

Northern Kentucky Views Presents:

A Few Words on
Newport's First Court-House
and City Building

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NEWPORT'S FIRST COURT-HOUSE AND ITS PRESENT
TEMPLE OF JUSTICE AND CITY BUILDING

Newport is 120 years old Friday. Previous to the construction of the first court-house a frame structure was on the same site, having been designated as the "meeting house." The building shown in the top picture in the midst of trees, with stairs leading to the second floor, was used for a city jail and the upper floor for school purposes. The long frame structure to the left was the first and only market house. It stood at Fourth and Columbia streets, and was removed during Col. Nelson's term as mayor to make way for the present city building and lawn. The thoroughfare shown is Fourth street, west, from York. Judge James C. Wright, who continues to practice at the Campbell county bar, took the picture more than 60 years ago. It was loaned by Oliver G. Thompson, Newport contractor. The latter received his first education in the building, school being taught by Prof. Wagner. The original structure used for jail was built of logs. Some years later it was strengthened by outside walls of brick. Hubard Taylor, civil engineer of Virginia, aided by Peter McArthur, laid out a town and call it Newport, in 1780. Campbell county then included all that territory now occupied by Kenton, Mason, Bracken and Pendleton, part of Boone, Grant, Harrison and Robertson counties. Newport was the county seat until 1840. Ft. Washington, later called Newport Barracks, was established in 1806 by order of H. Dearborn of the War department. It remained the property of the Government until the building of Ft. Thomas in 1893. In 1874, by special act of Congress, the old fort was ordered turned over the city of Newport to be used for a city park. Newport's first mayor was Francis T. Helm, elected in March, 1834. When incorporated as a city in March, 1849, Horatio Turpin Harris was elected as first mayor. He was followed by John N. Taliaferro and his successors were R. D. Hayman, T. W. Decoursey, George R. Fearons, F. A. Boyd, George R. Fearons, re-elected; E. W. Hawkins, sr., Robert B. McCrancken, C. P. Buchanan, R. H. Hayman, Louis Constans, A. S. Berry, W. H. Harton, M. V. Daly, James C. Wright, A. S. Berry, re-elected; George H. Ahlering, Paris C. Brown, Edward Diltz, R. W. Nelson and Dr. August Helmbold, also elected mayor when the commission form of government was established; followed by the incumbent, A. J. Livingston. By an act of the Legislature in 1852, the cities of Newport and Covington were authorized to build a bridge that now spans the Licking River, jointly owned by the two cities. The first street railway franchise was granted in March, 1860. In 1847 a tract of 20 acres of land was purchased from Samuel Winston to be used for burial purposes. It is known as Evergreen cemetery. The first Board of Directors of the cemetery were D. D. Hayman, C. Todd, Edward Southgate and C. Stricker. In June, 1848, the graveyard on Eighth Street, present site of the high school, was abandoned.