8-2011

Landmark Report (Vol. 29, no. 2)

Kentucky Library Research Collections
Western Kentucky University, spcol@wku.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.wku.edu/landmark_report

Part of the Cultural Resource Management and Policy Analysis Commons, Historic Preservation and Conservation Commons, and the Public History Commons

Recommended Citation
http://digitalcommons.wku.edu/landmark_report/114

This Newsletter is brought to you for free and open access by TopSCHOLAR®. It has been accepted for inclusion in Landmark Report by an authorized administrator of TopSCHOLAR®. For more information, please contact topscholar@wku.edu.
The Landmark Association invites you to its

**Annual Picnic**

*The Ennis Farmstead*

*Home of Dr. Jeff Adams and Dr. Tommy Willis*

956 Glen Lily Road

Sunday, September 11, 2011

$5.00 per person

Home Tour 4:00 p.m.

Dinner 4:30

Program Begins at 5:20

Program includes a brief 10th anniversary moment of remembrance of 9/11 &

An appearance by Johnny Green of the Orphan Brigade as presented by Ethan Sullivan Smith, a Chautauqua presenter from the Kentucky Humanities Council. This is a costumed, first-person account of Johnny Green who visited Bowling Green during his Civil War service and is presented as part of the Civil War Sesquicentennial (see page 2 for additional information on Green).

Pleasant Hill Christian Church was recently razed. It was located in the Greenhill area, not far from Cemetery Road. A pavilion will be built on the location and a commemorative granite marker will be erected. The cemetery, behind the structure, remains unchanged. A former Warren County resident wrote about this building in a letter to the Daily News in 1997: “I was told this old church was no longer used for Sunday services. My father and mother, Albert Howell and Allie Donoho Howell, lie in its graveyard. I feel like this church where the pews are bare and no music is heard; and it’s falling to pieces, board and stone. It has had its day, but that day is past and it stands there to crumble to dust.”

**Save the Dates:**

**Oct. 29**

Ramble to the Gardner House and Munfordville Civil War battlefield

**Nov. 15**

Deadline for Landmark grant completion

**Dec. 3**

Christmas Tour of Homes
Johnny Green to Again Visit Bowling Green

Johnny Green of the Orphan Brigade will once again visit Bowling Green for the Landmark Association picnic on Sunday, September 11. Green was 19 when the Civil War broke out, and was one of the only soldiers in the Orphan Brigade alive when it ended. Orphan Brigade soldiers were unable to return to their home state of Kentucky until the war was over—lest they be tried for treason—because they chose to fight for the Confederacy. Though he had learned to love the Union, as his mother was from Boston, Green felt passionately that states should have the right to govern themselves. And when President Abraham Lincoln called for men and arms, Green left his job in Florence, Alabama, to travel to Bowling Green, to join the Confederacy on the day before his 20th birthday. Green’s story, as detailed in a journal he wrote for his daughters years later, provides extraordinary accounts of courage and bravery, and brings to life the story of the Orphan Brigade to life. Green kept a diary of his trials, which was published in 1956 as Johnny Green of the Orphan Brigade. Here is a brief excerpt:

We came back from Russellville to Bowling Green by R.R., the rain pouring down all day. Reaching Bowling Green at dusk we marched through mud & rain to a point on the right hoof side of the turnpike looking north & called the place Camp Price for Genl Sterling Price who had just done such gallant fighting in Mo. [Missouri]

I was drenched to the skin, tired, muddy & sick, every bone in my body aching, but I said to my messmates I would bring straw to spread in our tents to sleep on. (We were fortunate enough of this time to have tents.) I took my blanket, filled it with all the straw I could pick into it, brought it [to] our tent & being almost dead on my feet threw myself down on it & tossed until morning.

When day came my messmates found I had broken out with measles & Col Hunt sent me to the hospital. He rode down to the hospital in Bowling Green & got the matron to give me the best accommodation & attention; my bed was a bunk filled with straw with one blanket to lie on & one to cover with. I knew nothing for a few days & when my fever began to abate I could not speak above a whisper. The only treatment I remember receiving was that about every hour the good kind hearted matron would bring me a tin cup full of hot sage tea. ▲

Johnny Green is a 21st Century Eagle Scout, a member of the world famous Civil War reenactment group, the Orphan Brigade. He is a retired attorney in Kentucky, and currently resides in the state of Florida. He is a frequent visitor to Bowling Green, Kentucky, and will be arriving for the Landmark Association picnic on Sunday, September 11, to celebrate the bicentennial of the formation of the Orphan Brigade.

The November 1900 cover of the Delineator Magazine produced by the Butterick Publishing Company. The company was the women's magazine to promote its clothing pattern business.Courtesy of Kentucky Library & Museum, WKU

The "Girls" of the Delineator Club

By Jean E. Nehm

The year was 1952, the place, the home of Alma Lee Francis on Edgewood in Bowling Green, Kentucky. The women who gathered there at 7:30 on the evening of February 7th already decided to form a literary club; they also agreed to meet once a month from September through May and to limit their group to fifteen members. The secretary recorded, "Present were the following girls: Ann Francis, Alma Lee Francis, Elsie Gains, Mary Hendrick, Marilyn Hill, Margie Nohm, Virginia Earl Pearson, and Sarah Pope. Also accepting membership but unable to be present were Louise Jolly and Betty Johnson, and Virginia Neel."

What they had not yet determined was an appropriate name for their new group. Two months later, several names were suggested: Heritage, Delineator, Contemporary, and L' cercle Ferme, with the Delineator Club being the unanimous choice. The origin of this name was The Delineator, a monthly magazine published by the Butterick Company from 1873 until 1957. The magazine featured not only the latest Fashions and sewing tips but fiction and articles on homemaking and self-improvement. The members in the new club believed that just as the magazine editors delineated (made a formal, precise outline) their material in order to create a successful publication, they too would carefully outline and prepare interesting programs for each other in the years to come.

Several traditions were launched during the first years of the club. Virginia Earl Pearson made a motion, which was seconded and carried, that all call be answered by any good book that the member had read. Members also planned an annual summer picnic with their husbands; the Hill Cottage on McFarland Lane off Orren Road was a popular destination for the picnic for several years. Members also voted unanimously to serve a dessert course before each program. Secretaries in the early years noted that "a delicious dessert" was served, but later minutes specify the ladies' baking skills by listing lemon pie, Hershey bar pie, strawberry cake, and Helen Donnelly's "own inimitable Charlotte Russe which we love having when she entertains our club." Georganna Hagerman delighted the members with "her delicious rum cake" one year and again the next year with a "delicious chocolate mandarin orange klee dessert." The exact recipe served by Covella Biggers in September 1987 was not mentioned, but the secretary noted that a "sinfully rich dessert" was served by the hostess, which was eaten by members on the spot.

A unique feature of the Delineator Club was its circulating library. Minutes from May 1, 1952 recorded, "It was decided that every member would purchase a book in the fall to be used as a circulating club library." In addition to the usual duties of officers president and secretary-treasurer, the club created the position of librarian, whose duties were "to keep a record of each member's book, to take the books to each meeting for exchange, and to return books to their owners at the end of the club year." Examples titles donated from the 1950s include these recent literature books: East of Eden (John Steinbeck), The Town (William Faulkner), My Several Worlds (Pearl S. Buck), The Silver Chalice (Thomas Covenant), Midcentury Journey (William S. Irwin), The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit (Sloan Wilson), Peace at Bowling Green (Alfred Leland Crabb), and The Dollmaker (Harriet Simpson Arrow). The format for most programs was a book review, with members choosing a wide range of both fiction and nonfiction literature to discuss. The Constitution and By-Laws stated that each program "shall be no shorter than 20 minutes and no longer than 45 minutes," so clearly, the members planned and delineated their remarks carefully. Sometimes, the program was not about a specific book but about an interesting topic such as a 1952 discussion of the presidential candidates, and later, the life of Bowling Green dressmaker Carrie Burnham Taylor, the life of Kentucky author Janice Holt Giles, the history of the Capitol Arts Center, and a travelogue from a member's recent (continued on page 4)
journey. Guest speakers also contributed interesting programs. For example, Novella Mitchell, a watercolor artist from Smiths Grove, visited, sharing her collection of paintings of covered bridges and speaking of the encouragement she had received from Hans Wilcox, Evelyn Thurman, former Western Kentucky University educator and librarian, came to speak about Laura Ingalls Wilder. Michelle Meng delighted the club with her presentation about antique lace, passing around samples of cut work, drawn work, Irish crochet, Brussels’s lace, Rosepoint, and Bobbin lace. Marc Durban also visited and told of her background in theater and how she came to found The Public Theatre of Kentucky.

As the months passed on, the club celebrated anniversaries and inevitably altered some traditions. With the passage of time, however, membership dwindled. Several years ago, members made an effort to keep the club vibrant. Although there was some initial reluctance, Sara ("Sookie") Bennett insisted that the club invite some younger women to join. As one of the charter members of the Delineator Club, she could not fathom the thought of the club fading out of existence. "We can’t let it die on the vine" she said. So the club ordered special, engraved invitations and sent them to women they thought would be interested in joining. The plan worked; all who received an invitation joined.

The new generation includes Lucinda Anderson, daughter of charter member Alma Lee Francis. Lucinda has fond memories of her childhood home and her mother’s intense preocupation. The club invite some younger women to join. As one of the charter members, she said. "That would sooner or later blow us up from a sanitarie point of view." They understood, nevertheless, that the temptation to civic inaction was profound. For generations, Bowling Green had boasted a means of sewage disposal that was disarmingly simple. Eons of precipitation had forced rainwater through the topsoil, where it eroded the soil into a bedrock at the foot of the bluff. underground caves and streams and hundreds of sinkholes—short, any number of receptacles to collect and carry off the waste of a small city and its richest Inhabitants.

Nevertheless, Bowling Green’s sewage system was generally sloping, beginning at the north at an elevation of 650 feet on what is now the campus of Western Kentucky University, descending to 500 feet near the public square, then draining northward to another convenient outlet, the Barren River.

Opening a passage to the city’s underground system of cesspools and watercourses became the 25th of the "sink finder." Such troglodytes would dig through the topsoil until they located a passable section of the underground stream, and then start its course with the aid of a healthy volume of water. If no obstruction was evident, voids, said, "The property owner had his sewer connection. Though the manhole was generally random and success accidental, at least one sink finder, an African American named Henry Jameson, gained fame for his ability to locate and accompany fissures with the help of a divining rod or “witch stick.”

Natural sewage outlets, however, could prove costly to the user. If the sink happened to connect to an underground stream, it might serve its purpose for years, but more often complications arose. Without consistent drainage, waste accumulated, often percolating through the walls, floors, and ceilings. Cleanliness required a parade of plungers and firemen’s hoses. It was years before any sanitary tour of the town. One might begin at Chestnut Street and find the College, where the student body would select a school for young men of whom club secretary William A. O'Barahan was president. In the heat and humidity of summer, noted O'Barahan, the stench escaping from a nearby ground opening was "exceedingly offensive." Only a short distance up the hill was Potter College, the school for young ladies established a dozen years earlier by another club member, Benjamin F. Cabell. During construction of the school building, the architect had recommended that Cabell simply discharge waste through pipes onto the rear hillside. He was wrong, however; and his neighbors soon complained about the odor. Luckily, a little blasting had opened a way to a cavern beneath the property, at least temporarily alleviating the problem.

On the other hand, the center of town, one could pause at the corner of State and 10th Streets to admire the four-story McCormack Building. Built by two of the club’s guests, Dr. Joseph McCormack and his son Dr. Arthur T. McCormack, the building was a prestigious address for business and municipal offices. During excavations for the cellar, however, workers had discovered a two-sewage-contaminated underground stream, necessitating the construction of retaining walls and septic tanks costing some $12,000. Continuing down State Street to the northeast corner of the public square, one would encounter the owners of the Morehead House, the city’s leading hotel, blasting their twenty-third hole to create a fresh outfall for sewage. The Morehead owners’ method was the Gerard House, a residential hotel with such an unhealthy atmosphere that, said, it was no baby had ever been born there.

Other businesses in the vicinity, in common with many homeowners, found themselves without on-premises access to sinks. Consequently, at the rear of the public square, in the commercial heart of the city, one could find numerous, poorly maintained, fluid-tested, open privies from which sewage was discharged onto the ground. Finally, no tour of downtown was complete without a look at (and a sniff of) its main drainage canal, the famous Whisky Run Sewer. Originating in a spring a few blocks to the southeast, it ran under State Street parallel to 10th Street, just south of the McCormack Building, then behind the courthouse. Turning northward between Center and Kentucky Streets, it eventually emptied into a large sink near the Barren River. Open in some places, board-covered in others, fortified here and there with rubble, this old drainage ditch took its name from the swillish quality of the liquid it carried.

The club’s responses to the sewage problem, as one of the XY Club’s guests knew, had been as sluggish as the most
What Is the National Register?

By Dwight Young

What exactly is the National Register? One official government website employs an impressive skein of nouns to describe it as a compilation of "districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture." Another describes the Register more succinctly as the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation. Both definitions are accurate, but the shorter one provides a better sense of what this amazing list is all about.

The diverse and lengthy and ever-expanding roster of treasures on the National Register—more than 86,000 listings, comprising more than 1.7 million individual resources, from steel mills to shotgun houses, railroad stations to roadside attractions, bridges to battlefield, mansion to canals, prisons to lighthouses, archaeological sites to sailing ships—is made up of things we should care about. Having them around, living with them, and learning from them helps us remember who we are, where we came from, how we got to now. They're "worthy of preservation" because they tell the story of us as a people and a nation in the process up to this point, whether the property's Integrity is compromised, making it eligible for listing.

The process by which a property gets listed begins with a review in an exercise in straight-up democracy: Anyone can nominate a property, whether historical or architectural or both—that makes it worthy of a spot on the Register. Is it associated with an important person, event, or movement in history? Does it mark a notable advancement in technology or is it a premier example of a particular style? Is it the work of a recognized master? Does it have the potential to yield important archaeological information about our past?

Two important points to bear in mind. First, scoring a "yes" to any one of these questions may be enough to make a property eligible for the National Register; in other words, the property doesn't have to be both historically noteworthy and architecturally significant to be listed. Second, the Register is intended to recognize properties of local as well as national significance; many listed properties are deemed worthy of preservation because they played important roles in the history of their communities, not in the history of the nation as a whole.

The issue of integrity involved determining whether the features that contribute to the property's significance—its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and the like—remain largely intact. A house may be notable because it was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, for example, but has Wright's original design been radically altered through years of remodeling? Similarly, a building may be significant because it was an historic event took place there, but has it been moved from the site where the event occurred? If the answer to either question is "yes," the property's Integrity could be compromised, potentially making it ineligible for Register listing.

Generally speaking, properties must be at least 50 years old to be added to the National Register. (Properties that have achieved significance in the last 50 years may qualify if they are of exceptional importance.) It's worth noting that 50 years is a minimum on the national timeline. The National Park Service, the Civil Rights era, the space race...properties from that not-so-long-ago period are by no means ancient, but many of them are now eligible for the National Register. What's more, this 50-year threshold is constantly moving. So every year, a new bunch of properties comes of age, becoming eligible for—a list that often gets listed on—the Register. This means, obviously, that the National Register will never be "done." The nation's official list of things worth preserving is, and always will be, a work in progress.

Preservation professionals rely on the National Register as an awesomely useful planning tool—so useful, in fact, that it's hard to imagine how we got along before it was established in 1966. But what about the actual owners of properties included on the Register? What do they get out of it? Some pretty nice benefits, that's what.

First, listing on the Register is generally the threshold for eligibility for whatever preservation funding may be available from federal and state governments. Admittedly, there aren't huge pots of money out there awaiting distribution, but the preservation funding sources that do exist (and, it's safe to assume, those that might be established in the future) typically award their grants and loans only to properties on the Register. Similarly, owners of some types of Register-listed properties are eligible for generous tax credits that can help offset the costs.

(continued on page 10)

Warren County Properties on the National Register of Historic Places

[Editor's note: There are always properties in the process of application, but this is the list compiled by the Bowling Green-Warren County Historic Preservation Board. Some of these listed are historic districts which include multiple properties. A property can be listed individually and as contributing to a historic district. For further information about these sites see the Preservation Board's website at www.warrenhistory.org/historicpreservation/resources.php or the Kentucky Library National Register (Razed)]

Adams-Kentucky Streets District
Allen House
Allen House
Blytheley House
Burrum House
Campbell F. Smith
Cove Spring Farm
Cecilia Memorial Church
Cherry Hill-WKU
College Hill District
College Street Bridge
Confederate Monument—Fairview Cemetery
Cook House
Curd-Moss House
Davison House
Downtown Commercial District
Drakes Creek Baptist Church
Drunkin Site
Ennis House
Ewing House
Fairview Methodist
Ford House
Fort C. F. Smith
Fort Lyle—WKU
Fort Webb
Gordon Wilson Hall—WKU
Grosvenor House
Grider, John House
Grider, Tobias House
Hale House
Hays House
Health Building—WKU
Heating Plant—WKU
Hines House (Razed)
Hobson House
Home Economics Building—WKU (Razed)
Honeys Center (Karter House)
Industrial Arts Building—WKU
Ironwood Juggers House
Jesse Kirby House
Kelley House
Kentucky Building—WKU
L&N Bridge
L&N Railroad Station
Lost River Cave
Madison Farm
Magnolia Street District
Merritt Hardin House
Merritt House
Modern Auto District
Moose House
Mr. Otis Clumberland Presbyterian Church
Neal House
Newton Kemp House
Nine Hearths
Oakland-Freepoint District
Old Log Church
Pioneer Log Cabin—WKU
Pulaski House
President's Home (Alumni Center)—WKU
Rauscher House (Razed)

August 2011
Landmark Report 6

Ironwood, built in 1857 by Joseph Rogers Underwood and Elizabeth Cox Underwood, was the second Warren County home placed on the National Register. Courtesy of Kentucky Library & Museum, WKU.
backed-up sink. A few years after settling in Bowling Green in 1875, he became a member of the Board of Health. Joseph N. McCormack had conducted a sanitary survey of the city and urged the construction of a sewer system consistent with the installation of new gas lines. Having fallen victim himself to a severe case of typhoid in 1872, McCormack understood the menace to public health posed by sewage and sanitary wastes then still common in town. The legislature's utter indifference to promoting sanitary measures, however, had become clear when he approached the State Board in 1883. At $2,500 per year, the appropriation for the salaries and expenses of the position were so inadequate that he had to supplement his income by taking on an office practice in the city. McCormack had been contracted to provide sanitary services for 28 years.

Memphis, Tennessee, had responded to epidemics of cholera in the 1870s with construction of a sewer system to protect its water supply from contamination. By contrast, in establishing its first waterworks in 1870, sewer-less Bowling Green had put the cost before the horse, even locating the pumping station downriver from a drainage area. In 1892, at the urging of Dr. C. W. McCormack and Mr. J. S. Wilkins, the city engineer James Wilkinson—"the power behind the throne"—had engaged the services of a sanitary engineer and a state registrar, and consigned them to restate the city's sanitary condition and plans similar to those of Humphreys, but again the price tag was too high. The common council quickly dropped the matter. A decade later, as the XV Club noticed in hindsight, made the mistake of calling the price as a lump sum—$2,500—and a frustrated common council quickly dropped the matter. A decade later, club member and geologist J. H. Humphreys, had been engaged to conduct a new sanitary survey of Bowling Green. The outcome—a comprehensive plan for sewage disposal similar to that designed for Memphis—seemed foreordained, but Humphreys, as the XV Club noticed in hindsight, made the mistake of uttering the cost as a lump sum—$2,500—and a frightened common council quickly dropped the matter. A decade later, club member and geologist Malcolm H. Crump was confident that the work could be accomplished for half this amount; restated at $1.00 per foot, moreover, it compared favorably to the cost of a new sewage line. Dr. C. W. McCormack agreed, perhaps thinking that dynamite would be better used to gain the attention of the common council and especially the city engineer James Wilkinson—"the power behind the throne"—whose support was indispensable to progress.

At the conclusion of its meeting, the XV Club resolved to invite the State Board to hold its next sanitary convention in Bowling Green, but the next major call for a sewer system did not occur until after the turn of the century. In 1899, anti-municipal Jackson, a consulting engineer from Nashville, submitted plans similar to those of Humphreys, but again the price was too high. The common council, however, possessed satisfactory resources were being converging on the problem. On January 1, 1911, Kentucky's new vital statistics law took effect. A higher proportion of the population of Bowling Green than any comparable city in the Western Kentucky Normal School. That same year, the new sanitary engineer, Paul E. McCormack, produced his report. McCormack had raised the issue of sewage disposal to a new level, and the presence of such conditions, "with every home and business person maintaining a fly range of from one to a dozen accumulations of human filth," he found. Tolerance of such conditions was found to be incomprehensible as its inexcusable.

The goal, indeed, seemed within reach. On August 20, 1911, the local Board of Health took the initiative to construct a sewer system ordered by the State Board. Obenchain's widow, Lido Calvert Obenchain's widow, was invited to attend the hearing on July 25, Circuit Judge N. Porter Sims listened to affidavit evidence from both sides, even as he warned Mayor John B. Rodes from awarding the construction contract. Obenchain, noted that "Bowling Green seems to be growing, but it is not progressing," and "the sewage system of the city should be looked after." She was encouraged after reading the newspaper clippings he had sent. "It seems that Bowling Green is really going to have sewage," she wrote him. "It's organic. I think it's a good thing she was encouraged after reading the newspaper clippings he had sent. "It seems that Bowling Green is really going to have sewage," she wrote him. "It's organic. I think it's a good thing."

Ironically, the breakthrough to a full sewer system did not occur until after the turn of the century. In 1920, Bowling Green, like the rest of the country, fell from the comfortable 1920s to the leanest of the Depression years. For some residents and former residents, the prospect of a new toilet seemed remote. With the oldest city of any importance to the community's sewage. Nevertheless, a series of progressive reforms during the 1920s brought a sewer system closer to realization. As they took steps to improve and expand the city's waterworks, Mayor John B. Rodes, Jr., the common council, and the communitycrafted a comprehensive plan for sewage disposal similar to that embodied in the Barren River, underground, 1920s. Even after being sent underground and purified by passage through the limestone bedrock, waste flowed naturally and unimpeded to the river.

However, while a few in Bowling Green, unfortunately, told another story. For the next decade, they remained more than as high as other Kentucky cities with at least 10,000 inhabitants. Nevertheless, a series of progressive reforms during the 1920s brought a sewer system closer to realization. As they took steps to improve and expand the city's waterworks, Mayor John B. Rodes, Jr., the common council, and the communitycrafted a comprehensive plan for sewage disposal similar to that embodied in the Barren River, underground, 1920s. Even after being sent underground and purified by passage through the limestone bedrock, waste flowed naturally and unimpeded to the river.

Ironically, the breakthrough to a full sewer system did not occur until after the turn of the century. In 1920, Bowling Green, like the rest of the country, fell from the comfortable 1920s to the leanest of the Depression years. For some residents and former residents, the prospect of a new toilet seemed remote. With the oldest city of any importance to the community's sewage. Nevertheless, a series of progressive reforms during the 1920s brought a sewer system closer to realization. As they took steps to improve and expand the city's waterworks, Mayor John B. Rodes, Jr., the common council, and the communitycrafted a comprehensive plan for sewage disposal similar to that embodied in the Barren River, underground, 1920s. Even after being sent underground and purified by passage through the limestone bedrock, waste flowed naturally and unimpeded to the river.

Ironically, the breakthrough to a full sewer system did not occur until after the turn of the century. In 1920, Bowling Green, like the rest of the country, fell from the comfortable 1920s to the leanest of the Depression years. For some residents and former residents, the prospect of a new toilet seemed remote. With the oldest city of any importance to the community's sewage. Nevertheless, a series of progressive reforms during the 1920s brought a sewer system closer to realization. As they took steps to improve and expand the city's waterworks, Mayor John B. Rodes, Jr., the common council, and the communitycrafted a comprehensive plan for sewage disposal similar to that embodied in the Barren River, underground, 1920s. Even after being sent underground and purified by passage through the limestone bedrock, waste flowed naturally and unimpeded to the river.

Ironically, the breakthrough to a full sewer system did not occur until after the turn of the century. In 1920, Bowling Green, like the rest of the country, fell from the comfortable 1920s to the leanest of the Depression years. For some residents and former residents, the prospect of a new toilet seemed remote. With the oldest city of any importance to the community's sewage. Nevertheless, a series of progressive reforms during the 1920s brought a sewer system closer to realization. As they took steps to improve and expand the city's waterworks, Mayor John B. Rodes, Jr., the common council, and the communitycrafted a comprehensive plan for sewage disposal similar to that embodied in the Barren River, underground, 1920s. Even after being sent underground and purified by passage through the limestone bedrock, waste flowed naturally and unimpeded to the river.

Ironically, the breakthrough to a full sewer system did not occur until after the turn of the century. In 1920, Bowling Green, like the rest of the country, fell from the comfortable 1920s to the leanest of the Depression years. For some residents and former residents, the prospect of a new toilet seemed remote. With the oldest city of any importance to the community's sewage. Nevertheless, a series of progressive reforms during the 1920s brought a sewer system closer to realization. As they took steps to improve and expand the city's waterworks, Mayor John B. Rodes, Jr., the common council, and the communitycrafted a comprehensive plan for sewage disposal similar to that embodied in the Barren River, underground, 1920s. Even after being sent underground and purified by passage through the limestone bedrock, waste flowed naturally and unimpeded to the river.

Ironically, the breakthrough to a full sewer system did not occur until after the turn of the century. In 1920, Bowling Green, like the rest of the country, fell from the comfortable 1920s to the leanest of the Depression years. For some residents and former residents, the prospect of a new toilet seemed remote. With the oldest city of any importance to the community's sewage. Nevertheless, a series of progressive reforms during the 1920s brought a sewer system closer to realization. As they took steps to improve and expand the city's waterworks, Mayor John B. Rodes, Jr., the common council, and the communitycrafted a comprehensive plan for sewage disposal similar to that embodied in the Barren River, underground, 1920s. Even after being sent underground and purified by passage through the limestone bedrock, waste flowed naturally and unimpeded to the river.

Ironically, the breakthrough to a full sewer system did not occur until after the turn of the century. In 1920, Bowling Green, like the rest of the country, fell from the comfortable 1920s to the leanest of the Depression years. For some residents and former residents, the prospect of a new toilet seemed remote. With the oldest city of any importance to the community's sewage. Nevertheless, a series of progressive reforms during the 1920s brought a sewer system closer to realization. As they took steps to improve and expand the city's waterworks, Mayor John B. Rodes, Jr., the common council, and the communitycrafted a comprehensive plan for sewage disposal similar to that embodied in the Barren River, underground, 1920s. Even after being sent underground and purified by passage through the limestone bedrock, waste flowed naturally and unimpeded to the river.

Ironically, the breakthrough to a full sewer system did not occur until after the turn of the century. In 1920, Bowling Green, like the rest of the country, fell from the comfortable 1920s to the leanest of the Depression years. For some residents and former residents, the prospect of a new toilet seemed remote. With the oldest city of any importance to the community's sewage. Nevertheless, a series of progressive reforms during the 1920s brought a sewer system closer to realization. As they took steps to improve and expand the city's waterworks, Mayor John B. Rodes, Jr., the common council, and the communitycrafted a comprehensive plan for sewage disposal similar to that embodied in the Barren River, underground, 1920s. Even after being sent underground and purified by passage through the limestone bedrock, waste flowed naturally and unimpeded to the river.
churches, schools, the armory and the courthouse itself. General economic conditions, moreover, made any additional assessment of the project difficult due to the Great Depression. While the extra cost to property owners in the district had been estimated at between $125 and $142, the citizen’s group estimated that more than half of Bowling Green’s 4,700 Depression-struck taxpayers had already slid into delinquency.

If sewer foes believed that a petition attacking the necessity of the project put them on firm ground, they soon found the arguments wielded against them. Judge Sims observed on an avalanche of written testimony, including a statement signed by 11 physicians pronouncing the city’s public health inadequate in their expressed desire that, whatever conditions that opponents attempted to have it excluded from the proceedings, along with Mayor Rodes’s affidavit mourning the numerous but futile proposals for sewer systems dating far back as 1873. When, on August 3, Judge Sims dismissed all objections and upheld the city’s right to construct the sewer, the citizen’s group promptly filed an appeal. Although the Court of Appeals was then in recess, all parties hoped that a special panel of two judges would agree to decide the matter.

By this time the urgency had acquired a new dimension, for if the appeals court upheld Judge Sims, the local newspaper observed, construction could probably commence immediately and supply hundreds of jobs for Bowling Green’s growing ranks of unemployed men.

No quick decision from the special panel, unfortunately, was forthcoming, the judges having agreed that the full court ought to rule on the legality of the ordinance. In the meantime, however, an alternative method of financing the project was attracting interest. On February 2, 1932, the same day Bowling Green passed its sewer ordinance, the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC) had commenced operations in Washington. Originally chartered by Congress to fund Depression-starved banks, the RFC had received additional authority on July 21 to make loans for self-liquidating public works projects. Not only could such a loan finance a sewer system for the entire city and be repaid with monthly user charges of less than one dollar, it would generate jobs for as many as 690 men. On September 23, about 140 of those men gathered at the courthouse and passed a resolution urging the city to pursue the RFC loan. Desperation was evident in their expressed desire that, whatever the number available, jobs be parcelled out to 600 men on a pro rata basis, giving everyone a day or two per week of wages instead of public relief.

Negotiations for the federal loan, however, had to wait a few more weeks for another court decision. As part of its request for sewer financing from the RFC, the city of Hopkinsville had been required to obtain a ruling on the validity of the state law that governed borrowing by municipalities. Bowling Green’s common council watched closely, and when the Court of Appeals upheld the Hopkinsville application, quickly moved forward with its own. On November 1, 1932, local newspaper headlines trumpeted the RFC’s approval of a $630,000 loan to Bowling Green for a sanitary sewer system. With so many unemployed eager to enlist, the work began early in 1933 and was completed for in advance of the estimated four-year time frame. After more than a half-century, through the persistence of public health advocates and a timely dose of government stimulus, real bathrooms finally came to Bowling Green.

(National Register, continued from page 7)

...of rehabilitation. Since it was established in 1976, the federal government’s historic rehabilitation tax credit program has helped spark the rehabilitation of thousands of historic structures, from modest main street storefronts to high-rise office towers. Moreover, the success of the federal program has led several states to develop their own preservation tax incentives that can be combined with the federal credits.

National Register designation also provides a measure of protection through Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Section 106 requires that federal agencies provide the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the SHPO an opportunity to comment prior to funding, licensing, or approving a project that will affect a property listed on or eligible for the Register. Although the advisory council doesn’t have the power to halt a harmful project permanently, it can—and does—work with the sponsoring agency, preservationists, and other interested parties to seek ways to avoid or mitigate adverse impacts.

Finally, there’s this: Inclusion on the National Register is an honor. The owner of a Register-listed house can take pride in saying, “My house is important; the federal government says so.” That’s a feel-good benefit that means a lot to many people.


This is the most widely misunderstood fact about the National Register. Listing in itself does not impose any restrictions on an owner’s right to do anything with his or her property within the limits of local laws and regulations. Here’s another way to say it: Restrictions on an owner’s right to manage his or her property in any manner are imposed by state or local law, not by the National Register. (If an owner plans to use federal funds or permits for a project that would destroy a historic property, that’s a different story.) So inclusion on the Register does not ensure preservation in perpetuity. A responsible owner is key to any property’s survival.

Correction: Hildabrand received the Landmark Association’s Merit Award, for his work on the Garvin Building (Next Star Building) at 918 State Street. Thanks to Tim & Linda Leigh for allowing us to use their building at 600 State Street for the annual meeting reception. The building was originally constructed in the late-1860s as a service station. Larry Honder’s vintage automobile added true ambiance to the site.
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  ---------------------------

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

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

Checks should be payable to: Landmark Association
P.O. Box 1812
Bowling Green, KY 42102-1812

“A future with a past”