

Speaking of Kansas

Washburn Center for Kansas Studies



Kansas Studies Newsletter

Fall 2019

Kansas Studies Courses, Spring Semester 2020

KS199 A *KS and US, State & Local Government* MWF 10-10:50 am Clark Duffy HC 208

KS199 VA *KS and US, State & Local Government* online Amber Dickinson

KS395 A *Independent Study -- Kansas Studies* (contact co-directors for details)

KS397 XA *Internship in Kansas Studies* (contact co-directors for details)

KS399 A ST: *Kansas History* TR 11-12:15 Bruce Mactavish HC 203

KS399 B ST: *Kansas Archaeology* M 2:30-5:00 Laura Murphy KBI 182A/PC221

Kansas Studies Courses, Summer 2020

KS399 VA ST: *Literature of the American West* online David Weed

Fall 2019 Class Explores

The Life and Influence of John Brown

This fall, Kansas Studies fellow **Kelly Erby** taught a special topics history course examining radical abolitionist **John Brown**. Through close readings of primary sources, students investigated Brown as a family and businessman, in addition to a committed and, eventually, militant abolitionist. Students also used the methods of cultural biography to understand Brown as a man of his time, delving into political, literary, and religious movements of the nineteenth century. The final portion of the course considered Brown's place in America's historical memory and the ways in which his story has been appropriated in the 150 years since his execution.

Thanks to support from the Center for Kansas Studies and the Department of History, students enjoyed numerous opportunities to take their learning out of the traditional classroom with fieldtrips to such historic sites as the John *Continued on p. 2* ▶




Vanessa Steinroetter/
Danielle Head, Co-Directors
cks@washburn.edu

Deborah Altus, Human Services
Tom Averill, English
Bob Beatty, Political Science
Roy Bird, KHC Speaker
Chris Bowers, Military Student Success
Marcia Cebulka, Playwright
Jeannie Chinn, KSHS
Stacy Conner, Human Services
Virgil Dean, KSHS
Kelly Erby, History
Dennis Etzel, Jr., English
Jia Feng, Geography
Connie Gibbons, Mulvane Art Museum
William Gilliland, Geology
Rachel Goossen, History
Chris Hamilton, Political Science
Jonathan Hart, History
Bob Hoard, Sociology/Anthropology
Lindsey Ibanez, Sociology
Jim Kelly, KTWU
Robert Hull, Finance
David Kendall, Film Producer
Louise Krug, English
Gabrielle Lunte, Modern Languages
Bruce Mactavish, History
Judith McConnell-Farmer, Education
Eric McHenry, English
Debra Mikulka, KAN TRAIN Grant Mgmt.
Annie Miller, Political Science
Linsey Modellmog, Political Science
Laura Murphy, Anthropology
Marguerite Perret, Art
Mark Peterson, Political Science
Leslie Reynard, Communications
Betsy Roe, TSCPL
Tom Schmiedeler, Geography
Robin Shrimplin, History
Bradley Siebert, English
Sarah Smarsh, Author
Laura Stephenson, Dean, CAS
Margaret Stewart, English
Nancy Tate, VP, Academic Affairs
Kelly Watt, Art
David Winchester, Mabee Library
Kerry Wynn, History
Carol Yoho, Graphic Artist

Center for Kansas Studies
www.washburn.edu/cks


Continued from p. 1 ▶ **Studying John Brown**

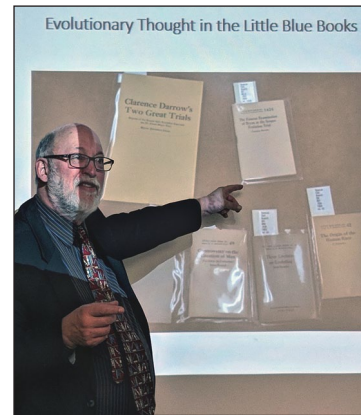
and Mary Jane Ritchie House in Topeka and the John Brown Museum in Osawatometie. While in Osawatometie, the class took a brief detour to the Pottawatomie Creek area where Brown and a posse of men executed five proslavery settlers. During another class period, students engaged in archival research using the impressive digitized collection related to Brown through the *Kansas Territorial* website. A final class fieldtrip brought students to the Kansas State Capitol to examine the John Stewart Curry mural of Brown. 



Celebration of the Little Blue Books Centennial

On November 5, 2019, Mabee Library hosted several presentations celebrating the centennial of the **Little Blue Books**, a series of cheap (initially 25 cents; eventually just a nickel) paperback “pocket” books published by Emanuel and Marcell Haldeman-Julius, a husband-and-wife team out of Girard, Kansas. The series was remarkably successful, eventually issuing about 2,000 titles and selling an estimated half a million books, mostly by mail. In addition to promoting socialist ideas, the series also featured works of classic literature, philosophical texts, contemporary fiction, and introductory essays on a wide range of fields (e.g. Darwinian evolution, sex education, Freudian ideas, and much else). These and other aspects of this remarkable publishing venture born in Girard, Kansas, in 1919, were highlighted by the four speakers giving presentations: CKS Fellows **Tom Averill** and **Kerry Wynn**, Professor of History Tom Prasch, and Professor of Accounting Louella Moore. As their presentations illustrated, the subjects and format of the Little Blue Books were just as unconventional as the lives of their publishers.

The event, which was sponsored by Phi Alpha Theta, the history honorary society, was held in a room adjacent to the shelves that house the Thomas Fox Averill Kansas Collection, including copies of roughly half of the titles published in the series. Many of the Little Blue Books were on display, along with printing plates for one of the books. 




SUPPORT for the Center for Kansas Studies:
 We are grateful to past and present supporters of the Center for Kansas Studies, whose contributions help us to offer student scholarships and enhance our course offerings through guest speaker visits and important field trips. If you would like to give to the CKS, please visit www.wualumni.org/givenow and write “Center for Kansas Studies” under “Designation.”

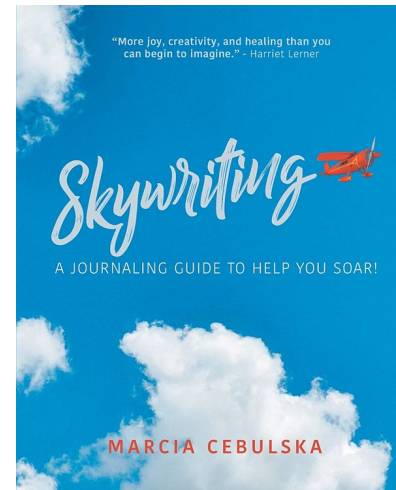
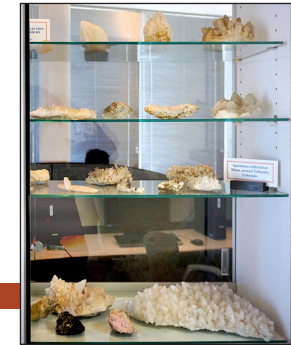
New Geologic Displays in Stoffer Hall

Thanks to the work of CKS Fellow **Will Gilliland**, two new geologic displays are now available for viewing in the west hallway of the first floor of Stoffer Hall.

The first display is **fossil leaves** from the **Dakota Formation of Ellsworth County, Kansas**. These fossils were collected and prepared by **Charles H. Sternberg**, now better known as the father of a dinosaur fossil hunting dynasty. These fossil leaves were part of a collection of 256 specimens purchased by the Washburn College Museum, in 1885, for the grand sum of \$40.00. These specimens and eight others are still used in the geology teaching collection.



The second display is of “**golden**” **calcite crystals** from a cave located under downtown **Joplin, Missouri**. This cave was discovered while mining for galena in the 1890s. The cave was opened as a commercial cave around 1915 and was a popular attraction until the 1930s. Around 1932 the commercial entrance was sealed. After mining was ended in the late 1940s, the pumping of ground water stopped flooding the mines and cave. The **calcite crystals** on display were donated to Washburn College in 1905 as part of the “**Cooper Collection**,” which is used for teaching and displays. **Note that most of the crystals show damage resulting from the 1966 tornado.** 



Skywriting Takes Flight: An Introduction by CKS Fellow Marcia Cebulska

I’ll let you in on a secret: The little red airplane on the cover of *Skywriting* is modeled after the one Amelia Earhart successfully flew on the first solo, female-piloted, non-stop flight across the Atlantic. As a Kansas woman myself, I loved the idea of using a depiction of the aircraft on the cover of my book, a guided journal with “sky” in the title.

On September 19, 2019, *Skywriting* made its debut in the Marvin Auditorium of the Topeka & Shawnee County Library to a standing-room-only crowd of 100+. New York Times best-selling author Harriet Lerner introduced the book with a short chat she called, “Ten Secrets You Don’t Know about Marcia Cebulska.” Dr. Lerner concluded by reading her endorsement: “Cover up your screens! Tell your phone to take a hike! Get ready to journal your way to more joy, creativity, and healing than you can begin to imagine.” I was honored and humbled.

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How did it happen that a playwright like me, with some four decades of experience writing scripts, came to write a guided journal? The tale began in the very same Marvin Auditorium at a writer's conference where I was giving a presentation entitled "Dialogue that Sings," a fitting topic for a playwright. Afterward, a woman introduced herself as **Thea Rademacher** of **Flint Hills Publishing**. We set up a time to meet.

A series of lunches followed during which we talked about the challenges of facing a blank page, the value of words and the beauty of language, overcoming obstacles in rewriting, but also, the joys of writing. We discovered that we both had a passion for journaling. Thea Rademacher said that she hoped I would one day write a book about writing and that her press would publish it. I confessed that I had once started a book called "Writing to Heal" based on a series of classes I'd taught. Somewhere, I told her, buried in a dusty file, I might still have the beginnings of that book along with writing exercises I'd developed for creative writing and playwriting classes that I had taught over the years.

We embarked on a journey: I'd write and she'd edit a guided journal full of writing prompts, exercises, and stories. We thought such a book would be helpful for both those seeking personal growth and those interested in creative writing. I wanted the book to give writers courage and a sense of authenticity, a book that would include not only a record of life's events and its troubles but also playfulness and fantasy. I could offer techniques I'd used myself and with my students to live a more aware, creative, and pleasure-filled life. I even borrowed stories from my memoir-in-progress to act as inspirations so that the readers could become my co-writers.

The result is ***Skywriting: A Journaling Guide to Help You Soar!*** In it are chapters with titles like, "Troubles and why write about

them" but also "Fun with fake astrology." The

Introduction begins with these words:

Our lives do not come with plot lines. We may struggle to find any rhyme or reason for what happens to us. Writing can help tame our past, focus our present, and give us a hand in creating a path for our future.

My daughter, a psychologist at Stanford University, calls it: "Self-discovery without



the angst." The Introduction also includes this line: "We write to make art out of the stuff of life." Indeed, all of my plays have started with a scribble in my journal.

Since its launch, I have had the good fortune to introduce the book at several presentations to widely varied audiences. For example, at The Raven Bookstore in Lawrence,

Kansas, I spoke to an audience of mostly writers. Three days later, in Kansas City, Thea Rademacher and I addressed an auditorium peopled by therapists and social workers at a Care4U2 conference with the theme of caring for caregivers. A couple of weeks later, I led a professional development workshop for Washburn University's Department of English which included, among its participants, teachers of composition, creative writing, and literature.

Writing *Skywriting* and sharing it with the world has re-enforced my belief in the power of journaling. The practice of writing can help us develop self-compassion, confidence, a more mindful appreciation of the world around us, help us cope with troubles and escape when we need to play. A journal gives us a safe place to vent, confess, doodle, record, experiment, complain, play, brag, remember, reflect, release, observe, pretend, be brave, be creative, and be grateful.

<https://www.marciacebulska.com>

<https://www.amazon.com/skywriting/s?k=skywriting>

CKS Meeting Summaries

September 12, 2019, Lincoln Room

Updates from Fellows

- **Vanessa Steinroetter** / Co director – Published journal article on literary representations of prairie madness in the summer 2019 issue of *Great Plains Quarterly*. Wrote two film reviews for the journal *Kansas History*.
- **Danielle Head** / Co director – Started photographic work on new project through Major Research Grant.
- **Connie Gibbons** – Mulvane art museum
- **Judy McConnell-Farmer** – Starting her 26th year and taking sabbatical in spring write book on early childhood education, lives of young children in Kansas, with 18 countries represented.
- **Rachel Goossen** – Completed summer Sweet Sabbatical where she continued looking at LGBTQ justice, learning from people in different places, and giving conference presentations.
- **Marguerite Perret** – Completed summer Sweet Sabbatical taking student work to exhibit in Sorbonne in Paris, connected to the conference the City is Nature. Also visited OSU Stillwater as embedded artist in graduate studies program for two weeks, learning about watersheds of OK for exhibition in August.
- **Kerry Wynn** – The history and honors program partnered with Tom Averill to work on map of Kansas literature. Article coming out in *Mid-Western Quarterly* (fall), about "Little Blue Books."
- **Deborah Altus** – Thanked CKS for honorarium, "Laramie Inside Out." Current project investigating Mitsy McPatrick, long term care, looking at surveys of nursing home residents, thinking about how to more accurately get a sense of peoples care.
- **Tom Averill** – Wrote review for film retrospective of Gypsy Moths, Found Documents – won Byron Calwell Smith award KU, Willa Aware – Women Writing the West finalist aware, going to Kansas Book Festival, Oklahoma Book Festival. Developing Kansas studies book collection, family artist residency in Iowa, built rock sculpture and wrote poetry, Ag Arts. Looking for artists something to do with environment, conservancy funded by Garth family in Iowa.
- **Marcia Cebulska** – Last May presented at northern Colorado writers conference, and in Greece. Publication of book *Skywriting*, to be launched at Public Library, Thursday, 7pm. She is on playwriting panel, Flint Hills Publications.

- **Rebecca Manning**, Art Museum – Working on research women artists from Topeka, turn of the century, larger project from new women artists in area. Visit peer institutions, and private public collections sharing work. Stay tuned in dev. Visiting artist from Paraguay, meet and greet, part of Kansas Paraguay partnership until Oct 5th.
- **Will Gilliland** – Work with collections, new display for Topeka gem and minerals society of plant fossils discovered by Sternberg in 1885, display of gold and calcite crystals from crystal cave under Joplin MO. 1st floor of Washburn Gem and Mineral Show.
- **Ramon Powers** – Has a forthcoming book together with Denise Low from the University of Nebraska Press Breakout fort Robinson Nebraska trial. Kansas oral history project, interview former legislators, women representatives, Amber Dickenson continue project. Digitized on Washburn server.
- **Lindsey Ibanez** – City and urban life, applying statistics initiatives Topeka, third spaces, guest speaker Bonnie Johnson, KU Urban planning. Teach next spring connect with community schools including Topeka High.
- **Laura Murphy** – Looking at excavation sites, pre-Spanish, archeology – paleoecology research, students and former students helping, continue to work on project fold in to spring course in Kansas Archeology – HICEPS Kansas State Historical Society – revive April as Kansas Archeology Month – Sat., April 18th KA Day. Curating displays and giving public presentations.

Call for Spring Kansas Studies

- Let us know if there are classes that have Kansas connection. Literature of American West, etc.

Ideas for Guest Speakers – Collect running list of good speakers, inviting regional guest speakers, send ideas, create list / database, send all the ideas. WU-mester citizenship and suffrage, discussion panel.

Call for Newsletter Stories

- Send for place holder – TBA cutoff date November follow up

Ben Lerner / Topeka School – Oct. 5th

Launch of Megan Phelps-Roper's memoir *Unfollow* – Oct 8th

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September 12, 2019 -continued from p. 5

Funding Requests – For requests under \$200.00, please email co-directors. For requests above that, please introduce them here so that CKS fellows can vote.

Tom – AG Arts / asking for \$1,400.00 (Theatre?). Understand state of contemporary ag, stories of loss of farms, immigrants, pre-proposal. In Kansas in Feb. Alma, send out packet of information to group. If there is interest, work on fundraising.

Working on one for Laurent – connecting panel with museum. Land in Spring John Hitchcock – Connie working on project acquiring 75 photographs for collection African American women, photographs of famous figures, and other portraits. Brian Lanker – *Capitol-Journal*, Pulitzer prize, collection through wife, through foundation, raise funds to acquire. Exhibiting Feb. 1, 2020. Scheduled Bruce Mactavish to bring in Flonzie Wright Brown – civil rights worker, leader in community. Talk as part of WU-mester w/ exhibition. “I dream a world.”

Later request to do permanent art exhibit at Library work on Robert Alt started national art therapy association.

Respectfully submitted by Danielle Head

November 7, 2019, Lincoln Room

- I. Meeting called to order 12:20 PM
- II. **Updates** from CKS Fellows
 - a. **Danielle Head** – Traveled to the Society for Photographic Education Midwest Chapter Conference in Milwaukee. Also visited the Art Institute of Chicago, which featured an exhibit of photography and folk art from WPA projects.
 - b. **Tom Averill** – Presented at an event honoring the centennial of the Little Blue Books in Mabee Library on November 5, together with Kerry Wynn, Tom Prasch, and Louella Moore. Tom A. and Kerry were also on a KLWN radio show together. Tom has a story forthcoming in *Vautrin* titled “Extra Innings” and set in a futuristic, dystopian Topeka, dedicated to “making Baseball Great Again,” where the baseball field was sponsored by the “Cook” brothers. Tom will also be teaching an Osher class titled “Kansas Literature: A Dozen Writers You Should Know but Probably Don’t” in March/April 2020. Work on the Map of Kansas Literature project is ongoing thanks to the efforts of work-study

- students. Finally, Tom also talked about this year’s Kansas Book Award (category is fiction), for which there are 18 very strong submissions so far.
- c. **Marcia Cebulka** – Launched her new book *Skywriting* on September 19 and is busy presenting and leading workshops based on it, including at the Raven Bookstore in Lawrence and an upcoming faculty workshop for the English Department. She looks forward to presenting at the Northern Colorado writing conference next April/May as well.
 - d. **Carol Yoho** – Has been busy with new photographic adventures that have taken her outside of Kansas. Continues her interest in silent film and Buster Keaton. Carol is on the planning committee for a revival, in Sept. 2020, of the Buster Keaton Celebration, which had been held in Iola, KS from 1993 to 2017, and in Kansas City, MO, in 2018. The next event is planned for September 2020 and will focus on Buster Keaton and Gene Kelly.
 - e. **Laura Murphy** – Will be teaching AN369/KS399/HN302 Kansas Archaeology in the spring 2020 semester, which will be a High Impact Community Engagement Practice (HICEP) course. Students will help with the planning of and showcase their research at a public Kansas Archaeology Day on April 18, 2020. Laura also mentioned that the 2020 Flint Hills Conference will be in Topeka, presenting additional opportunities for students.
 - f. **Martha Imparato** – As the university archivist at Washburn, Martha selected and arranged the exhibit accompanying the Little Blue Books presentations given by Tom Averill, Kerry Wynn, Tom Prasch, and Louella Moore on November 5 in Mabee Library. She also gave two presentations at local organizations, Sons of the American Revolution and the Lincoln Club.
 - g. **Rachel Goossen** – Is planning next year’s History Day events and invited volunteers to contact her if they would like to serve as judges for the regional competition on February 29, 2020. The state-wide History Day competition will be in April 2020. The National History Day theme for 2020 is “Breaking Barriers in History.”
 - h. **Will Gilliland** – Created new displays for the Topeka Gem and Mineral Society show

- that included fossils and calcite crystals. The displays are now viewable on the first floor of Stoffer Hall. Carol Yoho will take pictures of the exhibit so that they can be included in the fall 2019 CKS newsletter.
- i. **Vanessa Steinroetter** – No updates related to KS scholarship or teaching at this point.
- III. **Head** and **Steinroetter** announced that as usual, the CKS will be planning a Kansas Day speaker event on January 29, 2020. Nominations are solicited from the CKS Fellows, who will then vote on their preferred speaker choices. Please send nominations for Kansas Day speakers to both vanessa.steinroetter@washburn.edu no later than Monday, November 25, 2019. The CKS co-directors will then send out a list of nominees with instructions for voting shortly thereafter.
- IV. **Steinroetter** provided an update on CKS funds that have not been spent or committed to specific expenses yet. At this point, about \$3,000 are still available for funding requests. Head and Steinroetter asked those CKS members in attendance whether they would prefer to fund the Ag Arts play discussed at the previous meeting – which would cost more than half of available funds – or reserve the funds to support multiple other projects to be suggested by CKS Fellows. After some discussion, the consensus emerged that the latter option was preferable. Therefore, the CKS encourages further funding requests, including those for spring 2020. Steinroetter mentioned that it would make sense to request that all funding proposals be received by the co-directors by the end of the fall semester, so that they can plan for the budget better. Please send funding proposals for the spring 2020 semester to vanessa.steinroetter@washburn.edu and danielle.head@washburn.edu at your earliest convenience.
- V. **Head** and **Steinroetter** encouraged fellows to submit stories for the fall newsletter. Deadline for receipt of all stories and photos is November 25, 2019. Please send submissions to vanessa.steinroetter@washburn.edu and danielle.head@washburn.edu.
- VI. **Steinroetter** reminded those faculty teaching a class with some connection to Kansas Studies to please advertise KS classes for the spring 2020 semester, such as Laura Murphy’s Kansas Archaeology class, as well as

- the minor in Kansas Studies. The co-directors will work with Carol Yoho on updating and printing more copies of the promotional brochure.
- VII. **Head** circulated a draft of a scholarship proposal that the CKS co-directors would like to pilot in the spring 2020 to increase student engagement with the CKS and the field of Kansas Studies. The proposal describes a \$500 scholarship that is to be awarded to a Washburn University student to develop or disseminate a research, creative, collaborative, or community-based project with a significant tie to any aspect of Kansas studies. Upon completion, the project will be publically presented or exhibited (e.g. as a WTE, at Apeiron, in the CKS newsletter, at a local/regional conference, etc.). The award will be for the 2020-2021 academic year with a starting date of August 2020. CKS Fellows at the meeting provided feedback and suggestions for this proposal, which met with approval. Averill suggested that a similar scholarship could be created for a student working with the Thomas Fox Averill collection in Mabee Library, and Steinroetter and Head agreed that they would be happy to partner with him on the creation and funding of such an additional scholarship.
- VIII. Meeting adjourned at 1:00 PM
- Respectfully submitted by Vanessa Steinroetter

Details will be shared early in Spring Semester



WASHBURN UNIVERSITY
1700 SW COLLEGE AV
TOPEKA, KANSAS 66621

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Dennis Etzel, Jr. has a new chapbook of poetry coming out from Kellogg Press in Spring 2020 titled *Everything is Ephemera*. Many of the poems are based on his transformation as a student as well as being an English teacher at Washburn University.

