

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.



Recent Acquisitions	Browsing in our Archives	People Passage Place	Spring/ Summer Interns	Notable Louisville Neighborhoods & Lee Shai Weissbach Lecture	Community History Fellows	History Inspires	Thruston Legacy Circle	Cultural Pass	Photo Biennial	Gertrude Polk Brown Lecture Series	The Filsonians
3	4	6	8	9	10	13	14	15	16	17	18

From the President

You Can't Take It With You. This classic screwball comedy, directed by Frank Capra and starring James Stewart and Jean Arthur, won the 1938 Academy Awards for Best Picture and Best Director. Its theme, the triumph of generosity, is as critical to our times as it was in the Depression era.

Rogers Clark Ballard Thruston (1858–1946), a Yale educated engineer who came from a family with deep Kentucky roots, saw the Depression's dispiriting effect on cultural and educational institutions he loved. He is best known for serving as the Filson's president for over thirty years and leaving it the bulk of his estate. A plaque dedicated to him rests directly underneath his portrait, serving as a reminder of his generosity of intellect, spirit and purse.

This is why the Filson named its legacy giving society after Mr. Thruston. Since the Thruston Legacy Circle's creation, many have included the Filson in their estate plans. This has helped us steadily grow within our means—debt free. We are profoundly grateful.

When you include the Filson in your estate plans, you continue our mission. This mission—to collect, preserve and share the significant history and culture

of Kentucky and the Ohio Valley—will be 140 years old in 2024. We will never stray from this mission. Every day I see students from middle school to graduate school, professors, and holders of Filson fellowships interacting with our sixty thousand volume library and collection of over two million original documents, and a world-class collection of art and material culture; family genealogy researchers; and the countless learners among us who engage in our 70+ annual programs, lectures and exhibits. What we do matters. The raw essence of our mission is to present unvarnished, uncensored, and unrestricted historical truth, thus preserving and nurturing our Democracy.

We genuinely hope that you will include the Filson in your estate planning. If you let us know when you do, we would be delighted to recognize you publicly with your permission. It will inspire others.

Remember: *You Can't Take It With You.*

Sincerely,



Richard H.C. Clay

President & CEO, The Filson Historical Society

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OUR MISSION:

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

From the Chair

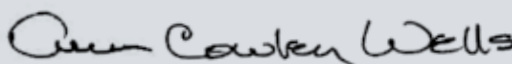
When you read this letter, it will likely feel like summer outside, but at the Filson, staff are hard at work preparing for what promises to be an exciting fall. The Filson is bringing back the Notable Louisville Neighborhoods series, this time featuring the Portland neighborhood. More information can be found on page 9. Heather Potter, the Curator of Photographs and Prints, and Brooks Vessels, Assistant Museum Curator and Exhibits Designer, have been putting in lots of work on the upcoming exhibit *Animals in the Archives*, which is part of the Louisville Photo Biennial. This photography exhibit, which opens on September 8, documents the bond between people and animals throughout history. See page 16 for a list of events associated with the exhibit.

On October 13–14, the Filson will offer the 2023 Biennial Conference in partnership with the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts (MESDA). "New Voices in Kentucky Material Culture" will feature panels exploring Black, Indigenous, female, and queer perspectives on the confluence of rivers and cultures in the 18th and 19th century. This partnership will open new conversations about material

culture in the colonial and early-national Ohio Valley and is not to be missed. A detailed list of all sessions can be found on the Filson's website at <https://filsonhistorical.org/events/filson-biennial-conference/filsonmesda-conference-2023/>.

In November, we are delighted to welcome award winning historian and former Filson Fellow Amrita Chakrabarti Myers as the latest Dine & Dialogue speaker. Her book, *The Vice President's Black Wife: The Untold Life of Julia Chinn*, tells the riveting, troubling, and complicated story of Julia Ann Chinn, the enslaved mixed-race wife of Richard Mentor Johnson, who was Vice President under Martin Van Buren. We also welcome back Ronald C. White as our Gertrude Polk Brown Speaker on November 21 in celebration of his book, *On Great Fields: The Life and Unlikely Heroism of Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain* (see page 17 for more details).

Thank you again for your ongoing support and attendance at Filson events!



Ann Wells, Board Chair

COVER: "Bull Carving" by Marvin Finn, on display now in *People Passage Place*.

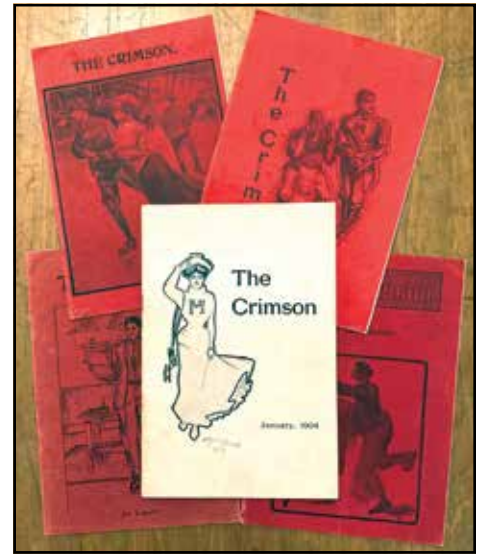
Recent Acquisitions



Diptych abstract painting on burlap, ca. 1951, G. Caliman Coxe (1907–1999). (Donated by Tony and Betty Springfield.)



Broadside advertising the Joseph J. Quilling estate sale, Franklin County, Kentucky, November 1861. (Donated by Molly Borders.)



Five early 20th century issues of DuPont Manual High School's publication, *The Crimson*, from Louisville, Kentucky. (Donated by Kate Qazi.)



A collage of historical items related to the ancestry, life, and activism of Charlene Hampton Holloway of Louisville, Kentucky. Of note is Holloway's original 1961 "Jail-Bird for Freedom" sign she received upon her release from jail after her arrest for participating in Louisville, Kentucky, Civil Rights activities. (Donated by Charlene Hampton Holloway.)



▲ Images from the H. Harold Davis Photograph Collection. Davis worked as a *Courier-Journal* photographer from 1935–1973 and was a pioneer in color photography, bringing color imagery to the *C-J Sunday Times*. He also was an early food photographer. (Donated by H. Harold Davis, Jr., and Mary Anne Davis.)

Selections from the John Begley Ohio Valley Art Posters & Ephemera Collection, which documents our region's art scene from the 1970s through the mid-2000s through posters, art mailers, catalogs, and flyers. (Donated by John Begley.)



“Knocking the Hell out of Hitler”:

WWII Letters of the Thomas Brothers

By Jana Meyer, Associate Curator of Collections

In 1943 Lucy Clark wrote to her son Miles, imploring him to send her a line. She hadn't heard from him in two months and just wanted to know that he was ok. With two sons in the military during World War II, Lucy had good reason to worry. Her oldest son, Miles “Buck” Thomas (1917–1991), was with the 94th Engineering Regiment and would traverse North Africa, Italy, France, and Germany by the war's end. Her youngest child, Robert “Jack” Thomas (1921–1984), was with the 859th Engineer Aviation Battalion, which saw service in England, France, and Germany. Generally, both young men were dutiful letter writers, keeping their mother apprised of their well-being throughout the war. Their correspondence is the core of the Filson's recently cataloged Thomas family papers.

Buck and Jack grew up on the outskirts of Louisville, the sons of Lucy C. Mickens

and Robert Thomas, Sr. They had a sister, Estella R. Thomas (1919–1994), affectionately referred to as “Sis” in some letters. Their parents separated sometime in the 1920s and their mother Lucy remarried: first to Filmore Coleman and later to John Clark. The family home was in Eastwood, near the Shelby County line in east Jefferson County. The city outskirts were rural in the early 1940s. Lucy's sons often asked about the chickens and hogs the family raised for slaughter, or wondered how the garden was coming along.

Joining the military was an adventure—or at least it started off that way. Jack, in particular, was interested in having a good time. During his training at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida, Jack wrote about traveling to nearby towns and even New Orleans on leave. He went to dances, had drinks at local joints, went to a prize fight, and especially, he met beautiful women everywhere he

went. In Crestview, he met a “swell” young woman who took him for a ride in her 1942 sports car. The woman he was seeing in Pensacola enjoyed his company, turning down offers from other soldiers to attend a dance because she preferred to go with him. Jack had enough women in enough towns that his brother mentioned them too, writing, “I guess Old Jack is having his time down South with those girls.”

However, both brothers soon found that military life was challenging as well. Shortly after arriving at Eglin, Jack shared a story of a soldier who was bitten by a snake while out on overnight training maneuvers. Buck, who had been in the military longer and had already experienced overnight hikes and camping among the snakes, was not impressed. He wrote to their mother, “Tell Jack that snake bite isn't nothing. If that all happen to them, they was lucky.” Buck went



A circa 1955 photograph, tentatively identified as Lucy Mickens, mother of Buck, Jack, and Estella Thomas. [Thomas Family Photograph Collection]



Possibly an image of Estella Thomas, sister of Buck and Jack. Both brothers opposed her plan to join the Women's Army Corps. [Thomas Family Photograph Collection]

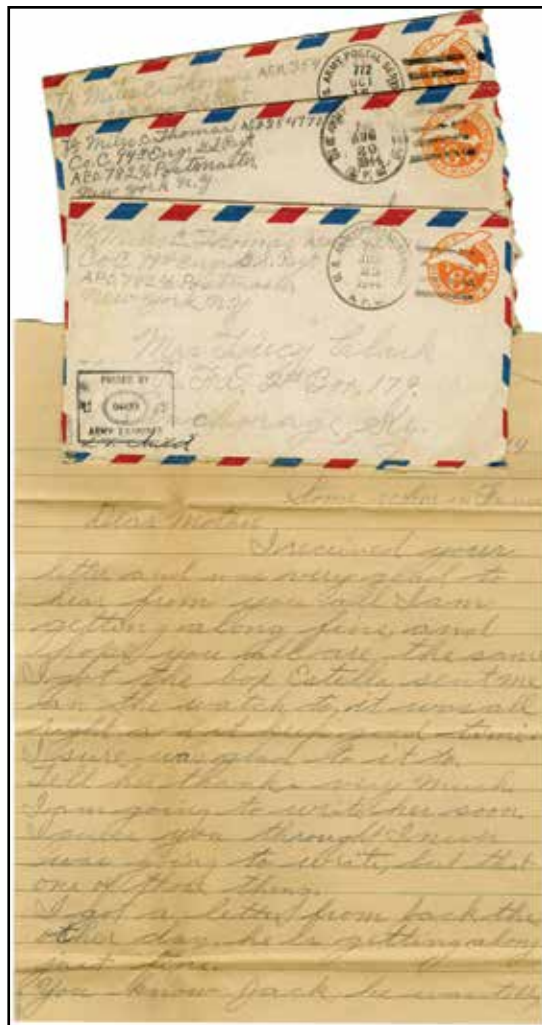


Both brothers were in engineering battalions and drove trucks during the war. This image of a man in military uniform next to a vehicle may relate to their service. [Thomas Family Photograph Collection]

on to share that he had recently worked a whole week in water and mud up to his neck. During training with his engineering regiment, Buck was busy learning to build bridges and drive trucks, studying for exams, and drilling with rifles and machine guns. He concluded that there were both good and hard days when you were in the military.

There were also dangerous days. After the war's end, Buck admitted to his mother that there were days and nights in Italy when he wasn't sure he was going to make it. During the war, however, both Buck and Jack avoided writing about life-and-death situations. Instead, like so many other soldiers, they provided reassurance to family and friends. Both brothers frequently opened their letters with lines like: "I am getting along fine and hope you all are the same." Although Buck was injured during the war, he mentioned the event only in passing in his correspondence. In a letter—in which he also wrote about riding a camel and his favorable impressions of North Africa—he mentioned that he was in the hospital because his truck overturned. He did not give details about the manner of his injury, but it was more than a minor mishap: he was in the hospital for forty days.

One must read between the lines of both wartime censorship and what soldiers are willing to tell their families, to get a sense of their combat experiences. Buck and Jack's thoughts about the war may be most apparent in their response to their sister Estella's plans to join the Women's Army Corps. Both brothers were adamant that she should remain at home—two of them serving in the army was plenty. Jack thought the work Estella was doing at a local plant was more than enough contribution to the war effort, writing "Every bolt or nut that she tighten means that another plane will come over here to knock the hell out [of] Hitler." Buck warned



Letters from Miles "Buck" Thomas to his mother Lucy.



A banknote from France. Buck and Jack traversed Europe and North Africa during their service.

her that she would regret signing up, writing "that a hell of a way to see the world."

In many ways, Buck and Jack's letters are typical soldiers' letters. The thoughts and feelings they express are like those of many young men away at war. However, as African Americans, their experiences were different too. The U.S. military was segregated

during World War II, with many African American units relegated to stateside or non-combat roles. Buck and Jack served in segregated engineering units which did see overseas service. While there was opportunity for advancement—Jack wrote in one letter that he had been promoted to corporal—many could only advance so far. Senior officers of African American units were often white. Training facilities for the men were located throughout the country. Buck trained in several northern states, while Jack traveled south. Jack liked Florida, but the South made Buck uncomfortable: "I guess it is pretty down there, but I don't want know [sic] parts of it." There were men in Buck's unit from the South who chose not to go home on their furloughs. Even minor comforts might be overlooked. The U.S. military, which issued cigarettes to soldiers as part of their daily rations, neglected supplies of hair and skin products that African American soldiers would have liked. Jack could not find hair grease at Eglin; his letters from Europe contained frequent requests for face cream and hair dressing, items that he could not seem to find overseas.

Nevertheless, Buck and Jack served their country loyally and with courage. They were both excited to come home at the war's end and ready to get out of the army. The correspondence of both brothers ends in 1945, so it is unclear how they experienced the transition back to civilian life. Many African American soldiers, having served their country faithfully and sometimes experiencing greater freedoms overseas, found the daily injustices of life in a segregated America less tolerable upon their return. Seeds for the social reforms of later decades were sown. The Thomas family papers are an important collection of letters about the experiences of two young men: brothers, sons, engineers, African Americans, Kentuckians, and Americans, who served in World War II.

People Passage Place

Folk Art



"Laundry Day" by Helen LaFrance, on display now in *People Passage Place*.

"Bull Carving" by Marvin Finn, on display now in *People Passage Place*.



The Filson's *People Passage Place* exhibit showcases the historical and social richness of the Ohio Valley through a variety of collection items, including works of art in every medium. On display you can find pieces by artists both world-renowned and regionally beloved.

Today we want to spotlight a tradition often ignored or undervalued by the art historical canon: folk art. Although there's no universal definition of folk art, it is often created outside of formal institutions and serves as a reflection of the cultural life of a community. Right now, there are two creators in *People Passage Place* often described as folk artists. Both eventually went on to commercial success and critical acclaim, but for the majority of their lives they made art purely for their own fulfillment, even in the face of limited resources.

Kentucky artists Helen LaFrance and Marvin Finn could not have lived in more different environments. LaFrance spent her life painting scenes of rural communities in Graves County in western Kentucky, while Finn constructed his iconic wooden sculptures in the urban landscape of Louisville.

Yet both created vibrant, colorful works using resources foraged from their surroundings. LaFrance reportedly learned to mix her own paint colors from dandelions, berries, and laundry detergent, while Finn created many of his fanciful carvings and toys out of scrap plywood and scavenged paint. Both were also able to devote themselves to their crafts more fully in their 60s and went on to even broader acclaim in old age; Finn lived to age 89 and LaFrance to age 101.

Both these artists remain influential after their deaths. Just this summer, children from the California Neighborhood Boys and Girls Club visited the Filson and created their own crafts inspired by Finn's sculptures.

The Filson's collection contains many more examples of amazing folk art. We hope that as *People Passage Place* evolves over the years, we can spotlight even more regional artists who will continue to inspire for generations to come.



Some other works by Marvin Finn, on display now in the Carriage House. On top of the case you can also see the Finn-inspired crafts created by the California Neighborhood Boys and Girl Club.



Children from the California Neighborhood Boys and Girls Club visiting the Filson in early June 2023. They completed a scavenger hunt in the mansion, spent time in the exhibits, and created their own whimsical creatures inspired by Marvin Finn.



The Filson
Historical
Society

**NASH
GALLERY**
ongoing

The semi-permanent exhibit *People Passage Place: Stories of the Ohio Valley* shares stories of family, community, art and craftsmanship, business and agriculture, social justice movements, Indigenous heritage, colonial settlement, Antebellum, Civil War, and Reconstruction narratives, travel, immigration, religion, foodways, music, and more. You are invited to engage with the Filson's collections and to think critically about how history shapes your lives and communities.

Exhibit generously sponsored by:

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Spring & Summer Interns



Ashleigh **Roth** Museum Collections Intern | Spring 2023

Ashleigh Roth worked with Filson Assistant Curator of Museum Collections and Exhibits Designer, Brooks Vessels this spring! Ashleigh worked on a variety of projects at the Filson throughout her internship, which include unframing works of art, expanding the whiskey jug display in the Ferguson Mansion, assisting with the hanging of art works around the museum, researching paintings, and cleaning contaminated objects.

Ashleigh will graduate from the University of Louisville in the Spring of 2024 with a degree in Art History. Upon graduation, Ashleigh hopes to begin working in collections management or in a curatorial role.

When asked about her favorite part of working at the Filson, Ashleigh responded, "As someone who grew up in the northern suburbs of Chicago, I really enjoyed learning about Kentucky history through the direct work with historic objects."



Hayley **Salo** Archival Processing and Research Intern | Summer 2023

This summer, Hayley Salo, the Filson's Archival Processing and Research Intern, is working with Curator of Jewish Collections Abby Glogower on processing the Baer Fabrics Collection. Hayley is originally from Maple Ridge, Vancouver, in western Canada. She received her master's degree in English from the University of Louisville in 2019 and is

currently working toward her doctorate in Comparative Humanities at UofL. She studies North American and British Literature and material culture throughout the long nineteenth century. Outside of work and school she enjoys crocheting and kayaking trips with her husband and their dog Revan.

Baer Fabrics first opened in downtown Louisville in 1905 as a tailoring and drycleaning supply business. Run by Russian Jewish immigrant Nathan Baer, his son Abe Baer and later, Abe's son in law, Stuart Goldberg, Baer Fabrics eventually expanded to locations in St. Matthews and Evansville, Indiana. For over a century this family-owned business served as a beloved community center for sewing, costuming, and textile craftspeople throughout the Ohio Valley. Hayley has spent this summer organizing and cataloging the Baer Fabrics business materials, photographs, and fabric samples.

Hayley expressed that one of her favorite parts about her Filson summer project is having the opportunity to work hands-on with textiles, which has reinforced her interest in studying material culture. Already a seasoned researcher, she has also enjoyed learning about the "back of house" operations of a museum and archive.

Zachary **Keown** Digital Archives Intern, H.F. Boehl Summer Intern | Spring and Summer 2023

Zachary Keown joined the Filson in the spring of this year, working as the Digital Archives Intern through the University of Louisville's Commonwealth Center for the Humanities and Society. During that internship, Zachary digitized and described

the West Louisville Evangelical Church Register, along with supporting other digital projects for our architectural collections. This summer, Zachary is the Filson's H. F. Boehl Intern. His role this summer has been two-fold in helping with research services. He supports researchers by fielding reference questions related to house history, genealogy, and all kinds of other topics. He

has also been working to enhance the Filson's research guides by providing better description to a variety of collections, such as the funeral home records, orphanage records, and Louisville City Directories, to make them more accessible to researchers.

Zachary was born and raised in Louisville, Kentucky. He graduated from the University of Louisville in the spring of 2023 with a bachelor's degree in history.

In the future, Zachary plans to pursue training as a digital archivist through a master's degree in library and information science. Zachary expressed that one of his favorite parts about working at the Filson this summer has been interacting directly with researchers! Zachary finds it satisfying to help people find the information they are searching for and gratifying to see firsthand the impact he is making in aiding people with their research!



Notable Louisville Neighborhoods Series: Portland

The History of Portland with Tom Owen

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

In Person | Portal @ 1512
1512 Portland Avenue, Louisville
Refreshments: 5:00 pm, Program: 6:00 pm
Free

Louisville's Portland neighborhood, located in the upper-left corner of your Jefferson County map; was among the first local areas to become urbanized. Tom Owen's fast-paced, broad-brush description of the colorful community will emphasize the role of transportation throughout its history, the multiple races and ethnicities that have peopled the place, and Portland's special independent streak.

Portland Neighborhood Tour

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21

In Person | meet at The Filson Historical Society, 1310 S. 3rd St., Louisville
9:00 am–1:00 pm
\$20 for members, \$25 for non-members

Welcome to a captivating tour of Portland, where history lives on in a vibrant present rich with creativity and community. Led by Ed White, a third generation Portland resident, and Danny Seim, Director of the forthcoming AHOY, The Adventure House of You, this journey will explore the intriguing landmarks, institutions, and stories that have shaped this proud, unique, and diverse neighborhood, which began as its own independent port city.

Panel Discussion: Opportunities and the Future of Portland

MONDAY, OCTOBER 2

In Person | The Filson Historical Society
1310 S. 3rd St., Louisville
Refreshments: 5:00 pm, Program: 6:00 pm
Free

This panel will be moderated by Katy Delahanty, Director of the Portland Museum, and include the following panelists: Portland residents Judy Schroeder, Kacie Chase, Sterling Chase, and Ed White; Portland TIF Representative, Mike Neagle; Metro Council Person, Donna Purvis; Portland Now, Inc President, Mary Jolly; and Portland Now, Inc Vice President, Richard Meadows.

This series is presented by:



The Lee Shai Weissbach Memorial Lecture in American Jewish History *Once We Were Slaves: The Extraordinary Journey of A Multiracial Jewish Family in Early America*

Laura Arnold Leibman

Tuesday, October 24 • 6:00-7:00 pm • The Filson Historical Society, 1310 S. 3rd St., Louisville
Free • Register online at www.filsonhistorical.org/events/upcoming-events



An obsessive genealogist and descendent of one of the most prominent Jewish families since the American Revolution,

Blanche Moses firmly believed her maternal ancestors were Sephardic grandees. Yet she found herself at a dead end when it came to her grandmother's maternal line. In this talk, Professor Leibman overturns the reclusive heiress's

assumptions about her family history to reveal that her grandmother and great-uncle, Sarah and Isaac Brandon, actually began their lives as poor, Christian, and enslaved in Barbados. Leibman traces the siblings' extraordinary journey around the Atlantic world, using artifacts they left behind in Barbados, Suriname, London, Philadelphia, and, finally, New York. While their affluence made them unusual, their story mirrors that of the largely forgotten people of mixed African and Jewish ancestry that constituted as much as ten percent of the Jewish communities

in which the siblings lived.

Laura Arnold Leibman is Professor of English and Humanities at Reed College in Portland, OR. Her work focuses on religion and the daily lives of women and children in early America and uses everyday objects to help bring their stories to life.



Honoring the memory of University of Louisville History Professor Lee Shai Weissbach (1947–2022), the scholar who put Kentucky Jewry on the map.

The Lee Shai Weissbach Memorial Lecture in American Jewish History is co-sponsored by:



Meet the Filson's Community History Fellows

This fall the Filson proudly wraps up the second cohort of our dynamic Community History Fellows Program (CHFP). Started with a grant from Louisville's Jewish Heritage Fund, the Community History Fellows have met regularly at the Filson between May and September. Together, with Abby Glogower, Curator of Jewish Collections, and Emma Bryan, Community Engagement Specialist, the fellows support one another in researching topics of interest, meaning, and value to their communities. Meet the 2023 Community History Fellows and learn about the projects they are launching!



Mariel Gardner

Mariel Gardner is from the Algonquin neighborhood in Louisville's West End. A haphazard farmer, knitter, and photographer, she is a member of the West Louisville Women's Collaborative (WLWC), where she creates and sustains peaceful, artistic spaces in

the West End alongside a multiracial, multigenerational group of women from all parts of the city. Mariel writes,

*My Community History Fellows project has been to research and share the land story of the WLWC, located at 40th St. and Hale Ave. Understanding who has lived and worked on this land is important for our organization as we change our name to the **West End** Women's Collaborative (WEWC). I believe that Black liberation and land sovereignty are inextricably related. I shared the land story of 40th and Hale with my community at our Eighth of August Celebration, Kentucky's Emancipation Day. How can we use Emancipation celebrations as opportunities to demand the American promise of land? One answer lies in recovering our memories, traditions, and knowledge of the land where we stand.*

As the West End loses Black population, reclaiming our traditions and land preserves the memory of the people who made this place a home. Our capacity as WEWC volunteers may be small, but since 2014, we have transformed a vacant lot into a peace labyrinth and remodeled an abandoned home into a free community-gathering space. We plan to transform another abandoned home into a wellness center for practitioners to offer horticulture, acupuncture, and culinary therapy. We believe wellness lies at the juncture of art and nature and the spaces we curate foster healing and health.

Marcos **Morales**

Marcos Gabriel Morales Gutiérrez is a Xicanx artist who was raised by people of Michoacán, Mexico, in Okolona, Louisville, Kentucky. Primarily a fabric artist, Marcos also dabbles in poetry, dance, and photography. Marcos's work expresses their lived experience as a first-generation child



of immigrant parents and their journey and practice of remembering their ancestral roots through story and fashion. Marcos started designing clothes in 2012, when his mother taught him how to stitch and use her sewing machine. Since then, Marcos has come out with three clothing collections, *Warriors of the Here & Now* (2016), *TRIQUERO* (2020), and most recently *AFLORAR* (2022). Overall, Marcos's work can be found at the intersection of clothing upcycling, expression of cultural lived experiences, and fashion futurism.

Marcos's CHFP project has focused on collecting oral histories from five family members who have lived the majority of their lives in Okolona. These interviews preserve family history, livelihood, loss of land/immigration, and lived experiences. Marcos then honors the stories through a creative mode they have developed called R0PAMEM, creating clothing that carries memory. They are using this technique to upcycle a used jacket, outfitting it with a pocket patch that will then house five quilted pieces. Each piece tries to capture the essence of an oral history interview through photos, embroidery, reflective sew-on tape, and other materials. When complete, this jacket, and the stories contained within, will be on display in the Filson's lobby.

Kat O'Dell

A designer, researcher, and artist across multiple disciplines, Louisville native Katherine O'Dell is one-half of the creative duo behind *Derby City Midnight*: a self-published periodical full of found, archival, and community materials centered on lesser-known, esoteric, and strange entries in Kentucky history.



Throughout Kat's fellowship, the *Derby City Midnight* team is working to examine the roots, transformations, and manifestations of the modern (nineteenth- and twentieth-century) Spiritualist movement as it occurred within the state of Kentucky—particularly, how Spiritualism in Kentucky blended elements of Christian mysticism, Shaker culture, revivalism, psychic mediumship, and burgeoning pseudoscientific methods. Kat writes,

We are researching a range of religious organizations and trends, from revivalist evangelical churches to fringe and insular religious communities. We are also looking at how Native American, African, and Germanic magical traditions, as well as early Appalachian folklore, all intersected to inform growing Spiritualist communities in the commonwealth. Many of these concepts and practices would now be considered occult or esoteric, but we endeavor to show, through storytelling, the long and legitimate history of spiritual engagement beyond the earthly realm and its connection with the communities that held these beliefs. This research will culminate in a special issue of Derby City Midnight, as well as a storytelling event with visual aids and music to help bring to life some of the compelling stories we find.



Amy Shir

Amy Shir is a Louisville native and a nationally recognized social-enterprise entrepreneur who has spent her career promoting wealth building for low-income individuals and families across the United States.

Organizations she has worked with include the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), the world's oldest refugee resettlement agency, the Louisville Urban League, the Housing Partnership, and the city's Financial Empowerment Center. In 2017, Amy launched LHOME, Louisville's first locally headquartered, nonprofit Community Development Financial Institution, which has raised and deployed several million dollars, primarily to low-income Black and Brown small-business owners and homeowners.

As a Community History Fellow, Amy is determined for young Jewish adults in Louisville to know the legacy of Kentucky Jewish activist Suzy Post (1933–2019) and inspire them to continue her work of *Tikkun Olam*, the Jewish concept of “repairing the world.” Post's lifelong efforts focused locally on social, racial, and economic justice. Amy's fellowship has included partnering with local Jewish organizations to facilitate small group conversations about the causes Suzy Post worked for, including school desegregation, Title IX prohibiting sex discrimination in education, sheltering AWOL soldiers during the Vietnam War, fighting for reproductive freedom, and forming the Metropolitan Housing Coalition to promote affordable

housing. In sharing Suzy's passion for justice with young Jewish adults, Amy hopes to engage their own interests in social justice and help build meaningful avenues for positive action. Through the fellowship, she has created a workshop curriculum entitled “*Injustice Just Pisses Me Off*: A Suzy Post Primer, which she will begin sharing in the fall of 2023, in collaboration with the Jewish Community of Louisville's young leadership program and the Louisville High School of Jewish Studies.

Donovan Taylor

Donovan Taylor is a native of Louisville and the West End community. He grew up in the Hallmark/Algonquin area and now resides in the Chickasaw neighborhood. Donovan is a nature and culture enthusiast, combining these passions by exploring urban communities and environments. He is a lover of history, especially the Black experience and diaspora. Currently, Donovan conducts the Chickasaw Neighborhood Heritage Hike, a walking tour that features historical people, places, and activities. The hike also serves as a wellness event to advance both physical and environmental health. The tour has been well received by participants as a highly informative and enjoyable learning experience. With support from the 2023 Filson Community History Fellows program, Donovan is working to expand the history tour to include each of the nine West End neighborhoods, to be traveled by walking, cycling, or bus. The West End Neighborhoods Tours will educate individuals on the rich and varied history, people, and places of each community, remove stigma and barriers, and inspire a greater spirit of togetherness in our city of neighborhoods—Louisville, Kentucky.



Nathan Viner

Nathan Viner is an arts curator currently exploring film and music in physical and online venues. A Louisville native, he was brought up in the city's rich artistic scenes and its Jewish community. After graduating from the University of Louisville and completing an internship at the Speed Cinema, he moved to New York City, where he worked as an intern at both the Museum of Modern Art and Anthology Film Archives. He is currently the Programming Coordinator for the Criterion Channel and organizes a series of film screenings throughout Louisville, with an emphasis on the physical film medium and artist participation. Nathan writes,





My fellowship project explores the relationship between Jewish people and the culture of traditional music in Appalachia. While attending a week of musical education in Whitesburg, Kentucky, I discovered a significant presence of Jewish individuals throughout the culture: as performers, musicologists, and filmmakers. In particular, I study the work and reputation of John Cohen (1932–2019), a musician, photographer, filmmaker, and a New York Jew. Much of John Cohen's artistic output (and imprint) is derived from his documentation and learning in these mountain communities. Through my

work, I am discovering more of his history and religious identity, as well as the perceptions and sentiments about Jews and Judaism among the local Appalachians he met.

On Sunday, October 8, at 12:30 p.m., Nathan will be screening John Cohen's 1963 documentary film *The High Lonesome Sound* at the Speed Cinema, followed by a conversation that brings together members off the local Jewish and eastern Kentucky musical communities to explore the relationship between these two historied cultures.

Questions about the Community History Fellows Program? Please contact Abby Glogower at AbbyGlogower@FilsonHistorical.org.



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Creativity Encouraged by History

The Filson launches the History Inspires Fellowship

The Filson has a long-standing relationship with our regional art community as a resource for inspiration. This dates back to sculptor Enid Yandell consulting with our founder, Reuben Durrett, and early Filson collections while preparing studies for her Daniel Boone sculpture. More recently, you might remember songs playing before our Zoom lectures during Covid when the Filson offered only virtual programming. Musicians Greg and Abigail Maupin, known as Rannygazoo, were virtually introduced to the Filson's historic sheet music collection thanks to staff who had digitized portions of the collection and who were providing remote reference services. Several songs were investigated, and four songs were eventually worked up and recorded to be featured at the Zoom lectures. Along with the music, information about Rannygazoo and the history behind the songs was shared.

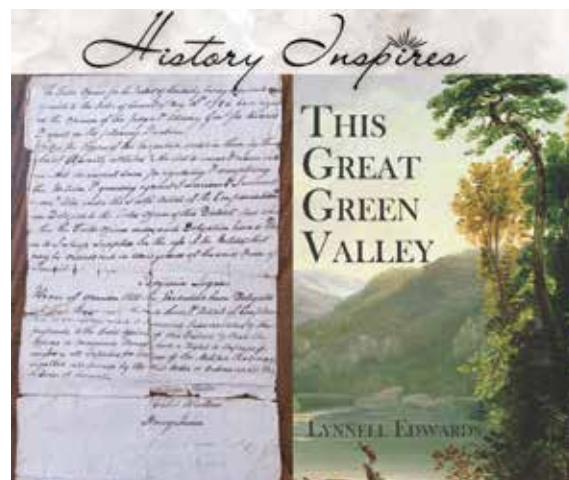
In March of 2022, Lynnell Edwards, an author and Associate Programs Director for the Naslund-Mann Graduate School of Creative Writing at Spalding University, presented a program for the Filson where she read from and discussed her research process when writing her newest collection of poetry, *This Great Green Valley*. Drawing on archival documents from the Filson collections related to both her early ancestors in Kentucky, the McAfees, as well as better-known pioneers such as Daniel Boone, Benjamin Logan, Simon Kenton, and Richard Henderson, Edwards re-imagined these founding stories through dramatic poetry that weaved together the pastoral and the historical to bring light and life from across the centuries. To this day, regional artists continue conducting research for creative projects, making

history relevant in today's contemporary art world. In addition to facilitating creative research, the Filson has established several relationships with artists through donations of ephemeral materials to our collection that will help us document the vibrant Louisville art community.

This Spring, the Filson launched the History Inspires Fellowship to better spotlight and encourage these bonds and the use of the Filson's collections by today's artists and makers. The History Inspires Fellowship (HIF) program will build upon established relationships by promoting the Filson Historical Society as a resource for artistic scholarly research and inspiration and will provide innovative people in the contemporary art world access to the Filson's collections. This is not limited to visual artists, but open to all creative folk: makers, musicians, poets, quilters, dancers, and more. Creatives of all types using any medium for self-expression are invited to submit a project proposal by October 20th stating what they plan to research using the Filson's collections and how our materials will help them produce a body of work.

To celebrate and to bring awareness to the launch of the HIF, on April 4 the Filson held "From Flower Bed to Feather Bed: Reimagining Historic Gardens Through Quilts," a fascinating presentation by lawyer-turned – seamstress, and now art quilter, Anita Streeter, who described her process of creating large quilts based on historic garden designs.

In August, musicians and visual artists that have recently utilized the Filson's collections



were invited to share about the materials that were the muse for their body of work. Rannygazoo returned for a live performance of the four songs researched and recorded. Visual artists Guy Tedesco and Susanna Crum presented on their investigation of historical printed artifacts that led to their various sculptures and mixed media art works. Tim Furnish, musician and video artist, along with his brother, musician Simon Furnish, constructed a performative/real-time audio reactive projected video that interpreted the architecture of the Ferguson mansion and the collections, set to modular synthesizer music.

The HIF has been announced on various creative bulletin boards, and the Filson has received many notifications from interested creatives who have expressed interest in submitting proposals. After the October 20 deadline, a review committee will screen and select HIF participants that will begin their projects in 2024.

Please spread the word about this exciting new opportunity! For more information, or to apply, please visit: <https://filsonhistorical.org/about-us/fellowships/#historyfellow>.



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.

If you have made a legacy 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 circle. If you would like more information

on the Thruston Legacy Circle, please contact our Development Director, Brenna Cundiff, at 502.634.7108 or by email at brenna@filsonhistorical.org.

We want to thank the Thruston Legacy Circle members listed below for investing in the future of our organization by making a legacy gift to the Filson Historical Society.

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✨ *Life & Legacy program donor supporting the Jewish Community Archive at the Filson.*

Summer Program Designed for Youth at the Filson Historical Society

By Dr. Julie James

The Filson Historical Society, in partnership with the Louisville Arts and Cultural Alliance and Fund for the Arts, participated in an exciting summer program called the Cultural Pass. This program aims to enrich the lives of children and teens under 21 years of age in the Greater Louisville area by providing them with free admission to over 50 arts and cultural sites, including museums and theaters. The program was offered from June 1 to August 6, 2023 and was designed to inspire, explore, and discover new experiences within our vibrant Greater Louisville community.

Participation in the Cultural Pass aligns with the Filson's goals of building and promoting programming that reaches traditionally under-represented audiences. The Filson continues to construct programs that are more accessible for teachers, families, and younger audiences.

One of the highlights of the Filson's program is the engagement of youth and the stimulation of their curiosity about history through the exhibit, *People Passage Place: Stories of the Ohio Valley*. To accomplish this, the Filson staff (led by Scott Scarboro, Programs Manager, and Emma Bryan, Community Engagement Specialist) organized two scavenger hunts, a self-guided tour, hands-on activities suitable for children aged 8 to 17, and a take home activity book.

Throughout the summer, over 100 children and their caregivers have visited the Filson on Monday afternoons as part of the Cultural Pass program. In the second week of the Cultural Pass, the California



Neighborhood Boys and Girls Club (see photo) paid a visit and had a memorable experience. They eagerly participated in the mansion scavenger hunt, allowing them to explore the historic Ferguson Mansion while solving intriguing puzzles. Additionally, they had the chance to create their own whimsical creatures inspired by the renowned artist Marvin Finn, make buttons, and spend time in the engaging exhibition titled *A Better Life for Their Children: Julius Rosenwald, Booker T. Washington, and the 4,978 Schools that Changed America*—Photographs, Storytelling, and Original Curation by Andrew Feiler. The children enthusiastically declared it the best field trip ever!

The 2023 Cultural Pass provided a passport to creativity, offering fun and interactive activities designed to inspire a love for history in a hands-on way. It's difficult to determine who had more fun—the dedicated Filson staff or the children themselves—as they embarked on this exciting journey together.

By offering free access to a wide range of arts and cultural experiences, the Cultural Pass program at the Filson Historical Society helped enrich the lives of youth and their families in the Greater Louisville area. It has fostered a deeper appreciation for history, sparked curiosity, and created unforgettable memories for countless young participants. The Filson is proud to continue being a part of this incredible summer initiative and engaging with the youth of our community in the years to come.



ANIMALS IN THE ARCHIVES

SEPTEMBER 8, 2023–FEBRUARY 9, 2024

EXHIBIT OPENING: FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2023 @ 5–6PM

In collaboration with the 2023 Louisville Photo Biennial, the Filson is launching an exhibition featuring pet photography culled from our archives.

From the inception of photography, pets have been a common theme that can be found throughout family photograph collections. These images document and exemplify the unbreakable bond between people and animals throughout history. Join us as we explore pet photography from the Filson's archives and learn more about the Ohio Valley families that owned them. The exhibit will be on display from *September 8, 2023, through February 9, 2024.*

EXHIBIT OPENING:

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2023 @ 5–6PM

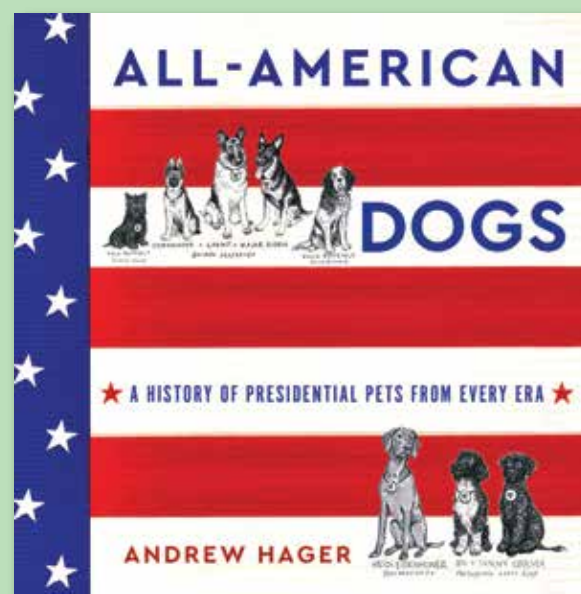
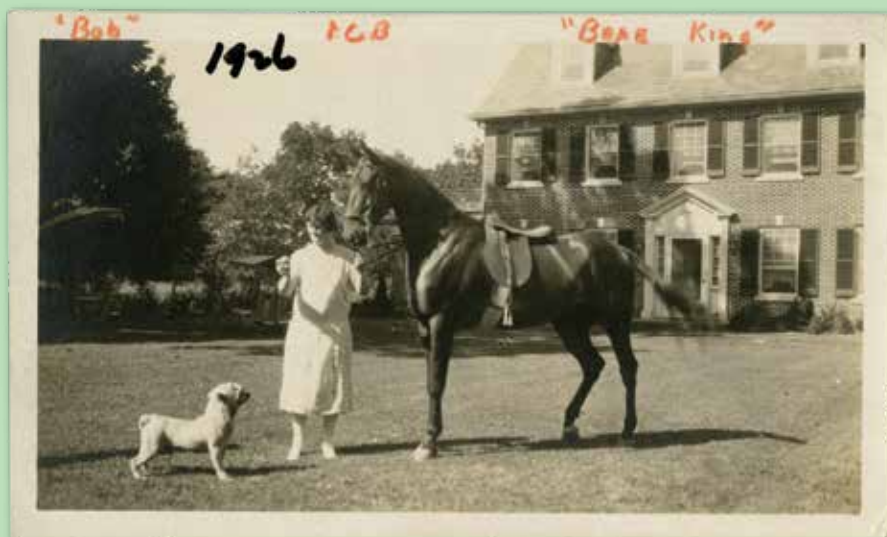
RELATED EVENTS:

September 30, 10am to 1pm:

Pet Festival for Lovers of History & Pets! Join us for a fun filled day exploring local pet-centric vendors. *Animals in the Archives* will be open for viewing. Sorry, pets (with the exception of service animals) cannot enter the Filson to view the exhibit.

October 17, 6pm:

All-American Dogs: A History of Presidential Pets from Every Era by author Andrew Hager. This virtual lecture examines the cultural history of dogs as pets, and the ways in which Americans' relationships with dogs has evolved over the past two centuries. Registration is required, please visit filsonhistorical.org/events/upcoming-events.



Help us support the mission of the Kentucky Humane Society! When you come to visit **Animals in the Archives** at the Filson, bring in an item from KHS's wish list for donation: <https://www.kyhumane.org/ways-to-give/wishlist/>



Animals in the Archives is generously sponsored by:



November 21, 2023, 6:00–7:00 p.m. (EST) | The Kentucky Center—Bomhard Theater, 501 W. Main St., Louisville
Free for members, \$26.33 for non-members
 (Members use code FILSON for free tickets)

On Great Fields

The Life and Unlikely Heroism of Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain

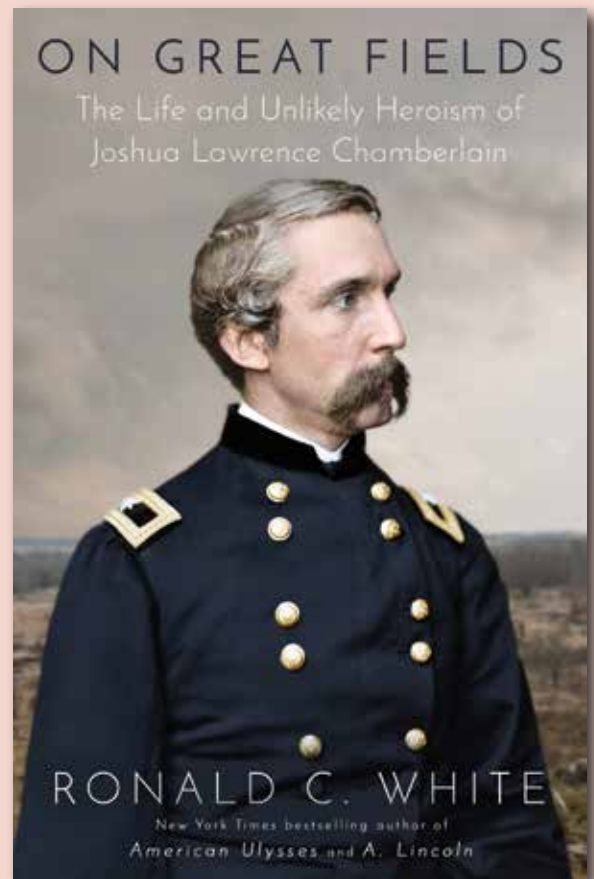
Ronald C. White

From the *New York Times* bestselling author of *A. Lincoln* and *American Ulysses* comes the dramatic and definitive biography of Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, the history-altering professor turned Civil War hero.

Before 1862, Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain had rarely left his home state of Maine, where he was a trained minister and mild-mannered professor at Bowdoin College. His colleagues were shocked when he volunteered for the Union army, but he was undeterred and later became known as one of the North's greatest heroes: On the second day at Gettysburg, after running out of ammunition at Little Round Top, he ordered his men to wield their bayonets in a desperate charge down a rocky slope that routed the Confederate attackers. Despite being wounded at Petersburg—and told by two surgeons he would die—Chamberlain survived the war, going on to be elected governor of Maine four times and serve as president of Bowdoin College.

How did a stuttering young boy come to be fluent in nine languages and even teach speech and rhetoric? How did a trained minister find his way to the battlefield? Award-winning historian Ronald C. White delves into these contradictions in this definitive, cradle-to-death biography of General Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, from his upbringing in rural Maine to his tenacious, empathetic military leadership and his influential post-war public service, exploring a question that still plagues so many veterans: How do you make a civilian life of meaning after having experienced the extreme highs and lows of war?

Chamberlain is familiar to millions from Michael Shaara's now-classic novel of the Civil War, *The Killer Angels*, and Ken Burns's classic miniseries *The Civil War*, but in *On Great Fields*, White captures the complex and inspiring man behind the hero. Heavily illustrated and featuring nine detailed maps, this gripping, impeccably researched portrait illuminates one of the most admired but least known figures in our nation's bloodiest conflict.



Ronald C. White is the *New York Times* bestselling author of *American Ulysses* and three books on Abraham Lincoln, most recently *A. Lincoln*. White earned his PhD at Princeton and has taught at UCLA, Colorado College, Whitworth University, and Princeton Theological Seminary. He has lectured at the White House, been interviewed on PBS NewsHour, and spoken about Lincoln in England, France, Germany, Italy, Mexico, and New Zealand. He is a reader at the Huntington Library and a senior fellow of the Trinity Forum in Washington, D.C. He lives with his wife, Cynthia, in Pasadena, California.

Filsonian listing reflects membership gifts received May 1, 2023–July 19, 2023

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