

## National History Day 2023

### “Frontiers in History: People, Places, Ideas”

#### Missouri, Kansas, and Truman Research Topics

#### **General Research Resources**

Harry S. Truman Library & Museum Online Collections

<https://www.trumanlibrary.gov/library/online-collections>

Kansas City Public Library Public Library Digital History Resources

<https://kclibrary.org/digital-history>

Kansas State Historical Society

<https://www.kansasmemory.org>

State Historical Society of Missouri Research Guides

<https://shsmo.org/research/guides>

UMKC Guide to Kansas City Sources

<https://libguides.library.umkc.edu/c.php?g=471017&p=3220358>

Gay and Lesbian Archive of Mid-America (GLAMA)

<https://library.umkc.edu/glama>

Sherman Grinberg Film Library

<https://www.shermangrinberg.com/>

Note: This link leads to numerous, categorized **primary** sources which will be helpful for researching Missouri history: <https://www.sos.mo.gov/mdh/topics>

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## Missouri Topics

- Susan Elizabeth Blow (1843-1916)
  - Known as the “Mother of the Kindergarten,” Blow opened the United States’ first public kindergarten in St. Louis in 1873.
  - Although kindergarten was popular in Germany, early education in the U.S. was limited to the wealthy and didn’t address young children’s unique needs. By training other kindergarten teachers, translating German works, writing her own treatises, and lecturing around the country, Blow revolutionized the fields of public and early education in America.
    - <https://historicmissourians.shsmo.org/susan-blow>
    - <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/nov2018/remembering-life-work-susan-blow>
- Lucile Bluford (1911-2003)
  - A prolific African American journalist who championed social justice causes as the managing editor of the Kansas City Call.
  - The Missouri-Kansas border acted as an arbitrary frontier for racial segregation. Bluford was refused entry at the University of Missouri’s School of Journalism due to her race but easily gained admittance to the University of Kansas.
  - After being rejected again from MU, this time for graduate school, Bluford used her position at *The Call* to raise visibility about the issue and take her case to the Missouri Supreme Court.
    - <https://www.kclibrary.org/bluford/exhibit>
    - <https://pendergastkc.org/article/confronting-injustice-lucile-bluford-and-kansas-city-call-1939-1942>
- Thomas Hart Benton (1889-1975)
  - Benton’s murals and portraits memorialized essential aspects of American history such as Manifest Destiny, urbanization, industrial labor, rural life, and the struggles of everyday Americans during the Great Depression.
  - Benton’s art used sweeping lines and vibrant colors to depict marginalized people such as African Americans and poor, rural Americans as heroes. In painting

everyday, Midwestern working people, Benton became a leading artist in the regionalism movement.

- <https://historicismissourians.shsmo.org/thomas-hart-benton>
- <https://mostateparks.com/park/thomas-hart-benton-home-and-studio-state-historic-site>

- Phoebe Couzins (1842-1913)

- In 1871, Couzins became the first female law graduate of Washington University in St. Louis and one of the first female lawyers in the United States.
- She devoted herself to women's suffrage, serving as a delegate at the American Equal Rights Association Convention and speaking at the 1876 Democratic National Convention on behalf of the National Woman Suffrage Association.
- Couzins again crossed the frontier of acceptable roles for women in 1887 when she was appointed the first female U.S. Marshall by President Grover Cleveland.

- <https://historicismissourians.shsmo.org/phoebe-couzins>
- [https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1447&context=law\\_journal\\_law\\_policy](https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1447&context=law_journal_law_policy)

- *Gaines v. Canada*, 1938

- In 1935, Lloyd Gaines, an African American student, applied to the University of Missouri School of Law and was rejected since the Missouri Constitution called for the separate education of blacks and whites.
- With the support of the NAACP, Gaines sued Silas W. Canada, the university registrar, in hopes of overturning the "separate but equal" precedent set by *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896. Gaines won his case before the U.S. Supreme Court in 1938, but the ruling simply affirmed that MU violated his constitutional rights, not that the school had to admit him. To avoid admitting African American students, the state of Missouri created a law school at Lincoln University, Missouri's public university for Black students. Gaines and the NAACP were prepared to sue again, but Gaines disappeared in 1939, never to be seen again.
- Gaines attacked the frontier of educational segregation 15 years before *Brown v. Board of Education* was successful, and his case draws attention to Missouri's legacy of segregation and discrimination.

- <https://www.oyez.org/cases/1900-1940/305us337>
  - <https://scholarship.law.missouri.edu/gaines/>
  - <https://www.kbia.org/education/2018-12-12/legacy-of-missing-lloyd-gaines-1938-supreme-court-plaintiff-still-haunts-higher-education>
- Martha Gellhorn (1908-1998)
  - Generally known as Ernest Hemmingway's third wife, Gellhorn was an astounding war correspondent in her own right who forged where few journalists, male or female, dared to go.
  - During the Great Depression, Gellhorn served as an investigator for the Federal Emergency Relief Administration and wrote of its devastating effects on everyday Americans.
  - As a war correspondent, Gellhorn covered the invasions of Czechoslovakia and Finland, snuck aboard a hospital ship to report firsthand from the beaches of Normandy during D-Day, and covered the liberation of the Dachau concentration camp. She went on to cover almost every ensuing war and military conflict until her retirement in 1988.
    - <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/martha-gellhorn-eyewitness-war>
    - <https://historicmissourians.shsmo.org/martha-gellhorn>
- Langston Hughes (1902-1967)
  - Born in Joplin, MO, Hughes was a leading poet, writer, and playwright of the Harlem Renaissance.
  - His works drew on blues and jazz to express the struggles, joys, and music of life for working-class African Americans while encouraging black pride, which not only challenged the prevailing attitudes of middle-class blacks but rejected white America's conceptions of acceptable writing.
    - <http://www.kansasheritage.org/crossingboundaries/page6e1.html>
    - <https://beinecke.library.yale.edu/collections/highlights/langston-hughes-papers>

- Virginia Irwin (1908-1980)
  - As a woman, Irwin had to work her way through the ranks of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch to become a war correspondent in WWII. Her stories connected readers back home with life on the front as experienced by soldiers and civilians alike and brought humanity to the overwhelming war news.
  - In April 1945, Irwin, her fellow correspondent, and their driver became the first Americans to reach Berlin. Her work captured the final moments of the German Reich, conveyed the previously unseen perspective of Russian soldiers, and re-introduced Americans to the city as one of the foremost frontiers of the Cold War.
    - <https://mohistory.org/blog/virginia-irwin>
    - <https://digital.shsmo.org/digital/collection/mhr/id/41852>
- Kansas City Monarchs
  - As one of the most prominent baseball teams in the Negro Leagues, the Monarchs boasted legendary players such as Satchel Paige, Jackie Robinson, and Buck O'Neal. Despite battling limited resources and discrimination, the team repeatedly found wild success on the field.
  - The Monarch's popularity pushed its players through the color barrier, facilitating desegregation to make baseball a truly all-American pastime.
    - <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/kansas-city-monarchs-1920-1965/>
    - <https://www.nlbm.com/about-nlbm/>
- Lewis and Clark Expedition, 1803-1806
  - With the help of Sacagawea, a Lemhi Shoshone woman, Captain Meriwether Lewis and William Clark led the Corps of Discovery Expedition to explore President Jefferson's new Louisiana Purchase.
  - The information they collected on the frontier's environment, geography, and Native peoples, specifically from St. Charles, Missouri, to the Pacific Ocean on the Oregon Coast, proved invaluable for later economic and settler expansion.
    - <https://historicmissourians.shsmo.org/lewis-and-clark>
    - <https://lewisandclarkjournals.unl.edu/>

- Missouri Mormon War, 1838
  - During the 1830s, heavy Mormon migration to Missouri sparked widespread violence between the new migrants and the “Old Settlers.” Caldwell County was created as a “separate but equal” refuge for the Mormons, but this new frontier could not contain the swelling number of migrants.
  - Repeated skirmishes between mobs, militias, and civilians led to the Missouri Governor’s “Mormon Extermination Order,” resulting in a mass Mormon exodus from Missouri.
    - <https://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/resources/mormon.asp>
- Kate Richards O’Hare (1876-1948)
  - In 1916, O’Hare was nominated as the Socialist Party Candidate for the U.S. Senate. She was one of the first women to run for Senate, despite being unable to vote due to her gender.
  - After serving time in the Missouri State Penitentiary for violating the Espionage Act during WWI, she became an advocate for prison reform. As an outspoken activist and political figure, Kate O’Hare pushed the boundaries of women’s roles in public and political spheres.
    - <https://historicmissourians.shsmo.org/kate-richards-ohare>
    - <https://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/book/lookupname?key=O%27Hare%2C%20Kate%20Richards%2C%201877%2D1948>
- The Phoenix Society for Individual Freedom, 1966
  - The Phoenix Society for Individual Freedom was Kansas City’s first homophile organization, a group devoted to improving the social, economic, and legal status of homosexuals. Driven by Drew Shafer, the Phoenix Society published pamphlets, flyers, and a magazine that raised awareness and celebrated the artistic contributions of their subscribers. In 1968, the “Phoenix House” became KC’s first LGBT community center, providing safety and support for the vulnerable members of the community.
  - Members became leaders in national and regional LGBT organizations, and their publications fostered a national community that enabled the post-Stonewall gay

liberation movement to take off and attack the frontiers that limited the rights of LGBT Americans.

- <https://info.umkc.edu/makinghistory/>
  - <https://info.umkc.edu/makinghistory/the-phoenix-society-for-individual-freedom/>
- Pony Express, 1860-61
  - Created by William Russel, Alexander Majors, and William Waddell, the Pony Express allowed mail from Missouri to reach California in only ten days. This relay system of horses and riders bridged the frontier, invaluable connecting communities along the route and across the country.
  - Although soon replaced by the telegraph, the story of the Pony Express became a cultural staple of the Wild West and the American frontier.
    - <https://www.ponyexpress.org/historical-timeline>
    - <https://postalmuseum.si.edu/topics/pony-express>
- Redlining in Kansas City
  - Redlining was a widespread practice that maintained racial segregation through neighborhood restrictions. Famed Kansas City developer J.C. Nichols' (1880-1950) use of racially restrictive covenants and home associations became the basis for suburban developments across the country and by extension redlining and segregation.
  - Although *Shelley v Kraemer* ruled racially restrictive covenants unconstitutional in 1948, Nichols and other developers continued to design neighborhoods for whites only, writing detailed contracts which eliminated potential non-white buyers. The legacy continues today, with Troost Avenue persisting as a dividing line between Kansas City's black and white residential neighborhoods.
    - <https://jcprd.com/1811/Special-Exhibit---Redlined-Cities-Suburb>
    - <https://jocohistory.wordpress.com/2020/07/29/j-c-nichols-johnson-county/>
    - <https://www.oyez.org/cases/1940-1955/334us1>

## **Harry S. Truman Topics**

- The Berlin Blockade and Airlift, 1948-1949
  - In June 1948, the Soviet Union blockaded the city of West Berlin, effectively halting land shipments of food and other vital supplies from the Allies. The Truman Administration responded by supplying the city via airlift for 16 months, buying time for political negotiations, and proving to the Soviets that the Americans would not abandon Germany to communism.
    - <https://www.trumanlibrary.gov/library/online-collections/berlin-airlift>
- Desegregation of the Armed Forces
  - During WWII, African Americans could only serve in segregated military units and faced discrimination from white officers, other soldiers, and civilians. The lynching of several black war veterans and their wives led President Truman to issue Executive Order 9981 demanding the integration of the armed services and the establishment of the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services, or Fahy Committee.
    - <https://www.trumanlibrary.gov/library/online-collections/desegregation-of-armed-forces>
- Korean War
  - Following WWII, Korea was divided at the 38th Parallel with a communist government in the north and a southern government supported by the United States. In 1950, North Korean forces attacked the frontier of South Korea with plans to unify the peninsula under communist rule. President Truman responded by committing American troops to the combined United Nations forces defending



the Republic of Korea. This proxy war illustrated Truman's commitment to containing communism and highlighted the realities of dividing a country, people, and culture between conflicting ideologies.

- <https://www.trumanlibrary.gov/library/online-collections/korean-war-and-its-origins>

- Deciding to Drop the Atomic Bomb- the Frontier of the Atomic Age

- As vicious fighting in the Pacific Theater continued, the decision of utilizing the newly developed atomic bombs rested on President Truman. He knew using these weapons of mass destruction against Japan would save countless American lives and end the global war at a devastating cost to the Japanese population. His ultimate decision to drop two atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki ushered in an atomic age, forever transforming global relations.

- <https://www.trumanlibrary.gov/library/online-collections/decision-to-drop-atomic-bomb>
- <https://www.manhattanprojectvoices.org/resources>

## Kansas Topics

- June Bacon-Bercey
  - A trailblazer for African American women, Bacon-Bercey became the first black woman to receive a degree in meteorology from UCLA in 1954. She went on to serve on the Atomic Energy Commission as a senior advisor and in the early 1970s became the first woman trained in meteorology to deliver on-air weather reports. She encouraged students of color and girls to cross the frontier into science careers by creating science fair programs and a scholarship program funded by her winnings from a game show.
    - <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/people-african-american-history/june-bacon-bercey-1928-2019/>
    - <https://eos.org/features/june-bacon-bercey-pioneering-meteorologist-and-passionate-supporter-of-science>
- Brown v. Board of Education, 1954
  - This landmark court case successfully crossed the frontier of educational segregation that countless others had failed to cross. The Supreme Court ruling that Topeka's "separate but equal" segregated schools were inherently unequal and therefore unconstitutional transformed American education and represented a major success for the civil rights movement.
    - <https://www.kshs.org/kansapedia/brown-v-board-of-education-of-topeka/1994>
    - <https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/brown/brown-brown.html>

- Bleeding Kansas, 1854
  - The Kansas-Nebraska Act established that Kansas residents would decide whether the new state would be a slave or free state. This triggered a bloody war on the Kansas-Missouri border as both pro and anti-slavery supporters flooded the territory to influence the outcome. These violent conflicts between neighbors anticipated the Civil War and highlight the role of Kansas in the nationwide struggle over slavery.
    - <https://guides.loc.gov/kansas-nebraska-act>
    - <https://www.kshs.org/kansapedia/bleeding-kansas/15145>
    - <https://www.kshs.org/kansapedia/john-brown/11731>
  
- Potawatomi Trail of Death, 1838
  - Following the Indian Removal Act of 1830, the US government sought to remove the Potawatomi people from their native lands in Indiana to make room for white settlers. A militia burned the villages of the Potawatomi people, chained their leaders, and forced them to march to a reservation in Kansas. Many died on this 660-mile march to the frontier which is now called the Trail of Death by the Potawatomi.
    - <https://www.potawatomiheritage.com/encyclopedia/trail-of-death/>
    - <https://www.potawatomi.org/blog/2021/09/02/resources-highlight-the-trail-of-death/>
    - <https://archive.org/details/trailofdeathlett141peti/page/n13/mode/2up>

- Orphan Train Movement, 1854-1929
  - Charles Loring Bryce, the founder of the Children's Aid Society, started the Orphan Train movement as a solution to the inadequate welfare systems of New York City. He saw the Western frontier as a land of opportunity and began sending trainloads of children from urban orphanages train to rural communities. Some were taken into loving families, but many were simply used as free laborers and suffered abuse.
    - <https://orphantraindepot.org/history/>
    - <https://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/programs/child-welfarechild-labor/orphan-trains/>
- William Reynolds v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas (1903)
  - Predating *Brown v Board* by almost 50 years, this was one of the first cases to challenge *Plessy v Ferguson's* separate but equal ruling. William Reynolds' son attended a desegregated elementary school near to their home until the building was destroyed in a fire. When the school was rebuilt only white students were readmitted, while black students were sent to a segregated school that was vastly inferior and further away. Reynolds sued the district and ultimately lost his case before the Kansas Supreme Court, but his efforts were an important step toward ending segregation.
    - <https://www.kshs.org/index.php?url=km/items/view/209565>
    - <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/william-reynolds-v-board-of-education-of-topeka-kansas-1903/>

- Shawnee Indian Mission Manual Labor Boarding School, 1839-1862
  - One of the first schools of its kind on the frontier, this religiously run boarding school followed the nationwide agenda to ‘kill the Indian and save the man.’ Indigenous children were taken from their homes, received English names, and were banned from speaking their native languages or engaging in Shawnee cultural practices. This forced assimilation was perfected through manual labor and corporal punishment and serves as a case study for the United States' attempts to erase Indigenous American cultures from the frontier.
    - <https://www.shawnee-nsn.gov/news-community/post/182-years-sim>
    - <https://www.kshb.com/news/local-news/first-ever-report-details-abuse-trauma-inflicted-by-indian-boarding-schools-including-in-kc-metro>