7-2005

Landmark Report (Vol. 25, no. 1)

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The Cedar Ridge Neighborhood

(Editors Note: The last paragraph of this article explains how this document was created. The research led to a significant treatise, which Sue has condensed into the following article. Sue has lived in Cedar Ridge at 338 Marylon since 1977. Bowling Green needs more research done on its historic neighborhoods. The photos are courtesy of Robin Zeigler of the Bowling Green-Warren County Historic Preservation Board)

Outside the city limits until 1950 and consisting primarily of farmland prior to about 1920, the Cedar Ridge Neighborhood (CRN) was located approximately one and one-half miles from the downtown business district. The advent of the automobile, followed by the accessibility of Federal Housing Acts in the 1930's and, ultimately, the post-World War II housing boom, all contributed to the development of subdivisions like the Cedar Ridge Neighborhood. Post World War II brought a great deal of growth to the nation and Bowling Green was no exception. The progression of CRN single-family residential construction is summarized in the table below.

The farm in the area between Nashville Road, University Boulevard, and Normal belonged to William J. "Uncle Billy" Craig. Craig Avenue bears the name of "Uncle Billy" Craig, and he built and lived in the home at 1933 Nashville Road. A farm owned by J.B. Sumpter was adjacent to the Craig farm. The Sumpter farm was bordered on the north by Western Kentucky State Normal School, on the west by the Old Russellville Road (now Creason Street,) and continued south to include the area now comprising the Crume Nature Park. Mr. Sumpter and Mr. Craig took land from their farms and opened what is now Sumpter Avenue. Barbara Stephens, widow of Dr. H.L. Stephens, related that when Walter Nalbach and her husband wished to purchase land for homes (511 and 517 Sumpter), Uncle Billy Craig agreed to sell them the land and put in the street if they would make sure that the street was named for him. Craig Avenue originally continued to the intersection of Normal, and the street became Sumpter Avenue from the Normal intersection to the Old Russellville Rd. Some years later the city of Bowling Green renamed the east-west portion of Craig to Sumpter, although Dr. Stephens refused to acknowledge the name change during his lifetime.

J.D. Sumpter's daughter and son-in-law, Mary Sumpter Gregory and John Dallas Gregory, were the next owners of the Sumpter farm. In 1935, the Gregory's tore down the J.D. Sumpter family home and re-built with only the basement from the original structure remaining. This Tudor style single-family home is located at 1904 Creason. According to the Gregory's daughter, Lucille Harris, the portion of the Sumpter farm now comprising Marylon and Sumpter Avenues west of the Normal intersection was used for growing strawberries commercially. The

Age data (years), single-family residences*, CRN**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Average Age</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>n=</th>
<th>Acreage</th>
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<td>11</td>
<td>21.73</td>
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<tr>
<td>Normal</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>50-79</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>67</td>
<td>46-85</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>15.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>53-72</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.09</td>
</tr>
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<td>58</td>
<td>43-95</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5.22</td>
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<tr>
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<td>58</td>
<td>44-90</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10.62</td>
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<td>57</td>
<td>51-62</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>40-68</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6.90</td>
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<td>Craig</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>43-70</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>42</td>
<td>11-71</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>25.51</td>
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* Includes single-family structures on property zoned RM.
** Determined from Warren County PVA database.
The Landmark Association of Bowling Green-Warren County

A non-profit organization established in 1976 as a community advocate for preservation, protection and maintenance of architectural, cultural and archaeological resources in Bowling Green and Warren County.

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Landmark Report is published three times a year by:
The Landmark Association of Bowling Green - Warren County P.O. Box 1812
Bowling Green, KY 42101
(270) 782-0037

Landmark Report encourages unsolicited articles or suggestions for articles and will consider all for publication.

Printed by:
Liberty Group

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Architectural Details

Warren County Preserves, an HPB and Insight Communications production about historic preservation and the history of the area, airs daily on Channel 5: 8pm and 10pm, Saturday at 10:30am, 1pm & 6pm and Sunday at 10am, 4:30pm & 6:30pm.

You may have noticed from the front cover that our little newsletter has been published for over 25 years now. WOW! Next year the Association will celebrate its 30th birthday. Newsletters often do not have long tenures. In its first newsletter a similar group in Bowling Green noted: "Typically newsletters have a life expectancy of 2 to 3 years, then they seem to just fade away, possibly due to a whole host of reasons. Certainly, we hope this fate escapes our effort." It was the only issue of that newsletter ever published. Twenty-five years is a signal success for the Landmark Association!

Recently Sue Spurlock came across a receipt of some interest to Bowling Green history buffs. Because of its odd location, the editor wants to make note of it. The receipt is found on a microfilm reel entitled "Warren County, Kentucky Marriages, Wills, Deeds, vol. H-L, 1796-1880" (Drawer 30, Roll 44, Frame 851). The receipt is to Judge William H. Payne, who at the time was Warren County Court Judge. He was being charged by H.B. Froyer for advertising the call for bids on a "New Jail" to be constructed in 1858. The fee was for two different advertisements, the first being for a called meeting of "The Justices of the Peace of Warren County...on the FIRST MONDAY IN JUNE, for the purpose of further action of the Court upon the subject of the Warren county Jail." This advertisement was inserted in the paper three times and Mr. Froyer charged $1.50. In August the court advertised for "SEALED PROPOSALS FROM CONTRACTORS to build a new jail in Bowling-green" and "to supersede the same." The ad goes on to give us the following details about the intended structure: Said Jail is to be 37 1/2 by 35 feet from out to out, with partition

The Cedar Ridge Neighborhood (cont'd)

Gregory's plotted and sold the lots for Marylan Place subdivision, the properties located on Marylan Avenue.

Prior to the late 1950s, Cedar Ridge extended from Sumpter only as far as the intersection of Cedar Ridge and Woodland. Oscar Uhl purchased a rather large tract of land from the Gregors and in 1934 built his own family home at 1843 Cedar Ridge Road, the oldest home on the street. From this property, theUhls conveyed lots now numbered 1847, 1859, and 1865 Cedar Ridge; 407 and 415 Sumpter; and 500 and 501 Woodland to other families for constructions of several family residences.

The oldest home in the CRN focal point is located at 2111 Nashville Road. According to PVA records, the home was built in 1890 by Samuel A. and Elizabeth V. Smith Walker. Mr. Walker returned to his native Bowling Green from Denver, Colorado, and was considered one of Bowling Green’s leading businessmen, serving as director of the Bowling Green Trust Company from its incorporation in 1911 until his death in 1921. When Elizabeth Walker died in 1913, Samuel Walker had the Main Street limestone arch at Fountain Square Park erected in her memory. The Walker property was then transferred through a series of owners, M.A. Moyes, Pat L. and Louise Patterson, and Joseph L and Louelle McElwain. Rhea G. and Catherine Cox Price purchased the property in 1927. Mr. Price was a highway contractor who moved many of Bowling Green’s streets in the 1920’s and was for several years the superintendent and vice-president of the Kentucky Rock Asphalt Company. In the mid-1930s the house became the property of Rhea Price’s daughter and son-in-law, Christine Price Lazarus and Harry R. Lazarus, Jr. According to Rhea Lazarus, Christine and Harry’s son John next owned the property, his father’s farm consisted of approximately 16 acres. The Walker-Lazarus farm adjoined the Sumpter farm on the west and extended south along Nashville Road. A stone fence which may be seen behind some of the homes on Lansdale marked the northern boundary of the property. The fence was rebuilt by the current owners, Gary and Dianne Howerton, after they purchased the property in 1988. The area comprising Woodland and Lansdale is shown on old City maps as the Briggs Addition. The oldest home in the Briggs Addition is the Bower property located at 510 Lansdale. A deed search of this property shows that the property has been divided and sold at least twenty-one times, but Robin M. Briggs owned the property from 1921-1936. The age of many of the residences in this area lead one to surmise that Mr. Briggs’ holdings may have been more extensive than the single residence, and that the Briggs addition noted on the maps got its name from him.

The newest residential area in the CRN occurred when Cedar Ridge was extended during the late 1950’s and early 1960’s. Harry Lazarus sold four lots at 1909, 1921, 1923 and 1925 Cedar Ridge, and additional lots for the Cedar Ridge extension came from the original Sumpter-Gregory property. As the CRN focal point area began to undergo development as a low density, single-family residential continued on page 4

300-302 Marylan
304 Sumpter
305 Sumpter
306 Sumpter
309 Sumpter
315 Marylan

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306 Sumpter
309 Sumpter
315 Marylan

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consisting predominantly of owner-occupied, single-family residences with very little undeveloped property.

Other features of the CRN, excluding residential properties, include the Crume Nature Park, Unitarian Universalist Church, W.R. McNell Elementary School, and several WKU properties: the former Jones-Jaggers Laboratory School, three parking lots, a softball complex, a soccer field and one vacant lot.

An extensive floodplain, known in the neighborhood as "The Valley," parcels of which are owned by bordering residents on Cedar Ridge, Marylan, and Creason is surrounded by "The Ridge" where cedar trees are abundant. Flood plains also parallel portions of Sumpter and Nashville Road.

It is not uncommon for many of the residents within the CRN to develop strong emotional attachments to the neighborhood. David Lyne currently resides in the home on Marylan which was built by his father, and Poul Durbin resides in the Marylan Avenue home built by his grandparents.

The home located at 335 Sumpter is venerated in a local chant, also known as burr rock. Although fairly common in other parts of the city, this residence is the only house within the CRN with a chant venerate. At least one home located at 516 Sumpter is a prefabricated Gunnison House. The push for quick construction of affordable homes after World War II encouraged several companies to design prefabricated housing. Foster Gunnison, a lighting designer and manufacturer from New York, designed and developed a process that United States Steel later purchased and marketed. The walls are made with thinner than traditional construction since they are a sandwich of wood panels and insulation fused together. The house was delivered to the site in prefabricated sections, with doors and windows included, and were bolted together.

Several of the homes within the CRN were designed by James Ingram, a locally prominent...
The Cedar Ridge Neighborhood (cont’d)

Pickles-Adams Home

This lovely home at 321 Sumpter Avenue is one of the older homes in the Cedar Ridge Neighborhood. James Henry (J.H.) Pickles built the home around 1929 for he and his family. Mr. Pickles was born in Yorkshire, England, the son of William and Elizabeth Utley Pickles. He migrated to the United States in 1891 where began a career in stone cutting under his uncle, Samuel Pickles. We do know that Samuel was a stonemason and ran a contracting business in Jackson, Michigan. Samuel and J.H. moved to Bowling Green in 1912 where the elder served as the president of the Bowling Green Granite Company, the business that owned the Whitestone Quarry and eventually operated the Southern Cut Stone Company. J.H. eventually became secretary and manager of the latter. He lived in Delafield, close to the plant, for several years before deciding to build a new home.

The home that James H. and Esther Pickles built is of masonry construction with beautiful limestone details, including widow silhouettes, ornamental gables, and a gorgeous door surround crowned with a broken pediment and urn. The Pickles did not live here long, as the 1937 and 1941

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1912 Newspaper Reports Ghostly Legends of Vinegar Hill

Annotations by Lynn Niedermier

Like many schools, Western has its share of ghost stories, tales that evoke the spectral presences of suicidal coeds, accident-prone maintenance workers and long-dead but still-loyal employees. As a correspondent for the Bowling Green Messenger, I became familiar in 1912, however, the Hill was haunted long before Western's arrival. Seeking out one Charles L. Jones, who had just sold his property after a 45-year residence nearby, the reporter absorbed "Old Charley's" fascinating, albeit well-worn, tale of the tragic and unsavory events that turned "Vinegar Hill" into a cauldron of restless, even malevolent spirits. Portions of the December 19, 1912 article, with commentary in italics, follow.

Yesterday, Charles L. Jones, a very respectable old colored man, who founded Jonesville in 1867, sold all his holdings on "Vinegar Hill" for the sum of one thousand and fifty dollars to Perry Hill, of Barren County. Jonesville was an African-American community located on the west side of what is now Western's campus. Although Mr. Jones's claim is one of several regarding its precise origin and age, Jonesville thrived into the mid-1960s when residents were evicted, under the guise of "urban renewal," to accommodate Western's expansion plans (see Landmark Report, June 1999). Ironically, no record of an actual deed between Mr. Jones and his purchaser, Perry Hill, can be found. When he rounded Jonesville and planted it on the west side of "Vinegar Hill," there were no buildings of any kind on the hill.

Looming over Bowling Green, a town of about 4,500 in 1867, Vinegar Hill had yet to be civilized. At its crest 232 feet above the Barren River, it might have afforded a lovely view of the surrounding countryside but its thick covering of cedars, underbrush and limestone outcroppings marked it as a mysterious, even dangerous place. One legend claimed that a fortune in Civil War gold had been buried somewhere on its heights. Many names have referred to the quality of the moonshine brewed, according to another legend, by an old cronie encamped in its dense thickets and known as "Betsy Vinegar." Betsy's enterprise attracted local bandits, posing additional deadly risks for those traveling at night on the Russellville and Nashville Pikes. As a result, Mr. Jones relates, local citizens made heroic efforts to redeem the hill from these undesirable souls.

Mr. Rumsy Skiles, probably the most accomplished man who ever lived in Warren County, once owned "Vinegar Hill," and he tried to change the name to "Kapley Knob," but he never succeeded. Polly Bruff and her gang had occupied "Vinegar Hill" too long. James Rumsy Skiles, a wealthy businessman and builder, purchased Vinegar Hill in 1836, and his effort to rename it C[kapley Knob did, in fact, enjoy partial success. The Copley Cemetery Company was incorporated in 1856 by a group of local citizens with the intention of establishing a cemetery on Vinegar Hill. The Civil War and subsequent creation of Fairview Cemetery shelved their plan, but by the 1870s the name "Copley Knob" had gained some favor among Bowling Green's more Upstanding citizens. In 1855 lawyer and banker Thomas Covert purchased the hill from Skiles and his magnificent residence, built on its east side in 1870, would become the home of Oldham College in 1871. By that time, Vinegar Hill's mysterious female outlaw, "Polly Bruff," was long gone.

Like wild Meg Merrilies, Polly made a long, hard flight to hold "Vinegar Hill," but what human hands could not do, the ghosts which have ever haunted "Vinegar Hill" were able to do. Polly was driven out of the cedars, and she and her gang made their last stand on the hill at a point on the Russellville road, just opposite the house which C. L. Jones sold yesterday.

Perhaps moonshiner "Betsy Vinegar" was actually Polly Bruff, who the reporter compares to the gypsy Meg Merrilies of Sir Walter Scott's novel, Guy Mannering. The pitched battle that deprived Polly of her turf evokes an even more vivid picture if one imagines... continued on page 8
1912 Newspaper Reports

her as Scott describes Mag: "She was full six feet high, wore a man's greatcoat over the rest of her dress . . . and in all points of equipment, except her petticoats, seemed rather masculine than feminine. Her dark elf­
locks shot out like the snakes of the gargon . . . while her eye had a wild roll that indicated something like real or affected insanity." After Polly's expulsion, Mr. Jones maintained that her presence lingered in bowling Green, and past Mr. Procter's cottage at the foot of the hill or the ghosts will get you, and you are never safe on this pike until you pass the pond on the left­
hand side of the pike, almost one mile from town.

By 1912, prominent citizens like William A. Obenchain, a professor at Ogden College who lived at the corner of Fourteenth and Chestnut Streets, and lawyer Benjamin F. Procter, who owned substantial tracts on the east side of Vinegar Hill, had made the area one of the more fashionable places to live. Only a year earlier, Western had moved its campus to the hill and opened its grand new Administration Building (Van Meter Hall). Our reporter, nevertheless, closed by inviting his readers to explore that especially haunted east­side—where one might have been well advised, like Tom O'Shanter, to invoke the aid of John Barleycorn—and then, like Ichabod Crane, spur his horse, shut his eyes tight, and break forth "with involuntary fervor into a praiseworthy mystery."

Old Charley still thinks that in locating Jonesville on the west side of "Vinegar Hill" he acted wiser than Mr. Procter, who located on the east side.

On any dark night in November, the ghosts of Offutt, Evans, Harper and others, brood over the Nashville Pike, and after you pass the residence of Major Obenchain you have to ride like Tom O'Shanter past Ogden College, and past Mr. Procter's cottage at the foot of the hill or the ghosts will get you, and you are never safe on this pike until you pass the pond on the left­
hand side of the pike, almost one mile from town.

support Preservation Through Membership

They say preservation happens at the local level, and while this is definitely true, it doesn't happen without the support of our state and national organizations as well. The HPB encourages you to become a member of our local, state and national preservation organizations: Landmark Association, Preservation Kentucky, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. For as little as $60 a year, you can be a member of all three! Membership provides you with informative newsletters and invitations to events but more importantly supports the advocacy efforts of these organizations. Without these organizations and the projects they co­sponsor with the HPB and the State Historic Preservation Office, the Kentucky Heritage Council, we would not have many of the programs we rely on today, including a local Main Street program, a Local Historic Preservation ordinance and now the state tax credit for rehabilitation.

The Landmark Association was established in 1976 as a community advocate for preservation, protection and maintenance of architectural, cultural and archaeological resources in Bowling Green and Warren County. For more information visit http://home.insightbb.com/~bglandmark or call 270-782-0037.

Preservation Kentucky, Inc. exists to promote the preservation of Kentucky's historic resources through advocacy and education. They are responsible for bringing the historic preservation state tax credit to Kentucky, they sponsor Kentucky's Most Endangered List and they co-sponsor the bi-annual statewide preservation conference. For more information visit www.preservationkentucky.org or call (270) 358-9069.

For more than 50 years, the National Trust has been helping Americans protect the irreplaceable. A private nonprofit organization with more than 270,000 members, the National Trust is the leader of the vigorous preservation movement that is saving the best of the country's past for the future. For more information visit www.nationaltrust.org.

Need Your Help

This interesting photograph was recently donated to the Kentucky Library by Mike Bieber. We know the picture was taken in front of the old Post Office, now the William H. Natcher Federal Courthouse. Can you identify this group or any of the men in it? Please contact Jonathan Jeffrey (745-5083) if you can. Inquiring minds want to know. Courtesy of Kentucky Library & Museum, WKU.
The Civil War in Bowling Green is Remembered

The HPB and partners remembered the Civil War this July in three exciting ways:
- July 20, 1pm: The HPB and Lost River Cave and Valley celebrated the new Civil War Discovery Trail in Bowling Green brochure and Lost River Cave’s first Civil War living history weekend. The thirty minute kick-off event included first-person accounts from three different people affected by the War: a civilian, a Confederate soldier and an African-American Union soldier. The new driving tour brochure is available through the Bowling Green Area Convention & Visitors Bureau and at the Lost River Cave gift shop, among other tourist locations in the area.
- July 23-24: Lost River and Green History Weekend, Bowling Green brochure and Lost River history weekend was weekend. The thirty minute kick-off event included first-person accounts from three different people affected by the War: a civilian, a Confederate soldier and an African-American Union soldier. The new driving tour brochure is available through the Bowling Green Area Convention & Visitors Bureau and at the Lost River Cave gift shop, among other tourist locations in the area.

HPB Fall and Winter Workshops

The following workshops are being planned by the HPB:

Repointing Hands-On Workshop
September 17, 2005 • 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Repointing, also known simply as "pointing" or somewhat inaccurately "tuck pointing," is the process of removing deteriorated mortar from the joints of a masonry wall and replacing it with new mortar. Whether you are interested in repairing a wall, a structure, a foundation or a chimney and whether you will be working with brick, stone, terra cotta or concrete block, this class is for you. This workshop is presented by WASCO, Inc. and has been funded in part by a grant from the Kentucky Preservation Fund of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, WASCO and the Contractors Licensing Board.

Rotten Wood Repair Hands-On Workshop
October 8, 2005 • 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.
This hands-on workshop, led by Tonya Taylor and sponsored by Mid-South Paint and Design at Mid-South Lumber, will work mainly with a system of consolidant (Rotten Wood Hardener) and two-part epoxy (Wood Rebuilder). Participants will receive hands-on experience on scrap pieces of rotten wood, gain practice on handling the products, and learn about crucial steps that will help the repair last as long as possible. The cost of attending the workshop includes all supplies and materials.

The HPB is also planning the following activities this fall and winter: a free showing of "Stone Wars: When Wal-Mart Comes to Town," sponsored by the HPB, the Kentucky Preservation Fund and the Capitol Arts Alliance; How to Organize a Cemetery Board, Cemetery Documentation Workshop. Confirmation of registration for both classes will include directions, how to dress and what to bring. For more information about any or all of the following activities, please contact Robin Zeigler at robin.zeigler@bgky.org or 270-842-1953.

Annual Meeting Scrapbook

President Joey Powell and husband Bill are greeted by our reception hosts, Kathi Munisteri and David Hoed, at their new shop, Eclectic Style on Park Row downtown.

J. David Bryant, Jr. receives the Heritage Award, Landmark's most prestigious award, from last year's honoree, Steve Snodgrass.

Valerie Brown, CEO of Service One Credit Union, receives the HPB's Award from HPB Chair, Dorian Walker, for their work on the new 15th Street Branch across from WKU.

Kim and David Jones receive the Steel Wool Award for their work on the Graham-McGown house at 1252 State Street.

Dorian Walker accepts a Landmark Home Award for his work on the Thomas Pollard House at 1303 State Street.

Landmark member Thomas N. Moody provided historical information about the church and gave a short concert for attendees.

Nancy Parker strikes up a conversation with guests at Eclectic Style.
Perhaps you could pass this newsletter along to someone you think would be interested in supporting Landmark’s efforts in historic preservation advocacy.

I (we) want to support the Historic Preservation efforts in Bowling Green and Warren County.

Name

Mailing Address

City __________________________ State ______ Zip __________

Telephone __________________________ E-mail __________________________

----------------------------- Levels of Membership -----------------------------

          Regular           Corporate

[ ] Individual $15          [ ] Active $100 [ ] Patron $250
[ ] Supporting $50          [ ] Sustaining $100 [ ] Donor $500 [ ] Benefactor $1,000

I have enclosed $________________________ to support the Irene Moss Sumpter Preservation Endowment Fund.

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