

New Interest Is Stirring In Covington Garden Of Hope

By CAROLE VALENTINE
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Hope springs again for the Garden of Hope, which has had several revivals as a Covington tourist attraction.

The four-acre tract on a bluff at the west end of 16th Street on Edgecliff Road has a detailed replica of the Holy Land tomb believed to be the burial place of Jesus Christ. It is said to be the only such replica of Christ's tomb in the United States. Also in the Garden is a carpenter shop containing a ge-old tools and work benches typical of Nazareth in the time of Christ.

A statue of Christ kneeling is dedicated to the Sermon on the Mount and a stone from that historic site on the Horns of Hatton is imbedded into the floor of the Chapel of Dreams at the spot where brides and grooms stand to be married. Stone "bridal stairs" lead to the chapel, which boasts three bells said to have belonged to the last Louisville and Nashville Railroad steam engines.

THIS scenic, serene spot sits high above I-75's death hill, and affords an encompassing view of downtown Cincinnati, its surrounding hill ridges and the sweep of Covington and Newport with the hills of Ft. Thomas etched against the sky to the east.

The Garden of Hope is owned by Immanuel Baptist Church, Covington, having reverted to it as recently as February. The garden had been the dream come true of a former Immanuel minister, the late Rev. Morris H. Coers, who accomplished the replica as a shrine for those who may never be able to visit Jerusalem.

The enthusiasm and the number of tourists faded after Rev. Mr. Cours' death in 1960, a few years after the garden was completed.

TODAY there is a new minister at Immanuel, the Rev. Walter Isley, and new hope for the garden.

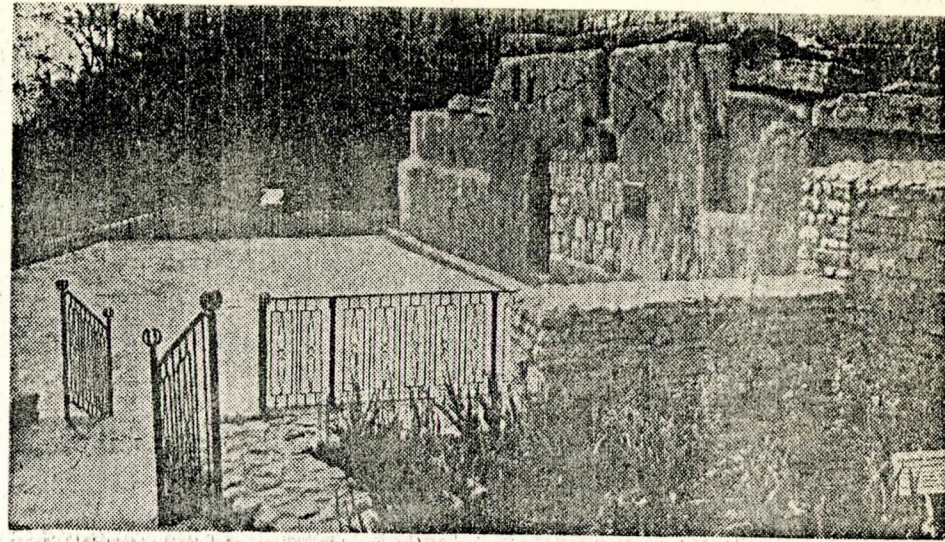
Determined to restore it without jeopardizing the church budget, which does

pay the monthly mortgage payment on the garden, upkeep will depend on individual donations.

"The tomb is the central thing in the garden," Rev. Mr. Isley said, "and is a potential setting for experiencing a spiritual effect."

"The spiritual possibilities are there for everybody. To me, the place is symbolic of the resurrected Christ, eternal life," Rev. Mr. Isley said. "Christianity is the only religion that has an empty tomb, a place where all Christians can unite in their agreement that Christ arose from the dead."

He said that people used to come to the garden every week or so, to pray, to



Local Replica Of Christ's Tomb

... 'symbolic of resurrection, eternal life'

meditate and then go away saying they had found the real meaning of Christianity and answers to problems.

THIS SPRING, there have been about 10 weddings in the chapel, people

of all denominations. An inspiring Sunrise Service was held there.

One couple, married in the chapel, stayed on to live in the apartment above the carpenter shop. Their presence has helped

discourage vandalism and misuse in a place that should be kept beautiful and restful.

Now, with volunteer help from nurserymen, tree pruners and interested groups working under Rev.

Mr. Isley's direction, the original beauty is emerging.

ANYONE desiring to tour the garden can do so by calling Rev. Mr. Isley at his office, 261-6428, or at his home, 431-3426. It is hoped that regular volunteer tour guides and a full schedule of hours will soon make visiting the Garden of Hope pleasant and enlightening. No entrance fee

is asked, and all donations will be used to maintain this unusual Northern Kentucky attraction.

"The whole thing up there brings you closer to religion," Rev. Mr. Isley said. "I see the spiritual possibilities there as a part of my ministry. Everyone can see in a visit the strengthening of their own belief. I think it is a tremendous place to go."

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