

Our Missouri Podcast

Title: Episode 11: "Wide-Open Town"

Guest: Diane Mutti Burke & Jason Roe

Air Date: February 25, 2019

KEVIN WALSH: Welcome to *Our Missouri*, a podcast about the people, places, culture, and history of the 114 counties and independent city of Saint Louis that comprise the great state of Missouri. Each episode focuses on a topic related to the state ranging from publications about Missouri's history to current projects undertaken by organizations to preserve and promote local institutions. The *Our Missouri Podcast* is recorded in the J. Christian Bay Rare Books Room at the State Historical Society of Missouri's Columbia Research Center, and is generously provided to you by the State Historical Society of Missouri. And now, here's your host, Sean Rost.

SEAN ROST: Good morning, good afternoon, and good evening, or at whatever hour you are tuning in to listen to the *Our Missouri Podcast*. My name is Sean Rost and I will be your guide as we explore the memories, moments, and misfortunes from our Missouri. With this year's Missouri Conference on History coming up in March, many scholars will soon be going to Kansas City. To help prepare for the conference, the *Our Missouri Podcast* invites listeners to explore the City of Fountains from the confluence of two mighty rivers near the downtown skyline to the Plaza, the Paseo, and the intersection of 18th and Vine. This five-part series entitled "Going to Kansas City" focuses on several projects and institutions that document and define Kansas City's history and identity. Today, we are talking with Diane Mutti Burke and Jason Roe, editors of *Wide-Open Town: Kansas City in the Pendergast Era*. This new book is a collaborative effort by several scholars to research and document Kansas City's diverse population and institutions during the first half of the 20th Century. Diane Mutti Burke is a professor of history and director of the Center for Midwestern Studies at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. She holds a PhD in History from Emory University and is the author and editor of several books, including *Kansas City, America's Crossroads*; *Bleeding Kansas*, *Bleeding Missouri: The Long Civil War on the Border*; and *On Slavery's Border: Missouri's Small-Slaveholding Households, 1815-1865*. Jason Roe is the digital history specialist for the Kansas City Public Library. He holds a PhD in History from the University of Kansas. He is also the recipient of several awards for his digital history projects through the Kansas City Public Library, including "The Pendergast Years" and "Civil War on the Western Border" which won the Roy Rosenzweig Prize for Innovation in Digital History from the American Historical Association and George Mason University. Welcome to the *Our Missouri Podcast*.

JASON ROE: Thank you.

DIANE MUTTI BURKE: Thanks for having us.

SEAN ROST: Now, in looking at this collection and this anthology, how did this project originate?

DIANE MUTTI BURKE: Well, this is a long time collaboration between the Center for Midwestern Studies and the history department at UMKC and the Kansas City Public Library. Starting ten years ago, we worked on a project about the border wars, about the Civil War in this region. There was a big conference where we brought in scholars from all over the country and it was a big public conference to kind of launch the sesquicentennial of the Civil War here in the region. A volume came out of that, and then there was an accompanying website, "The Civil War on the Western Border," which Jason has been very involved with, that won all sorts of national prizes for digital history projects. So, that was an amazing experience, and we felt like we were generating new scholarship about the history of this region, especially of Kansas City and Jackson County. And so, we felt like we needed to move this project forward. There hasn't been a tremendous amount of scholarship about this city. It has a really, really interesting story. And so, we decided, based on our really great experience the first time and the wonderful outcomes from it, that we should try another project and this time we decided to focus on Kansas City during the Pendergast Era because it's such a rich history. So, we did the same thing. We put out a call for papers. Scholars came in. We workshopped papers. We had a big public conference where—how many people, Jason, did you say you finally determined attended?

JASON ROE: There was over 900 people spread across four sessions and one keynote lecture by David Kennedy, a Pulitzer Prize-winning historian [who] talked about the Great Depression.

DIANE MUTTI BURKE: So members of the public are clearly interested in this story. They came out to listen to a group of historians and various other scholars give papers about really interesting topics. So, ultimately, that also resulted in a website and the project that we're talking about today.

SEAN ROST: As editors, certainly you've been involved with this process as you suggested for a very long time, what is your hope that the general reader will take away from these articles in this overall collection?

JASON ROE: One of the big takeaways for me is that it's very tempting for people in the public to view this era through the lens of nostalgia. It's a time when Kansas City mattered nationally. In a cultural and economic sense, they had a reputation as a wide-open town, which is, of course, where we got the name for the book, and that's because of its jazz style, the night clubs, the avant-garde art scene led by Thomas Hart Benton. So, it was a very exciting time. There's good reason for the nostalgia. It's a time of bootleg liquor during Prohibition and mobsters and everything else. So, even the crime that happened, and sort of the negative aspects of this, have been viewed through a lens of nostalgia. So one of our takeaways from this research is that we're digging deeper and we're finding the complexity and it really is an amazing story that we don't want to give short-shrift to. There were complicated racial dynamics that are explored in over half a dozen chapters in this volume. Certainly disputes over voting rights. There are labor disputes that are examined through the lens of race and gender in several chapters. So, we're looking at kind of the positives and the negatives and trying to move beyond nostalgia.

DIANE MUTTI BURKE: There's been this idea that somehow this period was Kansas City's "golden age," and there's a lot to recommend that idea in that this was a time where the city built

environment was bandied by various city boosters. The Liberty Memorial. The [government] complexes downtown were built as WPA projects during this time period. So, there was a lot going on in Kansas City, and I think the leaders of Kansas City really imagined Kansas City as the next great thing—perhaps the next Chicago—and they were really working toward that. So they were doing things like trying to lure the Republican National Convention to town, which they successfully did. Set up a ten year plan to build out the city and these various sort-of public structures in a really sophisticated way. So, they were trying to capitalize on, I think, some energy that existed in the city at the time. But, as Jason has pointed out, it's a really complicated history that accompanies that. Certainly, the racial dynamics and the art scene and then the politics, which are incredibly fascinating, from this time period, and I think a lot of people at least have some sense of that—of Pendergast and the political machine and the corruption and the crime. But even that story is a bit more complicated than it appears on the surface.

SEAN ROST: Now, based upon the research done for this project, and from the articles that were contributed and the previous conference as you mentioned, how would you all describe Kansas City in the interwar period? You mentioned as a wide-open town, but, I mean, did the average citizen know that this is a town that was on the up-and-up, this is a town that has certain dynamics to it? Was this well known, you think?

JASON ROE: I think that this sense of Kansas City as being on the upswing was really central to the identity of Kansas City at the time. People definitely bought in to it, or at least that if they didn't buy in to—if you look at the documents that were produced, there was certainly that thread going through this. A lot of what you see with Kansas City during this time period is that it's centered on its role as a railroad hub. It's geographically located in the center of the country. It may have had the most railroad lines or connections of any city because of that location. That enabled it to build industries. So, if you're describing Kansas City in the time, then you would see in the West Bottoms an enormous stockyards with livestock. It was the second largest behind Chicago. We have a full chapter about the stockyards and the meatpacking industries and labor disputes. And, of course, those tied in to the railroads because that was where the livestock came, were sold at auctions, or processed at meatpacking plants. So, all of this is connected, and other industries as well such as the garment industry. So, it was a very modern city. Again, a wide-open town. There was definitely a sense that it was modern and on the upswing.

DIANE MUTTI BURKE: Yes. That's definitely true. I think everyone wanted to capitalize on the promise of the city. But, to go back to your original question, I think that a lot of these different elements of Kansas City during this time are the different factions coexisted during this time period. So, there are these business boosters who are pushing all of these industries and pushing all of this civic development. But, they're coexisting with the Pendergast machine, and, to a certain degree, sort of looking the other way as some of this corruption is playing out because I think they all believed that they were working toward some kind of mutually beneficial end.

SEAN ROST: Now, when we think of Kansas City in a not only Missouri history context but also in an urban history context, Pendergast—as you mentioned—kind of dominates the overall theme and the idea of Kansas City. So, why do you think that this Pendergast Era is so significant when we look at Kansas City?

JASON ROE: I believe that Diane started to touch on this with her mention of businesses and Tom Pendergast coexisting. It was actually required that a lot of businesses would have to pay bribes or otherwise cooperate with the machine. The Pendergast machine controlled the full city government. So, if you wanted permits, trash collection—police were controlled by the machine—so if you were running an establishment and you wanted to have gambling there then, of course, you would cooperate with the machine.

DIANE MUTTI BURKE: I mean, it's even more complicated than that as Jeff Pasley shows in his article. He makes an argument that Pendergast was kind of on to something as far as his political coalition was concerned. He was figuring out ways to incorporate a lot of different people into his coalition. Among those were African Americans. So, he manages to pull African American voters—he's pulling them—he hasn't pulled them all—but he's pulling a lot of them away from the Republican Party who they had supported since Reconstruction for obvious reasons. They would not historically be inclined to support Democrats because of the racial politics of that party during this time. But, he managed to pull them away by sort of bringing them in to the process, to a certain extent. I mean certainly not, by and large, in the leadership type of a role, although there were some leaders that emerged. But, he was handing out goodies and he was handing out patronage jobs and he was trying to bring people in in all of these different ways. So, he's really setting up a coalition that predates the coalition that FDR started. The Democratic coalition that FDR started to move toward during the Great Depression. He's doing that as early as the '20s, and so it's trendsetting here in Kansas City as to how this politics played out. It's not all positive, of course. Pendergast is locating a lot of his vice industry in these same black neighborhoods. So, it's not altogether a positive story, to be sure, but it's certainly an interesting story.

SEAN ROST: Before we return to our conversation, let's take a step back in time with Bob Priddy to an event from this week in history in a "Missouri Minute."

BOB PRIDDY: I'm Bob Priddy with this "Missouri Minute" about the days when Missouri went to war with Kansas. The Missouri Compromise seems to have provoked at least as much trouble as it sought to avoid. Slavery in Missouri would be one of its sore points between this state and our neighbors for years. But with Kansas, it was even worse. Congress tried to keep the delicate balance by suggesting Kansas come in to the Union as a slave state [and] Nebraska come in free. But, Missouri slave owners wanted to guarantee that, and flocked into Kansas in an effort to cast pro-slavery votes. They used force, and as the anti-slavery forces grew in Kansas, conflict broke out on the border. Lawrence was attacked by Missourians. Kansas John Brown raided Missouri. Missourians attacked his Kansas headquarters in Osawatimie. He came to Missouri for still another raid. Finally, the Missouri legislature appropriated \$30,000 on February 24, 1859 to establish a military force to stand along the border to keep marauders from crossing the line...either way. Civil War finally ended the border war. I'm Bob Priddy for the Center for Missouri Studies.

SEAN ROST: Now, you mentioned Jeff Pasley there and his article or his chapter on the transformation of the Democratic Party in Kansas City. What are some of the sections that you broke the anthology up into to address these certain topics and what are some of the historical

themes and topics certainly that have been written that readers might find fascinating that they may now have known about Kansas City before?

DIANE MUTTI BURKE: I'd like to start by talking just a little bit more about the title, *Wide-Open Town*. We mean for that to be taken in a complicated way, I guess. So, it's wide-open and people know about the wide openness as far as ignoring Prohibition and the crime and the vice and all of that. But, we see it as much more expansive than that because there were all these things going on. Some kind of unsavory, honestly. Certainly the political corruption and the vice. It did sometimes create opportunities for people to move within these spaces that might not otherwise be available to them. So, it offered opportunities certainly for business leaders to move forward with their various projects—business and civic leaders. It opened up the opportunity for African Americans and for Mexican Americans and for women to expand what they could do within these communities. So, there are articles about women just getting the vote and how they get involved in city government and things like that. But also, it offered amazing opportunities for artistic production in this community during this time period. So, the way we have organized it is the first part is called "Politics and Progress in Kansas City's Golden Age" and it talks mostly about the political scene and about boosterism and these sort of civic improvements that we mentioned earlier. The second part is called "Breaking Barriers in a Segregated City" and it focuses on stories of African Americans and Mexican Americans—primarily women. The last section is called "Culture at an American Crossroads" and it talks about this flourishing of culture that I just described. So, we can tell you in a little bit more detail what some of those sections entail, if that would be helpful.

SEAN ROST: Yeah. Sure.

DIANE MUTTI BURKE: Okay. Jason, do you want to start with the "Politics and Progress" part?

JASON ROE: Yeah. It begins with an examination of the racial dynamics in both Missouri and Kansas City at the time. The takeaway from that is that Missouri politics were very evenly divided between Republicans and Democrats. So, there was an opportunity for minority votes—namely African Americans who made up somewhere around nine or ten percent of the population—at least in Kansas City—to be a swing vote that would swing elections one direction or another if those votes could be unified in a particular way.

DIANE MUTTI BURKE: African Americans—even though there was segregation in Missouri—they did not lost the vote during this time period, which would not be true in other parts of the South. So, that's a really significant point.

JASON ROE: Yes. That's a very important point and the point of that chapter is that African Americans were fighting to keep the right to vote and to make that right matter as much and in as big a way as possible statewide and also in Kansas City. And, of course, Diane spoke about Dr. Pasley's article which examines the way that Tom Pendergast built on that racial dynamic and political dynamic to build a coalition that would be quite powerful. It was made up of working class whites who had labor interests and Irish and Italian immigrants—so it was a very diverse party that looked a lot like Roosevelt's. The rest of this section discusses politics and racial

dynamics, namely J.C. Nichols and all of his developments in Kansas City which introduced racially restrictive covenants and redlining. So, all of that is examined. Then, there's economics that are kind of brought in to this with the Federal Reserve being brought to Kansas City and the Republican National Convention brought to Kansas City.

DIANE MUTTI BURKE: So, those last two articles really touch on this idea of the boosterism that existed among the Kansas City business community. So, they were shooting for big things and they managed to accomplish them and they felt pretty proud about that. As far as the J.C. Nichols article, that one is interesting. I mean, people, I think, have a pretty good understanding of the racial covenant part of that story, and even the fact that J.C. Nichols was—while he didn't pioneer that idea, he certainly added some aspects to it that then sort of took off nationally and other people started to replicate. So, he was a very important development figure in American history during this time period. Sara Stevens, who wrote this article, actually, has written a larger book that compares all these different people and, I think, she sees Nichols as a significant figure. But, the other thing that I think is interesting about that article is that she talks about—that's the negative side of it—but the positive side of it is that he had this really, I think, pretty sophisticated sense of design. So, he was bringing in landscape designers to design his neighborhoods in a pretty artistic fashion. If you drive around those neighborhoods, even to this day, you can see that's part of the reason. Of course, on top of the racial covenants part of it, while those neighborhoods have persisted over time. So, the second section, "Breaking Barriers in a Segregated City," really focuses a lot on questions of race, certainly, and gender, but also it focuses a lot on class. So, it looks at working class people. So, the first two articles are about the stockyard and the garment industry, but really what they are looking at are the workers in those industries. So, John Herron explores how African American meatpackers—I mean, he looks at all the meatpacking laborers, but he focuses especially on the African American workers in this industry who were typically working in the worst kinds of jobs. But what he ends up arguing is that these were really good jobs for the time and steady jobs—and there are these really interesting moments where laborers within the industry actually worked together across racial lines to try to deliver different things that they're hoping for. That is not an altogether typical story. There is a long history of racial tensions within the labor movement where people are not working across racial lines. So, that's a real interesting aspect, I think, of the story here in Kansas City. Another chapter focuses on the Donnelly Garment Company. So, we learn a lot about Nell Donnelly who was a really fascinating figure. She's a millionairess here in Kansas City. She develops a garment company of readymade dresses for women. She has a really good eye also for design. She figures out what women want and this company really explodes. So, she has a lot of women working in her factory, and basically what this is is the story of how she tries to beat back their efforts to unionize by doing things that you would think are good. She provides a nurse to provide them with medical care. She has different activities outside of work. She tries to make their experience fairly good, but she does not want the unions in her shop and she works very diligently through the law and through her alliance with her husband, Senator James Reed, to make sure that that will never happen. Others chapters talk about political activism of women and how they actually made some inroads on winning seats on the school board. They try to win some seats on the city council. They don't have as much luck with that, but they were very politically active in the years after having received the vote. The last articles focus on the African American community and on the Mexican immigrant community in Kansas City. I'll mention that one article is about Lucile Bluford—and actually the case where she tries to take on the

University of Missouri at Columbia to get into the journalism school. She's thwarted in that attempt, but what she does is she uses the platform of the *Kansas City Call*, which was the newspaper that she helped edit, to make a case for why she should be able to attend the university. So, it's a fascinating story of her rhetoric and how she's trying to mobilize the African American community, primarily, but also change the minds of white readers as well. And then, there's an article about the Guadalupe Center here in Kansas City, which is actually celebrating its 100th anniversary this very year. It started out as essentially a settlement house—kind of a Jane Addams-style settlement house—where some middle class/upper-middle class white women, Catholic women, set up this center, basically, to help Mexican immigrants who had started to come into Kansas City in fairly large numbers around World War I to work in railroads and meatpacking, to a lesser extent, although they do that more over time, and various other industries around town. At first it's the men, but then the families start to follow them. Valerie Mendoza traces how this center—the Guadalupe Center—sort of changes from a place that's really very much controlled by these white women and what they saw as the needs of the community to a place that is really controlled by the people themselves. It starts to change over time and it starts to reflect what their needs are not what their benefactors think their needs should be. I'll let Jason talk about his article.

JASON ROE: My article was about Kansas City's black public hospital which was General Hospital No. 2. General Hospital No. 1, of course, was the segregated hospital for whites. No. 2 is segregated for blacks. So, my article was exploring—I kind of started with the concept of Tom Pendergast's racial coalition that to the African Americans was an important part of his coalition. Building on that idea is that the machine needed to deliver certain benefits to black voters to draw those votes. I think earlier we mentioned that there were a number of black leaders who emerged. One of whom was William Thompkins. He was a doctor. He was placed in charge of General Hospital No. 2, which had been established in 1908. The problem with the building was that it was old—fifty or sixty years old at this point. It was a fire trap. There ended up being a large fire that threatened patients' lives and everything. They needed a new building. Everybody agreed on that. There was disputes about where it should be located. Again, this kind of brings us back to which neighborhoods it should be located in and the racial landscape of the city. There were lobbyist, such as William Thompkins, kind of leading the charge for this. Eventually, they did get a new building built in 1930 which, at the time of its opening, was the only black public hospital in the United States that was a new building and that was fully staffed and administered by African American doctors, nurses, and staff.

DIANE MUTTI BURKE: So, the last section is called "Culture at an American Crossroads" and I think it's probably the most fun section of the volume because it focuses on all of these really interesting cultural aspects of Kansas City. So, for example, one of the articles is written by Marc Rice, whose actually a musicologist, or a music historian, and he focuses on how, in fact, all this wonderful Kansas City jazz that the city is so famous for, that many of these bands were in fact, at least initially during the 1920s, not supported by Pendergast and his whole machine. But, supported more by the African American community itself. They were regularly hiring these bands to play at various charity events because there's a very flourishing African American community on the east side of Kansas City with a pretty solid middle class of people who are involved in all these different clubs and organizations. So, they bring in these bands to play for their various events. Chuck Haddix focuses on a band that probably most people have not heard

of. He's actually an expert on the Kansas City jazz style, but he focused his article for this volume on what was called the Coon-Sanders Nighthawks Orchestra, which was a white jazz band that took advantage of the radio, which was a very early thing or very new thing at the time—so this was during the 1920s—and they ended up broadcasting a radio show at midnight from Kansas City from one of the clubs and they became a national sensation basically. So, he traces this band and how it started out here in Kansas City and then ends up becoming a big deal on the national scene.

JASON ROE: One thing I think that is fascinating is that some of themes from the beginning of the book continue to pop up throughout the book. In Chuch Haddix's article, we'll see that Kansas City is in the center of the country and the radio network broadcasts nationally. It wasn't regulated in the same way it is today with certain smaller regions. So, you could hear this band on the East Coast or the West Coast live on radio and that's what made it so unique is this kind of original national sensation.

DIANE MUTTI BURKE: Yeah. So, it's kind of a cool story, I think. Henry Adams, actually, also wrote an article about Thomas Hart Benton, and at this point he was already a nationally known artist of American regionalism. But, he ended up coming back to Kansas City to work at the Kansas City Art Institute. Henry traces how Benton came back here. He came back to his home state and he had this idea that he would basically turn Kansas City into a cultural mecca. He essentially ended up establishing what I can only call an intellectual and cultural salon in his house where he would invite all these really interesting people to these large parties that would occur at his house where they were all talking to one another and singing together and drinking together I'm absolutely sure. But, Kansas City was a really interesting place at the time. It turns out that there were a number of people who fled Europe during the rise of the Nazi regime there and the president of the University of Kansas City—which is now UMKC—was inviting a lot of them to Kansas City. So, there were a number of artists and musicians and intellectual scholars who were coming in to Kansas City to seek refuge during the war. They all end up in this really interesting, eclectic community that, to a certain extent, revolves around Thomas Hart Benton. I think in the end Benton was a little bit thwarted in his plan for turning Kansas City into a national cultural mecca partly because he ended up running up against some of the elite Kansas Citians because he was kind of a rough and tumble guy. He would sometimes say things that I think were off-putting to people, but when he actually got into the most trouble is when he went on a full attack on the director, in particular, of the emerging art museum in Kansas City—which is now called the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art. They had this rule where they basically would not display modern art. So, Benton was really frustrated by that, but he went about attacking that rule [and] people who made the rule in a very off-putting way. That is that he attacked the sexuality of the director. You would think that that wouldn't have made a difference in the 1920s and 1930s America, but, in fact, it did. People didn't like it that he had gone after him in this kind of way. The last couple of chapters are interesting as well. Stuart Hinds has a chapter in her about how there were female impersonators here in Kansas City in this wide-open club scene that we've talked about. What's interesting about Kansas City is that while female impersonation started to be shut down in a lot of venues throughout the nation in the 1930s and moving forward, that did not happen here in Kansas City. This art form managed to flourish as we move forward in time. And then lastly, I think, as the last piece of the volume, which I think really speaks to all the themes that we touch on over the course of the volume, is Keith Eggener's

article about the Kansas City Liberty Memorial. He traces the building of that building and the design elements of that building. He's an architectural historian. So, how it was built [or] fashion designed in this very modern way. It was built by the city boosters who wanted to have this iconic structure in Kansas City and managed to make it happen in the early years of the 1920s. But then, he traces the decline of the museum—not of the museum—of the monument over time. By the 1970s and 1980s, it was a pretty rough place. It had not been maintained. It was falling into disrepair. They had to close the tower for a long period of time. But ultimately, what ended up happening is the city came together to make sure the monument was preserved. They raised a lot of money and made it happen and ultimately built an amazing, first-class World War I museum by digging out underneath the monument, which is kind of a cool idea, and turning it into something different. So, while it was initially a memorial for the men who had lost their lives during the war, it turned into a museum to educate people about World War I as well as the monument part is there. But, we think it really is a good symbol for what's happened in Kansas City in recent decades because we argue in our introduction to the book that there has been this new resurgence of Kansas City, perhaps a new golden age for Kansas City. And what I think is most interesting about it is that a lot of what is being revived is from the remnants of this 1920s and '30s time period. So, the Crossroads District in Kansas City. The Liberty Memorial turning into the World War I Museum. The built environment of Kansas City from this time period—the time period where it flourish—is now been totally revived. People are moving into the downtown and there's a lot of exciting. The cultural scene is flourishing. The business community is moving forward in really promising ways. So, it all circles back to this earlier golden age, and we can only hope that the new golden age will continue on for decades to come.

SEAN ROST: Now, between the initial symposium that you had in Kansas City and the publication of this book there was the introduction of a website affiliated Kansas City Public Library—"The Pendergast Years." Could you tell us how that connects not only with this work and this project, but also to a wider audience of educators and students and the general public?

JASON ROE: Well, we've been really excited by the kinds of resources that we can offer through the library and its partnerships not only with UMKC but with dozens of archives across the city and the region. Of course, the most noticeable intersection between the book and the website is that many of the articles are on the same topics. The articles on the website are kind of geared toward online reading [or] maybe younger audiences. They tend to be a little bit shorter [and] maybe a little bit less formal. There aren't as extensive of footnotes, for example. The substance of the articles is all there, and we have an additional four or five thematic articles. What's wonderful about the internet is that we can provide so much more context that really helps get people into this era in a way that a traditional book cannot. And that is, if you visit the site, you'll see thousands of photographs. You can click on the image gallery and there are pictures of the full built environment of the city at the time. We worked with, again, partnering archives all over so that we could find not just pictures of the prominent buildings and the prominent people, but also, whenever possible, the other neighborhoods. So, you can click on a map and see where some of the poorer neighborhoods and some of the other regions—the West Bottoms and the North End where the Italian community lived. So, you can click on a map and you can see where all of these photographs were taken. You can click and see a thumbnail of those items and click through to the item in the collection records. Another thing we've done—it's not just photographs—it's documents. So, if you are interesting in voter fraud in the 1936

election, we have a map for that that shows you the precincts where voter fraud occurred and was prosecuted. Of course, this was around the beginning of the fall of the Pendergast machine—this topic, for example. They started to get caught in the 1936 elections. So, you can kind of see that story play out visually, and then you can click through and you can see the court documents and find out how ballot boxes were being stuffed. How voters who were dead were somehow miraculously voting. How on occasion—or actually quite often—some of the precincts would report 100% of the population voting. 150% of the population voting. That's obviously impossible, but those votes were recorded. And then, that generated court cases which you can see today. One thing that we've tried to do with this website is insure that everything is easy to navigate. We're taking advantage of every opportunity we can to organize all of the content into different topics and themes. So, you can click through and read about machine politics and organized crime, race relations, Prohibition, women's rights, jazz, communities and neighborhoods, labor and industry, the economy, the Depression, and sports and entertainment, and other cultural matters. So, that differs from the approach that a lot of history websites have taken where maybe they haven't had as many resources put into it. They tend to scan and put them into a repository. I think this is changing, but we're certainly on the leading edge of not just scanning everything and putting it into a repository because that makes it difficult for people to search. If they don't know what's in the repository, it's hard to know what to look for. So, that's kind of rationale behind all of the different tools that we've put in here. The maps. We have a timeline. And, again, organizing everything into topics and themes so that you can click through. You can click on sports and entertainment, and then click on pictures of ephemera. You can click on communities and neighborhoods and read the article about J.C. Nichols and additional articles, and then read correspondence to and from J.C. Nichols and other important people on that topic.

SEAN ROST: What is the address for that website for people who might be interested in accessing it?

JASON ROE: So, the website is named, "The Pendergast Years: Kansas City in the Jazz Age and Great Depression," and the web address is pendergastkc.org. You can also find links to it on the kclibrary.org website.

DIANE MUTTI BURKE: We are also excited about this general idea that we've talked about today. We believe that Kansas City is an understudied city, but a very important city on the national scene, certainly, and this state. Our hope is with all of this that we will continue to generate new research on this really fascinating place. We feel like we can help some with that through the production of these various volumes. But, the website itself, both websites, present the opportunity for other people to take up this charge and move it forward. So, we're talking about other possible projects we might think about in the future. One thing that we've discussed is a civil rights era history of the city. But, we're hoping that in the future we can move this project of learning more about this town forward.

SEAN ROST: Alright. Well, thank you for joining us today.

DIANE MUTTI BURKE: Thank you for having us.

JASON ROE: Thank you, Sean.

SEAN ROST: Thanks for listening to this week's episode. As always, I am your host, Sean Rost. The show's producer is Brian Austin. The opening and concluding credits are narrated by Kevin Walsh. If you are interested in more of the people, places, culture, and history around our Missouri, check out the following upcoming events:

If you're in the mood for a little bluegrass music to kick off your summer, Rolla is the place to be on May 19th for Ozark Pickin' Time. This afternoon of music and memories will be held at the Cedar Street Playhouse in Rolla and features Jimmie Allison and Midnight Flight, Jerry Rosa and the Rosa String Works Band, and Marideth Sisco and Accomplices. This event is free and open to the public, though registration is appreciated. While you're there, be sure to check in with staff from the State Historical Society of Missouri to learn how the Historical Society is preserving the state's rich musical history.

With the State Historical Society of Missouri's Columbia Research Center slated to be closed from spring to midsummer 2019 for the move to the newly constructed Center for Missouri Studies, you only have a few weeks left to view three featured art exhibits. In the corridor gallery, the exhibit "Work Artwork" consists of art by staff members and volunteers from the Historical Society's six research centers across the state. In the Main Gallery, visitors will find two exhibits, "Benton's Perilous Visions" and "The Aesthetic of the Monumental Figure." To learn more about these, and other, exhibitions, please visit shsmo.org/art/exhibits/.

National History Day in Missouri is looking for educators, historians, writers, filmmakers, museum staff, and community members to join them at this year's state contest to judge student projects. The state contest will be held on April 27, 2019 at the University of Missouri-Columbia. To thank you for your essential participation in National History Day in Missouri 2019, the State Historical Society of Missouri will provide a light breakfast and lunch, plus a travel stipend of up to \$50 for judges whose round trip mileage exceeds 75 miles. National History Day in Missouri is a unique opportunity for middle and high school age students to explore the past in a creative, hands-on way by producing a documentary, exhibit, paper, performance, or website on a topic of their choosing. To learn more about National History Day in Missouri, including judge orientation and how to start a program at your own school, please visit shsmo.org/nhdmo/.

On March 2, join Joan Stack, Curator of Art Collections for the State Historical Society of Missouri, at the Arrow Rock State Historic Site Visitors Center for "United We Stand" a public presentation on how George Caleb Bingham's Election Series paintings showcased his views of America's constitutional democracy in the mid-19th Century.

The sixty-first annual Missouri Conference on History, hosted by the University of Missouri-Kansas City and Park University and sponsored by the State Historical Society of Missouri, will be held March 6-8, 2019, at the Holiday Inn Country Club Plaza in Kansas City. For more information about the Missouri Conference on History, please visit shsmo.org/mch.

Come to the Historical Society's Columbia Research Center's Main Gallery for a special one-week pop-up exhibit entitled "Show Me Missouri Women" on March 5-9. This exhibit showcases materials that share the story of how women helped shape the Show-Me State. Society archivists have selected a wide array of their favorite photographs, letters, art, journals, and other artifacts illustrating changes in gender roles and women's ongoing fight for equality.

On March 9, join senior archivist Erin Smither for SHSMO 101: Making the Most of Your Research at the Stone County Historical Museum & Genealogical Center. In this presentation, Erin talks about the Society, its history, and the great variety of materials available to researchers at the six regional research offices around the state.

If you are interested in learning more about Missouri's upcoming bicentennial in 2021, there will be three opportunities in March to hear from bicentennial coordinator Michael Sweeney. On March 12th, Michael will be at the Friends Room of the Columbia Public Library. On March 16th, Michael will be joined by senior archivist Claire Marks at the Jefferson County Library's Northwest Branch in High Ridge. On March 26th, Michael will be at the Callaway County Library in Fulton. To register and learn more about these events, please visit the State Historical Society of Missouri's website at shsmo.org/events.

KEVIN WALSH: Thank you for listening to the *Our Missouri Podcast*. If you would like to learn more about the podcast, including past and future episodes, information about guests, and upcoming events, please visit our website at shsmo.org/our-missouri.