Proud to Be: Writing by American Warriors

*Proud to Be: Writing by American Warriors* is a creative writing anthology of poetry, fiction, essays, interviews, and photography submissions by and about veterans from across the nation and spanning generations — from World War I to Iraq and Afghanistan. It is an annual series first released in November 2012.

The anthology provides an outlet for self-expression as American veterans build and enhance their support systems, reconnect with their families, reintegrate into the workforce, and heal the unseen wounds of war.

*Proud to Be: Writing by American Warriors* is published by Southeast Missouri State University Press in cooperation with the Missouri Humanities Council. Submissions are reviewed by a panel of judges for inclusion in the anthology, with a $250 prize in each of the five categories listed above.

To submit your work or to learn more about this program, contact MHC’s Director of Family and Veterans Programs, Lisa Carrico, at lisa@mohumanities.org or 314.781.9660.

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Whether you’re traveling east or heading west in north Missouri, you will most likely be traveling across Missouri Highway 36, known as The Way of American Genius.

Once called the Pikes Peak Ocean to Ocean Highway, U.S. 36 seemingly was destined to ignite the imaginations of travelers yearning to see the American West. But for a special group of Missourians, this area of the state was a hub for creative expression long before paved roads crisscrossed the country.

Many of Missouri’s most well-known figures were born, grew up, or made their greatest contributions to society while living in communities that today are situated along the Missouri Highway 36 corridor, which includes the actual highway and extends 36 miles to both its north and south.

Today, the Missouri Highway 36 Heritage Alliance has been formed to make the connection between these stories and locations and communicate them to a wider audience. Our vision is to foster widespread recognition of the unique character and heritage of Missouri’s U.S. Highway 36 Region.
Heritage Alliance

The mission of the Alliance is to cultivate the educational experience and the economic well-being of the Missouri Highway 36 corridor by fostering a greater appreciation of its natural, cultural, and historic resources by identifying and promoting the theme “The Way of American Genius” and those individuals and innovations that have uniquely defined and influenced American culture and character.

Beth Carmichael is the Director of Project Development at the Buchanan County Tourism Board (dba St. Joseph Convention and Visitors Bureau). In St. Joseph, she assists local museums and other tourism-related nonprofits with marketing and grant writing support and works as administrator of the Missouri Highway 36 Heritage Alliance.
In the lush, rolling, green hills of Northern Missouri lies a corridor that is gaining popularity, as much for its rich history as for the convenience it brings to travelers. Missouri Highway 36 is quickly becoming known as The Way of American Genius. The transformation to a four-lane, modern stretch of highway from the Kansas state line to the Illinois border has made it a viable alternative for motorists. However, the stories of the people who made the area along Highway 36 their home are what truly give life to this land. Iconic innovators and innovations all share deep roots in this rural stretch of North Missouri. Author Mark Twain. Innovator Walt Disney. James Cash Penney, founder of retail giant JCPenney. They all credit the places they grew up as significant parts of their journeys. The list continues: Walter Cronkite, Dr. Andrew Taylor Still, Molly Brown, General Sterling Price, General Omar Bradley. In addition to these famous faces from Northern Missouri, two genius concepts that helped shape the world originated along the Highway 36 Corridor: sliced bread and the Pony Express.

A visit to The Way of American Genius provides ample opportunities to learn about each of these significant geniuses and to step back in time and experience the unique history that shaped their worlds. One such opportunity is in Chillicothe, which is the proud home of sliced bread.

An original Rohwedder Bread Slicing Machine at the Grand River Historical Society Museum.
Chillicothe is a community which honors its history and culture while celebrating progress and innovation as they look to the future. In July of 1928, the invention which would become the gold standard for all future innovation was created in Chillicothe. Sliced bread was first produced by the Chillicothe Baking Company using the Rohwedder Bread Slicing Machine, revolutionizing bread sales on grocery store shelves.

Visitors to Chillicothe can see an original Rohwedder Bread Slicing Machine at the Grand River Historical Society Museum. This exhibit is on long-term loan from the Smithsonian Institute. There is also a PBS-produced documentary about the unique history of this genius concept in Chillicothe. Additionally, the museum features Native American and military sections as well as a trip down historic Main Street, and they are adding new exhibits all the time.

The Grand River Historical Museum functions as a time capsule, using everyday objects and images to tell stories. With 9,600 square feet of exhibit space, the museum allows visitors to reconnect with the early history of the region with the hope that reaching back and embracing the past will make us better stewards of the future.

In addition to the museum, the murals of Chillicothe are a breathtaking, larger-than-life example of public art in the heart of downtown Chillicothe. Turning plain buildings into glimpses of our heritage, the murals offer a scenic walking or driving tour for visitors, bringing history to life. Over twenty-two streetscapes celebrate unique aspects of the town’s history, including the invention of sliced bread.

And if you are still craving more bread, the Sliced Bread Jam Bluegrass Festival is a toe-tapping, finger-snapping celebration of our country’s native music. Held every June in Chillicothe on the Litton Campus, the two-day music festival features acts such as Finley River Boys, KBA Treblemakers, Lonesome Road, Rural Roots, Volume Five, and Flatt Lonesome.

As evidenced by the celebration of the unique culture, history, and heritage in Chillicothe, the spirit of The Way of American Genius is alive and well along Highway 36 in North Missouri. The pride of the famous Americans who have been so proud to call this soil home is the same pride that keeps the communities along Highway 36 working together and inviting those who travel it to awaken and explore their inner genius.
The General John J. Pershing Boyhood Home State Historic Site, located in Laclede, Missouri, interprets the life of one of America’s greatest war heroes: John Joseph Pershing, born in 1860 and known as “Jack” throughout his life. The Pershing family moved into the house in Laclede in 1865 and stayed there until 1885. There is little in Pershing’s boyhood to suggest that one day he would become a national war hero. His typical boyhood included fishing, hunting, and mischief-making along Locust Creek. In the panic of 1873, the Pershings lost all of their land holdings with the exception of the home in Laclede and one of the farms.

Young John accepted a teaching position at the Prairie Mound School, located some ten miles south of Laclede. He earned $30/month and saved just enough money to attend Kirksville Normal School (now Truman State University). There he received his teaching degree in June of 1880. He returned to Prairie Mound School and taught until the fall of 1881. It was at that time when an article in the local newspaper concerning a competitive exam for entrance into the U.S. Military Academy at West Point was pointed out to him. Pershing took the test on October 20, 1881, qualified, and was nominated to West Point Military Academy, where he graduated in 1886.
His first assignment was with the Sixth Cavalry at Fort Bayard, New Mexico, against the Apache Indians, led by their chief, Geronimo. He fought with the Sixth Cavalry in 1891 on the Dakota/Nebraska border, where Chief Sitting Bull was killed, and with the Tenth Cavalry, known as the “Buffalo Soldiers,” in the Battle of San Juan Hill during the Spanish–American War in 1898.

In 1900 he was assigned to the Philippine Islands, and later assigned to be an observer under the command of General Enoch Crowder in the Russo-Japanese War in Manchuria in 1905. In 1906 he was promoted from Captain to Brigadier General. He was promoted over 862 senior officers by President Theodore Roosevelt. He returned to the Philippines, where in 1909 he became Governor of the Moro province on the southern island of Mindanao. After one battle he was recommended for the Medal of Honor, which he emphatically declined, declaring danger was a soldier’s duty. In 1914 Pershing took command of the Southern Department along the southern border with Mexico in the campaign against the revolutionary leader Francisco “Pancho” Villa.

In May 1917, Pershing was sent to France as Commander-in-Chief of Land Forces of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) in the Great War, later to be renamed the First World War. His tasks included organizing, training, and supplying an inexperienced force that quickly grew to more than a two-million-man force. In 1919 Pershing was promoted to General of the Armies of the United States, to be forever senior in rank and title by a special act of Congress. During his military career, Pershing taught at the University of Nebraska, where he led the school’s rifle drill team to a championship. Upon his leaving, the rifle team declared themselves the “Pershing Rifles.” The organization still exists today in over 800 college campuses across the United States. He married Francis Warren in 1905 and had four children, three of whom perished in a fire along with Mrs. Pershing at the Presidio officer housing in San Francisco in 1915. Pershing won the Pulitzer Prize for history in 1932 for his memoir, My Experiences in the World War. Upon his retirement from the U.S. Army in 1924 he was asked to head the American Battle Monuments Commission as their Chairman. He held that post until his death July 15, 1948. General Pershing was buried in Arlington National Cemetery with the nation’s highest military honors.

Today visitors can walk the grounds of Pershing’s youth, passing through the rooms of his boyhood home on a guided tour. Guides will interpret the formative years of young John’s life. Walking the grounds, you will see a larger-than-life-size bronze statue of General Pershing sculpted by Carl Mose. Surrounding the statue is the Wall of Honor, a service memorial inscribed with names.

The current Visitor Contact Point has a small theater space, gift shop, and tourist information. The Prairie Mound School serves as a temporary self-guided museum to the life and military career of General Pershing, themed with doorways he would have walked through in his life.

In the coming year we will be adding a First World War Commemorative Garden. We have been given special permission by the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) and have acquired soil from the first eight American cemeteries. The first eight cemeteries were First World War cemeteries. General Pershing took particular care in their establishment. The cemeteries contain some 35,000 known and 5,000 unknown war dead. The garden will represent the reflective last years of General Pershing’s life, when he chose to honor the living and the lost.

Future expansion of the General John J. Pershing State Historic Site will include the Pershing Memorial Museum and Leadership Archives. The 7,800-square-foot space will allow for a large theater, gift shop, and tourist information as well as a self-guided museum interpreting the life and military career of General of the Armies of the United States John J. Pershing.

Denzil R. Heaney has been the Administrator of the General John J. Pershing Boyhood Home State Historic Site for the past fifteen years. He is an Iraq War Veteran with a longtime passion for military history and over twenty years of work in museums and nonprofits.

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How many headlines have you read lately concerning the sad, though inevitable, deterioration of rural communities and the rural way of life?

You may even be one of the many who view rural community economic development as an oxymoron. You might not verbalize your true feelings at the small-town coffee shop any more than you would blurt out that a terminal friend was dying; nonetheless, you are convinced of the sad outcome.

There is no pretending that rural areas are depopulating and face uncertain futures, but it is not from complacency, backward thinking, or lack of effort, as is oftentimes reported. With dwindling financial resources and fewer boots on the ground, small counties and towns are working harder than ever but finding themselves confused by conflicting rural-lifesaving programs offered up by outside consultants and governmental agencies. Many rural leaders and advocates are growing skeptical of these magic rural growth elixirs. They may promise healing, but the deliverables are more akin to hospice. Open wide, try this… it will keep you comfortable until, well… the end!

Even though some state and federal government officials have given up on a bright future or, for that matter, any future for rural towns and regions, the folks in rural communities haven’t. To the rescue, some very highly motivated and downright innovative civic and business leaders are stepping forward! They are advocating for trashing the old and failed rural development models—urban centric, one-size-fits-all, and needs-based—with strategies that focus on and compliment the vast assets and resources that rural areas possess. Who says rural people can’t be trailblazers and foster change? Our own local histories tell us a very different story.

The leaders and community volunteers in the small town of Brookfield and surrounding area are dedicated to reversing the negative economic and social trends experienced by so many of America’s small rural towns. Like them, it has lost employer businesses, struggled to provide quality healthcare, faced...
deteriorating infrastructure, experienced the exodus of too many of its young people, and, in the past, relied on “experts” from the outside to provide solutions.

In a courageous move made over ten years ago and fueled by the unexpected loss of a major employer, Brookfield area stakeholders came together and formed the Brookfield Area Growth Partnership, a nonprofit organization that facilitates change through public–private partnerships. Change is always difficult, and the area’s traditional rural culture even compounds that challenge. However, spearheaded by some pioneering leaders, the community has taken back ownership of its destiny and is now directing its collective energies into local people, businesses, and entrepreneurs and building up its economy from within. The first step was to simply look forward and plan for the future. The second was to look back upon the original trailblazers who settled our region and established our community. They actually created something from nothing, and all we have to do is fix it back up, not by trying to recreate the past but by discovering new opportunities using existing resources.

On the town’s collaborative team you will find representatives from the city’s government, Economic Development Department, Chamber of Commerce, local and regional hospitals, and the area school district, along with banks, businesses, civic organizations, and youth. The overarching mission of this organization is to create a higher quality of life, stronger business environment, and greater economic opportunity in the Brookfield area by merging the efforts and resources of the community partners together into a seamless network—more simply put: by working together! We consider the creation and collective work of this system the catalyst for the positive changes that our community has since experienced.

Across the Highway 36 Corridor, several communities like Brookfield are developing a reputation of success by forming regional networks. They are raising hope that collaboration and rural-focused strategies can lead to greater economic success. The progress being realized is fueling hope that decades of downward trends can be reversed and a more prosperous future is possible for this region.

If you drive down the Main Street of Brookfield today, you might say to yourself, “there is nothing special about this town,” and on the surface you may be right. Engaging in an asset-based community development initiative has forced us to face our problems. On the other hand, it has also compelled us to reprioritize our efforts and approach our future with a sense of pride in what we do have in this community rather than what we don’t, working from strengths instead of limitations. We have departed from traditional “smoke stack chasing” and begun to focus on civic entrepreneurship and system leadership where our citizens engage and share responsibility for building a better Brookfield. The results of this change in attitude have been most encouraging. By connecting the community “dots” through our public–private partnership, we now have in place a network that is stronger and provides better community-wide representation. The better the representation, the better the buy-in. The better the buy-in, the better the results.

When asked by other communities, “What is Brookfield’s secret?” we simply state that the answers are simple but the work is hard. It is really all about just getting along, communicating, growing our network, and owning the outcome. Government and business, education and healthcare, young and old, leaders and volunteers—all working together to achieve a common goal, just as it has always been.

Oh, and don’t forget those folks from the past who sometimes, oh so subtly, send us a message and remind us that the baton has been passed and it’s our turn:

“Brookfield has a monument of which our people may well be proud, and in one hundred years from now, unless removed by the hand of man, it will be standing where it stands now, as artistic and as complete as it is today.” —Brookfield Gazette, May 4, 1912

For the past sixteen years Becky Cleveland has served as coordinator for Community/Economic Development in her hometown of Brookfield. She is also active in the Missouri Economic Development Council, Northwest Roundtable of Economic Developers, Community Foundation of Northwest Missouri, and the Highway 36 Heritage Alliance, organizations that advocate for stronger regional collaboration in promoting economic development in North Missouri.
MEGAN RAPP
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, HANNIBAL CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

“Hannibal has had a hard time of it ever since I can recollect, and I was “raised” there. First, it had me for a citizen, but I was too young then to really hurt the place.” —Mark Twain

In true Twain style, the above quote holds both humor and partial truth. When Samuel Clemens, known around the world by his pen name Mark Twain, was a child, Hannibal, Missouri was a growing river town. The mighty Mississippi connected it to the world. St. Louis, just down the river, was one of the busiest ports in the country. The people Twain knew in his childhood—his friends, family, the people on the steamboats stopping daily, the slaves that were a part of his daily life—all shaped the stories he would later create.

Hannibal holds the legacy of Mark Twain’s childhood and inspired the stories he made. He immortalized Hannibal in his fiction, and Hannibal continually strives to maintain the physical structures and landmarks so strongly associated with this literary icon, making them available for people to enjoy today.

The Mark Twain Boyhood Home and Museum, under the leadership of Director Henry Sweets, maintains eight buildings. All of the properties are part of the Mark Twain Historic District, and Mark Twain’s Boyhood Home is a National Historic Landmark. Twain gives us a gift in his works; he tells us in both his autobiography and in other nonfiction books of the Hannibal residents that inspired some of his most beloved characters, and the homes that remain standing are part of the Mark Twain Boyhood Home and Museum properties.

The museum takes on the herculean task of taking these modest buildings and not only maintaining and restoring them, but fitting the larger-than-life man who was Mark Twain, and his beloved characters, into humble wooden and stone buildings.

“Nothing remains the same. When a man goes back to look at the house of his childhood, it has always shrunk: there is no instance of such a house being as big as the picture in memory and imagination calls for.” —Mark Twain
The humble home of Samuel Clemens is open for visitors to see. The Clemens family being poor, there are no actual artifacts that belonged to them in the period-furnished rooms. Therefore, the museum is allowed to house not only an estimated reproduction of what the home may have looked like, but also the stories it inspired.

“My father was a justice of the peace, and I supposed he possessed the power of life and death over all men.” —Mark Twain

Twain’s father, Judge John Marshall Clemens, was indeed a Justice of the Peace, later the inspiration for Judge Thatcher, Tom Sawyer’s sweetheart’s father in The Adventures of Tom Sawyer. Unfortunately a title did not equal financial success, and he did not make enough money for the family to prosper. In 1847, the Clemens family moved into the second floor of Grant’s Drug Store, where his mother worked as a cook for the family. Judge John Marshall Clemens died there when young Sam Clemens was only eleven, leaving the family in even more strained circumstances. Today, the museum is raising funds to restore Grant’s Drug Store and preserve it for future generations. The work is ongoing and shows the dedication of preserving Mark Twain’s legacy.

John Marshall Clemens’s Justice of the Peace office has already been restored, telling the story of Hannibal’s early justice system and some unforgettable experiences Sam had that would later make it into his stories.

“Laura Hawkins was my sweetheart.” —Mark Twain

The most impressive recent restoration has been the Becky Thatcher House. The home, named after the character that was inspired by the real girl Laura Hawkins, is now an interactive museum area where people of all ages explore the childhood Sam Clemens experienced in 1840s Hannibal. The exhibits opened in the summer of 2016 and have been well received by visitors.

Each year, visitors from nearly 80 countries come to visit the place that Mark Twain made famous in his writings. From the museum’s efforts to preserve the buildings that inspired so many stories to the riverboat that offers people a chance to ride on the mighty Mississippi, Hannibal continues to pay homage to the man who put it on the map. After all, it’s the least this generation can do when America’s greatest writer gave his time in Hannibal such praise:

"Those were pleasant days; none since have been so pleasant, none so well worth living over again.” —Mark Twain

Photos: Left page: Brick Mall area. Below, left to right: The Boyhood Home and the Becky Thatcher House.
The Kansas City Storytelling Celebration, organized by Metropolitan Community College–Maple Woods, launches its eighteenth season in 2017 with something for everyone. Anecdotes, myths, legends, and lessons will honor the timeless tradition of tale weaving with events held at more than one hundred sites across the Kansas City metro area.

Over four days in November, MCC will again partner with local businesses and organizations to bring the surrounding community members the opportunity to experience lifelong learning, cultural diversity, and imaginative entertainment.

Key to the success of this one-of-a-kind event has been the generous grant financing of the Missouri Humanities Council. Over the years, MHC has provided nearly $15,000 to the Storytelling Celebration.

“As a statewide organization, MHC not only ensures a robust outreach for programming like ours, but it also helps us to connect with similar organizations, leveraging the resources of partners across the state to make every dollar go further,” says Mark James, chancellor of Metropolitan Community College.

The Storytelling Celebration features narratives and experiences from all genres. From folktales to tall tales, fantasy, fiction, and fairytales to personal life stories, all share the spotlight to bring the audience a unique understanding of the world at large and of their own lives.

Founded in 1999 with the help of the River and Prairie Storyweavers, the Kansas City Storytelling Celebration has grown from a small group of local tellers to a nationwide event. The original goal of fostering healthy dialogue about diversity and community involvement has grown to include a wider number of individuals each year—from 20,000 in its inaugural year to more than 250,000 a year.

MCC–Maple Woods and its community partners invite patrons to experience this extraordinary event and spread the word about the importance of teaching the community to become citizens of the world through stories. Join this year’s story November 8–11. Schedule details are pending. Check the kcstorytelling.org website for updated information.

Featured storytellers for the 2017 Kansas City Storytelling Celebration:

• Adam Booth: Booth’s storytelling blends traditional folklore, music, and an awareness of contemporary Appalachia. His original voice, both humorous and touching, is influenced by generations of diverse storytellers from West Virginia.

• Geraldine Buckley: Known primarily for personal stories that make people laugh and think, Buckley teaches workshops and performs at conferences, colleges, schools, corporations, and house concerts. Until January 2010, she was the Protestant chaplain at the largest men’s prison in Maryland. In her eclectic past she has been, among other things, a minister in a large London church, a radio DJ, a television newsreader, an events director, a ghostwriter, a food critic, a magazine editor, and an award-winning performance poet.

• Sheila Arnold: Arnold has been a full-time storyteller since 2003, sharing a variety of stories—“whatever tickles her ear.” She has been called a “professional imaginator,” travelling throughout the country providing stories, historic character presentations, Christian monologues, and professional development for educators at schools, churches, libraries, organizations, and storytelling festivals.

• Scott Whitehair: Whitehair is a storyteller, teacher, and producer from Chicago, IL. He is the host of This Much Is True, one of the city’s longest running personal narrative series; director of Do Not Submit, a citywide network of open mics focused on connecting neighbors via their stories; and the creator of Story Lab Chicago, which has put more than 400 new storytellers on stage since 2011 and was recently mentioned in Newsweek and Forbes.

The Missouri Humanities Council is one of several vital community partners. The Kansas City Storytelling Festival’s supporting collective also includes National Storytelling Network; RAPS (River and Prairie Storyweavers); Missouri Arts Council; the Kansas City, Missouri Neighborhood Tourist Development Fund; Arts Council of Metropolitan Kansas City; the Mader Foundation; and Oppensteın Brothers Foundation.

Metropolitan Communications and Public Relations supports Kansas City’s oldest and largest public institution of higher education in its mission of preparing students, serving communities, and creating opportunities. The college educates more than 30,000 students annually through credit and noncredit courses and business services.
As America entered the twentieth century, westward trails had made way for transcontinental trains, and electricity and industry were dotting large swaths of pastoral places with high-energy cities. Urban, rural, agricultural, industrial, East, West, North, South—these once separate ways of life were converging, sometimes clashing, and increasingly blending to become a distinctive American style.

Planted squarely in the middle of that vastly diverse and freshly connected nation was Virgil Thomson, a studious young teen who lived in a working class neighborhood in Kansas City, a crossroads of the emerging culture.

From his earliest days at the family parlor piano to his place as one of the most influential composers in American History, Thomson’s diverse body of work, from symphony to opera to ballet and film score, melded a nation’s story into a unique sound.

This summer, Kansas City-based Inland Sea Productions will complete a feature documentary on Thomson’s life and work for the national PBS series American Masters. With the support of the Missouri Humanities Council and private foundations, the filmmakers have captured live performances of Thomson’s works across the country and have interviewed a variety of scholars and performers. In celebration of Thomson’s Kansas City roots, the producers are working with the Gem Cultural Educational Center at the city’s 18th and Vine entertainment district to host the film’s national preview screening and produce companion educational programs for music and history education.

To explore Virgil’s life and work is to unearth a rich and engaging guide to America in the twentieth century.

Having practiced on the Thomsons’ parlor piano, young Virgil’s foray into public performance was as an organist at the family’s neighborhood Baptist church, where spare hymns and choral music became his foundation. By his teens, the budding artist found regular gigs as an accompanist for a nearby silent movie house, where, without sheet music or guides, he had the freedom to interpret the wordless emotions flickering on the screen. Across town via streetcar, Virgil attended operas and travelling shows and frequented bandstand performances at the dazzling Electric Park. A short walk from the Thomson home were 12th and 14th streets, where wide open windows at bordellos and clubs gave forth a rich and
textured mix of ragtime, blues, and emerging jazz. A small island of art in the segregated city, this neighborhood housed “Black and Tan” clubs, where both African American and white artists played separately but side by side. Patrons were a raucous mix of local regulars and a stream of visitors stopping through the city’s rail center. From cowboys freshly paid after long cattle drives from Texas, to Eastern and Western urbanites stopping over mid-journey, the district was a free-flowing experiment of music. A few blocks from Virgil’s family home was the 18th and Vine district, the city’s African American center. A tightly knit community for those barred from Kansas City’s “whites only” establishments, it was a neighborhood young Virgil traversed regularly, observing and absorbing its rhythms and styles, watching and listening as it blossomed into a vibrant incubator of jazz.

By the time Thomson left Kansas City to attend Harvard and serve in World War I, he was steeped in sounds and styles that would inform his musical style throughout his career, where he incorporated parlor ballads, Baptist hymns, Sousa marches, cowboy folk tunes, and blues and jazz into his operas, symphonies, song cycles, and documentary film scores. His diverse and highly original style, rooted in American speech rhythms and hymnbook harmonies, became emblematic of the “American Sound” made famous years later by Aaron Copland and then “borrowed” and popularized by the composers of movie music (especially Westerns), television series, and radio/TV commercials (e.g., the “Marlboro man”).

For nearly a century now, the Americana of Aaron Copland cum Virgil Thomson has been recognized and fervently embraced as the definitive musical portrait of our nation. Copland’s “Billy the Kid,” “Lincoln Portrait,” or “Fanfare for the Common Man” can be heard at virtually every event of national significance, whether celebratory, stately, or mournful. But Thomson, the urbane Kansas City-bred composer who inspired those big, spacious chords and edgy charm, is at serious risk of being forgotten, not only by the public but by the future students and teachers of American classical music.

The producers of Virgil Thomson: Creating the American Sound will remedy that risk. When Thomson died in September 1989, Leonard Bernstein said of him:

[Virgil] will always remain brightly alive in the history of music, if only for the extraordinary influence his witty and simplistic music had on his colleagues. I know that I am one twig on that tree, and I will always cherish and revere Virgil, the source.

Aimee Larrabee is an award-winning journalist who founded Inland Sea Productions in 1994 with the goal of creating authentic and accurate motion pictures that become the centerpieces of multiplatform programming.

Aaron Copland is by far the most illustrious and familiar purveyor of this American sound, but Thomson, Copland’s lifelong friend and colleague, was a primary source of the musical innovations and inspirations on which Copland’s American idiom was founded. Thomson’s Symphony on a Hymn Tune and, most particularly, his innovative film scores for the New Deal documentaries The Plow that Broke the Plain and The River, served as prototypes for the American classical sound brilliantly perfected by Copland and then “borrowed” and popularized by the composers of movie music (especially Westerns), television series, and radio/TV commercials (e.g., the “Marlboro man”).
The news came as a surprise and Columbians were shaken. Shakespeare’s Pizza would be demolished, they asked? The iconic pizza joint adjacent to Mizzou’s campus that had for over forty years attracted national attention? The restaurant and bar that had been the scene of hundreds of thousands of dates and family gatherings since 1973? “It’s coming down? It can’t be!” they said. “But Shakespeare’s is historic!” people exclaimed. “You can’t tear it down!”

It was April of 2015 when that story hit the local papers. And it was a mere two months later when the building located at 9th and Elm Streets was demolished by bulldozers. And so, a community debate that had already been kindled by the demolition of a handful of other downtown properties to make room for high-end student housing (read: expensive, private, luxury apartments for students) was inflamed once more. Adding to people’s concerns was the existing state of downtown Columbia’s electric, stormwater, and sewer infrastructure.

It was at this point the Boone County Historical Society and Museum’s staff and volunteers chose to undertake the creation of a new history exhibit that would assist in some small way to bring understanding and perspective to our downtown’s history. Themes of historical vs. sentimental, property owner’s rights vs. citizen’s cherished landmarks, and the constancy of change in today’s urban centers were all ripe for discussion and interpretation.

Ironically, the Boone County Historical Museum possesses hundreds of thousands of photographs of Boone County individuals from 1915 through 1965 in its permanent collection, yet possesses only a modest collection of historical photographs that depict the streets, buildings, and commercial life of downtown Columbia. To build a comprehensive exhibit that would fill the 3,000-square-foot gallery, the Society reached out to the State Historical Society of Missouri to obtain additional photographs, whose compositions included entire blocks of downtown Columbia in the 1940s and 1950s.

When the exhibit opened during the winter of 2016 (and with no small amount of help from a Missouri Humanities Council grant) a simulated walk down Broadway of the 1930s, ’40s, and ’50s was the central hub of the exhibit. Photos of large segments of Columbia’s Broadway were enlarged to 8” x 10” and supported by aluminum frames. Some of the “photo murals” were set up opposing each other with a ten-foot ‘walkway’ between them. The circumference of the gallery utilized a dozen exhibit cases featuring supporting artifacts, documents, and interpretation.

_I Remember When—Downtown Columbia 1935–1965_ included authentic pieces of clothing, household appliances, dishware, and dairy items purchased from downtown retailers between 1935 and 1965 and used by Columbia residents through those decades. There were also photographs, tools, and other artifacts related to automotive sales and service. Enormous ice-block forms
and panels loaned by the heirs of the Columbia Ice House on East Broadway were displayed along with photos and text panels describing the history and process for freezing and delivering ice to households without electricity. Other highlights included objects found in the many drugstore soda fountain counters in downtown Columbia and antique pool cues and billiards on loan from the nationally-acclaimed Booches Billiards.

Many volunteers were responsible for developing and executing the exhibit. Credit is due to Sue Viola, Carolyn Spier, Laurel Wilson, Marjory Johnson, Dick Otto, Mike Lynch, John Fetters, Joan Sorrels, and Richard Sorrels.

Historical research and photographs were integrated to tell the story of downtown Columbia’s people, its commerce, its architecture, and its methods of advertising. The exhibit also illustrated how the growth of this college town has impacted today’s residents as well as the state’s growth and history. The exhibit has since been retired and replaced with one highlighting 100 years of childhood experiences in Boone County. But the year-long exhibit served its purpose. Discussions were generated and visitors were provided an opportunity to form their own perspective about both historic preservation and the ever-evolving nature of town centers. And Shakespeare’s Pizza found another home. In fact, an amazing reincarnation took place. The owners of the new student high-rise apartment building built in place of the one-story brick building that housed Shakespeare’s went to great lengths. They rebuilt the interior of Shakespeare’s by photographing nearly every square foot of the restaurant and then replicating it as perfectly as they possibly could—and on the very same footprint. Today Shakespeare’s is on the ground floor of the new building with the same décor, kitchen, crew, and tables. When you walk through its doors today, you will encounter the long-familiar and gratifying visuals and aromas. We can’t always hold on to our cherished buildings and landmarks, but sometimes a collaboration can create the next best thing. In the meantime, the Boone County Historical Society and hundreds of more organizations and museums like ours throughout Missouri will continue to preserve, conserve, acknowledge, interpret, celebrate, and educate.

Chris Campbell is the Executive Director of the Boone County Historical Society (BCHS). Chris’s background is an unlikely one for a museum director, having spent a thirty-year career in nonprofits, the performing arts, and executive administration at Paramount Pictures before coming to BCHS, a 93-year-old nonprofit organization that operates the Walters Boone County Historical Museum, the adjacent Montminy Art Gallery, Maplewood House, and the four living-history venues known as The Junction at Boone Village. All of them can be found in Columbia’s historic Nifong Park.

For the tenth anniversary of the True/False Film Fest, we made a commemorative book; on its cover was a borrowed phrase we thought both a challenge and a truth: *Rarely has reality needed so much to be imagined*. That was four years ago.

As we reflect on this year’s edition of True/False (March 2–5, 2017), we find these words to be truer than ever. Since its inception, True/False has sought to champion the best in new nonfiction—and to bring those films and filmmakers from around the world to Columbia, Missouri. These stories come from Philadelphia and Mexico, New Jersey and China, and the discussion that follows, be it at post-film director Q&As, cafés, or the ticket lines that spill onto the sidewalks, is the other essential part of the True/False equation. We have never been about only the lineup; what makes True/False magical year after year is the challenge our four-day experiment poses for our community and attendees: why not reimagine reality?

In the era of countless information outlets, fake news, and computers in our pockets, the need for a media-literate public is more urgent than ever. At True/False, we cultivate a sense of inquiry by programming films that reside “in the slash” between “True” and “False.” Our films often play with the application of feature fiction filmmaking techniques rather than traditional documentary methods. In the case of *Casting JonBenet* (T/F 2017), we have a filmmaker whose film is a series of interviews and audition sessions with actors playing individuals involved in the JonBenét Ramsey case. Another True/False headliner this year, *Quest*, could not have been more different. Over the course of a decade, the director (Jon Olshefski) and the film’s subjects (the indomitable Rainey family) became close friends. The result is an intimate, slow-burning portrait of an American family.

The filmmakers who accompany their films to the Fest, the audience of 15,000 individual attendees, the artists, musicians, and the thousands of students and citizens who participate in a range of free and open-to-the-public educational activities are all engaged in this media literacy effort. Conversations that pair experts with curious minds are what make True/False great. As we reimagine reality, we believe that dialogues like these will move us forward.
Missouri River Relief Connects Volunteers to River History and Lore

KATHY LOVE

The audience was moved to tears when Marideth Sisco talked about how the “wide Missouri” separated pioneers from their homes and loved ones at the “Missouri River in Story and Song” event on May 1, 2016 in Kansas City. She sang original words to “Oh Shenandoah.” Her unaccompanied tenor voice, plaintive and beautiful, recalled how the Missouri River moved settlers into unknown territory, assuming its rightful place in the history, lore, and legend of the Westward Expansion. The Missouri Humanities Council helped bring Sisco, a storyteller and musician from West Plains, and Cathy Barton and Dave Para, musicians from Boonville, to the Musical Theater Heritage stage in Kansas City’s Crown Center.

Missouri River Relief hosted the event to honor their namesake river. River Relief is a sixteen-year-old nonprofit whose mission is trash—eliminating it, that is—from the river that provides nearly half of Missourians with their drinking water. The group formed in 2001 with a community cleanup in Easley that brought people together from as far away as Maine and California. It was so successful it has been replicated now with more than 150 cleanup events in thirty communities, engaging more than 22,000 volunteers to clean 1,088 river miles, removing more than 1.7 million pounds of trash from the river. But it does far more than clean up the river.

“We want people to connect with the river,” said Jeff Barrow, executive director. “Most people never get to experience the Missouri River. We make the river accessible so they can enjoy its beauty, plus we give them a mission they can feel good about. It’s eye-opening and inspiring. It can even be a life-changing event for them. They go back to their homes and realize the trash they see along the roadsides or in backyards will likely end up in a river or stream. They start to look for ways to change things for the better.”

Below: Removing large, heavy objects from riverbanks requires applying a little physics and a lot of muscle.
Volunteers at River Relief cleanups get a T-shirt, gloves, and a trash bag. If weather permits, they are taken by boat to trashy areas that have been scouted by crew the day before. The volunteers scramble in mud, over rocks, up banks, and through weeds to pick up Styrofoam, plastic bottles, old tires, and derelict appliances. Over the years, they’ve picked up three hot tubs, a piano, a Studebaker hubcap, a kitchen sink, and fifty messages in bottles. Part of the fun of a cleanup is discovery. Unusual items are displayed after the event so everyone can admire the treasure trove of trash. At the end of a cleanup, volunteers are dirty, tired, and smiling ear to ear.

In 2015 River Relief hired education coordinator Kristen Schulte to engage students and teachers in river-related learning activities and curricula. The organization conducts River Academies each summer to help teachers learn how to use the river as an educational resource to teach science, social studies, English language, arts, and math. A separate academy leads teens to investigate the natural and cultural history of the Missouri River. “We discover the river ecosystems and the natural forces that shaped them,” Schulte said. “The river is a great, underutilized learning resource. It’s important to understand how human choices have affected its rhythm and flow, and how to protect it as one of the state’s most valuable resources.”

Native Americans referred to the river as “Pekitanoui.” They paddled the braided channels of the river in canoes carved from sycamore and cottonwood trees, leading to the origin of its name, “River of the Big Canoes.” (The French translation, “ouemessourit,” referred to the native people who lived along the river. The root, “messourit,” means “canoe” in Illini-Algonkian language.) The Missouri River was the path westward for Lewis and Clark, a conduit for the fur trade, a transportation corridor for pioneers headed west, and a supply line for early settlers. Steamboats plied their way up and down the river, occasionally blowing a steam engine or hitting a dreaded snag, spilling their precious cargo into the muddy depths of the river. The river was a lifeline and source of drinking water to some, a sewer and source of dread to others. In the twentieth century, engineers tried to tame its twisting channels, building dikes and revetments to trap sediment that accreted into rich bottomland farmland. Historic floods continue to dramatize the untamed nature of the Big Muddy.

Missouri River Relief offers many avenues for enjoying and understanding the Big Muddy. A speakers series, held monthly in St. Louis and Columbia, explores the natural features of the Missouri River and how humans impact its health. Its website, bigmuddyspeakers.org, is a “one-stop shop” for information about the river. To learn more about cleanup events and Missouri River Relief education programs, visit the website, riverrelief.org and click on 2017 events.

Kathy Love attended the first Missouri River Relief cleanup in Easley in 2001 and has served on its board for eons. She is a freelance writer and editor based in Boone and Shannon counties and has recently completed a book, Sage-Grouse: Icon of the American West, with photographs by Noppadol Paothong, to be published this fall.
DR. BETSY DELMONICO

The Missouri Folklore Society’s annual conference travels freely around the state, most recently in Kirksville, and next November in Sikeston, but its birthplace and mailing address are Columbia. Its permanent officers include Boonville’s wonderful folk singers Cathy Barton and Dave Para.

Founded in 1906 by faculty and students in Mizzou’s English Club, the Missouri Folklore Society involved both academics and non-academics who insisted that old half-remembered songs were worth studying. It quickly became a state-wide group, keeping membership costs low so curious students and energetic tradition bearers could join. It defined “folklore” broadly, as “customs, institutions, superstitions, signs, legends, language and literature of all races.” In 1916, 120 people attended the St. Louis meeting.

Within two decades, however, the annual conference had become a wing of the Missouri State Teachers Association. Costs had increased, membership decreased, and funding was weak. Most members were collecting Missouri versions of French or Irish lore, though a few, like long-term president Mary Alicia Owen of St. Joseph, devoted their energies to Sac and Fox Indians and former slaves. When Owen died in 1935, the organization quietly disappeared.

Then, in 1977, it rose again. The first stirrings came from Columbia—from the likes of Adolf and Becky Schroeder, Donald Lance, and a very young Cathy Barton. The reborn Folklore Society committed itself to a democratic respect for folk artists and tradition bearers, whether university-trained or not. And it re-committed itself to inclusiveness.

As it grew, it frequently relied on funding from the Missouri Humanities Council, the Missouri Arts Council, and the NEH and NEA. Over the past forty years, chambers of commerce, museum curators, and local colleges in twenty-two places have also cooperated with MFS. The results have been impressive: thousands statewide have experienced folksongs and fiddling, tales, jokes, memes, dances, and foods from all of Missouri’s cultures.

Fast forward to November 2016. Organizers Adam Davis (perennial MFS secretary), Betsy Delmonico (temporary president), and Barb Price (long-term board member) chose the Kirksville Days Inn venue and decided to honor Missouri farmers, osteopathy (Kirksville being the birthplace of osteopathic medicine), and the community’s newest immigrants.

We solicited talks on farm life: mules, mud, melons, and eco-villages. An MAC mini-grant brought us “Green Strum.”

Celebrating MISSOURI’S DIVERSE Folk

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Top left: Congolese-now-Missourian griot, Chief Bokulaka Illonga, lectured and demonstrated the music his family has performed for many generations—then taught attendees to dance. His MFS appearance was sponsored by the MHC, but he stayed on to give a free post-conference concert.

Top right: This painting, loaned to the Kirksville Arts Association exhibit by Joanna Marshall, depicts a group of five women shopping in a traditional manner in Havana, Cuba.

Bottom left: This Dogon carved figure from Burkino Faso and “Two Sisters” painting by Senegalese artist Ibrahima Wade are among the African riches loaned to the Kirksville Arts Association’s November exhibit.

Middle right: A middle school class visits the KAA exhibit later in November. The photograph is by Jana Russon, the photographer who documented the building’s destruction by fire on December 2, two days after this exhibit came down—and one day after the Hands of Friendship Quilters’ exhibit opened.

Bottom right: In Kirksville in 1892, Andrew Taylor Still (1828–1917) founded the American School of Osteopathy (now A.T. Still University). Its extraordinary museum was open for MFS attendees to tour. MHC historian Ken Winn explained how nineteenth-century med students acquired their cadavers.
musician Ryan Spearman, who joined Howard Marshall, Dave Para, Cathy Barton, Judy Domeny Bowen, and about thirty others in making music. The Hands of Friendship Quilters did a grand trunk show. Dozens of presentations tagged Missouri’s rural folklife, past and present.

To showcase our medical heritage, we recruited Jason Haxton, director of the A.T. Still Medical Museum, to talk and conduct a tour. MHC’s Show Me Missouri sent us historian Ken Winn, whose “Body Snatching” presentation explained how nineteenth-century medical students acquired cadavers.

But MFS this year paid most attention to Missouri’s newest communities. Between 2003 and 2016, the region’s Latinx and African populations doubled. To showcase their folklore, MFS secured small grants from the Missouri Humanities Council and Truman State University and put together several programs.

The celebration of Latinx folklore started at the registration table, where Greg Olson’s MHC traveling exhibit on Sac and Fox Indians represented one culture with strong resonances. On Saturday, Axel Fuentes brought a group from Milan—a town whose Latinx population is about 45 percent—to perform Guatemalan dances for corn-planting, courting, and honoring ancestors. El Salvadoran native Leyda Flores cooked pupusas, stuffing homemade tortillas with pork and cabbage.

The celebration of Africa began with a dinner at Truman State University featuring foods from old Missouri cookbooks. Afterwards, African American storyteller Loretta Washington launched her memoir, My Corner of the Porch (Missouri Folklife Society Journal, Volume 32). Washington grew up among sharecroppers in a deeply segregated Bootheel; her book highlights the resilience, intelligence, and humor of people whose grandparents had been slaves. She brought her characters to life, her teasing voice and gestures making their stubborn optimism as real as the flapjacks and peach brandy Aint Tankie concocted. “Absolutely amazing,” was the consensus.

Kirksville’s new African immigrants, however, are not the descendants of slaves. As Sana Camara, Truman Professor of French, explained in his plenary session, our newest Afro-Missourians did not grow up with our stereotypes. European colonizers had tried to devalue Africa’s cultures, but the cultures endured. Richard Yampanya, community organizer, proved the point by bringing a Congolese griot, Bokulaka Ilonga, from St. Louis to lecture, drum, sing, and teach MFS members to dance. In a free post-conference concert at the Presbyterian church, Bokulaka, along with jazz saxophonist Heritier Elombe and singer Christelle Mukendi, demonstrated the African roots of much contemporary music, again teaching listeners to dance. Celeste Nyembe made samposas for both events, showcasing Afro-American foodways.

The Kirksville Arts Association cooperated with MFS and thirty-two Missouri art collectors/artists in creating a parallel “Celebrating Missouri’s Diverse Folk” exhibit. From hand-stamped adinkra to hand-made zither, it foregrounded practical arts. Clara Straight’s oil painting depicted sorghum-making; a Congolese sawdust painting showed women pounding yams. A Puerto Rican vejigante mask contrasted an ebony one from Senegal; wood carvings ranged from Peruvian flutes to adult-sized rocking horses. Posters of A.T. Still plucking medicinal fruit a century ago complemented an enormous digital painting of corn, done on cloth by a young eco-artist. The conference ended November 5, but the exhibit stayed up all month.

This year’s conference will be in Sikeston, November 2–4. Hopefully, the Missouri Folklore Society will again partner with the Missouri Humanities Council, the Missouri Arts Council, and local groups to celebrate our state’s rich cultures. For further information, see the MFS newsletters: missourifolkloresociety.truman.edu/newsletter/mfsnewsletterfall2016.pdf.

Betsy Delmonico retired from Truman State University in 2016 after thirty-four years of teaching English. After her year as President of the Missouri Folklore Society, she happily handed the gavel to co-presidents John and Carol Fisher and Ken and Janelle Burch.
DON STRAND

Three years ago, I was presenting my family story to an eighth grade class in an underserved school in Daly City, California, a few miles south of San Francisco. A few of the students knew me because I mentored them on Monday mornings. To the others I was just another visitor. The room was a rich cultural mix of Latino, Asian, African American, and Pacific Islander students. Many appeared sleepy, having stayed up late the night before and not eaten breakfast that morning. The class was U.S. History, and the kids looked like the last thing they wanted to hear was the personal story of someone like me—a middle-aged white man.

I asked them, “Who likes U.S. history?” Only two of the twenty-six students raised their hands. I said, “Dang, this is gonna be a challenge for me.” That elicited a chuckle from a young man with a single ear bud hanging over one ear. Soon he turned toward the window in detachment, staring at the heavy fog outside.

As I slid my iPad out of its case, a few students gradually wriggled up from their adolescent slouch. Not that they hadn’t seen an iPad before. After all, they shared a county border with Silicon Valley. But their school technology was limited to an antiquated overhead projector. Thanks to invaluable funding by the Missouri Humanities Council and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, I had just created an iPad app to tell the story of my third great-grandmother Pelagie Amoureux: She was born into slavery in Ste. Geneviève, Missouri, fell in love with a French nobleman’s son, obtained her freedom in 1832, and possessed the courage to take men to court who harmed her.

When designing the app, our goal was simply to tell a compelling story through video and primary historical documents. We installed an iPad in the historic eighteenth-century Bauvais-Amoureux house, where Pelagie had raised her mixed-race family, and made the free app available on iTunes so any teacher or student with an iPad could access the intriguing story. We chose the iPad as the tool for delivery because, in my experience, the way to draw kids to history is to hide it in a piece of technology. It worked! Technology itself, though, was only a carrot. We had to provide a provocative narrative and pose questions to the young viewers. We needed to engage kids through fresh and accurate words and enable them to “see” history through a new lens. Kids demand “real” and “relevant,” so that’s what we gave them. We eliminated the word “slave” and used “enslaved”—the former was a label to control another human being, where the latter accurately describes a condition. We replaced the word “master” with “enslaver,” shifting the justifiable shame to the subjugator. We purged the words “brought over from Africa” and correctly recorded the act as “kidnapped.” These changes alone help remove the walls kids put up in protection against hurtful characterizations.

In Pelagie’s story, students are able to relate to a part of U.S. history through the eyes and heart of the sufferer, a woman born into slavery. The observers now
can become the observed; the students more acutely sense Pelagie’s pain and feel the sting of injustice. In one of the short video segments, students are asked, “Do you ever have people in your life who are hatin’ on you, talkin’ behind your back, those who are disguised as friends?” This question often evokes an immediate connection to bullying in students’ lives today, and the gap of 150 years of history falls away. Their conscience is stimulated and rich classroom dialogue begins.

At times I questioned whether I was qualified to tell Pelagie’s story. I’m neither a professional historian nor a writer. I worried this may be yet another white man interpreting African American history—about a woman, no less. I was concerned that students might be lost without a strong background of African American history, a critical ingredient that is still mostly missing in textbooks today. Yet there was something that pushed me forward, an internal nudge that said, “Give kids what’s in your heart.”

The final outcome and response to the app was something I couldn’t have imagined. Three years after our initial funding, the app has over 200,000 downloads by schools not only nearby but far beyond the banks of the Mississippi. My next goal is to reach the poorer banks of all rivers, those schools that don’t have iPads but may have access to smart phones.

I wrapped up my presentation that day by playing the app’s final video segment. All my doubts and fears faded away. The students saw my extended family, a mosaic of skin tones brought together. They grasped a universal message of acceptance and perseverance and an acknowledgment of the cruelty and courage of our past. I asked the class, “What is the message for you here?” A girl in the front responded, “Love over fear.” The young man with the ear bud was now sitting up in his chair, his arm straight and hand raised. He answered, “Never give up.”

Timeless messages not only for the students, but also for their presenter that day.

Don Strand volunteers as a financial literacy instructor at Alive & Free, a youth violence prevention organization based in San Francisco, and as the developer of the educational website AmHouse.org. To access the free iPad app, go to AmHouse.org/app.
New Exhibition Opens Exploring the Missouri Immigrant Experience, with Focus on the Contributions of Germans
On April 21, 1938, President Franklin D. Roosevelt spoke before a meeting of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). After regaling the audience with details about his family’s deep ties to the nation’s founding, the president beseeched those listening to “remember, remember always that all of us… are descended from immigrants and revolutionists.” This simple idea, while ignoring the experience of Native Americans and many African Americans, nonetheless expresses a central value of the United States, that we through our heritage are a place that welcomes and values people from other nations and cultures. It is an idea enshrined on the Statue of Liberty and one that as a nation we have strived with varied success to live up to.

This idea is at the heart of an exhibition of photography entitled the Missouri Immigrant Experience, which opened in the Rozier Gallery of the Missouri State Museum in Jefferson City on March 7. The Missouri Immigrant Experience, which includes both historic and contemporary photographs of immigrant communities, was meant to juxtapose past and present immigrants in the hopes that visitors will see the ways in which past generations of newcomers have contributed to society and encourage the understanding that if they are not buried under the weight of nativism, current and future generations will do the same.

The exhibition, originally developed by the Missouri Immigrant and Refugee Advocates (MIRA, mira-mo.org), the only statewide coalition dedicated to protecting immigrant and refugee rights, has with this display of the exhibition partnered with the Missouri Humanities Council and the Missouri German Consortium to develop a greater focus on the German experience in the state while still retaining the larger narrative about immigrant diversity. This focus on Germans was motivated by the creation last July of the Missouri German Heritage Corridor by the Missouri Legislature. The corridor, which extends from St. Louis to Saline County along the Missouri River, is meant to encourage the study and increased focus on the way that Germans, who settled the state in the nineteenth century, transformed the culture and economy of the state in ways that still impact us today. The corridor was also intended to encourage increased cultural tourism along the route.

The Missouri Immigrant Experience can be viewed until May 13 at the Missouri State Museum in Jefferson City, MO and will spend June–August at the German American Heritage Museum in Washington, DC before coming to the Chesterfield Community Center in Chesterfield, MO in October–December.

Joan Suarez is a lifelong activist who has worked for the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, as the International Vice President of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (now Workers United), and with Missouri Jobs with Justice, where she helped to found the Missouri Immigrant and Refugee Advocates.

Daniel Gonzales is the Public Historian for St. Louis County and has been a board member with the Missouri Immigrant and Refugee Advocates since 2013.

Our last issue of MO Humanities introduced many facets of Missouri’s German Heritage Project. In it, Executive Director Steve Belko explained that the project as a whole will explore the migration and settlement patterns of Germans in Missouri over the course of roughly two centuries. Through this project, we hope to reveal how German immigrants were influenced by the cultures they encountered in Missouri, as well as how they themselves impacted the culture of the state.

Since last fall, our nine-member project team has met on multiple occasions to set forth our priorities for the planning period. Our next step will be convening our two dozen contributing scholars and project team members for a series of planning meetings this summer in St. Louis. These meetings will illuminate and contextualize nearly two centuries of German immigration into Missouri. One of the main focuses of our scholars and project team will be determining settlement patterns in Missouri of immigrants coming from Germany. In some cases, these settlers named towns in Missouri overtly after their homeland (one example being Westphalia), but other sites and settlements are not so obvious. Our goal is to find out where in Germany these immigrants came from and where they settled in Missouri.

The results of the scholarly meetings will provide the foundation for an interpretive plan. That plan will serve as a blueprint for public workshops and community conversations to collect and document stories related to the German heritage of Missourians. We hope Missouri’s German Heritage project will assist other states interested in creating their own comprehensive, programmatic resource for their German cultural heritage.

Additionally, the project team has identified four components to be laid out in the interpretive plan: traveling and permanent exhibits (permanent exhibits will be erected...
at select sites throughout the German Heritage Corridor; traveling exhibits will circulate the state for a period of at least three years), site interpretation (including the study and interpretation of historic settlements, structures, and landscapes related to the state’s German heritage), digital public history (electronic documentation of artifacts, oral histories, language and dialects, historic sites and settlements, and an electronic bibliography of all Missouri German-related sources), and public programming (speaker series, curriculum development, teacher education workshops, and “share your story” community conversations). Each component relies equally on both scholarly and public input.

We will be in this development stage for about a year before we begin to implement these components into local communities. MHC will apply for a National Endowment for the Humanities Implementation Grant next year to assist in funding the programs set forth during the planning process. We are very excited to be going forward with Missouri’s German Heritage project alongside the many individuals and organizations who have supported us, matching our excitement for such a massive (and much needed) statewide project. Prost!

For more information on the German Heritage Corridor, contact Caitlin Yager at caitlin@mohumanities.org.
CLAIRE BRUNTRAGER  
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, MISSOURI HUMANITIES COUNCIL

The Peers Store has stood steadfastly in the Missouri flood plains for over a century. It is fondly remembered by Marthasville residents today as the Glosemeyer’s General Store, long serving the surrounding area and travelers of the Katy Railroad with food and community. MHC is excited to announce that this historic structure will now serve as the pilot project for public programming throughout the German Heritage Corridor.

The Peers Store resides in the heart of the German Heritage Corridor, and at the center of the rich story of German settlement in Missouri. In 1893, George Glosemeyer began its construction in the newly established town of Peers, only a year after the Missouri–Kansas–Texas Railroad (known as the Katy) was laid through the area. Six decades earlier, George’s father and grandparents fled civil unrest and economic depression in their home country of Germany. The Glosemeyers were among the first German settlers to the area, which was quickly becoming a haven for German immigrants.

Throughout the twentieth century, the Glosemeyer’s General Store prospered along the Katy Railroad. It was the center of life in the town of Peers, operating as the area’s general store, coffee house, and post office. The business was passed down to succeeding generations of Glosemeyers, and the family kept it running despite decades of major floods from the nearby Missouri River. However, in 1986, the Katy Railroad was discontinued and the general store went into decline. In 2012, after one hundred and sixteen years in business, the store closed.

Fortunately, in 2014, the building was purchased by Dan and Connie Burkhardt, and restoration efforts commenced. The Peers Store serves as the focal point of the Katy Land Trust, founded by the Burkhardts. Its mission “seeks to educate all Missourians about the value of our rural landscape and farmland, and to provide landowners an opportunity to keep their land permanently in agricultural, forestry or recreational use.”

In 2015, the Peers Store reopened. Today, the store’s shelves now showcase paintings by Bryan Haynes featured in the Burkhardts’ new book, Growing Up With the River: Nine Generations on the Missouri.

The Missouri Humanities Council, in partnership with the Katy Land Trust, is in the process of planning public programming at the Peers Store. In addition to its art exhibit, MHC plans to bring in local artisans, living history, and an interpretative exhibit highlighting not just the Peers Store’s German heritage, but the rich German
heritage of the surrounding area. We hope to involve the community in oral histories and family artifact interpretation. As the Corridor expands, the Peers Store will help pioneer future programming.

In the meantime, the Peers Store opened for the 2017 season on April 15. The store will be open every Saturday and Sunday from noon to 4:00 PM through October. Visitors can enjoy artwork in the gallery and live music on the front porch. Special events this summer include State Park tram rides from Marthasville to Peers on May 21 to celebrate Marthasville’s Bicentennial and an Eclipse Party on August 21. The Peers Store will also be included among the stops for the October St. Louis and Missouri Wine Country Bike Tour by Trek Travel Company (TrekTravel.com/Missouri).

For a full list of events and store details, visit KatyLandTrust.org. For further questions regarding the Peers Store, please contact Dan Burkhardt at bethlehemvalley@aol.com. For more information on the German Heritage Corridor, contact Caitlin Yager at caitlin@mohumanities.org.

Photo by Clearly Video.
Painting the Midwest: First Inhabitants

Selections from the Collection of Timothy and Jeanne Drone
Long before the United States’s Midwest was charted by explorers, missionaries, and settlers in what is now known as Missouri and Illinois, many Native American tribes existed and thrived, numbering in the thousands and stretching across its plains, hills, and riverbanks. It is in large part due to these early adventurers and the artists who documented them that we can look back into a time long lost, when the Midwest was home to many indigenous Native American tribes.

In an effort to celebrate these tribes, the Perry County Community Foundation proudly presents an original exhibit, *Painting the Midwest: First Inhabitants*. This extraordinary exhibit consists of nearly one hundred selections from the collection of Timothy and Jeanne Drone. The heart of the exhibit will highlight eight indigenous Midwest tribes: Cheyenne, Chickasaw, Illini, Iowa (Ioway), Osage, Oto, Quapaw, and Missouri (Missouria). Authentic Native American artifacts from the Drone collection associated with each specific tribe are featured in paintings by artist Michael Haynes depicting the lifestyles of Midwest Native Americans. Whether it’s a tomahawk, bow and arrow, a maiden dress, or a peace medal, it is displayed alongside the painting to create a strong visual reference point for an otherwise inanimate object.

Other renowned artists featured will include Karl Bodmer and George Catlin, both known for capturing the essences of Native American warriors, chiefs, and tribal rituals encountered during nineteenth century expeditions, as well as Charles Bird King, best known for his portrayals of significant Native American leaders and tribemen visiting Washington between 1822–1842.

Whether you are an art connoisseur or a history hound, this exhibit will educate, excite, and inspire both the young and the experienced, bringing realization, recognition, and appreciation to the earliest inhabitants of the Midwest, the artists who masterfully captured that moment in history, and our own aspirations to connect the two and revitalize a past, lest we forget.

*With nineteen years of county government and thirty years of cultural and historical experience, Trish has served as the Perry County Heritage Tourism director since it was created in 2015 to promote the heritage and culture of Perry County.*

Photos:
Left center: Osage Tomahawk, late nineteenth/early twentieth century, collection of St. Louis University High School, gift of Timothy & Jeanne Drone Fine Art Trust.
In August 1861, newly minted brigadier general Ulysses Grant arrived in Cape Girardeau, where he established headquarters for an army he was assembling for his first strike south. He took a room at the St. Charles Hotel, at the corner of Main Street and Themis, a landmark of Cape Girardeau that stood for a hundred years after Grant’s visit. On another corner of that intersection is Heritage Hall, a building not so old as the St. Charles but now the landmark headquarters of the Kellerman Foundation for Historic Preservation.

The U.S. Grant Symposium began its history in 2014 in a collaboration between Missouri’s Civil War Heritage Foundation and the Missouri Humanities Council. Now, coming on September 19, 2017, the symposium is to be hosted by Cape Girardeau. This fourth annual event will be at Heritage Hall and will feature Ronald C. White of the Huntington Library of California, author of 2016’s American Ulysses. This eye-opening biography of Grant has been aptly described by the Wall Street Journal: “Ronald White has restored Ulysses S. Grant to his proper place in history with a biography whose breadth and tone suit the man perfectly. Like Grant himself, this book will have staying power.”

Cape Girardeau, an original member of the U. S. Grant Trail, has taken a number of steps in recent years to claim its rightful place in Civil War history. Among many resources for visitors, including an intact Civil War earthwork, Ulysses Grant began his campaign that culminated in the capture of Vicksburg, Mississippi from the Cape Girardeau waterfront.

The Missouri Humanities Council is the principal sponsor and organizer of this year’s symposium, along with the U. S. Grant Trail and Southeast Missouri State University. The Cape Girardeau Convention and Visitors Bureau is also participating in the presentation of the event. Planned speakers in addition to Dr. White are: Frank Nickell, Ph.D., Associate Professor Emeritus of History of SEMO and currently Associate Director of the State Historical Society of Missouri (Cape Girardeau Research Center); author and high school teacher Darrel Dexter of Jonesboro, Illinois; and Missouri Humanities Council staffer and author Gregory Wolk.

The event begins at 1:00 PM at Heritage Hall, 102 North Main Street in Cape Girardeau on Tuesday, September 19. The public is invited to meet Dr. White at a reception that will be held at Heritage Hall from 3:30 PM to 5:00 PM. Copies of his book will be available for purchase and signing by the author.

Heritage Hall will display the Civil War exhibit funded by the Missouri Humanities Council and the Missouri History Museum, A State Divided: The Civil War in Missouri, during the time of the symposium. Opening and closing dates for the exhibition will be announced by Heritage Hall in August, 2017.

The keynote address for the 2017 U.S. Grant Symposium will be delivered by Dr. White at 7:30 PM: “Ulysses S. Grant: A Fresh Vision for American Leadership.” The venue for the keynote address is the historic Common Pleas Courthouse, 44 North Lorimier Street. Books will again be available for purchase outside the courthouse, beginning at 6:45 PM.

Greg Wolk is the Executive Director of Missouri’s Civil War Heritage Foundation and the Heritage Resources Coordinator for the Missouri Humanities Council.
On April 6, 1917, the United States declared war on Germany, pulling the country into a global and mechanized conflict the likes of which had never been seen. One hundred years later, what can be learned from the “war to end all wars?” The St. Joseph Museums, Inc., with funding from the Missouri Humanities Council and Mosaic Life Care, presents WWI St. Joseph: Reflections on Community and Conflict. The interactive exhibit commemorates the lives of those who lived through the era, focuses on St. Joseph during the war years, and draws parallels to today’s issues.

St. Joseph was a pioneer town prior to the Civil War, and a jumping off point to the west for immigrants and frontiersmen. Many immigrants made their homes and fortunes in St. Joseph, where they built the foundations of the city. At the turn of the nineteenth century, St. Joseph was a cosmopolitan center with tremendous wealth and an ethnically diverse population. World War I changed the economic, political, and social landscapes.

Wartime patriotism in the United States sparked a movement to remove “hyphenated Americans” such as “German-Americans” and “Polish-Americans.” After the declaration of war, citizens were either Americans or the enemy. St. Joseph’s German influences were suppressed with the loss of the German-English School and the renaming of the German-American Bank.

St. Joseph men fought the War overseas, while women and children supported the effort on the home front. Local businesses made products for the War—for example, the Wyeth Hardware Company was sending harnesses to France, even before the United States entered the fighting. After the War, soldiers returned home with souvenirs and shell shock to Prohibition and became part of the lost generation of the roaring twenties.

April 2017 marks the 100th anniversary of America's entry into the First World War. But even before America joined the hostilities, Missourians actively contributed to various aspects of the war effort. Missouri industries fulfilled military contracts to supply mules, munitions, and other goods to Allied armies. More than 156,000 Missourians served in the war, including future president Harry S. Truman, Walt Disney, and Generals John J. Pershing and Enoch Crowder.

To tell these stories and others, the Missouri Humanities Council has partnered with the Springfield-Greene County Library District on the traveling exhibit *Missouri Over There*. The exhibit will open at the Missouri State Capitol in early July, hosted by the Missouri State Museum. Eight weeks later, it will travel from Jefferson City to Three Rivers College in Poplar Bluff. And from there it will stop in at least six other places around the state as it makes its way to Springfield for November 2018 to commemorate Armistice Day and the end of the war.

The exhibit features seven double-sided panels exploring the many facets of World War I history told through the perspective of Missouri and Missourians. Visitors will learn about the contributions of Missouri women and African Americans to the war effort and discover the vital role Missouri horses and mules played in the war despite the military adopting new technologies such as motorized vehicles. Each panel features historical images and artifacts from museums, libraries, archives, and private collections from across the state.

Accompanying the exhibit are two touch-screen kiosks, where visitors can explore more content, artifacts, and photographs and discover the locations of World War I monuments located throughout the state. The exhibit will also feature a new seven-minute documentary video featuring footage from the war.

For more information about the *Missouri Over There* exhibit, contact Mark Livengood at 816.802.6566 or mark@mohumanities.org.

The Modern War panel explores varying technologies that were used during the First World War, from machine guns and telephones to messages sent by carrier pigeons.
The second annual Summer Teachers Academy will be held June 12–15, 2017 in Columbia, addressing the theme of the origins and legacy of the Bill of Rights. Forged in the crucible of Federalist/Anti-Federalist debates concerning whether or not individual liberties would be threatened by a constitutionally empowered national government, the Bill of Rights came into force in late 1791, more than three years after the ratification of the document it amended. Though it spills over with ideas as hotly contested now as they were during the period of national formation, and though it remains integral to resolving questions that are central to political life today, what we do not know about the Bill of Rights likely outpaces what we do. Its pre-history, for example, is frequently glossed over, if covered at all, in U.S. history textbooks. Knowing what amendments are relevant to what issues too often stands in for a nuanced understanding of how they are relevant.

While three days are hardly enough time to fully cover the remarkable, ever-evolving legacy of the Bill of Rights, we certainly believe it will provide ample opportunity to examine some of the finer points of the document’s philosophical roots and historical development and, moreover, do so in a way that adds greater context and clarity to public discourse about the Bill of Rights’s place in contemporary society.

The inspiration for the 2017 Teachers Academy came in part from the Humanities Council’s work with the National Archives to provide a traveling exhibit, with accompanying public programming and online educational resource materials, to local libraries across Missouri in commemoration of the 225th anniversary of the Bill of Rights’s ratification.

Held for the first time in June 2016, the Missouri Summer Teachers Academy enables high school social studies educators from all corners of the state to gain further expertise in their primary subject fields by spending three days closely studying a theme from American political and constitutional history alongside Mizzou faculty and other scholars from around the region.

Read more at democracy.missouri.edu.
December 2016 marked the 225th anniversary of the Bill of Rights.

The National Archives partnered with the Federation of State and Territorial Humanities Councils to commemorate the anniversary by providing 2,000 pop-up exhibits to any community across the country that requested one.

Spotlighting one of the most remarkable periods in American history, the exhibit conveys the importance of the Bill of Rights, its history and implementation, and its impact today.
MHC placed the exhibit in twenty-two libraries across the state of Missouri with accompanying public programming and online educational resource materials. The exhibit spurred much interest. Libraries hosted panel discussions and guest speakers to explore the power of the Bill of Rights and our enduring system of government. Speakers have investigated and presented the origin of the Bill of Rights; the history of church–state relations and religious conscience; the history of the drafting, proposal, and ratification of the Bill of Rights; and more.

For more information about the Amending America initiative presented by the National Archives, visit archives.gov/amending-america.
Wish You Were Here
Love & Longing in an American Heartland
Zachary Michael Jack
9781612481708 • $19.95
Wish You Were Here offers a clear-eyed yet tender look at life in the modern Midwest from the perspective of a seventh-generation ruralite. Championing the romance of wide-open spaces in a rapidly urbanizing world, Zachary Michael Jack challenges the stereotypes of rural and small-town Midwestern life in a well-grounded and deeply felt counter-narrative of love and longing sustained in communities where young and old alike plant roots.

In essays whose settings encompass the diversity of the Heartland—from wooded hills to verdant croplands, from tightly knit small towns to booming suburbs—Jack considers how growing up country helped shape his life and the lives of his ancestors, inviting readers to reflect on the wellspring of connections between place and personality, demographics and destiny, at work in their own lives.

The Beginner’s Cow
Memories of a Volga German from Kansas
Loren Schmidtberger
9781612481685 • $19.95
At the age of seven, Loren Schmidtberger was assigned to a beginner’s cow—the gentlest cow in the herd and the easiest for a child just beginning to milk. As he learned to milk with the help of the cow, he also learned the art of living from the unforgiving reality of the Dust Bowl years tempered by the steadfast resilience of his Volga German community. After he left the family’s isolated Kansas farm and throughout his teaching career, Schmidtberger draws from hundreds of interviews in his search for restless spirits. A serious but witty look at Missouri’s place in the ghostly realm, this book brings together history, folklore, and just enough mystery to intrigue the skeptics and delight the believers.

Haunted Missouri
A Ghostly Guide to the Show-Me State’s Most Spirited Spots
Jason Offutt
9781931112666 • $19.95
Mysterious cold spots, disembodied voices, and smoky apparitions are just a few of the ghostly goings-on gathered by journalist Jason Offutt in his trek across Missouri. Visiting public places such as Civil War battlefields, university halls, and infamous mansions, Offutt draws from hundreds of interviews in his search for restless spirits. A serious but witty look at Missouri’s place in the ghostly realm, this book brings together history, folklore, and just enough mystery to intrigue the skeptics and delight the believers.

Unguarded Moments
Stories of Working Inside the Missouri State Penitentiary
Larry E. Neal and Anita Neal Harrison
9781612481104 • $19.95
In this first memoir about life in the Missouri State Penitentiary by a worker who was neither a prisoner nor a guard, Larry E. Neal reveals a portrait of prison life very different from common conceptions. As a maintenance worker, Neal led prisoner work crews, and his stories show that life inside the prison walls could be surprisingly lighthearted, with prisoners and staff playing pranks on each other and crawling through dark tunnels together. In addition to a rare insider’s view into prison humor, Unguarded Moments also gives readers a window into the rhythms of daily life inside and the shared humanity of everyone behind the walls.
George Caleb Bingham
Frontier Artist, Missouri Politician
Greg Olson
9781612482064 • $27.00
As a child, George Caleb Bingham dreamed of becoming a painter. He taught himself to paint and learned from other artists when he could. George painted everyday people doing everyday things, like people working on the river or voting in an election. George also had a passion for politics, and he became a state legislator in 1848. After the Civil War, George left his political career and became the first professor of art at the University of Missouri. George Caleb Bingham’s paintings are a visual history of the wild frontier of a young America. George’s scenes are still popular because they show the beginning of a new nation, full of life and possibilities.

George Washington Carver
Teacher and Environmentalist
Christine Montgomery
9781612482149 • $27.00
George Washington Carver was born into slavery in the final weeks of the Civil War. When he was growing up, George was so good at growing plants that the neighbors called him the “plant doctor.” Since George was African American, he wasn’t allowed to go to school with white children. But George was so eager for an education that he walked for miles and moved all over the country to go to school. He studied agriculture in college so he could learn to help others. After college, he moved to the South and taught poor farmers how to grow crops better and keep their soil healthier. He became a respected teacher and scientist during the Great Depression because of his knowledge and kindness to others.

J. C. Penney
The Man With a Thousand Partners
Jason Offutt
9781612482088 • $27.00
James Cash Penney was born on a small farm in a family that valued hard work and fair play. When he was twenty, he got a job at a store and saved up to buy his own store. Over many years, he opened more and more stores across the country. J. C. Penney’s business was based on the idea of being fair to both his employees and his customers. When his stores made a lot of money, he shared that money with his employees and gave money to charities. J. C. Penney became one of the most successful and respected businessmen in the United States.


Order online at tsup.truman.edu
15% discount on regularly priced books | FREE shipping on website orders over $45
The Missouri Humanities Council is in its fourth year of collaboration with the Saint Louis Public Library to provide veterans and their families with an outlet for self-expression through veterans writing workshops. The free, five-session workshops are open to veterans, active duty personnel, and their families. Taught by professional writers, these workshops help attendees develop their writing skills and tell their stories by providing the same high level of instruction as a college/university writing course.

This year, MHC and the St. Louis Public Library are proud to launch their first Women’s Veterans Writing Workshop on Saturday, April 1. Every woman veteran has a unique story that may be better developed in the company of a female instructor and amongst the support of other women—whether veteran, active duty personnel, or family.

Now in its second week (as of this writing), participants include family members of veterans and women in active service branches ranging from the air force to the army. According to the workshop’s facilitator, Virginia Slachman (award-winning poet, novelist, and college professor), “We’re doing a lot of writing in the workshop and outside it, and everyone is enjoying each other’s company and the conversation is lively.”

As MHC continues to work in partnership with many great organizations across the state of Missouri to expand its veterans writing programs, MHC sees a great value in increasing women-specific workshops. As an organization that recognizes the power of writing as a way to share the human experience, it is essential to provide women with the opportunities to fully convey the experiences of women in the military—whether as combat fighters, nurses, or military wives and daughters.

For more information on upcoming 2017 Veterans Writing Workshops, please visit our website at mohumanities.org or contact our Director of Family and Veterans Programs, Lisa Carrico, at 314.781.9660.
VETERANS WRITING WORKSHOP—ST. LOUIS
St. Louis Public Library
Central Library
Main Auditorium
Saturdays, May 27–June 24, 2017
9:00 AM–1:00 PM
Veterans (from all services and eras), current active duty personnel, and family members are invited to take part in the Missouri Humanities Council and the Saint Louis Public Library’s fourth annual Veterans Writing Workshop. The program consists of five four-hour sessions including the basics of writing, revision, and publication. Participants are not required to focus their writing on military experiences.

The workshop will be led by Kent Walker, a combat Army veteran who holds an MFA in writing. The workshops are FREE and lunch is provided at no cost.

On May 19 and May 20, Ron Capps, Executive Director of the Veterans Writing Project out of Washington, DC, will facilitate a two-day workshop titled “Writing War: A Guide to Telling Your Own Story.”

For more details, please call 314.781.9660 or email lisa@mohumanities.org.

CAPTURING TRUTHS: A YOUTH STORYTELLING WORKSHOP
University City Public Library
The Tree Room
Saturday, June 11, 2017
1:00 PM–3:00 PM
The Missouri Humanities Council is partnering with Humans of St. Louis and Forward Through Ferguson to host a ninety-minute workshop for youth ages thirteen to fifteen to explore the basics of conversational interview and smartphone photography. Participants will produce a digital portrait with accompanying quotes. These stories, presented in the style of Humans of St. Louis and Forward Through Ferguson storytelling, will be posted to a shareable Facebook page. This workshop is free and open to the public. Space is limited, so please RSVP at mohumanities.org/home/calendar.

For more details, please call 314.781.9660 or email lisa@mohumanities.org.

MILITARY AND VETERAN FAMILY DAY
American Red Cross, Kansas City
Saturday, July 15, 2017
9:00 AM–1:00 PM
The Western Missouri Region’s American Red Cross, in partnership with MHC and the Veterans of Former Wars, will be hosting a free and fun military and veteran family day. Families are invited to participate in free workshops for both adults and children and learn about area military resources and services.

For more details, please call 314.781.9660 or email lisa@mohumanities.org.

“C” IS FOR CROSSROADS: A FAMILY LITERACY NIGHT
Kansas City Crossroads District
Friday, August 4, 2017
4:00 PM–7:00 PM
To kick off the 2017–2018 school year, the Missouri Humanities Council is teaming up with Turn the Page KC to present a First Friday Family Literacy Night. Local Crossroads businesses, galleries, and organizations will come together to provide a family-friendly scavenger hunt and host fun literacy-based activity stations. Each participant is encouraged to pick up their family literacy passport, and the first 100 families to fill their passport and decode the “secret word” will receive a free copy of “Our Home Kansas City.”

For more details, please call 314.781.9660 or email lisa@mohumanities.org.
Read from the Start (RFTS), MHC’s family reading initiative, is offered free of charge and encourages parents and caregivers to read to their young children. RFTS participants, with the guidance of a certified Discussion Leader, read and discuss high-quality children’s books. The parents keep the books and leave RFTS programs excited to share the books and stories with their children. MHC partners with local organizations throughout the state to host the programs. These partners all share a commitment to family reading and literacy. A sample of host sites includes: Head Starts, Parents as Teachers, libraries, community action agencies, schools, and shelters.

To learn how you can host or attend a RFTS program, please visit readfromthestart.org.
### GRANTS AWARDED  
*September 1, 2016–April 1, 2017*

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### New Staff Member: Claire Bruntrager

**DR. STEVE BELKO, MHC**

![Claire Bruntrager](image)

The MHC welcomes another addition to the staff: Claire Bruntrager, who serves as Associate Director. Although she is chiefly responsible for coordinating MHC’s commemoration of our state’s approaching bicentennial and for spearheading various facets of our state’s German heritage program, Claire assists all of our directors in numerous capacities. We were lucky to have Claire serve as an intern with us during the summer of 2015, before she left to complete her graduate work in Scotland, and even luckier to have her back full-time upon her recent return. Born and raised in West St. Louis County, Claire graduated from Villa Duchesne High School and earned her B.A. in history from Truman State University and her M.Sc. in museum studies from the University of Glasgow. She is an avid traveler and apparently enjoys scotch and whiskey tastings, and since she already sports a German last name, I did not have to make her change her maiden name, as I did with the staffer introduced in our previous issue.
Support your Missouri Humanities Council

By making a contribution today using the enclosed business reply envelope inside the back cover of this magazine or going online at mohumanities.org, you will guarantee receiving future MO Humanities publications, frequent e-newsletters, and notifications of future programming.
PETRA DEWITT
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR,
MISSOURI UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY–ROLLA

History is filled with eccentric characters whose fascinating stories are difficult to substantiate or disprove. While conducting research at the Washington Historical Society, I came across the obituary of Fred E. Franke, who died in late February 1912 near Nierstein, Franklin County, Missouri. Two boys who had visited Franke regularly to listen to his tales of adventures in Europe and during the American Civil War had discovered his already decomposing body. According to the obituary, Franke was a “Schnitzelfritz,” a person who carved trinkets from discarded wood pieces (or, in his case, discarded cigar boxes). People referred to him as a recluse, an eccentric, a “Happy Hooligan,” and a generally odd character because he had the appearance of a pauper, was cross eyed, had long, straggly hair, and during winter bound his feet in “gunny sacks.”

His final resting place was among unknowns, derelicts, and the poor.

Intrigued, I asked questions and learned that Franke had published an autobiography, entitled “Ein Verfehltes Leben” (“A Failed Life”) in the Hermanner Volksblatt in neighboring Gasconade County. William Wilke, a prominent German American in Washington, had also published a translated version, “A Misspent Life,” in the Washington Centennial in 1955. Wilke’s research revealed that Franke had authored several columns entitled “As the Cross-Eyed Fellow Sees Things” and “Pipe Fillings for You to Smoke” in the Washington Citizen during 1909 and regularly submitted articles to the Volksblatt and the Washington Post.

According to local lore, several curious people rummaged through Franke’s papers after his death, discovering that he was of noble birth and that Emperor Franz Joseph of Austria knighted him. These documents, however, have disappeared, or at least no one is aware of their existence. For the last few years I have attempted to find evidence that would authenticate Franke’s claims, but he remains an elusive character.

I knew that finding proof of Franke’s lower nobility status and extensive career in the Austrian military, including training as a cartographer, would require a lengthy research trip to Vienna, Austria. Meanwhile, I concentrated on his American life. According to the autobiography, Franke enlisted in the 27th Pennsylvania Regiment under Colonel Max Einstein on the Union
side in the American Civil War. He allegedly fought at Second Bull Run and in Warrenton, Virginia, earning an appointment to the staff of General Carl Schurz in 1863. At Chancellorsville, however, Confederates captured and transported him to the infamous Andersonville prison camp. Luckily, Franke had to endure only eight months in “this den of hell” because his connections made him a valuable person. He was exchanged in January 1864 for a Confederate prisoner of war. Then Franke allegedly received promotion to the staff of General Philip Sheridan and fought in the battles of the Wilderness, Spotsylvania, Cold Harbor, Petersburg, and Cedar Creek. Finally, Franke witnessed Lee surrender to Grant.

Although a fascinating account, military records do not entirely support the story. The 27th Pennsylvania fought at Chancellorsville, but not during all the battles Franke noted. Andersonville records reference a Fred Franke, but assign him to the 28th Pennsylvania and record him as present during different dates. Sheridan’s memoirs do not mention the organization with the Secret Service. In 1887, J. W. Powell, director of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), supposedly offered him a job assisting in the survey of the Grand Canyon, the Grand Tetons, and the Pecos Valley in New Mexico; however, USGS records do not cite his name.

In 1891 tragedy entered Franke’s life when a kerosene lamp exploded in his face, leaving him permanently cross-eyed and ending his surveyor career. He then lost his wife and his four youngest children within days of each other to diphtheria in 1895, temporarily went insane, and supposedly dismembered their bodies. After nine months in the insane asylum in Springfield, Illinois, he reunited with his remaining children, Gus and Helene; however, both died within five years. These events turned him to drinking, wandering the hills between the German settlements along the Missouri River and surviving by carving wood and occasionally writing articles for local as well as national newspapers.

Life in Missouri was difficult to verify because newspapers did not record the dismemberment of a wife and four children between 1892 and 1897, a ghastly event worthy of headlines. The United States census was of little help because Fred can mean Friedrich or Frederick, and possibly Franke was an anglicized version of his real name; that leaves many possibilities for misspelling. The 1890 census was lost in a fire; neither he, nor Helene, nor Gus appear in the 1900 census; and since he was homeless in 1910, it is unlikely that a census taker recorded him. Does that mean Fred Franke did not exist or that his tragic riches-to-rags story was incorrect? Was Franke nobility or an imposter? Only further examination of the sources will eventually reveal the truth, if ever.

Petra DeWitt is an Assistant Professor at Missouri University of Science and Technology in Rolla and the author of Degrees of Allegiance: Harassment and Loyalty in Missouri’s German-American Community during World War I (2012).
The history of St. Louis is one frequently told as a history of divisions—geographical, racial, political, economic, ethnic, generational... the list goes on. Some of these divisions are visible for all to see, as clear as lines marked on a map. Others run like an undercurrent in our region, only visible to those willing to shine a light on them, but always there shaping our path forward.

To be successful, leaders must understand where these lines exist and the view from each side of the divide. Like the parable of the blind men and the elephant, leaders must look beyond their own experience and perspective in order to bridge divides and create lasting positive change.

For more than twenty years, FOCUS St. Louis has used this strategy in educating, connecting and empowering leaders to improve our region. In addition, FOCUS facilitates the important conversations taking place in our community, bringing together diverse viewpoints and ideas.

FOCUS St. Louis was created in July 1996 through the merger of two of the region’s most influential nonprofit organizations: The Leadership Center of Greater St. Louis and Confluence St. Louis. In 2011, FOCUS also became a national Coro center, acquiring the longstanding Coro Fellows Program in Public Affairs and Coro Women In Leadership programs.

Through the course of its work, FOCUS has established itself as the region’s premier civic leadership education organization. FOCUS programs educate current and aspiring leaders about the systems that challenge and support the region so they can become engaged and participate in its growth and success.

“We know that leadership is not just a title on an organizational chart,” explains FOCUS President and CEO Dr. Yemi Akande-Bartsch. “Quality leadership is required at all levels throughout our community. Our goal is to meet participants where they are in their lives and careers.” To meet this ongoing need for quality leadership, FOCUS offers a continuum of eight programs that serve nearly 400 individuals annually, from high school juniors to young professionals to executives.

- Leadership St. Louis is FOCUS’s highly selective flagship program for established and emerging leaders who demonstrate a deep commitment to improving the region.
- Youth Leadership St. Louis brings together high school juniors from thirty-two public, private, and parochial schools to develop leadership skills, promote teamwork, and provide a deeper understanding of the St. Louis community.
- Emerging Leaders serves young professionals ages twenty-one to thirty-five to help them find causes that energize them and discover how to leverage their strengths to benefit the community.
- Coro Fellows Program in Public Affairs is FOCUS’s only full-time program, offering a nine-month immersion program for twelve competitively selected participants.
- Coro Women In Leadership connects women from diverse backgrounds and helps them refine their leadership competencies.
• Diversity Leadership Fellowship is designed for FOCUS alumni and others with an interest in issues of diversity, inclusion, and equity.

• Experience St. Louis provides a regional orientation for executives and their spouses who are new to the St. Louis area.

• FOCUS Impact Fellows offers leaders the opportunity to work together to address a specific issue in the St. Louis region.

Each of the programs is unique, yet they share common threads of experience-based learning, unparalleled access to community leaders, and a focus on civic engagement. While many leadership programs focus on individual competencies, FOCUS programs go a step further, connecting participants to the broader issues facing our region. On any given day, FOCUS leadership program participants might spend time at local schools to better understand educational issues, conduct a logic study to explore the challenges facing a municipality, participate in a poverty simulation, interview St. Louis City or County leaders, or dive into discussion on issues of race and equity.

The organization’s newest program, FOCUS Impact Fellows, goes a step further by putting participants’ leadership skills into action. Launched in 2016 with support from the William T. Kemper Foundation, the Impact Fellows program brings together FOCUS alumni and other leaders to tackle a regional issue and produce a tangible outcome, project, and/or solution. In the inaugural year of the program, the class used the framework of the Ferguson Commission Report to address three calls to action, and in its second year will explore the issue of health in the region. Details on these projects and outcomes are available at stlimpactfellows.org.

Time and again, FOCUS leadership program participants describe their experience as transformational—both in terms of knowledge gained and relationships formed. Participants build deep connections that last long after graduation day and join a vibrant network of 8,000+ FOCUS alumni leaders.

“Beyond the change they experience in themselves, FOCUS leaders go out into the world with a deeper sense of commitment to the St. Louis region and the ability to create change,” Akande-Bartsch says. “Our impact goes far beyond each individual, reaching wherever our participants go on to make change, impacting the whole St. Louis region.”

But FOCUS’s work is broader than the leaders who go through its programs. With an established reputation as a nonpartisan convener and facilitator, FOCUS brings together community members from across the region around critical issues facing our community. Each year, the organization hosts or partners on 30+ educational programs, issues forums, service events, and discussion/networking opportunities. In recent years, topics have included hunger, workforce development, immigration, gender equality, STEM careers, poverty, policing, economic growth, media, and more.

In 2016, more than 1,800 community members attended one of FOCUS’s civic events. “Our goal is to be a connector—of both people and ideas,” says Akande-Bartsch. “When people attend one of our policy events or discussion forums, we hope that they take with them new perspectives and ideas, along with a better understanding of how they can get involved.”

A newly launched partnership between FOCUS St. Louis and the Missouri Humanities Council will create a new space for this crucial dialogue. A series of four public forums, titled Civics and Civility, will combine humanities perspectives—history, literature, ethics, and philosophy—with policymakers’ perspectives to spur discussion, conversation, and political cross-pollination.

“Recent events, both locally and nationally, have convinced many in our region that now is the time to lead,” explains Akande-Bartsch. “From our alumni, friends, and fellow leaders, we hear a call for increased learning about civic engagement in the region. This partnership helps us to answer this call, while combining the practical leadership of policymaking with thought leadership in the humanities.”

To learn more about FOCUS St. Louis, visit focus-stl.org.
Attending high school on the Navajo Reservation in the late 1980s, I was disappointed by the fact that many of my history teachers failed to acknowledge indigenous contributions to American society in our classrooms and lessons. Even in a state like New Mexico, with its large Native population, those in power championed the European version of history. Historical events told from the Native perspective are rare in our country because Native people, my grandparents and great-grandparents, were traditionally excluded and silenced.

When Native stories have been told, they’ve been told from an outsider perspective. One of America’s first bestsellers was written by an American woman who was kidnapped by Native Americans during King Philip’s War. Published in 1682, *A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson*, gave birth to a genre that remained popular in the United States for the next two hundred years. Set in print as nonfiction, many of these captivity narratives were little more than fables, and the genre, once fictionalized, grew increasingly violent. Mrs. Rowlandson, however, actually lived among her captors, and prior to being set free seemed to almost see the humanity in them.

I mention this book for two reasons. First, it exposes the pervasiveness of the vantage point so many Americans hold in regards to Native American stories. Here I cannot emphasize enough, **captivity narratives were a best-selling genre in America for over two hundred years.** This means the mainstream American viewpoint about Native Americans filtered down through the lens of this cultural script (violent and fictionalized). If those in power control the story, then the line between savagery and civilization has been mediated on by only one perspective in this country. Secondly, I find the story of Mary Rowlandson encouraging because she does what most people do when forced to live in close quarters with diversity. She questions her ideologies and gains an education.
An education can be frightening for the way it fills our blind spots with new information. My teachers shied away from the complexity of our shared American heritage, forfeiting the opportunity to engage us in a discussion about how we came to be who we are as a nation. While history can be painful (what happened to the Missouri Indians?), burying the truth is destructive. Why would a nation bear the difficulties of betterment and growth without reaping the benefits of discoveries therein?

Without the clash of cultures in America the world wouldn’t have the blues, ragtime, and especially jazz; Native musical beats contributed to each of these discoveries. Imagine the culinary world without the following ingredients—tomatoes, chocolate, peanuts, vanilla—sixty percent of the world’s food comes from Native agricultural efforts. Native philosophy helped shape this country as well. According to Benjamin Franklin, the idea of the federal government, in which certain powers are given to a central government and all other powers are reserved for the states, was borrowed from the system of government used by the Iroquoian League of Nations.

If America leads the world in innovation, it is because of our diversity, yet many of our citizens still think of us as a newer version of Europe. This is why I was excited to join the MHC’s board to help with the Native American Heritage Program. I applaud the educational efforts being made in the state: a sculpture being built to honor the Osage, a language preservation program for the Shawnee, three Old Appleton acres secured for return to the tribe. Yet while the work being done is impressive, what I find most encouraging is the spirit with which this work is being done.

By this I mean the council is making every effort to include Native perspectives in the launching of these programs. For decades, Native Americans have been largely invisible, ignored and forgotten by the media and government. The inclusion of our voices breaks an era of silence in Missouri, and I know it makes our ancestors proud. It reminds us that the story of a continent never truly disappears. It’s present in the language—“chipmunk,” “mahogany,” “hurricane,” “Missouri”—in the spirit of the land, and the generosity of its people. Thank you to all those involved!

Deborah Taffa is an enrolled member and recognized descendent of the Yuma and Laguna Nations. An adjunct professor of creative writing at both Webster University and Washington University in St. Louis, she received her MFA from the University of Iowa in Iowa City. She joined the MHC board in December 2016.
During the 1819–1820 congressional debates over the admission of our state into the Union, so many propositions had been so often addressed that many congressmen simply commenced their speeches with phrases similar to that of Massachusetts’s U.S. Senator Prentiss Mellen’s January 1820 quip: “I am sure, sir, if the subject has not already been exhausted, the distinguished powers of intellect which will be exerted during the present discussion will completely exhaust it.”

I use this as an opening because forthcoming Reflections on the Humanities columns will focus on stories surrounding Missouri’s crisis of statehood, from January 1818 to August 1821. But this comment does have some foundation in the current political climate—both at the national level for all humanities councils and at the state level for Missouri Humanities—about the potential loss of government funding for nonprofit humanities organizations. So much has been said and written about this current development (which, in actuality, reoccurs about every decade since the Reagan administration) that little remains to be said that could offer anything new or possibly change minds. Combine this recent clash of opinions with the ongoing, and equally intense, debate between STEM and the humanities (particularly how the former outweighs the necessity of the latter, and how the latter seemingly has no connection with the former), and there really is nothing more to say or write. Of course, another attempt never hurts, and maybe a slightly different approach might just offer a fresh perspective on a very stale debate. So let us reflect on a specific period of U.S. history, one that I have often mentioned before and one that I feel comfortable addressing—the Age of Jackson (1815–1850).

Dramatic political and constitutional change—more popularly known as Jacksonian Democracy—characterized the decades between the War of 1812 and the War with Mexico. The age of egalitarianism overcame the age of deference, and the introduction and expansion of universal manhood suffrage challenged old guard “aristocratic” interests, manners, and policies. Despite the fact that American Indians, African Americans, and women did not share in this rapid, often boisterous, empowerment of the common man (no pun intended here), marked change indeed transformed the American electorate, and certainly for the better. Removal of voting restrictions, reforms in the state constitutions of the original states, admission of new western states, opening of more state and local offices to popular vote, greater reapportionment in state legislatures, periodic election of judges, increased selection of presidential electors by popular vote, and a substantial surge in voter turnout secured an expansive (if still imperfect) democracy in the American political system, at both the state and national levels.

As with most transformations in the body politic, Jacksonian Democracy marched in tandem with other significant alterations in the fabric of American society. Equally
dramatic economic and social changes consumed Jacksonian America as well. These extraordinary changes, collectively known as the Market Revolution, transformed permanently the economic and social landscape of the United States, sowing the seeds for international might that came in the decades after the Civil War. “Revolution” indeed seems an apt term to explain the explosive maturation of the American economy from 1815 to 1850. Nascent industrial production, characterized by the rise of the factory system and the introduction of the merchant capitalist, made the United States second only to Great Britain in industrialization by 1840. A transportation revolution introduced new and more efficient ways of producing and moving goods; the proliferation of steamboats, the widespread construction of canals, and the rise of the railroad indeed revolutionized transportation across the American continent. New technologies and inventions, with an emphasis upon the practical application of science, spurred patent activity, from the mechanical reaper, the revolver, vulcanized rubber, the telegraph, the sewing machine, and the electromagnetic motor to innovations in refrigeration, canning, and heated and illuminated homes, and to agricultural experimentation and scientific breeding of livestock. American practicality demanded constant experimentation in ways to improve and move goods across the nation and to ports abroad. Improvements in printing created a communications revolution, with a subsequent mass increase in newspapers and magazines covering just about every facet of American society and activity. The Market Revolution was, fundamentally, STEM at its inception (for Americans anyway), and anything done to advance this incipient STEM seemed, well, the American way.

Yet, as STEM constantly teaches us, for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction—and the Market Revolution indeed caused a potent equal and opposite reaction. Jacksonian America became conspicuous for social change as much as economic, as new forces entering the social arena markedly modified institutions and everyday life in the wake of economic, technological, and scientific revolutions. The Market Revolution thus produced the Age of Improvement and the American Renaissance.

The reaction entailed a dual nature. First, Americans reacted to an increasingly dynamic, industrially developing, materialistic society created by the Market Revolution—they were reacting, in essence, to the adverse consequences of pure STEM. The apparent unadulterated advance of early nineteenth-century STEM unnerved American sensibilities, and so the early nineteenth-century version of the humanities sought to ameliorate the conditions caused by impersonal economic change.

Second, this Age of Improvement actually marched in tandem with the Market Revolution, for if we could improve our economy, our transportation network, and our ability to produce goods, then we could improve mankind itself. If we could secure the perfectibility of our infrastructure, we could likewise achieve the perfectibility of man; if we were consumed by the inevitability of the improvement in technology, we surely believed in the improvement of the individual and society overall. A devotion to progress applied to the betterment of human beings as it did to economic production. The personal must attend the impersonal; humanities must accompany STEM.

Ralph Waldo Emerson called the phenomenon the “demon of reform,” and it indeed consumed the soul of America. The first organized temperance movement in American history addressed the alarming rise in alcoholism, as America became recognized worldwide as the “alcoholic republic”; Dorothea Dix worked tirelessly to improve conditions in asylums and prisons; Horace Mann worked as assiduously to improve elementary and secondary education; Lucretia Mott, Susan B. Anthony, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton fought for gender equality and the extension of the suffrage; a nascent labor movement challenged the power of the impersonal production system introduced by the merchant capitalist and the evils inherent in the Fall River system, and organized to seek the elimination of imprisonment for debt, reform of the militia system and land sales, and
improved educational opportunities for the poor; communitarian experiments galore attempted to avoid the materialism of society and the impediments wrought by the insatiable accumulation of private property; the proliferation of antislavery societies attempted to cure the nation's most glaring and destructive cancer; voluntary associations addressed various plights caused by a dramatic increase in urban population and increased immigration (lyceum societies brought education to the masses and the penniless); and a peace movement sought the end of conflict seemingly produced by the unbridled pursuit of wealth. The Age of Improvement pervading Jacksonian America cannot be separated from, nor understood without considering the vagaries of the Market Revolution. Social reforms embodied the essence of the humanities in the wake of rapid scientific, technological, and engineering advancements.

This Age of Improvement, the demon of reform, had an equally alluring sibling, the American Renaissance, itself a movement indicative of social reform, individual improvement, and the empowerment of the common man. In the religious realm, a Second Great Awakening reacted to the orthodoxy and elitism of the country’s established denominations; Transcendentalism revolted against the materialism of the age, the ugliness of


In its view of nature, the Romantic movement (which Hudson River School epitomized) was essentially simple: its universe was beautiful and man was the chosen and favored creature in it. Their view emphasized the good of nature and of "natural" man. It was also greatly influenced by territorial expansion and the magnitude of the West, which invited adventure. Another impulse of Romanticism was humanitarian in that it romanticized the common man and supported an age of reform movements. It revealed an abiding faith in the boundless energy and resources of the human spirit and imagination, and encouraged an optimistic expectation of improvement (which fits the “Age of Improvement” and the “Market Revolution”).
man’s institutions, and the corrupting influence of industrializing society; Unitarianism espoused a powerful message of human equality in an era of increasing socioeconomic inequality, despite the rise of the common man. In literature, America arguably reached the apogee of its literary genius—poets such as Edgar Allan Poe, William Cullen Bryant, John Greenleaf Whittier, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, James Russell Lowell, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Walt Whitman, and Emily Dickinson (who would not gain fame until a half century later); novelists such as Washington Irving, James Fenimore Cooper, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Herman Melville; essayists like Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau. These icons of American Romanticism consistently preached a humanitarian impulse, idealizing the common man, supporting social reforms, exalting the power and resourcefulness of the human spirit and imagination, and optimistically promoting human improvement in all its manifestations. This age of romanticism—this American Renaissance—inspired American art as well, especially the Hudson River School, the paintings of which attest to the beauty and magnitude of nature and to the perfectibility and natural goodness of man. This, too, was a reaction to the degrading, destructive, and corrupting consequences inherent in unrestrained economic change and progress.

So the lessons of Jacksonian America can teach us much about the course of modern society. With every advantage of technological, scientific, and economic change, there occurs an equal and opposite rise of adverse social consequences. In times of a “Market Revolution,” an “Age of Improvement,” an “American Renaissance,” must by necessity accompany. This marching in tandem of STEM and the humanities assures healthy, steady growth. In times of revolutionary economic expansion and disruption caused by our impulse for STEM, the humanities provides ethical bounds to scientific discovery, sound and informed judgment to guide scientific inquiry, and value-laden solutions to impersonal economic progress and technological change. In the words of one my colleagues, the humanities makes us better humans, not just intellectually-advanced ones. While economic and technological change seems to bring the world closer, the humanities ensures that we do not at the same time grow farther apart. STEM is undoubtedly the module, the vessel, the transportation device for the advance and progress of mankind, but the humanities provide direction, purpose, validation—and, as is all too often required, the brakes—in the name of the advance of civilization.

So here is my feeble attempt to demonstrate in this instance, by employing only a specific, short period of American history, how STEM and the humanities coexist, how they march in tandem, and how they are as symbiotic as they are codependent. But there is a more serious, more divisive consideration we cannot ignore in this tandem march, a conundrum we currently encounter, and one that could determine the fate of the humanities: Is this a function of government? That is, is it appropriate for government funds, whether national or state, to be expended on nonprofit organizations, such as the Missouri Humanities Council, to promote the humanities in our respective jurisdictions? If it is in our collective and individual interest to expend public monies to promote STEM, does it not behoove us to do the same for the humanities? Does not the welfare of the community benefit from both investments? We may categorically answer in the positive to these inquires, but it does not mean that the “investment” is a proper function of government. The entire populace may agree that the promotion of the humanities in our society is critical to the advance of STEM, and vice versa—yet, we may (and do!) differ substantially over whether our public funding should apply here. Well, stay tuned, for Part Two of our larger debate, to be hashed out in the next issue of MO Humanities…

Dr. Steve Belko contributes to this article in his personal capacity. The views expressed are his own and do not necessarily represent those of the Missouri Humanities Council. This series of articles—“Reflections on the Humanities”—is meant to be thought-provoking and encourage a dialogue around some of today’s most relevant humanities topics. Have a response? Send it to sbelko@mohumanities.org.
Dear Reader,

Since 2011, we have shared with you stories of our Veterans Writing Workshops across the state. What began as a partnership with the VA St. Louis Medical System at Jefferson Barracks has expanded to include writing workshops for veterans at the St. Louis Public Library, the Springfield-Greene County Library, Olin Library at Drury University, and the Kansas City Public Library (in partnership with the Writers Place of Kansas City). Each new location offers a new opportunity to connect with veterans in that area. As such, MHC is working tirelessly to expand this important program to as many rural and urban centers as possible throughout the state. We owe as much to our veterans—and so much more.

MHC’s Veterans Writing Workshops—taught by professional writers and offering the same high-level instruction as a college/university writing course—provide an important outlet for self-expression for veterans (both active duty and retired) as well as their families. Instructors guide veterans through the writing process, teaching them to explore their experiences through the written word, which undoubtedly helps participants rediscover their sense of self, reconnect with their families, and maintain a sense of camaraderie with their fellow soldiers.

And this year we have an incredible opportunity to expand the workshops once again. Lisa Carrico, Director of Family and Veterans Programs at MHC, is working with Mike Lederle of Columbia College—Rolla (U.S. Army Command Sergeant Major, retired) to offer a pilot program of our Veterans Writing Workshops in Rolla, MO in Fall 2017.

Rolla is an ideal location for the next expansion of our program, and Columbia College is the perfect partner. With thirty-eight campuses across the U.S. (including ten in Missouri)—half of which are located on military bases—Columbia College would offer a strategic partnership to MHC. With their support, we can reach more active duty/young service members than in our traditional programming. And their dual campuses in Rolla and nearby Fort Leonard Wood open the possibility to offer expansion programs at Fort Leonard Wood in the near future.

“The Missouri Humanities Council and I know first-hand the value of writing. During my deployment to Afghanistan, I journaled daily, which help me cope with the many pressures associated with a combat environment,” says Mr. Lederle. “Columbia College—Rolla proudly supports our veterans, service members, and their families, and we are honored to host the Missouri Humanities Council as they bring the Veteran Writing Workshops to the Rolla/Fort Leonard Wood area.”

Use the specially-marked envelope enclosed in this magazine to support new Veterans Writing Workshops in Rolla, MO with a $10 donation.

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Husband-and-wife team Kent and Stacey Walker have agreed to lead a pilot workshop in Rolla later this Fall. Both Kent and Stacey have been published in the MHC's annual anthology, Proud to Be: Writing by American Warriors. Pending a successful pilot program, MHC will institute a full, five-session workshop to begin in Spring 2018.

Kent and Stacey Walker. Kent Walker is a combat Army veteran who holds an MFA in writing. Stacey Walker is a lecturer at University of Missouri—St. Louis and Jefferson College. She holds an MFA from the University of Missouri—St. Louis.
CENTENNIAL of Missourians in WORLD WAR I

Image courtesy Springfield-Greene County Library District