

# Speaking of Kansas

## Washburn Center for Kansas Studies



## Kansas Studies Newsletter

Spring 2010

### Fall Semester 2010 Course Offerings:

- **GL 103A Historical Geology** • 1:00 - 2:15 pm MW • Lecture/Lab • Tanbra Eifert
- **GL 103C Historical Geology** • 5:30 - 6:45 pm MW • Lecture/Lab • Will Gilliland
- **HI 397A Internship in History Agencies** • Prerequisites are HI111 & HI112 & 6 hours upper division history and consent • Rachel Goosen
- **PO 106D U.S. Government** • 12:00 - 12:50 pm MWF • Lecture • Bob Beatty
- **PO 107A American State & Local Government** • 9:30 - 10:45 am TR • Lecture • Mark Peterson
- **PO 304A Political Behavior** • 1:00 - 2:15 pm MW • Lecture • Bob Beatty
- **PO 307A Intern-State & Local Government** • Prerequisites are PO107 & Junior or Senior Status and/or Consent of instructor • Chris Hamilton

Tom Schmiedeler, Director  
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Sharon Ashworth, Biology  
Deborah Altus, Human Services  
Tom Averill, English  
Bob Beatty, Political Science  
Patti Bender, Health  
Roy Bird, KS State Library  
Marcia Cebulska, Playwright  
Jeannie Chinn, KSHS  
Marilyn Cott, KHC  
Charles Cranston, Mass Media  
Virgil Dean, KSHS  
Paul Fecteau, English  
David Feinmark, Mabee Library  
Jessie Fillerup, Music  
William Gilliland, Geology  
Rachel Goossen, History  
Chris Hamilton, Political Science  
Robert Hull, Finance  
Reinhild Janzen, Art  
Jim Kelly, KTWU  
David Kendall, KTWU  
Robert Lawson, English  
Gabrielle Lunte, Modern Languages  
Bruce Mactavish, History  
Judith McConnell-Farmer, Education  
Eric McHenry, English  
Marguerite Perret, Art  
Mark Peterson, Political Science  
J. Karen Ray, English  
Leslie Reynard, Communication  
William Roach, Business  
Betsy Kanabe Roe, Art  
Bradley Siebert, English  
Sarah Smarsh, English  
Margaret Stewart, English  
Sara Tucker, History  
William Wagnon, History  
Marydorsej Wanless, Art  
David Winchester, Mabee Library  
Margaret Wood, Soc./Anthropology  
Carol Yoho, Art

## Fellows News

**O**n April 21, 2010, the Mabee Library dedicated the **Thomas Fox Averill Kansas Studies Collection**, which Tom began transferring to Mabee in the summer of 2009. The Washburn Endowment Association created an endowed support fund to keep the collection vital.

During the ceremony it was announced that some donations have already been made to the collection. **Steven Hind**, special guest at the dedication, contributed fiction manuscripts. Washburn English Department faculty member **J. Karen Ray** donated notes and scripts from her Kansas Humanities Council Chautauqua performances as Carry A. Nation, Laura Ingalls Wilder, Kate Richards ("Red Kate") O'Hare and Osa Johnson, as well as materials from the Kansas Characters class taught on the Washburn campus. **Howard Faulkner**, also of the English Department, contributed copies ►

Visit: [http://www.washburn.edu/mabee/special\\_collections/averill.shtml](http://www.washburn.edu/mabee/special_collections/averill.shtml)



Thomas Fox Averill



Kansas Studies Collection



Center for Kansas Studies  
[www.washburn.edu/cks](http://www.washburn.edu/cks)

## Fellows News

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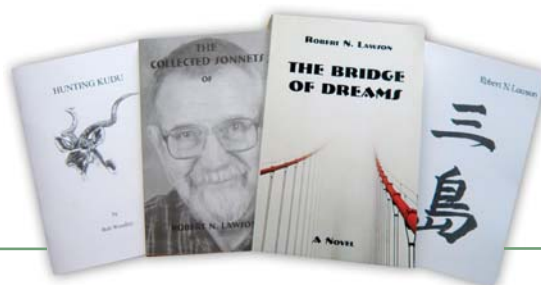
► of letters made during his extensive research, with Virginia Pruitt, of Dr. Karl Menninger.



Steven Hind chats after his reading at Mabee Library

If Tom shows up at work in overalls, chances are good he has a gig soon as William Jennings Bryan Oleander (of Here, KS). Besides commenting at public events, Tom also comments as Oleander for Kansas Public Radio. Transcripts of the KPR commentaries are available on-line, with links to the audio commentaries. Visit <http://www.washburn.edu/cas/english/taverill/here.html>

**Robert Lawson**, professor emeritus, Department of English, is promoting sales of his novel, *The Bridge of Dreams*, published by the Woodley Press as part of its 30th Anniversary celebration. The novel has a companion piece, *Collected Sonnets*, including sonnets that introduce each chapter of his novel. Both titles are available at the Washburn Bookstore. Two chapbooks are also now available, for sale at bargain prices directly from Dr. Lawson ([robert.lawson@washburn.edu](mailto:robert.lawson@washburn.edu)). The first is Lawson's Modern Noh Play, *Mishima*, published by Woodley in 1983. The second is Chapter V (pp. 72-92) of Woodley's novel, *Cry to Dream Again*, submitted as his M.A. thesis at the University of Kansas in 1962, but never published as a complete work. (This writing seems to be the autobiographical story of hunting kudu in Ethiopia.)



**Roy Bird**, Director of Kansas Center for the Book, State Library of Kansas, and CKS fellow, announced the **Kansas 150 SLK blog**, a two-year journey through Kansas history, culture, society and natural wonders at <http://kansas150slk.blogspot.com>

New entries appear every two weeks. Some samples are Wizard of Oz, geology, Carry A. Nation and orphan trains.

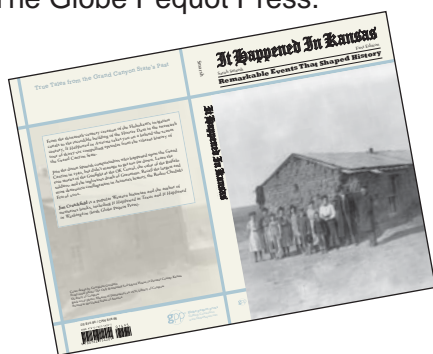
**Another State Library initiative** now underway is a grassroots project **soliciting book title suggestions**. Each book nominated must contain a significant aspect related to Kansas. The book can tell a story about Kansas, its culture, heritage or state history. In addition, the book may be written by a recognizable author who has called Kansas home at some time in his/her lifetime; and the book may be from any

genre, fiction or nonfiction, and for readers of any age (we need children's and young adult titles). Nominations may be made from now until October 31, 2010. The list of 150 notable titles will be announced at the beginning of 2011 and promoted throughout the sesquicentennial year. Obtain a nomination form from the Kansas Center for the Book at the State Library, or online at <http://kslib.info> and scroll to the 150 Books link in the middle of the home page. Submit as many as you like, but please submit each on a separate form. Participation is free and open to the public. *Tell everyone you know!*



# The Goat-Gland Doctor

From *It Happened in Kansas: Remarkable Events That Shaped History*, by Sarah Smarsh. Copyright 2010. Used with permission of The Globe Pequot Press.



## 1917

### **The Brinkley-Jones Hospital and Training School for Nurses kept goats.**

Sure, the private hospital in a tiny town at the edge of the Flint Hills had normal medical fare, such as an X-ray machine, rows of scalpels, and operating tables. But the key to its signature treatment was the goats, who lived in a pen behind the large hospital building. People traveled from across the country to receive the goats' healing powers, administered by the diamond-ring-wearing, fast-talking, questionably trained Dr. John R. Brinkley.

Brinkley came to Milford, Kansas, in 1917 to set up shop as the town doctor. He had studied medicine for three years at Bennett College in St. Louis

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**The place had a bad habit of awarding medical certificates to anyone who would pay for them.**

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**by Sarah Smarsh,  
English**

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Kansas native Sarah Smarsh is a fellow of the Center for Kansas Studies and an assistant professor of English at Washburn University in Topeka, where she teaches creative nonfiction writing."

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but, unable to pay the school, ultimately obtained a bogus degree at a Kansas City, Missouri, school called Eclectic Medical University. The place had a bad habit of awarding medical certificates to anyone who would pay for them. Because the school wasn't recognized by most states, he artfully obtained his medical license in Arkansas and then acquired a Kansas license for \$25 by way of reciprocity, wherein one state recognizes the professional certifications of another. It was a roundabout road, but Brinkley was ready to make good money in Milford, a remote town in which he could charge a sizable fee for long-distance house calls to rural areas.

Born in 1885 to a poor North Carolina doctor who had served

as a medic for the Confederate Army, Brinkley had always dreamed of being a doctor. But just out of school in Kansas City, he found himself working at Swift Packing Company, becoming intimately familiar with the anatomy of slaughtered livestock.

One animal held particular interest for Brinkley: the goat. While working at Swift, he learned that goats were immune to human disease and that they were among the healthiest animals on the planet. Cattle and pigs got sick regularly enough, but goats were predictably robust and virile. It was at the packing company that Brinkley began to formulate the theory that would make him a rich man.

For the next two years, Brinkley—along with his second wife, Minnie, whom he had married without divorcing his first wife, with whom he had two daughters—moved from town to town in Kansas, looking for steady work as a doctor.

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**One animal held particular interest for Brinkley: the goat.**

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His ear, nose, and throat practice only lasted a month in Hays, in western Kansas, as the locals distrusted his character. He drew a wealth of customers in Fulton after curing an old couple's constipation, and with this success he purchased ►



## The Goat-Gland Doctor, *cont.*

▶ a fancy car and joined the local Masons and Shriners. But Brinkley soon found himself stationed at Fort Bliss in El Paso, Texas, serving under the Medical Officers Reserve during World War I. (Brinkley would recall valiantly tending to the health of more than two thousand recruits for months on end, but army records say he served one month and five days, almost all of which he was



Brinkley photos @ [www.kansasmemory.org](http://www.kansasmemory.org)

lying in the Fort Bliss hospital for nervous exhaustion.)

Discharged from the military, Brinkley returned to Fulton to find that another doctor had swooped in and taken his business. It was time to move again. An ad attempting to attract a doctor to Milford caught his eye in the *Kansas City Star*; the ad listed a population of two thousand, though it was actually more like two hundred.

Minnie cried at the prospect of starting over there, a town

with nothing more than a bank, two mills, a small mercantile, and one rural post office route. But Brinkley insisted that the town was rife with opportunity.

Brinkley was still in debt from his Fulton hijinks but, gradually, he worked his way out of it. The major influenza outbreak of 1917 allowed him to establish trust and rapport with locals over the course of many house calls, and he performed minor surgeries for swollen tonsils or burst appendixes. Soon, Brinkley had a couple thousand in the bank. He was able to rent an office building, complete with living quarters and a drugstore at which Minnie ran the soda fountain. Brinkley presented himself smartly, wearing light suits, sharp spectacles, and a well-trimmed, auburn goatee. He felt sure that he was going places, and he would be ready when opportunity knocked.

Soon, a local farmer stopped by to chat privately about a certain medical condition. He was, well, impotent. Could the doctor help?

Brinkley's blue eyes must have twinkled, as he had waited for this moment for years now. Finally, he could test some of the ideas he had developed back at

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**He was able to rent an office building, complete with living quarters and a drugstore at which Minnie ran the soda fountain.**

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Swift Packing Company in Kansas City: specifically, his idea that implantation of goat testi-

cles into a human male would result in increased sexual performance.

The farmer agreed to undergo the procedure and even agreed to supply the goat.

First, Brinkley transplanted slices of goat testicles into the farmer's own testicles. Next, he blocked the vas deferens on that side and transplanted a blood vessel and nerve to the new testicle hybrid (for what Brinkley termed "more nerve energization"). The whole procedure took less than fifteen minutes and cost \$150.

The farmer was happy with the results; he reported a change in the bedroom, and gossip spread about the doctor's unique service.

The next goat-gland recipient, William Stittsworth, didn't stop with his own procedure. He made sure his wife received a goat ovary, as well. The couple had faced difficulty conceiving a child, but a year later the two had a baby boy, nicknamed "Billy."

More and more people came to Brinkley, and soon dozens of locals were walking around with bits of goat glands in their bodies. There was a bit of a learning curve, as some of these early patients found they began to emit an unpleasant animal musk; the trick, Brinkley learned, was to avoid stinky Angora goats and use only three-week-old male and yearling female Toggenburg goats.

While curing impotence was a buzz-worthy claim itself,

## The Goat-Gland Doctor, cont.

Brinkley soon expanded the scope of his goat-gland theory. After operating on a resident of an insane asylum, Brinkley claimed he could cure insanity. He also claimed his procedure could cure high blood pressure, epilepsy, diabetes, and, yes, even cancer.

Brinkley was ready to capitalize on momentum for the goat-gland procedure. He hired an advertising executive to consult with him on public relations. The ad man saw a gold mine in the idea and encouraged him to gather tes-

and—fittingly for a hospital making use of goat testicles—a butcher shop.

Brinkley was on his way to real success, and he needed the town of Milford to catch up with him. He led a mission to incorporate the town, establish a city government, and install electricity, running water and sewer lines. Some residents objected to the increased taxes, but the town went forward with the changes Brinkley proposed, soon paving main roads, building sidewalks, and establishing a high school.

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**Brinkley was getting a reputation for being a loose cannon. He appeared to have a drinking problem, carrying a gun in public or transforming into a mad man who chased patients with a knife if they didn't pay up.**

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timonials from patients, target rural households with mailed pamphlets, and take out ads in one hundred of the nation's top newspapers.

The advertising blitz paid off; the chancellor of the law school at the University of Chicago himself underwent a goat-gland transplant and, delighted, saw to it that his school award Brinkley an honorary doctor of science degree. This exposure resulted in an onslaught of new patients from near and far, generating income that would allow Brinkley to build the Brinkley-Jones Hospital and Training School for Nurses. The place opened in September, 1918, and included a drugstore, post office, barbershop, restaurant,

The hospital drew a steady stream of patients, providing economic vigor to the town. Brinkley and his wife were local celebrities; they “gave back” to Milford by giving away turkeys during the holiday season, sponsoring a baseball team called the Brinkley Goats, and building a Methodist church (though the bishop wouldn't allow it to be called “John R. Brinkley Methodist Episcopal Church”). They even kept a live bear caged in their front yard for the enjoyment of children passing by—until, one night, it made noise incessantly, and Brinkley shot it to death.

Brinkley was getting a reputation for being a loose cannon. He appeared to have a drinking

problem, carrying a gun in public or transforming into a mad man who chased patients with a knife if they didn't pay up. On at least one occasion, he was arrested for shooting up the town and found guilty of disturbing the peace.

Nonetheless, Brinkley's business grew. He had an offer to operate on former president Woodrow Wilson but refused to a condition of secrecy. One newspaper falsely reported that the entire country of Japan had embraced Brinkley's procedure. In 1922, a *Los Angeles Times* editor brought Brinkley to California, pressed the state medical board to grant the man a temporary permit, and then underwent the surgery himself; subsequently, Brinkley received rave reviews in the newspaper and went on to operate on aging movie stars in need of a sexual boost.

Patients continued to stream into Milford. By 1927, Brinkley had performed hundreds of operations and couldn't keep up with demand, though he was now charging \$750. He was earning \$1.5 million a year on his goat-gland scheme, not to mention another half million from prescriptions.

Along the way, Brinkley saw his share of backlashes. In 1921, when one happy patient celebrated Brinkley's method in a book, *The Goat Gland Transplantation*, the American Medical Association contacted the publisher with information on Brinkley's lackluster ►

## The Goat-Gland Doctor, *cont.*

► credentials, and the publication was halted. Connecticut, Brinkley's summertime stomping ground, revoked his license upon discovering his bogus degree. His outrageous advertising got him expelled from the American Medical Association, and a Chicago hospital sent him and his goats packing without an Illinois state license. In 1924, Henry Ford's newspaper called Brinkley a charlatan.

It would be wrong to suggest that Brinkley was the only one of his kind. Research into animal glands, organ and tissue, and their potential benefits to humankind was in vogue. Indeed, Brinkley's greatest professional nemesis, Dr. Max Thorek of Chicago, studied the transplantation of gorilla glands. But no one made a name for himself quite like Brinkley did.

This was largely due to his prowess in self-promotion. When Brinkley wasn't operating, he was giving lectures or ordering more advertising. And when radio became public media, Brinkley seized the opportunity, in 1923 establishing the fourth commercial station in the country and becoming the star of KFKB. His station featured programs covering health, country music, poetry, market news, the weather, and fundamentalist religious teachings. But it was all a cover for Brinkley's real objective. His nasally voice, still with a tinge of North Caro-

lina accent, spoke to the entire nation, mostly its rural factions, imploring them to seek his medical help. He thrilled men with the prospect of increased sexual virility, and delighted women by recognizing their sexual needs in a time when such matters weren't recognized, let alone discussed. "You owe it to yourself and your wife," he told men over the airwaves, just as he had written "Many and many wives come to me and say, 'Doctor, my husband is no good'" in one brochure.

Responding to complaints by the American Medical Association, the Federal Radio Commission shut down KFKB in 1930. Brinkley sued on the grounds of censorship, but federal courts sided with the



commission in a landmark decision. The same year, the Kansas Medical Board investigated forty-two deaths related to Brinkley's surgeries and revoked his license. The Goat-Gland Doctor's time in Kansas was running short.

He rallied by mounting a campaign for governor—a position from which he could transform the medical board to his liking. As a write-in candidate, he narrowly lost with 30 percent of the vote, and it's widely believed that state officials intervened in what was truly a win for Brinkley.

Brinkley moved his wife and small son south to Del Rio, Mexico, where he could continue his radio operation legally by blasting signals across the border into the United States. Thus, in the 1930s, despite the economic depression going on in the United States, Brinkley, his wife, and a young son lived in extravagance south of the border. Brinkley drove a custom-made Lincoln with gold-plated hub caps, or a sixteen-cylinder Cadillac with his name emblazoned on gold plate in thirteen places. He wore enormous diamond rings on his hands and kept a veritable zoo at his palatial new home—birds, giant tortoises, and penguins ill-suited for the hot climate. The animals moved about the fantastic grounds that featured a lily pond, spectacularly lit water fountains, and a huge pool with Brinkley's name in it.

But the coming decade would continue to unravel Brinkley's success. Ultimately, he was bankrupted by charges of medical malpractice, tax evasion, and mail fraud and died of heart failure in 1942. 🐐



# Spring News Flashes

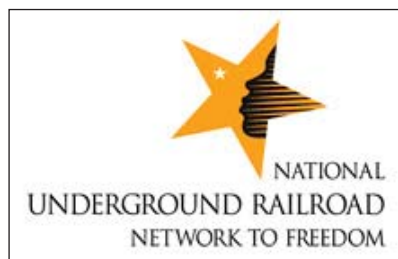
- ▶ Topeka's **Ritchie House** was recently listed on the **Network to Freedom**, the National Park Service's virtual park devoted to sites associated with the Underground Railroad. Other recognized sites in Topeka are the **Owen House** in the 3500 block of NE Rochester Road and **Constitutional Hall** in the 400 block of Kansas Avenue.



- ▶ A new book about the 1966 Topeka tornado will be released in the fall. **And Hell Followed With It: Life and Death in a Kansas Tornado** was written by Topeka native Bonar Menninger and will be published by Greenleaf Book Group of Austin, Texas, in September. The book chronicles the experiences of dozens of Topekans who found themselves in the path of the F-5 tornado as it cut an eight-mile swath through the city. The story also highlights the history of Topeka, the legend of Burnett's Mound and provides background information on severe weather science and forecasting. Upon publication, the book will be available for purchase via the Web, at [topekatornado.com](http://topekatornado.com), and through local and national book retailers.



- ▶ The **2010 National Underground Railroad Conference** will be held in Topeka, July 28-31, 2010, sponsored by the National Park Service. Participants can kick off the conference with a viewing of **Ne-groes to Hire**, a documentary film of the slave culture in 1850s Missouri and Kansas. Film



makers Gary Jenkins and Dr. Jimmy Johnson, descendants of slave masters and slaves, respectively, will discuss this little known slice of history and its effects on modern day race relations. Marvin Auditorium 101 B&C, TSC-PL, Topeka, 7:00 pm, Tuesday, July 27, 2010. For more information, call 785-580-4510. Conference details are available at: <http://www.lanetrail.com/ugr/>

- ▶ Staff at the Kansas Museum of History are planning an exhibit they're calling "**150 Things I Love About Kansas.**" The idea is to feature 150 objects, events, people, and other influential forces that have made Kansas uniquely Kansas over the past century and a half. Objects, photos and documents may be included. To suggest a submission contact Rebecca J. Martin, Assistant Museum Director, Kansas Museum of History, Kansas Historical Society, 6425 S.W. Sixth Ave., Topeka, KS 66615-1099, [rmartin@kshs.org](mailto:rmartin@kshs.org), (785) 272-8681, ext. 426.



- ▶ The Center for Kansas Studies announces its own Sesquicentennial list. Help nominate "**150 Kansas Firsts**"—events in the history of Kansas representing firsts for the nation or for Kansas. Because CKS encourages "interdisciplinary exchange of ideas and resources," we welcome all suggestions for "firsts." We'll need a one-sentence description of each "Kansas First" you nominate, your contact information, and a source of reference to share. Deadline for nominations is December 31, 2010. Our list will be announced for Kansas Day, January 29, 2011—our Sesquicentennial. We'll link a Nominating Form to the CKS web site. Meanwhile, send nominations to [tom.averill@washburn.edu](mailto:tom.averill@washburn.edu)



# Kansas in the Outer Hebrides

When I first met my wife, Barbara, many years ago in Salina, her home town, I asked her, “If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?” As a geographer, her answer—the Outer Hebrides—surprised me because most Kansans, though they may have heard of this Scottish island chain, would not have it at the top of their list of places to experience, opting instead, perhaps, for a glamorous city like Paris or Florence. Coincidental-

by Tom Schmiedeler,  
Political Science

Research is from a Sweet Sabatical Dr. Schmiedeler took in Summer, 2009.

All photos are by the author unless otherwise attributed.



1. A Map of the Inner and Outer Hebrides in Scotland. Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Hebridesmap.png>

ly, the islands had also been a priority destination for me since the mid 1970s when, while traveling on the European continent, reports of fellow travelers lauding the scenery and Gaelic culture of the islands first stirred my interest. At last in the summer of 2009 we experienced the Outer Hebrides after flying from Inverness, the unofficial capital of Highland Scotland, to Stornoway, the largest and only real town on the islands. Our flight began the last leg of a month-long period of island hopping that included trips to two other Scottish archipelagos, Orkney and Shetland.

The islands of the Outer Hebrides lie in an arc pattern off the northwest coast of Scotland and are about 130 miles long (figure 1). For this reason they are also known collectively as the Long Isle. From north to south, the principal inhabited islands are Lewis and Harris (one island consisting of three parts: Lewis, North Harris and South Harris), Berneray, North Uist, Benbecula, South Uist, Eriskay and Barra. Most of the population of about 26,000 lives on Lewis and Harris. Stornoway, with a population of about 8,000, is located on the east coast of Harris.

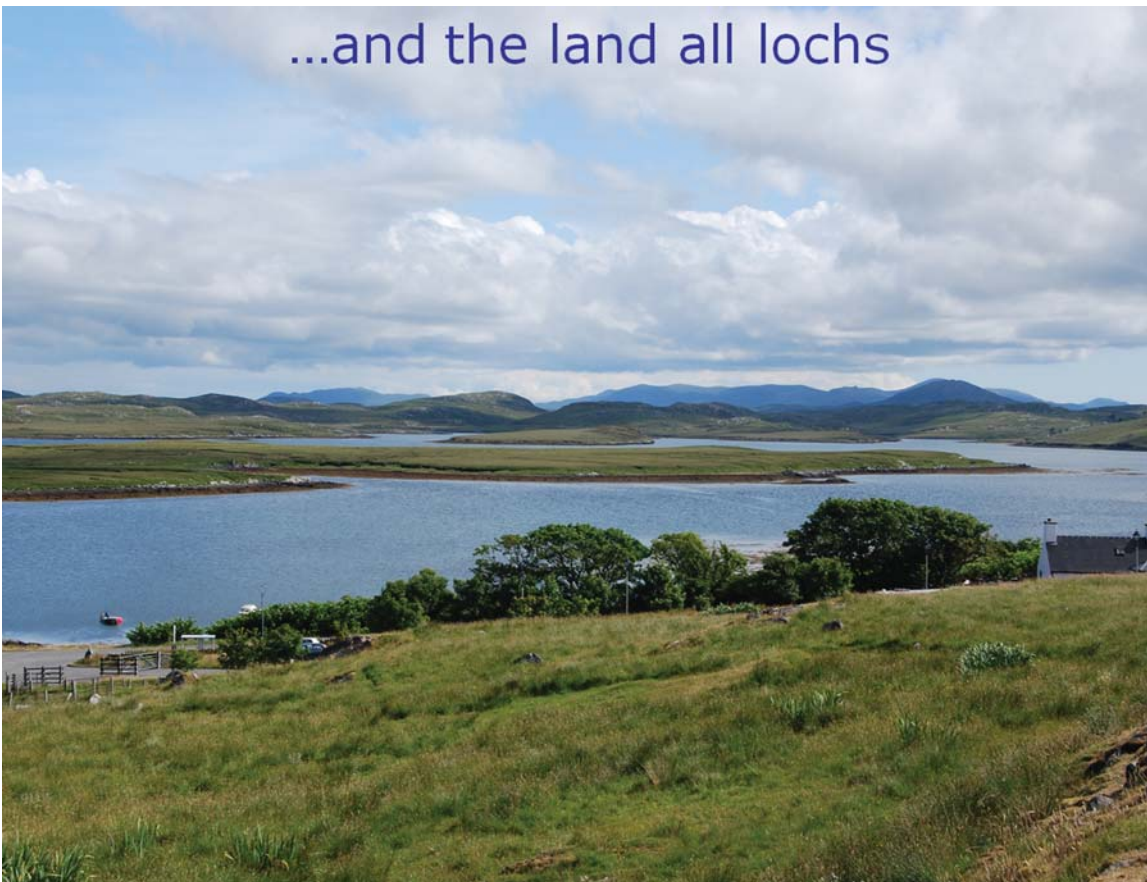
John MacCulloch, the Scottish geologist, is purported to have written the following quote in a letter to Sir Walter Scott:



## Kansas in the Outer Hebrides,, *cont.*



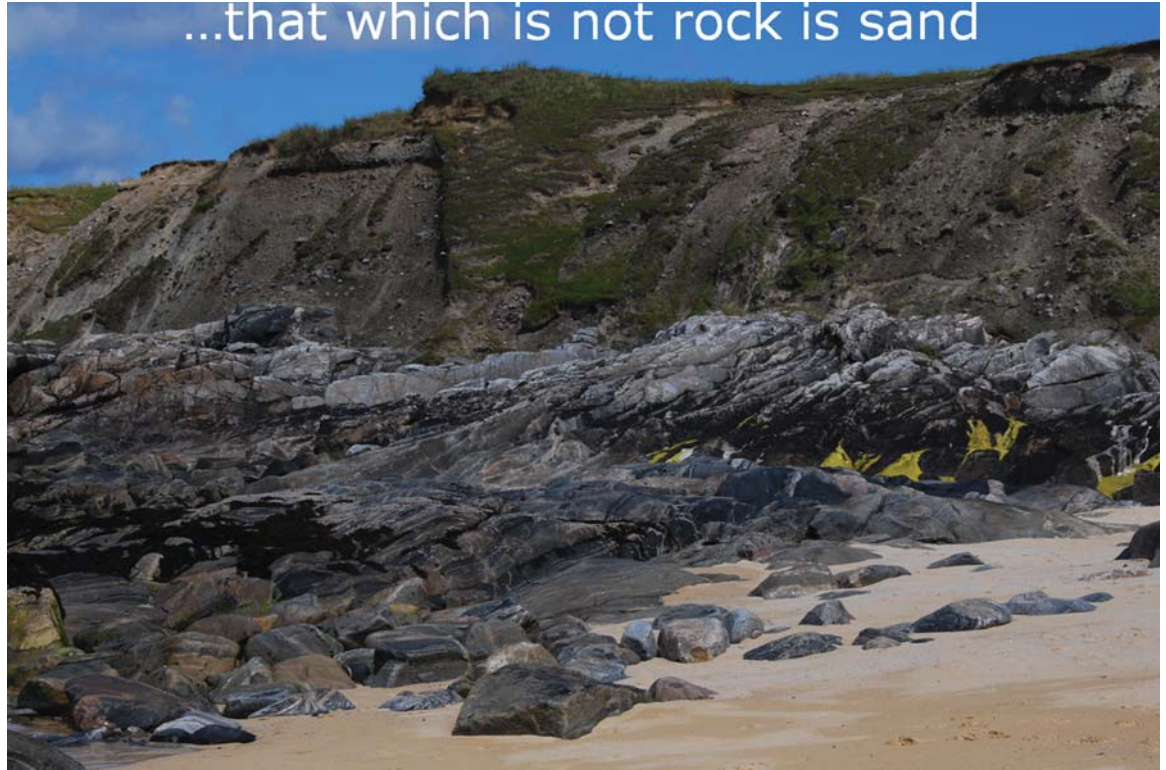
2. View of islands in the Sound of Harris from Leverburgh, South Harris.



3. Cailleach na Mòintich (Old woman of the Moors) and Loch Smuaisebhal, Lewis.

## Kansas in the Outer Hebrides,, *cont.*

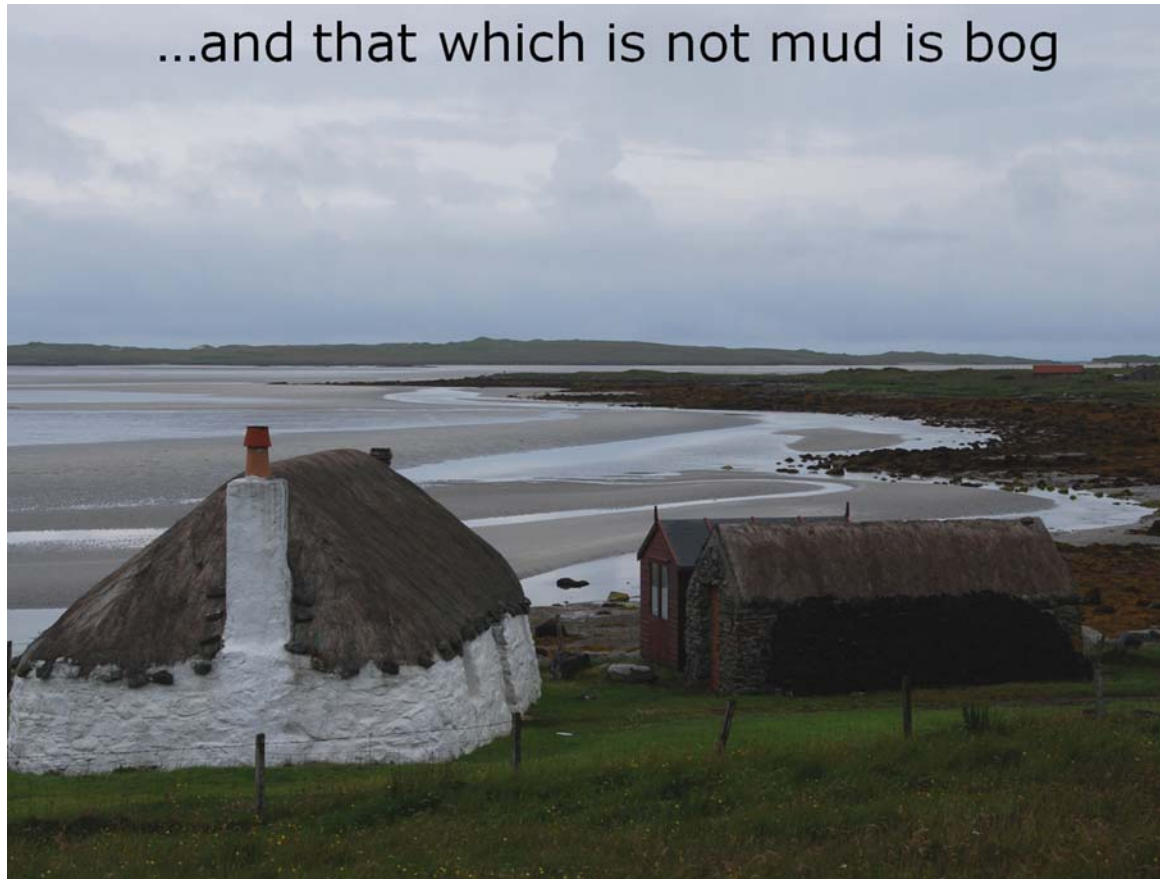
...that which is not rock is sand



4. Lewisian Gneiss and Sand, Traigh Lar, South Harris.

5. Struan Cottage, Traigh Bhalaign, North Uist.

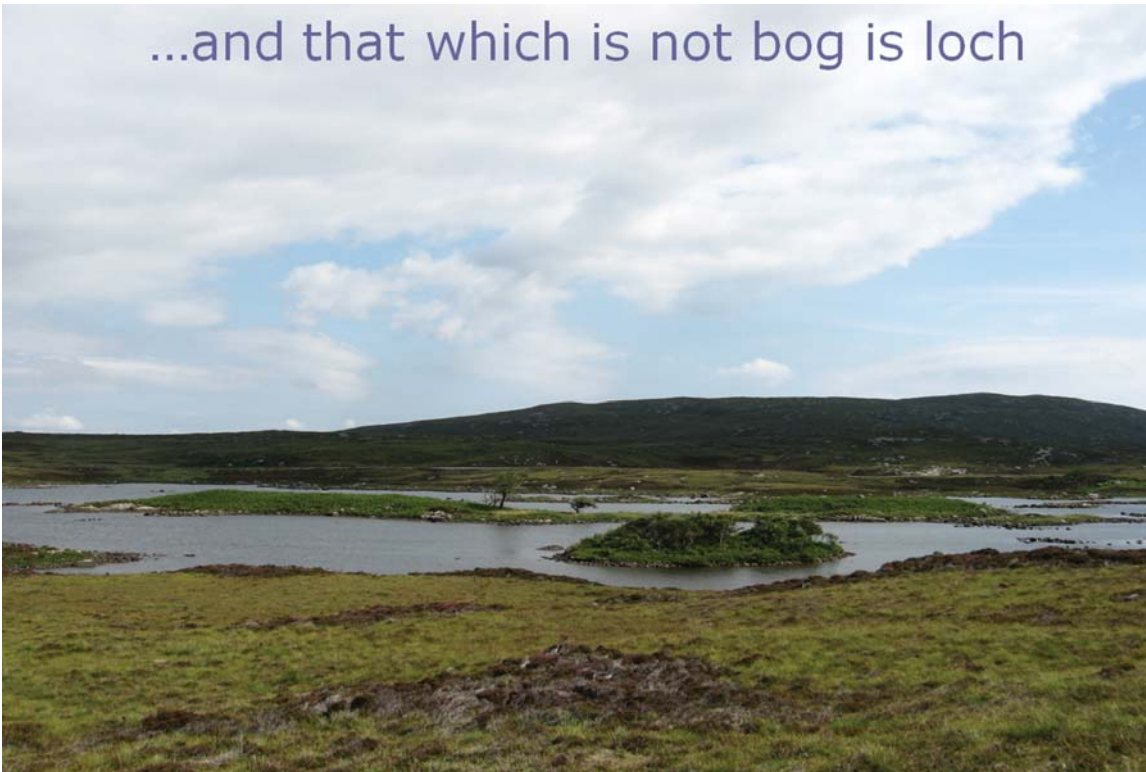
...and that which is not mud is bog





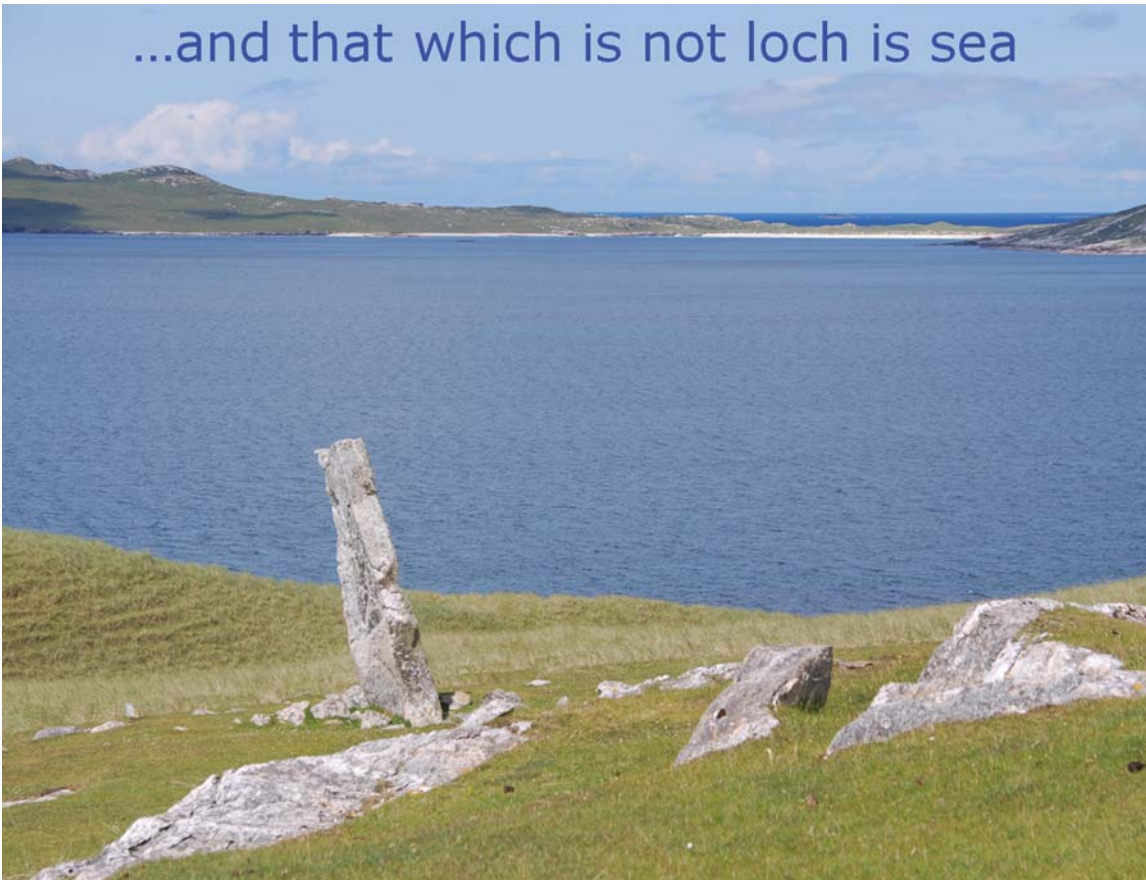
## Kansas in the Outer Hebrides,, *cont.*

...and that which is not bog is loch



6. Loch Druidibeg, National Nature Reserve, South Uist.  
(Photo by Barbara Solberg)

...and that which is not loch is sea



7. Clach Mhicleoid Standing Stone, Aird Niosabost, South Harris and Sound of Tarnasay



## Kansas in the Outer Hebrides, *cont.*

► MacCulloch’s description, and the accompanying imagery, suggests that the geography of an island chain facing the North Atlantic has little in common with that of Kansas in the heart of a huge continent and, of course, for us native Kansans, the expectation of experiencing the distinctive physical and cultural characteristics of a remote insular world was why we went there. Surprisingly, though, we learned that there are some similarities between the two regions that while interesting in themselves are also informative of what makes these islands special places in the British Isles.

The most obvious physical characteristic shared by the two regions is the dominance of grassland as natural vegetation. If one can eliminate the numerous lochs and inlets from view, the perspective lying before the casual observer resembles that of the Kansas Flint Hills complete with colorful wildflowers, rock outcroppings, grazing cattle (though sheep are more plentiful) and relatively few trees (figure 8). The coastal and adjacent interior grasslands of the islands, however, have acquired much of their character directly from the sea. They are referred to as *machair* (mākər, mākħər), a Gaelic term defined as a fertile, low-lying plain, but also as “a type of sand dune pasture” that developed in wet and windy conditions. Some ecologists prefer to describe machair as a whole ecological system formed after glacial meltwater spread huge

amounts of sands and gravels over the exposed continental shelf. With rising sea levels, the glacial sediment, along with crushed shells of mollusks, was driven ashore by wind and waves to form characteristic white, calcareous beaches (as high as 90% shell content) and coastal sand dunes. Through time, the prevailing southwest winds disintegrated and reformed the dunes gradually driving the finer, shell sand over the interior grasslands, lochs and marshes, and onto the peatlands further inland.<sup>i</sup> Archaeological evidence suggests that the machair has been cultivated and grazed for thousands of years. Calcium carbonate derived from the high sea shell content, along with the addition of animal dung and



8. Machair Plain, South Uist. (Photo by Barbara Solberg)

sea weed that binds the soil together and helps retain moisture, has maintained relatively high soil fertility.<sup>ii</sup>

Perhaps the nearest Kansas equivalent to the machair ecology occurs in the southwestern part of the state in the Arkansas River Lowlands where dunes found primarily south of the river are

## Kansas in the Outer Hebrides, *cont.*

believed to have evolved from glacial deposition in association with northerly winds during the Pleistocene Period. The present landscape obviously lacks direct influences of the sea, but much of the sediments that comprised the various rock layers now exposed at the surface in many parts of Kansas were deposited in inland seas millions of years ago. This bedrock geology, though, no matter where it occurs, is relatively young compared to that of the islands. For example, the Permian-aged, cherty limestones that have kept the plow at bay in the Flint Hills are a mere 260 million years old, whereas the Lewisian gneisses found along the shoreline and as outcrops throughout the islands are, at three billion years, some of the oldest surface rocks on Earth (figure 9).

Outside of Stornoway, the islands are very rural. As if to emphasize this point, a Scotch-sipping patron of the Carlton Lounge, (formerly the Whaler's Rest) in Stornoway, upon learning of our

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...our interactions with the locals tended to convey the same sense of overt friendliness, accommodation and trust that we have experienced in rural areas of home.

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plans to travel throughout the islands, informed us that we wouldn't need any money beyond Stornoway "for there's nothing to spend it on." Demographically, the islands, like rural Kansas, have a declining and aging population, though net out

migration is a stronger factor in the rural depopulation of Kansas, whereas low birth rates contribute more to population loss from the islands.



9. Lewisian Gneiss, Traigh Lar, South Harris.

Socially, we seemed to be treading on familiar ground as our interactions with the locals tended to convey the same sense of overt friendliness, accommodation and trust that we have experienced in rural areas of home. Our initial experience on the islands is a case in point. After landing in the late afternoon at the small Stornoway airport, we waited anxiously beyond the scheduled time for the arrival of the last bus to take us the couple of miles into town. We were assured by a passing airport employee that the bus was sometimes delayed a little but would eventually arrive and so it did. As we were the only passengers, we easily fell into conversation with the driver who, upon learning the name of the bed and breakfast at which we were staying, drove the big city bus directly to its doorstep as if he were operating a private limousine service.

The house at which we arrived was in a residential area that was fairly typical for Scottish towns— ▶



## Kansas in the Outer Hebrides, *cont.*

▶ two and three story homes with rock and lime facades, protruding dormers, gabled chimneys, and walled parcels that, from our perspective, were struggling for identity as front yards (figure 10). What was atypical was the more or less reg-

ular, grid pattern of streets whose broad widths were more characteristic of a residential area of a Kansas county seat than of a Scottish town. Apparently, Stornoway's urban grid, at least in one section of the town, came into existence in the late nineteenth century with the expansion of the town along old field lines as a result of growth in the fishing trade.<sup>iii</sup> However it may have evolved, it bears little resemblance to the urban morphology of other places on the islands. Comparisons are difficult, however. Consider Lochmaddy and Lochboisdale on North Uist and South Uist respectively. Despite their status as ports-of-call for connecting ferries to the Inner Hebrides and mainland, they are nothing more than strand vil-



10. Lewis Street, Stornoway, Harris.

lages the principal artery of each links the dock area and a handful of shops and houses with the trunk road running the length of the southern islands.

As we moved south down the island chain we experienced another example of island hospitality and openness. We decided at the eleventh hour to rent a car for the last leg of travel around the southern islands. An employee of the Ask Car Hire, operating from "The Garage" at Creagorry, Isle of Benbecula, delivered the car to Lochmaddy, our destination on South Harris, with doors unlocked and keys in the ignition but without acquiring from us a credit card number or contract signature. As it turned out, they also accommodated our request for use of the car for another half day at no extra charge. Upon commenting about such

trustworthy but seemingly lax business practices to a B & B proprietress, she remarked, "Oh you know, you'd never gotten off the island without paying. They would have seen to that!"

And then, too, as in rural Kansas, everything moves at a much slower pace, especially transportation. Public transportation consists of buses that go to most places except on Sunday—the Calvinist Wee Free sect continues to maintain power over the Sabbath, though it has been weakened considerably over the last two decades or so. One must not be too impatient with bus travel. The drivers of buses (mostly vans on the southern islands) traveling between hamlets and villages are most accommodating of the transportation needs of the rural population by picking up and dropping off passengers and parcels just about anywhere. A wave of the hand is all it takes to get the bus driver to stop, pick you up and take you



## Kansas in the Outer Hebrides, *cont.*

down the road. And tourists are treated as if they lived there. While returning to Tarbert from Leverburgh on South Harris, our driver stopped the bus so one of our fellow passengers could photograph a view of the magnificent tidal beach at Luskentyre.

Travel by car is slower, too. The central trunk highway linking the islands of North Uist, Benbecula, South Uist and Eriskay is in some sectors still today a one-lane road with short passing lanes provided every quarter mile or so on one side of the road or the other. Road etiquette is simple enough: if the passing lane—usually no longer than a couple car lengths—is on your side of the road, you pull over to let an approaching car pass. It quickly becomes apparent to a novice driver that the way to keep moving is to time the traffic encounters by speeding up or slowing down to allow motorists to reach passing lanes. Still there are numerous instances when spatial conflicts occur and common courtesy is in order by which one pulls over and waits on an approaching motorist, who usually acknowledges your deference with an open-hand wave as opposed to the

index-finger wave barely elevated above the steering wheel one encounters in rural Kansas. The frequent stops and starts may well sensitize one to the pace of Hebridean transportation, but from a practical perspective, they keep one from driving too fast on narrow roads habitually occupied by sheep.

Until very recently the islands have been able to lure some of their natives home from the cities. As a friend who grew up near the Callanish standing stones on Lewis and now lives in The Borders region of the mainland told me “the plan was to always go back...Every time we left, it was as if I got robbed of something.” At the heart of that sense of thievery, has to be the nostalgia for community, knowing a place as part of who we are. It is what drives many mainlanders to the Isles for holiday and Kansans back periodically to their hometowns, although many of them know full well that for one reason or another they could never live there again. As Simone Weil once wrote, “To be rooted is perhaps the most important but least understood need of the human soul.” 🌀

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- <sup>i</sup> *Scotland's Living Landscapes*, “How Machair is Formed,” <http://www.snh.org.uk/publications/on-line/livinglandscapes/machair/how.asp>
  - <sup>ii</sup> *European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism*, “Machair: Unknown Jewel,” <http://www.efncp.org/hnv-showcases/scottish-hebrides/machair/facts/>
  - <sup>iii</sup> Geddes, Arthur. “The Development of Stornoway,” *Scottish Geographical Journal*, 2 (63), 1947: 59.

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## Around Washburn Campus, Spring 2010 — Photos by Carol Yoho



# Fellows Meetings: *Minutes*

January 28, 2009

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**F**ellows of the Center for Kansas Studies enjoyed a luncheon meeting at the Lincoln Room of the Washburn Union on Thursday, January 28. In attendance were Carol Yoho, Deborah Altus, Tom Averill, Sarah Smarsh, Rachel Goossen, Sharon Ashworth, David Winchester, Will Gilliland, Bradley Seibert, Marguerite Perret, Robin Shrimplin, Bob Lawson, Virgin Dean, Marcia Cebulka, Bill Roach and Tom Schmiedeler. After a budget update, Director **Tom Schmiedeler** reminded Fellows of the Kansas Day presentation by **Craig Miner** the following day. He also suggested a tentative deadline for Newsletter contributions of April 1 and encouraged Fellows to submit to him their Kansas Studies course they will be teaching this fall.

In the round-the-table discus-

sion, **Tom Averill** said that he would do radio commentary on small towns in Kansas on Kansas Day. He also brought along some books of poetry given to the Center by **Denise Lowe** for Center support of the Ad Astra Poetry Project. He also announced and encouraged participation in the forthcoming university colloquium on "The Book" and that **Steven Hind** will be presenting this spring in Mabee Library to which he will be donating his fiction manuscripts. **Rachel Goossen** reminded everyone of History Day on February 27.

**Carol Yoho** encouraged people to attend the 14th annual Kansas Silent Film Festival at White Concert Hall on Friday and Saturday, February 26 and 27. Washburn supports the festival with performance space. Special guest is the granddaughter of Kansas native Buster Keaton, **Melissa Talmadge Cox**. The Mul-

vane Art Museum will have a special companion exhibition, "Orval Hixon: The Last Great Silent Picture Show."

On behalf of **Bob Beatty**, who was unable to attend the meeting, **Virgil Dean** introduced a funding request for two author stipends of \$400 each as part of a book project **The Modern Kansas Governor**, which will have chapters on every Kansas governor from 1961-2011. The authors' stipends will pay **Burdett Loomis** of the University of Kansas to write the chapter on Governor Robert Docking and Fellow **Mark Peterson** to write the chapter on Governor Joan Finney. After some discussion, Fellows approved the budget request for the full amounts.

The meeting adjourned at 1:45.

*Minutes submitted by*  
**Tom Schmiedeler**

April 8, 2010

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**F**ellows of the Center for Kansas Studies met at a breakfast meeting on Thursday, April 8. Present at the meeting were Marydorse Wanless, Bob Beatty, Carol Yoho, Margaret Wood, Will Gilliland, Tom Averill, Marguerite Perret, Bob Lawson and Tom Schmiedeler. After the usual round-the-table discussion of activities, Director **Tom Schmiedeler** discussed the status of the Center budget and forthcoming Newsletter. All funds from the Center budget have been spent or encumbered.

**Bob Lawson** announced that his novel, **The Bridge of Dreams**, will be published by Woodley Press as part of its thirtieth anniversary celebration. The book will be available in May along with Bob's previously

published books at Woodley including **Collected Sonnets** (2004) and **Mishima** (1983). Each of these books was dedicated to Bob Woodley, Bob's office mate of 13 years, though Bob "knew no Noh," and "never liked the sonnet form at all," and "would have disputed using the bridge of dreams as a metaphor for the literary experience."

**Carol Yoho** discussed the forthcoming newsletter and encouraged contributions. In this regard, Director Tom Schmiedeler asked that Fellows submit to Carol their round-the-table discussions of forthcoming activities for publication in the newsletter. Tom suggested that publication in that format might have a better chance of being read by non Fellows and

therefore might stimulate contacts with people interested in projects of the Fellows more than a terse announcement in the meeting minutes.

Fellow Roy Bird, who was unable to attend the meeting, wanted Fellows to be aware of one of the State Library's Kansas 150 projects for the sesquicentennial. The Kansas State Library is accepting submissions of recommended titles of books by Kansans or about Kansas from now until October. The results will be compiled and published on the library web site and to the media on Kansas Day, January 29, 2011 when the 150th anniversary of Kansas is launched. The web site link is <http://kslib.info/kansas150/index.html> ▶

## Fellows Meetings: *Minutes, cont.*

► **Will Gilliland** reported that he will attend the Kansas Academy of Sciences annual meeting this weekend at Ft. Hays University. Marydorsey Wanless said that she has had several art shows recently including one at Metropolitan College, Omaha, in February.

**Margaret Wood** announced that she will be presenting a paper on the Quindaro townsite at the National Underground Railroad Conference in Topeka, July 28-31. She also reported that she is in the planning stage for archaeological work at the Union Town site along the Kansas River and is considering a project excavation of a cottage on the Washburn campus. Tom Averill announced that Poet Steven Hind will visit Tom's Kansas Literature class on April 21 and will do a public reading at Mabee Library (4:00 p.m. that day) in honor of the dedication of Thomas Fox Averill Kansas Study Collection and Fund. Tom also mentioned that later that day he will be in Wichita to present as Mr. Oleander a talk on Kansas libraries to the Kansas

Library Association. His Oleander commentaries can be accessed through his website.

**Marguerite Perret** discussed "The Waiting Room," a collaborative, in-progress, visual arts installation, and ongoing critical dialogue about women's health that will also result in a publication. A majority of the contributors are from Kansas and many are connected to Washburn University. Washburn principle artists are **Marguerite Perret**, associate professor of Art, **Stephanie Lanter**, Catron Professor of Art, and writer/editor **Sarah Smarsh**, assistant professor of English in creative non-fiction. Additional participants include scholarly and costume design contributions by **Sharon Sullivan**, theatre, and scholarly submissions by **Rachel Goossen**, history, **Mary Sundal**, anthropology, and **Reinhild Janzen**, art history. And as the project grows, there may be others. The visual installation is structured as a theatrical waiting room with sculptural chairs representing various relevant issues. **Marcia Cebulska**, award-winning, Topeka-based playwright will compose a short work to be performed in response to the visual art components. "The Waiting Room" opens at the College of St. Catherine, St. Paul, Minnesota this fall and travels to the Sabatini Gallery at the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library in the fall of 2011. Additional venues are currently in negotiation. For more information or to express interest in the project, find us on Facebook by searching for "The Waiting Room," and join the discussion group, visit the web page at [www.waitingroom.weebly.com](http://www.waitingroom.weebly.com), or email [marguerite.perret@washburn.edu](mailto:marguerite.perret@washburn.edu) or [stephanie.lanter@washburn.edu](mailto:stephanie.lanter@washburn.edu).

**Bob Beatty** reported that he will be working this summer and fall on updates for the Kansas Governors Documentary. He will be adding information on new governors and updating information on Governor Bill Graves. The goal for the project is a book which can be used in Kansas politics and Kansas history classes. He also said that he is travelling to London for the British elections on May 6.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45.

*Minutes submitted by*  
**Tom Schmiedeler**



Craig Miner





# Online Resources

postcard: [www.kansasmemory4y.org](http://www.kansasmemory4y.org) ►



## Kansas History On-line

Kansas Memory has been created by the Kansas State Historical Society to share its historical collections via the Internet. It supports the mission of the Society--to identify, collect, preserve, interpret, and disseminate materials and information pertaining to Kansas history in order to assist the public in understanding, appreciating, and caring for the heritage of Kansas. Topics include government and politics, home and family, military, objects and artifacts, people, places, thematic time periods and transportation. Materials shared on-line include art objects, audio, cartoons, drawings (technical), film and video, illustrations, lithographs and engravings, maps, objects and artifacts, photographs, postcards, printed materials and unpublished documents. Visit: <http://www.kansasmemory.org>

## Images of Kansas Towns and Cities

Over 475 different Kansas towns and cities from nearly every county are represented in an on-line image collection from Wichita State University. Subjects include but are not limited to people, street scenes, agriculture, business interiors, and railroad and aviation scenes. The majority of the images are not dated; however, most appear to have been published before 1923. Use restrictions apply.

Visit: <http://specialcollections.wichita.edu/kw/index.asp>



Visit us on-line: [www.washburn.edu/reference/cks/](http://www.washburn.edu/reference/cks/)

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