

Museum Hours

March - December

Wednesday - Saturday:
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Sunday:
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Monday - Tuesday:
By Appointment

January - February
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[campbellhouse
museum.org](http://campbellhousemuseum.org)



CAMPBELL
House Museum
SAINT LOUIS
City Living Since 1851

The Story of Minnie Kleeman: Faithful Cook and Beloved Grandmother

By Cameron Collins, Museum Docent

Sometimes even the littlest of things can make a tremendous impact.

I should know, because I watched it happen two years ago. And it all started with a little piece of paper with the name “Minnie” written on it.

To be more specific, this little piece of paper is glued to the inside of a kitchen cabinet at Campbell House, where I’ve been a docent since 2012.

The written name “Minnie” is short for “Philomena,” as in Philomena Kleeman, a cook who lived and worked in the Campbell family’s home more than 80 years ago.

But before I get to the great story about Minnie and that little piece of paper, here’s a bit of background information.

The Campbell House Museum has been open for almost 75 years. And while it’s a great place for visitors to look at beautiful stuff and hear great stories, much more is happening behind



The small remnant of paper glued to the inside of the kitchen cabinet with “Minnie” written on it.

the scenes. It’s a place of constant research and learning, and that’s a major reason I’m glad to be part of the Campbell House family.

And it may surprise many that we are still just scratching the surface. To this day, significant new information is constantly emerging. For example,

we didn’t know the name of the architects who designed the house until a few years ago (Joseph C. Edgar and Thomas Waryng Walsh). We learned where the “missing” Campbell child is buried (he’s in Bellefontaine Cemetery with his brothers and sisters). And in an astounding 2012 discovery, it was proven

that Robert Campbell once owned an enslaved woman named Eliza. All of these are

important changes to the Campbell narrative, but even the littlest things like name pronunciations have thrown us for a loop. If you took my tour four years ago, you would have heard me pronounce Hazlett Campbell’s name with a short “a” vowel sound (like “hat”). Take my tour today and you’ll hear me say it with

Continued on page 4

New Exhibit: ‘Curated Curiosities’

The new special exhibit *Curated Curiosities: Victorian Taxidermy & other Pastimes* opened in April. The display focuses on the art of taxidermy and the important people and exhibitions that allowed taxidermy to successfully imitate nature. Aside from taxidermy, nature was imitated with wax, glass, and wool to create faux flowers, fruits, and landscapes. A highlight of the exhibit is the Campbell’s pet bird Beauty (pictured at right).

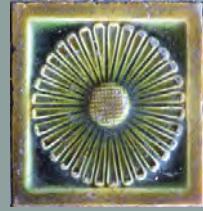
On loan from the **St. Louis Science Center** and displayed in the museum’s temporary gallery is an American black bear, great horned owl, and a beaver. America’s oldest taxidermy studio is located in St. Louis. **Schwarz Studio Taxidermy** loaned a rare 1916 deer trophy mount.

The exhibit runs through January 28, 2018.



CAMPBELL HOUSE MUSEUM

Since opening on February 6, 1943, the Campbell House Museum has served the greater St. Louis area as one of the region's premier historic property museums. The Museum not only preserves the Campbell's house, but also their collection of original furniture, fixtures, paintings, objects and thousands of pages of family documents. In 2005 the Museum completed a meticulous five-year restoration that returned the building to its opulent 1880s appearance, when the house was one of the centers of St. Louis society.



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Troublesome Transom

Recently a tall (7.5 feet) door was uncovered in the back corner of the Campbell House basement.

Its unique wood graining treatment (mahogany on one side and walnut on the other) led to the discovery of its original location between the hallway and morning room. However to restore the door to its original location required the fabrication of a missing transom. Thanks to efforts of volunteer carpenter Jim Morris and painter Jay Traxell the old door and new transom have been installed. Restoration is a neverending process!



Campbell House Lithophane

What's a lithophane? Simply it is an art form that employs molded porcelain and light to create a magical image. Visitors to Campbell House are treated to a lighting of the Museum's very rare lithophane lamp in the master bedroom. Now available in the Museum shop (\$25.95) is a lithophane nightlight that depicts the Campbell House and its magnificent cast iron fence. Come to the shop to pick up one today or order it online at campbellhousemuseum.org/shop.



Museum News and Updates

By Andy Hahn

Roses! For decades the jewel of the Museum's gardens has been the rose bed. For almost 50 years the roses were carefully tended by former Campbell House curator Theron Ware and later by Leo and Katie Krobath, members of the Greater St. Louis Rose Society.

This spring the Rose Society re-established its commitment to the Campbell House rose garden under the direction of volunteer Bruce Davis. In April the Rose Society replaced more than 25 damaged or dead plants and installed a drip irrigation system. There are now 50 roses thriving in the garden with evocative names like King's Ransom, Yellow Brick Road and Sugar Moon.

All of the other flower beds in the garden are maintained by a dedicated group of volunteers who meet for "garden days" once a month. Thank you Vera Viher, JoAnn Schremp, Eileen Carr, Celeste Sprung, Elodee Tuley, Tom and Carol Stake and Susie Hahn for all the hard and hot work keeping the outside of Campbell House beautiful.

Campbell House maintains a vigorous student internship program. The museum has an established relationship with both the Museum Studies Programs and History Departments at the University of Missouri-St. Louis and University of Illinois-Edwardsville.

This summer five students are completing a variety of projects which include inventorying the Campbell collection, transcribing historic documents and creating a detailed timeline on Google Maps of the Campbells' travels. Check out this work in progress— <https://goo.gl/H8FBB2>.

Periodically we hear from past interns. James Bragado completed an internship in spring of 2016. On a recent visit to Paris he sent a selfie showing him in front of the Campbell's Paris apartment at 20 Place Vendome.

The Campbell family has a shared history with Bellefontaine Cemetery going all the way back to 1853 (see story on back page). It is a tradition of friendship that continues today, most recently with the Museum's participation in the Cemetery's decoration day event this past June which celebrated the fur trade era. Bellefontaine was also the setting for a visit by Alan McFarland as part of an exciting new documentary commissioned in part by the BBC. Read the whole story on page 6.



Octoberfest



Neil Diamond

Meet the New Weekend Manager

Jessica Engel started as the Museum's Weekend Manager on April 1. She graduated from UMSL in 2016 with Bachelor's in Anthropology and an Archaeology Certificate.

Jessica's duties as Weekend Manager include opening and closing Campbell House every Saturday and Sunday and working with the docents to provide engaging tours to visitors. She also helps tend the garden and she lives on

the second floor of the Carriage House as the Museum's on-site staff person.

During the week she works as a full-time gardener at Forest Park.

Her hobbies include cross-stitch, which she is usually working on between tours.

She loves living downtown because "there is such a rich history here that many people do not realize."



a long “a” (like “maze”).

But if there’s one aspect of the Campbell story that remains elusive, it’s the story of the Campbell servants. These are the scores of men and women who lived and worked behind the scenes as domestic laborers. They are the cooks, housekeepers, maids, and coachmen who worked long hours keeping the Campbell House running smoothly. And other than a few notable

exceptions, we know almost nothing about them. Several names can be found from family letters, official documents, and census records, but that’s about it. Most of the Campbell servants simply showed up to work for a year or two and then left. And when they left, they took all of their stuff (letters, journals, photographs) with them. Little evidence of their time in the Campbell House was left behind.

Servants are an important part of the Campbell story, but they also represent an aspect of private life that has all but disappeared. Hiring live-in domestic labor still happens today, but on an infinitesimally smaller scale. 150 years ago, it wasn’t just commonplace for a wealthy family to utilize domestic labor, it was expected. And it would have been impossible for Robert and Virginia to live the lavish lifestyle they did without the aid of servants. In fact, the number of servants employed by a wealthy family even played a role in determining social status. With as many as nine or ten servants living at 20 Lucas Place during the peak years of the Campbell House, there’s no doubt that the Campbell family found themselves near the very top of the 1875 St. Louis social ladder.

While servant names and faces continue to be elusive, what is known is that their days were filled with backbreaking work. Campbell servants worked an average of 78 hours a week. On-call at all hours, servants were hard at work before the family awoke, and were still at it long after the family went to bed. The Campbell servants were responsible for every household chore, including cooking, cleaning, doing laundry, emptying chamber pots, sewing garments, arranging ice delivery, pulling weeds, fetching coal, driving carriages, and much more. During a time when appliances like washing machines, gas stoves, and microwaves didn’t exist,

Married Name	Relationship	Occupation	Room
Campbell Hugh A M 32	Son		Kuping house
Virginia W F 57	Mother		
Kyle Lucy Ann W F 29	Granddaughter		
Campbell Haylett W M 22	Son	Ck in grocery	
Janus A W M 20	Son	At college	
Otev Elnor 4 F 59		At home	
O’Neal John W M 30	Servant	Cochman	
Johnson Alfred R M 24	Servant	Servant	
Mary Ellen W F 30	Servant	Servant	
Roke Hannah W F 60	Servant	Servant	
Mean Nellie W F 28	Servant	Servant	
o a. W m 0 m u		Servant	

From Alfred Johnson (age 24) to Hannah Roke (age 60), the 1880 U.S. Census shows nearly as many servants living in Campbell House as family members.



Mary Boerste in the Campbell House garden circa 1910.
(from Mary Boerste's photo album)



Gus Meyer on the kitchen steps of Campbell House, circa 1910.
(from Mary Boerste's photo album)

little time was available for anything but work.

But being a domestic laborer in an elite, upper-class home did have its merits. It allowed young men and women to earn a decent wage along with room and board. In some instances, even a servant’s clothing was provided. With few expenses (and little free time to spend money), a young woman like Philomena Kleeman could save her money and prepare

for a life ahead. And that’s exactly what she did. Although her time at the Campbell House probably wasn’t as labor-intensive as what was described above (only one Campbell was alive during her time there), she made the most of it. After working at the Campbell House as a cook from 1932 to 1936, she returned to her hometown of Tell City, Indiana with \$3,000 in her pocket. After marrying her sweetheart William Emmett Miller, she used her savings to build the house in which they would spend the rest of their lives together.

But wait a minute... didn’t I just get done explaining that very little is known about the Campbell servants? How could I possibly know how much Minnie Kleeman saved and what she did with it? And how do I know the name of the guy she married? Well, this is where this story gets even better. And it all started with that little piece of paper glued to a kitchen cabinet door.

It all started on a Saturday when I was at the house giving tours. A fellow docent named Dennis Rathert told me a story about a Christmas party held at the Campbell House back in 1922. The party was hosted by Hugh Campbell, the

older of two surviving Campbell sons living in the home at the time. Hugh Campbell was a very generous man, and one way in which he showed his appreciation to those who worked for him was to throw lavish Christmas parties for his servants and their families and friends.

The 1922 party is special because we actually have a written account of the event by someone who was there. In his account, a man named Dewey Dauby details an extravagant affair that included a catered nine-course meal and dancing to a seven-piece orchestra. Among other indulgences, Dauby describes his plate surrounded by “six small glasses filled with wine and liquors of different kinds,”



A photo circa 1910 of the Campbell family servants in the side yard. (right) Gus Meyer the butler from 1901-1938, (center) Mary Boerste the housekeeper from 1905 to 1936 and (right) probably Susan Hacke the cook. From Mary Boerste's photo album.



and he goes on to say that it was impossible to empty one of the glasses without it being immediately refilled. As the festivities continued, Dauby admits to feeling a bit “dizzy” while making eye contact with another man “in a funny hat” on the other side of the room. After the two men raised their glasses to each other, Dauby hilariously realized that he’d been toasting to his own reflection in a mirror.

Dewey Dauby was at the Campbell House in 1922 as the guest of Mary Boerste, one of the few Campbell servants we know quite a bit about. Dauby had recently married Mary’s niece, Polly (Pauline) Kleeman, and the couple attended the party as part of their honeymoon in St. Louis. Born in 1883, Mary Boerste came to St. Louis in 1904 to visit the World’s Fair. Instead of returning home after her visit, Mary answered an ad in a newspaper for a housekeeping job at the Campbell home. And after being hired by Hugh Campbell, she remained there for the next thirty-two years, becoming one of the longest-tenured servants and a significant part of the Campbell story.

After telling me this story, Dennis showed me the small piece of paper (that I had never paid much attention to) glued to the inside of the kitchen cabinet. Seeing “Minnie” written on it, I learned the name was short for Philomena Kleeman, Mary Boerste’s niece. Minnie also attended the epic 1922 Christmas party. She was eighteen at the time, and she’d return to the Campbell House ten years later when her aunt Mary helped secure her a job as the Campbell cook.

As for me (sufficiently envious of Dennis and his tale), I walked

 distlhitory
Campbell House Museum

distlhitory Philomena "Minnie"
Kleeman, a cook who worked at the Campbell House in the early 1930's, wrote her name on this piece of paper (maybe a recipe) once glued inside a cabinet door.

bethapuckett This is my grandmother!

bethapuckett Does anyone know if this is still in the Campbell House?

distlhitory Yes it sure is! Come see it!

back into the kitchen and took a picture of Minnie’s little piece of paper. Happy to add another story to my tours, I applied a shiny filter and posted it on the social media site Instagram. A few weeks later, my iPhone dinged and notified me that someone had commented on my post (*pictured above*). And that’s when the real fun began.

After a few back and forth messages on Instagram, I soon found myself in the midst of an amazing email correspondence with Beth Puckett, Minnie’s oldest granddaughter. She explained the Instagram find was the result of a simple Google search by her cousin, Susan Kornreich Wolf, who was visiting her mother, Patricia Miller Kornreich, in Maine. The two were curious about Minnie’s time in St. Louis working for a millionaire and discovered the above Instagram post, shared it with the rest of Minnie’s family, and just like that, a new connection between the Campbell House and someone who lived and worked there came to be.

The excitement of this new connection quickly spread throughout the Campbell House and Minnie’s family. Information began flowing back and forth, and both sides became excited about a rare opportunity to share information. And a couple of months later, four members of Minnie’s family came to St. Louis to see the Campbell House in person. Along with Minnie’s children Wilma and Cliff, Minnie’s granddaughter

BBC Filming Robert Campbell Documentary

In July producer/director Michael Beattie and an Irish film crew visited Campbell House to begin production on a new 60-minute documentary about the "bold and dashing life" of Robert Campbell.

The documentary is presented as a trip of discovery with viewers following Robert Campbell's four-times great nephew Alan McFarland as he learns about his ancestor.

The crew was in St. Louis for three days of filming which included interviews with Museum director Andy Hahn and senior researcher and board member Tom Gronski.

From St. Louis, the crew headed to the annual Rocky Mountain Rendezvous at the Museum of the Mountain Man in Pinedale, Wyoming. The production team completed interviews with the major scholars of the fur trade era

(top left) The film crew gets a look at the Arch. (top right) Robert Campbell's great nephew Alan McFarland with Willie Leclair, tribal elder of the Eastern Shoshone tribe. Leclair was interviewed about Campbell's relationships with Native Americans. (right) Campbell House Senior Historian and Museum Board member Tom Gronski is interviewed by Michael Beattie in the Campbell House library.



which will be a particular focus in the documentary.

Filming for the production will end later this summer when the crew visits Inverary Castle in Scotland, ancestral home of the Clan Campbell and Aughalane House in Ireland, Robert Campbell's birthplace.

The documentary is set to air on the BBC in mid-2018. A local premiere will be held about that time.



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Mark your calendar for the Victorian Christmas Open House. Campbell House Museum is collaborating again with Magic Chef Mansion for an evening featuring splendid Christmas decor and a chance to see the interiors of both houses after dark. This year the open house will take place on Thursday Dec. 7 and Friday, Dec. 8 between the hours of 5 and 8 p.m. each day. Tickets are \$25 in advance (\$15 for CHM members). To purchase, visit campbellhousemuseum.org/xmas or call 314-421-0325.



Beth and great-granddaughter Emma spent an afternoon touring the house and talking with museum staff. Interestingly, it wasn't the first visit for Wilma and Cliff. In 1953, Minnie brought her entire family to St. Louis to see the place where she lived and worked for four years. At the time, Wilma was fourteen and Cliff was ten. Their visit is even recorded in the Campbell House guest book.

But the story gets even better. During their visit, Minnie's family donated two shirts that Minnie had taken with her back to Indiana in 1936. The shirts once belonged to Hazlett Campbell, and getting those shirts was a significant acquisition for the Campbell House. Prior to that donation, no clothing belonging to any of the Campbell children existed in the museum's collection. And for those wondering if Minnie Kleeman stole the shirts, she didn't. It's funny to consider, but Hazlett Campbell was beyond the need for such fancy attire when Minnie worked in the house. One plausible theory is that she simply held on to the shirts as a source of extra fabric.

I was unable to be there when Minnie's family came to visit the Campbell House, but I was fortunate to be part of a second donation that soon followed. A few weeks after their visit, Minnie's granddaughter Beth contacted me again to arrange a special delivery. A few days later, I hand-delivered a photo album to the museum that once belonged to Mary Boerste, Minnie's aunt who worked in the Campbell House for more than thirty years. Mary Boerste died in the Campbell House in 1936, and Minnie's family believes it was this event that stirred Minnie to return to her home in Indiana. Along with her own belongings (and a couple of Hazlett Campbell's shirts), Minnie also packed up her aunt's photo album and took it all with her. Nearly 80 years later, Minnie's family generously decided to donate it.

This special photo album contains nearly 200 photographs that had never been seen by anyone at the Campbell House before. Suddenly, after more than seventy years of operation, the Campbell House had new photographs of the home, new photographs of the garden, and best of all, new photographs of Mary Boerste and other servants. From these photographs, the museum learned the house once had awnings, that a unique screen once existed in the garden, and that the furniture in Mary Boerste's bedroom wasn't arranged as she had it during her time in the house.



(from left) Minnie's son Cliff, daughter Wilma, granddaughter Beth and great-granddaughter Emma visit Campbell House with their donation of two of Hazlett Campbell's monogrammed shirts.

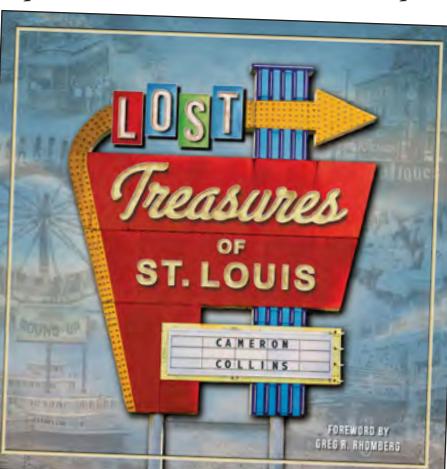


Philomena "Minnie" Kleeman.

William raised five wonderful children, and that all of them came to St. Louis in 1953 to visit the museum where Minnie once lived and worked. We know that her fried chicken was everyone's favorite, along with mashed potatoes, milk gravy, and green beans. We even know that Minnie continued gluing recipes and housekeeping tips to her cabinet doors like she did at the Campbell House. And finally, along with so much more, we know that Minnie passed away in 1983.

Today, two years after the events in this post happened, I still look forward to telling visitors about my favorite items in the Campbell House collection. But now there's one I look forward to more than any other. Today, my favorite item in the Campbell collection is not a piece of furniture, a painting, or a stained glass window. It's not Virginia's Limoges china, Robert's straight razor, or the Schomacker piano in the parlor. It's a little piece of paper glued to the inside of a cabinet with the name "Minnie" written on it.

Cameron Collins is the author of the new book, *Lost Treasures of St. Louis* (autographed copies available in the Museum shop, \$39.95). He is also the author of *Distilled History, a St. Louis history and drinking blog* that was named the Riverfront Times' Best Personal Blog in 2013. A passionate docent, he was awarded the President's Award from the museum's Board of Directors in 2015.



But perhaps the highlight of this experience is learning more about Philomena Kleeman herself. Through a freak social media connection, we now know that a woman who once lived in the Campbell House lived a splendid life after she left. And we've learned more about how she lived it. We know she was a hard worker, but she was reluctant to come to St. Louis in 1932 because she'd be far from the man she loved. And we know that she married William Miller as soon as she returned to Tell City in 1936. We know that together Minnie and

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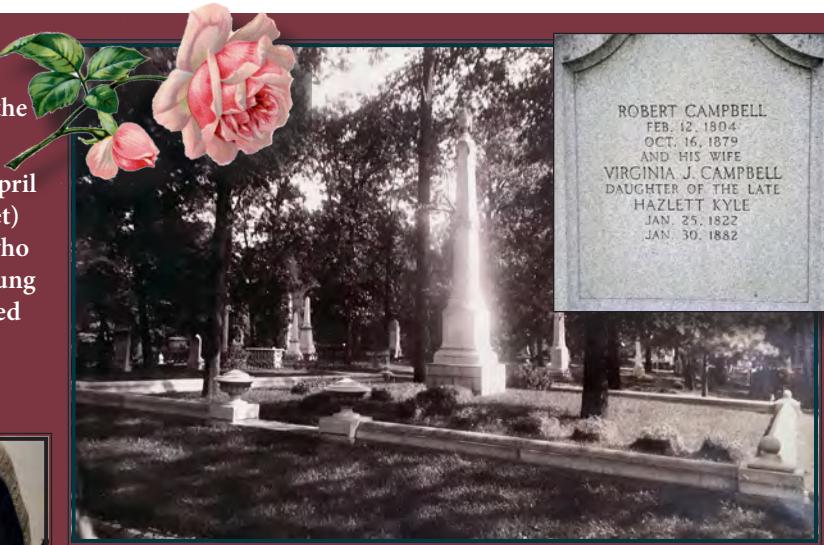
From the Archives

Established in 1849, Bellefontaine Cemetery quickly became the final resting place for most of the St. Louis elite.

Robert and Virginia Campbell purchased their family lot on April 22, 1853 for \$364.50. The large lot (more than 2,000 square feet) was first used that spring for the burial of a one-year-old son who died of scarlet fever. Eventually 10 of Robert and Virginia's young children would be buried on the lot (including 5 children moved from an older cemetery).

In October 1862 Robert wrote a stone mason in Philadelphia directing that "the front of the monument will face the North, which should be reserved for my wife and myself - we have buried nine of our children and the names of five I wish on the side to the West and four on the side South."

The marble monument was finally erected on the lot in the spring of 1865. Simultaneously well-known architect George I. Barnett was engaged to design and contract for a low stone



Photograph taken about 1885 of the Campbell lot in Bellefontaine. The photo is preserved in a family album and illustrates the Victorian practice of growing ivy mounds over individual graves.

wall to be erected around the perimeter of the lot.

The Campbell's improvements to the lot continued when in 1927 Robert and Virginia's son Hugh contracted to replace the original deteriorating marble monument (*detail pictured at left*) and wall with an exact copy (*detail pictured above*) in granite at a cost of \$16,300, more than \$240,000 today when adjusted for inflation.

The Campbell lot is a stop on a number of Bellefontaine Cemetery's many unique guided and self-guided tours. Take a tour and you will be sure to hear about many fascinating St. Louisans of the past. Learn more at bellefontainecemetery.org.