12-2011

Landmark Report (Vol. 29, no. 3)

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

Follow this and additional works at: https://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
https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/landmark_report/113

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.
THANK YOU

The Landmark Association expresses its appreciation to all those who helped with our Christmas Tour of Homes, especially our sponsor Meyer Mortgage, our Christmas Home Tour chairman Miranda Clements, the poster designer Sheila Flener, our Board of Directors, all the other volunteers who helped at the individual properties, and the donors to the silent auction.

The tour is one of Landmark's chief fundraisers and serves as an educational event for all those who attend. Our sincerest thanks to those who opened their homes or businesses for the tour:

Jane Morris
Tim & Linda Leigh of Select, Inc.
Montessori School of Bowling Green
Downtown Redevelopment Authority
Doug Gorman
Steve & Patsy Morgenthaler
Ed Faye
Michael & Linda Barron of Morris Jewelry
Greg & Theresa Davis Shea of Tea Squares
Hildabrand Receives Heritage Award for Preservation Commitment

Jason Hildabrand, owner of Hildabrand Interiors and Restoration, received the Heritage Award, Landmark's highest honor, at the Association's annual meeting in May. Besides his supervision of the Pump House project, Hildabrand has restored his own home, the Leander Greer House. The home was featured on HGTV in the fall of 2007. The Greer House has been on several tours since Jason purchased and began renovating it in 2006. The Greer House has received numerous awards; including the Operation PR.I.D.E. Award, the Landmark Association Historic Home Award, and has been featured in Kentucky Homes and Gardens Magazine in the July/August 2008 special edition issue entitled "Designer's Own Homes." For more information about Hildabrand Interiors and Restoration or the Leander Greer House, visit http://hildbrandinteriors.com/index.html. Hildabrand has also served on Landmark Association's board of directors, chaired the Association's Christmas tour, and has worked on numerous historic preservation projects throughout the area.

PUMP HOUSE, ca. 1926. 700 EAST MAIN, BOWLING GREEN, KY

These beautiful, 6 1/2" x 4 1/2" colored note cards of the Pump House done by local artist Misha Ambrosia are available from the Association in bundles of 10 for $4. Contact the office if you would like some, or would like a price list of our other note cards, books, maps, and other merchandise.

Mr. Browning Would Be Pleased

By Jean E. Nehm

British poet Robert Browning (1812-1889) enjoyed a creative productivity in the late 1800s in both England and the United States. Admirers formed Browning Clubs or Browning Societies in order to read and study his poetry. In America, the first Browning Clubs were in Boston (1885), Chicago (1886), and Philadelphia (1888) (Greer 165-169). In an article about literary clubs in New York, it was written that no "city with any pretensions to culture was without its Browning society at this time" (Howley 5). Bowling Green, Kentucky could be considered among those cultural locales, for in 1895, Daisy Cooke, Minnie Cooke, Nona Cooke, Florence Dillard, and Nora Greer founded a Browning Club here. They spent their first year studying Browning's works in general. The next year, with Mary Armitage and Mattie Hatcher joining the group, the women concentrated on Browning's monumental, book-length poem, The Ring and the Book, described by a contemporary critic as "beyond all parallel poetry and the supremest poetical achievement of our time" (Buchanan qtd. in Loucks and Stauffer 508).

Studying poetry together was a popular activity in those years, and more members joined the Browning Club. However, they decided to broaden their study to other authors in addition to Robert Browning and turned their attention to the Bible, Shakespeare, Dante, Great Books, World Literature, and other themes. They did return to the poet for the 1936-1937 year, when the program theme was "A Year with Robert Browning" and in 1977-1978 for "Robert Browning and His Contemporaries."

Linda Surface, a member since 1954, is fond of saying that a year in the Browning Club is equivalent to taking a course at Western Kentucky University. Nancy Cheek adds that preparing for a program is akin to writing a master's thesis every year. A schedule from 1961-1962, during which the ladies studied Nineteenth Century American literature, is an excellent example.

September 23 Introduction: The New Nation and the House Divided
October 13 Emerson and the Transcendentalists
October 27 James Fenimore Cooper
November 10 The Historians
December 5 Nathaniel Hawthorne
January 12 Longfellow, Whittier, Holmes, and Lowell
February 9 Washington Irving
February 23 Herman Melville
March 7 Walt Whitman
March 27 Sidney Lanier and the Ring and the Book
April 13 Samuel Clemens
May 18 Henry Thoreau

Twice a month, the ladies, wearing dresses, hats, and gloves, would gather at a member's home to listen to the hostess' program. The purpose of the club, according to the Constitution, was "to enhance the knowledge and scholarship of the members," so each member felt the responsibility to be well prepared. In 1961, the idea occurred to give her very first program, Georgann Hagerman came down with an inopportune case of laryngitis. With some trepidation, she called the president, Mattie Hatcher, and "croaked" that she would be unable to host the Browning Club. Miss Mattie replied, "You will give your program!" With a true spirit of dedication, Mrs. Hagerman did deliver her program and even now loves to share the story of this strict but beloved early member of the club.

Miss Frances Richards was another inspirational member. As the first editor of the College Heights Herald and a former English professor at Western, she welcomed some of her own former students into the Browning Club, including Ann Fields, Marge Sagabiel, and Clare Scarborough.

Today, Mr. Sagabiel treasures an antique doll that once belonged to Miss Richards; the doll, named Frances, now sits in the room whenever Marge hosts a club meeting. The Browning Club still meets twice a month from September to May, and the members are

The cover of a special program created for the Browning Club's 100th anniversary.
History and Restoration of the 1928 BGMU Pump House

By Christy Spurlin

The recently completed restoration of the BGMU Pump House at 700 East Main Avenue has been a labor of love by members of Landmark. Sated for demolition, the structure had been an ongoing topic of discussion by the Landmark Board over a two-year period. Landmark members did not want the city to lose the brick structure with its unique limestone foundation, milled stone lintels, keystones, quoins, and clay tile roof.

Working in cooperation with BGMU, the structure was leased to Landmark and in the summer of 2010, restoration work began in earnest under the direction of Jason Hildbrand. With his expertise in historical restoration, Jason was able to develop a comprehensive restoration plan for the 1928 Pump House and spent hundreds of volunteer hours himself restoring both the exterior and interior. Security window grills were removed, wooden windows were removed and scraped, painted and reglazed, exterior woodwork scraped, painted, a new door was crafted, roof tiles repaired, new storm windows installed, interior surfaces painted and much more.

Landmark members were committed to saving the structure, not just due to its aesthetic beauty, but also for its historical significance. The 1928 Pump House has an interesting and pivotal role in the city’s development and the history of the Reservoir Park, named after the open air reservoir that once supplied the city’s water.

Before any type of water pumping or filtration system was used, Bowling Green residents relied on a series of wells, and naturally occurring water sources. As the city’s population increased, more came to rely on the public well on the courthouse grounds. Despite efforts to protect the public water supply, contaminated water was the source of much illness for many downtown business owners to the Wright well for drinking water. Dr. Wright was a city representative and he championed the building of a comprehensive city water works system.

In 1929, the Kentucky legislature granted the Bowling Green Water Works Company the right to organize. Land was purchased at both College Knob in 1866 for a reservoir, and on the Barren River end of Chestnut Street. Also in 1868, Louisville civil engineer Charles Hermany was employed to develop the Bowling Green system. The system designed by Hermany could pump up to 648 gallons a day, cost a total of $125,000.

At the Chestnut Street station, a pump was installed to pump water from the Barren River up to an open reservoir constructed in 1871 atop Hospital Hill. The open reservoir and the grounds surrounding eventually became a popular leisure spot for residents. Tables of what was found or fell into the open reservoir over the years run the gamut from the plausible to the absurd. No doubt by modern standards, the system was unsanitary and lacked the modern day health and safety measures to control the pollution of the city’s water supply.

Cast iron pipes varying from 2-6 inches in diameter ran throughout the present day downtown area. Once atop Reservoir Hill, gravity assisted in getting the water downtown to residents. In 1886 a Dixon Steam Pump was installed and used until 1909 when the city purchased another steam pump. Semi-diesel equipment was installed with generators to provide current for the pumps around 1920. The system was used until 1921. In 1921 a sediment basin adjacent to the reservoir was erected.

Problems continued as the city expanded and the demand for water increased. By 1926 the water situation was pronounced “serious” and the city appropriated $1,500 for a consulting engineer. The verdict of the report was that the health of the city’s water was in danger due to water not adequately filtered and the pumps at the “old pump house” were inadequate for the demand. The “new” Pump House of 1928 came out of a major expansion to the city’s water system.

The city contracted Chester Engineering of Philadelphia to survey the city’s water system and offer recommendations. The building, the 700 East Main was designed by Chester Engineering of Philadelphia and erected in 1928 to house the high powered water pumps. Dravo, Dopler and Company installed the water pumps. A driving force behind the expansion was Bowling Green mayor A. Scott Hines. Hines advocated the building of both a water plant and for larger pipes. The “new” Pump House was located near the old steps leading to the reservoir. Also in 1928 a 150,000 gallon elevated storage tank was erected on Western’s campus. In 1869 pumping capacity was 452 gpm, double to a 2,000 gallons per minute.

Over the next several decades the city continued to improve and modernize the city’s waterworks. In 1970 when the iconic red and white blue water storage tank was built, another underground pump station was used. Later a new pump station was built downtown from the 1928 building. The 1928 pump station was used in emergencies so late as the 1990s to keep the one million gallon red, white and blue tank topped off in very hot weather.

The beautifully restored 1928 Pump House was featured in the 2010 Landmark Christmas Tour of Homes. The Pump House received the 2011 Commercial Award from Operation Pride. The Upper East Main Historic District neighborhood recently started a campaign to develop an ongoing development atmosphere around the structure. Once an eyesore, the structure is now on asset to the community.

Landmark Associates would like to thank all members who donated money and volunteer hours to the 1928 Pump House’s restoration.

Reservoir Hill became a rustic park for local citizens. Here some ladies take respites by the reservoir’s edge with the undulating countryside east of town in the background. Courtesy of Kentucky Library, WKU.

At one-time Reservoir Hill featured a fish pond, a working pond, and a miniature golf course. Here some folks relax on the stone steps leading to the fish pond. Courtesy of Kentucky Library, WKU.

Highlights of Public Water History in Bowling Green

1866 Kentucky Legislature granted the Bowling Green Water Works Company the right to organize.

1868 Land purchased on College Knob as suitable grounds for a reservoir. Reservoir system developed by Charles Hermany, superintendent of the Louisville Water Works.

1871 Open reservoir was constructed.

1920 Steam pumps at treatment facility were converted to diesel. Sediment basin erected next to the reservoir.

1926 Bowling Green enters a contract with Chester Engineers to survey and report on the city’s water system.

1927 Another contract between the city and Chester Engineers for plans for and supervision of necessary improvements to the waterworks.

1928 Water treatment facility on Chestnut completed. System consisted of Barren River collection pipe, four filters and two sedimentation basins. This is also when chlorination of water began. Pump House and water plant constructed.

1929 Storage tank on Western campus erected.

1957 5,000,000 gallon steel umbrella roof storage tank built at Hospital Hill.

1970 Pipe made red, white and blue storage tank was completed.

1972 Nashville Road one million gallon tank constructed.

1980 Pump house restoration by Landmark Association started.


Water was pumped from the Barren River at the foot of Chestnut Street up to the Pump House where it was gradually divided back into the waterworks for the expanding population. The pump house was added in the late-1920s to give additional water pressure to the Bowling Green system. The system designed by Hermany consisted of Barren River water, a sedimentation basin, a water treatment facility, and two sedimentation basins. This is also when chlorination of water began. Pump House and water plant constructed.

1926 Bowling Green enters a contract with Chester Engineers to survey and report on the city’s water system.

1927 Another contract between the city and Chester Engineers for plans for and supervision of necessary improvements to the waterworks.

1928 Water treatment facility on Chestnut completed. System consisted of Barren River collection pipe, four filters and two sedimentation basins. This is also when chlorination of water began. Pump House and water plant constructed.

1929 Storage tank on Western campus erected.

1957 5,000,000 gallon steel umbrella roof storage tank built at Hospital Hill.

1970 Pipe made red, white and blue storage tank was completed.

1972 Nashville Road one million gallon tank constructed.

1980 Pump house restoration by Landmark Association started.
Watterson's Speech at Fountain Square

Dedication

[Editor's note: This is a verbatim transcript of Henry Watterson's speech for the official dedication of Fountain Square Park on June 5, 1872. Watterson was the editor of the Louisville Courier-Journal at the time.]

I thank you, Mr. Mayor, and I thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for the cordiality of this reception. When your very flattering sentences were read to me, I was engaged in duties not wholly unimportant; but, in spite of much distrust of myself, I could not resist the temptation to be identified, albeit in an humble way, with so pleasing a ceremony, and I was the more ready to come, since, recognizing the neighborly claims which you have upon my time and labor, I believe that this understanding, so admirably and so happily completed, is calculated to raise the credit and contribute to the best interest of this city.

In laying the foundations for an organized community two gloomy but practical necessities present themselves to the most ideal pioneers in civilization; some spot must be set apart as a place of burial, and this is quickly followed by the almost equally melancholy duty which calls for the erection of a place of confinement for malefactors and breakers of the law. You are met to dedicate a spot of confinement for those by-gone conflicts in this enchanted green spot, with its statues and its fountain, a decoration which the commercial metropolises of your State would be proud to call her own, and can by no means match. You have reason to rejoice, for it is all the work of your handicraft, the fruit of your own home industry.

We are often told that that which is most needed by a growing and ambitious community is what are facetiously denominated "a score or two of first rate funerals." Your experience contradicts this rash, unfeeling epigram; for you have many old and rich men among you, and I am told that, so far from setting you back, or throwing yourselves across the pathway of your progress, they have been among your liveliest spirits. May I not violate a too common rule, and wish that these old men may be with you long? We cannot hope that the waters of this fountain will partake of the qualities of that mythical spring which the romantic Spaniard sought through the delusive blooms and fatal mists of the Floridas. They cannot, pure and sweet though they be, impart everlasting life. But they have power to quicken and freshen and prolong the vital energies; and may they prove not less the solace of your old than the delight of your young. May the Park, itself, become your social rendezvous, a place—"For talking age and whispering lovers made.

May its hold upon your affections grow with your growth and strengthen with your strength as it deepens and mellows into the free and common resort of the rich and poor. May its shadows mingle with other and so lessen the haunts of our childhood and listen to the bells which trill so drowsily that we can scarce distinguish the sounds of sorrow from the noon and the night. You have been self-reliant and active, and you have prospered. You have not idled your time away in useless repining; and beheld the results around you. A dingy and war-stained hillock, which I found when I first saw it as if the Great Architect had dropped a handful of odd beam ends and chimney stacks and not taken times to put them fairly together, you have produced out of the wreck and powder-clad an inland city which is known all over this country for its thrift, progress and fine appearance. You have emulated the story of Aladdin; and you have achieved some of the wonders of the Lamp. You are watered by a reservoir which will compare with Fairmount. You are lighted by gas and purity and cheapness of which would, if suddenly fallen upon Louisville, dazzle and astonish and delight her people. You have, in this enchanting green spot, with its statues and its fountain, a decoration which the commercial metropolises of your State would be proud to call her own, and can by no means match. You have reason to rejoice, for it is all the work of your handicraft, the fruit of your own home industry.
This photograph of the Gilbert Sisters Band performing in Fountain Square Park is the only known image showing the original stone fountain mentioned by Walterson in his speech. Courtesy of Kentucky Library, UK.

Fountain Square, continued from page 7

Ishmael, whose presence was undeniably felt throughout the evening. His spirit seemed to guide us, as if he knew exactly where we were headed. Without further ado, let us delve into the history of this magnificent location and its impact on community life.

The fountain, a symbol of renewal and growth, stands as a testament to the enduring spirit of the people who call Fountain Square home. Its very existence is a reminder of the importance of preserving our past while embracing the future.

The fountain's history is intertwined with the city's, serving as a focal point for events and gatherings. It has witnessed countless celebrations, from weddings to political rallies, each leaving a unique mark on its surface. The water that gushes from its Mouth of Water has kept flowing year after year, symbolizing the unbreakable bond between the community and its landmark.

As we continue to celebrate the past and look forward to the future, let us remember that Fountain Square is not just a location, but a reflection of who we are as a people. It is a testament to the power of community, bringing together generations to share in the beauty of our shared history.

December 2011

Landmark Report 8

The Browning Club Program

Monday, May 7, 1990

China

Members: Miss McDaniel, Miss Anderson

1938-1939 Browning Club yearbook which indicated that China was the topic of discussion that year.

Browning Club members at the 100th anniversary celebration on April 25, 1995. Front row: Sister Linda Satter, Mary Lou Pearson; seated: Gretchen Niver, Doris Hendrick, Bonita Davis, Martha Jean Clark, Mary Lynn McGoldrick; standing: Carol White, Shirley Holland, Nancy Chen, Jean Hahn, Ann Fields, and Marge Sagbiel.

Illinois, Indiana, Alabama, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin, are proud to honor the Browning Club's historic traditions. But it should not be assumed that they are a tableau, frozen in the past. The club’s minutes, carefully archived in the Kentucky Library and Museum, show the passage of time as they change from handwritten to typed to computer-generated manuscripts.

In addition, members have enthusiastically taken advantage of the Internet to research their topics as well as to read book reviews and find new books. Carol White, who uses e-mail to send friendly reminders of meetings, was the first member to incorporate a laptop computer during a program on Laura Hillenberg’s Seduction when she shared on audio call of the famous horse’s race. Nancy Chen was the first member to use a Kindle, and Gretchen Niver the first to use a Nook. Other members, too, have embraced the new methods to achieve their familiar goal of lifelong learning.

This kind of technology would, of course, have been unimaginable to Robert Browning. But it is interesting to speculate about what the great poet might think of this Browning Club in Bowling Green. Most likely, he would not be offended that the members have broadened their study to include many other authors, for he himself was the president of two literary clubs in London, the New Shakespeare Society and the Wordsworth Society (Greer 164). Certainly, he would be very proud that the club awards its annual treasure to the winner of the poetry contest in Western Kentucky University’s English Department. And most assuredly, he would be pleased that the club founded in his name over 116 years ago continues the dedicated study of literature to the mutual pleasure and edification of its members.

Men As Lovers

Kentucky: They come here from the old and thickly-populated bluegrass country. They come here from the almost unknown country beyond the Tennessee. But they will go there to see Bocuse. They have a point of view and a purpose in life — a sense of duty which did not perhaps apply to me more directly than to another. The proposed gathering about this fountain and beneath these trees recalled vividly to my mind and heart the pleasures and the aspirations of a day that is gone. I suppose that every man’s life, however prosperous and happy, contains within itself certain unattainable longings and irrational regrets. For my own part these are strongest with me when I am reminded of the old village-life—the old home-life, wherein the smallest particles were full of romance and poetry—wherein everything partook more or less of the nature of a song. There are those in this company whose existence has been mainly so made up. Your own peaceful little city, cradled in rolling meadows so quiet that the wonder is they have not rocked you to sleep. It, like a mid-summer melody, a pretty dream of the golden daybreak,—“wherein angels prophesy.”

Adorable vision of the new Day!—so full of energetic life yet so serene—clinging to it and building upon it! The foundation of every great fortune—the foundation of every great enterprise, is that glorious yearning which ceases to inspire and which ever shines just above us and beyond us. The patter of the small bluegrass country. They come here from the almost unknown country beyond the Tennessee.

Ray Buckberry recently found an old piece of script printed specifically for use by Bowling Green businesses during the Depression. Typically script is associated with specific companies, such as coal firms, but it was used by many communities during the Depression. On March 8, 1933, The Park City Daily News reported on the script’s use:

“Approximately $10,000 [the order actually climbed to $22,000 according to the park two days later] in local scrip will be circulated in Bowling Green within the next few days as a medium of exchange designed to “turn over” rapidly and to discourage the hoarding of available currency during the period of financial unrest.

At a meeting of business men and women held yesterday afternoon at the City Hall, it was decided the plan would be of great benefit to the community at this time and steps were to immediately put it into operation.

An order for the lithographing of the script bills was placed with a Nashville concern as it is impossible to do work of this type in Bowling Green. City Attorney George W. Mepth went to Nashville today to see a proof of the work and it is very likely the bills will be here Friday ready for distribution.

It is calculated that approximately $10,000 worth of scrip and to increase the amount to $20,000 if necessary.

Today 57 concerns had signified their intention of issuing the scrip:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One dollar will be circulated in Bowling Green within the next few days as a medium of exchange designed to “turn over” rapidly and to discourage the hoarding of available currency during the period of financial unrest.

At a meeting of business men and women held yesterday afternoon at the City Hall, it was decided the plan would be of great benefit to the community at this time and steps were to immediately put it into operation.

An order for the lithographing of the script bills was placed with a Nashville concern as it is impossible to do work of this type in Bowling Green. City Attorney George W. Mepth went to Nashville today to see a proof of the work and it is very likely the bills will be here Friday ready for distribution.

It is calculated that approximately $10,000 worth of scrip and to increase the amount to $20,000 if necessary.

Today 57 concerns had signified their intention of issuing the scrip:
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
PO. Box 1812
Bowling Green, KY 42102-1812

"A future with a past"