

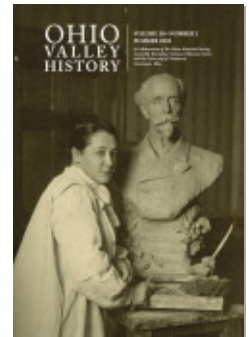


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Naming Louisville's Parks: A Story of Tribes, Politics, and the Filson President

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Naming Louisville's Parks

A Story of Tribes, Politics, and the Filson President

Richard Hume Werking

Louisville's Olmsted Parks are among the city's most treasured assets. Yet, important aspects of their early history—including the naming of the three major parks—are not widely known.

Some in the community have recently maintained that Frederick Law Olmsted himself—the prominent landscape architect who in the 1890s contributed so much to the park system's design and subsequent reputation—named Cherokee, Iroquois, and Shawnee parks. But this speculation has no basis in fact, and as the noted philosopher John Rawls has observed, “a theory however elegant and economical must be rejected or revised if it is untrue.” Almost thirty years ago, local historian Samuel W. Thomas cautioned his readers against giving the talented Olmsted too much credit for developing the city's park system. The history of how and why these three flagship parks acquired and retained the names they have today underscores his point, while also revealing a rich and complex story.¹



Drinking Fountain in Cherokee Park.

POSTCARD COLLECTION, PKL-57, FILSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Beginnings

During the second half of the nineteenth century, American cities began to emulate their European counterparts in establishing public parks. As urbanization accelerated with factories and their labor forces living in close proximity, civic leaders began establishing parklands within and on the edges of their rapidly growing cities. Such areas were seen as features that would attract residents, improve property values, and provide all classes of the population with cleaner air and opportunities for aesthetic enjoyment and relaxation. They would also help a city move ahead of, or at least not lose ground to, its urban rivals. New York City's Central Park, begun in 1857, was the first among thousands of landscaped public parks in the United States.²

It would be 1880 before Louisville got into the act. That initial step was taken when the city's former graveyard, in use from 1786 until 1832, became its first public park, on Jefferson Street between Eleventh and Twelfth Streets. The city council named it Baxter Square in honor of the retiring mayor, who had long been a parks advocate. It is still there.³

According to local historian George Yater, one reason for Louisville's delay in embracing public parks was the proximity of the countryside, "only a brisk walk away." But parks advocate Andrew Cowan identified a more important constraint. "Large and influential property owners," he recalled many years later, "were opposed, almost unanimously, to Public Parks. How often did we hear it said, and read in the papers, that 'Louisville is a city of homes, where nearly every family has its home with a garden, so the people did not need parks.'"⁴

In his annual message of 1881, Mayor John Baxter called for much more than had been done so far. "A public park would contribute more to the health, wealth, and moral purity of this community than anything I can imagine," he wrote. "There is not a city in the United States of even half our size which does not possess a public park. We have no place either for a drive for our own citizens, or where we can show strangers and visitors." Making clear how inadequate he considered the two-acre plot that would bear his name, he added: "The park should contain from 500 to 1,000 acres of land." Baxter's successor, Charles D. Jacob, also called for action and for funds, in the process stimulating many suggestions for possible sites.⁵ But it would be several more years before tangible progress was made.

Louisville's present-day park system has resulted from the work of many hands, but during the early years Andrew Cowan contributed much more than anyone else. Born in Ayrshire, Scotland, and reared in New York State, Cowan served more than four years in the Union army during the Civil War. At Gettysburg in July 1863, twenty-one-year-old Captain Cowan was in charge of a battery of six artillery pieces, with more than 110 officers and enlisted men. On July 3, the critical and final third day of battle, his unit positioned in the center of the Union

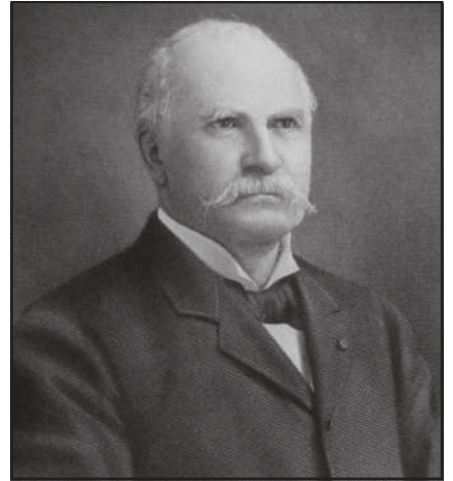
line, he served heroically and effectively in the desperate fighting. His battery helped shatter the force of Pickett's Charge when the Confederates were only a few yards away from overrunning the Union position on Cemetery Ridge—the so-called high-water mark of the Confederacy.⁶

Andrew Cowan moved to Louisville in 1866 and established a successful leather goods company. Although he was a Republican, and hence belonged to a political minority, he was active in civic affairs and widely respected. (Henry Watterson, who edited the staunchly Democratic *Courier-Journal* for more than fifty years, considered Cowan his “lifelong friend.”) A driving force for causes that inter-

ested him, Cowan encountered public parks by chance. Sometime in the 1870s, he entertained a friend visiting from New York City by taking him for a ride through Louisville's scenic Cave Hill Cemetery to enjoy the closest thing to a public park the city offered. In return, when Cowan next visited his friend, he was treated to tours of Central Park and Brooklyn's Prospect Park—both products of Frederick Law Olmsted's work. “Parks for Louisville,” he reported years later to a Cherokee Park audience, “took possession of my mind then and there,” and he began educating himself about the park systems of other cities.⁷

In 1887, at meetings of the Salmagundi Club, with Thomas Speed and Cowan playing leading roles, the matter of providing public parks was introduced and enthusiastically received. A committee was formed to discuss the issue. Cowan was appointed to write the resulting report, which he read to the Club's members on June 4, 1887—an occasion Samuel Thomas has called “the precipitating event in the birth of the parks.”⁸

The report was published in the *Courier-Journal* the next day on the paper's editorial page, no doubt expedited by Cowan's friend and fellow Salmagundi member, editor Watterson. (A member of the Salmagundi's parks committee, Watterson simultaneously published a strongly supportive editorial.) Cowan made a strong case for public parks in Louisville, observing that in addition to the city offering employment and educational opportunities “for all who will make their homes among us...we must also provide for the recreation and health of the people. Public parks for the recreation, health and benefit of the public and free to all forever are recognized as imperative necessities wherever large bodies of people have come together for permanent residence.” The report also stressed that parks would be an economic asset; the Chicago parks were “a profitable

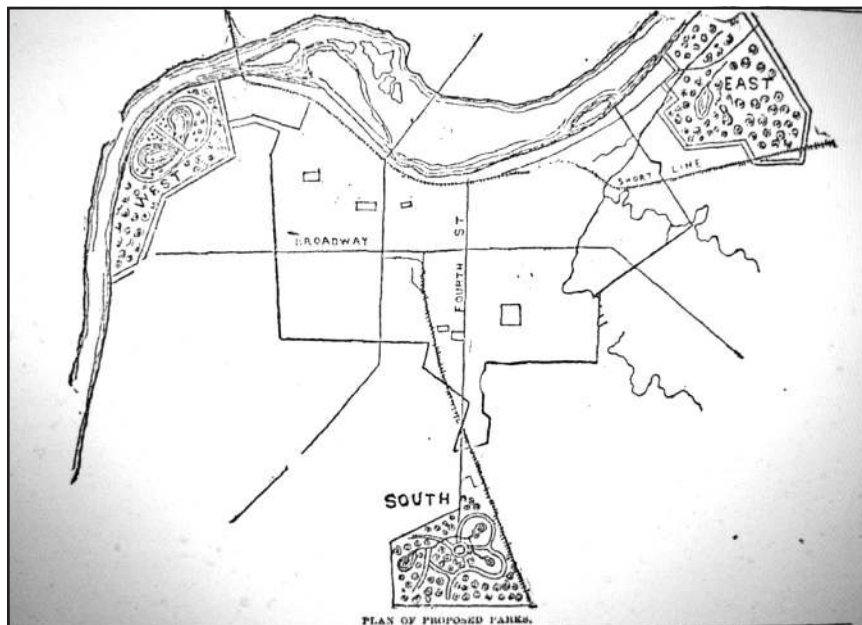


Andrew Cowan.

J. STODDARD JOHNSTON, MEMORIAL HISTORY OF LOUISVILLE FROM ITS FIRST SETTLEMENT TO THE YEAR 1896, VOL. 2 (CHICAGO AND NEW YORK: AMERICAN BIOGRAPHICAL PUBLISHING CO., 1896), 338.

investment,” and Central Park in New York City was obtaining “heavy revenue derived from adjacent property.” In short, public parks would help the city by making it a more attractive place to come, work, and live healthier lives, undergirded by a growing economy that would benefit from the development of a park system, enabling Louisville at least to keep pace with its urban competition.⁹

Published along with the report’s prose was a map by Charles Hermany, chief engineer of the Louisville Water Company, illustrating the concept of distributing three major parks among the city’s eastern, southern, and western suburbs.¹⁰



COURIER-JOURNAL, JUNE 5, 1887.

The following month Cowan and Col. John Mason Brown, president of the Salmagundi Club, obtained the cooperation of the city’s Commercial Club, and Brown drafted the required piece of legislation. In May 1890, the Kentucky State General Assembly passed the bill authorizing Louisville to issue bonds for a park system and create a Board of Park Commissioners—if the city’s voters approved.¹¹

So, during the summer of 1890 Louisville established its park system. Two elections were scheduled, for July 1 and August 4. The city’s voters would first select six men to serve as members of the new Board of Park Commissioners—and then, a month later, would vote to approve or reject a bond issue of \$600,000 (about \$16.3 million today) to finance the whole enterprise.¹²

The sequence of the elections was important. The first task was to identify the men who would be responsible for acquiring and subsequently maintaining the parklands and who would then be accountable to the public for the hundreds of

thousands of dollars expended. Only after knowing the composition of the Board of Park Commissioners, the logic went, could the citizenry determine whether or not it wanted this parks system. As Cowan later explained, the purpose of the sequence was “to give the people a chance to defeat” the parks bill in the second election “if the Park Commissioners were chosen in the interest of any land scheme.”¹³

Playing a central role in helping establish the park system, distinguished especially by his work in naming the major parks, was the longtime president of the Filson Club, Reuben Thomas Durrett. Today the Filson Historical Society’s website honors him as “the primary founder” of the organization established by “ten Louisvillians with a common love of history.” In 1884, Durrett convened the club’s founding meeting in his home at 202 East Chestnut Street (now the site of a major hospital complex). Subsequent meetings were likewise held at Durrett’s home, and he served as the group’s first president from the founding until his death in 1913, a tenure of twenty-nine years.¹⁴

Born in 1824 in Henry County, Kentucky, Durrett earned degrees at Brown University in 1849 and 1853, obtained a law degree at the University of Louisville in 1850, and began practicing law the same year. In 1857 he became editor of Walter N. Haldeman’s *Louisville Courier* and was copublisher with Haldeman until 1859, when he tired of newspaper work and returned to his law practice. In that same year, he declined an offer of political office from Kentucky’s new governor, Beriah Magoffin. Nevertheless, the governor rewarded him for some supportive campaign speeches by sending him a commission as a colonel, a title he used proudly and by which he was referred thereafter. Early in the Civil War, Durrett’s pro-Southern writings as a contributing editor for the *Courier* antagonized federal government officials. US Army general Robert Anderson charged him with treason and “aiding the rebellion.” Durrett was arrested and incarcerated for a few weeks in a federal prison, but he gained his freedom and returned to Louisville, resuming his law practice.¹⁵

In the early 1870s, Durrett played a major role in establishing the Public Library of Kentucky, a forerunner of today’s Louisville Free Public Library, by drawing up the organization’s charter and for a time serving as its president. He was also president of the Children’s Free Hospital and the Episcopal Orphans’ Home. His law practice was financially successful, and he retired in 1880, at the age of fifty-six, to pursue research, writing, and building a most impressive library collection on the history of Kentucky and the Ohio Valley.¹⁶

As shown repeatedly in his extensive correspondence, now housed at the Filson, Durrett was widely considered the foremost expert on Kentucky history. In 1891, John B. Castleman, vice president of the Board of Park Commissioners, reminded a newspaper editor that Durrett was “the man who has done more than any other Kentuckian to frame Kentucky history and to establish respect for Kentucky historic incidents.” Two years later, the *Paducah News* characterized

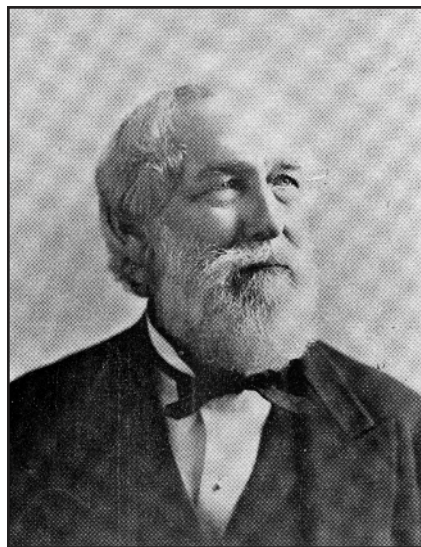
Durrett in charming fashion: “He is a living cyclopedia of Kentucky history, and there is not an important event in the annals of the State from the days of Daniel Boone to this year of grace that is not stowed away in the good, gray matter which the Colonel carries under his hat.”¹⁷

Nor were these accolades merely a matter of locals taking pride in one of their own. In 1895, the US Bureau of Education in Washington, DC, was planning a series of bibliographies dealing with the Southern states, and it was seeking a knowledgeable compiler for each state. A bureau official pleaded with Durrett to take on this task for Kentucky “through your well known and long continued interest in anything that pertains to the history of Kentucky. You are no doubt better acquainted with the subject than any other man alive, and from what I have heard it would in this case be little more than a catalogue of your own library of Kentuckyana.” Theodore Roosevelt must have added to Durrett’s national reputation—and to the number of the Kentucky colonel’s correspondents—when in *The Winning of the West* he labeled Durrett’s library “the most complete in the world on all subjects connected with Kentucky history.”¹⁸

In 1858, long before Louisville’s first parks elections, while still in his twenties, Durrett had been a member of the city council. In that capacity, he had tried to persuade his fellow councilmen to support a policy of planting willow trees on Corn Island in the Ohio River and converting it into a public park, in order to save that small piece of real estate from erosion and ultimate extinction. (It was here that George Rogers Clark had made his first military settlement at the Falls of the Ohio.) But the council did not share Durrett’s environmental or historical concerns, and Corn Island eventually sank into the river.¹⁹ Many years later, however, with the parks question looming before the voters, it seemed he might have another chance.

Given his earlier support for parks and the environment, as well as his overall prominence in the community, it is no wonder that in 1890 Durrett was nominated to stand for election to the city’s first parks board. Twelve men were nominated for the six elected positions, and the mayor would serve as a seventh commissioner, ex officio. Their names appeared on two tickets of six men each, one comprising all Democrats and the other a so-called calico ticket, composed of three Democrats (including Durrett) and three Republicans.²⁰

Three days before the election, Durrett took the unusual step of sending the *Courier-Journal*, then, as now, Louisville’s most prominent newspaper, a handwritten letter to the editor about



Reuben T. Durrett
FILSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

his candidacy. Consuming nine legal-size pages, it reveals much about the man while also providing a description of the election process.

The letter thoughtfully provided the newspaper not only a headline but also the subheads common for such lengthy articles of the day:

Parks in Louisville
Their Lost Opportunities & Present Prospects
Col. R. T. Durrett
Reviews the Situation Past & Present
An Interesting Letter Well Worth Reading

“The history of public parks in Louisville is more to the shame of our citizens than to their credit,” he began. Referring to the old cemetery renamed Baxter Square, he continued:

It has taken us 112 years from the foundation of our city to set aside a single square 400 feet long and 200 feet wide for the use of the public, and to do this we had to rob the pioneer dead of the graveyard which their valor had won from the Indian. Other progressive cities like New York and Philadelphia and Boston in the East and Chicago, St Louis & Cincinnati in the West can boast of their hundreds and thousands of acres of breathing places and pleasure grounds for their citizens while we must huddle our 180,000 living souls within half as many square feet and not even there without disturbing the ghosts of those who laid the foundations of our city and expected no interference with their last resting place until the resurrection morn.

The letter then shifted from narrative and description to arguing for political broadmindedness (while still reminding readers of the author’s own political orientation):

There is no reason why Democrats & Republicans should not...make the race together. Let those who demand that all candidates...shall be Democrats ask if the fresh air that is to be breathed in our parks will be less pure because partly introduced by Republicans?, if the flowers will be less bright, and the grass less green and the trees less shady because partly planted by Republicans? I have no such false notions and find no uncongeniality in running with Republicans for the office of Park Commissioner which, of all offices, ought to have in it as little of politics as possible.

After summarizing his experiences studying the public parks of the United States and Europe as well as landscape gardening, he observed: “Ten years ago I

retired from the practice of my profession and now have plenty of leisure which it will be my pride to devote to our parks for the honest purpose of having them take the right course at the beginning.” And he concluded: “If I am not elected, I hope that a better man may be chosen in my place.”²¹

He did not have to wait long for a reply. In a note written and delivered on the same day, his friend and former business partner, longtime publisher of the *Courier-Journal* Walter N. Haldeman, rejected the essay:

My dear Col. Durrett—

I have just read your Park article, & while that about Parks will do and would be willingly published, the latter portion is a vehement defense of Republican candidates, which I could not consistently publish in a good Democratic paper like the C. J.... I have therefore to ask you to excuse me using this; and I assure you I do so with extreme reluctance, for I hate to refuse you anything you ask. But you are in bad, very bad company, and I wish you a safe deliverance from your wicked associates.

Very truly yr friend,

W. N. Haldeman²²

June 28th —90

As it so happened, Haldeman too was among the dozen candidates in that election, on the ticket comprising only Democrats. Yet an editorial in his newspaper the day after his note to Durrett expressed a very different sentiment, a generous one, when it declared all twelve candidates “gentlemen whose integrity and intelligence insure for the city a capable, upright management of her pleasure plots.” Offsetting that compliment, another article the same day communicated a sentiment more in keeping with the view Haldeman expressed to Durrett: “The Calico Ticket has too strong an odor of the Republican party about it to suit us.” Perhaps there was some difference of opinion between publisher Haldeman and editor Watterson.²³

Undeterred and wasting no time, Durrett fired off his essay to another Louisville newspaper, the *Critic*, where it was published the next day.²⁴ That result might have secured a few votes, but probably many fewer than the *Courier-Journal's* readership could have yielded.

The day after the election, a *Courier-Journal* headline declared: “A Quiet Election: Six Good Men Chosen for Park Commissioners by a Light Vote.” Only two men on the paper-endorsed ticket of six Democrats were elected, while the calico ticket provided the remaining winners: two Republicans (including Andrew Cowan) and two Democrats, the top four vote-getters. Departing briefly from the headline’s bipartisan tone, the article grumbled about the low turnout: “General Apathy was in command of the voting forces, and that is how two Republicans managed to be elected Park Commissioners of this Democratic city.”²⁵

Neither Durrett nor Haldeman was successful in his bid for office, with Durrett securing eighth place among the twelve hopefuls, and Haldeman eleventh. That order of finishing likely gave the Filson president some degree of satisfaction, while Haldeman was probably not in a very good mood, considering his own defeat and that of most of the men endorsed by his newspaper. Yet Reuben Durrett would have another chance to serve as a park commissioner, when a board member died the following February. The other commissioners voted unanimously to name him to fill the vacated position on an interim basis, until the next municipal election, in July 1891. His letter to the editor of the *Critic*, perhaps strategically circulated among friends and acquaintances, might have contributed to this outcome.²⁶

Naming the Parks

Durrett joined the parks board at an exciting time. Following the second election of the previous summer, in which the voters had approved the bond issue by more than a three-to-one margin, the commissioners had begun work right away investigating potential park sites. In the spring of 1891, thanks to Cowan's efforts, they secured the services of America's most esteemed landscape architect—Frederick Law Olmsted and his firm, whose work on the two New York parks had so inspired Cowan many years earlier and prompted his embrace of public parks as a civic responsibility.²⁷ By the summer of 1891, it was time to name the three large suburban parks, and it was here that Durrett would make his most important contribution.

As early as April, an unsigned item on the *Courier-Journal* editorial page had expressed the desirability of preserving "Indian names in our parks." Because "Indians roamed over the lands we are now turning into parks," it declared, the use of such nomenclature would foster "recollections of a past that should not be forgotten." The article went on to oppose the idea of naming the parks after any politician. In July, soon after Durrett had secured his seat on the board in the city's municipal election, his fellow commissioners asked him to prepare a report on Indian names for the parks. By the time he submitted it at the board's meeting on July 28, two more *Courier-Journal* articles had appeared reporting a "general sentiment" among the commissioners favoring the use of such names. The newspaper followed up by publishing Durrett's report the morning after he presented it to his colleagues.²⁸

The Filson president's report championed names drawn from the languages of three tribes: Shawnee, Cherokee, and Iroquois. Although only the Shawnees were known to have dwelt in the territory that became Kentucky, he emphasized, the two other tribes had established occupation claims and had found buyers. They had sold large land areas to Europeans and Euro-Americans: the Iroquois to the English Crown in 1768 at Fort Stanwix and the Cherokees to Richard

Henderson's Transylvania Company in 1775. Ironically, the Shawnees, the only well-established residents, had not sold their land. According to Colin Calloway, a prolific scholar of American Indian history, "the Shawnees earned a reputation for stiff resistance against encroachment on their territory and for staunch defense of their way of life."²⁹

Durrett proposed a name for each of the parks, suggesting that the eastern park be *Chen-o-ee*, the Cherokee word for the Kentucky country; that the southern park be *O-nan-ta*, the Iroquois word for "mountain"; and that the western park to be situated along the Ohio River be *Al-wa-me-ke*, Shawnee for "bottom land" or "alluvial soil." The board was expected to decide on park names at its next meeting, on August 13.

Although more a cloistered scholar than his fellow commissioners, Durrett was shrewd enough to avoid appearing a zealous advocate for Indian names, and he adopted a soft-sell approach. At the end of his report, he stated briefly that he was willing to entertain certain other Indian words; or naming the parks after "eminent pioneers"; or just using the directions East, South, and West.³⁰

Four days after Durrett's suggestions were published, an especially thoughtful and entertaining column, "Parks and Park Names," appeared on the editorial page of the *Courier-Journal* in response. In an appealing manner, its author warned against adopting Durrett's suggestions in the form provided. The anonymous writer, whose columns appeared frequently in the paper, regularly signed his work "Shadow" and titled his series of columns "Shadows."³¹

Very efficiently, the column's first sentence shows where the writer intended to go, with obvious reference to Colonel Durrett's recommendations: "The question of park names is one of popular acceptance more than of refined taste and accurate significance." After a few more paragraphs, Shadow observed:

A park, like a picnic, is a sort of lapse from civilization. It is a response to the demand of the primitive qualities that are merely restrained in the cultivated man.... Given a park, and considering motives and purposes, and the causes and effect connected with it, nothing could be more appropriate than to give it a savage Indian name. Apparently pursuing this idea, Col. Durrett has suggested for the Louisville parks names from the Shawnee, Iroquois and Cherokee languages. It appears from his interesting report that these three great historical tribes were occupiers, if not constant habitants, of Kentucky, and that with them the pioneer history of the State is most intimately associated.

So far, so good, and a nice synopsis of Durrett's proposal. But Shadow was concerned about two matters that he had previewed in his first sentence: the obscurity of all these proposed names and the difficulty of pronouncing two of them. As he put it, "To have to climb up a name before climbing up a hill would be

a double burden on a common wayfaring man afoot.” He proposed important revisions: “Why shouldn’t we stop at the beginning of Colonel Durrett’s suggestion? Why not have Shawnee Park, Iroquois Park, Cherokee Park? These three names are familiar, distinct, recognizable, of well-established pronunciation, of broad, open sound, pleasing to the ear. And they are a summary of the Indian and pioneer history of Kentucky.”



Observation Point at Iroquois Park.
POSTCARD COLLECTION, PKL-43, FILSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Shadow had the most to offer about the southern park:

Colonel Durrett suggests the Iroquois word “O-nan-ta,” meaning mountain. The tourist visiting Onanta Park might, as he climbed the ascent, ask why it was not called “Mountain Park”, but “Onanta” would convey no meaning to ordinarily informed persons. Once on the same summit called Iroquois Park, even the school boy, gazing...down upon the Ohio river and the broad plain of Louisville, would associate the scene with the fame of the Iroquois and their temporary camps in Kentucky, while the student would recall the Iroquois sale to the English King of the Kentucky lands they did not occupy, and might ponder on the possible consequences of this early introduction of absentee landlordship.

As for the eastern park, Shadow thought that if pronounced clearly, “*Chen-o-wee*” was a pleasing word. However, he cautioned, “If the lisping children of Jefferson County turned it into the familiar name of Chenoweth no great harm would come, but if an American accent must fall on it,...the eastern pleasure grounds of Louisville will eventually appear in foreign guide-books as ‘Genoa Park.’”

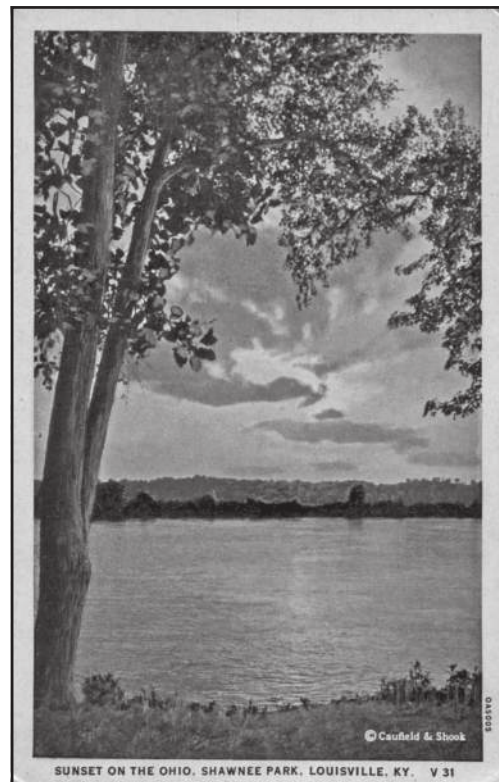


White Winter, Cherokee Park.

POSTCARD COLLECTION, PKL-71, FILSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Finally, for the western park along the river, Shadow feared that the pronunciation of *Al-wa-me-ke* would soon make the word unrecognizable. “But Shawnee Park,” he wrote, “could not be mistaken, and the bold sachems of the city government, who have their annual fish-fry in that neighborhood, would all welcome a brave word like this that can be pronounced in all conditions and under all circumstances.” The column finished succinctly, with a one-sentence paragraph: “Shawnee Park, Iroquois Park and Cherokee Park are good names to read on the signs and electric cars, as well as pleasing to the ear, and everyone recognizes them as Indian names.”³²

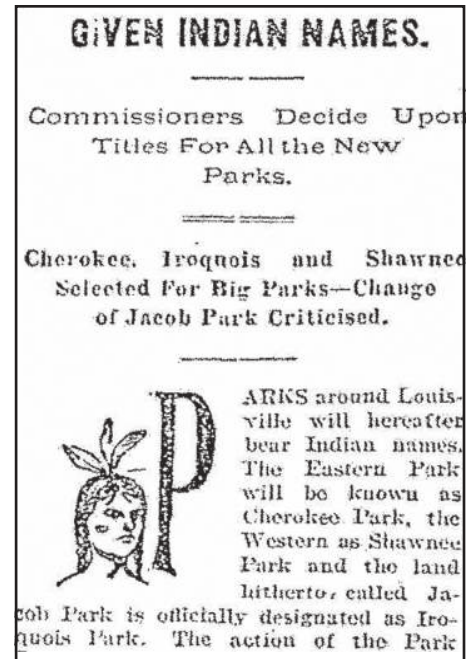
At noon on August 13, 1891, the commissioners met, and later that day the *Louisville Post* declared: “The agony is over,...Indian names have been bestowed upon the city’s breathing spots.” Cowan’s favorite newspaper went on to explain that “a majority of the Commissioners thought the historic Indian tribes who formerly owned the land should be honored in some way, and this was the only method of doing it.” The outcome matched Durrett’s suggested pairing of tribal names with the park locations, though not the words from the tribes’ languages. Whether Shadow was prescient or influential, or perhaps both, the results were those he had recently recommended in the *Courier-Journal*. The next day, that morning newspaper reported the same outcome, together with an illustration.³³



Sunset on the Ohio, Shawnee Park.

POSTCARD COLLECTION, PKL-96, FILSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Why did the board choose Native American names, and why these names? For one thing, beginning as early as April there was a groundswell of interest in adopting such names, as already shown. That interest no doubt grew and became more focused because of Reuben Durrett's involvement in the matter and the high regard in which he was held. These were three important tribes, perceived to be an essential part of Kentucky's pioneer history. Moreover, several generations had passed since Kentuckians had been engaged in the often-brutal struggle, as Durrett had phrased it the year before, to win land from the Indians. Out West in South Dakota, the massacre at Wounded Knee had occurred only a few months earlier, in December 1890. Nevertheless, in the Ohio Valley, with decades providing distance in time from Kentucky's own Indian wars, and more than a thousand miles providing distance in space from Wounded Knee, these Native American peoples of Kentucky were considered worthy of memorialization.³⁴

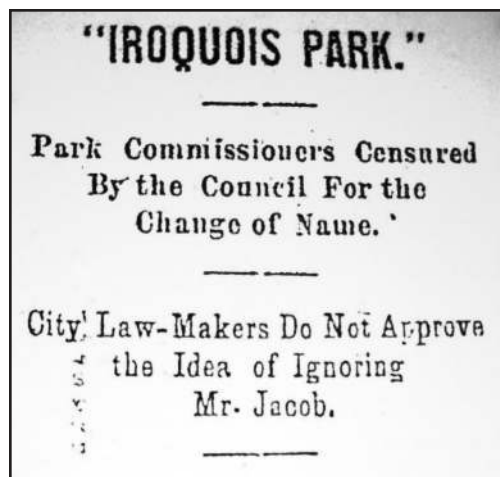


COURIER-JOURNAL, AUGUST 14, 1891.

Controversy

But there was an additional angle in play, one that Andrew Cowan would hint at five years later in his article about Louisville's park system: "Kentucky, before its settlement by white people," he wrote, "was the property and hunting ground of these tribes, and it was thought to be both appropriate and desirable to bestow their names upon the parks." From the viewpoint of most of the park commissioners, the decision was almost certainly "desirable" in part because of political issues related to naming parks after living individuals. The board's action on August 13 was unpopular among the city politicians, as revealed in the same *Courier-Journal* issue announcing the new park names. One headline derided the outcome by putting "Iroquois Park" in quotation marks, while another announced the city council's "censure" of the parks board; readers were told that "a good deal of feeling was exhibited" at the council meeting. Council members reacted negatively because the southern park already had a name, though an unofficial one.³⁵

Two years earlier, Mayor Charles D. Jacob had purchased part of a piece of land known as Burnt Knob, six miles south of the courthouse. After improving it, he sold it to the city for his costs plus interest. In the process, the mayor and city council ignored the requirement in Louisville's city charter (written prior to the creation of the parks board in 1890) that any purchase of parkland required submission of that



COURIER-JOURNAL, AUGUST 14, 1891.

proposal to the voters. “Jacob Park,” as the public generally knew it, opened in June 1889, although it would not officially be deemed a city park right away.³⁶

The editorial in April introducing the prospect of tribal names had also spoken out against naming parks for former mayors, calling it “a mistake” to have bestowed Mayor Jacob’s name on the southern park. Early in August, as the board was still considering its options, an anonymous letter to the editor of the *Courier-Journal*, signed “A Taxpayer,” weighed in on the same subject, much

more sharply than April’s commentary. “As a taxpayer,” the letter writer thundered, “I protest emphatically against naming either of our parks for one of our citizens since no one has given a park to the people. . . . Can politicians, or newspapers, or land speculators, or any one’s personal friends, however influential or numerous, convince the Park Commissioners or the public that any man now living in our city or State has deserved such a monument as one of our parks?”³⁷

No wonder most of the commissioners were reluctant to go down the road of honoring living individuals, especially living politicians. Having to deal with contesting claims to fame and memorialization would have been a continuing pain. The Taxpayer letter only scratched the surface of that potential mess, as demonstrated by the city council’s censuring the parks board. Using the names of prominent tribes was a path out of this thicket as well as a way of providing a potentially unifying narrative by invoking Kentucky’s pioneer past.³⁸

Taxpayer understood the situation well. That lengthy letter to the editor was not from just another interested citizen but from one of the park commissioners—Andrew Cowan himself, who had already contributed so much to the establishment of Louisville’s park system. The same page of Cowan’s scrapbook at the Filson Historical Society that identifies J. M. Wright as Shadow also unmaskes Taxpayer as Cowan, with copies of both essays pasted in side-by-side. It is a fitting arrangement, and surely deliberate, as these two anonymous pieces had shared the same editorial page on August 2, 1891.³⁹

But not all the park commissioners agreed with Taxpayer. More than a week earlier, the *Courier-Journal* had reported a division among board members, with some wishing to officially give the southern park the name already in common use.⁴⁰ That reporting was on target, as borne out by the minutes of the August 13 meeting.

There, alarmed by what was about to transpire, President Thomas Sherley quickly protested “the action being taken today to name the parks.” Given his

Naming the Parks.

SHADOWS.

Parks and Park Names.

The question of park names is one of popular acceptance more than of refined taste and accurate significance.

Some Names in Disguise.

The popular disposition to misname and to bring every name to the easy pronunciation of familiar language is amply illustrated in Kentucky. The city of Louisville is variously called by its own people, according to individual fancy, "Looyvil," or "Levilvil." Lagrange and Versailles, on the railroad, and Vevay and Ghent, on the river, are wonders to foreigners.

In New York the railroad runs through "Seghrakuzer" and "Utykay." If we want a test of Indian names we need only ask some one to read aloud the recent magazine articles on our Indian warfare of the last twenty years. Tourists from the Eastern States stumble ludicrously over the Spanish names familiar to the people of the Pacific Coast. I have heard several men of considerable scientific and literary fame shift the accent to the last syllable of the name of Kentucky's latest and best explorer into its early history, so that Col. Durrett would hardly have recognized himself. It may be noted in Louisville that on ordinary days the members of the country club go out to "Fin castle," but on swell occasions they go out to "Fluk-a-sel."

The name of a public park, like the name of every public place, should be an easy, familiar, common, recognizable, open vowel sound. The Louisville parks, so far as selected, are a topographical departure from the character of nearly all the parks in the world. Parks are generally level, such ground being easier to prepare and less costly to maintain, in addition to being more to the taste and idea of comfort and convenience of the persons who select them. Louisville, with apparent entire unanimity of public approval, has gone in for beauty of prospect from commanding eminences more than for ease in driving, walking, bicycling and trundling hogg. To have to climb up a name before climbing up a hill would be a double burden on a common wayfaring man afoot.

A park, like a picnic, is a sort of lapse from civilization. It is a response to the demand of the primitive qualities that are merely restrained in the cultivated man. Robin Hood might with safety have erected comfortable quarters for his men, but he considered a home under the "greenwood tree" best calculated to develop and sustain in his followers the qualities suited to their calling.

In the private parks of England they raise deer, breed horses and nurse birds to turn loose to gratify the primitive desire of the gentry to kill something now and then.

Whenever a respectable citizen joins a fishing or gunning expedition he arrays himself in outlandish clothes, covers himself with a disreputable hat, and provides himself with double the amount of fire-water he would consume at home. On such expeditions I have myself seen dignified, middle-aged husbands and fathers trying to imitate the Indian war-whoop, making ridiculous efforts at climbing trees, and even wrestling with other heads of families. I have heard decent men who would not offend good taste by singing a note in the city, on such occasions loudly singing hymns that their children brought from Sunday-schools, and comic songs that they had heard while entertaining their customers, without any consideration for the sensibilities of their associates.

In public parks the primitive propensities awakened by contact with nature are restrained by a large, carefully distributed body of policemen.

Given a park, and considering its motives and purposes, and the causes and effects connected with it, nothing could be more appropriate than to give it a savage Indian name.

Col. Durrett's Suggestion.

Apparently pursuing this idea, Col. Durrett has suggested for the Louisville parks names from the Shawnee, Iroquois and Cherokee languages. It appears from his interesting report that these three great historical tribes were occupiers, if not constant inhabitants, of Kentucky, and that with them the pioneer history of the State is most intimately associated.

But why should we not stop at the beginning of Col. Durrett's suggestion? Why not have Shawnee Park; Iroquois Park; Cherokee Park?

These three names are familiar, distinct, recognizable, of well-established pronunciation, of broad, open sound, pleasing to the ear. And they are a summary of the Indian and pioneer history of Kentucky.

O-nan-ta vs. Iroquois.

For the Southern Park, Col. Durrett suggests the Iroquois word "O-nan-ta," meaning mountain. The tourist visiting Onan-ta Park.

he climbed the ascent, ask why it is called "Mountain Park," but Onan-ta would convey no meaning to ordinarily informed persons. Once on the same summit called Iroquois Park, even the school boy, gazing from Jacob Park down upon the Ohio river and the broad plain of Louisville, would associate the scene with the fame of the Iroquois and their temporary camps in Kentucky, while the student would recall the Iroquois tale to the English King of the Kentucky lands they did not occupy, and might ponder on the possible consequences of this early introduction of absentee landlordship.

Chen-c-woo vs. Cherokee.

For the Eastern Park, Col. Durrett suggests the Cherokee word "Chen-c-woo," the Indian name given to the country of the Kentucky river. If all the vowel sounds are clearly given it is a phrasing word, but it clipped it is not readily recognized. If the lisping children of Jefferson county turned it into the familiar name of Chenoweth no great harm would come, but if an American accent must fall on it, and on the favorite place of the second syllable, the eastern pleasure grounds of Louisville will eventually appear in foreign guide-books as "Genua Park."

Shawnee Word vs. Shawnee Name.

For the Western Park, Shawnee Word with its bottom-lands and alluvial soil, Col. Durrett suggests the expressive Shawnee word, "Al-wa-me-ke," commended to him by the melody of its four syllables. To fully appreciate this allusion to the melody of the word one must say A-B-C-D-and in the same manner, Al-wa-me-ke. Such a word would be sure of abbreviation, and if it by chance escaped that its various accentuation would make the word Col. Durrett had in mind unrecognizable. But Shawnee Park could not be mistaken, who have their annual fish-fry in that neighborhood would all welcome a brave w r d like this that can be pronounced in all conditions and under all circumstances.

Shawnee Park, Iroquois Park and Cherokee Park.

Shawnee Park, Iroquois Park and Cherokee Park are good names to read on the signs and electric cars, as well as pleasing to the ear, and every one recognizes them as Indian names.

SUGGESTIONS ON PARK NAMES.

(To the Editor of the Courier-Journal.)

It is said that the three suburban parks will soon be christened by the Board of Park Commissioners, so that a few suggestions on the subject may now be appropriate. An Indian name for one of the parks, if expressive, and not too sweet or difficult to pronounce, will give general satisfaction. Ohio is a Indian word meaning beautiful river; why not call the West Park Ohio Park? Chenoa, meaning Kentucky, the name suggested by Col. Durrett for the Eastern Park, in his scholarly paper on Indian names, is significant and beautiful. Beargrass is a robust, if not musical, English word, and would answer very well for our Eastern Park. Beargrass Park will mean something to our home people. The bluegrass and the beargrass equally belong to the neighborhood. Every boy in Jefferson county knows the Beargrass, but few, indeed, are acquainted with the lovely mid-dle branch of that stream that flows through the Eastern Park.

The Southern Park is a bold hill, in no way "park like," and should be treated as a forest park—if it is hereafter to be properly treated. Its feature at present is

the fine views from its summit, but, if cared for on the lines of intelligent forestry, it will, in time, have many advantages for those who are called from city noise and cares. Why not call it Prospect Park, or Forest Hill, either of them appropriate and good all round? Or, should the early pioneers be remembered, why not call it Pioneer Park, as has been suggested, and thus honor the whole company of adventurous settlers?

As a taxpayer, I protest emphatically against naming either of our parks for one of our citizens, since no one has given a park to the people. All property owners will be taxed for the next forty years at least to pay for these park lands and their improvement. Six hundred thousand dollars (\$600,000) of principal and nine hundred and sixty thousand (\$960,000) of interest on the bonds, besides no less than forty thousand dollars (\$40,000) a year for improvement and maintenance, must be raised by taxation within forty years to pay for these parks, so that when the park bonds mature there will have been expended at least three million dollars (\$3,000,000). Can politicians, or newspapers, or land speculators, or any one's personal friends, however influential or numerous, convince the Park Commissioners or the public that any man now living in our city or State has deserved such a monument as one of these parks?

We have worthy citizens, it is true, and all agree that they should be held in the highest esteem. Some of them have exhibited a most commendable interest in establishing a system of parks for our people, and have labored to effect much that has already been done. The late Col. John Dismas, Brown was one of these, and there are others worthy of being remembered, but no one among us has yet given the people a park; no one can claim that a public park should be built at the entire expense of the taxpayers, to bear his name while living, and perpetuate it here forever.

The friends of Col. Brown will doubtless do honor to his memory, and the Park Commissioners may, with perfect propriety, be asked to set apart a place in one of the parks where his statue shall be erected, where or his friends and admirers are prepared to pay that tribute to his public services. So, in time, it may be that others will be remembered and fully honored, not, however, at public expense, but surely with public approbation.

It is known that an attempt to name the Southern Park by the General Council failed with the Board of Park Commissioners. The designation, expressed in the deed to the Board of Park Commissioners, can only be construed as an act of courtesy by the City Attorney, who prepared the deed, for the Mayor to execute, but who assuredly assumed no authority to give an official title to the Southern Park. There is, therefore, no foundation for any claim that one of the parks has been named, but if there were, it would not be too late to undo a wrong. The Park Commissioners should name all the parks and squares. They should not forget that they owe a duty to all taxpayers, and that they can be under no obligation to any party or faction, or individual, which could justify them in yielding to political, social or business influence, when naming the public parks. The people have shown their confidence in these gentlemen, and it is expected that every one of them will do his duty in this important matter, regardless of personal friendship or political interest.

A. COWAN, A TAXPAYER.

Courier-J. Aug 2/91
May, J. M. Wright

preferences, Sherley was right to be concerned. Board vice president John Castleman moved, with E. C. Bohne seconding, that “no Park, Place or Square shall be named after a living man unless he be the donor.” But before the vote was taken, Sherley countered with a substitute motion to continue the name of Jacob Park, and his motion received votes from two additional commissioners: Gottlieb Layer and Mayor Henry Tyler. Voting against Sherley’s motion were Castleman, Cowan, Bohne, and Durrett, defeating it 4–3. Then Castleman’s motion was adopted unanimously, quite possibly as a diplomatic move to present a united front and avoid the appearance of an action directed at the former mayor. The majority was bipartisan, as both Cowan and Bohne were Republicans, while Castleman and Durrett were Democrats; all except Castleman had run for election the previous year on the calico ticket. The minority’s three commissioners were all Democrats.⁴¹

The board then accepted Durrett’s proposal for the procedure to be followed, first a nominating process with each commissioner offering his preferred name for each of the three major parks. For the eastern park, Cherokee received three votes, while one vote each went to Shelby, East, Washington, and East View. The southern park candidates were Iroquois, with four votes, and Pioneer, George Rogers Clark, and South with one each, while the western park recommendations were Shawnee with four, Park Ohio with two, and West with one.⁴²

Next, the board scrupulously took additional votes on whether to give each park the name receiving the highest number of nominations. Cherokee Park was approved by a vote of 6–1, Iroquois by 5–2, and Shawnee by 6–1. In each case, Sherley voted against. On the Iroquois Park vote he was joined by Layer, who had sided with him earlier in the meeting on the matter of the substitute motion, but not by Mayor Tyler. A full-time politician, Tyler could see that his vote one way or the other would not affect the outcome, and he probably preferred to be on the winning side.⁴³

The *Courier-Journal*’s negative reaction the next day was long-lasting, and for many years the paper continued to refer to Iroquois Park by its former, unofficial name. This development is puzzling, considering the support for Indian names on its editorial page less than four months earlier, along with the writer’s simultaneous criticism of calling the area “Jacob Park.”⁴⁴

Seven years later, in September 1898, spurred on by the urging of Mayor (and Commissioner) Charles Parsons Weaver, the parks board officially changed the name of Iroquois Park back to Jacob Park, ostensibly because that was the name most of the public was accustomed to using. Perhaps some of the commissioners supported the action out of sympathy for the despondent former mayor, in failing health, whose son had been recently killed in the war in Cuba. But Weaver needed no such motivation. He had been a city alderman in the early 1890s before becoming mayor in 1897, and it was his resolution offered in the city council in 1891 that censured the parks board for adopting the name Iroquois

for the southern park. As the *Courier-Journal* had explained at that time, Weaver “thought that ex-Mayor Jacob’s name ought to be perpetuated.”⁴⁵

According to the pro-Jacob *Courier-Journal* the next day, “there was no opposition to the change.” But that assertion was false and is contradicted by the facts laid out in the board’s detailed meeting minutes. Commissioner Robert C. Kinkead, the only Republican present, moved an amendment that final action be delayed until the board’s next meeting, but his motion died for lack of a second. When the vote was taken on the

measure to change the park’s name, the four Democratic commissioners voted in the affirmative, while Kinkead voted against. The only member present in both 1891 and 1898 was Gottlieb Layer, who at the meeting naming the parks had voted for Thomas Sherley’s motion on behalf of Jacob Park instead of Iroquois. Seven years later he remained consistent.⁴⁶

It was probably significant to the outcome that board president John B. Castleman was absent, since it was his motion, adopted narrowly at the August 1891 board meeting, which had specified that no park should be named after any living person. But in September 1898, Colonel Castleman was on active military duty, commanding the Louisville Legion in its capacity as a US Army regiment in Puerto Rico during the Spanish-American War. Lt. Col. Morris Belknap, a fellow parks commissioner who along with Kinkead comprised the board’s Republican representation, assisted Castleman with the legion in Puerto Rico.⁴⁷ Hence, for about half a year Louisville operated with only a five-member Board of Park Commissioners.

Moreover, Andrew Cowan, often vociferous in his criticism of Mayor Jacob’s role with the parks, was no longer a park commissioner. No doubt Cowan had Jacob in mind for his anonymous Taxpayer letter to the *Courier-Journal* in August 1891, but Cowan’s remarks had been much more specific in his signed letter to the *Louisville Post* in 1893, while he was still in his first term as a commissioner. A Jacob supporter in that year’s mayoral election had asserted, “It will not be denied that Mr. Jacob is the father of the park system of Louisville.” The next day, in a lengthy and signed letter to the editor of the *Post*, Cowan responded with his characteristic directness: “I deny it....I declare that Mr. Jacob had not the remotest connection with the conception of the plan that has given us a system of parks, nor did it have his cordial support.”⁴⁸



COURIER-JOURNAL, SEPTEMBER 21, 1898

Cowan would continue to criticize Jacob for many years, not least for purchasing a portion of the Burnt Knob hill, far south of where Cowan and his fellow planners were envisioning the southern park's location. According to George Yater, Mayor Jacob's "single-handed approach roused the ire of Salmagundians," probably in part because the mayor was ignoring the plan that had been publicized in the *Courier-Journal* and had gathered widespread support. Moreover, in 1890–91 the newly established board was required to reimburse the city not only the purchase price but also a far larger amount for the so-called improvement costs Jacob had directed that were of dubious quality—funds that would no longer be available to expand or maintain the park system. Other irritants for Cowan, in addition to the mayor's flouting the city charter requirement, included Jacob's many followers referring to their leader as the "father of the parks," and also that in 1890 the mayor had not been a warm supporter of the parks bill when it was being considered by the state legislature.⁴⁹

Between 1898 and 1907, the board's official minutes and annual reports continued to use Jacob Park when referring to the southern park. That practice ended in the fall of 1907, when Louisville's voters sent Cowan and five other Republicans and independents back to the board as commissioners. At the new board's first meeting in November, Cowan was elected president, and once again it would be Iroquois Park in the minutes and annual reports—if not always in the *Courier-Journal* for many more years.⁵⁰

Cowan's return to the parks commission would be brief. After only a year, in the fall of 1908 he was obliged to resign from the board, as he moved into his recently built mansion overlooking Cherokee Park—outside Louisville's city limits. He called his new estate Ayrstead, in honor of his birthplace in Ayrshire County in Scotland, and his residence Alloway House, after the village in Ayrshire where poet Robert Burns was born. Cowan would not return to the parks board, and so after 1908 any involvement he may have had with parks-related policy was much less prominent than it had been during the preceding twenty-one years. Commissioner Morris Belknap succeeded him as board president for a year.⁵¹

What appears to have been the last gasp for any official effort to reaffix the Jacob Park label onto the southern park took place in December 1913. In the absence of President John Castleman, what was by then an all-Democrat board tried again, voting 5–0 for the change. Vice President Louis Seelbach explained to the *Courier-Journal* that of the board members, Castleman was "the only member of the commission who insisted on the name Iroquois Park."⁵²

But the effort was short-lived, lasting barely a month. At the next board meeting, Helm Bruce, an independent Democrat, political reformer, and former park commissioner who had been among the new board members in the 1907 sweep, showed up to protest the board's recent action. And at the following meeting, two weeks later, a committee from the Commercial Club attended to request that

the name remain Iroquois, perhaps because the club believed the city's reputation as a good place to do business would not be enhanced by the board's action. Acquiescing on the spot, the commissioners unanimously voted to rescind their action of the previous month, with the minutes acknowledging that it had been "a mistake to disturb the uniformity of the names of the three suburban parks, which are peculiarly appropriate." (The *Courier-Journal's* version was that the board had acted "on the grounds that it was a bad precedent to change the name of a city park.")⁵³ It is also quite possible that influential board president John Castleman weighed in on the matter from his winter home in Florida.

And so it took more than two decades for the names adopted in 1891 by a closely divided parks board to become settled policy even within the board itself. Durrett, Cowan, and Castleman had played an especially important role in initially establishing the tribal names and the latter two men in ultimately maintaining them. It is worth noting that when he returned from the Caribbean and to the active presidency of the parks board in 1899, Castleman's preference for Iroquois did not produce a reversal of the board's action of several months earlier. It was left to Cowan and the rest of the newly installed board in 1907 to accomplish that. It is unknown whether President Castleman tried between 1899 and 1907 to reverse the 1898 reversal. Yet it is suggestive that in 1913 board vice president Seelbach was describing him as the only commissioner insisting on—not just preferring—the Iroquois Park name.

The Orator

In the spring of 1893, five years before the park commissioners would resume their arguing over Iroquois and Jacob, Reuben Durrett traveled to the Chicago World's Fair. That huge enterprise was also known as The World's Columbian Exposition, celebrating the four hundredth anniversary of the Genoese navigator's first transatlantic voyage, albeit a year late. Durrett was in Chicago on a Filson Club mission, and on June 1 he presided over the Kentucky Pavilion's unveiling of a Daniel Boone statue that had been created by twenty-three-year-old Enid Yandell. She was a Louisville native for whom Durrett was a mentor, patron, and father figure; his recommendation had helped her secure a position at the World's Fair in 1891, working with other sculptors preparing for the event. The Boone statue was a Filson project, commissioned for \$1,500—about \$43,000 today.⁵⁴



Photograph of Enid Yandell's Daniel Boone statue exhibited at Chicago World Fair, 1893. SUBJECT PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION, DB-15, FILSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

During his extensive remarks, the Filson president praised bold pioneers and Boone's significance as a Mosaic figure, portraying him as "the one man who... more than any other set in motion that transmontane immigration from the Atlantic slope, which drove barbarism from the Mississippi valley, and planted civilization in its stead." He continued:

Little more than a hundred years ago, the place where we now stand...was a part of the great wilderness of the Mississippi valley. From the crest of the Alleghanies to the summit of the Rockies, and from the Lakes to the Gulf, there was a succession of dark forests, and dense cane brakes, and broad prairies in which lurked the wild animal and roamed the wilder savage....

It is true that there were scattering Spanish settlements on the lower Mississippi and the Gulf, and equally sparse French colonies on the upper Mississippi and the Lakes. These, however, were not the kind of settlements that were adapted to this quarter of the globe. They were but little more than religious establishments for the propagation of a bigoted faith and for monopolizing the profits of the fur trade. Their intolerance would accept no immigrant but one of their own faith, and their state-craft would admit none who was not a monarchist. In their semi-Indian huts, with a garden spot enclosed, they were content to live and pray and traffic with the savages, without regarding the broad acres around them inviting cultivation. Like the Indian, they seemed to prefer the country as a primeval wilderness to opening it up to civilization and the arts. Nor were the English of that day any more capable of handling such a country than their predecessors. The Puritans and the Cavaliers of the Atlantic slope were nearly as intolerant as the Catholics of the Valley....

The English, the Irish, the Scotch, the Dutch, and citizens of other nationalities, after sleeping upon the Atlantic slope for a hundred and sixty years had at last grown equal to the exigencies of advancing civilization and had produced the wide awake men and women that the time and the place demanded. They were ready for the enterprise and all they needed was some leader to arouse them to action, and to conduct them to the promised land. That leader was ready, and soon made himself known to them in the person of Daniel Boone....

We do not claim for Boone that he was personally among the first settlers of all these states. We only award to him the honor of the initial movement which began in Kentucky and afterwards extended from State to State until the whole Mississippi valley was settled. In this sense he was the pioneer of the whole valley, and his fame is the common heritage of all its people.⁵⁵

Of course, Durrett was articulating the common view that the Indians were solely hunters, failing to make proper use of a largely vacant “primeval wilderness.” They should therefore make way for a different civilization, one with its system of landed, individualized property rights and related values.⁵⁶

Many decades later, historians would provide correctives, insisting that Euro-Americans were by no means moving into empty territory, what Theodore Roosevelt in his popular multivolume work *The Winning of the West* had called “waste spaces.” According to Stephen Aron, “Daniel Boone’s frontier was not a virgin land but a borderland, a crossroads where Indian and European cultures collided, yet also surprisingly coincided.”⁵⁷

Moreover, many of the Indian inhabitants east of the Mississippi River were agriculturalists and town-dwellers as well as hunters, with corn (maize, which early Euro-American settlers called “Indian corn”) serving as the principal crop. While conducting his successful campaign in 1794 against Miami and Shawnee warriors at Fallen Timbers, Gen. Anthony Wayne labelled the surrounding area “the grand emporium of the hostile Indians of the West,” noting he had not seen “such immense fields of corn, in any part of America, from Canada to Florida.”⁵⁸

A century after Wayne’s victory, Durrett’s address celebrating the statue acknowledged that likenesses of Boone already existed in the form of portraits showing him seated, but he dismissed these scornfully. “A modern-clad Boone sitting at ease,” he declared, was not “characteristic of this old wanderer of the West.” Instead, he continued, “What we wanted was a Boone in motion, a Boone who though always calm was never still, a living Boone, moving along....It was reserved for the genius of a young Kentucky girl to have such a conception of the old pioneer, and to embody it in a statue. The faithful young artist...has reproduced the identical hunting shirt, and rifle, and tomahawk, and powder horn used by Boone in life.”

Although it was a plaster statue, Durrett promised that after its return to Louisville it would be “cast in bronze to bear the young artist’s name to distant times and to endure as long as the fame of Boone shall be known in the land.” He concluded his speech by committing the statue “to the care of the Kentucky Commissioners of the Columbian Exposition, to be exhibited as a part of the Club’s contribution to the World’s Fair.”⁵⁹

One phrase in that last sentence is intriguing: “*part* of the Club’s contribution.” Two months earlier, Durrett had received a request from a young civil service commissioner, Theodore Roosevelt. The two men had become acquainted in 1888, when Roosevelt visited Louisville, spending many hours in Durrett’s library while conducting research for what became *The Winning of the West*. But in the spring of 1893, Roosevelt had something else in mind. He asked Durrett if he might borrow Daniel Boone’s rifle to display in a replica pioneer’s cabin at the exposition, a project being sponsored by his New York-based Boone and Crockett Club. As Roosevelt’s

letter explained: "We would like very much...to have relics of two or three of our mighty men with the rifle there." According to Jacob Lee, Durrett cooperated, and hence the loan of the rifle was another gift from the Filson Club to the Chicago fair where, Lee notes, "it had a significant impact on visitors."⁶⁰

In June 1906, thirteen years after his oration at the Columbian Exposition, the eighty-two-year-old Filson president represented the parks board at a similar ceremony, when Enid Yandell's Daniel Boone statue was placed in Cherokee Park. As Durrett had promised in Chicago, it was cast in bronze. C. C. Bickel, the city's major cigar manufacturer, had paid \$10,000 for the statue's bronzing (about \$287,000 today) and donated the newly refashioned figure to the parks. The *Courier-Journal* reported that fifty thousand people attended the day-long celebration accompanying the statue's unveiling.⁶¹

In his address accepting the statue for the board (reproduced in the *Courier-Journal*, but for the most part not delivered at the ceremony because of heavy rains), Durrett naturally repeated themes and language he had used years before in Chicago. His remarks concluded with lines from a poem he had employed on that occasion:

A dirge for the brave old pioneer;
Columbus of the land;
Who guided Freedom's proud career
Beyond the conquered strand;
And gave her pilgrims' sons a home
No monarch's step profanes,
Free as the chainless wins that roam
Upon its boundless plains.⁶²

But a significant change in content from his 1893 speech was the orator's expressed hope that "this gift of Mr. Bickel will be followed by others until these charming grounds become a kind of rural art gallery in which will be preserved the statues and busts of Kentuckians who leave imperishable names at their departure from this world." The reaction of the park commissioners to this prospect is not known, but any member of the Olmsted firm certainly would have been alarmed on hearing of it. It was, as Samuel Thomas noted, "the hardcore Olmsted philosophy that the parks other than Shawnee were scenic retreats only." The *Courier-Journal* found the notion significant enough to draw readers' attention with a subhead the next day: "Wants Rural Art Gallery."⁶³



Daniel Boone statue in Cherokee Park.
POSTCARD COLLECTION, PKL-49, FILSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Postlude

Reuben Durrett died in September 1913, at the age of eighty-nine. His obituary in the *Courier-Journal* noted that he had been “a man of uncommon talents and of unusual versatility.” Only five months earlier, he had sold most of his twenty thousand books, plus pamphlets, maps, manuscripts, and newspaper files to the University of Chicago. That institution was much better prepared than any in Kentucky to house his collection and to maintain it physically and bibliographically.⁶⁴

Edward M. Walters, himself a librarian and historian, has described Durrett as possessing “the characteristics of a classic book collector—serious devotion to his subject, boundless energy in collecting, and anxiety about the ultimate fate of what he had accumulated.” It should be no surprise that Durrett was thinking about the welfare of the collection he had amassed and maintained over many decades. He was a *de facto* librarian and archivist, not only a zealous collection builder but also a preeminent reference librarian for Ohio Valley history. His collection and his knowledge, together with his characteristic cordiality in sharing both, contributed significantly to the work of prominent historians like Lyman Draper and Reuben Gold Thwaites, both at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, along with many others, such as Theodore Roosevelt, Frederick Jackson Turner, and Ida Tarbell, stimulating among the wider public an interest in the history of his state, and region. He wanted to ensure that his collection would remain an important resource for historians.⁶⁵



Reuben T. Durrett sitting in home library. Individual Photograph Collection, PC4.0085
FILSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

About Durrett's own historical writing, the late Thomas D. Clark, longtime dean of Kentucky historians, concluded that the Filson president was "a productive and proud author" whose "writings have the character of being part solid historical fact and part romantic wishful thinking that history should have been that way." James R. Bentley characterized some of Durrett's written work as reflecting "his own opinions and his penchant for making a good story better." Other historians in recent years have likewise taken him to task for embroidering facts—and occasionally creating his own. As he explained about one of his possessions, a rifle allegedly having belonged to Abraham Lincoln's grandfather: "The surest way of securing a relic and the best way of enjoying it is to accept as true the story which accompanies it, whether it really be truth or fiction."⁶⁶

Durrett's habit of composing poetry in his youth surely reflected and reinforced a style of flowery and imaginative writing, one often demonstrating what Thomas Clark called his "romantic wishful thinking." It was evident in his written communications with the public and in his oratory. Like the much younger Theodore Roosevelt, Reuben Durrett *was* a romantic. That trait is apparent in his approach to history, including the names he urged his colleagues to bestow on Louisville's parks. Thanks to Shadow's timely and practical editing, the names were transformed, while still recognizing the three tribes as essential actors in the storied past of Kentucky and the greater American West.



Scene in Cherokee Park. Postcard Collection, PKL-59
FILSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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- 2 Roy Rosenzweig and Elizabeth Blackmar, *The Park and the People: A History of Central Park* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), 1; Albert Fein, *Frederick Law Olmsted and the American Environmental Tradition* (New York: G. Brazillier, 1972), 8–10, 20–22, 32–33.
- 3 Thomas, *Origins*, 78–81.
- 4 George H. Yater, *Two Hundred Years at the Falls of the Ohio: A History of Louisville and Jefferson County* (Louisville: Heritage Corp., 1982), 134; "Paper Read by Colonel Andrew Cowan at a Meeting of the Conversation Club and Also at a Meeting of the Salmagundi Club, Louisville, KY," Nov. 14, 1913, copy in Bodley Family Papers, Filson Historical Society (hereafter FHS).
- 5 Thomas, *Origins*, 107. By way of comparison, in 1896, shortly after the establishment of Louisville's park system, Cherokee, Iroquois, and Shawnee Parks together totaled slightly over a thousand acres; today that number has grown to fourteen hundred, not including golf course property. Andrew Cowan, "The Public Parks and Parkways," in *Memorial History of Louisville from Its First Settlement to the Year 1896*, vol. 2 of 2, ed. J. Stoddard Johnston (Chicago: American Biographical Pub. Co., 1896), 341; email communications to the author from Layla George, president and CEO of Louisville's Olmsted Parks Conservancy, June 4, 2019, Mar. 1, 2020.
- 6 "Against Pickett at Gettysburg," *CJ*, June 29, 1958; Kent Masterson Brown, "Double Canister at Ten Yards: Captain Andrew Cowan at Gettysburg," *Filson Club History Quarterly* 59 (July 1985): esp. 300, 317–23; Edwin B. Coddington, *The Gettysburg Campaign: A Study in Command* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1968), 516. By war's end, Cowan had been promoted to lieutenant colonel. Like many of Louisville's leading figures, he would be addressed and referred to by his military rank for the rest of his life.
- 7 "Andrew Cowan," and Cowan, "The Public Parks and Parkways," both in Johnston, *Memorial History of Louisville*, 592, 340; Rebecca Summer, "A Partnership for a Democratic Society: Frederick Law Olmsted, Andrew Cowan, and the Louisville Park System" (BA thesis, Yale University, 2010), 6, 10–12, copy at FHS; "Henry Watterson Grieved: Lifelong Friend of Andrew Cowan Issues Statement," *CJ*, Aug. 24, 1919; "Shelter House Is Dedicated," *CJ*, June 17, 1910; Temple Bodley, "Some Park History," *CJ*, Mar. 31, 1929. Bodley was an attorney and local historian who served as a park commissioner from 1893 to 1895 and was Cowan's close friend; his family's papers at the Filson Historical Society include Cowan's scrapbook and other materials. Craig M. Heuser, "Remarkable Advances: The Development of the Louisville Park System to 1916" (MA thesis, University of Louisville, 1999), 226. See also note 51, below, for a brief, partial summary of Cowan's contributions.
- 8 The Salmagundi Club was founded in 1879, meeting frequently at its members' homes to discuss literary and social issues. Some of its papers and records are housed at FHS. Grady Clay, "Salmagundi Club," *Encyclopedia of Louisville*, ed. John E. Kleber (Lexington, University Press of Kentucky, 2001), 782; Cowan, "Public Parks and Parkways," 339–40; Summer, "Partnership," 10–11; Thomas, "Olmsted Myth"; Bodley, "Some Park History."
- 9 "Public Parks: A Plan to Promote the Pleasure, Happiness, and Prosperity of the People," and Henry Watterson, "Public Parks," *CJ*, June 5, 1887. For a recent account of Cowan's report and Watterson's response, see Steve Wiser, "Louisville's Parks Vision Set Forth 125 Years Ago," *CJ*, June 3, 2012, which reprints portions of Cowan's report along with Watterson's editorial.
- 10 George H. Yater, "Hermany, Charles," in *Encyclopedia of Louisville*, 382. The final locations of the eastern and southern parks were quite different than those shown on the map, but planners followed the general idea. Thomas, *Origins*, 113.
- 11 "Commercial Club," July 8 and "Public Parks: A Bill for Their Establishment and Maintenance," *CJ*, July 15, 1887; Cowan, "Public Parks and Parkways," 340. Cowan provided Brown with published park reports and legislation he had gathered from other cities over the years. "Paper Read by Colonel Andrew Cowan."
- 12 Cowan, "Public Parks and Parkways," 340.

- 13 Cowan, "Our Parks," *Louisville Post*, July 26, 1893, copy in Cowan Scrapbook 73A, p. 80, Bodley Family Papers, FHS.
- 14 "Our History," Filson Historical Society website, <https://filsonhistorical.org/about-us/our-history/>; Edward M. Walters, "Reuben T. Durrett, the Durrett Collection, and the University of Chicago," *Filson Club History Quarterly* 56 (Oct. 1982): 384–85; James R. Bentley, "Durrett, Reuben Thomas," *The Kentucky Encyclopedia*, ed. John E. Kleber (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1992), 275–76. Jacob F. Lee has provided a useful brief overview describing the establishment of historical societies in the postbellum United States, along with an account of the Filson Club's early years. Lee, "'Whether It Really Be Truth or Fiction': Colonel Reuben T. Durrett, the Filson Club, and Historical Memory in Postbellum Kentucky," *Ohio Valley History* 9 (Winter 2009): 27–47.
- 15 Robert Anderson, a native Kentuckian and former slaveholder, as a US Army major had commanded the garrison that surrendered Fort Sumter to the Confederates in April 1861.
- 16 Thomas D. Clark, "Reuben T. Durrett and His Kentuckiana Interest and Collection," *Filson Club History Quarterly* 56 (Oct. 1982): 354, 360–61, 365–69; Walters, "Reuben T. Durrett," 380–87; Bentley, "Durrett, Reuben Thomas," 275–76; W. H. Perrin, J. H. Battle, and G. C. Kniffin, *Kentucky: A History of the State*, 8th ed. (Louisville: F. A. Battey, 1886), 777–79; "Reuben T. Durrett," a two-page, chronological outline of his life, in the finding aid for the Reuben T. Durrett Papers, FHS.
- 17 John B. Castleman to editor of the *Commercial*, June 3, 1891, copy in Durrett Papers; "In and About Kentucky," *CJ*, June 7, 1893. See also Lee, "Whether It Really Be Truth or Fiction," 35–36, 43.
- 18 Stephen B. Weeks to Reuben T. Durrett, Apr. 11, 1895, Durrett Papers; Theodore Roosevelt, *The Winning of the West*: vol. 1, *From the Alleghanies to the Mississippi, 1769–1776* (1889; repr., Lincoln, NE: Bison Books, 1995), xxvi–xxvii.
- 19 Cowan, "Public Parks and Parkways," 339. Thomas has reported that the council's minutes make no reference to this effort (*Origins*, 47). In 1880, Durrett confessed to a meeting of the Southern Historical Association: "We have no park now...and are not likely to have one until wiser and better men get control of our city affairs" (107).
- 20 "Politics and Parks," *CJ*, June 29, 1890.
- 21 Reuben T. Durrett, "Parks in Louisville," June 28, 1890, handwritten copy in Durrett Papers.
- 22 Walter N. Haldeman to Reuben T. Durrett, June 28, 1890, Durrett Papers. Haldeman published the *Courier* from 1844 and, after 1868, the *Courier-Journal* until his death in 1902 at the age of eighty-one, when he was struck by a streetcar on his way to the office on a Saturday morning. John Ed Pearce, "Courier-Journal, The," *Encyclopedia of Louisville*, 224; Dennis Cusick, "Haldeman, Walter Newman," *Kentucky Encyclopedia*, 398.
- 23 "Silly Statements" and "Politics and Parks," *CJ*, June 29, 1890.
- 24 Reuben T. Durrett, "Parks in Louisville," *Critic*, June 29, 1890.
- 25 "A Quiet Election," *CJ*, July 2, 1890; "The People and the Parks," *CJ*, July 3, 1890.
- 26 "Park Commissioner Durrett," *CJ*, Feb. 14, 1891.
- 27 The vote on August 4, 1890, had been 9,961 in favor and 2,997 opposed. Summer, "Partnership for a Democratic Society," 18, 28–33; Virginia L. Fitzpatrick, "Frederick Law Olmsted and the Louisville Park System," *Filson Club History Quarterly* 59 (Jan. 1985): 57–58; Thomas, *Origins*, 126–43. "By the 1880s," one historian has written, "Olmsted was regarded at home and abroad as the nation's principal environmental planner." Fein, *Frederick Law Olmsted*, 27.
- 28 "Our Parks and Pioneers," Apr. 27; "Indian Names Favored," July 8; "Naming the Parks," July 15; "Park Commissioners," July 23; "The Old Retained," July 29; all in *CJ*, 1891. With only an occasional exception for stylistic relief, I have chosen to use "Indian" rather than "Native American" in this essay, and not because it was the term used at the time. In doing so I follow the lead of Charles Mann and other leading scholars such as Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1991); Dee Brown, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West* (New York: Holt 1991); Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, *An Indigenous People's History of the United States* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2015); and Colin Calloway, the most recent of whose many books is *The Indian World of George Washington: The First President, the First Americans, and the Birth of a Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018). The Oglala Sioux activist Russell Means, long a leader of the American Indian Movement, once pointed out that "anyone born in the western hemisphere is a Native American." See Charles Mann, *1491: New Revelations of the Americas before Columbus* (New York: Knopf, 2005), 339–43, which quotes Means as declaring in 1998: "I abhor the term Native American." See also Kenneth C. Davis, *Don't Know Much about History* (New York: Harper Collins 2011), xxix.
- 29 "Old Retained"; Colin Calloway, *The Shawnees and the War for America* (New York: Viking, 2007), xxii.

- Calloway observes that “Shawnee leaders repeatedly insisted that God had given them their country and they had no right to sell it, let alone hand it over to strangers who would bound it and abuse it and build alien societies” (xxix, xxxvi). For brief descriptions of the Fort Stanwix treaty and Shawnee reaction, see Calloway, *Shawnees*, 44–48, and Michael A. McDonnell, *Masters of Empire: Great Lakes Indians and the Making of America* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2015), 274. Stephen Aron provides a description of how the seventeenth-century Iroquois invasions had depopulated parts of Kentucky and the rest of the Ohio country, so that by the time the Shawnees returned in the eighteenth century, chiefly north of the Ohio River, even they maintained only “seasonal claims to Kentucky lands.” Stephen Aron, *How the West Was Lost: The Transformation of Kentucky from Daniel Boone to Henry Clay* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 7–8.
- 30 “Old Retained.” Durrett’s translations appear to have been on target for the meaning of the Iroquois and Shawnee words he proposed, but apparently less so for the Cherokee *Chen-o-ee*. According to Stephen Aron, “still mysterious are the Indian origins of the name Kentucky.” *How the West Was Lost*, 212–13.
- 31 Shadow, “Parks and Park Names,” *CJ*, Aug. 2, 1891. Samuel Thomas’s *Origins* identifies this essay as “a letter to the editor” (165). But *Courier-Journal* readers were quite familiar with the columns signed “Shadow,” of which more than a dozen appeared in the paper during that July and August alone. Whether they were all the work of the same author is unknown; if they were, it was a prodigious output.
- 32 Shadow, “Parks and Park Names.” Shadow is identified in Andrew Cowan’s scrapbook as Maj. J. M. Wright. Like Cowan, the major was a prominent Louisville businessman, a distinguished veteran of the Union army, and a member of the Salmagundi Club’s twenty-one-man parks committee. He also was president of the Southern Exposition in the 1880s; a charter member of Salmagundi, and its secretary in 1885 and 1886; the first president of the Pendennis Club in 1881; the marshal of the US Supreme Court for twenty-seven years beginning in 1888; and a sometime member of the *Courier-Journal* editorial staff. His schedule at the Supreme Court was such that he was required to be in Washington, DC, for only five months of the year, and he continued to maintain a residence in Louisville. Cowan Scrapbook, 73A, p. 74; “Public Parks: A Plan,” *CJ*, June 5, 1887; “Maj. Wright’s Appointment,” *CJ*, Dec. 24, 1887; “Funeral Will Be Tomorrow,” *CJ*, Jan. 3, 1915; “Membership Salmagundi,” 15, and “Charter Members of Salmagundi,” Salmagundi Club Records, FHS.
- 33 *Louisville Post*, Aug. 13, 1891, Cowan Scrapbook 73A, p. 75; “Given Indian Names,” *CJ*, Aug. 14, 1891.
- 34 Durrett, “Parks in Louisville,” *Critic*, June 29, 1890. Note also the title of Theodore Roosevelt’s *The Winning of the West*. In her prize-winning book about King Philip’s War of 1675–76, Jill Lepore identifies a similar transformation. By the 1820s and 1830s “many New England writers expressed only sorrow at the Indians’ disappearance” from their region. An exception was the famed orator and statesman Edward Everett, who in an 1835 speech “swam against the tide of popular romantic sentiment when he defended the *colonists’* conduct in the war.” Indeed, “most white Americans, including New Englanders, were quite comfortable celebrating Philip as a hero...without questioning their own right to the land they lived on, or even more basically [here quoting from Everett’s speech] ‘the rightfulness of settling the continent.’” *The Name of War: King Philip’s War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York: Vintage, 1998), 206–7.
- Wounded Knee has sometimes been called a battle, but two days afterward Maj. Gen. Nelson Miles described it to his wife as “the most abominable criminal military blunder and a horrible massacre of women and children.” Peter R. DeMontrevil, *Hero to His Fighting Men: Nelson A Miles, 1839–1925* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1998), 206. See also Stephen Aron, *The American West: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 67. My thanks to Allen Ashman for the reminder of Wounded Knee’s temporal proximity to the adoption of Indian names for Louisville’s parks.
- 35 Cowan, “Public Parks and Parkways,” 341; “Iroquois Park,” *CJ*, Aug. 14, 1891.
- 36 Thomas, *Origins*, 117–22; Yater, *Two Hundred Years*, 134–35; Bodley, “Some Park History.”
- 37 “Our Parks and Pioneers”; [Andrew Cowan], “Suggestions on Park Names,” signed “A Taxpayer,” *CJ*, Aug. 2, 1891, also in Cowan Scrapbook #73A, p. 74.
- 38 Jacob Lee highlights the Filson Club’s tendency to focus “on the common past of the frontier era” in order to avoid discussing the War of the Rebellion. Lee, “Truth or Fiction,” 30. It seems that a significant portion of Louisville’s civic leadership, at least those who were not professional politicians, were similarly disposed. But frontier history may have held an additional appeal, one suggested by the “lapse of civilization” setting the parks offered and that Shadow found so fitting for “a savage Indian name.” Andrew Denson has observed that during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, “Americans looked to Native cultures to provide contact with an authentic premodern existence.” Denson, *Monuments to Absence: Cherokee Removal and the Contest Over Southern Memory* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 7.

- 39 For the adjacent Wright and Cowan pieces, see Cowan Scrapbook 73A, p. 74. Durrett had used *Chen-o-ee* as the Cherokee word to grace the eastern park; Shadow wrote it as *Chen-o-wee*. That is not as close to the feared *Genoa* as is *Chenoa*, the version Cowan attempted in his Taxpayer letter and which he described as “significant and beautiful,” though “Beargrass” too would “answer very well.” Wright and Cowan may have collaborated on their August 2 essays, as the two Union army officers shared similar interests. The handwritten version of Durrett’s report confirms that the *Courier-Journal* had initially published *Chen-o-ee* correctly, as written. Durrett Papers.
 - 40 “The Park Commissioners,” *CJ*, Aug. 5, 1891.
 - 41 Louisville Board of Park Commissioners, minutes, Aug. 13, 1891, FHS (hereafter cited as Board minutes). Former mayor Charles Jacob was still living, and two years later would run unsuccessfully for the mayor’s post; he died in December 1898. “Tip’ Tyler’s Victory,” *CJ*, Sept. 13, 1893; “Charles D. Jacob Dead,” *CJ*, Dec. 26, 1898.
 - 42 Board minutes, Aug. 13, 1891. Jacob Park was not nominated; the board had just unanimously passed a resolution against such an outcome.
 - 43 Board minutes, Aug. 13, 1891. Samuel Thomas claimed that “Andrew Cowan thought Beargrass, Forest Hill, and Sunset were preferable” for the eastern, southern, and western parks, respectively. Thomas, *Origins*, 163. This was possibly true at one time, since Cowan had included two of these names (not Sunset) two weeks earlier in his anonymous Taxpayer letter, along with another possibility for the southern park. But Cowan’s letter might simply have been providing additional options for consideration. At any rate, the August 13 votes show no evidence of such a preference; none of these four names was among those nominated. The one name his letter did suggest for the southern park that showed up among the nominees was Pioneer. He also offered Ohio Park as a possibility for the western park. “Suggestions on Park Names.”
 - 44 “Our Parks and Pioneers.”
 - 45 Board minutes, Sept. 20, 1898; “Believed to Be Dead,” *CJ*, July 12; “Charley Jacob’s Death,” *CJ*, July 26, 1898; “It Is Jacob Park,” *CJ*, Sept. 21, 1898. “Iroquois Park,” *CJ*, Aug. 14, 1891. Weaver may have wanted to do more than simply honor or repay Jacob, a fellow Democrat who the previous year had chosen not to run against Weaver in the mayoral election. Back in early 1891, only two or three months before giving Indian names to the flagship parks, the parks board had withstood political pressures and declined to hire Weaver’s nephew, Clarence Weaver Parsons, as the city’s landscape architect in place of Olmsted’s firm. Parsons would serve as Louisville’s City Engineer during his uncle’s administration, 1897–1901.
 - Thomas, *Origins*, 134. According to George Yater, Weaver was mayor courtesy of the powerful political machine run by the Whallen brothers, John and James. *Two Hundred Years*, 131–33.
 - 46 “It Is Jacob Park,” *CJ*, Sept. 21, 1898; Board minutes, Sept. 20, 1898, Aug. 13, 1891. Early in October, former mayor Jacob wrote the commissioners to express his “deep sense of gratitude.” He also reminded them that their action recognized “the unquestionable wishes amounting almost to unanimity of the People of Louisville who are the founders of your Honorable Board and who, thus fully paying for the creation and sustenance of the parks, are certainly entitled to the highest consideration.” He died in December, at the age of sixty. Board minutes, Oct. 4, 1898; “Thanks from Charles D. Jacob,” *CJ*, Oct. 5, 1898; “Charles D. Jacob Dead,” *CJ*, Dec. 26, 1898.
 - 47 Thomas E. Stephens, “Belknap, Morris Burke,” *Encyclopedia of Louisville*, 81.
 - 48 [Cowan], “Suggestions on Park Names”; Cowan, “Our Parks,” *Louisville Post*, July 26, 1893, Cowan Scrapbook 73A, p. 80.
 - 49 Yater, *Two Hundred Years*, 134; Bodley, “Some Park History”; “Paper Read by Colonel Andrew Cowan.”
 - 50 Board minutes, 1898–1908; *Louisville Municipal Reports* (Louisville, KY: Courier-Journal Job Printing Co., 1898–1908); Heuser, “Remarkable Advances,” 106. Yater, *Two Hundred Years*, describes the turbulent political climate surrounding the highly unusual voting sweep across city government that ousted Democrats and installed Republicans and independents (147–50). See also “Bruce, Helm,” *Louisville Encyclopedia*, 138.
- The board seems not to have taken any formal action to change the name back to Iroquois—it just did it. Board minutes, Dec. 16, 1913. Among the newly elected Republican commissioners in 1907 was Morris Belknap, who had also been a park commissioner in 1898, when the board’s majority changed the name from Iroquois to Jacob. Although he had been absent from that meeting, on active duty in Puerto Rico, no doubt he had firsthand information to share with his new colleagues nine years later. His tenure on the board was from 1895 to 1903 and 1907 through 1909. Heuser, “Remarkable Advances,” 226.
- If the *Courier-Journal* was aware of the name change, it apparently chose not to mention it. For evidence of continuing irritation among prominent Democrats about the 1907 official return from Jacob back to Iroquois—including from an officer of the *Courier-Journal* company—see “Bon Voyage,” *CJ*, Jan. 21, 1909.

- 51 “Park Board Today Gets Col. Cowan’s Resignation,”

- CJ*, Nov. 17, 1908; "Cowan Funeral Set for Today," *CJ*, Aug. 24, 1919; Heuser, "Remarkable Advances," 226. Cowan served as a most active and productive Park Commissioner, 1890–93, 1894–95, and 1907–08. Included among his achievements for city parks were his June 5, 1887, report published in the *Courier-Journal*; his crucial involvement in the state legislature's 1890 enactment of the parks bill; obtaining land for what became Cherokee Park; and during the winter and spring of 1891 securing for Louisville the services of Frederick Law Olmsted's firm. He wrote many letters to the editor and columns in local newspapers, some signed and others under pseudonyms, as shown in his scrapbook. The *Louisville Post*, generally a Democrat supporter, was nonetheless a fan of Cowan and hence a favorite outlet for his writings. In 1890, Cowan even received the *Post's* endorsement as its "first choice for Park Commissioner." Cowan Scrapbook 73A, p. 29. John B. Castleman, the long-serving parks commissioner and president of the board for twenty-three years wrote in his final Board report, "No one has done more in the early days of the Board...than did this great citizen." A nice tribute—and a considerable understatement. (Castleman's comments are in the Nov. 19, 1917, Board minutes and the next day's *Courier-Journal*.) Beyond Louisville, Cowan's civic involvement included spearheading the famous fiftieth-anniversary reunion at Gettysburg in 1913 for veterans who had fought on both sides of that conflict, his service as president of the Society of the Army of the Potomac from 1911 through 1916, and his active role, along with Henry Waterson, in the effort to build a monument near Cleveland commemorating Oliver Hazard Perry's victory in the 1813 Battle of Lake Erie. "Colonel Andrew Cowan Dead. Father of the Joint Reunion of Blue and Gray at Gettysburg," *New York Times*, Aug. 24, 1919; Brown, "Double Canister," 326; "First Annual Report of the Perry's Victory Memorial Commission," US Senate Document 35, 67th Cong., 1st Sess., May 25, 1921, 43–44, 78–79. For another example of Cowan's many contributions to reconciliation between Union and Confederate veterans, see CSA veteran J. Stoddard Johnston, local historian and journalist, to the editor, *CJ*, June 16, 1905; Aaron D. Purcell, "Johnston, Josiah Stoddard," *Encyclopedia of Louisville*, 452.
- 52 Board minutes, Dec. 16, 1913; "Cut in Levy," *CJ*, Dec. 17, 1913.
- 53 "Bruce, Helm," *Encyclopedia of Louisville*, 138; Board minutes, Jan. 6, 20, 1914; "Park Board," and "Protect Trees," *CJ*, Jan. 7, 21, 1914. Apparently not until the 1920s did the *Courier-Journal's* references to Iroquois Park outnumber those to Jacob Park, often in the context of real estate transactions. But the newspaper's policy seems to have settled on Iroquois by 1917, when it published a lavishly photographed article on the park system. "Louisville System of Parks Admittedly among Best in the World," *CJ*, Nov. 7, 1917. A brief examination of the *Courier-Journal* historical database suggests that, in addition to its practice regarding "Jacob Park," it took more than a decade before the newspaper's use of Cherokee or Shawnee to identify those parks outnumbered its use of the directional terms Eastern and Western. Samuel Thomas also noted the *Courier-Journal's* reluctance to adopt the Indian names, but he overstated the consistency of the paper's practice when he wrote that during this time it "did not acknowledge the park name changes." *Origins*, 165. It frequently did so acknowledge—and frequently did not.
- 54 Contract between Enid Yandell and the Filson Club, Jan. 28, 1893, Enid Yandell Papers, FHS. The contract shows a payment of \$1,500, but in a letter Yandell stated that she had received \$1,750. Julie Decker, *Enid Yandell: Kentucky's Pioneer Sculptor* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2019), 7, 40, 109, 178, 208–9. John B. Castleman was especially active in the fundraising for Yandell's statue. Castleman to the Filson Committee, Jan. 20, 1893, Yandell Papers. Composing that committee were R. W. Knott, Jouett Meniffee, and the ubiquitous Andrew Cowan.
- 55 For more recent and richer interpretations of Boone, see Calloway, *Shawnees*, xxiv, xxxiv–xxxv, 48, 67–68, 158–60; Aron, *How the West Was Lost*; and John Mack Faragher, *Daniel Boone, The Life and Legend of an American Pioneer* (New York, Holt: 1992).
- 56 James Tully has shown how the seventeenth-century political philosopher and colonial government official John Locke brought his prodigious intellectual firepower to bear in support of this view. According to Tully, Locke's writings do not recognize "the native system of... property rights and responsibilities," and he "defines property in such a way that Amerindian customary land use is not a legitimate type of property." As a result of Locke's *Second Treatise of Government* and other writings, his "theory of political society and property was widely disseminated in the eighteenth century and woven into theories of progress, development, and statehood." Tully, "Rediscovering America: The Two Treatises and Aboriginal Rights," in *An Approach to Political Philosophy: Locke in Contexts*, by James Tully (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 154, 139, 158. See also Aron, *American West*, 66. Charles Mann has portrayed vividly how the perceptions of land ownership differed between the Powhatan Indians and English at Jamestown: "Except for defensive palisades, Powhatan farmers had no fences around their fields. Why screen off land if no cattle or sheep had to be kept inside?...The lack of physical property demarcation signified to the English that Indians didn't truly occupy the land—it was, so to speak, unimproved." Charles C. Mann, *1493: Uncovering the New World Columbus Created* (New York: Vintage, 2011), 61. Jill Lepore's account of seventeenth-century New England provides much the same picture of contrasting world-views about the environment and property rights, as does

- Stephen Aron's analysis of eighteenth-century Kentucky. Lepore, *Name of War*, 76–79, 61, 164–67; Aron, *How the West Was Lost*, 102–3, 106, and Aron, "The Significance of the Kentucky Frontier," *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 91 (Summer 1993): 315–16, 319–22.
- 57 Roosevelt, *Winning of the West*, 1. With more geographic specificity, Roosevelt also wrote: "Unless we were willing that the whole continent west of the Alleghanies should remain an unpeopled waste, the hunting-ground of savages, war was inevitable" (xi). The vigorous title of Roosevelt's book underwent little editing for the 1962 blockbuster film *How the West Was Won*, directed by Henry Hathaway, John Ford, and George Marshall (Burbank, CA: MGM), featuring a multitude of Hollywood's leading lights. The film was narrated by Spencer Tracy, and its three Oscars included awards for screenplay and sound. Two recurring songs that sought to capture the allure of westward expansion and pioneer settlement added to its appeal—the boisterous "We're Bound for the Promised Land" (echoing the term Durrett had used in his 1893 oration to describe the destination of Boone and his people) and "I'll Build You a Home in the Meadow," to the tune of "Greensleeves."
- Aron, *How the West Was Lost*, 3. Nevertheless, in 2019 David McCullough continues the more generally popular version when describing the Northwest Territory of the mid-1780s as "an unsettled empire" in which "there was as yet not one permanent legal settlement." *The Pioneers: The Heroic Story of the Settlers Who Brought the American Ideal West* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2019), 7. For data on Indian populations in the Americas prior to the arrival of Europeans, see Mann, *1491*, 93–101, 132–33, 310, 375, 453. In this context, Mann calls attention to the suggestive title of Bernard Bailyn's book on British immigration—*The Peopling of British North America: An Introduction* (New York: Knopf, 1986)—"in which Indians are almost not to be found," 375.
- 58 Wilcomb E. Washburn, "The Moral and Legal Justifications for Dispossession of the Indians," in *Seventeenth-Century America: Essays in Colonial History*, ed. James Morton Smith (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1959), 23. Writing chiefly about the region east of the Appalachians, Washburn argued that "the natives were hunters, but they were also, and probably more importantly, agriculturalists and fishermen." See also Aron, *How the West Was Lost*, 6–11, 65; Aron, *American West*, 49; Susan Sleeper-Smith, *Indigenous Prosperity and American Conquest: Indian Women of the Ohio River Valley, 1690–1792* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018), reviewed by Andrew K. Frank in *Ohio Valley History* 19 (Summer 2019): 89–91. For General Wayne's description, see Colin Calloway, *One Vast Winter Count: The Native American West before Lewis and Clark* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), 113–15.
- 59 "Address Made by R. T. Durrett in Chicago, June 1, 1893, at the Unveiling of Miss Yandell's Statue of Boone," Durrett Papers. Only six weeks later, the Columbian Exposition hosted the American Historical Association's annual conference, at which the University of Wisconsin's Frederick Jackson Turner first delivered his highly influential paper "The Significance of the Frontier in American History." To convene at the exposition, the AHA had postponed its conference from December 1892. See Miriam Hauss, "An Etching for the AHA," *Perspectives on History: The News Magazine of the American Historical Association* 42 (Sept. 2004), <https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/september-2004/an-etching-for-the-aha>.
- 60 Roosevelt to Durrett, Mar. 30, 1893, Reuben T. Durrett Added Papers, FHS; Lee, "Whether It Really Be Truth or Fiction," in which the author doubts that the rifle ever belonged to Boone (41).
- 61 Upon the close of the Columbian Exposition late in 1893, the Boone statue was moved from Chicago to the Polytechnic Institute of Kentucky, the successor institution to Durrett's Public Library of Kentucky and a forerunner of the Louisville Free Public Library. In addition to books, the institute housed a significant number of sculptures and paintings. At some point, Bickel acquired the statue, probably to promote his firm's Daniel Boone cigar. William Dulaney to Durrett, Dec. 1, 1893, Durrett Added Papers; William Garnar, "Louisville Free Public Library," *Encyclopedia of Louisville*, 550; Lee, "Whether It Really Be Truth or Fiction," 41; Decker, *Enid Yandell*, 210–11; Fifty Thousand Do Honor to Kentucky's Backwoodsman," *CJ*, June 16, 1906.
- 62 According to the *Courier-Journal*, approximately a hundred self-identified descendants of Daniel Boone were part of the huge crowd at the dedication. "Fifty Thousand Do Honor." Much of its lengthy story was devoted to describing a highlight of the day, the staging of a mock attack by make-believe Indians on make-believe brave settlers. The day before, the paper had promised an "attack by painted Indians." "Revive Pioneer Days in Old Kentucky," *CJ*, June 15, 1906.
- The confusing layout of the *Courier-Journal's* article, covering many details of the proceedings and two lengthy speeches, likely caused Samuel Thomas to mistakenly attribute Durrett's remarks to Breckinridge Castleman, son of longtime president of the parks board John Breckinridge Castleman. The younger Castleman made a "presentation address" at the event on behalf of the donor, to which Durrett's acceptance speech responded on behalf of the parks board (Thomas, *Origins*, 180).
- 63 "Fifty Thousand Do Honor"; Thomas, *Origins*, 174. In August 1891, the Olmsted firm's first lengthy report to the parks board offered an admonition to its new

employers: "Your business is to form parks, not museums or collections of ornaments. Admit nothing to your parks that is not fitting and helpful to their distinguishing purpose." Cowan, "Public Parks and Parkways," 343.

64 "Col. R. T. Durrett," *CJ*, Sept. 27, 1913; Walters, "Reuben T. Durrett," 380, 392; Clark, "Reuben T. Durrett," 354–56, 379.

65 Walters, "Reuben T. Durrett," 380, 387, 393; Clark, "Reuben T. Durrett," 369, 367.

66 Clark, "Reuben T. Durrett," 353, 366; Bentley, "Durrett, Reuben Thomas," *Encyclopedia of Louisville*, 260. Bentley also authored Durrett's biographical sketch for *The Kentucky Encyclopedia* nine years earlier (275). The two pieces comprise four paragraphs of virtually identical text, except for a single sentence added to the more recent version—containing the reference to "making a good story better." Thomas, *Origins*, 23–26; Thomas, "Document 'Is a Fraud,'" *CJ*, Mar. 26, 1990; George H. Yater, "Cato Watts," *Encyclopedia of Louisville*, 927; Lee, "Whether It Really Be Truth or Fiction," 39. One of Durrett's Filson lectures provided Lee's article with its title.