



for the Record

Devoted to Kentucky's State Archives and the Historical Record

Winter 2007

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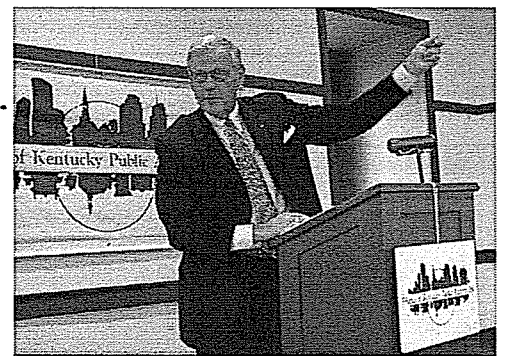
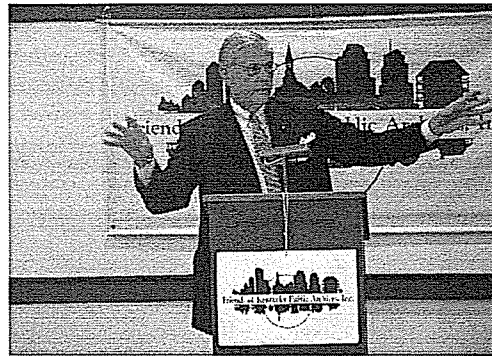
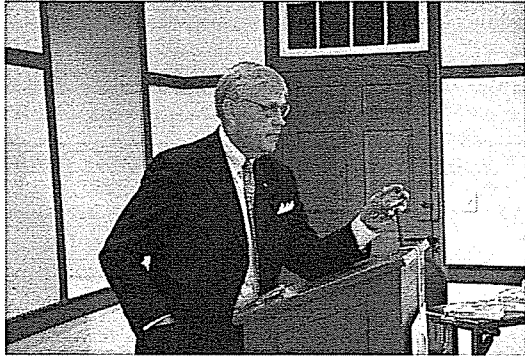
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I N S I D E **State Archives
Research Opportunities**

**2006 Public Archives Symposium,
Friends' Annual Meeting**

**Making a Difference:
Freedmen's Bureau Microfilm**



Brown Recounts Compelling Gettysburg Story

Lexington attorney is featured speaker at Friends' 18th Public Archives Symposium

Despite the frigid temperatures, a full house heard Lexington attorney and Civil War specialist Kent Masterson Brown discuss his research for his recent award-winning book, ***Retreat from Gettysburg: Lee, Logistics, and the Pennsylvania Campaign***. Brown was the featured speaker at the 18th annual Public Archives Symposium, held in the main meeting room of the West Lot Dwelling at Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill on November 17, 2006. Those in attendance were rewarded with a compelling story that heretofore has received only limited attention.

In his groundbreaking history of the Army of Northern Virginia's retreat from Gettysburg in July 1863, Brown drew on previously untapped sources to chronicle the massive effort of General Robert E. Lee and his command as they sought to move people, equipment, and scavenged supplies through hostile territory and plan the army's next moves.

Brown set a vivid scene for listeners, describing how more than fifty-seven miles of wagon and ambulance trains and tens of thousands of livestock accompanied the army back to Virginia. Brown eloquently described the movement of troops and supplies over the challenging terrain of mountain passes, despite the adverse conditions of driving rain and muddy quagmires, and recounted General George G. Meade's attempts to attack the trains along the South Mountain range and at Hagerstown and Williamsport, Maryland. Brown noted how Lee's deliberate pace, skillful use of terrain, and constant positioning of the army behind defenses so as to invite attack caused Union forces to delay their own movements at critical times. He concluded that even though the battle of Gettysburg was a defeat for the Army of Northern Virginia, Lee's successful retreat maintained the balance of power in the eastern theater and left his army with enough forage, stores, and fresh meat to ensure its continued existence as an effective force.

Brown, the creator and first editor of the magazine, *The Civil War*, is the author of several books, including ***Cushing of Gettysburg: The Story of a Union Artillery Commander*** (1993) and ***The Civil War in Kentucky: Battle for the Bluegrass State*** (2000). He was the creator and tour leader of the Filson Civil War Field Institute, sponsored by the Filson Historical Society, and writes, hosts and produces video documentaries with Talking History, LLC, of Lexington, Kentucky. Brown was the first chairman of the Gettysburg National Military Park Advisory Commission, appointed by President George H. W. Bush, and first chair of the Perryville Battlefield Commission, appointed by Governor Brereton Jones.

The annual Public Archives Symposium, co-sponsored by the Friends of Kentucky Public Archives, Inc., and the Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives, features outstanding recent scholarship drawing on archival sources.

"The keeping of the public record of a civilized people is a continuing responsibility where properly the task is never completed. The vigilance necessary to preserve the record is synonymous with that of preserving the freedom of an open and democratic society." Dr. Thomas D. Clark, former Historian Laureate of Kentucky

Archives Research Room Hours and Closings

KDLA's Archives Research Room is located at 300 Coffee Tree Road, off State Highway 676 in Frankfort. The Archives Research Room is open to the public from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. It is closed on Saturday and Sunday, all official state holidays, and special events. Free parking is provided outside the KDLA building.

Please mark your calendars!

Jan. 15 - Monday	Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday
April 5 - Friday	Close at noon for Good Friday

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Research Opportunities at the State Archives

Kentucky was one of the first states west of the Alleghenies to pass a law requiring **the registration of vital statistics**. By an Act of the General Assembly passed January 9, 1852, all physicians, surgeons and midwives were required to keep a registry of births and deaths at which they attended. The historical context for the passage of Kentucky's first vital statistics law can be found in the records and publications within the KDLA collections. There is also much to be gleaned about the man behind the law – Dr. William L. Sutton, of Scott County, Kentucky.

Within the State Archives are a variety of records which illustrate Dr. Sutton's tireless dedication to fine-tuning the process of collecting vital information about the citizens of the Commonwealth. The monumental task of designing and implementing the registration of records and also producing a statistical and narrative report ultimately fell to Dr. Sutton. Although the Office of the Auditor of Public Accounts was officially charged with the responsibility of collecting the returns from all counties in the state and producing a statistical analysis and report, it soon found itself unable to complete the task in a timely manner. Auditor Thomas S. Page, Kentucky's first elected Auditor of Public Accounts (and the first elected state executive officer in Kentucky to be tried for corruption), reported that even with the help of additional employees, his staff worked "...from eight o'clock in the morning until 10 at night for at least the last six months..." and were still unable to complete the final report. Governor Powell, in his December 31, 1853 State of the Commonwealth address, mentions appointing a "skilled Physician" [Dr. Sutton] in September to complete the task. Dr. Sutton finished the report, which was 120 pages in a mere three months, perhaps working by kerosene lamp on an extension table at home (said to be one of the first extension tables purchased in Scott County). The report, which covers statistics for 1852, was published in early 1854.

Among the most revealing items are Dr. Sutton's letters to Auditor Page, who served as Auditor from 1851 to 1859. Within Auditor Page's correspondence are numerous handwritten letters from Dr. Sutton, providing an inside view of the process behind the implementation of the first vital statistics registration. It is evident after reading these letters that not only was Dr. Sutton an excellent statistician, but also an incredibly tenacious perfectionist, which served him well given the many obstacles encountered.

One such obstacle was the apparent disregard of the Auditor when it came to organizing records alphabetically. In a letter from Dr. Sutton to Auditor Page, dated September 23, 1856:

"By the bye; would it not be as well for you to adopt a strictly alphabetical list of counties in your reports? I remember having been disappointed in opening them, years ago, by turning forward to find a county which had been inserted previously. **When a man comes squarely to a road, he ought to know whether to turn to the right or to the left...**"

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Participants enjoy 2006 Friends' Archives Symposium at Shaker Village



In another sharply worded letter to Page, from June 10, 1857, Sutton writes:

“See here Mr. Page. I have had occasion lately to look into your Auditor’s reports and **I can’t stand your 'alphabetical list' of counties. I thought you had a list; if it was a bad list: but I find you have no list at all.** I take up the report to look for Clay County Table 10. I open upon Casey. I turn over, one leaf after another to the end of the C’s – don’t find it – turn back to where I started and go leaf by leaf to beginning almost. If I consult another table, I find a different list. I want to compare one report to another. There it is again, a different list again. I send you two lists of B’s.

The Commissioners do better for taxes than for Births & deaths: - They hardly ever lose more than 50,000 acres of land in a county and then make it up somewhere else. So, I suppose it is as broad as it is wide.

If you say – Mind your own business; it is [right] – But if my business is *tangled* it is more trouble than if it isn’t.

Goodbye. W. L. Sutton”

Yet another obstacle was staffing, as can be seen in the following letter, written by Sutton to Page on June 28, 1856:

“I shall have much trouble this year – new hands altogether, and my principal reliance has just informed me that he cannot engage in it. **But send on the books, I must find clerks.**

I have a son 15 yrs old, writes a very tolerable hand, pretty good at arithmetic; of good general information for his years. Would you have use for such an [sic] one for 4 or 5 years? If you would, I doubt whether you could be better suited.”

[NOTE: This son, William Henry Sutton would later become a physician.]

An additional hurdle was the transfer of large ledger books from the Auditor’s office in Frankfort to Dr. Sutton’s home in Georgetown. Dr. Sutton, in an undated letter to Mr. Hopkins (presumably a messenger), wrote: “Mr. Page, the Auditor, wishes to send me some books about once a week. The postal regulations prevent their being sent by the stage: but I see no impediment to their being sent by a special messenger. Could you contrive to have them brought

to you and then forward them? If so, let me know. There is a bundle now lying at Page’s office.” In the subsequent correspondence about this subject, Dr. Sutton goes so far as to suggest the passage of a special law to expedite the handling of these very large and cumbersome ledgers.

Dr. Sutton’s role in providing expertise to other states about the registration process can be seen in a letter he wrote to the Auditor in April 1857. In it, he says he will be taking copies of Kentucky’s “blanks” (forms) to the American Medical Association (AMA) meeting in Nashville for consideration of a uniform recording system for all of the U.S.

His influence even extended as far as Europe, as seen in the following letter written by Sutton on October 17, 1855:

“...I received a letter from Dr. Edward Jarvis of Dorchester Mass asking me to send him 4 or 5 copies of our second report on Registry of Births & etc. to be transmitted to Europe.”

Further evidence of Dr. Sutton’s role is that he was elected Vice-President of the AMA in 1859. Clearly ahead of his time, he was a proponent of public health boards on state and county levels – something that wouldn’t occur until many decades after his death.

Unfortunately, Sutton died in 1862 from complications related to diabetes. His daughters remarked that it was just as well that he didn’t live long enough to know that Kentucky’s first vital statistics law would be repealed by the General Assembly later that year. The Civil War had rendered all levels of government and the medical community ill-equipped to continue registration of vital statistics.

Registration resumed again in the 1870s, but it wasn’t until 1911 that legislation was passed that made it mandatory, enforceable and uniform throughout the South. It is truly remarkable to consider that the recording of such essential records, needed today for creation of passports, social security benefits, voter registration, proof of age for marriage, and proving kinship for inheritance, began over 155 years ago due in large part to the very capable and dedicated “father” of Kentucky’s vital statistics registration, Dr. William Loftus Sutton.

This article was based on research in Auditor of Public Accounts correspondence, Senate and House Journals, Acts of the General Assembly, Public Documents of the General Assembly, records of Kentucky governors, vital statistics records, American Periodicals Series Online 1740 – 1900, and the monograph, William Loftus Sutton, M.D., 1797-1862: Father of the Kentucky State Medical Society and of Kentucky’s First Vital Statistics Law, by Carrie Carleton Goldsborough and Anna Goldsborough Fisher.

Many thanks to those of you who have renewed your membership in the Friends for 2007. We deeply appreciate your support of Friends' activities and of the services and mission of our State Archives.

If you are not yet a Friends' member, we urge you to become a member today by returning the membership strip at the bottom of this page. We need your help. The State Archives is working for all of us, and in this small way, we can help the Archives advance its programs and services.

Friends Elect Officers, Review 2006 at Shaker Village Annual Meeting

During a spell of unseasonably cold weather, Friends' members and guests gathered at Shaker Village on November 17th for the 2006 annual meeting of the organization. The meeting, held in the West Lot Dwelling amid the rolling hills of Mercer County, featured an annual review of Friends' activities and concerns, delivered by President Jim Powers, and an assessment of the year's developments at the State Archives by State Archivist Richard Belding. A Friends' Award of Merit was awarded to Ms. Devra Steckler, Hopkins County Clerk, for outstanding contributions to the management and preservation of public records in Kentucky. Ms. Steckler was unable to be present and will receive her award in Madisonville in January.

Elected as officers for the coming year were James Powers, president; Robin Rader, vice president; Jane-Rives Williams, secretary; and Dr. Bill Ellis, treasurer. Elected to a three-year term on the Friends' board of the directors were Betsy Morelock, James Powers, Dr. James Ramage, Anne L. Rodick, Judge Wayne Rutherford, and David Schroeder.



Friends of Kentucky Public Archives, Inc.

Making a Difference: Acquiring Freedmen's Bureau Microfilm

The National Archives recently announced the release of the Field Office records for the Freedmen's Bureau in Kentucky, consisting of more than 133 rolls of microfilm. This collection documents the Bureau's efforts to assist, educate and protect Kentucky African Americans in the transition from slavery to freedom.

Created by offices located throughout the state, these records may include correspondence, contracts, marriage records, special censuses and numerous other documents that reflect the Civil War's aftermath for the freed slaves. An invaluable source on families, communities, schools and social conditions throughout Kentucky, the Freedmen's Bureau Field Office records would be a major complement to our Civil War era sources.

The entire collection may be purchased for \$8,645. The cost per roll is \$65.00. You can make a difference by helping the State Archives enrich its research offerings and enabling us to acquire this remarkable collection. Directed gifts of all sizes for purchase of this microfilm are most welcome. Please make your checks payable to the Friends of KY Public Archives, Inc., and write *Freedmen's Bureau microfilm* on the subject line of your check. All directed gifts identifying this project will be applied toward this purchase. Your assistance is deeply appreciated.

The Friends of Kentucky Public Archives, Inc., is a not for profit membership organization of private citizens concerned with helping the Public Records Division of Kentucky's Department for Libraries and Archives fulfill its role as a vital information link between people and government. The Friends' organization supports the management, preservation, and use of Kentucky's historic public records and serves as an advocate for the Kentucky State Archives, which the division manages. For further information, contact the Friends at P.O. Box 4224, Frankfort, KY 40604.

Yes, I would like to renew my membership in/become a member of the Friends of Kentucky Public Archives, Inc.

My check for _____ made payable to the Friends of Kentucky Public Archives, Inc., is enclosed. Membership benefits include a quarterly newsletter, a membership pin, and invitations to workshops, special events, the Kentucky Archives Institute, the Public Archives Symposium, and the annual meeting. Gifts to the Friends beyond the basic membership are tax deductible.

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

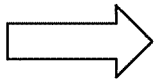
State: _____ Zip: _____ Telephone: _____ E-Mail Address: _____

Membership levels: _____ \$15 Individual/Family _____ \$25 Libraries, Genealogical and Historical Societies _____ \$250 Life
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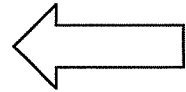
Please clip and mail to: Friends of Kentucky Public Archives, Inc., P.O. Box 4224, Frankfort, Kentucky 40604 * We appreciate your support.



Georgetown College, after a layoff of several seasons, resumed football on a limited basis in 1955. A pair of Tiger claws brought this Carson Newman Eagle down with a "thud". (This photograph is from records of the Department of Public Information collection of the State Archives holdings, Public Records Division, Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives).



If you haven't already done so,
please renew your Friends' membership today!



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