

# News from the Midwest

*Assistant Editors: Alexandra Bisio, University of Oregon, and Lois Hamill, Northern Kentucky University. Please submit News from the Midwest items for Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Nebraska, North Dakota, and Ohio to Alexandra at [bisio@uoregon.edu](mailto:bisio@uoregon.edu) and items from Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Minnesota, Missouri, South Dakota, and Wisconsin to Lois at [hamilll1@nku.edu](mailto:hamilll1@nku.edu). Submissions must be 150 words or less. Images are welcome!*

## ILLINOIS

### Illinois State University

Milner Library at Illinois State University is pleased to announce the online exhibition *Agency Through Otherness: Portraits of Performers in Circus Route Books 1875–1925* (<https://scalar.usc.edu/works/circus-route-books-project/index>). The digital exhibit explores the diverse identities of circus performers and features essays, images, interactive timelines, and map data visualizations of circus routes integrated with Native lands, historical railroads, and population data. Research on highlighted performers also leveraged identity management principles with Library of Congress Name Authority Records and Wikidata that created linked data for optimal discoverability. The project represents the final segment in the multiyear Step Right Up: Digitizing Over 100 Years of Circus Route Books (<https://library.illinoisstate.edu/collections/circus-route-books>) CLIR grant collaboration with the Ringling Archives and Circus World Museum. The project team members are Angela Yon, Elizabeth Harman, Liz Hartman, and Mariah Wahl, with contributors Rebecca Fitzsimmons and Eric Willey.



*An interactive timeline in the digital exhibit features circus performers in historical context to illustrate the confines and space in which they lived.*

### Principia College

The Principia Archives is excited to share one of its new digital collections. The Morgan Family Photograph Collection was recently published on the Principia Digital Collections site (<https://principia.contentdm.oclc.org>) to showcase the photographic history of Principia's founder, Mary Kimball Morgan, and her family, including her husband, William E. Morgan Sr., and sons, Frederic E. Morgan and William E. Morgan Jr. This collection spans the decades from the mid-1800s to the 1970s. The Morgan family spent their lives unselfishly serving the Principia campuses and were vibrant members of St. Louis and southern Illinois communities. Principia is a dual campus institution founded in 1898 with educational and spiritual values grounded in Christian Science, serving students from preschool age through students seeking college degrees. Principia College is an undergraduate liberal arts college in Elsah, Illinois, and Principia School is located in St. Louis, Missouri.



*Mary Kimball Morgan and sons, photographed by Takuma Kajiwara. Morgan Family Photograph Collection, Principia Archives, Principia College.*

### University of Illinois, Chicago

The Adrian Scheltes papers are now available for research. Adrian Scheltes was the supervisor of counsel and guidance for the blind at the Illinois Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, where he assisted blind people in learning professional skills to enter the workforce. He lost his sight at the age of 21, which motivated him to seek a career in public service assisting other visually impaired people. These papers contain black-and-white photographs, newspaper clippings, and letters from the late 1940s through the 1950s. The photographs document blind people working in a variety of jobs, including a florist, a disc jockey, switchboard operators, and assembly line workers. A few photographs show Scheltes at work as well. The letters are from employers of Scheltes's clients with updates about how they are faring in their work. The Scheltes papers are available at the Library of the Health Sciences–Chicago Special Collections (see finding aid at <https://uic.cuadra.com/star/findingaids/MSSCHE21.xml>).

## IOWA

### University of Iowa

The Iowa Women's Archives (IWA) has a new Spanish translation of its popular pop-up exhibit, *Migration Is Beautiful. La Migración Es Bella* builds on the archives' *Migration Is Beautiful* website (<https://www.lib.uiowa.edu/studio/project/migration-is-beautiful>) and illustrates the history of Latino/a/x communities in Iowa from the 1910s to the 1970s using images and quotes from IWA collections. It was translated by University of Iowa associate professors

of Spanish and Portuguese, Pilar Marcé and Julia Oliver-Rajan, and funded by LULAC Council 10 of Davenport, Iowa. It was displayed at the Des Moines Public Library for Latinx Heritage Month and will continue to be available to Iowa organizations.

### **Iowa State University**

The latest exhibit, *A Home Away from Home: The George A. Jackson Black Cultural Center*, curated by University Archivist Greg Bailey, is now available online (<http://iastatedigital.org/scuaexhibits/exhibits/show/bcc/background>). This exhibition, installed in February 2021, honors the 50th anniversary of the Black Cultural Center in 2020, and it is still available for viewing on the first and fourth floors of the Parks Library. Keep an eye out for information on an upcoming exhibition celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Margaret Sloss Center for Women and Gender Equity. In other news, the Iowa State University Library has purchased a film scanner, the Archivist from Lasergraphics, to digitize its 8mm and 16mm films.



*Open house at Black Cultural Center. Pictured left to right: Roy Snell (president, BSO), Mrs. Ellen Parks, Norman Thomas (first manager of BCC), W. Robert Parks (ISU president), Amelia Parker (graduate student), Dean William Bell (associate dean of students), Mrs. Harriett Bell. University Photographs Collections, RS 715/G, box 496.*

### **MINNESOTA**

#### **St. Catherine University**

The gallery at St. Catherine University recently received a major donation from Minnesota artist Bettye Olson which included nearly two hundred paintings and prints, printing plates, artist's sketchbooks, archival records, and more. An influential artist, Olson's prolific career began in the 1950s when she challenged gender norms as a working artist, wife, and mother. Olson is an abstract expressionist who draws inspiration from the natural world, working primarily in acrylic, oil, and watercolor to create dynamic and boldly colored works. She taught at the University of Minnesota and in 1964 cofounded the West Lake Gallery in Minneapolis with a group of women artists. Now 98 years old, Olson resides in St. Paul where she continues to paint regularly. A selection of Bettye Olson's paintings is now on view in the St. Catherine University Library. Additional artwork and the artist's archival materials are available to view upon request in the Visual Resources Library.



*Red Hills, painting by Bettye Olson (1990), recently acquired by St. Catherine University's Fine Art Collection*

### **MISSOURI**

#### **Missouri Historical Society**

Thanks to the support of the Institute of Museum and Library Services' (IMLS) Museums for America grant program, the Missouri Historical Society launched the three-year project Seeing 1940s St. Louis: The Sievers Studio Collection in late 2018. The project's mission was to fully process, rehouse, and selectively digitize the Sievers Studio Collection's Series 4 photographic materials and open the series for public access and use. The collection itself contains the surviving work of Sievers Studio, a commercial photography studio active in St. Louis from 1917 to 1989. Series 4 encompasses the studio's work in the 1940s, showing firsthand daily life in 1940s St. Louis and fully embodying studio founder Isaac Sievers's motto "I photograph anything." The project ended in November 2021, unlocking over 76 linear feet of materials to the public eye. See <https://mohistory.org/collections/item/P0403> for more details about the collection, its available series, and its digitized images.



*Women employees handling bombshells in a Niedringhaus Metal Products Company war plant at 5739 Natural Bridge Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri. Photo by Sievers Studio, January 13, 1943. Missouri Historical Society Collections.*

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### Missouri Historical Society

Missouri Statehood Day, August 10, 2021, marked the important milestone of 200 years since Missouri became the 24th state to enter the Union. More than two hundred events took place to commemorate Missouri's bicentennial year. In 2013, the Missouri General Assembly tapped the State Historical Society of Missouri to be the official organizer. Years of planning led to this momentous year as staff carried out virtual and in-person events and projects. The Missouri Bicentennial Quilt, with selected quilt blocks from each county, is touring the state, showcasing the cultural and geographic diversities of each region. Photography contests, book talks, folk art,

exhibits, storytelling, oral history recordings, and Missouri music took center stage at festivals throughout the year. Missouri Statehood Day included an old-fashioned ice cream social that took place in 198 venues with the official commemoration at the Missouri State Capitol and a Naturalization Ceremony to welcome new Missourians.



*Bicentennial quilt. State Historical Society of Missouri.*



*Missouri Statehood Day logo. Courtesy of Allie B. Hollycross.*

### Washington University in St. Louis

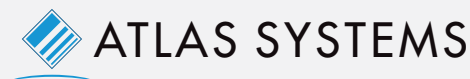
On August 19, 2021, HBO Max premiered the documentary special *Eyes on the Prize: Hallowed Ground*. The new program is directed by Sophia

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Nahli Allison, who previously made the Academy Award–nominated short *A Love Song for Latasha*. *Hallowed Ground* is a celebration and update of the groundbreaking civil rights documentary series *Eyes on the Prize*, which was originally broadcast nationally as two seasons in 1987 and 1990 on PBS. The new special uses clips from a variety of full-length interviews from *Eyes on the Prize*, which are stored at the Washington University Libraries as part of the Henry Hampton/Blackside Inc. collection (<https://library.wustl.edu/spec/henry-hampton-collection>). Over the last decade, the libraries have preserved and digitized all of the interviews thanks to grants from the Mellon Foundation, the National Historical Publications and Records

Commission, and the National Endowment for the Humanities. Learn more and view footage from the interviews at [library.wustl.edu](http://library.wustl.edu).



*Hallowed Ground* director *Sophia Nahli Allison* and executive producer/ interviewee *Patrisse Cullors*.

## NEBRASKA

### University of Nebraska at Omaha

The University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) Libraries' Archives and Special Collections partnered with the Episcopal Diocese of Nebraska to digitize and share its earliest history with the public. The newspapers now available from UNO include *The Guardian* (vol. 1, no. 1 January 1873–vol. 2, no. 12 December 1874) and *The Diocese of Nebraska* (vol. 1, no. 1, 1889–vol. 9, no. 3, 1897). *The Guardian* was the first Episcopal newspaper in Nebraska, and the *Diocese of Nebraska* was a monthly newsletter initiated by Bishop George Worthington. All digital material is available from UNO Libraries at

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**NEWS FROM THE MIDWEST—Continued**  
**Alexandra Bisio and Lois Hamill, Assistant Editors**

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<https://repository.unomaha.edu>. All analog newspapers and other archival collections are available to the public in the volunteer-run archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Nebraska.

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**NORTH DAKOTA**

**University of North Dakota**

Thanks to a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), and in partnership with Nueta Hidatsa Sahnish (NHS) College in New Town, North Dakota, the Elwyn B. Robinson Department of Special Collections at the University of North Dakota (UND) will continue to digitize archival materials related to the Indigenous peoples of the region. The project, Strengthening & Preserving the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation's Humanities Infrastructure, recently was awarded nearly \$500,000 from the NEH. The funding will be split 40/60, with NHS College receiving the 60 percent share. Documents from the archival collections of US senator William Langer and US representative Usher Burdick related to the construction of the Garrison Dam and other

issues of importance to the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation will be digitized and made available on the UND Scholarly Commons (<https://commons.und.edu>).

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**SOUTH DAKOTA**

**South Dakota State Historical Society**

More South Dakota towns are now represented in the digitized historical newspaper collections on *Chronicling America*. *The Miller Press* (1909–1924) and *The Reporter and Farmer* (1888–1913) of Webster were recently added. Eighty-two different South Dakota newspapers are now available online, representing 40 towns and 36 counties. They can be viewed by visiting the *Chronicling America* website at <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/newspapers/south%20dakota>. In 2018, the State Historical Society-Archives was awarded a third round of grant funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities to continue digitizing historical newspapers as part of *Chronicling America*, a Library of Congress initiative to develop an online database of select historical

newspapers from around the United States. Due to slowdowns with vendors during the pandemic, the project was extended into 2021. As part of the grant, the State Historical Society-Archives has digitized approximately one hundred rolls of microfilmed newspapers predating 1924 over the last three years.

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**REGIONAL**

**Denison University and Illinois State University**

Sasha Kim Griffin (Denison University) and April K. Anderson-Zorn (Illinois State University) were both storytellers in the Finding Aid to My Soul event hosted by SAA and the Committee on Public Awareness. They were part of a group of five storytellers from across the country who all shared true stories about their funny, heartfelt, and surprising encounters in the archives. It was hosted by two-time Moth GrandSLAM winner (and former Moth director of education) Micaela Blei. Recordings of the stories will be made available in the future via SAA.

## **Making History: Kansas City and the Rise of Gay Rights**

The exhibit *Making History: Kansas City and the Rise of Gay Rights* was created by a University of Missouri–Kansas City (UMKC) public history class in 2016–17. Students used archival materials in the Gay and Lesbian Archive of Mid-America (GLAMA) (<https://library.umkc.edu/GLAMA>) and interviewed local activists to describe American homophile activism in the 1950s and 1960s, including Kansas City’s pivotal role in helping to launch America’s gay rights movement. The students won a national award from the National Council on Public History for their efforts, and the project also received honors from the Midwestern History Association. As part of the project, a touring version was created, and it has traveled to public libraries, museums, and historical societies throughout Kansas and Missouri. In September of 2021, *Making History* was installed at the Missouri State Museum, located in the Missouri State Capitol in Jefferson City. After receiving complaints about the exhibit’s content from legislative staff and legislators, leaders of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR)—the

department that oversees Missouri State Museum—decided to remove the exhibit after only four days. The removal of the exhibit was covered by many local and national news outlets, including the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Missouri Independent*, the *Advocate*, and Fox 2. Owing to the media outcry, the DNR quickly relocated the exhibit to the Lohman Building, part of the Jefferson Landing State Historic Site. This new location was far less accessible and visible than the Capitol. A number of professional organizations issued statements in support of the exhibit and calling for Missouri governor Michael L. Parson to move it back to its original location. Statements came from the American Alliance of Museums, the Missouri Association for Museums and Archives, the National Council on Public History, the American Historical Association, and the National Coalition Against Censorship. At the time of this writing, the exhibit continues to be on display at the Lohman Building. However, the controversy has generated significant interest

across the state from a variety of organizations, and UMKC received private funding to fabricate another traveling exhibit to meet the demand for requests to host the exhibit. We anticipate that *Making History* will be on display throughout Missouri for most of 2022, and others interested in the exhibit can visit the digital version (<https://info.umkc.edu/makinghistory/about-this-project>).



*Photograph of the exhibit Making History: Kansas City and the Rise of Gay Rights at the Missouri State Museum before it was removed. Credit: University of Missouri–Kansas City University Libraries.*

### **Midwest Archives Conference Statement in Support of LGBTQ+ History and the Exhibit *Making History: Kansas City and the Rise of Gay Rights***

The Midwest Archives Conference unequivocally condemns the removal of the *Making History: Kansas City and the Rise of Gay Rights* exhibit from the Missouri State Capitol rotunda. Removing this exhibit erases the history of Missouri’s LGBTQ+ community by censoring and excluding LGBTQ+ history from the mainstream historical narrative. MAC supports and respects student scholarship, Missouri’s LGBTQ+ community, and the accurate telling of the state’s history.

As archivists, we work with historically relevant documents. We see evidence each day of blatant discrimination against marginalized groups, including the intentional erasure of these communities’ cultures resulting in noticeable gaps in the historical record. We strongly condemn any attempts to hide this history or pretend it never happened. Rather, we choose to shine light on our past, as these students did, so that we may avoid making the same mistakes again. Our LGBTQ+ community has been fighting for fair treatment for decades and its members deserve to be recognized as primary players in our nation’s past and present.

We call on Governor Michael L. Parson to reinstall the exhibit in the Capitol Rotunda. The story of Missouri’s marginalized citizens should be front and center to all visitors to the building, as was originally intended.