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COVER PHOTO
A deer with a surprising adornment faces a hunter in the animated film Chasse Galerie, watercolor on paper by Brian Hawkins, 2021.

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Robust Discussions at Missouri Conference on History Bring Past to Present

By Beth Pike

The 66th Annual Missouri Conference on History met March 13–15 in Columbia, offering new scholarship on topics such as President Truman’s integration of the military, the preservation of regional dialects in Missouri, the early 20th century American eugenics movement, and St. Louis’s Bosnian community. Rachel Brekhus, a humanities and social sciences librarian at the University of Missouri, enjoyed hearing from scholars, including undergraduate researchers and well-known historians.

“I was impressed with the Truman State panel of undergraduate researchers, moderated by a faculty historian, on Harry H. Laughlin and eugenics, because of the careful, critical, and nuanced intellectual history research the students presented based on the available sources,” said Brekhus, who was among the 200 attendees at the conference.

Many of the vendors at the conference represented scholarly publishers, which Brekhus finds helpful in her purchase of books for the MU libraries. “I learned of many promising historical publications. Randomly, I discovered a field guide to the snakes of Snake Road in southern Illinois, which happens to have been written by a fellow librarian. I’m always interested in learning about archival collections that historians are using, so that I can assist my patrons better.”

Nanette Clevenger of Neosho attended the conference for the first time. After hearing a panel discussion about music and memory, Clevenger said it was interesting and found it hard to decide which session to attend next: “There is so much history in Missouri that I was unaware of.” Clevenger came to the conference hoping to learn more about the history of Jefferson County, where her father’s family is from. “I’m trying to understand their past lives and how some of the skills they learned as homesteaders could still be applied, such as growing organic food,” said Clevenger.

Keynote luncheon speaker Sydney Norton, an independent scholar, spoke about her recent book, *Fighting for a Free Missouri: German Immigrants, African Americans,*...
Several awards were given, including the 2024 Book Award presented to Greg Olson for *Indigenous Missourians: Ancient Societies to the Present*. Jason McDonald received the 2024 Lawrence O. Christensen Article Award for “‘Watch Adair Kounty Klan Grow’: The Second Ku Klux Klan in Kirksville, Missouri, 1923-1925,” published in the *Missouri Historical Review* in October 2023. The 2024 Lynn and Kristen Morrow Missouri History Student Prize was presented to Elizabeth Nahach of Truman State University for “The ‘Foot’ in Jefferson City: An Ethnic Slum or Economically Robust Neighborhood?” The Student Paper Prize, newly endowed by Dr. Petra DeWitt, history professor at Missouri S&T, was awarded to Catherine Hutinett of the University of Missouri-Columbia for “(Little) Dixie’s Daughters: A History of the United Daughters of the Confederacy in Missouri.”

Susan Croce Kelly, managing editor of *Ozarks Watch Magazine*, often attends the annual conference. Kelly said she always comes away energized after finding people who are researching and writing about things of interest to her readers.

“This year, there were good surprises that I’ll follow up on, such as the St. Louis University professor who had stumbled across a scandal over a favorite women’s card game that offended the chief of police and a session by archivists at the State Historical Society who had found surprises of their own in the archives,” said Kelly.

The Missouri Conference on History will be held next year at the Adams Pointe Conference Center (part of Courtyard by Marriott) in Blue Springs on March 12-14, 2025. Further details will be posted on shsmo.org in the upcoming months. The conference is open to scholars, researchers, and anyone who has an interest in Missouri history.
Left to right: Jason McDonald, Greg Olson, and Elizabeth Nahach receive writing awards at the Missouri Conference on History, March 15.

SHSMO historian Bridget Haney (top right, seated at table) leads a discussion on feminism, civility, and activism in the 20th century with presenters Amanda Izzo and Robert Bagley of St. Louis University.

Luimil Negrón-Pérez of the University of Missouri-St. Louis (center) speaks about the closure of Colored School No. 3 and the fight for educational equality with her fellow panelists, Jamiliah Whiteside (right) and Heidi Ardizzone (left).

Debra Foster Greene (left) asks a question during a panel discussion about the migration of Bosnian refugees to St. Louis following the Bosnian War in the 1990s.

Logan Kammerer (standing), Vela Lightle (left) and Jason McDonald (center) of Truman State University present a program on the American eugenics movement during the early 20th century.

Audience members at a presentation on midcentury modernism and historic architectural styles.

Archivists at the State Historical Society of Missouri present a program about the odd collections found in the archives.

Staff of the University of Missouri Press visit with attendee at the Missouri Conference on History.
HE State Historical Society of Missouri’s Art Collection is best known for its world-class artworks by Missouri artists George Caleb Bingham and Thomas Hart Benton. Recently, however, SHSMO received a donation of contemporary works by Missouri artists, many created in the 21st century. Columbia’s Simmons Bank (formerly Landmark Bank) donated 38 examples of photography, ceramics, fiber, painting, and mixed media to the Society. Simmons/Landmark Bank is well known for

Simmons Bank Donates Contemporary Artworks to State Historical Society

By Joan Stack and Greig Thompson

Wash Day by Lloyd Grotjan.

Slinky by Susan Dunkerley Maguire.

Vessel by Bede Clark.
its rich art collections, and mid-Missourians are familiar with the sculptures of horses, made by Doug Owen from found metal objects, on the grounds of the bank’s Stadium Boulevard location on the west side of Columbia.

Simmons/Landmark Bank became a particularly avid supporter and collector of art under the leadership of Marquis “Mark” Landrum, the son of Carl Landrum, who had purchased Columbia’s Exchange National Bank in 1964. The bank was renamed First National Bank & Trust Co. in 1971 and was rebranded Landmark Bank in 2009. Mark Landrum became the majority owner in 1994, and collected and brought art to his customers and staff by installing important contemporary pieces in his banks throughout Missouri, Oklahoma, and Texas. He valued fine art photography and was instrumental in establishing the Visions open call photography exhibition and competition at the Columbia bank. Visions was held annually for over a decade, and each year, several entries were purchased for the bank’s collections.

Landrum passed away in 2012, but the bank continued operating until 2021, when Simmons Bank, based in Arkansas, acquired the Landmark Community Bank network. A few years after the changeover, the new leadership of the organization decided to share some of its vast collections of art with various institutions in Columbia, including the State Historical Society of Missouri.

Among the significant pieces Simmons donated to SHSMO are works by former MU professors and students, including internationally known ceramist Bede Clark, a professor emeritus from MU’s School of Visual Studies. Clark is known for pieces that challenge standard notions about the nature of pottery by reimagining traditional forms and techniques. Among the former Mizzou students represented is Simon Tatum, a native of the Cayman Islands who came to MU on a scholarship and has since gained international fame for his work dealing with identity in colonial contexts. Works by other Mizzou graduates include paintings by Philip Michael Hook of Missouri State Route 240 and photos by Susan Dunkerley Maguire, who is nationally recognized for her haunting images staged using small found objects and elements taken from nature.

Several internationally known Missouri photographers are represented in the donation, including renowned artist Deanna Dikeman, whose poignant images examine the intimacies of family, place, and domestic objects; Doug Koch, whose landscape work often explores environmental issues; and Carole Patterson, known for her compelling photos exploring human experiences, identity, and creativity.

A selection of works by these and other artists included in the Simmons donation is on display in the corridor leading to the Guitar Galleries through the summer of 2024.

Joan Stack is the art curator and Greig Thompson is the art collections manager at the State Historical Society of Missouri.
PATRONS can now access thousands of new online images of Missouri in the 19th and 20th centuries. Currently, SHSMO has over 66,000 photographs available to the public in the digital collection, but this is just a fraction of the photographs held at the State Historical Society, and many more are yet to be digitized and placed online. Each month, more content is added to digital.shsmo.org for greater accessibility by the public.

The recently added digital images include photos of Lexington, Warsaw, and Adair County. Images by photographer Algert T. Peterson feature studio portraits from the Higginsville and Concordia areas.

Above: Wedding portrait, Lafayette County, 1890s. Photograph by Algert T. Peterson.

Left: Portrait of a young woman playing a harp, Lafayette County, 1890s. Photograph by Algert T. Peterson.
in western Missouri. Also new is the William Pyle Photographs Collection that includes mid-20th century advertising photos from Central Dairy in Columbia.

In the Westward Expansion of the United States Collection, SHSMO has digitized the Elijah Preston Howell Diary, which chronicles a journey from Athens township in Gentry County, Mo., across the plains to the Sacramento valley during the California gold rush. Other recently digitized materials from this collection include Thomas Breckenridge’s memoirs of a doomed 1848 western expedition with John C. Frémont and the B.B. Cannon Journal, a difficult but significant account of the Trail of Tears.

Selections from the Durand-Thomure Family Papers are now online in the Genealogy and Family History Collection. These digital files consist of Ste. Genevieve land records between 1792 and 1842, many of which are translated from the original French. Also from this collection is a bill of sale for an enslaved woman named Elizabeth, dated 1835, that has been added to the Missouri Slavery Documents collection.

The Rolla Research Center continues its Route 66 digitization project with over 100 images added to the Travel and Description digital collection. This collection also includes the papers of Mary Dwight Eaman Bright, and contains a diary, letters, and photographs of her journey around the world in 1912-1913 at the age of 23.

Finally, the new Folklore and Folklife digital collection now includes an 1857 book of folk magic and remedies from the papers of Floyd Calvin Shoemaker!

If you are new to SHSMO’s digital collections website, a training video, “Using SHSMO Digital Collections,” is available to stream at shsmo.org/on-demand.

Heather Richmond is a senior archivist at the Columbia Research Center.
Growing Missouri’s Digital Newspapers Led to Second Career

By Patsy Luebbert

I BEGAN a new work adventure in 2010 after a 35-year career with the Missouri State Archives. In this new role, I became immersed in the world of newspaper digitization. The State Historical Society of Missouri had just completed its first newspaper digitization grant through funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities, adding 100,000 pages of digital newspaper content to the Library of Congress website, Chronicling America. Fourteen years later, I am retiring a second time, and would like to share some of the goals that we accomplished for the Missouri Digital Newspaper Project.

SHSMO became very good at digitizing Missouri newspapers and making them available through our website. Visitors to the site can enter a name, phrase, combination of words and dates, and location, and with the magic of good metadata, the past can be unlocked. There’s no more scrolling through reels of microfilm or flipping pages of faded newsprint, hoping to find a lost ancestor or a past sporting event. Digitizing newspapers to the high standards set by the Library of Congress has brought a renewed interest to our collection of Missouri newspapers dating from 1808 to today.

Three national grants and many Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grants have allowed our free digital newspaper content to grow from 100,000 pages to over eight million. We began with seven unique newspaper titles and expanded to more than 500, with twice as much content on the subscription side of Newspapers.com. In 2019, SHSMO entered an agreement with Newspapers.com to digitize SHSMO’s collection of public domain (prior to 1964) newspaper content. This partnership freely provides over 22 million pages to all patrons who visit SHSMO research centers. After a three-year embargo, the agreement allows these pages to be moved to shsmo.org/collections/newspapers for anyone to search remotely.

The success of SHSMO’s Missouri Digital Newspaper Project could not have come about without the support of my colleagues, who have provided technical insight, proofread grant applications, and assisted with the labor of processing and shipping thousands of reels of microfilm. I also appreciate the host of our digital newspaper collection – Newspapers.com. Their website is user-friendly, easy to navigate, and, more importantly, allows SHSMO to keep growing its digital newspaper content and make it available to the world.

Today, this program is in excellent hands with newspaper librarian Katie Ziegler, who has been taking over more of the program. She loves newspapers and the information they provide.

SHSMO began in 1898 with support from the Missouri Press Association to preserve Missouri’s newspapers. Today, newspapers are still one of the Society’s most used and valuable collections. Finding information in the digital papers is just clicks away on a keyboard or a few taps on your cell device. My time at the State Historical Society makes me think of a favorite quote from the 1989 movie Field of Dreams, “If you build it, they will come.” Our patrons have come and will continue to view the newspaper collection for centuries ahead. Happy searching because I know that’s what I will be doing in my next chapter. A warning: it can be habit forming!

Patsy Luebbert is a senior archivist at the Columbia Research Center.
Harvard University Student Credits Her Success to National History Day in Missouri

By Danielle Griego

RILEY Sutherland’s prized possession is an antique wooden sewing table that she used as a prop for her National History Day performance in 2017. Underneath the tabletop are the dates and locations of each NHD contest she participated in, serving as a reminder of her NHD involvement and passion for historical research.

Sutherland embarked on her NHD journey in 2013 as a seventh-grade student at South Valley Middle School in Liberty, Missouri. She quickly fell in love with the program, especially the performance category, and participated each year until she graduated from Liberty North High School. Throughout the program, Sutherland received many accolades. She took first place at the state contest in 2017, 2018, and 2019. She placed second at nationals in 2018 and received an outstanding entry award at the national contest a year later. Sutherland credits her family, Kansas City regional coordinator Mark Adams, and teachers Cali Kliewer, Kimberly Brownlee, and Kelly Lock-McMillen for her success. Her final performance, “Divided by Politics, United by Purpose: Anna Maria Land and Elizabeth Murray,” was her favorite project. She portrayed the lives of two women during the American Revolution, relying on what she learned from primary sources such as military service records, pension files, and the Virginia governor’s council minutes.

Since her days as an NHD student, Sutherland has continued to engage in historical research. She received B.A. and M.A. degrees in history at the University of South Carolina and worked with mentors that she met while doing NHD research in 2016 at the university. She is now a doctoral student in history at Harvard University. Sutherland’s research is a continuation of her senior NHD topic and involves historical analysis, writing papers, and giving presentations to colleagues. After she graduates, Sutherland’s dream is to pursue a career at a historical society, archive, or museum in Boston. She would also like to help coordinate NHD contests and encourage students to be part of the program.

“National History Day gives students a space to explore their interests, no matter how particular,” said Sutherland, who also noted that the program helps prepare students for any career path. “NHD taught me how to speak in front of hundreds of people and convey original arguments within a designated time slot. The contest taught me how to receive feedback and use it constructively to develop my work. It taught me how to study resources and synthesize lots of data into a comprehensive whole.”

Sutherland’s sewing table has been a constant in her life since 2017. It traveled across the country to NHD nationals, suffering a break from a fall that her mom was able to fix. The table moved with her to South Carolina for college and was the only thing salvageable when she was forced to move out of her apartment because of toxic mold. It is still with her in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and as soon as she finishes her Ph.D. general exams, she will ask her professors to sign the bottom, archiving yet another milestone in her history career. Whenever she looks at the table, Sutherland is reminded of where she began, with big dreams and a history program full of supportive people.

Danielle Griego is the educational program coordinator at the State Historical Society of Missouri.
AWARD-WINNING ANIMATED FILM
Inspired by Missouri Creole Folktale from SHSMO Collections

By Stacia Schaefer

“IT’S THANKS TO YOU ALL THAT THIS FILM EXISTS.”

This tantalizing message appeared in my inbox one day last October. The beautiful watercolor image of a stag with what looked like a fruit tree growing between its antlers and the accompanying link led me to a delightful short film, Chasse Galérite, and to the artist, Brian Hawkins.

As a descendant of one of the first French settlers of Ste. Genevieve, Hawkins’s interest lies in the music, folklore, and history of Missouri’s French Creole population. His research into the community led him to the archives at SHSMO, where he studied several related collections. In the Adolf E. and Rebecca Schroeder Collection, Hawkins discovered an audiocassette recording of Pierre Boyer, a Missouri French storyteller and musician. Boyer tells the French colonial folktale of 17th century hunter Chasse Galérite, whose luck and ingenuity gets him out of trouble and wins him the hand of a beautiful Native American woman.

“I was stunned,” said Hawkins about hearing Boyer tell this story. “Not only was this my first encounter with the spoken Missouri French language, but the story was also unpublished and brimming with vivid, dreamlike imagery. Before he had even finished the tale, I was sure I wanted to adapt it as an animation.”

Inspired by the story, Hawkins used his combined interests in art, filmmaking, and history to bring the tale to a new audience. Hawkins creates evocative watercolor illustrations, which he then cuts and sews together into puppets to tell stories in his animated films. The ethereal, dreamy watercolors complement the fantastical elements of Chasse Galérite. The film garnered acclaim upon its release in 2021, winning Best Animation at the Verona International Film Festival and at the Cinema on the Bayou Film Festival. Chasse Galérite also was chosen to screen at the Annecy Festival in France, one of the most prestigious festivals for animated films.

Hawkins used Boyer’s original recording of the story for the narration of his six-minute film, which includes English subtitles. One of the last native speakers of the local French dialect, Boyer’s rich voice adds even more charm to this humorous and imaginative folktale. Boyer was born in 1910 in Racola, Missouri, in Washington County’s Old Mines area, which was settled by French immigrants in the 1700s. He developed a lifelong interest in recording and preserving Missouri French music and culture, devoting much of his time to performances and
sharing his knowledge with audiences throughout the state and the nation. Boyer donated his own collection (Pierre A. Boyer Collection) to the State Historical Society in 1993. He died in 2000 at the age of 90.

Delving into Missouri’s French history isn’t Hawkins’s first foray with SHSMO. In 2002, at the age of 14, he participated in the National History Day in Missouri contest as a student in Harrisonville. With an interest in art and music, Hawkins entered a short film in the documentary category and took first place, advancing to the national contest in College Park, MD. There his film about ragtime music won third place in the nation and was also awarded the Loman D. Cansler Folk History Prize and the Strickland African American History Prize.

Hawkins credits National History Day with introducing him to self-directed, in-depth research and giving him his first experience at making films.

“It was, by far, the most impactful educational experience of my life,” said Hawkins. “Not only did I develop the investigative and technical skills that are central to my work today, but the program also changed my relationship to history.”

Hawkins is thankful to have discovered that history can be part of a creative act. His current project is an upcoming feature-length documentary on the French folklore of Missouri called *Toujours Icîte*. He is an adjunct lecturer in the Department of Visual Art at the University of Kansas and in the University of Missouri’s School of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures. The public is invited to learn more about Hawkins’s process and new work when he kicks off SHSMO’s fall season of History on Elm programs September 10, 2024, at the Center for Missouri Studies.

*Chasse Galerite* can be viewed on Vimeo here: [https://vimeo.com/871252019](https://vimeo.com/871252019).

Stacia Schaefer is a senior strategic communications associate at the State Historical Society of Missouri.
URING the mid-1980s, the world took notice of growing hunger issues. The United States suffered from food insecurities due to economic turmoil and restrictions on social welfare programs. Overseas, a famine in Kenya took the lives of over a million people, and food shortages were widespread from western Africa to the former Soviet Union. The public did not overlook these dreadful events; assistance would come to those in need. Charity organizations raised money and awareness of hunger issues. Events such as Live Aid, We Are the World, and Hands Across America engaged global audiences. The U.S. Congress took notice too, forming the Select Committee on Hunger to address food insecurities. Congressmen Mickey Leland and later Tony Hall led the committee, but its vice chairman, Bill Emerson, was crucial to its success and triumphs.

Norvell William Emerson was born in Hillsboro, Missouri, on January 1, 1938. When he was 15, he was appointed by Missouri Congressman Thomas B. Curtis to the House Page School, where he attended classes and assisted Curtis’s office in Washington, D.C. After graduating from the House Page School, Emerson returned to Missouri and attended Westminster College, receiving a bachelor’s degree in 1959. He earned a law degree from the University of Baltimore in 1964. In 1980 he ran for Congress and was elected to represent Missouri’s 10th District.

Emerson gained seats on the House’s Agriculture Committee and Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs. During his first term, he and his colleagues faced mounting social and economic issues due...
to the 1981-1982 recession. In 1983, Emerson worked closely with Nutrition Subcommittee chairman Leon E. Panetta of California to help states establish emergency food centers. The Reagan administration pushed back against the program, but Emerson and Panetta were successful in aiding food centers.

A year later, the Select Committee on Hunger was formed, with Emerson serving as vice chairman. The committee introduced the Emergency Hunger Relief Act and the Hunger Prevention Act, making federal food assistance available to Americans living in poverty or facing adversities such as the 1980s Farm Crisis. Support for maternal and child nutrition programs led to a plan to fully fund the Special Supplementary Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children, also known as WIC.

The Select Committee on Hunger addressed international crises as well. It obtained $800 million for emergency assistance to drought-ridden African countries facing a massive famine. Emerson labored on the Select Committee on Hunger until the House defunded it in 1993. This decision outraged Emerson and his fellow committee members, and chairman Tony Hall began a hunger strike in protest. Emerson supported Hall and painstakingly fought to keep the Hunger Committee funded, but his efforts were fruitless.

After the committee was dissolved, Emerson and his colleagues established the Hunger Caucus and the Congressional Hunger Center to continue the efforts to end global hunger. Both groups survive today and continue to introduce legislation and programs. The Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act and the Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellowship reflect the Missouri congressman’s work to bring help to people around the world who still go hungry. Emerson’s papers are part of a grant-funded records project to process and digitize select congressional papers held at the State Historical Society.

Zane Peterman is an archivist at the Columbia Research Center.

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**Go for the Gold!**

Members of the State Historical Society of Missouri who join or renew at the gold level or above can now receive a free one-year subscription to *Missouri Life* magazine. This new benefit is available from April 2024 through March 2025. *Missouri Life* is a beautifully designed full-color magazine published eight times a year, offering the best of Missouri culture, history, and travel. To become a gold-level member today, visit shs.mo.org/join or call 573-882-7083.
A NEW book Men of No Reputation: Robert Boatright, the Buckfoot Gang, and the Fleecing of Middle America, written by SHSMO editor Kimberly Harper, takes the reader into the secret world of Missouri’s criminal past and explores the life of one of the Midwest’s most prolific confidence men. Robert Boatright and his fellow con men, styled the “Buckfoot Gang” by the local press in Jasper County, preyed upon victims from across the U.S. who fell for their fixed athletic contests. A series of missteps led to a string of court cases across the country that brought Boatright’s criminal enterprise in Webb City to an end. Many of Boatright’s associates, however, continued the con under the leadership of John C. Mabray, who eventually presided over one of the largest Midwestern criminal syndicates in history.

Harper found the newspaper collection at the State Historical Society was invaluable to her research for the book. "It is one of the most comprehensive state newspaper collections in the country," said Harper. "Even with local, state, and federal court records—which made up the other half of my research—I would not have been able to tell this story without newspapers."

Among the difficulties Harper faced while researching the book were holes in the historical record, such as missing court records. Also, separating the truth from deception made it a complex story to write.

“One of the biggest challenges was, as I warn readers, everyone in the story is a liar,” said Harper. “Boatright, his victims, his associates—they all tried to fashion their own truth to escape justice. Ultimately the Buckfoot Gang’s story, which includes murder, vengeful marks, and a very spirited newspaper war, made the effort incredibly rewarding.”

Harper is satisfied that her latest book will find an audience interested in a more scholarly but accessible account of confidence men in the United States, particularly within Missouri. She noted it is the first book on the complex criminal organization that operated out of Jasper County, Missouri, but had a national reach.

"The Midwest is often stereotyped as a wholesome region populated by God-fearing people, but Boatright’s victims—who hailed from Kansas, Oklahoma, Iowa, among other states—show that it has its fair share of crooked individuals,” added Harper.

Author Daniel Woodrell (Winter’s Bone) reviewed Harper’s book, saying "Men of No Reputation is about the confidence racket in the Ozarks circa 1900, but along the way Kimberly Harper gives a compelling account of local politics, prizefighting, foot races, attitudes toward crime, and much else. I finished reading this wonderfully written book feeling I’d just been educated.”

Men of No Reputation is published by the University of Arkansas Press. Harper received the Missouri Humanities Distinguished Achievement in Literature Award for her previous book White Man’s Heaven: The Lynching and Expulsion of Blacks in the Southern Ozarks, 1894-1909. Both books are available for sale at the Richard Bookstore inside the Center for Missouri Studies or online at shop.shsmo.org.
LISTENERS in the Ozarks region can now hear stories about interesting people, places, and events gathered from the collections held at the State Historical Society’s Springfield Research Center. KSMU Ozarks Public Radio is broadcasting *Stories from the Archives*, a new series with two-minute monthly episodes that highlight manuscript collections from southwest Missouri. After reading about a similar partnership between Wyoming Public Radio and the American Heritage Center, I was inspired to take my proposal for this new series to Michele Skalicky, news director at KSMU. After deciding on program length, frequency, and content, the station agreed to partner with SHSMO, and I began preparing for my first radio series.

The inaugural episode of *Stories from the Archives* aired February 26 and featured the Mark Twain National Forest Historical Photograph Collection and wildfire prevention efforts of the 1930s. Following its February premiere, the series has featured the African American Heroines of Jericho Records and the Knight Family Collection. Each episode brings listeners stories from SHSMO’s collections and explains how they relate to the history of the Ozarks.

*Stories from the Archives* is produced by KSMU’s Christopher Drew. I research and write the scripts and voice the episodes. After each episode airs, the recording is made available on KSMU’s website, along with a transcript and photographs from the collection.

KSMU, the region’s NPR affiliate, was signed on air in 1974. The station is licensed to Missouri State University in Springfield and its studio is in Strong Hall, a short walk from the Springfield Research Center in Meyer Library. Skalicky says the station is excited to join forces with the State Historical Society of Missouri to bring *Stories from the Archives* to its listeners.

“I hope they will gain an even greater appreciation of the history of Missouri and the Ozarks by listening to the stories each month, and I believe the series will make history more easily accessible for anyone who tunes in,” said Skalicky.

*Stories from the Archives* airs the last Monday of each month at 8:30 a.m. on 91.1 FM.

Haley Frizzle-Green is an archivist at the Springfield Research Center.
Missouri Communities’ Bid for the Central Route Fell Short

By Kathleen Seale

When a popular movement for better roads began in the United States in the 1870s, various groups advocated for straighter routes and upgraded road surfaces to travel on with their wheeled horse-drawn carriages. In time, groups such as the U.S. Post Office, the League of American Wheelmen for bicyclists, and the American Automobile Association joined the conversation, seeking increased state and federal funding to improve and maintain rural roads. Numerous trans-state roads were proposed, with three main contenders receiving the most attention: the Northern Route, Central Route, and Southern Route.

In Missouri, the proposed Central Route was meant to pass through St. Louis and Kansas City, but its actual route was highly debated. Supporters of one particular route, which would follow many existing roads from St. Louis through places such as Webster Groves, Manchester, Union, Owensville, Westphalia, and Jefferson City, had supporters in Franklin, Gasconade, and Maries counties. From Jefferson City, it would connect with existing roads that continued to Kansas City. A route to Springfield would fork from the Central Route at Belle in Maries County and continue southwest through Dixon, Crocker, Richland, Lebanon, and either Buffalo or Marshfield before reaching Springfield.

Meetings supporting the Central Route began in 1907, a year before the Model T was introduced, launching the automobile industry. Lawmakers approved the
Central Route in 1911 and road improvements began soon afterward. The Federal Aid Road Act of 1916 and the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1921 improved the transportation network across the country. In 1922, delegates from towns along the Central Route petitioned the Missouri State Highway Commission for their road to be adopted as one of the new interstate highways. SHSMO’s collections include pamphlets promoting the Central Route. One pamphlet claimed the proposed route had “the best grades, least bridges, and suggests a $3 million saving to Missouri Road Funds!”

In 1926, the U.S. Numbered Highway System was established. The previous debates on designating highways through Missouri would face a final decision, which confirmed the basic route followed by U.S. Highway 40 and later I-70. The routes once favored through Franklin, Gasconade, and Maries Counties and from Belle to Springfield are now a mix of county and state highways that wind their way through the central Ozarks.

While these hopeful communities did not receive an east-west highway, some of them later became stops on the north-south U.S. Highway 63 (formerly Route 7 from 1922-1926). Parts of the Central Route also integrated into sections of U.S. 40 and U.S. 66. The section from St. Louis to Union would become part of Route 66. The history of the Central Route can be found in several collections at the Rolla Research Center, including the Leslie B. Hutchison Papers and the Herbert Spencer Hadley Papers.

Kathleen Seale is the coordinator of the Rolla and Springfield Research Centers.
B’NAI B’RITH is a fraternal organization that began in New York City to help Jewish immigrants adapt to living in the United States. Its first meetings in 1843 were conducted in German. In 1909, Jewish women fought for inclusion in the organization, and the first official chapter of B’nai B’rith Women was founded in San Francisco. Hundreds of B’nai B’rith Women’s chapters were created throughout the world, including five chapters in Kansas City. The activities of one of these chapters during the late 1950s and early 1960s are documented in the B’nai B’rith Women, Kansas City Chapter #158 Scrapbook held at the Kansas City Research Center.

The scrapbook was kept by the chapter’s president, Inge Silverman, between 1959 and 1960. In the scrapbook, Silverman outlined what membership in B’nai B’rith accomplished: “1. Builds Democracy—Serves Humanity, 2. Helps Young People—Aids Israel, 3. Builds Community Welfare, 4. Promotes Jewish Education.” The scrapbook, recently processed by SHSMO, includes flyers and invitations for events and also demonstrates that the women were concerned about politics within and outside of their organization.

B’nai B’rith Women expanded to over 100,000 members in the United States by the end of World War II. Throughout the war years, the organization, including Kansas City Chapter #158, supported the work being done in Palestine to establish the State of Israel. According to one newspaper clipping, the chapter and the Committee for State of Israel Bonds held a dinner to support the tenth year of the Israel bond program, encouraging people to purchase bonds for Israel that would assist in stabilizing its economy.

Along with the establishment of Israel, B’nai B’rith Women had a vested interest in addressing anti-Semitism occurring throughout the United States and abroad. They worked with the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) to sponsor interfaith seminars and introduce the Dolls for Democracy program for elementary school children. Silverman included newspaper clippings and articles from the ADL Bulletin reporting on anti-Semitism and how the ADL and Dolls for Democracy worked to combat it. Articles in the Bulletin had headlines such as “Bomb Blast at Kehilath Israel Shocks Community, World” and “More than 400 Anti-Semitic Incidents in Germany.” On the pages of the scrapbook, Silverman lamented in marker: “This is our punishment—what was our crime?”

Focused on better equality for women within their organization from its conception, B’nai B’rith Women turned to feminism during the 1960s as the Women’s Liberation Movement gained momentum. Chapter #158 followed suit, becoming involved in the betterment of the University of Missouri–Kansas City. One article in the scrapbook details B’nai B’rith Women’s participation in the Kansas City Women’s Pilgrimage for Higher Education. The pilgrimage consisted of tours, talks, and exhibits and raised funds to help furnish the University Center building.

As the decades wore on, membership in B’nai B’rith Women decreased. In the late 1980s, B’nai B’rith International discussed absorbing B’nai B’rith Women, but the women resisted. After a period of conflict between the two organizations, B’nai B’rith Women decided to break out as an independent organization, now known as Jewish Women International, which still has a chapter in Kansas City.

Sarah Herndon is a manuscript specialist at the Kansas City Research Center.
By Zachary Palitzsch

In 1980, a group of activists, students, union organizers, and community members formed the Organization for Black Struggle (OBS) to address the needs and issues of the Black working class in the St. Louis area. Members took on issues of racial discrimination in housing, employment, and criminal justice reform. Their concerns extended to the 1980s anti-apartheid movement in South Africa. Nearly 1,000 photographs, along with video cassettes and publications of the group’s campaigns and initiatives, are part of a newly processed collection at the St. Louis Research Center.

OBS founding members Al Lumpkins and Jamala Rogers sought to unite the Black community against racial injustices through radical and militant social and political activism. The organization has consistently been at the forefront of issues involving the St. Louis Black community and helped to spur a national movement against police brutality following the police shooting of Michael Brown, an unarmed teenager, in Ferguson, Missouri, in 2014.

In the 1980s, the organization became involved in the notable case of Ellen Reasonover, whose murder conviction it helped overturn. Reasonover was found guilty in the death of James Buckley, a Dellwood, Missouri, gas station worker, in December 1983. Twenty-four at the time of her arrest, Reasonover was sentenced to life in prison, but continued to protest that she was innocent. The NAACP, Congress of Racial Equality, and Missouri Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights began investigating the circumstances surrounding the trial, and within a year, the Organization for Black Struggle also took up Reasonover’s cause.

OBS kicked off a series of fundraising initiatives to support Reasonover’s defense and enlist the help of Centurian Ministries, Inc., a national organization successful at helping to free convicts who were falsely accused of their crimes. In 1993, Centurian Ministries officially took over the case and began interviewing all parties involved. A few years later, they became aware of two secretly recorded tapes that had been withheld by the prosecutors. The tapes repeatedly referenced Reasonover claiming to cellmates that she was not involved in the murder, contradicting cellmate testimony in the original trial.

In a new hearing granted in the case, the tapes were turned over to the court and a cellmate testified not only that Reasonover had not admitted to any wrongdoing, but also that authorities had offered money for testimony against Reasonover. On August 2, 1999, Chief U.S. District Judge Jean Hamilton ruled in Reasonover’s favor and ordered her release, noting that her original trial had been unfair since the tapes were withheld from the jury. After nearly 17 years, Reasonover left the Chillicothe Correctional Center to a welcome home party given by OBS and Centurian Ministries.

Five years later, Reasonover settled a lawsuit against the city of Dellwood for $7.5 million. Her legal team included Johnnie Cochran and Barry Scheck, the defense attorneys for O.J. Simpson, who was acquitted in 1995 in a famous murder trial in Los Angeles. Scheck is the founder of the Innocence Project that works to exonerate inmates who have been wrongly convicted.

Zachary Palitzsch is an archivist at the St. Louis Research Center.

Publicity flyers calling for Ellen Reasonover to be released from prison, Organization for Black Struggle Records (S1240.)
Carl Schaeperkoetter remembers the first time he walked into the State Historical Society of Missouri to learn more about the history of the towns where he grew up: Bland and Union, Mo. He visited the Society’s research center, then located at Ellis Library, as an undergraduate at the University of Missouri-Columbia in the 1970s. Searching through old newspapers, he became immersed in the towns’ histories and began to learn more about his family history.

“You had to physically look through census records back then. There was no internet or digital files. So, I spent a lot of my free time on campus discovering what was in the archives at the State Historical Society,” he recalled.

After earning his undergraduate degree in history and then a master’s degree in community development, Carl found a calling in public service that led him to MU’s law school. He graduated in 1982 among the top of his class. After working as a law clerk for a federal judge and then in private practice, Carl took an opportunity to work at the Missouri Supreme Court in the Office of Chief Disciplinary Counsel. His duties included overseeing probation and diversion. After 25 years, Carl retired from his job. “I found meaningful work in law and helping lawyers, many who suffered from substance abuse, get treatment and put their lives back on course so they could continue to practice,” said Schaeperkoetter.

About six months after retiring, Carl became a volunteer at the State Historical Society, where he now enjoys greeting people at the front desk on Wednesday afternoons, transcribing World War II letters before they are added to online collections, and attending many of the events held at the Center for Missouri Studies with his wife, Ann.

“Really enjoy seeing staff and the visitors who come to the bookstore and to do research in the library. Being at the front desk, I am part of the hustle and bustle of what happens here,” he said.

Carl also spoke about the impact of letters by soldiers in World War II that he read and transcribed. “The tenor of the letters had meaning. One letter from a sailor described the light from the moon on the ship’s deck and finding it peaceful despite the turmoil,” said Schaeperkoetter. That same day, he transcribed a letter from a nurse who had assisted survivors from Auschwitz concentration camp in Poland. “That was a hard one to read.”

Volunteering is important to Carl. He also helps at Loaves and Fishes, a place in Columbia that offers free meals for the hungry. He has regular shifts at the local food bank and is a driver for immigrants and refugees who attend Education as a Second Language classes.

A sixth-generation Missourian, Carl’s interests and research have made him a family historian. He and Ann enjoy spending time with their three children and three grandkids, including a recent newborn in the state of Louisiana who will eventually hear the stories about their relatives in Missouri.
**Looking Ahead**

**History on Elm – Second Tuesdays, 12 p.m. – 1 p.m. Monthly**
(September through June) Cook Hall, Center for Missouri Studies

On May 14, ride along with humorist John Robinson, who drove every mile of every road on the Missouri state highway map, as he shares experiences from his epic road trip. Before the series takes a short summer break, come hear retired journalism educator Bill Cloud speak on June 11 about his hometown of Pleasant Hill and memories of the small Missouri railroad town during World War II.

**Basic Genealogy: Crossing the Pond – Tracing Ancestors in Immigration and Naturalization Records**
May 30, 1 p.m. – 2 p.m. Virtual Program on Zoom

Join Bill Eddleman for the next installment in SHSMO’s genealogy series that will offer tips on tracking down hard-to-find immigration records from different time periods and making use of them in family histories. Register online at shsmo.org for this free program.

**Ginger Rogers: Dressed to Impress Exhibition**
Now through August 2024, SHSMO Art Gallery, Center for Missouri Studies

A collection of costumes originally worn by Hollywood star Ginger Rogers is on display in the SHSMO Art Gallery, in collaboration with the University of Missouri’s Department of Textile and Apparel Management. Learn how the actress and entertainer from Independence, Missouri, inspired contemporary apparel design by students in the Department of Textile and Apparel Management.

**Benton & Benton: The Senator & The Artist Exhibition**
Now through Fall 2024, SHSMO Art Gallery, Center for Missouri Studies

Explore the art and material culture related to Senator Thomas Hart Benton (1782-1858), Missouri’s preeminent statesman from the 1820s to the 1850s who was known as “Old Bullion” for his support of gold currency, and his great-grand-nephew and namesake, Thomas Hart Benton (1889-1975), the famed Missouri artist known as a founder of the American Regionalism art movement.