

<http://www.famousamericans.net/johnfilson/>

Life and Writings of John Filson by R. T. Durrett (Louisville, 1884).  
FILSON, John, explorer, born in Chester County, Pennsylvania, in 1747; died in Ohio, in October 1788. He was an early explorer of the western country, and before he was thirty-seven had traversed the territory now occupied by the states of West Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Louisiana. After spending several years in Kentucky collecting information for a history of the country, he purchased from Mathias Denman a one third interest in the site of Cincinnati, which he called Losantiville, a name formed by Filson from the Latin "os," mouth, the Greek "anti," opposite, and the French "ville," City, from its position opposite the mouth of the Licking river. While exploring the country between this place and the Great Miami, he disappeared, 1 October 1788, having been killed, it is supposed, by hostile Indians. After his disappearance his partners, Denman and Patterson, to Israel Ludlow, transferred his interest in the site of Cincinnati and his heirs never reaped any benefit from the subsequent increase in the value of the land. Mr. Filson was the author of "The Discovery, Settlement, and Present State of Kentucky" (Wilmington, Del., 1784; London, 1793; Paris, 1785); "A Map of Kentucky" (Philadelphia, 1784); and "A Topographical Description of the Western Territory of North America," in association with George Imray (1793). He also left in manuscript "A Diary of a Journey from Philadelphia to Vincennes, Indiana, in 1785"; "An Account of a Trip by Land from Vincennes, hid., to Louisville, Kentucky, in 1785"; "A Journal of Two Voyages by Water from Vincennes to Louisville," and an account of an attempted voyage in 1786. See "Life and Writings of John Filson," by R. T. Durrett (Louisville, 1884).

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John Filson (1747 - 1788)

John Filson was born in Chester County, Pennsylvania in 1747. Filson spent several years in Kentucky, finally acquiring land he called Losantiville, where he taught school and began to write. Discovery, Settlement, and Present State of Kentucke first appeared in 1784 and was a travel companion book of the state. The book included a map which Filson put together after interviewing early settlers and other explorers. Both the book and map were reprinted numerous times in the United States as well as in England, France, and Germany. The appendix, however, is what took the attention.

"Curiosity is natural to the soul of man, and interesting objects have a powerful influence on our affections. Let these influencing powers actuate, by the permission or disposal of Providence, from selfish or social views, yet in time the mysterious will of Heaven is unfolded, and we behold our conduct, from whatsoever motives excited, operating to answer the important designs of heaven. Thus we behold Kentucke, lately an howling wilderness, the habitation of savages and wild beasts, become a fruitful field; this region, so favourably distinguished by nature, now become the habitation of civilization, at a period unparalleled in history, in the midst of a raging war, and under all the disadvantages of emigration to a country so remote from the inhabited parts of the continent." (from The Adventures of Colonel Daniel Boone)

The Adventures of Colonel Daniel Boone was published on Boone's fiftieth birthday and claimed to be written in Boone's own words, including "a narrative of the wars of Kentucke." However, it was actually written by Filson. Download the easiest screen capture (print screen) program. Free trial It turned Boone into a legend and Filson into a recognized author. The book should not be considered a reliable history, though Boone, himself, noted every word to be true.

Other writings include A Topographical Description of the Western Territory of North America, (1793), A Diary of a Journey from Philadelphia to Vincennes, Indiana, in 1785, and A Journal of Two Voyages by Water from Vincennes to Louisville.

While exploring in 1788, Filson disappeared and is believed to have been killed by Native Americans.

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