

**GREATER JEFFERSONTOWN**  
**HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER**

August 2019

Volume 17 Number 3

**August Meeting**

**REMEMBER THE MEETING TIME FOR AUGUST IS 7:00 P.M.**

We will meet at **7:00 P.M.** in the Jeffersontown Library, 10635 Watterson Trail. The Greater Jeffersontown Historical Society meetings are held on the first Monday of the even numbered months of the year. Everyone is encouraged to attend to help guide and grow the Society.

This month Mel Arnold will talk about Richard Clough Anderson, who made a name for himself in the Revolutionary War, and then provided assistance to veterans of that War in claiming their land grants in Kentucky, Virginia, and Ohio.

Mel, a native of Alabama with a degree from the University of Indiana, has taught at the Universities of Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Perdue. Following his teaching career he came to Louisville and was Educational Director for Humana and Louisville Gas and Electric.

**GJHS Meeting Times**

Remember GJHS meetings will return to a start time of **1:00 P.M. in October.**

**Thank You, Anne Bader.**

As president and Newsletter editor, I want to thank Anne for all of the programs she does for us. I know the reports she does goes along with her profession, but she is always ready and willing to present them, even when her schedule is very demanding. We always learn more about our region and its history from them, I would have her at every meeting if I could until I had drained her bookcase.

**June Meeting**

In June Anne Bader presented to us the history of the Beecher Terrace Housing Project located in downtown Louisville and its connection to the Fort-on-Shore built by the first settlers of Louisville. Corn Island Archaeology was given the contract to excavate Beecher Terrace before new housing in the area is constructed. All of the pictures here were part of her presentation.

Anne said she was going to talk about Fort-on-Shore at the end of her presentation on Beecher Terrace, but there were a few people who didn't know what was Fort-on-Shore. When George Rogers Clark and his group came down the Ohio River in 1778, they landed on an island just north of the Falls of the Ohio, first surveyed in 1773 by Virginia Captain Thomas Bullitt's party and called Dunmore's Island after John Murray, 4th Earl of Dunmore, Crown Governor of Virginia, where they set up their first fort. Later when they moved on shore, they built a fort they first called Fort-on-Shore, later named Fort Nelson. Clark later renamed the island Corn Island for the corn the settlers first grew there.

On an early Louisville map Anne pointed out the location of Beecher Terrace and Ninth Street, or the Ninth Street Divide, as many call it, the significant line that divides Louisville's West End, from the city's central and east areas. A goal of her work on Beecher Terrace is to provide a connection of that area to the central and east portions of our city, and provide a means to create a connectivity between the areas that could result in bringing businesses, services, and communications to the West End that are desperately needed there.

Beecher Terrace is bounded by Ninth and Thirteenth Streets, east to west, and Jefferson and Muhammed Ali Streets, north to south. This is the largest of many urban archaeological projects created in the city and Beecher Terrace is the seventh of those projects Corn Island Archaeology has worked on. Urban archaeology is a different animal when it comes to digging; you have buildings and other areas to work around. Beecher Terrace contains Baxter Cemetery, Louisville's first public burial ground.

The first area they dug in was Walnut Street Park at Ninth and Muhammed Ali, created in 1945 when the buildings were torn down, they then moved to the Baxter Cemetery. In July or August they hope to open some trenches at Thirteenth and Jefferson, then below that block to the area where the old Tenth Ward Elementary School was located, and move to the two blocks toward the Thirteenth and Muhammed Ali corner.

Beecher Terrace was built in 1939 as the second public housing complex for low income African-Americans and veterans in Louisville. As the old project buildings were torn down and the siding ripped off, it exposed the original concrete and stone exterior, and from old archive photos they saw the old wallpaper on the interior

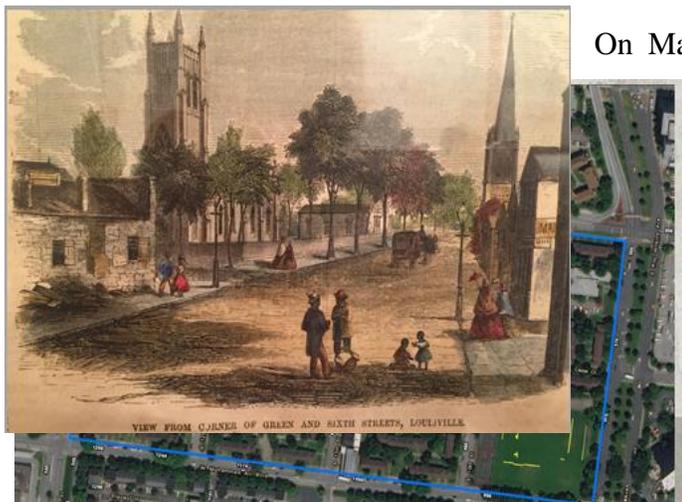


walls, and the sinks and cabinets in the original apartments. Old newspaper articles reprised how happy and thrilled the new residents were to have such nice accommodations. There were guidelines the residents had to meet in order to get an apartment in the complex.

When the city started this project with her, Anne said they had no idea the mess they were getting into working with her. The city told her there was nothing to be found now that the old 1930s era buildings were torn down, the area dug up, completely disturbed, with lots of layers of fill dirt brought in when the units were first built in the 1930s.

When Corn Island Archaeology opened the investigative trenches in the five pilot areas, they estimated there were over 380 lots - residences, commercial buildings, schools, and churches that made up the footprint of that area. Some of the buildings probably were constructed there by the 1830s, especially along Jefferson Street, but most by the 1860s, and the 1890s were the heydays for the area. After the turn of the century the area went into decline.

There is not enough money available to dig up 380 lots, much less have room to store all that could be unearthed, so they had to make a plan on how to approach the problem to get the best results. Little is known what the area looked like in the 1800s. There are some renderings. Corn Island was working at Ninth and Green Street (now Liberty) and this painting is from just three blocks east at Sixth and Green in 1863.



On March 27, 1890, the neighborhood was devastated by a tornado, and three years later the financial crash of 1893 caused more havoc, and the area never recovered. By the 1920s and 1930s the neighborhood was one of the worse slums in the city, and leaders knew something had to be done for an area right next to the city center. New homes had to be built for people to have decent homes to live in.

Beecher Terrace has been an interesting place to work according to Anne. It has had a bad reputation for some time, problems with gangs, shootings, drugs. A few years back there was a two night national television

program focusing strictly on Beecher Terrace where one in six residents had been incarcerated at some time in their life. It comes down to if that is what is happening to a neighborhood, how can that neighborhood survive and the fabric of that neighborhood be maintained under those circumstances?

Louisville's leaders are hoping that the work being done on this project can foster a change attitudes and instill some pride and hope in the people living in the Russell neighborhood, so they can realize that in earlier times this wasn't like it used to be, and doesn't have to be in the shape it is now.



So Anne's crew started to work stripping the rear of the lots because that is where people put their garbage and that is where the outhouses were installed, not in the front yards. And right off they started unearthing foundations and privies, sometimes three or four privies on the old small-sized lots. One foundation was dated prior to 1850, maybe from some of the earliest settlers of Louisville. They found old brick walks, usually leading to a privy, and keyhole cellars usually used for cold storage, some with openings that were barely shoulder width; one was brick lined.



There were round, twenty foot deep, brick-lined privies, which were younger than the square and rectangular, shallower, wood-lined privies. These are where the good stuff is always found. If you couldn't

burn it, into the privy it went. The privies weren't completely excavated, a power shovel was used to cut a slit down a side and the contents scattered on the ground according to level and gone through. That way they kept track of young to older contents. The square shallower privies were richer in artifacts and the deeper, brick ones contained more demolition debris.

Anne said she always had the idea that in city settings when the privies got full the contents were scooped out. What a great job! But now, after this project, she has found that the full privy was just covered and a new one dug. They found as many as five privies on some of these little city lots.

One picture from the 1930s showed two privies on the property, one marked for colored and one for whites. Anne wondered how in the 1930s when people in this neighborhood during the Depression were struggling to figure out where their next meal would be found, or how they were going to make a living, would put going to the bathroom in the right outhouse as a priority. Segregation was just awful! As they dug they kept in mind if they would be able to distinguish between the two privies, and what kind of lifestyles the two peoples were living at the time. They were hoping they could find the site where the picture was taken, because they would go straight there to dig! They thought that on lots with multiple privies they may be able to find a difference.

They spent a year and a half meeting with the city and thirteen different agencies and civic groups to figure out what they were going to dig, where they were going to dig it, how much they were going to dig, and what their subject of research was going to be. It was a very painful process and sometimes Anne felt they were never going to be able to get out to the site and start to dig.

When Anne's firm started out on this project they put down some objectives:

- Excavate lots that reflect a representative sample of the ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic segments of the neighborhood. They thought they would get material from African-Americans, the early settlers, later whites, and Jews. From other projects they found that Louisville had a large segment of early German Jewish immigrants. But the ones in the Beecher Terrace area were from Eastern Europe that were known as “shuttle Jews.”
- Selectively seek residential lots that would fill archaeological “data gaps” in our understanding of neighborhood development within the City of Louisville.
- Concentrate on those lots that were occupied by the African American population in order to tell the stories of the people who once called this place home.

But the city really wanted them to concentrate on telling the story of the African-American population from the area, and a new set of community goals were formed:

- Recapture the identity, history, and cultural heritage of the community.
- Embrace the diversity of the original neighborhood.
- Celebrate the successes of the minorities who once lived there.
- Contribute to a change in the perception of the neighborhood as a “crime bed.”

And through these goals study the population on a priority basis.

- Professional African Americans
- Blue collar African Americans
- Eastern European immigrants (Jewish)
- Other immigrants (western Europe)
- Native born Kentuckians and first settlers

Louisville had an unusually large segment of well educated, professional African-Americans living in the area for the time. There were twenty five doctors, three owned and published newspapers, plus many entrepreneurs. The blue-collared group consisted of the not so educated African-American population, the shuttle Jews, and the Western European immigrants, of whom some in the general Louisville population would complain, “we have enough German and Irish, we don’t need any more.” As we know, this attitude later came to a head on Bloody Monday, August 5, 1855. Finally they would study the Native born Kentuckians and the early settlers – this is where Fort-on-Shore comes in.

When they finally got started it rained for four months and they had to contend with MSD projects. By the time they completed this first phase they had studied twenty three privies and 178 other features on just eight lots. Anne wanted to tell the stories and connect the artifacts they found to the people who lived there.

Sara and Henry Fitzbutlers, both doctors, became active in promoting equal educational opportunities for



African-Americans while opposing segregated schools. As the four other medical schools in Louisville were closed to African-Americans, Fitzbutler secured a charter from the Kentucky Legislature in 1888 to organize a medical school that would accept African-Americans, the Louisville National Medical College.

Henry was a son of a slave from Virginia who escaped to Canada. Henry went to the University of Michigan and became the first Black person to earn a doctor of medicine degree from there and was persuaded to come to Louisville to service the African-American population. Sara, the daughter of a freed black farmer in Virginia, was the first woman in Kentucky of any ethnicity to earn a degree in medicine and practice medicine in Kentucky.

The Fitzbutlers owned two lots in Beecher Terrace and Corn Island Archaeology opened one of them. They have found some of the most beautiful pharmaceutical bottles, syringes, and opium bottles; these people loved their opium, Anne said. They have started looking at death certificates, what the residents died of, to see if what may have been in the bottles had any connection to their deaths. Seeing the bottles, Anne said having poison ivy was better than using the treatment for it.



Glass bottles from Paris, France were unearthed. Anne wonders if these came here via Canada, since the Fitzbutlers emigrated from Canada.

Albert S. White, Sr. (1869-1911), was born in Kentucky, the son of Albert and Jane Buckner White. He was an attorney and dean of the Louisville Central Law School, where he served from 1896-1911. He fought for African American voting rights; when White and others insisted on voting in the 1890s, they were beaten by Louisville police officers. White was a graduate of State University [Simmons, KY] and Howard University Law School. In 1902 he was appointed a U.S. Revenue Agent following the election of Kentucky's first Republican governor, William O. Bradley.



White's wife Sallie was the first woman to graduate from Central Law School and the first African American woman to pass the Kentucky Bar (1904).

Alexander Morris, a barber, who worked with his nephews, was one of the first freed businessmen in Louisville. He was the illegitimate son of a Revolutionary War veteran, who when he died, left all his children from his affair with a black woman, property in Louisville and each a slave.

Charles Wesley Harris was a child when he left Beecher Terrace, has written twenty seven books, was Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and the graduate school of Howard University in Washington, D.C. from 1940-1942, then as President of Wilberforce University and then Central State College in Ohio. He worked as editor of the Journal of Negro History and became the leader of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History.

Abraham and Jennie Zimmerman were shuttle Jews born in Lithuania. Abe was known as a patriarch of the Louisville Jewish Orthodox community, who had served as the longtime president of Congregation Beth Hamedrash Hagodol, which merged with B'nai Jacob Congregation in 1926 to form Keneseth Israel. Abe became a vice-president and later president of Keneseth Israel. Anne is interested in looking at their life styles, she suspects their European German attitudes were different than Western Jews. A lot of pork bones have been found on this lot, along with a fancy hair comb made of early plastic material.



Many of these people in mid-1800s were not poor. Evidence of crystal chandeliers and decanters, expensive dishes of all kinds that would be found in a thriving community of different nationalities was found, similar to what Louisville's leaders are visioning for the new Beecher Terrace. Something that surprised everyone was that it was known there were many restaurants in the area, and they expected to find a lot of cow, but what was not expected were all the horse bones uncovered, meaning the people must have been eating horse meat along with pigeon and pork.

Most of a toothpaste container was found, an old brand that was tracked down on line, tooth brushes, many of bone and some plastic ones, and an upper denture. Can you imagine sitting on the privy and dropping your dentures? Oh, \_\_\_\_!! They also found a political campaign artifact – a small brick with the year 1863 and H. G. Tyler for Mayor imprinted in it. Tyler Park in the Highlands is named for him.

Two very nice, intact crock pots were dug up out of a privy, a pristine, not a chip in it, Isaac Thomas crock made in Maysfield, and a perfect Melcher crock made in Louisville. You don't think Anne was excited? They now reside in a very safe place of her choosing. They are both about a half-gallon size. They also uncovered a larger Louisville Samuel Booker in pieces that they reassembled, minus a few pieces. A couple Henry Thomas yellow ware bowls, probably made on Fulton Street down by the river, were found.



And they found a prehistoric knife blade once found and lost, now found again.

Editor's Note: For those gentle readers who don't know Dr. Anne Bader, archaeologist, she loves pottery crocks, especially old ones. And some of us have grown to appreciate them also. And she has a few.

All the facts and artifacts uncovered from this project, Anne thinks, will take five to seven years to study and sort through, tell the stories of many more, and put it all down in a book. The city doesn't just want all this history to be shoved back into a closet somewhere in the city, so they have allocated money to bring it to life.

Here is the vision:

- 250-page book for public consumption by the Louisville Story Program, such as the book found at Barnes and Noble, [Our Shawnee](#).
- 30 minute film for public television and four shorts. Filming has started.
- Oral histories transcribed and stored at the Western Branch of the Louisville Free Public Library.
- Public archaeology event to co-occur with a neighborhood festival.
- Artifact display to go into neighborhood community center.
- Scheduled tours of the archaeological excavations.
- Artifact of the week on website.
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The city wants people to go down to the site and take part in the dig, which is why there is ten-foot tall fencing around the area. But they do want people to come in and see - the reason for the public tours, the scheduled digs, and the pictures on the fence of what has been found. We can go down anytime. You can join on their Facebook page.



The neighborhood folks have come in, looked around, and had their picture taken with Anne. One is Grand Daddy, a real character who tells her stories of growing up in Beecher Terrace and of his sister being burned alive. Anne asked him if she could take his picture. He said, "Wait a minute" and he reached in his pocket, pulled out a little roll of handkerchief, opened it and put his teeth in. "I'm going to be on the cover of one of the books, and I want to look good!"

The leaders want the books with all the stories, information, and pictures of people with their history. They want the artifacts displayed in schools and other places in the area and the information used in the curriculum of the Jefferson County School System to teach the kids about their history. Some of what has been done has already been in a spread in the *Louisville* magazine.

In the area toward the west end of Beecher Terrace is where Anne dug next, was the first public cemetery in Louisville, now known as Baxter Square. It is close enough to Fort-on-Shore that they hoped to find, not necessarily bones of the first settlers, but at least bones and artifacts of their children, since people tend to stay close to where the start. Jack Koppel, GJHS member and probably the most knowledgeable local cemetery researcher, gave Anne many articles on the cemetery. How it opened in 1786, love stories about people being

found entwined under an elm tree, some that may still be there, a story that by early 1800s there was no more room for burials, and other stories. Some follow:

In Volume 2, Stoddard states “In 1880, the old graveyard on Jefferson, between Eleventh and Twelfth streets, was deprived of the bones of pioneers, who had lain there for a hundred years, and the ground was devoted to public use under the name of Baxter Square. In converting this space from a burial ground into a park some noble elms that had come down from the original forest were unwisely removed, but still other trees were left and shrubbery and flowers were planted. Thus was inaugurated the first park in Louisville.” (Stoddard 1896: vol.2, p.339) He further states:

*“when the town of Louisville was laid out, the trustees reserved certain lots for burial purposes, supposed at that time to be ample. The block bounded by Eleventh, Twelfth, Jefferson and Green Streets and those between Fifteenth, Eighteenth, Jefferson and Grayson were set apart for such use, while in various parts of what now constitutes the city were a number of burial places belonging to private families or church congregations. The increase of population has encroached upon these spots to such an extent that they have all been obliterated except for the lower cemetery on Jefferson and a small Hebrew one, of the existence of which comparatively few are aware, on Woodbine Street, between Floyd and Preston. The upper Jefferson Street Cemetery has been converted into a public park known as Baxter Square, to which use, in good time, the lower one will doubtless be devoted when the tenants by whom it is occupied shall have been reverently removed to some more appropriate spot.*

The cemetery closed in 1832 and Anne found some headstones with 1832 engraved in them. Many think that



a lot of graves were moved to another cemetery, but they found that is untrue. Baxter Square was always set up as a cemetery; it was never developed with houses on it. After 1832 it was neglected and became an overgrown mess and down the road Mayor Baxter made it a park then named it after himself. The left picture is what the park looked like, the little curved sign says Baxter Park. The building in the back left is now the Beecher Terrace Community Center. The right picture is the park after the 1990

tornado.

In the cemetery they dug two long trenches, about forty or so feet apart in an area of the park that had been playgrounds. Twenty-five grave shafts were found, some deep, some shallow, mostly as a result of all of the fill that had been brought in over time. When these excavations are done, they try not to disturb any grave, but look for the evidence of a dug grave. The dirt put back into a grave is a different color than the undisturbed dirt. In one grave they did break through a vault. Of some pieces of headstones that were uncovered, one had the burial date of 1832.

One thing that was dug up at Baxter Park was a 1759 silver Spanish Real coin. Up to 1853 any silver coin from another country was considered legal tender in the United States

There is a question of what is going to happen to Baxter Square, archaeologists don't want it changed, it is still a home to many souls and Anne doesn't think it will be developed.

Anne had some early maps of Louisville that she had found, after month of searching, at the University of Chicago. None were to be found in Louisville, not even at the Filson. Collet's 1804 map of his 1796 survey of the region, T. Condor's 1793 map, Jared Brook's 1807 map, published in 1834, an undated late map that had the public square on Jefferson Street, many property lots outlined, and two ship yards on a little peninsula

piece of land where Beargrass Creek came into the river at Fourth Street, William Bard's 1779 map based on George Rogers Clark notes, with a people's initials in some of the lots, another map, ink on linen, based on Clark's papers, showing the public square and the Station-on-Island and the Station-on-Shore, this one also had lot layouts on Corn Island. A difference with beliefs is that Fort/Station-on-Shore is located at Twelfth Street, not at Seventh Street, where most believed it was. The last map she had, also contained a surprise. It had a fort at where Beargrass Creek came joined the river. Anne said she will now have to track it down because no one has ever said anything about a fort being there. This map also showed a small grouping of some lots and no date as to when it was made.

She had a drawing of what the Fort-on-Island looked like according to Clark's notes, the first settlement of Louisville with eighteen families that there is a list of, and there is also a Fort-on-Shore list of the families, some families are on both lists. Jack Koppel provided a list of names of the early dead in the Baxter Cemetery, some match the fort list. Several surnames from the early Beecher Terrace area matched these lists, including Smith, Applegate, and Stewart. Other names from the Corn Island family list are Dougherty, Perkins, Toole, Harris, Crittenden, Fleming, and Green; these all had residences in the subject area in the late nineteenth century. The addresses associated with these individuals will be subjected to deed research using the Grantor-Grantee index and limited genealogical research will be conducted on the families.

Anne has identified the lots she is planning to start excavating in August. These lots had big houses on Jefferson Street, probably with slave quarters in back.

If you go down to the dig that sits between Eleventh and Twelfth Streets, you will find a marker for the Fort-on-Shore. It is placed pretty much in the correct spot, but the correct is a parking lot that they probably not going to get permission to dig it up. A map made by Ballard Thurston dated May 1910, puts the fort on Rowan Street outside the floodwall, with Rowan running through the middle of it. With these new maps, this is the best chance to find the Fort-on-Shore.

The latest update on the ghosts of the Seaton House, Anne's business office. Anne now has taken over the entire building including the two-story addition. As a result, she has a new security system that monitors movement in all the rooms, and can be activated via a cell phone off site. She left one evening, activating the system from her car. As she watched her phone to make sure it was activated, there was movement in the building that went from room to room and went on some twenty minutes! This has happened more than once. The movement is more active in the early evening after closing, and gets slower as the night progresses. Updates will be posted as occurrences warrant!

### **New Cemetery**

Jack Koppel has found another old cemetery on the property of Johnson Controls on the Bluegrass Parkway that parallels I-64.

### **Jeffersontown Friends of the Library**

Don't forget The Jeffersontown Friends meet every other month, on the second Wednesday at 10:30 A.M. Yearly dues to join the friends of the library are \$15, but all are welcome to the meetings, regardless of dues. The Friends group is a way for folks to help the library by advocating and fundraising, and they are looking for new members.

### **Contact Us**

The telephone contact is your newsletter editor, John Ulmer, 491-6463. Our e-mail address is **[jtownhistsociety@aol.com](mailto:jtownhistsociety@aol.com)**.

