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## The Encyclopedia of Louisville, Entry for "Wilson Wyatt".

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The Encyclopedia of Louisville, Entry for "Wilson Wyatt".

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# THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF Louisville

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(Hero of the Month) for recovery and rehabilitation from serious war injuries. Miller was wounded and badly injured by machine-gun fire near Remagen, Germany, in 1945. Twice hit in the head, he returned to normal life after three years of intensive rehabilitation. He is the son of Charlotte (Hoefler) and Edward M. Miller Sr. and was born April 4, 1917, in Louisville. Miller attended the UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE and was a General Electric marketing executive for twenty-eight years working in national ADVERTISING. He married Jean Culberson July 12, 1952; they have four children: Mark Louis, Douglas Edward, Gregory Owen, and Rebecca Ann.

See George H. Yater, *Two Hundred Years at the Falls of the Ohio* (Louisville 1987); Richard G. Stone, *Kentucky's Fighting Men 1851-1945* (Lexington 1982); Eric George, "Day of Infamy," *Louisville* 42 (Dec. 1991): 37-43.

Richard R. Bernier

**WORTHINGTON.** Worthington is a small community in eastern Jefferson County on Old Brownsboro Rd. (KY 22) between Chamberlain Ln. and Ballardsville Rd. Early settlers of the fertile farming land included the Barbour, Dorsey, and Chamberlain families, and Dabney Taylor, brother of ZACHARY TAYLOR. In addition there were African American families among the settlers of the area. In the 1870s the Louisville and Brownsboro Turnpike Rd. (KY 22) was paved with stones, and a toll gate was built at the intersection of Brownsboro and Ballardsville Roads.

POPULATION increase boosted traffic and created the need for a post office. When the post office was established in the 1870s, the local residents decided to name the community for one of its prominent citizens, Guy Worthington Dorsey. Soon after, the Pendleton brothers replaced the old Tarleton general store across the street from the toll house with a two-story brick building. The new structure housed a saloon and a grocery on the first floor and a community hall on the second floor. With a number of different proprietors over the years, Worthington Grocery kept its doors open into the 1960s.

In the early 1900s a drugstore and barber-shop were also located near this intersection. The local blacksmith shop, which was established around 1840 by William Henry Harrison Chamberlain, was relocated to the northeast corner of Brownsboro Rd. and Chamberlain Ln. in 1870. The Chamberlain family turned the establishment into an automotive garage and ran the business until 1969 when the building was razed. Carl Chamberlain, proprietor of the garage, was also the first fire chief of the Worthington Volunteer Fire Department, organized in 1943.

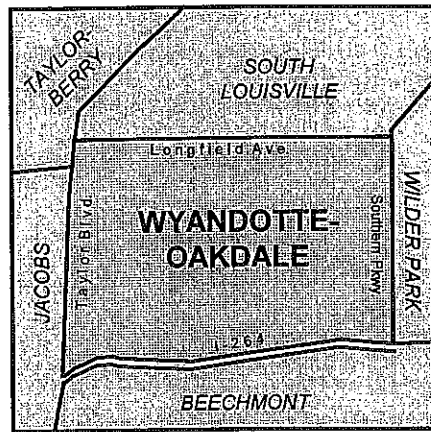
The Worthington School was built in 1915 (and razed in 1968) to replace the Rock Bridge School (later Worthington Colored School) on Ballardsville Rd. Henry Frank, a MIDDLETOWN

builder, constructed the building on land donated by John W. Netherton. Stone for the building was quarried and hauled by farmers in the community. The opening was marked by a procession of students from the old Rock Bridge School to the new school.

After the turn of the century, WORTHINGTON became a prime potato-growing area. About 1920, at the peak of the county's potato production, the Worthington Potato Growers Cooperative built a shed for processing the local farmers' abundant crop. After farmers dropped off their harvest, the potatoes were shipped to markets in St. Matthews, Cincinnati, or Indianapolis. As prices declined in the 1940s the potato industry faded. During this time wealthy individuals began building large homes on surrounding land. Residential developments continued to arise through the years, encouraged particularly after the opening of Interstate 71 in 1969, the completion of a nearby stretch of Interstate 265 in 1968, and the construction of the Ford truck plant. Outside of the Worthington Cemetery, few remnants of the once-thriving community survive.

See G.T. Bergmann, *Map of Jefferson County Kentucky* (Louisville 1858); *History of the Ohio Falls Cities and Their Counties* (Cleveland 1882); *Louisville Times*, Nov. 12, 1965; *Courier-Journal*, April 20, 1941, April 14, 1969.

Carol Brenner Tobe



**WYANDOTTE/OAKDALE.** Neighborhood south of CHURCHILL DOWNS bounded in modern times by Longfield Ave. to the north, Taylor Blvd. to the west, the WATTERSON EXPRESSWAY to the south, and Southern Pkwy. to the east. The creation of IROQUOIS PARK south of Louisville and the construction of Grand Blvd. (later Southern Pkwy.) and two electric streetcar lines to the park in the early 1890s opened a vast expanse of countryside to suburban development south of Louisville. The Coleman-Bush Development Co., anticipating these changes, began ADVERTISING lots for sale in the fall of 1890 in the subdivision it called Oakdale. The name was likely inspired by the abundance of oak trees in the area.

The outward migration of the middle class from the city, made possible by the electric

streetcar, soon resulted in sizable new communities; and Oakdale was no exception. In 1904 the area was incorporated as the sixth-class city of Oakdale and soon began expanding its boundaries. Churchill Downs was annexed, as well as part of WILDER PARK east of Third St. By 1908 the POPULATION increase allowed Oakdale to become a fifth-class city with a mayor and council. But in 1916 the Louisville City Council adopted a sweeping annexation ordinance that included Oakdale, among many other areas. A series of court battles followed, initiated by opponents of annexation, including Oakdale. After losing in local COURTS, the plaintiffs appealed to the United States Supreme Court in 1921. The suit was dismissed because it did not involve a question of federal law. In 1922 Oakdale became a part of Louisville.

In 1935 a Louisville city park, named Wyandotte in the local tradition of naming PARKS for American Indian tribes, was opened along Taylor Blvd. in the western section of Oakdale. In the mid-1970s, when federal URBAN RENEWAL grants were replaced by community development block grants, it was necessary to set definite boundaries for NEIGHBORHOODS to be eligible for grants. Because of the park, Wyandotte was chosen as the name and is so shown on the official city neighborhood map. Nevertheless, residents continue to call it Oakdale.

See Barbara N. Bishop, *Oakdale: An Early Twentieth Century Suburb* (Louisville 1989); Carl E. Kramer, "The City-Building Process: Urbanization in Central and Southern Louisville, 1772-1932," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toledo, 1980.

George H. Yater

**WYATT, WILSON WATKINS, SR.** (b Louisville, November 21, 1905; d Louisville, June 11, 1996). Louisville mayor and lieutenant governor. Born to Richard H. and Mary (Watkins) Wyatt, he graduated from LOUISVILLE MALE HIGH SCHOOL and attended the UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE for one year. Following graduation from Louisville's JEFFERSON SCHOOL OF LAW, Wyatt was admitted to the Kentucky bar in 1927. On June 14, 1930, he married Anne Kinnaird Duncan. They had three children: Mary Anne, Nancy, and Wilson Junior.

After establishing a law practice in Louisville he served as secretary of the Kentucky Bar Association from 1930 to 1934. In 1935 Wyatt joined the law firm of Peter, Heyburn, Marshall, and Wyatt, where he became principal counsel for ROBERT WORTH BINGHAM's *COURIER-JOURNAL* and *LOUISVILLE TIMES*, as well as for the other Bingham family enterprises, including WHAS radio and TELEVISION stations.

Elected mayor of Louisville in 1941, Wyatt took office on December 1, only days before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. With the outbreak of WORLD WAR II the new mayor immediately undertook regional civil defense plans. During the war the home front needed attention, and Wyatt worked for legislation in



Wilson Wyatt with President John F. Kennedy, 1962.

the Kentucky General Assembly to modernize and streamline the Louisville city GOVERNMENT. He took several city-county consolidation steps, one of which was the creation of Louisville-Jefferson County PLANNING AND ZONING Commission.

As Louisville's young, wartime mayor, Wyatt garnered national attention. He became a leading spokesperson for many national civic and public service organizations, including the American Society of Planning Officials and the National Municipal League. Numerous newspaper and magazine articles detailed his ideas concerning governmental and municipal planning, which attracted the attention of the White House. In the spring of 1943 President Franklin D. Roosevelt chose Wyatt to head a Board of Economic Welfare mission to North Africa to formulate plans for coordination of economic development in that region to aid in the war effort.

When his term as mayor ended in 1945, Wyatt's participation in national affairs expanded in January 1946 when President Harry S. Truman made him housing expediter in the Office of War Mobilization and Reconversion. Wyatt's New Deal philosophy and approach to dealing with the problems of affordable housing for the returning veterans soon came under fire from the Republican-controlled Congress. When he failed to receive needed support from the White House for his efforts, Wyatt resigned as housing expediter in December 1946.

Returning to Louisville, Wyatt founded the law firm of Wyatt and Grafton. While rebuilding a successful and lucrative law practice, Wyatt maintained his active involvement in politics and public affairs both locally and nationally. He played a key role in the formation of the Americans for Democratic Action, a liberal political action group, and served as the organization's first chairman in 1947. In 1952 he managed nationally the unsuccessful presidential campaign of Adlai Stevenson. He also played a prominent role in Stevenson's 1956 presidential campaign.

In 1958 Wyatt announced his candidacy for governor of Kentucky. Prior to the primary election, however, he withdrew as a gubernatorial candidate and endorsed Bert T. Combs's candidacy, running for lieutenant governor on a united ticket with Combs. In the Democratic primary election, the Combs-Wyatt ticket defeated Harry Lee Waterfield, the candidate of the Chandler faction of the DEMOCRATIC PARTY. Following a victory in the general election in November, Combs and Wyatt took office in December 1959.

As lieutenant governor, Wyatt worked to make the position an active and effective part of the administration. In addition to presiding over the state senate during its biennial sessions, he served as chairman of the newly created Kentucky Economic Development Commission. Wyatt was also the leading proponent for the establishment of the Spindletop Research Cen-

ter, an early attempt to unite the University of Kentucky's research program with economic development in Kentucky businesses and industry.

In 1962 Wyatt announced his candidacy for the U.S. Senate, running in the general election against the incumbent, Sen. Thruston B. Morton, a fellow Louisvillian. In a hard-fought and often bitter campaign, Wyatt lost to Morton by a narrow margin. However, Wyatt's participation in national affairs continued in 1963 when President John F. Kennedy sent him to Indonesia to mediate a dispute between U.S. oil companies and Indonesian president Sukarno. Sukarno had threatened to nationalize foreign oil operations, but Wyatt was successful in negotiating an agreement that averted an international crisis.

In December 1963 Wyatt established the Louisville law firm Wyatt, Tarrant, and Combs, but his role in national politics continued. Hubert H. Humphrey asked Wyatt to play an important role at the 1968 national Democratic nominating convention by negotiating a compromise agreement in the party's platform regarding the VIETNAM WAR. Never again holding public office, Wyatt served in a wide variety of civic activities both in Louisville and throughout Kentucky.

With Thruston Morton, he drew up a plan for consolidating the Louisville and Jefferson County governments. He was an adviser to mayors, county judge/executives, and governors, and, on occasion, to the editorial board of the *Courier-Journal*. In his later years, he devoted his attention to training a new generation of leaders by co-founding Leadership Louisville. One of his final efforts was to reform Kentucky's tax structure. Wyatt was chairman of the University of Louisville Board of trustees from 1951 to 1955 and the BELLARMINE COLLEGE board from 1981 to 1982. In 1994 Wyatt and his wife, Anne, gave five hundred thousand dollars to the University of Louisville School of Law to help it attract nationally known speakers and to improve teaching. The Wyatts gave the same amount of money to Jefferson County Public Schools to provide scholarships for high school debaters. In 1995 the School of Law building at the University of Louisville was named Wilson W. Wyatt Hall. He is buried in CAVE HILL CEMETERY.

See John Ed Pearce, *Divide and Dissent: Kentucky Politics, 1930-1963* (Lexington 1987); Wilson W. Wyatt Sr., *Whistle Stops: Adventures in Public Life* (Lexington 1985); Wade Hall, *Complete Conviction: The Private Life of Wilson W. Wyatt, Sr.* (Louisville 1997).

Terry L. Birdwhistell