

GREATER JEFFERSONTOWN
HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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August 2016 Meeting

The August meeting will be held on Monday, August 1, 2016. We will meet at 7:00 P.M at the Jeffersontown Library, 10635 Watterson Trail. Steve Wisner and Jack Koppel will talk about Jefferson County cemeteries. Do you want to know more about "where the bodies are buried?" Then be sure to attend this fascinating look at a few of the approximately 300 burial grounds that lie within the borders of Jefferson County. Steve Wisner, local architect and historian, and Jack Koppel, cemetery researcher, will discuss the history, monuments, and notable residents of these final resting locations. The Greater Jeffersontown Historical Society meetings are now held on the first Monday of the even numbered months of the year. Everyone is encouraged to attend to help guide and grow the Society.

October Meeting – October 3

Catherine Bache will present a program on her Girl Scout Gold Award project, "Faces of Freedom – The Underground Railroad". Part of the project is a reenactment of various people's parts in running the Underground Railroad. Locust Grove has requested Catherine and her group present that play portion at Locust Grove on Friday, September 9. This will not be part of our program. The Girl Scout Gold Award is the equivalent to the Boy Scout Eagle Award.

June Meeting

Jim Holmberg, Curator of Collections with the Filson Historical Society, presented the program "To The Polls! Political Campaigns Through the Years." Jim is a native of Louisville and holds a BA and MA from the University of Louisville in History. He joined the staff of The Filson in 1982. The 132 year old Filson Historical Society is the largest privately funded, independent research library in Kentucky with the largest collection of books, letters, and maps of Kentucky history. At the time of the presentation researchers from Washington, D.C. were working on a Muhammad Ali TV program for the Chinese, and earlier in the year a Japanese group was working on a TV program on the Hill sisters and the Happy Birthday song.

Americans have been holding presidential elections for well over 200 years; and except for George Washington, as the nation's first chief executive, there have always been contenders for the office. Some campaigns for the White House have been rather calm affairs, while others have been vigorously and bitterly contested. Through the years, The Filson has acquired a large collection of campaign related material that gives both voice and vision to this important process in our country's political life. So the presentation was not a lecture on political campaigns, but a sampling of The Filson's presidential campaign and election materials and a discussion of their use in the race for the White House. And if you think political campaigns are rough and dirty now, you will see that nothing has really changed over the years, they have even gotten better, because there isn't the violence now as there was in earlier campaigns. Paul F. Boller, Jr. has written several books on the subject and Jim read information from Boller's book on campaigns for his talk.

Of course it all started with George Washington who set the tone and tradition of the American presidency. He had no competition and really no campaign. Campaigning didn't start until the campaign between John Adams and Thomas Jefferson in 1796 and again in 1800. And let the mud- slinging begin. Jefferson had his problems with Sally Hemmings, his black mistress and he was accused of not being a

real Christian, since he was a Deist. It was put out that if Jefferson got elected he would have all the bibles burned. A story goes that a Connecticut woman gave her bible to a Jeffersonian Republican and asked him to save it for her. He asked if she believed the story, why did she think the bible would be safe with him? Well, she said, who would ever think to look for a bible with a Jefferson Republican. Jeffersonian Republicans morphed into the Democrats.

The election of 1800 was again hotly contested between the Federalist President, John Adams, and the Democratic-Republican candidate, Thomas Jefferson. Because the Constitution did not distinguish between President and Vice-President in the votes cast by each state's electors in the Electoral College, both Jefferson and his running mate Aaron Burr received 73 votes. Burr decided he wouldn't give in to Jefferson, so the vote was sent to the House of Representatives, where it took thirty ballots to decide for Jefferson, who was thought to be the lesser of two evils.

This period ushered in what Holmberg calls the six D's of poisonous politics: Denounce, Disparage, Damn, Decry, Denigrate, and Declaim. All this was done via the newspaper, pamphlets, handbills and broadsides (of a barn or building), barbeques and rallies (think Fancy Farm social), pin and coins, buttons and ribbons. Now we can add television, radio, and the all present internet.

Following Jefferson came James Madison and James Monroe, the three making up the Virginia Dynasty and the era of Good Feeling with Monroe.

In 1824 the era of good feeling came to an end with another political crisis, a four-way race with John Quincy Adams, Andrew Jackson, Henry Clay of Kentucky, and William Crawford. It became a first time crisis between who won the popular vote vs. who won the Electoral College vote and not all who have won the popular vote have won the electoral vote.

Jackson won the popular vote, but not the electoral vote by the majority needed so the election was thrown again into the House of Representatives, where Henry Clay was Speaker of the House. The Electoral vote was Jackson, Adams, Crawford and Clay. Holmberg showed a lengthy letter from the Filson archives written in February 1824 by North Carolina politician Willie P. Mangum to William Polk analyzing the 1824 election. He correctly picked the four finalists and lists the states they would carry.

Henry Clay, who now held a decisive position as speaker, did not follow Kentucky's instruction to vote for Jackson, who had carried Kentucky, and instead supported Adams. Clay had led some of the strongest attacks against Jackson, one of which accused Jackson's wife of being a bigamist for not properly being devided from her first husband. Rather than see the nation's top office go to a man he detested, Clay forged coalition that secured the White House for John Quincy Adams. In return Adams named Clay as his Secretary of State, a position that had been the stepping-stone to the presidency for the past four presidents. Jackson supporters cried foul and called the appointment a "corrupt bargain" that robbed Jackson of the presidency he rightly deserved and that opened the antagonistic presidential race of 1828 practically before Adams even took office.



By 1828 the two party system, the Democrats and the National Republicans which later became the Whig Party, had come together and Jackson's supporters were determined their hero would not be cheated again. Filson manuscripts again show how thing were going. In a letter to Henry Buckner, Samuel Catlett stresses that the majority must rule and laments at the filth being spread by both sides. But the campaign is fought from print to the stump and Old Hickory wins in a landslide and John Quincy Adams becomes a one and done president.

Even though Jackson easily carried Kentucky, Henry Clay remains very popular in Kentucky, is acknowledged as the leader of the National Republicans, remains solidly opposed to the Democrats and Jackson, or as Clay called him, King Andrew, The First, and looks to defeating Jackson in 1832.

Clay is the presidential candidate of the National Republicans in 1832 and predicts a win, but Jackson remains popular and Clay is thrashed.

In 1836 Van Buren follows as Jackson's hand-picked successor with Richard M. Johnson of Kentucky as Vice-President. At the time Kentucky was a very powerful and important state and several Kentuckians served in Van Buren's cabinet. Johnson had served in the Kentucky militia during the War of 1812 and at the Battle of the Thames he reportedly killed the Shawnee chief Tecumseh. This was used to advantage during the 1836 campaign with the ditty, "Rumpsey Dumpsey, Rumpsey Dumpsey, Colonel Johnson killed Tecumseh."

Van Buren's timing was bad, the Panic of 1837 sent the country into a depression and when 1840 rolled around the voters were ready for a change and Van Buren became a one-term president. By this time the National Republicans had pretty much turned into the Whig Party. William Henry Harrison had been their candidate in 1836 with a good run, and they figured if Jackson could run as a military hero, why not Harrison. But Clay also had presidential aspirations for 1840 figuring the Democrats would win easily, but he again was denied.

The campaign of 1840 saw the true evolution of campaigning really taking shape with campaign songs and slogans, sheet music and torch-light parades. It had started in 1836, but solidified in the 1840



campaigns. There were letters to the editor in newspapers started just for the campaign. One newspaper had this to say of Harrison: "Give him a barrel of hard (alcoholic) cider and settle a pension of two thousand a year on him, and take my word for it, he will sit the remainder of his days in his log cabin." Holmberg had several examples from the Filson's archives; one two-page letter entitled "Erect Your Cabin & Pole." "Tippecanoe and Tyler Too" and "Martin Van Ruin" became well-known slogans along with the cabin and hard cider. Some song lyrics: "Old Tip he wears a homespun coat / He has no ruffled Shirt-wirt-wirt / But Mat has the golden plate / And he's a squirt-wirt-wirt. "

Harrison from Virginia gentry, had risen to the rank of major-general during the War of 1812, was a territorial governor of Indiana, and had been a senator and a diplomat. He had a lot of good credentials that people liked. Van Buren was considered to be a rich snob, but he really was well-versed in politics.

It was a short-lived for the Whigs; Harrison should have listened to his mother and worn a coat and hat on his inauguration day. He didn't, and contracted pneumonia and died, only thirty days into his term. Vice-President John Tyler succeeds him and is given the name "His Accidency" by some people. True Whigs soon learned that Tyler, from Virginia and a slave owner, was a compromise candidate to satisfy the Deep South that was more Democratic than Whig. Tyler caused a constitutional crisis of sorts since this is the first time a sitting president left office during his full term. People were asking if the vice president was really the next president or should there be another election. After discussions it was realized Tyler moving up to be president was the correct move according to the Constitution and Tyler filled out Harrison's term while the Whigs did everything they could to forestall any move they considered Democratic in nature while waiting for the 1844 elections.

The Whigs again turn to Henry Clay to win back the White House and they felt confident that Clay could duplicate Harrison's landslide victory of 1840 against any opposition candidate. But there is this little

problem called Texas that had been a republic since 1836, but its American residents wanted to be annexed into the US. The Democrats are for it but the Whig Party is conflicted over the issue, and Clay comes out against annexation causing many in the South to turn against him with the country in full “Manifest Destiny” mode.

Clay runs up against James K. Polk, a dark horse, compromise candidate elected on the ninth ballot, who was well known, had been the House Speaker, but was not considered to be presidential timber by many Democrats. His platform embraced America's popular commitment to territorial expansionism, often referred to as Manifest Destiny. Polk had beaten out Martin Van Buren, the former president and the Democratic presumptive presidential candidate but was rejected as nominee at the Democratic National Convention after he failed to satisfy the demands of southern Democrat expansionists wanting someone favoring the immediate acquisition of Texas and some shenanigans by the party bosses.

Again political newspapers of short duration abounded. *That Same Old Coon*, from Dayton, Ohio, published from April to November 1844 was a Whig newspaper that supported Clay, whose nickname “Ol’ Coon” was intended to give him rustic appeal and connect him to his Kentucky roots, echoing Harrison’s “Log Cabin” campaign of 1840. *The Whig Banner Melodist* from Philadelphia had a raccoon shimmying up a flag pole in its September 1844 issue. It contained Whig campaign songs set to familiar tunes of the day supporting Clay, but derogatory toward Polk and other notable Democrats. Another paper had a caricature of Clay with a head with two faces. The banner above the drawing read, “Clay’s Two Faces”, with “North Face” over the left side and “South Face” over the right side. Another article had the banner, “Base and malignant charges of the Federal party against a Revolutionary Patriot proved false by a witness whose word no man dare doubt.”

Polk barely defeated Clay. Clay is now 0 – 3 in presidential races and even the Whigs in Kentucky are saying give it up. He tries to angle a spot in 1848, but the party told him they had to go with someone else, since he just wasn’t electable on a national level. However, he remained a force and important person on a national level. After the 1844 elections party alliances were shaky because of the Texas Question, but Democrats pulled together enough votes in the aftermath of Polk’s victory to pass a joint House-Senate resolution to make Texas the 28th state in 1848.

The Whigs decided to go with Zachary Taylor, a Mexican War hero, in 1848. It ushers in a decade of discord as the nation begins to split leading up to the Civil War. Taylor was a southern slave owner, born in Virginia, grew up in Kentucky where his family owned over 10,000 acres and twenty-six slaves, settled in Louisiana after marrying, and buried in Kentucky.

Taylor and his running mate, Millard Fillmore ran against Democrat, Lewis Cass, and Free-Soil candidate, Martin Van Buren. Taylor was known as “Old Rough and Ready” by his troops for staying out in the field with them. Taylor wins by a narrow margin and has his own ideas of what was needed, so there were many in his own party in opposition to him. Territorial expansion and slavery are Taylor’s big problems. Although a slave owner himself, he leans toward abolition, and what should be slave policy in the new western land gained in the Mexican War, and with the discovery of gold in California there are more calls for statehood for western territories.

But in July of 1850, at the laying of the cornerstone for the Washington monument, Taylor has iced milk and eats raw vegetables and cherries, maybe to excess, and he took ill with violent stomach cramps the following day. Treatment for the condition in the day was purging, bleeding and blistering. All that did was to probably hasten his death and Taylor died on July 9 of acute gastroenteritis called cholera morbus at the time. In 1991 some novelists pushed forth the idea he had been assassinated by poisoning by Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, and John Calhoun. His body was exhumed from his tomb in Zachary Taylor

National Military Cemetery; tests *showed he had not been poisoned with arsenic, and back he went. And if you remember – big circus over.*

Clay may have been a zero for presidential runs, but he was three for three when it came to negotiating national compromises. The Missouri Compromise in 1820 set the line for Free vs. Slave states in the North and South and the Western States. He brokered the 1833 Compromise when South Carolina, whose leaders always threatened to pull out of the Union if they didn't get their way over something, said they would secede if tariff questions weren't answered. Jackson a southerner from Tennessee said that if South Carolina tried such a move he would lead an army himself and go down there and hang every traitor he could find from the first tree he came to. Then in 1850 Clay was the leader that cooled feelings about slavery and state's rights for awhile in the 1850 Compromise. Clay died in 1852 leaving a void of great leaders who were able to keep the country together.

Then there was the forgettable 1850s with weak leaders who generally didn't do a whole lot. Democrat Franklin Pierce was in 1852. He did make one good decision in appointing Louisville's James Guthrie as Treasury Secretary, thought to be one of the finest Secretaries of the Treasury. He was President of the University of Louisville, he was behind the Portland & Louisville Canal built in the 1820s to bypass the Falls of the Ohio, and was instrumental in getting the first bridge to Indiana at Louisville built over the Ohio River. He was also active nationally.

Pierce was followed by James Buchanan in 1856, who is said to have been dominated by southerners in his cabinet, as Pierce was supposedly dominated by his cabinet.

The Whig Party had come apart by this time over slavery and replaced by the Republican Party formed in the mid-1850s. The Democrats have split into North and South Democrats over the same issue. John C. Fremont of California and explorer fame was the first Republican candidate in 1856; he was anti-slavery and carried the north.

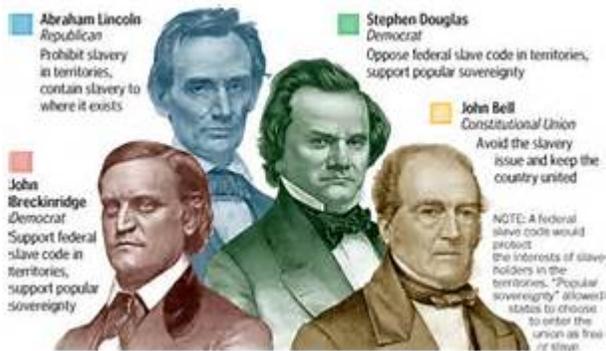
The American Party, or the Know Nothings, found brief success nationally, and in Kentucky in the mid-1850s. Their platform was anti-foreign and anti-Catholic that drew many people who feared the many Irish Catholics and Germans entering the country, who they felt didn't have their values. The American Party was strong enough in Kentucky to elect a governor, Charles S. Morehead (1855-1859), and other federal and state representatives. If you queried them about their party affiliation and what it stood for, their pat answer was, "I know nothing."

Editor's Note – Kentucky Historical Marker

"Bloody Monday" and American (Know-Nothing) Party

Marker Number	2205
County	Jefferson
Location	1011 West Main St., Louisville
Description	Election day, Aug. 6, 1855, known as Bloody Monday due to riots led by "Know-Nothing" mobs. This political party was anti-Catholic and nativist. Attacks on German immigrants east of downtown and Irish in the west caused at least 22 deaths, arson, and looting. Catholic Cathedral of the Assumption & St. Martin's Church was threatened with destruction. (Reverse) This party feared that Catholic immigrants from Germany and Ireland threatened Protestantism and democracy. By 1854, the party claimed a million members nationwide and led Jefferson Co. govt. They split over slavery and by the end of the Civil War they had vanished from politics in Louisville and Jefferson Co.

The 1860 election was a four-way race, where the country came apart, and led to the Civil War. The Republicans nominated Kentuckian Abraham Lincoln, the Northern Democrats felt that Stephen Douglas had the best chance to defeat the "**BLACK REPUBLICANS**," the Southern Democrats chose John C. Breckinridge, another Kentuckian, who had been Vice-president under James Buchanan, and the Constitutional Union Party put forth John Bell of Tennessee. Interestingly the Democrats had considered Louisville's James Guthrie as a compromise choice, but they couldn't agree and the two factions split.



Breckinridge stood for protection of slavery and states rights, Douglas, known as the "little giant", he was short but a very powerful politician, pushed popular sovereignty – let the state decide if they wanted slavery, Bell said adhere to the Constitution and maintain the Union, and Lincoln's platform was to limit slavery and maintain the Union, but southerners were convinced Lincoln did not believe in just limiting slavery, but total abolition.

The election was a vote by section, Breckinridge carried the South, Lincoln carried the North, Bell won in Kentucky where Lincoln only received one percent of the vote. Lincoln received forty percent of the popular vote, but more than half of the electoral vote to win the election. Douglas actually was second behind Lincoln in the popular vote tally, but fourth in the electoral vote.

A *New York Times* article had this to say on November 6, 1860: Astounding Triumph of Republicanism.; The North Rising in Indignation at the Menaces of the South. Abraham Lincoln Probably Elected President by a Majority of the Entire Popular vote. Forty Thousand Majority for the Republican Ticket in New-York. One Hundred Thousand Majority in Pennsylvania. Seventy Thousand Majority in Massachusetts. Corresponding Gains in the Western and NorthWestern States. Preponderance of John Bell and Conservatism in the South.

The election in 1864 was the first held during war since the War of 1812 and Lincoln didn't think he would win. He had strong opposition in the Congress, his suspension of the writ of habeas corpus was ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court, an order Lincoln refused to obey, but worst of all, the war was not going well. Atlanta fell in September followed by significant Union victories, and it became evident the Union would be victorious. Soldiers were released to go home and vote. Lincoln ran against Democrat Gen. George B. McClellan, Lincoln's former commander of the Army of the Potomac, who tried to portray himself to the voters as the "peace candidate" who wanted to bring the American Civil War to a quick end. But the Democrats were split and disorganized.

Lincoln won in a landslide and became the first president to be elected to a second term since Andrew Jackson in 1832. He was assassinated just forty-two days later. His second term is the shortest term by a president other than William Henry Harrison's thirty-one day term when he died of pneumonia. Andrew Johnson of Tennessee, brought in as a compromise candidate for vice-president with Lincoln, assumed the presidency.

Johnson had a hard row to hoe from the start with the Radical Republicans. He had started the reconstruction process while Congress was out of session in 1865, and when they came back in session late in the year, the Radical Republicans passed legislation to impose military rule in the South and guarantee freedom for slaves. Johnson came within one vote of impeachment for running amuck of one of the new pieces of legislation the Republicans had gotten passed.

In bitterly contested election in 1868, Republican Ulysses S. Grant became the 21st President of the United States.

From the 1868 election Jim Holmberg showed memorabilia from presidential elections and told about some of the more interesting ones.

In 1872 *New York Tribune* newspaper editor, Horace Greeley, ran against Grant who really didn't do much campaigning. Greeley was pilloried in the press and was done in a flash. James Garfield was inaugurated in March 1881 and assassinated on September 19, 1881. Benjamin Butler was the Democratic nominee in 1884 and you wonder how that ever happened. He wasn't photogenic, he had a bad reputation as a manipulator and conniver, the South absolutely loathed him, he was known as "spoon Butler" because as a commanding General in the Civil War he was in command in New Orleans, and he supposedly was stealing all the silver and lining his pockets with it.



In 1896 the prohibition movement had a brief fling and nominated Joshua Levering for president. He was the trustee's president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. But the real battle in 1896 was a battle of the standards. "Gold bugs" believed that the national economy should be based on the gold standard, and the "Silverites" led by William Jennings Bryant, believed that currency should be redeemable in silver as well as gold. William McKinley, Republican, was elected and re-elected in 1900, again defeating W. G. Bryant. McKinley was later assassinated and Theodore Roosevelt assumed the presidency. Roosevelt ushered in a progressive era,

was very popular, and lived to regret a promise not to serve for more than two terms. Since he had only been elected President one time, he could have run again. He did run again in 1912 on the Progressive or Bull Moose ticket when Roosevelt became unhappy with the path the Republican Party was going down. This split the Republican vote and Democrat Woodrow Wilson was elected.

1908 – William H. Taft is the largest person to be elected to date – over 300 pounds. People would say, "You know what Taft stand for - Takes Advice From Theodore." Which wasn't true, as was found in 1912 when Taft lost to Wilson.

1912 – Woodrow Wilson, a New Jersey Democratic progressive, was nominated for president at the Democratic Convention by Kentucky Senator Ollie James, who it was thought after Wilson's run, would become the next Democratic nominee.

Another run of mediocre presidents followed Wilson. Warren Harding of whom it was said he would rather be playing cards and with his mistress than running the country. Calvin Coolidge stepped in after Harding died in office and he was elected to his own term in 1924. He was a devotee of long afternoon naps and called "Silent Cal" for not saying much. Herbert Hoover was elected in 1928 and had the misfortune of being in office when the 1929 stock market crash hit. Hoover's opponent was Catholic, Al Smith. The campaign was very ugly, but Hoover had no part in it.

But when Hoover ran for re-election in 1932 against Franklin Roosevelt there was a ditty- "Mellon pulled the whistle / Hoover rang the bell / Wall Street gave the signal / And the country went to hell." Roosevelt sweeps into office and stays there for four terms, taking on all comers, brings the country out of the Depression, leads the nation during WWII, and dies in office in 1945. He is followed by Vice-



President Harry Truman, who is elected in 1948 by a slim margin in a famous misreported result. His Vice-President is Kentucky Senator Albin Barkley.

For the 1952 and 1956 election cycles the Filson has the usual “I like Ike” buttons, also a pin for Ike with Morton and Cooper on it, referring to Kentucky’s two senators. They also have packs of cigarettes campaigning for Ike and Stevenson.



In 1960 it was Kennedy vs. Nixon and the Filson has a campaign pin showing President Truman and under his picture reads, “Nixon is a Shifty Eyed g—d----- liar.” Of course in 1968 Nixon did get his turn, only to prove maybe Truman was right, as Nixon was forced out of office because of the Watergate scandal.

Bobbleheads of Clinton and George H. W. Bush were a new twist in 1992. “The Chads” had it in 2000 as Gore won the popular vote by over 500,000, but lost the electoral vote by five to George W. Bush. And 2000 is the first time there is a father and son serving as President since John and John Quincy Adams in the early 1800s.

Jim closed his program with a picture of the Three Stooges with banner reading, “Don’t let the Rhetoric and Pundits Drive you Crazy or Keep you Home.” Very apropos for this election cycle.

No matter who or what you are for, just make sure you exercise you constitutional right and VOTE! !

Durrett/Dr. Bryant/Spring Lake Farm

What is left of the old Dr. Bryant/Durrett property is up for sale. It is the old farmhouse, barn, and some land. It is listed as six bedrooms and six baths, the price is \$445,000. Beth Wilder had talked to one of the Durrett daughters about possibly being able to take photos inside the house and maybe look through the barn for Bryant artifacts said to possibly being stored in the barn, but nothing ever came of it. If anyone knows or hears anything, you can call me -491-6463.

Contact Us

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