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# COVINGTON

AN ADDRESS

BY

RUSSELL SWAIN CLARK

Pupil Second District School



BEFORE THE INDUSTRIAL CLUB  
OF COVINGTON, KY.

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An Address by  
RUSSELL SWAIN CLARK,  
Pupil, Second District School, Before The Industrial Club.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN OF THE  
INDUSTRIAL CLUB:

THE subject on which I am going to speak, is Covington. How many of the persons who are always grumbling about Covington, have taken interest enough in the city, to know anything of its early history? That Covington is in the great State of Kentucky, is reason enough in my mind, why it should deserve the respect of every one of its citizens.

There is no other state of our glorious Union richer in stories of adventure than Kentucky, no pioneers bolder or more deserving of our admiration, than that of the Kentucky pioneers, and no other state that has played any nobler part in the time of our Nation's need, than Kentucky, of which state *Covington is its second city.*

The pioneer stock of Kentucky is exceeded by none. We read in history, that our State was settled by that unsurpassed class of people, the Scotch-Irish, chiefly from Virginia, and I think that the first families of Kentucky are not at all inferior to the *boasted* first families of Virginia.

You hear that the Kentuckian is a fierce hater, that his hatred extends on down through his descendants; that feuds are a blot upon our State; that Kentucky ranks low in educational opportunities. If the Kentuckian is a fierce hater, he is also a most loyal friend. If the educational opportunities are poor, the real Kentuckian in Culture surpasses all candidates for the grand old name of "Gentleman," and it is up to you, gentlemen, to help Covington in this day and generation to advance the educational facilities of its people.

An English gentleman, one who had traveled much, passing through Kentucky, answered in reply to a resident of our city, who was making apologies for this town, that the most cultured, the most widely read persons he had ever met in his travels, were Kentuckians. Yes, and narrowed it down to *Covingtonians*. It takes an unprejudiced mind to do us justice.

From Revolutionary times, Kentucky has played an honorable part in our nation's history. One thousand volunteers flocked to meet Colonel George Rogers Clark at the mouth of the Licking river. Their object was to avenge the battle of the Blue Licks. They destroyed five Indian towns in Ohio, and so overwhelmed the savages, that they never again invaded our State in large numbers.

Gentlemen, where is Covington's monument to "Colonel George Rogers Clark" and his daring pioneers?

In the War of 1812, it was the sharpshooters from Kentucky who won the battle of New Orleans. Soldiers, trained on European battlefields, could not cope successfully with the keen-eyed, steady-armed Kentuckians, trained on the dark and bloody ground. History has repeated itself in the Kentucky doughboy, many from Covington, who overcame in the late war the military aristocrats of Prussia and Bavaria.

In the Civil War, Kentucky was neutral. Some persons have slurred our State because of this attitude in the struggle between the North and the South. The people of Kentucky then were a thinking people. They followed blindly neither the champions of one cause nor those of the other. Many Kentuckians fought and perished for the Union, many fell for the Lost Cause.

In 1898, Kentuckians, including Covingtonians, were not slow to respond to the call for men to avenge the wrongs of Cuba, and uphold the dignity of our Nation. The Cuban war, known as the Spanish War, was one that suited the Kentuckians exactly. It was short, clear-cut and the country went straight to work. It accomplished its purpose, it hit the mark, and Spanish tyranny fell.

In the World War, just closed, our own city, along with the State of Kentucky and the Nation, played an important part and contributed largely to the successful outcome, and many heroes, including Covingtonians, did much to overwhelm the common enemy, and some of our boys are now lying on the battlefields of France. To them all honor!

Is anyone ashamed of the part we played in this great conflict? If there were any traitors within the confines of this fair State and City of ours, they were not the descendants of the pioneer stock of Kentucky nor that of Kenton County; they were those whose sole aim for sometime, has been, to supplant the dwellers of this land, that has been well named, "God's Country." They were relatives of those Barbarians beyond the sea. Kentucky is indeed a noble State, and we must see that Covington shall be a credit to it.

I suppose when Thomas Kennedy came down the river from Pittsburgh, the spot situated at the junction of the Ohio and Licking rivers must have appealed to him. It must have seemed good to settle here. I do not know what this region was in his day, with all the charm of natural scenery about it, but I do know, that Covington, viewed from the Suspension Bridge at sunset of a quiet evening in Spring, is good to look at—sweet and restful.

I am no judge of architecture, therefore, if my opinion does not agree with yours, pardon my ignorance; I know only what pleases me, and the many comfortable homes and commodious and fairly convenient public buildings of our good city, are fair to look upon.

Among the buildings of which we are justly proud is the beautiful new High School, located at Holmesdale, near the mansion of a famous Covington family, that of the Holmes's, one of the most widely known Kentucky families, where in former years, banquets and dinners were held in honor of statesmen and men of renown.

Gentlemen, "*as a schoolboy,*" I am especially interested in matters of education, and our High School offers two courses, one wherein the students prepare themselves for business, as soon as they leave school, while the other is

where the student prepares himself for a college or a university course.

Our good city has fine elementary and Junior High Schools with an efficient set of teachers; but, gentlemen, we need at least two more new schools, and when they are completed, Covington will be for the time being well supplied with school facilities. Kindly see to it that we get these new schools, for education makes deserving men and women, and it differentiates the scholar and gentleman from the bum.

If you will look at the dates upon our Public School buildings, you will perceive that from 1865 to 1872, old Covington erected the First, Second, Third and Fourth District Schools and the old High School. Does that look as if Covington had shirked its duty in the *old days* towards its children?

At the close of the great Civil War, within a period of seven years, five Public School buildings! Evidently the old Covingtonians had respect for America's "greatest institution," *the Public School*. Gentlemen, can you afford to do less in this, the 20th century?

Gentlemen, the boys and girls of our city thank you, one and all, for the interest you have taken in our welfare. This interest amounts to more than mere words, as witness, the elegant High School which has just been builded. The school children of our city mean to prove, by their appreciation in work accomplished, their gratefulness to the taxpayers of Covington for the efforts made for our education and welfare.

We need a Normal School, and if you will establish one for us, we assure you, that you will find many teachers for our schools right in your midst.

Our parents cannot afford to send their children across the river, to the teachers' college, of the Cincinnati University, and you and we are losing good teachers because Covington girls do not happen to be rich enough to train themselves for teaching in those schools where they must pay for such training.

Let us start a Normal School in the Holmes Castle, and I promise you that there will be graduated from it "student teachers" that will demonstrate that education is not a failure.

It is said that a certain wealthy gentleman of a neighboring city, was once asked by a representative of an institution established for the welfare of the young men of the city, for a donation for that institution. "What is it doing"? asked the capitalist, who was of an inquiring mind and thoroughly practical. Educating young men, replied his visitor. The old gentleman sprang from his chair, threw down violently upon the table a ruler that he had in his hand, and said, "Education be damned! I have a son-in-law who can speak five languages, yet he can't make a living for my daughter."

Gentlemen, the students who will come from these schools of ours may never be able to speak five languages, but if they learn to speak their own beautiful English tongue well and apply themselves intelligently to life's duties, do you not think their education will be a success?

Build us more schools, for Covington is constantly growing in population and wealth, and schools are a necessity. And while doing it, do not forget that you have promised to see that there shall be a new Second District School, also a new District School in West Covington.

In building these new school buildings, see to it that they are ample, commodious and possess all modern improvements, including a gymnasium, a good sized community room, and bath and toilet rooms.

Gentlemen, who can tell in the years to come how many Presidents and statesmen may come from Covington schools? For statesmen, including Presidents, are merely boys grown to manhood and who have availed themselves of their opportunities.

Covington has solved the problem of the negro. We educate him in his own schools, by teachers of his own race. We do not force him into a school-room where he will have his feelings hurt by an unsympathetic teacher and

by thoughtless students. We give him encouragement in the thought that he must elevate his race and himself, and not wait for the white man to do it for him. We furnish him the opportunity and he does the rest.

Kentucky has never treated the negro unkindly. A gentleman interested in educational affairs, recently said that Covington has one of the best schools for the education of the negro to be found anywhere. I have heard that the teachers in that school are doing excellent work. Perhaps, gentlemen, they need further encouragement to strengthen them in their labors. See to it that they get it.

Covington has reason to be proud of its courts: for is there anyone here ashamed of that judge and jury that gave the death sentence to those fellows who shot two of our aged men, who were guarding the hard earned savings entrusted to their care?

These old gentlemen had been respected citizens of the community and the jury that tried their murderers did not forget that fact.

Neither does anyone here blush, because another jury gave to an old negro, *an ex-slave*, the property that his master had left him many years ago.

*"Covington's Business Houses."* Look at those stores amongst us, still doing a thriving business after years of service to the community. A lady said the other day, that a member of the third generation of her family was buying groceries of the same old firm, which had been patronized first, by her mother, then by herself, and now by her daughter. This is indeed a recognition of faithful service.

A city must work in order that it lives, eats, and enjoys itself, and makes for its future growth. Among Covington's great industries I would mention the great plant of the Houston, Stanwood and Gamble Company, the Stewart Iron Works, the Eagle Cordage Works, U. S. Motor Truck Company, the Kelly-Koett Company, the Sebastian Lathe Works, and numerous machine shops, iron foundries, railway shops and woodworking concerns, and many minor

industries, all of which give employment to and make for the greater importance of our city.

Covington is justly proud of its several banking institutions, its many building and loan associations, its large retail stores, and this beautiful Industrial Club Building and this wide awake Industrial Club, which latter is ever working for the advancement of our city and its institutions.

Covington progresses, as attests the many miles of paved and improved streets, also its splendid street railway system, which latter you must treat fairly and liberally, its electric light and water facilities, together with its several bridges, crossing the Ohio and Licking rivers, and its great railway systems, all making for the comfort and convenience of its citizens.

*"Its Professional Men."* Where will you find finer specimens of the bar than those great lawyers of old Covington. Who forgets John G. Carlisle? Mr. A. C. Collins, the principal of my school, handed me a newspaper clipping, yellow and worn. It was about John G. Carlisle. In it, the writer said, what I must give you in his exact words: "It was by sheer force of intellect that John G. Carlisle attained such prominence, for he was a poor politician; the American people have great respect for brains. In Carlisle, all parties saw a gigantic mind, and that made him a leader. He was the most accomplished Speaker of the House, in our history and the most popular. He spoke evil of no man and did not appear to think evil of any man." Gentlemen, where is Covington's monument *to this* distinguished son?

He sleeps among the pioneers of Covington in Linden Grove Cemetery, and many boys and girls of our city, as he quietly rests in God's Acre, do not know that such a man ever existed. We must take greater pride and make known to the world the worth of such noble Covingtonians.

As we progress, in the course of time, Covington may be able to supply the nation with another great Speaker. Some day, we may even furnish a President to these United States. Such a one, as was the great Lincoln, a native Kentuckian.



*"Our Physicians."* Where will anyone find men with more beautiful records for charity and devotion to duty than the physicians of old Covington? The older citizens ever tell beautiful stories which might adorn the pages of fiction, of the men who by day and throughout the long watches of the night, ministered to the sick and ailing. The physicians in our midst *today* are not far behind their predecessors, for *they, too*, are doing their duty, and carving for themselves enviable names and positions.

To the gentlemen of the bar, the press, to our progressive merchants and manufacturers—to all who would see Covington take a place in the sun—we appeal to you, as well as to the members of this Industrial Club, that you do everything in your power to advance the interests of our good city.

We have accomplished much as witness our magnificent parks, and open spaces, including Devou and Goebel Parks, which will be appreciated more and more, as our people learn their value, as they continue to visit them more largely.

Our magnificent City Hall, and City Commissioners, our Board of Education, our splendid churches of all denominations, and their splendid buildings, including the new Cathedral, the fine parochial schools and the ministers of all denominations of this city, are all contributing to the glory and growth of our good city as they reflect the pulse beat of its heart.

Yes, gentlemen, a city but reflects the men and women who are its citizenry. If we would have a still greater and a still better Covington, and there is always room for improvement, we must continue to go forward. Let us all put our hearts and souls into the affairs of our city, for as we devote ourselves to its best interests, so will we work for its greater future, and make it a sweeter, and a better town to live in, one more favorably known abroad and we proud to be known as Covingtonians.