



Exploring History. Exchanging Ideas. Building Community.

## Bright Dreams, Fun Times: Chautauqua Comes to Beloit and Lawrence

Join the Kansas Humanities Council in June as the Chautauqua tent goes up in Beloit and Lawrence. Historical characters from the 1930s are featured, including Will Rogers, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Huey Long, Aimee Semple McPherson, and Zora Neale Hurston. In addition to the programs under the Chautauqua tent, there will be workshops led by Chautauqua scholars, a special *Photographs from the Dust Bowl* exhibition, a 5-day Chautauqua Camp for youth, and other special events planned by the host communities.

*Bright Dreams, Hard Times: America in the Thirties* will be in Beloit June 11-15 and Lawrence June 18-22. This Chautauqua is supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities through its *We The People* initiative. Kansas is partnering with Nebraska to offer this Chautauqua in both states for three years. For a complete schedule of events in Beloit and Lawrence, visit [www.kansashumanities.org](http://www.kansashumanities.org).

Featuring: Will Rogers, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Huey Long, Aimee Semple McPherson, and Zora Neale Hurston.

Beloit • June 11-15, 2008  
Lawrence • June 18-22, 2008

Sponsored by the Kansas Humanities Council in partnership with the Nebraska Humanities Council. For more information visit [www.kansashumanities.org](http://www.kansashumanities.org) or call 785/357-0359.

*Bright Dreams, Hard Times: America in the Thirties*  
is supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities "We the People" Initiative.

KANSAS HUMANITIES COUNCIL

Local hosts for the 2008 Chautauqua are the Solomon Valley-Highway 24-Heritage Alliance in Beloit and the Lawrence Convention and Visitors Bureau.

### Dates Set for 2009-2010

Join us for *Bright Dreams, Hard Times: America in the Thirties* in four more Kansas communities over the next two years:

2009: Ottawa June 3-7 and Hesston June 10-14

2010: Colby June 2-6 and Belleville June 9-13

### What is Chautauqua?

Chautauqua began in 1874 as a summer school for Sunday school teachers in Chautauqua, New York. By the late 1800s, Chautauqua had developed into a nationwide traveling educational and entertainment program, bringing the world to rural communities across the nation. Programs of political oratory and lectures about health, science, and the humanities were combined with entertainment, such as opera singers and stage performances of Shakespeare. William McKinley, Rutherford B. Hayes, William Howard Taft, and William Jennings Bryan toured the Chautauqua circuit, and audiences discussed views on national issues with their neighbors. Chautauqua became so popular that Theodore Roosevelt called it "the most American thing in America." The modern-day Chautauqua differs from the original by featuring history professionals portraying famous figures from the past, rather than contemporary speakers.



Chautauqua Park, Winfield

## America in the 1930s

The stock market crash of 1929 propelled America into a decade of hard times, characterized by economic depression, environmental disaster, and political unrest after World War I. After the prosperity of the 1920s, many Americans confronted pervasive poverty for the first time. Local and state governments crumbled under the heavy burden of unemployment, while service agencies struggled to provide help for growing numbers of indigent and homeless. This summer's Chautauqua examines four critical themes from the 1930s.

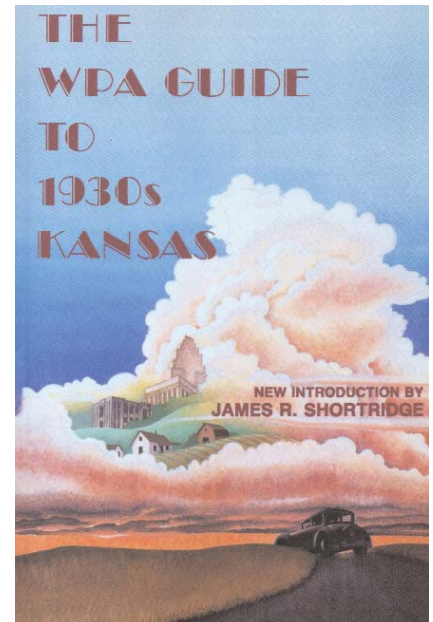
### 1) *The changing relationship between Americans and their national government.*

In the 1930s, the relationship between the American people and their government, especially the federal government, altered dramatically, and in ways that continue to shape our lives in the twenty-first century. Elected President in 1932, Franklin D. Roosevelt and his New Deal Administration programs sought to provide relief, recovery, and reform that would alleviate suffering and prevent future national disasters of such a massive scale. The 1930s witnessed the introduction of New Deal programs such as Social Security, major public works projects, including the TVA (Tennessee Valley Authority) and REA (Rural Electrification Administration), and agricultural programs, such as the AAA (Agricultural Adjustment Act) and the SCS (Soil Conservation Service), that raised prices, paid for livestock and crops, and encouraged soil conservation. This approach to the crisis was advocated by business leaders within the Republican Party, such as Emporia, Kansas, newspaper publisher William Allen White and Governor Alfred Landon of Kansas, the Republican Party candidate for president in 1936. New Deal critics included Louisiana Senator Huey Long and Father Charles Coughlin.

### 2) *Flourishing of artistic and intellectual activity*

The changing relationship between the national government and its American people brought about an unexpected change for artists and intellectuals. Realizing that not everyone was cut out for the shovel, the early Federal Emergency Relief Agency established a professional projects division. The Historical

Records Survey employed hundreds of writers in a massive effort to catalog state and local records of historical importance. The Works Projects Administration's (WPA) Project Number One employed artists, musicians, writers, actors, and scholars on wide-ranging projects, including the production of local and state guides that captured regional differences and provided a generation of travelers with an introduction to the states. By the end of the 1930s, WPA agencies completed thousands of murals and pieces of sculpture, performed thousands of public musical performances, and produced volumes of written work. WPA artists included authors John Steinbeck and Zora Neale Hurston; poet



Dust storm in Rolla, Kansas. Courtesy of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library.

## Dust Bowl Photo Exhibit Tours with Chautauqua

In the 1930s, photographers working for the Farm Security Administration (FSA) captured unforgettable images of the faces and landscape of the Dust Bowl. Forty years later, Nebraska photographer Bill Ganzel found and re-photographed the survivors for a book and exhibition. *The Dust Bowl* exhibit, from Humanities Texas, combines the FSA photographs with Ganzel's photographs to tell a story of strength and triumph in the face of despair. Visit *The Dust Bowl* exhibit Thursday – Sunday in each community.

**Beloit:** June 12-15 at the First National Bank Room, North Mills Street, from 1-4 PM.

**Lawrence:** June 19-22 at the Watkins Community Museum of History, 1047 Massachusetts St., 10 AM-5 PM.



*Fleeing a Dust Storm, Cimarron County, Oklahoma by Arthur Rothstein, April 1936.*

(cont. from p.2)

Langston Hughes; artists Selma Burke, Lucienne Block, and Jackson Pollock; actor Orson Welles; photographer Dorothea Lange, and many more.

### 3) *Role of religion in public life*

Another response to the crisis of the 1930s included individualized and personal approaches to religion as Americans sought solace for their daily problems. Pentecostal services actively engaged congregations through charismatic behaviors such as shouting, speaking-in-tongues, and trances. This new approach to religious solace quickly spread as Depression-era Americans turned to faith to find relief. And importantly, religion found a place in the public sphere as it ministered to desperate people in both urban and rural America.

### 4) *Democratization of American culture through new technologies*

Radio and sound pictures ushered in great changes in America. News reached people more quickly, and closed the gap between rural and urban America. Political and religious leaders could reach the general public directly. Radio broadcasted President Franklin D. Roosevelt's "Fireside Chats" directly to citizens where he shared his hopes and concerns for the American people. Other leaders also understood radio's ability to reach the American public, including Louisiana Senator Huey Long and evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson. Through broadcasting their messages to the American public, political and religious leaders, entertainers, and advertisers influenced and inspired Americans and brought together audiences across the nation in a way that had not been done before. Similar to radio, sound pictures had become a means for relief from daily hardships. Moviegoers escaped for a few hours as they watched popular film stars

Errol Flynn, Will Rogers, or Clark Gable, or delighted in Walt Disney's animated film *Snow White*. While sound movies entertained, they also informed. For example, Pare Lorentz's films illustrated the struggle of Dust Bowl Americans (*The Plow that Broke the Plains*, 1936) and argued the TVA's successes in its ecological efforts (*The River*, 1937).

### Bibliography

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- Kennedy, David M. *Freedom From Fear*.
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- Miner, Craig. *Next Year Country: Dust to Dust in Western Kansas, 1890-1940*.
- Napier, Rita, ed. *Kansas and the West: New Perspectives*.
- Partridge, Elizabeth. *Dorothea Lange: A Visual Life*.
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## A Who's Who Under the Chautauqua Tent



**Will Rogers**  
Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division.



**Franklin D. Roosevelt**  
Courtesy of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library.



**Aimee Semple McPherson**  
Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division.



**Huey Long**  
Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division.



**Zora Neale Hurston**  
Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, Carl Van Vechten Collection.

**Will Rogers** was a humorist, film and radio celebrity, and essayist who commented on American culture and politics. A member of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, Rogers was billed as the “Cherokee Kid” for stage performances and secured his stage career by performing in Ziegfeld’s New York variety revue. Writing for newspapers and magazines from 1925-1935, giving radio broadcasts, appearing in movies, and winning the admiration of American audiences, Rogers offered observations from a general, non-partisan viewpoint.

**Franklin D. Roosevelt**, the President of the United States from 1932-1945, introduced the New Deal to help Americans in their time of need. In his first hundred days, Roosevelt enacted what some viewed as frantic experimenting with a number of federal programs. The result was a mix of new and innovative government programs that blended traditional works projects with untraditional projects for artists, writers, architects, musicians, and young people. His New Deal did not end the Great Depression, but in hard times Roosevelt personified bright dreams and restored a measure of hope to millions of Americans.

**Huey Long** was the Senator and former Governor from Louisiana who, unlike Franklin D. Roosevelt, used force and totalitarian tactics to bring aid to his constituents. As a

young governor, Long cowed legislative opposition while implementing public works programs, putting Louisianans to work. In 1930, he was elected to the United States Senate. In his attempts to redistribute wealth in 1934, Long created the Share Our Wealth program with the motto “Every Man a King.”

**Aimee Semple McPherson** was a pioneering evangelist and pastor. The founder of publications titled “Bible Call” and “Foursquare Crusader,” McPherson established more than 400 branch churches she called Lighthouses. McPherson became a popular preacher and an authority on religious issues, heard by many Americans on radio broadcasts over KFSG (Kall Four Square Gospel), her church’s radio station. During the Great Depression, she provided relief, and a hot meal, to impoverished families in Los Angeles at her Angelus Temple.

**Zora Neale Hurston** was a Harlem Renaissance author and folklorist who worked for the Federal Works Progress Administration (WPA) during the 1930s. Hurston provided an authentic voice for African Americans through her folklore collection *Mules and Men*, the fictional *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, and her work for the Library of Congress and the Folk Arts Committee of the WPA.

## Chautauqua Troupe



**Tonia Compton**



**Fred Krebs**



**Patrick McGinnis**



**Wanda Schell**



**Doug Watson**

**Tonia Compton** is a history doctoral candidate at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, and holds the M.A. from Texas A & M. Her scholarship has brought her the Huntington Library W.M. Keck Foundation Fellowship, 2006; and the University of Nebraska, Department of

History Stover Fellowship, 2004. Her research interest is nineteenth century women’s history. She portrayed Dolley Madison in the *From Sea to Shining Sea: American Expansion and Cultural Change, 1790-1850* Great Plains Chautauqua from 2002- 2006.

## Chautauqua Includes Special Programs for Youth

Chautauqua offers a variety of youth programs to engage participants in Beloit and Lawrence in the history of the 1930s and of their local communities. All youth programs are free, but registration may be required. For more information, contact the Mitchell County Historical Museum in Beloit at 785/738-5355 or the Lawrence Convention and Visitors Bureau at 785/865-4499.

### *Youth Chautauqua Camp*

Wednesday-Sunday during Chautauqua Week  
Youth Chautauqua Camp provides students the opportunity to become historians, researchers, scriptwriters, and actors.



Youth Chautauqua performances in Baldwin City, 2007.



The five-day camp allows participants to identify and research a local historical figure of the 1930s and portray that person under the tent on the final evening of Chautauqua. The Youth Chautauqua Camp is facilitated by Ann Birney and Joyce Thierer of Ride Into History. Registration required. Grades 4th-8th.

### *Dear Eleanor, Dear Laura* 10:00 AM Friday during Chautauqua Week

If you could write a letter to the First Lady of the United States, what would you say? During the Great Depression of the 1930s, children from all over the country sent letters to First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt asking for everything from a pair of roller skates to food for their family. Participants in this workshop will become historians-in-training as

they research the letters and then write their own to First Lady Laura Bush. Ages 8 and up.

### *Iconic Images*

Wednesday & Saturday during Chautauqua Week  
Photographers from the 1930s, like Dorothea Lange, captured the hardship and despair of the Great Depression in images. Aspiring photographers will have the opportunity to study historic local images from the 1930s and create their own of contemporary life. Cameras provided. Registration required. Grades 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>.

*Making Murals with Folktales: How Butterflies Were Made*  
Zora Neale Hurston compiled folktales from her home state of Florida. One folktale tells how the colorful butterflies were created to keep the flowers company and how they came to be called butterflies. Children will listen to the vibrant story told by "Zora" and then create a mural based on the images in the folktale. The mural will be photographed and displayed on the website. Ages 8 and up.



Eleanor Roosevelt.  
Courtesy of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library.

(cont. from p.4)

**Frederick A. Krebs** is a professor in the Social Sciences and Humanities Division at the Johnson County Community College in Overland Park, Kansas. He received his M.A. in American History from the University of Missouri-Kansas City. Professor Krebs is a prolific speaker and toured as William Allen White in the 2007 *Famous Kansans Chautauqua* and as Stephen Douglas in the 2004 *Bleeding Kansas Chautauqua*.

**Patrick E. McGinnis** portrays Franklin D. Roosevelt. Dr. McGinnis holds the Ph.D. from Tulane University and for the last four years has held the rank of Emeritus Professor of History at the University of Central Oklahoma. He has published *Oklahoma's Depression Radicals: Ira M. Finley and the Veterans of Industry in America* in 1991, in addition to several historical articles. He portrayed William Clark in the *From Sea to Shining Sea: American Expansion and Cultural*

*Change, 1790-1850* Great Plains Chautauqua from 2005-2006.

**Wanda Schell** portrays Zora Neale Hurston. Schell is an accomplished actress and writer who holds degrees in Liberal Arts and Theatre from the Community College of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College, and has pursued graduate work at the Trinity Repertoire Conservatory. In addition to a variety of stage roles, Schell has used her theatrical skills to conduct youth outreach programs across the country.

**Doug Watson** portrays Will Rogers, and, as Rogers, is the moderator for Chautauqua. Dr. Watson holds the Ph.D. from Texas Tech University and is a recently retired Professor of English at Oklahoma Baptist University. A seasoned Chautauquan, Dr. Watson has performed over 300 programs across the nation as Will Rogers.

## Special Workshops Appeal to Adult Audiences

See community schedules for Beloit and Lawrence for times and locations at [www.kansashumanities.org](http://www.kansashumanities.org).

*Role of Political Satire and Commentary* presented by Doug Watson

During the 1930s, political cartoons, radio programs, newspaper articles and film mirrored, and sometimes exaggerated, how Americans responded to political and religious leaders. This workshop will use examples of Will Rogers' work from the 1920s and 1930s to discuss the continuing role of humor as a response to today's world.

*Will Rogers: Film and American Society* presented by Doug Watson

From 1929-1935, Will Rogers made 21 "talkies." These movies, filled with Rogers' trademark wit, wisdom, and an optimistic vision of American society, were extremely popular. They also provide insight into social topics from the time period such as new wealth, rural distress, and political and economic corruption. This workshop examines how Rogers' movies informed Americans about complex issues. Can the same be said about today's movies?

*Agriculture Then and Now* presented by Patrick McGinnis  
Today's family farm looks much different than the farms of our grandparents and great-grandparents. During the 1930s, New Deal farm policies changed traditional farming practices and the role of government in agriculture. This workshop will examine why these policies were introduced and how they affected rural communities.

*What Do Historians Say?* presented by Patrick McGinnis  
During his presidential campaign in 1932, Franklin Delano Roosevelt introduced his New Deal ideas to the American public. Historians differ on the interpretation of the impact and legacy of these relief programs. This workshop will explore many interpretations and give participants the opportunity to discuss how the image of FDR changes with the perspective presented.

*Crisis and the Role of the Demagogue* presented by Fred Krebs  
A demagogue can be defined as a leader who champions the cause of the common people or a leader who makes use of popular prejudices and false claims and promises in order to

gain power. So - was Huey Long a demagogue? Participants in this workshop will consider what leadership meant to politician Huey Long. Clips will be shown of Roseen's 1949 film *All the King's Men*, a fictitious account of Long's life.

*Huey Long and State Innovation* presented by Fred Krebs  
Huey Long was innovative in his approach as Governor of Louisiana from 1928-1932. He worked to create laws that would make life easier and more equitable for the people. This workshop will examine Long's work as a reformer in his home state. How did his ideas effect change in Louisiana and the nation?

*Radio in the Thirties* presented by Tonia Compton  
Radio in the 1930s changed the ways Americans learned about the world around them. Used by FDR, Huey Long, Will Rogers, and Aimee Semple McPherson as a new way to reach the American public, this workshop will include samples of popular shows. Workshop participants will analyze radio's impact on cultural, political, and social changes of the 1930s. How does today's technology influence American society?

*Floods, FEMA & the Faithful: Religious Organizations' Relief Efforts in the Wake of Disasters*, presented by Tonia Compton  
From disasters in the early twentieth century like the San Francisco earthquake in 1906, to the recent devastation of Hurricane Katrina, victims and government agencies have increasingly come to rely on private efforts by religious organizations to provide aid. This workshop will consider the development of this trend, and look at how churches and other religious groups responded to the Dust Bowl on the Great Plains.

*Go Gator and Muddy the Water* presented by Wanda Schell  
Zora Neale Hurston wrote for the Federal Writer's Project during the 1930s, collecting folklore as well as other stories. In this workshop, participants will compare Kansas and Nebraska folklore, myths, and rituals to those from Florida collected by Hurston. Additionally, participants will explore healing rituals, songs, and children's games found in Hurston's writing and discuss how some of the more controversial themes were received by her contemporaries.

## Planning for the Future

The Kansas Humanities Council is compiling a list of email addresses for future e-newsletters. This electronic publication will not replace the mailed *Humanities* publication. Instead, it will serve as a timely way to keep Friends up-to-date. If you would like to receive KHC's e-news in the future, please send to [tracy@kansashumanities.org](mailto:tracy@kansashumanities.org) your:

- Email address
- Name
- Contact information

## New Harmonies is a Success at the Winfield Public Library

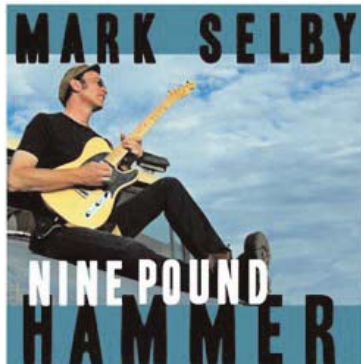


Over 50 musicians participated in a Mossman guitar jam at the Winfield Public Library in honor of Stu Mossman, the famous guitar maker from Winfield.

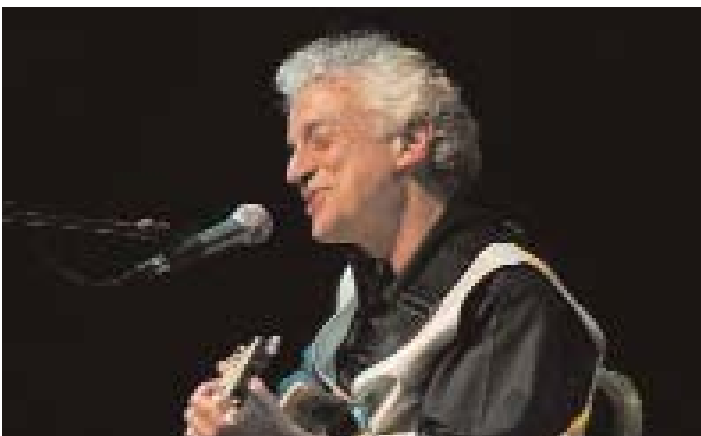


Visitors to *New Harmonies* try out the listening stations and the rub board, a rhythm instrument used in Cajun and Zydeco music.

## Russell Stages *New Harmonies* Exhibition and Programs



*New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music* will be at the Deines Cultural Center in Russell through June 22. For confirmation of all events, times, locations, or a complete schedule, call the Center at 785/483-3742 or visit [www.deinesculturalcenter.org](http://www.deinesculturalcenter.org).



Bluesman Doug MacLeod.

## American Roots Music Festival, Saturday May 31

Call the Deines Cultural Center for a full schedule of events, 785-483-3742.

### At the Cecil Bricker Park in downtown Russell

11 AM–12 PM	FlatRidge Band (country/rock/blues)
12:30–1:30 PM	New Old Timers (bluegrass)

### At the Dream Theater in downtown Russell

11:00–11:45 AM	Patty Davidson, Ventriloquist
12:30–1:30 PM	Mark Selby (blues)
1:45–2:45 PM	Dwight Kilian Quartet with Scott Strecker

### At the Deines Cultural Center

10:00 AM–All day	<i>New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music</i>
11:45 AM–12:30 PM	Doug MacLeod (blues)
11:00 AM–1:00 PM	Western Kansas String Academy for Kids

### At the Russell County Festival Grounds Main Stage

3:00–4:00 PM	Blaine Younger Band (country blues)
4:15–5:15 PM	Mark Selby (acoustic blues)
5:30–6:30 PM	Homemade Jamz (blues)
6:45–8:15 PM	Doug MacLeod (blues)
8:35–9:55 PM	Kelley Hunt, CD Release (blues)
10:15–11:30 PM	Steam Powered Airplane (edgy bluegrass)

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