

# History of Erlanger

## By Henry F. Childress

### 1924

Prompted by a love for Erlanger, the people of Erlanger, I have tried to record all of the historical facts which I have been able to procure. My hope is that this effort on my part will encourage some more capable writer to take up the work I have started, and complete it in a more credible manner.

Sincerely, H. F. Childress



The first definitive record we have of the territory now occupied by Erlanger, and the surrounding community, dates back to the year 1807, when Bartlett Graves, who was elected to the Kentucky Legislature in 1805, and the high sheriff of Campbell-co in 1814 and 1815 (Kenton-co was a part of Campbell-co until 1840), built a log house of eight rooms, each room being 18 feet square with walls 18 inches thick. This house was said to have been situated on the plot of ground now occupied by the residence of Mrs. John J. Mayberry, on Commonwealth Ave.

Mr. Graves was the grandson of Thomas Graves who came to Virginia from England. He was the son of Thomas and Susan (Barlett) Graves who moved from Virginia to Kentucky in 1785. Bartlett Graves was the father of Milton Graves, the grandfather of Alonzo Graves, Mrs. W. A. (Annie M. Graves) Price, and Joseph Price and wife, and the great-grandfather of Mrs. William (Lizzie Graves) Corey, Milton Carl Price and Alonzo M. Price, all of whom have resided in or near Erlanger. While it is not necessarily a part of the history of Erlanger we are pleased to say that the Graves family have so long and honorable record behind them.

#### **Land was \$2.50 an Acre**

In the year 1807 Barlett Graves purchased, probably from a Mr. Carneal of Cincinnati, all of the land along the north side of what is now known as the Dixie Highway from the Long place, formerly known as the Dennis Nead place, near Florence, to the Hence place, formerly called the Uncle Billy Longmoor place, which

is located about one half mile north of Erlanger on the Dixie Highway. It is said to have extended back as far as Dry Creek. The price of this land was probably a little over \$2.50 per acre, as the government grant a short time before was said to have been for \$2.50 per acre.

Other purchasers of land in this vicinity were Major Thornton Timberlake, Colonel Thomas Buckner, William Longmoor, Thomas Tupman, David Riggs, Gen. Leonard Stephens, and Dr. B. F. Bedinger.

### **Elm is a Landmark**

In 1819 Mr. Graves built a large brick house on the same spot where the present residence of Mr. Chester Davis is located, opposite the Baptist Church on Commonwealth Ave. Mr. Graves called it "Walnut Grove" and it retained that name until it was sold to Dr. B. F. Bedinger in 1866 and it was then called "The Elms." Both names were derived from the numerous trees of that character near the house. All of the old trees have either died or been cut down with the exception of the one giant elm, which measures over five feet in diameter and stands about 75 feet in the rear of the residence of Mrs. George N. Buffington on Home Street.

### **House is Landmark**

Some time prior to 1826, Dr. B. F. Bedinger moved into a two-story house which is located on the T. J. Stevenson place and is still in good state of preservation and known to be considerably over 100 years old. Dr. Bedinger remained there for some years, then moved to Boone-co, where he resided until he bought the Graves property mentioned above. George M. Bedinger, the son of Dr. Bedinger, is remembered by some of the older residents of Erlanger as a man of sterling qualities. He reared a large family in "The Elms," all of whom were held in high esteem. They moved to California early in the 90's and they have all prospered in that state.

### **Northern Kentucky's Oldest Road**

There was no special growth of development of this section until the building of the Covington and Lexington turnpike. This road was chartered in 1829, being one of the first roads to be granted a charter by the Legislature. It was constructed and completed about 10 years after the date of its charter. It is interesting to know that this historical highway, which was traveled by Henry Clay and other notable men of that day, is a part of the great Dixie Highway, and was chartered one year before any railroad in the state was chartered. This wonderful highway immediately became the outlet for central Kentucky and thousands of hogs, sheep and cattle were driven over it to the Cincinnati market. Countless numbers of wagons hauling all manner of produce came through this "neck of the bottle." Stagecoach lines were established and daily trips were made from each of the points for which the road is named. Taverns were built along the route for the convenience of the public and the profit of the owners. A post office is said to have been established here and called Timberlake in honor of Major Thornton Timberlake. Mr. Joseph Graves has now in her possession a letter addressed to Timberlake, Ky., on which the postage charges were 25 cents.

### **Pioneers Descendants**

Major Timberlake was one of the pioneer settlers of this section. He was the owner of thousands of acres of land on the south side of what is now Dixie Highway. His first residence was located on the highway between what is now May and Vine Streets in Elsmere. His next residence was the same house in which Rev. George Bealer resides at this time. Major Timberlake was the father of Miss Alice E. Timberlake, (who married Dr. John J. Stevenson), and the grandfather of Mr. Thomas J. Stevenson, Miss Mary A. Stevenson, and Mrs. Theodore F. Hallam (Margaret E. Stevenson). He was the great-grandfather of Miss Mary Alice Stevenson and Miss Alice Hallam. Dr. John H. Stevenson, the son-in-law of Major Timberlake, was one of the leading physicians of Kenton and Boone counties. He moved to what is now Erlanger in 1855, and resided in the present residence of this son, Mr. Thomas J. Stevenson, until his [?] death in 1883. The old graveyard in the rear of the house indicates that the house was erected prior to 1849. As Webster said in regard to Massachusetts, so will the writer say in connection with the Timberlakes and Stevensons: "I shall enter no encomium on them; they need none." William Longmoor, another one of the early settlers, owned a large tract of land beginning in what is now the place of business of T. W. Spinks Co. and extending toward Covington. Very little information is to be had in regard to this gentleman, but from memory we recall that all of the older inhabitants spoke very highly of "Uncle Billy Longmoor." His nearest living relations in this part of the country are said to be Miss Amy Ellis of Covington and Mrs. E. M. (Dolly Haven) Gumpf of Ft. Mitchell.

### **Among Early Settlers**

Mr. Thomas Tupman was another pioneer in this section, and is said to have been the owner of a large number of acres of land near what is now Crescent Springs. He reared a large family, and they, together with their families, remained here until some thirty years ago, when they moved California, where they still reside and have prospered greatly. They were splendid people and would be a credit to any community. Mr. David Riggs came to this part of the country early in the nineteenth century. He was the owner of a considerable acreage northeast of what is now Erlanger. His children and grandchildren have resided in this place for more than a century, and their influence for good, as educators and Christian citizens, prompts the writer to say that they have not lived in vain.

### **Buckner in Office**

Colonel Thomas Buckner, another one of the early settlers of this section, came here in 1812. He owned thousands of acres of land. His property is said to have been bounded on the north by what is now the Dixie Highway, the east by the Dudley-pk, the south by the Turkeyfoot-rd, and the west by the property of Major Thornton Timberlake. Colonel Buckner was the grandfather of Mr. H. G. Buckner of Commonwealth-av and Misses Alice and Livy Buckner of Erlanger-rd. Colonel E. G. Buckner, their father, had his title Colonel conferred upon him for valiant service in the Mexican war. The Buckner family stand out too prominently in the affairs of the state and nation to need any commendation in this history.

### **Birth of Kenton-co**

In 1840 Kenton-co, which is one of the smallest counties in the state, was clipped off the western portion of Campbell-co. Beyond the fact that this was a growing community, very little worthy of being recorded seems to have happened until after the Civil War. The only information now obtainable in regard to the activities of the residents of this community in that great conflict is that many citizens were engaged in it, some on the side of the north and some with the south. The nearest approach to actual fighting seen here was the presence of the troops of General Kirby Smith when General Lew Wallace was stationed at Fort Mitchell

### **Erlanger's First School**

Up to 1867 no school had ever been held here. The pupils living here were compelled to go to Florence, or what was then known as the Turkeyfoot Road School. It was located near the present residence of Mr. Harry Hartke. Miss Lillie Bedinger, who is now located in Bakersfield, California, gives us the following information regarding the first schools held here: "The first school I attended, in what is now Erlanger, was in 1867. It was in an old Negro cabin in back of Dr. Stevenson's house. The chimney was on the outside, built of stone, and finished off with a barrel. There was one small window. The pupils all brought their own chairs and tables. The teacher was Miss Billings, a graduate of Mt. Holyoke. She received what was then thought to be an enormous salary, which was one thousand dollars per year. She taught Latin, history, rhetoric, astronomy, algebra, geometry, French and a few other college majors like natural philosophy.

### **Drive for New School**

"Later, when the old Negro cabin would no longer stand up, a committee of five girls decided to have a drive for a school building. The committee consisted of Misses Mary Timberlake, Fidle Buckner, Kate Rankin, Eva and Nellie Bedinger, and Tranter Stevenson.

They succeeded in collecting enough money to put up a building fifteen by twenty-four feet.

It was ceiled inside with flooring boards and had five windows. Two on each side and one at the end, and one door. The blackboards were between the windows. As it took all of the money we had collected for the building, we had a second drive and got enough money to buy a stove and teacher's desk, but we still had to continue to use our own chairs and tables as we did not have enough to buy desks and seats for the pupils. This building was located opposite the Graves Pond in a locust grove (where the Herrmann Building is now located at Dixie Highway and Erlanger Street.). We called it Locust Grove Academy. The old pond furnished many delights for us children, especially the skating in the winter, and mud, malaria, pollywogs, mudperch and other joys in the summer.

### **Pupils Were Janitors**

The pupils took turns doing janitor work. Two at a time, week about, and about once a month we had a window washing bee, and scrubbed the floors also. Miss Billings was out teacher for three years, after which we had various other teachers, who came on their own responsibility, but none stayed for more than a few months, as they

were generally young men students who wished to earn a little to help along in college. John Uri Lloyd was then teaching in Florence.

### **Coming of the Southern Railway**

On July 6, 1869, the first Board of Trustees of the Southern Railway met and Miles Greenwood was elected president. The construction work could not begin until 1873. It was decided that the depot would be located on the corner of the Bedinger property, which is in its present location. Mrs. Bedinger had given the land for that purpose. The citizens were greatly excited over the coming of the railroad. They felt that some miraculous prosperity would come when it was completed. Some, however, were prone to look upon it with regret, feeling that when it was completed that the farmers in the south would be able to ship their produce and ruin the market for them.

The railroad reservoir (Silver Lake) was about one-half mile north of the depot, and called Greenwood Lake, in honor of Miles Greenwood. The station was named the same. The old schoolhouse previously mentioned had ceased to be used as a schoolhouse and was moved to what is now Erlanger Road and Dixie Highway and was used as a store until it, together with a lumber yard, burned down in 1877,

The railroad was completed in 1877 and the first time card, under the date of July 23, 1877, shows this station as Greenwood Lake. Later it was found that five other stations on the road began with "Green," and that it caused much confusion, therefore the name was changed to "Silver Lake."

### **How Erlanger Was Named**

When an application was made for a post office it was discovered that several other post offices in the country were called Silver Lake, so Mrs. Bedinger selected the name Erlanger, in honor of Baron Frederick Emile d'Erlanger, who was the head of the Erlanger Syndicate, which leased the Southern Railway on October 11, 1881. The Erlanger post office was established on May 20, 1882, and Mr. George M. Bedinger was the first postmaster.

### **Schooling Was A Problem**

Several attempts had been made to have schools in different private residences, but without any marked success. Miss Lillie Bedinger held a "spring term" in 1884 in The Elms. The following fall the children of Erlanger were compelled to walk to the Old Turkey Foot School, previously mentioned. In the spring of 1885 Miss Katie Riggs held a "spring term" in an old house in the yard near "The Elms," and again they went back to Turkey Foot School in the fall of 1885 and the spring of 1886. The same conditions prevailed until the spring of 1888, when school was held in an old tobacco barn which was located on the same barn as the present residence of Mrs. M. M. Cates at Erlanger Road and Crescent Avenue. The following fall a one-room building was erected on Erlanger Road, where the residence of J. W. Taliaferro is located. A few years later two brick rooms were added to this building and this served as Erlanger's only school until its present school building was erected in 1907.

### **Erlanger's Boom**

The real inception of the town of Erlanger came in the summer of 1885, when James Pendleton Garvey, a man of influence and wealth (he was then owner of what is now known as Cody's farm), with his neighbor, Dr. C. P. Judkins (who was the son-in-law of Jacob Straub of Cincinnati), hobnobbing in a coterie of prosperous Cincinnati bon vivants of that day, frequently mentioned to them that Greenwood, which was still the name of the station but not the post office, would be a wonderful location for a suburban town. A little later nearly 60 well-to-do Cincinnati business men, among them Dr. R. H. Weatherhead, veteran druggist of 6th and Vine Streets; Joseph Peebles, Cincinnati grocer; Richard Carroll, general manager of Queen and Crescent Railroad; and Harry Hulbert, owner of the Hulbert block at 6th and Vine Streets, were inveigled into the deal. Two rollicking trips to Greenwood had been made by the original jolly merchants and professional men, together with George B. Kerper of the Mount Adams Incline Railway, and George W. Clark of the Mitchell; and Tranter Co. It is said that President Schiff of the Cincinnati Southern Railroad assured these gentlemen that he would locate the car shops at Greenwood and that all trains would stop at the proposed suburb.

### **Land Syndicate Formed**

It was a time for "ground floor" syndicating of land subdivisions, and several of the best-known stockholders got their stock for their publicity influence. The balance bought for par, two \$1,000 shares, on terms of \$500 down and in installments of \$500 each. Some were never called for the third payment, and none was ever called on for the fourth payment, as the receipts from sales covered all costs and dividends began to roll in, during the summer of 1888. Mr. George C. Bloss became general manager of the Erlanger Land Syndicate in 1888 and the work prospered under his management beyond the fondest hopes of those who had money invested in the project. The first sale of lots here was held in May, 1887.

### **First Lot Sold**

The writer saw the first lot sold. It was on the corner of Crescent Avenue and Locust Street (the present residence of Mr. George C. Bloss), to a Mr. Greer of Covington, at \$16 per front foot. Some of the citizens who had farm value properties in mind, thought that the lot sold for \$16, and said that it was a very reasonable price.

### **Enthusiasm Ran High**

On Sundays great excursions were run to this place from Cincinnati. Frequently as many as 20 [railroad] carloads of people would come to the new suburb. Hundreds of lots were sold and the excitement ran high. Many people figured that it would become a metropolis over night. In the spring of 1887 the syndicate built five cottages, which are still standing and may be found at the following locations:

107 Erlanger Road

17 and 23 Locust Street

26 and 28 Center Street

The other houses at that time were the George M. Bedinger, the Thomas Fennell (now 14 Erlanger Road), the Ballard property (now the C. C. McCracken residence at

118 Erlanger Road), the Alonzo Victor place on the corner of Crescent Avenue and Clay (now the Judge D. E. Castleman home), the Stevenson homestead, a boarding house at the corner of Crescent Avenue and Locust Street, the railroad section house (which was located a short distance back of where the present depot now stands), the home of Jacob Hilker (now the W. E. Baird residence, 117 Erlanger Road) and the house of John Donovan near Silver Lake. With the exception of a few scattered farm houses, a tobacco barn at the corner of Erlanger Road and Crescent Avenue, the skating rink (where the Mickle Lumber Co's plant is now situated), the village store, owned by George M. Bedinger (this same building, with numerous repairs and improvements, is now the one occupied by Dahlenburg's Drug Store) and the large ice house of the Stone Lake Ice Co, near [?] these comprised all of the town at that time. But houses began to be built quicker and in a short time many new residents came here.

Prior to the time that the Erlanger Land Syndicate bought the Bedinger property, the Erlanger Road was built. After the purchase of all of this property by the syndicate, they gave contract for the construction of Commonwealth Avenue and the reconstruction of Erlanger Road to Mr. George M. Bedinger. Other streets were laid out but not constructed until later. On May 21, 1889, the syndicate, under the direction of Mr. George C. Bloss, opened up "South Erlanger" subdivision, and on July 18, 1890, the same people bought out the Bedinger interest in the "Woodside" subdivision and operated it. Previous to this time there was no South Erlanger, or Woodside, other than scattered farm houses.

### **Democratic Barbecue**

In the fall of 1888 one of the most notable events in the history of Erlanger occurred. It was during the memorable political campaign for the presidency between Grover Cleveland and Benjamin Harrison that a democratic barbecue has held in the W. A. Price field. It was attended by thousands of people from hundreds of miles around. The then [U.S. Senator Joe Blackburn](#) and [John G. Carlisle](#) spoke and the Honorable Theodore F. Hallem presided.

### **How Streets Were Named**

The streets of Erlanger were given their names for the following reasons: Home, for the old Bedinger home; Graves Avenue, in honor of Bartlett Graves; Elm Street, for "The Elms; Cowie, for Charles S. Cowie; Hulbert Street, for Harry C. Hulbert; Commonwealth Avenue, for the Commonwealth of Kentucky; Baker Street, for "Uncle Bob" Baker; Crescent Avenue, for its shape; Locust Street, for the locust grove that was there; Center Street, for its location; Clay Street, for its preponderance of clay; Division Street, the dividing line of the town and county; Lake Street, for Silver Lake; and Slater Street, for Dr. C. R. Slater.

### **Community Church**

In 1888 Erlanger's first church was erected. IT was a union church and all denominations worshiped there. The leasing spirits in the erection of this church were Rev. T. W. Barker, R. J. Cody, John C. Tanner, and John C. Carpenter. It

continued to be used as a union church until May 6, 1889, when it was dedicated as a Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

### **Preachers Stand High**

It is a noteworthy fact that three of the young men who came here as pastors of this church have attained places of prominence and importance in the work of the church. Dr. Willard G. Cram, now directing secretary of the Missionary Centenary of the M. E. Church, South, and former missionary to Korea, preached his first sermon here as an itinerant preacher, on the first Sunday in October, 1898. Rev. E. K. Means was pastor of this church in 1901; he is now pastor of the Galloway Memorial Church in Jackson, Miss. It is one of the largest in the south. Rev. William B. Campbell, who is now president of the Kentucky Wesleyan College near Winchester, Kentucky, was pastor here in 1909. Two others identified with the work here were Rev. George N. Buffington and Dr. William F. Taylor, who were truly as godly men as we ever knew, and we can say in sincerity and in truth that we do not believe that "we shall ever look on their like again." The outstanding features of the work of this church have been the missionary societies, and the Senior and Junior Epworth Leagues. A recent addition to this church building has greatly increased the seating capacity and improved its appearance.

The present membership of this church is 110 with an average attendance of 68 in Sunday School.

We now find Erlanger a growing town. R. J. Cody came here on June 28, 1887, as a contractor and erected his residence at what is now 36 Erlanger Road. Thomas Coe in 1893 built a home on Commonwealth Avenue; in 1888 Fred Ficke opened his café; Adolph "Dutch" Konerding opened a grocery at Crescent Avenue and Locust Streets; and in the spring of 1890, P. O. Griffin started a barber shop.

### **Business in Boom**

The same year T. B. Castleman financed a drug store, which was conducted by Felix "Judge" Meyers, in the present building association room. Dr. C. R. Slater came here in February 1890. M. J. Mitchell opened his place of business in 1891. Herman Placke started his bakery in 1890. R. J. Scott bought the

Castleman drug store in 1891 and continued in business there until Scott, along with Capt. W. Harry Baker, erected a three story brick building at Dixie Highway and Commonwealth Avenue in 1892. He moved the drug store into that building, and it has been a drug store ever since. In 1888, E. L. Garver opened a grocery where the Erlanger Hardware Co is now located. The Riggs brothers, Homer and Cal, opened their livery barn in 1887 where the Philip Taliaferro undertaking establishment is at the present. H. W. Ryle started his livery business in 1891. George Gebhardt opened his shoe store in 1888, in the present location of the Cherry Blossom Tearoom. Numerous and sundry other businesses came from time to time.

### **Light Fantastic Popular**

By 1892 the community had taken on a new social life. Dances and entertainments of all kinds have entered into the activities of the town. From 1892 to 1896 Erlanger

was the central point for the belles and the beaux of Boone, Kenton and Grant Counties, so far as the dancing was concerned. The 'town hall' was the Mecca for these events. On June 17, 1890, the Perpetual Building and Loan was chartered. The original incorporators were John L. Snell, John C. Tanner, George M. Bedinger, John L. Zumbiel, and Mont L. Sweatman. Many of the citizens of Erlanger and Elsmere owe a debt of gratitude to this institution that has made it possible for them to own the homes, which they now possess. This organization is now located in its own building on Commonwealth Avenue.

### **Bank is Organized**

The Erlanger Deposit Bank was incorporated on May 12, 1893, by W. H. Baker, W. A. Price, Daniel Bedinger, and W. H. Blanton. Capt. W. H. Baker was the first president. We can think of no more befitting and sincere compliment to pay his memory than to say he was a real, red-blooded American, a sagacious businessman, and a true friend.

The Erlanger Deposit Bank is one of the strongest county banks to be found anywhere.

Erlanger's first fraternal order was Good Faith Lodge No. 95 of Free and Accepted Masons. It was opened here on December 18, 1892. This lodge was originally opened in Florence on April 8, 1834 and has had continuous existence since that time. It was chartered before any of the Covington or other lodges in this section of the country. Its first meeting place in Erlanger was on the third floor of the Town Hall Building. After the erection of the Citizen's Bank Building it was moved to the third floor of that building, where it is now located. Since its organization it has been an influence for good in the community.

### **Free Railroad Rides**

Shortly after the Erlanger Land Syndicate had started its work here the railroad company put on three commuter trains each way, daily, and caused all trains to stop here. They offered, as a special inducement to get people to move here, free transportation to all who would build homes in this town. This continued for several years. They also sold commutation tickets at the rate of \$3.00 per month. Daily round-trip tickets were sold for 25 cents. About this time that stations of South Erlanger and Woodside [Elsmere] were established.

### **Physicians Lauded**

In the year 1893, Dr. C. W. McCollum moved here. Here we pause to say with serious and sentimental sincerity that we believe in some way there is a special regard laid up in heaven for Drs. Slater and McCollum for the great, good, and unselfish work they have done.

### **Erlanger Baptist Church**

This church was organized in 1889 and the present church building was erected in 1890. Because the first minute book is lost, we have been unable to get a complete list of its first members, but we are informed that the Rev. Oscar Huey was the first pastor, and Ephraim Utz was the first clerk. The names of some of the first members of this church follow:

Mr. and Mrs. Ephraim Utz, Col. And Mrs. H. G. Buckner, Mrs. Robert Baker, Julius L. Brist, Miss Statira B. Childress, Miss Cora Cheeks, Miss Sophia Buckner, and Warren and Spencer Meeks. Rev. J. E. Martin, who was pastor of this church from 1901 to 1903, is now the pastor of a large church in Jellico, Tennessee, and is doing splendid work there. Rev. John Percy Stewart was pastor of this church from 1905 to 1908. Later he went to Italy as a missionary, where he remained until the year of his death in 1915. Another pastor of this church was Rev. J. R. Jester, in 1909. Later he was pastor of a large church in Fort Worth Texas.

### **Elsmere Gets Church**

In April 1904, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Pohr, Miss Statira Childress, Ab. Behymer, Spencer Meeks, William Oliver, and Thomas Edwards started a branch of this church in the Elsmere Town Hall, and in 1905 the present church building was erected. The growth of this work continued and on November 23, 1922, the Elsmere Baptist Church was organized. Today they have 136 members and an average attendance in Sunday School of 134. Rev. J. M. Miller is pastor of this church and is doing a splendid work there. They are now erecting a \$10,000 church building.

The Elsmere Baptist Church has been missionary in spirit, as well as in name. A \$75,000 campaign and all other worthy causes have received the liberal support of this church. Rev. Miles Woodward Smith, who is now pastor of the First Baptist Church of Norwood, Ohio, received his early Christian training at this church. Later he attended the William Jewell College, where he received his training in theology, after which he was pastor of a church in Boston, Mass. Another young man who became a Christian here was Rev. Robert White, who after his preparatory and collegiate courses entered the ministry. He is now pastor of the Linwood Baptist Church. Notwithstanding the fact that 80 members of this church withdrew last November to become members of the new Elsmere Baptist Church, this church still has a membership of 317. The average Sunday School attendance is 155.

### **St. Henry's Catholic Church**

St. Henry's was organized in 1890 by the Rev William Gorey, who was then pastor of St. Paul Church at Florence, where he resided. In the same year a small church building was erected on Shaw Avenue. In 1893 Rev. B. J. Kalb, who succeeded Rev. Gorey, built a frame schoolhouse on a lot opposite the first church building on Shaw Avenue. On August 27, 1899, the first church building burned down, and on May 20, 1900, the foundation was laid for the new church building on Garvey Avenue near Dixie Highway. It was completed one year later and dedicated by Bishop C. P. Maes on May 19, 1901.

By the spiritual growth, the members have become better Christians, more reputable and worth citizens, and added by their frugality to the material wealth and prosperity to the community.

Rev. B. J. Kalb, who was pastor of the church from 1893 to 1916, was a wise counselor and an organizer. He brought to the work good business qualities and left the church in a strong and prosperous condition. The present membership of this church is 575, including children.

## **St. Henry's School**

St. Henry's School was started on Shaw Avenue, in 1893, with one teacher. It continued there until the fire of 1899, after which it was conducted in the Morelli Homestead (which is the present residence of Rev. George Bealer) by the Benedictine Sisters as teachers. After the completion of the new church building the school was transferred to the first floor of the church, where they now have five teachers for grades and one music teacher. The present enrollment of pupils is 166.

Lafayette Lodge No. 111, Knights of Pythias

Lafayette Lodge No. 111, Knights of Pythias was organized Sept 19, 1894. The charter members were: Henry Meyers, Anthony Miller, C. W. Zumbiel, J. C. Sougher, Louis Morelli, Thomas H. Edwards, Walter H. Withrow, Edward Zumiel, Harry Ryle, P. M. Rigdon, C. A. Riggs, John L. Zumiel, B. W. Delaney, and Dr. Wm. Corey.

The principles for which this organization stands are friendship, charity and benevolence.

May 11, 1896, a charter was granted the town of Elsmere, which up to this time had been known as South Erlanger. The first officers of the Town of Elsmere were: Henry Linfert, police judge; Carter Williams, marshal; John P. Westerman, assessor; Frank Moss, Charles Jackson, Alex. Daron, Sr., Henry Leckleiter and W. Guenther, trustees.

## **Full-Fledged Town**

The town of Erlanger was incorporated on January 25, 1897. The first officers of the town were: Louis Morrelli, police judge; A. J. Wyss, town marshal; Henry Musman, Mathew Huerkamp, Isadore Hagen, George C. Bloss and Harry Nusbaum, trustees.

At the outbreak of the Spanish-American War in 1898, Robert Mitchell Shearer organized Company A, Second Regiment, Kentucky Volunteer Infantry, of which he was made Captain. Charles Forest Coe, also of Erlanger, was made regimental provost sergeant. Company A was largely made up of young men from Covington. The only other Erlanger men to enlist were Privates Michael Rohan and Albert Ingram.

At the close of the war Capt. Shearer entered the regular army and was sent to the Philippine Islands where he held numerous government positions until 1919, when he retired with the rank of Colonel.

Charles Forest Coe was detailed by Company A as a sharpshooter and because of his excellent marksmanship, he was awarded a medal of honor [not, "the Medal of Honor"]. During the war, many thousands of recruits were sent south over the Southern Railway, and as they passed through here a large delegation of ladies would meet the train and serve them with coffee and sandwiches.

Kenton Council No. 25, Junior Order United American Mechanics was organized on August 30, 1901 by S. B. Wilson, district organizer. The following officers were elected on that date: Eli Summers, councilor; Charles Chipman, vice councilor, Harry Westerman, conductor; J. B. Westerman, Sr., recording secretary; Alfred Mann,

assistant recording secretary; William Westerman, financial secretary; Clarence Adams, treasurer; James Lucas, warden; W. A. Eckles, inside sentinel; Ellis Cook, outside sentinel; Charles Rhoades, and Charles Chipman, trustees. On April 22, 1902, their charter was granted and the following members recorded: W. A. Eckles, Ellis Cook, Charles Westerman, H. G. Tague, James Lucas, Henry Meyer, Charles Chipman, Charles Rhoades, J. H. Ogden, W. H. Westerman, Eli Summers, J. P. Westerman, Sr., Clarence Adams, Charles Fulton, Perry Marshall, F. H. Harrison, J. P. Westerman, Jr., Arthur Jackson, C. M. Summers and Birthal Marshall.

From the date of organization this order has been very active in setting forth the principles of virtue, liberty, and patriotism for which it stands.

### **Erlanger Christian Church**

Rev. Edgar Dewitt Jones and 34 charter members organized the Erlanger Christian Church on Nov. 26, 1901. The first officers were Calvin A. Riggs, Albert Riggs, and Albert Farquharson, deacons; L. C. Yeager and David Riggs, elders; and William Riggs and P. O. Griffin, trustees. The first meeting place of this church was in the Erlanger Town Hall, from 1901 to 1904. The dedicatory sermon was preached by the Rev. F. M. Raines, a former missionary to China.

### **Pastor is Author**

In 1904, the Rev. Edgar Dewitt Jones, now LL.D., left this church to go to the Euclid Avenue Christian Church in Cleveland, Ohio. Later, he accepted the call of a Christian church in Bloomington, Illinois. He has done considerable work in addition to have written two books, *Fairhope* and *The Inner Circle*. Rev. Jones has also given numerous lectures, which have stamped him as a man of unusual mental capacity and oratorical ability.

Rev. S. S. Lappin, who was pastor of this church from 1908-1916, was at the same time editor of the Christian Standard. After leaving here he was a professor in Bethany College, Bethany, WV. Later, he accepted the pastorate of a large church at Bedford, Indiana, which has grown wonderfully under his administration. He has also built up 25 other congregations in the country districts near Bedford, some of which have become self-supporting. From the date of organization to the present time this church has been very active in all of its several departments. The church, Sunday School and Young People's branches are constantly engaged in some worthwhile endeavors.

One outstanding feature of this church is that two splendid young men who became Christians in this church entered the ministry and are doing excellent work for the cause of Christianity. Rev. Frank Lappin, the son of Rev. S. S. Lappin, is now a missionary in Japan and doing splendid work.

### **Girls Equip Room**

Rev. Harry Wilson, who also received his early religious training in the Bible school of this church, became a minister, after having graduated at the Kimberlain Bible College, in Kimberlain Heights, Tennessee. Since that time he has become pastor of several large churches in northern Ohio and in the south. A systematic offering of the

Bible School to six worthy causes stands to the credit of this school. The Girls' Circle has furnished and equipped a room at the Old Ladies Home at Louisville, Ky. This church has a membership of 200 and an average Sunday School of 135.

### **Fraternal Organizations**

Kenton Council No. 9, Daughters of America, patriotic organization was chartered on April 25, 1905. At the time of organization 27 charter members were enrolled, nine of which are still active members. From the date of beginning to the present time this order has had an active existence, setting forth the principles of loyalty, love and patriotism.

Bristow Chapter No. 31, Order of Eastern Star, was reorganized under the constitution of Grand Chapter of Kentucky, September 30, 1905 by Mrs. Amanda Helman of Ludlow, Ky. The charter was received October 17, 1905.

This organization cooperates with and acts as a sister lodge to the Masonic Order. It has grown from 10 to 95 members. The principles for which this splendid body stands are moral, social and beneficial. Mrs. Mary A. Coe was the first worthy matron and George J. Schoepfel the first worthy patron.

### **Fair Association Formed**

Kenton County Agricultural Association, which operates the Erlanger Fair, was incorporated February 20, 1906, by S. W. Adams, J. P. Riffe, H. G. Blanton, E. T. Gale, and L. T. Rice. Up to the current year the annual fair has featured the activities of this incorporation, but changing conditions seem to have justified their conducting a six-day "running meet" instead of the fair. They have one of the best half-mile tracks in the state and own 32 acres of valuable land.

### **Men's Club Aids**

The Business Men's Club of Erlanger was formed in the spring of 1906. The officers were E. B. Terrill, president; George J. Schoepfel, vice president; H. F. Childress, secretary; S. L. Webb, treasurer; and O. M. Rogers, Dr. P. J. Riffe, J. D. Cobb, T., J. Stevenson, and L. C. Yeager as directors. While the existence of this organization was not over tow [sic] years, its good influence was felt, as it was an important factor in the erection of the present school building and the reconstruction of Commonwealth Avenue.

### **Day of Tragedy**

Tuesday, August 27, 1908, was a day of tragedy for Erlanger. Two colored men were killed in the railroad yards. Squire T. J. Childress was called to hold the inquest, and as he entered the Blanton undertaking establishment toppled over dead. Dr. C. R. Slater, who was called to attend top Squire Childress, fainted and was not revived for some time.

In the afternoon Dorothy Helen, the 3-year-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Harold Tavlin swallowed strychnine tablets and died shortly thereafter. The tot, with her mother, was visiting her grandfather, Dr. C. W. McCollum, and while playing in the doctor's office mistook the tablets for candy. The infant daughter of Mr. and Mrs.

Harry Westerman of Home Street, while playing with a lead pencil, put it in her mouth and it became lodged in her throat, and only hasty action on the part of the physician saved the child's life.

### **Town Gets Bank**

Citizens Bank of Erlanger was organized on December 16, 1911, by George N. Buffington, George Gebhard, Claud E. Slater, A. B. Rouse, P. M. Witt, T. J. Stevenson, and Edward F. Smith. It was chartered on February 1, 1912, and opened its doors on November 18, 1912. They own the beautiful three-story brick building in which they are located, a part of the first floor of which is used as the Erlanger branch of the Covington post office, the second floor is occupied by the telephone exchange, and the third floor by the Masonic Order. This bank has had a steady growth and is a safe and conservative financial institution.

### **Women Organize**

Friday, March 6, 1914, a number of ladies met at the residence of Mrs. Henry F. Childress to organize a Woman's Club and 38 were enrolled as charter members.

On August 18, of the same year, the club decided to order one of the Traveling Libraries from the Kentucky State Library Commission, and after a book shower on October 27, a free public library was opened on November 3, in a room offered by the Citizens Bank. Miss Louise Buckner was librarian. At the present time this library has approximately 1,000 books, and is open two days each week, with Mrs. Thomas J. Stevenson, Mrs. John L. Zumbiel, and Mrs. Charles Goodrich as librarians.

This organization paid for the first domestic science equipment in the public school, and one of its members gave her services as instructor for one year. This club is affiliated with the State Federation of Women's Clubs.

It has a most interesting and instructive program each year. The club has developed friendliness and cooperation among its members.

Erlanger Improvement Association was organized in 1914, with J. P. Riffe, president; H. F. Childress, vice-president; M. Y. Thomas, secretary-treasurer; L. A. Bentler, A. Victor, Jr., Dr. P. E. Blackerby, and M. J. Mitchell, directors. This organization lasted about two years, but during the period of its activity it did much toward the advancement of Erlanger and its interests.

This organization gave three community banquets, which had much to do with bringing about a closer relationship and feeling of mutual needs. The first celebrated installation of electric current and was held March 27, 1914.

### **The Program**

Rev. S. S. Lappin, toastmaster;

"Erlanger As a Residence Town," S. W. Adams;

"Erlanger as a Business Town," Morris Y. Thomas;

"Civic Pride," A. A. Shearer;

"Schools and Public Improvement," John Erret;  
"The Property Owner and Public Improvement," D. E. Castleman;  
"Professional Men and Public Improvement," O. M. Rogers;  
"Fraternalities and Public Improvement," Dr. P. E. Blackerby;  
"The Churches and Public Improvement," Rev. Noland;  
"Conservation of Character," E. W. Thornton; and  
"The Need of a Local Improvement Association," H. F. Childress.

#### Road Delegate Named

The Improvement Association, April 3, 1915, sent a representative to the first Dixie Highway meeting ever held at Chattanooga, Tennessee.

The Second Community Banquet was given on March 18, 1915, with the following program:

Rev. S. S. Lappin, editor of The Christian Standard, toastmaster;  
"Our Town," Honorable D. E. Castleman;  
"The Public Health," Dr. R. Lee Bird;  
"Better Schools," Professor P. L. Hamlett;  
"What Gives a Town Standing," Judge F. M. Tracy;  
"Good Morals As An Asset," Edgar R. Riley;  
"Erlanger As I See It," Judge R. G. Williams; and  
"Civic Pride," Rev. H. H. Webb.

The third banquet was given on March 24, 1916, with the program as follows:

Hon. D. C. Castleman, president of Erlanger Improvement Association, toastmaster;  
"The Advantage of Organization for Civic Betterment," John E. Shepherd, former solicitor for Covington;  
"The Cheerful Life," John L. Shuff, former Cincinnati postmaster, general agent, Union Central Life Insurance Co., Cincinnati, Ohio;  
"The Dixie Highway," Dr. C. L. Bonifield, president of the Cincinnati Automobile Club and vice president Hamilton County Dixie Highway Association;  
"The Car Line Extended to Erlanger," Stephens L. Blakely, commonwealth attorney, Kenton County;  
"The Occasion," E. C. O'Hara, county attorney, Grant County, Williamstown, Ky.;  
"Let's Make It Look Better," C. C. Preston, general agricultural agent, C.N.O.&T.P.R.R., A.G.S. Railway, and H. & N. R., Chattanooga, Tennessee;

"Shinny On Your Own Side," Dr. S. S. Lappin, editor, Christian Standard, Cincinnati.

### **Entertains Convention**

Erlanger entertained the Northern Kentucky Educational Tournament on May 26, 27, and 28, 1915. About 300 visiting students attended this meeting and the event was handled in a manner which was a credit to the town. Prof. P. L. Hamlet was in charge.

### **Storm Kills Woman**

On the evening of July 7, 1915, at about 8:30 o'clock, Erlanger experienced the worst storm in its history. The clouds had been growing blacker and getting lower all evening and finally the storm came with intense fury. It only lasted six minutes, but much damage was done. In the south side the home of August Daue was wrecked and Mrs. Daue was killed by falling timbers. Their two daughters were injured and many houses damaged. Hundreds of trees were uprooted. Telephone and electric light poles and wires were torn down. Practically every home in the town was damaged more or less, but the residences of T. J. Stevenson and E. T. Gale were wrecked. The streets were blocked by broken trees. The marvelous thing about it all was that the loss of life and injury were not greater.

### **Enviably War Record**

From the day following the declaration of war against Germany until after peace was declared, Erlanger did all that was expected of her. Ever Liberty Bond issue was oversubscribed, ever War Savings Stamp campaign was oversubscribed, every Red Cross, United War Work, Y.M.C.A, and other war cause received greater contribution from Erlanger that was the quota. It was given cheerfully, and in many instances out of what the giver hoped to earn later. But this was the least that Erlanger did. She gave her brave boys, the best she had, and they fought like the brave soldiers that they were. Three of them never came back.

We honor those who did their bit, but especially those who made the supreme sacrifice.

They were:

Fritz Daniel Corrigan, Company L, Twenty-eighth infantry, enlisted April 9, 1917, killed in the battle of Tigny, May 29, 1918;

Leonard "Conde" Wright, Company L, Twenty-eighth infantry, enlisted April 10, 1917, killed in action Nov. 7, 1918;

Ralph Sherman Sanders, Company M, 122nd Infantry, Thirty-Second Division, killed Nov. 8, 1918, in the battle of the Meuse-Argonne, near Brandyville, France

### **On Honor Roll**

The following is a list of those who registered from the district of the Erlanger Post Office, which included Erlanger, Elsmere and the surrounding territory. (We have made a great effort to have this list complete, but in view of the fact that we have no

official list to draw from, we fear that some few names have been unintentionally omitted.)

Acree, Casper (Student Army Training Corps) Arnold, Gladys Arnold, Guy Biel, Walter C. Beiser, Fred Beiser, Jos. A. Bloss, Jr., George C. Bogenschultz, Lawrence Booth, Nathaniel Bramlage, John (Cpl.) Bramlage, Robert Bricking, Edward P. Bricking, Joseph Bricking, George H. Bristow, James W. Bryant, J. S. (Sgt.) Burks, Stephen H. Carter, Joseph, Casselman, Marie Casselman, William Clutterbuck, Twyman (Sgt.) Codey, George L. Cody, Jesse, Cody, William Corrigan, Fritz (killed in action) Corrigan, Frank Corrigan, Rosemary (nurse) Daron, Jr., Alex Dauer, R. L. Dauwe, R. L. Dorsey, John J. Dorsey, Irvin Fullilove, Harvey Gale, George McD (Student Army Training Corps) Geiger, Ira Gormley, J. M. (Sgt.) Guth, George Guth, John Haley, Harry Hamlett, P. L. (Sgt.) Hartman, George H. (Sgt.) Haskell, E. W. (Sgt.) Hayden, Charles A. Highhouse, George L. Hoard, Elbert R. Israel, Marion Koeler, John Mantachm, William J. (Sgt.) McCollum, Harry C. (Sgt.) McCollum, John P. (Lt.) McCollum, Robert E. (Lt.) Miller, Clifford Mitchell, Morgan I. Moss, Edward Munch, Albert Munch, Leonard Meyers, W. B. Ramler, Frank Reigler, George RequaRDT, Fred Rhodes, Ralph A. Rice, Chester Riggs, Harry L. Riggs, Orville (Student Army Training Corps) Riley, D. M. Ryle, Floyd (Sgt.) Scales, Noah (Colored) Scheper, George Sanders, Ralph Sherman (Killed in Action) Sanders, C. E. Schaffer, Caspar Scheben, Fritz (Cpl.) Schneider, Louis Scott, Lewis Shearer, Emmal (Sgt.) Simmons, B. C. (Lt.) Squares, Robert (Sgt.) Taliaferro, Philip A. (Sgt.) Talvin, Harold T. (Student Army Training Corps) Taylor, Dwight R. (Sgt.) Taylor, Mayo M. (Sgt.) Thamen, John H. Thamen Jr., Joseph T. Victor, Edwin O. (Sgt.) Victor, Russel N. (Ensign) Waginger, John Jr. (Sgt) Whaley, Stanley White, Charles E. White, David A. Wooster, Raymond (Sgt.) Wright, Leonard (killed in action) York, Grover Young, Daniel (Cpl.) Young, Carl O. (Sgt.) Zinke, Frd H. Jr. Zitt, Edward Zumbiel, James F. Zumbiel, William A.

### **Parent-Teachers' Association**

Parent-Teachers' Association was organized March 5, 1920, by Prof. P. L. Hamlett and Mrs. J. W. Kennedy. The following officers were elected at the same meeting: Mrs. M. J. Mitchell, president; Mrs. C. W. Gurney, vice-president; and Mrs. L. L. Childress, secretary-treasurer. The outstanding feature of the work of this organization has been the beautifying of the school building and grounds. They had the concrete sidewalk constructed from Erlanger Road to the school building on Cowie Ave. They have a standing committee to visit the school and report on the work being done. They have improved the sanitary conditions in and around the school building, and purchased new electric light fixtures and equipment for the domestic science room. They joined the State Federation of Parent-Teacher Associations in February 1923.

This splendid organization was instrumental in bringing before the voters of Erlanger on January 19, 1924, the matter of issuing \$25,000 worth of bonds for the purpose of adding three rooms an auditorium to the present school building. The bond issue carried by an overwhelming majority and the construction work will begin as soon as possible.

## **Post Office is Substation**

July 1, 1920, the Erlanger post office became part of the Covington post office, and is now known as a substation of Covington. Out of this office we now have two city postmen and two rural routes.

## **Highway Jubilee**

August 16, 1921. Erlanger celebrated an event that has had more to do with putting it on the map than any other thing that has occurred in its history. It was the opening of the Dixie Highway, and it was attended by a crowd variously estimated at from 10,000 to 15,000.

The town was beautifully decorated and the new concrete highway was as clean as a pin. The opening program which had been arranged by the citizens of Erlanger as follows: opening number, Esberger's Band; vocal duet, Thomas Holzberg and Billy White; folk dance, three young ladies from Cincinnati; selection, Esberger's Band; vocal duet, Holzberg and White; folk dance; selection, Esberger's Band; vocal duet, Holzberg and White, and selection, Esberger's Band.

Formal opening of the Dixie Highway was presided over by Judge D. E. Castleman, and the Hon. Church Ford of Georgetown, Kentucky made the principal address, after which dancing on the highway began and lasted until well past midnight.

## **Bus Line Started**

On June 1, 1922, Stephens L. Blakely, Logan Foster, William Rossell, and A. M. Bower started to operate the Dixie Traction Company, from Florence and Erlanger to the Ft. Mitchell car line. This service has been a great help to the people of Erlanger. Buses now meet every car.

## **Depot is Important**

Erlanger station, on the Southern Railway, has grown from one of no importance to the best station, in proportion to the size of the town, between Cincinnati and Somerset, with the exception of Lexington. The passenger traffic is large and the freight business in all manner of commodities is very heavy. The lumber, coal, and building material shipments run into thousands of dollars per month.

It is probably hard for the present generation to conceive of the time when Erlanger had no telephones, but nevertheless there was such a time. It was in 1889 that the citizens of Florence had, by popular subscription, paid the Bell Telephone Company \$300 to get them to run the wires to that place and put in a single box. This sum only gave them the phone, but they had to pay 20 cents for each message to the city. The fact that Florence had telephone service prompted Erlanger to ask the telephone company for it also. They agree to put another box on the Florence line if Erlanger would, by subscription, pay them \$100 and pay the toll rate of 15 cents for a message to Cincinnati. Enterprising citizens agreed to the proposition, and Dr. C. R. Slater called on the people of Erlanger and secured the desired amount. The first telephone was placed in Dr. Slater's office, which was then located on the same spot where the Kentucky Independent Oil Company's filling station is today. This was in the winter of 1890.

## **New Exchange Planned**

Today Erlanger has an exchange of its own, with more than 400 subscribers. This exchange now occupies the entire second floor of the Citizens Bank Building. Preparations are being made to make this exchange as modern in every respect as a metropolitan exchange.

## **Schools Rank High**

In thinking of the advancement made here in various ways, we are impressed more by the increased school enrollment than any other one fact. Prior to 1890 one teacher cared for all of the Erlanger children, including what is now Elsmere, together with the children from the surrounding county, in the one-room schoolhouse. In 1893, St. Henry's School was started with one teacher and in 1899 the public school district was divided and Elsmere established their own school. Today the Erlanger school has an enrollment of 240 pupils and seven teachers. The Elsmere School has an enrollment of 233 pupils and six teachers, and St. Henry's School has 166 pupils enrolled and five teachers, making a total of 18 teachers and 639 pupils.

It has been the good fortune of Erlanger to have for superintendent of schools quite a number of most capable men, but Professor H. C. Wayman, who was here for a period of [sorry - it ends there!].

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*The History of Erlanger*, by Henry F. Childress, was written in 1924. We've added the section titles, and, at Mr. Childress's written invitation, ("My hope is that this effort on my part will encourage some more capable writer to take up the work I have started, and complete it in a more credible manner"), we've cleaned up a sentence and a typo here and there.

In 1996 The Erlanger Historical Society published a comprehensive history of the City of Erlanger

From Buffalo Trails to the Twenty-First Century  
A Centennial History of Erlanger, KY

Editor Wayne Onkst

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