

"There's No Place Like Home": Symbols and Images of Kansas

by James H. Nottage and Floyd R. Thomas, Jr.

JUST AS THE BALD EAGLE, "Old Glory," and Uncle Sam symbolize the United States, a variety of symbols and images have come to represent Kansas.¹ Sunflowers, tornadoes, wheat fields, and John Brown are among such symbols. Along with many others, they have served to define the state in the public mind both within and beyond Kansas' borders.

Conceptions of the state are numerous and varied. They have changed over time and have been created through diverse influences. They have been expressed in literature, music, poetry, art, artifacts, cartoons, and conversation. Kansas land, Kansas people, and Kansas history have been sources of ideas about the state, and a wide variety of media have served to influence the development of thought related to them. Certain images and symbols have dramatically affected the lives of those who have acted upon a belief in their validity. At the very least, most people have some impression of the state, whether it is a warm, patriotic glow or a negative feeling about tornadoes and flat land.

There are many kinds of symbols and images. In large part this study is concerned with visible signs or emblems that are used to express ideas or attitudes about the state. Official symbols have been created to represent Kansas and convey attitudes about it. The history of these formal devices and the motivations for their creation tell something about how many Kansans have viewed themselves and their state.

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Emblems of State

Seals and mottoes have represented governments, families, organizations, and businesses for many centuries. In 1855 it was standard procedure for the new government of Kansas Territory to adopt a seal. Designed by Gov. Andrew Reeder, it featured a shield including a buffalo, a hunter, and some agricultural implements. A pioneer with rifle and tomahawk stood to one side of the shield, while on the other was Ceres, the goddess of agriculture, with a sheaf of wheat. At her feet lay a fallen tree and an ax. Surmounting the shield was the motto "*Populi voce*," translated at the time to mean "born of the popular will."² Interpreters of the seal clearly saw within it meaning that represented man's industry and ability to settle and civilize the "wilderness."

In 1859 the Wyandotte Constitution was written as the vehicle that would lead to Kansas statehood. Two years later Gov. Charles Robinson addressed the first state legislature and called for appropriate action to

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1. Representative of works examining national symbolism are the seminal essays of E. McClung Fleming. See "The American Image as Indian Princess, 1765–1783," *Winterthur Museum Portfolio* 2 (1965): 65–81; "From Indian Princess to Greek Goddess: The American Image, 1783–1815," *Winterthur Museum Portfolio* 3 (1967): 37–66; and "Symbols in the United States: From Indian Queen to Uncle Sam," in *Frontiers of American Culture*, ed. Ray B. Browne (Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Studies, 1968), 1–24. Note, also, Lewis C. Jones, *Outward Signs of Inner Beliefs: Symbols of American Patriotism* (Cooperstown: New York State Historical Association, 1975). Limitations to the study of such symbols have been noted by Simon Bronner, whose commentary is briefly summarized in Thomas J. Schlereth, ed., *Material Culture Studies in America* (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1982), 45–46.

2. D. W. Wilder, *The Annals of Kansas*, new ed., 1541–1885 (Topeka: Kansas Publishing House, 1886), 55.



A reproduction of John Stuart Curry's state capitol mural of John Brown greeted visitors to the exhibit "There's No Place Like Home," along with a sign once displayed at the Kansas Welcome Association headquarters in New York.

implement the provisions of the constitution. Among these was the requirement for the creation of "a great seal," the state's first official symbol.³

A committee was appointed to select a design. There were strong feelings about the elements that should characterize the state, since impressions of the seal would give official status to documents. The debate intensified and more legislators spoke out. Soon they had seen "designs, designs, and designs, mottoes and mottoes. Scholars suggested and Western men insisted. John H. McDowell, of the state library committee, suggested a design with a landscape, something like that afterwards adopted, and the emphatic motto 'We will.' Mr. [Hampton B.] Denman proposed to change the motto to 'We won't.' Backward and forward the thing was bandied about."⁴

A conference committee was appointed to resolve

differences of opinion, and on May 22, 1861, the legislature approved the committee's recommendation. Sen. John J. Ingalls had submitted a design that included "a blue shield at the base of a cloud, out of which was emerging one silver star to join the constellation in the firmament, comprising the thirty-four then in the Union, with the motto 'Ad astra per aspera.' The cloud symbolized the struggles through which we had passed: the star, the state; the constellation, the Union."⁵

Ingalls' suggested design was considerably altered by the committee, which added buffalo, Indian hunters, a man plowing, a steamboat, and a log cabin. Ingalls, however, felt that "had my original design been adopted without modification, its significance would have been apparent."⁶ Even so, many felt that the committee design clearly represented Kansas as a progressive state with opportunities in commerce and agriculture.

Claims that Ingalls was responsible for the motto

3. The most complete account of the creation of the seal is Robert Hay, "The Great Seal of Kansas," *Kansas Historical Collections*, 1903-1904, 8:289-99.

4. *Ibid.*, 294. Hampton B. Denman, elected to the first state senate in 1859, participated in the debate over the motto to be used on the seal.

5. *Ibid.*, 295.

6. *Ibid.*, 297.



were challenged in 1897 when Josiah Miller, another committee member, was given credit for suggesting "Ad astra per aspera." Ingalls responded by asserting that the saying "is as old as Josephus," and that whoever suggested it did not matter.⁷ He thought it appropriate that the translation, "to the stars through difficulties," would make the motto meaningful for many generations of Kansans.

Indeed, the state motto quickly became ingrained in rhetoric, poetry, and literature about the state. Those who faced the difficulties of war, drought, grasshoppers, depression, and storms did find it to have special meaning. Frequently mentioned in patriotic speeches at annual celebrations of Kansas' birthday and other occasions, it has endured with little opposition. The state seal, on the other hand, has periodically been assailed. Complaints that it was old-fashioned surfaced as early as 1870. In 1915 suggestions were made to "update" the seal with a steam tractor, an automobile, cattle, a house, and a train. These recommendations did not seem appropriate to the *Topeka Daily Capital*, which editorialized that "no one would really have the old state seal, so picturesquely suggestive of the state's beginnings, brought down to date. Having reached the 'stars' of material achievement, it is worth while retaining the memory of the 'difficulties.'" Nevertheless, W. R. Smith, a former state supreme court justice, requested a special legislative session in 1921 to revise the seal, which he thought was a "primitive, inartistic picture of a semi-civilized region." Smith also contended that the seal was "emblematical of nothing in which we now take pride" and demanded "a new coat of arms embossed with heraldic devices, reflecting the glorious spirit of the present day."⁸

The original state seal has survived these and other

efforts for change and has been affixed to official documents, army uniforms, badges, and buttons. It has been interpreted in many artistic media including oil paint, inlaid wood, plastic, and cloth. Versions decorate books, magazines, and promotional brochures. It is found on the state flag and remains the oldest official symbol of the state.

Kansas did not adopt another official state symbol for forty-two years. As a national trend developed for the adoption of state symbols after the turn of the century, however, Kansas acted quickly. A conscious awareness existed of the next and most obvious choice.⁹

Certainly one of the most dominant symbols of Kansas, the sunflower was once claimed to be an "importation." Sunflower seeds, it was suggested, were first brought into Kansas from the Southwest in mud and dirt clinging to the broad wheels of freight wagons plying the Santa Fe Trail.¹⁰

Actually, for hundreds of years Indians living in the region used seeds from the sunflower plant as a nutritious source of food. Prior to the opening of the Santa Fe trade, members of Stephen Long's expedition through Kansas in 1820 noted birds feeding on the seeds of a sunflower.¹¹ Despite reports to the contrary, sunflowers have long graced the Kansas landscape.

Noble Prentiss was among the first to suggest that

8. *Daily Commonwealth*, Topeka, January 28, 1870; *Topeka Daily Capital*, July 18, 1915; and *Topeka State Journal*, July 16, 1921.

9. A useful source for noting the development of state symbols is George Earle Shankle, *State Names, Flags, Seals, Songs, Birds, Flowers, and Other Symbols* (New York: H. W. Wilson Co., 1934). Shankle's work, however, is basically a compilation. Neither the first nor later editions contain useful analyses of the meaning or significance of state symbols.

10. Cecil Howes, "Sunflower, Adopted 45 Years Ago As Kansas Emblem, an Importation," *Kansas City Star*, August 16, 1948.

11. Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., *Part III of James's Account of S. H. Long's Expedition, 1819-1820*, vol. 16 of *Early Western Travels, 1748-1846* (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1905), 230.

7. *Ibid.*, 297-99.

the sunflower symbolized the state. Less than twenty years after Kansas entered the Union, the Atchison newspaper editor wrote: "The capitol square is surrounded by a dense growth . . . of rampant sunflowers. They grow as big, rank and yellow as if they were forty miles from a house. The sunflower ought to be made the emblem of our state."¹² In 1887 the sunflower was adopted as an emblem by the Kansas delegates to the Grand Army of the Republic convention at St. Louis. When their sunflower badges attracted attention, the Newton *Daily Republican* suggested that Kansas might be named the "Sunflower State."¹³

Early suggestions to adopt the sunflower name and the sunflower image did not receive immediate formal approval, however. In fact, the state legislature in 1895 declared the sunflower a noxious weed and mandated that it be destroyed.¹⁴ Efforts to eradicate the sunflower obviously proved unsuccessful. Its hardiness, which so disgruntled many farmers, endeared it to Kansans, who admired the characteristic.

George P. Morehouse of Council Grove recalled the event that led him to become an outspoken advocate of the sunflower as the state's floral emblem. In 1901 each Kansan attending a rodeo at Colorado Springs, Colorado, wore a sunflower as a badge of identification. "Everyone wore the large blossoms with the golden rays," Morehouse recalled. "It presented a pleasing scene, unique and attractive to every citizen of the Sunflower state. Our hearts swelled with pride and our thoughts and words fondly dwelt upon the resources, traditions and triumphs of the state we all love so well. That occasion suggested the sunflower as our state flower."¹⁵

As a member of the Kansas Senate in 1903, Morehouse drafted the legislation designating the sunflower the official state flower.¹⁶ Since that time Kansas writers have discussed the symbolism of the sunflower and its appropriateness as the state's floral emblem. Many have found the sunflower to be a positive reflection of the state and its people. Marvin Creager, a 1904 University of Kansas graduate and managing editor of the *Milwaukee Journal*, summa-



"Sunflowers" illustrated the section on Kansas in William M. Thayer's 1888 volume *Marvels of the New West*.

12. Noble Prentiss, *Atchison Champion*, September 1880, as quoted in Howes, "Sunflower, Adopted 45 Years Ago."

13. Kirke Mechem, ed., *The Annals of Kansas, 1886-1925*, 2 vols. (Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1954), 1:42.

14. The law was passed in 1895 but not published for two years. By 1899 the sunflower section of the law appears to have been dropped. Kansas, *General Statutes*, 1897, ch. 172, sec. 11, 950.

15. Howes, "Sunflower, Adopted 45 Years Ago."

16. For a more detailed discussion of the rationale for making the sunflower the state flower, see George P. Morehouse, "The Sunflower and the Law Making It the 'Floral' Emblem of Kansas," *Kansas Magazine* 2 (September 1909): 15-17 and "The State Flower," *Sunflower Magazine* 3 (June 1905): 7-8.

rized the qualities of sunflowers that he felt characterized Kansas and Kansans:

... the sunflower always was out in the open. It did not hide in dark places and it did not seek the shade. It made its own way. It was no parasite. It stood by the dusty roadside and out on the high prairie—and you always knew what it meant. . . . it turned its gold petals and black center always toward the sun. No matter how fiercely the heat beat down, it faced the music and it never blinked. It never wavered. It never lost courage. It was the last bit of vegetation to surrender to the hot winds and it was blithe to the last. It loved life and it was genuine.

I like to think of the sunflower as typifying the people of Kansas. I am sure it does.¹⁷

Artists have fostered the state's association with the sunflower, and businesses, organizations, and institutions have capitalized on this association to advertise themselves, their products, and their services. Kansas politicians have used the sunflower to promote their candidacies. Alf Landon's presidential campaign in 1936 focused national attention on Kansas as the "Sunflower State."¹⁸

After fifty years of statehood, however, Kansas boasted only two official symbols—the Great Seal and the state flower. Nationally, most other states were beginning to accumulate a wide range of official symbols to express their identities. Following the celebration of Kansas' semicentennial in 1911, several patriotic organizations began to assume a greater role in identifying, sponsoring, and promoting the creation of new symbols for the Sunflower State. These symbols expressed attributes assigned to Kansas in a spirit of increasing state pride and patriotism.

Before assuming the office of governor in 1915, Arthur Capper wrote to agencies of other states, asking if they had their own state flags. In a typical letter sent to Providence, Rhode Island, Capper inquired about designs and noted that "having just been elected governor of this state, it has been suggested to me that Kansas should have a state flag and I am anxious to know what other states have done in this matter."¹⁹ The Michigan Historical Commission advised that "each state can have its flag by using its coat of arms on the blue ground of Old Glory. Your seal should make a fine design."²⁰

17. Marvin Creager, "Sunflower Qualities That Stick: A Reminiscence," *Graduate Magazine* 28 (April 1930): 6.

18. Dan Rumph, "Rise of the Sunflower," *Topeka State Journal*, October 28, 1936.

19. Arthur Capper to Secretary of State, Providence, Rhode Island, December 28, 1914, general correspondence, numerical file (1915), state flags, Arthur Capper Papers, Archives Department, Kansas State Historical Society.

The design suggestion was prophetic. The creation of a Kansas state flag, however, required another thirteen years of argument to become a reality. The next step was taken by the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). At its annual conference in 1916 the organization presented designs accumulated in a contest for a state flag which would "express the spirit of Kansas" and be exhibited patriotically with the national colors. The winner of the contest was Lawrence artist Esther Estelle Northrup, who suggested a flag with three broad horizontal stripes—the top one red, the middle white, and the lower blue. In the upper left was a gold sunflower on a blue background with the state seal in its center. In 1917 this design was submitted to the legislature. It was not destined for acceptance.²¹

In 1919 efforts to pass an act designating the Northrup design as a state flag continued to meet with opposition. The DAR pressed for passage, but separate bills in the House and Senate were stalled. Leading opposition to the bill were the Native Daughters of Kansas²² and the Grand Army of the Republic. The two groups felt that "'Old Glory,' good enough for the United States, is good enough for Kansas." Those defending a state flag countered that it was not proper for the national flag to represent the state as well. Some contended that Kansas, as one of only a few states without a distinctive flag, was clearly out of step. Patriotic interests remained in conflict and the bills were not passed.²³

During the legislative debate, Topeka artist Albert T. Reid was asked to submit a design. His blue flag with a gold sunflower in the center met with some popular acceptance. It was carried to New York and was hung at the Kansas Welcome Association headquarters to greet servicemen returning from Europe. A year later it was returned for display at the Kansas State Historical Society.²⁴ In 1921 alone, four separate

20. Marie B. Ferrey, curator of museum, Michigan Historical Commission, Lansing, to Arthur Capper, December 31, 1914, *ibid.*

21. *Topeka Daily Capital*, January 16, 1916; April 1, 1916; and April 9, 1916; Kansas, *House Journal*, 20th sess., 1917, H.B. 450, 148, 164, 360.

22. Wilhelmina F. Bertsch, "Native Sons and Daughters of Kansas," *Jayhawk, the Magazine of Kansas* 2 (February 1929): 45–46. Mrs. Dewitte C. Nellis of Topeka proposed the idea for this organization, which she thought should have as its sole aim "the glorification of Kansas." The constitution adopted in 1915 stated the objective to be "to promote patriotism, to create fellowship among worthy native daughters of Kansas, to preserve and to record the history of the pioneer settler of this commonwealth, to reverence their memory, to perpetuate the standards and rights for all citizens, and to further the present interests and ideals of the state."

23. *Topeka Daily Capital*, February 6, 1919; Kansas, *House Journal*, 21st sess., 1919, 31, 37, 51, 119, 190, 248, 345, 501; Kansas, *Senate Journal*, 21st sess., 1919, 23, 26, 49, 51, 92, 137, 140, 141, 544.

24. *Kansas City Times*, May 8, 1919.

bills for the creation of a state flag were submitted but along with proposals for a state song failed of passage. Additional bills were submitted in 1923, including one for a triangular blue emblem with the state seal in the center of a sunflower. Finally, on February 24, 1923, House Bill 435 was reported out of committee with the recommendation that it be "deferred for a period of two years, together with all other bills on the same subject." There the matter lingered.²⁵

Finally, in 1925, the legislature passed an act designating a state banner. Designed to hang from a horizontal bar, this banner contained familiar elements with a sunflower and the state seal centered in a blue field. Above was "Kansas" and along the bottom was a draped golden fringe. The bill satisfied its primary sponsor, the Grand Army of the Republic. These Civil War veterans preferred this design because it would not compete with the national flag. Some disliked the design because it included the sunflower, Hutchinson representative Frank Martin reading into the House

vote "that weed is in many respects worse than the cocklebur." Representatives of the DAR were unhappy. Summarizing the ten-year fight for a flag, Mrs. T. A. Cordry of Lawrence announced that "Kansas people do not want a banner hung from a horizontal bar. They want a state flag, which will float from a heaven-pointing staff, with 'Old Glory' to show that Kansas is 'one of the many' and that 'many' embracing our glorious United States of America."²⁶

Kansas was the only state represented by a banner until March 21, 1927, when an act was signed "designating the form and color" of an official flag. This bill had taken less than two months of legislative action after being reviewed by the House Committee on Military Affairs.²⁷ State Adj. Gen. Milton R. McLean had been adamant. The banner was impossible to march with and had been rejected for display with other state flags in Washington.

The adjutant general's influence had clearly been felt. The basic elements of the flag design were a blue field with the state seal in the center. Above the seal was the generally unknown state crest—an insignia designated by the U.S. War Department in 1923 and made up of a sunflower beneath which was a bar or wreath meant to symbolize the Louisiana Purchase. Shortly after passage of the act, McLean's troops marched at Fort Riley, proudly displaying the first official flag.²⁸

The Kansas flag quickly became an emblem representing the feelings of many residents and patriotic organizations. Mrs. O. C. Emery of Wichita could not avoid the temptation to express her opinion, and she gave to the elements of the flag meaning that may not have been intended. She wrote that

its blue stands for the loyalty and steadfastness of the people of Kansas. The azure, pink and yellow of the seal symbolizes our cosmopolitanism and the melting pot of statehood which has from the contributions of



Designated by the legislature in 1925, the Kansas state banner featured a sunflower and the state seal on a blue field. Many felt, however, that it was no substitute for a proper state flag.

25. Kansas, *Senate Journal*, 22d sess., 1921, S.B. 193 and 288; *House Journal*, 22d sess., 1921, H.B. 163 and 328; *House Journal*, 23d sess., 1923, H.B. 435, 331.

26. Kansas, *House Journal*, 24th sess., 1925, Joint Resolution 3, 54, 56, 99, 162, 271; *Topeka State Journal*, February 11, 1925; *Topeka Daily Capital*, February 22, 1925, and March 1, 1925.

27. Kansas, *House Journal*, 25th sess., 1927, H.B. 397, 198, 208, 371, 382, 709, 723.

28. *Topeka Daily Capital*, February 4, 1927; March 19, 1927; and March 26, 1927; *Topeka State Journal*, August 5, 1927; unidentified clipping, *Wichita Beacon*, State Flag Clippings, Library, Kansas State Historical Society. McLean expressed interest in two other official symbols. An official salute to the flag was proposed in 1943 but did not pass. Kansas, *Senate and House Journals*, 33d sess., 1943, H.B. 162. And in 1933 a state march (listed in law books in 1949) was created for use on official occasions. McLean's influence included the concept of using some words from "John Brown's Body." See *Topeka State Journal*, August 29, 1953.

many lands and commonwealths produced a contented, harmonious citizenry, while the open frankness of its sunflower face is indicative of the fearlessness with which Kansas meets her problems and solves them.²⁹

The state banner rapidly fell into disuse after the flag was created. The flag itself was widely distributed to Kansas schools, particularly through the efforts of the Kansas Commonwealth Club. Legislation in 1961 added the word "Kansas" to the bottom of the flag and required display in schools of the state. The flag specified turned out to be larger than the national flag, and additional legislation in 1963 reduced its size.³⁰ Since that time some legislators have attempted to create a new, "more distinctive" flag for Kansas. Their efforts have met with a notable lack of success, and the flag created "through difficulties" remains a symbol of the state.³¹

As legislators and patriotic organizations quibbled over the state flag, Kansas schoolchildren actively participated in the selection of state symbols. This interest may have been stimulated by the patriotic manuals and Kansas history texts featuring state symbols and ideals that had been read by generations of Kansas students.³² Indeed, the *Hutchinson Daily Gazette* reported in 1914 that "the Sunflower state thinks that its sons and daughters should be raised on Kansas ideas, brought home through the text book that fits Kansas instead of those turned out in cultured Boston for 'urchins' instead of for healthy boys and girls of a prairie state. . . ."³³ Formed in 1897, the School Textbook Commission was succeeded by a series of commissions or committees culminating in the State Board of Education Textbook Advisory Committees in 1937. History texts published or endorsed by the state usually highlighted official state symbols, and elements of state history were studied as examples leading to good citizenship.³⁴

In the mid-1920s, Madeleine Aaron, secretary of the Kansas Audubon Society, originated, planned, and

managed a statewide election in which the schoolchildren of Kansas selected a state bird on Kansas Day, January 29, 1925. According to Aaron,

since Kansas is pre-eminently an agricultural state, the Audubon Society is of the opinion that it should have a bird as well as a state flower. A bird would not be a mere symbol, but rather a reminder to all who live in the state that the grain the farmer reaps, the fruit he gathers, the potatoes he digs, are only possible because of the activities of birds.

They keep in check the grasshoppers that proved such scourges in the past; each year they destroy millions of caterpillars, weevils, cankerworms, beetles, wire worms, army worms and innumerable other pests.³⁵

Nominated for the honor were the western meadowlark, cardinal, prairie chicken, and quail. The criteria on which the children were to select a state bird strongly favored the meadowlark. Contest supporters suggested that while all four benefited the farmer by eating insects, only the meadowlark lived in the state year round in every Kansas county. "Other birds may come and go with the seasons," wrote one supporter, "but the happy little songster of the prairie stays on the job and does his bit in filling the air with lilting song and ridding the country of injurious pests."³⁶

Similar rhetoric was heard nationally at this time as school groups, Audubon societies, and federated women's clubs worked to make certain that each state had its symbolic avian representative.³⁷ When the votes were counted in Kansas the western meadowlark soundly defeated its rivals, and claims were made that Kansas was "the first state to have a State Bird, and by a general election of the school children."³⁸ Charging only for the cost of production, the Audubon Society provided prints of the meadowlark for classrooms throughout the state. These prints were often placed alongside prints of the Kansas sunflower.³⁹

While schoolchildren voted for the meadowlark in 1925, the Kansas legislature did not make it the offi-

29. Milton R. McLean, "The Kansas Official Flag," unpublished typescript, Library, Kansas State Historical Society.

30. *Kansas City Times*, April 29, 1937; *Kansas City Star*, January 20, 1963.

31. *Kansas City Times*, February 22, 1974.

32. Six editions of a patriotic manual were produced between 1909 and 1973. Printed by the state and issued by the superintendent of public instruction or the State Department of Education, the manuals were summarized in 1973 with the statement that "patriotism is an attitude. It is an attribute of a citizen who is aware of his heritage of the past and conscious of his privileges and responsibilities." *Patriotic Manual and Guide for Classroom Observance of Special Days* (Topeka: Kansas State Department of Education, 1973).

33. "Kansas Crazy Again," *Hutchinson Daily Gazette*, December 29, 1914.

34. Bessie E. Wilder, *Governmental Agencies of the State of Kansas*, Governmental Series, no. 4, rev. (Lawrence: University of Kansas Publications, 1957), 44, 119. One of the more popular texts was Bliss Isely and W. M. Richards, *The Story of Kansas* (Topeka: State Printer, 1953).

35. "A State Bird for Kansas," *Kansas Authors' Bulletin* 2 (Holiday Number 1924): 29-30.

36. Mary Alice Jones, "The Students Select the Right Bird," *Kansas Authors' Bulletin* 3 (Spring-Summer 1925): 33.

37. Shackle, *State Names*, 371.

38. "The Meadowlark: Our State Bird," *Kansas Authors' Bulletin* 3 (Spring-Summer 1925): 17.

39. D. O. McCray, "The Best Loved Bird in Kansas," *Kansas Teacher* 23 (June-July 1926): 30-31, as quoted from the *Christian Science Monitor*.



The Audubon Society provided copies of this print to classrooms throughout Kansas after schoolchildren voted in favor of the western meadowlark as the state bird in 1925.

cial state bird until A. W. Relihan introduced a bill in 1937. The Smith County representative also introduced legislation designating the cottonwood as the state tree.⁴⁰ Although the cottonwood did not prove controversial to the legislature, it had received mixed reviews in previous years. One writer editorialized that "perhaps no other tree in Kansas, with the possible exception of the Osage orange, has been so maligned. On the other hand it is doubtful if any other tree has been so acclaimed."⁴¹

S. T. Kelsey, forester for the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad during the 1870s, claimed that while cottonwood was not the most valuable timber, it made good fuel. Moreover, he reported that adaptability, cheapness, quick growth, and wide use characterized the tree. A rationale for the tree's official status

40. The western meadowlark became the official state bird and the cottonwood the official state tree with the passage of H.B. 49 and 113, approved by Gov. Walter A. Huxman, March 23, 1937. See "Kansas Historical Notes," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 6 (May 1937): 223.

41. "The Kansas Cottonwood Now Is the Official State Tree," *Kansas City Star*, July 6, 1937.

was stated in the 1937 *Kansas Session Laws*: "If the full truth were known, it might honestly be said that the successful growth of the cottonwood grove on the homestead was often the determining factor in the decision of the homesteader to stick it out until he could prove up on his claim."⁴² One student of symbols wrote later that Kansas selected the cottonwood "because of its *hardiness*, suggestive of the characteristic trait of the pioneer settlers of the territory."⁴³

Little difficulty attended legislative designation of the meadowlark and cottonwood as official symbols of the state in 1937. The legislators did draw the line, however, when the Osage orange was recommended as the official state fruit.⁴⁴

The designation of the next state symbol required more than thirty years to resolve. Gov. Arthur Capper generated interest in the selection of a state song in 1915, and the Woman's Kansas Day Club responded by sponsoring a competition the following year.⁴⁵ According to its rules, the song was to be written by a "loyal resident of Kansas" and "in language simple enough to be understood and learned easily. It must not be ragtime, but at the same time the air must be catchy. It must contain something of Kansas spirit and Kansas ideals, but must not be too 'highbrow' for all Kansas people to sing. . . ."⁴⁶ Apparently the clubwomen were not sufficiently impressed with the competition results, for no awards were made and the search continued. In 1921 "My Golden Kansas" by Harry W. and Gene Stanley failed to win approval in the Kansas legislature.⁴⁷ "Hymn to Kansas" by Luadah Sallee Baughman and Lewis C. Biggs was introduced in 1927. Baughman distributed ten thousand copies to Kansas schoolteachers and it was "catching on like wild fire," but members of the Kansas Authors' Club and others protested and legislative sanction was denied.⁴⁸

The Kansas Federation of Music Clubs offered a reward for the "best poem for a state song" in 1923.⁴⁹ Again, although the contest spurred "numerous offer-

42. *Kansas, Session Laws*, 1937, 511, as quoted in *ibid.*

43. Eva C. Hangen, *Symbols: Our Universal Language* (Wichita: McCormick-Armstrong Co., 1962), 80.

44. *Kansas, House Journal*, 30th sess., 1937, H.B. 485, "An act designating the Osage orange, commonly known as the hedge apple or Smith county lemon, as the official state fruit."

45. On the history of the organization, see Mrs. Albert H. Horton, "The Woman's Kansas Day Club," *Kansas Historical Collections*, 1915-1918, 14:198-202. One of the leading patriotic organizations of Kansas, the group had a stated purpose "to encourage and promote the collection and preservation of the early history of Kansas, to instill patriotism in Kansas youth, and establish a comradeship among Kansas women."

46. See "Can You Write Songs? Write One for Kansas," *Topeka Daily Capital*, April 23, 1916; *Topeka State Journal*, July 14, 1916.

47. *Kansas, House Journal*, 22d sess., 1921, House Concurrent Resolution 5.

ings, . . . the judges did not consider that any met the real requirements for a Kansas State Song, and thus no award was made."⁵⁰

Edna Reinbach included a number of songs considered for official adoption in her study of Kansas music published in 1930. She erroneously concluded that "it is evident that an acceptable state song yet remains to be written."⁵¹ Though the Kansas Federation of Music Clubs presented an award to Prof. C. S. Skilton of Lawrence for the music he wrote to Esther Clark Hill's poem, "The Call of Kansas," the legislature did not grant official status and the state remained without a state song.⁵²

In 1937 the Native Sons and Daughters took up the cause. The groups sponsored yet another contest "designed to stimulate interest in the adoption of an official song for the state." Topeka music teacher Albert Shutt's "Kansas, We're Proud of You" won the contest but did not garner the requisite support from the legislature.⁵³

Even before Shutt's effort, another song was being heard throughout the nation. By 1934 "Home on the Range" had achieved phenomenal popularity, fostered by record companies, music publishers, and performers who paid no royalties because the author was unknown. Unknown, that is, until a half-million-dollar copyright suit brought against the National Broadcasting Company and several large music publishing houses resulted in an extensive investigation of the origin of the song. The Music Publishers Protective Association's lawyer, New Yorker Samuel Moanfeldt, carefully examined the claim of authorship by an Arizona couple who brought the suit for damages. After exhaustive research Moanfeldt obtained conclusive evidence that while living near Smith Center, Kansas, in 1872 or 1873, Dr. Brewster Higley wrote the lyrics and Dan Kelly the music to the song.⁵⁴ The Arizona couple withdrew their lawsuit, but others claimed to have

written the now-famous song. As recently as 1974, television newscaster Charles Kuralt interviewed Texan David Guion, who recalled writing the song in 1908.⁵⁵ Unfortunately, "Kuralt failed to ask Guion how an 80-year-old man could be the author of a 100-year-old song."⁵⁶

Controversy over the song focused attention on its Kansas origin. That such a popular song had been written in Kansas was a matter of considerable pride, and in 1947 the state's claim was further secured when "Home on the Range" was designated as the official state song. A two-year campaign organized by the Kansas Commonwealth Club had achieved its objective.⁵⁷ The issue of a state song was finally over, or so it was thought. Objections were raised almost immediately by people who charged that the song conveyed an antiquated image of the state. Others suggested that the song was simply not accurate, that when it was written there were no antelope playing on the Kansas plains.⁵⁸ Recommendations to substitute Jersey milk cows for buffalo, and jackrabbits for antelope, were not, however, seriously considered.⁵⁹ The song's supporters proved that antelope were definitely a part of the Kansas prairie scene at the time. That the song glorified a Kansas of a bygone era could not be denied.⁶⁰

Only a year after "Home on the Range" received official standing, the tax-supported Kansas Industrial Development Commission (KIDC) offered a prize for the best parody of the official lyrics. Gov. Frank Carlson awarded prize money to the authors of two of

48. "Song in Great Favor: 'Hymn to Kansas' Catching on Like Wild Fire," *Topeka Daily Capital*, February 6, 1927; and "No State Song Just Now: House Decides They're Nice Songs, But No Designation Due," *Topeka Daily Capital*, March 11, 1927. Attempts to make "Hymn to Kansas" the state song in 1935 and 1937 also failed. See "Legislators Have Chance to Adopt 'Hymn to Kansas,'" *Topeka Daily Capital*, January 18, 1937, and Kansas, *Senate Journal*, 22d sess., 1921, Senate Concurrent Resolution 5; Kansas, *Senate Journal*, 29th sess., 1935, Senate Concurrent Resolution 9; and Kansas, *House Journal*, 30th sess., 1937, H.B. 75.

49. *Kansas Authors' Bulletin* 1 (July 1923): 11.

50. "Kansas State Song," *Kansas Authors' Bulletin* 1 (October 1923): 27.

51. Edna Reinbach, comp., *Music and Musicians in Kansas* (Topeka: State Printer, 1930).

52. *Ibid.*, 27.

53. "Topekan's Song Is Indorsed by Native Kansans," *Topeka Daily Capital*, January 29, 1937.

54. John Watson, "No Longer Do Buffalo Roam: 'Home on the Range' Stands Near Smith Center," *Wichita Evening Eagle*, February 26, 1953. For a more detailed discussion of the Moanfeldt investigation, see David Dary, "Saga of a Song," *Kansas City Star Magazine*, October 23, 1977.

55. See Forrest Hintz, "Texas Tries to Steal 'Home on Range,'" *Wichita Beacon*, March 5, 1975. See also "Pennsylvania Man Says He Wrote the Kansas State Song," *Smith County Pioneer*, Smith Center, December 28, 1961.

56. Dary, "Saga of a Song." See also Merle Bird, "Kuralt on Texas' Side—They're Claiming Our Song," *Topeka Daily Capital*, July 22, 1974. In 1975 John N. White wrote the history of the song and concluded that "my guess is that it goes far back beyond Kansas and Texas, as well, into the big songbook which the folk have held in common for centuries. See . . . And the Skies Are Not Cloudy All Day: Seeking the Origins of a Western Song Classic," *American West* 17 (September 1975): 10–15.

57. "Want 'Home on the Range' Made Official Kansas Song," *Wichita Morning Eagle*, November 15, 1945, and "Club to Back Famous Song for This State," *Wichita Evening Eagle*, February 8, 1946.

58. See Peter Wyden, "Discouraging Words Echo in Capitol—'Home on Range' Strikes Cloudy Weather—Legally, That Is," *Wichita Morning Eagle*, January 21, 1949.

59. "What! A Jersey Cow for Buffalo: Few Musicians in Discord as House—With Few Discouraging Words—OK's 'Home on Range,'" *Topeka Daily Capital*, March 28, 1947.

60. Wyden, "Discouraging Words"; see also "Remembers Antelope," *Wichita Morning Eagle*, January 25, 1949.

the six hundred new versions submitted to the KIDC.⁶¹ For staunch supporters of Higley's verses, Governor Carlson added insult to injury. At his inaugural celebration in 1949, lyrics by Mrs. Helen Etnire of Wichita replaced the original wording.⁶² "Substituted for the livestock—with not even a lone buffalo left to roam about among the sharps and flats—were such modernized phrases as: 'There's a state in the West that is surely the best in the whole of our grand U.S.A. . . .'"⁶³ The Kansas Authors' Club strongly objected to this revision, and Irwin E. Nickell, the Smith Center state senator who engineered the legislative approval of "Home," threatened to seek the repeal of the official designation if the original words were replaced. Eager songwriters quickly responded to this threat and offered their own renditions. That "Home on the Range" today remains the official state song bears witness to their lack of success.⁶⁴

In general, the lyrics of the songs written about the state emphasize two principal themes: Kansas is a good land and it is occupied by good people. More specifically, to borrow directly from a number of the songs, Kansas is a "mighty land" with "rich soil" and "fertile fields" of "golden grain" and "green fields of clover." This land in the "heart of the nation" is blessed with sunflowers and sunshine and rain that falls only at night, for "the skies are not cloudy all day."

The songs promote images of Kansans being as exemplary as the land they occupy. According to the lyrics, Kansas people are "faithful," "loyal," and "true." Moreover, in Kansas, "girls are sweet and trusty" while "boys are brave and lusty." Two secondary themes are also emphasized. A number of songs allude to the state's struggle against slavery. Kansas, the lyrics suggest, is a land of freedom and liberty. Other songs tell of Kansans who wander in search of greener pastures only to learn the error of their ways.

In 1955 the home where buffalo roamed was still celebrating the one-hundredth anniversary of its creation as a territory. Perhaps this factor contributed to interest in designating the buffalo as the state animal. Legislation to this effect was suggested by University

of Kansas sculptor Bernard "Poco" Frazier, and with supporting data from the Kansas State Historical Society the bill was passed without opposition. Indeed, abundant evidence documented the importance of the buffalo to the history of the region. Little in traditional art and decoration, however, associated the animal as a particular symbol of the state. From the 1930s the buffalo did grace the cover of *Kansas Magazine*; it was also mentioned in some poetry and songs but was generally absent from treatments dealing with symbolism and the state. Buffalo had, of course, been a prominent part of the state seal, and after passage of the so-called "buffalo bill" in 1955, increased interest in associating the animal with Kansas was evident. In 1962 a mounted buffalo was donated to the Seattle World's Fair as a symbol of the state.⁶⁵

Between 1972 and 1982 a wide variety of new symbols were promoted publicly and at the legislature. Topekan Don Hiechel felt strongly about the need to promote additional state symbols, partially as an indication of pride and patriotism. Despite the support of school groups and individuals such as Hiechel, efforts to name a state gem (moss opal, 1972), a state rock

65. David Dary, "The Buffalo in Kansas," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 39 (Autumn 1973): 343-44. Kansas, *Senate and House Journals*, 39th sess., 1955, S.B. 42; *Wichita Morning Eagle*, June 6, 1962.



Featuring the seal, the sunflower, and other Kansas symbols, these boots were presented to Gov. John Anderson, Jr., by the Acme Boot Company of Tennessee during the state centennial in 1961.

61. "At Least Kansas Becoming Aware of 'Home On—': State's Own Song, New Words 'n All, Mired in More Trouble as Texans Put in Prior Claim," *Topeka Daily Capital*, February 1, 1949.

62. Wyden, "Discouraging Words."

63. Virg Hill, "Mighty Discouraging Words in 'Home on Range' Vex Backer, Pondering Unofficializing Bill," *Topeka Daily Capital*, January 22, 1949.

64. Ibid. See also Mabel Wolfe Shaw, "'Home on the Range' Straight," *Topeka Daily Capital*, February 2, 1949; "State's Own Song, New Words 'n All," *Topeka Daily Capital*, February 1, 1949; Virg Hill, "Love This State—Loyal Poets Await Death of 'Home on—,'" *Topeka Daily Capital*, January 27, 1949; and Anita Solter, "A Change on the Range?" *University of Kansas Alumni Magazine* 79 (June 1981): 6.

(limestone, 1979–80), and a state fish (catfish, 1979–82) all failed.⁶⁶

In 1976, however, a final official state symbol was designated by the legislature. A campaign by schoolchildren brought petitions for the honeybee to be named the state insect. Despite rhetoric associating honeybees and their habits of industry with Kansans themselves, there was no special evidence of an identity of the state with the insect, and little interest was apparent following the passage of the bill.⁶⁷

As the state enters the year of its 125th anniversary, it is interesting to note the continued interest in official state symbols. Thousands of postcards featuring the flower, seal, and flag along with a factual pamphlet about the state are given by the secretary of state to schoolchildren. The symbols themselves are subjects of classroom study. Perhaps an increasing interest in developing an identity with and an understanding of the state's symbols might lead to the designation of new ones. Perhaps the movement has not ended at all.

People and Principles

People, including both heroes and villains, have long been identified with Kansas and have helped to create Kansas images. Most have become known because of their successes or excesses. The state itself has attempted to identify prominent people who embody admirable qualities and who through association with the state can serve as symbols. Journalist William Allen White of Emporia, President Dwight Eisenhower from Abilene, Sen. Arthur Capper of Topeka, and pilot Amelia Earhart of Atchison gained international fame for their endeavors and accomplishments. Each is honored with a statue in the rotunda of the state capitol.⁶⁸ Kansas sports figures of accomplishment such as football great Gale Sayers ("The Kansas Comet"), runners Glenn Cunningham and Jim Ryun, baseball player Walter Johnson, and boxer Jess Willard ("The Kansas Giant") have been claimed by the state and associated

with it by outsiders. By promoting causes or ideologies, other persons have become symbols identifying themselves and their issues with Kansas.

Collectively, Kansas people have been known as Jayhawkers. This appellation can be traced back to the territorial period of Kansas history. According to one of the self-described Jayhawkers of the time, "the name was assumed by a band of men organized in Linn county for the legitimate defense of their lives, homes and property." These free-state settlers joined together for mutual defense against proslavery "border ruffians" from Missouri who had "committed numerous outrages against the free-state settlers in Kansas, from horse-stealing and arson to wholesale massacre. . . ."⁶⁹

The Jayhawkers were not satisfied to react defensively, however, and they began to take aggressive action against proslavery supporters on both sides of the Kansas-Missouri border. They not only conducted raids into Missouri but also attacked "settlements of proslavery sympathizers who were accused of har-



Gale Sayers, a Wichita native and University of Kansas football star, won the Rookie of the Year award during his first season with the Chicago Bears in 1965.

66. Don Hiechel, "U.S.A., the Pride of the People, as Expressed in State Symbols," typescript, April 1972, Library, Kansas State Historical Society.

67. Kansas, *Senate and House Journals*, 1976 sess., 1976, H.B. 2236. The bee and beehive as traditional symbols have been far more important to others. For an example of how one symbol has been viewed by residents of another state, see Hal Cannon, comp., *The Grand Beehive* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1980).

68. Kansas, *Senate and House Journals*, 1978 sess., 1978, H.B. 3278, called for the designation of four persons to be featured in the rotunda. A committee appointed by the Kansas State Historical Society selected them on the basis of their significance to the state's history.

69. William A. Lyman, "Origin of the Name 'Jayhawker' and How It Came to Be Applied to the People of Kansas," *Kansas Historical Collections*, 1915–1918, 14:203.

boring the border ruffians and furnishing them with information to the detriment of the free-state settlers." Several proslavery men were executed without benefit of a trial or any pretense of legal sanction. The Jayhawkers "inflicted damage on the pro-slavery sympathizers that ranged all the way from blood to loot. . . ."⁷⁰

Charles Jennison, who had shared leadership of the Jayhawkers with James Montgomery, was authorized by Gov. Charles Robinson to organize a regiment of cavalry following the outbreak of the Civil War. Broad-sides were posted in towns and villages proclaiming the formation of the "Independent Mounted Kansas Jayhawkers." William Lyman, a member of the unit, claimed "our reputation became such that the Southerners had strange notions as to what Jayhawkers were, it being said that they possessed horns, and that a common article of diet among them was young and tender babies."⁷¹

This reputation notwithstanding, the Jayhawkers completed more than four years of "efficient and honorable service," as Lyman put it, and "the name of 'Jayhawkers' was redeemed. . . . It was made known from one end of the country to the other, and given such standing that to-day Kansas people are proud to be known as 'Jayhawkers.'"⁷²

While Kansans in general became known as "Jayhawkers," the visual image itself did not take shape until after University of Kansas students and faculty took on the nickname.⁷³ Henry (Hawk) Maloy created the original cartoon character which appeared in the University of Kansas student newspaper, the *Daily Kansan*, beginning in 1912. Here the Jayhawk began its transformation into the university's mascot. Describing his well-heeled creation, Maloy explained:

We left the human legs and shoes on him for two reasons. One was that the shoes were good weapons for slap stick comedy. (It is lots more fun to see a tiger get a good swift kick in the pants than get his eyes clawed out.) The other reason was that students soon were running around the football games inside of Jayhawks made of wire, cardboard and cloth. They looked just like the cartoons—same kind of legs and all. We had animated cartoons before Walt Disney did.⁷⁴



The Jayhawk symbol is often used commercially. Here the mythical bird serves as a decanter.

The mythical bird has evolved through the years and is often seen today "hawking" various products, businesses, and organizations. Even units of the U.S. military have adopted the Jayhawk as an official mascot. In complete fairness it should be mentioned, however, that not all Kansans revere this symbol. Students and alumni of Kansas State University, like Missourians of old, find themselves in conflict with the Jayhawk. Their own symbol, the Wildcat, often does combat with the Jayhawk in intercollegiate athletics. Nevertheless, Kirke Mechem, former secretary of the Kansas State Historical Society, found the Jayhawk to be a unique bird, one the state should be proud of. "It should be advertised, capitalized and mounted on the Statehouse dome."⁷⁵

The Jayhawk never found a perch atop the capitol dome, but another symbol of the conflict over slavery is featured in a statehouse mural by John Stuart

70. S. M. Fox, "The Story of the Seventh Kansas," *Kansas Historical Collections, 1903-1904*, 8:16.

71. Lyman, "Origin of the Name 'Jayhawk,'" 207. See also Stephen Z. Starr, *Jennison's Jayhawkers: A Civil War Cavalry Regiment and Its Commander* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1973).

72. Lyman, "Origin of the Name 'Jayhawk,'" 207.

73. In a letter dated November 18, 1935, Chancellor E. H. Lindley claimed that the nickname was adopted in about 1890. See George Earle Shankle, *American Nicknames, Their Origin and Significance*, 2d ed. (New York: H. W. Wilson Co., 1955), 471.

74. From a letter quoted by Kirke Mechem, "The Mythical Jayhawk," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 13 (February 1944): 14-15.

75. See "Let Jayhawk Bird Perch on Dome of Capitol—Mechem," *Topeka Daily Capital*, March 5, 1944. The Saturday Night Literary Club of Topeka endorsed the suggestion that a Jayhawk be placed on the capitol dome instead of a statue of Ceres, goddess of grains. One member of the club stated: "We would like to have the goddess idea given up and the jayhawk officially declared to be the legal symbol." See "Jayhawk Gets Another Boost, Saturday Night Club for It," *Topeka Daily Capital*, March 19, 1944.



In recognition of the territorial centennial in 1954, Walt Kelly featured the Kansas Jayhawk in his popular cartoon strip "Pogo."

Curry.⁷⁶ During the territorial period of Kansas history, violent conflict between free-state and proslavery factions, "border ruffians" and "Jayhawkers," focused national attention on "Bleeding Kansas." John Brown became a dominant figure in the struggle to secure the territory for the free-state cause. Following a proslavery raid on Lawrence in which the Free State Hotel and two newspaper offices were destroyed, Brown set out to even the score. In the "Pottawatomie Massacre," five proslavery men were taken from their families and hacked to death. Brown's message was clear. Violence would be met with violence.⁷⁷

John Brown's hatred of slavery eventually led him to Harper's Ferry, Virginia. By raiding the federal arsenal there he planned to obtain weapons to arm Southern slaves for an insurrection. Brown became a martyr when the raid failed, and he was captured, tried for treason, and hanged.

John Brown became a legend throughout the land and was immortalized in poetry and song. Though he lived in the state only briefly, his association with Kansas was imprinted indelibly on the public mind. Personal possessions and relics of his life were deposited in the collections of the Kansas State Historical Society. The "John Brown Cabin," which was actually the home of his brother-in-law, Samuel Adair, was purchased for preservation in 1916 by the Kansas Depart-

ment of the Woman's Relief Corps and transferred to the administration of the state. Enshrined in a pergola built by the state in 1928, the cabin remains a popular historic site that attracts thousands of visitors each year.⁷⁸

Whether considered a madman or a saint, John Brown became an international symbol of the fight against slavery. Victor Hugo and other French admirers presented a gold medal to his widow in 1877. The inscription on the back reads:

To the memory of John Brown assassinated legally at Charleston, December 2, 1859, and to those of his sons and of their companions, dead victims of their devotion to the cause of the freedom of the blacks.

The Civil War finally resolved the conflict over slavery, and during a period referred to as "Reconstruction," the rights and freedoms of black Americans were generally protected by federal troops stationed throughout the South. When the troops were withdrawn, however, a reign of terror began, exemplified by lynchings, raids by night-riders, and the activities of the Ku Klux Klan. Blacks were denied the vote and systematically stripped of their rights as citizens. A system of share-cropping was established that virtually reenslaved poor blacks.

Rejecting these intolerable conditions, blacks in great numbers fled the South. Many sought refuge in the land symbolized by John Brown and the struggle against slavery. During the "Kansas Fever Exodus,"

76. For a discussion of the Curry murals, see Laurence E. Schmeckebier, *John Stuart Curry's Pageant of America* (New York: American Artists Group, 1943) and Sue Kendall, "John Stuart Curry's Kansas Pastoral: The Modern American Family on the Middle Border," in Joseph S. Czeszchowski, ed., *John Stuart Curry and Grant Wood: A Portrait of Rural America* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1981).

77. For detailed discussions of Brown's life which also document the development of his association with Kansas, see James C. Malin, *John Brown and the Legend of Fifty-Six* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1942) and Stephen B. Oates, *To Purge This Land with Blood: A Biography of John Brown* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970).

78. For commentary on the role of the state in preserving historic sites, see Edgar Langsdorf, "The First Hundred Years of the Kansas State Historical Society," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 41 (Autumn 1975): 364-65, 384-85.

79. For a detailed discussion of the Exodus see Nell Irvin Painter, *Exodusters: Black Migration to Kansas after Reconstruction* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977) and Robert G. Athearn, *In Search of Canaan: Black Migration to Kansas, 1879-80* (Lawrence: Regents Press of Kansas, 1978).

1879–81, the state became the destination for thousands of blacks seeking "the Promised Land."⁷⁹ A witness to this mass migration reported that the Exodus seemed "a sort of religious exaltation, during which they have regarded Kansas as a modern Canaan and the God-appointed home of the negro race."⁸⁰ Many came unprepared for life in Kansas, but those who remained ultimately made important contributions to the state and to the communities in which they lived. For them, Kansas symbolized freedom and opportunity.⁸¹

Gov. John P. St. John was an important force in preparing the way for the exodus and providing assistance for those in need.⁸² He campaigned most energetically, however, for prohibition. Under his administration in 1880 the state became the first in the nation to adopt a constitutional prohibition on the sale and manufacture of alcoholic beverages. Although temperance and prohibition had been issues in the state since the 1850s, Kansas now became known throughout the country for creating this legislation. The *New York Tribune* commented on December 18, 1881, that "Kansas is the banner State, this year, in the prohibitory movement." For over one hundred years Kansas remained in the vanguard of prohibition, and this identification was a source of both positive and negative images for the state.⁸³

In her campaign for the enforcement of liquor laws, Carry Nation herself became a symbol both of the movement and of its association with Kansas.⁸⁴ Known as the "Kansas Saloon Smasher" and the "Kansas Cyclone," Nation and her vigorous campaign brought extensive commentary in newspapers throughout the country. Several went so far as to associate her with a predecessor of old, the *Kansas City Star* proclaiming that "the Mrs. Nation movement in Kansas is simply John Brown's soul marching on."⁸⁵

Crusaders like Brown and Nation, however, were only two among a much larger number of people who drew attention to the state. In fact, few writers during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries could help commenting about Kansas people. As Lincoln Steffens wrote, "'Kansas' means men to me; men and

women. . . 'queer' people, others call some of them."⁸⁶ For some time Kansas had been known as a land of wild-eyed fanatics. Commenting on the Kansas Populist delegation visiting the World's Columbian Exposition, the *Chicago Tribune* wrote on September 12, 1893, that "bleeding, cyclone-swept, grasshopper devastated Kansas is a thing of the past. Now it is a proud, triumphant, glorious Kansas that produces the biggest crops, the most beautiful women and some of the greatest cranks in the country."

"Sockless" Jeremiah Simpson, Mary Elizabeth Lease, William Pepper, and a wide variety of other reformers and politicians drew attention to the state during the Populist Era. Senator Pepper's long, flowing beard and Representative Simpson's bare feet became familiar in the columns and cartoons of newspapers and magazines around the country and overseas.⁸⁷

Progressives and others later earned their own share of attention from those who viewed Kansas. By the first decade of the twentieth century writers were beginning to attempt assessments of the Kansas character and Kansas characters. Essays by Carl Becker, Kenneth Davis, Karl Menninger, Allan Nevins, and others have in turn presented ideas about the state and the circumstances that have driven common people as well as eccentrics. Usually, they have lamented the fact that Kansas does not seem to be as radical or as innovative as it once was. Perhaps the occasion of the state's 125th birthday does mark, as C. Robert Haywood has written, a time of maturity wherein residents "seem to be enjoying the more dignified pace of mature middle age. What was lost in mystery and bombast, Kansans believe has been more than balanced by decorum and the good life."⁸⁸

87. An important interpretation of Kansas figures of the era is O. Gene Clanton, *Kansas Populism: Ideas and Men* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1969). Commentary about the state of affairs received its most often-quoted treatment in William Allen White, "What's the Matter with Kansas," *Emporia Gazette*, August 15, 1896. Numerous attempts have been made to explain the Kansas character of this time. For example, see Patricia R. Spillman, "The Kansas Ethos in the Last Three Decades of the Nineteenth Century," *Emporia Research Studies* 29 (Summer 1980). It should also be noted that the Populists themselves did not make as frequent use of distinct Kansas symbols. The Republicans more often utilized sunflowers and other symbols identifying their cause; this was especially notable in the gubernatorial campaigns of Edward Morrill.

88. A useful summary of several of the essays is found in C. Robert Haywood, "What Happened to Kansas?" *Humanities* 10 (Winter 1985): 1–2. See also Karl Menninger, "Bleeding Kansas," in *A Psychiatrist's World: The Selected Papers of Karl Menninger* (New York: Viking Press, 1959), 16–22; Allan Nevins, *Kansas and the Stream of American Destiny: A Lecture Delivered at the Kansas Centennial Conference of the University on April 30, 1954* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1954); Kenneth S. Davis, "Portrait of a Changing Kansas," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 42 (Spring 1976): 24–47; and James C. Malin, "Kansas: Some Reflections on Culture Inheritance and Originality," *Mississippi Valley American Studies* 2 (Fall 1961): 3–19.

80. F. R. Guernsey, "The Negro Exodus," *International Review* 7 (October 1879): 375, quoted in Painter, *Exodusters*, 187.

81. The Exoduster spirit is kept alive with annual celebrations to commemorate the migration of blacks from the South to Kansas.

82. Athearn, *In Search of Canaan*, 52.

83. Robert Smith Bader, "Mrs. Nation," *Kansas History* 7 (Winter 1984–85): 247.

84. *Ibid.*, passim.

85. Reported in *Iowa State Register*, January 25, 1901. Comparisons with John Brown are also made in *Iowa State Register*, February 9, 1901.

86. Quoted in *Kansas City Star*, February 18, 1909.

Mixed Media

Actual events and personalities in Kansas history have not been the only sources for the creation and growth of important images. From the realm of imagination have come ideas that remain ingrained in perceptions of the state. From the rich imagination of L. Frank Baum came some of the most enduring of all Kansas images.⁸⁹

Earlier titled "From Kansas to Fairyland," *The Wizard of Oz* was the first of fourteen Oz books written by Baum.⁹⁰ These books, along with plays, films, and a statewide advertising and promotion campaign, have nurtured the Kansas-Oz relationship. For over eighty years this association has been enthusiastically embraced and vigorously opposed.

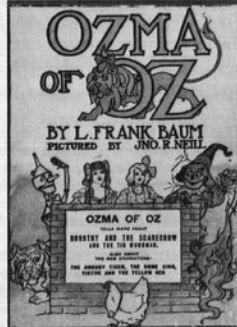
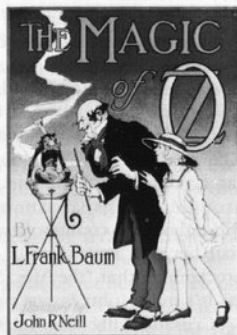
89. There have been attempts to tie the Wizard of Oz to events and personalities of history. One of the most provocative essays is Henry M. Littlefield, "The Wizard of Oz: Parable on Populism," *American Quarterly* 16 (Spring 1964): 47-58.

90. Michael Patrick Hern, ed., *The Annotated Wizard of Oz, the Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1973), 28; Martin Gardner and Russel B. Nye, *The Wizard of Oz and Who He Was* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1957).

Although other volumes by Baum and his successors commented on Kansas, *The Wizard of Oz* had the greatest influence on perceptions of the state.⁹¹ Key passages identify the two most important elements. The first is found at the beginning of the book which tells the reader that "Dorothy lived in the midst of the great Kansas prairies" and describes her home in the bleakest of terms. As is often noted, the word "gray" appears nine times to describe the monotony and drabness of Dorothy's environment—not the sort of thing to be cited in attracting new residents or tourists. Later Uncle Henry jumps from the porch with the observation that "there's a cyclone coming," and the second Kansas image is highlighted. Critics have long

91. See, for example, L. Frank Baum, *The Emerald City of Oz* (1910; New York: Ballantine Books, 1979), 12, 60; *Ozma of Oz* (1907; New York: Ballantine Books, 1979), 80; and *The Road to Oz* (1909; New York: Ballantine Books, 1979), 10, 30-31.

92. Hern, ed., *Annotated Wizard of Oz*, 91-92, 95. One science-fiction volume utilizing the Oz story line has its characters rationalize why Baum pretended that Dorothy was from Kansas rather than from South Dakota. See Philip Jose Farmer, *A Barnstormer in Oz* (New York: Berkley Books, 1982), 25.



been quick to point out that Baum was probably describing portions of South Dakota where he had worked as a newspaper editor.⁹² The point seems not to be relevant. The Kansas association cannot be denied.⁹³

The success of *The Wizard of Oz* made it one of the best-selling books of the twentieth century. Beginning in 1901, dramatic versions were popular in New York and elsewhere; Kansan Fred Stone relished his stage role as the Scarecrow. Years later he recalled how "*The Wizard of Oz* opened with a Kansas cyclone, which was just like old-home week to me, because I had lived through so many Kansas windstorms."⁹⁴ Baum himself attempted a film version, and in 1925 a feature movie appeared with Oliver Hardy as the Tin Woodman.⁹⁵

In 1939 MGM released *The Wizard of Oz* starring Judy Garland in the role of the little Kansas girl, Dorothy. Repeated showings of the film in years since have helped to spread the Kansas association far and wide. As film historian Gregory Sojka has written, the film "provided generations of Americans with their predominant and probably only view of Kansas: A gray tornado-swept landscape where poor, overworked farmers toil to coax a harvest from the barren soil."⁹⁶ The grayness of Kansas described by Baum in the book gains greater impact in the film, which shows Kansas scenes in sepia and Oz scenes in color. For many viewers the dramatic, frightening, and memorable tornado sequence leading to Dorothy's arrival in the colorful Land of Oz gave special meaning to the line "Toto, I have a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore. We must be over the rainbow."

In a 1957 assessment of Baum's *The Wizard of Oz*, Russel B. Nye noted that "children . . . see magic only in Oz, which never was nor could be Chicago or Omaha or California or Kansas. . . . It is fundamentally the out-of-time, out-of-space fairyland of tradition."⁹⁷ The world of Oz, somewhere beyond the rainbow, was its own place of imagination. This assessment was ignored or rejected when a new movement



began to develop, embracing the idea that Kansas was the Land of Oz. Created from the earlier Kansas Industrial Development Commission in 1963, the Kansas Department of Economic Development took on the job of tourist promotion. A full-blown campaign by the late 1970s proclaimed that the state itself lay at the end of the rainbow, and decals, bumper stickers, caps, shirts, brochures, and other souvenirs flooded the market. A vigorous campaign to promote tourism thus named Kansas the "Land of Ah's." Emphasizing the state's many resources, the campaign attempted to reject the gray image created by the book and the movie. One promotional brochure called to the visitor, "Welcome to the Land of Ah's! Come to Kansas and discover a vacation at the rainbow's end. It's a pot of gold rich in recreational, historic and cultural attractions."

Criticism of the "Land of Ah's" campaign has been frequent and vehement. Some residents and outsiders have rejected the Kansas-Oz association outright, while others have merely commented with amusement. One reporter wrote that "although tourism officials insist that the *Wizard of Oz* theme will give Kansas a new and exciting image, many Kansans argue that the movie is what cursed the state with its old image of a bleak and tornado-torn wasteland. These detractors say it makes as much sense for Kansas to call itself the Land of Oz as it would for a seaside community to bill itself as the Home of Jaws."⁹⁸ From an opposite perspective, it should be pointed out that despite the gray bleakness of Kansas and the colorful splendor of Oz as portrayed in the book and the film, the entire

93. Michael Hern's annotated version of *The Wizard of Oz* provides some challenging suggestions about factors that influenced Baum's writing of the book. Note especially Hern's reference on p. 93 to the fact that William Allen White's *The Real Issue and Other Stories* was issued in 1896 by Baum's publisher, Way and Williams of Chicago. Hern detects some similarity between White's "The Story of Aqua Pura" and "A Story of the Highlands" and the first chapter of Baum's book.

94. Fred Stone, *Rolling Stone* (New York: Whittlesey House, 1945), 132.

95. For a description of the 1915 silent film version of *The Wizard of Oz*, see David L. Green and Dick Martin, *The Oz Scrapbook* (New York: Random House, 1977), 154-59.

96. Gregory S. Sojka, "Hollywood Comes to Terms with Kansas," *Kansas Business News* 6 (May 1985): 47.

97. Gardner and Nye, *The Wizard of Oz and Who He Was*, 4.

98. "State of Kansas Unhappy About 'Oz,'" *Topeka Daily Capital*, March 29, 1978; "Land of Blahs," *Salina Journal*, April 13, 1985; *Wall Street Journal*, March 8, 1983.

tale is based on Dorothy's struggle to get back to Kansas. After all, as the movie version ends, "There's no place like home."

Of all the film treatments of Kansas, the *Wizard of Oz* has been the most controversial. There have, however, been many other movie and television expressions of other images of the state. The real Kansas communities of Dodge City, Abilene, and Wichita have been featured in numerous movies stressing elements of the fictional "Wild West." The television series "Gunsmoke" with its Dodge City setting carried on familiar western themes and further helped to develop stereotypes of gunfighters and the frontier. Early segments of "The Life and Legend of Wyatt Earp" along with "Bat Masterson" and other series helped to reinforce the Kansas association with stereotypes of the film western.⁹⁹

These television programs were building upon patterns established and also continued by movie westerns.¹⁰⁰ The list of western films that in whole or in

part deal with Kansas is long. *The Plainsman* (1936), *The Kansan* (1943), *Wichita* (1955), and *Gunfight at the OK Corral* (1957) might be considered typical. Perhaps *Dodge City* (1939) starring Errol Flynn and Olivia de Havilland, which premiered in the real Dodge City, best represents the genre. Through association, the image of frontier Kansas became one filled with cinematic views of violence, good guys, bad guys, and heroines. The *New York Times Film Review* on April 8, 1939, described the movie:

Nothing much happens in "Dodge City," the Kansas pastoral presented at the Strand yesterday. Just a shooting scrape, a cattle stampede, a murder, a couple of street fights, another murder, a barroom brawl, a runaway, a few more street fights, another murder, a lynch mob's attack on a jail, a fight in a burning caboose and a few dull things like that.

The review concluded with the note that "men are clubbed, slugged or plugged on all sides; the Marshal marches on."

Serving as the locale for westerns is not the only role played by Kansas in films. Many movies and television programs have used Kansas locations to typify the Midwest and small-town America. People are usually stereotyped as simple country folk, and an image of Kansas conservatism is clearly developed.

The observant writings of Kansan William Inge contributed to the film depictions of Kansas people and communities. In particular, *Picnic* (1955) and *Splendor in the Grass* (1961) were used to typify the midwestern, conservative values and life-styles. A diverse number of other films carried similar images and ideas. In *The Ghost and Mr. Chicken* starring Don Knotts, the imaginary town of Rachel, Kansas, is billed as the "home-plate for wheat and democracy." In *Superman* the hero grows up on a Kansas farm near the town of Smallville and in this environment develops his sense of "truth, justice and the American way." In *Cold Blood* (1967), *The Learning Tree* (1969), *The Gypsy Moths* (1969), *Paper Moon* (1973), and *The Day After* (1983) are among the other movies that use Kansas for a setting depicting small-town and rural values. The effect has been summarized by one student: "In most



Kansan Milburn Stone as Doc, joined fellow cast members (left to right) Dennis Weaver (Chester), Amanda Blake (Miss Kitty), and James Arness (Matt Dillon) during the filming of "Gunsmoke" in 1955.

99. The Kansas image was further enshrined at Dodge City, Abilene, and Wichita with the creation of tourist attractions "replicating" the television and movie versions of these towns. See Robert R. Dykstra, *The Cattle Towns* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968), 355-56.

100. Studies of western movies and television programs are numerous. See, for example, Jon Tuska, *The Filming of the West* (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1976); George N. Fenin and William K. Everson, *The Western, from Silents to Cinerama* (New York: Orion Press, 1962); and Vincent Terrace, *The Complete Encyclopedia of Television Programs, 1947-1979* (New York: A. S. Barnes and Co., 1979).



In this publicity shot, cast members from Dodge City dramatized the frontier violence that characterized the 1939 western film.

instances, the image of Kansas as 'home' with its family values and small town atmosphere is depicted by Hollywood as provincial, boring, and suffocating: A place to escape from and to flee back to the 'range,' an area of freedom and independence."¹⁰¹

The Day After was filmed in and around Lawrence because the director felt the area represented a "socio-cultural mix" and was located at "the cross-hairs of the country." Although the film had much broader social commentary to make in depicting the aftermath of a nuclear war, it seemed easy to use Kansas, the heartland, as a place to typify the human experience. However, reviewers and commentators could not help associating the film with other Kansas images. In one critique a reviewer automatically associated Kansas with Oz. Dick Locher in a November 1983 *Chicago Tribune* cartoon depicted Dorothy, Toto, the Scarecrow, and the Tin Woodman standing next to a sign with the

words "The Day After." Looking over a charred landscape, Dorothy exclaims, "What a terrible thing to do to Kansas!"

Kansas Land

The Kansas climate has fostered a number of popular images of the state. "If you don't like Kansas weather," so one saying goes, "just wait a minute." Writing to his wife in March of 1856, Topeka founder Cyrus K. Holliday observed that "when I commenced this letter I said there was a thunder storm raging. It is now raining, hailing, snowing, blowing, thundering & lightning all at the same time. A great Country."¹⁰²

The image of Kansas weather as variable, unpredictable, and rapidly changing is further characterized by tornadoes, wind storms, and drought. The state's association with tornadic activity has been particularly

101. Sojka, "Hollywood Comes to Terms," 49.

102. Lela Barnes, ed., "Letters of Cyrus Kurtz Holliday, 1854-1859," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 6 (August 1937): 280.



This poster poked fun at the popular image of Kansas as a center of tornadic activity.

persistent. As early as 1885 the U.S. secretary of war published a report indicating "there is perhaps no part of the world where they [tornadoes] prevail more than in this region, and especially in that part of the middle latitudes west of the Mississippi River embracing Kansas and Missouri."¹⁰³

In defense of their state and its climate, Kansans have from time to time taken issue with this negative perception. In "Why Kansas Is Loved," published in 1901, Foster Coburn denied the image. "Kansas has

been called the cyclone state. That is a misnomer. There is occasionally a wind storm that blows off a few tree limbs, but there has not been a real cyclone in Kansas in 20 years. More damage has been done by a single cyclone in some other states than was ever done in all of Kansas since it became a state."¹⁰⁴

The image of Kansas as a tornado-swept prairie is hard to shake, however. L. Frank Baum's *The Wizard of Oz* accounts in part for this persistence, but in addition the image does, in fact, have some basis in reality. Over the years many communities throughout the state have been struck by the awesome fury of a Kansas twister. On June 8, 1966, Topeka suffered one of the most destructive tornadoes ever to strike an American city. Dramatic coverage in the national press and media served to validate the image of Kansas as a tornado-torn countryside.

Once considered part of the "Great American Desert," Kansas still evokes images of a flat, treeless landscape.¹⁰⁵ Clearly, a large portion of the state conforms to this popular stereotype, even though one can be disabused of the generalization by traveling through eastern Kansas with its Konza Prairie, Flint Hills, and forested river valleys. The image is persistent, however, and is perpetuated in the kind of comic humor exemplified in "Ski Kansas" posters.¹⁰⁶

While humorists exploit the topographic image of Kansas, the state prides itself on its geographic setting as the "Heart of the Nation," for it is both the geographic center of the forty-eight contiguous states and the geodetic center of North America. As one roadside historic marker north of Osborne advertises, land surveys of a sixth of the world's surface are based on a point in Kansas. Through the years the implications of the state's location have been discussed. An observer of the American West wrote in 1888: "Kansas lies between the thirty-seventh and fortieth parallels of latitude, the district which, the world round, controls the

103. William Ferrel, "Recent Advances in Meteorology," *Annual Report of the Chief Signal Officer of the Army to the Secretary of War for the Year 1885* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1885), pt. 2, appendix 71.

104. Foster Coburn, "Why Kansas Is Loved," in *Kansas: A Few Facts Concerning the Great State* (St. Paul: N.p., 1901).

105. American explorer Stephen H. Long is credited with being the first to use the specific term "Great American Desert." Following his expedition through the Great Plains, 1818–20, other travelers substantiated Long's assessment. Their reports "were 'full of deserts' and often contained whole passages from the published journals of other writers. Invariably they compared the region to Siberia or the Sahara Desert." See W. Eugene Hollon, *The Great American Desert Then and Now* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), 66.

106. For a thorough discussion of Kansas geography, see Huber Self, *Environment and Man in Kansas: A Geographical Analysis* (Lawrence: Regents Press of Kansas, 1978) and *Geography of Kansas* (Oklahoma City: Harlow Publishing Corp., 1960).

destinies of the globe, and the time will come when this State will be the powerful centre of the most powerful nation on earth."¹⁰⁷

The image of Kansas as the center of the nation has been promoted in more recent years through the "Midway USA" campaign, initiated by the Kansas State Chamber of Commerce in 1959.¹⁰⁸ The organization's Tourist Promotion Council conducted a contest and selected the chosen slogan for "most graphically depicting the state's exclusive appeal to both industry and tourist travel." William David Long, then an eleven-year-old junior high school student from Hutchinson, submitted the slogan, which appeared on the state centennial emblem and on Kansas vehicle license plates from 1965 to 1967. "Heart of America," a slight variation of the "Heart of the Nation" theme, has been promoted through use in such diverse activities as an annual debate tournament sponsored by the University of Kansas in Lawrence and an annual threshing bee in McLouth.

Promoting Kansas

The land and environment have, of course, inspired some of the most powerful and enduring Kansas images. Kansans have long been proud of the part they play in feeding the American people and have cultivated and nurtured this image with the care they have given their crops and stock. Terms and circum-

107. An "able journalist," quoted in William M. Thayer, *Marvels of the New West* (Norwich, Conn.: Henry Bill Publishing Co., 1888), 649.

108. See "Hutchinson Boy, 11, Wins Slogan Contest—'Midway USA' Best for Kansas," *Topeka State Journal*, March 7, 1959.



Issued August 16, 1974, this cachet commemorated the centennial of the introduction of Kansas hard winter wheat into the United States.

stances have changed through time, but clearly the image and nicknames for Kansas as "the Garden of the West" and "the Nation's Breadbasket" have been earned and acknowledged.

The earliest attempts to promote Kansas as a "land of plenty" can be found in letters from early settlers encouraging family and friends to immigrate to Kansas. Emigrant aid societies published tracts glorifying the agricultural opportunity to be found there. Through the years exuberant residents have contributed to the image of Kansas as a land of plenty. Not all of their efforts were meant to be taken seriously. For pure, uninhibited chauvinism, it is difficult to surpass Virginia King Frye, whose praise of Kansas knew no bounds. Perhaps a "little over-stated" is her claim that "Kansas, in the last few years alone, has raised sufficient corn to fatten enough cattle to drink up the waters of Lake Superior and enough hogs to furnish ham gravy sufficient to float the United States navy."¹⁰⁹

Railroad companies eager to sell land in the state promoted Kansas just as enthusiastically with advertis-

109. Virginia King Frye, "O.K.—of Kansas," *Kansas Magazine* 3 (January 1910): 4.

ing campaigns and free tours. A brochure published by the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad, much like materials distributed by other such companies, hailed Kansas as "First in Corn, First in Wheat, First in the Hearts of the Stock Raisers."¹¹⁰

Participation in fairs and expositions was an early and very serious strategy of the State Board of Agriculture in promoting this positive image. While Kansas exhibits boasted the industrious nature of the state's citizens, agriculture was given top billing.

Of the fairs and competitions in which Kansas participated, the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia was considered the most important. This exposition would not only attract hundreds of thousands of visitors and many potential settlers but also provide Kansas with an opportunity to polish its agricultural

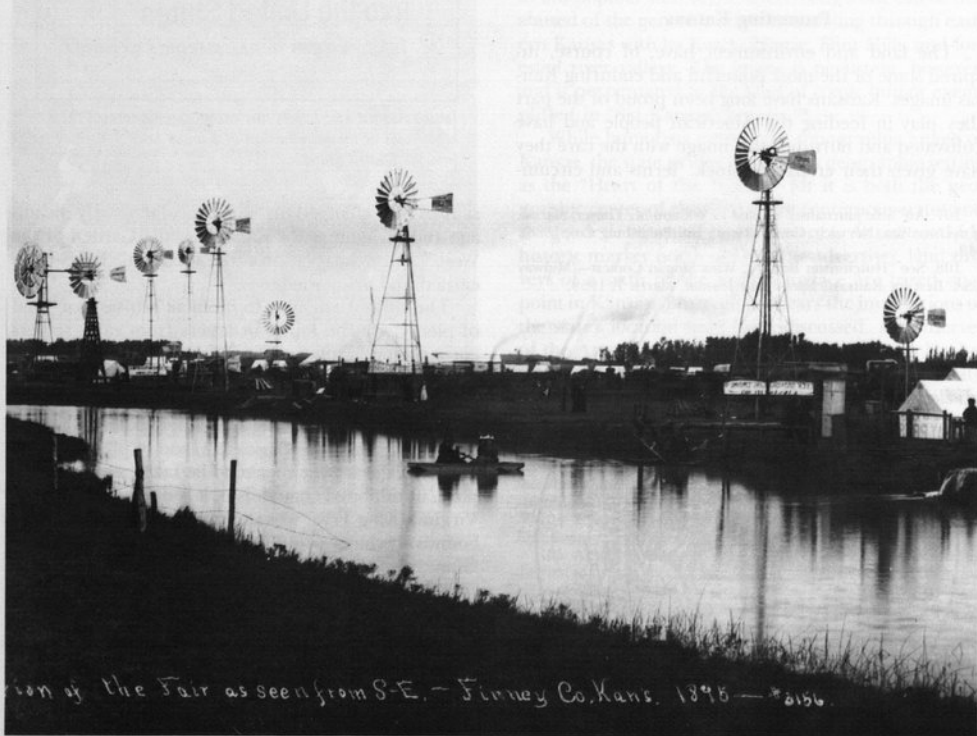
image, which had recently been tarnished by a devastating grasshopper invasion.¹¹¹ Featuring an impressive array of agricultural products, the exhibit was a great success and generated considerable interest in the state and its agricultural prowess. "It is needless to say that the Kansas exhibit at Philadelphia was almost perfect, and attracted more attention than that of any other state exhibit on the grounds. The visitors never overlooked the Kansas building, and its effect was long apparent in the increase of our farming population."¹¹²

Artist Henry Worrall of Topeka was another nineteenth-century promoter of the state's agricultural image. His most famous caricature was drawn in 1869 when the state's reputation still suffered from a severe

111. See Robert W. Richmond, "1874 Year of the Grasshopper," *True West* 16 (August 1969): 30-31, 38.

112. George W. Veale, "Coming In and Going Out," *Kansas Historical Collections, 1909-1910*, 11:10. See also Joseph W. Snell, "Kansas and the 1876 United States Centennial," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 40 (Autumn 1974): 337-48.

110. A *Royal Record*: Kansas: First in Corn, First in Wheat, First in the Hearts of the Stock Raisers, Kansas Collection, Spencer Library, University of Kansas.



A forest of windmills graced the Kansas prairie at the Finney County Fair, Garden City, in 1895.



Ceres, goddess of agriculture, has often been proposed as an ornament for the capitol dome. This plaster model was probably made in 1901 by Winslow Brothers of Chicago from a design by State Architect John Stanton.

drought in 1860–61. Titled "Drouthy Kansas," this exaggerated depiction of the state's bounty was in keeping with the exhibits sponsored by the State Board of Agriculture. It appeared in several publications, including *Resources of Kansas*, a widely distributed handbook written by C. C. Hutchinson to attract settlers to the state. After the grasshopper invasion and drought of 1874, some disgruntled settlers blamed Worrall for enticing them to Kansas. "Delegations waited on him to inform him that, had it not been for the diabolical seductiveness of that picture, they would never have come to Kansas to be ruined and undone by grasshoppers."¹¹³

Expressions of the state's agricultural image have been represented in many different ways. Not all such efforts have met with wide acceptance. In 1890 a statue of Ceres, the ancient goddess of agriculture, was proposed to ornament the top of the Kansas state-

house dome. Some Kansans saw the goddess as an especially appropriate symbol for the state. Others, however, objected to the cost and to the use of a pagan idol of questionable morality. The debate has continued intermittently through the intervening years, but the capitol dome remains decorated only with a light.¹¹⁴

While Ceres was not enlisted to promote the state's agricultural image, the message has been carried in other ways. From 1949 to 1959 license plates conveyed the message that Kansas is "The Wheat State." Today, highway signs placed by the Kansas Agri-Women boast that Kansas is the number-one wheat producer. The Wichita State University mascot, the "WU Shocker," also promotes the image. Kansas State University has garnered for the state an international reputation for the quality of its agricultural programs.

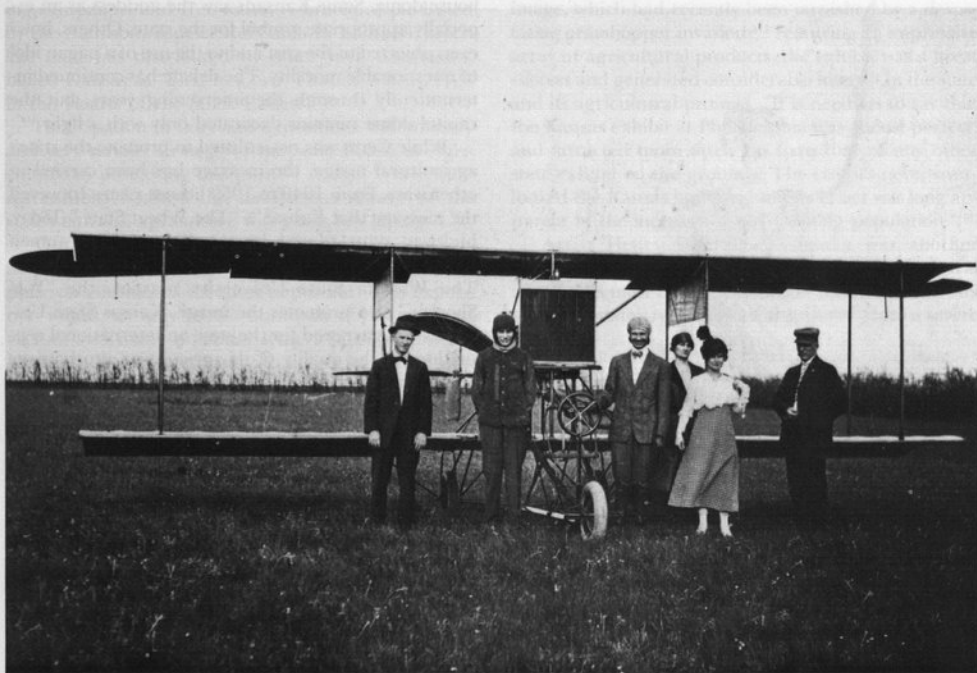
Not all promotional efforts have been directed

113. *Commonwealth*, Topeka, March 31, 1875 (daily edition).

114. Numerous articles have been written through the years about the Ceres statue and the controversy over its proposed placement atop the capitol dome. See, for example, "An Art Subject" and "Ceres," *Topeka Daily Capital*, April 6, 1890; "May Not Be a Statue on Capitol Dome," *Topeka Daily Capital*, October 13, 1901; Carl P. Bolmar, "Gleanings from the Field of Art," *Topeka State Journal*, July 7, 1923; "Out Comes Ceres, Once Destined as Adornment for State-house Dome," *Topeka Daily Capital*, December 12, 1937; "Ceres Quits a Dusty Refuge to Bid for Capitol Pinnacle," *Topeka State Journal*, March 21, 1944; "It's That Goddess Again," *Kansas City Star*, March 22, 1944; "Lone Bulb Atop State House to Shine On," *Topeka State Journal*, January 20, 1945; "Lest You Be Deceived," *Topeka Daily Capital*, July 18, 1946; Robert W. Richmond, "Kansas Builds a Capitol," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 38 (Autumn 1972): 262; and John Peterson, "Wings of Goddess Ceres Clipped by Petition, Veto," *Wichita Eagle*, March 21, 1974.



Road signs placed by the Kansas Agri-Women promote Kansas' agricultural image.



Built in 1913–14, this Longren airplane exemplified Kansas' aeronautical heritage.

toward agriculture. In 1939 the Kansas Industrial Development Commission (KIDC) was formed for the economic promotion of the state. The KIDC worked primarily to develop manufacturing and tourist industries and to make sure that Kansas' many resources were known by anyone who might consider buying the region's products or moving to the state. As the state began to pull out of the Depression, new slogans, publications, and campaigns were pushed. By 1940 the agency was working to tell the world that Kansas was "Where East Meets West and Farm Meets Factory."¹¹⁵

The KIDC's greatest achievement came as the state's manufacturing plants geared up for the production needs of World War II. Many Kansans had contributed to the establishment of the American air industry. Clyde Cessna, Walter and Olive Beech, Lloyd Stearman, and others contributed to the growth of airplane manufacturing in Wichita. Expansion of their plants and the Boeing Airplane Company during World War II allowed for the production of the B-29 Superfortress and many other aircraft in the victory drive. The KIDC pressed its development responsibili-

ties after the war, and the relationship of Kansas to the air industry continued. Wichita is billed as the "Air Capital of the World," and Kansas astronauts Ron Evans and Joe Engle have helped to carry the association and image "to the stars."¹¹⁶

"125 and Coming Alive"

Symbols and images carrying Kansas into the space age are thus part of the total of ideas and attitudes representing the state since its creation 125 years ago. It seems appropriate that a new symbol has been created to go along with the celebration of the 125th an-

115. *Topeka State Journal*, March 6, 1939; *Kansas City Times*, May 6, 1939, and January 10, 1940; *Topeka State Journal*, March 25, 1940.

116. In 1942 the idea of Kansas as an "air capital" was first expressed. A lead newspaper article reported that "Kansas as the air center of the nation, or perhaps even the air center of the world, was envisaged today in discussions of the Kansas Industrial Development Commission." See *Kansas City Times*, July 28, 1942. The image and such industrial output were promoted by the Kansas State Chamber of Commerce; note "Not Just a Farm," *Kansas City Star*, March 26, 1943. For general commentary about the growth of the air industry during World War II, see "The Battle of Kansas," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 13 (November 1945): 481–84.

niversary. A logo with the now familiar "Ah! Kansas" motto and the saying "125 and Coming Alive" suggests a state full of opportunity and activity. Skeptics with tongue-in-cheek will surely ask whether or not the state has been sleeping for the last century and a quarter. The state's history with images recalling John Brown and others serves to remind one of a state always in transition, always active, always alive.

Celebrations themselves have been a tradition recalling Kansas' past and nurturing feelings of patriotism and pride. Kansas symbols and images are often featured in such festivities as residents promote ideas about themselves. Kansas Day, January 29, commemorates the admission of the state into the Union and has been celebrated in schools of the state at least since 1877.¹¹⁷

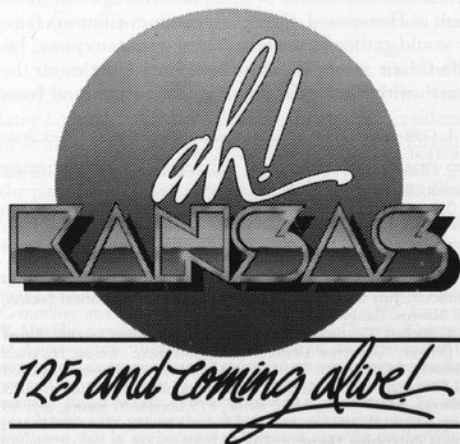
Souvenirs created to commemorate special birthdays including the state's fiftieth anniversary and the territorial centennial have gone further to promote the symbolism and imagery associated with Kansas. With the state's centennial in 1961, Kansas symbols were applied to everything from earrings to wallpaper. The official seal of the centennial is itself a catalog of both official and unofficial symbols of Kansas.

Patriotic fervor for the state has both created and preserved symbols and images. A consciousness about the area's past has been used to underscore a vast range of rhetoric that has literally created new meaning and substance for historical individuals and events of note.¹¹⁸ Few writers contributed as much to the written Kansas image as William Allen White. An admirer quoted a typical example: "So, do not puzzle yourself to account for Kansas. Accept her for what she is—and



thank God she wasn't born twins. For she will win—because light conquers darkness. God said 'Let there be light!' and there was Kansas."¹¹⁹

White's fluid prose created an immediate image that expressed his own feelings about the state. Think carefully about how you feel and consider what influences have contributed to your perceptions of Kansas. Look closely at the evidence all around. It can be found in the paintings, poems, songs, films, books, signs, flags, and souvenirs that bear representations of thought about the region, the land, and the people. Whether rejected or encouraged, they convey the attitudes and beliefs of the resident and the outsider. They are the symbols and images of Kansas. [KH]



117. "Origin of Kansas Day," *Patriotic Manual and Guide for Classroom Observances of Special Days*, 1954, 22; 1973, 18.

118. George Martin, secretary of the Kansas State Historical Society, quoted Eugene F. Ware as saying, "The great charm of Kansas is the fact that it has had both heroes and historians. . . . In it the valuables and the jewels of the state are kept. Into this bank goes the surplus greatness of the people and of the state." *Twelfth Biennial Report of the Board of Directors of the Kansas State Historical Society, 1898-1900*, 6. Early efforts to memorialize positive historical events and individuals are evident as early as 1908. See "Memorial Monuments and Tablets in Kansas," *Sixteenth Biennial Report of the Board of Directors of the Kansas State Historical Society, 1906-1908*, 83-106.

119. Frye, "O.K.—of Kansas," 7.