

News from the Midwest

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Submissions must be 150 words or less. Images are welcome!*

ILLINOIS

Augustana College, Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center

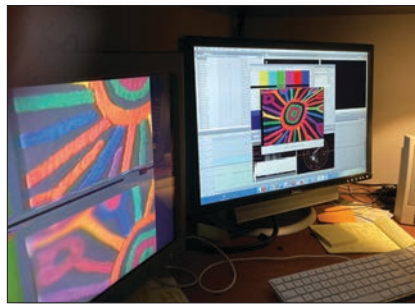
The Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center celebrated its 40th anniversary this year. The center is an international research hub for Swedish American studies. The 40th anniversary symposium, “The Migration and Beyond: New Perspectives on Swedish-American Relations” invited four scholars (two Americans and two Swedes) to present on new topics in Swedish American studies. Talks included, among others: “Vikings and Dumb Blondes: The Construction of American Discourse on Nordic and Scandinavian Whiteness” and “An American Myth: Birth Control, Sex Education, and the Creation of the Swedish Sin.” Recordings are available on YouTube for a limited time at www.youtube.com/c/SwensonCenter.

MINNESOTA

Minnesota Media Arts

Minnesota Media Arts recently completed an extensive video archive project digitally converting the “Cable Arts Consortium Video Collection” comprising 60 3/4” U-matic video cassette programs. The process involved media asset cataloging, metadata collecting, converting to digital files, and, finally, creating a finding aid to share online. The collection, initially assembled for cable TV distribution, features arts and cultural programming from the late 1970s and 1980s.

Programs include works of visual artists, musicians, filmmakers, photographers, and poets, as well as dance and theater performances and sculpture installations. The digitized videos will be made available for reference and research through the Minnesota Media Arts repository. This project was made possible in part by the people of Minnesota through a grant funded by an appropriation to the Minnesota Historical Society from the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. For more information on this project visit <http://mnmediaarts.org>.



Digitization of analog videotape at Minnesota Media Arts for the Cable Arts Consortium Video Collection. Credit: Mark Stanley, Minnesota Media Arts.

MISSOURI

Lewis and Clark Discovery Expedition and Boat House

Now on display at the Lewis and Clark Boat House and Museum, a remarkably well-preserved dugout canoe offers a fascinating glimpse into trapping, hunting, and exploring in the late-eighteenth-century Ozarks. Miraculously, it was rescued from final indignity as a garden decoration by Larry and Judy Sifford of Branson West, Missouri. This rare example of a vessel crafted in the tradition

of Indigenous boat builders is extremely well preserved. Seeing the canoe in person, one appreciates the refinement and expertise of its design and construction. The key to its remarkable condition is Osage orange wood, the hardest and most naturally rot-resistant lumber in North America. Northwest Louisiana/southwest Arkansas is consistent with “the pre-settlement distribution of Osage orange, from which it was constructed,” notes Dr. Neal Lopinot, director of the Center for Archaeological Research at Missouri State University. Dr. Jack Ray and Dr. Lopinot oversaw radiocarbon dating to establish the canoe’s construction between 1777 and 1823 (68.2 percent probability). The builder apparently used a hollow tree as the raw material, making this dugout particularly unusual. At 13 feet long and weighing 175 pounds, the dugout was purchased by the Siffords in 2020. Larry Sifford acted on a hunch and had archaeologists confirm the age and significance of the little canoe, which has been placed on loan by the Larry and Judy Sifford family.



Missouri State Archives

The Missouri State Archives is pleased to announce the creation of a new collection on Missouri Digital Heritage. Civil War in Missouri features 221 items totaling 618 pages gathered from a dozen smaller collections, all nongovernmental records on the Civil War in Missouri. Letters provide insight into what families were going through during this conflict. The correspondence can be poignant, informative, disturbing, or all of the above. The collection also includes over 50 illustrations from contemporary newspapers such as *Harper's Weekly*. Photographs include portraits of soldiers, officers, and civilians. Every letter (except for one in German) is fully transcribed so that keyword searching is enabled and young researchers who may not be adept in reading handwriting of the era can appreciate the content and consider using the letters for upcoming National History Day projects. Visit <https://mdh.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16795coll39>.



Sample from the *Civil War in Missouri* collection. Credit: Courtesy Missouri State Archives.

Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City Art Institute, St. Louis Public Library

Missouri Remembers: Artists in Missouri Through 1951 is a freely available

digital resource documenting the stories and careers of various Missouri visual artists who have helped shape the artistic heritage of the state. Researchers from the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, the Kansas City Art Institute, and the St. Louis Public Library worked collaboratively to add over 280 artists to the still-growing portal with entries based on research from artist files, library resources, local historian files, and archival materials. The project aims to aid users in the discovery of Missouri's rich artistic legacy and to shine a light on those artists who may have been looked over in the past. It was endorsed as part of Missouri's Bicentennial Commission in 2018, *Missouri Remembers* can be accessed at <https://missouriartists.org>.



Art class at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, early 1970s. Credit: Education Department Records. Record Group 32. Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art Archives. Kansas City, Missouri.

State Historical Society of Missouri

The State Historical Society of Missouri has three new exhibitions in Columbia. *Mr. Pruitt's Possum Town* is on display through November 5, 2022, and presents a selection of photographs from 1920 to 1960 in

the segregated town of Columbus, Mississippi—known locally as “Possum Town.”



Lowndes County farmer Sylvester Harris with mule Jesse outside his home in Plum Grove community, February 1934. Otis N. Pruitt and Calvin Shanks Photographic Collection, UNC Wilson Library Special Collections.

In conjunction with *Mr. Pruitt's Possum Town*, *Picturing Missouri Sharecroppers* explores the 1939 sharecroppers' strike with images that share similarities with Pruitt's Mississippi photographs.



A group of evicted sharecroppers sits around a fire along Highway 61 in southeast Missouri, 1939. Arthur Witman Photograph Collection (S0836), State Historical Society of Missouri.

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A third exhibition celebrates the 35th anniversary of the National Women and Media Collection. *In Their Own Words* features the voices of important media women straight from their diaries, letters, and interviews. All exhibitions are free and open to the public during regular gallery hours. Located at 605 Elm Street in downtown Columbia, the Center for Missouri Studies galleries are open Tuesday–Friday from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Free parking is available. Learn more at shsmo.org.



Donna Allen, Marjorie Paxson, and Jean Gaddy Wilson with Western Historical Manuscript Collection associate director Nancy Lankford at the founding of the National Women and Media Collection in Columbia, Missouri, 1987. Marjorie B. Paxson Papers (C4078), State Historical Society of Missouri.

University of Missouri

The Missouri Historic Costume and Textile Collection presents *New Notables: Show-Me Queens*, an exhibit featuring the acquisition of garments worn by Missouri notables Ginger Rogers, Simone Esters, and Zachary Willmore. Gowns of legendary dancing queen Ginger Rogers highlight her Broadway career and traveling nightclub revue. Simone Esters is pageant royalty as Miss Missouri 2019–20 and second runner-up in the 2020 Miss America competition, as well as a world champion baton twirler. A gold-sequin evening gown and lace wedding dress are on display from Rock Bridge High School’s first male homecoming queen, Zachary Willmore, who is also a TikTok celebrity with over 1.1 million followers. His series “dancing every time I get dress-coded” features outfits that violated RBHS dress code and is a tool used to strike against fashion stereotypes and to deconstruct gender. The exhibit is displayed in Gwynn Hall on the University of Missouri campus through February 2023.



Gingers Rogers’s feathered gown (back detail) by Jean Louis (1975–80). Credit: Missouri Historic Costume and Textile Collection.

SOUTH DAKOTA

South Dakota State Historical Society

The Cultural Heritage Center, which houses the South Dakota State Historical Society in Pierre, is undergoing renovation now through 2025, just in time for the nation’s 250th anniversary. The renovation project will enhance storage for artifacts and archives, update staff areas, and reimagine the gallery spaces. The work should give the society another 20 years in the building. Recently, the renovation project moved from its conceptual phase to design development where costs are being calculated for updates. Collections will be stored off-site, but the Cultural Heritage Center will remain open and operational during the renovation. Next will be the conceptual phase for the revised exhibits with renovation getting under way early next year.



CHC Rendering Credit: ISG Architects