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The State Library of Kansas Announces the 2014 Kansas Notable Books *15 books celebrating Kansas cultural heritage*

Topeka, KS, — The State Library of Kansas is pleased to announce 15 books featuring quality titles with wide public appeal, either written by Kansans or about a Kansas-related topic. The Kansas Notable Book List is the only honor for Kansas books by Kansans, highlighting our lively contemporary writing community and encouraging readers to enjoy some of the best writing of the authors among us.

A committee of Kansas Center for the Book (KCFB) Affiliates, Fellows, librarians and authors of previous Notable Books identifies these titles from among those published the previous year, and the State Librarian makes the selection for the final List. An awards ceremony will be held at the Kansas Book Festival, September 13, 2014, to recognize the talented Notable Book authors.

Throughout the award year, KCFB promotes all the titles on that year's List electronically, at literary events, and among librarians and booksellers.

For more information about the Kansas Notable Book project, call 785-296-3296, visit www.kslib.info/notablebooks or email infodesk@library.ks.gov.

2014 Kansas Notable Books

Biting through the Skin: An Indian Kitchen in America's Heartland

by Nina Mukerjee Furstenau

At once a traveler's tale, a memoir, and a mouthwatering cookbook, *Biting through the Skin* offers a first-generation immigrant's perspective on growing up in America's heartland. Nina Mukerjee Furstenau's parents brought her from Bengal in northern India to the small town of Pittsburg in 1964, decades before you could buy plain yogurt in American grocery stores. Embracing American culture, the Mukerjee family ate hamburgers and soft-serve ice cream. Her parents transferred the cultural, spiritual, and family values they had brought with them to their children only behind the closed doors of their home, through the rituals of cooking, serving, and eating Bengali food and making a proper cup of tea.

Through her journeys she learned that her family was not alone in being a small pocket of culture sheltered from the larger world. This book shows how we maintain our differences as well as how we come together through what and how we cook and eat.

The Black Country

by Alex Grecian

The British Midlands. It's called the "Black Country" for a reason. Bad things happen there. When members of a prominent family disappear from a coal-mining village—and a human eyeball is discovered in a bird's nest—the local constable sends for help from Scotland Yard's new Murder Squad. Fresh off the grisly 1889 murders of *The Yard*, Inspector Walter Day and Sergeant Nevil Hammersmith respond, but they have no idea what they're about to get into. The villagers have intense, intertwined histories. Everybody bears a secret. Superstitions abound. And the village itself is slowly sinking into the mines beneath it. Not even the arrival of forensics pioneer Dr. Bernard Kingsley seems to help. In fact, the more the three investigate, the more they realize they may never be allowed to leave...

Bleeding Kansas, Bleeding Missouri: The Long Civil War on the Border

edited by Jonathan Earle and Diane Mutti Burke

Long before the first shot of the Civil War was fired at Fort Sumter, violence had already erupted along the Missouri-Kansas border—a recurring cycle of robbery, arson, torture, murder, and revenge. This multifaceted study brings together fifteen scholars to expand our understanding of this vitally important region, the violence that besieged it, and its overall impact on the Civil War. *Bleeding Kansas, Bleeding Missouri* blends political, military, social, and intellectual history to explain why the region's divisiveness was so bitter and persisted for so long. By focusing on contested definitions of liberty, citizenship, and freedom, it also explores how civil societies break down and how they are reconstructed when the conflict ends.

A Death at Crooked Creek: The Case of the Cowboy, the Cigarmaker, and the Love Letter

by Marianne Wesson

One winter night in 1879, at a lonely Kansas campsite near Crooked Creek, a cowboy from Lawrence was shot to death. The case might have been soon forgotten—except for the \$25,000 life insurance policies the cowboy had taken out shortly before his departure. The insurance companies refused to pay on the policies, claiming that the dead man was not John Hillmon, and the apparent widow, Sallie Hillmon, was forced to take them to court in a case that would reach the U.S. Supreme Court twice. The companies' case rested on a crucial piece of evidence: a faded love letter written by a disappeared cigarmaker, declaring his intent to travel westward with a "man named Hillmon."

In *A Death at Crooked Creek*, Marianne Wesson re-examines the long-neglected evidence, recreating the court scenes that led to a significant ruling on the admissibility of hearsay evidence. This engaging and vividly imagined work combines the drama, intrigue, and emotion of excellent storytelling with cutting-edge forensic investigation techniques and legal theory.

Dragging Wyatt Earp: A Personal History of Dodge City

by Robert Rebein

In *Dragging Wyatt Earp* essayist Robert Rebein explores what it means to grow up in, leave, and ultimately return to the iconic Western town of Dodge City. In chapters ranging from memoir to reportage to revisionist history, Rebein contrasts his hometown's Old West heritage with a New West reality that includes salvage

yards, beef packing plants, and bored teenagers cruising up and down Wyatt Earp Boulevard. Along the way, Rebein covers a vast expanse of place and time and revisits a number of Western myths, including those surrounding Francisco Vasquez de Coronado, the Cheyenne chief Black Kettle, George Armstrong Custer, and of course Wyatt Earp himself. Funny and incisive, *Dragging Wyatt Earp* is an exciting new entry in what is sometimes called the nonfiction of place.

Echoes from the Prairie: A Collection of Short Memoirs

edited by Nicole Muchmore

A modern memoir anthology by Kansas writers in the Great Plains Writers Group, *Echoes from the Prairie* consists of short creative non-fiction stories arranged in four sequential parts that begins by answering the question “Why write memoir?” The remaining parts are separated by the phases of life: childhood, transition to adulthood and adulthood. Many of these stories echo each other in pairs or clusters, often by subject, but also more subtly in voice and construction. This work displays the courageous perseverance of both unearthing memories and in artfully advancing the craft of personal writing.

Edmund G. Ross: Soldier, Senator, Abolitionist

by Richard A. Ruddy

Thanks to John F. Kennedy’s *Profiles in Courage*, most twenty-first-century Americans who remember Edmund G. Ross (1826–1907) know only that he cast an important vote as a U.S. senator from Kansas that prevented the conviction of President Andrew Johnson of “high crimes and misdemeanors”, allowing Johnson to stay in office. But Ross was also a significant abolitionist, journalist, Union officer, and territorial governor of New Mexico. This first full-scale biography of Ross reveals his importance in the history of the United States. Ross’s life reveals a great deal about who we were as Americans in the second half of the nineteenth century. He was involved in the abolitionist movement as both a journalist and a participant, as well as in the struggle to bring Kansas into the union as a free state. His career also involved him in the expansion of railroads west of the Mississippi, the Civil War, Reconstruction, and the Gilded Age with its greedy politicians and businessmen. In short, Ross’s career represents the changes that the whole country experienced in the course of his lifetime.

The Good Lord Bird

by James McBride

Henry Shackleford is a young slave living in the Kansas Territory in 1857, when the region is a battleground between anti- and pro-slavery forces. When John Brown, the legendary abolitionist, arrives in the area, an argument between Brown and Henry’s master quickly turns violent. Henry is forced to leave town—with Brown, who believes he’s a girl. Over the ensuing months, Henry—whom Brown nicknames Little Onion—conceals his true identity as he struggles to stay alive. Eventually Little Onion finds himself with Brown at the historic raid on Harpers Ferry in 1859—one of the great catalysts for the Civil War. An absorbing mixture of history and imagination, and told with McBride’s meticulous eye for detail, *The Good Lord Bird* is both a rousing adventure and a moving exploration of identity and survival.

Navigating Early

by Clare Vanderpool

After his mother's death at the end of World War II, Jack Baker's father sends him from his home in Kansas to attend a boys' boarding school in Maine. Jack doesn't know what to expect. Certainly not Early Auden, the strangest of boys. Early keeps to himself, reads the number pi as a story, and refuses to accept truths others take for granted. Feeling lost and adrift, Jack connects with Early and the two become friends. During a break from school, the boys set out for the Appalachian Trail on a quest for a great black bear. As Jack and Early travel deeper into the mountains, they meet peculiar and dangerous characters, and they make some shocking discoveries. Jack's ability to be a steadfast friend to Early will be tested as the boys discover things they never know about themselves and others. This Young Adult novel will challenge and astound readers as they navigate mysterious and uncharted lands.

Needle in the Bone

by Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg

Needle in the Bone tells the astonishing stories of Holocaust survivor Lou Frydman and former Polish resistance fighter Jarek Piekalkiewicz. As mere teenagers during World War II, the two men defied daunting odds, lost everything and nearly everyone in the war, and yet summoned the courage to start new lives. Captured by the German army during the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, Frydman survived six concentration camps and three death marches. Piekalkiewicz started his own underground army at age sixteen. After the war, Frydman and Piekalkiewicz began the long process of healing, taking different paths through the refugee camps of Europe, and then through university, marriage, and work, eventually leading them both to teaching positions at the University of Kansas, where they met in 1975. Recognizing the trauma and courage of each other's experiences, they became best friends. By blending extensive interviews with the men, historical research, and the author's own responses and questions, this emotionally stirring book provides a unique perspective on still-compelling issues, including the meaning of the Holocaust, the nature of good and evil, and how people persevere in the face of unbearable pain and loss.

Of Grave Concern: An Ophelia Wylde Paranormal Mystery

by Max McCoy

The Civil War is over, and many a young widow has turned to spiritualism to contact their husbands on "the other side." But Ophelia Wylde won't be fooled twice. After wasting her money on a phony psychic, she decides if she can't beat 'em, join 'em. She heads West, selling her services as a spiritual medium who speaks to the dead. By the time she reaches Dodge City, business is booming. Except for a handsome but skeptical bounty hunter named Jack Calder, no one suspects Ophelia of running a con game--until an unfortunate "reading" exposes her to a town full of angry customers. As punishment, the mob drags Ophelia to Boot Hill and buries her alive in a fresh grave overnight. That's when the dead start speaking. To her. For real. And for dead people, they've got lots to say. . .

Teatime to Tailgates: 150 Years at the K-State Table

by Jane P. Marshall

To celebrate K-State's sesquicentennial, the College of Human Ecology published a book about the university's rich food heritage featuring stories and recipes from 1863 to 2013. The book encompasses the

entire university, from Call Hall's ice cream parlor to Van Zile's dining room, from Cowboy Cabbage cooked in a cast iron pan to the union's Crown rolls. Much of the information for this book came from archives, diaries, newspapers and historical journals- demonstrating the link between the school and the business of feeding the world. Many of the recipes are accompanied by historical anecdotes, narratives and historic photos. It's the story of homesteaders and wheat fields, cowboys and steak, test tubes and textbooks.

The Thing About Luck

by Cynthia Kadohata

Summer knows that *kouun* means "good luck" in Japanese, and this year her family has none of it. Just when she thinks nothing else can possibly go wrong, an emergency whisks her parents away to Japan—right before harvest season. Summer and her little brother, Jaz, are left in the care of their grandparents, who come out of retirement in order to harvest wheat and help pay the bills. Having thoroughly disappointed her grandmother, Summer figures the bad luck *must* be finished—but then it gets worse. And when that happens, Summer has to figure out how to change it herself, even if it means further displeasing Obaachan. Because it might be the only way to save her family.

The Tie That Bound Us: The Women of John Brown's Family

by Bonnie Laughlin-Schultz

John Brown was fiercely committed to the militant abolitionist cause. Less well known is his devotion to his family, and they to him. The commitment of his wife, daughters and daughters-in-law to his cause and their crucial roles in preserving and transforming his legacy after his death often goes unacknowledged. Brown's wife, daughters, and daughters-in-law were in many ways the most ordinary of women, contending with chronic poverty and lives that were typical for poor, rural nineteenth-century women. They also lived extraordinary lives, crossing paths with such figures as Frederick Douglass and embracing an abolitionist moral code that sanctioned antislavery violence in place of the more typical female world of pamphleteering.

In the aftermath of Brown's raid at Harpers Ferry, these women experienced a particular kind of celebrity for their roles as "relics" of Brown's raid. Because of their position as symbols of the most radical form of abolitionist agitation, the story of the Brown women illuminates the changing nature of how Americans remembered Brown's raid, radical antislavery, and the causes and consequences of the Civil War.

Worth the Pain: How Meningitis Nearly Killed Me - Then Changed My Life for the Better

by Andy Marso

Born at the beginning of the millennial or "me-first" generation, Andy Marso grew up believing he was smart, talented and entitled to his dreams. He coasted through school with minimal effort, but weeks before he entered the "real world," Marso was struck down by a bacterial infection that changed everything. In this first-person narrative, Marso, a professional journalist who has written for the Washington Post and the Topeka Capital-Journal, details a transformative months-long hospitalization in which he fights for his life and then his limbs. By the time he leaves the hospital, Marso will face a choice: continue to grasp futilely at the easy, comfortable life he knew, or embrace a new life more challenging than he ever imagined.

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