

# Ludlow Express



Issue No. 11

SUMMER EDITION

July 2024

## Ludlow Urbanism and Latta Row

by Patrick Snadon

In the 1870s, Cincinnati built its own railroad, the "Cincinnati Southern," through Ludlow to Chattanooga. The new railroad located its repair and manufacturing shops in Ludlow. This caused a rapid boom in Ludlow's population and building activities. In 1870, before the arrival of the railway, Ludlow was a bucolic "garden suburb" with a population of 817. By 1890, the population had increased over three times, to 2,469.

This late 19th-century boom caused the construction of many new homes and commercial buildings that give central Ludlow its "Victorian" character. Before the arrival of the railway, Ludlow contained villas and cottages scattered among garden-like grounds. The pressure for new construction caused some of Ludlow's "pre-railway families" to subdivide and develop the grounds, or "estates" surrounding their earlier houses. These older occupants tended to create "family clusters" of newer houses, often intended to accommodate their children and sometimes to produce rental income. Three prominent families who developed their properties in this way were the Burnses, the Bentleys, and the Lattas. Michael Burns and his wife Ann, in the 1870s-80s, built a series of freestanding Victorian townhouses on the south side of Elm St., in the 400 block, for themselves and their children. A block closer to downtown, Matthew Bentley and his wife Mary accumulated property at the corner of Elm and Butler Streets where they built their own house (now the

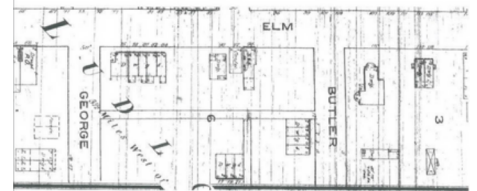
Ronald B. Jones Funeral Home) and adjacent houses for their children along Elm and Butler. The Bentleys built both single and double houses; all have similar canted bay windows which the Bentleys evidently favored for light and views.

Among Ludlow's most interesting pre-railroad families were the Lattas. The first generation consisted of Alexander Bonner Latta (1821-65) and his wife Elizabeth (d. 1917). An inventor and industrialist, Latta created and sold the world's first steam-powered fire engine to Cincinnati in 1853. Although born in Ohio, Latta's Italian-sounding name may have made him uncomfortable in an 1850s Cincinnati that experienced anti-Italian and anti-Catholic riots. Probably after 1853, Latta purchased approximately four acres in Ludlow, bounded by Elm, Euclid, and Butler streets on the south, east, and west, and by the remains of the Elmwood Hall estate on the north. The original Latta House was an older structure with rambling additions.\* In 1871, the four-acre Latta parcel was subdivided into three lots fronting on Elm St., designated to the three surviving Latta children. Mrs. Latta occupied the family house to the north, separated from the three lots by the new Latta Ave.

In 1884-85, only two Latta children survived: Griffin Taylor Latta (c. 1855-1930) and Luella M. Latta (c. 1863-1889). They developed the site. G. T. Latta built small rows of houses facing Butler St. and the new Latta Ave. (the latter survived).

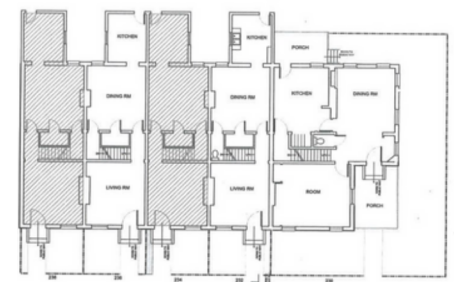
On her lot at the corner of Elm and

Euclid (then George St.), Luella Latta built five attached houses, Ludlow's only, true urban "row."



Detail of 1886 Sanborn Insurance Map, showing Latta Row

The row now occupies Nos. 230-238 Elm St. The four western houses are smaller, with three downstairs and two upstairs rooms and with stair halls in the middle.



Latta Row; Reconstruction of Elm St elevation

Luella Latta probably intended the fifth house, No. 230, at the corner of Elm and Euclid, which is larger than the other four, as her own residence, while renting the four smaller houses for income. In building Latta Row, Luella Latta (perhaps with assistance from her brother, G. T. Latta), assumed the role of businesswoman-developer, unusual for a female in the Victorian era. Latta Row is thus distinguished as Ludlow's major residential row, built by a woman.

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## The Reeves Family's Storied History



by Julie Wartman

Clarence Price "C.P." Reeves started the family business in 1915 as a fruit peddler from Constance, KY, selling produce door-to-door throughout Ludlow and Bromley with a horse-drawn wagon. C.P. traveled to Petersburg and Cincinnati to purchase the produce he would sell. Eventually, he acquired a Model-T truck, which transformed the business. In the time it took to make one trip to Cincinnati in the horse-drawn wagon, C.P. was able to make three or four trips to Petersburg to buy cantaloupes and watermelons. After World War II, C.P.'s three sons, Charles "Burr", Robert "Sid" and Jim "Goo-Goo" started working for their father. That's when the business grew to enable the purchase of two additional trucks. This allowed them to add eggs and bottles of Coca Cola to the traveling inventory.

The Reeves family worked all year round, in good weather, as well as snow, sleet and rain. They would park in various neighborhoods, set up their goods in and around the trucks, and make their presence known by yelling out what they had for sale that day. People would come out of their homes from all around to make their purchases.

The impact of World War II was felt far and wide, resulting in changes in how the Reeves did business. As

many women joined the workforce during and following the war, fewer people were home during the day. Peddling through residential neighborhoods transitioned to opening a retail store.

C.P., who owned a farm with his wife in Hebron, started growing Christmas trees in the 1960's. His sons started selling them at their retail location in Ludlow at 549 Elm St.



In the mid 1950's Reeves' Dairy Cheer restaurant was opened in Ludlow. With great success at this location, a 2nd restaurant in Florence opened. The name was changed to Reeves Drive-In Restaurants. In 1966, a new building was constructed to house the Florence restaurant. Throughout the 1960s, each Reeves brother managed a separate part of the business. Burr managed the produce, Sid managed the Florence restaurant, and Jim managed the Ludlow restaurant. Some long-time Ludlow residents may remember the original menu which included favorites like the Big Burr, the Steak Hoagie, the Footlong Hot Dog, and the Ham Deluxe...just to name a few. The restaurants thrived until the 1990's. Charles W. "Burr" Reeves was a second-generation businessman. When he showed up at high school

with burrs in his hair, he received the nickname Burrhead which was later shortened to Burr. When Burr retired at the age of 82, his nephew Steve Webb managed the market in Ludlow.



*Dairy Cheer, Florence, KY, 1958, nkyviews.com*

Operated now by 3rd generation Greg Reeves and family, upgrades have been made and new items added. Folks from all around the tri-state travel to Reeves for produce, jellies, jams and pickles, along with Amish cheeses and bakery products. Seasonal flowers are the most popular items sold here with local produce being the second most popular. Outdoor flowers are abundantly available in spring and summer. The annual Christmas tree sales start in late November, including many adorable novelties inside the store, which make for great gifts. Taking a walk through the rows of pine scented Christmas trees will certainly leave you in the Holiday spirit!

Today, 109 years after the horse and wagon carried food to area neighborhoods, Reeves Market remains where it began - at 549 Elm Street. Reeves Market is a Ludlow institution that we hope will continue to serve its residents well for years to come. ■

### ? Did you know...?

There is a Ludlow in: California, Colorado, Maryland, Illinois, Maine, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Missouri, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Vermont, as well as New Brunswick, Canada. There is a Ludlow Mountain in Vermont, and Ludlow Falls in Ohio. Preceding these Ludlows is the market town of Ludlow in Shropshire, England.



## Message from the Mayor

This November, voters will go to the polls with several important decisions to make. Obviously, the Presidential race is the one that is likely to garner the greatest headlines. For many of us, more impactful races occur at the state and local levels than the federal races that hold so much of our attention. With this in mind, I wanted to share with you my thoughts on Kentucky Constitutional Amendment 2 and why I believe it is detrimental to our children and community. Kentucky Constitutional Amendment 2, also referred to as the school voucher amendment, seeks to alter the state constitution to allow public school monies to follow students to non-public schools. It is presented as a means of allowing students and families choice in where they send their children based on their specific needs. I do not mind this thought process and advocate for students to have all of their needs met. I also believe that diverting greatly needed funds away from our public schools is not the way to make this happen. Kentucky Constitutional Amendment 2, presented as a means of providing opportunity to students, falls well short of providing opportunities for

all students. I have no doubt that, if and when I would like to enroll two of my children in any school, public or otherwise, they would be accepted. The issue that I have is that my other child, born with severe learning disabilities, would almost certainly be denied. Non-public schools are under no obligation to accept all students. The schools that will benefit from Amendment 2 have the ability to cherry pick which students they want to accept. If this is truly an issue of school choice and providing opportunities for ALL students, then why isn't the amendment written in a way that ensures that ALL students are actually provided those opportunities? I have frequently shared that I believe that Ludlow Independent Schools are the heartbeat of our community. When my wife and I were deciding where we wanted to raise our family, we intentionally sought out what Ludlow had to offer. The financial burden that a school system like Ludlow would potentially take on if Amendment 2 passes serves as a de facto burden to our entire community. Kentucky Constitutional Amendment 2 is only on the ballot because previous attempts to guide

public monies to non-public schools have been found to be unconstitutional. These are attempts to change the fabric of our state. And what does the research say that we will receive:

- A diversion of critical resources towards schools that do not face the same accountability measures as public schools.
- The subsidizing of current non-public school students who are not being provided with the new opportunities that advocate promise.
- Added expense to the state budget which, experienced in most states with similar allowances, are well above most projections and fiscal notes.
- Hits to small towns that rely heavily on the quality of their public schools like we do.
- Children like my own who are promised greater opportunities only to be left out while money leaves the school district that is required to accept them no matter the needs.

While at the polls this November, please consider voting no on Amendment 2 for the protection of ALL of our students and our community.

-Mayor Wright

## Historic Storehouse in Ludlow Railyard Takes on New Life

by Ruth Bamberger

After years of neglect, the lone remaining brick building in the Ludlow Railyard, the Storehouse, will be getting a new roof in the near future. The \$78,000 roofing project has now received \$50,000 in grants from the Ludlow Historic Society, the Josephine Ardery Foundation, other Foundations, and a generous private donor. The Museum Fundraising Committee anticipates the remaining amount to be forthcoming with other funding now in the works. A new roof will allow the interior work

to begin. Already, architectural plans have been drawn up for both the inside and exterior grounds. The facility will become the new home of the Heritage Museum and a center for programs and other events. With increased space the Museum will be able to expand its exhibitions; as currently numerous artifacts, maps, and other documents are in storage. The Storehouse has been designated an Architectural Landmark by Ludlow City Council. Completed in 1892 after a disastrous fire destroyed the railyard buildings, it was constructed of brick and stone in an Industrialized

Victorian style, and is unique in the Greater Cincinnati area. Most importantly, the Storehouse is a reminder of Ludlow's rich railroad history that made the city we know and see today. The Fundraising Committee strongly encourages contributions to the Storehouse project. Donations can be made through the website [www.ludlowheritagemuseum.com](http://www.ludlowheritagemuseum.com), or by mailing to P.O. Box 16192 Ludlow, KY 41016, or by stopping by the Museum during business hours (Saturdays 11 -3). ■

Continued from page 1

Latta Row is an urban row in miniature. Its walls are brick, its windows and doors topped by pressed metal hoods. The elaborate cornice is also of pressed metal, a Victorian industrial material. In the 20th century, the row gained unsympathetic additions. A fire in No. 230 (the corner house) resulted in the rebuilding of its roof and the loss of its original metal cornice, while first story additions accommodated an optometrist's office in front and a garage in back. At No. 232, a wooden addition for selling ice cream was built on the front. In 2017-18, the Ludlow Historic Society purchased No. 232 and restored it to its original appearance, including removing the later wooden addition and recreating the lost metal window and door hoods on the first story. The restoration (supervised by Joy Amann and Brenda Boone) won an award from the Cincinnati Preservation Association

and encouraged other owners in the row to repair and restore their houses. The improvements in Latta Row helped to ignite a revival of Elm Street. While attached row houses are an urban type, Luella Latta built the row on the grounds of her family's house, where their gardens had been. Some of the earlier "gardenesque" character of pre-railway Ludlow made its way into Latta Row. The smaller houses to the west (Nos. 232-238) have little garden courtyards in front, on Elm St. Behind, kitchen gardens ran to a rear alley. At the corner house, No. 230 (probably for Luella Latta herself), gardens originally surrounded the south, east, and north sides of the house (now partly filled in by later additions). Latta Row was thus an "urban row" set amidst gardens. Latta Row's original colors consisted of the natural dark red brick of the walls, with the pressed metal hoods and cornices painted in yellowish stone colors. This gave the

row great architectural consistency. The current owners, by contrast, have chosen individual colors for each house, giving the row more variety in character.



Latta Row (Nos 230-238), 2024

The form and history of Latta Row make it unique to Ludlow and important to Northern Kentucky.

*\*The Latta's son, Griffin Taylor Latta, took down the old family house in c. 1901 and rebuilt the unique, 12-sided Latta House that now stands on the corner of Butler and Latta Streets. ■*



## Community Calendar

### LUDLOW HISTORIC SOCIETY

4th Wednesdays • 6:30 PM

Ludlow Historic Society meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of every month in the basement of the City building.

### CITY COUNCIL

2nd & 4th Thursdays • 7:00 PM

City Council meetings are held on the second and fourth Thursday of every month in the City building. Open to the public.

### URBAN DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

3rd Thursdays • 7:00 PM

UDRB meetings are held on the third Thursday of every month in the City building and are open to public.

### HOTDOGS IN THE PARK

July 12, July 26 • 11 AM

Join us at Ludlow Memorial Park for free hot dogs and story time with The Kenton County Public Library. See City of Ludlow Facebook for more info.

### CARS AND COFFEE

July 14 • 9 AM - 12 PM • Ludlow City Plaza

Cars and Coffee is cruising on over to a new location starting July 14th. The Ludlow Heritage Museum is opening their doors during the event. So come check out some cool rides, drink some Ludlow Coffee, and take in some Ludlow history!

*Have an event you'd like included in the Ludlow Express Community Calendar? Email [ludlowhistoricsociety@gmail.com](mailto:ludlowhistoricsociety@gmail.com).*

### LIMBURGER FEST

July 27 • 3 PM - 9 PM

A family-friendly celebration of cheese and friendship with food, beer and fun for all at the historic Ludlow Vets on the river! Come feast on traditional Limburger sandwiches, grilled sausages, and a variety of local German-style beers, while enjoying scenic river views and family-friendly lawn games.

### SAVE THE DATE: HOLIDAY HOMES TOUR

Sat, Dec 14

Mark your calendars and save the date for our 2024 Holiday Home Tour! We're bringing it back after ten years and are so looking forward to gathering with our neighbor's next holiday season.

This issue of the **Ludlow Express** is brought to you by our friends...



  
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