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Landmark Association Sponsors Historic Scavenger Hunt

The Landmark Association is sponsoring a scavenger hunt that will take individuals around the city’s circumference as well as exploring many interesting facts about sites within the city proper. On April 1, the brochure “A Tour of Historic Bowling Green Along the Greenways” will be mailed to Landmark members and to other interested parties that answer advertisements and public service announcements. Accompanying the brochure will be a list of questions; one question for each of the new twenty-three interpretive markers found along the greenways system. The questions will not be difficult to answer but will require the entrant to carefully examine each marker. The answers will not be included in the brochure. Entrants will then mail the filled-out form back to the Association’s office. Drawings for the four prizes will be held at Landmark’s annual dinner meeting held on Thursday, May 19, and winners will be promptly notified. Only one entry per person, but if a family attempts the hunt together, each member can enter but each must fill out an individual form.

Get out there and enjoy some fresh air and Bowling Green’s history!

Prizes
- $50 gift certificate to Barbara Stewart’s Interiors
- $50 gift certificate to Mariah’s Restaurant
- $50 gift certificate to Candle Makers on the Square
- $50 worth of Landmark merchandise including books, maps, note cards, etc.

Save the Dates:
March 18
Spring Ramble to Princeton

May 19
Annual Meeting
Reception at 600 State Street
Dinner at Mariah’s
The History of Her Heart
by Lynn Niedermeier

When Rosa Praig Dickerson died in 1902 at her home in the Plano community of Warren County, the Bowling Green Times-Journal eulogized her as a good Christian woman, a doctor's wife, the mother of five daughters and, more uniquely, as a "writer of marked ability." While the full record of Dickerson's published work will never be known, at a minimum it comprised 29 poems and another 29 sketches and stories, including at least 8 in one of the most popular periodicals of the 19th century, Godsey's Lady's Book and Magazine.

That Dickerson is unknown today is hardly surprising, for the literary endeavors of women whose bylines appeared in Victorian-era mass-market magazines have long broughtcondescension, if not outright scorn. Criticism of their work—which typically involved earnest musings on nature, mortality, beauty, love and loss—as unambiguously sentimental and moribund dates from their own time, when Nathaniel Hawthorne famously decimated them as that "d--d mob of scribbling women" whose "trash" monopolized both the public's attention and its purse. In 1930, magazine historian Franklin Luther Mott offered an example of the sentimentality that "infected" the pages of Godsey's Lady's Book. He cited a story in its December, 1868 issue by one Violette Woods called "The Frozen Heart," in which the heroine, despite having her capacity for love extinguished by an untrustworthy suitor, marries and bravely devotes herself to another man in the single year of life she has left. Although Mott made clear that he had selected this tale entirely at random, his roll of the dice was especially unlucky, for "Violette Woods" was, in fact, Rosa Praig Dickerson.

Perhaps, through Dickerson's own story, we can see Violette Woods in a kinder light. Rosa Belle Praig was born in Louisville on July 17, 1843, the second of five children of John G. and Arabella Praig. Rosa's father appears to have died in her youth, because by 1859 her mother, who is engaged to Arthur Leslie Dickerson, is living in Bowling Green, Kentucky. There, in common with many sixteen-year-olds, Rosa seems to have cultivated both a poor self-image—a she always thought she was ugly—and a desire to write. She found a model in the 6th century B.C. Greek poet Sappho—petite, dark, lacking in beauty, but described by a fellow poet as "pure" and "violet-haired." Sappho was also at the forefront of a new style of poetry, one that put aside epic verses about gods and heroes and focused on lyrical expressions of individual emotion.

In August 1859, an author named only as "Violet" made her debut in Godsey's Lady's Book with a story called "Principles." It told of the angelic Alice Lee, who is engaged to Arthur Leslie but who sends him away in anguish upon learning that he does not believe in God. After Alice marries another man and has a child, Arthur reappears, now converted by the memory of her piety but, alas, mortally ill. When he dies and leaves his fortune to his daughter, Alice serenely resumes her exemplary life without regret that she once sacrificed love on the altar of emotion.

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The Cardinal Motel: A Piece of Roadside Kitsch

By Samantha Pillar

In 2004, during a meeting of the Orphan Brigade Kinfolk Research Group held at the Kentucky Library & Museum, a visiting couple announced that they were staying at the Cardinal Motel on the By-Pass. An almost collective gasp went up from the listeners, who recognized the Cardinal as an aging way station not too distant from its creature comforts. The couple explained that they had married in 1954 in Louisville and were motoring down the 31-W By-Pass anticipating a Florida honeymoon. Tired from the day’s activities, they decided to stop in Bowling Green and continue their journey the next day. They stopped at a brand new motel called the Cardinal Motel only to find that this was the first night that the motel was open for business. Thus their reason for staying at the Cardinal; the couple and the hotel were celebrating their fiftieth anniversary. The Cardinal Motel, 1310 31-W By-Pass, is one of the few motels left in Bowling Green proper and certainly is unique in that until recently it was still individually owned and not a franchise operation. Perhaps the hotel opened in 1954 to meet the needs of a traveling public on a heavily traveled route between Louisville and Nashville. During the 1940s Highway 31-W was the major thoroughfare in Bowling Green. Following Chestnut Street through town 31-W was always congested. One gets a sense of the immense inconvenience this caused city dwellers when one hears a long-time resident of Bowling Green report that there was an accident in town every night.

In 1947, with the rumor that a superhighway connecting Canada to the Gulf of Mexico might be built on 31-W, many property owners petitioned the State Highway Department to construct a route around Bowling Green on Laurel Avenue. Citing the dangerous conditions in the city the petitioners asked that this route be relieved of some of the heavy traffic. The owners in town knew that if they were to get this new road designated as an “alternate” in hopes of keeping the tourist traffic coming through town, but to no avail. Its 1949 construction almost immediately gained 31-W By-Pass the majority of the business activity in Bowling Green. Besides catering to passing tourists, businesses looking for ample parking space also built on the By-Pass. By 1951 new construction included two tourists courts, a drive-in theater, many small inns, restaurants, a drug store, a miniature golf course, two whiskey shops, two fruit markets and a monument business. By 1956 these numbers jumped to fifteen gasoline stations, five tourist courts, four liquor stores, three ice cream parlors and an assortment of florists, jewelers, and clothiers. As stated in an October 1951 news article: “It is only necessary for a person to drive along the smooth, easily navigable highway to see the increasing upshot of economic ventures to see that here on the Bowling Green By-Pass is big business.”

The builders of the Cardinal received their building permit in May 1953. They estimated that the new twenty-room motel would cost $20,000 to build. The Cardinal is U-shaped, punctuated on the ends of the courtyard “arms” by the red roof of the registration office and the white wall outlining the pool. My interpretation of this is that the color marks the beginning and end of the motel, where one gets a room and what one does while staying in his enclosed complex. Good design was of primary importance to roadside architecture, because the exterior was what caught the motorist’s eye. The old cabin motel of the previous twenty years was replaced by integrated or massed units in the 1940s. Because these units were all under one roof and instead of individual units, they were cheaper to construct.

The next most important aspect of the era’s motel construction was the aesthetic treatment. Five general aesthetic themes emerged from the 1920s to the 1950s: rustic, southwest, western, modern, and bungalow. The idea was to present to the public something exotic like the adobe look or something traditional like colonial revival. By the 1950s the bungalow and modern style were the most popular because they were the most familiar. The characteristics of the International Style greatly appealed to motorists. Honesty, economy, clean lines, functionality and the reduction of elements to fit basic human needs fit into the whole concept of the motel. If one compares a stereotypical advertisement illustration of a motor hotel from 1962 to a photo of the Cardinal, one sees similarities in the...
The Severance Club’s Evolving Identity

By Jean E. Nehm

On a Tuesday evening in February of 1935, several women gathered at the Seventeenth Street home of Mrs. W. Ross McGehee. These Bowling Green ladies were taking the tentative steps in forming a club, and their first concern was what to name it. Their first page of minutes, dated February 21, 1935, reports without explanation “that it was thought wise to not use the word ‘literary’ in the name.” Initial suggestions for the club’s name included The Eight O’clock Club, The Tuesday Evening Club, The Ken Club (Scottish for “to know”), and the Rien-Ken Club (the word formed by the last letters in the last names of the charter members: Miss Hammer, Mrs. McGehee, Mrs. Monkin, Mrs. Rosebrook, Mrs. Connette, and Mrs. Patterson). A decision was postponed until the next meeting, and after a discussion of period furniture and refreshments of spiced tea, pear and cheese salad, and wafers, they adjourned.

Suggested names offered at the next meeting again indicate some uncertainty about the purpose of the club: The Tri-Arts Club (Home Arts, Fine Arts, and Social Arts), The Philomath (love of learning), Inter Nos (among ourselves), The Quest Club, The Costume Club, The Arts and Crafts Club, and The Studio Club. After a discussion, the women decided to name their new organization The Severance Club. This name is “in honor of Madame Caroline Severance, ‘Mother of Clubs’ and founder and president of the first women’s club in America: The New England Woman’s Club of Boston.” This quotation has been written in every yearbook of programs from 1935 until the present.

Having decided on a name, the women commenced writing a constitution. Article I recorded the official name as The Severance Club, and Article II stated that the “object of the club is broad and wide: to cultivate and practical interests of the various members of the club.” Membership was limited to twelve members, a good number, they thought, to ensure an interesting organization and to enjoy a close and friendly relationship with each other. The women wanted refreshments at each meeting but declared in the constitution that they must be “limited to two foods and these must be very simple.” Officers (chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary-treasurer) were to be chosen by secret ballot, and meetings were to be held on the fourth Tuesday of every month with optional social meetings held as desired. Mrs. McGehee invited the group to her home for the first social meeting, with the ladies encouraged to bring along their sewing.

The topic of the first year was period furniture. The women selected a date, researched their topic, brought pictures, and informed others about furniture of the Elizabethan Period, Jacobean Period, Queen Ann Period, Chippendale Period, Colonial American Period, and the Federal Period. Their next topic of study was the serving of foods, including proper table setting, rules for serving a tea, a buffet supper, a reception, and a card party as well as rules for serving family meals — with or without a maid.

During the first few years, several literary topics were suggested as possible programs for the following year, but it was not until 1939 that the club decided to spend the year studying contemporary American writers. Selected authors included Pearl Buck and Robert Frost. The following year’s theme was Literacy. And so these women left behind the domestic topics and pursued more intellectual topics. Even if the topics were not explicitly about books or authors, the women began choosing topics that required significant research. One example of a challenging theme was “Music — The Universal Language” chosen in 1946. Specific programs were given on Stephen Foster, Jean Sibelius, opera, the history of church music, the origin of musical instruments, and American folk music.

By 1952, the Severance Club seems to have settled into its identity as a literary club. In fact, the secretary said as much in an entry about some new business in their March meeting. The members had been discussing whether to contribute to a community organization. They declined, writing that they were “in full accord and sympathy” with civic projects and that individual members contributed when they could. But concerning the Severance Club itself, the secretary added, when “our by-laws were written, it was with this idea in mind that we were purely a literary club, collecting no dues and assuming no outside obligations.” The members’ fondness for reading was again highlighted in the December 1955 minutes when the secretary wrote, “Mrs. Hammer turned in her usual fine performance with a paper on McGuire and His Readers. She had a collection of the readers to show which took all of us back to another day when Reading was a lesson instead of a delightful pastime.

Looking back on historical topics (“Kentucky in Retrospect” and “As It Used To Be”) was popular, but so too was a forward-looking look at the Russians launching Sputnik. Entitled “Destination Outer Space,” Mrs. Patterson’s program “held us spellbound with this timely subject and interesting subject matter. She stated that the future safety of our nation will depend on interplanetary travel and knowledge of outer space.”

Over the years, broad program themes reflect the women’s wide interests and allowed them to research a specific topic. Examples include Famous Families, Rivers of the World, Biographies, World Religions, National Parks, Women of Courage and Vision, Poets and Poetry, Kentucky Authors, and Western Kentucky University’s Centennial. Occasionally, members invite a guest speaker to present a program. For example, dressed in period clothing, Carol Crowe-Carraco, history professor at WKU, presented a program on the life of Kentucky Mary Breckinridge (1891-1965). Joe Surviv, a professor of English and a Kentucky Poet Laureate, visited the club and read from his book Anne and Alpheus 1842-1882. Another example is Jonathan Jeffery’s program given around 2001. As Manuscripts/Folklife Coordinator at the Kentucky Library and Museum, he shared interesting insights on the shocking consequences of Victorian women riding bicycles. According to the minutes, the women “hallowed their ankles, rode with men, and even wore pants. There was a revolution of social customs; churches suffered, reading was prevented. Bikes popularized short skirts and bloomers and eradicated corsets.”

December meetings of the Severance Club became an opportunity for members to change the traditional meeting format to allow each member to share a special Christmas reading or story. Included in the historical record are these examples:

• Jean Simpson read Kentucky writer Elizabeth Maddox Roberts’ “Christmas Morning.”
• Carol Adams read a poem “The Friendly Beasts.”
• Garmitwave Bole read from Marjorie Holmes’ selection “Home for Christmas.”
• Irene Burnette read a selection from “A Bowling Green Christmas Sampler.”
• Evelyn Ray read “The Gingerbread House.”
• Vera Guthrie told of the symbolism of the sand dollar shell.
• Mary Campbell read a legend of the candy cane and gave every member a sample.
• Dorothy Dodson read a precious letter to Santa she herself had written as a child.

(continued on page 18)
The Morehead House
By Margie Helm

The Morehead House was built in 1836 on the date now marked by a marker and a brass tablet. It was the site of the very first hotel in what is now Russellville, Kentucky. Today, the Morehead House is a well-known landmark and a popular destination for tourists.

The Morehead House was built by Charles D. Morehead, a wealthy entrepreneur who was known for his generosity and hospitality. He was a member of the prominent Morehead family, which had played a significant role in the development of the town.

The hotel was originally called the Helm Hotel, named after its builder, Owen Helm. However, in 1841, it was renamed the Morehead House in honor of Charles D. Morehead, who had passed away in 1840. The hotel was operated for the next 110 years by the Morehead family, who continued to provide a warm and welcoming environment for visitors.

In 1952, the Morehead House was sold to Mrs. James McGoodwin and his wife. Mrs. McGoodwin had a reputation for providing excellent hospitality and was known for her warm welcome to visitors. She continued to operate the hotel until her death in 1968.

The Morehead House was bought by Mr. Carl Helm in 1969, who continued to operate the hotel and maintain its historic charm. He was assisted by his wife, Dr. T. O. Helm, who had a background in medicine and helped to expand the hotel's services.

In 1999, the Morehead House was bought by Mr. James McGoodwin and his wife. They continued to operate the hotel and maintain its historic charm, as well as expand its services and add new amenities.

Today, the Morehead House is a popular destination for tourists and is known for its historic charm and excellent hospitality. It is a true landmark of the town and a testament to the rich history of Russellville, Kentucky.
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 ___________________

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

[ ] Doric Order $50         [ ] Corinthian Order $250       [ ] Cornice $1,000

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