

# The Filson

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



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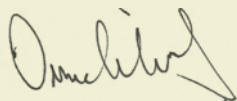


## From the President

In May 1884, Col. Reuben T. Durrett and nine other Louisvillians founded The Filson. Our organization has come a long way since then, growing from a small private club to an established historical society with a professional staff and thousands of members and supporters. Our unique collections, moreover, are available not only to our members but also to scholars, researchers and students, indeed anyone interested in our region's history. Col. Durrett and his co-founders would hardly recognize The Filson Historical Society today!

As we approach our 125th anniversary, we would like to highlight The Filson's important mission: to collect, preserve and tell the significant stories of Kentucky and the Ohio Valley's history and culture. To pursue our mission, each year we actively add to our extraordinary collections of rare books, pamphlets, maps, photographs and more than 1.5 million manuscripts and documents, not to mention museum items like paintings, portraits, prints, decorative arts and Native American artifacts. Through careful cataloging and conservation efforts, The Filson works continuously to preserve these collections. Perhaps most importantly, through our accessible collections and through dozens of programs and lectures every year, we share with our members and the public, the history, the culture and the significant stories of our state and region.

You, our wonderful members, enable us to fulfill our mission. The Filson Historical Society is deeply grateful for your support as we enter our 125th year.



Orme Wilson, III  
President

## From the Director

I hope that you will take time this year to commemorate the Lincoln bicentennial by joining us for some or all of the many Filson programs that we have scheduled.

Our spring Filson Institute Public Conference, "From Country Lawyer to Commander in Chief: The Making of Abraham Lincoln," will take place May 14-16 at the Filson. Our speakers will explore various aspects of Lincoln's career, including his years as an attorney, politician, commander in chief and emancipator. We also welcome well-known Lincoln scholar Michael Burlingame as the keynote speaker for this conference. Burlingame recently released a two volume collection of books titled *Abraham Lincoln: A Life*, which has been called "the finest Lincoln biography in more than 60 years."

And please sign up for one of three Lincoln book discussions with Dr. A. Glenn Crothers. Books by historians Catherine Clinton, James Oakes and James McPherson will be discussed in small group settings. Because of the popularity of this book discussion series, reservations are required.

For more information, visit our website [www.filsonhistorical.org](http://www.filsonhistorical.org) and click on the "Lincoln's Kentucky" link.

I look forward to seeing you at The Filson.



Mark V. Wetherington, Ph.D.  
Director

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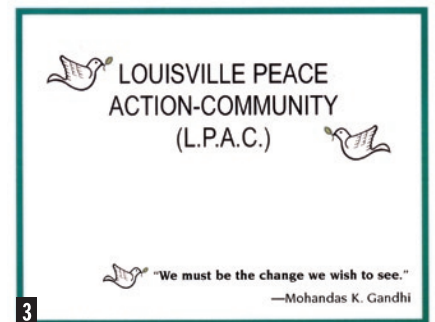
Jonathan Carver's map from his  
Travels Through the Interior Parts  
of North-America in the years  
1766, 1767 and 1768.

# Recent Acquisitions at The Filson



A collection recently donated to The Filson is the records of the Louisville Peace Action Community (LPAC). The LPAC collection documents the activities of a contemporary organization dedicated to peace, justice and world community. It is important to document the views and activities of LPAC and other organizations in order to better understand our history.

1. LPAC's version of the Derby Festival poster promoting peace, 2003.
2. LPAC "tip sheet" distributed at the 2003 Kentucky Derby.
3. LPAC note card designed by Bob Mankes, 2004.



# Browsing in Our Archives

## The Daguerreotype

BY ROBIN L. WALLACE | ASSOCIATE CURATOR OF SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

The daguerreotype is one of the earliest and most striking photographic processes. The Filson Historical Society's photograph collection contains more than 50 daguerreotypes, including several persons of note. One item found in our collection is a daguerreotype of Amos Kendall, a member of Andrew Jackson's cabinet and Postmaster General in 1835. Our collection also includes a daguerreotype of Willis Stewart, the Masonic High Priest of the Grand Chapter of Kentucky and the Grand Master of Masonic Lodge K. A daguerreotype of Eliza Woolfolk Johnson Johnston (wife of Col. Josiah Stoddard Johnston: Civil War officer, politician and author of *A Memorial History of Louisville*) and her younger sister Martha Johnson bears the humorous inscription, "Miss Rings and Miss Reticules/ The latter the common puppet & source of ridicule for the family particularly for J. Stoddard Johnston- July 3rd 1862." Daguerreotypes offer an interesting look into the lives of our ancestors, providing information about social standing, costume and family relationships.

The daguerreotype was developed in France by Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre. The process was based upon the photographic research and experiments Daguerre conducted with his partner Joseph Niépce (who is often called the father of photography), and was announced to the public in 1839. Earlier photographic processes required excessively long periods of light exposure rendering them unfit for commercial use or portrait photography. The invention was quickly introduced to the United States in 1840 by Samuel Morse, inventor of the telegraph. A flourishing new trade in portraiture was born, primarily practiced by itinerant photographers. Daguerreotypy provided those of relatively modest means with the opportunity to acquire their portrait for the first time in history; the wealthy by and large continued to patronize painters, and considered the monochrome

daguerreotype to be of little artistic merit and an inferior form of portraiture. Later, daguerreian studios could be found in almost any city of substantial size.

In daguerreotypy the image is exposed directly onto a polished silver surface that has been coated with silver halide particles

deposited by iodine vapor. The daguerreotype process does not produce a negative that can be used to reproduce the final product, unlike later processes. The daguerreotype itself is a negative image, but the mirrored surface of the metal plate reflects the image and makes it appear positive in the proper light. Once the silver plate was properly processed, it may have been hand-colored or gilded by the photographer. The image would then be stored in a small, glass-fronted case to protect the surface of the image, which is highly susceptible to scratches and damage. These casings were often quite beautifully rendered in velvet and tooled leather, and afford the image a longevity that is not usually found in other photographic processes. If kept properly sealed, a daguerreotype can last indefinitely. Even so, the daguerreotype enjoyed a short-lived run of popularity as other photographic methods were introduced which were more economical and easier to employ: the calotype, the ambrotype, the tintype and the collodion process. Daguerreotypy continues to be practiced today as a novelty or alternative process.

The Filson Historical Society actively collects daguerreotypes and we hope to expand our holdings of this seminal photographic process.

We will gladly accept your donations to our daguerreotype collection and welcome the chance to preserve these important examples of early photography.



Top: Amos Kendall, ca.1855 – ca.1865

Bottom: Willis Stewart, ca. 1843- ca.1851

Opposite: Eliza Woolfolk Johnson Johnston and Martha Johnson, 1862

*All images from the collections of The Filson Historical Society.*







*Engrav'd, for Cambrs*  
Travels.

British Statute Miles 60 to a Degree





A detailed historical map of the North Atlantic Ocean, showing the eastern coast of North America, Greenland, and the British Isles. The map is oriented with North at the top. Key geographical features include the Gulf of St. Lawrence, the Strait of Belle Isle, the Gulf of Fundy, and the Atlantic Ocean. Major cities and towns are labeled, including New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and London. The map also shows the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Cancer. The map is titled 'A T L A N T I C O C E A N' and 'NEW BRITAIN'.

Written by Judith Partington, Head Librarian

Tocqueville was curious as to why republican representative democracy had succeeded in America while failing in his native France and other countries. He speculated on the future of democracy in the United States and discussed possible threats to its existence, including the division of the country over the issue of slavery. He also noted that Americans combined their belief in Christianity with their belief in freedom, writing that: "I have known of societies formed by the Americans to send out ministers of the Gospel into the new Western States, to found schools and churches there. Lest religion should be suffered to die away in those remote settlements and the rising states be less fitted to enjoy free institutions. Thus religious zeal is perpetually stimulated in the United States by the duties of patriotism. These men do not act from an exclusive consideration of the promises of a future life... and you would be surprised to find how much value they set upon the goods of this world, and that you meet with a politician



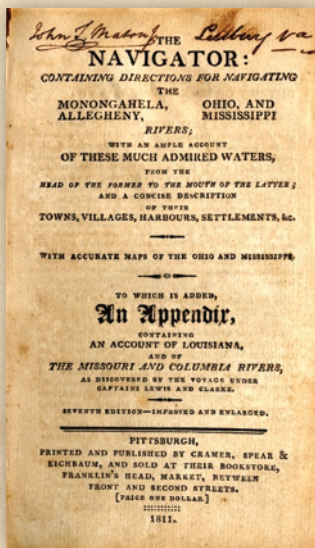
where you expected to find a priest. They will tell you that all the American Republics are collectively involved with each other; if the republics of the West were to fall into anarchy or to be mastered by a despot, the republican institutions which now flourish upon the shores of the Atlantic Ocean, would be in great peril."<sup>2</sup>

Americans, he concluded, wanted to maintain their religion in order to maintain their liberties. Tocqueville admired this quality in Americans. He realized that: "Despotism can govern without faith, but liberty cannot." Religion, he felt, was much more necessary in a republic than in a monarchy. "How is it possible that society should escape destruction if the moral tie be not strengthened in proportion as the political tie is relaxed? And what can be done with a people which is its own master, if it be not submissive to the Divinity?"<sup>3</sup> These were the questions raised by de Tocqueville more than 170 years ago when viewing the complexities of a free society where people relied on their own and each other's sense of morality to provide their lives and institutions with a system of checks and balances.

Jonathan Carver was an American explorer with a less philosophical bent. He joined the colonial militia at the start of the French and Indian War in 1755. It was during this time that he studied surveying and mapping techniques. He left the militia in 1763 with a desire to explore the new territories acquired by the British during the war. In 1766 a Royal Governor by the name of Robert Rogers contracted Carver to lead an expedition to find the Northwest Passage. The king and the parliament

had promised a vast prize in gold for anyone who discovered a western water route to the Pacific, and Carver started out from Mackinaw City, Michigan in the spring of 1766.<sup>4</sup> Shortly afterwards he found that his sponsor was under suspicion of plotting treason against England. Rogers was arrested in 1767, but this did not deter Carver from his goal of exploring and mapping the newly-acquired territory.

The Filson Library has the original copy of his book, *Travels Through the Interior Parts of North-America in the Years 1766, 1767, and 1768*, which was



published in London in 1778. It met with wide acclaim and was immensely popular. Carver went farther West on the Mississippi than any other English explorer before the Revolution. His map is an incredibly accurate depiction of North America given how little was known of Canada and the United States when it was printed (The Lewis & Clark expedition would not take place for another 60 years.) Shown to the west of Virginia is a territory identified as Buffaloes Meadows on land which would now be part of Kentucky. Rivers, mountains, lakes and Indian villages are clearly marked, and two little-known tribes, the



White Padoucas and the Black Padoucas are located in the western section of what was then called the Louisiana Territory.

After two years of travelling and mapping the country, Carver submitted a list of expenses to his superiors, but payment was denied on the grounds that Robert Rogers did not have the authority to sanction such a trip. Carver was outraged. He sailed for England in 1769 and began to pressure the government for his promised payment. In the midst of his lobbying endeavor, he wrote his *Travels* and though it was highly regarded, he was never adequately rewarded. He died in London in 1780 a poor man.<sup>5</sup>

Zadock Cramer's *The Navigator: Containing Directions for Navigating the Monongahela, Allegheny, Ohio and Mississippi Rivers* was definitely required reading for anyone who wished to move their families, farm goods or newly-manufactured supplies up and down the rivers. A sort of floating gazetteer, it made reference to every channel, sandbar



Great Miami\* (or Mineami) river  
right side, (M. D.) 6 551

At the mouth of this river is a sand bar, channel on the left shore; and about 300 yards below is another sand bar on the same side, channel midway between the bar and the right shore.

The great Miami or Rocky river, has a very stony channel, a swift stream, but no falls: is 200 yards wide at its mouth; at the Pickaway towns, 75 miles up, it is contracted to the breadth of 30 yards; it is nevertheless, naviga-

\* Before we quit the state of Ohio (at the western boundary of which we have now arrived,) it may not be amiss to give a short description of Chillicothe, the former capital, (the seat of government being removed to Zanesville) for which we are indebted to a work just published, entitled a Western Tour from Philadelphia in 1807.

CHILLICOTHE, which signifies town in the Indian dialect, is most beautifully situated on the banks of the Scioto, about forty five miles by land, and nearly seventy following the meanders of the river from its confluence with the Ohio, which it joins between Portsmouth and Alexandria—In all that distance, the river has a gentle current, and unimpeded navigation for large keels, and other craft of four feet draught of water—It continues navigable for smaller boats and batteaux upwards of one hundred miles above the town towards its source to the northward, gliding gently through a naturally rich, level, and rapidly improving country—The situation of the town is on an elevated and extensive plain of nearly ten thousand acres of as fine a soil as any in America, partly in cultivation, and partly covered with its native forests.—This plain is nearly surrounded by the Scioto, which turning suddenly to the N. E. from its general southerly course, leaves the town to the southward of it, and then forms a great bend to the eastward and southward.

Water street which runs about E. by N. parallel to the Scioto, is half a mile long and contains ninety houses—It is eighty four feet wide and would be a fine street, had not the river floods caved in the bank in one place near the middle almost into the centre of it. There is now a lottery to raise money for securing the bank against any further incroachments of the river. Main street parallel to Water street, is one hundred feet wide, as is Market street, which crosses both at right angles, and in which is the market house, a neat brick building eighty feet long—The court house in the same street, is neatly built of free stone on an area of forty five by forty two feet, with a semicircular projection in the rear, in which is the bench for the judges. It has an octagonal

and city on the rivers. Cramer was a bookbinder by trade, and in 1800 he advertised in the *Pittsburgh Gazette* that he was about to open a bookbindery.<sup>6</sup> That same year he acquired a bookstore which was believed to have had more than 800 titles. Situated as he was near the point in Pittsburgh where the Monongahela and the Allegheny Rivers form the Ohio, he saw swarms of immigrants bound West and South. Immediately he realized the need for a publication that would provide detailed information for navigating the Western waters. The Filson Library has six editions of his publication beginning in 1808 and ending in 1824. The seventh edition was scanned for the Library of Congress's American Memory website, *The First American West: the Ohio River Valley from 1750 to 1820*. If you would like to peruse more than just the title page and the portion of the Ohio River running from Cincinnati to Louisville (pp. 114-115) that are shown here, you can go to The Filson Historical Society's website at: [www.filsonhistorical.org](http://www.filsonhistorical.org) and click on

*The First American West*. Cramer's book was believed to have been based on two other titles available in our collection: Gilbert Imlay's *A Topographical Description of the Western territory of North America* which was published in London in 1797 and Thomas Hutchins' *Topographical Description of Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland and North Carolina*. Both of these titles are located on the *First American West* website under Gilbert Imlay's third edition.

Considering the abominable conditions endured by those who chose to travel in the 18th and 19th centuries, it is hard to fathom why anyone would venture away from a safe and comfortable haven to explore a wilderness fraught with danger. Yet many intrepid souls did just that, and they did it for a variety of reasons. Not unlike their 21st century counterparts who journey to remote and inhospitable locations to observe the plants and animals, to record the language and customs of the natives, to measure ice floes, to climb the world's highest peaks, to uncover antiquities and to satisfy their sense of adventure, explorers of the 18th and 19th century were similarly motivated. They took to the high seas, the corduroy roads and the Indian trails stirred by a need for adventure, an insatiable curiosity and a desire to experience firsthand the vastness of this new continent, to judge for themselves the character of the people who settled here and to compare their institutions and way of life to the ones they had left behind. The Filson Library is fortunate to have more than 150 such travelogs written by men whose motives for coming to America were as varied and as interesting as the men themselves.

Page 4: Jonathan Carver's map from his *Travels Through the Interior Parts of North-America* in the years 1766, 1767 & 1768. The entire work can be found by going to [www.filsonhistorical.org](http://www.filsonhistorical.org) and clicking on *The First American West: Ohio Valley History from 1750 to 1820*.

Page 6: Title page from Zadock Cramer's *The Navigator: Containing Directions for Navigating the Monongahela, Allegheny, Ohio and Mississippi Rivers*. This book can also be found on *The First American West: Ohio Valley History from 1750 to 1820*.

Page 6 and 7: Section of Cramer's *Navigator* showing the Ohio River from Cincinnati to Louisville. The course of the entire river can be seen on the *First American West* site.

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The title is surrounded by several red blood splatters of varying sizes, some with a spiky, irregular edge, suggesting a violent crime.

# **MURDER ON MAIN**

## **THE NEWCOMB TRAGEDY OF 1852**

**SARAH-JANE POINDEXTER, ASSISTANT CURATOR OF SPECIAL COLLECTIONS**



# STREET

Though the Newcomb tragedy is little known today, in its time it was one of the most infamous cases of filicide in the United States. An affluent wife's brief moment of insanity resulted in two deaths and a maiming and spurred decades of betrayal, gossip and greed. The scene of this grim murder was in Louisville, Kentucky, near the corner of First and Main streets, at the mansion of Horatio Dalton Newcomb. Though the house no longer stands, the legacy of the tragic event remains.

Nineteenth-century correspondence, legal

documents and newspapers in The Filson's collection chronicle the horrific event.

Horatio Dalton Newcomb

moved to Louisville from Massachusetts in 1832. Starting out in the liquor and grocery wholesale business he went on to become active in other enterprises such as coal mines, cotton mills, the second Galt House and the L&N Railroad, of which he eventually became president. In the mid-1800's, Newcomb was Louisville's wealthiest and most powerful businessman, influencing all his endeavors with a Midas touch. His fortune and local fame, however, did not save him from the gruesome tragedy that would befall his family.

It happened a few days before Christmas in 1852. Newcomb's wife Cornelia had been sick for the past week but seemed to be improving. She convinced her husband

to join his friends for dinner at a local club. After he left, Cornelia's mother, who was staying with them at the time, retired for the evening. Cornelia gathered her four children and told them to come into her bedroom which was on the second floor of the house facing Main Street. She then enticed them to the window with

**SHE THEN ENTICED THEM TO THE WINDOW WITH THE PROMISE OF SEEING A BALLOON OUTSIDE.**

the promise of seeing a balloon outside.

The subsequent event was recorded in a confidential letter from Helen Bullitt to her aunt, Helen M. Martin. Bullitt began, "Please do not to let anyone, not even Miss Mira, see my letter." She wrote, Mrs Newcomb "placed a trunk at the window and the two eldest got on it, she pushed them out, then she picked up the other two and threw them out of the front window on the pavement. One was killed in an instant; another died the same night; the eldest it is thought will recover entirely, the third was very seriously injured, his recovery is still uncertain. The alarm was given. Mr. McKnight was the first to get there. Mrs. N[ewcomb] opened the door and was perfectly calm as if nothing had happened . . . Mrs. Newcomb said that she knew it seemed very strange but that no one could conceive of the pain it cast her to part with her children, but the lord had been calling for them for several weeks and she had sent them to him." It was later revealed that she had also intended to kill her husband and then herself.

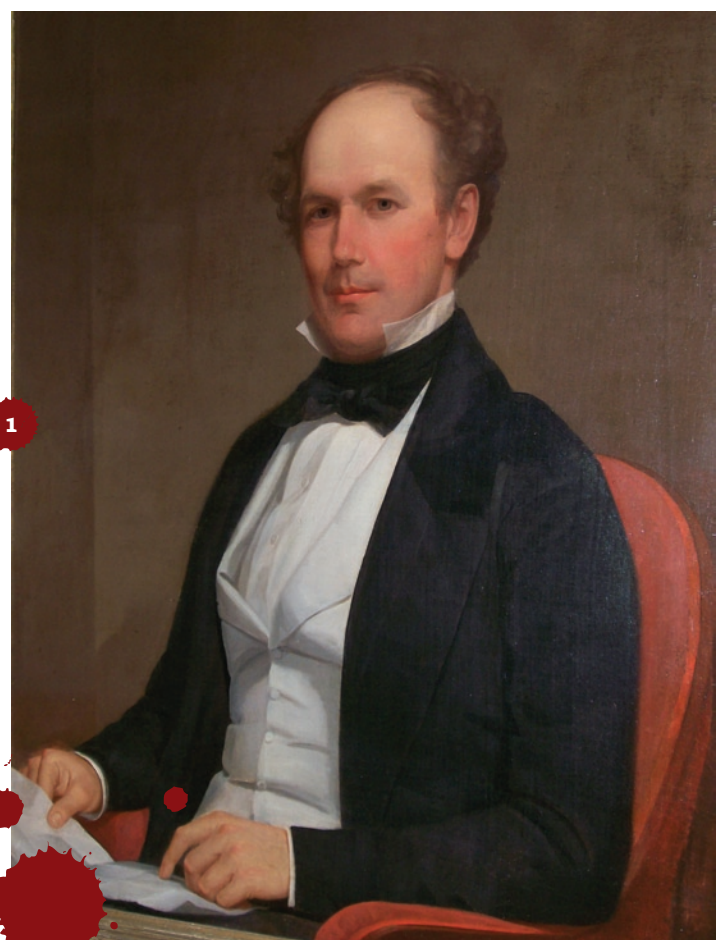




In the days and weeks that followed this shocking act, the family buried the two children murdered by their mother. One of the surviving little boys' legs was so damaged as to require amputation. During the procedure, he cried out, "Mama, Mama, please don't throw me out of the window." He later died, on the verge of adulthood, at the age of 21. Mr. Newcomb placed his wife in the McLean Hospital in Somerville, Massachusetts, where she resided for at least 20 years.

While Cornelia lived in Massachusetts, Newcomb fell in love with the significantly younger daughter of his business partner J. B. Smith. Insanity was not a legal cause for divorce in Kentucky until 1865. Even after 1865, to divorce his wife and wed Mary Smith, Newcomb's case would need to be tried in front of a jury and include defense for the insane party and an investigation into the wealthy plaintiff's resources to apportion alimony. Newcomb wanted to avoid publicity and used his influence to keep the matter out of the newspaper. He compelled the Kentucky General Legislature to pass special legislation to amend the divorce law. The special session gave the Chancery Court power to make the decree for divorce and settle the issue of alimony, further suppressing publicity. Newcomb privately presented his case to a judge, asserting that his wife's insanity was concealed at the time of marriage. The divorce was granted and Cornelia Newcomb was cut off from any share in his estate. Horatio Dalton Newcomb was ordered to pay \$2,500 a year for Cornelia's continued support and maintenance for as long as she lived. One month after the divorce, at the age of 62, Newcomb married Mary Smith, a woman distinguished by her beauty, brilliance and manners. The couple had two sons.

Four years after his second marriage, Mr. Newcomb died of a stroke. His death set off a series of lawsuits among his heirs. In a personal letter dated January 18, 1930, attorney William Marshall Bullitt explained the legal and social underpinnings of the disputes to his friend Elise Barber. He wrote, "The Kentucky Court of Appeals decided that although [Cornelia Newcomb] was confined to a lunatic asylum, she had never been judicially determined to be a lunatic; and that the divorce proceeding was absolutely void." Bullitt then added, "The court said in its opinion the children of the second wife were legitimate, by a statute. It was always thought that the court said this simply in order to relieve the children by the second wife of the stigma of illegitimacy."



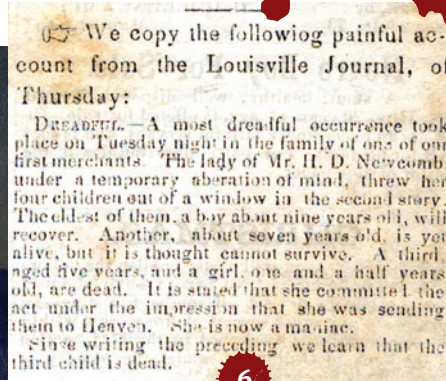
Please not let any one not even said  
Miss Lee my letter

Permon Dec 28/52  
Sunday Evening

My dear Aunt

I write because you requested it, but  
absolutely I have not the slightest particle of news for  
you, except that Uncle Outhbut has been sick. He is very  
well now, though his mind is in a wretched state.  
I have been sick almost ever since you left. I now have  
a rising on my finger & cannot <sup>play</sup> or sew & can scarcely  
write. Don't you sympathize with me, I cannot get any one here  
to do so. I am at present really suffering agony.  
I suppose you do not get papers regularly and of course you  
cannot at get have heard of Mrs Newcomb's derangement. For  
a week Mr Newcomb had remained at home almost  
entirely because she was sick & he did not know at  
what moment she might become enraged. Tuesday Evening  
she seemed very well & persuaded him (Mr N) to go to a  
club at Mr. Rother's. Her brother at about nine o'clock  
said she felt very sleepy and went into the next room to  
go to bed. She then went to the kitchen and took her  
cocoa Mrs Newcomb





Newcomb's second marriage was illegal! As a result of the legal decision, Cornelia Newcomb received the majority of his substantial estate, along with her only surviving son, Horatio Victor, and his children. Mary, the second wife, and her sons received a considerably reduced inheritance. In an anomalous social standing, neither maiden nor wife, Mary married Richard Ten Broeck, a disreputable sportsman and gamester 40 years her senior. The Louisville public expressed "disgust" with the widow and her "two marriages to two old men". The couple was wed in the home of the bride's father although the parents were not in attendance. The Ten Broecks had one son. An 1892 article published in *The New York Times* after Mr. Ten Broeck died revealed him to have been an imperious old man. He frequently taunted his stepsons, castigating them with illegitimacy. The young men were so disturbed by this repeated accusation that they sought legal counsel and requested that the case of their legitimacy be re-examined. Judge Bruce's original opinion that they were legitimate offspring of Horatio Dalton Newcomb was sustained. Soon thereafter, the eldest son died while in his senior year at Harvard.

No Newcomb generation escaped tragedy, the impetus of which was the terrible murder on Main Street. Though the children's murder shocked and horrified Louisvillians, many responded compassionately to the heartbreaking event. Friends and family expressed hope that Cornelia Newcomb would never realize the consequence of her actions. Indeed, Mrs. Newcomb may have been fortunate enough to live out her days peacefully. Nevertheless, repercussions of the horrific event were felt for generations to come.

## NO NEWCOMB GENERATION ESCAPED TRAGEDY...

**Image 1:** Horatio Dalton Newcomb (1809-1874).

Artist unknown.

**Image 2:** Helen Bullitt to Helen M. Martin, 26 December 1852. Bullitt-Chenoweth Papers.

**Image 3:** Virgil McKnight, friend and neighbor to the Newcombs, was the first to arrive with help at the murder scene.

Artist unknown, painted circa 1850.

**Image 4:** Herman Wells Newcomb (1849-1870) survived the fall from the window but died at age 21 while attending the Jefferson Medical School in Philadelphia. Thomas LeClear, artist, 1870.

**Image 5:** H. Victor Newcomb (1844-1911), the eldest and only surviving child of Horatio Dalton and Cornelia Newcomb, was a successful businessman, railroad manager, and founder of the United States Bank. He married Florence Ward Danforth; they had three children. Thomas LeClear, artist, 1870.

**Image 6:** Newspaper clipping from the Lexington Observer and Reporter, 29 December 1852.

**Image 7:** William Marshall Bullitt (1873-1957) in his office circa 1949. Bullitt Family papers -Oxmoor collection.

*All images from the collections of The Filson Historical Society.*



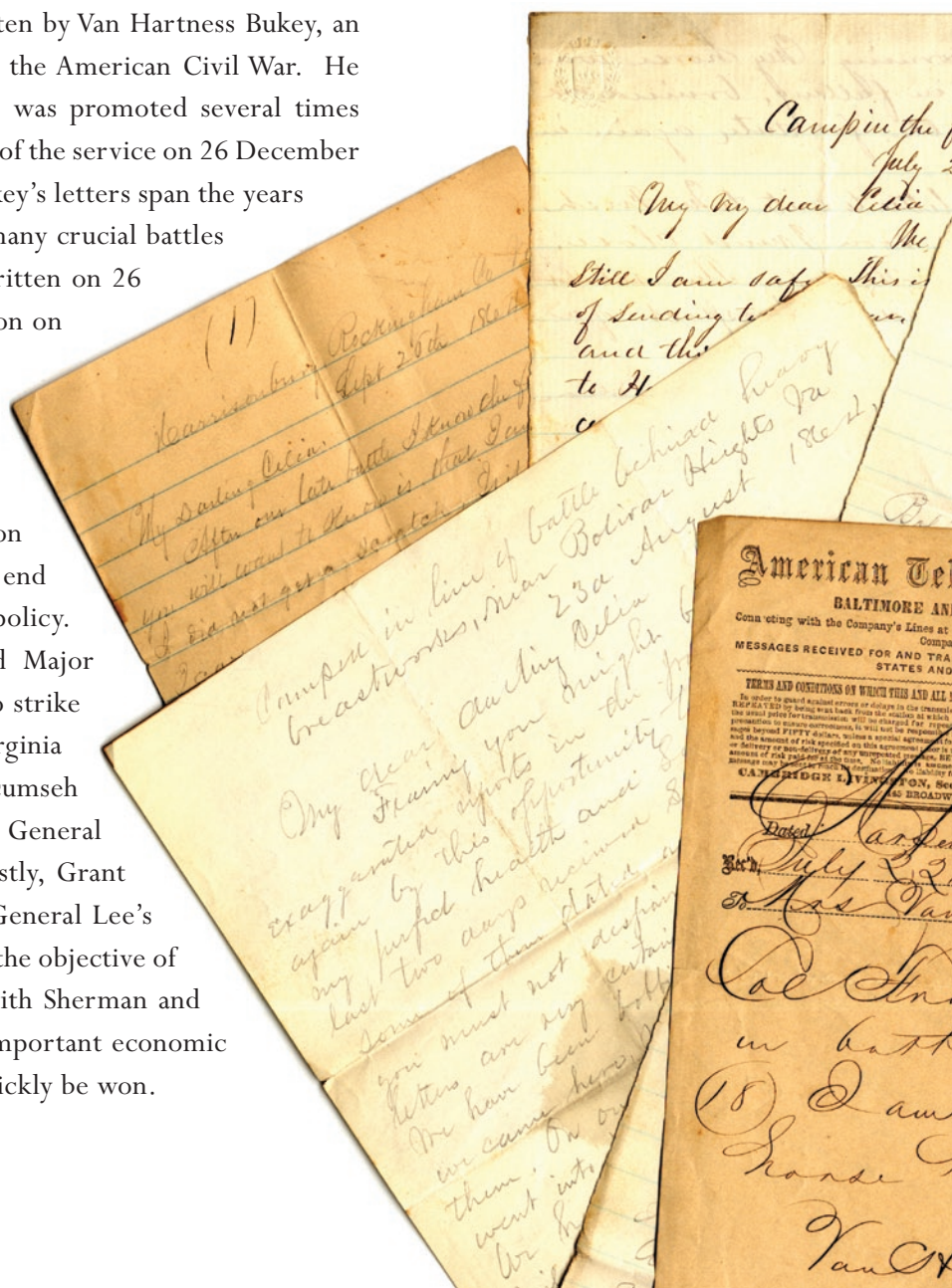
# Van Hartness Bukey and the Valley Campaign

LINDSAY MERRITT | FILSON H.F. BOEHL INTERN

*"The rebels did not see the movement until we had nearly gained our position when he began shelling us furiously. O I tell you they came rapidly... We were ordered to fix bayonets face to the front, and the Army of West Va. went in on a bayonet charge with the most deafening yells. For a while the rebels stood, and poured into us the most awful fire of musketry, shells, grape and canister. But they could not stand the fierce onslaught of our Virginia troops and they broke, pell-mell. We charged them double-quick, for three full miles and [Lieutenant General Jubal A.] Early's flower of the Southern army was a disorganized, demoralized mob – flying in confusion, Cavalry over Infantry, and both through artillery which they left behind."*

This excerpt is from one of the letters written by Van Hartness Bukey, an Ohioan who served in the Union Army during the American Civil War. He enlisted in the Army in 1861 as a private and was promoted several times throughout his career, until he was mustered out of the service on 26 December 1864 at the rank of colonel. The majority of Bukey's letters span the years of 1863 and 1864, and feature descriptions of many crucial battles of the Civil War, such as the above selection written on 26 September 1864 regarding the Battle of Opequon on 19 September 1864.

Opequon was one of many battles in the Valley Campaigns of 1864, which took place between the months of May and October. The Valley Campaigns of 1864 conducted by Union forces were part of a strategic move to bring an end to the Civil War through a scorched earth policy. Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant directed Major Generals George Meade and Benjamin Butler to strike against Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia near Richmond, Major General William Tecumseh Sherman to capture Atlanta, Georgia, and Major General Nathaniel Banks to seize Mobile, Alabama. Lastly, Grant ordered Major General Franz Sigel to destroy General Lee's supply base and lines in the Shenandoah Valley – the objective of the Valley Campaigns of 1864. Grant, along with Sherman and President Lincoln, felt that by destroying this important economic base of the Confederacy, the war could more quickly be won.





# Signs of 1864

Corner: Bukey's 28 July 1864 letter to his wife describing the Union "skedaddle" at Cool Spring ten days earlier.

Below: Examples of Van H. Bukey's Civil War papers, including his July 22, 1864 telegram to his wife reporting the death of Col. Frost and Bukey's horse at the Battle of Cool Spring.

The skedaddle from Winchester was, as far as that portion of the troops who did skedaddle, was concerned, the most complete panic imaginable. The Enemy came in overwhelming force, probably outnumbering us three to one. Our Cavalry, (in which we have long ago lost confidence) broke and fled, the trains were ordered to the rear, Hundreds of our worn out soldiers were in the rear, unable to participate in the fight, and the dash of the Cavalry created the confusion. Then such a mixed up mass of Cavalry running over Infantry, drivers cutting their Horses loose from their wagons, to be able to run faster, Infantry throwing away everything — it was awful."

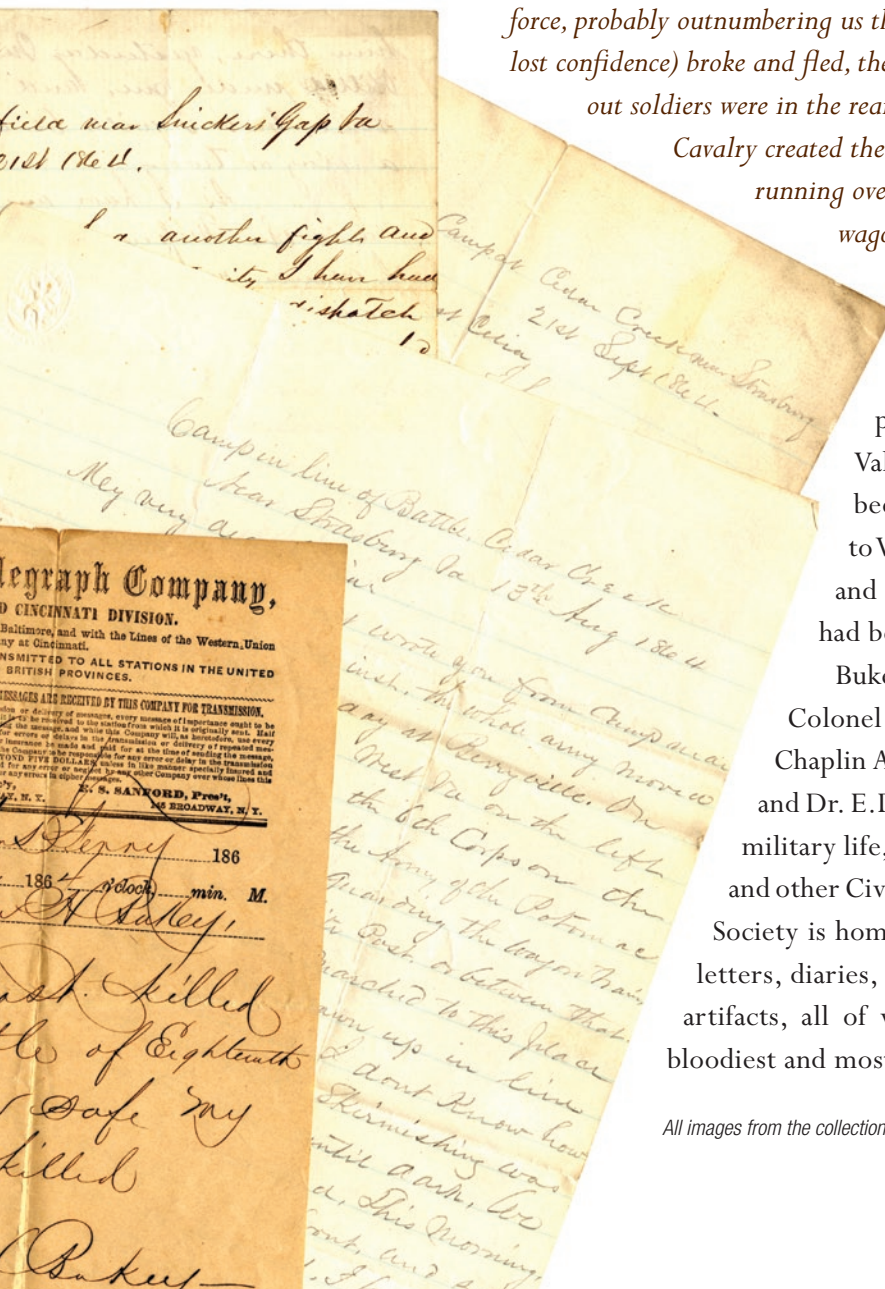
During the Valley Campaigns, Bukey served as Lieutenant Colonel and then Colonel of the 11th West Virginia Volunteer Infantry Regiment. He and his regiment participated in various battles, such as Cool Spring, Berryville, Opequon, Fisher's Hill, Tom's Brook and Cedar Creek. In his letters to his wife Celia, Bukey often described his battle experiences, such as the 18 July 1864 battle of Cool Spring in which the Union Army was forced to retreat by Confederate troops after intense fighting. Bukey wrote on 28 July,

"The skedaddle from Winchester was, as far as that portion of the troops who did skedaddle was concerned, the most complete panic imaginable. The enemy came in overwhelming force, probably outnumbering us three to one, Our Cavalry, (in which we have long ago lost confidence) broke and fled, the trains were ordered to the rear, Hundreds of our worn out soldiers were in the rear, unable to participate in the fight, and the dash of the Cavalry created the confusion. Then such a mixed up mass of Cavalry running over Infantry, drivers cutting their Horses loose from their wagons, to be able to run faster, Infantry throwing away everything — it was awful."

The Battle of Cedar Creek, which took place on 19 October, marked the end of the Valley Campaigns. The Confederate forces had been neutralized and were no longer a threat to Washington, D.C., via the Shenandoah Valley, and the military-related economy in the region had been suppressed.

Bukey's collection also contains letters from Colonel Daniel Frost, Sergeant Major Michael Ayers, Chaplin A.J. Lyon, Brigadier General George Crook, and Dr. E.D.J. Bond. Other topics in his letters include military life, Union and Confederate officers, casualties, and other Civil War-related subjects. The Filson Historical Society is home to a large number of American Civil War letters, diaries, paintings, lithographs, maps, ephemera and artifacts, all of which give personal insight to one of the bloodiest and most important conflicts in American history.

All images from the collections of The Filson Historical Society.





# My Trip to The Filson

BY SAMUEL NEGUS | FILSON FELLOW

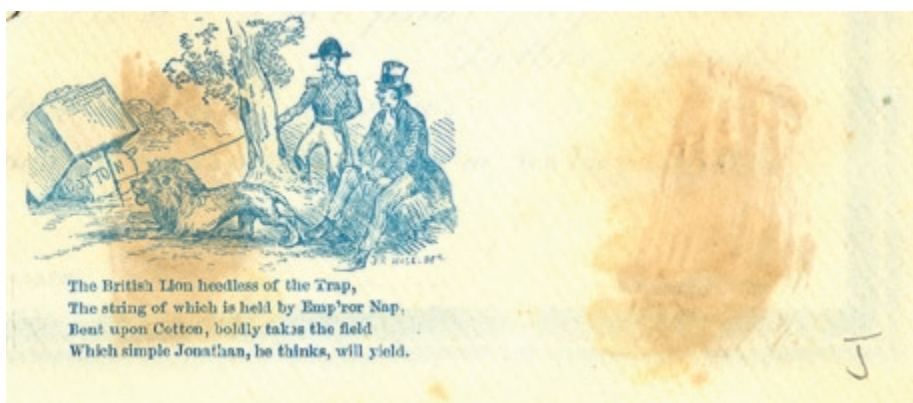
**“The history of Sea Power is largely, though by no means solely, a narrative of contests between nations, of mutual rivalries, of violence frequently culminating in war.”**

With these words Alfred Thayer Mahan began his seminal work *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1783*. First published in 1890, Mahan’s magnum opus helped inspire new traditions of modern navalist thought and professional maritime scholarship in America. The Naval War College he helped establish continues at the heart of both to the present day.

Mahan’s words reflect a view of naval and maritime history with grand strategy, raw power and broad trends at the center. But Mahan’s conditional clause, “though by no means solely”, indicates an awareness of historical sub-texts that his scholarship did not really explore. Today, a new generation of maritime scholars, inspired by recent advances in the methodologies and principles of social history, seek to add depth and subtlety to the work of their intellectual forebears. This process led me to Louisville for a one-week Filson fellowship.

My dissertation examines Anglo-American relations over ‘the long nineteenth century’ through the lens of maritime and naval relations. I focus primarily on the legal-diplomatic questions raised by the use of naval blockades in war. This complex and ever-evolving belligerent strategy played a significant role in British triumph over Napoleonic France, led directly to the War of 1812, formed a central strategic and diplomatic feature of American Civil War landscape, and reappeared as a vital tool of Allied sea power during the First World War. The blockade issue also frequently affected British and U.S. interests through wars between diverse third parties ranging from newly independent Brazil and Argentina to the ancient empires of Russia and Japan.

First and foremost I am a diplomatic and maritime historian concerned with grand historical narratives. But writers of ‘long-view’



histories forget at their peril that great stories are ultimately the sum of countless smaller sub-plots. History is like a painting made of many individual brush-strokes. Each stroke has a significance of its own in addition to the part played in the broader picture. For this reason I always attempt to ground my work in an understanding of the myriad background social contexts framing the main story.

During my week at The Filson I focused on the Civil War portion of my project, looking specifically for two things. Firstly, I hoped to find an awareness of the war’s diplomatic context, and the

## History is like a painting

international significance of its maritime aspects, in the correspondence of ordinary people in Union or Confederate naval families. Secondly, I wanted to examine collections dealing with Union prisons and prisoners for a part of my project dealing with the stories of blockade running sailors who were arrested and imprisoned by the United States.





Several collections proved useful for the first part of my project. In particular, the Bayless-Crawford and Winn-Cook papers contained various letters discussing diplomatic matters. Also, the 'Patriotic Covers', a collection of illustrated envelopes from the loyal states dating to 1861 and 1862, contained numerous political cartoons addressing foreign relations. These cartoons demonstrated the presence, at least at some level, of a nuanced and accurate popular understanding of diplomatic realities surprisingly early in the war. For my work on Union prisons, The Filson owns several useful

I am sure that I echo the praise of every visiting scholar in saying that Filson staff members are not only helpful, polite and prompt, but also possess valuable knowledge of both their archival holdings and the broader histories to which they relate. I extend my deepest gratitude to the Filson staff, and also to the members and donors who make the generous Filson Fellowships possible. The field of history is manifestly richer for regional historical societies enabling scholars to focus on the local and personal aspects of our national and global story.

## made of many individual brush-strokes.

autograph books and diaries, and many collections of letters giving first-hand accounts of life as a Union prisoner. The Thomas Wallace papers, Thomas Walker Bullitt diary, John Joyce diary and James Hughes papers were just a few of the items which allowed me to deepen my understanding of this important social sub-text to my work.

page 14: Patriotic Stationery, c.1812

page 15: Naval War College near Newport, RI, September 8, 1914

*All images from the collections of The Filson Historical Society.*



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Nov. 2008 – Feb. 2009

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