The Filson

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



Recent Acquisitions Browsing in our Archives

Architectural History 3 Dissection & Body Snatching Civil War Field Inst. Whig Opposition 10 Filson Inst. Public Conf. 14

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From the President

The Filson has recently redesigned its website. This "virtual facility" offers expanded and updated information about The Filson's collections, exhibits, programs, fellowships, internships and memberships. Secure links enable visitors to become members, make donations and buy books and other items through The Filson's online store. The site also includes access to our collections catalog and to selected images from our manuscripts, rare books and museum artifacts. An entirely new feature, the Filson "blog" provides a forum where members and visitors can exchange views and share ideas about our region's history.

We want to recognize the many people who worked so hard to develop our new website. We are deeply grateful to Doe Anderson – led by Todd Spencer, President and CEO – for its enthusiasm and generosity in helping us with the redesign. Doe Anderson's creativity and professionalism made a huge difference. So did the ideas and the efforts of our Image Committee, chaired by Holly Gathright. Our staff, including Director Mark Wetherington and Public Relations and Development Director Judy Miller, deserves our appreciation as well. Special thanks should go to Jim Holmberg, our Curator of Special Collections, and his dedicated colleagues who put in long hours adding and transferring information and images to the newly designed site.

The Filson's redesigned website will continue to evolve as we add and refresh content. By using the Internet to help tell the significant stories of Kentucky and the Ohio Valley's history and culture, this new site will assist us in fulfilling a key element of our mission. I invite all our members to visit The Filson at www.filsonhistorical.org, and please take advantage of our blog. It is also through your generous support that we have been able to create this new website and we would like to hear from you!

Orme Wilson, III

President

From the Director

I hope that you will join us this summer as we continue our popular "Filson Fridays" programs. Many cultural institutions, including The Filson, reduce programming during the summer months, but audience feedback from last summer's series was so positive that we have continued them this year.

Presented by members of The Filson's curatorial staff, the noontime programs will include an entirely new lineup of topics. Speakers will draw on their areas of research and curatorial interest, sharing their knowledge with our members and the public. As you can imagine the topics are wide ranging. They include amateur film, Quaker women in the Civil War, bourbon history, the history of photography, British Indian agents, Kentuckian's travel diaries, the death of Meriwether Lewis, and post Civil War Kentucky.

I want to thank The Filson's curatorial staff for their commitment to research and education by participating in the "Filson Fridays" series and our public relations staff for generating audience interest in the programs.

So, mark your calendar for each Friday (except July 3) through August 14th. I look forward to seeing you here at The Filson.

Mark V. Wetherington, Ph.D.

Trush V. Wether In

Director

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The Filson

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COVER PHOTO:

Lithograph of the General Winfield Scotts' entrance into Mexico City. Filson Print Collection.

Recent Acquisitions at The Filson





- Sampling of items from the late 19th and early 20th centuries collected by ferryboat captain Madison Dugan of Jeffersonville, Indiana. Gift of Margaret White.
- 2. One of a series of photos documenting the construction of Ohio River Lock and Dam 39 near Vevay, Indiana, 1914. Gift of Betty Bone Schiess, whose father Evan Bone was the superintending engineer.
- 3. Special Order 28, 6 September 1869, from two volumes of Hyatt Ransom's military records chronicling his service in the Civil War and American West. Gift of Graham Poindexter.



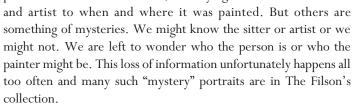
All images from the collections of The Filson Historical Society.

Browsing in Our Archives

The Case of the Mysterious Portrait

BY JAMES J. HOLMBERG | CURATOR OF SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

The term "archives" encompasses a variety of material existing in various forms. We generally consider paper-based items to be archival material; and that is what we usually highlight in our "Browsing" feature. But we can expand the usual understanding of that term to also include The Filson's museum collection. Our museum has wonderful holdings, including an outstanding portrait collection. Many of our portraits are on display and can be viewed by the public. They are often used for illustrations in books and articles and even on websites. Some of our portraits are well documented, identifying the sitter



One such "mystery" painting is particularly intriguing. We know who the subject is but not the artist. We know about when it was painted and probably where. Knowing the subject is the most important piece of the puzzle because it allows us to research his life. It was this research that revealed the sitter's own brush with a truly historic man of mystery.

Amasa Converse was born on 21 August 1795 in Lyme, New Hampshire. He received an excellent education for the day, attending Phillips Academy at Andover, Dartmouth, and Princeton Theological Seminary. At Princeton, Converse was mentored by the noted Presbyterian theologian Archibald Alexander. Converse was ordained as a Presbyterian evangelist in 1826 and at the urging of Alexander set out for the American South. The young minister soon felt the calling of the printed rather than the spoken word to his flock and by early 1827 Converse was in Richmond, Virginia, serving as editor of the Presbyterian paper *Visitor and Telegraph*. In 1839 the paper merged with the *Presbyterian Religious Remembrancer* published in Philadelphia. The new paper was christened the *Christian Observer* with its office in the City of Brotherly Love and Converse as its editor. ¹

The mid-19th century was not a tranquil time in the Presbyterian Church. Like other denominations, it was rent by issues ranging from theology to slavery. Converse and the *Observer* espoused the views of the New School and then the Southern Orthodoxy. Converse was a vocal critic of the Lincoln administration. In April

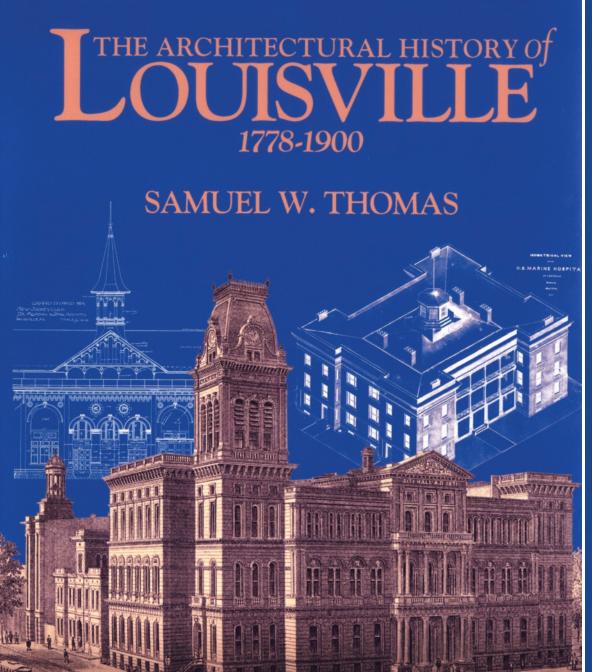


1861 federal officials ordered the *Observer* to be shut down and Converse seized. The Presbyterian firebrand fled Philadelphia and returned to Richmond where he published the *Christian Observer* until 1869. In 1869 Converse moved to Louisville where he continued to publish the *Observer* until his death on 9 December 1872. The paper was a family affair. Two of Converse's sons had worked on the paper with their father and continued its publication following his death. Succeeding generations of Converses continued the family's connection with the *Christian Observer* well into the twentieth century.

In looking at the portrait of Reverend Amasa Converse, one can easily imagine an emotional as well as learned sermon or essay coming forth from his mouth or his pen. But who painted the young divine? In looking at his youthful appearance and his style of dress, best guess dates the portrait to about 1830. It seems unlikely that a young divinity student would have invested in a portrait before getting established, and that didn't occur until 1827 when Converse settled in Richmond. Whoever painted his image was no mediocre talent. It is quite a fine portrait. Queries to art historians have yielded some guesses but no firm attributions, thus the artist remains a mystery. Closest matches to it of other portraits of Richmond residents around 1830 have the same mystery — artist unknown. Maybe one day the "case" of who painted Reverend Amasa Converse will be solved.

And what of Converse's connection to the truly historic man of mystery? While in Richmond, Converse most likely met a fellow editor. Perhaps they were even friends. This editor had enjoyed limited success with his poetry and prose and was gaining a reputation as a literary critic. In later years he gained a following for his short stories with themes of mystery, crime, death, and even science fiction. He is credited with inventing the modern detective novel. His poem "The Raven" and horror tales such as "The Tell-Tale Heart," "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," "The Pit and the Pendulum," and others have immortalized him as one of America's most famous authors. But in 1836 his was not yet a household literary name. The man is, of course, Edgar Allan Poe; and on 16 May 1836 in Richmond, Converse presided at the wedding of Poe and Poe's 13 year old cousin Virginia Clemm.

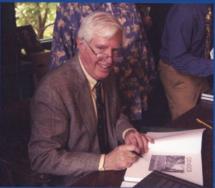
1. Sources disagree as to the exact lineage of names of these Presbyterian papers. Best evidence indicates that shortly before the merger of the two papers, Converse changed the name of the *Visitor and Telegraph* to the *Southern Religious Telegraph* and the *Remembrancer* was changed to the *Philadelphia Observer*. It wasn't until the following year, in 1840, that the paper's name was officially changed to the *Christian Observer*.



The Filson Historical Society celebrates its 125th anniversary, marking an uninterrupted record of service that began in 1884. Our mission to collect, preserve, and document Kentucky and Ohio River Valley history and culture remains vibrant today.

The Filson Historical Society is pleased to publish Samuel W. Thomas's *The Architectural History of Louisville 1778-1900*. The Filson's collections are well represented in the many photographs, architectural drawings, artwork, and historical sources. This volume approaches each of the distinctive architectural styles discussed by providing examples in the chronological order of their construction. The result is an indispensable guide to Louisville's early architectural history and a reference book for generations to come.

Mark V. Wetherington, director
 The Filson Historical Society



Samuel W. Thomas is the author of 18 books, including *Views of Louisville since 1766, Churchill Downs*, and major studies of neighborhoods, as well as numerous articles on local history. He was directly involved in the restoration of Locust Grove, the Jefferson County Courthouse, and the Ferguson Mansion for The Filson Historical Society, a founder of Preservation Alliance, a member of the Louisville Landmarks and Preservation Districts Commission, and archivist of Jefferson County. He is currently project manager for the restoration of the 1785 Christian family log house and a consultant to historic Oxmoor. Dr. Thomas is a graduate in chemistry (B.A. 1960 and Ph.D. 1964) from the University of Louisville, and was the College of Arts and Sciences Distinguished Alumnus in 1994.

In 2009 The Filson Historical Society celebrates its 125th anniversary. This milestone marks an uninterrupted record of service that began in 1884 and continues today. Our mission to collect, preserve, and tell the significant stories of Kentucky and the Ohio River Valley history and culture is as vibrant today as it has been at any time in our long history.

One of those significant stories is the architectural history of Louisville. Our community's identity is shaped in many respects by the architectural legacy we inherit, including the homes we live in, our workplaces, and our educational and religious institutions. With this mission in mind, The Filson is publishing a new book by Dr. Samuel W. Thomas entitled *The Architectural History of Louisville*, 1778-1900.

Dr. Thomas approaches each architectural style present

between 1778 and 1900 by providing examples in the chronological order of their construction. The result is an indispensable guide to Louisville's early architectural history and a reference book that will be turned to for generations to come, with images from The Filson's own collections well represented. Earlier publications about Louisville architecture have focused on existing structures. However, nearly two-thirds of the more than 425 examples discussed and illustrated in this book no longer exist, ranking it with the likes of *Lost Chicago* and *Lost New York*.

The Architectural History of Louisville, 1778-1900 will be available in the fall of 2009 and may be pre-ordered now from The Filson Historical Society for \$65. Pre-ordering will also ensure your member discount of 10% off the regular price of \$65. To reserve your copy, please call The Filson at (502) 635-5083.

 $Louisville\ \textit{Medical College Students, ca. 1880s.}\ \textit{Third St. between Liberty and Walnut, west side.}\ \textit{The Filson Photograph Collection}$

DISSECTION By Heather Fox - Special Collections Assistant AND BODY SNATCHING

CENTURY

On March 2, 1932, Louisville physician Louis Frank delivered a lecture to The Filson Club (currently The Filson Historical Society) in which he described two harrowing trips to procure "anatomical material" for use during his studies at the University of Louisville School of Medicine. Although it sounds gruesome to our ears, medical students often resorted to such tactics in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. The simple reason for such bodysnatching: supply and demand.

The medical profession expanded rapidly in the United States between 1800 and 1900 with the number of medical schools increasing from 4 to 160. Concomitant with this expansion came an increased demand for the cadavers used for medical training. Many states allowed the bodies of executed criminals to be used for medical education, but the number of executed criminals failed to keep pace with increasing demand. Body snatchers, or "resurrectionists" as they were commonly known, robbed graves and sold them to medical students who were happy to disregard the unsavory origins of the "anatomical material" they would use in their studies.

BODY SNATCHERS, OR "RESURRECTIONISTS" AS THEY WERE COMMONLY KNOWN ROBBED GRAVES AND SOLD THEM TO MEDICAL STUDENTS

In some instances body snatchers decided not to wait for natural death. In 1878, resurrectionists in Cincinnati caused a national scandal when they murdered an elderly couple so they could sell their bodies to medical students. A contemporary account printed in The New York Times includes an interview with a Louisville resurrectionist who describes the process. He states that the "absolutely necessary" tools for a grave robber were a spade, a key-hole saw and a piece of rope. With the spade, the robber would mark off one-half of the grave and remove the

dirt from the upper half of the coffin. Then the saw would be inserted into the exposed edge of the coffin and "soon, with a noise resembling sobs and groans," the robber would "cut through the upper board, and often through the shroud and flesh of the subject!" The lid would then be pried up and the final instrument brought into play. The robber would lower the rope, which had been tied into a slip-knot, over the head and hoist the corpse from the grave. The resurrectionist recounts, "I remember once that the whole head of a woman whose neck we tied the rope around came off in our grasp." Another report published around the same time mentions using the "ear test" to determine the viability of a cadaver for dissecting. The test involved pulling on the cadaver's ear to determine its freshness. If the ear came off in the body snatcher's hand, he left the corpse in the ground. The regular fee for a body in Louisville in the late nineteenth century was, reportedly, \$8 to \$12.

In the summer of 1883, before his first year in medical school, the future Dr. Frank contacted a student who arranged a clandestine meeting with the "resurrectionist officially connected with the school." Frank was looking for a body on which he could "do some dissection before the school term." They worked out a plan with the night watchman at the City Hospital who kept an eye out for a "suitable subject" to snatch.

When they got the go ahead, the body snatchers climbed through a window which had been left unfastened. They found the body, put it in a sack, carried it to Madison Street, and swung it over a fence to an accomplice waiting across the street from City Hospital. The next day Frank discovered that the police had been alerted to the missing body and were hunting for the body snatchers. In order to escape detection, Frank and his colleague removed coal "lump by lump" from the winter coal supply, stowed the cadaver in the bin, and then replaced the coal. In his account, Frank entreated his audience to "imagine this in an August Temperature and with fear of a sudden invasion by officers of the law." His hard work paid off and he managed to evade the authorities, and presumably engaged in some warm-weather pre-semester dissection.

The second time Frank illicitly secured a cadaver he and his companions stole away to a potter's field under cover of darkness and used spade, saw and rope to remove

THE REGULAR FEE FOR A BODY IN LOUISVILLE... WAS REPORTEDLY \$8 TO \$12.

their quarry from the ground. Frank recounts that "material for the students was again running low and with others the writer volunteered to join a party to replenish our empty larder." This time Frank's adventure occurred just before the Christmas holidays when it was cold outside. The students received a tip from their resurrectionist that "desirable material would be deposited upon a certain day in the Potters Field located on the north side of the Alms House." Frank notes that "in the horse and buggy



Illustration of Louis Frank, from "Kentuckians as We See Them", 1905 Filson Manuscript Collection



Louisville Medical College Students, ca. 1880's. Third St. between Liberty & Walnut. The Filson Photograph Collection



City Hospital, ca. 1883. Filson Print Collection

days it was quite a distance from Preston and Chestnut Streets to St. Helen's and to drive this distance with a jogging horse on a cold winter night was no pleasant task." Based on the evidence, it's likely that this ghoulish group started at City Hospital and traveled down Seventh Street to what is now the Manslick Road Cemetery.

Once Frank and his group arrived at their destination they followed usual grave robbing procedures. They dug down uncovering only the top, or head and shoulders, portion of the coffin. Once they reached the coffin, they split the lid open and broke off the exposed part using the buried end of the coffin as leverage. They slipped a rope under the fellow's arms and hoisted him out of "what had been intended to be his last resting place." In perhaps the most harrowing moment of the gruesome evening, the resurrectionists accidentally dropped the corpse once they had freed it from its grave and when it hit the ground a "loud grunt was emitted as the air was forced out of the lungs." Frank admits that in his heightened state of awareness he thought for a moment that the poor fellow wasn't really dead.

Fortunately for all concerned, Frank's fears proved false and the students loaded the corpse onto their wagon and headed back up Seventh Street for home. Frank and his party had to endure a final trial before

...IN HIS HEIGHTENED STATE OF AWARENESS HE THOUGHT FOR A MOMENT THAT THE POOR FELLOW WASNT REALLY DEAD.

reaching their destination. Frank writes, "On our return journey we stopped at our 'FIRST CHANCE' which had been the 'LAST CHANCE' going out and here I partook with my companions of a much needed early morning stimulant. Later coming in Seventh Street it became necessary to hold the subject on the seat between two of us while a policeman engaged us in conversation which finally terminated by our leader taking the Officer of the Law into a 'SECOND CHANCE' for indulgence in a wee bit of a drama which he said was necessary to keep his Scotch courage up. This ended my experience with resurrectionists."

And so ends The Filson collection's eyewitness account of the unsettling practice of grave robbery in the name of medical science. Materials in our photograph, manuscript and library collections helped illuminate this dark corner of medical history. Who knows what other stories lurk within them?

Civil War Field Institute



The purpose of The Filson's Civil War Field Institute 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 ground where they fought. These tours familiarize the public with the campaigns and battles of the Western Theater of the Civil War. The primary focus of the Institute is to discuss the

strategic importance of battles in relation to Kentucky and the men from Kentucky who fought on both sides.

This spring's Institute travelled to the Chickamauga-Chattanooga National Military Park, located in northern Georgia and eastern Tennessee. The park preserves the sites of two major battles of the American Civil War: the Battle of Chickamauga and the Chattanooga Campaign.

PHOTOGRAPHY Top row: 1-4 / Bottom row: 5-8

- 1. Our tour guide, the entertaining and highly knowledgeable National Park Service Ranger James Ogden III, proved to be a true living resource in his vast understanding of the topics at hand. During his lecture on our first night together, he set the stage for the following days with a large canvas floor map of the surrounding areas which depicted the various sites of battles. In his socked feet he literally walked us through the main objective of the campaign.
- 2. The Filson Civil War Field Institute gathered on the northern Georgia/eastern Tennessee border to explore the lands where two major battles took place. Ogden's illustrative and descriptive presentation made it easy to envision the struggles of conflict and the effects of misguided leadership. His insight into the individual personalities of Braggs and Rosecrans, their strengths and weaknesses and how the stress of the situation played a part in their decision making helped to make the past more conceivable.
- 3. One of the highlights of visiting the Chickamauga battlefield was visiting the huge monument dedicated to the Kentucky soldiers that fought and died on both sides, which was depicted in the symbolic artwork. Ogden took every opportunity to point out Kentuckians' involvement and importance in the battles, as some Filson members actually had traceable relationships with soldiers who had fought here.

- As participants gathered in front of the monument for a group photo, it was a special time to reflect upon the many lives lost.
- 4. The entrance to Point Park, at the top of Lookout Mountain. Though the foggy weather obscured some of the views, participants were still able to enjoy many sites.
- During our day focused on the Battle for Chattanooga, the group visited the top of Lookout Mountain. Here, we were able to view artist James Walker's extremely large (13' x 30') oil painting of the Battle of Lookout Mountain.
- As the fog and rain cleared the group explored Orchard Knob, which served as headquarters for Ulysses S. Grant and his troops while confederates were on Missionary Ridge.
- Ogden, passionately and with great knowledge, explained to The Filson's group the battles which took place on these fields during the battles of Chickamauga and for Chattanooga.
- A few members of The Filson's Civil War Field Institute group look over the ridge to see views also witnessed so many years ago by soldiers who fought on these fields.







THURSDAY OCTOBER 22 – KEYNOTE LECTURE

Educator, historian, and author Richard McMurry

Richard McMurry has penned more than 100 articles on Civil War topics and has written numerous books which *Civil War Magazine* lists among the 100 best modern Civil War books ever published. He is considered among current historians to be the foremost supporter of the importance of the Western Theater to the outcome of the Civil War.

TOUR GUIDE - CHARLIE CRAWFORD

Since 2002 Charlie Crawford has been president of Georgia Battlefields Association and editor of the *Georgia Battlefields* monthly newsletter. He has made more than 75 presentations and led more than 25 tours relating to the Civil War in Georgia.

AMONG THE SITES WE WILL VISIT

Resaca Battlefields, New Hope Church, Pickett's Mill Battlefield, General Leonidas Polk Monument, Kennesaw Battlefield, Atlanta History Center, Atlanta Cyclorama, The Southern Museum, Resaca Confederate Cemetery

ACCOMMODATIONS

We will be staying in Cartersville, GA (379 miles from Louisville, KY) which is located 45 minutes north of Atlanta at the Fairfield Inn-Marriot. Call 770-387-0400 to make your hotel reservations. Mention The Filson Historical Society to get a discounted rate.

FIELD TRIP FEE

\$298 for members; \$345 Non-members Includes all admission fees to four museums and two parks, chartered bus, two lunches, a reception and one dinner (Thursday)

TO RESERVE YOUR PLACE

Space is limited. A non-refundable deposit of \$50 per person is required at time of registration and balance is due to The Filson by October 5, 2009.

To assure your field trip reservation please send your deposit to The Filson Historical Society in care of Scott Scarboro, 1310 South Third Street; Louisville, KY 40208.

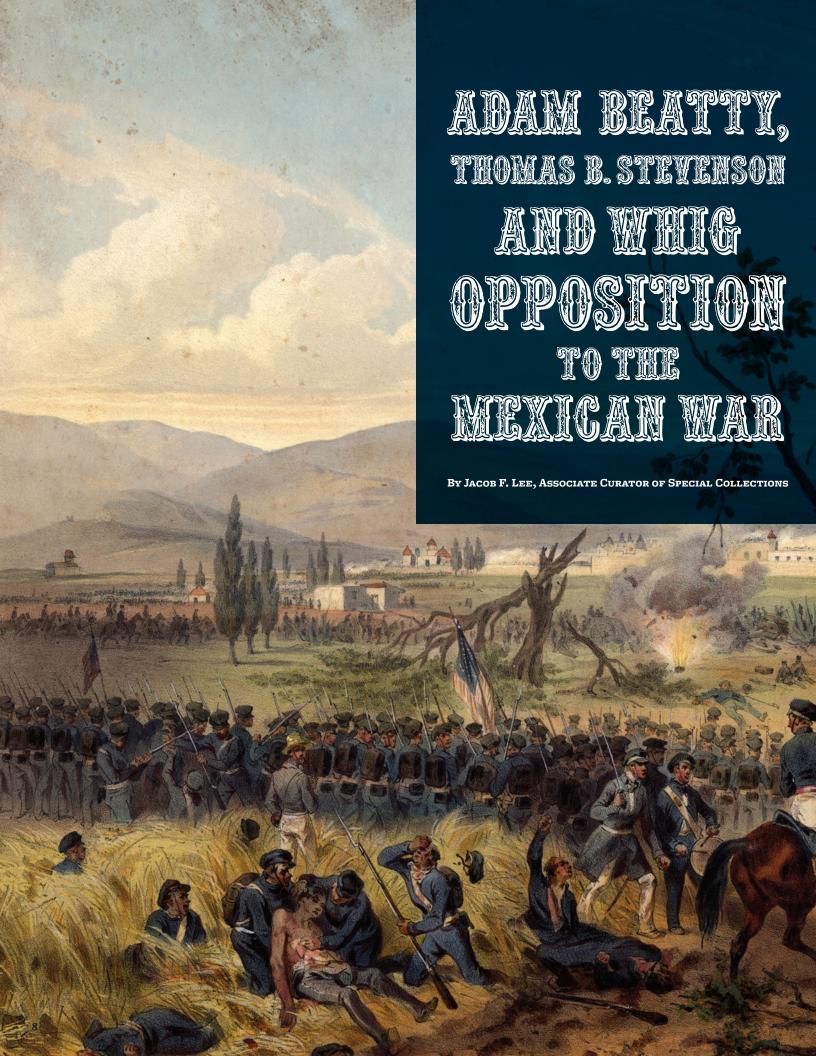
For more information please contact The Filson Historical Society at (502) 635-5083. All participants are responsible for their travel arrangements to and from Cartersville, GA. During the field trip we will travel by chartered bus as a group.

UPCOMING CIVIL WAR FIELD INSTITUTE

REGISTRATION FORM

The Filson Civil War Field Institute The Atlanta Campaign October 22-24, 2009

Name(s)
Address
City/State/Zip
Telephone
Email
NUMBER OF ATTENDEES
Filson Member (\$298) Non-member (\$345)
A non-refundable \$50 deposit per person is required with
this registration form. Balance due by October 5, 2009.
METHOD OF PAYMENT
(Checks payable to The Filson Historical Society)
Check Visa Mastercard
Card Number
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Signature Please detach or copy this form and send with a non-refundable
Signature
Signature Please detach or copy this form and send with a non-refundable \$50 deposit per person to: The Filson Civil War Field Institute



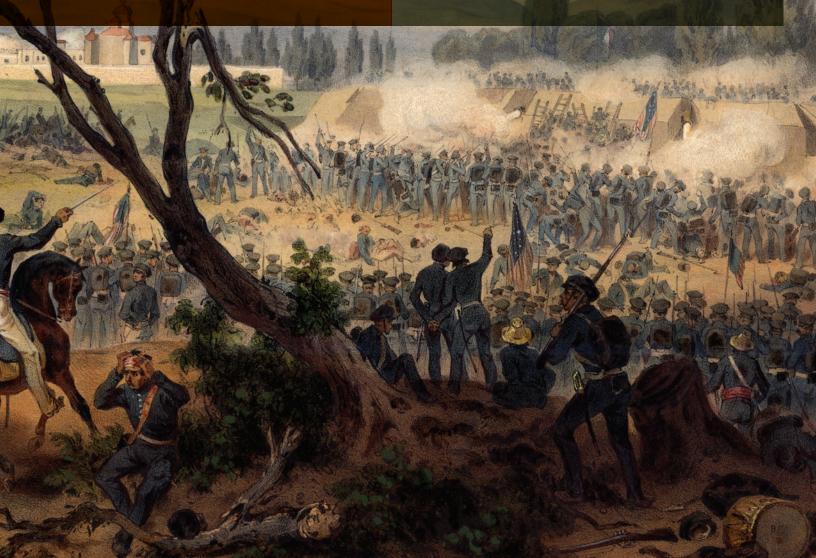
In 1846, the United States provoked Mexico into a war over their shared border. Democrats led by President James K. Polk rushed to promote the war, while Henry Clay's Whiés, includiné future president Abraham Lincoln, remained skeptical about both the cause and the purpose of the conflict. In Kentucky, two prominent Whiés enéaéed in a correspondence that reveals the Whié Party's reservations about the war. In their letters from 1846 to 1848, now part of The Filson's Beatty-Quisenberry Family Papers, Adam Beatty, a Mason County judée and farmer, and Thomas B. Stevenson, the editor of the Frankfort Farmer and later the Cincinnati Atlas, discussed a number of issues surroundiné the war but focused particular attention on the acquisition of territory belonéiné to Mexico. Rather than celebrate the addition of new territory to the United States, both men feared the repercussions that would come from U.S. expansion into the southwest.

In particular, both Beatty and Stevenson worried about the additional southern, thus slave, territory and the added influence it would give to the southern congressional delegation. With the addition of each new slave state to the Union, the South would gain two representatives in the U.S. Senate. Since the early 1820s, an equal number of slave and free states had comprised the Union. Many in the North feared that the massive additions in the southwest would

give the South an overwhelming majority in Congress, allowing them to push through any legislation they desired. Texas alone had authorization to divide into five states. It is easy to see why Whigs took pause at the thought of the slave states that could have been formed from hundreds of thousands of square miles of additional territory.

Stevenson and Beatty both opposed the extension of slavery into the newly acquired territory. Out of personal interest, they hoped to limit the power of the slave states by keeping their numbers reduced. They were concerned that increased southern power would undermine a key plank in the Whig platform – "the protection of home industry." In June 1848, Beatty wrote that with only a "little more annexation" the South would be strong enough to derail Whig efforts at protective tariffs and "any other law for the benefit of the great mass of our population in the Northern, middle or western states."

Ideology also played a role in their opposition. Many Whigs contested the extension of slavery as a mild form of antislavery. If slavery could be contained, the argument went, it would wither away in due course. Stevenson and Beatty seem to have agreed with this line of reasoning. In August 1848, Stevenson asked, "How often have we all in Kentucky deplored the original introduction of slavery,



amoné our otherwise élorious institutions, and declared that if slaves had never been brought here, they never should be?" To him, the situation in the new territories was no different. Stevenson then promised to "endeavor to prove my sincerity by opposiné the extension of slavery into new territories where it does not now exist." However, both men also feared that a renewed debate over slavery and its extension would briné sectional conflict to a head. Since the conclusion of the Missouri Compromise in 1821, many considered the issue of slavery to be resolved. The acquisition of new territory brought the debate to the forefront once again.

The two Whigs also found the changing American character distasteful. In general, the two men believed that the annexation of Texas had whetted the national appetite for new territory. Stevenson wrote that the annexation of Texas "inflamed the bad passions of the masses and roused the unquenchable thirst for acquisition." In his criticisms of the "land robbers" promoting war, Stevenson proclaimed that he had not wanted Texas and would not want California either, even if presented as a ģift. Durinģ treaty neģotiations in late 1847, Stevenson saw his fears proven when he reported that the U.S. had refused a treaty that would have appropriated 300,000 square miles from Mexico. Stevenson wrote, "Such an acquisition was too pitiful; and now the cry is The whole of Mexico! How could it fall short of that?" Stevenson returned his argument from early in the war and asked, "If you once influence the bad passions of men, do you think, in the heat of passion, you can put restraints upon them? If you give a hungry tiger one lap of warm blood, can you lead him away by a string from the quivering carcass, till his appetite be satiated?" In August 1848, Stevenson warned, "Such wild and immoral policy can only be arrested by reviving the popular mind, the sense, now blunted, of Christian virtue and true republicanism, and sound peaceful policy."

The worries about Americans' new taste for war and land lasted well beyond the end of hostilities with Mexico. Particularly, they were concerned that the North would feel the need to claim more territory of its own, in order to keep pace with the South. Rumblings about a violent annexation of Oregon from Great Britain had only faded away with the territory's peaceful acquisition in 1846. Although Beatty and Stevenson feared southern political dominance, Stevenson was equally worried that northerners would lead the U.S. to seize Canada, which could be "cut up into five or six free states." In August 1848, Stevenson wrote about Michigan senator and presidential hopeful Lewis Cass, who he had heard believed domestic troubles in Britain would allow Canada to be taken with ease. The last thing Stevenson wanted was another war, even one that would restore the political equilibrium between the sections.

In contrast to most Americans, even those who opposed the war, Beatty and Stevenson both expressed sympathy for Mexico as a "sister Republic." Stevenson, in particular, often lamented the war's terrible effect on Mexico and its people, who he described in May 1848 as "victims of their own weakness and our unbridled thirst of dominion." Additionally, he opposed the methods used to obtain the land, decryin¢ acquisition by seizure, purchase, or ne¢otiation. He believed that even the purchase

It is a blind, unreasoning, uncalculating phrinay, not a sober patriotism. We are often told that were being flagrant - blows struck - nasm is to be put in abegance and the law of might sub- statuted for the sacred rule of right. This is an immoral and anti-republican centiment, which has had much influence in debasing popular monals. The same principle applicable to the gor-

of California, which some Americans were promoting, would be an act of war as long as the U.S. pursued its "aggressive policy" toward Mexico. According to Stevenson, a purchase would be "softer in terms, but really as hard in conditions, as to conquer it by force."

Passion for the war and for new territory consumed many Americans. As opponents to the conflict, many Whi¢s felt the need to defend their patriotism. Stevenson was no exception. In May 1848, the editor wrote that there were many "deluded by the immoral maxim that, once in war, it is patriotism to pursue it to any excess to which the Executive at the time may please to press it." Stevenson condemned this position as a "blind, unreasonin¢, uncalculatin¢ phrensy; not a sober patriotism." The editor hoped he could demonstrate his loyalty and patriotism while criticizin¢ Polk, the Democrats, and the war.

In sum, the Mexican War era correspondence of Adam Beatty and Thomas B. Stevenson provides a window into the Whis mindset, both in Kentucky and nationally. From their fears of southern political dominance to their worries about the corruption of the American character, the two Whigs expressed a range of opinions that echoed antiwar sentiment across the union. In the end, their opposition did little to alter the outcome of the war. American troops captured Mexico City in September 1847 and the following February, Mexico agreed to the terms of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidaloo, which ceded over 500,000 square miles to the U.S. for the bargain price of \$15 million. The cession made up more than half of Mexico's pre-war territory and included all of modern day California, Nevada and Utah, most of Arizona, and parts of three other states. Yet, Stevenson's warnings proved prescient. He soon recognized that the new territory had reenergized the debate over the expansion of slavery, and he realized that the growing sectional conflict would "menace the harmony of the existing Union." The annexation of Texas and the war with Mexico began a series of events, including the debate over the Compromise of 1850 and the "Bleeding Kansas" border war, that culminated with civil war a mere 15 years after the U.S. invaded Mexico.

page 10: Lithograph of the Battle at Churubusco. Filson Print Collection.

page 12: Passage discussing patriotism and opposition to the Mexican War in Thomas B. Stevenson's May 23, 1848 letter to Adam Beatty.

page 13: The first page of Adam Beatty's November 1, 1847 letter to Thomas B. Stevenson. Beatty-Quisenberry Family Papers.

Prospect dies 1st noor 1847. My Dean dir, your long and very interesting letter, On Mercian affairs, was received, a few daysunce I was highly gratified at your acrowd your Correspondence; and still more with the confedence and friendly opait, which breather throughout your letter, you complain of my having det. fand our conceptiondence to slacken, on my hart. I assure you this has happened solely from an appelience that I should be trespassing of it, which could be mon usefully approprialed to your Allas. I am a constant and of that paper, and particularly of all your Editorials, so many of which are very asefull appropriated to am affairs with Mexico. accord with you, entury in the opinion that the war with that country originated in a palpable violation of the constitution. The power of making war is wested, by the Courtitution, in Congress. Now if a Prendent Can do an act, which will inveitably bury on a war, does he not, in effect, to a set exercine a power which belongs alone to 6 gress? In our controvery with freat Britain aespecting the Main boundary, would not roan have mearlably resulted, if der Van Buren as commander in chief of the away, has ordered our military forces to invade and take harest to made and tak possession It to the shiel was hassing of

The Filson Institute Public Conference

From Country Lawyer to Commander in Chief: The Making of Abraham Lincoln

BY SCOTT SCARBORO | SPECIAL EVENTS AND EDUCATION COORDINATOR

This spring, The Filson Historical Society hosted a public conference that took a very in-depth look into what made Abraham Lincoln, Abraham Lincoln. The conference started off with a wonderful keynote address from nationally recognized Lincoln scholar, Michael Burlingame. He presented insights into Lincoln's character and other discoveries made during the process of researching materials for his epic two-volume biography *Abraham Lincoln: A Life*.

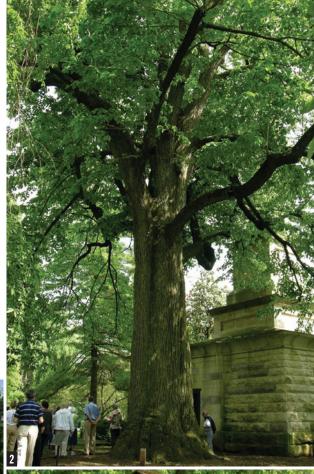
The following day Dr. John Kleber of the University of Louisville led a full bus of 55 Lincoln enthusiasts on a tour entitled "A Housed Divided, A State Divided." First we trekked to Lincoln's birth site, Sinking Spring Farm, and to the site of his earliest boyhood memories, Knob Creek Farm (both in Hodgenville, KY) to examine Abraham's humble origins. We saw where the young Abe drew water from the nearby springs, labored in the fields and perhaps heard fanciful stories of other places from the occasional traveler on the nearby country road. We had lunch at the Old Talbott Tavern in Bardstown, KY before we traveled on to Lexington where we visited the Mary Todd Lincoln House. There we witnessed a stark contrast to Abraham's upbringing, artifacts of opulence from an aristocratic

society. We also visited such sites that Lincoln visited on his trips to Lexington including Cheapside, the site where he might have witnessed slave acquisitions. We ended our field trip at the Lexington Cemetery, the final resting place of numerous members of the Todd family who fought on both sides of the Civil War.



Back at The Filson Historical Society on Saturday, May 16th we held an all day lecture series featuring highly knowledgeable Lincoln historians Burrus Carnahan, Brian Dirck, Daniel Stowell and Gerald Prokopowicz. In detail investigations were given to such topics as Lincoln's roles as emancipator, lawyer, politician and commander in chief.

This conference was successful in providing a thorough glimpse into the heart and mind of a man so dear and interesting to so many.



- 1. The bus tour visited Sinking Spring Farm, the site of Abraham Lincoln's birth
- The Lexington Cemetery, the final resting place of many members of the Todd family
- 3. Lincoln's boyhood home at Knob Creek Farm







16th Annual House Tour

Distinctive Dwellings

Sunday, September 27, 2009 12:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.



The Filson Historical Society would like to thank the following people for inviting our membership into their homes.

Anne and Charles Arensberg

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Suzanne Wallace Whayne



A detailed packet of tour notes will be mailed to participants in September. Tour notes will be researched and written by John David Myles, who has provided insightful narration for the last several tours. Myles is a judge in Shelbyville, whose avocation is the study of architecture. He is an avid ovserver and frequent lecturer on local architectural history.

To make reservations, please contact The Filson at 502-635-5083 or at The Filson Historical Society, 1310 South Third Street, Louisville, KY 40208. Tickets are \$125 a person and limited in number.

For volunteer opportunities, please call (502) 635-5083.



The Filsonians March - May 2009

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.

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Find more information about our programming, publications, collections and exhibits online! You can also find out how to become a Filson member or donate and volunteer in various capacities. Also, view the site's new blog where you can read staff updates and converse with others on different topics pertaining to history and The Filson in general.

In addition to being simpler to navigate, The Filson's new website is also home to many beautiful photos of Filson collections and the Ferguson mansion. Please visit www.filsonhistorical.org to see the new and improved look!



If you are interesting in volunteering your time as the 'voice of The Filson' at our reception desk, please contact (502) 635-9289 or miller@filsonhistorical.org.