

COLD SPRING HISTORY - CONTINUED

Generally, it is believed that the early settlers of Cold Spring evolved from a party of men and women who accompanied Major David Leitch in his travels from Fort Pitt (Pittsburgh) to Losantiville (Cincinnati) in 1789. Leitch and his group traveled six miles up the Licking River and constructed a block house with a tall picket fence, on land that is now just east of Interstate 275 and the AA Highway interchange. The site became known as Leitch's Station. Indians in the area were extremely hostile, and from time to time the dangers forced the pioneers to flee to Ft. Washington for safety. Ft. Washington had been established in 1789 to protect early settlements. Leitch chose to accept the dangers of the frontier, and apparently retained 200 acres along the Licking River for himself. He then sold his remaining acreage to friends, and for those who could not forgo the expense, he offered land in exchange for work clearing the area.

Those families who remained and bought property included Benjamin Archer, John Bartle, Samuel Beck, John Bird, Timothy Bull, Cader Edwards, William Edwards, Joseph Farrar, George Gordon, George Kelly, Joseph Kelly, Thomas Johnson, John Murnan, Edward Welch, Thomas Lindsey and Thomas Rees (later known and spelled Reese).

Many of these men owned property inside the present day Cold Spring city limits. Apparently Thomas Rees bought property and organized Rees or Reese's settlement, which became the forerunner to Cold Spring. In an early article published in December 1878 in the Newport Local, historian John W. Stevens mentioned Reese's settlement, which included the Reese, Smith, Griffith and "other" families. Stevens reported that the group were Baptists who established a Church called Licking. Additionally, he commented, "It was the first church in the County."

The settlers had been traveling to the mouth of the little Miami River (present day Lunken Airport) to a church known as Columbia Baptist. The dangers of travel and the distance required caused them to withdraw and create a church within the confines of their settlement.

Historically, the church was known as "Mouth of the Licking" and was created by William Decoursey, Bethuel Riggs, Closs Thompson, Joseph Kelley, and their wives at the home of Decoursey in 1794. The first pastor was John Smith, who ironically was the first pastor at Columbia. In 1805, the members acquired land from Thomas Lindsey and built a log structure at the present intersection of Pooles Creek Road and US 27 where the old Cold Spring Baptist Church structure stands today.

By 1807, the church had 38 members. The name of the church was changed in 1820 to Old Licking Church. It is not known when Reese's settlement actually changed and the name Cold Spring began being used, however, references to the name have been found in the 1840's. Population of the area increased rapidly between 1820 and 1850.

In 1857, Reverend N.C. Pettit founded a school, known as the Cold Spring Seminary. Pioneers in the community, Robert Dodsworth, John C. Youtsey, Joseph and Charles Horner, and William and George Winters financed the project, and the building was constructed by another preacher and well-known bricklayer, James M. Jolly. Reverend Pettit served as the first principal, and the three teachers taught Mathematics, Music and English. The name was changed to Walnut Hills Academy before the civil war and during those years, the school served as a Union Army provost headquarters. The local Homeguard and Union troops occupied the ground adjacent to the building. Scores of famous men spoke at the school, including Abraham Lincoln, U.S. Grant, and William Howard Taft. It is generally thought that Lincoln spoke on his campaign trip to Cincinnati in 1859, and one source states that Lincoln spent the night at a home in Cold Spring. In the 1870's Cold Spring organized its own school district and in 1875, Walnut Hills was sold for use as a public school. The school was run by the Cold Spring District as a graded school system and a high school. It was destroyed by fire in December 1921, and was replaced by the current Cold Spring elementary building at the corner of US 27 and East Alexandria Pike.

On May 12, 1870, Bishop Augustus Toebbe of the Catholic dioceses established the St. Joseph Orphanage at Cold Spring. Funds were raised and the Diocese purchased what was known as the Walsh farm, (present day Disabled American Veterans property). An existing eight-room farmhouse was used until a building could be constructed. What became the St. Joseph Parish began shortly after, and a small frame church and one room school

were constructed In 1881, Reverend Herman Kramer proposed construction of a new church. The bricks were made of clay from behind the orphanage cemetery, and kilns were constructed on the property for the purpose of firing. The church building was dedicated October 8, 1882.

A post office was established prior to September 1870, when it was listed among other postal zones in Campbell County. Cold Spring was also mentioned in 1876 Kentucky Gazetteer. On March 15, 1876, the State of Kentucky approved the creation of the District of Cold Spring with limited city power. The men appointed to manage the district were John and Andy Youtsey, Charles Horner, H. S. Clark, Wiley Bates and Henry Sethman.

In 1880, the state of Kentucky initiated a project to map the state, county by county and Cold Spring was included in the project. When the 1883 atlas was published, an entire map with property owners was included with a general description of the city. At the time, Cold Spring had two saloons, three blacksmiths, a grocery, two wagon makers, a shoemaker, a doctor, an auctioneer, and a yeast maker. The city also had a justice of the peace, constable and a postmaster. The population was 500.

The above history covers the time period from first settlement through creation of the county atlas in 1883. Information used comes from numerous published sources, however no claim is made for complete accuracy. Historical information in very early years of the state and county creation can be subjective, however I have tried my best to maintain accuracy. I am very open to comments, and welcome corrections depending on documentation.

Copyright John E. Leming Jr. 2003