington and to transfer it, even temporarily, into a beer saloon, was to them akin to sacrilege. A bar set up in Odd Fellows' Hall and beer casks piled up beneath its gorgeous and costly ceiling! Was such an audacious proceeding ever heard of before?*²⁵⁶

*Even a proposition that this magnificent Hall should be desecrated by long bearded and heavy mustached Myrheers, drinking lager beer "swel glass" at a time, was enough to shock the moral sensibilities of some of the Covington City Fathers . . . After an exciting discussion, the moral scruples of some of the members were overcome and in consideration of the fact all of the beer at the festival would be drunk for the benefit of the widows and orphans, the privilege was allowed. Farewell to the classical character of Odd Fellows' Hall. The city Fathers have "gone and did it!"*²⁵⁷

Undoubtedly, the attire of some of the men in attendance at such social affairs included the high beaver hat which was so popular at the time. Chances are the hat was a Covington-made product, for in 1851, Nathan Walker, a

Pennsylvanian of German-descent, established his home here and became the first person in this section of the West to engage in such a manufacturing enterprise. Walker purchased the beaver skins from area trappers and turned them into a product which found wide acceptance.²⁵⁸

Social clubs and fraternal groups were flourishing at the time. One of the more fashionable was the Merry Bachelors Club. This organization, composed of many of the community's leading young men, usually showed a preference for Magnolia Hall as the place for its social functions. There, the young bachelors frequently held "select Cotillion parties" where they and their stylishly dressed lady friends partied and danced until dawn.²⁵⁹

The polka was one of America's favorite dances and the *Covington Polka* one of its favorite songs. The popular tune was composed in 1855 by Louis Ambler and published "in good style" by W. C. Peters of Cincinnati.²⁶⁰ Ambler, thoroughly enamored with Covington, first came here in 1852 as a teacher of foreign languages and vocal and instrumental music. He made his home on Banklick Street near Eleventh.

Neighboring Newport took an unusual amount of pride in its large number of social and benevolent societies. It was felt the town's apparent lack of poverty was due to the charitable work done by these groups. One civic-minded Newporter who believed this way wrote:

*The stranger visiting us will never meet with a beggar in our streets – those little petty annoyances which infest the city on the opposite side of the Ohio. When the Cincinnati ladies desire to have a comfortable walk and be rid of the little beggars who are eternally thrusting themselves in their faces when promenading the sidewalks of Cincinnati, they had better come over here, as our streets do not afford such a nuisance.*²⁶¹

Newport's serenity, or dullness, depending on one's viewpoint, had been previously noted by a Cincinnati reporter who could find nothing considered noteworthy. Still, he felt he had to write something and complained about the town's "dullness:"

*We have nothing of interest to record concerning this quiet city. Items are dull – the town is dull – and everything seems dull about the place excepting its pretty women, who are as lively and gay as they are beautiful and fascinating.*²⁶²

The 1850s decade was one of extraordinary economic and social change for Covington. The expansion of the town's industrial base created a whole new life-style somewhat unique for Kentucky. While Kentuckians elsewhere remained essentially rural in their outlook, Covington citizens took on a decided urbane character.

Women were reaping leisure time from such labor-saving devices as the sewing machine and increasingly popular kitchen cook stoves. Housewives had done their cooking on open hearth fires until the 1830s when the first cook stoves were introduced. The stoves were initially slow in winning widespread acceptance, as many women doubted their safety. Neither were the earlier housewives certain that cooking on them would be any easier or faster and many were certain the finished meals could never be as tasty.

The stoves made it necessary to learn an entirely different method of cooking and required a completely different time schedule for cooking various foods. As a result, area housewives did not fully accept them until the late 1840s and early 1850s.

The size of the stoves made available give an indication of the size of Covington families of the time. One supplier advertised handling five sizes, declared:

*The smallest will answer for a family of six to eight persons; the next size, 12 to 15; the next 15 to 25 and the two largest are intended for Hotels and Steamboats.*²⁶³

Samuel Lawrence, one of the town's early owners of the new style stove. He had a reputation for not being too particular about his fuel source and, according to a published account, John Gray, a prominent citizen, "blew him up" for purloining his firewood. Gray suspected Lawrence of visiting his woodpile and accordingly charged a stick of it with gunpowder. The journalist noted, "The result was a surprising explosion in Lawrence's cook stove, and a permanent safeguard around Mr. Gray's wood pile."²⁶⁴

The 1850s also witnessed use of the newly-patented lockstitch sewing machine. Covington folk became obsessed with adopting any number of labor-saving machines made available. Their desire for convenience prompted one observer to note: "This is a labor saving age. People now-a-days seem to be engrossed with one idea – to transfer the work formerly the task of hands, to the more speedy operations of machines."²⁶⁵

The change from home made to ever-increasing use of factory-made goods made it possible for townspeople to enjoy unprecedented leisure hours. Women especially became increasingly involved in events of the day and this explains the strong reform movements which occurred.

Slavery, public drunkenness, and whipping of criminals came under mounting attacks. In 1857, local protest were heard throughout the Ohio Valley over the whipping of 12 army deserters at Newport barracks. The penalties imposed by military court ranged from infliction of 25 to 50 lashes “on the bare back and well laid on.”²⁶⁶

Those protesting the Newport whippings pointed out the navy had abolished such punishment as had several penitentiaries around the nation. The furor resulting from the sentence – and others like it – ultimately led to the disappearance of that punishment from the army.

However, a year later, when a Kenton County Circuit Court sentenced a Covington man to receive 39 lashes for stealing a pair of boots and then sentenced his companion, who stole a pair of shoes, to a year in the penitentiary, there were protests that the 39 lashes represented *too light* a punishment for such a crime.²⁶⁷

Covington’s reputation as a center of commerce grew steadily as the town attracted traders from throughout the Licking and Ohio valleys. Lower Market Space [Court Street] literally teemed with wagons of produce brought by regional farmers as did the new Seventh Street Market.

One of the town’s many family-oriented businesses was the Farrell & Kennedy Grocery Store, operated by John W. Farrell and Joseph M. Kennedy. In January 1857, Kennedy announced he had recently acquired the agency of the Adams Express Company and would operate it in conjunction with his Scott Street grocery “opposite Lower Market Space.”²⁶⁸ Kennedy succeeded R. B. Baldwin who had held the agency since April 1855.²⁶⁹

Pressures on the town market facilities were so great that plans were drawn for yet another – to be on East 11th between Scott and Greenup. By the time the new market house finally opened however, the need for expanded facilities had increased to the point that the September 8, 1857 opening brought little lessening in the size or confusion of market place crowds. The new market instead represented simply an extension of the pandemonium.

The following year, the tiny village of Economy [today’s Botany Hills – editor] incorporated as the town of West Covington and in Covington proper, postal officials announced plans to inaugurate Sunday mail delivery beginning in July.²⁷⁰

At Frankfort, Governor Charles S. Morehead’s daughter, Amanda, announced her engagement to Covington’s Samuel J. Walker.²⁷¹ Their wedding, which took place October 7th, was the first such ceremony ever celebrated in Kentucky’s Governor’s Mansion.²⁷²

Several years later, after the elder Morehead’s death, his widow Margaret Leavy Morehead, moved to Covington to live with her daughter and son-in-law. She died here in 1871.²⁷³

DESPITE COVINGTON’S GROWTH AND PROSPERITY, most citizens still obtained their drinking water from their own or public wells, cisterns or springs. Others purchased water from the numerous small water-carts traveling about the streets and virtually all carried their own laundry water from the river.

The restricted water supply continued posing a serious problem for the town’s fire fighters and made it commonplace for those buildings catching fire to be totally destroyed. Such was the case on July 11, 1852 when the Greer Hall [Scott Street between Lower Market Place & Fourth] burned to the ground. The three-year-old structure, built by Alexander Greer, had recently become home to the Masonic Lodge Number 109 which now moved its meetings to the Odd Fellows’ Hall, then located on Greenup Street opposite the east end of Lower Market.

Two years later, May 1854, Greer re-built his building on the same site. This second Greer’s Hall has since been replaced by the still-standing Bradford Building.

Among other conflagrations was one at the stables of the Drovers’ Inn resulting in heavy loss of animals, grain, wagons and numerous buildings associated with the business. Yet another costly blaze heavily damaged a frame building on Scott between Second and Third, and before it could be brought under control, spread to the rear of former mayor Mortimer Benton’s home on Garrard.²⁷⁴

Such disastrous fires served to encourage frequent formations of new fire companies, one of which organized on March 22, 1856 when 62 men gathered at the Pike and Washington engine house. There they formed the Citizens Fire Company Number 3 and elected David J. Thomas its first president.²⁷⁵ The new company, though active from its inception, would wait two years before bothering to secure a charter.²⁷⁶

During that year of 1856, Franklin Fire Company Number 2 members observed the Fourth of July by journeying to Louisville, where they were to be entertained by that city’s fire fighters. The resulting celebration was described as Louisville’s “event of the day.”²⁷⁷ Before returning home, the Covington fire fighters were “loaded down with presents,” and several Louisville firemen accompanied them on their homeward journey.²⁷⁸ The partying

fire fighters no sooner reached Covington than the Franklin Company decided it was too soon to halt the celebration and staged an elaborate ball in honor of the Louisvillians.²⁷⁹

CONSIDERING LAW ENFORCEMENT, serious crimes of violence continued to be relatively rare. Nevertheless, on March 6, 1856, council passed an ordinance providing for “policemen in the City of Covington.”²⁸⁰

The new ordinance declared the police force would “consist of one or more persons in each ward, who shall be appointed at such times and for such ward(s) as the Council may deem necessary . . . and such policemen shall receive the same fees . . . that are allowed to the City Marshal.”²⁸¹

Despite such enabling legislation, it would be several years before a full-fledged police department would emerge. The crime rate was low and, although the population was nearing 16,000, the street patrol would continue to consist of just a marshal and two deputies.²⁸²

The great number of heavy wagons serving the growing businesses and industries was having a visible effect on the floor of the Licking River Bridge. In the spring of 1859, the span’s original pine floor was replaced by heavy oak planks.²⁸³

During that year, also, Sandford Street was extended south through Henry Bruce’s estate in order to connect with Seventh. Plans were announced for a similar extension of Garrard Street.²⁸⁴

The original Garrard Street terminated at Fourth, while the original Sandford was only a block long and connect Fourth and Fifth. It had been named in honor of Thomas Sandford who had represented Campbell County at Kentucky’s Second Constitutional Convention and served in the Congress of 1803-4 as this area’s first Representative.

On March 15th, the town played host to the nation’s old war heroes when Texas’s Sam Houston quietly spent the night at the Magnolia Hotel.²⁸⁵ He was between trains while returning home from Washington and took extraordinary precaution to make sure his presence was not known to local townspeople. Houston wanted no repeat of the clamor raised during an earlier stay in Covington. That earlier visit was on January 8 & 9, 1856, when the famed Texan was unexpectedly compelled to stop here because of heavy river ice. He was enroute to Washington but the Covington ferry could not navigate the river. The former president of Texas then made arrangements to lay over at the Magnolia.²⁸⁶

Word of Houston’s presence quickly spread and in a short time, the area around the hotel was crowded with a multitude of well-wishers and admirers. Cheers for the ex-general were heard throughout the night and cries for a public speech came from all parts of the community.²⁸⁷ The tumult continued throughout the night and next day. Houston could not hold out against such unaffected adoration and on the second night addressed an overflow audience at the Magnolia.²⁸⁸

Much to the delight of local veterans of Texas battles, Houston recounted the major events of that struggle for independence from Mexico. He launched into a glowing tribute to virtually everything associated with Texas. He praised its agriculture, climate, soil, farms and anything that came to mind. The audience seemed to enjoy his endless praise for his adopted state and frequently interrupted him with prolonged and frenzied cheers. Houston never forgot.²⁸⁹

DURING THESE YEARS, it was a prosperous time for Covington. Jobs were plentiful and despite a threatening North-South political rupture, the local economic outlook continued optimistic. European immigrants arrived in large numbers, and on April 23, 1859, G. Becker began publication of the *Covington & Newport Zeitung*, a German-language newspaper.²⁹⁰ The German language had become a second language by a significant number of native-born Covingtonians, including some of the town’s free blacks and even a few slaves.

The Germans still found little favor with the local Irish. The general dislike the Irish held for them stemmed not only from their divergent speech and old-world backgrounds but even more from their economic rivalry. The Germans impressed the Irish as being all too willing to accept jobs as scab laborers replacing any Irish, employers felt to be troublesome.

Many German immigrants continued their resistance to complete assimilation into American society and determined to maintain certain of their European customs. Their celebrations were usually well-attended and one three-day event in late June at Licking Gardens, required the *C&L Railroad* to add six trains to its regular schedule to carry the throngs of participants. Literally thousands of revelers traveled to the event aboard the steamboat *Belvedere*.²⁹¹

The celebration, which was termed a “General German Festival,” featured music by Weber’s Music Band and included such activities as bird, star and regular target shooting. Teutonic games, dances and food were plentiful and there was never a shortage of lager beer.

The various social affairs held throughout these pre-Civil War years were extremely popular with workers who labored in Covington's many steam-powered mills and factories. Two of these plants were the Licking Rolling Mills and the Kentucky Stove Works.

In 1859, the Kentucky Stove Works, owned by G. W. Ball & Company at 32-34 Main Street, covered nearly three acres. The firm brought pig iron from the Hanging Rock region of southern Ohio and northeastern Kentucky and turned it into an infinite variety of castings. Its production included all types of stoves and hollow ware as well as other type castings for western and southern markets.²⁹²

The company's products, especially its stoves, gained an outstanding reputation for the highest quality and were noted for their exquisite design and finish. The Kentucky Stove Works also turned out a large number of tea kettles with an amazing variety on simple utensils which were widely sold and traded among the western and southwestern Indian tribes.²⁹³

In early June, the prospering stove works quickly absorbed many of the workers left jobless when fire destroyed a near-by bagging factory. The spectacular fire also threatened to engulf the recently-closed locomotive works adjacent to the bagging plant and actually did destroy one of its smaller buildings. The timely arrival of Newport firemen and the Washington Fire Company of Cincinnati with its new steam fire engine, were credited with saving the locomotive works from complete destruction.²⁹⁴ The efficiency of the steam fire engine amazed all who saw it in action and set off a demand in Covington that eventually resulted in one being obtained for their city.

Also during 1859, the Licking Rolling Mill employed a 275-man work force six days a week, turning out products for the lucrative western and southern markets. Much of the wrought iron on southern homes, including many structures in New Orleans famed Vieux Carre, was manufactured in Covington mills.²⁹⁵

It was the age of steam and each day the words of **George W. Cutter's** "Song of Steam" were gaining in meaning throughout the western world:

*Harness me down with your iron bands,
Be sure of your curb and rein;
For I scorn the power of your puny hands,
As the tempest scorns a chain.
How I laughed as I lay concealed from sight,
For many a countless hour,
At the childish boast of human might,
And the pride of human power.*

*When I saw an army upon the land,
A navy upon the seas,
Creeping along, a snail-like band,
Or waiting the wayward breeze;
When I marked the peasant faintly real
With the toil which he daily bore,
As he feebly turned the tardy wheel,
Or tugged at the weary oar; -*

*When I measured the panting courser's speed,
The flight of the courier dove –
As they bore the law a king decreed,
Or the lines of impatient love –
I could not but think how the world would feel,
As these were outstripp'd afar,
When I should be bound to the rushing keel,
Or chained to the flying oar.*

*Ha! Ha! Ha! They found me at last,
They invited me forth at length,
And I rushed to my throne with a thunder-blast,
And laughed in my iron strength.
Oh! Then ye saw a wondrous change
On the earth and the ocean wide,*

*Where now my fiery armies range,
Nor wait for wind or tide.*

*Hurrah! Hurrah! The waters o'er,
The mountains steep decline,
Time – space – have yielded to my power –
The world! The world is mine!
The rivers, the sun hath earliest blest,
Or those where his beams decline;
The giant streams of the queenly west,
Or the orient floods divine;*

*The ocean pales where-er I sweep,
To hear my strength rejoice,
And the monsters of the briny deep
Cower, trembling, at my voice.
I carry the wealth and the lord of earth,
The thoughts of his god-like mind,
The wind lags after my flying forth,
The lightning is left behind.*

*In the darksome depths of the fathomless mine,
My tireless arm doth play,
Where the rocks never saw the sun decline,
Or the dawn of the glorious day.
I bring earth's glittering jewels up
From the hidden cave below,
And I make the fountain's granite cup
With a crystal gush o'erflow.*

*I blow the bellows, I forge the steel,
In all the shops of trade;
I hammer the ore and turn the wheel,
Where my arms of strength are made;
I manage to furnace, the mill, the mint;
I carry, I spin, I weave;
And all my dongs I put into print,
On every Saturday eve.*

*I've no muscle to weary, no breast to decay,
No bones to be "laid on the shelf,"
And soon I intend you may "go and play,"
While I manage this world myself.
But harness me down with your iron bands,
Be sure of your curb and rein;
For I scorn the strength of your puny hands,
As the tempest scorns a chain.²⁹⁶*

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Chapter 11 Readin', Writin' and the Gospel

The people of Covington had shown a keen interest in their children's education since the city's earliest days. A schoolhouse was erected on the public square in 1819, only four years after Covington was founded.¹ It was only a small log structure but it was the forerunner of what would become the state's finest educational system.

What was then the town's public square is that plot today bounded on the north by an alley connecting Court and Greenup Streets and on the other three sides by Courts, Greenup and Third Streets. From 1843 until 1970, it was the location for Covington's first three city halls.

The school site had been given to the city for public use and the gift was accompanied by a stipulation that it would revert to heirs of the original owners if ever used for any other purpose. This restrictive clause was cited in 1899 as one reason why no attempt was made to locate a proposed new city building further uptown.²

The little log school served as a court room on Saturdays and on Sundays as a church for all denominations, even though there was no regular minister. It also did duty as a meeting place for the town trustees.³

Choice of textbooks presented no great problem at the little school. Webster's Spelling Book, the American Preceptor or Reader, Pike's Arithmetic and an alphabet pasted on one side of a board, constituted the students' texts. Classes were held five days a week and presided over by schoolmaster James Grimsley Arnold.⁴

JAMES ARNOLD was an experienced educator who once taught in Mason County. There, one of his pupils had been Albert Sydney Johnson, later a Confederate general who died at Shiloh.⁵ Arnold came to Covington in 1817 to become a hotel keeper and subsequently entered the tobacco trade and real estate business. Both prospered and made him wealthy.⁶

The capable school teacher held many posts of honor during his lifetime, including magistrate, town clerk, president of the town council, and one of the community's earliest postmasters. He gave generously to charities and educational institutions and included the betterment of the state university among his favorite projects. He was also a member of the Christian Church and eventually built a small, red-brick house of worship for that group on Third Street between Scott and Madison.⁷ Arnold died November 16, 1876 at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Joseph B. Boyd, at the southeast corner of Sixth and Philadelphia. He had built the house in 1872-74 as a wedding present for her.⁸ Because of his civic activities, it was said at the time of his death that "James G. Arnold's history is almost identical with that of this city." He was buried at Linden Grove Cemetery.⁹

BEFORE COVINGTON'S ENTRY INTO EDUCATION, the nearest school was in Newport. The Newport Academy was created by the state legislature in 1798 and scheduled to open April 1, 1800.¹⁰ In 1799, Newport's Reverend Robert Stubbs announced a planned opening of an academy "at his farm, two miles from the Ohio . . . where he will teach English grammar, Latin, Greek, arithmetic – all the most useful and some of the ornamental branches of mathematics."¹¹ Reverend Stubbs, described as a "Philomath and English gentleman," had been selected to head the projected Newport Academy. Accordingly, he gave up the farm-located school when the new academy opened.¹²

The board of trustees for the academy, first named in 1799, consisted of Charles Morgan, John Grant, Thomas Kennedy, Thomas Sanford, Thomas Carneal, Richard Southgate, Daniel Mayo, James Taylor, Bernard Stuart, Washington Berry (chairman), and Reverend Stubbs, the school's president and principal.¹³ This same group had acted in a like-capacity for the academy's short-lived predecessor at Reverend Stubbs' farm.¹⁴ For serving as academy president and principal, Reverend Stubbs was paid 75 pounds a year and given use of a house and 70 acres of cleared land.¹⁵

Kentucky was quick to aid the new school with large grants of land located in Barren County. It received a total of 3500 acres in 1800 and another 2500 in 1801.

Prior to the academy's opening, a log school house had existed on the same two-acre site. The land was donated to the town by Colonel James Taylor IV in 1795 to be used for public purposes.¹⁶ Academy officials boasted their school was a place "where, besides the ordinary branches of education, were taught the dead languages, geometry, plain surveying, bookkeeping, etc. – the elementary studies at \$8 per annum; the high branches at 1 pound – 267 cents – per quarter."¹⁷ Prospective students for the Newport school were reminded by the trustees that room and board could be obtained in that town for a reasonable charge, most of which could be paid in farm produce.¹⁸

Among the school's earliest teachers was a Mr. Freeman, commonly known as "the solid Irishman," and described by a former student as "a genuine son of Hibernia, red haired and sanguine."¹⁹

Early teachers to follow James Arnold at the little log school house in Covington included pioneer surveyor James Adams and Dr. Platt Kennedy. One of Kennedy's students was Thomas Kennedy's daughter Nancy, who later said of her teacher: "Dr. Kennedy was a healer of the flesh as well as a physician for the mind and would often prescribe for the salvation of the soul. He was an Irish gentleman of high culture and great attainments."²⁰

As time passed, a group of Covingtonians began considering their public square as a potential site for a new church and school building. Eventually, on April 18, 1832, the town trustees rejected the group's petition but appointed trustees Fisher and Martin to "fix upon a location on the publick [sic] Square to build a Schoolhouse."²¹

Six months later on October 9th, the trustees met and ordered the old schoolhouse sold at auction and removed from the square. It would be an additional two years before the removal order was carried out. It was sold for \$18.25 "on three months' credit."²²

Meanwhile, another public structure was added to the square when in July 1833, the first engine house for Covington's infant volunteer fire department was erected.

In addition to the little school on the town square, another early Covington scholastic institution was the private school conducted by Mr. and Mrs. Gist, two pioneer educators who migrated here from Virginia. On August 21, 1820, they advertised they would instruct boys and girls between the ages of five and fourteen in the Gist home for tuition charge of \$2.00 for each quarter of eleven weeks.²³

A subscription drive for a public school that would be free to all who couldn't afford to attend a private school was undertaken in January 1825. The drive, in which John Dow and Judge Thomas were active, succeeded in raising \$80. The town trustees rented a one-room log cabin for the new school. It soon had 20 pupils in attendance.²⁴

The subscription method of school support continued until October 1830, when town officials set aside \$100 to be used for a free school. Prior to final passage of the city charter in 1834, a total of \$546.11 was appropriated in this manner. The new public school building, built in 1830, also served as a meeting place for a light infantry troop, the town trustees and the *Social Polemic Society*.²⁵ It is of note to include that on June 2, 1831, Mortimer M. Benton, destined to be the town's first mayor, began teaching a course there consisting of a series of lectures on English grammar.²⁶

Also in 1831, Covington's first private female school went into operation in a two-story log cabin owned by Thomas Kennedy at Second and Scott.²⁷ A notice regarding the school appeared in May that year and read:

*PROFESSOR N. M. HENTZ, originally from France, has recently resigned the professorship of Modern Languages in the University of North Carolina, under an engagement with Dr. J. W. KING, of Covington, Kentucky, to take charge of a female school in that place, to be restricted to ten or at most 15 scholars.*²⁸

All this time, the number of privately-owned schools was increasing at a rapid rate, prompting some individuals to express deep concern over their operations. Accordingly, on April 22, 1834, city council passed its first act regarding such institutions. The act made it unlawful for any person not possessing a certificate of qualification to open a school and provided for a fine of five to ten dollars for anyone found in violation.²⁹

Council set up a Board of Trustees who would determine an applicant's qualifications and made the board responsible to the council. Those named were: Henderson R. Phelps, Milton Herndon, George M. Southgate, George B. Marshall and Bushrod W. Foley.³⁰

J. L. Kemp was evidently aware of the community concern for quality education, for when he opened an academy for boys in 1835, he stressed his school was "properly endorsed by business and social leaders including three preachers." Tuition rates at Kemp's new school were \$8.00 per quarter for English and arithmetic and \$10 a quarter for algebra, logic and the classics.

Also in 1835, Mrs. Margaret Chase, who operated the Ladies Seminary at the "head of Greenup Street," closed her school because of lack of paying students. The school existed for only a single year.

That year, Covington's educational status was enhanced when in May and June, the six-months-old **Western Baptist Educational Society** paid \$33,250 for three tracts of land of 370 acres south of the original town. There the Baptists proposed to establish a theological seminary.³¹ The Society quickly began selling off several large parcels of its land purchase at a profit and subdivided much of the remainder into nearly 700 building lots. Those lots extended from present-day Ninth Street to 15th Street and from Banklick Street to east of Greenup. Twelve acres were retained as a site for the proposed seminary, and in 1840, a large and elaborate building to house the institute was built on West Eleventh, then known as High Street. Its cost of c. \$20,000 was financed from the sale of lots.³²

Two existing homes had also been acquired by the society and one was now designated for the school's president, while the other served as a faculty residence.³³ Ceremonies marking laying of the four-story Theological Building's cornerstone were held August 3, 1840 and included the music of two brass bands. Among the day's many speakers was Calvin E. Stowe, renowned associate of Ohio's Lane Theological Seminary. The building itself, erected in the center of the twelve-acre oblong tract, had a large chapel and various classrooms on its first floor, while the upper floors contained 48 rooms for student housing.³⁴

Despite the fact the Western Baptist Theological Institute received its charter in 1840, it did not open its doors to students until the fall of 1845. The delay was intended to allow time to raise additional funds.³⁵ Ephraim Robbins, an Ohio insurance agent and native of Suffield, Connecticut, proved to be the chief architect of the successful effort to raise the needed funds for the school's actual opening. He first proposed creating a new subdivision on the institute's excess acreage and selling off land as building lots.³⁶ Robbins saw to it that new streets were laid out and graded and other public improvements made to the area. He personally arranged for the twelve-acre campus to be beautified with a large variety of trees, shrubs and flowers transplanted from the surrounding forest. He then directed the landscaped grounds be enclosed with a decorative fence.³⁷

Robbins' efforts quickly produced the much-needed funds, for between 1840 and 1843, 150 homes were built in the new subdivision.³⁸ An indication of the housing demand then in existence may be gathered from the fact there were 85 buildings erected in Covington in 1841, yet the *Licking Valley Register* on New Years Day 1842 noted there was not a single vacant house in town.³⁹

When the school's first students enrolled, they were greeted by a faculty consisting of three members – Dr. Robert Everett Pattison, school president and professor of Christian Theology; Reverend Ebenezer Dodge, professor of Hebrew and Ecclesiastical History; and Reverend Asa Drury, professor of Greek.⁴⁰ Reverend Dodge was succeeded a year later by Ezekiel Gilman Robinson.⁴¹

The faculty members, though small in number, were eminently qualified. Pattison, native of Vermont, was a graduate of Amherst College and held a Doctorate of Divinity. Dodge held degrees from Brown and Newton Colleges, while Drury, a graduate of Yale, had formerly taught at the College of Cincinnati.⁴²

The school's first Board of Trustees outnumbered the faculty by more than two-to-one and included;

- H. Wingate and C. Johnson of Kentucky
- Ephraim Robbins, Samuel W. Lynd, John Stevens and T. Lewis – all representing Ohio.
- J. L. Holman of Indiana.

From these names it is easy to understand the origin of Covington streets as: Robbins, Lynn, Holman and Stevens. The last named street, Stevens, has since become that part of Garrard Street south of Eleventh.⁴³

Over the next several years, Western Baptist Theological Institute educated what quickly proved to be some of America's more distinguished educational and spiritual leaders. One of its outstanding graduates was Rufus C. Burleson, who went on to serve some fifty years as president of Texas Baylor University. Today, Burleson's memory is kept alive among Baylor's students by a bronze statue standing in a prominent part of their campus.⁴⁴

The local institute had been built by northern capital and staffed by northern educators whose intention was to educate western men. Members of its Board of Trustees were to be from each of the western states. Despite this effort to ensure fair representation from various areas the school served, there were many pro-slavery extremists in Kentucky's interior and deep South who, by summer of 1847, were openly accusing the school and the Baptist Church in Covington of abolitionism.⁴⁵

On one occasion, one of the trustees who believed in rightness of slavery, proposed a resolution that slavery be declared divinely inspired. The proposal was defeated but those who espoused it were not to be denied and turned to the state legislature for help. There they succeeded in inducing sympathetic law makers to alter the seminary's charter so that sixteen specifically named individuals were added to the institute's board. It was also made a requirement that from that time forward, only Kentuckians would be eligible for such appointments.⁴⁶

Those charges in January 1848 set off a series of bitter quarrels among members of the newly-packed board. The Kentuckians accepted President Pattison's resignation and replaced him with Samuel W. Lynd, who had since migrated westward to St. Louis. The school's financial agent was dismissed as was one of the professors and it was announced in no uncertain terms that, neither the school nor any of its employees would do anything which might interfere with the institution of slavery.⁴⁷

The new trustees declared the North would never be allowed an equal voice in administering school affairs until the pro-slavery element could regard the school as being "safe."⁴⁸ The northern trustees, of course, objected to the seminary's altered charter and resisted it on constitutional grounds. After lengthy litigation, the case was carried

to the Kentucky Court of Appeals where, in February 1853, the charter's new amendment was declared unconstitutional.⁴⁹

The Court of Appeals' decision put the newly-appointed trustees out of office, but by then, the controversy has resulted in a serious division of the seminary's friends and supporters into a northern and southern faction.⁵⁰

This was a time of political polarization in which Covingtonians were adopting a newer and firmer crystallization of attitudes toward the issue of states' rights and the need for preserving the American Union. It was a time which would rapidly merge into a period of stirring events and remarkable political protagonists. The ever-sensitive pro-slavery minority was becoming more aggressive in the face of an ever-broadening and widening anti-slavery movement.

A compromise was eventually reached by the Institute's warring factions when they agreed to call upon John McClean, Associate Justice of the U. S. Supreme Court, to act as arbiter.⁵¹ On September 20, 1853, McLean proposed the school's assets be divided equally between the northern and southern factions and the following January, the Kentucky Legislature ratified his proposal.⁵²

Accordingly, the institute's property was divided into two equal shares, one of which went to Georgetown College in central Kentucky and the other to support Fairmount Theological Seminary in Ohio.⁵³ Western's library had previously been given to what is now Denison University at Granville, Ohio.⁵⁴ The Covington seminary had become one of Kentucky's first major sacrifices on the slaveholders' altar of human bondage.

IN 1853, THE TOWN'S CATHOLICS purchased a plot of ground at the northwest corner of Twelfth and Greenup Streets that had once been owned by the Baptist school and the following year began construction of a new church. A shortage of funds soon halted the work and instead of erecting the large and elaborate church building originally planned, they settled for a smaller combination school and church to be known as St. Joseph's. It was built on Twelfth just east of Greenup.⁵⁵

By June 1858, the number of German Catholics had become so large in that part of town that it was necessary to renew work on the originally planned structure. When completed, it proved to be an outstanding example of Romanesque architecture, with a tower rising 128 feet above the city.⁵⁶

In 1862, the Very Reverend Prior Odilo von der Gruen was assigned to the new church and his first objective became securing new altars and establishing several missions throughout the diocese. He organized an altar-building stock company which eventually built altars for many churches throughout the nation.⁵⁷

The new organization, known as the Institute of Catholic Art, included an art glass department, an altar-building division employing architects and skilled carpenters and an artistic studio where talented artists such as **Johann Schmitt** and William Lamprecht worked.⁵⁸

Visitors frequently stopped by to watch the artists at their tasks. One, a writer who watched Schmitt painting an altar piece for the Franciscan church in Oldenburg, Indiana was moved to note: "Artist Schmitt is an artist of the first class. With deep piety and sincere faith he delights to paint on canvas what his noble heart feels and sincerely believes."⁵⁹

Another frequent visitor who marveled at Schmitt's work was **Frank Duveneck**, then a small boy. Schmitt quickly recognized young Frank's latent talent and gave him his first drawing and painting lessons. In time, the young boy would develop into the undisputedly greatest artist ever produced by Kentucky (or Greater Cincinnati, for that matter) and would have a lasting influence in international art circles.⁶⁰

Schmitt, recognized as America's "first Christian artist," received many Covington commissions, including two exquisite murals for St. Joseph Church, 12th & Greenup. Entitled *St. Joseph, Patron of the Dying* and *St. Joseph, Patron of the Universal Church*, each measured 15 feet wide and 25 feet high. The latter was a copy of his original masterpiece hanging in the Vatican, donated to Pope Leo XIII.⁶¹

Both of St. Joseph murals were painted directly on the walls of the church sanctuary and were lost when the church was razed in 1970. Fortunately, another five superior murals done for the original St. John Church, Covington's Lewisburg Neighborhood were saved when that structure was demolished. They were given to the Sisters of Notre Dame, then located on Fifth Street.⁶²

Schmitt also did outstanding murals for scores of other Kentucky churches. His works were to be found in communities including Williamstown, Mayslick, Newport, Georgetown and Louisville. Covington's Mother of God Church has five of his murals, while one of his better-known paintings, the *Annunciation*, is at Paris.⁶³

The nation became wreaked with civil war shortly after the construction of St. Joseph's and the former Western Baptist Theological Institute on West Eleventh Street was pressed into service as a federal hospital. This

proved an omen, for on November 11, 1867, the Sisters of the Poor of St. Francis acquired the structure for a civilian hospital. The Sisters had been operating a sixteen-bed hospital since 1861 on Seventh Street near Scott. It was housed in a three-story brick which once housed a grocery.⁶⁴

Johann Schmitt had long envisioned the seminary building as a possible replacement for the inadequate Seventh Street facility and was instrumental in bringing about its purchase. Because of his support, he and Rev. Conrad Rotter of Newport's St. Stephen Church were given authorization to purchase it for the Sisters for \$33,000.⁶⁵

Schmitt believed the larger hospital site was so great that he responded to those who criticized the purchased price as excessive, by pledging all his personal property to help offset any financial loss, should the venture fail.⁶⁶

In the spring after the Sisters acquired the former college building, it reopened as St. Elizabeth Hospital with capacity for 110 beds.⁶⁷ The building proved ideal for hospital purposes, located on what was then the city's highest point, surrounded by extensive gardens which served to provide the patients' a relaxed and serene atmosphere. St. Elizabeth continued caring for some 2000 to 2200 patients annually at this location until 1914 when this facility moved to a new building at 21st Street and Eastern Avenue.

During the same year (1848) the legislature altered the Baptist Seminary charter, Catholics formed the St. John Orphan Society and purchased a site on Madison Avenue near 15th for construction of an orphanage. The home was never built however and children were boarded to private families instead.⁶⁸

It was not until 1868 that the Society acquired its own home when it purchased the Preparatory College of St. Aloysius. This school had been established only the previous year on a Lexington Pike site about five miles south of Covington [present Ft. Mitchell – editor]. The seminary building and its surrounding acreage proved to be ideal for the orphanage.⁶⁹ The new home, dedicated in 1871, housed only girls at first, while homeless boys were lodged at St. Joseph Orphanage n Cold Spring. Finally, in 1885 both sexes were housed at the Kenton County facility.⁷⁰

Meanwhile, Western's old campus became split by the *Covington & Lexington Railroad*, the remainder of the land sold off and in March 1916, the Theological Building itself was demolished. Its cornerstone was saved and sent to the library of Louisville's Southern Baptist Theological Seminary where it serves as a reminder of what was once hoped would become the nation's leading Baptist school of theology.⁷¹

The Institute's other buildings still exist and serve as private residences. The president's home, 1026 Russell has a state historic highway marker, while the faculty building stands at 112 West Eleventh.

The 1026 Russell home was built by Alfred Sanford, son of Thomas Sanford, and remained in the Sanford family until acquired by the WBTI. It was originally constructed in Federal style but, after suffering heavy damage from a fire, was re-designed in French Empire.⁷²

Despite the fact the **Baptists** picked Covington as the site of their seminary, they were surprisingly slow in establishing their first church within the city. As late as 1840, there were only nine Baptist churches in all of Kentucky providing full-time ministers who "gave themselves wholly to the ministry [and looked] to the churches for support."⁷³ One was at Covington where Reverend Joseph T. Roberts was pastor.⁷⁴

The local First Baptist Church was formally organized March 10, 1838, when 21 members met in a building at the northeast corner of Fourth and Scott to hear Elder Samuel W. Lynd preach the first service.⁷⁵ The congregation had no regular meeting place but held services at various places about town. In time, Reverend John B. Cook became the group's first pastor.⁷⁶

By May 1841, the congregation was meeting in a structure near the foot of Garrard that eventually was occupied by Lewis N. Senour's tobacco factory. After a short time, the congregation returned to the building at Fourth and Scott.

In 1857, Baptists living in the southern part of the expanding town called a meeting on the lawn of the defunct seminary. There, they organized what they termed "John's Baptist Church." The name was chosen in recognition of the group's first pastor. The new congregation soon erected a church building at the corner of Madison and Robbins and adopted the still-existing name of Madison Avenue Baptist Church.

In 1871, the congregation of the original First Baptist erected a large edifice on West Fourth Street which its members still occupy. At the time, it was noted the front was of "pure Kentucky limestone," and the structure itself represented "something new and unique in church architecture in Covington."⁷⁷

The Baptists also attracted a number of blacks, both slave and free. Those who attended services were required to sit at the rear of the white congregation or occupy the balcony if one was available. Still other blacks were given permission to cross the river to Ohio for church.

Eventually, in 1864, Reverend George W. Dupree and **Jacob Price** took the lead in organizing the First Baptist Colored Church. The 22 charter members conducted services at Price's home and chose him as the first pastor.⁷⁸

Price, a free black who lived at what was then 61 Bremen Street, was a carpenter and as a young man, started his own lumber yard in the 400 block of Madison. He was widely respected for his business integrity and soon had an annual income of about \$15,000 – a handsome income for the time. He also amassed considerable holdings in real estate and as a minister, became influential in attempts to improve Negroes' lot. Price took up residence at 245 East 10th Street where he spent the remainder of his life.

In 1833, two years before the Baptists acquired the site for their WBTI, **Catholics** purchased a plot at Fifth and Montgomery. A small church and school as well as an orphanage were built and on September 21, 1834, dedicated St. Mary Mission. Dedicatory addresses were made in German by Father Martin Henne and in English by Bishop John B. Purcell and Father Stephen H. Montgomery.⁷⁹ [Father Henne later was consecrated bishop of Milwaukee –editor]

The mission's location was in a relatively isolated section of town and the newly-erected little house of worship was completely surrounded by a dense growth of woods. Services were held every week until 1837 when the mission was raised to parish status and Father Montgomery, a Maryland native, was assigned as its first resident pastor.

Throughout the 1830s and '40s, Europe's famines and political and military turmoil prompted hundreds of thousands of immigrants to America and Covington witnessed a steady increase of Irish and German-born residents.

Services at St. Mary's, like those at the local Protestant churches, were in English, which had a minimum impact on the English-speaking Irish. For the Germans, the language barrier was very real and presented an absolute necessity for church services in the Teutonic tongue.

Ever since Karl Bosemer, a baker of German heritage, had come here in the 1820s to open a combined grocery and tavern near the public commons, local German Catholics regarded his business as a gathering place. The group who met there developed the plans for the first German-language parish.⁸⁰ The group eventually set up temporary quarters on the second floor of the National Hotel on Scott Street where they were ministered by Father Ferdinand Kuhr.⁸¹

Father Kuhr was a native of Eslohe, Prussia who came to America in 1839; to Covington in 1841. Here he proceeded to organize the group at Bosemer's, along with other German-speaking members of St. Mary's, into a new parish to be known as *Muttergottes Gemeinde*.

Land was purchased on Sixth Street and on April 4, 1842, the cornerstone was laid for a magnificent *Muttergottes Kirche*. The church building was surmounted by a tall steeple, topped by a huge ball and cross, and like its eventual successor, became a Covington landmark that was seen for miles in all directions.⁸²

As work progressed on the church, the town experienced its first overt act of friction between the various religious bodies. In August, a German immigrant, said to be intoxicated, was accused of interrupting an outdoor Methodist service by calling its German minister a liar.⁸³

The incident prompted the editor of the *Register* to explode with indignation. America, he wrote, was justly proud of its religious freedom, and of taking in the religiously oppressed and persecuted. The German Catholics, he reminded his readers, had been welcome and given protection from their oppressors. For this, he noted, the immigrants initially seemed grateful.⁸⁴

The journalist complained that as the number of immigrants increased to the point of gaining influence, "they throw off the garb of humility and assume an offensive attitude and take upon themselves to dictate how we shall manage our affairs, either in politics or religion. Not content with being secured in the free exercise and enjoyment of their own religious creed, they attempt to frustrate others in their rights and privileges and treat their foster-friends with contempt and contumely . . . some, we are sorry to say, act more like demons than saints."⁸⁵

The writer cited instances of German Catholic arrogance in other cities and said:

*Covington does not escape the insults of those bigoted fanatics. For two Sabbaths past, Revs. WM. NAST and ADAM MILLER, highly learned and talented German Methodist Preachers, have preached . . . under a beach grove not far from the premises known as the Montgomery House. Whilst Mr. Miller was preaching last Sabbath, we are informed, one of the German Catholics insulted him by calling him a liar and he escaped the severest penalty of the law by the interferences of a friend who apologized for him on the score of ignorance and drunkenness.*⁸⁶

There were rumors, the writer continued, that the local priest was stirring up religious animosity and more incidents were planned. He warned any possible future troublemaker to “beware,” and declared:

*Like priest, like people – and the spirit which the German priest manifests in this matter clearly shows that he is totally ignorant of what constitutes the inestimable privilege of civil, political or religious liberty – he has not yet drunk in the spirit of freedom and does not understand the institutions of a free government.*⁸⁷

The editor assured his readers he was not taking such a stand because it was a Methodist minister who was insulted but because of a concern for basic American freedoms. The offender, he explained, was one of those coming from a land where they had been “subjects to a bigoted monarchy with political privileges not far above the slaves in Kentucky” and who were now attempting to deny others the very freedoms which they themselves had once been denied.⁸⁸

Father Kuhr later wrote about the church’s beginnings in a letter to the Prince Archbishopric Professorship of Chair of the Leopold Foundation in Vienna, Austria. The letter, dated November 19, 1844, was cited in a 1902 German-language *History of Covington* and reads:

At my arrival in Covington a few years ago, I met with about forty families who possessed so little knowledge of churchly matters that one could not attribute a name to them.

I, myself, carpented an altar that at the present time serves as high altar in the new church. I made the remaining objects necessary for spiritual service or sought to borrow them. I then held mass for several months in a hall that I rented from the Americans. Here, the Most Reverend Domcapitular Salzbacker held mass once.

*I strove now to buy a construction site as soon as possible for the new church. Although I borrowed money for it, I began immediately to build it, and within six months stood a new brick church under roof. It is a hundred feet long fifty feet wide and decorated within by columns. At the same time I built a school-house. I myself, had to be construction chief, supply all materials and seek the necessary money from all sides.*⁸⁹

The school Father Kuhr referred to was a thirty by eighteen feet structure at the church’s rear. It remained in use until 1862 when it was replaced by a new three-story structure, also of brick.⁹⁰

ONE OF THE TEACHERS at the little sixth street school was the talented Professor Bernard Francis **Hellebusch**, a native of Oldenburg, Germany. Hellebusch, who made his home at the southeast corner of Fifth and Russell, was deeply religious and composed several religious hymns after migrating to Covington. In 1858, he published his popular *Gesang und Gebetbuch*, a prayer and song book which eventually went through 69 editions. He published a second song book that same year, the “Hellebusch Method and Hymnal,” containing numerous German folk songs and religious hymns. Possibly Hellebusch’s best known work was his *Cantata Catholica*. It offered an especially wide selection of Masses, Vespers Litanies and Hymns.⁹¹ Eventually, in 1880, Professor Hellebusch joined the staff of St. Aloysius School where he remained until his death on June 11, 1885.⁹²

Father Kuhr took note of his parish’s expanding German population and forecast a rising need for yet another parish. His prediction quickly materialized as parishioners living in the fast-growing German neighborhoods of Lewisburg and Amsterdam began collecting funds to erect their own neighborhood school.

That was 1848 and plans for a school quickly enlarged to include a proposed church. A construction site was secured at the corner of Leonard and Worth Streets, where the following year a small frame school house was built and occupied.⁹³

By the end of 1854, the Lewisburg and Amsterdam parishioners also built their church. It was erected next to the school and as the first parish created out of *Muttergottes Gemeinde*, was named St. John Parish.⁹⁴

Meanwhile, in late 1848, a dispute arose between the Diocese of Louisville and Cincinnati over which would have jurisdiction over the Covington parishes. The dispute continued into 1852 when the First Plenary Council of Baltimore petitioned the Holy See to form all of eastern Kentucky into a new diocese.⁹⁵

Accordingly, on July 29, 1853, Pope Pius IX established the Diocese of Covington containing 17, 286 square miles, including 57 counties.⁹⁶

The Very Reverend George Aloysius Carrell, SJ, consecrated on All Saints Day November 1, 1853, was named the new diocese's first bishop.⁹⁷

One of Bishop Carrell's earliest concerns was completion of a cathedral. St. Mary Church at 5th and Montgomery was considered too small and on October 2, 1853, a cornerstone was laid for a new cathedral on East Eighth Street. The event was witnessed by some 5,000 spectators.⁹⁸ The finished structure measured 65' wide and 126' long.⁹⁹

Until the new St. Mary Cathedral was dedicated July 11, 1854, Bishop Carrell used the former mission on Fifth Street as the temporary head church for the new diocese.¹⁰⁰

ABOUT THE SAME TIME St. Mary was first established as a mission, James Grimsley Arnold built a frame church for the Christian – what some called, the Campbellites. It stood on Second Street at the southwest corner of an alley between Garrard and Greenup. The Christians had previously worshipped in the log cabin on the public square and it was there the Reverend James Challen claimed to have formed the first local Christian Church as early as 1824.¹⁰¹

On one occasion, Reverend Alexander Campbell, the Irish-born minister who organized the Christian Church as a separate denomination, came to Covington to preach in an upper room of Arnold's store. Arnold had always made the room available for public meetings.¹⁰²

Another Christian Church's outstanding pioneer leaders to preach here was the renowned "Raccoon" John Smith.¹⁰³ Reverend Smith was a former Baptist minister who enjoyed a wide reputation as a vigorous and influential spiritual leader. Reverend Smith acquired his unusual nickname when he introduced himself on one of his many speaking engagements as being "John Smith from the Little South Fork ... where raccoons make their homes."¹⁰⁴

Reverend Smith possessed unusual ability as a speaker and when he became convinced he should take up the Christian Church's cause, he succeeded in taking his entire Baptist congregation with him into the new denomination.¹⁰⁵

Reverend Campbell's early followers generally preferred their group be known as the Disciples of Christ. Still they are known as the Christian Church, even though that was the original corporate name of a denomination organized by former Presbyterian minister Reverend Barton W. Stone who, along with several congregations, had withdrawn from Presbyterian authority.¹⁰⁶ Reverend Stone and his followers eventually joined the movement begun by Campbell to be part of the growing Disciples of Christ. The merger was completed in 1832.

THE PRESBYTERIANS, at this time, became deeply concerned about strengthening their position in northern Kentucky and in 1834, Joseph Cabell Harrison, a first cousin to President William Henry Harrison, established the Richwood Presbyterian Church in Boone County. In May 1841, Presbyterian minister William Orr came to Covington from Charleston, Indiana, where he had been conducting a girls' school. Reverend Orr, who planned to move his school to this city, was appalled to find Covington had no church of his persuasion nor offered any regular services by a Presbyterian minister.¹⁰⁷

Reverend Orr immediately proposed to conduct regular Sunday services for the few Presbyterians in town. The proposal was accepted and in August, the little group began meeting in two small rooms donated by Timothy A. Goodhue. The meeting place was in a private school which Goodhue, a native of Deerfield, New Hampshire, conducted on the west side of Madison between Fourth and Fifth. The church was finally formally organized the following November.¹⁰⁸

The congregation grew so rapidly that the two rooms could not accommodate all who attended. Member William Ernst erected at his own expense, a 25 x 40 feet frame building for temporary use until a permanent structure could be erected.¹⁰⁹ Ernst was born in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, where his Strassburg forbearers had settled. His father, John C. Ernst, was a Presbyterian minister who spoke no English, while his mother had died at Dresden, her birthplace.

When young Ernst first came to Kentucky in 1834, he settled in Lexington. He remained only a short time as by 1838 moved to a more Teutonic Covington where he became president of the local Northern Bank of Kentucky branch and became one of the town's wealthiest property owners.

The Presbyterians rushed construction of their permanent building, completed in time for dedication on Christmas Day 1842. It was a modest building but was of brick and measured 34 x 60 feet with a basement for lecture rooms and Sunday school.¹¹⁰

EPISCOPALIANS that same year were also determined to begin a Covington church and received permission from the Presbyterians to use the little frame structure that had been built by Ernst. There, the first local Episcopal service took place on May 8th with Bishop Benjamin Bosworth Smith officiating.¹¹¹

The Right Reverend Smith, native of Rhode Island, was the first Episcopal Bishop of Kentucky and had come here in response to urging of Dr. Thomas Bird, a partner in a drugstore business on Lower Market.¹¹² Bishop Smith authorized Green Grove Moore, formerly of Maine, to officiate as a Lay Reader and the following Sunday, Moore, once a Methodist minister, began regular Episcopal services in a Madison Avenue school room. He was ordained as a deacon and on November 24th, conducted an organization meeting of the parish of Trinity Church.¹¹³

By then the group was meeting in a third floor room of a brick building on the south side of Market Apace between Scott and Lower Market.¹¹⁴ Artist John Wesley Venable was a prominent member of that group and eventually became an Episcopal priest.¹¹⁵ On June 24th the following year, the Episcopalians laid the cornerstone of their new Trinity Church building.¹¹⁶

The local Episcopalians served the community well and in the second half of the twentieth century refused to follow other churches abandoning the central city for outlying suburban areas.¹¹⁷ On April 30, 1978, Trinity Church renewed their pledge of service to the community with a symbolic planting of a flowering pear tree in Goebel Park.¹¹⁸

AMERICA'S URBAN GROWTH during the 1840s was the greatest such growth in the nation's history and the Irish accounted for a substantial new world arrivals. They represented virtually all religious creeds and included thousands of Episcopalians, Methodists and Baptists and literally tens of thousands of Irish Presbyterians.

Covington became home to many of these Irish immigrants and local churches quickly reflected their presence with surging increases in memberships.

Migrant Germans, however, almost all held to the Lutheran, Protestant Evangelical or Reform beliefs. Episcopalians and Presbyterians were little able to increase their churches among the Teutonic newcomers.¹¹⁹

William Ernst's father was probably Covington's first German Protestant minister and occasionally conducted services in the English-speaking Presbyterian Churches for local Germans of that faith. There was no organized congregation and Reverend Ernst's followers were limited largely to the Pennsylvania-German inhabitants rather than European immigrants.¹²⁰

Presbyterians were having little success attracting migrant Germans but Methodists succeeded in founding and maintaining a small congregation. The minister, Reverend Heinrich Ernst Pilcher, came to Covington in 1840 and remained active in local affairs for several years.¹²¹

Although German Protestant ministers were in the community for a considerable time before Catholics' Father Kuhr, the first German-language Protestant congregation was not officially formed until after Father Kuhr built his first *kirche*. The Protestants' first regularly assigned Teutonic minister was a Pastor Frederick Goebel who came over from Cincinnati to hold services in the town school house.

It was not until 1847 that the group organized its own church, the German Protestant Evangelical St. Paul Congregation – a congregation in which Pastor Doelle served for a considerable time.¹²² Their first building was a frame structure which opened in August that year Eleventh and Banklick Streets.

In 1860, the congregation began work on a larger and more ornate building which stood until the late 20th century when destroyed by fire. That structure, completed in 1867, was built in stages with the first floor constructed in 1860-1 as a German-language school and pastor and teacher residence. In 1875, the building's tower was extended upward and a clock and bell installed. A large copper hand pointing heavenward was mounted at the top. In 1968, the congregation abandoned the neighborhood and its sturdy old church building that served so well, and moved to what some members considered a more advantageous location in Ft. Wright.

Reverend Orr continued to serve the Presbyterians without pay until March 1843 when the church voted to pay him a salary of \$300 for the year.¹²³ The need for larger quarters became more pressing as the Presbyterians grew. Eventually, the little brick building on Fourth between Scott and Greenup was demolished and in 1850, a larger structure built on its site. During construction, the congregation held services in Covington's city hall.¹²⁴

ONE OF KENTUCKY'S NOTED WRITERS of the time was Reverend John Alexander McClung, who also happened to be a Presbyterian minister. Reverend McClung was not only a learned scholar but also possessed a photographic memory and would often recite word-for-word accounts of book-length writings.

McClung's history of the west, *Sketches of Western Adventure*, was first published in 1832 at Philadelphia and re-published several times. One of its best-known editions was published in Covington in 1872 by Richard H. Collins and is recognized as a major source of information on the early history of the Ohio Valley.

Covington had long been one of Reverend McClung's favorite cities and in 1851, he spent considerable time here when he made numerous appearances as guest preacher in various local churches. Three years later, Reverend John R. Worrall came from Oxford, Ohio to accept the Presbyterian pastorate.¹²⁵

One of the more devout Covington Presbyterians during these years was Jonathan Edwards Spilman, a man whose name should be included in any list of great Kentuckians. It is ironical that Spilman remained unknown to later generations until Judge Earl R. Hoover of Cleveland, wrote a scholarly and well-documented biography for the July 1968 edition of the Kentucky Historical Society's *Register*.¹²⁶ Judge Hoover declared the state had completely overlooked the fact Spilman wrote an internationally known melody while living here. The melody is probably known and loved by more people around the world than any other one thing ever created by a Kentuckian.¹²⁷

Spilman was born at Greenville, Kentucky, April 15, 1812, and about six years of age migrated with his family to White County, Illinois. At 19, he entered newly-established Illinois College at Jacksonville and was a member of its first graduating class. Spilman decided to practice law and entered law school at Transylvania in 1836.¹²⁸

One summer day, the following year, the musically-inclined law student was seated under one of the campus trees, reading his favorite poetry. He began forming an immortal melody that Hoover said could easily match the works of such giants of poetry as Robert Burns.¹²⁹

At the suggestion of friends, Spilman submitted the melody to a leading publisher. It was immediately accepted and *Flow Gently Sweet Afton* became one of the most popular songs of any early American writer.¹³⁰

The tune Spilman composed is also used to accompany the words of one of the world's most beloved Christmas songs, *Luther's Cradle Hymn* or as many know it, *Away in a Manger*.¹³¹

*Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
The little Lord Jesus lay down his sweet head.
The stars in the heavens look down where he lay.
The little Lord Jesus asleep in the hay.*

Even though there are some 41 different tunes to this psalm, it is Spilman's which is conceded to be the most popular and universally recognized.¹³²

After being admitted to the bar, Spilman opened his law practice at Nicholasville, but eventually migrated to the more lucrative Covington scene where he continued in law from 1849 until 1856. His law partner was first Samuel M. Moore and later John W. Menzies.¹³³

Events were occurring that would eventually lead to armed conflict between northern and southern states and the Presbyterians, like many other religious groups, became deeply divided over the same issues. Eventually, the differences in opinion prompted a group whose sympathies ran counter to those of the majority of the local congregation to begin forming a southern, or Second Presbyterian Congregation.

Spilman was having serious doubts about his career in law and in 1858 became a Presbyterian minister. He served pastorates in Covington and Maysville.¹³⁴

In May that year, the *Covington Journal* took note of Spilman's change of careers and said it was but a short time earlier that the newspaper had recommended him as an attorney. It noted he was accepting the pastorate of Covington's newly-formed Second Presbyterian Church and declared:

*We hail with pleasure the return of Mr. Spilman to our city. We have no doubt he will do much towards building up the new church.*¹³⁵

Reverend Spilman, whose home was on the east side of Madison between 11th and 12th, was named as the splinter group's pastor and on February 3, 1861, helped dedicate the congregation's newly-completed brick building at 14 East Ninth Street [structure still standing in 2012 - editor]. The new structure, "lighted with gas, from brackets at the sides," was designed to seat about 650 worshippers.¹³⁶

The structure had a balcony where slaves who attended were required to sit. It was not unusual at that time for slaves to attend the same church as their owners but they usually were required to sit at the rear of the congregation or in a balcony, if one was available [Before the 1888 additions, Trinity Episcopal Church had a balcony used for just such a purpose, perhaps continuing after the Civil War – editor].

The congregation remained on East Ninth until 1889 when it moved to 1025 Madison where it became known as the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church. Ironically, the Ninth Street structure was then used to house an all-negro congregation, the Ninth Street United Methodist Church. [The structure is now used – in 2012 – by a Spanish-speaking denomination – editor]

The Madison Avenue Presbyterians eventually surrendered their separate identity when they merged with a smaller Lakeside Presbyterian Church in 1961 and abandoned the city in favor of a suburban location.¹³⁷ Their building was then demolished and the site made into a parking lot for a neighboring funeral home.

Spilman, as noted above also held a pastorate in Maysville where a tragedy took the life of his wife Eliza, occurring before his very eyes.¹³⁸ On August 8, 1866, Eliza, who was a niece of former president Zachary Taylor, boarded the elegant new river packet *Bostona No. 3*. She planned to meet her son at Cincinnati and visit Covington and Louisville. When the packet left the Maysville wharf and headed downstream, Eliza rushed to the rail so she might wave to her family. At that moment, someone shouted that fire had broken out aboard the vessel.¹³⁹ The flames spread quickly throughout the boat. When Eliza Taylor Spilman tried to escape the blazing inferno, she was severely scalded by live steam escaping from a broken pipe. She died two days later.¹⁴⁰

Eventually, Reverend Jonathan Spilman migrated to Flora, Clay County, Illinois, where he became pastor of that town's Presbyterian Church. On May 23, 1896, whose name has become associated with those of Robert Burns and Martin Luther and given the world an immortal work of art, died and was laid to rest in Flora's Elmwood Cemetery.¹⁴¹

The original Presbyterian structure, now known as the First Presbyterian, at 117 East Fourth, between Scott and Greenup, became the home of the Fourth Street Christian Church.¹⁴² The dissidents, who differed with the original group over the method of serving communion, eventually moved to Madison Avenue near Fifteenth. The Fourth Street structure was then used for a variety of purposes, including an American Legion hall and later a factory. In July 1978 the historic structure suffered moderate damage from fire.

The original Christian congregation continued to expand and in 1865 purchased its present Fifth Street site where a new church was under construction vacated its Third Street quarters in January 1867, services were held in the Odd Fellows' Building for a brief period until the new structure was finished.¹⁴³

Disaster struck in 1893 when the new Fifth Street church building was destroyed by a costly fire. It was quickly rebuilt, however, and dedicated October 14, 1894. The sturdy structure still served the congregation in its original capacity.

Meanwhile, the First Presbyterian church moved to a new a rather impressive church on West Fourth that has since been razed for the Internal Revenue complex. The congregation is now on Highland Avenue.

The local growth of a formally organized Methodist Church had its beginnings in Newport, where in September 1865, Bishop Francis Asbury, America's first Methodist bishop, Baptist two of Elijah Spark's children. In 1806, a small class was formed at Jonathan Hulin's home, comprised of Dr. Thomas Hinde and eleven women, including Nancy Southgate and Rachael Rittenhouse. Those 12 individuals constituted Newport's Methodist Church until 1812 when John Lindsey and five additional women joined the already predominantly female group.¹⁴⁴

The few Covington Methodists there were at the time had no organization of their own and each Sunday crossed the Licking to join the Newport group for services. There Jonathan Stamper served as minister and conducted services at either the Hulin home, Newport Barracks or the Newport Courthouse.

Methodist circuit riders sometimes appeared in Covington to offer services at the log school house on the public square. Each of them was usually dressed in a sturdy long blue coat, wore a broad-brim hat, and carried saddlebags that were often stuffed to overflowing.¹⁴⁵

The arrival of such a rider was a momentous event for the community. Large crowds always gathered at such times not only for the religious services, but also for news from the outside.¹⁴⁶

Probably one most noted early minister to appear in Covington was the famed itinerant frontier preacher, **Lorenzo Dow**, though never officially accepted as a Methodist minister, was nevertheless closely associated with that denomination. The Connecticut-born Dow often preached in the town's log schoolhouse and once attracted an estimated 300 listeners. The crowd could not be accommodated in the little school, so the meeting adjourned to a lumberyard on the opposite side of the street. It was Covington's first large-scale open-air religious meeting. That was 1825, the same year General Lafayette passed through town.¹⁴⁷

At other times to overflowing crowds, Dow would usually preach from the school's doorway. On these occasions, women and children sat inside the school, while the men gathered into an out-of-doors group.¹⁴⁸ One Sunday, while Dow was addressing such a crowd, he noted a woman, who had a widespread reputation for her talking, whispering to another. Dow tolerated the woman for a lengthy period of time but at last his patience gave out. He struck three resounding taps on the door, pointed a finger at the offending woman and drawled out in measured tones, "In heaven there was silence for the space of half an hour; there were no women there (yet)."¹⁴⁹

The men thoroughly enjoyed Dow's admonition to the talkative woman and gleefully used it for months afterward as a repeated lecture against their own wives' volubility.¹⁵⁰ The itinerate Dow had a flair for the dramatic

and a penchant for using simple speech and commonplace situations to underscore his messages. This style of preaching was typified by a sermon he once began by reading from St. Paul.¹⁵¹ “I can do all things,” Dow read and then paused. He took off his spectacles, laid them on the open Bible and loudly declared: “No, Paul, you are mistaken for once! I’ll bet you \$5 you can’t and stake the money!”¹⁵²

The preacher laid the money on the Bible and continued reading – “...through Jesus Christ, our Lord.”¹⁵³ “Ah, Paul,” Dow dramatically exclaimed while snatching up the money, “that’s a different matter – the bet’s withdrawn!”¹⁵⁴

Word of Dow’s death at Washington, D.C. in 1834 prompted a period of genuine grief among those Covingtonians who had personal contact with him.

Yet another early Methodist preacher at Covington was Reverend John Newland Maffitt. He was known as a “great exhorter” and so popular that at times his followers spread carpets on the streets for him to walk on.¹⁵⁵ Once while delivering a sermon, Maffitt noticed a number of particularly unruly young men in the congregation. He was not the least un-nerved by their presence but shouted to them: “Come up . . . Come up!! If we can’t get fish we will take tadpoles.”¹⁵⁶

Dr. Theodore N. Wise, who set up medical practice at Covington in 1837, declared Reverend Maffitt was one of the most distinguished ministers south of the Ohio and was as celebrated for his vanity as for his eloquence. It was said many came to his services to simply watch him primp before a small hand-held mirror while one of the church members led the congregation in prayer.

Such early-day preachers as Reverend Dow and Maffitt were often colorful individuals given to equally colorful speech. Another such Methodist preacher from Kentucky was once delivering a sermon in another state and was describing the happiness to be found in heaven. He summed up by joyously proclaiming: “In short, my brethren, to say all in one word, heaven is a Kentucky of a place.”¹⁵⁷

It was not until 1827 that the town’s first Methodist Society formed. It consisted of ten members and was served by David Musselman, class president and William Powell, minister.¹⁵⁸ Services were held at the log schoolhouse until 1832 when a Methodist Chapel was erected at 233-235 Garrard Street.¹⁵⁹ The Garrard Street Chapel was a two-story double-brick which was later converted into a silk factory and still later to a residence.¹⁶⁰

Mortimer Benton presented the congregation a melodeon for the new building. Much to his surprise though, his gift set off a storm of protest and, according to one individual, led to “words not expressive of brotherly love.”¹⁶¹

Some of the more prim female members condemned Benton for his worldliness and denounced those accepting the gift. Nevertheless, the small reed organ was placed in the chapel and prepared for the next day’s service.¹⁶² Those opposed to the musical device were not to be denied and early Sunday morning two of the more determined women led a group who “grasped the ungodly machine and carried it into the middle of the street and left it.”¹⁶³

Blacks were welcome to attend services at the new church but it was generally understood they were to sit in the gallery overlooking the main auditorium. As with all social classes, their small children frequently became restless during long sermons and would sometimes disrupt the service. One individual remembering these incidents stated: “I remember once a little pickaninny climbed and fell over (the gallery railing) into the lap of a good old deacon who was dozing below.”¹⁶⁴ Happily, neither the child nor the surprised deacon was injured.

In 1838, Covington became a Methodist station and Reverend Thomas R. Malone placed in charge. Four years later, Reverend George C. Light was given charge and delivered his first sermon in that capacity on October 2, 1842.¹⁶⁵ One of Reverend Light’s acquaintances recorded his impression of the minister and wrote:

Among the early preachers was Father Light, a good old man, but an inveterate tobacco chewer and when he became warmed-up in his discourses, he would expectorate tobacco juice so furiously as to make it quite uncomfortable for his congregation¹⁶⁶ on the front benches.

The number of Methodists grew rapidly and on July 8, 1843, the cornerstone of a new church building was laid, located on the east side of Scott between Fifth and Sixth.¹⁶⁷

The slavery debate had grown so intense that it engulfed much of the Methodist membership. A large number of members in the North insisted upon non-slaveholding as a pre-requisite and because of this, broke away from the main body of the Methodist Church. In 1842m they organized the Wesleyan Church.¹⁶⁸ The slavery debate continued and at the 1844 New York meeting of the Methodist Episcopal General Conference, the southern members voted to leave the national ecclesiastical organization to form a distinct southern division.¹⁶⁹

In May the following year, the southerners met at Louisville and voted to separate completely from the national General Conference. They formed what they called the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.¹⁷⁰ The impact of the splintering of their church was felt by Methodists throughout the state, for the Kentucky Conference voted to join the southerners.¹⁷¹ The Covington church was one of those now adhering south.

About that time, the Kentucky Conference divided into two sub-groups. One retained the name Kentucky Conference, and in September 1846, convened in Covington for its first annual convention. Delegates came from throughout Kentucky, southern Ohio and much of what is now West Virginia.¹⁷²

During that same year, the Wesleyan movement took hold locally when 27 members withdrew from the Scott Street congregation to form Wesley Chapel. Under leadership of Reverend Joseph M. Tremble they erected a tiny frame church building on the south side of Third Street where the present Covington-Kenton County Municipal Building stands [former site of the 19th century post office – editor]¹⁷³

The number of local Methodists preferring the non-slaveholding tenets of the Third Street group continued to expand and three years later, in June 1849, reorganized as the Greenup Street Chapel. They laid the foundation of¹⁷⁴ a new and even larger building on the west side of Greenup, south of Fourth.

Despite the fact the Scott Street congregation continued its adherence to the M. E. Church, South, many members persisted in expressing open distaste for the affiliation. This was especially true for the Germans and in 1949, they, along with other German Protestants of the community, organized the German-language Immanuel Methodist Church.¹⁷⁵

The new congregation, like that of Newport's Salem M.S. Church organized a year earlier, adhered north. It became part of the Ohio Conference and stayed with that group until 1864 when the Central German Conference was organized.¹⁷⁶

Reverend Christian Vogel became the first pastor of the newly-formed church which, in 1850, paid the Baptists \$1,100 for a frame chapel. It stood at what was 717-719 Craig Street. Within a few years, the congregation put up what was possibly the first Christmas tree ever seen in Covington and what also proved to be the first to ever to be seen outside an American church.

The Christmas tree, although introduced early in the century, was still a novelty and it was not until 1851 that a German-born minister first placed one inside an American church. That was in Cleveland, where the event touched off a storm of controversy throughout that community.¹⁷⁷

The same reaction occurred in Covington over its first tree. Many criticized it for its pagan origin and denounced it as an example of Teutonic barbarism. Nevertheless, the custom rapidly took hold and in a few years the Christmas tree became an annual institution in virtually every Covington home.

Ever since the Kentucky Conference decided to align with the M.E. Church, South, there had been continued breaking away of parts of congregations to form new groups which chose to adhere to the national ecclesiastical group.¹⁷⁸

The General Conference continued organizing efforts in the state and as new congregations formed, they were made part of the Ohio Conference. This continued until October 1853 when Covington hosted a convention where a Kentucky Conference and various state sub-districts of the national M.E. Church were formed.¹⁷⁹

In the summer of 1854, the local community was visited by cholera which killed as many as 40 citizens a day. As might be expected, the town experienced an extraordinary religious awakening lasting for an extended period. On one Sunday during the following February, there were 200 people who joined the Methodists alone.¹⁸⁰

This revival was not the first, for virtually the same experience occurred a year earlier.¹⁸¹ At that time, a newsman noted the revival taking place at the Greenup Street Methodist Church "continues with unabated power," and had spread to engulf the Methodist Church, South on Scott Street.¹⁸²

Among those joining the Greenup Street church was the family of **Jesse and Hannah Grant**. They had always lived in rural or semi-rural communities but by 1854, Jesse reduced his business operations to a point where they decided to leave their Bethel, Ohio home and retire to the comforts of a city.¹⁸³

When the Grants first considered leaving Bethel, where Jesse once served as mayor, they experienced uncertainty deciding between Newport and Covington.¹⁸⁴ They finally chose Covington perhaps because of its growing cultural offerings and increased opportunities for social contacts. Jesse and Hannah had six grown children and it is known the elder Grants enjoyed visits from the family who now lived in other parts of the country. Covington was better served by riverboat and other transportation than either Bethel or Newport.¹⁸⁵

Among those frequent visitors were their eldest son Ulysses, his wife Julia and their children. Ulysses compiled a distinguished military record during the Mexican War and remained in the army until the same year his parents moved to Covington. He and Julia, like the other Grants, were seen in attendance at the Greenup Street church whenever visiting here from their St. Louis home.¹⁸⁶

Jesse Grant, Pennsylvania-born and Ohio-reared, was an aggressive and ambitious man who built a solidly successful business. He was relatively wealthy when he settled here in 1854 and still owned tanneries in Portsmouth, Ohio and harness factories and leather goods stores in such widely separated communities as Galena, Illinois and LaCross, Wisconsin. The Grants quickly became one of Covington's most prominent families, devoting much of their attention to community and church affairs.

During the Civil War, the Greenup Street congregation regularly hosted scores of federal soldiers and made a practice of preparing food and refreshments for a large number of troops passing through town on their way to southern battlefields.¹⁸⁷

General Grant also continued to attend service here whenever in town. According to many of his fellow worshippers, the modest general never appeared at church in uniform but "would try to pass to the family seat unnoticed . . . avoiding all notoriety and shunning praise."¹⁸⁸

Ulysses' three sisters, Clara Rachel, Virginia and Mary Frances, were faithful in their attendance at the church and always properly attentive to the sermon. Guest ministers sometimes appeared and one, Reverend Michael John Cramer, seemed to have special appeal to the girls' interests – especially Mary Frances.¹⁸⁹

After Reverend Cramer's sermon, he and the girls were introduced. Virginia, or Jenny, with her golden hair, gray-blue eyes and fair complexion, was generally thought to be the family beauty but the eloquently-spoken Mary Frances attracted the young minister's attention.

Reverend Cramer was affiliated with a Cincinnati church at the time and this made it relatively easy for frequent calls on Mary Frances at her Greenup Street home [still standing in 2012 – editor]. Soon their friendship blossomed into romance and in the war year of 1863, the two were united in marriage.¹⁹⁰

Mary Frances was deeply fond of her Greenup Street home and even though she would now live in some of the world's most fascinating cities, continued to visit it whenever she could. Her visits continued long after her husband's death and well into the twentieth century. In late 1904, six months before her own death, she once again "slept under the roof that had sheltered her in the happiest moments of her young life."¹⁹¹

The town's early Methodists were deeply concerned about their younger members' secular education and during the 1850s, acquired the property of "the late Sydney Snowden" as a site for a new high school. There, the new Methodist Female High School opened in August 1856 under R. Case as principal.¹⁹²

The church briefly operated a Methodist Female College on Scott between 7th and 8th Streets. This institution closed in 1859 when Catholic Bishop George A. Carrell purchased it and its 78 x 254 feet lot for approximately \$5500.¹⁹³

The slavery question continued to be a vexing one for Methodists as for other religious denominations. The issue in many congregations was not so much the actual freeing of slaves as it was with the *manner* in which their freedom would be brought about.¹⁹⁴ Most local groups siding with the states' rights view showed relatively little support for those who would fracture the Union over the issue, but this attitude was never sufficient to appease the more adamant of the anti-slavery element. Splits occurred within splits and in 1859, several members of the Greenup Chapel, including Mortimer Benton, transferred affiliation to Trinity Episcopal Church.¹⁹⁵ Benton was one of the original 27 who had withdrawn from the Scott Street Methodists to form the Greenup Chapel's predecessor.¹⁹⁶

Among Covington's ethnic groups represented in the Methodist Church was a large number of **Welsh**. For some time they had talked of establishing their own congregation and by late 1850s, were actively working toward that goal. Finally on May 20, 1860, they dedicated a newly-established Welsh Methodist Church on Lynn Street near Greenup.¹⁹⁷ A pleased writer for the *Covington Journal* took note of the dedication and wrote: "We congratulate our Welsh brethren upon this evidence of the prosperity of their church."¹⁹⁸

The Craig Street congregation also prospered during these years and in 1864 spent \$1,000 to acquire an adjoining house to the church as a parsonage.¹⁹⁹

Two years later, the congregation acquired a building site at the southeast corner of Tenth and Russell where, on July 11, 1869, the cornerstone of a new church was laid. The structure's first floor opened for use that year, but it was not until 1876 that the building was completed. The old Craig Street property was sold for \$4000.²⁰⁰

In 1950, descendants of Immanuel's founders set a precedent for their neighbors, the Evangelical St. Paul congregation, by abandoning the community for a suburban location – in this case Lakeside Park. The sturdy old Tenth and Russell structure was turned into a factory building and warehouse.

COVINGTON ALSO PLAYED a unique role in conjunction with the history of the **Mormon Church**. In 1844, Joseph Smith, the denomination's founder, was killed in Illinois and his successor, Brigham Young, eventually led the Mormons to Utah. There were a few, however, who refused to recognize Young's leadership,

declaring the rightful heir was the slain Joseph's brother, William Smith. William claimed the succession and engaged Young and the church elders in a bitter dispute that ultimately led to William's excommunication.

William and a small number of supporters set up headquarters in Covington from where he frequently fired off letters to the nation's newspapers, declaring "the true principles of original Mormonism has no connection with the treasonable acts and wicked designs of these Salt Lake City Mormons."²⁰¹

On April 5, 1850, the town hosted the "annual Conference of the Latter-Day Saints. Those attending termed the meeting the "greatest Annual Conference held since the martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph." They denounced Brigham Young as a usurper and passed a resolution acknowledging William's "undisputable right to be the President, Prophet, Seer, Revelator and Translator of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints."²⁰²

Conference-goers were adamant in their position toward what they called "Salt Lake Mormons," and declared it was the western group and not William's followers who had been cut off from the true church. A resolution to that effect was passed which read:

*That whereas the Salt Lake Mormons have . . . falsely represented that William Smith has been cut off from the Church . . . we therefore take this opportunity to state flat that their declaration is false and libelous. The fact is that those very men, even all the Salt Lake Mormon leaders, have been cut off from their former Apostleship from the Church . . . by the unanimous vote of the Church and the Presidency thereof and consequently they have no authority to cut off any person from the Church, much less to cut off the President of the Church.*²⁰³

During the Covington conference, William Smith reported receiving a revelation foretelling of an "overflowing scourge" and directing him and his followers "to get from this land and gather in the valley of the Cordilliers mountains."²⁰⁴ The revelation was reported to the public on April 20th by a Covington writer who went on: "In obedience to this revelation a number of these people will depart for Texas in a short time and the remainder will follow in the fall."²⁰⁵

In late 1857, the Mormons again became the subject of excited debate among Covingtonians. Members who had migrated to Utah were expressing impatience with what they considered an unreasonable delay in their territory being admitted to the Union and they were now threatening open rebellion. Their officials were accused of destroying federal records and authorizing militant actions aimed at making Utah a sovereign nation.

The Mormons responded by saying they were exempt from observing U.S. laws and they would henceforth refuse permission for any more California-bound wagon trains to pass through their territory.²⁰⁶ A number of wagon trains now found themselves under armed attack and on one occasion, nearly 135 men, women and children were slaughtered when their wagons were attacked and destroyed. There has been dispute as to who launched the attack but according to one Kentuckian, the massacre was perpetrated by a band of "destroying Angels" acting on orders from Brigham Young.²⁰⁷

About that time, President Buchanan removed Young as territorial governor and dispatched federal troops to the territory to enforce federal law. This galvanized Kentucky to action and in February 1858, the state legislature empowered the governor to raise a regiment of volunteers to offer the federal government.²⁰⁸ Covington lost no time responding to the state's call for volunteers. Aston Madeira, a veteran of the bloody fighting at Buena Vista during the Mexican War, hurried to raise a company. This prompted a local writer to note that since Madeira had once crossed the plains to California, he would be "well posted in all that an officer destined to Utah ought to know."²⁰⁹

The excitement of war was nothing new to Covington and a few days later, the same writer was declaring:

*The military spirit has been aroused in Covington. During the day the events of the Mormon War . . . are anxiously discussed; at night the ear-piercing fife and spirit stirring drum keep alive the excitement. Volunteers for the Mormon War are rendezvousing at Greer's Hall and we are told the ranks of the company are rapidly filling up. Altogether, one is reminded of the recruiting times of the Mexican War.*²¹⁰

Soon, another company was beginning to organize at Cooper's Hall and, as with Madeira's company, attracted scores of "those whose hearts burn with a high ambition for military glory and those who are moved by a less noble impulse, a curiosity to see Mormondom at Uncle Sam's expense."²¹¹

During all this, the expedition of regular army troops, headed by Kentucky's Albert Sidney Johnston, got under way. Mormon leaders promised the troops would meet with strong resistance, but quickly agreed to peace once the expedition reached their territory. There was no bloodshed and in Covington, the "Utah fever," as it was being called, died out as quickly as it had appeared.

The Covington area is also home of the oldest Baptist Church building west of the Alleghenies still being used for its original purpose. In 1794, nine pioneers of the Upper Bluegrass founded this "mother church" of many tri-state Baptist congregations at nearby Bullitsville. Three years later they built a small church of logs and in 1819, erected the still-standing white brick sanctuary.

The building, though small and plain, was sturdily built and has walls measuring sixteen inches thick.²¹² Its surroundings have changed little since it was built or for that matter, since the day in March 1801 when Zebulon Montgomery Pike, discoverer of Pike's Peak and Clarissa Brown were married by Elder Lewis DeWise of this pioneer congregation.

On July 29, 1803, representatives of the Bullitsville Church met with those of eight other congregations at the Dry Creek Meeting House in present Kenton County and organized the North Bend Association of Baptists.²¹³

Another area church, the Hopeful Lutheran near Florence, holds the distinction of being the first Lutheran Church organized west of the Alleghenies. It was organized by a small group of German settlers who came here from Hebron, Virginia. They traveled in covered wagons through North Carolina and over the Daniel Boone Trail through Kentucky and Tennessee.²¹⁴

On reaching northern Kentucky, the group decided to settle and make their homes. One of their first acts was establishing a church and called it "Hopeful," signifying the hope their faith might be preserved in the Upper Bluegrass. The church adopted a constitution January 6, 1806.²¹⁵

Fifteen years later, in 1821, Covington's Thomas Madden purchased a tract of farmland at the junction of Boone County's Price and Burlington Pikes, with the intention of establishing a new town. He, with a small group, established the community of Maddentown which, in 1830, after a period of time which it was known as Connersville, officially changed its name to **Florence**.²¹⁶

In 1836, the year after the Western Baptists first acquired their Covington site, Mr. and Mrs. Manning established the town's second exclusively female school. Known as Beech Grove Academy, it was situated on an elevated seven-acre campus overlooking the Ohio River and provided a "fine view." The school became co-educational in September 1837, when a male department was added under S. H. Montgomery and his assistant Dr. J. Mudd.

At the same time Beech Grove was established, city council again acted in regard to public education when it paid \$150 for a one-room log cabin at the foot of Garrard Street. Even though it was 1836, council still considered the cabin's location "on the banks of the Ohio" as ideal for a schoolhouse because the children would not be exposed to Indians. The school began operation in December that year.²¹⁷

The Indians who concerned council were undoubtedly those being moved from Ohio to new homes further west. Their displacement went on through the 1830s and 1840s and it was commonplace for large bands of Wyandot, Seneca, Miami and other uprooted tribes to camp on the city's outer fringes. There, they waited for steamboats that would carry them to another leg of their long westward journey.

Also during 1836, the internationally known actress, Frances Ann Drake was operating the Covington Female Seminary in her "commodious and elegantly situation" home at 322 East Third Street.²¹⁸ She was a member of Noah M. Ludlow's theatrical troupe and conducted her short-lived school between the troupe's 1836 – 37 western tours. Even as today, teachers recognized the value of professional organizations. Notices of their meetings often posed somewhat of an enigma, as in the following:

Notice to Teachers:

The Campbell County Association of Professional Teachers and friends of education will meet in Covington, Kentucky; on the last Saturday at 10 o'clock AM.

On the Friday evening preceding, President McGuffee of the Cincinnati College and Dr. Beecher are expected to deliver addresses on the subject of education. The friends of education, generally and teachers in particular, are respectfully and earnestly solicited to attend. If it be asked – "What is the object of the meeting?" – I answer, "Come and see."

The seriousness with which the teachers viewed their role can be judged by the caliber of those asked to address the meetings. The “President McGuffee” mentioned was William Holmes McGuffee, one of America’s foremost educators and author of the famous series of readers bearing his name. The other, Dr. Lyman Beecher, was the nationally renowned president of Lane Theological Seminary and head of the remarkable Beecher family.

The federal census of 1840 revealed Covington’s population of 2,026 inhabitants. There were 133 whites over the age of 20 who could neither read nor write. Community leaders were shocked by what they considered an unacceptable rate of illiteracy, so on March 26th that year, city council appointed a committee to study the possibility of supporting a free public school with a portion of coffee-house fees. Many of the coffee-houses in existence were little more than saloons of the lowest type and were thought to detract from the town’s general well-being.

By May 1841, a highly significant city ordinance on public education was passed. The new resolutions gave the school visitors, a group equivalent to a board of education, power to contract for building a schoolhouse of their own plan and further stated it lawful to operate a school for 1841 and every year thereafter.

City Council suggested the newly-authorized school consist of two departments, male and female, but left the final decision with the visitors. The two departments were to be housed in the same building but with arrangements to keep them separate and distinct. Each year there would be appointed “one principal teacher and two others who shall be female.”²²⁰

The following October 14th, the new three-room school opened for instruction with attendance of 150 pupils. It replaced the two one-room schools and cost nearly \$2200 which the city paid in installments. The new school, erected on the public square, was headed by C. W. Clayton as principal. His staff consisted of Miss M. Rice and Miss E. Thomas.²²¹

The city’s new school’s first report was for the year ending June 18, 1842. Brief in nature, it consisted only of the following:

<i>Mr. C. W. Clayton, Principal for 9 months</i>	\$350
<i>Miss M. Rice, 1st Assistant</i>	\$175
<i>Miss E. Thomas, 2nd Assistant</i>	\$150

There were a minority of parents who voiced an unfounded criticism of educators and the methods used to teach. Now that schooling was free and universally available, the numbers of critics increased. Even as with later generations, most of education’s critics would quickly admit they knew little about the complexities of the judicial, medical or other professional fields, yet they often felt highly qualified to interfere in the professional conduct of teachers. Frequently this qualification was based solely that they themselves had received some schooling as children.

Locally, some of the strongest critics came from members of the lower socio-economic classes who compared the teacher’s salary for a nine-month year with their own annual income and called the teachers’ salaries extravagant over-spending of tax money.

The *Licking Valley Register* strongly defended education and its editor replied to those critics:

PARENTS SHOULD GIVE TO TEACHERS THEIR SYMPATHY

*Some parents . . . are still lamentably deficient in this one Christian grace and virtue. They seem to have no conception that he has worth like other men that time with its free use and unfettered enjoyment is also to him a blessed commodity . . . They seem not to realize that the teacher has nerves that need relaxation, languid pulses to be revived and wasted strength to be renewed and they can, and not infrequently do, **grudge** the limited vacations which are absolutely necessary to recruit his crippled energies and exhausted body.*²²²

The editor addressed those who declared the cost of a teacher’s service unfairly matched and often exceeded that of a “true worker” such as a clerk or laborer. He wrote:

*But as there is no estimating the amount of good or evil influence upon the ductile mind of a child, extending as it does . . . operating unseen upon the principles and habits of all after life, running into eternity even – so there can be no estimating, in mere dollars and cents, the unspeakable value of a good teacher’s services.*²²³

Initially, there was some debate about what population segment should be called upon to pay for a free, public educational system. Should only the families with children be the ones to pay? Should only families whose children attended the system pay? Or, should the cost be spread over the entire population?

One group, the Covington Polemic Society, had what it considered a partial answer when it proposed an annual tax of one dollar be placed on all “old bachelors and maids.” The money raised by such a tax would be placed in a “bachelors’ sinking fund” and its interest used for schools.²²⁴

Neither was there complete agreement on benefits of equal schooling for boys and girls. Although council made provision for the public school system to accept girls, there were those who questioned the wisdom of such a move.

One Covingtonian who objected, declared that men, by their very nature, were “the authors of every human improvement.”²²⁵ With regard to women, he said: “Nothing is plainer than, that they were intended to spend their time, their talents, their influences, their all, in the domestic circle. That is the place for women.”²²⁶

Private schools, then widely accepted, developed far more rapidly than their public counterparts. One very popular was operated on Third Street by a Mr. and Mrs. Bacon. A December 1835 announcement said of this school:

The proprietor will furnish a convenient carriage, a steady horse and a careful driver to go every morning (where the distance does not exceed the city limits) and receive children for his school and to carry to their homes in the evening every school day for one dollar per quarter (paid in advance).²²⁷

Tuition costs were as reasonable as the one dollar transportation cost.

The growing number of private schools included the Covington Academy, a classical school for both male and female. It opened September 9, 1838 under superintendence of a Mr. Fellows.

Another popular school was operated by a Mr. and Mrs. Kutz in 1839. It stood on Greenup between Third and Fourth. The Kutzs also operated Covington’s first night school and enrolled “males and females over thirteen.” Two more night schools began operation in 1840.

The Covington Commercial College commenced in 1839 and located on Madison next to the Madison House, one of Covington’s more prominent hotels. It was eventually incorporated and the state legislature conferred on it full collegiate powers and privileges.²²⁸ At the time, the college would “compare favorably with any similar institution in the West.”²²⁹ On October 3, 1840, the Covington *Union* carried a notice announcing the Covington Collegiate Institute, under W. Sackett Mead, was “pleasantly located on the outskirts of the city of Covington” and would accept both day and boarding students.

Miss Besset and Miss Steel opened the Covington Seminary for Young Women in their home on Turnpike Street in November 1842. That year saw the first session of Covington High School, a private institute under Principal Reverend William F. Nelson, a graduate of Amherst College and Newton Theological Institute of Massachusetts and Reverend Asa Drury, formerly a professor of Ancient Languages and Greek and Roman Literature at the Cincinnati College.

The private high school was housed on the first floor of the main building’s eastern wing at the soon-to-be-opened Western Baptist Theological Seminary. It commenced operation on September 19th and had a scholastic year consisting of two 22-week sessions, each subdivided into two terms or quarters.²³⁰

Three years later, November 5, 1845, the Covington Classical Seminary for boys and young men was opened on Third Street under Superintendent S. M. Hair.

Neither were the needs of aspiring young businessmen overlooked for in September that year Sidney Snowden had opened a night school in his home on Front Street east of Garrard. Snowden conducted classes from six to eight o’clock each evening and offered “a complete and thorough course of Book-keeping.”

The following September, Snowden became principal, and C. W. Coin assistant principal of newly-opened Covington Female Academy. Later, the academy was incorporated under a board of five trustees given power to confer degrees.

Such private schools, as noted, were flourishing in large numbers and the curriculum of the High School for Boys and Young Men, founded by Sackett Mead in the same month and year as the Covington Female Academy, was typical of the better ones. Mead conducted the school in his home on Turnpike Street and offered a list of courses including history, rhetoric, logic, natural and moral philosophy, algebra, geometry, trigonometry and surveying.

Private schools continued to multiply with great rapidity. The Covington Literary Institute for males and females operated at Third and Garrard under Superintendent Timothy A. Goodue and W. S. Massie. Mr. and Mrs.

Preston established the Young Ladies Boarding School in August 1848 at their Madison Avenue home “near the Episcopal Church.” An act of the legislature granted a charter to the Covington Collegiate Institute in January 1847, a school that had re-located on Scott between Market Place and Fourth. There it continued its policy of accepting boarding and day students.

Covington Collegiate soon became recognized as one of the leading educational institutions of its day but still did not alter the modest board and tuition rate of \$65 for each of the two twenty-week sessions of the year.

In March 1849, Professor Asa Drury founded Male High School, another private institution in his Main Street home. Drury was connected with a host of private educational institutions during his life and eventually became the first superintendent of the Covington Public School System.

In September that year, Male High School began, the Covington Female High School located in the local Baptist Church. Dr. Savage “and lady” were the school’s principals and announced their goal “to make instruction – comprehending all the branches of Female Education – thorough and practical.”²³¹ The Savages remained in Covington until August 1851 when they moved to Glasgow, Missouri to assume charge of a private academy.²³²

One of the scholastic competitors of Dr. Savage “and lady” was Mrs. Simpson’s Boarding and Day School. This school, next to the Methodist Church that was then on Scott, was especially “designed for Misses and Children.”²³³

Within a month of the Savages’ move west, the English and Classical Male School opened under W. A. Gunn’s direction at Eighth and Washington.

Another private school of the 1840s was Sackett Mead’s previously mentioned “High School for Boys and Young Men.” He initially operated in his home but later moved classes to a large second-floor room of the brick Firemen’s Hall Number 2 at the southeast corner of today’s Pike and Washington. Tuition at Mead’s school was twelve and sixteen dollars “per session of five months, payable invariably at the close of the session.”²³⁴ The students shared occupancy of the building with Covington’s new fire engine, the *Henry Clay*.

In June 1852, Professor S. Bernard opened the French and Spanish Academy on Fifth near Scott. Bernard, who had come to Covington from Franklin College in Louisiana, also opened a night school at the same address for “young gentlemen, who during the day, are engaged in mercantile or other pursuits,”²³⁵

October that year also witnessed Reverend C. P. Jennings serving as Rector of the Home Seminary which was described as being another “select English and Classical School.” It stood at Fourth and Madison.

From 1841 until 1859, Covington was home of the Covington Female Seminary, reputed to be one of the finest private schools in the state. This school, conducted by **Reverend William Orr** “and Lady” had its start in what was known as the White Mansion, on a campus bounded by Fifth, Sixth, Montgomery and Russell Streets, not to be confused with the smaller, like-named school operated by Caroline Andrews on Fifth between Scott and Madison, nor with one once operated by Frances Ann Drake.

REVEREND ORR’S SCHOOL attracted students from widely scattered points of the Ohio and Mississippi valleys. The *Covington Journal* noted: “not only has the institution a claim upon the citizens of Covington but upon the West and South.”²³⁶

Their school catalog of 1846 said of Reverend Orr’s school:

It is thought that the location of this institution combines many important advantages. Covington, in a quiet and retired part of which it is situated, is a city of good moral and religious habits and of unquestionable healthfulness and is, moreover, a point very easy of access from the South and North by means of the Ohio river; from the interior of Ohio by the Miami canal and the eastern stage route; from the interior of Kentucky by the Lexington Pike.

The catalog also noted the seminary building, which fronted on Montgomery Street, had cost \$10,000 and was built “expressly for seminary purposes and with every modern convenience.” Dr. Orr’s school offered one of the finest and most varied curriculums of the time. This can be judged from its 1843 announcement, which read:

*Boarders are instructed in the following branches at the rate of \$65 per session of twenty weeks (including board and tuition), reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, history, grammar, ancient and modern history, rhetoric, botany, geology, astronomy, natural and moral philosophy, mythology, music, drawing, embroidery, bead and shell work.*²³⁷

The school's authorities placed great stress on good manners and "lady-like deportment" for their students. Some teachers extended this to the point of requiring a low Victorian bow from each student as classes were dismissed pupil by pupil.

Lewis Collins, in his *History of Kentucky*, acclaimed Dr. Orr's school as "one of the best literary institutions of the kind in the state."²³⁸

The school later moved to 622 Sanford Street and on September 3, 1849, its old campus was auctioned as prime building lots. Sixteen lots fronting on Montgomery, Fifth and Russell were sold that day for an average of \$31.75 per front foot.²³⁹ [622 Sanford building still stands in 2012 – editor]

The new Sanford Street campus included all the ground now bounded by Sixth, Seventh, Sanford and the Licking River. Garrard Street, which now extends through those grounds, did not run any further south than Fourth Street.

Five years after the school's former campus was auctioned, the White Mansion was struck by fire. The blaze was quickly extinguished by the local fire companies but before leaving the grounds, two rival units engaged in one of the all-too-common inter-company brawls.

Some time later, another fire struck the neighborhood and heavily damaged the Fifth Street building that had once housed St. Mary Catholic Church. During the blaze, Henry E. Wilson, of the Western Fire Company, suffered smoke inhalation and other injuries when the burning structure's roof collapsed under him. A week later Wilson still had not "fully recovered from the effects of the smoking he received."²⁴⁰

Reverend Orr, whose wife Emily preceded him in death by ten years, died July 8, 1857 at "Kenton Dale," his residence on the Covington and Lexington Pike.²⁴¹ His school continued to operate for two more years and closed forever.

In September 1886, Rugby Military Academy occupied the Sanford Street seminary. Still later, Rugby became a co-educational college-preparatory school, as did another Covington classical academy operated by Reverend F. H. Blade.

At that time, there were few occupations for women. It was assumed women did not need to prepare for a career, as a result, much of the schooling for girls consisted of the arts and humanities – music, painting, foreign languages, philosophy and other "lady-like courses" thought to enhance a girl's chances to marry well.

Most such schools established rigorous rules concerning the students' conduct and use of time. One of the better schools was Bristow Institute, a boarding and day school for "young ladies and misses," located in the former home of the president of Western Baptist Theological Institute at 1032 Russell Street. [Home still standing in 2012 – editor].

Miss E. V. Bristow was the school's principal and promised parents that "While a **rigid observance** of all laws of **propriety** and **gracious demeanor** will be exacted, the daily life will be that of a highly cultivated and happy home."²⁴²

Rules for Bristow's boarding students were strict. No visiting or visitors were permitted at anytime except on Fridays from 3:00 PM to 10:00 PM which time was set aside as a "reception time" for the students' families and friends.²⁴³ School rules declared: "No boxes of eatables are allowed, nor will they be delivered, save at Christmas and birthdays." Neither were the students permitted to write more than three letters in any one week "as it interferes with regular duties." Instead, they were expected to spend their afternoons and evenings at study.²⁴⁴

Day students were required to honor the foregoing rules, and caught in the act of "bringing notes, messages, or communications of any sort whatever, to the boarders, will be promptly expelled."²⁴⁵

Some of the school's afternoons were given to field trips to museums and other local points of interest, but Bristow's evenings were devoted to *belles lettres* classes. One evening of each week was devoted to the study of musical composers, one to celebrated artists and their works, one to a critical analysis of the works of classical authors, one to the study of Shakespeare and one to the discussion of current news events.²⁴⁶

The town's burgeoning business and industrial base provided scores of opportunities for advancement to those with the necessary skills. Still, many young Covingtonians were never able to secure the required schooling for advancement because of a need to work and earn a living. John R. Ricke saw the need for a school for such individuals and on October 27, 1856 opened a night school over McDanold's Jewelry store at Fifth and Madison. His school, Ricke declared was for "young men, who labor and have not the opportunity of attending during the day."²⁴⁷

James T. P. Carney's Commercial School was another which offered night classes. Courses were conducted during three time-blocks: 9:00 AM to noon; 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM and another from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM.²⁴⁸ Carney's school was located in the Jones Building on Scott between Third and Fourth but by the beginning

of 1861, had moved to the McDanold Building. Students could enroll at any time and were “allowed day and night if they wish until the course is finished.”²⁴⁹ Among the more popular courses offered by Carney were Commercial Calculation, Mercantile Law and Commercial Science.²⁵⁰

Dancing was a popular past-time of that era and parents who were socially ambitious for their children, felt it imperative the youngsters master all the social graces, including ballroom dancing. One of the town’s flourishing dance academies was opened on September 5, 1856 by “Madame Blaique” in the Greer Building at Scott and Market Place. There, Madame Blaique offered to teach the fashionable Polkas, Scottishes, fancy dances and politeness (to) young Ladies and Masters.” Her fee was ten dollars for 24 lessons.²⁵¹

In 1846, another free public school, the Second District, had opened. It was housed in a new four-room frame on Greer Street between 6th and 7th. Space was so urgently needed that two of the rooms were occupied as soon as completed, even though work was still in progress on the remainder of the building. That same year, the Covington school year was set at twelve months.²⁵²

Enrollment continued to rapidly expand and by 1849 another public school was built – this one just north of the Craig Street burial grounds on a lot purchased from William Johnson. The new school, which fronted on Craig, was not completed in time for the September opening date, so a room had to be rented to relieve the crowded condition at the First District School on Scott Street. When the building finally opened on January 5, 1850, it was still found necessary to continue use of the rented room.

The First School District at that time consisted of the city east of Russell, while the Second served children living west of Russell.²⁵³

There was much talk concerning the need for a tax-supported **public high school**, free of all tuition charges. There was nothing like this anywhere in Kentucky and it became a marked tribute to the foresight of city council when, in January 1850, its members began formulating a new city charter which provided for such a school and authorized a Board of School Trustees for the city school system. The trustees would prescribe the necessary curriculum for the planned high school.²⁵⁴

In addition, the new charter declared:

*The Trustees shall have power to employ teachers, and discharge them at pleasure; provide for, regulate and manage the schools and appropriate money to defray the expenses of the same, out of the school fund: Nevertheless, the said schools shall be subject to such control as the Council shall, by ordinance, prescribe.*²⁵⁵

The charter also empowered city council with the right to appoint a Board of Examiners. The examiners would administer qualifying examinations to all prospective teachers and prescribe the duties of each of those hired.²⁵⁶ The charter went on to declare:

*Whenever it may become necessary and proper to establish a central or high school, the Board of Trustees may do so; and in said high school, such languages and branches of a liberal education may be taught as with Trustees may prescribe. No pupil shall be admitted into the high school, except he or she shall have attended the common school and passed such an examination as shall satisfy the Trustees of his or her qualifications therefore.*²⁵⁷

Some two months later, on March 2, the state legislature approved the new charter and confirmed council’s full control of the city’s school system. It also recognized that the Board of School Trustees, which would be composed of one representative from each of the city’s wards, would continue to be responsible to council. The new charter made it clear however, councilmen could not dismiss a trustee from office.²⁵⁸

A month later, on April 10th, city council officially authorized establishment of the Third School District. It consisted of all the Sixth Ward plus that part of the older First District which lay south of Tenth.²⁵⁹

Covington now had three common schools as well as one rented room. The system was still overcrowded, containing 658 pupils and nine teachers as of June 1850.²⁶⁰ One year later the enrollment climbed to 716. Later that same year of 1850, city council found it necessary to reorganize the free public school system and raise the total number of districts to five.

School rules and regulations were also revised that year. Teachers were reminded they not only were expected to “exercise vigilant, prudent and firm discipline,” but also keep their respective schoolhouses “thoroughly cleansed and ventilated.”²⁶¹

The school day, from the first Monday in May until the first Monday in November, ran from eight o'clock in the morning until five in the evening. The schools closed from eleven until two in order to permit the students to go home for lunch.²⁶² Beginning the first Monday in November and continuing until the first Monday in May, the school day started at nine o'clock in the morning and ended at four-thirty. Lunch time extended from noon until one-thirty.²⁶³ The schools closed for only three holidays – July 4th, Thanksgiving and Christmas Day. In addition, there was a one-week break at the end of each semester.²⁶⁴

In January 1852, the city charter was amended to give school trustees power to set the length of the school day and year and to arrange the school district boundaries as they saw fit. They were also empowered to hire a school superintendent but were restricted to paying a salary of no more than \$300 a year for the position. In addition, the city officials were directed to keep all school funds separate from the general welfare fund.²⁶⁵

During that same year, the city purchased a six-room frame at the northwest corner of Eleventh and Scott from Thomas George. After repairs and alterations, it opened in October as the Fourth District and continued in use until 1868 when replaced by a 12 room modern brick on Scott between Fifteenth and Sixteenth.

Such educational developments were in strong contrast to those found in most other parts of the state. Early-day Kentuckians were migrants from various other locations and, generally speaking, the quality of education they provided for their children depended largely upon the settlers' previous backgrounds and habits.

As backgrounds differed widely, so did the educational development of various sections of Kentucky. Educational opportunities in most places settled largely by migrants from southern states were vastly inferior to those provided by Covington and other communities which attracted a liberal number of migrants from the mid-Atlantic and northeastern states.

The Kentucky Legislature itself, had not enacted a law for a system on common schools until February 1838 and even then the resulting schools were not public in the true sense and certainly not free in any sense. In fact, there was no state system of free schools until after adoption of the 1850 constitution at which time all required tuition fees were abolished. Only then was the school system protected by the constitution and no longer subject to whims of often-incompetent legislators. The state office of Superintendent of Public Instruction was made elective, a move which was and still is, seriously questioned by many of those interested in the state's educational development.

In those Kentucky schools outside such centers as Covington, the great tests of learning remained reading and spelling and to have mastered simple arithmetic was to have acquired an outstanding education!

COVINGTON again became a pioneer in public education on January 8, 1853, when it established Kentucky's first tuition-free, totally tax-supported, co-educational, **public high school**.²⁶⁶

Although it is claimed Louisville maintained a public high school prior to the founding of the Covington Institution, it is important to note that the Louisville school, unlike the local one, relied upon public subscription for a large measure of its financial support. Neither was the Louisville school co-educational.

A passing grade on one of the quarterly entrance examinations was the only requirement to be met in order to enroll in Covington's new high school. "Its doors are open alike to rich and poor – MERIT being the only test and qualification," noted one writer who declared the school was "the head of the district schools and the crowning glory of our common school system. It should be regarded which just pride by our people and fostered with jealous care."²⁶⁷

The inordinate amount of pride displayed by the local community in its new institution of learning during its early years prompted another to write: "Covington has reason to be proud of this school. Under the able superintendance [sic] of Prof. DRURY, it is accomplishing all and more than all that was expected of it."²⁶⁸ The high school, which was in one room of the Fourth District School, was under Asa Drury's immediate direction.

Drury's appointment to the school's first principal met with the community's full approval. One admiring observer was moved to declare:

*We are glad to see that this High School has been placed under the charge of Prof Drury. A ripe scholar, experienced instructor and devoted friend of popular Education, his pleasure and his pride alike will impel him to make the institution a blessing and an honor to the city.*²⁶⁹

Veteran educator Drury, who is also credited with being the school's founder, was born at Athol, Massachusetts in 1802 and graduated from Yale University in 1829. From 1829 until 1831, he taught at his alma mater and in 1832 was ordained a Baptist minister.²⁷⁰ From the year of his ordination until 1835, Drury served as professor of Greek and Latin at Ohio's Denison University and joined the staff at the Cincinnati College where he taught until 1838.²⁷¹

Drury returned East after leaving the Cincinnati College, but after a period of time, came to Covington to become the local Baptists' third pastor and to accept the position of professor of Greek at the Western Baptist Theological Institute.²⁷² It is noteworthy that Drury's Covington-born son, Dr. Alexander Greer Drury, MD, authored a significant portion of "Daniel Drake and his Followers," the outstanding account of early-day life in the Ohio Valley.²⁷³

The younger Drury earned a reputation for being an outstanding and concise medical historian and was considered a master in the field of biographical writing. All that, of course, was in addition to his work in medicine.²⁷⁴

At the time of the local high school's founding, Covington's public school system consisted of:

- First District School on Scott, J. C. Green, principal.
- Second district School on Greer Street, E. B. Coon, principal.
- Third District School on Third Street, D. B. Maxer, principal
- Fourth District School (No. 1) on Madison btw. Ninth & Tenth, C. Perrin, principal.
- Fourth District School (No. 2) on Patton's Subdivision, G. Lancaster, principal
- Fifth District School on Banklick Street, Ephraim Hardy, principal.²⁷⁵

The local system by then was strongly committed to the concept of having a free, neighborhood elementary school within easy walking distance of every child. [This was not so for free black children – editor] Such small, neighborhood schools, based on a concern for education rather than economics, quickly proved to be one of the community's greatest assets.

Even though Covington's new high school, formerly known as Central High, opened its doors in 1853 with one teacher and 20 pupils, it did not graduate its first four-year student until Amelia Orr, daughter of a pioneer Covington family, received her diploma on June 5, 1869. Her credits consisted of four units of each of English, Latin and math and two each in history and science.

On July 6th, a month after her graduation, Miss Orr, who made her home at 428 Russell, was engaged to teach grade B, or the second grade as it is now known, at Fourth District School.

One of the oddities of public secondary education in Covington is the fact the city organized its first public night school in October 1852, a year before the founding of Central High. The night school charged tuition of \$2 a month and offered courses in bookkeeping, arithmetic, grammar and writing. Classes met three nights per week from seven o'clock until nine at the First District School on Scott between Fifth and Sixth.

There were those who preferred, for one reason or another, to provide directly for their own children's education rather than leave it to the public. One of these was Robert Patton who erected his own schoolhouse "near the corner of Madison and Howell Streets, above 15th," and placed it in charge of Amanda C. Gustine, a former resident of New York.²⁷⁶

Although the school was built primarily for Patton's own children, others who wished to attend were accepted and when it opened for the 1855 school year, there were "some sixteen scholars in attendance."²⁷⁷

THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE TALK OF EXPANDING CATHOLIC SCHOOLS to provide additional educational opportunities for children of the many Irish and German immigrants of that faith. In February 1856, the Council of the Sisters of Charity met to discuss the situation and out of that meeting came plans for that fall's opening of the diocese's first academy, the Academy of Our Lady of LaSalette, the name being selected by Bishop George Aloysius Carrell.

The new school, with grades one through 12, was established in a two-story, six-room brick home at Seventh and Greenup purchased from a Mr. McClosky. Many parents however, found difficulty paying the one dollar monthly tuition rate in cash and substituted farm produce or products from their small businesses and factories.

Such a payment method for debts or fees was not unusual at that time. Even local newspaper publishers often accepted farm produce in lieu of cash. When the publisher of the *Licking Valley Register* set his newspaper's pre-paid subscription rate at two dollars a year, he included the following provision:

*Farmers residing in the country, who find it difficult to raise money, can pay in produce at the market price. Wheat, Corn, Tobacco, Beeswax, Tallow, Bacon, hemp, etc., will be received, if delivered at some point which shall be agreed upon.*²⁷⁸

LaSalette Academy grew and prospered for the next hundred years. By the third quarter of the twentieth century, however, its enrollment had dropped dramatically, as many of the academy's supporters deserted it in favor of newer and more suburban schools.

Finally, in June 1977, the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth closed the school and the building was eventually sold to a construction company. Its new owners converted the structure into a 74-unit apartment building known as LaSalette Garden. It received its first tenant December 10, 1980.²⁷⁹

Although Covington reorganized its public school system in 1850, it was not until January 6, 1856 that Asa Drury was named as the first superintendent and Professor A.M.F. Randolph as his assistant. Their annual salaries were set at \$1200 respectively.²⁸⁰ Drury's pay was four times allowed by the city charter.

In addition to being superintendent, Drury continued to carry the title of high school principal. For all practical purposes however, Professor Randolph, as his first assistant, was responsible for and carried out the duties of that office.²⁸¹

Shortly after Drury's new appointment, the schools became faced with the most crucial event of their history. The growing threat of a civil war, the economic uncertainty of the times and the sudden unconcern of some citizens, all combined to interfere with and restrict the system's orderly growth. All this was reflected in wildly fluctuating enrollment figures for the high school. Typical was the 1856 enrollment which ranged from a high of 105 students to a year-end low of only 43.²⁸²

At the same time, Newport Academy managed to boast an enrollment of 900 pupils, many of whom were Covingtonians attracted there because of the excellent reputation of the school's mathematics department.²⁸³

The Covington school system was still expanding however. It was just the previous November that a new Sixth District School was established with J. G. Carlisle as its principal.²⁸⁴

On July 9, 1859, the *Covington Journal* took note of growing talk concerning the system's financial condition and reported:

*There was been some talk of closing the public schools of Covington on the plea that the school fund is not sufficient to carry them regularly. The people of Covington however, do not seem to think there is a necessity for suspended operation; and, as will be seen by reference to the proceedings of a public meeting, have advised against such a course. We note this action of our people with pleasure.*²⁸⁵

A month later, a furor erupted over an earlier reduction in the teachers' pay scale and many teachers refused to return to the class room. The Board of Trustees did not hesitate to replace them with others more agreeable to the lower pay rate which began at \$20 a month for elementary teachers and ranged upward to \$62.50 per month for elementary principals.²⁸⁶

Teachers were also reminded of the board's 1856 ruling prohibiting teachers from holding any other job while employed by the board. The trustees deemed teaching to be an exacting profession and required teachers "to give it their best thoughts and energies (and) to devote themselves to it to the exclusion of all other regular employment."²⁸⁷

Members of Covington's highly qualified, though admittedly underpaid, teaching staff continued upgrading their own qualifications and often invited nationally known educators to Covington to exchange ideas and thoughts on the field of education. One such individual was Horace Mann, who frequently met with local teachers and often spoke before various Covington organizations.²⁸⁸

Neither did the local women teachers fit the widely held and usually derogatory stereotype of the stern-faced pedagogue. This was readily apparent to a newsman who once ended a report of one of the women teachers' many meetings by saying:

*It was universally conceded that a handsomer set of ladies could not be found among the teachers of any other city in the Union – Covington was always noted for beautiful women and the bright eyes and intelligent features of our female teachers more than do justice to her reputation.*²⁸⁹

At that time, the school trustees recognized they were paying Superintendent Drury a larger salary than authorized by the city charter. Accordingly, at the end of the 1859 school year, his pay was cut back to the \$300 limit imposed by the charter. Drury immediately tendered his resignation as did Professor Randolph.²⁹⁰

After he left the school system, Drury became associated with the Judsonian Female Seminary, a private school located in the former Western Baptist Theological Seminary main building on 11th Street.

Professor Randolph's former position was filled almost immediately by Sackett Mead, who became acting high school principal.²⁹¹ The position of superintendent though, would remain unfilled for five years.

DURING ALL THIS, the philosophy of the northern Methodists had been taking hold among residents of the Westside. In 1857, a group of these residents, led by Reverend William H. Black and attorney William Benton, began searching for a suitable site for a house of worship.²⁹²

The southern Methodists had earlier attempted to expand into the Westside and erected a chapel on the west side of Main Street between Sixth and Seventh.²⁹³ This was a section of town with large numbers of Irish and German immigrants who had little sympathy for any viewpoint that might be interpreted as pro-slavery and pro-southern. The southern group met with little success among them and soon gave up in despair – despite claims that the slavery question in the southern group centered not so much on the slaves being freed as it did on **how** that freedom might be accomplished.

On July 1st, Reverend Black and attorney Benton made a down payment of \$1,000 for the southern group's chapel. It would now become the new Main Street Methodist Episcopal Church.²⁹⁴

The following year, the annual Kentucky Conference of Methodists, which was held in Covington, authorized the new church's Board of Trustees to raise the needed funds to help pay off its indebtedness and appointed Reverend S.S. Belville as the congregation's pastor.²⁹⁵

The early years of the church were said to be "a marked success," and in time there began talk of possibly obtaining larger quarters. This would cost money and that was something the congregation seemed to find in short supply.²⁹⁶

Eventually, Amos Shinkle, Jonathan D. Hearne and Jacob D. Shutt, all prosperous members of the Greenup Street congregation, came to the aid of the newer group's fund drive and helped purchase a lot on the northeast corner of Eighth and Main. There,²⁹⁷ thirty years after the church's founding, work began on a new structure.

Years later, Jonathan Hearne purchased an eight-room home at 832 Willard Street and presented it to the church as a parsonage.²⁹⁸ In the mid-twentieth century though, when it was planned to replace the parsonage, a decision was made to join those others who were abandoning their established neighborhoods and locate a site in the suburbs.

In 1953, the comfortable old home was sold and a replacement acquired in a hilltop suburb far from the neighborhood and church it was meant to serve.²⁹⁹ [The church building was sold and houses artists in 2012 – editor]

ALL THROUGH THE DECADE of the 1850s, the little community of **Economy**, just west of Covington was attracting more residents as Irish and German immigrants found its hills and valleys made charming home sites. By 1858, the community reached the point where its residents decided to seek incorporation papers. They were successful and that year Economy was incorporated as the Town of West Covington.

Two years later, a local observer noted the cornerstone for a West Covington Catholic Church was to be laid on a lot donated by James and John Slevin. The site was "situated on the very top of the hill back of the White Hall Tavern."³⁰⁰ That was June 1860 and the same observer went on:

*West Covington and Ludlow Town contains many Catholic families who have purchased lots and built houses for themselves in order to have healthy and quiet homes, removed from the dust and noise of the city . . . The Catholic population is composed of Irish and German.*³⁰¹

The church would not be completed for another two years and until then, the members of the newly-created St. Ann Parish met regularly for Mass at the corner of High and Main Street, now High and Parkway.³⁰²

The delay for the new church was caused by many of the same problems facing Covington public schools. A high degree of uncertainty pervaded the school system as possible war became more distinct. There was also a great amount of script in circulation which added to the difficulties.

On March 1st 1860, the city charter was again amended to authorize the local superintendent's position to pay annually up to \$1,000 and relieve the holder of that job from all mandatory teaching assignments.³⁰³ The trustees made no substantial move to fill the position.

At the same time, city council re-affirmed its power to appoint a Board of Examiners who would count among its duties the granting of teaching certificates after administering what was considered a careful and thorough examination of the candidates. The certificates were valid for one year and could be revoked at any time the board felt the teacher was not satisfactorily discharging his or her duties.

Also, two or more examiners were required to visit each school on a quarterly tour of inspection. They administered examinations to the students from time to time in order to ascertain the amount of learning taking place.

The public was usually invited to witness such board-administered examinations and frequently attended in large numbers. The examinations' oral portions were especially popular but were all too often conducted under conditions closely resembling those of a town holiday.

Such practices also attracted a number of critics, including a State Superintendent of Education who declared:

*Too much parade and show are played off on public examination days and too little attention is paid to impressing facts, truths and principles upon the mind. The memory is overtaxed while the understanding and the judgment are left comparatively unimproved. The cunning teacher knowing the fact that a large majority of the parents are not qualified to judge of the proficiency of their children; entrenches himself behind the strong fortress of public examinations where he proves his ability to teach as well as the children's capacity to be taught. And then, if his pupils can answer questions . . . all passes off admirably . . . parents and guardians are satisfied, but the children are not materially benefited.*³⁰⁴

Still, public examination would remain a "strong fortress" for many years. The tests were popular with the public and the jobs of city officials depended upon the public vote. This can be understood when it is remembered the Board of Examiners was responsible to the Board of School Trustees which in turn was responsible to City Council. All of this was in compliance with terms of the city charter.

The powerful trusteeship retained its power to employ and discharge teachers virtually at will, and decisions in these matters were increasingly being made arbitrarily. The individual trustee's job included not only general supervision of the school in his district, but also the obligation to report "any conduct of teachers that may prove them unworthy or unqualified" for the board's trust.³⁰⁵ In addition, the trustees were to "give aid and cooperation to the teachers by their council as may tend to increase their usefulness and efficiency."³⁰⁶

This power of the trustees often led to abuses that were heavily criticized by those interested in bringing about a more professional attitude to the field of education. So too, were there criticisms of the handling of school funds. By 1861, the money allotted to the schools had dwindled to the point that salaries and other expenses could not be met.

For a long time, the teachers had been paid with scrip and now even that was losing its value as increasing amounts were issued. Many merchants refused to accept it at all, while others accepted it only if it was offered at a heavy discount.

This all led to more cries for a school board independent of city council control. Finally, on May 25th, such criticism with lack of hard cash, prompted the board to shorten the school term by closing all schools earlier than originally scheduled and dismissing the teachers. A notice of the order read:

*Owing to the exhaustion of the School Fund and inability of the teachers to realize sufficient cash upon school scrip to defray the expenses of living, the School Board has decided to close the Public Schools until the September term, at which time it is confidently expected that the State funds for educational purposes will be augmented.*³⁰⁷

The last day of school that year was May 31st.³⁰⁸ Note, this shortened school year was still longer than those of many school systems of the late 20th century.

Much of the blame for the schools' closing was aimed at city council members who admittedly experienced difficulty with the city finances. They had authorized the issuance of large amounts of scrip and used it to pay municipal debts and meet the city's other financial obligations, including the school system payroll.

After a summer readjustment, the schools reopened on September 8th amid a new surge of interest and dedication. The system was still without a superintendent and criticism of council's control over schools continued. Some of the chief critics were the school trustees themselves, who maintained that continued control by councilmen could only result in a mediocre educational system at best.³⁰⁹ In this, the trustees were joined by scores of others who were genuinely concerned about maintaining the high quality of their schools.

MEANWHILE, IN APRIL 1862, a number of German Protestants of the west side met in a small room above a grocery at Pike and Craig Streets. There they formed a German Reformed Church, later known as **Grace United Church of Christ**. The congregation grew rapidly and within that same year, began construction on a new building at the northeast corner of Willard and Lockwood.³¹⁰

The new church prospered and for the first several years of its existence, maintained a school for its children. Like the church, the school, which charged a monthly tuition of 35 cents, conducted all its affairs in the German language.³¹¹

The Civil War was well underway when the Willard Street church was under construction and Covington was being threatened by Confederate invaders. The German workers were all loyal Unionists and when called on, they immediately halted their work on the new building and hastened to the city's outskirts to help build defense fortifications.³¹²

Southern sympathizers were a minority in the community and in June 1863, the public school trustees refused to re-appoint four women teachers, contending they were members of that disloyal element.³¹³

City Council's control over the schools still irritated those wanting an independent educational system. The schools, they insisted, must be free of outside control before the community could be assured the system's high quality would continue.

Eventually, on February 3, 1864, the city charter was once again amended, creating an independent school board that would be "a body corporate and politic, with perpetual succession."³¹⁴

The new board was given exclusive control of all school property and funds and assumed all the school-related powers held by city council. It was further declared all school property would "forever remain free" from any of the city debts or liabilities.³¹⁵ The amendment also mandated two school trustees be elected from each ward and a School Board President elected from the city at large. The City treasurer would have the additional duty of serving as School Board Treasurer.³¹⁶

The city would continue to collect all school taxes and was empowered to tax slaveholders one dollar a year for each slave over age 16 and impose an annual two dollar poll tax on every white male over 21. All this would be used for school purposes and would be in addition to the regular school tax.³¹⁷

Little time was lost filling the vacant superintendent's position and during that same year, the principal of the Fifth District, New York-born Ephraim Hardy, was named to the top job. Hardy had first come to Covington in 1848 and for a time operated a private school at the northwest corner of Seventh and Madison. He entered public education and held positions in the Covington and Cincinnati school systems.³¹⁸

Also in February 1864, a modern three-story brick structure was completed on the site of the First District school. It was 78 feet long, 52 feet wide and contained a school library, various offices and storage rooms and 12 classrooms, each 24 x 32 feet. Each classroom contained seats for 56 pupils at double desks and heated by coal stoves.³¹⁹

The new First District School, which cost \$25,000 to erect, housed not only elementary classes but also classes at the intermediate and high school levels.³²⁰ The structure, located on the west side of Scott between Fifth and Sixth, continued in use as an elementary school until 1937 when it was razed and replaced. [This replacement still stands –editor]

AT THE TIME the 1864 First District School was erected, the Confederacy was being hard pressed on all sides. When that year's annual session of the Kentucky Conference of the M.E. Church, South opened in Maysville, it was found no bishops were in attendance because none could get through the Union lines.³²¹ As a result of the absence of bishops, Reverend J.C. Harrison of Covington's Scott Street church was elected to serve as Conference president.³²²

Harrison, however, was a staunch supporter of the Union and not always in complete agreement with other Conference members. Consequently, he eventually broke with them and resigned from the southern-aligned group.³²³

Pro-Union members of Newport's Taylor Street M.E. Church, South were loudly objecting to what they called the "reported disloyalty of the church toward the United States Government." They took their complaints to a meeting of their congregations' officials and petitioned them to urge the Kentucky Conference to adopt a more loyal position toward the government and separate itself "from all disloyal connections."³²⁴ The church pastor refused to accept any such resolution and "threw them out, although they could have been passed over his head."³²⁵ This did not sit well with the petitioners and one observer said, "They anticipate getting an unconditional Union minister next year."³²⁶

True to their word, the following April – the same month General Lee surrendered – members of the Newport congregation dropped the word “South” from their name and became simply the Taylor Street Methodist Episcopal Church.³²⁷ Taylor Street has since by renamed Third Street and the church building, which stood between Monmouth and Saratoga, has been razed and its site occupied by an auto dealership.

During these times, more European immigrants moved into Covington Westside with Irish tending to cluster about its northern portion while Germans settled immediately to their south.

The Civil War was showing signs of winding down when on January 8th, 1865, a group of German Catholics met in a Bakewell Street grocery to plan a new parish in their part of town. The outcome was construction of a new church and school, **St. Aloysius**, at the southeast corner of Seventh and Bakewell.³²⁸ The church, which held its first Mass in September 1865, grew so rapidly that within a few weeks, it was decided the structure would have to be replaced with a larger one. Accordingly, on January 1, 1866, the cornerstone of the replacement was laid and the new church was dedicated on November 24, 1867, [The church was struck by lightning in March 1986 and completely destroyed. The parish was absorbed into Mother of God Church – editor].³²⁹

RELIGION ALSO PLAYED an important role in the lives of local Negroes. The influence of the all-black First Baptist Church on Bremen Street was spreading throughout the community. It provided its members not only with spiritual aid and comfort but also gave them unprecedented opportunity to socialize with their peers.

New members of the black congregation were usually baptized in either the Licking or Ohio Rivers during services that were frequently well attended by townspeople – both black and white. Typical of such services was one held in early February 1865 when some 20 individuals were baptized in the cold waters of the Licking.³³⁰

Throughout the Civil War, many “contrabands,” or liberated southern slaves, were shipped by steamboat to Covington and other loyal river cities. Despite a general policy of employing these displaced blacks about various government institutions, many were simply left to shift for themselves.

Some of these liberated slaves found shelter at Covington’s war-time Main Street Hospital, where a Miss Whitney organized classes for them. She had been hired for that purpose by the Cincinnati Contraband Relief Association. That was in late 1862 and represented one of the earliest attempts at conducting anything remotely resembling formal education for blacks in Kentucky.³³¹ That hospital was located on the west side of Main between Third and Fourth.

Legally, the slave and freedmen in Kentucky were not entitled to even the rudiments of a formal education. However, the state was one of only three which never enacted a law prohibiting such schooling.³³² Instead, fear of the effect which abolitionist literature might have on blacks and the simple belief in the black person’s inability to profit from schooling, effectively prevented any successful attempt to provide for their education. A few slaveholders believed their human chattel were entitled to read the Bible and gave them the necessary instruction. Still, the literate black person remained a minority within a minority.

When the war came to a close, Covington public school officials adopted several measures considered extremely progressive for the time. The curriculum was expanded, special teachers were appointed, the first of Kentucky’s public school kindergartens were established and in time a school was opened to [begin] meeting the educational needs of the community’s long-neglected black children.

Endnotes – Chapter 11

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Chapter 12

Thralldom and the Road to Freedom

Slavery had existed in Kentucky since before the state's official beginnings and the same was true concerning the slaves' discontent. As early as November 1775, Lord Dunmore, British governor of Virginia, had quickly raised a full regiment when he promised freedom to any of the American rebels' slaves who would enlist.

Dunmore's actions though probably hurt his cause more than it helped, for its net effect was to turn many otherwise loyal members of the planter class against him and toward the rebel cause. But the British continued to entice black recruits throughout the American Revolution by offering liberty to any slave who would serve with them. A number of slaves on the Kentucky frontier gained their freedom by doing exactly that.

Slavery at that time was not against British law and it was ironic that while the royal army was enrolling runaway slaves, England's Indian allies were carrying on a practice of capturing Negroes in Kentucky and selling them in Detroit for whisky. Historian George W. Ranck states the Indians were still engaged in this practice at the very time Kentucky entered the Union in 1795.¹

Despite the fact Kentucky's first state constitution permitted slavery, there was almost continuous opposition to it. Even the men who framed that first constitution listened to numerous impassioned pleas to eradicate slavery from Kentucky before they proceeded to give it constitutional recognition and protection.

Some of Covington's early land transactions serve to demonstrate how certain slaveholders tended to regard their human servants as being but little different from any other piece of property. Such a case was recorded as early as 1797, when a farmer exchanged his land at North Bend in Boone County for a Negro woman and her child. Then, for a horse, he acquired another farm six miles south of the Covington site, near the Lexington Pike.

Neither were all religious bodies free from this attitude. According to early records of one of the more prominent local churches, the pastor received a yearly pay of forty pounds of tobacco and two Negroes. He could then turn those items into cash.

Another example involved a Methodist professor of religion when he purchased a local slave woman and her two children with the understanding they would not be required to leave the Covington-Newport area. Soon a group of slave traders offered to buy the woman for \$50 more than the professor had paid for her. The religious leader promptly ignored the terms of the original agreement and accepted the profit, even though it meant the woman would be taken from her children and sent to the deep South.²

Still, there were others who regarded their slaves in an entirely different light and thought each of them to be worthy of pay for their labors. Griffin Yeatman was one of the early Northern Kentucky settlers who came to believe this way and on October 9, 1797, he filed a deed of emancipation in the Campbell County courts for his slave, Thomas Jackson. Jackson entered into an "indenture of apprenticeship" with his former owner.³

The slaves often chaffed at their bonds and runaways were common on the frontier. Those who fled their owners frequently headed for the Northwest Territory, north of the Ohio River. In fact, one of the earliest notices of a runaway slave to be published was in a Northwest Territory newspaper. Daniel Boone's nephew, Squire Grant, who made his home in present Kenton County, placed a notice which read:

TWENTY DOLLARS REWARD

*Ran away from the Subscriber, living in Campbell County, Kentucky, on Sunday, the 15th. Two **NEGRO MEN**, one about 22 years of age, named **BOB**, about five feet 10 inches high, slender made with a very peasant countenance, tolerable handsome, no particular marks, only a large sear on the right knee, occasioned by a burn, last winter which causes him to limp a little – had on when he went away, a linen shirt and overalls of about six hundred linen, a grey greatcoat, a felt hat, and a buff Cassimere vest. –The other is a thick heavy made fellow, about five feet nine inches high, about 20 years of age with uncommon thick heavy feet, a smiling countenance, thick bushy wool on his head, has a scar on one of his thumbs, occasioned by a burn when young, had on when his went away a tow shirt and overalls, a striped swasdown vest, a short brown alastic [sic] coat, somewhat worn and patched, a felt hat, and a blue spotted silk handkerchief round his neck, named **Charles**. I expect they have procured a pass, and attempt to go to the North West Territory. The above reward will be given if delivered to me or secured in any jail in the United States, and all reasonable charges, or ten dollars for either of them.*

17th September 1799

SQR. GRANT

Physical abuse of those in bondage was a commonplace that in 1798, slavery's critics succeeded in having the state enact a law which gave county courts the power to free any slave who the court felt to be persistently and illegally abused.

This same law also provided that white men who were judged to be without visible means of support and not trying to better themselves, or who were convicted of vagrancy, could be sold into temporary bondage. The ownership of white men as slaves, however, was expressly forbidden to blacks and Indians.⁵

One case which occurred in Covington was of an individual related to one of the town's oldest and most respected families, but who was said to have degenerated into a "mere sot." He was arrested for "inveterate vagrancy," and sold into seventy days bondage at a public auction. When the public showed reluctance to bid for his services, the local jailer made a token offer of ten cents, and secured the man's services for the seventy-day term.⁶

Although Negroes were forbidden to hold whites in bondage, they could and often did hold fellow blacks as slaves. The 1830 census listed 107 free Kentucky blacks who held such chattel. It has been claimed the reason for such a situation lay in a "benevolent conspiracy" in which a freed slave might save his money and then purchase his wife or other relatives from the white owner. The new owner could offer his relatives a degree of protection from possible kidnapping and re-enslavement by not issuing them freedom papers.

It is doubtful if such a noble motive could be ascribed to all black slave-holders, for the same census revealed that nationwide there were 3,775 free Negroes who held a total of 12,760 of their black brethren as slaves. Certainly not all of those were held as part of such a "benevolent conspiracy."

Even when such a conspiracy did exist, there still was no absolute guarantee the results would be those hoped for. This was demonstrated in a case reported by the *Covington Journal* where a freedman purchased his wife and children from their white owner. Consequently, they were legally his property and when he later became overloaded with debts, they, along with the rest of his property, were seized and sold in order to satisfy his creditors.⁷ It was not unknown for a black man, either fugitive or legally free, to get rid of an unwanted fugitive wife simply by informing authorities of her runaway status.⁸

Among Kentucky's earliest outspoken opponents of slavery was a group begun in 1804 under leadership of a few prominent Baptist ministers. When the Baptist Association condemned their activities as being "improper," these ministers withdrew from the general Baptist Union and, in September 1807, formed the "Baptized Licking-Locust Association, Friends of Humanity."⁹

The new association, composed primarily of churches in the state's northeastern section, engaged in numerous, highly vocal anti-slavery campaigns but managed to do little else before reorganizing into the Kentucky Abolition Society. Nevertheless, the association left its mark on the history of Kentucky slavery for it represented what could be called one of the state's first organizations to openly denounce human bondage.¹⁰

It has always been said by Kentucky's apologists that slavery in their state was the mildest form of servitude to be found. A widely accepted stereotyped version of the happy, contented slave strumming a banjo or eating watermelon was conjured up by imaginative novelists.

Certainly there were those blacks who fit that description and also those who deliberately tried to give such an impression to please their masters. Still, it is indisputable that every bit of slavery's most despicable aspects could be found throughout the Commonwealth.

The Kentuckians' self-deluding myth of the kind Kentucky master is easily seen as a myth when it is realized any such kindness depended entirely upon the masters' humanity and the slaves' submissiveness. Those slaves who refused to submit were often brutalized or sold into the deep South.

Even those servants who gave obedient and faithful service were often stripped of all security in their old age by suddenly being given their freedom. By doing this, the slaveholder could feel justified in not bearing the expense involved in caring for them.

More greedy slaveholders did not hesitate to sell the aged and infirm to southern traders for the few dollars they would bring. The unfortunate blacks were then shipped to the deep South where they were frequently brutally overworked in the cotton, rice or sugarcane fields, all of which, of course, is in direct contrast to some of Kentucky's most treasured myths.

Locally, such mistreatment of slaves was far more prevalent in rural areas, where, according to one observer, even the slaveholders' children frequently grew up being cruel. The Reverent Charles Stewart Renshaw, a Presbyterian minister of Boone County, recalled:

*One Sabbath morning whilst riding to meeting near Burlington . . . I was startled at mingled shouts and screams, proceeding from an old log house, some distance from the road side. As we passed it, some five or six boys from 12 to 15 years of age, came out, some of them cracking whips, followed by two colored boys crying. I asked Mr. W. what the scene meant. "Oh," he replied, "those boys have been whipping the niggers; that is the way we bring slaves into subjection in Kentucky – we let the children beat them."*¹¹

*The boys returned to the house and again their shouting and stamping was heard but ever and anon a scream of agony that would not be drowned, rose above the uproar; thus they continued 'til the sounds were lost the distance.*¹²

On yet another occasion, a prominent Boone County judge was quoted as saying he knew of instances of tobacco farm overseers "who, to make their slaves careful in picking the tobacco worms off . . . would make them eat some of the worms and others who made them eat every worm they missed."¹³

It was also commonplace for many slaves to be marked, or disfigured, as a form of punishment or identification easier should they run away. A ball and chain might be fastened upon a slave suspected of planning an escape or he might be fitted with an iron collar featuring long protruding bars. Such encumbrances served the dual purpose of retarding any possible flight and as an aid to identification should an actual escape be effected.¹⁴

One favored way of marking potential runaways so they might be easily described and detected in case of flight, was to crop or cut a notch in one or both of the ears and in some cases actually cut off an ear.¹⁵

Yet another popular marking was to break or remove one or more of the slave's front teeth. When this was done, it usually involved the upper teeth as the mark would be more obvious.¹⁶

Advertisements for the apprehension of runaways invariably included mention of such marks, along with notice of any other distinguishing scars, such as those resulting from the whip or other forms of punishment.

These marks and scars sometimes led to public criticism of the cruelty of slavery. This was a touchy topic with most slaveholders who frequently passed off a runaway's disfigurement as resulting from an accident or from the slave's own action. Typical of such claims were those contained in an advertisement placed in a Covington newspaper by a Georgia slaveholder. The advertisement read:

\$100 REWARD

RUNAWAY from the subscriber, living in Cass County, Georgia, on the 12th of August last, a Negro Man named JESS. He is a dark mulatto, 45 or 50 years of age, badly ruptured on one side, a small piece bit off one of his ears in fighting, a scar on one side of his forehead, caused by the kick of a horse, and his right shin bone has been broke, also by the kick of a horse, the toe on that foot turns a little out while walking; his hands and feet a little more crooked and bony than common, and the joints somewhat larger than usual for a man of his size.

The said man was . . . seen on the road, 18 miles above Knoxville, Tennessee. I will give the above reward for his confinement n any jail so that I get him.

James Freeman

October 16, 1839.¹⁷

Runaways, such as Jess, could be apprehended in any state under provisions of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1793, and returned to their owners. The law was heavily weighted n favor of the claimants, whose sworn, but otherwise unsupported testimony, was often the only evidence needed to convict a Negro of being an escaped slave.

The law was not nearly as stringent as a later version passed in 1850 and for a period it was not uncommon for blacks claiming to be kidnapped freedmen, to be heard by the courts.

One of those appealing to the courts was Richard Lunsford, a Covington slave who, in 1817, was taken into Ohio on a work assignment by Thomas D. Carneal. While in that state, the black man refused to do Carneal's bidding and declared he was no longer a slave.

Carneal, of course, refused to recognize the black man's claim to freedom and the dispute eventually reached a court of law. There, a writ of *habeas corpus* was issued ordering Carneal to produce Lunsford for a hearing, after which it was ruled a slave could not be forced to perform slave labor in Ohio but could be forced to return to the state from which he was brought.¹⁸ Lunsford was returned to Covington and to Carneal's slave cabins.

Yet another black person resorting to the courts was Joseph Kyte, who made his home on East Sixth Street in Cincinnati's "Bucktown." Joseph was born a slave in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia and eventually became the property of Boone County's George Kyte.¹⁹

In 1835, George Kyte moved to Butler County, Ohio and took along his now liberated servants. One night in April the following year, all of the ex-slaves were kidnapped and driven back to Kentucky where they were resold into slavery. The freedom papers given them by Kyte had, of course, been destroyed by the kidnapers.²⁰

Fortunately, Joseph was absent from his quarters at the time of the kidnapping and managed to retain his freedom. When he learned of what had happened, he went to Ohio's Governor Jeremiah Morrow and secured an order for the return of the kidnapped freedmen.²¹

In July a group of the Ohio officials came to Covington to serve the papers and brought Joseph along in order to identify the unfortunate blacks. They stopped at Alexander Connelly's tavern at Second and Garrard and while there, were confronted by a mounted party on nine armed men headed by the individuals who had kidnapped Joseph's friends. The armed Kentuckians now took Joseph as a prisoner.²²

Joseph's hands were bound behind his back and a long rope tied about his neck. The rope's other end was tied to a horse and in this manner the ex-slave was forced to walk to Richmond, Kentucky, in two day's time. The forced journey so debilitated him that he remained bedfast for another eight days, after which he was sold to a "nigger trader" for \$2,000.²³ Joseph quickly brought suit for his freedom and spent the next nine months in the Richmond jail awaiting trial.²⁴

Joseph won his case and returned to Cincinnati where he filed suit for the freedom of his captive sister and her children, his grandfather and his aunt. The court once again ruled in Joseph's favor and ordered the kidnap victims to be released from slavery.²⁵

Sometimes Ohio freedmen were lured to Covington with the promise of work. Such was the case when "a loafer named Bill Borlieu" enticed a Cincinnati Negro to accompany him to the Kentucky side of the river. As soon as they reached Covington, Borlieu had the black arrested and charged with being a runaway. The case was heard almost immediately by Mayor Moses V. Grant, who promptly dismissed the charge and released the Negro from custody.²⁶ After the black man left the court, he was again seized by Borlieu. Now, Borlieu took him to the jailer, who locked him in a cell.²⁷

That afternoon, the Negro was brought before two justices of the peace, and they too ordered him released. The black man explained that his freedom papers had been lost while he was aboard a ship sailing from Maine to New Orleans but the ship's captain had had additional proof of his freedom recorded in New Orleans.²⁸

One newsman later noted the black man had been employed on local steamboats for a long period of time and was generally known to be free. The newsman added: "This outrage we hope will not be blamed on the citizens of Covington or its officers, they are a prompt in defending the black man's right as they would the white man's claim. Should Borlieu be caught in Cincinnati, the laws of Ohio would consign him to the penitentiary, for his attempted villainy."^{29 30}

John Singer, a free-born black, was well aware of the dangers he would have to face when traveling alone. As a result, he sought out a sympathetic white person to act as a traveling companion when he wanted to make a journey to Wheeling. Fortunately, John Mackoy was going to New York City on a business trip about the same time and planned to travel by boat as far as Pittsburgh. When Singer explained his position, Mackoy was happy to have him in his company as far as the western Virginia destination.^{31 32}

After he landed at Wheeling, Singer lost little time in seeking out and marrying "one of the colored belles of Pennsylvania." Along with his bride, he returned to Covington and his prospering barbering trade.³³

Singer was a shrewd businessman and wisely invested a large part of his earnings in Ohio real estate. He seemed to have a penchant for what would later be called "good public relations," and frequently published such notices as the following:

JOHN SINGER

FASHONABLE BARBER and HAIR DRESSER RETURNS his sincere thanks to the citizens of Covington for past favors and solicits a continuance of the liberal patronage by which he has heretofore been sustained.

*Rooms on Greenup Street, nearly opposite Bakes' Hotel, Covington.*³⁴

Singer was one of the more fortunate free blacks and eventually amassed a modest amount of wealth.³⁵

Kidnapping of freedmen and physical mistreatment of those held in bondage continued to be touchy subjects with slaveholders and frequently served as targets for the wrath of slavery's critics. The critics seized upon every opportunity to depict slavery and slave owners in the worst possible light. Even ridicule was often used to make their point as in the case of an area resident who was said to be so miserly that he required his servant to whistle whenever sent to the cellar for apples. This, it was claimed, was to prevent the slave from eating any of the fruit.³⁶

The Negroes' constant straining at the chains of thralldom eventually led to many slave-holding families living in perpetual dread of the ever-present possibility of slave-set fires and of open slave revolts. Nevertheless, many Kentucky writers and historians have consistently ignored or minimized those fears.

Locally, in 1838, it was rumored Florence was to be a scene of a general slave insurrection. The revolt, said to be scheduled for November 13th, never occurred and six of the accused Negro conspirators fled to Canada.³⁷

One of the state's many slaveholders who saw his home burned by a disgruntled slave was Newport's General James Taylor. Taylor, who had built the fire-ravaged home in 1812, replaced it with a palatial residence which still stands [altered] on the original home-site at Third and Overton Streets.

Taylor's new home was built from a design drawn several years earlier by Benjamin Latrobe. Latrobe had been surveyor of public buildings at Washington, DC and the designer of the north portico of the White House. This helps explain why the Corinthian columns gracing the home's original ballroom are exact duplicates of those in the Gold Room at the White House.

The destruction of Taylor's home, in 1837, represented the second financial loss in as many years which he suffered at the hands of dissatisfied slaves. In the previous summer, a family of his slaves effected one of Kentucky's most daring slave escapes. The flight had its inception when one of the family members found a purse containing \$500 and decided it was enough to finance a flight to Canada.

The family carefully laid plans for their escape and when all was ready, went to their owner and obtained permission to attend a nearby camp meeting. Once out of Taylor's sight, they went straight to the river landing and boldly stole the ferryboat! That night found them fifty miles closer to Canada.³⁸

In time, General Taylor came to favor emancipation and freed all his slaves. He also became a member of the American Colonization Society and worked diligently in its behalf. The Colonization Society (more correctly the American Society for Colonizing the Free People of Colour of the United States), had been organized at Washington, DC in December 1816 with the intent to re-settle in Africa any free blacks who volunteered for such resettlement.³⁹ Its organizers, including men as Massachusetts' Daniel Webster and Kentucky's Henry Clay, felt it was the white man's responsibility to see that any freed black who desired to return to Africa would be provided the opportunity to do so.

The Colonization Society, which formed its first Kentucky chapter in 1823, also supported legislation that might serve to lighten the slaves' burden and was one of the prime forces that successfully backed passage of the 1833 state law that prohibited bringing slaves into Kentucky as merchandise to be sold. This law was part of a larger anti-slavery plan proposed by the Reverend Robert J. Breckinridge and followed an earlier, but unsuccessful attempt to secure the constitutional emancipation of Kentucky's slaves.⁴⁰

On February 10, 1840, the society's Covington chapter, with Dr. John W. King serving as president, met and offered a resolution which declared in part that the federal government did not have the power to interfere in any form or fashion with slavery. That power, the Covington chapter said, "belongs of right and *alone* to the States concerned."⁴¹ To many, the questions of slavery, states' rights and black civil rights were clearly separate and distinct issues. They looked upon the colonization movement as the answer to all of them.

The Colonization Society was not an abolitionist organization as such and because of that, it attracted the support of many slave-holders who believed slavery could never be secure unless all freedmen were sent from this country. This belief was strengthened by the fact that many freedmen had, indeed become actively engaged in the work of aiding escaped slaves. Many citizens further contended Negroes could not adjust to the competition which is basic to the American free enterprise system and, as a result, there would always be social and economic friction between the two races.

Kentucky was one of the states that gave official approval to the society which had attracted such a strong following in the Covington area. One local supporter, who deplored the widespread disregard of the Fugitive Slave Law in Ohio and Indiana and who was highly critical of the Underground Railroad and free Negroes in Kentucky, wrote of his feelings in a letter to the Covington *Democratic Union*. He said, in part:

*It is now reduced to a certainty that free negroes are the active agents in this business in Kentucky and some of them are located in Covington . . . It is useless to think of holding slaves in Kentucky while free negroes are permitted to remain among us and our only remedy will be to banish them in tot by law. If they wish to be free in earnest, let them go to a free country, either to Africa or the newest free State . . . Let them leave after reasonable notice or be sold as slaves for life; one half of the proceeds to go to the prosecutor and the remainder to the Colonization Society of Kentucky.*⁴²

It was true, as the letter-writer pointed out, that many freed blacks turned their efforts to aiding others escape the bonds of slavery. One example was provided one cold December day when at three o'clock in the morning, the Covington Marshal and several assistants captured eight runaway slaves at the corner of Eleventh and Madison. The slaves all belonged on farms near Independence and were being taken to freedom in a hack driven by a free Negro whose wife belonged to the owner of seven of the runaways.⁴³

The Colonization Society as noted, attracted many supporters in the Covington area, including J.M. Preston, P. S. Bush, J. E. Spilman, J. W. Menzies, Reverend John Clark Bayless, of the Presbyterian church, Dr. C. J. Blackburn, Reverend William Newton, William B. Kinkead, Thomas Bird, William Ernst, John B. Landrum, Mortimer M. Benton, John K. McNickle, Alexander L. Greer and George C. Tarvin. These men gave generously of their time and money but it is doubtful if any of them exceeded the efforts of Newport's J. H. M'Clure who, in December 1831 alone, pledged \$10,000 to the colonization effort.⁴⁴

Covington was also home of one of the state's most articulate journals in support of the movement. This was the Covington *Western Colonization and Literary Journal*, founded in early 1839 and published by E.E. Bartleson.⁴⁵

Even the editor of the *Covington Journal*, an outspoken critic of even the faintest hint of interference in the rights of slave-holders, came to the society's defense when a local senator denounced it as being "a humbug." The incensed editor replied to the remark by saying the society represented "one of the best and noblest schemes of benevolence ever devised and the man who deliberately pronounces it a humbug most emphatically proclaims himself to be the greatest humbug of the day."⁴⁶

The modern-day nation of Liberia is an outgrowth of the colonization movement and many of that country's present-day citizens are descendants of freed Kentucky slaves who made the return to Africa. In fact, in 1845 the Colonization Society's Kentucky chapter voted to establish a special territory within Liberia to be called "Kentucky."⁴⁷

The territory in Liberia eventually acquired by the state society consisted of 160 square miles and was purchased for \$5,000. Each male head of a migrating Kentucky family was deeded five acres of the land or else given a town lot, according to his preference. The same was also true for every unmarried adult male.⁴⁸

The society also allowed migrants to purchase additional land at prices ranging from 25 cents to \$1 an acre. In addition, ship passage would be paid for any needy migrants and they would be eligible to receive six months' financial support to help them adjust to their new environment. This support included a rent-free home and free medical service.⁴⁹

Delegates to the Kentucky Colonization Society's 1853 state convention noted some 660 American blacks had migrated to Liberia during the previous year. At that same convention, convening in Covington January 20th, James M. Preston, a prominent Covingtonian, was selected to serve as the organization's vice-president.⁵⁰

Two months later, the society's national officers announced another Liberia-bound ship would be leaving Norfolk on May 1st and had already received 178 applications for the 250 available berths. The officers urged those desiring to make the trip to file their applications and noted the fare of \$60 would include passage and six months' support in the new country. Passage could be had at no charge by "all worth persons who are unable to pay and who come well recommended."⁵¹

The editor of the *Covington Journal* strongly supported the movement of free blacks to Africa and heartily endorsed a society proposal that the state grant colonization backers \$5,000 to aid in carrying on their work.⁵²

"Humanity and self-interest," declared the *Journal's* editor, "conspires to make it the duty of Kentucky to aid in removing free blacks from within her borders to Liberia."⁵³

One of the early migrants to "Kentucky-in-Liberia" wrote of the territory as follows:

*A tract of land, beautiful and fertile had been selected . . . on the northwest side of the St. Paul's river, extending along the river . . . to the sea; thence . . . along the sea beach in a northwesterly direction . . . and thence into the interior . . . For Fertility, salubrity and convenience a better location could not have been made on the coast.*⁵⁴

From 1820 through 1865, a total of 9,502 freedmen, including 585 from Kentucky, chose to resettle in Liberia.⁵⁵ State lawmakers looked with favor upon the blacks' exodus and in March 1856, enacted a law appropriating \$5,000 annually to the Colonization Society.⁵⁶

Among the first Kentuckians to make the return to Africa was a group of 21 who left New Orleans December 18, 1831 aboard the schooner *Crawford*.⁵⁷ Ninety-nine Kentucky blacks were aboard the brig *Alex* when it sailed in May 1833 and 102 more sailed on the same vessel the following November. These numbers represented a considerable increase over the lone Kentucky freedman who made the journey aboard the *Criterion* in July 1831.⁵⁸

During the 1830s and '40s, there was strong sentiment in Kentucky that held slavery to be wrong and it was widely believed when the time came to alter the state's constitution, there would be a clause inserted that would make slavery's abolition possible.⁵⁹

Most Kentuckians did not own slaves, and that was also the case with most residents of all slaveholding states. In fact, it has been estimated the 95% of the slave states' white population were non-slaveholders. This figure can be somewhat misleading, however, for by 1850, the 5% of Kentuckians who were slaveholders represented some 28% of the state's white families – a fact consistently ignored by many writers on the subject.⁶⁰

The slaveholders continued to be regularly catered to by lawmakers at the state level and just as Kentucky laws jealously protected the right to own slaves, so too did they protect the slaveholders from any threat of insubordination on the part of their chattel.

Even the most minor infractions of the law were considered serious offenses when committed by a slave and when any slave was executed for a capital crime, his owner was paid for this lost property from the state treasury. As of February 1830, some \$68,000 of Kentucky tax money had been paid for such executed slaves.⁶¹ Such catering to slaveholding interests was not an exclusive trait of the state lawmakers but could frequently be found at the local level as well.

In 1834, Covington officials permitted the city tax collector to post his indemnity bond in the form of a lien on his slaves and in August 1839, council voted to prohibit free blacks from appearing on the city streets "without having some good and plausible pretext and business calling." Anyone found in violation of this ordinance was to be sentenced to hard labor for a maximum of one month for each offense.^{62 63}

The offender was also required to pay all the expenses connected with his arrest and confinement. If he could not pay, he was to be sold at public auction "to the highest bidder for the shortest period of time as will cover the expenses."⁶⁴

The above ordinance was introduced and passed at the urging of Mayor Bushrod Foley, who was reacting to slaveholder complaints about the "number of slaves running away and increasing efforts of the abolitionists."⁶⁵

The mayor who had also experienced the loss of several runaways would hear the cases of all charged with violating this ordinance and he was to be the sole judge of their guilt and innocence.⁶⁶

It was not considered at all improper for a Kentuckian to acknowledge anti-slavery feelings at this time. In fact, open debate was carried on in the columns of many of the state's newspapers, and it was generally agreed Kentucky would most probably be the first slave-holding state to emancipate their human chattel. Why this did not come about was due in large measure to the "**Old Court/New Court**" dispute.⁶⁷

By 1840, Kentucky was then a Whig state and had been for fourteen years. The Democrats had lost support when they made the mistake of trying to abolish the old state courts and substitute new courts in order to maintain a State Bank. When Kentucky was faced with the situation of two courts claiming equal jurisdiction, the citizens turned upon the Democrats in vengeance and voted them out of office.

For 14 years, the Democrats nursed their wounds and worked at gradually rebuilding their strength. Finally, when a convention was called in 1848 to revise the State Constitution, they were nearly equal to the Whigs in numbers of voters. As a result, each party was reluctant to act when the question arose of whether or not an anti-slavery clause should be inserted in the Constitution.

The politicians were fearful of any possible injury their respective parties might suffer if they should support such an anti-slavery act. As a result, neither faction did anything, even though many leaders of both parties acknowledged the desirability of such a clause. Instead, a vociferous pro-slavery element was catered to and the slavery provision of the old Constitution was carried over to the new.⁶⁸

This was a serious set-back for the anti-slavery forces as was the action of that year's state legislature when its members voted to repeal the 1833 Non-Importation Act. In its place, a new law was passed which allowed slaves to be brought into the state but prohibited their new Kentucky owners from re-selling them for a period of five years. The latter part of the law was not always enforced.

Covington lawmakers were not completely free of slaveholders' influence. Possession of firearms had always been a serious offense for slaves but in 1850, when councilmen made the selling of firearms to children under age 16 a crime punishable by a fine, they were induced to extend the scope to the new ordinance to include blacks of all ages whether slave or free.

Many Kentucky slave owners at that time were still smarting from an event which had occurred three years earlier in Michigan. In 1847, they had learned of a large colony of escaped slaves living at Young's Prairie in that state's Cass County. Most of the runaways were from Northern Kentucky and many had been owned by neighboring Boone Countians.

When knowledge of the settlement's existence reached Kentucky, a company of about 30 men was organized to capture the fugitives and bring them back to Kentucky. When the pursuers departed for Michigan, they took several wagons in which to transport the women and children.

A small party on horseback rode ahead to learn the exact location of each of the Negro cabins and prepare for simultaneous raids on all of them. Headquarters were to be set up at Niles, which was an adjoining county just a few miles from the community of ex-slaves.

Under pretenses such as buying stock or other items, the agents infiltrated the black community and gained all the information necessary for success of their upcoming raid.

Another Northern Kentuckian, an anti-slavery man, had earlier contacted the Underground Railroad with news of the raiding party and a rider was dispatched to warn the threatened community. The rider's information concerning the planned time of the raid was wrong and he did not reach the Negro settlement until after the attack had already taken place.

The well-armed Kentuckians struck the community in the dead of night. A number of blacks were seized in their sleep, quickly bound and thrust into the waiting wagons. Other blacks fought desperately but were soon overpowered and also bound.

One of the Kentuckians, a Baptist minister according to Levi Coffin, recognized a man and wife and claimed them as his own property, saying they had fled from him several years before. The couple by then had a baby just a few months old so the minister claimed ownership of it also, saying the child followed the status of its mother. In addition, the child would be worth \$200 to the minister when they returned to Kentucky.⁶⁹

While the raiders were trying to subdue the infant's struggling father, the child's mother fled for help. As dawn arrived, a large band of white men from neighboring communities rode in to rescue the ex-slaves from their captors. My then, all the blacks had been bound and placed in the wagons. The minister had gathered the child in his arms and mounted his horse. The raiding party was about to return to Northern Kentucky.⁷⁰

When the band of local villagers rode up, its leader gave orders to charge the raiders and not leave one of them alive. Fortunately, several Quakers were present by then and interceded on behalf of the outnumbered Kentuckians.⁷¹

At that time, the rescuers' leader noticed the mounted minister carrying the infant and forced him to dismount. He made the minister walk along the road and through the streets of Cassopolis, the county seat. The occupants of every home they passed were called upon to come out and see the "child-stealer." The minister was taunted so much as he was paraded through the streets, he actually broke out in tears.⁷²

When the Northern Kentuckians first surrendered, they agreed to go to the county seat and prove the blacks were indeed their property, as the law required. They failed to prove that ownership to the court's satisfaction and were jailed on charges of kidnapping.⁷³

Michigan officials promised the Kentuckians a fair trial but still managed to detain them in jail long enough for the Negroes to move on to Canada.⁷⁴ This was despite the fact their release bonds had been signed by Amos Dow, Henry Jones, Daniel McIntosh and Asa Kingsbury – all of whom were considered reputable citizens.⁷⁵

When the trial was finally conducted, it resulted in no further punishment for the accused other than paying court costs.⁷⁶

The editor of the *Licking Valley Register* was outraged by the entire affair. The attack on the Northern Kentuckians, he said, was nothing less than “infamous,” and was committed by a “furious mob of several hundred abolitionists who treated them with every indignity which cowardly brutality could invent.”⁷⁷

The Kentuckians, the editor continued, were then subjected to

A mock trial before a Judge who had previously sword that they should not take the negroes away in any event. [The whole affair] was the most atrocious piece of abolition villainy, the details of which cannot fail to make the blood of every honest man boil in his veins. The time may come when those cowards and sons of cowards will again, as during the last war, turn their imploring eyes to Kentucky and to Kentuckians for protection from ravages of a foreign foe.^{78 79}

In February 1848, following the raiders’ return to Covington, some of the slave owners brought suit against several of those who had sided with the escapees. The case was to be tried in the US District Court at Detroit but was delayed from one court season to another.⁸⁰

By the time it seemed the suit might finally come to trial, one of the wealthier defendants settled out of court by paying \$2,755 to one of the attorneys for the plaintiffs. Much to the slaveholders’ chagrin, however, the attorney kept the entire sum as his fee.⁸¹

The raid, known for a long period as Northern Kentucky’s “Great Michigan Raid,” attracted nationwide attention. It was not only on the minds of those at Kentucky’s 1849 State Constitutional Convention, but also had a strong bearing at the national level on passage of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act.⁸²

The new Fugitive Slave Act greatly strengthened and expanded the right of a slaveholder to pursue a runaway into any free state and to return him to his slave quarters. Furthermore, it placed all fugitive slave cases under exclusive federal jurisdiction and provided for fines and imprisonment of any citizen or official who refused to aid in the apprehension of a runaway.

Any black person arrested under the new law was denied the right of trial by jury and not allowed to testify in his own behalf. Penalties for any citizen who sided in the fugitive’s flight or concealment included a fine up to \$1,000; imprisonment up to six months; and a liability up to \$1,000 in damages for each slave so lost.

With the new law in effect, slaveholders became determined to drive back into slavery every runaway they could, even those who had lived for years as free men. It was not until mid-August 1853 that the first federal case with local ties was tried. The case was heard in the federal court of Ohio before Judge John McLean of the US Supreme Court and involved Washington McQuery, a runaway from central Kentucky who had since married a free black woman and settled near Troy, Ohio.⁸³

A white man, John Russell of Piqua, had learned of McQuery’s status as a runaway and reported him to his former owner, hoping for a cash reward. The owner seized McQuery and placed him in the custody of a US Deputy Marshal.⁸⁴

After a series of legal maneuvers, McQuery was brought before Judge McLean, a jurist known for his anti-slavery feelings. McClean was also a man who would not allow his personal feelings to interfere with his interpretation of the law and said as part of his ruling:

*I cannot here be governed by sympathy; I have to look to the law and be governed by the law . . . Sooner or later a disregard for the law would bring chaos, anarchy and widespread ruin; the law must be enforced . . . I am bound to remand the fugitive to his master.*⁸⁵

After McLean announced his decision, McQuery’s defense moved to make an appeal to the Supreme Court but was then informed no such appeal could be made from the decision of a Supreme Court judge made at chambers. McQuery, who had been living in freedom for four years, was then sent to Covington to be returned to central Kentucky and the bonds of slavery.⁸⁶

Slaveholders of the deep South were jubilant over the decision and a Petersburg, Virginia newspaperman acclaimed it as the nation’s first case in which the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act was upheld by a Supreme Court justice.

New Jersey-born McLean was a brother-in-law to Israel Ludlow, Jr., one of Northern Kentucky’s largest land owners. Four years after his McQuery decision, McLean wrote a dissenting opinion from that of Chief Justice Roger B. Taney in the celebrated Dred Scott case. He held slavery had its origin in power, was totally alien to right and was upheld only by local law.

McLean's minority opinion is generally accepted as ultimately leading to the recognition of free Negroes as citizens and the recognition of Congress as being constitutionally empowered to regulate slavery in the territories.

When the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act was enacted, Kentucky stood third among the 14 slave states in the number who owned slaves. Only Virginia and Georgia ranked higher, with Georgia's total exceeding Kentucky by only 71.⁸⁷

There were 38,456 white Kentuckians who held 210,981 black Kentuckians in bondage – 28% of the state's white families.⁸⁸

The number of blacks held by the state's various slave owners were distributed as follows:

<i>Owners of 1 slave</i>	9,244
<i>Owners of more than 1; less than 5</i>	13,284
<i>Owners of 5 or more; less than 10</i>	9,579
<i>Owners of 10 or more; less than 20</i>	5,022
<i>Owners of 20 or more; less than 50</i>	1,198
<i>Owners of 50 or more; less than 100</i>	53
<i>Owners of 100 or more: less than 200</i>	5

The Covington area was never a large slaveholding section of the Commonwealth. This was due to several factors, including the basic beliefs of the majority who first settled here. Although a number of the earlier and more prominent settlers were Southerners who had been reared with and accepted a slavery-based economy, most were migrants from the free states of the East and Northeast. Even many who have been described as Virginians were in reality from that state's western counties which eventually formed the free state of West Virginia.

Also significant were the vast number of Europeans who came during the 1840s and '50s. These people, largely German and Irish, came in search of political, social and economic freedom for themselves and were not inclined to deny those freedoms to others.

The county auditor's report of February 1854 revealed 764 Kenton Countians were held in slavery and since 1844, the local ratio of one slave to 15 whites had diminished to one to 30. The county's slave count during those years was:⁸⁹

1844.....	644 slaves	1849.....	727 slaves
1845.....	736 “	1850.....	726 “
1846.....	689 “	1851.....	782 “
1847.....	725 “	1852.....	764 “
1848.....	712 “	1853.....	772 ‘

The bulk of the county's population was in Covington, yet the number of slaves held by Covingtonians represented but a relatively small part of the county's total. According to the assessor's reports, the city had but 280 slaves in 1850, 165 in 1855, 101 in 1857, 124 in 1858 and 134 in 1859.⁹⁰

The same reports showed there were 33 free blacks in the city during 1855 and 1857; 40 in 1850; and 48 in 1859.⁹¹

There were some who viewed this relatively small number of freedmen as a threat to the town's well-being. Complaints about their presence were common. Typical fears and complaints were expressed in a letter to the editor of the *Licking Valley Register*, signed by **MANY CITIZENS**. It read:

*From present indications it appears that we are likely, in a short time, to be overrun in our city, by a population of free colored persons, if not checked in some way. We presume, sir, that our laws, if properly administered, will afford us the necessary safeguard against this rapidly increasing evil. Had we no slaves, this kind of population is calculated to operate as a nuisance. We hope our reflecting citizens will bear this subject in mind and that our authorities will promptly discharge the duties imposed upon them by the laws of the state.*⁹²

Most of the freedmen earned their living working as domestics or common laborers. As a result, it was not unknown for out-of-town Kentuckians to seek prospective employees from among the town's free blacks as shown by the following advertisement from the *Covington Journal*:

WANTED TO HIRE

A NEGRO woman, for house-work, who must understand cooking and washing and can come well recommended, for which a good price will be paid. The place is about 50 miles from Covington, near Boyd's Station. For further particulars, inquire of JAMES P. PATTON, corner of Eighth and Scott streets, Covington, Ky. ⁹³

Unlike those held in bondage in rural sections, Covington-held slaves and especially the women, were usually provided living quarters in their owners' homes. There was though, a minority of townspeople who outfitted small out-buildings for their slaves or who might even provide them with a small, near-by cottage.

Work for the urban female slave was largely of a domestic nature and ordinarily involved such assignments as cooking, washing, ironing and other general household tasks, including caring for the young and nursing the ill. Some servants showed outstanding ability at certain tasks and became well-known in the community for those abilities. Mostly these were cooks, nurses, seamstresses or hair-dressers.

Male slaves, like the females, also performed a variety of tasks, including carpentry, yard work, house painting, stable work, coach driving and for those with the talent, entertaining at various social events given by their owners.

So too, it was commonplace for some slaveholders to hire out their human chattel and in some instances there were those who held slaves for the express purpose of hiring them out. Neither was it uncommon for such slaves to be hired for jobs on the Ohio side of the river.

Local manufacturers, unlike those elsewhere in slaveholding states, were never successful in introducing the widespread use of slave labor in their factories. This was due entirely to the strong opposition of the white working class.

One local industrialist who owned a number of slaves was John K. McNickle. He was also an active member of the American Colonization Society but despite this, could never be considered an advocate of abolition. McNickle had a reputation for being what Kentuckians termed "a kind and benevolent master."

This "kindness" however, did not prevent seven of McNickle's slaves from fleeing his ownership and, according to a fellow townsman, "It was generally supposed they made good their escape per *subterranean railroad* to Canada." ⁹⁴

McNickle soon learned the runaways were merely hiding in Cincinnati and had them arrested. The blacks were returned to his ownership, after which all except one had been "anxious to return to their master." ⁹⁵

Covington's anti-abolitionists were enraged when the Negroes explained it was a group of white men who persuaded them to run away. The furious states-righters renewed their threats of violence against all abolitionists and one fumed: "Let these white men . . . show themselves in Covington if they covet broken bones." ⁹⁶

Even though laws existed which were meant to protect the slave from cruelty and neglect, their observance depended upon the humanity of the owner. Legally, no Kentucky slave could leave his owner's property without a pass but in practice, most of the town's slaves had far fewer such restraints enforced against them than those elsewhere in the county. They were subject to the same pass requirements as their rural counterparts but because of the numerous errands they were called to run, this law like others, was frequently ignored for the sake of convenience. A large number of the town blacks were personally known to local officials and were not subjected to the frequent stopping and questioning that was the lot of the agrarian slaves.

The laws, state and local, became more harsh as time went by and left the slave with no social or civil rights whatsoever. Even the free black was but little better off despite the fact that at one time many Kentucky freedmen actually held the vote.

There continued to be owners who conscientiously saw to their slaves' needs and did not place undue demands on them. Some indulgent owners taught their servants to read and write but even this came to be a criminal act. In a few rare instances there were those Covington blacks – slave and free – who, because of the Teutonic character of the city itself, became conversant in German.

To be owned by a Covington citizen or other urban slaveholder insured considerable prestige among those in bondage. Next to actual freedom, it was a way of life which virtually every agrarian slave envied. Yet it was a way of life led by an ever-declining percentage of the slave population.

By 1860, the eve of the Civil War, the federal census showed the number of Covington-held slaves was but 197 of the city's total of 16,471. They consisted of 52 males and 141 females. In the county outside the city, an additional 178 males and 192 females were held in bondage. Covington was home to 51 free blacks that year.

To those already-mentioned reasons for the relatively small number of slaves held locally, the obvious financial risk was involved – it was a short, though risky, flight to a free state. Yet, during Covington’s earliest days, many local slaves were often permitted to go alone to Cincinnati for recreation among that city’s black residents. Still others would simply slip away for a short visit to the Ohio city and a bit of celebration.

In order to purchase whisky and other needs, slaves used animal pelts, wild honey, garden vegetables or other items to barter with. It was common for them to earn small amounts of money by running errands for neighboring non-slaveholding whites, or performing tasks as cutting wood, washing windows, trimming lawns or engaging in crafts as broom-making and shoe-cobbling.

These river crossings were in direct violation of an 1831 state law saying no ferryman was to transport slaves out of Kentucky without the express permission of the slaves’ owners. Each Ohio River ferry operator was required to post a bond of \$3,000 to ensure the law would be observed and would be subject to a fine of \$200 for every violation.⁹⁷

The same law made it a criminal offense for anyone else to carry such slaves across the river or even lend them any type of river craft.⁹⁸ This law, like many others enacted by the state before and since, was widely ignored by local officials. Only the most trusted slaves were allowed such unquestioned freedom of movement.

Saturday nights were usually the favorite times for blacks to visit across the river and often were climaxed by wild drunken sprees in which fights and near riots would culminate in the slaves’ arrests. Their Covington owners were required to pay the slaves’ fines in order to have them released from police custody.

This freedom to cross the Ohio unaccompanied by their owners virtually disappeared as the demand for cheap labor in southern cotton fields drove the slaves’ value to ever-increasing highs. Their dollar-value eventually peaked during the Civil War and was accompanied by a growing tendency of blacks to seek their own freedom in northern flights.

The runaway problem became increasingly acute for Covington slaveholders and in 1853, when the last five of Bushrod W. Foley’s slaves fled their owner, the editor of the *Covington Journal* lamented:

*We are daily strengthened in the conviction that slavery will speedily disappear from the northern border of Kentucky. The number of runaways is steadily increasing and will continue to increase as the facilities for escape north are multiplied. No remedy for the evil suggests itself. The utmost vigilance and the kindest treatment are alike unavailing.*⁹⁹

The “facilities for escape” the editor complained of, were those provided by the invisible Underground Railroad and the growing number of people dedicated to increasing its use and effectiveness. The editor had long decried the runaway problem and only a short time before had observed:

*Within a month past, perhaps not less than forty slaves have run away the northern border of Kentucky. It seems quite certain that slavery will pretty rapidly disappear from this portion of Kentucky. The slaves will have to be taken South or they will go North.*¹⁰⁰

Much the same problem was faced by slaveholders throughout the state as the number of abolitionists increased. The anti-slavery element north of the Ohio was becoming increasingly militant in defying terms of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act, while its Kentucky counterpart was urging more blacks to flee their bondage.

Many state historians have declared this activity helped stiffen the slaveholders’ resistance to any form of freedom whatsoever for their slaves. Even Henry Clay, known for his advocacy of gradual emancipation, decried the runaway problem and the militancy of certain abolitionists when he said:

I have very little doubt, indeed, that the extent of loss to the state of Kentucky in consequence of the escape of her slaves is greater, at least in proportion to the total number of slaves that are held within that Commonwealth, even than in Virginia. I know full well, and so does the honorable senator from Ohio know, that it is at the utmost hazard and insecurity to life itself, that a Kentuckian can cross the river and go into the interior to take back his fugitive slave from whence he fled. Recently an example occurred even in the city of Cincinnati in respect to one of our most respectable citizens. Not having visited Ohio at all, but Covington, on the opposite side of the river, a little slave of his escaped over

to Cincinnati. He pursued it [sic]; he found it in the house in which it was concealed; he took it out and it was rescued by the violence and force of a negro mob from his possession – the police of the city standing by and either unwilling or unable to afford the assistance which was requisite to enable him to recover his property.

*Upon this subject I do think we have just and serious cause of complaint against the free states. I think they fail in fulfilling a great obligation and the failure is precisely upon one of those subjects which in its nature is the most irritating and inflaming to those who live in the slave states.*¹⁰¹

Attempts by Ohio freedmen to liberate Kentucky slaves were increasingly open and bold. On May 26, 1852, Lloyd Lewis, James Gibbins and John Kinney led an effort to free a Negro girl belonging to Harlan Moore.¹⁰² Moore, a native of Bath County, Kentucky, was aboard the steamboat *Telegraph* on his way to Texas with his slave girl when the craft docked at Cincinnati Public Landing. Lewis, Gibbins and Kinney, along with several other free Negroes, appeared at the landing and demanded the girl's release. She was a free person, they said, the daughter of a Mrs. Williams and now being kidnapped by Moore.

The three leaders went to Moore's stateroom where they kicked and pounded on his locked door while demanding the girl be turned over to them. By then, a large crowd collected on the public landing, causing the *Telegraph's* captain to express fears of what he thought would be "severe consequences." Accordingly, he moved his craft to the Covington side of the river, taking Lewis, Gibbins and Kinney with him. The trio made no objection to the *Telegraph's* move and voluntarily went before Covington's Mayor Bushrod Foley where they repeated their demands.¹⁰³

Local officials promptly arranged to have the girl's alleged mother appear at the mayor's hearing. There, she was questioned about her position in the case "and at once disavowed all knowledge of the girl."¹⁰⁴

As a result of the woman's testimony, Mayor Foley dismissed all charges against Moore but ordered Lewis held on a charge of attempting to wrongfully take a Negro girl from her legal owner. His bail was set at \$500.

Gibbins and Kinney were released when Foley determined the evidence against them was not sufficient to warrant their detention. It was learned after the hearing that all the Negroes had been heavily armed throughout the entire episode.¹⁰⁵

Covington remained an attractive stopping place for southern businessmen and others who came up-river with their servants. Lewis C. Bakes recognized this when he first acquired the Covington Hotel. He advertised its location at the corner of Greenup and the Public Square was just one square from the ferry landing. This, he boasted, "renders it a desirable stopping place for Southerners and all others passing through this place with slaves."¹⁰⁶ Bakes placed his advertisements not only in the local papers but also in those throughout the Upper South.

The southern planters who came up-river to Cincinnati were often accompanied by their slave servants. Since Ohio laws prior to the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act declared all slaves free as soon as they touched that state's borders, the planters were advised to stop at Covington. There they could leave their slaves and feel free to cross to Ohio to transact their business.

Actually, one of southwestern Ohio's boasted attractions at that time was its advantage of being close to Covington. Virtually all its promotional literature reminded prospective slave-owning businessmen who might fear loss of their slaves while visiting Ohio, that they could live on the Kentucky side and legally keep their human chattel.

Many businessmen and other southern visitors, were attracted to Covington by this "advantage," despite its accompanying obvious disadvantage – it was but a short flight to Ohio and freedom.

On one occasion, a prosperous New Orleans slave-owner was aboard a Cincinnati-bound steamboat with his wife, three children and the children's black nurse, Maria. Partway through the journey, the Southerner was told he was sure to lose his servant-girl in Cincinnati, "as that city is cursed with free negroes and abolitionists."¹⁰⁷

As a result, the slave-owning family decided to make its summer home on the Covington side, much to Maria's surprise and disappointment, for she had long planned for this journey and the opportunity it would present to flee to Canada. Now, the prospect seemed bleak indeed.¹⁰⁸

One day after they were comfortably established at the White Hall Hotel in present-day Ludlow, Maria took the children to the river bank where they amused themselves by watching the steamboats and throwing pebbles

into the river. While the children were busy at play, a white man approached Maria and asked if she would like to cross to Ohio. The servant-girl replied that this was her fondest wish, but she knew of no safe way to do so.¹⁰⁹

The stranger pointed to a large, exposed tree root under which a grown person could easily hide. He told her to slip off from her owners that night, hide under the root and wait until she heard a low whistle. Then, the man said, she should come out of her hiding place and without saying a word, step into the waiting skiff. He would then use muffled oars to row her to the Ohio side where she would be met by other sympathetic members of the Underground Railroad.¹¹⁰

Maria later said of her flight:

I never can tell you how strange I felt about such good new as this and wondered if it could be true. I just trembled like a popple leaf all the evenin'. Master and missus was over in the city to a lecture on Fernology [phrenology?] and didn't get back 'til twelve o'clock. I kep' the children awake later'n common so they'd speep sounder. Then I tied my clothes up in a tight bundle an' had my shoes an' hat whar I'd lay han's on 'em an' put out the light. I was snorin' when missus looked in an' said, "All's asleep – all right;" an' I waited 'til the clock struck one an' all still. I crep' sof'ly out on the street and down to the root an' waited fur a whistle. The clock struck two. O how long! Will that man come? Chillen may cry and muissus fin' me gone. Had I better wait 'til it's three o'clock? May be he can't come. He said, "if anything happen he couldn't come to-night, I mus' go back an' try another night. An' 'bout as I began to think I better go back come the whistle. I stepped in an' we went over; but the clock struck three before we got half across an' he was mighty fear'd he couldn't get back afore daybreak."¹¹¹

When Maria landed on the Ohio side, she was immediately taken to the home of a black family where she spent the following day. Her owner was furious at her escape and posted a \$500 reward for her capture and return. All during that day his agents, along with others hoping for the reward, could be seen searching Cincinnati streets for Maria.¹¹²

Laura Haviland, who was a devout Quaker and an active member of the Underground Railroad, decided Maria must be moved to a safer place. Accordingly, she went to the runaway as soon as night came, disguised the servant-girl in a Quaker dress and bonnet, placed a heavy veil over Maria's face and led her to the home of another black family, this one on Longworth Street.¹¹³

By the next day, the New Orleans planter had doubled the reward to \$1,000. He declared he would catch Maria if he had to "set one foot in hell" to do it.¹¹⁴

Laura Haviland now decided Maria must again be moved. As the streets in that neighborhood were too well lit for Maria to be mistaken for a white person through her veil, Laura powdered the black girl's face with flour before adjusting the heavy veil. The two then hurried to another home where Maria spent the next two weeks hiding in an attic.¹¹⁵

Once again, the slave-hunters began to get dangerously close to discovering Maria's hiding place, so Laura decided to move her again. This time she was taken to a home on Fourteenth Street, after which Laura wrote a letter to Maria's former owner, making it appear the black girl was safely in Canada. She had a Canadian-bound friend mail it from Windsor, Ontario.¹¹⁶

The letter convinced the southerner that Maria had made good her escape so he canceled the reward offer and called off the search. Laura and her fellow Underground workers immediately hired a closed carriage and by nightfall had transported Maria and two other runaways thirty miles northward. There, the black fugitives were turned over to other members of the Underground Railroad for the remainder of the journey to Canada.¹¹⁷

Today, the memory of Laura Haviland's work is kept alive by a statue of her which stands in front of the Adrian, Michigan City Hall.

If slaveholders of the Upper Bluegrass were concerned about the nearness of a free state, so too did Ohio's freedmen worry about the nearness of slaveholding Kentucky. The freedmen's worry was not without cause for the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act not only denied the black man a trial by jury, neither would it permit him to testify in his own behalf and for all practical purposes allowed him to be taken by anyone who might decide to claim him as a runaway. The road to freedom was one that could be traveled both ways.

After passage of the Fugitive Slave Act, more of Kentucky's runaways were pursued into Ohio and returned to their owners. There were also the countless cases of unscrupulous people who continued to kidnap freedmen on the pretext they were runaways, force them to Covington and sell them south for a handsome profit. Such happenings engendered much friction with those who were anti-slavery and in sympathy with the abolitionists.

One case involved George Jackson, a Negro freedman who was seized on a downtown Cincinnati street and forced at knife and gun point to accompany his abductors toward the river. Jackson cried for help and as they neared the ferry landing, a sympathetic crowd began throwing bricks and rocks at the kidnapers.¹¹⁸

The ferryman nevertheless, held his boat long enough for the men and their prisoner to reach it. He took them to the Covington shore and George Jackson was never heard from again. It is presumed he was sold south into slavery.¹¹⁹

On another occasion, a mob of whites in Cincinnati took from the police a black man who had been arrested for some minor offense and forced him through the streets to the Covington ferry, proclaiming they intended to take him to the Covington side to hang him.¹²⁰

Several Covingtonians heard of the commotion and hurried to the riverbank where, by then, the Cincinnatians were about to carry out the hanging. The *Covington Journal* reported the Ohioans "were at once commanded to desist and the cowardly scoundrels, quailing before the determination of the Kentuckians, were compelled to relinquish their foul purpose and finally slunk back to Cincinnati."¹²¹

This attempted lynching was preceded by a similar attempt on the life of yet another freedman. The affair had its beginning when John Cropper, a Covington steamboat officer, punished a Negro employee by whipping him. The Negro's brother swore revenge for the whipping and on an occasion in St. Louis, attacked Cropper with a butcher knife but did no harm.¹²²

On September 11, 1847, the black man again met Cropper, this time in Cincinnati, and attempted to shoot him. When the pistol failed to fire, he threw it at Cropper's face. A crowd quickly gathered and, according to one observer, "perhaps saved the negro's life, as Mr. Cropper is an immensely stout man and would have *demolished* the villain in a few seconds."¹²³

The two men were arrested and taken to the Cincinnati mayor's office for a hearing. Bail was set for both but the black man was kept in custody when he could not pay the amount. The crowd was still milling about the street and when police appeared with the prisoner, began following them toward the jail. Cries of "kill the damned nigger" were clearly audible after which the Negro was pelted with sticks and stones.¹²⁴

Soon, members of the crowd seized the now-bloodied black man and took him on one of the docked steamboats. For some unexplained reason, they changed their minds and decided to move the lynching to the Covington waterfront.¹²⁵

The lynch party no sooner stepped ashore at Covington than Mayor Bushrod Foley appeared and ordered the group to leave town. Accordingly, the crowd moved down the riverbank until all its members were just outside the western city limits. There, a rope was thrown over a tree limb and was being adjusted about the victim's neck when Thomas Kennedy and a deputy marshal appeared. Kennedy promptly drew a knife and cut the rope into several pieces. The crowd, according to an Ohio newsman, "seemed willing to listen to better counsels and were induced to suffer the negro to be placed in a skiff and brought back to this shore where he was received by some of our police and safely lodged in jail."¹²⁶

Several months after this, Covington passed an ordinance limiting the reasons a slave might be imprisoned in its jail. The law, enacted June 8, 1848, proclaimed:

No slave shall be put into the city jail or workhouse for safe keeping or under any pretense save and except when he, she or they shall be placed there for some felonious offense, unless by written order or permission of the Mayor of said city.

This ordinance was given broad interpretation and in "A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin," Harriet Beecher Stowe mentions a notice which appeared in the *Frankfort Commonwealth*. The notice read:

NOTICE

Taken up by M.H. Brand, as a runaway slave on the 22nd ult., in the city of Covington, Kenton county, K., a negro man calling himself CHARLES WARFIELD, about 30 years old, but looks older, about 6 feet high; no particular marks; had no free papers but he says he is free and was born in Pennsylvania and in Fayette county. Said negro was lodged in jail on the said

22nd ult., and the owner or owners, if any, are hereby notified to come forward, prove property and pay charges and take him away.

C.W. HULL, J.K.C.

August 3, 1852 – 6m

When an individual was placed in such detention, there was little hope for him, for in Kentucky it was customary to sell such persons for jail fees if they were not claimed. Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote she assumed that was the eventual fate of the Covington prisoner.¹²⁷

Another example occurred in January 1861, when a Negro was discovered hiding in the hold of the steamboat *Swallow* during one of its upstream trips. The black man, who had been subsisting for several days on raw potatoes, was seized by the boat's officers and landed at Covington where he was turned over to the local officials.¹²⁸

The stowaway gave his name as Joseph Keitt and stated he had boarded the boat at Dover, Tennessee. Covington officials jailed him until he could either establish proof of his freedom or was claimed by his owner. They also placed the following notice in several newspapers:

COMMITTED TO JAIL¹²⁹

Was committed to me as jailer of Kenton county, Ky., of the city of Covington, Joseph Keitt of Brown, a man of color, supposed to be a runaway, about 27 or 30 years of age, about 5 feet 9 or 10 inches high and weighs about 160 pounds; he is very dark but not African black; says he belongs in Dover, Stewart county, Tenn., and that his mother is a free woman.

A.H. HEROD

Jailer, K. C., Ky.

January 10th, 1861 – tr.

Keitt spent the next six months in Covington's jail while the preceding announcement was published with a certain amount of regularity. Finally, a member of the firm of Wood, Lewis & Company of Cumberland, Tennessee, claimed him as a runaway and returned him to his owner.

Another Tennessee runaway to be removed from a steamboat at Covington was one described by a local newsman as the "NIGGER IN A DRY GOODS BOX!"¹³⁰

This case began when a white divorcee boarded the steamboat *Portsmouth* for an upstream journey to Ohio. She brought aboard a large dry goods box containing what she said was her crockery and had it stored with the vessel's other freight.¹³¹

In the meantime, a slaveholder notified the *Portsmouth's* crew of the possibility that one of his runaway slaves might be aboard. The boat was searched but no runaway could be found. As the vessel neared Covington, however, the divorcee was observed taking a glass of water to the crate. Suspicion was aroused among the boat's officers and the crate ordered opened. Inside was a 45 year-old male who readily admitted to being a runaway and claimed the woman had agreed to his escape in return for his promise to work for her for 12 months.¹³²

The runaway was promptly landed at Covington where he was jailed to await being reclaimed by his owner.¹³³ In order to reclaim a jailed runaway, the owner was required to pay all the fugitive's arrest and jail costs and local officials noted there were times when these expenses nearly matched the Negro's market value.¹³⁴

Even though a black man might be able to prove his status as a freedman, he still could not always be sure the proof would be respected. This was demonstrated in the case of a freedman who was traveling from Illinois to Cincinnati, also by river boat. He, like Keitt, was seized by the boat's officers before landing and turned over to Covington officials, despite the fact he had documents of freedom issued by an Illinois court.¹³⁵

Slave owners tended to be exceptionally sensitive about slavery's morality and attempted to justify it in any fashion they could. One of the more amazing rationalizations can be found in Edward A. Pollard's "Southern History of the Civil War." Pollard wrote:

*In referring to the condition of the negro in this war, we use the term "slavery" in these pages under strong protest. For there is no such thing in the South; it is a term fastened upon us by the exaggeration and conceit of Northern literature and most improperly acquiesced in by Southern writers.*¹³⁶

*There is a system of African servitude in the South; in which the negro, so far from being under the absolute dominion of his master (which is the true meaning of the vile word "slavery"), has by law of the land, his personal rights recognized and protected and his comfort and "right" of "happiness" consulted and by the practice of the system, has a sum of individual indulgences which makes him altogether the most striking type in the world of cheerfulness and contentment. And the system of servitude in the South has this peculiarity over other systems of servitude in the world: that it does not debase one of God's creatures from the condition of free-citizenship and membership in organized society and thus rest on acts of debasement and disenfranchisement but elevate a savage and rests on the solid basis of human improvement. The European mind, adopting the nomenclature of our enemies, has designated as "slavery" what is really the most virtuous system of servitude in the world.*¹³⁷

School books used in the Confederacy carried out similar themes, the following taken from an approved geography textbook, proposing slavery as being a humane and just institution. In speaking of the races of mankind, it said:

*The Caucasian race is found among the civilized nations of Europe and America and is superior to the rest in mind, courage and activity . . . The African, or Black race is found in all parts of African, except on the Northern coast; and in America, where they have been brought and humanely reduced to their proper normal condition of slavery.*¹³⁸

Samuel Davis, editor of the *Covington Journal*, held somewhat similar views of the Negro. He viewed the slave as having no legal or moral right to private possessions and was stunned to near disbelief at learning of a slaveholder who permitted his slave to keep \$15,000 the slave had won in a Kentucky lottery.

Davis decried the slaveholder's action as being a violation of the highest moral principle and declared:

*We need not stop to say that the relation of master and slave, is, under divine [sic] authority based upon the perfect and absolute right of the master in the slave, comprehending all his labor and all his earnings and whoever admits, in any way, a right of claim on the part the slave to any portion of either, no matter a concession which weakens the relation, and to that extent depreciates the value of the property. He does more; he yields the only ground upon which the relation can be maintained and justified. In this view, the conduct of the master was impolite and indefensible.*¹³⁹

Understandably, the slave used a portion of his winnings to purchase his own freedom, prompting Davis to call it another case of a black person being "turned loose upon society."¹⁴⁰ The editor felt the newly-rich slave was "totally unfitted to enjoy freedom," and predicted he would either soon be cheated out of his money or become "the victim of his own uncultivated, unrestrained passions."¹⁴¹

Davis and other local defenders of slavery, liked to compare the southern slaves' condition with the plight of many of the poor in northern industrial centers. One resident, who had just returned from a visit to Boston, spoke of the sad state of a widow and her children who were begging for living in the streets of that city. He noted:

*On the same day there were thousands of people . . . indulging in pious grief for the sad condition of the fat, sleek, well-clothed and well-protected Africans in the South and not a few benevolent ladies passed by the shivering, weeping, cringing group, hurrying along to make a donation for the "distant heathen."*¹⁴²

Another Covingtonian was quick to respond to the arguments of the pro-slavers by noting he knew of no free person to ever apply for slavery. In spite of the avowed benevolence of "the most virtuous system of servitude in the world, local newspapers, especially the *Covington Journal*, regularly carried advertisements placed by down-state slave owners describing runaways and offering rewards for their apprehension. It was always hoped the escapees would be caught before crossing the Ohio. The following are typical of such advertisements:

\$200 REWARD

RAN away from the subscriber, at Eminence, Ky., on 17th inst., a negro man named ANDA, aged 25 years, black, 5 feet 8 inches high and weighs about 150

lbs – has small pits over his face, holes in his ears with strings in them and seaton [sic] scars on the back of his neck. I will give the above reward for him if taken out of this state or \$150 if taken in this state and delivered to me at the Louisville jail.

ISAAC B. SHELBY ¹⁴³

\$100 REWARD

RUNAWAY from the subscriber, leaving Fayette county, Ky., on the night of the 27th inst., a negro woman named MAHALA – Said woman is about 28 years of age, of copper color, about five feet high and has a scar over her right jaw, caused by the removal of a tumor.

I will give a reward of \$100 for the woman if taken out of the State or in any county bordering on the Ohio river and \$25 if taken in any other county in the State and delivered to me or secured in jail so I get her.

JOSEPH HEARNE ¹⁴⁴

Lewis C. Robards and Washington Bolton, two infamous central Kentucky slave traders, frequently advertised in Covington newspapers, and once offered area residents a reward of \$1,400 for the return of seven slaves who had escaped from their Lexington jail after sawing through one of the jail's iron bars.¹⁴⁵

Although Cincinnati was technically in free territory, it could never be considered entirely safe. In fact, on at least three separate occasions between 1827 and 1841, white mobs ran the community's free blacks out of town. In addition, an influential segment of Cincinnati's populace was in sympathy with the southern slaveholders and as a result many hapless Negroes were imprisoned and turned over to Covington officials as suspected runaways. These Cincinnatians thought it "just good business" to accommodate the slaveholders. The Southerners spent many dollars in their city. [The 1850 census shows 50% of Cincinnatians to have been born in the South – *editor*]

Caleb Atwater, known as Ohio's first historian, took a similar utilitarian view of slavery in his "A History of the State of Ohio," first published in 1838. He considered it was to Ohio's advantage to have Southern bondage continue without interference as he wrote:

As a state, it is our interest, in Ohio, to have slavery continued in the slave holding states, for a century yet, otherwise our growth would be checked. The broad and deep stream of wealth, numbers, enterprise, youth, vigor and the very life blood of the slave holding states now rolling into Ohio like mighty floods, would be stayed and even rolled back to their sources, rendering those states not merely our equals but even our superiors in numbers, wealth and political power. No, we have adopted a policy which, for a century yet, requires slavery in the states south of us to be continued until they become desert (that is none of our business), while we have twelve millions of people of Ohio; until, indeed, this whole State becomes one vast lovely paradise, all cultivated; intersected everywhere by roads and canals; covered with cities and their splendid homes. No, let slavery be continued where it is during the next century at least. ¹⁴⁶

One Cincinnatiian who feared the abolitionists' possible effect on business wrote to a newspaper editor and declared:

Some decided means must be adopted to retrieve our character and to quell these disturbers of society, or we shall incur the contempt and hostility of all our southern neighbors. ¹⁴⁷

He also accused the abolitionist movement of being composed of fanatics and deceivers who could not be trusted and said:

Even a female member of it lately took up her abode in a family near Covington for the purpose of enticing away their servants and carried over incendiary tracts for their instruction. ¹⁴⁸

The writer complained of Kentuckians and their servants being pursued and harassed in Cincinnati streets and stores by abolitionists and declared such practice could only result in harm to that city's business community. He told of a Covington woman who took her child and a black nurse on a shopping trip to Cincinnati. According to the correspondent, the shoppers were constantly followed by "a great fat wench" who kept asking the child's nurse if she didn't want to be free.¹⁴⁹

The letter writer went on:

*The farmers and drovers who supply our markets . . . can no longer bring their negroes to assist in driving their cattle. The Kentucky trade must take another direction . . . and the trade of Louisville, Covington and Maysville will be increased at our expense.*¹⁵⁰

This desire of some Ohioans to maintain good relations with the slave holders often resulted in stark tragedy. Such was the case of a black man who was taken prisoner near the Cincinnati waterfront, bound in irons and ferried toward Covington. To the prisoner though, death was preferable to being robbed of freedom. Just before reaching the Kentucky side, he leaped overboard and drowned in the swirling river water.¹⁵¹

A similar case to George Jackson's, and one in which even the victim's name was uncannily similar, was that of a runaway belonging to Vice President William R. King. King had been elected with President Franklin Pierce and when he left his Alabama home for Washington, the slave, known simply as Jackson, saw his own opportunity. He fled to freedom in Cincinnati where he thought he would be safe.¹⁵²

Jackson had talent as a barber and after being in Ohio for a considerable time, decided to open a shop. He built a prospering business and had been operating for some time when King learned of his whereabouts. The Vice President promptly sent an agent to return the runaway to his slave quarters.¹⁵³

The agent came to Cincinnati, organized a posse and one day about noon seized Jackson at Fifth and Walnut Streets. Jackson struggled and cried for help but was forced at gun point onto a ferryboat and across to Covington where slave holding was legal. He was promptly returned to Alabama.¹⁵⁴

Some slaves, after once securing their own freedom, expanded their time and energy in aiding others. One such ex-slave was Benjamin Chelsom, who was granted his freedom in 1840 by his master's vigorously contested will. The freed Benjamin lost no time in migrating to Ohio where he secured employment as a laborer. He also began to surreptitiously encourage and aid runaways, activity which eventually led to his own return to slavery.¹⁵⁵

The central Kentucky heirs of Benjamin's former master had always resented the ex-slave's freedom and eventually succeeded in having set aside that portion of the will which freed him. They began plotting Benjamin's capture to return him to their slave cabins. To effect the entrapment, they hired a free Negro to pose as a fleeing slave and so decoy Benjamin to a rendezvous on the Covington side of the river.¹⁵⁶

The heirs were certain Benjamin would respond to the decoy's pretended plight and lay in wait for the clandestine meeting to occur. When Benjamin appeared at the prearranged site, he was pounced upon and seized. After a fierce struggle, in which he was beaten to the ground and bound, Benjamin was taken to the Covington jail. There, his wounds were treated and the next day was returned to slavery.¹⁵⁷

"Nigger sealers" was the scornful name given those who aided in the escape of slaves. This term, along with the equally scornful "nigger catcher," was also applied to individuals engaged in kidnapping free blacks and selling them back into slavery. Some of the area's more unscrupulous "nigger stealers" played both sides of the river and included members of both races.

During 1854, one of the local freedmen was Robert Russel, described as an idle, loafish mulatto and a typical traitor to his own race. It was said that for even the smallest of fees, he would guide a runaway to freedom north of the Ohio, and for an equally small fee, betray the ex-slave to his former owner. His activities eventually aroused so much antagonism among Cincinnati's free blacks that he refused to venture from Covington for fear of being tarred and feathered.

When abolitionists learned Russel was wanted by the police of Ripley, Ohio on a charge of stealing, they began working on a plan to have Covington slaveholders force him out of the community. The plan decided upon was to use the theft charge as an excuse to surreptitiously print and distribute cards notifying slaveholders of Russel's activities in helping slaves to escape. Their message read:

Slave-holders of Kentucky:
BEWARE OF THE ROGUE, ROBERT RUSSEL!

Who absconded from Ripley, Ohio to evade the strong arm of the law he richly deserved for misdemeanors in that town. This man is a light mulatto and betrayed one of his race for ten dollars in Cincinnati, bringing him into life-long trouble. He will as readily take ten dollars from any of your slaves to bring them to Cincinnati and again take ten dollars to return them to you, as he has no higher purpose to serve than paltry self.

A Lover of Right

The plan worked, for shortly after the cards were distributed, a group of slaveholders approached Russel and ordered him to leave Kentucky by nine o'clock the following morning or else suffer the consequences. Russel quickly agreed and was never seen again in the Covington area.¹⁵⁸

Sometimes mass escapes took place as on the night of June 11, 1854, when 27 slaves fled their Northern Kentucky owners during what one newsman called a "slave stampede."¹⁵⁹

The runaway problem along the state's northern border became so serious as to prompt the legislature to take additional action in behalf of the slaveholders. That year a law was enacted requiring all owners of boats and skiffs on the Ohio River to keep their craft secured with a "substantial chain and lock" when not in use. Failure to comply could bring a fine of ten dollars for each offense. Yet a countless number of slaves continued to make their escape northward.

One of the many successful flights through Covington was of a slave family of ten consisting of a husband and wife and their eight children all of whom lived on a farm about 15 miles out of town. Their master, in order to keep them from trying to escape, always said he intended to eventually free them.¹⁶⁰

The mother, known as Aunt Betsey, was a reliable servant, and had a standing pass from her master for visits to Cincinnati where she frequently took wagons of vegetables to market.¹⁶¹

One day, Aunt Betsey learned her owner intended to sell some of her children. She became thoroughly alarmed, of course, and decided to take her family and flee. After mapping out plans, she asked a small white boy if he cared to take a ride to Cincinnati with her when she took in a load of vegetables the next morning.¹⁶²

The young boy eagerly accepted Aunt Betsey's invitation and at the agree hour showed up to accompany her to the city. Having her entire family with her was of no concern to the young lad nor in his innocence, did he question her later action when they arrived at the Covington city limits. There Aunt, Betsey halted the wagon and had her husband and weight children bury themselves beneath the vegetables where she had previously hidden spare clothing and bedding.¹⁶³

Her timid husband became extremely fearful and begged her not to enter Covington but return instead to their master. His wife was firm in her decision and compelled him to go on. The white child watched all this but did not fully comprehend what was taking place. Again Aunt Betsey mounted the driver's seat and with the white boy beside her, urged the horses on.¹⁶⁴

They soon reached the river. The ferryboat operator, who was acquainted with Aunt Betsey, asked no questions, for it looked to him like a routine trip to market. Once on the Ohio side, she immediately headed for freed friends who would help in her escape.¹⁶⁵

After the bedding and her family were unloaded, Aunt Betsey drove the wagon to Broadway, stopped the team and informed the boy she had to visit the market place and he should stay behind to watch the horses. A short time later, a German immigrant who could speak but a little English appeared. He drove the wagon and boy back to Covington where they were found in the next morning by the irate master who had come in pursuit. The little boy, afraid and crying could be of no help, for he knew nothing of the city streets. All the sobbing youngster knew was Aunt Betsey had gone to market and hadn't come back.¹⁶⁶

Another case involved a young married slave couple, Jack and Lucy. They were both young and strong and represented two valuable pieces of property to their Covington owner. Their master had just sold them to a southern slave trader and they were to be delivered to Louisville on an early downriver boat.

The night following their sale, Jack and Lucy were locked in an upstairs back room for safekeeping. The pair managed to escape, however, by fashioning a rope of bed clothing and sliding down to the backyard. Most of their clothing had previously been taken from them and they were forced to flee through the dark Covington streets "barefooted, bareheaded and very thinly clad."¹⁶⁷ When they reached the edge of the Ohio, they stole a skiff and rowed across.

Their escape was detected almost immediately and a hastily organized posse set out in pursuit. An ironical situation developed at the river when the pursuers rowed across at almost the precise moment Jack and Lucy were doing the same. Fortunately for the fleeing couple, the two crossings took place at opposite ends of town.

When the owner could not easily discover the escapees on the Ohio shore, he returned to Covington and had handbills printed which offered \$400 reward for their recapture. The pair was worth \$1,000 each to him and he was eager to capture them. The handbills were widely circulated on both sides of the river and also distributed among the police.

Jack and Lucy were never caught and for two weeks watched from a window of their garret hiding place as their owner led companies of men in search of them. When the hunt finally quieted down, Jack and Lucy were spirited to Canada.¹⁶⁸

Another of the many exciting local escape stories where the Underground Railroad was involved, concerned Jane, described as a “handsome girl” and said to have been well treated by her Covington owner. Her owner’s aged wife took such pains to teach Jane the arts of sewing and housekeeping that she eventually became extremely skillful at both. Her life seemed to be a reasonably pleasant one.¹⁶⁹

When Jane was sixteen, her elderly owner died and she became the property of the woman’s son. He immediately made Jane his mistress and bore him a daughter whose skin coloring was almost as light as his. Jane also became converted to Christianity at about that same time – an act which outraged the young man. About three years later he announced his intention to sell her to the first trader to come through.¹⁷⁰

Jane was greatly distressed at the thought of being sold to a slave trader and went to see a nearby anti-slavery family. The old English gentleman who was head of the family tried to intercede in her behalf, even to the point of offering to buy her. He then intended to let Jane buy her freedom. The owner refused, saying she was a handsome girl who would bring a premium price in the South. Nothing was said about the child, who of course would go with its mother. The old Englishman later told Levi Coffin he “had not thought that the brute would sell his own child.”¹⁷¹

A few days after Jane had first contacted the Englishman, she and the little girl were sold to a Southern dealer for \$1,100. Jane now literally begged her friends to aid her in any way they could. She told them she had only one day left in Covington and would have to leave with the trader. The old gentleman contacted the Underground Railroad in Cincinnati and a skiff was arranged early that night to an area in the lower part of Covington which was frequently used for clandestine river crossings.¹⁷²

Jane’s owners watched her closely that evening but at an opportune moment Jane took the little girl in her arms and slipped out of the yard and into a back alley. She hurried to a pre-arranged rendezvous where her English friend was waiting. He led her and her child to the skiff, helped them into it and bid them a fervent farewell.¹⁷³

Jane’s enraged owner made a search of Covington and Cincinnati, trying to locate her and eventually sent agents as far as the Canadian border. During all this time, Jane was safely hidden in Cincinnati. After a short while, she was spirited out of town to Randolph County, Indiana, where friends enrolled her in school at the Union Literary Institute.¹⁷⁴

Jane ultimately made her way to Canada where she married and reared several children. Ironically, one of her Ontario-born granddaughters later returned to Covington to teach in the local school system for thirty years, beginning at Lincoln-Grant and later at Fourth District. The granddaughter was a graduate of Oberlin and the University of Cincinnati and did post-graduate work at Xavier University.¹⁷⁵

She also taught evening adult classes, served as a delegate to the Kentucky Education Association and was superintendent of her church Sunday school. This dedicated teacher worked at her chosen profession until her death in June 1976. She completed the final report cards for her classes from her death-bed at St. Elizabeth Hospital.

Jane’s role as a mistress to her owner and as mother to his child was not unusual for a slaveholding society. Children born of such a union were born into slavery and of the nation’s total slave population of 3,200,000 in 1850, it has been estimated that 246,000 were products of mixed parentage. By 1860, the number of “mulatto” slaves increased to 411,000 out of 3,900,000 slaves.¹⁷⁶

Such national leaders as Benjamin Franklin, Patrick Henry and Alexander Hamilton were said to have had Negro mistresses and even Daniel Boone was rumored to have fathered a “mulatto” daughter.¹⁷⁷

Neither were illicit relationships unknown to Confederate defenders of the Southern way of life, for it has been recorded that Robert E. Lee’s father-in-law had a child by a slave and Lee’s half-brother is said to have seduced his own sister-in-law.¹⁷⁸

Concubinage was widespread among Kentucky slaveholders. Light-skinned Negroesses were favored for these illicit arrangements and Frankfort was generally considered the state’s chief market for them.¹⁷⁹ There, the

sale of prospective concubines always prompted spirited bidding from literally scores of representatives of some of Kentucky's most prominent families.

As noted, slavery had existed in Covington since the town's beginning and in fact, Thomas Kennedy had been one of the area's leading slaveholders. However, the open and public auctioning of Negroes, so common elsewhere in Kentucky, was so repellent to the typical Covingtonian that such a spectacle was an extreme rarity in the town. One such episode however, occurred on April 14, 1862, in front of the courthouse and involved a forty-year-old slave named Angeline and her eleven-year-old child. They had been the property of a deceased Boone Countian and were being sold under an attachment at a public Master Commissioner's sale.

Several slave dealers were at the sale but Andrew H. Herod, who was city jailer at the time, was determined the pair should not fall into their hands. He began bidding against the slavers and quickly gained ownership of the two blacks for the surprisingly low price of \$375.¹⁸⁰

Angeline's husband witnessed the sale and signified his pleasure at the fact she was not going "down state" in the hands of a dealer. After the sale was concluded, it was only the second public sale of Negroes to take place in Covington for 15 years. This was so despite the all-time high prices slaves were bringing in the deep South.

Covingtonians were kept well-informed of prices paid in southern markets by reading the *Covington Journal* which often carried such news as the following:

*Slaves command very fine prices just now in the South. At Camden, South Carolina last week, a family consisting of eight likely negro men sold at an average of \$1,086.87 ... each.*¹⁸¹

The usual method used by local slaveholders who wished to sell their slaves was to deal with an out-of-town slave trader or with one of the many itinerant dealers who regularly scoured the countryside looking for slaves who could be resold at tremendous profit in the deep South.

Many of the itinerant dealers made frequent stops at Covington and would advertise their presence by distributing handbills or placing advertisements in local papers. Typical of those is the following found inserted in the *Covington Journal* by Robert H. Thompson:

WANTED¹⁸²

*A NUMBER OF YOUNG AND LIKELY NEGROES FOR FARMING USE.
FOR which I will pay the highest CASH PRICES.
I can be found at Magnolia House, where any information left will be promptly
attended*

*ROBERT H. THOMPSON
Of Fayette, Ky.*

Although Covington lacked the slave auction, traders such as Thompson could frequently be seen driving coffles of slaves to the riverfront to be loaded on south-bound boats. Whenever the possibility occurred that a slave might be sold, it was certain one or more leaders would be on the scene attempting to acquire the Negro at the lowest possible price. Their comings and goings in Covington were common enough to prompt city council on April 17, 1851, to assess a one dollar fee on all steamboats landing here to receive or discharge slaves and not remaining for more than one hour.

One of the local slaves' greatest fears was someday they might be "sold South." This same fear was usually held for the possibility of being sold "down state" where some of the worst evils associated with Kentucky slavery were found, including the practice of purposely breeding slaves for the lucrative southern market.

Several years after slavery was abolished, Kentucky historian Nathaniel Southgate Shaler published a state history where he said:

*Slavery in Kentucky was of the domestic sort . . . (and) . . . not a grievous burden to bear. The Kentucky slave was not ordinarily overburdened with work and was reasonably content with his place in life.*¹⁸³

*The proof of all this is well shown by the fact that thousands of them quietly remained with their masters on the counties along the Ohio River, when in any night they might have escaped across the border.*¹⁸⁴

These claims of Shaler have probably resulted in his becoming as much responsible as any one person for the myth of Kentucky slavery being a mild, paternalistic system. This dubious distinction developed because of many later writers who accepted his views as valid for the entire state, and repeated them as such.

These writers overlooked that Shaler's observations of slavery were made largely here in the state's northernmost part. He was a Newport resident and saw a minimum of the negative excesses found throughout the state.

Nowhere was slavery as mild as some depicted it although it was probably least oppressive in Shaler's urban Covington-Newport area. Reasons for this are varied. Here slaveholders' relatively small numbers made them more subject to public scrutiny than the case elsewhere. This same small number also served to affect the nature of the slaves' position in the community. Not only did they become reasonably well-known but they experienced far closer contact with their owners than those further south. There, they were often required to work under direction of an overseer or under another slave who derived his authority from the owner.

Local anti-slavery members were far more outspoken in criticizing slaveholding neighbors than in any other part of the state. Their criticism invariably found strong support among nearby Ohioans and the daily interaction of citizens from the two sides of the Ohio gave this importance that cannot be overlooked.

Neither should the absence of open criticism by one's neighbors be overlooked when considering slavery's nature in the state's interior.

Desperation invariably set in among those local slaves who learned the possibility of their being "sold South" was about to become a fact. Even panic sometimes occurred and for some, death was preferable. One slave father and mother who had been locked in a Covington slave barracoon with their children to await shipment to the deep South, decided to kill the children rather than have them suffer such a fate. After slaying the children, the parents committed suicide.¹⁸⁵

Another case involving a slave who was about to be sent further south had a happier ending. The slave, an 18 year-old girl named Lottie, had been given to the widow of William W. Southgate. After a time, it was learned the title to the girl was defective. This prompted authorities to take her into custody with the announced expectation she would be sent to the deep South.¹⁸⁶

Lottie, who had won the affection of virtually all the children on the neighborhood of Southgate's East Second Street home, was temporarily placed in the Negro quarters of the Magnolia Hotel. The children visited her regularly and shortly before she was to be taken away, successfully persuaded officials to allow her to spend "just one more night" at the Southgate home.¹⁸⁷

Lottie no sooner returned to the Southgates than the children began a conspiracy to help her escape to freedom. They pooled their savings, secured contributions of clothing from other slaves, and persuaded another servant to act as her guide during the initial part of the flight.¹⁸⁸

Finally, Lottie was led along the bank of the Licking and across that stream's new but ill-fated suspension bridge. About ten minutes after the crossing, there was a tremendous roar as the span collapsed under the weight of a drove of cattle.¹⁸⁹ Once the pair was in Newport, Lottie was placed in the care of that city's Underground Railroad and was not heard from again until she was safe in Canada.¹⁹⁰

The ease with which the runaway passed through Newport was due largely to the excitement and confusion caused by the bridge collapse. This same situation also permitted her guide to return to his Covington quarters virtually unnoticed and unquestioned. On his return, he was rowed across the Licking by Andy Hood, who had set up a ferry service at the foot of East Second Street.¹⁹¹

Winter months, when the Ohio was frozen, provided many excellent opportunities for escape. Often large numbers of runaways would travel through Covington to cross on the bridges of ice. This was especially true during the severe winter of 1850-1, 1852-3 and 1855-6. The same situation prevailed in Newport where a party of 14 once fled across the frozen stream.

The Covington area provided the setting for many such dramatic escapes and some individuals even claim the novel "Uncle Tom's Cabin" was inspired by local slave activity. There are a number of ante-bellum homes in Kentucky where it is claimed Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote her story but one authority states the book's opening chapters were written in a house on Garrard, just south of Riverside Drive. The historic old structure at 122 Garrard was eventually razed to make way for a home erected by Ullie J. Howard, once a prominent Covington attorney.¹⁹²

It has also been claimed the novelist received inspiration for the episode of Eliza's escape across the river's ice flows from such a crossing that once took place opposite the mouth of Mill Creek. Whether Eliza's escapade was inspired by a local happening or by one at South Ripley as others claim, is a controversy that will never be definitely settled.¹⁹³

Certainly the Beecher family was intimately connected with Covington. It was here Harriet's brother, Henry Ward Beecher, began his outstanding career when he took a Covington preaching assignment after finishing

seminary studies. He was here but a brief time before receiving a call to Lawrenceburg, Indiana, from where he quickly rose to national prominence.¹⁹⁴

Harriet Stowe's novel, first published in book form on March 20, 1852, was well-received in Covington where the owner of the Covington Book Store was hard pressed to keep in stock a sufficient number of the sensational book. The author was subjected to all sorts of verbal abuse from slaveholders, however. She received literally thousands of abusive letters from the South, including one which contained a Negro's ear.

Even the origins of some of Kentucky's best known and highly romanticized slavery-connected myths have been attributed to the Covington area by certain scholars. The myth of the happy "darkies" often associated with Stephen Collins Foster's *My Old Kentucky Home* is one of these.

The truth, according to some of Foster's biographers, is that the Pennsylvania-born song writer was making his home in Cincinnati at the time he received much of his inspiration for the well-known song. Certainly it was during this time he made his first acquaintance with the southern riverboat traffic and with the culture of the nearby border state of Kentucky.

Foster was fascinated by the waterfront activities of riverboat workmen and public landing roustabouts, many of whom were Kentucky-born Negroes. He spent countless hours watching them at work and it was the Negroes' frequent referrals to their former homes in "old Kentucky," and the constant sight of the Kentucky hills and the Covington shore that led him to write *My Old Kentucky Home*. [Actually, *My Old Kentucky Home* was written in Pittsburgh – editor]. This is in direct contradiction to the legend that claims Kentucky's state song was inspired by and written during a visit to Federal Hill in Bardstown.

There have been many reputable scholars to refute the claim that Foster wrote *My Old Kentucky Home* at Federal Hill, as has the songwriter's daughter, Marion Foster Welch of Pittsburgh. Even Randall Capps, author of a highly sympathetic biography of the owners of Federal Hill [The Rowan family, cousins of Foster - editor] admits that even though Foster's song was written in 1852, it was not until the Civil War that it became associated with the Bardstown home.¹⁹⁵

John Winston Coleman, Jr., noted Kentucky historian, has repeatedly pointed out the fallacy of the Bardstown story. Coleman has said he personally remembered the desk at which Foster was said to have written the song was purchased at a Louisville antique store and brought to Federal Hill. After it was placed inside, the story was concocted that Foster wrote the state song at that desk!¹⁹⁶

Coleman has also pointed out that Josiah K. Lilly, son of the founder of the Lilly Pharmaceutical Company and one of the world's greatest collectors of Foster memorabilia, made a standing offer of \$1,500 to anyone would could produce **documentary proof** that Foster even as much as visited Federal Hill.¹⁹⁷

The state song has further ties to the Upper Bluegrass in that a portion of it is almost certain to have been written at Augusta. This occurred while Foster was on a visit to Augusta College where his uncle, Dr. Joseph S. Thomlinson, served as the school's able president. [Most scholars feel Stephen only visited Augusta as a child – editor]

Augusta College had been founded in 1822 as the world's first Methodist affiliated college. It did not survive the Civil War however, for despite the valiant defense efforts of Augusta's Home Guards, much of it was destroyed by the Confederates who also wantonly destroyed many private homes in the community. Fortunately, "Echo Hall" where a portion of the state song is believed to have been composed was saved and is now one of the many historic landmarks in and around the pleasant little upriver community. [Probably an urban legend – editor]

The Bardstown story persists and was given its greatest impetus when Federal Hill was purchased by a group of promotional-minded citizens and presented to the state as a shrine. Queen Marie of Romania was one of its early visitors and was told by a Bardstown booster with an overactive imagination, that the piano there was the actual one on which Foster first played *My Old Kentucky Home*. [Foster was known to play flute but scant evidence he was a pianist – editor] The Queen immediately had her picture taken beside the instrument for public relation purposes and this gave additional exposure to this gigantic hoax.¹⁹⁸

The piano's donor, a woman from Louisville, was present at the time of the Queen's visit but made no effort to refute the claim made for the instrument. She had acquired it for the Federal Hill museum only because it was contemporary to Foster's time and it was accepted for that reason only.

Actually, Foster's original title for Kentucky's state song was *Poor Uncle Tom, Good Night* and the words were slightly different than those in the revised version which reached the publisher.¹⁹⁹

"Uncle Tom's Cabin" had been published by Cincinnati's Harriet Beecher Stowe shortly before Foster published his famed song and some see the sensational book as being the song's inspiration. Certainly, Foster did not write about a home as fine as Federal Hill, but about a lowly cabin, as the song's words indicate.

The song is essentially a version of “Uncle Tom’s Cabin” set to music and is basically a story of the sorrow and unhappiness felt by a group of slaves at being taken from their Kentucky cabins and sold into the deep South. This point is consistently stressed throughout the song – from the time the happy “young folks roll on the little cabin floor” to the approaching end of their trials when “A few more days and the trouble all will end ... Then my Old Kentucky Home, goodnight.”

In Foster’s manuscript notebook, the words of Kentucky’s state song immediately follow those of “Massa’s in de Cold Ground.” This proximity of the two songs lend support to the theory of Covington having played a role in the state song’s inspiration, for it was a Covington scene which motivated the writing of “Massa’s in de Cold Ground.” This fact was early noted in a Pittsburgh newspaper which reported on the later song:

*It was written in 1852. It was suggested by a scene in Covington Kentucky when Foster was in Cincinnati [working for his brother]. A number of slaves whose master had died huddled together weeping for the death of “Massah” and looking fearfully into the future, where they might not find so kind an owner and be separated by purchase of various members of the party by different slave holders.*²⁰⁰

Although it is definitely known Foster published songs as *O Suzanna* and *Old Uncle Ned* while living in Cincinnati and it is known *Massah in de Cold Ground* was inspired by a scene he witnessed in Covington, still a mystery surrounds the writing of *My Old Kentucky Home*. No one can say with certainty when or where it was written in its entirety or exactly how it came to be inspired. Covington and the neighboring town of Augusta seem to have more valid claims to the honor than any other.

The romance of many of Foster’s songs had little in common with the grimmer everyday realities of Kentucky’s slave life. The slaves continued chaffing at their bonds and the slaveholders continued fretting over runaways and possible slave revolts.

One of Covington’s most startling slave-connected episodes to occur during its immediate pre-Civil War days involved such a runaway group. Seventeen blacks escaped from Covington homes and neighboring farms late on a Sunday night in the latter part of January 1856. There was a light snow on the ground so the group stole a pair of horses and a large sled for their flight. They drove the horses at full speed into Covington and through the quiet city streets. Dawn was breaking when they pulled up at the Ohio’s edge near the foot of Main Street. There they abandoned the sled and dashed on foot across the frozen river.²⁰¹

When the group reached the Ohio side, they split into smaller segments so as not to attract attention, now that the sun was up. One of the groups was comprised of a single family, consisting of a young married couple named Simon and Margaret Garner, their four children and Simon’s two parents.²⁰² They found shelter at the home of Elijah Kite, a sympathetic freedman who lived near Mill Creek. Elijah was Margaret’s cousin and a relative to Joseph Kite, or “Kyte” as Joseph preferred the name be spelled.²⁰³ Joseph, had once been kidnapped from Alexander Connelly’s tavern, it will be recalled.

The other runaways successfully contacted Ohio’s Underground Railroad which safely conducted them to freedom.²⁰⁴

The Garners were not so fortunate. Officials quickly learned of their whereabouts and obtained a warrant for their arrest. Under provisions of the Fugitive Slave Act, the Negroes would be returned to Covington where they could be claimed by their owner.

When arresting officers arrived at the cabin where the runaways were hiding, they found it locked and barricaded. The blacks, armed with “cudgels and pistols,” put up a brief resistance and managed to inflict a gun wound on one of the officers, causing him the loss of a finger and several teeth.²⁰⁵

When the officials finally managed to break into the cabin and overpower the fugitives, they found Margaret had slit the throat of her three-year-old child and injured two of her other children. The young mother had acted out of a sense of desperation and declared she had intended to kill all her children and herself rather than be returned to Covington and slavery.²⁰⁶

A large number of people, many of whom showed sympathy for the slaves, quickly gathered at the scene and “it was with no inconsiderable difficulty” that the Garners were placed in carriages and taken to the Cincinnati jail.²⁰⁷

The body of the dead child was claimed by the slave-master [Archibald Gaines of Richwood – editor] and returned to Covington for burial. Here, it was said, the child could “rest in ground consecrated to slavery.”²⁰⁸

Margaret, who was charged with the murder of her child, was estimated to be 22 or 23 years of age and was described as being “a mulatto, about 5 feet high, showing one-fourth or one-third white blood. She had a high forehead, her eyebrows were finely arched and her eyes bright and intelligent but the African appeared in the lower part of her face in her broad nose and thick lips. On the left side of her forehead was an old scar and on the cheek-bone, on the same side, another one. When asked what caused them, she said, “White men struck me.”²⁰⁹

Friends of the slaves quickly obtained a writ of *habeas corpus* to allow the Hamilton County Sheriff to take the slave family into custody and move them to the county jail. There. It was felt they might better be protected from their owner than they would be with the Cincinnati officials.²¹⁰

On February 8th, a grand jury returned a murder indictment against the parents and grandparents for the young child’s death. This indictment placed the four adults under the control of state authorities. The probate judge issued a writ of *habeas corpus* for the three surviving children and ordered they should not be removed from the court’s jurisdiction pending a decision in their case.²¹¹

Meanwhile, a federal marshal applied to the U.S. District Court for a *habeas corpus* against the sheriff for the purpose of bringing the four adult blacks before him to determine, not whether the sheriff was entitled to their custody under Ohio law or whether they should be in the marshal’s custody under the Fugitive Slave Act.²¹²

The stage was set for a debate over the issue of states’ rights. Did Ohio law take precedence over the federal Fugitive Slave Act? Ohio’s Governor Salmon Portland Chase said it did and he would use the full power of his office to support the position of the sheriff in this matter.²¹³

Earlier court testimony indicated Margaret and her children were owned by Archibald E. Gaines of Boone County while Simon and his parents, Mary and Simon, Sr., owed “labor and service to James Marshall, for life.”²¹⁴

What had become known as the Margaret Garner case, was creating a storm of controversy and attracting attention of newsmen from throughout the nation. Local slaveholders became furious at being made the target of ever-increasing public criticism and called for several mass meetings in order “to take into consideration what is proper to be done in the present crises of our affairs, touching our rights as slaveholders and union lovers.”²¹⁵ Most of the meetings were conducted in communities principally rural in nature, such as Florence and Union.²¹⁶

At a Florence meeting, held February 23rd, the slaveholders soundly denounced the “religious fanatics and abolition thieves” who were accused of encouraging and aiding slave runaways. The assemblage, led by John W. Leathers, declared Northern Kentuckians had “borne this species of plunder to the loss of many millions of dollars,” and noted “hundreds of our best citizens have been broken up by the thieving and meddling with our property.”²¹⁷

The slaveholders called for “fearless and manly prosecution” of slaveholder rights and demanded the Garners be returned to their owners. Furthermore, they declared these owners deserved “the commendation, sympathy and support of every true hearted Kentuckian” and called upon the state to pay all their expenses connected with the trial. The money would be taken “out of the public treasury.”²¹⁸

Nor did the slaveholders stop with that demand but went on to insist the state legislature impose a tax on all property, whether owned by slaveholders or not, to create a fund from which Kentucky slaveholders would be reimbursed for any court expenses incurred in a free state while trying to reclaim their runaways.²¹⁹

Five days later (February 28th), a U. S. District Court upheld the federal marshal’s contention that the four adult blacks be brought before him and ordered the marshal be given custody of the adults but the children as well. Instead of that happening however, the fugitives were hurried into an omnibus and driven under heavy guard to the ferry *Kentucky* and brought to Covington.²²⁰ Hardly an hour had elapsed after the court’s decision that all the Garners, except Margaret, were returned to their slave master. Margaret was locked in the Covington jail pending further developments in the charges against her.²²¹

No one was more shocked at these events than Governor Chase. He never imagined a judge could be found who, by proceeding with *habeas corpus*, would transfer persons already indicted under state law into federal custody through use of the Fugitive Slave Act. Neither did he remotely consider the children who were held under a state court order, might be carried off in violation of that order. Nevertheless, such a judge was found, and acts were carried out.²²²

Jubilant advocates of states’ rights declared the law had been vindicated and some, like Gaines and his attorney, held happy celebrations during which the whisky “flowed freely.”²²³

Shortly after the Gaines celebration, held at the Magnolia House, a Cincinnati newsman was set upon and beaten by a number of pro-slavers, causing the national attention already focused upon Covington to be intensified.²²⁴

The newsman was returning to Ohio at the time and was about three blocks from the river when he was suddenly attacked from behind. Cries of “damned abolition reporter;” “tar and feather him;” “dunk him;” and “take him down to the river and put him on a cake of ice” were heard throughout the assault.²²⁵

The last suggestion sounded good to the mob and the reporter was forced to the waterfront. There the mob was surprised to find a Cincinnati deputy marshal and the Ohio escort that helped bring the Garners to Covington was still on the Kentucky side.²²⁶

The Ohioans, seeing what was occurring, immediately drew pistols and ordered the reporter be released. Needless to say, the slavers complied, after which the Ohioans safely crossed the river.²²⁷

Covingtonians were appalled at the attack on the newsman and held a mass meeting at city hall “to express disapprobation” of the mobs conduct. The large crowd in attendance contended it was a universal belief among the townspeople that the assault was “cruel, wanton and unjustifiable,” and declared “no means ought or shall be left untried to bring the assailants to punishment.”²²⁸

Five of the accused, identified by the *Gazette* as John Butts, Henry Wilson, A.B. Fisher, Joseph Hall and John Hardin, were quickly arrested and brought to trial. The prosecutor called the attack “cowardly and contemptible” and according to the *Cincinnati Gazette*, said the entire group charged with the crime wasn’t “worth a two-year-old nigger.”²²⁹

When it was learned that Aston D. Madeira would serve as the defendants’ attorney, the editor of the abolitionist *Newport Daily News*, William Shrieve Bailey, feigned surprise, saying he “had thought there was no one in Covington . . . who would publicly defend so gross an outrage . . . even for the love of gold.”²³⁰

Madeira freely admitted his clients’ guilt but claimed their action was justified because the reporter had defamed slaveholders in his news reports of the Margaret Garner case.

A jury returned a verdict of guilty and imposed fined of ten to fifty dollars on each of the accused, depending upon the individual’s “prominence in the affair.”²³¹

The editor of the *Newport Daily News*, although pleased at the fines imposed, was infuriated by Madeira’s attempt to justify the crime. What, he wanted to know, gave slaveholders the right to beat and intimidate those who would exercise their privilege of free speech? “When,” he implored, “will Kentuckians learn to be magnanimous?”

The Newport editor went on to predict:

*The institution which has given cause to these outrages here in Kentucky . . . will not . . . much longer need the advocacy of lawyers to perpetuate it. A few more acts of this kind and a few more speeches in their justification and it will fade from the face of the earth. A few more of these outrages and the people of the country will rise en masse at the election and say . . . they will tolerate no longer, an institution which will thus cause to take place and defend, outrages, more diabolical than any that have ever yet disgraced a nation.*²³²

Others viewed the situation in a different light, when an Ohio newsman referred to the attackers as “border ruffians,” the editor of the *Covington Journal* replied:

*A Border Ruffian is quite as respectable as a Border Thief . . . and . . . so long as Border Thieves infest the Ohio shore, he may expect to find . . . Border Ruffians on the Kentucky shore.*²³³

The whole weight of Governor Chase’s influence was now used to induce Kentucky officials to return Margaret to the Ohio courts. Eventually, Kentucky’s Governor Charles S. Morehead agreed to the request but when Ohio officials came to Covington with the necessary legal papers, they found she had been released several days earlier to her owner’s agent.²³⁴

Margaret, her infant child and the two Simons were spirited away to Louisville by way of Frankfort and placed aboard a steamboat bound for Arkansas. They were in custody of Covington Marshal Butts for the journey which one report said was abruptly interrupted when the vessel sunk after colliding with another boat below Louisville. The child drowned during the tragedy.²³⁵

Another report claimed Margaret clutched her baby in her arms when first put aboard the craft and leaped into the river. The deck hands managed to drag her back onto the boat but the infant was lost to the swirling water.²³⁶

Regardless which version is correct, Margaret, like George Jackson, was never heard from again. Her defense council was later quoted as saying she had been taken from the Covington jail only to disappear into “the seething hell of American slavery.”²³⁷

The Garner case shocked the entire nation. Northern newspapers stressed its minutest details while even the staunchest pro-slavery journals of the South found it impossible to ignore. It was even a topic in the floor debates of the Democratic Party's 1856 national convention.

The local community's conscience was severely jolted and possibly because it was, there was but little publicity given the escape of a slave girl which occurred shortly thereafter. The runaway belonged to Virginia-born John White Stevenson, a successful young attorney and future Kentucky congressman and governor, who had migrated to Covington in 1841.

Stevenson was politically ambitious and wished to avoid offending as many of the town's voters as possible. He was already identified as the owner of one of the runaways who had fled with the Garners and feared he might be thought of as too harsh with his slaves. As a result, the only newspaper publicity surrounding his latest loss was a brief paragraph which read:

*A negro girl, the property of J. W. Stevenson, Esq., of Covington, left for parts unknown night before last. She was noticed at supper time, but was missing immediately after. Where's Anderson?*²³⁸

Slavery was on the defensive as more Covingtonians began divesting themselves of their human chattel. The number of runaways increased and even Gaines lost four more slaves just four days after the Garners first fled.²³⁹ Within a year the number of slaves held in Covington dropped to merely 101.²⁴⁰

The local revulsion to this type of servitude was amply demonstrated in 1856 when a group of anti-slavery Masons applied for and received a charter for a new lodge. They named it the "Golden Rule Lodge," and adopted that same rule as the lodge's motto. Mayor Bushrod Foley, himself a former slaveholder, was one of the lodge's organizers.

Influential slaveholders were alarmed at the threats facing them and reacted by pressing for more rigid enforcement of local and state slave laws. Certain agreeable officials began complying with such zeal that it set off a strong protest among a number of Newport citizens. Many of the protesters had long been trying to have the state authorize a circuit court at that city and now bitterly complained that members of the Kentucky Legislature "have never felt disposed to do the city of Newport justice because its inhabitants were looked upon as the capital of Abolitionists and negro-stealers."²⁴¹ Nevertheless, the legislature did respond by enacting legislation which enabled the county court to meet in that city.

Abolitionist William S. Bailey used the columns of his newspaper to criticize the sudden enforcement of laws and declared officials were actively mistreating not only slaves and free blacks but also whites from Ohio. Laws which had long been ignored were now being enforced with more than ordinary vigor, he noted.²⁴²

Such freedom to criticize slaveholding interests had long since lost its acceptability with states-rightsers and became tantamount to extending an invitation to violence from the slaveholding "gentry." It was one freedom they would deny to all Kentuckians.

The slaveholders soon won the support of large numbers of poorer and non-slaveholding whites. The slaveholders, along with those politicians who catered to them, were beginning to have remarkable success at convincing the other classes that the abolitionists represented a threat to the Union. It became a badge of merit to join the war against them.

The slaveholders also showed signs of attracting support from a number of those who once spoke out in favor of some form of gradual emancipation. To them, the stance taken by abolitionists represented a greater threat to constitutional law than anything the slaveholders had done, or would do.

Although a number of Covingtonians proclaimed themselves being irreversibly for or against slavery, the bulk of townspeople remained indifferent to the Negroes' plight. The real issue, as they saw it, was how best to preserve the Union, for by then, the breakup of that Union was a distinct possibility.

The very thought of secession was abhorrent to most Covingtonians as it was to Kentuckians in general and because of this, their sympathies tended to shift from the cause of those who openly denounced slavery to that held by those demanding an immediate, uncompromising recognition of slaveholder rights to their slave property.

The actions of the vast majority were predicated on feelings of how to best preserve the Union. If this could be done by silencing abolitionists then so be it. If accomplished by abolishing slavery, then that too must be done. At the moment, it was popularly believed Unionism could best be served by appeasing the pro-slavers.

The immediate cause of much of this belief can be traced to actions of many northern abolitionists who consistently praised the violence perpetrated by militants like Nat Turner and John Brown. Kentucky's states-rights element was shrewd enough to capitalize on this approval of violence by convincing the masses that not only constitutional law but the very survival of the Union was being threatened by the abolition movement.

No one in the local area was more aware of this situation than William S. Bailey, who had long claimed it was slaveholders' desire to keep great masses of Kentuckians ignorant of their true political and economic interests.

Unlike Cassius M. Clay, who favored a form of gradual emancipation, Bailey wanted the immediate abolition of slavery. He felt this should be brought about by the duly elected state legislature but still recognized its members were dominated by pro-slavery forces.

The outspoken Bailey declared slavery and free labor were incompatible and said the incumbent legislators would do nothing to change the law since neither they nor the slave owners were the least bit concerned about the working class, whether white or black.

Bailey's publications, widely read locally, infuriated slave interests so much that they tried repeatedly to silence him. Tactics against him included libel suits; setting up rival newspapers; boycotting his advertisers; destroying his printing plant; burglarizing his home; having him jailed for engaging in so-called inflammatory activities; and making actual physical attacks on him and his family.

On one occasion, the harassed publisher was attacked by a relative of a wealthy citizen he had criticized. Bailey defended himself and administered a sound beating to his assailant. The abolitionist editor was then sued for assault and battery!

The Negroes' bondage had long proven to be Kentucky's curse. It tainted everything it touched and even enforcement of the state's harsh slave laws often seemed to depend on who owned the accused slave. This was demonstrated in August 1859 when one of Thomas Kennedy's slaves ran away after learning he was about to be arrested and charged with attempted rape of a Covington white woman.²⁴³

The fugitive was apprehended in Cincinnati and brought to the Covington jail. Kennedy immediately secured the slave's release and rushed him to Lexington where he was sold.²⁴⁴ This was despite a law which demanded mandatory hanging for any slave convicted of a crime Kennedy's slave supposedly committed.

The white woman's husband was shocked by the slave's release and subsequent sale and promptly telegraphed Lexington officials, asking arrest of the black for attempted rape. The central Kentucky officials complied with the request and returned the accused to Covington.²⁴⁵ The Negro was bound over to the Kenton Circuit Court where, after what was described as "a brief time," he was acquitted of the charges against him.²⁴⁶

The court was bitterly criticized by those who felt it gave prime consideration to Kennedy's financial interest in reaching its verdict. The slave then was re-arrested and convicted on a lesser charge of indecent exposure. He was sentenced to receive 39 lashes, "which the Sheriff immediately executed in the yard of the jail, in a most effective manner." The black was then released to his owner.²⁴⁷

Along with abolitionists such as William Bailey, other favorite targets for abuse from the pro-slavers and for harsh treatment at the hands of the law were free blacks, especially those from north of the Ohio. One was Henry Williams, a literate Cincinnati workman who was unfortunate enough to be in Covington on the day Margaret Garner was returned to Kentucky.

Williams wrote of his experience as follows:

*On the 28th of last February, myself and drayman went over the river . . . to the Covington & Lexington Railroad. We ... unloaded our drays ... when Marshall Butts and his Deputy arrested us. They said the slaves were kept in jail in this city and they intended to put in jail all colored persons going there from this side ... We were kept in jail three or four hours [when] two white gentlemen...applied to the Mayor for our release. The Mayor released us and told us not to come over there again; if we did, he would put us in jail and not let us out for any reason. He fined us \$6 for nothing for we were by no means guilty of misdemeanor or crime.*²⁴⁸

Fountain Lewis was another Cincinnati freedman who experienced similar harassment. He had been in Covington for a short visit and on returning to the ferryboat, he was arrested by two citizens for not producing his freedom papers for their inspection. A passing Cincinnati dentist who had known Lewis for 12 years, vouched for him, but was ignored by the two whites. Lewis was also ignored when he claimed to know attorney John W. Stevenson and Mayor Bushrod Foley and asked to be taken to them.²⁴⁹

The angered dentist upbraided the ferryboat captain for not speaking out in the black's behalf but was told by the captain, "I don't care a damn about it. They can go over when they please provided they pay me...the hell of it is to get back."²⁵⁰

The dentist immediately contacted Mayor Foley who explained the law under which Lewis was arrested had never been enforced until Governor Chase asked for Margaret's return to Ohio but now the mayor said the pro-slavery element was enforcing it for spite.²⁵¹

Foley went to see the imprisoned Lewis who he immediately recognized as an old acquaintance. The mayor promptly waved all the fees and costs imposed on Lewis that he could legally waive. There was, however, a charge of two dollars which he was obliged by law to collect and Foley offered to pay even this. Lewis declined the mayor's offer, saying he would pay the two dollars himself.²⁵²

The law of that time required any free Negro entering the state to go immediately to the county clerk's office and explain why he wanted to enter Kentucky. If the clerk felt the reason was satisfactory, a certificate could be issued authorizing the freedman to stay and transact his business. Under no circumstances would a certificate be valid for more than thirty days.²⁵³

Cases such as those of Williams and Lewis were noted in Ohio newspapers with such regularity that the resentful editor of the *Covington Journal* complained such newsmen "cannot resist a propensity to meddle whenever there is a 'nigger' in the case."²⁵⁴

It was common practice for some Covingtonians who did own slaves to occasionally allow their most trusted servants to cross unaccompanied to Ohio for shopping or to run other errands. Such had been the case with Aunt Betsey. These Negroes were usually well known and were not molested or bothered in any way by Cincinnatians or their officials.

Even before Covington acquired full-time police protection, these same owners permitted trusted slaves to escort visitors home through the unlighted streets. The slaves not only lighted the way by preceding with a lantern but also furnished a measure of security and protection for the visitor.

One of the more faithful servants was Sally, an intelligent housekeeper and cook who was owned by two unmarried Covington women. They had inherited the excellent servant and provided good care for her. The two owners became extremely fond of Sally and constantly reminded her that eventually she and her five daughters would be given their freedom. Sally's husband, as was so often the case, was owned by another family.²⁵⁵

Sally frequently reminded her owners of their promise of freedom and sincerely believed they would fulfill it one day. Like Aunt Betsey, she was doomed to disappointment. One morning Sally was informed that she and three of her five children had been sold and would be taken away that very day! The promise of eventual freedom had been a type of hoax so prevalent in this part of the state. It was intended to dissuade her from taking advantage of Covington's nearness to a free state and fleeing.²⁵⁶

Sally was ordered to her upstairs room to pack her belongings and prepare to depart with her new master. When she reached her room and was alone, she managed to climb out a back window onto a lower shed roof. Sally lowered herself to the backyard and fled to the nearby home of a sympathetic widow. The widow concealed her while searchers checked homes of suspected activist anti-slavery residents.²⁵⁷

Later that day, the widow contacted Underground Railroad agents who agreed to help. The agents disguised Sally in men's clothing and about midnight smuggled her across the Ohio from near the Point. She eventually made her way to Canada but never again saw her family.²⁵⁸

Ashland, in the state's northeastern corner, was another city where slavery was difficult to maintain. As at Covington, freedom for the slaves lay just across the Ohio River and also as at Covington, the great number of runaways represented a continuous drain on the supply of household servants.

Ashland never attracted the large number of Irish and German immigrants that Covington did and on one occasion, when the Boyd County city experienced one of its many acute shortages of servants, a Covington newspaper reprinted a news item from the *Ashland Kentuckian*.

The news item, reprinted with Covington immigrants in mind, read:

*Good reliable Irish and German girls would find it profitable to try their fortunes here, as from various causes the slaves are daily decreasing in number*²⁵⁹

The promise of freedom continued to lure runaways northward and freedmen were involved in encouraging and aiding many of them. In December 1860, a local circuit court judge gave recognition to this when he made his charge to a newly-impaneled grand jury. After calling the jurors' attention to Covington's chronic problems of gambling, illegal voting and carrying concealed weapons, the judge proceeded to make special reference to Kentucky's law relative to enticing slaves away or inciting slaves to rebellion and then charged the jury to indict all persons known to leave unlocked skiffs on the banks of the Ohio. He also directed the jurors' attention to the law prohibiting free Negroes from taking up residence in Kentucky explaining their entrance and stay was limited to a maximum of thirty days.

The judge noted this law was due to expire January 1st, when a new a stricter law would take effect. The new law would prohibit *all* free Negroes from returning to Kentucky after once leaving.²⁶⁰ Violation of this piece of legislation was a felony punishable by imprisonment for a minimum of six years if it was proven the Negro had intended to remain in the state or a sentence of one to five years if he was merely visiting here without a permit.²⁶¹

If, upon completion of the sentence, the convicted Negro failed to leave the state within the prescribed time, or if he was ever convicted again for the same offence, he would be imprisoned for the remainder of his life!²⁶²

The new legislation declared no Kentucky slave could be freed unless he agreed to leave the state within ninety days after receiving his freedom. It also decreed any black who was already free would lose his Kentucky “citizenship” and be subject to all the foregoing if he should ever go into a free state.²⁶³

Among the few blacks exempted from the above provisions were those employed on steamboats and free blacks who might accompany a trusted white person from and to the state – but only if the white person was declared eligible to receive a special permit for the black to accompany him.²⁶⁴

It was also declared any free Negro convicted on a charge of loitering or having no visible means of support, could be sold into slavery for a term of two to ten years. The same penalty would also be imposed on any free black who permitted other blacks, free or slave, to assemble at his home for purposes of “gaming, drinking or dancing.”²⁶⁵

The law makers also targeted gypsies for attention when they declared all those who refused to leave Kentucky were to be arrested and either fined or imprisoned. Neither was freedom of the press overlooked, for legislation was enacted making it a crime to write or distribute any book, newspaper or other printed matter that might be interpreted as advising or inciting Kentucky blacks to engage in any form of riot or insurrection. To Governor Magoffin and his supporters, even the act of criticizing now became a crime for which the offender could be imprisoned.

All these restrictions had been enacted the previous March by the General Assembly elected in 1859. Most of these lawmakers, along with newly-inaugurated Magoffin, were strong advocates of the rights of slaveholders and began enacting their ever-harsher slave laws almost immediately after taking office.

This same group managed to feel magnanimous when they made it legal for any adult freedman to volunteer to become a slave. Any such volunteer, they declared, would be privileged to “choose a master or mistress who he or she will serve during life.”²⁶⁶

Governor Magoffin was especially alarmed by the attacks being made on slavery. In one of his earliest major addresses as governor he declared peddler, free Negroes and “Yankee” school teachers represented the chief threats to Kentucky slave property. One of Magoffin’s Covington supporters added the governor planned to meet those threats by increasing the tax on peddlers and expelling the free Negroes from the state, “but had no remedy for the greater evil.”²⁶⁷

Such declarations from the highest official and his backers served to encourage the more powerful of the slaveholders to frequently take the law into their own hands. Such an incident occurred at nearby Ghent when a school teacher was “invited” to leave that community because he had expressed a favorable opinion of abolitionist John Brown’s action at Harper’s Ferry.²⁶⁸ The “invitation” was synonymous with a threat of violence and the teacher “left immediately.”²⁶⁹

On another occasion, a group of pro-slavers at Florence met and decided to appoint a five-member committee whose job would be “to keep a general surveillance over all hucksters” and to require the peddlers to secure a special permit to pass through or even enter, that community. This was necessary, they declared, because of “the present excited state of political feeling and the uncertain tenure of slave property so near and accessible to free states as we are.”²⁷⁰

The slave owners were convinced local abolitionists were responsible for the increasing number of runaways taking place and viewed “those wandering hucksters . . . as the most dangerous emissaries of the underground railroad.”²⁷¹

In Covington, slavery was never the economic factor it was in outlying rural areas but was largely a matter of having house servants and handy-persons. Many slaves were widely known in the community and much of the latest harsher-than-ever slave legislation enacted by the 1859-1861 General Assembly was only randomly enforced here.

Despite Kentucky’s ever-present concern about a possible slave revolt, the state never experienced anything even remotely resembling an insurrection and other than few exceptions, the same was true for all slaveholding states. Even here in thralldom’s northernmost province, where the runaway problem was probably at its greatest extent, there was a multitude of blacks who refused to flee their bonds, even though the sight of free soil

was a daily event and but the width of a river away. Those who chose to flee, though large in number, still represented a fraction of those in bondage.

This lack of militant restlessness was a difficult fact for abolitionists to accept. Many denied the existence of an acquiescent slave and seemed to believe the Negro, born and raised in slavery, had the same views of slavery of the abolitionist who was born free. The abolitionists, like many later writers on the subject, resorted to compilations of the numerous relatively small incidents of slave resistance in order to underscore the points they wished to prove.

The persistent runaway problem was as vexing for the urban slaveholder as it was for the rural and members of the Underground Railroad continued their work of aiding the fugitives.

Public outrage first generated by the Margaret Garner case, encouraged many citizens on both sides of the river to lend ever-increasing support to the Underground. Covington, because of its location and the temperament of the people became one of the more important stations on this clandestine system. The system's very name originated here in Northern Kentucky.

Historian Henrietta Buckmaster shows in *Flight to Freedom* that the term "Underground Railroad" was first used after Tice Davids, a runaway, fled across the Ohio at a point about 50 miles upstream from Covington and in the vicinity of Ripley, Ohio. There, the runaway literally disappeared when friends hid him.²⁷²

The owner was amazed how quickly Tice vanished and after returning empty-handed to Kentucky, he rationalized the slave's successful escape by saying the black must have found an "underground railroad."²⁷³

The term was quickly adopted by pro- and anti-slavery forces and came to be applied to the system of aid given fleeing slaves by those sympathetic to their plight.

The Underground, like the legitimate railroads, consisted of divisions. Two of them, the Illinois Line from St. Louis and the Quaker Line from the Ohio River, converged in Cass County, Michigan from where they followed a common course into Canada.²⁷⁴

The origins of the Illinois Line's name is readily apparent, while the Quaker Line received its name because of the large number of Ohio, Indiana and Michigan Quakers who aided the black fugitives.²⁷⁵ It was the Quaker Line which operated in the Covington area.

Not all runaways were sufficiently informed of the Underground Railroad however, or else had enough apprehension about white people south of the Ohio to prevent them using its facilities, for there were countless instances of fugitive slaves slipping through Covington on their own. This was true despite Levi Coffin's assertion the Underground Railroad was basically a southern institution which differed from its northern counterpart only in the principle on which it was conducted.

Coffin, reputed to be the Underground's "President," always maintained close connection with the Covington abolitionists. Even his family's assistant cook was an escaped Covington slave girl whose ex-owner once sent a neighbor to Coffin's Cincinnati home looking for her.

When the girl learned someone from her former neighborhood was in Coffin's house she disguised herself in a new black silk dress and "a fashionable bonnet" with a heavy veil. Accompanied by a freed black who posed as her servant, she boldly walked out onto the street just as the visitor was leaving.

Once outside, the two blacks leisurely strolled behind the departing guest until they reached a side street. There they turned the corner and quickly sought more secure quarters.

Those engaged in the Underground Railroad operation were understandably opposed to slavery and in favor of abolition. There were large numbers of abolitionists who never had the slightest contact with the clandestine system while strangely enough, there were also certain slaveholders who were quite willing to secrete fugitive slaves if paid enough.²⁷⁶

Some slaveholders in the deep South who maintained summer homes here, often unwittingly aided many runaways whenever they closed their local homes for long periods of time. Such was the case with **George Kenner, the Louisiana planter who built Ludlow's Somerset Hall.**

Word always rapidly spread whenever Kenner closed his local home for the winter in order to return to Louisiana and then the Underground Railroad would often surreptitiously use Somerset Hall as a hiding place for escaping slaves.²⁷⁷

Most escaping slaves traveled at night and rested during the day. The homes where they were hidden during their travels were known as "stations." R.E. Banta, in "The Ohio," points out that most towns along the escape routes had at least one such house and certain cities could boast of dozens, some purposely designed for this specific use.

Covington had literally scores of underground stations where sympathetic homeowners allowed fleeing slaves to hide from pursuers and rest before starting on the next leg of the journey to freedom.

The station operators found it necessary to always be prepared to receive and care for escapees. It was never known when or in what number they would arrive. An entire family may unexpectedly arrive in the middle of a cold winter night. At these times the runaways would be hurried into the darkened house and all windows quickly covered before any light was lit. Then the fugitives were fed and led to a secure hiding place to rest before resuming their journey. If medical attention or clothing was needed, this too was often provided by the operator.

The people who arranged the journey from one station to another were known as “conductors.” Local conductors smuggled escapees into Covington in a number of ways. Sometimes the runaways arrived openly on horseback, train, wagon or carriage but usually on foot. Sometimes they were hidden in false wagon-beds or smuggled in under large loads of hay or other farm produce. Sometimes disguises were used. When this occurred, the runaway might appear in a closed carriage, heavily veiled and dressed in finery. To masquerade as a wealthy white woman was common for both male and female slaves. Once at the station they were hidden in any one of a number of places – barns, sheds, attics, cellars or secret rooms and passageways.

Among those runaways who arrived in Covington in an open and bold manner was a Scott County slave who fled his owner in October 1850. He stole a suit of fine clothes, a horse and buggy and a large sum of money from the owner and drove to Covington where he spent the night.²⁷⁸

The fugitive, described as a “bright mulatto boy,” told all who asked, that he was the son of an Indian woman and a white man and was on his way to visit them in Ohio. The next morning, he climbed into the buggy and crossed on the ferryboat without arousing any suspicion.²⁷⁹

Another of the many Kentucky runaways who made the full journey to Canada with the Underground Railroad’s aid was **Henry Bibb**. At Sandwich, Ontario, Bibb began publishing a small anti-slavery news-sheet and would often send messages to Kentucky owners of newly-escaped slaves, telling them of the excellent condition of their former property.

On one occasion, Bibb wrote such a message to Mrs. Mary Winston, Robert Slaughter, Dr. Parker, Robert G. Todd and General Taylor’s son Colonel James Taylor, all of Newport. These citizens had lost ten slaves June 10th, 1853 and Bibb wrote they all had reached safety and their only regret was they had not known of the Underground Railroad earlier.²⁸⁰

Many Canadians expressed alarm at the influx of Negroes into their country agreeing with a member of their parliament who described the blacks as being “immoral and unprincipled.” That same parliamentarian accused the runaways of “contaminating the whites by their vices,” and proposed expelling them to “the Manitou islands or somewhere else, where the whites could not come in contact with them.”²⁸¹

Locally, the editor of the *Covington Journal* gleefully claimed it was only proper the Canadians should “suffer the consequences of their folly” since they had played a part in inducing the slaves “to leave comfortable homes and settle in their inhospitable country.”²⁸²

The editor had long denounced conditions in Canada as “deplorable” for the Negroes and leading to a “thriftless, destitute and unprincipled life.” He further declared members of the Underground Railroad usually “abandoned” the runaways once they reached that country and allowed them to “sink lower and still lower in degradation.”²⁸³

Kentucky’s Underground workers were engaged in a most dangerous task, for anyone caught aiding a runaway was subject to heavy legal penalties. Local agents had to be extremely secretive in their work, for Covington was also well supplied with informers seeking to collect possible rewards.

An example of the court’s severity with those aiding runaways is provided by the case of a white woman arrested in Newport on a charge of helping a group of fleeing Grant County slaves. She was arraigned before the Grant County Circuit Court at Williamstown and given a six-year penitentiary sentence. The time involved from her arrest to her sentencing was less than two weeks.²⁸⁴

It was rare indeed for a person accused of willfully aiding runaways to not be prosecuted. Such an event did occur though when one Covington’s oldest and most respected citizens was indicted by a Kenton County grand jury for this very crime.²⁸⁵

Even the most hardened of pro-slavers found it difficult to publicly admit such a prominent member of the “gentry” had been secretly working against their interests, for to do so might cause an incalculable amount of harm to their cause. As a result, the charges were never pressed any further and even the commonwealth attorney refused to prosecute the accused.²⁸⁶

Local station operators were fortunate in that Covington had a number of houses whose cellars were linked by tunnel to either the Ohio or Licking. Many of these underground passageways had been built for bringing coal and other necessary supplies directly from river craft to the householder's home or place of business. Some were but a block in length while others stretched below the city streets for a mile or more.

A portion of one lengthy passageway was uncovered by workers at the Internal Revenue Service's building site in 1965. Yet another was brought to light in March 1966 when Dewey Burns, a bulldozer operator from Moscow, Ohio, moved a buried 500 pound stone slab while doing excavating work for the Panorama East Tower. What was then revealed was a long-closed tunnel. It ran toward the Ohio from the vicinity of Sixth and Washington Streets and was lined and floored with rock and roofed over with 500 pound slabs. Although it was about fifteen feet below the surface, local historians generally believed this particular tunnel was originally constructed at a depth of only six feet.²⁸⁷

The fact these hidden passageways were not always built for aiding runaways did not prevent the owners, if they were anti-slavery, from using them to aid the fleeing slaves and many did. Even though there was little or no monetary gain from its operation, the Underground Railroad must nevertheless be recognized as a major industry of its day. It is thought some 75,000 slaves made their way to freedom because of its facilities. The cash value of this property has been estimated to have run between \$40 and \$50 million.²⁸⁸

Although expense was great and dangers greater, the Underground movement continued to attract supporters. It included a certain number of militant fanatics but also appealed to many people of high principle and integrity. Among the prominent abolitionist forces in Covington were such church groups as the Wesleyan Methodists and individuals such as **Reverend Henry Hathaway of the Christian Church**.

Reverend Hathaway was an elder and pastor of his church and sincerely felt slavery to be an unmitigated evil. When he decided to erect a palatial hilltop home overlooking the Ohio River, he went to the additional expense of constructing a large underground "holding room" and escape tunnel. These were for the express purpose of helping fleeing slaves on their road to freedom and saw frequent use in exactly that capacity.

The holding room was entered from a trapdoor in the owner's elaborate parlor. The lengthy tunnel ran from the holding room and extended down a steep hillside until it opened into a tangle of wild grape vines at the river's edge.²⁸⁹

Hathaway's home also served as a important meeting place for leading Kentucky and Ohio abolitionists. Here they plotted and planned their strategy and Reverend Hathaway supported them in any and every way he could.

When war came, this sincere man put his entire fortune into the anti-slavery movement and eventually died penniless. His home, "Hathaway Hall" continued to stand for more than a century as a monument to him and the countless others who never flinched from supporting an ideal in which he believed.

Finally, in March 1969, the once-splendid colonial home, long a landmark at 1210 Highway Avenue, was demolished to make way for a new apartment high rise.

More than a century after it ceased to exist, the Underground Railroad again attracted nationwide attention when some 300 blacks, including Benjamin Hooks, Julian Bond and other civil rights leaders from across the nation, gathered here to begin a walk to Detroit as part of a Negro voter-registration drive.²⁹⁰

The walk, which began August 13, 1983, was sanctioned by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and was aimed at building a black voting bloc against a possible second term for President Ronald Reagan.²⁹¹ Covington was selected as the gathering point because of its prominence in the Underground's operation.

The "1983 Overland Railroad March," as the walk was called, was slated to follow much of the original Underground Railroad's route. However, only a reported thirteen of the group agreed to complete the full length of the journey and the national leaders were here only to lend morale support – not to walk to Detroit.²⁹²

Endnotes – Chapter 12

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Chapter 13

Rebellion and a Decision for the Union

Sectional differences between the northern free states and slave states of the South had been growing at such a pace that reconciliation seemed virtually impossible by the time the nation passed the mid-nineteenth century mark. Compromises in which both sides gave and gained concessions were made but few seemed satisfied. Some Kentuckians were saying nothing could save the Union while others declared saving the Union was all that really mattered. The question of states' rights versus the powers of the federal government was coming to a head and slavery was the issue bringing it about.

In Covington, as in All of Kentucky, the pro-slavery element seemed most vocal of all factions. The real issue would be maintenance of the Union and in this matter, Governor Magoffin and most of those elected to state government with him, proved completely out of touch with the masses. It might be said there has never been a set of Kentucky officials who lost contact with the people as much as those elected in the summer of 1859.

It was barely a month after Magoffin's election when two of the nation's most noted debaters, Stephen Arnold Douglas and Abraham Lincoln, appeared in Cincinnati to fill speaking engagements. Both took the opportunity to make special reference to the political and slavery issues existing in Covington. The previous year's celebrated series of Lincoln-Douglas debates was still a popular topic of discussion in Covington and a large number of townspeople crossed the river to see and hear for themselves these two political antagonists.

Douglas, then a Democratic senator from Illinois, spoke on September 9th and strongly denounced Lincoln and the Republican Party, saying Lincoln preached that there could be no true peace until all states were free or else all slave. This, the senator said, could only mean the conflict between free and slave states would increase in intensity until one of the groups "has been annihilated by the complete triumph of the other."¹

Such a position, Douglas maintained, would solve nothing, and could never bring about a reconciliation between the free states and those recognizing slavery.²

Douglas asked his listeners:

*Now, when do you expect to have peace in the slavery question? When do you expect to have harmony between Cincinnati and Covington, between Ohio and Kentucky, if you wait until the states become all free or all slaves?*³

Eight days later, Lincoln appeared in the Ohio city and again many from Covington were in the audience. Lincoln took note of their presence and of his nearness to Covington and declared he intended to direct a portion of his speech to them and Kentucky in general. Good natured laughter and applause greeted his words when he said:

*I should not wonder that there are some Kentuckians about this audience ... and by speaking distinctly, I should not wonder if some of the Kentuckians would hear me on the other side of the river.*⁴

*I say then, in the first place . . . that I am what they call as I understand it, a "Black Republican." I think that slavery is wrong, morally, socially and politically. I desire that it should be no further spread in these United States and I should not object if it should gradually terminate in the whole Union.*⁵

Such directness was in sharp contrast to Douglas' consistent evasion of the moral issues surrounding slavery. Lincoln had first stressed its "moral, social and political" wrongs during the earlier debates and it was this which was the prime factor in his ultimate election to the presidency.

Lincoln also corrected Douglas' charge that he preached that there could be no peace while slavery existed. What he had originally said, the Kentucky-born speaker pointed out, was that he expected peace "only when the people believed slavery was in the course of ultimate extinction."⁶ He pointed out how the general public once believed in slavery's ultimate doom, but since that belief was no longer so widely held, the nation had become embroiled in an ongoing dispute between the slavery and anti-slavery forces.⁷

Lincoln also pointed out that he had no intention of interfering with slavery where it already existed. He further added that neither he nor anyone had a right to interfere with any state's existing institutions.⁸

Feeling he had clarified his views for the Covington members of his audience, the future president turned to the main theme of his address, replying to Douglas' speech of the previous week.

Any newly-created good will for the Republicans which Lincoln's speech may have generated among their

Covington opponents was short-lived, for the following month, an event occurred that thoroughly alarmed every Kentucky slaveholder and did inestimable harm to the town's infant Republican Party. That was the seizure of the federal arsenal and armory at Harper's Ferry, Virginia (now West Virginia) by an armed band of men led by John Brown.

The raiders had hoped to instigate a general slave rebellion and establish a free state in the heart of the southern Appalachian Mountains. The raid was to acquire weapons necessary for such an insurrection.

The greatest fear of all slaveholders was a possible slave revolt and now they blamed not only the abolitionists for the Harper's Ferry raid but the Republicans as well. The "Black Republicans," declared many states' rights Democrats, were working hand-in-hand with every radical abolitionist.

Fears of such a raid in Kentucky gave rise to countless false rumors that spread throughout the state. Many rumors were repeated as fact by various newspapers and caused a large segment of the population to begin viewing every opponent of slavery as a potential instigator of such slave revolts.

Rumors were especially prevalent in central Kentucky and in December 1859, a group of fleeing Madison County abolitionists arrived in Covington after a pro-slavery crowd ordered them to leave Berea. The persecuted group consisted of twelve families, containing 39 followers of John Gregg Fee. They ranged in age from infancy to some over seventy.⁹ The exiles did not stay in Covington any length of time but continued on to Ohio where they were provided food and shelter by those in sympathy with their plight.

Locally, the new Republican Party became subject to all types of abuse and harassment, not only at the hands of individual antagonists but also from public officials and even the courts. Attempts were made to suppress the publication of Republican literature, newspapers and anything the courts decreed to be of an incendiary nature.

One of the area's more violent episodes occurring in the wake of the Harper's Ferry raid was a mob attack on William Bailey's home and newspaper plant in Newport. Unlike the 1851 fire which ravaged his plant, this attack was openly instigated and carried out by embittered pro-slavers who were encouraged and aided by various political factions which hoped to prevent the Republicans from holding their state convention, scheduled for November 11th at Bailey's home. However, they were disappointed, for the convention was held as planned, although five days later than originally scheduled.

The attack began on October 28th when a crowd of pro-slavers gathered in Newport to denounce the abolitionists and the "Black Republicans." After a short time, the crowd proceeded to the office of the *Free South* and forcibly seized much of Bailey's type, which was scattered in the street.¹⁰

The next day, the mob assembled again and once more marched on the printing office. When the publisher refused to admit anyone to his plant, mob members smashed down the doors and loaded all the equipment onto waiting wagons. The wagons were driven about town and most of the contents strewn over the streets. What little remained was dumped in the river.¹¹

Also, the mob broke into the publisher's home at what was then #2 Taylor Street and stole many of his valued possessions, including a large sum of money.¹²

After Bailey re-established his newspaper, he sued known members of the mob for \$15,000 and heavily armed his office, daring anyone to attack him again. He refused orders to leave town and told the pro-slavers the only way he would go would be to go out dead and guaranteed he would take some with him. He was never again bothered by mob action.¹³

Bailey claimed Newport's postmaster was one of the mob members and demanded all his future mail be sent to the Covington post office. There, he said, the postmaster was a "gentleman" who would never be goaded into committing such lawless acts.¹⁴

The Newport publisher had always favored immediate abolition over a policy of gradual emancipation and wanted it brought about by lawful legislation. He conceded though, there was little hope the state's incumbent lawmakers would ever take such action.¹⁵

Furthermore, Bailey accused the slaveholding element of wanting to keep the laboring masses, black and white, ignorant of their own true economic interests. Even the state's educational lag, he said, was due to this same element's long-standing influence with pliable legislators.¹⁶

Bailey also recognized a strong fear existing within the southern wing of the Democrats, that they could possibly lose the political dominance insured for themselves in the newly-elected state administration. This loss would surely come about if he and others like him succeeded in convincing the laboring class of the correctness of their stand.

Bailey's views, along with the Republicans, were highly distasteful to most Kentucky office holders and slaveholders alike. Because of this, Bailey always felt the attacks made on him and his property were committed for the sole purpose of preventing the planned Republican state convention. The convention, they said, would give him and his fellow "black Republicans" an additional platform from which to air their views. To prevent this, Bailey said the slaveholders and politicians joined forces and prodded the area's lawless element into making the attacks.¹⁷

Bailey's personal courage and persistence in standing up to violence and threats forced his political and slave-owner enemies to abandon all thought of frightening him into giving up his work and leaving town. Instead, they intensified their boycott of his advertisers and over the years, helped in the establishment of nine different Covington area newspapers – all pro slavery and all set up with the hope of driving Bailey out of business. All soon failed.¹⁸

Bailey successfully continued publishing his newspaper, however. Its publication lasted throughout the Civil War and well into the postwar years.¹⁹

An ironic facet of the local anti-slavery movement was that abolitionists, such as Bailey, seldom resorted to physical violence in order to advance their views, while their opponents – slave owners, "landed gentry" and even many law enforcement officials, were known to have perpetrated some of the state's most heinous crimes in the name of maintaining the "peculiar institution."

Another irony was the fact Covington's anti-slavery movement, including operations of the Underground Railroad, seemed to flourish with increased vigor after the attacks on Bailey. This was especially true among the community's intellectuals.

Strangely, some of slavery's most militant supporters continued to be found among the poorest and least educated of the whites. They gave slaveholders the popular support needed to keep the black man in bondage.

This paradox might be explained in part by the widely-held belief among the lower classes that abolitionism constituted a threat to the Union. This, of course, was instigated and encouraged by slaveholding interests. Some sociologists claim that even though slavery provided no direct economic benefits to members of the lower classes, it still served to give them a sense of social superiority.

Never had any class of whites fully approved of the presence of large numbers of free blacks in the community. Most freedmen were well aware of this and the local black population remained relatively small.

In Newport, which had the smallest black population of any major city in the state, the marshal was often prodded into pressuring the freedmen of that city to move elsewhere. One of the more concerted efforts came shortly after the 1859 attack on Bailey's home and newspaper.

In early November, the Newport marshal called together most of that town's free blacks and read them the state and local laws pertaining to freedmen. The marshal suggested they comply with the laws and leave the city.²⁰

One observer of the marshal's actions wrote: "In consequence of that suggestion they promised they would pick up their traps and depart. They exodus will much please the people of our city."²¹

The observer commented on Newport's slaveholders, saying:

*...and we believe the owners of slave property are simply owners because they are compelled to be from the natural course of events and that they would prefer to be rid of them if it could be accomplished upon such terms as would suit the body politic.*²²

A year later, a special census would disclose 39 slaves then existed in Newport.²³ That was October 1860 and at a time when Newport was the state's third largest city, behind Louisville and Covington.

To notice only the political disputes and the slavery struggle of the immediate pre-Civil War years would be to ignore some of the most outstanding achievements of a remarkable era. Covingtonians had played a prominent part in adding Texas and the far west to their nation. They helped finance and build a railroad to the South and proudly pointed to America's abundant opportunity for all, as immigrants came in throngs.

One of those immigrants was Dot Ming, a Chinese gentleman of varied accomplishments, who decided upon Covington as his new home. Dot Ming quickly became one of the community's more popular citizens. Many townspeople always agreed with the individual who first observed: "but as he talks broken China it is rather difficult to keep up a prolonged conversation with him."²⁴

The town's productive energy seemed boundless. It was prosperous and productive and this applied to the creative arts as well as to the growing industries. Its painters, song-writers, poets and prose writers enhanced the literary scene.

Neither did the community lack for a sense of humor as newspaper editor Samuel Davis demonstrated when he told of an out-of-state newsman who declared while in a fit of nostalgia for Revolutionary War enthusiasm:

*Hurrah for the girls of '76!*²⁵

“Thunder,” Davis said yet another editor cried, “that’s too old. No, no, hurrah for the girls of 17.”²⁶

Lodge dances, festivals and parades were commonplace. Circuses and Ohio River showboats found receptive audiences and the numerous *Sommernachfests* provided opportunities for fun and relaxation for nearly everyone.

The *Sommernachfests*, first introduced by the Germans, were annual celebrations in honor of bock beer. They were held just after Easter and were found in every neighborhood of town. Even the Irish, whose general dislike of the Germans was well known, accepted and participated in these annual rituals.

The community’s European background was reflected in numerous facets of everyday life. Residential architecture was taking on a distinctive German flavor and European-style drill teams and military companies began flourishing more than ever.

Such militarism, no doubt, was further encouraged by the mounting possibility of civil war. One local company, the Kenton Cadets, was formed in November 1858. It received almost instant recognition from state officials and by the following month, was fully equipped with state-supplied arms.²⁷

Within a short time, a second company of Cadets was formed and on May 3, 1859, both units were organized into a battalion. They used Greer’s Hall as their armory.²⁸

By then, it was virtually impossible to ignore the gathering war clouds and many Covingtonians began to suspect the newly-armed Cadets of harboring anti-Union sentiments. Partly as a result of this suspicion, the ultra-patriotic Kentucky Rovers came into being and participated in its first public parade during that year’s Fourth of July celebration.²⁹

During all this and continuing up to the war’s beginning, occasional rafts carrying westward-bound freight and migrants downriver from Pittsburgh were still a reasonably common, though dwindling sight. Typical of these vessels was a Texas-bound Pennsylvania family who briefly tied-up at the foot of Newport’s York Street. It was described as a “queer-looking craft, having the resemblance of an immense flatboat, which is filled with choice stock, consisting of cattle and sheep and agricultural implements.”³⁰

At times, scores of these rectangular wooden craft lined the Covington waterfront, many of them abandoned who had no further use for them. Small boys found them ideal as fishing piers and bases for swimming and diving.³¹

Few youngsters paid any heed to an ordinance which declared it a crime to bathe in the Ohio or Licking Rivers before eight P.M. This seldom-enforced law had been enacted in March 1856 and provided for fines up to \$10 for its violation.³²

A ban on nude bathing was but little more effective. Young boys who had their own favored “skinny dipping” locations along the rivers’ more secluded parts would respectfully wait for the lowering of the flag at Newport Barracks. To them, this became the signal to disrobe and happily plunge into the water.

Drownings, as might be expected, were reasonably common. When it happened that a body sank from sight, men of the community would fire cannon in an effort to make the victim rise to the surface. Often a floating body could be seen tied to the municipal wharf awaiting identification.

Whenever a death occurred in the community, it was customary to print handbills announcing the funeral and distribute them about town. It was also customary to send close friends of the deceased special invitations to attend the funeral. Joseph W. Pomfrey, who maintained a bill collecting agency on Fifth Street between Madison and Scott, considered the prompt delivery of such invitations to be one of his specialties.³³

There were still relatively few morticians in the community and the old practice of simply placing the deceased on ice continued to be commonly practiced. When this occurred, a friend sat with the body to protect it from attacks by cats or rats. This was considered an act of the greatest neighborliness and was unthinkable for anyone to refuse if asked to serve in such a capacity.³⁴

When the family of a deceased decided to engage the services of a mortician, it was common practice for the hired undertaker to cry with the mourners, his flow of tears usually being proportionate to the funeral cost.

During these years, Kentucky’s noted historian, Richard H. Collins was becoming established in the publishing business at his headquarters on the west side of Greenup, between 7th and 8th. The family of twelve-year-old Frank Duveneck was also establishing its new business venture in partnership with Henry Wichman, at the corner of 13th and Greenup. It was a small bottling plant operated in conjunction with a *biergarten* – typically German, of course, and a popular neighborhood gathering place.

Covington's preeminence over other Kentucky cities in the field of art was clearly established by this time. Lesser known artists such as Miss Loduska Tuttle, who migrated here from her native Maine, and English-born William Scott, shared the Covington ambience with stalwarts of the art world like Charles T. Webber and James H. Beard.

Beard, who was born in Buffalo, New York in 1814, was barely 6 when he and his family migrated to the Ohio frontier. There, he developed a strong interest in painting but because of the remoteness of the area, was forced to make his own first brushes and paints. The brushes were made from the fur of wild animals, while his colors were ground with a mortar and pestle had had fashioned for the purpose. The colors were mixed with what little oil occasionally in his possession.³⁵

While still in his teens, Beard chose to seek his fortune in Pittsburgh where he secured work with a keelboat firm. He first visited Covington on such a craft. Once, while here on a visit, the youthful Beard attended a turkey-shoot at Latonia Springs and, like so many keel boaters of the day, became embroiled in a gigantic free-for-all. He was but 17 at the time.³⁶

Beard eventually settled in Cincinnati, where he married and fathered six children, all talented artists in their own right. The Beards also once gave employment to Catherine Siemers, a young girl who had lost her parents. Catherine later became the mother of Covington's internationally known Frank Duveneck.³⁷

Beard resumed painting in a serious manner after leaving the keel boating firm. His earliest attempts at portraiture brought only four or five dollars each. His talents developed rapidly though and in time he moved to Covington. Here he rented his home at 322 East Third, the former residence of the famed Drake family. By then, his paintings were commanding \$3600 and included portraits of William Wright Southgate, Henry Clay and presidents John Quincy Adams, Zachary Taylor and William Henry Harrison.³⁸

Beard eventually came to work primarily with animals and regularly collaborated with his brother, William H., in producing many of these widely-acclaimed works.

ANOTHER NATIONALLY KNOWN ARTIST who called Covington home during that time was **Charles T. Webber**. Webber, like James Beard, was a native of New York and migrated to Cincinnati in 1858, when that city was considered the art center of the West. Again like Beard, he decided Kentucky was more to his liking and, according to Edna Talbot Whitley's "Kentucky Anti-Bellum Portraiture," moved to Covington.³⁹

Webber was essentially a portrait painter and produced life-sized portraits of a number of prominent people, including Salmon P. Chase, President Rutherford Hayes, Generals George H. Thomas and William T. Sherman and the noted poet, Coates Kinney. Undoubtedly, his most widely acclaimed work is the *Underground Railroad*, a large historical painting of a group of runaway slaves arriving at an Indiana farmhouse station under cover of darkness.⁴⁰

Interest in Webber's dramatic slave painting was renewed when it was exhibited at Chicago's 1893 World's Fair and today, copies of it are used to illustrate the text of scores of American history books.⁴¹ Webber eventually returned to Ohio where, in 1911, he died at his Riverside home at age 85.⁴²

BUSHROD W. FOLEY, who made his home at the southeast corner of Front and Russell Streets, was serving as Covington mayor at the year 1860 approached. Fire Company Number 1 maintained a 1200 volume library at its engine house on the north side of Third between Scott and Greenup, while Citizens Fire Company Number 3 operated from the corner of Washington and Lexington Pike and Western Fire Company Number 4 maintained its headquarters at the corner of Sixth and Main.

The local temperance society published the monthly *Temperance Companion*, while on the educational scene, Miss S. A. Haines presided as principal of the Judsonian Female Institute, which occupied the main building of the defunct Baptist Seminary on Eleventh Street. She would soon be replaced by Asa Drury.

William Boswell operated the St. Charles Coffee House near Weber and Company's bookbinding firm on Lower Market Space, while German saloons and Irish pubs abounded throughout the community.

Charles Gaisbauer's Covington Brewery annually turned out 8,000 barrels of fine beer at its plant at the northwest corner of Pike and Scott, but an equally good lager could be had from the Dukme and Company Brewery situated on the north side of Turnpike, between Baker and Ludlow Streets. Turnpike Street, has since become West Pike Street, while Ludlow Street's today's southern portion of Western Avenue.

Other breweries included that of Frank Stade at the northeast corner of Fourth and Main and Frank Hone's at the northeast corner of Twelfth and Stevens.

George Slimmer operated a distillery at the northern end of Western Row, then an extension of Ludlow Street, while John Mieth turned out fine wines at his winery on the south side of Pike between Craig and Banklick.

John Coulson's carriage factory was also on the south side of Pike, but between Craig and Main, while numerous cigar and tobacco factories flourished throughout the north end of town. At that time, there were well in excess of 1,500 men employed in Covington's various tobacco factories.

In addition to the above enterprises, the Adams Express Company maintained an office near John Mackoy's Wholesale Grocery on the south side of Pike between Madison and Washington, while first-grade glassware was being turned out at the Gray, Hemingray and Brothers Glass Manufacturing plant at the foot of Madison.

Local attorneys had long been aware of the need for a law library and in March 1860, the state's General Assembly incorporated the Covington Law Library Association for the purpose of establishing such a facility.⁴³

The 1860 federal census revealed Covington's population of 16,471 made it the nation's 57th largest city. In addition, it had grown to the 14th largest city where slaveholding was legal, exceeding in size by only Baltimore, St. Louis, New Orleans, Louisville, Washington DC, Charleston, Richmond, Mobile, Memphis, Savannah < Wilmington, Petersburg, Virginia and Nashville. According to that census, Covington was home to only 197 slaves.

A more impressive picture of the area's dramatic growth can be seen when the combined Covington-Newport population of 26,517 considered as a unit, would be the 32nd largest city in the nation and the 9th largest in the slaveholding states. The only larger slaveholding cities were Baltimore, St. Louis, New Orleans, Louisville, Washington DC, Charleston, Richmond and Mobile. Covington's northern neighbor, Cincinnati had become America's seventh largest city.

The town was still attracting large numbers of immigrants and in March 1860, a new all-German lodge of the IOOF was formed. Designated *Germania Lodge No. 148*, it conducted all of its affairs in the Teutonic language.⁴⁴

The Irish also were continuing their influence in the community and the 1860 St. Patrick's Day was observed with a spirited display by the Independent Kentucky Rovers, one of the local military companies that had a predominant number of Irish on its rolls.⁴⁵

The town boasted of forty miles of hard surfaced streets, most paved with limestone macadam.⁴⁶ During dry spells, the pavement had a tendency to become covered with thick layers of fine white limestone powder constantly being churned into dense choking dust clouds by the town's traffic.

Serious plans were being made to extend Garrard Street from Fifth to Seventh. It was the previous year that block-long Sanford Street had been extended.⁴⁷

Covington's levee at the foot of Garrard and Greenup frequently presented a bustling scene. The landing was partly paved with cobblestone but because of the river's constant rising and falling, floating piers and wharf boats were used rather than land-anchored, stationary docks. Passengers and freight were conveyed over gangways to the wharf and onto the steamers and ferries. These gangways were not quite wide enough for two wagons to pass and at times overly competitive teamsters would crowd and jostle one another off into the river.⁴⁸ This was especially true during times of high water on the Licking, for an increased number of lighter draught boats would rush to tap the resources of the upper Licking Valley.

In April, a local correspondent wrote of the Licking trade:

*Taking advantage of the recent rise in the Licing [sic] river large quantities of produce have been shipped from Claysville about 70 miles upstream. Corn, wheat, tobacco, bacon and whisky arrived here yesterday in large quantities ... and more is expected if the river continues at its present high stage.*⁴⁹

During the next month, on May 21st, Kentucky was struck by one of the severest tornadoes in its history. The state's northern portion was fortunate that the storm's force had somewhat abated by the time it reached here. Nevertheless, trees and chimneys were blown down and scores of houses unroofed. The west wall of the riverfront glass works [Hemingray] collapsed and the rail mill at the foot of Scott suffered extensive damage.⁵⁰

At Independence, part of one side of the county courthouse was demolished while county court was in session. Officials and spectators alike made a precipitous rush from the building. Happily, no one was injured.⁵¹

Town ball, an antecedent of today's baseball was probably the community's most popular team sport as formally organized clubs such as the Unions, the Kentons, the High School Boys and the Excelsiors engaged in vigorous competition with one another. In the fall of 1860, it was estimated no less than ten such organizations were flourishing throughout the town.⁵²

Attending Sunday prize fights constituted another favored pastime. Because the frequently held bouts were in violation of state law, they posed a constant problem for law enforcement. One such open-air event was scheduled for August 12th in West Covington. Bernard McGirty had been elected marshal of the tiny community just the day before, yet when an estimated 200 fight fans appeared on the hillside overlooking the river and Ludlow's White Hall Hotel, he and his deputy, James Yancey, did not hesitate to personally order them out of town.⁵³

The marshal's action was tantamount to inviting a spirited donnybrook, but surprisingly, the young men cheerfully dismantled the erected boxing ring and moved to another site five miles downstream. There, the prizefight went on as scheduled.⁵⁴

Four days later, another group of young Covingtonians met at the Main Street firehouse and elected Nathaniel Pratt to be captain of their newly-formed Covington Artillery Company.⁵⁵ The company, which continued to use the firehouse as its meeting place, was then inducted into the state service.⁵⁶

One of the earlier circuses to appear in town for that year's show season was the Antonio Brothers' Great World Circus which opened May 9th. This was followed by a host of traveling tent shows and fairs which appeared throughout summer and fall.

Event after the advent of cool weather, local citizens continued to be entertained by indoor fairs until the year's final one opened December 18th at the Odd Fellows' Hall [5th & Madison]. The fair ran two weeks and was held for benefit of the new hospital readied on Seventh Street. The hospital, in a three-story brick which had previously housed a grocery, was formally dedicated as St. Elizabeth Hospital on January 6, 1861 and received its first patient on the 23rd.

Lotteries, unlike prizefighting, were legal, and F. C. Albrink did a brisk business at his lottery office on the west side of Scott between 3rd and 4th. William Clayton and Company engaged in the same business at the northeast corner of 4th and Scott, while the Shelby College Lottery office was on the west side of Scott, two doors above 3rd.

William and Mathew Hall's marble yards was on the east side of Madison just north of 8th and the oculist, Elkanah Williams maintained headquarters on the west side of Madison between 9th and 10th. Rope walks were conducted by Frank Knowll on Johnson Street. Valentine Hagen at the southeast corner of Riddle and Pike and Daniel Knoll on the north side of 8th between Main and Bakewell. Western Union Telegraph maintained its office on the south side of 5th between Madison and Scott, while over on the north side of 6th between Russell and Washington stood Henry Overman's vinegar factory.

Covington boasted several hotels. They included the American House on the south side of 6th near Russell; the Clinton House at 520-522 Madison; Benjamin H. Elliston's Drover's Inn at the southeast corner of Pike and Banklick as well as his Ellison House on the west side of Main between Third and Fourth. He also operated the Elliston Stock Yards adjacent to his Main Street Hotel [probably an unfortunate combination! – Editor]. It was never made clear however, why he omitted the "t" from the name of his Main Street hostelry.

The Main Street hotel would be converted to a military hospital and on April 9, 1860, the Drover's Inn would be taken over by Miller Hawkins, formerly of Newport.

The Franklin House stood on the west side of Greenup between 2nd and 3rd, while Henry Grossayer kept a hotel at the southwest corner of 4th and Main. James Handlan conducted a hostelry on the south side of Pike between Madison and Washington while the Heltemes House stood at the southwest corner of sixth and Washington. Across the street, the Jackson House was operated by Henry Wenzel [also a soft drink manufacturer – Editor] while the Kentucky House stood on the west side of Washington between 6th and Pike.

Other hotels included the Kenton House at the northeast corner of Pike and Craig; the Lexington House at the northwest corner of Pike and Washington; the Madison House at the southeast corner of Sixth and Madison; the Magnolia House on the east side of Madison between 7th and Pike; the McDonald House at the southeast corner of 2nd and Scott; and the National Hotel on the west side of Scott between 3rd and 4th.

Henry Niemeyer operated the Lewisburg House, southwest corner of Montague and Lexington Pike, while the popular Rising Sun Hotel stood at 313-315 Pike, between Kip and Riddle Streets. Kip is now Lee Street and Riddle has become part of 9th west of Banklick Street. The Rolling Mill Exchange was at the southeast corner of Greenup and Robbins, while the Rolling Mill House stood on the north side of 11th between Prospect and the Licking River. Both of these businesses were so-named because of their proximity to Thomas and George Phillips' flourishing Licking Iron Works at the foot of 11th Street.

By that time, Covington's chief stagecoach office was located in the Madison House, where crowds of small boys were usually on hand to greet each stage's arrival. The boys were sure to see a spectacular show of equestrian speed and strength for it was the custom of coach drivers coming from the south to round the corner of

Pike and Madison at full speed, while all the time the guard would sound his horn. The driver would dramatically rein-up his horses at the 6th and Madison hotel – all to the delight of the scores of waiting boys.⁵⁷

The principle topic of conversation at all the hotels and inns concerned politics and the possibility of war. The same could be said of any place in town where people gathered. Events were happening which caused many Covingtonians to develop a desperate feeling that somehow the Union must be saved. They saw the danger to the Union growing daily as talk of the likelihood of Southern secession became commonplace.

Some were especially critical of the formation of the Republican Party and newsman Samuel Davis took delight in aiming some of his most scathing remarks in its direction. A meeting held November 16, 1859 at William Bailey's Taylor Street home in Newport, attended by Bailey, Cassius Clay, Abner Williams, Dr. William W. Jones of Madison County, Dr. George D. Blakey of Logan County, Dr. J. R. Whittemore of Newport and a Mr. Beatty of Covington, was mocked by Davis for being called a Republican State Convention.⁵⁸ Instead, he snorted, it was merely a "cheap way" for the participants to keep their names before the public.⁵⁹

According to Bailey, his enemies had hoped to prevent this meeting with the October 28th and 29th attacked on the *Free South*. There was a five day postponement from the originally scheduled date. Even on the day of the meeting, there were still some who were declaring it would not be held.⁶⁰

At the end of the one-day conference, it was announced Clay and Dr. Bailey had been selected as delegates to their party's national convention. The assemblage proceeded to Covington where Clay and Bailey each delivered a spirited address to a crowd of the curious gathered at the corner of 7th and Madison.⁶¹

The talks, given by the light of scores of torches and bonfires, had been preceded by a crier on horseback who galloped throughout the community calling out news of the impending speeches.⁶²

Clay and Bailey predicted a Republican victory in the following presidential election and both supported a program of gradual emancipation. Clay further denounced the violence being used by slaveholding interests and called John Brown's raid an example of "the fruits of the invasion of Kansas by the pro-slavery men."⁶³

Politics had always been the prime interest to Covingtonians but this year was special. New parties were being formed and in April, the city would host the 1860 Republican State Convention.

Everyone knew the upcoming presidential election would be crucial to the nation's survival and many were anxious to learn what this new political party's platform would be. How far would the party go on the question of abolition? What would its stand be regarding slavery's spread into the territories? How would it view the federal government's position in regard to slavery where it already existed?

The curious did not have long to wait before receiving a strong indication of what the answers to these and other questions might be, for it was soon announced Cassius M. Clay would be the convention's principal speaker.

Clay, a veteran of the Mexican War and distantly related to Henry Clay, was generally recognized as one of Kentucky's most outstanding anti-slavery leaders. He was a man of exceptionally strong will and had never been known to back off from a fight. Still, none of this prevented his opponents from throwing sharp barbs in his direction, as did one who wrote:

*The nondescript party of Kentucky, by some denominated the Black-Republican party, will meet ... to listen to the "sound and fury, signifying nothing," of C. M. Clay ...and others of like proclivities.*⁶⁴

The two-day convention, which drew a surprisingly large number of delegates from throughout the state, was an unusually orderly one for those turbulent times. Held at City Hall, April 25 and 26, it represented the first time that the structure was ever made available for Republican meetings. Prior to this, the Republicans were consistently refused permission to meet in the building, even though it had always been a common practice for all other parties to have free use of its facilities.

Cassius Clay was the main speaker at the first day's sessions and like many orators of that time spoke about two and a half hours. His speech was barely begun when it was interrupted by the loud and incessant clanging of a fire bell.⁶⁵ Initially, Clay thought the raucous sound was being made deliberately to interrupt his speech but a quick investigation discovered a nearby livery stable was engulfed in flames.⁶⁶

That first day's activities included election of a full slate of party state officers and the routine formation of various committees. The sessions were somewhat enlivened later when B. F. Sanford proposed a series of resolutions concerning Reverend John G. Fee and a group of his abolitionist followers' recent expulsion from Madison County.⁶⁷

Sanford proposed the convention condemn the expulsion as "an outrage on the sacred rights of citizens, upon the Constitution and law and a disgrace to the Commonwealth." He further proposed Governor Magoffin be

censured for failing to protect Fee and the others, many of whom were professors at Berea College. Sanford wanted the convention to offer them its “warmest sympathies.”⁶⁸

Cassius Clay immediately voiced opposition to the resolutions, saying that even though the information contained in them was true, they could only hurt the party if adopted and would invite violence from the pro-slavers. Clay had long-ago proved threats could not deter him from airing his anti-slavery views. His views though, were of a moderate emancipationist and he felt Reverend Fee’s strict abolitionist stance should not be permitted to become associated in any way with the Republican Party.

Clay added, almost as an afterthought, he would support the resolutions if Sanford “will go with me to the county of Madison and stand in their defense.” Otherwise, he would continue to oppose them and would “call upon all who are lovers of law and order and friends of Christian civilization, to vote with me to put them down.”⁶⁹ The resolutions were quickly and permanently shelved, after which the convention adjourned for the day.⁷⁰

Reverend Fee had once been in close alliance with Clay and had originally gone to Cassius’ home county partly in response to the Madison Countians’ urgings. There, Reverend Fee’s influence helped bring about the founding of Berea College.

The pair’s relationship however became strained as Clay came to feel Fee’s radical abolitionism was harming the moderate movement favored by himself. Differences mounted with time and by the time of the convention, had reached the point where Clay wanted to be completely disassociated from the minister and his followers.

When the delegates convened on the 26th, they worked out a firm set of proposals to take to the national convention at Chicago. They adopted a platform which favored keeping a significant portion of the public domain perpetually subject to the Homestead Act; favored admission of new states as each reached the prescribed population; supported government aid to help link the Atlantic and Pacific coasts by rail; and opposed any inequality of rights among American citizens.⁷¹

After reproaching their British ancestors for introducing slavery into the original colonies, the delegates declared strong opposition to any reopening of the African slave trade and vigorously condemned an earlier state legislative action which repealed the 1833 law forbidding importation of slaves as merchandise into Kentucky. They also favored a treaty to procure a location in South or Central America for colonization for freed slaves.⁷²

The convention adopted a surprisingly mild attitude toward slavery where it already existed. The position was expressed in two platform planks which stated:

*We repudiate the new and repulsive doctrine that the Constitution, of its own force, carries slavery into all territories of the United States. We regard slavery as purely the creation of local municipal law. It can have no force in any community except by force of laws executed by the Sovereign power. When such laws are enacted in a constitutional manner, the rights of masters to the services of their slaves must be respected as other civil rights.*⁷³

*We deny to Congress any power over the institution of slavery within the several states and claim for the people of the States themselves, only the right under their constitutional and moral responsibilities to establish and regulate or abrogate the institution. But as to the Territories, we hold . . . that Congress has power to pass all needful rules and regulations for their government, to the extent of enacting laws for them, or repealing laws enforced by them.*⁷⁴

Having worked out their platform, the party members formed a state Central Committee to be headquartered in Louisville and named two delegates from each of Kentucky’s ten congressional districts and four from the state-at-large to attend the national convention. The four at-large were Charles Hendley of Newport, W. D. Gallagher of Oldham County, A.A. Burton of Garrard County and Dr. Blakey.⁷⁵

The convention adjourned but before anyone could leave, Reverend Fee asked for and received permission to speak. He was still chagrined at Clay’s remarks of the previous day and wished to respond.⁷⁶

The minister readily admitted Clay was right when he said Fee had gone beyond Republican precepts by advocating immediate abolition but then released a torrent of critic of Clay for not coming to the defense of his right to free speech.⁷⁷

The articulate Clay answered Fee’s remarks at great length. He repeated the charge the minister had long-ago abandoned the Republicans’ conservative doctrines and declared he should have withdrawn from the party

rather than jeopardize lives of those who did not hold such radical views.⁷⁸ “The lesser interest,” said Clay, “should then have been sacrificed for the greater.”⁷⁹

By then the Republican Party had become a powerful force in the free states. In Covington however, its local members were seen as a small though troublesome minority who represented a dangerous threat to private property rights. Even the state’s Democrats, with their growing talk of possible secession, were viewed locally as little more than traitors to the cause of national unity.

Neither did the populace look with favor at the stand of Governor Magoffin and members of the newly-elected legislature who seemed to be chiefly concerned with stemming the power of anti-slavery forces, while overlooking (or sympathizing with) the threats to that national unity. Newsman Samuel Davis spoke for many of his fellow townsmen when he denounced the Democratic lawmakers and their party as “daily becoming more sectional, more intolerant and more thoroughly imbued with the spirit of dis-union.”⁸⁰

An example, according to Davis, was the repealing of the laws that had prohibited the importation of slaves into Kentucky. This action, he said, was inspired by “old John Brown’s raid,” and was without the least consideration of the public good.⁸¹

Davis had been a strong supporter of Joshua Bell during the 1859 gubernatorial campaign and was now calling for the organization of a nation-wide Unionist party. He closely watched activities of the new Constitutional Union Party being formed in other states and soon became instrumental in bringing many local members of the old Opposition Party into its fold.⁸²

On May 9th, representatives of the old Opposition met at Baltimore with remnants of the Know Nothings and Whig Unionists and officially merged into the Constitutional Union Party at the national level. The delegates virtually ignored the slavery issue as they condemned the sectionalism of both the North and South. They saw their new party as one of moderation and expressed no real political philosophy other than of upholding the constitution, enforcing the law and saving the Union. Its leaders espoused conciliation. The newly-formed party nominated Tennessee’s John Bell for president and Edward Everett of Massachusetts for vice-president.

A week later on May 16th, the Republicans met at Chicago in a large structure known as the Wigwam and nominated Abraham Lincoln of Illinois and Hannibal Hamlin of Maine. The party’s many faceted platform reaffirmed the right of each state to control its own domestic institutions, but also contained a plank condemning all attempts to revive the African slave trade and another declaring neither Congress nor any territorial legislature had authority to extend slavery into the territories.

Meanwhile, the Democratic Party was in disarray, torn asunder from within. Its national convention was called for April 23rd at Charleston, South Carolina. The party’s ultra-southern wing of radicals insisted on demanding federal protection for slavery in the territories, while the remainder of the party favored a policy of popular sovereignty for the territorial residents, an agreement to abide by all supreme court decisions and a general reaffirmation of the 1856 party platform. One of the few things the two groups could agree on was the desirability of acquiring Cuba as additional slave territory.

After ten days of fruitless balloting and withdrawal of eight Southern States, the delegates adjourned to Baltimore where they reassembled June 18th. Once again, the radical Southern delegates withdrew and this time nominated Kentucky’s John Cabell Breckinridge for president and Joseph Lane of Oregon for vice-president. The main body of the party nominated Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois and Georgia’s Herschel V. Johnson as vice-president.

Douglas, like Lincoln, was fiercely loyal to the indestructible Union but, unlike Lincoln, did not accept the notion it could not exist part slave and part free. He personally saw no reason why the Union should not continue indefinitely with some states with legal slavery and others outlawing it.

The Breckinridge forces were keenly aware that the slaveholding states were already outnumbered 18 to 15 by free states and clearly in the minority in both houses of Congress. If slavery was not extended into the territories, they said, the slaveholders’ situation was hopeless in they remained in the Union.

Breckinridge had carried Kenton and Campbell Counties once before. In 1856, he won the vice-presidency on the Buchanan ticket. During that campaign, Breckinridge helped put Kentucky in the Democratic fold for the first presidential election since 1828 when he told voters the Union would be dissolved if Fremont and the Republicans were elected. The Republicans, he falsely charged, were committed to abolition.

Breckinridge once declared intense loyalty to the Union. Over the years, he modified his position to loyalty to *Unionism*, but only Unionism as he saw it.

Locally, this position was strongly endorsed by citizens as William E. Arthur, Jesse D. Bright and Newport's George B. Hodge. As for maintaining the Union, they clearly agreed with the central Kentucky newsman who wrote:

*We are for the Union, forever and inseparable, so long as our rights are respected and maintained but when we are to be subjected to the whims and caprices of a Northern power, without the power of redress, simply because it has the numerical strength, the Union is not worth preserving.*⁸³

The slavery issue was fast coming to a head and for most Covingtonians it was no easy matter on which to agree. A growing number favored nothing less than out-and-out abolition, while others believed it to be an altogether fitting and proper institution. The latter firmly agreed with Governor Magoffin when he once said, "I do not believe slavery to be wrong. I do not believe it to be a moral, social, or political evil."⁸⁴

These two views, of course, represented the two extremes, with other townspeople preferring a policy of gradual emancipation.

There were another large number of local residents who did not necessarily favor slavery, but who still harbored a deep belief in the Negroes' inferiority. The voters in this group was often the one to which the slavers pitched their appeal. Slavery was merely tolerated by them and in effect they made themselves consenting tools of the "slavocracy."

To this group, the Democrats – especially at the state and local level – had become advocates of not only maintaining slavery but also turning things back to what they once were. When the reality of secession presented itself, they turned against the slave interests.

Despite all the pre-campaign interest and the growing apprehension over talk of secession, the actual presidential campaign proved to be relatively quiet in comparison to many others in the turbulent political history. This seems unusual considering there were four major parties making the race.

Covington experienced the usual rallies, torchlight parades, speeches and visits by nationally known personages, including Salmon P. Chase for the Republicans and Joseph Lane, the Southern Democrats' vice-presidential candidate.⁸⁵ On the occasion Lane was speaking to the states' righters at Drovers' Inn, a Republican rally was being conducted in English and German in Newport. The bi-lingual rally was held in a York Street building that had been re-named the Wigwam.⁸⁶

One of the area's largest rallies of the campaign was held by the Bell and Everett forces the evening of August 2nd. The torch-lit affair was held near the Western Baptist Theological Seminary, then known as College Square, bonfires blazed throughout the city. The town presented "a scene of the wildest tumult and disorder," and when viewed from the Ohio side of the river "it appeared as though Covington was overwhelmed in a fearful conflagration."⁸⁷

On the day following the Bell and Everett rally, the Covington Republican Club received a black walnut rail that was "duly certified" as having been cut by Lincoln some 35 years earlier. It was proudly placed on display at the organization's club-room at Pike and Washington.⁸⁸

The editor of the *Covington Journal*, who gave unstinting support to the Constitutional Union Party, expressed dismay that a formal Republican organization should exist locally. He declared that although the club's avowed purpose was to aid in Lincoln's election its "only practical result . . . is to sow the seeds of Abolitionism."⁸⁹

The local presidential campaign was overshadowed by events of the contested August 6th mayoralty election. Bushrod Foley, mayor since 1845, sought to retain the office under the banner of the Constitutional Union Party. His opponent was Georgia-born John A. Goodson, Sr., the incumbent city council president.

Goodson, a former town trustee and state representative, was a close political ally of Carlisle and John W. Stevenson, and now received the support of both wings of the Democratic Party in his effort to win the mayor's office.

The two sides waged an intense campaign, and when the votes were counted both claimed victory and both charged vote fraud on the part of the other. Foley claimed to have won by a majority of two votes, but Goodson's backers claimed they personally knew of three illegal votes cast for the incumbent and if these were thrown out, Goodson would be the winner. One hundred twenty more votes were cast than there were eligible voters in the city assessor's books.⁹⁰

Accusations of fraud were so rampant a special board of examiners was appointed and given the responsibility of determining the winner. After three days of investigation, two of Foley's votes were thrown out and the election declared a tie, with each candidate receiving 1,138 votes.⁹¹

The examiners ruled a victor would be selected by placing their names in a hat and a winning name drawn by a third person.⁹² The first man asked to select a name declined the invitation as did a young boy. A small girl was asked and “consented without knowledge of what she was about to perform.” She drew Foley’s name.⁹³

Goodson was still not satisfied and announced he would continue contesting the election as he firmly believed he had won it fairly. Foley responded that he did not enjoy being re-elected by mere chance of name-drawing and declared he would be willing for another election to be held if Goodson agreed. Goodson was not agreeable and insisted the vote investigation continue.⁹⁴

After another month of probing, the examiners announced they had purged 36 more of Goodson’s votes as being illegally cast and 47 of Foley’s. Goodson was declared the winner by 11 votes – final count 1,102 to 1,092.⁹⁵

Goodson officially assumed office on the morning of September 20th when he took over the criminal docket of the mayor’s court.⁹⁶

Widespread speculation of why the popular Foley lost after serving more than 15 years as mayor included not only the joining of ultra-southern Breckinridge forces with Douglas Democrats, but also the fact Foley, despite his support of Bell in the presidential race, was seen by many as displaying an ever-increasing tolerance for the Republican Party.

Goodson’s slim victory represented the only Democratic win during that election. The Constitutional Union ticket’s Clinton Butts easily defeated Harvey Riff for marshal, while Samuel F. Roberts, who entered the sheriff’s race as an independent, won over Democrat H. Wayman, the Constitutional Union Party’s Alf Martin and Joel Dedman, another independent.⁹⁷

The only state-wide race was for Clerk of Court of Appeals and the Constitutional Union candidate, Leslie Combs, won handily.⁹⁸

Local efforts in the presidential election were growing in intensity. Political poles were being erected by various factions and cut down almost as rapidly by those with different views. The first pole erected by Newport’s Republicans did not last throughout the first night. A second was quickly erected at York and Mayo (7th Street) and wrapped in sheet iron for a height of 15 feet to protect it from the enemies’ axes and saws. The pole stood for about 30 hours when it was somehow consumed by fire.⁹⁹

Covington’s Bell supporters joked gleefully about the fate of the Newport poles and erected one at 6th and Main. It too quickly fell to an ax and those who erected it were no longer laughing.¹⁰⁰

One who saw no humor in the situation declared:

*Some unruly chaps whose morals had, doubtless, been neglected, had the audacity . . . to cut down the Union pole which had been erected on the corner of Sixth and Main streets. The Union men are indignant at the outrageous act and have offered a reward of \$25 for the arrest of the offenders.*¹⁰¹

Lincoln’s local backers were under almost continuous attack from Constitutional Unionists and Democrats alike. Goodson no sooner took office than the ban against Republican meetings held in city hall was again invoked.¹⁰² Both groups took delight at a printed bit of buffoonery mocking membership requirements for the Wide Awake Club, a Republican campaign organization. The mockery, ridiculing Lincoln and blacks, went as follows:

Q – Do you believe in a supreme political being?

A – I do: the almighty nigger.

Q – What are the chief objects of the Wide-Awake Society?

A – To disturb Democratic meetings and to furnish conductors for the Underground Railroad.

Q – What is your opinion of the great questions of the day?

A – I believe Abraham Lincoln was born; that he built a flat-boat and split 3 million rails.

Q – Do you drink lager?

A – I am passionately fond of that commodity.

Q – If you are admitted a member of this Society, do you promise to love the nigger, to cherish him as you would a brother and cleave unto him through evil as well as good report and hate the Democrats as long as life lasts and water runs?

A – All this I solemnly promise to perform, so help me – Abraham.

“This candidate is then,” according to the final lines of the mockery, “invested with cape and cap; somebody gives him a slap on the side of the head and tells him to be Wide-Awake.”¹⁰³

Tactics employed throughout the campaign by local Douglas forces featured concentrated attacks on Negroes and the Republican Party, while those of the less-effective Breckinridge group, led by men like William E. Arthur and Daniel Moor, consisted of little more than making ominous threats of secession if slavery interests were not protected.

The Breckinridge forces experienced difficulty coordinating their local efforts and held relatively few rallies, most poorly attended, and some canceled because scheduled speakers did not appear.

The approach of Covington’s Constitutional Unionists was the best organized and effective on the local political scene. Party members stressed one major theme – the necessity of preserving the Union and consistently attacked those they viewed as endangering that Union.

Former governor Charles S. Morehead, clearly reflected Bell supporters when he addressed a gathering at Off Fellows Hall on the evening of October 30th. The speech was “often eloquent – ever patriotic and ... vehement in its denunciation of conspirators and their conspiracies to deserve this glorious Union.”¹⁰⁴

As election day neared, the editor of the *Covington Journal* not only flailed the Republicans but also called upon voters to rebuke the southern sectionalism shown by pro-slavers of both wings of the Democratic Party. When many of the town’s Breckinridge backers began predicting a Lincoln victory, the editor admitted they might be right but only if Breckinridge remained in the race.¹⁰⁵

The southerners’ candidate was a decided threat to the nation and should withdraw from the election, the editor said. He asked of Breckinridge:

*Has he the patriotism and the aspirations and the magnanimity to rise above the prejudices and aspirations of a mere politician and meet the issue as the best interests of the country demand?*¹⁰⁶

Neither was the editor unmindful of possible last minute trickery at the polls and in his final edition before election day advised the Constitutional Unionists to be sure “your tickets are all right.”¹⁰⁷

The anti-secessionist stand of both the Constitutional Unionists and the Douglas Democrats had a strong appeal and although a high percentage of Kentuckians tended to look favorably upon slavery and states’ rights, they were fervently in favor of preserving the Union.

Bell’s supporters were well-aware of the attitude prevailing in Kentucky and their campaign of consistently stressing nationalism and maintenance of the Union was now about to be vindicated. On election day, their candidate emerged as Kentucky’s clear choice. Any question about the typical Kentuckian’s view on secession could now be answered without doubt. The state was strongly pro-Union and that quickly became apparent in the state’s presidential voting pattern. Constitutional Union candidate John Bell received 66,016 votes; John C. Breckinridge 52,836; Stephen Douglas 25,644 and Abraham Lincoln 1,366.¹⁰⁸

As evident, candidates representing Union principles, although divided into 3 factions, received a 40,190 vote majority over the party representing ultra-southern doctrines.

Covington and the County gave the Unionists nearly 90% of its votes:

	<u>Covington votes</u>	<u>Kenton County votes</u> ¹⁰⁹
Bell	936	1,327
Douglas	844	1,312
Breckinridge	239	650
Lincoln	230	267

In Campbell County however, Douglas proved to be top vote-getter, the tally was as follows:¹¹⁰

Douglas	960
Bell	854
Breckinridge	520
Lincoln	314

Most Kentuckians displayed a resistance to the southern mystique and in sharp disagreement over the future status of the Negro, would continue to give generous support to the indestructible Union of states.

Lincoln's poor showing in Kentucky was due in part to the very real fear throughout the state that his election would mean the Union's destruction. There were numerous reports of would-be Lincoln voters in other parts of the state being forced from the polls by Southern Democrat backers. Such it was in Hart County. There, Lincoln received one vote and that was said to have been cast only after the voter brandished a rifle and announced he would shoot the next person attempting to interfere with his voting.

Lincoln's vote total in Covington was nine less than that of Breckinridge and of all Kentuckians who voted for him, over one-third were residents of the Covington-Newport area. Campbell County gave him more votes than any other county in the state and Kenton posted the second highest number.¹¹¹

Even here Lincoln's support was meager. In Campbell he received only 11.9% of the votes and in Kenton 7.5%. In Boone, as in Hart, he polled but a single vote!

It is conceivable but not proven, that many Northern Kentuckians who might have voted for Lincoln were kept from the polls by threats of violence. Such a possibility was suggested by one Ohio newspaper which reported Newport's Breckinridge forces visited every Republican in that city a few months before the election and warned them to leave town.¹¹²

How effective this was is not known but after the election results became known, the same newspaper noted:

*The tables have turned since then . . . and the result has been that the Breckinridge men have found themselves in the minority. With that fact before them, the Republicans have notified the Breckinridge men that **they** had better leave Newport.*¹¹³

Nationally, Lincoln was clearly the winner as he carried every free state and won 180 of the 303 electoral votes. He failed to win a single electoral vote from the southern states but people in ten of those states were not permitted to vote for him as their officials refused to place his name on the ballots.

The more rabid southern politicians declared the Republican victory was totally unacceptable. Their belligerent attitude thoroughly alarmed ex-governor Charles Morehead who, while on a journey to the deep South, attempted to persuade them to adopt a more moderate stance.

Morehead's earlier election as governor on the old Know-Nothing ticket had always been viewed that Kentuckians favored the Union and wanted to save it, more than it revealed the anti-foreign or anti-Catholic feelings in the state. He had supported John Bell and the Constitutional Union Party and now was taking on the difficult task of trying to keep the spark of Unionism alive in the South.

Probably the most enthusiastic group of southerners the ex-governor addressed was at Vicksburg, Mississippi. There on November 29th evening, he spoke at a large Union meeting and, as at other appearances, took the position the election of Lincoln in itself, afforded no grounds for secession.¹¹⁴

The militants were not listening. To them, the South had lost all political influence at the national level and because of that, they did not see the Union being worth saving.

South Carolina did not wait for Lincoln's inauguration. Its political leaders called a convention and on December 20th, adopted an ordinance repealing South Carolina's adoption of the U. S. Constitution and dissolved the American Union on the part of that state. Other southern states quickly approved South Carolina's course and began preparing for their own acts of secession.

That scenario in the South had been openly debated in Covington for some time. Still, news of it actually happening genuinely shocked the community and prompted strong and highly vocal denunciation of all supporting secession, including those who had backed Breckinridge during the election.

In the face of such positive Union support, the Breckinridge forces canceled several post-election meetings and many, including some in public office, completely abandoned the principles of their states' rights friends.

Newport citizens were especially vehement in denouncing the southern moves and this had an effect on courtroom experiences of abolitionist editor William S. Bailey. Bailey's news plant, as noted above, had been the object of violent mob action, the last attack being in October 1859.

Such action failed to squelch the editor in his opposition to slavery and, along with his wife and daughters, he worked diligently to re-establish his newspaper. His daughters were expert typesetters and like their parents, strongly opposed slavery and fought it with an enthusiasm difficult to equal.

After months of labor, all was ready and on August 20, 1860, publication of the *Free South* was resumed. Meanwhile, the Magoffin Administration enacted legislation making it a crime to write or distribute any newspaper, book or other printed matter that could be interpreted as inciting Kentucky's blacks to riot or engage in insurrection.

Bailey's enemies fully intended to use the law to suppress the *Free South* forever. On the very day of the journal's reappearance, Magistrate James R. Hallam issued a warrant for its publisher's arrest. He was charged with publishing "an incendiary document."¹¹⁵

The next day, Bailey appeared for his hearing before Hallam in the Newport Courthouse and because of previous personal difficulties with the magistrate, requested a change of judges. The magistrate replied he was quite capable of hearing the case with no prejudice and refused to leave the bench.¹¹⁶ For this Hallam would later be severely criticized by his fellow pro-slavers who correctly predicted the general public would quickly view Bailey being persecuted for his political beliefs and views of slavery. Many prominent individuals defended the editor during the hearings and virtually all denounced the law under which he was arrested as unconstitutional.

One who testified in Bailey's defense was John Flaval Fisk who, as a member of the state senate, voted in favor of the law's passage. He saw nothing in the *Free South* that conflicted with the law and said, "Bailey had simply made an ass of himself – which he had a perfect right to do if he wished – and this was all."¹¹⁷

Fisk was well aware Hallam was a supporter of the Southern Democrat's presidential campaign and of the magistrate's anti-Republican stance when he added:

*Bailey had simply addressed himself to the voters and said no more than was said by emancipationists at the time the new [state] Constitution was formed.*¹¹⁸

To ensure no one misunderstood his own feelings about Negroes, Fisk, who was a Douglas Democrat, strongly differed with Bailey's view on slavery and likened the Negroes to dogs "in that they both needed a master." Blacks, according to his testimony, would never be capable of self-government nor of providing for themselves.¹¹⁹

Hallam patiently listened to those testifying in Bailey's behalf but ruled the anti-slavery newspaper not only "promulgates sentiments adverse to the institution," but also "denounces it as contrary to the divine laws and the principles of Christianity."¹²⁰

The magistrate said this was a clear violation of the Kentucky law and made it necessary to hold the editor for further hearings at the next term of the Campbell Circuit Court. He set Bailey's bond at \$1,000 which was quickly posted by a group of prominent citizens, including Judge Charles Helm, Deputy County Clerk, George R. Fesrous, Judge F.A. Boyd of the Campbell County Court, Ira Root and Alfred Thornton.¹²¹

Hallam was said by many to be a street brawler and a political opportunist. He strongly supported slavery and had once backed Breckinridge for president. Before the election however, he sensed the growing pro-Union feeling in the area and switched to the Constitutional Union Party. Now in the face of mounting support for Bailey, he began to soften his rhetoric against the editor and appeared less eager to see the case brought to a head.

Bailey was anxious to appear in circuit court but began experiencing feelings of frustration after waiting in vain for two and a half months for his case to be heard. Then he told those who had posted his bond he would no longer guarantee them he would appear for the hearing. The men withdrew the bond and Bailey was promptly arrested and jailed.¹²²

The editor's time in jail lasted from noon until about nine PM, when "he was brought into court on a writ of *habeas corpus*, returnable to Judge Boyd, who discharged him from custody." This time, security for his circuit court appearance was given by Jacob Hawthorn.¹²³

On November 31st, Bailey was indicted by a grand jury for "publishing an incendiary sheet" and his trial set for the next court term.¹²⁴ By then, local anti-southern feelings had become so intensified by secessionist moves, that it was thought wise to ignore the charges against him. They were never taken up again and Bailey continued to publish his newspaper until well after the Civil War.¹²⁵

One of the fondest wishes of Bailey and his family was that be remembered by a posterity living in freedom. In this, their hopes have materialized, while the majority of their persecutors have faded into obscurity.

At the time of Bailey's indictment, a strong move again surfaced among local Methodists to remove the term "South" from the Scott Street congregation's name. The move received strong support and, according to one Methodist bishop, was "favorably received on the part of those who speak for the church."¹²⁶

The bishop said:

*The word **South** is very much in our way, just because it has a sectional sound. Many who approve our position and policy are hindered from coming to us*

*because of that appendage to our name. It does us no good anywhere . . . and is objected to by many who could come to us if it was removed.*¹²⁷

Within a short time however, a number of the congregation began denouncing any such change. These opponents wielded an unusual amount of influence to block the change. The name “South” remained well into the twentieth century.

AS THE YEAR 1861 APPROACHED, Covington found itself facing another election. Scheduled for January 5th, for filling all city offices except marshal and mayor and, like the recent presidential election, was preceded by an unusually quiet campaign. Even party labels were abandoned. That in itself was unusual for a community whose life style was deeply ingrained with politics and parties. The candidates’ personal beliefs however, represented virtually every shade of political opinion existing, with most reflecting the thinking of John Bell and the Constitutional Union Party.

The victorious candidates, including winners of the seven councilmanic seats, were elected on their personal popularity. The majority of new councilmen were strongly pro-Union, while only two (Aston Madeira and Doctor John E. Stevenson) had ever shown any prior support for the southern states’ rights movement.

Madeira and Stevenson were destined to join Major Goodson in playing the role of a minority, sometimes effective, faction in the city government. Madeira came to council from the Fourth Ward, while Stevenson was elected from the west side’s Seventh, a ward with a large number of immigrants and marked by a fierce loyalty to the Union.

Stevenson had attended, but did not graduate, from medical school. Nevertheless, he won many friends as a doctor and, at the time of his election, was practicing medicine from his home on Western Row, now Western Avenue. He later moved his practice to the north side of Emma, between Main and Bakewell.¹²⁸

FOUR DAYS AFTER THE LOCAL ELECTION, Mississippi followed South Carolina out of the Union. The two defectors were quickly joined by others, so by February 1st, a total of seven southern states had pulled out. The nation was rapidly disintegrating and a timid President Buchanan did nothing to prevent the defections.

Kentucky Governor Magoffin called a special session of the legislature attempting to put Kentucky in the southern camp by proposing a convention he called to determine the state’s course in the North-South split.¹²⁹

Secessionists cheered the proposal and began boasting they would now take Kentucky out of the Union. Kentucky’s place in the nation was about to become a thing of the past, for it was generally agreed such a convention was the accepted method, or prerequisite, whereby secession could be brought about.

Even though southern sympathies continued to exist among lawmakers and Kentuckians in general, most remained strong in devotion to an indivisible nation and considered secession nothing short of outright treason. It had been only a few years since Kentuckians placed a marble block in the Washington monument bearing the inscription: “Under the auspices of Heaven and the precepts of Washington, Kentucky will be the last state to give up the Union.”

Local supporters of a southern confederacy rejected the belief this new country could properly function as a nation of states forever indivisible. To them, any state should be free to break all ties with the others for whatever reason that particular state felt was just. The Republican presidential victory was considered such a just cause.

Public mass meetings were frequently called by those favoring one or another of the many existing political viewpoints. One of the many Covington meetings, this one pro-southern, was held at a small Scott Street grocery on February 2nd. It attracted only 5 participants by they drew up and published the following resolutions:

WHEREAS, for many years the Northern people have shown an inveterate hatred to the South and everything Southern; but as long as this hatred manifested itself in no other way than through Abolition speeches, we were satisfied to treat all such with contempt. Yet, now that the Republican party has grown so powerful that it has been able to elect Abraham Lincoln and Hannibal Hamlin to the highest of offices in the gift of the people; and being convinced that unless we are willing to bow in humble submission to the North, to be deprived of everything noble and good, that we are indeed free men and that we will have our rights guaranteed to us, or each and every one of us will die in the glorious attempt, preferring to die free men rather than to live as slaves under government.

And whereas, we believe the natural condition of the African when brought in contact with the white man is slavery, and we believe the overthrow of the institution of African slavery in the Southern States (to say nothing of the distinctive consequences in the Free States) would be followed by results as injurious as war or famine, every element of conservatism would be obliterated, and the reign of terror and darkness succeed; therefore, we deeply regret the election of a President and Vice President of the United States, by the free States alone, when added to the long list of prior aggressions upon the Southern States, as an open declaration of hostility against us. In view of this we think the time has come when we should, by a united move, demand our rights in the Union, therefore,

- 1) *Resolved, That our Representative in Congress, the Hon. John W. Stevenson, be requested to propose at once the Crittenden amendments to the Constitution, or any other which in his judgment may be sufficient to settle the slavery basis and that he urge their adoption.*
- 2) *Resolved, That if Congress and the free States will not in this or some other constitutional mode recognize our rights and equality in the Union, then we are for secession at once, cost what it may.*
- 3) *Resolved, That if all efforts to settle the dispute between the sections shall fail, then, in our opinion, Kentucky should stand by the side of her sister Southern States, and share with them a common fate, and bear with them a common destiny.*
- 4) *Resolved, That we tender to South Carolina, in the event that all efforts shall fail to settle the unhappy disputes between the two sections, our cordial sympathy and pledge to her our support, come weal or woe.¹³⁰*

Most Covingtonians regarded the pro-southern meeting with mild amusement when they learned it was attended by only five individuals. They were even more amused when the five consisted of two Canadians, two underage juveniles and one adult Covingtonian, who like the others, was not an eligible voter. The amusement quickly turned to outrage when the group's resolutions were released in the newspapers.

Many of Kentucky's secessionists were, like those five, represented a boisterous and defiant minority receiving far more attention in the press and subsequent school textbooks than their numbers warranted. Far more typical were Kentuckians deciding to stand by the national flag.

A few days after the Scott Street meeting, several hundred Newporters gathered and left no doubt about *their* feelings. The crowd assembled at the foot of Monmouth Street and raised a large American flag atop a tall pole. The pole flew a long streamer bearing the word **UNION** in large letters and a large blue and white **K**, signifying Kentucky who would remain loyal to the Union.¹³¹ But it must be recognized most area residents retained deep and mixed feelings about the new Republican president-elect.

Mayor John A. Goodson, a staunch states' rights advocate and bitter adversary of the Republicans, had been in office less than five months when Lincoln visited Cincinnati while on the way to his Washington inauguration. Officials of the Ohio city made elaborate plans for welcoming him and invited Covington and Newport to participate with official delegations.

Newport promptly accepted the invitation but Mayor Goodson replied he could find no one in Covington willing to serve in such a capacity.¹³² The fact is, he never tried to find anyone.

The community felt outraged that such an insult would be offered the nation's president-elect. It was one thing to differ with his political views, Covingtonians said, but quite another to deliberately insult the man who had just been elected. Even the most bitter of Lincoln-haters declared the invitation should have been accepted "as a mark of respect to the office if not to the man."¹³³

Ex-mayor Foley was especially furious at Goodson and immediately called for a meeting of citizens to remedy the situation. The ensuing public rally in Covington was well represented at the reception. The committee selected to represent the community was composed of Foley, Robert Richardson, Green Clay Smith, George C. Tarvin, Joseph Clark, Charles Bird, Moses Swain, Dr. Theodore N. Wiswe, John Todd, Reuben Broadus, John Bowen and E.T. Rust. Robert Kennedy, acting on behalf of the ferry company, placed one of the ferryboats at the committee's disposal.

When Lincoln arrived at Cincinnati, a procession was held in his honor. The president-elect, accompanied by the mayor of Cincinnati, Covington's ex-mayor Foley and Newport's Reverend Andrews, rode in a special open carriage drawn by six carefully matched white horses, while carriages carrying the remainder of the welcoming committee followed close behind.

Lincoln stayed at the Burnet House [3rd & Vine] while in Cincinnati and spoke from its balcony to a large and enthusiastic audience below. During his talk, he made frequent references to the large number of Kentuckians who had crossed the river to hear and see him and made it abundantly clear he wanted their support and cooperation during his administration.

It was Lincoln's fifty-second birthday and according to historian William H. Townsend's "Lincoln and the Bluegrass," he felt he might be invited to cross the Ohio to Covington to deliver an address in his own native state. He had even written a five-page speech for the expected occasion.¹³⁴ Lincoln's Kentucky oration was never delivered, for the invitation was never extended.

This unique political situation gave rise to many interesting Covington court cases. One, in March 1861, involved a man arraigned before Kenton Circuit Court on a charge of passing a counterfeit bill on the State Bank of Louisiana. The prisoner however, claimed the local court had no jurisdiction because Louisiana was no longer a member of the American Union. Nevertheless, the judge ruled that as neither the President nor Congress recognized secession, the trial would proceed.¹³⁵ The trial took place under laws of Kentucky and a jury awarded the man with three years in the penitentiary.¹³⁶

Most of the South's political leaders continued their firm refusal to accept the Presidential election result and one, a Senator from Mississippi, said to a group of Lincoln backers:

I can say to you, with all the calmness and dignity that I can summon, that we will not submit to the election of Lincoln.

In February, well in advance of Lincoln's inauguration, delegates from several seceded states met at Montgomery, Alabama and named Kentucky-born Jefferson Davis as its president. Immediately after the Montgomery meeting, the southerners began seizing federal property within their boundaries, including mint, hospitals, customhouses, army installations and shipyards.

Southern firebrands made plans to commandeer these properties as early as December 1860 and now moved quickly to seize such federal posts as Ft. Pulaski, Georgia; Ft. Morgan, Alabama, Ft. Gaines, Florida as well as 19 Texas military posts, all taken without a struggle.

The southerners soon became so sure they would never be resisted they began demanding the surrender of everything within their reach. Locally, the Unionists wondered if their federal government would ever voice a protest.

About that time, Covington's long traditional spirit of militarism experienced a new surge of life as Home Guard units were rapidly formed. A portion of Greenup Hall was designated as an armory and countless drills began to be conducted.¹³⁷

Even here, division surfaced, for prominent southern sympathizers began vying with supporters of the Union for control of various companies of Home Guards. Early in February, states' righters Aston Madeira and Samuel K. Hays succeeded in leading several companies of the newly-formed Licking Battalion into the Kentucky State Guard.¹³⁸ Other units remained fiercely independent and denounced the State Guard and those joining it as little more than traitors.

ODD FELLOWS' HALL'S ornate ballroom became the scene of many military balls, one of which was held in honor of that year's Valentine's Day. It was the "grand social event of the season."¹³⁹

A week later, George Washington's birthday was patriotically celebrated with a full-dress military parade of two companies of loyal Unionists, Captain Alfred Martin's Kentucky Grays and Captain P. Dillon's Independent Rovers. The day's activities were capped off the evening when Judsonian Seminary students gathered at Odd Fellows' Hall to present a program of "Musical and Literary Entertainment . . . appropriate to the patriotic occasion."¹⁴⁰

On March 4th, Lincoln was sworn in as the nation's new president and his inaugural address called for fraternalism and again assured the southerners there would be no federal interference in their slaveholding rights. The South was not listening and termed the inauguration an affront to all "southern gentlemen." Arrogant slaveholding interests hurled insult after insult at the Union and the new President and declared his assumption to office not only the end of constitutional government but also heralded the approach of war.

Military preparations were stepped up throughout the slaveholders' domain, and on March 30th, Kentucky's General Assembly, for the "peace of the country," passed a resolution asking the President to honor the request of any seceded state to remove federal troops from that state.¹⁴¹ Almost immediately, the southerners seized the South Carolina installations of Fort Moultrie and Fort Sumter. When the federal commander of Charleston Harbor, Lieutenant-Colonel John Lane Gardner, asked Washington for reinforcements, many southern Congressmen called the request an insult to southern integrity and demanded the commander's removal.

Out-going President Buchanan's Secretary of War John Buchanan Floyd, who had long been in sympathy with the southerners' plans, gave in and in November 1860, replaced Garner with Kentucky-born Major Robert Anderson. Floyd thought the new appointee would be a southern sympathizer.

Anderson, a veteran of the Seminole, Black Hawk and Mexican Wars and a West Point graduate, proved a disappointment to the South as he remained staunchly loyal to the Union. The Kentuckian quickly detected weakness in Fort Moultrie's defenses and secretly moved the garrison to Fort Sumter, the island-fortress in mid-harbor.

When the troops arrived at Fort Sumter, they were met by a band of southern laborers making repairs to the fortification, putting it in shape for their assumption of southern occupation. The laborers opposed the landing of Union soldiers but were driven into the fort at bayonet point. Afterward, they were sent ashore in supply boats. At noon the next day, Major Anderson raised the American flag.

No one was more surprised at the turn of events than Floyd, who insisted on Anderson's removal. Failing that, Floyd went south to openly join the Confederates and Buchanan replaced him with Kentuckian Joseph Holt.

Soon the inevitable happened. On April 10th, 1861, Jefferson Davis ordered Confederate General Pierre G.T. Beauregard to take Fort Sumter and authorized him to use any force necessary. At 4:30 AM on April 12th, the southerners launched their attack. Anderson did not hesitate to return fire in kind and America's great internal struggle began!

Although armed conflict had been expected, its actual advent was electrifying. Many of Covington's old war veterans thought it was impossible that Americans could be so disloyal. The southerners had fired on their own flag and that was treason!

In Covington as elsewhere in Kentucky, emotions ran deep. Major Anderson had once been stationed at Newport Barracks and had many close friends in this area. There were, however, southern sympathizers who thought he was wrong in resisting the Confederate demands and they silently rejoiced when he was eventually forced to surrender.

The firing on the garrison represented the last militant insult the federal government would take from arrogant southern firebrands. There had already been far too many seizures of federal property that had gone unresisted, the Unionists said, and now they would fight.

The day after Major Anderson's surrender, a patient Lincoln called for 75,000 volunteers for the military. Southern leaders immediately put up a cry of "aggression," for the realization was upon them – they would have to contend with war.

President Lincoln asked Governor Magoffin for four regiments of Kentucky troops. Magoffin, who had once practiced law in Mississippi, was in sympathy with the South but lacked the power base to allow him to pull Kentucky out of the Union. That did not prevent him from replying to the President's request with the following:

Frankfort, Ky., April 16, 1861

Hon. Simon Cameron, Secretary of War:

Your dispatch is received. In answer, I say emphatically that Kentucky will furnish no troops for the wicked purpose of subduing our sister Southern States.

B. Magoffin, Governor of Kentucky

Covington Journal editor Samuel Davis rejoiced at Magoffin's reply and wrote from his office [see corner Pike & Madison]:

The demand upon Kentucky to . . . aid with the bayonet in forcing the principle of Black Republicanism upon the people of the Confederate States is the latest sally of A. Lincoln. The old Joker of the White House had a huge chuckle over the idea.

*There is no longer room to doubt the position of Kentucky. **She will give no aid to the North in its war upon the South – NOT A MAN, NOT A DOLLAR.***¹⁴³

Davis' anti-German feelings also resurfaced in that same edition:

*The infidel Germans of the northwest are keen for a fight with the Southern people. The Turners are among the foremost in tendering their services to the Abolition authorities.*¹⁴⁴

Neither was Davis as yet in total agreement with those first Kentuckians to go south to join the rebel armed forces. He called their actions “not only unwarranted but in the present condition, altogether indefensible.”¹⁴⁵ Davis' pro-states' rights and anti-Lincoln stance were showing signs of turning into open support for the Confederacy. He pleaded with his readers not to shop in Ohio and based the appeal on Southern patriotism. He said:

*No Southern man possessing an iota of self-respect will voluntarily go into such a place to transact business.*¹⁴⁶

Unlike editor Davis, most Covingtonians stood amazed at the governor's biting reply to the President's request for troops. The Union needed help and if Magoffin chose to look the other way, certainly Covington would not.

Within a short time after learning of the governor's reply, which they termed infamous, the town's Unionists called for a mass meeting to be held at the Eleventh Street Market House. There, ex-mayor Foley presided until far into the night while a series of patriotic speeches were delivered before a cheering audience.

Among the many resolutions passed at the gathering was one demanding the state legislature vote to fully support the Union cause. “The Administration must be sustained,” the group declared, “Lincoln is just the man for the times.”¹⁴⁷ In the end, Kentucky gave official support and furnished 99,463 soldiers, including 23,703 blacks, to the Union cause.

Covington's Colonel James V. Guthrie and Captain W.E. Woodruff of Louisville were among the first to ignore the governor's stand. These two lost no time in responding to President Lincoln's appeal with offers of their own service and on April 23rd, received authority to raise two regiments as part of Kentucky's quota.¹⁴⁸

To avoid political complications, Camp Clay was established in Ohio opposite Newport and on May 6th, Guthrie and Woodruff mustered two full regiments into service – the 1st and 2nd Kentucky. The volunteers enrolled for three months but before leaving for battle, the officers obtained permission to reorganize the units into three-year regiments. Many of the Ohio enlistees refused to re-enroll for the longer period but their positions were quickly filled by enthusiastic Kentuckians. The eager replacements were easily recruited by Guthrie and Woodruff who simply crossed back into the Covington-Newport area and issued an appeal.¹⁴⁹

The relatively few Covingtonians who favored the nation's break-up continued to argue, those with diminishing voices, that the Union was nothing more than a compact among several *sovereign* states, and because of that sovereignty, any state was free to leave the Union when it suited them. They believed the U.S. was nothing less and nothing more than a voluntary association of states to be dissolved at will by any contracting party.

On May 16th, scores of Covingtonians crossed the river to Cincinnati to greet newly-promoted General Robert T. Anderson on his arrival to that city. The military demeanor of the recently-organized Kentucky Grays and the equally green Independent Rovers was especially impressive as they joined in the enthusiastic welcome.

It was rumored the Fort Sumter hero would be stationed as commander of Newport Barracks and many of his local friends sincerely hoped it was true. When the rumor proved false, a noticeably keen disappointment seemed to settle over the entire community.

Until the attack on Fort Sumter, Covington's political arena housed a myriad of political philosophies, most of which could be placed into one of four groups. They were:

1. A small growing number of abolitionists who were also fiercely devoted to the inseparable Union.
2. Those who favored some form of restriction on slavery, but unstinting support to the Union.
3. Those favoring states' rights within the framework of the Union.
4. A small, vociferous group favoring states' rights and secession.

Now there would be one course of action – those in the fourth group must be routed and the Union saved!

On April 18th – less than a week after the start of armed hostilities – committees from Cincinnati, Newport and Covington met to determine a course of action for the cities' mutual protection. Those representing Covington at the meeting were Mayor John A. Goodson, Mortimer M. Benton, John W. Stevenson, George C. Tarvin, John T.

Levis, Maurice J. Dudley, George W. Finnell, Thomas R. Page, Henry C. Harris, John B. Casey, Dr. Richard Pretlow, John Gray, Thomas D. Kennedy, John Mackey, J. Banneny, R. J. Lattimer, J. W. Baker and Amos Shinkle. These men, although of differing shades of political thought, all agreed on one thing – the local area represented a rich and tempting target for potential Confederate attack. The three cities must unite their efforts and achieve a common defense, they said.¹⁵⁰

That night, one of the area's growing number of patriotic displays took place when workers at the Rail Rolling Mill hoisted the stars and stripes over their plant at the foot of Scott Street. They fired a 34-gun salute to the Union, each salvo in honor of one of the 34 states.

The workers were pleasantly surprised when their salute was quickly returned with one fired by the Fourth Ward Artillery from across the river. The next day, local citizens raised another flag at the foot of Greenup Street and fired another 34-gun salute.

There was no doubt of the feelings of the majority of Covington citizens – national flags suddenly appeared everywhere. Home guard units were rapidly formed by a large percentage of the community's males who were not accepted by the regular military. It was the Minute Men of the Revolution again.¹⁵¹

Such patriotism prompted some to suggest holding a two-state "Union jubilee" and even hanging a large American flag from a rope stretched across the Ohio River!¹⁵²

On April 20th, the first public meeting of a newly-formed United Home Guard of Cincinnati, Newport and Covington was held at the Covington Courthouse. Newport Mayor Edward W. Hawkins presided as chairman, while Napoleon B. Stephens, Clerk of Kenton County Circuit Court, acted as secretary.

A series of fiery political orations were delivered before the group by Colonel Taylor of Newport and Miles Greenwood, J.C. Butler and Rufus King – all of Cincinnati. Additional guards were being formed throughout the area and one from West Covington and Ludlow was seeking active cooperation with the United Home Guards.

Patriotism overflowed the city. One observer said:

*At first, there was a few who declared sentiments inimical to the Union, but they have "grown small by degrees and beautifully less" and at present the strongest Union feeling pervaded the city.*¹⁵³

Three days later, another observed:

*The citizens of Jamestown have taken a most decided stand for the Union . . . and last night the place was illuminated, bonfires kindled and cannon fired for the Union. The little place was in a perfect blaze of light and enthusiasm and the most undivided feeling of devotion to the Government pervade the city.*¹⁵⁴

Jamestown later merged with the tiny community of Brooklyn to form what is now Dayton, Kentucky.

On April 23rd Covington councilmen enacted an ordinance creating a volunteer police corps reserve and authorized its members to arm themselves "without delay with one breech-loading rifle and one Colt revolver and 100 rounds of cartridges for each or arms as nearly similar and equivalent thereto as practicable."¹⁵⁵

The newly-formed corps quickly attracted 350 eager volunteers who were then formed into a four-company battalion known as the Citizen Guards of Covington. At their first meeting, the guards elected John W. Finnell their commanding officer with rank of major.¹⁵⁶

Members of the Ludlow and Bromley Union Home Guard were not idle. A regular meeting of that group, with C.B. Newton serving as chairman and George W. Blinn as secretary, was held on April 25th.¹⁵⁷

As with most meetings, ultra-nationalistic speeches were made and a vow once made by Henry Clay recalled with patriotic fervor. Twelve years earlier, Clay said in a Senate speech:

*F Kentucky tomorrow unfurls the banner of resistance, I never will fight under that banner. I owe a paramount allegiance to the whole Union – a subordinate one to my own state.*¹⁵⁸

Rallies and meetings were the order of the day. On April 29th, another mass meeting was held at city hall. The women of Covington presented a large silk American flag to "the patriotic gentlemen who comprise the Citizens Guard of Newport, Covington and Cincinnati."¹⁵⁹

The flag, surmounted by a wreath of flowers, had a long streamer attached, bearing the message: "*This is the only banner under which we will consent to live.*"¹⁶⁰

Colonel Taylor raised a large American flag atop his Newport home, while John W. Menzies traveled about the county attending formal flag raisings, making patriotic speeches.¹⁶¹

Rumors abounded and one of the most persistent was that a group of rebel sympathizers was preparing to make an attempt to seize Newport Barracks. The rumor gained enough credibility by early May 1861 that the post commander took the precaution of ordering ammunition issued for every field piece and soldier on the post.¹⁶²

On another occasion, a company of 100 armed Cincinnatians crossed the river to Ludlow and raised a flag and “liberty pole” in front of Berkenkamp’s saloon at the southwest corner of Ash and Locust Streets.¹⁶³

The company heard rumors the community was home to a large number of southern sympathizers and thought there would be armed resistance. Instead the men received a happy surprise when they found the rumor false. Ludlow was overwhelmingly Unionist.¹⁶⁴

The numerous citizens’ patriotic committees organized at the time also began demanding a firmer and more aggressive form of Unionism from local and state officials. Among those receiving bitter criticism were Mayor Goodson and the community’s two legislators, John Ellis and John G. Carlisle, neither of whom seemed to understand the extent of Unionist feelings among their constituents.

Carlisle was especially criticized for defending the right of states to secede but his siding with those opposed to any military defense of the Union that caused his critics to explode with anger. Covingtonians may have voted Democratic but it was clear they refused to put party loyalty above the Union.

Many residents were carrying firearms at all times now. One states’ rights newsman, fearing an outbreak of a more militant form of Unionism, bitterly complained that:

*The common trappings of many young blades in the marketplace are one of Colt’s revolvers, a pocket Derringer, a self-cocker, a Bowie knife, a slung shot, a pair of brass-knucks, a brickbat and a large stick.*¹⁶⁵

Neither was the newsman too happy with the unconcern of many of the town’s office holders, for he went on:

*(T)here was a scarcity of local officials in Covington last night – we learn a cock fight was in progress on the outskirts of the city.*¹⁶⁶

During these early days of the war, one of the oddities of the conflict occurred when scores of Kentucky families moved northward to the free state of Ohio in search of sanctuary from the possible wrath of their fellow Kentuckians.¹⁶⁷ The fleeing Kentuckians were not unyielding abolitionists, as some supposed, or “Black Republicans,” but some of Covington’s more active pro-secessionist states’ righter who professed open fear of the town’s more “rabid” Unionists.

True Southerners, the secessionists said, were safer from the possibility of bodily harm in “Yankee” Cincinnati than in its neighboring Kentucky city.

The situation proved temporary however, and although Covington’s political and economic ties to the Union remained intact throughout the war, it nevertheless continued to be home to numerous Confederate sympathizers and soon gained a reputation as a hotbed of intrigue and meeting place for spies and saboteurs.

The editor of the *Covington Journal* continued making bitter attacks on Lincoln and the federal government and, by the end of the first month of the war, adopted a suicidal policy of open support for the seceded states. On May 11th, the editor noted the Union’s superiority in arms and manpower but predicted of the Confederates:

*These people may lose a battle now and then; here and there a town may be taken and sacked; their ports may be blockaded and their coast cities shelled. War may be waged for years but they will come out, with thinned ranks, doubtless, but unsubdued, with their political opinions unchanged and with the right to govern themselves in their own way, vindicated and recognized.*¹⁶⁸

The local newspaper asserted Lincoln had no legal precedent for calling for three-year volunteers and “no shadow of authority to increase the regular force of the Army and Navy.”¹⁶⁹ The *Journal* declared:

*Our government, at a single bound, has passed from the limits of a Constitutional Democracy into a Military Despotism.*¹⁷⁰

Even the idea of the Union defending itself was often criticized. Shortly after the Fort Sumter attack, the *Journal* editor wrote of the Union’s reaction:

(A)ll this for what? The maintenance of the constitution! Those who have been sworn to uphold it are daily violating it in its letter and spirit. The

*reconstruction of the Union? Every blow struck by the Federal Government only widens the breach and renders reconstruction more and more improbable.*¹⁷¹

The Covington editor further declared there was not a “solitary good object” to be gained by a military defense of the Union and urged the citizenry “to rise up in their might and demand that it be brought to a close.”¹⁷²

The *Journal's* position had radically changed from that when its editor once criticized those hot-headed Southern Democrats who were calling for disunion if Lincoln won the presidency. The editor condemned the southerners' attitudes toward the Republicans, slavery and the South by saying:

*They are doing more to disturb its peace, more to render slave property on its northern borders insecure than the entire Republican party. We of Kentucky claim to be of the South . . . (but) . . . for no such cause . . . will we aid in “tearing down the pillars of the Temple of Liberty and overwhelming all in universal ruin.”*¹⁷³

The *Journal's* anti-Union stance became the target of so much public criticism that the editor discontinued its publication.

The *Enquirer* of Cincinnati, which had a wide circulation in Covington, was also highly critical of the nation's war effort. Never did it advocate or condone the Union's dismemberment but it did oppose the war and did not approve its management once it began.

Unlike the *Journal*, the *Enquirer's* circulation continued unhindered in Kentucky until June 1864 when the military ordered it banned from the state. That was after the state began experiencing a new surge of guerrilla activity when Confederate raiders, led by General John Hunt Morgan, struck at several Kentucky cities, including nearly Cynthiana.

The ban, said to be in the best interest of the Union efforts, did not interfere with the *Enquirer's* publication and it became common practice for southern sympathizers to smuggle the newspaper into Covington.

The relative few instances of Union interference with an unrestricted press came at the hands of the military only in those sections of Kentucky and other border states were either being invaded by the Confederates or threatened with invasion. It was done to deny the rebels any “solace” they might derive from a critical, anti-administration or anti-war news media. Generally though, a vigorous and unfettered press was maintained throughout the northern states.

This was in contrast to wartime policies early in the new Confederacy. Every vestige of Union sentiment was ruthlessly suppressed. Harsh penalties awaited any editor daring to publish anything calculated to demoralize southern citizenry or that might be construed detracting to the military or its leaders. No opposition to the government was permitted the general populace, and any newspaper failing to express loyalty to the southern cause was abolished.

Brutal treatment of those showing signs of sympathy for the Union cause became commonplace. In north Texas, Unionists were ruthlessly suppressed when they set in motion a plan to resist the Confederacy and to lead a large portion of Texas to break away from the rest of the state. Sixty-five of them were hanged in a single day at Gainesville.¹⁷⁴

Closer to home, loyalists in east Tennessee were arrested in large numbers and publicly hanged. On one occasion, the Confederate War Department ordered a group of civilians hanged near remains of a bridge they were suspected of destroying. The corpses were left hanging for an extended time during which secessionists would beat them with sticks and clubs.¹⁷⁵

Such callous acts of Southerners greatly contributed to a widespread assumption that people in the South are somehow more inhumane than Americans from other sections of the country.

One great irony of the war was the very principles on which it was conducted by the two sides. The Union fought it principally as a confederacy, recognizing the several states and calling upon them for military units. The various governors were empowered to appoint commissioned officers and this proved to be one of the federals' more serious handicaps.

The Confederacy, in contract, quickly abandoned state sovereignty when pertaining to the military and eventually refused to organize new state regiments. The power to appoint officers was reserved for itself, and demanded service of every white male of military age.

The suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus* occurred very early in the South, as did the confiscation of many factories which manufactured items sorely needed by the Confederate army. In many respects, the South gave every indication of conducting its war affairs from a strong national government and became one vast military state – a point not lost upon Generals Ulysses S. Grant and William T. Sherman.

The loss of so many personal freedoms in the South represented a position generally unknown in the Union states. Critics of the federal war effort were abundant within the Union and in Kentucky the chief critics, in addition to the slave interests, were the governor and his political backers. For a time, the Democratic dis-unionists were close to being in full control and, whether Kentuckians liked it or not, Democratic sectionalism was attempting to pull the state into the southern fold.

Governor Magoffin clearly favored the South and in matters between Unionism and the seceded states, he invariably sided with the latter. However, he was not a strong or dominant type and this worked in the Union's favor. He and his cohorts in the legislature needed additional time to consolidate their power over the remaining lawmakers. That too, worked in favor of the Union for it was apparent that most Kentuckians were sincerely concerned with preserving the Union.

The resulting political situation in the state seemed far too complicated for many of the lawmakers to fully grasp, so they vacillated. Each side coveted the support of the indecisive legislators.

Meanwhile, the bulk of the lawmakers, including Covington's Carlisle and Ellis, stumbled about in utter confusion, crying out about the forcible retention of the southern states, but doing little more than enacting ever-harsher slave laws.

Eventually, on May 20th, Governor Magoffin issued a proclamation declaring Kentucky to be an "armed" neutral and forbidding its citizens to aid either side. In only a few days, a Frankfort newspaper declared:

Kentucky will never permit a rabid and fanatical minority to saddle her with secession and bully her out of the Union . . . Never! No never!

...The true issue is: Shall this Government be broken up . . . or shall this glorious Government, the best Government the world ever saw, be sustained?

*WE ARE FOR THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT and we don't care a continental anathema who knows it.*¹⁷⁶

The more conservative Unionists were quite willing to support a neutral position for the state. They knew Kentucky's Unionists lacked effective organization and, unlike their more impatient brethren, recognized the time needed so desperately by the Magoffin faction would work far more advantageously to their own cause.

Magoffin's avowed position of neutrality was obviously impossible. The amount of rebel sympathy existing among the state's population was never as great nor widespread as reported by later writers who allowed themselves unduly influence by the governor's pro-Southern attitude.

The convictions of the state's masses were with the Union but those who have helped create and perpetuate a myth to the contrary failed to recognize the impact of national issues of the day on those masses outside the highly vocal slaveocracy. Nothing could be further from the truth than to declare the neutrality proclamation came about because of a sharp division in sentiments among Kentucky's citizens. It was a desperate political foil, pure and simple, proclaimed by a governor attempting to buy time for the southern cause and supported by conservative Unionists who believed it would soon provide political ascendancy for their side.

During this period of "armed neutrality," Newport's Mayor Edward W. Hawkins promptly labeled it "armed nonsense." No one was certain what the state politicians would do. It was obvious, men like the governor had pro-southern feelings and were out of touch with the sentiments of most Kentuckians. Widespread chaos could be the only result if such men should pull Kentucky out of the Union.

At one point after delivering his proclamation, Magoffin called upon the governors of Ohio and Indiana to join him to affect a truce between the seceded states and the federal government. Indiana's Governor Oliver P. Morton did not hesitate to rebuff him by answering:

*I do not recognize the right of any state to act as mediator between the Federal Government and a rebellious state.*¹⁷⁷

President Lincoln, in his wisdom, did not move against Magoffin for fear such action might be misconstrued and drive Kentucky into the Confederacy – something the governor and his secessionist desired.

Lincoln regarded Kentucky's loyalty as of utmost importance. This was demonstrated in a letter he wrote to Orville Hickman Browning, the Cynthiana native who served as U.S. Senator from Illinois. The president wrote:

I think to lose Kentucky's nearly the same as to lose the whole game. Kentucky gone, we cannot hold Missouri, nor I think, Maryland. These all against us and

*the job on our hands is too big for us. We would well consent to separation at once, including the surrender of this capital.*¹⁷⁸

Lincoln was prepared to play a waiting game for it was evident Kentucky's undercurrent of Union sentiment was certain to eventually assert itself. The governor's failure to recognize the true feelings of most Kentuckians and his refusal to aid his nation's government, quickly aroused bitter resentment throughout the state. Kentucky had been settled by soldiers and patriots and its citizens had ever since played a heroic part in every struggle in which their nation had been engaged. It was hardly possible these people would now sit idly by while that nation was wrecked by rebellion – and they didn't.

Before the war's end, Kentucky would furnish more troops to the defense of their national government than such staunchly loyal states as California, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont or West Virginia.

The strength of Unionists feeling in the Covington area alone may be seen during the course of the conflict. Kenton County would furnish fourteen companies to the Union; Campbell County twelve. These were in addition to the Home Guard units formed mostly by merchants, shopkeepers and other patriotic citizens eager to defend their home from a possible invader.¹⁷⁹

Kentucky had been considered southern by many and indeed it supported many southern institutions, including slavery and the right of states to nullify acts of Congress. But when the test came, the Commonwealth remained loyal to the Federal Government. The vast majority of its citizens rejected outright the idea of dissolving a nation their forefathers so valiantly carved out of the wilderness of a new world. This was especially true in Covington where even prominent slave holders, typified by Vince Shinkle, firmly embraced the Union cause. Most Covingtonians preferred to work within the American political and economic system rather than destroy it.

Proponents of secession scoffed at the idea the war was to save the Union and said it was being waged by the Union to abolish slavery. This notion, coupled with cries of the northern abolitionists, eventually succeeded in turning the struggle in exactly that direction, despite Lincoln's earlier declaration he meant only to save the Union and if he could do so by freeing some or none or all of the slaves, he would.

The President stated his position on the war in a manner that would have been perfectly clear to all if they had been listening and reading with true understanding. He declared:

*My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union and is not either to save or to destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that. What I do about slavery and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union.*¹⁸⁰

The slaveholders' concern about their property rights was not the only problem involved in bringing on the conflict between the North and South. One concerned the protective tariffs placed on foreign-made products coming into the nation. The tariffs served to aid American manufacturers, most of whom were located in the north. The agricultural South bitterly opposed the tariff, claiming such taxes worked to their disadvantage.

Another area of disagreement concerned whether a state's power within its borders superseded that of the federal government. This was probably the most honest issue dividing the American people. Southern firebrands however, carried it to its ultimate extreme and argued any state had power to break all ties with the remainder of the nation at any time it desired.

Had the Confederacy won over the Union, it is well with possibility that both would have shortly splintered into as many warring factions as there were member states. A precedence would have been set whereby each would feel free to go its separate way if that suited its purpose at the moment. On one occasion, the governor of North Carolina threatened to lead his state out of the Confederacy! On another occasion, Governor Joseph E. Brown of Georgia threatened to do the same with his state when he felt the Confederate Government was not doing enough to protect Georgia's interests.

At the height of what some called the War for Southern Independence, North Carolina's Governor Zebulon B. Vance warned Jefferson Davis that the Confederacy's fate must be decided someplace other than in his state and in no case would the Confederate Army be allowed to make a final stand in North Carolina "and deluge her fields with blood and devastation."¹⁸¹ Brown further warned Davis that if the Confederate forces were ever forced out of Virginia, they must retire deeper into the cotton states "and end the conflict where it began!"¹⁸²

Kentucky's failure to embrace the southern cause rankled Confederate sympathizers and all during the war and afterward, southern writers and historians continued to rationalize that failure by depicting Kentuckians as willing and anxious to join the Confederate movement but held in a state of oppression by despotic Unionists.

The Commonwealth was truly harmed by such propaganda, for people in the deep South came to believe Union leaders in Kentucky were monsters, while citizens of the northern states came to believe every Kentuckian was either a traitor or of doubtful loyalty. The effects of such Civil War propaganda have never been completely eradicated and may have cost at least one Covingtonian, John G. Carlisle, a chance at the presidency.

Today, if we are to understand the ordeal which our relatively new nation underwent, we will have to view the struggle not as the descendants of either a loyal Union family nor of a rebellious Confederate family, but rather as Americans. To put aside their Civil War heritage forever, a moment can be a most difficult position for some Kentuckians, but it is a position which must be adopted if there is to be any insight at all into the trying situation.

Most of the earliest historians of Kentucky's participation in the Civil War were written by ex-Confederates and others who were either pro-Southern or at least strong believers in states' rights. Writers such as Z. F. Smith, Basil Duke, E. Polk Johnson, George B. Hodge, J. Stoddard Johnston and Richard Collins were among those who allowed their own views to interfere with objectivity regarding Union and Confederate operations in the state. For his 1874 edition of the state's history, Richard Collins employed ex-Confederate General Hodge to write that portion dealing with the Civil War.

Like so many other accounts of the war written by ex-Confederates, Collins' history is often elitist and omits many facts and in some cases presents faulty and misleading information. Still, it is indispensable to those who are careful to separate facts from the views and opinions liberally and consistently interjected. The sad result of this situation is that many later-day writers who used these early, heavily-biased accounts as their only research source, accepted the views as authoritative and repeated them as fact.

Some of the early writers, such as Collins, acted as agents of the state at a time when many high state offices were occupied by ex-Confederates and were undoubtedly influenced by that factor. One of the more unusual reasons for such heavily slanted writing was offered by ex-Confederate E. Polk Johnson, who rationalized his own giving of undue prominence to Confederate military units by claiming that facts concerning Kentuckians who served in the federal forces had never been gathered and recorded!¹⁸³

Although strenuous effort was made to minimize Kentucky's ties of loyalty to the Union, 25,000, both black and white, remained loyal and entered the Union forces. John M. Harlan, Supreme Court Justice, expressed it well when he said:

*...a large majority of its [Kentucky's] people held steadily to the view that if the Union ship went down, our state must be the last to desert it.*¹⁸⁴

The possibility that attacks as those made on William S. Bailey and his newspaper could also be made on other local institutions prompted President Lincoln to warn southern sympathizers that any move against Newport Barracks while Kentucky was neutral would be met with force in order to protect the state's integrity.

Newport Barracks was the only federal military installation in Kentucky during the proclaimed period of neutrality and at the time of the firing on Fort Sumter, housed 280 soldiers on the regular army.¹⁸⁵

With Lincoln's threat of defense for Newport Barracks, the local area became recipient of a large quantity of armaments. On May 17, 1861, a shipment of 500 muskets and bayonets and a large supply of ammunition arrived here. The arms had been allotted to Covington by the federal government and placed in charge with Bushrod W. Foley and John W. Finnell, both becoming strong leaders of the local "Unconditional Union" movement. They were to be made available to "true, faithful and reliable Union men" for a fee of \$1 each and were thought to be a necessity because so many state-owned weapons had been carried away by defecting state guard members.

The details behind the shipment and distribution of these weapons or "Lincoln Guns," constitute one of the war's lesser known sidelights. The president kept an anxious watch on Kentucky. He knew Union sympathizers predominated but were unorganized and without weapons. Native Kentuckian William "Bull" Nelson, an Annapolis graduate and navy veteran of the Mexican War provided a plan for furnishing weapons to these Unionists.

Nelson commanded a fleet of Ohio River gunboats, but eventually transferred to the army where he was commissioned a brigadier general in September 1861. The president liked Nelson's plan and agreed to supply him with an initial 5,000 muskets for Kentucky distribution. Ten percent of the weapons were allotted to the Covington area.

Fortunately, an account of this episode was written by Reverend Daniel Stevenson and published in the *Magazine of American History*. Dr. Stevenson was personally acquainted with many of the men who participated in the operation and derived his information from them.

The guns were shipped from Washington to Cincinnati, where Nelson forwarded a portion of them to Jeffersonville, Indiana. From there they were to enter Kentucky through the Falls City. The remainder were distributed to other sections of the state from Cincinnati and Covington. Dr. Stevenson gave an account of this in the following extracts:

The guns for the counties of Bourbon, Fayette, Clark and Montgomery were sent up by the Kentucky Central Railroad. The shipment of these guns took place on the 17th of May. Mr. John D. Hearne, at that time of Paris [KY], now of Covington, took an active part in the work. He says that all was kept profoundly secret till the departure of the afternoon train on the Kentucky Central Railroad, when a man designated for the purpose was stationed in the telegraph office at Covington, to prevent any information being sent on the wires. Trains of wagons were hastily loaded in Cincinnati with the guns and sent across the river to the Kentucky Central depot n Covington, where cars were speedily placed in a position to receive the arms . . . The train was loaded and left the depot at 11 o'clock that night and before daylight the next morning the guns for Bourbon, Clark and Montgomery counties were landed at Paris and those for Fayette County at Lexington.

*On the day on which the guns for the counties just named were shipped by cars from Covington, others were shipped by boat directly from Cincinnati up the Ohio River. The latter were for the counties of Mason and Nicholas.*¹⁸⁶

On May 18 1861, the *Covington Journal* noted:

*[S]ome thirty boxes of arms passed through this city yesterday, directed to various points in the interior . . . It is understood that these arms are from the Springfield [Mass.] Armory.*¹⁸⁷

On Saturday, Jun 22nd, the same newspaper further noted:

Between seventy and eighty boxes of the "Lincoln muskets" were sent up the Covington and Lexington RR last Thursday. It seems they are intended for the Union men of the mountains.

Word of the guns soon spread throughout the state and Nelson was besieged almost immediately by Unionists from Boyle and Garrard counties who wanted a number of them for their home areas and their neighboring counties of Jessamine, Mercer and Lincoln. Nelson was extremely cooperative and granted them an order for 700 guns from the shipment at Maysville.

One unverified account of the "Lincoln guns" states that when the rail shipment from Covington reached Cynthiana, the train's conductor learned of plans for an organized band to seize the cargo. He altered his plans accordingly and returned the shipment to Covington. Here the guns were divided into two lots and placed on boats for Louisville and Maysville. From those two points they were sent into central Kentucky.

The distribution of the guns to loyal Unionists greatly strengthened the federal position in Kentucky and emboldened them to voice much stronger opinions than before.

Until fall 1861, when the state finally abandoned Magoffin's impossible position of neutrality, north to south trade through Covington was brisk – and legal! In fact, the trade was so lively the governors of Ohio, Indiana and Illinois asked President Lincoln to occupy Covington and Newport with federal troops in order to stop the flow of war material to the Confederacy. Lincoln refused the request on grounds it might serve Kentucky with an excuse to secede.¹⁸⁸

It was presidential wisdom such as this that had an untold amount of influence on Kentucky's ultimate decision to give up her neutral position in favor of the Union.

From the inception of Magoffin's avowed neutrality however, there were many Covingtonians who worked diligently to ensure it did not become a menace to the Union cause. Yet Lincoln's observance of the governor's proclamation effectively blocked any local application of federal laws governing trade with the seceded states. As a result, many greedy farmers and business people from north of the Ohio shipped tons of material into Covington where they could reap far higher profits by re-shipping goods South. At times, their heavy freight wagons literally clogged the streets leading to the railroad terminal or out to southward stretching roads.

When official efforts were made to halt the southern trade, they were confined initially to the Ohio side, as the following report shows:

*A number of horses intended for the South were prevented from coming to this city yesterday, by some detective officers of Cincinnati. Fifteen of the lot, however, had already passed over the ferry and were immediately taken to the Kentucky Central R.R. depot to be forwarded . . . South.*¹⁸⁹

Enough economic uncertainty existed to prompt the town's Board of Education to issue an order on May 25th, 1861 closing all public schools early that year and dismissing the teachers. The Board had already been paying the teachers with scrip.

It was becoming more apparent the state guard was taking on a decided pro-southern outlook. Events leading to this began shortly after Lincoln's election when Governor Magoffin urged the guard be completely reorganized. As part of the reorganization, new uniforms, arms and other equipment were issued and command given to Simon Bolivar Buckner, a West Point graduate who held the same pro-southern sympathies as the governor. Buckner, who had resigned from the federal army six years earlier because promotions did not come to him as fast as he felt they should, would eventually become a Confederate general.

A stepped-up recruiting campaign now commenced in which special efforts were made to attract those with Confederate sympathies. In Covington, two such companies were formed during the summer 1861, the States' Rights Guard and the Magoffin Guard.

Earlier that year, a local home guard rifle company captained by Covington Councilman Aston Madeira and known as the Madeira Guards, defected from the home guard movement and was mustered into the state guard as a unit. No sooner was this done than Magoffin and Buckner provided the unit with new and improved arms.¹⁹⁰

Madera, mentioned previously, had edited the *American Sentinel* and had been an active supporter of the old Know Nothing Party.

Another guardsman, Major Samuel K. Hays of the Washington Artillery, reorganized that unit and took it into the state guard. The artillerymen rebelled at the move and quickly resumed their unit's identity as an independent command.¹⁹¹ Hays attempted to raise a full regiment for the state but once again met with failure.¹⁹² He eventually went to Tennessee to join the Confederacy.

The governor's intention to give Kentucky's state guard a pro-southern orientation was painfully obvious to those loyal to the Union and created much dissension within the guard itself. One of the first Covington units to actually sever all relations with the state organization declared the guard had become too pro-southern and would probably desert to the Confederacy. The unit's members pronounced themselves to be Unconditional Unionists and now as an independent company adopted the name "Independent Grays."¹⁹³

In June, Andrew Johnson of Tennessee, later to become president, arrived in Covington. The *Covington Journal*, which considered him little more than a traitor to the states' rights movement, laconically noted:

*Andrew Johnson of Tennessee, came down on the morning train from Lexington, last Wednesday. He was met at the Covington depot by . . . about 100 men and escorted directly to the Burnet House, Cincinnati.*¹⁹⁴

During this same month, Unionist strength in Kentucky was dramatically displayed when every congressional district but one elected a Unionist candidate. Locally, Union backer John W. Menzies defeated Overton P. Hogan for the Tenth District congressional seat as he received 1,588 of Covington's slightly less than 2,000 votes cast.

Such political set-backs for the local secessionists prompted a number, including Samuel K. Hays, William T. Estep and W.B. Phelps, former city attorney and son of once-prominent Jefferson Phelps, to leave for the Confederacy and the southern army.¹⁹⁵

Six months later, Phelps would be killed at Dranesville, Virginia.¹⁹⁶ Madeira was destined to die in the Battle of Chattanooga.¹⁹⁷

Covington was the hometown of one of America's greatest military geniuses of all time, **General Ulysses S. Grant**, for by mid-1862, the humble and modest young general frequently spoke of the town and the house at 520 Greenup Street, as home. His wife and children were living there with his parents and much of the general's correspondence from the Corinth battlefield makes it abundantly clear he too, considered Covington as home,¹⁹⁸

Grant, who graduated from West Point as a sub-lieutenant assigned to the 4th Infantry Regiment, had acquitted himself well in the Mexican War. He was twice cited for bravery and won relatively rapid promotion, being

brevetted first lieutenant for gallantry at Molina del Rey and as captain at Chapultepec. It was in Covington that his climb to military fame had its real beginnings.

Ulysses Grant came here as a civilian in June 1861 in a futile attempt to see Major General George B. McClellan, headquartered in Cincinnati, and to visit his parents, Jesse and Hannah Grant, residing on Greenup Street. He just finished training a regiment of citizen soldiers at Galena, Illinois and was now seeking a commission with the Union Army.

Some writer say Grant had an unfair and exaggerated reputation for drinking and failure and theorize he was suffering from an undue amount of prejudice. Nevertheless, justice does occur and one day, while sitting in the parlor of the Greenup home, a messenger brought him most welcome news. The message was from Governor Richard Yates of Illinois and contained an offer of the colonelcy of the 21st Illinois Regiment.¹⁹⁹ Grant immediately accepted. He was now on the way to victory *and* to the White House.

Years later, Governor Yates said of his offer to Grant:

*Early in June 1861, I telegraphed him at Covington, Ky., tendering him the colonelcy of the Twenty-first Regiment of Illinois Infantry, which he promptly accepted; and on the 15th of June, he assumed command.*²⁰⁰

Yates was another individual with historic ties to the Covington area, for he had been born at nearby Warsaw.

General McClellan later rationalized his own failure to see Grant, saying he had been out of town when Ulysses attempted to contact him. McClellan wrote in his biography:

*I think it was during my absence on this very trip (to Indianapolis) that Grant came to Cincinnati . . . but before I got back he was telegraphed that he could have a regiment in Illinois . . .*²⁰¹

Frederick Dent, Grant's father-in-law, could never comprehend why he ever wanted to join the federal army in the first place, and once told him he could probably get a commission as a brigadier general in the Confederate Army simply for the asking. Grant's nature showed through when he replied he could never consider such a rant in **any** army, unless it was earned and his worth proven in battle. He would soon do exactly that, but in the Union Army.²⁰²

The aging Jesse Grant, unlike Ulysses' father-in-law, had always been fiercely patriotic. He was an outspoken critic of secession and would not hesitate to soundly denounce anyone suspected of harboring the least amount of southern sympathies.

Jesse's grandfather, Captain Noah Grant, saw duty in the French War and had fallen in battle in 1756. His father, also named Noah, had hurried from his farm at the first hint of the American Revolution and served as a lieutenant on Lexington Common where he and his fellow patriots fired the first shots for America's independence. How could anyone born into such a family not have a strong sense of patriotism?

At one time, Ulysses seemed to have some fear for his parents' safety in Covington. This was during the war's earliest days and he was uncertain how his outspoken Unionist father would fare in this border city. He wrote of those fears in a letter to his sister Mary and in another letter to his father, actually urged him to leave Covington because of the possible danger of harm.

Ulysses decided while here on his 1861 visit that his fears for his father's safety were groundless and said as much in a letter to his wife Julia, when he noted the overwhelming Unionist sentiments found here. It was a chatty-type letter in which he said Covingtonians were buying fresh fruits and vegetables at a reasonable price. Strawberries were selling at five cents for two quarts and he noted it cost his mother only about 10 cents to buy a two-day supply of peas, cucumbers, lettuce and strawberry radishes.²⁰³

Covington's celebration of that year's Fourth of July was especially patriotic. A great parade was held, including some of the proudest units to ever march through the town. Among the participants in the parade were such unconditional Union companies as the Boone Rifles, the Clearaways, the Union Defenders, the Constitution Guards, the Ludlow Home Guard, the Jackson Guards, the Kenton Union Guards, the Kentucky Rovers, the Independent Grays, the Washington Artillery and the Marion Artillery, along with many other military units from throughout the local area. Included among those participating units were some sixty to seventy horsemen who had been specially mounted for the occasion by E.T. Clarkson.

The guards were all armed with new "Lincoln Guns." Also the Kenton Union Guards carried along a twelve-pounder mountain howitzer which could be used for firing shells, grape or canister.

A day earlier, Bushrod Foley returned from Washington with an additional 400 guns and said another day or two he expected to receive 600 more., with 40,000 ball cartridges.²⁰⁴

During the gigantic parade, a stop was made at the river-landing in order for the Marion Artillery to fire a national salute. Most of the units were formed as an aftermath of the mass meeting of April 18th.

The parade route passed the home of a Reverend Nicholson, who had recently moved to Covington from Tennessee and made his home at the corner of 11th and Washington Streets. A Confederate flag fluttered from one of the upper windows of the home. When Captain Amos Shinkle's unit saw the rebel banner, they decided to return after the parade and tend to its removal – and they did!

The editor of the *Covington Journal* was furious that the Confederate flag should be ordered removed in such a manner and warned all those supporting the Union that: "The minority of today may be in the majority next week."²⁰⁵

Local Unionists became extremely agitated a few days after the Independence Day celebration when it was rumored the Mason Rifles, a state guard from Maysville, would pass through Covington **under a Confederate banner** on their way to a state encampment near Cynthiana.

The street were thronged with Union guard company members by the time the Maysville packet, the *Hazel Dell*, arrived. It was after dark when the Mason Rifles, numbering about 50 men, landed and marched up Scott Street, but carrying the Kentucky State flag while their band played *Yankee Doodle*.

When the Maysville men halted in front of the Madison House, they were immediately surrounded by a forest of bayonets. Their commander was asked to explain his position in regard to the Union and replied he was only acting under orders to report to the Cynthiana encampment. Furthermore he and most of his company were strongly for the Union and were only going to the encampment "to see what was going on."²⁰⁶

The excitement subsided and the home guard members returned to their armories but only after telling the visitors they were free to go anywhere in the city they wished but if they marched, it must be under the American flag only.²⁰⁷

When the Mason Countians left Covington the next day, they left marching under an American flag donated by the Independent Grays.

Despite the governor's declaration of Kentucky's neutrality, little of it was apparent in the thinking of most Covingtonians. Home guard units were being formed and regular army troops were drilling at Newport Barracks. Workers at the rolling mill organized a home guard unit known as the Faugh-a-Ballaghs, while women at nearly Falmouth formed a military company and were holding regular drills.

Falmouth's company of women, known as the Union Captivators, adopted a uniform consisting of a full-cut type of apron made of red, white and blue material. The apron's upper part represented the American flag's blue field of stars, while the lower part, or skirt, consisted of red and white stripes.

After watching the Falmouth company at drill, an observer reported he had never seen "a more interesting sight."²⁰⁸

So too were recruits for the federal gunboat service being taken aboard the steamboat *Ohio No. 3* anchored opposite the Newport iron foundry of Thomas G. Gaylord & Company.²⁰⁹ Other craft frequently tied up at Covington's waterfront to take on recruits and supplies bound for newly-established Camp Dick Robinson.

The new camp, on the banks of the Kentucky River and deep in the state's interior, had been established by President Lincoln and began operation August 1st. Lincoln defended its opening from the criticisms of pro-Southerners by pointing out it was established on Kentucky soil for the exclusive use of Kentucky recruits and in no way violated the terms of Governor Magoffin's stance of neutrality.

By the end of August, Captain James L. Foley, son of Bushrod Foley and close friend of U.S. Grant, raised a local company of cavalry and was sent to Missouri and assigned to Major General John C. Fremont's command as part of the famed Fremont Body Guard.

August was also the month in which the 1861 legislative election was held and it was apparent Covingtonians were in no mood to see their state government continue its do-nothing policy. Like many Kentuckians, they voted Democratic in the last legislative race but had long realized the dangers to which they had exposed the state's place in the Union and were now quite willing to ignore sectional appeals in favor of the nation. This seemed to be lost on the incumbent representatives who continued to do nothing to help save that nation from a near fatal rupture.

Federal and Confederate officials alike, watched the election closely, for its outcome was crucial for both sides. When all votes were tallied, the state's strongest political bond with the South, the pro-Southern Democrats

was shattered. Kentucky's support for the Union, without regard to parties, had mounted to a mighty crescendo as voters gave the Unionists 76 of the 100 seats in the house and 27 of 38 senate seats.

Such an overwhelming Union victory prompted one elated Ohioan to declare:

*Kentucky is redeemed. Yesterday she threw off the chains which have fettered her loyalty and restrained her gallant people.*²¹⁰

Among the replaced lawmakers, were Covington's John Ellis and the youthful, inexperienced John G. Carlisle. Both had favored Kentucky's neutrality because of their belief it worked to the South's advantage. They had wanted an investigation made of the Lincoln Guns and urged the weapons be shared with the state guard.

None of this set well with Covingtonians. The townspeople demanded a more aggressive form of Unionism from their legislators and now chose John W. Finnell and Green Clay Smith to represent them.

Although Smith had been born at Richmond, Kentucky, he now considered Covington his home. He would later bring it recognition as a general in the Union army and as a contender for Vice President on the 1864 Lincoln ticket. Later, Smith would serve as a Montana territorial governor, and as the Prohibitionist Party's candidate for President.

The newly elected legislative assembled on September 2nd and lost no time reminding the governor that he now represented an ineffective minority in the state government. On that same date, Andrew Johnson returned to Northern Kentucky when he appeared at Newport to address the largest crowd to ever gather in that city up to that time. The demonstration was arranged as an "Anti-Peace" rally to refute the actions of those calling for a position of neutrality for Kentucky.

The huge throng of patriots gathered at the courthouse square after staging a lengthy procession through Newport's streets. Its members surged about the speakers, including Johnson, who was described as being "the patriot exile from Tennessee."

Before introducing Johnson, Newport's mayor, Edward W. Hawkins, presented several resolutions, all of which were loudly endorsed by the assemblage. Among his many resolutions were "

1. The war was forced upon the country by disunionists of the South
2. The government which does not punish treason and cannot suppress rebellion is not worthy of the name
3. The soil of Kentucky is only "sacred" when floated over by the Stars and Stripes
4. With the highest respect to everyone and intending no shock to delicate and sensitive nerves, we will say that according to our judgment "armed neutrality" is just armed nonsense.

The mayor further called for disbanding the state guard and sending Governor Magoffin before the Committee on Treason.²¹¹

When Johnson rose to speak, he said he heartily endorsed the resolutions. He proceeded to deliver a fiery oration damning the Confederacy an all traitors and called for severe punishment for those taking part in the rebellion.²¹²

The more radical at the rally maintained the neutrality was completely meaningless and the rebels would ignore it whenever they thought it advantageous to do so. Those holding such views did not have long to wait before their arguments were correct for the very next day, September 3rd, Confederate troops under General Leonides Polk occupied Columbus in the state's west. Almost simultaneous with Polk's move, General Felix K. Zollicoffer launched a Confederate invasion in the east near Cumberland Gap.

Federal military and political recognized immediately the Southern move as a serious blunder for it merely stepped-up the date when Kentucky would openly declare itself for the Union. It also provided General Grant an excuse to move into Paducah where he issued a proclamation that he came to defend Kentuckians against their country's enemy. Grant's movement represented the beginning of a drive to ultimately annihilate much of the southern forces.

John Flavel Fisk, Covington's outstanding forceful Speaker of the Kentucky Senate, was furious at the Confederate invasion and proposed lawmakers "fling out the Stars and Stripes from the dome of this capitol."²¹³

A group of aged veterans of the War of 1812 responded to Fisk's proposal by hastily securing an unusually large banner. Amid the boom of cannon, the sound of a brass band playing the *star Spangled Banner* and shouts and applause of "thousands of people," the flag was raised to the capitol's top.²¹⁴

One writer noted Fisk's action prompted a strong wave of patriotism to sweep the state. Fisk, he said,

Saw and understood the growing rebellious proclivities and his noble appeal to the people through the emblem of freedom awakened the American principles in the hearts of Kentucky citizens.

It is safe to say that the effect of this wisely-directed motion was among the chief means of keeping Kentucky from withdrawing from the Union. ²¹⁵

At this time, Colonel Bushrod Foley led his Kenton Union Regiment in a spirited parade down Madison Avenue. They were not the only ones staging such a march, for on that same day, an attractive young woman held her own parade when she marched over the same route – alone and defiantly waving a Confederate flag!

The split between Magoffin and the General Assembly was now virtually complete and would eventually lead to Magoffin's resignation. Before he resigned though, the pro-southern governor suffered defeat after defeat at the hands of the legislative body. One came when he vetoed a resolution passed 71 to 26 by the house which ordered Confederate forces out of the state. The resolution was promptly passed over his veto.

Other bills passed over Magoffin's veto included one directing him to call out the militia to "expel the invaders;" one calling for 40,000 volunteers for the Union; another rejecting the Kentucky citizenship of those joining the Confederate forces.²¹⁶

Lawmakers' mistrust of the governor's motives prompted them to take the state's military forces from his command and place them under the leadership of Thomas L. Crittenden.

Confederate agents were active throughout the area at the time and a group of them had set up a clandestine headquarters in the George W. McDanold Building at Fifth and Madison. There they did surreptitious recruiting for the Madeira Guards, which along with many other guard units deserted Kentucky and went to the Confederacy.²¹⁷

Madeira's command was one of the first units to arrive at newly-completed Camp Boone, Tennessee, a camp which the Confederacy set up to enroll Kentuckians during the state's period of avowed neutrality. The company reorganized since its defection to the South and the local recruiters were attempting to attract more Covingtonians to fill its ranks.

Despite the activities of such pro-southern minorities, the wish of Kentucky's great masses was abundantly clear. On September 18th, 1861 the legislature officially aligned the state with the federal cause.

Three days after the legislature's action, the steamboat *Mary Cook* docked here with a large number of battlefield wounded. Many patients were promptly taken to the post hospital at Newport Barracks, while others were placed in various temporary make-shift quarters.

Covington itself, remained overwhelmingly Unionist in spirit and in fact and one historian has credited this as being one of the important factors in putting Kentucky in the Union camp.²¹⁸

Boats owned by Covington river interests were mobilized for troop transports, women of the community set up a Soldiers' Relief Society and on September 26th, Newport Barracks, already on vigorous war footing, received several additional cannon from Pittsburgh and would soon be supplier with heavy artillery.

Virtually overnight, Covington became filled with long lines of army troops and equipment moving south. One convoy was the First Ohio Volunteer Artillery whose wagons and caissons attracted throngs of spectators as they rumbled over the streets to the local railhead.

After the artillerymen loaded their horses and guns safely aboard a southbound train, they grouped into their platoons and marched to the market house. There, according to one soldier's journal,

We partook of a good dinner that had been provided for us by the loyal and patriotic ladies and gentlemen of Covington. When we had eaten to our hearts' content, our haversacks were abundantly filled by fair hands; then giving nine rousing cheers for Covington's noble sons and daughters, we reformed in line and marched back to the depot. ²¹⁹

About that same time, John C. Breckinridge, like Simon Buckner and the state guard had already done, defected to the rebel states. He had earlier been elected to the US Senate by political friends in the Magoffin-led legislature. That was a time when legislators elected national senators.

The new lawmakers recognized that Breckinridge did not represent the will of the people and instructed him to resign. The obviously pro-southern Senator refused the order and instead, continued his opposition to Lincoln's war measures.

Eventually, on September 19, 1861, Breckinridge dropped all pretense of loyalty to the Union and fled to the Confederacy to openly join the rebel cause. This move came when he was visiting in Kentucky and learned of the possibility he would be arrested.²²⁰

In November, a Federal District Court at Frankfort indicted the defected lawmaker for treason and on December 2nd, the Senate took formal notice of his desertion when it declared:

Whereas John C. Breckinridge, a member of this body, has joined the enemies of his country, and is now in arms against the government he has sworn to support, therefore be it resolved that the traitor Breckinridge be expelled. ²²¹

Neither Buckner nor Breckinridge took their personal wealth with them to the South. Instead, they both deemed it safer for the bulk of their monies to remain within the boundaries of the Union.

Breckinridge transferred all his Kentucky land holdings by a deed of trust to a Unionist friend, while Buckner invested his wealth in Chicago real estate. Buckner deeded the real estate to his brother-in-law who was in the Union army but required the brother-in-law to draw up a will bequeathing the property back to him.²²²

On October 5th, three days after the Kentucky Legislature instructed Breckinridge to resign his senate seat, work began at trenching and fortifying the hills on Covington's outskirts. Within a short time, defense embankments were guarding all the southern approaches to town. Camp King, overlooking present-day Latonia and named for a commandant at Newport Barracks, had originally been planned as a Home Guard training camp, now became a base of operations for the 20th Ohio Volunteers.

None of this was considered to be too soon for minor skirmishing with rebel partisans was already occurring in nearby rural counties like Gallatin and Owen. War had come to the Covington area.

Endnotes Chapter 13

¹ Cincinnati Daily Enquirer, 10 September 1859.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Cincinnati Daily Gazette, 19 September 1859.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Cincinnati Daily Enquirer, 18 September 1859.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Cincinnati Daily Gazette, 31 December 1859.

¹⁰ Cincinnati Daily Times, 31 October 1859.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Filson Club Quarterly, Volume 31, Number 3, July 1957.

¹³ *Ibid* and Cincinnati Daily Times, 29 October 1859.

¹⁴ Filson Club Quarterly, Volume 31, Number 3, July 1957.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Cincinnati Daily Times, 31 October 1859.

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¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Cincinnati Daily Enquirer, 16 November 1859.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*, 4 October 1860.

²⁴ Covington Journal, 4 December 1858.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 24 April 1858.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 6 November 1858 & 18 December 1858.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 7 May 1859.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 9 July 1859.

³⁰ Cincinnati Daily Enquirer, 18 October 1860.

³¹ Beard, Daniel C., *op. cit.*

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³³ Covington Journal, 8 January 1859.

³⁴ Beard, Daniel C., *op. cit.*

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- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 17 March 1860.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 21 January 1860.
- ⁴⁷ *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer*, 10 September 1859.
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- ⁴⁹ *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 17 April 1859.
- ⁵⁰ *Covington Journal*, 26 May 1860.
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁵² *Ibid.*, 10 November 1860.
- ⁵³ *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer*, 12 & 14 August 1860.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 14 August 1860.
- ⁵⁵ *Cincinnati Daily Times*, 16 & 17 August 1860; also *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer*, 16 August 1860.
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁷ Perkins, George Gilpin, *op. cit.*
- ⁵⁸ *Cincinnati Daily Times*, 17 November 1859.
- ⁵⁹ *Cincinnati Daily Times*, 19 November 1859.
- ⁶⁰ *Cincinnati Daily Times*, 16 November 1859.
- ⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 17 November 1859, also *Covington Journal*, 19 November 1859.
- ⁶² *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer*, 17 November 1859.
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- ⁶⁴ *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer*, 25 April 1860.
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- ⁶⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁹ *Ibid.*
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- ⁷² *Ibid.*
- ⁷³ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁵ *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 27 April 1860.
- ⁷⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁸ *Ibid.* [John Greg Fee's racial attitudes were ahead of his time. He even considered racial intermarriage perfectly normal, a practice actually against the law at the time – Editor]
- ⁷⁹ *Ibid.*
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- ⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 21 January 1860
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- ⁸³ *Georgetown (Ky) Journal*, as reported in the *Covington Journal*, 24 November 1860.
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- ⁸⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁸⁹ *Covington Journal*, 22 September 1860.
- ⁹⁰ *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer*, 8 August 1860.
- ⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 10 August 1860.
- ⁹² *Ibid.*
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- ¹¹¹ *Ibid.*
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- ¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*
- ¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 27 August 1860.
- ¹²¹ *Ibid.* Also: *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer*, 23 August 1860.
- ¹²² *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer*, 14 November 1860.
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- ¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 1 December 1860.
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- ¹²⁷ *Ibid.*
- ¹²⁸ Poweleit, Dr. Alvin C., "Bicentennial of Physicians of Northern Kentucky," Newport (1977).
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- ¹³³ *Ibid.*, 16 February 1861.
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- ¹³⁶ *Ibid.*
- ¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 2 & 16 February 1861.
- ¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 9 February 1861 & 27 April 1861.
- ¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 9 February 1861.
- ¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 23 February 1861.
- ¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 6 April 1861.
- ¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 20 April 1861.
- ¹⁴³ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 4 May 1861.
- ¹⁴⁸ Speed, Thomas, *et al.*, "The Union Regiments of Kentucky," *op. cit.*
- ¹⁴⁹ After being re-organized as three-year units, the 1st officially entered federal service on June 4, 1861, and the 2nd June 13, 1861.
- ¹⁵⁰ *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 19 April 1861.
- ¹⁵¹ Beard, Daniel C., *op. cit.*
- ¹⁵² *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 20 April 1861.
- ¹⁵³ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 23 April 1861.
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- ¹⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 22 April 1861.
- ¹⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 30 April 1861.
- ¹⁶⁰ *Ibid*.
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- ¹⁹² *Ibid*, 20 April 1861.
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- ¹⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 13 July 1861.
- ¹⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 25 January 1862.
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A Time of Turbulence Chapter 14 Wartime Covington

Now that Kentucky had aligned with those fighting for the Union, Covington quickly became an important army recruiting center and a prime staging point for troops moving south.

Army recruiters established operations in Amos Shinkle's coal office at Fourth and Scott and as the war progressed, ladies of the community set up long tables of food at the armory at Fourth and Greenup. There they served many soldiers passing through town.¹

By the end of 1861, several training camps dotted the local area and included Camps Finnell, Webster, King, and Bromley, the latter so-named because of the embryonic community nearby.

In September that year, Captain W>W> Culbertson organized the Decoursey Creek Home Guards and arranged for its members to be armed from the local supply of Lincoln Guns.²

A new armory, featuring an exceptionally well-lighted 65 x 100 feet enclosed drill area, was erected at Fourth and Greenup.³ It was formally opened amid elaborate ceremonies on the night of October 14th.

Camp Wheeler was established on the Campbell County side of the Licking and by November, Colonel Gustavus Artzman was using it as a recruiting and training base for the 1st Kentucky German Regiment.⁴ Artzman previously captained a company that had served as a 30 day police guard on the Covington and Lexington Railroad.

Orders came, transferring Colonel Artzman's regiment to Louisville's Camp Sigal. Before its scheduled departure, the regiment paid a visit to Covington in response to an invitation from acting Lieutenant Governor John Fisk. After parading through the streets of town, the German unit halted at Geisbauer's Brewery where its members drank an impressive number of overflowing bumpers of lager as toasts to the health of their host. They then somehow managed to re-form their military lines and listen to Fisk deliver a brief but "eloquently patriotic" speech.⁵ A few hours later, John W. Finnell, who had become the state's adjutant general, dispatched an order from Frankfort changing the unit's assignment to Covington's Camp Webster.

The 15th Regiment of regulars was busy recruiting at Newport Barracks and on November 28th, about 400 of its members boarded the steamer *Champion*, bound for Louisville and eventually the southern battlefront.

During that same month, work was in progress on altering the Covington jail to provide separate quarters for women prisoners. The remodeled facilities were completed December 3rd and the first occupants received.⁶ The new women's quarters consisted of one-half of the workhouse adjoining the jail and contained 6 oak cells – all large enough to allow prisoners enough space "to walk about." Prior to that time, women and men prisoners had been housed in the same facility.⁷

The town was also home to some of the state's most outspoken proponents of the Union cause, including Amos Shinkle, John F. Fisk, Mortimer M. Benton, Congressman John W. Menzies and its two new representatives in the state legislature, John W. Finnell and Green Clay Smith. They were more than Union men – they were recognized leaders.

Finnell, who held rank as brigadier general with the state military department, had since been credited doing more than any to save Kentucky for the Union. He was a native of Winchester, Kentucky and first came to Covington in 1852 to practice law.⁸

Finnell had been an active member of the Whig Party but in 1860, was selected as a representative to the Constitutional Union Party's political convention which nominated John Bell and Edward Everett for president and vice-president. Now he was representing Covington in the state legislature as a strong Union supporter. On October 12, 1861, he was appointed as the state adjutant general.⁹

The new adjutant general was an outstanding judge of men and possessed an uncanny ability in the art of politics and statesmanship. He knew time was on their side during Governor Magoffin's farce of neutrality and, like Lincoln, felt the impetuous Confederates would eventually blunder into making an invasion of Kentucky. The Unionist must patiently wait and the South would force the state into the deferral camp. The decision proved to be a wise one.

The town's other representative, Green Clay Smith, was equally rabid in his support of the Union. He was born at Richmond, Kentucky but, like Finnell, chose to make his home in Covington. He came here in 1858 and almost immediately became enrolled in local politics.

In December 1861, Smith offered a resolution in the House of Representatives that the members be organized into an armed military unit to be known as the "state Defenders." The law makers, according to his resolution, would be armed and uniformed and, if called to duty, the House would immediately adjourn until the mission at hand had been completed.¹⁰

The other legislators rejected the proposal that they be placed in unit of *armed* combat! The militant Smith, who was a nephew of the renowned Cassius M. Clay, volunteered for active military duty and eventually attained the rank of major general. During the war, he helped lead the celebrated rout of Confederate General John Hunt Morgan at Lebanon, Tennessee.

Smith later entered the ministry and in 1876, became the presidential candidate of the National Prohibition Party. He died June 29, 1895 at Washington D.C. and is buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

The Covington population at the war's beginning was 16,471. The city was also home to 197 of the county's 567 slaves and had a small number of free blacks. Two of the local free Negroes were an old couple known as Uncle Cassius and his wife, Aunt Annie, who lived in a small shack at Third and Garrard. Their previous owner had found it to his economic advantage to free them since they had reached advanced years and were no longer able to perform profitable work for him.

The elderly Negro couple possessed an unusual story-telling ability and became great community favorites. Their neighbors, especially the children, cheerfully took on the responsibility of providing for them in return for their long hours of reminiscences.¹¹

John Singer was another local freedman and one of the town's popular barbers. He maintained his shop on lower Scott Street and, along with two other highly respected freedmen, William Page and one known only as "Ike," traveled liberally between Covington and the Ohio side. None of the three were ever forced to carry a written permit to enter or leave the state, even though Kentucky law required it.¹²

The circumstances surrounding Ike's manumission go far to explain a commonly held local view of slavery and the public sale of slaves. When Ike's owner died, all of the deceased's estate, including his slaves, was to be sold at public auction. Ike was well-liked throughout town, so several citizens formed a company for the purpose of buying him, and then granting him his freedom.¹³

Covington continued to be an important station on the Underground Railroad. The family of noted painter Frank Duveneck, though not part of the network, often concealed and aided runaway slaves. The homes of many families in the area were officially recognized by the Underground and used as a last stop for the fugitives before crossing into Ohio on their northward flight. The fleeing slaves were often hidden in outbuildings, cellars or attics on these homes until safe for them to leave.

As the Union troops pushed their way south, many slaves deserted their owners and flocked to Union lines. There, they were seen as contraband of war and given a degree of safety. The Confederates found it no easy task to watch both their Negroes and the invader. Their attention could be focused on only one at a time and as one slave expressed it:

*When Marsa watch the Yankee, nigger go – when Marsa watch the nigger,
Yankee come.*

The fact that slave owners joined the Confederate army was an opportunity for the slaves to run away, claiming they were abandoned. One case occurred in Newport when a fugitive slave from Eastport, Mississippi, was arrested and lodged in jail. He justified his action by saying his owner had run away from him and joined the rebel army.¹⁴

On another occasion, several slaveholders put up posters near the 9th Ohio Volunteer and 2nd Minnesota encampment in central Kentucky, in which they offered rewards for runaways. One ex-slave in the encampment, who was described as being "very witty," retaliated by placing his own poster alongside the others. It read:

50 CENTS REWARD

Ran away from dis chile, an' leff him all alone, to take care of his-self, after I don worked twenty-six years faithfully for him.

MY MASSA, "BILL DUNCAN"

Massa Bill is supposed to have done gone off wid de Seceshers, for to hunt his rights and I speck he don got lost. Any person 'turnin him to me, so dat he can take care of me – as he allers said "Nigga" couldn't take care of his-self – will be much obliged to dis chile.

NB – Persons huntin' for him please look in all de "last ditches," as I often heard him talk about goin' into the diein' business.

'Spectfully submitted, "Jim"

The slaveholders who saw “Jim’s” poster were furious and all of them agreed he was a “mighty sassy nigger.”¹⁵

Blacks swarmed to the rear of the advancing Union armies throughout the war and Covington became a haven for many of them. When they would first arrived in town they would usually go from door to door looking for food and lodging. Wherever help was granted, the Negroes gladly did the housework, yard work or any other chores requested of them. For a time, even the poorest Covingtonian could afford household servants.

One of the largest groups to arrive at one time consisted of several hundred homeless runaways brought here by steamboat and landed at the foot of Garrard Street. It was the dead of winter and they had been rescued from the mountains of West Virginia where they had been trapped by snow and freezing weather while fleeing slavery. Most all had been severely frost-bitten and were in severe pain. Sympathetic citizens of the community took in many but many simply disappeared.

On another occasion between 40 and 50 contrabands reached Covington aboard the steamer *Silver Moon* from Island No. 10 in the Mississippi. Most were women and children and were placed in charge of Dr. F. C. Thomas at the Main Street Military Hospital.¹⁶

The term “contraband,” in reference to runaway slaves, was first used to apply to those slaves in the rebelling states who fled to Union lined where they were received as “contraband of war.” In a short time, the term became a common designation for all runaways.

The use of contrabands as workers at the hospitals and military installations was a deliberate effort to encourage blacks to earn their own way in a free economy and had originally been instituted by General Grant in his western campaign. Grant conceived of such a work program as part of a conscious effort to prevent blacks from being re-enslaved to charity and federal hand-outs.

Despite the heavy influx of Negroes into Covington during and immediately after the war, the town never developed a black community of any appreciable size. City assessor Hiram F. Bowen’s report of May 1st, 1862 indicated the town was home to only 52 free blacks.¹⁷

Bowen’s report did not include the vast number of contrabands whose stay in the community was temporary. The lure of more freedom north of the Ohio and the restrictive laws enacted by Kentucky served to keep Covington’s permanent black residents at a low number.

That the federal government should care for the runaways was a constant source of irritation for some Covingtonians. One local newsman complained:

*While the Government is furnishing runaway slaves with shoes, clothing and food, the families of volunteers, in numerous places, are suffering for the necessities of life.*¹⁸

Covingtonians enlisting in the federal service were doing so because of their desire to help save the Union. They viewed secession as nothing but treason and associated their country with liberty, social justice, democracy and equal justice opportunity for all. Large numbers of them refused to concede any of these intangibles were remotely connected with blacks and openly showed resentment at federal concerns for the Negroes’ plight.

Many citizens were still actively pursuing and arresting suspected runaways and turning them over to local police. Typical of these citizen arrests was one occurring in October 1861 when a group of fishermen took four Fayette County blacks from a skiff on the Ohio River and committed them to the Covington jail.¹⁹

The war was barely a year old when Covington began to emerge as an important hospital center for the military. On April 15, 1862 the State Military Board rented the former Elliston House on Main Street near Third as a hospital and appointed Dr. Thomas to a position of Post Surgeon and Dr. John T. Wise as Assistant Surgeon. In time, Dr. A. M. Speer became the hospital’s chief surgeon.^{20 21}

Benjamin Elliston, owner of the Main Street structure, had earlier completed a new hostelry at the corner of Harvey and Russell Streets. He boasted the new structure was “finished in good style and furnished with all the conveniences of a first-class hotel.”²²

On September 4th it was announced another hotel building that of the former Bridge Hotel at Front and Greenup, had been leased by the government and would soon be converted into a hospital. It opened its doors to patients on September 24th.

Twelve days before the military rented the former Elliston House on Main, ex-governor Charles S. Morehead arrived in Covington from seven months imprisonment at Fort Warren on the east coast. He was arrested the previous September as a possible enemy of the Union. The states’ rights editor of the *Covington Journal* rejoiced

at the ex-governor's return to Kentucky, saying: "He has at last been released unconditionally and of course without trial."²³

Morehead had worked diligently to prevent southern secession. His views on Unionism quickly changed though, once the war actually began. He supported Magoffin's position of neutrality for Kentucky and that failed, he began voicing open support for the principles of secession.²⁴

Morehead, who owned several slaves and a large plantation in Washington County, Mississippi, made no secret of his feelings and raised questions among Union authorities about his loyalty and intentions.²⁵

Such prominent individuals as the ex-governor were in an excellent position to give aid and encouragement to Kentucky's militant secessionists. It was deemed a wise precautionary move to place him under arrest, even though the charges against him might be vague.

When Morehead was first arrested, his closest supporters promptly raised a cry of Union harassment. They, and others, always insisted on having the right to violently denounce the Union, its officials and the military, while keeping the right to praise what they called "Southern rights."²⁶

As one Kentucky historian has pointed out, a civil war is not a peaceful arbitration but a fight in which the idea of self-preservation is uppermost. It is a delusion, he said, to believe complete freedom of speech and action would be kept intact during such a crisis. He further noted, this is especially so when thousands of that nation's defenders were perishing in actual battles.²⁷ Like ex-governor Morehead, Covington's minority of southern sympathizers would quickly learn the truth of these observations.

Meanwhile, the Seminary Building on West Eleventh Street became available and on September 19th, it too opened as a military hospital. Eventually, Dr. Wise was placed in charge.^{28 29}

Other structures, such as the Odd Fellows' Building and the building at the northeast corner of Eighth and Madison, were at various times pressed into temporary service for the sick and wounded and in November 1862, the one-year-old Sixth [Seventh?] Street Markethouse was outfitted as a barracks for convalescents. It accommodated 400 – 500 patients.

Another government hospital was erected at Cole's Gardens, on the Licking River near Camp King [present Meinken Field, Latonia – editor]. It opened August 24, 1863 and immediately received 50 patients.³⁰

By this time, Ulysses Grant achieved a number of spectacular military successes and won promotion to major general. His wife and children had come to make their home with his parents on Greenup Street and he too considered it his home as well.

Ulysses was married to the former Julia Dent of Missouri. She became engaged to him on 1844 when he was only a second lieutenant but the Mexican War delayed their marriage until August 22, 1844. When triumphs of a great military leader eventually came, she shared the glory in a manner becoming a great lady.

Ulysses first seriously considered Covington as a permanent home for Julia and the children when he was initially ordered to duty after accepting his colonelcy from Illinois' Governor Yates. He had made many friends in Galena, Illinois while living there and finally decided it would be better for his family if they stayed in that city. This decision was made over his father's objections, for Jesse desired his daughter-in-law and grandchildren move to Covington so they could all be together.³¹

In January, 1862, Ulysses had a change of heart and sent Julia and the children, 11-year-old Fred, nine-year-old Buck, six-year-old Nellie and three-year-old Jesse, Jr. to live in Covington.³² When Julia and the children arrived at Cincinnati, they hired a Negro coachman to drive them here by way of the ferry. All went well until they arrived at the Greenup address. After the Grants left the coach, the Negro driver was quickly arrested by Covington's marshal on a charge of violating the Kentucky law which denied free Negroes of entering Kentucky without a pass.³³

Old Jesse was furious! He lost no time in bailing the unfortunate black man out of jail and proceeded to berate his fellow townsmen for the "shameful way they would treat a person who had helped the family of one of Abe Lincoln's officers."³⁴ General Grant's name was a legend throughout the land by then and substantial victories at Fort Donelson, Fort Henry and at Shiloh added to his acclaim.

When news of the victory at Fort Donelson reached Covington, it set off a spectacular display of flags on homes and businesses throughout the city. Scores of cannon at the local fortifications roared salvo after salvo, "and as their thunderous voices awoke the echoes of the hills for miles away, every heart beat with joy and every face beamed with untold satisfaction."³⁵

Elated council members, with the exception of Dr. John E. Stevenson, an admitted states'-righter, voted resolutions in recognition of the victory's importance. They also tendered the city's thanks to the men and officers of Grant's command, "recognizing in them the assurance of the speedy deliverance of our State from the presence of

hostile armies and the cheering promise of an early restoration of our distracted country to its wanted peace, unity and prosperity.”³⁶

The councilmen, who prided themselves being “loyal citizens and representatives of a loyal city,” further resolved:

*That whenever the people of the seceded States, or any portion of them, shall return to their true allegiance to the government of our Fathers, we will welcome them as brothers and gladly unite with them in a common rejoicing.*³⁷

The men and officers of Grant’s command were equally pleased with their commanding general and after their capture of Fort Donelson, presented him with “a magnificent sword . . . manufactured in the highest attainment of art.”³⁸ The general accepted the gift in the spirit in which it was offered but sent it to his father’s home in Covington. To wear such an adornment was not in keeping with his modest nature.³⁹

Old Jesse was understandably proud of his son and loved to bask in his reflected glory. It was said by many of his neighbors however, that his parental pride often degenerated into little more than abrasive boasting and even Ulysses wrote him from the battlefield asking he curb his overly-zealous words. Jesse, however, was not an easy person to dissuade from doing what he liked to do. He frequently wrote letters to the local newspapers, and after the Fort Donelson victory, began boasting his son would make an ideal president.

Jesse often tried his hand at poetry and for Covington’s 1862 Fourth of July observance, composed one which caused no end of embarrassment for his celebrated son. The nine-stanza poem, entitled *Fort Donelson*, read, in part:

*And when the war at last is ended,
The Rebellion crushed and its chiefs suspended,
When slavery is gone and peace is come,
The saber sheathed and hushed the drum,
Then let the public voice have vent –
U.S. GRANT FOR PRESIDENT!
From the prairies West to the Eastern board,
Let the cry go up with one accord,
“We’ll have no man for President,
But the country’s idol, General Grant.”*⁴⁰

Patriotism had been at a fever pitch throughout these early months of 1862. Thousands of troops and tons of materiel poured southward through the city and the community’s women were kept busy trying to treat each of the regiments to at least one home-cooked meal. The new armory was usually the site of such festive events, whether it was the 16th, 20th, or 40th Ohio Regiments, or the 10th Kentucky, or any of the numerous other units to serve here, all agreed the meals were a considerable improvement over army fare.

In central Kentucky, the women of Woodford County planned a New Year’s dinner for the Union troops stationed in and about Lexington.⁴¹

During January’s closing days, more than 8,000 army mules passed through town for duty in the state’s interior and on February 18th, the 64th, 70th, and 71st Ohio Volunteer Infantry Regiments left Newport aboard the steamers *Bay City*, *Cricketer No. 2*, *Moses McLellan*, *Ohio No. 2*, *Dunleith* and *Iowa*.

Many of the Ohio regiments counted scores of Covingtonians on their rosters. One Covington member of the 72nd Ohio wrote of his impressions of the civilians with whom he came in contact as his regiment pushed its way into southern territory. Like so many American soldiers of later wars, he noted: “The inhabitants are eager to get our green backs wherever we go.”⁴²

Enlistment offices appeared all over the city. In January, ex-Deputy Marshal Harry Biff opened a recruiting office for the 50th Ohio Volunteer Infantry and inducted many Kentuckians into that regiment. The 50th later saw some of the war’s heaviest action, including General Sherman’s Atlanta campaign and battles of Franklin and Nashville in Tennessee.

Another enlistment center was set up at Linn’s Livery Stable on Madison near 5th and was for those desiring service in the cavalry.

It was common for some men to express a preference for duty with a certain unit only, but missing the opportunity to join that unit while the recruiting officer was in town. This was the case with Asa Drury who traveled

to Falmouth on February 8th to enroll as a chaplain in the 18th Kentucky.⁴³ The following August, the Confederates took Reverend Drury prisoner near Richmond, Kentucky but released him on parole. Despite this and the fact his school board had granted him but a six-months' leave of absence, the state's adjutant general continued recognizing him as the regiment's chaplain until October 4, 1863.^{44 45 46}

In August 1862, the 6th Kentucky Infantry renewed its local recruiting efforts, while Captain James C. Foy opened a recruiting office in the Magnolia Hotel for the 23rd Kentucky Infantry. The 8th Kentucky Cavalry, commanded by then-Colonel James M. Shackelford, maintained a recruiting office on the east side of Scott between Fourth and Fifth Streets and the 32nd Kentucky Infantry had its recruiting center at city hall.

During that month, Adjutant General Finnell authorized city jailer Andrew Herod to raise a company for the 32nd Kentucky. He issued commissions to Captain Joseph Lawson and Lieutenants Allen Purdy and Henry Cook to raise a Covington regiment for the 13th Kentucky Cavalry. Lawson established his office at the southwest corner of Seventh and Madison.

In Campbell County, George F. Webster announced he was resigning his seat in the Legislature to accept a captaincy in the Quartermaster General's office.⁴⁷

Enlistments were brisk for the prospects of fighting the rebels. It was not only males who succumbed to the lure of that prospect, for a number of women successfully masqueraded as men and signed up to help defend the Union. Their feat was made easier because of the large number of beardless young boys enlisting.

Women masquerading as men was first brought to Marshal Clint Butts' attention rather abruptly when he once took an ill soldier into custody on Pike Street. The soldier, a member of Colonel Marcellus (Marc) Mundy's 23rd Kentucky Regiment, was stationed at Camp King and had become ill in town on a pass. After the soldier was taken to city hall, it was discovered the would-be warrior was really a twenty-year-old Canadian woman who had somehow disguised herself as a man and enrolled in Colonel Mundy's regiment. Mundy was stunned with surprise when informed of the discovery but declared she had been an excellent soldier. The young woman protested vehemently when told she could no longer serve in the military. Finally, Mundy solved the dilemma by allowing her to return to his unit as a regimental nurse.⁴⁸

A similar occurrence took place when a young Richmond, Indiana girl came to Covington and enlisted as a private in the Second Kentucky Heavy Artillery. Her deception was not discovered until a week after she had been inducted.⁴⁹

Yet another case, was a Scots woman who enlisted in a Kentucky regiment and took part in the Battle of Mill Springs. After three months of military service, she decided to disclose her gender and be discharged from the army. She then retired to Detroit.⁵⁰

Some time before this, the Assistant Secretary of War proposed transferring the Union's floundering Army of the Potomac to Kentucky, where it would join with the successful troops on the western front. In a combined assault it could split the Confederacy in half by a mighty push southward. The logistics of the move was worked out and called for the eastern troops to be moved to Pittsburgh, where they would board downriver transports to Covington.

It was no small undertaking, for the plans included bringing everything the army needed. The time involved in the move from Washington to the docks at Covington was to consume eleven days. The planned move was about to be executed when Grant's victories at Forts Henry and Donelson changed the entire picture. Washington realized that the western field generals were fighting generals and could manage the job quite well by themselves.

The rebel defeat at Fort Donelson represented one of their most serious losses. The post, which counted two regiments of Kentuckians among its defenders, had been placed under command of Brigadier General John B. Floyd, the former Secretary of War – now a Confederate political officer.

Some claimed Floyd had misappropriated government funds while ostensibly serving the Union. As a result, he had morbid fear of being taken prisoner, worried of being tried for treason or at very least for fraud. The thoroughly frightened commander turned his post over to Brigadier General Gideon Pillow and made preparations to flee to safety.

Pillow, no better a soldier than Floyd, now emulated that frightened officer and turned the command over to the third ranking general, Simon B. Buckner. The two resigned commanders were joined by Nathan Bedford Forrest, at the time a lieutenant-colonel and the three of them fled the fortification, leaving Buckner the job of surrendering.

Buckner, an old friend of Grant, accepted his unhappy task and wrote the Union commander to negotiate a settlement. General Grant replied with words that would capture the world's imagination:

No terms except unconditional and immediate surrender can be accepted. I propose to move immediately upon your works. ⁵¹

The startled Confederate general, who had been wheedling for terms, capitulated and surrendered an estimated 12,000 to 15,000 soldiers, although he denounced Grant's terms as being "ungenerous and unchivalrous."⁵²

Still, the friendship of these two men, and their admiration for each other, continued. Buckner was present at Grant's inauguration as he took the oath of office and years later served as one of his pall bearers.

General Grant's victories saved Kentucky from enormous destruction of life and property. He wrote his family in Covington that it was his firm belief the war could quickly be ended if there was a single unified command in the west which would follow up the Fort Henry and Fort Donelson victories with a full-scale incursion into the deep South. Instead, the rebels were given time to raise more troops and fortify new positions. The general realized the only way to a final victory would have to be through a prolonged struggle.

It was also Grant's belief the Southern people would have brought an immediate halt to the war in mid-1862 if they had been free to express their feelings without the influence of the Confederate leaders. He expressed this view in a letter to Julia from the Corinth battle site.⁵³

The general's spectacular victories at the two Tennessee strongholds wrecked Confederate plans to make Kentucky and other border states the war's major battleground. This was one of Grant's reasons for attacking the forts. The rebels had concentrated some of their best troops along lines of strong positions in order to save the Confederacy the horrors of war, while turning those border states which had not seceded into major battle areas.

One Confederate objective was to control Kentucky and hopefully, cross the Ohio and make the northern states the theatre of war. If such an invasion proved impossible, the great rivers such as the Mississippi and Ohio, must be held at all cost and made into formidable front lines of defense. The Confederacy would be secure behind these lines and eventually compel recognition of its independence. Now, all that changed and these same Confederate leaders were reeling under smashing Union blows.

Much of the enthusiasm for the war was a direct result of the number of victories scored by General Grant. His spectacular wins aroused new hope throughout the land and led to he being hailed as the one person to save the Union and bring peace. State legislatures voted him special thanks and each delivery of mail brought him showers of gifts from a grateful citizenry. He was truly America's man of the hour as the nation enshrined him in its heart.

Such a large portion of the new generation being born was named in the general's honor that the land was being populated by a whole host of little U. S.s and Grants.

Covington witnessed an almost endless number of visitors who came here to congratulate the general's family. Newsmen conducted interviews while artists made countless sketches of them and their home – 520 Greenup was easily the best known address in all of Kentucky.

Not everyone shared this high opinion of the general, and criticisms invariably drew a broadside of bitter invectives from Jesse. A host of detractors said Grant was a drunkard and a butcher and it is tragic that so many otherwise reputable historians allowed such sordid gossip to influence their judgment of a man possessed of such military brilliance.

On occasion, Hannah would send her son a bottle of Covington-made wine and sometimes include a bottle of Covington bourbon for his aides.⁵⁴ Such gifts added fuel to the gossip, much of it promoted by unreasonably jealous generals who were chagrined at his army's striking successes. These critics were often politically ambitious men who were misfits as soldiers and generals.

Even some northern newspaper joined in the harangue. Their attacks caused a great deal of anguish for Julia and prompted the celebrated General William T. Sherman to write many letters to her at Covington where he generously praised her husband's abilities.⁵⁵

Despite the handicap of being a target for frequent malicious attacks, General Grant continued his vigorous prosecution of the war. Jesse's unbridled enthusiasm, defending him however, caused no small amount of anxiety and embarrassment for the modest general and eventually prompted Ulysses to write from the Corinth battle site asking his father to cease such zealous efforts in his behalf.⁵⁶

Tension grew between Julia and her in-laws as criticism of the general mounted. Despite the fact she recognized Covington as an ideal community for her children and had enrolled them in the local schools, she nevertheless began to feel they were reaching a point where they would no longer be welcome in their grandparents' home.⁵⁷ The situation was aggravated by the different attitudes Julia held toward money. She was fond of small luxuries and considered his thrift as penny pinching. Conversely, Jesse considered her to be overly extravagant.⁵⁸

Julia often stated she felt more than satisfied with her Covington in-laws, including Ulysses' brothers and sisters. She virtually adored Hannah and considered her one of the kindness and self-sacrificing women she ever met. Yet, Julia always felt a deep desire to be near her husband.

Soon, she bundled up the children over old Jesse's protests and joined Ulysses at various points near his command. Julia had grown fond of Covington as a home however and never discontinued visits to the town, though eventually making them more sparingly.

Julia always preferred being with her husband and throughout the war constantly strived to accomplish this or else be as near as possible to his campaigns. It was once said of her: "Having learned a lesson from her predecessor, Penelope, she accompanied her Ulysses in his wanderings around the world."⁵⁹

In May 1863, General Grant launched one of the most daring campaigns in all military history. He moved to the south of Vicksburg, Mississippi and against every established rule of military science, cut loose from his base of supplies. Covington Unionists watched in sheer fascination as "their general" marched eastward, capturing Mississippi's capitol city of Jackson and fought his way back to the edge of Vicksburg. Grant and his men laid siege to Vicksburg and captured that stronghold on July 4th.

Once again, Covington loyalists celebrated and again, the generosity of "Unconditional Surrender" Grant, as some were now calling him, became apparent when he paroled more than 31,000 captured rebel soldiers rather than intern them as prisoners of war. He did this in spite of considerable evidence that many previously released southerners did not honor their parole terms but returned to the field of combat.

Covington was proud of its adopted son and went into sheer frenzy when capture of Fort Henry and Fort Donelson was followed with Corinth and his smashing victory at Vicksburg. Parades were held, bands played and fireworks displays seemed endless.

One observer described the town's reaction to the general's victories:

*Stores were soon depleted of powder, rockets, Roman candles, etc! Flags were thrown to the breeze from nearly every loyal home . . . At night the Kenton Light Artillery fired a salute and a procession of citizens, headed by a band of music, proceeded to the residence of Mr. Grant, the venerable father of the hero of Vicksburg and called him out. The old gentleman responded in short speech and was loudly cheered. Later . . . a delegation from Cincinnati, also accompanied by music, awaited upon Mr. Grant and congratulated him upon the success of his illustrious son . . . At the corner of Sixth and Madison streets a large crowd collected and a fine display of fireworks took place . . . after which a procession was formed and marched through the principal streets . . . with huzzas for the Union and General Grant. Bonfires blazed in nearly every street . . . so great was their enthusiasm over the glorious man.*⁶⁰

It was the nation's birthday when Vicksburg fell and area residents felt fully justified in turning that day's usual celebrations into a week-long frenzy of excitement. The same was true in Newport, which a reporter said "was in a blaze of excitement." Bonfires burned on every street of that town, while "cannons, rockets and Roman candles were fired and crowds of citizens marched through the streets to the music of fife and drum."⁶¹

Similar celebrations took place throughout the county's rural sections. On July 8th, the soldiers at Newport Barracks were still firing salutes in observance of Grant's victory and staged a special tribute to him that night when they "got up a magnificent display of fireworks."⁶²

There are few campaigns in all annals of warfare that can compare with Grant's Vicksburg campaign. The general's compassionate care and treatment of the wounded of both sides will always stand as a monumental rebuff to the hate-inspired cry of "Grant, the butcher." He had cut the Confederacy in two and, if allowed a free hand at that time, could possibly have brought the war to a quick end.

Lincoln was so impressed with Grant that after the capture of Vicksburg, he gave him command of most armies in the Western Theater. This arena covered 240,000 square miles of Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama and Georgia and contained in its seceded portion, a large percentage of the Confederacy's key rail junctions, industries and foodstuff.

The new Commanding General immediately elevated Major General Thomas – "the Rock of Chickamauga" and for whom Northern Kentucky's Fort Thomas is named – to command the encircled Army of the Cumberland at Chattanooga. Once again, Grant's brilliance and sound strategy became apparent, for five days later,

a supply line was opened to the city and a short time later, Thomas and his men, under orders from Grant, cleared Missionary Ridge.

It was abundantly clear to Lincoln this man Grant was one of very few who had a firm grasp of the overall military picture and an effective strategy was developing from that understanding.

To understand the tasks facing General Grant, one must know the Confederacy's geography, the military background and nature of each side as well as logistics of the contending armies. For Ulysses, this knowledge had to be in depth – and it was. The problem of maneuver and supply which he faced, because of the vast terrain the war covered, were unparalleled in history.

In March 1864, Grant's outstanding military ability won him appointment as supreme commander of all armies of the Union. After this promotion, the general decided to pay a quick visit to Covington and his parents.

The new Commanding General arrived here March 13th, only four days after President Lincoln presented him his new rank and one day after being placed in command of all Union forces. Grant would soon be facing the renowned Confederate, General Robert E. Lee, yet this humble man still chose not to attire himself in glittering regalia. He wore a plain and drab overcoat and carried his own simple satchel made of carpet-like material that was so common in that day.⁶³

The new commander's well-known quality of thrift became readily apparent when he arrived at the Cincinnati railroad station and inquired of a coachman what the fare to Covington would be. When the coachman replied \$3, General Grant declared it was too much – he would rather walk. He strolled from the station to the ferry crossing and walked unnoticed through the streets of Covington to his parents' home.⁶⁴

When news of the general's visit spread, several townspeople called upon him at the Greenup address. They were received with all the courtesy and sincere humility that only a person as unassuming as Ulysses Grant could possibly provide.⁶⁵

Unlike many Union and Confederate military leaders, the modest General Grant was never inclined to dress in showy or ostentatious uniforms. The very prospect of a military life held no fascination for him. As to his earlier West Point appointment, he mused:

*A military life had no charm for me and I had not the faintest idea of staying in the army even if I should be graduated, which I did not expect.*⁶⁶

He was not quite 17 years of age when he was given his appointment as a cadet.

Grant did not care too much for most of his studies at West Point but like many of the world's military geniuses, he displayed unusual ability in the field of mathematics. It was his ambition to eventually "secure a detail for a few years as assistant professor of mathematics at the Academy and afterwards obtain a permanent position as professor in some respectable college."⁶⁷ Fate decreed otherwise, for two wars – the Mexican and Civil – awaited him.

Grant attributed part of his dislike for uniforms to an early incident in Cincinnati. He just graduated from West Point and was riding along a Cincinnati street feeling very self-conscious in his new uniform, when in his own words:

*...a little urchin, bareheaded, barefooted, with dirty and ragged pants held up by a single gallows . . . and a shirt that had not seen a wash-tub for weeks, turned to be and cried: "Soldier! Will you work? No sir-ee; I'll sell my shirt first!"*⁶⁸

Just as glittering uniforms failed to impress the new commanding general, neither did he stand in awe of General Lee, nor had the faintest doubt concerning the outcome of the confrontation, certain to take place.

Grant was well aware he would have to contend with Lee's exploitation of the tremendous power given an army on the defensive. The fact the Confederate army met with disastrous results in each of its three attempts to launch offensives – Lee's invasion of Maryland, his subsequent defeat at Antietam, Bragg's ill-fated 1862 Kentucky invasion and Lee's invasion of Pennsylvania and disastrous loss at Gettysburg.

Those losses, plus Hood's debacle at Franklin and Nashville, Tennessee, convinced Lee and the Confederacy to stay with a policy of defensive warfare. This was done because of three factors:

1. To take the offensive would require such a large number of casualties the South could not possibly hope to win.
2. If the defensive Southern tactics should cost the attacking Union forces enough casualties, perhaps a disillusioned North would agree to the nation's partition.

3. Failing this, there was hope the Confederacy might sufficiently prolong the war until it won recognition and aid from Europe.

The Eastern Theater of Operations contained a number of east-west streams which could serve admirably as natural defense lines.

The Southerners' advantage could be overcome in part by mounting superior numbers and Grant included this concept in his plans. When his mother asked if he had any doubts about the outcome of his certain confrontation with Lee, he answered by assuring her that he knew Lee as well as he knew himself and he would attack those points where he was weak and flank the ones where he was strong.⁶⁹ It was not too long afterward he did exactly that.

The town's waterfront was an extremely busy location as boats engaged in various forms of war activity were constantly arriving and departing. The saddest arrivals were those boats carrying the dead and wounded from Southern battlefields. On these occasions, townspeople of all ages were quick to offer every aid and comfort they could. Typical were those of children of the Second District School when they learned of the arrival of the *Tycoon* and the *Lancaster No. 4* with their cargoes of wounded and dead. The children quickly contributed about \$15 in pennies and nickels, as well as a quantity of fresh lint.

Both steamboats arrived on April 17, 1862, carrying casualties from Shiloh. The *Lancaster No. 4* landed at the foot of Main Street and discharged 102 wounded. They, with those from the *Tycoon*, were immediately rushed to the Main Street Military Hospital to be given the best medical attention of the time. The hospital received the soldiers even though it was still in the process of being equipped and would not officially open for another week.⁷⁰

Covington's hospital facilities saw heavy use and as the war's tempo increased, boatloads of casualties arrived here from many battle arenas. On February 12, 1863, the steamer *Emerald* alone brought in 242 casualties from the Nashville battle front.

Abraham P. Rose, who had contracted to supply the hospitals with coffins for the dead, reported on February 20, 1863 that to date, there had been 113 patients to succumb to their injuries while at the Main Street Hospital, 37 at the Seminary Hospital [11th Street] and 11 at the Greenup Street Hospital.⁷¹

The hospital at Newport Barracks, where Dr. Nathaniel Burger Shaler was employed as surgeon, was used for some of the war's very worst cases. These severely wounded men were sent from field hospitals throughout the war zones, yet the Newport facility managed to compile a record of the highest percentage of successfully recorded patients of any of the nation's hospitals of that time.⁷²

In civilian matters, it was announced in March that the Western Fire Company Number 4, whose engine house was at Sixth and Main, had disbanded because most of its members had enlisted in the federal army.⁷³

During that month, the Fire Department Chief asked City Council to abolish all the various fire companies because of what he termed "their inefficiency." The war-time companies, he said, had become composed largely of "young and vicious boys who loaf around the engine houses and cut and destroy the city property." The chief claimed such youths had already inflicted \$1,000 of damage to equipment of Fire Company No. 1 alone.

Because of such destruction, and claims the entire system was unreliable, the Fire Chief recommended its immediate abolishment. After that was accomplished, he said, the city should purchase a steam fire-engine and reorganize the community's entire fire-fighting policy.⁷⁴

Council members agreed with all the Chief's recommendations, but failed to take any immediate action to remedy the situation.

Local patriotic rallies were commonplace at the time, as they were throughout each of the war years. On June 28, 1862, a large crowd assembled for one such affair at the Eleventh Street Markethouse to hear an address by Colonel R.B. Carpenter. A gun squad brought a cannon to fire a salute for the affair, but while the gunners were relaxing in a nearby saloon, someone, thought by some to be a neighborhood prankster, spiked the big field piece.⁷⁵

When the gunners learned what had taken place, they carted the cannon to a neighborhood blacksmith where the spike was drilled out in time to fire a few rounds before the meeting adjournment.⁷⁶

Covington's Fourth of July observation that year was unusually quiet. In place of the usual parades and chauvinistic jingoism, the event passed with family picnics as the order of the day. Many also made special efforts to visit patients at the hospitals and several local musicians performed for the sick and wounded.

Two weeks later, July 17th, the town was electrified by news of John Hunt Morgan's capture of Cynthia. Within 24 hours, Covington was placed under martial law. All approaches to the city were heavily guarded, while the city itself was patrolled nightly by the military, requiring all civilians to be off the streets by 9:00 PM. James L. Foley, who had returned from fighting in Missouri, was appointed the county's Provost Marshal.

Morgan did not enjoy the spoils for long. On July 20th, a company of 50 mounted men, all raised and equipped in Covington and commanded by Captain John Todd, left aboard a special train for that community, while a strong Union force was sent out from Lexington. The Confederate raiders began withdrawing southward and eventually fell back to Tennessee.

When Morgan departed from Cynthiana he left several of his wounded behind and warned the townspeople to take good care of them, or else suffer the “dire vengeance” which would be taken.⁷⁷

The full impact of the battle was not felt here until the wounded and the bodies of the dead began to arrive for return to their families. The community was grief stricken, for many of the casualties had been popular young men of the area. Significantly, it was just the previous summer that local Catholics had opened the St. Elizabeth Foundling Home for infant war orphans. The home, on East Seventh Street, was operated in conjunction with the hospital of the same name.

One of the hardest hit units at Cynthiana was a company largely of Newport youths. When the C & L train bearing the bodies of William Shipman and Lewis Wolf from that company arrived at Covington on the evening of July 22nd, it was met by military squads which solemnly escorted the bodies to the homes of the bereaved families.

The soldiers’ funerals took place the next day. All of Newport was draped in mourning and flags flew at half-staff. The war was no longer fought on remote battlefields and memorialized locally by parades and brass bands. Suddenly it became very real and local Unionists just as suddenly found it virtually impossible to tolerate the action of their pro-Southern neighbors.

Those showing any favoritism towards the South were now so despised that many local pro-Southerners moved **north** to the Ohio side of the river to escape the wrath of their fellow Kentuckians.

Newport, especially, experienced a strong wave of anti-Southern feeling and its citizens initiated a round-up of several fellow townspeople suspected of having rebel sympathies. Outraged Newporters raided suspects’ homes and confiscated and destroyed Confederate flags and sheet music, including songs as *Bonnie Blue Flag*, *Southern Marsellaise*, *Maryland*, *My Maryland*, *Beauregard’s March*, *The Jeff Davis March*, and something called *John Morgan’s Schottische*.⁷⁸

The Newporters, whose own flags were at half-staff, were in no mood to toy with suspected rebels. The military was concerned about Newport’s reaction and on July 25th, Henry C. Gassaway of that city’s Provost Marshal’s office issued a statement ordering those persons making unauthorized searches and arrests “to discontinue such actions, as it is against my express orders.”⁷⁹

A special prison was hastily prepared for interment of arrested rebel females, who were given the job of sewing for Union soldiers stationed at the Barracks. Newport Barracks was also used to house Confederates taken as prisoners of war at Cynthiana.

On the same day Gassaway issued his order, a local newsman noted that many “secessionists and Southern Rights men” were fleeing Covington and Newport and taking temporary refuge in Cincinnati.⁸⁰ That was the second time such a mass flight took place and points to the ironic fact that slaveholding Covington and Newport was at times far more militant in their Unionism than was their northern neighbor.

The term “Copperhead” was being freely used by local loyalists when referring to those suspected of holding southern sympathies. According to the Unionists, the stereotyped characteristics of the poisonous snake of the same name were identical to those displayed by southern sympathizers. Kentucky would be a better place if both were exterminated, many thought.

On July 23rd, Covington’s martial law was relaxed somewhat. However, suspected “Copperheads” were required to take an oath of loyalty to the Union. The very next day, Provost Marshal Foley reminded all political candidates in an upcoming local election of an order issued three days earlier by the military. The order declared no one hostile to the government and desiring its overthrow would be permitted to run for office in Kentucky.

Local officials were initially inclined to ignore the new order but in the face of renewed Confederate armed activity in the state, decided to enforce its provisions. The Unionists agreed with the portion of the order which declared:

*He who desires the overthrow of the Government can seek office under the Government only to promote its overthrow.*⁸¹

What Southern sympathizers and states’ righters have always called unjust military interference in the elections, was viewed by loyal Unionists as necessary precautionary safe-guards. The order did not outlaw political parties, nor did it outlaw political differences, unless those differences include a belief in the nation’s dissolution. Kentucky was once again facing an armed invasion and in some parts of the state, there had been open rejoicing at recent Confederate victories.

It was entirely possible Kentucky might be pulled out of the Union and it was no secret there were political forces working toward that end. In those communities dominated by southern sympathizers, Union supporters were made the target of daily insults and abuse and secession was openly taught in the schools.⁸²

The military was aware of the threats a hostile political regime would pose and recognized the absolute necessity of preventing the state's defection to the Confederates. This dictated the provision which declared:

*No person hostile in opinion to the Government and desiring its overthrow, will be allowed to stand for office in the District of Kentucky. The attempt of such a person to stand for office will be regarded in itself sufficient evidence for his treasonable intent to warrant his arrest.*⁸³

Despite cries of military despotism, the move to bar states' rights sympathizers thought to be a wise move, for in the unlikely event that political control of various local and state offices had passed to the pro-southerners, then Kentucky's reception of the Confederate invaders would undoubtedly have been entirely different. The states' rights office holders would be in a position to hinder Unionist activities, while possessing the political ability to effectively cooperate with southern invaders and pave their way into various localities. Kentucky would have been handed over to the Confederacy and, in President Lincoln's opinion that would virtually assure the South's ultimate victory.

A number of Covington's political hopefuls now joined the pro-southerners' northward flight to Ohio. One Cincinnati newsman noted their predicament when he wrote:

*For a day or two past many residents of Covington and Newport have been taking temporary refuge in this city. They are composed of rank Secessionists and "Southern Rights" men who are fleeing from the necessity of taking the oath of allegiance to the United States Government. Some of the candidates for office in Kenton County and some who hold office, are in a like delicate position with the first described individuals, as far as the sensitiveness upon the subject of taking the oath of allegiance to the Government that feeds them is concerned. – Their sensitiveness, however, avail them nothing: either their consciences or their stomachs must suffer. The Provost Marshal, it seems, has no idea of permitting them to feed fat upon the public crib, at the same moment they are seeking to destroy their benefactor.*⁸⁴

Samuel M. Moore, candidate for re-election as Kenton County Circuit Court Judge, was one suspected of being somewhat less than totally loyal to the Union. He believed the new order was issued only for the moral effect it might have and remained in the political race. He gave no indication of agreeable to take a loyalty oath.⁸⁵

Moore quickly learned the reality when he was personally told to either take the loyalty oath or withdraw from the election. Otherwise he would be placed under arrest. Moore chose to withdraw.⁸⁶

Among others withdrawing from political races were William E. Arthur [*Arthur Apartments* – property location, editor] and Solomon C. Perrin, candidates for the offices of Commonwealth Attorney and County Clerk respectively.

Perrin was a native of Harrison County and member of a family who openly sympathized with the South.⁸⁷ Yet some writers, such as Richard H. Collins, would later denounce such orders which prompted Perrin's withdrawal by declaring:

*It was part of federal policy to make Kentucky **feel** the humiliation, bitterness and personal suffering of a relentless civil war; and those who sought by an honorable, gentle and kindly course to keep the masses of people at home and quiet, were soon hurled from authority.*⁸⁸

The military justified its actions by declaring it was virtually forced to adopt such precautionary moves in reaction to Confederate threats to the state and counteract increasing acts of violence and sabotage committed by local secessionists.

One act of sabotage occurred the night of June 5, 1862, when rebel sympathizers inflicted serious damage at Fort Shaler, near Newport. Two of the fortification's 24-pounder cannon were spiked with large nails driven firmly into their torch-holes. Two nights later, two 32-pounders met the same fate and temporary barracks set afire and destroyed.⁸⁹

Private property was also not immune from attacks. Typical was the slicing-up of a quantity of harnesses belonging to John Finnell and the burning of the barn and stables on his Kenton County farm.⁹⁰

These acts infuriated the community's loyal citizens who demanded a special tax for the military be placed on all southern sympathizers in Covington and Newport. Local officials obliged the townsfolk and issued an order for such a levy. It was quickly rescinded, however, by Major General Gordon Granger, Commander of the District of Central Kentucky.⁹¹

Some local newsmen began accusing southern sympathizers of being "too cowardly to enter the Southern Army and too sneaking and mean to proclaim themselves against the Union."⁹²

Many of Covington's states' righters remaining at home and being accused, had never actually sympathized with every aspect of the Confederacy. Their views did not embrace the principles of secession and this point is often overlooked by latter-day writers of history, just as the more rabid of pro-Unionists often overlooked it and passed harsh laws. The laws however, must be understood in the light of events of that day. There was an **armed** revolution in progress and the American nation **was** in utmost danger.

The more rabid of the pro-southern element continued to accuse Unionist leaders of being political opportunists who would create strife and division within the state. Ironically, this same articulate and vocal majority defended the rebel view that no attempt be made to interfere with southern efforts to destroy the Union!

Neither did the South's supporters rule out terrorism and even murder as weapons against their Unionist neighbors. Covingtonians were well-aware of this and of the reported fate of a central Kentucky legislator who had voted to keep the state in the Union. The lawmaker was murdered when he returned home from Frankfort and the act committed by his disillusioned pro-southern neighbors.⁹³ Such lawlessness, Unionists insisted, could not go unchallenged.

Tenseness permeating the Covington area even reached into local courtrooms. During a trial states righter William E. Arthur and Unionist Mortimer M. Benton were opposing attorneys. Benton was cross-examining a witness when Arthur, acting as prosecutor, rephrased one of Benton's questions. Benton accused the states righter of placing answers in the witness' mouth, which led to the two attorneys becoming engaged in an extremely heated argument. Benton struck Arthur and Arthur returned the blow. When they were separated, the presiding judge fined each \$30.⁹⁴

A local Covington and Kenton County election was set for August 4th and saw two full slates of candidates – those of the independent Democrats and regular Union Party. The winners, all from the regular Union Party, were:

- Joseph Doniphan.....Circuit Judge
- R.B. Carpenter.....Commonwealth Attorney
- S.H. Cambron.....County Attorney
- James Ayers, Jr.....County Clerk
- Hiram F. Bowen.....Sheriff
- Andrew H. Harod.....Jailer
- John N. Maxwell.....County Coroner
- John W. Yates.....County Assessor
- J.W. Garner.....County Surveyor
- Lafayette Shaw.....County Judge
- Clinton Butts.....Covington City Marshal
- Cyrus A. Preston.....Covington Mayor

Preston's defeated opponent, Joseph Andrew, polled only 99 votes to the victor's 1,244. In his concession, the Independent Democrat congratulated his backers as being "steadfast in the faith as regards our country's good, our independence and the rights of all." He added that those who had opposed him were "children of darkness" and "imps of hell."⁹⁵

The Unionist victory represented the tide of patriotism sweeping the state. Some Covingtonians claimed the earlier election of states righter Goodson as mayor and Magoffin as governor occurred because of the loyal citizens' fruitless efforts to appease the pro-southern element. They declared Kentucky's Unionists never wanted war but had been long subjected to violent and consistent denunciations by states' righters as little more than warmongers.

Now that Kentucky found itself under armed attack by a militant and radical southern invader, the state's loyalty surfaced in an unexpected and surprisingly strong backlash. The Confederate attack galvanized Kentuckians'

patriotic zeal and led to arrest and imprisonment of scores of citizens whose loyalty was questioned. Other suspected rebels became subject to almost daily harassment from their neighbors while grand juries in the state were indicting southern sympathizers for treason. States rights legislators were forced to resign and even such strongholds of slavery as Lexington elected full slates of Unionists to local offices.⁹⁶

It was common for south-bound federal troops to be warmly greeted by communities through which they passed. Kentucky men cheered them, Kentucky women served them food and both worked to raise funds for any who had left a needy family behind.

Confederate raids like Morgan's spurred more enlistments in the federal cause – something totally unexpected by the Confederate raider.⁹⁷ Some of his critics pointed out that a dispassionate analysis of Morgan's actions reveal he contributed little or nothing to influence the South's main war effort and more likely, even harmed it. He certainly alerted Kentuckians more than any person had done, to the full dangers of dis-union. His incursions made them see the war an infinitely more horrible struggle than southern sentimentalists had pictured it.

Kentucky's loyalty during 1862 proved invaluable to the national government. It prevented the Confederates from using the Ohio River as a defense line and forced the war front further south. Magoffin and his supporters were rendered ineffective, and for a time, the views of the more radical states righters were held in law regard. The state's support for the federal cause was at its wartime peak.⁹⁸

Locally, recruiting and other patriotic posters were seen everywhere as were flags and bunting. Home guard units drilled and paraded through the streets while small boys played war in the alleys and vacant lots. Military convoys seemed endless as tons of material and thousands of men passed through town. Patriotic civilian groups vied with each other at feeding and otherwise aiding the long columns of troops crossing the Ohio and boarding trains at the Covington terminal [Pike & Washington – editor]. They also raised funds, aided soldiers' families and generally helped morale.

This outpouring of Unionism was later glossed over, or entirely ignored by the state's post-war historians – many of whom had been southern sympathizers themselves. Their accounts of Kentucky's attitudes in relation to the Confederacy tend to be far more chauvinistic than factual. Writers such as Zachariah Smith presented a purely partisan view of this facet of the state's development, while others such as Richard Collins, resorted to derisive epithets when referring to the state's Union activities. Collins' sympathies, like Smith's, had been with the South and his writing reveals little or no effort to conceal his resentment at the southerners' plight.

In response to these biased accounts, one Unionist later wrote:

*Doubtless some injustice was done at the time by the military and also by those who denounced the military but a more uncalled-for injustice has been perpetuated since the war by various writers who have placed upon the historic page the wholesale crimination rife at the time but not sustained by any record evidence.*⁹⁹

One caught up and swept away by that 1862 tide of patriotism was Governor Magoffin. He was rebuffed repeatedly by the legislature and many efforts were made to secure his resignation. Eventually, he admitted his ineffectiveness, and offered to resign if allowed to approve his successor. The Unionists agreed without hesitation.

The lieutenant governor was now deceased and next in line was speaker of the senate, John F. Fisk. Magoffin was bitterly opposed to Fisk as governor, so on August 16th, the Covingtonian voluntarily resigned his position so the senate might elect James F. Robinson in his place. Magoffin then resigned and senate speaker Robinson became acting governor. After that, Fisk was re-elected to the speakership.

Magoffin's objection to Fisk stemmed from his distaste for having the state headed by an inflexible Unionist. Yet, as one writer pointed out later:

*Of all the acts in Mr. Fisk's eventful life, perhaps none so ably portrayed his . . . unselfishness of motive, nor was there one which was followed by so many important consequences. It strengthened the Union sentiment of the state, gave it fresh tone and vigor and greatly facilitated the efforts of the general government. Probably no event contributed more effectively to the defeat of the secessionists in this state.*¹⁰⁰

Fisk, born December 14th, 1815 in Genesee County, New York, had come to Kentucky in May 1837. He became a school teacher in Mason County and in 1839 paid a brief visit to Covington. "I was pleased with the little town," he later said and after more travels, returned in October 1848 to make it his permanent home.¹⁰¹

During that year, Fisk was admitted to the bar and began a successful law practice. He became prominent in the Whig Party and served in several offices: city attorney, county attorney, school trustee, school board president and in 1857, elected to state senate on the Democratic ticket.¹⁰²

Fisk was a strong backer of Stephen A. Douglas during the 1860 presidential election but with the onset of war, gave his unstinting support to President Lincoln and became a life-long Republican. At the end of eight years of service in the Kentucky Senate, he refused all attempts to run for any other office, state or national.¹⁰³

Fisk's wife, Elizabeth Sarah, was an uncompromising Unionist whose life, like the lives of her children, was often threatened by radical, rebel sympathizers. Despite the threats and one actual attempt on her life, she still refused all offers of an armed Union guard. She died a peaceful death on April 18, 1904, a little more than two years after death of her husband, who died February 21, 1902.¹⁰⁴

The editor of the *Covington Journal* was highly suspicious of Fisk's resignation in favor of Robinson. The newsman claimed Governor Magoffin had no real choice in the affair and declared it was all part of a plan originated by Unionists who had formerly been Republicans. He said these individuals wanted nothing to do with the Unionists who had once been Democrats. Fisk fit into the latter category.

The journalist denounced such Unionists and Republicans in general as being for war. "War places at their disposal numerous offices and immense sums of money and this adds to their power and influence," he declared.¹⁰⁵

Neither did the editor relent in his attacks on the new administration, for sometime later he complained:

*It has probably been noticed that in the distribution of the spoils in Kentucky, Union men of Democratic antecedents have been compelled to put up with the crumbs and few at that.*¹⁰⁶

Davis had long since gained a reputation for being a harsh critic of virtually anything connected with the Union war effort. He consistently complained of the cost of prosecuting the war and frequently accused government officials of indulging in nightly revels and lavish spending on Washington parties. The South, he predicted, would eventually emerge victorious over a corrupt Union that was already tottering on the brink of financial collapse.

None of this sat well with the town's staunch Unionists. To them, Davis' views were traitorous and they did not hesitate to let him know how they felt.

The influence the local editor wielded had all but vanished when federal officials added their voices to the critics. Being a lonely states rights voice in Unionist Covington was no easy matter and, like Governor Magoffin, the editor found himself drowning in a sea of Unionism – a sea being stirred to overwhelming waves of patriotism.

About the same time as Magoffin's resignation, Davis decided to suspend publication of the *Journal*, saying he could no longer publish a newspaper where he did not feel free to express his "opinions and convictions in reference to public affairs without the supervision of federal officials."¹⁰⁷

Davis was thoroughly disgusted with his fellow townspeople. This was at a time, he later said, when Covingtonians manifested their loyalty "by joining the Home Guards and hanging out a ten cent flag – when the test of qualifications for public station was the capacity of the aspirant to denounce as Traitors and Copperheads all who didn't subscribe to the doctrines set up by New England Puritans and Abolitionists."¹⁰⁸

No population segment was more loyal to the Union than the town's firemen and because of this, they were especially criticized by the disgruntled Davis. All, he complained, were:

*Of the dominant party and they, with the wagon and horses belonging to the city, were prominent in all processions and other public demonstrations of that party. At the polls, on election days, no men were more active, insolent and overbearing than members of the Fire Department.*¹⁰⁹

Like Davis, virtually all members of the minority who sympathized with the Confederacy took their rejection bitterly. Many who had already gone South to join the rebels now began terming those Kentuckians who voted to support the Union as being little more than avaricious cowards the Union as being little more than avaricious cowards who were more interested in protecting their wealth than their honor.¹¹⁰

During all this, preparations were being made for Covington's newly-elected city officials to be sworn in. The ceremonies were to take place on September 1st.

When inaugural day arrived, everything proceeded in a normal fashion except for one detail – the newly-chosen mayor, Cyrus A. Preston, failed to appear.

Three days passed and the mayor-elect had still not appeared! On September 3rd, an impatient newsman, who had supported Preston asked:

WHERE IS MAYOR PRESTON?

*This is a very pertinent question, which is asked by nearly everyone in the city. Mr. C. A. Preston was elected by the Union Party of Covington, as mayor, on the 4th of August and according to the custom should have been sworn in and commenced discharge of his duties on Monday last; but he had disappeared, and it is not certainly known to the public where he is gone or when he will return. The affairs of Covington are in a condition at this time that requires the serious attention of the head of the city government and that functionary owes it to the people who elected him, to report himself at once for duty, or resign.
We want a Mayor!*¹¹¹

Meanwhile, incumbent John A. Goodson continued acting as mayor. Finally, on September 4th, Preston appeared and was sworn into office. He offered no explanation of his whereabouts.

Preston's seeming lack of concern for duties of mayor, if indeed it was a lack of concern, can only be termed inexcusable, for Kentucky had once again been invaded – this time the invaders were heading straight for Covington.

The weather was unseasonably hot and dry that September, creating a serious scarcity of water in town. A Cincinnati steam fire-engine was placed in service at the foot of Garrard to pump water from the river into the city's depleted fire-cisterns

Besides the unusual weather, the water shortage was exasperated by the multitude of troops pouring into Covington for the town's defense from Confederate attack. The military activities involved thousands of army animals, wagons and soldiers raised so much dust there were occasions when the entire town became enveloped in a dust cloud. Most streets were composed of crushed limestone [macadam] which heavily loaded wagons quickly pulverized into fine dust and "made outdoor business and movement exceedingly difficult."¹¹²

The majority of citizens accepted the heavy military traffic in stride, and regarded inconvenience a small part of the price for protecting the city from attack. There were a few, however, who complained if their particular financial interests were being harmed in any way. Such was the case with officials of the local gas company.

Amos Shinkle, a representative of the gas company, fired off a letter to city council complaining of a number of lamp posts knocked down by government wagons. Resetting the posts was a burden to the utility company, he complained, and suggested "locust posts be erected at certain street corners to prevent this from happening."¹¹³

On September 14th, military authorities leased Tebb's large store at 14 Pike Street for a general commissary depot and on the 26th, the Caldwell Building on Newport's York Street was taken over for a military hospital.¹¹⁴ Another commissary and hospital were set up in the building at the northeast corner of Eighth and Madison.

During that same September, the Covington post office volume increased to about 7,000 daily outgoing letters and 10,000 received and delivered. To handle this increase, Postmaster Hamilton Cummings lengthened the hours of the work day, and tripled postal employees.¹¹⁵

The Fourth Street Suspension Bridge between Covington and Newport suffered considerable damage from the heavy volume of military wagons using it so on the 23rd, the army began a pontoon bridge across the Licking at a location between Fourth Street and mouth of the Licking. Roadways were cut through the steep banks on either side of the stream so that when the new crossing opened four days later, it saw immediate heavy use.¹¹⁶

The pontoon crossing served only a short time. On November 6th, all real threat of a Confederate attack had disappeared and workmen began removing, not only the Licking pontoon but also the similar span which crossed the Ohio at the foot of Greenup.¹¹⁷

While the pontoons existed, the Ohio River water level made two sudden changes. In early October, the river surged above flood level and destroyed the submarine cable connecting the C&L telegraph line to the north. Repair crews were rushed into service and by October 15th, a new cable was laid under the Ohio at the foot of Scott Street.¹¹⁸

Five days later, the river was so low it was possible to wade from Covington to the Ohio side. On that day, a drove of 100 cattle forded the stream at the foot of Covington's Main Street.

The city's heavy military activity throughout 1862 had necessitated construction of additional installations. Work began that summer on the Covington Barracks near what was then the head of Greenup Street and close to Dryer's Foundry.

Fresh-water wells were dug throughout the neighborhood of the new barracks, the two most prolific at present southeast corner of 20th and Greenup and at the eastern end of present Levassor Place. New military buildings came into being and at least one, originally built as a company headquarters, still stands in the 1900 block of today's Pearl Street.¹¹⁹

Covington Barracks was constructed by Thomas & Smith Company and when completed that fall, consisted of 41 frame buildings and housed a regiment of infantry and two batteries of artillery. The base could accommodate approximately 1,000 men permanently or 2,000 temporarily. Its nine largest structures each normally house 95 soldiers.¹²⁰

Covington Barracks was destined to serve in many capacities and not all of a military nature. One unexpected service came early in November 1862 when the base furnished temporary shelter for 300 loyal Unionist refugees forced from their home in east Tennessee.¹²¹

These refugees represented one of the Confederacy's problems in prosecuting the war in the Western Theater. Several of the South's most powerful Union enclaves were located in that region. Eastern Tennessee experienced a near-reign of terror when that state joined the Confederacy.

The Tennessee Unionists voted overwhelmingly against secession and now the Confederates were making their lives unbearable. Confederates publicly hanged those accused of aiding the federals; homes of Unionists were burned; their crops destroyed, and citizens arrested and forced to swear an oath of allegiance to the C.S.A.

One Confederate arrest was of an east Tennessee congressman while attempting to pass through Virginia. He, like the others, was forced to swear allegiance to the Confederacy before being released. Such martial law and military force sent many individuals into hiding, while others struck back with full-scale guerrilla warfare. They destroyed bridges and communication lines, harassed and killed draft officials, engaged Confederate troops in skirmishes and encouraged desertion among those dissatisfied with army life.

A great number of east Tennesseans were eventually driven from their home state and found their way to war-time Covington and federal protection.

That fall, the federal government erected three large stables, each holding several hundred horses, on Banklick Pike, a mile from town. They were placed under command of Newport's Gustavus Artzman. The stables, along with several near-by acres, quartered about 2,000 horses and 2,500 mules.¹²²

Also at that time, 111 rebel prisoners arrived from Paris and Mt. Sterling and temporarily confined in the Odd Fellows Building.¹²³ They were followed by an additional 57 captives, also from Mt. Sterling.

The number of captured Confederates sent here prompted an announcement on September 2nd, 1863 that a new military prison was being erected near the Covington Barracks. This was hoped to obviate the use of such temporary quarters as the Odd Fellows Hall and the need for the old Third Street firehouse which was earlier converted into a military prison.

In addition to long lines of newly-captured Confederates, another common sight on Covington streets was the large number of former Confederate soldiers who had been recently released from northern prison camps. They had taken a loyalty oath to the Union and were passing through town on their way home.

Shortly after Mayor Preston took office, a correspondent for *Harper's Weekly* visited the area to write of local Union outposts. His published report contained a scathing attack on Covington and reflected his disdain for all slaveholding communities, large or small. The report read in part:

Covington today presented a most dilapidated appearance; but few of the inhabitants were visible, stores all closed and the streets were occupied by troops moving or vehicles attached to the army. The buildings looked as if erected in the year One and, in my judgment, the country would suffer but little were Covington wiped out. Newport, on the east side of the Licking River, is but little, if any, better; and both only serve to obstruct what would be, were they away, a most beautiful landscape.¹²⁴

Those were words of a northerner writing for a publication with a large circulation in the northern states. His description of a slaveholding city was undoubtedly influenced by concern for his readers' preconceived attitudes and beliefs. It made economic sense.

Actually, Covington experienced a large measure of prosperity during the war, despite a brief initial economic uncertainty. New buildings, many still standing, were being erected throughout the business district. Typical is the structure at 19 and 21 West Pike Street, built in 1860.

The hotel business was also prospering and on July 23, 1861, one of the Ohio Valley's finest hostelrys, the *Elliston House*, opened at the northwest corner of Harvey and Russell Streets. One writer said of its opening:

*The new hotel is admirably planned. The building is 48 feet front, 61 deep and 4 stories high. It contains between 50 and 60 rooms. In the basement a saloon, reading room, barber shop, wash-room, store rooms, etc. On the second floor, the ladies' parlor on the right and immediately in the rear of the parlor, is the dining room, large, well lighted and ventilated and with capacity to seat some 250 persons at table – the chambers are large and neatly furnished.*¹²⁵

The hotel's owner and operator, Benjamin Elliston, was not to enjoy his new business for long, for on July 11, 1863, he died of cholera.

New locomotives, manufactured by firms like Ohio's Moore & Richardson Company, were being brought to the foot of Main Street by boat and pulled through the town's streets to the Kentucky Central tracks at Eighth and Washington. Repairs to tracks and bridges, damaged by rebels were rushed. Some bridges damaged included one over Cruizes Creek and ones at DeMossville and Falmouth, both totally destroyed.¹²⁶

After the last invading rebels had been forced from the area and damages to the Kentucky Central Railroad property repaired, there came an unprecedented tide of travel into Covington. The small towns and rural areas immediately south had been cut off from border cities for two months and people now thronged through Covington, laying in supplies of fall and winter clothing, dry goods and groceries.¹²⁷

One of the first trains to arrive after the repairs, carried more than 700 passengers, nearly all were farmers and rural merchants in search of staples like coffee, salt, boots and other items that had been in short supply or non-existent during the Confederate occupation. Happy merchants described the onslaught of customers as "another invasion."¹²⁸

Tens of thousands of army dollars also flowed into Covington's economy when the commissaries purchased tons of local goods. For a long time, Covington's commissaries supplied all Union troops throughout northern, central and southern Kentucky. Long supply trains constantly rolled south carrying everything from shoe-laces to hair brushes.

Typical of many contracts given local merchants was one awarded to grocer George H. Hill on October 23, 1862. It was for 8,000 pounds of soap at 7 ¾ cents a pound.¹²⁹ Fresh bread was supplied in large quantities to the military by John Hanhauser, a popular local baker.

Covington's Peter P. MacVeigh contracted to supervise the transportation of huge amounts of provisions and supplies from Ohio warehouses for the military. He used 200 horses in his transport work and gave employment to about 100 men.

Supplies and equipment of all sorts were needed by the military and area industries strained to help meet the demand. Newport's Swift & Company as early as 1861 was supplying much of the armor plate for the Mississippi River gunboat fleet.¹³⁰

The Busch & Jordan Rolling Mill, founded 1845 at the eastern end of Eleventh Street and the banks of the Licking – one time the only iron works west of the Allegheny Mountains – won exceptionally large contracts. Its flood of war-time orders prompted the owners to establish a foundry in connection to the rolling mill. The foundry was established to manufacture axles for government wagons and Ignatius Droege, Sr., a German immigrant company employee, from Wesphalia.¹³¹ Droege proved to be an exceptionally capable individual and eventually acquired control of the entire company.¹³²

Similar war-time work was going on throughout the area's industries and most businesses prospered. The town's industrial and commercial prosperity was accompanied by sharp price rises for many consumer items. This led to demands by labor for wage increases to meet the rising cost of living.

In February 1863, boiler workers at all local rolling mills went on strike when management refused their request for a \$1 raise for each ton produced. The employees were earning \$6 per ton and management finally met the workers' demands after a three-week strike.¹³³

Prices continued their upward swing and the following month local brewers announced the price of beer was being increased from \$7 to \$10 a barrel. Retailers, of course, passed the raise along to the consumer and increased the price of a glass of beer from 3 cents to an unheard-of 5 cents!¹³⁴

Soon rope makers and coal heavers went on strike for higher pay and the former were "demanding" a \$1.50 per day.¹³⁵

On the last day of April, all of Covington's businesses came to a halt for 24 hours.¹³⁶ This was in response to President Lincoln's request that the entire nation observe one day as one of "national humiliation, fasting and prayer [for the] restoration of our now divided and suffering country to its former happy condition of unity and peace."

Still, prices and wages continued their upward spiral and on August 18th, employees at the William B. Mookler & Son Tobacco Company had struck for higher pay.

One business however, virtually destroyed by the war, was the John Ascher Walthall. Walthall was a pioneer builder of pre-fabricated houses, most shipped by flatboat to Mississippi and Louisiana. At the time of the firing on Fort Sumter, he had three such houses in the deep South awaiting final delivery and erection. The Confederacy confiscated them.¹³⁷

The outbreak of war was also devastating to the newly-established H. Marshall & Company, "manufacturers of Marshall's improved Metallo-Percha Burial Casket." The company, located on the south side of Seventh between Madison and Washington, made what were claimed to be air-tight and water-tight caskets. A large percentage of the firm's business was with southern states, where its products had proved especially popular.¹³⁸

Nevertheless, much wealth was accumulated by many of the town's more fortunate individuals. The 1863 real estate assessment figures reveal ex-school teacher James G. Arnold was Covington's largest individual payer of real estate taxes. His property holdings that year were assessed at \$131,335. Amos Shinkle, with property assessments at \$103,150, ranked second, while William S. Johnston was third, with holdings assessed at \$100,550.¹³⁹

The federal income tax was introduced to Americans for the first time during the conflict. In 1864, there was \$14,951.35 collected from Kenton Countians outside Covington, whose those in the city paid a total of \$108,376.14.¹⁴⁰

Covington's waterfront was frequently crowded with heavy barges and work boats but in contrast to the public landings at many other river towns, seldom had more than a dozen or so of the passenger steamboats tied up at any one time. When this did occur, it invariably drew comment from local newsmen. On July 31, 1863, a newsman noted 12 such craft were docked here, and said: They imparted a scene of liveliness quite unusual to our river front."¹⁴¹

Another situation where Covington differed from most river towns was the fact its business houses did not concentrate along the stream's banks but centered about the local railroad terminal and streets leading out to the pike roads. There were exceptions, such as Connelly's Tavern – a town favorite. It sat at the northwest corner of Second and Garrard and provided "entertainment for men and beast."

The main room of Connelly's Inn was spacious with a huge open fireplace at one end. It was provided with hard cider and whisky. Patrons gathered here and talked of the growing West; discussed how the Union could best be preserved; and often denounced the latest raids perpetrated by the Indians, who by then had been pushed west of the Mississippi.¹⁴²

Most Kentuckians then continued to harbor expansionist principles and were full of optimism about their new Republic. They boasted about the U.S. as a land of opportunity, prosperity and progress and tended to view the Confederacy's socio-economic structure as a throw-back to the old countries of Europe. This view was especially strong in Covington and the Upper Bluegrass.

Not all conversations dealt with such serious matters. Sometimes the patrons joked about happenings as the outcome of a duel with two local teenage boys arranged. The youths argued over a disparaging remark one supposedly made about a young lady. Hostile notes were exchanged and arrangements made for the two to meet on the west bank of the Licking – a short distance from the Covington-Newport Bridge.¹⁴³

At the appointed hour, the principals with their seconds appeared upon the field and chose muskets as weapons. They agreed to fire at 30 feet. After all preliminary arrangements were completed, the principals took their places and the weapons were heavily charged with buckshot. At that point, as a newsman reported:

One of the belligerents commenced to shake violently in the knees and declared he did not wish to kill the opponent. His agitation was so great that his finger accidentally touched the trigger . . . and the weapon was discharged, the load entering the ground.¹⁴⁴

It was pointed out the other teenager did not fire but instead both eagerly agreed to accept a proposal made by the seconds that clubs be substituted for firearms. The youths had difficulty finding what they considered suitable clubs so agreed to switch to the iron ramrods from their muskets.¹⁴⁵

The reporter continued:

*The ramrods were placed in their hands; the word given to "pitch in" when again one of the youngsters crawfished. He was opposed to fighting in such a manner. He was willing to fight with the weapons nature gave him, but none other. Finally a game of fisticuffs was agreed upon but before the arrangements for the contest were completed the affair was amicably adjusted.*¹⁴⁶

The choicest bit of gossip had its beginnings in Tennessee. In July 1863, the federal army rounded up all prostitutes in Nashville in an attempt to control venereal disease. The women were placed aboard the steamboat *Idaho* and sent to Louisville. City officials would not let them land so the boat continued to Cincinnati, where once again, they were not permitted to come ashore.¹⁴⁷ The craft anchored off the Kentucky shore and a writ of *habeas corpus* was obtained at Newport for release of ten of the 111 women.¹⁴⁸

After the women's case was heard in Newport's Mayor's Court, they were permitted to re-board the boat. The craft was ordered to return to Louisville but that city sent it and the passengers back to Nashville.

At least one Democrat, with an attempt to poke fun at President Lincoln, maintained the order returning the women from Newport to the South came directly "from Father Abraham."¹⁴⁹

Kentucky's Democrats had long since split into two factions, each claiming loyalty and affection for the Union. However, neither agreed with or supported the Lincoln administration and both denounced virtually all the president's policies – especially emancipation and Negro military service.¹⁵⁰

A sharp distinction existed between the two. The Union Democrats – or War Democrats as some called them – placed themselves squarely upon a war platform, declaring regardless how much they differed with many of the president's policies, they would never fail in "support of the Administration in prosecuting a war so wantonly commenced by the seceded states."¹⁵¹

The other faction – the Peace Democrats – strongly opposed furnishing any more men or money to the federal war effort and hoped to force the government to agree to a cessation of hostilities. This was sheer treason, their opponents claimed, and would lead to "nothing but a recognition of the independence of the Southern Confederacy."¹⁵²

The Peace Democrats attracted not only Kentuckians favoring peace but also won support from the secessionists and anyone who resented the presence of federal authorities in the state.¹⁵³

Few of Connelly's patrons disagreed with those called the Peace Democrats Copperheads and traitors but discussions on the merits of the Unionists' platform were often long and sometimes heated. Like elsewhere in town, the topics of emancipation and Negro soldiers were sure to arouse passionate debate. This was especially true for the August 3rd, 1863 gubernatorial election. The Union Democrats selected Thomas E. Bramlette and Richard T. Jacob as candidates for governor and lieutenant-governor, while Peace Democrats put forth Charles Q. Wickliffe and William B. Read.

The two Union candidates were veterans of federal army service, which enhanced their appeal to Covington voters. That was further enhanced on the night of July 29th when Jacob delivered an emotional speech before a large crowd at the Seventh Street Market. He was a colonel with the force that just completed a successful pursuit of Confederate General John Hunt Morgan across Ohio and was returning to his Oldham County home when persuaded to address the Covington gathering.¹⁵⁴

Colonel Jacob traced the war's progress in his talk and charged the Peace Democrats and their pro-southern supporters with being traitors who were attempting to place blame for the conflict on the federal government. Jacob told his Covington listeners that this was "a falsehood as all heaven and earth well knew."¹⁵⁵

The view expounded by Wickliffe's supporters, he predicted, would haunt them for all eternity, "while the instigators, supporters, aiders and abettors of this unholy rebellion, are suffering the just punishment for their crimes – the greatest ever committed since time began."¹⁵⁶

The articulate Jacob held his listeners spellbound as he continued:

All the bloodshed, all the woes, trials, sufferings, sorrows and horrors of this war are upon the souls of those who plotted and inaugurated this rebellion. The moans of the wounded and dying, the wails of all the widows and orphans of all the land are directly chargeable upon their guilty heads. It is so written – it will be so read by all coming generations. They will so read themselves through all eternity. And yet there are men in the loyal states, who sympathize with those

*criminals . . . [and furthermore] . . . Those who follow . . . Wickliffe and those guerrilla Union men who are contending against the regular candidates of the Union Democracy, are working for neither Constitution nor Union – they are working in the interest of Jeff Davis, whether they know it or not.*¹⁵⁷

Such appeals as Jacob's added to the certainty of a Unionist victory at the polls. Local voters viewed the aging Wickliffe's position as substantially the same as that held by Clement L. Vallandigham, the Ohio Copperhead, and proceeded to give Bramlette a lopsided 1,358 to 59 victory.¹⁵⁸

The official county-wide tally was 1,906 for Bramlette to only 383 for Wickliffe.¹⁵⁹ Typical of the county's voting pattern was Ludlow, where the Unionist scored a 58 to 10 victory.¹⁶⁰

Bitter resentment of the losers accompanied the election and the results set off a cry of fraud, corruption and federal intervention. They complained the votes represented nothing more than a mockery of a free election. Certainly, federal authorities wanted a Bramlette victory and insisted upon stringent enforcement of the law requiring all participants in the election to submit to the oath of loyalty. This included the voters and those who refused, of course, were denied the privilege of the ballot.

Army officials placed the state under martial law a few days before the election. They said this was necessary to keep hordes of disloyal persons from voting and to ensure a free election for all loyal citizens. Authorities pointed out that armed Confederate attacks then being made on various communities in the central and southern parts of the state made it imperative that military law be invoked.

Many historians and political observers claim there was little doubt Bramlette's victory would have been just as impressive even if federal officials had remained impartial. Kentuckians favoring withholding aid from the Union cause were a distinct – but vocal – minority.

Bramlette's supporters were well aware of charges of fraud and military interference in the election, for one noted shortly after the vote count:

*We know that an attempt will be made to show that this result was reached through the stringency of the oaths extracted from those suspected of disloyalty and the severe operations of martial law. Nothing will come of this, however, further than that the ballot box was denied to such only of the citizens of the State as by open or covert assistance to the rebellion, voluntarily forfeited their right of suffrage . . . for they have had the laws of the State before them for many months.*¹⁶¹

Others elected at the local polls that day included J. Crockett Sayers and Mortimer M. Benton, both of whom won their state representative races and former state representative Green Clay Smith, who was now selected as the area's new congressman.¹⁶²

Throughout the campaign, Smith's opponents centered their criticism on the fact he held the rank of Brigadier General and was not on the battlefield. One critic bitterly declared:

*During the recent great military movement from Gettysburg to Port Hudson, while such Kentuckians as Wood, Rousseau, Crittenden and Burbridge have been where duty and glory called, General Smith was hanging around Covington to procure a nomination to Congress from a Republican Convention and prosecuting a canvass.*¹⁶³

Many local Republicans, typified by Benton, were still reluctant to adopt that party's label, although openly agreeing with the party policies. They held no hope of sponsoring a viable gubernatorial candidate but formed an alliance with the Union Democrats to help elect Bramlette, whom they viewed the lesser of two evils.

Benton often hosted Bramlette at his home during the campaign and once while the candidate was staying there, a large group of his local supporters turned out to serenade him and wish him well.¹⁶⁴

Now that Wickliffe and the Peace Democrats were vanquished, they voiced their dissatisfaction with the newly-elected governor and called for unqualified support of the Lincoln Administration.

The president and his policies were always popular topics of debate among the patrons at Connelly's Tavern. Some might even have recalled an early visit of Lincoln to this area as did Nathaniel Southgate Shaler in later years when he wrote:

Among the interesting and in a way shaping incidents of my boyhood, was a brief contact with Abraham Lincoln about 1856. He was coming on foot from the town of Covington; I was on horseback and met him near the bridge over the Licking River. He asked the way to my grandfather's house which was about a mile off. Attracted by his appearance, I dismounted and asked him to get on my horse, which he declined to do; so I walked beside him. Probably because he knew how to talk to a lad – few know the art and those the large natures alone – we became at once friendly. When I had shown him into the house, I hung about to find his name. As I had never heard of Mr. Lincoln of Illinois, it was explained to me that he was the man who was "running against" the Little Giant. We lads all knew Stephen A. Douglas who was so popular that farm tools were named for him – the Little Giant this and that of corn shellers or ploughs.¹⁶⁵

Shaler didn't know the reason for Lincoln's visit but supposed it concerned legal matters involving the separation of an uncle of Lincoln's and an aunt of Shaler's.

Not all Covingtonians found their relaxation in taverns such as Connelly's. The frequently held *volksfests* and *schutzenfests* were always popular as also were the many stage presentations appearing here.

One of the most unusual performers to appear on stage anywhere was closing out a three-day engagement at the Odd Fellows Building on the very day Jefferson Davis gave the order to take Fort Sumter.

George Christy's Minstrels had just finished an engagement in the Hall, when it was announced "TOM, the Little Blind Negro Pianist," would follow with a three-day series of concerts. The ten-year-old slave youth was billed as a "Composer, Linguist, Imitator and Musician," whose abilities, according to the show manager:

Have confounded and perplexed the ablest professors of the day and who is the only person living who can perform three pieces of music at one time; reproduce any piece, however long and difficult, after once hearing it; play with his back to the instrument; perform a correct second or bass, then change seats and correctly play the piano to any piece he had never before heard; execute in masterly style the most difficult operatic music, marches, waltzes, polkas, fantasies concerts, variations, etc.; give inimitable imitations of the church organ, drum and fife, railroad cars, guitar, etc.¹⁶⁶

Tom sings in English, German, French, Italian and Spanish or any other language he may hear; improvises the most brilliant gems yet does not know a flat from a sharp or the name of a key on the instrument, nor does he understand a word in either language he sings.¹⁶⁷

"Blind Tom," as he became known in the theater, was sightless since birth and never received any formal training whatsoever. His concerts were said to be "not only critically correct but brilliant and beautiful."¹⁶⁸

Tom's gift for reproducing any musical sound he heard enabled him to build a repertoire of 5,000 songs. This gift was accompanied, however, by serious deficiencies in other aspects of mental development, prompting many later-day psychologists to speculate that he was a savant.

The young performer belonged to James N. Bethune of Columbus, Georgia, who hired him out to exhibitors and show managers. The engagement at Covington was the furthest north the show ever played to that date and when its manager learned of the events at Fort Sumter, he promptly canceled the remainder of his contracts, saying he "was wanted down South." He packed-up all the show's furnishings and "left Covington in high dudgeon with all Yankeedom."¹⁶⁹

If Tom's manager resented Covington as a place of "Yankeedom," certainly Covington held no resentment for his star performer. The townsfolk marveled at Tom's abilities and attended each of his performances in large and enthusiastic numbers. They said never was there another pianist whose talents could match those of this little blind slave.

Circuses were also popular and as many as three or four a month played here. One of the best-liked was Dan Rice's GREAT SHOW which set up at Fourth and Madison on May 17, 1861. The show traveled about aboard the steamer *Dan Rice* and came upstream from Louisville. Its owner created considerable excitement among residents all along the way by firing a near-continuous string of Union salutes.¹⁷⁰

There were others who preferred a much different type of relaxation and were willing to defend that preference. On the night of May 29th, 1861, City Marshal Clinton Butts boarded the steamer *Moses McLellan*, moored at Covington, taking on freight for Pittsburgh, and attempted to make arrests for gambling. Butts was met with considerable resistance but with great difficulty, he finally managed to take one man to the local jail.

Sunday strollers along Madison Avenue were generally pleased with the stately maple trees lining both sides of the street from Seventh to Twelfth. The trees were planted through the efforts of the Madison Street Maple Society organized in the late 1840s. The society's avowed purpose was to plant maples along all the town's principal thoroughfares.

As evening approached, the strollers might see John Meller, making his way about town inspecting each street light. In January 1862, he was awarded the contract for keeping the public lamps in order, at a fee of 14 7/8 cents for each lamp.

Another popular place for leisure Sunday strolls was the well-tended, park-like grounds of Linden Grove Cemetery. On May 5th 1862, strolling in this cemetery came to a temporary halt when the cemetery grounds Board of Trustees voted to close the cemetery on Sundays. This was necessary, they felt, because of excessive vandalism taking place.

Disaster struck in August at New Ulm, Minnesota, when the town came under heavy attack by Indians. Much of New Ulm was burned and many of its men, women and children were massacred. The survivors abandoned the community and fled to safety elsewhere.

New Ulm was home to a large number of German immigrants, many who had gone there by way of Covington. News of the raid created a furor in this Kentucky city. The local German community was especially upset and on December 13th, its members sponsored a benefit at Turner's Hall for the suffering residents of the stricken Minnesota town. The benefit consisted of a program of vocal and instrumental music and attracted patrons from throughout Covington.

The most popular social affairs were the unending soirees and balls for benefit of soldiers' families, widows and orphans. One typical event was for widows with sons in the army, held at the ornate Old Fellows ballroom the evening of November 30th, 1861.

Such affairs gave the fashionably dressed ladies of Covington frequent opportunities to dress in their finest. The full gowns of the day were certainly not popular with everyone. One Covington journalist complained of the stylish dresses by saying:

*It had grown up into a gigantic evil, from whatever point of view it may be regarded – outlay, convenience or taste, a girl is lost in her vast amplitude of tulle tarlatan. She does injustice to her own attractions by swamping them in gorgeous billows of silk and lace, that rise and foam over half the breadth of a room, dwarfing her face into insignificance. Dress should be elegant, but need not be ruinously extravagant; in the reigning style but never in the excess of the fashion . . .*¹⁷¹

On Sunday afternoons, many town people would ride the pleasure boat which operated up the Licking on short excursions or catch the steamer *Cincinnati Belle* to visit Camp King. The *Belle* began running to Camp King from the foot of Cincinnati's Ludlow Street at 9:00 AM on November 3rd, 1861 and departed every hour.

Visiting the trenches or sightseeing other military installations was a popular pastime. One of the more visited installations was Camp Finnell, named for Kentucky Adjutant General, John W. Finnell. It was located on the Covington and Lexington Railroad, about three miles south of town, in the vicinity of Camp King.

The women of Covington organized a Soldiers' Relief Society in 1861 and it became their most sacred duty to provide soldiers in the entrenchments with all types of gifts. Another organization, the German Ladies' Protestant Aid Society was formed in June 1862 and its members volunteered long and difficult hours at military hospitals.

Travel to and from military establishments was so heavy, the traffic attracted individuals by the prospect of easy profit to be made in the transport business. Profiteers and individual wagon owners charged unreasonable rates and finally prompted Colonel James V. Guthrie, on September 10, 1862, to impose a price ceiling of 20 cents for entrenchment trips unless over five miles. Each mile over five added an addition five cents.

Licensed public transportation within the city was regularly provided by the Kentucky Central Omnibus Line, owned and operated by James Clayton. Clayton bought out his partner, Hezekiah Young, on October 24, 1862, to become the sole owner. Those desiring to travel south on the Lexington Turnpike boarded a stagecoach of the

Florence and Williamstown Line which, in March 1861, maintain an office at the Madison House, Sixth and Madison.

Throughout the war, Covington continued to be well supplied with a host of diversions and amusements. Besides the visits to encampments, there were frequent circuses and carnivals, theatricals, lectures, panoramas, band concerts and patriotic rallies.

Prominent military men were frequent visitors to Covington and their visits warranted noisy welcomes. Such a welcome, including a 34-gun salute, was given Major General Ambrose Burnside at the Covington railroad terminal on December 18, 1863.¹⁷² Burnside and his staff recently completed the successful Knoxville campaign and were on their way east to join the IX Corps.

One of the nation's leading tent shows, *Baily & Company's Mammoth Circus and Menagerie*, drew record crowds when it played at the big lot at Tenth and Scott, September 30th, 1864.

The town's chief center of social activities was undeniably the Odd Fellows Building. One of many memorable performances given there was by the celebrated Tom Thumb on April 2, 1862. The show was complete with diminutive carriage and pigmy coachmen and was generally hailed a great success – except for one detail. It did not have a city permit!¹⁷³

Tom Thumb's agent was hauled into the mayor's court on a charge of holding a public exhibition without a license. Mayor John A. Goodson listened to his plea that he knew nothing of a license being required and the fined him \$5 and court costs.¹⁷⁴ The agent's excuse seemed somewhat lame to Mayor Goodson for this was not the first time this show had played Covington.

In January 1863, the world renowned humorist, Artimus Ward appeared at Odd Fellows to deliver a humorous lecture entitled "Sixty Minutes in Africa." That same month the large Fifth and Madison structure was also the site of a huge Bible Panorama and on April 30, 1864, the dramatic company of Ohio's Pike Opera House opened a season of drama there.

Popular presentations at the Fifth and Madison location during that spring and summer included crowd-pleasing drama as *The Hidden Hand*,¹⁷⁵ and a number of well-attended double bills. One of the more popular double features was presented on the evening of July 14th, when an exceptionally large audience turned out to see "the great moral drama *The Drunkard* and the laughable farce *Perfection, or the Maid of Munster*." ¹⁷⁶

The special "Tableaus" found favor with townspeople. These were elaborately costumed affairs where various scenes would build to a point where the performers would suddenly freeze in a motionless position simulating a famous painting or a well-known writing.

Traveling minstrel shows were especially popular and invariably attracted large and enthusiastic audiences whenever they played here. One show billed as *Gus Shaw's Minstrels from London* was especially well liked.¹⁷⁷ The patrons paid the 50 cents admission, took their seats and impatiently waited for the performance to begin.¹⁷⁸ The show, however, failed to begin at its announced time and this led to a rumor that the audience was swindled. There would be no show, it was said, simply because there were no performers. Within minutes the patrons became convinced they were victims of a hoax.¹⁷⁹

"The excitement now began," one individual later said. Part of the audience rushed to the ticket booth to see return of their money while another group pushed its way back stage to determine if a minstrel troop was really there.¹⁸⁰ At that point a lone performer hurried onto the stage and succeeded in partially restoring order. He turned a few awkward somersaults that only served to infuriate the audience again. Another rush was made for back stage but by then the police arrived and restored order.¹⁸¹ Only two people connected with the alleged show were found on the premises and they were quickly taken into custody. Their arrest was made "for the double purpose of preventing the crowd from mobbing them and to arraign them ... on a charge of giving an exhibition without a license!"¹⁸²

ON THE MILITARY SCENE, a new Licking River pontoon bridge was completed on May 8, 1863 at Cole's Gardens, near Camp King [present Meinken Field – editor]. The span, about 300 feet long, was built under the supervision of the Quartermaster Corp's Captain George P. Webster and reinforced rumors the government would soon lease a large building at Cole's Gardens for use as a hospital.¹⁸³ As was mentioned above, Captain Webster had resigned his seat in the legislature to enter the military.

A few days before the Licking span was completed, on May 4th, the Greenup Street Military Hospital was closed and the patients transferred to the larger Seminary Hospital [on 11th Street – editor]¹⁸⁴

On May 14th, two councilmen, Harvey Meyers of the Sixth Ward and Alfred Martin of the Third Ward resigned their offices. Dates were hastily set for special elections to choose their replacements.

The Sixth Ward election, held May 23rd, went off smoothly, but the Third Ward was another matter, held June 6th. R.G. Matthews was the apparent winner over John C. Taylor but the election was declared void when other council members refused to accept the results. They claimed many votes were cast before election officers had been sworn in and the returns could not be accepted as valid.

Another election was set for June 20th and once again Matthews emerged victor but by the thin margin of three votes. Meanwhile, the Commonwealth felt compelled to take action to assure safety of the state archives. Covington, because of its minimum number of Confederate sympathizers, was chosen as one of the state's most loyal and secure locations.

Therefore, on July 9th, 1863, four heavily loaded wagons were employed to bring all the public records here from Frankfort. The Commonwealth's archives spent the remaining war years safely in Covington.¹⁸⁵ In addition to the state archives, three car loads of small arms and ammunition from the State Arsenal were sent here and anxious banks in the state's interior began transferring their deposits to Covington banks.¹⁸⁶

By the end of the year, there were half-hearted suggestions to make Covington the permanent state capitol. None of this was taken seriously by the local populace however, until February 22, 1864 when a newsman revealed such a matter was indeed being discussed by members of the legislature. He wrote:

**PROPOSITION TO REMOVE THE CAPITOL OF KENTUCKY TO
COVINGTON**

The question of removing the Capitol of Kentucky was again discussed in the Senate on Thursday night.

Senator Fisk of Covington favored the removal of the seat of Government; he could not see why the present location had ever been fixed upon. He wanted the question settled as to removal but when the location was to be considered he [advocated] Covington as the center of a great arc which embraces the most valuable portions of the State.

Senator Mallory did not think the present an opportune time to agitate this question but was surprised that the gentleman who last spoke should argue in favor of claims of Cincinnati as the Capitol of Kentucky, for when he spoke of Covington he must always have Cincinnati in his mind. Senator Fisk said he had referred to Covington as a great center, toward which trade was struggling but from the want of communications it was compelled to go through Louisville and round by way of Seymour and Cincinnati. When improvements were made it would all find its natural center in Covington.¹⁸⁷

When Fisk referred to Seymour, which is in Indiana, and Louisville, he was referring to the fact that Covington's fastest rail connection with Frankfort was by way of those communities.

When Fisk was proposing moving the state capitol, another Covington lawmaker, Mortimer M. Benton, successfully sponsored a bill to incorporate Ludlow and grant it a charter.

LUDLOW, like Covington, had proven to be a bastion of Union sentiment and it was a Unionist legislature which quickly approved Benton's bill. It passed February 20th.

Other legislation approved that month included an act to incorporate the Ludlow Turnpike Company, another incorporating the Covington Street Railroad Company and two acts amending the Covington City Charter.

Locally, in August, another pontoon bridge stretched across the Licking at Cole's Gardens. The Adams Express Company's office was now situated on the Odd Fellows Building and there was a persistent rumor the company would soon have a new neighbor of a yet uncreated banking institution.

Virginia J. Simpson set September 5th as re-opening date for her School for Young Ladies and Misses, located three doors below Fifth Street, on the west side of Greenup. She offered an ambitious course of instruction embracing all the collegiate branches of learning. She promised free instruction in French to all who enrolled.

The rumors of a new bank soon proved true. Covington businesses were prospering and on November 17, 1864, at the height of the war, one of the area's most stable financial institutions, the First National Bank, was established. A group of leading citizens met at the Covington Gas Company office and selected the new bank's board of directors. The new board met two days later at the Covington office of the Covington and Cincinnati Bridge Company and elected Amos Shinkle as the bank's first president.¹⁸⁸ Banking facilities were set up in the Odd Fellows Building and the institution began operation the first week of January.¹⁸⁹

During November, it was announced Shinkle entered the southern river trade and was operating a new steamboat between Cairo and New Orleans.¹⁹⁰ Shinkle was one prime mover behind Covington's spectacular business expansion and in the following January, with William Ernst, became one of the incorporators of the Newport and Covington Water Company.

The Covington Gas Light company also experienced high prosperity that year and extended its service into Newport.

Negotiations between the light company and Newport was underway as early as 1858 but it was not until March 1, 1864 that actual work began laying necessary gas pipe across the Licking's suspension bridge. On the evening of October 20th, 61 street lights were lit for the first time in that city. By the end of the year, the number grew to 72.¹⁹¹

The first Newport street lights were erected on York from Front to Williamson; on Monmouth from Front to Harris; on Columbia from Madison to Mayo; on Madison from Brighton to Monmouth; and on Front from the Licking River to Saratoga.¹⁹² Now, Williamson Street is Eleventh; Harris is Ninth; Mayo is Seventh; Madison is Fifth.

Amos Shinkle was also president of the light company and his shrewd sense of business soon led to a conflict with Covington officials. Covington was using scrip to pay its employees and meet other debts. This did not sit well with Shinkle. In December he demanded his company be paid in cash or with scrip that bore a healthy amount of interest. Otherwise, he said, the city would face the possibility of having its gas shut off.¹⁹³

Covington's business community was prospering as never before. Early that year, B.F. Sanford began a new pro-Union newspaper, the *Saturday Evening American*. The publication trumpeted its support of the Union in its masthead which proclaimed "For the Union, for Liberty, for the Truth and the Right."

The newspaper offices were on the second floor of the Madison House at the southeast corner of Sixth and Madison. Sanford wrote some of the fieriest editorials in support of President Lincoln and the Republican Party to be found south of the Ohio.

During 1864, the town boasted of 560 retail establishments, 21 cigar factories, 8 large tobacco factories, 5 breweries, 4 distilleries, 3 beef and pork packing establishments and a host of other industries, including those of hemp and silk.¹⁹⁴

Massive war demands fed the general prosperity. Wages were rising as the economy boomed yet an accompanying inflation weakened the wage-earners' purchasing power. Neither did everyone experience this upward spiraling income. In July, a newsman noted local pay for seamstresses was often as low as \$2 for a six-day week. This was at a time when "plain boarding at any respectable boarding house" cost a minimum of \$3.50 a week.¹⁹⁵ The reporter declared the women were paid just 30 cents:

*...for making cloth pantaloons. If complaint is made that they can't make a living at these prices, the reply is usually given that there are plenty of others willing to do the work.*¹⁹⁶

The town's large number of job-hungry European immigrants gave a certain validity to the employers' response. Nevertheless, the newsman's social conscience prompted him to ask:

*Could not the ladies of Covington get up an Association for the benefit of the poor sewing women? By renting a store and employing a good cutter, and giving out work at fair rates and then selling clothing at cost price, a very worthy deed would be done.*¹⁹⁷

City officials were not oblivious to conditions among the poor and that winter, voted to donate some 2,000 bushels of coal to the town's needy.¹⁹⁸ The officials also made space available for the City Hall Mission School. The school's teachers catered to the needs of destitute and that Christmas made a special effort to sponsor an unusually large and sumptuous banquet for them.¹⁹⁹

FABULOUS PROFITS were being easily made from the war and shrewd businessmen and not infrequently some with exceptional greed, managed to acquire huge fortunes or multiply an existing one many times over. Amos Shinkle was one who profited handsomely. He owned a fleet of steamboats and sold or leased many of them to the military. One, the *Magnolia*, carried wounded from the Tennessee battlefields to northern hospitals. Others were converted into gunboats which saw heavy action on the lower Mississippi and its tributaries.

Shinkle christened most of his craft with the name *Champion*. His *Champion No. 3, No. 4 and No. 5* all experienced heavy combat serving with the river fleet.²⁰⁰ A typical naval lease with Shinkle was that executed for the *Champion No. 6*. Throughout most of 1864, the navy operated it as part of the Mississippi Squadron while paying the Covington financier a fee of \$180 per day!²⁰¹

Shinkle's coal business as well, shows a handsome profit. Coal was vital to the success of the Union river fleet. No boat commander could ever operate beyond the limits of his fuel supply and it was coal which largely determined the duration of his raids. As a result, the government was a huge purchaser of coal and that made possible equally huge profits for dealers in coal-stocking centers like Covington.

But Shinkle had his share of reverses as on the occasion when two of his civilian craft were sunk on the lower Mississippi. Although they were engaged in peaceful business, loaded with valuable merchandise, Shinkle made no effort to secure indemnity for his losses.²⁰²

The town's link to Kentucky's interior by the Kentucky Central Railroad was especially comforting that winter to residents of Paris, Lexington and other land-locked communities. The state's central area experienced a severe coal shortage late in the year [1864] and relied heavily on the large stock piles of fuel brought by steamboat to such coal yards as Shinkle's. By December, trainloads of coal were being sent to the stricken communities on a daily basis.²⁰³

It was common to see troop-laden steamboats bound north on the Ohio to Wheeling or Pittsburgh. From there, the soldiers would travel overland to the eastern battlefields. Covington served as a coaling station for many of the craft and sometimes the soldiers were permitted to come ashore for a brief bit of relaxation while their boat was being re-fueled. The local area became widely known throughout the army for its abundance of bar-rooms and liberal attitude toward battle-bound soldiers on leave.

Once, six fully loaded transports landed near the Licking's mouth in order to take on coal. This time, none of the troops were permitted shore leave and guards were posted to see that none left.²⁰⁴ The soldiers were not to be denied however, and about 150 successfully "eluded the vigilance of the guards," and quietly slipped ashore. Fortunately for Covington saloon keepers, they landed on the Newport side where they quickly scattered throughout the streets of that town.²⁰⁵ It didn't take the merry-making soldiers long to find the saloons and many soon became intoxicated.²⁰⁶ A number of the imbibing soldiers visited various stores where they selected items they wanted and told the merchants to send their bills to "Uncle Sam." Many of the saloons were smashed and wrecked. A reporter remarked, "This is perhaps not to be much regretted considering that the liquor which maddened the soldiers, was obtained at those places."²⁰⁷ News of the antics of the absent-without-leave troops eventually reached the transports' officers who sent a detail to try to return them to the boats.²⁰⁸

THE YEAR 1864 WAS A TRAUMATIC ONE for Covington and Kentucky in general. In early January suggestions were made for the federal government to begin a military recruiting program in the state for Negro enlistments. It was a year since the Emancipation Proclamation which liberated slaves in the seceding states and nearly that long since passage of the first draft law.

President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation had become effective January 1, 1863. Of course, the act did not apply to Kentucky or other loyal border states but declared all slaves in the rebellious states were free. In many parts of the country, the federal government embarked on a policy of recruiting blacks and former slaves for military duty, something the typical Kentuckian looked upon with sheer horror.

Kentuckians traditionally considered military service as an honorable calling and the thought of elevating a Negro to that status filled them with bitter resentment. Covington, being in a loyal state, was not directly affected by the Emancipation Proclamation but the draft law and the enlistment of Negroes were different matters. White Kentuckians generally felt the Negro was not trustworthy and lacked the necessary skills and intelligence to make a good soldier.

The war was now being turned into a crusade for black equality, critics said, and many whites resented being drafted into such a cause. Whites considered the use of black troops would show a disregard for the laws of modern warfare. Even some of the staunchest Union supporters began showing noticeable signs of cooling toward the Lincoln Administration. According to them, every Covingtonian in uniform would be insulted by arming blacks.

The first draft was enacted March 3, 1863 and was meant primarily as a stimulant to enlistments. The law would be applied only to those districts of the nation which failed to meet their assigned enlistment quotas. In New York and a few other northern cities, the law's passage led to rioting in the streets. These so-called draft riots were not directed at the war effort so much as against the idea of enforced fighting for the black man's freedom. In that

sense, they were really anti-Negro race riots. The idea of black equality was repugnant to many Northerners as it was to those in the South.

Locally, there were only a few overt acts of draft resistance, and those that did occur, seemed to center also on the race issue. Once, officials at Newport Barracks decided to launch a round-up of that city's draft dodgers and resisters. The task proved relatively easy, as many of the culprits were found in their homes hiding in such obvious places as under their beds.²⁰⁹

One dodger was discovered trying to pass himself off as a woman. He was dressed in female attire when discovered and was promptly placed under arrest and hurried off to the courthouse. The arresting officers were not without compassion for after proceeding about a square, the soldiers permitted him to return home and divest himself of his hoops.²¹⁰

Kentucky's outcry about use of black troops and its loyalty to the Union resulted for a period of time it was the only state to be spared Negro enlistments within its boundaries.²¹¹ Such special treatment could not last long and soon the governor issued a special appeal for people to lay aside all thoughts of violence and unlawful resistance, and peacefully accept the fact of Negro enrollments. He asked all Kentuckians to "trust the American people to do us the **justice** which the present Congress may not do."²¹²

On April 18, 1864, a military order calling for the enlistment of Negroes in Kentucky was issued and on May 16th it was announced blacks could be accepted as substitutes for white men.²¹³ A count of draft-age black males in what was the Sixth Congressional District revealed some 1,192 who were liable for military duty. The break-down was as follows:

<u>COUNTY</u>	<u>SLAVES</u>	<u>FREE BLACKS</u>	<u>TOTAL</u> ²¹⁴
Kenton	78	23	101
Campbell	9	14	23
Boone	257	6	263
Bracken	67	23	90
Carroll	105	4	109
Gallatin	73	0	73
Grant	85	5	90
Harrison	292	19	311
Pendleton	46	8	54
Trimble	<u>78</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>78</u>
	1,090	102	1,192

Covington, because of its continuous high percentage of volunteers, never experienced the draft until May 16th when the first local conscription took place. At that time, names of 3,858 Kenton Countians were placed in a large selective service wheel and 769 were drawn. Not only were names of whites included but those of slaves and free blacks as well.²¹⁵

Two days later, the Provost Marshal of the Covington District received instructions to accept all Negro slaves who volunteered for the army, regardless of their owners' wishes. Anyone interfering with the draft or enlisting of Negroes was to be promptly arrested.

If slavery was not the central issue in the war's beginning, it certainly was becoming so now. Those whites who were unenthusiastic about volunteering their service in such a cause were also equally unenthusiastic about being drafted. The conscription act allowed any potential draftee to hire a substitute or to purchase an exemption for \$300. Because of this exemption, it was called one of the most unjust of any such law ever passed. Resentment of its unfairness was further compounded by enlistment of Negroes.

By May's end, 227 potential Kenton County draftees had paid commutation fees in order to be excused from service.²¹⁶ The fees were used to help pay bounties to volunteer enlistees.

The healthiest and ablest of Covington's young men volunteered early in the war. In fact, in February 1864, Kenton County already furnished 1,237 men to the Union Army, while Campbell County supplied 1,181. Of these, 764 were from Covington and 635 were from Newport.²¹⁷

Many remaining at home tended to be the less venturesome. They prompted a local newsman to claim that of over 1,000 Kenton Countians called for the draft that year, only 20 gave actual personal service in the military. Most were either rejected for various reasons or else had substitutes serve for them. One of those to furnish a substitute that summer was Amos Shinkle's brother, Uriah.²¹⁸

The use of substitutes quickly became a widespread practice. On one occasion, a wealthy farmer who owned a “fat and muscular negro” had been called for the draft. The farmer expressed determination to keep his valuable chattel. The farmer came to Covington and offered an Irishman \$500 to serve as a substitute. Only after the Irishman was sworn into the army and received his fee was he told it was a Negro slave he represented.²¹⁹ The Irishman was furious, one observer noted: “his wrath and profanity exceeded all bounds but it was too late to back out and he was sent to quarters.”²²⁰

The draft proved somewhat less than a total success as only 36,000 men were conscripted nationwide. Most who actually fought the war were already in the military by that time, while the majority of those entering service after the act’s passage were blacks and hired substitutes.²²¹

The sight of newly-enlisted Negro soldiers soon became commonplace on the streets of Covington. By the end of July, a writer for the *Saturday Evening American* observed:

*There are now nearly 300 colored soldiers in Covington and the number is constantly increasing. The intention is to raise a full regiment. Indeed, the Colonel appointed over the same and two line officers are already here. We meet every hour in the street these colored soldiers in their new uniforms of blue and their bearing seems uniformly soldierly and praiseworthy, considering their sudden elevation from chattels into men.*²²²

The newsman noted the black troops’ nearly 100% rate of illiteracy, saying:

*Only a few had learned to read. Cannot some of the benevolent Christian men and women of Covington open a Sunday and week-day school for the benefit of such among them as are hungering for instruction?*²²³

Neither did the newspaper overlook the existence of a widespread notion among many church members about the relationship between religion and slavery when it declared:

There are those who occupy high places in the church, that endeavor to prove slavery the natural condition of men and that it is ordained and fostered of God. This monstrous subversion of the truth is receiving . . . a terrible rebuke in bloodshed and war.^{224 225}

Nevertheless, the belief in Negro inferiority persisted and as the community’s relatively small black population began to be augmented by large numbers of contrabands and Negro troops, the notion was strengthened and a corresponding rise in hostility toward blacks arose.

Further resentment of Negroes arose when local officials adopted a policy of granting employment to those judged unfit for military duty. All such blacks were sent to the local quartermaster who placed them on the federal payroll. Most were given jobs at the large government stables where they were paid \$30 a month as stable hands.²²⁶

The Democrats lost no time in reminding townspeople of the correctness of their earlier claim the war was nothing more than a means of giving Negroes equality with whites. Now, the predicted, a horde of crude, illiterate former slaves would be loosed on the community.

Some neighborhoods decided to spare no effort in showing their distaste for a conscription act that would force their residents to fight for Negro equality. Saving the Union was one thing; raising the Negro to equal status with whites was quite another matter!

On August 12th, citizens of the Ninth Ward held a mass meeting where they passed a resolution asking every resident of the ward to contribute \$25 to a fund for hiring enough substitutes to free their neighborhood from the draft.

Affairs in the Ninth were typical, as such meetings became common throughout the city. On September 2nd, a community-wide was held at City Hall to organize a bounty fund for the entire county and by January 1865, had raised enough money to pay every enlistee \$200.

On August 17, 1864, a scandalous event of widespread proportions occurred here. A white Covingtonian was arrested and charged with enticing Negro recruits to desert their Covington camp and selling them in Ohio as hired substitutes.²²⁷ The man’s arrest led to the uncovering of a Covington ring which clandestinely took local black recruits to cities throughout the North for similar purpose.

From the outbreak of hostilities, the federal government had to contend with strong opposition to many of its war-time measures and now the draft act only added fuel to the fire. Many criticisms were prompted by partisan politics, coming as they did from not only pro-southerners but also from Conservative Unionists, or Union Democrats, who wanted to maintain their party's identity as a separate political organization, even though they supported the war. They thought it good policy to oppose the incumbent Lincolnites whenever possible to derive party advantage.

Even though it was an election year, President Lincoln continued to adopt policies which some thought politically unwise but which he felt in the nation's best interest. In addition to the draft act and the use of Negro soldiers, his suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus* on July 5th became another favorite target for his critics.

A writ of *habeas corpus* is a legal procedure ordering a sheriff or other officer to produce the arrested person at a designated time and place and report the cause of arrest.

The guarantee of such a writ is one of the Constitution's most important provisions against illegal restraint and a safeguard for the citizens' personal liberty. The Constitution says:

The privilege of the Writ of Habeas Corpus shall not be suspended, unless when in Cases of Rebellion or Invasion the public Safety may require it.

Lincoln suspended the writ in Kentucky because some of the pro-southerners, augmented by many paroled Confederate veterans who had turned outlaws, "have not only greatly disturbed the public peace, but have overborne the civil authorities and made flagrant civil war, destroying property and life in various parts of the State."²²⁸

The day after the writ was suspended, another order arrived. It read:

*By order of the War Department. Covington Kentucky and the country around it, within a radius of ten miles, has been added to the Northern Department, under the command of Major General Heintzelman.*²²⁹

All this was partly in response to growth of the local peace-at-any-price element or Copperheads in Covington being nothing more than traitors and seemed to be at their strongest in the loyal states of Ohio, Indiana and Illinois.²³⁰

The central Copperhead organization in the loyal states, the Knights of the Golden Circle, which eventually changed its name to the Order of American Knights and later to the Sons of Liberty, kept close contact with events in Covington and worked diligently to undermine sentiments that favored the war's prosecution.

The Copperheads won an increasing number of adherents after passage of each federal war-time measure. They were accused of many treasonable acts, including encouraging Union soldiers to desert and aiding and abetting the Confederacy.

As late as June 1864, the large wagon trains carrying war supplies south from Covington had to be guarded by heavy cavalry escorts because of danger from militant Copperheads and marauding bands of rebel soldiers between here and Lexington.

Locally, these ultra-conservative Democrats, or Peace-at-Any-Price Democrats, maintained the term "Copperhead" originated from their practice of cutting the central emblem from the copper cent and wearing it as a party lapel button. The commonly accepted version however, was that the name was given them by Unionists in an allusion to the stereotyped characteristics of the poisonous snake of the same name.

At the height of the war, a group of local Copperheads aided in the marriage plans of Thomas H. Hines, a man who was one of the Confederacy's most dangerous agents. Hines journeyed to Covington and was hidden by local sympathizers while a message was delivered to Nancy Sproule, his fiancée. The message requested her to join him here, where they would be united in matrimony.²³¹

Nancy was in a convent school in Brown County, Ohio when she received the message. She immediately left for Covington and on November 10, 1864, she and Hines were married. Father T. R. Butler, pastor of St. Mary Cathedral officiated.²³²

Hines is remembered for his part in "the Northwest Conspiracy." This was a Southern plan in which a rebel force was scheduled to invade Kentucky and create a general uprising. Disorder was also planned for Missouri, Illinois and Ohio and Confederate prisoners in those states were to be rescued and armed. They would be joined by members of a secret order created expressly for this project and set about to capitalize on growing Northern discontent with the draft and increasing length of war.²³³ Participants in the Northwest Conspiracy were also scheduled to receive aid from various Copperhead societies in the scheme which Southern leaders hoped would change the war's course.²³⁴

In 1864, Hines was commissioned Major General *pro tem* to lead the plot. On several occasions he had been called to Richmond to confer with President Jefferson Davis and his cabinet officials and traveled throughout the target states and Canada furthering the conspiracy. The center of much of his Canadian activity was Toronto which abounded with escaped rebel prisoners and Confederate and Union agents.²³⁵

The conspiracy's plans included arson, the overthrow of state and city governments, and murder of Union political leaders. Large cities, including New York, Chicago, Cincinnati and Boston were slated to be burned. If successful, the plan would have spread a siege of terror from Maine to Minnesota.²³⁶

Such conspirators could be arrested and detained with little formality. As a result of the writ's suspension, scores of local residents suspected of being Confederate sympathizers were subject to arbitrary arrest and imprisonment. When the Union's very life was at stake however, the President believed the law of survival temporarily superseded Constitutional law. "Are all the laws but one to go unexecuted," he asked, "and the Government go to pieces lest that one be violated?"

Lincoln defended his suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus* further by asking his critics:

Must I shoot a simple-minded soldier boy who deserts, while I must not touch a hair of the wily agitator who induces him to desert? I think in such a case to silence the agitator and save the boy is not only constitutional but withal a great mercy.

Whenever an arrest was made of local secessionists or one under suspicion, all that was usually necessary for their quick release was a pledge of loyalty to the United States. Those who refused were usually interned. On rare occasions, the military interceded in local court cases, and ordered re-trials when it was thought the punishment was unusually light for confessed or convicted secessionist sympathizers.

It was standard practice to initially confine such prisoners at the Third Street Military Prison. From the time it opened October 1, 1862 until January 1, 1863, there had been a total of 280 prisoners confined there. Of that number, ten were sent to the prison compound at Camp Chase, Ohio; nine were still confined at the Covington prison; while the rest were released.²³⁷ An additional 67 were jailed there in January but all but six were released after a few days.²³⁸

Lincoln's philosophy with these matters was not merely academic. He possessed great common sense and kindness of heart and complete readiness to forgive and bestow mercy. These attributes were evident by such incidents as occurred in Covington in January 1864. A soldier who had been charged with desertion and using "disrespectful language" toward the President, was court-martialed and sentenced to be shot. His execution was scheduled to take place on the line of fortifications in back of the city.

Local Unionists who knew the President's feelings on these matters requested Lincoln's intervention. A few hours before the execution, a Presidential reprieve for the soldier arrived at the Covington telegraph office. The reprieve was granted partially because the charges included "the use of disrespectful language toward himself."²³⁹

MEANWHILE, COMPLAINTS MOUNTED AGAINST USE OF VOLUNTEER FIREMEN to fight the city's conflagrations. Rowdiness among the volunteers, frequently instances of inefficiency and ever-increasing costs for replacing vandalized equipment finally prompted the 1864 members of council to reconsider drastic changes in the fire-fighting system.

New equipment was ordered and on June 26th, the city's first steam fire-engine arrived from Seneca Falls, New York. It was immediately christened the *U.S. Grant* and assigned to Engine House No. 3 on Pike Street.

The next day, about 1,000 spectators gathered at Fourth and Russell to observe a test of the new engine and were amazed at what they saw. It took but seven minutes from the time a fire was lighted under the boiler until the engine was forcing a 1 ¼ inch stream of water through 200 feet of hose and throwing it an additional 220 feet. When the hose length was increased to 1,000 feet the new engine still threw the same size stream for 145 feet.

Council members were well pleased with the performance and at their June 30th meeting enacted an ordinance establishing the fully-paid all-professional Steam Fire Department of Covington. The ordinance provided for a Superintendent of the Fire Department and "one or more steam fire engine companies and one or more hand engine companies." The superintendent, who would be selected at the first regular council meeting in July, was assigned sole command over the entire department and its personnel, including the Chief Engineer.²⁴⁰

At the July meeting, L.D. Croninger was selected the fire department's first superintendent – a position he held until October 26, 1865 when he was succeeded by Henry E. Wilson.

The new law also required all fire department members be at least 21 years of age. Also the engineers of the steam engines be paid “not more than \$100, nor less than \$50 per month” and set the salary of pipe men, drivers and firemen at “not less than \$25 nor more than \$50 per month.” Covington joined the ranks of the earliest American cities to have a full-time professional fire fighting organization.²⁴¹

No one watched fire department developments with more interest than Ludlow’s **Alexander Bonner Latta**. He revolutionized fire-fighting techniques when he invented and built the world’s first steam fire engine, the *Uncle Joe Ross*.²⁴²

Latta, born in Ross County, Ohio on June 11 1821, worked as a foreman in a Cincinnati machine shop where he also constructed the first railroad locomotive built west of the Allegheny Mountains. He went on to invent and patent a number of improvements in railroad appliances and in 1852, made his revolutionary fire engine.²⁴³

On January 1, 1853, Latta gave his engine its first trial run. Its performance amazed all who witnessed the demonstration and prompted one Ohio official to note such an engine would never become drunk or engage in brawls. The official said its only drawback was that it couldn’t vote.²⁴⁴

After the new fire department was organized, the city began selling off its old equipment. Advertisements like the following were placed in newspapers:

The City of Covington having procured Steam Fire Engines, now offers for sale two first-class Row-boat Engines, one or more of Agnew’s Lever Engines, together with two No. 1 Hose Carriages, all in the best repair, having just been thoroughly overhauled, repainted, etc.

*Also about 2,000 feet of superior two-inch copper-riveted hose.*²⁴⁵

Efforts were also directed to improve the town’s police protection. On May 15, 1863, council authorized the city marshal to hire two or more active deputies “who shall devote their time exclusively” to police duties. To pay their salaries, the marshal’s own annual salary was increased to \$900. If he chose to hire only one deputy, his pay would be \$700 and if none, it would be \$500. His pay was in addition to the fees he was already allowed.²⁴⁶

A year later, on April 10, 1864, the marshal’s salary was increased to \$1,200 and his allowed fees. There would be a reduction to \$900 if he hired only one deputy and \$600 if none.²⁴⁷

DURING ALL THIS, COVINGTON WAS A CITY WITHOUT SEWERS or garbage collection. Townsfolk still dumped their ashes, slop and garbage into the streets. The ashes served to fill mud holes while what surplus existed was carried away in tiny ash carts by the street cleaners. Much of that surplus was dumped at the eastern end of Third Street in an effort to extend that thoroughfare onto the banks of the Licking.²⁴⁸

The garbage and slop were different matters. They were disposed of by the countless number of pigs and hogs which freely roamed the streets of Covington.²⁴⁹

The roaming swine came to constitute a real nuisance so in July 1864, the city council organized a force of ten boys known as the “Hog Police.” Their duties consisted of rounding up every pig and hog running loose in the streets and taking them to an impounding lot. The boys were paid 25 cents for each animal.

The following month, city council contracted to have Pike Street, between Madison and Washington “bowlderred” at a cost of \$2.25 a square yard. Towns people were hopeful the work would soon be extended to include all the city streets. One observer wrote:

*Farewell, then, to broken rocks to be ground up into dust to fill our eyes, our shops, our parlors and covering up and de-facing grass lawns and pretty flower potteries, etc.*²⁵⁰

It would be another year however, in April 1865, before council members would approve an ordinance to boulder Madison from Fifth to Pike. That was merely a month after they voted significant salary increases for various city officials, including doubling the mayor’s annual pay of \$2,000 to \$4,000.

Other wage increases included:

Office	Previous Salary	New Salary ²⁵¹
Auditor	\$1,500	\$2,000
Judge of Police Court	\$1,500	\$2,000
Police Court Prosecuting Attorney	\$1,200	\$1,700;
City Civil Engineer	\$2,000	\$2,500,
Warf master	\$1,000	\$1,500

Market Master

\$600

\$900

As noted, 1864 was a presidential election year and the political scene in Covington was most interesting. On July 16th, John G. Carlisle, John W. Leathers, George C. Tarvin, James O'Hara and Daniel Mooar were appointed as the Democrat's Executive Committee for Kentucky's Sixth Congressional District.²⁵² Three of these, Carlisle, Leathers and Tarvin, with other prominent men as William Simeral, William E. Ashbrook, Solomon C. Perrin and William Maxwell had earlier met at Independence with the Peace Democrats and were attempting to unite Democrats of all factions in order to defeat Unconditional Unionists and Republicans.

The first election scheduled for their attention that year was the August 1st contest for Judge of the 23-county Second District. Mortimer M. Benton, candidate of the Republicans or Unconditional Unionists as they preferred being called, was slated to oppose incumbent Alvin Duvall. The editor of the *Saturday Evening American* gave his full support to Benton saying:

Hon. M.M. Benton, the Union candidate, is a man of superior ability and unquestionable patriotism. Judge Duvall is a sympathizer with the rebellion and of no marked ability whatsoever. ²⁵³

Duvall was a fanatically pro-Southern Rights man. Such sympathies were totally unacceptable to the Union military and he was forced to withdraw from the election. Duvall, shortly fled the county in order to avoid possible arrest.²⁵⁴

Benton now seemed certain of being elected and did little campaigning. Duvall's backers however, decided to sponsor the candidacy of Lexington's George Robertson, a former Whig and new Conservative Unionist. Robertson, although not completely acceptable to the Southern Rights element, was far more palatable to them than Unconditional Unionist or "radical" Benton. The night before the election, up to the very morning, they were busy spreading word of their new candidate throughout the district and especially in the southern and central counties.

The military remained adamant in refusing to allow suspected individuals to vote. All that was required of most persons to clear their name was to take an oath affirming their allegiance to the United States. The oath read:

You do solemnly swear that you have not, since the 10th day of April 1862, been in the service of the so-called "Confederate States" or in that of the "Provisional Government of Kentucky," in either a civil or military capacity, and that you have not given, directly or indirectly, voluntary aid and assistance to those in arms against the Government of the United States or the State of Kentucky, or those who were intending to join the armed forces of the so-called "Confederate States," and that you will bear true and faithful allegiance to said Governments of the United States and State of Kentucky. So help you God. ²⁵⁵

In many of the district's southern and central counties, the self-styled "guerrilla influence" was sufficient to hold down the Benton vote and in others, the ballot boxes containing Benton votes were destroyed by Southern sympathizers. At one place, about 2 miles south of independence, a group of Confederate sympathizers raided the polling place and tore up the poll books.²⁵⁶

The result, of course, was a resounding victory for Robertson. The states-righters always claimed the victory came as a result of popular protest to the suppression of Duvall's candidacy and the military interference at certain polls. One observer was more accurate when he said,

Where one rebel sympathizer has been prevented from voting by federal bayonets, a score of good Union men have been frightened from the polls by the torch and pistol of the roving bands of marauders who plague the State. ²⁵⁷

Negative racial attitudes undoubtedly played a large part in the Benton-Robertson election and entered the local presidential campaign. These attitudes prompted some to join the Peace-at-any-Price Democrats. One person's remark said those who joined the peace party in hopes of retaining slavery, did so "there might remain a class lower than themselves." ²⁵⁸

Many parts of the state were infested with Confederate sympathizers and guerrillas, committing some of the most barbaric crimes in the name of states' rights. Periodic Confederate invasions encouraged these acts while stragglers and deserters from the invading forces compounded the situation by pillaging at will. The frequency and brutality of the violence caused genuine concern among Union officers and prompted them to adopt extreme retaliatory measures in order to protect Union interests – military and civilian.

In June 1864, Major General William T. Sherman wrote from his Georgia headquarters instructing Brigadier General Stephen Gano Burbridge to institute stronger measures against the guerrillas and others who aid or support them. These people, Sherman said, were “not soldiers, but wild beasts, unknown to the usages of war.”²⁵⁹

General Burbridge, commander of the military’s Department of Kentucky since February 15th, was an able soldier who had experienced war at its worst during the heavy fighting at Shiloh. He was not one to coddle southern sympathizers and issued a number of orders designed to severely hamper their operations. After this, he became the target of harsh criticism from those who took up the Southern cry of discrimination.

In Covington, the controversial orders generally met with approval and with B.F. Sanford, editor of the *Saturday Evening American*, were greeted with near glee. Sanford particularly disliked those businessmen suspected with southern sympathies. That they should profit from their business dealings while holding such views struck him as most unjust.

Now, Sanford saw reason to believe the Copperheads would suffer and wrote:

CERTAINLY, DISLOYALTY just now DON’T PAY

*The restrictions to trade in Kentucky, by which only the truly loyal can get permits to carry on trading operations, are having an excellent effect, and Gen. Burbridge is entitled to much credit for having brought around the present state of things. Hitherto the disloyal have seemed to have had the best opportunities for making money. They did not fight in the Union armies. They did not contribute to the support of soldiers’ families. They did not help make up bounties for obtaining volunteers. But they were recipients, of course, of their valuable patronage. Many a store kept by a disloyal person was made the rendezvous for all the lovers of rebellion in the surrounding country. Here treason was spouted forth without any stint. Of course, every such place was a moral pest-house so far as its influence on patriotism and loyalty was concerned. We are glad all this has come to an end.*²⁶⁰

About this time, Burbridge was brevetted major general in recognition of his earlier successes against the noted Confederate raider, John Hunt Morgan.²⁶¹ The new major general was not a popular figure with the states’ righters, so when, on October 28, 1864, he called upon all Kentucky farmers to sell their surplus hogs only to the Union army, the states’ righters – especially those with pro-Confederate leanings – sent up a partisan cry heard even in the White House.

The critics not only scoffed at Burbridge’s promise of a fair market price, but called his order nothing more than an attempt to conduct a gigantic “hog swindle.” A higher price, they said, could be obtained in the free markets of Kentucky, Ohio and Indiana and urged the farmers to ignore Burbridge’s decree.

Colonel Wager Swayne, in command of the Covington area, believed in the merit of the decree, and issued an order effective November 9th prohibited taking hogs across the Ohio. This was outrageous and totally unwarranted interference with free trade, cried the dissidents. Furthermore, they accused Union officials of amassing illegal profits at the farmers’ expense.

The protests, largely partisan in origin, were nevertheless effective. On November 27th, amid new accusations of a \$60,000 “swindle,” and at the urging of President Lincoln, Burbridge rescinded all orders pertaining to Kentucky hogs.

The Covington commandant, Colonel Swayne was a distinguished soldier who possessed an enviable war record. He served with honor at Island No. 10 and at Corinth and later went on to distinguish himself at Resaca, Kenesaw Mountain and Atlanta. He lost his right leg in South Carolina and was eventually promoted to Major General. After the war, Swayne was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his gallantry at Corinth.²⁶²

Despite widespread local dissatisfaction over the racial questions and the “hog swindle,” the Unconditional Unionists, or radicals as some said, gave unstinted support to Lincoln’s re-election. Lincoln was re-nominated on the first ballot at the June convention of the regular Republicans, or National Union Party as they called themselves at the national level.

For vice-president, the party nominated Andrew Johnson, the Tennessee Democrat who had so vigorously opposed his state’s secession. Johnson’s nomination was an obvious attempt to conciliate the Union Democrats, who were giving support to the war. The Republicans endorsed a continued prosecution of the war without compromise and urged a constitutional amendment to end slavery.

Under the Constitution, emancipation of slaves could only be done by the individual states. Because of the strong appeal emancipation would have among Europe's liberal classes, and because it could possibly prevent England and France from extending recognition to the Confederacy, Lincoln proposed in the Spring of 1862, that loyal slave states, including Kentucky, abolish slavery in exchange for compensation by the national government. The border states were so filled with indecision over the issue, they failed to act.

Kentucky's Conservative Unionists, or Union Democrats, felt offended by the latest proposal to end slavery, and declared their support for the National Democrats, Major General George B. McClellan for president and George H. Pendleton for vice-president. McClellan was a former Union army commander dismissed from his command by President Lincoln.

The National Democrats declared the war a failure and played up the fact that after three years of war, Richmond was still in Confederate hands. Lincoln, they said, was paying the price for his earlier refusal to reinforce McClellan and had caused the slaughter for more men than McClellan ever had under his command. They said a vote for Lincoln was a vote for the draft as well as a vote against slavery.

All this sounded good to the ultra-States Rights, or pro-Southern faction of the Democrats, and they too announced support for McClellan. The Peace-at-any-Price Democrats succeeded in writing into the party platform a provision favoring peace, but McClellan consistently repudiated it. Even he saw there could be no peace without Union.

Covington's support of Lincoln's war policies was growing steadily throughout his term in office and now that he had been re-nominated, support became increasingly apparent. On the night of August 23rd, a mass meeting of local citizens enthusiastically ratified a resolution introduced by Mortimer M. Benton which declared:

*That when the Nation is engaged in a death struggle for self-preservation with a stupendous conspiracy aiming to destroy it, all things which are necessary for the Government defense are lawful to be done, whether it be the seizure of persons or property, the transportation or execution of the one, or the confiscation and appropriation of the other. Necessity is above all law hence whatever is necessary is constitutional and lawful. The Constitution is the bond of Government, and whatever acts preserve the Government defend the Constitution.*²⁶³

Those attending the meeting not only supported Lincoln's conduct of the war, but also endorsed the Conscription Act, the Confiscation Act, the Emancipation Proclamation and the enlistment of Negroes. These things, the group said, "having been determined by the regularly constituted authorities as necessary for the suppression of the rebellion, are therefore authorized by the Constitution, and are legal."²⁶⁴

, The group declared:

*President Lincoln has on all occasions exhibited the greatest firmness of purpose, having only in view the public good and the preservation of the liberation of the people, and a full determination to maintain the supremacy of the National authority at all hazards, yet in the execution and exercise of the great power confided to him, he has done so with a just sense of prudence and humanity and has shown a wonderful leniency.*²⁶⁵

The Covingtonians solemnly promised, "We will exert ourselves in behalf of his re-election."²⁶⁶ The assemblage used the opportunity to denounce those critical of General Burbridge. Unstinting praise was given the commander and the members voted to "heartily approve and fully endorse the military administration of Maj.-Gen. Burbridge, in the District of Kentucky."²⁶⁷

General Stephen Gano Burbridge was born in Scott County, Kentucky, the son of a veteran of the War of 1812 and grandson of a Revolutionary War veteran. He always found Covington a city to his liking and made it his home for a time after war's end.

For the first several weeks of the presidential campaign, things looked anything but encouraging for the Republicans, as a strong anti-war feeling swept much of the land. The policy of waging war in order to maintain the Union was a failure, many said, and should be brought to a halt. The seceding states, they said, should be allowed to depart without further bloodshed.

Lincoln and his top generals, including Grant – now General in Chief of the Armies – were being mocked and vilified by their critics. Unfriendly and unknowledgeable newspaper editors claimed both were guilty of frequent drunkenness, of trading military pardons or passes for favors and of sending armies to be butchered to satisfy their lust for meaningless battles.

The criticism was so great that Lincoln himself thought he would go down to defeat. Never once, however, did he or his staff waver from their commitment that the Union must be preserved.

Then came a string of Union victories. Men such as Sherman, Thomas, Sheridan and Farragut were ripping out the heart of the Confederacy. Victories at Mobile Bay, Atlanta, the Shenandoah Valley, Winchester, Fisher's Hill and Cedar Creek proved the war was anything but a failure.

The efforts of countless numbers of staunchly loyal Lincolnites working all over the Union cannot be discounted. Loyal Covingtonians like Mortimer M. Benton, Cyrus A. Preston, Andrew Herod, Jacob D. Shutt, B.F. Sanford, Bushrod Foley and Amos Shinkle labored tirelessly for the president's re-election and boldly endorsed the proposed constitutional abolition of slavery. Their stand against slavery was taken despite the danger of possible sacrificing their own future political fortunes in slaveholding Kentucky.

Many of these men had the foresight to urge slavery's abolition when the administration originally offered loyal slaveholding states its plan for compensated emancipation. This plan won few, if any, adherents among the slave holders. Calls for public meeting on the subject consistently went unheeded and many which were held, were cut short because of poor attendance. Typical were two Newport meetings cancelled when only the same seven people appeared at each.²⁶⁸

Those favoring outright abolition were far more successful winning a local following and their meetings frequently drew exceptionally large crowds. Many of their assemblies were held at the Odd Fellows Building, where the practice of conducting them on Saturday nights drew special notice from at least one Democratic newsman. Saturday was a good choice for abolitionist meetings, the journalist scoffed, as that had always been "a night generally selected by niggers, as well as their Covington friends for 'frolic and fun'"²⁶⁹

Covington witnessed many assemblies at which the Emancipation Proclamation was praised and Negro army enlistment endorsed. At one rally, that was preceded by the firing of artillery and playing of martial airs by a brass band. Mayor Preston called slavery the backbone of the rebellion and declared it "must not only be broken, but taken out and destroyed."²⁷⁰

Preston was a strong Lincolnite who foresaw slavery's inevitable demise. In February 1864, he appeared at an emancipation meeting and declared:

It is my deliberate judgment that the institution of slavery is doomed . . . The first shot at Fort Sumter was its death-knell. Calmly and deliberately I then determined in my own mind to stand or fall with the Government of my fathers and let slavery die from the death wound inflicted by its own friends...

*It seems to me that, if the friends of slavery had calmly considered ...that the slave is a thinking being, endowed with a soul like unto theirs, and liable, at any moment, to take himself off from his master, they would have paused ere they brought on this civil war. But, with reckless madness, and without any just cause, they have brought on this terrible and desolating war, and forever doomed the institution they profess to love so well. Then let the responsibility rest upon them.*²⁷¹

Locally, the Lincoln-McClellan campaign was marred by many fights and disrupted rallies as militants of both camps clashed. Typical was a McClellan-Pendleton rally held at Third and Philadelphia on September 21st. A group of soldiers, all Lincoln supporters and most ambulatory patients, took loud exception to a speaker's reference to Major General Stephen G. Burbridge as "Burbridge the Brute." The speaker answered his critics, calling the soldiers "white-livered cowards."²⁷²

The soldiers reacted to the name-calling by increasing their heckling until the various speakers gave up all attempts at oratory and left the platform. The crowd tore down the speakers' stand and used the material to make a huge bonfire.²⁷³

A more peaceful affair was the Lincoln-Johnson rally at Odd Fellows Hall on the night of October 14th, where Salmon P. Chase was the featured speaker. The former Ohio Governor and Secretary of the Treasury, had once desired that year's Republican presidential nomination would be himself. He lost all hope for it when his home state approved a resolution in favor of Lincoln.

Chase had long ago earned a reputation as a tireless worker for the Union and had once defended such a large number of blacks accused of being fugitive slaves, that Covington slave-holders scoffed at him as the “Attorney-General for Niggers.”

Chase’s appearance however, attracted an unusually large audience cheering wildly when he declared the Union must be preserved at all costs. He reminded his listeners he had spoken at this same location four years earlier in support of Lincoln and since then Kentuckians and Ohioans had “stood upon many a field of battle, fighting for the Union of States.”²⁷⁴

He was also cheered when he defended Lincoln’s freeing the slaves in rebel states. “Whatever is necessary to insure the safety of the country, is right and fit to be done and ought to be done,” he said.²⁷⁵

Chase continued his defense of Lincoln by declaring:

*I know there are a good many in Kentucky who do not sympathize with the Administration. There are some, I am sorry to say, who sympathize with the rebellion, but the mass of people in Kentucky are true and loyal men and women and they have no more idea of deserting the old flag than we do in Ohio.*²⁷⁶

The audience was virtually ecstatic at the last remark.

The speaker was cognizant of those who called the war a failure for the Union and replied to their criticisms by saying:

But has it been a failure so far? Kentucky was neutral when the war began. Is she neutral today? ...Kentucky is safe, Missouri is safe, Maryland is safe, West Virginia is safe. Tennessee is in the Union and a large portion of Louisiana is in the Union and our flag floats in every State where rebellion displayed its standard four years ago.

*I shall never forget the state of things three years ago, last April, immediately after the firing on Fort Sumter. There was hardly a regiment in Washington. Our troops were scattered all over the Union and the greater part of our little army was in Texas, where it was surrendered by a traitor General, to the rebel authorities of that State. There was no army under the command of the President – no navy. Our ships had been scattered all over the globe. There were few guns in our arsenals and we had but small means to equip armies, if we had them. The railroad between Washington and Baltimore was in possession of the rebels. Baltimore itself was in possession of the rebels. They had seized the vessels in the harbor and were preparing an attack upon Fort McHenry. We were beleaguered in the capital, with no way out, except through West Virginia or Pennsylvania. The Ohio River was closed. Every light of commerce along the whole coast, from the Cape of Delaware to the mouth of the Rio Grande, had been extinguished. Instead of the accustomed greeting to foreign commerce entering our ports, all was darkness on our coasts . . . Such was the condition of things three years ago last April.*²⁷⁷

The effect of Chase’s comparison of the Union’s advantages in 1864 with its earlier state of unpreparedness was having a marked effect upon his listeners who strained to hear every word.

Chase continued with a plea for unity in the upcoming election and in closing predicted victory for Lincoln, Johnson and the Union. In an outstanding example of the oratory style of that time, he proclaimed:

*The people will ‘rally round the flag.’ They will come to the rescue of their institutions . . . The resistless march of the Union will prevail. **Rebellion will fail!** State after state will haul down the rebel flag. Over state after state will the old stars and stripes float once more, resplendent in their original glory, until at length, over the whole vast extent of the Republic shall again be seen the gorgeous ensign of the Republic once more full high advanced, its arms and trophies streaming in their original luster, not a stripe erased or polluted, nor a single star obscured – bearing for its motto no such miserable interrogatory as **What is all this worth?** But everywhere spread all over, in characters of living light, blazing on all its ample folds, as they float over the sea and over the land,*

*and in every wind under the whole heavens, that other sentiment, dear to every true American heart. Liberty and Union, new and forever, one and inseparable!*²⁷⁸

Chase's support of Lincoln and his outstanding abilities as an attorney would soon lead to his appointment as Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

Three days before Chase's appearance here, Covingtonians were made acutely aware of an Ohio Congressional election when a special polling place was set up at the Larz Anderson Artillery Battery near the present day campus of Holmes High School. There, all Ohio soldiers stationed throughout Covington and Newport were permitted to cast their votes in the Buckeye election.

By then, Covington was taking a more determined, belligerent pro-Lincoln stance. The Democrats were well aware of this and began to sarcastically call their opponents the "super-loyal men of Covington" and "the Lincoln mob party." McClellan supporters consistently referred to themselves as "Covington's elite."²⁷⁹

Events of October 20th served to further convince McClellan backers of the accuracy of their term "mob" describing the local Lincoln faction. Governor Thomas E. Bramlette, a Union Democrat and former federal officer, was scheduled to speak that night at Magnolia Hall on behalf of McClellan.

Even though Bramlette received support of Covington in his race for governor, this election was an entirely different matter. The community had the choice between his style of Unionism and one that offered no compromise. Covington became a place where "it was not considered altogether safe for a man to avow himself a Democrat and those who attended the meetings generally went armed for self-protection."²⁸⁰

Governor Bramlette was refused the use of City Hall and the Odd Fellows Building for his speech and the Republicans tried to block his appearance by renting all the other available halls and meeting places.²⁸¹ The Magnolia, however, was generally thought of as the Democrats' unofficial headquarters and was the one place where Republicans had no control. It was here the Democrats nominated their slate of candidates for the previous January city election. This slate was soundly defeated, however, and the following morning some unknown individual draped the hall's door with crepe and posted a formal announcement of the death of "Magnolia Democracy."²⁸²

Governor Bramlette no sooner began his speech than a large crowd of Covingtonians gathered on the street outside the hall and "began and kept up ... a series of demonstrations of the most disgraceful character."²⁸³ Rocks were thrown through the hall's windows while noises made by the crowd frequently drowned out the governor's words. An Ohio newsman who supported McClellan, reported the event by declaring:

**ANOTHER OUTRAGE COMMITTED by the LINCOLN MOB PARTY of COVINGTON –
GOV. BRAMLETTE INSULTED.**²⁸⁴

The newsman repeated the charge, as he cried:

***OUTRAGE in COVINGTON – INFAMOUS INSULT TO THE GOVERNOR
of KENTUCKY***

*If the object of speaking be to convince, then the best McClellan speech of the campaign was made by the Abolition horde at Covington, Kentucky.*²⁸⁵

*A ruffian mob occupied the street in front of the hall [and] endeavored to break up the meeting. For some time it was impossible for the speaker to proceed or the audience to hear. ...Nor was the conduct of this dastardly mob confined to noise and shouting. They kindled a bonfire in front of the hall; and...they hurled missiles...and made complete smash of the windows.*²⁸⁶

One of the windows at Bramlette's back was a favored target for several of the rock throwers. The governor would have suffered multiple injuries except for the fact "the National banner, unfurled and spread out at the window, protected him and stopped the missiles."²⁸⁷

The meeting struggled to its eventual close after which those in attendance hurried to the safety of their homes. The jeering crowd rushed into the empty hall and destroyed every vestige of the elaborate decorations the McClellanites had so painstakingly put in place.²⁸⁸ Such an unexpected, violent reception had an unsettling effect on Governor Bramlette and two nights later he failed to keep a speaking engagement at a Newport rally near that end of the Licking Suspension Bridge. He did appear at a daytime rally at the Newport courthouse on October 24th.²⁸⁹

Once again, the governor's appearance was not without incident, for the night before his scheduled talk, the cannon which the Democrats customarily used for the firing of special salutes was spiked. This, a Bramlette supporter said, "was a mean trick," and added, "but no salute was fired as such had not been the intention."²⁹⁰

SENATOR GARRETT DAVIS was another of the state's leading McClellan supporters to come here on behalf of the Democrat's nominee. Davis had initially opposed secession and supported virtually all Union aims and principles. He was however, strongly pro-slavery and by the war's third year, became convinced it was being waged to abolish slavery. He then began bitterly attacking President Lincoln and the conduct of the war.²⁹¹

Unlike Governor Bramlette's local appearance, Senator Davis' appearance at Cooper's Hall on the evening of October 22nd was largely ignored by the local populace. Despite Democratic claims that he attracted "a large and enthusiastic" crowd,²⁹² one of the senator's critics quickly scoffed: Garrett Davis delivered a speech, about five hours in length, to 39 copperheads.²⁹³

Much of this hostility toward Peace Democrats was due in some measure to the indiscriminate raids being made in made parts of the state by roving bands of guerrillas who professed to be southern sympathizers. Typical of their attacks was that made against a passenger train which left on October 18th.²⁹⁴

The crowded train, which had passengers standing in the aisles and even on the car platforms was forced to halt because of a barricade placed across its tracks at Lair's Station, a few miles south of Cynthiana. A group of about 100 guerrillas opened fire causing many passengers to panic and flee the safety of the coaches. The guerrillas promptly rounded them up as prisoners.²⁹⁵

There were 22 partially trained, but armed, federal soldiers on the train "about one-half of whom fought the Confederates." The others, disgraced themselves by crouching on the floor, claiming they had no ammunition.²⁹⁶

The small group of soldiers poured a steady fire into the rebel ranks, killing two and wounding another. After about twenty minutes of heavy fire exchanged, the raiders released their prisoners and fled into the countryside. One passenger was slightly wounded during the fray.²⁹⁷ One of those released was the Union's Postmaster General Montgomery Blair, who was not recognized by the marauding band.²⁹⁸

Such attacks invariably set off loud outcries among Covingtonians and usually resulted in joining the ranks of Lincoln supporters. On the night before the presidential election, the Lincolmites conducted a huge torchlight parade through town, while those who lived along the line of march vied with one another in decorating and illuminating their homes.

One enthusiastic homeowner erected a large platform in front of his house and used it as a stage for a chorus of 20 young, flag-waving ladies singing patriotic songs. The girls, each dressed in white, stood before a backdrop of a large American flag over which a large transparency carried the words: "Lincoln and Johnson: the nation's choice."²⁹⁹

Local Lincoln backers were jubilant when early election returns showed Covington had given their candidate a victory margin of 1,351 votes to McClellan's 750. The same early returns showed Lincoln also won in neighboring Newport by 865 to 395.

McClellan ran considerably stronger n the area's rural precincts, yet Covington and Newport gave Lincoln enough of a lead to enable him to easily carry the two counties. The final official vote for Kenton County gave the President a 341-vote margin, defeating McClellan 1,716 to 1,375. Lincoln also carried Campbell County by 216 votes, winning 1,504 to 1,286.

Elsewhere in what was then the Sixth District, McClellan proved to be the clear-cut choice of the heavily rural electorate. The district results, in addition to those for Kenton and Campbell were as follows:

COUNTY	McCLELLAN	LINCOLN ³⁰⁰
Bracken	922	268
Boone	1063	200
Gallatin	391	109
Grant	372	220
Harrison	820	256
Carroll	324	82
Trimble	385	12
Pendleton	688	629

Throughout the state, just as in the rural portion of the Sixth District, the coalition of various dissident factions proved to be too difficult for the Lincolnites to overcome. Fear and distrust of an emancipated Negro was a potent weapon in the dissidents' hands and they used those fears to their fullest advantage.

Lincoln's victory in the urban centers was the result of an effective coalition. During the previous four years, various Covington factions came to see Lincoln as the first president since Polk who acted for a decisive constituency and who was himself a decisive president. The ineffectiveness of the other chief executives has been due to the temper of the times itself.

Covington voters had often been confused themselves as to how to deal with problems of the chaotic pre-war years. A change occurred in immigration patterns that bordered on the traumatic for the town's long-established residents. Any balance that existed between commercial Covington and agrarian Kentucky was being upset by the throngs of German and Irish migrants who tended to be against slavery interests.

When changing migration patterns were joined to the community's growing factory and commercial systems, an influential voting group emerged which the older political parties could not successfully cope.

The social and economic issues were crucial and often left the common citizen bewildered and confused about the correct course to follow. This resulted in the rise and fall of numerous pre-war political parties and an uncommon amount of political compromise and political drifting.

In Lincoln, Covingtonians sensed the leadership which, though not without bitter critics, could effectively bind together the forces of the Free Soilers, the industrialists, the immigrants, the abolitionists and the commercialists into a force which would prevail over the strongest of detractors.

The influence of those factors shaping Covington's view of the President was at a minimum and entirely missing in other sections of the state. Kentucky votes 64,301 to 27,786 to discard the Kentucky-born leader and become one of only three states to reject Lincoln – with Delaware and New Jersey.

Locally, the election was perceived as concrete evidence of the nation's heart being in agreement with Lincoln and the complete suppression of the rebellion. The vote struck a severe blow to the Democrats' hope of regaining an effective voice in the city's affairs. They party seemed in complete disarray as the 1865 municipal election neared and offered only token opposition to the Republican, or Union ticket.

The local Republicans also experienced a mild turbulence in their ranks when a number of them publicly criticized the capabilities of some of their own candidates. Little came of the intra-party dispute however, and with one exception, the entire Union slate was swept into office at the January 7th election.³⁰¹

The party's lone loss was Jacob Greenwald, a dealer in animal hides. He was defeated by Joseph Hovekamp in the Fifth Ward councilman race. The Fifth consisted of all the city north of Twelfth between Russell and Main.

Bitterly cold weather that January led to several hard freezes, all to the delight of the town's ice skating enthusiasts. Lakes and ponds turned into unusually smooth rinks and, one reporter said:

*Thousands of ladies and gentlemen have availed themselves of the opportunity to enjoy the exhilarating sport of skating. At night, the ponds are literally covered with people and the scene presented is a very exciting one.*³⁰²

*Covington can boast of some very fine skaters, both male and female.*³⁰³

Indoor parties and festivals were commonplace. A festival at the Main Street Methodist Church nearly ended in tragedy when, on January 2nd, a Christmas tree caught fire. Fortunately, the blaze was quickly extinguished, but for a brief time it was feared the entire building would be engulfed.³⁰⁴

SOLDIERS WERE SEEN everywhere as troop arrivals and departures occurred almost daily. On one occasion, two of recently mustered out 24th Kentucky Volunteer Infantry were arrested on drunkenness charges. Word of their arrest quickly spread to other former members of the regiment and some 50 to 60 of them proceeded to the jail and demanded their comrades' release. When the jailer refused, the protesters, whose ranks were augmented by a large number of townspeople, threatened to break down the jail to do as he was told.³⁰⁵

The jailer meanwhile sent for the mayor and the provost marshal, both who quickly arrived with several offices. The mayor took one look at the angry crowd and decided there was a very real danger of a full-scale raid threatening the jail. He and the provost marshal promptly ordered the prisoners released, this course being deemed the most prudent under the circumstances."³⁰⁶

The draft law was still in existence and every healthy Covington male of military age was concerned about the possibility of another call-up. As a result, draft meetings were held throughout February to discuss ways of raising sufficient bounty money to spur enlistments. This, they felt, would spare the community the “dishonor” of such a call taking place.

Early that same month, one newsman noted:

*Men are applying at the Provost Marshal's office every day, to enlist and be credited to Kenton County, offering to take whatever bounty the people may determine to give. Unfortunately, up to the present time, no bounty whatever has been offered.*³⁰⁷

Not only was there no bounty, but loud complaints were being made by Covington and Newport citizens about what they called “the necessity of furnishing nearly all the men and money required to fill the quotas of Kenton and Campbell Counties.”³⁰⁸

It would be proper, Newport and Covington residents cried, to have their cities made into separate military subdivisions, independent of the counties.³⁰⁹

Other complaints had long been voiced by Covingtonians about Boone County's practice of maintaining recruiters in their city. That county, like many other places which experienced difficulty meeting quotas, never hesitated to capitalize on the patriotism in other communities.

According to one perturbed resident, Boone County citizens

*sent hither a swarm of agents and runners who opened a recruiting office in the most public part of the city and who have daily scoured our streets with pockets full of money, inducing our young men to enlist for Boone County.*³¹⁰

*If the gallant people of Boone cannot find men enough in their county who will volunteer for the bounty offered then let the Provost Marshal cast lots for them to see who shall go. One thing is certain: the people of Kenton have come to a resolution that Boone County had better move her recruiting officers, agents and runners from Covington to Burlington.*³¹¹

In addition it was charged the Boone County recruiters often enticed away men who had already enlisted, but who were not yet officially sworn into the military. The situation eventually led to a committee of citizens making personal calls on every local recruiting agent for other states and counties and asking them to halt their Covington activities.³¹²

A later report on effectiveness of the committee's visits noted: “All of them agreed to comply with request except two, who will be looked after today.”³¹³

On February 22nd, city council took action and established a license fee of \$250 for the substitute brokerage business and required each to post a bond of \$5,000. Penalty for violation of the new law was a fine of \$50 for every recruit or substitute the offender might succeed in attracting.³¹⁴

Newport officials, whose city was experiencing some of the same difficulties, watched Covington closely and soon followed with a similar rigid requirement for out-of-town brokers.³¹⁵

During all this, several meetings were held in futile attempts to devise a workable plan to raise the needed bounty funds, for it was apparent Covington residents were beginning to tire of shouldering what they thought was a disproportionate share of the entire county's responsibility. At a February 16th meeting, it was decided to conduct an all-out drive to solicit enough funds from the general public to pay a bounty of \$300. It would be paid to every man who enlisted for three years “to the credit of Kenton County.”³¹⁶

Those attending the meeting resolved to petition the state legislature to authorize county officials to levy a tax to reimburse the contributors to the fund.³¹⁷ Such proposed legislation was ironic. It would enable the county residents to purchase an exemption with their contribution and have the taxpaying public reimburse them for their pseudo-patriotic outlay.

About three weeks later, the legislature responded to such urgings and granted seventeen counties, including Kenton, Campbell and Boone, the right to raise the desired funds.³¹⁸

The nation-wide practice of paying bounties led to creation of a type of military deserter known as the bounty jumper. This was the unscrupulous individual who would enlist in one state or community for the bounty offered and then desert to claim another payment in a different locality. These men were a generally despised lot who could expect little sympathy if caught. One group of about 40 such culprits was brought here during mid-March to board a south-bound train. A local newsman made no attempt to conceal his contempt for the heavily-guarded

deserters when he wrote: “They were a most villainous set of rascals and conducted themselves in the most outrageous manner while here.”³¹⁹

The “outrageous” behavior occurred while the group was waiting to board the train. The newsman reported:

*One of them set fire to a frame shanty . . . the flames from which would, no doubt, have communicated to adjoining buildings had they not been promptly extinguished. It is supposed that the bounty-jumpers hoped to effect their escape during the excitement which would attend the fire.*³²⁰

Shortly before this, Newport hosted the annual state conference of those Methodist Churches adhering North. On March 4th, which inauguration day for President Lincoln, the conference voted to mark the event by following a sacramental service with a special inauguration prayer service in behalf of the Kentucky-born president.³²¹

Within days, General Grant, with scores of Covingtonians under his command, was unleashing smashing attacks all along the Confederate defense lines about the Virginia cities of Petersburg and Richmond. The southern army was soon reeling under his relentless blows, while the entire Union eagerly anticipated its total collapse.

The general’s thoughts frequently turned to his family here in Covington, for on March 6th, while engaged in his epic struggle, his sister Clara died.³²²

His sister’s death so saddened Ulysses that it took two urgent letters from his father before he could bring himself to answer. On March 12th, he finally wrote:

*Although I had known for some time that she was in decline, yet I was not expecting to hear of her death at this time – I have had no heart to write earlier.*³²³

Clara was the second member of Ulysses’ family to die while he was away at war. His brother, Simpson, had died shortly after the conflict’s beginning.

On April 2nd, General Grant again showed the world how devastating his attacks could be. After being tied down in a protracted siege of Petersburg, he suddenly hit General Robert E. Lee’s right with an overwhelming assault that broke his line and forced the southern general to abandon his entire Petersburg and Richmond defenses.

When news of Grant’s capture of Richmond reached Covington, wild pandemonium broke out and celebrants crowded the streets just as after his earlier victories in the West. Barrels were stacked and made into gigantic bonfires and cannon fired in the market place.

The cannon fire was so frequent and thunderous that windows throughout town were shattered. At one of the leading hotels, the Madison House, not a single pane of glass remained unbroken!

The 1st Ohio Heavy Artillery, stationed here at the time, set up its big guns near the Seminary Hospital and fired a victory salute of 100 guns. The hospitalized combat veterans were in a frenzy of jubilation. Daniel Beard, founder of the American Boy Scout movement, later wrote that not even the town’s tumultuous celebration at the end of World War I surpassed the dramatic excitement of this occasion.³²⁴

In Newport, an observer of the town’s rampant celebration said simply:

*The fact is, if there was another Richmond to fall into our hands in a few days, we think it would prove fatal to a large portion of the population of Newport.*³²⁵

Covington officials however, planned a repeat celebration for April 14th when the city staged an **official** observance of the victory. Council members arranged to have every bell in the city, including church bells, steamboat bells and factory bells, join all the town’s fire alarms in hailing the fall of the Confederate capitol. Nightfall was to be greeted by “a general illumination of houses . . . and bonfires in the streets.”³²⁶ Special church services were planned but thoughts for a formal parade were reluctantly abandoned after “considering the bad condition of the streets.”³²⁷

Plans for an official celebration were noisily aborted when shortly after midnight of Palm Sunday, April 9th, the announcement of Lee’s surrender at Appomattox Court House brought on another unrestrained celebration. The news arrived here while Monday was barely a few minutes old and set off the ringing of bells and booming of cannon. The people, aroused from their sleep by the noise, rushed into the streets. When informed of Lee’s surrender, they engaged in another wild celebration lasting throughout the night.

Once again bonfires were lit, church and fire bells were rung and crowds marched through the streets singing *Rally ‘Round the Flag* and other patriotic songs. As daylight arrived, many businesses remained closed for

two days and virtually all buildings were draped with bunting and flags. Two hundred gun salutes were again fired by the 1st Ohio Heavy Artillery and responded by troops at Newport Barracks.

The demands on local saloons and breweries reached record proportions. This was the only occasion where they were drained dry!

The war was apparently ended, the Union and Covington celebrated.

Endnotes

¹ Beard, Daniel, *op. cit.*

² *Cincinnati Daily Gazette*, 17 September 1861.

³ *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 18 September 1861.

⁴ *Ibid*, 15 November 1861.

⁵ *Ibid*, 22 November 1861.

⁶ *Ibid*, 4 December 1861.

⁷ *Ibid*.

⁸ Shaler, Nathaniel Southgate, "Autobiography," Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston (1909)

⁹ Collins, Richard H., volume 2, *op. cit.*

¹⁰ *Covington Journal*, 7 December 1861.

¹¹ Beard, Daniel C., *op. cit.*

¹² Perkins, George Gilpin, *op. cit.*

¹³ *Ibid*.

¹⁴ *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 10 February 1863..

¹⁵ *Cincinnati Daily Times*, 9 October 1862.

¹⁶ *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 15 May 1863.

¹⁷ *Covington Journal*, 3 May 1862.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 8 February 1862.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 26 October 1861.

²⁰ *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 16 April 1862.

²¹ *Cincinnati Daily Times*, 1 September 1864

²² *Covington Journal*, 13 April 1861.

²³ *Ibid*, 5 April 1862.

²⁴ Kerr, Charles, editor, "History of Kentucky, volume 2, American Historical Society, Chicago (1922).

²⁵ *Biographical Encyclopedia of Kentucky, op. cit.*

²⁶ Speed, Thomas, "The Union Cause in Kentucky," *op. cit.*

²⁷ *Ibid*.

²⁸ *Cincinnati Daily Times*, 19 February 1863.

²⁹ *Ibid*, 1 September 1864.

³⁰ *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 25 August 1863.

³¹ Ross, Ishbel, *op. cit.*

³² *Ibid*.

³³ *Ibid*.

³⁴ *Ibid*.

³⁵ *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 18 February 1862.

³⁶ *Covington Journal*, 22 February 1862.

³⁷ *Ibid*.

³⁸ *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 18 February 1862.

³⁹ *Ibid*.

⁴⁰ *The Lounger*, Covington, 25 December 1875.

⁴¹ *Covington Journal*, 7 December 1861.

⁴² *Ibid*, 21 June 1862.

⁴³ Kentucky Adjutant General's Report, volume 2, *op. cit.*

⁴⁴ Juettner, Otto, *op. cit.*

⁴⁵ *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 17 February 1862.

⁴⁶ Kentucky Adjutant General's Report, Volume 2, *op. cit.*

⁴⁷ *Covington Journal*, 9 August 1862.

⁴⁸ *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 9 December 1861.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 4 December 1863.

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- ⁵⁰ *Covington Journal*, 31 May 1862.
- ⁵¹ Coppee, Henry, "Grant and His Campaigns," Charles B. Richardson, New York (1866)
- ⁵² *Ibid.*
- ⁵³ Simon, John Y., editor, volume 5, *op. cit.*
- ⁵⁴ Cotton, Bruce, "Grant Takes Command," Little, Brown & Company, Boston (1968).
- ⁵⁵ Ross, Ishbel, *op. cit.*
- ⁵⁶ Cramer, Jesse Grant, editor, "Letters of Ulysses S. Grant," G.P. Putnam Sons, New York (1912).
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, also: Ross, Ishbel, *op. cit.*
- ⁵⁸ Simon, John Y., editor, "The Personal Memoirs of Julia Dent Grant, G.P. Putnam Sons, New York (1975).
- ⁵⁹ *Cyclopedia of American Biography*, volume 2, D. Appleton & Co., New York (1896).
- ⁶⁰ *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 9 July 1863.
- ⁶¹ *Cincinnati Enquirer*, 9 July 1863.
- ⁶² *Ibid.*, 10 July 1863.
- ⁶³ Ross, Ishbel, *op. cit.*
- ⁶⁴ *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 14 March 1864.
- ⁶⁵ *Cincinnati Daily Express*, 15 March 1864.
- ⁶⁶ Grant, Ulysses S., "Personal Memoirs," volume 1, Charles L. Webster & Company, New York (1885).
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁹ Ross, Ishbel, *op. cit.*
- ⁷⁰ *Cincinnati daily Commercial*, 19 April 1862.
- ⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 20 February 1863.
- ⁷² Shaler, Nathaniel Southgate, "Autobiography," *op. cit.*
- ⁷³ *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 5 March 1862.
- ⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 8 March 1862.
- ⁷⁵ *Cincinnati Daily Times*, 30 June 1862.
- ⁷⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁷ *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 22 July 1862.
- ⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 24 July 1862
- ⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 26 July 1862.
- ⁸⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 25 July 1862.
- ⁸² *Ibid.*, 8 May 1862.
- ⁸³ *Ibid.*, 25 July 1862.
- ⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 26 July 1862.
- ⁸⁵ Collins, Richard H., volume 1, *op. cit.*
- ⁸⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁸⁷ *Biographical Encyclopedia of Kentucky*, *op. cit.*
- ⁸⁸ Collins, Richard, H., volume 2, *op. cit.*
- ⁸⁹ *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 10 June 1862.
- ⁹⁰ Stevens, Harry R., "The Ohio Bridge," The Covington and Cincinnati Bridge Company (1939). Finnell's farm was located just north of present-day Visalia.
- ⁹¹ *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 11 October 1862.
- ⁹² *Cincinnati Daily Times*, 5 July 1862.
- ⁹³ According to the Louisville *Courier-Journal Magazine*, 18 April 1978, the slain lawmaker was Edward Massie of Spencer County. He was murdered by pro-southern night riders.
- ⁹⁴ *Cincinnati Daily Times*, 17 June 1862.
- ⁹⁵ *Covington Journal*, 9 August 1862.
- ⁹⁶ Townsend, William H., "Lincoln and the Bluegrass," *op. cit.*
- ⁹⁷ Stone, Richard G., Jr., "A Brittle Sword," *op. cit.*
- ⁹⁸ Coulter, E. Merton, "The Civil War and Readjustment in Kentucky," University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill (1926).
- ⁹⁹ Speed, Thomas, "The Union Cause in Kentucky," *op. cit.*
- ¹⁰⁰ Levin, H., editor, "The Lawyer and Lawmakers of Kentucky," Lewis Publishing Company, Chicago (1897).
- ¹⁰¹ Andrews, Belle Fish, *op. cit.* and *Kentucky Post*, 13 December 1895.
- ¹⁰² Andrews, Belle Fish, *op. cit.*
- ¹⁰³ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁰⁵ *Covington Journal*, 13 July 1861.
- ¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 23 August 1862.
- ¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 8 February 1868.
- ¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

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- ¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹⁰ Collins, Richard H., volume 1, *op. cit.*
- ¹¹¹ *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 3 September 1862.
- ¹¹² *Ibid.*, 4 September 1862.
- ¹¹³ *Cincinnati Enquirer*, 10 July 1863.
- ¹¹⁴ *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 26 September 1862.
- ¹¹⁵ *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 12 September 1862.
- ¹¹⁶ *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 24, 25 & 29 September 1862.
- ¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 7 November 1862.
- ¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 16 October 1862.
- ¹¹⁹ Author's personal conversation with Lee Nordheim, who stated the former headquarters building is at 1915 Pearl Street.
- ¹²⁰ *Cincinnati Daily Times*, 27 October 1862.
- ¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 3 November 1862.
- ¹²² *Ibid.*, 31 October 1862.
- ¹²³ *Ibid.*, 27 October 1862. Before the structure burned and was rebuilt into its present condition, the Kenton County Historical Society was able to record much of the lost graffiti left on the walls of some 2nd floor rooms in the building by the prisoners. There seemed to also have been some Union deserters also awaiting arraignment, judging from the context of some of the graffiti. Erected in 1857, the building was barely five years old at the time – editor.
- ¹²⁴ *Harper's Weekly*, 27 September 1862.
- ¹²⁵ *Covington Journal*, 20 July 1861. This structure survived into the 1970s, the upper floors being vacant and uninhabitable. The basement was indeed still being used as a tavern, mainly for African-Americans. The last use of the building was as a Halloween haunted house to raise funds for nearby Mother of God Church. The building was razed to widen Russell Street. - editor
- ¹²⁶ *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 11 October 1862.
- ¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 31 October 1862.
- ¹²⁸ *Ibid.*
- ¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 24 October 1862.
- ¹³⁰ Boynton, Charles B., "History of the Navy During the Rebellion," D. Appleton & Company, New York (1867). [See *Northern Kentucky Heritage Magazine*, XVIII, #2 for complete history of the Alexander Swift Iron Works, Wilder, Newport – editor]
- ¹³¹ Johnson, E. Polk, volume 3, *op. cit.* [See: *Northern Kentucky Heritage Magazine*, XIII, #1 for a discussion of the career of Ignatius Droege. His home still stands on Greenup near 12th – editor]
- ¹³² *Ibid.*
- ¹³³ *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 17 February 1863.
- ¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 13 April 1863.
- ¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 19 April 1864.
- ¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 1 May 1863.
- ¹³⁷ Johnson, E. Polk, volume 3, *op. cit.*
- ¹³⁸ *Covington Journal*, 12 January 1863.
- ¹³⁹ *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 28 May 1863.
- ¹⁴⁰ *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer*, 18 August 1865.
- ¹⁴¹ *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 1 August 1863.
- ¹⁴² Leonard, Lewis Alexander, editor, "Greater Cincinnati and its People," Lewis Historical Publishing Co., Cincinnati (1927).
- ¹⁴³ *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 20 August 1863.
- ¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴⁷ Letter in vertical file at Kenton County (KY) Public Library.
- ¹⁴⁸ *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 24 July 1863.
- ¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 17 July 1863.
- ¹⁵⁰ *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 6 August 1863.
- ¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁵² *Ibid.*
- ¹⁵³ Coulter, E. Merton, *op. cit.*
- ¹⁵⁴ *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 31 July 1863.
- ¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 4 August 1863.
- ¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 8 August 1863.
- ¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 4 August 1863.
- ¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 6 August 1863.

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- ¹⁶² *Ibid*, 4 August 1863.
- ¹⁶³ *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer*, 22 July 1863.
- ¹⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 2 July 1863.
- ¹⁶⁵ Shaler, Nathaniel Southgate, "Autobiography," *op. cit.*
- ¹⁶⁶ *Cincinnati Daily Gazette*, 4 & 5 April 1861.
- ¹⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 5 April 1861.
- ¹⁶⁸ *Ibid*.
- ¹⁶⁹ *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 20 July 1865.
- ¹⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 13 May 1861.
- ¹⁷¹ *Covington Journal*, 15 March 1862.
- ¹⁷² *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 19 December 1863.
- ¹⁷³ *Ibid*, 4 April 1862.
- ¹⁷⁴ *Ibid*.
- ¹⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 13 July 1864.
- ¹⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 14 July 1864.
- ¹⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 31 March 1865.
- ¹⁷⁸ *Ibid*.
- ¹⁷⁹ *Ibid*.
- ¹⁸⁰ *Ibid*.
- ¹⁸¹ *Ibid*.
- ¹⁸² *Ibid*.
- ¹⁸³ *Ibid*, 20 May 1863.
- ¹⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 7 May 1863.
- ¹⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 10 July 1863. Also: Collins, Richard H., volume 1, *op. cit.*
- ¹⁸⁶ *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 10 July 1863.
- ¹⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 22 February 1864.
- ¹⁸⁸ Johnson, e. Polk, volume 2, *op. cit.*
- ¹⁸⁹ *Cincinnati Enquirer*, 6 December 1864.
- ¹⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 20 November 1864.
- ¹⁹¹ *Covington Journal*, 1 May 1858. Also: *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer*, 2 & 15 October 1864 & 31 December 1864.
- ¹⁹² *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer*, 21 October 1864.
- ¹⁹³ *Ibid*, 10 December 1864.
- ¹⁹⁴ "Leading Manufacturers & Merchants of Cincinnati and Emerson," International Publishing Co., New York (1886).
- ¹⁹⁵ *The Saturday Evening American*, Covington, 30 July 1864.
- ¹⁹⁶ *Ibid*.
- ¹⁹⁷ *Ibid*.
- ¹⁹⁸ *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer*, 24 December 1864.
- ¹⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 28 December 1864.
- ²⁰⁰ Official records of the Union & Confederate Navies, Series I, Volumes 24, 25, 27, Government Printing Office (1911).
- ²⁰¹ *Ibid*, Series I, Volume 27.
- ²⁰² Johnson, E. Polk, volume 2, *op. cit.*
- ²⁰³ *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer*, 6 December 1864.
- ²⁰⁴ *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 22 March 1865
- ²⁰⁵ *Ibid*.
- ²⁰⁶ *Ibid*.
- ²⁰⁷ *Ibid*.
- ²⁰⁸ *Ibid*.
- ²⁰⁹ *Cincinnati Enquirer*, 16 July 1863.
- ²¹⁰ *Ibid*.
- ²¹¹ Coulter, E. Merton, *op. cit.*
- ²¹² Collins, Richard H., volume 1, *op. cit.*
- ²¹³ *Ibid*.
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- ²¹⁵ *Ibid*, 17 May 1864.
- ²¹⁶ *Ibid*, 31 May 1864.
- ²¹⁷ *Ibid*, 4 February 1864. This same edition reported 1090 Campbell Countians as being on active duty in the Confederate Army. The Covington and Kenton County figures are from the *Daily Commercial* 17 February 1864.
- ²¹⁸ *The Saturday Evening American*, Covington, 27 July 1864.
- ²¹⁹ *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 10 October 1864.
- ²²⁰ *Ibid*.
- ²²¹ Commager, Henry Steele, editor, "The American Destiny," volume 7, Danbury Press, New York (1976).

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- 222 *The Saturday Evening American*, Covington, 30 July 1864.
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224 *Ibid.*
225 *Ibid.*
226 *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 13 July 1864.
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231 Horan, James D., "Confederate Agent," Crown Publishers, New York (1954).
232 *Ibid.*
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234 *Ibid.*
235 *Ibid.*
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237 *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 12 February 1863.
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239 *Ibid.*, 8 January 1864.
240 *Ibid.*, 2 July 1864.
241 *Ibid.*
242 *Cincinnati Daily Gazette*, 29 April 1865 & 1 May 1865.
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246 City Charter and Amendments to 1864.
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248 Beard, Daniel C., *op. cit.*
249 *Ibid.*
250 *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 2 August 1864.
251 *Ibid.*, 15 March 1865.
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254 Collins, Richard, H., volume 1, *op. cit.*
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256 *Ibid.*, 2 August 1864.
257 *Ibid.*, 4 August 1864.
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259 Collins, Richard H., volume 1, *op. cit.*
260 *Saturday Evening American*, Covington, 27 August 1864.
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263 *Saturday Evening American*, Covington, 27 August 1864.
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265 *Ibid.*
266 *Ibid.*
267 *Ibid.*
268 *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer*, 21 January 1863.
269 *Ibid.*, 19 February 1864.
270 *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 19 February 1864.
271 *Ibid.*
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277 *Ibid.*
278 *Ibid.*
279 *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer*, 22 October 1864.
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281 *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer*, 22 October 1864.
282 *Covington Journal*, 5 April 1873.

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- 283 *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer*, 22 October 1864.
284 *Ibid.*
285 *Ibid.*
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311 *Ibid.*
312 *Ibid.*, 23 February 1865.
313 *Ibid.*
314 *Ibid.*, 25 February 1865.
315 *Ibid.*, 4 March 1865.
316 *Ibid.*, 18 February 1865.
317 *Ibid.*
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320 *Ibid.*
321 Newton, Rev. James Marcus, *op. cit.*
322 Cramer, Jesse Grant, editor, *op. cit.*
323 *Ibid.*
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325 *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 5 April 1865.
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327 *Ibid.*

Chapter 15

Military Activity on the Covington Front

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The Confederates met with any successes during the war's first year. Their cause, however, was not faring nearly as well in the Western Theater of Operations as it was in the East and the fall of Tennessee's Fort Donelson on February 16, 1862 led to their evacuation of all Kentucky. In spring 1862, the Confederacy experienced the fall of the great cities of Nashville, Memphis and New Orleans as well as great portions of the rebels' entire western region.

Because of these outstanding early Union successes, it was always General Grant's belief the war could have concluded by the end of 1862 if Northern politicians had not consistently interfered.¹

After Grant captured Fort Donelson and the Confederacy abandoned Kentucky, the Commonwealth remained relatively free of southern troops until July 1862. Then-colonel John Hunt Morgan made a desperate attempt to salvage the rebels' western cause with a raid into the state.

Adjutant General Finnell immediately issued an appeal to Covingtonians for volunteers to defend Lexington and alerted such Home Guardsmen as Captain Gustavus Artzman and Amos Shinkle to assemble their companies. That was July 12th and by 4:00 AM the next morning, three trains with 700 troops and volunteers left Covington for the central Bluegrass city.²

Typical of those hastily-formed units, was a company of men headed by Captain Alfred Martin. Formed July 13th, it was immediately rushed southward. Seven days later, on July 20th, it returned to Covington with the other units and promptly disbanded.³

Because of such responses as Covington's, Morgan was forced to alter his plans and Lexington was saved. The rebel leader decided to move north by another route but with Lexington securely in Union hands, he could not risk any move beyond Cynthiana.

Morgan, a Lexington native, entered the state with 900 men and since increased the size of his force to 1,200. Cynthiana was defended by a detachment of newly-formed 18th Kentucky Volunteer Infantry Regiment and a group of Cincinnati firemen, all under the command of Lieutenant Colonel John J. Landrum.

The under-manned defenders staged such a spirited defense that for a time, it seemed the more experienced raiders would suffer a severe defeat. The fighting was the heaviest Morgan and his men had seen to that date. Many of the invaders were either shot or drowned while forcing their way across the Licking under heavy fire.

Like so many other commanders in so many other wars, Morgan consistently under-reported his casualties. The rebel count of eight dead and 28 wounded which he later reported as his total losses, was patently false. The federals removed 13 of his dead from the river shortly after he retreated from town. It was known he carried scores of dead and wounded with him on his retreat.

What success Morgan achieved along the route of his raid was due almost entirely to the element of surprise and the untrained condition of his opposition – hastily recruited, volunteer militiamen. Now that the local forces became increasingly organized to fight, the rebel leader's position became hopeless. Within a short time, Morgan fled south into Tennessee. His raid ended in failure that many of his Southern critics predicted.

As mentioned, most Kentuckians, including affluent slaveholders, were strongly pro-Union. They tended to view Confederate troops as potential destroyers of the American Union – not defenders of slavery and states' rights. This loyalty to the federal government astonished Confederate leaders and prompted one southern historian to later note:

But it is to be admitted that the South was bitterly disappointed in the manifestations of public sentiment in Kentucky, that the exhibitions of sympathy in this state were meager and sentimental, and amounted to but little practical aid of our cause. Indeed, no subject was at once more dispiriting and perplexing to the South than the cautious and unmanly reception given to our armies...⁴

The strong feeling Kentuckians held for their nation was well known among the high ranking Southern army officers and after the war Confederate General George Hodge wrote:

He must be struck with judicial blindness who, in arriving at conclusions drawn from a careful retrospect of the action of the people of Kentucky during this crisis, will deny that a vast majority of the people of the state were devoted to the cause of the Union and deeply impressed with the necessity of its preservation if possible. In truth, the sentiment of devotion to the Union was

*more nearly akin to the religious faith which is born in childhood, which never falters during the excitements of the longest life and which at last enables the cradle to triumph over the grave. The mass of them did not reason about it. The Union was apotheosized; it was thought of, spoken of and cherished with filial reverence. The suggestion of its dissolution was esteemed akin to blasphemy: to advocate or to speculate about it was to be infamous.*⁵

Confederate marauders quickly became aware of this attitude when they conducted plundering raids into the countryside. One resident of nearby Grant County said of the pillaging:

*My grandfather had a lot of good horses too, and the slaves would hide the best ones on the back of the farm, because the raiders would take everything in sight if they found that the farmer wasn't sympathetic to the cause. One time Morgan's men stole everything in the smokehouse.*⁶

The Confederacy had suffered a severe blow at Shiloh and Major General Don Carols Buell was leading a strong Union force in the direction of Chattanooga. General Braxton Bragg and Bull Run veteran Major General Edmund Kirby Smith hurriedly met in that Tennessee city to devise some sort of plan to deal with the federal threat and so devised a two-pronged invasion of Kentucky. One of the invasion spearheads, led by General Smith, was aimed at the Covington area, while the other, under General Bragg, would strike toward Louisville.

The two Confederate leaders were encouraged in their plans by enthused, but completely false, reports of John Hunt Morgan that Kentucky would rise up *en masse* and some 25 to 30,000 of its citizens would immediately rush to join the Southern cause.⁷

The Confederates desperately needed supplies, money and men and they believed a plentiful supply of each would be obtained in Kentucky. They hoped the invasion would succeed in luring the Union army out of the Confederacy and move the heavy fighting north of the Ohio or at least into Kentucky.

General Bragg was the senior officer of the two but he agreed to allow Smith to operate independently until their two forces would ultimately meet, at which time Bragg would assume total command. This quickly proved a serious mistake on Bragg's part for Smith was not the type to ever willingly give up a command.

In August 1862, Smith began his move into the Commonwealth. He no sooner crossed the state line than he began scattering his forces and announced he would not be able to immediately join Bragg in the move against Buell. Then the senior Southern officer marched into the state and successfully drew Buell after him. Bragg was satisfied with this for he could destroy Buell on Kentucky soil. He planned to eventually move toward Bardstown where he expected Smith to join him for a joint march toward Louisville and a combined, all-out attack on Buell.

However, Smith didn't show much interest in Bragg's purposes and proceeded to deploy his own troops in an ineffectual manner over a wide area of eastern, central and northern Kentucky. His invasion route took him through the strongly pro-Union mountain area where civilian partisans, called bushwhackers by the rebels, kept up a deadly, but disorganized fire on the southerners.

In a letter to his wife, Smith complained bitterly about the reception given him by the Kentucky mountaineer. He hoped Kentuckians of the Bluegrass would rally to him, and pushed on.⁸

Smith's disciplined, battle-toughened veteran troops met with little organized opposition until August 29th when they met and scattered a large, but inexperienced Union force of raw, untrained recruits near Richmond, Kentucky. The federals were overwhelmed in what became a humiliating defeat.

When the alarming news of the Union loss reached Covington, all the local home guard units were immediately armed and ordered to report to their respective headquarters for two hours of daily drill, from four to six PM. All business houses were ordered closed during those hours so there would be no distractions from the drills.

Governor James T. Robinson was quick to react to the disaster and promptly issued a proclamation stating:

The State has been invaded by an insolent foe, her honor insulted, her peace disturbed and her integrity imperiled. Not a moment is to be lost . . . rise in the majesty of your strength and drive the insolent invader of your soil from your midst.

TO ARMS! TO ARMS!

*And never lay down 'til the stars and stripes float in triumph throughout Kentucky.*⁹

Remnants of the defeated forces began trickling into Covington and on September 3rd, 2,000 army mules which had escaped rebel capture passed through town on their way northward.

The Richmond defeat caused a great deal of concern to the people of Ohio and Indiana as so many of the Union casualties were from troops of those states. On September 11th, a wagon-train of 40 ambulances, sent by the governors of those states, passed through Covington on the way to the battlefield to return the sick and wounded. The ambulances all bore yellow flags and carried approximately fifty women nurses, including a dozen Sisters of Charity. General Kirby Smith previously granted them permission to pass unmolested through his lines.¹⁰

Covington suffered its share of the casualties, one of whom was Captain William W. Culbertson of the 18th Kentucky Regiment. A leather-bound memorandum book was found on young Culbertson's body after the battle and contained a letter written the morning of his death. It was addressed to his mother and, although indicating faulty knowledge of the enemy leader's identification, it serves as a poignant reminder of a soldier's thoughts before battle. It read:

MY MOTHER –

It is no use to say how much I love you, or how much I love my country, or anything of that kind. I do ask God to take care of me and I know He can do it, through the roar of cannon and musketry and the hardships of a campaign, if it is His will; and if not, it is my duty to willingly submit to His. So, now I will say for the present, farewell to all. My boys are almost all sleeping soundly in the shade. It will never do to advance unless we hear of the advance of our forces. May God protect us by His might! I am very well, and hope soon to see Morgan scouted – or captured, rather. He certainly is the worst man I ever heard of – a perfect robber.

Written within six miles of Winchester and 12 miles of Lexington, Ky.

Captain W.W. Culbertson

Co. K, 18th Ky., Regt., US Vol. ¹¹

Culbertson had been one of the first to offer his services in defense of the Union and organized the Decoursey Creek Home Guards in September 1861, as was mentioned above. He died September 22, 1862 of wounds received at Richmond, Kentucky.¹²

The federal defeat served to give an already over-confident Smith even more confidence. On September 1st, with an army many times the size of Morgan's, he captured Lexington and shortly afterward dispatched Brigadier General Henry Heth and Colonel Preston Smith with a force of 5 or 6,000 men on a march against Covington and its surrounding area.

The men moving against Covington were mostly combat-toughened veterans of many bloody battles, including Shiloh. Heth, himself, was a veteran of numerous battles throughout Virginia and West Virginia and opposed such Union generals as Fremont and Crook.

Colonel Smith was a thoroughly experienced soldier and was wounded in the heavy fighting at Shiloh. He would be promoted to brigadier general before the year was out and was destined to eventually die in the fighting at Chickamauga.

One local newspaper correspondent who wrote of the advancing rebel troops said:

*The enemy is composed chiefly of picked troops from the Confederate Army and are represented to be a bold and dashing army of fighters. Many of them are shoeless, hatless and without coats.*¹³

Among the results of the southern movement against the Covington area was the opening of a war front of skirmishes and raids and an encouragement of guerrilla-type outlawry that would continue in sporadic fashion throughout the remainder of the war.

This Covington Front may be thought of as being enclosed on the north by the great arc formed by the Ohio River as it flows from a point east of Augusta, Kentucky to another point west of Warsaw, Kentucky. Its southern border would follow a line connecting Falmouth and Williamstown and curving in a northerly direction to its anchor points near the two Ohio River communities.

Smith and Bragg invaded the state with the announced intention of increasing their supplies and to enforce Confederate draft laws on the communities they would occupy. Their conscription laws were designed to take every man of military age and those who refused to favor secession were to be special targets. They would be forcibly taken with no questions asked.¹⁴

Action was needed if the tri-cities of Covington, Newport and Cincinnati were not to fall into the enemy's hands. Major General Horatio Wright, commander of the Department of the Ohio, ordered 35-year-old Major General Lewis Wallace, then in Paris, Kentucky, with a small federal force, to fall back to the local area and take charge of its defense. It proved to be a wise move.

Covington was placed under martial law. The fear of treason and traitors was great enough to make it a distinct possibility that the most innocent remark might be twisted into something disloyal. Many Covingtonians turned to the German language to carry on conversations when within hearing range of strangers.

A hasty call was made for volunteers to assemble into local home guard units, the enlistments this time for a period of 30 days. On September 1st, the Kenton Home Guards were enrolled under Captain W.H. Leonard's command and three days later the 41st Enrolled Militia entered service under Amos Shinkle, by then a Colonel.¹⁵

The Kenton County Home Guards' two company lieutenants were First Lt. John W. O'Neal and Second Lt. Harrison Hightower. Its roll included such prominent local names as Rich, Carlisle, Martin, Culbertson, Cunningham and Bennett. Top members of Shinkle's staff included Lt. Colonel James C. Baldwin and Major John Marshall.¹⁶

Covington's first mayor, Mortimer M. Benton, served as Paymaster for the 41st, while Colonel Shinkle's brother, Uriah, was a corporal with the regiment's Company A. The regiment, with 1,096 names on its roster, was one of the state's largest, with a large percentage of its members coming from West Covington [present Botany Hills], Ludlow and Bromley.

When the rebels came within five miles of Covington, they were faced with the possibility of withdrawal because of a lack of cavalry. Accordingly, Colonel John Hutchinson was dispatched from Lexington and brought six much-needed companies of troops.

Newport citizens were also busy organizing their own regiment, the 42nd Enrolled Militia under command of Gustavus Artzman, who, like Shinkle, was a Colonel. The 42nd's enlistment time was also for 30 days.¹⁷

Artzman, in 1864, was appointed captain and assistant quartermaster in the regular army. At war's end, he transferred to New Mexico and served until mustered out in August 1866 and returned to Newport.

Another Newport resident, Dr. Nathaniel Southgate Shaler, was commissioned to raise the 5th Kentucky Battery which became known as Shaler's Battery. He mounted four 32-pounder cannon on the highest hill between Alexandria Pike and the Licking River, just south of Newport. Jacob Spiller, a local teamster, furnished sixteen horses to haul the heavy guns to their emplacements which guarded approaches to Newport from Alexandria Pike or the Licking.¹⁸

Shaler was a strong supporter of states' rights doctrine but the realities of the invasion quickly brought him, and others, into the Union camp.¹⁹

Heth, with a force headed by a division of infantry and a brigade of cavalry, eventually penetrated the hilltop surrounding Covington. From there, he posed a threat to the local area and southern Ohio. General Heth actually had thrown away his opportunity for a speedy victory. Like many Southern officers, he was exceedingly overconfident and dawdled along his northbound route, appropriating cattle and horses and plundering farms along the way.

When he finally arrived here, he found Covington defenses ready. While the Confederates were losing time on their northward march, a call was made throughout Indiana and Ohio for volunteers to come to the area's aid. It was estimated that as many as 72,000 patriots answered the call, including a colorful conglomerate of 60,000 irregulars, soon to be dubbed the "squirrel hunters."²⁰ The men were quickly assembled and moved into Northern Kentucky for it was apparent the coming battle would be fought on the Covington shore.

The advancing rebels were living off the countryside and always kept a sharp lookout for useful material they could confiscate. Fortunately, the citizens often managed to gain advance warning of Southern raiding parties and had time to hide their horses, cattle and other valuables.²¹ Such was the situation when Confederate troops were near Sanfordtown with a few prisoners. The damage during their two-day stay was limited to cutting down a large American flag which a local patriot had defiantly flown. The frustrated Southerners angrily tore the national banner to shreds.

The Independence Courthouse was serving as headquarters for a group of 80 home guards under a Captain Johns. Dr. J.M. Chambers placed a large 18-foot American flag atop the courthouse dome. It too, was torn down from its fastenings by the Southerners during a foray in search of plunder. The guardsmen had been away from their headquarters at the time but that afternoon a small group of them pursued the raiders into Nicholson and attacked the larger rebel force in an inspired, but unsuccessful attempt to retrieve the banner.²²

On September 2nd, General Wallace assumed his task of defending the tri-cities. He set up headquarters in Cincinnati's Burnet House [3rd & Vine] and remarked, "If General Kirby Smith will give me one week in which to get ready, I believe we can all lie back and laugh at him."²³

As the situation grew more tense, Wallace moved his headquarters to Covington and found space over Smith's iron store on the west side of Madison between Fifth and Sixth Streets.²⁴ His staff at the Madison headquarters was most unusual. It was composed of so many literary men, chiefly poets and authors. Wallace himself later became governor of the New Mexico Territory, minister to Turkey and author of the outstanding novel "Ben Hur."

A brisk encounter between the advancing rebels and a small reconnaissance group sent out by General Wallace occurred at Florence. It left a total of 19 dead and wounded, forced the Union group to withdraw and prompted the Union command to strengthen its local defenses.²⁵

Thomas Buchanan Read, one of the more able writers on Wallace's staff, commemorated Covington's military crisis in the poem entitled *Siege*. Read was composer of the immortal *Sheridan's Ride*, and wrote *Pons Maximus* to mark the building of the Suspension Bridge.

It was 9:00 PM when Wallace first arrived in Cincinnati and by 2:00 AM, he had placed the three cities under martial law. According to the decree, all business except that vital to the military, was suspended as of the following 9:00 AM. At 10:00 AM, work orders were issued to citizens who were in turn required to assemble at "convenient public places." Wallace's full orders read as follows:

PROCLAMATION

The undersigned, by order of Major-General Wright, assumes command of Cincinnati, Covington and Newport.

It is but fair to inform the citizens that an active, daring and powerful enemy threatens them with every consequence of war; yet the cities must be defended and their inhabitants must assist in the preparation.

Patriotism, duty, honor, self-preservation call them to the labor and it must be performed equally by all classes.

First: All business must be suspended at nine o'clock to-day. Every business house must be closed.

Second: Under the direction of the mayor, the citizens must, within an hour after the suspension of business (10 o'clock AM) assemble in convenient public places for orders. As soon as possible they will then be assigned to their work. This labor ought to be that of love and the undersigned trusts and believes it will be so. Anyhow, it must be done.

The willing shall be properly credited; the unwilling promptly visited. The principle adopted is, citizens for the labor, soldiers for the battle.

Third: The ferry-boats will cease plying the river after 4 o'clock AM until further orders. Martial law is hereby proclaimed in the three cities, but until they can be relieved by the military the injunction of this proclamation will be executed by the police.

Lewis Wallace

Major-General Commanding

*Cincinnati, Ohio, September 2, 1862.*²⁶

Even the newspaper did not escape effects of the emergency and the Cincinnati *Enquirer*, which some thought to have southern leanings, was temporarily banned from Covington. Never had the *Enquirer* advocated secession, nor was there any attempt to interfere with its publication. The ban against the *Enquirer* lasted until March 1865 when it was lifted by Major General John M. Palmer, then military commander of Kentucky.²⁷

The publisher of the *Covington Journal* voluntarily suspended publication because he "did not choose to print a paper in which we could not express our opinions and convictions in reference to public affairs without the supervision of federal officials."²⁸

The *Journal* consistently published items designed to demoralize Union soldiers and civilians alike. During its last few weeks of publications, its editor repeatedly denied he had ever been anti-Union but only anti-abolitionist. He termed abolitionism being the one great stumbling block to Union and said: "Sweep it away, and in four weeks the rebel military power would be destroyed and the people of the South would hang their own leaders in treason."²⁹

When the *Journal* resumed publication after war's end, its editor, by then a rabid Democrat, said publication was being resumed because "we believe the interests of the party with which we act, as well as the interest of [the] State in which we live, demand it."³⁰

Wallace's proclamation, for the most part, was received by the general population with cheerful loyalty.³¹ Only a few weeks before, in fact, Covington responded to a call for defense personnel (July 18th), and attended innumerable mass meetings at city hall. This meeting was called to raise volunteers. To make doubly sure there would be an adequate number, it was directed in no uncertain terms that all Kenton County's able citizens should present themselves for duty in the Union's defense.

Another strict order was issued by General Wallace and addressed to the mayor of Cincinnati. It read:

You will arrest all male citizens of Covington and Newport who may be found in this city, who are evading military laws and send them under guard to Brig. Gen. G. Clay Smith, headquartered in Covington.

Guards were stationed at all ferry landings, patrols covered the entire riverfront and passes from the Provost Marshal's office were required to cross the Ohio. Soldiers looking for contraband inspected bundles carried by travelers and everyone leaving or entering town was required to give an account of themselves. Covington was under true military law.

All boats moored to the shore and not essential to the military, were ordered moved to the north bank. Captain John A. Duble, an experienced steamboat man, undertook this operation and began organizing a flotilla of steamboats to patrol the river.³²

The boats in Duble's 16-vessel fleet were barricaded with bales of hay in order to protect the soldiers and crew from any small arms fire they might encounter. Each craft mounted two deadly six-pounder brass pieces, well stocked with ammunition.

The boats were sent up and down the river for guard duty. The steamer *Emma Duncan* was Duble's flagship. Henry Emerson served as his chief of staff. The staff consisted of Emerson and four others.³³

As the invasion's climax approached, Milton Saylor, Thomas Buchanan Read and James E. Murdock transferred from the land forces to the river fleet. Saylor was Topographical Engineer, Read became Quartermaster and Murdock was named captain of the fleet's sharpshooters. A few days later, James T. Beard was added to the staff.³⁴

The flotilla conducted a steady patrol between Augusta and Lawrenceburg, Indiana and was constantly bringing in stragglers for military checks. An agreement was reached between General Wallace and the fleet officers when the flying of a red flag during daylight hours or the firing of a red rocket at night would signal that an actual enemy attack was being launched.³⁵

One of Duble's staff members later said of the rebels: "We had no fear of them and we of the navy were fast coming to the opinion that John Paul Jones would have been proud of us."³⁶

The cost to the federal government of maintaining these ships of the line was more than \$200,000. They were in commission for nearly six weeks.³⁷

Covingtonians were preparing for a possible attack and as Wallace later recalled in his autobiography:

The war had been a horror to them, read of as so distant it could not be brought to their doors. Now, suddenly, here it was, and with demands that did not stop with a mere appropriation of their time and a blockade of their business – it actually ordered them to go to work in unaccustomed ways or take arms and be ready to fight. Actually the demands reached to their lives. Let one try to imagine the consternation of the citizens about to open his shop at being tapped on the shoulder by a policeman and told all business was suspended. And what of consolation was there when, to his angry insistence why, he was informed the enemy was coming. What enemy? The rebels. Dwelling in a land of peace and plenty, he had been accustomed to cream for his coffee and hot rolls for breakfast; now the milkman was shut out and the baker shut in. Nor was it contributive to good-humor, if he were a travelling man, to hear at the station: "No train out today. Everybody is held up." ³⁸

Within three days, the city found itself ringed by a line of entrenchments. This series of 29 hilltop fortifications was constructed under direction of Generals Horatio Wright and Wallace.

Seventeen of the installations were in Kenton County and twelve in Campbell. Also, Ohio's Mt. Adams and Price Hill each bristled with two batteries of artillery with a commanding sweep of the river and Kentucky shoreline.

The area was not completely without defense when General Wallace arrived. The fortifications construction had started as early as October 1861 and continued to be strengthened after the rebels retreated from the state. At Newport Barracks, there were 400 men of various independent companies as well as two or three companies of regulars. On the Ohio side there were three independent companies, including the celebrated Guthrie Grays. Down the Lexington Pike were the 99th and 45th Ohio Volunteer Infantry Regiments which were quickly recalled to the immediate Covington area.³⁹

The immediate line of defense of Wallace was anchored in the east by Campbell County's Lee Battery and in the west by the J.L. Kirby Smith Battery. The Smith Battery sat atop a hill to the rear of Ludlow's fairgrounds and racetrack and overlooked the present-day site of the Ludlow-Bromley Swim Club.

One of the ironies of the war was that the Smith installation was named for Confederate General Kirby Smith's 26-year-old nephew, Colonel Joseph L. Kirby Smith, who remained loyal to the Union and died from wounds suffered at Shiloh.⁴⁰ Of all the hilltop fortifications stretching south along Sleepy Hollow Road, it was the only one lying in the eastern side of the road.

Other Kenton County installations included Coombs Battery, Bates Battery, Rich Battery, McRae Battery, Kyle Battery, Hooper Battery, Carlisle Battery, Burbank Battery, Hatch Battery, Fort Henry, Buford Battery, Burnett Battery, Larz Anderson Battery, Fort Perry, Fort Wright and Fort Mitchel. Today some of the names such as Forts Perry, Wright, Henry and Mitchel, are carried by Covington suburban communities.

In the March 1946 edition of the *Bulletin* of the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio, D. Collins Lee described the still-discernible remains of some of the entrenchments which stretched along the traces of a former ridge-top military road.⁴¹

The road extended from Fort Bates's commanding position overlooking the Ohio River and the present-day community of Bromley, southeastward past a dense thicket of plum trees to Fort Rich, so-named, according to Collins, for the family on whose land it was erected. There, a fifty-foot square, redbud-covered hilltop was still enclosed by a five feet high earthen embankment.⁴²

The road continued to Fort Perry and the remains of its rifle pits and other earthworks and to the site of Fort Mitchel, which by then was occupied by private residences.⁴³

The community of Fort Mitchell, named in honor of the military installation, has long ago misspelled its own name. The fortification had been named for Major General Ormsby M. Mitchel, but virtually all soldiers, from the newest of recruits to commanding officers, persisted in spelling the general's name with two Ls. This mistake was so common as to make the rarely seen correct spelling almost seem incorrect.

Another of Covington's suburban neighborhoods, Fort Henry is located several miles from the site of the Civil War's fortification of that name. The military's Fort Henry stood on a hilltop near today's Latonia Terrace Housing Project and overlooked the broad expanse of flat land now covered by Latonia and Rosedale.

Wallace wrote of engineering plans for the defense installations saying:

And I lectured them about running staked lines to the best advantage and digging rifle-pits and breastworks. Getting a map of the country in the great bend half encircling Newport and Covington on the south side of the Ohio River, I instructed them to run lines and mark them with stakes across the bend, for that next day they would be followed by General O.M. Mitchell and named after him. That I adopted as starting-point, from which, in the afternoon, my civil engineers, turned military for the occasion, began their tasks according to instructions.⁴⁴

General Mitchel was a native-born Kentuckian [born 1809 in Morganfield, Ky. – editor] who gained a world-wide reputation as an astronomer and mathematician. He entered West Point shortly before his 15th birthday and ranked 15th in his class when he graduated in 1825. Two of his classmates were future Confederate generals, Robert E. Lee and Joseph E. Johnson.⁴⁵

Work on the local fortifications went on at a feverish pace and continued throughout the nights by light of torches. Much of the construction was done by Cincinnati, Newport and Covington merchants who were called into service for this task. They were initially paid \$1.00 a day for their work – a rate that was eventually raised to \$1.50.

Officials also attempted to force Negroes into helping build the trenches and conducted a housed-to-house roundup of them in Bucktown, a free black neighborhood in Cincinnati's east side. The blacks were beaten and forced into Kentucky at gunpoint but adverse publicity quickly forced a change in policy.

On September 4th, General Wallace assigned the job of organizing the Negroes to Judge William M. Dickson, who immediately halted the brutality and allowed those forcibly taken to Kentucky to return home if they desired.

One observer of the Negroes' plight described the situation as follows:

The colored men were roughly handled by the Irish police. From hotels and barber shops, in the midst of their labors, these helpless people were pounced upon and often bareheaded and in shirt-sleeves, just as seized, driven in squads, at the point of the bayonet, and gathered in vacant yards and guarded. What rendered this act more than ordinarily atrocious was, that they, through their head man, had, at the first alarm, been the earliest to volunteer their services to our mayor, for the defense of our common homes. It was a sad sight to see human beings treated like reptiles.

At this stage of affairs the idea that our colored citizens possessed war-like qualities was a subject for scoffing: the scoffers forgetting that the race in ancestral Africa, including even the women, had been in war since the days of Ham; strangely oblivious also to the fact that our foreign-born city police could only by furious onslaughts, made with Hibernian love of the thing, quell the frequent pugnacious outbreaks of the crispy-haired denizens of our own Bucktown. From this view, or more probably a delicate sentiment of tenderness, instead of being armed and sent forth to the dangers of battle, they were consolidated into a peaceful brigade of workers in the trenches back of Newport, under the philanthropic guidance of the Hon. William M. Dickson.⁴⁶

Officials also issued an order calling for the arrest of any individual shouting insults to the labor battalions. If the offender was a woman, she was to be placed under house arrest and if a man, lodged in jail.

The order didn't seem necessary though, for in Covington the black brigade was actually cheered on occasion. Many of the blacks, nevertheless, felt a sense of relief when their task was finished and they returned to Ohio, for even though Covingtonians were not secessionists nor pro-Confederacy, neither were they necessarily anti-slavery.

Slavery was still legal in Kentucky and it was not uncommon for free blacks to suddenly disappear. Neither was it unknown for blacks who had been freed by Union pickets as contraband, to be later arrested by civil authorities and returned to their previous owners or sold for expenses involved in their arrest and confinement. Many slaves who were forced to accompany Heth's troops as cooks and servants fled to the local Union lines where they were freed by military fiat.⁴⁷

The brigade of 706 blacks labored for three weeks in and about the hilltop fortifications, while another group of about 300 worked in the camps, on the gunboats and in town. On one occasion, Colonel Dickson took about 500 blacks laboring on the local fortifications and marched through Covington to the rear of Newport for similar work. He described the march in his official report:

A handsome National flag . . . was borne in their midst; and their march was enlivened by strains of martial music from a band formed from the ranks of their own notion.⁴⁸

They were cheered on their way to their work by the good words of the citizens who lined the streets and by the waving handkerchiefs of patriotic ladies. As they passed the different regiments in line of battle, proceeding to the fortifications, mutual cheers and greetings attested the good feeling between their co-workers in the same cause.⁴⁹

Throughout this period of construction, there were many things which had to be improvised. The blacks seemed to display a great aptitude for coping with the situation facing them. They built miles of military roads and rifle pits and cleared hundreds of acres of forests for the forts and magazines. One even suggested a change in engineering plans for an exceptionally steep roadway. The engineer admitted the suggestion was a good one but refused to accept it and implied that further suggestions from the blacks would not be welcome.

This Black Brigade represented the first Negro group in the middle west to be organized for anything remotely related to the military. Even in the face of attack, there were occasions when its members worked nearly a mile in front of the Union lines. At such times there was nothing between them and the Confederates except a few cavalry scouts. The commanding officer of the 50th Ohio once thought the brigade was the enemy and planned to fire a barrage of artillery in their direction! The blacks seemed unconcerned when later told of the near-tragedy and said they would go wherever ordered.

All except three of the brigade's various company officers were Negroes who excelled in their positions of leadership. The blacks wanted the honor of defending their works and homes and some companies armed and equipped themselves at their own expense and volunteered their services. They were denied this privilege and, according to Dickson, "cheerfully performed the duty assigned."⁵⁰

None of the blacks, however, were paid for the first week's work but did receive a dollar a day for the second week and \$1.50 a day for the third week. Their pay came from a fund raised by public subscription. Later, brigade members presented Colonel Dickson a fine sword as a testament of their high regard for him.

A 25 feet wide pontoon bridge, broad enough to accommodate four teams of horses at a single time, was built across the Ohio River. It was formed of coal barges brought down the Licking and lashed together, side by side. They were then covered with broad planks which served as a roadway.

The span, built under direction of Wesley M. Cameron, represented one of the war's first such structures and was reputed to be the world's first pontoon bridge rushed into existence solely as a result of a wartime, military emergency. The bill submitted to the government for its construction was \$3,258.69.

Most of the men employed in Covington's defense came over this structure. Fifty-five thousand of the 72,000 who crossed the river were posted in the fortifications while another 15,000 were stationed as guards at fordable places on the river, which was at low stage. The remaining 2,000 were stationed aboard Captain John Duple's steamboat flotilla.⁵¹

Henry Howe, serving in the force which crossed the pontoon bridge, described his crossing and entry into Covington in these words:

*We joined our regiment at the [Cincinnati] landing. This expanse of acres was crowded with armed citizens in companies and regiments. Two or three of our frail, egg-shell river steamers, converted into gun-boats, were receiving from drays bales of hay for bulwarks. The pontoon was a munitions hastening southward. Back of the plain of Covington and Newport rose the softly rounded hills; beyond these were our bloodthirsty foe. Our officers tried to maneuver our regiment. They were too ignorant to maneuver themselves; it was like handling a rope of sand. But in my absence, they had somehow managed to get that long line of men arranged into platoons. Then as I took my place the drums beat, fifes squeaked and we crossed the pontoon. The people of Covington filled their doorways and windows to gaze at the passing pageant. To my fancy they looked scowlingly. No cheers, no smiles greeted us. It was a staring silence. The rebel army had been largely recruited from the town.*⁵²

The forgoing words were written by a citizen volunteer facing the possibility of battle for the first time and his fancied apprehension at moving south of the Ohio is understandable. The actual truth is that few, if any, of the rebel invaders were from Covington. General Heth's troops were largely seasoned veterans and represented such units as the 2nd and 15th Tennessee, 15th and 30th Arkansas; 43rd Georgia and 11th Texas Cavalry. There were occasions, as in December 1861, when every house in Covington flew the stars and stripes.⁵³ None of this could negate the local Copperheads whose sympathies were with the Southern invaders.

Howe continued:

March! March! March! We struck the hills. The way up seemed interminable. The boiling September sun poured upon us like a furnace. The road was an ash heap. Clouds of limestone dust whitened us like millers, filling our nostrils and throats with impalpable powder. The cry went up, Water! Water! Little or none was to be had. The unusual excitement and exertion told upon me . . . I had been on my feet on guard duty all night.

Near the top of the hills some 500 feet above the Ohio level, our regiment halted when our officers galloped ahead. We broke ranks and lay down under the wayside fence. Five minutes elapsed. Back cantered the cortege. "Fall into line! Fall into line! Quick men!" was the cry. They rode among us. Our colonel exclaimed, "You are now going into battle! The enemy are advancing! You will receive sixty rounds of cartridges! Do your duty, men! Do your duty!" I fancied it a ruse to test our courage and so experienced a sense of shame.

I looked upon the men around me. Not a word was spoken; not one smiled. No visible emotion of any kind appeared, only weary faces, dirty, sweaty and blowsy with the burning heat.

We again shuffled upward. Suddenly as the drawing of a curtain, a fine, open, rolling country with undulating ravines burst upon us. Two or three farm mansions with half concealing foliage and corn fields appeared in the distance; beyond, a mile away, the fringed line of a forest; above, a cloudless sky and noon-day sun. The road we were on penetrated these woods. In these were concealed the uncommon thousands of our war-experienced foe.³⁴

On the summit of the hills we had so laboriously gained, defending the approach by the road, ran our line of earth works. On our right was Fort Mitchell; to our left, for hundreds of yards, rifle pits. The fort and pits were filled with armed citizens and a regiment or two of green soldiers in their new units. Vociferous cheers greeted our appearing. "How are you, H?" struck my attention. It was the cheerful voice of a tall, slender gentleman in glasses who did my legal business, John W. Herron.

Turning off to the left into the fields in front of these and away beyond, we halted an hour or so in line of battle, the nearest regiment to the enemy. We awaited in expectation of an attack, too exhausted to fight or perhaps even to run. Thence we moved back into an orchard, behind a rail fence on rather low ground; our left and the extreme left of all our forces, resting on a farm-house. Our pioneers went to work strengthening our permanent position, cutting down brush and small trees and piling them against the fence. Here, we were in plain view, a mile in front, of the ominous forest. When night came on, in caution, our camp fires were extinguished. We slept on hay in the open air with our loaded muskets by our sides and our guards and pickets doubled.

At 4 o'clock reveille sounded as we were up in line. I then enjoyed what I had not before seen in years – the first coming on the morning in the country. Most of the day, we were in line of battle behind the fence. Regiments to the right of us, and more in the rifle pits farther on and beyond, it seemed a mile to the right, the artillerists in Fort Mitchell – past those on hills above us also stood waiting for the enemy. Constant picket firing was going on in front. The rebels were feeling our lines. Pop! Pop! Pop! One – two – three, then half a dozen in quick succession, followed by a lull with intervals of three or four minutes, broken perhaps by a solitary pop. Again continuous pops, like a feu-de-joi, with another lull and so on through the long hours. Some of our men were wounded and others, it was reported, killed. With the naked eye we caught occasional glimpses of the skirmishers in a corn-field near the woods. With a glass a man by my side said he saw the butternut-colored garment of the foe.

Toward evening, a furious thunder-storm drove us to our tents of blankets and brush-wood bowers. It wet us through and destroyed the cartridges in our cotton haversacks. Just as the storm was closing, a tremendous fusillade on our right, and the cries of our officers, "**The enemy are upon us: turn out! Turn out!**" brought us to the fence again. The rebels, we thought, had surprised us and would be dashing down in a moment with their cavalry through the

orchard in our rear. Several of our companies fired off their muskets in that direction and to the manifest danger of a line of our own sentinels. It was a false alarm and across in the 110th Ohio, camped on the hill to our right.

You may ask what my sensations were as I thus stood, back to the fence, with uplifted musket in expectant attitude. To be honest, my teeth chattered uncontrollably. I never boasted of courage. Drenched to the marrow by the cold rain, I was shivering before the alarm and so I reasoned in this way – “Our men are all raw, our officers in the same doughy condition. We are armed with the old, condemned Belgian rifle. Not one in ten can be discharged. All my reading in history has ground the fact into me that militia, situated like us, are worthless when attacked by veterans. An hundred experienced cavalymen dashing down with drawn sabers, revolvers and secesh yells will scatter us in a twinkling. When the others run, and I know they will, I won’t. I’ll drop beside this fence, simulate death.” I was not aching for a fight. Ambitious youths going in on their muscles, alas! Are apt to come out on their backs!⁵⁵

That Howe had self-doubts is certainly plain enough. His contempt for the invaders was just as apparent, as he continued:

To pit my valuable life against one of these low Southern whites – half animals, fierce as hyenas, degraded as serfs – appeared a manifest incongruity. It never seemed so plain before.⁵⁶

It is also apparent Howe generalized his fear and distaste at the prospect of a coming battle when he first spoke of Covington as where much of the rebel forces had been recruited and a town full of scowling faces. Civilian Howe’s words and attitude stand in sharp contrast to those of numerous infantrymen who served here. One of them wrote:

... we crossed the river and camped for the night on the stone floor of the Covington market house. Having no rations, the citizens of the town furnished us with hot coffee and other choice refreshments, for they looked upon us as the defenders of their fire sides. On the 6th we received orders to move forward to Fort Mitchell . . . That little march made an indelible impression upon the minds of all my comrades of the 103rd. This move was made after dark and although short, was one of the most tedious on all our experiences, it being up grade and amid dust interminable, arising from the limestone pike and added to this each man carried a ponderous knapsack containing all the useful articles usually found in a Saratoga trunk, in addition to our accoutrements and overcoats which had been issued to us, although the heat was oppressive. Arriving near the fort, we bivouacked in a peach orchard, lying in the dust till morning, dreaming of our wives and sweethearts. It has been said that during the next ten days not less than 25,000 soldiers and 30,000 squirrel hunters were in position on the hills commanding the Lexington Pike. Every height glistened with bayonets and with batteries of artillery in favorable positions. In addition to this was Fort Mitchell, from the parapets of which six great siege guns frowned down upon the pike, looking as they really were, the very dogs of war. Among the many regiments that were around us, I can only give the following: The 97th, 45th, 100th, 101st, 107th and 108th Ohio, the 23rd Kentucky and the 18th and 22nd Michigan, with thousands of home guards from Covington and Cincinnati . . . [T]here were frequent skirmishes while we lay back of a line of trenches, sleeping constantly on our arms at night and one day and night the rain came down in torrents, soaking everything through and through and filling our rifle-pits with water, for as yet we were without shelter of any kind either from the rain or the burning sun.

It would have been the height of folly for the rebel forces to have attempted to storm our defenses.⁵⁷

The infantryman went on to pay tribute to the home guardsmen:

*The squirrel hunters who seized their guns, elected their officers and hastened to the defence [sic], were a motley crowd in citizen's dress mainly with here and there a man in uniform. Armed as they were with muskets, rifles, shot-guns of every conceivable size and pattern and loaded with their own ammunition, they would have proved a dangerous set of men for the rebels to have met and great credit is due them for their prompt action. On the 19th of September, our Union forces withdrew from the vicinity of Fort Mitchell and moved forward to occupy Lexington and Frankfort and the squirrel hunters returned home when business was again resumed in Cincinnati and Covington with confidence fully restored.*⁵⁸

One newsman could not hide his disappointment that the rebels had retreated and no battle would be fought at Covington. He wrote:

Church bells of Covington rang out the hour of mid-day, one, two, four, six o'clock – the sun went down behind the western woods, no rebels could be heard or seen. Our pickets who had been on duty, came in to rest their limbs and reported "all quiet" beyond the woods. Officers (those who were in camp) and soldiers took their evening meal of pork and bread, with the sincere hope that before the morning had lit up the eastern sky, "To arms," would be shouted from camp to camp and fort to fort.

*But sometimes soldiers are disappointed; they sometimes are compelled to retire on their bed of grass with dark clouds as their covering, and awake and retire day after day with no sound so joyous. This morning, like those which have passed since Thursday, recorded the rebels in the distance – some said ten miles.*⁵⁹

Another spirited regiment which rushed to Covington's defense was the 50th Ohio Volunteer Infantry. It counted many Kentuckians on its roster, one of whom, Ludlow's Erastus Winters, later recalled:

. . . we were ordered to Kentucky and sent out the Lexington Pike near Fort Mitchell and camped near the Highland House on an open lot for the night . . .

In the morning, several comrades with myself were detailed for fatigue duty and were busy at work with pick and shovel just under the hill below camp: all went well for a short time and then from headquarters came the nerve disturbing rattle of the long roll; beat with all the energy that Bob Crandle, our lame drummer boy could put in the drumsticks. We all understood what that meant – picks and shovels were dropped at once. I am not sure but those that had their picks in the air, ready to strike, left them hanging there, and we rushed to camp to find the regiment already forming on the parade ground. In the excitement, some comrade had mistaken my gun and accoutrements for his own, but there is not time now for changing guns. I gather up what is left and take my place at the head of Company K and at the command: Right face, forward, double quick, march, we are off out the pike a short distance, file right through a farm gate, then across fields, orchards, gardens, vineyards and vacant lots, jumping newly made breastworks.

We finally came to a halt with scarcely a half an inch of breath left inside the grim walls of old Fort Mitchell, where at that time, stood a battery of brass guns, the same that Professor Lloyd mentions in his famous book "Stringtown on the Pike."

. . . Old veterans will all bear me out, I think in saying, the long roll is very trying on the nervous system, especially if it takes place in the vicinity of the enemy . . .

Half a mile or a mile south of Fort Mitchell, at that time the pike ran through a dense beech woods. We naturally looked out that direction after

getting in line in the fort and we saw a great cloud of white dust arising above the tree tops . . . Finally when we were all about ready to have nervous prostration, there emerges from the dark woods, not Kirby Smith's advance, but a large drove of government mules that were being driven in to save them from falling into the hands of Kirby Smith, whose advance was at Florence, only a few miles distant from Fort Mitchell, and his advance pickets and ours had exchanged a few shots at each other that morning and a few men were killed and wounded, as we learned afterwards.

After these things calmed down, we returned to our camp near the Highland House. . .

There were thousands of men in the defences [sic] of Covington at that time; raw recruits, militia and backwoods squirrel hunters; what kind of a fight we would have put up is hard to tell had Kirby Smith advanced on us, but he must have thought we were too many for him, for he flanked off to the right and left us, but he still hovered around a few days, causing us to keep a sharp lookout for him . . .

That same afternoon, the Fiftieth Ohio was called into line and marched to Camp King, back of Covington, going by way of a mud road that led east or rather southeast from our camp. . .

My father and one of my brothers came to see me while at Camp King, and when I bade them good bye, that was the last I saw of any of my relatives until the close of the war. . .

A day or two . . . [later] . . . we received marching orders and getting into line, we were soon on the move down through Covington.

Crossing the Licking Bridge, and passing through Newport, we bore to the right onto Saint John's Hill and remained there one night, camping on the hillside in the rain. We passed a very disagreeable night; next day, we fell into line once more, and soon found ourselves marching out the Alexandria Pike and in a short time, arrived at Camp Beechwood . . .

*One morning after being in Camp Beechwood a few days, we received marching orders and in a short time, we filed out of camp and were soon tramping down the pike toward Newport and Covington, the boys, in high spirits, singing snatches of gay songs, such as **Ain't I glad to get out of the Wilderness, Good Bye, Mary Ann, and The Girl I Left Behind Me.***

Passing through Newport and Covington, we crossed the river on a pontoon bridge into Cincinnati and marched down to the foot of Fifth Street, and into the O & M Railroad depot. Here a guard was thrown around us, with orders not to let any of us pass out and we were told to make ourselves comfortable until morning, but what building was ever strong enough, or guards strict enough to hold strenuous Yankee soldiers in check, if they once took it in their heads to pass out; so, as it might be expected, a hole was soon found and the boys were soon busy as bees, passing in and out and like the bees, they all came in loaded; if not with honey, it was something that seemed to please the boys fully as well.⁶⁰

The next morning, the 50th boarded a train for Jeffersonville, Indiana and from there moved south to become engaged in some of the war's bitterest and bloodiest fighting.

In Independence, Major Joseph Doniphan, later a judge of the Ninth Kentucky Judicial District, appointed Dr. J. M. Chambers as provost marshal. Within a short time, a large number were arrested and brought before Chambers, who immediately arranged the release of all who gave an oath of allegiance to the United States. There were two Pendleton Countians however, who refused. Major Doniphan ordered them interned at Camp Chase, Ohio and released all the others.⁶¹

Doniphan served as judge of the Kenton County Circuit Court from 1862 to September 1868.⁶²

Despite a small minority who fervently wished for the nation's dissolution, thousands of loyal citizen-soldiers from both sides of the river spent long nights in the trenches around Covington. All that time, General Heth was poised just beyond those breastworks and might make a run at the town at most any time. Everyone was tense, for the battle was expected.

A reporter for the nationally-circulated *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* was on the scene and wrote of the expected blood-letting:

*The fierceness of feeling existing between the rebels and the loyal citizens is something far above all international hostilities and partake of a vindictive abhorrence which will render the conflict murderous in the extreme.*⁶³

The defending troops arranged to fire three rockets over Covington as a signal when the fight began. On one occasion, a false alarm occurred and the rockets immediately arched high over the city. Every fire-bell in town took up the alarm. Aroused soldiers and town folk, not knowing how the battle might go, swarmed into the streets. Shortly, word of the mistake was spread and everyone returned to their homes. It was a long and uneasy night in Covington.

How false alarms might occur is readily understood by any combat veteran who recalls his own first night on the front lines. One soldier of the 103rd Ohio Company F remembered and later wrote of those first-night fears and apprehensions. His words:

All veterans can remember their first experience in battle or on the picket line, so it might interest some . . . to know how a soldier behaves before he is a veteran. I will describe my first adventure in that branch of service. The first duty I ever performed in that line was near Covington, Kentucky . . .

Company F being detailed for picket duty, my experience begins. We have no trouble during daylight, but soon after dark, imagination begins its work. Every rustling leaf betokens the footsteps of a savage, bloodthirsty rebel, seeking whom he may devour and as the picket gazes in the darkness with straining eyes, he is sure that log he has noticed a dozen times during the day is an enemy stealing up. He can even see it move and the longer he looks the larger it grows and nearer it comes.

In the meantime, the woods upon all sides are filled with katydids, crickets and tree toads which indulge in ghostly music. Sometimes two or three owls, in close proximity, hold a midnight concert and it is not uncommon for one to station himself directly over the sentinel's head. This, of course, doesn't have a tendency to quiet his nerves. In fact, he has borne it as long as he can, when bang goes his gun. The picket on the right may have been watching the same thing and hearing the shot and seeing the flash of his neighbor's musket, follows suit. Now, here are two or three on the left who, thinking they are attacked, must fire also and as three shots constitute the signal to rally upon the reserve, we all rush to the reserve post, a short distance in the rear, with the alarm. "The Rebels are coming!" We stand to arms a few minutes awaiting the attack that doesn't come, when the officer in charge of the picket line places us in position once more with the injunction not to get frightened again at our own shadow.⁶⁴

Some of the ammunition which had been hastily delivered to the defenders was not the proper caliber and a few of the big guns were not yet in workable condition. An unconfirmed report said on one occasion, a few of the operational cannon were put out of action by a twelve-year-old child from a family of southern sympathizers. The boy strolled past lax guards one night and spiked the guns at Fort Mitchell.

The local defenders who were doing their best to protect the community were furious at the boy and supposedly retaliated by stabling horses in his mother's living room. They smashed her preserves on the walls and poured molasses into their piano.

The bulk of these defenders were not regular troops but volunteer militiamen who represented a cross-section of the community and whose homes, businesses and very lives were at stake. There were many citizens who thought the reported punishment inflicted on the rebel sympathizers extremely mild for an act which could have cost the lives of hundreds or thousands of local residents.

The adventures of another twelve-year-old, Covington's Joe Vandergrift, resulted in his being declared something of a local hero, however. Young Vandergrift, who was a decided Unionist, appropriated his mother's water faucet. Fashioned it into a crude pistol and stole away to the Union lines. He vowed to "get at least one rebel," and roamed the lines four days attempting to do exactly that. Finally, the boy's presence was noted and he was promptly sent home – minus his crude weapon.⁶⁵

Although Joe failed to accomplish his avowed mission, he was nevertheless, hailed by soldiers and civilians alike as one of America's real defenders.

A large portion of the community's citizens were constantly at work trying to relieve the tension of the citizen-soldier who had to spend long hours in the trenches. They did this in the best way they knew – by sending a steady stream of gifts of food and other items.

On one Sunday, gifts of food reached troops in amazing amounts. One individual gave a wagon load of vegetables and pies. Other gifts from patriotic citizens included four barrels of cooked chicken; a barrel of whisky; a barrel of beer; a barrel of ice; 200 loaves of bread with six boiled hams; and a gift of 100 loaves of bread, pies, hams, a rump of beef and various vegetables. There were hundreds of smaller gifts, such as baskets of cookies, sandwiches and fried chicken.⁶⁶

The military installations were veritable bee hives of activity. An early civilian visitor to Fort Mitchel made no attempt to hide his enthusiasm over the prospects of a coming battle when he described the scene as follows:

We, this morning, paid a visit to the fortifications back of this city. Fort Mitchell and the earthworks in its immediate vicinity are about completed. The attention of the observer is called to the entire absence of fences for several miles along the road, while in front and on both sides of the main work trees within the radius of half a mile have been felled and formed into impenetrable abates.

Long lines of rifle-pits stretch over the surrounding hills on every side, while batteries of field artillery command every available position.

The guns in the main fort are all mounted, and ready at a moment's warning to belch forth death and destruction on an advancing foe.

The tents of the various regiments peer through the autumn foliage on either hand, some distance in the rear, while strains of martial music, mingled with the hoarse commands of officers, gives a life-like and enchanting air to the scene.

Over the hills, to the left, lies the cavalry encampment, from which proceeds the shrill notes of the bugle and the measured tramp of the war horse.

The Quartermaster and Commissary Departments are established just beyond the toll-gate, on the left of the road. Here is piled up immense stores of food and clothing. Boxes and barrels lie in a most inexhaustible confusion and in the greatest profusion.

On the turnpike leading to the fortifications and camps, one continuous string of vehicles roll unceasingly along. Water-carts, ammunition wagons and army wagons, heavily laden with stores, mingle with the private vehicle of the citizen and the market wagon of the farmer.

Officers and aids dash along at the peril of life and limb, while straggling soldiers and perspiring citizens struggle through the clouds of dust raised by their more fortunate fellows.

Taken all in all, a visit to the fortifications gives a good idea of the "pomp and circumstance of glorious war." ⁶⁷

During all this, General Wallace maintained a constant surveillance of the rebel encampment. On one occasion, he had two spies pose as Southerners in search of runaway slaves. The men circled the rebel troops so as to join them from the South. Their ruse was a complete success and the Southerners gave them complete freedom to probe their camp. General Heth himself was so taken in by the scheme that he even invited the Union spies to dine with him.⁶⁸

The rebels were also active in sending spies in and out of Covington. Heth had them pose as farmers bringing in hay from the surrounding countryside, but Union officials soon learned of their real objectives.⁶⁹

Wallace issued orders to not interfere with the rebel spies and allowed them to go about their business, completely unaware that their identity and presence were known to him and his officers. He hoped that if they gave Heth the true number of troops on the Union lines, it could impress the rebel general and possibly deter him from forcing a fight with the untrained citizen-soldiers until the Union staff felt the time more acceptable.⁷⁰ Wallace knew a Union force of regular army troops was on its way.

When Heth was informed of the great number of militia defending Covington, he boasted of being unconcerned. The more defenders the city had, he declared, the more would be killed. Heth, however, did not completely understand Wallace's defensive stance. He fully expected to be attacked as soon as he passed Florence, and ordered two-day's rations cooked for his troops. If Wallace would not attack him, he would attack Wallace.

By September 10th, the Southern forces were only five miles from the Covington town limits and formed a line of assault stretching from a point just south of the Ohio on the west and curving southeasterly to a point east of Banklick Pike. The rebels, despite Heth's boasting, were more than a little discomforted to find they were confronted by miles of freshly dug rifle-pits, scores of re-enforced fortifications, tens of thousands of volunteer defenders and an astonishing maze of telegraph wires which allowed the various defense units to keep in close communication. Scores of trees had been felled to make attacking rebels easy targets for the sharp-shooting Squirrel Hunters.

One cleared tick forest was present-day grounds of the Fort Mitchell Country Club. Much of that area lay between the two opposing armies.⁷¹ Vast numbers of trees had also been felled along Decoursey and Banklick Pikes; along the Licking River; and throughout the flat plain now occupied by Latonia and Rosedale.

These clearings served to give Squirrel Hunters a better sight on attacking troops and helped prevent a possible surprise attack from concealed positions. Yet, on September 10th, William Black of Company A, of the 104th OVI, was killed by a rebel bullet while on picket duty about a mile beyond the lines of Fort Mitchell. Black, from Massillon, Ohio, was reported to say just before his death, "Tell by friends that I did my duty."⁷²

The next day, the 104th engaged the Southerners in a sharp skirmish and suffered four more wounded. The casualties inflicted on the rebels were ten wounded and two dead.⁷³

On the same night (September 11th), Wallace learned the Southerners were using a grist mill in Florence to add to their food supply. He promptly ordered Captain Charles Worthington of the Wallace Guards to get behind the enemy's lines and disperse them from the mill. Worthington not only carried out the order without the loss of a single man, but brought in 28 prisoners as well.⁷⁴ The Wallace Guards was a thirty-day company and one of the few such short-term organizations to be actually mustered into federal service.⁷⁵

While Heth was trying to decide a plan of attack, General Smith ordered him to hold his fire and prepare to fall back at a moment's notice. That order came on the night of the 11th also and according to official Confederate sources, was issued because Smith's army might soon be needed to aid the vacillating General Bragg in his efforts to deter General Buell's Union forces near Louisville. The mobility of Heth's troops was of utmost importance.⁷⁶

General Heth was carefully watching military developments throughout the state and recognized the order as being given because "Bragg was retreating from Kentucky."⁷⁷ His view was based on Bragg's movements of preceding days. The Southern general seemed to go out of his way to avoid a battle with Buell and allowed the federal general to pass unmolested into Louisville.

Neither did it appear General Smith was really looking for a show-down. Smith by then set up temporary field quarters on Banklick Pike and personally visited the front lines. What he saw gave him grave doubts about the rebel's ability to successfully attack the Covington ramparts.⁷⁸ Even though his force was made of veteran troops, it was deemed risky to commit them to an attack of such superior numbers. It was then he developed the story that he had been feigning such an attack.

Years later, an aging veteran recalled Smith's local; quarters and the rebel withdrawal as follows:

On the right of Bank Lick pike, leading from Covington to Independence . . . and not more than five miles from Fountain Square, Cincinnati, stands a story and a half cottage, with a broad cool porch in front with pillars and vine and shade and all overlooking a stretch of fertile bottom lands extending to Bank Lick Creek and the range of hills forming the southern boundary of a village at once pastoral and romantic.

. . . Yet less than a generation ago, the white-walled cottage was headquarters for a man who held the fate of Cincinnati in his hand and with it, possibly, the fate of the Union. Most of the troops were encamped between the

*little cottage and the Lexington pike, awaiting the command of their General, for Kirby Smith made his headquarters at the little cottage, then and for many year afterward, the home of Joseph Tosso, the violinist.*⁷⁹

Tosso, whose home was commandeered by the rebels, had often entertained for Union benefits and was the reputed composer of the well-known song "Arkansas Traveler." On one occasion, his son was taken prisoner by the Southerners and brought before General Smith. Smith promptly ordered a parole for the younger Tosso.⁸⁰

The veteran continued his account of General Smith by saying:

*After a day and a night under its roof and within but an hour's walk to Covington and in sight of Latonia, Smith left the house and passed on up the steep road leading from Bank Lick pike to the Lexington pike, where he led his men back southward.*⁸¹

Heth was more than happy to fall back, as the first of a dangerous Union force of 12,000 to 15,000 men of the regular army began to arrive in the area. Southern scouts kept him informed of the movements of this large experienced federal force that was coming up the Ohio side of the river on the Ohio and Mississippi Railroad.

If Heth was not concerned before, he certainly was now and openly expressed his fear that this veteran force would be thrown across the river somewhere in his rear.⁸² In fact, two of the battle-hardened state regiments, the 2nd Missouri and the 36th Illinois, had already arrived in Covington.

The 2nd Missouri reached here the same day Heth began his withdrawal. The men were veterans of a whole host of skirmishes and actions in the West, including the bloody Battle of Pea Ridge, Arkansas and the siege of Corinth, Mississippi. A local newsman took one look at them and wrote: "They are a noble-looking set of fellows and bear the marks of hard service."⁸³

The 36th Illinois was another war-toughened regiment and, like the 2nd Missouri, had seen hard fighting at Pea Ridge. They too, had taken part in the occupation of Corinth.

Indicative of Covington's crowded conditions the fact when men of the 36th were assigned to make-shift quarters in the Eleventh Street Market House, they found it extremely inadequate. Those who could not be housed in the structure did not complain but simply made camp on adjoining sidewalks and on a large vacant lot at Tenth and Scott Streets.

The Sixth Street Market House was also put into service. Not only was it used to house troops but at one time served as General Wallace's headquarters. For this, the federal government paid the city a monthly fee of \$25.⁸⁴

The Squirrel Hunters, along with other volunteers in the trenches, learned of Heth's withdrawal the morning after the Southerners broke camp. Their reaction was one of unrestrained joy. Music from hastily formed bands filled the air as spontaneous cheers and singing rang throughout the lines.

Later that day, the men formed into squads and made a triumphal return march through the town and on to Cincinnati. Their march was a happy one, accompanied by the cheers of residents, the sounds of brass bands and as they neared the river, salutes fired by the gunboats.

Also that same day of the 2nd Missouri's arrival, Amos Shinkle and Mortimer M. Benton were going out the Independence Turnpike when they surprised and captured five unarmed Confederate soldiers. Three of those captured were from the 15th Arkansas, one from the 2nd Tennessee and the other from the 15th Tennessee. Among other rebels taken prisoner during Heth's operations against the local area were men from the 30th Arkansas, 43rd Georgia and 11th Texas Cavalry.

The Southerners made their advance toward Covington by the Lexington Turnpike and the C & L Railroad right-of-way. In retreat, they chose to principally follow the turnpike. When Heth reached Walton, he was reinforced by Lieutenant Colonel John Hutchinson and several companies of cavalry. Hutchinson and the newly-arrived troops were sent to re-occupy a portion of the ground Heth just vacated. Hutchinson scouted the Covington front for some distance and engaged in several skirmishes while covering General Heth's retreat toward Covington.⁸⁵

After inflicting a small amount of damage and taking a few raw recruits as prisoners, Hutchinson, like Heth, was forced to retreat southward.

Once again, Walton became the scene of the arrival of Confederate reinforcements – this time under command of Colonel Basil Duke, brother-in-law of John Hunt Morgan. The rebel retreat continued, however, and Covington seemed saved for the time being.⁸⁶

When Wallace became certain the rebels were in full retreat, he asked permission of his superior, General Wright, to give pursuit. The request was denied.

The Southerners were gone and Howe happily wrote:

*Saturday afternoon, the 13th, we began our return march. The militia were no longer needed for the rebels had fallen back and thousands of regular soldiers had been pouring into the city and spreading over the hills . . . The lambs led forth to slaughter thus returned safely to their folds because the butcher hadn't come.*⁸⁷

Howe's pessimistic view of the irregulars' abilities was completely unwarranted, for alongside his company of bumbling lawyers, clerks and shop-keepers were thousands of the crack-shot Squirrel Hunters. These able marksmen acquired their name because of their backwoods dress and a known ability to supply their farm families with an ample supply of wild game. They carried their own rifles, and although non-descript in appearance and lacking formal education and military training, were recognized by Wallace for the patriotic sharpshooters they were.

The peril which prompted the Squirrel Hunters' near-spontaneous outpouring seemed imminent and horrendous. As one early writer said, "They were ignorant and timid; but they were Americans and would have died with their faces to the foe!"⁸⁸ Without them, Covington might have become a blackened and pillaged ruin.

Another tribute was paid the area's defenders when songwriter Jessie Bremley composed the "Squirrel Hunter's March," a rousing patriotic air which featured a blaring trombone solo.⁸⁹ As might be expected, the composition became extremely popular with the numerous brass bands of that time.

Major Malcolm McDowell, who commanded the Squirrel Hunters' Brigade and gave them their singular name, later furnished a lithographed memento to each regularly enrolled member. The lithograph, designed by artist Will P. Noble, bore a picture of Ohio's governor David Todd in the upper left. On the left of the document was pictured a squirrel sitting in a tree and munching a nut, while a hunter was loading his rifle "with evident intention of disturbing his meal." The American flag and the Ohio State Seal were in the foreground, with words testifying the person whose name was inscribed had honorably answered the call to the area's defense.⁹⁰

On the same date the Squirrel Hunters began they homeward march, a sharp skirmish occurred about two miles north of Independence between a group of about 40 rebels and Captain John's Home Guard Company. The rebels retreated and were pursued through the streets of Independence, all the time exchanging a constant fire. The pursuit continued for three miles beyond the town where the Southerners finally made good their escape. The total casualties consisted of two wounded Confederate soldiers and two dead rebel horses.⁹¹

Local skirmishes were still taking place with men of Heth's command two weeks after his departure. On the 17th, pickets at Florence captured several members of the 43rd Georgia, 30th Arkansas and 11th Texas Cavalry.

On that day and same location, a detachment of the 10th Kentucky Cavalry, encamped around the locomotive plant at the lower end of Philadelphia Street, became involved in a bitter skirmish and suffered a loss of one dead and one fatally wounded. Both casualties, Corporal Thomas Prather and Private Jonathan Bryant, were members of the regiment's I Company.⁹²

A few days earlier, men of the 104th Ohio Infantry inflicted a dozen casualties on the rebels but, as noted before, not without cost. One infantryman said his regiment was marching along the pike, about a mile beyond Fort Mitchel,

*...when a volley from the woods ahead brought us to a halt. Company A, in the advance, lost one man killed and two wounded . . . A ball whizzed over the heads of Company D and every man dodged as if he expected to be hit, but never a man broke step.*⁹³

Officers promptly ordered the men to take cover in a nearby ravine. There they spent the remainder of the day pouring a desultory fire into the rebel lines.⁹⁴

At the end of the day, the 104th marched back to Fort Mitchel but returned to the scene the next morning. The regiment cautiously patrolled at the rear of the retreating Southerners as far as Crittenden before dropping back to Florence to bivouac.⁹⁵

Crittenden residents provided the infantrymen a pleasant surprise when they greeted them as liberators. Not one Southern sympathizer was in the little town, according to one soldier who declared:

*We found all the people loyal to the core. They had been harassed and robbed by the rebels and their joy was unbounded at their deliverance.*⁹⁶

As Heth continued withdrawing southward, General Kirby Smith issued an order for Duke to conduct a campaign of harassment in the direction of Covington. When Duke reached Williamstown, he decided to ride eastward to Falmouth. Pausing briefly there, he turned north again toward Independence and on September 16th, occupied that small community with about 1,500 of his invaders, who still boasted they would yet capture and burn Cincinnati.⁹⁷

Duke considered striking once more at Walton, now occupied by federals. After several minor skirmishes throughout Kenton County south of Covington, and a claimed capture of 80 to 90 prisoners, 69 of whom were said to have been taken on September 23rd by Sergeant Will Hays of Covington, the rebels retreated to the Falmouth area. So ended all real threats to the safety of Covington.⁹⁸

Duke had not abandoned an attack on Ohio, however. Now that Covington's capture was out of the question, decided to strike northeast toward Augusta. As he conceived it, this attack would serve three purposes:

1. It would destroy an Augusta Home Guard unit which had been giving him much trouble.
2. It would allow access to a ford across the Ohio.
3. It would relieve the pressure on Hutchinson's troops.

When Duke's troops reached the edge of Augusta, they took up positions on hilltops overlooking the river. Children were still playing in the little community's quiet streets. The first notice most residents had that Confederate troops were on the town's edge came in the form of rebel fire directed at a group of river boats.

It was September 27th. An unwary passenger boat landed to pick up a crowd of Cincinnati-bound passengers when suddenly the rebels began firing a field piece and volleys of musketry at the boat.

The unarmed vessel immediately cast off and backed out into the stream. One of the gunboats, the *Allen Collier*, moved into a position so that the passenger boat would be between it and the rebels and kept that position until both craft were out of range of the Confederate guns.⁹⁹

A second gunboat also fled the scene, to the chagrin of the boat's gun commander, Henry Horrocks. Horrocks managed to fire one shot at the rebels before the boat's captain took the craft out of gun range. That shot killed Major William C. Prentice, the eldest son of Louisville newspaper editor, George D. Prentice.¹⁰⁰

Two other gunboats, the *Belfast* and the *Florence Miller* sighted the rebel artillery emplacement. The *Belfast* fired a shell into the emplacement, killing two or three of the gunners and forcing the troops to re-position.¹⁰¹

Duke reacted to the boat's gunfire by sending men and howitzers to the river near the town's eastern edge with orders to keep the craft under constant harassment. The vessels were forced to retire upstream when the *Belfast* had its hull penetrated by a howitzer shell.¹⁰² The town had no big guns for protection and Duke assumed he would ride into the community and accept an easy surrender.¹⁰³

The Home Guardsmen were ready to die protecting their homes, however and immediately opened fire when the Southerners made their move into the town. Duke lost several men at the very outset and once again was forced to re-position his troops. Fierce fighting erupted as the Home Guards poured volley after volley into the Confederate ranks.

Duke prodded and forced his men to storm homes of citizen-soldiers as his reinforcements rode in. Confusion and disorder appeared among the rebels and they mistakenly opened fire on each other. Their howitzers also commenced firing, adding to the chaos.

After a semblance of order was restored among his troops, the Confederate commander ordered artillery turned upon the defenders' homes and the town put to the torch. Homeowners who attempted to extinguish the flames were shot. In Duke's own words "Few lives were spared in the houses into which they [the Confederate soldiers] forced their way. Savage hand to hand combat occurred."¹⁰⁴

Augusta's women were forced to care for the Southern wounded. On one occasion, Duke sent a wounded Confederate into a private home and ordered the woman living there to give the soldier the best of care or else he would personally see that her two sons, who were prisoners of the rebels, would never receive their parole.¹⁰⁵

More than 10% of the approximately 350 Southerners involved in the Augusta attack became casualties and included some of the raiders' best officers. In addition to Major Prentice, Captain Samuel D. Morgan, cousin of John Hunt Morgan was also killed.

The outnumbered Home Guards did their job well. They made the rebels pay a high price for what could only be called a pyrrhic victory. When they eventually forced to surrender, the embittered Confederates retaliated by embarking on a systematic looting and plundering spree. Stores, shops and a firing of the town began.¹⁰⁶

That evening a Union force of regulars headed for Augusta's relief and Duke immediately took to flight, stopping only to confiscate every carriage and light wagon that could be found. During the Confederate retreat, they were constantly harassed by people of the countryside.

The beleaguered rebels rapidly fell back through Brooksville, Falmouth and all the way to Cynthiana. Duke later described the first night of his retreat at Brooksville as "the gloomiest and saddest that any man among us had ever known."¹⁰⁷

Today [1986], a small marker stands at Augusta commemorating the deeds of those who defended their homes against the forces of an invader. It reads:

By September 1862, 6,000 Union troops had gone from this district. Only 100 Home Guards left, under Col. Bradford. On Sept. 27, Col. Duke with 350 Morgan Raiders attacked. Guards secreted in houses fought until Raiders penetrated area, burned and cannonaded houses. CSA loses of men and ammunition forced return to Falmouth and abandonment of raid into Ohio.

Another encounter with the Home Guards took place at Falmouth and prompted historian Nathaniel Southgate Shaler to later write of the Guardsmen:

*In a score of other engagements these little detached commands, fighting by their thresholds, showed their willingness to combat against hopeless odds and to endure a degree of punishment which it is hard to obtain from regular troops. Though often overcome, they showed the Confederate troops that the State would not be readily subjected and dissipated all the fondly-cherished ideas that Kentucky was actually in sympathy with the Confederacy.*¹⁰⁸

This was not the first time that the Falmouth Home Guardsmen gave a good account of themselves. A few days earlier, about a dozen of them succeeded in driving off a much larger detachment of Texas Rangers.¹⁰⁹

Neither was the Union cavalry idle during this time, for on October 2nd, elements of the 10th Kentucky struck a group of harried rebels attempting to make camp near Williamstown. They captured 18 of the Southerners and took 96 horses.

Citizens of the Upper Bluegrass made an indelible impression on the Confederates and virtually every Southern history of the war devotes considerable space to the failure of the rebel cause in Northern Kentucky.

After the Confederates were completely driven from the state, Duke wrote: "with the failure to hold Kentucky, our best and last chance to win the war was thrown away."¹¹⁰

When Bragg suffered his defeat at Perryville, the rebels fled southward, leaving their dead and wounded on the field. The Union victors buried the Confederate dead along with their own and cared for the wounded until they recovered to a point where they could be paroled.¹¹¹

Perryville was a serious loss for the Confederates, despite their claim it had been an indecisive stand-off. The only thing which kept it from being a complete rout was Buell's failure to follow the battle with a pressing pursuit and ultimate destruction of the rebel army. Instead, he seemed content with possession of the field and for this he was severely criticized in Union circles and ultimately became an object of a military board of inquiry.

Covington's *Saturday Evening American* was especially critical of the Union commander and declared:

*Few copperheads have been guilty of greater meanness than Don Carols Buell.*¹¹²

In fairness to Buell, he successfully deceived the Southerners into dividing their army, keeping a major portion of it, including that under Kirby Smith, dwindling in the direction of Frankfort, while the Perryville battle was taking place.

Not only were the rebel leaders deceived into dividing their forces, but they displayed an unbelievable military irresponsibility when they joined with political elements at Frankfort to "inaugurate" Richard Hawes of Paris, as Kentucky's Confederate governor.

The pseudo-inauguration ceremonies were cut short when a small band of Union soldiers appeared on the crest of a hill overlooking the town. The entire ceremony turned into something bordering the ridiculous as the rebels mistook the federals for Buell's main force and fled the city in a state of panic. That was just after Hawes boasted Kentucky "would be held by the Confederate army, cost what it might."

A later, more direct link between Covington and Hawes was established after the war when two of his sons, James Morrison and Smith N., came here to make their homes.

James, who graduated from West Point in 1845 and was a lieutenant in the 2nd Dragoons during the Mexican War, served in the Confederate army as a brigadier general. He was married to Maria Southgate and came

to Covington at the war's end to engage in the hardware business at the then #3 Pike Street.¹¹³ General Hawes made his home at 71 Powell Street (now 121 East Fifteenth) where he died November 22, 1889.

Hawes' other son, Smith N., held the rank of lieutenant and was aide-de-camp on his brother's staff. When he came to Covington, he chose to enter the local political arena and served as Covington's city treasurer from 1872 to 1875. He later became a principal subject in a sensational court case involving accusations of forgery and embezzlement of a large portion of the city's treasury. He fled to Canada.

During Bragg's retreat from Perryville, his troops subsisted on Kentucky's countryside and carried away whatever they could. It was common practice for units of both armies to forage for supplies, but the Confederates, unlike troops of the federals, took not only what they needed at the moment, but stripped the countryside of all useful material that could be taken south with them.

Bragg loaded nearly 4,000 wagons with plunder from dry goods stores, groceries, private homes and farms. A Richmond, Virginia newspaper boasted the wagon train was 40 miles long and carried a million yards of jeans, boots and shoes, clothing, bacon and other much-needed booty for the Confederacy.¹¹⁴

In many cases, the Southerners offered to pay for their loot with Confederate money. They found that even the most rabid of southern sympathizers were hesitant to accept it as bona fide currency and many flatly rejected it. Bragg issued an order to all Kentuckians in Confederate occupied territory to accept rebel money at its full face value or face arrest under military law and be punished accordingly.¹¹⁵

Much local plunder was sent south, for Smith's army had raided many local farms, especially in Boone County where the rebels confiscated wagon loads of ground corn, wheat and sides of bacon. Basil Duke, in later years, said of Smith's foraging in Kentucky: "he had demonstrated he could take care of himself."¹¹⁶

During the threatened invasion of Covington, a Richmond, Virginia newspaper cried for more plunder and declared in an editorial directed at the Confederate government:

*The great and true source of meat supply is the State of Kentucky. If our armies could push directly forward over that state and occupy it to the banks of the Ohio, the political advantages secured to the South would be of even small account compared with those she would derive in a sumptuary point of view. There are more hogs and cattle in Kentucky available for general consumption, two or three to one, than are now left in all the South besides; and steps ought to be taken by government to drive back these animals, as well as mules and horses, as our armies march forward and place them within our lines.*¹¹⁷

Now, those same Southern newsmen were calling for Bragg's invasion "a brilliant blunder and a magnificent failure."

The Bragg-Smith invasion was the only multi-army offensive ever launched by the Confederacy but, as Bragg's defenders point out, it was doomed from the start when Smith struck out on his own. The original plan, of course, had been for the two armies to combine for a joint effort.

There might have been a chance, as Bragg still fully expected Smith to join him at Bardstown. Smith, however, insisted he could ill-afford to do that, as he had to protect his own region. Smith had badly scattered his troops so that any promise to ultimately cooperate in an attack upon Buell and Louisville was entirely meaningless.

Bragg, who is rightly criticized for not exercising his seniority over Smith, was forced to use defensive tactics rather than push for his all-out assault. This meant a considerable loss of time at the very moment Union strength was rapidly mounting. During that time of indecisiveness the two enemy forces met at Perryville.

Only after Perryville, did Smith become cognizant of the extreme danger of annihilation the Confederates faced and joined forces with Bragg. Up to then, Bragg was facing the Union's Army of the Ohio alone. By then, Kentucky was lost to the Confederacy and Bragg began his retreat to Tennessee.

Bragg received severe criticism for his loss yet much of that criticism must be directed toward Smith, who was reluctant to cooperate. This lack of cooperation and failure of Kentuckians to favorably respond to the invasion undoubtedly disheartened the senior commander and did much to contribute to the failure of his cause in Kentucky.

Bragg correctly knew that a strong Union force headed by newly-promoted Major General Gordon Granger, was coming down the C&L Railroad from Covington to join with Buell. If the Confederates were to safely extricate themselves from their predicament in Kentucky, now was the time to chance it. For all his difficulties, autumnal rains were coming and Bragg was well aware the rough mountain roads would be turned into virtually impassible quagmires.

The rebels fleeing Kentucky did all in their power to enrich the Confederate larder. One hazard they would face before getting their plunder safely out of the state was the great number of loyal citizens who would constantly harass them by firing upon them from concealment. This, of course, was a hazard faced by virtually all Confederate units in Kentucky, especially in the mountain area through which Bragg would pass.¹¹⁸

The Confederates termed these militant civilians “bushwhackers,” and often seized and hanged them on the spot. Bragg found them especially troublesome.¹¹⁹

The Southerners rationalized their raids on Kentucky homes and farms by declaring that if the property they took was of a Unionist, it was a lawful prize of war. If the property belonged to a states-righter, then the owner ought to gladly surrender it to the Southern cause.¹²⁰

Plunder was also an objective to be gained by the Southerners if they succeeded in capturing the local metropolitan area. This was made evident in a conversation between Wallace and Heth during a chance meeting several years after the war ended. Heth spoke of Cincinnati and said to Wallace:

*It is a great city – a great city and rich, and the people think a great deal of it. And if I had proposed to its authorities to sack it from and to end or that they could redeem it with fifteen millions, or such matter, which do you think they would have preferred?*¹²¹

If the Southerners had attacked the Covington defenses, the carnage undoubtedly would have been of titanic proportions, for Heth unwittingly planned the attack at one of the Union’s strongest positions. He planned to strike north toward the Ohio and then east through the present-day communities of Bromley, Ludlow and West Covington [Botany Hills – editor].¹²²

Heth revealed his planned route in the same conversation with Wallace in which he boasted he could have taken the cities, had he so desired. Wallace asked why then hadn’t he done so. The Southerner replied:

*My column was in motion to attack when I received an order from General Kirby Smith to rejoin him in haste, as Bragg was retreating from Kentucky. But for that I would have got in behind you at a place on the west which you had left undefended and unguarded.*¹²³

Wallace knew the place and said:

*It was a narrow neck between the river and foot of the large hill on the south and right, was it not?*¹²⁴

When Heth said it was, Wallace then explained:

*Perhaps it was well enough you did not try it, for it was the next best defended section of the whole line. Across the river, n easy range at the foot of Race Street, I had four guns in a lunette covered with tarpaulins. The gunners were in an empty warehouse at the top of the level. Below the bridge there were also six gun-boats, each with two six-pound brass pieces, giving me 16 guns available against you. Besides that, within an hour I could have covered the hills on your right hand with 50,000 sharp-shooters. It was just the place for my irregulars to show their handicraft.*¹²⁵

There have since been many qualified military observers who maintain the Union’s show of strength at the Covington defense lines may well have been one of the more important such displays of the entire war. It is certainly a demonstrable fact the Covington defenses made an impressive impact on the rebel leadership and may actually have saved the entire Ohio and Mississippi Valleys for the federal cause. Had Heth been allowed to move his troops into Covington and southern Ohio, General Grant would undoubtedly have found it necessary to pull back his successful drive down the Mississippi.

Neither did the loyalty displayed by Kentuckians while under the stress of invasion go unnoticed in other parts of the nation. An example of the attention it attracted was provided by the Albany, New York, *Evening Journal* which said of those who still consider Kentucky a pro-Confederate state:

[T]hey will do well to remember how much the success of our army in the West has been owing to the attitude of that state. They will do well to remember that had she gone over into the ranks of the rebel states, the seat of war would have been transferred from the Cumberland and the Tennessee to the Ohio . . . that instead of penetrating with our armies into the heart of the insurgent country,

*we should have all we could do during the winter and spring to defend our own frontier. They will do well to remember that Kentucky, even neutral, would be worth 50,000 men to us; that in her present loyal position, she is potent almost to decide the fortunes of the war. Let us generously give her credit not only for what she has done, but for what she has prevented. Let us admit that without her aid, to-day the southwest would be irretrievably lost to the Union.*¹²⁶

Even though General Kirby Smith was forced from the state, he had yet to see the last of Northern Kentuckians, for General Canby of Boone County, as stated above, would force the last Confederate surrender of the war from him.

The Southern forces had been short of virtually everything needed to wage a successful war, so plundering, threats, terrorism and other acts of violence against civilians became a common, but largely overlooked tactic of their commanders.

One of the best known examples of Confederate extortion took place in 1864 when Major General Jubel Early rode into Frederick, Maryland and threatened to burn that community to the ground unless paid a bribe of \$2,000. He made the demand even though the little town's entire annual tax revenue was only \$7,000.¹²⁷

The people of Frederick wanted to save their homes and decided to meet the harsh imposition by having their community borrow the funds from various financial institutions. The sum was such a staggering amount that it took the little town until 1951 to fully replay the load.¹²⁸ General Heth had exactly the same type of demand in mind for the Covington-Cincinnati area.

Duke and his men were so angered at Augusta's resistance, they pillaged and burned much of that town.¹²⁹

Guerrilla activity after Bragg's and Heth's invasions made it advisable to keep troops stationed here throughout the remainder of the war. Even the building and enlargement of local fortifications and defense installations continued throughout the years 1863 and 1864.

Recruiting for the rebels and spying on federal installations were dangerous occupations at the time and could lead to the death penalty if caught and convicted. This was the fate of Campbell Countians Jefferson McGraw and William Francis Corbin, both captured on the night of April 8th, 1863 near Rouse's Mill in Pendleton County. The two were convicted on espionage charges and of recruiting for the Confederates within Union lines. They were executed at Johnson's Island, Ohio.¹³⁰

McGraw's remains were returned for burial at Beech Grove, near Flagg Springs in Campbell County. There, in October 1914, some 50 years after his execution, the United Daughters of the Confederacy erected a monument in his memory.¹³¹

Many bands of Southern guerrillas roaming the countryside were composed of little more than outlaws, draft-dodgers, military deserters and sheer opportunists looking for personal gain. As early of 1862, there were no less than 100 such deserters, including a squad of 18 cavalymen "lurking about Newport."¹³²

These bands of desperados often attacked small Union detachments, destroyed bridges and rail lines sabotaged Union installations and liberally helped themselves to food and fresh horses at farms and stables along their way. They seemed to regard Kentucky's fattened herds and ripening grain as legitimate spoils.¹³³

Rural sections suffered the most at the hands of such terrorists. In mid- and late-1864, the nearby counties of Owen, Henry, Carroll and Gallatin were under almost complete control of such groups. Locally, even the home of J. Crockett Sayers, Kenton County State Representative, was looted by Confederate sympathizers.¹³⁴

Most of these self-styled guerrillas were former Confederate soldiers who deserted in order to be closer to their homes. Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest bitterly complained that Kentuckians enrolled in the Southern cause could not be relied upon to remain with their units but had a strong tendency to desert and join guerrilla plunderers to ravage the countryside of their home state.¹³⁵

Desertions from the Confederate military by disillusioned and homesick Kentuckians became more commonplace as the war progressed. It was estimated that 3,482 Kentuckians left the Southern army in that manner.¹³⁶

Many of these men had no real desire to leave the state in the first place. As the war was nearing its end, there occurred the spectacle of two entire Confederate regiments of Kentuckians deserting en masse near Cumberland Gap rather than leave their home state.¹³⁷ Such men frequently formed into outlaw bands to roam their state under the guise of legitimate guerrillas.

One of Kentucky's most difficult tasks quickly became that of defending itself from the lawlessness of these deserters and their sympathizers. The Home Guards made incessant war on them, as did the state's various regular military commanders.

As late as April 1, 1865 – days before Lee's defeat at Appomattox Court House – the Campbell County Home Guards became involved in a minor brush with such a party on Ripple Creek two miles south of Cold Spring. The guerrillas fled after a brief confrontation where neither side suffered a single casualty.

When Morgan retreated from his 1864 defeat at Cynthiana, he directed a number of officers to stay in Kentucky and organize bands of marauders. There were several of his men who scattered over the countryside to become outlaw guerrillas and the officers were given the task of seeking them out, forming them and any other interested Southern sympathizers into armed groups capable of conducting a series of harassing movements throughout the countryside.

One on such an assignment was Lieutenant George M. Jesse, detached to Owen and Henry Counties. Jesse was an experienced veteran in such matters and in a short time he and those chosen to follow, were described by Unionists as one of the most dangerous guerrilla bands in all of Kentucky.

Similar bands of Southern sympathizers roamed Northern Kentucky's rural districts, killing and plundering almost at will. Such a group terrorized and plundered the tiny Fleming County communities of Tilton and Hillsboro in October 1864 and in December that year, a former Confederate soldier from Maysville, then an outlaw guerrilla, admitted killing 76 "Unionists," and boasted he was sorry he didn't kill more. He was finally arrested and executed in Tennessee.¹³⁸

On the following February 3rd, Covington's Captain A.V. Carlisle and two members of the 55th Kentucky Regiment of Union Volunteers, fell victim to one of the most famous guerillas of the war – William Clarke Quantrill.

QUANTRILL, a former school teacher and son of a school principal, had earlier enlisted in the Confederate army but decided he preferred the life of an outlaw guerrilla. He became notorious in Kansas and Missouri and was robbing and murdering his way across Kentucky. His recent operations, with those of the infamous Marcellus Jerome Clarke, alias "Sue Mundy," had been in nearby Henry and Owen Counties.

Carlisle and his companions were dining at Carrollton when they were surprised by the outlaw gang and made prisoners. They were taken outside the building and summarily shot after which their bodies were mutilated and "their heads hacked to pieces with knives."¹³⁹

Quantrill and his men continued their bloody forays throughout large portions of the state oftentimes dressed in federal uniforms. The outlaw chieftain's career came to an abrupt end when he was severely wounded and taken prisoner in Spencer County. He was imprisoned at Louisville where he died of his wounds on June 6, 1865.

Virtually all Confederate raiders needed solid Union currency and often pillaged homes and commercial institutions looking for it. When none was found, they often turned their attention to anything of value. Such an event took place at Williamstown where a state historical marker on their courthouse lawn commemorates the incident. It reads:

On Nov. 1, 1864 planning to seize reported large sum of money, a Confederate force of 32 under Col. R.J. Breckinridge, Jr., and Maj. Theophilus Steele raided the city. Finding money removed they plundered Tunis' Store, taking 30 USA muskets.

What the marker does not record, however, is that the Confederate army had long ago retreated from Kentucky and the raid was part of a reign of terror conducted throughout the state by small isolated bands of Confederate soldiers, outlaws and Southern sympathizers. Neither does it record that one of the raiders' leaders was Moses Webster, reputed to be one of the area's most active guerrilla outlaws.¹⁴⁰

During the foray, occurring between three and four o'clock in the morning, most townspeople fled to adjacent woods and fields for safety. The event produced an outstanding hero when a small boy named Billy Beard mounted a horse and galloped 18 miles to the Falmouth telegraph station to flash word to Union forces of what was taking place.¹⁴¹

Moses Webster's activities frequently brought him to the edge of Covington's city limits, as did those of two other guerrillas – Lum Knox and Columbus Cox.

In March 1865, Cox "claim[ed] to have a sort of roving commission . . . to enlist men in the rebel service and steal horses." The rebel often boasted an ability to travel where he pleased and that he was always aware of every movement of the local Union forces. The information came from his companions, who frequently came into Covington to learn of the latest military affairs.¹⁴²

The group headed by Cox roamed chiefly in the southern part of the county, where they “frequently get on a spree . . . disturb villages and neighborhoods and then disappear.”¹⁴³

By that time, the rural sections were so filled with Confederate deserters that local military officials announced they were willing to register such deserters who would voluntarily report to the provost marshal. Such registration would be regarded as a renunciation of further connection with the rebel government and entitle the registrant to full military protection. Those who refused the offer were regarded as spies and guerrillas.¹⁴⁴

Many local Unionists strongly objected giving military protection to former Confederates and did not hesitate to speak out against it. Scores of the rebels did take advantage of this offer, which prompted in some degree by the daily sight of large squads of newly-freed prisoners-of-war coming from northern prison camps. The ex-prisoners all took the loyalty oath to the Union and were passing through Covington on their way home.¹⁴⁵

Others, like George Jesse and Moses Webster scorned the offer until after Lee’s defeat at Appomattox Court House. Then they agreed to give themselves up but only on the same generous terms Grant gave Lee.¹⁴⁶

Major General John M. Palmer, state Union commandant, regarded such men in a different light. He declared each would have to make a personal surrender of himself, his arms and his horse and added “no man will be allowed to surrender who has been guilty of crime against the rules of civilized warfare.”¹⁴⁷ Palmer pointed out they could, however, surrender in order to answer charges and be heard before a special commission.¹⁴⁸

The activities of the great bulk of the area’s Southern sympathizers were of dubious value. Such raids as that at Williamstown were relatively minor conducted by embittered and desperate people and could have no effect on the war’s outcome. Most Upper Bluegrass citizens felt secure in the ultimate and total Union victory.

Covington had been made safe from Confederate invaders and General Wallace dissolved his command. Before he left the area, he felt obliged to issue a final proclamation of thanks to the people. His communication follows:

To the People of Cincinnati, Newport and Covington:

For the present, at least, the enemy have [sic] fallen back and your cities are safe. It is the time for acknowledgments and I beg leave to make you mine. When I assumed command there was nothing to defend you with, except a few half-finished works and some dismounted guns; yet I was confident. The energies of a great city are boundless; they have only to be aroused, united and directed. You were appealed to. The answer will never be forgotten.

Paris may have seen something like it in her revolutionary days, but the cities of America never did. Be proud that you have given them an example so splendid. The most commercial of people, you submitted to a total suspension of business and without a murmur adopted my principle – “Citizens for labor, soldiers for battle.”

In coming time, strangers, viewing the works on the hills of Newport and Covington will ask, “Who built these entrenchments?” You will answer, “We built them.” If they ask, “Who guarded them?” You can reply, “We helped in thousands.” If they inquire the result, your answer will be, “The enemy came and looked at them and stole away in the night.”

You have won much honor; Keep your organizations ready to win more. Hereafter, be always prepared to defend yourselves.

Lewis Wallace

Major General Commanding¹⁴⁹

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Chapter 16 From the Soldiers' Diaries

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During Kentucky's period of professed neutrality, it was against Kentucky law for the US Army to recruit within the state's boundaries. Therefore, camps and post for recruiting of Kentuckians were established on the north bank of the Ohio River. One was Camp Clay, set up opposite Newport to recruit enlistees from the Covington-Newport area. The Confederates did the same along the state's southern border for those who sympathized with the South.

After neutrality was abandoned, Covington quickly took on the appearance of many behind-the-lines wartime cities. It became one of the federal hospital centers for the wounded, a pre-internment center for prisoners, a city of entry for southbound Union armies and supplies and of course, a major point of recruitment.

Elements of the 10th Kentucky Cavalry from Maysville, a community with surprisingly strong pro-Union sentiments, were among the advance troops moved into Covington during July, August and September 1862. The unit's primary mission was to protect the area from rebel depredations, even though it was not formally mustered into service until it reached here. It was not until September 9th, when Lieutenant G. G. Hunt, the local U.S. Mustering Officer, officially swore the men into federal service. Enlistments in the 10th were stepped-up until it became a Covington regiment, to a large degree.

While here, the 10th encamped in and about the locomotive works at Third and Philadelphia and stayed here until all danger to the local area had passed.¹ They were sent on the line toward Knoxville and spent the entire winter of 1862-'63 in prolonged and arduous marches.

During the spring and summer of 1863, the 10th was aggressively engaging the enemy in Virginia, West Virginia, Eastern Kentucky and northeastern Tennessee. According to the Adjutant General's report:

*The services of the regiment were of the most active and efficient character. Its skirmishes and small fights were numerous and its marches continuous and severe.*²

Covington streets fairly teemed with Union soldiers and wagon trains, not only during Confederate threat to the city, but throughout the war as thousands of troops poured south to put down the rebellion. Some were seasoned veterans, but most were raw recruits. Some passed through the city without pause, while others remained to spend varying lengths of time in drill and training. Men who soldiered here helped emblazon on the pages of American history such names as Shiloh, Vicksburg, Corinth, Nashville, Chattanooga, Missionary Ridge, Atlanta, Kennesaw Mountain and those of countless other places including Richmond and Appomattox Court House. Virtually all the new enlisted always remembered Covington as the place where they first began to feel like soldiers.

Many of the troops who were recipients of Covington hospitality were astonished at the friendly reception given them. These soldiers were newly-recruited volunteers from farms and towns of Ohio, Indiana, Wisconsin, Michigan and other equally pro-Union areas. For many, it was their first venture south and their pre-conceived notions of Kentucky as a state filled with rabid Confederate sympathizers were quickly changed.

Other troops to serve here, like the 6th and 9th New Hampshire Infantry Regiments, were veterans of hard fighting in the East. The 9th crossed to Covington by ferryboat on March 29, 1863 and represented the first IX Corps Regiment to ever enter Kentucky.³

This regiment, which fought at Antietam and Fredericksburg, was merely passing through town on this first visit and boarded a south-bound train that night. The men crowded as much pleasure as they could into their brief stay in Covington and when it was time to board the train, one of the men

*...liked the climate – or the whisky – so well that he was determined not to board the cars . . . In vain the sergeant besought him to go peaceably. Seizing the mutinous soldier by the nape of the neck and the seat of the trousers, he pitched him bodily into the car.*⁴

A few days later, in April, the 6th New Hampshire, also veterans of eastern battles as 2nd Bull Run, Antietam and Fredericksburg, passed through town. This regiment probably more-so than any out-of-state regiment, became a great favorite of Kentuckians and at Lexington the people actually petitioned General Burnside to allow them to remain in town.⁵

The request, of course, could not be honored. When the 6th was ordered to move out, its members were given a tumultuous send-off with hearty cheering and hands playing. Many Lexington girls actually wept to see the men leave.

Both regiments continued south to help capture Vicksburg and take part in the arduous Mississippi campaign. The hardships the men underwent took a heavy toll with not only rebel bullets but with malaria infested swamps. While on their deep-south campaign, the men consistently reminisced about their stay in Kentucky and their moments of reverie seemed centered as much about that state as their own of New Hampshire.

Both regiments completed their Mississippi service and returned to Covington in August 1864. Nothing was quite the same. The men had seen hard service and one later recalled:

*The boys were glad to be once again on "Old Kentucky Soil," but we were so sick with chills and other diseases that we could not enjoy ourselves as we did in the spring.*⁶

The men of the 6th had a surprise when they reached here. They found about 200 New Hampshire recruits waiting since January for the regiment's return. The new recruits, quartered in Cooper's Hall at 6th and Madison, were serving as regimental replacements.

The troops came throughout the war. They camped in the fields and in city streets. Mountains of supplies and equipment appeared throughout town. A number of the 112th Illinois later said of his Covington stay:

*Here for the first time, the men spread their blankets on the ground and lay down to sleep. With no roof over them but the starry heavens and no bed under them but old mother earth – a new and strange experience to many of them; but they afterwards became accustomed to such "lodgings" and preferred to sleep on the ground, if not too cold or wet, rather than in beds. And here, too, the "boys" had their first experience with the government mule. The regiment was supplied with 15 wagons for the transportation of its effects – five for "headquarters," including hospital and quartermaster's stores and one for each company – each drawn by six mules. The mules . . . were wild as the untamed mustang. Most of them had never been haltered and it required several men to manage one mule and nearly a whole company to harness and hitch up a team of them.*⁷

The soldier went on to pay a tongue-in-cheek tribute to the army mule. He said:

A mule is a mule the world over but there is no mule like a government mule. His kick is like a stroke of lightning from a clear sky; and then the malicious brute will appear so meek and penitent and wear such an innocent, injured look about him, that one can hardly comprehend that the lightning blow that laid him out came from the heels of such an honest looking animal. The mule was an important factor for his prosecution of the war; he deserves credit for his patriotic devotion to the Union and for his unflagging zeal, his patient endurance and his untiring services in behalf of the Union armies.

*The government armies were fed and clothed and supplied with arms and ammunition and hospital stores, drawn, in many cases, hundreds of miles over rough and hilly roads, through narrow, mountain passes, by the ever-ready, ever willing, hardy, patient government mule.*⁸

While serving at Covington, the 112th Illinois was brigaded with the 33rd Indiana, the 77th, 97th, and 108th Illinois regiments. On October 12, 1862, they began their long march southward to their baptism of fire.

One soldier who served with the 105th Ohio Infantry, a regiment he proudly referred to as "the Thousand," wrote of his arrival in the city as follows. He was to spend his first few days of army life here:

A light, wavering mist hung over the Ohio River, shrunk almost to its lowest stage, when, in the early dawn of its second day of service, the Thousand crossed the Fifth Street ferry and clambered up the ungraded streets of Covington, Kentucky.⁹ It hardly needed the sight of blue uniforms, swords and muskets, in the streets and at the ferries, to tell us that we had reached the theatre of war. Two or three turtle-backed gunboats, lying at anchor in midstream, loomed out of the fog, their ports open, the smoke lazily lifting from their funnels, an armed watch showing on their decks. They seemed like grim black dogs, ready to leap on their prey; and our hearts exulted at the thought that the skill and ingenuity which freedom fosters had provided the cause of liberty with such formidable weapons . . .

We landed on the Kentucky shore where the water-works now are and climbed the hillside without forming ranks . . . and as we passed one of the cottages, which clung to the sharp slope, an aged woman, standing in the door, saluted us with a wave of the hand and said:

“God bless you, boys, and bring you all safe home again!”

Many uncovered at this first greeting on southern soil, and Sergeant Werner . . . answered for all:

“Thank you, mother, and may you be here to see us when we come!”

The line was formed on Greenup Street. While we rested on the curb, the red sunlight began to show through the silvery haze, telling of drought and hear. An elderly gentleman came along carrying a market-basket. He paused to inquire where we were from and to learn the names of our field officers. As he passed on, someone told us that it was “Mr. Grant,” the father of the fighting general. One of the “boys,” – a specimen of that sort of boys who never grow to be men, except upon the field of battle – made as if to filch an ear of corn from his store. Just then, the fire-bells began to ring. “Wait awhile,” said the old man, good-naturedly, “and you will get a much better breakfast. Covington gives her defenders one good meal as a send off, and those bells are ringing to let her people know that another regiment has arrived.”

The city made good its pledge of hospitality; the tables in the market-house may not have groaned with the viands spread out upon them, but some of the Thousand did before they were cleared off. It was a long time before they were to have such lavish hospitality forced upon them again.¹⁰

During the three days they were here, men of the 105th were frequently visited and given encouragement by Jesse Grant and other citizens of the community. The recruits, most from the Cleveland vicinity, were eager to learn and responded to their training with a great deal of enthusiasm.

“The streets,” the soldier continued:

...were filled, early and late, with awkward squads; each one’s awkwardness proving an encouragement to the other . . . When the squads were dismissed, drill went on in the quarters. What one failed to catch, his comrade shows him how to do. It is amazing how much was accomplished in the three days in which we lay in Covington.¹¹

Another soldier, a member of the 9th Ohio Volunteer Infantry and obviously in awe at being in Kentucky, wrote of his impressions of the situation in Covington:

We were south of Mason and Dixon’s line, in the land of slavery, in the State of haughty, defiant, neutral Kentucky, but were courteously received by the loyal citizens who treated us to a splendid and welcomed supper at the armory . . . The various companies were posted at different points in and about the city, each charged with important duties, the bustle and deep concern grating harshly on the nerves . . .

The war cloud to the South was little less disquieting than the absolute terror among the citizens, who saw in fancy their loved homes riddled with shot, contending armies sweeping the streets and they fleeing with their families for shelter. Nothing that apparently could add to the excitement was absent. Rebels conveyed information through the lines and back to spread the most appalling news. Not without the best of reasons, the most watchful care was exercised to avoid surprise. Nervous anxiety and entire want of familiarity with the duty, led to frequent alarms. Troops turned out to the thrilling long-roll, marched quickly to the supposed point of danger amid the ringing of alarms on the city bells, expecting to take a hand in the clash of arms and to witness bloodshed. . .

We look back now, with a smile, on what were then most serious matters and wonder that Kirby Smith did not carry out his plans . . . But perhaps

*he was deterred by the herds of "Squirrel Hunters," who, each filled to the brim with patriotism, made this invasion a personal matter, to be settled by the unerring squirrel rifle. He certainly would have been filled with fear, had he appreciated the nonchalance with which they made their camps lively with song and story, while they shot at marks, just to keep their hands in, until the invaders should become **targets**? All joined in genuine exultation, when it was known that Kirby had retired, especially our "Squirrel Hunter," who glided quietly home, while we prepared at once to look elsewhere for laurels.¹²*

All during the Confederate threat, Covington was truly a fortified and beleaguered city, according to Dan Beard. Small boys, he said, "idolized the soldiers and regarded every man n blue as an ideal character."¹³

After all threat of attack had passed, the town streets continued bustling with military activity. The dull rumble of wagons and gun caissons could be heard at all hours. Drills and marches were common sights as the air throbbed with the beat of drums and messengers on horseback dashed about. Many residents opened their homes to the soldiers, while others volunteered their services at manning the huge eating facilities at the armory.

Soldiers, soldiers and more soldiers! And still they came! A member of the 83rd Ohio Infantry recorded in his memoirs:

A pontoon bridge spanned the Ohio River just above the unfinished piers of the new suspension bridge. . . Another pontoon spanned the river at the foot of Lawrence Street. These were guarded by farmers with all kinds of shooting irons, and in all manner of dress, uniforms being conspicuous by their absence or scarcity. . . We were hurried through the city and across the pontoon into Kentucky and thus began our actual career as soldiers. We slept that night in the streets of Covington. The market-house afforded shelter for the most, if not all of us; the butchers' benches and the brick floor being utilized in place of the comfortable beds to which we had been accustomed all our lives. The morning dawned on us with no rations and with nothing to do but sit around on the aforesaid butchers' benches.

...[W]e seemed in a fair way of getting no breakfast, when Lieutenant Clapper came up. He had been a teacher on this side of the river and some of his friends proffered his company a large kettle of hot coffee, to say nothing of other things. It was indeed a most acceptable offering and was heartily enjoyed and rapidly consumed . . .

After this uncomfortable first night on Kentucky soil, and with a light breakfast at least for most of the men, we were called into line and ordered to march to Camp King. This was south of Covington on the Independence Pike. The weather was muggy and hot and the unaccustomed accoutrements and other paraphernalia all contributed to our discomfort. We reached our destination about noon of September 4th completely exhausted by marching only that short distance.

But was war time and we were allowed no time for rest or even to finish our dinner of which we were so sorely in need. The long roll was sounding and demanding that we form in line of battle at once. We took our position on the double quick, dimly comprehending the seriousness of the situation. For a brief season the scene begged description. Infantry on the double quick; batteries at a gallop; the cavalry on the run created consternation indescribable, while clouds of dust following each movement quiet obscured the view often preventing those in the rear of the line from seeing those in front. Occasional shells from the batteries added to the already intense excitement. . .

It is needless to say that we were greatly relieved to hear an officer of experience say there was no possible danger, as the enemy was miles away.

. . . Notwithstanding, we remained in line of battle the balance of the afternoon, which in itself was rather a serious matter. This affair was ever after facetiously called "The Battle of Camp King."

The following day, we started in the direction of Covington and arrived in the city about dark, weary, foot-sore, very hungry and thoroughly disgusted. We were given a good supper at the armory and bivouacked on a vacant lot in the vicinity. The following morning, as we were performing our ablutions in the Licking River, we were overtaken by a severe thunderstorm. An overturned flat boat afforded us shelter. This detention came near causing us to lose a mighty good breakfast which was set for us in the armory.

From this place we marched to Fort Mitchel and then returned to Camp King, going into camp adjoining a detachment of the 18th US Infantry.

About eleven o'clock that night we were called up and started eastward. We soon came to the Licking River which it was necessary to cross. There seemed to be only one way, namely wade.

Some had sense or judgment enough to stop and pull off their shoes and stockings and roll up their pants and some did not. Those of us who did not, waded across in water a foot or more in depth, shoes and all. Right then we received a lesson that came of good use in the future and by which we profited. We marched a little over two miles and thought it was ten. Those who had wet shoes and stockings soon had very tender feet and in addition had to spend the balance of the night before large fires in getting dry.

This was Camp Beechwood, on the Alexandria Pike, where we were supposed to support a battery. . . We did picket duty for several days and then moved to the Robinson premises named Camp Orchard from the fruit trees that abounded on it. . .

At this camp we were joined by the three companies from Butler County. Our regimental roll was now completed and numbered 1,010 men. . . .

At this camp, Orchard, we received our knapsacks and canteens making us feel like thoroughbred soldiers. On the following day, we saw how a new officer looked, one often looked for, but not as often seen – the paymaster. He gave us our advance pay, amounting to \$27 each. On September 17, 1862, marching orders were received and to be ready to fall in at ten o'clock with two days rations, but it was really four o'clock before we really moved out.

Our route was to Camp King and down the Independence Pike. At ten o'clock we went into camp on the banks of the Licking, in a field between two hills and waked up at daylight with blankets wet with dew.

Our objective point was Crittenden, about 33 miles away. The march out required three days, but we returned in two. This march of 66 miles was very fatiguing, as the weather was quite warm, the roads dusty and water scarce. This marching and counter-marching was very severe on green, unseasoned troops, and evinced poor judgment on the part of our commanding officer, who was evidently putting us through a seasoning process which was too rapid to be at all healthy.

On September 25th we moved from the Orchard to camp Shaler, which was the Newport Cemetery, now known as Evergreen Cemetery. A long line of rifle pits had been constructed facing south, but we had no idea of their practical use. Had we been called on to use them, a good battery on the adjacent hills would mighty soon have routed us out, as those same adjacent hills were some hundred or more feet higher than we were.

On the 27th, we marched down to Newport to undergo one of those celebrated functions called a grand review. It was presided over by Gen. Green Clay Smith and was intolerably and unnecessarily tiresome. We stood in one place for three hours and with our guns at a shoulder the whole time without rest. Then when we moved marching into Company front, one can imagine what a splendidly crooked line the different companies would make when it is known

that we had so little drilling and were less than 30 days from our homes. General Smith sat on his horse and his eyes fairly glittered and his whole appearance showed complete disgust at the anything but soldierly alignments as we stolidly marched past him. He shook his head and showed plainly how he felt.

While at Camp Shaler we were assigned to the First Brigade, First Division, Army of Kentucky. We remained in this camp until October 7th.

Camp Shaler had many pleasant occasions. Numbers of friends made frequent visits and the amount of good things they brought was a very welcome addition to our unaccustomed army fare, though, at that time we were reveling in luxury as compared to what our haversacks contained during some of the subsequent months.

Drilling was comparatively light as were guard and picket duty. Such a state of affairs was not intended for real soldiering and the higher powers soon inaugurated a change. October 7th, we received marching orders and we slung our knapsacks like veterans, and headed south on those hard, stony pikes that had an entirely different feel to the feet from Brussels carpet.¹⁴

Regimental reviews, such as mentioned above, were often held in the streets of Newport and Covington and were frequently regarded with somewhat more favor than the self-conscious, raw recruits often thought. A correspondent for *Harper's Weekly* wrote of one such review as follows:

Major-Generals Wright and Lew Wallace . . . reviewed the troops in Covington yesterday afternoon. The display was very fine ... The boys were in splendid spirits and are chock full of fight and confidence. Much enthusiasm greeted the Generals everywhere, and the Indianans were almost wild over Lew Wallace their confidence in his ability and courage being unlimited and may stand in good stand in the approaching contest. Let all men say what they will about green regiments and raw recruits; let them cry them down as much as they chose, as many newspapers and newspaper correspondents are now doing; let them iterate and re-iterate that the vast body of volunteers now congregated in and around Covington are only fit subjects to be gobbled up by Kirby Smith's veteran soldiers; (that they will only be a breakfast-spell or a light evening's repast for the well-drilled rebels) no such fears or childish forebodings enter my mind. Green men and raw recruits will fight. I have seen them do it; and a body of troops of finer material, both physical and mental, than the army now massed at Covington, never was seen, or known, or heard of. If Kirby Smith takes them for a breakfast-spell, it will be the bloodiest breakfast-spell on record, and few of his men will want any dinner. . . from what I have seen . . . they will stand up nobly to their work and beat back the rebel hordes with a determination that shall make a repulse a defeat. The men are all sound and right and will do all that is expected of them and more too, if their officers keep cool and act with judgment.¹⁵

Years later, an elderly citizen recalled the days of the threatened attack on Covington, and said:

I was a young matron then, with two children, a boy and a girl. We had a cigar store on the west side of Scott Street, between 4th and 5th Streets. Martial law had been observed and we were not allowed to have our place open for business. My husband was gone and I needed money, so I would stand outside and when the troops passed the house and expressed their desire for tobacco I would offer to procure it for them. Often they would give me five or ten dollars when they had bought only \$1 worth. They would not wait for the change. "Keep it," was their usual cry and then they would march on. At other time the soldiers would spend the nights on the streets and we women of that neighborhood would

*cook coffee and carry edibles to them, for which they were touchingly grateful. It was not unusual then, to see Indians pass. At one time I saw Indians and soldiers together passing over the pontoon bridge. . . Tents were pitched at divers places; they were numerous on the banks of the Licking River and wherever a good, large vacant spot was to be found. Battery Lars Anderson was situated at Sunnyside, a valuable piece of property now owned by Mr. O.J. Carpenter. A pontoon bridge was pitched across the Licking River directly back of that place to facilitate reaching Fort Thomas.*¹⁶

The Lars Anderson Artillery Battery mentioned above was in the vicinity of present-day Holmes High school. It served to protect the Licking River pontoon bridge at that place, as well as the entrance to Covington by way of the Independence Poke – KY 17 today.

Lars Anderson was a brother to Major Robert Anderson, commander of Fort Sumter when the Confederates launched their attack.

Another regiment which spent its first soldiering days in Covington was the 86th Indiana. During the invasion scare, these men were rushed from their home state to Cincinnati by train, arriving there during the early morning hours. “After breakfast,” one of the soldiers later wrote,

..the regiment crossed to Covington, Kentucky, on a pontoon bridge and proceeded down the river. Passing through Ludlow, a mile or more, it bore off to the left and camped. The day was warm and the loads were heavy. The men had been on their feet almost the whole day and were entirely inexperienced in marching and many of them found it exceedingly tiresome, in fact, many fell behind the regiment on this, its first march. These stragglers were greatly fatigued and much chagrined at the thought of not being able to keep up, but they mostly came in before dark. The camp here was designated as Camp Mitchel. The regiment now barely had a taste of marching, but many, at least, were fully satisfied that when it was undertaken in earnest that there was not one bit of amusement about it – not, at least, for raw troops. The teams were soon on hand and tents were put up. After supper, the events of the day were discussed until “taps,” when all retired hoping for a good night’s rest. Not long after lying down an alarm was given and the regiment was called out as was supposed to give battle. After standing to arms for some time, and neither seeing our hearing anything indicating the approach of the enemy, the regiment was permitted to break ranks and again retire.

The following morning was quiet cool but otherwise pleasant. There was a number of the regiment reported sick this morning. Marching in the heat of the day, heavily loaded, and then lying at night upon the cold, damp ground produced internal congestion. The changes in food and drink caused many to suffer with camp diarrhea, accompanied in some cases with considerable fever.

Orders were received to march before noon. The regiment was soon on the road, leaving behind the tents and the sick. Crossing Licking River, the command passed to the southeast of Newport and having marched some six or seven miles, was halted in an open field, where it remained until the following day. The boys were now being initiated into the duties and mysteries of marching, camping, campaigning and of the bivouac. Tuesday and Tuesday night, September 9th, the Eighty-sixth experienced its first true bivouac with naught but the sky and stars above. The next morning was pleasant. The men lounged around the bivouac fires discussing the probability of a battle at this place until about 10 o’clock, when the regiment re-crossed the river back into Covington and took position on a high hill just south of the town and about a half mile from it. This was designated as Camp Wallace. Here the boys were far from being pleased with their environment and much grumbling was indulged in among the ranks. These complaints became so numerous and vigorous that the

place came to be known as "Grumble Hill." Again the wagons failed to arrive with the tents and the regiment indulged itself with another bivouac. This hill was already entrenched, therefore the Eighty-sixth formed its line just inside the works and so bivouacked to be ready to "fall" into the ditch and defend the hill to the last in case of an attack. Reports were flying still thick and fast of the enemy's approach with intention of making an attack upon the place. Nerves were consequently on a constant strain. On the morning after the regiment's arrival at this camp on "Grumble Hill" it began raining and the trenches were very muddy. Notwithstanding the rain and the mud, every hour or so an alarm would be given that the enemy was approaching and the men would be ordered into the ditches, there to wallow in the mud. But Kirby Smith had no intention of an attack and was even at that time withdrawing his forces. The nerves of all were in a state of extreme tension and this with the real hardships of loss of sleep and wallowing in the mud was extremely wearing on the constitution of the men. Even after nightfall, the camp would be alarmed by the command "Fall in, Eighty-sixth." ...At once the regiment would rush into the muddy trenches. If the men were ever justifiable in indulging in profane remarks here was the occasion on "Grumble Hill." Some night they would be allowed scarcely any sleep, so busy were they falling in and out of the ditch.

On the 12th inst. The tents came up. Thenceforward what little time there was for sleep on "Grumble Hill" was with a little better protection from wind and rain and the chill of the night air. The regiment had been here at or near Covington five nights without tents and this was felt to be quite a hardship. Later on little would have been thought of such deprivations . . . Some time during the 14th, it was announced that the regiment was under marching orders. A great shout went up from the overjoyed Hoosiers who were beside themselves almost at the prospect of getting away from "Grumble Hill."

On the morning of the 16th of September, Company H, Captain Milton Bell in command, was detailed to do picket duty for the regiment. The company (H) received orders to go out as pickets. We went out about three miles on the pike and stopped for the reserves or company headquarters at a fine house from which an "old secesh" [sic] had been taken and left everything that we wanted to use. Our men were soon placed upon the line. The Second-Lieutenant, Uriah Thomas, took a squad of 13 men and started on a little scout on our own responsibility. The men stripped themselves of all [un]necessary luggage that they might be in the best possible trim for making good time if by chance they should come across too strong a squad of the enemy. Pressing forward at a good pace we soon covered some four miles from our reserve station and came to a suitable place to get our dinners. We had a good dinner and all the apples and peaches we could eat, as well as all the milk we could drink, something we had not had since leaving home. After scouting around over the neighborhood for some time, always keeping a sharp lookout for the enemy, we concluded to lay in a supply of something nice to eat and then return to the post of our duty. So we killed a nice shoat [young pig] and secured a number of chickens and returned to the picket station. Up to this time everything had gone along pleasantly enough without the appearance of an enemy. About dark we feasted on "hard tack," fresh pork and chicken. Reported attempt of "bushwhackers" firing upon the sentinels here after dark were made known to us and all were duly warned to keep a sharp lookout for their own personal safety as well as the general good. It was a wide-awake picket line that night. The countersign was "Blue Ridge." Some time before our "trick" was out, one of the sentinels heard, as he claimed, someone snap a cap immediately in his front. Taking it for granted that it was a "bushwhacker" making an attempt upon his life, he fired on him without hesitation. The next sentinel being as he supposed somewhat

more exposed than the one that fired, and more likely to fall a victim to the "bushwhacker's" fire, left his post and came down the line with speed of a quarter horse, making the brush crack as he came tearing along. Fearing that the other sentinels would mistake him for the enemy and so sacrifice him to their fears, he yelled at every jump "Blue Ridge!" "Blue Ridge!" "Blue Ridge!" until the woods rang with his unearthly cry. He made good time to the reserve station, where with almost breathless haste he related his very narrow escape. It was laughable in the extreme to others, but a fearful reality with the frightened sentinel. The sentinel who fired stood fast and nothing more was heard. Some of the boys were wholly incredulous and did not believe the statements of the sentinel who fired – did not believe that he had heard the noise. Early next morning, they sallied forth to prove there had been one there and that the sentinel had fired for "buncombe." But upon going to the spot designated, to their great surprise, a gun was found which satisfied all but a few obstinately incredulous ones. It was now pretty generally accepted that a genuine attempt at "bushwhacking" had actually been made, but the prompt firing of the sentinel had frightened the would-be assassin and he had left in haste. Now, too, the timid comrade who is somewhat given to boasting cannot say a word in his braggadocio style without being called down with "Blue Ridge, Blue Ridge" much to his discomfort. Before the company was relieved, another squad of the boys went outside the lines and killed a nice calf and brought it to the reserve. Thus the company was for the time being pretty well provided with good meat. About 10 o'clock a.m. on the 17th, we were relieved by another company of the Eighty-sixth and H company returned to the camp on the hill. It might be said in closing this account that the sentinel who so promptly fired upon the "bushwhacker" afterwards became the regiment's most expert forager, in fact, it never saw his equal. He was, however, captured by the enemy near Rural Hill, Tennessee, paroled and never returned to the regiment and was afterwards reported as a deserter. The timid sentinel on the contrary, notwithstanding the great trial of his nerves, remained in the service and finally fell a victim to the enemy's shot in the fateful trenches around Atlanta toward the last of July 1864.

The Eighty-sixth now considered itself capable of performing every duty known to veterans. The boys had marched; they had bivouacked; they had laid in the trenches all night; they had been on picket; they had performed every duty of a soldier except meet the enemy in actual battle and they were ready for that. Were they not soldiers?

On the 19th of September, the regiment received marching orders which caused a ripple of excitement in the ranks. To a man all were anxious to leave the camp on the hill where the men had been so miserable and "had to drink river water." On the following day, the orders were more specific. They were to have three days' cooked rations in their haversacks and be ready to march at a moment's notice. This was something definite. All went to work with a will, some to cook, some to strike tents, and others to packing up all baggage that should go on the wagons. All was hum and bustle, jest and jollity, at the thought of departing forever from "Grumble Hill." Everything was in readiness for the trip by noon and the old hill, destitute of numberless white tents, lay bleak and bare. The men of the Eighty-sixth only waited for the word of command to set forward on their journey wherever it might lead.

The regiment remained on the hill the entire day until the dusk of the evening, when at last came the command, "attention, Battalion. Take arms. Shoulder arms. Right face. Forward march. File left" and the boys turned their backs on "Grumble Hill" to see it no more during their term of service.¹⁷

That same date saw departure of the 24th Wisconsin. It and several other Wisconsin regiments, including the 21st, 22nd and 23rd, had spent several weeks here, but now would go on to take part in some of the bloodiest fighting of the war.¹⁸

Troops were everywhere in Covington. They pitched their tents on the banks of the Licking and Ohio, as well as on every available vacant lot. Some were fortunate to secure quarters at the Covington Barracks, or at one of the many public buildings being used for that purpose. Others, less fortunate, simply made camp on the streets and sidewalks where they slept in the open.

Men of the 112th Ohio Volunteers made an attempt to escape the crowded conditions by crossing to Newport. There, they spent several days encamped on the town's courthouse lawn.

Most of those who served at Covington during the threatened invasion were like the men of the 86th Indiana in that they had yet to be exposed to actual battle. Those in charge of the area's defense were keenly aware of this and called on General Grant to rush as many veteran troops as he could spare.

Among the first battle-hardened units to reach here was the 36th Illinois, veterans of bloody Pea Ridge and the occupation of Corinth, Mississippi. The men were astounded at the activity they saw and one battle-hardened veteran wrote:

The militia of Ohio and Indiana were pouring into the city in vast floods. The public parks, the sidewalks and every square inch of space was occupied by the undisciplined rabble of "squirrel hunters" and farmers fresh from fields and plow, partially armed with shot-guns and old rifles. . . Men 70 years of age, with heads whitened for the grave and boys 15 years old, rushed to the front and lined the rifle pits, hastily thrown up to cover the approaches to the city. Martial law was proclaimed, business houses closed and all work but that of arms suspended. . . All had "blood in their eyes," and were fully bent on "damaging rebels" if they ever came within reach of their long-ranged rifles.

With the arrival of . . . veteran troops, whose mettle had been tried on the battlefield, the fears of the citizens were at once allayed. With such troops behind breast-works, which each hour were being strengthened, they felt that a successful resistance could be offered to all the assaults which Kirby Smith could organize against them. Never was there such a revulsion of feeling from despondency to confidence, as was experienced by the citizens . . . on the arrival of the "Pea Ridge Brigade." A great weight was lifted from their hearts and they could not too warmly testify their satisfaction and gratitude.¹⁹

The 36th was quartered at the Eleventh Street Markethouse and all its members made subject to various work details. Like most veterans of all conflicts, these men were more interested in the sights offered by a strange town. The soldier pointed this out when he wrote:

Covington had many attractions for the men, who wandered away from the Market House singly or in squads and when the Captain called for a detail for the performance of some fatigue duty, scarcely a man could be found. Those in the quarters were put on guard, with orders to prevent any from passing out, while the city provost guard and police were directed to arrest the stragglers wherever found and bring them in. But few delinquents were caught and many of those remaining managed to slip by the guards and get away. The Captain's patience was sorely tried; he declared it as his belief that if but one man remained in the quarters and all the residue of the regiment were set over that man, he would devise some way to elude the guards and escape. At supper-time, all were in their places, hungry as sharks, sedate as high churchmen, seemingly quite unconscious of having disturbed the equanimity of their commanding officer, or of being guilty of un-military conduct in ranging over the city and away from their quarters without permission.

The next day, the 36th marched to a position near the line of fortifications in rear of Covington, relieving a regiment of Cincinnati militia, made up of clerks and book-keepers. In addition to their muskets and

accoutrements, each was armed with a brace of wine and bourbon bottles tucked beneath their waistbands. Their commissary was garnished with lager beer kegs, champagne baskets, hams, crackers, sardines and oysters, while as many women as men were in camp, looking after the morals and ministering to the comfort of their "brave soldier boys." The veterans were in hopes Kirby Smith would make an attack, just to give these "counter hoppers" a chance to enjoy a mixture of gunpowder and lead with their other luxuries and afford an opportunity to display their valor. Just imagine a charge upon a fortification with a musket in their hands, a baby on one arm and a wife clinging to the other! When they were gone, the thirsty "Pea Ridge Boys" occupied their quarters and had a good time smelling empty bottles and beer kegs...

For six days, the troops lay in the trenches on the banks of the Licking, in constant expectation of an attack. But the movement of the main Confederate force, under Bragg, toward Louisville, the sudden departure of Kirby Smith from before Covington, and his forced march and junction with Bragg [caused] the excitement which a few days before had prevailed [to be] transferred to Louisville, and frantic calls for veteran troops were made upon the Department commanders.²⁰

A vastly changed landscape lay in the wake of the departing rebels. An unbelievable amount of virgin forest had become a casualty. Great acreages of forests that predated the very first of the pioneer explorers had been destroyed by troops of both sides, in order to have a clear view of the terrain in front of their lines. The clearings would deny the opponents any chance of launching a surprise attack from cover of a dense forest.

Visitors to the local defense lines were amazed at their extent and as one post-war historian noted:

Except at the battle of New Orleans, no equal amount of work has ever been done on this continent, nor as many men got together in so short a time.²¹

Now the crisis was over. The rebels withdrew and the Squirrel Hunters were celebrating. The commercial life of the community was resuming and the lawyers, clerks and storekeepers were happy.

The task of the soldier was nowhere near an end. It would be a long time and many miles before they would return home, for the demands of war called them to heavier duty further south. Some went by train, some marched and some, like the 86th Indiana, went by steamboat.

A member of the 86th said of his departure:

*The regiment marched through Covington direct[ly] to the boat landing and shipped aboard two steam boat the **Forest Rose** and the **Dunleith** for Louisville, Kentucky.*

*On the morning of Sunday, September 21, about 6 o'clock, the **Forest Rose** and **Dunleith** backed out from their landing, swung round into the channel and steamed out down the river. Two other boats carried an Ohio regiment down at the same time, the four boats frequently being in full view of each other in the stretches of the river and making a very beautiful sight to behold. As the magnificent boats steamed downstream that beautiful September morning, the men were relieved of all thought of camp duty and were consequently once more comparatively at ease. The atmosphere was delightfully invigorating and the sun shone brightly. It was a lovely day.²²*

Endnotes

¹ *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, 16 February 1864.

² Kentucky Adjutant General's Report, Volume 1, *op. cit.*

³ Ford, Edward O., "History of the Ninth Regiment New Hampshire Volunteers," Republican Press Association, Concord, NH (1895).

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Jackman, Lyman, "History of the Sixth Regiment New Hampshire Regiment," Republican Press Association, Concord, NH (1891).

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Thompson, B. F., "History of the 112th Regiment of Illinois Volunteer Infantry," Toulon, IL (1885).

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ The soldier probably crossed on the Main Street ferry, and not the Fifth Street ferry which ran from the foot of Cincinnati's West Fifth Street to Ludlow.

¹⁰ Tougee, Albion W., "The Story of a Thousand," S. McGerald & Son, Buffalo (1896).

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Woods, J.T., "Services of the Ninety-Sixth Ohio Volunteers," Blade Printing & Paper Company, Toledo (1874).

¹³ Beard, Daniel, C., *op. cit.*

¹⁴ Marshall, T. B., "History of the Eighty-Third Ohio Volunteer Infantry," Cincinnati (1913).

¹⁵ *Harper's Weekly*, 27 September 1862.

¹⁶ *Cincinnati Times-Star*, 31 May 1915.

¹⁷ Barnes, James A., Carnahan, James R. and McCain, Thomas H.B., "The Eighty-Sixth Regiment, Indiana Volunteer Infantry," Crawfordsville, Indiana (1895).

¹⁸ Quiner, E.B., "The Military History of Wisconsin," Clark & Company, Chicago (1866).

¹⁹ Bennett, L.G., and Haigh, W.M., "History of the 36th Regiment of Illinois Volunteers," Aurora, IL (1876).

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Goodrich, DeWitt and Tuttle, Charles R., "An Illustrated History of the State of Indiana," Richard S. Peale & Company, Indianapolis (1875).

²² Barnes, James, A., *et. al., op. cit.*

Chapter 17

Local Troops on the Battle Fronts

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When news of the Fort Sumter attack first reached Covington, there was no doubt where the loyalty of the majority of the town lay. Although local citizens held to many beliefs and institutions associated with the South, dismemberment of the nation was not one of them. "Union" was their uppermost belief and the affirmation of that was immediately expressed in a city-wide display of flags. Patriotic assemblies were held and scores of pro-Union speeches made.

At nearby Brooklyn, now the Campbell County community of Dayton, citizens held a mass meeting at Front and Main Street to determine a course of action. An indication of how that meeting went, can be determined from the fact the tiny community had only 58 families and 51 men in those families enlisted in the federal army.¹ On another occasion, citizens of Brooklyn hoisted what they claimed to be the largest American flag in Kentucky. It measured 30 x 24 feet.

The cries of the minority favoring the nation's dissolution were overwhelmed by their neighbors' outburst of patriotism, only to emerge again when Governor Magoffin delivered his bizarre declaration of neutrality. Despite the governor's pronouncement, area residents continued to deluge Union enlistment camps. The 1st and 2nd Kentucky Infantry Regiments, as noted above, at Camp Clay, received many of these early enlistees.

The cavalry company raised by Captain James L. Foley was assigned to the famed Fremont Body Guard in Missouri. It took an active role in Major General John C. Fremont's Missouri Campaign and from September to November 1861, served in the advance against Springfield. It saw skirmish action at West Glaze on October 13th and at Linn Creek on October 14th and 16th.

As soon as the editor of the *Covington Journal* learned of the presence of Covington troops in Missouri, he began writing of the difficult conditions connected with army service in that state and of sickness and disease there. Most of his writing contained gross exaggerations and appeared designed to affect the morale of the families of the Union soldiers serving there.

The particular unit to which Foley and his men were assigned was commanded by Major Charles Zagonyi and consisted of men who had been selected on the basis of their outstanding physique, high intelligence and general aptitude for military service.²

It was a proud organization and on October 25th, after a grueling 105-mile march in 48 hours, distinguished itself when 150 of its men routed a force of 2,000 rebels. The federals moved to within a half-mile of the Southerners, when they drew sabers and launched what the *Detroit Free Press* called "undoubtedly one of the most dashing . . . charges ever made."³ Throughout their spectacular charge, the Covingtonians repeatedly shouted: "Old Kentucky forever!" "Remember the Queen City, boys!" and "Fremont and Union!"⁴

The guards were exposed to heavy fire. Fifty-two of them, over a third of the organization, were wounded and Captain Foley had his horse shot from under him.⁵ The men pressed on and drove the Confederates into the streets of Springfield where fierce hand-to-hand fighting ensued. The rebels were badly mauled and fled in disorder after suffering 137 dead and captured.⁶

The Covingtonians won a significant military victory but now became embroiled in a political controversy from which they could not hope to emerge unscathed. Missouri, like Kentucky, was a loyal slave state, and its loyalty, like Kentucky's, was considered crucial by the federal administration.

However, Fremont had proven an acute embarrassment to President Lincoln. His complete lack of tact and diplomacy in handling his responsibilities as commander of the Military Department of the West created an intolerable situation. His critics were adamant in their demands he be removed and now that Covingtonians had gone into battle cheering his name, they became the object of political attacks as well.

When Foley and his men returned to St. Louis, they were ordered to disband because of the sentiments expressed in their Springfield battle cry. The order came from the Secretary of War.

Brigadier General Samuel D. Sturgis, a regular army cavalry officer, was scheduled to take part in the company's discharge ceremonies. He had become so impressed with the unit's military record that he refused to officiate at what he considered a disgraceful affair.

Sturgis' actions set off a whole series of compliments and praise for the soldiers and they were now urged to incorporate into the regular army. The proud men felt insulted by the political resentment shown at their battle cry and demanded they be given their discharges.⁷

On November 30th, the Covingtonians, along with the remainder of the Fremont Body Guard, were granted their wish and immediately returned home.⁸

Another unit formed largely of local men was the 1st Kentucky Independent Artillery Battery, or Simmond's Battery – a name it acquired in recognition of its commanding officer. This group originally formed as part of the 1st Infantry Regiment but was detached as a separate unit on October 31, 1861.

The 1st Kentucky Independent served in virtually all the early campaigns of western Virginia and later took part in some of the great battles of the Army of the Potomac. Some of its better-known engagements include Antietam, Gauley Bridge, Harper's Ferry and New River Bridge. At Antietam and South Mountain the unit merited numerous special mentions in official battle reports. The battery eventually returned to Kentucky and was mustered out of service at Louisville, July 10, 1865.

The 1st and 2nd Infantry Regiments, both composed of many Covington area residents, were also destined to see some of the war's heaviest fighting. They saw action in West Virginia as early as July 1861 and served there until the following January when they were assigned to General Buell's army for duty at bloody Shiloh and Corinth.

After Corinth, the 1st and 2nd served with the Army of the Cumberland and fought in all its campaigns, including Stone River, Chickamauga, Lookout Mountain, Missionary Ridge and various phases of the Atlanta campaign. The 1st also took part in the siege of Knoxville.

By mid-1864, enlistment terms of both regiments were drawing to a close and the units returned to the Covington garrison to be mustered out of service. On June 19th, men of the 2nd were given their discharges and on July 18th, the battle-scarred veterans of the 1st joined them in their return to civilian pursuits.

Probably no member of the 1st was more pleased at the thought of returning home than Newport's **William H. Horsfall**. Young Horsfall served as drummer boy in Company G, and on May 21, 1862, heroically saved the life of a wounded officer. The officer had been laying helpless between the battle lines at Corinth, when fourteen-year-old Horsfall went to his rescue. For his heroism, he was awarded the newly-instituted Congressional Medal of Honor.⁹

Horsfall was no stranger to heroic behavior and again distinguished himself in the bloody battle at Stone River. After that engagement, he came home for a brief visit at which time a Newport columnist noted:

A little son of J. Horsfall, Jailer of this city, who has returned home on furlough from the Army of the Cumberland, is a real prodigy of a soldier. He is fourteen years old and four feet six inches in height. At the battle of Stone River, the youthful soldier, who was a drummer boy, threw down his drum and rushed to the very front of the battle, where he was found shooting at the rebels. He was ordered to the rear by General Rosecrans in person, who witnessed his conduct.¹⁰

Horsfall later said he was once caught between Confederate horsemen and infantry at Stone River, when he heard one of the southerners shout: *Don't shoot the little Yank. I want him for a cage.* At that instant, the youthful soldier made a mad dash between the rebels and the safety of his own lines.¹¹

Horsfall's military career began in December 1861 when he and three other youths stowed away on the steamboat *Anne Laurie* at Newport. He did not emerge from his hiding place until the boat was well under way and proceeded to tell officials he was a homeless orphan. The story of course, was false but was believed by the officers who allowed him to enter the army as a drummer boy.¹²

About a year after Horsfall's heroic action at Corinth, another Newport soldier, William Steinmetz, earned a Medal of Honor during the fighting at Vicksburg.¹³ Steinmetz, the son of a German immigrant, was a private in the 83rd Indiana Infantry and earned the medal for his part leading a volunteer assault against a strong enemy position.¹⁴

One of the adversaries of the 1st and 2nd regiments had been the Confederate's First Kentucky Brigade, which carried the names of many local men on its rolls. When these outfits and other Kentucky units engaged one another at Shiloh, more than 1,400 Kentuckians became casualties, including the Confederate's Kentucky-born General Albert Sydney Johnston.

The *Covington Journal* said the opposing Kentuckians fought one another with a vengeance and reported one of them, a federal soldier, happened to wound and capture his own brother, a Confederate. The Union soldier began firing at another rebel near a tree when his captured brother cried out: "Don't shoot there any more – that's father!"¹⁵

One segment of the First Brigade did not participate in the fighting at Shiloh. Its members were in federal prisoner of war camps awaiting either parole or exchange. The imprisoned unit was the 2nd Kentucky Infantry Regiment, part of which was Captain Aston Madeira's company. Madeira, as mentioned, was a former Covington

councilman who had organized a group of local states-righters into a company of home guards, only to later defect with his company to the state guard and finally to the Confederacy.

In July 1861, Madeira's company was assigned to the 2nd Kentucky at the time of the regiment's organization at Camp Boone, Tennessee. The roster contained such names as the following:

Samuel K. Hayes	William T. Estep
Michael J. Campion	Thomas L. Cox
James P. Mooklar	Joseph S. Robinson
James H. Summers	Ed R. Thomas
Odell G. Taber	George W. Williams
William H. Longmore	Woodford W. Longmore

In February 1862, the 2nd was detached from the brigade and sent to Fort Donelson, where they surrendered on the 17th with the rest of that garrison. Madeira and his men, who had engaged in some of the heaviest fighting, were then sent to Camp Chase, Ohio, as prisoners of war.

While a prisoner of war, one of the Covingtonians wrote a letter home in which he described a portion of his company's experience at Fort Donelson. He wrote in part:

There were ninety members in the company. Previous to the fight, thirty men were detailed for duty elsewhere, leaving sixty who were, with two or three exceptions engaged in the fight from the beginning to the end. . . . You can form no idea of the horror of a battle field. All over the field, for miles, the dead and wounded were strewn. In some spots, where the fighting had been desperate, thirty or forty dead lay in a pile. Hundreds were not buried for days.¹⁶

Casualties were high on both sides and many of the local dead, as of the son of Samuel Reynolds, were returned here for burial when their parents, or other loved ones, went to the battle site to claim the bodies.

Madeira's men constantly plotted escape after their imprisonment and some, including Woodford W. Longmore and Captain Madeira himself, succeeded in regaining their freedom in that manner. Longmore made his way south after escape and joined with Morgan's cavalry, only to lose a leg at Cynthana.¹⁷ Madeira fled into Canada after escaping while undergoing preparations for a transfer to a new military prison in Sandusky Bay.¹⁸ He spent the winter in that country and then set out to find and rejoin his old regiment.

The 2nd had been exchanged for federal soldiers being held in Southern prison camps and had once again become part of the Third Brigade. Captain Madeira rejoined the regiment in time to take part in its Mississippi campaign and in severe fighting at Chickamauga.

The battle at Chickamauga was especially furious and heroics were commonplace on both sides. One of Madeira's men, Private William T. Richardson of Scott County, was mortally wounded but not before performing in such a manner that he would later be awarded the Confederate Metal of Honor. Madeira, himself, suffered a fatal wound and died at Atlanta on September 28, 1863.

Lieutenant Michael J. Campion, one of Madeira's close friends, was wounded at Chickamauga, but recovered to fight throughout his company's remaining battles – Chattanooga, Missionary Ridge, Resaca, Marietta, Kenesaw Mountain, Atlanta and the general retreat before Sherman's powerful force.

The brigade was pushed across Georgia, South Carolina and on to Raleigh, N. C., where it found itself when the war ended.

The Confederacy was defeated and its soldiers left penniless to make their separate ways home. Those of the brigade, fortunate enough to be paid, received a hard specie payment of \$2.50 for each enlisted man and \$5.00 for each officer. Each man could have all the worthless Confederate paper money he desired.

The First Kentucky Brigade, known as the Orphan Brigade, had the misfortune to be to usually be pitted against the Union's ablest leaders and probably saw more hard fighting and marching than any other rebel unit. Those same officials invariably pronounced it the Confederacy's best brigade.

Lieutenant Campion, returned to Covington at war's end, only to be killed in 1867 during a Fourth of July fracas. The tragedy occurred at Cole's Garden when Campion, acting as one of the resorts special police, was attempting to quell a fight between two groups of drunken patrons.

The fate of Samuel K. Hays was considerably happier. He, like Madeira, had originally entered the Confederate cause in 1861 but only after making an unsuccessful attempt to reorganize the Washington Artillery Home Guards into a permanent part of the state guard.

Later that year, Hays joined Madeira's company at Camp Boone as a private but was quickly given the rank of major and assigned as an assistant quartermaster on General Buckner's staff.¹⁹ Mays took part in the battle at Fort Donelson after which he confined his military activities to those more in keeping with the duties of a quartermaster officer.

On July 22, 1862, George M. Jessee, at the head of what he called "Jessee's Battalion of Mounted Rifles, Kentucky Volunteers," saw that group pledge itself to the Confederacy's service at Owen County. A year later, he was still recruiting for his command, and in July 1863, enrolled enough Boone Countians to form the battalion's Company B. The company was headed by Captain W.H. Vaughn. On the following September 29th, Jessee's troops were officially designated as the 6th Battalion of Cavalry.²⁰

Few Kentuckians who fought in the name of the Confederacy had a more active or interesting career than George M. Jessee. Considered a hero by Southern sympathizers and a self-serving outlaw guerrilla by Kentucky Unionists, Jessee, like many of his breed, remained a controversial figure in history.

Early in his career, he recruited a hundred men from Henry, Carroll and Trimble Counties and started them on a long and surreptitious march to Georgia. At Scott County they were joined by a company of Boone Countians. When the would-be Confederates reached Mt. Sterling, they were attacked by Home Guardsmen and a group of federal cavalrymen who inflicted heavy casualties on them, and forced the entire remainder of the group to surrender.²¹

Jessee escaped a short while later and returned to Henry County to recruit a new company of 103 men. This group set out for Knoxville, eventually reaching after suffering many losses in attacks along the way. At Knoxville, Jessee and his men were inducted into the Confederate Army.²²

General Kirby Smith invaded Kentucky shortly before this, and Jessee was given the assignment of escorting a number of Confederate officers who wanted to catch up with Smith.²³ The group no sooner entered Kentucky than they were attacked by federal troops and once again Jessee lost his entire party of more than 100 men. He and two others were the only ones who escaped.²⁴

Jessee reported to General Smith and requested he be given a detachment to lead into Henry and Owen Counties to conduct raids on the local Provost Marshal's forces and loyal area citizens. Smith complied.²⁵

This latest group revived the name "Jessee's Battalion of Mounted Rifles," and added several new recruits. The men conducted a ferocious guerrilla warfare throughout their area until they were officially accepted in the Confederate Army as the 6th Battalion of Cavalry.

Many of the northern Kentuckians recruited during Heth's invasion were assigned to the 9th Kentucky Cavalry Regiment, led by Colonel William C.P. Breckinridge. The 9th was organized at Alexandria, Tennessee in December of 1862 for General Morgan's command, but never served with him after that year's "Christmas Raid" into Kentucky. It was instead assigned to the retreating Army of Tennessee.²⁶

Just before the Battle of Missionary Ridge, the 9th was sent to Major General Joseph E. Wheeler's Cavalry Corps and stayed with that command for the remainder of the war. It took part in the heavy fighting at Missionary Ridge and in battles of northern Georgia.²⁷

Morgan made many applications for the 9th's return but his requests were consistently rejected by higher authorities.²⁸

It seemed to be the fate of the local men in the 9th to consistently face defeat at the hands of Union troops who also boasted of close ties to the Covington area. The men faced one another at Missionary Ridge, Resaca, Marietta, Peach Tree Creek and Atlanta.²⁹

After the Atlanta campaign, Wheeler took the 9th back into Tennessee and into fighting at Saltville, Virginia. It again faced scores of Union troops there who had been recruited at Covington.³⁰

From Saltville, the 9th returned to Georgia only to have Sherman's men force it to retreat all the way to Savannah and into the Carolinas. The regiment was at Raleigh when Lee made his final surrender.³¹

A few of the 9th's die-hard members could not or would not accept a full realization of the disaster that overtook the Southern forces. They volunteered to accompany Confederate President Jefferson Davis in his last desperate flight which ended a short time later when the entire group was surrounded and captured at Irwinsville, Georgia.³²

The only other rebel group of any significant size to enlist from this area was one of 24 Campbell Countians who enrolled at Alexandria on March 1, 1863. The men, headed by Captain B.J. Beal, were assigned to Company L of the 14th Cavalry Regiment and took part in the June 1864 action at Mount Sterling and Cynthiana.³³

Some of Covington's firmest states rights advocates detected early what they felt was a growing local anti-slavery and anti-Southern bias and because of this, moved South long before the outbreak of armed hostilities. One family believed such bias would corrupt their young son and moved to Gallatin, Tennessee where they hoped he could be reared in the Southern tradition they preferred. That boy, born at Covington on September 5, 1815, is now remembered in Southern history as Confederate General Tyree Harris Bell.³⁴

After the war, Bell migrated to California where he became a farmer. He died at New Orleans, September 1, 1902 and is buried near Sanger, California.³⁵

Another area resident who rose in rank to General in the Confederate Army was Newport's George Baird Hodge. He was an 1845 graduate of the Naval Academy but resigned from the navy in April 1850 in order to enter the practice of law at Newport.³⁶ There he married Keturah Moss Tibbatts, daughter of John W. Tibbatts and granddaughter of General James Taylor.³⁷

When war came in 1861, Hodge promptly enlisted as a private but his previous military training enabled him to quickly rise to officer status. He was named to the Confederate Provisional Congress as a "delegate from Kentucky," and managed to serve in the dual capacities of soldier and lawmaker.³⁸

The convention which selected Hodge for the Provisional Congress was a three-day "Sovereignty Convention" which opened at Russellville on November 18, 1861. The delegates, including Covington's D.P. Buckner, passed what they called Kentucky's ordinance of secession. The group declared "Kentucky to be a free and independent State, clothed with all power to fix her own destiny and to secure her own rights and liberties."³⁹

The "Sovereignty Convention" was largely a sham and must not be given any degree of credence for being representative of the state's true feelings. Many – probably most – of the delegates were self-appointed and had no sanctions whatsoever from the electorate they claimed to represent. Nevertheless, it was on the basis of this group's actions that the South always claimed Kentucky as a Confederate state.

Before leaving for the South, Hodge frequently talked of someday returned to march through the local streets at the head of a victorious Confederate army.⁴⁰ He did see heavy service. He took part in the Battle of Shiloh; saw duty in Tennessee; and eventually appointed commander of the District of Southwest Mississippi and Eastern Louisiana.

Hodge's dream of returning as a conquering hero quickly vanished, when he found himself a prisoner of the Union forces. His former neighbors reported he was writing letters to them saying he was eager to take the oath of amnesty and allowed to return home.⁴¹

On May 10, 1865, the repentant general was paroled at Meridian, Mississippi and promptly returned to Newport to resume his law practice and to enter politics. Later he was engaged by Covington's Richard H. Collins' revised "History of Kentucky."

About a year after Hodge was paroled, he decided to erect a home about two miles south of Covington on Taylor Mill Road. The residence was nearing completion when, on the night of September 9, 1866, it was totally destroyed by a fire believed to be arson. Hodge's loss of the nearly-completed home was \$25,000, a princely sum for that time.⁴²

General Hodge died August 1, 1892 at Longwood, Florida and was buried in that state. In late 1902, his son Circuit Judge John T. Hodge of Newport, returned his remains to Newport for re-burial. This was in compliance with the general's often stated wish that "he should be laid to rest in Kentucky ground."⁴³

Newport's **Charles J. Helm** was another local resident who gave his loyalty to the South. Helm was American Consul to Havana from 1857 to 1861 and from 1861 to 1865 served as a Confederate agent to that same Caribbean government.⁴⁴

The Confederacy also won the allegiance of Covington's D.R. Williams, who has the distinction of inventing the first true machine gun to be used successfully in combat. This weapon, a one-pounder with a bore of 1.57 inches and a barrel measuring four feet in length, was mounted on a horse-drawn mountain howitzer-style carriage. The Confederate's Bureau of Ordnance adopted it at the war's very beginning and used it for the first time at Virginia's Battle of Seven Pines, also known as the Battle of Fair Oaks. It had a devastating effect on advancing Union troops.⁴⁵

The weapon's firing mechanism was operated by a hand-crank located on its right and used a self-consuming paper cartridge dropped into place by hand. The firing rate was 65 rounds a minute with a range of 2,000 yards. About seven six-gun batteries were constructed by the Confederates and used throughout the war.⁴⁶ The 1st Kentucky Battery – the Schoolfield Battery – was probably the best known rebel unit to use the weapon, commonly called the Williams Rapid-Fire Gun. Williams, who made his war-time home in Lynchburg, Virginia, amassed a fortune from his invention.⁴⁷

Eli Metcalfe Bruce was another Covingtonian who cast his lot with the Confederacy. He was born at Flemingsburg in 1828 but migrated here by way of Maysville to engage in Cincinnati's pork packing business. Bruce subsequently participated in a series of business ventures throughout the Midwest, but went to Richmond, Virginia when the war began. There he served in the regular Confederate Congress as a representative of what the Southerners called "the Covington District."⁴⁸

By March 1863, Eli and his wife were living in Chattanooga. When it became apparent that the community would come under Union attack, Mrs. Bruce fled to Marietta, Georgia with two of her children, her sister and two slaves.⁴⁹ From there, Mrs. Bruce returned to Covington on a journey which her son later described by saying:

*She took my sister, myself and two slaves to Savannah, where we boarded the blockade runner **Coquette**, which was owned by my father, and went to Nassau, where we took an English boat to Montreal. From Montreal, we went south to Covington, Kentucky, where my grandmother lived. My brother was born in Covington shortly afterwards.⁵⁰*

After the child was born, Mrs. Bruce decided to rejoin her husband who was then in Richmond acting as representative of "The Covington District." Eli's uncle, Henry Bruce of Sanford Street, took her to Washington to appeal to President Lincoln for a pass to proceed through the Union lines. Lincoln granted the request.⁵¹

Mrs. Bruce traveled on an exchange boat to Hampton Roads and went overland to Richmond. There she and her husband established their home across the street from the Robert E. Lee home.⁵²

Covington's loyal Unionists were showing signs of a growing resentment at Henry Bruce's activities. His position as one of the town's leading copperheads was well known and it was becoming apparent he was also actively engaged in organized espionage for the Confederacy. This grated on the nerves of even the most tolerant Unionist and prompted the military to keep him under close surveillance.

Henry soon became aware of his fellow townspeople's growing hostility and the possibility he might be arrested on treason charges. He took no chances and fled for the safety of Canada.

On the other hand, Eli quickly rose to prominence in the Confederacy and, while serving as a member of the South's Ways and Means Committee, became a prime force behind the South's efforts to supply its people and army with food and supplies.

As the war progressed and the Union established its tight quarantine of southern ports, Eli acquired and outfitted a fleet of ships designed to run the blockades. His ships carried cotton to English and other European ports and returned with much-needed supplies for the South.

After the South's final defeat, Eli journeyed to Washington to successfully plead with President Andrew Johnson for restoration of the citizenship he once denounced. He had amassed a small fortune as a result of war-time activities and proceeded to spend virtually all on it in aiding stranded southern soldiers return home.

On December 15, 1866, Eli died at a hotel he operated in New York.⁵³ His body was returned to Covington for burial in Linden Grove Cemetery where it remained until 1917 when it was moved to a family plot in Highland Cemetery.

Not all local Southern sympathizers chose to renounce their American citizenship. Such it was with social prominent **Daniel Henry Holmes** family. Holmes, grandson of an Irish immigrant, was born near Point Pleasant, Ohio in 1816. He entered the mercantile business as a young man, and in 1846 founded at New Orleans what would become one of the South's leading department stores. The following year, also at New Orleans, he met and married British-born Eliza Maria Kennison.⁵⁴

Young Holmes found it necessary to make many extended business trips to the world's fashion centers that he felt it advisable to also establish a home in New York, London and Paris. He liked the cosmopolitan aspects of these cities and often remained in them for months at a time. He, therefore, earned a reputation for being what one biographer called, "a cosmopolite, a citizen of the world."⁵⁵ His European business contacts always referred to him as "the King of New Orleans."⁵⁶

Holmes was a frequent visitor to Covington during his formative years and had fond memories of the community and the Ohio Valley. After his marriage, he decided to make the town the chief place of residence for he and his family. In 1852, he purchased one of the area's old colonial homes for his family and renamed it Holmesdale.

Holmes foresaw the havoc, destruction and social upheaval a civil war would bring and began preparing for what he thought was the inevitable. He was an ardent states righter but during the same decade where he established Holmesdale, he decided to bring his slaves to New York where he granted them their freedom.⁵⁷

Once the war began, the pro-South Holmes returned to New Orleans. There, he converted most of his liquid assets into cotton, a commodity he felt certain would become more valuable as a medium of exchange than the currency being printed by the Confederate government.⁵⁸

Most of the Lincoln's Administration's policies were repugnant to Holmes but he could not bring himself to take an active part in the Union's dismemberment. As a result, he decided that he and his family would go to Europe to sit out the remainder of the war.

Holmes planned for some time to build a palatial home in Covington, yet it was not until he attended the 1867 Paris Exposition that he finally decided on a definite plan for its construction. According to a booklet published by New Orleans's D.H. Holmes Company, he returned to Covington and erected a replica of a castle shown at the exposition.⁵⁹ Holmes insisted all the work and materials of the home be of the highest quality, for as one journalist noted, it was to be a gift for his wife and would be built "with a love that was indifferent to cost."⁶⁰

Most of the furniture for the 55-room mansion was hand carved from expensive woods. The inlaid floors in many of the rooms were of teak, ebony, rosewood, mahogany and other woods brought from equatorial regions and the Far East. White Carrara marble was imported from Italy expressly for the mansion's mantels, while the impressive double stairway leading to the second floor was constructed of rare bird's eye maple. The stairway alone was valued at more than \$40,000.⁶¹

After his wife died in December 1884, Holmes gave ownership of the castle to his son, Daniel Jr. He then moved to an apartment in New Orleans and devoted his remaining years to his mercantile business. He died July 3, 1898 while in New York on a business trip.⁶²

Most Covington families, however, were militarily loyal to their government and furnished a large number of Kentucky's staunchest Union defenders. The family of young Daniel Carter Beard was among them, and Dan's older brothers among the first to act when war came. Harry Beard enlisted in the army in 1861, while Frank went with the Seventh Ohio Regiment as a special combat artist for Frank Leslie's *Illustrated Newspaper*.

On the national level, most but not all southern-born army officers on active duty at the war's outbreak, resigned their US commissions and entered service of the new Confederacy. Those electing to return south and fight against the nation they had sworn to defend numbered about 270 out of the army's total of about 900 officers.

Most northern-born officers remained loyal, as did virtually all enlisted men, regardless of birthplace. By war's end, there was a total of 634,255 Union Soldiers who had been born in slave-holding states.

Although Kentucky decided squarely for the Union, there were residents who agitated for a rebel victory. Divided families were numerous, the best known was probably the Crittendens. That family's split was remarkable in that two brothers rose to the rank of general on opposing sides. Thomas L. Crittenden became a Major General in the Union Army, while his brother, George B., held the same rank with the Confederates.

The Commonwealth furnished each of the warring factions with a president – Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis were both born within its boundaries, Kentucky also furnished 79 generals to the two sides – more than any state except Virginia and populous New York. Forty-one were Union. If all native-born Kentuckians to reach that rank were considered, the total would be 103 – with 67 of them Union.

Among the top-ranking Union military figures from Covington were men as Major Thomas F. Purnell, Brigadier General Thomas J. Williams, Major General Green Clay Smith and, of course, Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant, who made frequent war-time references to Covington as his "home."

Major Purnell was a member of the Union General Staff, who continued serving in that capacity until March 1866. He migrated to Texas and soon won appointment as U.S. Marshall for that state.⁶³

General Williams, one of the war's lesser-known personalities, entered the army as a private September 24, 1861, and rose to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the 55th Kentucky. He received his discharge on January 1, 1865 but the following December was granted a rank of Brevet Brigadier General for his war service. The brevet was dated from September 22, 1865.⁶⁴

It is typical for communities to boast of even their most tenuous of associations with well-known persons and such has been the case with many American cities and General Grant. The Ohio-born general made his home in several different communities during his lifetime, yet it was Covington's 520 Greenup Street which he regarded as "home" throughout most of his Civil War career.

The Greenup Street home received many important visitors throughout the war and was the subject of much interest and curiosity throughout the Union states. *Harper's Weekly* was one of several national publications to feature the Covington residence in its news columns, saying:

The association that must be linked with the place in the thought and affection of our Lieutenant-General also makes it a very dear and interesting place to all of us. ⁶⁵

There is general agreement among historians that Grant was not only an able military leader but a devoted husband and father and a man of nearly unqualified personal integrity as well. He never swore – one of his strongest terms was “Oh, fudge!”

The general possessed a strong sense of humor. He joked about his lack of musical talent and always claimed he knew but two tunes. According to him, one was *Yankee Doodle* and the other wasn't.

Grant's distaste for weapons and killing were led him never to carry as much as a side arm. The sight of blood so appalled him that he could never kill an animal. Neither, he once quipped, could he even eat a beef steak unless it was well done.

When such traits are combined with simplicity, patience and common sense, their possessor is sometimes thought dull by contemporaries. This happened to President Lincoln as well as General Grant. No doubt the patience and perseverance of these two leaders approached the super-human as an irresponsible segment of the opposition press joined with mud-slinging politicians in heaping abuse on them. One was called “that ape in the White House,” and the other ‘a drunken butcher.’”

One reason so many criticisms of Lincoln were not kept alive by late nineteenth and early twentieth century historians was the fact Lincoln was assassinated. There then came a long period when it was extremely unfashionable to repeat any of the malicious charges once hurled at the martyred president. This was not the case with General Grant.

Before today's more open recognition of Grant's remarkable abilities, there was a period in which those talents were overlooked by the general public and given little space in journals. Among prime factors involved in depreciation of his accomplishments were post-war school textbooks which regularly distorted the view of various Civil War leaders. Abilities of Union leaders were frequently minimized and those of Confederate officers magnified – often to heroic proportions.

There were reasons for this. First, America is a land of freedom of speech and for the national government to interfere with such writings would be unpardonable interference with liberty. Secondly, such distortions were often encouraged in the belief they made it easier for the southern to accept his defeat and become a cooperating part of a *United States*. Thirdly, there were the economic realities of the textbook publishing industry.

Most states in the old Confederacy approved school textbooks at the state level. After Reconstruction, the majority of offices in those states were filled by former Confederate military men. This was also true for positions on the state board of education. Those men had the power to approve or disapprove selection of textbooks for *all* public school systems of the state. Most textbook publishers were willing to risk loss of an account in an independent northern district but not the loss of business from an *entire* southern state.

This economic threat made textbook publisher cautious concerning Confederate myths and the politics of nostalgia. As a result our schools – north and south – produced several generations who received a distorted view of the men and the conflict which came so close to destroying the American Republic. The defeated rebels felt it imperative their actions be vindicated by the printed word. If this meant biased criticism of the Union war effort – so be it!

This southern attitude even extended to poetry and one poet was warned never to visit Richmond, Virginia because his poetry, although critical of the Union, was not critical enough!⁶⁶

The same was true about southern slavery. Facts crucial to an accurate historical understanding of this entire era were swept aside. An 1888 study of history books used in southern schools declared the books were

spreading a thoroughly studied, partisan system of sectional education. These school histories teach the same identical doctrine, more radical and partisan than before the war, as they now proclaim the righteousness of their cause, vindicate State sovereignty and secession, and any school history that teaches anything different finds but little encouragement in that section. ⁶⁷

This condition existed until well into the second half of the twentieth century, when many textbook publishers began to recognize the dis-service they had done to the American people. Despite threats and verbal abuse from rabid southern demagogues, the publishers started revising their texts and presented a somewhat more balanced view of that epic struggle.

Many unsophisticated writers and school teachers have unwittingly helped popularize the story that Grant was a sledge hammer type. It was a charge first made by the general's political enemies and promoted by sectional writers. There was no general in that struggle, regardless of which side, who resorted more to maneuvers in order to win campaigns. Grant was constant in his strategy of threatening the Confederates' base of operations and the bulk of his tactical strikes were consistently governed by that idea.⁶⁸

The Civil War, although fought during the second half of the nineteenth century, may be said to represent the earliest of the twentieth century's devastating wars. It saw introduction of land mines, armored warships and railroad trains, submarines, field telegraph, aerial observation, rapid-fire weapons, barbed wire and extended trench warfare. The innovative battle strategies developed and used by Grant are still studied at military academies around the world.

Yet, the innumerable distortions of General Grant are still frequently repeated by the militarily naïve. It was said he was without strength and given in to whisky, yet his dependability was one of the very features which attracted the attention of Lincoln. Every reliable military history touching the subject points out there is not one mistake made by Grant that can be attributed to drink.

It was also said he could never manage the affairs of business, yet few could match his systematic methods at structuring and management, as exemplified by the outstanding performance of his supply bases.

It was said he was an unimaginative dolt who would grind down the enemy only when he had the advantage of sheer numbers, yet one of the war's most dazzling campaigns – Vicksburg – was built on a spectacular combination of artful illusion, daring decisions, lightning-like movements and sound military wisdom.

So have the militarily naïve often overlooked the tactics Grant later used during his smashing attack at various Virginia points while pushing Lee toward ultimate and complete defeat. They included the most difficult maneuvers of war and involved moving his right flank out of the line of battle and swinging it behind the lines to the other flank. Such movements necessitate the crossing of rear supply lines for those units being attacked and Grant's skillful execution has attracted the admiration of military students everywhere.⁶⁹

General Grant was clearly the nation's idol by mid-1862. By early 1864, his popularity set Democrats and Republicans alike to devise ways to attract him as their party's presidential candidate. The general would have none of this talk, saying he could do but one thing at a time – and that moment he had a war to fight. Nevertheless, leaders of the two parties continued sending agents into Covington in attempts to learn what political aspirations the general might have, if any.

Grant, of course, had one goal in mind: to bring about a complete and final victory for the Union. He never lost sight of this. It was his unyielding determination to reach his goal which played a major role in bringing about his many successes.

In March 1864, a grateful government granted Ulysses the rank of lieutenant general and gave him command of all Union armies. The newly elevated general had always recognized the military's chief weaknesses and often wrote of the more pressing ones in letters to his family in Covington. One, as he saw it, was lack of an overall strategy. Now, as army's supreme commander, he could implement his own concept of conducting and winning the war. In doing this, he proved to be one of the world's first proponents of total war. He not only recognized the value of capturing towns and military strongholds, but also insisted on the absolute necessity of neutralizing the enemy's ability and will to make war.

As American army officer training manuals point out, Grant was married to the principle of the offensive. He was a master of the pincers movement, the same military tactic later studied by the Germans and used effectively by them in the early days of World War II. Grant consistently used this tactic to cut off and isolate great sections of southern territory. He remained calm in crisis and in victory and mastered each situation he encountered. His operations were models of the application of the principles of war and if he sometimes made mistakes, he rarely repeated them.⁷⁰

General Grant planned to personally lead a campaign against Atlanta at the time of his appointment to the supreme command but turned that project over to one of his sub-commanders, Major General William Tecumseh Sherman. He had the utmost confidence in Sherman's ability and when he left for Washington to accept his new command, urged Sherman to accompany him as far as his family's home in Covington. His purpose was to have an opportunity for the two to discuss a general strategy for the war.

Sherman stopped at a Cincinnati hotel [Burnet House, 3rd & Vine – editor] and there the two generals hammered out plans for a gigantic pincers movement. One of Sherman's biographers later wrote of that meeting saying:

The death warrant of the Southern Confederacy was made out and it was signed and sealed in the parlor of the Burnet House, Cincinnati, when the two Generals bent together over a map, marked out the great Richmond and Atlanta campaigns and then, with a silent handclasp, parted, not to meet again until each had done deeds that made the world ring with his fame. ⁷¹

The Confederacy would rapidly crumble under the all-out, multi-front war about to be forced upon it by Grant and Sherman while the progressive closing of their gigantic pincers movement would spell its final doom.

Sherman's part of the coordinated push resulted in the capture of Atlanta, after which he embarked on his famed march through Georgia. Military observers throughout the world watched with fascination when his troops cut loose from their base of supplies and began their long trek to the sea. Many experts predicted the army would be destroyed and the British *Army and Navy Gazette* said of the commander: "He has done either one of the most brilliant or most foolish things ever performed by a military leader." ⁷²

Sherman's march through Georgia and the Carolinas was the type campaign that many soldiers dream of but seldom have the opportunity to participate in. The enemy was unable to mount any effective opposition as the Union forces played havoc with their ability to prolong the war. For 300 miles, the federals, many having their first soldiering at Covington, cut a 60 mile-wide path of destroyed bridges, wrecked railroads and ruined crops.

The Ohio-born Sherman was a tough and tenacious general. He was a prophet of total war and a brilliant soldier. He longed for peace and, like Grant, realized one way to bring it about was to smash the enemy's capacity and will to make war. Anything which aided the Confederate military effort was to be destroyed.

Neither was Sherman overly solicitous of the welfare of Georgia's civilians when it concerned the security of his own base. If the rebel forces or sympathizers showed any sign of posing a threat, he did not hesitate to expel them from the region for the remainder of the war.

Such evacuees were given the choice of going north or south and a truce was arranged with the Confederate army to allow those choosing that side to pass through the lines of combat. There were hundreds who refused to go deeper into Confederate territory. These were deported to the north and on October 19, 1864, a local newsman noted a large number of them, principally from Atlanta, were in Covington. ⁷³ Covington was much larger than Atlanta at that time and represented the largest city many of the Georgians had ever seen.

Also about that time, Sherman was supposed to have said the "war is hell" phrase. Yet his actual words as stated, "war is cruelty," were not quite so dramatic.

In a reply to complaints from Atlanta's mayor, the Union commander agreed there would be distress among the rebel civilians, but said his orders were not intended:

...to meet the humanities of the case, but to prepare for the future struggle in which millions of good people outside of Atlanta have a deep interest. We must have peace, not only at Atlanta, but in all America. To secure this, we must stop the war that now desolates our once-happy and favored country. To stop war, we must defeat the rebel armies ... To defeat those armies, we must prepare the way to reach them ... You cannot qualify war in harsher terms than I will. War is cruelty and you cannot refine it. ⁷⁴

Georgia howled, just as General Sherman once said it would. Sherman was in complete accord with General Grant's belief that there could be no compromise with the southern notion of an independent confederacy. The slave-based economy of the South must be destroyed, General Grant declared, and now it was increasingly apparent he was quite correct in formulating and prosecuting the war. The longer the South could prolong the struggle, the less likely the Union would survive.

Grant's policy resulted in his commands pouring continuous defeat and military humiliation on one ill-starred rebel command after another. Kentuckian Simon B. Buckner had been defeated at Fort Donelson and surrendered 15,000 men. John C. Pemberton lost Vicksburg and more than 31,000 men. Albert Sidney Johnston, a Northern Kentuckian from Mason County and former commander of the Army of the Republic of Texas, bled to death during the Confederate defeat at Shiloh. P.G.T. Beauregard replaced Johnston, only to be removed from command three months later for failing to hold northern Mississippi. Braxton Bragg, after his retreat from Kentucky,

relieved Beauregard and saw his army demolished at Missionary Ridge.

Joseph E. Johnston, who had been replaced by Robert E. Lee as commander of the Army of Northern Virginia, replaced Bragg. After a series of retreats from Sherman's rifles, Johnston was replaced by Kentucky's John Bell Hood, who proceeded to lose Atlanta and over a third of his army.

Hood conceived the idea that if he marched north to Tennessee, Sherman would follow. How wrong he was! The Union command simply detached troops which destroyed Hood's impossible dream, which included hopes of reaching the Ohio. The native Kentuckian lost more than 6,000 troops and 13 generals in his vain attempt to sweep northward. Rebel losses included entire regiments, such as the 34th, 43rd and 56th Georgia Infantry – all veterans of Kirby Smith's move against Covington.⁷⁵

After their retreat from Kentucky, these Georgia regiments took part in the Vicksburg campaign where the 43rd and 56th were forced to surrender to General Grant's troops. A short time later, they were exchanged for southern-held prisoners of war and along with the 34th, participated in the Battle of Missionary Ridge and in the Atlanta campaign. Their ranks became so decimated, they ceased to exist as effective fighting units and were consolidated with other rebel units.⁷⁶

While Sherman was driving a wedge through Georgia and the Carolinas, Grant was pushing Lee back into the fortifications of Petersburg and Richmond. At Petersburg, he effected a policy of attrition forced the southern general to stretch the Confederate line so thin it neared the breaking point.

The new Union commander took personal charge in the East and first met Lee in battle at the Wilderness on May 5, 1864. The loss of life on both sides was staggering.

During his career in the West, Grant carried the war to the enemy on both strategic and tactical levels. He initially tried the same approach against Lee but after several bloody campaigns, realized it didn't work. Grant switched to flanking movements and attacking points he viewed as being weak. He often called on the overwhelming power at his command whenever he deemed it wise. Lee found he could only react to moves made by the Union commander. Never again was he able to take the initiative and in less than a year, would be forced to capitulate.

Every loyal Covingtonian rejoiced at Grant's triumphs and many vainly boasted of a close acquaintance with "their good friend and fellow townsman, the general," whether true or not. The Grants were clearly the town's most popular family.

Another top military leader from the local area was Major General Edward Richard Sprigg Canby, who was born at Piatt's Landing in Boone County. He was responsible for holding New Mexico for the Union and preventing a Confederate force from invading California.⁷⁷

At Citronella, Alabama, General Canby accepted the war's final surrender when Confederate Generals Richard Taylor and Kirby Smith were forced to capitulate on May 26, 1865. The official surrender papers were formally signed June 2nd at Galveston harbor.

Although the war's last surrender occurred at the tiny community of Citronella, the last actual fighting took place a short distance away on April 12th and a Northern Kentuckian played a prominent role. The fight was a cavalry affair between advancing Union elements and a Confederate rear guard unit commanded by Newport's Colonel Philip Spence.⁷⁸

Colonel Spence recalled later that his men were in full retreat after the fall of Mobile when he decided to make a stand. He said:

*On Four Mile Creek, near Whistler, Alabama, I formed my men in good position and made as stubborn resistance as possible for so small a force . . . In **Destruction and Reconstruction** by Lieutenant General Richard Taylor, CSA. You will find the following: "During the movement from Mobile toward Meridian, occurred the last engagement of the Civil War, in a cavalry affair between the Federal advance and our rear guard, under Colonel Spence." ⁷⁹*

Spence went on to say that after the battle he retreated to Citronella where he remained on outpost duty until the surrender to General Canby.⁸⁰

This area was also home to navy officer Gustavus Vasa Menzies. Menzies, born in Florence, graduated from the Naval Academy at Annapolis with the class of 1864 and was assigned to blockade duty on the North Atlantic. While serving aboard the *Marblehead* off the coast of New England, he participated in the search for the privateer *Tallahassee*.⁸¹

When the war ended, Menzies returned to the Naval Academy as an instructor of navigation and mathematics. He eventually was promoted to Lieutenant Commander in January 1870.⁸²

The federal cause found the local area a far more fertile recruiting ground than did the rebels. From the onset, scores of volunteers crossed the river to join units being raised in Ohio, while others flocked to Newport Barracks to enlist in the regulars. None of this was necessary once Kentucky aligned itself with the Union for recruiting stations for state regiments sprang up throughout the Commonwealth.

By late 1861, Kentucky Unionists were raising a brigade of four regiments, the 8th, 18th, 19th, and 23rd Kentucky Infantries. The 23rd was organized by Colonel Marcellus “Marc” Mundy at Camp King, where it was mustered into service January 2, 1862.⁸³

The ranks of the 23rd were filled the previous December 13th when the regiment absorbed a Colonel Peter’s incomplete regiment stationed at Camp Finnell, as Peter’s men called their camp area at Ludlow’s Queen City Race Track and at Camp Bromley, so named for the embryonic community it was near.⁸⁴ The regiment’s companies were all recruited from the Upper Bluegrass, one each from Mason, Pendleton and Boone Counties, while the others came from Campbell and Kenton.⁸⁵

The race track encampment was the second such local site to bear the name “Camp Finnell,” for another bivouac area existed near Camp King.

The 23rd remained in the local area until February 1862m when it marched south for some of the war’s fiercest combat. One of its first serious fights came almost by accident when Confederate Brigadier General Nathan Bedford Forrest attacked what he thought was a wagon train but was actually the 23rd. The veteran Confederate force “was handsomely repulsed.”⁸⁶

After this surprise encounter, the 23rd saw a string of heavy engagements at Chattanooga, Lookout Mountain, Chickamauga, Missionary Ridge, Resaca, Kenesaw Mountain, Atlanta, Franklin and Nashville.

During the regiment’s advance from Chattanooga, Newport’s Andrew Burknett, serving with Company E, was taken prisoner and interned at the Confederate’s dreaded Andersonville Prison. He was held there for four months and became part of a prisoner exchange and permitted to return home.⁸⁷

When Burknett arrived at his Newport home, he told numerous stories of Confederate mistreatment and of mass starvation among the prisoners. His neighbors noted that he too had been such a victim, pointing to his 80 pound weight during his first two weeks of freedom.⁸⁸

Andersonville was probably the South’s most noted prison. More than 34,000 prisoners were crowded into a 27 acre uncovered enclosure. The mortality rate was fantastically high and included the deaths of at least 492 Kentuckians.⁸⁹

The 23rd was actively engaged in the Atlanta Campaign, when Lieutenant Colonel James C. Foy, the commanding officer of Company A, was mortally wounded while leading his troops. He died at Marietta on July 24, 1864.

Many of the troops looked to their regimental chaplain, Reverend William H. Black, for comfort. The former minister at Main Street Methodist Church, Black joined the 23rd at Camp King on December 16, 1861. His enlistment was for three years.⁹⁰

After Atlanta’s fall, the regiment turned back to pursue General John Bell Hood’s forces through northern Georgia and into Tennessee where Hood’s army was soundly defeated. They chased the remnants of the southerner’s command into Alabama where the rebels were completely crushed.

The 23rd moved into Texas where it served out the remainder of the war. The men were mustered out of service at Victoria in December 1865.⁹¹

The 18th Kentucky Volunteer Infantry Regiment, like the 23rd, was also recruited during the winter of 1861-2 and mustered into service on February 8th. During their organization, until August 20th, it guarded the C&L Railroad while maintaining its regimental headquarters in Falmouth. On June 16th, a detachment of the 18th helped defend Cynthiana, where they suffered a loss of two dead.⁹²

In late August, the regiment – about 600 strong – proceeded to Madison County where the green and untrained recruits participated in the Battle of Richmond (KY). The 18th lost 52 killed and 115 wounded while nearly all the remainder were captured and then paroled. Among those killed was Captain William W. Culbertson of Company K.⁹³ As mentioned, Culbertson had earlier headed the Decoursey Creek Home Guards.

The few members remaining of the regiment returned to Covington where the unit was reorganized and assigned to a brigade commanded by Brigadier General Green Clay Smith. By June 23rd, the 18th was marching with the Army of the Cumberland and became actively engaged in the fighting at Chattanooga and Chickamauga. They also took part in the skirmishes in northern Georgia and engaged Hood’s forces into Alabama.⁹⁴

Regiment members were conscious of the possible financial needs of their families at home and frequently sent them a generous portion of their meager pay. Once they sent an agent of the XIV Corps to Covington with \$10,000 for delivery to their various homes.⁹⁵

After assisting in smashing Hood's forces, the men of the 18th rejoined Sherman at Atlanta for his march to the sea and northward across the Carolinas. On April 10, 1865, the 18th helped take possession of Raleigh and went into camp at Holly Springs.⁹⁶

The regiment started home on April 29th, marching the 186 miles from Raleigh to Richmond in six days. The men arrived in Washington May 19th and remained to take part in the grand review held in that city. From there, the 18th proceeded by train and boat to Louisville, where they were mustered out on July 18th.⁹⁷

Another federal unit deserving mention is the 6th Kentucky Volunteer Infantry Regiment, since there were many members from this area. The 6th maintained a Covington recruiting office during the summer of 1862 and eventually became the parent regiment of a company temporarily commanded by Captain Alfred Martin. The regiment received many orders of praise for its "undaunted gallantry, soldierly conduct and discipline," as it fought in the Western Theatre of Operation. The battles included Shiloh, Stone River, Chickamauga, Missionary Ridge Resaca, Kenesaw Mountain, Peachtree Creek and Atlanta.

In the fall of 1864, Martin's Company A, commanded by Captain William Jones, had suffered severe losses at Shiloh. They returned to Covington on October 1st and mustered out, as its enlistment had expired.

Among the other federal units organized at Covington were the 53rd Kentucky Mounted Infantry (formed September 1864), and the 55th (formed in November). The 55th was recruited by Colonel Weden O'Neal at a time when there was a great demand for troops to protect eastern Kentucky communities from outlaw guerillas. They saw service throughout the mountain areas of Kentucky, Tennessee and Virginia under Major General George Stoneman.⁹⁸

The men of the 55th gave an excellent account of themselves during this arduous service and an official noted their conduct:

*...was all that could have been expected of veterans. Neither danger, long marches, sleepless nights, hunger nor hardships brought forth a complaint and the utmost harmony and good feeling pervaded throughout.*⁹⁹

The 55th spent the remainder of its term in vigorous prosecution of the guerrillas and covered virtually all of the state east of the Kentucky River.

The 53rd experienced the same type of duty, including the difficult service at Saltville, Virginia. Severe frost-bite was common during that campaign and many had to undergo amputation of their arms or legs. The 53rd and 55th were both mustered out of service in September 1865.

The 1864 Saltville campaign consisted of two advances on the rebel stronghold to destroy the valuable salt works located there. One advance was in October; the other in December. Both attacks included large numbers of Kentucky freedmen serving in the 5th and 6th US Colored Cavalry regiments. The rebels contemptuously referred to those black soldiers as "Smoked Yankees."

One of the more effective rebel units in this campaign was the 4th Kentucky Cavalry Regiment. Earlier that year they had been part of Morgan's forces at Cynthiana. It was formed during Smith's and Bragg's invasion of the state, after which they spent a long period of hard service in eastern Tennessee and southwestern Virginia.

Surreptitious recruiting for the 4th had gone one in Northern Kentucky throughout the fall of 1862. Several companies carried many Kenton, Campbell and Boone Countians on their rolls. When first recruited, these Northern Kentuckians had assembled in Owen County where they rode south, picking up additional recruits along the way.

Covington's John Ellis was typical of those serving in the 4th. He was a veteran of fighting in Tennessee where he had been abandoned by his fleeing regiment. He managed to make his way through the lines and joined E Company of the 4th.

Again, Kentuckians would face Kentuckians in battle. This time the result would forever be a blot on the record of the Confederate army. During the October attack, the southerners repulsed the federals, inflicting severe losses on the Union command. After the battle, the rebels murdered every wounded black soldier unfortunate enough to have fallen into their hands! Confederate soldiers roamed the battle site looking for and killing any additional blacks they found!

The federal forces were determined to destroy the salt works and shortly before Christmas launched another attack, during a freezing rain and sleet. The Confederates, under Kentuckian General John C. Breckinridge, had been

reinforced by Basil Duke's troops. The reinforcements were little help for this time the rebel general was completely out-manuevered and a large portion of the salt works was destroyed.

During this campaign, scores of black refugees fled to the Union lines where they were sent to Covington to be quartered in local military installations. The Covington barracks housed approximately 100 such persons – all clamoring to join the army.¹⁰⁰ Frost-bitten troops – black and white – were also sent here for medical treatment.¹⁰¹

During summer and early fall 1863, a large part of the 2nd Ohio Heavy Artillery Regiment was organized at Covington Barracks and attracted many area recruits. This unit left for combat shortly after its formation and served in various engagements throughout Kentucky, Tennessee and western Virginia. It was mustered out on August 29th, 1865.

One of the Civil War's more dramatic chapters was written by Union troops from the Covington Barracks and involved one of the greatest pursuits the conflict would witness. It resulted in the capture of one of the South's most daring cavalry leaders, Brigadier General **John Hunt Morgan**.

Morgan, known as "the Thunderbolt of the Confederacy," launched his fourth invasion of Kentucky on July 2, 1863 when he crossed the Tennessee line with about 2,500 men. It was thought he again planned to attack the central part of the state, and as a result, Lexington and other central Kentucky communities were in near-panic. Many residents, fearing for their lives, promptly fled to the safety of Covington.

One local newsman took note of the flight when he wrote:

*A large number of refugees have arrived in this city during the past twenty-four hours. Every train from Lexington comes in crowded with passengers.*¹⁰²

The rebels began looting and terrorizing as soon as they entered the state. At Lebanon, they robbed many of the Union troops taken prisoner. One victim was a local member of the 20th Kentucky Infantry who had sewn about \$300 in the lining of his newly-purchased hat, only to have the hat taken by one of his captors.

The hat theft was recorded by a Covingtonian who wrote:

*After the surrender of the town, a rebel fancying the glossy appearance of the new hat on the prisoner's head, snatched it off and put it on, placing in its stead his own tattered chapeau. Whether he has yet discovered his prize, we are not informed.*¹⁰³

When the rebels reached Bardstown, Morgan suddenly directed them westward to Brandenburg where they crossed the Ohio River into Indiana. The rebel leader began a string of looting sprees that stretched across that state and on to Ohio. He robbed the county treasurer at Corydon and looted Salem. Historian Henry Howe said of him:

*Horses and food were taken whenever wanted by raiding parties on both sides . . . but no such plundering was known as that of Morgan's raid.*¹⁰⁴

Even Basil Duke, Morgan's brother-in-law, admitted the Confederates' looting and said of their conduct:

*The disposition for wholesale plunder exceeded anything that any of us had ever seen before . . . They did not pillage with any sort of method or reason; it seemed to be a mania, senseless and purposeless.*¹⁰⁵

A large number of the raiders were Kentuckians and such activities reinforced a notion held by many north of the Ohio that Kentucky's secessionists were less than civilized. Even many Copperheads who might have helped them, felt repulsed and some actually shocked into becoming staunch Unionists.¹⁰⁶

The raiders looted and pillaged all along their route of travel. At some places, they took everything they could carry, including furniture, women's clothing and even birdcages, only later to discard the loot while being hotly pursued.

Another Morgan tactic was to demand ransom payments of up to \$1,000 each from property owners. In return, he would promise not to burn the property. At one Indiana town, a minister who dared oppose the rebel, not only saw his home set afire but was shot in both legs!¹⁰⁷

Morgan made use of a tactic later adopted and enlarged upon by General Sherman during his devastating march through Georgia. This was the rebel commander's daily practice of sending out men from each regiment to scour the countryside for five miles on either side of the main body of troops. Every horse in this ten-mile wide corridor was seized and taken to the main column's rear.¹⁰⁸

The Confederates were in full flight by the time they reached the Indiana-Ohio border, being pursued by countless numbers of troops from the regular army, home guards and militia. Civilians harassed them all along their

route and ambushes were commonplace. Impressed civilian guides were frequently forced at gunpoint to lead them and were told they would be killed on the spot if they gave the rebels false information. Still, the rebels were often deceived. Their incursion had long ceased being a raid and was then a disastrous, full-scale flight from relentless pursuers.¹⁰⁹

Local officials were taking no chances. Arrests were stepped up of those suspected of harboring the least amount of southern sympathies. It was felt the town might once again become a target for armed attack. This apprehension spread to the cities of Cincinnati, Covington and Newport again being placed under martial law and as happened during General Heth's threat, all commercial business was ordered closed. Every male citizen between the ages of 18 and 45 was "organized in accordance with the direction of the State and Municipal authorities,"¹¹⁰

Covington councilmen hastily called a special meeting, saying it was the desire of "the city of Covington . . . to co-operate heartily and promptly with the military authorities in all proper measures for the protection of our city." Council members enacted the legislation needed to raise a defense force and designated an official place of enlistment for each of the town's seven wards.¹¹¹

Morgan had no intention of striking at the urban centers but was concentrating all his energy on how best to escape his pursuers. The harried rebel leader decided to make a run about the northern edge of Cincinnati at night but found he had to constantly force his exhausted men to continue their flight. Basil Duke later wrote of the troops' misery:

*It was a terrible, trying march. Strong men fell out of their saddles and at every halt the officers were compelled to move continually about in their respective companies and pull and haul the men, who would drop asleep in the road . . . Quite a number crept off into the fields and slept until they were awakened by the enemy.*¹¹²

The rebel chieftain continued his headlong dash to the east and any possible threat to the local communities vanished as suddenly as it had appeared. As a result, most provisions of the martial law were never put into effect.

As the Confederates retreated across Ohio, many of their horses were ridden to death, often falling dead while the rider was still attempting to drive the animal on. In these cases, the horseless men struggled along until another farm could be raided for more horses. The men were so exhausted from lack of sleep that many of them lashed themselves into the saddle to keep from falling off their mount while asleep.¹¹³

Morgan had disobeyed his superior's orders when he first crossed into Indiana and now that the raid turned into a complete rout, his primary aim became to re-cross the Ohio River at first opportunity and flee southward to safety. The flight continued a grueling experience and offered so little time for rest that Morgan and his officers resorted to physical force frequently to make the men continue.

Yet the rebels continued their destruction of civilian property. One Ohio citizen who witnessed their action at Batavia said:

*Behind Morgan and his men were leveled fences, trampled fields and gutted stores. It was just harvest time. The men rode through oat fields, feeding their horses from the shocks and scattering the carefully bound grain in all directions. Farm houses were despoiled of all their eatables and valuables; havoc reigned supreme, while not far in the rear was the dust and thunder of pursuing cavalry . . . Although almost in the clutches of the Union forces, Morgan's men still kept up their marauding depredations, fine horses, cash, clothing, watches, "boiled" shirts, eatables – everything went!*¹¹⁴

At his Army of the Ohio Headquarters, Major General Ambrose E. Burnside received countless dispatches from the scene of the chase. So many of them contained conflicting reports on the progress being made, that he decided to add another force to the pursuit. He called Major George W. Rue of the Covington Barracks into conference and issued orders for him to pick the healthiest of those convalescent Union patients at Covington for this force. These were combat tested veterans who had been hospitalized for battle fatigue and wounds.

On July 23, 1863, Major Rue, a descendant of one of Kentucky's earliest pioneer families, organized a force of 375 cavalrymen at the Covington Barracks and started northward to Mingo Junction, Ohio where he waited further orders. His hastily formed regiment included three pieces of artillery from the 15th Indiana Battery and men from the 1st, 9th, 11th, and 12th Kentucky Cavalry Regiments plus a group from the 8th Michigan Cavalry Regiment.¹¹⁵

Meanwhile, Morgan was being pressed by Union troops. Of an original force of 2,400, his group was reduced to 700, with more casualties to come. With these men, he effected a near-miraculous escape from entrapment on the banks of the Muskingum River. This only served to make Burnside more determined to catch the wily Confederate.

Major Rue and his Covington detachment, designated the 9th Kentucky Cavalry, were ordered to a spot north of Steubenville where they joined forces under Brigadier General James M. Shackleford. Shackleford, as mentioned, had once been a Colonel in the 8th Kentucky Cavalry. He was promoted to Brigadier General on January 2, 1863.

Despite the fact they joined Shackleford, Major Rue and his men maintained they constituted an independent command operating under direct orders from General Burnside.¹¹⁶

Because the Covingtonians had fresh horses, they were given the lead in the hot pursuit. Their aggressiveness quickly became apparent. The smell of victory steadily grew and on July 26th, a group of civilians at the village of Salinesville happily directed Major Rue to a trail that would help him cut off and entrap Morgan.

The crafty Morgan knew capture by the Covingtonians was imminent and decided it would be to his advantage to find a less stringent local home-militiaman to accept his surrender. He was certain the terms would be far more general than any offered by the old veterans from the Covington Barracks.

As luck would have it, a quasi-captain, James Burbick and a small patrol of local men appeared. To engage this group of half-trained civilians would take time and that was one thing Morgan did not have.

He decided to talk with Burbick under a flag of truce. The conversation was amiable enough and ended in an agreement where Morgan promised to do no harm in Burbick's neighborhood and Burbick in return agreed to guide and escort the Confederates to the state line. This was too good to be true!

Burbick was not and never had been a militia officer in the service of his state. He later admitted:

*I was captain of no militia whatever, or any other force of men, but was appointed that Sunday morning as Captain by the men that went out with me on horseback, there being some 15 or 20 in number.*¹¹⁷

After riding together for a few miles, Morgan saw the clouds of dust being raised by Rue's men. He knew his time had come. Suddenly Morgan turned to Burbick and asked if Burbick would care to accept his surrender. The surprised quasi-captain would only be too happy to do so.

"But," said Morgan, "perhaps you would not give me such terms as I wish."

"General Morgan," replied Burbick, "you might write your own terms and I would grant them."¹¹⁸

These were the words Morgan wanted to hear. He immediately surrendered – and upon Confederate terms! Those terms included provisions that all his men would be paroled and they would keep their horses. The same terms applied to the officers who, in addition, would be allowed to retain their side arms.

Burbick no sooner agreed to all this, than the rebels found themselves confronted by Rue's combat tested veterans, all spoiling for a fight. These were the Covington troops who had forced Morgan into this position.

The rebel tried one more audacious bluff. He would attempt to have Rue surrender to the rebels! Rue's report reads:

*As soon as we reached the main road we wheeled to the left [and] I found we were ahead of Morgan. I knew then I had him . . . Soon afterwards three troopers came riding over the crest of the hill . . . One of the men had a bit of white muslin tied on a saber, or on a ramrod, which he was waving . . . I sent three of my men forward to find out what was wanted. My troopers came back and reported that General Morgan demanded my surrender. I at once recognized that as a John Morgan bluff. I sent word to Morgan that he must surrender or fight...*¹¹⁹

Rue went on to say it was only then that Morgan sent a message saying he had already surrendered to Burbick. Rue continued:

*I then sent word back to Morgan that I recognized no surrender, only one to myself, and informed his men that he must surrender or fight at once. They then went back to report and in a few moments returned with the announcement that Morgan was willing to surrender to me.*¹²⁰

Despite Rue's claim that he operated an independent command, he made a report to General Shackleford and only then dispatched a message to General Burnside. He stated: "I captured John Morgan today at two o'clock PM, taking 336 prisoners, 400 horses and arms."¹²¹

When Morgan's men learned it was a detachment of the 9th Kentucky Cavalry out of Covington who captured them, some were heard to exclaim in amazement: "Damn that regiment, it was everywhere!"¹²²

Most of the rebels taken prisoner during the last several days were placed aboard steamboats such as the *Bertha*, *Starlight* and *Ingomar* and brought down river on the first leg of their journey to prisoner of war camps. When they reached the local area, the craft anchored midstream between Covington and the Ohio shore while arrangements were made to send the captives on their final places of imprisonment.¹²³

Word of the prisoners' presence quickly spread and both banks of the river were soon jammed with throngs of curious spectators. The river itself seemed alive with every conceivable small craft as many paid exorbitant prices to be taken closer to the prisoner-laden steamers. Several local residents who had cast their lot with the Confederacy were among the prisoners including Dr. H. Holt Jones, Ben Collins, Thornton Stephenson and James Price.¹²⁴

After a while, one of the local ferryboats moved alongside the larger craft and began bringing the rebels' sick and wounded to the Covington wharf. From there they were taken to the Seminary Hospital [11th Street –editor] for treatment and care. The remaining captives were taken to the Ohio side where crowds of spectators taunted them with cries of "horse-thieves" and "murderers."¹²⁵

Some confined on the *Bertha*, anchored at the foot of Greenup Street, were required to spend the night aboard the craft. Three of the prisoners viewed this as an opportune time to escape and jumped overboard under cover of darkness. Their attempt proved futile, as one drowned and the other two were taken into custody as soon as they reached shore.¹²⁶

News of the capture was cause for rejoicing in communities throughout the Ohio Valley and prompted George D. Prentice of the *Louisville Journal* to recall Morgan's renowned penchant for seizing horses. Prentice suggested with tongue-in-cheek, that a one-gun salute be fired before every stable door in the land.¹²⁷

After Morgan's capture, a rumor spread throughout Ohio that 5,000 Morgan horses were interned at Covington's army stables. The rumor was false but nevertheless, hundreds of Ohioans visited Covington daily in hopes they could identify stolen horses.¹²⁸

Except for a few who managed to slip away unnoticed, most prisoners taken that day at Salinesville were interned at various prisoner-of-war camps in Indiana and Ohio but principally Camp Douglas. One of those who managed escape was Covington's John T. Boswell. He was later killed in Tennessee.

Morgan and 70 of his officers, including his personal staff, were sent to the Ohio State Penitentiary at Columbus rather than a conventional prison camp. This was done in retaliation for a similar prison sentence meted out to the Union's colonel Straight the preceding April for a similar raid through parts of Alabama and Georgia.¹²⁹

Morgan's stay in prison was short for the following November the area was shocked by news of his escape – an escape which Major Rue always insisted was made possible by a mysterious woman in Covington who allegedly spent \$30,000 for bribes and other expenses connected with the escape.¹³⁰ This was confirmed when one of Morgan's fellow escapees, Captain Thomas H. Hines, later admitted his sister financed the prison break by sending the money. He said it was delivered to the prison concealed in the binding of a book.¹³¹

Hines related the escape was times so he and Morgan would be able to board a south-bound passenger train that left Columbus at 1:15 AM on November 28th. When they reached Cincinnati, he said, they jumped from the still-moving train at a point near the Ludlow ferry landing.¹³²

Captain Hines continued his account by saying:

Going directly to the ferry we were crossed over in a skiff and landed in front of the residence of Mrs. Ludlow. We rang the bell, a servant came, and General Morgan wrote upon a visiting card, "General Morgan and Captain Hines, escaped." We were warmly received, took a cup of coffee with the family, were furnished a guide and walked some three miles in the country, where we were furnished horses. Thence we went . . . to Union, in Boone County, Kentucky, where we took supper with Daniel Piatt . . . That night we went to Mr. Corbin's, near Union . . . where we remained concealed until the next night and where friends supplied us with good, fresh horses and a pair of pistol each.¹³³

The two escapees acquired a volunteer guide and on the night of the 29th, quietly slipped out of Union to resume their southbound journey.¹³⁴

During all this, local authorities kept a sharp, but ineffective, lookout for Morgan and his companion. Their presence in the area was suspected as soon as their arrival and, according to one newsman, they narrowly escaped recapture while at the Ludlow home.

The newsman wrote:

*We are informed by an intelligent gentleman of Covington that on Saturday morning at about 8 o'clock, two men appeared on the Ohio side of the Ludlow ferry . . . A skiff was being used and the two men stepped in, desiring to be rowed over at once. The boy in charge of the boat wished to wait a few moments for a load, telling them that more would soon be along to go over. One of the strangers asked how much a full load would be worth and was told one dollar, whereupon the men gave the boy two dollars and he struck his oars rapidly into the water for their benefit. Arrived on the Kentucky side they passed hastily up the hill and stopped at the house of Mrs. Ludlow. Our informant says they did not appear to be in military dress and it is stated from Columbus that Morgan and his men wore citizen's clothes. The escaped raiders are supposed to have taken the 2 o'clock train from Columbus, due here at 7:25 AM and it is almost a certainty that these two men of the Ludlow ferry are of that party. Subsequently four men appeared at Mrs. Ludlow's in search of deserters, suspecting these men may have been such, but their search was fruitless.*¹³⁵

Numerous accounts of Morgan's return to Kentucky were given during the next several years by local citizens who claimed to have first-hand knowledge of the event. One, recalling the episode, said:

*Mrs. Ludlow was a woman of strong secession sympathies and Morgan, in some manner, became acquainted with the fact. Upon his arrival with a companion on the Ohio bank of the river, they were ferried across to Ludlow by boatman Sam Worley. The fugitive slipped over to Mrs. Ludlow's house and were taken in and sheltered.*¹³⁶

*Some eight hours later Mrs. Ludlow harnessed up her pair of black horses to the family carriage and spirited Morgan back into the county as far as Anderson's where other friends took him in charge.*¹³⁷

Several years later, another resident said of Morgan and the Ludlow family:

*He landed at a point not far from the Cincinnati Southern Railroad Bridge and made his way to the home of Israel Ludlow, after whom the town was named, Ludlow and Morgan were great friends and Morgan was received with true Kentucky hospitality.*¹³⁸

That was 1900 and the individual went on to note:

*The spot where Morgan stayed is still pointed out to the visitors by the old inhabitants of the town. The house unfortunately was destroyed by fire several years ago.*¹³⁹

The Ludlow home was erected by Thomas Carneal in 1823 for the use of one of his overseers. When Israel Ludlow acquired the land three years later, he decided to make the home his chief residence.¹⁴⁰ The fire, which occurred about 1883, left little of the house still standing.¹⁴¹ What remained of the burned-out structure was eventually repaired and rebuilt but after another period as a residence, was abandoned and left vacant.

The home faced the Ohio River just east of today's Southern Railroad Bridge and, during its years of vacancy, often suffered ravages of floods and frequently was a target of vandals. Finally, the old homestead was razed in the 1930s, the used material saved and used in expanding and remodeling a home at 411 Hooper Street in Ludlow.

Why Hines and Morgan chose to seek aid from the Ludlows has been erroneously attributed to what some writers assumed was the family's pro-southern sentiments. This is patently false. Captain Hines, who planned the prison escape, was distantly related to the Ludlows through marriage and it was this kinship which he hoped would elicit their sympathy and aid.

The Ludlows were well-known for their entertaining of Union troops but now, just as Captain Hines had hoped, family loyalties compelled them to help him and his noted companion.

Virtually all who were familiar with Morgan's visit to the Ludlows took note of the extreme risks involved entering the state at that point. The Ludlow home, one observer remarked, occupied a conspicuous location in a neighborhood that served as "a great rendezvous for Union soldiers."¹⁴²

Traveling through any part of the region about Ludlow posed a high risk for the two rebels, as the entire countryside was dotted with homes of Irish immigrants who were intensely loyal to the Union. It was thought wise to make frequent stops along their route out of that community. This was done to determine if it was safe or proceed or go into temporary hiding.

One of the pair's many stops was made at the Robinson Thomas home, the father of several girls. Many years later, one of these daughters recalled the event:

Yes, General Morgan and Captain Hines jumped from the train a little above the Ludlow Ferry . . . and went to the Ludlow home . . . Will Ludlow came up to notify us that it would be unsafe for the fugitives to remain over night . . . and that they were coming to our house, which was in a more retired place, about one half mile back of the present town of Ludlow, Kentucky.

I shall always remember when General Morgan and Captain Hines stepped upon the porch. We girls fairly carried them into the house.^{143 144}

*"Is this a reality and not a dream" Am I standing in the presence of the brave and distinguished General Morgan," I inquired.*¹⁴⁵

*"Yes," replied the hero, smiling.*¹⁴⁶ *"I am determined never to be taken alive again."*¹⁴⁷

At that point, one of the Thomas sisters asked the General for a lock of his hair. "Cut it if you can find any, for you know they have shaved my hair," he replied.¹⁴⁸

*We cut just a few strands.*¹⁴⁹

Thomas' daughter implied Captain Hines erred when he indicated the rebel leaders spent only one night in the local area, for she continued by saying:

*It was late at night before we retired and I do not think any of us slept soundly. Bright and early, after a hasty breakfast for Mr. Tupman who lived several miles beyond, where they were to take fresh horses and proceed on their way.*¹⁵⁰

On one occasion, a local individual thought he recognized General Morgan walking the streets of Covington. The citizen grabbed the suspect and began shouting he had seized Morgan. A large, unruly crowd quickly gathered, and despite the victim's protestations he was a visiting farmer from Indiana, began shouting: "Hang him! Kill the dirty traitor!" The bewildered farmer continued protesting his innocence, saying he was registered at the Elliston House and could prove his identity if given the chance.

Finally members of the enraged crowd rudely shoved the man in the hotel's direction, claiming they would hang him on the spot if what he said was not true. Happily, seven responsible individuals at the hotel vouched for the visitor and remonstrated the mob. The next day, not one citizen could be found who would admit having participated in that mob.

Even though Morgan eventually returned to a military life, any real usefulness he might have been to the Confederacy was at an end. His reckless adventure was conducted in direct defiance of his superior's orders not to cross the Ohio. The raid accomplished little of value and is viewed as a serious military blunder. It cost the South 2,400 sorely needed men and brought widespread criticism upon Morgan as a commander. After one more such disastrous raid in 1864, into Kentucky, the Confederacy relieved him of command and issued an order for his court-martial.¹⁵¹

Although Covington had long been safe from enemy invasion and was no longer in the forefront of the war news, its name continued to be heard across the nation – this time as a fighting vessel on western and southern rivers.

General Grant, with other Union military leaders, had known no lasting impression could be made upon the western rebels until a firm foothold was gained in Kentucky and Tennessee and until the Mississippi River was wrested from Southern control. This couldn't be done by the army alone. It was obvious conventional riverboats were not capable of resisting fire from land based artillery.

Even though the effectiveness of ocean-going iron-clads was proven, the question remained whether such armored boats could navigate inland rivers and if so, could they compete with the heavy guns of close-up fortifications.

The answers came in part during Grant's drive up the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers. Soon such vessels were found on virtually all western rivers. Much of their iron plating, it should be mentioned, was produced in Newport's prospering rolling mills [see: *Northern Kentucky Heritage*, XVIII, #2, "Newport Steel Mill: a Long History of Manufacture" – editor]

One segment of the Union's new armored navy was the tough, scrappy river fleet known for speed and light armor. These were officially termed light-drafts, but commonly called "tin-clads." The *Covington*, a 16-inch gunboat was such a vessel.

The *Covington*, with a sister boat the *Queen City*, had originally seen service as Covington ferryboats but were acquired by the navy in 1863 and assigned new roles. On February 16th that year, Joseph P. Sanford, Ordinance Officer of the U.S. Navy's Mississippi Squadron, sent the following report to Commander A.M. Pennock, Fleet Captain and Commandant at Cairo, Illinois:

Sir: I would report that I purchased the steam side-wheel ferryboats Covington No. 2 and Queen City No. 3 at Cincinnati of Samuel Wiggins, esq., for \$19,000 and \$16,000 respectively.

The boats are well adapted for altering into light-draft gunboats, are strong, sound and swift and will probably not draw more than 36 inches when fully prepared for service.

I would recommend that the battery of each should be two 30-pounder Parrotts forward, four 24-pounder Howitzers (broadside) and one 50-pounder Dahlgren (a stern).

Mr. Joseph Brown not being in Cincinnati when I left, I cannot say whether he will accept the contract of altering these vessels at the same rate as the stern-wheel boats.

If he does not, I would suggest that Mr. Morton be given the contract. He has great facilities and is in every way responsible.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. P. Sanford

*Ordinance Officer, Mississippi Squadron*¹⁵²

The two craft were sailed to Cairo to be remodeled and outfitted for the dangerous tasks that lay ahead. It was their duty to operate not only on the larger rivers but also on the vast amount of shallow waters where larger boats could not venture.

The *Covington* and her sister tin-clads were destined to perform a vital job of protecting federal communications on all inland waters as they answered the need for light, shallow-draft, speedy gunboats. Their armor averaged about one-quarter inch iron plating as opposed to the more cumbersome iron-clads which might have as much as 2 ½ inches of iron backed by 20 inches of oak timber. These craft had just enough plating to protect the machinery and crew from small-arms fire.

Service aboard these small craft, like that on the Patrol-Torpedo Craft (P-T Boats) of World War II, was among the most hazardous the navy had to offer.

The two local craft carried considerable fire-power when completely outfitted. The 224-ton *Covington* mounted two 50-pounder Dahlgren rifles, four 24-pounder Howitzers, two 30-pounder Parrott rifles, plus a 12-pounder Howitzer that was added at a later date. She carried a crew of 76.¹⁵³

The *Queen City*, a 212-ton vessel, was manned by a crew of 65 and carried four 32-pounders, four 24-pounders and one 12-pounder.

There was such a need for these light-craft vessels, that by the end of 1862, twenty-two had been added to the river navy. In 1863, another 26 were added. The tin-clads proved to be crucial in the war for the West as they helped slice the Confederacy in half and aided in denying the rebel eastern command much-needed troops and food supply from the trans-Mississippi country. Such tin-clads drew so little water that Rear Admiral David D. Porter remarked: "They could run on a heavy dew!"

On one occasion, the *Covington* served as part of a force that made its way up the Tennessee River beyond Fort Henry and as far as Florence and Tuscumbia, Alabama. Its mission was to engage and disperse a rebel concentration. The *Covington* and her sister ships did well on that mission. That was April and May, 1863 and was followed by numerous operations on stretches of the Ohio, Tennessee, Mississippi and Cumberland Rivers, in which varying degrees of damage was inflicted on the rebels.¹⁵⁴

On June 19th, that same year, Admiral Porter issued a general order that each tin-clad would be assigned a number to be painted in black on the forward part and sides of the pilot house. The *Covington* was assigned number 25; the *Queen City*, number 26.

General Grant was then moving against Vicksburg and the *Covington* took part in a series of river ambushes, skirmishes and other gunboat retaliations in support of his movements. She saw heavy action on the Mississippi and was singled out for Admiral Porter's praise for her part in the Vicksburg operation and the opening of the Mississippi for the Union. Among the prizes captured by the *Covington* was the steamer *Eureka* with a full load of whisky. Two days later, Vicksburg surrendered.¹⁵⁵

The *Queen City* was also giving a good account of herself and also won high praise for performance in the Vicksburg Campaign.

During this time, the Confederate raider, **John Hunt Morgan** again invaded Kentucky, and on July 8th, crossed the Ohio into Indiana. Rumor spread he would attempt to make his return to Kentucky by re-crossing the river somewhere in the vicinity of Trimble and Carroll Counties.¹⁵⁶

Indiana Governor Oliver P. Morton rushed off a request for a patrol of gunboats to be set up along the southern Indiana border to prevent the rebel's escape in that direction. In response, a number of craft, including the *Queen City*, hurried back to the Ohio and established a blockade along that stretch of the river.¹⁵⁷

In June 1864, the *Queen City* was assigned patrol duty on a section of Arkansas' White River. During the time of this assignment, she destroyed much southern war material and took several prisoners.¹⁵⁸

The *Queen City's* good fortune ran out on June 24th. About 4:00 AM, a surprise attack by Confederate artillery and two regiments of cavalry caught her while she was tied up at shore.¹⁵⁹

The crew of the little vessel put up an heroic struggle for about 20 minutes during which their ship was completely riddled with rifle shot and took one direct artillery hit after another. It became apparent the career of the *Queen City* was ending.¹⁶⁰

Once the decision to surrender was made, the commanding officer told crew members they could choose between becoming prisoners of the rebels or jump overboard to try to escape. Most chose the latter, and were successful in their bid for freedom. What few were taken prisoner were robbed of all cash before being led to a place of confinement.¹⁶¹

The Confederates, under Brigadier General Joseph O. Shelby swarmed over the wrecked vessel, stripping her of supplies, ammunition, small arms and two of its nine cannon. The *Queen City* was then burned and sunk.¹⁶²

Other local craft acquired for the river fleet included vessels such as *Champion No. 3*, *Champion No. 4*, *Champion No. 5*, *Champion No. 6* and the *Little Champion*.¹⁶³

The *No. 4*, like the *Covington* and *Queen City*, had previously served as a ferryboat. The two-engine side-wheeler, measuring 150 feet in length with a 30-foot beam, was preparing to take a tow of coal to Nashville when it was offered to the navy for the bargain price of \$16,000.¹⁶⁴

The navy quickly bought the two-year-old craft, outfitted it as a gunboat and renamed it *Champion No. 24*.¹⁶⁵ The *No. 24* quickly compiled a distinguished record, including the capture of the Confederate vessel *Volunteer*.¹⁶⁶ In early May 1863, it led a raiding expedition of five war craft on the Tennessee River. The craft carried several companies of cavalry and infantry which added to their effectiveness by making several raids ashore.¹⁶⁷

On another occasion, while convoying a body of troops, the *No. 24* was fired upon by 500 guerillas. The craft came to a complete halt and drove off the attackers with withering fire.¹⁶⁸

The *Champion No. 3* began its war service considerably earlier than the *No. 24* and took part in action at Fort Pillow in May 1862.¹⁶⁹

In December that year, the *No. 3* served as a commissar boat for the XIII Army Corps' expedition up the Yazoo River, taking part in operations against numerous river-shore guerilla camps. By the following month, it was operating on the White River and then took part in the offence against Vicksburg.¹⁷⁰

The *No. 3* served in many capacities during its naval career. Used not only as a gunboat, it also served as a tugboat and an armed transport. It frequently hauled coal, ammunition, provisions and even cattle in and about the war zones as well as transporting army and marine troops into battle.¹⁷¹

For a brief period, after Vicksburg fell, the *Covington* was the only vessel cruising between that city and Memphis and managed to inflict severe damage on rebel bands at various localities between those two points. Then it took a major prize when it captured the transport *Gillum*.¹⁷²

Later, the *Covington* was assigned to the ill-fated Red River expedition in Louisiana. Major General Nathaniel P. Banks commanded that 1864 campaign and wanted to drive across Louisiana into Texas for two reasons: (1) the available cotton crop and (2) the belief that if he reached Texas and the Rio Grande, it would discourage the French in Mexico from continuing their open violation of the Monroe Doctrine.

The imposing Red River armada counted several other of the locally-acquired craft among its fleet and easily penetrated the very heart of Louisiana. On March 18th, Alexandria was captured without bloodshed, after which the force continued toward Shreveport at the head of steamboat navigation.

The Confederates managed to rally their forces and began to inflict serious losses on General Bank's land forces. The river level also began to drop dangerously low, forcing a decision to move the fleet back downstream. During this time of dropping water level, the large ironclad *Eastport* struck a mine and became grounded. Admiral Porter ordered several craft, including *Champion No. 3* and *No. 5* to leave Alexandria and attempt to refloat the damaged vessel. Both *Champions* acted as pump boats and carried out duties as gunboats and transports.¹⁷³ The *No. 3* was carrying nearly 200 Negro men, women and children – all contraband from nearby plantations.¹⁷⁴

Efforts to save the *Eastport* proved futile so the ponderous war craft was scuttled and the salvage vessels returned to Alexandria. Meanwhile, the Confederates set up powerful artillery batteries near the junction of the Red and Cane Rivers. There, they planned to attack the returning craft.¹⁷⁵

The rebels began a furious cannonade as soon as the vessels came into range. One of their first shots struck the boilers of *Champion No. 3* causing it to explode and sinking the craft. The boat's captain and three engineers were scalded to death by hot steam and water spewing from the ruptured boiler, as were all the Negro contraband.¹⁷⁶

Later, an official Confederate report said of this incident:

*The transport **Champion No. 3** was struck in the boiler by a solid shot and was enveloped in hot steam and water. This transport was loaded with near 200 negroes, consisting of men, women and children taken from the plantations above, and most recklessly and cruelly attempted, under the convoy of gunboats and under actual fire, to be run through the lines of our army.*

*The 12-pound gun solid shot which struck the boiler of the transport was probably the most fatal single shot fired during the war, producing the death of 187 human beings, over one-half instantaneously and the remainder within 24 hours. All on board, except three, perished by the most frightful of deaths and the steamer fell into our hands.*¹⁷⁷

The other local vessel in this engagement, the *Champion No. 5*, was attempting to tow the disabled *Juliet* through the murderous fire when it too, was hit by a shell.¹⁷⁸ A report later filed by the *Juliet's* commander charged that, when the *No. 5* was struck, it probably

*commenced backing and backed into our bow, carrying away our bits, guards, housing, jackstaff and everything forward. When in this position, our steam pipe and tiller ropes were shot away and the decks were filled with steam. As soon as it passed off and I was able to look around me, I found the **Champion No.5** had turned up head upstream, that her pilot and captain, had abandoned her pilot house, that an attempt was made to cast us adrift and that we were drifting down under the batteries of the enemy, who were pouring a constant fire into us.*

*One of my pilots, Mr. Maitland, having had our wheel shot out of his hands, jumped on board **Champion No.5** and took charge of her wheel. We finally succeeded in getting a line fast to the **Champion** who towed us up river out of the range of the batteries.*¹⁷⁹

The crafts were repaired overnight and returned to attack the batteries the next day. This time, shell fire completely disabled the *No 5* when moved to the opposite shore. There, its crew managed to escape the furiously burning and sinking vessel.¹⁸⁰

Pilot William Maitland of the *Juliet's* crew, later said of the loss of the *No. 5*:

*On the morning of the 27th of April I volunteered my service to pilot the steamer **Champion No.5** by the rebel batteries . . . When nearly opposite the batteries a shell entered the pilot house of my boat which wounded me in both*

*legs causing me to drop on my knees depriving me from working the wheel. The boat then ran into the bank of the river on the same side with the batteries. Another shell struck her at this time, which wounded me in six other places and still another which cut away the bell rope and speaking trumpet. Recovering sufficiently from my wounds I rang the starboard bell and had the boat backed across the river to the opposite side from the enemy. I then left the pilot house and jumped overboard and swam ashore, the enemy keeping up a heavy fire upon the boat until she sank, which was in about a half-hour afterwards. She now lay with her head upstream, her hurricane deck on the port side under water.*¹⁸¹

The *No. 5*, which had been acquired from Vincent Shinkle, was later raised by the Confederates, renamed the *New Champion*, and put into rebel service. Its Confederate service was of limited duration however, for it was later recaptured while at Shreveport.¹⁸²

Meanwhile, Union troops dealt the rebels what could have been a disastrous loss when they scored a brilliant victory at Pleasant Hill. The inept General Banks though, threw away the victory by ordering a full-scale retreat. This was done over protests of his subordinate generals, of whom at least one tried to have him removed for incompetence.¹⁸³

The big concern was not so much Banks' military incompetency but the safety of the river fleet. A large part of the squadron was operating between Alexandria and Shreveport and because of Banks' panicky retreat, was woefully short of shore troops to protect it. The *Covington*, under command of Acting Volunteer Lieutenant George P. Lord, was part of that flotilla.

The river fleet's difficulties were compounded when Alexandria Falls, which is a mile-long series of rapids over which the craft would have to retreat, was found to have only a little more than three feet of water in its narrow channel. The heaviest boats required at least 7 feet.

It was the lowest the river had been in 20 years! The water churned and boiled over and around protruding rocks and boulders and for a time it seemed the fleet would be helplessly grounded in the rapidly falling water. All appeared lost until Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Bailey, an engineer with the XIX Corps, proposed felling neighboring trees and building a dam. It was thought this would back the water sufficiently to raise its level a minimum of four feet to allow the heavy boats to barely pass.

The 19th Kentucky, veterans of the siege of Vicksburg, was one of several regiments called upon to help build the dam. Trees were cut, fleet forges made the necessary heavy nails and bolts and in a surprisingly short time, a dam stretched some 600 feet across the shallow stream.

Colonel Bailey's plan worked so well that he was later promoted to brigadier general in recognition of a success of truly heroic proportions and a brilliant piece of engineering. He became one of only 15 army officers during the entire war voted the Thanks of Congress.¹⁸⁴

Two of the busiest boats during the eight days of the dam's construction were the *Covington* and her sister ship, the *Signal*. They served as convoys for transports, brought up barges for use in building the dam and shelled detachments of rebel forces.

The narrow river was so low the boats had difficulty rounding some points without backing and filling repeatedly until they could eventually clear the turn. The rebels took advantage of this and mounted artillery on high bluffs at such points and waited until a boat reached a position where its guns could not be sufficiently elevated to return fire.

The rebels then commenced firing and kept it up until the craft managed to back off far enough to allow the guns to be raised enough to return fire. Then the Southerners would break off the engagement and move to another location further along the boat's route.

Such was the position in which the *Covington* and *Signal* found themselves while escorting the side wheeler transport *John Warner*. The transport was loaded with 400 soldiers of the 56th Ohio Volunteer Infantry who were on their way home for a 30 day furlough granted after re-enlisting.

The transport and the *Covington* left Alexandria on May 4th, and were later joined by the *Signal*. At 4:45 in the morning, the *Warner* became the target of artillery and rifle fire as it rounded the point opposite Dunn's Bayou. The heavy bombardment was the culmination of a full night of exchanging irregular fire with rebel forces.¹⁸⁵

The *Covington* and *Signal* immediately rounded and opened the fight, a fight which proved to be epic in river warfare. The *Warner's* rudders soon became disabled and it ran aground. Confederate artillery and dismounted cavalry had a field day pouring continuous fire into the crowded transport, whose decks quickly resembled a slaughter pen.

The boats returned volley after volley, even though heavy enemy fire had perforated both vessels' boilers and cut their steam pipes. Because the river's banks were steep and high at this location, the boats found it difficult to sufficiently elevate their guns for the most effective return.¹⁸⁶

The unequal contest continued for three hours with neither gunboat showing signs of giving in. The *Warner* was receiving an unusually heavy hail of fire and was forced to strike her flag. The *Covington's* commander quickly sent a party to burn the transport but they discovered the *Warner's* decks completely covered with dead and dying soldiers. They decided it was impossible to carry out their mission.¹⁸⁷

A short time later, the *Signal* became completely disabled. The *Covington's* crew never hesitated, but immediately took their sister ship in tow and tried to get it to safety. At that point however, the *Covington's* rudders suffered the same fate at those of the *Warner*. The tow line was cut and the *Covington* drifted ashore on the opposite bank from the Confederates. There it was made fast.¹⁸⁸

It would have been understandable if the officers and crew decided to scuttle their boat and retreat across land to safety. Such was not the case however, as they continued to keep up the struggle. For about two more hours, the *Covington* continued firing her fore, aft and port broadside guns into rebel lines. Finally, the ammunition was exhausted, making her exposed and helpless condition untenable. Her steam escape pipe was cut, the rudder shot completely away, her wheel shattered, the pilot house demolished and many of the crew slain. Only then, Lieutenant Lord ordered the remainder of the crew ashore, the guns spiked and the shell and bullet-riddled boat set afire.¹⁸⁹

Lieutenant Lord said in his official battle report:

*The whole action lasted about five hours, and the **Covington** was badly riddled from stem to stern, there being no less than five shots in her hull and some 40 or 50 in her upper works.*¹⁹⁰

*Thirty-two survivors of the original crew of 76 officers and enlisted men escaped through the woods as a loud explosion rocked the **Covington**. The craft then burned to the waterline.*¹⁹¹

A Confederate brigade officer at the scene, later boasted:

*I had the pleasure of seeing the smoke issuing from the **Covington** and she was soon wrapped in flames, her crew escaping to the opposite side of the river under hot fire from our Enfields. . . The fire having reached the guns and shells of the **Covington**, they kept up a continuous roar. . . None of the crew was captured.*¹⁹²

The *Signal's* commander had so many seriously wounded aboard that such a course of action as that taken by Lieutenant Lord was out of the question for him. Instead, he gave permission to all who wished to try to escape to do so, while he remained with his vessel to be taken prisoner when it fell into rebel hands. The Confederates promptly stripped the captured *Signal* of her guns, and sank her.¹⁹³

Perry Wilkes, the *Signal's* pilot was later awarded the Medal of Honor for his performance during the engagement.¹⁹⁴

Admiral Porter expressed his sorrow for those taken prisoner, saying the Confederates "have been very merciless to some of the prisoners they have taken, and committed outrages at which humanity shudders."¹⁹⁵

The *Warner* suffered the same fate as the *Signal* and about 150 of the men ended up in Confederate prisons. Of those who survived the battle and escaped, a number pierced the enemy line and returned to Alexandria while still others managed to join with Union troops further downstream.

Admiral Porter later paid tribute to the two tin-clads when he wrote:

*The brave men in their light vessels, only musket-proof, defended them for four or five hours and many of the actions heralded to the world during the late war were much less worthy of notice than this contest between two little gun-boats and 20 pieces of artillery...*¹⁹⁶

Even more accolades came from Secretary of the Navy, Gideon Welles. He offered official congratulations on behalf of the Navy for the squadron's safe passage through the falls and closed by saying:

*While regretting the loss of the steamer **Signal** and **Covington** and lamenting for the brave men who fell in the engagement with the enemy, the Department takes great pleasure in expressing its admiration of the gallant manner in which those vessels were defended and has reason to believe that the officers and men did their whole duty nobly and faithfully.*¹⁹⁷

In addition to the *Covington* and the *Signal No.9*, other navy craft lost during the disastrous Red River campaign were the transports *Champion No.3* and *Champion No.5* as well as the ironclad *Eastport* and another ironclad, the *Cricket (No.36)*. The army lost its hospital boat *Woodford* and its transports *Emma*, *City Belle* and *John Warner*.

Among the prisoners taken on the *Warner* was Covington's Benjamin Roberts, a captain in Company A of the 56th Ohio. He, along with many other Union prisoners, was taken to Camp Ford at Tyler, Texas. While there, Roberts and a companion managed to persuade a friendly guard to allow them to escape.¹⁹⁸

As soon as the other guards discovered the escape, a pack of bloodhounds was set in pursuit. Roberts and his companion had foreseen this and waded along a water course for a considerable distance, effectively eluding the hounds. They also managed to secure rebel uniforms and successfully posed as Confederate soldiers returning to their regiment in Arkansas.¹⁹⁹

Strangely enough, one of the escapees' closest brushes with death came as they approached a unit of federal troops near Little Rock. The troopers just had undergone a partisan "bushwack" attack and now the sight of two gray uniforms did nothing to lessen their suspicions of the two strangers' claim of being federal soldiers in disguise. The bitterest of the troopers were demanding the two be hanged as "bushwackers" when Captain Roberts' companion was fortunately recognized by a few old friends with whom he had previously served.²⁰⁰

General Banks, who was in overall command of the Red River venture, was a politician and former governor of Massachusetts. He possessed no military experience and had secured the company of a reluctant Admiral Porter and the powerful fleet of gunboats only because of orders from higher authority than Porter.

After Banks' fiasco ended, the surviving troops and boats returned to the Mississippi, which they managed to reach May 21st. Part of the troops were sent to General Sherman's command and the remainder assigned to Northern Kentucky's General Edward Richard Sprigg Canby, who at that time had command of all federal forces west of the Mississippi.²⁰¹ Banks resigned his commission and returned to politics.

Meanwhile on May 26th, another Covington vessel, the *Little Champion*, arrived at the Red River. This was five days after the original fleet left that stream, so immediately the *Little Champion* was ordered back to a more secure area. Nevertheless, it managed to bring out a barge containing 210 bales of cotton, one empty barge and a gun float carrying six guns.²⁰²

The *Little Champion* had been in naval service for only two weeks, having been chartered from Amos and Vincent Shinkle on May 11th. The two Shinkles were paid \$165 a day for its services, \$15 less than the daily rate they were receiving for their *Champion No.6*.²⁰³

A short while after the Red River debacle, **John Hunt Morgan** again led a raid into Kentucky. It culminated with another attack on Cynthiana in June 1864 and once again the rebel cavalry leader met defeat.

Cynthiana received advance word of the rebels' approach and, except for a few of the strongest of southern sympathizers, the town was quickly emptied of its loyal inhabitants who gathered their valuables and fled north to Covington and other parts of safety. They had experienced a Morgan raid once before and had no desire to experience another.²⁰⁴

Morgan led this particular raid from the mountains of Virginia for the ostensible purpose of gathering horses for his troops, many of whom were without mounts.

Despite the appeal Morgan's raids held for southern newspapers, many of the South's military leaders expressed grave misgivings over his move. General Bragg was so pessimistic about the raider's prospects that he fired off a report to the Confederate government saying:

*The accounts so far do not indicate any satisfactory results of the movements into Kentucky by General Morgan. Should he ever return with his command it will as usual be disorganized or unfit for service until again armed, equipped and disciplined. The large number of prisoners we always lose by these raiding expeditions has been the source of great evil.*²⁰⁵

Once the 2700-man force got underway, it became apparent Morgan had lost much of what little control he once exercised over members of his command. The raid quickly turned into one of wanton looting, robbery and arson.

Many Civil War historians claim the rebel chieftain had by then lost all realistic views of the war and was obsessed only with the idea of building a reputation for himself as a "bold raider." The crimes committed on this, his last raid into Kentucky, like those committed by outlaw guerillas, would not be a credit to the rebel cause. The name of Morgan would become so tarnished in some quarters to later prompt his brother-in-law Basil Duke, to write the highly biased "Story of Morgan's Cavalry" in an admitted effort to enhance the chieftain's image in the eyes of posterity.

Duke filled his book with erroneous and highly inflated figures for the numerical strength of units opposing Morgan's marches as well as for the number of casualties inflicted and prisoners taken by the raiders. Furthermore, serious military historians recognize the strongly opinionated accounts of battles and skirmishes as often being incomplete and, in some cases, filled with serious inaccuracies.

Many writers of popular histories, as well as scores of Morgan's later biographers, have all too often accepted the volume's gross inaccuracies and misinformation and repeated them as facts, thus adding to the confusion surrounding Morgan's operations. Yet, Duke's book is valuable to the researcher because it gives incidents, biased though they are, of Morgan's career and of army service in the Confederate cavalry.

On this raid, Morgan's men attacked passenger trains, robbed innocent passengers, looted their luggage and burned the coaches. The town of Mount Sterling was plundered and the local Farmers' Bank robbed of more than \$70,000.

At Lexington, every horse that could be found was taken, including many from Henry Clay's estate. In addition, stores were looted for supplies and another bank robbed.²⁰⁶ The rebels then made a thrust for Frankfort but were thwarted in that by a body of federal troops. The marauders engaged in a drunken looting spree in Georgetown, after which they rode in the direction of Cynthiana.²⁰⁷

Meanwhile, Covington abounded with rumors, some true, some partly true and others completely false. One was set off just after Morgan crossed the Kentucky-Virginia line to become involved in a series of minor skirmishes. A Covington correspondent for an Ohio newspaper reported Morgan's noted telegraph operator was among a group of prisoners brought to Covington.

The correspondent wrote:

*Nineteen rebel prisoners, captured by our forces . . . passed through this city yesterday . . . Among the number [is] Morgan's telegraph operator . . . Ellison Burgy.*²⁰⁸

Not only was the ungrammatical report wrong about the telegraph operator being captured, but was wrong about the operator's identity. Morgan's communications expert was George S. Ellsworth and he managed to survive the raid as far as Cynthiana where he finally became a prisoner of war, but for a brief time.²⁰⁹

On June 9th, the 168th and 171st Ohio National Guard Regiments entrained at Covington for Cynthiana's defense. A small detachment of the 168th left the train at Falmouth, while the remainder of the two regiments went on to occupy Cynthiana.

On the morning of the 11th, Morgan's veteran raiders marched into the Harrison county seat and proceeded to burn a large part of it to the ground. This occurred during a minor skirmish and, like Duke's burning of Augusta, was done on the pretext that the town's defenders had been taking refuge in the now-burned-out buildings. Many of Morgan's own followers were shocked at this callous action and declared the burning to be entirely unwarranted.²¹⁰

Only after Cynthiana was put to the torch did the chief fighting in the town's behalf get underway. Morgan's veteran raiders managed to entrap and force the surrender of the two national guard units, both of which were composed of patriotic but inexperienced 100-day volunteers.

The neophyte guardsmen gave a good account of themselves and held off the superior force for five hours before finally capitulating. Thirteen men of the 171st were killed in the battle and 54 wounded, while the 168th lost seven dead and 18 wounded.

The rebels were not to enjoy their victory for long. Early next morning an experienced federal force under General Burbridge completely routed them after about an hour of hard fighting. Morgan lost 300 dead and nearly that number wounded, many of them were abandoned by their fleeing comrades. In addition almost 400 others were taken prisoner and more than 1,000 horses re-captured.²¹¹

Meanwhile, a wounded Brigadier General Edward H. Hobson and seven other Union officers, all of whom had been taken prisoner the previous day, were being escorted under a flag of truce to Covington by an armed Confederate guard of three officers and one private. The journey's object was outlined in a parole agreement the seven had been induced to sign whereby they agreed to travel to Covington and attempt an exchange of themselves for Confederate officers of equal rank being held by Union forces

When the group reached Falmouth however, its members were set upon by a detachment of federals who liberated the Union prisoners and made prisoners of the Confederate escort. A legal question now arose of whether or not Hobson and his seven companions were to be considered under parole. Hobson submitted the question to General Burbridge and in answer was told no one could be considered Morgan's prisoner other than those the rebel leader might have been able to take with him on his retreat. Hobson and the other officers were directed to report for duty.

Morgan, needless to say, managed to escape capture and, like the remnants of his badly-defeated and scattered troops, fled back to Virginia. There he faced the strong censure of many of his own officers and was suspended from his position of command. He would never enter Kentucky again.²¹²

On the day after the rebel defeat at Cynthiana, the hospital trains began arriving at Covington with their cargoes of wounded for the local hospitals. Facilities at the Main Street Hospital, as well as at Seminary Hospital, were adequate to meet the demands place upon them when they were called upon to treat not only the Union wounded but Confederates who had been left on the field of battle by their defeated commander.²¹³

Less than two months later, Morgan himself would lay dead at Greenville, Tennessee.

Unbiased military histories have not been kind to Morgan, They point out the harsh fact that while the main body of the Confederate army was being methodically destroyed in gigantic battles, he was often giving battle to untrained Home Guards and militiamen in forays that could have no possible effect on the war's outcome. In the process, he was losing thousands of soldiers who were desperately needed elsewhere.

Many of the units Morgan defeated in various actions across the state were not "Federal Troops" or "Union Troops" in the strict sense of the term but were hastily formed civilians who volunteered their service for that particular emergency. Their enlistment periods were often for as little as one week and seldom for more than a month. Many of them, as at Cynthiana, gave an exceptionally good account of themselves against the trained and more experienced raiders.

At one time or another, there were about 10,000 men who served with Morgan and contrary to popular view, seldom did they initiate action against a numerical superior force. When this did occur, it was usually the result of federal reinforcements reaching the scene of action.

Morgan's popular image as an accomplished and glamorous cavalry leader is drawn largely from his brother-in-law's book. Other less biased sources give a somewhat different picture.

A prime example of the many looting sprees of Morgan occurred at Bardstown during his 1862 4,000 man "Christmas Raid," There the men battered down the door of one of the community's largest stores and surged inside to strip it bare. The plunderers rivaled one another in their greed and at least one looter, who gathered all he could carry, had to force his way back out of the store by threatening his fellow plunderers with an ax.

On another occasion, while raiding Cynthiana, Morgan arrested George B. Durant, a telegraph operator for the Kentucky Central Railroad, and charged him with being a Union spy. Morgan seized Durant near the little community of Boyd, and informed the prisoner's grandfather, Andrew Boyd, that Durant would be executed unless the rebels were paid a ransom of \$5,000. Boyd somehow raised the money and his grandson was released.²¹⁴

It was also know for Morgan to inflict punishment on his prisoners before paroling them. One of the more common forms of mistreatment was to compel the prisoners to run on foot alongside his mounted troops for distances of ten miles or more.²¹⁵ Morgan was known to also work with outlaw guerillas.

The rebel chieftain still remains much a controversial figure. Even the circumstances surrounding his death are marked by controversy and shrouded in mystery. Some say he was killed while trying to escape capture while others claim he was killed after he had already surrendered.

Many authorities attribute Morgan's death to a shot fired by a private in the 13th Tennessee Union Cavalry. One who always claimed to be the slayer was George Fry, a controversial figure, who eventually migrated to Covington. Here he made his home on a Licking River houseboat moored at the foot of Powell Street.²¹⁶

Covington became more important as a recruiting point for the Union and when the federal government decided to enlist Negroes, the town became a magnet for blacks wanting to enroll.

From the war's beginning, the Negro was closely associated in the white Southerner's mind with the political cause of the struggle, and the Negro himself saw the conflict as a war of liberation.

Blacks made continuous efforts to enlist in the military but their efforts consistently met with spirited opposition. This opposition existed in the North as well as in the loyal slaveholding states like Kentucky. Even though the war's first semi-military service to be rendered by blacks occurred in constructing Covington defenses, it was not until September 27, 1862 that the first black unit, the First Regiment, Louisiana Native Guards, was officially enrolled in the U.S. Army. By war's end, Negro soldiers served in every theater of operation.

The federal government had not entered the conflict with the announced intention to abolish slavery but rather to preserve the American Union. That, however, did not prevent abolitionists from using the slavery issue as one of their strongest rationalizations for the war. When this became coupled with attitudes of the white Southerners and of blacks, the result was that the struggle began to assume definite anti-slavery overtones.

After Lee's defeat at Antietam, President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation to become effective January 1, 1863. By this act, the federal government recognized the freedom of all slaves held in the states in rebellion. The proclamation, of course, did not apply to Kentucky and other slave-holding states in the Union. In those states, slavery continued to exist until the Constitution's Thirteenth Amendment was ratified December 18, 1865.

Locally, it is doubtful if most of those Covingtonians opposed to slavery were motivated so much by a genuine concern for the blacks' social and economic welfare, as by ethical and religious values.

Not only did Kentucky continue to recognize slavery, but it continued its resistance to the entrance of free blacks into the state. In fact, one of the few sources of irritation between Covington citizens and out-of-state soldiers coming here was the habit of some northern officers of bringing free blacks who had been hired as cooks or orderlies. This was in direct conflict with the Kentucky law barring their entrance into the state.

The Confederate government quickly reacted to Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation and to Negro enlistment in the Union army. An 1863 law was passed which read:

*Every white person . . . who . . . shall command negroes or mulattoes in arms against the Confederate States, shall, if captured, be put to death or otherwise punished, at the discretion of the court.*²¹⁷

The Southern President Jefferson Davis, was also furious at the thought of the Union army enlisting Negroes and issued an order which declared any black soldier captured by the Confederates would be considered an insurrectionist and traitor and be put to death as such. Abolitionists considered this an outstanding piece of irony, coming as it did from one who they considered a traitor and insurrectionist of the worst kind.

Negro enlistment in Covington, as in all centers which refused to enroll them in state units, was in organizations belonging directly to the federal government. Even then, the enlistees were assigned to segregated units designated as United States Colored Troops, which in turn finally became fully organized by the War Department in May 1863.

Although blacks did not serve in any of the Kentucky state military organizations, Kentucky furnished 23,703 colored troops to the USCT and ran a close second to Louisiana which supplied 24,052.²¹⁸ Yet there were many black Kentuckians taken out of Kentucky and enlisted elsewhere. By mid-July 1864, more than 12,000 had been enlisted in various northern states and credited to those states' quotas.²¹⁹ Of the northern states, Pennsylvania was the largest contributor of black troops and furnished 8,612, while Texas sent the fewest – only 47.

Enrollment of blacks at Covington, both slave and free, began in March 1864. By May and June, their enlistment rate at the local recruiting stations soared to impressive figures and became so large by July that the federal government felt obliged to open a separate enrollment center for them.²²⁰ Typical of the large groups flocking here to enlist, was a group of 70 Harrison County Negroes who arrived in town on July 10th and were mustered into the army two days later. On another occasion, 140, largely from Boone County, appeared on the streets of Covington. They too wanted to be mustered into service.

When one reads in popular histories accounts of slaves who were loyal to their southern masters, he must recognize that such slaves were largely the aged or infirm who could not be expected to fend for themselves, or else were house servants such as butlers, cooks, nurses, coachmen and the like. These house servants were slavery's aristocrats whose ties to their owners were usually based on lengthy and close relationships. This small minority of blacks, however is invariably the stereotype used by sentimentalists who fantasize a honeysuckle-and-magnolia South.

In actuality, an overwhelming majority of slaves fervently desired the approach of freedom and some openly attacked their owners and overseers at that freedom neared. This occurred among some of the house servants as was the case of a central Kentucky slave woman who attempted to kill her owner's entire family by putting poison in their coffee.²²¹

The elation with which blacks greeted news that the army would now accept them is attested to by the great number who swarmed to enlistment centers. Little wonder they deserted their owners in such numbers, for it accepted by the American army, it meant not only their own freedom but also for their wives and children.

By July, so many blacks of all ages and physical conditions were fleeing Kentucky farms and rushing to enrollment centers such as Covington, an acute shortage of farm laborers developed. Even women, children and the very elderly – all in innocent ignorance – believed they army would enroll them. Finally the state's Adjutant General compelled to issue the following reminder:

The law authorizing the enlistment of colored troops has only reference to the able-bodied negroes capable of bearing arms and not the old men, the infirm or women and children . . . all others will be encouraged to remain at their

respective homes, where, under the State laws their masters are bound to take care of them , , Furthermore, all of this class of persons are required to assist in securing the crops now suffering in many cases for want of labor. ²²²

During that month, Covington recruiters were averaging 50 to 75 new volunteers a day, black and white. In fact, so many black volunteers came in from Harrison and Gallatin Counties that those counties were exempted from having to furnish men for the draft.²²³ The same thing was nearly true for many other counties, such as Boone, Pendleton, Bracken, Grant, Carroll and Trimble.²²⁴

By that time however, more citizens were coming to view the conflict as one to end slavery and voluntary white enlistments began tapering off. This view was given added impetus when it was noted those Negroes rejected for military service because of physical reasons were not sent hoe but given jobs working about the government stables at a pay of \$30 a month.²²⁵

In November, 82 blacks who had been working for the Engineer, Quartermaster and Commissary Departments at Covington, were mustered into the army. A shocked and amazed newsman reported that "Under the new order of things, the men will be uniformed and draw rations and pay the same as soldiers."²²⁶

Any reports of the number of local white enlistments, like those of black enlistments would indicate a lower figure than their enlistments actually were. This is because of the large number of recruiters come here from other communities and states to enroll soldiers. They usually paid large bounties and the enlistees were not credited to the local area.

A substantial number of the blacks enrolling at Covington were ultimately assigned to units like the 100th, 107th, 108th and 109th Colored Infantry Regiments, giving those organizations strong ties to this area. Others were assigned to the 12th and 13th US Colored Heavy Artillery then being organized at Camp Nelson in the state's interior. These two units later took part in the decisive Battle of Nashville where their combined total of 335 casualties indicate the batteries' heavy extent of involvement in that campaign.

Another of the above mentioned regiments, the 100th, also participated in the capture of Nashville and from December 17th to the 28th was engaged in pursuit of General John Bell Hood's forces to the Tennessee River. It spent the remainder of its service guarding the Nashville and Northwestern Railroad.

Of all the black units containing local enlistees though, it is the 117th Regiment USCT that is of special interest to the Covington area. It was enrolled here in its entirety. The 117th, commanded by Colonel Lewis G. Brown, underwent its organization from July 18th to September 27th and for a short time served as the town's Provost Guard.

After the 117th reached full strength its duties here were taken over by four companies of the 47th Kentucky and the 117th sent to Camp Nelson for a brief period of time. That was October 8th.²²⁷

From Camp Nelson, the men were sent to Baltimore and then to City Point, Virginia, where they arrived October 21st. The regiment, along with the 107th and 118th, now served as Colonel E. Martindale's Provisional Brigade of the 3rd Division, XVIII Corps of the Army of the James, where it remained until December 1864.²²⁸ It was assigned to Major General Godfrey Weitzel's XXV Corps and sent into battle as part of that corps 2nd Division, led by Brigadier General William Birney.²²⁹

The first action the 117th was involved in took place back in Northern Kentucky on August 29th when a detachment of 60 raw recruits was surprised by a force of 100 partisans led by the noted Colonel George M. Jessie. The blacks had been sent to Gallatin and Carroll Counties on a recruiting assignment and were at Jex Landing, about three miles about Ghent, where they were suddenly attacked while eating their noon meal.²³⁰

The surprise was so complete that not a shot was fired by the Negroes who suffered one killed, eight wounded, one of whom died later and 17 captured. One of those taken prisoner was a Lieutenant Seward, the officer in charge of the detachment. The remainder of the men managed to escape and return to their Covington base.

The steamboat *Rowena* was passing up stream at that precise moment and the rebels shouted demands that it put ashore. The boat's captain instead landed at Vevay, Indiana and alerted the townsfolk, who proceeded to shell the Kentucky shore with a six-pound cannon. The *Rowena* brought the wounded Negroes to Covington where they were hospitalized at the Seminary General Hospital.²³¹

Lieutenant Seward was released by Jessie's followers shortly after his capture but the black prisoners were taken southward and probably sold into slavery.

The 117th was in City Point a short time when it was sent directly into operations against Petersburg and successfully participated in capture of that southern stronghold.

During the Petersburg advance, the 117th was part of a group that scaled a Confederate breastwork and, with a patriotic rage, forced the rebel gunners to abandon their guns and flee for their lives. The blacks captured nine pieces of artillery and 200 prisoners and turned the rebel guns on the remainder of the fleeing foe.²³²

At that moment, Petersburg was wide open to relatively easy capture but Major General William F. “Baldy” Smith, commander of the XVIII Corps proved to be too cautious and decided to wait for reinforcements. As a result, the rebels had time to quickly garrison the city with additional troops and defenses and forced General Grant to lay a protracted siege to that strategic road and rail center.²³³

The Confederates felt humiliated by their loss to the black troops and never forgot, nor forgave the Union for using “niggers” to fight against what the Confederates termed “true Southern gentlemen.” The blacks of course were delighted they had captured “ole massa,” as they often called the southern soldier and this obvious glee over their own accomplishment only served to irritate the rebels further.²³⁴

When the federals first entered Petersburg, they could see large masses of Confederates fleeing excitedly through the other side of town and along the Appomattox River, trying to effect a crossing. At that point, General Grant briefly entertained the idea of destroying the rebels with artillery, but quickly dismissed the notion in the name of humanity. He later wrote in his *Memoirs*:

I was sure Lee was trying to make his escape and I wanted to push immediately in pursuit. At all events I had not the heart to turn the artillery upon such a mass of defeated and fleeing men and I hoped to capture them soon.

The 117th was destined to play an important part in that pursuit – after it completed one more assignment. It would help take Richmond!

The southern capital was now a city in utter confusion. Many of its military and civil leaders had deserted it without the least bit of notice to the townspeople. Up to the moment of their desertion, these authorities had led the people to believe the rebels had just won an important victory near Petersburg. Now the capital city was in the process of being converted to a smoking, burned-out monument to their duplicity.

For some time now, severe drunken rioting and looting had been commonplace in southern cities as rebel civilians heard of nearby federal victories. Other factors such as profiteering, over-speculation, rampant inflation and widespread hunger among the poor became linked to an ever-growing war weariness and disaffection with the Confederacy to produce the riots of Atlanta, Augusta, Milledgeville, Mobile and other places. None could compare with what took place in the rebel capital.

Richmond was burning furiously and the fire seemed to increase in number and size as the men of the 117th neared it. Streets inside the beleaguered city were filled with rowdy and drunken bands of Confederate civilians looking for plunder. Crowds of women looted stores for food while drunken Confederate soldiers reeled through the streets and mobs rifled jewelry stores.

In this chaos, there suddenly appeared a group of federal prisoners under heavy Confederate guard. When the prisoners cheered at the sight of the burning city they were lashed with Confederate whips. The prisoners, who were in the process of being moved to another location, could not be silenced and continued their catcalls over the city’s imminent fall.

Two regiments of Confederate militia were employed to maintain order but refused to obey commands. One early writer described the nightmarish situation as follows”

At nightfall, a scene of the wildest confusion set in. There was a large quantity of liquor in the city and the municipal authorities, as a measure of safety, ordered this to be destroyed. The heads of the casks were knocked in and the liquor poured into the gutters. The worst classes of inhabitants, white and black, turned out en masse and a rush was made for the business quarter in an amazingly short time – stores of considerable value, which had been denied to the hungry troops in the field. The shops of the merchants were broken open and entered at pleasure. The contents – jewelry, dry goods, provisions, property of all kinds – were seized and carried off by the rioters, the owners making no effort to save them, every one being convinced that the city would be sacked by the enemy the next day. Hundreds of drunken men and boys roamed through the streets, adding to the confusion by their cries and yells. To these noises were joined the shrieks and screams of terrified women and children.

The rioting and looting continued throughout the night, when suddenly:

A new horror was added to the scene. A large quantity of tobacco was stored in the great warehouse of the city. Some time previous to the evacuation, the Confederate Congress had ordered that, if the city had to be given up, the tobacco should be burned, in order to prevent its falling into the hands of the enemy. Unfortunately, this tobacco was stored in localities where its destruction would be dangerous to the city itself. Appeals were made to the government to remove the tobacco to a place where the city would not be set on fire by it, but, as a matter of course, these appeals were disregarded . . .

The flames [now] spread from the tobacco warehouses to other parts of the city and many buildings were fired by the mob, with the hope of being able to plunder them of their contents.

By morning the city was in a fearful condition. A large part of it was in flames and heavy clouds of smoke were floating over it. The wind was blowing directly across the city from the river, spreading the flames slowly and steadily. The lower streets were filled with a cowardly mob . . . Houses and stores were being plundered. The people dwelling in the endangered quarter were busy moving their furniture into the Capitol square, where hundreds of women and children, rendered homeless by the fire, had sought refuge. The roar of the flames and the crash of falling buildings sounded high over everything and the constant explosion of shells and ammunition added not a little to the horror of the scene.

Towards seven o'clock there was a violent commotion in the crowd and the cry of "Yankees! Yankees!" ran from mouth to mouth; while the rioters rushed towards the upper part of the city in the wildest alarm. In a short time, a body of forty Federal troopers appeared, riding slowly along the street. Upon reaching the Capitol square they dismounted and took possession of the Capitol, from the roof of which their guidons were soon flying in the morning breeze – the first Union flags that had waved over the city since April 1861.²³⁵

One of the war's crowning ironies or perhaps, poetic justice, depending upon one's inclinations, was the fact a column of Negro troops should be the first to carry those Union flags of freedom into the capitol of Virginia and the southern Confederacy.

When the men of the 117th entered the city, they were amazed at the raging conflagration, but soon stacked their muskets and organized fire brigades to fight the flames. The thoroughly defeated southerners were of little or no help, for not only were they a defeated people, they were a completely demoralized people.

To combat the roaring fires, Covington's Negro soldiers could be seen sharing their own meager rations with starving white women and children in the town square, while the southern men continued their drunken spree.

Another instance of compassion for the enemy was displayed when it was learned General Lee's family had been left in the burning city by retreating Confederate troops. Mrs. Lee, who was an invalid, suffering from a severe case of arthritis, and her property were now scrupulously protected from southern looters and pillagers by the freshly arrived Union forces. The 117th did not remain in Richmond for long but were soon hurrying westward in pursuit of the fleeing rebels.

Shortly before Richmond's fall, General Grant wrote to his father in Covington:

We are now having fine weather and I think, will be able to wind up matters about Richmond soon. I am anxious to have Lee hold on where he is, a short time longer so that we can get him into a position where he must lose a great portion of his army. The rebellion has a lost its vitality and, if I am not much mistaken, there will be no rebel army of any great dimensions a few weeks hence.²³⁶

Until Grant's arrival in the East, many commanders in that theater had failed to grasp the principle that in order to win, Lee's army had to be attacked and destroyed. Grant never lost sight of this simple truth. The capture of Richmond was not his prime objective and this never seemed to be fully appreciated by many writers of the time or even later.

The true test of a general's ability is not necessarily in battles won, but often in what he does after the battle. In this respect, Grant proved to be a man with whom the southern command could not cope. Even when he seemed to lose a battle, he still advanced.

On the other hand, General Lee, who had been considered the South's most outstanding general, sometimes had difficulty deciding to advance even after an overwhelming victory. Because of this failing, his critics said it was he as much as any other, who lost the war for the South.

Military strategists have severely criticized Lee for his failure to press an attack on General Ambrose Burnside's army in December 1862 at Fredericksburg after the Union command had suffered a complete rout. The advance was urged by Lee's subordinates, but he was much too cautious and lost his greatest opportunity to win European recognition of southern independence. Years later, Lee often recalled the situation and admitted his indecisiveness probably cost the Confederacy the war.²³⁷

General Grant always wanted to get Lee in the open where he could force a decisive fight. He failed in this at the Wilderness and was never able to get between Lee and the rebel capitol. The casualties he suffered at Cold Harbor stunned even his strongest supporters and necessitated the reorganization of entire units. One of these, the 2nd Infantry Regiment, found it necessary to return to Newport Barracks where it embarked on a vigorous recruiting campaign to replace its heavy losses.

But Grant made the Confederates fight the type of war the South could never hope to win. While he kept Lee pinned down in Virginia, relentlessly driving him into the cities of Petersburg and Richmond, Sherman was smashing northward through the Carolinas. Neither Confederate force could reinforce the other.

This gigantic pincer movement was all a part of a grand strategy and both of the Union campaigns, Grant's and Sherman's, must be viewed as related parts of the entire picture. Yet at Petersburg, Grant deliberately violated one of the principles of military leadership when he held back from destroying Lee's army and allowed it to leave the city.

General Grant always recognized that even though a battle might be unusually bloody, it could possibly save lives in the long run. He still had not forgotten this, despite his compassion for fleeing Confederates. That the rebels could and would have been slaughtered had he decided to turn his artillery on them was apparent. Grant knew Lee's army was doomed and that he could easily maneuver the southern general into surrender once in the open. Because of this compassion, thousands of Southerners were spared a general slaughter.

It was less than a year since Grant had assumed personal command in the East and completely reorganized the Union forces fighting there. Some corps were consolidated into more flexible commands while others were brought into being with the addition of thousands of troops to the army. Minor uncoordinated movements were abandoned in favor of fully integrated efforts. Munitions and supplies were sent forward with a new efficiency to make the enlarged Union force one gigantic, fully-functioning war machine.

At the same time, the Confederates' use of their own interior lines of transportation and communications were disrupted and the rebel armies prevented from aiding one another in any way. In this respect, the disorganization of Lee's commissariat was nothing short of phenomenal. Food and supplies were stocked in behind-the-lines warehouses while his poorly clad troops tottered on the brink of actual starvation.

Even Jefferson Davis conceded that the Confederates' failure to supply their troops "was due to the active operations of the enemy on all our lines of communications."²³⁸ The rebel army had become a mockery of its former self.

Knowledge of defense strategies in this new-type war, with its new and improved weapons of death, were considerably advanced over that of the offense. Grant was married to the offense and it had been up to him to rewrite offensive strategy. There were no established procedures to follow, for this was a war, the likes of which the world was seeing for the first time.

New weapons, such as rifled artillery and small arms, quadrupled the killing power of defensive armies. A well-entrenched unit could not only inflict heavy losses on its enemy but in many cases even repel a larger force attacking from the open. Defensive armies were given this tremendous boost in effective firepower at the precise time Grant would have to do the bulk of the attacking.

Many of the commanders seemed slow to comprehend this new warfare as witness the Confederate action at Gettysburg and that of the Union at Cold Harbor. Still, the lessons of a changing technology of war, which seemed to have escaped Lee during the Mexican War, were learned well by Grant, for from that time on, firepower was always uppermost in his mind.

Another of the countless herculean tasks facing the Union general was determining how to fight a war with armies with combat experience only below the divisional level. Grant understood the science of war as no other man of his time and the maneuvers and tactics developed by him have since been studied in military academies the world over. Many historians, such as Roy Meredith, author of several Civil War volumes, acclaim U.S. Grant one of the world's greatest military strategists.

In retrospect, one of Lee's greatest misfortunes was his inability to understand the mind of a man like Grant. Lee was a provincial to a great extent. He admittedly aligned himself with the Confederacy because he was a Virginian and, like many others, fought for "his state" against "other states." His critics say this military myopia had the effect of limiting him to seeing the war on a scale no larger than his own native Virginia.²³⁹

On the other hand, Grant, like Lincoln, did not see the struggle as a "war between the states," nor even as one of "North against South." He supported the federal government because he believed in the underlying principles of an American union, and his sole aim was to do everything in his power to preserve that union. Everything else was secondary.²⁴⁰

Lee could well understand the minds of other provincial men – such as the Hookers and the Burnside – but this man Grant was another matter.²⁴¹

At long last, the Union commander had Lee in the open and his ensuing pursuit of the southern general still stands as one of the more outstanding operations of its type in the annals of warfare. He pursued relentlessly and speedily with troops behind and just south of the Confederates – on Lee's left flank – just as he had earlier told his mother back in Covington.²⁴²

Lee's troops were pursued so relentlessly they abandoned caissons, ammunition, clothing and virtually everything else that might hinder their flight. They did this despite the fact they were already in a famished and ill-equipped state. Hundreds deserted as the retreat continued along the Appomattox River and in at least one instance, an entire southern regiment virtually disappeared. Confederate soldiers and home guards roamed about the countryside, plundering the homes and farms of their fellow southerners. Discipline was non-existent.

Many defectors actually came over to the Union side, giving rise to the saying "gone over into the Union," which was so frequently heard among Confederate forced at that time. Desertions became such a serious matter that Lieutenant General James Longstreet announced he would recommend a commission for any enlisted man who prevented another from deserting.

Despite the hopelessness of their situation, Confederate leaders still refused to stop the slaughter. Jefferson Davis continued issuing orders as though he headed a healthy nation instead of a hollow shell and Lee persisted in doggedly carrying on.

One of Lee's greatest fears was that, if he surrendered, Grant would insist on exacting humiliating terms. He feared there might even be prison sentences for him and his officers or possibly worse. Certainly, the Confederates imposed such penalties after some of their own victories. Now there was fear the federals would do the same.

Somehow, maybe a miracle would happen for the rebel military. Maybe Grant could still be given the slip. Maybe the American Union could still be dissolved.

None of this was to be. Lincoln found his man and he was the likes with which Lee had never tangled. This man Grant had revamped the Union armies and completely rewritten the manuals of warfare. Civilian as well as military morale was at an all-time high. Union industrial output was booming and Grant's huge supply depots operated with an efficiency never before known. Eighteen trains a day poured tons of material into his headquarters and federal soldiers had long ago ceased suffering from shortages of food and other supplies. He men were well equipped and now were decimating Lee's forces.

By this time many of the black troops heard of the massacre at Fort Pillow, Tennessee and began using its name as a battle cry. It was at Fort Pillow that about 575 Union troops surrendered to the Confederates under then-Major General Nathan Bedford Forrest. This was the same Forrest who, as Lieutenant Colonel, fled Fort Donelson.

Forrest amassed a large sum of money as a slave trader before the war and possessed a violent dislike for Negroes serving as soldiers. Fort Pillow was garrisoned by many such soldiers and more than 300 of the surrendering troops, including 230 blacks were shot, bayoneted or buried alive.

Some of the Union soldiers were forced to dig their own graves before being killed, while others were shot while in their beds at Fort Pillow's hospital, after which the hospital was set afire.²⁴³ Among those massacred by the southerners were men of the 6th U.S. Colored Heavy Artillery and Battery F of the 2nd Colored Light Artillery, units which carried names of many Kentuckians on their rolls.

Ironically, by early 1865, the Confederacy responded to the cries of more southerners, including General Lee, and finally authorized enlistments of blacks into the military. By then, the war was swiftly coming to an end and no Confederate black units ever entered combat.

The Confederacy increasingly seemed a lost cause. Each night literally hundreds of despondent rebels were driven by hunger to cross unto the Negro lines to surrender. To be made prisoner by black troops was the ultimate in humiliation for many of the demoralized rebels but their desire for food and rest from the relentless torment of fighting a losing war overcame any feelings of superiority they may have had. A total of 19,132 Southerners were taken prisoner by all federal forces between March 29th and the final surrender, Lee's army was being more than just defeated, it was in the process of being utterly demolished.

From April 2nd through April 6th, the opposing forces engaged in a running battle. When Major General Philip H. Sheridan cut squarely across Lee's line of retreat, the southerner found himself outmaneuvered and trapped in a gigantic vise.²⁴⁴ He asked to surrender the issue had been decided. The United States would remain united. Covingtonians greeted news of Sheridan's action with enthusiasm, for like several other top Union leaders, he had many personal acquaintances in the local area. These friendships dated from the time he was fresh from West Point and stationed at Newport Barracks.²⁴⁵

On the evening of April 8th, General Lee called his commanders into conference and fully explained their desperate position. He told of correspondence with General Grant in which a possible surrender was discussed. Despite these rebel peace overtures, it was decided General Fitz Lee should attack Sheridan's cavalry early next day in hopes the Union forces were without infantry support.

Early next morning however, General Sheridan's forces were joined by Negro troops of the Army of the James. The blacks, including Covington's 117th, marched all night in order to make the juncture. Both sides were aware of negotiations between Grant and Lee, yet the southerners launched their desperate attack. The Union troops were subjected to heavy fire from waves of rebel infantry and cavalry, but as Fitz Lee later said:

*The arrival at this time of two corps of their infantry necessitated the retiring of our lines.*²⁴⁶

A Union officer put it more bluntly by saying simply:

*As soon as [they] discovered we had infantry . . . they retired precipitately toward the Valley.*²⁴⁷

General Sheridan was highly incensed at what he considered another example of the southerners' duplicity and demanded an explanation for the attack. He also appeared at the treaty site with his protestations about that morning's apparent truce violations. Lee, according to Sheridan, did nothing more than offer a meek apology for his troops' actions.²⁴⁸

At the Appomattox surrender site, Grant's disregard for military splendor was apparent. The contrast between the military slow of the defeated Southern leader and the plain dress of the 42 year-old victor can be seen in Grant's own modest description of the scene. He noted:

*General Lee was dressed in full uniform which was entirely new and was wearing a sword of considerable value, very likely the sword which had been presented by the State of Virginia; at all events, it was an entirely different sword from the one that would ordinarily be worn in the field. In my rough traveling suit, the uniform of a private with the stripes of a lieutenant-general, I must have contrasted very strangely with a man so handsomely dressed, six feet high and of faultless form. But this was not a matter that I thought of until afterwards.*²⁴⁹

Grant, though not as physically impressive as Lee and 15 years his junior, displayed a chivalry difficult to equal. Three hundred sixty thousand Union and 258,000 Confederate soldiers had died and another 500,000 from both sides had been maimed and crippled. One resident of the Covington area later recalled the war as "that disastrous conflict which resounded to the ends of the earth and made even Europe, long habituated to wars and bloodshed, stand aghast at such unprecedented slaughter."

Ships, railroads and cities had been destroyed and a large segment of the nation lay prostrate. The American form of government had come dangerously close to being destroyed. Grant could understandably have been vindictive with Lee and his army of revolutionaries. In fact, many southern officers who abandoned the United States fully expected such action.

General Grant however, proved once again what a magnanimous person he was. As at his victory at Vicksburg, not a cheer nor an insulting word was uttered by his soldiers when the defeated rebels laid down their arms. Instead, the general quietly accepted Lee's surrender, generously allowed the Confederates to keep their horses and mules and even furnished food rations to the Southerners.

Although the defeated rebels warmly cheered their beaten commander, General Grant issued an expressed order forbidding the Union officers and enlisted men to cheer or fire salutes in celebration of their own victory. Whenever possible Grant allowed the defeated forces free travel home over Union controlled railroads. This behavior contrasted strongly with the Southerners at many of their own earlier victories.

The defeated southern officers at Appomattox presented a noble appearance, dressed as they were in their finest array, but it has been said true nobility is a thing of the heart. The ever-modest Grant demonstrated this brand of nobility when he declared the beaten Confederates could go peacefully to their homes. They would be free from all future arrests and prosecution "so long as they observed their paroles and the laws in force where they reside."

General Grant did these things despite the fact he was perfectly aware many loyal Unionists considered the Confederates guilty of treason and wanted them punished accordingly. Now there would be no treason trials and no executions for taking up arms against the federal government. The general's word effectively blocked such an eventuality.

General Grant later wrote:

*I felt like anything rather than rejoicing at the downfall of a foe who had fought so long and valiantly and had suffered so much for a cause, though that cause was, I believe, one of the worst for which a people ever fought and one for which there was the least excuse.*²⁵⁰

A short time later, General Joseph Johnston surrendered his army to General Sherman in North Carolina and this was quickly followed by the capitulation of other southern commands, the last being that of Kirby Smith, exacted on June 2nd by Northern Kentucky's General E.R.S. Canby.

Meanwhile, the 117th, after helping force Lee's surrender at Appomattox Court House, returned to Petersburg and City Point where they remained until June. The regiment moved to Brazos Santiago, Texas and saw duty at Brownsville and along the Rio Grande. They were part of those American forces who helped convince France to abandon its dream of a puppet Mexican empire.

The 117th was eventually mustered out of service at New Orleans on August 10th, 1867 and today many of its members lie at rest in historic Linden Grove Cemetery, Covington.

Grant's spirit of forgiveness continued throughout his life, and on at least one occasion he came forward again to shield Lee from arrest on a charge of treason. Many influential and sincerely loyal citizens were calling for such arrests. Happily for the southerners, none of the ex-Confederates had to face this charge for Grant used every ounce of his prestige and resources to prevent such an occurrence.

Lee himself, wanted his American citizenship restored and went before a notary public on October 2, 1865 and swore loyalty to the Union. He mailed a copy of the oath to Washington, where somehow it was misplaced in the welter of government papers and not found again until 1970, when it was discovered in a box of uncatalogued papers in the National Archives.

Five years later, in August 1975, President Gerald Ford signed a joint House-Senate resolution of the previous month restoring Lee's citizenship retroactive to June 13, 1865, the date the general filed his appeal.²⁵¹

President Ford's action left Jefferson Davis as the sole Confederate leader who still remained officially unforgiven for attempting to destroy the Union. On October 17m 1978, Georgia-born President James Earl Carter signed a bill posthumously restoring the former Confederate president to full citizenship.²⁵²

When President Carter signed Davis' citizenship bill, he noted it "officially completes the long process of reconciliation that has reunited our people following the tragic conflict between the states."²⁵³

After Appomattox, Grant was awarded the rank of full general, the first man since George Washington to be accorded such an honor by our country. He was toasted throughout the loyal states and made a triumphant tour of the land he had so successfully defended.

Tumultuous crowds greeted the general everywhere he went, but with all the public acclaim he received, Grant never forgot his own home neighborhood. He took particular care to see the tour included Georgetown, Bethel, Ripley and Batavia on the Ohio side of the river. These were small towns but they were very important to him.

Neither did this great man forget his parents, and he made an extra-special point to interrupt his tour for a visit to Covington – an extra-special town in his life.²⁵⁴

FINIS

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The 3rd Division of the XVIII Corps was commanded by Brigadier General Charles G. Paine and made of the 1st, 4th, 5th, 6th, 10th, 22nd, 36th, 37th, 38th, 107th, 117th, and 118th Regiments, Elias Wright, Alonzo G. Draper, John W. Ames and E. Martindale were brigade commanders of the corps' four brigades,

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²⁴⁸ Sheridan, Philip H., Volume 2, *op. cit.*

²⁴⁹ Grant, Ulysses S., Volume 2, *op. cit.*

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁵¹ *Cincinnati Post*, 6 August 1975.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, 18 October 1978.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁴ Ross, Ishbel, *op. cit.*

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