



**KCA Fall Meeting 1999
Kentucky History Center
Frankfort
Friday, October 22, 1999**

Charles Hay of Eastern Kentucky University, incumbent chair, welcomed all to the meeting. He introduced Richard Belding, state archivist, who described a survey issued by the State Historical Records Advisory Board, available at the meeting. The program began with a status report for the Kentucky Digital Library, given by Mary Margaret Bell of the University of Louisville, Clara Keyes of Morehead State University, and Eric Weig, project manager with the Kentucky Commonwealth Virtual Library. Eric gave a demonstration of the site to date and Clara and Mary Margaret described activity taking place in the area of selection of archival materials for the online library from the various repositories. Clara and Mary Margaret thanked the repositories participating for their contributions to the project.

Charles Hay recognized James C. Klotter, former director of the Kentucky Historical Society, now a professor at Georgetown College, for his work in garnering legislative support to build the Kentucky History Center, which formally opened in April 1999. The next presenter on the program was Nancy Glaser, director of museums for the KHS. She described the effort in creating the permanent exhibit in the new center, "A Kentucky Journey." A professional museum firm was chosen to assist and six focus groups were convened across the state to collect ideas on what the exhibit should represent. A three-year planning process ensued, including participation from scholars and teachers. Nancy showed slides beginning with empty space, continuing with the construction of the exhibit, to its completion.

Cathy Zwyer, assistant director of museums, discussed other aspects of the creation of the permanent exhibit, including use of archival material in the display. She said visitors found the exhibit engaging, encouraging them to talk among themselves about what they were seeing. The exhibit is "KERA-friendly," in accordance with the reform of Kentucky schools following the passage of the Kentucky Education Reform Act in 1990. Cathy discussed the historical research needed to construct displays in the exhibit, such as flatboats and the proper costuming of mannequins used.

Doug Boyd, oral history archivist with the KHS, discussed his role as the "sound guy" for the exhibit. He consulted with a Cincinnati sound group to create ambient sounds for the display, including fifteen-second clips of such ordinary sounds as people walking. They created special sounds to invoke other eras such as antebellum times. He played demonstration clips. Actors were used to read from primary source material. Clips were used from the WHAS radio archives, recently donated to Berea College. The last clip played was entitled *Pure Kentucky*. It included

sporting events featuring boxer Muhammed Ali, pitcher Jim Bunning, Secretariat winning the Kentucky Derby, and University of Kentucky basketball games.

Mike Thomas, museum theatre coordinator for the History Center, followed Doug. He described the new field of museum theatre as a way of making history come alive. The portrayers use a "hats on, hats off" policy. With the hat on, the portrayer stays true to the character and period. With the hat off, the portrayer speaks contemporarily.

The last speaker, Annie Denny, senior museum guide, spoke of her experiences giving presentations to adults or school groups. She showed a typical demonstration she gives using reproductions of artifacts from different eras, interacting with visitors to seek their guesses as to what use the objects had.

During lunch, chair Charles Hay gave away door prizes. Richard Belding sought interested parties to assist with the creation of Archives Week in Kentucky.

Following lunch, members enjoyed touring the permanent exhibit, and also had the opportunity to view the sobering temporary exhibit of Vietnam War photographs. Tours were given of the research library and the special collections section of the building, including the storage area for manuscripts, photographs, oral history materials, and rare books.