

Crowds gather in Republic County at the unveiling of the Pike Monument at the Pawnee Village site, September 1901.

Making a Unique Heritage

Celebrating Pike's Pawnee Village and the Santa Fe Trail, 1900–1918

by Amanda Laugesen

“**F**or several years,” Katherine S. Lewis of the Kansas Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) declared in 1901 at the site of Pike’s Pawnee Village, “we have been seeking out antiquity for Kansas; we felt that our state was too new to be interesting.”¹ Historical celebrations held in Kansas through the early twentieth century represented the past that Kansas citizens such as Lewis desired to find. Pike’s Pawnee Village could provide a heritage worthy of comparison with the events of the Revolution that other chapters of the DAR in the United States celebrated. Lewis recognized that, by the standards of what most people reckoned as historically significant, Kansas had little that could compete. It was the beginning of a new century, and the people of Kansas were looking for new ways to define their communities. They were searching for a historical consciousness, a heritage specifically of, and for, Kansas.

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1. Katherine S. Lewis, “Congratulatory Address,” in “Kansas and the Flag. Dedication of a Monument Marking the Site of Pike’s Pawnee Village,” *Kansas Historical Collections, 1901–1902* 7 (1902): 287.

This hunger for tradition and heritage, for a common public understanding of the past, was manifest throughout the United States at the turn of the century. Historian Michael Kammen has attributed this, at least in part, to a deep-seated resistance to change.² Certainly, the desire for a past to provide stability can be particularly strong in times of uncertainty and upheaval. Kansas at the turn of the century had recently gone through troubled times from which the community had fresh memories—and fresh wounds. Populism, and the agrarian movements that had preceded it, had only recently met its demise. Economic booms and busts, with the related ebbs and flows of settle-

were keen to establish a history more than a generation deep and pursued this search for the past with a vengeance.

Celebrating the past was a significant opportunity for Kansans to get together to create and reinforce a sense of community and identity as Kansans. The Pike celebrations of 1901 and 1906, and the Santa Fe Trail marking project, were exemplary of the urge to make a heritage, to fashion and shape a past specifically tailored to the needs of the present. All communities desire to make a past for themselves. Kansas at the beginning of the twentieth century was a community in search of a unique past.



(Above and facing page) The 1901 celebration at the Pawnee Village site.

ment, plagued the history of late nineteenth-century Kansas.³ Such political and social turmoil in a state so young was unsettling. It had its effect on how the established generations of Kansans were going to talk about their past and their future. The past, as they constructed it, could be a welcome source of continuity. Recent settler communities—those with ostensibly the least history—

2. Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), 248.

3. An excellent recent discussion of some of the aspects of political culture in this period is Michael Lewis Goldberg, *An Army of Women: Gender and Politics in Gilded Age Kansas* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997). More general histories of Populism include Gene Clanton, *Populism: The Humane Preference in America* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1991); Scott G. McNall, *The Road to Rebellion: Class Formation and Kansas Populism, 1865–1900* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988); Jeffrey Ostler, *Prairie Populism: The Fate of Agrarian Radicalism in Kansas, Nebraska and Iowa, 1880–1892* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1993).

Spaniard and Pawnee. “Pike told the Indians that he didn’t care a rap what the Spaniards wanted,” related the *Journal*, “and that if anybody tried to stop him he would cut down the voting population of the Pawnee tribe very materially.”⁴ The celebrations would make this story a patriotic myth, but the *Journal’s* blunt style captured the true western appeal of Pike. The Pawnees relented, and the Spanish flag was lowered to make way for the Stars and Stripes, thereby beginning the long process of settlement of the area for the United States.

Johnson began investigating the locality for traces of the Pawnee village, for a long time without success. Eventually, while out driving with friends, Johnson found some traces of what she believed were remains of an Indian vil-

4. *Topeka State Journal*, September 8, 1906.

lage. She was convinced this was Pike's village. Scandia was its accepted site, championed by local amateur historian Noble L. Prentis. However, Johnson intended to pursue her claim, and after consulting historical material from the Kansas State Historical Society (KSHS), she took its secretary, Franklin G. Adams, to the site, and persuaded him of its authenticity. The area was in immediate danger of being plowed up, so Johnson and her husband purchased the site. "The deed came in about a month, and I was about the proudest woman in the country," recorded Johnson. "I felt like I had the whole state of Kansas, for it seemed that this was the height of my ambition."⁵

Local newspapers took an interest in the story, reporting on the work and progress in establishing the authenticity of the site. In 1896 the KSHS board of directors adopted resolutions recognizing Johnson's site, after her claim was confirmed by the investigation of Elliott Coues, a local antiquarian.⁶ A Pawnee Republic Historical Society (PRHS) was established, and the KSHS worked with this organization to decide what to do with the site. On July 6, 1899, Johnson and her husband donated the land to the KSHS. To thank Johnson for the donation, a result of her "patriotic zeal," it was decided that the site should be marked appropriately. The state legislature passed an act in 1901 "accepting title to the site of Pike's Pawnee Indian Village, in Republic county, Kansas, making appropriation for fencing and suitably marking the said premises, and placing the same under the care and control of the Kansas State Historical Society," and provided three thousand dollars for this work.⁷ Plans subsequently were made for the dedication of the site and an appropriate celebration.

The visible remains of the site were to be enclosed by an iron fence, to be built by the Topeka Capital Iron Works. The monument was a twenty-five-foot shaft of Barry granite, with the inscription:

Erected by the State of Kansas,
1901,
To mark the site of the Pawnee Republic, where
LIEUT. ZEBULON M. PIKE
caused the Spanish flag to be lowered
and the flag of the United States to be raised,
September 29, 1806.⁸

The cornerstone was laid on Independence Day, 1901. Participants and observers gathered in a grove on a bank of the Republican River, some half a mile from the site of the monument, to enjoy the day's events.⁹



Speeches during the celebration reflected the work of the PRHS and KSHS to transform the Pike story into myth and into an important lesson in heritage and patriotism. The Pike story was emblematic of the cause of American freedom and the establishment of American sovereignty in the area. It was a story of empire and settlement, of the defeat of Spain and Native Americans, and of the victory of the American settler. Shaping Pike into a usable heritage involved the complex intertwining of past and present.

5. Johnson's personal account of the events is in a footnote to "Kansas and the Flag," 261-62. The now accepted site of Pike's village is in Nebraska.

6. *Republic City News*, September 4, 1896, in "Kansas State Historical Society, Clippings," vol. 10: 200-4, Library and Archives Division, Kansas State Historical Society. Elliott Coues was the editor of Pike's account of the expedition, *The Expeditions of Zebulon Montgomery Pike* (New York: Francis P. Harper, 1895). See Elias Branson Cowgill, "Where Was the Pawnee Republic?" in "Kansas and the Flag," 301-11; "Twentieth Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors," January 21, 1896, vol. A, 175, Minutes of Annual Meetings of the Kansas State Historical Society, 1875-1906, Library and Archives Division, Kansas State Historical Society.

7. Kansas State Historical Society, "Twenty-fourth Annual Meeting, Report of the Secretary," January 16, 1900, *Kansas Historical Collections, 1897-1900* 6 (1900): 33-34.; "Kansas and the Flag," 261.

8. Kansas State Historical Society, *Kansas and the Flag: The State to Mark the Site Where Pike Raised the U.S. Flag in 1806*, program, (N.p.: 1901).
9. "Kansas and the Flag," 263.

J. C. Price, Republic County surveyor and superintendent of schools, opened the proceedings as the president of the PRHS. Invoking Pike's story as a testament to freedom, he declared to the crowd, "[w]e meet on this historic spot, this hall of fame, to place a tablet to the memory of one of our early heroes, and to dedicate these grounds to the cause of freedom . . . to perpetuate the record of one of the greatest peaceful victories of our history."¹⁰ The orators of the day invoked the recent memory of the Spanish–American War, certain to be fresh in the minds of those present.

Henry F. Mason's speech paralleled Pike's lowering of the Spanish flag and raising of the American with the re-



However impressive the events of 1901, they were far surpassed by the celebration five years later for the one hundredth anniversary of Pike's actions. Here, waving flags mark the entrance to the "Pawnee Centennial 1906."

cent defeat of imperialist Spain and the American victory in both Cuba and the Philippines. His speech outlined the Spanish history of Kansas, significantly alluding to a past that stretched back before American occupation. This past should be remembered and appropriately marked, but the more historic and significant story that Mason sought to tell was of the recent war.¹¹ America was fighting, Major W.

L. Brown had declared two years previous, "to relieve an oppressed people from the hellish acts of Spain and her tyranny, and to allow Cuban people and their generations yet to come the blessing of breathing the health-giving air of liberty."¹² It was not just rhetoric that shaped Kansan attitudes toward Spain: Kansas had raised several regiments for duty in Cuba, and the Twentieth Kansas under Colonel Frederick Funston saw action in the Philippines.¹³

The war thus lingered in the collective memory of many involved in the celebration. Noah L. Bowman, a Kansas teacher, spoke of the "Footsteps of Liberty" that linked Pike to an American heritage, which began at the first landing at Virginia and ended with the recent campaign in Cuba. The Spanish–American War was the culmination of American commitment to the cause of liberty. The people who settled Kansas were of "[t]hat class who, recently believing that the creole girl on the island of Cuba was as much entitled to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness as the Queen of Spain, march to battle again. . . . The Spanish flag of oppression and slavery again came down, and the stars and stripes went up." Bowman concluded his speech with the cry: "May the banner of liberty wave over Cuba and the stars and stripes over Kansas as long as time shall last!"¹⁴ In speeches such as these, the meanings of past and present became entangled and indistinguishable.

The struggles of the territorial past shaped the Kansan community's earliest histories and resonated through the rhetoric of the Pike celebrations. Born out of the experiences of those involved in the divisive events, such histories helped establish a "myth of origin," tales that gave meaning to those events and formed a basis for a common identity for the state and its people. Here was a story of the

12. W. L. Brown, "Kansas in the Spanish–American War," *Kansas Historical Collections, 1897–1900* 6 (1900): 130.

13. On Kansas's involvement in the Spanish–American War, see *ibid.*; Colonel Wilder S. Metcalf, "The Twentieth Kansas Regiment in the Philippines," *Kansas Historical Collections, 1897–1900* 6 (1900): 133–37; Lieutenant J. R. Whisner, "A Filipino Battle Flag," *ibid.* 146–47; William Zornow, *Kansas: A History of the Jayhawk State* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1954): 225–26; Karl I. Faust, *Campaigning in the Philippines* (1899; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1970); Christopher C. Lovett, "'To Serve Faithfully': The Twenty-Third Kansas Volunteer Infantry and the Spanish–American War," *Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains* 21 (Winter 1998–1999): 256–75; Lovett, "The Crowning Glory and the Greatest Grief: Kansas in the Spanish–American War," *Kansas Heritage* 6 (Summer 1998): 4–9; Justin Dragosani-Brantingham, "'Proud Are We': Private Rhinehart and the College Company of the Twenty-Second Kansas Volunteers," *Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains* 21 (Summer 1999): 100–32.

14. Noah L. Bowman, "Footsteps of Liberty," in "Kansas and the Flag," 291.

10. "J. C. Price's Address," *ibid.*, 264.

11. Henry F. Mason, "From Quivira to Kansas," *ibid.*, 268–76.

making of the state, of Kansas as a bulwark of liberty, saving the nation from the triumph of slave interests. Here were the small but noble band of free-state settlers battling the “border ruffians” and the insidious slave threat. Many histories ranging from the earliest reminiscences, to later ones such as William Connelley’s *A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans* (1918), presented the free-state battle as a noble and mythic one.¹⁵

This generation of history makers wrote of their own experiences, seeking to preserve their actions in the historical record and integrating Republican political rhetoric. But the generation that celebrated Pike also consisted of younger citizens who did not have direct memories of the early days of Bleeding Kansas. A new heritage was to be shaped by this generation, which also spoke to a spirit of reconciliation, of moving beyond earlier divisions for the sake of shoring up social authority in the face of new threats of change. As Nina Silber writes, “[f]aced with a society wracked with political and economic conflicts, as well as an increasingly alienated work force, middle-class Americans attempted to construct a culture that could heal their social and moral wounds—a culture that could uplift human emotions to create a sense of selflessness that would appeal to all.”¹⁶ The Spanish–American war itself necessitated a spirit of sectional unity for the sake of fighting a greater enemy. Margaret Hill McCarter, a famous Kansas author, believed the occasion was “sacred” when she spoke at the 1901 celebration. She invoked both the Spanish–American War and the cause of American liberty but specifically linked this to reconciliation. She believed partisan strife to be fading, with the rebel yell no longer being heard.

15. See, for example, William E. Connelley, *A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans*, vols. 1, 2 (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1918), 435–626; Charles R. Tuttle, *A New Centennial History of Kansas: Being a Full and Complete Civil, Political and Military History of the State, From Its Earliest Settlement to the Present Time* (Madison, Wisc.: Inter-State Book Company, 1876). See also early issues of *Kansas Historical Collections* and the many personal accounts of territorial and Civil War Kansas history. Connelley captured this vision of the territorial past: Kansas’s “spirit was forged in the white heat of battle from the refined principles evolved by a free people migrating to a new land to build a beacon to light up the way of Freedom” (p. 711).

16. Nina Silber examines this culture of reconciliation in *The Romance of Reunion: Northerners and the South, 1865–1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 106. She argues that in late nineteenth-century America a desire to preserve Victorian ideals motivated this work (p. 9, 95). Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory*, ch. 4. It should be noted that sectional divisions continued in Kansas, but reconciliation could be used as a motif in historic/heritage rhetoric because of the confidence of Republican dominance, especially after Populism’s collapse.

Instead, “[t]he wider education of people and common national purposes are slowly creating a new brotherhood.”¹⁷ The rhetoric of Bleeding Kansas was not entirely abandoned; indeed, its spirit and language often were invoked, but the history this new generation sought to fashion was one that stretched farther back. This heritage would better reflect the meanings they set upon, or desired to set upon, their community.

A new sort of heritage, specifically ‘of’ Kansas, was in the process of being created. It was partly based on a sense of community rooted in place. As Kammen has argued, regional pride often is reflected in the attempt to create a local



The Woman’s Kansas Day Club, DAR, Kansas State Historical Society, and the Johnsons played significant roles in the elaborate 1906 Pawnee Village celebration. Among the dignitaries posed here are: (front row, beginning fourth from left) Elizabeth Johnson, Sarah Hoch, Zu Adams, and George Johnson. (Back row) George W. Martin (third from left), Cora Lewis (fifth from left), and Lilla Day Monroe (third from right).

history and heritage and often is more effective than national pride in engaging people.¹⁸ Historian Robert Athearn states that local celebrations often are linked to a desire for respectability that can come only from tradition and the sense of a continuous past.¹⁹ For Kansans, the Pike celebrations were a vehicle to promote local pride. A sense of pride and community anchored in local understandings also helped mediate and make comprehensible broader under-

17. Margaret Hill McCarter, “Lest We Forget,” in “Kansas and the Flag,” 279.

18. Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory*, 272, 141.

19. Robert G. Athearn, *The Mythic West in Twentieth-Century America* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1986): 50.

standings of nationhood.²⁰ The rhetoric of patriotism that ran throughout the celebrations suggested that it helped articulate nationalism through a sense of the local.

But if these celebrations were in one sense more inclusive—by moving beyond sectional divisions—it also was more exclusive. The celebrations were products of the desires of a middle-class, Protestant, Republican establishment. Heritage often is the pursuit of established groups in a society who are in a social position by which they can make themselves respected and heard. They have the time and money to involve themselves in



Standing at the Santa Fe Trail marker in Council Grove are Senator George P. Morehouse (left) and George W. Martin.

these pursuits, and heritage and the past often have special meanings to them. Organizations such as the KSHS or Kansas DAR were part of this elite. Heritage involved constructions of the past that people could relate to their own lives and interests. For the dominant groups of Kansas society, such ideas as patriotism and good citizenship could

20. Anne Ruggles Gere, *Intimate Practices: Literacy and Cultural Work in U.S. Women's Clubs 1880-1920* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997): 58. Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 6, shows how Civil War monuments were used in the late nineteenth century to link communities and "the abstract machinery of the nation-state."

be infused into heritage. Immigration and political agitation, among other sources of anxiety in this period, destabilized these dominant groups' world. Heritage could be used as a means of education, even control. It spoke to these current concerns and worries about the future, providing stability and continuity in a world that seemed threatening and transient. Heritage was in this sense fundamentally conservative—a past that could provide a basis for the future. It could help counter the sense of a radical disjunction with the past that could threaten or undermine the young community of Kansas. But also it was dynamic: heritage continually drew on the present, and this meant it could be a forum for voicing new meanings about the past.²¹

The Spanish-American confrontation served a purpose in understanding another confrontation: that of Native American and Anglo-American. The story of Pike provided a genealogy of possession: the land of Kansas was "liberated" from the yoke of evil Spanish possession and not taken by act of conquest or dispossession of Native Americans. A key part of the ceremony involved handing the deed to the site over to Governor William Eugene Stanley, an act redolent with the symbolism of possession and dispossession. Native Americans were, by the logic of this story, to be dismissed. According to Governor Stanley, the Native American inhabitants of the area were forgotten, and "homes, schoolhouses and churches where formerly the wigwam stood" illustrated the "wonderful growth [that] reads like a fairy tale."²² The new Kansas community had no place for what it perceived as mere relics and impediments to progress.

The process of conquest and the encounter with Native Americans was central to the symbolic meanings of the Pike story. Visions of future progress and prosperity were integrated into the Pike rhetoric.²³ The explorer was imagined by Mason "blazing a way through the wilderness, seeking information as to the newly acquired domain of America, as a preliminary to its occupation and cultivation by a race who were willing to render an equivalent for

21. General works on heritage include Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory*, and David Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

22. "Governor Stanley Accepts the Deed," in "Kansas and the Flag," 265, 266.

23. *Farmer's Advocate* (Topeka), August 30, 1906, used the Pike monument to tout the assets of Republic County: "Could Lieutenant Pike stand by the granite shaft that commemorates his honored deed in Republic county, instead of seeing a sandy desert incapable of being subdued by the Saxon race, as he thought, his eyes would behold one of the garden spots of the west."

wealth in labor."²⁴ Mason deliberately invoked a mythic West of trailblazing pioneers, but he also played on the territorial story by suggesting the future of Kansas as a free state and contrasting the American settler-citizen with the fortune-seeking Spaniard.

F. Dumont Smith, publisher of the *Kinsley Mercury*, devoted his speech to a story about "The Anglo-Saxon and His Conquests," invoking popular rhetoric on the mission of the Anglo-Saxon race. Although for Smith white Kansans were, apparently, blessed with the right blood, he more significantly talked of how Kansans were a unique people. The generation of 1901 would be "bone of the Kansas bone and flesh of the Kansas flesh"; they would "know no other mother. They have no past but hers; they ask no other future. They are strong with the brawn and vigor of a new land."²⁵ The nation would look to this generation born of the hardships of settlement to guide America through the new century. For Smith, Pike evoked the future, of the land and mentality that would provide America with future greatness. Smith foresaw a new and unique Kansas community, not only Anglo-Saxon but also a special product of the unique environment of Kansas. The Kansas community being imagined at the celebrations was an Anglo-American one, even if it was uniquely Kansan. The boundaries of community belonging were being distinctly set and defined.

The Pike monument was finally unveiled on September 30, 1901. George Martin, secretary of the KSHS, had addressed an Old Settlers' Meeting on the site a year before. The people of Kansas, he believed, were upholding Pike's values. "We must account for what we do, and I believe that the pioneers and people of Kansas, as Pike looks down on us from heaven, can meet his eye and say we have kept the faith with the flag."²⁶ Indeed, the celebration of 1901 was in keeping with Pike's (unintentional) legacy for Kansas. Elizabeth Johnson was selected by the local DAR chapter to perform the unveiling, which she did to the strains of the crowd singing the "Star Spangled Banner." The unveiling was followed by a twenty-one gun salute by the Sixth Battery Field Artillery.²⁷

However impressive, the 1901 events soon were overtaken by the elaborate celebration five years later for the

one hundredth anniversary of Pike's actions. The *Topeka State Journal*, informing the public about the meaning of the upcoming celebration, wrote, "The flag raising in which Zebulon Montgomery Pike participated is about the first thing in Kansas history that the people of this state are justified in bragging about. Prior to Pike's little adventure the state didn't have any history to speak of."²⁸ Pike had entered the Kansas historical imagination as a significant figure, and the 1906 celebration far surpassed that of 1901 (the former having four days of events, beginning on Wednesday, September 26, with Woman's Day, and ending on Saturday with Pike's Day).



At the unveiling of this Olathe marker, J.T. Burns declared, monuments "keep alive in the minds of the people . . . the heroic deeds of men, the mighty achievements of armies and other historic events."

Woman's Day provides interesting insights into the involvement of women in heritage. Heritage and contemporary politics became fused around the figure of Pike, as women contributed centrally to fashioning public historical discourse. Woman's Day showcased some of the most powerful women's organizations in the state, including the Kansas Federation of Women's Clubs and the Woman's

28. *Topeka State Journal*, September 8, 1906.

24. Mason, "From Quivira to Kansas," 271.

25. F. Dumont Smith, "The Anglo-Saxon and His Conquests," in "Kansas and the Flag," 296.

26. *Topeka Daily Capital*, September 30, 1900.

27. McCarter, "Lest We Forget," 283. The Pawnee Republic Historical Society met in the years leading up to the more significant 1901 event. A flag raising at an 1896 event at the site was described by the *Republic City News*, October 2, 1896, as "a soul-inspiring incident."

Christian Temperance Union, and was a forum for women to express their visions for Kansas. About five thousand people were believed to have attended that day, which included an informal reception to allow people to meet the governor's wife, Sarah (Mrs. Edward W.) Hoch. The *Topeka Daily Capital*, reporting on the day, acknowledged that "most of the prominent women of the state were present," and it reprinted a number of the speeches given.²⁹

Mrs. Hoch was the first to address the assembled crowds. She approached her speech tentatively, acknowledging that she was not a public speaker. Commemorating Pike was especially important for women, she believed, as



Santa Fe Trail marker at Fort Larned.

"it was an intelligent, enterprising, pioneer Kansas woman who discovered this historic spot and made the perpetuation of this thrilling incident in Kansas history possible in this definite and tangible manner."³⁰ This woman was of course Elizabeth Johnson, discoverer and donor of the site. Pike's monument honored not only Pike but also Johnson, a heroine for Kansas women. She had found the spot and ensured its preservation, thus demonstrating her patriotism and respect for the Kansas past.³¹ Mary A. (Prescott) Horton, of the DAR, was one of many others who valued and praised Johnson's work. Horton claimed a special connection with this spot because a woman had discovered the site.³² The effort to remember and celebrate Johnson's work

29. "Where Pike Raised The First Flag," *Topeka Daily Capital*, September 27, 1906.

30. Mrs. E.W. Hoch, "A Woman's Greeting," in "One Hundred Years Under the Flag. The Centennial Celebration at Pike's Pawnee Village," *Kansas Historical Collections*, 1907-1908 10 (1908): 24.

31. *Ibid.*

32. *Topeka Daily Capital*, September 27, 1906, notes the number of women who praised Johnson's work; Mrs. Albert H. Horton, "Daughters of the American Revolution," in "One Hundred Years Under the Flag," 29.

was important: it suggested how Kansas women saw themselves as a group united in the work of preservation and patriotism. It tied in importantly with the role of women in education and citizenship, something many of these women's organizations saw as vital.³³

The Woman's Kansas Day Club (WKDC) played a significant role in the celebration of both Pike and Johnson. The WKDC's explicit aims were collecting Kansas history and fostering patriotism. On behalf of the WKDC, Cora G. Lewis declared, "It is by constant tending the flame of patriotism that we keep the sacred fire burning and like those who guarded the sacred fires of Rome, the women who keep the heart aflame with love of country and comradeship are simply being true to their heritage." Women were the keepers of the flame of Kansas heritage. Patriotism and love of place and community was something located, and to be nurtured, in the home. In 1906 the women decided to pay special attention to the Pike celebration as an event that would raise considerable patriotic and historic interest. They had already recognized Elizabeth Johnson when they presented her with a gold badge for her patriotic efforts at their first annual meeting. For the women of the WKDC, Elizabeth Johnson was a state benefactor who had "earned her place among the great of the land."³⁴

The Pike celebration was seen as fulfilling the main objectives of the WKDC: "To foster patriotism in Kansas youth. To preserve Kansas history. To promote comradeship among Kansas women." The work of the WKDC at the Pike event would "go down in history," the women believed. "It was the first time that a state organization of women has taken part in the celebration of an event in the State's History," and they deemed it "an honor that as women, we, too, could pay our tribute to the past, and that our 100th anniversary had this equal recognition from loyal men and women of our glorious commonwealth."³⁵ Margaret Hill McCarter, writing in the women's club jour-

33. Numerous studies on the work of middle-class women's organizations in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century are available. Women were intimately involved in cultural work that contributed to social, political, and cultural discourse. See Gere, *Intimate Practices*, 5, 145; Ann Firor Scott, *Natural Allies: Women's Associations in American History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 113; Goldberg, *An Army of Women*; June O. Underwood, "Civilizing Kansas: Women's Organizations, 1880-1920," *Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains* 7 (Winter 1984): 291.

34. "Kansas Types.—Mrs. Elizabeth Johnson," *Club Member* 3 (September 1906) 13-14; *History of the Woman's Kansas Day Club* (Junction City: John Montgomery and Son, 1907), 5, 13, 17.

35. *History of the Woman's Kansas Day Club*, 22, 26.

nal *The Club Member*, which she edited, believed Pike to be foremost in the Kansas hall of fame and reiterated the image of him as the bearer of the American flag to Kansas soil. For McCarter it was fitting that the WKDC should choose to celebrate such a noble figure.³⁶

After the 1906 celebration George Martin praised the work of the WKDC, declaring that the women had “struck the key-note of patriotism and usefulness.”³⁷ The KSHS, intimately involved with both Pike celebrations, had been fostering a close relationship with women’s organizations. In 1900 Martin wrote an open letter to Kansas women’s clubs requesting their help in collecting local historical material.³⁸ In 1904 the Topeka Federation of Women’s Clubs held a meeting in the KSHS rooms in the statehouse, reinforcing the relationship between the work of women’s clubs and the KSHS.³⁹ As George Martin expressed in a 1905 report, the women of Kansas were essential in its history. “This Society and its work have drawn largely from the heroic women of each year since the first settlement, and their movement to celebrate our natal day along historical lines is entitled to the respect and encouragement of this Society and every citizen.”⁴⁰

The WKDC’s Cora Lewis, speaking of the Pike monument, said, “in the mind’s eye across a century so full of romance it is like the shifting pictures in a dream.” Lewis alluded to the power of the historical monument—to evoke both historical memories, imagined and experienced, and to evoke the present and how the past impinges on that present. “Where in all time is there a story so full of romance, so rich in dramatic history?” asked Lewis. She imagined the events of the past century as events of great magnitude, as part of the triumph of empire: “the white man has become master of an empire in the West that in 1806 belonged to Indians and solitude.” The story of women was absolutely

36. Margaret Hill McCarter, “What’s What with the Editor,” *Club Member* 3 (September 1906): 15. McCarter involved herself with many women’s organizations, working actively for them, and her work was always greatly patriotic and evocative of Kansas history. A popular writer, she also was much in demand as a public speaker and spoke at both the 1901 and 1906 Pike celebrations. For a brief biography, see Sister M. Hildalita Carl, *Kansas History as Seen in the Work of Margaret Hill McCarter* (Seneca, N.Y.: Courier-Tribune Press, 1938.)

37. “Meeting of the Board of Directors,” *Kansas Historical Collections*, 1901–1902 7 (1902): 18.

38. *Wyandott Herald*, March 1, 1900.

39. Kansas State Historical Society, *Report of Secretary* (N.p.: 1904), 7.

40. *Ibid.* (1905), 10.

essential in this. “Let us,” she proclaimed, “on every occasion for the celebration of the things worthy to be remembered in Kansas history, pay our tribute of affection to the memory of the pioneer women.”⁴¹

Kansas settlers were heroes in the mold of Pike, and present-day Kansans had an obligation to remember and emulate them. But Lewis also acknowledged the pain of that settlement, citing the stories on pages of “which the recording angel has dropped tears.”⁴² Painful memories were as important as the stories of triumph. Her story of



Marking the Santa Fe Trail at Lost Springs by the Wichita DAR, 1908.

Kansas was not one of conquest but one of the establishment of enlightened values and brotherhood, eagerly embraced by the indigenous people. Lewis painted a romanticized picture of a taming of the land, a building over of the places of conquest and investing these places with new meanings of pastoral ideals and domestic and agricultural bliss, although this belied the tough realities of Kansas life. Lewis embedded her memories and identity in the Kansas environment that shaped her sensibilities, but she failed to fully comprehend them. The story of settlement was re-fashioned and domesticated through the cultural work of Kansas women.

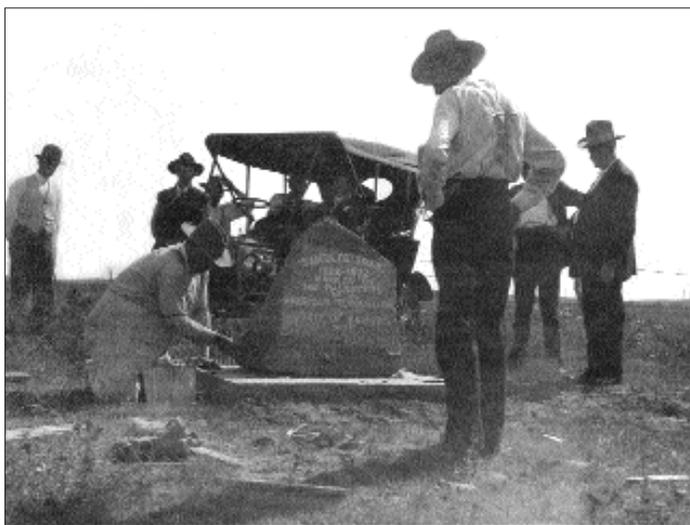
Woman’s Day was followed by Historical Day and, according to the *Topeka Daily Herald*, nearly ten thousand people were present on this day of the celebration, the weather being particularly fine.⁴³ Attending soldiers performed a

41. Mrs. James M. Lewis Jr., “A Romance Century,” in “One Hundred Years Under the Flag,” 43, 44.

42. *Ibid.*, 45.

43. “Historical Day,” *Topeka Daily Herald*, September 28, 1906.

drill and maneuvers to entertain the crowd. The maneuvers were particularly well received, according to newspaper reports. Several Kansas citizens, including Martin and Connelley of the KSHS, made speeches, prompting Kansans to preserve their past. Grand Army Day, that Friday, included a reunion of the GAR with talks on patriotism.⁴⁴ All public schools in Kansas were to devote one hour to studying Pike. Planners envisaged “three hundred thousand school children, in every city and township in Kansas . . . acting in unison with the services at Pawnee Village.” The WKDC planned for these students to take flags to school on that day and to sing the “Star Spangled Banner.”⁴⁵



Santa Fe Trail marker being placed at Harmony School in Finney County, September 1907.

Gomer T. Davies in a final speech on Pike’s Day believed the celebration to have “fixed the sentiment of patriotism in the minds of Kansas people,” and “[s]o long as such seed is sown and takes root in the hearts of our countrymen, so long shall our government last, its beneficent influence continue to bless the lives of men in every land and under every sky.”⁴⁶ The *Republic City News* for October 4, 1906, declared the Pawnee Centennial celebration “a grand success.” The Woman’s Kansas Day Club believed that the crowds exceeded all expectations, describing the scene of the celebration: “Many camped on the grounds for the four days, others came daily from miles away. They came in all sorts of vehicles, wagons a few, automobiles a

few, and carriages by the thousand filled with prosperous and happy citizens of Republic and adjoining counties.”⁴⁷

Around this same time the DAR, with assistance from the KSHS, took on a campaign to mark the Santa Fe Trail. In presenting a paper to the 1906 American Historical Association’s Conference of State Historical Societies, Zu Adams, KSHS librarian and DAR member, outlined the DAR’s motivations for pursuing this project. The Daughters had been puzzling “over the possibilities of raising shrines to patriotism within their own boundaries.” The trail offered an opportunity for women to celebrate the past and foster patriotism. In the spirit of reconciliation, Adams argued that the trail was beyond any sectional interest. “Eastern Kansas was well scarred in the war which dedicated her soil to freedom in the fifties, but that strife was fraternal, and is best forgotten, at least by a society whose ancestors hail from the South as well as from the North.” She also believed that the marking would “result in the increase of the historic conscience, which is akin to patriotism, in the minds of the children of Kansas.” Adams referred to the earlier Pike celebration as one of the first significant endeavors to celebrate heritage in Kansas, and she also noted Johnson’s contribution.⁴⁸

First suggested by Fannie Thompson, DAR state regent, before her death in 1903, marking the route of the Santa Fe Trail was taken up as a serious project at the 1904 DAR conference. Almira Cordry, “official historian” of the organization, chronicled the project’s story in 1915. She wrote that the Daughters had “wrenched back from oblivion the famous old highway, and erected markers, not only to point the way of the Trail, but as a memorial of thousands of sturdy pioneers and soldiers who lost their lives when the way was forged across prairies and desert sands, the home of the Indians.”⁴⁹ The marking restored the trail and its followers into the collective memory and heritage of Kansas. It was a good cause because the trail’s length covered the entire state of Kansas, thereby making the project a unifying one. It also involved a historical exercise in which the KSHS made its greatest contribution: to find the actual route of the trail. For the Daughters, however, the trail provided an absorbing history of romance that needed to be recorded and remembered. They believed it was es-

47. *History of the Woman’s Kansas Day Club*, 26; “A Grand Success!” *Republic City News*, October 4, 1906.

48. Zoe [sic] Adams, “The Marking of the Santa Fe Trail,” *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1906* 1 (1908): 152, 156.

49. Mrs. T. A. Cordry, *The Story of the Marking of the Santa Fe Trail by the Daughters of the American Revolution in Kansas and the State of Kansas* (Topeka: Crane and Co., 1915), 15.

44. *Ibid.*; *The Flag in Kansas*, program (N.p.: 1906).

45. *The Flag in Kansas*; *Topeka Daily Capital*, September 1906.

46. Gomer T. Davies, “At the Beginning,” in “One Hundred Years Under the Flag,” 159.

pecially important to educate children of the state on the trail's history, and schools became heavily involved in the marking campaign.⁵⁰

The KSHS concluded that the trail marking project was a "most inspiring" task, reporting that the markers "excited an historical interest never before reached," and people would "drive miles out of their way to see the markers." The project also led to a greater interest in local history, they believed, arguing that the legislature did well to spend its money "to the purpose of perpetuating heroic incident, inculcating patriotism and local and state pride" which would result in "an interested and enthusiastic citizenship."⁵¹

As early as 1902 the KSHS was approached to help find a true map of the trail route. Its board of directors considered and approved the request, and it formed a commission to help prepare a map. The board "believed that the citizens would take pride in marking its course with inexpensive monuments of stone."⁵² However, it proved more difficult than expected to find a true map of the route that could be used, and it was necessary to issue an appeal for help to old settlers and travelers of the route. Many settlers contributed enthusiastically to the campaign.⁵³

It was vital to secure appropriations from the state legislature, and one thousand dollars initially was given to aid the project. It was thought that cement stone markers would be the only affordable ones, and local citizens would need to contribute to the cost of placing them. The small markers were to be set along the sides of present roads that crossed the old trail, needing no foundation but simply level ground. A fine was to be levied for any defacement of these markers. However, larger markers seemed more fitting, and as cement stone was inappropriate for the Kansas climate, they would be made of red granite.⁵⁴

Various activities were held to raise both funds and public awareness. A "Trail Day" was organized for 1906 that involved Kansas schools, and a program of appropriate activities was distributed to teachers. One activity con-

50. Schools helped place the markers along the trail. The markers acted to educate the young, explained Finney County superintendent of schools H. P. Nichols, who "thoroughly believed in developing within the minds of the young, reverence and interest in the reminiscent and historical, and that his plan for marking the trail in their county would do so." His plan evidently was a success, as the Finney County children were so active as to place five markers instead of the expected three. See Cordry, *The Story of the Marking of the Santa Fe Trail*, 128.

51. Kansas State Historical Society, *Report of Secretary* (N.p.: 1907), 27.

52. "Twenty-seventh Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors," December 2, 1902, vol. A, 252–53, Minutes of Annual Meetings of the Kansas State Historical Society, 1875–1906.

53. Adams, "The Marking of the Santa Fe Trail," 154.

54. *Ibid.*

sisted of a contest for the best student essays on Santa Fe Trail and Kansas history. A penny collection activity did not raise as much money as planned, despite an offering of a national flag for the largest financial contribution. However, the committee was satisfied that public interest had been turned to the trail and that enough money had been raised for some marking memorials.⁵⁵

Made from stone quarried in Granite, Oklahoma, markers were to be at least two feet high, with the inscription:

SANTA FE TRAIL
1822–1872
MARKED BY
THE DAUGHTERS
OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION
AND THE
STATE OF KANSAS
1906

The DAR and KSHS were jointly responsible for placing the markers. The Santa Fe railroad offered free transportation of the markers, and localities generally bore the cost of setting the concrete foundations for them.⁵⁶

The Topeka DAR chapter unveiled its marker in June 1907. The unveiling included speeches and patriotic songs, and a supper was held in the evening with George Martin addressing the assembly. He spoke of settlers who had emerged to tell their tales of the Santa Fe Trail and of schoolchildren eager to hear the stories and pass them on. He concluded that, "the good which the marking of the Trail has done in reviving the interest in Kansas history, cannot be estimated." Martin also spoke at the unveiling of the Council Grove marker and paid tribute to the work of the DAR. "In doing this," he stated, "they are commemorating the historic and stirring events through which Kansas has passed in its growth from a wilderness to a mighty State; they are preserving, by lasting memorials, material for the writers, historians and poets of the future."⁵⁷

Each marker interwove stories that surrounded the marked places before, during, and since the time of the trail. Olathe's marker, for example, marked the scene of Civil War troubles—Olathe had been the rendezvous point of Kansas soldiers during the Price Raid in 1864. Palmyra's

55. Cordry, *The Story of the Marking of the Santa Fe Trail*, 46, 59; Adams, "The Marking of the Santa Fe Trail," 155.

56. Adams, "The Marking of the Santa Fe Trail," 155.

57. Cordry, *The Story of the Marking of the Santa Fe Trail*, 91, 98, 111.

marker was dedicated as part of a city park to be known as Trail Park, and it addressed the history of Palmyra: a repair stop along the trail and the place where free-state leaders and Missourians faced each other in the tense days of June 1856.⁵⁸

The marking of the Olathe trail memorial was part of the Old Settlers Association of Johnson County's annual meeting. The records of the meeting suggest that several thousand people gathered for the day's events, which included the marker ceremony and a display of relics inside Olathe's courthouse. Grace Meeker, Kansas secretary of the DAR, spoke about the heritage of Kansas, a history "as



Old-timers gather around the Santa Fe Trail marker in Dodge City.

wonderful as any of the thirteen colonies" with "[h]istoric stories just as thrilling." Meeker emphasized how the markers would prompt future generations to remember their state and locality's history. She was proud to unveil the markers in front of the old settlers, whose personal experiences were so vital to Kansas and trail history. Johnson County citizens had been especially useful when the correct trail was being mapped.⁵⁹

J. T. Burns spoke at the Olathe marker unveiling of the significance of the trail. "Monuments are erected to perpetuate the memory of events," Burns declared. All communities sought to build monuments, he believed, in order "to commemorate and keep alive in the minds of the people and of succeeding generations, the heroic deeds of men, the mighty achievements of armies and other important events of history." The marker would commemorate all the

heroes of history that had passed that way. All should take heed of this past and aim to emulate past examples so "as to aid in the great work of the civilization, elevation, purification and refinement of the inhabitants of the world."⁶⁰

Markers were tied to many Kansas stories, some personal, some invoking the broader history of Kansas and the United States.⁶¹ The Council Grove monument marked the site of a council of United States Commissioners with Osage Indians that resulted in a treaty for right of way on the trail. The Council Grove marker included in its inscription, "COUNCIL GROVE. On

this spot, August 10th, 1825, the treaty was made with the Osage Indians for the right of way of the Trail." The marking ceremony involved former Kansas senator George P. Morehouse and a Council Grove settler placing a memorial history box under the marker. The keys to this box were then placed in the KSHS collections.⁶² Morehouse delivered speeches at several marker dedications and placed other memorial history boxes at those sites. As he excavated and presented histories surrounding lesser-known places where markers were placed, the Santa Fe Trail marking project thus became a prompt to not only collect local history but to encourage that it be actively researched and debated.

An attempt to save Old Pawnee Rock was part of the trail campaign. The Santa Fe Trail had gone past the rock, which had been "a veritable 'Rock of Ages' to many a train of pioneers." "Soldiers and settlers carved their names on the rock, and names illustrious in history today were left there," wrote Almira Cordry. "As civilization reached the rock, the owner of the farm on which it stands found it was good building material and, regardless of its historic memories, began quarrying it away [and] so the carved names were lost." The rock had been neglected but was taken up as a project by people of the nearby town to preserve it for the future. The Santa Fe Trail committee put its best efforts toward helping Benjamin Unruh, who owned the land on which the rock stood, refused to sell his five acres of land for less than three thousand dollars. In an effort to raise the funds, Cordry was instrumental in writing letters to newspapers all across the state. Soon the Woman's Kansas Day Club took on the project and enlisted the help of other women's organizations. Unruh, however, then demanded that it was necessary not

58. *Ibid.*, 105, 107.

59. Old Settlers' Association of Johnson County, Kansas, *Tenth Annual Meeting* (N.p.: September 7, 1907), 5, 13–14.

60. *Ibid.*, 15–18.

61. Such as that of Dan B. Bell who was married on the trail, *see ibid.*, 119.

62. *Ibid.*, 109, 111.

only to purchase the five acres but also to make extensive improvements to the site, including creating a bronze monument and building an avenue from the town of Pawnee Rock to the rock itself. Unruh also insisted that one hundred dollars a year be spent on maintenance or the property would revert to him or his heirs.⁶³

Through an agreement with the state legislature for the area to be turned into a public park, Unruh's requirements were met. The monument, a thirty-foot-high shaft of Barry granite, was similar to Pike's. The base included the Unruh name, a dedication to the women's organizations involved in the project, a carved design of a "mighty buffalo gazing out over the endless plains with melancholy eyes," and "a magnificent Indian head in profile."⁶⁴ The base captured the threads that ran through much of the historical celebrations of Pike and the Santa Fe Trail, and Cordry observed that the monument combined Old World genius with western ideals.

Kansans were looking in fresh ways at their state for a heritage, for a past that was not tied exclusively to the East and the sectional divisions of that history, and for sites where antiquity could both be "discovered" and created. The heritage that Kansas citizens were attempting to capture was a unique one and one that also was typically western. Both Pike's story and the Santa Fe Trail were evocative of western history and myth. Pride in locality and environment had emerged, and heritage could reflect it. Patriotism and faith in the nation were woven into this heritage, in ways that made them uniquely Kansan.

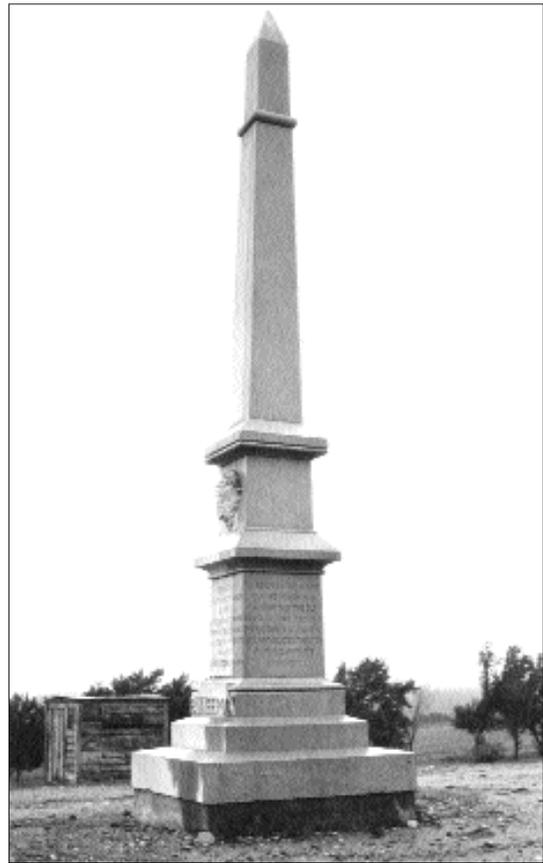
A sense of community and identity was, at least in part, grounded in a vision of the past that granted those in the present—and those in control of the heritage—legitimacy and authority. The Native American presence shadowed the triumphalist rhetoric. As emblems of the antiquity that Kansans were reaching for, they were at the center of the story. But equally, they were dismissed, victims of an inevitable process of progress. Heritage in Kansas at this time could only understand conquest and dispossession in such a way. Native Americans, like the buffalo, belonged to the past. Heritage was not just about a romanticized past, it was a mirror that reflected back images of themselves that these Kansans wanted to see. If an undercurrent of anxiety ran through the brash and powerful rhetoric of these celebrations, it perhaps was not recognized. Kansans were seeking a vision for future by looking back at the past, searching for ways to make sense of the present and to

63. *Ibid.*, 145–46, 148, 150–51.

64. *Ibid.*, 157–58.

comfort themselves that the future would be what they wished it to be.

Heritage has a way of being many different things to many different people, combining contradictory meanings. When people gazed at those granite shafts rising from the landscape, when they drove out of their way to look at the Santa Fe Trail markers, what did they think? Perhaps they brought to them their own experiences and memories of their time in Kansas, perhaps they thought fleetingly of the Native American or the buffalo on the Plains. Their thoughts probably would have been a melange of popular culture images of the West, lessons on



A thirty-foot tall monument was placed at Pawnee Rock to mark the Santa Fe Trail.

Kansas history learned at school, and perhaps thoughts about the progress of the United States as it entered the twentieth century. The Pike's Pawnee Village celebrations and the Santa Fe Trail marking project wove together a range of meanings for all those involved, and therein lies the fascination with attempting to capture these meanings and the significance of Kansas heritage.

