



Bulletin of the Kenton County Historical Society

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The Twin Tunnels at Grants Bend

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Dennis Harrell

Since the creation of Kenton County in 1840, the Licking River has served as the boundary with neighboring Campbell County to the east. Although the river generally follows a leisurely course to the north between the two counties, an interesting thing happens at about the halfway mark. Because of high ground in both counties, the river veers northeast, only to make a 180-degree turn to the southwest followed by another 180-degree turn back to the northeast before resuming its northward flow to the Ohio River. This sinuous meandering of the Licking River results in corresponding “thumbs” of each county jutting into the other.

The Kenton County “thumb” is called Grants Bend,¹ named after a prominent Northern Kentucky family who owned large expanses of land on both sides of the Licking River.² In 1815, General Squire Boone Grant built a large log house facing the Licking River on the eastern side of Grants Bend. Named Errondale, the house is now in ruins. The family cemetery remains beside it, however, containing the graves of many early members of the Grant family.³ Over the course of time, Grants Bend developed its own small community with its own post office,⁴ ferry landing,⁵ schoolhouse,⁶ alleged Indian burial ground,⁷ other small family cemeteries (some no doubt lost to time),⁸ and, as we shall see, a railroad station. Because of its odd geographical configuration and somewhat limited connection to the rest of Kenton County, however, it has remained an isolated area, accessible only by a few narrow and twisting roads ~ unknown to and unvisited by the vast majority of people in Northern Kentucky.

There is one major development, however, that impacted Grants Bend, not only disturbing its tranquility but giving it a distinction no other Northern Kentucky community can claim. It has twin rail-

road tunnels, both of which are over four-tenths of a mile long.

Beginning in the 1820s, business interests in Northern Kentucky advocated the construction of a railroad linking central and/or eastern Kentucky with either Covington or Newport. These early efforts, although ardent, failed because of both the economic factors of the times and the unsettled issue as to which city would be the terminus of the proposed railroad.⁹ In 1849, the Kentucky General Assembly resolved the latter matter by authorizing the creation of the Covington and Lexington Railroad Company, thus designating Covington as the terminus. Later legislation also provided for financing of the project with subscriptions raised by cities and counties through which the railroad would pass. Financing was in fact readily secured, and, in 1850, surveyor Sylvester Welch recommended the Licking River Valley as the most feasible right-of-way for the laying of rails. Starting in Covington, the right-of-way would proceed south, closely following the Kenton County or western bank of the Licking River.¹⁰

The proposed route generally offered continuous level land near the river on which to lay tracks. Grants Bend, however, presented an obstacle. It made little practical or economic sense to have the tracks follow the curvature of the river at that point. A much shorter route would be across the neck of Grants Bend, but that likewise presented its own problem. The same high ground which rose over 350 feet above the river level at that point, causing the river to change course toward the northeast, prohibited easy transit.¹¹ The only logical solution was a massive tunnel. At 2,150 feet in length, it would be the longest tunnel on the Covington and Lexington Railroad and by far the longest tunnel in Northern Kentucky.¹²



Above: Home of General Squire Boone Grant, overlooking the Licking River on the Campbell County side (now in ruins).
Cover: Tunnels at Grants Bend, Kenton County

Above photo courtesy www.nkyviews.com Cover image courtesy the author

Although there is little information about the actual work on the tunnel, we do know that it was constructed of stone up to seven feet on the side walls and then arched with a total of 500,000 bricks.¹³ It was completed in the spring of 1852.¹⁴ In May of that year, the railroad planned a celebration by offering a special passenger train for those wanting to see the tunnel in person. An account in *The Covington Journal* described the event:

On Saturday afternoon last the Directors of the Covington and Lexington Railroad fitted up a train of ten cars and conveyed about one thousand persons, many of them ladies, to the large tunnel at Grant's Bend, 10 miles out of Covington. The run was made at moderate speed that the company might have an opportunity of viewing the work and the country through which it passed. Arriving at the entrance, the train was

stopped to give those who felt disposed an opportunity to walk through, and examine the massive tunnel. Many walked through. The larger portion, however, preferred to ride and accordingly, the iron horse was put at it and with his train plunged into the "bowels of the earth." A thousand lights, hung at intervals along the walls, dispersed just enough darkness to make what remained visible, while the smoke from the locomotive added to the gloom, and caused one to think of the "smoke of their torment." The locomotive moved along with a clanking sound, breathing as if in a mighty struggle; the boys shouted; the girls screamed – perhaps some swooned; the men took care of the women, while the women took care of their bonnets and shawls. Directly, the train emerged into the open air to the great relief of the anxious.

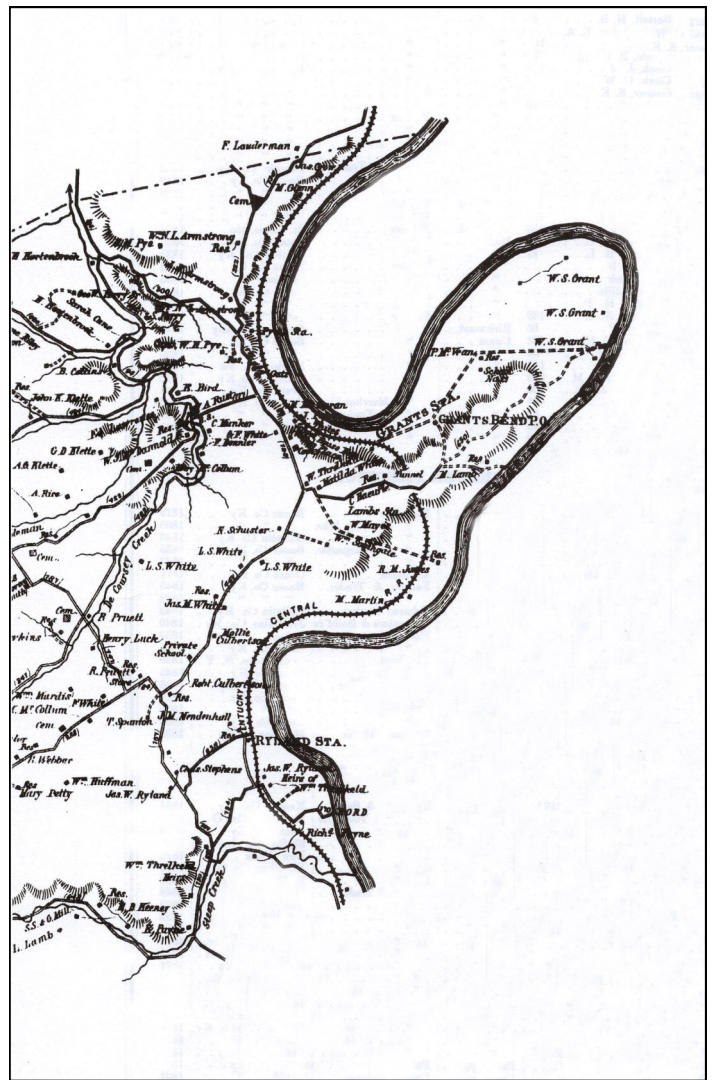
The paper further noted that the tunnel appeared to be “substantially and accurately built,” and that all were “seemingly delighted with the excursion.”¹⁵

Over 50 years later, another newspaper account gave a slightly less-glowing report. In an article noting the celebration of Dr. William N.L. Armstrong’s 92nd birthday, it was recalled that he married Augusta Ann Rusk on May 12, 1853, and celebrated his honeymoon by taking his new bride on the Grants Bend tunnel excursion. A friend recalled that the tunnel was lighted by candles stuck in mud cups. The train had 10 flat cars on which seats were placed crosswise for the crowds. Many a coat sleeve caught fire from cinders. The bride’s bonnet was ruined by sparks. That was the extent of the honeymoon journey through the tunnel, from Pye’s Station, a distance of about two miles. Apparently, the Armstrongs had their fill of adventure. The article ends by noting that with the exception of four months, “they spent their entire wedded life in the [nearby] old log cabin” in which Dr. Armstrong had been raised.¹⁶

For over the next half-century, the Grants Bend tunnel served its purpose permitting freight and passengers to traverse that part of the county both north and south. Wheat and hogs constituted much of the freight from Central Kentucky to processors in Covington and Cincinnati while local industries shipped its manufactured products to the south.¹⁷ Residents of Kenton County benefitted by a local train (“The Butler”) and stations located every few miles. An 1883 atlas of the area shows a Lambs Station at the southern entrance to the tunnel, with a Grant Station and a Pye’s Station to the north. Ryland Station is found a few miles to the south.¹⁸ The latter station was particularly important to handle the large number of city dwellers seeking summer relief at the Crystal Lake Fishing Club founded in 1892.¹⁹ No doubt the ride through the tunnel added to the sense of outdoor adventure.

Meanwhile, the company operating the railroad underwent several transformations. Within a decade of its founding, the Covington and Lexington Railroad Company defaulted on bond interest and ended up in court. It emerged from those legal pro-

ceedings as the Kentucky Central Railroad Association, an entity “formed for the express purpose of operating and acquiring the properties formerly owned by the Covington and Lexington, and, in general, tidying up things a bit.”²⁰ In 1871, a new company, the Kentucky Central Railroad Company, was incorporated, and eventually took over all properties of the Association in 1875. The new company was in turn acquired in 1881 by interests controlled by railroad baron Collis P. Huntington, but fell into receivership in 1886. The name was again changed to the Kentucky Central Railway until it was acquired in its entirety by the Louisville and Nashville Railroad in 1891.²¹ Thereafter, the Northern Kentucky portion of the railroad was known as the Kentucky Central Division, and, later, the Knoxville Division, of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad.



Above: 1888 map of the Grants Bend region. R. top: Morning View Station. R. Bottom: two views of the tunnels.

Courtesy www.nkyviews.com



An important standardization change during this time dealt with track width. During the 1800's, most railroads in the South, including the Covington and Lexington Railroad, used a 5' gauge for its rails while Northern railroads used a standard 4'8 1/2" or 4'9" gauge.²² In order to have conformity with its connecting railroads to the East, the Huntington interests adopted the 4' 9" gauge for the Kentucky Central In 1881. Five years later, Southern railroads, led in part by the Louisville and Nashville Railroad, decided to adopt the 4'9" gauge as a whole. The Louisville and Nashville Railroad made that change in one day - Sunday, May 30, 1886 - when train traffic was stopped and 8000 men labored to alter 2000 miles of track. This was accomplished by presetting the interior spikes for the new rail and removing alternate interior spikes on the existing rail. On the actual day of the conversion, the west rail was slid over three inches and the new exterior spikes put in place. Narrow tunnels presented a special problem as it was sometimes necessary to move both rails 1 1/2 inches inward.²³ It is quite possible that the tunnel at Grants Bend had presented such a problem in the earlier 1881 conversion.

Another transportation advancement, however, would have a much larger impact on Grants Bend. Larger locomotives and railway cars were being built, challenging the dimensions of bridges and tunnels constructed years before. As a result, a major reconstruction of the Grants Bend tunnel began in 1905. Two hundred men, living in tents on the worksite and working with drills and dynamite, labored in crouched positions to both widen and raise the dimensions of the tunnel an additional four feet.²⁴ The old brick ceiling and stone walls were removed by blasting and replaced with solid concrete. Because of trouble securing laborers, the construction superintendent noted that "all of the brick that is being taken from the tunnel is being thrown over the embankment, for the reason that I can get no one to pick up the brick and clean them." The same superintendent also stated that he had built and reconstructed many tunnels, but that Grants Bend tunnel was "the biggest of them all."²⁵

With work going on day and night, the project progressed quickly. On March 8, 1907, the *Kentucky Post* reported that 600 feet of the new work had been

KENTUCKY CENTRAL

RAILROAD,

DEPOT

Eighth and Washington Streets.

SHORTEST AND QUICKEST ROUTE TO
FRANKFORT, RICHMOND,
WINCHESTER, MT. STERLING,
LEXINGTON, and MAYSVILLE.

TO LEXINGTON.

LEAVE.	No. 1		No. 3		No. 5		No. 7	
	A. M.	P. M.	A. M.	P. M.	A. M.	P. M.	A. M.	P. M.
Covington	7.15	2.00	7.15	2.00	5.55	12.00		
Culbertson	7.35	2.20	7.35	2.20	6.20	12.20	A. M.	
Ryland	7.49	2.35	7.49	2.35	6.35	12.35		
Visalia	7.54	2.41	7.54	2.41	6.41	12.41		
Benton	8.03	2.51	8.03	2.51	6.53	12.52		
Morning View	8.10	2.59	8.10	2.59	7.01	1.00		
Damossville	8.19	3.10	8.19	3.10	7.14	1.12		
Butler	8.27	3.20	8.27	3.20	7.25	1.24		
Boston	8.34	3.27	8.34	3.27		1.31		
Falmouth	8.55	3.50	8.55	3.50		1.57		
Cynthiana	10.05	5.02	10.05	5.02		3.20		
Paris	10.43	5.41	10.43	5.41		4.05		
Lexington	11.30	6.30	11.30	6.30		5.00		

Reclining chair car attached to No. 7.

No. 1 connects at Lexington for Frankfort, Mt. Sterling, Winchester and Richmond.

No. 3 connects at Paris for Maysville and Flemingsburg, at Lexington for Danville, Winchester and Mt. Sterling.

No. 7 at Lexington for Frankfort, arriving there at 8.15 a. m.

TO CINCINNATI.

LEAVE.	No. 4		No. 8		No. 2		No. 6	
	A. M.	P. M.	A. M.	P. M.	A. M.	P. M.	A. M.	P. M.
Lexington	5.00	8.00	5.00	8.00	2.00			
Paris	5.50	8.30	5.50	8.30	2.47			
Cynthiana	6.23	9.10	6.23	9.10	3.25			
Falmouth	7.37	10.08	7.37	10.08	4.29			
Boston	8.03		8.03		4.52			
Butler	8.10		8.10		4.58	5.45		
Damossville	8.19		8.19		5.07	5.57		
Morning View	8.30		8.30		5.10	6.09		
Benton	8.38		8.38		5.22	6.16		
Visalia	8.49		8.49		5.31	6.30		
Ryland	8.55		8.55		5.38	6.36		
Culbertson	9.10		9.10		5.51	6.52		
Covington	9.30	11.30	9.30	11.30	6.10	7.15		

Where no time is given, trains do not stop.

No. 2 makes close connection with all trains going East, North and West.

No. 8 makes connections at Paris with trains from Maysville and all points on Maysville Division.

Reclining Chairs coach on No. 8.

Ticket Offices: Barnet House, Grand Hotel and Depot in Covington.

JAMES C. ERNST,
General Passenger and Ticket Agent.

Typical train schedule for the Kentucky Central Railroad, this one printed in the *Daily Commonwealth* of September 1879

Courtesy Kenton County Public Library

completed.²⁶ The *Cincinnati Enquirer* reported on January 23, 1908, that the reconstruction would be completed that day and that “a number of officials will inspect the work.” When completed, it was estimated that the work on the new tunnel had cost a total of \$200,000.²⁸

Reconstruction of the 1853 tunnel, however, was only the beginning of major work at Grants Bend. To accommodate rail traffic going both north and south, the Louisville and Nashville Railroad decided to build a second tunnel. The new tunnel was to be constructed immediately to the east of the original (now reconstructed) tunnel, but it would not be exactly parallel. The original tunnel was a straight line, permitting the viewer to see from one end to the other. Although the south portal of the new tunnel was immediately adjacent to the south portal of the original tunnel, the new tunnel would angle slightly to the east before making a curve to the west prior to exiting the north portal. As a result, one looking into the second tunnel would only see darkness and not a light at the other end. Also, while the two south portals could be viewed together, the north portals would be separated by a few hundred feet and not visible to each other. Because the differing exits at the north portals, the new tunnel – at 2,100 feet – would be slightly shorter than the original.²⁹

The construction contract was awarded to Boxley Brothers which began work from each end of the proposed tunnel in the summer of 1911. Periodic newspaper articles reported on the progress of that construction as well as the work laying a second set of tracks along the length of the line.³⁰ In December 1911, slippage of earth at Grants Bend near the Licking River caused a delay in construction until “experts from the East” could determine the cause of the slippage.³¹ The crews digging the tunnel met in the middle in February 1912, and the finishing concrete work followed.³² The new tunnel, completed in the autumn of 1912, cost about \$225,000.³³

The work on both tunnels was not without human cost. Although there is no readily available information on the construction of the original tunnel in the 1850's, the work in the early 1900's did result in both injuries and the loss of life. A newspa-

per report on the reconstruction of the original tunnel noted that only one man was killed during that work, “and that occurred when there was not the least danger imminent.”³⁴ There was no further explanation of that statement. In July 1910, a Kenton County jury awarded J.H. Runyon \$1,950 for injuries suffered during the reconstruction – evidence that accidents did occur.³⁵

Other accounts suggest that the Licking River itself presented an equal hazard for workers. In July 1906, the *Cincinnati Enquirer* reported that a “negro employed in reconstructing the L. and N. tunnel near Grant's Bend” drowned in the river.³⁶ A similar drowning report in July 1907 provided more dramatic detail. W.H. McGee, an assistant foreman on the reconstruction project, left the workers' camp on a weekend day “to go to a road house on the other side of the river.” When word reached the camp that “trouble was brewing on the other side,” two other workers set off in a skiff to bring McKee back to camp. Unfortunately, the rescue effort failed. The skiff capsized on the return trip, and McKee, who could not swim, was lost.³⁷

The construction of the second tunnel likewise resulted in the loss of life. Viola Ferdinand, a 41-year-old Hungarian, was injured by falling rock in 1911. Taken to St. Elizabeth Hospital, he developed pneumonia and died a few days later.³⁸ The more sensationally reported death, however, was that of Thomas F. Haywood, a 28-year-old civil engineer from Cove City, N.C., employed by Boxley Brothers as the resident engineer on the construction project. While taking notes on October 23, 1912, he failed to hear the approach of a train exiting the old tunnel “at a very rapid rate of speed.” The train struck him from behind, throwing his body “a great distance.” The top of his head having “been completely severed”, he quickly died.³⁹ Compared with this, Walter Stephens of Covington was fortunate in suffering only a wrenched back and a fractured left leg in a twenty-foot fall at the tunnel earlier that same year.⁴⁰

With the completion of the new tunnel in 1912, construction at Grants Bend ended. Although passenger service and local trains are a thing of the past, freight trains have continued to use the tunnels

on a daily basis for now over a century. Although the tracks may look the same, the name of the company operating the rail system has, as it had in the 1800's, undergone several name changes. The Louisville and Nashville Railroad, which at one time had exerted tremendous influence in the politics and economy of Kentucky became a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Seaboard Coastline Railroad in 1971. It was completely merged into the Seaboard System Railroad in 1982, ending its 132-year existence. The Seaboard System Railroad in turn merged with The Chessie System in 1986 to become CSX Transportation - the present operator of the rail traffic through Grants Bend.⁴¹

Today, Grants Bend retains its isolated character. A sparse mixture of houses can be found, but they are built back from the road and apart from each other and driving on the narrow roads is a lonely experience. The northern portals of the tunnels cannot be seen from any roadway, and one wishing to see them must find a place to park and then hike along the rails for a moderate distance. The southern portals of the twin tunnels, on the other hand, are easily seen from the only road in Grants Bend that actually crosses the tracks. Although remote, it is clear that all of the portals and the tunnels themselves attract attention from railroad enthusiasts and the occasional thrill-seeker.⁴² Graffiti is found at all the portals and extends briefly into the tunnels. The arched ceilings have been blackened by the passage of thousands of trains through the dark interiors. One can see the distant light of the far end in the original tunnel, but the view into the newer tunnel quickly fades into darkness. If one is lucky, you may witness a freight train entering or exiting one of the tunnels, its horn announcing the beginning or end of yet another passage and the sole crossing gate flashing its warning

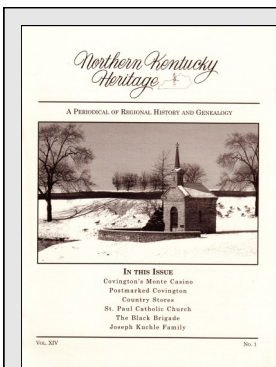
lights. But one generally hears nothing, and the tunnels remain silent.

As one might expect, there is a ghost story associated with Grants Bend. Allegedly, a man - either a railroad employee or a person walking along the tracks - was struck and killed in the 1930's by a passing train. The story is that he may sometimes be seen walking near one of the tunnel entrances carrying a lantern, searching for something unknown to the living.⁴³ Perhaps there is a basis for the story. Following a heavy rainstorm in 1925, an engine and a baggage car plunged over a hill at Grants Bend, killing two of the crewman and injuring another.⁴⁴ Or, perhaps, the story simply arises from fertile minds stimulated by the isolation and mysterious allure of the tunnels.

What cannot be denied, however, is a silent, lingering sense of the presence of hundreds of workers who lived in camps in the area and labored on these narrow passages through the towering earth above and the thousands of trainmen who have traversed the tunnels for well over 150 years. There are no plaques or other markers noting who these men were or the labors they performed. With rare exceptions, their names are lost to history. The tunnels, still used daily by succeeding generations, are the only monuments to their memories and to their contributions to rail transportation in Northern Kentucky.

About the Author

Dennis Harrell is a retired attorney who lives in Independence, Kentucky. He is presently a Board member of the KCHS, the archivist at Christ Church Cathedral in Cincinnati, and a volunteer at the Kenton County Public Library. This is his first submission for the *Bulletin*.



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Endnotes

1. Grants Bend can be found spelled both with and without an apostrophe. For simplicity's sake, this article omits the apostrophe except in direct quotations or citations where it is used in the original source.
2. See Jack Wessling, "The Grant Family," *The Encyclopedia of Northern Kentucky* (Univ. of Kentucky Press 2009), at 416-17; Robert M. Rennick, *Kentucky Place Names* (Univ. of Kentucky Press 1984), at 122. The history and adventures of this large family and its influence on Northern Kentucky is fascinating, but far beyond the scope of this article. The family also lent their name to the settlement of Grants Lick (founded about 1800) in Campbell County and to Grant County (established in 1820), although there seems to be some confusion as to which family member or combination thereof should be credited with each honor. See Rennick, *Kentucky Place Names*, *supra*; Jim Reis, *Pieces of the Past 1*, (Kentucky Post 1988), at 142.
3. Both the ruins of the house and the cemetery are on private land. Pictures can be accessed through the Kenton County Library website at www.kentonlibrary.org/genphotos/index.php?q=Errondale. A list of the known burials in and views of various stones in the cemetery can be found by searching for Grant Family Cemetery, Kenton County, Kentucky, on the website www.findagrave.com. It is noted that the cemetery is still active, receiving burials as recently as 2005.
4. See Robert M. Rennick, *The Post Offices of Northern Kentucky* (The Depot, Lake Grove, OR. 2004), at 120-21, for a history of the various post offices and postmasters serving Grants Bend. The actual location of the post office moved for various reasons. One move from Ryland to Grants Bend in 1879 resulted from the postmaster at Ryland Station deciding he could "make more money picking strawberries" that summer. "The Post-office at Ryland Station," *The Daily Commonwealth*, May 10, 1879, at 1.
5. Lamb's Ferry Road is the main road leading to the southern portion of Grants Bend. A ferry at this point on the Licking River makes sense because the railroad stop at Grants Bend was "a loading station for much of the farm produce from the area." Elaine Grift Voorhees, *Ryland: The First 100 Years* (Graphic Information Systems, Inc., Cincinnati, O. 1992), at 1.
6. An 1883 atlas shows School No. 21 in the center of Grants Bend. See *An Atlas of Boone, Kenton and Campbell Counties, Kentucky*, (D.J. Lake & Co., Phila., PA., 1883), at 43. A list of teachers compiled in 1894 shows a total of 54 white schools (numbered 1-54) and 6 black schools (lettered A-F) in Kenton County. J.A. Caywood, *A Brief Sketch of the Development of the Kenton County School System* (1957), Table III.
7. Louis E. Arnold, *Plat of Ryland Kentucky from an Aerial Photograph* (Hand-drawn Map 1946) (copy in possession of author). This map places the burial ground near Arrowhead Farm Road near the neck of Grants Bend.
8. Surveys made in the 1980's reported at least two other cemeteries. Martin Cemetery clearly indicated in the 1883 map, still has the one reported standing headstone and several field stone markers. Lamb Cemetery had two headstones and several field stone markers. The author has not been able to locate this cemetery which no doubt would have been on private property.
9. For more detailed descriptions of these early efforts, see Paul A. Tenkotte, James C. Claypool, and David E. Schroeder, *Gateway City: Covington, Kentucky, 1815-2015* (Clerisy Press, Covington, KY., 2015), at 36-37; Joseph F. Gastright, *The Making of the Kentucky Central . . . Part 1*, Kenton County Historical Society Quarterly Review, July 1983 (available at www.kentoncountyhistoricalsociety.org/bulletin-archives/).
10. *Gateway City*, *supra*, at 37-38; Paul Tenkotte, *Vital Link to the Bluegrass: The Covington and Louisville Railroad* (1981), at 7-8.
11. Topographical maps show the level of the Licking River around Grants Bend as being below 500 feet above sea level. The hills at the neck of Grants Bend reach heights up to 850 feet.
12. *Gateway City*, *supra*, at 38. The other tunnel needed along the Kenton County portion of the Covington and Lexington Railroad located at Buena Vista, just north of present-day Latonia. That tunnel, which no longer exists, was much shorter in length. Two other tunnels were built in Kenton County just north of Independence for another railroad line. One of these – the Fleming Hill Tunnel – was 600 feet in length. "Covington and Louisville Railroad," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, April 1, 1867, at 1.
13. Webpage, "Grant's Bend Tunnel", at www.cincinnati-transit.net/grantsbend.htm.
14. *Gateway City*, *supra*, at 38.
15. "A Ride through the Tunnel," *The Covington Journal*, July 2, 1853, at 3.
16. "Dr. Armstrong's 92d Birthday Celebrated in Old Log House," *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, September 12, 1915, at 10.
17. *Gateway City*, *supra*, at 38-39.
18. *An Atlas of Boone, Kenton and Campbell Counties*, *supra*, at 43.
19. This club still exists today as the Ryland Lakes Country Club. At the time of its creation, the only way to reach the club grounds was by means of the railroad. Webpage, "Ryland Lakes Country Club," www.rylandlakescountryclub.com. The club history notes that "as many as 150 tickets were sold [at the Ryland Station] on Sunday," and that the "railroad kept one coach empty for Rylanders with their picnic baskets and 'minnie' buckets topped with ice to keep the minnow bait alive." *Ryland: The First 100 Years*, *supra*, at 7.
20. Kincaid A. Herr, *The Louisville and Nashville Railroad 1850-1963* (Univ. of Kentucky Press 2000 ed.), at 116.
21. The long and convoluted history of the Kentucky Central Railroad, including a decades-long court battle, competing boards of directors, and both personal and civil questionable financial maneuvering, is detailed in a three-part series published by the Kenton County Historical Society. See Joseph F. Gastright, *The Making of the Kentucky Central*, Kenton County Historical Society Quarterly Review, July 1983, Spring 1984, and Spring 1985 (available online at www.kentoncountyhistoricalsociety.org/bulletin-archives/). See also Herr, *supra*, at 116-17; Maury Klein, *History of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad*, (Macmillan Co., N.Y. 1972), at 296-97.
22. Herr, *supra*, at 78; Klein, *supra*, at 315-317; Tenkotte, *Vital link to the Bluegrass*, *supra*, at 8. Ironically, the Covington and Lexington Railroad had found it necessary to widen some track from a 4' 9" gauge to a 5' gauge when it took possession of a portion of the Maysville and Lexington Railroad in 1855. See *Fifth Annual Report to the Stockholders of the Covington and Lexington Railroad* (Covington Journal Office, 1855), at 33 (Track Superintendent's Report).
23. Herr, *supra*, at 78-83; Klein, *supra*, at 317-320. In 1896, the American Railroad Association recommended that all tracks use the 4' 9 1/2" gauge – the standard that is used today. Klein at 320.
24. "Rebuilding Tunnel," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, April 22, 1906, at 6; "Rebuilding Big Tunnel," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, March 8, 1907, at 5; "Tunnel Completed," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, January 23, 1908, at 7.
25. "Rebuilding Big Tunnel," *supra*.
26. "Rebuilding Big Tunnel," *supra*.
27. "Tunnel Completed," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, January 23, 1908, at 7. On January 28, 1908, a northbound baggage car jumped the track at the tunnel, requiring a wrecking engine to be sent from Covington. "Train Jumps Tracks at Tunnel," *Kentucky Post*, January 29, 1908, at 2. It is not recorded if this mishap inconvenienced the inspection.
28. "Tunnel Completed," *supra*.
29. "Tunnel Work Progresses," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, February 22, 1912, at 8.
30. "Work is Started on Grant's Bend Tunnel by the Louisville and Nashville," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, July 4, 1911, at 13; "Train Service," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, December 6, 1911, at 9; "Tunnel Work Progresses," *supra*; "L. & N. Tunnel Work at Grant's Bend Progresses," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, July 5, 1912, at 14; "L. & N. Tunnel Nearly Done," *Kentucky Post*, August 7, 1912, at 2; "Tunnel Work on Railroad Completed," *Kentucky Times Star*, August 7, 1912, at 10.
31. "Slipping Earth Delays Work on Grant's Bend Tunnel," *Cincinnati*

A Look Back at The Headlines

An on-going feature reliving local headlines.

This issue features:

The Daily Commonwealth – December 13, 1884.

Our History

Kentucky was simply Kentucky County, Virginia as late as 1780, when it was divided into Jefferson, Fayette and Lincoln counties. Kentucky was not admitted as a state until February 4, 1791. Campbell County was formed from parts of Fayette in 1794 and the first county seat was at Wilmington on the Licking River, about 22 miles south of Newport. The county seat was fixed at Visalia in 1827, on the idea of having it in the center of the county. Newport later became the county seat and in 1840 Kenton County was established, with Independence as the county seat.

Local News Items

The river is still rising with over eight feet of water in the channel.

Pure candies available at Echerts.

Best quality of headlamp oil 15 cents per gallon, delivered to all parts of the city by Nodler.

M.C. Motch is the best place to buy spectacles.

Capt. T.B. Matthews is minus a wonderful overcoat, purloined by some sneak thieves from the Internal Revenue Service.

Buy your silk mufflers and fine gloves at Keuven.

P.B. Rice & Co., the livery stable men at 4th and Madison streets, hired a horse and buggy Thursday to two young men. The buggy was found yesterday completely destroyed but the buggy and two men are still missing.

Fresh nuts & caramels at Echert's, 4th and Madison.

Enquirer, November 7, 1911, at 9.

32. "Center of New Tunnel," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, April 27, 1912, at 7.

33. "L. & N. Tunnel Nearly Done," *Kentucky Post*, August 7, 1912, at 2; "Tunnel Work of Railroad Completed," *Kentucky Times-Star*, August 7, 1912, at 10.

34. "Tunnel Nearing Completion," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, August 17, 1907, at 10. See also "Rebuilding Big Tunnel," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, March 8, 1907, at 5 (Superintendent states he "never had a man injured or killed in my 32 years of this sort of work, until the other day . . ."); "Rebuilding Tunnel," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, September 28, 1907, at 5 ("But one serious accident has occurred.").

35. "Runyon Gets Verdict," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, February 12, 1910, at 11.

36. "Clarence Deal," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, July 5, 1906, at 10. This is one of the few references to the ethnic background of the workers of the railroad projects. Local historian John Burns wrote that the crews which laid the original tracks in the 1850's were largely Irish, a fact apparently leading to at least one notable brawl south of Covington. John E. Burns, *A Short History of Covington, Kentucky Through 1865* (Karl J. Lietzenmayer, ed.) (Kenton County Historical Society 2012), at 165. As suggested by the drowning recounted in the text, there is evidence that many of the workers in the early 1900's were black. In discussing a storm that hit the Grants Bend construction area in July 1907, one newspaper account noted that "the negroes fled to their huts." "No Serious Damage," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, July 8, 1907, at 7. In a 1911 cave-in at the Buena Vista tunnel site near Latonia, the newspapers reported that "about 25 negroes [were] at work" during the accident. Two men died. Both were black laborers – one from Virginia and one from Alabama. "1 Killed: 4 Injured in Tunnel Cave-in," *Kentucky Post*, July 25, 1911, at 3; "Another Victim of Tunnel Accident," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, July 26, 1911, at 4.

37. "One Drowned," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, July 16, 1907, at 11.

38. "Hurt in Tunnel at Grants Bend in Kentucky," *Kentucky Post*, September 19, 1911, at 3.

39. "His Head Severed," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, October 24, 1912, at 9; "Tunnel Engineer Killed by Train," *Kentucky Post*, October 23, 1912, at 1.

40. "Fell From Trestle," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, April 27, 1912, at 15.

41. Charles B. Castner, *A Brief History of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad*, found at www.lnrr.org/History.aspx.

42. Several videos taken at and in the tunnels can be found on the internet. These can be found by typing either "Grants Bend Tunnel" or "Lamb's Ferry Tunnel" in your browser or at www.youtube.com.

43. See "12 Creepy Urban Legends Around Kentucky," at www.onlyinyourstate.com/kentucky/urban-legend-ky/; "The Twin Train Tunnels," at www.creepycincinnati.com/2011/11/05/the-twin-train-tunnels.

44. "Train Wreck," *Kentucky Post*, February 24, 1925, at 1.

Want to be Published?

We are always looking for material for the *Bulletin*, as well as *Northern Kentucky Heritage* magazine.

To submit an article for the *Bulletin*, send a paper copy by mail, or email it as a Word document to the address below.

(less than 500 words with at least two references)

Articles for the magazine should be more than 500 words and have full endnotes, as well as several images or graphics.

nkyhist@zoomtown.com.

P.O. Box 641, Covington, KY 41012

Then and Now



Left: Aerial view of the Coach & Four restaurant being razed in 2003.
Now standing on that spot is the Ascent at Roebling Bridge.

Left photo courtesy Cincinnati Enquirer, right courtesy Wikipedia.com



Mystery Photo

Can you identify the mystery photo below? The answer can be found at the bottom of the page.



ANSWER:

A small portion of the sign atop Giuseppe's Neighborhood Pizza, just south of
15th and Madison streets, Covington.

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I Bet You Didn't Know

*Tidbits from Kentucky's heritage
for every day of the calendar year*

May 5, 1973: *Secretariat* became the first horse to run the Kentucky Derby in under two minutes.

May 15, 1900: An 11,520 ton battleship, the *USS Kentucky*, was commissioned for service. It was scrapped in 1924.

May 28, 1977: 169 people were killed and nearly 100 more were injured in a fire at the Beverly Hills Supper Club in Southgate. 2017 marks the 40th Anniversary of what remains Kentucky's worst disaster.

June 11, 1864: Half the town of Cynthiana was destroyed in the 2nd Civil war fought there.

June 26, 1959: "The Stephen Foster Story," by Paul Green, premiered at the outdoor theater at *My Old Kentucky Home* in Bardstown.

"On This Day In Kentucky" — Robert Powell

Programs and Notices

Upcoming KCHS Events

Robert Webster, author of *The Beverly Hills Supper Club, The Untold Story Behind Kentucky's Worst Tragedy*, will review the history of Beverly Hills, and the fire itself. 169 people were killed 40 years ago on May 28, 1977. Mr. Webster will do a PowerPoint presentation beginning at 10:30 AM. The date for the program will be Saturday, May 20, the place will be the Kenton County Public Library, Erlanger Branch. The program will be free and open to the public.

The Kenton County Historical Society will again have its own booth at Roebing Fest, near the Roebing Suspension Bridge, at Court Street, Covington, Saturday, June 17, 10:30-5:30. The event is free.

The Kenton County Historical Society will again have its own booth at the Kenton County Fair in the evenings from Monday, July 10th through Friday, July 15th.

The Kenton County Historical Society will celebrate its 40th anniversary with a picnic. It will be at one of the shelters in Kenton County's Pioneer Park on Saturday, July 15, 2017, noon to 4:00 PM. Pioneer Park is located at 3951 Madison Pike, Highway 17, along Banklick Creek. Members, friends and the public are invited.

Behringer Crawford Museum

"Culture Bites: Northern Kentucky's Food Traditions," will open April 21st and run through August 31st. Students from NKU's Public History department built the exhibit. It will feature innumerable artifacts; many borrowed, many taken from the museum's collections.

The Behringer Crawford Museum will again present its annual music concert series - a variety of ensembles - brass band, Blues, Jazz, Bluegrass, Celtic and other folk flavors. The weekly schedule will run from May 25th through August 10 on Thursday evenings. The doors open at 6:00. The performers begin at 7:00. Food from the Colonial Cottage restaurant can be purchased throughout the evening, and drinks from the cash bar and also soft drinks and bottled water. Reality Tuesday Café will donate unsweetened ice tea, available without charge. Adults \$5.00, children (3-12 years) \$3.00. Check the museum web site and social media.