

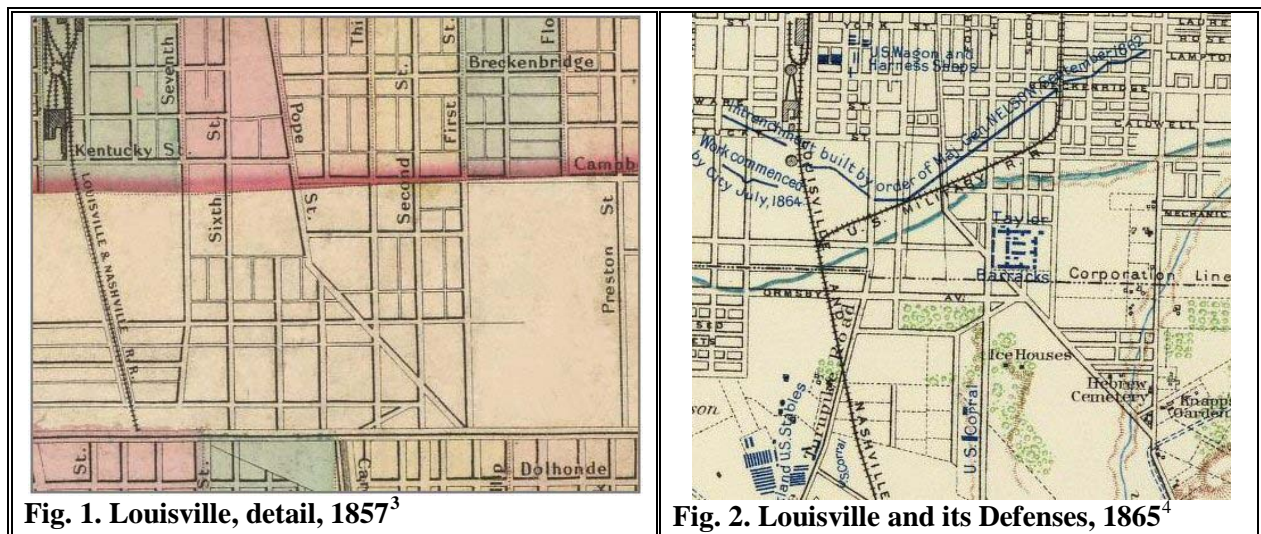


# 509 West Hill Street Louisville, Kentucky

The house known as 509 West Hill Street in Louisville, Kentucky was built in 1902. It is part of the Old Louisville Residential District listed on the National Register of Historic Places.<sup>1</sup> The original application for historic designation pointed out that, with the exception of its arched attic windows, this structure is similar to its next neighbor at 507 West Hill, a “two-and-one-half-story villa-style building with projected full-front veranda.”<sup>2</sup> Both this block and adjoining St. James Court grew from the twin interests of Louisville’s late-nineteenth century business leaders: industrial manufacturing and fine arts.

## 1850-1890

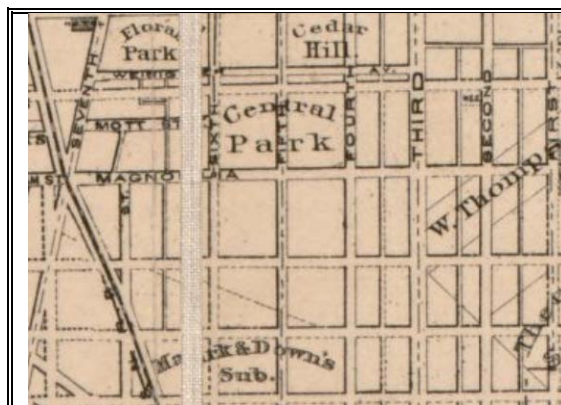
The Louisville and Nashville Railroad began construction in 1850, passing through an undeveloped swath of land south of downtown Louisville. Much of the area that is now considered the city’s showplace was then wetland (Fig. 1). The United States found its relative openness and proximity to rail and river transportation critical to the Civil War effort. For several years, the federal presence dominated a large space that included the future Hill Street (Fig. 2).



Following the war, the current 500 block of Hill Street (Fig. 3) was not residentially developed as quickly as other areas, but it was put to use. About 1875, the owners of a professional baseball club built a facility behind Central Park. Its grandstand ran east to west along Hill Street between fourth and sixth streets, with home plate centered on Hill. Their structure burned in the early 1880s and the vacant land became part of the Southern Exposition site<sup>5</sup> as did a bicycle track completed around the ball park in June 1882.<sup>6</sup>

Louisville businessmen had a decade of experience promoting the “arts, inventions, and products” (Fig. 4)<sup>7</sup> before the Southern Exposition opened in 1883. For the next five years, through changing ownership, the annual event reigned as the largest agriculture, manufactures, and fine arts showcase in the country. Lit by Edison’s new light bulbs, the entire exposition immersed visitors in musical, visual, and industrial excellence.<sup>8</sup>

Exhibits changed each year. An 1884 catalogue details the lengths to which the art committee went to ensure its quality<sup>9</sup> through the participation of noted artists, collectors, and the Smithsonian Institution.<sup>10</sup> The exposition was a fun destination, with fireworks, restaurants, and a shooting gallery but, after the 1887 show, it was closed. For a while, other events took place in its facilities. A dramatic festival was held in the Music Hall during May 1888<sup>11</sup> and a Floral Exhibition in the main building four months later.<sup>12</sup>



**Fig. 3. Louisville Map, 1873**<sup>13</sup>  
Much of area south of Central Park was used for public amusements.



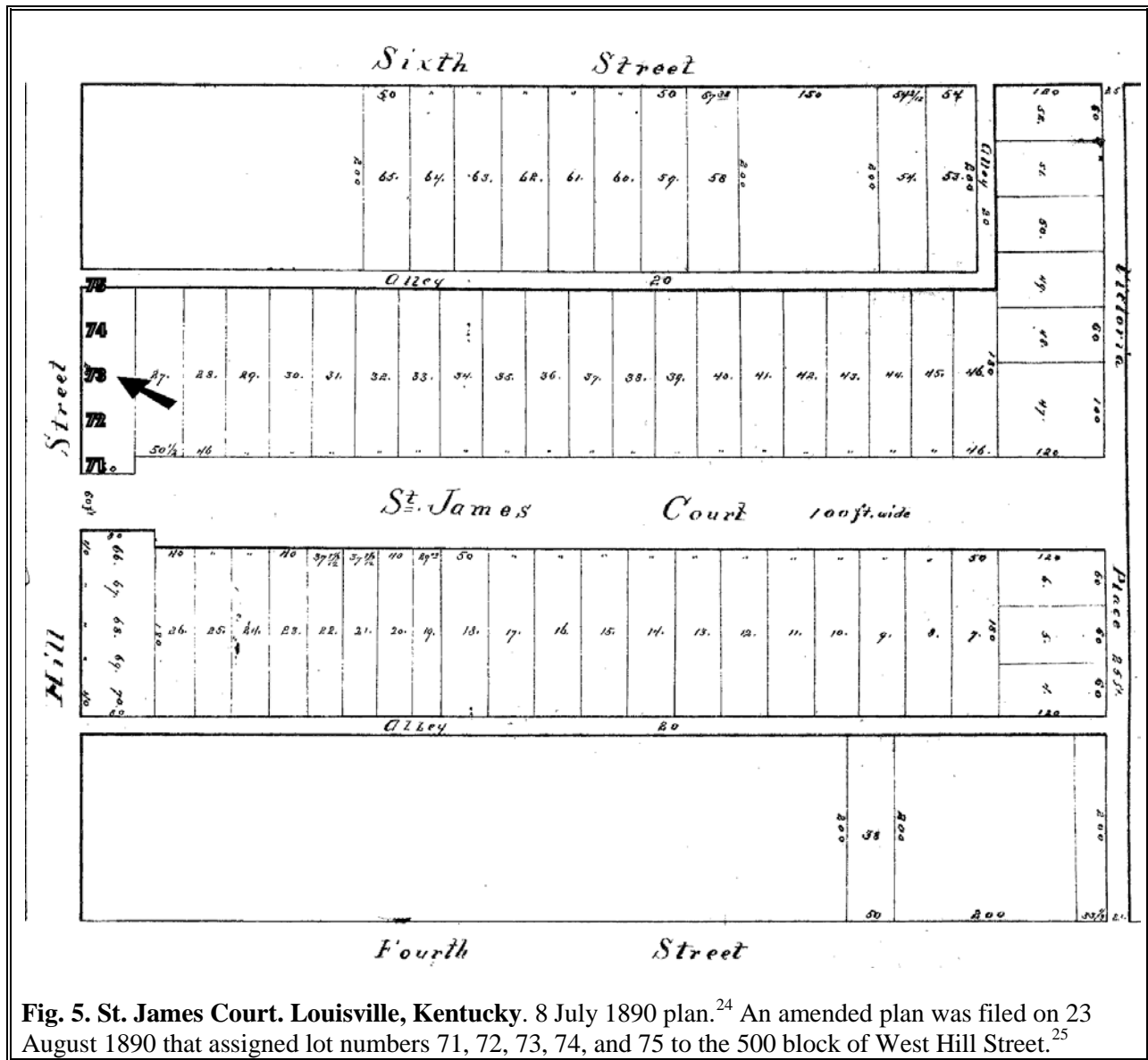
**Fig. 4. Louisville Industrial Exposition**<sup>14</sup>  
Shows were held at the exposition building, northeast corner of Fourth and Chestnut, from 1872-1882.

On 14 May 1888, the Southern Exposition buildings, machinery and grounds were sold at a court-ordered public auction.<sup>15</sup> After the site was cleared by its new owners (Fig. 6), materials salvaged from the exposition buildings were used in a number of ways. A notable example was the construction of the Amphitheatre Auditorium opened in September 1889 at the corner of Fourth and Hill streets (Fig. 7). A 10,000 seat Fireworks Amphitheater had opened at the same intersection three years earlier and<sup>16</sup> crowds continued to visit the area for its many amusements.

The 500 block of West Hill Street sits on the former site of a Southern Exposition annex that contained a saw mill exhibit showcasing modern milling techniques (cover image).<sup>17</sup> Exposition real estate was auctioned in 63 separate parcels.<sup>18</sup> The buyer of a tract beginning at the northwest corner of Fifth and Hill streets and running west 200 feet to an alley was William Ritcher,<sup>19</sup> a general agent who dealt in a variety of goods, from curtain stretchers to oil stoves.<sup>20</sup>

His purchase extended only 60 feet north parallel with Fifth Street, 20 feet less than the current lots along west Hill Street. This additional footage was part of a tract bought by W.H. Slaughter, who, by the end of September 1889, had acquired much of the former exposition property.<sup>21</sup>

In July 1890, W.H. Slaughter filed a plan for St. James Court and both he<sup>22</sup> and William Ritcher<sup>23</sup> sold their holdings to the Victoria Land Company. In August, an amended plan was filed that assigned lot numbers to the 500 block of West Hill Street (Fig. 5). Present-day 509 West Hill Street occupies all of lot 73 and a portion of lot 74.



**Fig. 5. St. James Court. Louisville, Kentucky. 8 July 1890 plan.**<sup>24</sup> An amended plan was filed on 23 August 1890 that assigned lot numbers 71, 72, 73, 74, and 75 to the 500 block of West Hill Street.<sup>25</sup>

## 1891-1907

In February 1891, Sallie W. Cooke, wife of real estate broker John Esten Cooke, bought land on West Hill Street “for her own use” that included all of Lot 73 and part of Lot 74 on the amended St. James Court plan. The deed stipulated that the property was *for residence purposes only, and that when improved, the improvements shall front Hill Street, and a house of two or more stories of brick or stone, shall be erected...*<sup>26</sup>

19 November 1895 the Cookes sold the two lots on West Hill Street to Frank P. Carroll,<sup>27</sup> a deputy sheriff.<sup>28</sup> In 1897, the 500 block of West Hill Street contained one completed residence.<sup>29</sup> By the following year a public girls’ high school was open on the southwest corner of West Hill and Fifth (Fig. 8) and the 500 block of West Hill contained three residences.<sup>30</sup>

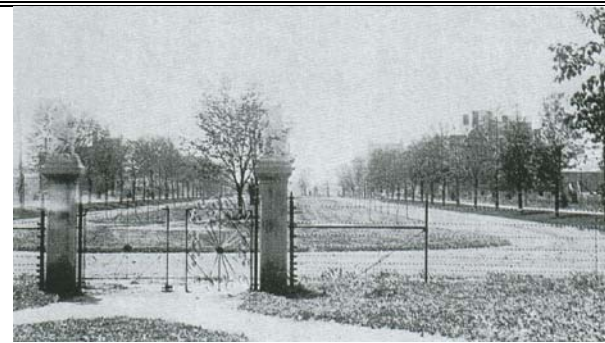


Fig. 6. Site of former Southern Exposition.<sup>31</sup>



Fig. 7. Amphitheatre Auditorium<sup>32</sup>

The house on Lot 73 of the St. James Court plan was likely built after November 1901 when Frank P. Carroll and his wife, Anne, sold their lots to the McDowell Land Improvement Company.<sup>33</sup> Present day 509 and 507 West Hill Street first appeared in the 1903 city directory as 507 and 505 West Hill, both vacant when the directory was prepared.<sup>34</sup> In March, Joseph P. Tepper, owner of J.P. Tepper gents furnishings at 734-736 Market street, bought the new house at 507 (now 509).<sup>35</sup> The deed contained stipulations:

*Conveyance made subject to the right of the owner on the adjoining land on the west to have the cornice on the building project as it now projects over the lot being conveyed; also, walk or passageway along the western boundary and the stairway of the house on adjoining lot to be maintained in their present position and as at present used.*

J.P. Tepper sold the house four years later to Peana Lion,<sup>36</sup> the wife of his new next door neighbor. She likely made the purchase in preparation for her parents, Leopold and Jeannette Koch, to live there.

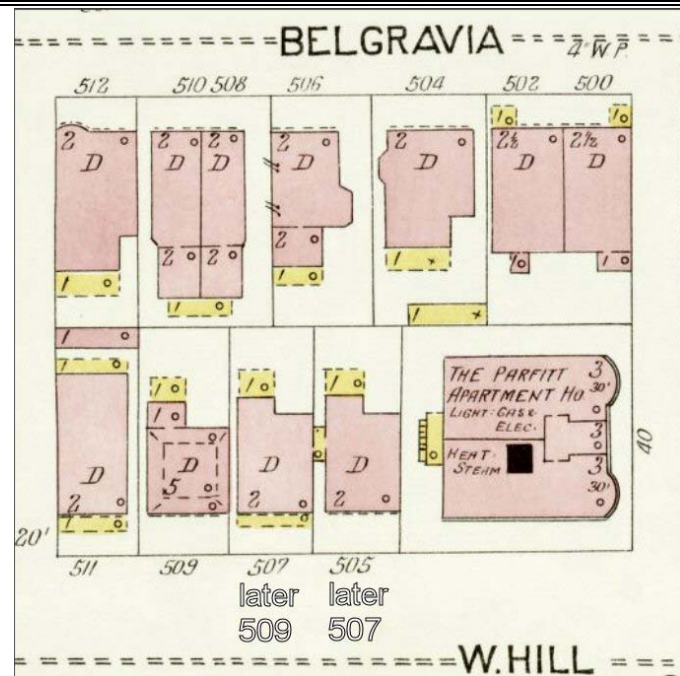


**Fig. 8. Louisville Girls' High School**<sup>37</sup>

The building was used as a school until 1935 and as city school administrative offices until razed by Urban Renewal in 1971.<sup>38</sup>



**Fig. 10. Koch Monument**<sup>39</sup>  
The Temple Cemetery,  
Louisville, Kentucky



**Fig. 9. 1905-1922 Sanborn Insurance Map**<sup>40</sup>

Louisville houses were renumbered in 1909.<sup>41</sup> Between the years 1902-1909, present-day 509 West Hill Street was known as 507 West Hill.

## 1908-1930

### *The Lion-Koch-Loebenberg Years*

The Koches were among the numerous German immigrant families who settled in Louisville during the nineteenth century and prospered.<sup>42</sup> A few years before moving to West Hill Street, clothing manufacturer Leopold Koch headed a household on East Walnut that included his wife, Shanette (Jeannette); daughter, Caroline; son, Morris; daughter, Peana Lion; son in law, Simon Lion; and grandson, Maurice Lion.<sup>43</sup>

Daughter Caroline “Carrie” Koch married Henry Loebenberg of Kansas City, Missouri in 1904<sup>44</sup> and the new son-in-law also joined Leopold’s household. The two men owned a mens’ wear store, The Model, on Market Street<sup>45</sup> until 1908<sup>46</sup> when Leopold retired and bought 507 (now 509) West Hill Street<sup>47</sup> next to his daughter, Peana Lion. He and Jeannette brought the Loebenberg family with them to West Hill Street.<sup>48</sup> A doorway connecting the two houses is visible on a Sanborn Insurance Company map (Fig. 9).

On 4 August 1916, the temperature in Louisville reached 94 degrees, resulting in the deaths of four people. Among them was retired merchant Leopold Koch,<sup>49</sup> who collapsed in front of 315 East Market Street.<sup>50</sup> He left his entire estate, estimated at \$30,000, to his widow, Jeannette Koch.<sup>51</sup> The family soon added a live-in maid, Martina Jochem,<sup>52</sup> who was still with them in 1920.<sup>53</sup>

Jeannette Koch died in May 1919.<sup>54</sup> The funeral was held at her residence<sup>55</sup> and she was buried next to Leopold Koch in the Temple Cemetery (Fig. 10). In August, Daughter Carrie bought<sup>56</sup> her brother and sister's inherited shares<sup>57</sup> in the house. She remained at 509 West Hill Street for the next decade. Henry Loebenberg died in 1930<sup>58</sup> and his widow decided to sell her home.

## **1930-2003**

### ***The Bickel-Patterson-Archer Years***

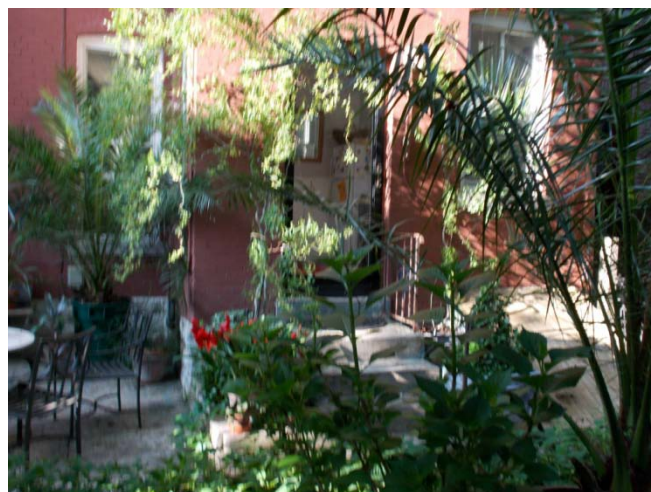
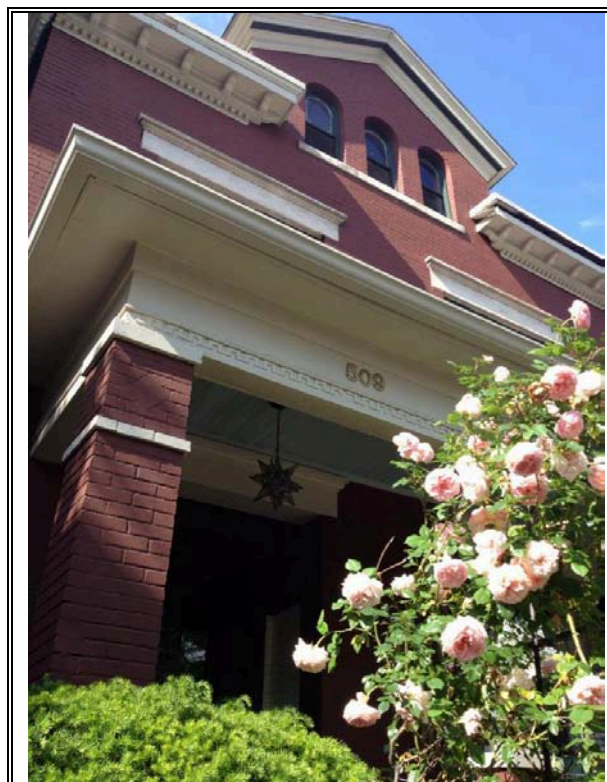
Katherine Fitzgerald Bickel was renting a house across the street<sup>59</sup> when she bought 509 West Hill Street from Carrie Loebenberg in July 1930.<sup>60</sup> A native of Germany, she became a naturalized citizen in 1895. The 1930 Bickel household consisted of Katherine's second husband, Joseph G. Bickel, a butcher; and her two daughters, Johanna Fitzgerald and Margarete H. Fitzgerald.<sup>61</sup> The girls attended the Louisville Girls High School on the corner.<sup>62</sup>

In April 1940, seven people lived at 509 West Hill: Jacob G. Bickel, meat cutter; Katherine F. Bickel, his wife; Johanna Fitzgerald, stepdaughter; Margarete F. Archer, stepdaughter; George F. Archer, medical doctor, son in law; and grandsons David F. Archer and George F. Archer.<sup>63</sup>

Jacob G. Bickel died in 1946<sup>64</sup> and Katherine Fitzgerald Bickel in March 1950.<sup>65</sup> She left the house to her two daughters, Johanna F. Patterson and Margarete F. Archer.<sup>66</sup> The sisters divided the structure into two apartments by removing a stairway to the third floor, adding a kitchen to the second floor, and converting the first floor pantry to a bathroom.<sup>67</sup> Johanna Patterson occasionally lived there before her 1995 death,<sup>68</sup> but most years it was rented to others.<sup>69</sup> Johanna left her half interest in the house to her sister and co-owner, Margarete,<sup>70</sup> who kept it as rental property. No occupants were listed in the 2003 city directory<sup>71</sup> when Margarete F. Archer sold the house to preservationist/realtor Deborah Stewart and her husband, David Stewart.<sup>72</sup>

## **2004 - Present**

The Stewarts restored the house to a single family residence and sold it to Rexford J. Lyons,<sup>73</sup> the founder of Holly Hill Inn in Midway, and a former director of the Commonwealth's Executive Mansion in Frankfort.



**Front and back entrances – 509 West Hill Street, Louisville, Kentucky**

## **Owners**

*of the*

*lot containing the address now known as  
509 West Hill Street Louisville, Kentucky  
1888 – 2013*

*On 14 May 1888*

*The following parties had an interest in the Commissioner's auction of the former Southern Exposition property on that date and were considered its collective owners:*

*J.M. Wright, assignee of the Southern Exposition at Louisville, Kentucky, the Southern Exposition at Louisville, Kentucky, The Fidelity Trust and Safety Vault Company Trustee of the mortgage bonds of the Southern Exposition, The Fidelity Trust and Safety Vault Company administrator of W.W. Walker dec'd., the Louisville and Nashville Railroad, The Falls City Bank and all the creditors of the Southern Exposition at Louisville, Kentucky.*



- 2 July 1888            *William Ritcher<sup>74</sup> and M.S. Ritcher his wife and  
W.H. Slaughter (both tracts purchased at auction 14 May 1888)*
- 25 August 1890        *Victoria Land Company<sup>75</sup>*
- 18 February 1891     *Sallie W. Cooke, wife of J.E. Cooke<sup>76</sup>*
- 19 November 1895    *Frank P. Carroll<sup>77</sup>*
- 20 November 1901    *McDowell Land Improvement Company<sup>78</sup>*
- 12 March 1903        *J.P. Tepper<sup>79</sup> (KY Title Company)*
- 16 March 1907        *Peana Lion,<sup>80</sup> wife of Simon Lion*
- 8 October 1908        *Leopold Koch<sup>81</sup>*
- 12 August 1916        *Jeannette Koch,<sup>82</sup> widow of Leopold Koch*
- 7 August 1919         *Carrie Loebenberg, wife of Henry Loebenberg<sup>83</sup>*
- 22 July 1930          *Katherine Fitzgerald Bickel<sup>84</sup>*
- 12 April 1950         *Johanna F. Patterson and Margarete F. Archer,<sup>85</sup> daughters of  
Katherine Fitzgerald Bickel*
- 5 June 1996            *Margarete F. Archer<sup>86</sup>*
- 27 October 2003      *David Stewart and Deborah Stewart<sup>87</sup>*
- 27 October 2004      *Rexford J. Lyons<sup>88</sup>*

## **Further Research**

This research report does not include an investigation of property records prior to the dissolution of the Southern Exposition. Working back through the early land granting process could reveal more about early uses of the property and certainly would identify additional property owners. This report also does not include an examination of all available records for the period between the Southern Exposition's dissolution and the present. These include annual tax

lists, complete probate records including any inventories made of household contents, and building permits issued for any architectural alterations.

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- <sup>12</sup> *The Courier Journal*, Louisville, Kentucky, 11 September 1888, page 8.
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- <sup>22</sup> Kentucky. Jefferson County, Deed Book 350:409, 1890, Slaughter to Victoria Land Company.
- <sup>23</sup> Kentucky. Jefferson County, Deed Book 361:418, 1890, Ritcher to Victoria Land Company.
- <sup>24</sup> Kentucky. Jefferson County, Deed Book 350:638, 1890.

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- <sup>25</sup> Kentucky. Jefferson County, Deed Book 357:638, 1890. Available copies of the amended plan showing the Hill Street side are not reproducible, so this image shows the original plan with additions noted that appear only on the corrected plan.
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- <sup>45</sup> *Men's Wear: the Retailers' Newspaper*, New York, 10 April 1907, pages 153-4.
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- <sup>63</sup> 1940 U.S. Census, Jefferson County, Kentucky, Louisville, enumeration district (ED) 121-205, p. 2417 (stamped), family 109, Jacob G. Bickel; digital image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : 12 July 2013); citing National Archives and Records Administration microfilm T627, roll 1371.
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- <sup>79</sup> Kentucky. Jefferson County, Deed Book 590:73, 1903, McDowell Land Improvement Company to Tepper.
- <sup>80</sup> Kentucky. Jefferson County, Deed Book 668:133, 1907, Tepper and KY Title Company to Lion.
- <sup>81</sup> Kentucky. Jefferson County, Deed Book 689:130, 1908, Lion to Koch.
- <sup>82</sup> Kentucky. Jefferson County, Will Book 35:177, 1916, will, Leopold Koch.
- <sup>83</sup> Kentucky. Jefferson County, Deed Book 917:529, 1919, Lion and Koch to Loebenberg.
- <sup>84</sup> Kentucky. Jefferson County, Deed Book 1450:180, 1930, Loebenberg to Bickel.
- <sup>85</sup> Kentucky. Jefferson County, Will Book 71:513, 1950, will, Katherine Fitzgerald Bickel.
- <sup>86</sup> Kentucky. Jefferson County, Deed Book 6747:111, 1996, Patterson to Archer.
- <sup>87</sup> Kentucky. Jefferson County, Deed Book 8286:643, 2003, Archer to Stewart.
- <sup>88</sup> Kentucky. Jefferson County, Deed Book 8520:586, 2004, Stewart to Lyons.