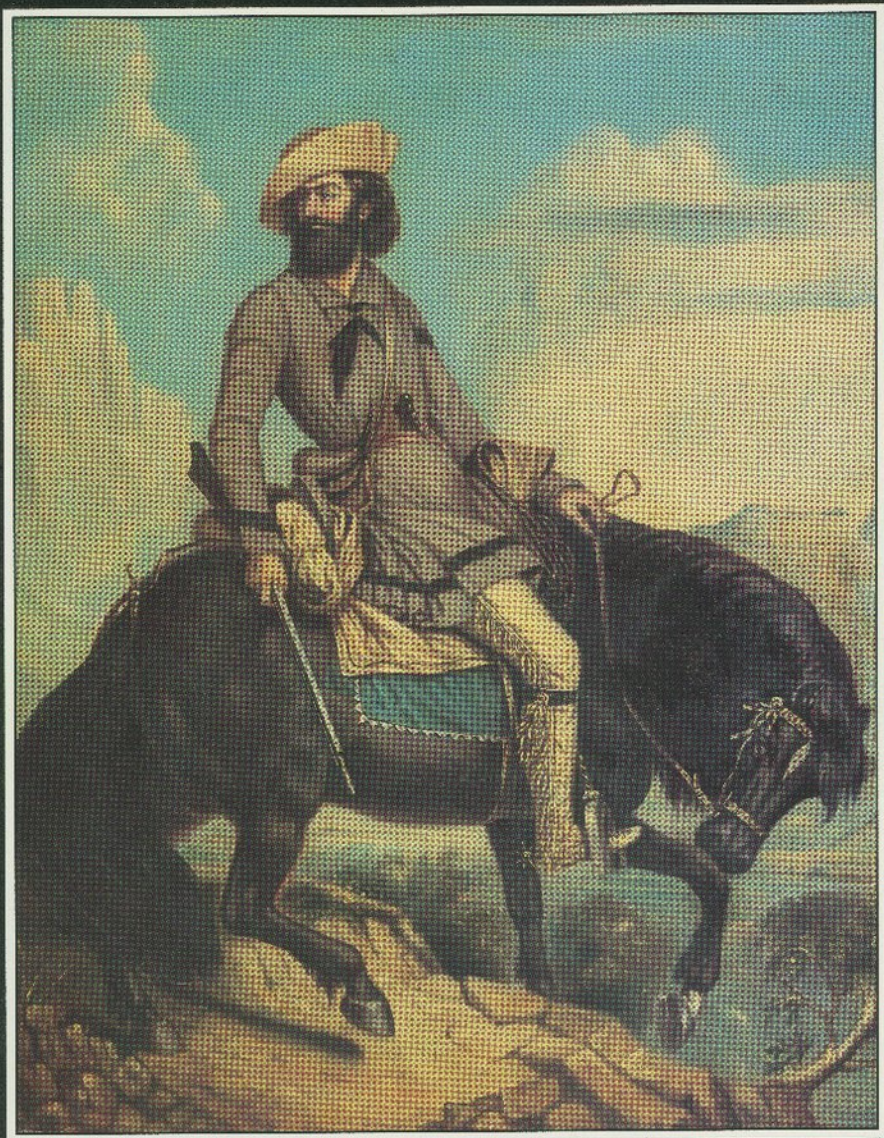


KANSAS HISTORY

A Journal
of the
Central Plains

Volume 14, Number 3
Autumn 1991





This issue's Henry L. Wolf photograph features the stately turn-of-the-century home of the David W. Pitts family located on North Tenth Street in Garden City, Kansas, circa 1895. The house was built by M. E. Clute, the owner of a local lumberyard, about 1886 and rented by the Pitts family. Seen in this photograph are: Dave Pitts (in buggy), his wife Emily B. (standing by gate), Dave's mother Mrs. Sylvester Pitts (sitting in swing), and Vida B., the Pitts' seven-year-old daughter, who posed on the front porch with her doll buggy. Notice the sprinkler watering the front lawn; a common sight in the 1990s but one which seems a bit unusual for the 1890s. The "Garden" was born of irrigation, however, and whether the goal was a green lawn or healthy vegetables, "Mother Nature" often needs a helping hand on the High Plains.

In 1886, Dave Pitts moved to Garden City during the area's initial boom and became a partner in a "Hat Shop and Gents' Furnishings store." The twenty-six-year-old clothier came to Kansas from Montana, where he met and married Emily Belle Martin while in the employ of the Northern Pacific Railroad. The Pitts stuck with their new Kansas community during the lean years that followed on the heels of their arrival, in all likelihood because Dave managed to secure appointment as postmaster in 1890. Subsequently, he was elected clerk of the district court. After two terms of office, Pitts took a position as a traveling representative for the Wolf Packing Company of Topeka. When he died in 1926 after twenty-five years with that company, Dave Pitts, a "friendly, jovial" man who was "always interested in the troubles of his friends," was said to be "one of the widest-known men in Western Kansas."

KANSAS HISTORY

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Cover: The trailblazer, as pictured here in Charles Deas' ca. 1844 oil painting, was a vital ingredient in opening the American West during the 1800s. The 1844 opening of the California-Oregon Trail from St. Joseph, Missouri, is the subject of this issue's article by Morris Werner.

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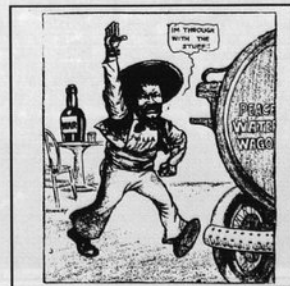
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Kansas History (USPS 290 620) is published quarterly by the Kansas State Historical Society, 120 West Tenth Street, Topeka, Kansas 66612-1291. Second-class postage paid at Topeka, Kansas. Postmaster: Send address changes to *Kansas History*, 120 West Tenth Street, Topeka, Kansas 66612-1291.

Printed by H. M. Ives and Sons, Inc.
Topeka, Kansas

Blazing a Trail



Flint Hills Folklife



Desperate Characters

