

PRESS RELEASE – for immediate release

September 20, 2024

From: Wichita-Sedgwick County Historical Museum
204 S Main St; Wichita, KS 67202

BOOK EVENT AND AUTHOR PRESENTATION ON *WICHITA BLUES: MUSIC IN THE AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY*

October 13, 2024 @ 2-4pm

Admission FREE

Open to the public

Patrick Joseph O'Connor presents a program on his new book "Wichita Blues: Music In the African American Community" (University of Mississippi, released September 16, 2024).

This program is FREE and open to the public. Books will be available for purchase and signing during the event courtesy of Watermark Books. You can also purchase your book in advance at their location (4701 E Douglas) or by visiting them online at <https://www.watermarkbooks.com/>.

About the Book

In conversations on regional blues, the traditions of the Mississippi Delta, the Carolina Piedmont, Chicago, Houston, Memphis, New Orleans, and Los Angeles are frequently lauded. But until now, little attention has been paid to the Midwest, despite the presence and popularity of blues in these heartland communities. *Wichita Blues: Music in the African American Community* seeks to address this gap in music history by exploring the lively Wichita blues tradition. In interviews with nineteen African American Wichita blues performers, author Patrick Joseph O'Connor reveals the evolution of the blues from the 1930s to the 1960s and beyond.

Utilizing twenty-five years of fieldwork, *Wichita Blues* details the history of performance and camaraderie among the musicians of this often-neglected regional sound. The personal interviews offer unique insight into topics that shape Wichita's sound, including how migration from Oklahoma, Texas, and Arkansas brought varied artists to the area and the ways musical traditions cross-racial divides and generations. The artists articulate the poetics of the blues and the diverse regional influences that can be detected in their music. In exploring the Wichita blues tradition, O'Connor traces African American history in Kansas, ranging from the Exoduster movement in the late nineteenth century and minstrel shows across the state to Black cowboys and growing urban African American communities in Topeka and Wichita.

Including a foreword by renowned music scholar David Evans, *Wichita Blues* allows seasoned blues musicians to tell their own stories and paints a picture of the vibrant Black music scene in the city.

Author Bio

Patrick Joseph O'Connor has been an active blues musician and researcher since the late 1960s. He is a former lecturer in the blues for Wichita State University's Department of Anthropology, and his research has been published in several academic journals.

Sponsored in part by Watermark Books and Café - 4701 E Douglas Ave; 67218 (www.watermarkbooks.com)

Submitted by Michelle Frikken, Historical Museum Communications: museum@wichitahistory.org

Wichita-Sedgwick County Historical Museum, 204 S. Main, Wichita, KS 67202

Contact: 316-265-9314, wschm@wichitahistory.org

Website: wichitahistory.org for additional information

Museum Hours: Tuesday – Friday 11:00 am to 4:00 pm; Saturday & Sunday 1:00 to 5:00 pm.

Supported in part by the City of Wichita and the Board of Commissioners of Sedgwick County Kansas

OUR VISION: To provide a world class museum experience, advancing the understanding and exploration of the rich historical and cultural heritage of Wichita and Sedgwick County Kansas.