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Spring Ramble to Columbia, Tennessee
Friday, April 12, 2013 • 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

$50 per person
(Includes transportation, lunch, and tour fees)

Join fellow members of the Landmark Association as we tour the beautiful community of Columbia, Tennessee, south of Nashville on Friday, April 12. Columbia, located in Maury, County, is called the “Antebellum Homes Capitol of Tennessee.” We will visit the President James K. Polk home, the Athenaeum, and other antebellum homes in the area with lunch in downtown Columbia. See upcoming flier for more details. Seating is limited to 15. Warning: Rambles such as this one require a good deal of walking and standing for tours; wear comfortable shoes.

Annual Dinner Meeting
Thursday, May 30, 2013 • 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. • Faculty House at WKU

Join us as we enjoy a delicious meal and then congratulate our award winners. Ironically the Faculty House was constructed by students under faculty supervision as a “student center” in 1921 from cedar trees that had died on the western edge of campus. It became the college library a short time after construction. Eventually the building became a respite for faculty members and remains that to this day. In the past the building has been referred to as the Cedar House and the Senior House.
Spring Time in Kentucky

(A slight jab at Indiana's poet laureate James Whitcomb Riley published in 1930)

by John A. Logan

For to entertain the Angels
Riley would select the time,
When the corn is cut and in the shock
And frosted is the pumpkin vine.

That would do for Indiana
But for us across the line
Let 'em come to old Kentucky
When it is goose layin' time.

When the suckers are a showin'
And the dogwoods are in bloom,
When the redbud shows its banner,
And the songbirds are in tune.

When the young and tender bluegrass
Spreads for them a carpet green,
With their golden robes and slippers
Makes the perfect color scheme.

When our own Kentucky Maidens
Robed for Easter bright and fair
Make the perfect fitting playmates
For these children of the air.

Place them on the backs of horses,
Where the redbird fits and sings,
Let them race across the meadows
They'll admit they need no wings.

Talk about your corn and pumpkins
And sparrows and sausage meat
When it's Spring in Old Kentucky,
Who would ever want to eat!

Obituary Provides Information About John A. Logan

(Daily News, July 16, 1940)

John A. Logan, 66, died at 6:30 o'clock this morning at his residence, 1408 Chestnut Street. He had been in ill health about six years. Mr. Logan was taken to a Nashville hospital July 4, remaining there one week. The body has been removed to the Gerard Mortuary where it will remain until tomorrow morning, when it will be moved to the residence. Funeral services will be conducted at 2:30 p.m. Tuesday at the Fairview Cemetery, near Brownsville.

Mr. Logan, president of the Smiths Grove Deposit Bank, and general attorney for the Kentucky Rock Asphalt Company, was born in Butler County, September 29, 1878, son of Stafford J. and Catherine Humphrey Logan. He received the greater part of his education at Shrewsbury, Edmonson County, where he attended the public schools. During the time he attended school at Shrewsbury, he taught in the Edmonson County schools. He also attended Lee Seminary in Grayson County three years and read law in the office of the late Senator W.M. Logan, a first cousin, with whom he later became associated in the practice of law at Brownsville, following his admission to the Kentucky bar in June 1900.

He served as county attorney of Edmonson County two terms and was later appointed by Governor Edward P. Morrow to serve the unexpired term of Judge John H. Gilliam as commonwealth's attorney of the old Eighth Judicial District, comprised of Allen, Butler, Edmonson and Warren counties.

He was elected to the office for a six-year term. He was master commissioner of Edmonson Circuit Court six years and was a member of the Edmonson County Board of Examiners.

Mr. Logan, with the late Senator Logan and Fred Wood, founded the natural rock asphalt industry in Kentucky. He and his partners took over approximately 40,000 acres of asphalt lands in Edmonson, Grayson, Hart, Ohio and Warren counties, owned by the Green River Land and Mining Company and the Boe Springs Land and Mining Company and in 1916 organized the Kentucky Rock Asphalt Company. In addition to serving as general attorney for the company, he was a member of the board of directors and was named a member of the board of directors of the company when the company was reorganized in 1937.

An extensive land owner, Mr. Logan was a believer in public improvements and an advocate of good roads. Through his efforts the first macadam highway in Edmonson County was constructed from Brownsville to Rocky Hill.

A poet and philosopher, Mr. Logan was the author of Echoes from the Hills of the Mammoth Cave County. (A poem by (continued on page 7)
Charles Jacob Van Meter Remembered

One hundred years ago the eastern portion of the United States experienced one of the most devastating floods in its history. Low lying areas surrounding Bowling Green were inundated with churning waters from the burgeoning Barren River. Ironically, on the eve of the flood, Charles J. Van Meter—the namesake for Van Meter Hall—who had plied the Barren River frequently in his lifetime and had made his livelihood from river steam-boat traffic, died. Following the custom of the day, his body was laid out at his home for viewing and for later rites. As time for the funeral service approached, water began to fill his basement; flooding was imminent. J.B. Donaldson, a local bank clerk, recounts his adventure of assisting local funeral director, Eugene Gerard, in removing Van Meter’s body on January 7, 1913. The duo, with the assistance of another gentleman, was able to remove the coffin to a nearby horse and get back to town by cutting fences and driving through fields.

Charles J. Van Meter, the son of Jacob and Martha Van Meter, began his working life as a clerk and farmer. In 1856 he and several partners constructed a steamboat that eventually traversed the Barren River. Soon thereafter, Captain Van Meter established the Bowling Green Navigation Company and began developing a system of locks and dams on the river that made it a viable transportation route for both passenger service and freightage. Van Meter was certainly one of Bowling Green’s most prominent and prosperous citizens. Because he believed in education, the first educational institution not only to be built in the county but in the state, Van Meter made magnanimous overtures to the fledgling Western Kentucky State Normal School while it was still located downtown. In order to properly acknowledge his encouragement and significant monetary contributions, the downtown building was named Van Meter Hall.

When Western moved to the top of the Hill in 1911, Henry Hordin Cherry further honored the Captain by naming the auditorium in the new Administration Building, Van Meter Hall. Most people referred to the entire building as Van Meter, although that was not mode official until the Board of Regents approved the name change in 1968. After undergoing an addition and extensive renovations from 2008 to 2009, Van Meter Hall is poised to retain its reputation as one of Kentucky’s premier performance facilities.

One hundred years after Captain Van Meter’s death, his great, great-niece, George (Duncan) McKenzie attended events in this magnificent hall. Actually, McKenzie, who grew up in Bowling Green and attended the Western Training School and College High, attended dance recitals, concerts, plays, and special presentations at Van Meter Hall during her early years. She later married William McKenzie, Jr. and lived out of state, but returned to Bowling Green in the mid-1980s. Since then, she has often returned to the venerable Van Meter Hall for entertainment and educational programs. McKenzie acknowledges a “special feeling of connection to this place and my great, great-uncle Charlie. The recent renovation...is indeed magnificent” and would no doubt “delight” her magnanimous forebear, whose portrait graces one of the lobby’s regal staircases.

Chautauqua Comes to Bowling Green

By Jean E. Nehm

Just as a pebble tossed into a placid lake creates ever-widening concentric ripples, so too does the word Chautauqua evoke the multiple meanings and expanding influence. An Iroquois word for a lake located in southwestern New York State, Chautauqua (pronounced “sh-TAH-kuh”) has several meanings, including “jumping fish” and “two moose tied together.” The most popular definition, according to long-time Chautauqua Peg Snyder (manager of the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle in Bowling Green, Ky.), is “the biggest theme in the middle,” an apt description of the long, narrow lake which is pinched in the middle, nearly creating two segments.

The definition of Chautauqua was broadened considerably with the advent of John Vincent (a Methodist Bishop) and Lewis Miller (an industrialist and advocate for Sunday School education) upon the lakeshore in 1873. Their original plan to establish a summer camp-meeting to support and inspire Sunday School teachers, who, because of an enormous success that later evolved into the Chautauqua Institute. Nestled near the lake is an entire community dedicated to adult education. Still in existence today, the Chautauqua Institute hosts thousands of visitors who, each summer, come to listen to lectures, enjoy evening concerts, attend theater and opera performances, take classes, and study with visitors from around the country and world. Indeed, many of the 19th century buildings are still used. The Amphitheatre, for example, is the centerpiece of The Grounds.

According to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), the Amphitheatre is where “the community gathers for daily lectures and concerts and religious services on Sundays. Few podiums in the country have held such a distinguished group of speakers and performers.” Eleanor (in 1933) and Franklin (in 1936) Roosevelt are only two examples. Another significant structure is the Hall of Philosophy, built from 1903 to 1906. It is described in the NRHP as an “open-air Doric Temple” in the woods, delineated by Doric columns on each side. “Masonry pediments at the corners support Classical candelabra on tripods which are ceremoniously lighted annually.”

Another significant landmark is the grand Athenaeum Hotel, opened in 1881. “Facing east with a view of Lake Chautauqua is a great verandah over 200 feet in length with 30-foot-high columns and large scroll brackets under the eaves” (NRHP). It was one of America’s first hotels to use electric lights. The National Register of Historic Places includes on 1881 press release about all the amenities: “There is no modern appointment lacking in this great structure. The first class barber shop, the telegraph office, telephone office, electric baths, gymnasium and electric lights, hot and cold baths, magnificent parlors, large rooms—well lighted and ventilated, elevators, music—everything to make it most complete. The table is such to tempt the appetite of a lord, the servants are attentive, the garments cultured, the proprietor genial and gentlemanly, and the terms moderate.”

Surrounding these impressive structures are numerous halls and charming Victorian cottages. These picturesque cottages, which visitors may rent for the duration of their stay, are “primarily wood frame in construction” and sheathed in clapboard or shingles and covered by gable roofs. Most noticeable are the ubiquitous front porches with wicker rocking chairs, a kind of living-room extension which is “very American in concept” (NRHP). For several weeks every year this special place becomes a thriving summer festival that “embraces all the arts and offers the sense of community” (Simpson 18).

The concept of continuing education was too popular to be limited to one place, even a place as special as the Chautauqua Institute on the lake. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, the word Chautauqua began to take on an additional meaning due to the popular traveling shows presented in huge kiosk tents, which were driven to town by train and set up at locations across the country for about a week in summer. Virginia G. Carter, Executive Director of the Kentucky Humanities Council, writes, “Tent Chautauqua swept the nation as communities saw an opportunity to gain access to the most famous speakers, the best music and literature, the latest in science, and the educational leaders otherwise unavailable in small and mid-size towns and cities” (14). Kentucky was one of the original states to bring the tent Chautauqua to their communities.

The Chautauqua hotel and amphitheatre in Bowling Green, Ky. Courtesy of the author.
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 _______________________________________________________

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Checks should be payable to:  Landmark Association
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