

# Author Whitehead to deliver DeGruson Lecture

**October 04, 2010 12:00AM**

Author and historian Fred Whitehead will deliver the 2010 Gene DeGruson Memorial Lecture, "Freethinkers in the Union Army," at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 7, in the Special Collections Room of Axe Library.

Whitehead's lecture will discuss his forthcoming book on the subject, "Freethinkers in the Union Army." In the vast literature on the American Civil War, no one has ever addressed this topic in a full-length scholarly study, although Freethinkers of various kinds played a dramatic role in the defense of the Union, from the beginning of the war, to its conclusion. Participants in the Freethinker movement included refugees from the European revolutions of 1848-1849, transcendentalist teachers from the Ozarks, and German immigrants in the Hill Country of Texas.

Fred Whitehead is a prolific author, editor and independent scholar. His many works include "Culture Wars: Opposing Viewpoints," "The History of Radical Politics in America," "and Freethought on the American Frontier." Since 2003, Whitehead has donated more than 4,000 books and 140 linear feet of his personal papers and research files to Special Collections in Axe Library. The Whitehead Collection contains many valuable works in the fields of history, political science, cultural studies, religion, rationalism, poetry, and American literature.

The Gene DeGruson Memorial Lecture honors the memory of Gene DeGruson, who founded the Special Collections department in 1968. A well-known scholar, writer and editor, DeGruson was especially identified as an expert on Kansas and Southeast Kansas history. DeGruson died in 1997. The memorial lecture is set to occur near the time of DeGruson's birthday, which was Oct. 10.

The Gene DeGruson Memorial Lecture is free and open to the public. It is sponsored by the Friends of Axe Library.

For information, call Axe Library, 620-235-4880.

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