

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF
Louisville

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Muhammad Ali Blvd.), its home for some thirty years. Subsequent downtown quarters were in the HEYBURN BUILDING and Theater Square, both at Fourth and Broadway. In 1990 the Arts Club moved to the WATER TOWER ON RIVER RD., home of the LOUISVILLE VISUAL ART ASSOCIATION. Club members have always met on Sunday nights for a meal and a program such as a Gilbert and Sullivan operetta or a POETRY reading. For many years, programs were held every Sunday. With decreased membership in recent years, dinner meetings are held only on the second and fourth Sundays of each month.

In 1998 there were forty-two members in the Arts Club of Louisville. Although the decline in membership may be attributable to the growth of professional arts organizations in the city, from theater to dance, the Arts Club continues to be a viable force in Louisville's arts community.

See *The Arts Club*, 50th anniversary booklet (Louisville 1970); "The Arts Club Bulletin," May 1964 and Dec. 1968; "Bluegrass Painting Exhibition" booklet, 1982.

Gregg Swem

ARTS IN LOUISVILLE, THE SOCIETY FOR THE. The Society for the Arts was founded and chartered in September 1955 as a nonprofit organization for the promotion and stimulation of interest and participation in the various arts in Louisville. The founders were several first-chair solo players under the direction of Leo Zimmerman, a young painter recently returned to Louisville from five years in Paris. He had heard that Louisville was experiencing an "arts renaissance." Although burgeoning modestly, the renaissance seemed to him somewhat less than it might be encouraged to become.

A master plan for a stimulation of interest in Louisville's arts evolved. It was based on the publication of an informative and educational arts magazine with the subsequent organization of its subscribers into an association of active arts proselytizers. With the cooperation of numerous local arts organizations and arts-affiliated merchants offering special considerations to the membership at large, a varied group of some three thousand arts enthusiasts was enlisted within the first two years. An art gallery was opened in a historic carriage house near downtown Louisville. An art school for adults was established. A Linotype machine, foundry type, and a printing press were acquired.

An illustrated arts publication, the thirty-two-page monthly magazine of the arts, *Arts in Louisville Magazine*, began publication in October 1955 and was printed and distributed nationally through April 1958. Published were 237 major arts essays. Many local, regional, and national artists and writers contributed the many perceptive articles that appeared alongside editorials, arts calendars, previews, reviews, letters, and so forth. Being an all-volunteer mission, the magazine, later retitled the

Louisvillian, was self-supporting through its advertising income and the modest membership dues.

The summer of 1958 saw the monthly magazine's replacement by the *Gazette of the Arts in Louisville*, a fortnightly six-page, tabloid-size newspaper that blazoned the arts news through 1959. Up-to-the-minute arts-publicizing graphic flyers were mailed to all members on a weekly basis after 1959.

December 1957 brought the opportunity to lease the historic LOUISVILLE ATHLETIC CLUB building at Zane St. and Garvin Pl. Built in 1888 as Louisville's most fashionable club, it was a perfect setting for the society's purposes. There was space for a 132-seat intimate theater in which the "Arts in Louisville Players" would produce a smattering of exciting theater. Two spacious art galleries were lavished with continuing panoplies of the art creation of regional painters and sculptors.

The vast second floor, originally the gymnasium, was to become "The Great Hall." It was remodeled and equipped for seating and serving as many as 250 members at dinner. Evenings saw a variety of enterprises. There were local chamber-music nights, and numerous local groups played exciting weekend jazz. On occasion, big-name jazz weekends were staged with celebrities the likes of Dizzy Gillespie, Roy Eldridge, Coleman Hawkins, Ramsey Lewis, and Cannonball Adderley.

There were local poets' poetry-reading nights, in-the-round theater of the absurd, and occasional local ballet demonstrations. Then, there was the wine-cellar bar, down under, which featured folksingers, small music ensembles, and bunnies.

The society, neither sought nor accepted handouts from government, business, or individuals. On principle, it paid its own way successfully through April 1963, when it was voluntarily closed down, citing staff cultural exhaustion.

The giant poplar-wood-frame building burned to the ground in May 1969.

Leo W. Zimmerman

ASBURY CHAPEL. Asbury Chapel is one of Louisville's oldest METHODIST churches. Founded in 1845, it was named for prominent Methodist missionary Francis Asbury. Originally at the corner of Fourth and Green (Liberty) Streets, the church began as an AFRICAN AMERICAN congregation under the auspices of the Methodist Episcopal Church South. A second and entirely distinct congregation named Asbury Chapel, also associated with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, worshiped at a one-room brick structure on Ohio St. from 1845 until 1936.

By the late 1840s, under the leadership of Rev. James Harper, the congregation had seceded from the Southern Methodists, affiliated themselves with the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME), and moved to a new loca-

tion at Ninth and Walnut (Muhammad Ali Blvd.) Streets. Harper was soon transferred to New Orleans by the AME hierarchy, and the church's leadership passed to Rev. Hiram R. Revels, who later moved to Mississippi and became the first African American to serve in the United States Senate.

Denominational membership, however, remained controversial. In 1851 a faction of the church, fearing the loss of church autonomy and property to the AME hierarchy, attempted to gain an independent status. Spearheading the effort was former pastor James Harper, who had since been dismissed from the AME denomination in New Orleans and had returned to Louisville to resume control of his old congregation. That dispute was taken to the Kentucky Court of Appeals, which decided in *Harper v. Straus* (1853) that the church facilities remained under the control of Revels, the recognized AME pastor.

Again in 1939 the church faced a similar controversy when a party under the leadership of Rev. W.E. Spillman attempted to withdraw Asbury Chapel from the AME denomination in order to assert greater control in the appointment of pastors. In *Clay v. Crawford* (1944), the Kentucky Court of Appeals reaffirmed the 1853 decision, granting the AME hierarchy the right to control church property and affairs (the dissenting faction later founded the Spillman Memorial Church). Since 1939 the church has been at its present site at 1801 W Chestnut St. In 1990 the chapel suffered damage in what police believed to be a racially motivated arson attempt.

See "Clay v. Crawford," *Reports of Civil and Criminal Cases Decided by the Court of Appeals of Kentucky*, vol. 298 (Lexington 1944); Ben Monroe, ed., "Harper v. Straus," *Reports of Cases at Common Law and in Equity Decided in the Court of Appeals of Kentucky*, vol. 14 (Frankfort 1854); *Courier-Journal*, Nov. 20, 1996.

Timothy L. Wood

ASHLAND INC. Ashland Inc. was founded in 1924 as Ashland Refining Co., the refining subsidiary of the Swiss Oil Corp. of Lexington, Kentucky. Ashland founder Paul G. Blazer was hired by Swiss Oil to find a refinery that would be able to process Swiss's Kentucky crude oil production. Blazer located a thousand-barrel-per-day refinery near Catlettsburg in eastern Kentucky and recommended its purchase to Swiss. After Swiss purchased the facility, Blazer was installed as general manager. After a few years of improving operations at the Catlettsburg refinery, Ashland Refining Co. purchased a second refinery along with an extensive Kentucky pipeline network. In 1936 Swiss merged into Ashland Refining Co., forming Ashland Oil and Refining Co. and offering stock to the public for the first time.

In 1998 Ashland merged its petroleum-refining and marketing operations with those of the USX-Marathon Group, creating a joint ven-