



Does Your Ludlow House Have a Story? This one does...



223 Oak; © Robert Burge Photography, 2003

by Ruth Bamberger

Driving or walking down the 200 block of Oak St., one would not notice anything unusual. The Fire Department dominates the block; the houses vary in size and architecture, but nothing out of the ordinary. However, one house in that block- 233 Oak St., has an extraordinary history. It is a story of the heroism of a railroad engineer and a closely knit railroad community that Ludlow became in the era of the railroad boom following the Civil War. In 1869, the city of Cincinnati finalized a plan to build a rail route to Chattanooga, TN, opening up a new trade route to the South. Because the Ludlow family granted property easements for the construction, a bridge was built across the Ohio River into Ludlow, and the town became the site of the major

railyard for maintenance and supplies. Hundreds of workers, many German and Irish immigrants, moved to the town to work in the railyard. One such worker was Daniel Driscoll, an Irish-American immigrant, who was an engineer for the Cincinnati Southern Railway in the early 1880s. The Driscoll family numbered six children, all boys, ranging from three months to seventeen years. Driscoll's wife, Elizabeth, was an active volunteer with the Irish Catholic community. Driscoll's work schedule required him to be away from home for days at a stretch, followed by several days off. But as a favor to a fellow engineer (and with a poor safety record), Driscoll substituted for him soon after he arrived home with virtually no rest. On the route from Chattanooga back to Cincinnati, Driscoll encountered an oncoming train on the same track at the Versailles Pike Crossing, Lexington. Despite every effort to avoid a collision, the locomotive tumbled over an embankment and Driscoll was killed instantly. However, Driscoll's capable maneuvers with the engine prevented further loss of life to passengers and workers on the train. Tragically, Elizabeth was left a widow and the children with no father. Several months after the tragic accident, rail workers and the Southern Railway had a new house built for Elizabeth and her

Upcoming LHS Events

ANNUAL MEMBERS MEETING

Wed, Apr 22 • 7 PM • Second Sight

Join us for our annual member's meeting to celebrate a year full of accomplishments and plan for the coming year. Learn how to get more involved and vote for the new LHS Board Members.

FREE for LHS Members

GARDEN & BUSINESS WALK

Sat, Jun 20 • 10 AM - 2 PM

We have re-imagined our garden tour of years past as a Garden and Business walk, featuring 12 distinctive gardens in the neighborhood. Tickets on sale May 20th at preserveludlow.com

Tickets \$15

boys in 1883 as a tribute to Dan Driscoll. In her diary Elizabeth noted: "Tis a beautiful house with lots of room for us all....The men from the railroad said whenever one of the boys is ready to start working that they will have a place with the Southern if they want it.... The house is the answer to my prayers. I know Daniel had a hand in it, watching over us still...." This humble 143 year old house, recently renovated, is another keepsake of Ludlow's rich railroad stories. ■

Author's Note: *The complete account of the Driscoll family and Daniel Driscoll's work experience with the railroad is available in Northern Kentucky Heritage. Douglas Burge, "Twenty Minutes 'Til Daylight- An Account of a 19th Century Irish-American Hero", Vol.XII, No.1, Fall-Winter 2004*

Reintroducing... the Ludlow Garden Tour! Cultivating Community Roots: A Garden & Business Walk in Ludlow

This summer, the charm of Ludlow will be in full bloom as the Ludlow Historic Society invites residents and visitors alike to experience a day of inspiration, connection, and local pride.

The **Garden & Business Walk** will take place on **Saturday, June 20**, from **10 a.m. to 2 p.m.**, offering a unique opportunity to explore the heart of this vibrant river town. Featuring 12 distinctive gardens, the tour highlights the creativity and passion of Ludlow homeowners. From thoughtfully designed small-space gardens to expansive landscapes complete with in-ground pools, each stop offers something new to admire. Several vegetable gardens will also be beautifully showcased, demonstrating how residents are cultivating both beauty and sustainability in their own backyards. More than just a visual experience, the event is a chance to connect with neighbors. Homeowners will be on hand to share stories, gardening tips, and the inspiration behind their outdoor spaces—making this a welcoming and personal tour for guests of all interests. “Ludlow is a very strong community, and the historic society wants to share that,” says event organizer Joyce Nessler. “It’s been a long time since Ludlow has hosted a Garden Walk, and we’re hoping people will come spend the day in this quaint town.” In addition to the gardens, attendees are encouraged to stroll through Ludlow’s business district. Local



Event Poster includes artwork from Fruit, Home and Garden, August 1923

restaurants, bars, coffee shops, and even the town’s distillery will be open and ready to welcome visitors. Whether you’re stopping for lunch, enjoying a refreshing drink, or browsing unique shops, the day offers plenty of ways to support local businesses. Tickets are \$15, with online sales beginning May 20, 2026. We recommend purchasing in advance by visiting

www.preserveludlow.org. Day-of-event ticket sales and will call will be centrally located at the Ludlow City Building located at 51 Elm Street. The Garden & Business Walk will be held rain or shine, so come prepared to enjoy the day no matter the weather. Please note that all ticket sales are final. Mark your calendar and come see what makes Ludlow bloom—one garden at a time. ■

Message From the Mayor

Spring is here, and with it comes one of the best parts of living in Ludlow, our parks coming back to life! You'll start to see steady progress across our public spaces as we move into the warmer months. At Memorial Park, you'll see the completion of the ADA ramp near the steps at the memorial on Elm Street, improving access for everyone. Soon, picnic tables, charcoal grills, and bench swings will be installed, creating more ways to gather and enjoy the river view. Our focus is simple: clean, safe, and easy-to-enjoy spaces for everyone. Along the river, there's real momentum as we partner with Southbank Partners on The Riverwalk at Riverfront Commons. The next phase of the Riverwalk is nearing completion with concrete pads for benches and waste stations and additional site work, including grading and fencing, to take place in early April in coordination with project partners and the school. The finishing touches are also

being applied to the river stage, and events are beginning to fill the calendar, keep an eye out. The first event is planned for Saturday, May 16, featuring The Dublin Defense with Ludlow's own Tony Parsons. We're also looking forward to a community river cleanup on Sunday, April 19, organized by Matt Williams. Volunteers will meet at Second Sight Spirits at 12:00 p.m. Gloves and trash bags will be provided, and a waiver will be required to participate. It's a great way to get outside, give back, and take pride in our shared spaces. A special thank you to our Community Center and Events Coordinator, Jenny McMillan, for the hard work she's put into planning and building out this season's events. Her effort is helping bring new energy and opportunities for connection across the city. Of course, we also have our fireworks festival to look forward to again this year in late June, a tradition that always brings the community

together and is a highlight of the season. Small towns have soul. You see it in the way people show up, take care of what we have, and build something together. That's exactly what's happening here. This project is about more than infrastructure; it's about creating a place the community can use and take pride in. With the next phase of The Riverwalk nearing completion and a ribbon cutting on the horizon, Ludlow is getting closer to having a riverfront that reflects the strength and character of our city. This month is a great time to get outside and enjoy it. Whether it's a walk along the river, time in the park, or joining a community event, these small moments shape the kind of community we want to be. Ludlow has a lot to be proud of, and our parks and public spaces are a big part of that. I'm looking forward to seeing them filled with activity again this season. ■

*-Sarah Thompson, Mayor
City of Ludlow*

Ludlow in Bloom: Growing Community Pride Together

A new initiative is taking root in our city - **Ludlow in Bloom**, a community beautification program designed to enhance our shared spaces and strengthen civic pride. This effort brings together volunteers and city staff to care for the places we all enjoy, from green spaces to streetscapes, helping make Ludlow more vibrant and welcoming for everyone. Volunteers will assist with a variety of hands-on projects, including planting flowers, pulling weeds, spreading mulch, and maintaining public areas. It's a simple but powerful way to make a visible difference in our community. The truth is, the upkeep of a city isn't just the responsibility of city employees, it belongs to all of us. We all want Ludlow to thrive. We want our neighbors to feel proud of where they live, our local businesses to succeed, and visitors to leave with a great impression of our town. That kind of success starts with community involvement. ■

Get Involved

Ludlow in Bloom will meet on the second Wednesday of each month from 6:00-7:00 PM, the same day as Walk & Talk & Trash. The first gathering took place on April 8, meeting at the city building parking lot. Volunteers will focus on areas around the city building and along Elm Street. Participants are encouraged to bring their own gardening tools and gloves. We hope you'll join us as we work together to make Ludlow bloom.

JOHN HALL Brings Ludlow Historic Society into a New Era



The Ludlow Historic Society Board at John Hall's final meeting as Board President in February 2026. Pictured from left to right: Andy Corn, Ari Knight, Julie Wartman, Ruth Bamberger, Destiny Meyers, John Hall, Joyce Nessler, Julie Navarre. Not Pictured Nate Steeber.

By Ruth Bamberger

After five years as President of the Ludlow Historic Society, John Hall left his mark on the organization, the civic group in Ludlow committed to preserving the rich history and architectural character of the town. John and his partner moved to Ludlow's Historic District almost ten years ago from Eastern Kentucky. He had a keen interest in the Ashland area history where he grew up, and when settling in Ludlow, he learned that the Heritage Museum needed volunteers to move from its location in the old City Building to the front section of the Public Works Building. It was not long before the LHS snapped him up to become a member of its Board, and then advanced him to the presidency with strong Board support. John hit the ground full speed by bringing the website and social media up to date, which significantly raised the visibility of the organization in the region. He undertook the closing details of a house on Butler St., which the LHS restored exteriorly and then sold to a developer.

John urged the Board to structure more activities where the public could participate. This spawned the birth of trivia nights, interesting programs on Ludlow's baseball history, snippets of Ludlow life in the early days, walking tours, and even a bicycle tour featuring historic houses. The house Christmas tour was resurrected after a ten year hiatus, which drew more than 200 people. This coming June, the Historic Society is sponsoring a city Garden Tour. John also established working relationships with other likeminded groups in the area- very important for small organizations to share their resources. The bicycle historic ride, for example, drew riders from several communities who were familiar with KY 8, but knew little or nothing about the houses and families that lived in them. It was a big hit!

In March John accepted a position as Executive Director of Enrollment at Somerset Community College, but for now, is keeping his residence in Ludlow. We all wish him well in his new job. ■

Walk, Talk, & Trash 2026 Dates Announced

We're excited to share the 2026 Walk & Talk & Trash schedule! Join us as we come together to connect with neighbors, enjoy a walk, and help keep Ludlow clean.

When: Second Wednesday of each month

Time: 7:00–8:00 PM

Rain Date: The following Wednesday

Location: Varies, Check Facebook

Each month we'll choose a different area of Ludlow to meet, walk, and clean up together. Light refreshments will be provided!

Follow us on Facebook for updates on meeting locations and weather-related cancellations.

2026 Dates:

- April 8
- May 13
- June 10
- July 8
- August 12
- September 9
- October 14

For April's walk we will meet at the city building parking lot. We'll provide gloves, bags, grabbers and a snack.

Bring a friend, meet your neighbors, and help make a difference in our Community!

The goal is to focus on making your town worth loving.



RIVERFRONT COMMONS™

by Southbank Partners

Riverfront Commons is Northern Kentucky’s Riverfront District. An important element of the district is a 20-mile paved path, The Riverwalk, connecting eight cities into one world-class destination. In Ludlow, Phase 1 of The Riverwalk was completed several years ago connecting Adela Avenue to Lemker Field. This past fall, the City, School District, Southbank Partners, community leaders, and private donors broke ground on Phase 2 of The Riverwalk from

Adela Avenue to Hooper St. We are excited to see Phase 2 move forward and we anticipate a ribbon cutting soon in May to officially open this new section to the public! For the last two years we have worked diligently with the city to enhance Ludlow Memorial Park by upgrading the basketball courts, shelter buildings, and restroom/concession building. Memorial Park is another key aspect of the entire riverfront district within the city, and we are committed to ensuring it is a world-class gathering place.

Continued investments into quality of place, by both the City and private donors, are vital to realizing the full potential of this regional project and improving the overall quality of life. Both Southbank Partners and the City have been working diligently on the next phases of The Riverwalk – connecting to both Covington in the east and Bromley in the west. As Riverfront Commons and The Riverwalk move forward, we encourage the community to reach out to the City or Southbank Partners for updates and to visit the website:

www.TheFrontPorchoftheSouth.com

From the Desk of the LHS President

Being asked to step into the role of President of the Ludlow Historic Society is a responsibility that I am truly honored to be trusted with. This new adventure began with a desire to know more about the town I grew up in, a town that many outsiders tried to convince me was not a place to take pride in being from. What started as a surface level search on my own quickly made me realize just how much history there was to uncover, and I found myself wanting to know even more. After attending a Ludlow history trivia night in late 2023, and being in attendance at a monthly

meeting the board holds, I felt deeply drawn to be more involved. By March of 2024, I had been nominated and voted in as a board member and since then, I’ve been grateful to have been a part of bringing our history to life through events like the Holiday Home Tours the Ludlow Lagoon festival, and our “First Families of Ludlow” walking tours. What stands out to me most is how our shared history has a way of connecting us, not just to the past, but to each other.

As I step into this new role, my hope is to continue creating opportunities for our community to come together in impactful and meaningful ways, while also finding ways to invite younger generations into the story of Ludlow. I am incredibly thankful for the board members who have chosen to continue serving this year as I truly couldn’t imagine stepping into this

without them. We are looking forward to gathering with you at our Annual Members Meeting on April 22nd. It will be a time to connect, reflect on the past year, share what’s ahead, and welcome new ideas and faces into the Society. We are also currently looking to add a few new members to our board and will be holding a vote at the meeting. If you are interested, or know someone you would like to nominate, we would love to hear from you. Whether you’ve been involved for years or are just beginning to take an interest, we would love to have you join us. We look forward to honoring the history of Ludlow while also creating meaningful moments together that become part of its story moving forward. With appreciation for this community,

Destiny Meyer, President
Ludlow Historic Society



Show Your Support!

Work continues on The Storehouse, future home of the Ludlow Heritage Museum. Show your support by ordering a custom brick for the future sidewalk!
www.thatsmybrick.com/ISRAELLHS,



Community Calendar and Announcements

WALK AND TALK AND TRASH

Wed, Apr 15, May 13, Jun 10 • 6 PM

Join your neighbors in a clean-up effort! Check our Facebook page for meeting location, which will rotate.

KENTON COUNTY CLEAN UP DAY

Apr 24 & 25 • 8AM-4PM • Independence or Morning View

Free disposal of large unwanted items like appliances, furniture, mattresses, electronics, yard debris, etc. For all Kenton County residents, must show ID.

SECRET SOCIETY INDUCTION

Sun, Apr 26 • 4PM • Second Sight Spirits

Join us for our first ever members induction meeting. Get cool swag, try a secret drink, and receive your membership card.

LUDLOW CLEAN UP DAY

Sat, May 9 • 10A-3 PM • Ash & Traverse Streets

Free disposal of unwanted items such as yard debris, mattresses, furniture, and tires. For Ludlow Residents, must show ID.

CARS & COFFEE

Sun, May 3 • 9 AM - 12 PM • City Plaza

Cars & Coffee returns for the 2026 season! Typically held on the Second Sunday of each month, we're early this month in honor of Mother's Day.

LUDLOW HERITAGE MUSEUM FUNDRAISER

Sat, Jun 27th • 4PM - 8PM • Chipotle - Covington

Dine in or pick up dinner and share the flyer on our Facebook page. 25% of the sales will be donated to Ludlow Heritage Museum. Online orders use the code **CQ3HYPJ**

Have an event you'd like included in the Ludlow Express Community Calendar? Email ludlowhistoricsociety@gmail.com.

LUDLOW HISTORIC SOCIETY

4th Wednesdays • 6:30 PM

Ludlow Historic Society meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of every month in the lower level of the City building and are open to the public!

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 the public.

AVAILABLE FOR RENT

Community Center • 808 Elm St

Don't forget about the Ludlow Community Center for you upcoming events! Check out our Facebook page!

FACES AND PLACES PHOTO DRIVE

KCPL - Covington Branch

Donate your historical photos to the Local History and Genealogy Dept. at the Kenton Co. Public Library.

TRIVIA, VINYL NIGHTS

Thursdays • Second Sight Spirits

Spend your Thursday evenings at Second Sight for Trivia or Vinyl Nights, alternating weeks.



PRIMARY ELECTION

Tue, May 19 • 400 Linden Street

Ludlow residents have a new polling location for our upcoming Primary Election. Cast your ballots for various federal, state, and local races at Ludlow First Baptist Church.

This issue of the **Ludlow Express** is made possible by the continued support from our friends...



SOUTHBANK PARTNERS

southbankpartners.com • [@southbankpartners](https://twitter.com/southbankpartners)

Southbank Partners is a nonprofit regional economic development and place management organization serving a partnership of nine urban cities in Northern Kentucky. For almost 30 years, we have promoted and coordinated economic development for the creation of connected communities, vibrant riverfronts, and resilient downtowns by facilitating collaboration and bringing vision to reality.

The **Ludlow Express** is presented by the Ludlow Historic Society. Become a member today!

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Membership Options

Annual Individual \$25

Annual Family/
Household \$40

Lifetime Member \$200

Scan the QR code to visit our website and join LHS, make a donation to historic preservation, access back issues of the **Ludlow Express**, and more.

