

Speaking of Kansas

Washburn Center for Kansas Studies



Fall 2007

Fellows News

Mike Hayden to be Kansas Day Speaker

CKS Director Tom Schmiedeler announced that Former Governor **Mike Hayden**, Secretary of the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, will be the Center's Kansas Day speaker. He will speak on Monday, January 28, 2008, at 3:30 p.m. The title of the presentation and its location is forthcoming.

Fellow **Mark Peterson**, Political Science, says that Hayden's presentation "provides detailed information on the nature and impact of depopulation, corporate agriculture, drought and water-mining on Kansas west of the 98th meridian and its implications for the future of the state. It is a non-prescriptive presentation designed to start a public discussion on the underlying causal forces and what policy options might be available to address them."

Fellow Bill Wagon, Department of History, announced plans to stage a public humanities program around the 150th anniversary of a local flight on the Underground Railroad.

In July 1858, Rev. Lewis Bodwell, Topeka Congregational minister, escorted a family of

slave fugitives, who had escaped their masters in Leavenworth, from the Ritchie House north along the Lane Trail (modern day US 75) through Holton, Sabetha and Nebraska City to Civil Bend, Iowa. He kept a diary and published the day-to-day account of the event in a Kansas Congregation newspaper in 1892. It is a document unusual in its detail.

Wagon plans to apply for a Kansas Humanities Council grant to underwrite a sequence of local programs to commemorate the event in those Kansas cities along the Lane Trail. He also plans to engage Fellow and playwright Marcia Cebulski to write a play on the group's departure from the Ritchie House and to seek funds from the Gleed Fund to bring in a scholar to discuss the history of the Underground Railroad. He also plans a one-day event at the Ritchie House in mid-July, 2008, with reenactors in period costumes, etc.

These events should promote area appreciation of the new Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area, which is devoted to regional promotion of the "Bleeding Kansas" events in American history.

A pertinent reading list includes:

Tom Schmiedeler, Director
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Deborah Altus, Human Services
Tom Averill, English
Bob Beatty, Political Science
Roy Bird, KCFB
Marcia Cebulski, Playwright
Jennie Chinn, KSHS
Virgil Dean, KSHS
Paul Fecteau, English
Jessie Fillerup, Music
Amy Fleury, English
William Gilliland, Geology
Rachel Goossen, History
Amanda Hamon, Mulvane Art Museum
Robert Hull, Finance
Reinhild Janzen, Art
Jim Kelly, KTWU
Dave Kendall, KTWU
Robert Lawson, English
Gabrielle Lunte, Modern Languages
Bruce Mactavish, History
Ed Marchant, CIS
Judith McConnell, Education
Mary McCoy, Biology
Marguerite Perret, Art
Mark Peterson, Political Science
J. Karen Ray, English
William Roach, Business
Betsy Knabe Roe, Art
Tom Schmiedeler, Geography
Bradley Siebert, English
Loran Smith, Political Science
Margaret Stewart, English
Sara Tucker, History
William Wagon, History
Mary-Dorsey Wanless, Art
Ron Wasserstein, Academic Affairs
Tom Wolf, Biology
Margaret Wood, Soc./Anthropology

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Fellows News, cont.

- Richard B. Sheridan, *Freedom's Crucible: The Underground Railroad in Lawrence and Douglas County, Kansas, 1854-1865*.
- Larry Gara, *The Liberty Line: The Legend of the Underground Railroad*
- John Hope Franklin and Loren Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves: Rebels on the Plantation*
- Fergus M. Brodewich, *Bound for Canaan: The Epic Story of the Underground Railroad, America's First Civil Rights Movement*
- Wilbur H. Siebert, *The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom*

See also: <http://skyways.lib.ks.us/orgs/schs/history.html#bodwellenroll>

Fellow Chris Hamilton, Political Science, reports that his creative non-fiction novel, *The House Rules*, is progressing nicely. He hopes to bring it to completion in early 2008.

The work is about the 1960s era, small town Concordia, and the social revolution issues that dramatically impacted the youth and townspeople in that era. The novel especially focuses on the true story of Terry August Householter, record-setting high school sprinter and marine company Bronze Star medal hero who was killed in action in Vietnam at age 19.

The novel is rooted in many interviews of townspeople and fellow marines, and includes historical documentation. Terry's story is about a rite-of-passage, and the heart and soul of Kansans.

Center Fellows' Project Featured in Winter Issue of *Kansas History*

“For the Benefit of the People’: A Conversation with Former Governor John Anderson, Jr.,” an article to be published in the winter 2007/2008 issue of *Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains*, captures the essence of the administration that launched the state into its second century. It is the first in a series based on the oral histories captured on video by Washburn University political scientists and Center for Kansas Studies Fellows **Bob Beatty** and **Mark Peterson**. The interview is biographical—John Anderson, Jr. was born on a dairy farm in Johnson County and served as county attorney, state senator, and attorney general before his 1960 election as governor of the state of Kansas—but focuses on Anderson’s years as governor, 1961-1965.

“I enjoyed my years of public service and my four years as governor,” said the ninety-year-old Anderson. “It’s far behind me now,” but “it’s history, and I was part of it.” Anderson discussed many issues from education—“I’ve been told, and it was said, that I was an ‘Education Governor’—to Republican Party politics in the late 1950s and 1960s, but many readers will be interested in his comments on capital punishment in Kansas. “The death penalty was not the

main reason I won governor,” Anderson explained. “I was pretty well known for my other work, but it played a part. Governor George Docking just did not believe in the death penalty. During the campaign I just hounded him and hounded him for that. When I’d tell people about Docking and his stand on the death penalty they were all on my side. Every speech I’d make I’d mention it and get a good reaction. So Docking had what I thought were real problems in the area of pardons and the paroling of prisoners. I didn’t think he had the experience to deal with those kinds of issues.... I liked old George Docking.... But I thought he issued too many pardons. I think the voters did too.”

The initial research, which preceded the gubernatorial interviews and the production of the DVD, *The Kansas Governor: A Behind the Curtain Look at the Chief Political Figure in the State* (2005) was funded in part by the Center for Kansas Studies. The published versions will appear in *Kansas History*, edited for the Kansas State Historical Society by Fellow **Virgil W. Dean**. Beatty’s conversation with Anderson will be available online soon. Copies of the journal may be acquired after the first of the year from the Kansas State Historical Society, Inc. (email: jalfrey@kshs.org or web: <http://store.kshs.org/store//home.php?cat=409>).

Garden Plots, by Thomas Fox Averill

Center Fellow **Thomas Fox Averill**, Writer-in-residence at Washburn, took a month-long Sweet Summer Sabbatical and visited gardens in France, Ireland, and the U.K., including Scotland and Wales. His goal was to locate settings appropriate for writing garden stories, and although the UK is a long ways from Kansas, several of the stories inspired by his travel will be set in the Sunflower State. Some of his Kansas “Garden Plots” are printed below:



#1: Seed Pinchers

All over the UK, people are pinching seeds. At Holehird Garden, above Windermere in the Lake District, a man admiring hydrangeas is nearly ready to leave the garden. “But first,” he says, “I have to make a little trip for some seeds.” He shrugs his shoulders. “When I visited gardens with my mum, she always pinched seeds. That’s not right, I’d tell her. You’ll get in trouble. Now I’m doing it myself.”

In the double-walled garden at the National Botanic Garden of Wales, a man with a handful of seed pods, little black seeds inside the papery skin of what was a flower, admits he pinches seeds from each garden he visits. “That way,” he says, “you don’t just have a plant, you have a whole garden, a memory.” His wife nods. “You see, they don’t pick all the seed heads. They can’t. No harm.” He takes a couple more. “Of course they really frown on cuttings. That’s not good form.”

He moves closer. “But if you take a little plastic bag, and put tissue in it, quite damp,

you can snip a small bit with a little pair of scissors, wrap it up, and it will keep moist up to forty-eight hours. You might even see a tiny sprout by the time you return home.” He presses two seed heads into my hand. “Of course they frown on cuttings.” He and his wife march on.

“You’re not going to keep those seeds, are you, Dad?” asks my son. “It’s not right.”

“I’ll throw them away,” I say. But I put them in my pocket.

I do not declare them at customs. I want a bit of Wales in my Kansas garden. Just next to the spot of Holehird, from the Lake District.

#2: Marigold Capital of Kansas

When Kenneth’s senior class took their trip, they were more ambitious than most—all the way to London, England. What a difference from Midlin, their tidy, plain Kansas

Garden Plots, by Thomas Fox Averill

town. And how different from the one city they knew, Wichita, sprawling and congested with beat-up cars. London was bustling, dirty, compact and beautiful. Flowers everywhere. Even at the level of the open upper deck of the tour bus, which might suddenly stop next to a richness of color Kenneth had never before experienced. When he returned, he wished for such unexpected flowers. He and his friend Robert, whose father owned



Midlin's only lawn service, and who was easily sworn to secrecy, bought fifty small bags of potting soil. Marigolds would be hardy enough to withstand the dry heat of a Midlin summer. They stayed up all night, driving without lights, easing up to the courthouse, their school, Midlin's City Park with its War Memorial arch. They climbed the water tower and the grain elevator, even a few light poles. To each place, they brought a bag of soil, slit it open, and stirred in the seeds. Of course, Midlin noticed the bags sooner than the boys hoped. Robert's father spoke before the city commission. They agreed to let the bags stay in place, wait to see what might happen. First, a lush green. Then orange, gold, and yellow in combinations that surprised even the most skeptical. By midsummer, the commission declared Midlin to be the Marigold Capital of Kansas. And by summer's end, in terrible August heat, they ordered the volunteer fire department to "Water those flowers!"

#3: The Grass Garden

They hired Timothy because of his reputation as an innovator in landscape architecture. And, because they could afford him: the extremely generous grant from the Morton family assured that the open land just south of downtown could be a showcase of natural beauty. Timothy was said to be influenced by the classic sweeping borders of "Capability" Brown, that giant in English gardening history. Timothy might snake a hedge along winding pathways. Maybe a labyrinth, or a circular path festooned with a rainbow of color. Though the climate was dry, the endowment could afford irrigation, a sprinkler system, fresh mulches each year to hold moisture and release nutrients not always present in Central Kansas soils. Nobody was prepared for Timothy's grass garden. Eigh-

Garden Plots, by Thomas Fox Averill

teen species, one for every incorporated town in the county. Grasses to wave, to shoot up plumes, to head, to droop with the weight of seeds. Bluestem, switch, dropseed, Indian, wheatgrass and tufted hair. “I’ve fallen in love with the names alone,” reported Timothy to the planning committee. “Remember, humans first became human, two-legged creatures in grasslands. Imagine how people will feel being drawn into grass. The subtle shades of green, the rusts, browns, siennas of fall, the heads poking up through winter snow.” Hands shot up. No flowers, bushes, trees? No scents of lavender, lilac, magnolia or rose? “Imagine texture,” Timothy said, “the shapely thin reed grass next to the flat broad leaves

of Indian grass. Watch what your abundance of wind can do to such eager stalks.” They refused to imagine. In their wisdom they cut their losses, paid Timothy for his trouble, and hired a horticulturist from the junior college who lived up to their expectations. Today, only the grasses in the ditches wave to passersby, trying to help them feel at home in a landscape so dominated by sky. Wild oats bow their heads on the road to the Morton Botanical Garden, where visitors there will see expensive beauty, primped and poised. Expensively designed and maintained. As travelers leave, the heads of bluestem at the side of the road nod, as though acknowledging their passing.



#4: The Last Coroner's Wife

They bought the Glimmer place, only mansion in town, surrounded by a limestone wall. The county could barely afford to hire a coroner, but this one had retired early from the military. His wife was a recluse—never went out shopping, stayed away from church. The town saw her only when she accompanied her husband to each death. There, she’d

dig a slip of day lily from old Monroe’s bungalow, or she’d take a cutting of lilac from the front of Rob Martin’s barn. Rhubarb from Mrs. Jenkins prize patch, rose moss from the Thomas rock garden. After a while, they saw her at night. “Dug up a peony from the courthouse gardens,” someone reported. “And a tea rose from the library,” said another. School

Garden Plots, by Thomas Fox Averill

grounds, historical society, churches: all found plants missing. When the county could no longer afford the position, the coroner and his wife left town, and the Glimmer place, unsold, grew over with vines. Old Sampson bought the place, finally, to bulldoze the wall for the limestone. As he broke through the wall, he found the overgrown garden of the coroner's wife. With plants, she had created a map of the county, each plant signifying a person's life, and placed in the square walls just where it had been found in the square county. Of course everything was grown to riot, so hers was a disheveled garden, ruined like the county, but alive where the county—its hopes and dreams—seemed dead, failed. Old Sampson shook his head. *At least Nature goes to ruin in beauty, he thought. Buildings and farms, they just go to ruin.*



Photos accompanying this article were taken by **Thomas Fox Averill** during his 2007 Sweet Summer Sabbatical.

Averill's 2006 collection of short stories, ***Ordinary Genius***, was designated a "Kansas Notable Book" by the Kansas Center for the Book.



Tom Averill, Department of English, and **Carol Yoho, Department of Art**, will again teach Mapping Kansas Literature in the spring semester, 2008. Students in this honors class will research specific Kansas poets and writers, compile biographical information, bibliographic information and work samples from each writer. In the end they will add their work to CKS's Map of Kansas Literature: www.washburn.edu/reference/cks/mapping/



CKS Meeting Summary, Fall 2007

Thursday, September 6

Fellows of the Center for Kansas Studies met for a luncheon meeting in the Lincoln Room of the Memorial Union on Thursday, September 6. In attendance at the meeting were Bruce Mactavish, Marguerite Perret, Rob Hull, Carol Yoho, Tom Averill, Bill Roach, Bradley Seibert, Marcia Cebulska, Bob Lawson, Marin Cott, Charles Cranston, Betsy Roe, Olga Mashtakova and Tom Schmiedeler. After a round-the-table update of Fellow summer activities, **Tom Schmiedeler**, Director, discussed briefly the Center budget for the new fiscal year and encouraged contributions to the fall Newsletter now in the planning stage. Tom also gave a brief follow-up report on his trip to Lincoln County to research the work of Kansas illustrator F.A. Cooper, who published the weekly series of historical cartoons as "It Happened in Kansas."

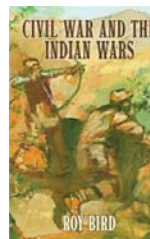
Tom also asked Fellows to think of potential Kansas Day speakers. He mentioned the possibility of former governor Mike Hayden, Secretary of the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, but encouraged Fellows to submit other names for consideration. Tom announced that the Center for Kansas Studies is up for program review this fall and asked for assistance in guiding the program through a successful review process. Some discussion followed as to what that might entail. A letter requesting documentation from fellows of activities related to past Center funding is forthcoming.

Tom Averill requested funding (\$200) for the Speaking of Kansas series and for support (\$500) for a day-long poetry event to be held in the Flint Hills at the Flying W Ranch.

Fellows approved both requests. **Bob Beatty** and **Mark Peterson** renewed their request in absentia for funding related to the third and final phase of their study of Kansas political advertising. The funds will be used for travel to Oklahoma to examine archival records and for compilation fees. Funds for this phase of the project were approved earlier at the last spring meeting. Upon learning that Senator Nancy Landon Kassebaum is coming to Topeka in October, Bob and Mark also had a last minute request for funding to hire a videographer to record an interview with her as part of their oral/video project. After some discussion, funding (\$200) was approved.

Marcia Cebulska and **Charles Cranston** inquired as to whether the Center could help fund the initial business costs for the creation of a drama production company. The consensus of opinion was to seek advice and assistance from various members of the Business School, and the Small Business Development Center at Washburn. Counsel from the University attorney was also recommended.

In a note to the Director, **Fellow Roy Bird** wrote that his next book, *Civil War and the Indian Wars*, will be coming out in mid September.



Reinhild Janzen reported that the Mulvane is hosting a "Conversation, Connecting Art to Our Lives" on Wednesday, September 12 at 5:00 P.M. The focus is on the art and the music of the Strawberry Hill Community in Kansas City. Artist Marijana Grisnik and Musician Ed Grisnik will be featured. Marijana's paintings are currently on

view at the Mulvane as part of the exhibition "Embracing the Creative Spirit: Works by Self-Taught Artists." Another "Conversation" will be at the Mulvane on Thursday, September 27 at 5:00 P.M. when artist Barbara Waterman-Peters will discuss her paintings for Washburn's theater productions. These are currently on view in the second floor gallery as the exhibit "Painting the Essence: Theatre Images." Other exhibits include "Art Works: Come Back to the Table" (September 7-21), "Made in China: A Kansas Initiative" (October 6 to December 20) and "Sudan: The Land and the People" (October 27 to December 9).

The meeting concluded at 1:45.

— Minutes written by
Tom Schmiedeler, Director



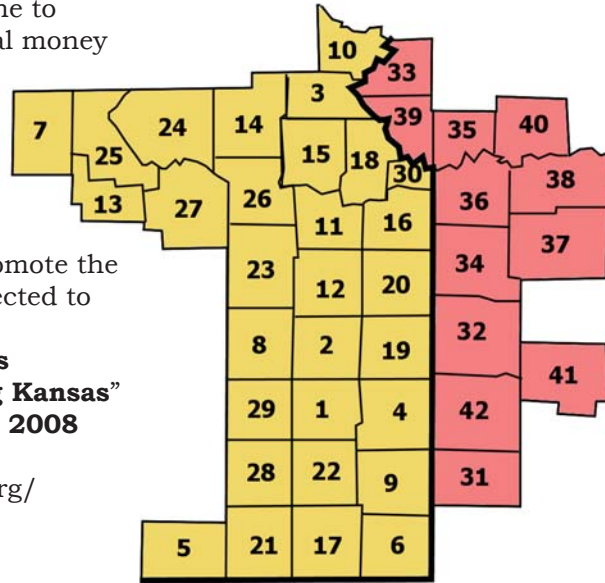
above: Fall day, Washburn Commons

Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area

Thirty Kansas counties are in line to receive up to \$10 million in federal money to help people relive history. The National Park Service will supervise planning for the area, which is eligible for up to \$10 million in federal funding to preserve existing historic sites and trails and to promote the area. Planning this project is expected to take three years.

Read about Fellow Bill Wagon's plans to celebrate our "Bleeding Kansas" heritage along the Lane Trail in 2008 on page one of this issue.

Also visit www.freedomfrontier.org/



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| KANSAS | 22. Neosho |
| 1. Allen | 23. Osage |
| 2. Anderson | 24. Pottawatomie |
| 3. Atchison | 25. Riley |
| 4. Bourbon | 26. Shawnee |
| 5. Chautauqua | 27. Wabaunsee |
| 6. Cherokee | 28. Wilson |
| 7. Clay | 29. Woodson |
| 8. Coffey | 30. Wyandotte |
| 9. Crawford | MISSOURI |
| 10. Doniphan | 31. Barton |
| 11. Douglas | 32. Bates |
| 12. Franklin | 33. Buchanan |
| 13. Geary | 34. Cass |
| 14. Jackson | 35. Clay |
| 15. Jefferson | 36. Jackson |
| 16. Johnson | 37. Johnson |
| 17. Labette | 38. Lafayette |
| 18. Leavenworth | 39. Platte |
| 19. Linn | 40. Ray |
| 20. Miami | 41. St. Clair |
| 21. Montgomery | 42. Vernon |



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