



**KCA Spring Meeting 1998
John James Audubon State Park
Henderson
Friday, April 24, 1998**

Announcements and business meeting

Becky Ryder of the University of Kentucky, incumbent chair, opened the meeting. She asked new members and guests to identify themselves. Joining KCA were Kevin Reid of Henderson Community College, Sister Louise Quinlan, O.P., of the Dominican Sisters at St. Catharine, and Sister Katherine Misbauer, S.L., of the Sisters of Loretto at Nerinckx.

Becky announced the death of Sister Florence Wolff of the Sisters of Loretto, a longtime KCA member, on March 19 at the age of 87. She read Sister Florence's obituary from the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. The group then observed a moment of silence in Sister Florence's memory.

Becky gave a short report on the new William T. Young Library at UK, which opened April 3 after five years of construction. She described the quilt display featuring quilts donated by Wade Hall of Louisville. Becky brought new library guides to the meeting for anyone who was interested and mentioned that the library is featured in the architectural issue of the *American Libraries* journal. Becky reported that UK hopes to have the library fully moved by the fall semester.

Mary Winter of the Kentucky Historical Society made brief remarks about the progress of construction on the new Kentucky History Center. Mary said it's expected that the History Center will be open in about a year.

Becky reminded the membership that the next meeting is set for October 16 at Riverside, the Farnsley-Moremen House in Jefferson County. Jim Holmberg of the Filson Club, KCA Board member, reported that the meeting will center around the impact of archives and special collections on historic homes and archaeological research. Jim also said KCA hopes to offer a cruise on the Spirit of Jefferson.

Becky said the KCA Board was seeking a date, avoiding Good Friday, for an April 1999 meeting at the William T. Young Library, but arrangements have not yet been made.

She opened the floor for discussion of a new membership recruitment initiative by the organization. Becky reviewed efforts in the area in the past, which had primarily consisted of drafting of a brochure and limited circulation of that publication. Copies of this brochure are now scarce and partially out of date. She discussed finding new markets of possible members, including individuals who volunteer at our various repositories. Becky proposed creating a new committee or task force to study the issue. Mary Margaret Bell of the University of Louisville spoke of serving on the original committee to draft the brochure and said most of its language remained current, in describing the organization's purpose and activities. Mary Margaret mentioned that she had discussed this matter with Becky in relation to Mary Margaret's role as a membership support person for SAA in Kentucky. She said she felt the task force should also consider what prospective members needed in the way of information from KCA, particularly workshops providing instructions in basic information in archives or assistance in finding such training elsewhere. Mary Margaret also suggested that ways to serve members unable to attend the meetings be explored. Sue Lynn Stone of Western Kentucky University and Lynne Hollingsworth of the Kentucky Historical Society also supported efforts to provide more training by KCA. Lynne suggested links with the KHS' Historical Confederation of Kentucky (HCK) to assist local historical societies.

Following discussion, Becky announced she would contact KCA members to serve on this task force.

Ballots were passed out with the names of four nominees for two vacancies on the KCA Administrative Board. The nominees were Delinda Buie, University of Louisville, B.J. Gooch, Transylvania University, Charles Hay, Eastern Kentucky University, and Glen McAninch, Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives. Further nominations from the floor were solicited. None were forthcoming so the election was held among those previously named. The election was so close a runoff between two candidates had to be conducted. B.J. Gooch and Charles Hay were selected. Roger Adams of Northern Kentucky University was elected the new chair later in the day when the new board met for the first time. It was also announced that Lynne Hollingsworth of the Kentucky Historical Society will succeed Lena Jones-Turner as treasurer.

Roger Adams read a [resolution](#) recommending naming the new conservation laboratory at UK's William T. Young Library in honor of George M. and Dorothy G. Cunha, renowned conservators. Several members shared their memories of George Cunha, who taught at UK and served Kentucky archives in several other ways. The resolution was adopted unanimously.

The Audubon Museum and Its Collections

Don Boarman, curator of the John James Audubon Museum, gave a talk about the origins of the museum and how it came to possess the important collection of Audubon materials it holds. Audubon lived in the Henderson area from 1810 to 1819, which was the longest residence by the naturalist in any location. Don acknowledged the efforts of longtime Henderson historian Susan Starling Towles, a descendant of Audubon's acquaintance, Judge Thomas Towles. By Susan Towles' efforts, a large family collection of Audubon material belonging to Leonard Sanford Tyler was deposited at Henderson in 1936. The federal Works Progress Administration

constructed the park and museum, which opened in 1938, as one of its Depression-era public works projects.

The museum's collection includes original lithographs, journals, documents and artifacts. The museum raised funds to purchase two Audubon watercolors at auction. In 1985 the Tyler family considered removing their deposited collection, due to inadequate conditions at the museum, but the family changed their mind, and the state and friends group began to raise money for much-needed renovation at the park's facilities, completed in 1991. Financial difficulties caused by estate taxes forced the family to sell the collection in the mid-1990s, but the state of Kentucky and Audubon support group were able to raise the funds to finally purchase the collection for the museum.

Don also showed some local documents on deposit by the Henderson County Historical Society, relating to the history of Henderson, one of three Transylvania Company towns founded by Richard Henderson.

Kentucky Virtual Library: Digital Collections for the Commonwealth

Mary Margaret Bell of the University of Louisville and Sue Lynn Stone of Western Kentucky University reported on the Virtual Library project originally begun by the State-Assisted Academic Library Council of Kentucky (SAALCK). Mary Margaret is currently acting chair for the Kentuckiana Working Group, in the absence of Clara Keyes of Morehead State University, who is on sabbatical.

Mary Margaret described the past year's activity, when archivists were asked to consider how to add Kentuckiana materials to the Virtual Library, an electronic database of information for students of the planned Virtual University, a distance education offering designed to broaden Kentuckians' access to higher education.

Archivists' efforts were originally tied to similar endeavors to transmit electronic images of state publications. The archivists decided that this was premature, as archival repositories were less likely to have substantial quantities of electronic bibliographic records in place to support the linkage. Early discussions identified the establishment of a central reformatting center to have significant support, and the need to have time for study and planning before beginning digitization of original materials. With funding delayed by the legislature in the 1997 special session devoted to higher education, the working group created a second group to draft a grant proposal to the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) to fund the planning phase.

Sue Lynn described the grant's outlines and breakdown of tasks for the planning process, such as the gathering of collection information from the eight publicly-assisted state universities and local training in these issues. If funded, the grant will run from July 1, 1998 to June 30, 1998.

Mary Margaret reviewed significant changes since the beginning of 1998. The project is now known as the Commonwealth Virtual Library and encompasses much more than the original eight universities. Private academic libraries, the Kentucky Library Network, public libraries,

school libraries, and other special libraries have all been added to its scope. Encoded Archival Description finding aids and images of rare books are now being considered for the project. Some funding will be made available for the CVL from funds allocated to the Council on Post-Secondary Education in the 1998 session of the legislature.

Into the Future: On the Preservation of Knowledge in the Electronic Age

This video presentation, narrated by Robert MacNeil, outlined the difficulties faced by archivists and cultural historians in saving the extremely fugitive medium of electronic records. Amid scenes of destruction of traditional records in devastated Bosnian libraries, experts described similar losses occurring without notice daily through the speedy degradation of electronic media and the related issues of hardware/software obsolescence.

Lunch and Luncheon Speaker

Dr. Marianne Walker, professor at Henderson Community College, was the luncheon speaker. She shared stories of her research behind her book, *Margaret Mitchell & John Walsh: the Love Story Behind Gone With The Wind*. Dr. Walker even received a letter of congratulation from actress Olivia de Havilland following the book's publication. Dr. Walker chose *Gone With The Wind* for a book review in 1985, never having read it. Fascinated by the novel, she soon learned about Margaret "Peggy" Mitchell's husband John Marsh and his Kentucky origins. After reviewing previous Mitchell biographies, she visited Marsh's home town, Maysville, and interviewed family members and others who had known the Marshes. She received access to many original sources retained by Marsh family members, including "round-robin" letters instituted by Marsh's mother, and circulated among the family. Dr. Walker spent considerable time researching the Mitchell collection at the University of Georgia and checking sources from previous works written about Mitchell. She found substantial material challenging assertions by a previous biographer, Anne Edwards, and based her own work on those sources. Dr. Walker sought the necessary permission to publish from the Mitchell estate and was told by Paul Anderson, the estate's attorney, that she had come closer to the truth than previous biographers.

Tour of the Audubon Museum

The meeting concluded with a tour of the newly renovated Audubon museum, guided by Don Boarman, its curator.