

Discovered after Article was written: Post office called Queen City, Ky. Established in Rowan County April 11, 1878. Wm. Fowles, Postmaster. Closed May 25, 1882.

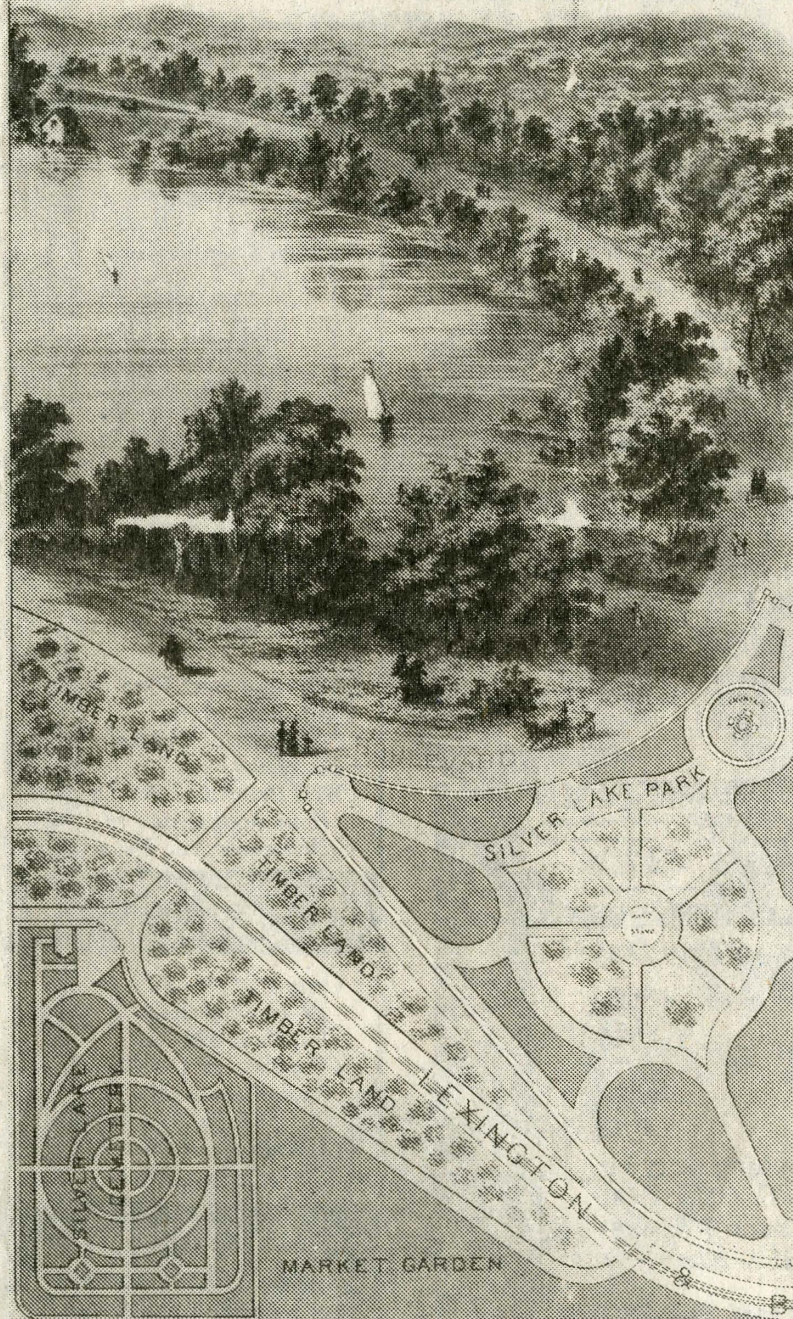
'Queen City' - Rowan County 1875

J.W. SEWELL - BREWITT CO. - EDWOOD CINN. PRESIDENT

State of Kentucky, Rowan County.

This is to certify that the Plat of Queen City, as made out by the "Queen City Land and Swindling Association" is duly filed in this office, and that the title to the lands of said Company is good, as shown by my official records. Given under my hand and seal.

JAS. W. JOHNSON
Clerk and Recorder of Rowan Co., Ky.
Morehead, Nov. 28th, 1875.



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This is a plat of Queen City, Rowan County. The illustrated description of Queen City showed a symmetrically laid out city with 200 ft. wide boulevards and avenues. Streets were 80 ft. to 100 ft. wide, with such names as Grand Blvd., Lake Avenue, and Park Avenue. Many streets were named after past U.S. Presidents. This plat appears courtesy of Jack Ellis and the Morehead State University's Camden-Carroll Library.

Great Kentucky Land Swindle tempts residents

By Jack Ellis

(Editor's Note: Dr. Jack Ellis is a Morehead resident who has done extensive research on the history of Morehead and Rowan County.)

So you thought Cincinnati was known as the Queen City? But almost 125 years ago when the county was barely 20 years old, plans were made by a "shady" real estate developer to build Queen City, Rowan County.

You say you never heard of it? Well, don't worry, not many people in Rowan County, and few people in Kentucky, ever heard about it either — but it once was printed on a map as one of the most promising cities in Kentucky.

It was registered on an elegant plat in the Rowan County Court Clerk's Office in 1875. It was a very official looking document which said:

*State of Kentucky
S.S.*

County of Rowan

This is to certify that the plat of Queen City, as made out by the "Queen City Land and Building Association" is duly filed in this office, and that the title of the lands of said Company is good as shown by my official records. Given under my hands and seal,

James W. Johnson

Clerk and Recorder of

Rowan County, Kentucky

Morehead, Nov. 8, 1875.

While this appeared very legal and factual, it was the basis of one of the biggest, boldest, and most audacious land swindle in the state, and maybe, even the nation. It certainly rivaled many of the real estate "scams" in Florida that came 50 years later where innocent people bought worthless swamp land.

"Slick Sewell's Shady Scam Swindles"

The Queen City Land and Building Association was the brain child of J.W. Sewell. Mr. Sewell was a native of Breathitt County, who moved to Covington. On his way to Covington, he came through Rowan County, and the seeds of the scheme were sown. After getting settled in Covington, he had no trouble getting financial backing and formed an Association with Mr. E. Wood of Cincinnati as president. He then returned to Rowan County and purchased 1,800 acres of land four and one-half miles west of Morehead along the road to Olympia, in Bath County.

The Association then published an elegantly engraved plat of the city which included 368 blocks, each with 24 lots to the block. Each lot was 25 ft. by

100 ft. and sold for \$4.50 to \$6.00 per lot.

The illustrated description of Queen City showed a symmetrically laid out city with 200 ft. wide boulevards and avenues. Streets were 80 ft. to 100 ft. wide, with such names as Grand Blvd., Lake Avenue, and Park Avenue. Many streets were named after past U.S. Presidents.

A Perfectly Planned City

This handsomely laid out city showed beautiful churches with lofty spires, large school buildings with modern equipment. A lovely park was located in the center of town with no continuous fountains. Marble status of Cupid and Aphrodite all certainly captured the admiration of the reader.

For the music lover there was a music bandstand and gazebo for outdoor concerts. For the water lover, there was a large lake called Silver Lake. The brochure showed a wide road around the lake side with people on horseback, in buggies, and strolling. There were several sailboats on the placid lake, with happy children in sailor suits sitting on their decks. The shrubbery, trees and grass reflected the natural beauty of the surrounding countryside.

Market Garden was the commercial district where business would flourish. The Lexington and Big Sandy Railroad showed two tracks adjoining this idyllic setting, where trains would bring the latest merchandise and tourists to Queen City.

Everything anyone would want in life was elegantly presented in their brochure. But they did not even forget death because there on the edge of the city is beautiful Silver Lake Cemetery, arranged in circular format with three streets in an ever widening circle of grave sites. There was also a chapel for funeral services.

Everything anyone would want in life, and in death, was planned for in Queen City, Rowan County, Kentucky. According to the *Louisville Courier Journal*. With this strong sales pitch - Hundreds of lots were bought by people from all over the country. But in those days it was strictly a paper city.

Swindle Discovered - Buyer Beware

James Appleby, a wealthy hotel owner in Montreal, got tired of the Canadian winters, and decided to move south. He traded his hotel for one block in Queen City plus several thousand acres in the surrounding country. After he received the deed from the Queen City Land and Building Association, he

decided to go examine his purchase.

Arriving on the train at Mt. Sterling, he was informed that was as far east as the train ran. Mr. Appleby rented a horse and buggy, and began asking where Queen City was. No one, of course, knew about it, until he met someone who told him it was in Rowan County, 40 miles east. So Mr. Appleby came to Morehead and finally found "Queen City."

There were no railroads, churches, houses, parks, or streets. He sued in Rowan Circuit Court to recover his hotel, but died before the case was settled.

Many others taken in by the swindle joined in the suit, but others fearing it was not worth the effort took their loss and went home. Some of the deeds were recorded in Rowan County, and each had a miniature copy of the brochure attached to the deed.

The Deception Deepens

This was not the end of the Queen City Land swindle, because although Mr. Sewell

owned the land, he sold it in the name of his sister, Abbie Grigsby. Therefore all the deeds for the land purchased and even recorded were worthless. In fact the Queen City Land and Building Association was worthless, and did not even own the land. Abbie Grigsby owned the land. There were many claims against the land. Suits and counter suits resulted. But on Jan. 3, 1879, A.J. McKenzie, Sheriff of Rowan County, sold the land at auction at the courthouse steps.

Warren M. Alderson (great-great grandfather of this writer) purchased all the land in 10 different tracts. He bought a total of 2,387 acres, but no price was ever listed on a deed in those days. (I sure would like to know how much my great-great grandfather paid for that land.)

The Bad Guy Gets His

This was not the end of "Slick" Sewell's shady scam swindles. He disappeared for several years, but later reappeared in Indiana and had the same type of scam going again. But this time one of the men he swindled hunted him

down and put a forty-four bullet in his brain ending his life and works.

His death, and the purchase of the land by Warren M. Alderson,

marked the end of Queen City, Rowan County. But if the dream had been legitimate who knows what Rowan County would like today.


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\$1000 Rebate

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| 1995 THUNDERBIRD 40th Anniversary | |
| V8, Leather, S/Roof..... | \$12,950 |
| 1996 FORD EXPLORER XLT | |
| 4x4, One Owner..... | \$19,950 |
| 1995 OLDS CUTLASS | |
| One Owner, 6 Cyl., Leather..... | \$10,950 |
| 1997 DODGE CARAVAN | |
| 6 Cyl., Auto, Air, Teal..... | \$16,950 |
| 1997 DODGE INDY TRUCK | |
| V8 (2 To Choose From)..... | \$16,950 |

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Morehead Theatre Guild: Past, present and future

"There's no business like show business ..." and the Morehead Theatre Guild has been singing this tune for nine years.

Since 1989 when a group of Morehead residents decided they wanted to put together an organization that, as Bill Layne said in the first newsletter, would produce "the best quality of theatre within our resources and abilities," many things have happened for the Guild.

The Rowan County Medical Society and Morehead/Rowan County Arts Council awarded grants to pay for that first show.

A board of directors including Randy Kinsler, Sandra Scott, Clyde James, Sandy Clayton, William J. Layne, Edward Figins and Wilma Grote, was established and a season was announced.

In the spring of 1990, the Guild opened with Mary Chase's "Harvey" and the community

responded with enthusiasm. Since that time, the group has produced such shows as "The Odd Couple," "Steel Magnolias," "Nunsense I & II," and "The Sound of Music."

"Our Town" opened in 1997, directed by Ted Pack, and Kyle McCormick and Samantha Davis portraying George and Emily. In the summer, "The Sisters Rosensweig" opened in Kibby Theatre. Paula Dailey, Jo Smith and Judy Krug portrayed the eccentric women of the title.

As the season drew to a close, Pam Mace directed the life of Helen Keller, the blind, deaf mute. Alice Weaver had the title role. "A Slaying in the Speakeasy," a murder mystery dinner theatre, was the Guild's first major fund raiser for its building fund.

The Guild has three goals to help it achieve new success, said President Tavia Fleck. Educat-

ing, Creating and Establishing: educating the Guild to be a business oriented cohesive group, creating an image that conveys its mission, logo and history, and establishing and building a customer relationship with the community.

The mission of the Guild, Fleck said, is to provide opportunities for area residents to encounter quality theatrical art and to develop and encourage the technical and creative skills necessary for participation in and appreciation for the performing arts.

In November 1997, at the annual meeting, this statement was voted on by the general members and placed in the by-laws of the Guild: We want you to join in the fun and celebration with us. After all, you are the reason we do theatre!

The slogan for the 1998-99 season is Catch us in the Act.

The season will be announced in a spring brochure and membership letters, which should arrive in homes and businesses by the opening of the Guild's spring play.

The Guild is realigning its season and will now open with a summer show and end with a show in the spring of the following year. In May, the Guild will present "Thurber Carnival" by American humorist James Thurber. An award-winning car-

toonist and author of several books for children as well as adults, Thurber is best known for stories that focus on the frustrations of average men faced with the pressures of everyday life.

The play is presented in a series of short plays. "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty" addresses the life of a hen-pecked husband who escapes from his dreary life into the heroic world of his imagination. "The Night The

Bed Fell" illustrates an actual event that occurred in Thurber's childhood, where an ordinary occurrence is exaggerated out of proportion with hilarious results.

Auditions for "A Thurber Carnival" will be held at City Hall on Monday, March 2 and Tuesday, March 3 at 6 p.m.

For details on this production or the Guild, contact Fleck at 780-0845.

ARH admissions, discharges

Recent Appalachian Regional Healthcare releases were:

Feb. 16
Kayla Poe, Hazel Green; admitted.
Daisy Haney, West Liberty; discharged.
Elzie Keeton, West Liberty; discharged.

Feb. 17
Opal Keeton, Salyersville; admitted.
Elizabeth Lacy, West Liberty; admitted.
Palmer Francis, Salyersville; discharged.
Noah Jenkins, Salyersville; discharged.
Shirley T. Johnson, Hazel Green; discharged.
Earl Smith, West Liberty; discharged.

Feb. 18
Charlie Perkins, West Liberty; discharged.

Kimberly Smith, West Liberty; discharged.

Feb. 19
Kayla Poe, Hazel Green; discharged.

Feb. 20
Norma Gilliam, West Liberty; admitted.
Mary Hall, Wellington; admitted.
Lenvil Holbrook, West Liberty; admitted.
Lizzie Lindon, Campton; admitted.
Elizabeth Lacy, West Liberty; discharged.
Opal Keeton, Salyersville; discharged.

Feb. 21
Norma Gilliam, West Liberty; discharged.
Mary Hall, Wellington; discharged.

Feb. 22
Norma Gilliam, West Liberty; admitted.



Dr. Travis Lockhart, left, and Dr. Shirley Gish performed in "Harvey" in 1990, the first production of The Morehead Theatre Guild. The Guild is currently holding auditions for "A Thurber Carnival" on March 2 and March 3 at City Hall in Morehead.

Forum will feature Sen. Ford

A Tobacco Settlement Forum with U.S. Senator Wendell Ford as featured speaker will be held at 7 p.m. Friday, March 13, in the Crager Room, Adron Doran University Center on Morehead State University's campus.

The Licking River Agricultural University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service, is sponsoring the forum.

Issues to be addressed include sentiment in Washington, D.C., toward the tobacco industry and specifically the tobacco farmer; progress being

farmers and rural communities; the LEAF ACT in comparison to other plans.

Also sharing comments with the tobacco farmers participating will be Kelly White, field staff from U.S. Senator Mitch McConnell's office and represen-

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