Is Your Ancestor Hiding in the 1848 Panorama?
New Family History Revelations

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And sometimes a gift falls out of the sky... or should I say out of the Internet... This is an amazing coupling of the present technology and treasures from the past. But the fantastic surprise is... a store sign “Foreign Wines & Liquors” and an associated advertisement. It is great-great-granduncle Lewis Abraham’s store and advertisement. Jim Smith, A Genealogy Hunt, June 8, 2011

Within a week of the long awaited unveiling of Cincinnati’s Panorama of 1848 and its corresponding high resolution images, genealogists from around the world found new evidence of their ancestors, which linked to their documentary research. Discover the fascinating family and ethnic histories as multiple formats merge into one.

1. Introduction to the 1848 Cincinnati Panorama
   - Charles Fontayne and William S. Porter captured the world’s attention by using a new invention, the camera, in a revolutionary way.
   - The daguerreotype medium, while expensive and impractical (some would say dangerous), produced the most detailed image of any photographic method known to date.
   - The Panorama survives as the oldest photograph of urban America.

2. First in-depth investigation and discoveries
   - Cincinnati Public Library Director Carl Vitz and steamboat historian Frederick Way Jr. led the exploration of the Panorama using a magnifying glass and historical records from the 19th century.
• Their revelations included establishing the date the photograph was taken and laying the groundwork for future research by identifying streets, buildings, and steamboats.

3. Serendipity from high tech conservation
In an effort to apply the latest conservation measures and return the Panorama to public view, the Public Library partnered with the George Eastman House International Museum of Photography and Film. The treatment utilized/produced:
  • High resolution digital microscopy
  • Early detection of damage & deterioration-revised treatment
  • Zoomable images up to 32 times magnification
  • New Images of our past-Never seen before!
  • Digital data for an integrated electronic platform

4. Building a context-Points of Interest
Upon the arrival of the digital images from the George Eastman House, librarians at the Public Library of Cincinnati & Hamilton County and fellow genealogists began to match mid-19th century records with the high resolution images to build a context.

5. Five Family Histories
Digital release of Panorama images on large screens in the Cincinnati Library and online access, http://1848.cincinnatilibrary.org/, led to further genealogical exploration. An examination of the five individuals and their families reveals a deeper understanding of the people who resided “in the Panorama.”

• Frederick Schierberg (German immigrant)
  In 1848 Cincinnati’s German population exploded, doubling in a little more than 10 years. Immigrants now made up nearly half the city’s population. Frederick Schierberg arrived with his brothers, Bernard and Joe aboard the JUPITER in 1835. Their lives changed dramatically from that of tenant farmers near the town of Neuenkirchen in Oldenburg to entrepreneurs in Cincinnati. Within a dozen years, the three brothers had all established grocery, restaurant-coffee house, and boarding house businesses in the riverfront Bottoms. Together with their fellow Germans, they helped permanently shape Cincinnati.

• Lewis Abraham (Jewish/English immigrant)
  A building on the west of the Public Landing bears a large advertisement for “Foreign Wines and Liquor,” promoting the establishment owned by Lewis Abraham. Alcohol played an important role in the local economy and was at the center of political, social and religious discourse. The Abraham family also made a significant impact on the burgeoning city. Lewis was born of a large Jewish family in London, England in 1825 and
with two of his brothers immigrated to the United States in 1840. They settled in the bustling Western metropolis of Cincinnati and established careers in commerce and law. The brothers exemplified the first wave of Jewish immigrants to Cincinnati, who came mostly from England. Lewis became a significant member of the growing Jewish community of Cincinnati and a nationally recognized contributor to the American Jewish Reform movement.

- **Elizabeth Conlon (Irish immigrant)**
  Famine immigrant Elizabeth (Moran) O’Connigalon and her husband, Charles, arrived in Cincinnati with their seven children in 1848, after crossing the Atlantic on the *ERINS QUEEN* and entering the U.S. through the Port of New Orleans. Elizabeth and Charles remained attached to an agrarian life, moving to Daviess County, Indiana with their youngest two children a few years later. Five of the children remained in Cincinnati and established new lives with an urban focus. The sons worked in factories and for the railroad and post office. Descendants of Elizabeth’s eldest son, Michael, remained a few blocks from where the family first settled in Cincinnati for 100 years. The Conlon family story reflects the transition to a new life and the challenges faced by Irish men and women in mid-19th century America.

- **Jacob Strader (Virginia native)**
  Settling in New Jersey in the mid-1700s, Jacob Strader’s German grandfather became a prosperous farmer and landowner. As a young man who had come to Cincinnati seeking business opportunity, Jacob swiftly capitalized on his family’s earlier fortunes and connections. He established himself in the steamboat packet industry, first as a long-serving riverboat captain, then as the head of packet company. His business interests covered a wide range of Cincinnati manufacturing and commerce: cotton milling, banking, Cincinnati’s first railroad, and grocery and commissions. The Panorama of 1848 shows his fine Neoclassic home on Fourth Street, several steamboats owned by his company, and the passenger depot of his Little Miami Railroad.

- **Delphi Benson (Free Black/Kentucky native)**
  As early as 1840, Kentucky born Delphia Benson and her husband Henry Benson, a free black from Pennsylvania, lived in Cincinnati, where Henry Benson worked on the river. In 1848, they resided with their three year old son near the riverfront in the fourth ward, immediately west of the public land, among Irish and German immigrants, and native born whites. Legal obstacles and segregation prevented African Americans from obtaining equality in Cincinnati, the city with the third largest free black population in the U.S. Nevertheless, by 1860 the Benson children were enrolled in school and like many Cincinnatians, the Bensons no longer lived in the basin area nor depended on the river for their livelihood.
Selected Resources

Acts of the State of Ohio, 2\textsuperscript{nd} Session of the General Assembly, 1803-1804.

Cemetery Scribes, \url{http://www.cemetyscribes.com/getperson.php?personID=I9631&tree=Cemeteries}.

Cincinnati Birth and Death Records, 1865-1912. University of Cincinnati, Blegen Library, \url{http://drc2.libraries.uc.edu/handle/123456789/1}.

Cincinnati City Directories, (various publishers) 1842-1850, \url{http://virtuallibrary.cincinnatilibrary.org/VirtualLibrary/vl_CityDir.aspx}.

Find a Grave, \url{http://www.findagrave.com}.

Hamilton County Property Deeds, 1848. University of Cincinnati, Blegen Library.


\textit{Map of Cincinnati, Newport and Covington}. Cincinnati: E. Mendenhall, 1855.


St. Philomena Marriage Records, 1848. Historical Archives of the Chancery, Archdiocese of Cincinnati.


