

SUPPLEMENT TO  
OLD GOVINGTON, KENTUCKY  
AND  
PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS  
OF AN OCTOGENARIAN

To which is appended Sketches of Old Govington's share in the festivities attending the visit of General Lafayette and son to Cincinnati, selected from an ancient newspaper, dated May 25th, 1825, once owned by the father of

MRS. ELEANOR CHILDS MEEHAN

The Baker-Hunt Foundation  
620 Greenup Street  
Covington, Ky.

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SUPPLEMENT TO "OLD COVINGTON"  
and  
"Personal Recollections of an Octogenarian"



THE kindly reception given this little booklet by many old friends, acquaintances and lovers of the old Home Town, added to the regret of its brevity expressed by some, have sent my mind gypsying over spaces and names that may be pleasantly recalled. It proves what a poet tells us:

"Old books, old friends are best,  
Old things are loveliest,  
Old houses and the glamor of old days,  
The olden peace, the olden, quiet ways,  
Old Gospels and old dreams,  
With new delight life teems  
When these are read."

Old trees are fascinating in every season of the year, and we recall in kindly feeling the pioneers who planted them for future generations to enjoy.

Old photograph albums, amusing and saddening; old cemeteries, with their quaint, sad or hopeful epitaphs, sending the mind in sympathy back to the probable lives and loves, heartaches and hopes of those that "lie under the stone."

Then there are old manuscripts, as in the old South Church in Boston, where one wonders over the almost microscopic writing in old sermons and letters; or, in some old papers of our own dear ones the often quaint and always sincere wording reflecting the honest thoughts of hearts unspoiled by life's vanities, the writers' once busy fingers folded over the pulseless breasts these many, many years.

Old houses were mentioned in my former paper, but there was one, beside the Old Log and Old Stone House, that stood, beautiful and homelike on the

northwest corner of Sixth and Greenup Streets: the old Kennedy Farm House, the space now occupied by the apartment building erected by the son of Judge William Arthur, who occupied it for some years, after having been for a long time the residence of Mr. Isaac Cooper. Opposite, stands a dwelling I remember as the residence of Mr. Tarvin, whose daughters, Anne, Mary and Sallie, attended Dr. Orr's School. Lower down, a long frame house, remodeled now, the home of Mr. Clayton and the Bullocks. Just below here resided Jesse, the father of General Grant, while acting as postmaster, just after the Civil War.

Then came the pretty home of Mr. Boude, whose daughters were my schoolmates; one of them, Mrs. Peter Thornton, residing in Newport, Ky., is still active in patriotic and social circles. This lovely home long since demolished and built over. "*Sic transit.*"

Then came the substantial, comfortable home of Dr. Richard Pretlow, still a pleasure to the eye. Farther down was the business house and residence of Mr. Sparrow, whom we regarded as a severely English type of gentleman. Across the street was the residence of Mr. Charles Withers, once so pretty and homelike, the yard and well so beautiful, but now the grounds are built over and with the added stories seems to look down over its neighbors, as if to say, "Time has not touched me, I have taken new lease on life!" The little park in front was once occupied by the "lower market," and this brings us to the Court House, with its memories of stormy days when Judge James Pryor Tarvin was on the bench. Aware of the insecurity of the building, which was Covington's second Court House, he argued the necessity of safeguarding the records, but some of the members of Council were dilatory

and refractory, and the determined Judge promptly sent them to the Independence jail, where they remained until they came to terms. Judge Tarvin was a grandson of Judge Pryor of noble memory.

Down below the Northern Bank on Third and Scott Streets stood "Factory Row," a long frame building, occupied, perhaps, by many of the employes of "Ball's Foundry," on West Third Street, now substituted by handsome dwellings.

In those days, a trip from the suburbs to Cincinnati and return occupied a whole day, walking all the distance, crossing the ferry, and some delays. Then when we would reach the flower market in Cincinnati, at the east end of what is now Fountain Square, once the Fifth Street Market, my gentle mother would be lost among the flowers. Going up Scott Street, just above Fourth, was seen the time-honored book store of Andrew Laird. Other places already mentioned. On the east side of Scott Street, between Fourth and Fifth, was the handsome home, long demolished, of Mr. James Gedge, whose wife's pretty sisters, Laura and Emma Howell were once schoolmates.

Just north of Eighth Street, on an elevation above Scott, was an academy conducted by Mr. Snowden, a popular school for girls. Near by, on Eighth Street was the humble Cathedral that had faced many vicissitudes. The wooden tower had to come down and the cracked bell stand on the ground until better days. I have lately read a touching apostrophe to the "Old Church Bell," written long ago by a prominent Covingtonian and rescued from an old newspaper.

Continuing south, at the northwest corner of Eleventh and Scott Streets, stands now a dwelling that as late as 1857 was the Covington High School.

The adjoining square, beautified by a little park,

bears no evidence of the unsightly Eleventh Street Market, so long obnoxious to lovers of civic progress.

South of what is now the city and west of the old Bank Lick Road, once bordered with trees, stood the Howell homestead, "Howell Lane" running back among the hills. The grand "Park Woods," surmounting one of them, were familiar to all lovers of nature. On the Buena Vista hill was the large vineyard, with buildings occupied by the Benedictine monks, where sacramental and other wine was made with Old World skill.

Nearly opposite, where now is Wallace Avenue, was a pond, dignified by the name of "lake," where once there was a night exhibition of the "Pinafore" opera, with some Cincinnati talent taking part.

From Wallace Avenue, down Madison Avenue, are comparatively modern buildings. The large place formerly belonging to Mr. James Walsh, is still imposing. Down to Twelfth Street, where stands the present Cathedral, owing much to the generosity of the late James Walsh and his sons, Nicholas and Dennis, and enriched internally by artists abroad, as well as our own Duvenick and Barnhorn. At the northeast corner of Eleventh and Madison, for many years, was the modest grocery stand of "Uncle Jimmy Ellis," a familiar figure and of numerous connections.

Following Madison Avenue, past places already mentioned, down to the Old Trinity Church, brings back memories of former prominent citizens and of dear little Mary Hall, so devoted to its wants and pleasures. Farther down, on the opposite side, once stood the handsome home of Mr. Frederick Gedge, whose daughters, Jane and Mary, were contemporaries of my own sisters, all pupils of Dr. Orr's Seminary. My recollections of Jane are par-

ticularly bright; gifted with a rich voice, as a reader she was wonderful! Although but a youngster myself, I was included in the reading class, and I would sit absorbed in admiration of her dramatic renditions, especially as she would fairly intone Nat Willis' "King David's lament over Absalom!" Should the lesson be humorous, she would, without a smile, read with fierce emphasis — to the great amusement of her hearers, and taxing the dignity of the teacher in charge of the class. She married Mr. Jacob Sellers, and was the mother of a prominent citizen, Mr. Frederick Sellers.

Where now stands Odd Fellows Hall was, within my recollection, a tobacco factory. I have, in another paper, mentioned Virginia, the eldest daughter of Squire Arnold, who was the first wife of Dr. Theodore Wise. The second daughter, Louisiana Arnold, who married Mr. Phelps, I remember well as a merry singer of the popular songs of that day. I thought her "O, Susanna," the "Burman Lover," "Oh, come with me in my little canoe" the *ne plus ultra* of musical execution. Among the contemporaries of my sisters and the fellow-pupils of Dr. Orr's School were Rachel Cleveland, the Bakewell girls, whose pretty home in the west end gave name to Bakewell Street. There were Sue and Elizabeth Ashbrook, and these recall an incident which approached a tragedy in our school lives. At the lower or river side of the school grounds stood a number of large beech trees, and all enjoyed swinging on the long, pliable branches. One day we were summoned to the superior exhibition of Sue Ashbrook swinging out over the high bank. Her sister and another girl prepared the scene; when ready, the word "go" was heard, and we prepared for the wonderful act, but not for the slipping hands, the rushing body down

among the weeds, the swoon and consternation and final restriction placed on our favorite amusement.

There were the McMurtry girls, whose father owned the flouring mills before mentioned. The younger, Mary, a very amiable, pious girl, was greatly mourned by all who knew her, by her early death. Although in love with life, her resignation to the will of God was edifying and beautiful.

The favorite teacher in the older classes in the early days was an assistant, Miss Robb, whose dismissal of the girls in the evening was one by one, and exacted a very correct and Victorian curtsy at the door; outspread skirts, low obeisance, not the silly "bob" of today.

Covington had several visitations of cholera, in my recollection, the one of 1849 very severe. In an essay, as a little girl, I attempted a sort of review of that year, the climax being, "And the heart will shudder when the summer of 1849 is brought to the memory." There were then no professional nurses. In an emergency, sometimes a Sister from an institution might be obtained, but neighbors were kind and would take turns in "sitting up" with an invalid, to watch the medicines and wants. In 1867 cholera visited us again. Sometimes it would sweep one place, take one or two in another, and be unknown in another. In the last epidemic Mr. John Condell, prominent citizen and church deacon, was stricken. It seemed, over the country, to be most prevalent where limestone water was used for drinking, as around Nashville, Tennessee.

In the winter of 1853 and '54 the Ohio River was frozen over (some thought to the bottom) for a long period. Booths were erected on the ice, where hot refreshments were served to skaters and visitors, and heavily loaded wagons crossed constantly. The ice was a playground between the

two cities. To suffer from floods in the spring was common, necessitating much inconvenience and suffering among the lowland residents and the shifting of the ferry landings, but the flood of 1884 exceeded the recollections of the oldest inhabitants.

I vividly recall one day when our little settlement was terror-stricken by the sight of Federal officers and many other men rushing up the old Bank Lick Road to where the retreat of the notorious counterfeiter, John Mount, had been discovered in our little quiet hamlet. There may be yet among our older residents some who remember this startling event.

At the close of his school life Dr. Orr retired with his family to the pleasant Ludlow Cottage in the old Carneal district. Here another ex-pupil and I paid a short visit as probable farewell to their further removal. I can see the placid river, the green hillside above, long before railroad invasion was dreamed of. That evening will long be remembered, full of happy anecdotes and recollections. It was, indeed, our last meeting until we saw the body of a venerated instructor and friend committed to mother earth in old Linden Grove. The pretty "Ludlow Cottage," since destroyed by fire and rebuilt, was a quiet, restful place for him who had spent a busy life in education. Returning home the next day, he drove us in his carriage up over the hill, through the little hamlet of "Economy" (now West Covington), the poor little spire of St. Anne's Church pointing to the sky.

Old Covington had spasmodic attempts to moderate the indulgence in intoxicating drinks, but, like most such movements, the enthusiasm would subside. I recall being allowed to accompany my father to hear the famous Irish Apostle of temperance, Father Matthew, then visiting this country many

years ago, lecturing in the open and on the grounds of the Old White Mansion. My father was a rigid abstainer from alcohol and his example was admired by all who knew him. Moral suasion seemed more effectual than the forced prohibition of today.

When a little girl, there was a small patch of dense woods in the rear of our place, and sometimes in summer we had open-air preaching in "God's first temple." Beyond the trees, I could see a house on top of "Light's Hill" and would wonder what was beyond and beg to be taken up to see. At last, one day an opportunity offered. A woman who had been in my mother's service, died and I was permitted to attend the funeral. Arriving on the bleak hillside, we came to a little, desolate burying ground where once were laid to rest the early pioneer Catholics, the graves now removed to St. Mary's Cemetery on the Lexington Pike. Returning over the steep, rocky road, we found that a carriage preceding ours had been wrecked by runaway horses, the poor driver lying besides the roadside, badly injured. My romance of "beyond the hill" was shattered, as has been that of many in life, whose curiosity to "see beyond" has equally come to grief.

In my childhood, a finely made rag carpet was a work of art. On the ground now occupied by the late cold storage building, on Scott near Fifth Street, was once a frame building housing an artistic weaver of carpets. Some of his work was beautiful, fit to adorn any home. Then the quiet, simple lives of housewives were often brightened by an invitation to a "quilting," when someone, having finished the piecing of a quilt, often containing treasured scraps of gowns of long-lost dear ones, the neighboring ladies would be invited, the quilt tacked in its frames, the desired pattern defined by chalk lines; the best quilters, among whom was

