



NEWS

6425 SW Sixth Avenue

Topeka KS 6615-1099

785-272-8681

www.kshs.org/sesquicentennial/

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 6, 2003

KANSAS-NEBRASKA ACT TO BE CENTER OF EXHIBIT ON KANSAS TERRITORY

Exhibit opens April 3, 2004, at the Kansas History Center and Museum in Topeka

The Kansas-Nebraska Act will be making its own history when the exhibit, *Willing to Die for Freedom: A Look Back at Kansas Territory*, opens April 3, 2004, at the Kansas Museum of History. For the first time in the history of the National Archives, one of its public law documents will be loaned to another institution. This important act, recently ranked 28th by *U. S. News*, will be the centerpiece for the museum's exhibit commemorating the 150th anniversary of the establishment of the Kansas Territory. Although the Kansas-Nebraska Act only will be featured through June, the exhibit runs through October 1, 2004.

The original Kansas-Nebraska Act, signed by President Franklin Pierce on May 30, 1854, has never been outside of the Washington D.C. area. On loan from the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, the delicate parchment document will be available for only the first three months of the exhibit due to its rarity and condition. The museum is building a special environmentally stable exhibit case with separate security alarms for the Kansas-Nebraska Act. The document will be couriered to and from Topeka by staff from the National Archives.

In the 1850s, Kansas was the crucible for two events that changed our nation forever--the Civil War and the abolition of slavery. Just after Kansas Territory was formed in 1854, it quickly became the center of attention. The whole nation knew that when Kansas became a state it would alter the balance of power between North and South. Hundreds of people came here to promote either the pro-slavery or anti-slavery causes. If compromise failed, they realized, the nation likely would explode into war. This exhibit both observes the territory's 150th anniversary and explores Kansas' free-state heritage.

Also featured in the exhibit are John Brown's pike, slave bills of sale and a shackle from a freed man, several rare flags and banners, and the *actual* Kansas constitution.

The Kansas Museum of History is open 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Tuesday – Saturday; 1:00 – 5:00 p.m. Sunday. Admission is \$4.00 adults, \$3.00 seniors,

- MORE -

and \$2.00 students. Special groups rates available with prior reservation. The museum is located at the Kansas History Center is located at 6425 SW Sixth Avenue, Topeka, KS 66615; 785-272-8681; TTY 785-272-8683; www.kshs.org.

The nine-member Kansas Territorial Sesquicentennial Commission is chaired by Judge Deanell Reece Tacha, other members are Constance M. Achterberg, Jack E. Dalton, Larry M. Hatteberg, Mike Hayden, Yolanda Lopez, G. Hal Ross, Gail Kuehl, William L. Muir III, Karen Seaberg, and Karen Swisher. A 28-member advisory committee assists the commission with its projects and activities.

For further information about the Kansas Territorial Sesquicentennial Commission, contact the Kansas State Historical Society at 6425 SW Sixth Avenue, Topeka, KS 66615; 785-272-8681; TTY 785-272-8683; www.kshs.org/sesquicentennial.