

# KANSAS HISTORY

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Memorial Building, headquarters of the Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, 1920s.

*"I believe we should erect a fine building, one that will be to this state what the congressional library is to the federal government."*

*John C. Nicholson, state claims agent,  
Topeka Daily Capital, April 15, 1908*

On September 27, 1911, President William Howard Taft laid the cornerstone for that "fine building," and on May 27, 1914, dedication ceremonies marked the completion of the GAR Memorial Building at Tenth and Jackson Streets in Topeka. Finally, almost a half century after the Civil War and nearly four decades since the founding of the Kansas State Historical Society, the state of Kansas had a fitting monument to its honored veterans and a worthy home for its historical collections.

Planning for some sort of memorial structure had been underway for many years, but periodic legislative initiatives stalled. Not surprisingly, appropriations were at issue, and it was the promise or prospect of a large federal grant that got the ball rolling. The Kansas State Historical Society, explained Secretary George W. Martin on December 4, 1908, had joined the movement launched by the Grand Army "to labor in behalf of an appropriation for a memorial building in which to care for the magnificent historical collection now in the state capitol. . . . The circumstances were propitious, a return of several hundred of thousands of dollars to Kan-

sas from the federal government, money expended in defense of the state forty years ago, being anticipated. There is hearty agreement between the Grand Army of the Republic . . . and the Historical Society in this request for a memorial building to house the offices and collections of both organizations."

With that federal money in hand, officials finally settled on the old Lincoln College site, and Martin could write on June 11, 1909: "The building proposition is making a very nice showing now, the site is practically settled and the architect is at work on the plans. He thinks he can give us a building 120 by 200 feet and three stories high for about \$175,000. This will be a monstrous building. It will have foundation and walls sufficient for six stories and to grow upwards suits the space very well to be had around the square." The final price tag was about a half million dollars for a five-story, 103 x 185 foot, marble structure.

Before the building was completed, the friendly partnership between the GAR and the Historical Society had been tested many times, and both sides had been forced to compromise on the arrangement and use of the building's interior space. But, after all was said and done, most everyone agreed with the Topeka Daily Capital, May 21, 1914: "Memorial Hall, majestic and grand, typifies the love and gratitude the people of Kansas hold for the soldiers of the Union. . . . [It] stands as a monument to the record made by Kansas soldiers in war and peace."

# KANSAS HISTORY

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Cover: Samuel Reader of the free-state militia, 1856. Conflict in Kansas Territory is the subject of "How Bloody Was Bleeding Kansas?" Back cover: Poster for the 1930 Kafir Corn Carnival in El Dorado. An article on Butler County's kafir corn carnivals begins on page 70.

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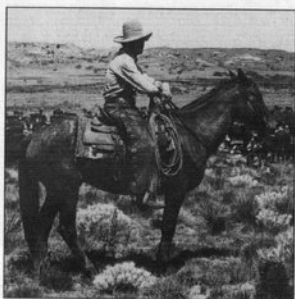
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# BUTLER COUNTY

KAFIR CORN CARNIVAL

AND

# FALL ROUNDUP



El Dorado, Kansas



Oct. 16 - 17 - 18

Agricultural Display - Stock Show  
School Contests - Industrial Exposition  
Carnival Rides

THREE BIG DAYS AND NIGHTS  
EDUCATIONAL AND ENTERTAINING

PARADES  
BANDS

Something Doing  
All The Time

October  
16 - 17 - 18



FALL  
ROUNDUP

Afternoon  
and Night

October  
16 - 17 - 18