

## History as a Profession

History as a profession is relatively young. The academic historian, trained in a specific field of historical study, appears as a newcomer to an old discipline. Before the introduction of professional standards and requirements into the study of history, individuals devoted to the subject for any number of reasons dominated the discipline. These amateur historians chronicled history on which later generations of professionals based much of their work. While the study and writing of state history now rests in the hands of professional historians, the debt owed to their amateur predecessors remains monumental and deserves study.

Why did these non-professional historians devote so much of their time and energy, and personal fortune to the study and writing of their state's history? More important, what did their interpretations of Kentucky history do for their reader's perception of the state? What sources did they use in their research? Did they approach with a critical eye and verify these sources? Did they perpetuate the myths and prejudices of their time regarding the history of the commonwealth? These questions should be addressed if we are to understand not only the findings of Kentucky's amateur historians, but also if we are to understand how Kentuckians view themselves.

Fortunately for Kentucky history, a number of dedicated men and women researched and wrote much of the existing history of the Commonwealth. This study will look primarily at the efforts of the non-professional historians who wrote or compiled a comprehensive history of Kentucky. Well into the twentieth century amateur historians pursued their craft. History became more of an avocation than a vocation. Some people of leisure and adequate financial resources looked to history as a means to express themselves in their community, or to add to their prestige as men and women of letters. For many years people viewed history as a noble pursuit, something to amuse and hopefully enlighten, the individual, but not to be taken seriously as a profession. Not until the 1870s and 1880s did institutions of higher learning such as Johns Hopkins, Harvard, and other schools began to confer Ph.D.s on students of history. The field of history as an academic discipline slowly began to come into its own in the colleges and universities of America. For many years academic history remained more of a novelty than a reality. The responsibility of writing American history fell to persons of independent wealth and excellent social connections. Men of means such as Henry Adams, Frederick Bancroft, and Francis Parkman could devote their time to the study and writing of history. These brilliant and prolific amateurs dominated the writing of history for many years before being displaced by the rise of the professional historian.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> David D. Van Tassell, *Recording America's Past* (Chicago, 1960), 179; John Franklin Jameson, *The History of Historical Writing in America* (Boston, 1891), 158-159; For an excellent study of the growth of professionalism in academia in the United States, see J. Burton Bledstein, *The Culture of Professionalism* (New York, 1976).

The histories written by non-professional historians have influenced generations of Americans. The histories of Kentucky are no different. The work done by the predecessors of college and university trained professionals has impacted the views of many people. In Kentucky, as elsewhere, the men and women who took upon themselves to interpret their state's past have immeasurably influenced students of history. Local prejudices often colored their interpretations of statewide or national events. The role of the county in Kentucky history should never be underestimated. Not only did the role of a particular county in Kentucky history influence the history of an area or region, it also influenced the interpretation of the history of the state.

Local biases could tend to make a history of Kentucky reflect a pro-southern when the work explored Civil War years. Or, it could take a totally nationalistic stand. The frontier could over played, or the influence of a segment of the state could be blown out of proportion. The problems of localism influenced more states than just Kentucky, however, the commonwealth suffered from more than its share of prejudicial history.

While some women wrote history on a regional and national level, few of them received acceptance as serious historians. The near stranglehold of men on the writing of history proved a difficult barrier for women to overcome.

Southern female historians fared worse than their Northern counterparts. Males tended to dominate the writing of history, especially in the South. In Kentucky women did not venture into the writing of state history until the late nineteenth century when Emma M. Connelly authored the *Story of Kentucky* (1890) as part of the *History of the States* series,<sup>2</sup> followed in 1896 by Elizabeth Shelby Kinhead (1863-1935), who wrote a text for grade schools published by the American Book Company entitled *A History of Kentucky*. Reprinted between 1896 and 1919, this work remained a popular favorite.<sup>3</sup>

Martha Grassham Purcell contributed to the body of the commonwealth's historical literature with her well written, entertaining, but highly romanticized version of the commonwealth's history in *Stories of Old Kentucky*. Purcell based her work on the "great man" theory of history. She writes in her preface that the history of the state "teems with adventure and patriotism. Its pages are filled with the great achievements, the heroic deeds, and the inspiring examples of the explorers, the settlers, and the founders of our state."<sup>4</sup>

As the nineteenth century waned, dedicated amateurs and antiquarians continued to be the prevalent force in Kentucky historiography. Genteel (or at least aspiring to gentility), white males, made up of businessmen, judges, lawyers, newspaper editors, and teachers, with little or no formal training in the study of history, abounded as would-be historians. Many of these amateurs only amused themselves with the study of history. They did not do so much original research as they did retelling heroic historical events. The dramatic

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<sup>2</sup> Emma M. Connelly, *The Story of Kentucky* (Boston, 1890).

<sup>3</sup> Elizabeth Shelby Kinhead, *A History of Kentucky* (New York, 1919); June Lee Mefford Kinhead, *Our Kentucky Pioneer Ancestry* (Baltimore, 1992), 40.

<sup>4</sup> Martha Grassham Purcell, *Stories of Old Kentucky* (New York, 1915), 5.

and the heroic story remained the custom in the early historiography of Kentucky. Romantic tales of hardy pioneers such as Boone, Kenton, and Harrod, who conquered a wild and savage wilderness, appealed to the reader as well as to the early writer of Kentucky history.

A lack of documented information burdened the first attempts at writing Kentucky history. Moreover, some of the first historians of Kentucky were men who had motives other than those of preserving a record of the past. The lack of a historical methodology placed the early histories of Kentucky in the category of quaint curiosities to the more sophisticated modern reader. Nevertheless, these works greatly influenced future generations of historians and laymen alike. The first history of Kentucky became the epitome of the type of historical writing that set the standard for many years to come. These early histories are part promotional, part romantic, and part pure fabrication.

In 1909 Dr. Robert McNutt McElroy, assistant professor of history at Princeton University, authored a work entitled, *Kentucky in the Nation's History*. Not a comprehensive history of the Commonwealth, McElroy's work focused on the history of Kentucky as it pertained to the nation's history, not as work for the "cultivation of purely local patriotism." By no means should McElroy's book be placed in the same category as other state histories. Limited in scope, *Kentucky in the Nation's History* only takes the reader through the Civil War. Not until 1922, when William Connelley and E. Merton Coulter wrote two volumes of a five-volume work on the state, edited by Judge Charles Kerr, would Kentucky have a history written in part by professional historians. Fifteen years later, in 1937, Dr. Thomas D. Clark authored *A History of Kentucky*. This classic work, the first overall one-volume history of the commonwealth written by an academically trained historian remained the standard for many years.<sup>5</sup>

With the end of the American Revolution, and the entry of the United States into the community of nations, came a sense of national pride. As a new political entity the nation did not have a national heritage. The United States far from being united in the post revolutionary era, suffered from localism. History was no exception. Prolific New England authors wrote much on the history of their portion of America. The South lacked the intellectual foment of New England, and only a few Southern writers produced historical works of note.

By the 1780s American historians began to fill in the gaps in national history, but localism remained a driving historical force. Jeremy Belknap (1744-98), founder of the Massachusetts Historical Society, listened to the advice that writing a state history would, "lay a good foundation" for a future historian to write a "general history of the country."<sup>6</sup> In 1784 he published the first of a three-volume work on the *History of New Hampshire*.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Robert McNutt McElroy, *Kentucky In The Nation's History* (New York, 1909).

<sup>6</sup> Letter from A. Wibird to Belknap, April 14, 1779, *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections*, 6<sup>th</sup> sr., 4 (1891): 139.

<sup>7</sup> Belknap's History... presages some of the nineteenth century state histories including some Kentucky works (most notably the efforts of Lewis and Richard Henry Collins) in that it includes a volume of anecdotal material covering a wide range of subjects. See, Sidney Kaplan, "The History of New

The same year that Belknap published the first volume of his New Hampshire history, another history another came off the press in Wilmington, Delaware. This history did not look at one of the long settled east coast states; instead it recorded the beginnings of the wild Kentucky portion of the Virginia frontier.

John Filson (1753-1788), an itinerant schoolteacher from Chester County, Pennsylvania, and a part-time surveyor and cartographer, wrote the first published history of Kentucky in 1784. He moved to the area in 1783, and shortly after his arrival, began to write a book about his new home. His work, *The Discovery, Settlement, and Present State of Kentucke*, published in Wilmington, Delaware, served as a promotional for the settlement of Kentucky rather than a real history of the region.<sup>8</sup>

As a promotional for emigration and settlement, Filson's book appeared at a propitious time in American history. The Revolutionary War ended in 1783, opening up the Kentucky frontier for increased and legitimate settlement.<sup>9</sup> The book's timing was excellent. Land-hungry settlers looked to the West for the fulfillment of their desire to find literally greener pastures. Filson's work only whetted the settler's seemingly insatiable appetite for land. The author himself acquired some 13,000 acres of prime Kentucky land. Meanwhile, his book, selling for a dollar and a half, did very well. Filson reported that the 1,500 copies printed, "sold at a rapid pace."<sup>10</sup>

The inclusion of an excellent map of the central Kentucky area became one of the lasting achievements of Filson's work. The map also sold separately from the book and is considered the first of its kind totally devoted to Kentucky.

Filson's history of Kentucky achieved extreme popularity. In 1785 M. Parraud of Paris published a French edition. German editions published in Frankfurt in 1785, Nuremberg, 1789, and in Leipzig, 1790, sold well. English editions appearing in 1792, 1793, and in 1797, also did well. Publisher Samuel Campbell of New York reprinted Filson's work in 1793, along with Gilbert Imlay's *Topographical Description of the Western Territory of North America*, and Harry Toulmin's, *Thoughts on Emigration*.<sup>11</sup> In 1786 Alexander Fitzroy used Filson's work in a pamphlet aimed at potential immigrants to America.<sup>12</sup>

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Hampshire, Jeremy Belknap as Literary Craftsman." *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ser., 21 (January, 1964): 20-21.

<sup>8</sup> For an overview of Filson's life and work, see, John Walton, *John Filson of Kentucke* (Lexington, Ky., 1956).

<sup>9</sup> Settlers came to Kentucky as early as 1774-75, defying the Proclamation of 1763, which prohibited the settlement of the lands west of the Appalachian Mountains and north of the thirty-first parallel.

<sup>10</sup> John Filson, *The Discovery, Settlement, and Present State of Kentucke* (Wilmington, Delaware, 1784); J. Winston Coleman, Jr., *John Filson, Esq. Kentucky's First Historian and Cartographer* (Lexington, Ky., 1954), 5-6.

<sup>11</sup> Imlay's work appeared in a number of editions. Dublin and New York in 1793, and in an enlarged London edition printed for J. Debrett in 1797. See Gilbert Imlay, *A Topographical Description of the Western Territory of North America* (London, 1797); Harry Toulmin work was also reprinted by different publishers. See Harry Toulmin, *Thoughts on Emigration* (n.p., 1792).

<sup>12</sup> Alexander Fitzroy, *The Discovery, Purchase, and Settlement of the Country of Kentuckie, in North America* (London 1786). W.R. Jillson reprinted this work in 1931 as *Kentucky Country*.

It would be Filson's history that created the international fame of one of Kentucky's first pioneers. Daniel Boone (1734-1820) became a legend due to an appendix to Filson's work. "The Adventures of Col. Daniel Boon; containing a Narrative of the Wars of Kentucke" remains one of the best pieces of promotional writing to date.

Filson enthusiastically describes Kentucky. He lauds Kentucky's climate as "more temperate and healthy than the other settled parts of America." Winters "last three months, commonly two..." The best land has soils "about two or three feet deep." The "well timbered" countryside produced "large trees of many kinds, and to be exceeded by no country in variety." The "sugar-tree" furnishes every family with plenty of excellent sugar. While the fruit of honey-locust "has a sweet taste, and makes excellent beer." Filson notes that Kentucky has "plenty of fine cane" for cattle "to feed and grow fat."<sup>13</sup>

Filson's glowing account of Kentucky's natural riches, fertile land, great forests, abundant game and fish, ample water supply, and mild climate helped influence thousands of people to move westward to Kentucky. To the land-hungry residents of the frontiers of Virginia, the Carolinas Maryland and Pennsylvania, Filson's description of Kentucky became a siren's song to emigrate. If his account held true, Kentucky must be a veritable Eden only awaiting the axe and plow to open up the area for settlement. If nothing else, Filson proved himself an excellent promoter. Other Kentucky historians followed his lead in mixing history and promotional literature. Historical facts interspersed with vivid descriptions of how great a place Kentucky could be for settlement and exploitation, gave the reader a near magical mixture of fact and hype. Add a sense of adventure to tales of battles, narrow escapes and settlement opportunities, and one has an irresistible combination of romance, reality, and above all, promotion.

Unfortunately, Kentucky historiography languished during the period between Filson's work and the next published history of the state. The popularity of the Filson's history continued into the twentieth century when the Filson Club (a Louisville based historical society named in honor of Kentucky's first historian and now called the Filson Historical Society) reprinted a facsimile edition of Filson's book in 1929 and 1930, as *Filson Club Publication No. 35*. Another edition of Filson's work, edited by Willard Rouse Jillson, appeared in 1929 as *Filson's Kentucke*.<sup>14</sup>

Nearly three decades passed before the next attempt at writing a history of Kentucky. The first state history, as well as the first critical history of Kentucky, resulted from the efforts of Humphrey Marshall (1760-1841) who published *The History of Kentucky* in 1812. While Marshall's work is the first history of Kentucky in the true sense of the word, it is also one of the most flawed histories of the Commonwealth. Marshall, an ardent Federalist, did not let history stand in the way of using his work as a political vendetta against his enemies. He used the pages of his history to attack with a vengeance those who opposed him. Senator John Brown (1757-1837) of Frankfort particularly

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<sup>13</sup> Filson, *Discovery*, 21-23.

<sup>14</sup> Willard Rouse Jillson, *Filson's Kentucke* (Louisville, 1929). There were other reprints of Filson's work. Jillson's edition was reprinted in 1930, 1931, and in 1934. Other editions of the book came out in 1956, 1962, 1967, and in 1968.

earned his contempt. He accused Brown of supporting the machinations of James Wilkinson and the so-called “Spanish Conspiracy” to separate Kentucky from Virginia and make it a part of the Spanish empire.<sup>15</sup> Marshall further accused Brown of intriguing “clandestinely and traitorously with the Spanish minister to separate Kentucky from Virginia and the Union; and for the purpose of connecting it with the Spanish Monarchy.”<sup>16</sup> Marshall’s work is important to the historiography of Kentucky not only for being the first attempt at a truly comprehensive history of the state, but also for the first hand accounts of important historical events. His book was enlarged and republished in a two-volume format in 1824.<sup>17</sup>

One of the more important, but often overlooked, additions to the historiography of the Commonwealth was penned by John Bradford (1749-1830) of Lexington. Editor of the *Kentucky Gazette*, the only newspaper within 500 miles of Lexington from 1787 until 1795, Bradford not only had an interest in Kentucky history, he also passed it on to posterity. As an editor and printer, Bradford had the means to preserve the historical anecdotes pertaining to Kentucky.<sup>18</sup>

In 1826 Bradford began to publish a series of sixty-six “Notes on Kentucky.” From the pages of the *Gazette*, Bradford gleaned materials on Kentucky’s past. He retold the tales of Indian raids, “long hunters,” settlement, and statehood. Bradford also included information on the educational struggles of Transylvania University, publishing the minutes of that institution.<sup>19</sup> The historical vignettes from the *Gazette* contain an enormous amount of material for the historian.

Marshall had at least attempted to write an overall history of the state. However, another decade would pass before the next general history of the state would appear. In 1834, Mann Butler (1784-1855), a native of Baltimore, Maryland, published *A History of the Commonwealth of Kentucky*. Unlike Humphrey Marshall’s history, Butler’s study of Kentucky presented a more balanced history of the state. The acerbic political attacks that filled Marshall’s book is absent in Butler’s history. Instead, Butler gave excellent descriptions of frontier life.<sup>20</sup> Well educated in law and medicine, he received degrees

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<sup>15</sup> Stuart Seely Sprague, “Kentucky Politics and the Heritage of the American Revolution: The Early Years, 1783-1788.” *Register* 78 (Spring 1980): 107-114; also see, Judith O’Hare Smith, “The Spanish Conspiracy, 1783-1792: A Quest For Equity.” Ph.D. diss., University of California, San Diego, 1983, and Thomas Marshall Green, *The Spanish Conspiracy* (Cincinnati, 1891).

<sup>16</sup> Humphrey Marshall, *The History of Kentucky* (Frankfort, 1812), 341-42. For an opposing view of Brown’s involvement Elizabeth Warren, “Senator John Brown’s Role in the Kentucky Spanish Conspiracy.” *Filson Club Quarterly* 36 (April 1962): 170-74.

<sup>17</sup> Humphrey Marshall, *The History of Kentucky* (Frankfort, Kentucky 1824) 2 vols.; Howard Meridith, “The Historical Thought of Humphrey Marshall: A Note on Frontier Historicism,” *Filson Club Quarterly* 47 (1973): 349-52; A.C. Quisenberry, *The Life and Times of Humphrey Marshall* (Winchester, Kentucky, 1892).

<sup>18</sup> Richard Miller Hadsell, “John Bradford and His Early Contributions to the Culture and the Life of Early Lexington and Kentucky,” *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 62 (1964): 266-68.

<sup>19</sup> See Thomas D. Clark, Editor, *John Bradford’s Notes on Kentucky* (Lexington, Kentucky, 1993).

<sup>20</sup> Richard Henry Collins said of Butler, the historian, “As a historian Dr. Butler was exceedingly laborious, full sometime to tedium, exact as to facts, conscientious, fair, plain-spoken and nearly always entertaining

from St Mary's College in the District of Columbia. First and foremost, an educator, Butler spent a great deal of his career teaching school. He taught in Frankfort, and eventually joined the faculty of Transylvania University in Lexington,<sup>21</sup> and later taught in Louisville from 1831 to 1845. Instrumental in founding the University of Louisville and the Louisville Free Public Library, Butler spent much of his time promoting education. In 1845 he moved to St. Louis, where he continued his work as an educator until his death in a train accident in 1855.<sup>22</sup>

The publication of Butler's history of Kentucky marked a turning point in the historiography of the commonwealth. Thus far Kentucky historians employed the narrative approach to history. In 1847 one of the major histories of the state changed its format from narrative to annalistic. Lewis Collins (1797-1870), newspaper editor, and judge of Mason County, Kentucky devoted his leisure time to the study of Kentucky history. As editor of the *Maysville Eagle*, Collins published a number of popular articles on the history of the state. These articles, along with other materials contributed by his brother-in-law Henry Peers, made up Collins' *Historical Sketches of Kentucky*. Often overlooked by historians, Peers provided the bulk of county and town information that Collins used. He had planned to gather information on Kentucky and publish it as a gazetteer of the state. However, with Peers' untimely death, Collins obtained the majority of his notes. As the originator of much of what Collins used in his work, Peers had laid the foundation for Collins' more complete work.

By far, Lewis Collins' 1847 Kentucky history represented the most complete work to date. He attempted to give statistics along with historical anecdotes regarding Kentucky's past. As the first Kentucky historian to recognize the importance of the county in Kentucky history, he carefully added facts and figures on each of the state's counties, giving an excellent view of mid-nineteenth century Kentucky. Collins desired to "preserve, in a durable form," the scattered fragments of Kentucky's history.<sup>23</sup>

The addition of a chronological outline of historical events added interest to Collins' work. Biographical vignettes also strengthened his retelling of Kentucky's past. By not following the strict narrative format he could incorporate a number of unrelated topics into his history. He also drew heavily from oral traditions, which he called the "recollections" of "the stirring scenes" of "aged actors" who played their parts in the founding of the commonwealth.<sup>24</sup>

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but with few passages that were eloquent or specially attractive in style." Richard H. Collins, *History of Kentucky* 2 vols. (Newport, 1874), I: 38-39.

<sup>21</sup> Samuel M. Wilson, "Sketch of Mann Butler," *Register* 24 (1926): 191-94. Also see Mann Butler, *A History of the Commonwealth of Kentucky* (Louisville, Ky., 1834).

<sup>22</sup> *The Frankfort Commonwealth*, November 6, 1855; See G. Glenn Clift, "Preface," in Mann Butler, *Valley of the Ohio* (Frankfort, 1971); Butler's papers, including many of his historical manuscripts, are located in the Ruben T. Durrett Collection housed in the manuscript division of the University of Chicago.

<sup>23</sup> James P. Gregory, Jr., "Lewis and Richard H. Collins, A Chapter in Kentucky Historiography," *Filson Club History Quarterly* 21 (1947): 313.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* Collins, *History*, 2I: iv.

The 1840s became a key decade in the historiography of Kentucky. During the decade Lyman Copeland Draper (1815-1891) began his quest to secure information on western frontier history. Draper deemed it necessary to gather as many documents and interviews as possible from those who participated in the westward expansion. In 1844, Draper began a journey of some five months through Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia, collecting thousands of documents to verify the experiences of the pioneers. The news of Draper's research quickly traveled through the intellectual community of the state. While in Louisville, Draper utilized the collections of the relatively new Kentucky Historical Society.<sup>25</sup>

During the 1850s publishers sensed the growing popularity of state history. To meet the demand for relatively cheap mass-produced books publishers issued numerous editions of state histories. These uniform works published by Lippincott, Grambo & Company of Philadelphia were widely distributed throughout the country. The Kentucky volume came out in 1852. In the publisher's preface the reader is informed that this series of histories "while presenting a concise but accurate narrative of the domestic policy of each state, will give greater prominence to the personal history of the people."<sup>26</sup> In the author's preface, T.S. Arthur and W.H. Carpenter stated that they had endeavored to present as much "detail as possible" in their history, but they also wished to write a narrative of the "thrilling adventures of the early settlers which give to the history of Kentucky the fascination of a romance."<sup>27</sup> True to its intent, the Lippincott history of the state filled its pages with tales of Indian raids, pioneer exploits, and frontier intrigues. Disappointingly, very little of Kentucky history is related between 1814 and 1846. The work ends with a brief description of the Mexican War.

In 1870, Dr. Daniel Drake (1785-1852), a noted physician and medical lecturer, wrote the seminal work on Kentucky pioneer social history. *Pioneer Life in Kentucky 1785-1800* gives a vivid description of what life on the frontier during the years of settlement and early statehood. Drake's childhood memories of daily activities offer a rich narrative of life in the wilderness.<sup>28</sup>

The next important attempt at producing a comprehensive Kentucky history appeared in 1872, written by Green County native, William Barrett Allen (1803-1882). Allen's *A History of Kentucky, Embracing Gleanings, Reminiscences, Antiquities, Natural Curiosities, Statistics, and Biographical Sketches* became the first major history of the Commonwealth in a quarter century. Allen tells his readers that it is his desire to write a

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<sup>25</sup> William B. Hesseltine, *Pioneer Mission, The Story of Lyman Copeland Draper* (Madison, Wis., 1954), 53; Draper evidently carried off more than copies from the Kentucky Historical Society. See letter dated July 2, 1881 from Cornelia Bush, KHS librarian, requested the return of manuscripts that were loaned to him for his research. Bush to Draper, July 2, 1881, *Kentucky Papers* 33CC27, Draper Manuscripts, State Historical Society Wisconsin.

<sup>26</sup> T.S. Arthur and W.H. Carpenter, *Lippincott's Cabinet Histories of the States. Kentucky* (Philadelphia, 1852), 6.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>28</sup> Daniel Drake, *Pioneer Life in Kentucky, A Series of Reminiscent Letters From Daniel Drake, M.D., of Cincinnati, To His Children* (Cincinnati, 1870); J. Christian Bay, "Dr. Daniel Drake, 1785-1852," *Filson Club History Quarterly* 7 (1933): 1-17.

history of Kentucky filled with “useful, interesting, correct, and entertaining matter; and with a narration so plain as to be easily understood, even by those of the humblest pretensions to learning.” He also noted that he had included historical sketches of the leading denominations of Christians in Kentucky “without partiality or sectarian predilection.”<sup>29</sup>

Allen notes that his historical “advantage and assistance” in writing his history came from the works of Butler, Marshall, and Lewis Collins. But many of the historical sketches were “written from my own recollection and knowledge of the persons described, with such information as I could collect from their descendents or intimate friends and relatives.”<sup>30</sup> Allen’s history of Kentucky, like so many other historians of the nineteenth century, makes no attempt at verifying its content from original records. His work is also filled with a number of lists, some having to do with various subjects pertaining to Kentucky history, while other lists dealt with the history of the nation. Allen devoted 138 pages of his 449 page state history to biographical sketches of prominent Kentuckians. Late nineteenth and early twentieth century Kentucky historians would rely on padding their histories with numerous biographical sketches for commercial and filler purposes.<sup>31</sup> Overall, Allen’s history of the state adequately filled the gap between Lewis Collins’ study and the work of Collins’ son, Richard.

In 1874 Lewis Collins’ son, Richard Henry Collins (1824-1888), expanded his father’s one volume work into two. Collins added a great deal of new historical and statistical material on Kentucky’s counties. Well adapted to his task, Richard Henry Collins possessed an excellent education, having attended Centre College, where he obtained both bachelors and masters degrees. He also studied law at Transylvania University in Lexington, receiving a law degree in 1846.<sup>32</sup>

Collins’ love of history and the written word evidenced itself throughout his career. As a youth he wrote in his journal of his admiration for the lessons of history. In 1839 he noted, “History is the key-stone, the foundation of all other studies with which man’s ease and toil has made him permanently acquainted; the key which alone unlocks to every inquisitive mind the treasures of the universe.” As a founder of the *Danville Review* magazine (edited by Robert J. Breckinridge), writer, and later editor for the *Maysville Eagle*, Collins’ fascination with history inspired him to delve deep into Kentucky’s past.<sup>33</sup>

In 1884 Collins helped found the Filson Club, which became one of the premier historical societies in the nation. However, Richard H. Collins is best remembered for the expansion of his father’s work, *Historical Sketches of Kentucky*.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> William B. Allen, *A History of Kentucky*, (Louisville, Ky., 1872).

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, v., vi.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 236-337.

<sup>32</sup> Jennie Chinn Morton, “Sketch and Picture of Richard H. Collins, Historian,” *Register* 7 (1909): 11-16;

<sup>33</sup> Richard H. Collins, “Journal.” University of Kentucky Special Collections. Lexington, Ky.

<sup>34</sup> Hambleton Tapp, “The Founding of the Filson Club,” *Filson Club History Quarterly* 18 (1944): 144.

Out of print since the 1850s, Lewis Collins' work continued in high demand. With numerous requests for a reprint of *Historical Sketches of Kentucky*, Richard H. Collins decided to not only republish his father's book but to also enlarge it. Collins' sense of history and his admiration for his father's achievement gave him a feeling of destiny in regard to the publication of the story of Kentucky's founding. He later said, "The duty of preparing this History sought me and I not it."<sup>35</sup>

With over three hundred individuals providing some type of information or research, Collins spent the better portion of four years from 1870 through 1874 in compiling and writing his magisterial history of the commonwealth. He used some three hundred and fifty pages of his father's book, either in total or with modifications. Collins added an additional 1,500 pages of new material, a great deal of which he gleaned from court documents.<sup>36</sup>

Collins' extensively used primary sources. He culled a massive amount of information from nearly 10,000 court depositions. He took copious notes from these documents, thus proving as historical fact many local legends and traditions. By studying the early county court records and land surveys, Collins collected an enormous amount of data on the first settlers of Kentucky.<sup>37</sup>

By far the best work of its type yet to be published, Collins' *History of Kentucky* had major faults. The lack of order in which the author presented his material makes it difficult to follow. In volume one Collins begins with a list of Revolutionary War soldiers, followed by over two hundred pages of data regarding the history of Kentucky. For the next one hundred pages he gives an outline of the state's history. The remainder of the volume is a polyglot of statistics, notes on Native Americans, church histories, a section on freemasonry, internal improvements, and poetry.<sup>38</sup>

Despite Collins' convoluted placement of topics in the first volume, the second volume redeems itself with an invaluable study of Kentucky's numerous counties. Not only does Collins relate the genesis of each county, he also lists the towns and villages, with population figures from 1790 through 1870. He includes information on the types of timber and mineral deposits found in the counties, as well as lists of Native American antiquities.<sup>39</sup>

Collins determined to make his edition of the *History of Kentucky* the most extensive and through history ever compiled. He felt that this would be possible due to a promise made by the Kentucky General Assembly to purchase enough volumes of the *History* to supply the schools of Kentucky with at least one edition of his work. Collins thankfully dedicated his publication to the members of the "Kentucky legislature." His thanks to the

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<sup>35</sup> Collins, *History* 2, vii; Stuart Seely Spargue, "Richard H. Collins and His History of Kentucky," *Register* 70 (January 1972): 17-18.

<sup>36</sup> Gregory, "Collins," 317-18.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 318.

<sup>38</sup> Collins, *History*, 1.

<sup>39</sup> Collins, *History*, 2. The second volume of Collins is an excellent example of the use of the antiquarian's use of local history.

politicians had a polite, but pragmatic reasoning since Collins had financed his work to the amount of over \$20,000.<sup>40</sup>

Difficulties in collecting the promised legislative funds for the *History of Kentucky* soon occurred. Amendments to the original act providing monies were made during the legislative session of 1871-73. Some members of the legislature argued that the voters in the school districts should be in favor of the purchase of Collins' books. Others took a wait and see attitude. Much to Collins' chagrin lawmakers indefinitely postponed the amendments. In February 1873, the legislature questioned the constitutionality of paying for Collins' books with tax money. However, the general assembly defeated an effort to repeal the act promising to purchase the Collins' *History*. By February 1874 the courts had two pending lawsuits before them to test the legality of the original act. Some sympathetic members of the General Assembly offered the hope that if the courts decided that it was indeed unconstitutional to pay for Collins' books out of the school fund, perhaps unappropriated money from the state treasury could be used. The Senate passed this measure. The lower house failed to act.<sup>41</sup>

In April 1875 after the Franklin County Circuit Court found that the act providing public funds for the purchase of Collins' books unconstitutional, the Kentucky Court of Appeals sustained the lower courts ruling. Another bill passed in March 1876 allowing Collins to sue the state. The Franklin County court ruled that the state should pay for the books and award Collins damages of six percent dating from March 1874. The Court of Appeals reversed this decision.

Although Richard Henry Collins suffered financial distress from his historical endeavors (he invested over \$20,000 of his own money), his work remains one of the great resources on Kentucky's history.<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless, from a historiographical point of view, Collins' *History of Kentucky* leaves a number of things to be desired. In view of the extensive research made by Collins, very little effort went into placing Kentucky in the greater scheme of national history. His work lacks historical interpretation. The very lists that make his work so interesting also becomes one of his greatest failures as a historian. Collins became a compiler, an annalist, and an antiquarian, rather than a critical historian. Southern historian Ellis Merton Coulter noted in his bibliography on *The Civil War and Readjustment in Kentucky*, that Collins' history of the state "is a mine of undigested, and unrelated information."<sup>43</sup> Without efforts to interpret Kentucky history, he lost an invaluable opportunity to make his work one of the enduring models of the historian's art. Nevertheless, Collins' *History of Kentucky* remains one of the most referred to and revered histories ever written about the commonwealth.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Gregory, "Collins," 321.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 320-22.

<sup>43</sup> E. Merton Coulter, *The Civil War and Readjustment in Kentucky*, (Chapel Hill, 1926): 455.

<sup>44</sup> Despite Collins' efforts to utilize as many primary sources as possible, he did not research the Draper collection. In an 1880 letter to Lyman C. Draper he wrote, I have always blamed myself for not paying you a visit, while I was working up my history. You had so much material I ought to have seen." Richard Henry Collins to Lyman C. Draper, 3 February 1880, Draper MSS 33CC18.

Nathaniel Southgate Shaler (1841-1906) born near Newport, Kentucky, authored the next major work on Kentucky history. A brilliant academic, though not an historian, he possessed a love for nature and history, and graduated *summa cum laude* from Harvard in 1862. During the Civil War he served as captain of the 5<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Volunteer Battery (1862-1864). He later became one of the nation's foremost geologists.<sup>45</sup>

In 1873, Shaler received the appointment of state geologist for Kentucky. That position also allowed him to indulge his love of Kentucky history. In 1885 he published a 433-page history of the state. *Kentucky: A Pioneer Commonwealth*, a part of the Commonwealth Series of state histories. A well-written and researched work, Shaler's section on the Civil War in Kentucky presented a more balanced view of that conflict. While a number of the state's historians tended to glorify the "Lost Cause" Shaler did not.<sup>46</sup>

The same year Shaler presented his history of Kentucky to the public another and more lengthy work on the commonwealth's history saw publication. Zachary F. Smith (1827-1911), of Henry County penned *The History of Kentucky*. The most ambitious undertaking of its kind since Collins' *History* a decade before, Smith as an educator and scholar, wished to offer the history of Kentucky to as many people as possible. Like Collins, he saw the state as a means to promote, as well as finance, an extensive history of the Kentucky. Also Like Collins, Smith wanted his work used as a text in Kentucky schools.

In 1885, the *Courier-Journal* Job Printing Company published *The History of Kentucky*. Although a basic history of the state, Smith filled the 824 pages of his work with numerous anecdotes pertaining to the daily life of the pioneers. One section deals with the food-ways of the early settlers. Another explains a cabin raising. Smith goes on to add information on methods of corn grinding and the manufacture of clothing. His description of pioneer sports gives a delightful description of the leisure pursuits of the pioneers. Throwing the tomahawk, dancing simple jigs and reels, and imitating birds and animals added to the past times of frontier children.<sup>47</sup>

Like Collins, Smith added large amounts of ephemera to his history. Unlike Collins, Smith endeavored to maintain a more narrative history. In many instances Smith's *History of Kentucky* surpasses Collins in style and format. However, just as Collins made no effort to note his sources, neither did Smith. He did make an attempt to give a critical bibliography on the histories he "liberally" used. He credits both Lewis and Richard H. Collins, and used those sources extensively. Smith calls Shaler's history of Kentucky "an admirable treatise," but goes on to say that Shaler's work does not "pretend to be a history of Kentucky; but a "philosophical generalization." For those who wished to study

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<sup>45</sup> Ivan Zabilka, "Nathaniel Southgate Shaler and the Kentucky Geological Survey," *Register* 80 (1982): 410-12; David N. Livingstone, *Nathaniel Southgate Shaler and The Culture of American Science* (Tuscaloosa and London, 1987), 175-76; Nathaniel Southgate Shaler, *The Autobiography of Nathaniel Southgate Shaler* (Boston and New York, 1909), 431-33.

<sup>46</sup> N. S. Shaler, *Kentucky, A Pioneer Commonwealth* (Boston, 1900). Strongly pro-Union, Shaler devotes pages 231 to 391 to the Civil War and its aftermath.

<sup>47</sup> Z.F. Smith, *The History of Kentucky* (Louisville and Chicago, 1885), 391-400.

the printed histories of Kentucky, Smith added a list of sixteen pages of histories and biographies pertaining to the Commonwealth's history.<sup>48</sup>

A 240-page edition of Smith's history came out in 1889 as a *School History of Kentucky*. In 1891 an enlarged 288-page edition saw publication, and another enlarged and revised edition in 1898, an enlarged and revised edition of 367 pages was published as a *Youth's History of Kentucky, from the Earliest discoveries and Settlements to the Year 1898*.<sup>49</sup>

Historical works published for profit proliferated during the latter part of the nineteenth century. Although advertised as state history publishers aimed these works at the local level. The Goodspeed Publishing Company, out of Chicago and Nashville, printed a number of state histories of the southern states in the 1880s. F.A. Battey Publishing Company out of Chicago and Louisville, published a series of Kentucky state histories between 1885 and 1888. W.H. Perrin, J.H. Battle, and G.C. Kniffin compiled *Kentucky. A History of the State*. Consisting of over 600 pages of history and Civil War statistics, Perrin, Battle, and Kniffin's (popularly known as Perrin's *History*) work also included an extensive collection of biographical sketches of local personalities and families. Broken down by county, and submitted by individuals who purchased one or more of the books, these biographical sketches are of great interest to genealogists and local historians. The Battey publishing firm made no attempt at verifying the information submitted to them.<sup>50</sup>

Between the beginning of the twentieth century and the end of World War I, a literary explosion of Kentucky historical articles and monographs occurred.<sup>51</sup> In 1917, Robert S. Cotterill (1884-1967), a native of Fleming County, Kentucky and professor of history at Western Maryland College, wrote a *History of Pioneer Kentucky*. Like Daniel Drake's 1870 work, Cotterill only dealt with the pioneer era of the state.<sup>52</sup>

With interest growing in Kentucky state and local history, the need for associations to preserve and promote these subjects became more apparent. Although concerned citizens made numerous efforts to establish and maintain a state historical society, most quickly failed.<sup>53</sup> By the late nineteenth and early twentieth century antiquarians, local historians, patriotic, lineage societies and concerned citizens began to establish historical associations and organizations to promote the study and preservation of Kentucky history. Founded in 1884, by ten of the state's most prominent citizens, including General Basil W. Duke (1838-1916), Judge James S. Pirtle (1840-1917), and Richard

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<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.* v.

<sup>49</sup> Z.F. Smith, *School History of Kentucky* (Louisville, 1889).

<sup>50</sup> J.H. Battle, W.H. Perrin, G.C. Kniffin, *Kentucky. A History of the State* (Louisville, 1885). See subsequent editions through 1888. For an example of Goodspeed's histories, see *History of Tennessee* (Chicago and Nashville, 1887).

<sup>51</sup> The period between the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth was one of great productivity in the writing of Kentucky history. This era was the beginning of more specialized historical research and writing such as the *Filson Club Publications* on various Kentucky historical topics.

<sup>52</sup> R.S. Cotterill, *History of Pioneer Kentucky* (Cincinnati, 1917).

<sup>53</sup> Walter Muir Whitehill, *Independent Historical Societies* (Lunenburg, Vt., 1962), 223; Leslie W. Dunlop, *American Historical Societies 1790-1860* (Philadelphia, 1974), 157-58.

Henry Collins, the Filson Club (named for Kentucky's first historian) filled the void. Led by Ruben T. Durrett (1824-1913), whose collection of Kentucky history provided the nucleus of the new organization's collection. The Filson Club became a center for those who wished to pursue the history of the commonwealth.<sup>54</sup> The Kentucky Historical Society, founded in 1836, had closed its doors on several occasions due to lack of funds and a general lack of interest. Re-formed after the Civil War, it folded once more. In 1895 a group of determined residents of Frankfort, led by Jennie Chinn Morton (1838-1920) and the Frankfort Colonial Daughters, revitalized the Kentucky Historical Society.<sup>55</sup>

In 1903 the Kentucky Historical Society created a forum for historians interested in researching and writing about the commonwealth with the establishment of the *Register*, a journal devoted to the state's history.<sup>56</sup> The Filson Club began a series of publications on various topics of Kentucky history as early as 1884.<sup>57</sup> In 1926 the Club began publication of the *Filson Club History Quarterly*. Both *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* and *The Filson Club History Quarterly* provided historians with a much-needed means to disseminate their findings on the commonwealth's history to a wider audience. In future these journals would also be a boon to professional historians who required refereed journals in which to publish their research.<sup>58</sup>

The historical journals gave women a much-needed outlet for their historical research. Not only did Morton head the Kentucky Historical Society, she also founded, wrote for, and edited *The Register*, its journal. Maude Ward Lafferty (1869-1962) wrote a number of well-received books and pamphlets on the commonwealth's history in addition to her near half-century service on the Executive Committee of the Kentucky Historical Society.<sup>59</sup> Mary Verhoeff (1871-1962) served as vice president of the Filson Club and wrote extensively on the subjects of Kentucky commerce, mining, and transportation.<sup>60</sup>

The need for an up-to-date, comprehensive state history remained a challenge for Kentucky historians. No attempt at an overall history of the state had been made since the 1880s. In 1912 E. Polk Johnson (1844-1924) of Jefferson County tried to remedy this lack of historical scholarship when he wrote one volume of history and edited two more biographical ones in a work entitled, *A History of Kentucky and Kentuckians*. Johnson, a newspaperman, composed a rambling account of the state's history replete with lists and appendixes, and surprisingly for its day, a section on women written by Madeline

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<sup>54</sup> Preston Davie, "Personal Reminiscences Concerning Some of the Founders of the Filson Club," *Filson Club History Quarterly* 18 (1944) 127-40; Hambleton Tapp, "The Founding of the Filson Club," *Ibid.*, 141-53. Also see Lowell H. Harrison, "A Century of Progress: The Filson Club, 1884-1984," *Ibid.*, 58 (1984): 381-407.

<sup>55</sup> Willard Rouse Jillson, "Sketch and Bibliography of the Kentucky Historical Society 1836-1943," *Register* 41 (1943): 201-2.

<sup>56</sup> Jillson, "Sketch," *Register* 41 (1943): 203-4.

<sup>57</sup> Harrison, "Century of Progress" *Filson Club History Quarterly* 58 (1984): 385-86.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.* 203-4.

<sup>59</sup> "Necrology," *Register* 60 (1962): 164.

<sup>60</sup> "In Memoriam," *Filson* 36 (1962): 209; Mary Verhoeff, *The Kentucky Mountains: Transportation and Commerce 1750 to 1911*, (Louisville, 1911).

McDowell Breckinridge (1872-1920).<sup>61</sup> Not one of the better histories of the commonwealth, within a decade his work was supplanted by a much more extensive Kentucky history.

In 1922 a five-volume *History of Kentucky* published under the editorial direction of Judge Charles Kerr of Lexington, made its debut. While Kerr served as editor, the actual writing came from the combined efforts of William E. Connelley, secretary of the Kansas Historical Society, and Professor E. Merton Coulter, history department head of the University of Georgia. Thus the 1922 *History of Kentucky* does not fully belong in the amateur category, but instead, as the joint efforts of two professional historians. However, since Kerr contributed to the work as the supervising editor, he falls in the amateur class.<sup>62</sup>

Charles Kerr (1863-1950) was born in Maysville, Kentucky. He moved with his family to Fayette County where he worked on the family farm. Kerr began the study of law in the offices of W.C.P. Breckinridge and John T. Shelby. He passed the bar in 1886 and began a successful legal practice. Known for his oratorical skills, Kerr became an adept politician. A Democrat until 1896, Kerr became a Republican. In 1911, he was appointed circuit judge of Fayette County.

In his preface to the *History of Kentucky*, Judge Kerr points out that this history of the Kentucky would be a “real” history, “not a mere chronological citation of events.”<sup>63</sup> Kerr goes on to say that “This history is has been written entirely from original and contemporaneous sources.” “All secondary sources were consulted, but they were followed only where supported by available manuscript records and contemporaneous accounts.”<sup>64</sup>

Although Kerr’s work ranks as the first semi-professional and footnoted history of the commonwealth, it, like its predecessors, contained a large number of biographical sketches. Three of the five volumes contain the obligatory sales-oriented biographical notes on prominent Kentuckians.

By the late 1920s, Kentucky history needed a fresh interpretation. The task fell to two attorneys, Temple Bodley (1852-1942) of Louisville and Samuel M. Wilson (1871-1946) of Lexington. Born in Louisville, Bodley later attended the University of Virginia, and the University of Louisville Law School, graduating in 1875. He practiced law with the firm of Bodley, Simrall, and Bodley. From 1893 to 1897, he served as city parks commissioner for Louisville. He retired from the legal profession in 1903 and devoted much of his time to the study and writing of Kentucky history.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> E. Polk Johnson, *A History of Kentucky and Kentuckians: The Leaders and Representative Men in Commerce, Industry and Modern Activities* 3 vols. (Chicago-New York, 1912).

<sup>62</sup> Charles Kerr, *History of Kentucky* (Chicago and New York, 1922), 1: iii.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, iv.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> See Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Meeting of the of the Kentucky Bar Association (Louisville, 1941).

In Kentucky the legal profession provided its share of historians. Samuel MacKay Wilson was also born in Louisville. He attended Centre College in Danville, and Williams College in Williamstown, Massachusetts. Wilson studied law at Centre and in the office of Judge Jere Morton in Lexington. He was admitted to the bar in 1895.

After serving in France with the American Military Expedition in the Judge Advocate Corps during World War I, Wilson left the service in 1919 with the rank of lieutenant colonel. He returned to Lexington where he soon built an extensive and lucrative law practice. Astute in politics, Wilson became a power in local and state Democratic Party political circles. He maintained an active role in community affairs, serving on numerous committees. Amateur and professional historians alike appreciated his influential role in local, state, and national historical organizations, including the Kentucky Historical Society and the Sons of the American Revolution. An avid book collector, Wilson eventually bequeathed his extensive personal library to the University of Kentucky where it became the foundation of the University's rare book collection. In 1936 he also helped found one of Lexington's most interesting associations, the "Cakes and Ale Club," a group of men who enjoyed fine food and drink, along with stimulating conversation on history, literature, and any other subject that might appeal to them. His love of history evidenced itself by the prolific output of some sixty-five meticulously researched articles and books.<sup>66</sup>

In 1928 Bodley and Wilson published a three-volume *History of Kentucky*. In the preface of the first volume, Bodley tells his readers that this work on Kentucky history will "differ much from previous ones..." "not only in what it will contain, but in what it will omit." He went on to say that this history of Kentucky stressed the "conditions and events" that gave "Kentucky its unique significance in the nation's history." Bodley felt that the early history of Kentucky, particularly during the American Revolution, consisted of three major conflicts, diplomatic, military, and political. These forces combined to shape Kentucky's frontier destiny. With this thesis Bodley makes his greatest contribution to Kentucky historiography. Fascinated by the early settlement period, Bodley wrote colorful descriptions of Kentucky frontier life. Sections of the 620-page first volume of his Kentucky history utilizes long quotes from the Draper manuscripts. The author uses primary documents from the frontier era, and does not rely solely on secondary sources, as had been the case of some of the earlier Kentucky historians.<sup>67</sup>

The use of primary sources that made Bodley's history so refreshing was also its weakness. He constantly interrupts his narration with extensive block quotes. He also devotes an extensive section of his work to the exploits of his great-great-uncle George Rogers Clark as savior of the western frontier. Despite these criticisms, Bodley manages

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<sup>66</sup> G. Glenn Clift, "Samuel McKay Wilson, 1871-1946," *Register* 45 (1947): 27-38.

<sup>67</sup> Temple Bodley, *History of Kentucky Before the Louisiana Purchase in 1803*, 5 vols. (Chicago-Louisville, 1928). Bodley makes extensive use of the Draper Manuscripts for his narrative on frontier Kentucky history.

to write an appealing, informative, and well-documented description of a turning point in Kentucky and American history.<sup>68</sup>

Samuel Wilson wrote the second volume of narrative for Bodley and Wilson's *History of Kentucky*. It takes the history of the commonwealth from the antebellum era through World War I. Wilson, who was known as "a historian's historian," looks at not only political history, but through social, intellectual, and economic history as well. He weaves his story of Kentucky carefully, informing his readers of the importance of transportation, schools, cultural activities and the status of the state's indebtedness.<sup>69</sup>

In his introduction, Wilson notes that "Two things dear to the heart of the historian," had to be discarded in this work— footnotes and a comprehensive bibliography.<sup>70</sup> However, he did devote over a dozen pages to the "Previous Histories and Historians of Kentucky." The lack of footnoting may have irritated professional historians, but the reading public enjoyed a rich and diverse history of Kentucky. Wilson's prowess as a writer, along with his attempt at writing an inclusive history of the state, made his volume of *History of Kentucky* a solid effort at composing a well-researched and well-written work.<sup>71</sup>

The remainder of Bodley and Wilson's work is made up of biographical sketches of prominent contemporary Kentuckians. The trend to place potted biographies in state histories was a sales gimmick used widely in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Dozens of biographical sketches pertaining to influential people filled volumes of state histories.<sup>72</sup>

The status of Kentucky history changed dramatically in 1937 with the publication of a one-volume history of the state. Mississippi-born and Duke University-trained Thomas Dionysius Clark (1903-2005) began the current academic phase of Kentucky historiography. Used for decades as a college textbook on the subject, Clark's *History of Kentucky* remained the standard history of the commonwealth until the 1990s.<sup>73</sup>

Academic historians did not easily displace the non-professional. In 1945, Frederick A. Wallis (1869-1951), a wealthy insurance broker and politician, was the supervising editor of a four-volume history of Kentucky. *A Sesqui-Centennial History of Kentucky* followed the old and proven pattern of former histories of the state with a slight variation. The first volume was devoted to history, the remainder to brief descriptions of schools and biographical sketches.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.* (For an example of Bodley's use of block quotes see pages 92 through 94.)

<sup>69</sup> Samuel M. Wilson, *History of Kentucky, Volume II: From 1803 to 1928* (Chicago-Louisville), 1928.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.* v-vi.

<sup>71</sup> Wilson, 13-25.

<sup>72</sup> (Not only did Bodley and Wilson's work contain numerous biographical sketches, other nineteenth and twentieth century historical publications promoted their works in this manner).

<sup>73</sup> Thomas D. Clark, *History of Kentucky* (New York, 1937). While Coulter was a professionally trained historian, his work fell under the editorship of an amateur.

<sup>74</sup> Frederick A. Wallis and Hambleton Tapp, *A Sesqui-Centennial History of Kentucky*, 4 vols. (Hopkinsville, Kentucky, 1946).

Frederick Wallis' co-editor, Hambleton Tapp (1900-1992), was responsible for the historical research and writing of the *Sesqui-Centennial History*.... Tapp's efforts brought the history of the state only through the Civil War. He noted in his foreword that he "Particularly" regretted his failure to write a history of Kentucky that would include the 1870-1900-time period. In 1950 Tapp obtained a PhD in history from the University of Kentucky and later became Kentucky's state historian through his work with the Kentucky Historical Society.<sup>75</sup>

As supervising editor, Frederick Wallis wished to publish a history of Kentucky that would be different from previous ones. He wanted a history that recorded more of an economic and social history of Kentucky. What was published was a number of historical segments broken down by years. The flow of the narrative is often stilted by the adherence to a historical chronology. However, the work is extensively footnoted with a great deal of references from primary sources being utilized throughout.<sup>76</sup>

One of the most important and often overlooked areas in Kentucky historiography is that of state history textbooks. Until Clark's 1937 textbook, largely non-professionals wrote histories of the state for schools. Like so many of the histories of the state, the textbooks were based on the heroic pioneer taming the wilderness. Most of these works make no attempt at looking critically at historical sources. Instead, they are for the most part a retelling of the frontier legends and the tragedy of the Civil War.

As early as the 1870s, 80s, and 90s, Richard Henry Collins, Z.F. Smith, and Elizabeth Shelby Kinkead published Kentucky histories for the public school system. In 1897 Edwin Porter Thompson (1834-1903), born in Metcalfe County, and author of a monumental study on Kentucky's Confederate *First Brigade* published in 1868 and in 1898, enlarged under the title the *Orphan Brigade*, published a textbook on Kentucky history. Thompson's *A Young People's History of Kentucky for Schools and General Reading* was another attempt at bringing the Commonwealth's history to students. The text, while entertaining, was typical of nineteenth century historical prose. More attention was paid to the heroic accomplishments of the pioneers and the tragedy of the Civil War than any economic or social factors that shaped Kentucky history.<sup>77</sup>

In 1923 Thomas C. Cherry, brother of the founder and first president of what would become Western Kentucky University, wrote *Kentucky, The Pioneer State of the West* as a grade school text. In 1940 Cherry and Arndt Stickles, head of the history department at Western, published *The History of Kentucky* for grade school students.<sup>78</sup>

By the beginning of the 1960s, the need for an updated Kentucky history school text was apparent. Ruby Dell Baugher and Sarah Hendricks Claypool published *Kentucky*

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<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*,[iv.]

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> John M. Gresham, *Biographical Cyclopedia of the Commonwealth of Kentucky* (Chicago, 1896) 581-82; "Capt. Ed Porter Thompson," *Confederate Veteran* 6 (1898): 315-17; *Ibid.*, "The Last Roll," 11 (1903): 176-77.

<sup>78</sup> Thomas C. Cherry, *Kentucky, Pioneer State of the West* (Boston, 1923); Cherry and Arndt M. Stickles, *The History of Kentucky*, (Boston, 1940).

*Yesterday and Today*. Like their predecessors, these texts were geared toward students in the seventh grade.<sup>79</sup>

During the 1960s another Kentucky history text was published. Authors Katherine E. Wilkie and Elizabeth R. Mosley entitled their work, *Kentucky Heritage*. This history was again directed toward junior high students. In their introduction the authors noted that they were both native Kentuckians, and “steeped in local folklore, fact, and tradition since their childhood days.”<sup>80</sup>

As late as the 1970s Kentucky history texts were using the standard formula of westward expansion and conquest led by brave and hardy pioneers. When Joseph O. Van Hook (1892-1985), a professor of history and political science at Berea College and Eastern Kentucky University published *The Kentucky Story* in 1959, in what would be a popular history text for many years, the thesis remained the same, but with some refreshing exceptions. The standard format is maintained. The pioneer defeats the Indian, builds a thriving agricultural society, is devastated by the Civil War, goes through difficult times, and we then all look toward the future. The “Turner Thesis” of westward expansion still had full sway in Kentucky history books. Van Hook’s work, as well as the other more modern school histories does endeavor to add some cultural and social information. Art, literature and music are discussed in some detail.

Van Hook’s history of Kentucky and *Exploring Kentucky*, a 1939 grade school text by Thomas Clark and Lee Kirkpatrick, along with Cherry and Stickles work were the first of the academic school histories. These works laid the foundation for future textbook histories of the state to be written by professionals.<sup>81</sup>

Due to the social and political climate of the time, amateurs or many of the professional historians did not address large segments of historical facts. Non-professional Kentucky historians like their professional counterparts, wrote with the standard “Whigish” interpretation of history. That is to say they had a proclivity to moralize and lionize the flow of progress toward a divinely inspired and protected democracy.<sup>82</sup> In contrast, Humphrey Marshall blatantly used his historical writings to promote his political agenda.

Describing women’s existence on the frontier included anecdotes of their bravery, hardiness, and domestic activities, but took little or no notice of their political or economic aspirations.<sup>83</sup> American Indians received short shrift as sometime “noble savages” who more likely “skulked through the woods and pounced upon unwary hunting parties and outlying settlements, burning, murdering and pillaging.”<sup>84</sup> The intense animosity engendered by the frontier wars between settlers and Indians had left a

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<sup>79</sup> Ruby Dell Baugher and Sarah Hendricks, *Kentucky Yesterday and Today* (Evansville, Ind., 1964).

<sup>80</sup> Katherine E. Wilkie and Elizabeth R. Mosley, *Kentucky Heritage* (Austin, Tex., 1966), v.

<sup>81</sup> Thomas D. Clark and Lee Kirkpatrick, *Exploring Kentucky* (New York, 1939).

<sup>82</sup> Beginning historians have a tendency to follow the “Whig” interpretation of history. This interpretation sees history flowing in a near pre-ordained fashion toward liberty and democracy. Herbert Butterfield concisely overviewed this historical practice in his 1931 classic, *The Whig Interpretation of History*.

<sup>83</sup> Cherry and Stickles, *Story*, 66.

<sup>84</sup> Cherry, *Kentucky*, 127.

negative image of the first Kentuckians. Kentucky historians seemed all too happy to quickly usher the Indians off the pages of their histories and write about the civilizing effects of pioneer settlement.

At best historians treated black Kentuckians with somewhat of a kindly paternalism. Some Kentucky historians described the black population of the Commonwealth as faithful slaves whose “splendid behavior” during the Civil War allowed their masters to fight for the Confederacy. The “beauty and strength of their devotion [to their owners] scarcely has its equal in history.”<sup>85</sup> In Connelley’s 1890 history of Kentucky, blacks who fled slavery were “Poor foolish old souls,” who would endure many hardships contrary to their “ease-loving African natures.”<sup>86</sup> Connelley felt that blacks lacked the responsibility to become citizens. She felt the people of Kentucky were “unalterably opposed to Negro suffrage, ‘whether limited or special, general or qualified.’” The author also lambasted the use of black troops during the Civil War and directed a stream of invective toward the Freedmen’s Bureau, calling it “meddlesome... expensive, unwise, utterly useless.”<sup>87</sup> As late as the 1950s Kentucky history texts still supported the theory that Kentucky’s docile slaves were treated as members of their owner’s family.

The American Civil War occupied large portions of Kentucky history books. Efforts in impartiality were for the most maintained, although a number of histories displayed a sympathetic nod toward the South. Battle, Perrin and Kniffin’s *History of Kentucky* grandiloquently describes the published view of most Kentucky authors when they wrote, “It is worse than folly to ridicule the uprising of a great people to assert their independence...” The “Lost Cause” was “Hallowed in the memories of thousands of hearts by the blood of loved ones sacrificed upon its altar...” However, Kentucky historians for the most part took a nationalistic view of the Civil War. On the same page extolling the virtues of those who sacrificed themselves to Southern independence, Battle, Perrin and Kniffin bemoaned the fact that some of the more illustrious Kentucky families “did not present themselves a living wall, against the tide of secession, which beat against but never submerged Kentucky...”<sup>88</sup>

Although the amateur historian dominated the study and writing of Kentucky history for over a century and a half, their influence on the field of historical research began to wane. However, six men, all non-professional historians, still dominated much of Kentucky historiography at the local and more specialized levels well into the 1970s. While they did not write an overall history of the state, these prolific authors nevertheless produced an enormous amount of historical research and works on Kentucky subjects. John Winston Coleman, Jr. (1898-1983), Willard Rouse Jillson (1890-1975), Otto Arthur Rothert (1871-1956), John Wilson Townsend (1885-1968), William Henry Townsend (1890-1964), and Garrett Glenn Clift (1909-1970), enriched Kentucky historiography with their contributions. While none of them wrote a comprehensive history of the commonwealth, their works are invaluable in the quest to understand Kentucky history as

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<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 299.

<sup>86</sup> Connelly, *Story*, 223.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 254-55.

<sup>88</sup> J.H. Battle, et al, *History*, 349.

a whole. "Squire" Coleman wrote the first bibliography of state history in 1948, as well as seminal works on slavery and travel.<sup>89</sup> His bibliography is extensive, covering more than three thousand books and pamphlets. Articles and pamphlets by Coleman on a myriad of cultural and social subjects abound. His collection of Kentucky related books, pamphlets, and manuscripts became one of the finest Kentuckiana collections extant.<sup>90</sup>

Rothert's works includes one of the classic Kentucky county histories. His *History of Muhlenberg County* (1913) remained a standard for county histories for many years. His work as editor of the *Filson Club Quarterly* earned him the respect of historians throughout the country. "Uncle Otto" as he was fondly known, was mentor to a generation of Kentucky historians.<sup>91</sup>

The works of Willard Rouse Jillson are numerous to say the least. Not only did he fill the post of state geologist, writing extensively on that subject, he became one of the most prolific authors on Kentucky history. Although criticized by some historians for writing a great deal too quickly, and not verifying all of his sources, his articles and books on Kentucky remain a treasure trove for students of the state's past. Jillson wrote, compiled or edited more than sixty books and five hundred articles on geology and history. Among his historical publications is *Pioneer Kentucky*. Jillson included materials on the geography, exploration, trails, and settlement of the state. He also added an extensive list of the forts and stations of the early settlers.<sup>92</sup>

The gap between amateur and professional historians dramatically widened during the latter part of Jillson's career. During the late 1950s some members of the Kentucky Historical Society wanted to modernize the institution by electing a professional historian as the chief executive officer of the organization. Jillson, who had been associated with the Society for many years, opposed this idea. Since his writings filled pages of the *Register*, the Society's quarterly historical publication, he felt that he had adequately served the purpose of writing and interpreting Kentucky history. In short, he felt that the Society did not need to go in a new direction. However, he found out about the proposed change in leadership and decided to challenge the proceedings.

One faction nominated Dr. Thomas D. Clark, professor of history at the University of Kentucky to lead the Society, while the traditionalist faction nominated Jillson. In an

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<sup>89</sup> J. Winston Coleman, Jr., *A Bibliography of Kentucky History* (Lexington, Ky., 1949); *Slavery Times in Kentucky* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1940); *Stage Coach Days in the Bluegrass* (Louisville, Ky., 1935). For a partial list of Coleman's works see, J. Winston Coleman, *A Bibliography of the Writings of J. Winston Coleman* (Lexington, Ky., 1953); For biographical information on Coleman as well as material on his historical research and writing, see, J. Winston Coleman, Jr., *The Squire's Memoirs* (Lexington, Kentucky, 1975); Virginia Davis, *J. Winston Coleman, Jr.* (Lexington, Ky., 1979); Holman Hamilton and Edward T. Houlihan, *Meet Squire Coleman* (Lexington, Ky., 1973).

<sup>90</sup> Coleman, *Memoirs*, 79.

<sup>91</sup> Hamblen Tapp, "Otto Arthur Rothert," *Filson* 61(1987): 54-67; Otto A. Rothert, *A History of Muhlenberg County* (Louisville, Kentucky, 1913).

<sup>92</sup> See, Willard Rouse Jillson, *The Memoirs of Willard Rouse Jillson* (Frankfort, Ky., 1971); George Lee Willis, *Willard Rouse Jillson: A Biographical Sketch* (Louisville, 1930). Jillson was one of the most prolific of Kentucky historians. His bibliography on history and geology is extensive. Also see, Jillson, *Pioneer Kentucky...* (Frankfort, Ky., 1934).

unprecedented, and extremely bitter election struggle, Jillson and his supporters challenged a number of the ballots cast for Clark. The pro-Jillson forces won the election by a vote of 30 to 29, thus precipitating animosity within the Kentucky historical community for decades to come.<sup>93</sup>

Although the Jillson-Clark feud caused divisions among some historians within the commonwealth, a steady flow of historical publications continued appear. John Wilson Townsend contributed to Kentucky historiography with literary history. His definitive two-volume *Kentucky in American Letters* (1913), an expansion of his 1907 work, *Kentuckians in History and Literature*, is an excellent example of a well-crafted study of the role of literature in a state's history. Townsend also wrote a number of historical and biographical articles on Kentucky subjects, as well as two impressive biographies: *James Lane Allen* (1928), and *Richard Hickman Menifee* (1907). One of the major contributions Townsend made to Kentucky history was the editing of John Bradford's *Notes on Kentucky* (1932). As a collector and book dealer, Townsend had few peers. Eastern Kentucky University purchased some 1,500 of his Kentucky items. In 1966 he donated 6,000 volumes to Transylvania University in Lexington.<sup>94</sup>

The works of William Henry Townsend on Abraham Lincoln and his Kentucky connections are among the most admired historical studies on the history of the Bluegrass area. *Lincoln and the Bluegrass: Slavery and Civil War in Kentucky* (1955), an expanded version of his earlier work, *Lincoln and His Wife's Home Town* (1929), is still considered to be an excellent source on the history of the Lexington, Bluegrass region. Townsend's role as extremely popular raconteur of history and founder of the Lexington Civil War Round Table made him a great influence in the field of state and local history.<sup>95</sup>

G. Glenn Clift's role as a gentleman historian was more the patient collector and compiler of facts. Clift did write a popular and well-researched history of Mason County, Kentucky. However, he spent most of his energies gleaning materials from newspapers and compiling lists of data that is a boon to historians and genealogists. In his role as editor of the Kentucky Historical Society *Register*, Clift oversaw the publication of a number of the best articles written on Kentucky subjects.<sup>96</sup>

During the 1970s the Kentucky Historical Society made plans to publish a multi-volume history of the state. To date, three of those volumes have been published.<sup>97</sup> In 1975 George M. Chinn (1902-1987), a former director of the Kentucky Historical Society, and weapons expert, published the first volume of the series, *Kentucky Settlement and*

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<sup>93</sup> Hugh Morris, "Historical Society Fight Won by the 'Old Guard' Dr. Jillson Beats U.K.'s Dr. Clark, 30 to 29 For Top Elective Office After Rousing Session." *Courier-Journal*, 3 October 1958.

<sup>94</sup> See Dorothy Edwards Townsend, *The Life and Works of John Wilson Townsend* (Lexington, Ky., 1972).

<sup>95</sup> "In Memoriam: William Henry Townsend 1890-1964," 8 (*Civil War Round Table Newsletter*); J. Winston Coleman, *Scholar, Raconteur, Lawyer* (Lexington, Ky., 1980).

<sup>96</sup> See, "G. Glenn Clift, 1909-1970." 69 *Register* (1971): i-viii.

<sup>97</sup> The proposed multi-volume History of Kentucky to date includes, George M. Chinn, *Kentucky Settlement and Statehood* (Frankfort, Ky., 1975); Hambleton Tapp and James C. Klotter, *Kentucky Decades of Discord, 1865-1900* (Frankfort, Ky., 1977); and James C. Klotter, *Kentucky Portrait In Paradox, 1900-1950* (Frankfort, Kentucky, 1996).

*Statehood 1750-1800*. The work was highly popular with the public, but met with some criticism from the scholarly community for the number of factual errors it contained, and for presenting an overly generalized view of Kentucky history. In 1977, academically trained historians, Hambleton Tapp and James C. Klotter co-authored *Kentucky Decades of Discord, 1865-1900*, as the second volume of the proposed series, followed in 1996 by *Kentucky Portrait in Paradox* by James C. Klotter. The second volume received mixed reviews. Historians accepted the third effort, as an excellent work.<sup>98</sup>

By the end of the twentieth century Kentucky history was no longer in the hands of the non-professional. Academia had finally won out over the efforts of the amateurs. Kentucky history also went through another metamorphosis. The day of the amateur author composing a complete state history had ended. But so had the day of one person writing the entire history of the Commonwealth. Between 1945 and 1977, with the exception of editions of Thomas Clark's *History*, historians made only two attempts to write a comprehensive history of the state. Steven A. Channing, a professor of history at the University of Kentucky, wrote *Kentucky: A Bicentennial History* (1977) as part of the "States and Nation Series" of the American Association of State and Local History.<sup>99</sup>

In 1981 Lloyd G. Lee, a Kentucky schoolteacher, published *A Brief History of Kentucky*, a 668-page study on the state. He wished to pick up the history of Kentucky, with its emphasis on county history where Richard H. Collins' work left off in 1874. Less than 150 pages of Lee's work are on the history of the state. The vast majority of this work is a compilation of county history and statistics. His effort was the last attempt to date of a non-professional to write a history of the state.<sup>100</sup>

The academic era in Kentucky historiography also ushered in the era of specialization. The writing of history now became the province of the expert. Black, economic, Native American, and women's history needed individual attention. The subject of Kentucky history became far too complex for one individual to master every phase of the state's convoluted past.<sup>101</sup>

The most recent state history of Kentucky written by academically trained historians resulted from a joint effort by two of the commonwealth's most respected and prolific historians. Lowell H. Harrison and James C. Klotter wrote *A New History of Kentucky* (1997), which after sixty years supplanted Clark's standard work.<sup>102</sup> Klotter also edited a school text, *Our Kentucky* (1992) incorporating social, intellectual, as well as political history.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> George M. Chinn, *Kentucky Settlement and Statehood* (Frankfort, Ky., 1975).

<sup>99</sup> Steven A. Channing, *Kentucky A Bicentennial History* (New York, 1977).

<sup>100</sup> Lloyd G. Lee, *A Brief History of Kentucky* (Berea, Ky., 1981).

<sup>101</sup> One of the best examples of the trend toward specialization in writing of Kentucky history is to be found in the study of black history. See Marion B. Lucas and George Wright, *A History of Blacks in Kentucky* (Frankfort, Ky., 1992).

<sup>102</sup> Lowell H. Harrison and James C. Klotter, *A New History of Kentucky* (Lexington, Ky., 1997).

<sup>103</sup> James C. Klotter, ed., *Our Kentucky* (Lexington, Ky., 1992).

As the twenty-first century begins, the future of non-professional state historians looks bleak. However, at the local level history continues to be written by those men and women who just for the sheer love of the subject, research and write community and county histories. The academic demands for a strict adherence to methodology makes non-professional historians less accepted in the field of history. The end of the era of the well-to-do antiquarians who had the time and means to devote to their research and writing, has placed Kentucky history firmly in the hands of the trained professional historian.<sup>104</sup>

The amateur historian made many mistakes in their work. Many of them played to the prejudices of their day. Women became nothing more than minor players on a stage fit only for masculine heroes. Blacks, with few exceptions, found themselves forever portrayed as servile, simple, childlike folk who benefited from their association with the majesty of Anglo-Saxon civilization. The American Indian, seemingly noble in his unspoiled dignity, was in fact a brute savage that had to give way to the ideas of European progress.

Many amateur historians accepted legends for fact, and could not help but to moralize and chastise those who deviated from their personal, and their times', ideas of propriety. As historians they committed the cardinal sin of judging the past by the standards of their present. However, for all their faults did yeoman service for the commonwealth's historiography. Without their contributions the bibliography of Kentucky history would be slim indeed. The professionals of today owe much to the groundbreaking work of their non-professional predecessors. Upon the amateur historian's foundations of fact interspersed with romantic legends of daring pioneers and hostile Indians, and southern nostalgia, modern historians built the superstructure of a scholarly and factual history of Kentucky.

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<sup>104</sup> For excellent essays on the status of history in Kentucky, see, James C. Klotter, "Clio in the Commonwealth," *Register* 80 (1982): 65-88; and "Moving Kentucky History into the Twenty-first Century: Where Should we go From Here?" *Register* 97 (1999): 83-112; C. Crawford Crowe, "A New Era in the Writing of Kentucky History," *Register* 68 (1970): 385-91.

