

Northern Kentucky Views Presents:

Amos Shinkle

from

The Northern Kentucky Bicentennial Commission's
A Salute to Northern Kentuckians

November 15, 1992

www.nkyviews.com

Amos Shinkle

1818 - 1892

Financier and Developer

Amos Shinkle, a long-time Covington resident, was active in the area during the mid-to-late nineteenth century. His contributions are many. As a businessman, he helped to organize a bank, to build steamboats, to bring gas lighting to Covington and to build approximately 30 to 40 houses in Covington as a developer.

Shinkle's most substantial contribution to northern Kentucky was as the guiding light behind the Covington and Cincinnati (now John A. Roebling) Suspension Bridge. A bridge, which was first envisioned as early as 1839, was recognized by civic leaders as being vital to the continued development of Covington and northern Kentucky as it would link Covington, which was northern Kentucky's financial, commercial and mercantile center, to downtown Cincinnati.

The Covington and Cincinnati Bridge Company was finally created by the Kentucky state legislature in 1846. The company floundered, however, until Shinkle became involved in 1856 as President. Shinkle was an entrepreneur and a businessman with ties on both sides of the river. He recognized the necessity of the bridge and became the driving force behind it.

The Construction of the bridge began in 1856, but had to be halted due to the Civil War. At the time the bridge was finally completed in 1866, it was the longest suspension bridge in the world and the first bridge to span the Ohio at Cincinnati. Completion of the bridge in the 1860s made it possible for people to live in northern Kentucky and work in Cincinnati for the first time. Much of Covington's development after 1870 can be directly attributed to the vital link provided by the bridge that changed the face of northern Kentucky forever.

Shinkle's efforts in the nineteenth century enhanced the quality of life in northern Kentucky in immeasurable ways. As President of the Covington Gas Light Company and organizer of Covington Waterworks, Shinkle worked to bring gas lights, water and telephone service to Covington, by providing basic services that we take for granted today.

As a civic leader, Amos Shinkle served on Covington's City Council, the Covington Board of Education, and as a staunch supporter of the Methodist Church, he contributed to the construction of three Methodist Churches in Covington.

He helped to organize Home Guards to protect northern Kentucky during the Civil War, left a \$60,000 endowment for the founding of Children's Protestant Home, founded Champion Coal and Tow-Boat Company and was a real estate developer.

His influence as a civic, political and business leader left a mark on Covington and the region that will be remembered forever.

Nominated by Leah J. Konicki, a preservation specialist with the City of Covington.

