

**The Filson Historical Society**

**Menu Collection, 1860-1990**

For information regarding literary and copyright interest for these papers, contact the Collections Department.

**Size of Collection:**

0.66 cubic feet

**Locator number:**

Mss./BB/M549

## **Menu Collection, 1860-1990**

### **Historical Note**

In the 1830s when Louisville was first developing into a booming city, the Galt House and the Louisville Hotel emerged to serve up Louisville's first taste of high-quality cuisine. In 1905 Louis Seelbach opened the Seelbach Hotel, whose Oak Room became another cornerstone of gourmet dining. After the establishment of these first major restaurants, Louisville's culinary scene expanded to include a wide variety of styles and flavors. This collection showcases the culinary history of Louisville and surrounding cities over a 130-year period, representing not only food throughout the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but also significant events and everyday culture.

## **Menu Collection, 1860-1990**

### **Scope and Content Note**

This collection contains menus dating from 1860 to 1990, as well as programs, guest lists, seating charts, dance cards, invitations, and tickets of admission for various events. The collection contains over 140 menus and papers organized alphabetically by venue.

Most of the menus are from the Louisville area, but some are from other cities in Kentucky, including Frankfort, Harrodsburg, Shelbyville, Richmond, and Bardstown. A few are also from cities out of state, including French Lick, Washington, D.C., Nashville, Cincinnati, St. Louis, and New York.

Many of the menus detail the daily fare served at local restaurants and hotels, but a significant portion were used at special events and celebrations. These include Christmas, Thanksgiving, New Year's Day, Derby Day, Oaks Day, weddings, and birthdays, as well as banquets honoring guests such as the Grand Duke Alexis of Russia, Queen Victoria, the queen of Romania, President Andrew Johnson, and President William Howard Taft. Other items of interest are a "mourning" menu used at the Galt House after the death of President James Garfield in 1881 and a menu of patients' meal options at Kentucky Baptist Hospital. The menus provide excellent examples of popular styles of food and art from different eras.

This collection is a transfer from the Filson's library collection. An index is available.

## Menu Collection, 1860-1990

### Folder List

#### Box 1

- Folder 1: A: Alexander Hotel – Audubon Country Club
- Folder 2: B: Benedict's – The Brown Hotel
- Folder 3: C: The Cape Codder – Claudia Sanders
- Folder 4: E-F: Echo Hall – French Village
- Folder 5: G: Galt House – Glyndon Hotel
- Folder 6: H: Highland Presbyterian Church – Hungry Hermit
- Folder 7: J: Jim Porter's Tavern – J. Timothy

#### Box 2

- Folder 8: K: "K" – Kentucky Hotel
- Folder 9: L: Little Rebel – Louisville Hotel
- Folder 10: M-N: Mario's Pizza – The Normandy Inn
- Folder 11: O-P: The Old House – The Playhouse
- Folder 12: R-S: Rufer's – Sullivan & Brach Café and Restaurant
- Folder 13: W: The Waldorf-Astoria – The Willard
- Folder 14: Unknown venue

## Menu Collection, 1860-1990

### Subject Headings

Birthday parties – Kentucky – Louisville.  
Brennan House (Louisville, Ky.)  
Brown Hotel (Louisville, Ky.)  
Christmas – Kentucky – Louisville.  
Dinners and dining – Kentucky – Louisville.  
Galt House (Louisville, Ky.)  
Garfield, James A. (James Abram), 1831-1881.  
Holiday cooking – Kentucky – Louisville.  
Hospitals – Food service – Kentucky – 20th century.  
Hotel restaurants – Kentucky – Louisville.  
Hotels – Kentucky – Louisville.  
Johnson, Andrew, 1808-1875.  
Kentucky Derby.  
Louisville and Nashville Railroad Company.  
Louisville Board of Trade.  
Louisville Hotel (Louisville, Ky.)  
Luncheons – Kentucky – Louisville.  
Menus – Kentucky – Louisville.  
New Year – Kentucky – Louisville.  
Pendennis Club (Louisville, Ky.)  
Restaurants – Menus.  
Seelbach Hotel (Louisville, Ky.)  
Taft, William H. (William Howard), 1857-1930.  
Thanksgiving cooking – Kentucky – Louisville.  
Thanksgiving Day – Kentucky – Louisville.  
Weddings – Kentucky – Louisville.