



HUMANITIES
KANSAS

UPDATED JANUARY 2026

SPEAKERS BUREAU

The Humanities Kansas Speakers Bureau presentations are designed to engage and inspire Kansans. We believe that stories carry our culture and ideas change the world.

The topics and presenters in the Speakers Bureau tell the stories of our state and the people who live here. They connect Kansans to one another over time and across generations.

Humanities Kansas is an independent nonprofit leading a movement of ideas. Since 1972, HK's programming, grants, and partnerships have documented and shared stories to spark conversations and invite new insights. Together with statewide partners and supporters, HK encourages Kansans to draw on our diverse histories, literatures, and cultures to create connections with one another and strengthen Kansas communities and our democracy.

HUMANITIESKANSAS.ORG



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HOW TO USE THE HUMANITIES KANSAS SPEAKERS BUREAU

1. Review the catalog and select a speaker and topic. There is a booking fee of \$100 per presentation.
2. All presentations are 60-minutes in length unless otherwise noted. If you need a shorter presentation, please ask the speaker first and make sure that's a possibility.
3. Contact the speaker and confirm time, date, format, length of presentation, and location. The format indicates whether the event is to be held in person or online. Most presenters can offer either format.
4. Apply online at humanitieskansas.org for HK program funding to bring the speaker to your community! You'll pay the booking fee during the application process. Payment can be made online by credit or debit card, or by check through the mail.
5. Publicize your event! This is exciting! Humanities Kansas Speakers Bureau events must be free and open to the public. Download a template for your press release, speaker bio, speaker photo, and more!
6. Tell us how it went! After the event, fill out a Speakers Bureau evaluation and cost share form online (required). Send us photos! Your \$100 booking fee will count toward cost share.

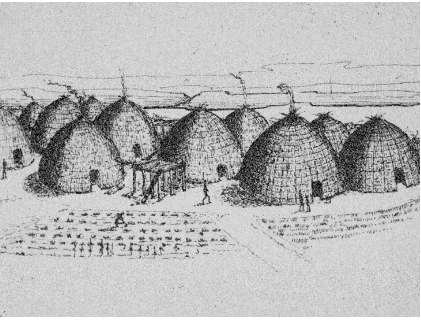
CONTACT

Kaitlyn Savage, Operations Manager
(785) 357-0359 or kaitlyn@humanitieskansas.org

The opinions expressed by the speakers do not necessarily reflect those of Humanities Kansas.

SPEAKERS BUREAU

Stories carry
our culture
and ideas
change the
world.



Kansas 1776: A Dynamic Landscape



Presentation can be conducted in person or online.

**NEW
FOR
2026!**

Although the land we call Kansas has changed greatly since 1776, it was already a dynamic cultural and environmental landscape before the “Founding Fathers” forged a new nation. Human activities and natural process alike had transformed Kansas over the course of millennia as a changing climate, Indigenous burning practices, dynamic waterways, and other developments shaped and reshaped what became the Sunflower State. Presented by Adam Hodge.

Adam is the head of reference at the Kansas State Historical Society in Topeka. He has a Ph.D in history with specialization in environmental and Indigenous history of the North American West.

Adam Hodge
Adam.hodge@ks.gov
(785) 272-8681
Wamego





The Perfect Storm: Remembering the Dust Bowl in Kansas and Why It Matters



Presentation can be conducted in person or online.

From the parched fields of 1930s Kansas emerged stories that continue to shape our state's identity. Through the voices of survivors, policymakers, and historians, this presentation explores how Dust Bowl narratives have evolved and why they remain relevant today. This presentation will examine how this pivotal moment is remembered and highlight how those memories continue to shape the future of the Plains.

jantle@jccc.edu
Lawrence

Jay Antle is a History Professor and Executive Director of the Center for Sustainability at Johnson County Community College



Out of the Dust: Literature of the 1930s



Presentation can be conducted in person or online.

The experiences of the Great Depression and Dust Bowl inspired classic works of American literature, most notably John Steinbeck's "The Grapes of Wrath." This interactive presentation examines some of the decade's works, both famous and lesser known, and how authors responded to this defining moment in American history.

jholwerda@unitedwireless.com
(620) 682-5596
Dodge City

Jane Holwerda is a retired professor of writing and literature at Dodge City Community College



Life in Kansas During the Dust Bowl



Black Sunday – April 14, 1935 – is an unforgettable moment in history. The photographs from that day of the dust storm in southwest Kansas made headlines across America. How did Kansans respond to this challenging moment in history? Using eyewitness accounts and photographs, this presentation explores the impact and the legacy of the drought and the “Dust Bowl” on life in Kansas during the 1930s and beyond.

skkeckeisen@gmail.com
(785) 220-0714
Topeka

Presentation can be conducted in person or online.

Katie Keckeisen is local History Librarian at the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library





The Power of Imagery and the Civil Rights Experience

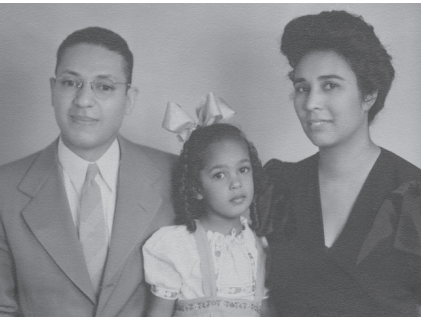


Presentation can be conducted in person or online.

Since its inception, photography has been used for raising awareness of social issues, provoking emotions and thoughts, and reshaping our perceptions of the world. This presentation will delve into the impact of photography on the civil rights movement in the aftermath of the landmark Supreme Court case, *Brown v. Board of Education*, tracing the evolution of how Black individuals and communities have been portrayed from historical beginnings to the era of *Brown v. Board* and up to the present day.

anndean@sunflower.com
Lawrence

Ann is an artist and freelance photographer who also teaches photography at the Lawrence Art Center.



Women of Brown



Twelve Black women were at the forefront of the civil rights movement as plaintiffs in the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* case. Unfortunately, their contributions to the civil rights movement have often been overlooked, yet they are essential to the story of the *Brown* decision and its impact on American society. This presentation will shine a light on their stories and ensure that their names are not forgotten.

Donna Rae is the local historian librarian at the Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library.

Donna Rae Pearson
donnarae64@gmail.com
Topeka



Beyond Brown: Mexican Struggles for Equality Before and After Brown V. Board

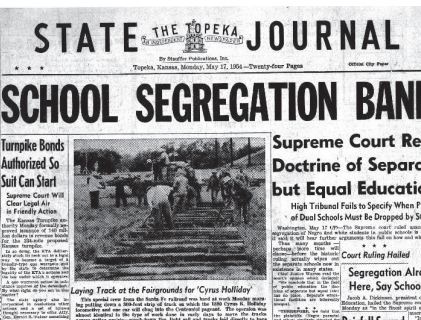


Presentation can be conducted in person or online.

The momentous 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court case dismantled racial segregation in public schools. Yet, the segregation experienced by Mexican and Mexican American students is often overlooked. This presentation looks at the ways the Latino communities banded together to fight discrimination and demand equal protection under the law, focusing special attention on Kansas examples. Presented by Valerie Mendoza.

Valerie is a lecturer and director of the Strengthening Institutions grant at Washburn University.

Valerie Mendoza
valmarmen@gmail.com
(785) 845-6385
Topeka



Remembering Brown v Board of Education



Presentation can be conducted in person or online.

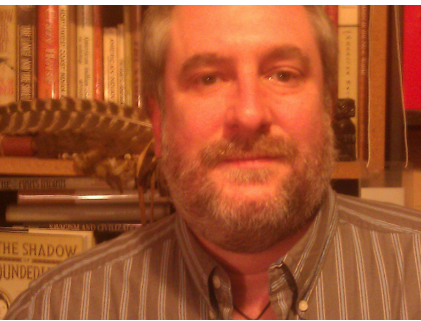
In 1954, Topeka, Kansas became the epicenter for the Supreme Court decision of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, a pivotal moment in American history. The lead plaintiff was Oliver Brown, a father and pastor, whose daughter Linda was denied entrance to a nearby elementary school for white children. Brown along with plaintiffs from four similar cases across the United States sought to dismantle racial segregation in education, arguing that segregated schools were inherently unequal and violated the 14th Amendment's guarantee of equal protection under the law. This presentation will explore the intricacies of the five cases included in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* case and explore the transformative impact of this landmark decision.

Contact Eric directly about speaking at your event:
esexton@foulston.com
Wichita

Eric Sexton is a governmental affairs consultant.



A History of The American Indian Boarding Schools



Presentation can be conducted in person or online.

Renewed calls for investigations into the abuses to American Indian children have brought new scrutiny to the boarding school system. This talk will examine the thinking behind the creation of federal schools for youth including Haskell Indian Nations University, originally known as the United States Indian Industrial Training School, and how this system affected Native communities in the short and long term. The American Indian story is one of cultural survival, but what are the next steps for reckoning with this difficult and painful part of our national history? Presented by Eric Anderson.

Eric is a citizen of the Potawatomi Nation and professor of history at Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence.

Eric Anderson
eanderson@haskell.edu
(785) 331-8682
Council Grove



The Dockum Drugstore Sit-In



Presentation can be conducted in person or online.

Renewed calls for Seeking racial equity and an end to segregation, Wichita's Black students organized and staged a sit-in in 1958 at Wichita's Dockum Drugstore. Long denied entry into the city's movie theaters and restaurants, students exercised their right to peacefully protest over a three-week period at the popular lunch counter. What transpired, how it ended, and the lasting impact it had on race relations in the city is the focus of this talk. More broadly, the talk will explore how these types of protests transformed the struggle for racial equity in America. Presented by Prisca Barnes.

Prisca is the CEO and president of Storytime Village, Inc.

Prisca Barnes
priscabarnes@storytimevillage.org
(316) 350-4511
Wichita



Children of The Promised Land



Presentation can be conducted in person or online.

Nicodemus, a small, unincorporated town in Graham County, is the only remaining western town established by African Americans during the Reconstruction Period following the Civil War. Black homesteaders settled the town, which today is a National Historic Site. This pictorial history explores the unique experience of mothers and their children in Nicodemus, some of whom were the first members of their families born free. Within the context of settling in the West and at the end of Reconstruction, this presentation discusses the dynamics of mothers and their children after slavery, stories of children conceived in slavery but born free, and the contrast of life and decisions based on the simple concept of “choice,” which freedom afforded. Presented by Angela Bates.

Angela is the executive director and past president of the Nicodemus Historical Society.

Angela Bates
angela@ruraltel.net
(785) 839-8200
Bogue



Strangers In Town—Film Discussion



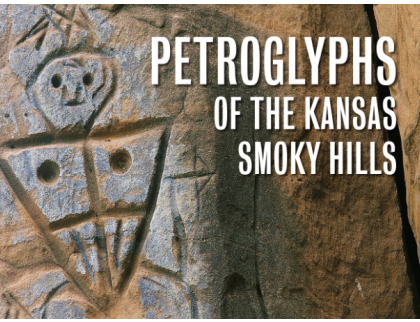
Presentation can be conducted in person or online.

Strangers in Town tells the story of how global migration transformed and enriched Garden City, Kansas. Amidst the increased demands for housing, social services, education, and infrastructure, current students at Garden City High School are flourishing. This film explores their stories, gives meaning to the city’s motto “The World Grows Here,” and provides an inspiring view of human possibility in the face of change that resonates in all communities. After the screening of the 30-minute film, take part in a timely discussion that promotes understanding and uncovers our shared humanity. Presented by Dr. Debra Bolton.

Projector and internet access are needed for this program.

Dr. Debra Bolton is Director of Intercultural Learning and Academic Success and faculty member in the Department of Geography and Geospatial Sciences at Kansas State University.

Debra Bolton
dbolton@ksu.edu
Manhattan



Petroglyphs of the Kansas Smoky Hills



Presentation can be conducted in person or online.

Too often Kansas history seems to start with the Coronados' trip through the state in 1541. For centuries before European arrival, Native people lived on the plains, and some left behind rock carvings on soft sandstone in the middle of the state. Based on the book *Petroglyphs of the Kansas Smoky Hills*, this presentation focuses on these carvings, the people who made them, and what the carvings tell us about those people and their relationship to the land. The presentation also discusses the challenges of dating and interpreting these carvings, the threats posed by erosion and vandalism, and the role of landowners whose property shelters these carvings. Presented by Rex Buchanan.

Rex is the former director of the Kansas Geological Survey and the author of books about Kansas geology and water.

Rex Buchanan
(785) 691-8667
rex@kgs.ku.edu
Lawrence



William Allen White and the KKK In Kansas



Presentation can be conducted in person or online.

The 1920s saw the re-emergence of the Ku Klux Klan across America, and sparked fear and violence against African Americans and other minority groups. As the editor of the *Emporia Gazette*, White was acutely aware of the growing presence of the KKK in Kansas following World War I. Seeing no candidates free of Klan influence, White declared, "I want to be governor to free Kansas from the disgrace of the Ku Klux Klan." This presentation follows the raucous two-month campaign that had White traveling over 2,700 miles to deliver 104 speeches, all directed at expelling the KKK. Though he did not win, White's efforts led to a Kansas Supreme Court ruling that outlawed the Klan in Kansas. Presented by Beverley Olson Buller.

Beverley is an author, an educator, and chair of the William Allen White Children's Book Awards.

Beverley Olson Buller
beverley@beverleybooks.com
(316) 284-4624
Newton



People, Places, and Politics in 1800s Kansas



Presentation can be conducted in person or online.

Pioneer James R. Mead was a man of his times. Interested in commerce, politics, and conservation, he settled in the Kansas Territory in the 1850s. Known now as one of Wichita’s founding fathers, Mead was also influential as a trails outfitter, statesman, and railroad booster. What can be learned from Mead’s influence on the state’s early development? Presented by John Burchill.

John is a Professor Emeritus of Criminal Justice at Kansas Wesleyan University. He authored the book Bullets, Badges, and Bridles - Horse Thieves and the Societies That Pursued Them.

John Burchill
jkburchill@gmail.com
(785) 819-0789
Salina



The Harvey Girls: Women’s Roles in Railroads, Kansas, and US History



Presentation can be conducted in person only.

The mythology of the Harvey Girl looms large in Kansas history and across the western United States. The Fred Harvey Company, concessionaire along the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway, offered young women employment opportunities as waitresses and tour guides. These women played a role in the economic and cultural history of Kansas and the American Southwest. This talk includes stories of women employed by the company as well as its founder, Fred Harvey, who lived in Leavenworth and opened his first lunchroom depot along the line in Topeka. Presented by Dr. Michaeline Chance-Reay.

Dr. Chance-Reay is Professor Emeritus of Women Studies and Education at Kansas State University.

Dr. Michaeline Chance-Reay
mreay@ksu.edu
(785) 802-8207
Manhattan



Presentation can be conducted in person or online.

Presentation available in English and Spanish.

Flour Power

During the Mexican Revolution, many immigrants made their way to Kansas to raise their families and work in the railroad, agricultural, industrial, and hospitality industries. A cultural offshoot for groups of Mexican residents settling in the Midwest was the search for the perfect tortilla, a staple of Mexican cuisine. Because corn tortillas were difficult to make by hand, many restaurants and home cooks substituted wheat flour tortillas for their signature dishes. This talk uncovers the rich history of Mexican immigration to Kansas and the journey of the humble but important tortilla. Presented by Gene Chávez.

Gene consults on diversity issues as president of Chávez and Associates.

Flour Power/ El Poder De La Harina

Durante el periodo de la Revolución Mexicana, muchos inmigrantes llegaron a Kansas para establecer a sus familias y trabajar en el ferrocarril, agricultura, industria y sector hospitalario del estado. Un derivado cultural de este nuevo grupo de residentes Mexicanos que se establecieron en el Medio-oeste era la búsqueda de la tortilla perfecta, una tradición de la cocina mexicana. Como las tortillas de maíz eran difíciles de hacer a mano, muchos restaurantes y cocinas caseras substituyeron con tortilla de harina para sus platillos principales. Acompañenos a discutir la rica historia de la inmigración Mexicana a Kansas y la trayectoria de la humilde pero importante tortilla. Presentación disponible en Inglés y Español. Presentado por Gene Chávez.

Gene es consultor de asuntos de diversidad y presidente de Chávez and Associates

Gene Chávez
gtchavez45@gmail.com
(913) 206-2936
Tonganoxie



You've Got Mail: Exploring Letter-Writing Through Time



Presentation can be conducted in person or online.

At one time, daily letter-writing bound us together. Today, ubiquitous emails, texts, and social media messages challenge this time-honored tradition. This talk weaves together a historical look at letter-writing from the pharaohs of Ancient Egypt and historical figures like Abigail Adams and Jane Austen to the intimate, everyday shared experiences between sweethearts, friends, and family members. Is letter-writing a tradition lost? Or will a renewed interest take hold again? Presented by Celia Daniels.

Celia is an independent museum consultant specializing in ethnographic collections.

Celia Daniels
kscousin@sbcglobal.net
(785) 232-0332
Topeka





Dress For Success: Nelly Don and American Fashion



You can't mention 20th-century women's wear without thinking of Nelly Don. The Parsons native built a fashion empire on the vision that women deserved affordable, stylish clothing regardless of means or status. From humble beginnings, Don built a company that treated her workforce of women fairly, brought fashion to millions of American women, and became the largest dressmaker of the century. Ellen "Nell" Quinlan Donnelly's story is one of innovation, triumph, and hard work—all rooted in her small-town Kansas upbringing. Presented by Marla Day.

Presentation can be conducted in person or online.



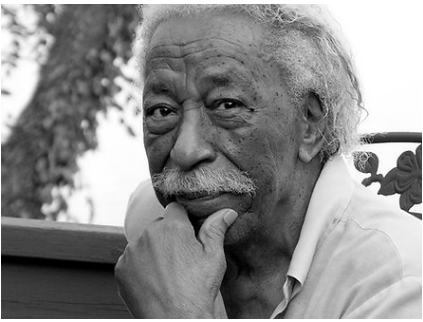
Waste Not, Want Not: Reimagining Fashion through Thrift Style

Presentation can be conducted in person or online.

Thrifting and upcycling are not new concepts. The practice of reusing empty feed sacks, flour sacks, and sugar sacks—also known as commodity bags—as raw material for clothing and other home goods was popular during the austere decades of the 1920s through the 1940s. This program highlights a collection of sacks from Kansas mills, thoughtfully selected to honor a family with deep Kansas roots in agricultural extension, 4-H, and a family-owned feed and farm supply store. This collision between commercial waste and homespun ingenuity provides a model for our modern emphasis on sustainability! Presented by Marla Day.

Marla is the curator of Kansas State University's Historic Costume and Textile Museum in Manhattan.

Marla Day
mday@k-state.edu
(785) 532-1328
Manhattan



Learning From Gordon Parks

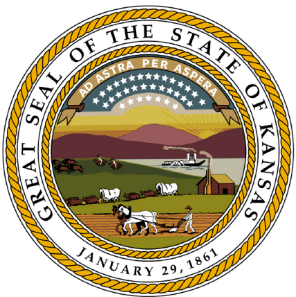


African American author, photographer, and filmmaker Gordon Parks was well known for his documentation of American life and culture. Born in Fort Scott, Kansas in 1912, he is one of the most esteemed image makers of all time. In this presentation, photographer Ann Dean discusses the impact and inspiration found in Parks’s books: *The Learning Tree*, *A Choice of Weapons*, and *Half Past Autumn*. These books help illustrate Parks’s mother’s teachings centered in love, dignity, and hard work, and provide a starting point to talk about his struggles, choices, and triumphs – all great life lessons for those searching to find their way in this complicated world. Presented by Ann Dean.

Presentation can be conducted in person or online.

Ann is an artist and freelance photographer who also teaches photography at the Lawrence Art Center.

Ann Dean
anndean@sunflower.com
Lawrence



“We, The People of Kansas ...” The Story of Kansas’s Founding Documents, 1820-2020



A nation or state’s founding documents speak to the values and aspirations of its people, and at a functional level, provide the functions of government. For the United States, these are the Constitution and Declaration of Independence, and for Kansas, the 1859 Wyandotte Constitution qualifies. It stipulated the form of government, a bill of rights, and systems for elections, education, public institutions, and even the formation of counties and townships. This talk will explore the key components of the Wyandotte Constitution and look at other foundational documents in the state’s history. It will also explore the modifications to the constitution to expand the role of government and rights for individuals over the 160 years of statehood. Presented by Virgil Dean.

Presentation can be conducted in person or online.

Virgil is retired as consulting editor and editor of Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains.

Virgil Dean
vwdean51@gmail.com
(785) 424-5115
Lawrence



The Kansas City Monarchs and America's National Pastime



Presentation can be conducted in person or online.

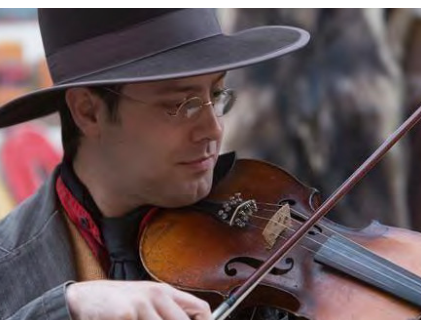
2020 marked two major milestones for baseball: the Negro Leagues celebrated their 100th anniversary and Major League Baseball merged statistics of these African American players with those of the major league. The history of Negro League baseball in America mirrors the racial strife experienced by African Americans in society. It was plagued by discrimination, racism, and inequity, while its athletes were celebrated for their resiliency, professionalism, and athleticism. The Kansas City Monarchs barnstormed across Kansas and the region to play more than 400 games between 1920 and 1957 against local towns. This talk sheds new light on this sports history and the history of baseball in Kansas. Presented by Phil Dixon.

Phil is a historian and co-founder of the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum.

Phil Dixon
Philsdixon@aol.com
(816) 922-0680
Belton, MO



Kansas Music History

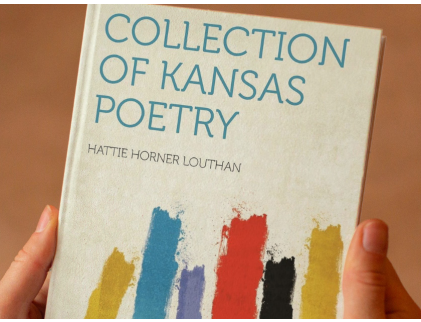


Presentation can be conducted in person or online.

What is it like to be a musician from Kansas and what can their music tell us about time and place? Using music and storytelling, this presentation explores informal music traditions, styles, and musicians from Territorial Kansas up through the age of the radio, and concludes with a demonstration of various instruments and music from early 19th and 20th century Kansas. Presented by Derrick Doty.

Derrick is a music historian and works at the Riley County Historical Museum.

Derrick Doty
derrickddoty@gmail.com
(620) 487-4579
Manhattan



Poets of Kansas



Presentation can be conducted in person or online.

Kansas has a rich history of wonderful poets, and this presentation will explore and present the work of eight pioneers who roam the wheat fields, tallgrass, and landscapes of the Sunflower State, fashioning words into moving stanzas. Presented by Dennis Etzel Jr.

Interested in hosting a poetry writing workshop following this presentation? Contact Dennis for more information about hosting a poetry workshop. [Separate fee applies.](#)

Dennis is a Kansas poet and senior lecturer at Washburn University.

Dennis Etzel Jr
dennis.etzeljr@washburn.edu
(785) 554-2018
Topeka





Cambiaron Mi Nombre/They Changed My Name



Presentation can be conducted in person or online.

This presentation brings together the dynamics of immigration told through the lens of visual art and poetry. It showcases an interactive exploration of a personal journey from the heart of Colombia to the heart of the United States, exploring the conundrum of belonging in unfamiliar surroundings while straddling two different cultures and narratives. Presentation available in English and Spanish. Presented by José Faus.

José is an independent teacher, artist, and founder of the Latino Writers Collective in Kansas City.

They Changed My Name /Cambiaron Mi Nombre

Esta presentación reúne las dinámicas de inmigración presentadas a través del lente de las artes visuales y poesía. Muestra una exploración interactiva de un viaje personal desde el corazón de Colombia hasta el corazón de Estados Unidos, explorando el dilema de pertenecer a un entorno desconocido mientras se divide entre dos culturas y narrativas diferentes. Presentación disponible en Inglés y Español. Presentado por Jose Faus.

José es maestro independiente, artista, y fundador del Colectivo de Escritores Latinos "Latino Writers Collective" en Kansas City.

José Faus
carridos@gmail.com
(816) 809-4074
Kansas City, MO





The Wizard Behind Oz



If you're from Kansas, you've surely encountered plenty of Wizard of Oz jokes and quips. Where's Dorothy? You're not in Kansas anymore! I'm melting! But what you may not know is the fascinating story behind L. Frank Baum's classic *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. This talk explores the unique appeal of this first truly American fairy tale, and its legacy on our culture from speech, to music, to media. This presentation pulls back the curtain on Baum's crowning achievement. Presented by Chris Glasgow.

Presentation can be conducted in person only.

**NEW
FOR
2026!**

Matilda Joslyn Gage: Lost Suffragist and Oz

One of the most prominent Women's Rights leaders was also the mother-in-law of L. Frank Baum, author of the classic book "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz." Author, abolitionist, suffragist, lecturer, and activist, Matilda Joslyn Gage was a force. This presentation explores her achievements and how her influence can be found in Baum's writing, especially in the brave, independent, and outspoken character named Dorothy Gale. Presented by Chris Glasgow.

Chris serves as curator at the Oz Museum in Wamego.

Chris Glasgow
curator@ozmuseum.com
(785) 458-8686
Wamego



Fresh Produce: Kansas's Orchardists, Market Growers, and Truck Farmers



Presentation can be conducted in person or online.

In Kansas, agriculture is king. Our roots are connected to the land and crops harvested from the soil. This talk highlights Kansas's commercial specialty crops, agriculture experimentation, horticultural "royalty" marketing, and the evolving local foods movement. Learn about Kansas's nationally known heritage apple; the crabapple king's downfall; the successful gardening secrets of freed slaves, entrepreneurs, and early suburbanites; the state's connection to exotic fruit introduction; the 1960s counterculture influence on today's market mainstays; future outlooks; and county-specific produce projection. Presented by Cindy Higgins.

Cindy is a journalist and historian of Kansas industry.

Cindy Higgins
(785) 542-2606
cinhiggins@yahoo.com
Eudora



One Potato, Two Potato: Campfire Tales and Children's Folklore in Kansas and Beyond

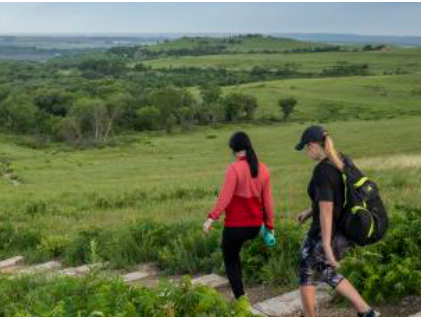


Presentation can be conducted in person or online.

Ever wonder about the history behind some of our favorite childhood rhymes and stories? This presentation delves into a variety of children's folklore—from playground games to counting-out rhymes to urban legends to silly campfire stories and more. Explores how this intangible cultural heritage gets passed down through generations. Are there aspects we should reconsider passing along, and could there be deeper meanings behind this "kid stuff"? Presented by Priscilla Howe.

Priscilla is a professional storyteller and author from Lawrence.

Priscilla Howe
priscilla@priscillahowe.com
(785) 331-6181
Lawrence



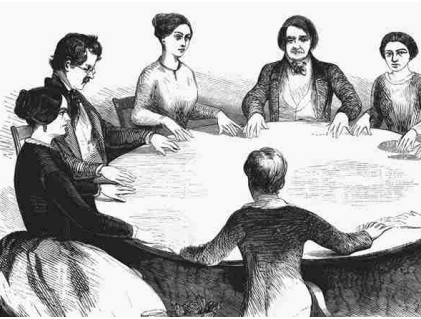
Listening to Place: Nature and Poetry Walks



Connecting with the natural world can provide a wellspring of knowledge and inspiration, enabling us to (re)discover strategies for living in the world, to grieve and heal after loss, and realign our thinking toward kinship, community, and sustainability. This beginner-friendly nature and poetry walk will be oriented to connecting with the more-than-human world through literature in the environmental humanities. By the words of poets, writers, and our own senses, this hike will engage with diverse habitats throughout Kansas to help participants listen to the often-unseen wisdom around us. This program is adaptable to meet participants' accessibility needs. Presented by Megan Kaminski.

Megan is a Poet and Professor of Environmental Studies at the University of Kansas.

Megan Kaminski
kaminski@ku.edu
(913) 346-2160
Lawrence



Beyond the Veil: A History of Spiritualism



It seems one of the eternal questions that has plagued humanity centers around what happens to us when we die. Most modern religions try to tackle this question, but no did so with more fervor that modern Spiritualism. What started in a cabin in New York with two young girls quickly spread across the globe. Soon, spiritual mediums who claimed they could communicate with the dead could be found in almost every town in the nation. This presentation examines the emergence of this religious phenomena, its connections to both the Civil War and World War I, and how it led to a battle of words between the creator of Sherlock Holmes and the greatest magician of all time. Presented by Katie Keckeisen.

Presentation can be conducted in person or online.

Katie is the Local History Librarian at the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library.

Katie Keckeisen@gmail.com
skkeckeisen@gmail.com
(785) 220-0714
Topeka



Army of Amazons: Women’s Fight for Labor Rights in Kansas Coalfields



Presentation can be conducted in person or online.

In December 1921, thousands of women in southeast Kansas rose up to fight injustice in the area coalfields. These women were immigrants from Eastern European nations as well as Kansas born. After a months-long strike by the coalminers, the women joined the cause. In the short term, their efforts crippled mine production for nearly a month; in the longer term, their continued activism impacted future statewide elections and national legislation. This talk will share the stories of these women, christened the “Amazon Army” by the *New York Times*, and their fight for democracy and labor rights in Kansas’s coalfields. Presented by Linda O’Nelio Knoll.

Linda is an educator and historian in Pittsburg.

Linda Knoll
lindaoknoll@swbell.net
(620) 231-0499
Pittsburg



You Say Tomato, I Say Tomahto: Evolution of Language In Kansas



Presentation can be conducted in person or online.

We’ve all heard that newscasters are trained to speak with a Midwest accent—the so-called “accent from nowhere.” In fact, language reflects people, history, and community. It is intimately tied to our immigrant past, a foundation that, surprisingly, is always changing. This talk will examine the ways language has changed in Kansas over the past hundred years through the examination of archival and contemporary oral history. Presented by Mary Kohn.

Mary is an associate professor of English and the director of the Chapman Center for Rural Studies at Kansas State University.

Mary Kohn
maryekohn@gmail.com
(828) 337-4003
Manhattan

Presentation available in English and Spanish.



If These Walls Could Talk

Murals seem to be nearly everywhere in Kansas towns both big and small. However, it's not a new tradition! From the iconic John Steuart Curry murals in the state's capitol to the frescoes of Jean Charlot in Atchison, and the many murals by artists commissioned as part of the New Deal, murals have long graced our public spaces. This talk will explore the artists, meanings, and impetus behind the state's rich collection of public murals, and how they reflect an image of who we are as Kansans. Presented by Dave Loewenstein.

Dave is an artist based in Lawrence.



Presentation can be conducted in person or online.

Dave Loewenstein
dloewenstein@hotmail.com
(785) 550-8531
Lawrence



Last Stand at Rebel Creek: The Osage as Union Allies In Civil War Kansas

As conflicts between states increased during the Civil War, both the Union and the Confederacy tried to use the Osage to achieve their own aims. Initially divided over how their people should respond in the face of escalating struggles, the Osage eventually emerged as important allies of the Union forces, thwarting an 1863 Confederate expedition tasked with reviving Southern resistance in Colorado and New Mexico territories. This presentation explores the Osage contributions to the Union cause in Kansas during the Civil War. Presented by Isaias McCaffery.

Isaias J. McCaffery is professor of history at Independence Community College.



Presentation can be conducted in person only.

Isaias McCaffery
imccaffery@indycc.edu
(620) 714-0037
Independence



Voices of Japanese “War Brides” in Postwar Kansas



Presentation can be conducted in person or online.

Japanese women fled the devastation of a war-torn Japan after World War II to find challenges in a strange, new world. After marrying US military men and moving to the United States, these young women often faced challenges and hardship while others found opportunity and success. How did they adjust to a Western world and a military culture? How did they maintain connection to their homes and families back in Japan? This talk will share the voices of Japanese women who triumphed amidst great struggle to find community, connection, and cultural identity in the place they viewed as the last destination of their lives— the Kansas prairie. Presented by Ayako Mizumura.

Ayako is the academic director of the University of Kansas’s Center for East Asian Studies, a role she’s held since 2013.

Ayako Mizumura
mizu@ku.edu
(785) 979-0070
Lawrence



The Disability Rights Movement



Presentation can be conducted in person or online.

In the 1960s, people with disabilities and their allies fought to ensure full citizenship and civil rights to a population often overlooked or approached with pity. Efforts to seek equal rights and protections under the law occurred at the federal, regional, and local levels, including an important case in Lawrence. This talk celebrates the contributions of those who worked to realize critical legislation in this movement for social justice and explores those who made it happen. Presented by Ray Mizumura-Pence.

Ray is a professor of American studies at the University of Kansas.

Ray Mizumura-Pence
8rp14ence@gmail.com
(785) 304-2966
Lawrence



What a Ride! Rural Community-Owned Carnivals



Across Kansas, late summer brings county fair season and all the fun that goes along with it. But what happens when the carnival stops coming? These community connectors have largely gone by the wayside due to economic challenges, but some counties have united to host community-owned carnivals. This talk will delve into the history of the carnival in Kansas, and the recent herculean efforts by small, rural communities to keep this tradition alive and thriving. Presented by Erika Nelson.

Erika is an independent artist and educator, scouring nooks and crannies across the United States in search of the odd and unusual.

Presentation can be conducted in person or online.

Erika Nelson
worldslargestthings@gmail.com
(785) 760-0826
Lucas



Railroded: The Industry That Shaped Kansas

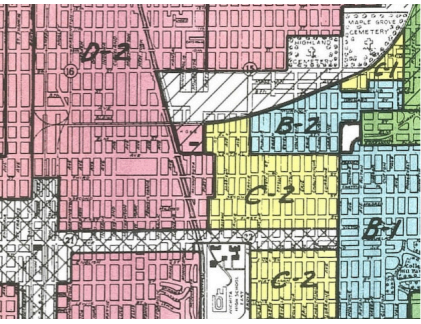


Few industries dominated the economy of the nation in the 19th century more than the railroad. Railroads brought immigrant settlers, created jobs, and fed beef markets in the East. They enabled regular mail service and the adoption of standard time. Most Kansas towns were founded because of the railroad, and few survived without it. Yet the advancement of the railroad industry came at a significant cost to the Plains Indians who were forcibly displaced by this westward expansion. This presentation examines the complicated legacy of railroads and the impact on native peoples who called Kansas home. Presented by Leo Oliva.

Leo is a historian with a research focus on 19th-century Kansas.

Presentation can be conducted in person or online.

Leo E. Oliva
oliva@ruraltel.net
(785)425-7312
Woodston



Mapping Inequality



Federal and State polities in the early 20th century restricted financial resources to African Americans for housing. Known as redlining, it was followed by another historically discriminatory practice twenty years later—urban renewal. These two programs segregated and changed communities across the nation. This presentation will explore its history and the lingering impact on today’s communities. Presented by Donna Rae Pearson.

Donna Rae is the local historian librarian at the Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library.

Donna Rae Pearson
donnarae64@gmail.com
Topeka



World’s Fair Remnants in Kansas



Presentation can be conducted in person or online.

Ice cream cones. Ferris wheels. Hot dogs. Cotton candy. All these iconic items were first introduced at world fairs held in America. The very first international exposition, known commonly as a world’s fair, launched in London in 1851 at the Crystal Palace. Since then, innovations in architecture, engineering, foods, and futuristic visions have debuted at fairs across the globe, including ones held in the United States. Oftentimes lasting legacies remained, such as Seattle’s Space Needle, Forest Park in St. Louis, and the US Open site in New York. Surprisingly, Kansas, which has never hosted an international exhibition, is home to at least four striking legacies of significant world’s fairs. This talk will share the history and significance of international exhibitions worldwide and focus on the wonders held today in the towns of Lawrence, Lindsborg, and Wamego. Presented by Thomas Prasch.

Tom is a professor and chair of the History department at Washburn University.

Tom Prasch
tom.prasch@washburn.edu
(785) 357-0928
Topeka



A New Generation of Veterans: Stories From Iraq and Afghanistan



The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan gave rise to a new generation of veterans. They challenged society's traditional notions of military services and raised questions about the role of the US in global conflicts. Soldiers from Kansas were some of the first deployed to fight in Iraq and Afghanistan. They returned again and again, yet their stories remain largely untold. Modern communication platforms connected these veterans to family and friends instantaneously but left little written record for future generations. This talk reviews key events of America's longest war to date and discusses methods to collect and share these stories from American veterans. Presented by Murl Riedel.

Presentations can be conducted in person or online.



Architecture of the People's Houses

Kansas has 105 county courthouses and hundreds of city halls, plus a few more state capitals than you might expect. The manifestation of the greatest ideals occurs in these buildings, where the work of the people's democracy is in action. The designs of these buildings tell us about the evolution of local government in the state. Larger societal issues, such as the Free State and the Civil Rights movements, can also be examined through the architecture of place. Some resemble Greek and Roman temples of democratic ideals while others convey the Victorian notions of civility. Still others are nondescript storefronts. Regardless of scale and beauty, these buildings represent symbols of our shared values and convey much about our communities. Presented by Murl Riedel.

Murl is a former curator at the Kansas Museum of History and a retired major from the Kansas Army National Guard.

Murl Riedel
murl.riedel@gmail.com
(785) 207-0503
Topeka



African American Musicians in Kansas 1860-1920



Presentation can be conducted in person or online.

African American musicians from 1860-1920 are often part of an under-told story in Kansas history from 1860-1920. Not defined as traditionally Black music, these musicians played in mandolin quartets, cornet bands, orchestras, and string bands. They performed as itinerant musicians and jubilee singers at civic events, weddings, fairs, barn dances, and private homes. They were an important feature of the musical landscape of Kansas, and their history mirrors the history of Kansas itself: the struggle of abolition, the Civil War, and Western migration. This talk explores the dynamic musical history of African Americans, and the social and cultural impacts in Kansas. Presented by Lem Sheppard, who will also perform musical samples.

Lem is an internationally known guitarist and vocalist.

Lem Sheppard
lemshep@yahoo.com
(620) 875-9131
Pittsburg



A Creative Guide to Writing Your Family's Stories



Presentation can be conducted in person or online.

We all love discovering a fantastic tale of our family's past—whether it be the distant relative who journeyed on the Mayflower or the grandmother riveted airplanes at a World War II factory. But how do we share these stories in engaging ways? This workshop provides the tools to enrich genealogical research with story and memory so that readers will feel what it was like to be in that moment. Exercises include developing characters, describing places and events of importance, and finding the heart of a story with the goal of creating an irresistible read. Presented by Kim Stanley.

Kim is a professor of English and chair of the Department of Modern Languages at McPherson College.

Kim Stanley
stanleyk@mcpherson.edu
(620) 755-1080
McPherson



Researching Your Home and the People Who Lived There



Presentation can be conducted in person or online.

Researching a property, be it an old home, a new business, or a section of pastureland, can do more than tell us the history of a space. It can also build a human connection to the people who came before us and the times in which they lived. This talk, which can be customized to highlight a local resources, shares creative ways to study documents and assemble relevant narratives from maps, deeds, newspapers, and often unsought or unknown resources. This is ideal for those new to seeking out family and community stories, and helpful for those stymied by a dead end. Presented by Diana Staresinic-Deane*.

Diana is the executive director of Franklin County Historical Society and Old Depot Museum in Ottawa.

Diana Staresinic-Deane (Pronounced "STAH-reh-SIN-ik-DEEN")
dianastaresinicdeane@gmail.com
(785) 248-4815
Ottawa



Married to Adventure: Osa and Martin Johnson's Films



Presentation can be conducted in person or online.

Pioneers in the early history of documentary filmmaking, Kansans Osa and Martin Johnson traveled the world filming people and wildlife in early 20th century. Their prolific career took them from the South Seas to Africa, and they shared their adventures across the nation in films, books, and presentations. While considered groundbreaking in their day, nowadays their work can be viewed as exploitative. This presentation will delve into their successes in early filmmaking and revisit their vision for their work against today's differing standards. Presented by Mary Ann Thompson.

Mary Ann is the retired Kansas Room librarian at the Hays Public Library and an instructor at Fort Hays State University.

Mary Ann Thompson
maryannthompson459@gmail.com
(785) 628-6399
Hays



Good Trouble



Presentation can be conducted in person or online.

The late political activist and U.S. congressman John Lewis coined the phrase “good trouble” to describe his civil disobedience in the 1960s. Others, who did not share his vision, considered his actions as merely “disturbing the peace.” Notwithstanding these conflicting perspectives, Lewis raises an interesting question. What role have the humanities played in times of crisis, contentiousness, and incredible disagreement? This talk will seek to answer this question by looking at selected works, such as Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation, Booker T. Washington’s Atlanta Exposition speech, Martin Luther King Jr.’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” Barack Obama’s consolation speeches to victims of gun violence at Sandy Hook and Charleston, and how they frame today’s perspectives and debates about racism. Presented by John Edgar Tidwell.

Edgar is professor emeritus of English at the University of Kansas.

John Edgar Tidwell
tidwelje@ku.edu
(785)331-4201
Lawrence



Free Did Not Mean Welcome



Presentation can be conducted in person or online.

Millions of African Americans walked away from the South after Emancipation looking for freedom. For some it meant a journey to Kansas, believing “free state” meant free of racial discrimination. Discover how many realized that for Black people in Kansas “free” did not necessarily mean “welcome.” Presented by Dr. Carmaletta Williams.

Carmaletta is a former professor of English and African American studies at Johnson County Community College. She is currently the executive director of the Black Archives of Mid-America in Kansas City.

Carmaletta Williams
drcarma5@gmail.com
Grandview, MO



Ruralpreneurs: Tumbleweeds and Talents in Kansas Communities



Presentation can be conducted in person or online.

How can businesses succeed in small town Kansas? The answers can be found in what we have termed “ruralpreneurs” – innovative entrepreneurs who have built successful enterprises in small town Kansas, and strengthened their communities as a result. This presentation highlights real-world examples of Kansas entrepreneurs who have built businesses and created jobs and opportunities in a rural setting. These include innovative businesses in Marysville, Garden City, Downs, Neodesha, and more. The presentation also honors the emerging role of diversity, technology, and telecommunications that have brought about so many changes in society. It also reflects the importance of a spirit of service and community. This fascinating, inspiring, fun, and informative presentation highlights rural Kansans and builds pride in our state.

Ron Wilson is the director of the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development at Kansas State University in Manhattan.

Ron Wilson
rwilson@ksu.edu
Manhattan





Presentations can be conducted in person or online.

From Property Taxes to Pets, Demystifying Kansas County and City Government

Ever wonder about your city and county government? This presentation will explore how Kansas counties are different from cities, what each does, and how they are financed. Attendees will learn about the history of these local governments and reflect on their own city and county. This presentation will cover issues like budgets, taxation, planning, zoning, economic development, and public health. Come hear about the often-unknown inner workings of the most impactful government in daily life...local city and county governments. Presented by Hannes Zacharias.

Rediscovering the Arkansas River

The Arkansas River pierces the heart of America, stretching 1,469 miles from the Tennessee Pass in Colorado to the Mississippi River at the eastern edge of Arkansas. As the nation's sixth-longest river (45th longest in the world), it is both the economic engine and burden to millions of people and scores of cities bordering its banks. From raging rapids to diversion dams for irrigation ditches, to dry streambeds, and finally barge traffic, this presentation will examine the impact this wild, elusive, and embattled river has had on cities, towns and adjacent farmland, starting with the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 through to the present day. Presented by Hannes Zacharias.

Hannes Zacharias is the Robert A. Kipp, professor of practice in public administration at the University of Kansas.

Hannes Zacharias has been appointed by Governor Kelly to serve on the Humanities Kansas board of directors. If you would like to bring Hannes's presentation to your community, you will need to pay him directly. HK can no longer provide his honorarium or travel. Thank you!

Hannes Zacharias
hzacharias4@gmail.com
(913) 709-8153
Lenexa

