It's great to be here. I don't often come over to 502 area code. I live in 859. But sometimes I compromise my principles and come over to five. I've never understood how that rivalry started. And I don't think it's entirely sports and I was oblivious to it for so long, but I like Louisville people, so I have no problem with being here. I have to tell you a funny story about the bell breezing book. I was at a book fair at Cincinnati last weekend. Seems like a long time ago already, and I think it was raining that day too. But I had my little sign up with the title of the book. And you know, everything is different when you cross that river. Have you ever noticed that these men were walking by and I could not get them to come over? They were like this, you know, the van the ward off the vampire sign? Like because they saw the word sex southern brothel. And I was thinking, I don't think Kentucky man would be shying away from this book at all good old southern Kentucky man would take this as an historical treatment, which it is. But anyway, I thought they were amusing. So does anybody or everybody know who Belle breezing was before we start? Okay, then I'm going to tell you know who she was. So that we can say you have a good understanding of her before even start her story. Bell was one of the most famous madams ever in the south. And she had her hay day, really in the gay 90s And the early part of the 20th century, although she started her brothel in the 1880s. But by the time of the 1890s, she was going full steam and Lexington and she got to be known worldwide. And that was because of the horse industry. She rose to prominence at the same time the horse industry was becoming big in Lexington, and they were very closely intertwined in the horse industry. She operated at the center of power for the city. She knew police judges, she knew all the city authorities and she was on good terms with them. She was pardoned by at least two Kentucky governor's. How do you like that? Wouldn't the courier journal and the Lexington Herald Leader be all over that in the modern day but the pardons exist and there's a picture of one of them. In my book and I have seen another pardon. The one we have in the book, I believe is by Luke Blackburn. It was not unusual to be pardoned by the governor. If you are mad them then they seem to the man who has had a lot of influence. And one time there was another madam in the red light district in Lexington named Sue green and she was indicted and I think taken off to jail. And all these city officials and county officials wrote letters on her behalf to the governor asking for her to be let out because she had a family to raise and
and I thought this was just really a different time back then. Then course then it would be now but anyway, so Bell was known for her wonderful mansion for man which I will show you here shortly. And a lot of horsemen used to hang out there because it was more like a gentleman's club than a brothel. It was both but the men could just go there and sit in Bell's parlors and have a bourbon or glass of wine and smoke their cigars and, and be among in the company of other men. If they wanted a club atmosphere, and if they so chose, they could go upstairs with one of the women that worked for Bell. It was a top rate establishment top rate that women were not allowed to come downstairs in the evening unless they wore evening gowns and the men had to be well dressed to go into bells. Bell just didn't take people off the street. She charged more money than all the other brothers in the red light district. And she suffered no bad language or bad behavior. So you had to act like a gentleman if you went to bells and many gentleman went to bells. So the Time Magazine obituary just seems so outlandish now, but that's exactly what happened in 1940 when Bell died at the age of 80. Time ran her obituary. And now that just seems a Amazing to us that they identified her as the keeper of the most orderly of disorderly houses. So the other thing about Rael breezing which I'm sure you would like to know is that she was the prototype for Belle Watling, the madam and Gone With the Wind. And there this is dealt with in my book. Some of Margaret Mitchell's biographers have nailed this down. Margaret Mitchell always denied it in her lifetime, but it's been nailed down by someone in her family. She was afraid of being sued by Bell bracing. So she would always say, oh no, this wasn't modeled after Bell bracing at all. But people in Lexington knew it was because they could see the similarities. And they were always convinced that this was the bell that had served as the model for the other mme for the fictional madam and and Yes, she did. So people will say, Well, how how was this connection made? What did Margaret Mitchell know about a brothel in Lexington and Margaret Mitchell lived in Atlanta. Well, Margaret Mitchell's husband, John Marsh, when he was a young man, one of his first jobs was as a police reporter for one of the Lexington newspapers. And Bell breezing used to open her kitchen to the police reporters and the police man on the beat. That was one way to keep everybody happy. And these guys could go in there and have a good meal. And they would get to know Bell and Bell kept good municipal relations, shall we say and good public relations. That way. She was a smart, smart woman. So John Marsh got to know her that way. And years later, when Margaret Mitchell's writing her novel, he's able to tell her about this character. And the novel. I think it came out in 1936 in the movie in 1939. So Belle Watling was there on the big screen and Belle breezing by then as a recluse in her house and Lexington. So let's get to Bill's life. If I can work this thing, there we go. This is Belle bracing. She wore beautiful hats and beautiful dresses. she shopped a lot in New York after she got to the level where she could afford that she was a wealthy woman. This was her house in Lexington, three storeys there were 20 some rooms at the back. And her apartment is that bay window on the second floor looking out on the street does was her private apartment. I don't know who the gentleman is that posed in front of this brothel. But it could have been one of her boyfriends it I don't know. I mean, he's he's standing there posing I'm always mystified by this. Who was that person we don't know. This again is Bill breezing. This is the iconic photo of Belle that you see most often. She's sitting in her apartment, her private apartment, and it was lavishly furnished. And after I show you the slides, I'll go through more of her story for you. But I would just like you to see what everything look like first. This is Belle as a young girl. Now how do we have a picture of Belle when she was about eight years old? Well, men went through her trash can after she died. And a lot of the pictures and things have been thrown out. And some of them even torn. You'll see a torn picture here in a minute. But they rescued a lot of this stuff. And we are so glad they did because now it is in Special Collections at University of Kentucky. And this is how the research can be done. It's just like coming to the Filson society. And being able to do research, somebody cares and somebody saves the stuff and then somebody donates it. And we historians love that. This was a scrapbook Belle kept as a young girl. It was given to her by the
man who quote unquote, ruined her at she was 13 or 14 at the time. I think she was about 13 And he gave her a scrapbook and it's looks like any young girl scrapbook. There's pictures cut out from cards and magazines in it. Belle was just like anybody else except she had a bad reputation already when she was a very young girl. And I know this because the newspapers would be making fun of her even as a young teenager so you can tell people in Lexington which was a small place then knew who she was and knew, knew that she was getting around so to speak, and they they laughed at her. This is the first woman she went to work for and I will talk about her a little more in a minute. Her name was Jenny Hill and she operated in the house. She had a brother in the house where Mary Todd Lincoln had spent part of her youth and where the President came to visit Mary Todd Lincoln's family of Robert Todd. The neighborhood obviously declined. And by but it didn't decline that much because Jenny Hal had the best brothel in Lexington at the time. So it was upscale. But you know, it's not like it was when Mary Todd Lincoln was a young girl. And that was the house. This is some years later, there was a grocery store in front by them. Let me flip forward really quickly and show it to you now. They give tours, they don't generally mention who was its most famous resident other than Mary Todd Lincoln. But anyway, they've done a really good job of restoring this house from it falling into ruin to this beautiful building. This was the first place that Belle had her own brother after she left Jenny Hill. Again, I'm doing this so you'll be able to picture in your mind when I talk about her. What kind of building she was working in. It's a row house on South upper Street and I'm sorry, North upper Street in Lexington. And pretty much looks the same today except it's been restored. You know who owns it Now does anybody know? Transylvania University. It is a woman's locker room for the athletics field. How ironic that is. This was the first house that Bill owned on upper Street. And while she was there for a few years before she moved into her big mansion. She got to be known really well for her parties during the races. She was maybe Lexington first and Premier entertainer during the horse races. Here is a story which I'll pause at and let you read or I'll read it to you it says a ball at Miss Bell breathing and it would have been at that house I just showed you which will come off during the races will probably be pretty breezy and the proprietress will be the belle of the ball. A large attendance is anticipated. Reporter will be provided with a telephone and telescope and we'll take it in from the top of Morrison college was Transylvania University. I don't think this was true. It was in the newspaper. Not all things back then. Certainly not now. We're not true. But I think it speaks to the fact that the community recognize the amount of money flowing through Belle's house during the races and how entwined she was with the local economy. This is her account book one of them. The book is missing now. It's supposed to be at UK and special collections. I've turned UK upside down and we cannot find the book. However, some pages from the book were photocopied and put in the collection at Special Collections at UK but not all the pages and you have to wonder if you believe in conspiracy theories, and I do. How come not all the pages made it into the collection. And what happened to the book? I don't know. Here's the pardon. All these photos are taken from the book by the way Look, Blackboard and one of our governors pardoning Bell breathing for keeping a body house. Bell was indicted regularly. She never went to jail. She had friends in high places. That's Main Street in Louisville. Probably when she was a young girl. This is Harrods story. Winchester road, if any of you know where the Hamburg mall is in Lexington. That's the corner where it is. But John Madden bought a horse farm on the right. Or a farm he turned into a horse farm named Hamburg place named after one of his race horses and he developed a really famous horse farm there before generations of the family later sold it and it became a mall. This is I want you to remember what this man looks like when we um, when I get to talking about I'm William singer Lee, an industrialist from Philadelphia, tons of money, which is what a sugar daddy needs. Right? We'll be talking about him. The house again. This is Billy made on the tragic character in this story. He was Belle's true love. It wasn't the rich guy I just showed you. It was belly Mae Bong. The sad thing about Billy, he got to live at Bell's house all time, all the time, except when the sugar daddy came to
mentally challenged. I don't mean emotionally challenged. I mean, mentally, in the old days, but about age seven, they began to realize the baby Daisy Mae Kenny was her name was have been a prostitute already. The baby was raised by this neighbor woman, Mrs. Burnett and daughter, and Belle hits the streets, she becomes a prostitute right away. I think she might have been a prostitute already. The baby was raised by this neighbor woman, Mrs. Burnett and but about age seven, they began to realize the baby Daisy Mae Kenny was her name was mentally challenged. I don't mean emotionally challenged. I mean, mentally, in the old days,
we would have said retarded, and she didn't know what was going on. Could that have been the result of Bill drinking and living? A life of getting around, keep wanting to say the other word. I don't know. But But Daisy Mae would be this way the rest of her life. And Val had been married briefly, I think for a week when she was 15. Also, but that wasn't the father of Daisy Mae and Belle got divorced about five years later. So Bella, I mean, she's not even 16 and she has really seen life already. The next time we hear from Belle, she's, I think she was about 18 or 19. I'm terrible with ages and dates. And I tell my students, you don't have to remember dates in my history courses because I can't remember dates. Oh, they love that. That gets us off to a great start. Anyway, there was a newspaper item that Val breezing had attempted to commit suicide in a pact with another woman and I can't figure this out. I don't know if Belle was bisexual, or what was going on. But she and this woman both took morphine and tried to kill themselves. They were both prostitutes at the time, street prostitutes, and Bell revealed to the reporter that she had. It wasn't the first time she had tried to overdose on morphine. So she had a habit, a drug habit, and she wasn't happy with her life. But within less than a year, she is in the house, the brothel run by Jenny Hill, whom you saw up here. So Jenny Hill is running the most exclusive brothel in Lexington at the time in the Mary Todd Lincoln house. Bell must have cleaned herself up and got and killed her drug habit in order to get taken in by this madam Jenny Hill, because a pretty good clientele is visiting Jenny hills. So Belle goes to work for her and she stays there about a year and a half. And when she leaves, this is very indicative of how much Bell had risen in the community. When she leaves. She rents that row house that Transylvania University now owns and she is able on her own recognizance to go down on her signature, go down to merchants on Main Street and get furniture, fabrics. Everything she needs to furnish the row house, which will be her brothel. She gets loans from these merchants, which I find amazing. She just signs for loans. And she would be charged interest and she had deadlines for paying them off. She always paid them off well before they were due. But what merchant today would would just give a prostitute credit like that. It just boggles my mind. But somebody either spoke for bail, or they knew bail. Who knows? But you can find this in the mortgage books that here's bail breezing getting all this furniture like bad springs. Yeah, it's funny. Big mirrors they call them peer mirrors. What else fabric for making drapes and Bell knew how to sew. Her mother had been a seamstress. She knew how to sew though, and all kinds of things to furnish this house with. So she's there for a while and very soon buys her own house further up the same street. Where did she get the money? The brothels weren't making that much money. But somebody must be speaking for Belle in abling her to get these mortgages. She gets the house on a mortgage. She buys it on credit, so to speak, and she moves up the street and this is the first house she owned. And that is the house that you saw the torn photograph of and where she had that. The newspaper article about Bal de Demi monde during the race meet where she would be having the ball and the reporter would be watching through a spyglass from the top of Transylvania University. So Bell is moving on up always, always with the explicit permission of the community, which I find in our monitoring context. So strange. Bell stayed at her new house, her first house she owned for a couple of years, I think, and then something but potentially disastrous begins to build. There were neighbors around that new house that didn't like the idea of there were three madams on the street. And there was a man who came to Lexington that start stirring up these neighbors. He was a defrocked Presbyterian minister. And he decided even though he'd lost his religion, he said he lost his religion. He was going to go after in Lexington, the horse racing interests, the liquor interests and the prostitutes. You're not going to win that war in Lexington. I'm sorry, I can only picture Don Quixote, you know, tilting after windmills. He he certainly did not get the horse racing interests and he did not get the liquor interest but he had some mild success in in getting a petition up among citizens to get these brothels close these three brothels on this one Street North upper Street. And I don't know what happened to the other two Madams if they moved out or not, but Bill did, she took out an ad in the newspaper saying I am leaving my
residence. If anybody has any accounts open with me, please settle them up as soon as possible. Again, this is mind boggling. So she moves. Now, this is when she buys that big mansion that you saw. But where did she get the money to buy a big mansion? She had a boyfriend. Remember the singer Lee man from Philadelphia? Well, it was there were two brothers, George and William. You saw Williams picture? I cannot find a picture of George. We don't know which one it was or if your mind should go in this direction. Maybe both of them. Were her sugar daddies. The reason I don't know is because in the documents, there had been written George singer late. And in Bill's original biographer crossed that out and put William this is all on TypeScript. And he wrote in longhand William, but he left no explanation. I know from my own research that both brothers would come to Lexington to buy trotters. And they both loved driving their own trotters. Eventually both of them also got into thoroughbred racing. But if they're both coming there, and we don't know which one it was, Who am I to say it might not have been both of them befriending bail. But the thing was when one or both of the singer ladies would come to Lexington, which was often from what I can tell, he would he or they would take a room at the Phoenix Hotel, which is where all the horsemen stayed at the time. It was our grandest hotel was like the Galt house was in Louisville. And and they or he would send flowers out to Bell's house to the mansion. And that was the signal for belly Mae Bong her true love to get out of the house because the money man was coming in to stay and usually stay for the whole race meet. So, Billy, really that's why I say it was tragic. He had to always bow down to the money because he didn't have any money himself and Bill Bell paid attention to money money got her places. So she let the singer Lee's rule in the house and or the singer Lee. We might never know which one it was but they bought excellent trot. Horses very fast trotting horses and they were part of that trotting horse culture that existed before automobiles. When wealthy men, particularly in the major urban centers, like New York, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Cleveland would buy these fast trotters hitch them to their own little vehicles, like, you know that trotters pull something called a sulky, which is like a little cart, and they would race them against their buddies who all had money at private clubs, just like going to a country club on a Sunday afternoon, these guys would go to their driving club, and they would race around on their private track. They would also race on certain city streets. New York, it was called the Harlem Speedway, it was just roads in Harlem, where they had unofficially designated that that's where we'll race and everybody else had to get out of their way. But it was not unusual in New York on the Harlem Speedway to see William Vanderbilt driving his Trotter racing by a newspaper owner, William Bonner, and having a rivalry with one or more of his friends and see who could get the best trotters will. A lot of those guys either sent their representatives to Lexington to find fast horses, or they would come themselves. George and William singer Lee came to Lexington themselves, so Bell has building up Bell breathing is building up connections in the trotting horse business and later she would do the same in the thoroughbred business after thoroughbred people started coming to Lexington after the advent of the automobile. And when thoroughbred racing is, is surpassing trotting racing. So Belle is making a lot of connections among important men, besides, in addition to Kentucky governors and police judges, and all the politicians of Lexington and lawyers, businessmen, bankers, anybody who had any power, she's manipulating the strings of power in the shadows, mind you, she's a brothel keeper. But she's at the center of power because she knows all these people. Now. She's also when she moves to her new mansion. After the Reformers run her out on upper street, she is going into a district that was becoming known as the Red Light District. And this was a phenomenon of the 1890s, early 20th century, when almost every city in the United States and maybe North America, I haven't looked into Canada yet would unofficially designate a certain part of the city as a place where brothels would be allowed to operate without any police interference. It was against the law, but they would be left alone because the thinking the cutting edge thinking at the time was if we corral the prostitutes into one part of the city, they they won't be able to come out of there and therefore they won't expose the general
population to sin. Or however you want to look at it. In other words, it's wink wink if we can't see you, you're not really there. But so many important men knew how to find their way to the red light district. Now, later on. The whole thinking of Americans would change during the progressive era of the early 1900s onward through the First World War, that they were no longer going to tolerate red light districts in the cities. And that would close down or pretty much closed down. Not only the red light districts across the country, but a way of life in which prostitution was much more accepted than it would be afterwards. So bell in her new neighborhood now the red light district is able to operate without any interference from reformers, from neighbors anything. She really comes into her glory in this large mansion that you saw, and gains renown. Some men took a load of horses to Argentina, and they heard another man in a hotel down there talking about bail breezing in Lexington. She was she was she's gone from the little girl in a poor part of Lexington who has a bad reputation to a woman who is known worldwide and talked about with not only respect but some kind of awe for what she was because she built herself up as a Southern belle at a time when people want to think of Kentucky as populated with Southern belles. Belle knew how to play the game. She took the money that the singularly fortune gave her and she bought that house but she had plenty of money left over it was rumored to be $50,000 that was given to her in the house costs are less than 5000. She invested her money, she was so smart. She was such a good business woman. And she invested in the stock market. And in real estate, she owned about four houses at one point and she was not operating the other houses as brothels they were rental properties. So she had learned how to spread her money around. No doubt she had somebody advising her how to do this, but she had come a long way in life to be such a business woman. And she would keep accounts in her account book. And because she was opening the bar every night so she I have seen a page where she would write down how many drinks a certain she would name the man and how many drinks they had, what their bar tab was things like this because it was all business. It was a business of running a gentlemen's club plus the brothel. One interesting thing happened 18 No, I'm sorry. I'm 19. The 1930s After Bell had long been shut down. She was shut down during World War One as we were going to World War One. And she's now an old woman. And some gentleman in Lexington historians mostly were called to her house by her personal physician. He said she has a collection of books she's considering donating to University of Kentucky. And would you like to come and see them and one of these men? William Townsend, I think it was it was either he or Winston Coleman, one or the other. His buddies shows up at his house and yells from the driveway. Hey, would you like to go visit a whorehouse? And this is written in the pamphlet. Both men wrote pamphlets about this visit that they made to look at the books and it's in one of those pamphlets, either Townsend or Coleman's. And so they all go on up there. And in the company of Dr. Thomas Clark. We all know who he was. He's part of this group. So they make this I always have to make it clear when I write about a professional visit to Belle bracings house. She long had since ceased operating a brother but she's still living in the house. So they go to look at the books. And William Townsend kind of lags behind as the others go upstairs to her apartment to check out these books. And he starts pillaging through a little bookcase, a secretary and finds the account book which is now missing but we had for a while. And he also found a photograph which also is missing. And it was a picture of the three parlors of bells house opened up so there's a long banquet table. There are men in full evening attire and seated with young women and full evening attire. This beautifully decorated table belted brought out all the silver flowers, everything. And on the back of the photo was written my opening night 1891 says she'd been in the house since 1890. But she spent a lot of time remodeling it so I guess she had a delayed opening at 91. And William Townsend when he wrote about this, in his pamphlet, said that I looked at this photo and he was a lawyer besides being in a story and he said when I first came to the bar to practice, these were the senior lawyers in town and I recognized a lot of them. Now, I would give my firstborn cat to have this photo. It's never been seen. Did William
Townson take it with him. I don't know. He never mentions if he put it back in the photo album, or took it. He did say I took the account book. But he didn't say Would you leave that photo behind I wouldn't I you know, course some we don't want to think of people taking historical collections. That's a big no no here at the Filson or anywhere else but but William Townsend said I took the account book I kind of slipped it out and what happened to the photo. There's never Another mention of this photo. And I would love to see it. I would just love to see how Bill's place was decorated. He describes it at great length in his pamphlet, which I'm sure they have here. If you ever want to read it. Read the Filson downtown. But what happened to that photo there been a lot of things is like that, in researching the bell story that are just simply missing. I don't know if anybody was trying to protect anybody else or who or what, but there's just things we don't have anymore. But we know that bell had this grand opening. And it must have been the social occasion of the season, which is interesting that that she would be able to bring a segment of society of high society and Lexington into her house. They would recognize her as a hostess when the women of Lexington and of course wouldn't and they shun bell when you know, they would turn their faces when she drove downtown in her elegant carriage. She used to ride her horse downtown, she had a beautiful horse, apparently. And it got frightened one day and fell over on top of her it that was written about in the newspaper, the newspaper was constantly not constantly but frequently reporting on bell that way, although she never gave interviews, but after that when she ride into town in her carriage, people would sort of snub her. Why? Because of what she was, I don't know. But she had high society, the male half of it coming to her house and dressing for the occasion. And so, maybe, Belle felt slighted by the community. I don't know. We can always speculate about things, but we have no evidence. We have no documents to tell us how she felt, since she never let us know. But certainly a number of her friends and former employees also talked about her and they all loved her. And we have those interviews. And she apparently among those who knew her was very popular, very well liked. She was known to be generous, even though St. Joseph Hospital shunned or refuse to take a charitable donation from her just like happened to Belle Watling and Gone With the Wind by the way. Mill lived in a shadow world. And then the community which had once accepted her and the red light district turned on her. And that was part of that era, where people had the urge to reform we call it the progressive era began sort of when Teddy Roosevelt came into the White House around 1900. And it lasted through first world war and after that nobody wanted to reform anymore. They'd had enough of it, and they were ready to be hedonist which they were in the 1920s. But you could see in the newspapers and in Grand Jury reports in Lexington, that there was this momentum building where we are becoming appalled at the idea of having brothels in our midst, and built and built until about 1915. When these were farmers were getting so strong, they were persuading city officials that now we have to do something and they finally passed ordinances closing the red light district. Now Bill quietly reopened after these ordinances were passed and a couple of other madams on her street quietly reopened. They kept operating for about two more years. But as I said earlier, what finally closed them down was the US Army. Because when we were preparing to send young men over to Europe, we had a training camp in Lexington called Camp Stanley. And across America, parents were worried about their young man when they sent them off when the army would send them to these training camps. They were worried the young men would become exposed to saloons and to prostitution. So the army had to step in and go into cities in and close these things down. So that is when the death knell sounded for bail. The army came in, they saw that there was prostitution still going on in the red light district. And they they had the power to close the brothels down after that bell, just close down shop. And so she died a little more than 20 years later, but for those final two decades, she pretty much stuck to herself. She still had money to live off of. We know she subscribed to the newspaper because I've seen the receipts and people said they could see her in the evening reading the newspaper up in her window, her bay window that face the street and she was there but not really they're
always living in the shadows. And as for her daughter, Daisy Mae. She spent her life and institutions Bell always supported her. She lived with nuns in institutions. And she got moved from Northern Kentucky up to MIT Michigan and that's where she died some time after Bell died in 1940. Then Daisy Mae died. And she is buried in Michigan Daisy Mae is now Bell is buried in the Catholic cemetery in Lexington. Catholic Diocese doesn’t want to talk about this. Iran ran into some real roadblocks. In fact, I was inquiring May I look at the burial cards because bale owned a plot for 12 people there. And they said, No, we can't show you those. This is holy ground. I said, holy ground. And I said, I'm a card carrying Catholic you don't need to tell me about holy ground. But I find that you have the best known Brother's Keeper buried in your cemetery. And I would just like to look at the records, which by the way, are at UK the original one, they were photocopied, but I wanted to take another look at them. And they wouldn't, they just stopped answering my emails or my phone calls. So I didn't somebody 10s her grave, also, with a little garden in front of it, and they wouldn't give me information on who's attending the grave. So they left me clueless about that I'm bitter. Yes, I thought they might excommunicate me there for a while. But interestingly, at the first talk I gave when the book was launched, there was a priest in sitting in the back of the room, an elderly priest, and he told me, the priest who had given Bell the last rites of the Catholic Church, the night she died, had also baptized him when he was a really old man. And I said, I've got to talk to you sometime, I need to track you down and talk to you because I just find it interesting. You know, Bill in her life, nobody mentioned anything about her going to church. But when they appraised her estate, before they offered it at auction, and had to be through probate court, all her items listed, there were rosaries in her possession. And these were offered at the auction. So she, I guess she was baptized Catholic, but when and by whom I have no idea. Maybe some other future historian might be able to give us more insight someday. And I keep hoping a diary of one of our girls might pop out of someone's attic or something. Who knows what we might find in the future. It's unfortunate Bill didn't do interviews. Or we might know more about how she felt about things, but that's the way it is. But I think it's a testament to the position she held in the community that there actually is a collection about her at UK. Now, I'll be glad to take any questions. Yes. Billy may bond died before Bell died. This is sad too. I mean, he might have been her closest friend. And he died. He had um, I think he had a kidney disease. And he died some years before Bell shut down her business actually, and Bailey sister, where the viewing was held at her house allowed bill to bail to come one night after all the other mourners had left. So Bill and she left bell in the room alone with Billy's body. So Belle got to spend some final time with Billy may bong and William singer Lee and George singly, we're both deceased by that time. So it's kind of a poignant moment. Bell did not go to the funeral the next day, and Bailey was sent to Cincinnati to be cremated. He belonged to a prominent family in Lexington, the family of the thunder bowl to the Confederacy. John Hunt Morgan and a rather his sister, his sister had married into that family I'm sorry I keep getting that confused but they were well connected in town. And it must have bothered that family that Billy would be seen driving with bell breezing in a carriage through town and be so connected with her but the sister to her credit, inviting bail or agreeing to have bail come and visit with Billy before they send them off to be cremated I think was very admirable. very admirable. So another question Yes, sir. Yes. No. Well, she had a banker, who was taking had been taking care of her accounts. While she became more and more ill will late in life, McFarland was his name. And she had actually met him through belly Mae Bong. And he remained her banker for years and years and he was taking care of her financial business at the end. Then the priest who gave her last rites also came to the cemetery to bury her. And she had friends among like former girl employees that came, it was a very small group from what we understand. We know this from one of the pallbearers who it was his father who owned the funeral home that buried her. And he he told that who was there that was recorded? I forgot where we were going with this. Oh, is the grave site elaborate? No, it's not. Belle does not have a huge headstone. She's got a headstone. And
that would have been ordered out of the estate, but it's not big. It has her name, and her birth year is wrong on it. And I believe her name is misspelled. Everybody was always misspelling her surname. And there is only one E in it. But I think because it's pronounced breezing everybody wants to think there's two E's in there. And there is an obelisk on the grave. The little plot that has 12 places in it, the obelisk is to her mother. I don't know if her mother's bones are in the ground there or in another Catholic cemetery because when the mother died 1876 They had just switched over to this new Catholic cemetery. And that's another thing I couldn't find out from the diocese. If the mother might have been actually buried in the old cemetery and Belle just later erected this obelisk to in honor of her mother, which says on the side of it, bless it be the pure in heart. Keeping in mind, her mother was a prostitute. Anyway, there are other people buried in that plot. And they were believed to be some former girls of Bell's or other prostitute she knew. And one young man who was always in trouble with the law. I just think bill would allow these people to be buried there because she was a generous person and maybe didn't want to see them go to a potter's grave. And, and so all 12 places were filled up, but whether the mothers in there I don't know. Did you have a question, sir? Okay. And I'd love to know who's tending. There's some little bushes in front of the gravestone or the little head headstone in. It's kind of pretty, it's these are things that will bloom in all seasons. But I can't get the information on who tends it. Other graves don't have that. But somebody loves Belle enough that they take care of her grave. And I think that's wonderful that people honor this historical character, enough to tend the grave. Yes. She didn't have enough to start a trust. When she died. She had very little left in her checking account. What money was left came from the sale of her personal effects. And that went to Daisy Mae's care up in Michigan. So by the time Bill died, there was not a whole lot left. And I know there wasn't a trust. I think it's somebody's kindness. And yes, yes, she did. Wait a minute. I might have her confused with someone. I'm terrible about this. I mean, I haven't looked at this in a year because it takes that long to get a book in print. No, she did not have a will. She? She went through probate. She did not have a will. But they just put everything in Daisy Kenny, Daisy Mae Kenny's name. And there were depositions taken about guardianship of Daisy Mae Kenny, up in Michigan, and it was people testified that newer either from Lexington or up there in Michigan that she she did not know what was going on in life. She was an adult woman and she thought she was about 12 years old and her mother was about that age and things like this. So she was very damaged. Okay, over here that is a corset. I don't know if we can get it back up. I guess I would have to open the computer for that. That's a corset. Here we go. And That was taken, I think from a stock photo by the publisher. They designed the cover for me. They also write the title for me. I am no good at writing titles. But I've actually been asked that question before and believe it or not, when they sent me a PDF document of the cover after they designed it, and I looked at it, I said, What is this? I didn't know either, but a lot of other people knew right away. So I felt I felt like pretty simple, but believe it or not, people are still asking me that question. So I guess we're all not so simple. I mean, we're in good company many of