



Exploring History. Exchanging Ideas. Building Community.

Lincoln at 200: Commemorating the Lincoln Bicentennial

*This year Americans observe the 200th birthday of Abraham Lincoln and Kansans mark the 150th anniversary of Lincoln's first – and only – visit to Kansas. What does Lincoln mean to Americans today? **Jonathan Earle**, a professor of History at the University of Kansas and the Associate Director for Programming at the Dole Institute of Politics, examines Lincoln's legacy 200 years after his birth.*

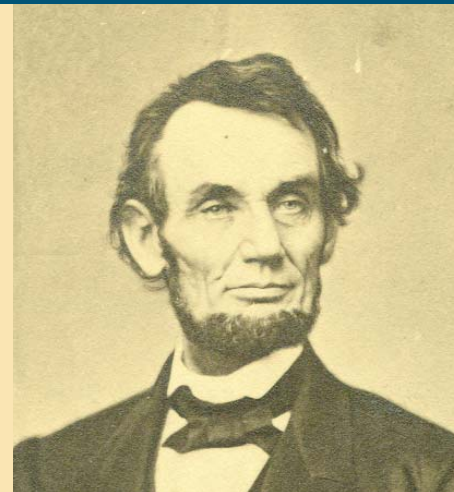


Photo credit: Kansas State Historical Society

Lincoln in the 21st Century by Jonathan Earle



Jonathan Earle

Each year brings us piles of new books, days worth of television documentaries, and scores upon scores of magazine articles on Abraham Lincoln. Is there really more to say, hear, and learn about our 16th president? Can a person born 200 years ago still have relevance for our country in the 21st century? The short answer is: absolutely.

Two centuries after Lincoln's inauspicious birth in Kentucky, we continue to learn from our greatest president. Some parts of our modern republic would be unrecognizable to the 19th century politician, but many of the challenges he faced remain at the top of our national agenda. How will the nation confront racial divides and assure equal rights for all? How can we assure that the brave men and women in uniform who have been wounded or killed haven't sacrificed in vain? How can we set aside competing values, interests, ideologies, and beliefs and find unity in our diversity?

As a young man, Lincoln famously feared his achievements in life would amount to little that would be remembered after his time. But his emergence as a leader of the new Republican Party, his guidance of the Union war effort during the Civil War, his plans for reconciliation after the war was over, and, above all, his determination to make the war one for freedom and opportunity continue to make him one of the most revered Americans. When he signed the Emancipation Proclamation in January, 1863 Lincoln said, "I never, in my life, felt more certain that I was doing right, than I do in signing this paper." The proclamation, of course, made the abolition of slavery in the rebelling states an official war goal. This legacy remains central in our nation's collective mission to expand freedom, equality, and opportunity.

Lincoln's legacy encompasses far more than the mountains, highways, high schools, towns, and counties that bear his name. Citizens of our 21st century republic still have much to learn from the unlikely prairie lawyer who became our greatest president.

Abraham Lincoln Speakers Bureau

Kansas communities can participate in the Lincoln Bicentennial with a program from the **Abraham Lincoln Speakers Bureau**. Nine topics offer perspectives on Lincoln's life, presidency, and legacy. For a complete list of programs, booking information, and fees visit www.kansashumanities.com or contact Deborah Pomeroy at 785-357-0359 or deborah@kansashumanities.com.

- ***John Brown's Raid and the Election of Abraham Lincoln***
Jonathan Earle, professor of History at the University of Kansas and the Associate Director for Programming at the Dole Institute of Politics
- ***Strong-minded Women, Lincoln and the Civil War***
Diane Eickhoff, independent historian
- ***The Great Emancipator?***
Fred Krebs, professor of Social Science and Humanities at Johnson County Community College
- ***Lincoln's Likeness in History and Memory***
Brian Craig Miller, professor of History at Emporia State University
- ***Lincoln, American Indians, and the Civil War***
David A. Nichols, former professor and academic dean at Southwestern College in Winfield
- ***Lincoln the Lawyer***
David Rebein, a partner in the firm of Rebein Bangerter, Dodge City
- ***Lincoln and His Place in History***
Jennifer L. Weber, professor of History at the University of Kansas and advisory panel for the national Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission
- ***Lincoln in Kansas***
William S. Worley, adjunct professor at the University of Missouri-Kansas City
- ***Lincoln the Storyteller***
William S. Worley, adjunct professor at the University of Missouri-Kansas City

Kansans Tell Their Stories Documentary Shorts

Kansans Tell Their Stories Documentary Shorts showcase a local, unique, one-of-a-kind story told from the community's perspective. In November 2008, Lansing and Lucas premiered their short films and hosted panel discussions with the local audience. **Steven Kite** of Fort Hays State University, **Laura Phillippi** of the Lansing Historical Museum, and **Erika Nelson** of The Amazing 100 Mile Tourism Coalition reflect on the filmmaking process, the premieres, and their future plans for their documentaries.

Local History and the Power of Place

By Steven Kite

In November 2008 I sat with others in the Lucas Area Community Theater watching two historical documentaries, one focusing on the Lansing Correctional Facility and the city of Lansing, and the other on the history and culture of the Kansas Post Rock region. As I watched these films I could not help but share in the excitement and pride of the audience as their history moved across the screen. These people were not just watching *any* history but a story involving *their* history, the history of *their* place in the world. This fact struck me as being, among other things, very un-American.

From the earliest days of the United States to the present time visitors to this country have remarked on the fact that Americans do not hold much respect for, or interest in, their past and their history. According to some, people in this country suffer from a lack of a sense of place or, in other words, a sense of placelessness. Americans, so the theory goes, have

always been on the move, advancing from one frontier to the next. Convinced that mobility equals opportunity, Americans have never settled in one place for very long before moving on to the next town, state, or territory. As a result of this tendency towards mobility Americans constantly seem in danger of losing, forgetting, or misplacing their history.

Projects such as the documentary shorts are essential in helping to reverse the instances of placelessness in America; they allow all of us a glimpse into the history, heritage, and traditions that make us who we are today. Through these documentaries the Kansas Humanities Council is helping Kansans to reclaim, remember, and appreciate their role in the history of our state and country.

Steven Kite is an assistant professor of History at Fort Hays State University.

The Kansas State Penitentiary: An Institution and a Neighbor

By Laura Phillippi

When most people hear the word “prison” they think of negative things. When I took my job at the Lansing Historical Museum, located on the grounds of the Lansing Correctional Facility (LCF), I was leery of working on prison property. As I interacted with the prison, I learned of the prison’s history and its positive influence on the community. This unique story needed to be shared with the public. I submitted a successful grant application to the Kansas Humanities Council to create a documentary short to illustrate the symbiotic relationship between the prison and the community.

After months of work, the city of Lansing premiered the documentary November 12, 2008 at the Lansing High School. Approximately 100 people attended the premiere and panel discussion. The audience had an opportunity to ask the panelists questions about the

prison and the project. Panel member Kyle Deere, LCF Deputy Warden and third generation LCF employee, received several questions from the audience regarding insights into the prison that no one else in the community could provide.



Panel discussions followed the premieres in Lansing and Lucas.

We received numerous compliments from the audience, including a congratulatory email from a patron who, prior to the documentary, had not been interested in local prison history. This documentary has made it possible to erase some of the public’s misconceptions

about the prison. The documentary is posted on the city of Lansing’s website www.lansing.ks.us, and has aired on the local government access channel. The documentary will be shown at upcoming events and in the future Kansas Regional Prisons Museum.

Laura Phillippi is the site supervisor of the Lansing Historical Museum.

A Drive Through History Along the Post Rock Scenic Byway

by Erika Nelson

The documentary short produced for the Lucas/Wilson area, *A Drive Through History Along the Post Rock Scenic Byway* will be a valuable tool in explaining some of the unique features of this area. The early Czechoslovakian settlers discovered a workable stone layer out here, just below the surface of the treeless plains. It ended up being an important part of the cultural geography, coming from the land itself, then being shaped into civic, residential, farm, and church structures. The material is native to the area, and the immigrant settlers shaped it into a unique regional feature.

The story itself is hard to tell without visual references - to the land, to the stone, and to the results of this discovery. The documentary helps us tell this story in both a verbal and visual way, and ties it back to the region. Our communities will use this piece as a storytelling tool. It will be made available to all regional tourism and history entities, Chambers of Commerce, educational and library facilities, as an introduction to this important part of our heritage.

The documentary premiered at the Lucas Area Community Theater, attended by interested residents,

Kansas Humanities Council representatives, and interested entities. Many attendees appreciated the documentary for giving voice to an often-overlooked story. The following day, it was shown again to regional planners involved in the Post Rock Scenic Byway, who also saw the educational and informational potential of the piece.

Other plans for distribution and dissemination include posting an optimized version on host communities’ websites, regional and national websites, and broadcast versions to be shown on public television, and sent out to productions that focus on regional and rural stories. We will also be using the production as support material for future grant applications that will enhance the involved rural communities, illustrating the unique heritage component as seen along the Post Rock Scenic Byway.

Erika Nelson is an independent artist and educator, and director of World’s Largest Things, Inc.

Both documentary shorts can be viewed on the Kansas Humanities Council website:
www.kansashumanities.org.

Kansans Tell Their Stories Grants Awarded

The Kansas Humanities Council recently awarded \$79,648 in *Kansans Tell Their Stories* grants to eleven organizations. The grants offer Kansans and Kansas communities an opportunity to tell their unique story through documentary shorts, podcast series, public forums, museum exhibitions, and oral history projects. The *Kansans Tell Their Stories* grants are made possible by We the People, a grant initiative of the National Endowment for the Humanities.



Topeka's Mariachi Estrella and aviation pioneer Clyde Cessna will be subjects of 2009 *Kansans Tell Their Stories* Documentary Shorts.

Baker University, Baldwin City (\$13,514)

Bauer, Baker, and Baldwin City: Electrifying a Small Town's Identity
A documentary short that 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. Joanne Tolkoff, project director.

Hodgeman County Historical Society, Jetmore (\$3,168)

World War II Impacts Hodgeman County
An oral history project exploring the impact of World War II on the families and individuals of Hodgeman County. Mary Ford, project director.

Justicia, Inc., Topeka (\$14,792)

Mariachi Estrella: Ad Astra Per Aspera
A documentary short featuring the story of Mariachi Estrella de Topeka, one of the first all female mariachi bands to form in the United States. Marlo Angell, project director.

Kingman County Historical Society, Kingman (\$14,963)

The Clyde Cessna Story
A documentary short featuring the story of Clyde Cessna, aviation pioneer and Kingman County resident. Prisca Krehbiel, project director.

Kinsley Public Library, Kinsley (\$3,248)

Patchwork of Dependency: The Effects of World War II on Edwards County, Kansas
An oral history project exploring World War II's impact on the citizens of Edwards County. Joan K. Weaver, project director.

La Cygne Historical Society, La Cygne (\$3,500)

Visiting La Cygne's Past – Relating to the Present — Connecting to the Future!
A series of twelve podcasts highlighting individuals who have played a major role in the development of La Cygne. Janet Reynolds, project director.

Leavenworth County Historical Society, Leavenworth (\$1,129)

Eight Elements of Leavenworth County
A series of eight podcasts featuring the architecture, art, commerce, cuisine, customs, geography, history, and people of Leavenworth County. Joanie Soukup, project director.

Lenexa Historical Society, Lenexa (\$3,500)

Lenexans Tell Their Stories
An oral history project featuring interviews of fifteen Lenexa residents who have contributed to Lenexa's early growth. Terry Clark, project director.

McCormick School Museum, Inc., Wichita (\$3,500)

Separate is Not Equal: Research on Wichita Public Schools
A project to research the public education experience of African American students from 1873-1958. Galyn A. Vesey, project director.

Peabody Historical Society, Peabody (\$3,500)

Women in Peabody's History
An oral history project to collect and preserve the stories of women with leadership roles in the community. Marilyn Jones, project director.

Seneca Downtown Impact, Seneca (\$14,834)

Seneca's "Historical Tour" Kiosk and Podcast
A project to create an informational kiosk and a series of podcasts telling the history of Seneca. Linda Honeyman, project director.



Picturing America Free Programs on Kansas Art and Artists

Picturing America is a National Endowment for the Humanities initiative designed to connect Americans to their history through great works of American art. In conjunction with Picturing America, KHC is offering six programs highlighting Kansas art and artists. The programs are available to non-profit organizations in Kansas communities.

“The Speakers Bureau programs introduce historical themes through the work of artists who shaped, and were shaped by, Kansas,” said Julie Mulvihill, executive director. “Using art to explore history is a fresh and engaging way for Kansans to explore their heritage.”

Programs offered in the Picturing America Speakers Bureau include:

- ***Picturing the Dust Bowl***
Kate Meyer, curatorial assistant in the Department of Prints and Drawings at the Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas
- ***Birger Sandzen and the New Land***
Ron Michael, Birger Sandzen Memorial Gallery
- ***A Look Inside Outsider Art in Kansas***
Erika Nelson, independent artist and director of World’s Largest Things, Inc.
- ***The Rise of Aaron Douglas, the Dean of Black American Painters***
Cheryl Ragar, assistant professor in American Ethnic Studies at Kansas State University
- ***Women’s Clubs and the Fine Arts in Kansas***
William Tsutsui, professor of history and associate dean for International Studies at the University of Kansas
- ***Exploring the Rich Heritage of Kansas Arts***
William Tsutsui, professor of history and associate dean for International Studies at the University of Kansas

For a complete list of programs and booking information visit www.kansashumanities.com or contact Deborah Pomeroy at 785-357-0359 or deborah@kansashumanities.com.



Swedish-born Kansas artist Birger Sandzen. *Kansas State Historical Society.*



The *Tragic Prelude* mural in the Kansas State Capitol by Kansas artist John Steuart Curry. *Kansas State Historical Society.*

An Invitation to the Kansas City Chinese Film Festival

Families in Modern China: An Exploration of What Makes a Family in Changing China is the theme of the **2009 Kansas City Chinese Film Festival** presented by the Confucius Institute at the University of Kansas. The film festival provides a venue for English-and Mandarin-speakers to explore the cultural and social issues raised on the screen through post-film bi-lingual discussions.

The films to be screened and discussed are:

February 28 *Warm Spring (Nuan chun)*, 2003, directed by Wulan Tana.

Family roles and responsibilities are questioned when an elderly father welcomes a foster child into his home despite the adamant disapproval of his son and daughter-in-law.

March 7 *You and Me (Wo men lia)*, 2005, directed by Liwen Ma. A moving story of an unlikely bond that develops between a cantankerous old woman and her feisty young tenant.

March 14 *Still Life (Sanxia haoren)*, 2006, directed by Zhang Ke Jia. Drama about families affected by the Three Gorges Dam project.



March 21 *Together with You (He Ni Zai Yi Qi)*, 2002, directed by Kaige Chen. Xiaochun and his father face challenges when they leave their provincial town and begin life in Beijing. As father and son, they struggle to succeed in this new environment as they confront the fragility of their small family unit and, finally, re-strengthen the family bond.

March 28 *The Post-Modern Life of My Aunt (Yi ma de houxian dai sheng huo)*, 2006, directed by Ann Hui. Generational differences are explored as an aging single woman living in Shanghai attempts to maintain a sophisticated lifestyle, with family at a distance, until circumstances compel her to reconnect with her family.

All screenings will take place at the Rio Theater in Overland Park. Films begin at 10 AM. For more details, visit www.confucius.ku.edu or call 913-897-8613.

KHC Seeks Board Members

Leadership by a volunteer Board of Directors guides the work of the Kansas Humanities Council and anchors its mission in Kansas values and priorities.

KHC is currently seeking nominations of Kansans for service. The deadline for applications and nominations is March 27, 2009. Members of the KHC Board of Directors:

- Play a central role in helping raise public and private funds.
- Support the annual fundraising campaign.
- Engage in advocacy work on the national and state level.
- Serve on standing committees.
- Attend board meetings 3 times each year (locations vary).
- Oversee and attend KHC-conducted programs and special projects.
- Review grant proposals.

“It is rewarding to be part of a congenial board, composed of individuals with diverse talents and



Photo courtesy of Jay Price.

expertise,” said Shannon Gackstatter, Chair of the Membership Committee. For more information, or to nominate a candidate or yourself, contact KHC Executive Director Julie Mulvihill at julie@kansashumanities.org, call 785-357-0359, or visit www.kansashumanities.org for more information.

Planning Team Offers Recommendations

In 2008, the Kansas Humanities Council engaged in Strategic Planning at the request of the Board of Directors. The planning committee included Randy Austin, Chair of the KHC Board of Directors; Sharon Hixson, former Chair; Kim Stanley, Program Committee Chair; Bill Tsutsui, former Program Committee Chair; Shari Wilson, Advocacy Committee Chair; and Brian Crockett, Consultant.

According to Kim Stanley, Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee and professor of English at McPherson College, "[During the process] we looked at who we have been, who we are, and who we want to be." After a year of meetings, data collection, number crunching, focus groups, brainstorming, planning, and decision-making, the group submitted a 3-year plan to the Board of Directors for approval. Much of the committee's work involved recognizing the strengths of the Council and recommitting to the ideas, programs,

and principles that guide its work. Ultimately the plan incorporated the implementation of several new program ideas, the continuation of several signature KHC programs, and recommended the retirement of others. For the first year — 2009— KHC will:

- Introduce **FLIKS**, a film discussion program.
- Continue **Museum on Main Street**, the traveling Smithsonian exhibition program.
- Update the **Speakers Bureau** catalog, and include new offerings and new directions.
- Continue **Grants**.
- Refresh communication tools, such as the website and publications.
- Retire **History Alive** and **Prime Time Family Reading Time**.

The Strategic Plan was approved unanimously by the full Board of Directors at the October 17 board meeting.

A Strategic Planning Summary

Who We Are

The Kansas Humanities Council is a statewide nonprofit organization that provides resources to communities in support of cultural programs in hometowns across Kansas.

Our Mission

KHC promotes understanding of the history, traditions, and ideas that shape our lives and strengthen our communities.

Meeting Our Mission

KHC supports both ready-made and community-created public humanities events. These include, but are not limited to, book and film discussion programs, Speaker presentations, traveling Smithsonian exhibitions, community conversations on contemporary topics, and grants.

Our Target Audiences

KHC primarily works with partner organizations that provide public events to their community. Partners typically include museums, historical societies, public libraries, senior centers, art centers, and civic organizations.

How We See Our Organization

KHC programs are humanities-driven, relevant, participatory, inclusive of diverse perspectives, and fun.

Desired Results

KHC programs result in citizen discussions and individual reflection on relevant historical and contemporary topics.

Commitment to Kansas

KHC is dedicated to providing quality cultural programs in Kansas. Creating and maintaining strong programming requires persistent, and consistent, action on the part of KHC. We believe that taking ideas to implementation requires access to resources, financial and otherwise.

Philosophy

KHC believes in the importance of shared participation between humanities professionals and the public. Humanities professionals offer current scholarship and interpretation to the public for its reaction. In return, the public brings forward fresh perspectives, personal insights, and understanding on the topic.

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