

The Filson

A Publication of The Filson Historical Society, Kentucky's Oldest and Largest Independent Historical Society



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FROM THE PRESIDENT

As the newest member of The Filson community, I have been welcomed in unexpected ways. Filson members and supporters have called and written with good wishes and suggestions for programs. Strangers have spoken to me at the grocery store and the bakery offering their best hopes for The Filson's future and especially for the new building project. One longtime Filson member knocked on my door at home to offer her congratulations. Actually, she knocked on several doors to find me since she did not know my address, just that I lived near the Daniel Boone statue. She found me and we had a delightful visit.

All of which reminds me that The Filson is indeed a community. The Filson is a cherished institution for all of Louisville but for the members, it's something more. The Filson represents a gathering of people who not only love history, but they choose to do something about it. Joining the historical society and coming together for programs and events puts their love of history into action. I am grateful and impressed that so many people are ready to act on their love of history and their pride in Kentucky and the Ohio River valley.

Personally, I feel like I've landed at The Filson at the perfect moment. There is a great deal of disruption that comes with working in a construction zone – you would not believe what the staff goes through every day just to get their jobs done. But their optimism and their perseverance seem to be driven by what they know lies ahead. The new Owsley Brown II History Center, the renovated Ferguson mansion, and the renovated carriage house will allow us to provide a level of service and quality that Louisville has never seen.

Glad to have you with us.



Craig Buthod
President

FROM THE DIRECTOR

I am delighted to share the exciting news that Craig Buthod has been appointed by the Board of Directors as the new President and CEO of The Filson Historical Society. Craig recently retired after serving 17 highly successful years as the Executive Director of the Louisville Free Public Library. Craig was selected after an extensive national search that drew highly qualified candidates from around the country. Our sincere gratitude goes to search committee members J. McCauley Brown, Orme "Sandy" Wilson, Emily Bingham, Anne Ogden, Larry Muhammad, and Holly Gathright, as well as our Search Consultant, Bryan & Jordan of Richmond, Virginia. Their time, wisdom, and wise counsel are greatly appreciated. Craig began on Monday, September 21, 2015. He brings terrific energy, enthusiasm, creativity and expertise to the organization. Craig is eager to become acquainted with our members, donors, and supporters!

The Cornerstone project to expand/renovate the campus continues to make excellent progress. It remains essentially on schedule and on budget. If you have not done so, please visit our website and view the exciting photographs. Maintaining normal operations during the construction has been especially challenging for the staff. Nevertheless, they have endured and persevered throughout the process. Indeed, membership and annual giving have both increased this year. We are so thankful for their commitment!

Finally, I want to extend our heartfelt appreciation to our former director, Dr. Mark V. Wetherington, for his dedicated and loyal service to The Filson for the past 22 years! Under his leadership, The Filson has enjoyed tremendous growth and success. It has earned a national reputation for his scholarship and its collections. It has become one of the leading historical societies in the country. Mark will continue with The Filson as a Senior Research fellow, for which we are very grateful.

As always, we deeply appreciate your support! The future has never been brighter for The Filson!



Carl Thomas
Chairman of the Board

BOARD MEMBERS

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The Filson

is published quarterly by
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Louisville, KY 40208
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OUR MISSION:

To collect, preserve, and
tell the significant stories
of Kentucky and Ohio
Valley history and culture.

Recent Acquisitions



1

Excellent additions to The Filson's collection were acquired over the past few months. Several of the items are pictured here. From wonderful family photos of the Lilly-Parker-White-Cooper family and of "The Kentuckians" honoring Henry Watterson at their annual dinner at New York City's famous Waldorf-Astoria Hotel on the eve of the famous editor's departure for a European tour to William S. Arrasmith's diary chronicling the World War II landing of Allied troops at Salerno, Italy, these items represent only a few of the welcome additions to our collection. Thank you to these and our other donors that keep our collections growing!

1. Sept 4. Ports aux Paques, Algeria
Moving out for transport
loading tomorrow at Oran.
All confusion over now,
last of long series of revision
to all plans finally made.
This is it and invasion
of Italy is on -!
Sept 5. Moved out for Meers
El-Kahia at 8 am arriving
by motor convey on dock
at 9:15 - at 9:45 L.C. 2 is put
out from our ship (a
British Luxury Liner) the
Dutchess of Bedford. She
is a 2000 ton job and
looks like a fine boat.
Arriving on board find large
bar facilities and plenty

2



3

1. Annual dinner of "The Kentuckians" at the Waldorf-Astoria honoring Henry Watterson on the eve of his departure for Europe, December 11, 1906. Gift of Craig Peterhansen.

2. Lt. Col. William S. Arrasmith's diary of the amphibious landing by Allied troops at Salerno, Italy, in September of 1943. Arrasmith was a Louisvillian and prominent architect, perhaps best known for the Bowman Field administration building. William S. Arrasmith Papers. Gift of Anne A. Lewis.



4

3. The Rev. Dr. Edward P. Humphrey of the College Street Presbyterian Church, Louisville, dated July 16, 1867; flanked by Mary Parker and an unidentified woman, no date; and little Attee White, dated September 22, 1869. Lilly-Parker-White-Cooper Family Photograph Collection. Gift of J. Cooper Lilly.

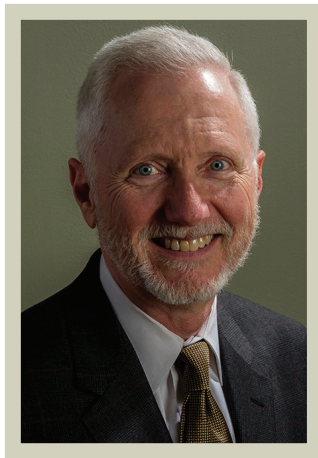


4. Trade card for the "famous" McFerran, Shallcross & Co. "Magnolia Ham," ca. 1890. Gift of Keith Wulff.

40 MINUTES WITH CRAIG BUTHOD

BY JAMIE EVANS | MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS COORDINATOR

In September, The Filson's leadership passed from Dr. Mark Wetherington to Craig Buthod. Craig's professional career spans 40 years as one of the country's leading librarians and authorities on institutions of education and knowledge. After serving in library leadership positions in Seattle and Tulsa, Craig spent the last 16 years as Director of the Louisville Free Public Library. In 2015, he was awarded *Louisville Defender Newspaper's* 2015 "Lifetime" Community Service Recognition Award.



When asked about the selection process for this position, Board Chairman Carl Thomas said: "Craig Buthod was selected by the Filson Board of Directors after a nationwide search. The Search Committee of the Board was advised by Bryan & Jordan of Richmond, Virginia which did an outstanding job of developing excellent candidates from California to the east coast. The committee had the challenging task of narrowing the focus to four semi-finalists, who were invited to Louisville to meet with the committee and tour the Filson campus. Craig distinguished himself because of his extensive leadership experience, his proven success as a fund and friend raiser, his broad knowledge of our community, and his extensive experience with large capital/construction projects. He also has significant experience with technology. Craig's high energy level, his creativity, his terrific communication skills, and his enthusiasm were important factors in his selection. His poise, warmth, and gregarious nature made him the ideal selection. We have every confidence that he will lead the Filson forward during these exciting times for the organization."

In addition to his stellar resume and professional career, Craig is an interesting person when he is off duty. While our members have been introduced to him via letter and in person around town, who is Craig the person? I sat down with Craig in September to find out a little bit more about him, his interests, and where he sees The Filson going in the next ten years.

JE: *What drew you to this position (President and CEO)?*

CB: I was the director of the library for almost 17 years, and part of what attracted me to this position is the skill set I could bring to this organization. If I had some successes at the library, they were in programming, in fundraising, in developing buildings and making best use of them, and media relations. I was excited to see The Filson opening because I thought I had a background that could help me serve the community in a different way.

The short hand is that I am looking forward to having fun and learning something every day. So far, in my first weeks, I've gone home exhausted every night and come back every morning inspired.

JE: *What are some of the new things you are learning?*

CB: I'm learning more about Kentucky history, since I'm from Oklahoma. And while I have a great rolodex and I know a lot of people in Louisville, there are a lot of people in The Filson's circle that I don't know and I'm enjoying meeting them.

JE: *What is something you'd like the membership to know about you?*

CB: I'm a bicyclist, I do enjoy that. I started that when I was 50 and I've gained a lot from it, like learning Louisville neighborhoods, and for health benefits. I'm one of 12 children. I studied history as an undergraduate, it was not my degree but I was close to a minor. I was on the board of the Tulsa County Historical Society as a young man and I loved it. I also worked with history groups in Seattle when I lived there for most of the 90s. I've visited 49 states. I'm holding out on Rhode Island until they give me a reason to visit. I do love to travel. I've hiked along the Lewis and Clark Trails and camped by the Missouri River.

JE: *It look like you have a lot of experience working with historical institutions even though you didn't necessarily work in a historical society setting.*

CB: That's right. My whole career has been aimed at the same aims of The Filson, to collect and preserve, and share our cultural

heritage. I just did it in public libraries, and now I'm doing it at The Filson. That's why I feel so good about making that transition. It's not a giant leap. I'm not going into nursing or auto mechanics.

JE: *What's the thing that you are passionate about?*

CB: What am I passionate about? There are so many things I could say. I'm passionate about education. I told you the story about being 15 years old and wanting to be an education administrator.

JE: *Did you want to work in higher education or K-12?*

CB: I was 15; I probably thought I could do my principal's job better than he could. I don't really remember. I was really surprised to see it when I was going through my papers.

There are a lot of things I really love, but to say I'm passionate about something is hard for me. I love good food, I like travel. I like fine furniture. I don't have a lot, but I like to go to museums and see fine furniture from years past. I like that even more than the art, although it is an art, I shouldn't make that distinction.

JE: *Do you have a favorite decade or era?*

CB: It's whatever is in front of me. I like to appreciate what's there.

JE: *What's your favorite thing about Louisville as an outsider?*

CB: That's easy. The short answer is the people. The people here are genuinely in favor of your success. People really want to help, and that's very different from a lot of cities. Here, people really do care that you find a good neighborhood, that you know where the best groceries are, and they are genuinely in favor of your success. It was a delight to come here and experience that. Now that I've been here 17 years, I understand that. There is a greater sense of community here and a sense that we are in this together.

Another thing I really like about Louisville is the trees. People don't realize what a good thing we have. It's so green.

JE: *What is it about Louisville that sets it apart from the other cities you've lived in?*

CB: The people know what happened to their school or their neighborhood, and a lot of them know and care about Kentucky history. I find that wonderful.

JE: *Where do you see The Filson in the next 10 years?*

CB: I see The Filson taking the best advantage of our new building, through exhibits, gatherings, programming, and for educational activities for young people. I see The Filson a lot more involved in educational programming. On a separate note, over the next 10 years, I anticipate The Filson acquiring lots of collections from people as they are clearing out their houses or as old folks pass on. We will be seeing more and more coming to our collections.

Among the things that I appreciate in an organization like this is the financial propriety or financial responsibility that we provide to the donors and supporters so they can rest assured that we pay close attention and that we take care. I like the personal values of the institution, including ethical values.

JE: *How do you feel the digital revolution that we're in is going to affect an institution like The Filson?*

CB: I think it will make us stronger and a lot more valuable across the world. The way I look at it is that the people who founded The Filson and supported it all these years understood that collecting and preserving history is a responsibility to the world. Helping people have access to that is our responsibility. Digitizing will help us to share what we collect with so many more people without geographic barriers. It's a great boon for researchers.

JE: *What do you think will make The Filson the go-to place for local and regional history?*

CB: Part of how you do that is by making news. We'll make news when we open the new building, but we'll also make news when we get new collections coming to us. Let's give them something to talk about.

JE: *What can we do to increase public awareness of The Filson?*

CB: We have a great strength here, and we want to share that, with more people knowing who we are and what we do. Most people don't know about us, so the challenge is to reach more people with the message that we have something of remarkable value here and they can enjoy it.

Browsing in Our Archives

Wounded Warriors: The Medical Records of Dr. William Allen Bush

BY JAMES M. PRICHARD | MANUSCRIPT CATALOGER

Like all wars, the pain and suffering veterans endured on the battlefield did not end once they returned home. However unlike those who served in past conflicts, the veterans of World War I confronted all the horrors of modern, mechanized warfare - machine guns, tanks, poison gas, and aerial attacks.

On March 3, 1919, nearly six months after Armistice Day ended the slaughter in Europe, Congress passed an act that authorized the United Public Health Service to oversee the treatment and rehabilitation of the nation's wounded and disabled veterans. Designated treatment facilities were established across the land including several in Kentucky cities. The Filson holds the surviving medical records of Dr. William Allen Bush, who supervised the Public Health Service office in Winchester, Kentucky.

Dr. William Bush (1870-1930), a Clark County native, graduated from Transylvania University's medical school in 1905. He practiced his profession in Winchester until 1916 when he established Bush's Hospital, which was described as "a modern structure with twenty four rooms and accommodations for fifteen patients." Following America's entry into the World War, he served as a medical examiner for the Clark County Draft Board. On October 22, 1918 he was appointed a captain in the Army Medical Corps. Captain Bush never served "Over There," but he performed important service at the military embarkation hospital in Hoboken, New Jersey. He also served at the disembarkation hospital in New York City where he treated many wounded soldiers after their return from France. Discharged in 1919, he returned to Winchester and resumed his work at the local hospital until he was appointed an assistant surgeon under the Civil Service Commission.

From 1919 until 1921, Dr. Bush treated veterans from all branches of the service, both black and white, who lived primarily in the Kentucky counties of Clark, Madison, Estill, Montgomery, Menifee, Bath, Rowan, Morgan, and Wolfe. His medical record book recorded the names, age, race, occupation, and marital status of his patients as well as their rank, unit, and nature of their wound or disability. Two additional volumes for the same period track the appointments and treatment prescribed for the same individuals.

The entries in his patient record book reflect the brutal nature of trench warfare on the Western Front for many Kentuckians. One veteran reported he suffered a gunshot wound to the leg at Soissons in July 1918 and was wounded again in the right arm during the



"Advise he be given employment out of doors, by which he can make a living for his wife and child. I advise mail carrying."

- Dr. William Allen Bush, Medical Records Book, 1919-1921: 196

See things at times. See the Devil and everything else. Feel like I want to Kill myself at times, life no pleasure, not able to work.

Others suffered more mundane injuries. One Army veteran had a truck run over both feet near Verdun; another veteran suffered injuries in a motorcycle accident on October 14, 1918, during the Argonne Offensive. A sailor reported his right foot was partly amputated after being badly crushed by a falling hatch aboard the battleship *Illinois* at Hampton Roads, Virginia. One of the several African American veterans treated reported that he suffered from severe rheumatism he contracted from exposure to harsh weather conditions while serving in the 815th Pioneer Regiment. Not a few of these veterans were survivors of the deadly worldwide influenza epidemic that resulted in millions of deaths between 1918 and 1920. As Bush noted about one veteran:

Pains in chest, right side and back, cough, had pneumonia Feb. 25, 1920, in bed 2 weeks, spit blood, condition worse than when discharged.

The significance of these records for modern researchers stems from the fact that over 80% of the military records for army veterans of the First (and Second) World War were lost in a disastrous fire at the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis in 1973. In this respect, one may be able to discover more about the service record of an ancestor who fought at Gettysburg than a family member who served on the Western Front in 1918.

In many cases the descendants of modern era army servicemen and women are forced to piece together their ancestors' stories from discharge records found in local courthouses or Kentucky Veterans Bonus Records files at the Department for Libraries and Archives in Frankfort. Another source, which is available for research in The Filson's library, is *Kentucky in the World War, 1917-1919*. Published in 1924 by the Kentucky Council of Defense these 144 volumes largely consist of veteran's service records. Organized by county, these volumes list the number of veterans who saw active duty as well as those killed or wounded during the conflict. In many cases, the rosters contain only basic information. In the case of Dr. Bush himself, the roster contains only his date and place of birth, his date of appointment, a brief reference to his station at Hoboken, New Jersey, and his date of discharge.

Age 26 Col white Occurs 4 farmer. Present Complaint pain in back of head
neckton
Military History Began at camp
Wadesmith D.C. Had mumps, Mr.
1918. Sent to Hosp. There about 1
month then to Hosp at Atlanta
Ga., there 1 mo. then sent to D. Dix.
Hosp Washington D.C. There 5 mo.
Sent home and discharged
later. Date of discharge ~~was~~ Nov.
22, 1918.
Ht 74 in Wt 150 Pulse normal Temp normal Extremities
Resp normal Svs Diast
Mouth, Pharynx, Glands
no physical signs of disease.

Age 24 Col. White Occupa Farmer
Induction Dec. 19, 1917.
Military History
Began at St. Omer, France,
July 16, 1918. Passed. Sent
to St. Omer. There found
Left eye blind. Sent to camp
Merit, then Camp Dix - there
discharged - Oct. 13, 1919.

neuroses, blind in L.
eye, not able to work on
account of neuroses.

Date of Authority ✓

Ht ✓ Wt ✓ Pulse ✓ Temp ✓ Extremities ✓
Resp ✓ Sys ✓ L.H. ✓
Mouth, Pharynx, Glands ✓

With the centennial of the United States' participation in this epic conflict fast approaching, The Filson is committed to collecting and preserving such rare and valuable sources as these medical records in order to document Kentucky's role in what was vainly hoped to be "The War to End All Wars."

Page 4

Photo from History of Kentucky by Kerr, Connolly and Coulter. From The Filson Historical Society's Collection. [976.9]

Page 5 - Top

Dr. William Allen Bush, Medical Records
Book, 1919-1921. Page 119

Page 5 - Bottom

Dr. William Allen Bush, Medical Records
Book, 1919-1921. Page 131



The holiday season is just around the corner!



Please join The Filson for our upcoming holiday events.

Saturday, December 5

6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Kentucky Peerless Distilling Company
120 N 10th Street, Louisville
\$100

Celebrating Repeal Day

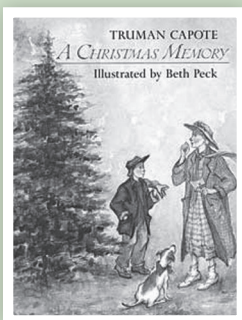
Michael R. Veach

The 18th Amendment was the only Constitutional amendment to take away a freedom instead of guaranteeing one. Join us as we celebrate the repeal of Prohibition at The Filson's Repeal Day Bourbon Tasting. This is a unique opportunity to increase your knowledge of the Prohibition-Era era and get a taste of history with vintage bourbons!

We will be sampling bottles of Old Crow Whiskey and a Paul Jones Rye from the 1890s, and comparing them to modern day whiskeys from Michter's and Woodford Reserve. These Prohibition-Era bourbons are unique and no longer being produced. Both unopened bottles were stored for decades before they were donated to The Filson.

Michael R. Veach, a member of the Bourbon Hall of Fame, is The Filson's Bourbon Historian. Mike's book, *Kentucky Bourbon Whiskey: An American Heritage*, was published in the spring 2013 and is in its fourth printing.

This event is sponsored by the Greater Louisville Convention and Visitors Bureau.



Monday, December 14

Reception, 5:30; Reading, 6:30

Oxmoor Farm, 720 Oxmoor Avenue, Louisville
Free - This event is open only to members and their families

A Christmas Memory

William McNulty

So much of the holidays are about tradition, and *A Christmas Memory* reading at Oxmoor Farm has been a long-standing Filson tradition. We invite you to share this evening with us in the renowned library at Oxmoor Farm.

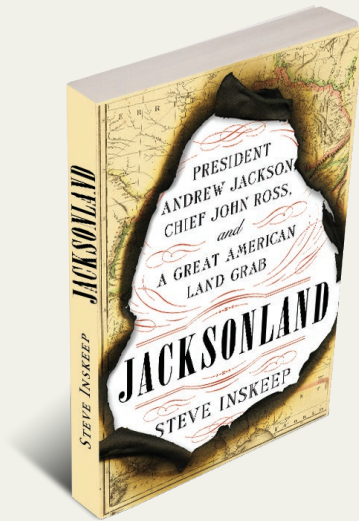
A 1960s classic, *A Christmas Memory* is a story about a seven-year-old boy, Buddy, his cousin, an eccentric old lady and a little rat terrier called Queenie. Buddy and his cousin are each other's best friends, whose relationship is symbolized by the baking of fruitcakes. The poverty and despair of the Great Depression fails to stop or even slow down this loving relationship at this special time of the year.

Actors Theatre's William McNulty, who portrays Ebenezer Scrooge's character in *A Christmas Carol*, will read the holiday classic, *A Christmas Memory*, by Truman Capote. William McNulty has played more than 150 roles during 32 seasons of residency at Actors Theatre, including four of the roles in *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens. McNulty has directed many plays and appeared in several other theaters. He was the 2007 recipient of the Fox Foundation Resident Actor Fellowship, one of three grants awarded annually in the Distinguished Artist category.

Members are welcome to bring their families to this event and we invite you to bring a friend you think would be interested in The Filson. The reception will be at 5:30 p.m. and the reading will be at 6:00 p.m. Christmas spirits and holiday fare will be served. Come celebrate the holiday season with us.

Jacksonland

by Steve Inskeep



“Steve Inskeep has paid incredible attention to detail and his references are impeccable and well researched. History often overlooks, or briefly mentions, that one of Andrew Jackson’s major initiatives as President of the United States was the removal of Indian tribes, including the Cherokee, from their ancestral homelands. The honest and factual detailing of how Cherokee traditional lands were usurped is compelling, and I hope it gives contemporary American readers a new perspective on our collective history. Andrew Jackson and his political allies in Congress wanted what we had and they simply took it by any means necessary. Clearly, our ancestors didn’t stand a chance. Steve Inskeep tells the story fairly and pays proper due diligence to the politics of the day, especially the treatment of the Five Civilized Tribes.”
– Principal Chief Bill John Baker, Cherokee Nation

Jacksonland is the thrilling narrative history of two men—President Andrew Jackson and Cherokee Chief John Ross—who led their respective nations at a crossroads of American history. Five decades after the Revolutionary War, the United States approached a constitutional crisis. At its center stood two former military comrades locked in a struggle that tested the boundaries of our fledgling democracy. *Jacksonland* is their story.

One man we recognize: Andrew Jackson—war hero, populist, and exemplar of the expanding South—whose first major initiative as President instigated the massive expulsion of Native Americans known as the Trail of Tears. The other is a half-forgotten figure: John Ross—a mixed-race Cherokee politician and diplomat—who used the United States’ own legal system and democratic ideals to oppose Jackson. Representing one of the Five Civilized Tribes who had adopted the ways of white settlers—cultivating farms, publishing a newspaper in their own language, and sending children to school—Ross championed the tribes’ cause all the way to the Supreme Court. He gained allies like Senator Henry Clay, Chief Justice John Marshall, and even Davy Crockett. In a fight that seems at once distant and familiar, Ross and his allies made their case in the media, committed civil disobedience, and benefited from the first mass political action by American women. Their struggle contained ominous overtures of later events like the Civil War and set the pattern for modern-day politics.

Steve Inskeep is host of NPR’s *Morning Edition*, the most widely heard radio news program in the United States, alongside co-hosts Renee Montagne and David Greene. He is the author of *Instant City: Life and Death in Karachi*. He has been a guest on numerous TV programs including ABC’s *This Week*, NBC’s *Meet the Press*, MSNBC’s *Andrea Mitchell Reports*, CNN’s *Inside Politics* and the PBS *NewsHour*. He has written for publications including *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and *The Atlantic*.



Thursday, December 3, 2015, 6:30 p.m.

The Temple

5101 US Hwy 42, Louisville, KY 40241



Tickets are \$10 for non-members.

Free for members of The Filson Historical Society.

Register online at filsonhistorical.org OR send ticket requests with a self-addressed, stamped envelope to:
GPBL Tickets, 1310 S. Third Street, Louisville, KY 40208.

Planned Giving at The Filson: The Thruston Legacy Circle

Laura Kerr, Development Coordinator

The Filson has preserved, protected, and shared our history for 130 years, becoming a renowned historical society and lifelong learning center during that time. It's longevity and success is due to the support of generation after generation of individuals who understood the importance of history. Planned giving is one way to continue that tradition. Planned gifts provide important long-term financial support for the Filson and, in some instances, tax and other benefits to donors. These gifts can build The Filson's endowment or be used directly in our operations – to acquire new collections, present educational programming and exhibits, or defray other costs of performing the mission of a privately supported historical society.

Thruston Legacy Circle

To honor those who make a planned gift, The Filson has formed the **Thruston Legacy Circle**. Its members will be following in the footsteps of the Circle's namesake, Rogers Clark Ballard Thruston, president of The Filson from 1923 until his death in 1946 and The Filson's first significant planned giver. Mr. Thruston led the organization through a pivotal period following the death of its founder, Col. Reuben T. Durrett, guiding its transition from a private history club to a public, nationally respected, educational institution.

R.C. Ballard Thruston

Although he was not one of the Filson's original ten founders, R. C. Ballard Thruston was a very early member, joining the organization in 1892, when The Filson was only eight years old. In the uncertain years following Col. Durrett's death, Thruston ensured the organization's continued existence and growth. He is

rightly considered the founder of the "second phase" of The Filson.¹ His leadership, financial support, and vision transformed The Filson from a private club of cigar-smoking gentlemen who met in Durrett's personal library to discuss history, to a professional historical society.

Under his guidance, The Filson moved into its own building in

1928 on Louisville's West Breckinridge Street, and its tradition of educational excellence was established. Thruston personally financed more than half the cost of the new building and helped fill its library with his own collection of books, manuscripts, artifacts and photographs. In 1929, he donated \$50,000 to establish The Filson's endowment fund and also gave \$25,000 to start a collection acquisition fund. He presided over readings of academic papers, scoured the countryside for manuscripts and artifacts to add to the collection, and vastly expanded membership. He even banned smoking in The Filson building to better preserve the manuscripts and artifacts. His most enduring legacy is his planned gift to The Filson, a \$125,000 bequest under his will which safeguarded The Filson's future. He was, indeed, "the savior" of The Filson.²



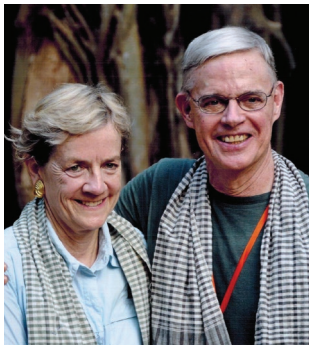
*R.C. Ballard Thruston Portrait
by Jules Aviat, 1906*



*The Filson's first building
at 118 W Breckenridge Street.*

Circle Members

Thruston Legacy Circle members are individuals who want to ensure that The Filson continues to preserve our history and educate future generations about their special home. The Circle's founding members are Bill and Lindy Street, Bob Kulp, and Orme Wilson. Bill Street, Bob Kulp, and Orme Wilson are current members of The Filson's board and have held various Filson leadership positions. They have made provisions in their estate plans to provide for The Filson's future.



“A wonderful treasure – tucked away in Old Louisville – The Filson Historical Society is the collector of Ohio River Valley historical papers and items that capture the significance of and add perspective to the rich history of this part of our great country. Linda and I have made The Filson a part of our planned giving in order to provide continued financial assistance toward this wonderful resource.”

- **Bill Street**



“I am very pleased to be able to make a planned gift and become a member of The Filson’s Thruston Legacy Circle. Although I am technically from “away”, to use a New England term, my marriage into a Kentucky family with history here going back several generations and experiencing their long term enthusiasm for the Society in preserving regional history strongly influenced my decision to continue this support in the form of a planned gift.”

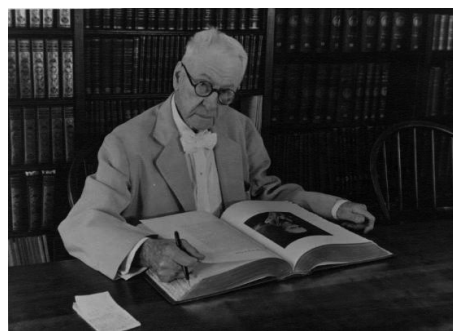
- **Bob Kulp**

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*R.C. Ballard Thruston in
The Filson Library, 1944*

¹Thomas D. Clark, “Rogers Clark Ballard Thruston, Engineer, Historian, and Benevolent Kentuckian” *The Filson Club Quarterly*, Louisville, KY, 1984, Volume 58, page 430

²Hambleton Tapp, “Rogers Clark Ballard Thruston: Good Kentuckian”, *The Filson Club Quarterly*, Louisville, KY, 1947, Vol. 21, No. 2, page 125

CAMPUS EXPANSION PROJECT UPDATE

It is an exciting time at The Filson, as our \$11.75 million Campus Expansion Project continues to take shape. Work on the Project will be completed in early 2016, and we can now easily envision moving into the new Filson and putting its wonderful features and amenities to work in the performance of our mission. Construction on the new Owsley Brown II History Center continues and renovations on the Carriage House and Ferguson Mansion are in full swing. We welcome you to stop in, visit, and see the transformations for yourself. If you do, please, pardon our mess! Renovation can be a dusty business. You also can watch the Expansion take shape by viewing the photos and videos, including our drone's eye view, of construction progress on our website, filsonhistorical.org. We have less than \$1 million left to raise to reach the full Project budget. You can help us reach our full goal by making a commitment to the Cornerstone Campaign online or by calling the Development Department at 502-635-5083. We are on track to celebrate the new Campus's Grand Opening in 2016, and hope you will join us for that happy occasion.



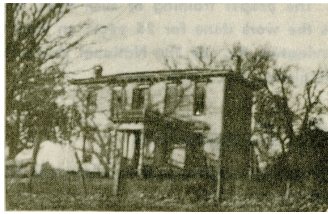
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A Champion for the Children

Jana Meyer, Associate Curator of Special Collections



On October 7, 1950, Alzada Singleton Buford wrote a letter to her father, fondly chiding him: “Take care of yourself and remember that you are nearing 82 and can’t do what you did at 28 I know you too well to think you will take this seriously.” Indeed, by age 81 most people have retired from their vocations, spending time with their families and enjoying leisure pursuits. Not so Octavius Singleton. The octogenarian minister pursued his philanthropic agenda with the same passion and dedication that had characterized his earlier years. Over his lifetime, Singleton would work tirelessly to improve circumstances for African Americans throughout Kentucky and the South.

Octavius Singleton was born in 1869 into extreme poverty in Edwards, Mississippi. In a letter to his daughter in September 1947, he wrote of his childhood: “In the deepest depths of poverty ... your father was born of an ex-slave mother, on an early Sunday morning, in a little dillapidated [sic] one room slab cabin on a mattress filled with a mixture of corn shucks and cotton ... He was born a very hopeless, puny, sickly child, constantly on the very verge of death until he became 8 years of age.” Much of the region’s poverty could be attributed to the Civil War, which had so recently devastated much of the South. Singleton observed, “It would be difficult for a child to be born under more unfavorable circumstances.”



Despite this inauspicious beginning, Singleton considered himself more than fortunate. “In the most essential thing, I was born a multi millionaire ... Not only were my parents both Christians, great true believers in the Bible, in God, and in His Son ... [but] every member of both the Singleton and Brigs side of our ancestors were all Christians.” It was Singleton’s faith that would lead him to become a minister and humanitarian, shaping him into an individual who would dedicate his life to improving the circumstances of others living in poverty.



An able student, Singleton attended Southern Christian Institute in Beulah, Mississippi, and then undertook ministerial studies at Hiram College in Ohio. In 1894, he was ordained as a minister and immediately moved to Louisville, Kentucky, where he was the pastor of Hancock Christian Church and the principal of the Louisville Christian Bible School. Here, it was the plight of black children, and particularly orphans, which especially moved him. Singleton found that Southern states spent thousands of dollars aiding orphaned and destitute white children. Yet throughout the South, little was being done for black children in similar circumstances. According to Singleton, African American children were being sent to “reformatories that amounted to little more than penitentiaries.”



In 1909 concern for these neglected children prompted Singleton to become a founding member and superintendent of the National Home Finding Society. This organization would care for and train black orphans for over 30 years. Singleton planned to place children into the homes of good families. Initially, the children were housed at 1716 West Chestnut Street in Louisville, a home purchased by the Society in 1912. However, adoption rates were lower than anticipated and more space was needed. In 1919 the Society purchased 600 acres of farmland in Irvington, Kentucky, eventually expanding to nearly 1,000 acres. In this location, the boys of the Home tilled the soil and the girls learned homemaking skills. The Irvington property accommodated a school and teacher's cottage, barns and farm buildings, and housing for the children.

The merits of raising children in an institutional setting are more controversial today. There can be no doubt, however, that Singleton believed he could transform the lives of the children in his care for the better. As superintendent of the Home, Singleton proposed to turn children from a wayward path to become fine, upstanding citizens in their communities. Fragments of Singleton's letters to the Society's supporters survive. He reminds them that it will cost much less to invest in children now, rather than to lock them up as criminals later in life. Other letters contain fleeting references to a few children who went on to lead successful lives.

The National Home Finding Society operated successfully for several decades, caring for over 800 children during its tenure. World War II, however, brought times of increased financial hardship. When combined with the ill health of his wife, these troubles forced Singleton to release the children in his care or find placement for them in other homes. He would spend the remainder of the decade seeking a church or religious organization to continue his work at Irvington.

In the meantime, Singleton continued to advocate for

children in other ways. He returned to his hometown in Mississippi where he raised awareness of the plight of African Americans living in the area. Singleton was a meticulous observer; letters written to his family during the late 1940s paint a picture of life among the black community in Mississippi. He often wrote about the idyllic setting, giving detailed and sometimes poetic descriptions of the land and its people, the darker side of life in Mississippi did not go unnoticed. Poverty was endemic in the region and the people were too dispirited to strive for change: "Houses all around are very poor. Seems no body is interested in the house they live in just so it protects them from the cold and rain and affords them a place to eat and sleep No body worries, but seem to be perfectly contented Naturally any people such as that can't be interested [in] progress of any kind, not even in the education of their own children."

Being satisfied with such deplorable circumstances was antithetical to Singleton's nature. He immediately contacted his network of supporters, redistributing the resulting donations among the poor families of Mississippi. Through these efforts, he was able to assist numerous families, provide money towards scholarships for students, and support educational institutions in the area. Singleton even solicited aid from his own family, often asking his daughters to consider sending their used clothing, shoes, and other items to Mississippi. He considered helping struggling families of Mississippi to be one of his greatest life achievements, at one point commenting that the work would "tell better throughout eternity."

Singleton's achievements on behalf of children are the more remarkable when one considers the obstacles he faced because of his race. During his lifetime, Jim Crow segregation was the norm and the laws of the land relegated African Americans to the margins of society. To those who endured segregation, the inequalities of everyday life could not pass



NATIONAL HOME FINDING SOCIETY

A HOME FOR COLORED CHILDREN
IRVINGTON, KENTUCKY

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will shine forever more*

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STOP THE CRIMINAL !! SAVE THE THIEF !!

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War and crime consume over 75% of our tax billions.
The true remedy is offered within by

THE NATIONAL HOME FINDING SOCIETY

Rev. O. Singleton, B. L., Gen. Supt.
Irvington, Ky.

RETURN IN 5 DAYS

without comment and Singleton's letters are no exception. Sometimes, he adopted a conciliatory tone: "Most of the trouble the Negro has here in [Mississippi], he causes it himself." When banks refused to loan money to black customers, he observed, "Banks, no doubt have very good reasons and complexion could not well be one of them." At other times, he railed against the injustice of segregated society. He complained about how whites regarded interracial marriage: "Half their women, they don't want themselves, but would rather die than see them [married to blacks]." Whites also overlooked the economic contributions blacks made to society: "If it were possible to ship the southern Negro off to Africa or to the moon or elsewhere it would seal the fate of millions of the whites who would starve to death."

Octavius Singleton was not the only one who yearned for greater equality. A few short years after his death in 1950, another black Southern preacher would become the leader of a nationwide movement for social change. Singleton's work is an important precursor to the societal upheaval and transformation of the Civil Rights years. It reminds us that African Americans were active in their communities prior to the sit-ins and demonstrations of the 1950s and 60s. Singleton's story is important in the greater narrative of how African Americans strove for change during the Jim Crow era. The Filson is pleased to preserve his writings as part of its newly acquired collection of Singleton family papers.

Page 13

An eight room mansion, sold to the Society in 1943 by an Irvington resident.

Page 13

Hemp Davis of Chotard, Mississippi, who lived at the Home. He became an employee of Walgreens in Chicago.

Page 13

James Wooden of Crawfordsville, Indiana, who stayed to become the farm manager at Irvington before returning to work in his hometown.

Page 13

Missie Wooden, daughter of James Wooden.

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Overlooking Irvington, Kentucky, from Jolley's Hill. [Rogers Clark Ballard Thruston Collection]

Page 14

View of the farmland near Irvington, Kentucky from Jolley's Hill. [Rogers Clark Ballard Thruston Collection]

Page 15

Portion of a letter to supporters, bragging about girls who are now leading successful lives.

Page 15

Envelope mailed to potential supporters of the National Home Finding Society.

The Filsonians

June - September 2015

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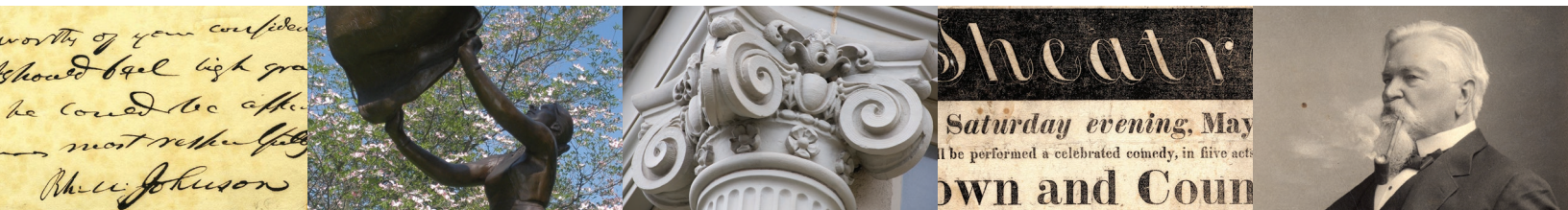
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"Ten years ago, I was lucky enough to become a Filson fellow. I was in graduate school, just beginning my dissertation, and the Filson fellowship provided the resources I needed to jumpstart my archival research. At The Filson, I looked at manuscripts dating back to the 1700s, focusing on relations between early settlers and nearby Native American nations. That research became a key component of my first book, which explored captivity in the American South. More recently, I've gone back to The Filson to work on my second book. I'm drawn to the fascinating history of early Kentucky, and **there's no better place to study that history than The Filson**, not only because of its extraordinary archival wealth, but also because of the intellectual community it creates. The Filson's staff is exceptionally knowledgeable and helpful, and their collections and events draw scholars from around the world."

Dr. Christina Snyder, the Thomas and Kathryn Miller Associate Professor of History at Indiana University, was a 2005 Filson fellow. Snyder's first book, *Slavery in Indian Country*, was published by Harvard University Press in 2010, and won several awards.

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