

THE ERLANGER HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY

**BOONE KENTON LUMBER Co.**  
**Oldest Business still in operation in**  
**the City of Erlanger, KY**



**100 YEARS OF CONTINUOUS  
SERVICE TO THE CITIZENS OF  
BOONE & KENTON COUNTIES**  
History of Boone Kenton Lumber Company

By: Patricia A. Hahn

**Blaine Fulton****Boone Kenton Lumber Company - 1919**

In 1915 Mr. John R. Edgett and Mr. Blain Fulton open the Edgett & Fulton Lumber Company. It was located at 219 Crescent Avenue, Erlanger, Kentucky. That was before the Post Office changed all addresses of streets parallel with Dixie Highway. It is the same location as the present 3219 Crescent Avenue of the present day Boone Kenton Lumber Co. The company dealt in mostly hardwood for use in floors, furniture, ect. This business was seasonal so the company started a regular lumber company by putting up a little office. This was the shipping point to customers all over the area. Mr. J. R. Edgett and his wife Minnie had one daughter Grace and they lived at 107 Erlanger Road. Mr. Blaine Fulton and his wife Hannah lived at 201 Erlanger Road. Mr. And Mrs. Fulton were born in Pennsylvania and came to Erlanger to raise their family of twin sons Ralph and Bruce born in 1919 and 3 daughters Cora M, born in 1913 Ruth V. born in 1917 and Anna L. born in 1925. Ralph and Bruce both served in WWII. Bruce was a prisoner of War and held as a Prisoner of War for over a year and Ralph was killed in WWII. The Erlanger/Elsmere Veterans of Foreign Wars Society is named in Ralph's honor. Both the boys worked in the Lumberyard. Bruce remembers one large drayage horse that pulled the lumber wagon around the yard and was kept in a stall at the lumber yard.

**Mr. R. C. MCNAY****Boone Kenton Lumber Company 1929**

On April 15, 1924 Mr. R. C. McNay purchased the Lumber Company and the name was changed to Boone Kenton Lumber Company, Inc. Stockholders were:

R. C. McNay	of Erlanger	80 shares
A. H. Gaines	of Walton	20 shares

W. L. Gaines	of Walton	05 shares
A. M. Edwards	of Walton	05 shares
J. R. Edgett	of Erlanger	20 shares
Blaine Fulton	of Erlanger	20 shares
J. B. Respass	of Erlanger	05 shares

O. M. Rogers was the lawyer for the business. Omega M. Rogers was a prominent lawyer in the area. He and his wife Katherine lived at 319 Erlanger Road.

Mr. M. L. McCracken was an estimator for the business and notarized the articles of incorporation. Milton and his wife Edna M. lived at 208 Erlanger Road. Mr. McCracken worked for the Lumber Company for over 50 years.

Mr. Russell C. McNay was President and General Manager of the Company; Allen H. Gaines was Vice President; Blaine Fulton was Secretary-Treasurer.

In a 1929 article in the Kentucky Post it was stated that the Boone Kenton Lumber Company is one of the most modernly equipped in or about northern Kentucky. It is located on the Southern R.R. and has the advantage of downtown yards in the fact that it has ample advancing territory in which to spread it's growth.

Mr. McNay was a very active businessman, not only was he president and general manager of Boone Kenton Lumber Company he was director and officer in five other lumber companies, He was first vice president of the First Federal Savings and Loan and a director of the Covington Trust Company and president of the Dixie Building & Loan Association in Elsmere. On July 6, 1959 the statement of intent to Dissolve-Boone-Kenton Lumber Company, Inc was filed in book #17 Page 11 in Kenton County Kentucky.

Mr. McNay was also very active in his community. He was president of the Board of the Highland Cemetery and a charter member of the Erlanger Rotary of which he served as the president and secretary; He served as President of the Covington Chamber of Commerce and as president of the Kentucky Retail Lumber Association. . He was a chairman of the Booth Hospital Advisory Council and the only lifetime member of the Board. . He was an active member of the Erlanger Baptist Church

R.C. was a Mason and member of Scottish rite, a Shriner and member of the El Hassa Temple. He was a veteran of WWI. He was a father of two daughters. His second wife was Irmadele Mitchell McNay. Irmadele was a very stylish lady and always had a new hat. If fact when Irmadele passed away the Historical Society was the recipient of the hats and clothes and old magazines and papers collected by the McNay's.

When the school board wanted to purchase the old Erlanger Fairgrounds for the new Lloyd High School. Mr. McNay was one of the local residents to loan the school system the needed money.

In 1936 R.C McNay and his wife Irmadele Mitchell McNay purchased their home at 140 Commonwealth Avenue from A.B. Rouse who served in the U.S. Congress. The McNay's lived there for the rest of their natural life. Mr. Mc Nay passed away on July 22, 1973. When

Irmadele passed away, June 15, 1993 the house was donated to the Erlanger Baptist Church. The Church tore the house down in 1999 and the land is now a parking lot for the Church.

## **1956 Employees of Boone Kenton Lumber Company**

**Henry Burris, John Gillespie, Paul Hahn, Walter Dishon, Jimmy Bevis, Warren Stephens**



**Mr. Warren Eugene ( Gene) Kelly**

**Boone Kenton Lumber Company 1962**



On December 6, 1960 in book #17 page 492 the Articles of Incorporation were filed by Warren E. Kelly to form a corporation. The name of the corporation would be Boone-Kenton Lumber and Building Supply Company, Inc. The nature of the business would be processing, dealing, manufacturing, installing, transporting or otherwise working in or with building materials of every kind. At the time of purchase Mr. Kelly lived at Route 1, Hands Road, South Ft. Mitchell, Kentucky. Warren E. Kelly was the sole incorporator, and was subscribed to 500 shares of stock.

'Gene' Kelly was a son of a Baptist minister and was known for his energy, ambition and business sense. He started in the trucking business, hauling water, feed and concrete, then branched out into other enterprises. Along with being one of the owners's of the Boone-Kenton Lumber and Building Supplies Company he owned Wildwood Motor Inn, and was part owner of Ramada Inn in Florence. Mr. Kelly was a Director of the Northern Kentucky Convention and Visitors Bureau, The Erlanger Rotary Club, Boone County Businessmen's Association and the Northern Kentucky Homebuilders Association. He was owner of the Boone Creek Development Co and was a stockholder of Boone State Bank which was bought by 5<sup>th</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> Bank in the 1980's . Gene lived on Big Bone Church Road in Union where he owned Kelly-Green Farm and raised

Tennessee walking horses. Gene had three sons, Tom, Patrick and Russell and an adopted daughter Sherry. His brothers, Kenneth & Edwin own Kelly Brother's Lumber Company. Mr. Kelly passed away August 13, 1976 at the age of 48.

## **Herbert Works**



## **Boone Kenton Lumber Company 2003**



Mr. Herbert Works owned stock in the Boone Kenton Lumber and Building Supply Company, Inc. as early as 1960. Upon the death of Mr. Warren E. Kelly, Mr. Works, who was involved with Mr. Kelly in many of his endeavors, became the President, Secretary, and Treasurer of the Corporation. Herbert Works was born in Covington. He now lives in Walton. Herb has two sons, Wayne and Gene, two daughters, Kimberly and Vicki and two stepsons, Bryson and Mark. He also has two grandsons. Mr. Works has served on the Board of Directors of the Kentucky Retail Lumber Dealers Association and is on the Board of Directors of the Bank of Kentucky. Mr. Works is the General Manager of the Boone Kenton Lumber and Building supplies Company, Inc. Herb was one of the major contributors to the Erlanger Depot renovation.

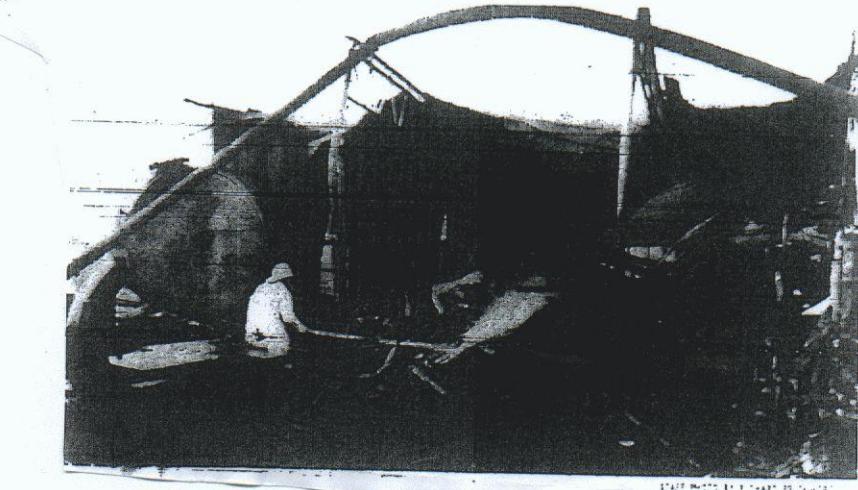


**2003 employees/ Larry Stephens and Janice Hellman**

## **Major fires 1931-1966 and 1972**

## **Boone Kenton Lumber and Building Supplies Company , Inc**

# Fire rakes lumber plant



Picture from the Kentucky Post-Times Star

Boone Kenton Lumber Yard was plagued with fires throughout the years. In an article of March 21, 1931 the headline said "Erlanger Lumber Company Swept by Fire: Loss Placed at \$75,000". The blaze started shortly after 7 p.m. Defective wiring in the main building was blamed. When Erlanger firemen, under chief Andrew Scheben arrived the building was a mass of flames, So. Ft. Mitchell, Elsmere and Covington assisted the Erlanger Firemen. A 500-gallon per minute pumper equipped with a large hose bed and a 200-gallon water tank, the top of the line for that day was purchased in 1929. A 12 cylinder Studebaker engine powered this vehicle. The equipment was used at the Boone Kenton Lumber Yard Fire and pumped for 18 straight hours in a effort to contain the fire. High winds fanned the blaze. Every building was burned to the ground. All machinery was destroyed along with two trucks and an automobile. The flames, which leaped high in the air, could be seen for miles around, and attracted thousands of spectators to the scene and resulted in a traffic jam for 2 miles along the Dixie Highway. John Antrobus, Erlanger Marshall and T. W. Rash, Elsmere Marshall worked for hours to straighten out the jam. Buses traveling north and south were delayed several hours. Governor Flem D. Sampson was among those delayed. He had a speaking engagement in Covington on March 20, 1931. Trains were held up and 28 pairs of wires were burned along with the Southern Railroad signal system and boxcars on sidetracks of the railroad were destroyed. The city of Erlanger was without lights and phones. Firemen were served coffee by proprietors of Dixie restaurants. Mr. R. C., McNay said the buildings were covered by insurance and would be rebuilt. While the firemen battled the lumberyard blaze citizens obtained garden hoses and buckets to battle the destruction of their homes. Water was poured on the threatened residences across the street. Several homes had blistered paint and the trees were scared for years to come.

Thirty-five years later on June 20, 1966 another blaze swept through the Boone Kenton Lumber Company. The torch was 150 feet into the northern Kentucky Sky. Three trains were held up 1-½ hours. The destruction amounted to several hundred thousand dollars. Four buildings and three trucks were total losses. Paul Hahn, an employee of Boone Kenton Lumber was en route

home from coaching the First National Baseball Little League team when he saw the fire from the highway. Hahn unlocked the buildings and helped remove three trucks and office equipment and files out of the buildings. He closed the double fire doors, which protected the Mill and office from severe damage. Erlanger Fire Captain Clayton Van Camp, said teen age boys also helped first firemen on the scene evacuate equipment. Jim Viox who lived at 3220 Crescent Avenue across the street from the lumberyard gave the fire alarm. Covington, Crescent Springs, Elsmere, Florence, Fort Wright, Independence, Park Hills, So. Ft. Mitchell and Taylor Mill responded to the fire. There were 150 firefighters and 11 pumper present. Three firemen were taken to St. Elizabeth hospital they were James Simpson, 24, 312 McAlpin Ave, Frank Fahrendorf 59, 211 Buckner Street, Elsmere and Wallace Allen 45, 95 Arcadia Ave. Lakeside Park. Erlanger Fire Chief, Fred Ficke, 68, a fireman for 46 years said the 1966 blaze was the worst fire in the city since the 1931 Boone Kenton fire. Warren E. Kelly said he had insurance and would be open for business in the morning and he was. Employees were answering phones, cleaning the offices, while firemen and insurance estimators tromped through the charred lumberyard the next morning.

Once again on February 29, 1972 fire broke out at Boone Kenton Lumber. Flames from the burning building lit up the entire Dixie Highway. Cans of paint began exploding, sending big balls of fire rolling upward. But firemen confined the blaze to two buildings, the display store office building and an adjoining multi use building. Flames did not reach several warehouses. Erlanger, Florence, Elsmere, Ft. Mitchell, Southern Hills, Park Hills and Crescent Springs responded to the fire. Once again the statement of the Vice President, General Manager, Herbert Works, was "we are not out of business. We'll rebuild and in the meantime we will move in a trailer and work out of it."

In May of 1993 the Historical Society presented awards to some special Erlanger residents and businesses. An award was presented to Henry Schneider born in 1894, the oldest living resident and oldest veteran. Miss Ester L. Schwind, born January 6, 1895 was honored as the oldest teacher. Everett and Annette Kidwell married for 65 years, were honored as the longest married couple and Boone Kenton Lumber Company was honored as the oldest business.

Presented by  
The Erlanger Historical Society  
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