

Speakers  
Bureau



*Kansas Humanities Council*

# **Special Edition 2009**

**Abraham Lincoln**

**Journey Stories**

**Picturing America**

To book your Speakers Bureau, contact the speaker directly to confirm their availability, then fill out the [booking request form](#). (Clicking on “booking request form” will download a pdf file for you to print off-line.

For more information on booking a Speakers Bureau program and booking fees, please visit the Kansas Humanities Council’s [Speakers Bureau Catalog](#) or call Deborah Pomeroy at 785/357-0359.

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## Abraham Lincoln

*“If I went West, I think I would go to Kansas.” – Abraham Lincoln*

In December of 1859, Abraham Lincoln came to Kansas. In 2009, Kansas celebrates the Sesquicentennial of that visit, in addition to the Bicentennial of his birth. The Kansas Humanities Council provides the Abraham Lincoln Speakers Bureau to help your community celebrate these historical events and the life of the Sixteenth President of the United States.

### **John Brown’s Raid and the Election of Abraham Lincoln**

In 1859, after several violent years in Kansas, abolitionist John Brown and his followers raided the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry. The result? Brown’s capture, subsequent trial, and ultimate execution. How did John Brown shape the 1860 presidential election? This presentation explores how Abraham Lincoln was able to navigate a tricky course of political moderation to win his party’s nomination and, finally, the presidency. *Presented by: Jonathan Earle, professor of History at the University of Kansas and the Associate Director for Programming at the Dole Institute of Politics.*



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### **Strong-minded Women, Lincoln and the Civil War**

During the Civil War, women served as soldiers, spies, and nurses. Also, they ran farms, schools, and businesses. But what about politics? Why were Kansans, such as Clarina Nichols – abolitionist and women’s rights leader – initially critical of Lincoln? How did Lincoln relate to “strong-minded women” and their rights? This presentation discusses women’s political roles in the Civil War, including their relationship to President Lincoln. *Presented by: Diane Eickhoff, independent historian.*



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## The Great Emancipator?

On the issue of slavery, Abraham Lincoln compared himself to Charles Blondin, a high-wire artist who crossed Niagara Falls. Why did Lincoln feel he had to walk a political “tightrope” on the topic of slavery? Was Lincoln consistent over time in his views about slavery? This presentation explores Lincoln’s personal and political struggles with the institution of slavery and his legacy as the “Great Emancipator.” *Presented by: Fred Krebs, professor of Social Science and Humanities at Johnson County Community College.*



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## Lincoln’s Likeness in History and Memory

From the penny to Mount Rushmore, most Americans can easily recognize an image of Abraham Lincoln. Yet, most people are not aware that these images were manipulated, either to make Lincoln appear more folksy or presidential. Through photos of Lincoln during his life, as well as representations after his death, this presentation examines how his image continues to resonate with Americans today. Powerpoint. *Presented by: Brian Craig Miller, professor of History at Emporia State University.*



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## Lincoln, American Indians, and the Civil War

Alliances, exploitation, and planned executions. During the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln had to govern a country and its territories. Explore the politics of “Indian Affairs” during the Civil War. Discover how ambitious men, including Kansas Senator “Bloody Jim,” exploited the American Indian tribes for wealth and power. Lincoln promised to reform this corrupt system, but died before he could act on that pledge. *Presented by: David A. Nichols, former professor and academic dean at Southwestern College in Winfield.*



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### **Lincoln and His Place in History**

Contrary to what many of us think today, Abraham Lincoln faced stiff opposition in the North during the Civil War. This presentation discusses Lincoln's approach to those that disagreed with him. How did this define him as a leader? You might be surprised to find out how one of America's greatest presidents was so close to being considered a failure. *Presented by: Jennifer L. Weber, professor of History at the University of Kansas and advisory panelist for the national Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission.*



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### **Lincoln in Kansas**

During five cold days in December 1859, Abraham Lincoln stopped in several Kansas towns canvassing for support for his Presidential run. Later he commented, "If I went West, I think I would go to Kansas." This presentation will explore the importance of Kansas to Lincoln (and the nation) and will highlight Lincoln's unwavering beliefs in the preservation of the Union and the containment of slavery. *Presented by: William S. Worley, adjunct professor at the University of Missouri-Kansas City.*

### **Lincoln the Storyteller**

Not only was Abraham Lincoln a remarkable and memorable President, his peers reveal he was also quite a storyteller. In this presentation find out about the humorous side of Lincoln through firsthand accounts and discover his ability to resolve most crises by his creative use of homespun wisdom. *Presented by: William S. Worley, adjunct professor at the University of Missouri-Kansas City.*



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*“Journey stories – tales of how we and our ancestors came to America [and to Kansas] – are a central element of our personal heritage.” -- Journey Stories exhibit*

In conjunction with the Smithsonian Institution’s traveling exhibition, *Journey Stories*, the Kansas Humanities Council offers a Speakers Bureau exploring the stories of the transportation innovations and the migrations and immigrations that shaped Kansas. From Native American migrations in and out of our state, to Southeast Asian immigrant groups and African Americans making the Sunflower state their home; these presentations explore themes of arduous journeys, difficult, yet exciting transitions, and the idea of making Kansas a home.

### **Vietnamese Pioneers in the Heartland**

Imagine a family immigrating to southwest Kansas. They are family-oriented, hard working, and determined to survive. It’s a familiar story, but includes unexpected details. The date is 1975, Saigon has fallen, and Vietnamese refugees are pouring into the United States, including Kansas. This presentation focuses on Vietnamese immigration to Garden City, their story of survival, and the tough decisions to stay or leave. Slides. *Presented by: Janet Benson, associate professor of Anthropology in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work at Kansas State University.*



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### **Trabajando en el Ferro Carril (Working on the Railroad)**

The history of American railroad building is a history of immigration. In Kansas, much of this story is connected to Mexican migration. This presentation provides a brief history of the development of railroads in Kansas and the role of Mexican workers. Furthermore, the expansion of the “Iron Horse” led to the creation of Mexican American communities, including Garden City, Kansas City, Kansas, and Topeka. *Presented by: Gene T. Chávez, independent scholar and president of Chávez & Associates.*



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### **Women, Freedom, and Equal Rights in Kansas**

In 1854, the Kansas-Nebraska Act opened Kansas Territory to white settlement, allowing settlers to pour in from both the North and South. Many, like Clarina Nichols and Miriam Davis Colt, came in antislavery groups called emigrant aid societies. Supported by art and poetry from the period, this presentation traces their journeys, highlighting Nichols's fight for women's rights and Colt's attempt to establish a vegetarian settlement in Kansas. *Presented by: Diane Eickhoff, independent historian.*



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### **Kansans Remember World War II**

World War II altered many lives, sending a generation of men and women across the state and overseas. The stories of nurses, pilots, chaplains, welders, and musicians provide a window into Kansans' journeys to pacifist communities, factories, hospitals, and military service. This presentation focuses on oral histories of 1940s-era Kansans, as well as the journeys of present-day students who collected these stories. Powerpoint. *Presented by: Rachel Waltner Goossen, associate professor of History at Washburn University.*



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### **The Pawnee Tribe Today**

In the early 1800s the Pawnee tribe dominated north central Kansas and Nebraska. After years of conflict, they were forced to leave the earth lodges of their homeland to be relocated in Oklahoma. This presentation ties this past with the modern Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma, exploring the symbolism of the Pawnee flag, the political structures of the four bands of Pawnee, and ongoing economic development for the Nation. *Presented by: Chris Howell, Chief Operating Officer/ Deputy Director for the Kansas Arts Commission and a member of the Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma.*



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## **My Kaw Ancestors**

In 1601, Spanish explorers first recorded contact with the Kanza, or Kaw, Indians in what is now Kansas. For nearly 300 years, the Kaw created a way-of-life dependent on the land. All of this changed in 1873. As the United States continued its western expansion, the Kaw were removed to Indian Territory (Oklahoma). Through personal history, images, and displays, learn the story of the Kaw's migration into and out of the state that honors their name. *Presented by: Erin Pouppirt, independent scholar and a member of the Kaw Nation.*



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## **How Kansas Women Fought Jim Crow and Won**

Although Jim Crow was illegal in Kansas, local laws ensured its survival into the early twentieth century. To fight back, middle-class black women joined organizations such as the Kansas Association of Colored Women's Clubs. Between 1890 and 1930, these clubs fought racial inequality, yet also promoted Christian values, temperance, homemaking, and education. This presentation examines the role of women's clubs in the development of African American communities in Kansas. *Presented by: Doretha Williams, recipient of the Mellon Mays University Fellows Dissertation Grant from the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation for 2008-2009.*

## **Kansas and the Great Migration**

By the early 1900s, many African Americans living in the rural south began looking elsewhere for a place to call home. Northern cities saw their populations explode as blacks sought better jobs, better schools, and racial tolerance, if not equality. Not all chose to move north. For some, Kansas was as likely a destination as Chicago. Using oral histories, family photos, and memorabilia, this presentation examines one family's journey to Topeka as part of the nation's Great Migration. *Presented by: Doretha Williams, recipient of the Mellon Mays University Fellows Dissertation Grant from the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation for 2008-2009.*



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## Railroads in Kansas

It is hard to imagine Kansas without railroads. They are a presence across our landscape. Many communities started because of railroads like the Kansas (Union) Pacific, the KATY, and the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe. This presentation tells the stories of the rail giants, the town boosters, the passengers, the workers, and the freight that shaped Kansas' past and continues to shape our future. *Presented by: William S. Worley, adjunct professor at the University of Missouri-Kansas City.*



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## Additional Speakers Bureau programs with the *Journey Stories* theme (These programs are also found in the [Speakers Bureau Catalog](#))

### Indian Trails: Hidden Highways of the Prairies

Indian trails crisscrossed Kansas long before explorers, trappers, and traders followed these routes across the prairie. This program examines these early trails, plus the forts, trading posts and battles occurring along these trails adding another chapter to the history of Kansas' first transportation network. Slides. *Presented by: Donald J. Blakeslee, Professor of Anthropology at Wichita State University.*



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### Harvey Girls: It All Started in Topeka

Preferring the term Harvey Girl to waitress, Fred Harvey recruited single women to work at Harvey Houses along the Santa Fe Railroad line from Kansas to California. Between the 1880s and the 1950s, more than 100,000 women, many Kansans, proudly wore the black-and-white uniform of the Harvey Company. Find out more about these adventuresome young women. Slides and handouts. *Presented by: Michaeline Chance-Reay, an author, historian, and Assistant Professor of Secondary Education at Kansas State University.*



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Travel: 4 hours from Manhattan

### **Orphan Trains in Kansas**

The “orphan trains” brought poor children from the eastern cities to rural Kansas from 1867 until the 1920s. Firsthand accounts of orphan train riders challenge our picture of childhood in the “good old days.” *Presented by: Marilyn J. Holt, an independent historian who consults on Kansas history.*



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### **The German Heritage of Kansas**

More than a third of Kansas residents are of German ancestry. This talk explores the major German immigrant groups and their impact on Kansas agriculture, education, and Midwestern culture. *Presented by: William D. Keel, Professor and Chair of the Germanic Languages and Literature Department at the University of Kansas.*



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### **World’s Largest Things: Roadside Attractions**

We’ve all seen them. Right here in Kansas we have the World’s Largest Ball of Twine and the World’s Largest Electric Shovel, to name just a few. This program examines Roadside Vernacular Iconic Architecture, or World’s Largest Things. How did the travel culture of the 1950s play a part in its development? Slides or PowerPoint presentation and an Art Car. *Presented by: Erika Nelson, independent artist and educator, and director of World’s Largest Things, Inc.*



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### **Reading Roadside Kansas**

Motels, billboards, and humble gas stations along the highway reflect the fads and fashions of bygone days. Take a road tour of the Sunflower State and discover how to read history through your windshield. Slides. *Presented by: Jay M. Price, Associate Professor of History and Director of the Public History program at Wichita State University.*



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### **Plucky & Purty: Women on the Santa Fe Trail**

On the long trek to Santa Fe, women travelers had to be prepared for startling encounters with other cultures, the challenges of harsh terrain and violent weather, including heat, dust, and boredom. *Presented by: Sara Jane Richter, Professor of English at Oklahoma Panhandle State University.*



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# Picturing America

*"Great art speaks powerfully, inspires fresh thinking, and connects us to our past."*

---Picturing America, <http://picturingamerica.neh.gov/>.

In conjunction with the National Endowment for Humanities initiative, Picturing America, the Kansas Humanities Council offers a Speakers Bureau exploring the art and artists that shaped, and were shaped by, Kansas. From the famous, to the "outsiders," these presentations explore our rich artistic heritage and timeless Kansas themes, such as our relationship with the land and the impact of individuals and groups of people on society.

**For a limited time: All Picturing America Speakers Bureau programs are offered free-of-charge to Kansas community organizations.**

## **Picturing the Dust Bowl**

Large and looming black clouds hovering above a Kansas farm produce a classic image of the Dust Bowl. What are others? This presentation uses paintings, photographs, and prints of the Dust Bowl as a way to explore early 20th century American attitudes toward nature and the environment, but also provide clues about the changing expectations for the future. Powerpoint. *Presented by: Kate Meyer, Curatorial Assistant in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the Spencer Museum of Art at the University of Kansas.*



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## **Birger Sandzén and the New Land**

When Swedish born Birger Sandzén moved to Lindsborg, Kansas in 1894, his painting style gradually changed from one with a Swedish Romantic influence to one using bold colors and expressive brushwork. This presentation discusses Sandzén's enormous contributions to arts and culture in Kansas and examines the development of his art, focusing on the influence of the regional landscape, particularly in Central and Western Kansas. Powerpoint. *Presented by: Ron Michael, curator of the Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery in Lindsborg, Kansas.*



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### **A Look Inside Outsider Art in Kansas**

Who were S.P. Dinsmoor and “Grandma” Layton? This presentation examines the abundance of art created by untrained artist (known as “Outsider Art”) produced in Kansas. Find out how the often-unexpected work of these grassroots artists reflects the creative, cultural, and political landscapes of our state. Slides or Powerpoint. *Presented by: Erika Nelson, independent artist and educator, and director of World’s Largest Things, Inc.*



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### **The Rise of Aaron Douglas, the Dean of Black American Painters**

Graduating in 1917 from Topeka High, Aaron Douglas quickly became a significant player in the Harlem Renaissance. How did Douglas’s Kansas roots influence his commitment to painting “everyday people” and depicting ideals such as hope and opportunity? This presentation examines Douglas’s Midwest roots, the highlights from his Harlem days, and his lasting contributions as a leader, a teacher, and an artist. Powerpoint. *Presented by: Cheryl Ragar, assistant professor in American Ethnic Studies at Kansas State University.*



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### **Women’s Clubs and the Fine Arts in Kansas**

Between the 1920s and the 1960s, the Kansas Federation of Women’s Clubs conducted many programs to promote the visual arts as a “civilizing” force in Kansas society. This presentation explains how women’s clubs had a significant impact on art appreciation, art collecting, and amateur artistic activity, helping to create a dynamic artistic culture in Kansas in the twentieth century. Powerpoint. *Presented by: William Tsutsui, professor of History and associate dean for International Studies at the University of Kansas.*

### **Exploring the Rich Heritage of Kansas Art**

Kansas boasts a long, vibrant, and diverse history of art, filled with debates, contestations, and drama. This presentation explores the big names (Sandzén and Curry to name a few) and the lesser-known artists of Kansas’ visual art community. Powerpoint. *Presented by: William Tsutsui, professor of History and associate dean for International Studies at the University of Kansas.*



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