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**John Perkins Honored**

The Landmark Association offers its sincere condolences to the family of John Perkins who passed away on January 17, 2010. The Webster County native was born July 15, 1913. He graduated from Bowling Green High School in 1936 and attended Western Kentucky University. Perkins entered the Army as a 2nd Lt. in 1941 and served with the 30th Infantry Regiment, Third Infantry Division, spending almost four years in foreign service during World War II in Algeria, Tunisia, Sicily, Italy, France, Austria and Germany. He was in amphibious landings at Casablanca. Sicily, Salerno, Anzio and southern France. He was awarded the American Defense Ribbon, Legion of Merit, the Army Commendation, the EAME Ribbon with 10 bronze stars and arrowhead for 10 campaigns, the Bronze Star Service Medal, Distinguished Unit Ribbon, American Theater Ribbon, World War II Victory Medal, the Italian Cross of Military Valor, Army Commendation Medal and the World War II French Fourragere.

Perkins was the owner and principal broker for Perkins Realty and was Realtor of the Year in 1982. He was a longtime member of the Bowling Green Board of Realtors, Rotary Club, Bowling Green Chamber of Commerce, Mid-Century Literary Club and Downtown Business Association. He served as a deacon, elder and trustee of the Presbyterian Church of Bowling Green and was on the board of directors of Bawellswood Presbyterian Home for Children, being named chairman of the board of Bawellswood in 1982.

A dedicated preservationist, John was appointed as a member and was elected to be the first chairman of the Bowling Green-Warren County Historic Preservation Board in 1990. He served as chairman for five years, during which time Bowling Green-Warren County’s Historic Preservation Ordinance was enacted, design guidelines developed and a local Historic District was established. He was a founding member of the Bowling Green-Warren County Landmark Association in 1976 and served on its board of directors. The “John C. Perkins Operations Endowment” was established in his honor by the Landmark Board in 1998. In 1999, John was awarded the “Idea Lee Willis Memorial Foundation Preservation Award” by the Kentucky Heritage Council. The Perkins family asked that donations in John’s memory be made to the John Perkins Operation Endowment c/o Landmark Association, P.O. Box 1812, Bowling Green, KY 42102-1812. The following is a list of donors contributing to the Perkins Endowment.

Barbara Shea
Anne Woodford Russell
Richard and Jean Boland
Dr Nicholas & Patricia Spurlock
Helen Shenton Harrison

(continued on page 8)

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**Porter’s Watch: The View from the Firehouse**

*by Lynn Niedermeier*

"Bad Luck," declared Porter Dodd, writing in one of two record books (now housed at WKU’s Kentucky Library & Museum) kept during his long career as a Bowling Green firefighter. He was summarizing the mishaps of February 29, 1912, after the alarm came in warning of a house ablaze on east High Street. In the main fire station at College and 10th Streets, Wagon No. 1, Porter’s Lehigh, was faced with a hose and a fifty-gallon tank of water with a chemical additive to create pressure, the wagon was pulled by Doc and Dan, a team of gray horses. At the sound of the alarm bell, the well-trained animals lunged from their stalls and "did all but buckle themselves into the harness," recalled Dodd. Their driver pulled a rope to open the station doors, and the race was on.

At eighteen years of age, Dan was in the twilight of his working life, but in recording his first day of duty in 1902, on the-job injury in 1908, and even a vacation day in 1909, Dodd gave some indication of the regard in which he held his equine partner. Unfortunately, Dan’s tenure ended suddenly that morning in 1912 when, en route to the fire, the horse collapsed and died.

That left Wagon No. 2, with its team of black horses, to step into the breach, but once again misfortune intervened. Carrying Porter Dodd, his brother, Leslie, and two other firemen, the wagon hurtled around the corner of College and 6th Streets, skidded and overturned, scattering the crew and damaging the chemical equipment. By the time they recovered it was too late to save the burning house, but as the newspaper headline "Mourning in the Fire Department" made clear, their greatest regret that day was the loss of "old Dan."

When he began his service in 1895, slightly built Euclid Porter Dodd seemed an unlikely candidate for what was then an all-volunteer fire department. Before the acquisition of horse-drawn wagons in 1898, the men had to use their own muscle to pull hose reels to the scene of a fire, then attach the hoses to the nearest fire plug and bind up any cracks in the rubber with rags in order to keep the water flowing toward the flames. Over the years, nevertheless, many young men, including the sons of Bowling Green’s best known families, served as volunteers—attracted, no doubt, by both the excitement and the two-dollar fee (about $50 today) awaiting those who answered the alarm.

It was thirty-year-old Porter Dodd, however, who managed to land a regular, $35-per-month fireman’s position in 1900, two years after the city established a salaried force. Perhaps his best recommendation was the girt he had shown during the Potter Opera House fire on July 3, 1899. Suffering what would be the only injury of his career, Dodd had helped to extract Chief Jim Wilkinson from the building at College and Main Streets, before the roof collapsed.

During his early years as a fireman, Dodd witnessed rapid changes in the department: the arrival of new recruits, including his brothers Charles and Leslie; the purchase of a hook and ladder in 1901; the establishment, also in 1901, of a second fire station at Main and Adams Streets, where Dodd became captain in 1904; his transfer in 1906 to the main station at State and 11th Streets; and the consolidation of both stations at the new central firehouse in 1909. Throughout this time, Dodd kept notes on a variety of events having both local and national significance, including accidents, crimes and prosecutions, elections, record-setting temperatures, snow and floods. His record books methodically listed the death dates of scores of his fellow citizens as well as the demise of governors and presidents. Some deaths were dramatic: one Tom Wilson "went wild" on a December day in 1906, resulting in the shooting death of another man two weeks later in the mistaken belief that he was the rampaging Wilson. Two men were hanged in nearby Russellville early in 1907, and four men lynched there the following year. The entry "Mob gathered at jail" suggested a similar uproar in Bowling Green on August 3, 1909. A disturbance of a political nature, unfortunately, interrupted Dodd’s service before the end of his first decade. "Fired Dec 6 1909," he wrote besides his own name in his book’s list of department personnel. The same notation appeared for John Molltenberry, an original member of the department and its chief since 1904. The high-level shakedown followed the election of Mayor Gilson E. Townsend, a physician and druggist whose interest in the workings of the fire department proved so close...
that the second horse on Wagon No. 1, Doc, had been named after him. In 1911, however, two ghostly downtown fires, one of which required help from some of the coast-off veterans to save the courthouse, threw discredit on his reorganization skills, and Moltenberry and Dodd were soon called back to their posts. Townsend’s term expired in 1913 and, as Dodd recorded, Doc (the horse, not the mayor) was sold on July 27, 1914. Beginning with the purchase of an Ahrens-Fox truck in 1914, Dodd documented the creation, by 1918, of a fully motorized fire department. By noting on even greater transportation accomplishment caused the students to rush for a better view, Dodd continued until 1956 to take note of a parade of events, both great and small. Remarkably, over a long career in which he saw and heard of many dramatic moments, Dodd never claimed to believe in such phenomena, however, Dodd’s record book might just point the way to the “real” source of the haunting. After his retirement in 1938, Porter Dodd filled the position of “night watchman for life” with the department. From the unique vantage point of the Bowling Green firehouse, in which he claimed to feel more at home than in his own residence, he continued until 1956 to take note of a parade of events both great and small. Remarkably, over a long career in which he saw and heard of many dramatic moments, Dodd never had to make the entry he would have found most difficult: the death of a fellow firefighter in the line of duty. The stone fence work completed on Ennis Property

Dr. Jeffrey and Tammy Adams have completed another project on the old Ennis Farm out on Glen Lily Road. Many of you probably recall Landmark having their picnic on the property about five years ago, who could forget the torrential downpour or the hospitality of our hosts who allowed all of us to eat indoors. The Adams’s most recent project involved rebuilding a stacked stone fence which ran along Glen Lily Road.

Here is some information about the project in Jeffrey Adams’s own words: “Here are some photos of before and after work on the fence. We also had a stone building out front that was supposed to be a Union army ammo storage building. It was taken down sometime in the 1980’s. I remember seeing it years ago. There were eight thousand troops here during the war, which kept the house from being completed until the war was over. The army would take the lumber.”

“The fence is supposed to have been built by the Ennis family slaves which they sold during the war. Some of the fence still remains further out Glen Lily from our house. We rebuilt 1,500 feet of it that is in front of the house. It was begun in April and finished this week (November 2009). Felipe Briceno and his wife Maria did most of the work and clearing of the trees and brush that had overgrown it over the years. We did enough stacking to attest that it is slow and not easy,”...I have also sent you two photos of the Dishman Mill on the creek by our house. It is about three hundred yards from the place where Lost River comes out of the ground. The Ennis family that built our house also built the mill in 1840. The dam is still there. The mill house burned years ago. This has to be the best kept secret in Warren County.”

The stone fence bordering the Ennis property along Glen Lily Road. All photographs used for this story courtesy of Jeffrey Adams.
Van Meter at 100: Building Outfitted for Bright Future
by Jonathan Jeffrey

A century ago, anxious students and Bowling Green citizens watched construction workers erect Van Meter Hall, the first new campus building on Western’s fledgling campus. They viewed the architectural drawings for the building on an exhibition in a downtown storefront, but even those carefully executed renderings belied Van Meter Hall’s grandeur. As the centenary year of Van Meter Hall’s dedication approaches, students and local citizens are once again intrigued by this venerable structure and anxious to view the results of its major alterations and additions.

As the Southern Normal School grew in cramped quarters downtown, Henry Hardin Cherry no doubt cast an envious eye on the attractive campus of the Pleasant J. Potter College for Young Ladies. The college’s hilltop site afforded a commanding view of a growing city and presented the ever-keen president with a symbolic location for his growing institution. In 1906 the state established one of its two new normal schools in Bowling Green, affording Cherry the opportunity to purchase the Potter property for construction of his own “academical village.” In a bold and progressive move, he hired architect Brinton B. Davis and landscape architect Henry Wight to develop a master plan for the new college campus. The duo presented a lovely design which included a circular arrangement of buildings around the hill’s perimeter.

The campus already boasted a significant classroom building as well as a president’s home, vestiges of the defunct Potter College. The first new building for the Western Normal School was a major administration building that would contain administrative offices, three classrooms, and a 1,600-seat auditorium for chapel services and community events. Cherry viewed daily chapel meetings as a bonding experience for the students, particularly as enrollments rose, thus a commodious meeting hall was of paramount importance. Cherry also wanted the building to reflect the institution’s promising future. Agreeing, Davis chose a Classic Revival style that hinted of the Acropolis’s Erechtheion temple with its stately portico, classic ornamentation, and handsome location atop College Hill.

Davis had hoped that the new building would be faced with the white oolithic limestone, known in trade circles as Bowling Green Green limestone and found in abundance in Warren County. However, the county’s major quarry experienced labor disturbances and declared bankruptcy in 1910; it reopened in time to provide the cut-stone trimmings used throughout the building. Most of Davis’s later campus designs at Western specified the white limestone. After a number of delays the Administration Building was dedicated on 5 May 1911.

Davis’s brilliant design created a bastion of knowledge to top the city’s highest hill. A student, who first saw the campus in 1913, thought the administration building "was the biggest building in the world." For students coming from farms on the Barrens or near the Knobs, this majestic structure towered. Pride manifested in the new building was apparent at its dedication as thousands toured the facility. The student paper praised the Administration Building, citing its gleaming white columns and the "open doors" that beckoned students to enter and "conquer ignorance." Local residents complimented the building’s attractive masonry and stone exterior throughout the construction process, but they anxiously anticipated the opportunity to view the structure’s interior. They were not disappointed. In the beautifully appointed lobby, Davis included imported stone, sweeping marble staircases with wrought iron balustrades, Spanish floor tiles, classical moldings and columns, and an attractive stained glass skylight. The auditorium was the city’s largest meeting space, and it impressed with its capacious wood-paneled stage, massive brass light fixtures, heavy draperies, and the sea of theater seats. For approximately $125,000 Davis had created the aura that Cherry envisioned for Western, as the president was "concerned with the biggest, the highest, the most, the best, the most worthwhile, and the most beautiful."

Western officials named the new auditorium Van Meter Hall in honor of Charles Jacob Van Meter, a steamboat captain who provided one of the school’s first major monetary gifts; an auditorium at the school’s old downtown location had previously been named for Van Meter. The entire structure was christened the Administration Building. The Board of Regents officially changed the name of the building to Van Meter Hall in 1968 after a major renovation.

Just like their counterparts a century earlier, students and Bowling Green citizens are eager to view Van Meter’s additions and renovations executed by RossTarrant Architects of Lexington. What they find will impress them: cleaned and restored architectural features, bright and attractive meeting facilities, enlarged dressing rooms, improved lighting and acoustics, new seating, a dramatically enlarged stage area allowing greater utilization of the facility, better building access including handicapped entrances and an elevator, as well as the addition of patron bathrooms near the lobby. Befitting an arts facility, Van Meter will also boast several new pieces of artwork, including a major new sculpture, a second floor fresco, and the incorporation of the familiar Four Seasons sculpture grouping in the auditorium itself. One thing that remains from the old Van Meter is the unique Western experience of exiting from an evening performance and walking out into the stars. Thank goodness some things never change.

The Hill Builder

In February 1931, a Bowling Green newspaper dubbed Louisville architect Brinton Beauregard Davis (1862-1952) the “Hill Builder” for his untiring efforts as Western’s architect. With the exception of two major projects, Davis designed all the college’s hilltop structures from 1910 to 1937, including nine major buildings, a swimming pool, and a stadium. Besides his work at Western, Davis, who maintained an office in Louisville, designed buildings in eight states. Perhaps his most important work was Louisville’s InterSouthern Insurance skyscraper. Other important projects included the Jefferson County Armory (now Louisville Gardens), the Louisville’s Kentucky Hotel, Parr’s Rest, and Atlanta’s Ansley Hotel. In Bowling Green Davis also designed City Hall and the Denhardt Armory.

Van Meter while under construction; Jacob Bornstein on Louisville served as the building’s general contractor.
March 2010

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Membership Matters
Prepared January 2010

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This image is one of 90 photographs featured in an exhibit titled "Settling Schweizer: Scenes of an Immigrant Community" which will run at the Kentucky Library & Museum from May 29 to August 31, 2010. The exhibit documents life in the small German community of Schweizer in Simpson County, Kentucky. Early in the 19th century amateur photographer Oswald Kummer captured numerous images of his neighbors in both work and play. The prints were made from glass plate negatives in the Kentucky Library & Museum collection. Courtesy of Kentucky Library & Museum, WKU.
Unfolding History with the Mothers Club Manuscripts

by Jean E. Nehm

[Editor's Note: Jean has tackled a project to do write histories of Bowling Green's numerous literary clubs, both extant and inactive. If you have special information to share, contact her at jean.nehm@wku.edu]

The Mothers Club, one of many literary clubs in Bowling Green, was formally organized in the Chestnut Street home of Mrs. Bert Smith on February 12, 1925. The original sixteen charter members of this club set forth to study "the essentials of child nurture to the end that they may more efficiently assist nature in the development of their children mentally, morally, and physically," and they did so faithfully until 1998 when they closed the last chapter of their club. Thanks to their meticulous manuscripts archived in the Kentucky Library and Museum, we can observe history unfolding in their financial records, minutes, and yearbooks.

It is interesting to note that on the title page of the club's constitution, the organization is called the Mothers' Club, but in the preamble, the punctuation changed to Mother's. Over the years, the secretaries used three variations: Mother's, Mothers', and Mothers. The final decades of the club, the name used Mothers, so this article will use the latest and most frequent spelling.

Although there was a social component to the meetings of the Mothers Club, these women clearly took their club seriously. Long before calculators and computer spreadsheets, the secretary-treasurer conscientiously recorded attendance and all financial transactions. Dues were 10 cents, collected at each monthly meeting. Even the smallest expense was recorded, including 20 cents for a get well card, 8 cents for a stamp, 25 cents for ribbon for the yearbooks, $3.00 to the Pure Milk Co. for ice cream for the annual picnic, and $1.50 to Deemer's for flowers for a sick member.

Some of the club's resources were also used for outside philanthropic interests. For example, in 1929, the club agreed to support a plan to beautify Bowling Green. In 1933, members contributed $75 toward furnishing a room in the hospital's nurses' home and "to have our name placed on the door." In 1940 the club received "a card of thanks from Miss Marjorie Helm, expressing her appreciation for the donation of Three dollars by the Club for the Public Library." During the war years, disbursements included a $5.00 donation to the War and Community Chest Drive and a $23.00 donation to the Red Cross. In 1945, a gift of $5.00 was donated to the Red Cross.

From seventy-three years of handwritten minutes, now on yellowing paper, we learn so much about the remarkable mothers and their evolving interests over time. From the beginning, the meetings were quite formal, starting at 3:00 on the second Thursday in the month. Time in the first hour was allotted for business, a program on an assigned topic, and discussion; the second hour was reserved for socializing with the hostess serving refreshments and providing "a maid or someone to care for the children of the visiting members so that each mother may bring her children and yet be relieved of their oversight so she may enjoy the program." And always, members referred to each other as Mrs. Gordon Wilson or Mrs. C. A. Loudermilk, never using first names. Attendance was taken and recorded as Pr or A. However, when the child did not simply say "Present" when their names were called, Depending on the topic for the day, they answered the roll call with "vacation echoes" (memories from their summer vacation), a current event, a garden tip, a household hint, a comment on "how to cultivate truthfulness in a child," or the number of hours they had volunteered at the Red Cross Center.

Topics in the early years focused on children, such as Care of Children's Teeth, Beneficial and Detrimental Influences of the Moving Picture, Child Literature, Importance of Play, and Health of Children. As the years moved on, the focus grew, including gardening, travel descriptions, authors, and many reviews of books. Several club activities became fond annual traditions. One was a formal dinner with their husbands at the Helm Hotel every November, and another was the casual family picnic at Covington Woods Park or Lost River Cave every summer. Probably the most memorable meetings occurred in December. The minutes for December 12, 1925 describe the scene: "The subjects were The Origins of Xmas and Xmas Customs, and Xmas in the homes of today. As a conclusion ... a Christmas hymn was played on the phonograph while the wide doors leading to the dining room were slowly opening revealing an impressive scene - Children of the Club members were gaily dancing around a beautiful Xmas Tree." Later minutes dutifully recorded all the names of the children who sang a solo, played a musical instrument, or recited a poem to entertain their mothers at Christmas.

Every year, a program committee selected topics for study and prepared a small yearbook for each member. The first yearbook covers were dark green or brown and were tied with pink and blue ribbon. Inside were pages with the meeting dates, topics, the names of the presenters, and the names of the hostesses. The 1938-1939 yearbook featured a new design on the cover. The minutes note that "Mrs. Rowlinson was kind enough to make the modernized block print covers which carry out the idea of Mother and child." Except for the 1939-1940 yearbook, covers were dark green flowers, the block print was used on all future yearbooks. Not only were the topics for every month announced, but an appropriate quotation was also often included on the page. For example, on February 13, 1938, Mrs. D. O'Roak was scheduled to speak about Robert Frost, and the quotation on the page was "Home is the place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in." From Frost's "The Death of the Hired Hand." When Mrs. F.C. Grese spoke about antiques, the quotation was "All things old were once new," by Tacitus. Among us senior members must have appreciated the quotation on February 13, 1975, the day of the club's 50th anniversary tea: "Forty is the old age of youth. Fifty is the youth of old age," by Victor Hugo.

On February 14, 1925, the local newspaper lauded the formation of the Mothers Club, writing, "It is comforting to know that there are mothers in the city with whom their children come first and who regardless of the demands that their social duties may make upon them are going to devote themselves first to the good of their children." By 1998, however, times had changed, and the busy mothers and now grandmotherd found it more difficult to meet regularly. The final page of minutes, now typed on paper that is still white, reports that in the spring of 1998, President Sue Pauli remarked that the Mothers Club had indeed achieved its purpose. Members expressed fond memories and agreed to end the organization.

The 1925 newspaper article concluded by saluting the Mothers Club "with an almost holy wish that its days may be long and lasting." Clearly, that wish came true. Though the formal club no longer exists, surviving members still have strong memories. Mrs. Dorothy Hones remembers the mothers, who attended meetings wearing hats and gloves, "as a loving, loving group of ladies." Mrs. Sue Pauli recalls that the club was a "good example of how families functioned at their best." Mrs. Harriet Downing remembers the Mothers Club "as an organization that held family and Christian values above all else.

Recalling the Mothers Club, Miss Dorothy Dotson feels that the club is "one that people should know about and remember." Certainly, all the carefully preserved records in the Kentucky Library and Museum will help achieve that goal.

So, too, will the club's final donation. Members agreed to donate the remaining $47.00 in their treasury to the public library for the purchase of children's books, thus preserving their legacy for future generations. ▲

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Landmark Boasts New Website

In October of 2010, Landmark began work on designing a new website and Facebook page. Marian Robbins, a WKU Folk Studies graduate student worked with others to design user friendly pages that highlight the many aspects of the organization.

The new website will allow members and out-of-town guests to purchase Landmark publications, cards and maps online as well as pay their membership dues if they have a PayPal account. The site also includes a photograph gallery about recent Landmark events, information about endangered properties, digital versions of some of the older Landmark Report newsletters, and news related to Bowling Green's preservation community. Forms for our grant program and for the Landmark awards are also available on the site.

To keep informed please become a friend of Landmark on Facebook by searching for "Landmark Association." Check out the look of the new website at bglandmark.org.
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.

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[ ] Foundation $25 [ ] Ionic Order $100 [ ] Entablature $500

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Checks should be payable to: Landmark Association

P.O. Box 1812
Bowling Green, KY 42102-1812

"A future with a past"