

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.



Reopening Update	Recent Acquisitions	Browsing in our Archives	Gift Membership	Department Reorganization	Gertrude Polk Brown Series	Remote Reference and Events	Exhibit Update	Interns/ Volunteers	COVID-19 Poster Project	Staff Profile	The Filsonians
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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Filson Family,

Change is in the air. On January 1, 2021, Carl Thomas will become past chair of the Filson's Board. Carl has served on the Filson's Board since 2010 and has served as chair for the last six years. His leadership has been highly consequential. Carl's servant leadership, along with that of many others, resulted in a successful capital campaign, the refurbishment of the Ferguson mansion, construction of the Owsley Brown II History Center, creation of the Jewish Community Archive, and further diversification of the board. Using his managerial expertise, he led the development of a new governance model that revamped the Filson and helped write and implement an aggressive long-range plan. Carl stepped in as interim President & CEO in 2019, while chairing the most recent presidential search committee. Bottom line: I'd rank Carl Thomas among the most effective nonprofit Board chairs I've known in my 43 years as a professional. He is perceptive, has excellent judgment and is utterly self-effacing. Here is what our leadership team says about him:

Working with Carl on two presidential searches was illuminating! Jennie Cole, Director of Collections Access.

Carl is a mentor to many and one of my favorite people. Diane Cornwell, Interim CFO.

Carl's genuine commitment to our community comes across every time we speak. Brenna Cundiff, Director of Development.

Carl is the perfect board chair—connected, dedicated, and caring. Jim Holmberg, The Filson Historical Society Curator.

Very few board chairs would have had the nerve to let the Filson chart a bold course through 2020, and our current position relative to our peers reflects both Carl's strength and his trust in the staff. Patrick Lewis, Director of Collections and Research.

Carl is a consummate professional and a genuinely nice person. Julie Scoskie James, Vice President.

Carl will remain on the Filson's Board and executive committee in 2021. All of us are looking forward to working with his outstanding successor, John Stern, as the next chapter in your Filson's 137-year history begins!



Richard H.C. Clay

President/CEO, The Filson Historical Society

COVER: The Business Women's Club, designed in 1911 by architect George Herbert Gray.

FROM THE CHAIR

As I wrote in my last letter, I hope that you and your family are healthy. What a year 2020 has been! It has certainly been historic. I think we can all agree that we'll be glad when it concludes in the next few weeks. Despite the many challenges that The Filson Historical Society has faced, our staff has persevered, displaying amazing creativity, ingenuity, patience and dedication. Our programming has continued through virtual delivery and has been attended by individuals in 41 states and in places such as Great Britain, Australia, Brazil, Canada, and Indonesia. Attendance continues to be strong and we're really excited about our calendar of events already planned for 2021.

As the year reaches an end, we extend our sincere thanks and best wishes to four directors who have finished their terms: J. McCauley "Mac" Brown, who has served for eleven years, including four years as President/CEO of the Board, Anne Ogden, our Board Vice President, who has served a total of eight years beginning in 2007, Robert E. Kulp, our Board Development Committee Chair, who has served for nine years and Dr. Laman Gray, who has served for six years. Bob Kulp was preceded on the board by his departed wife, Margaret, who also served for many years.

Also leaving our Board is our Treasurer, Donna Heitzman, and Marshall Farrer. We sincerely appreciate their service and important contributions.

John Stern, who has served on the Board for eleven years, will be our new Chair, beginning his two-year-term at our December Board meeting. I will continue serving on the Board in the role of immediate past Chair. John will introduce our new officers, directors and committee chairs in the next edition of the magazine.

It has truly been an honor to serve as the Board Chair of this distinguished organization for the past six years! I have learned so much and made so many new friends. All of us take tremendous pride in the fact that renown scholars and authors such as H.W. Brands, Liza Mundy, Danielle Allen, William Hitchcock and David Blight consider The Filson among the finest historical societies in the country. I have every confidence that our staff and the Board will continue to pursue our mission with excellence....."to collect, preserve and tell the stories of Louisville and the surrounding Ohio River Valley."

Best wishes for the holiday season and for a healthy and prosperous New Year!

Sincerely,



Carl M. Thomas, *Chairman of the Board*

BOARD MEMBERS

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The Filson

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and story ideas.
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info@filsonhistorical.org

OUR MISSION:

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

The Filson Historical Society Reopening Update

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Filson Historical Society has amended its reopening plan. The organization now anticipates resuming normal operations based on CDC and local guidelines on April 1, 2021. More information will be released in advance of this date.

Filson staff will continue to work in the building at no more than 33% capacity on any given day, in accordance with Kentucky's "Healthy at Work" guidelines.

Collections staff will continue to provide remote research services and work with patrons to meet their research needs. For more information about utilizing the Filson's collections remotely, please contact the Filson via phone at (502) 635-5083 or via email at research@filsonhistorical.org. The Filson's voice-mail is checked Monday through Friday and all voicemails and emails will be returned in a timely manner.

To be added to a list of individuals interested in future research appointments, please email research@filsonhistorical.org with your name and contact information. This list is being maintained by Jennie Cole, Director of Collections Access. Online collections catalogues and resources are available on the Filson's website, filsonhistorical.org/collections.

All programming will continue to be held virtually until further notice. Currently, virtual programs are free for both members and the public. For a list of upcoming virtual events, please visit filsonhistorical.org/events.

Questions about the Filson's reopening plan should be directed to Emma Bryan via phone at (502) 635-5083 or by email at emmabryan@filsonhistorical.org.

The Board, staff, and volunteers at the Filson are so grateful for the continued support of our membership during this time. We are continuing to update and add to our digital resources. If you haven't already, please make sure to check out the *Filson Connection*, our bi-weekly email with collections information, links to *Ohio Valley History* articles, and virtual event updates.

Recent Acquisitions



Untitled collage, 1981, by Helen LaFrance (b. 1919) of Graves County, Kentucky. LaFrance is an important regional artist known for her folk-art memory paintings that capture rural life. Historical Acquisitions Fund Purchase.



Isaac Shelby letters, 1785–1789. Part of the Shelby-Bruen Collection, gift of Shelby Susan Clark.



Two 1930s Louisville Motorcycle Club/Harley Davidson uniforms including pants, shirts, boots, and riding cap, belonging to Jimmy Bray (1919–1996) donated by his daughter Pam Steffen. The Louisville Motorcycle Club is one of the local chapters under the American Motorcycle Association, founded in 1927. It was the oldest of the three motorcycle clubs that existed in Louisville in the mid 20th century. The only requirement for joining the club was that a member must “own and ride a motorcycle or be actively engaged in the sport of motorcycling.” The purpose of the club was to promote the sport of motorcycling, safety, fellowship among riders, and participation in competitive events.



Kentucky Oaks 2020 and Kentucky Derby 2020 official programs, donated by Sarah Fink.

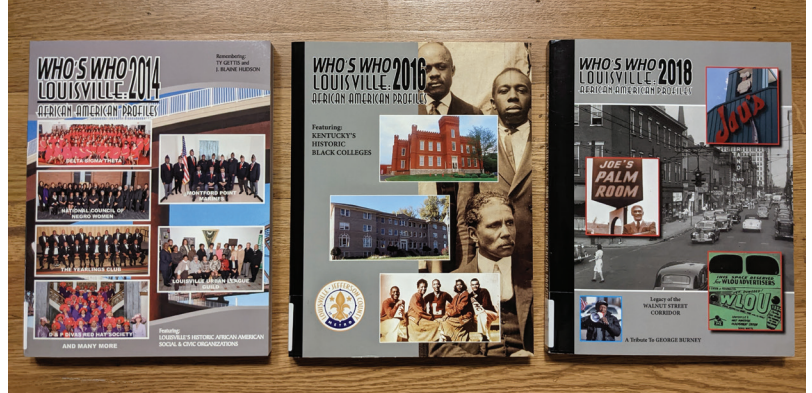
White Hall, Ky.
 Dear Sir, Sept. 30-1889.
 I have recd. your
 letter of the 27th inst. inclosing
 Che. for \$12.30 - in full of
 Buck sold you.
 Truly
 P. D. Barber
 Esq.
 Bardonia, Ky.

Cassius M. Clay note to P. S. Barber regarding his sheep business, 30 September 1889. Part of the Grundy-Barber Collection, gift of Helen Dedman.

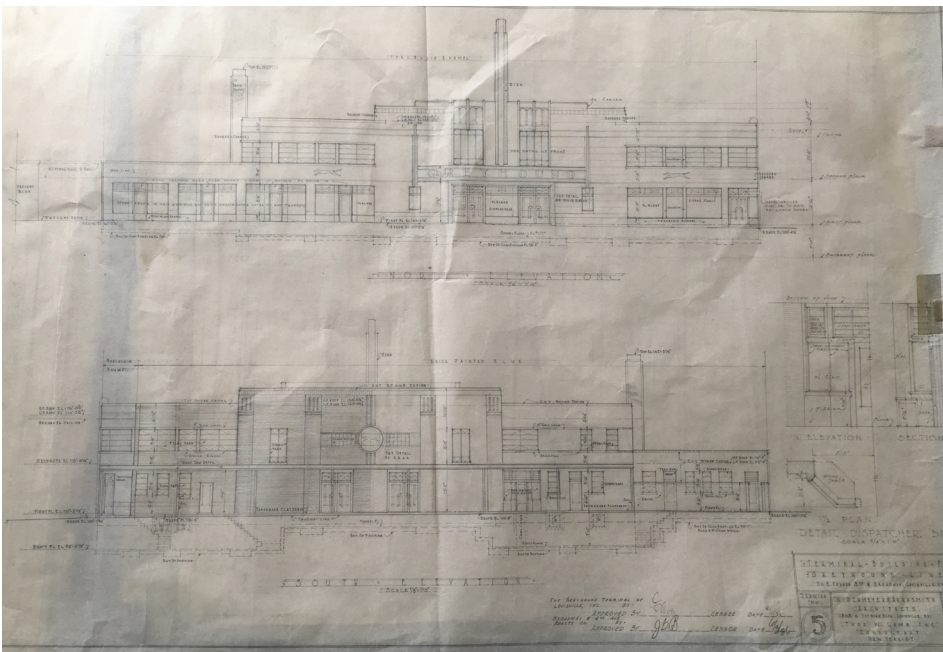


HEADQUARTERS DISTRICT CENTRAL KENTUCKY.
 Friday. Mossey Creek, Tenn. Jan. 1864
 Weather very cold.
 This commences a new year, which
 like the one just passed, will soon
 glide away. Had many pleasant
 thoughts of home today, and wonder
 what all the folks are doing. Wrote
 a letter to Harry Jenkins, in evening.
 Had a plenty of writing to do.
 Expect another close road.

Diary of Pvt. Benjamin F. Greeley of the 35th Massachusetts Infantry, 1864. Greeley was a company clerk and writes interesting entries about his experiences as a prisoner of war after being captured by Morgan's brigade in East Tennessee. Historical Acquisitions Fund purchase.



Elmer Lucille Allen in the lab at Brown-Forman and at her 1949 graduation from Central High School. Filson staff have worked closely with celebrated local artist and retired chemist Elmer Lucille Allen who has been donating works of art and family materials in recent years. The Filson has most recently acquired a portion of her personal photograph collection including images of her time as a chemist at Brown-Forman, family photos, and documentation of the local art scene, and anticipate more to come. Ms. Allen also donated several volumes of *Who's Who Louisville, African American Profiles*.



One of architect William Strudwick Arrasmith's 1936 drawings of Louisville's Greyhound bus terminal at 5th and Broadway, the first of many stations he would design throughout the U.S in the streamline moderne style. This station was demolished in 1971, but several are now listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This is one of many architectural drawings by Arrasmith and successor firms donated to the Filson by John Robertson of Schmidt Associates. Cassius M. Clay note to P. S. Barber regarding his sheep business, 30 September 1889. Part of the Grundy-Barber Collection, gift of Helen Dedman.

Redefining Roles through the Women's Club Movement

BY JANA MEYER | ASSOCIATE CURATOR OF COLLECTIONS

In the months leading up to the centennial of women's suffrage, several colleagues and I combed the collections at the Filson for material related to the cause. One afternoon we were excited to discover a ribbon, in the purple, white, and gold colors of the suffrage movement, in our museum collection. The letters "BWC" boldly adorned the topmost piece of fabric. What did the mysterious abbreviation represent? Our first assumption was that they were an individual's initials; but when a further look into the records indicated the ribbon was donated by a woman named Elizabeth Armstrong Ray, this seemed less likely.

We next considered that BWC was the acronym for an organization—with a high probability of "women" for the W—and hit upon a likely candidate. The Business Women's Club, founded in Louisville in 1899 and active throughout the years of the women's suffrage movement, was a distinct possibility. Further research revealed that the club occasionally hosted suffrage meetings. The ribbon may have been worn by a member at one of those gatherings: perhaps in 1901 when leader Laura Clay visited the club, or in the 1910s when voting rights for women became a popular (and divisive) cause. It was through clubs like the BWC that many women of the era became politically engaged in causes such as women's suffrage. The exhibit that resulted from our research, *Women at Work: Venturing into the Public Sphere*, highlights how

women's work changed in the 19th and early 20th centuries, resulting in a female population more engaged in public life and interested in redefining the roles women were expected to play in society.



This "BWC" ribbon, in the colors of the women's suffrage movement, was most likely worn by a member of the Business Women's Club ca. 1900-1920. (Filson museum collection)

The Business Women's Club was one of many civic and literary clubs that proliferated in the United States between the Civil War and World War II, in what became known as the women's club movement. Many women were members of one or more clubs in their cities. The membership of the

General Federation of Women's Clubs, a national umbrella organization, peaked in 1914 with 1.7 million women. Women's clubs had a variety of aims, including continued learning and self-improvement, and bettering their communities through political and education reform, philanthropy, and civic improvement.

The Business Women's Club assisted women who were entering the workplace for the first time. In the late 19th century, many women relocated to cities as the United States became more industrialized. They were primarily young, single and poor in search of work, lodging and community. In Louisville, the Women's Christian Association (WCA) was the umbrella organization for a network of residential sites that accommodated newcomers. The WCA sought to provide safe and clean lodging for working women and to integrate them into urban society. Among the WCA's branches was the Business Women's Club, founded in 1899 by Rebecca Buchanan, Jennie Benedict and several others.¹

The Business Women's Club was an organization for all women. Its aims included providing for the "happiness and development of its members," and creating a space where "enjoyment, friendship and opportunities of improvement can be found."² The club operated in the heart of Louisville at 423-425 W. Walnut Street, a busy commercial thoroughfare, for nearly 50 years. In its early years, the club rented rooms

¹ "A Business Woman's Club: Outline of an Organization Recently Formed by a Number of Prominent Women," *Courier-Journal*, 5 February 1899.

² By-Laws of the Business Women's Club, Branch of the Womans' Christian Association of Louisville, Ky. Organized January 1899.

from the YMCA. By 1911, it had raised funds to construct its own building, designed by architect George Herbert Gray.³

The BWC helped women find work. An exchange on the building's first floor provided women working from home space to sell items such as pies and jams, or offer services such as clothing repair. The club also leased storefront space to businesswomen, providing prime real estate in the central business district. The club's employment department matched women seeking work with local employers. Women became office workers as bookkeepers, clerks, or stenographers; others entered the nurse training program, operated in partnership with the Red Cross, and found employment in the medical field. Notably, the employment department aided not only white women, but also women of color.⁴

The BWC also provided opportunities for intellectual development; women were encouraged to further their education and expand their worldview. They received instruction in classes as varied as French, sewing, guitar, health and sanitation, gymnastics, drawing, and bookkeeping. There was even a botany class with outings to explore Louisville's developing park system, and a travel class that went on an excursion to Mammoth Cave. A lending library contained nearly 800 volumes by the end of the club's first year.

The BWC was organized around the concept of community. The club created a safe space where women could relax and establish friendships. It also provided temporary housing for women, including those moving to the city; expansions over the years eventually resulted in dormitory space for approximately 60 women in the building's upper stories.

Another of the club's early initiatives to create community was opening a lunchroom serving affordable meals to working women. In its



The Business Women's Club, designed in 1911 by architect George Herbert Gray. Women working from home sold items such as pies and jams, or offered services such as clothing repair in the building's first floor exchange. (George Herbert Gray photograph collection, PC7.0109)

early years, the cafeteria was managed by Jennie Benedict, a club founder and one of Louisville's most successful restaurateurs.⁵ Benedict operated the city's largest confectionary, catering, and novelty business for many years. Her popular Blue Ribbon cookbook was printed multiple times, with her potato rolls, seasonal fruit cakes and plum puddings among the best-loved of her recipes. She is still celebrated

for her creation of Benedictine, a spread containing cucumbers and cream cheese.

Under Benedict's watchful management, the cafeteria flourished as a popular lunch option for women working downtown. Women eating out in restaurants in the early 1900s were expected to be accompanied by a chaperone, but at the BWC they could enjoy a meal with other women. On a

³ "Business Women's Club All Ready for Opening," *Courier-Journal*, 11 June 1911.

⁴ "Year's Work: Helpful Efforts of Woman's Christian Union," *Courier-Journal*, 7 December 1899.

⁵ Benedict, Jennie C., *The Road to Dream Acre*, Louisville, Ky.: Standard Print. Co., 1928, 44-46.



Interior of Jennie Benedict's popular restaurant on Fourth St. Benedict also managed the Business Women's Club's lunchroom. (Filson photograph collection, SB-58)

typical business day, several hundred women visited the premises to eat lunch. When the new clubhouse was constructed in 1911, the two-story kitchen occupied a central location connecting the building's wings. The cafeteria continued to be a popular lunch option, but now grander and more accommodating.

The old BWC building still stands today. It is currently undergoing renovation and will reopen as the Harmony Building. Historical research on the BWC influenced the building renovation, with human health and ecological goals incorporated into its new design and purpose. The history of the BWC can be explored not only in the Filson's *Women at Work* exhibition, but also at the Conrad-Caldwell House Museum's exhibition featuring committee leader Elaine Caldwell, and on a walking tour of Old Louisville where Caldwell resided: <https://filsonhistorical.omeka.net/exhibits/show/progressive-women-old-lou>.

BREAD.

POTATO ROLLS.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 cup flour. | 1 cup potatoes (which have been put through a potato-ricer). |
| $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of lard. | 2 eggs, well beaten. |
| 1 cup of milk. | 1 teaspoonful of salt. |
| $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of sugar (scant). | |
| 1 cake of Fleischmann's Compressed Yeast, dissolved in 2 cups of lukewarm water. | |

Mix thoroughly the lard, potatoes, sugar and salt; add the eggs, then the milk, and then the yeast. Set to rise for two hours; make into a soft dough by adding about a quart of flour, and set to rise again. Make into rolls or loaf, butter the top, and set to rise again; bake in a quick oven.

PLAIN ROLLS.

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1 pint of milk. | 2 tablespoonfuls of butter. |
| 2 tablespoonfuls of sugar. | 1 teaspoonful of salt. |
| 3 cups of flour for sponge. | $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of lukewarm water. |
| $\frac{1}{4}$ cake of Fleischmann's Compressed Yeast. | |

Scald the milk and pour it over the butter, sugar and salt. When cold, add the yeast cake dissolved in the lukewarm water, then add the flour to make the sponge; beat well; let it rise until light. Then add enough flour to knead; knead well—very thoroughly—and set to rise. When light, cut it down, shape into rolls, let rise again, and bake in a quick oven.

Jennie Benedict's Blue Ribbon Cookbook was first published in 1904. Potato rolls were one of her most popular recipes, perhaps produced not only in her restaurant but also in the BWC cafeteria. (Filson library collection, RB 641.5 B463 1904 3rd)



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Gift Recipient Mailing Address _____

Street Address _____ City, State, Zip _____

Gift Recipient Email _____

Would you like the gift membership packet mailed to your address or the recipient(s)?

(Guaranteed mail date by December 18, 2020)

☐ My address _____

☐ Please send directly to the recipient.

Purchaser Information

Name _____

Address _____ City, State, Zip _____

Phone # _____ Email _____

Method of Payment (Please make all checks payable to The Filson Historical Society)

☐ Check ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ American Express ☐ Discover

Card Number _____ Exp. Date _____

Name on Card _____ Signature _____

Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Please mail this form and payment to the Filson Historical Society at 1310 S. 3rd St., Louisville, KY 40208.

Reorganizing the Department of Collections and Research

BY PATRICK LEWIS | DIRECTOR OF COLLECTIONS AND RESEARCH

In June 2020, the Filson publicly committed itself to seeking equity and inclusion in all facets of its organizational life, from membership to programming to collections. One step towards that goal was a restructuring of the Department of Collections and Research, which includes half of the Filson's professional staff. Dr. Patrick Lewis, who came to the Filson last year as the Scholar in Residence, now manages the department in the new role of Director of Collections and Research. The department merger brings together the acquisition of, access to, and interpretation of Filson collections—manuscripts, portraits, museum objects, prints and photos, library materials, and digital content.

An important new feature for the department is the Collections Management Committee, which has brought a new collaborative structure to the department's decisions on acquisition, preservation, exhibition, and deaccessions. All departmental staff gather every other week to propose new acquisitions, discuss needs for conservation, and share opportunities for fundraising or outreach. In contrast to previous practice, each staff member can propose new acquisitions and a group of five senior curators votes on

moving forward with each item. According to Maureen Lane, Museum Curator, "the Filson continues to actively collect a wide variety of material that spans from the pioneer era to present day. The Collections Management Committee ensures that each new acquisition either enhances the existing collections or fills a collections gap. While the donation process does take more time with this new system, it allows the collections staff to carefully balance the growth of the collection with stewardship needs that include adequate housing, environmental controls, security, preservation, and accessibility to promote the sustainability of the collections for current and future generations."

New priorities for the department include rewriting the collections policy not just to reflect the current structure but also to weave a recognition of the Filson's past and future collecting priorities into every step of the curatorial process. "On its face, the Filson's mission to 'collect, preserve, and tell the significant stories of Kentucky and the Ohio Valley' seems quite simple," says Abigail Glogower, Curator of Jewish Collections. "But in fact, it is complex. What comprises

the Ohio Valley region? Which stories count as significant and why? How do these definitions influence what we collect and when? A robust and visionary collections policy is a living document that helps us put values into action and guide our mission in the present and for years to come."

While not moving away from traditional subjects of Filson collecting interest, the department is looking to branch out to communities which have felt excluded from the region's story. History is always under construction, and the Filson is committed to speaking more publicly about that process as it is understood by the archivists, curators, and writers who work professionally in the field. "The Filson built its international reputation as a research organization on the strength of its collections," Lewis says. "As we look back at the strengths of our holdings, we also have to recognize whose voices we've excluded from the historical record. Those silences reflected power imbalances and inequalities that continue to challenge Louisville." The Filson has a chance, he says, "to build a more inclusive record of the city's past and present and use that to inform a better future for everyone in the city."

THE GERTRUDE POLK BROWN LECTURE SERIES

REAGANLAND

America's Right Turn 1976–1980

Rick Perlstein

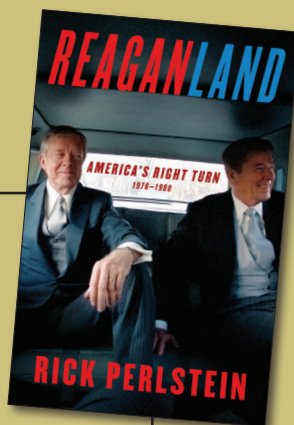
With *REAGANLAND: America's Right Turn 1976–1980*, historian Rick Perlstein concludes his sweeping four-volume account of the rise of modern American conservatism.

Over two decades (and more than three thousand pages), Perlstein has published three definitive works about the emerging dominance of conservatism in American politics: *Before the Storm: Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of American Consensus* (2002); *Nixonland: The Rise of a President and the Fracturing of America* (2008); and *The Invisible Bridge: The Fall of Nixon and the Rise of Reagan* (2014). With the saga's final installment, *REAGANLAND*—covering the years from Jimmy Carter's election to his defeat at the hands of Ronald Reagan—he has delivered his most stunning literary and historical achievement yet. Perlstein shows how much the nation changed over those years—and just as importantly, how those changes produced the world we live in now.

In late 1976, Ronald Reagan was dismissed as a man without a political future: defeated in his nomination bid against a sitting president of his own party, blamed for President Gerald Ford's defeat, too old to make another run. His comeback was fueled by an extraordinary confluence: fundamentalist preachers and former segregationists reinventing themselves as militant crusaders against gay rights and feminism; business executives uniting against regulation in an era of economic decline; a cadre of secretive “New Right” organizers deploying state-of-the-art technology, bending political norms to the breaking point—and Reagan's own unbending optimism, his ability to convey unshakable confidence in America as the world's “shining city on a hill.”

Perlstein also describes a simultaneous civil war within the Democratic party. When President Jimmy Carter called Americans to a new ethic of austerity, Senator Ted Kennedy reacted with horror, challenging him for reelection. Carter's Oval Office tenure was further imperiled by the Iranian hostage crisis, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, near-catastrophe at a Pennsylvania nuclear plant, aviation accidents, serial killers on the loose, and endless gas lines.

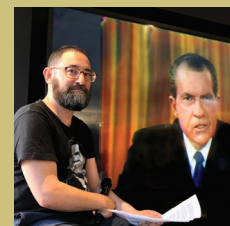
Backed by a reenergized conservative Republican base, Reagan prevailed. *REAGANLAND* is the story of how that happened, tracing conservatives' cutthroat strategies to gain power and explaining why they endure four decades later.



Perlstein's account shows how crucial grasping that era is to understanding our own. Deregulation, the power of the NRA, the zealotry of anti-abortion activists, the rise of white supremacy, tax cuts for the wealthy, precarious relationships with Russia, China and Iran—decades later, we continue to deal with these issues. As Perlstein makes clear, this is not by coincidence or chance. He traces the conservative strategy to gain power and shows that they are simply sticking with what worked, right down to the campaign slogan “MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN,” which was devised by a Madison Avenue ad agency for Reagan's presidential campaign.

With the approach of another divisive election, Perlstein's book seems especially necessary. (He even describes both President Donald Trump and presumptive Democratic nominee Joe Biden coming to national prominence during this period.) *REAGANLAND* is essential reading for anyone hoping to understand how American politics arrived where it is today.

Rick Perlstein is the author of the New York Times bestseller *The Invisible Bridge: The Fall of Nixon and the Rise of Reagan*; *Nixonland: The Rise of a President and the Fracturing of America*, a New York Times bestseller picked as one of the best nonfiction books of 2007 by over a dozen publications; and *Before the Storm: Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of the American Consensus*, which won the 2001 Los Angeles Times Book Award for history and appeared on the best books of the year lists of *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and the *Chicago Tribune*. His essays and book reviews have been published in *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Nation*, *The Village Voice*, and *Slate*, among others.



Praise for **REAGANLAND** *America's Right Turn 1976–1980*

“This magisterial fourth volume brings his history to a crescendo.... Meticulously researched and beautifully written, *Reaganland* tracks the troubled years of the Carter administration, which enabled the election of a former B movie star who'd spend his eight years in office grinding his ax against progressivism.”

—O, *The Oprah Magazine*

Remote Reference at the Filson— We are Here for You!

Providing access to collections is one of the Filson's core functions – why do we *collect* and *preserve* if not to *share*? The Filson has provided access to essential documentation of our city, state, and region for over 130 years, first at the personal libraries of Reuben T. Durrett and Rogers Clark Ballard Thruston, and then in reading rooms on Breckinridge Street and in the Ferguson Mansion. Reference questions, sent by letter, phone, fax, and email, have been pouring into the Filson for the last century. Access is truly fundamental to the mission of the Filson.

The Filson's closure to the public on March 13, 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic caused a sudden and jarring halt to our in-person and live phone reference services, as staff pivoted to working remotely to fulfill quarantine requirements in Kentucky. In March, we never imagined that this closure would be ongoing through the rest of 2020 and beyond. Our commitment to the safety of our patrons, volunteers, staff, and community has led us to make the difficult choice to remain closed to the public while staff take on a hybrid remote and in-person work schedule. Despite these physical limitations, Filson staff have been working to provide quality reference services



Danielle Spalenka (and daughter) work remotely with snacks at hand.



Jennie Cole, Director of Collections Access, in her normal Friday position at the photocopier/scanner!

to our members and the broader community using phone calls, email, and even virtual meeting technology. During most months since the pandemic began, we have answered approximately 100 questions via email, telephone, and social media. Through the summer, we saw numbers rising to almost 150 per month.

During this time of remote-only reference, Filson Collections staff have continued to serve genealogists, students, teachers and professors, writers, journalists, scholars, and all manner of individuals with curious minds. We check the remote reference account, research@filsonhistorical.org, on a daily basis and work to respond within about one week, providing information, images, and scans at reasonable costs. Community Engagement Specialist Emma Bryan continues to be on the front line of telephone and social media reference inquiries. Emma works closely with the Collections staff to forward messages, return calls, and post answers. Filson staff are also assisting students by joining in on virtual class meetings, providing an introduction to the Filson and a special look at some of our resources through virtual show and tell. **No matter the type of question or mode of contact, Filson staff are ready, willing, and able to assist you!**

How Do I Connect with the Filson for Remote Research?

Email: research@filsonhistorical.org

Voicemail: (502)-635-5083

Social Media:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/TheFilsonHS/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/filsonhistorical/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/filsonhistory>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/FilsonHistoricalKY>

For more information on how to research using our website, see: <https://filsonhistorical.org/collections/how-to-research/>.

January/February 2021 Events at the Filson

All events are free, live and offered virtually via Zoom.

Thursday, January 7, 6:00 p.m.

REAGANLAND: America's Right Turn, 1976–1980

Rick Perlstein

With *REAGANLAND: America's Right Turn 1976–1980*, historian Rick Perlstein concludes his sweeping four-volume account of the rise of modern American conservatism.

Thursday, January 14, 12:00 p.m.

Bringing Women at Work to Life

Join us for the virtual opening of *Women at Work: Venturing into the Public Sphere*. This exhibit explores the diversity of women's experiences in the public sphere in the late 19th century.

Tuesday, January 26, 6:00 pm

A Night With the Met

As we enter 2021, with a pandemic still looming and cultural institutions and museums facing mounting challenges, local cultural leaders from The Frazier, KMAC, Roots 101, The Speed and The Filson Historical Society to discuss our collective future with Daniel Weiss, the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Thursday, February 11, 6:00 p.m.

Making Bourbon—Making Landscape: Kentucky's Nineteenth-Century Transition from Craft to Industrial Distilling

Karl Raitz

This study of two distilleries, Elkhorn Distillery in Scott County and the Henry McKenna Distillery in Nelson County provides an illustration of the craft-to-industry transformation of Bourbon.

Tuesday, February 23, 6:00 p.m.

York, Isaac Murphy & Medgar Evers: Historical Poetry as Teacher

Frank X Walker will discuss the educational possibilities that exist when historical poetry is employed as a tool for building a greater understanding of our past.

Tuesday, January 12, 6:00 p.m.

George Rogers Clark and William Croghan: A Story of the Revolution, Settlement, and Early Life at Locust Grove

Gwynne Potts

This is the story of Irish immigrant William Croghan and Virginian George Rogers Clark, who's war experiences represented the breadth of the War for Independence and concluded in their joint venture to survey Virginia's western lands as bounty for the commonwealth's militiamen.

Monday, January 25, 12:00 p.m.

A Simple Justice: Kentucky Women Fight for the Vote

Melanie Beals Goan

Melanie Beals Goan will discuss the impact of the 19th Amendment as well as Kentucky's role in its ratification.

Thursday, February 4, 6:00 p.m.

The Gertrude Polk Brown Lecture Series ELEANOR

David Michaelis

ELEANOR chronicles not only the timeline of Eleanor Roosevelt's life and achievements, such as guiding the drafting of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but gives us a universally relatable story of a great woman's lifelong search for love.

Thursday, February 18

Henry Clay, a Statesman for the 21st Century

David Ratterman

This program will explore Clay's life and career, draw parallels between challenges faced by the nation in the first half of the 19th Century and the first half of the 21st Century; and explore whether Henry Clay can serve as an example of statesmanship for the 21st Century.

Exhibits Update

Exhibits are
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Upcoming Exhibit

Women at Work

Venturing into the Public Sphere

(Re) Opening January 14, 2021

LIVE VIRTUAL EVENT

Visit <https://filson.simpletix.com/> for details

Drawing on the stories of women documented in the Filson's collection, this exhibit explores the diversity of women's experiences in the public sphere in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Bingham Gallery: January 14–April 30, 2021

Check filsonhistorical.org or call (502) 635-5083 for virtual tour options in January-March; in-person tour times in April to be determined based on COVID public health restrictions.

Online exhibit: <https://filsonhistorical.omeka.net/exhibits/show/women-at-work>

Curated by Jana Meyer, Maureen Lane, Emily Benken, and Jennie Cole, with special assistance by Brooks Vessels and art by Irene Mudd.

Upcoming Exhibition: A Child's World

Opening event: April 8, 2021

Nash Gallery: April 8–October 15, 2021

Tour times to be determined based on
Covid-19 public health restrictions

Please call (502) 635-5083 or check
filsonhistorical.org for details.



Illustration by Carrie Douglas Dudley Ewen for the book *Supposin* by Betty Baster, 1931

Interns/Volunteers



Andi **Ellington**

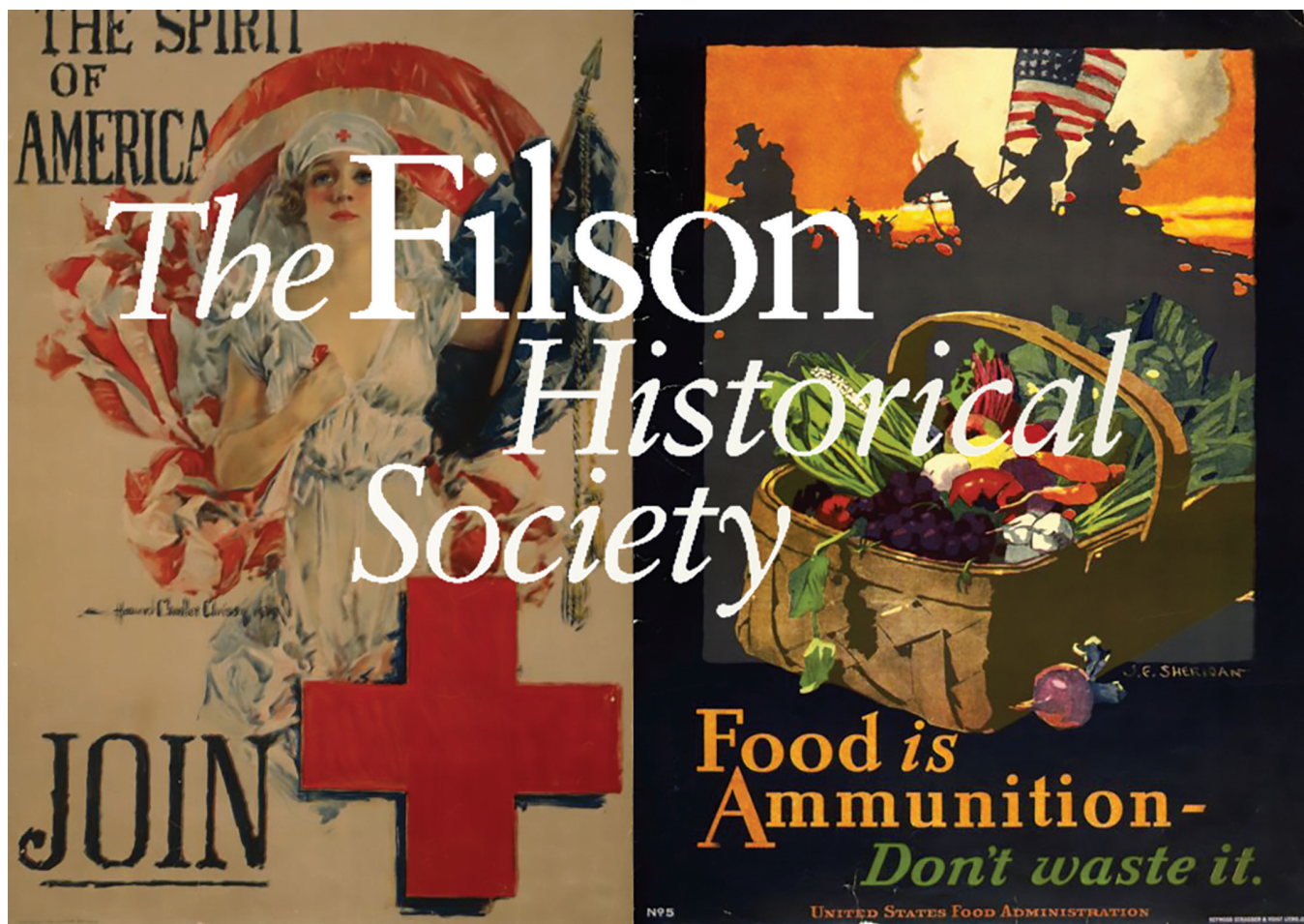
I am a senior history major at Bellarmine University. I became interested in archival work my sophomore year and my advisor connected me with Jennie Cole at the Filson. I was fortunate to be paired up with Abby Glogower to work on the Helman-Victor family papers. This collection was especially interesting for me because, while I have a wide array of interests relating to history, I particularly enjoy learning about individuals and local history. I have a special interest in theater and art, so the Roanne Victor papers absorbed me the most for her work with Actors Theatre of Louisville and various arts and humanities projects in the city. For a while, my task consisted of sorting through the materials and arranging them in a sensical order. It was quite satisfying to see boxes of miscellaneous papers organized into neat folders at the end. Unfortunately, the Covid-19 shutdown year put my volunteering on hold. After the Filson reopened for volunteers, I was able to draft the finding aid for this collection and prepare it for cataloging before having to leave for school. Lynn Pohl graciously took up the task of cataloging and I still assist with questions via email. While my time with this collection has come to a close, I am grateful for the experience and guidance I got while volunteering at the Filson and this experience has encouraged me to pursue a career as an archivist. Additionally, the Filson's Jewish Hospital exhibit last summer inspired the topic for my practical research project this semester. Influenced by the volunteerism of Helen Helman and Roanne Victor, my research project explores the contributions of women volunteers at Louisville's Jewish Hospital.



Elizabeth **Standridge**

Hello! My name is Elizabeth Standridge and I am so thankful to have been able to continue working at the Filson this summer as the H. F. Boehl Summer Intern! I recently graduated from the University of Louisville with Bachelors Degrees in History and Humanities, where I completed a senior thesis focusing on race relations during the 1937 flood in Louisville. Now I am thrilled to be able to split my time between the Filson and the Frazier History Museum, where I work in the Brown-Forman Archive as an Archives and Digitization Assistant.

I have been an intern at the Filson since January 2019, and have enjoyed learning about how to process and catalog manuscript collections under Jana Meyer, Associate Curator of Collections. As a Boehl intern, I was able to continue that work and focus my attention on an exciting new addition to the Filson's collections: the papers and photos of Mervin Aubespain! Aubespain was a career journalist at *The Courier-Journal* from the late 1960s until the early 2000s and also a co-author of *Two Centuries of Black Louisville* with J. Blaine Hudson and Kenneth Clay. The collection explores his career, including involvement with professional organizations such as the National Association of Black Journalists, and his work to recruit more people of color to work in the news industry. For the past few months, I've been organizing and describing the collections to make them accessible to researchers.



COVID-19 *Poster Project*

“In times of uncertainty, art is more than beauty or decoration—it’s a tool. Art can heal, art can save lives, art can bring us together—even when we’re apart.” Aaron Huey, founder of Amplifier (Artists Paint a Portrait of a Pandemic, NPR, May 11, 2020)

This Filson is excited to introduce a new initiative, The Kentucky COVID-19 Poster Project. Inspired by the COVID-19 Poster Project at the Wisconsin Historical Society (WHS), and other COVID-19 art actions throughout the country, this project leverages the power of words and images to document, interpret, and find inspiration in a challenging historical moment. The COVID-19 pandemic parallels the 1918 Influenza pandemic and the WWI era when artists were employed to communicate important messages and inspire public action and morale. Recognizing the historic and challenging nature of individual and collective life in our current pandemic, the Filson Historical Society moved to commission local artists to design original posters in a digital format that speak to and about life with COVID-19 in our area.

With support from The Snowy Owl Foundation and the Mountjoy Chilton Medley, seven Kentuckiana artists will receive a commission of \$250 to design posters that will be added to the Filson’s COVID-19 Community Collection. Starting on November 24, 2020, the posters will be sold online, through the end of the year. All proceeds will benefit the Artists Relief Trust, a local coalition of arts organizations and private philanthropists providing small grants to Kentuckiana artists in need during these difficult times.

In September, the Filson opened a call for artists and the project team was overwhelmed by the enthusiastic and heartfelt response. Every artist interested in participating shared personal narratives of how they and their communities have been impacted by COVID-19. Their stories represent diverse points of view on the local impacts of a global pandemic. Artists spotlights and additional information about how to purchase posters can be found on the Filson’s website, social media, and member emails.

Brenna Cundiff

Director of Development

Jamie Evans: Tell us about your path to the Filson.

Brenna Cundiff: I have always loved history and knew from a young age that I wanted to work in a museum. I remember being fascinated with museums and the artifacts they hold. I loved that these objects connect us with those that lived before us and give us an understanding of their experiences. My mom worked in an elementary school library and my dad was a history buff so I was also born into this love of history. I earned a B.A. in History with a minor in Art History from Indiana University and went on to earn an M.A. in Critical and Curatorial Studies from the University of Louisville. In 2008, my husband, Jordan, and I relocated to Indianapolis so that I could take a position as curator of the Johnson County Museum of History in Franklin, Indiana. Franklin is a beautiful town and I enjoyed every moment. I later became Director of the Johnson County Museum. I am proud of the work we were able to accomplish thanks to a great staff, an amazing group of volunteers, and a dedicated board of directors.

BC: After our first daughter was born, Jordan and I realized we needed to be closer to our families. I knew I wanted to continue working in non-profits and took a position in fundraising with Boys and Girls Haven and later worked as Director of Development for Safe Place Services. It was a wonderful challenge working in fundraising for these social service agencies. I continued working at Safe Place until 2018 when the perfect position opened up at the Filson Historical Society.

JE: What do you do as the Director of Development?

BC: As Director of Development, I get to tell everyone about all the exciting work happening at the Filson and give them the opportunity to be a part of our mission. My job is to be sure that our members, supporters, and prospective supporters are aware of the exhibits, programs, and events that we are hosting as well as the resources available in our research library, the Filson's preservation efforts, and community outreach work being done. By promoting the work of our small, yet mighty staff and board of directors, our supporters want to be a part of the Filson as volunteers, donors, and members.

JE: What is one thing you want our members to know about the Filson?

BC: I don't think everyone realizes how many of our resources are available online. I particularly love browsing our digital collections photo database and clicking the "random images" button. It is wonderful to be surprised with different street views of Louisville, buildings that are long gone, or fun photos of children and their pets.

JE: What are some of your hobbies and interests outside of the Filson?

BC: Outside of the Filson, I love to travel and spend time with our young family. Our daughters are 9 and 5. Although, we have experienced the same challenges that many other families have dealt with over the past year, we also realize how fortunate we are to



get this extra time with the kids at home. We have traveled to many of the parks that I visited growing up with my parents. The kids especially loved visiting Cumberland Falls earlier this summer.

JE: What is your favorite national park that you've visited? Any tips for others who want to visit?

BC: My favorite national park would have to be the Smoky Mountains. I have fond memories of traveling to the Smokies with my parents on long weekends, picnicking and skipping rocks in the creeks with my dad. We've enjoyed taking our daughters and creating our own memories.

Filsonian listing reflects membership gifts received July 25, 2020–October 29, 2020

The Filsonians

July 2020 – October 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.

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