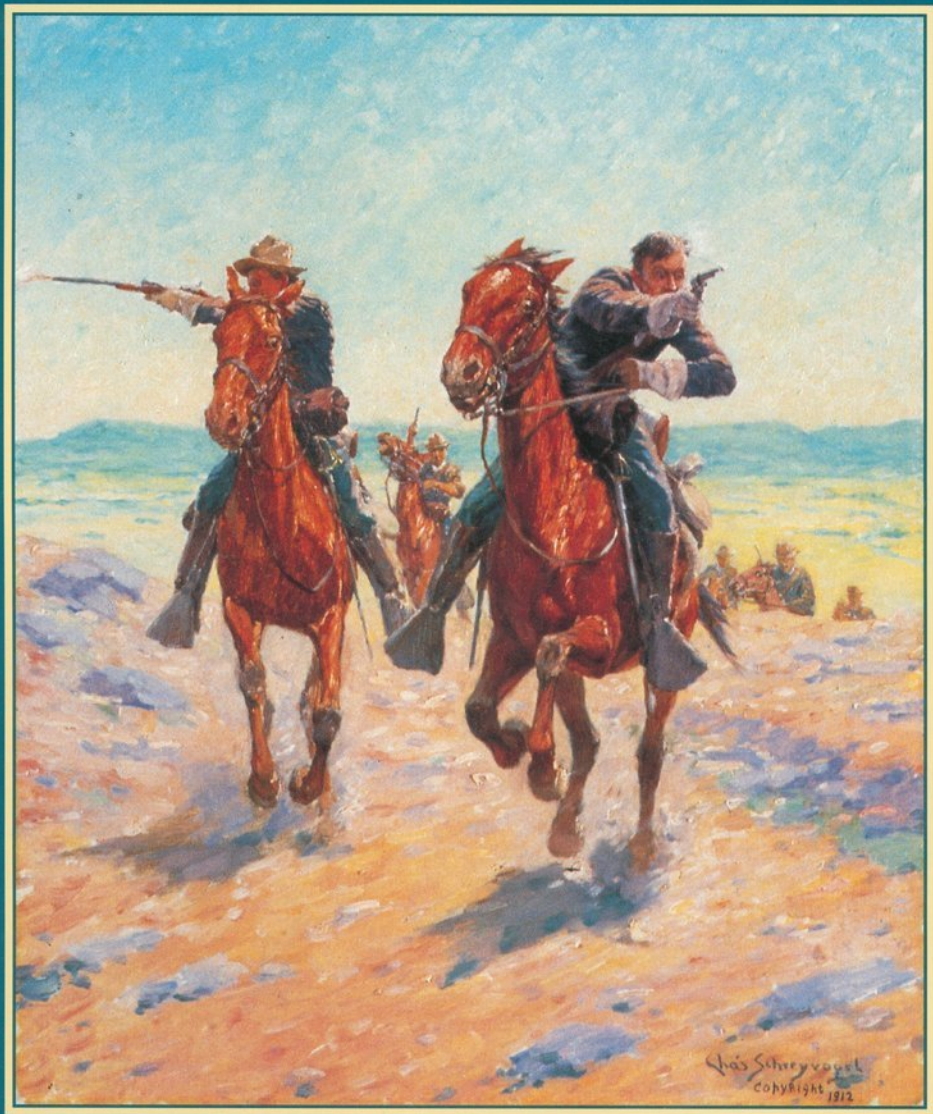


KANSAS HISTORY

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Centennial Highlights

The World's Columbian Exposition



Designed by Boston architect Sophia G. Hayden, the Woman's Building (right) featured foreign and domestic exhibits, an active assembly room, and a "roof-garden"; also shown is the pavilion of the White Star Steamship Company.

Majestic celebration, as well as horrendous despair, marked the year 1893. In Kansas the inauguration of the "first People's party" government led to a bloodless Legislative War and a rancorous session. As a stunned nation read of "revolution" and "anarchy" in Topeka, it also watched, with eager anticipation, final preparation for the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. President Grover Cleveland opened the World's Fair on May 1, but the celebration was tempered four days later with the onset of a national "panic" or depression; the big crash in the stock market came on June 27, 1893. Through the drought-ridden summer and anxious fall, the Chicago festivities continued without interruption, with "Kansas Week" activities commencing on September 11. The great irony of this year was not lost on contemporary observers. The Emporia Gazette thought America was most likely "the only country on earth where the people go through a panic and a World's fair the same year."

Despite the very real suffering of many Kansans, this was "the age of ostentation" and few objected to Kansas' participation in the fair and the state's grand effort to impress the world, and prospective immigrants, with its prosperity and promise for the future. "It is true the nation is in the midst of great financial depression," admitted the state's Populist governor,

and I shudder to contemplate the suffering and misery already at hand. The people are looking to Washington, and crying to their chosen representatives, "Watchman, what of the night?" But, with the inspiration born of hope and experience, the people of Kansas are looking beyond the shadow, and are also saying, "O, watchman, what of the glorious day?"

"Genuine Kansas pride" dictated that the state have its own exposition pavilion, and an array of educational, historical, agricultural, and industrial exhibits were displayed there and in other buildings throughout the fairgrounds. Thousands of Kansans joined the throngs making the trek to the "windy city," where, according to one observer, "everything goes at a rush—or has that appearance to the unsophisticated eye of a rural Kansan." This Jayhawk fairgoer stood in awe of "the magnificent arch of the transportation building" and "the massive columns that support the covered entrance to the manufacture's hall," and felt that one would need several weeks to take it all in. There, among the exotic peoples from "strange," far away lands and the marvels—curiosities, amusements, and other technological wonders—of the Industrial Revolution, one could forget, if only for a short while, the travails of this paradoxical year and decade.

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Cover: *On Patrol*, oil painting by Charles Schreyvogel. Military and commercial exploits on the Santa Fe Trail are the subject of this issue's article on the Fort Riley - Fort Larned Road. Back cover: *Banner of Marshall's Military Band*, Topeka, the official state band for Kansas Week at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago.

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