

REMINISCENCES OF EARLY NEWPORT

William House  
200  
mf

Early settlers of Newport displayed a most progressive spirit. They took up a subscription and raised funds to erect a brick courthouse in 1814. They believed that the log structure at the corner of what was then known as York and Belleview streets had served its purpose.

The total sum subscribed was \$1,007. The sum was applied to the fund to erect the new "Palace of Peace." The contract for the building called for a brick structure to be erected on the public square. The courthouse was to be forty feet square, with the foundation to be sunk in the ground two and one-half feet. Other plans and specifications were presented and the contract was let on January 30, 1815.

On December 28, 1803, the Kentucky General Assembly gave jurisdiction to the United States of a tract of land in Campbell County consisting of five acres and six square poles in the town of Newport for the purpose of erecting an arsenal and other public buildings. For years the barracks on this plot at the point of the Licking was one of Newport's show places. Establishment of Ft. Thomas spelled the doom of the barracks and the property is now a city park.

Campbell County, as is generally known, was a vast territory at one time. It embraced the counties of Pendleton, Boone, Kenton, and a part of Grant. John Brown Lindsey was Newport's first mayor and he was also the sheriff and the Justice of the Peace for many years.

One historian says that Newport was established by an act of the General Assembly on December 14, 1795. The first trustees



were: Thomas Kennedy, Washington Berry, Henry Brasher, Thomas Lindsey, Nathan Kelley, James McClure and Daniel Duggan. These trustees were to be elected annually "by the housekeepers and owners of lots" on the first Monday in March, the election to be held before the clerk of the trustees at the courthouse in Campbell County.

✓ A spirited argument arose with reference to the selection of a site for the county seat. The first courts were held at Wilmington on the Licking River, twenty-two miles from Newport. In 1827, a law was passed designating Versailles, now in Kenton County, as the county seat, upon the theory that Versailles was the center of the county. In 1840 Kenton County was created and a section as the territory for the new county.

Alexandria then became the county seat and the little village has clung tenaciously to this honor since then. Gen. James Taylor was the first clerk of the courts and Washington Berry was the first judge of Campbell County.

The city of Newport was incorporated on February 24, 1834, with the government vested in a mayor and six trustees.

Daniel D. Mayo was Newport's first postmaster. James Taylor was President of the Newport Bank Organization in 1819.

In 1833 the present Taylor M. E. Church, South, was erected by the Presbyterians. In the deed to the lot appears the name of Henry Ward Beecher, who was then a student at Lane Theological Seminary, Cincinnati. The members of the Presbyterian Church at that time were Yankees who had come to Newport to work in a bagging factory on the river front. When the business failed the employees moved away and the Methodists purchased the church, the historian reveals.



Bibliography

Information obtained from "The Kentucky Post" on January,  
1929.