

# *The Filson*

A publication of The Filson Historical Society, a privately-supported historical society dedicated to preserving the history of Kentucky and the Ohio Valley Region.



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## FROM THE PRESIDENT

We asked you to share your COVID-19 stories with us. I'd like to share mine with you. In mid-March I developed symptomatic features. My wife took me to the emergency room, where I soon was moved to ICU and ultimately placed on a ventilator. I came home, weakened and 16 pounds lighter, on April 8. I am steadily improving. Like so many of you, along with our amazing Filson staff, I am working remotely from home. This is a key turning point in my life—one that makes me vastly more aware of life's gifts and life's fragility. The heroism of those on the front lines of this battle represent the better angels of our nature.

I am also grateful to the Filson's board, my co-workers, and each and every one of you—our members. We depend on your enthusiasm and support. Thanks to each of you who have contributed your Pandemic experiences to our archives. The materials in our collection, while the stories of individuals, have universal appeal and relevance.

The Filson is bringing history directly into your home. Visit our website and join us for fun, interactive activities for folks of all ages. Catch up on great lectures you may have missed, or that we will be streaming in future weeks and months. Send us research questions. We can handle them remotely.

I hope you will consider a financial gift to the Filson as well. During these uncertain times, your contributions to membership and our annual fund are absolutely essential lifeblood. By investing in the Filson, you serve as stewards for future generations.

An example of a dedicated steward is Neal O. Hammon of Shelby County, who died at age 94 on April 17. Neal was a frequent contributor to the old Filson History Quarterly. He also edited the seminal *Early Kentucky Land Records*—a 1992 Filson publication, along with other writings pertaining to Kentucky history. He had an expansive, probing mind. We will miss him.

Thank you!



Richard H.C. Clay

President/CEO, The Filson Historical Society

## FROM THE CHAIR

I hope that you and your family have been healthy and weathering the COVID-19 storm. The Filson Historical Society has been doing its best to adapt to and comply with the emergency stay at home orders. This has included “pivoting on a dime” to re-imagine how we conduct our daily business and how we communicate with our members, our donors, our friends and each other. I have been so impressed with the manner that our staff has creatively used technology platforms such as Microsoft Team and Zoom video conferencing to stay connected. While we've had to cancel all our traditional large audience programming, we've conducted lectures and programs virtually. We have launched an on-line “tell us your COVID-19 stories” survey in late April to chronicle your experiences that will become part of our community's history. We have begun our Julius Friedman digital exhibit. The technological lessons that we are learning today will allow us to perfect and accelerate our virtual and digital capabilities that will enable us to share our programs and collections across the country and the world.

We were saddened to learn of the passing of James R. Bentley, a former Curator, Director, and Secretary of the Filson. Jim held degrees from Centre College and the College of William and Mary. He joined the Society in 1968 as the Curator of Manuscripts. As Secretary, he planned the traditional monthly meetings for many years. In 1984, Jim became the Filson's Executive Director, helping guide the capital campaign for the acquisition, renovation and move to our present home, the Ferguson Mansion on South Third Street. Jim stayed with the Filson until 1992, having served for over twenty-four years. Jim was a nationally recognized expert in genealogy and was involved in many hereditary organizations, such as the Sons of the American Revolution and the Society of Colonial Wars. Our deepest condolences are extended to Jim's family and friends.

On behalf of the staff and the Board, THANK YOU for your thoughts, concern and prayers during Dick Clay's COVID-19 illness. Dick is well on his way to a full and complete recovery and is back at the helm of the Filson.

Lastly, THANK YOU for your continuing commitment to the Filson. I know how much you miss our opportunities to gather for lectures, programs, exhibits, research and fellowship. We certainly miss seeing you! Please help us to sustain the Society during these historic times. We will endure and we will emerge from the emergency stronger and with greater capabilities.



Carl M. Thomas, *Chairman of the Board*

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## OUR MISSION:

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

**COVER:** *Girl in Swing*, Carrie Douglas Dudley Ewen (1894–1982),  
ca. 1930s, Filson Museum Collection [1986.1.23]

On June 3, 2020, the Filson Historical Society published a list of resources on race, violence, injustice, and segregation in Louisville and across the American South along with resources about creating constructive conversations about race among families, in classrooms, and in communities. The Filson was prompted to do so in response to the protests which have spread to many American cities in the wake of the killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor.

The Filson was not alone. The American Historical Association published a statement endorsed by 57 affiliated societies of professional historians. “As a nation, we’ve shown a reluctance not only to learn our own history but to learn from it,” writes the leading professional body in our field. Likewise, the Midwest Archives Conference reiterated our professional shared values that archives “serve as evidence against which individual and social memory can be tested.” It is and for over a century has been the Filson’s commission to help Louisville remember its past and learn from it.

The Filson is a research organization, whose mission is to preserve and tell the stories of the Ohio Valley region. The researchers who have studied our collections, who have presented in lectures to our membership, and who have published in our peer-reviewed journals have painted a composite picture of the city’s long history of discrimination, violence, and residential segregation directed against the African American community. Furthermore the silences in our records, by themselves, speak volumes.

The Filson stands by the lessons of history that we have shared with our community and stands with the community as it applies those same lessons in the present. The words and the resources we have shared were chosen based on the Filson’s published and presented interpretations of our rich collections and the ideals upon which the nation was founded but up to which it has, sadly, long struggled to live.

The Filson recognizes, further, that concrete action items must follow from this moment of national reflection.

- Actively engage with the Louisville Black community to more fully archive the marginalized histories of our city, state, and region. This means first and foremost supporting and empowering the community to preserve its own history by being a resource, whether the histories end up at the Filson, in self-directed archives, or deposited at the Filson’s peer institutions.
- Achieve greater diversity in public program subjects and presenters to feature perspectives which have been a vital part of Kentucky history, but which have been historically marginalized.
- Examine our membership recruitment efforts to actively pursue a more diverse Filson community and thereby provide easier access to empowering knowledge about our past.
- Engage Filson staff and board in a structured professional development plan that cultivates a culture of equity, inclusion, and welcoming.
- Proactively collaborate with partners in secondary and higher education to involve more students of color in the professional life of the Filson and prepare a more diverse workforce to find careers in the fields of archives, museums, publishing, and scholarly research.

The Filson recognizes that work towards these goals will be ongoing for many years and may be complicated in the short term by the devastating effect of the global COVID-19 pandemic on our partners in cultural and educational organizations. But our reading of history tells us that this is work that demands doing.

In the coming weeks and months, the Filson will be expanding its contact with organizations who can help us achieve these goals, and we invite any similarly minded local, regional, or national group to reach out to us to help leverage the power of our past to build a better American future in Louisville and the Ohio Valley.

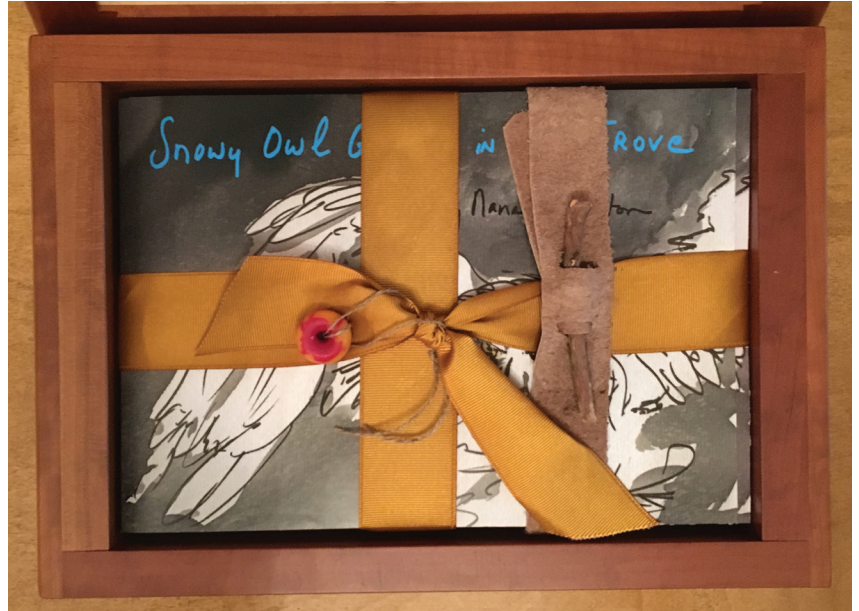




# Recent Acquisitions

Selections for this installment of recent acquisitions focus on four works of art donated just prior to the coronavirus pandemic closure. Two are portraits of Julius Friedman painted at approximately the same time period but presenting very different looks for the beloved Louisville designer and artist. The third is a book by Nana Lampton designed by Julius Friedman. The fourth is a portrait of Lelia R. Chandler by well-known Louisville artist Ann Troutman.

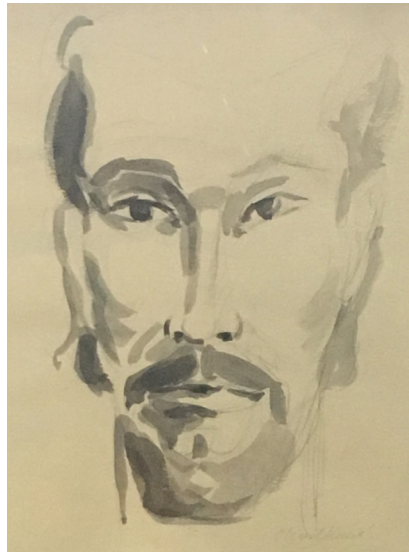
Although the Filson has been closed due to the coronavirus pandemic, our work goes on. We've been communicating with donors and have a growing list of follow-up appointments. So, hang on to your manuscripts, books, portraits, photographs, and other items for possible donation and we hope to be talking to you – and especially seeing you – in the not too distant future.



In 2009 Nana Lampton published *Snowy Owl Gathers in Her Trove*, a book of poetry and art in support of her Snowy Owl Foundation. Designed by Julius Friedman, Ms. Lampton had a limited number, each with an original painting by her, housed in hand-crafted wooden cases. She donated this one to the Filson.



Ann Troutman was a well-known mid-20th century Louisville based artist. Her clients ranged from little children to Louisville's social elite. The latter included Lelia Roemele Chandler, wife of Hilliard-Lyons executive James Chandler. This oil on canvas portrait, painted in 1955, depicts Chandler dressed for an outing in high society. The portrait, together with other Chandler material, was donated by Brian Easley who acquired it when he and his wife purchased the Chandler house in Harrods Creek.



This pencil and ink wash of Julius Friedman was done in the early 1970s by his former teacher and friend Henry Chodkowski. Chodkowski taught art at the University of Louisville for 37 years. Donated by Friedman's sister and long-time manager Carol Abrams, she referred to it looking quite Trotsky-esque, a reference to the Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky.



Quite different, but painted at approximately the same time as the Chodkowski portrait of Julius Friedman, is this oil on canvas likeness of him painted by artist Ann Farnsley about 1973. Friedman and Farnsley were dating at the time and living in Vevay, Indiana. She kept it for almost fifty years, and sold it in the fall of 2019 at an art fair in Madison, Indiana. The buyer was Dr. R. Ted Steinbock who donated it to the Filson.



# Women at Work

## Julia Tevis and Education

BY MAUREEN LANE | MUSEUM REGISTRAR & EXHIBITS MANAGER

*"I confess to an ambitious desire of becoming more than a mere atom floating in the sunbeam of prosperity. I coveted a distinct individuality, yet it is my deliberate opinion that I loved learning for its own sake."*<sup>1</sup>

— Julia Ann Hieronymus Tevis  
Founder of the Science Hill Female Academy

In the decades between the American Revolution and Civil War, ideas regarding the education of women evolved radically. Colonial education for women consisted of basic reading and sometimes writing with instruction in "ornamental pastimes" such as music, dancing, drawing, and embroidery that would help women acquire the cultural capital they needed to obtain social standing and marriage.

A belief that emerged during the post-Revolutionary era was the notion of Republican Motherhood: that women were influential in cultivating "civil society" in their roles as wives and mothers, as well as in their benevolent work. This opened the door for the advanced education of women. Early generations of American women used their education to express their opinions and to influence discourse at the dinner and tea table and in the parlor.<sup>2</sup> By the Civil War, women from middle class and elite families had access to an education equitable to that of men, and were putting it to use as writers, teachers, and social reformers.

Julia Ann Hieronymus Tevis (1799-1880), born in the decade following the Revolutionary War, was part of a family that valued the education of women. Her parents ensured the best educational opportunities they could provide for her. She in turn devoted more than 60 years to a career as an



Julia Ann Hieronymus at the age of 18,  
Science Hill Academy Records, FHS  
[Mss. BI S416/57]

educator who continuously expanded educational opportunities for women.

Tevis was the second child and eldest daughter of Pendleton Hieronymus (1775-1820) and Mary Bush (1778-1833) who were married in Clark County, Kentucky in 1795. Pendleton was raised in Loudoun County, Virginia, less than 50 miles from Washington, D.C. In 1806, he moved his family back to Virginia, in search of better educational opportunities for his children. The family moved again to the Georgetown

neighborhood in Washington D.C. in 1813, during the height of the War of 1812, possibly for Pendleton's work. By 1815 the family boarded members of Congress at their home while the legislature was in session. Tevis' older brother enlisted in the army while she and her younger sisters attended various schools in Washington D.C.

From age 16-19, Tevis attended Mrs. Stone's school at Pennsylvania Avenue, where many of the students were children of Washington's elite. The school did not provide a rigorous academic education; there was a large focus on society matters. As Tevis matured into a young woman, she was told not to depend upon her looks for her future and it became evident to her that she would not be a belle. "I decided, therefore, that my attractions must be of the mind."<sup>3</sup> She became a voracious reader, advancing her education through books. She also learned from the politicians staying at her family's house.

Tevis' father was not good at managing money. The family home and possessions were auctioned off to pay his debts. He went to St. Louis to seek employment and Tevis took a teaching job in western Virginia, eventually taking one of her sisters with her. Within a year, Tevis' father died and her mother and remaining younger sisters came to live with her. Tevis supported all of them

on her teaching salary. At her second teaching job in Abbington, Virginia, Tevis met her future husband, John Tevis, an itinerant minister raised in Shelbyville, Kentucky. Before agreeing to marriage, the couple struck a deal. He would continue his work as an itinerant minister covering 900 square miles, which would result in long absences. She would move to Shelbyville to be near his aging parents and would continue teaching. They were married on March 9, 1824.

Tevis started Science Hill Female Academy in Shelbyville on March 15, 1825, one year after her marriage and after the birth of the first of their seven children. There were at least 22 students enrolled in the school during the first year. By 1852, Science Hill had grown to include an assistant principal, 14 teachers, and 258 students. These young women were primarily from Kentucky, although a substantial group hailed from Louisiana. Smaller numbers of students traveled from Tennessee, Mississippi, Iowa, Texas, and California. At least one student came from New York.<sup>4</sup>

Alice Shrewsbury was one of Science Hill's students during the early years of the academy. In 1830, Tevis billed her father \$307 for tuition and expenses. Shrewsbury's tuition bill provides insight into her coursework at the academy, which included entomology, algebra, astronomy and chemistry.<sup>5</sup> The curriculum also included ancient and modern history, geography, geology, logic, rhetoric, moral philosophy, and human physiology. As Science Hill grew, it regularly modified curriculum to meet the needs of an evolving student body.<sup>6</sup>

Like other academies of the antebellum period, Science Hill provided women with a rigorous education that promoted independent intellectual inquiry but at the same time maintained conventional notions of womanhood. Science Hill also provided instruction in traditional pursuits such as French, drawing, and music. Tevis and her students provided regular lectures and recitations on



Julia A Tevis, 1861, Charles V. Bond, oil on canvas, Filson Historical Society (FHS) [1974.12.2]

subjects that included morality and modesty. Students were also assigned domestic tasks in order to develop the skills they would need to run their own households.

Tevis carefully navigated social expectations. Science Hill began teaching chemistry early on, despite beliefs that chemistry was a subject best left for men. Tevis stated:

"Chemistry is especially requisite for the successful progress of our inquires and researches into the nature of those things whence we derive the means of our comfort, our happiness, our luxuries, our health, and even our existence...In an experimental science, where truth lies within our reach, we

should make use of our senses and judge for ourselves."<sup>7</sup>

Tevis justified the teaching of chemistry as necessary for women to better run their households. She argued women needed to understand the chemical properties of pharmaceutical and cleaning agents to apply them correctly and to prevent accidental poisoning.<sup>8</sup> By doing so she succeeded in bringing a subject traditionally reserved for men into the realm of women.

Science Hill remained open throughout the Civil War, with students from the deep South treating the school as a sanctuary and boarding year-round, despite Tevis'



*The W<sup>m</sup> Shrewsbury* In ap with Rev J Lewis  
1830 To Board, Tuition & up to Alice Shrewsbury  
July 1 To Bal. up rendered to this date  
For Board, Tuition & up to Alice Shrewsbury 1830-31

◀ Bill for Alice Shrewsbury, 1830–1831, Science Hill Academy Records, FHS [Mss. BI S416/1]

Sept 12 " Etymology 40 - Pencil 5 - Class B 12 62  
" Dictionary 30 - Binding portfolio 100 130  
" Music Portfolio 75 - Copy 33 163  
Oct 1 " Sp. Book 13 25 - Boots 1.50  
" Algebra 80 - 1/2 Sines 15 - 1/2 Sines 15  
" Dr. pencil 10 - Dr. pa 10 - Rubber  
" Sackling Comb 1.68 - 8 1/2 Can. 10  
" Lpp. game box 1.50 - Mandy breast  
Nov 26 " Sp. Book 13 10 - Boots 1.50 - 1/2 Sines  
" Silks 25 - Wadding 5 - 8 1/2 Can. 10  
" Dr. pencil 10 - Cash 10 - 1/2 Sines  
Dec 5 " Canage of Box 15 - 2 1/2 Silks 65  
" Canage of Box 25 - 1/2 Cotton 12 1/2  
" 2 yd Canage 81 - Hooks 8  
" Black Dress 2.00 - Mythology  
" 1/2 Dr. Sines 2.60 - 1/2 Sines  
" Dr. pen & Sam 35 - Cash for Can  
" Sines 2.50 - Stage fare to  
" Silks 10 - Stage fare to Shelby  
Jan 131 " Dr. pa 10 - Boots 1.60  
" Postage bill 1.75 - 6 yd Cotton  
" Braids 5 - Buttons 5 - Cash 10  
" Altering Dress 30 - Pencil  
" Instruction 13 1/2 - Primer  
" Printed Music 8.75 - 1/2 Sines  
Feb 1 " Board, Washing, Fuel &  
" Music Lessons 10  
" French  
" Drawing Lessons 1/2  
" Astronomy & Atlas 1.25  
" Boots 4.50 - Soap 25 - Cash 10 1.85  
" Dr. pa 12 1/2 - Dr. pencil 10 - 1/2 Silks 2.19 2.41 5.61  
Amount forwarded 307.62



▲ Graduating Class of 1860 (Tevis 1st row on left), Science Hill Academy Records, FHS [Mss. BI S416/57]

antislavery stance. At the age of 70, Tevis slowly began to relinquish her administrative duties, but continued to teach. She sold the school in 1878 to Dr. Wiley Taul Poynter and his wife Clara, who maintained the

school until its doors closed in 1933. Estimates put the number of women educated at Science Hill Female Academy around 3,000.

Julia Tevis is one of many women featured in the Filson's digital version of *Women at Work*:

*Venturing into the Public Sphere* which you can access online at: <https://filsonhistorical.omeka.net/exhibits/show/women-at-work>. Be sure to watch for the exhibit's physical opening when the Filson resumes public hours.

1 Tevis, Julia A., *Sixty Years in a School-Room: An Autobiography of Mrs. Julia A Tevis*, Western Methodists Book Concern, 1878, Cincinnati, OH.  
2 Kelly, Mary, *Learning to Stand and Speak: Women, Education, and Public Life in America*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 2006, 25.  
3 Tevis 142  
4 Annual Catalogue of Pupils, Science Hill Female Academy, 1852, Science Hill Academy Records, Filson Historical Society (FHS) Manuscript Collection [Mss. BI S416]

5 Tuition and Board for Alice Shrewsbury 1830-1832 Science Hill Academy Records, FHS, [Mss .BI S416/1]  
6 Course of Study and Instruction 1837-1881, Science Hill Academy Records, FHS [Mss. BIS416/3]  
7 Kelly 72  
8 Tevis 413

# A Fresh Look for the Filson's Website!

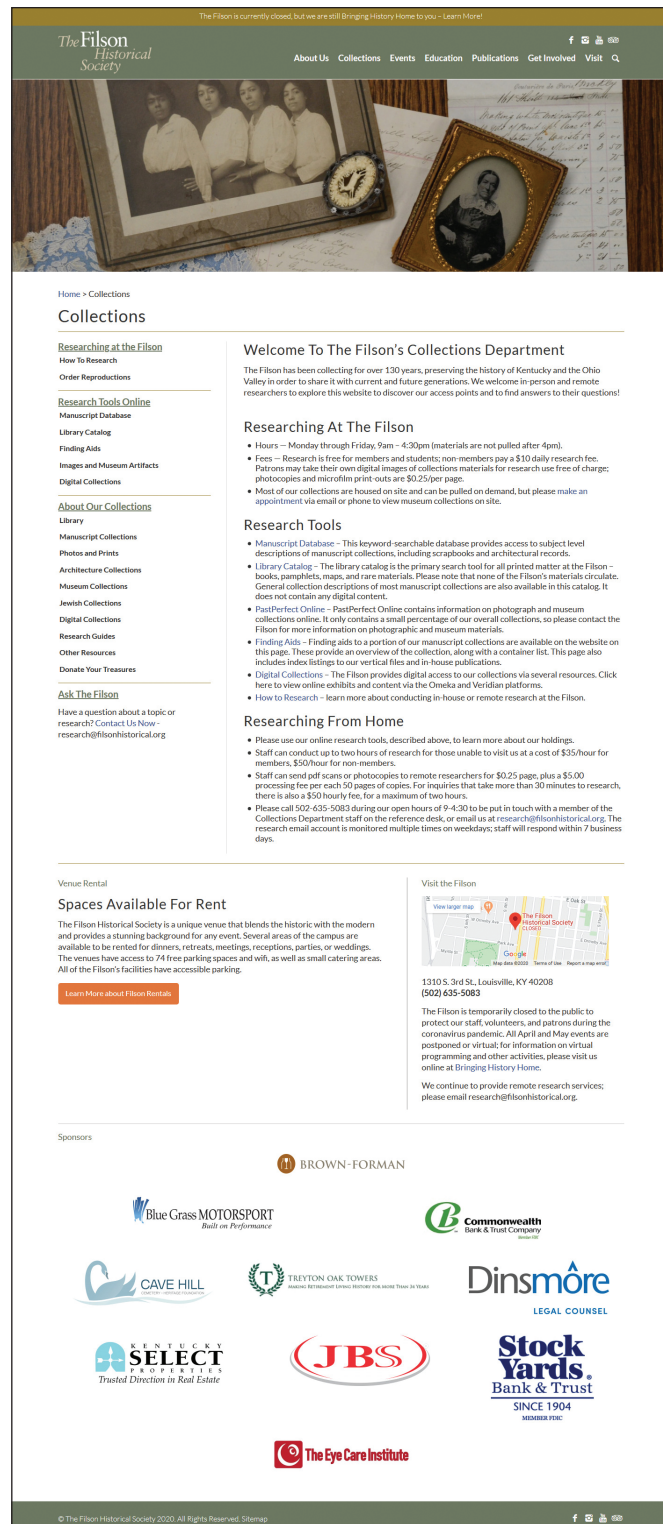
Filson staff are excited to announce a June 1, 2020 launch of our updated website at [www.filsonhistorical.org](http://www.filsonhistorical.org). Designed and created in partnership with Louisville Geek, this project has been in the works for several years. The goals of the website update were to provide easier access to Filson online resources, make the site mobile-friendly, update the technology on the back end of the site, and to freshen and brighten the site's colors and look. We heard your concerns and we are proud to show you what we've done.

What differences will you notice?

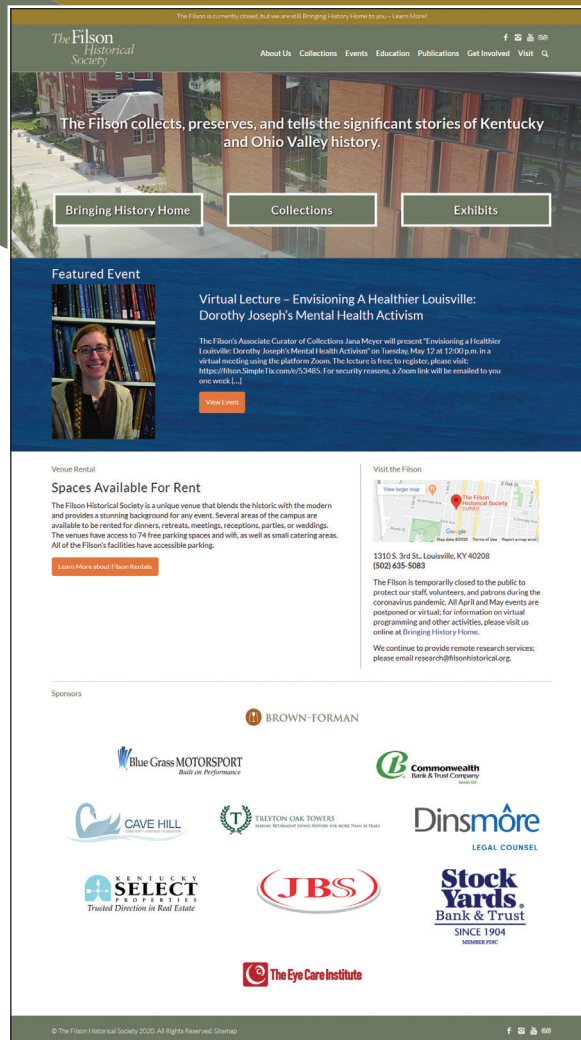
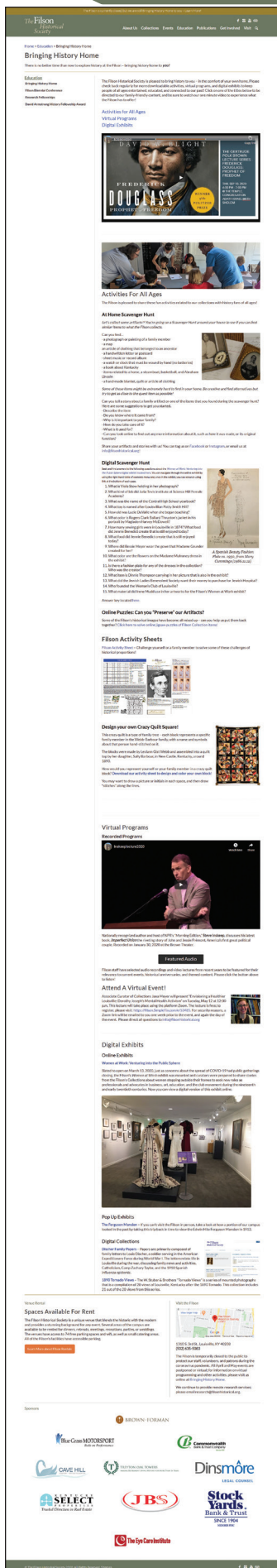
- New images and content
- Section-specific menus on the left of each page for quick navigation
- No more member logins!
- Better mobile device access
- Brighter colors

The new homepage provides immediate access to all the Filson's offerings via a horizontal menu bar with drop-down features, along with information on upcoming programs, rentals, and information on visiting. The main sections of the Filson's website align closely to what you are used to: About Us, Collections, Events, Education, Publications, Get Involved, and a new feature, Visit. The menu bar is a feature on every page throughout the website, supplemented by section-specific menus on the left side of each page.

About Us includes information on the Filson's history, mission, staff and board, and career opportunities. The Collections area of the website now puts all the Filson's online databases and content at the user's fingertips in the left side menu bar and provides a







deeper dive into the various collections through descriptions and research guides. Information on conducting research in person or at home is thoroughly explained. Our Events continue to be ticketed through SimpleTix, an external ticketing service.

The Filson's Education section on the website now features a new component, Bringing History Home. This page features downloadable activities, virtual programs, and digital exhibits to keep people of all ages entertained, educated, and connected to our past. In addition to this new feature, the Education section continues to provide information about past and present Filson Biennial Conferences and Fellowships. Internship information can now be found in Career Opportunities.

Publications provides access to articles from the entire run of the *Filson Club History Quarterly* via a search by searchable by title,

author, year, and edition, along with downloadable issues of *The Filson* news magazine from 2009-current. Information on the Filson's scholarly publication, *Ohio Valley History* (OVH), can also be found in this section. Members will be provided separate access to digital issues of OVH, as the website no longer has a member-login component.

Get Involved is the new home for information about Filson membership and donating – whether the donation is financial, your historical materials, or your time! The Visit section of the new website provides information for those coming to our Old Louisville campus – whether to attend an event, visit an exhibit, conduct research, or rent one of our spaces! We hope the new website provides our members and public with a seamless way to interact with us online! Please contact [info@filsonhistorical.org](mailto:info@filsonhistorical.org) with any questions.

# William Struck *In Memoriam*

The Filson lost one of our longest serving volunteers on April 4, with the passing of William W. “Bill” Struck. Bill volunteered for the Filson for over 20 years. He was a native of Louisville who returned home after a career with the State Department’s Foreign Service, spending many years abroad, particularly in Africa and Latin America.

Bill specialized in transcribing manuscripts as a volunteer. Those familiar with handwriting know how difficult it can be to read sometimes—especially as reading cursive becomes something of a lost art to many younger researchers. Bill often would stop by the Filson on Wednesdays after delivering meals for the Meals on Wheels program, where he faithfully volunteered for years. On these visits Bill would photocopy manuscript material selected for transcription due to its difficulty in reading or fragile condition. When the Third Street Rectifiers were operating, he and fellow spirits enthusiasts Mike Veach and Larry Carr (long time volunteer that passed away last year) would check their small barrel of liquor (usually a whiskey of their devising) and taste its progress. With transcripts in hand, Bill would then head home where he transcribed and often annotated the letters, diaries, and documents. Over the years, he transcribed thousands of pages of manuscripts. Weeks would go by without seeing him, and consequently given his periodic visits and then disappearing for weeks at a time, Bill became known as our “stealth” volunteer – unseen but delivering a payload of work that enhanced the collection and researchers being able to use it. Bill’s single, longest lasting project, was transcribing the 1857 to 1903 diaries of Louisvillian John F. Jefferson.

Staff fondly remember Bill. “Bill always brought a smile to every Wednesday for me,” Jennie Cole recalls, “knowing he would be in, even if he didn’t need new work, just to check in on us and jokingly approve time off. I will miss his laugh and his smile, and am

so grateful for all of the time we had with him. He is irreplaceable.” Former curator Shirley Harmon remembered that “Bill and our other volunteers were what made working at the Filson so special; they felt like family and made our days brighter.” Another former curator, Sarah-Jane Poindexter, upon hearing the news wrote us that “Bill was a gem. Not only did he have incredible patience for the transcription work but his output was prolific. I always enjoyed his “stealth” visits to Special Collections, especially his stories of living abroad and the hilarious international capers of the Struck family dog.” And curator Jana Meyer, who coordinated with Bill the past couple of years, remembers what a delight it was to see Bill and Larry Carr collaborating on projects, and how even while battling cancer he continued to transcribe manuscripts. As for my own memories, Bill liked to tease me that I was the “stealth” curator. If I wasn’t in my office when he stopped by he’d email me later for an explanation as to my whereabouts. Reviewing his projects with him always taught me something new. Bill didn’t simply transcribe; he researched the people and events mentioned and often included notes about them as part of the transcript. An important subject of conversation was family news. Family meant a great deal to him. And he was part of our Filson family. He was a regular attendee of staff chili lunches and the holiday party.

Bill will be missed. He was a wonderful person and wonderful volunteer. Volunteers like Bill are priceless. When he told us of his diagnosis of pancreatic cancer, he expressed his hope of beating it. He commented that when symptoms first appeared, he thought it was a return of the malaria he’d contracted while in the U. S. Navy serving in Vietnam. We all wish it had been. He will be remembered and appreciated not only for his dedicated service to the Filson but for what he meant to us.

— Jim Holmberg



◀ Bill Struck, far right, at a Filson Holiday party. Left to right: Librarian Cassie Bratcher, volunteers Joan Brennan and Phyllis Berger, Curator of Collections Jim Holmberg, and Bill.

Bill enjoyed rectifying spirits ▶ with his Filson friends.





# Prairie Fires

*The American Dreams of Laura Ingalls Wilder*

by Caroline Fraser

Millions of readers of *Little House on the Prairie* believe they know Laura Ingalls—the pioneer girl who survived blizzards and near-starvation on the Great Plains, and the woman who wrote the famous autobiographical books. But the true saga of her life has never been fully told. Now, drawing on unpublished manuscripts, letters, diaries, and land and financial records, Caroline Fraser—the editor of the Library of America edition of the Little House series—masterfully fills in the gaps in Wilder’s biography. Revealing the grown-up story behind the most influential childhood epic of pioneer life, she also chronicles Wilder’s tumultuous relationship with her journalist daughter, Rose Wilder Lane, setting the record straight regarding charges of ghostwriting that have swirled around the books.

The Little House books, for all the hardships they describe, are paeans to the pioneer spirit, portraying it as triumphant against all odds. But Wilder’s real life was harder and grittier than that, a story of relentless struggle, rootlessness, and poverty. It was only in her sixties, after losing nearly everything in the Great Depression, that she turned to children’s books, recasting her hardscrabble childhood as a celebratory vision of homesteading—and achieving fame and fortune in the process, in one of the most astonishing rags-to-riches episodes in American letters.

Spanning nearly a century of epochal change, from the Indian Wars to the Dust Bowl, Wilder’s dramatic life provides a unique perspective on American history and our national mythology of self-reliance. With fresh insights and new discoveries, *Prairie Fires* reveals the complex woman whose classic stories grip us to this day.

Caroline Fraser is the editor of the Library of America edition of Laura Ingalls Wilder’s Little House books, and the author of *Rewilding the World* and *God’s Perfect Child*. Her writing has appeared in *The New York Review of Books*, *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and the *London Review of Books*, among other publications. She lives in New Mexico.

**NEW  
DATE!**

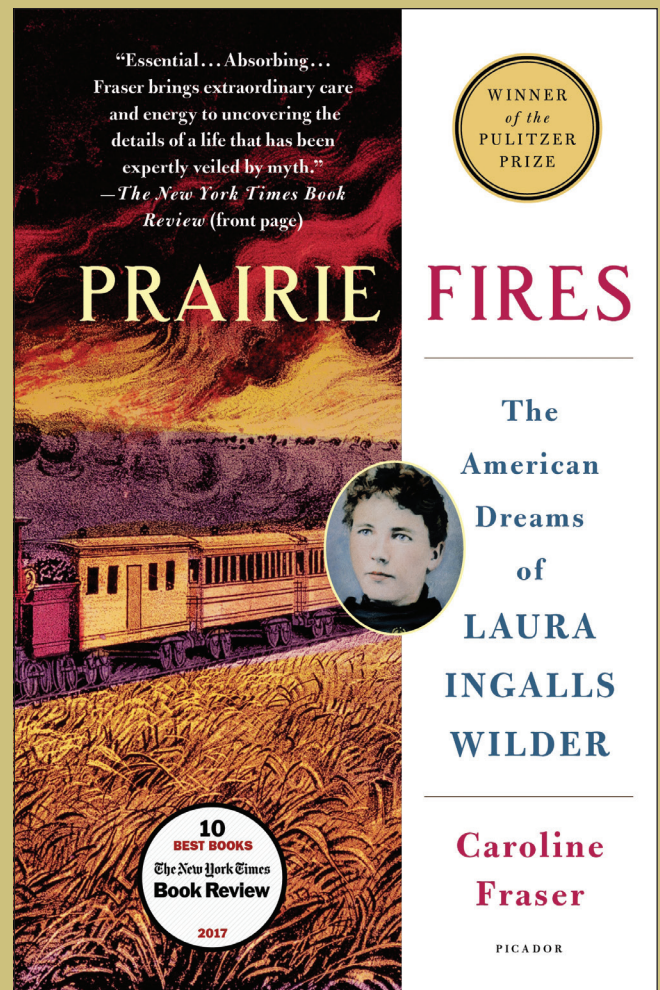
Advance registration required

**Tuesday, August 11**

**6:00–7:00 p.m.**

**Live Virtual Lecture via Zoom**

Free | Register online at [filson.simplivetix.com](https://www.filson.simplivetix.com)



## Praise for *Prairie Fires*

*The American Dreams of Laura Ingalls Wilder*

“An absorbing new biography [that] deserves recognition as an essential text.... For anyone who has drifted into thinking of Wilder’s ‘Little House’ books as relics of a distant and irrelevant past, reading *Prairie Fires* will provide a lasting cure.... Meanwhile, ‘Little House’ devotees will appreciate the extraordinary care and energy Fraser devotes to uncovering the details of a life that has been expertly veiled by myth.”

—*The New York Times Book Review*

“At last, an unsentimental examination of Laura Ingalls Wilder’s real life on the frontier. Caroline Fraser rescues Wilder from frontier myth and gives us the gritty, passionate woman who endured the harshest experiences of homesteading, loved the Great Plains, and was devastated by their ultimate ruin and loss. Elegantly written and impeccably researched, *Prairie Fires* is a major contribution to environmental history and literary biography.”

—Linda Lear, author of *Beatrix Potter: A Life in Nature* and *Rachel Carson: Witness for Nature*

# Commonwealth Center Internships



Caitlin **Hogue**

I am a sophomore history major with an art history and economics minor at the University of Louisville and I spent my Spring 2020 semester as the Collections Intern at Filson. My ultimate career goal is to work as a curator somewhere that allows me to look at beautiful artworks daily. That's been my dream since high school so getting to work at the Filson was an amazing opportunity for me. My main project was to catalog the large collection of Walter H. Kiser drawings. Kiser was an artist who ran a column in *The Louisville Times* called "The Neighborhood Sketches." These sketches consisted of historic homes, cabins, and mills spread mainly across the Kentucky and Indiana regions. It was wonderful to get to examine these drawings closely. I like to view Kiser's art as works of preservation, whether they were intended that way or not. I was also lucky enough during my internship to witness the planning and construction of the *Women at Work* exhibit. The excitement around the Filson was palpable during the final weeks and it helped me to further realize that the museum field is where I need to be.



Emma **Johansen**

This semester, I worked with Danielle Spalenka as her Digital Collections Intern and created an online exhibit featuring the female composers in the Filson's Sheet Music Collection and the Barney Collection. So far, my experience in scanning, metadata, and online interpretation has only deepened my love for archival work. The large Sheet Music Collection, completely undigitized when I started, held over one hundred women composers previously unknown to us. The little information on these female composers in finding aids, indexes, and secondary sources proves to be a significant challenge in exhibit building, but this further proves the one of a kind items in the collections. These compositions and composers are from a wide range of fame and expertise; we have a Kentucky songwriter handwriting chords for her sister-in-law alongside an internationally renowned Polish composer from the mid-19th century. We have women who wrote under pseudonyms, owned their own film studio, or wrote simply as "A Lady." I'm excited to further this research and keep this online exhibit updated to the best of my ability.





## David **Brennan**

Hello! My name is David Brennan, and I am a high school senior at Kentucky Country Day School. As a part of the honors program at my school, each student chooses a single local organization to get involved with so we can really explore something we are passionate about. It was obvious to me that the Filson was where I wanted to go. I have always loved history, and I was excited to put that passion to use. My first job was working mainly with Sarah Bruns and Scott Scarboro, helping out with the Filson's Enid Yandell themed activities for the Cultural Pass. I gave hints for the scavenger hunts, made buttons, and helped kids create their own sculptures. I also became a backup tour guide who would step in if the regular guide was unavailable.

Later, once Cultural Pass had ended, I started working with Maureen Lane cataloging the Filson's collection of edged weaponry. We've gone through shelves of knives and swords, some of which are hundreds of years old. Every time I come to the Filson, I get to hold a fascinating piece of history in my (gloved) hands. You know you've got a cool job when holding swords from the Civil War becomes quite a regular occurrence.

My time here at the Filson has been one of the best experiences I've had in my life. I have met some amazing people and I have been able to do things that many history buffs can only dream about. I am so grateful to the Filson for the opportunities it has given me and the people I have met. Soon, I'll be off to the University of Colorado Boulder where I'll be double majoring in Physics and Atmospheric & Oceanic Sciences, with a minor in history. Thanks everyone!



## Rachid **Tagoulla**

MFA candidate, University of Louisville

Rachid is pursuing a Masters degree of Fine Arts with a concentration in Photography at the University of Louisville. He is a passionate photographer with over 12 years of experience. He recently curated an exhibition featuring photographs of UofL Hite Art students and Moroccan photographers at UofL's MFA Gallery. He is currently organizing, with Professor Mary Carothers, an artist residency Study Abroad Program in Morocco for Hite Art students for summer 2021. His work as an MFA student has been featured in many galleries locally and internationally. Through his involvement in the arts, Rachid hopes to continue to build bridges between Morocco and other countries. He is currently developing a Sister Cities partnership between the University of Louisville and the University of Ibn Zohr in his hometown of Agadir, Morocco.

Rachid teaches introductory courses in Art History at the university level and he is passionate about documentation and historic processes. Rachid worked this spring as the Photograph Collection Intern with the Filson through the University's Commonwealth Center for the Humanities and Society. He helped arrange the Jewish Hospital Photograph Collection and the massive Greenburg Bottling Company Slide Collection. Rachid started taking inventory for the Filson's video collection but the building had to shut down and put its services on hold after COVID-19 hit the world. From this three-month experience, Rachid was able to gain knowledge and skills about archival practices, how to appropriately preserve visual materials and prepare them for future utilization by researchers. This experience has also widened career opportunities for him and inspired him to preserve visual materials as a part of his MFA thesis. He feels that visual materials need to be better preserved in his home country and hopes to use his experience to build an archive there in the future.

# Filson Fridays 2020

**Friday, June 19, 12:00-1:00 p.m.**  
**The Filson Historical Society, 1310 S. 3rd St.**  
**Free—Virtual Lecture**

## **Madison Conyers Johnson, 1806–1886** *The Hidden Hand of Power*

Richard H. C. Clay

Join Richard H. C. Clay as he presents his first Filson Friday on a lawyer and banker of enormous, but hidden and discreet importance, before, during and after the Civil War. Though his practice was centered in Lexington, his pro-Union influence permeated the State.

Richard H. C. Clay is the President and CEO of the Filson Historical Society.

**Friday, July 10, 12:00 p.m.**  
**The Filson Historical Society, 1310 S. 3rd St.**  
**Free—Virtual Lecture**

## **Researching Your Historic Home**

Danielle Spalenka

Learn how to navigate and discover resources to find out about the history of your historic home. The talk will provide basic guidance, highlight key resources, and present two case studies from Old Louisville that provide a glimpse of the twist, turns, and dead ends you may encounter when finding more about your historic home.

Danielle Spalenka is the Associate Curator of Digital Projects at The Filson Historical Society and a resident of Old Louisville. Prior to joining The Filson staff in April 2019, Ms. Spalenka held the role of Preservation Specialist at the Northeast Document Conservation Center; Project Director for the NEH-funded Digital POWRR



Project; and Curator of Manuscripts at the Northern Illinois University Regional History Center. She holds a BA in history from Saint Mary's College (Notre Dame, IN) and a MA-LIS from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

**Friday, July 24, 12:00–1:00 p.m.**  
**The Filson Historical Society, 1310 S. 3rd St.**  
**Free—Virtual Lecture**

## **Living with a Deadly Disease** *A History of Tuberculosis and Waverly Hills Sanatorium*

Lynn Pohl

At the beginning of the twentieth century, tuberculosis was widespread, striking adults and children across lines of class and race. Drawing on the Filson's manuscript, photograph, and architectural collections, Dr. Lynn Pohl examines how Kentuckians lived with the deadly disease, how they learned about germs and contagion, and why they sought treatment at tuberculosis sanatoria built across the state. It is a history that takes us from whiskey remedies to Louisville women's public health work, and from Mammoth Cave to a vast complex of patient facilities at Waverly Hills Sanatorium.

Lynn Pohl received her Ph.D. in history at Indiana University and is Collections Cataloger at the Filson.





**Friday, July 31, 12:00–1:00 p.m.**  
The Filson Historical Society, 1310 S. 3rd St.  
Free—Virtual Lecture

**Friday, August 7, 12:00-1:00 p.m.**  
The Filson Historical Society, 1310 S. 3rd St.  
Free—Virtual Lecture

## Designing Women

### *The Dresses of Women at Work*

Jana Meyer

The Filson's *Women at Work* exhibition includes six dresses fashioned by four local designers in the 19th and early 20th centuries. At the time, dressmaking was a popular career choice for women entering the workplace. Many women found employment in the Ohio Valley's apparel industry. The work required skill and creativity as garments were made by hand. Dressmakers often commanded considerable wealth and independence as owners of their own establishments. Who were the women who designed the dresses in the Filson's exhibit? And who were the women who wore them? This lecture will explore the stories behind the dresses on display.

Jana Meyer is an Associate Curator of Collections at the Filson Historical Society. She received a degree in History from the University of Louisville, as well as a master's degree in Library and Information Science from the University of Kentucky.



## Archiving 101

### *Organizing and Caring for Family Photographs*

Heather Potter

Family pictures are more than a photograph of a loved one; each image is a historical document. These photographs reflect history, they inform us, they change our impressions of our ancestors, and tell the story of our family's past. Yet, many family photograph collections remain tucked away in the basement or attic. Join Heather Potter, Curator of Photographs & Prints at The Filson Historical Society to learn more about how to get started with selecting, organizing, and caring for your family photograph collection and learn some valuable research tools along the way.

Heather Potter is the Curator of Photographs & Prints at The Filson Historical Society, prior she was a Project Archivist at the Kentucky Historical Society. Potter received my BA in History from Washburn University, Topeka, Kansas, and MLS with an emphasis in Archives from Indiana University – Bloomington. Her research interests include Mammoth Cave, World War I, and Genealogy & Family History



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**The 2020 Filson Fridays Series  
is generously sponsored by  
Dinsmore & Shohl, LLP.**

# Julie Scoskie James

Vice President



**Jamie Evans:** So, Julie, tell us a little bit about your background.

**Julie Scoskie:** I love learning and experiencing new things. When I was younger, I watched planes flying overhead and said, “I would like to be on that plane”. My parents would reply “You don’t know where that plane is heading”, and I would respond “It is going someplace I have never been; so, I want to go!” I grew up in Louisville in a very loving and close family. I am the middle of three children and have an older brother and younger sister. I had wonderful parents who gave me a strong moral foundation, instilled the importance of faith, and encouraged higher education.

While earning a Master’s Degree, I taught high school and college. Although I loved helping people learn, I was drawn into the private sector where I combined my teaching skills with my business acumen. I worked for a computer leasing firm and later for Humana developing computer-assisted training. This work involved extensive travel and helped me check off one of many bucket list items: to visit all 50 states.

After my first son was born, traveling for work wasn’t as appealing. I took a job

with Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) in Adult Education as their Financial and Reporting Systems Manager. Before the end of my 27-year career with JCPS, I was promoted to Director of Community Support Services, leading 350 employees in providing supportive services to ensure students of all ages success in achieving their high school credentials.

Even though I loved working for JCPS, I needed a new challenge. The Director of the Louisville Free Public Library (LFPL), Craig Buthod, offered me the opportunity to join as LFPL Assistant Director. During my tenure, LFPL gained national recognition for reinventing their Summer Reading Program by combining it with the Cultural Pass Program and for partnering with Code Louisville to provide Treehouse computer training on-line

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**JE:** What brought you to the Filson?

**JS:** Once the Filson completed its campus expansion, Judy Miller, then Deputy Director, retired. At that time, the board, along with President and CEO Craig Buthod, reorganized the leadership team and they were seeking someone with my experience. I joined the Filson in 2017 as Vice-President and am responsible for Education and Development. I am honored to work with very talented colleagues. Having the expanded campus and being able to add more programs has resulted in providing more and better services to all our stakeholders. All the Filson’s major impact indicators have increased at an impressive rate, and I am so proud to play a role in making that happen.

The Filson building closure in mid-March, created new opportunities for the Filson staff to reinvent the way we deliver

programs and content. Our very talented, creative staff worked together within a matter of a few weeks to offer virtual programs, exhibits, and add to our digital platform. This work has helped us attract more diverse populations, including people from other states and countries, and will continue to help us reach these audiences after we return to in-person services.

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**JE:** Tell us more about your educational background.

**JS:** My curiosity and quest for learning, led me to college where I earned a B.S. Degree in Business Education from Eastern Kentucky University, a Master of Business Administration Degree, and an Ed. D in Organizational and Educational Leadership from University of Louisville. I elected to take a pause between my MBA and Ed. D to raise three sons. Once the youngest graduated from high school, it afforded me the opportunity to return to college. My family spent many evenings around the kitchen table with all of us doing college coursework.

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**JE:** Tell us a little bit about Julie outside of the Filson. What are some of your hobbies and passions?

**JS:** I am passionate about spending time with family and friends. Steve, my husband, and I have a blended family with seven sons, three grandsons and a fourth grandson on the way. Just celebrating family birthdays is enough to keep us busy. Typical holidays are celebrated with 30-40 people at our house. We built a house and moved less than two years



ago, and plan to put in a pool as soon as possible. Steve and I love to travel and have recently enjoyed trips to Greece, Italy, and Portugal.

We also love the outdoors. We try to hike or bike at least a few times per week. I even rode my bike in the Ride to Conquer Cancer fund raiser from Louisville to Lexington, spent the night, and rode back to Louisville the next day. It was a great challenge for me and again something I was glad to check off my bucket list. I don't plan to do it again!

We also enjoy going to plays, museums, U of L sporting events, horse races, concerts, dancing, playing cards, and entertaining with friends and family.

Some things never change, I have a passion for leaning and a wander lust. My travel plans have been placed on temporary hold for now, while we all wait for things to get more back to normal.

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**JE:** What has been your favorite vacation?

**JS:** Asking about my favorite vacation, is like asking about my favorite dessert. I have never had a dessert I didn't like, and I have never vacationed anywhere I didn't enjoy. If I had to choose one, it would be our annual family vacation to Daytona Beach. This is for sentimental reasons. My grandparents started a tradition more than 100 years ago of the entire family going to Daytona. We have carried on this tradition and had as many as 40 family members join. It is always a great time to relax, share memories, and reconnect with family! Plus, I love the beach!

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**JE:** What's one thing you want our patrons to know?

**JS:** I truly enjoy my job. One of the things I like is getting to know people. Every week I have the pleasure of connecting people with programs they enjoy. I always like hearing what people like about our programs and hearing suggestions for things they would like to see us do relating to our mission.

## THE GERTRUDE POLK BROWN LECTURE SERIES

# Frederick Douglass

## *Prophet of Freedom*

David W. Blight

As a young man Frederick Douglass (1818–1895) escaped from slavery in Baltimore, Maryland. He was fortunate to have been taught to read by his slave owner mistress, and he would go on to become one of the major literary figures of his time.

His very existence gave the lie to slave owners: with dignity and great intelligence he bore witness to the brutality of slavery.

Initially mentored by William Lloyd Garrison, Douglass spoke widely, using his own story to condemn slavery. By the Civil War, Douglass had become the most famed and widely travelled orator in the nation. In his unique and eloquent voice, written and spoken, Douglass was a fierce critic of the United States as well as a radical patriot. After the war he sometimes argued politically with younger African Americans, but he never forsook either the Republican party or the cause of black civil and political rights.

In this “cinematic and deeply engaging” (*The New York Times Book Review*) biography, David Blight has drawn on new information held in a private collection that few other historians have consulted, as well as recently discovered issues of Douglass's newspapers. “Absorbing and even moving...a brilliant book that speaks to our own time as well as Douglass's” (*The Wall Street Journal*), Blight's biography tells the fascinating story of Douglass's two marriages and his complex extended family. “David Blight has written the definitive biography of Frederick Douglass...a powerful portrait of one of the most important American voices of the nineteenth century” (*The Boston Globe*).

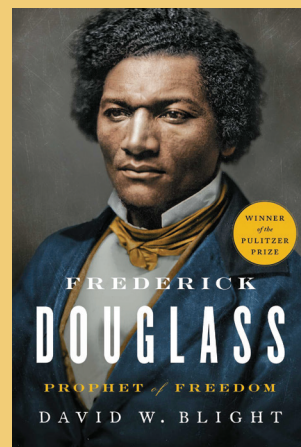
David W. Blight is the Sterling Professor of History and Director of the Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition at Yale University. He is the author or editor of a dozen books, including *American Oracle: The Civil War in the Civil Rights Era*; and *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory*; and annotated editions of Douglass's first two autobiographies. He has worked on Douglass much of his professional life, and been awarded the Bancroft Prize, the Abraham Lincoln Prize, and the Frederick Douglass Prize, among others.

## Praise for *Frederick Douglass*

### *Prophet of Freedom*

“The first major biography of Douglass in nearly three decades.... Blight isn't looking to overturn our understanding of Douglass, whose courage and achievements were unequivocal, but to complicate it — a measure by which this ambitious and empathetic biography resoundingly succeeds.”

— Jennifer Szalai, *The New York Times*



**Thursday, September 10, 2020 6:00–7:00 p.m.**  
Live virtual lecture via Zoom | Free

Filsonian listing reflects membership gifts received February 16, 2020 through April 30, 2020

# The Filsonians

## February 2020 – April 2020



The Thruston Legacy Circle is an honorary society established in 2015 to recognize those who have followed the example of R. C. Ballard Thruston by including the Filson in their estate plans. Since our founding in 1884, the Filson has been privately supported and planned giving is an ideal way to continue that tradition of private support.

If you have made a planned gift to the Filson and have not so advised us, we thank you and ask that you let us know so we can welcome you to the TLC. If you have not made a planned gift but would like more information about doing so, please call our Development Department at (502) 634-7108 or email Brenna Cundiff at [brenna@filsonhistorical.org](mailto:brenna@filsonhistorical.org).

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