

The Filson

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



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From the **President**

Louisville kicked off the city's America250 celebrations in January, and I spoke at a dedication ceremony for a new display of a rare facsimile of the Declaration of Independence.

Americans in 1820 lived in an age of dislocation, disconnection, and rising hostility. Few Revolutionary veterans were alive. The republic had spread to become a Continental power. A national political crisis over the expansion of slavery—the first of many on the road to Civil War—led Henry Clay to broker the Missouri Compromise and avoid a dissolution of the Union, for the moment.

So, Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, son of a still-living signer, commissioned 200 exact copies of the Declaration from skilled engraver William Stone. Adams believed that by the power of the document itself, as much as the words it contained, Americans could be inspired to a renewal of the faith in the work we all undertake together.

Adams reminded his fellow citizens, and us today, that these ideals—that all men are created equal, endowed with the unalienable Rights of Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness—were not just for 1776 or 1820, but forever.

By sending copies to governors, legislatures, cabinet officials, colleges, and universities across that expanding nation, we all could be reminded of our

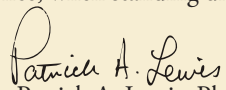
duties to those who came before us as well as those who will come after.

Louisville is fortunate to have one of less than fifty remaining Stone facsimiles, thanks to the generosity of the Mulloy Family donating this copy to the city in the 1980s.

In an age where information is cheap, when you can pull up the text of the Declaration on your phone, gathering to view a historical document with your family, classroom, or community group is an affirmation of truth, belonging, connection, and participation.

Like the Filson's two-million-plus archival documents, it is an object that holds depth of meaning, at which we can resolve to be part of something larger than ourselves. To seek significance in the imperfectly beautiful penstrokes, rather than in the characters rendered on a screen.

To remind ourselves that ours is a document and a government produced and reproduced by human beings imprisoned in their moment—flawed as they were, flawed as we are. Yet all capable of transcendence, when standing united.


Patrick A. Lewis, Ph.D.

President & CEO, The Filson Historical Society

From the **Chair**

As we look ahead to the upcoming celebration of America's 250th anniversary, the Filson is filled with both excitement and purpose. This milestone offers far more than an opportunity to commemorate a date. It provides us with an added opportunity to pause, reflect, and recommit ourselves to understanding the complex story that has shaped our nation and our community.

The Filson's America 250 celebration will bring events, programs, and conversations that honor the people, ideas, struggles, and achievements that define our shared past. We are excited to provide opportunities for learning and engagement that connect history to the present moment in meaningful ways. The goal is not to simply look back. We aspire to deepen our collective understanding of who we are today and how we got here.

History challenges us to reflect honestly. By studying the past, including both the successes and failures, we gain perspective that helps us navigate today's challenges with greater wisdom and empathy. History does not give easy answers. Rather, it offers invaluable lessons. Frankly, this is the goal of our work at the Filson even when we aren't commemorating a

historical milestone. Preserving and sharing history ensures that future generations inherit both fact and context. We aspire to inspire curiosity, critical thinking, and civic engagement.

As Board Chair, I'm incredibly proud of the work the Filson does to preserve the stories of the people of the Ohio Valley and to bring that history to life. The Filson's plans to celebrate America's 250th are a powerful reminder of why this work matters. We look forward to recognizing this historic occasion with you and continuing our shared commitment to history as both a record of the past and a barometer for the future. We hope you will join us for as many of the Filson's America 250 offerings as you can.

As always, thank you for your support of the Filson. Your support greatly assists us in the accomplishment of its mission - to collect, preserve, and share the stories of the people in our region. Thank you for your meaningful impact on our organization. Your generosity and engagement are so very much appreciated.



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The Filson

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1310 S. 3rd St.
Louisville, KY 40208
We welcome your feedback and story ideas.
Phone: (502) 635-5083
www.filsonhistorical.org
info@filsonhistorical.org

OUR MISSION:

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

What's New in Collections

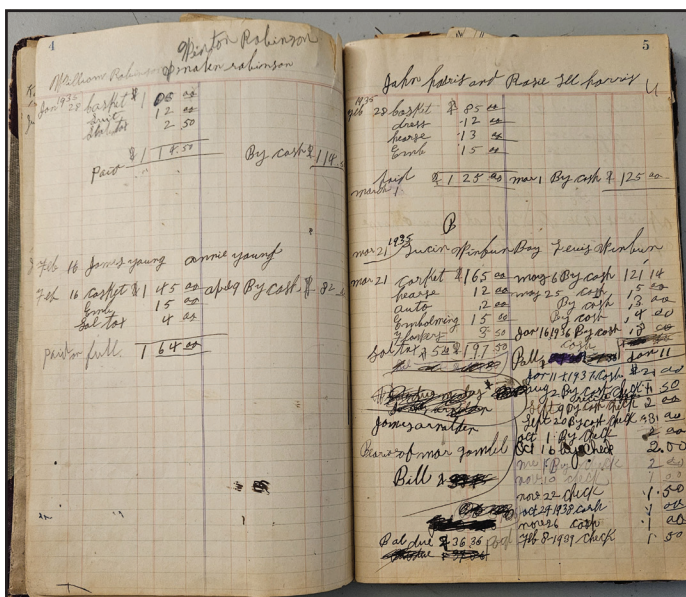
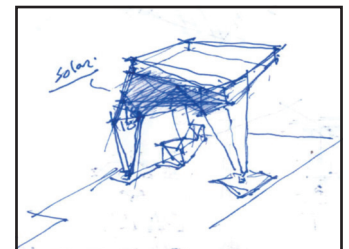
Recent Acquisitions



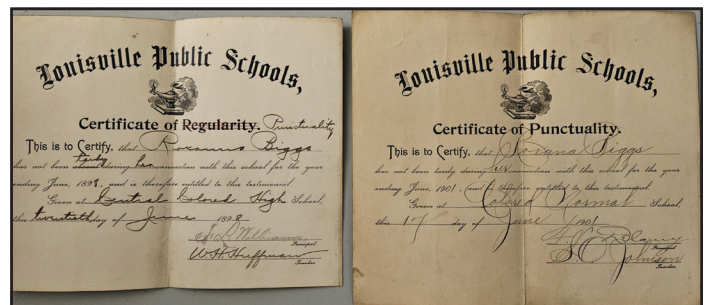
The Allen Hotel (Louisville, Ky.) Records. These records include ephemera relating to The Allen Hotel, formerly located at 2516 West Madison Street in Louisville. The hotel was part of Victor Green's *The Negro Motorist Green Book*, a publication that listed safe spaces such as restaurants, gas stations, and hotels where African Americans were allowed to patronize. (Donated by Juanita White)



Christopher Manzo Architectural Drawings, ca. 1990s–2025 [025AR5] This collection consists of professional papers, photographs, and drawings created by architect Christopher Manzo. Included are a concept sketch and final photograph of the Muhammad Ali Bus Stop at 18th and Muhammad Ali, an AIA Kentucky award-winning design. (Donated by Christopher A. Manzo, AIA)



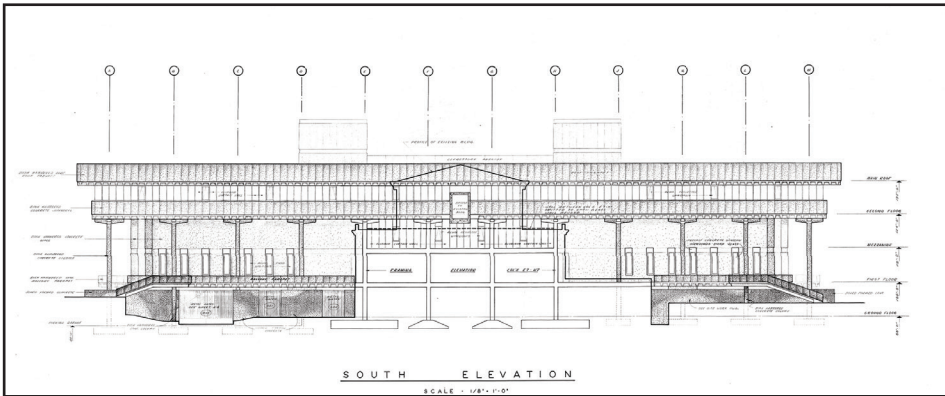
Blake Finch Collection. This collection includes ledgers and documents related to a funeral business owned by an African American man who also worked as a coal miner in Drakesboro, Kentucky. Coal mining shaped local life for many in Drakesboro, but funeral directors were often among the most visible and respected Black business owners in small towns. (Donated by Debra Harley)



Roxanna Biggs Certificates of Punctuality. Two certificates of punctuality presented to Roxanna Biggs, one from Central Colored High School in 1898 and the other from Colored Normal School in 1901. These certificates seem to be precursors to modern perfect attendance awards. (Donated by David Doss)



Anderson Family Collection. This collection consists of textiles, photos, and manuscript material belonging to an African American family from Louisville. Featured family members include sisters Carrie Anderson (1874–1893) and Mamie Anderson (1874–ca. 1940) and their cousin Mattie Lee Spencer (1889–1978). (Donated by Juanita White)



Louis & Henry. Addition to the Main Branch of the Louisville Free Public Library, 1968–1969 [025AR3] A collection of architectural drawings from the 1969 addition to the Main Branch of LFPL, which more than doubled the library's space. The Main Branch is currently undergoing another extensive renovation project.

Recently Cataloged



Van Winkle Family Films, ca. 1934–1935, 1947–1952 [Mss. A V285] These digitized family films document the Van Winkles of Louisville, who were best known for their leadership in the Stitzel-Weller Distillery in Shively. The films depict the ca. 1934–1935 construction and grounds of the distillery, the home of the Van Winkles, and family leisure activities. (Donated by Sarah Van Winkle Campbell)



Carson-Carter-Stewart-Ogden Family Photograph Collection, ca. 1850s–1970s [013PC38] This collection documents members of the Carson, Carter, Stewart, and Ogden families, as well as other relations of Anna Carter Stewart and J. Adger Stewart, who married in 1899 and lived in Louisville. One cabinet card in the collection depicts Mary Price, a Black woman enslaved by Thomas Dixon Carson and Albana Carson Carter. Also included are photographs of Les Cheneaux Club on Marquette Island, Michigan, and family trips to Europe. Pictured here is a cabinet card of Carter family members and friends, ca. 1890. (Donated by Stewart Ogden)



Vincent Falardo Papers, 1936–2004, and Photographs, ca. 1970s–1990s [Mss. A F177, 023PC11] These collections consists of material related to the career of ballet dancer, choreographer, and répétiteur Vincent Falardo (b. 1948), who served as ballet master and director of education and outreach for Louisville Ballet. Pictured here is Falardo teaching a dance class at a local school, ca. 1970s. (Donated by Vincent Falardo)



Alfred Shands Productions Inc. All We are Saying, 1970 [Mss. C A] This documentary was directed by Rev. Al Shands, III. The 16mm film documents the March Against Death, a major anti-Vietnam War protest march and gathering that took place in Washington, D.C., on November 13-15, 1969. Use this QR code to view the digitized film on the Filson's YouTube channel. (Donated by John Collins)



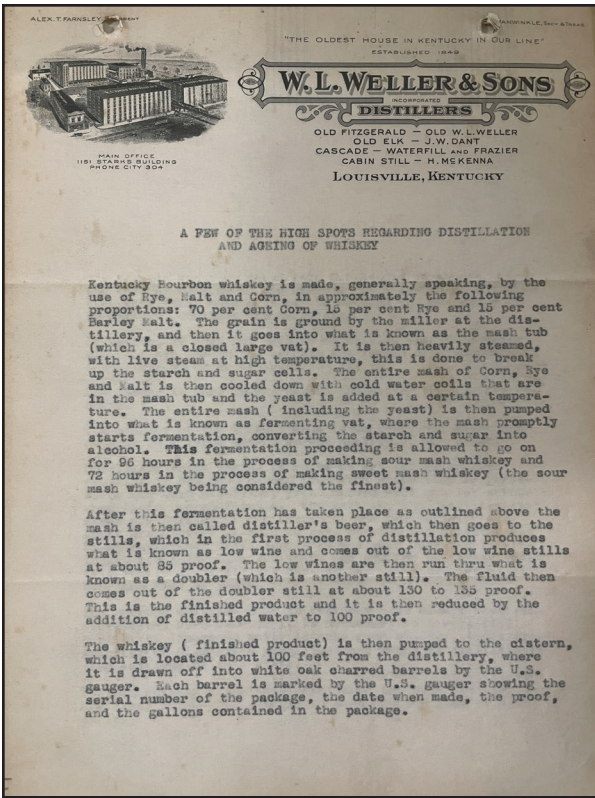
Squire Ogden Georgetown College Photograph Album, ca. 1916–1920 [024PC22] This photograph album documents Squire Ogden's years at Georgetown College in Georgetown, Kentucky. Photographs are of campus buildings, students, football and baseball teams, track and field, and young men and women swimming at a lake. The album includes ephemera, a Kappa Alpha songbook and programs, and clippings. (Donated by Stewart Ogden)



Temperance and Prohibition Ephemera, ca. 1903–1925 [Mss. C A] This collection includes an Anti-Saloon League mailer, a flyer promoting temperance, and two prescriptions for whiskey written during Prohibition. Pictured here is a prescription for whiskey on a U.S. Treasury Department form, filled out in January 1925 by Victor C. Wathen, who owned a pharmacy at 7th and Jefferson in Louisville.

Joy Williams Bell Papers, 1932–2019, and Photographs, ca. 1930s–2010s [Mss. A B433b, 023PC4] These collections contain material related to the life and career of Louisville ballet dancer and dance instructor Joy Williams Bell (1932–2017). Material includes biographical information, speeches, dance studio and company programs and pamphlets, newspaper clippings, and more. Pictured here is Bell dancing with other members of the Louisville Civic Ballet at Iroquois Amphitheater in the late 1940s/early 1950s. (Donated by Mary Jean Huelsman)

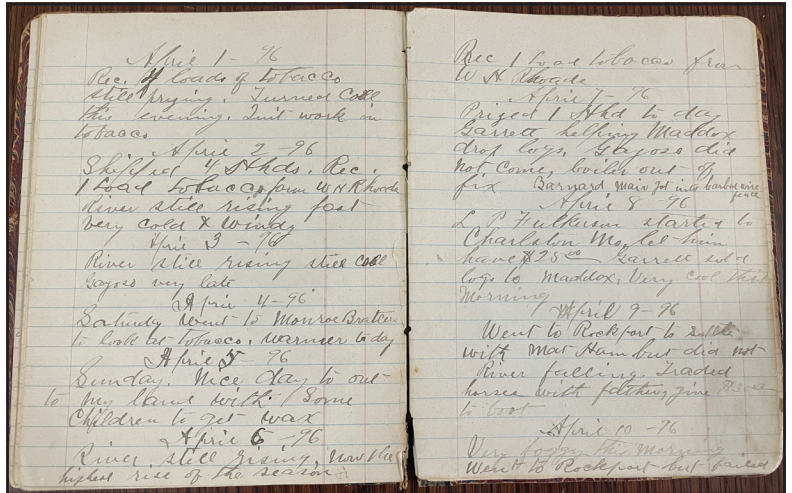




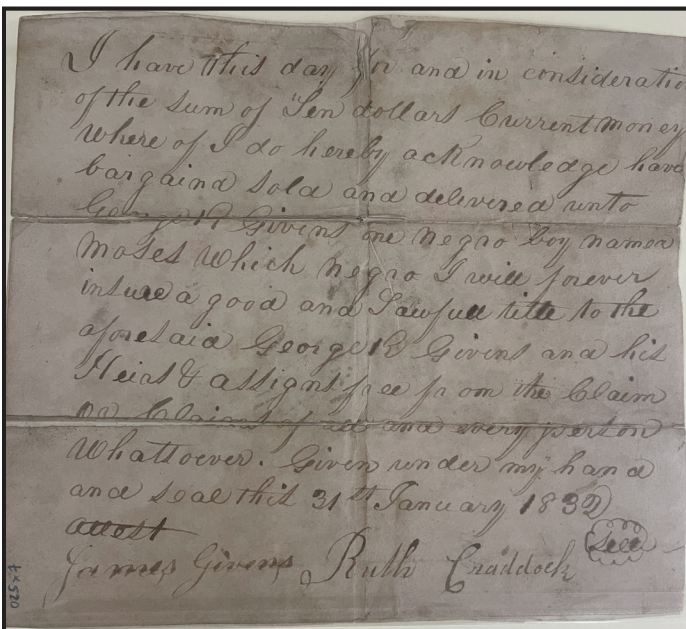
W. L. Weller & Sons Records, ca. 1930s [Mss. C W] This collection includes an undated document about the making of Weller whiskey, as well as early 1930s records about the sale of Everclear alcohol during the Prohibition era. Pictured here is the first page of "A Few of the High Spots Regarding Distillation and Ageing of Whiskey." (Donated by Robert B. Burton)



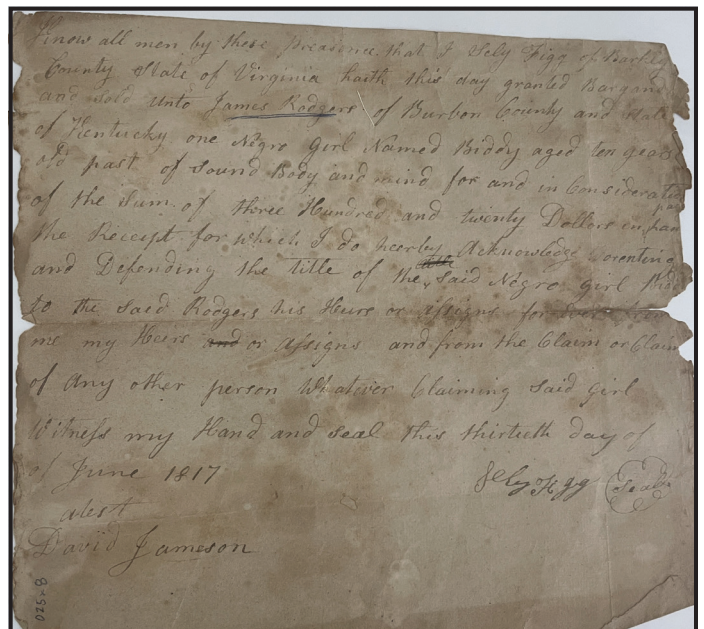
John Begley Audiovisual Collection, ca. 1970s–early 2000s [024PC24] This video and audio collection documents the late twentieth to early twenty-first century visual arts scene in Louisville through the perspective of arts administrator, educator, and artist John Begley (b. 1947). Pictured here is artist G. C. Coxe speaking during an Off The Walls video interview in 1987. (Donated by John Begley)



Virgil Dire Fulkerson Diary, 1888–1896 [Mss. A F964] This diary documents activities in the small town of Ceralvo in Ohio County, Kentucky. Also included are diary transcriptions and historical and biographical notes. The owner of the diary was most likely Virgil Dire Fulkerson (1864–1899), a merchant, farmer, and landowner involved in the trade of a variety of goods, including produce, clothing, livestock, tobacco, corn, and timber. (Donated by Wanda Kaye McSpadden)



George R. Givens Deeds, 1832 and 1836 [Mss. C G] These papers include an 1832 bill of sale selling an enslaved boy named Moses to George R. Givens (1810–1883) when he lived in Bourbon County, Kentucky. Also included is an 1836 record selling land in Schuyler County, Illinois, to George and his wife Mary Givens. (Donated by Philip Kendrick)



James Rogers Slave Bill of Sale for Biddy, 14 June 1817 [Mss. C R] In this bill of sale, dated 14 June 1817, Sely Figgs of Virginia sold a 10-year-old enslaved girl named Biddy to James Rogers (1771–1840) of Bourbon County, Kentucky. (Donated by Frances Duffy Oakley)

Behind the Curtain: 75 Years of Louisville Ballet

An exciting partnership between the Filson and Louisville Ballet

By Kelly Hyberger, Director of Curatorial Affairs

In December 1951, a small but ambitious group of dancers and arts advocates came together to form what would become Louisville Ballet. Early dancers, committed to the vision of a local ballet company, paid for their own costumes and shoes and rehearsed in borrowed spaces. By 1952, Louisville Ballet staged its first official production.

As Louisville Ballet now looks ahead to its 2026–2027 season—its milestone 75th anniversary—it does so with a long legacy of collaboration at its core. Since its earliest days, partnerships with community organizations have helped sustain and shape its work. Today, the Filson Historical Society is proud to be among those partners, connecting the Ballet’s vibrant present to Louisville’s rich past.

In partnership with Louisville Ballet, the Filson has become the proud steward of a significant portion of the Ballet’s records and photographic collections, helping to ensure that the history of this beloved cultural institution is preserved for generations to come. These collections include performance programs, marketing materials, newsletters, production notes, and outreach documentation. Together, these items offer insight into how each production came together and how the company connected with audiences across the region.

The Filson has also worked closely with several former staff members, dancers, and their families, who have generously shared personal papers, photographs, and memorabilia. Photographs from the careers of former artistic director Alun Jones and former principal dancer Helen Starr capture everything



Promotional photograph, undated
Louisville Ballet Photograph Collection,
024PC25_f256

from set and costume design to rehearsals and dramatic performances.

Papers, photographs, and objects donated by Vincent Falardo document his 35-year tenure with Louisville Ballet. Joining as a dancer in 1969 and later promoted to Ballet Master in 1978, the Falardo collection highlights not only his own contributions to the success of Louisville Ballet, but also the Ballet’s broader commitment to teaching and community engagement—values that remain central to its mission today. Other collections recently added to the Filson archive document the contributions and careers of Nina Allen, Joy Williams Bell, Carole Mix, Beverley McLaughlin Ogburn, Andrea Lococo Reed, David Thurmond, and many others. Together, these materials tell rich, behind-the-scenes stories of the artistry and community that have

defined Louisville Ballet for more than seven decades. While our team is still in the process of cataloging some of these materials, many are already accessible on the Filson’s website or available for in-person research.

Building on these exciting recent acquisitions, the Filson is thrilled to announce a new exhibition created in collaboration with Louisville Ballet. Opening this September, *Behind the Curtain: 75 Years of Louisville Ballet* will celebrate the company’s milestone anniversary by exploring the people, talent, and stories that have defined the Ballet since 1951. Drawing directly from the Filson’s growing Louisville Ballet collections, the exhibition will showcase photographs, posters, programs, and archival materials that capture the excitement of performance and the behind-the-scenes moments that help bring each production to life. The Filson’s exhibition and curatorial teams are thrilled to be working with current Louisville Ballet dancer Ashley Thursby as a guest co-curator for the project. Ashley’s contributions have added a particularly meaningful dimension to the project, helping to connect the Ballet’s rich history with the lived experiences of its dancers today. The exhibition will also serve as the centerpiece for a series of collaborative programs with Louisville Ballet, including special events and exclusive behind-the-scenes conversations.

Whether you’re a lifelong ballet enthusiast or simply curious to learn more, we can’t wait to welcome you to celebrate 75 years of creativity, collaboration, and dance together.

Intern Spotlight

CJ Jones | Robert M. Ireland Intern | Summer 2025

CJ Jones is a Louisville native who will graduate from the University of Kentucky in the spring of 2026 with a bachelor's degree in English, a minor in History, and a certificate in Creative Writing. He currently works in the UK William T. Young Library and serves in leadership positions with numerous organizations around campus--the Board of Directors of WRFL, UK's independent student radio station; the Graphite creative writing association; the local chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, a national English Honors Society; and the Scratch Post, a literary arts magazine and blog developed by students in the Lewis Honors College. He has long been interested in the so-called "smaller picture" of history, the reality of what it was like for people of all varieties to live day-to-day in the Ohio Valley throughout our collective history, and his work at the Filson has given him a chance to explore those passions in greater detail. In his free time, he enjoys reading and writing fiction, playing video games, listening to hip-hop music, and spending time with the people (and animals) that he loves.

Last summer, CJ worked on combing through the Filson's vast collection of digitized artwork, documents, photographs, and artifacts to develop social media and newsletter content that puts a spotlight on the eclectic variety of resources that the Filson offers its members and researchers. He took a particular interest in the several Louisville-based cartoonists, both political and otherwise, that

feature prominently in the Filson's archives, as well as artifacts relating to the rich literary history of the Ohio Valley region.

When asked about his favorite part of working at the Filson this summer, CJ responded, "Growing up in Kentucky, there seemed to be a common sentiment among my peers that we had somehow drawn the short straw, that we had been forced to grow up in the most boring place imaginable. But the older I get, and the more I've gotten the chance to explore the rich cultural history of the Ohio Valley, the more I realize just how special our home is and how important it is that we preserve its history. Being able to do intensive research on behalf of the Filson into the history of places I've lived in and explored for years, like Louisville and Lexington, has really given me such a renewed perspective on the region that I now feel proud to call home, and I'm really excited about helping promote and showcase the collections that have made me feel this way! I hope our work at the Filson can help promote a greater understanding across the commonwealth on who we are, and where we've been."

Upon graduation, CJ plans to pursue an MFA in Creative Writing and become a tenured professor in creative writing, as well as a semi-successful novelist and part-time local historian. Whichever one comes first.



Filson Historical Society Passport Program

The Filson Historical Society is excited to launch our 2026 Participant Passport! This new initiative for Filson programs and events allows participants to track their support of the Filson and receive special edition items and merchandise, along with some bragging rights! The first of its kind program at the Filson features a unique passport book specially designed to align with our commemoration of the America250 semiquincentennial.

Members can pick up their passport at any Filson program or by visiting us during normal operation hours. Visit filsonhistorical.org for more information on how the Passport Program works!

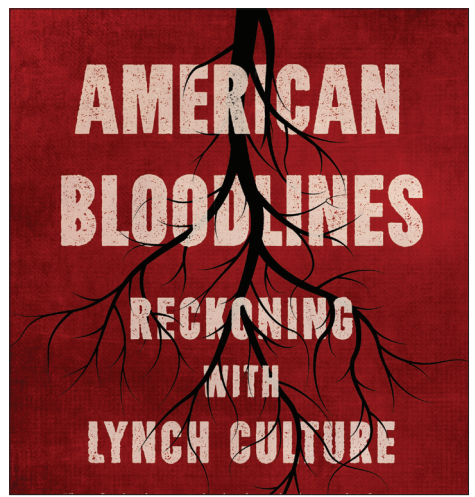
2026 Program Preview

Visit filsonhistorical.org for more information and to register.

JUNE 9

American Bloodlines: Reckoning with Lynch Culture
Sonya Lea

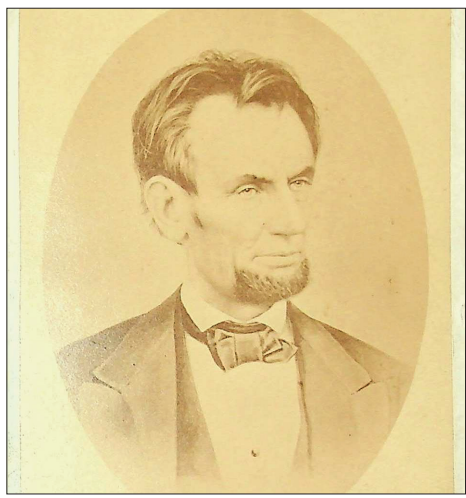
American Bloodlines combines memoir with reportage and cultural criticism to interrogate and complicate the traditional narrative about how lynch culture is created in families, communities, and institutions.



JUNE 26

Filson Institute Showcase

The Filson is excited to offer a second year of our updated fellowship program, the **Filson Institute**, and another concluding community round table. This year's Institute topic reflects the Filson's approach and engagement with America250: E Pluribus Unum, La Belle Rivière, and the Pursuit of Happiness.



JULY 21

The Future of Lincoln Studies

Join eminent Civil War historians Kenneth Noe, Brian Matthew Jordan, and Kevin Waite in a roundtable discussion with *Ohio Valley History* editor Matthew Christopher Hulbert on the future of Abraham Lincoln in American historical scholarship, popular culture, and memory.

AUG. 27

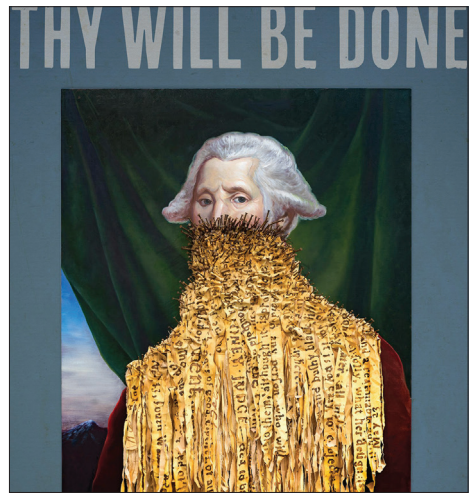
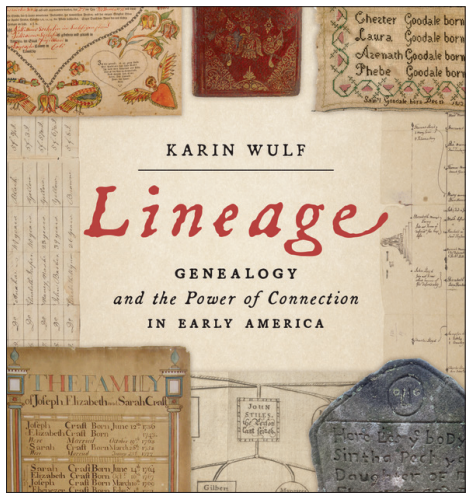
Dine & Dialogue - *Thy Will be Done* - John Garrison Marks

How should we remember George Washington's entanglement in slavery? Americans have argued over that question for nearly 250 years. In *Thy Will Be Done*, historian John Garrison Marks tells the story of Americans' long, fraught struggle to come to terms with Washington's legacy of slavery.

SEPT. 3

The Gertrude Polk Brown Lecture Series - *Lineage* - Karin Wulf

Lineage offers a deep understanding of genealogy as a foundational element of American history, illuminating its vital role from the colonial era through the birth of the nation.



BUSTLES TO BLUE JEANS

Highlights from the Filson's Fashion Archive

ON DISPLAY IN BINGHAM GALLERY
THROUGH AUGUST 18



THIS...IS BLACK LOUISVILLE



For over 200 years, African American people have shaped the city's social, political, and cultural fabric. Beginning with free Blacks migrating from rural Kentucky in search of work, safety and community, their population surged between 1870 and 1900. Today, they make up about 24% of the city's population. This...Is Black Louisville celebrates the resilience, creativity, and enduring impact of the Black experience in forming the River City's identity.

ON DISPLAY IN THE WOOD CARRIAGE HOUSE
ONGOING

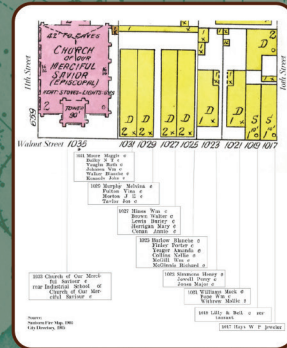
HISTORY INSPIRES

The Filson's archives are open to anyone who wants to connect with the past. We believe that seeing, touching, and holding historical artifacts, documents, and photographs can spark curiosity, build empathy, and help us better understand our present.

In recent years, the Filson has invited artists and creatives to engage with our collections in new and exciting ways. In 2023, we launched the History Inspires Fellowship to encourage makers of all kinds – visual artists, musicians, poets, quilters, dancers, and more – to use the collection as inspiration for new creative work. So far, seven artists have participated in this program. Over the coming months, our History Inspires spotlight exhibition will individually showcase their projects.

2024 History Inspires Fellows: John Akre, Tammy Burke, Zed Saeed, Ashley Thursby

2025 History Inspires Fellows: Lori Larusso, Moria Magre, Sarah Pennington



Images provided by Zed Saeed

ON DISPLAY IN THE WOOD CARRIAGE HOUSE
ONGOING

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FROM THE SAME CLOTH

Textiles of the Ohio Valley

Each stitch in a quilt, coverlet, or sampler tells a story—a story of physical necessity, artistic expression, and cultural tradition. *From the Same Cloth: Textiles of the Ohio Valley* explores 250 years of textiles and the diverse narratives they share. Through historic and contemporary works, this exhibit reveals how fiber arts express identity, carry memories, and connect families across time.

The pieces on display will represent our region's many communities, cultures, eras, and styles. Highlights include a rare early 19th-century whitework quilt, a linen bedsheet woven by an enslaved craftsperson, a contemporary embroidered quilt documenting current events, and works from Appalachian fiber traditions. As our nation reflects on its 250 year history, we invite you to come experience that history woven into the rich fabric of Kentucky and the Ohio Valley.



Nash Gallery Filson Historical Society Opening Reception May 29th

Rose of Sharon or Whig Rose Quilt
Jane Boone Wilcox Beckley (1813-1892),
ca. 1850, Shelby or Jefferson County, KY
Cotton
Filson Museum Collection [2025.16.1]
Gift of the Cook-Cummings family

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Historical Society
THE Filson
Since 1884

Thursday, September 3, 6:00–7:00 p.m. | Hybrid
Actors' Theatre of Louisville, 316 W. Main St., Louisville

Free for members (use code FILSON for 4 tickets), \$20 for potential members—Parking additional
Tickets may be purchased online at actorstheatre.org.

Lineage Genealogy and the Power of Connection in Early America

Karin Wulf

In eighteenth-century America, genealogy was more than a simple record of family ties—it was a powerful force that shaped society. *Lineage* delves into an era where individuals, families, and institutions meticulously documented their connections. Whether driven by personal passion or mandated by churches, local governments, and courts, these records appeared in diverse forms—from handwritten notes and account books to intricate silk threads and enduring stone carvings.

Family connections wielded significant influence across governmental, legal, religious, cultural, and social spheres. In the American context, these ties also defined the boundaries of slavery and freedom, with a child's status often determined by their mother, despite the prevailing patriarchy. This book reveals the profound importance of genealogy that was chronicled by family records, cultural artifacts, and court documents. These materials, created by both enslaved individuals seeking freedom and founding fathers seeking status, demonstrate the culturally and historically specific nature of genealogical interest.

Even as the American Revolution transformed society, the significance of genealogy endured. The legacy of lineage from the colonial period continued to shape the early United States, underscoring the enduring importance of family connections. *Lineage* offers a deep understanding of genealogy as a foundational element of American history, illuminating its vital role from the colonial era through the birth of the nation.

Karin Wulf is the Director and Librarian of the John Carter Brown Library and Professor of History at Brown University. A historian of “Vast Early America,” she earned her PhD from Johns

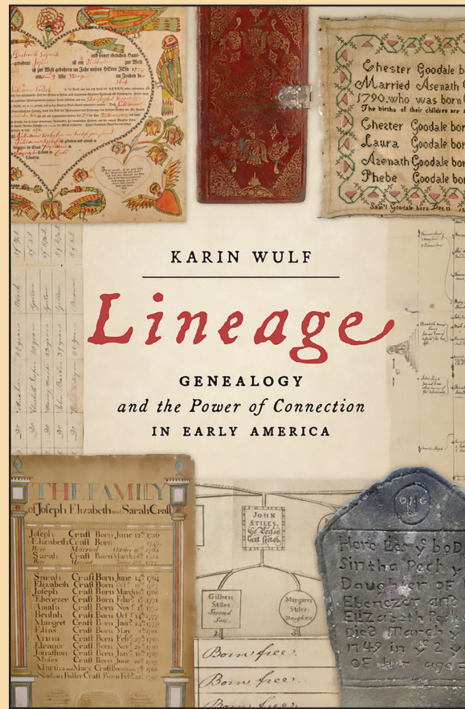


photo by Rhythm Vinoben

Hopkins University and was the Executive Director of the Omohundro Institute of Early American History & Culture and Professor of History at William & Mary. She has also taught at American University and Old Dominion University. The author or editor of prize-winning scholarship on gender, family, and politics, she writes regularly for both public and academic audiences about early American history, the humanities, and archives and libraries.

Praise for *Lineage*

“Karin Wulf’s *Lineage* transforms mind-numbing and mostly forgotten books and artifacts into vibrant accounts of forgotten pasts. A Wampanoag account book, a lock

of hair, a stained-glass window, a goat-leather-bound genealogy of a Stuart King, and reams of court records, diaries, letters, and plantation accounts affirm that “genealogy has never been, nor is it now, purely a matter of private interest.”

— Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, author of *The Age of Homespun: Objects and Stories in the Creation of an American Myth*

“In *Lineage*, Karin Wulf guides us through the early modern archive of genealogies—the stories and records kept by Kings and commoners, English, African and Indigenous peoples in the Atlantic world, and brings their enduring importance to light—an importance rooted in the connection between family and state interests or, as she so cogently puts it, between emotion and power. The result is a stunning work, beautifully written and meticulously researched, in which the multiple meanings of family are made exceptionally clear. This is a gorgeously rendered work of history that should be read by anyone interested in the American past.”

— Jennifer L. Morgan, author of *Reckoning with Slavery: Gender, Kinship and Capitalism in the Early Black Atlantic*

If We Will Do the Work

Patrick A. Lewis

The Filson is an institution of community resilience, of memory, of identity, and of belonging. Far more than teaching history, together we learn and share with the goal of building a sense of rootedness for us as individuals, families, neighborhoods, and a region. This, in turn, provides us stability in times of doubt and hardship.

A palpable sense of grief and anger overhangs the beginning of our republic's 250th anniversary. Commemorations are accompanied by a lament for the state of our civic garden, so long and costly in its tending, still becoming what it promised to be.

Wendell Berry, who knows something about caring for the land and the soul of our region, wrote a poem whose words have resonated with me recently. Just as our work and words are about history, his are about soil erosion. But both recognize the perpetual custodial work we undertake when we belong fully to a place and the lives rooted to it.

Wrong was easy; gravity helped it.
Right is difficult and long.
In choosing what is difficult
we are free, ...

The healing
that is ours and nature's will come
if we are willing, if we are patient
if we know the way, if we will do the work.

History teaches us the way. How shall we carry on the work? We are fortunate to take up a daily responsibility, as an independent source of information and perspective, for the soil in which constitutional, civic participation can flourish.

Inspired by the calls to present and future action prompted by the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, the Filson has implemented a number of workplace policies in 2026, with the intention that they be continued in future years.

- Paid time for any Filson employee who serves as an **election officer**, both for training and poll work.
- Four hours of **paid voting leave** on **primary election days**.
- **Paid voting leave** of four hours for part-time and eight hours for full-time on **Election Day**



- The Filson will **close to the public on Election Day** to facilitate voting, family care, and community service.
- The Filson will expand its **Volunteer Time Off (VTO)** program by arranging paid service days for Filson staff with community nonprofits. Begun in 2020, the Filson's VTO program funds up to 20 hours for full-time and eight hours for part-time staff to engage in community service. To date, projects have included nonprofit board service, pro bono curatorial services for small museums, participation in Greek organization community projects, and weeks of staff time in 2022 and 2023 assisting the flooded archives of Hindman Settlement School and Appalshop.
- Many Filson programs, lectures, roundtables, and screenings this year will feature **invited nonprofit partners**, whose work today addresses the questions raised about the historical topic we cover that evening. This transforms understanding into opportunity.

These measures reflect respect and care for Filson employees, their families, and the communities in which we reside and work. Nothing the Filson does is possible without the freedoms of thought, speech, and representative democracy. As an organization, grounded in the perspective of the histories we steward, we are willing and patient to seek the healing that will come.

Filson Farewell to Heather Potter



The staff and board of the Filson bid a fond farewell to our Curator of Manuscripts, Heather Stone Potter, who is beginning an exciting new role as Assistant Director of the South Caroliniana Library at the University of South Carolina.

Over the course of more than a decade, Heather has made an extraordinary impact on our institution. Heather did outstanding work for many years as Curator of Prints and Photographs and, in 2024, stepped into the role of Curator of Manuscripts when Jim Holmberg became Curator Emeritus. Throughout her tenure, she has brought exceptional thoughtfulness and care to her work. She has been a tremendous asset in volunteer and donor relations and collections development, as well as a strong public-facing advocate for history, preservation, and the Filson through presentations, exhibit curation, and volunteerism. Her contributions have helped shape the Filson in lasting ways, and her presence will be deeply missed.

Please join us in celebrating Heather's successes and wishing her the best in her future endeavors!

Thankyou

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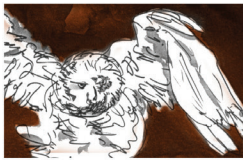


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THE Filson Historical Society
Since 1884

At a time when history and truth are often questioned and rewritten, the Filson's mission has never been more vital.

For more than 140 years, the Filson has been a trusted source of context, connection, and civic relevance, **dedicated to the preservation of our shared past to ensure a brighter future for our entire community.**

In 2025, more than 10,000 people took part in Filson programming, and over 900 researchers explored our collections of more than two million items. Through exhibitions, education, and partnerships, we are broadening access and deepening understanding, helping our community see itself more clearly through the lens of history.

Your support makes this possible. Contribute to the Annual Fund today.



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The 1884 Society recognizes individuals and families who contribute \$1,000 or more annually in support of the Filson Historical Society's mission. These leadership-level gifts provide critical support for preserving, interpreting, and sharing the history and culture of Kentucky and the Ohio Valley, ensuring the Filson's

work continues for generations to come. The donors listed below represent 1884 Society contributions made between January 2025 and January 2026.

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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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