

John Filson Seceded John McKinney



John Filson John Filson, an early historian to Kentucky, was born in Pennsylvania in 1747.

Filson was provided the typical common school and academic education but afterwards was lured into the beautiful mountains of Kentucky. Filson reached Lexington in 1782. Here he succeeded "Wildcat McKinney" as the second teacher. It was Filson who wrote the first history of Kentucky and the first authentic account of that vast, transmontane wilderness as well. In 1784, he gave his book, " Discovery, Settlement, and Present State of Kentucky" which contained the first map ever drawn of this state, showing the three original counties of Jefferson, Fayette, and Lincoln. All of this was accomplished before there were any printing presses in Kentucky, so Filson carried his map to Philadelphia and his manuscript to Wilmington, Delaware.

This little book of one hundred and eighteen pages was deemed of such consequence that one year after its appearance, it was translated into French and published by M. Parraud at Paris. Three editions were printed in

England by Gilbert Imlay, Kentucky's first novelist, who incorporated it in his "Topographical Description of the Western Territory." Filson led a restless, strenuous life. Soon after his first visit to Kentucky he was back on his native heath, again in the state of his adoption, next in the Illinois country gathering data for a history of that section, the manuscripts of which are now the property of the Wisconsin Historical Society.

In 1788 Filson was associated with Mathias Denman and Robert Patterson, the founder of Lexington, in the purchase of a tract of eight hundred acres opposite the mouth of the Licking River, where they planned a town, now the city of Cincinnati, but named by Filson, Losantiville, the "city opposite the mouth of the Licking."

But Filson ventured out once again, this time never to be seen again. He had just surveyed the Great Miami. His friends supposed he was killed by the Indians.