

Hicks

From Page 1K

Deeply moved, Rev. Coers vowed to build a replica in Kentucky. He pinpointed a rugged hilltop, and after a fund drive supported by many people throughout the area, the shrine that Rev. Coers named the Garden of Hope was built.

Highlights eventually included the replica of the tomb, positioned so that the rising sun sheds first light on it each dawn, a small chapel and a carpentry shop, much like the place where Jesus worked as a young man.

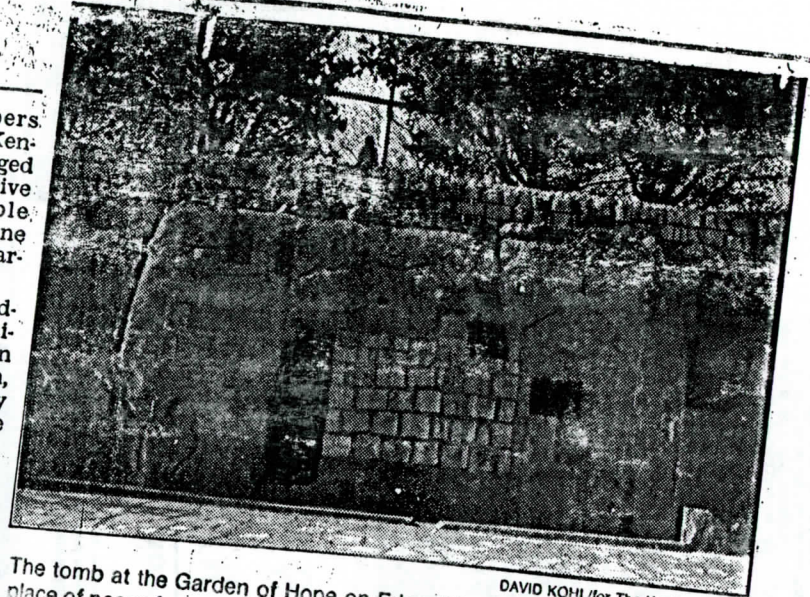
Then as now, the site was an ecumenical haven, where people of all faiths went to hold services, pray or meditate. It was, and is, a place of peace, and if nothing more, a spectacular view.

Construction work on the rough terrain soon caused erosion problems, however, and the hill supporting the tomb began to slide. Considerable money and time was spent to alleviate the problem, but the erosion was only slowed.

Rev. Coers and others involved in the project were viewing the location one day, very much in disappointment and maybe despair.

A large man in bib overalls showed up, explaining he was an engineer who had worked on some railroad projects and had sizeable knowledge about shoring up of hillsides. The Garden of Hope supporters agreed that he should give the wall a try, and almost before anyone noticed, the job was completed.

Rev. Coers died in 1960, and



The tomb at the Garden of Hope on Edgecliff Drive in Covington offers a place of peace for meditation and a spectacular view. DAVID KOHL/for The Kentucky Post

most of the others involved are also gone. But as Palmer understands the story, the church never received a bill. Efforts to trace the man and his company proved fruitless.

The retaining wall continues to bolster the area of the tomb, and despite a series of financial and maintenance problems, the Garden of Hope exists today as testimony to the dream of its founder. People still visit for prayer and inspiration. Weddings are held in the chapel, and there are plans to resume Easter sunrise services someday.

Was the engineer in overalls from another dimension, perhaps an angel? Mrs. Anderson can't say, but the experience is in keeping with other stories she has cataloged in her book, "Where Angels Walk." True

Stories of Heavenly Visitors."

Mrs. Anderson admits she was somewhat reluctant to put her reputation on the line writing about angels. That changed as she talked to people who claimed similar experiences.

"I started to look at coincidences in our lives with new eyes. I like to think they're among us," she said of angels.

Mrs. Anderson will be sharing some of the information she has gleaned Friday and Saturday at St. Catherine of Siena Church in Ft. Thomas. Proceeds will benefit the church roof repair fund, if someone else doesn't get there first and complete the job.

Jack Hicks is a columnist and political writer for The Kentucky Post.

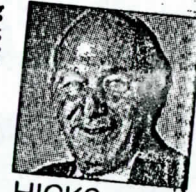
Maybe angel wore overalls in Covington

The hillside stopped sliding at the Garden of Hope nearly 40 years ago, and it is continuing proof that somebody knew what he was doing.

The explanation, however, may have more to do with the eternal than with engineering.

Bob Palmer of Erlanger isn't going to question it, nor is Joan Wester Anderson, who has written best-selling books about the works of angels.

JACK



HICKS

Palmer is a member of Immanuel Baptist Church, Covington, which oversees the Garden of Hope. He is one of several volunteer caretakers and tour guides for the hilltop shrine on Edgecliff Drive above Interstate 75 in Covington.

Palmer wasn't affiliated with the church when the idea for the Garden of Hope was born, or at the time the vital retaining wall was built. But he knows the stories, and like others, he marvels at the wall that keeps a major area of the garden from sliding away.

In the early 1950s, Rev. Maurice Coers was pastor of Immanuel Baptist. On a trip to the Holy Land he viewed a garden tomb generally accepted as the site of Jesus' burial and resurrection.

Please see HICKS, 2K