

# WELCOME TO FORT THOMAS





Dear Newcomers, Residents, Visitors and Friends:

We are pleased to provide this community information guide about the city's history, the services provided by our city employees, and facts about one of Greater Cincinnati's most livable and finest communities.

We are proud to be your elected Mayor and Councilmembers and we are grateful for the tremendous community involvement by our citizens. We appreciate those who serve on various Boards, Committees, and Commissions, as well as other volunteers. We are blessed to live in a wonderful community, with excellent schools, beautiful parks, and truly great citizens.

You are welcome to attend our Council meetings the 3rd Monday of the month at 7:00 P.M. or feel free to stop by the City Building (office hours are 8:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.) or call (859-441-1055) with any questions.

Sincerely,

Eric Haas, Mayor  
City of Fort Thomas

## **MAYOR AND COUNCILMEMBERS**

**Mayor - 4 year term, ends December 31, 2018**  
**Councilmember - 2 year term, ends December 31, 2018**  
**Next election: November 2018**

**Mayor:**

**Eric Haas**                                **42 Stardust Lane**

**Councilmembers:**

**Roger Peterman**                        **129 Riverside Parkway**

**Lisa Kelly**                                **118 Strathmore Avenue**

**Ken Bowman**                              **60 Altamont Ct.**

**Jeff Bezold**                                **45 W. Kimberly Dr.**

**John Slawter**                              **180 Burnet Ridge**

**David Cameron**                        **35 Sunset Ave.**

## **CITY ADMINISTRATIVE EMPLOYEES**

**(Offices at 130 North Fort Thomas Avenue)**

**City Administrative Officer - Ronald J. Dill**  
**City Clerk/Executive Secretary - Melissa K. Kelly**  
**Main Street Manager/Economic Development -Debbie Buckley**  
**Director of Finance/Assistant City Admin. – Joseph Ewald**  
**Finance Officer/Purchasing Agent - Jennifer Machesney**  
**Finance Clerk – Nancy Robisch**  
**Finance Clerk – Rhonda Corbin**  
**General Services Superintendent – Tim Mattingly**  
**General Services Director/Building Inspector – Kevin Barbian**  
**General Services Secretary - Julie Rice**  
**City Mechanic - Harry Holtkamp Jr.**  
**Director of Property Management – Greg Mounce**  
**Fire Chief - Mark K. Bailey**  
**Police Chief - Mike Daly**  
**Police Secretary - Debbie Lucas**

**(Offices off site)**

**Recreation Coordinator: Kat Disney**

**City Attorney - Jann Seidenfaden**  
**City Engineer – Frank Twehues, CT Consultants**

**We are proud to welcome you to the City of Fort Thomas! This community is an attractive and thriving residential municipality of approximately 16,440 residents located at the “top of Kentucky.” Built on a series of hilltop ridges overlooking the Ohio River, Fort Thomas is just south of downtown Cincinnati, Ohio, and is adjacent to five other municipalities—Newport, Dayton, Bellevue, Highland Heights, and Southgate. According to the Commonwealth of Kentucky's classification system, which is determined by a number of factors such as population and voting precinct representation, Fort Thomas is listed as a “Fourth Class Municipality,” but, we think our City is “First Class!”**

**Fort Thomas’ government is a Mayor-Council form of government, in that we have an elected Mayor for a four-year term, and six Councilmembers for two-year terms.**

**Fort Thomas City Administration – The Mayor appoints a professional City Administrator who is hired to manage the City’s day-to-day operations. He provides assistance and support to the City's elected officials, Mayor Eric Haas and the six Councilmembers, as they solve problems, develop new legislation and set guidelines for the City's future. Ron Dill was named Fort Thomas City Administrative Officer on October 19, 2015. Ron has a twenty eight year career with Fort Thomas in various positions, most recently serving as Assistant City Administrator/Director of General Services.**

**Other City Officers include the City Clerk, Melissa K. Kelly, who has been with the City since 2000, starting in the Finance Office for three years and then moving to the General Services Department for approximately 3 years. Melissa became City Clerk/Executive Secretary to the CAO, Mayor and Council in April of 2006. The City Clerk is the official Custodian of City Records, including minutes, correspondence, and official historic documents. She is the secretary to the Board of Ethics, Editor of the City’s quarterly newsletter, “From the Fountain,” and assists with special events within the City. She is also responsible for the written testing procedures for police and firefighter recruits.**

**Fort Thomas Finance Department - Finance Director Joseph Ewald started with the city on July 22, 2013 and manages the day-to-day operations in the Finance Department. Joe comes to us from the City of Newport, KY where he was the finance director for 4 years. The Finance Department is located in the central portion of the City Building and is responsible for the overall fiscal stability of city government, the provision of services, collection and disbursement of taxes and other fees, and development and execution of a balanced budget for each fiscal year. Besides Mr. Ewald, the Finance Department includes the City’s Purchasing Agent, Jennifer Machesney, Finance Clerk, Nancy Robisch and Finance Clerk, Rhonda Corbin. The Finance Department is your first point of contact when you call or visit the city building.**

**Fort Thomas General Services Department** - Our Director of General Services/Zoning Administrator is Kevin Barbian. The city recently did a restructuring of departments where Kevin was named the director. In 2012 the city combined departments with Building Services, Public Works and Recreation. The combining of these departments gives Kevin 20 full-time employees, along with several seasonal and part-time employees, including Superintendent, Tim Mattingly, City Mechanic, Harry Holtkamp, Property Manager, Greg Mounce, Secretary/Assistant, Julie Rice and Recreation Coordinator, Kat Disney.

The Public Works division operates from a structure located behind the City Building that includes a full-service garage/fulltime mechanic that services the city fleet of police, fire & general services vehicles and equipment. The labor force and greenspace crews provide snow and ice treatment/removal in the Winter months , curbside leaf pick-up in the Fall and concrete curb/sidewalk & street repair work in the Summer. They are an integral part of our continuing CBD Streetscape Project, as well as their assistance with street and sewer work, exterior and interior construction work of all types, landscaping and mowing work, tree planting, trimming and other planned projects. They are skilled and experienced in multiple disciplines as the City performs the majority of construction work in-house.

The Building Services division issues building permits, conducts inspections for construction within the City and supports planning and zoning functions. This staff also follows up on zoning complaints and provides information about zoning regulations to builders, sub-contractors, and homeowners. They maintain plat records of property within the City and provide staff support to the citizen volunteer members of the Planning Commission, Board of Adjustment, Design Review Board, and the Tree Commission. Public hearings are conducted as needed by the Planning Commission and Board of Adjustment for variances, subdivision/ development plans, signs, proposed additions, etc

One important function within this department is to be a resource for residents, contractors or developers regarding the Official Zoning Ordinance , building codes, property plats or other codes and ordinances. Call this Department with any questions about fences, swimming pools, decks, proposed additions, or any building or zoning matters.

The Property Maintenance division, managed under Property Manager Greg Mounce, is responsible for general maintenance of all City facilities including the City Building, park shelters & restrooms, Community Center and Armory Recreation Center.

The Recreation division has offices located in the Armory Building in Tower Park. You will find Recreation Coordinator, Kat Disney there to assist in anything related to parks & recreation. The hours of operation are 8:00 A.M.- 4:00 P.M. and phone number is 859-781-1700. Contact there will provide you with information on

parks, sports leagues, exercise programs, activities for adults, seniors, children; the Dog Park; use/rental of rooms, buildings, or picnic shelters ; bike trails; and upcoming events. Website: [www.ftthomas.org/recreation](http://www.ftthomas.org/recreation).

The City has three large parks (Tower, Highland, Rossford) each with a wide range of amenities that have all been upgraded recently. Additionally, the City offers numerous ballfields, public plazas and "pocket parks" that are dispersed throughout the community. To meet the demand of fields for organized play and practice, the City purchased a parcel of land outside the city limits on Route #8, adjacent to Pendery Park in Campbell County known as the Ft Thomas Soccer Complex. The entire year is filled with sports leagues, classes, and recreation events of many types within all of these parks.

The Recreation Department also sponsors several very popular events for all age groups throughout the year, including: a summer concert series at the Amphitheater, a Spring Egg Hunt, Community Holiday Walk, "Touch a Truck" and a Jack-O-Lantern Walk. The City's largest annual events are the Summer Celebration the Saturday before the 4<sup>th</sup> of July and the Merchant & Music Festival with activities including, a classic car show, food, bands, and booths in Tower Park and a brilliant fireworks display at dusk to cap it off.

**Fort Thomas Renaissance** - The City's Renaissance Manager/Economic Development Director is Debbie Buckley. Utilizing the Main Street four-point approach, the Renaissance Board focuses on positively impacting the designated Renaissance business districts through economic and physical revitalization. All actions taken by the Board are done with a commitment to improve how we live, work and raise families within the city. Renaissance is made up of all volunteers.

Each year Fort Thomas Renaissance develops goals dedicated to the development of a healthy business climate where our proud heritage helps us shape a promising future - enriching the quality of life in Fort Thomas.

During the late 1990's the city's elected body, staff and community volunteers engaged in a considerable effort to assess the city's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as it planned for the new millennium and continued success for the community. This effort included a long-range strategic visioning process, update of the city's official 20-year Comprehensive Plan, and consensus building from the elected body to establish priorities and areas of focus. These initiatives were completed with involvement and input from elected officials, city staff, volunteer committees, focus group meetings and professional consultants. One common theme that arose throughout this planning process was the need to reinvest in and revitalize the city's urban core, specifically its historic business districts which were beginning to show signs of economic and physical decline.

**In 2000, the city formed a citizen volunteer committee named Fort Thomas Forward to lead the development of an urban design and streetscape master plan for the center of town. During this same period, the city received state designation as a silver-level Renaissance Kentucky/Main Street community for its CBD revitalization efforts and received \$95,000 in Direct Appropriation funds to underwrite some of the initial streetscape revitalization costs, specifically a CBD utility relocation project, market study, and new CBD streetscape design and engineering. Subsequently, a part-time manager position, now full time, and Fort Thomas Renaissance Board were created pursuant to the requirements of the state Renaissance Kentucky/Main Street program.**

**The Midway Streetscape is one of our most recent updates in town. Beginning in south end of our town it has been renovated in the past few years providing for brick crosswalks and attractive landscaping, new street construction, lighting, benches and banners, which has brought a new cohesiveness to the area. There are several distinct business districts within the City, each with its own character, that provide different types of retail, professional office or service businesses. Most of the city's homes are single-family homes, with a smaller percentage of multi-unit buildings, some apartment complexes and an increasing number of condominium developments.**

**Renaissance sponsors several events each year. There are two Farmers' Markets. The Wednesday Market is in the Midway at River Road and S. Fort Thomas Avenue. The Friday Market is in the parking lot of the Warden & Associates Realty at 3 S. Fort Thomas Avenue and Highland Avenue in the Towne Center Business District. Both are 3:00-7:00 pm and begin in May.**

**Jr. Renaissance Camp is a two-week camp for middle-school and high school kids each summer. Each year we strive to teach students about their heritage in the City of Fort Thomas. From the military history to the architectural beauty, the drama of a local murder mystery, training to become a docent in our museum, these students have enjoyed a variety of classes over the years.**

**Renaissance supports Small Business Saturday in November. Our businesses are why we do everything we do. The businesses sponsor our events, and Renaissance returns the favor. Please support our local businesses!**

**Each year a Holiday Walk is held in the Central Business District and Inverness Districts with the lighting of a Christmas tree, open houses at businesses and lots of fun. The Holiday Hop is held in the Midway on a Friday evening. Businesses there "dress up" and provide entertainment for patrons to enjoy a night out on the town.**

**Our biggest event of the year is our annual Merchants & Music Festival each September. More than 10,000 attend this musical phenomenon. Two stages, eight bands, more than 100 merchants, a kid's zone, a wine festival, lots of beer and food**



provide an incredible day of fun for the entire family in Tower Park. Sponsors pay for the majority of this event.

**Fort Thomas Police Department** - Our Police Chief is Michael Daly who was promoted to the position in August of 2005. He has been a Fort Thomas Police Officer since 1994 and heads a department of 22 sworn police officers and a police clerk, Debbie Lucas. Accredited by the Kentucky Association of Chiefs of Police (KACP), the 5<sup>th</sup> law enforcement agency in Kentucky to become accredited in 1994. Dispatch phone numbers: 911, or 859-292-3622; police business line: 859-441-6562.

Our Police Department provides police protection, patrol and response, bicycle patrol, crime prevention, educational programs and community training, driver's education programs, Operation ID and Neighborhood Watch programs, Bike Road-E-O, and various other community participation events.

**Fort Thomas Fire Department** – Our Fire Chief is Mark Bailey, who was formerly with the Cincinnati/No. Ky. Intl. Airport Fire Department. He has a department strength of 18 professional firefighters, all of whom are Kentucky Certified EMT/Paramedics. Our Department was one of the first in Northern Kentucky to provide their own Paramedic Unit, or Advanced Life Support Unit, for our citizens. A new Ambulance was placed into service in January of 2011. A new Aerial Ladder Truck was purchased in 2000. A new Pumper/Engine Company was purchased in 2012.

Our Fire Department provides quick response to calls for fire or medical emergencies, and in addition, much time is spent on public education, fire prevention, code inspections and enforcement, and preparedness training. The Department implemented the Learn Not to Burn Program within the schools along with other programs, have monthly First Aid/CPR Classes offered to the public, conduct an annual Smoke Detector Blitz with our residents, and visits schools with the Fire Safety House and Sparky the Fire Dog. They also issue burning permits (for brush). Dispatch phone number: 911, or 859-292-3622; Fire business line: 859-441-8393.

Our City Attorney is Jann Seidenfaden, of Bertelsman, Kaufmann, Seidenfaden & Kolentse. The City's Engineer is Frank Twehues, CT Consultants.

The total number of City employees varies during the seasons, with full-time workers at 70-75.

There are approximately 7,300 residential “living units” with few undeveloped building lots remaining. However, on the hillsides overlooking the Ohio River and the Licking Valley, there are multiple acres of woodlands, “green space,” and forests. Any future developments will necessarily need to deal with

suitable methods of reusing existing lots or with the difficulties of building on the hillsides.

Fort Thomas is approximately 5.2 square miles in area, with homes tucked away in valleys and situated on hilltops, on flat-street subdivisions and on gently curving, tree-lined streets that total about 70 linear miles of streets. There is a wide range of housing stock within the City and assessed home values from \$80,000 to over \$2,000,000.

The economic base of the community is comprised mostly of professional offices and service-oriented businesses, with retail shops that provide the essentials for daily living such as convenient stores, banks, restaurants, drug stores, and beauty shops. There are no industrial areas or manufacturing zones within the City.

Some of our largest employers in the City are, St. Elizabeth Medical Center, the Fort Thomas Independent School system, and two nursing homes, the Highlands of Fort Thomas/Barrington Health Care Facilities and Carmel Manor. In addition, there are two federal facilities located within Fort Thomas both adjacent to Tower Park--the VA Hospital and a U.S. Army Reserve Engineering Complex. Contained within the boundaries of the City is a water pumping station and two water reservoirs for the Northern Ky. Water District, one on Military Parkway and another on Memorial Parkway.

Our population includes approximately 25% of property owners who are over the age of 65 and who receive Homestead Exemptions or Disability Exemptions on the total valuations of their property. This state-mandated exemption, deducted from both city and county taxes, requires that at least one property owner be 65 and complete the proper forms, presenting proof of age.

There is a high level of community involvement within Fort Thomas and the attractive, well-kept neighborhoods extend the feeling of small town living to the convenience of quick interstate access to Covington, Newport, Florence, and just minutes across the bridges, into downtown Cincinnati. There are three larger parks, Tower Park (south), Highland Hills Park (central), and Rossford Park (north). In addition, there are several smaller pocket parks, such as Riggs Memorial Park, Storrs Park and others.

Warm weather ushers in lots of activity in all the parks as well as walkers and joggers on the sidewalks throughout the city. Especially "on the Avenue" (North and South Fort Thomas Avenue), and on Highland Avenue, in the early evening hours families are out riding bicycles, pushing baby strollers, roller blading or scootering, or just chatting with friends. The City completed a dog park in 2001 within Highland Hills Park (at the end of Mayfield Avenue) where canine pets can run free and get exercise.

**Fort Thomas consists of approximately 3,660 acres. Many of our residents leave and return daily to work either in Cincinnati or to the industrial or commercial areas of Northern Kentucky. There is an increasing number of small businesses and retail establishments within the community, and a sizeable number of in-home businesses all of which contribute to the local economy.**

**The Board of Education completed construction in 2001 of a new \$13.9 million Middle School facility located adjacent to Highlands High School on Memorial Parkway. A Committee has recently completed an evaluation showing a critical need for upgrades to the High School as well as elementary schools, with an estimated construction cost at \$27 million. The school also recently completed re-building Woodfill School. Two parochial schools, St. Thomas (central) and St. Catherine (north) are within the City, plus there are twelve (12) churches scattered in areas from North to South.**

**Basic to the historic spirit of the City is the military fort, for which Fort Thomas is named, constructed around the turn of the century between 1898 and 1901. Due to our high elevation, the site was chosen for building a U.S. Military Fort for the training of troops at a location that wouldn't be repeatedly flooded as it did in the "bottom" land at Newport Barracks. One of the City's most significant landmarks is a large 100 foot tall stone water tower, built to provide water for the hundreds of troops stationed here during the Spanish-American War. As was the custom of the time, the Fort was given the name of an outstanding and much-beloved Civil War General, George C. Thomas, who was a strong and courageous leader famous for his firm stand in battle, and known as the "Rock of Chickamauga."**

**During the years when the Army Post was activated (until approximately 1948), there was a bustle of activity as troops from Ohio, Indiana, and all sections of Kentucky came in by train through Newport and Cincinnati. Enlistees were brought directly to Fort Thomas by bus or trolley, lived in the barracks buildings, dined in the (still-existing) Mess Hall, and marched daily on the drill fields (now converted to ball fields). The Fort was deactivated by the U.S. government in the early 1970s, and then purchased by the City with the express purpose of making it a recreation area. Today Tower Park is our largest, most active park, containing an Armory Building, picnic shelters, tennis courts, basketball and volleyball courts, hiking trails, and a full track/soccer field complex. In addition, the Mess Hall or Community Center has been renovated and is currently in use for wedding receptions, meetings and parties almost every weekend. You can call (859) 781-1700 to book this and other meeting rooms available at Tower Park.**

**The lovely turn-of-the century homes overlooking the Ohio River at the extreme eastern side of the Park were military-assigned quarters for the Generals, other officers and non-commissioned officers assigned to Fort Thomas. They have remained the property of the Federal Government and were assigned for use by**

civilian employees assigned to the Veterans Hospital facility. The VA recently declared the property “excess” and the City hopes to obtain title to these homes and then resell them to individual owners as landminiums, similar to those homes transferred and now known as “Military Commons.” Adjacent to the Park property is Carmel Manor Nursing Home, and the Headquarters of the U.S. Army Reserve 478<sup>th</sup> Engineering Battalion, which was deployed to Iraq in 2003 and again in 2007.

About a dozen of the surviving military buildings, those closest to the Stone Water Tower within park property, were formerly owned by the City as part of Tower Park. The Fort Thomas Heritage League worked for many years to get the Military Fort property designated as an official “Historic District.” They worked hard to raise money for the restoration of the Mess Hall and it is now an attractive Community Center. It was used in June, 1998, for the Centennial Celebration of the Spanish-American War, and during this event, a small military museum contained within the building was dedicated. Many of the original military buildings have been torn down, including the soldiers’ barracks, riding stable, chapel, and auxiliary kitchen. The museum was expanded and relocated to the building at 69 Greene Street located immediately adjacent to the amphitheater in Tower Park.

Whether you are a “true newcomer,” having just moved into the City, or have lived here for all of your life, information is available to you in this booklet, in our Spring/Summer and Fall/Winter newsletter From the Fountain, or on the internet at [www.ftthomas.org](http://www.ftthomas.org). Information is updated frequently, with a calendar of events, minutes of Council meetings, ordinances and resolutions, and information about the activities of the Administration, General Services, Police, Fire, and Recreation Departments.

Other services: Fort Thomas residents have bus service available to them from the Transit Authority of Northern Kentucky (TANK), as well as mini-buses from SouthBank. Scheduled routes for TANK connect with downtown Cincinnati, south to Northern Kentucky University, cross-county between Alexandria’s Village Green and Florence Mall and interconnections between the various cities in Campbell, Kenton, and Boone Counties. The SouthBank mini-bus has a circuitous route between Newport, Covington and several points in downtown Cincinnati.

The Campbell County Public Library System, which recently celebrated 100 years of library service in the County, has a branch in the city. An attractive building at 1000 Highland Avenue provides books, periodicals, CDs, and videos. There is a special section for children, as well as several meeting rooms and offices in the building. The library staff sponsors summer reading programs, story times, special events related to books and literature, and various discussion groups. Their phone number is: (859) 572-5033.

**As City employees, we are here to help you. We try to make a good impression on everyone we meet—emphasizing our spirit, our willingness to work hard and our constant attempts to conserve, recycle and save money wherever we can for our City’s benefit. Whether you own a home, condominium or business, rent an apartment, or stop here only long enough to visit with friends, you are welcome. We hope you come here deliberately to patronize one of our fine businesses or to enjoy our fine parks. This booklet is dedicated to the citizens whether you are one day old or 100 years old. Fort Thomas is a great place to live!**

## **CITY GOVERNMENT**

Fort Thomas is classified by the Commonwealth of Kentucky as a Fourth Class City. We have an elected Mayor, who serves a 4-year term and 6 elected Council members, who serve 2-year terms. Elections are held in November and officials take the Oath of Office on January 1<sup>st</sup> of the following year.

Council meetings are held on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday evenings of each month at 7:00 P.M. in the City Building, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Council Chambers. A regular time is set for any necessary Committee meetings at 6:15 P.M. just prior to Council meetings. The address of the City Building is, 130 North Fort Thomas Avenue, Fort Thomas, Kentucky 41075. If the Monday of Council/Committee meetings fall on a Federal or State holiday, the meeting is delayed to Tuesday night at the same time and place. Citizens are invited to attend these meetings and participate in their local government. During the course of a year, there are Public Hearings scheduled for various purposes, including the Fiscal Year budgets, applications for Alcohol Beverage Control licenses, community development and variances. These are advertised, by law, in the local newspaper of record, the Fort Thomas Recorder.

Our City's original by-laws from 1867 designate that we have a Mayor-Council form of government. All Ordinances, Resolutions, Municipal Orders, and Executive Orders carry the Mayor's signature, after presentation and approval by Council at a regular meeting. As laws are formulated and put into document form, they are presented at a Council meeting, are reviewed and studied by Councilmembers and the City staff during the next 2-week period, and then presented for a Second Reading and a Roll Call vote at the next regular Council meeting. At each meeting, there is opportunity provided for citizen input.

The final text of all Ordinances is published in the Fort Thomas Recorder. Copies of any Ordinance, as well as other City documents as defined under the Open Records laws, may be obtained in the office of the City Clerk with a small fee for copying any document over 5 pages. Upon request, they can also be mailed or faxed.

Each Council member is Chairman of one of the six standing committees and serves on two others. These Committees are, Finance, Public Safety, Public Works, Law-Labor-License, Public Utilities & Buildings, and Recreation. In addition, there are other citizen boards and commissions appointed by the Mayor to advise on matters of Planning and Zoning, Police and Fire testing, Tree Planting and Preservation, Ethics issues, and on the Board of Adjustment.

## **IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS**

**Please dial area code first – 859 – if you are calling or faxing from outside the area.**

**City Building/Finance Office/Administration 441-1055**

**Fire Department/Police Department/Life Squad 911  
(Dispatch Center took over all calls 2 years ago)**

**Business Office Number for Police Administration 441-6562**

**Business Office Number for Fire Administration 441-8393**

**Recreation Department/Armory 781-1700**

**City Attorney 441-2700**

**City Engineer(CT Consultants) 525-0544**

## **INFORMATION FOR NEWCOMERS**

**Within 15 days after moving into Kentucky:**

**Register your car/truck/motorcycle/motor home/boat/van -**

**Bring title, most current registration, proof of any previously paid sales taxes, and current proof of insurance card to the Campbell County Clerk's Office, 1098 Monmouth Street, Newport, KY 41071 PH. 292-3850**

**To obtain a Kentucky drivers' license-**

**Bring current license, if any, and Social Security card to the Campbell County Circuit Court Clerk's Office, 1098 Monmouth Street, Newport, KY 41071 PH 292-6311**

**Bring proof of any name/address change to same office. Written and eye tests may be required.**

**Within 30 days after moving into Campbell County, and/or into a new voting precinct:**

**Register to vote; make application at least 30 days prior to an election to the Campbell County Clerk, 1098 Monmouth Street, Newport, KY 41071 PH 292-3885  
Absentee ballots may be filed, however the time prior to election is longer, call to find the exact information on the specific election.**

**To register your child/children for schools in Fort Thomas or for information on what school your child should attend, please contact the Fort Thomas Board of Education/Fort Thomas Independent Schools, 28 N. Fort Thomas Avenue, 781-3333, for requirements and instructions on registration.**

**Our current waste collection and recycling contractor is Rumpke of Kentucky. Waste/Recycling collection days in Fort Thomas are Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday. Please call the Finance Department at 441-1055 for your collection day. Recycling bins are available at the City Building at a nominal cost of \$7.00 each.**

**The city sells commemorative bricks to be installed in the walkway of the Mess Hall/Community Center in Tower Park. These bricks are \$40.00 each and an application can be obtained at the city building or on the website at [www.ftthomas.org](http://www.ftthomas.org).**



## LIST OF UTILITIES

<b>Gas/Electric – Duke Electric Company</b>	<b>1-800-544-6900</b>
<b>Water – Northern Ky. Water Service District</b>	<b>859-578-9898</b>
<b>Sanitation – Sanitation District No. 1</b>	<b>859-578-7450</b>
<b>Telephone – Cincinnati Bell Telephone Co.</b>	<b>513-565-6090</b>
<b>Cable Television – Time Warner Cable</b>	<b>1-800-892-4357</b>
<b>Waste Collection &amp; Recycling – Rumpke of N. Ky.</b>	<b>1-877-786-7537</b>

**Animal Control – call your Police Department for dispatch (859-292-3622) of our Animal Control Officer, Terri Baker. The salary and expenses are shared by five (5) cities.**

### **Utilities:**

**There is a 3% utility tax placed on bills of the citizens of Fort Thomas by the School Board in order to provide money for the operation of the school district, effective April, 1998. This is on all of the following, gas and electric, water, sanitation, telephone, and cable T.V.**

**Auto Licenses - Campbell County Court House, 1098 Monmouth Street, Newport, Kentucky 859-292-3850**

**Voter Registration - Campbell County Court House, 1098 Monmouth Street, Newport, Kentucky 859-292-3885**

### **To visit your City or County Library branch:**

**The Carrico Branch in Fort Thomas, under the Campbell County Public Library System, is in Fort Thomas at 1000 Highland Avenue, Fort Thomas, KY 41075  
Call (859) 572-5033 to get hours. Just announced: opening on Sunday afternoons.**

### **To locate your closest U.S. Post Office:**

**The Fort Thomas Branch is at 24 South Fort Thomas Avenue, Fort Thomas, KY 41075 Phone 441-1938 Constructed in 1941; see interesting mural on wall.**

### **The nearest Hospital:**

**St. Elizabeth Medical Center East, 85 North Grand Avenue, Fort Thomas, KY 41075 Phone 572-3100**

**For patient information, you may call 572-3232. Visiting hours for patients are generally 1-8 P.M. daily.**

## CHURCHES

### Baptist

First Baptist Church - 600 N. Fort Thomas Ave. 441-8884

Highland Baptist Tabernacle - 1080 Highland Ave. 781-4510

Highland Hills Baptist Church - 638 Highland Ave. 441-0442

### Christian - Disciples of Christ

First Christian Church - 1031 Alexandria Pike 441-8658

### Episcopal

St. Andrews Episcopal Church - 3 Chalfonte Place 441-1092

### Presbyterian

First Presbyterian Church - 220 S. Fort Thomas Ave. 441-8939

### Roman Catholic

St. Catherine of Siena Church - 1803 N. Fort Thomas Ave. 441-1352

St. Thomas Church - 26 E. Villa Place 441-1282

### United Church of Christ

Christ Church - 15 S. Fort Thomas Ave. 441-2565

St. Paul United Church of Christ - 1 Churchill Dr. 781-4628

### United Methodist

Highland United Methodist Church - 314 N. Fort Thomas Ave. 441-0587

## SCHOOLS

### **Public Schools - Elementary Schools**

<b>Johnson School - 1180 N. Fort Thomas Ave.</b>	<b>441-2444</b>
<b>Moyer School - 219 Highland Ave.</b>	<b>441-1180</b>
<b>Woodfill School - 1025 Alexandria Pike</b>	<b>441-0506</b>
<b>Highlands Middle School – 2400 Memorial Pkwy.</b>	<b>441-5222</b>
<b>Highlands High School – 2400 Memorial Pkwy.</b>	<b>781-5900</b>
<b>Board of Education Office – 28 N. Fort Thomas Ave.</b>	<b>781-3333</b>

### **Parochial Schools - Elementary Schools**

<b>St. Catherine of Siena School - 1803 N. Fort Thomas Ave.</b>	<b>441-9856</b>
<b>St. Thomas School – 26 E. Villa Pl.</b>	<b>572-4641</b>

### **Day Care Facilities**

<b>Abby's Child Enrichment Center</b>	<b>781-3442</b>
<b>Country Hills Montessori</b>	<b>442-0500</b>
<b>Kids and Cribs Early Childhood Enrichment Center</b>	<b>441-5888</b>
<b>Moyer Elementary School After School Program</b>	<b>441-1180</b>
<b>Woodfill Elementary School After School Program</b>	<b>441-0506</b>
<b>Johnson Elementary School After School Program</b>	<b>572-4947</b>
<b>Campbell County YMCA</b>	<b>781-1814</b>
<b>Child Development Playcare</b>	<b>781-5498</b>
<b>Edleweiss Academy</b>	<b>781-8100</b>
<b>Kiddie College</b>	<b>442-9777</b>

### **Nursery/Pre Schools**

<b>Rainbow Nursery School – 638 Highland Ave.</b>	<b>441-9181</b>
<b>Wise Owl Nursery School – Moved to 220 S. Ft. Thomas Ave.</b>	<b>441-8939</b>
<b>BlueBird Early Learning Center - 406 N. Fort Thomas Ave.</b>	<b>441-0587</b>
<b>St. Thomas Preschool</b>	<b>572-4641</b>
<b>Natural Start Preschool (Tower Park)</b>	<b>360-3726</b>

## COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Northern Ky. Chamber of Commerce	300 Buttermilk Pike, Suite 330 Ft. Mitchell, KY 41017	859-578-8800 <a href="http://www.nkychamber.com/">http://www.nkychamber.com/</a>
Northern Ky. Visitors Bureau		<a href="http://www.northernkentuckycvb.com">http://www.northernkentuckycvb.com</a>
Northern Ky. Convention Center		<a href="http://www.northernkentuckycvb.com">http://www.northernkentuckycvb.com</a>
Campbell County Historical Society	8352 E. Main Street Alexandria, KY 41001	859-635-6407
Campbell County Seniors	3504 Alexandria Pike Highland Heights, KY 41075	859-572-4300 <a href="http://www.campbellcountyky.org/home/services/senior-center.html">http://www.campbellcountyky.org/home/services/senior-center.html</a>
Ft. Thomas Lions Club	<a href="http://fortthomaslionsclub.com/">http://fortthomaslionsclub.com/</a>	Email: <a href="mailto:jcsimpson@gmail.com">jcsimpson@gmail.com</a>
Ft. Thomas Business Asso.	P.O. Box 75023 Ft. Thomas, KY 41075	<a href="http://www.ftba.biz/">http://www.ftba.biz/</a> <a href="http://myfortthomas.com/">http://myfortthomas.com/</a>
Ft. Thomas Woman's Club	8 N. Ft. Thomas Ave.	859-441-4644
Village Players	8 N. Ft. Thomas Ave.	859-392-8500 <a href="http://www.villageplayers.biz/">http://www.villageplayers.biz/</a>
Ft. Thomas Masonic Lodge	37 N. Ft. Thomas Ave.	859-441-1280 <a href="http://www.mastermason.com/ftml808/">http://www.mastermason.com/ftml808/</a>
Ft. Thomas Moms Club		Email: <a href="mailto:ftthomasmoms@yahoo.com">ftthomasmoms@yahoo.com</a> <a href="http://ftthomasmoms.tripod.com/index.html">http://ftthomasmoms.tripod.com/index.html</a>
Fort Thomas Garden Club	Jenny Rice, President	
Fort Thomas Forest Conservancy	P.O. Box 75149 Ft. Thomas, KY 41075	<a href="http://www.ftfc.org/">http://www.ftfc.org/</a>
Green Team		Email: <a href="mailto:karenL@cinci.rr.com">karenL@cinci.rr.com</a>
Fort Thomas Swim Club	Bottom of James Avenue off of Highland Avenue	859-441-1411 <a href="http://www.ftscsharks.com/">http://www.ftscsharks.com/</a>
Campbell Co. YMCA	1437 S. Ft. Thomas Ave	859-781-1814 <a href="http://myy.org/our-ys/branches/campbell-county">http://myy.org/our-ys/branches/campbell-county</a>
Knothole Dist. 22	Mike Rouse Joe Grimme	<a href="mailto:Rousehouse21@yahoo.com">Rousehouse21@yahoo.com</a> <a href="mailto:jgrimme@fsgattorneys.com">jgrimme@fsgattorneys.com</a>
Ft. Thomas Jr. Football League	Paul Allen	<a href="http://www.forthomasjrfootball.com/">http://www.forthomasjrfootball.com/</a> Email: <a href="mailto:President@FortThomasJrFootball.com">President@FortThomasJrFootball.com</a>
Northern Ky. Soccer League	37 Valeside Drive Covington, KY 41017	<a href="http://www.nksl.com/">http://www.nksl.com/</a> Email: <a href="mailto:admin@nksl.com">admin@nksl.com</a>
Highland Country Club	931 Alexandria Pike Fort Thomas, KY 41075	859-441-8810 <a href="http://www.hcc-ky.com/index.shtml">http://www.hcc-ky.com/index.shtml</a>
Fort Thomas Seniors	Contact the Recreation Dept at 859-781-1700	

**There are numerous organizations connected with local schools and churches, and also many sports-related groups. For information on these, rely on direct communications from those sources, or watch for information in the following media sources: City newsletter From the Fountain published twice a year; weekly newspaper Fort Thomas Recorder; Local website: Fort Thomas Matters, monthly news magazine Fort Thomas Living; plus local newspapers Cincinnati Enquirer/Kentucky Enquirer (publishes daily)**

## **SHORT HISTORY OF FORT THOMAS**

**(FORMERLY DISTRICT OF THE HIGHLANDS)**

Compiled by Dottie Ivie, former City Clerk, from various books, reports, and research papers of local historians and students. Some information obtained from the Official Minutes of Meetings of the Board of Council. Additional research was completed during the City's Spanish-American Centennial Celebration for Official Dedication of the Military Museum at the Community Center in Tower Park, June 27-28, 1998.

### **GENERAL GEORGE H. THOMAS**

The City of Fort Thomas was named in honor of Civil War General George Henry Thomas, who ranks among the top Union Generals of the War, along with Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan. Whereas these three men were true Northerners and, in fact, were born within approximately 50 miles of each other, George Thomas was a Southerner. He was born of Welsh/English and French parents in Virginia on July 31, 1816. He was educated at Southampton Academy, studying law and working as a law deputy for his uncle, James Rochelle, the Clerk of the County Court, and he received an appointment to West Point in 1836. He graduated 12<sup>th</sup> in his class of 42 in 1840 and William T. Sherman was a classmate.

After receiving his commission as 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Artillery Unit, he served the Army well for the next 30 years. He was made 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant for his gallantry in action against the Indians in Florida. In the Mexican War, he served under Braxton Bragg in the Artillery and was twice cited for gallantry—once at Monterey and the other at Buena Vista. After the war, he was again sent to Florida to fight the Indians and was wounded in the face by an arrow. From 1851-1854, he was an instructor of artillery and cavalry at West Point, where he became a permanent Captain. Following his service at Ft. Yuma in the West, he became a Major and joined the 4<sup>th</sup> Cavalry at Jefferson Barracks. The Colonel there was Robert Sidney Johnston, and Robert E. Lee was the Lt. Colonel. Other officers in this regiment who went on to become famous as Generals were George Stoneman, for the Union, and for the CSA, John B. Hood, Kirby Smith, and Fitzhugh Lee.

## History - 2

As the Civil War broke out, he was on a 12 month leave of absence in the East. Although a Southerner by birth, Thomas chose to cast his lot with the Union. In a meteoric rise in rank, he was made a Lt. Colonel in April, 1861, full Colonel in May, 1861, and on August 17 of the same year, was appointed Brigadier General with the command of all volunteers assigned to Kentucky. On January 19, 1862, his troops won the first true victory for Kentucky at Spring Mill, defeating the Confederates under General Zollercoff, who was killed. His troops then joined Buell's forces and fought at Nashville and Pittsburgh Landing, where in April, 1862, he was made a Major General. His command was of all Volunteers and he commanded the right wing of Halleck's Army in the capture of Corinth. Again, he was reassigned to Buell's Army in Kentucky. Dissatisfaction of the higher-ups with Buell's retreat to Louisville caused them to order Thomas to take over Buell's command, but he declined due to his loyalty. He then served as Buell's second-in-command at the important Battle of Perryville.

Soon after this, General Rosencrans replaced Buell and General Thomas served under him with great respect and loyalty. On September 20, 1863, he showed his real battle genius and earned for himself the accolade for which he will forever be known. General Rosencrans, in an effort to cut off Bragg at Chickamauga, Tennessee, overextended his troops. General Thomas held the left or northern flank and Bragg, reinforced by Longstreet attacked the Union forces on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September, cutting the supply lines to Chattanooga. Neither side budged. On the 20<sup>th</sup>, Bragg, finding a hole in the Union lines on the right, poured through and swept the right center of the Union forces all the way to Chattanooga, but General Thomas—on the left—held firm. His lines were bent horseshoe-shaped but did not break. He held from noon until dark and then withdrew, bloodied but unbeaten. This action earned him the nickname or title of "The Rock of Chickamauga." In addition, he received the permanent rank of Brigadier General.

Two months later, he took command of the Army of the Cumberland with an attack on Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge. In May, 1864, Gen. Sherman began his march on Atlanta, and was joined by Gen. Thomas and his Army of the Cumberland. They pushed aside all opposition, beat Hood at Peachtree Creek, and received the surrender of Atlanta, being the first troops to enter the city. While Sherman continued his march through Georgia to the sea, Thomas was ordered to Nashville to organize an army to oppose Hood so he could not attack Sherman from the rear. He began to plan his strategy and get his new troops ready. It was his cavalry under General Wilson that prevented Hood from making a rear guard action or stand. The "Rock of Chickamauga" then became the "Hammer of Nashville." This was called by many the Union's victory of victories. It was the

only major battle in the entire Civil War in which an army was destroyed. For his action, he was promoted to Major General with the gratitude of Congress.

### History - 3

After the War, General George H. Thomas served as commander of a number of military districts. By 1869, he had assumed command of the Military Division of the Pacific at San Francisco and he died on March 28, 1870, leaving his widow, Frances Kellog Thomas, but no children. George and Frances were married in November, 1852, while he was an instructor at West Point. He was buried at Troy, New York, the home of his wife. Thomas was a man of fine presence, 6 feet tall and weighing 200 pounds. He was studious in habits, deliberate but decided in action and fastidious to the point of exasperation. He was respected by his superiors and beloved by his subordinates. Another nickname he was given was "Pop Thomas."

### THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE FORT

When it was decided to relocate the Newport Barracks to the top of the hills overlooking the Ohio River to escape the relentless flooding of the "bottoms," General Sheridan chose the site that is now Fort Thomas. Standing atop a bluff, he selected 111 acres and declared that the "highlands" area looked like "the West Point of the West." As was the tradition at the time, forts were named to honor Civil War Generals and thus, Fort Thomas got its name from General George H. Thomas. To the best perusal of current records, General Thomas never lived nor was he stationed at Fort Thomas, but it is believed that he did visit the Newport Barracks and the area upon several occasions. It is a fortunate and notable heritage of Fort Thomas to be named for a well-respected man who placed honor and duty and country above all else.

During the Spanish-American War, Fort Thomas was busy as a mobilization point and as the war was ended, it was turned into a hospital where scored of veterans convalesced from jungle fevers and wounds. Prior to World War I, there was much talk that Fort Thomas might be converted to a storage depot or even abandoned, but the outbreak of hostilities with Germany reversed the situation quickly. The Fort became an important center of recruitment and induction for the entire war era. Temporary barracks were erected on every available spot. It was officially reactivated as an infantry post and in 1919 a fine new barracks was constructed that now serves as a key building in the Veterans Administration Rehabilitation and Nursing Home Complex.

In the early 1900s, mineral waters were discovered in the area, and there were entrepreneurs churning the area and constructing three large hotels to turn the area into a health resort, similar to French Lick, Indiana. The Altamont, the

Avenel, and the Shelley Arms were hosts to numerous guests from Ohio and other points in the Midwest.

#### History - 4

The 10<sup>th</sup> Infantry arrived in 1922 at Fort Thomas and remained until 1940. During these years, the fort was used for training and for administering several civilian projects inspired by the depression. Later, the post was again activated as an Army reception center and induction center until 1964. Army activities have extended over a period of 161 years.

#### Notes from Centennial Book:

In 1970 the City of Fort Thomas purchased a portion of the government tract and the area was developed into park and recreation areas with many facilities for city residents. The first school in Fort Thomas was a log cabin near Holly Lane and North Fort Thomas Avenue, which was called Mt. Pleasant School. It was also used as a church building and was attended alternate Sundays by the Baptist and Methodist congregations. St. Thomas Catholic Church and School began in a house at the intersection of Grand Avenue and Tremont in 1902.

Actually, a number of churches had their initial meetings in the old City Building, among them: Highland Methodist in 1830, St. Andrews Episcopal Church in 1905, Christ Church United in 1906, First Baptist in 1915, and First Presbyterian in 1830. In the north end of town, St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Church was founded in 1930.

A second school was built on Highland Avenue opposite Newman Avenue, and was known as Mount Vernon School. Union School was built shortly after on Alexandria Pike near St. Stephen's Cemetery. Highlands High School was constructed in time for the fall term of 1915 and the cornerstone record states: "Our graduates invariably stand high when entering universities or colleges. Our entire corps of teachers is a most excellent one." That year, there were 955 students and 15 teachers.

Today, Fort Thomas schools hold a high ranking with the State Department of Education. Teacher salaries are ranked at the top in Kentucky, and 80% or more of Highlands graduates go on to college. In May, 1978, the Fort Thomas school district was one of eleven in Kentucky to be designated Superior, and was the only Superior District awarded in Northern Kentucky.

--Excerpted from Fort Thomas...Its History...Its Heritage

By Paul T. Knapp

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## OUR EARLY HISTORY

Located in the northeastern corner of Campbell County, Kentucky, Fort Thomas was once the site of a great Indian battle. Graves of 500 or 600 Indian warriors were discovered on a ridge near Highland and Newman Avenues. Archeologists indicate that around 1749 a roving Cherokee tribe fought and lost to the Shawnees and the Miamis in a fierce three-day battle. According to Indian legend, the Cherokee chief had betrayed a medicine man highly regarded by the other tribes. Over the years the once-plentiful relics and arrowheads have been thoroughly combed by field trips, school children, and construction in the area.

The same year, a group of prominent Virginians secured a land grant and sent surveyor Christopher Gist as scout to Kentucky. The state's first white woman, Mary Inglis, came to the area as a captive of the Shawnee Indians. She and a Dutch woman escaped from Big Bone Lick and were later rescued along the Ohio River banks. State Highway Route 8 was named for her in 1924.

During the Civil War, the city was on a key invasion route to Cincinnati and a part of the Cincinnati Defense Perimeter which stretched from Bromley and Fort Mitchell to Wilder and John's Hill. Remains of trenches are still visible on the south slopes of the Highland Country Club, the old Beverly Hills Club hillside and by the YMCA. Others can still be observed in Evergreen Cemetery where troops watched the southern Licking Valley. These were part of a 12-mile long perimeter of 25 installations built to defend the Greater Cincinnati area.

The key fortification in Campbell County was Fort Whittlesay almost directly across from the present tower at the entrance to Tower Park. Armed with nine cannons, it was actually two separate forts with a stockade to protect a passageway joining the exterior trenches. There were concealed trenches and a subterranean tunnel. This fort and others in the immediate area never had an opportunity to prove their worth, though there were many scares. One was when General Kirby Smith and 12,000 Confederates moved north; another was when General John Hunt Morgan threatened to raid Cincinnati. The only casualty recorded in Campbell County was a volunteer killed by a cannon misfire.

This year, Fort Thomas is 146 years old, founded in 1867. Originally called District of the Highlands, the name was changed officially, and by vote of its citizens, in 1914. Our first recorded Census (in 1871) showed a population of 617, the 2000 Census has shown that we've grown to nearly 17,000.

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## **INTERESTING NOTES**

**In earlier times the central area of town was called Mt. Vernon and the north end of town was Mt. Pleasant. Highland Avenue used to have board sidewalks from Fort Thomas Avenue all the way down to Alexandria Pike.**

**There are many sites of interest in Fort Thomas, including: St. Stephen Cemetery in use since 1850. Samuel Woodfill School, named for a World War I hero. Robson Spring, and 1890 cement marker on the site of a mineral spring used when Fort Thomas was known as a health resort in the 1920's. Carmel Manor was built by Eli Kinney who was the first Treasurer of the District and is now used as a nursing home.**

**The Fort, itself which was used as a military post from the Spanish-American War until 1964. The Stone Tower, mentioned earlier, is made of Kentucky limestone and is a memorial to men who died in the war.**

**The Post Office has been here since 1941.**

**The Samuel Shaw House near Audubon was built in 1859.**

**Today there are over 150 homes that are 100 years old or more.**

**There was a toll-gate house at Highland and Grand Avenue, one of the most picturesque in the state, which was overshadowed by huge trees.**

**Skating in winter and fishing and swimming in summer were enjoyed in ponds at Klainecrest and Grand Avenues, and also one near Highland and Grand Avenues.**

**People from miles around went to the drill field at the Fort for regular Sunday afternoon concerts.**

**Highland Avenue was noted for its complete board sidewalks from Fort Thomas Avenue to Alexandria Pike.**

**Dr. Simon Kramer who lived in the only so-called castle on the rear of the Army reservation, and died only a year ago, was nationally famous for his experiments with serums conducted in his laboratory located there.**

**Robson's Spring on Alexandria Pike near the Covington reservoir used by many for drinking water in the flood of 1937, formerly was graced by a long watering trough for horses, and water was also sold to individuals.**

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The first tax rate was five cents per each \$100 valuation and the poll tax was \$1 per head.

### **Famous Murder Case**

Perhaps the most startling excitement and bizarre experience in the history of Fort Thomas occurred in January 1896, when in a field not far from the end of the car line was found the decapitated body of a woman. It startled and shocked the entire county, and now we know it as the famous Pearl Bryan murder case. The identity of the body as well as the murderers was discovered by Cal Crim, then a young man, and paved the way for his successful career. The head was never found and a year later two young dental students by the name of Walling and Jackson were hanged in the Newport Courthouse yard, although never confessing their guilt. This double hanging marked the last time that Campbell County meted out such capital punishment.

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