

SWEET SIXTEEN

Louisville has given us some great gifts

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The lively city that we call home once was known as "The Graveyard of the West," a swampy outpost so besieged by Indians, mosquitoes and malaria that the 1800 census counted only 359 souls here.

Metro Louisville/Jefferson County, the mini-metropolis that is catapulting to the 16th-largest city in the nation, was in those days only the fifth largest city in the state — trailing Lexington, Frankfort, Washington and Paris.

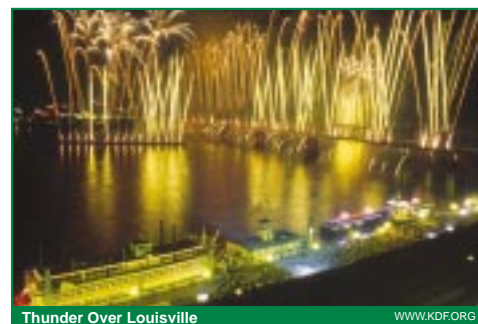
What if Louisville had stayed stunted forever? What would the world have missed if "The Graveyard" had become a ghost town?

A lot. A whole lot. Probably more than most lifelong Louisvillians ever imagined.

With an assist from historian John Kleber and his 988-page "Encyclopedia of Louisville," here is our stab at identifying the 16 most important contributions Louisville has made to the human condition.

16. Thunder Over Louisville

Billed as the biggest fireworks show in North America, Thunder draws humongous crowds (an estimated 700,000-plus in 2001) and explodes a prodigious amount of pyrotechnics (51,333 shells in each of the past two years).



Thunder Over Louisville WWW.KDFORG

15. Mint Julep

This deceptively potent potable — a blend of bourbon, sugary syrup, fresh mint and crushed ice — owes its existence to mixologists in Georgia and Virginia but owes its fame to the Kentucky Derby. Churchill Downs peddles more than 80,000 of them on Oaks-Derby weekend, served in collectible glasses that eventually can sell for \$100 or more.

14. Fund for the Arts

Founded in 1949 to promote local performance and visual arts, the Louisville fund claims to be the first of its kind in the United States and a model for similar organizations nationally and internationally. The Fund for the Arts has raised more than \$100 million in the past 53 years. It currently supports 15 performance groups, such as the Kentucky Opera and Louisville Ballet, and 10 grant programs, such as the Black Achievers Arts Scholarship Program.



Fund for the Arts KENTUCKY OPERA ARCHIVES

13. Artificial Heart

Louisville has been a world leader in heart-replacement surgery for nearly 20 years. In 1984, Dr. Allan Lansing of the Humana Heart Institute, with a promise from Humana Inc. to underwrite 100 implants, persuaded Dr. William DeVries to bring to Louisville his groundbreaking work with the Jarvik-7 mechanical heart, five of which were implanted here.

9. American Printing House for the Blind

APH is the world's largest publisher of books for the visually impaired. Founded in 1858, it was the first publisher of its kind in the United States. In 1959, APH completed a 142-volume edition of the *World Book Encyclopedia*, believed to be the largest Braille project ever undertaken.



American Printing House for the Blind APH ARCHIVES

In July 2001, Drs. Laman Gray and Robert Dowling of the University of Louisville implanted the first artificial heart completely contained within the human body. Seven terminally ill patients — three in Louisville — have received the AbioCor model. One, Tom Christerson of Central City, Ky., has lived 15 months since his failing heart was replaced by AbioCor's plastic and titanium pump.

12. "Happy Birthday"

Around 1894, at a birthday party for the daughter of a Louisville organist, the Hill sisters, Patty and Mildred, changed their song "Good Morning to You" into the ubiquitous ditty later adapted by torch singers (Marilyn Monroe) and classic composers (Igor Stravinsky and Aaron Copland) alike.

11. Seelbach Hotel

For nearly 100 years, when the rich and famous came to Louisville, the Seelbach typically was where they ate, drank and slept.

The Seelbach is where Al Capone played blackjack, Billy Joel played piano and Paul Newman and Jackie Gleason played pool in "The Hustler." Eight presidents, from Taft to Truman to Clinton, were served there, and "The Great Gatsby" was practically born there.

A young soldier named F. Scott Fitzgerald, stationed at nearby Camp Zachary Taylor, frequented the Seelbach for bourbon, cigars and the charismatic company of high rollers such as George Remus, a Cincinnati mobster who was Fitzgerald's template for Jay Gatsby. The hotel itself was the site of Tom and Daisy Buchanan's wedding reception.

10. Bottled Whiskey

Until the 1870s, whiskey was sold in barrels to physicians, pharmacists and barkeeps, who routinely diluted the liquor with water or other alcohol. George G. Brown, founder of Brown-Forman Corp., ensured the purity and consistency of his Old Forester brand by selling it only in bottles sealed at the plant.

Brown also lobbied for the Bottled-in-Bond Act of 1897, which required bonded whiskey to be aged four years, bottled at 100 proof and distilled at the same place and time.

8. Hand surgery

Kleinert, Kutz and Associates are internationally known for their expertise at reattaching amputated fingers, hands and arms. Skilled instructors as well as surgeons, the group has taught its microsurgical innovations to more than 900 doctors from 49 countries.

Founded in 1964 by Drs. Harold E. Kleinert and Joseph E. Kutz, the group claims to have been the first in the world to perform five different types of hand surgery. But its most celebrated achievement was a 1999 donor hand transplant, the first of its kind in the Americas and the second worldwide.

7. WHAS Crusade for Children

Since its inception in 1954, the Crusade has raised nearly \$90 million for children with special needs. All proceeds are returned to the community through grants to local agencies in Kentucky and Southern Indiana. A joint production of WHAS-TV and WHAS Radio, the Crusade for Children is believed to be the largest single-station telethon in the nation, according to the "Encyclopedia of Louisville."

6. Cheeseburger

The quintessential American sandwich purportedly was born in 1934 at Kaelin's Restaurant in the Highlands when Carl Kaelin asked his wife, Margaret, to slap a slice of American cheese on the hamburger she was frying for him. Kaelin liked the combination so much he added it to the menu on Oct. 12, 1934.

A Denver restaurant disputed Kaelin's claim in 1990, but its own commemorative plaque states the origination date as 1935, at least three months after Kaelin started selling his cheeseburgers for 15 cents apiece.

5. Twin Spires

A decorative flourish designed as an afterthought by architect Joseph Baldez, the Twin Spires are the signature of Churchill Downs and the symbol of American horseracing worldwide.

"What the Eiffel Tower does for Paris, the twin spires do for Churchill, for Louisville, for Kentucky, for horse racing the world over," sportswriter Blackie Sherrod wrote when the spires turned 100 in 1995.



Twin Spires CHURCHILL DOWNS ARCHIVES

4. Buchanan vs. Warley

This 1917 U.S. Supreme Court decision struck down a Louisville ordinance that prohibited integrated neighborhoods. In November 1914, Charles Buchanan, a white real-estate agent, sold a lot in the Portland neighborhood to William Warley, a member of the local NAACP, for the sole purpose of violating the ordinance and creating a test case for the courts. Because the Supreme Court had previously upheld state segregation laws in Plessy vs. Ferguson and other cases, Buchanan vs. Warley was an important affirmation of federal civil rights and marked the beginning of the end for Jim Crow laws.

3. "The Insider"

The interview was taped here, the movie was filmed here and, most importantly, the man made his stand here against a big business based here. Thus did Louisville become the epicenter of the largest class-action lawsuit in U.S. history.

Former Brown & Williamson vice president Jeffrey Wigand will go down in history as the ultimate whistle-blower, but what he really blew was Big Tobacco's cover. In a court deposition and a "60 Minutes" interview, Wigand revealed in 1995 that B&W executives privately referred to the cigarette company as "a nicotine delivery business" and knew that coumarin, a common tobacco sweetener, was a "lung-specific carcinogen."

Dr. David Kessler, former commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration, credited Wigand's revelations for paving the way for a historic settlement requiring the tobacco industry to pay \$206 billion to 46 states for smoking-related medical expenses.

2. Louisville Slugger

Not even the Derby has better publicized the city's name than the Stradivarius of baseball bats. Its oval imprint is burned into the history of America's pastime, a sport whose lore and legend spans three centuries.

The Louisville Slugger was invented in 1884 by an apprentice woodworker named J.A. "Bud" Hillerich and made famous by Honus Wagner and Ty Cobb, early 20th century batting champs believed to be the first athletes ever to sign a product endorsement contract.

Their autographs were branded directly onto the bats, a stroke of marketing genius that allowed fans to buy the same model used by their favorite big-league star. By the time Babe Ruth smashed 60 home runs with a Model R43 in 1927, the Louisville Slugger reigned as the unofficial bat of America's pastime.

1. Kentucky Derby

Contested every year since 1875, America's most famous horse race is the oldest continuously staged sporting event in U.S. history.

Partly through the promotional genius of Matt Winn, president and part-owner of Churchill Downs from 1902-49, the Derby grew beyond a 1 1/4-mile race for 3-year-old thoroughbreds into a celebrated slice of Americana that has introduced millions to the mint julep, the Twin Spires and "My Old Kentucky Home."

With crowds typically exceeding 125,000, the Derby is the best attended and most coveted horse race in the world. It has been witnessed by U.S. presidents, British royalty and Hollywood stars, and chronicled by the likes of William Faulkner and John Steinbeck.