

HUMANITIES

EXPLORE HISTORY • EXCHANGE IDEAS • BUILD COMMUNITY



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KANSAS JOURNEY STORIES

Photos by Juli Pitzer.

Journey Stories, the Smithsonian Institution traveling exhibition, continues to tour the state. The Kansas tour of the *Journey Stories* exhibition is made possible through the Kansas Humanities Council, the Kansas Department of Transportation's Enhancement Program, Jostens, and special contributions at the Patron level from the following Friends of the Humanities:



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RIVERBOATS IN THE FLINT HILLS

In October 1854, the steamboat *Excel* ventured into the mouth of the Smoky Hill River loaded with supplies for a new military fort. Among the boat's cargo was food, materials for the fort, and passengers that included H. D. McMeekin, a future representative of Kansas' First Territorial Legislature. The *Excel's* destination? Fort Riley, located in the heart of the Flint Hills. The *Excel's* trip was just one of two documented riverboat journeys along the Smoky Hill River. Other documented riverboat journeys took place on the Kansas River.

In 1853, the development of Fort Riley as a subordinate depot 130 miles west of Fort Leavenworth extended the protection of the United States Cavalry to the bold souls who decided to try settling in the "new states and territories to the west." In the early days of Fort Riley, speculation about the navigability of the Smoky Hill and the Kansas, or Kaw, Rivers was divided.

A small number of boats traveled as far as Fort Riley or Junction City. Perl W. Morgan's *History of Wyandotte County Kansas and Its People*, 1911, lists the *Bee* as

a popular passenger boat between Wyandotte

County and Fort Riley in 1855. Morgan also states that settlers of the Ashland Colony came up from Ohio to Kansas on the *Express* in 1856, noting "The boat took them up the Kansas River to Junction City, where they were located. In the party were Henry J. Adams, Franklin G. Adams, Matthew Weightman, William Mackey and wife of Junction City." In 1858, Captain Beasley brought the *Gus Linn* up the Kansas River, piloted by W. W. Hicks, marking the second of the two occasions when the Smoky Hill River was traversed by riverboat.

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Junction of the Smoky Hill and Republican Rivers, near Junction City, 1867. Photo courtesy of the Kansas Historical Society.

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ALL ABOARD TO PARSONS, "QUEEN OF THE GREAT SOUTHWEST"

All Aboard! Head to Parsons! That's what thousands of people did upon the creation of what some called the "Queen of the Great Southwest." The evolution of transportation shaped more than just another railroad town, it created a prominent city in southeast Kansas and left behind a rich history.

In 1870, stagecoaches brought several leading eastern businessmen to Labette County, Kansas in hopes of creating the first rail line to travel south to Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma). John D. Rockefeller, J. P. Morgan, and Levi Parsons were included among the group. The men joined an elite party of investors who financed the Missouri – Kansas – Texas Railroad, known as the "Katy." The Katy became the first passenger railway to cross from Kansas into Indian Territory.



Building subway at Parsons, 1909. Photo courtesy of the Parsons Historical Society.

The success of the Katy railroad sparked the rapid development of Parsons. Named for Levi Parsons, the community grew to 1,000 people by 1871. "The Katy railroad was responsible for the rapid growth and subsequent development of the

City of Parsons," said Labette County Tourism Director, Jim Zaleski. "The Katy prompted the influx of residents, new homes, and businesses and sparked exciting growth that would continue throughout the next 60 years."

In 1875, the Katy moved its general offices from Sedalia, Missouri to Parsons. The city grew at a rapid pace throughout the rest of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Growth of the railroad, and its central location, prompted many construction projects throughout the years at the Katy. With that growth came construction workers and their families, along with those searching for a new life in a booming town. With each year the Katy grew. In the early 1900s, it was estimated that nearly 30 passenger trains a day were stopping in Parsons. By April of 1907, Parsons had grown to 16,372 residents.

The Katy also provided many athletic opportunities for the residents of Parsons and southeast Kansas. On October 7, 1916, the Katy Athletic Field was dedicated. More than 5,000 people came to participate in the dedication festivities. "For years the Katy Park hosted a variety of events. In the spring of 1917, the park hosted the Minneapolis Millers and the St. Louis Cardinals in an exhibition baseball game," Zaleski added. "Many teams, such as Kansas City, St. Louis, and the Chicago White Sox played in the park."

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"Riverboats" continued from page 1

...steamboats had ascended the Kansas River as far as Fort Riley, but whether steady navigation would prove feasible was a disputed issue.

Many boats that started out on the Kansas River were moved to the Missouri River or elsewhere. Governor Andrew Reeder contributed advice in a booklet for emigrants, which stated that steamboats had ascended the Kansas River as far as Fort Riley, but whether steady navigation would prove feasible was a disputed issue. The question was finally decided by an act of the Kansas Legislature on September 6, 1864. In the face of pressure from railroad interests, the Kansas River was declared non-navigable, giving the railroads the freedom to bridge or dam the river without restrictions. Thus ended Geary County's brief flirtation with steamboat travel.

The Geary County Historical Society and Museums' local companion exhibit to *Journey Stories, Junction City: On the Road to Everywhere*, explores the importance of transportation and migration in Junction City's history. Junction City sits at the crossroads of Native American trails, overland trails, and railroads, not to mention riverboat travel. Early aviation took flight in Junction City and today Interstate 70 brings new generations of travelers to the city.

"The exhibits will show the significant part Junction City has played in the larger history of our nation, particularly in the westward migration of the late 19th century," said Georganne White, curator of the Geary County Historical Society and Museums. "The exhibits will also illustrate some interesting, but little-known, sidelights to our local narrative."

The Geary County Historical Society and Museums will host *Journey Stories* October 2 – November 15, 2009. For more information about *Journey Stories* and related exhibits and events in Junction City contact the Geary County Historical Society and Museums at 785/238-1666 or www.gchswb.org.



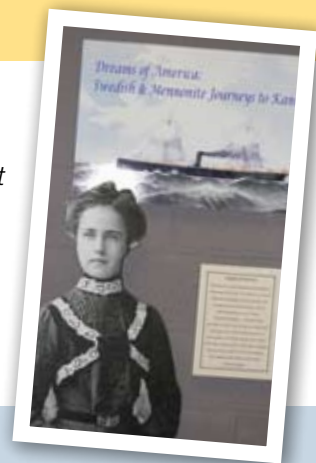
Photos by Juli Pitzer.

SENTIMENTAL JOURNEYS

Journey Stories was at the McPherson County Old Mill Museum June 26 – August 9. Museum Director Lorna Nelson reported on the impact of *Journey Stories* in Lindsborg.

A visitor from Saline County toured “*Journey Stories*” and our companion exhibition, “*Dreams of America: Swedish & Mennonite Journeys to Kansas.*” She spent a long time

in the galleries and when she finished she said, “You know, I don’t have Swedes or Mennonites, but I have a lot of immigrants in my history. It’s one thing to read it in a book, but this all just brings it to life! I really see it and understand it in a completely different way now.”



Find *Journey Stories* on Facebook

See Lindsborg’s *Journey Stories* installation in action! Simply go to www.facebook.com and search for Museum on Main Street.

“All Aboard to Parsons” continued from page 2

The railroad played an important role in World War I. Parsons was a stopping point for troops traveling on the Katy. It is estimated that more than 100,000 soldiers made a stop in Parsons between 1917 and 1919.

In the mid-1900s, the evolution of transportation changed Parsons forever. The affordability of personal automobiles meant that passenger trains were no longer popular or profitable. In 1957, Katy offices in Parsons closed, relocating workers to their new offices in Denison, Texas. In 1958, the Katy’s popular signature line from St. Louis to Parsons also stopped. Finally in July 1965, after 94 years of passenger service through Parsons, it ended.

The Katy will forever be remembered in Parsons through pictures, memorabilia, and stories dedicated to the rich rail history that helped to shape Parsons and the rest of the country.

“As a community that was formed on the back of western migration, we are pleased to be able to present *Journey Stories* to southeastern Kansas,” said Kari West, Public Information Officer, City of Parsons. “As people headed west, the Katy Railroad melded different cultures into our diverse population. Our companion discussions and exhibit will feature Mexican-American heritage, the great migration of African-Americans, and how transportation laid the foundation for our community as it is today.”

Three local companion exhibits to *Journey Stories* will be featured in Parsons. The first features material related to

the Union Electric Railway line, an interurban line, and its operations in Parsons from 1912 to 1947. The second exhibit highlights the Katy Railroad and its role in bringing people to Kansas and points west. The third exhibit looks at the Mexican-Americans who came to Parsons to build the railroad and their cultural contributions to Parsons. The Parsons Historical Society Museum is working in conjunction with the Parsons Public Library to produce the local exhibits. The Parsons Public Library will host *Journey Stories* November 20, 2009 – January 3, 2010.

For more information about *Journey Stories* and related exhibits and events in Parsons, contact the Parsons Public Library at 620/421-5920 or www.parsonslibrary.org.

Historical research courtesy of the Parsons Historical & Iron Horse Museums. Other historical facts from Maynard Harding’s “Collection of Rail Stories.”



Katy railroad locomotive shop, 1916. Photo courtesy of the Parsons Historical Society.

“The Katy prompted the influx of residents, new homes, and businesses and sparked exciting growth that would continue throughout the next 60 years.”

KHC CREATES NEW FILM DISCUSSION OUTREACH PROGRAM

By Juli Pitzer, Hall Center for the Humanities Intern



Juli Pitzer



Film Lovers in Kansas (FLIKS), the brand new program in development from KHC, is a

facilitated *discussion* series that uses short films as the starting point for community conversations of both historical and contemporary topics of interest to Kansans. It's similar to a book discussion, but without the book. These programs are ideal for use in a public library, art center, museum, senior center, or other similar location.

FLIKS will feature multiple film programs, each consisting of two to three short (under 15 minute) films. These are contemporary films that offer a power-packed message in a short amount of time. The programs are centered on themes of the environment, community, society and family, ethnicity and diversity, or sense of place. FLIKS short films may be documentary, fiction, animation, or experimental.

What can one expect at a FLIKS program? A local sponsor will book a program from KHC. KHC will provide a discussion leader to lead the program. Participants will watch a thirty-minute collection of short films, and afterwards the discussion leader will facilitate a guided conversation about the topics and ideas presented by the films.

"KHC is always looking for ways to get folks talking about important values and issues, so we're excited about this new choice!" said Kim Stanley, KHC Board Program Chair. "I think our constituencies – both our old friends and some new ones – are going to be intrigued and entertained by FLIKS."

Juli Pitzer, a graduate student at the University of Kansas, joined KHC as a summer intern through a partnership with the Hall Center for the Humanities. She has been working with various non-profit film organizations and filmmakers across the state of Kansas to generate high-quality films to use for the FLIKS 2009-2010 program.

For more information about the new FLIKS film discussion program, contact Dan Carey-Whalen, Director of Programs, at dan@kansashumanities.org or 785/357-0359.

Juli Pitzer is a doctoral student at the University of Kansas in the Department of Film and Media. Her research interests include new digital technologies, motion picture production and exhibition, fan cultures and film, and the teenage audience. Juli has organized multiple film festivals and is a short filmmaker and the creator of "Jenny's Dreamland." She received her Master of Arts in Film and Video Production from the University of Memphis. Juli joined KHC for the summer as part of KU's Hall Center for the Humanities summer internship program.

GRANT PROJECTS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

GRAY STUDIOS GLASS PLATE NEGATIVES PROJECT, STAFFORD

The images in the Stafford County Historical Society's collection range from the expected – children in their Sunday best – to the unexpected – daughters of freed slaves and artfully composed studio portraits. These images, and the stories behind them, are a part of the *Gray Studios Glass Plate Negatives* project at the Stafford County Historical Society in Stafford. Heritage grant funds from the Kansas Humanities Council support this project to clean, preserve, and catalog the collection of historic glass plate negatives.

The glass plate negatives came from the W. R. Gray Studio

in St. John. The studio was in operation from 1905 through 1981. The historical society acquired the negatives from Gray's daughter Jessie in 1986. The negatives date between 1905 and 1947,



Stafford County Historical Society volunteers clean and catalog glass plate negatives.

Continued on page 5

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE GRAY STUDIOS GLASS PLATE NEGATIVES COLLECTION

Michael Hathaway selected a few of the standouts from the collection, but he admitted, “Trying to pick out favorites is almost torture. There are so many wonderful photos.”



Photo courtesy of the Stafford County Historical Society.

Walter Manderscheid, a.k.a. “Baby in the Bowl”
July, 1914

“In general, most everyone’s favorite seems to be the ‘Baby in the Bowl,’” said Hathaway. Walter Manderscheid was the third son of Edward J. and Jessie D. Manderscheid. Mrs. Manderscheid died in November 1914 and Walter was sent to live with an aunt in California and adopted the surname Miller.

Georgia Bozarth
September 5, 1914

Georgia Bozarth lived in Ohio Township in Stafford County with her husband. She would have been around 25 years old at the time of the photograph.

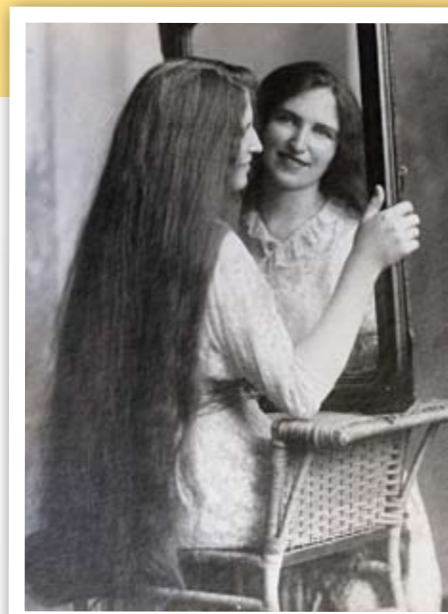


Photo courtesy of the Stafford County Historical Society.

P. F. Fox
November 6, 1915

Peter Franklin Fox was a Civil War veteran from Virginia who enlisted in the Confederate Army in 1863 and served until General Robert E. Lee’s surrender. He later came to Stafford County, where records show he served as the first treasurer for the Darling School and on the paint committee for Neelands Chapel.



Photo courtesy of the Stafford County Historical Society.

“Gray Studios” continued from page 4

and the historical society believes the 29,000-piece collection to be one of the largest specific to one geographic area.

Michael Hathaway, of the Stafford County Historical Society, noted that the project to catalog and store the negatives will preserve the “Images and personal history, as well as Kansas history, for scholars and genealogists.” Hathaway added that without support from the Heritage grant, the project would not have been possible. “KHC provides more than just vital financial support,” said Hathaway. “Without patient instruction from our Heritage Consultant, we simply would not have known where to start cleaning, preserving, and cataloging the negatives. KHC provided the exact support we needed, and for that, we will always be grateful.”

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RECENT GRANT AWARDS

The Kansas Humanities Council recently awarded grants to nine organizations.

Black Jack Battlefield Trust, Baldwin City (\$7,296)

Battle of Black Jack Traveling Exhibit

KTWU, Topeka (\$15,000)

Sunflower Journeys 2009 Television Series

National Foundation for Carnival Heritage, Kinsley (\$3,488)

Carnival Heritage Photograph Project

Phillips County Historical Society, Phillipsburg (\$3,500)

Making Sense of Our Heritage

Pioneer Bluffs, Matfield Green (\$9,963)

Return to PrairyErth Documentary

Smoky Hills Public Television, Bunker Hill (\$10,000)

Work Pays America Documentary

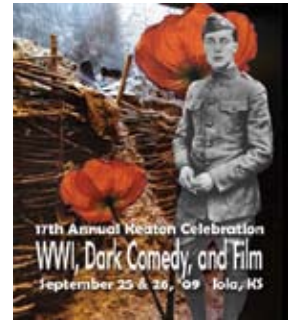
Stafford County Historical and Genealogical Society, Stafford (\$3,498)

Gray Studios Glass Plate Negatives Project

Bowlus Fine Arts & Cultural Center, Iola (\$8,500)

Buster Keaton and Company: World War I, Dark Comedy, and Film

The 17th Annual Buster Keaton Celebration, *Keaton and Company: World War I, Dark Comedy, and Film*, September 25 and 26, 2009 at the Bowlus Fine Arts Center in Iola. Visit www.bowluscenter.org or www.busterkeatoncelebration.org, or call 620/365-4765 for more details.



Sociedad Hidalgo, Shawnee (\$5,000)

Latin American Cinema Festival of Kansas City

The Latin American Cinema Festival, presented by Sociedad Hidalgo, September 5, 12, 19, 26, and October 3, at the Rio Theatre in Overland Park. Visit www.sociedadhidalgo.org or www.fineartsgroup.com for more details.



Photo by © Oscar Pedroza, 2007

COUNTDOWN TO KANSAS 150

Plans are underway for Kansas 150, the Statehood celebration in 2011. Beginning in Fall 2009 through Fall 2011, KHC Grants will support projects that prepare organizations for Statehood commemoration, use Statehood as the motivation for planning for the future, or

projects that are part of the Statehood activities. KHC's Fall Grant deadline is October 16, 2009. For more information and grant guidelines visit www.kansashumanities.org or contact Dan Carey-Whalen, Director of Programs, at dan@kansashumanities.org or 785/357-0359.

IN PRODUCTION

KANSANS TELL THEIR STORIES SHORT FILMS

Kansans Tell Their Stories Short Films tell a unique, local story from a community's point of view. Three documentary shorts are currently in production around the state and are funded by We the People, an initiative of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Local project directors from Baldwin City, Topeka, and Kingman report on the progress of their upcoming documentaries.

**Baker University, Baldwin City
Bauer, Baker, and Baldwin City: Electrifying a Small**

Town's Identity tells the story of W. C. Bauer, a Baker University professor who was instrumental in electrifying Baker University and Baldwin City in the early 1900s.

The project is going well. We interviewed eight people across a wide spectrum of community members – a utilities committee member, the granddaughter of a Baker professor who pre-electrified his home due to Bauer's influence – they



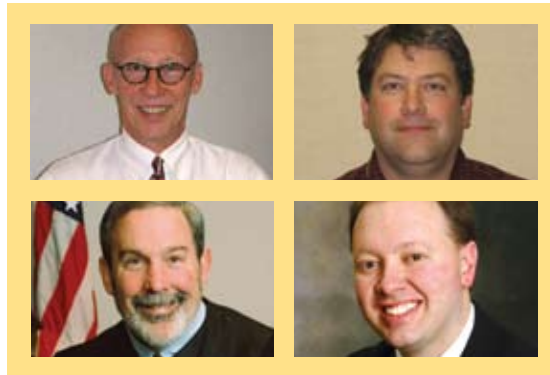
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KHC WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Leadership by a volunteer board guides the Kansas Humanities Council's work and anchors its mission in Kansas values and priorities. KHC is pleased to welcome four new members to its Board of Directors.

(clockwise from upper left)

Marc Galbraith, Topeka, is Kansas' Acting State Librarian.



Steven K. Kite, Hays, is an assistant professor of history at Fort Hays State University.

Aaron Otto, Roeland Park, is the Assistant State Treasurer.

Judge David Waxse, Johnson County, is a U.S. Magistrate Judge in Kansas City.

HIXSON NAMED CHAIR OF THE BOARD



Warren Hixson, Hutchinson, is the new Chair of the KHC Board of Directors. Hixson is a retired banker and real estate broker. He was on the Colby Community College Board of Trustees for 12 years and Mayor of Colby for almost 11 years. While Mayor of Colby, Warren served as

President of the Kansas League of Municipalities. He and his wife Sharon moved to Hutchinson in 2006 after more than 30 years in Colby to be closer to their granddaughter Morgan. He is currently serving on the 100 Year Celebration Committee for the League of Municipalities, the Kansas

Council on Intergovernmental Relations, The City of Hutchinson Landmarks Commission, and is a member of the Vestry of Grace Episcopal Church. He has a BS in accounting from Kansas State University. "I am pleased and honored to serve as Chairperson of the Kansas Humanities Council once again," said Hixson. "This is an exciting time for the Council as we continue implementing our new strategic plan to provide new ideas and programs to better serve the citizens of Kansas. It is fortunate that we have Julie, a great staff, and a forward thinking Council at this time in our history. We thank all of the people, businesses, and organizations that support us as Friends of the Humanities. It is very important to our mission for your continued support during these tough budget times."

"In Production" continued from page 6

still had some of the original fixtures. We also talked to a local historical society volunteer who remembers what it was like to live on a farm, pre-electricity (rural Baldwin electrified almost 35 years after the town). Our Humanities Consultant and Baker history professor's interview helped consolidate the story along with a tour of the original power plant. We went into the chemistry lab and set up a turn-of-the-twentieth-century chemistry experiment, along with kerosene lamps, to set the mood. The documentary will premiere on Friday, October 23 at 5 PM at The Lodge, 502 Ames Street in Baldwin City.

-Joanne Tolkoff, project director

recently interviewed Kliph Scurlock, member of the rock band "The Flaming Lips" and son of original Mariachi Estrella member Linda Scurlock, about the influence his mother, and the rest of the band, had on his passion for music.

-Marlo Angell, project director

Kingman County Historical Society, Kingman

The Clyde Cessna Story tells the story of aviation pioneer and Kingman County resident Clyde Cessna.



Hometown Collaborations shot footage for the film in Kingman and Rago.

There is a possibility of filming the flight of a replica of the "Silverwing," Cessna's first airplane. We have interviewed a former Cessna employee for the documentary and hope to interview Cessna's granddaughter.

-Prisca Krehbiel, project director



Justicia, Inc., Topeka
Mariachi Estrella: Ad Astra Per Aspera tells the story of Topeka's Mariachi Estrella, one of the first all-female mariachi bands in the United States.

We just filmed at Fiesta Mexicana in the Oakland community of Topeka and captured some beautiful images there. We

THANK YOU

The Kansas Humanities Council recognizes the following board members for their years of dedication, service, enthusiasm, and support. Thank you.

Christie P. Brandau
Maurice Bryan
David Rebein

The Kansas Humanities Council extends a special thank you to outgoing Board Chair **Randy Austin** for his years of leadership and guidance. Austin served on KHC's Board of Directors from 2002-2009, serving three years as Board Chair.



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