



NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Presentation Explores African American Musicians in Kansas

Osawatomie – Osawatomie Public Library will host “African American Musicians in Kansas 1860-1920,” a presentation and discussion by Lem Sheppard on Thursday, September 15th at 6pm at John Brown Museum State Historic Site (rain location: Osawatomie Public Library). Members of the community are invited to attend the free program. Contact the Osawatomie Public Library at 913.755.2136 for more information. The program is made possible by Humanities Kansas.

African American musicians from 1860-1920 are often part of an under-told story in Kansas history from 1860-1920. Not defined as traditionally Black music, these musicians played in mandolin quartets, cornet bands, orchestras, and string bands. They performed as itinerant musicians and jubilee singers at civic events, weddings, fairs, barn dances, and private homes. They were an important feature of the musical landscape of Kansas, and their history mirrors the history of Kansas itself: the struggle of abolition, the Civil War, and Western migration. This talk explores the dynamic musical history of African Americans, and the social and cultural impacts in Kansas.

Lem Sheppard is an internationally known blues guitarist, vocalist, and historian based in Pittsburg, Kansas.

“African American Musicians in Kansas 1860-1920” is part of Humanities Kansas's Speakers Bureau, featuring humanities-based presentations designed to share stories that inspire, spark conversations that inform, and generate insights that strengthen civic engagement.

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For more information about “African American Musicians in Kansas 1860-1920” in Osawatomie contact the Osawatomie Public Library at 913.755.2136.

About Humanities Kansas

Humanities Kansas is an independent nonprofit leading a movement of ideas to empower the people of Kansas to strengthen their communities and our democracy. Since 1972, our pioneering programming, grants, and partnerships have documented and shared stories to spark conversations and generate insights. Together with our partners and supporters, we inspire all Kansans to draw on history, literature, ethics, and culture to enrich their lives and serve the communities and state we all proudly call home. Visit humanitieskansas.org.

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