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The Filson

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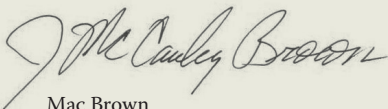
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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Transformation is an amazing concept. For some it is a new beginning, while for others it is an end to better days gone by. As I sit to write my first letter to The Filson Historical Society membership, I can hear the newscasts of the day calling for better ways to teach our children and the debate regarding the fiscal battles that are happening on the national and local levels. These current events are tomorrow's history, discussing in today's time how the lives of our families will be transformed. In understanding our history, we can utilize the facts of our past experiences to better deal with the issues we face today. With this knowledge, society is hopefully in a better position to avoid the pitfalls of the past and move the discussion into a positive direction.

Since that first meeting of ten Louisville citizens at the residence of Colonel Reuben Thomas Durrett, The Filson Historical Society has grown to become a leader in preserving and telling our significant stories. Through its vast collections, many lectures and continual publications, The Filson gives each of us a sense of who we are and how distinctive our home is, as well as a rich knowledge of our community's experiences. And all of this is privately funded by our charitable supporters.

Transformation is an ongoing process happening all around us in all parts of our lives. As The Filson looks to the future, we are excited about expanding the campus and putting in place the infrastructure needed to better collect and tell our stories. I want to give a special thanks to Orme Wilson III, our outgoing President, for his outstanding leadership in preparing The Filson for the future. Further, I would like to thank the Board and the staff for their vision and willingness to move The Filson to the next level. Finally, I want to thank all our members and supporters for the generous contributions that give life to our mission, to collect, preserve and tell the significant stories of Kentucky and Ohio Valley history and culture.




Mac Brown
President

FROM THE DIRECTOR

The Filson Historical Society's mission is to "Collect, preserve, and tell the significant stories of Kentucky and Ohio Valley history and culture." While Kentucky's borders are clearly defined, I'm sometimes asked what we mean by the "Ohio Valley." Part of the answer to that question is found in our earlier mission statements which described Kentucky "and adjacent states" as our field of study.

However, what we mean by the "Ohio Valley" today is a region covering much less than all of the "adjacent states" but much more than the Ohio River valley narrowly defined as that single river's floodplain. The broadest definition of the region would be the Ohio River's entire watershed, the area drained by the river system and touching parts of eleven states. That definition takes us well north of Indianapolis and Columbus, beyond Pittsburgh and Charleston, West Virginia, and into parts of middle Tennessee and extreme southwestern Virginia.

A more pertinent definition would include only the southern portions of Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio, the western portion of West Virginia, and the northern part of middle Tennessee. It is a complex region consisting of many parts—Appalachia, the Bluegrass, the Pennyroyal, the Knobs, the Jackson Purchase, to name a few. And there are many more perspectives to consider in addition to geography. The "cultural baggage" of people, their architecture, food ways, and music make definitions of the region all the more complex and intriguing. However, Kentucky is at the center of the region, and the Ohio River runs through it. Studying the commonwealth and its "adjacent states" gives us a stronger regional identity and a more tangible sense of the places that make up the whole.



Mark V. Wetherington, Ph.D.
Director

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OUR MISSION:

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

COVER PHOTOS:

Expansion Rendering, West Side.
Image from De Leon & Primmer Architecture Workshop

BACK PHOTOS:

(Inset) Looking at the northwest corner of Bullitt and Main, between
Fourth and Fifth Streets. Image ca. 1858 by unknown photographer.

(Large) Contemporary view of same place. Photo by author.

RECENT ACQUISITIONS



2



3

The Filson recently added to its growing environmental collection with donations by Hank Graddy, Betsy Bennett, and the family of Sue Anne Salmon. All three are well-known for their environmental commitment and activities. Mr. Graddy and Ms. Bennett continue their involvement to the present. Ms. Salmon passed away in 2010. Added to other recent acquisitions, such as the papers of Stewart Butler, Carroll and Doris Tichenor, and Hugh Archer, The Filson has a growing collection area for the study of the environmental movement in Kentucky.

1. Issues of *The Cumberland*, a newspaper published by the Cumberland Chapter of the Sierra Club.
2. Betsy Bennett and Filson curator Jim Holmberg in January 2011. Photo courtesy of Reggie Van Stockum.
3. Part of the Bennett-Graddy papers heading to The Filson, January 2011. Photo courtesy of Reggie Van Stockum.

1

BROWSING IN OUR ARCHIVES

MAIN STREET: MIRROR OF HISTORY

BY SARAH-JANE M. POINDEXTER | ASSOCIATE CURATOR OF SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

The history of Main Street is the history of Louisville. Nowhere is this as obvious as when examining the street's buildings, past and present. The architecture and function of the structures mirror the needs and lifestyles of those who built and utilized them, be it the first pioneers on the Kentucky shore, early merchants, or twentieth-century proponents of urban renewal. With its proximity to the Ohio River, rail lines, and now highways, Main Street is an architectural canvas reflecting the geographic, economic, and social development of Louisville. Moving from west to east, this article explores the changing built environment of downtown Main Street.



TENTH & MAIN

Considered to be Louisville's most devastating tornado, the 1890 cyclone killed approximately one hundred people, caused 2.15 million dollars in property damage, and destroyed over six hundred buildings. The business district on west Main Street was one of the hardest hit sections of Louisville. Known as the "Tobacco District," this area of Main Street between Eighth and Twelfth was the nation's largest tobacco market and destination for auction from 1880 to 1900. The only existing structure remaining today is a white Victorian Romanesque commercial building that housed "J. W. McCarty & Co. paints, oils, etc." in 1890; it is now home to a nightclub. Other changes to this section of Main Street include the addition of a twentieth-century structure that architecturally mimics the adjacent McCarty & Co. building, along with a highway entrance ramp for Interstate 64.

LEFT: Stereocard image of cyclone damage at Tenth & Main Streets, looking east. Photo taken March 27, 1890 by W. Stuber & Bro.

RIGHT: Contemporary view of the northeast corner of Tenth and Main Streets. Photo by author.

**...the 1890 cyclone
caused \$2.15 million
in property damage...**



SEVENTH & MAIN

The corner of Seventh and Main Streets has a rich history dating back to the earliest settlement of Louisville. When the pioneers settling the area moved from Corn Island to the mainland, they built a fort, often referred to as Fort-on-the-Shore, at the current foot of Twelfth Street. This fort was shortly superseded by a larger, more secure log structure, Fort Nelson. Built in 1781 by militia captain and sheriff Richard Chenoweth, it was named for the governor of Virginia, Thomas Nelson. The massive fort covered an acre between Seventh & Eighth Streets north of Main and was surrounded by a ditch lined with pickets. Though its capabilities were never tested, the structure was said to be strong enough to withstand cannon fire. Fort Nelson served as the western-most terminus of the Wilderness Road, but by the 1790s it was no longer necessary for the protection of settlers.

Some fifty years later, this same location in the heart of downtown Louisville was home to the residence of Richardson Burge, designed by famous Louisville architect Henry Whitestone. The luxurious home was demolished after only twenty-five years with the property's use shifting to rail transport. In 1886, the Chesapeake & Ohio Railway (C&O) built the first railroad station occupying this space, selling it shortly thereafter (1890) to the Illinois Central (IC). Known as

INSET: Image of Central Station and the former site of Fort Nelson, looking northwest of the intersection of Seventh & Main Streets. Photo taken in 1912 by Rogers Clark Ballard Thruston.

LARGE: The former site of Fort Nelson is presently commemorated by a memorial park and a monument erected in 1912 by the Colonial Dames. Photo by author.

“Central Station,” it remained under IC’s ownership until it closed. When the 1890 cyclone destroyed the original wood-frame station, the railway replaced it with the grand Richardsonian Romanesque-style structure seen in Thruston’s photograph, designed by the McDonald Brothers, a Louisville architectural firm. Upon the station’s close in 1963, Actors Theatre of Louisville bought the building and used it until 1972, when they moved to their present location further east on Main Street; Central Station was demolished to make way for Interstate 64.

Some fifty years later, this same location in the heart of downtown Louisville...



GEORGE ROGERS CLARK MEMORIAL BRIDGE

Early automobile owners used ferries to travel between the Ohio River’s Kentucky and Indiana shores. The first bridge able to accommodate cars was the Kentucky & Indiana Terminal Bridge between New Albany, Indiana and Louisville’s Portland neighborhood. Primarily a railroad bridge, it did not serve those needing to travel between Louisville and Jeffersonville. The discussion to build such a bridge at the foot of Second Street began as early as 1919, though it was not until 1928 that construction began. Much like today’s embattled debate on bridges, the project was delayed due to financial controversy, specifically, to toll or not to toll. The bridge was constructed in only one and half years, and features an Art Deco entrance designed by Paul Cret, the architect of Cincinnati’s Union Station. When Captain Roy Parsons of the Louisville Fire Department took the above picture of Second and Main Streets in 1928, the city was just beginning to break ground for the Municipal Bridge, later known as the George Rogers Clark Memorial Bridge or the Second Street Bridge. (Note in the image foreground piles of earth and debris as well as a train in the background running along the waterfront rail lines.) On the northeast corner of Main Street stands a limestone Italian Renaissance Revival building, completed in 1877, that originally served as the headquarters for

TOP: Intersection of Second and Main Streets before construction of the bridge. Photo circa 1928, Roy B. Parson, photographer.

BOTTOM: George Rogers Clark Memorial bridge, now flanked by the contemporary KFC Yum! Center and a historical commercial building (also in Parson’s image). Photo by author.

the Louisville & Nashville Railroad Company (L & N). Today, it houses a Berno’s restaurant in the basement. In Parson’s image, the northwest corner features an early Italianate building containing the Acme Printing Company and the adjoining Victorian Romanesque structure for the Breckel Press. This corner today is home to Louisville’s newest arena, the KFC Yum! Center, which recently replaced a Louisville Gas and Electric substation.

Much like today’s embattled debate on bridges, the project was delayed due to financial controversy, specifically, to toll or not to toll.

WHISKEY ROW

From the mid-nineteenth to the early-twentieth century, this block was the thriving center of Louisville's whiskey economy. It housed a variety of whiskey rectifying and blending houses, barrel warehouses, whiskey brokerages, and corporate headquarters for renowned local businesses Brown-Forman, Belknap Hardware and Manufacturing Co., and the L & N Railroad Company. The buildings were all constructed between the years 1857 and 1905, many with cast-iron storefronts (a load-bearing façade composed of prefabricated, cast parts which allowed the designers to maximize street-level windows). Second only to New York City, Louisville is home to the finest assemblage of cast-iron architecture in the United States. This block features a variety of architectural styles, designed by celebrated architects such as Henry Whitestone (Galt House), John Andrewartha (City Hall), and D. X. Murphy (Churchill Downs). Of note is the "Old Prentice Distillery" building at 107-109 W. Main (third from the right in the ca. 1900 picture). Designed by D.X. Murphy and built in 1905, this building is evocative of the Chicago School style and appears strikingly contemporary when sandwiched between the revivalist-style buildings of the period. Given the architectural legacy of Whiskey Row and its significant role in Kentucky's distilling history, the Louisville Landmark Commission designated Whiskey Row a historic landmark in 2010.

WEST ON MAIN, FROM BULLITT STREET (pictured on back cover)

An early reference to Main Street between Fourth and Fifth Streets was written by land commissioner and territorial judge of Mississippi, Thomas Rodney. In his 1803 diary, "A Journey Through the Wilderness," he describes the disassembling of a massive Native American mound, originally located near this site. The ambrotype image above, taken approximately fifty-five years after Rodney's visit, is thought to be the earliest photograph of Louisville and shows how quickly the built environment of this block changed. The carriages, crates, and businessmen captured by this image serve as a reminder of Main Street's establishment as a bustling center of commerce. The ambrotype provides an unrestricted view of blocks along the north side of Main Street, revealing the presence of many dry good merchants, wholesalers, druggist, cobblers, and more, housed in the Italianate buildings. In the lower right-hand corner is the head of Bullitt Street; this diminutive street extended only one block north, and ended at the city wharf. If it still existed today, Bullitt Street would be located just east of the main entrance to the Belvedere. The northeast corner of Main and Bullitt became the site of Louisville's pioneer skyscraper, the Columbia Building. The buildings on the western end of the block remained intact until the 1960s when they fell victim to the "modernizing" swing of the urban-renewal wrecking ball, along with the Columbia Building. Currently, the site is occupied by the Galt House Hotel complex, BB&T tower, American Life & Accident building and the Kentucky Center for the Arts.

For further exploration into the issues involved in understanding and preserving our cultural heritage through historic structures, check out The Filson's upcoming Public Conference, *The Legacy of Buildings: Learning from Historic Structures*, on May 12-14. *The Architectural History of Louisville* by Samuel W. Thomas, available at The Filson, is also a wonderful resource.



TOP: The 100-block along the north side of Main Street familiarly known as "Whiskey Row," looking west. Photo circa 1900, unknown photographer, Brown-Walker Family photo collection.

BOTTOM: Current view of Whiskey Row; eastern portion of block boarded up and slated for demolition by developers; the corner building at 101-103 W. Main collapsed in 2001. Photo by author.

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SICKNESS AND DEATH IN 19TH-CENTURY AMERICAN LIFE. THE SCRAPBOOKS OF JOHN F. JEFFERSON

BY BETTINA HESSLER, FILSON INTERN



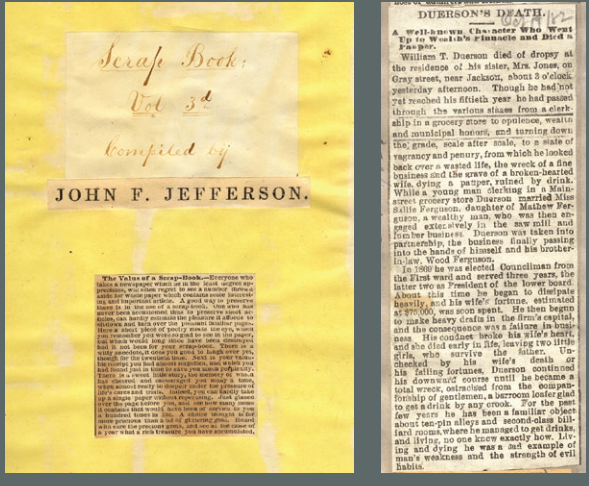
Several scientific discoveries in the second half of the 19th century built the basis for modern surgery and therapy. New medical instruments helped physicians diagnose diseases. Antisepsis and anaesthetics raised patients' chances to survive surgery. Advances in anatomical fields such as cell pathology (1858) and genetics (1870) introduced a new understanding of the human body and its functions. Nevertheless, this medical revolution changed little in the lives of ordinary 19th-century Americans. Sickness and death were ever present in the form of epidemics, infections, and accidents for which physicians often had no better cures than the patients themselves. Hence, the key to living a long life in the 19th century was the prevention of ailments caused by neglect or "evil habits".¹

The scrapbooks by 19th-century Louisville merchant John F. Jefferson (1833-1910) illustrate how ingrained death, sickness, and prevention were in people's understanding of the world. Scrapbooks are part of what scholars have called "life writing," a series of manuscript genres that document people's daily lives.² For the historian, scrapbooks are valuable sources because they reveal the kind of knowledge a person possessed by illuminating which information the authors considered worth collecting. The scope of collected information about a particular topic allows conclusions about the extent and content of the author's knowledge.

John F. Jefferson was one of three brothers who operated T.L. Jefferson & Bros. on Brook and Market Streets in Louisville. The Jefferson brothers learned their trade in the family business that their mother, Elizabeth Jefferson, had started in Louisville in 1831. The eldest son, Thomas L. Jefferson (1826-1884), left the family business in 1852 and started his own company that, with the help of John F. and their third brother Henry T. Jefferson grew into a successful wholesale and retail grocery. John F. Jefferson never married and spent his free time traveling, fishing, writing diaries, and compiling his scrapbooks.

The health advice and articles he collected in his scrapbooks provided Jefferson with his knowledge of sickness, illness prevention, and therapy. Jefferson organized health advice in the category "Recipes and Good Advice" along with cooking recipes, fishing advice, and farming instructions. "A cholera prescription commended by the Louisville College of Physicians and Surgeons" is glued next to instructions for planting trees, fighting baldness, and curing toothaches.³ This not only shows that monitoring and maintaining health was part of people's daily lives but also that people considered sickness prevention as part of the domestic sphere.

Despite reforms in medicine and therapy, until the late 19th century, Americans believed that most diseases were caused by environmental influences and the patient's own constitution. The health advice Jefferson collected reflects the overlapping of old and new: "It may be an exaggeration to say, as has been said, that man's own

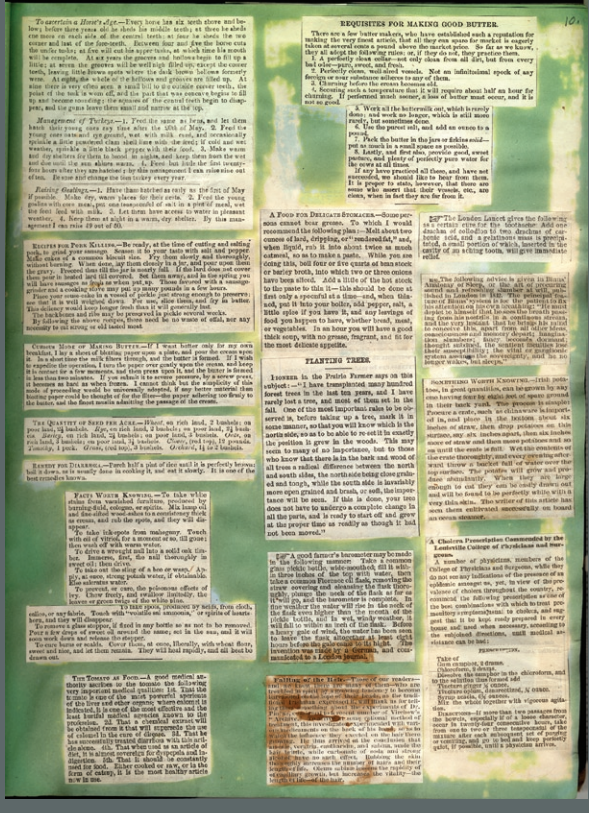


All images from the John F. Jefferson scrapbooks of The Filson Historical Society.

page 6 - Scrapbook cover, volume 10

page 7 (Clockwise)

- Inside cover, volume 3
- Obituary of William T. Duerson, volume 10
- "Recipes & Good Advice" featuring remedies for ailments ranging from toothaches to cholera, volume 3



DUERSON'S DEATH
 A Well-known Character Who Went Up to Wash's Farm and Died a Poet.

William T. Duerson died of dropsy at the residence of his sister, Mrs. Jones, on yesterday afternoon. Though he had not yet reached his fifth year, he had passed through the various stages of a clerkship in a grocery store to apothecary, wain and municipal honor, and having done this, he had afterwards, to a state of vagrancy and pauper, from which he looked back over a wasted life, the wreck of a fine business and the grave of a broken-hearted wife, dying a pauper, ruined by drink.

While a young man, residing in a Metropolitan grocery store Duerson married Miss Julia, daughter of Matthew Ferguson, a wealthy man who was then engaged in the business of retailing goods in partnership with the merchant and his brother-in-law, Wood Ferguson.

In 1830 he was elected Constableman from the First ward and served three years. He was then President of the lower board. About this time he began to dissipate his money, and his wife's fortune, estimated at \$7000, was soon spent. He then began to sink his heavy debts in the street and capital, and the consequence was a failure in business, and he died early in life, leaving two little boys, who survive the father. The girls, who were the wife's death or the falling fortunes. Duerson's total wreck, extricated from the indignities of a pauper, he was induced to get a drink by any means. For the next ten-pin alleys and second-class billiard rooms were his constant resort, and living, no one knew exactly how. Living in a state of extreme poverty, and man's weakness and the strength of evil habits.

article on a new cure for consumption (tuberculosis) provided by a "correspondent of an English medical journal": "Put a dozen whole lemons in cold water, and boil until soft; roll and squeeze until juice is all extracted; sweeten the juice enough to be palatable; then drink."⁶ Supported by the authority of the "English medical journal," this advice sounded scientifically proven but certainly would have not cured tuberculosis.

19th-century Americans died of diseases that modern medicine with its antibiotics, vaccines, and antiseptics has all but extinguished. Jefferson's collection of obituary records reveals some of the causes of death. Descriptions such as "terrible affliction" and "sudden death" indicate that strokes, heart disease, and cancer were responsible for many deaths. Yet, each scrapbook contains the obituaries of people who died of causes such as "complications of bronchial troubles," "lockjaw"

19TH-CENTURY AMERICANS DIED OF DISEASES THAT MODERN MEDICINE WITH ITS ANTIBIOTICS... HAS ALL BUT EXTINGUISHED.

(tetanus), and a "cold" turned into "pneumonia and congestion of the lungs."⁷ Jefferson collected these obituaries as memories of the deceased and for biographical information. Nevertheless, reading descriptions of why and how people died contributed to his perceptions of death, sickness, and health. Reading about a man "free from organic disease" who, after catching a cold that "first... did not affect his lungs or develop any alarming symptoms" eventually died of pneumonia, confirmed the health advice Jefferson collected in his scrapbook.⁸ Dressing appropriately, avoiding physical exercise and sweating, and keeping one's house ventilated were necessary measures to prevent sickness and potentially death.

breath, or impure air, is his greatest enemy, but it will scarcely be denied by any instructed man or woman that it is a frightful source of mischief and unhappiness," an article collected in 1881 stated. The article continues to reveal the health risks of improper ventilation that "the progress of scientific study has made manifest." Modern arrangements of buildings, the article stated, prevented proper ventilation with the result that people breathed impure air at home, at church, in railroad cars, and in theaters. Theaters in the winter "are sure to contain a sluggish air, overladen with carbonic acid, produced by the combustion of gas and exhalations from our lungs, the effect of which is almost stifling, and sends many of us home with a headache." Fresh air, the remedy for all sicknesses, the article argued, could be had in abundance — as long as one preferred nature to the evils of industrialization and entertainment.⁴

By the mid nineteenth century, medical therapy had transformed from the personalized treatments according to a patient's character and environment to the more universalized therapeutical approach based on experiments.⁵ Newspapers of the later 19th century adopted this approach when printing health advice. In 1883, Jefferson collected an

Whether he was aware of it or not, Jefferson learned a lesson from each of the obituaries in his collection. Death was inevitable but people had some influence on the kind and the time of their death. Living a good, moral life following health advice and avoiding immoral behavior was one way to postpone death. Jefferson certainly did not want to end his life like William T. Duerson who died of dropsy in 1882. His obituary concluded that after having "been a familiar object about ten-pin alleys and second-class billiard rooms... Living and dying he was a sad example of man's weakness and the strength of evil habits."⁹

¹ John F. Jefferson scrapbooks Vol. 10., p. 48.

² Ronald J. Zboray and Mary Saracino Zboray. "Is it a Diary, Commonplace Book, Scrapbook. Or Whatchamacallits? Six Years of Exploration in New England's Manuscript Archives." *Libraries & the Cultural Record*, 44/1 (2009), 101.

³ Jefferson Vol. 3, p. 16.

⁴ Jefferson Vol. 7.

⁵ John Harley Warner. "From Specificity to Universalism in Medical Therapeutics: Transformation in the 19th-century United States." *In Sickness and Health in America. Readings in the History of Medicine and Public Health*, edited by Judith Walzer Leavitt and Ronald L. Numbers, 87-101. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997.

⁶ Jefferson Vol. 8.

⁷ Jefferson Vol. 10, p. 45.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Jefferson Vol. 10, p. 48.

THE FILSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S EXPANSION-

EXPLORING THE INTERIORS

BY ROBERTO DE LEON, JR., AIA, LEED AP
AND M. ROSS PRIMMER, AIA - PRINCIPALS,
DE LEON & PRIMMER ARCHITECTURE WORKSHOP

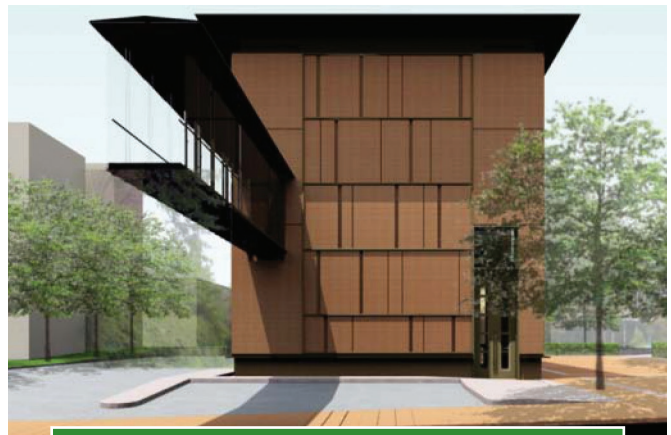
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This article is the third in a series centered on
The Filson Historical Society's expansion.

All images are from De Leon & Primmer Architecture Workshop



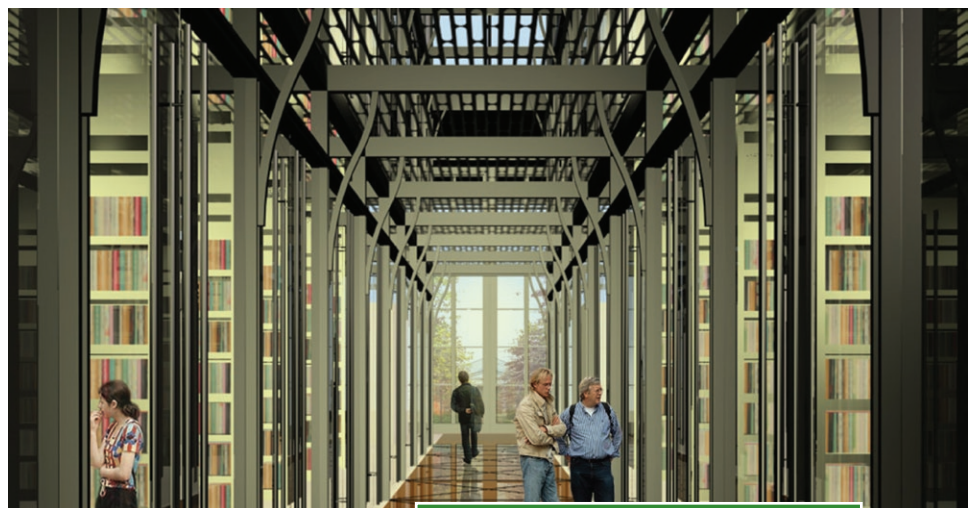
CARRIAGE HOUSE WITH CONNECTOR BRIDGE



EAST ELEVATION WITH CONNECTOR BRIDGE

ARCHIVAL STORAGE

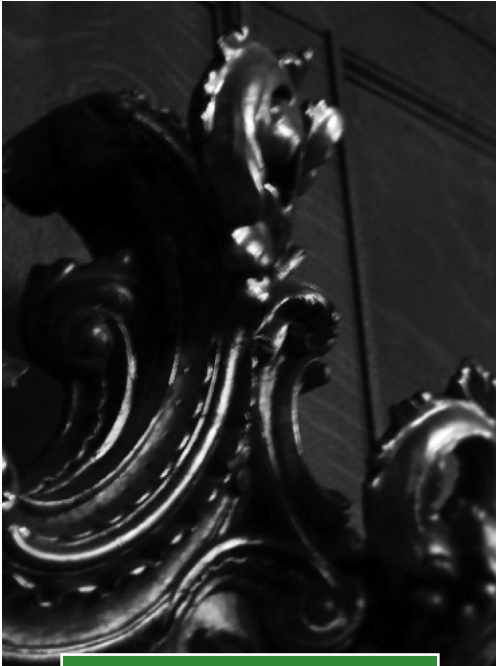
The new multi-level Archival Storage is directly connected to the Scholarly Research area (in the Ferguson Mansion) via a glass connector bridge. Originally hidden from view, historical manuscripts and artifacts will be visible to visitors from within the new addition. Changing displays will be incorporated into all public spaces.



ARCHIVAL STORAGE RENDERING

STAIRCASE

The historical precedent of elaborately carved oak staircases common to the circa-1890 neighborhood mansions is reinterpreted through a layering of curving wood veneer planes. Using sweetgum veneer (a native wood species), the staircase is expressed as a wooden ribbon that ascends to the community event space overlooking the city.



STAIRCASE CARVING DETAIL



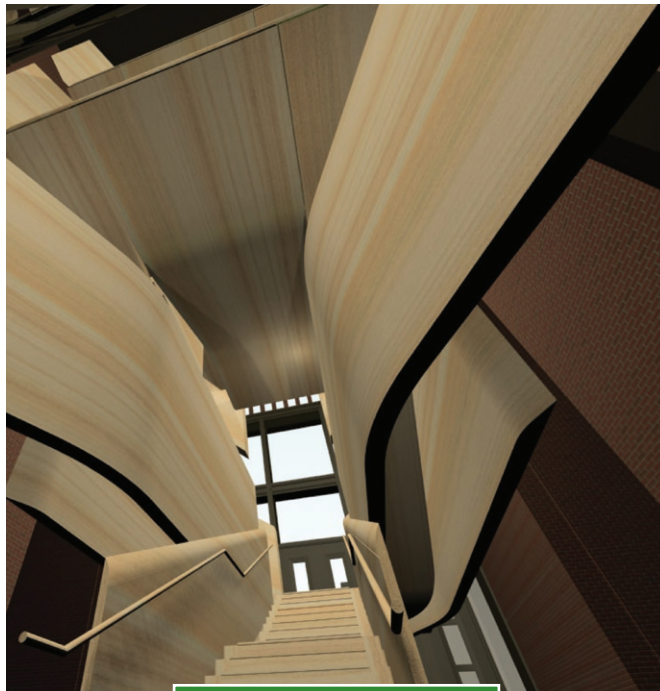
PEELING BIRCH BARK



WOOD VENEER FLITCH SAMPLES



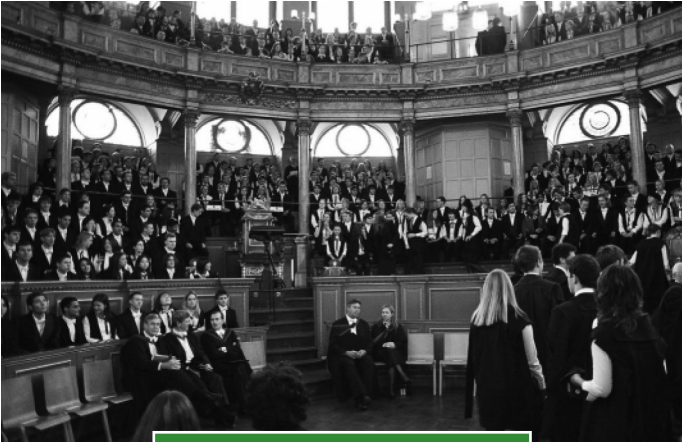
WOOD VENEER MOCK-UP



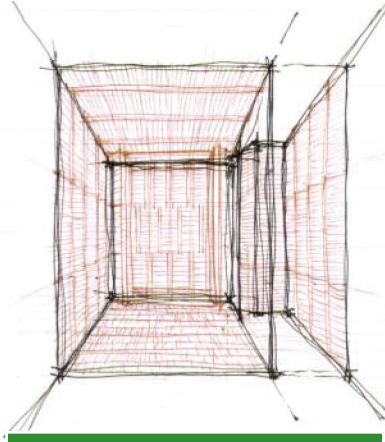
STAIRCASE RENDERING

LECTURE HALL

Lined in movable wood louver paneling, the Lecture Hall can be easily adapted to a variety of speaking and event configurations. Alluding to wood coffering and paneling in traditional lecture halls, the adjustable louver panels reinforce an open, spatial quality common to southern verandas.



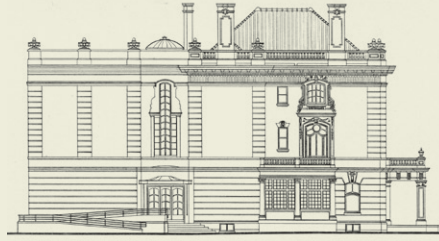
OXFORD LECTURE HALL



DEVELOPMENT SKETCH



LECTURE HALL RENDERING



The Filson Institute Public Conference

The Legacy of Buildings: Learning from Historic Structures / Spring 2011 / May 12-14

“The qualities that created civilization are measured in the architecture that is left behind as much as in their literature or music. Societies may disappear but the cultural artifact remains to provide intellectual access to those who created it.” – Sir Bernard Feilden, British conservation architect

What would it be like to live in the River City without the homes of Old Louisville, Churchill Downs or the Louisville Water Tower? What if the buildings that remind us of where we came from and what we have accomplished did not survive? Why do we value historical places and what can we learn from them?

Heritage conservation provides tangible economic benefits for the community, but it does so much more. Historic architecture enriches our lives and allows us to honor our legacy. Historic buildings stand as distinct examples of human achievement and shine a light on the cultural values of the past.

Join The Filson Historical Society as historians, architects, and historic preservationists explore the importance of understanding and preserving our cultural heritage through historic structures in Louisville, the Ohio Valley, and beyond.

THURSDAY, MAY 12 -

RECEPTION, 5:30; KEYNOTE LECTURE, 6:30

John H. Stubbs –

A Global Tour of Architectural Conservation: Saving Our Past

Stubbs' presentation will stress that architectural conservation is now an agenda item in every country in the world, including practical considerations such as tourism revenues and conservation's inherent energy-saving characteristics. All preservation is local because it defines the character and qualities of the places in which we live.

Stubbs is the Vice President for Field Projects at the World Monuments Fund, where he plays a lead role in planning and coordinating a number of the organization's key architectural conservation projects and related activities. He has taught at Columbia University since 1984, and is a graduate of Columbia's Historic Preservation Program. As a key overseer of WMF's World Monuments Watch program Stubbs helps to track progress and stimulate positive conservation actions at over 250 sites in 87 countries.

FRIDAY, MAY 13 - DAY OF LECTURES

Dr. David Mohney, AIA - Panel Moderator

Mohney, who has taught at the University of Kentucky since 1994, is Dean Emeritus of the College of Design. He is the Founding Secretary of the Curry Stone Design Prize and serves on a number of national and regional foundation and civic boards, including the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation and American Institute of Architects Students.

Dr. Samuel W. Thomas

Thomas is the author of 18 books, including *The Architectural History of Louisville*, which was published by The Filson. Thomas has also written major studies on Louisville neighborhoods, and many essays on local history. He was a member of the Louisville Landmarks and Preservation Districts Commission, and archivist of Jefferson County. In addition, Thomas was the College of Arts and Sciences Distinguished Alumnus in 1994.

Dr. Patrick Lee Lucas

Lucas is an Associate Professor of Interior Architecture at the University of North Carolina Greensboro. His current work includes the development of a book manuscript on the architect Edward Loewenstein and the mid-century modern design aesthetic, as well as a manuscript entitled “Athens on the Frontier: Grecian Style Architecture in the Valley of the West, 1820-1860.”

De Leon & Primmer Architecture Workshop

De Leon and Primmer established D&PAW in Louisville in 2003 as a design studio focused on cultural and civic environments. The Architectural League of New York recently selected D&PAW for its 2011 Emerging Voices award, and *Architectural Record* named the firm to its Design Vanguard in 2010.

SATURDAY, MAY 14 - FIELD TRIP

Judge John David Myles -

Early Kentucky Architecture, Henry & Shelby Counties

Myles is a Family Court Judge for Anderson, Shelby, and Spencer counties whose avocation is the study of architecture. He has built his expertise in architectural history over years of serious study and practical, hands-on work. Myles has written *The Filson's Annual House Tour Notes* since 1995.

A brochure with details is available -
Call The Filson at (502) 635-5083

BY AMY JACKSON | PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MARKETING COORDINATOR

WHAT WAS OLD IS NEW AGAIN:

THE FILSON'S PORTRAIT CONSERVATION PROGRAM

The Filson holds over 400 portraits, ranging from the painting of Susannah Smith Preston by John Wollaston done in the 1760s, to the late twentieth century portrait of Barry Bingham painted by Mary Cobb. All of these portraits are undeniably valuable historical objects, yielding countless clues about the past. Consider that before the advent of the camera, a portrait was the only way to preserve someone's likeness. This is how we know the faces of someone like George Washington or Daniel Boone. We can also view the painted scene as a window into the painter's mind by examining the portrait's details – what is the background? What are the

colors? What did the painter choose to emphasize – the subject's hair? Or their nose? Are they sitting or standing – posed or simply gazing at the viewer? We can learn more about the subject of the painting as well - is the face of the subject happy, or grim, or stoic? Is the subject wearing formal evening dress or a simple jacket? Is the subject young or old? All of these details offer fascinating clues into the past. Even the type of frame can offer historical insights.

Most of The Filson's portrait acquisitions have been gifts. These portraits have often been passed down through the family, and the descendants of the portrait's subject now wish



BEFORE

BEFORE & AFTER

Portrait of Judge Richard French,
attributed to painter Chester Harding



AFTER

to find a suitable home for the painting where it will be cared for and protected. Occasionally someone will make an exciting find at a flea market or antiques store and gladly donate the historically significant portrait that they have found to The Filson.

Around 1995, The Filson decided to have its portraits evaluated by the Cumberland Art Conservation Center, an art restoration company located in Nashville. Two representatives from CACC came and appraised the portraits, giving their opinion on which portraits should go through the conservation process, and in what order these portraits should be conserved. With this information in mind, The Filson ranked the portraits, taking into consideration the historical value of the subject and the artist as well.

The conservation process often begins with stabilizing and reinforcing the support of the painting. The portrait can become loose on its stretcher, or the backing may be unbalanced. When this occurs, the portrait canvas can begin to sag, as seen in this portrait of Judge Richard French (family tradition states the portrait was painted by Chester Harding). The bottom seam of the strainer had opened, and a large piece of the strainer on the top had broken off completely, leaving the canvas largely unsupported and markedly slack.

The first step for the conservator would be to apply a temporary facing tissue over the front layers of paint and across any tears to protect it during treatment. Once the front is secure, the conservator can then work on the back of the canvas, removing linings and adhesives that are causing damage, such as cracking, flaking and mold due to the water content in the material. Another step is to use gentle heat to “relax” the canvas to remove distortions and creases. This picture of the Judge Richard French portrait, taken after the portrait went through the conservation process in 2009, demonstrates how effective the process can be – the canvas bubbling is gone.

Cleaning is a very important part of the conservation process. In the past homes were heated by coal, so dust and dirt often collected on the portrait canvas. If there were smokers in the house, then a patina of smoke could have gathered on the canvas too. Another issue is if varnish was applied to the portrait. Varnish was administered in an effort to protect the portrait, but in an ironic twist, the varnish usually turned brown and damaged the canvas. Amazingly, even though the varnish has chemically adhered to the portrait canvas, conservators can often remove the varnish.

CLEANING IS A VERY IMPORTANT PART OF THE CONSERVATION PROCESS.



BEFORE

BEFORE & AFTER

Portrait of Hugh Nelson,
painted by James Thomas Poindexter



AFTER

IN THE CLEANING PROCESS THEY DISCOVERED A SIGNATURE IN THE BOTTOM RIGHT HAND CORNER, CONFIRMING THE ATTRIBUTION TO POINDEXTER.

Before the portrait of Hugh Nelson went through the conservation process in 2009, the canvas clearly had many issues. Not only did it need to be cleaned very badly because of remnants of varnish, there were areas of the canvas where the paint had flaked off. In a method called in-painting, the conservator can match the color of the paint and then re-apply it. The conservator will also apply a consolidating wax adhesive and chemically stable synthetic resins to the canvas in order to seal and protect it from future pollutants. The stunning results are obvious, as seen in the Hugh Nelson portrait after going through conservation.

The companion portrait to this picture of Hugh Nelson is that of his wife Mary Wallace Nelson and their son Memucan. This portrait was donated to The Filson by Nancy Rhodes Archer via Hugh Archer, while Hugh Archer gave The Filson the Hugh Nelson portrait. A black and white photograph of this portrait before it went through the conservation process demonstrates that there was a large hole in the canvas and an oil-resin varnish that was deeply ingrained by the paint.

The conservators noted that the oil-type coating was very tenacious, but a general reduction was possible. Remarkably, in the cleaning process they discovered a signature in the bottom right corner of the painter James Thomas Poindexter, 1848. Because of this discovery, and given the similarity of style and technique between the two Nelson portraits, the Hugh Nelson portrait was solidly identified as a Poindexter painting as well. These companion Nelson portraits now stand as beautiful examples of Poindexter's earliest known work as a portrait painter.

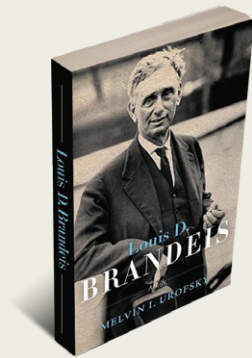
After the portrait evaluation process by CACC, The Filson has chosen four portraits on average to go through the conservation process each year, over about a fifteen-year period. This means approximately 60 portraits have gone through the conservation process, out of the roughly 400 portraits in our collection. Although The Filson has had to temporarily suspend the conservation program due to budget constraints, we plan on continuing this process in the future. The Filson's ability to display its large portrait collection will be greatly enhanced with the upcoming building expansion.



BEFORE & AFTER

Portrait of Mary Wallace Nelson and the Nelsons' son Memucan





THE GERTRUDE POLK BROWN LECTURE SERIES

Melvin I. Urofsky, “Mr. Brandeis of Louisville”



Louis D. Brandeis, the namesake for Brandeis University in Massachusetts and the law school at the University of Louisville, helped establish the concept of right-to-privacy, championed labor laws and fought against public corruption throughout his influential career as a practitioner in Boston. He was also an influential leader of the American Zionist movement before and during his years on the Supreme Court.



Dr. Melvin I. Urofsky is professor of law and public policy and a professor emeritus of history at Virginia Commonwealth University, and was the chair of its history department. He is the editor (with David W. Levy) of the five-volume collection of Louis Brandeis’s letters, as well as the author of *Louis D. Brandeis: A Life, American Zionism from Herzl to the Holocaust* and *Louis D. Brandeis and the Progressive Tradition*.

Urofsky is the recipient of the 2010 Brandeis Medal Award, which was established in 1982 to recognize individuals whose lives reflect Justice Brandeis’ commitment to the ideals of individual liberty, concern for the disadvantaged, and public service. *Louis D. Brandeis: A Life* received the 2011 Erwin Griswold Book Prize, the 2010 Ambassador Book Award and the 2009 National Jewish Book Award.



Tuesday, May 24, 2011 - 6:30 p.m.

Sandy Allen Fine Arts Center at Ballard High School
6000 Brownsboro Road, Louisville, KY 40222

Tickets are \$10 for non-members. Free for members of The Filson Historical Society. Send ticket requests with a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: GPBL Tickets, 1310 S. Third Street, Louisville, KY 40208.

THE FILSON CIVIL WAR FIELD INSTITUTE

CUMBERLAND GAP

THE CONFEDERACY’S CORRIDOR TO THE NORTH

JUNE 2-4, 2011



*Dear Father and Mother,
We left Camp Wild Cat yesterday. We had the rebels here to whip. Company “K” was in the battle with the rest. Well Pap . . . we did kill many for I helpt to bury eight myself but herd of many more. We whipt him bad. He retreated four times and then left for good. We are after him now . . . You better believe we made it roar for awhile from ten til twelve in the night . . .*

Except from a letter by Henry K. Thomen

October 1861

Filson Historical Society collections

The Filson Historical Society will host a Civil War Field Institute whose mission is to explore the complex history of the Civil War era in Kentucky, The Ohio Valley region and the Upper South through a series of field trips and lectures that allow participants to follow the footsteps of the armies and stand on the grounds where they fought.

This Filson Civil War Field Institute will focus on the Cumberland Gap’s pivotal role in the War Between the States and how the area’s significance lay in its routes north and south, the topography and geography, and the divided nature of its citizenry.

We will visit the Abraham Lincoln Library and Museum which houses one of the most diverse Lincoln and Civil War collections in the country, located in Harrogate, Tennessee. Exhibited are many rare items - the cane Lincoln carried that fateful night at Ford’s Theatre, two life masks, the tea set he and Mary Todd used in their home in Springfield, and numerous other artifacts.

The trip will include a stop for an interpretation of the Battle of Barbourville. The battle is considered the first Confederate victory in the commonwealth.

We will also visit the battlefields of Camp Wildcat and Richmond, Kentucky and stop at Camp Nelson in Nicholasville.

Our guide for this trip will be Brian McKnight. McKnight, an Associate Professor of History at the University of Virginia’s College at Wise, is the author of *Contested Borderland: The Civil War in Appalachian Kentucky and Virginia*, which won the James I. Robertson Literary Prize in 2006. His newest book is *Confederate Outlaw: Champ Ferguson and the Civil War in Appalachia*.

For more information please contact Scott Scarboro at (502) 635-5083, sscarboro@filsonhistorical.org. To reserve your place, please send a \$50 (non-refundable) deposit per person to Scott Scarboro’s attention at The Filson, 1310 S. Third Street, Louisville, KY 40208.

THE FILSONIANS

January - March 2011

How can you give a gift that will provide the greatest benefit to you and The Filson Historical Society? *Through Planned Giving.*

By informing us of your intent to include The Filson Historical Society in your estate, you are helping to ensure The Filson's ability to meet our mission of saving and sharing the significant stories of Kentucky and Ohio Valley history and culture. Your commitment allows us to remain a strong and vital educational resource for our community both today and tomorrow.

Planned gifts create opportunities for both you and The Filson Historical Society. Choosing the right type of commitment for you and your needs is just as important as making the gift. It could be something as simple as naming The Filson as a beneficiary to a more complex trust arrangement. In addition to the tangible benefits of planned giving, you will have the joy of knowing that your commitment helps The Filson to continue to be a steward of the past and ensures our future as a resource for Kentucky and the Ohio Valley. To learn more about planned giving options, please contact Judy Miller at 502-635-5083.

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WE MAKE A LIFE BY WHAT WE GIVE.”**

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