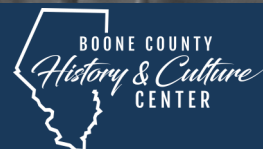


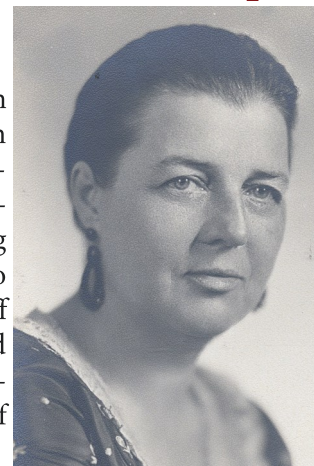
news & notes



Womens History Month—Mary Paxton Keeley - Columbia Polymath, Unforgettable Personality

Matt Fetterly, Local Historian and BCHS Research Associate

Few personalities loom as large in local history as Mary Paxton Keeley, known as the first woman graduate of the prestigious University of Missouri School of Journalism. This fact does little to explain the impact she's had upon Columbia. One might assume that our famous J-School did not wish to enroll women at the time; in fact they did from the beginning. Keeley came to Columbia precisely because she heard the University was opening a school of journalism and was admitted in 1908, along with a number of other women to its first class. She graduated in 1910, becoming the first woman to hold a journalism degree. It was Mary's strong will that forced a change on the Savitar yearbook staff after she was told women could not be present because the men smoked. She successfully organized women on campus to support candidates for student government that would enact a change. Predictably she was offered the position, but declined, allowing another woman to fill the spot. This type of leadership, provided to both men and women, was a character trait that would continue her whole life.



During her childhood in Independence, Mo. Keeley grew up next door to Bess Wallace. The two became close friends and Bess Truman, as Wallace is now more commonly known, later became First Lady of the United States. Their friendship and correspondence would last a lifetime. After Keeley's graduation from MU she returned to the Kansas City area, and became one of the city's first female journalists. The editor of the newspaper was dissatisfied with her employment for two reasons. First, she was a woman, and secondly, she had a college degree in journalism, a field that was believed to be a practical skill at the time, not requiring higher education.

Naysayers aside, her reporting often focused on women's issues and would now be considered what we call "*hard-hitting investigative journalism*." She wrote a story about Kansas City's red light district based on her own observations. Perhaps most famously, she authored a front page story about the State Training School for Girls in Chillicothe, exposing a superintendent who was allegedly training girls for prostitution. She recounted in an interview years later that "the only man in Chillicothe not afraid of the woman I was trying to expose said, 'This woman [the superintendent] knows you're here and you are in physical danger; you'd better get out. I said, 'Well, I'm not going to *get out*.' A man I know was building the courthouse got me to go to a hardware store one night and I bought a pistol, which I didn't even know how to shoot. I did shoot it off in my sleep in a Pullman car once, but that doesn't belong in this story."

Keeley traveled widely in Europe during World War I, working for the YMCA in canteens, documenting the war, and occasionally publishing newspaper articles. She later recounted, "my war diary I have put in a closed file in the Missouri historical society (*State Historical Society of Missouri*). They'll keep it closed until the girl who is going to handle what I have will tell them to open it." Keeley also compiled a list of slang terms used by soldiers, which she later published in the academic journal *American Speech*. Many of her definitions were later included in the *Thesaurus of Slang* and *Dictionary of American Slang*. After the

Continued on page 3

THAT'S WHAT SHE SAID[®] COLUMBIA

PRESENTED BY
STEPHENS
COLLEGE

Saturday, April 13th at 7 p.m.
The Missouri Theatre



Adonica Coleman



Augusta Cooper



Erica Dickson



Ranjana Hans



Elizabeth Herrera



Ellery Miller



Rebecca Miller



Jean Plumley



Stacie Pottinger



Vicky Riback Wilson

Benefitting maternal health
initiatives in our community.



TICKETS ON SALE NOW

Since 2013, The *She Said Project's That's What She Said* performances have inspired audiences and empowered communities with powerful, intimate stories shared by local women.

The second annual Columbia production presented by Stephens College, features 10 community women who share their stories of success, joy, hardship, and overcoming barriers. This is an evening for our community to come together to celebrate the contributions

of Columbia women (you don't have to be a woman to attend - all are welcome!).

Each *That's What She Said* show supports a local cause. This year's show will support maternal health initiatives in Columbia, providing financial and educational support to low-income women receiving prenatal and postpartum care at Boone Health and MU Health Care.

Your ticket to the show includes a complimentary wine, beer, cider, or mocktail along with a sweet treat for you to enjoy upon your arrival at the Missouri Theatre. Doors open at 6 p.m. and the show begins at 7 p.m.

Get your tickets now at: <https://go.evvnt.com/t/143586-E9C>

Follow us on Facebook for more: <https://www.facebook.com/Shesaidcomo>



Family Event: **Pioneer Toys**

What did Boone County children play before computer games? Find out during this fun-filled morning. Everything from the Game of Graces and Kick the Can to Jacob's Ladder and marbles will be available for you to try. Then you can make your own pioneer toys!! Rag dolls will be one of the toys made at this event.

Did you know? Boone County History and Culture Center hosts a family event every month on the second Saturday.. Check our events page at boonehistory.org/events to see the upcoming schedule.

Mary Paxton Keeley Continued

war and the early death of her husband she eventually found her way back to Columbia.

Keeley again enrolled at the Missouri School of Journalism for a masters degree. Her thesis was titled "The Appeal of the Women's Page," after conducting a survey of 500 Missouri women in search of what they liked to read. After graduating

in 1928 she was hired as a journalism professor at Christian College (now Columbia College); at the time an all female school. "It was very pleasant work. I taught journalism there twenty-four years. I had a chance to go other places, but money's not everything, you know.

Christian - they always had nice girls. And I think they have them today."

A young Keely once wrote "The only thing that keeps me from being a maniac is writing and writing and writing." She authored a children's book about three Missouri boys who find buried treasure along a riverbank called *River Gold*. She also wrote a remarkable number of plays. *The Kettle Singing* won the university's annual contest and was performed locally and on Kansas City radio. She sold the rights to that play in 1929. She also wrote a play about sculptor and famous Christian College alumna Vinnie Ream. *The River Rat* won a playwriting contest put on by the St. Louis Art League, and *Wind in the Stars*, a play based on the story of Theodosia Burr-daughter of Aaron Burr was performed here in Columbia. She edited and published a collection of plays by her student's at Christian College. During her long tenure as professor there she became famous for riding her bike around town and having short hair, both unusual for a woman in early 20th-century Missouri.

I want to recount an as yet unpublished and almost totally unknown story about Paxton Keeley that demonstrates the ferocity of her independent intellect. When she returned to Columbia in the late 1920s she became close friends with MU journalism professor E.K. Johnston. EK, as he was known to friends, was an alumnus

of the university and lived semi-openly as a homosexual man. He was well respected to the point of being appointed acting dean of the J-school in the late 1940s and was even considered a contender for University President. Columbia in the 1920s and 30s held a reputation as a safe ha-

ven for what we would now term LGBTQ+ people.

"In those days we called them pansies," and I think there is no derogatory intention in her tone. It was Johnston's firing under intense pressure from Missouri State Legislature, law enforcement, and local citizens, that began a nearly three decade long purge of gay men from the University that included arrests, expulsions, and forced outings resulting in lethal consequences for some victims. For Johnston, it meant he was fired from his job, convicted of being homosexual, and ran out of town. He died in obscurity in Kansas City in the 1990s.

Keeley remembers, "He was the life of the party, he always thought anybody's sex life was his own business as long as it didn't injure anybody." She says that she "had known E.K. 20 years when the scandal broke" and that after the arrest warrant was issued, EK "came by one night without the fellow he lived with and sat on my front steps. He told me his roommate Bill had been arrested, and he was afraid that he was in trouble. It

was a terrible responsibility on me to tell him what to do...The Curators got riled...and fired him right there, which was very, very unlawful, because he wasn't proven guilty...I was a teacher at that kind of prissy girls school, and they wanted me to stay out of the trial. But I sold EK's piano for him and did everything I could to help him. Frank Harris was Lieutenant Governor, and I went to him and said, 'now I'm going to help his man. Somebody has to help him and he's been my friend for 20 years. A man can't help him.' He did so many things for so many people and was such a vital part of that school."

Mary Paxton Keeley held a remarkable consistency in her beliefs about LGBT people. As America's public views changed rapidly, her remarkable independence of thought and her possession of moral fortitude allowed her to stay true to her beliefs.

Keeley retired from teaching in 1952, but lived in Columbia another 34 years. She continued to write, especially poetry, and edited the Missouri Alumnus magazine, composed a gardening column in the KC Star, published articles in The Ladies' Home Journal, Writer's Monthly, and Women's Day. She edited a Boone County Cookbook, painted a historical mural at Calvary Episcopal Church, helped found the Columbia Art League, and even conducted oral histories in partnership with our very own Boone County Historical Society. Mary Paxton Keeley Elementary School was named in her honor and her image is featured on the "Keys to the City" sculpture in front of Columbia's City Hall. She died in 1986, at age 100, at what was then called the Lenoir Convalescent Center and is buried in Columbia Cemetery. Her accomplishments and personality remain too expansive for this author to capture in this short space, but her example of human potential shows no tarnish.



Paxton Keely and male journalism students, c. 1910.

Speaker Series Welcomes City's Diversity Equity and Inclusion Officer

Angela Lechtenberg
Manager, Marketing & Communications

A diverse crowd came together to discuss different viewpoints on the American value system and hear the city of Columbia's Diversity Equity & Inclusion Officer D'Andre Thompson present "One Nation Under God: How Our Social Identities Shape Our American Values" during February's *Things that Matter* Speakers Series event.

"Each one of us has our own individual way of seeing things, and how we see ourselves as Americans and how we see the U.S.

Through these values we've discussed today, we use those different views to come together in communities and groups collectively.

A homogenous American culture no longer truly reflect the plurality of who we are as a society."



Participants listen as D'Andre Thompson, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer, City of Columbia presents One Nation Under God: How Our Social Identities Shape Our American Values during the February Things That Matter Speaker Series discussion.

A new speakers series exploring
REAL PEOPLE and REAL STORIES



**THINGS
— THAT —
MATTER!**



**FREE
EVENT**



March 14 Mel West
"Señor, look at my new shoes."
Local NGOs Making a Difference Worldwide

Monthly on Thursdays
1–2 p.m. at the History & Culture Center

**100
years**



Coming soon

**100 YEARS
100 OBJECTS**

Stay tuned for more information on our centennial exhibit, "100 Years, 100 Objects;" chronicling the last 100 years' history during the growth of the Boone County Historical Society. More to come soon!

BCHS Welcomes New Endowment Board Trustee Melissa Applegate

Angela Lechtenberg, Manager, Marketing and Communications

Retired educator and restaurateur Melissa Applegate, has joined the BCHS Endowment Trust Board..

Originally from Salisbury MO, the only daughter of 6 children, her father owned Naylor Fertilizer Service while her mother was the Salisbury High School Home Economics teacher (where the two met).

She attended the University of Missouri and completed a BS Ed (1982) and M Ed (1992) and would be the first to get certified in teaching for occupational home economics. She was then faced with the choice between clothing/textile manufacturing or culinary arts. And chose culinary arts.

She was drawn to Columbia early in life when her mother, Ruth, and then two brothers, graduated from the University of Missouri in 1948 and her sister, Kathleen Maier worked at Jefferson Junior School. After college, her mother worked for Pittsburgh Gas Co and demonstrated food preparation to housewives after the war.

Applegate left the Columbia area to pursue employment with Furr's Cafeteria in Lubbock, TX and to log hours to gain certification for teaching culinary arts. During this time she moved often and opened new cafeterias in Columbia, MO, Dallas, TX and Overland Park KS while moving up the management ranks in Omaha NE, Muskogee, OK and Tulsa OK at Utica Square. It was during this time she worked all aspects of the kitchen and management and was promoted and ultimately established the first Training Manager facility for the company in Overland Park KS for college graduates across the Midwest.

Upon returning to Columbia, she taught in Columbia Public Schools at Douglass School, and was the Culinary Arts Instructor at Joe Herndon Career Center in Raytown MO and UniTec Career Center in Bonne Terre MO and later was promoted to Placement Specialist at UniTec Career Center. She also taught evening GED at the Potosi Prison.



"I become co-owner of Jack's Gourmet Restaurant with my husband, Ken Applegate in 1996 and continued to build catering, restaurant, and satellite catering venues, Applegate says. "Jack's has been a destination fixture for locals and students of Columbia at its location on the Business Loop (formerly Old Hwy 40). Since 1928, the original building/location has been on the Business Loop but had different names -- Mel and Red's, and the Coronado."

The office was once the liquor store owned by one of Applegate's family members on the Naylor side and that is where customers bought their bottle and had setups available in the restaurant. At the time of his death, Ken Applegate had owned the restaurant for 44 years and the building was there since 1928 (88 years). Melissa also took on Ken's ambition of wanting to preserve as much of Columbia's local restaurant history by cultivating an extensive menu collection (recently featured in Inside Columbia Magazine, Jan/Feb 2024 issue *Escape*).

"It's exciting to be part of the BCHS Endowment as we support Boone County with the 100 year anniversary of the Historical Society this year. When Jack's was celebrating its 40th anniversary, we partnered with the Missourian with their project for

100 Years, 100 Voices that interviewed Boone Co residents based on their ages."

100 Ages, A Century of Voices by the Columbian Missourian (2013) included 100 videos, one for Boone County Residents each age from 1 to 100 that tell stories of past, present, and future. "It was a great time capsule, as many of those interviewed were customers of Jack's Gourmet Restaurant. That night was grand, and history was made through videos of people, who have now passed on or are reaching middle age that is still viewed today. I still hear from many and get positive comments about that night."

Applegate hopes to do something similar this year, making and recording history through video and pictures what she calls "time captured moments") to pass on to our future.

"This is a big opportunity to gain momentum to continue our mission and we want to bring the Wow factor for the Boone County Historical Society's 100th Anniversary."

SPECIAL THANKS TO



For the support and work on our grounds. BCHS is more beautiful because of you!

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The Genealogical Society of Boone County and Central Missouri



Visit the Genealogy Library at the Boone County
History & Culture Center!

Hours: Thursday –Saturday, 12pm–4pm

Managed by the Genealogical Society of Boone County &
Central Missouri, our library holds over 2,700
publications, including 600 that have a connection to
Boone County, and over 1,300 surname files.
Our library catalog is online and easy to search.

Meetings held every 3rd Saturday of the month, 1 pm
BCHS Conference Room

Upcoming programs:

March 16th: Michelle Brooks, author

New officers for 2024-2026

President: Tom Pauley

Vice President: Roger Wink

Secretary: Tara Griffin

Treasurer: Nancy Thomas

Librarian: Mary Helen Allen

Membership: Vikki Pauley

Historian: Karen Weaver

Reporter, Journal Editor: Belinda Luke

Newsletter Editor, Beth Talken

Past President: Debbie F. Baker



CoMo Preservation's mission
is to preserve the historic archi-
tecture of Columbia.

Columbia is a town that has seen a
lot of change over the last few dec-
ades and that has encouraged the
formation of a new non-profit fo-
cused on preserving the historic architecture of Columbia.

Towards that goal, CoMo Preservation hopes to edu-
cate Columbians about their historic buildings, advocate for
the preservation of historic structures, and help restore our
unique architecture by connecting interested parties to re-
sources.

Please join us at our monthly meetings at the Columbia
Public Library, and/or check out our tours of historic down-
town architecture. Next up is the Historic Movie Theater
Tour, March 16, 10:00 am–12:00 pm. Walking tours are
free, but reservations are required. We look forward to up-
dating you on our efforts in future News & Notes newslet-
ters and sincerely thank the Boone County Historical Socie-
ty for their support.



CoMoPreservation.org



CoMoPreservation



CoMoPreservation@gmail.com

See you at the History & Culture Center

Saturday, March 9
10am-12pm Family Event:
Pioneer Toys

Thursday March 14
1pm - 2pm

Things that Matter:

Mel West

“Señor, look at my new
shoes.” Local NGOs Making a
Difference Worldwide

March 2 – April 27
Concentricity Montminy
Gallery
MU - School of Visual
Studies **Opening Reception**
March 9, 6 -8 pm

100 Years, 100 Objects
Centennial History Exhibit
Opening in April

Volunteers Wanted:

**We have spots open to help with
class field trips for March 15, 21 and
April 6.**

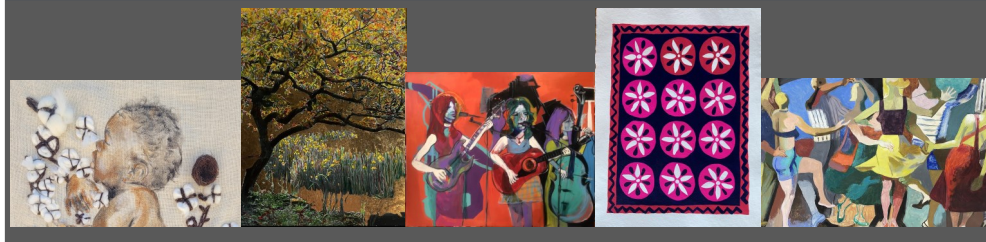
Call the Center if
you'd like to assist
with this volunteer
opportunity.

New to volunteer-
ing? We'll train you!



Pictured on front cover header: Columbian and singing star Jane Froman with President Eisenhower (courtesy Columbia College Archives); The Shack, watercolor (artist B.G. Pringle, BCHS collections, gift of Greig Thompson); Ewalt Perlman School of Ballet, LtoR Betty Allard, Martha Finney, Hazel Bee Cho (Algert Peterson photographer, 1937).

Montminy Upcoming Exhibits



Concentricity

March 2 – April 27

University of Missouri - School of Visual Studies juried alumni exhibit.

Opening Reception March 9, 6-8 pm

For the Love of Locals

May 4 – June 15

Featuring work by local artists, Lisa Bartlett, Jane Mudd, Kevin Dingman, Jeff Rogers & Amy Stephenson, represents the local cultural scene.

Opening Reception May 4, 2-4 pm

Over Time: 100 Years of Art Scene/Seen in Boone County

June 22 – Sept 3

A look at many of the artists who have helped shape the arts community through the years in Boone County.

Opening Reception June 22, 2:30-4:30 pm

The World as I See It: Narratives in Art by Larry Kantner

September 11 – November 2

An exhibit of new works by Larry Kantner, emeritus professor of art and art education.

Opening Reception September 12, 6-7pm

Third Annual Holiday Show

November 14 – Jan 4

A group exhibition with a variety of artwork available for purchase and ready for holiday gift giving!

Opening Reception November 14, 5:30 – 7pm

Visit our website for more information on these and other events!
themontminygallery.org/

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Boone County History & Culture Center

3801 Ponderosa St, Columbia, MO 65201
(573) 443-8936 | BooneHistory.org

Info@BooneHistory.org

Center Hours

Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday

10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Check BooneHistory.org
for the latest announcements

Find us on social media
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Thank you Socket!

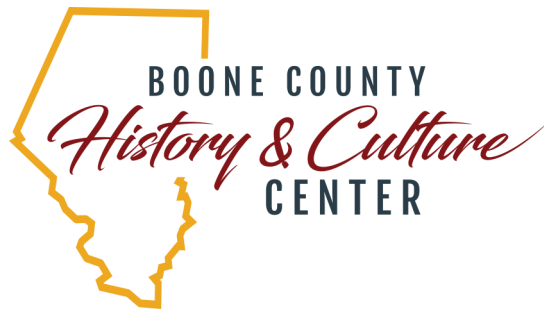
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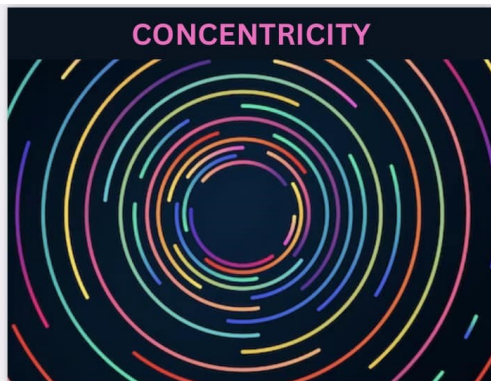
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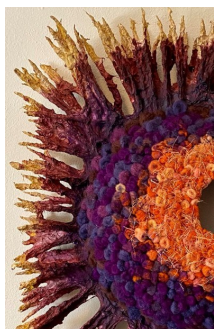
Montminy Gallery

Betsy Knabe Roe, Director & Curator, Montminy Gallery

Concentricity, Montminy Gallery's next exhibit, ushers in Spring running from March 2-April 27, 2024. The word concentric is defined as having a common center. Like a stone dropped into a pool of water, this effect causes ripples that travel radially in all directions. University of Missouri alumni for in this first this kind. from all ed States the variety artworks is their time versity in program. LeeAnn Garrison, Director of Visual Studies in the College of Arts and Sciences, and faculty members juried this exhibit and selected the works of forty-four artists. The wide variety of media includes video, fibers, painting, photography, sculpture, and ceramics. Mark your calendars for the opening reception, March 9, 6-8 pm!



School of Vis-
out a call to
participation
ever exhibit of
Past graduates
over the Unit-
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of dynamic
a tribute to
spent at uni-
the art pro-
gram.



100
years
OF PRESERVING LOCAL HISTORY
BOONE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY EST. 1924

LET'S CELEBRATE!

We have so many amazing things planned for this year!

We'll be celebrating all year with parties, special events and exhibits designed to celebrate our centennial and the events that have shaped this time as we've grown!

Keep watching for updates!

Help Make History. Volunteer. Donate.