

Missouri Folklore Society Newsletter

P.O. Box 1757, Columbia MO 65202
<https://missourifolkloresociety.org/>

Volume 49, Nos. 1-2

Spring, 2025

Annual Meeting November 7-8, Springfield



Ginger Hendrickson and Rachel Gholson have been hard at work lining up venues and creating programming for the November gathering. At a previous meeting the membership agree to try a Friday-Saturday schedule, instead of beginning on Thursday afternoon.

Our keynote talk will be “Rooted, Practiced, Sustained — Missouri’s Traditional Arts,” by Lisa Higgins, Director of the Missouri Folk Arts Program.

Spectacularly, our organizers have secured the century-old Elfindale Mansion, a three-story edifice with three onsite meeting rooms — which we get free if we fill the nine guest rooms. These second-floor rooms are not elevator accessible, so Ginger has also lined up nearby hotels for our friends who might have a problem with stairs. When you call, ask for the MFS rate — about \$100, very reasonable indeed. I’m going to get there Thursday night, so as to be ready to go Friday morning.

Location: 1701 S Fort Avenue, Independence, MO 64055 [417-234-7728]

https://www.tripadvisor.com/Hotel_Review-g44926-d78882-Reviews-The_Mansion_at_Elfindale_Bed_Breakfast-Springfield_Missouri.html





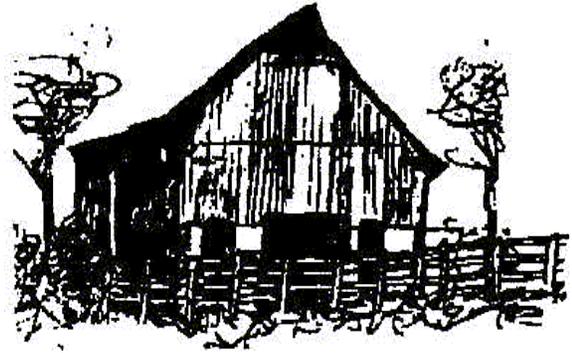
Oral History Session at MFS 2025

Rachel Gholson is organizing an oral history session for the annual meeting in 2025, providing attendees with a unique opportunity to

explore and share the personal narratives and lived experiences that shape our identities as folklore presenters, curators, community leaders, students, and scholars while members of the Missouri Folklore Society.

This oral history “taping” session is designed to preserve and celebrate the rich legacy of us and MFS. This interactive session will feature you: the members of our Missouri Folklore Society community sharing stories about your journeys with MFS by inviting audience participation and aiming to foster intergenerational dialogue, ensuring that the voices of both emerging and established members are heard and remembered.

Please, consider what MFS has meant and currently means to you between now and November. Then, come and share pivotal moments, challenges, and transformations membership in the organization has offered you. Or if you cannot attend in November, please contact Rachel (RGholson@MissouriState.edu), so your experience can be included in the MFS oral history.



Minutes
Missouri Folklore Society Meeting,
Saturday April 12, 2025
10:30 am CDT

<https://truman-edu.zoom.us/j/86954363710>

Meeting ID: 869 5436 3710

Call to order 10:33

Present: Ginger Hendrickson, Rachel Gholson, John & Carol Fisher, Adam Davis, Brett Rogers, Evelyn Rogers, Al Tacker, Dave Para, Erika Gerety, Neal and Betsy Delmonico
Introductions

Approval of minutes from November meeting

Treasurer's report: Dave Para The bank statement shows 7800 in checking, 20k in CD1 20K in CD2, Schroeder account 15k, maturing in September. Deposit made Jan 21, no other activity. Joe Hickerson sent \$200 for a lifetime membership! If we're going to spend up to the bank account, we can take some from the CD.

Remarks on the Story Center meeting, with deepest thanks to Ginger Hendrickson

Plans for 2025 in Springfield: Rachel Gholson, November 7-8. Ginger has done an amazing job. Mansion at Elfindale. About a mile up Sunshine from the Bass Pro Shop. We get the meeting rooms for free if we rent all 9 rooms (about \$100/night) – whole building to ourselves. Meeting rooms are on the first floor. Rooms are upstairs, but there are nearby lodgings. The manager has already booked us in. Rachel is looking into keynote speakers. The theme is "Tradition and Identity in the 21st Century." Lisa Higgins would be a good choice, as is Deb Bailey ... both near retirement. Brooks Blevins, MSU, also a possibility. Has also been reaching out to local ethnic community groups. We'll worry about food as the date gets closer. There's been talk about local cuisine. Cashew Chicken is the Springfield signature dish. Carol Fisher has written about it. Dave Para knows a reference to the doodlebug song, recorded by the Georgia Yellowhammers in the 20s, based on a children's song. The second line in the second verse ... might get a twenty minute talk out of it. Sing it with Mike and Tenley as Snorty Horse; could do some Ozarks tunes. Mike lives nearby in Rogersville, and might present on fiddling.

Publications report: Adam Davis

journals: Belden volume nearly done, second student miscellany in edit, additional proceedings to follow. Hoping to get nominal and actual years in sync
newsletter to be prepared in the coming weeks; please send items – especially need story for November meeting
website still rebuilding
social media: active FB page, good amount of traffic

2026 ideas? Nothing coming to mind!

Items from the floor, announcements:

Dave Para has a question about the PO box. He gets there every couple of months, but we don't get much mail. Does the state require us to have a permanent address? Rachel volunteers to have it sent to her. Address would have to be changed for the bank, state registration, tax-exempt.

Erika is willing to help with grant applications, but needs a UEI number (replaces the DUNS number) to move forward with any grant applications. At this point we have no program to request funding for. Lisa Higgins assures us that it's easy to get a number. To apply for a Missouri Arts Council grant.

Dave does the tax report.

Rachel would like to record some of us for an oral history of the society. We could build a taping session into the meeting.



Adjournment 11:14

April 12, 2025
 Financial Statement from December 31, 2023 to December 31, 2024

		INCOME	
		2023	2024
Membership Dues		\$1,060.00	\$340.00
Annual Meeting		\$1,877.00	\$1,970.00
Auction	\$604.50		\$520.00
Donations, Grants		\$130.00	\$300.00
Sales			
Interest		\$753.50	\$1,176.56
Miscellaneous			
Refund			
	Total	\$3,822.76	\$3,786.56
 EXPENSES 			
Journal Printing			
Newsletter Printing		\$159.07	
Annual Meeting		\$2,313.88	\$1,810.46
Refunds			
Postage		\$119.00	\$194.00
Awards		\$99.50	
Supplies			
Miscellaneous			\$224.87
	Total	\$2,532.38	\$2,229.33
		Net: \$1,290.38	Net: \$1,557.23
Checking Account Balance	12-31-2023	\$7,202.46	
CD	12-31-2023	\$20,003.31	
Schroeder Endowment Fund	CD	\$15,184.08	
Total Account Balance	12-31-2023	\$42,389.85	
Checking Account Balance	12-31-2024	\$7,724.13	
CD	12-31-2024	\$20,808.69	@1.05% matures 09/16/25
Schroeder Endowment Fund	CD	\$15,610.32	@4.4% matures 1/21/25
Total Account Balance	12-31-2024	\$44,133.14	

Respectfully Submitted,

Dave Para



A Good Show and Showing at Big Muddy Folk Festival

Considering attendance, it was the best festival since covid and Cathy's passing. We were pleased to present a program of good diversity and talent.

Ellie Grace was back to do an opening set and help Dave with the emcee duties. Her step dance and original songs are always a hit. Tricia Spencer and Howard Rains are known in the old-time world for a repertoire of unusual tunes and a tight fiddle duet sound. They brought three of their children in as the Lost Keys band, and endeared the audience completely.

Todd Day Wait is a Columbia native who started a transformative cross-country voyage with his guitar and a full commitment to music and a style evoking Jimmie Rodgers, Willie Nelson, Wynn Stewart and Kris Kristofferson. To New Orleans, to Nashville, and made it back for a visit home.

Alan Munde has a long career that spans the development of modern bluegrass music. His bands are often called legends, like Poor Richard's Almanac, Jimmy Martin's Sunny Mountain Boys, the Flying Burrito Brothers and the Country Gazette and featured his banjo mastery. He pioneered ways to get his thumb and two fingers to play more complete and complex melodies than the Scruggs-style patterns. Alan started with fiddle tunes, but his lyrical playing reaches through bluegrass and Texas swing to gospel, jazz and original compositions. He was joined by Elliot and Janice Rogers with whom he has been playing in recent years. The couple played for us a couple of years ago.

Our band, the Cheap Shots, mostly play contradances in New Mexico, and try to play tunes from different traditional styles, Appalachian, Irish, Scottish, Quebecois, swing – anything put together for dynamics and dance beat. The band consists of Pat Aruffo, fiddle; John Brinduse, keyboard and percussion; Bill Balassi, guitar and mandolin; Peter Esherick, hammered dulcimer and mandolin; Erika Gerety, bass and vocals, and the most recent addition, Dave Para, on guitar and banjo, who married the bass player and is pleased to play with this band.

Check out the entire Big Muddy 2025 playlist on YouTube:
[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?
list=PLMhLssHmxyBYK1qd0ZOYLh8eHKokCWc4v](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLMhLssHmxyBYK1qd0ZOYLh8eHKokCWc4v)

The Appalachian dulcimer has been played in many different hands during the course of its 70-year-old revival. Brian Jones, for example, played an electric dulcimer with the Rolling Stones on the “Ed Sullivan Show.” The instrument naturally couples traditional sounds and modern ideas. After playing here in 2013, Bing Futch won an international blues challenge with it and prompted comparisons with Jimi Hendrix and Taj Mahal. He really put out the sound and energy.

Dirk Powell has immersed himself in traditional communities from his Oberlin hometown to Kentucky to bayou Louisiana and mastered styles in fiddle, banjo and accordion. He bears his grandfather’s music in his journey, as his daughter Amelia bears that of her grandfather, Dewey Balfa, of the legendary Louisiana Balfa Brothers. This was a close look at family traditions at play.

3 Trails West returned here after a few years with their take on American Western music, a vocal trio, Roger and Leo Eilts and Jim Winters, vocals, guitars and bass, and a cowboy band accompaniment, Marvin Gruenbaum, fiddle, and Bill Dye, steel guitar, and a nod to the silver screen. The brothers Eilts and Marvin might be remembered in Spontaneous Combustion singing Broadway and pop tunes in bluegrass style at the festival 20 years ago.

We had a variety of workshops in instruments singing and dance. The weather eased up a bit on Saturday and was more conducive to participation.

(Dave Para)



pictures by

Nadine Arms Biere



from top:

Three Trails West;

Allan Munde Trio;

Bing Futch



Dirk and Amelia
Powell



Ellie Grace



Spencer &
Rains & the
Lost Keys;



Tom Day Wait

Hey Springfield! Midwest Crankie Fest Makes its Debut on June 8

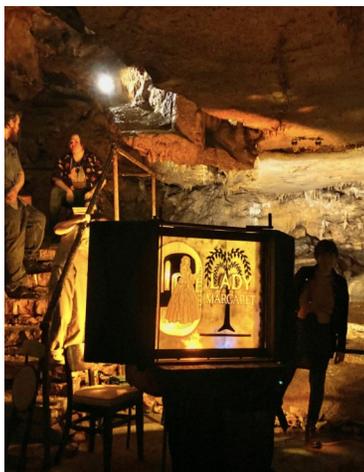


A centuries-old visual and musical art form will soon come to life in Springfield on June 8. It's the Midwest MidBEST Crankie Fest, a brand-new event that features artists from throughout the Ozarks.

Cities such as Seattle, Baltimore, New York City, and Berkeley host huge, very popular annual crankie festivals every year, but this is the first crankie festival happening in the Ozarks.

"Storytelling has long been part of Ozarks culture, and we are so excited to share this art form with the community and introduce it to new generations of art lovers," says Sandi Green Baker, who is leading the festival.

to another.



Crankie artists might use original or traditional stories, songs, poems, memoirs, recipes, political statements, or many more literary pieces for their subject. They illustrate their work on scrolls of either paper or fabric, and the story is told by rolling the scrolls from one side of a viewing box to another.

Crankie artists might use original or traditional stories, songs, poems, memoirs, recipes, political statements, or many more literary pieces for their subject. They illustrate their work on scrolls of either paper or fabric, and the story is told by rolling the scrolls from one side of a viewing box to another.

“Crankies go back centuries and have been experiencing a revival, especially in folk music circles,” said Baker. “I liken them to an Appalachian drive-in movie theater because they’re secured in a box like you’re watching a show in an old television cabinet.”

Baker, a retired art teacher and Ozarks native, discovered crankies several years ago after they had largely disappeared. She devoted a lot of time to their study and created several of her own. Now she hopes to introduce the Midwest to this tradition.

“Crankies are my dream project as an artist. The art form is a combination of all my passions - storytelling, illustration, theater, shadow puppetry, and live music.”

Baker got the chance to share her love with others by a grant from the Advanced Creative Aging through State Library Leadership Initiative distributed by the Springfield-Greene County Library District.

The grant funded Baker’s eight-week class for senior citizens to make their own crankie. The participants of the class will be the stars of the Midwest MidBEST Crankie Fest, which Baker hopes will become an annual event.

“Over more than two months, class participants have spent many hours learning about crankies and carefully creating what they want theirs to be,” Baker says.

“They each chose a song, story or poem they wanted to create theirs to match, and then spent a great deal of time visually expressing what they wanted to ‘say’ through the images on the scroll. They are very excited to share their works with friends, family, and the wider community.

The festival on June 8 will feature two identical shows at 3 and 7 pm. It will be held at the Shoe Tree Listening Room, an alcohol-free venue at 1342 East St. Louis Street in Springfield.

Funds from the festival benefit the venue, which hosts local and national musical groups. The Shoe Tree is tied to the nonprofit Arrow Creative Reuse, an art supply thrift store led by Baker’s daughter, Re Baker-Dietz.

Tickets to the Midwest MidBEST Crankie Fest are \$20 and go on sale May 19 at arrowcreativeuse.org.

For interviews or more information, contact Sandi Green Baker, (417) 493-8987, baker-sandi5610@gmail.com

(Reproduced by permission of the author)

Keep It Old-Time: Fiddle Music in Missouri from the 1960s Folk Music Revival to the Present. By Howard Wight Marshall. (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2022. Pp. xvi + 481, preface, acknowledgments, notes, works cited, a note on the recording, 1 CD, index.)

AARON ALBRECHT

Fiddler, Springfield, Illinois

Keep It Old-Time is the final book in Dr. Marshall's three-volume magnum opus on traditional old-time fiddling in Missouri. In the two earlier volumes, *Play Me Something Quick and Devilish: Old-Time Fiddlers in Missouri* (2012) and *Fiddler's Dream: Old-Time, Swing, and Bluegrass Fiddling in Twentieth-Century Missouri* (2017), Marshall traced the development of traditional fiddling in Missouri from the time of the earliest settlers to the modern period.

In this volume, Dr. Marshall documents the way that old-time Missouri fiddling developed from the 1960s to the present. He portrays old-time fiddling as a deeply held cultural tradition in Missouri and brings to life the way fiddlers have preserved their traditions through fiddlers' associations, fiddle contests, festivals, dances, camps, and community get-togethers. Within the overarching narrative of the history of Missouri fiddling, Marshall delves into the details of the lives and stories of those musicians who, through their skillful artistry or their colorful personalities, played an important role in maintaining the old-time fiddling tradition in Missouri. The book also includes a well-annotated CD, which is an excellent survey of some of Missouri's finest fiddlers and the styles described in the book.

A central thesis is the way fiddlers sought to mitigate the loss of their traditional regional styles and the way they acted to ensure the survival of traditional old-time Missouri fiddling. Accordingly, readers learn how master

fiddlers like Pete McMahan, Taylor McBaine, and R. P. Christeson of Central Missouri; Cyril Stinnett of Northwest Missouri; and Bob Holt, Art Galbraith, and Lee Stoneking of Southern Missouri passed their traditions to a new generation of fiddlers and musicians who were coming of age in the 1960s and 1970s, such as Charlie Walden, Bill Shull, Geoff Seitz, John Griffin, and many other fine musicians of that generation in Missouri.

Marshall describes the reinvigoration of traditional fiddling in Missouri by this new generation of fiddlers during the Folk Revival Movement. He depicts the performances of traditional fiddling taking place in coffeehouses, like the Chez Coffeehouse in Columbia, where young audiences enthusiastically received seasoned masters, such as Taylor McBaine, who played with college-age musicians like Dave Para and Cathy Barton, thereby passing this traditional knowledge from one generation to the next.

Marshall also discusses the way fiddlers developed their playing within a larger context of regional, national, and commercial musical influences, and documents how the folk tradition absorbed some of these influences. For example, he chronicles how modern "contest-style" fiddling found its way into the Missouri contest circuit in the 1980s and 1990s, not only influencing old-time fiddling styles, but also causing conflict among those who avidly sought to preserve the traditional styles of fiddling.

Marshall recounts the way a generation of Missouri fiddlers in the 1980s and 1990s, including Junior Marriott, Travis Inman, and Alita Stoneking—who learned at the feet of traditional Missouri masters like Kelly Jones, Pete McMahan, Jake Hockemeyer, and Lyman Enloe—developed their own styles, incorporating elements of modern contest-style (also known as modern Texas-style) fiddling, in order to succeed in the national contest scene and to develop the music that they loved. Other

fiddlers, such as John Williams of Central Missouri and David Scrivner of Southern Missouri, continued developing their playing in the traditional styles. They mentored young fiddlers through the Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Program sponsored by the Missouri Arts Council; fiddled for dances and jam sessions like the Hallsville community dance in Central Missouri or the McClurg jam in Southern Missouri; and taught traditional fiddling at youth camps like the Bethel Fiddle Camp in Bethel, Missouri, and the Ozarks Fiddle and Dance Camp in Mountain View, Arkansas.

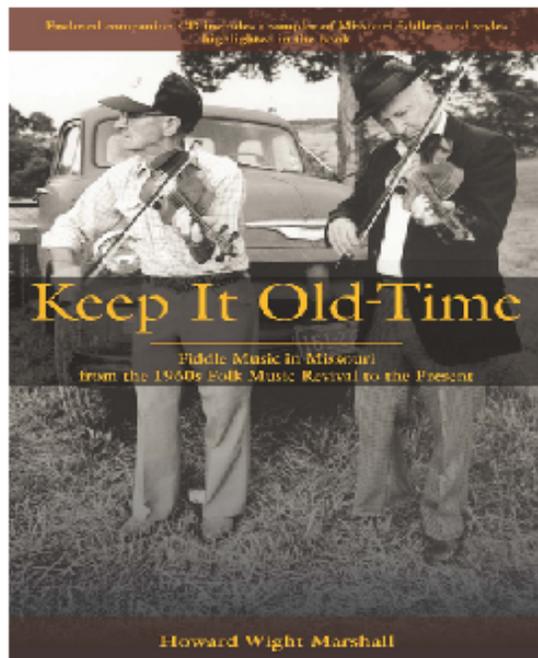
Arriving at the present day, this volume asks readers to consider how the tradition will be preserved in the years to come. How will the present generation of Missouri fiddlers like John Williams, Matt Wyatt, David Scrivner, Richard Shewmaker, Trustin Baker, and Rinn (Roger) Netherton ensure that the heart of traditional Missouri fiddling passes to the next generation? Will this old cultural tradition adapt to the new Digital Age? Will traditional fiddling continue to have a place in contemporary Missouri?

The book's primary value is the clarity with which Marshall documents the historical context behind Missouri fiddling during this epoch and the way he showcases the richness of Missouri fiddling as a cultural tradition. Marshall's vivid descriptions may make some readers feel as if they had been there. He accomplishes this through his role as a scholar and participant in the community of Missouri fiddling.

Marshall completed his PhD in folklore at Indiana University in the 1970s. He then worked for several years with Alan Jabbour in the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress and later with pioneers in the field like Richard Blaustein, Carl Fleischhauer, and Ralph Rinzler. Marshall chaired the Department of Art History and Archeology and directed the Missouri Cultural Heritage Center at the University of Missouri-Columbia. The State Historical Society of Missouri boasts the Howard Wight Marshall Collection, which consists of hundreds of field recordings and material history pieces related to traditional Missouri fiddling collected by the author since the early 1960s.

Marshall is not only a pre-eminent folklorist of his generation, but also an accomplished traditional Missouri fiddler in his own right, coming from a long line of fiddlers dating back to colonial times. The combination of Marshall's keen ability on the fiddle and his expert scholarship in folklore situates him as an official chronicler of Missouri fiddling.

The book immerses readers in the dramatic saga of Missouri fiddling, as if they were flies on the fiddle bow of one of the story's central protagonists. Through his captivating narrative, Marshall inspires readers to learn and share in the tradition of old-time fiddling in Missouri. To that point, at a recent fiddle contest at Stovall's Grove in Wildwood, Missouri, where modern Texas-style fiddlers entered to compete against old-time Missouri-style fiddlers, longtime Missouri fiddler Vesta Johnson took one young local fiddler aside and told him, "Keep it old-time!"



"An unforgettable collection, as lovely as it is honest."
Lee Martin, Pulitzer Prize Finalist of The Bright Forever

SCENES FROM THE HEARTLAND

STORIES BASED ON LITHOGRAPHS
BY THOMAS HART BENTON



DONNA BAIER STEIN

"Professor Adam Brooke Davis wrote the introduction, "Missouri and Mythicity," to the book Pulitzer Prize finalist Lee Martin called "An unforgettable collection, as lovely as it is honest."

Here are nine tales that bring to life the early decades of the 20th century as witnessed by one of America's most well-known painters. Thomas Hart Benton sketched fiddlers and farm wives, preachers and settlers, folks gathering in dance halls and tent meetings. Though his lithographs depict the past, the real-life people he portrayed face issues that remain front and center today. "

To get your copy visit

<https://servinghousebooks.com/scenes-from-the-heartland.../>

Here's another article from Aaron —

Hootin and Hollarin Celebrating Ozarks Heritage and Culture in Gainesville, Missouri

<https://www.msotfa.com/post/hootin-and-hollarin>



From his online bio:

“Aaron is an accomplished old-time fiddler from Springfield, Illinois. He took up traditional fiddling as a freshman at Truman State University in Kirksville, Missouri. From there, Aaron began learning old-time fiddling in earnest, participating in the monthly square dance in Hallsville, Missouri, attending the fiddle camp in Bethel, Missouri, and playing in old-time fiddle contests and jam sessions across the Midwest region. Aaron has learned from some of the Midwest’s finest fiddlers, including Dr. Howard W. Marshall and Charlie Walden.

Aaron has taught traditional fiddling at the Folk School of St. Louis and teaches at the Old Time Music and Dance Camp in Mountain View, Arkansas. He serves as a judge for the Illinois State Fair Old Time Fiddle and Banjo Contest. He plays old-time square dances and presents workshops on the topic of traditional fiddling throughout Illinois and the region.

Aaron is also an avid folklorist. He makes field recordings of the traditional artists he plays with both to advance his knowledge and to preserve the music and lore for the next generation. Toward this end, he released his first album of fiddle tunes with his band The Down State Ramblers to much acclaim in the old-time fiddling world in 2021.”

Samme Chittum, PhD, writes:

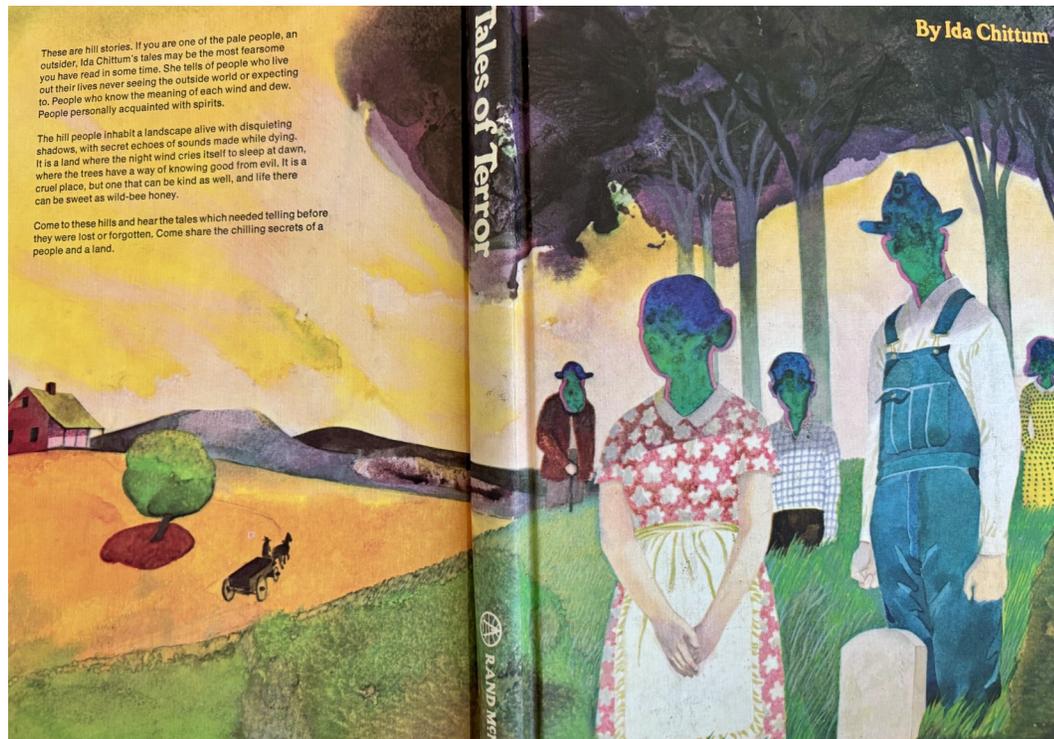
“I hope you will be interested in the newly released 50th anniversary second edition reprint of Tales of Terror by Ida Chittum, my late author mother who wrote this fascinating and entirely unique collection of stories inspired by her childhood in the Ozarks of Missouri.

[Ida Chittum] still has many fans! [The book] was first published in 1975, but went out of print. It has taken some work to obtain the copyright and raise it from the dead by giving it a digital second life and starting my own imprint, Feather Reader Books.”

And herewith, a very positive review! I just finished teaching a graduate seminar on horror fiction around the world, and one of our key findings? The best horror is most regularly rooted in the local folklore. That’s where the elemental uncertainty lives (a truism of the genre: the monster you can’t see is worse than the one you can see, but the monster you can *almost* see is worse still). This short collection feels traditional, not in the sense of the stories being familiar, but rather, the experience of reading them has the immediacy of an elder, a neighbor, telling you about something that happened not far from here, just the next holler over, and not all that long ago, either, no, there are still folks around who remember when it happened...

This is appropriate for juveniles, at least those you'd trust to deal with the classic volumes of *Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark*. But there's a psychological realism in some of these narratives that will reach out to an adult, and which are responsible for the subtle, unsettling experience of reading them.

-ABD



"What do we know of the world invisible? What do we know of the mystery of those sleep visions called dreams, those voices and scenes that come to us all in the night? No more than the austere ant working under our feet all day long knows of us."

Thus begins "Vision of Roses," one of eighteen short stories from *Tales of Terror*, Ida Chittum's most popular book among the thirteen she authored in as many years. *Tales of Terror*, published by Rand McNally in 1975, marked a distinct shift in her repertoire. Her transformation from housewife to published author was made possible by a talent for crafting humorous stories for children. By contrast, *Tales of Terror* took a left turn onto a lonesome dirt road into the dark heart of Hill country. It was a world she knew well. Unlike her stories for small children, which are pure fictional fun, *Tales of Terror* serves up real human drama, including murder and madness, as well as stories of hauntings and the supernatural.

Writers who gravitate to horror do so for many reasons. In Chittum's case, she was inspired by folkloric legends of monsters like the Whistler. Possessed of supernatural intelligence, the Whistler "lay out of sight in the piney woods, luring innocents to their dooms by whistling low, provocative tunes." There's also more than a hint of the monstrous in these stories about ordinary people who do terrible things.

<https://www.amazon.com/Tales-Terror-Ida-Chittum/dp/B0DZBVDBFY>

About the Author

In 1970, Ida Chittum sent the last of five children off to college and taught herself to type at age 52. She got her hands on an old Royal typewriter and sat down to write the stories swirling in her head. She began with funny tales for children. Editors at Highlights and Weekly Reader published her work and rewarded her with small checks that helped her buy a new



electric typewriter. She kept writing and publishers kept buying. Soon, she had her own literary agent with an office on Fifth Avenue in New York City.

She went on to author thirteen books and as many stories and poems for children and young adults, including *Farmer Hoo and the Baboons* (1971), which won the Lewis Carrol Shelf award, followed by *Clabber Biscuits* (1972), as well mysteries such as *The Hermit Boy* (1972) and children's picture books, including *The Cat's Pajamas* (1980). *Tales of Terror* (1975) and *The Thing Without a Name* (1981) were both collections of short stories, chilling tales of ghosts, murders and monsters set in the Ozarks of Missouri. She became a popular public speaker,

visiting schools, libraries and universities, accompanied by her greatest admirer, her husband, James R. Chittum.

It was a remarkable feat for a housewife from Findlay, Illinois who never went to high school. Educated to the eighth grade in a one-room school house in the Ozarks, Ida Mae Hoover was one of ten hardy children who labored alongside their father, a tenant farmer. She did the work of a grown man, culling stones from fields too rocky to be plowed. The only book her parents owned was a Bible, kept out of the reach of small hands. Her boon companion was a mule named Leonette, who followed young Ida on her forays into the hills where reclusive men and women lived out their lives with no contact with the outside world. There she met and befriended Sarah, a solitary widow. Sarah took her inquisitive visitor to overgrown burial plots to introduce her to the dead, whose names were carved on fallen headstones.

Endlessly curious, Ida Mae had a knack for seeking out strange people and places. She explored haunted homesteads and stumbled upon remote ravines, home to the Monster of Poot Hollow. She learned the art of telling tales from old Sarah and others like her. The most popular were those that made the listener shiver—encounters with ghosts of murdered girls and sightless monsters who crawled from caves to roam the woods on moonless nights. For young Ida, the art of

storytelling was more than a pastime. It was a talismanic gift that lent the teller a quasi-magical power to explore the unknown and transcend the hardships of life.

After the death of her beloved father from tuberculosis, Old Man Trouble moved in and took his place. Homeless and hungry, the Hoover family became squatters living-hand-to-mouth. To help her support her large family, fourteen-year-old Ida Mae found work as a live-in servant for a salary of \$2 a week with Sunday afternoons off. She loved to read and was scolded by her employer, a well-to-do widow, for perusing newspapers spread out on the kitchen table where she peeled potatoes. It wasn't until Chittum was a grown woman that she was able to buy second-hand books. Her home in Findlay became a library filled with hundreds of volumes crammed into makeshift bookcases and stacked on both sides of the stairs to the second-floor bedrooms.

Ida Chittum was the first female commencement speaker at Findlay High School and was responsible for bringing a bookmobile to the small town, which had no public library. If she had a book in her hand, she was happy. Her tastes were simple. "Ida Chittum likes trees, children, books and all living things," an editor for G.P. Putnam wrote in an author's biography on the dust jacket of *A Nutty Business*. "Boys are always bringing in injured animals to her to be cared for. She

had a wild rabbit living part-time in the bath tub and a pigeon living on a shelf in the cupboard.”

No matter how far she roamed from the haunted hills where she was reared, the adventurous girl who grew up to become an author never lost her talent for telling stories that vibrate with the subtle rhythms of the soul and invite the reader to peer deeply into the world invisible.

A story of the Bethel Youth Fiddle Camp, *Dance to the Fiddle* (25 minutes, 2023) is a short documentary about one of the oldest fiddle camps in the country and the only youth camp dedicated to Missouri fiddling: the Bethel Youth Fiddle Camp. Combining present-day footage with video from the 80s and 90s, *Dance to the Fiddle* provides a window into the tradition of Midwest fiddling and the intergenerational mentorship that keeps it alive.

A Film by Rachel Krause Photography by Dusty Aunan Archival Footage by Charlie Walden and Amy Skillman .

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BNem_nrrxXw





Dr. Franklin Delano Nickell, a former professor of history at Southeast Missouri State University died on February 9, 2025 surrounded by his family. He taught at Southeast from 1969 to 2013. After his retirement he worked for the Missouri State Historical Society then transitioned to his most recent position at the Kellerman Foundation. He established the Center for Regional History and has received multiple prestigious awards locally, regionally, and nationally.

Born on December 7, 1935 Dr. Nickell was raised on a farm near Atwood, Illinois. He received B.S. and M.S. degrees from Eastern Illinois University in Charleston, Illinois, and a Ph.D in American History from the University of New Mexico. Dr. Nickell and Gynel Snyder were married September 9, 1956; they were great humanitarians to the community. She preceded his passing in December 2011. Together they established the humane society in Cape Girardeau, MO, now referred to as Southeast Missouri Pets.

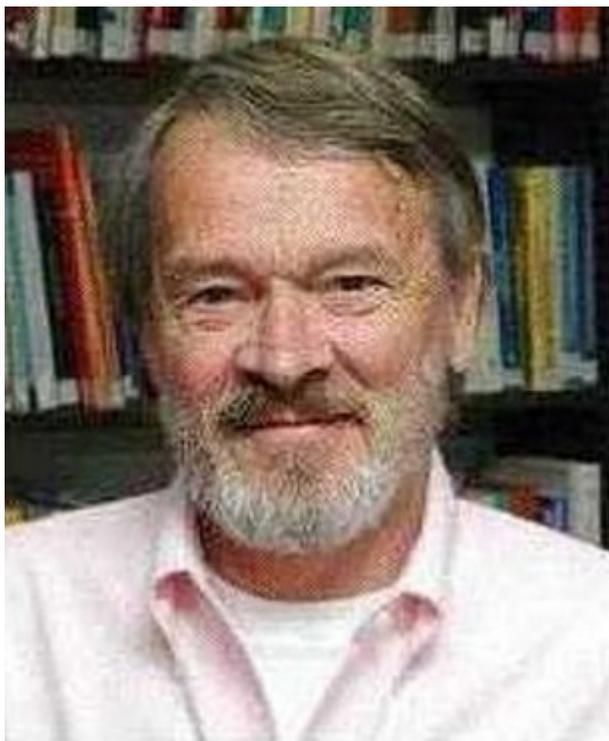
Dr. Nickell was the youngest of eight children, born to Leonard Nickell and Orpha Mechling Nickell, all who preceded him in death.

Dr. Nickell will be missed as he was deeply loved by his family, including his foster sons Roger (Thuy) Luethner and Lance Luethner who preceded him in death, his special niece Janet (Kevin) Stewart, as well as many other nieces, nephews and friends.

A Memorial Service was held on Friday, February 21, 2025 at 1:00 pm at Ford & Sons Funeral Home-Mt. Auburn with the Rev. Tim Koehler officiating.

In lieu of flowers, contributions to the following are suggested to honor his memory: Franklin Nickell Scholarship, Southeast Missouri State University. Southeast Missouri Pets of Cape Girardeau, MO.

It is with the deepest of sadness we share the news of Jim Vandegriff's passing. His loving wife Donna Jurich wrote this moving tribute. Please watch for further announcements regarding a celebration of his life to be held on the Saturday of our annual meeting, within an hour's drive of our venue.



Jim enjoyed his life to the fullest.

Jim (James Harley) was born August 14, 1942, on the little Vandergriff farm near Stoutland, Missouri. His parents were Oliver Wyatt Vandergriff and Mary Ella Vandergriff nee Perkins. Jim had four sib-

lings: Robert Lee (Bobby, died 1962), Jerry, John (died 2020), and Beverly (Bev).

Jim dropped out of high school after the 11th grade and joined the Navy in 1959. He served honorably for four years. Jim enjoyed his Navy years, serving as an ordnanceman, and traveling to Hawaii, the Philippines, and Japan. Trained to work with bombs and missiles, Jim left the Navy when he was told to attend courses on nuclear weapons. Jim wanted nothing to do with nuclear weapons.

After completing correspondence courses while in the Navy, Jim received his high school diploma and started college at Central Missouri State College. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in 1968 with a teaching certificate. Then, in 1972, he received a Master of Arts. While completing his Masters of Arts, he taught college English for a year beginning his career as a college professor.

Jim continued to teach for another 38 years in various places - Missouri, Kansas, Oregon, Illinois and Arizona. While he taught in middle and high schools, for the majority of his career he taught in higher education. His courses included English, Latin, folklore, science fiction, and teacher preparation.

Jim has one daughter, Amy, by his first wife; four grandchildren; two great grandchildren; and two nieces he raised for a time – all whom he loved deeply.

For most of his adult life, Jim was an active member of the Missouri Folklore Society (MFS), serving as President one year, journal editor for about 15 years, book review editor for about 10 years, and organizer of the book and exhibits room for many years. He was a member of the MFS board for about 50 years. Jim, also, published several articles for the MFS journal and presented at the annual meeting often - in-person, streaming, and asynchronously.

In November of 2015, Jim suffered a massive stroke, and in July of 2016, he broke his left hip. Both left him unable to do many things he used to and loved to do. He did find a new avenue to express himself – albeit somewhat reticently - cooking and breadmaking. Many friends and family enjoyed his delicious meals.

Jim was able to spend his last days at home, often sitting on the porch appreciating all the desert creatures that visited the garden – round tail squirrels, antelope squirrels, a rock squirrel, quail, sparrows, cardinals, cactus wrens, doves, hawks, and the neighborhood owl – all with one of the cats on his lap and blue grass playing in the background.

Jim loved national parks. If you are in Tucson, in lieu of flowers, please donate to Saguaro National Park in Jim’s memory. Donate at: <https://donatenow.networkforgood.org/friendsofsaguaro>

If you are in Missouri or the Midwest consider donating to the Missouri Folklore Society by contacting Adam Davis: adavis@truman.edu.

You can share memories of Jim here:

<https://obituaries.avenidascremation.com/james-vandergriff>

You can watch a video of Jim’s MFS presentation for the 2017 meeting, “Granny Lied” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E4NUGb_AKs0

For those on Facebook, Donna shared a slideshow from Jim’s memorial in Tucson. Jim himself wrote most of it.

<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1ARJPsTG9o/>