

CRESTWOOD

Home of Harry Brent Mackoy

Just six miles south of Covington, on a beautiful wooded knoll, beside what is now the Dixie Highway, U. S. Route No. 25, stands Crestwood, which has for many years been the home of Mr. Harry Brent Mackoy and his family. The place is situated in a rolling country, picturesque and filled with historic interest. It is on the head waters of Dry Creek, shown though not named on Filson's map of Kentucky in 1784, and stands at the point where that creek was crossed by General George Rogers Clark's "War Road", leading to the mouth of the Licking. The road was part of the Old Buffalo Trail to the Big Bone Lick, and later of the Dry Ridge Trace, used by Indian hunters and the earliest pioneers between the blue grass settlements and the northwest. It is possible that it may have been known to the early French explorers, like de Longueuil, for the Big Bone Lick appears on maps as far back as 1720. Colonel John Bowman marched over it in 1779, and Clark in 1780 and 1782, on their expeditions in those years against the Ohio Indians. John Filson and his associates passed over it in 1788 on their way to lay out Cincinnati, afterwards Cincinnati. During all later campaigns and in times of peace it became and now is the great avenue of traffic from North to South.

This locality was permanently settled at a period earlier than either Cincinnati or Covington. The exact date of the first inhabitant's coming is not known, but it was probably in 1785. The population grew and for years prior to the Civil War a grocery and post-office were maintained there under the name of Dry Creek. The postmaster during part of the time was Dr. ⁹ Oglesby, a virile

character who lived in a rather pretentious log house of two stories, situated a few yards back of the present brick residence at Crestwood. The old house withstood time's ravages until the great storm of 1915 almost destroyed it.

The community was a center of wealth and culture, including such families as the Buckners, the Sandfords, the Leathers, the Manleys and Stevensons. A boys' school, of which the building is still in existence, was established by one Sackett Meade, where young John Uri Lloyd, of Stringtown memory, was a student. A girls' seminary was also built, of which the principal was Dr. William Orr. There were even a church and a tavern, the latter having been built as far back as 1815. When the census of 1880 was taken the center of population for the United States was only a short distance west of Dry Creek. The estate across the road from Crestwood, which had then been recently purchased by Mr. Amos Shinkle, president of the Suspension Bridge at Covington, was for that reason named "Center Farm".

During the Civil War the little settlement suffered from the loss of more than one home, but mostly from the destruction of many noble forest trees. General John H. Morgan's men several times threatened Cincinnati, and finally did make their remarkable raid through Ohio. In September, 1862, Brigadier General Heath, of General Kirby Smith's Division of the Confederate army, planted his cannon in the yard of the old church to turn them on the Federal forces. At what is now Fort Mitchell Heights rifle pits were hastily constructed; over a pontoon bridge the "Squirrel Hunters", under General Lew Wallace, came from Ohio to occupy the fortifications. The intervening ground had to be cleared of trees to guard the approaches, probably.

It was then that Crestwood probably had its most eventful days. General Heath and his staff took possession of the old place, and on its ridges and gently sloping hillsides camped the men in gray. In the valleys below the house they watered their horses on the banks of Dry Creek, but they saved the trees; and now through those valleys grow wonderful beds of fragrant mint and sweet forget-me-nots.

It is appropriate that they should be there, since, for more than one hundred and fifty years, this has truly been a home by the side of the road. Many memories of brave men, beautiful women and bounteous hospitality linger in its air. A decade ago the present owner wrote:

"We chose our home beside the road,
Not as the poet hath said
That men might pass by our abode,
But linger there instead."

May the traditions of Crestwood be preserved.

"Crestwood"
December, 1938.