

History of Cold Spring

By Charles E. Gray, PhD
Cold Spring Councilman

Remnants of the history of Cold Spring are present throughout the city.

On December 6, 1921, a fire destroyed one of the areas most famous structures—the old **‘Coldsprings’ Seminary**. Built in the 1840’s, it was one of the few brick schoolhouses in this section of the country. Prior to the Civil War, it was used strictly for religious and educational purposes. Many of Northern Kentucky’s most famous and brilliant men were educated in that school. Many noted public officials spoke at special meetings here, including several governors and U.S. Senators, as well as Abraham Lincoln and Ulysses S. Grant.

It was later the home of the Walnut Hills Academy.

At the time of the fire the building was a part of the Campbell County School System, including for a time the Cold Spring High School.

A new building was erected in 1922 on the same ground. Above the main entry of the present building is the inscription, “1922 Cold Spring School.” The current building was built and dedicated the one year following the 1921 loss by fire of the old pre Civil War structure.

“COLDSPRINGS”

In 1883, most of what is now Campbell County was identified as the “Coldsprings Precinct.” There are many springs in this area. One spring, still flowing 365 days each year, can be seen in a very unusual location. On Cedar Point street, approximately 100 yards from Locust Point, if you look closely through a drainage grate on the street curb, there is a small, steady stream of water coming from a four inch pipe. The developer, apparently recognizing the futility of trying to cap off a natural spring, directed its flow into the storm water drainage system.

Another spring is located behind the Ameristop Food Mart Offices at 3955 Alexandria Pike, adjacent to St. Joseph Catholic Church. At one time, this area was located in a pasture and the spring provided water for a farmer’s stock. Water is usually there year round. You can see the cattails from Winters Lane.

One of the most common publicly used springs was that behind the AmeriStop Food Mart at 4140 Alexandria Pike. Only the foundation rock walls remain. The structure was built over a spring to provide a cold storage for the milk from a dairy farm on the land at that time. For the convenience of area residents, a dipper was hanging nearby for those who wanted a cold drink of water. “The water must have been pure,” states Charlie Bertsch, a life long resident. “After all, I am 93 years old.” Quite an endorsement of the purity of the Cold Spring.

Oh yes, there is another amusing story. It is about a Dalmatian named “Ross.” But I am out of space now. That will have to wait until next time.

New Cities: First Highland Heights and then Cold Spring.

During the winter of 1926-27, a number of citizens residing in the Cold Spring district of Campbell County, Kentucky met at the residence of Lee P. Reekers on Renshaw Road to discuss the matter of impassable roads and ... to remedy the situation. ... It was decided ... to incorporate a city of the sixth class under the laws of the Commonwealth of Kentucky. In order to become a city, the population had to be 125 or more. At the time there were only 124 people, but one family was expecting a baby. The town leaders waited in anticipation for the baby to arrive, bringing the population up to 125. The City of Highland Heights was created ... on June 25, 1927. [Quoted from "Highland Heights Civic Center Dedication," October 29, 1978]

In 1941, Cold Spring citizenry numbered 159 when incorporated on March 18. Boundary lines appeared simply as a square on the map, ½ mile on all sides. At the approximate center of the square was a farmhouse and behind it, a functional spring and spring house. The AmeriStop Food Mart sits on that location now at 4140 Alexandria Pike. The northern boundary was Chapman Lane. The southern boundary, one half mile south, was just beyond of the Old East Alexandria Pike and Route 27, at the Ripple Creek Road exit.

The first seat of government was in the firehouse on Chapman Lane. In 1967, the city purchased for \$33,000 a house and 14 acres of land at 29 East Alexandria Pike from Thomas Ross, across from what is now the Cline Elementary School. The farmhouse was replaced in 1979 with a new brick municipal building. The next move, in 1991, was to its present location, the former facilities of Holly Hill Children's Home.