ABOUT THE SPEAKER

A sixth-generation Missourian, Jeremy Neely is an award-winning teacher at Missouri State University whose writings explore the rich, often contentious history of his native state. Much of this work focuses upon the ways that people of different backgrounds reckoned with Missouri’s place as a border state, neither northern nor fully southern while also a vital part, for a time, of the American West. Now a resident of rural southwest Missouri, he often reflects upon their stories while pedaling his bicycle along the gravel roads of the Osage prairies and Ozark foothills.

AVAILABLE PRESENTATIONS

TERRORS AND TRIALS: HENRY AND LUCY FIKE'S CIVIL WAR

Drawing upon the 400 letters that Henry and Lucy Fike wrote to each other during the Civil War, Jeremy Neely considers the ways that two ordinary people--one a schoolteacher who became a Union quartermaster and the other a homemaker--navigated the greatest challenges that their nation and marriage faced. During the fall of 1864, Henry marched from St. Louis to the Kansas border, chasing Sterling Price's Confederate army and confronting the damage caused by years of guerrilla violence. Lucy, meanwhile, exemplified the outspoken patriotism of loyal women on the home front. In addition taking on the responsibilities once held by her absent husband and raising their spirited toddler, Ellie, she also spearheaded the local Union League and found herself constantly feuding with Copperhead neighbors. "For my part," Lucy wrote in 1863, "I feel like putting on britches now, and fighting." Together, the Fikes remind us how the war was indeed a shared experience which demanded extraordinary sacrifices by men, women, and children alike.

THE POLICY WHICH PUT DOWN THE WAR SHALL SETTLE THE RESULT: ROBERT VAN HORN AND THE RECONSTRUCTION OF MISSOURI

Drawing upon the writings of Robert Van Horn, a newspaper editor, politician, and Union veteran, Jeremy Neely considers the ways that Missourians wrestled with the legacies of the Civil War. Many households saw Union victory and emancipation as an opportunity filled with revolutionary potential. Others, however, resisted the political, social, and economic changes that they saw as too radical. The year 1865 brought forth a new state constitution, but the struggles that followed over the meanings of freedom, equality, and loyalty showed that although the military conflict had ended, the deep divisions within Missouri continued.

SPEAKER CONTACT INFORMATION

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