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Photo Courtesy of Kenton County Library

Daniel Henry Holmes was born in Ohio in 1815. As a young man he was employed in Cincinnati and eventually went into business for himself as a dry good merchant. Holmes soon became successful and moved his business to New Orleans where he opened the still-existing D. H. Holmes department store on Canal Street. While in New Orleans he met and married Eliza Kerrison in 1847. They had three children, a son and two daughters.

Holmes' business forced him to do a great deal of traveling between New Orleans and New York, so he decided to purchase a place in Covington as a stopover. In 1852 Holmes purchased sixteen and three-fourths acres of land south of Covington. On this land was an old colonial home which the Holmes family planned to use as a summer residence. Covington's southern boundary at this time extended only as far as today's Twelfth Street making their estate far out in the country.

When the Civil War broke out in 1861, Holmes considered taking his family to Europe as a safety precaution. The only family member willing to go, however, was Daniel Jr., who enrolled in a school in Paris, France. Mrs. Holmes and her daughters chose to remain in their Covington home.

In 1866 Holmes began the construction of his "dream house" which replaced their original colonial residence. The castle, or "Holmesdale" as it commonly referred to, was built in English-Gothic style, modeled after a building in Seine, Italy which Holmes had seen and admired during his travels abroad. The structure was three stories high and was equipped with a hot-air furnace, which provided central heating, and also a fireplace in each of its thirty-two rooms.

In the basement was a well-stocked wine cellar and a dairy room. The first floor consisted of a large reception hall in the center of the house, which was surrounded by dining rooms, a library, and several parlors. Many lavish balls and dinner parties were held there. Between the first and second floors were huge stairs that took the form of a balcony. The second floor served as the family's sleeping quarters and had no less than nine fully-furnished bedrooms. Access to the third floor was made by a smaller iron stairway. It was here that the house servants lived and the family stored their personal belongings in its numerous cedar closets.

In 1898, at the age of eighty-three, Daniel Holmes Sr. died while visiting friends in New York. Funeral services were held in Covington and his body was then returned to New Orleans for burial.

The castle remained in his family until 1916 when the family took up permanent residence in New Orleans. The structure was then sold to the Covington Board of Education for \$50,000. In 1919 the home became officially known as Covington High School, but the name was later changed to Holmes High School.

In 1936, because of rising heating and maintenance costs, the School Board had the historic house demolished and replaced it with a more modern structure.