

# MISSOURI TIMES

The State Historical Society of Missouri

February 2016 Vol. 11, No. 4



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## First African American Experience Lecture Features Kansas City Author

The first lecture of *The African American Experience in Missouri* series, featuring Diane Mutti Burke, associate professor of history at the University of Missouri in Kansas City, was held earlier this month on the University of Missouri campus in Columbia. The event marked the opening week of Black History Month, the annual recognition of the central role African Americans have played in US history, which is observed nationwide each February.

In her presentation, *Contesting Slavery: Enslaved Missourians' Enduring Struggle for Self-Determination*, Mutti Burke examined the lives of African Americans who were enslaved in mid-Missouri.

"The way slavery was practiced in central Missouri created living and working conditions that compromised the strength of enslaved families as well as black communities. It also increased the possibilities for physical and psychological abuse," Mutti Burke said. "Yet, at the same time, it enhanced enslaved Missourians' opportunities to effectively resist in a variety of ways."

In her research, Mutti Burke has found that roughly 90 percent of mid-Missouri slaveholders reported having 10 or fewer slaves. The relatively small scale of slave ownership led to enslaved people and slaveholders working and living more

closely together in Missouri than in parts of the South where large plantations were more prevalent.

The lecture series is a collaboration between the State Historical Society of Missouri's Center for Missouri Studies and MU's Division of Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity. The talks, to be held in 2016 and 2017, will explore the history of African Americans in Missouri from before statehood to the present.

*"Some of these stories are hard to hear, but we hope the community takes advantage of the chance to evaluate our past in order to move toward a brighter future."*

—Keona K. Ervin, Center for Missouri Studies fellow

"The scholars and subject-matter experts invited to speak will offer the University of Missouri community, as well as the public, an opportunity to expand their knowledge about the African American experience," said Chuck Henson, interim vice chancellor for inclusion, diversity, and equity. "We believe this look into the past is essential as we work together to write the next chapter of our shared history."

MU history professor Keona K. Ervin and SHSMO executive director Gary Kremer, both Center for Missouri Studies fellows known for research on African American history, are working together to create the series, which will include about a dozen lectures by top scholars in the field.

—Continued on page 2



Diane Mutti Burke, author of *On Slavery's Border: Missouri's Small-Slaveholding Households, 1815-1865*, presented the first lecture in *The African American Experience in Missouri* series, which is a collaboration between SHSMO and MU.

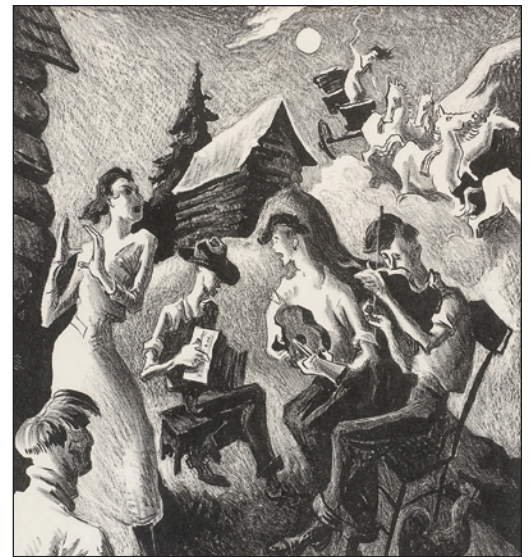
## In Sync with Thomas Hart Benton Celebrates Iconic Missouri Artist with Events, Exhibition

SHSMO partnered with the “We Always Swing” Jazz Series to present a three-day celebration of Missouri artist Thomas Hart Benton on February 2-4 in Columbia. The inspiration for the project was a major concert, “A Musical Tribute to Thomas Hart Benton,” which was performed by the Orrin Evans’ Captain Black Big Band, a critically acclaimed 10-piece ensemble based in New York.

“From time to time something so remarkable comes to our attention that we feel as an organization we have both the opportunity and the obligation to pursue the project,” said Jon W. Poses, Jazz Series executive and artistic director. “This concert represents only the second complete performance of ‘A Musical Tribute to Thomas Hart Benton,’ which was originally commissioned by and performed at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.”

Other activities explored the complexities of Benton’s life and art. Two Benton film documentaries were shown on February 2. Events the following evening were organized around the theme of *Inspiration, Music, and Thomas Hart Benton*. The discussions featured the concert musicians and Benton scholars from around the nation, including Henry Adams, author of *Thomas Hart Benton: Discoveries and Interpretations*; James Bogan, co-director of the documentary *Tom Benton’s Missouri*; Leo Mazow, author of *Thomas Hart Benton and the American Sound*; and Steve Sitton of the Thomas Hart Benton Home and Studio State Historic Site.

“It’s quite special to have all the various parties on hand—those who specialize in Benton’s art world as well as the musicians who drew from that sphere to create a wholly new extended work based on Benton’s art,” Poses said.



*Coming Round the Mountain* is one of the works showing Benton’s connection to music that is featured in the mini-exhibition *In Sync with Thomas Hart Benton*, on display through June in SHSMO’s main gallery.



## SHSMO Named among 75 Best Websites for Genealogy Research

In November *Family Tree Magazine* named SHSMO one of the 75 Best Websites for US State Genealogy in 2015. Top sites from across the country were recognized for providing exceptional access to records, transcriptions, and indexes.

“This list honors the best websites that specialize in genealogy research for one of the 50 US states,” said Diane Haddad, the magazine’s managing editor. “The 75 websites represent the go-to online destinations for tracing American ancestors, state by state.”

Intent on providing access to an ever-growing number of photographs, oral histories, newspapers, letters, diaries, and journals, the State Historical Society of Missouri devotes significant resources to digitizing materials for researchers.

“This year we crossed the milestone of one million digital newspaper pages and are continuing to add page after page of new

keyword-searchable content online,” said Gerald Hirsch, SHSMO associate director. “None of that progress would be possible without a coordinated strategy for digitization and dedicated staff members executing that plan. It is an honor to be recognized for this hard work.”

To access SHSMO’s digital collections, visit <http://statehistoricalsocietyofmissouri.org>. Help

*“This year we crossed the milestone of one million digital newspaper pages and are continuing to add page after page of new keyword-searchable content online.”*

—Gerald Hirsch, SHSMO associate director

continue this work by making a gift to support the Society and its collections. Contact SHSMO at 573.882.7083 or [shsofmo@umsystem.edu](mailto:shsofmo@umsystem.edu), or donate online at <http://shsofmo.org/store/priority-donation.html>.

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#### Website

[shs.umsystem.edu](http://shs.umsystem.edu)

#### Telephone

800.747.6366  
573.882.7083

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#### Managing Editor

John Brenner

#### Editor

Mary Ellen Lohmann

#### Assistant Editor

Kimberly Harper

## African American Experience in Missouri Lecture—Continued

“These presentations will cover everything from slavery and the meaning of race to urban decline and the rise of jazz culture,” Ervin said. “They are an essential step in continuing the dialogue on our campus that began this past fall.”

While details of the next lecture are still being confirmed, Kremer said Martha S. Jones, Arthur F. Thurnau Professor of History at the University of Michigan, will present *#SayHerName: Black Women and State Violence in the Case of Missouri v. Celia, A Slave* in Columbia on March 23.

“Celia’s story is deeply powerful and unfortunately very tragic. She was purchased by a local man in Callaway County and suffered tremendously for years before she stood up for her basic human right to decide her own fate,” Kremer said.

Ervin agreed. “Some of these stories are hard to hear, but we hope the community takes advantage of the chance to evaluate our past in order to move toward a brighter future.” For further information on *The African American Experience in Missouri* lecture series, visit <http://shs.umsystem.edu>.



## Join the State Historical Society Community in Remembering Three Exceptional Supporters

### Emory Melton

Emory Melton, longtime State Historical Society of Missouri trustee and 1996 Distinguished Service Award recipient, passed away on December 26, 2015. A Republican from southwest Missouri, he served six terms in the Missouri State Senate from 1973 to 1997.

Melton was born in McDowell, Missouri, on June 20, 1923. A lifelong resident of Barry County, he was known for his dedication to the community. He worked tirelessly to connect with his constituents. In a SHSMO oral history interview (C3929), he said, “I recall another instance over in Douglas County where I was trying to get across a creek and I couldn’t find the bridge. I can see a fellow over here—a man named Smith, who was cutting hay. It was a small creek—it wasn’t deep... And so finally I just parked my car. I parked it where he could see it. Threw off my shoes and socks, waded the creek, went over and campaigned him.”

His enthusiasm on the campaign trail may have helped Melton make it to the legislature,

but his commitment to his fellow citizens was what kept him there. Among his many accomplishments, Melton is credited with helping to establish Roaring River State Park near Cassville. Learn more about Melton’s lasting contributions through his personal papers (CA3125).

### Booker Hall Rucker III

State Historical Society member and donor Booker Hall Rucker III of Taos, Missouri, died on January 5, 2016, at the age of 76.

Deeply invested in sharing the culture and history of the Show-Me State, Rucker spent his career specializing in the preservation of historic sites.

Rucker ignited this passion as a University of Missouri graduate student excavating sites like the Osage Village State Historic Site in Vernon County and the George Caleb Bingham residence at Arrow Rock. He went on to conduct site studies at Watkins Woolen Mill, Washington State Park, and the first Missouri State Capitol in St. Charles. After 36 years with the Missouri State Parks, he

retired as the director of the Cultural and Natural Resource Management Program in 2003. In retirement he continued to share his love of Missouri’s vibrant culture with the Foundation for Restoration of Ste. Genevieve. He also collaborated on a revised edition of *Missouri State Parks and Historic Sites: Exploring Our Legacy*, published in December 2015 by *Missouri Life*.

### Richard Kent Withers

State Historical Society of Missouri volunteer Richard Kent Withers passed away on January 8, 2016, in Cape Girardeau. He was born on February 11, 1941, in the same southeast Missouri town.

During his award-winning radio career, Withers was a well-known on-air personality with stints at WGGH in Marion, Illinois; WABB in Mobile, Alabama; WSGN in Birmingham, Alabama; and WMAK and WLAC in Nashville, Tennessee.

He shared his talents with the Research Center—Cape Girardeau, assisting with oral interviews and regional events.

## March Event to Celebrate *The Call’s* “One-Shot Fambrough”

Kansas City photographer William L. Fambrough Sr. will be featured in a program presented by the State Historical Society of Missouri on March 19. Fambrough (1916–1983) chronicled the city’s African American community from the 1940s to the 1970s.

A staff photographer for Kansas City’s leading African American newspaper *The Call* who also worked as a freelancer, Fambrough became a trusted face behind the camera. He was known as “One-Shot Fambrough” for his speed and skill as a photographer.

Fambrough’s son, William L. Fambrough Jr., will present the talk on his father’s life and work at the historic Second Baptist Church, 3620 E. 39th Street in Kansas City. The event will begin at 4 p.m. and is free and open to the public.

Registration is appreciated but not required. To reserve a seat, please contact the Kansas City Research Center by phone at 816.235.1549 or by email at [shsofmo-kc@umsystem.edu](mailto:shsofmo-kc@umsystem.edu).

Fambrough’s work is also on display as part of the exhibition *Through the Lens: Visions of African American Experience, 1950–1970*, which will run until April 3 at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art. The exhibition is a collaboration of the State Historical Society of Missouri, the Black Archives of Mid-America, and the Nelson-Atkins.

Learn more about Fambrough through his photograph collection (K0642) held at the Research Center—Kansas City. It preserves roughly 100 photographs and 2,100 negatives depicting the people, places, and events of the African American community during his career.



Photographer William L. Fambrough Sr.

## LOVEMO20: Spread the Love of Missouri History throughout 2016



Share your love of Missouri with items from the State Historical Society of Missouri gift shop. All inventory is discounted 20 percent from February 7 to March 5. Whether it is an indulgence for yourself or the perfect present for that hard-to-shop-for person, the gift shop offers books, art, notecards, and other items that highlight your state heritage.

For family, friends, or business associates, a gift membership in the State Historical Society of Missouri is a meaningful gesture that will be enjoyed year-round. It is another great way to extend your own support of the mission to collect, protect, and share Missouri’s heritage for future generations.

Visit [shsofmo.org](http://shsofmo.org) with promo code LOVEMO20 or call 573.882.7083 and start spreading Missouri love!

### JOIN IN THE CONVERSATION!

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# NATIONAL HISTORY DAY IN MISSOURI

www.nhdmo.org



Jay Mehta, center, of Kansas City joins students from around the country at the grand opening of the *Campaigns of Courage – The Road to Tokyo* pavilion.

## National Medalist Jay Mehta Represents “Mighty Mo” at National World War II Museum

“And in first place—the National Endowment for the Humanities scholar for junior individual performance—from Kansas City, Missouri: Jay Mehta.”

As soon as they heard Cathy Gorn, executive director of National History Day, say “Kansas City,” the entire Missouri delegation—students, teachers, and families—burst into cheers.

While National History Day’s impact goes far beyond rankings and medals, it does feel good to win, and a wave of state pride swept through the group: Missouri had taken gold.

In his dramatic performance, *Victory at All Costs: The Leadership and Legacy of Winston Churchill*,

*“Speaking before an audience of over 600 people was an amazing experience for me, and I felt very humbled to have been selected as the student speaker for the VIP Gala.”*

–Jay Mehta, NHD gold medalist

Mehta, a student at Pembroke Hill School, portrayed four historic figures: Churchill, Neville Chamberlain, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and current British prime minister David Cameron. His performance explored why Churchill still matters today.

After conducting 300 hours of research on Churchill, including an interview with a World War II pilot, and competing at the regional, state, and national levels, one might think that Mehta would have taken a break from history over the summer. But he was just getting started.

For his next project, Mehta entered the Salute to Courage Award contest, a program offered by the National World War II

Museum in New Orleans in partnership with National History Day. NHD students from each state studied veterans whose oral histories are contained within the museum’s digital collections and then wrote essays describing why these men and women were outstanding examples of courage during World War II.

Mehta chose to write about naval officer James Starnes. As an Officer of the Deck on the USS *Missouri*, Starnes helped coordinate the formal Japanese surrender aboard the “Mighty Mo” that ended World War II. Mehta’s essay won the Salute to Courage Award, and he was invited to represent Missouri at the grand opening of the museum’s new *Campaigns of Courage – The Road to Tokyo* pavilion.

In December 2015, Mehta traveled to New Orleans and took the stage again as the student keynote speaker at the VIP reception before the opening of the new pavilion. Speaking on behalf of all NHD students about being part of the Salute to Courage project, Mehta reminded those present to share veterans’ stories and honor their leadership and legacy.

“Speaking before an audience of over 600 people was an amazing experience for me, and I felt very humbled to have been selected as the student speaker for the VIP Gala,” Mehta said. “It could have been overwhelming, but the veterans I saw in the audience put me at ease. I saw some of them smiling early on, and they seemed to be enjoying it, so that felt good.”



Thank you to the Missouri Humanities Council, cosponsor of National History Day in Missouri!

## Help Students Explore History through National History Day! Judge at NHDMO on April 30

National History Day is looking for volunteers to serve as judges at the state contest on April 30 at the University of Missouri in Columbia. Judges can expect to spend the day interacting with students from across the state in grades six through twelve as they express their passion for history through five diverse presentation categories: documentary, exhibit, paper, performance, and website. A free catered lunch will be provided. Roughly 150 volunteers are needed. Thank you in advance for sharing your time with Missouri students as you provide constructive comments on their work and help prepare top finishers for the national contest in June. For more details or to sign up, visit [nhdmo.org/judges](http://nhdmo.org/judges) or call 573.882.0189.



## Travels West: The Journals of Kate Medley Shively Gohn

On the morning of June 1, 1922, Kate Medley Shively and her 17-year-old son, Edward, got in their 1920 Overland automobile in Poplar Bluff, Missouri, and set out for Santa Fe. Their two excited Airedales, Bobbie and Sammie, could not have known that the ride was going to be 65 days long. By the time they returned home in late August, mother, son, and dogs had traveled nearly 4,000 miles.

Katherine “Kate” Shively saw the West, and it became the place where she wanted to be. From the 1922 excursion to her death in 1947, she regularly traveled there. In 1942 she bought land near Apache Junction, Arizona. “Pena Blanca,” her ranch, was in the shadow of Superstition Mountain and about as “American West” as a place could be.

Kate was born May 14, 1888, in Cape Girardeau County, Missouri. She was a talented musician, wrote poetry, hunted Native American artifacts, and developed sufficient mechanical skills to turn two small buildings in the Arizona desert into a livable home.

She and her first husband, Loron Stanford Shively, divorced in 1926, and in 1928 she married Charles Gohn. Her second husband died in 1945. Tragically, Kate was murdered two years later in her Arizona home by a former employee. He was soon caught and eventually executed by the State of Arizona.

Kate kept detailed diaries and journals of all her travels, and the State Historical Society of Missouri now possesses documents that reflect upon her life experiences. In the Cape Girardeau Research Center’s Elmore Genealogical Collection there are a number of her journals, including the account of her 1922 trip to Santa Fe. The following daily entries provide insight into Kate’s travels.

### **FIRST DAY. June 1, 1922.**

#### **Poplar Bluff, Missouri.**

*Up at 4:30. Very cloudy. . . . Roads were rough. . . . Made good time tho’ to the Big Hill near Advance where we had a puncture. . . . Had tube mended at Gordonville. . . . On to Jackson, where we had dinner at the old hotel Coz. Geo and Emma used to run. . . . Gave dogs a drink at the creek leaving town, where I have often waded as a child. Fine roads to St. Mary’s. Ran out of gas just 1 mile from there. Sent word to garage by man on a wagon—brot out 5 gals. Pulled in at 4:35.*

### **THIRD DAY. June 3, 1922.**

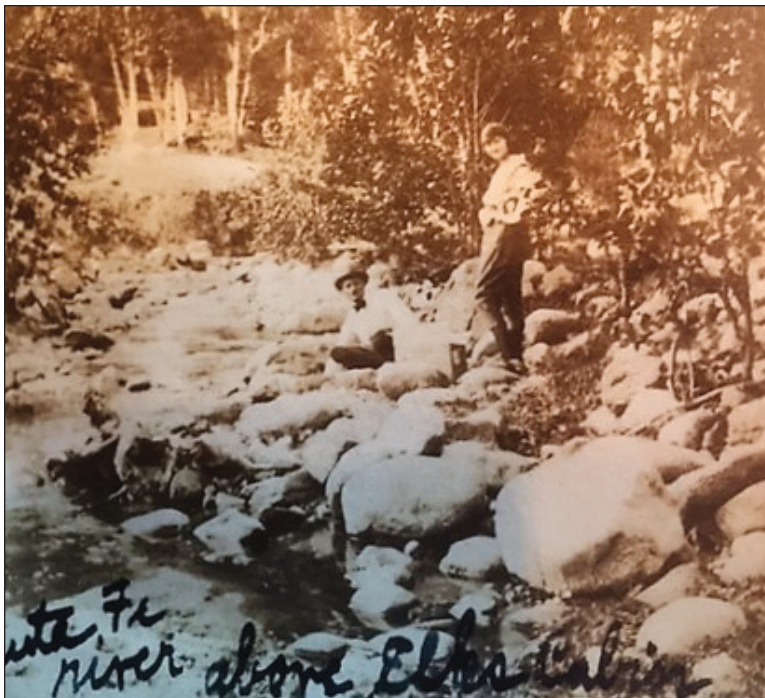
#### **Near Cottlesville, Missouri.**

*Left at 9. Everybody cried. Roads a little rough—high hills, but made good time. Beautiful views. . . . Turned off west before going under Frisco tracks at Mayville after several miles of bad going on newly graded work. Thro*



Portrait of a young Kate Medley Shively (1888-1947). Kate kept extensive travel journals, now preserved in Cape Girardeau.

*Webster Groves—trying to find Clayton to see Mom Wittich—but went past the turning before realizing it—so drove on to St. Charles road—crossed bridge over Missouri river and thro St. Charles at 5 PM. Quaint old town. Followed Natl Old Trails signs from there. Wanted to get camped early, as it’s the first time, so stopped in a patch of woods about 2 miles out of Cottlesville about 6. Dogs are good but jealous of each other. Sam doesn’t want Bobbie to get on the seat. . . . Put up bed in car before dark and let the dogs run. A farmer came along and stopped to talk. Drove 122 miles.*



**Left** Kate Medley Shively and her son, Edward, along a mountain stream in the hills above Santa Fe, New Mexico. The inscription reads “Santa Fe river above Elks cabin.” **Right** Kate and Ed Shively in their 1920 Overland. The photo, captioned “leaving St. Mary’s – June 3 – 1922,” captures the silhouette of the two dogs in the back seat.





## March

### Thomas Hart Benton Speaks

March 1 7 p.m. Jefferson City

From the 1930s until his death in 1975, Missouri artist Thomas Hart Benton argued that representational art more successfully reflected American culture than did nonobjective abstraction. Join SHSMO art curator Joan Stack at the Missouri River Regional Library, 214 Adams Street in Jefferson City, for this look at Benton's unfashionable attitude. Benton's stand remains a contentious aspect of his legacy among critics. A rediscovered and recently published interview with Benton from 1962 sheds light on his outlook, suggesting that his philosophy was not so much antimodern as "differently" modern.

### Missouri Conference on History

March 9 - 11 Columbia

Hosted this year by SHSMO at the Courtyard by Marriott and Conference Center, the Missouri Conference on History will open with a reception sponsored by the Boone County Historical Museum and Galleries. The keynote luncheon, sponsored by the Missouri Humanities Council, will feature Center for Missouri Studies fellowship winner Patrick Huber. He will explore historical memory in his hometown, Ste. Genevieve, regarding the race riot that occurred there in 1930. On the evening of March 10, the conference will celebrate women's contributions to government with a public interview of Gracia Yancey Backer, the first female majority floor leader in the Missouri House of Representatives. The conference will culminate in the awards luncheon, also sponsored by MHC.

### Through the Lens: Visions of African American Experience

March 19 4 p.m. Kansas City

In his long career with *The Call* and as a freelance photographer, William L. Fambrough Sr. captured the people, places, and events of Kansas City and its African American community. Join SHSMO as Fambrough's son, William L. Fambrough Jr., describes his father's life and the photographs he created. The event will be at the Second Baptist Church, 3620 East 39th Street, Kansas City. Registration is appreciated but not required. To register, contact the Research Center-Kansas City at 816.235.1549 or shsofmo-kc@umsystem.edu. See full details on page 3.



### An Afternoon with Molly Brown

March 20 2:00 p.m. Pineville

Join SHSMO and the McDonald County Historical Society to learn more about "The Unsinkable Molly Brown." Margaret Tobin Brown will be portrayed by SHSMO's Erin Smither. The program will describe Brown's childhood in Missouri, her journey from rags to riches, her tale of survival aboard the *Titanic*, and her passion for the women's suffrage movement. This celebration of women's history will be at the Pineville Community Center, 602 Jesse James Road. Find out more about Brown at <http://shs.umsystem.edu/historicmissourians>.

### Vernacular America Reception and Walk-Through

March 31 4 - 7 p.m. Columbia

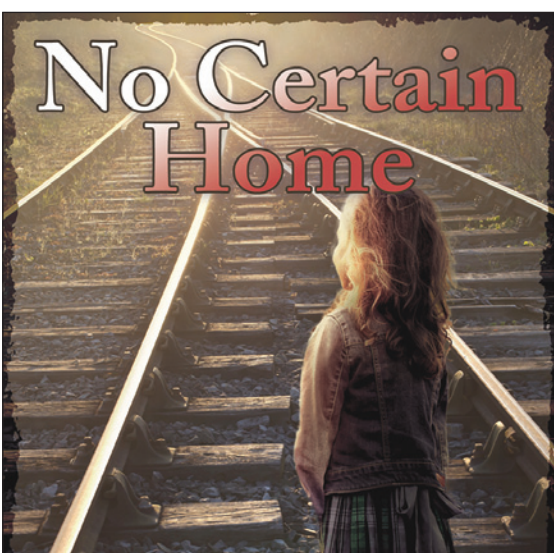
Wind down Women's History Month by exploring the extraordinary images of ordinary Americans from the Depression and World War II years in the SHSMO exhibition *Vernacular America in the 1930s and 1940s: The Art of Ben Messick and Fred Shane*. Joan Stack, curator of art collections, will lead a walk-through at 5:30 p.m. that focuses on women's roles in this important era.

## April

### St. Louis Genealogical Society Family History Conference

April 2 St. Louis

Visit with SHSMO staff attending the conference and find out how the Society's resources may help you to solve your genealogical quandaries. Make sure you are there before the sessions start to maximize your time at the SHSMO exhibitor's booth! The conference will be held at the Maryland Heights Centre, 2344 McKelvey Road in St. Louis.



### No Certain Home: Agnes Smedley's Story

April 3 4 - 6 p.m. Columbia

Join in the celebration of Marlene Lee's latest book at the release party for *No Certain Home*. A local author and SHSMO volunteer, Lee has crafted a fictional account of the life of one of the most intriguing women of the twentieth century, journalist Agnes Smedley. A native Missourian, Smedley's unconventional political beliefs led to accusations that she was a spy. Learn more about this American radical on April 3 in the main gallery of the Research Center-Columbia. SHSMO executive director Gary Kremer will introduce the author and brief readings will be shared from *No Certain Home*. Registration is appreciated but not required. Visit <http://shs.umsystem.edu/outreach/events> or contact the Society at 573.882.7083.

## Looking ahead

### National History Day in Missouri State Contest

April 30 Columbia

Students from across the state in grades six through twelve express their passion for history through NHDMO projects in five diverse categories: documentary, exhibit, paper, performance, and website. After advancing from regional contests, nearly 600 students will be in Columbia for the state contest on the University of Missouri campus. Join us as a contest judge! You will be amazed by the creativity and hard work that Missouri students put into their projects. To sign up, visit [nhdmo.org/judges](http://nhdmo.org/judges) or call 573.882.0189.





## Historic Headlines: Bicycle Craze and Its Ties to Women’s Movement Captured in Newsprint

The first bicycle appeared in St. Louis in 1878, and by the mid-1890s the city was enamored with the two-wheeled machine. The bicycling craze, which swept across the country, would have lasting effects for women, many of whom embraced the bicycle as a liberating means of independent transportation.

Due to the nature of the early high-wheeled bicycles, referred to as “ordinary” bicycles, the St. Louis bicycling community was initially populated mostly by male daredevils and thrill seekers. The city gained recognition for the exploits of local racers like Cola Stone, who astonished fellow cyclists with his breakneck performance over bad roads during a one-hundred-mile ride from Cobourg to Kingston, Ontario, during the Big Four Bicycle Tour in 1885. St. Louis also produced cyclists like William Sachtleben and Thomas Allen, Washington University graduates who earned distinction for their trailblazing 1890–1892 bicycle trip across Asia.

Local newspapers covered this male-dominated scene, at first sporadically, and then with increasing regularity. By the mid-1890s, issues of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* sometimes offered four pages of bicycling coverage, much of it locally produced. In the interim, the “safety” bicycle, designed much like the modern bicycle, was introduced, and women began to adopt it. As they did so, news coverage specific to women cyclists also increased.

By 1896 the *St. Louis Star* boasted the “Only Exclusive Woman’s Bicycling Page on Earth,” published on Sundays. Of the page, the *Star* declared, “The ladies are invited to use it in whatever way they desire. For instance, riders can exchange experiences, give each other



The article accompanying this image from the May 17, 1896, *St. Louis Star* encourages readers to write in for the pattern to make their own modest dress for bicycling. A fee of 30 cents was charged to cover the mailing expenses.

tips gathered by experience, ask for such information as they may desire, etc. IT WILL BE IN FACT AN EXCHANGE FOR WHEELWOMEN.”

The *Star*’s page covered the biking escapades of local society women, shared general news relating to women and cycling, and offered women a public forum for sharing their enthusiasm and even exchanging their favorite riding routes.

Although bicycling coverage was increasingly for and about women, much of it still concerned the opinions of men. Tellingly, their critique often hinged on a woman’s appearance; there was extensive newspaper commentary on what was appropriate bicycling attire for women, epitomized by a skirts-versus-bloomers debate.

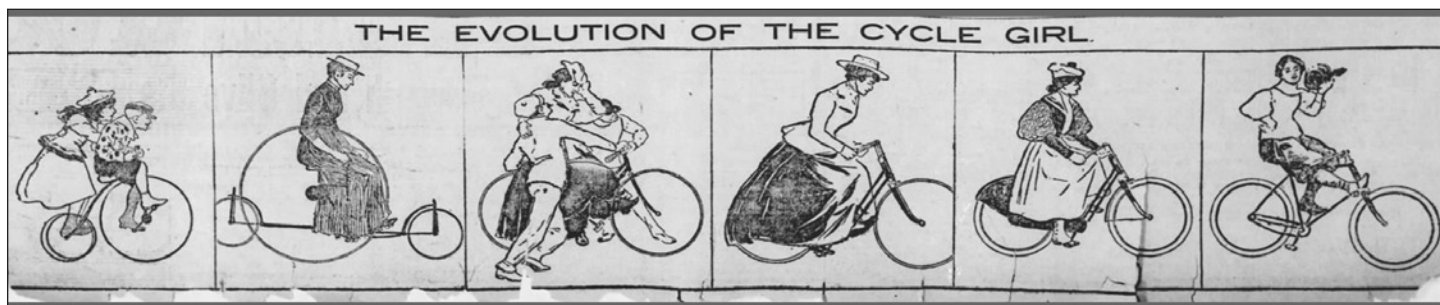
While male opinions on the subject of female cyclists abounded, when women’s

opinions were forthcoming, they were far from monolithic. The positions of two commentators, Ida Trafford Bell and Charlotte Smith, were aired in the pages of St. Louis newspapers.

Bell’s article in the August 18, 1895, issue of the *Post-Dispatch*, “The New Woman and the ‘Bike,’” extolled the virtues of bicycling in regard to, among other things, “rational dress.” In contrast, Smith, of the Women’s Rescue League, denounced the bicycle as a promoter of immorality in the July 2 and September 2, 1896, issues of the *Post-Dispatch*. Smith, a onetime St. Louisan who founded the successful *Inland Monthly Magazine* while living there, expounded upon bicycling’s supposed negative attributes for women, saying it led to disease, vice, and sin.

Opinions such as those of Bell and Smith exemplified the evolving debate about what constituted proper behavior for women. Shortly after these articles appeared, however, the bicycling craze waned as America’s love affair with the bicycle was supplanted by its romance with the automobile. But women, having gained an appreciation for independent mobility, were poised to explore life’s possibilities and redefine their place in the world.

Learn more about the bicycle’s ties to the women’s movement through the State Historical Society of Missouri’s vast newspaper collection. It includes microfilm of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* and the *St. Louis Star*, as well as other newspapers that covered the bicycle scene beginning in the 1870s. Issues of Charlotte Smith’s *Inland Monthly Magazine* for 1872–1877 are also available on microfilm.



This illustrated timeline in the April 19, 1896, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* depicts the bicycle’s liberating effects on women.

## Donation of Funeral Home Records Offers New Insights into Jackson County's History

A substantial donation of Jackson County funeral home records by Lee and Emily Ward to the Research Center–Kansas City provides scores of valuable documents to genealogists and other researchers. The donation, which will soon be supplemented with online finding aids, includes records for funeral homes that operated in Blue Springs, Buckner, Kansas City, Oak Grove, and other surrounding communities.

Lee Ward is the director and owner of the Museum of Funeral History in Independence. The records in the Wards' donation contain biographical information about past Missourians, give insight into the funeral service industry, and shed light on the social history of Jackson County.

Included with the donation are records for one of the county's oldest funeral homes. The Henthorn-Reppert-Brown Funeral Home Records (K1356) span the years 1918 to 1979.

John Henthorn and his son, Chase, operated their undertaking business in Buckner, Missouri, during the nineteenth century. Following World War I, Chase sold the business to his son-in-law, Vernon Reppert. After Reppert's death in 1955, his widow, Hazel Henthorn-Reppert, continued to operate the funeral home with the assistance of Dick and Alice Brown. The company was incorporated as Reppert-Brown Funeral Home in 1973 to reflect their partnership.

Of related interest are the Buckner Hill Cemetery Association Records (K1357), which document internments from 1910 to 1968. The Wards donated this collection as well.

*The records contain biographical information about past Missourians, give insight into the funeral service industry, and shed light on the social history of Jackson County.*

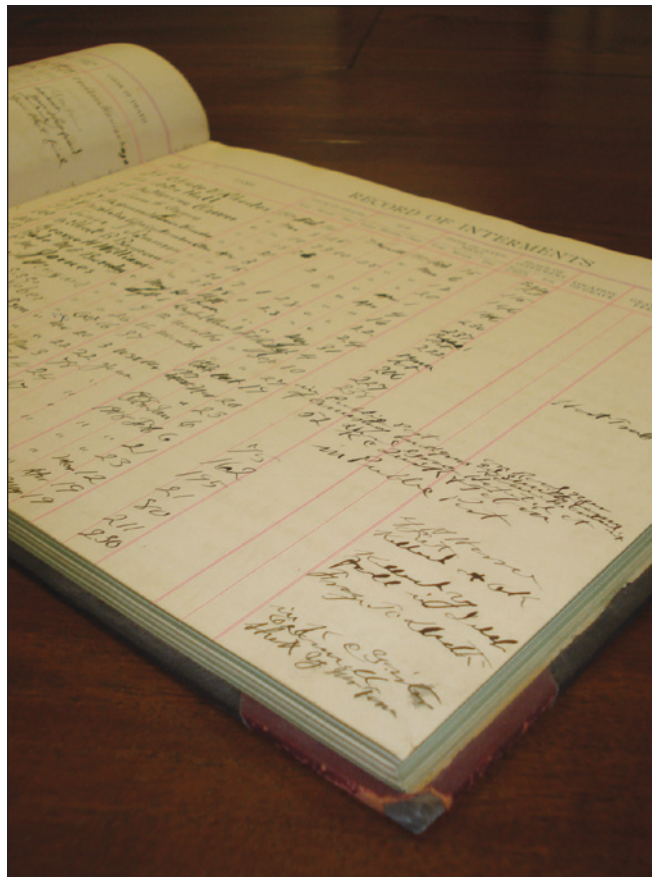
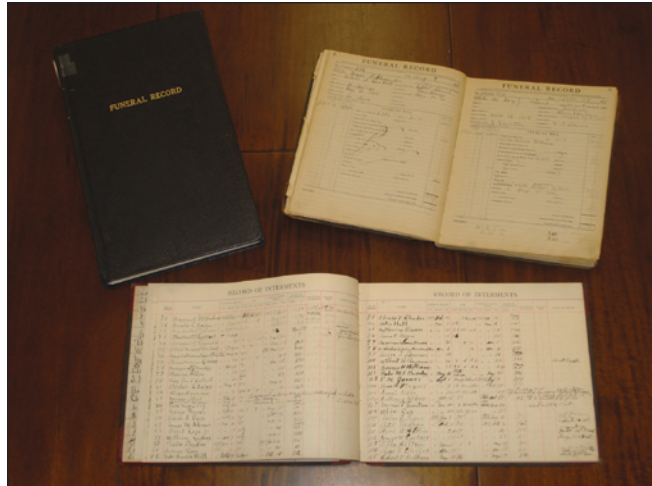
The donation also includes the Webb Funeral Homes Records (K1355), which trace the history of the G. B. Webb

and Sons locations in Blue Springs and Oak Grove from 1913 to 1978. The Research Center–Kansas City has also received noteworthy collections from the Wards such as the Earp and Sons Mortuaries, Inc. Records (K1354) covering the period 1978 to 1987; the C. H. Blackman and Son Funeral Home Records (K1358) for 1971 to 1979; and the Hinton Funeral Home Records (K1359) with papers from 1992 to 1995.

Among the Wards' other donations are the E. R. Morris Funeral Chapel Records (K1353), a collection of papers from a locally owned African American funeral home in Kansas City. In 1984 Eugene R. Morris, his wife, Ludella, and Duane E. Harvey founded the Morris and Harvey Memorial Chapel at 4316 Troost Avenue.

The business, renamed the L. M. Morris Funeral Chapel in 2006, closed after Ludella Morris's death in 2008. Eugene Morris preceded her in death in 2000.

During its operation, the chapel served many indigent persons, offering discounted services supported by state funds. The Morris Funeral Chapel Records, which cover the years 1984 to 2008, are supplemented by the E. R. Morris Funeral Chapel Programs (K1344).



The records recently donated by Lee and Emily Ward provide details on Jackson County traditions for honoring the dead starting as early as 1910. The documents record burial locations, memorial services, and other information useful to genealogists and other researchers.

The Wards have performed a great service to patrons by indexing many of these records. The indexes compile important data such as names, birth and death dates, and birth and burial locations.

Be advised: records created after 1964 are subject to restrictions due to the presence of Social Security numbers, death certificates, causes of death, and other sensitive information. Contact the research center for assistance at [shsofmo-kc@umsystem.edu](mailto:shsofmo-kc@umsystem.edu) or 816.235.1543.



## Springfield Collection Preserves Records of Conservation Efforts in Southwest Missouri

The Research Center–Springfield recently acquired the papers of the Southwest Missouri Resource Conservation and Development Council, a nonprofit organization that operated in fifteen Missouri counties. The RC&D's accomplishments included building a dam in Southwest City, developing and improving city parks, initiating fire prevention and water quality projects, and conducting the recent "Trees for Joplin" campaign to restore trees lost in the 2011 tornado.

Papers in the collection (SP0009) cover the years 1967–2011 and measure 20 cubic feet. The collection includes financial documents, correspondence, project notes, and publications created by the organization.

"We wanted to preserve the accomplishments of the RC&D," said Rita Mueller, US Department of Agriculture employee and longtime coordinator for the Southwest Missouri Resource Conservation and Development Council. "We knew that we had done all of these wonderful things, but we weren't necessarily all that good at publicizing them. We hope the donation of the papers can help preserve our legacy."

The volunteer-driven organization, founded by concerned citizens from ten southwest Missouri counties, was authorized under the provisions of the 1962 US Department of Agriculture Act and began operations on July 7, 1968. Five more counties were added in 1974. The organization's mission was to improve natural resource management and economic development through cooperative efforts. "The volunteers deserve the credit,"

Mueller said. "We had so many great volunteers throughout the years, and we could not have done it without them."

The Southwest Missouri RC&D operated with funds administered by the USDA Forest Service in partnership with the Missouri Department of Conservation. Each of the fifteen counties also paid sponsorship dues through their county commissions and Soil and Water Conservation Districts. The participating counties were Barry, Barton, Cedar, Christian, Dade, Dallas, Greene, Jasper, Lawrence, McDonald, Newton, Polk, Stone, Taney, and Webster.

*"Our mission lives on in the fledgling groups we helped throughout the years. Many of them got their start learning about grant writing from us, and working with us on projects."*

–Rita Mueller, coordinator for the Southwest Missouri Resource Conservation and Development Council

In 2011 Congress eliminated all federal funding for the program, ending the RC&D's work in the communities of southwest Missouri. But Mueller noted that the organization's impact continues to be felt within the region.

"Our mission lives on in the fledgling groups we helped throughout the years. Many of them got their start learning about grant writing from us, and working with us on projects. Some of those groups now exist as a part of the Community Foundation of the Ozarks. Our legacy lives on through those groups who have taken up the banner and are continuing the work we started."

For more information about this collection, please contact archivist Erin Smither in the Research Center–Springfield at 417.836.3782 or [Smithere@umsystem.edu](mailto:Smithere@umsystem.edu).



**Above** Volunteers plant trees as a part of the Southwest Missouri Resource Conservation and Development Council's "Trees for Joplin" campaign. The project aimed to help restore the city's natural landscape, which was decimated in the 2011 tornado. **Left** The collection includes project records such as this brochure for the Joplin replanting efforts.

## “Read between the Lines and You Will See How Much I Love You”: The Weaver-Riddick World War II Letters

The St. Louis Research Center recently received the World War II letters of Jack Weaver and Ruth Riddick. The 249 letters and postcards written by Jack and Ruth from February 20, 1941, to November 10, 1943, reveal an intimate wartime love story. The expressive, articulate letters between the St. Louis couple begin with Jack stationed at Camp Robinson outside of Little Rock, Arkansas, followed by assignments to Fort Lewis, Washington; the Aleutian Islands in Alaska; and Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

Ruth decided to write her letters as book chapters so that Jack could arrange them in chronological order. Her first chapter, which reminisces about their past times together and also provides news from the home front, is dated May 16, 1942. In it Ruth recalls how she and Jack first met at a church weenie roast. Jack asked Ruth to go with him to start the fire before the others arrived. She confessed that she was surprised and thrilled he had chosen her.

Jack’s letters discuss his life in the army as well as his family and friends. Some of his notes from the Aleutians have sections cut out by military censors. In closing one letter, Jack writes, “Well darling, if you are not tired reading all

this I know the censor is so I had better stop and get this mailed...”

In “Chapter 17,” Ruth writes about a letter she got from Jack in which he mentioned dancing at the Belvedere Club. She professed, “That was the nite of nites with the boy of boys that turned into the dream of dreams for a future of future etc.” Ruth also called their courtship an “air mail romance.”

In a letter dated August 28, 1942, Jack proposed marriage: “This trying to write a proposal is beyond my power of expression...just read between the lines and you will see how much I love you.” He suggested that Ruth could meet him in Seattle while he was on his next 15-day furlough. They could marry in a little church there, then travel to Omaha and Boston together. Jack told Ruth, “We could make it as a combined furlough and honeymoon and you could meet my sister and her family too.”

As fate would have it, the furlough did not come through, and the couple had to wait to marry until June 17, 1943, when Jack transferred back to the mainland. The letters end when the couple finally reunited for good in Virginia after Jack completed officer training. By the time Ruth wrote the last letter on November



Jack Weaver in uniform. An electrician during the war, Jack was stationed in Arkansas, Washington, Alaska, and Virginia.

10, 1943, she had sent Jack 160 chapters, later compiled into three volumes.


The couple’s daughters, Bonnie Weaver Jenkins and Jacquelyn “Jackie” Ruth Weaver Donnelly, donated the collection (S1168). Thanks to their generosity, the complete set of letters can be viewed at the St. Louis center. They can also be sent to any of the State Historical Society of Missouri’s other centers upon request. The letters will be of interest to anyone exploring the World War II era, particularly the St. Louis home front.



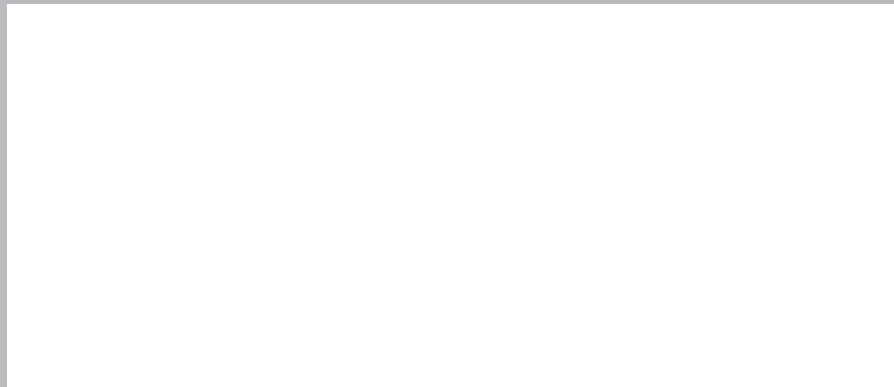
**Above** After more than two years of “air mail romance,” Jack Weaver and Ruth Riddick were united in marriage on June 17, 1943. **Right** By the end of their war correspondence in November 1943, they had exchanged nearly 250 letters and cards as their relationship blossomed.





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