

# MISSOURI TIMES

The State Historical Society of Missouri

February 2018 Vol. 13, No. 4



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Gary Kremer, State Historical Society of Missouri executive director, addresses guests at the Bicentennial Alliance signing event on January 8 at the Governor's Mansion. Kremer's remarks followed a welcome from Missouri First Lady Dr. Sheena Greitens, standing at right.

## Bicentennial Alliance Launches Statewide Projects at Governor's Mansion

The Bicentennial Alliance, a coalition of statewide organizations and government agencies, celebrated its official launch at the Governor's Mansion in Jefferson City on January 8. The alliance, which will foster collaboration and cooperative efforts to commemorate Missouri's bicentennial in 2021, emerged out of the State Historical Society of Missouri's work with other institutions through the Missouri 2021 initiative.

Other partners participating in the Bicentennial Alliance include the Kinder Institute on Constitutional Democracy at the University of Missouri, the Missouri Council for History Education, the St. Louis-based Missouri Historical Society (formerly the Missouri History Museum), the Missouri Humanities Council, and the Missouri State Archives.

At the January 8 event, Missouri First Lady Dr. Sheena Greitens noted that the bicentennial marks a significant historical milestone beckoning Missourians to reflect upon their heritage.

"We are really excited for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to celebrate Missouri's history and culture, and to make that history and culture accessible to people all over the state," Greitens said. "Eric [Governor Greitens] and I look forward to celebrating with you and to partnering with you on this important work."

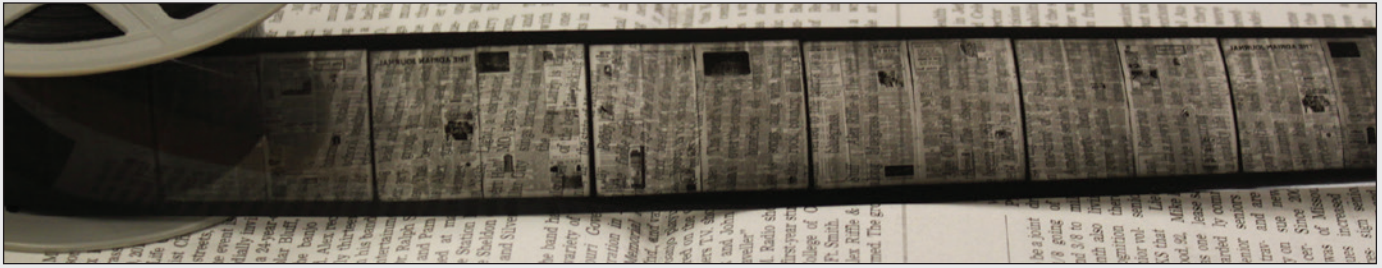
Gary Kremer, SHSMO's executive director, said the bicentennial provides an opportunity for exploring and promoting the intricate history and

wide range of cultures found among Missouri's local communities.

"One of the things that intrigues me most about Missouri is its diversity," Kremer said. "We Missourians embody and exemplify the complexity and diversity of this great nation; these are attributes meant to be celebrated."

The State Historical Society of Missouri plans to launch a series of programs and projects designed to explore the history of the state and its people through Missouri 2021. Initial Society bicentennial projects include:

- **Missouri Encyclopedia** ([MissouriEncyclopedia.org](http://MissouriEncyclopedia.org)) – a comprehensive online encyclopedia providing general audiences with authoritative information on the history and culture of Missouri
  - **Endorsement Program** – a media partnership between SHSMO and local organizations creating bicentennial activities
  - **My Missouri 2021** – a project inviting professional and amateur photographers to capture and share distinctive images of Missouri
  - **Missouri Community Legacies** – a program providing opportunities to document local traditions and creative expressions, meaningful places, and organizations and institutions of significance to communities around the state
- Learn more about the Bicentennial Alliance and planned projects by visiting [Missouri2021.org](http://Missouri2021.org) or finding us on Facebook @Missouri2021.



## Letter from the State Historical Society of Missouri President

I have just spent a day reading newspapers from the 1880s. More than 30 times last year, and more than a half-dozen times already this year, I have driven from my home in Jefferson City to the research center in Columbia to dive into the Society's massive microfilmed newspaper collection as I try to get the details right for my next book. Every time I bring the pages up on the screen, I discover something exciting, even if it's not on my topic.

Our State Historical Society has—hold onto your hat—more than 54 MILLION pages of newspapers on microfilm, dating back to Missouri's first newspaper in 1808. Whether you are a serious history scholar, just looking for an account of your own exploits, or tracking down even a brief

mention of a shadowy ancestor, you can probably find it in the newspaper collection.

And you don't have to drive to Columbia to do it. Our microfilmed newspapers can be delivered to any of the research centers across the state. Or they can come to wherever you are through an interlibrary loan ([shsmo.org/research/ill](http://shsmo.org/research/ill)).

What we don't see when we unspool those reels of microfilm into the readers are the piles of newspapers that SHSMO has not been able to film. The State Historical Society gets dozens more newspapers every day, and putting them all on microfilm is one of its greatest challenges. It is a costly process, but an essential one, even in our digital age, for reliable permanent preservation of newspaper content.

You can keep the old times rolling, so to speak. The company that has done the Society's microfilming has doubled its rates, which will eat up a lot of the \$150,000 annual microfilming budget. We are working to find a new partner, but even if we do, the costs will be higher. So I am turning to you, our members and supporters, to keep this vital program going strong. The history it preserves might be your own.

**Here's what I'd like you to do: Please squeeze \$100** out of your personal budget, if you can, and send it to the Society for newspaper microfilm work. If it's less painful to do it in four \$25 increments, that's fine. I've done it. Please join me.

Think of it as a gift to your descendants a century from now who might want



Bob Priddy, SHSMO president

to discover *you*. For your convenience, a return envelope is included with this issue, making it as easy as possible to donate.

You can also make a gift online at [shsmo.org/support](http://shsmo.org/support). Please pardon a terrible pun, but your donation could make you a REEL supporter of our State Historical Society of Missouri.

**Bob Priddy**  
President, Board of Trustees

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### MISSOURI TIMES

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## New Research Center Hours

On March 1 the State Historical Society will implement new hours for reference services in Columbia, Kansas City, Rolla, and St. Louis. These four research centers will be open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Tuesday through Friday. In Columbia, reference services will also be available from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday.

This change provides the centers with half an hour for opening and closing procedures, ensuring that SHSMO staff members are prepared to assist patrons in the morning and that collections are secured each evening.

The Cape Girardeau Research Center will continue its current hours, 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., Tuesday through Friday. The Springfield center will also remain at its current hours, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. The administrative office in Columbia will be open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesday through Friday.

"The schedule change was proposed to make sure that our patrons have the best service at

all six locations, no matter when they arrive," said Gerald Hirsch, SHSMO's senior associate director. "Additional time, specifically in the evening, also means that collections can be stored according to archival best practices."

The new schedule also allows the staff to spend more time responding to research requests sent via email, to process collections, and to prepare for the Columbia center's move to a new building in 2019. Hours of operation for all six research centers and the administrative office are posted on the website at [shsmo.org](http://shsmo.org).



Creating a searchable database from the Columbia Research Center's Missouri Surname Index is one of the many projects to be completed before the move.



# WHY WE GIVE: Ste. Genevieve Couple Points to Preservation and Lifelong Learning

Since moving to Ste. Genevieve in 2004, SHSMO trustee Bob Mueller and his wife, Linda, have enthusiastically supported preservation efforts in Missouri's oldest town. The couple renovated an 1873 home in its National Historic Landmark District. Bob has also served on the Foundation for Restoration of Ste. Genevieve and chaired the Ste. Genevieve Tourism Advisory Council, and he is a board member of the Ste. Genevieve County Community Foundation.

"It was through watching the passion of others for Ste. Genevieve's contributions to early Missouri history that I became interested in the culture, lore, and, most importantly, the people who settled this area," Bob said. "Genealogy became more to me than birth, marriage, death, and burial dates. It became a study of the communities in which these people lived and the events and technology growth that shaped their lives."

Bob's growing interest and involvement caught the attention of a friend who asked if he would join the State Historical Society of Missouri's board of trustees. The Society quickly recognized that his experience as a retired vice president of General Dynamics Corporation and a past president of the Missouri Science and Technology Academy of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineers would be a major asset to the board.

"I was elected in 2004," he said of his initiation to SHSMO. "That enabled me to better understand what the Society was doing not only to preserve Missouri history, but to make this history more readily accessible to citizens across Missouri."



Linda Mueller pins a boutonniere on her husband, Bob Mueller, a SHSMO trustee and Executive Committee member, at the Center for Missouri Studies Ground-breaking Ceremony in 2017. The couple has generously supported the State Historical Society for more than a decade. Photo courtesy of Notley Hawkins Photography

Over the past 14 years, Bob has applied his training as an engineer and an executive to advance SHSMO's mission by elevating its operational procedures. "For a number of years, I have helped the Society by facilitating the development, review, and updating of its strategic plan," he said. "This process provided more opportunity to learn about the Society's people, materials, and capabilities and to consider how they might be leveraged to make improvements as we enter the third century of Missouri statehood."

SHSMO honored Bob's devotion by presenting him with its 2015 Distinguished Service Award. He and Linda have also given financial support to the Society throughout his tenure on its board. Two years ago, the

Muellers became the first platinum-level donors (\$100,000 to \$249,999) to the State Historical Society's Center for Missouri Studies Comprehensive Campaign, a transformational fundraising effort to ensure the organization's future financial security through key endowments and program support. In January, Bob and Linda pledged another \$50,000 over the next three years.

"We believe in lifelong learning," Bob said. "We believe that the Center for Missouri Studies will expand the opportunities for the Society to have children and adults make Missouri history a part of their lives."

The Muellers said they are pleased that their donations will support projects throughout the state.—Continued on page 11

## New Oral Historian Seeks to Diversify Interviews in Collection

Sean Rost has joined the State Historical Society of Missouri's staff as its new oral historian. A doctoral candidate in history at the University of Missouri in Columbia, Rost expects to receive his PhD later this year. He holds a master's degree in history from Lincoln University and a bachelor's degree in history education from William Woods University.

Rost started work at SHSMO on January 2. He succeeds Jeff D. Corrigan, who accepted a position at California State University, Monterey Bay. The State Historical Society has employed a full-time oral historian since 1993. The oral history program now

includes extensive collections on the natural environment, Missouri veterans, one-room schoolhouses, politics, and other subjects.

Rost will continue to build the Society's inventory of firsthand accounts gathered through interviews with Missourians. The collection now totals more than 4,000 interviews. One of Rost's first projects will be to add interviews to the Missouri Desegregation and Civil Rights Oral History Project.

"The Civil Rights Movement was deeply personal and helped shape numerous nonviolent protests as well as modern life generally," said Gary Kremer, SHSMO's executive director.



Sean Rost, SHSMO oral historian

"It is important to preserve the monumental changes felt by individual people for future generations to truly understand this period of our history. Having a historian conduct these interviews helps make them that much more profound."

### JOIN IN THE CONVERSATION!

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## Help Students Explore History through National History Day! Judge at the State Contest in April



Judges interview Kaylee Ellsworth about her exhibit "The Missouri Sharecroppers Strike of 1939: Taking a Stand on Highway 60" at the 2017 state contest in Columbia.

If you enjoy history, learning new things, and helping others, then you are ready to be a judge at the National History Day in Missouri state contest on April 28 in Columbia.

Volunteer judges are vital to the contest, offering feedback to students on their research projects and helping top finishers prepare for the national contest in June. Judges can expect to spend the day interacting with students from across the state in grades six through twelve. NHDMO's five competitive categories—documentary, exhibit, paper, performance, and website—offer something for everyone.

Judges may volunteer for either a half-day or full-day shift. In appreciation, the State Historical Society of Missouri will provide a light breakfast, lunch, and a travel stipend of up to \$50 for those whose round trip exceeds 75 miles.

Roughly 150 volunteers are needed, so bring a friend and explore the University of Missouri campus after you are finished helping Missouri students. Thank you in advance for sharing your time! For more details or to sign up, visit [nhdmo.org/judges](http://nhdmo.org/judges) or call 573.882.7083.

## Show-Me Awards Promote Missouri History Knowledge, Awareness of State's Bicentennial in 2021

The State Historical Society's Show-Me Awards encourage National History Day students to investigate a key development in Missouri history or explore how a Missourian contributed to a significant national or international event. Students chosen for the awards receive \$50, learn more about their state, and have a chance to see their work included in Missouri's bicentennial observances.

The awards were created in 2014 to promote engagement with Missouri history among National History Day participants and to raise awareness of the upcoming 200th anniversary of Missouri joining the Union on August 10, 1821.

Each year, the State Historical Society of Missouri issues up to five awards of \$50 each to students presenting individual entries on Missouri history

topics in the senior division of the state competition. The award recipients grant the Society permission to showcase their National History Day projects in promotional efforts for Missouri's bicentennial. Students must apply for the awards in order to be considered.

To learn more, visit [nhdmo.org/special-prize-application](http://nhdmo.org/special-prize-application). Be sure to have students apply before March 28.



Deanna Schmidt, 2016 Show-Me Prize winner for individual senior paper.

## Missouri Winner Represents History Day at National Conference

National History Day gold medalist Hannah Scott of Odessa presented her award-winning exhibit, "The Safekeepers of History: A Monumental Stand for Cultural Preservation during the Second World War," at the American Historical Association's annual conference on January 6 in Washington, DC.

After taking gold as a high school senior at the 2017 national contest, Hannah is now a freshman at Truman State University, where she is majoring in history and preparing for her dream job as a museum curator. She plans to stay involved in National History Day as a judge. She will certainly have expert advice to give to contestants!

Congratulations to Hannah for representing Missouri at the AHA national conference, and for sharing her experiences as a five-time National History Day competitor with professional historians from across the country and the world.



Hannah Scott of Odessa was invited to show her national first-place exhibit at the American Historical Association's annual conference in January in Washington, DC. The project's visuals were inspired by the mines in which Nazis stored stolen art during World War II.



## Symington Family's Legacy of Public Service Preserved in St. Louis

The recently donated Symington Family Papers (S1211) expand upon six older SHSMO collections that document the family's role in shaping the state and nation through public service.

The Symington family includes many prominent Missouri citizens, such as William Stuart Symington Jr., known as Stuart Symington, who served as a Democratic US senator from 1957 to 1976 and began donating his papers in 1973 (C3874).

His son, Stuart Symington Jr., donated the newest collection to the St. Louis Center last August. It includes genealogical research on the Symington family and related Johnston and Boggs families from 1775 to 2010, as well as correspondence of the Symington and Johnston families from 1817 to 1883.

Notable correspondents in the collection include John D. Symington Sr. (1797–1864), his wife, Elizabeth McCaw Johnson Symington (1807–1878), and their son, William Newton Symington (1841–1899).

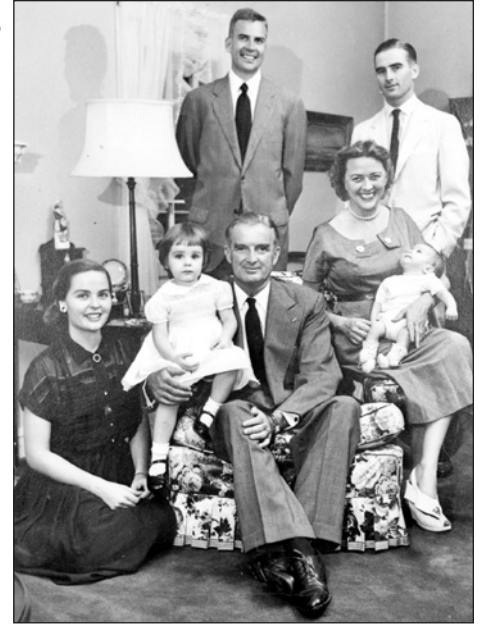
John D. Symington Sr. was born in Delaware to James and Margaret Fife Symington. He graduated from the US Military Academy in 1815 and was assigned to the army's ordnance branch. Symington served at various arsenals throughout his military career, including a stint as commander of the St. Louis Arsenal in the 1830s. He was in command of the Allegheny Arsenal near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, when it blew up on

September 17, 1862. Seventy-eight people were killed, mostly young workers. It was the largest civilian disaster of the Civil War.

Controversy swirled around the explosion, and John Symington's loyalty was quickly questioned. It did not help that his son, William, had joined the Confederate army; his daughter, Mary, was married to Confederate officer William R. Boggs; and his nephew, George E. Pickett, was a Confederate general. But a military court of inquiry concluded the cause of the explosion could not be determined, and Symington was found innocent. He retired on June 1, 1863, and died on April 4, 1864, in Maryland.

The collection includes a letter from one of Symington's subordinates at the Allegheny Arsenal pledging support during the trial. It also includes correspondence regarding William Symington's imprisonment by Union forces. He was captured in May 1864 in North Carolina while trying to run a blockade. William was a prisoner for seven months at Fort LaFayette, New York, and Fort Warren, Massachusetts. In 1865 he was exchanged due to the personal intervention of Abraham Lincoln. The situation's complexities are explored in a 1955 master's thesis, "Lincoln's Relationship with Four Quincy, Illinois Republicans" by Norma Lorene Johnson, which can be found within the collection.

The papers also contain a letter from John D. Symington Sr. to his brother-in-law,



Stuart Symington, seated in the center, with his family in 1964. The new Symington Family Papers provide insight into the US senator's ancestry.

Robert Pickett, regarding George E. Pickett's admittance into the US Military Academy. As an officer, George served with distinction in the Mexican-American War, but he would be forever associated with the failed attack on Union lines at the Battle of Gettysburg. Letters to Mary "Molly" Symington Boggs are also preserved in the collection, including love letters from William R. Boggs. The collection will be of interest to both genealogists and Civil War enthusiasts.

## State Historical Society of Missouri Remembers St. Louis–Based Supporters, Cultural Pioneers

**Frankie Muse Freeman**, a groundbreaking St. Louis–based civil rights attorney, died January 12 at the age of 101. Freeman was the first woman to serve on the US Civil Rights Commission, a role she held from 1964 to 1979. Over her roughly 60-year career as a practicing attorney, Freeman was involved in countless cases, including *Davis v. St. Louis Housing Authority*, a 1954 decision that ended legal racial segregation in the city's public housing. Freeman was the lead attorney for the NAACP in that landmark victory.

By the 1970s, Freeman was a municipal court judge. She also served as the inspector general for the Community Services Administration within the US Department of Health and Human Services in 1979. In 1982 Freeman helped found the Citizens' Commission on Civil Rights, which fought racial discrimination and helped ensure enforcement of anti-discrimination laws.

The Society's holdings relating to Freeman include three oral history interviews. The first, in 1973, is part of the Black Community Leaders Project (T-0264). Freeman is also represented in the Lift Every Voice and Sing Oral History Project (S0609), where her 1995 interview records her thoughts as a pioneer who broke through the barriers of racial discrimination. SHSMO trustee Blanche Touhill also interviewed Freeman in 2013 for the International Women's Forum Oral History Collection (SA1148).

Freeman garnered numerous local and national honors. She was named St. Louis's Citizen of the Year in 2011, and a statue of her was dedicated in the city's Kiener Plaza in 2017. Her footsteps are included in the International Civil Rights Walk of Fame at the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site in Atlanta.

**Elizabeth Gentry Sayad**, a leading advocate for the humanities and the arts within Missouri, passed away on December 12. She was 83.

A resident of St. Louis, Sayad was the first Missourian to receive both the Missouri Arts Award (1991) and the Missouri Humanities Award (2004). Her civic involvement as a founder and leader of historic and cultural organizations was extensive. Sayad co-chaired the National Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial Committee in 2004 with SHSMO trustee Blanche Touhill. In 2005 she completed a seven-year term as commissioner of the St. Louis Art Museum.

Sayad joined the State Historical Society in 1994 and held a life membership for more than 20 years. Many of her accomplishments are documented in her personal papers preserved at SHSMO, the Elizabeth Gentry Sayad Papers (S0476) and two addendums (S0731, SA1042). A descendant of General Richard Gentry, Columbia's first mayor, Sayad also donated the Gentry Family Papers (C4026, SA1169).





## February Missouri Council for the Social Studies Conference February 23-24 Kansas City

Visit with SHSMO staff members at their exhibitor's booth and discuss ways to use resources from the Society, the National History Day in Missouri program, and the upcoming Missouri bicentennial in your classroom! The conference will be held at the National World War I Museum. Visit [mosocialstudies.com/conference](http://mosocialstudies.com/conference) for details.

### Using Land Records in Genealogy Workshop February 24 8:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Jackson

Join Bill Eddleman, associate director of SHSMO's Cape Girardeau Research Center, and the Cape Girardeau County Genealogical Society for a workshop designed to assist family historians interested in working with land records. The session will include tips for finding public land information and understanding land surveys and conveyances. Experienced genealogists will be available to provide individual consultations. Participants must bring their own computer with Wi-Fi capability and should have familiarity with basic family history research. The workshop will be held at the Cape Girardeau County Archive Center, 112 East Washington, in Jackson. The cost is \$20, and spaces are limited. To register, contact Eddleman at [eddllemanw@sbcglobal.net](mailto:eddllemanw@sbcglobal.net) or 573.579.7978.

## March African American Experience in Missouri Lecture Series: Priscilla Dowden-White March 7 6:30 p.m. Columbia

Priscilla Dowden-White, associate professor of history at the University of Missouri–St. Louis and author of *Groping toward Democracy: African American Social Welfare Reform in St. Louis, 1910–1949*, will explore the life and legacy of St. Louis attorney and NAACP leader Margaret Bush Wilson. In her lifelong struggle to advance freedom and equality for African Americans, women, and all those who were excluded from the mainstream of society, Wilson blazed a courageous trail marked by landmark legal decisions and major civil rights advances that opened doors to equal opportunity. Dowden-White will examine the philosophical viewpoints and experiences that shaped Wilson's definition of justice and fairness for all. Her talk will be held at Stotler Lounge in the University of Missouri's Memorial Student Union. The series is sponsored by SHSMO; MU's Division of Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity; and the Missouri Humanities Council.

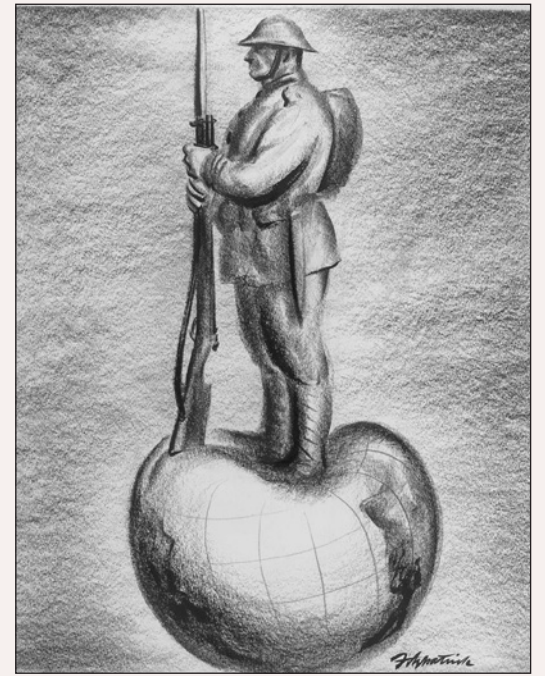
### Museum After Hours: Sketches of War: Political Cartoons of Daniel Fitzpatrick March 7 7 p.m. Jefferson City

Joan Stack, SHSMO's curator of art collections, will discuss the Society's collection of more than 1,500 original drawings by Daniel Fitzpatrick, two-time Pulitzer Prize-winning editorial cartoonist for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. Stack will consider how Fitzpatrick's social, political, and aesthetic attitudes shaped his artwork, with a special focus on the cartoons he created during the First World War. This event will be held at the Missouri State Museum, 201 W. Capitol, Jefferson City.

The *Sketches of War* Opening Reception will be from 6 to 8 p.m. on March 14 at the State Museum's Elizabeth Rozier Gallery, 101 Jefferson Street, Jefferson City. Refreshments will be provided. The show will run from March 6 to May 19.

### Missouri Conference on History March 14-16 Jefferson City

Register online now for the sixtieth annual Missouri Conference on History. The conference will be held at the Capitol Plaza Hotel in Jefferson City. Hosted by the Missouri State Archives and sponsored by SHSMO, it brings together scholars, teachers, and other professional historians to share in the presentation of research, exchange information on teaching and curricula, promote general interest in history and the welfare of the history profession, and discuss other concerns common to all historians. For additional information, please visit [shsmo.org/mch](http://shsmo.org/mch).



## April Genealogy in the Cloud April 7 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. Nevada

Genealogy research takes more than just scouring the Internet, but with so many resources now available online, it is important to organize your digital materials efficiently. At this new workshop, Amy L. Waters, State Historical Society librarian, will share tips for finding online resources and integrating them with other materials to create, organize, and maintain your family tree. The session is geared for both new and experienced genealogists. Register now to join SHSMO and the Cedar and Vernon County Genealogical Society for this workshop at the Bushwhacker Museum, 212 West Walnut Street in Nevada. The cost is \$5. Registration is encouraged by March 30 to the Cedar and Vernon County Missouri Genealogical Society. See RSVP information online at [shsmo.org/events](http://shsmo.org/events) or call 417.667.2457 or 417.876.2633.

### African American Experience in Missouri Lecture Series: Patricia Cleary April 16 6:30 p.m. Columbia

In histories of colonial St. Louis, people of African descent appear most often as enslaved men and women forced into doing the hard labor of settlement. Traces of their existence are visible in records relating to slave auctions and census documents enumerating their presence in households, but the fabric of their daily lives can be difficult to recover. Patricia Cleary, author of *The World, the Flesh, and the Devil: A History of Colonial St. Louis*, will illuminate the vital roles African Americans played in the early village on the Mississippi, exploring how they experienced violence and expressed themselves in a community frequently torn by discord and unrest. The event will be held at Stotler Lounge in the University of Missouri's Memorial Student Union. The series is sponsored by SHSMO; MU's Division of Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity; and the Missouri Humanities Council.

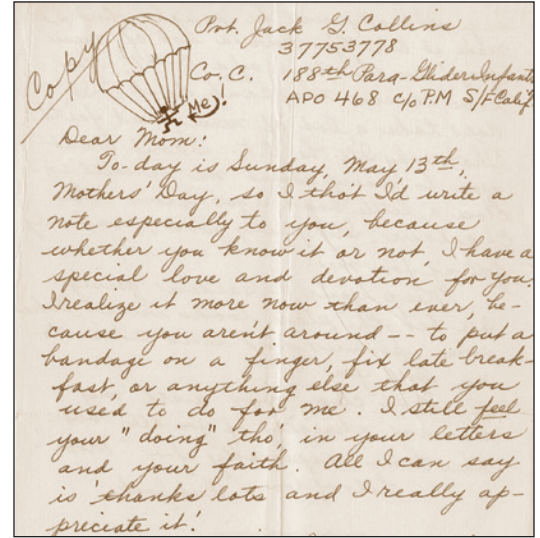
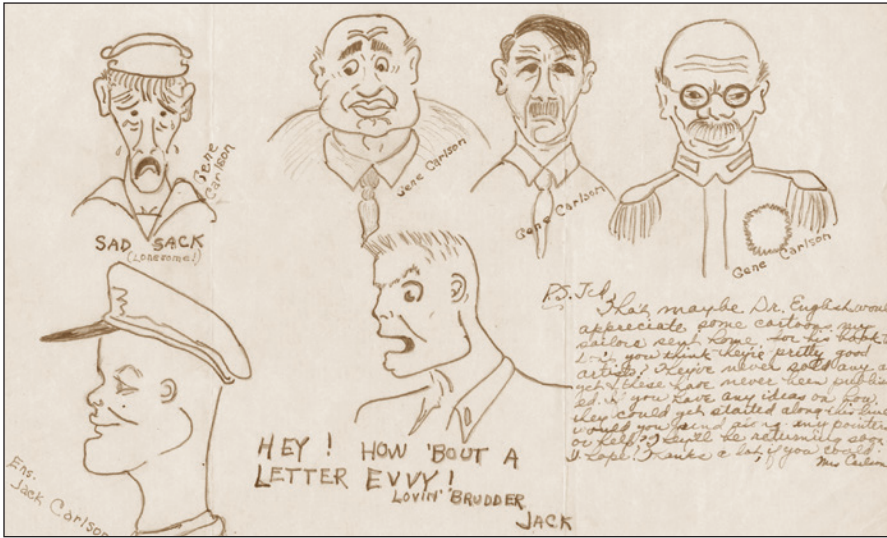
### National History Day in Missouri April 28 Columbia

Come witness the knowledge, enthusiasm, and creativity of hundreds of students from across the state as they share their History Day projects exploring the 2018 contest theme, Conflict and Compromise in History. They will compete for state honors in categories including documentaries, exhibits, papers, performances, and websites. Add to their learning experience by signing up to be a contest judge at [nhdmo.org/judges](http://nhdmo.org/judges). The state contest will be held on the University of Missouri campus. Top finishers will advance to the National History Day Contest in June.

## Looking ahead Bluegrass Pickin' One More Time May 20 2-6 p.m. Rolla

Join SHSMO and longtime mid-Missouri radio host Wayne Bledsoe in honoring Mona Jones and the Bluegrass Travelers, Jimmy Orchard and the Ozark Bluegrass Boys, and Jimmie Allison and the Ozark Rounders at an afternoon of live bluegrass. The festival will be held at the Havener Center on the Missouri University of Science and Technology campus. Watch for further details as they are announced at [shsmo.org/events](http://shsmo.org/events).





**Left** Gene Carlson sent this cartoon to his parents, Mr. and Mrs. N.J. Carlson in Seattle, Washington, from the Pacific Theater on September 1, 1945. **Right** On May 13, 1945, Jack G. Collins wrote a letter his mother, Mrs. Harry L. Collins, for Mother's Day. She later sent a copy of the letter to Ted Malone with a note mentioning her surprise at the frequency of Jack's letters and the warmth he displayed in them. She said prior to the war Jack did not show much affection.

## World War II Letters Project: Personal Letters of Military Men and Women Now Available Online

On December 7, 1941, the United States was thrust into the Second World War, which ultimately lasted nearly four more years and affected hundreds of millions of people from countries throughout the world.

Records of the war, and of the 450,000 Missourians who served in the military, are still being collected. One ongoing project at the State Historical Society of Missouri shares the stories of American servicemen and servicewomen through their personal letters. The World War II Letters Project has made the correspondence of roughly 1,000 individuals in military service available online at <http://digital.shsmo.org/cdm/landingpage/collection/wwii>.

The collection (C0068) began in 1945 when radio broadcaster Ted Malone, who hosted the ABC show *Between the Bookends*, asked listeners to send in copies of wartime correspondence. More than 3,000 people from all over the United States responded with letters.

In 2016, SHSMO started a digitization project aimed at providing online access to

all the letters in the collection. Dedicated volunteers have scanned, transcribed, and added essential metadata to ensure the letters are keyword-searchable.

After more than a year of transcribing and entering details such as the names, hometowns, dates, and places of origin for letters, SHSMO volunteers like Dave Connett have become familiar with many of the soldiers in the project.

"There was one that talked about the King of England saluting him as he was passing by," Connett said. "Another, Gene Carlson, was an excellent cartoonist, so he drew what he saw while he was living in the camps."

Yet, according to Connett, these stories are not the ones that have the most lasting impact. The letters that stay in his thoughts are those like the one that army corporal Clayton Hickman sent his parents from Yokohama, Japan, on October 14, 1945. It told the story of an orphaned girl his unit called "Jane."

"He described a five-year-old Japanese girl standing outside the camp," Connett said.

"The soldiers finally took her in, since she was clearly abandoned and severely malnourished. They fed her and gave her a place to sleep until they could find the right channels to get help for her."

Connett said letters such as this are his favorites. "Some letters show bravery, but the ones that show kindness and make you feel good, that's what kind you like the best."

"There are really great stories in these letters," said SHSMO archivist Heather Richmond. "Because it was often a mother, or a wife who sent them in, there is added context in an introductory note. A letter home might seem typical, but because of the cover letter from the mother we know that she thought her son 'was terrified, and homesick, and trying to keep up appearances for me and not act afraid.'"

Many of the mothers' letters also anticipate a book that never came to fruition. "Making them accessible online kind of feels like we are fulfilling that promise," Richmond said. "We are sharing their children's letters, many of whom were killed in action, with others."

## 2018 Center for Missouri Fellowships Explore Underexamined Areas of Missouri History

SHSMO's Center for Missouri Studies awarded 2018 fellowships to Heidi L. Dodson, a scholar-in-residence at the Marian Cheek Jackson Center for Saving and Making History in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and Angela Firkus, a history professor at

Cottey College in Nevada, Missouri.

Dodson received the fellowship on environmental history in rural/small-town Missouri for her project "Rivers, Bayous, Swamps, and Ditches: The Significance of Waterways to African American Communities

in the Missouri Bootheel, 1937-2011." Firkus has been awarded the fellowship on economic history in the greater Kansas City area for her proposed study, "Girls Wanted, Experience Unnecessary. Good Pay: Child Labor in Kansas City during the Progressive Era."

Each recipient holds the appointment for one calendar year. They will each write a scholarly essay for possible publication in the *Missouri Historical Review* and will also make a public presentation of their work. The fellowship awards include stipends of \$5,000.

## Springfield Center Receives Sailor's Poignant World War II Letters

The letters of sailor Joseph Claude Turner Jr., recently donated to the Springfield Research Center by his nephew, Jon S. Turner, are a powerful addition to SHSMO's sizable collection of World War II correspondence. After reading about the Society's World War II Letters Project (C0068), Jon donated his uncle's letters to ensure that future generations will learn about Claude, a young man who couldn't wait to join the navy, and who ultimately gave his life for his country.

Born in Lineville, Oklahoma, on October 23, 1922, Claude, called "Tub" by his family, moved to Webb City, Missouri,

as a teenager. He joined the US Navy soon after graduating from Webb City High School in 1942 and was assigned to serve on the USS *Spence*, a Fletcher-class destroyer commissioned in 1943.

The *Spence* and its crew saw significant action in the war, sinking several enemy barges in the Pacific and earning eight battle stars. The ship participated in the bombardment of enemy positions at Buka Island, Tiaraka, Bougainville, Emirau Island, Palau, Yap, Woleai, Aitape, Guam, Saipan, and elsewhere.

On December 18, 1944, the *Spence* and the rest of the navy's Third Fleet, under the command of Admiral William Halsey,

sailed into Typhoon Cobra. As she struggled in massive swells, the *Spence's* electrical equipment failed. The rudder became unresponsive, and the destroyer listed hard to port and capsized. There were only 24 survivors from the *Spence's* crew of 329. US Navy Fireman First Class Claude Turner was among the estimated 790 Third Fleet sailors lost in the typhoon. He was twenty-two years old at the time of his death.

Turner's letters express his profound homesickness. Much of his correspondence was to his mother, Elsie May Turner, in Webb City. As her second-eldest son, he frequently expresses concern for his widowed mother and his five siblings. He writes that he wished he could send money to help his mother fix up their house. Turner's letters also hint at his role as a father figure to his younger siblings, Freda, Virginia, Evelyn, and the youngest, seven-year-old Johnny, Jon's father.

Elsie Turner suffered tremendous loss in the war. In addition to Claude's death, another son, Forrest, sustained severe permanent injuries while carrying out his duties as a deep-sea diver for the navy. "I know how tough times were for a single mom trying to raise six kids in 1944," said Jon Turner. "Two go off to war—one does not return, and one returns 'not the same.' The loss of Claude and the disability of Forrest



Joseph Claude Turner Jr. joined the navy immediately after graduating from Webb City High School in 1942. He died at sea in December 1944.

was something that had a powerful impact on my dad, and grandmother, and I'm sure the whole family."

The letters, subject to military censorship, reveal very little about the activities of the *Spence*. Claude Turner frequently apologizes to his family for being unable to say more about the war. But his letters are an excellent resource for understanding a serviceman's loneliness, as well as how eager sailors like Turner were for the war to end. His first letter is dated November 29, 1942, and the last November 27, 1944. The Claude Turner Letters Collection (SP0027) is available for research at any SHSMO location by request. Contact the Springfield center at [springfield@shsmo.org](mailto:springfield@shsmo.org) or 417.836.3782 for details.



**Left** Claude Turner, marked with an "x," with other sailors, probably during basic training. Writing on the back of the photo indicates that it was taken at Great Lakes Naval Base, a training center near Chicago which prepared more than one million sailors for their duties during World War II. **Right** The USS *Spence* was among three destroyers lost during Typhoon Cobra. After the storm cost an estimated 790 lives, three ships, and 146 aircraft, the navy reevaluated its weather service, as orders from the Third Fleet's commander, Admiral William Halsey, were reportedly based on inaccurate weather calculations.







**Left** Jimmie Allison and Midnight Flight: Roger Matthews, Kevin Shults, Mark Vaccaro, Bill Cross, and Allison. **Below** Wayne Bledsoe, left, and Jimmy Orchard at one of the many Bluegrass Pickin' Time festivals in Dixon, Missouri. Bledsoe, longtime producer of *Bluegrass for a Saturday Night*, is serving as the master of ceremonies for the May 20 event in Rolla honoring Orchard, Allison, and Mona Jones.

## Rolla Research Center Receives Three New Bluegrass Collections

Noted Missouri bluegrass musicians Jimmy Orchard, C. J. Lewandowski, and Jimmie Allison recently donated their personal papers to SHSMO's Rolla Research Center. Their papers join other music collections such as the Mona Jones Papers (R1343) and the Loman D. and Laura M. Cansler Collection (C4018).

James "Jimmy" Orchard Jr. was born on July 21, 1936, in Ink, Missouri. He learned to play guitar in grade school before transitioning to

the mandolin and fiddle. His first band, the Boogher County Ramblers, entertained at pie suppers, hay rides, business events, and other local events.

After college, Orchard returned to Shannon County, where he joined the Current River Drifters. The band played throughout the Midwest, had a weekly radio spot, and were regulars at the Current River Opry in Eminence, Missouri. In 1970 he formed Jimmy Orchard and the Bluegrass Boys; he was also master of ceremonies at the Bluegrass Pickin' Time festival in Dixon, Missouri, from 1969 to 1998. In 2010 he organized "Music at Little Carnegie," a Friday night event at the VFW Hall in Summersville, Missouri. Orchard was also a public school teacher for many years in Eminence, Houston, and other school systems in the Missouri Ozarks.

One of Orchard's many protégés was Christopher "C. J." Lewandowski. A native of Columbia, Missouri, Lewandowski first learned the fiddle, followed by the mandolin and guitar. He was playing at music venues around Missouri, including Bluegrass Pickin' Time, when he met Orchard. Lewandowski later performed with numerous groups, including Orchard's Bluegrass Boys, and has played with such bluegrass greats as Jesse McReynolds, Kenny Baker, Doyle Lawson, and Rhonda Vincent.

Jimmie Allison, who began playing bluegrass at the age of seven with his grandfather, Harold Allison, in Phelps County, is an award-winning guitar player who has appeared at numerous Missouri festivals as well as across the United States



and Canada. He has been in several bands, including Riley Creek, Sinking Creek, Beverly's Hillbillies, and Midnight Flight, the last of which performed for two decades and became known for its single microphone style. Allison has continued the family tradition, passing his bluegrass knowledge on to his own grandson, who occasionally plays with him in his current band, Jimmie Allison and the Ozark Rounders.

The Christopher J. Lewandowski Papers (R1358), Jimmy Orchard Papers (R1351), and Jimmie Allison Papers (RA1651) contain photographs, posters, event flyers, awards information, and memorabilia from shows, concerts, and festivals. The three musicians have crossed paths at various times, and the collections include several photos of them performing with each other at various events. Music albums in the Jimmie Allison and Jimmy Orchard collections are also available for patrons who would like to listen to their music.



See Jimmy Orchard and the Ozark Bluegrass Boys, Jimmie Allison and the Ozark Rounders, and Mona Jones and the Bluegrass Travelers perform live from 2 to 6 p.m. on May 20 in Rolla. The Society and longtime mid-Missouri radio host Wayne Bledsoe are honoring these musicians by reviving the region's longest-running bluegrass festival, Bluegrass Pickin' Time, for a single afternoon. The festival will be held at the Havener Center on the Missouri University of Science and Technology campus. Watch for details at [shsmo.org/events](http://shsmo.org/events).

## Kemper Foundation Funds State-of-the-Art Scanner in Kansas City

The Kansas City Research Center has received a \$21,000 grant from the William T. Kemper Foundation to buy a large-format scanner and related supplies. The new equipment supports access to and preservation of oversize materials, such as the Kansas City center's large collection of architectural drawings dating back to the late nineteenth century.

The Context 5450 large-format scanner can digitally record materials with a width

*The materials demonstrate the region's complex and innovative architectural history, providing unique insights into Kansas City's past through its design features and architectural landscape.*

of up to 54 inches. The scanner uses professional-grade camera lenses to capture a high-resolution image in under 12 seconds. The digital copies created by the scanner will make architectural records and other oversize materials more easily accessible for patrons in and beyond the Kansas City area.

Archivists at the Kansas City center can now scan materials on site instead of sending them to an outside vendor, eliminating the possibility that they might be damaged while they are away from the archive. Copy costs for researchers will be significantly lower, since there are no longer any vendor fees associated with scanning large-format items such as posters, drawings, and panoramic photographs and negatives.

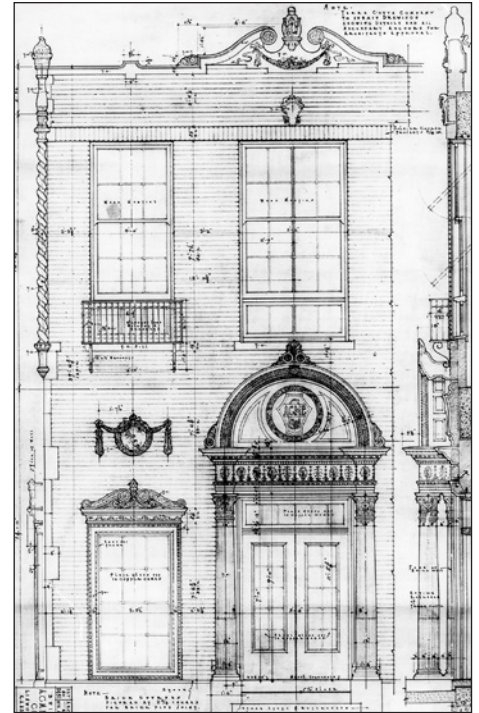
The collection of materials related to Greater Kansas City's built environment is one of the most prominent of the Kansas City center's holdings. The materials include more than 16,000 sets of architectural drawings and renderings for building projects from the late nineteenth through the early twenty-first century. Among the holdings are items related to landscape architecture, records of architectural firms, papers of local architects, and individual sets of drawings documenting residential, commercial, industrial, and

institutional structures in Kansas City and throughout the country.

The materials demonstrate the region's complex and innovative architectural history, providing unique insights into Kansas City's past through its design features and architectural landscape. The William T. Kemper Foundation gift will also support digitization of other oversize holdings that are too large for a traditional flatbed scanner.

The Kansas City Research Center's staff plans to scan materials such as the Native Sons and Daughters of Greater Kansas City Photographs (K0528), which provide an excellent depiction of early life in the region.

The Society is grateful to the William T. Kemper Foundation for its generous support. The Foundation, established in 1989, honors William T. Kemper, a well-known civic leader in Kansas City, for his lifelong commitment to philanthropy. It focuses its giving on education, health and human services, the arts, and civic improvements.



**Above** The Acme Cleansing Company building still stands today at 3201 Gillham Road in Kansas City. The architectural firm of Archer and Gloyd produced this blueprint in 1924.



Fire chief George C. Hale, first row center with arms crossed, patented more than 60 firefighting inventions and was once known as the "world's most famous fireman." This 1889 photograph was taken in what was known as the Old Headquarters at 807-809 Walnut in Kansas City. It eventually became Fire Station No. 2.

## Why We Give—Continued from Page 3

"The Society's staff at the Center for Missouri Studies will provide technological innovation for the future," Bob said. "The Center also provides additional opportunities for information to be made available in southeast Missouri and offers support

activities related to historic document preservation, K-12 school projects, and history-related presentations."

The state's upcoming bicentennial celebration in 2021 was also a key factor that led Bob and Linda to make a gift now.

"This is a major milestone for our state, and the new building will provide a showcase for Missouri's rich history," Bob said. "It will provide a space for historians, researchers, and the public to explore our past and our future history for the next century."

Their generosity is also helping to secure SHSMO's role as a

dynamic place to explore what it means to be a Missourian. "Supporting the Center for Missouri Studies and the Society is a wonderful way to make Missouri history available to the students and citizens of our state," Bob said.

Learn more about the Center at [shsmo.org/thecenter](http://shsmo.org/thecenter).

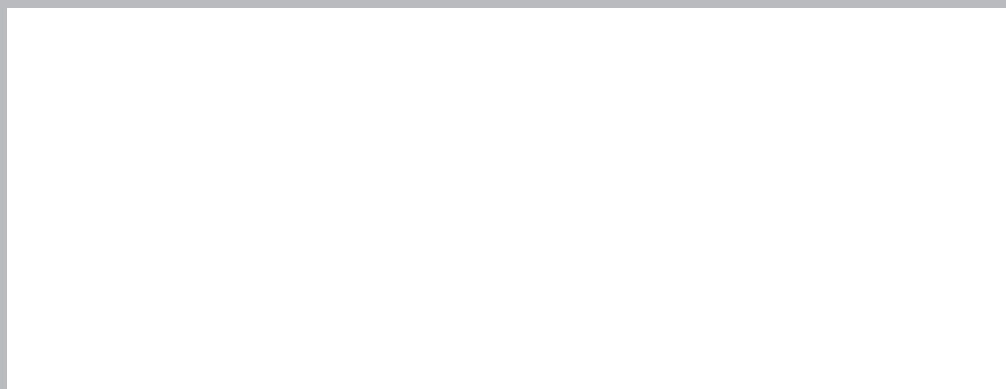




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