

Northern Kentucky Views Presents:

St. John's
Congregational Church
Covington, Kentucky

By

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COVINGTON

St. John's Congregational Church Covington, KY





ST. JOHN COMES TO COVINGTON MAY 1, 1892

DEDICATION

The information assembled and the commentary presented in this brief history are commended to the attention of the Bicentennial (2092) Committee of St. John's Congregational Church of Covington, Kentucky as the concise record of a heritage well worth preserving.

—Dr. Leslie C. Tihany

FOREWORD

For twenty-five centuries the remembrance in writing of things past, to inform and to exhort posterity, has been a hallmark of our civilization. A strict discipline in the writing of history arose only in modern times. The great German historian Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886) laid down the rule that a past event must be narrated and explained as it really happened (*wie es eigentlich gewesen ist*).⁽¹⁾ In other words, Ranke stressed that history should not be based on hearsay, but on precise documentary evidence. But historian beware! If you blindly obey the Rankean command and regale your reader with a story dry as dust, you risk putting him to sleep. If, on the other hand, you get too far away from evidence and start fabulizing, like Parson Weems about George Washington and the cherry tree, you will be concocting fancied history, the kind that sticks in memory for generations. What, then, is the happy medium? The answer is: historian, serve up only true facts, but do so entertainingly, within the range of your reader's interest! And, if you are writing for descendants about the noble deeds of their forefathers, try also to give the lie to Shakespeare's bitter lament that the good men do is oft interred with their bones!

The good that the Founding Fathers of St. John's Church of Covington, Kentucky did on May 1, 1892 is not buried with them. It lives on in the white-framed centennial church that still stands on its original site on Highway Avenue (Route 8) in West Covington. On this first centenary it behooves us to remember in writing what happened on that May Day one hundred years ago in surroundings still familiar to us, but in times quite different from our experience.

Remembering leads to questioning; witness the disputes of historians about cause, effect, and motivation. It will not suffice just to reconstruct an event that happened a century ago. Questions must also be asked and somehow answered; why, how, for what reason, and to what end? In the case of St. John's we will want to know what breed of people the Founders were, what was the faith that inspired them, what forces, internal and external, drove them overseas to settle in a new country? How did they assimilate to the religiosity of their new environment? And now, one hundred years later, what remains in the congregation of the old church? Let the bare facts come first!

A BRIEF HISTORY

What did happen on May 1, 1892? To make a long story short, sixteen God-fearing German immigrants covenanted in the Northern Kentucky town of Covington, in the name of their small community, to start a new evangelical church. Their families had already started worshiping together, as guests, in the hospitable sanctuaries of old Covington's St. Paul's Evangelical Church at Twelfth and Banklick Streets and also of the Union Methodist Episcopal (now Epworth Methodist Episcopal) Church. But the Germans wanted to have a church of their own! Since their credit was good, they took out a bank loan (at 5% interest!) and started building one. By December the structure was completed (reconstructed in 1923). The first service was held on December 26, 1892. The first Pastor, part-time, was the Reverend Gilbert Schmidt; the first President of the Board of Elders, the dynamic community leader Christian Schwindt. Reverend Schmidt received a yearly stipend of \$62.00 for his services.(2)

The amount seems small to us today, but a hundred years ago people of Northern Kentucky earned less and spent less than we do today. For example, a doctor in 1892 charged only two dollars for a house call. A laborer was paid one dollar for a day's work. *The Daily Enquirer* was home-delivered for a month for \$1.35. The prices of staples were commensurately low: a loaf of bread cost 5 cents, a quart of milk, 8 cents, a pound of butter, 15 cents, one pound of beef roast, 13 cents, a pound of steak, 15 cents, and one could buy a bottle of Moerlein beer for as little as 10 cents.(3) Reverend Schmidt's sixty-two dollars had a purchasing power perhaps tenfold of the same amount today.

The America of a century ago was not yet a consumer society like ours today. Benjamin Harrison was President, soon to be replaced by Grover Cleveland. Thomas Alva Edison had just (1891) patented his flickers; it took years before there were movie theaters to attend. Henry Ford had not yet put the country on wheels; public transportation was in its infancy and cheap. Electric trolley cars and electric lights began appearing on the streets.(5) Although the Suspension Bridge and the C & O Bridge already arched the broad Ohio, and Main Street Ferry was carrying passengers between Kentucky and Ohio shores, Cincinnati and Covington guarded their distinct identities. West Covington was still a separate suburb, called Economy.(6) The whole population west of the Licking estuary was barely 35,000. One could travel south into the interior of Kentucky on business or for pleasure. Trains pulled by steam locomotives were running on the Covington-Louisville-Lexington Line.(7)

There were recreational outlets. Since 1867 professional baseball games were open to the public in Cincinnati Red Stockings' ballpark. By 1895 there was professional football, too. In 1892 the sports pages of the local press carried glowing, hand-illustrated reports of Gentleman Jim Corbett's triumph in the world heavyweight championship over John L. Sullivan (only to lose it to challenger Robert Fitzsimmons in 1897).(8) There wasn't much entertainment for the Founding Mothers! They were confined to the three K's: *Kinder*, *Kirche*, and *Küche* (children, church, and kitchen). Women had not yet gained the right to vote. But families managed to have some fun occasionally. On October 31, 1893, the venerable founders of St. John's Church held a masked ball to celebrate *Oktoberfest*.(9)

However, storm clouds were already gathering on the

horizon. In 1883 labor trouble in Cincinnati, across the river, led to deadly rioting and to the destruction of City Hall by the mob. Ten years later, in 1894, the bloody Pullman strike in neighboring Illinois was broken with the use of Federal troops. Ominous shadows were falling on the future. A month after St. John's founding in 1892, the Prohibition Party held its national convention in Cincinnati.(10) For a while the Founding Fathers were still free to quench their thirst with foaming beer, but dry years were to come.

In 1892 the congregation had as yet no reason to worry about using German as the liturgical language. A quarter century later, with America's entry into the first world war on the side of Germany's enemies, their linguistic isolation was to end. A wave of irrational patriotism swept the country. Sauerkraut was renamed "liberty cabbage" on the marketplace. Strident voices were demanding a ban on the teaching of German in the schools of Covington. The congregation stood bewildered around Reverend Schmidt, who remained in the pulpit until his death in 1921, who preached and served the sacraments in the German language. Martin Luther's great German *Bible* was open on the Communion Table in front of the pulpit. In the circumstances, the Elders deemed it wise to switch from German to English-language sermons and liturgy in July, 1917.(11) In the process of assimilation that the immigrant community was undergoing, the change of languages would have to have come sooner or later. The younger Reverend Schmidt, who was occasionally standing in for his father, already was preaching in English. By 1918 a new, native-born, English-speaking generation was filling the pews at St. John's. The old folks felt sorry for the Fatherland, but the young ones rooted for America and victory. The whole congregation vigorously and patriotically participated in the war effort in 1917, and again in 1941-1945, while the second world war was raging over the continents. Twenty-seven of St. John's young men served in the American armed forces during the second great conflict.(12) Others worked as civilians in industrial plants and as technicians for government agencies.

Hardly had the war ended when Prohibition came in 1920. The breweries and the *beerstube* of Covington closed for thirteen years. Radio stations were already providing home entertainment, and the number of movie theaters was growing. Secular attractions began competing seriously with church activities. Also, it was getting more and more difficult to find qualified ministers to fill the pulpit. Mainly to assure pulpit supply, St. John's of Covington joined the American Congregational Church in 1923.(13) A placid, worshipful existence of nearly a quarter century was to follow. However, when in 1957 the Congregational Church merged with the Evangelical Reformed Church in America, St. John's opted to stay out of the new denomination called the United Church of Christ. St. John's of Covington continued as an independent, non-affiliated Congregational Church, retaining full ownership to its real estate. In the matter of church government, this was essentially a reaffirmation of the Founding Fathers' basic creed: no bishops, and no church authority higher than the congregation! The pews of the independent church remained filled on Sundays. Who were these faithful churchgoers? What heritage were they preserving?

WHAT BREED OF GERMANS

The people of Covington used to call St. John's (some still do today) "the German church". When asked, most modern descendants of the Founders proudly reply that their forefathers "came from Germany", without specifying the region or identifying the German ethnic stem from which they sprang. The facts are:

Most, if not all, of the Founders originated in east-central Germany, in the present Länder of Saxony and Thuringia of the reunited (1990) German Republic. They were simple folk born near on in the great cities of Dresden, Leipzig, Erfurt, Jena, Gotha, and Weimar. This is the area historically renowned as the homeland of the fiercely independent Saxons. Martin Luther, a Saxon, was born in the town of Eisenach, still there. The people spoke the hochdeutsch (highland) dialect of German, unlike their neighbors to the north, who were speakers of plattdeutsch (lowland) German.(14) Hochdeutsch eventually became the literary language of Germany, the language of Luther's Bible, of Goethe's Faust, Schiller's Ode to Joy. Not only in language and literature did the sons of Saxony make great contributions. The Saxons' Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) composed the world's greatest church music for Lutheran worship, and the Saxon painter Lucas Cranach the Elder (1472-1553) is world-famous as the Painter of the Reformation. For a brief and tragic period in 1918-1933, the Saxon city Weimar became the center of a democratic Germany.

Through ten centuries, the Saxons resisted and fought both Charlemagne and Napoleon. They were the first to accept the Protestant Reformation. Their ruler Frederick the Wise (1463-1525)(15) hid and protected Luther from his enemies in his princely Wartburg Castle. As an independent German kingdom, Saxony fought against imperialist Prussia in three conflicts: the War of the Austrian Succession (1742-1745), the Seven Years War (1756-1763), and the Austrian-Prussian War of 1866. Earlier, on March 13, 1848, there was a popular democratic revolt in the city of Dresden, bloodily suppressed by Berlin-centered autocracy.(16) After the 1870 unification of the German states, the Saxon-Thuringian region led the rest of the Hohenzollern Reich in the development of a labor movement and the spread of trade unions.

WHY DID THEY LEAVE THE FATHERLAND?

The earliest Roman historians(17) noted that the Germans obeyed their chiefs more readily in time of war than in time of peace, and that in troubled times they would start migrating. Indeed, since the pre-Christian centuries, the Germans preferred to be their own masters and were often on the go. Back in the fifth century after Christ, along with the Angles and the Jutes, an adventurous Saxon tribe crossed the North Sea, and on what is now English soil, set up the petty kingdoms of Wessex, Essex, and Sussex. The legend of the Pied Piper of Hamelin points to medieval migrations eastward, as far as Transylvania. To this day, gabled Saxon towns and Gothic-style Saxon Lutheran churches dot the Carpathian landscape of Romania. At the end of the seventeenth century, along with other German ethnics, Saxons participated in a great land rush east, into depopulated areas newly liberated from the Turks. Approaching Prussian hegemony in Germany was viewed with alarm by the Saxons. After the Prussian military defeat of Austria, a wartime ally of Saxony, the Saxon Prime Minister Frederick Beust (1809-1886)

resigned his high post, left his native country, and entered the service of the Habsburg Emperor in Vienna.(18) When, after the first world war, the Habsburg empire broke up, its nearly bicentennial settlers from the West became restless. Descendants of the original French colonist traveled to Paris and asked to be annexed by France.(19) The Germans of the Banat, around the still-rebellious city Timisoara, cast wishful eyes across the Atlantic. Tidal waves of immigration were bringing an annual average of 800,000 newcomers to America's shores in the eighteen-eighties. In peak years, like 1882, a quarter million came from Germany alone.(20) Into the Greater Cincinnati area German immigration swelled from an annual average of 40,000 in the seventies to nearly 80,000 in the eighties, and to about 90,000 in the eighteen-nineties.(21)

A TIME OF TROUBLES IN THE HEIMAT

Apart from the increasing pressure of population on the land in Europe that accompanied the Industrial Revolution and affected all countries and nationalities on the old continent, there were after 1870 at least three major trends in Germany that quickened emigration toward the New World.

First, after the German victory over France, for the next three-quarters of a century (with the exception of the 1918-1933 period), imperial Germany became a militarized, goose-stepping garrison state. The semi-official anthem of Hohenzollern Germany was Die Wacht am Rhein ("The Watch on the Rhine"), a stirring marching song that stimulated a martial spirit and at the same time echoed nation wide nervousness that defeated France might start a war of revenge. Through the seventies and the eighties there were recurrent war scares both in Germany and in France.(22) Preparations for war were going on. The Iron Chancellor Bismarck,(22a) in office from 1871 to 1890, imposed compulsory military recruitment on the newly united German states. Conscription in Prussia had been legal since 1811; now it was introduced in Saxony, Thuringia, Bavaria, and the Palatinate. All these once-independent states came under obligation to draft their young men into the imperial army. Militarism was growing, not only in Germany, but all over Europe. Young men in every country, including Germany, felt it in the air and were thinking of ways and means to avoid or escape it. One way to avoid conscription honestly was to emigrate overseas where it was not the law of the land. At the end of the nineteenth century, the United States was such a country.

The second major factor motivating German emigration was the kulturkampf(23) Bismarck started against the German Catholics in the mid-seventies, to assert the authority of the imperial government over German churches. By the end of the decade, half the Catholic bishops of Germany had fled their country for Rome or for other foreign lands.(24) Protestants were only indirectly affected, but the Catholic bishops' example was followed by multitudes among their flocks. Protestants at first passively observed the exodus and then became apprehensive that, once victorious against the Catholics, the Iron Chancellor might turn on them also. A popular attitude began taking hold that, before such a thing happened, it would be best to pack up and leave the country.

The third major trend propelling German emigration in the eighteen-eighties was more economic than political or cultural. After 1870, Germany speeded up its already well-

advanced process of industrialization and mechanization. Cottage industries were being driven out of existence by the new giant industrial conglomerates, plants, factories. Up to about 1880 it was still possible in the rural areas and in the suburbs of the cities to complement a craftsman's earnings by growing food grains and keeping livestock on small plots of land and in gardens. After 1880, the German working man's destiny became regimentation in cheerless city slums, to raise large families cut off from the sustaining soil, while being harassed by the inquisitive police seeking to root out suspected "red revolutionaries".

Unionizing and socialist agitation were parallel phenomena. Often the dividing line between trade unionism and socialism was hard to tell. From his London exile, Karl Marx sent the radical Wilhelm Liebknecht, first to Prussia and then to Saxony, to start organizing labor along Marxist lines.⁽²⁵⁾ Socialist books and tracts, some Marxist, some non-Marxist, were circulating among manual workers. Bismarck and his government were beginning to see red everywhere in the slums. Then, in July, 1878, two assassination attempts were made against the old Emperor William I.⁽²⁶⁾ The government blamed (wrongly) both attempts on socialist working men. A veritable red scare flared up. In October, 1878, the apprehensive Reichstag in Berlin voted a drastic anti-socialist law.⁽²⁷⁾ Meetings, publications, and the collecting of money, for purposes ill-defined as aiming at the "overthrow of the existing social order", were prohibited and made severely punishable. The freedoms of speech, assembly, and the press, were denied to German working men and their sympathizers overnight. Socialism was driven underground. In effect, the Iron Chancellor became a latter-day James I of England. As that seventeenth-century monarch drove out of his kingdom non-conformist, working-class Pilgrims, so now did Bismarck make life at home difficult for blue-collar Christian Germans, Protestant as well as Catholic. American immigration statistics show that between 1881 and 1891, one and one-quarter million German subjects (exclusive of German-speaking arrivals from Austria-Hungary) landed in United States port cities.⁽²⁸⁾ Most of the newcomers became urban dwellers on the eastern seaboard, as well as in the burgeoning towns of the interior, like Milwaukee and Cincinnati, and as far west as St. Louis on the Mississippi. The year 1980 marked the end of the old American frontier. After that date, free land was no longer available for new settlers in the wide-open spaces of the old American West.

WHAT TYPE OF PROTESTANTS?

There were two principal forms of German Protestantism: Lutheranism and Calvinism. The first was Saxony-rooted, prince-protected, bishop-supervised, liturgically adorned, and convivially earthy. The second bore a French-Swiss stamp, enjoyed middle class support, in Germany was bishop-less, liturgically unadorned, and sternly puritanical. Not even Christmas was permitted as a legal holiday in Calvin's Geneva! Lutherans called their church evangelische Kirche (evangelical church); Calvinists called theirs reformierte Kirche (reformed church) and put the Star of Bethlehem, or the cock that crowed at Peter, on the steeples of their churches instead of the cross. Lutheran beliefs were codified in the Augsburg Confession⁽²⁹⁾ (1530); the Calvinist creed in the Heidelberg Catechism⁽³⁰⁾ (1563). The center of the Lutheranism was Wittenberg in

Saxony, where the Wettin dynasty ruled. The hub of German Calvinism was Heidelberg in the Rhenish Palatinate, the seat of the Protestant branch of the ruling Wittelsbach family.

St. John's of Covington was an "evangelical" church, more with the German than with the modern English denotation.⁽³¹⁾ It had neither a cross, a Star of Bethlehem, nor a cock on its steeple. The Elders had named their church evangelische, but, in the manner of "low church" dissenters, did not want to submit to bishops, preferring to go it alone in an unpretentious, unadorned church. Also, they saw no conflict between piety and beer-drinking, which caused some raised eyebrows among surrounding English-Scottish-derived "evangelicals".

WHY ST. JOHN?

There are three St. Johns in the New Testament: the eccentric Baptist, a tragically episodic figure, who disappears early from the gospel narrative; the Greek-oriented author of the Fourth Gospel; and the visionary hermit on the isle of Patmos, who wrote Revelation. When St. John's of Covington was founded in 1892, John the Evangelist and John of Patmos were still (wrongly) thought to be the same person, so the choice for the Founding Fathers had to be between the Baptist and the Evangelist.

John (Johann) was a highly-favored German given name both among Protestants and Catholics. Catholics like the name because it was once borne by Mary's adopted son, the Beloved Disciple (John 19:26-27). Twenty-three Popes were named John. The first German church in Cincinnati, built in 1814 at Twelfth and Elm Streets, was named St. Johannes Kirche.⁽³²⁾ As it happens, it was an evangelische Protestant church, which indicates Protestant liking for the name as well. Indeed, beginning with 1834, five churches in the Greater Cincinnati area north of the Ohio River were dedicated to St. John; another five (one of them Catholic) on the south bank of the river, in Kentucky, bore the same name.⁽³³⁾ One of the four Protestant St. John churches was St. John's of Covington.

Whence the Protestant predilection for the name St. John? It goes back to the Reformation. The erudite German divines who surrounded and followed Luther, were shying away from the Latin-language Vulgate version of the Bible official in the Catholic Church. Lutheran challengers found delight in the Fourth Gospel of St. John because it was Hellenic rather than Roman in spirit and language, because it gave details the other three gospels omitted, and because it was written mainly to appeal to Gentile readers beyond Israel.^(33a)

Philip Schwarzert (1497-1560), a Professor of Greek and learned editor of Luther's translation of the New Testament, was so enamored of the Fourth Gospel and of all things Greek, that he even Hellenized his own family name to Melancton, which is a Greek rendition of the German meaning "black earth".⁽³⁴⁾ The Founding Fathers of St. John's evangelical church in Covington were apparently following an old German Protestant tradition when they dedicated their church to the Beloved Disciple who at the Last Supper "was lying close to the breast of Jesus" (John 13:23).

TO WHAT FORM OF AMERICAN PROTESTANTISM ASSIMILATED?

After more than a quarter century of independent existence, the people of St. John's in Covington threw in their lot with

the oldest and at the same time the most radical American Protestant denomination: the Congregational Church. The first Congregational church in America was founded in 1620 by the Pilgrim Fathers, whom King James I has hounded out of England because they recognized no higher authority over the congregation before God, would have no bishops, and were not willing to pray out of the Anglican Book of Common Prayer. These early American Congregationalists were descendants of the sixteenth-century English "Brownists", whom the dissenting Anglican clergyman Robert Browne (1550-1633)(35) had gathered around himself in Norwich during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. Gradually the Brownists split from the Anglican Church of London, much as the Lutherans and the Calvinists had seceded from the Catholic Church of Rome. They stood left of the Puritans in Reformation England both in their views regarding church governance and in the matter of "Confessions" promulgated by ecclesiastical establishments. The Brownists recognized no bishops, presbyteries or synods as higher authority because they felt that they were in direct communication with God and had no need of intermediaries. The Anglicans had bishops; the Calvinist Puritans followed the leadership of presbyters and synods. The latter were moving toward liturgical formalism at the time, which prompted the Puritan John Milton's bitter outburst: "New presbyters are but old priests!" Nor were the Brownists-Congregationalists willing to adhere to dogmas by hewing either to the Anglican Thirty-nine Articles (1563)(36) or to the Presbyterians' Westminster Confession (1645-1647).(37) Members of Brownist congregations rated low socially in Elizabethan and Jacobean England. In one of his comedies, (Winter's Tale, III.2.34), Shakespeare referred to them contemptuously and snobbishly. But in New England, the social lepers of Old English struck deep roots, became opulent, rose in society, and became founders of innumerable churches and institutions of higher learning, among them Harvard and Oberlin Colleges. The insistence on freedom of conscience and on the search for the truth struck a deep chord in the hearts of the Protestant immigrants emerging from traditional German denominationalism into a welter of American Protestant main-and sub-streams.

The adherence of St. John's of Covington to the Congregational Church of America was not only a marriage of true minds, but also one of convenience. Through the Congregational Church it was relatively simple to find well-trained ministers, and the congregations could retain its property rights to real estate, to boot. The common will to remain autonomous, non-dogmatic Protestant churches made for a harmonious coexistence within the fold of the Congregational Church. But when in 1923 the latter decided to join with the Evangelical Reformed Church, St. John's of Covington discovered that its thirst for an intransigent, proprietary status was unquenchable. It decided to continue alone, as an independent Congregational church. The church banner on display in the sanctuary symbolized the essence of the church: the Dove of the Holy Spirit fluttering over the church steeple under the all-seeing eye of God, with a miniature Mayflower approaching from the distance. Robert Browne would have approved of the symbolism!

WHY TO COVINGTON?

Covington, Kentucky and Cincinnati, Ohio are riparian twin cities facing each other across the Ohio River, like

Minneapolis, and St. Paul across the Mississippi in Minnesota, or Washington, D.C. and Arlington, Virginia across the Potomac. By the eighteen-sixties, Cincinnati had the reputation in Germany of a hospitable German-speaking overseas population center.(38) By the late eighties, the Queen City of the West was fondly thought of by many Germans as a place where both the defeated liberals of the 1848-49 revolutions and the Catholics fleeing Bismark's kulturkampf had found new homes. Of the estimated 1890 population of 400,000, fifty-seven percent was German,(39) mostly Catholic. The Catholic majority showed itself in the ratio of churches to population. The national average at that time was one Protestant church for every 438 persons; in Cincinnati at that time, there was one Protestant church only for every 2,195 inhabitants.(40) Of the 57% German majority, only 1.9% were of Saxon origin.(41) The Saxons were strongly Protestant. They never forgot that Luther was one of them! They tended to be distinct among German immigrants and formed a small elite.

Cincinnati offered good employment prospects. An enticing 1886 catalogue of the city's business firms had 277 closely-printed pages.(42) Among the industrial and commercial establishments listed were many with inviting German names: Dietz, Hornhorst, Hoer-Morgan, Mosler, Weber, and scores of others. Added to these enticements was the fact that many immigrant relatives and friends from Saxony and Thuringia were already in Cincinnati, employees of several of its business establishments.

Covington, across the river, was more bucolic than Cincinnati on the north shore, more of a garden city. Life was cheaper; in fact, its western suburb bore the tell-tale name Economy.(43) The environment was more rural; houses had small yards and gardens behind them, where vegetables could be raised to help feed large families, as in pre-industrial old Germany. During the late eighties, arriving German immigrants began spilling over from Cincinnati to Covington in search of a more home-like lifestyle.

Chamber of Commerce-type promotional publications about Cincinnati and its environs were reaching the East Coast, and perhaps even Germany, (44) during the closing years of the nineteenth century. In one of these promotional books, Covington is described as a town destined to become the first commercial city of Kentucky. Drawings portray Madison Avenue, both from the Pike and Lake Street angles, with three-story buildings (some of which still stand); with electric wires strung overhead; and with scant traffic, consisting of horse-drawn carriages, buggies, and decorously-dressed pedestrians. The 1891 observer had this to say about the developing urban scene greeting his eyes:

"The city today is one buzz of busy industry, and its numerous establishments comprise tobacco and cigar factories, iron-mills, distilleries, glass-works, silk-works, and almost all the industrial activities which are usually found in a thriving commercial city. Its principal buildings are the City Hall, the United States Courthouse, the High School, the Odd Fellows' Hall, the Hospital of St. Elizabeth, the Benedictine Priory of St. Josephs, the Benedictine Nunnery of St. Walburga, and a number of handsome churches, school and synagogues. The streets are wide and filled with many fine and prosperous stores, and as a residential suburb, many of the citizens of Cincinnati give it a preference and are continually erecting fine

dwelling there. Backed by the Western Hills, it is beautifully situated and well sheltered. It is supplied with water by water-works under the Holly-system, which was introduced in 1871 and has proved very efficient. It may not be generally known that the principal streets of Covington running from the Ohio River were also laid out as to present the appearance of a prolongation or continuation of those of Cincinnati. Electric car communication has recently been established, which is a great boon to both cities, and has already given Covington an additional impetus.”(45)

An earlier promotional publication paints Covington in glowing colors, like a little earthly paradise: “It is the second city in the State, a beautiful place, containing a population of nearly 35,000, the home of many Cincinnatians. center for a large portion of the State of Kentucky.”(46)

Even if the newcomers from Saxony and Thuringia had not read these inviting texts, they could not fail hearing from other Germans such idyllic oral descriptions once they were temporarily settled in Cincinnati. In the Founding Fathers' minds the Ohio became a Rubicon, a historic river that had to be crossed!

HOW DID THEY COME TO COVINGTON?

Up to the end of the nineteenth century there were three principal routes of westward movement from the eastern seaboard to Kentucky. The earliest road of trekking led from Virginia to the West, through the Cumberland Gap in the Alleghenies. This was the route the Scotch-Irish migrants took in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Most of these settlers didn't get far from the mountains. They built cabins in the hills and hollows, and became progenitors of the sometimes feuding hillbillies. After the Civil War the industrial lure of the North drew some of the hillfolk north to and beyond the Ohio River. The second route of migrations was fluvial, in flatboats downstream the broad Ohio through West Virginia, skirting Kentucky, toward the mighty Mississippi. Many of the pioneers took this route, among them some of the Pennsylvania Dutch and members of a German-speaking religious sect, the Dunkards.(47) The third principal route opened up between 1851 and 1886, when the railroad reached Cincinnati from the East.(48) By the eighties masses of German immigrants were taking this route.

The great ships from Bremen and Hamburg discharged their passengers at the docks of New York. From there people arriving for permanent residence were taken to the celebrated immigration center at Ellis Island in the harbor. Once cleared, they were ferried back to Manhattan, where they usually embarked on overnight river boats up the Hudson, going as far as Albany. At Albany they would transfer to a slow train leaving for Buffalo, on the eastern tip of Lake Erie. Large lake steamers were plying between Buffalo and Cleveland, along the southern shore of the lake. If they arrived in Cleveland after 1886, they could board a train on the New York, Pennsylvania and Chicago Line,(49) (later the Cincinnati, Washington, and Baltimore Railroad, (the B & O), which in twelve hours, after many stops across Ohio, would speed them to the city of Cincinnati, on the north bank of the Ohio River, facing Covington.(50) For the immigrants it was the end of the trip.

SOME CASE HISTORIES

Vater Schilling (as his descendants affectionately still

call him today) was born in the town of Suhl in the Thuringian Forest, and was working in Cincinnati in the early eighteenth-eighties as a gun- and locksmith. He roomed in the city's Mohawk district, sending all the money he could save home to his wife and five small daughters in Suhl. One wintry day in 1882 he received word, quite unexpectedly, from the great immigration reception center, Ellis Island, in New York Harbor, that Mutter Schilling and his children had been landed there and were waiting for him to bail them out. Vater Schilling was stunned. He thought his family was still in Thuringia. He had just sent travel money to Suhl so that the family could join him in Cincinnati, but Mutter was impatient. She was lonely for her husband, the children for their father; in desperation the mother borrowed money from her brother, and the six of them embarked on an oceangoing ship in a German port. Both Vater and Mutter were without funds. The family somehow managed to get from New York to Cincinnati, where Vater's kind-hearted landlady gave the whole family shelter and fed them in the boarding house, temporarily.

Mutter Schilling looked forward toward spring longingly, for the snow and ice that covered the backyard of the boarding-house to melt. She was planning to plant a small vegetable garden to help feed the family. Alas, when the thaw came, the backyard turned out to be not a plot of cultivable soil but a canal! At least the weather was turning warm. Mother and children could go for walks in the neighborhood to explore their new hometown. On one of these walks, they discovered mustard greens growing wild streetside. The six of them started picking and gathering it; soon they had enough for the children to go peddling the condiment door-to-door. Good days lay ahead! On one of their gleanings trips Mutter Schilling found lying in the street a small German-language book, with the title Hilfe in der Not (“Help in Need”). She took the find and the title as a good omen and indeed it was. Vater Schilling continued working hard at his trade. Mutter Schilling had a lot of get-up and go. She started knitting and crocheting laces, gloves, and scarves. The girls went from door-to-door selling them. Soon they had enough money to pack up and move across the river to Covington, where life was cheaper, work was easy to find for Vater, and there was more room to play for the children, who kept on coming. Three more girls were born between 1882 and 1886. Mutter looked around and found a large old house to rent on Amsterdam Road in Covington. It belonged to St. John's Roman Catholic Church in Kenton County. The priest was kind to the Schillings and, after a few years, sold them the house, letting them pay as they could.

There was a grocery store on the street side of the old house and a small vegetable patch behind it. The five German-born girls, grown up by now, married one by one. The sons-in-law pooled their resources, and the closely-knit family bought the grocery store, horses, and wagons. They started buying produce from farmers to supplement their backyard yield. Soon the extended Schilling family was owner of a flourishing Vegetable and Fruit Delivery Service. The new generation made the business grow. The oldest girl, Emilie, and her husband Theodore Anhofer were already members of the new St. John's Protestant Evangelical Church -- “the German Church” -- down by the river on Highway Avenue. The youngest girl, Emma, was six years old when the new church was founded. When she grew up, she and her family probably also joined the church, and so did

a multitude of other Schilling offspring. Fifth-generation Schilling scions in 1992 still attend and support their ancestral church.(51)

Fritz (ultimately Fred) Wolf, an ambitious young man from the Saxon town of Heinrichs, was working in Cincinnati as a machinist in the early nineteen-hundreds. On leaving the Heimat, he left behind his sweetheart Marta Popp, in the neighboring town of Albrechts. Fred's boat fare to come to America was advanced by Emilie, the oldest Schilling daughter, and her husband Theodore Anhofer. Soon Fred Wolf had saved enough to repay his sponsors and even to send for his fiancée Marta Popp to get on a boat and join him in America. Marta came. She and Fred were married in St. John's Congregational Church by the river. Aunt Emilie and Uncle Theodore took in, sheltered, and fed the young couple. The Wolfs lived with the Anhofers until they could set aside enough money to rent and furnish their own apartment in Covington. As time went on, they prospered, so that they could send for Fred's brother and for Marta's sister Elsa to come from Germany to join them. Before long, Elsa married a Schilling grandson. Year went by. All the eight Schilling daughters passed on, and so eventually did Fred Wolf, in the nineteen-eighties. Marta, long a grand and great-grandmother, rarely misses a Sunday morning service in St. John's Church.(52)

Robert Uhlig was born in the Saxon capital Dresden in the year 1855, and was working in Cincinnati as a baker in the mid-eighteen-eighties. He met a Swabian girl, by the name of Anna Diegel, born in the city of Stuttgart in the Black Forest in 1860. The two were married in 1886 in Cincinnati, and became parents of five boys and three girls. Robert Uhlig had to work hard in the bakery to support his wife and eight children. He was a proud man. When Anna started taking in wash to help out financially, she didn't dare tell her husband and kept on doing it on the sly, when he was away from the house. But Robert found out, and made his wife return every stitch of laundry still unwashed. He put his foot down and declared: "I will provide for my family myself!" His descendants still quote the famous saying today.

The second Uhlig boy, Edward, married a German girl named Alma Miller in 1914. They eventually joined St. John's Church in Covington. Edward passed on, but in the nineteen-eighties the minister looking out from the pulpit could see four female generations of St. John's congregations sitting in a row in the back pews: great-grandmother Alma Uhlig, grandmother Ruth Bell, mother Sandra Gadd, and great-granddaughter Stephanie Gadd. With Alma gone, Ruth, Sandra, and Stephanie are still sitting Sunday mornings in the old Uhlig pews.(53)

The story of the extended Geimeier family exemplifies the melting-pot fusibility of St. John's ethnic core with German and non-German, Protestant and non-Protestant population elements pre-existing in Kentucky. The Geimeiers originated in Langenpriesing, a small town ten miles northeast of Munich in Catholic Bavaria, and were present in central Kentucky as early as 1820. They came probably through the Cumberland Gap from Virginia shortly after the Revolution. They were originally in the cigar-making confectioner business, but eventually moved into the machine-tool industry. They lived through hard times during the turbulent early days of the Commonwealth and must have engaged in violent scraps with their neighbors because, according to tradition, they were told by a Governor to "leave Kentucky or die!" Some of them did so (these emigrants'

descendants still live in neighboring Indiana), following in the footsteps of such illustrious ex-Kentuckians as Abraham Lincoln and Daniel Boone. In the early eighteen-sixties a George Geimeier fought in the Civil War as a soldier of the Union Army. Helen Geimeier, the present matriarch of the extended family, bore the British maiden name Brewer (possibly an Anglicization of "Breuer"). Her grandfather Peter James DeLisle was a lineal descendant of Rouget DeLisle (1760-1863), the French army officer who composed the French national anthem La Marseillaise. Tom, one of Harry and Helen Geimeier's sons is a physician who practices in Maryland. When he visits his parents with his non-German wife and adopted Korean daughter, he worships in his ancestral St. John's Church. The Geimeiers were drawn into the St. John's orbit shortly after the founding of the congregation.(54)

For one-hundred years St. John's never lacked a direct, patrilineal Schwindt descendant. Members bearing that name have continued through Founder Christian's son Robert Harrison, through his grandson Robert Earl, through his great-granddaughter Mrs. Dan Dilts, nee Judi Schwindt. Through three generations the Schwindts were meatcutters. The two, matrilineal fifth-generation Schwindt descendants (sons of Mr. and Mrs. Dan Dilts), are entering the professions. Bob Dilts, the elder, has graduated from DePauw University and is currently at the University of Kentucky, Lexington, Law School. He drew distinction to himself by writing a theme in Sunday School: "Heaven is a Condition, Not a Place". Tom, the younger Dilts son, is a student at Centre College in Danville, Kentucky, and will probably enter Medical School in Kentucky when he graduates.(55)

THE FLOCK OF THE HERITAGE.....

Other than the Schwindt family name, none of the 1992 surnames listed in the most recent St. John's Church Directory goes back to the 1892 Founders' patronymics. German family names, however, are still conspicuous in 1992.

The family names in 1892 - Barkhau, Bluemlein, Bremerkamp, Dietz, Freiermuth, Hischemiller, Hugentobler, Kurtuum, Moser, Steinhoff, Winter, Zoble - have all disappeared. The late nineteen-eighties Directory contains - among a majority of non-German surnames - such family names as Allender, Anhofer, Dwertman, Ehrman, Einhaus, Geimeier, Hartmann, Haupt, Hoffman, Miller, Mueller, Reibling, Weghorn, and Windhorn. How did the old German names disappear?

A probable explanation of the phenomenon is that during a century in the multi-national environment of the New World, the congregation - sociologically speaking - changed from an endogamous, patrilineal (in-marrying, male-line descended) group to an exogamous, matrilineal (out-marrying, female-line descended) community. To put it into plain English: in this social group, daughters brought husbands and children into their fathers' church, generation after generation. The still-German names of the descendants, and the non-German patronymics of the later joiners, also suggests that exogamy (out-marrying) must have taken place in concentrically widening circles. Daughters of Saxon Protestant fathers married non-Saxon German Protestant husbands. Daughters of such mixed marriages went beyond the German pale and found themselves non-German mates. Such a societal trend over a hundred years could explain the presence of English, Scotch, Greek, and even Hindu

names in the late-twentieth century *Directory*.

An additional reason for the melting-pot characteristics of the modern church may be a topographically induced change over a century from an ethnic to a neighborhood church. In the old country, people used to walk or ride past dozens of Protestant churches until they arrived at the edifice of their own ancestral denomination. Lutherans went to Lutheran churches; Calvinists to Calvinist temples. Even on moving from one town to another in the same European country, family worship, christening, weddings, and funerals continued in the church of the denomination with which the family generational identified. In American, the immigrants found, people felt less bound by tradition and descent to choose their places of worship. To boot, distances were greater and convenience more demanding. A Protestant family resident in an American city, regardless of its denominational provenance, was likely to join the nearest available Protestant congregation rather than travel across town to the hereditary church. With the constant influx of outsiders into modernizing Covington, St. John's reputation as a "German church" gradually, but not totally, blurred. It has constantly tended to become more historical than contemporary.

Today (1992) St. John's of Covington is a multi-ethnic but still a uni-racial church. It is white, not because of exclusiveness, but probably due to the fact that Covington's percentage of blacks is very low. One hardly sees a black worshiper in other Covington churches, either. No black membership applications or transfer requests have been received by St. John's during the first century of its existence. Recent conversations with church members reveal stronger class-solidarity than race-consciousness. When the Reverend Jesse Jackson, an African-American, sought the presidential nomination in 1988, some blue-collar St. John's congregationalists declared their readiness to vote for him rather than for some of the white contenders.

In 1992, St. John's remains a predominately blue-collar church, although not without a sprinkling of professional (physicians, lawyers, teachers) members. It is interesting to note also, that, as far as we know, all the Founding Fathers were employees. The modern membership includes several employers, managers, and other administrative business personnel.

St. John's of Covington has survived its first century

probably because its people were not only devoted, but also level-headed. Texts of sermons preached stress the first of all commandments given by the Lord: Love God not only with your hearts and souls but also with your minds! (Mark 12:30)(56) Using minds, as well as hearts and souls, in the course of religious experience, helped the congregation steer clear of all kinds of extremism, secular and religious, that raised warning heads in the general area during its continued existence. Not too far south of Covington, a religious community of Shakers died out early in the century because its members espoused lay celibacy and went to the grave one by one without leaving progeny to continue the community. In the neighboring state of Indiana the utopian commune, New Harmony, folded up because its members were taught by their own experience the lesson subjects of the Soviet empire learned only in our latter days: that communism is unworkable. The stridently tempting televangelists of the nineteen-eighties could make no inroads, either, in St. John's, perhaps because in the Adult Bible School the scriptural figures of corrupt Simon Magus and of other servitors of Mammon were projected into modern times as horrifying examples. Texts of sermons also contain warnings against a selective use of Biblical texts to find scriptural justification for preconceived notions. For example, the oft-quoted call to beat swords into plowshares after a war (Isaiah 2:4) is soberly balanced in the sermons against the counsel that, in times of threatened assault, plowshares should be beaten into swords (Joel 3:10).

Similarly, parallel with Jesus's command to attacking Peter to put up the sword (John 18:11), the Master's admonition to the disciples to go out and buy weapons when expecting assault (Luke 22:36) is mentioned.(57) All the foregoing, plus their sober Saxon genes, may have kept the men and women of St. John's from lapsing into mindless religiosity.

And so ends the brief but question-searching history of St. John's Congregational Church during the first century of its existence, an unknown chapter from an open book, now - we hope - no longer unknown to present and future posterity.

Leslie C. Tihany
Pastor Emeritus(58)

FOOTNOTES

Abbreviations:

CHS/A Cincinnati Historical Society Archives

GAC/Blegen: German-Americana Collection, Blegen Library of the University of Cincinnati

J/A: St. John's Congregational Archives

KCPL/A: Kenton County (Kentucky) Public Library Archives

(1) Ranke, Leopold von, *Zur Kritik Neuerer Geschichtschreiber*, Leipzig und Berlin, 1824; Eduard Fueter, *Geschichte der Neuren Historiographie*, Munchen und Berlin, 1911.

(2) St. John's Church Congregational, *Seventy-fifth Anniversary: 1892-1967* (Covington, 1967) pp. 2-3.

(3) CHS/A, No. ZP9463, Boxes 12, 13, and 14: *Peebles Every Month*, December 1891, (A price list with Index to 1891 prices), p.238.

(4) For the formative world events of the eighteen-eighties and nineties see the chronologies in Langer, William L., *An Encyclopedia of World History*, Boston, 1922; Williams, Neville, *Chronology of the Modern World*, New York, 1967; and Grun, Bernard, *The Timetables of History*, New York, 1975.

(5) A streetcar fare in Cincinnati at the turn of the century was 5 cents. The City Council debated complaints

- that the fare was excessive as compared to the 3 cent fare in neighboring Indianapolis. See Gross, Charles Frederick, Cincinnati The Queen City (Cincinnati, 1912), vol. I, p.352.
- (6) St. John's Congregational Church, Ninetieth Anniversary (Covington, 1982), p.4.
- (7) Ibid.
- (8) Ibid.
- (9) Ibid.
- (10) Ibid.
- (11) St. John's Church, Seventy-fifth Anniversary, p.2.
- (12) Ibid., p.3.
- (13) Ibid., p.2.
- (14) Brugman, Karl, Kurze Vergleichende Grammatik, (Berlin und Leipzig, 1933), pp.13-16; Bloomfield, Leonard, Language, (New York, 1933), p.58.
- (15) See Smith, Preserved, The Age of the Reformation (New York, 1920), p.81; Bainton, Roland
- (16) For a brief history of the Saxons and of Saxony see The Columbia Encyclopedia (New York and London, 1963), pp. 1897-1898.
- (17) Julius Caesar and Tacitus.
- (18) Beust, Friedrich Ferdinand, Memoirs, London, 1887. Summary in Columbia Encyclopedia (New York and London, 1963), p. 211.
- (19) Schramm, Joseph, "Le Banat et Les Banatais," Mondes et Cultures, XXXIX.3 (Paris, 1979), p. 449.
- (20) U. S. Department of Commerce: Bureau of the Census, Historial Statistics of the United States, Part I (Washington, D.C., 1975), pp. 105-106.
- (21) Ibid.
- (22) Langer, Encyclopedia, pp. 738, 778.
- (22a) Pflanze, Otto, Bismarck (Princeton, 1991), vol. II, passim.
- (23) Langer, op.cit. 738 ff.
- (24) Op.cit. p. 79.
- (25) Op.cit. p. 738.
- (26) Op.cit. p. 739.
- (27) Ibid.
- (28) U. S. Department of Commerce: Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States (Washington, D.C., 1990), p. 7.
- (29) Hillerbrand, op.cit., p. 221.
- (30) Columbia Encyclopedia (1963), p. 928.
- (31) The German word evangelische was originally used in Germany as a synonym of Lutheran, with the denotation "gospel-based," as opposed to katholische, which denoted the Church of Rome. The German word implies a once-revolutionary rejection of post-scriptural doctrinal accretions. In modern British-American usage the word evangelical has assumed a conservative connotation additional to "gospel-based." It has come to refer to a body of beliefs held by Protestant Christians nostalgic for "that old-time religion," to confessional attitudes hostile to modernism in religion and its syndromes: rationalism, intellectualism, the "higher criticism" of Biblical texts, in particular to the theory of evolution and to scientific empiricism. As a rule, evangelicals back temperance movements and creationism, but stop short of the Fundamentalists' avowal of scriptural literalism and of the inerrancy of the Bible. See Marty, Martin E. and R. S. Appleby (eds.), Fundamentalism Observed, Chicago, 1991.
- (32) CHS/A: MSS No. qD263, Box II Folder 35. The Johannes Kirche was Unitarian from 1814 to 1822, when it became an "Evangelical Lutheran Reformed" Church. Vercouteren, Karl J., The German Churches of Covington (Covington, Kentucky, 1977, p. 13; GAC, Blegen Library, University of Cincinnati "German Genealogical Resources in Cincinnati" (a pamphlet of 9 pages, no date), p. 5.
- (33) Vercouteren, Karl J., The German Churches of Covington (Covington, Kentucky, 1977, p. 13; GAC Blegen Library, University of Cincinnati "German Genealogical Resources in Cincinnati" (a pamphlet of 9 pages, no date), p. 5.
- (33a) Barclay, William, The Gospel of St. John (Philadelphia, 1975), pp. 7-9.
- (34) For a brief biography see Columbia Encyclopedia (1963), p. 1345.
- (35) Smith, Preserved, op.cit. p. 345.
- (36) Op.cit. p. 329.
- (37) Columbia Encyclopedia (1963), p. 508.
- (38) CHS: Bergheim, Max, Cincinnati in Wort und Bild, Cincinnati, 1888. For the recruiting effect of kinfolk's impressions of American, see W. D. Kämpfhoefner (ed.), German Immigrants Write Home, Ithaca, NY, 1991.
- (39) GAC, Blegen Library, University of Cincinnati, "German Genealogical Resources in Cincinnati" (a pamphlet of 9 pages, no date), p. 7.
- (40) Marty, Martin E., Protestantism in the United States (New York and London, 1986), p. 158.
- (41) GAC, Blegen Library, University of Cincinnati (pamphlet cited above), p. 2.

- (42)CHS: Leading Manufacturers and Merchants of Cincinnati and Environs, New York, 1886.
- (43)Oral History: Communications from 1992 church members; St. John's Congregational, Ninetieth Anniversary (1982), p. 4.
- (44)CHS: Bergheim, Max, Cincinnati in Wort und Bild, Cincinnati, 1888.
- (45)KCPL: Illustrated Cincinnati, New York, 1891; J/A: Ninetieth Anniversary (1982), p. 4; Andrew Morrison, The Industries of Cincinnati (Cincinnati, 1886), p. 214 ff; and C. F. Goss, Cincinnati the Queen City (Cincinnati, 1912), II, pp. 327-376.
- (46)KCPL: Home Building: A Reliable Book of Facts, Covington, 1875.
- (47)GAC, Blegen Collection, University of Cincinnati (pamphlet cited above), p. 1.
- (48)On the early development of the railroad network in Ohio see CHS: Metzman, Gustav, Cincinnati and Ohio: Their Early Railroads, New York, 1948 and Hessler, Sherry O. Patterns of Transport and Urban Growth in the Miami Valley, Ohio (an unpublished Master's Thesis submitted to Johns Hopkins University), Baltimore, Maryland, 1961, esp. pp. 76-98. See also in CHS/A No. 40874: Rail Roads in Ohio (no date); No. R152 Rail Roads and Rail Road Stations, vol. II, CI-CZ; The Commissioner of Railroads and Telegraphs: Report to the Governor of Ohio, Columbus, 1905. The salient facts are that the first train left Cincinnati in 1846 (see RRs and RR Stations cited above); that Cincinnati, Columbus, and Cleveland were first linked by railroad in 1851 (Metzman, op.cit., p. 10); and that by 1886, or somewhat earlier, the line between Cincinnati and Cleveland was owned by the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago, and St. Louis Railway Company (Commissioner's Report to Governor cited above, p. 59). Metzman, op.cit. p. 21 states the CCC & St.L aka "The Big Four," was the fourth RR line in Ohio. Among the half dozen railroad ticket offices open in Cincinnati in 1886, Williams' Cincinnati Directory for that year, vol. I, p. 46, lists the "New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio Railroad" offices but not the "CCC and St.L."
- (49)Metzman, op.cit., p. 21.
- (50)Op.cit., p. 19.
- (51)Oral History: Communication of Mrs. Marguerite Hoffman, nee Schmidt and of Miss Lisette Anhofer, descendants of Vater Schilling.
- (52)Oral History: Communication of Mrs. Marta Wolf, nee Popp.
- (53)Oral History: Communication of Mrs. Ruth Bell, nee Uhlig.
- (54)Oral History: Communication of Mrs. Helen Geimeier, nee Brewer.
- (55)Oral History: Communication of Mrs. Judi Dilts, nee Schwindt.
- (56)J/A: Sermons.
- (57)Ibid.
- (58)Leslie C. Tihany retired from the U. S. Foreign Service as Consul General in 1972. Since then he has worked as Distinguished Professor of the Humanities (now Emeritus) at Northern Kentucky University (1972-1976); as Adjunct Professor of History at the University of Cincinnati (1976-), and as Minister (now Emeritus) of St. John's Congregational Church, Covington, Kentucky (1973-1987). He is currently a Visiting Professor at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes of the University of Paris (the Sorbonne).

Just the Facts . . .

The Sewing Circle was organized in 1924.

The combined number of years that Ethel Allender, Anne Miller and Jim Tibbs have been teaching Sunday School at St. John's is one-hundred fifty-six.

During a severe electrical storm on July 1, 1911, lightning struck the steeple of the church, completely demolishing it.

The Church is located at the corner of Highway and David Streets.

The first Church organist was the Reverent Carl F. O. Schmidt.

It was decided by the congregation on July 28, 1918, that the English language be used exclusively instead of the German.

In the year 1923, the Church was remodeled at a cost of about \$8,000.00.

The Choir was organized by Mr. Charles Brockman in 1893.

During the past century, only six Church Council Presidents have been female.

St. John's first organ was a gift from St. Paul's Evangelical Protestant Church of Covington, Kentucky in the year 1900.

There are ten elected members of Church Council.

A Junior Choir was organized in 1970.

There are twenty pews in the church.

When organized in 1892, the Sunday School had an official violinist, Mr. H. Bluemlein.

Kyle Rhodes represents the sixth consecutive generation of the Winter family to attend St. John's.

In 1923, The First German Evangelical Protestant St. John's Church of West Covington, Kentucky became affiliated with the Congregational Church and became St. John's Evangelical Protestant Congregational Church of Covington, Kentucky.

The first services were held at the Union M.E. Church (now Epworth M.E. Church) for several months and later at Romanowitz Hall until the completion of the church in October of 1892.

The Church annex was completed in 1960.

The first officers of the Church were Chris Schwindt, President; Andrew Winter, Vice-President; Conrad Dietz, Secretary; and George W. Bluemlein, Treasurer.

100th Anniversary Committee

James O. Tibbs, Chairman

Joy Allender, Treasurer

Don Allender, Lisette Anhofer, Henry Babbs, Hildegard Babbs, Barbara Begg, Ruth Bell, Joyce Crabtree, Christine Einhaus, Ron Einhaus, Sandra Gadd, Katherine Hartmann, Les Kidwell, Anne Miller, Joe Miller, Tom Reibling, Keith Rhodes, Norma Rhodes, Dennis Soard

Many persons have participated in many ways to make this book possible. Requests for aid brought photographs, newspaper articles, copies of documents, records, and an abundance of memorabilia.

I would like to acknowledge those who have assisted my own editorial work, especially my fellow committee members. Anne Miller contributed greatly to the content of material, and she, Joyce Crabtree, and Sandra Gadd worked diligently with me in the process of assembling copy and selecting photographs. The fine work of the 75th Anniversary Book Committee served as an excellent source for further research. Ron Einhaus collected and sorted photos. Rob Donahue designed the cover and assisted with the layout. Back cover drawing was done by Jeff Smith. Reverend Jack and Ruth Johnson assisted with proofreading. Current group photography was provided by Bill Graham of Sanders Photography. Other photos courtesy of members and friends of St. John's. You know who you are, and the pictorial sections of this book would not have been possible without your help. We appreciate the help and patience of the entire anniversary committee.

Articles were written and/or researched by Anne Miller, Jim Tibbs, Dennis Soard, Hildegard Babbs, Rev. Jack Johnson, Ruth Bell, Norma Rhodes, Lisette Anhofer, and Evelyn Dwertman.

Reverend Leslie Jihany converted a complex historical background text into a church history which is not only factual and interesting, but very readable. We are immensely grateful to him for this record which will remain a valued chronicle for all generations to come.

We wish to express our gratitude to Jim Tibbs, for his never-failing support, assistance, and assurance that this book would become a reality.

To all those who have contributed, and especially those whose names are not mentioned, this committee offers sincere thanks.

100th Anniversary Book Committee

Barbara Begg, Chairman

Joyce Crabtree

Sandra Gadd

Anne Miller