

Missouri Humanities Council: The Story of Us

Chrissy Sommer, Community Engagement Director, Missouri Humanities Council

An Introduction to the St. Charles County Historical Society

Amy Haake, Archivist and Chief Administrative Officer, SCCHS

Joan Koechig, Board President SCCHS

Keynote-- The Missing Pieces: Putting Together Authentically Inclusive Historical Narratives

Glenn North, Director of Inclusive Learning and Creative Impact, Kansas City Museum

Sound & Story: 25 Years at the American Jazz Museum

Chloe Willett – Exhibition Coordinator, American Jazz Museum

Dr. Dina Bennett – Director of Collections & Curatorial Affairs, American Jazz Museum

Morgan Smith – Registrar, American Jazz Museum

Sound & Story: 25 Years at the American Jazz Museum celebrates the American Jazz Museum's (AJM) 25-year anniversary and tells the story of jazz through four pillars that are mission-driven: performance, exhibition, education, and research. Each pillar will be defined and accompanied by artifacts that lend context to the work of staff, volunteers, and the community. Additionally, each pillar has a section that looks to the future, exploring innovative ideas and goals to make our space more inclusive and engaging for museum visitors.

An interactive timeline will highlight major events in AJM's 25-year history. Visitors will be asked to contribute their memories by adding sticky notes to the timeline. The intermingled memories will create a community timeline over the course of the exhibition creating an intergenerational experience to help us document the community's participation in AJM's history.

While in the design and organization phase of this project we stumbled upon a few challenges. In 2017, AJM celebrated a 20-year anniversary and installed an exhibit that gave a description of the events and activities that transpired throughout the twenty years. For this exhibit, we decided to take an introspective approach in reviewing our 25-year history. We explore the context and methodology of museum practice in telling the story of jazz through our four pillars. Hopefully, visitors will feel more connected to our institution and a part of our local history; not only the history of our museum, but a part of our shared history that includes many voices, perspectives, and experiences

Processing the Records of the St. Louis County Law Commissioner's Court

Bill Glankler, Supervising Archivist, Missouri State Archives-St. Louis

Noah Edwards, Reference/Field Archivist, Missouri State Archives-St. Louis

The St. Louis Law Commissioner's Court was a subsidiary court to the St. Louis Circuit Court and operated from 1849 to 1865. It handled debt and personal property claims that requested \$150 or less in damages and heard all appeals from Justices of the Peace. Through a grant from the Missouri Humanities Council, the Missouri State Archives-St. Louis processed the files of the Law Commissioner's Court from 1858-1865.

As essentially a small claims court, this court's files provide a more personal or intimate perspective on St. Louis society, economy and culture during the antebellum period. They are populated by steamboat roustabouts, doctors, slaves, carpenters, plumbers, entertainers, soldiers, small business owners, and numerous other persons that made up the fabric of life in antebellum St. Louis. The relationships documented in these files offer tremendous detail about the nation's fourth largest city leading up to and through the Civil War.

This session will discuss the nature and history of the court and its records, explain how they were processed, and share some of the many interesting stories they contain.

FIRE! Collecting from Disaster a Case Study

Ryan Leimkuehler – Kansas State University

In May 2018 a fire and water disaster occurred at Hale Library on the Kansas State University campus displacing collections through December 2021. This session will focus on the collaborative efforts of the university archivist and records manager in documenting and preserving the fire disaster and recovery records. I will discuss how a team of two developed a collection plan and worked in the decentralized structure of the library to maintain the historic records. Attendees will receive practical real-world examples of how to plan for this type of project with limited resources and working with various units and vendors. The Presenter will also discuss what worked well and what they would change as this project concludes.

Incorporating Marginalized Voices to Reframe Missouri Public History

Christine E. Boston, Lincoln University

Tiffany Patterson, Missouri State Museum

Vikki Cosner, Missouri State Parks

The museum and public history fields are undergoing systematic and necessary changes to how history is presented, specifically concentrating on sharing and focusing on the voices of marginalized populations, those not previously or very rarely showcased or highlighted. Providing diverse voices in communicating history allows for a greater holistic approach, thereby creating a richer and more accurate history. The presenters will address how to incorporate marginalized voices and showcase stories that have received little to no attention previously for the purposes of making history available and interesting for all, not just select, privileged audiences. You will hear about two State Parks projects wherein Black history was the focus. The first is the Lincoln University-Missouri State Museum Special Topics: Museum Studies course. This collaborative project provided Lincoln University students the opportunity and responsibility to research and create new content for new Missouri Black History exhibit panels, addressing Pennytown, the Ozark Lynchings, and notable African American Change Makers, Lloyd Gaines and Barbara Bush Wilson, and telling hard but necessary stories from the perspectives of the impacted communities. The second focuses on the commemoration of the Buffalo Soldiers' historic ride by Missouri State Parks, which opened up discussions about refocusing the narrative on the Soldiers' stories based on historical evidence and conveying little known histories that had been previously neglected.

The Wilborn Collection: Jackson County Historical Society

Erin Gray, Digital Archivist, Jackson County Historical Society

In March 2017, the Jackson County Historical Society (JCHS) received a significant gift - the Wilborn Collection, a unique photograph negative collection. The Wilborn Collection is the largest and most significant collection of historic photographs of the Kansas City region that exists in our nation at this time. It includes over 300,000 images including pictures and negatives of commercial entities, events, built environments, streetscapes, and people. Upon donation, the Historical Society was under the impression that the collection dated back to 1921. We have since discovered that it includes negatives dating all the way back to 1895. This information, and so much more, would not have been possible without continued research. The Archives Director, along with myself, have spent hours comparing negatives with the information that accompanied it, searching through books, and reading information online. We are thankfully not alone in our efforts. Several other researchers have dug in and rolled up their sleeves to help us discover the unknown about the Wilborn Collection. Because of these efforts, many other individuals have enjoyed expanding their knowledge about the topic of their current research. Researchers visit our archives frequently; searching for in depth information about their family, religious organizations, and many other topics. These individuals are able to continue their work away from our research room, by using our digital database. The Jackson County Historical Society is all too happy to have recently included the Wilborn Collection in our online database; making it easy for the public to enjoy the work JCHS employees and researchers have done. The historical society's archivists, researchers, and volunteers are all happily working together to ensure that the Wilborn Collection continues on for future researchers. We look forward to what the future holds for the Collection and our ever-growing digital archives database.

Reimagining the Old Cathedral Museum in St. Louis

Eric Fair, Director Archdiocese of St. Louis Archives

Rena Schergen, Archivist Archdiocese of St. Louis Archives

The Old Cathedral in St. Louis was built in 1834, and traces its roots back to 1764 when a parcel of land at the fledgling trading post was designated as the “church block.” Currently situated next to the iconic Gateway Arch, the property has never changed hands in its 258 year history. In the Spring of 2021, the rector of the church invited the Archdiocese of St. Louis Archives to renovate the museum space to appeal to a broad range of visitors and tourists. Over the past year, Eric Fair and Rena Schergen have been planning permanent exhibits that tell the story of the Old Cathedral within the context of the City of St. Louis and the broader Catholic Church. The exhibit will feature many of the beloved stories of the church while also taking care to highlight the events and experiences of the communities of faith, non-Catholics, and minority groups.

Art and Diplomacy at the Nelson-Atkins during World War II

Tara Laver, Senior Archivist, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri

During World War II, the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art curated or hosted over 20 exhibitions that related or responded to the war in some way. Among these were several “diplomacy exhibitions,” exhibits supplied by information services bureaus of Allied countries or strategic partners that were grounded in the idea that the arts could bring diverse people together and promote intercultural understanding. In turn, that might strengthen Americans’ resolve in the war and their support for the sponsoring nations.

This presentation will briefly discuss the phenomenon of diplomacy exhibitions and explore those held at the Nelson-Atkins in the World War II era, providing an interesting and direct example of history being presented within the greater context of the times.

MacLean Collection: Mentoring Experience and Creating Resources

Ashley Canner, Graduate Student, University of Missouri - St. Louis

I am collaborating with MacLean Collection from northern Illinois as a past intern to share my unique experience working with them. As a case study, the MacLean Collection Map Library has created a workplace for interns and fellows to come together utilizing hands-on experience with the library's resources. Map Library interns like myself have the opportunity to work with, catalogue, handle, and archive historical cartographic materials across multiple media and historical periods. They have the opportunity to develop and install thematic temporary exhibitions while working with visitors of all types, from providing tours to the general public to working with visiting specialists, scholars, and MacLean fellows. The latter affords a special kind of collaboration where the scholar brings a specialized knowledge, while the intern helps navigate the database, gather requested materials, and identify additional materials for close study. These mutually rewarding and enjoyable experiences between the scholar and intern create discoveries that can help shape an intern's career. For example, my rewarding experience of this internship was the opportunity to work with MacLean fellow from Singapore, Amberly Yeo. We worked together in a unique relationship between the scholar and intern which allowed her to understand the intern perspective while maintaining her research as a fellow. Our similar ages allowed us to mutually bond over our passions for historical museum work and artifacts. After her time at the collection, it allowed me to truly reflect on our different outlooks into these conversations of integrating a better experience for the interns and scholars. From my experiences at the MacLean Collection and other institutions, interns should be allowed to learn their strengths and weaknesses in consequential situations where they develop these skillsets actually used in museum workplaces. There is an absolute need to allow for more hands-on (and paid) experience for internships and fellowships. I understand there are multiple benefactors in creating programs inspired from this concept and not always the most accessible or affordable. We should all consider this case study as a guideline motivation for all institutions as we move forward and let no one's history exist in a vacuum.