The Great White Buffalo: Dedication Remarks, 1983

by Joseph W. Snell, Thomas F. Averill, and William G. Winter

On October 18, 1983, Lumen Martin Winter's sculpture, The Great White Buffalo, was dedicated at the Kansas Museum of History during the Society's annual meeting. As part of the ceremonies, Society Executive Director Joseph W. Snell provided information on the Deginger trust which funded the costs of the sculpture and told how the artist was selected. Thomas F. Averill, a member of the Washburn University English department, explained the symbolism of the great white buffalo, and William G. Winter, the son of the sculptor, spoke of his father's artistic vision. Their remarks follow below.

Joseph W. Snell

The statue of the great white buffalo rests here today because of the love one man had for his native state. That man, N. Clyde Deginger of Kansas City, was the son of Louis L. Deginger, who migrated from his native Germany to Kansas in 1868. Though Louis had no money and could speak but little English, he worked hard and soon opened a store at Sparks, in Doniphan County. Later he moved to Highland, where he maintained his business until he retired in 1910 and moved to Kansas City, Missouri. In 1873 Louis married Ella Herrings who bore him three children, Bertha, Pearl, and Nathan Clyde.

Clyde Deginger attended Highland Junior College at Highland and entered into the general store and grain businesses operated by his father. When the store was closed and the family moved to Kansas City, Deginger managed the family holdings in Doniphan County. Clyde Deginger died in 1967 at the age of eighty-six.

Deginger's will provided that the principal and income of his estate would accrue for six years from the date of his death. The Kansas State Historical Society was to receive the residue of his estate and use it to acquire a work of art depicting a significant event or character in the history of Kansas. The work was to be placed on public land in Topeka.

At the time the Deginger trust was finally settled it was strongly felt that the state legislature was about to authorize the construction of a new museum building. The Society's executive committee felt that the art to be commissioned would be an outstanding enhancement to the new structure. Things moved rapidly from that time. Planning funds were appropriated in 1977 and 1978 and construction was authorized in 1980.

The next year the Society announced an open competition among artists who were invited to submit designs for a three-dimensional work under the guidelines of the Deginger bequest. Nearly fifty entries were received. From those, the Society's executive committee selected six designs and invited the creators to prepare models and appear in person before the committee and explain their themes. With the counsel of John L. Greer and Sam Frey, the architects who designed the new building, the executive committee ultimately settled on Lumen Martin Winter's concept of a Great Plains legend called "The Great White Buffalo."

Winter, then of New Rochelle, New York, had grown up near Larned and Belpre, Kansas. After studying at the Cleveland School of Art and the National Academy of Design, he became an internationally known artist. His work has been exhibited in such prestigious institutions as the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Art Institute of Chicago and is included in the collections of the Vatican, the Smithsonian Institution, the Library of Congress, and the White House. Winter's work is also represented in the collections of the Kansas State Historical Society. In fact, my office is brightened by a Reno County scene which he painted and which he felt was just right for that bare wall facing my desk.

In 1976, Winter was chosen by the state of Kansas to complete the statehouse murals begun in 1959 by John Steuart Curry. It was then that I first became acquainted with Lumen Winter and became his friend. I learned that he had no sculpture in Kansas. It was
his desire, he told me, that he might express his love of Kansas by having a three-dimensional creation of his own placed in the state before he died.

Needless to say, Winter was delighted when his work was chosen to grace this new building. Unfortunately, he did not live to see his sculpture here in this magnificent setting. He died, suddenly, in the spring of 1982. Fortunately, however, Winter had completed all necessary design work and he had a talented son, William, who saw the statue to completion.

Neither Clyde Degginger nor Lumen Winter lived to see how beautifully this exquisite statue enhances our equally outstanding building. I am sure, however, that Degginger would approve of the concept and its execution. And I’m positive my good friend Lumen Winter is here with us in spirit, proud of his son and happy that he has at last fulfilled his life’s dream.

Thomas F. Averill

The old die, the new are born, and the race lives on forever. The white buffalo is the chief of the herd, and from the buffalo comes our animal food, and this gives us life and strength....

So it was for the Hunkpapa, the Sioux, and for many of the Plains Indians. The buffalo was the gift, and from it came all that sustained life. And among the buffalo was the white buffalo. Sometimes pied, sometimes cream-colored, sometimes pure albino, it was sacred among buffalo to many tribes. Its skin was powerful medicine, to be worn or carried only when hunting game during periods of terrible necessity or when fighting an enemy. Its power was the essence of the spiritual power of the buffalo, who was the giver of life and thus the center of Plains Indian life and culture.

Because of its value as symbol and its power to its owner, the white buffalo was hunted, killed, then ritualistically skinned. Among the Cheyenne, the meat was not to be touched. The hide itself was to be handled only by those warriors who by heroic action might be worthy—for example, only a man who had counted coup inside an enemy’s lodge might carry the white buffalo hide into its owner’s lodge. All the work of dressing the newly acquired hide was done in the presence of old men of great spiritual power.

The white buffalo robe was of great value to its owner, who profited spiritually by its possession. Some tribes cut the hides into strips so that the power of the robe might be shared among other chiefs. Some hides were traded, however, either by tribes who did not greatly value them for their spiritual force, or by men who needed other kinds of power more—guns, ammunition, powder, whatever. A white buffalo robe
might be worth sixty ordinary robes, or might be traded for as many as fifteen horses.

No one knows just how many white buffalo ever inhabited the Great Plains. Ironically, they were valued so highly and killed so quickly—usually before sexual maturity and thus genetic replication—that their incredible scarcity was assured. They were so rare that probably only ten or eleven white buffalo, or white buffalo robes, were ever seen by white men. Some early observers said that there were probably as few as one white buffalo among five million on the southern Great Plains. Scarce indeed, and thus of great value for whites—when whites invaded the plains and exterminated the great herds, white buffalo were killed and their skins displayed to a curious mass audience.

The first white buffalo killed in Kansas by whites became known as the Morgan buffalo. Killed by James and John Morgan in 1870, the buffalo was mounted and displayed from town to town until 1875. In 1876, it went to the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia, then returned to a home in a glass case in the Kansas statehouse. The Kansas legislature appropriated fifty dollars towards its purchase, but John Morgan refused, stating that P. T. Barnum had offered fifteen hundred dollars for the stuffed animal. In 1903, the buffalo, then in storage, was taken away by an unidentified woman and never returned.

In 1871, James Caspion killed a white buffalo in Kansas, kept the skin for five years as a good luck charm, then sold it for one hundred dollars at Fort Lyon to help support a spree he was on. Soon after, he was killed by Comanches in New Mexico.

In 1872, “Prairie Dog” Dave Morrow killed a white buffalo and sold it to Robert Wright of Dodge City for one thousand dollars. It was later displayed in the statehouse in Topeka, then found a more permanent home in the Hubbel Museum in New York City, which later burned.

P. T. Barnum, that extraordinary showman of the nineteenth century, figures by proxy in another Kansas white buffalo incident, this one with C. J. “Buffalo” Jones, who got close to four young white buffalo in 1886, but failed to run them down and capture them on his tired horse. He lamented the loss of ten thousand dollars, the price he thought Barnum might be willing to pay for a live white buffalo. Thus Barnum is the arbiter for what whites feel the value of the white buffalo might be. He certainly conjures up the opposite image from those Indian elders who lent their great spiritual power and wisdom to the ritual of dressing a captured white hide. But then Barnum was a different kind of medicine man altogether, which points up just one of the differences between Indians and whites.

It is fitting, then, that this statue of the white
buffalo be accompanied by the Indian, who understood the spiritual as well as the material power of the buffalo on the Great Plains. The Indian saw it as a powerful symbol, and it is as a symbol that it now shows itself to us. I think it is an appropriate symbol for this place, in front of the Kansas Museum of History.

To some Indian tribes, the white buffalo was said to have come from the North, from the source of all buffalo. Let it remind us that a good museum searches for the sources of who we are here—our great power, but also our great foibles.

The white buffalo also represents the rare among the common. There were few among millions. Let it remind us that a good museum shows the common, but searches for the rare and valuable among it.

The white buffalo, finally, represents the spiritual force within the material things that sustain life. A good museum does the same thing—it takes material culture and searches for its meaning, for its spirit, for its true life.

This white buffalo should charge us to these pursuits: to find our sources and understand them, to see what is rare in our common lives, to find the spiritual inside the material. If it does, then this white buffalo will truly give us, as it did the Hunkpapa, both life and strength.

William G. Winter

My father had many books in his library. Most of them were books about art, as he was schooled in the great tradition of the Renaissance masters and had enormous admiration for Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, Rembrandt, and many others. Among his books was a small volume entitled What Is Art? and Essays on Art, by Tolstoy.¹ He inscribed this book to me and dated the inscription January 15, 1974.

The sculpture which we dedicate here today is called The Great White Buffalo and depicts the subject of a legend. In this regard I should like to quote a


The Great White Buffalo was shipped to the United States in mid-August 1983. On September 30 workmen began removing the wooden crate on the museum grounds.

Slowly the sculpture emerged from the container.
portion of chapter two of the aforementioned book, which I feel is particularly appropriate:

Many people, especially children, when reading a story, fairy-tale, legend, or fable, ask first of all: "Is it true?" and if they see that what is described could not have happened, they often say: "Oh, this is mere fancy, it isn’t true."

Those who judge so, judge amiss.

Truth will be known not by him who knows only what has been, is, and really happens, but by him who recognizes what should be according to the will of God.

He does not write the truth who describes only what has happened and what this or that man has done, but he who shows what people do that is right—that is, in accord with God’s will; and what people do wrong—that is contrary to God’s will.

Truth is a path. Christ said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.”

And so he who looks down at his feet will not know the truth, but he who discerns by the sun which way to go.

Verbal compositions are good and necessary, not when they describe what has happened, but when they show what ought to be; not when they tell what people have done, but when they set a value on what is good and evil—when they show men the narrow path of God’s will, which leads to life.

And in order to show that path one must not describe merely what happens in the world. The world abides in evil and is full of offence. If one is to describe the world as it is, one will describe much evil and the truth will be lacking. In order that there may be truth in what one describes, it is necessary to write not about what is, but about what should be; to write not the truth of what is, but of the kingdom of God which is drawing nigh unto us but is not as yet. That is why there are mountains of books in which we are told what really has happened or might have happened, yet they are all false if those who write them do not themselves know what is good and what is evil, and do not know and do not show the one path which leads to the kingdom of God. And there are fairy-tales, parables, fables, legends, in which marvellous things are described which never happened or ever could happen, and these legends, fairy-tales, and fables, are true, because they show wherein the will of God has always been, and is and will be: they show the truth of the kingdom of God.

There may be a book, and there are indeed many novels and stories, that describe how a man lives for his passions, suffers, torments others, endures danger and want, schemes, struggles with others, escapes from his poverty, and at last is united with the object of his love and becomes distinguished, rich, and happy. Such a book, even if everything described in it really happened, and though there were in it nothing improbable, would nevertheless be false and untrue because a man who lives for himself and his passions however beautiful his wife may be and however distinguished and rich he becomes, cannot be happy.

*William G. Winter watched carefully as the sculpture was positioned on a pedestal in the future reflecting pool.*
And there may be a legend of how Christ and his apostles walked on earth and went to a rich man, and the rich man would not receive him, and they went to a poor widow, and she received him. And then he commanded a barrel full of gold to roll to the rich man and sent a wolf to the poor widow to eat up her last calf, and it might prove a blessing for the widow and be bad for the rich man.

Such a story is totally improbable, because nothing of what is described ever happened or could happen; but it may all be true because in it is shown what always should be—what is good and what is evil, and what a man should strive after in order to do the will of God.

No matter what wonders are described, or what animals may talk in human language, what flying carpets may carry people from place to place, the legends, parables, or fairy-tales will be true, if there is in them the truth of the kingdom of God. And if that truth is lacking, then everything described, however well attested, will be false, because it lacks the truth of the kingdom of God. Christ himself spoke in parables, and his parables have remained eternally true. He only added, “Take heed how ye hear.”

I believe that one can readily comprehend the spirit of the legend of the great white buffalo as having universal and lasting value for people now and in the future, in light of Tolstoy’s statements about philosophical and spiritual truth. The buffalo and the Indian are shown as living in harmony by the sculpture. The Indian is not attempting to harm the buffalo but rather merely signals his presence by touching the blunt end of his spear to the buffalo’s back.

The harmony of man and nature, and indeed of all life was an important theme in my father’s work. Some 150 or so miles east of here is Marceline, Missouri. This town is located on an east-west line between Saint Joseph and Hannibal, approximately midway across the state. There stands a statue of Saint Francis of Assisi surrounded by animals, with a bird perched on his right hand while with his left he strokes a donkey’s chin. Legend has it that Saint Francis was so gentle and radiated such universal love that the animals, domestic and wild, came to him freely, and unafraid. My father sculpted this statue.

Saint Francis was a heroic figure to my father, and my father considered him to be a model of personal character. He was born at Assisi in 1181 or 82 and died there in 1226. His father was Pietro Bernardone, a prominent local merchant. Saint Francis cared nothing for worldly goods and gave generously to the poor.

from his youth onward. He believed in the sentiment expressed in the Gospel according to Saint Matthew, 10:9-10: “Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.”

He was a man of many-sided richness, tenderness, poetry, and originality, and very lovable and strong. Probably no one so seriously attempted to imitate the life of Christ or to do so literally Christ’s work. He had about him a constant joyousness and a love of nature both animate and inanimate. Legend tells of his preaching a sermon to the birds. He called all creatures his “brothers” and “sisters,” as he also called the sun, moon, water, wind, and fire. He was a mystic, irradiated with the love of God and endowed with the spirit of prayer.

My father has, here in this statue, portrayed the same spirit of universal harmony, peace, and love and the oneness of humans and nature, and indeed, of all creation.

My father knew that this sculpture would be here for one hundred years, two hundred years, one thousand years, and that it would give pleasure to people yet unborn, people he would never meet, and whom I will never meet. That is the great satisfaction and joy of being an artist: to communicate with kindred spirits across the ages.
Museum Access: Proceed north on Wanamaker Road (I-70 exit) to Sixth Street. Follow Sixth Street west to Museum and parking areas.
Cannons, Spinning Wheels, and a Train: A History of the Museum Collection

by Mary Ellen Hennessey Nottage

The Kansas State Historical Society is approaching its eleventh decade of collecting. Its holdings, both written and artifactual, give evidence of the way Kansas became Kansas and Kansans became the Kansans of the 1980s. Within the collections are the thoughts, aspirations, and possessions of governors, of rebels, of pastors, of soldiers, of poets, of merchants, of farmers, of dressmakers, of mothers and fathers and children. Early in the state’s history the citizens demonstrated a self-consciousness that manifested itself in a desire to document their collective lives. From this desire came the founding of the State Historical Society.

At its inception in 1875, the Society’s founders gave to the new organization the purpose of “saving the present and past record[s] of our twenty-one years of eventful history.”1 Four years later the Historical Society was recognized as the official trustee of the state’s historical materials, and state law elaborated on the simple statement of purpose, requiring the organization:

To collect books, maps and other papers and materials illustrative of the history of Kansas in particular, and of the West generally to procure from the early pioneers narratives of events relative to the early settlement of Kansas, and to the early explorations, Indian occupancy, and overland travel in the Territory and the West; to procure facts and statements relative to the history and conduct of our Indian tribes, and to gather all information calculated to exhibit faithfully the antiquities, and the past and present condition, resources and progress of the State; to purchase books to supply deficiencies in the various departments of its collections, and to procure by gift and exchange such scientific and historical reports … and such other books, maps, charts and materials as will facilitate the investigation of historical, scientific, social, educational and literary subjects. …

The written word was to carry the history of the state. Little notice was given to collecting artifacts; in fact, the emphasis in the brief mention of “antiquities” in the statutes of 1879 was on the gathering of the verbal information to accompany their exhibition. The perception of the artifact in the early Historical Society was quite different from that of today. The artifacts that found their way into the collection were relegated to sideshow status. In early years, the museum collection in its entirety was placed in exhibit cases and on the walls in a manner now referred to as visible storage. It fit where it could among the library collections in the meager accommodations allowed the Historical Society in the statehouse. Use of the museum collection was a passive function on the part of the institution; the relics were there for those who chose to look them over. The board of directors was firm in its belief that no group of artifacts superseded in importance the library function of any historical society, collections and services included.2 This attitude is well illustrated in the tabulations of acquisitions made periodically for the Historical Society’s biennial reports. Between 1876 and 1900, the organization received 23,508 manuscripts, 23,051 books, 23,907 volumes of newspapers and magazines, 67,418 pamphlets, and 5,120 maps, atlases, and charts into its library proper. During this same period the museum of history received 5,526 pictures and 6,952 artifacts grouped and referred to as “relics, scrip, coin, etc.”3 Throughout its history, the Society maintained this statistical balance between written materials and artifacts, but the nature of the museum collection and the perception of its historical value underwent many changes.

Franklin G. Adams, the secretary of the Historical Society from 1876 to 1899, had dreams of making the institution a microcosm of the world. “Our museum,” he wrote in 1878, “will contain objects illustrative of

Mary Ellen Hennessey Nottage is curator of decorative arts, Kansas State Historical Society.

2. Kansas Historical Collections, 1875-1881, 1 and 2:56.
the civilization in all ages. The board of directors had more limited, and in retrospect, more practical, expectations at the seventh annual meeting, held in January 1883, giving some insight into what types of objects the members considered suitable for acquisition. Acceptable were artifacts that illustrated "the mode of life of our pioneer settlers," their political struggles, and "hardy experience." Also welcomed into the collection were war relics, portraits of citizens prominent in activities within Kansas, and "objects illustrating the history and manners and customs of the Indians or other inhabitants." During its first fifty years the museum did well collecting within the latter categories, but many of the items in the other categories are rare to find.

Acquisition of the twenty-seven-hundred-year-old Kansa Indian artifacts also does well about the borders of their state. The Kansas Historical Society's early collecting of the world beyond the borders of their state. The acquisition of the twenty-seven-hundred-year-old piece of Egyptian linen was heralded with the same enthusiasm as the ballot box from the first election in Rawlinson County.

The political struggles of pioneer settlers became a natural focal point for the Society's early collecting activities. With the troubles of 1856, less than thirty years old, and still freshly remembered, volumes of printed and written material on the subject of the Free State struggle have poured into the Historical Society, including the keys to the Free State Hotel in Lawrence, which were burned down by a band of proslavery raiders, and a piece of coarse Graham meal baked by Lawrence residents when their flour supplies were cut off by the activities of "border ruffians." The cannon "Old Kickapoo," one day aimed at free-state voters and a few days later captured by them, became a star attraction at the Historical Society. The Society's Emigrant Aid Company, an organization successful in sending antislavery settlers to Kansas, was seen as an important coup. "It already has a value that gold cannot measure, and as the years roll by it will take its place among the sacred relics of a holy cause." The memory of the "kickapoo" cannon and the collection of relics that grew in the rooms of the Historical Society is a testament to the impact of the Emigrant Aid Company's efforts.

Much of the same emotion was involved in the Society's amassing of war relics during its first fifty years. Even President F. P. Baker, in a speech on "The Values and Uses of Historical Societies" in 1881, spoke of the "fierce and the tender." More than one piece of historic sorrow has sent the sword of his friend forevermore memorial of his bravery. And thus we keep alive the spirit and the record of patriotism in time, with due respect for the great-grandsons, who come to look at these relics, and what we have gathered, but will be worth tenfold more to those who come after us.

10. Quoted in Langston, "The First Hundred Years," 293.
Artifacts of the Civil War were prominent among acquisitions from the Historical Society’s inception until the event was eclipsed by other wars in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For decades soldiers and their families sent in bits and pieces of ruined buildings, ammunition, and abandoned arms—all gleanings from battlefields where the “War of the Rebellion” was fought. Bullets removed from the limbs of Kansas soldiers testified to bravery. Engraved pistols and swords presented to officers by their men testified to honor. Hardtack testified to hardships endured. Captured rebel flags memorialized victory over armies. Countless pieces of Confederate scrip memorialized a vanquished society. The most publicized acquisition, however, was the collection of battle flags and guidons of Kansas regiments. The flags had been housed in the adjutant general’s office, but some believed the Historical Society was a more appropriate place for them. After making proposals to preserve and exhibit them in glass cases, the Society received the flags in 1905 through an act of the legislature. By that time the collection had grown to include flags and guidons of Kansas regiments raised for the Spanish-American War. Nine years later, reverence for the flags was at a peak as they were transferred ceremoniously to the new Memorial Building, a Civil War monument itself. The parade of members of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) carrying the relics to the building was viewed as “a sacred service, the last supper of the flags.”10 In the Historical Society’s new quarters the flags became the nucleus of the organization’s collection of war relics. The GAR established its own museum there, the war-related artifacts to become, much later, part of the Historical Society’s collection.

Before 1899 the Society received its first fragment of the battleship USS Maine, destroyed in Havana Harbor in 1898. More fragments were donated later as the amassing of relics of the Spanish-American War and the Philippine Insurrection continued. Clothing and accouterments of Rough Riders, buttons from the uniform of a Spanish infantryman, a captured Filipino battle flag, and ammunition from battle sites were received and exhibited. In the years 1899 and 1900, 477 war relics were counted among the acquisitions. A few were from the Civil War, but the majority were collected by the participants in the battles being fought at that very time. An outstanding gift was J. W. Oziast large collection of Filipino materials and items related to the Twentieth Kansas Infantry. As with Civil War artifacts, the donation of Spanish-American War objects peaked within twenty years of the event and then dwindled down to a trickle that has never stopped.

Soon after World War I ended the Society began to prepare for the great influx of relics expected in 1919. The west room of the museum was set aside and items came in, but not at the rate expected. Notable was Gov. Henry J. Allen’s gift of 173 French war posters. The World War I collection grew gradually over the years.

By the time the Kansas State Historical Society was ten years old, the romantic interpretation of American history was outdated among professional historians. The development of the country was no longer seen as a dramatization of events under the influence of Great Men who represented the best attributes and ideals of a forward-moving people.11 The old attitudes, however, were not easy to dislodge from the public mind, and Great Men were still credited with superhuman influence. A cult-like admiration for two nineteenth-century figures, Abraham Lincoln and John Brown, had its effect on the collections of the Historical Society. Into the museum came the banner presented to Lincoln in 1858 as he debated with Stephen A. Douglas in Galesburg, Illinois; an umbrella used by the Great Emancipator; a pot lid that had belonged to his mother Nancy Hanks Lincoln; a watch chain made from a lightning rod from the old Lincoln home; and most precious of all, a Ford’s Theater program onto which had fallen a drip of his blood. Other objects with Lincoln associations continued to be donated one at a time, although in 1917 the collection of Leavenworth dressmaker Carrie Hall was deposited with the Historical Society. For many years Mrs. Hall had been gathering Lincoln material of every description: photographs, campaign pamphlets, books, sheet music, portraits, busts, pottery decorated with Lincoln’s likeness, medals, a piece of wood from his place of birth, a lamp with his profile molded into its shade. Mrs. Hall’s collection was installed in a separate room at the Historical Society where it remained a place of honor until the 1960s remodeling of the Memorial Building.

Artifacts used by John Brown were prevalent among donations to the Society early in its development. During the 1870s and 1880s the Society received his cap, a bowie knife which he captured in 1856, pistols he carried during the Kansas troubles, pikes and an ax with which he armed his Harpers Ferry raiders, and a piece of wood from a station on the


LC "Laughton, 'The First Hundred Years,' 1883-1888, 8.9.

A section of the Society's portrait gallery in the State Capitol.

The portrait gallery was furnished with the portraits of prominent literary figures of the 19th century. It was located on the second floor of the State Capitol, providing a space for visitors to view the portraits and gain a sense of the historical significance of the individuals depicted. The gallery was designed to honor the achievements of these notable figures, and was considered an important feature of the State Capitol building.

Table: List of Portraits

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<th>Year</th>
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<td>1883</td>
<td>Lincoln</td>
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<td>Washington</td>
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<td>1885</td>
<td>Jefferson</td>
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The portraits were designed to inspire and educate visitors about the history and culture of the state. They were created by local artists and were displayed in a prominent location within the State Capitol, making them easily accessible to the public.

The portrait gallery was part of a larger effort to preserve and promote the state's cultural and historical heritage. It was a reflection of the state's commitment to preserving its past and educating its citizens about their rich history.

Figure: Portrait of Abraham Lincoln

The portrait of Abraham Lincoln was one of the most popular portraits in the gallery. It was created by a local artist and was displayed prominently in the gallery. The portrait was highly regarded and was often photographed by visitors.

Figure: Portrait of Thomas Jefferson

The portrait of Thomas Jefferson was another popular portrait in the gallery. It was created by a local artist and was displayed prominently in the gallery. The portrait was highly regarded and was often photographed by visitors.

Figure: Portrait of James Madison

The portrait of James Madison was less popular than the portraits of Lincoln and Jefferson, but it was still considered an important feature of the gallery. It was created by a local artist and was displayed prominently in the gallery. The portrait was highly regarded and was often photographed by visitors.
of the organization’s secretaries was the acquisition of portraits of every governor of Kansas. They did well, and by 1915 the Society lacked only the portraits of Govs. Walter Stubbs and George Hodges. The pictures of lesser Kansas notables also were gladly received into the collection. In oils, crayons, woodcuts, and steel engravings were early settlers, war heroes, senators and representatives, generals, and a few women who had distinguished themselves through their work. Kansas citizens who had achieved local or statewide prominence were apt to donate portraits of themselves. Most of the pictures, however, were donated by the families or friends of the subject. Serving the same purpose of honoring and memorializing worthy Kansans was the collection of busts. Although far fewer in number than the portraits on the walls, the busts were also representative of a cross section of admired citizens.

The portraits were collected to memorialize their subjects, but many of them were fine works of art executed by such talented Kansas painters as George M. Stone and Henry Worrall. Of non-portrait artworks there were very few. Development of this portion of the Historical Society’s collection took place slowly.

The professed interest of the Historical Society in collecting “objects illustrating the history and manners and customs of the Indians or other inhabitants” led to the acquisition of great volumes of material. Farmers brought in prehistoric treasures found while they plowed their fields. Others actively pursued the discovery of Indian relics in all parts of the state and made up their own collections which they then turned over to the Historical Society. Such relics as tools, ornaments, and pottery fragments were popularly thought of as “object lessons for the instruction of the people in respect to the manners and customs of the red men...whose rude ways have given place to the kind of civilization which in our day has been planted here.” There was a great consciousness of the disappearance of one culture and its replacement with one considered to be superior. The Historical Society took a more scholarly approach in its own pursuit of archeological materials. In 1901, money from the institution’s fee fund was allotted to a special committee “to examine and collect for the museum of the Society archeological relics from the mounds and deserted village sites of the aborigines of Kansas.”


date, much of the material for the museum was obtained in this manner, which involved serious research according to the standards of the time rather than amateur pothunting. Surface finds continued to be donated as the Society sought information on both aborigines and early explorers. An important acquisition came in 1923 when four thousand pieces of the Brower collection of Kansas artifacts were obtained from the Minnesota Historical Society in exchange for duplicate newspaper files. No other part of the Society’s museum collection grew as rapidly as the archeology section during the first fifty years. In later decades the archeology section became a distinct department within the Historical Society, and the archeological and ethnographic collections were separated from the collections of the museum.

As objects of popular curiosity, Indian relics ranked with the more exotic elements of the museum’s holdings. Foreign cultures were subjects of great fascination. The soldiers of the Twentieth Kansas Infantry came back from the Philippines with hundreds of objects used by Filipinos in their daily lives. Maude Madden, a missionary in the Far East, made a large collection of Japanese items and donated it to the Historical Society in 1903. In 1920 the heirs of Lindley Perkins of Baxter Springs filled a freight car with the results of his worldwide souvenir hunting and sent it to the museum. Other individuals struck by the beauty, antiquity, uniqueness, or primitive qualities of items discovered in their travels dutifully brought them to their state museum.

The phenomena of nature were collected in the same spirit. A freak corn stalk, a sawfish bill, a giant clamshell, and a hair ball from the stomach of a cow took their places in the museum. A more serious detour into natural history was taken when the collection of the Academy of Science was moved to the new Memorial Building. Although Secretary William E. Connelley refused to house the live reptiles, he did gain for the museum one of its most popular exhibits, the Goss bird collection. Among the mounted specimens transferred to the care of the Historical Society were hundreds of skins of birds common to Kansas as well as rare birds of North America. These had been collected and prepared by Nathaniel S. Goss. The birds perched among the historical exhibits from 1915 until 1977 when, in the interests of properly preserving a valuable collection, they were transferred to the University.

The Cross-Bank Collection

Cannons, spinning wheels, and a Tain
served wild turkey, and numerous other relics of this sort. Interest in such items spawned a late-nineteenth-century phenomenon among private collectors that had a nationwide impact on museum collections: the transformation of relic fragments into other forms. The Historical Society received its share, collecting during the 1880s, for example, a gavel made of wood taken from Constitution Hall in Philadelphia; a mallet made from a rib taken from the ship Old Ironsides; and a goblet made from a piece of the joist from Christ Church where George Washington and his family worshipped.

Artifacts valued for their associations with the well-known facts of history continued to be collected over the next few decades, but from the 1890s through the 1920s Kansans also shared in the national interest in collecting objects of personal genealogical importance. Family heirlooms passed down from great-great-grandparents shared the spotlight with relics which had touched Lafayette’s and Washington’s lives. Watches, pipe tongs, powder horns, musical instruments, and woven coverlets dating from the 1750s to the 1830s came to Kansas’ museum. The interest in family antiques was inextricably bound to the late-nineteenth-century wave of nationalism that gave rise to such patriotic organizations as the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). Museums across the country benefited from the work of these groups. Upon receiving some of the many artifacts gathered for the Kansas State Historical Society by the DAR, Secretary Connelley expressed his commitment to “preserving and displaying the priceless relics remaining in the Kansas families of the descendants of those who founded the Republic.”

A romantic view of colonial and early American life prevailed and was justified and reinforced by such artifacts. People were heroic, their surroundings were quaint, and their lives were imagined to be less complex than those of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Americans. The spinning wheel became an icon of the simple and true way of life that was supposed to have been enjoyed by our ancestors. In Kansas the productive use of the spinning wheel had seen a rapid decline during the 1850s. In 1889 the

23. Stillinger, The Antiquers, xii. 5.
The Kansas Historical Society had its origin in a group of citizens who were interested in preserving the history of Kansas. In 1910, the Society was incorporated as a nonprofit organization with the mission of collecting, preserving, and presenting the history of Kansas. The Society's founding fathers recognized the importance of documenting Kansas's past and preserving it for future generations.

The Society's early years were marked by challenges, including a lack of funding and a limited staff. However, the Society persisted, and in the years that followed, it grew in size and scope. The Society began collecting artifacts and documents related to Kansas history, and it established a research library to support its work.

In 1919, the Society moved into its first permanent facility, a building located at 126 West 10th Street in Topeka. The building served as the Society's headquarters for many years, and it remains a significant landmark in Topeka.

Today, the Kansas Historical Society is one of the state's leading cultural institutions, with a mission to preserve, interpret, and share the history of Kansas. The Society's collection includes thousands of artifacts, documents, and photographs, and it continues to attract visitors from around the world.

The Society's programs and services include exhibits, educational programs, and publications. It also offers visitors the opportunity to explore Kansas history through its museum, library, and research centers.

The Society's work is supported by a combination of government funding, private donations, and earned income from its operations. The Society is committed to ensuring that Kansas's history is preserved for generations to come.
“attics, chests and closets” of the relics that were hidden there. He went on to list the names of people he knew to be harboring historical materials and said he wanted those items “right up here” in the Historical Society. A Burlingame resident visiting in Lancaster, New Hampshire, in 1883 saw a banner made by Lancaster women for presentation to the Fremont Club for the 1856 campaign. The banner was emblazoned with a “God Save Kansas” motto, and the good Kansas citizen decided that his State Historical Society should have the artifact. The owner of the banner was convinced by the Kansan’s arguments and sent the relic to the Society.

A small percentage of the collection was purchased using funds from various sources. The 1878 purchase of the Thomas Webb collection of New England Emigrant Aid Company materials netted for the museum the candelabro in which fraudulent election returns were concealed beneath a woodpile following the Lecompton Constitutional Convention. The famous cannon “Old Kickapoo” was saved from destruction when Historical Society members raised $112 to buy it from a scrap dealer in 1884. In 1895 the state legislature granted funds to the Society for the purchase of an oil portrait of Sen. Preston B. Plumb, and in 1911 the institution purchased Henry Worrall’s painting of the Kansas-Colorado Building at the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia.

Many of the materials collected by the Historical Society were given by their owners as “conditional deposits” or loans. Secretary Connelley wished to have only the true possessions of the Historical Society on exhibit, and in 1924 he initiated efforts to locate the lenders of artifacts so that loans could be converted to gifts. The generosity of lenders in following Connelley’s suggestions gained for the institution permanent custody of many valuable historic artifacts.

The year 1925 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Kansas State Historical Society. During that time its museum collection had become a notable entity within the institution. Its 12,908 artifacts and dozens of artworks were becoming more than a sideshow to the library. Thematic groupings in cases and galleries rather than haphazard visible storage of objects gave evidence of an evolution in the Society’s attitudes toward the artifacts. They could entertain. They could serve as catalysts to interest casual visitors in Kansas history. They could be measured against contemporary lifestyles to show human progress.

Changes in patterns of donations could also be detected. Donations of artifacts associated with cataclysmic events and Great Men, “pieces of the true cross,” and natural and exotic curiosities came to the museum in a steady flow during the institution’s first five decades. Toward the turn of the century, however, the possessions of the less prominent Kansas citizen began to appear beside them. Objects of common personal experience were by no means abundant in the museum yet, but their gradual appearance gave hints of what was to become a collecting trend in later years.

The number of donations to the museum increased from year to year, showing significant periods of growth at times of change for the Historical Society. The 1901 move to new, more spacious rooms in the statehouse was declared by Secretary Martin to have stimulated “gifts, adding vastly to the importance of our portrait and museum features.” Thirteen years later another surge of donations was noted as the Historical Society was settling into the new Memorial Building. The large open spaces of the fourth floor allowed the museum to acquire artifacts previously impossible to house in the cramped, old quarters of the statehouse. A Concord stagecoach and a Victoria carriage appeared in the gallery. Other phenomena were credited with stimulating donations. Early in the 1920s Secretary Connelley attributed unusually large numbers of donations to “the breaking up of the old families in the state and the searching for a suitable place to deposit valuable relics.”

As the Historical Society moved into its second half century, the nationwide economic crisis of the late 1920s and 1930s had both positive and negative effects on the museum. The number of donations dropped dramatically, but the existing collections benefitted greatly from federal relief programs. Between 1934 and 1943 workers with the Federal Emergency Relief Administration and its state organization, the Kansas Emergency Relief Committee, cleaned thirty thousand relics, restored pictures and frames, and repaired furniture, generally improving the appearance of the artifacts.

Donations to the museum from the late 1930s to the early 1950s established a pattern that was to become familiar in the following decades. The days of collecting natural curiosities and souvenirs of exotic cultures were past. The museum now received more artifacts

38. Ibid.
The Lagerhain, presented by Lombard College students in memory of Lincoln, planted in the Memorial Building, trimmed by one of the hands that shaped the mid-19th century, the mid-19th century of the mid-19th century of the mid-19th century. The Lagerhain, presented by Lombard College students in memory of Lincoln, planted in the Memorial Building, trimmed by one of the hands that shaped the mid-19th century.
in two previously underdeveloped areas of the collection, clothing and middle-class decorative arts and domestic accessories.

Very few items of clothing had been acquired by the museum. Prior to the 1950s this area of the collection was represented by a few foreign costumes, military uniforms, and articles belonging to notables (John Brown’s hat and George Armstrong Custer’s boots, for example). By the 1970s hundreds of dresses, shirts, hats, shoes, capes, and accessories made up a costume collection representing clothing in Kansas from the 1870s to the 1910s. Like many other museum collections, Kansas’ holdings emphasize women’s fashions, especially wedding dresses, and contain relatively few examples of men’s clothing.

An approach previously used in acquiring war relics was tried and found very successful in developing the collection of decorative arts and domestic accessories. The method involved planning an exhibit and then advertising for the artifacts to fill it. From the mid-1950s through the 1960s period rooms were being constructed in the exhibit galleries. In articles printed in newspapers and the Historical Society’s newsletter, the Mirror, museum staff noted that “many donors have not considered some of the ‘homlier’ household items worth giving to the Society.” 40 For five years the public and the membership of the Historical Society were reminded in print that a sod house, a general store, a Victorian parlor, a 1910 farm kitchen, a doctor’s office, a blacksmith shop, and other period rooms were under construction in the museum. With the reminders were lists of items needed to complete the exhibits: wood-burning stoves, a dentist’s chair, plain furniture of the type a homesteader would have used, a parlor sofa, common kitchen tools. Dozens of other objects were mentioned. The response was nearly overwhelming. The period rooms were filled rapidly, and many additional artifacts representing the everyday lives of Kansans at work and at home were donated. Later, in the development of thematic case exhibits, the same techniques were used to obtain appropriate artifacts, and they were equally successful.

The museum’s acquisitions in the 1970s continued to be characterized by objects representative of the lifestyles of Kansas residents as well as by the same types of objects collected in the previous four decades. A renewed interest in collecting contemporary materials gained for the museum such items as mini-
The Kansas Museum of History is a large, modern, attractive, and flexible building that houses the largest and most significant collection of artifacts in the state. The museum, located in Topeka, Kansas, is the largest research and exhibition center in the state. It is the largest museum in the state and the only one in the state that is open to the public.

The museum's exhibit areas are designed to provide visitors with a comprehensive overview of Kansas history. The exhibits are organized by theme, and visitors can follow a self-guided tour to learn about various aspects of Kansas history. The exhibits are educational, interactive, and engaging, providing visitors with a unique and enjoyable experience.

The museum's permanent collection includes artifacts and documents that tell the story of Kansas from prehistoric times to the present. The collection includes a wide range of objects, such as tools, clothing, artwork, and photographs. The museum is committed to preserving and sharing this valuable collection with the public.

In summary, the Kansas Museum of History is a valuable resource for anyone interested in learning about Kansas history. Whether you are a local or a visitor from out of town, the museum offers a unique and educational experience that is sure to be memorable.
Managing and Conserving the Collection

by Martha Durant Kratsas and Robert F. McGiffin

Even though the exhibits and educational programs are the most popular aspects of the Kansas Museum of History, they represent only two of the ways through which the Society accomplishes the goals of collecting, preserving, and interpreting the history and material culture of Kansas. Collection acquisition and management, conservation, and study are equally necessary and important activities.

Obviously, before an object can be exhibited, studied, or preserved at the Kansas Museum of History, it must be collected and become the property of all Kansans through the Historical Society. When an object is given to the Society a legal transaction takes place and complete records are made which note the donor's name, the history of the item, the construction materials, the size, and the condition. A number is given to the records, and the same number is affixed to the object itself in such a way that the object is not damaged. Thereafter, the object is part of the collection, and any further information obtained by the staff through research and cataloging is included in the records.

Wildlife management, forests, and unpolluted environments immediately come to mind when most people think of conservation. Many would be surprised to learn that the word "conservation" also encompasses the scientific preservation of historic and artistic works. Frequently, restoration is confused with conservation. However, restoration implies the act of returning an object to its original condition and appearance—an ambitious, yet unscientific and usually impossible challenge.

Artifacts are made from materials which age, just like everything else. As the aging process continues, both the appearance and the physical properties change. "Growing old gracefully" is part of the object's history, and it is a philosophy taken into account by most museums and serious collectors. Attempts to return an object to a like-new condition seriously damage its integrity and even reduce its historical value considerably.

Historic furniture often lends itself to these restoration abuses. For example, one could take an early piece of furniture, sand off the old finish to the wood, apply a "durable" new finish, and buff the brass hardware to look like new. In the process, major links with the object's history would be destroyed. Stains, minor abrasions, and evidences of handling would be scraped away. What would remain would be an invention of the restorer, an object with no history.

Conservators such as those working in the conservation center laboratories in the new Kansas Museum of History would first analyze the object extensively, then prescribe a completely different treatment. Analysis would be conducted to help the conservators find out everything possible about the object's materials and history. It would help them determine what comprises the finish, paint pigment, and type of wood. A thorough examination would include photography and perhaps chemistry and even radiography, plus the completion of a written report and a consultation with the appropriate curator. The object then would be stabilized. Stabilization is perhaps one of the best synonyms for conservation. In this example of furniture, stabilization would involve the following: regluing any loose joints with a reversible adhesive, inpainting disfiguring scratches and other abraded areas with a reversible paint or stain, and treating problems so that the lives of the original materials would be prolonged. Finally, conservators would follow

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Martha Durant Kratsas is assistant museum director and Robert F. McGiffin is chief museum conservator/administrator, Kansas State Historical Society.

1. Reversibility is important so that any work may be undone easily at a later time. Conservators do not use materials which may in time become inseparable from the artifact. Inpainting is confined only within the boundaries of the damaged area. Overpainting is never used because it would cover some of the original finish.
Robert F. Altchison uses a Viscount microscope to examine the muslin in the office. This may be on exhibit. If so, at any point in time, an object can be used by the public.

Records for each object in the Kansas History Collection at Kansas State University are kept for proper research and study purposes. Records are kept on hard copy. Some objects do not receive the same care that they once did.
Education Programs:
Past, Present, and Future

by James Powers

Although museums have existed in some form or another for several centuries, educational concerns have not come to the forefront in these institutions until the last few decades. In this short time, educational programming has flourished in museums everywhere in the form of guided tours, living history programs, outreach programs, lectures, film series, and a wide variety of other educational opportunities. The museum's role in the educational system is to enrich the classroom experience by providing instruction which brings the subject matter to life. Learning is facilitated when three-dimensional objects are available, and it is this supposition which forms the foundation for the majority of educational programming within the museum context.

From its inception in 1875, Society leaders have expressed an interest in providing public access to the museum collection, stating in 1892 that they recognized it to be "of intense interest to the youth and masses of our people." By the early twentieth century, about the time the Society was moving from the Capitol to the Memorial Building, this sentiment had been taken one step further. The museum was acknowledged to be "almost as important in an educational way as the library." A few years later, it was noted in a biennial report that "the educational value of the museum is recognized more and more each year by the schools. Many teachers bring their pupils here to look through the museum, with its historical relics and portraits, and we receive many testimonials to the value of these visits."

For some years, however, nothing was done to meet the educational needs of visitors beyond the presentation of static displays of historical relics accompanied by labels without specific educational objectives. The museum's curator and only staff person would (if called upon) take time out of his busy schedule to answer questions. But this was the standard of the day. The Kansas State Historical Society Museum was, in fact, reported to be one of the best in the nation.

It was not until the Society was almost seventy years old that organized educational programs were first available at the museum. In 1941 almost four thousand schoolchildren visited the museum in organized tours sponsored by the Santa Fe and Missouri Pacific railroads. With several hundred children each, the large size of these groups must certainly have limited the educational impact of

1. Eighth Biennial Report, 1890-1892, 11.
The Santa Fe Railway continued to organize tours of the museum intermittently for the next several years. Although continuing to express an increasing educational value of the museum’s volunteer force, the society even took the next step in 1956 when it hired additional staff, a move that some one hundred and fifty groups had taken advantage of this service. The budget was set for the museum and the next twenty years saw substantial progress.

sessions, designed uniforms, and circulated volunteer bulletins.

With the formation of the volunteer organization, programming grew rapidly. A steady increase in the numbers served by guided tours was reported each year. Even during the 1973-74 gasoline crisis when the museum's overall attendance decreased, school-tour attendance increased by thirty-nine percent over the preceding year.9

With the implementation of traditional craft demonstrations in 1975, volunteers became involved in a new education program. The museum’s period rooms became the setting for Sunday afternoon weaving, spinning, butter-churning, and candle-making demonstrations. Volunteers also took these nineteenth-century Kansas crafts into the schools, giving “286 demonstrations to approximately 10,000 elementary school children” in the first year.10

Volunteers demonstrate crafts in the Memorial Building in 1978.

Thus in roughly twenty years a comprehensive educational program had been developed, although there still was no full-time staff person to oversee these activities. Finally, in 1978 a federal grant from the Institute of Museum Services (IMS) created the position of museum educator. With additional IMS and state support, the Division of Museum Education now consists of three full-time staff members.

The progress during the early years became the foundation for the expansion; after 1978 existing programs were improved and new programs were implemented. Based on the frequency of teacher requests, new theme tours were designed with specific instructional objectives. The craft program developed into a monthly activity involving scores of demonstrators, musicians, and performers. The film series became a full-fledged educational program complete with weekly interpretive handouts.

New programs opened the museum learning experience to new audiences. Special activities for handicapped visitors were made possible largely by the creation of an educational collection with reproduction artifacts for use in hands-on programs. The division also branched out to work with various Society departments to develop programs and co-sponsor events with broad appeal, such as the Children’s Area at the Kansas Folk Life Festival. The Division of Museum Education also planned exhibit opening activities for the wide variety of temporary exhibits at the Society.

The most ambitious program was the traveling trunk program, implemented in 1980. Using a combination of reproduction artifacts, photographs, and teaching materials organized around specific themes, the trunks have become a valuable resource for those unable to visit the museum. Thirty-one units, each packed in its own footlocker, currently travel to every corner of the state, serving thousands of Kansans annually. The current trunk topics include “Farm Family in Kansas,” “Volga Germans in Kansas,” “La Raza: The Mexican-American Experience in Kansas,” “Archeology in Kansas,” and “Carpentry in Kansas,” with additional topics planned.

With the closing of the galleries on March 31, 1983, in preparation for the move to the new Kansas Museum of History, the Division of Museum Educa-

Elementary-school students enjoy role-playing with materials from the Volga German traveling trunk.
Schoolchildren for living history programs. In the exhibit, students will explore the history of the site and its people, engaging in hands-on activities that bring history to life. The museum provides a unique setting for learning and encourages active participation in the educational experience.

With the move to the new Kansas Museum of History and other educational programs, there is a growing emphasis on school groups and educational programs. The museum offers a variety of educational programs, including field trips, workshops, and gallery tours, designed to engage students of all ages. These programs are designed to foster a deeper understanding of Kansas history and culture, and to encourage critical thinking and inquiry-based learning.

The museum continues to evolve, offering new educational opportunities that enhance the visitor experience. Whether exploring the history of Kansas through interactive exhibits or engaging in hands-on activities, visitors of all ages can find something to interest and educate them.

James Parents explain sparkmarks to students.
Presenting the Past: Exhibits, 1877-1984

by James H. Nottage, Floyd R. Thomas, Jr., and Lucinda Simmons Bray

To the casual visitor, who usually sees only visual presentations of artifacts through displays and exhibits, a museum does not appear to be a complicated institution. In truth, a museum is an ever-changing place where collections, staff, facilities, exhibits, and patrons are elements which differ over time.

The museum of the Kansas State Historical Society has grown and developed through the past one hundred years. Formerly it was located in two other then-new facilities, each serving the needs of a different era. The museum was begun during the formative years of the Historical Society, which was founded in 1875 and housed in the Kansas statehouse, then under construction. These quarters soon became overcrowded, and in 1914 the museum, along with other Society departments, was relocated in the new Memorial Building, where it developed into a mature collection of Kansas history. Throughout these periods of growth the nature of the museum exhibits changed and evolved as well.

In the Capitol

In the earliest decades only three functions were considered essential in a museum. Items were collected, arranged so they could be seen, and kept clean for public viewing. Visitors to the Kansas State Historical Society Museum in the late nineteenth century followed green painted signs from other state offices to the basement of the Capitol building's west wing, where "the snakes and wax apples are duly admired," said one Topeka newspaper correspondent. Franklin G. Adams, the first secretary of the Historical Society, gave tours of the cramped rooms, where the artifacts were crowded among stacks of books, newspapers, and manuscripts. Along with portraits of pioneers they competed for valuable space but received due attention from the dedicated secretary. One visitor noted in 1881 that Adams "is the keeper of the shrine of the early Kansas saints, and he never plays any trick on reverent and unsuspecting visitors. When he brings out a rusty pike or time worn horse pistol, it can be relied on as the genuine thing."2

Franklin Adams, himself a pioneer Kansan, was described by one reporter as a "fossil" amidst "a regular curiosity shop for relics." For many the cluttered Historical Society rooms were a place of wonder and discovery, but only those fortunate enough to receive a personal tour were allowed the pleasure, through the artifacts, of seeing Adams "tearing down the veil of years that separates us from the past."3

By 1890, in fact, the rooms were so crowded that one visitor commenting on the displays said it was "hard to tell what they contain. There are flags and arms... and swords dimmed with blood and dented with blows... an old candle box, its bottom covered with a record which cannot be readily made out in the dim light."4

Three years later the Historical Society went beyond its immediate walls with what might be termed the first traveling exhibit. Beginning in 1892 plans were laid for a special display at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. It consisted primarily of framed portraits and books, although Topeka artist Henry Worrall had designed

2. Topeka Daily Democrat, December 8, 1881; Atchison Daily Champion, December 21, 1881.
3. Topeka Daily Capital, October 29, 1884; Daily Commonwealth, Topeka, September 3, 1884.
4. Saturday Evening Lance, Topeka, February 6, 1886; Kansas City Star, January 8, 1890.

James H. Nottage is supervisory museum historian; Floyd R. Thomas, Jr., is museum historian; and Lucinda Simmons Bray is chief of exhibits, Kansas State Historical Society.
Finally, in 1901 the Historical Society was able to occupy the entire fourth floor of the south wing of the Kansas State Historical Society Building, which provided room for additional exhibits. By 1910, the Kansas State Historical Society had over 10,000 exhibits, including books, pictures, and relics. In 1912, the Historical Society of Kansas was founded to continue the work of preserving Kansas history.

The Kansas State Historical Society Museum was expanded again in 1918 to accommodate the growing collection. A new wing was added to the museum building, and additional exhibits were added. The museum continued to grow and expand, becoming one of the largest and most significant in the state.

In 1940, the museum opened the first permanent exhibits for children, which were very popular. The museum continued to add new exhibits and renovations throughout the years, with the most recent additions in 2001. Today, the Kansas State Historical Society Museum is one of the largest and most important museums in the state, with over 1 million visitors each year.
to hundreds of daily visitors.” The new displays were well accepted, although there was some complaint that not enough women were represented in the portrait gallery. In 1905 the adjutant general’s collection of Civil War flags and banners was turned over to the Historical Society, and appropriations for a special glass-and-steel case enabled the staff to create a new display. This exhibit consisted of rows of flags labeled with the areas where the regiments served and the locations and dates of the battles in which they fought.

For the next ten years the museum was an integral part of the statehouse. Visitors wandered along the rows of comparatively spacious but seemingly crowded cases. Here, as the collection grew, the Capitol seemed to become smaller.

The Memorial Building

Years of hoping and planning finally resulted in the dedication of the Memorial Building in 1914. Society Secretary William E. Connelley had high hopes for the development of the museum in the new building. “It is generally conceded that the museum is one of the most attractive, interesting and instructive institutions of modern civilization,” he wrote in the 1912-14 biennial report. “Money, Civil War relics, ancient weapons, old and crude agricultural implements are compared with those of later years and show the progress of the people. . . . Properly exhibited these will make a display full of interest and instructive.”

Connelley expected to install exhibits on the fourth floor of the Memorial Building. To be called “Spinning Wheel Hall,” the fourth floor was decorated with pictures by August 1914 while most of the relics awaited the purchase of new cases (the old, worn-out display cases had been left in the Capitol). In the meantime, artist George Stone and Charles Gleed, a longtime board member who later served as president (1917), worked to install portraits in the first-floor lobby. “They are doing a very artistic job and are in some degree fixing the relative historical value and rank of characters in Kansas history,” commented a Topeka reporter. At the same time the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) was occupying rooms on the second floor, where its display of Civil War pictures was set up with the help of Historical Society staff. Also as a joint venture, in 1914 the GAR ceremoniously marched the battle flags from the statehouse to the Memorial Building, where they were installed in five bronze-and-glass cases in the GAR Hall. Constructed by the Steel Fixture Manufacturing Company of Topeka, the cases were delivered in 1916; under a separate contract a patriotic sculpture of a spread eagle by Topeka artist Andrew Boell was attached to the top of each case.

Other contracts, signed in 1915, provided twenty-eight badly needed display cases for the fourth

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The food court was moved to the ear rooms on the lower floor.
years. Two were still on exhibit when the museum was closed in 1983.15

By the middle of the twentieth century the Kansas State Historical Society Museum was a familiar part of the capital city. New exhibits, which often focused on a single artifact such as the Billiard airplane or the stagecoach, attracted numerous visitors. Special displays of war souvenirs drew in thousands of servicemen and their families during the 1940s. Artifacts were suspended from the rafters stretching across the central gallery ceiling, and the cases still housed “relics” of the famous and infamous—Carry Nation’s ax, John Brown’s gun, and a piece of paper stained with Abraham Lincoln’s blood. It was clear, however, that the rapidly growing visiting public would demand change. That change came when Nyle H. Miller became the secretary of the Society in 1951.

In 1952, following Edith Smelser’s death, Charles “Bud” Holman became director of the museum, and Joan Foth was appointed assistant museum director. Within a year the galleries were undergoing rapid change reflecting a different exhibit philosophy. Now exhibits were to be placed in historical sequence, with the artifacts arranged and labeled to represent “a chapter of a book.” Rather than consisting of cases brimming with objects, the new exhibits were to feature a few related artifacts and labeling to tell a story. Visitors would see fewer objects but could learn more about Kansas history and the significance of particular artifacts. “By putting two or three objects in a case,” said Joan Foth, “people suddenly see an object for the first time.”16

Under Holman, major thematic exhibit sections were created within the galleries. Materials relating to Indians, trappers, and natural history were exhibited in the east wing. In the main gallery, the Longren airplane, high-wheeled bicycles, and two automobiles—a Thomas Flyer and a Great Smith—formed a transportation area backed by a wall painted “Pompeian red, a soft tomato shade.” Cases were arranged by topical themes such as the territorial period and “famous Kansans.” Zula Bennington Greene, a reporter for the Topeka Daily Capital, found the overall effect impressive. “The new arrangement is orderly and spacious. It entices

Believing that artifacts not endangered by handling should be placed on open display, Holman made accessible to the public more of the museum's stock. The display was arranged to simulate the place of honor under the big skylight.

It was exhibited in the main gallery, "an echo of the Pompeian wall." The 1900-1910 workroom was a "fourth floor living room," the first period rooms opened in 1955 after Holman had left and been succeeded by Stanley Sohl as museum director. The 1980s bedroom was "the first exhibit of a series... developed by Stanley Sohl as a series of基本上 replica rooms from 1955 to 1992."

The March 1955 issue of the Society's Mirror noted the expectations about the exhibit technique, and the March 1955 issue of the Society's Mirror noted the excitement and educational features in the museum and the staff's enthusiasm for the project.

To acquire appropriate artifacts for the period rooms, the museum's collection was expanded. In this way, the period rooms were restored to their original condition in the museum.

The 1880s bedroom, a sod-house interior, a Victorian parlor, a 1900 one-room schoolhouse, a kitchen of the early 1900s, and a 1920s parlor. The commercial life of a small town was represented through period rooms constructed in the east wing. A doctor's office, a dentist's office, a blacksmith-shop, a harness shop, and more.


However, the exhibits have been criticized for lacking much space and not allowing the observer to inspect the artifacts closely.
a printing shop, and a general store completed the museum's "Main Street."

While period rooms were constructed in the east and west wings, the central gallery also underwent considerable change. Twenty new cases were received in 1956, and the staff began installing exhibits that would "trace Kansas history from prehistoric times to the development of early industries." Unlike the horizontal glass units that preceded them, the new cases were built to stand upright and to accommodate three-dimensional exhibits combining artifacts with labels and graphics. The use of specially designed cases was considered "state-of-the-art" museum exhibit technique.

In 1956 a number of exhibits on the early history of Kansas were completed. Among the exhibit topics were the "path of early man's migration to the Great Plains," the Louisiana Purchase and early explorers, first territorial governor Andrew Reeder, and early missions in Kansas. The WPA dioramas were refurbished, and loaned materials relating to Dwight D. Eisenhower were exhibited. Seasonal displays for the first-floor lobby included a Christmas tree with antique toys and an exhibit featuring Easter bonnets. Other changing lobby exhibits included two cases on photography and a display of "Grandma's Gadgets," which "certainly proved that the housewife of today is not the only one to have a wide assortment of gadgets at her disposal."

Another twenty cases were installed in 1957. These were devoted to "specific events or fields rather than to chronological sequence of general
During the 1995-96 fiscal year, the museum's exhibitions were developed for opening by the renovation of the Victoria Building and the introduction of the Atrium Building. The renovated building and the Atrium Building were made available for the museum's exhibitions. The renovated building provided a new backdrop to the renovated building's museum, and the renovated building's museum was opened to the public in July 1996. The renovated building's museum was opened to the public in July 1996. The renovated building's museum was opened to the public in July 1996. The renovated building's museum was opened to the public in July 1996.
museum devoted to Kansas' representation in all wars" was created in space previously occupied by offices and displays of the GAR and associated organizations. A central feature of the military gallery was the display of large weapons, and exhibits traced military history from the frontier fort to the atomic age. Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower and other famous Kansas officers also were represented. An agricultural gallery featuring large pieces of farm equipment was built in reclaimed space as well. Case exhibits depicted such subjects as homesteading, the cattle industry, and the development of irrigation.  

Exhibits focusing on American Indians from prehistoric to modern times were transferred from the fourth floor to a new gallery on the third floor. "With the displays, even the amateur can note the difference in the characteristics in the various tribes," commented a Topeka reporter. Space cleared on the fourth floor was then "devoted to the role of women in Kansas history and to clothing and household items of interest to feminine museum visitors." Ten exhibits were placed in this area during 1961. China, glassware, silver, hats, shoes, hobbies, toys, fans, and accessories were thought to be of particular interest to women; men and boys were expected to be inclined toward the military and agricultural galleries.  

Following the gallery reorganization of 1960 through 1961, considerable time was devoted to developing special and traveling exhibits. A centennial semitrailer truck was fitted with twenty-one display units for viewing across the state. Individual exhibits dealt with such subjects as forts, trails, Indians, government, agriculture, industry, schools, Indian missions, and the Civil War. The centennial exhibit installed in the main lobby of the Memorial Building featured the Wyandotte Constitution, U.S. and Kansas flags, the state seal, a Charles Robinson portrait, and a sketch of Lincoln raising a thirty-four-star flag. Minus the portrait of Robinson and the Lincoln sketch, the exhibit remains today in the first-floor lobby. The Chisholm Trail Centennial in 1967 also was commemorated with a traveling exhibit. Installed on a railroad car provided by the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company, the mobile exhibit was viewed in several states. 

Presenting the Past

Exhibition.

In 1969, the Kansas Historical Society, with the assistance of the Kansas Historical Foundation and the University of Kansas Libraries, initiated an exhibition program that featured special exhibits and regularly updated displays. The program was designed to provide visitors with a comprehensive overview of Kansas history, highlighting significant events and figures. Over the years, the exhibition space expanded, with new exhibits added to accommodate the growing collection of historical artifacts. The exhibits were carefully chosen to reflect the diverse aspects of Kansas history, from prehistoric times to modern day. The Kansas Historical Society continues to ensure the accuracy and authenticity of the exhibits, reflecting the dynamic nature of Kansas history.

The annual exhibition program has been a cornerstone of the Kansas Historical Society's educational mission, offering visitors a unique opportunity to explore the state's rich heritage. Through a combination of artifacts, photographs, and interactive displays, the exhibits bring Kansas history to life, allowing visitors to connect with the past and gain a deeper understanding of the state's history and culture.
Kansas Museum of History

The Kansas Museum of History provides the Historical Society with the opportunity to expand its presentation of Kansas history. The new facility features a spacious exhibit gallery encompassing a three-thousand-square-foot special exhibit gallery, an orientation theater, and a nineteen-thousand-square-foot hall which will house the museum's main exhibit, "Voices from the Heartland: A Kansas Legacy." The special gallery will provide space for shows on loan from other institutions as well as short-term exhibits. Its twelve-foot ceiling clearance, carpeted walls, track lighting, and movable wall-panel system create a sophisticated environment in which to present exhibits complementing the museum's purpose. The main gallery, boasting a thirty-five-foot ceiling height and broad, uninterrupted floor space, will allow the full usage of artifacts of varying sizes and provide the opportunity for innovative exhibit construction.

Interpretive programming, the responsibility of the Exhibits, Education, and Research divisions of the Kansas Museum of History, encompasses the objectives of the Kansas State Historical Society. Simply stated, the purpose is to interpret or tell the story of Kansas history in a clear and concise manner. Exhibits and programming are intended both to educate and to entertain visitors while providing them with an idea of how events occurring today affect events tomorrow, just as those which occurred yesterday affect our lives today. By understanding change and continuity, along with the interrelationship of humankind and the environment, visitors are able to think and to draw conclusions about the land called Kansas. Perhaps the most appropriate goal of interpretive programming is to cause the visitor to feel a part of history.

Making history live within the museum is no small task. Exhibits are planned so that the interpretation does not compromise the historical integrity of a subject, and consideration is given to protecting the physical well-being of each artifact. Exhibits also are designed to avoid limiting any visitor's access to the physical environment and its interpretive message.

Moreover, exhibits are planned to complement
Another objective of the Kansas Museum of History is to make visitors to the museum feel as though they are part of the story of Kansas. The museum's exhibits will be designed to provide visitors with an understanding of the people and events that have shaped the state. The exhibits will include artifacts, photographs, and other materials that tell the story of Kansas in a way that is both educational and engaging.

The museum's exhibits will be arranged to create a narrative that begins with the earliest inhabitants of the region and continues through the state's history to the present day. Visitors will be able to explore different time periods and learn about the people who lived in Kansas during those times. The museum's goal is to provide visitors with a comprehensive understanding of the state's rich history.

One of the most important aspects of the museum's exhibits is their ability to engage visitors of all ages. The museum's staff has worked to create exhibits that are both educational and entertaining, using a variety of multimedia elements to bring history to life.

Visitors to the museum will be encouraged to ask questions and to interact with the exhibits. The museum's staff will be on hand to answer questions and provide additional information about the exhibits.

In addition to its exhibits, the museum also hosts a variety of events and programs throughout the year. These events range from lectures and workshops to family-friendly activities and special exhibitions. Visitors are encouraged to check the museum's website or call ahead to learn more about upcoming events.
to schools, historical societies, and museums throughout the state. It is hoped that from this beginning a traveling exhibits program with a regional orientation will develop.

Many questions will be asked as the public becomes accustomed to the new building. Visitors will wonder where their favorite quilt or piece of silver is or be pleased when an "old friend" is encountered in its new setting. Changes are important to continuity, and with this third move for the Society's museum, change will be evident. Gone will be the period rooms with their assemblages of furniture. In their places will appear vignettes of interiors and buildings. These smaller period settings will be historically accurate and will perhaps tell us more in an intimate way than did the larger rooms. Gone will be microcosms of history in closed cases. In their stead will be a flow of history with artifacts blending and tracing the threads of Kansas' past.

Activity centers with participatory exhibits will be located throughout "Voices," enabling visitors to gain a personal understanding of Kansas history.
with the dedication of the Kansas Museum of History, the opening of "Samples of Our Heritage" inaugurates a continuing exhibition program. Thousands of artifacts are housed in the museum, and "Samples," an overview or sampling of the Society's holdings, represents a number of the aspects of the collection.

For more than a century, the Historical Society of Kansas has been charged with gathering objects representative of the history of Kansas and the Great Plains. The purpose of the museum is to exhibit the most important objects and to instruct visitors concerning the history of Kansas and its people.

In fulfilling the task of interpreting the past, the museum must present a selection of objects that will serve the needs of those who want to understand the culture. The variety of artifacts allows visitors to gain a more accurate view of the past—comprised of a history that not all furniture was fabricated from a particular wood and not all tableware was silver plated. Although a museum may possess several styles of various years will provide a more comprehensive study of the collection.

As an extension of the main gallery outlining the history of the state, "Changing Exhibits," the special gallery will explore certain topics pertinent to life in Kansas. The first exhibit, however, is different. "Samples of Our Heritage," focuses on the materials of which later objects are the reason the Kansas Museum of History exists.

Why does the Society continue to collect even though it already possesses thousands of artifacts? The material culture of Kansas history is extremely broad and varied. Try to imagine all the objects used each day in the course of everyday life. As time passes, the objects used in the course of everyday life are actively sought. The Society before the objects deteriorate are acquired, stored, and are lost forever. The objects are acquired, stored, and lost forever. The objects are acquired, stored, and lost forever.

James R. Kraskas is curator of fine art, clothing and entertainment, Kansas State Historical Society.

John Zwierzyka is curator of technology, Kansas State Historical Society.
The Society collects objects related to famous people, places, and events that are prominent in our collective memory and serve to mark our history. Objects that are associated with these historical milestones are traditional favorites of museum visitors. They are direct links to times or individuals which otherwise are only abstract ideas. The artifacts give credence to times past; they are concrete evidence that people existed and events occurred.

Medal

Many contemporaries of John Brown considered this radical abolitionist a martyr after he was executed for attempting to lead a slave revolt. A group of French leaders, including the novelist Victor Hugo, had this solid gold medal struck in 1877 to honor Brown and his companions for their sacrifices. The medal was sent to Brown’s widow, Mary, and their children later donated it to the Kansas State Historical Society.

John Brown’s Surveyor’s Compass

When not fighting to further the free-state cause, John Brown spent some time employed as a surveyor while in Kansas. This surveyor’s compass set served as one of the principal tools of his trade. In addition to the brass compass, the set includes two brass protractors, two brass rules, a plumb bob, and the original walnut storage box. The scientific instrument makers Phelps and Gurley of Troy, New York, made the compass.

Exposition Window

World’s fairs were events of international import in the past as they are today. Kansas entered grand exhibitions at these fairs, showing with pride agricultural produce, manufactures, products of the mining industry, artworks and handicrafts of individual citizens, and cultural treasures. This stained and painted glass window was created for the Kansas Building at the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Centennial Exposition in Saint Louis and was used as a transom over the main entrance. It welcomed visitors with a splash of color and with symbols which Kansans recognized as their own.

Trophy

Radio Digest of Chicago presented this trophy to KFKB, “Kansas First, Kansas Best,” of Milford as the world’s most popular radio station. KFKB’s owner, Dr. John R. Brinkley, used the station for advertising his medical clinic and pharmacies and for campaign-
French Vase

The winter of 1947 was hard for thousands of Europeans. The deprivations of World War II were felt most severely by ordinary citizens. In Wichita, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas joined similar campaigns from no parts of the country. Promoters of the Southwest Friendship Train noted that gifts from Kansas filled over half of the 255 cars. More than 40 of those cars contained Kansas wheat and flour. The citizens of France wished to express their gratitude for the aid and organized a train of their own. Their “Merci” train included a car for each state containing mementos from French industries, and gifts of newly-rebuilt French industries. Many of the mementos were sent to Kansas State Historical Society collection. Among them is a piece called a French President Vincent Auriol to the people of Kansas, a fine Sevres porcelain vase.

Presentation Sword

James G. Blunt holds the distinction of being the first Kansan to achieve the rank of major general during the Civil War. To honor the general, two of Blunt’s close wartime associates presented this exquisite sword set to him. A product of the renowned Tiffany and Company of New York, the sword consists of an ornate silver hilt and a pommel with a gilt eagle perched on a ball. The blade, manufactured by Collins and Company of Hartford, Connecticut, has been etched with military motifs on a frosted gold background. In addition to the sword, the presentation set includes a gilt silver scabbard, a gilt wire sword knot, and a silk sash.
and things brought to Kansas to make a new home familiar. These are the belongings of generations of Kansans who created the Kansas of today.

Post Rock Fence Post
Wood was a scarce commodity on the relatively treeless plains of central Kansas. As a result, farmers and ranchers substituted the locally available limestone for wood as a material for fence posts. This unique type of stone, colloquially referred to as post rock, could be quarried readily from shallow deposits. Because of its stratified nature and its softness when initially extracted from the ground, post rock could be split easily and worked into fence posts. Travelers through central Kansas can still see the durable post rock fence posts dotting the landscape.

Trade Sign
The cigar store wooden Indian has always been a familiar and easily recognized symbol of the tobacconist. In 1871, Henry Moeer opened a cigar store on Kansas Avenue in Topeka and adorned it with this Indian. It is believed that the Indian was later displayed at the Windsor, one of Topeka’s leading hotels.

Cabinet
As leisure time became more available to middle-class Americans in the nineteenth century, hobbies gained popularity. Men as well as women desired to fill parlors with all manner of handworked artistry. Some hobbyists found a creative outlet in fretwork, the creation of wooden articles using a scrollsaw. The result was an abundance of lacy letter racks, comb holders, picture frames, and small furniture. Perhaps one of the most prolific fretworkers in Kansas was J. T. Genn of Wamego. After his discharge from Civil War service, he spent much time at his scrollsaw creating dozens of decorative and utilitarian household items. The small, wall-hung cabinet in the exhibit represents only a fraction of his work now in the museum collection.

Plains Rifle
For hunting and defense, frontiersmen often chose the attractive yet rugged Plains rifle. Leavenworth gunsmith John R. Biringer made this type of rifle for the local market. This gun, an example of Biringer’s work, has a .40 caliber, octagonal barrel and a walnut half stock. Note that the lock bears not Biringer’s mark, but that of “Goddard.” By the
reflecting this that help us understand this.

and efforts to accomplish their own purposes.

American decorative arts are set forth in the museum’s collection.

In addition, objects that show technological progress in the world.

understand the cultural traditions of the men-made world and provide us with insights of standards of design. Objects of art emerging from the tradition and the tools used in them are significant. However, the furnishings are those objects to which we are attracted. The history of art and architecture to us relates to our lives is not

The concept of fine aesthetics is one that is not

and understanding the past.

and understand the past.

beauty to our lives but also present new ways to see

shapes and colors of the world that is not only add

beauty but add another dimension of our culture. Artists

and craftspeople have always been popular for young

the exhibits collected by the Historical

Hair Wreaths

These were cherished household possessions in Kansas.

by the clothiers. As early as 1860, Co. 36th Kansas

of dress. Heads of hair were arranged in double cloth. These were called

Hair wigs were cut and shaped with the cloth of the time. In the exhibit,

He was born in 1832 in Maine, France.

Henry Adolph

Co. 36th Kansas

Co. 36th Kansas

Henry Adolph was born in 1832 in Maine, France.

He was a barber in the Third Kansas.

The exhibit is a great way to understand the wigs.

Hair wigs were cut and shaped with the cloth of the time. In the exhibit,

Henry Adolph was born in 1832 in Maine, France.
toward work; we can learn what types of work were considered most important. We can begin to comprehend the significant role of technology in our culture.

Pastel

The World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago was a showcase for many items including new inventions, crafts, and artworks. The exposition was enriched by a piece of art copyrighted by Henrietta Briggs-Wall and executed by W. A. Ford, both of Hutchinson. The pastel American Woman and Her Political Peers was a popular attraction at Chicago. It demonstrates the belief that a woman in the United States had as little political power as the disenfranchised Indian, madman, convict, and idiot. Creating quite a stir across the country, the pastel was reproduced on cards and distributed nationwide. Several newspapers and journals commented on it including the Alger County Republican in Michigan, which stated that American Woman would be to woman suffrage what Uncle Tom's Cabin was to abolition.

Oil Painting

Henry Worrall emigrated from Cincinnati to Topeka in 1868 and quickly discovered that Kansas was not the dry wasteland he had heard. When his eastern friends made derogatory statements about the land's aridity, Worrall sketched his version of Drouthy Kansas in 1869. Originally done in charcoal, then in this oil in 1878, Drouthy Kansas proclaimed huge harvests of wheat, watermelons, and corn and heavy rainfalls. The work drew much attention, appearing on the cover of Kansas Farmer and on circulars to promote immigration to Kansas.

Angell Disc Plow

In the 1920s, farmer/mechanic Charlie Angell of Plains developed a new type of disc plow especially adapted for wheat farming on the dry and windy High Plains. Angell's plow, unlike the traditional moldboard plow, did not turn over the soil and completely bury the surface trash. Instead, it merely tilled the soil while incorporating the trash or stubble into the top layer of the soil. This stubble then served as a mulch which conserved precious moisture, reduced wind erosion, and increased the humus content of the soil. After producing close to five hundred of the plows on his farm, Angell sold his rights to the plow to the Ohio Cultivator Company which marketed it as the "Angell One Way Disc Plow." Angell made this small, four-foot model (the most common size of the field models was ten feet) in 1926 for use in his family's vegetable garden.
The production of Cincinnati pottery increased in the 19th century, and Cincinnati became a leading center for American pottery. Cincinnati pottery was notable for its rustic style and its use of local materials, such as clay from the hollows of Cincinnati pottery. The pottery was often decorated with floral and landscape motifs, and it was popular among middle-class families. The pottery was exported to other parts of the United States and to other countries, and it remains popular today.
Artifacts in the Exhibition

Teapot
Ca. 1810; porcelain; h. 4⅛ in., diam. 4⅛ in.
This Chinese export teapot was used by Rev. and Mrs. Robert Simerwell when they worked at the Pottawatomie Baptist Mission during the 1840s and 1850s. Donated by Susie M. Arnold and the estate of Mary Esther Manley.

Riveting Hammer
1840-1860; steel; l. 6 in.
The Reverend Robert Simerwell made this small riveting hammer in the blacksmith shop of the Pottawatomie Baptist Mission. Donated by Susie M. Arnold and the estate of Mary Esther Manley.

Surveying Outfit
1845-1855; brass, steel, wood; transit on tripod, h. 65 in.
Albert D. Searl used this surveying outfit to lay out the towns of Lawrence, Topeka, and Manhattan for settlement in the mid-1850s after Kansas was organized as a territory. The outfit includes a transit, tripod, chain, and box. Donated by Mrs. S. J. Searl.

In the artifact descriptions, dates have been assigned as follows: a single date indicates that without question an item was made in that particular year. A range of dates (1872-1878) means that the artifact was made sometime within that period. The designation "ca." is used to specify a probable date within a span of five years before or five years afterward. Thus a date of "ca. 1875" means that the artifact probably was made about 1875, but could have been made any time between 1870 and 1880.

Comforter Fragment
1855; wool, linen, linsey-woolsey; l. 21½ in., w. 12½ in.
A comforter was made of Revolutionary War soldiers' cloaks and was sent from the Boston headquarters of the New England Emigrant Aid Company to the residents of Lawrence. They auctioned it to raise money to aid their free-state settlement. Only fragments of the comforter remain. Donated by Louisa B. Prentiss Simpson.

Seal
1854-1860; brass; diam. 1½ in.
The territorial auditor's office of Kansas embossed many official documents with this seal. Donated by William H. Morris.

Gavel
Ca. 1859; wood; l. 10½ in.
Alfred Larzelere used this gavel to bring the territorial House of Representatives to order. Donated by the heirs of Alfred Larzelere.

Candlesnuffer
Ca. 1830; cast iron; l. 6¼ in., w. 2½ in.
Residents of the Presbyterian Mission to the Iowa, Sac and Fox used this candlesnuffer. Donated by W. F. Horn.

Surveyor's Compass
1845-1855; brass, walnut; l. 15½ in., w. 7 in.
Abolitionist John Brown used this compass while he was employed as a surveyor in territorial Kansas in the 1850s. In addition to the brass compass, the set includes two brass protractors, two brass rules, a plumb bob, and the original walnut case.

Pike
1858-1859; l. 80½ in.
This is one of about one thousand pikes which John Brown had ordered specially made. Brown intended to arm southern slaves with the pikes and lead them in an insurrection. This particular pike was captured at Harpers Ferry, Virginia, after Brown's unsuccessful, yet fateful, raid on the federal arsenal there in 1859. Kansas State Historical Society purchase.

Medal
1877; gold; diam. 2¼ in.
This commemorative medal was struck in honor of abolitionist John Brown by French republicans. It was presented to Brown's widow. Donated by the children of John and Mary Brown.
H. Wood Foundation Board, by 1878, the turnpike was open.

1879-1883, iron, wallnut, l. 4'5" in.

Winchester Rifle

Thompson

Leghorn bow and four-string. Donated by W. F.

Thomson.

This address is incorrect. Properly Bonner to H. Carston.

1825-1855; iron, steel, wood.

Hammer

Donated by Elizabeth B. Custer.

These guns were owned by George Armstrong Custer.

C. A. 1870: Leaded: h. 22 in. (each).

Boons

Presetation Sword

Donated by Mr. Louis Joseph Lohr.

Promoted railroad and assisted in Kansas.

1853, silk, bottlec. H. 17" in. S. ,. 13% in.

Gown

Camporee

Donald by Mrs. Union Joseph Lohr.

This camporee survived the destruction of Lawrence.

C. A. 1860; pressed glass. H. 5 in. W. 7% in.

Camporee

Banner

Lincoln supporters. Donated by Mrs. Mark Dougherty.

in the 1860 presidential campaign in Kansas by

Lincoln-Douglas debates. The banner was later used

this banner to adorn a Lincoln portrait in the president

1858 silk: l. 32 in. b. 49 in.

Lincoln-Bloomington debate. The banner was later used

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Lincoln-Bloomington debate. The banner was later used

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1858 silk: l. 32 in. b. 49 in.
Presentation Revolvers
1860-1863; iron, ivory; 1. 13½ in. (each).
In 1863, the men of Company A, Sixth Kansas Volunteer Cavalry, presented this pair of revolvers to their major, J. Arrell Johnson, “as a token of his soldierly qualities.” The silver-plated Model 1863 Remington revolvers have gold-plated cylinders and ivory grips. The presentation inscription is engraved on silver plaques on the grips. Donated by J. Arrell Johnson.

Saddle
1900-1920; leather, wood; l. 29 in., h. 48 in.
Topekan P. H. Adams acquired this fine western saddle from cowboy John Hicks when Adams insisted that Hicks throw it in as part of a cattle deal.
According to one popular legend, author Owen Wister based his hero “the Virginian” on the character of his friend Hicks. Smith Brothers of Raton, New Mexico, made the saddle. Donated by Lakin Meade.

Sledge
1880-1895; steel, hickory; l. 26¾ in.
George L. Douglass, Republican speaker of the house, used this sledge to smash the doors and gain entry to the Populist-controlled house chamber during the Kansas Legislative War in 1893. Donated by George L. Douglass.

Doors
1880-1881; oak, walnut; h. 113 in., w. 29 in. (each).
These doors to the Kansas House of Representatives were smashed during the 1893 Legislative War.
Donated by John Seaton and B. S. Warner.

Photographic Print
Ca. 1893-ca. 1940; walnut, paper; l. 10¼ in., w. 8¼ in.
The frame of this photograph was fabricated from a piece of the wooden doors smashed during the

Legislative War. The wood was salvaged by Republican McGowan Hunt. Donated by Mrs. William Warren Powell.

Crandall Hammer
1880-1900; steel; l. 25 in.
A temperance advocate presented this vicious-looking tool to Carry A. Nation. Although originally intended for dressing building stone, Mrs. Nation put it to use in her anti-saloon crusade. Donated by Carry A. Nation.

Pin
1901-1911; mother-of-pearl; l. 1¼ in.
Pins such as this one were sold at temperance meetings to raise funds. Donated by Mrs. Charles Ray Fuller.

Roster
1898-ca. 1910; paper; l. 21½ in., w. 17½ in.
This roster was printed to commemorate a company of Kansas volunteers that served in the Philippine Insurrection. Donated by the United Spanish War Veterans.

Inkwell
1930; silver plate; h. 4 in.
Charles Curtis, a Kansan who served as vice-president of the United States from 1929 to 1933, was given this silver-plated inkwell. Donated by Margaret L. Seusy.

Shaving Mug
Ca. 1920-ca. 1940; porcelain; h. 3½ in., diam. 4¾ in.
Like many men of his time, Charles Curtis owned a personalized shaving mug. His name is emblazoned across this mug in bold, gilded letters. Donated by Margaret L. Seusy.
Trophy
1930; sheet metal; h. 10¾ in.
Radio Digest awarded this trophy to radio station KFKB of Milford as the world’s most popular radio station. KFKB was owned by Dr. John R. Brinkley who ran for governor in the 1930s. Donated by Angela Brinkley.

Chair
Ca. 1900; oak; h. 39 in., w. 29 in.
This chair was part of the furniture in the old governor’s mansion before Cedar Crest became the official residence of Kansas governors. Donated by the Office of Secretary of State Paul R. Shanahan.

Window
1903; stained glass, painted glass; h. 42 in., w. 78 in.
This window was placed over the door of the beautiful Kansas Building at the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Centennial Exposition in Saint Louis. Donated by the Kansas World’s Fair Commission.

Vase
1947; porcelain; h. 9¾ in., diam. 4½ in.
This fine Sevres vase was a gift of appreciation to the people of Kansas from French President Vincent Auriol. Kansans had participated in sending a Southwest Friendship Train loaded with food and supplies to Europe after World War II. Donated by the Office of Governor Frank Carlson.

Ballot Box
1870-1890; wood; l. 22½ in., w. 5 in.
Members of North Topeka GAR Blue Post 250 used this ballot box for voting at their meetings. The painted wooden box is shaped like a ship. Donated by the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Kansas.

Tableware Set
1873-1891; porcelain; plate, diam. 7¾ in., cup, diam. 3¾ in., saucer, diam. 5½ in.
This plate, cup, and saucer were used in the home of Cyrus K. Holliday, a founder of Topeka and of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad. Donated by Mrs. George W. Burpee and Mrs. Frank Smithies.

Medal
1898; gold, silk; l. 4⅞ in., w. 1½ in.
Adorned with gems, this medal was presented to Grand Army of the Republic State Commander Theodosius Botkin.

Barong
1900-1920; steel, silver, ivory; l. 24¼ in.
Osa Leighty Johnson, wife of Martin Johnson, acquired this barong, a Moro jungle knife, on the world-famous couple’s first exploring trip to Borneo in 1917. The knife has a silver-banded grip and a carved ivory pomme1. Donated by the Woman’s Kansas Day Club through Belle Leighty.

Saw Set
1895-1910; steel; l. 17½ in.
Walter Chrysler, the automobile manufacturer, first developed his mechanical skills while employed as an apprentice in the shops of the Union Pacific Railroad in Ellis. Lacking money, he learned to make many of his own tools. This saw set, a tool used to set the teeth of saws at alternate angles, was fabricated by Chrysler.
Pipe Bowl
1936; corncob; h. 2 in.
This pipe bowl was used as a promotional novelty by Kansan Alfred M. Landon in his bid for the presidency in 1936. Donated by Philip E. Zimmerman.

Necktie
1932-1944; rayon; l. 47¾ in.
This tie is an example of the novelties used in Franklin D. Roosevelt’s several presidential campaigns. Donated by Anita Reid Tannuzzo.

Drawing
1936; ink on paper; h. 17¾ in., w. 13¾ in.
Cy Hungerford created this pen-and-ink cartoon which illustrated a few of the issues of the 1936 presidential race.

Poster
1900; lithographic print; w. 24 in., h. 16½ in.
This colorful lithograph was one of several used in the presidential campaign between William McKinley and William Jennings Bryan.

Ribbon
1904; silk; l. 16½ in.
Hugh S. Cooper was awarded this ribbon for the outstanding corn he entered in the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Centennial Exposition in Saint Louis. Donated by H. S. Cooper.

Medal
1870; silver; l. 5 in., w. 3 in.
Flour milling has always been an important industry in Kansas. The Skelton Mills of Leavenworth was presented this silver medal for its fine wheat flour. Donated by Dora Skelton.

Quilt
Ca. 1890; cotton; l. 37 in., w. 32¾ in.
Amanda Elizabeth Gorman of Osborne made this quilt by tracing her little daughter’s hand for the handprint appliques. Donated by Agnes Hibbs, Lala Hibbs Morris, and Katherine Taylor Rowland.

Clock
1903-1907; oak; h. 71 in., w. 17¼ in.
Frank Kaho was a student of woodworking and drafting at the Kansas State Manual Training Normal School, Pittsburg, when he made this clock. Donated by Mrs. Dean Depler.

Rolling Pin
1899; Osage orange; l. 16½ in., diam. 2¾ in.
John McCready carved this rolling pin for his daughter. He used the wood of the Osage orange, a tree found in Kansas hedgerows. Donated by Paul M. Reid.

Wastebasket
Ca. 1900; pine; h. 18 in., w. 10½ in.
Pyrography was a popular home handicraft at the turn of the century. All types of household items were decorated by burning designs into the wood. Donated by the estate of Hattie Mack.

Pillow Shams
Ca. 1880-ca. 1895; cotton; l. 25½ in., w. 27½ in.
The art of embroidery was promoted by late-nineteenth-century women’s magazines which often featured designs for embroidered pillow shams in their pages. Donated by Mrs. Dale E. Logan and Mrs. Gordon A. Summers.
The estate of Frances J. K. Caddy, for whom the house was named in 1879, donated the first rockfish chair to the museum. This chair was a favorite of the family and was passed down through generations.

C. 1850-60, cane, 110 in., h. 110 in., w. 54 in., d. 54 in.

Cane Pitcher

By J. A. Miller. Pitcher for milk and water. The original pitcher was made in the 1860s, and the pattern was passed down through generations.

C. 1860, wood, spout: 3 in., h. 12 in., w. 4 in.

Chair

By J. A. Miller. Chair made in the 1870s for use in the kitchen. The chair was used by the family and was passed down through generations.

C. 1870-80, wood, 29 in., h. 29 in., w. 11 in.

Table

By J. A. Miller. Table made in the 1870s for use in the kitchen. The table was used by the family and was passed down through generations.

C. 1870-80, wood, 30 in., h. 30 in., w. 12 in.

Mug

By J. A. Miller. Mug made in the 1890s for use in the kitchen. The mug was used by the family and was passed down through generations.

C. 1890-1900, wood, 2 in., h. 2 in., w. 2 in.

Forms including framed weeklies: A landscape on this mug was donated by the Topeka Art Museum. The museum has several examples of this type of art.

C. 1890-1900, wood, 2 in., h. 2 in., w. 2 in.
Smooth Plane
1853-1870; beech; l. 8 in.

Molding Plane
1833-1844; beech; l. 9½ in.

Molding Plane
1833-1844; beech; l. 9½ in.

Level
1850-1870; wood, brass; l. 12¼ in.

Marking Gauge
1840-1870; beech; l. 9¾ in.

Calipers
1840-1870; steel; l. 6¼ in.

Brace
1840-1870; beech, brass; l. 13¼ in.

Bit
1840-1870; steel; l. 5 in.

Gouge
1860-1870; steel, wood; l. 8¾ in.

Backsaw
1833-1870; steel, brass, wood; l. 15 in.

Lamp
1910-ca. 1929; nickel-plated metal, glass; h. 22 in. diam. 10¼ in.

One of the many products of the Coleman Lamp Company of Wichita was the gasoline lamp. This model was patented in 1910 and was popular through the 1920s. Donated by Claude Brex.

Silk Fiber Sample
Ca. 1890; silk; l. 1 15½ in.

Experiments in raising silkworms took place in Kansas from 1869 through the 1890s. The state government established a silk station in Peabody where this dyed sample was produced. Donated by L. V. Horner.

Coverlet
1876; wool; l. 85 in., w. 76 in.

Henry Adolph was a skilled weaver who worked in Ohio, Indiana, and Iowa before moving to Kansas. He made this jacquard coverlet in Clinton. Kansas State Historical Society purchase.

Canning Jar
1901-ca. 1910; mold-blown glass; h. 9¾ in., diam. 4½ in.

Coffeyville had natural resources which led to the growth of its brick and glass industries. This canning jar was produced at one of Coffeyville's glass factories. Donated by Joseph Bidwell.

Shirt
Ca. 1913; silk; l. 34 in.

The Capital Shirt Factory of Topeka manufactured this silk shirt. Donated by the estate of Robert Billard.

Plains Rifle
1860-1890; iron, walnut; l. 49¼ in.

Gunsmith John R. Biringer of Leavenworth made this Plains-style rifle. The specimen has a .40 caliber, octagonal barrel and a walnut half stock. Kansas State Historical Society purchase.

Chair
Ca. 1861; oak, woven bark; h. 32¼ in., w. 17¼ in.

Small shops as well as large factories produced necessities for Kansas homes. John W. Worley made this chair in his cabinet shop near Cherryvale. Donated by the Woman's Kansas Day Club.

Anti-cowkick
1907-1915; steel; l. 31 in.

In 1907, Topekan Alfred B. Smith patented this "anti-cowkick" or "kickers," a device used to restrain
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Samples of Our Heritage

Type mill to grind ingredients for medicines. To treat
periods during which food is scarce. Early
1899-1900: From scale, H. 4½ in.

Ding Mill

Norwich, Ct., Thomas Partridge, and John
Thomson

Mr. Richardson's Norwich's Arrow Point Design

Bartholomew (Brink's Lame Design) 1879-1900: Scale, L. 18½ in.
Bartholomew (Allis Ribbon Design) 1881-1900: Scale, L. 18½ in.
Bartholomew (Allis Rockingham Pattern Design) 1881-1900: Scale, L. 18½ in.
Bartholomew (Ainsworth Design) 1879-1900: Scale, L. 18½ in.
Bartholomew (Henry Welch, Post Rock Fence Post) 1889-1895: Scale, L. 24½ in.
Bartholomew (Kells, Thomas Fence Design) 1878-1895: Scale, L. 24½ in.
Bartholomew (Frye's Parade Design) 1883-1900: Scale, L. 30 in.
Bartholomew (Shibue Plate, Large Design) 1889-1898: Scale, H. 5½ in.

Haque.

The Lincoln Rock and Mineral Club through Hardy
the 1880's and used in Lincoln County. Known as
central Kansas where wood was scarce, early
1880-1888: H. 10 in. Base Rock Fence Post

Post Rock Fence Post

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Post Rock Fence Post

Haque.
ailments of livestock. The mill, made by the Enterprise Manufacturing Company of Philadelphia, bears decals of patriotic motifs and floral designs. Donated by Mr. and Mrs. K. H. Petro.

Jigsaw
1877-1890; iron, wood; h. 40% in. Jigsaws or scrollsaws were used during the Victorian period to produce the elaborate scroll and perforated designs associated with furniture styles then in vogue. Hobbyist J. T. Genn of Wamego used this jigsaw to make ornate fretwork furniture. Donated by the estate of J. T. Genn.

Anvil
1875-1925; steel; l. 31 in., h. 11¾ in.

Tire Measuring Wheel (Traveler)
1880-1930; iron; l. 12 in.

Hoop Tongs
1880-1940; iron; l. 21¾ in.

Hollow Bit Tongs
1880-1940; iron; l. 18¾ in.

Punch
1880-1940; steel; l. 17¼ in.

Apron
1900-1940; leather; l. 33½ in. This group of blacksmithing tools was used in the Turnbull blacksmith shop which operated continuously as a family business in Maple Hill from 1888 through the 1950s. Donated by the estate of John Turnbull, Jr.

Leg-iron
1867-1890; iron, leather; l. 14 in., h. 8% in. Patented in Oregon in 1876, this variation of a ball and chain was used at the Kansas State Penitentiary in Lansing. Known as the “Oregon Boot,” it featured an ankle weight supported on top of an iron frame attached to a shoe. Donated by the Kansas Department of Corrections.

Dental Instrument Kit
1840-1875; steel, ivory, rosewood; case, l. 17 in., w. 10 in. This set of ivory-handled dental instruments with rosewood case was used by Eben Palmer. He practiced his profession in Jackson County from 1881 until his retirement in 1907. Donated by F. R. Palmer.

Lithographer's Stone
Ca. 1905; stone; l. 10 in., w. 9 in. This lithographer's stone was used by the Hall Lithographing Company of Topeka to print checks and receipts. Donated by Clarence M. Locke.

Line Gauge
Ca. 1900-ca. 1930; brass; l. 13¾ in. Used much like a ruler, this line gauge was used by a printer to measure type. Donated by John A. Ogle.

Rule Calipers
1900-1930; brass; l. 12½ in.

Rule Calipers
1900-1930; brass; l. 9½ in.

The Bertillon system is a method of criminal identification which uses calipers to take precise body measurements. In the early 1900s, fingerprinting began gradually to supersede this system as a means of identification. This set of three Bertillon calipers was used at the Kansas State Penitentiary in Lansing. Donated by the Kansas Department of Corrections.

Paperweight
Ca. 1910-ca. 1920; glass; l. 4¼ in., w. 2¾ in. This paperweight was probably distributed as an advertising novelty by the I. M. Yost Milling Company of Hays. Donated by Leota Motsz.
Samples of Our Heritage

Hairbrush

Relief Block

Ca. 1910-ca. 1920; wood; 1 1/8 in., w. 8 1/2 in.

This relief block was used to print advertisements for the Smith Truss Company of Topeka.

Trade Sign

Ca. 1883; painted wood; h. 39 in.

The wooden Indian has always been the familiar trademark of tobacco shops. This figure was brought to Topeka in 1877 and was located at Henry Mosser’s Cigar Store on Kansas Avenue. Donated by Hedwig Wilke.

Display Horse

Ca. 1860-1870; paper mache; h. 87 in.

This life-size paper mache horse was used to fit and display saddles in the shop of Fox and Sons in Anthony. Donated by Clarence E. Fox.

Serving Dish

Ca. 1893; ironstone; h. 13 5/8 in., w. 19 in.

This tableware made in Britain flooded the late-nineteenth-century American market. The tea leaf pattern was popular throughout the country and was featured in Sears, Roebuck and Company catalog. Donated by Mr. and Mrs. M. V. Liepman.

Trinket Box

Ca. 1885; silver plate; h. 5 in., w. 4 1/8 in.

The East Coast silver plate industry allowed people like this box designed to hold pins, jewelry, and other trinkets were readily available to Kansas. Donated by Dr. Charles L. Overlander.

Scrap

Ca. 1860-1890; chromolithographed paper; Santa sheet, w. 14 in., h. 14 in.

Collecting scrap was a fashionable late-nineteenthcentury pastime. The colorful paper figures were imported from England and Germany. Scrap was pasted in scrapbooks and used to adorn calling cards and make Christmas decorations. Donated by Gertie Maurer and an anonymous donor.

Shed

Ca. 1920; painted wood; h. 1 1/2 ft., w. 1 1/2 ft.

This was a recreational device for winter fun. This sled was bought by the Jemore family of Kansas around 1880. Donated by Henry C. and Margaret Jemore Melroy.

Medicine Bottle

Ca. 1890; cardboard; h. 1 1/4 ft., w. 3 in.

The A. B. Seely Medical Company of Abilene was one of the first large patent medicine producers in the central prairie states. Its “Wasa-Tussa” promised to cure the ills of man or beast. Donated by Mrs. F. E. Friby.
Billiard Balls
Ca. 1860-ca. 1870; ivory; diam. 1¾ in. (each).
*An Ozawie poolroom possessed these solid ivory billiard balls around the Civil War era. Donated by Frank M. Skelton.*

Bowling Ball
Ca. 1880-ca. 1900; burlwood?; diam. 8¼ in.
*This wooden bowling ball was used in Burlingame at a recreational hall. It features two sets of two fingerholes of different sizes so that it can fit several people. Donated by Charles Goebel.*

Roller Skates
Ca. 1860-ca. 1880; pine; l. 10½ in. (each).
*A bed brought to Kansas in 1855 provided the material for these handmade roller skates. Donated by George J. Remsburg.*

Golf Bag
Ca. 1910-ca. 1930; canvas; l. 32 in.

Golf Club
Ca. 1910-ca. 1930; hickory, wood; l. 44½ in.

Golf Club
Ca. 1910-ca. 1930; hickory, forged steel; l. 39 in.

Golf Club
Ca. 1910-ca. 1930; hickory, forged steel; l. 37 in.

Golf Club
Ca. 1910-ca. 1930; hickory, forged steel; l. 35 in.
*Hickory-shafted clubs such as these were used on many golf courses early in this century. Hickory was gradually replaced by steel and various other materials. Donated by Lyal Dudley.*

Trophy
1926; silver; h. 16½ in.
*The Goldsmith trophy was presented to the Milford Goats for their championship season. This baseball team was owned by Dr. John R. Brinkley, who gained nationwide fame for his implantation of goat glands in humans. Donated by Angela Brinkley.*

Football Game
Ca. 1927; sheet steel; l. 13¼ in.
*Many children played games such as this one advertised in the 1927 Sears catalog. Donated by Robert W. Richmond.*

Card Game
1903-ca. 1910; paper; w. 5¼ in.
*Gavitt’s Stock Exchange card game was manufactured in Topeka. Its appeal was based on the thrill of the stock market, with cards indicating shares in various railroad companies. Donated by Earl G. Radenz.*

Semimechanical Bank
1875-1895; cast iron; h. 5½ in.
*The figure of this bank was based on William Marcy “Boss” Tweed, the corrupt New York City politician. When a coin is placed in Tweed’s hand, the hand “pockets” the coin just as the real-life figure pocketed many dollars. Donated by Opal C. Teeter Robbins.*

Still Bank
1907-ca. 1925; cast iron; h. 5¼ in.
*Comic-strip characters provided subjects for manufacturers of banks. This Mutt and Jeff bank was probably produced soon after that comic strip made its debut in 1907. Donated by Nyle H. Miller.*

Mah-jongg
Ca. 1925-ca. 1940; bone, bamboo; l. 9¾ in., h. 6½ in.
*During the 1920s mah-jongg became the most popular parlor game, and sets of bone or ivory could be found in many homes. Donated by the estate of George McGill.*

Mechanical Toy
1906-ca. 1909; tin; l. 7½ in.
*German manufacturers of tin toys enjoyed enormous success throughout the United States before World War I. The war forced this industry to produce war materials instead of entertainment items. Donated by the estate of Dr. Lamoile Rush and Ella Callen King.*
Painting 1897, watercolor on paper, w. 20 in., h. 14 in. This painting depicts a scene from the American Indian Wars, specifically the Battle of the Washita in 1868. The artist, Mary E. Delahaye, was a prominent Kansas politician. The painting was donated to the Kansas State Historical Society by Mrs. Bertha M. White.

Drawing 1892, pastel, h. 24 in., w. 18 in. "Hunting the Badger," by John H. H. Judd. This drawing is a depiction of a hunting scene, capturing the spirit of the American frontier. The drawing was commissioned by the Kansas State Historical Society and is now part of their permanent collection.

Building Blocks 1885-ca. 1905, stone, l. 13 1/2 in., w. 15 in. This set of building blocks was designed to encourage children's imaginations and was a popular toy in the late 19th century. The blocks were manufactured by the Kansas City Block Company and are now part of the Kansas State Historical Society's collection.

Painting 1908, oil on canvas, w. 28 in., h. 18 in. "Distant Thunder," by Grant Wood. This painting depicts a farmer plowing his field, suggesting the agricultural life of the time. The painting was acquired by the Kansas State Historical Society.
Carving  
Ca. 1920-1927; painted wood; h. 7¾ in.  
Fred Douglas showed a great talent for carving figures, then assembling them in bottles. Donated by Rhetta Hood.

Sideboard  
1870-1880; walnut; h. 88½ in., w. 47½ in.  
The elaborate Renaissance Revival styling of the sideboard was fashionable before popular taste dictated a return to less complicated furniture.

High Chair/Stroller  
Ca. 1910; oak; h. 41 in., w. 17½ in.  
With the flip of a latch the seat can be lowered and the legs spread out to convert this high chair into a stroller. Donated by Opal C. Teeter.

Child’s Lounge  
Ca. 1902; walnut, fabric; h. 22 in., l. 42 in.  
This scaled-down version of an adult lounge or fainting couch furnished the backyard playhouse of Saraleen Curtis of Topeka. Donated by Saraleen Curtis.

Fish Knife  
Ca. 1870-ca. 1895; silver plate, shell; l. 12 in., w. 3¾ in.  
As the elaborate marine motif on the blade indicates, this utensil was designed solely for serving fish. Donated by Mary E. Delahay.

Compote  
Ca. 1880-ca. 1890; pressed glass; h. 14½ in., diam. 8¾ in.  
The log cabin, buffalo, and Indian pictured on this pressed glass compote commemorate the nineteenth-century American fascination with the West. Donated by Mr. and Mrs. Joseph T. Grogger.

Sideboard  
Ca. 1900-ca. 1910; oak; h. 63½ in., w. 50½ in.  
The clean lines and simple ornamentation of Arts-and-Crafts-style furniture had nationwide appeal. Donated by Barbara Mertz.

Table  
1896; cattle horns, pine; h. 28 in., w. 27 in.

Chair  
1898-ca. 1900; cattle horns, walnut, fabric; h. 38 in., w. 24½ in.  
Furniture made of cattle horns was popular in the late nineteenth century. Charles and Nancy Ellen Calwell of Wetmore made several pieces including this table and chair. Donated by Charles A. Calwell.

Bride’s Bowl  
Ca. 1885; silver plate, glass; h. 17 in., diam. 11¾ in.  
Lavishly decorated bride’s bowls were popular wedding gifts during the 1880s. Donated by Mrs. Vernon E. McArthur.

Tray  
Ca. 1870-ca. 1885; papier-mâché; l. 30 in., w. 24 in.  
Papier-mâché was a material that was well suited to the eclectic embellishments of Victorian design. A picture of a dog, a gilded border, and inlaid abalone shell adorn this example. Donated by Zulu Adams.
Pitcher
1882; earthenware; h. 8 in., diam. 6 in.
This pitcher is a product of the Rookwood Pottery. It was decorated by Albert R. Valentin, a pioneering artist of the American art pottery movement. Donated by Mrs. Richard J. Trail.

Colt Revolver
1884; iron, ivory; l. 10 in.
The Colt Single Action Army Revolver, colloquially known as the “Peacemaker,” and “Frontier Six-shooter,” has become a classic symbol of the Wild West. This extensively engraved, nickel-bladed  .45 caliber Colt features carved ivory grips in the shape of a steerhead. Donated by Andrew Sedgeley.

Escapement
1885; brass; l. 4½ in., w. 2½ in.
Topken Alonzo Thomas made this escapement at the topken school in order to prove his skills before graduating. Donated by the state of Alonzo Thomas.

Instructional Model of Locomotive Engine
1900–1940; iron; l. 29½ in., h. 9½ in.
Instructors at the Santa Fe Railway’s apprentice school at Dodge City used this model to demonstrate how a steam locomotive engine works. The hand crank at the left powers the model. Donated by Charles Gobert.

Patent Model of Grain Separator
1877; wood, steel; l. 11½ in., w. 7½ in.
In 1878, Thaddeus Hinds of Salina received a patent for a grain separator, a device used to clean chaff and other debris from grain. He submitted this model to the United States Patent Office to illustrate his invention. Kansas State Historical Society purchase.

Powder Horn
1775; cow horn; l. 12 in.
This crudely engraved Revolutionary War powder horn depicts the Continental Army’s unique siege of British-held Charleston during the winter of 1775–76. The horn belonged to Nathaniel Washington, a soldier in Washington’s army. Also engraved on the horn are Washington’s name and the date on which it was made, October 2, 1775. Washington’s grandson presented the family heirloom to the Historical Society in 1887. Donated by Avery Washington.

Bandolier and Pouch
1880–ca. 1925; horn, beading, cotton, velvet.
Once a functional shoulder bag, the bandolier and pouch evolved into a non-functional item of ceremonial dress. The colorful floral beadwork patterns of this example are typical Woodland Indian motifs. Donated by Mrs. Fred Garwood.

Sod Plow
1875–1880; iron, steel, wood; l. 80 in., h. 35 in.
Early settlers on the prairies used sod plows to turn over the thick, virgin soil. The unusual rod moldboard helped to reduce soil friction, but its peculiar appearance earned the tool the name “grasshopper plow.” Donated by John L. Agnew.

Electricity Machine
1860–1890; mahogany, steel; l. 10 in., w. 4½ in.
In the nineteenth century, static electricity was a commonly accepted cure for almost every sort of malady. Davis & Kidd’s Patent Magneto-Electric Machine, or nervous diseases was a popular remedy during this period. Donated by Roy Faulkner.
Disc Plow
1926; iron, steel; l. 108 in., w. 78 in., h. 60 in.
*In the 1920s, Charles Angell of Plains developed a disc plow especially adapted for wheat farming in the dry and windy High Plains. Marketed as the "Angell One Way Disc Plow," it changed dryland farming methods. Angell used this small, four-foot model in his family’s vegetable garden. Donated by C. Francis Angell.*

Boring Machine
1875-1900; steel, wood; l. 28½ in., h. 24 in.
*Around the middle of the nineteenth century, boring machines began to be substituted for, but did not entirely replace, augers as a means of drilling holes in wood. Donated by Carl Puderbaugh.*

Fruit Parer
Ca. 1885-ca. 1920; cast iron; h. 10¾ in., w. 8¼ in.
*Not only was the fruit parer a great labor-saving device, but its gears and wheels could be decorated to produce a functional tool of pleasing design. Donated by Henry C. Vangampolard.*

Butter Churn
Ca. 1880; oak, various woods, cast iron; l. 108 in., h. 63 in.
The McFaddens of Peabody put their dog to work on the treadmill of this butter churn. Donated by the estate of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel McFadden.
The Marais des Cygnes Massacre and the Execution of William Griffith

by Harvey R. Hougen

MY CURIOsITY concerning the Marais des Cygnes Massacre led me on a fruitless search for a complete and accurate account of the tragedy. This paper is an attempt to provide such an account. Readers who are familiar with the event may question the spelling of the name “Hamilton.” In most Kansas sources it is spelled with an “e” (Hamelton). Be assured that the more conventional spelling is the correct one. Sources concerning the Hamilton family, primary and secondary, are available in the Georgia Department of Archives and History (GDAH), Atlanta, and were consulted (see note 9).

This account of events on the day of the massacre is based for the most part on primary sources—the statements of survivors who were interviewed or who wrote their recollections soon after the tragedy. The narrative of Rev. B. L. Read in his long letter to Rev. Nathan Brown (La Cygne Weekly Journal) and the statements of Read and William Hairgrove (New York Times) added a new dimension to the story. Newspaper accounts based on interviews with the survivors were also valuable. These sources became the basis for the evaluation of secondary materials. Ely Snyder's Personal Experiences was written by Snyder during his elderly years and so was used with caution.

Concerning secondary sources, the brief account of the massacre in Alfred T. Andreas' History of the State of Kansas appears to have been based on information obtained from Rev. Read and is probably accurate as far as it goes. The single most valuable secondary source is William A. Mitchell, Linn County, Kansas: A History. Mitchell's book was used with caution, however, for it is poorly organized and contains some information which is clearly untrue (for example, his remarks concerning Rev. Read's experiences after he left the massacre site). On the other hand, his accounts of other events were based on interviews with Austin Hall, the massacre survivor who lived out his years in Linn County, and fit well with the information obtained from primary sources. Secondary sources appearing in the Kansas State Historical Collections (especially the articles written by Joel Moody and Edmund Smith) were used to flesh out the narrative, but these works are of uneven quality and were also used carefully.

Edmund Smith's eyewitness account of the Griffith execution (from the Mound City Clarion, reprinted in Mitchell, Linn County) and news reports from the Kansas City Daily Journal of Commerce were the principal sources for the treatment of the trial and execution of William Griffith.

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Marais des Cygnes Massacre

The border warfare that led to the Marais des Cygnes Massacre began in 1863, when the Kansas Territory was organized. The northern boundary of the territory extended westward from Missouri's southern boundary along a line extending westward from 100° west longitude. The Kansas-Nebraska Act, repealing that provision, substituting the principle of "popular sovereignty," under which the settlers themselves would decide whether the new territories would be open to slavery.

Judge Solomon O. Thacher held the October trial of William Griffith, a Free-Soil settler accused of murdering James Hamilton, an opponent of the Kansas-Nebraska Act. The trial was held in the Lincoln County Courthouse in Lincoln. The jury returned a verdict of not guilty, and Griffith was acquitted. However, the case had a greater impact on the Southwest border, as it was one of several in which Free-Soil settlers had been murdered.

The border conflict between Kansas and Missouri was a precursor to the Bleeding Kansas period, which lasted from 1854 to 1858. The conflict was fueled by the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which allowed the territorial inhabitants to vote on the issue of slavery. The debate over slavery in Kansas was intense, and the conflict between Free-Soil and pro-slavery settlers was a catalyst for the Civil War.

1. Kansas City Union, October 8, 1863.
2. Ibid., and L. D. Bailey, Border Ruffian Troubles in Kansas: Some Newspaper Articles, Article IV, Kansas Historical Society, Topeka, 1866.
vene in territorial elections and to terrorize free-staters (settlers who opposed the extension of slavery into Kansas Territory). The proslavery legislature, elected in March 1855, enacted a harsh slave code that provided severe penalties for persons who interfered with the "peculiar institution."

The situation rendered Kansas Territory virtually lawless. Disgusted by the proslavery voting frauds, free-staters boycotted the elections, refusing to recognize the proslavery legislature or its laws. During 1855, they formed the "Free-State" party, established a separate government in Topeka, adopted a constitution which forbade slavery, and organized a militia force. The proslavery faction responded by forming the "Law and Order" party and a militia which consisted largely of proslavery Missourians. The free-staters contemptuously referred to the Missourians as "Border Ruffians." As early as December 1855, the two military forces faced one another at Lawrence. A pitched battle was narrowly avoided through negotiations between Wilson Shannon, the official territorial governor, and Charles Robinson, head of the unofficial free-state government in Topeka. In any event, the ensuing border warfare claimed at least fifty lives (estimates range as high as two hundred), and its impact on the United States was dynamic.

As the results of popular sovereignty unfolded, incidents like the sack of Lawrence (by a proslavery posse) and the Pottawatomie Massacre (an atrocity committed by abolitionists: John Brown and a band of free-state men) emblazoned themselves on the nation's consciousness, fueling the sectional controversy that preceded the Civil War. Lawrence was a center of free-state activity and the home of free-state governor Robinson. Moreover, Lawrence's two newspapers were a constant irritant to proslavery leaders. In May 1856 a proslavery grand jury declared the newspapers and the city's Free State Hotel to be "nuisances" that could be "removed." Sheriff Samuel Jones responded by forming a large posse that entered Lawrence and destroyed the offending enterprises as well as other businesses and the home of Governor Robinson; two Lawrence citizens were killed. John Brown was en route to Lawrence with a free-state militia company when he received word of the "sacking." Three days later, on May 24, 1856, Brown retaliated by butchering five Franklin County proslavery men near "Dutch Henry's Crossing" on Pottawatomie Creek.4

Such events were widely publicized, but the situation in the southern border counties of Linn and Bourbon received less attention. There, the presence of proslavery and free-state settlers in near equal numbers and the proximity of proslavery bases in Missouri created an explosive situation.

The soil in the southern border counties was as fertile as any in the region, and rich stands of timber grew along the streams that divided the rolling green hills. The main watercourse in Linn County is the Marais des Cygnes River, which flows across the county in a southeasterly direction before entering Bates County, Missouri, where it joins the Little Osage to form the Osage River. The county immediately south of Linn is Bourbon; the Little Osage flows across Bourbon in an easterly direction, just below the county line. Frenchmen who explored the upper branch of the Osage were impressed by the number of swans in the marshes along the river; hence, the name Marais des Cygnes. Located on the river's north bank, about four miles west of the Missouri boundary, was a cluster of buildings known to the early settlers as Chouteau's Trading Post (later organized as the town of Trading Post). The "Post," as it was sometimes called, had been established by fur traders in 1834 and was one of the earliest white settlements in the Kansas region.5

The early arrivals in the southern counties were proslavery, but as settlement progressed an increasing percentage of the newcomers were free-staters. Fearing loss of political control, proslavery leaders formed night-riding "posses" to intimidate the unwelcome newcomers—to warn them out of the territory. Few actual settlers rode with the posses. In the main, the night riders were Border Ruffians—men whose policy it was to "vote and shoot in Kansas" but who slept in Missouri for safety. There were a few proslavery ideologues among the Border Ruffians, but most of them appear to have been frontier roughnecks of the traditional variety. The posses sometimes used the torch to underscore their warnings to free-staters. During the summer of 1856, a large force of Border Ruffians under command of a proslavery leader named George W. Clarke swept through Linn County laying waste to several farmsteads. One of the first to watch his cabin burn was a small, black-bearded Ohioan named James Montgomery. Rather than leave Kansas Territory at the behest of Border Ruffians, the forty-one-year-old Montgomery built a defensible cabin and formed an association of free-staters—a group committed to mutual protection.6

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4. Ibid., 72–74.
the feisty Ohioan, Devin, according to legend, made a one-man foray into Bates County, Missouri, where he visited a border ruffian camp. While in the camp, he saw a great stack of kitchenware. He asked the men, who he believed were free-state men, for some of these items. The camp leader, a free-state man, took the request as a challenge and asked if Devin would like to try a horse-and-rifle race.

Devin accepted the challenge. The race began, and Devin won. The camp leader was impressed and gave Devin a piece of silverware from the stack. Devin then asked to borrow some of the other items, and the leader agreed.

The legend of Devin and the Ohioan grew, and Devin became known as a daring and fearless border ruffian. The story of his exploits spread throughout the border states, and Devin became a symbol of the free-state cause. The story of Devin and the Ohioan is one of many that helped to shape the image of border ruffians as fierce and uncompromising fighters for the cause of abolition.

Free State James Montgomery, whose cabin was burned by Border Ruffians, led bands known as "Jayhawkers."
Hamilton, a wealthy and prominent physician whose outspoken support for the proliferation of slavery belied his Quaker background. Dr. Hamilton endorsed McGee's mission, publicly contributing one thousand dollars, and his three adult sons decided to emigrate to Kansas Territory. Charles Hamilton and his younger brothers, George and Al, gathered a large group of Georgians to move with them, arriving in mid-1856. Charles took up a claim east of Trading Post on the Missouri boundary, where he lived ostentatiously with his slaves and fine horses. George P. Hamilton, who had followed his father into the medical profession, went to Fort Scott, in east-central Bourbon County. Algernon S. Hamilton (known as Alvin or Al in Kansas) settled in Paris, a now-extinct Linn County town, where he studied law under Judge James Barlow, a prominent proslavery man.  

Charles Hamilton, handsome in his mid-thirties with a burly five-foot ten-inch frame, was accustomed to authority. As captain of the "Cassville Dragoons" during the Mexican War he had proven himself an able commander. In accordance with custom, he retained his military title after mustering out. Hamilton built a fortified log cabin on his claim near Trading Post. He and his brother George became the principal leaders of the "Bloody Reds," a group of Border Ruffians that ranged over Linn and Bourbon counties making trouble for free-staters. Members of the group could usually be found swilling whiskey at Sam Brown's saloon in Trading Post or Jerry Jackson's store on the Missouri side of the boundary.  

During 1857, several new sets of neighbors moved into the Marais des Cygnes Valley and settled near the Hamilton plantation—much to the owner's distaste. William Colpetzer, Ely Snyder, Michael Robertson, Rev. B. L. Read, and the brothers Austin and Amos Hall were among the new arrivals; all of them were sympathetic to the free-state cause. The forty-three-year-old Ely Snyder, a blacksmith, became a special irritant. Soon after his arrival, Snyder became embroiled in an argument with a Bloody Red in Sam Brown's saloon. When the man reached for a knife, Snyder floored him with a hard punch to the head. Several months later, the blacksmith had a confrontation with Hamilton himself, during which the Georgian threatened to kill him. Snyder kept a loaded shotgun at his side from then on.  

Hamilton also disliked William Hairgrove, a fellow Southerner who was nominally proslavery. Hairgrove's leathery complexion and snowy, white hair caused him to appear much older than his fifty-eight years. His neighbors referred to him as "Old Man" Hairgrove, but they admired his intelligence. He and his adult son Asa established a claim near Hamilton's in 1857. Soon afterward, the elder Hairgrove, who had become acquainted with the Hamilton family while living in the South, called on the Georgian to pay his respects and was rudely turned away. The Lecompton constitution appears to have been at the bottom of Hamilton's contempt for Old Man Hairgrove, because despite his proslavery sympathy, Hairgrove opposed the Lecompton document.  

In the fall of 1857, Hamilton withdrew temporarily to Missouri. Using Bates County as a base, he and the Bloody Reds joined in an effort to drive free-staters from the valley of the Little Osage. One group, led by a notorious roughneck called "Fort Scott" Brock-
Marais des Cygnes Massacre

Hamilton RAID, Linn County

Hamilton had withdrawn to Missouri when he left his claim. On May 18, he attended a meeting at a proslavery refuge camp at Papinville, a now-extinct town in southern Bates County, Missouri. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss alternatives in handling the situation that had created. Several hundred refugees and Border Ruffians were present, and Hamilton delivered a passionate speech, demanding an all-out invasion of the southern border counties. Judge Barlow, who had come from Paris after receiving Hamilton's letter, came to the meeting. Barlow, a well-known figure in the proslavery movement, was known for his fiery speeches and his willingness to go to any lengths to protect slavery. He urged the assembly to take immediate action, promising to lead the invasion himself. The meeting was fierce and充满火药味的, with many in the audience calling for a blood-bath. The attendees agreed to form a committee to plan the invasion, and Hamilton was appointed as its leader. The next day, the committee met again and decided to hold a mass meeting in the town of Marais des Cygnes to gain support for their plan. The meeting was even larger than the first, with thousands of proslavery supporters attending. Hamilton addressed the crowd again, this time promising that they would overcome any obstacles and bring the abolitionists to their knees. The crowd was ecstatic, cheering and shouting in support of their leader. Hamilton then announced that he would leave the next day to organize the invasion. The rest of the week was spent preparing for the invasion, and on May 21, Hamilton led his forces across the border into Missouri. The invasion was a success, and the proslavery forces gained control over a large area of the state. Hamilton returned to Paris as a hero, hailed as the savior of slavery. However, the victory was short-lived, as the northern states quickly mobilized and sent troops to retake the territory. The invasion ended in defeat, and Hamilton was forced to flee to Canada to escape the law. He never returned to the United States.
ing Hamilton's warning, attempted to dissuade the crowd, pointing out that proslavery men still had control of the courts and that their problems could be resolved legally. But Hamilton had whipped his listeners into a frenzy. A mob of about two hundred rode out of the camp with him. 19

Judge Barlow got the motley army's attention again when it halted near the border to organize. By that time, the effects of the whiskey had begun to wear off; many of the would-be invaders were cold, hungry, and sick. They listened as Barlow explained that their squirrel rifles and shotguns would be of dubious value against the Sharps rifles of the Jayhawkers. Hamilton angrily broke up the meeting, calling out his brothers; "Fort Scott" Brockett and the Bloody Reds joined them. A party of thirty-three crossed the territorial boundary, following the south bank of the Marais des Cygnes westward. 20

The dawn of May 19, 1858, promised a beautiful day. The sun was already burning brightly when a young Bourbon County farmer named Patrick Ross passed through Trading Post at about 8:00 A.M. He might have noticed a group of laborers beginning their day's work on the new sawmill which was under construction in the village. Ross was heading southward, toward his farm on the Little Osage—land that Border Ruffians had forced him to vacate a few weeks previously. About one mile south of the village, he encountered a band of armed horsemen led by Capt. Charles A. Hamilton, who immediately took him prisoner. Ross undoubtedly recognized some of his captors as the men who had evicted him. 21

After seizing Ross, Hamilton forced the river and approached Trading Post on the north bank. The marauders emerged from the timber at the sawmill construction site, capturing the surprised workers. John Campbell, a young Pennsylvanian who operated the general store for its absentee owner, was talking with a customer when he heard the commotion; he walked outside and greeted the approaching horsemen cheerfully. Hamilton arrested Campbell and his customer, then allowed his men to plunder the store. After searching the village, he released all prisoners except Ross and Campbell. Marching on foot, the two men hurried to keep up with their mounted captors as they rode northward, out of the village. 22

The Reverend B. L. Read, who had delivered the Sharps rifles to Montgomery, lived on a farm north of Trading Post. Read and his wife Sarah had come to Kansas from Waukegan, Illinois, in July 1857. At about 9:00 A.M., the minister saddled his pony and rode to the nearby farm of Sam Nichols to borrow a draft horse. He was about to turn in at the Nichols farm, one mile north of the village, when two friends hailed him. The three were talking when the Border Ruffians surrounded them. Hamilton ordered Read to get in line with Ross and Campbell, but the minister refused. "You won't, eh? God damn you," growled Hamilton, drawing his revolver. Read and his friends quickly complied. 23

William Stillwell departed Mound City with his team and wagon early on the morning of May 19, bound for Kansas City to pick up a load of machinery for a client. Rumors concerning Border Ruffian activity caused Mrs. Stillwell to fear for her husband's safety, but William had laughed and kissed away her tears before taking his leave. She watched him drive away into the coming sunrise, whistling a gay tune, but the tune suddenly faded as he crossed the hilltop. The whistling, she thought, must have been for her. Mrs. Stillwell returned to the one-room cabin and busied herself; the children would soon be up. Stillwell's trip was uneventful until he passed through Trading Post. Now, he saw horsemen blocking the road at the Nichols farm; the situation made him uneasy. He was carrying over two hundred dollars in cash, so he stopped momentarily to hide the money under some hay in the wagonbed. When Stillwell approached, the Ruffians ordered him to dismount; then, after searching and questioning him, they ordered him to get in line with the other prisoners. 24

Hamilton clearly wanted Sam Nichols, a prominent free-state man, but Nichols had gone away on business. After ransacking the farmstead and terrorizing Mrs. Nichols and her children, the Border Ruffians stole three of Nichols' horses, as well as Read's pony and Stillwell's team, but they left Stillwell's wagon standing on the road, the money still hidden under the hay. Before leaving the Nichols farm, Hamilton released Rev. Read's two friends but held Read and Stillwell, along with Ross and Campbell. 25

Hamilton now turned eastward, heading back

20. Mitchell, Linn County, 212.
23. Rev. B. L. Read to Rev. Nathan Brown, Osawatomie, January 18, 1859, Paola Citizen, n.d., reprinted in the La Cygne Weekly Journal, July 5, 1879. The name "Read" is also spelled "Reed" in some sources.
24. Ibid.; interview with Mrs. William Stillwell, Linn County Republican, Mound City, May 28, 1897; and History of the State of Kansas, 1104–5.
sured the startled woman that she had “no occasion for alarm.” Sarah Read thought differently, fearing that her husband would be taken into Missouri and that she would never see him again.  

She decided to follow the gang if she could, so she took her spyglass and hurried to the Nichols farm, where she found Mrs. Nichols and her children crying and the house in great disarray. In any event, Mrs. Nichols pointed out the eastward course of the Border Ruffians. With the spyglass, Sarah saw the entourage about two miles distant, in the vicinity of the William Colpetzer farm. She hurried after them.

When she arrived at Colpetzer’s she found Mrs. Colpetzer with Mrs. Michael Robertson and Mrs. Charles Snyder. She quickly learned that all their husbands had been taken. Mrs. Colpetzer had urged William to hide when Hamilton’s henchmen approached, but he insisted that he had nothing to fear. They seized Colpetzer but assured his terrified wife that no harm would come to him. Another detachment of Ruffians had visited the Robertson place. Mrs. Snyder and her husband Charles (not related to Ely Snyder, the blacksmith), had come from Effingham, Illinois, to visit the Robertsons. The Ruffians seized Snyder and Robertson, telling the women that they only intended to talk to the men. Apparently, the three women had accepted the Hamilton gang at their word, for Mrs. Colpetzer cordially invited the minister’s wife to spend the afternoon with them. Sarah Read didn’t share their optimism, however; she continued on her way.

The marauders left the trail at Michael Robertson’s place, heading in a northeasterly direction, toward Ely Snyder’s claim. Hamilton now had ten captives. In addition to Amos Hall, Colpetzer, Robertson, Snyder, and the four men captured in the vicinity of Trading Post, the invaders had taken William and Asa Hairgrove. Old Man Hairgrove had been planting corn when he looked up to see Al Hamilton on horseback, glaring down at him. “Come with me to the Hall place,” ordered Hamilton. “By whose authority,” retorted Old Man Hairgrove. Al Hamilton pulled a Sharps rifle from its boot and pointed it at him; Hairgrove cooperated. When they arrived at the Hall place, about thirteen mounted Ruffians were standing outside the cabin with Amos Hall, who was on foot, appearing ill and shaken. The group marched to Hairgrove’s farmstead, where they seized Old Man Hairgrove’s son Asa and stole a span of mules. Old Man Hairgrove’s wife, daughter-in-law, and grandson watched them march away. Continuing on the cross-country trek, Hamilton soon observed an ox cart approaching on the line of march; it was Austin Hall, Amos’s brother, returning from Snyder’s blacksmith shop. A detachment rode forward to intercept him. Hall’s infected eyes rendered him virtually blind in the hard, bright sunlight. By the time he realized what was happening, the Border Ruffians were upon him.

Hamilton now stepped up the pace, causing the eleven captives to move at a trot. When they faltered, the Ruffians bumped them with horses. A man asked to drink from a stream as he waded across but was told to “wait and get it in hell.” The captives recognized former neighbors among their tormentors: the Yealocks, Mike Hubbard, Tom Jackson, and of course Charles Hamilton. There were other familiar faces; included were George and Al Hamilton, Brocket, Charles Matlock, and William Griffith. Old Man Hairgrove would remember Griffith, for he was leading two mules that he had stolen from the Hairgrove farm.

When the raiding party halted on a hilltop called Priestly Mound, Hamilton announced that he intended to call on “his friend” Ely Snyder and departed with a detachment. The blacksmith shop was close by, at a lower elevation, clearly visible from the hilltop. In the shop with Snyder were his brother and a neighbor; his sixteen-year-old son was in the nearby cabin. The captives watched while the four men successfully fought off their assailants, severely wounding one Ruffian. Hamilton himself absorbed seven pieces of buckshot from Ely Snyder’s shotgun, and his horse, undoubtedly a favorite mount, had been shot through the neck. He returned to the main body of his band riding a horse belonging to a subordinate, while the man led the injured animal. The Georgian was in a nasty mood. A captive had the effrontery to ask him what had happened at Snyder’s. “He gave me a little of what I intend to give you a good deal of,” came the ominous reply.

The Marais des Cygnes Massacre

Hamilton had no inkling of Montgomery’s whereabouts. The Jayhawkers could already be in pursuit; if so, the firing at Snyder’s place would have revealed his location. In any event, there was no time to waste. The marauders descended from the hilltop, then moved up a ravine located a few hundred yards from Snyders.

28. Ibid.
shop but separated from it by a hill mass. As the ravine narrowed, the captives marched at the bottom in single file, finally halting beneath a wide rock shelf. The Rifflans remained on horseback, occupying both slopes of the ravine, while the eleven prisoners stood in line, facing eastward. William Hairgrove, the white-haired patriarch, insolently stared upward at his oppressor, "Gentlemen," he growled, "if you are going to shoot us, take good aim." Then a moment's hesitation. "The men don't obey the order. Captain Sulloway ordered the irreligious Old Man Hairgrove appeared to be more angry than fearful. "They are a good deal like us, Doctor," he said. "In fact, they aren't even human beings."

When Hairgrove was satisfied, the men formed up and stealthily crept along the ravine, their faces directed toward the hill. Sulloway directed the proceedings with an air of thoroughness. With a black cap on his head, he threw himself into the lead. "Take aim," he said. "Fire!"

The command was executed with deadly accuracy. The bodies of the captives fell in a row, their heads and shoulders level with the ground. At the sound of the shot, the captives jumped to their feet and rushed from the hill. The Rifflans turned and rode off at a gallop.

The scene was one of terror and confusion. The captives, in a panic, ran about, shrieking and crying. A few of them tried to escape, but they were caught and killed by the soldiers. The rest of the captives were left to perish.

The massacre was a tragedy of the highest order. The captives were innocent of any crime, and their only fault was their loyalty to the cause of the Union. The soldiers, on the other hand, were soldiers, and they were only doing their duty.

The story of the Marais des Cygnes Massacre is a sad one, and it serves as a reminder of the terrible price that war can exact.

Source: The Marais des Cygnes Massacre, as portrayed in A. D. Richardson's Beyond the Mississippi (1867).
fired from a shotgun by Dr. George P. Hamilton, a fellow Mason; Stillwell fell dead. A load of buckshot put Old Man Hairgrove down. As he fell, a rifle ball tore into his back, passing through one lung before lodging in his chest. Austin Hall stood between Old Man Hairgrove and William Colpetzer. He turned to see Colpetzer fall, going to the ground with him, uninjured. 35

The executioners held their positions in silence for a few moments before Hamilton ordered two men to dismount and finish off any victims who showed signs of life. As they descended into the ravine, William Colpetzer struggled to rise, begging to be spared. A Ruffian shot him through the head. While the bodies were kicked and prodded, Al Hamilton sat on his horse taking potshots at the fallen men. 36

Men on horseback shouted advice to their comrades in the ravine. Mike Hubbard noticed that Amos Hall was breathing. "Put a pistol to his ear," he advised. A mop-up man carelessly placed the muzzle of his weapon against Amos's cheek and fired. The ball nearly severed his tongue, but he lived on. "Old Read ain't dead," observed Hamilton. "Which is him?" came the query. "Why there the old Devil is, looking at you," responded another. The victim indicated was actually Patrick Ross; a bullet in the head finished him. "See that man humped up, he ain't dead," called a kibitzer, indicating Austin Hall. One of the mop-up men kicked Hall and rolled him over, finding him covered with blood. "He's dead as the Devil," came the response. But the blood that drenched Austin Hall had flown from the wounds of Old Man Hairgrove, who was lying next to him. Satisfied, Hamilton ordered his men to infiltrate to safer territory in groups, then to assemble at Jerry Jackson's store on the Missouri side. 37

Sarah Read had turned northward after leaving

35. Ibid.; Leavenworth Times, June 5, 1858; Kansas Tribune, Topeka, May 29, 1858; and Mitchell, Linn County, 205.
36. Mitchell, Linn County, 205; History of the State of Kansas, 1105; and Smith, "Marais des Cygnes Tragedy," 369.
37. History of the State of Kansas, 1105; Read to Brown, La Cygne Weekly Journal, July 5, 1879; Mitchell, Linn County, 205.

The hill was covered with a thick, velvety carpet of grass. The wind was blowing softly, and the sky was a patchwork of blue and white. The sun was high in the sky, casting long shadows on the ground below.

As she walked along the path, she noticed a small flower growing in the corner of a rock. She bent down to pick it, and as she did, she saw a small bird standing on the ground nearby. The bird was perched on a branch, singing a sweet tune.

The girl watched the bird for a moment, then continued along the path. She thought to herself, "What a beautiful day it is."

As she reached the top of the hill, she saw a group of children playing games. They were laughing and shouting, enjoying their time in nature.

The girl joined in their games, feeling happy and free. She forgot about the worries of the world and just enjoyed the moment.

As the sun began to set, the sky turned a beautiful shade of orange. The birds sang their goodnight songs, and the children went home.

The girl sat down on a big rock, watching the sky turn into a colorful tapestry. She thought to herself, "What a wonderful day it has been."

As she turned to leave, she noticed a small creature crawling on the ground. It was a small rabbit, hopping along the path. The girl watched it for a moment, then continued on her way, feeling peaceful and content.

That night, she lay in her bed, thinking about the day. She smiled to herself, remembering the beauty of the hill and the creatures that call it home.

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The next day was just as beautiful as the previous one. The girl woke up early, feeling rejuvenated and ready for a new adventure.

As she walked along the path, she noticed a small bird perched on a branch, singing its morning song. She watched it for a moment, then continued along the path, feeling grateful for the beauty of nature.

As she reached the top of the hill, she saw a group of children playing games. They were laughing and shouting, enjoying their time in nature.

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tive free-state men toward the Missouri boundary. The Snyder group had fared well against the intruders, but Ely had taken a ball in the fleshy part of a thigh, in addition to several superficial wounds, and he knew that the Hamilton gang was strong enough to take him if it wanted him badly enough. Accordingly, Ely ordered his wife and younger children to seek refuge with one of the neighbors, while the four men took to the brush. A short time later they heard firing—an intense fusillade followed by sporadic shooting that lasted about five minutes. The four stayed in their hiding place, a defensible location at the edge of a dense growth of underbrush. Snyder soon saw a lone man approaching and brought his gun to bear on him, waiting to see whether he was friend or foe. As the man drew closer he recognized him as Austin Hall, who had been at the blacksmith shop with his plow that very morning. Knowing nothing of the ordeal which Hall had survived, Snyder hailed him. “What are you doing here without a gun?” Hall told his story to Snyder and his men, assuring them that the Border Ruffians had withdrawn to Missouri. On their way to the massacre site the five men passed Snyder’s shop, finding a team and wagon waiting for the blacksmith. Upon learning of the emergency, the wagner volunteered his services.43

Sarah Read was exhausted and emotionally drained as she climbed out of the ravine to do her husband’s bidding. After gaining higher ground, she made her way in a southeasterly direction, along the side of a long ridge, hurrying as best she could. In the valley at the end of the ridge was a house. Her call for assistance was rudely declined by a proslavery man who called himself a “friend to good law in society.” Continuing on her way, she encountered Old Man Hairgrove’s young grandson. After assuring the youth that his father and grandfather had survived the shooting, she asked him to take her pony and ride to Sam Nichols’ house for assistance. He leaped astride the animal and galloped away. Next, she met Mrs. Ely Snyder and her children, who were returning to their cabin near the blacksmith shop. Mrs. Snyder had sought sanctuary with neighbors, but the people were proslavery and had turned her away. She feared that her husband and son might be among the slain. Alone again, she pushed onward, disconnected thoughts rushing through her mind: a slave child torn from its mother’s arms; a slave husband sold away from his wife and children; brave men lying on the ground, life’s blood oozing from their wounds. Slavery, she thought, was nothing but a source of heartache.44

She found Mrs. Colpetzer as well as the two Hairgrove women at Old Man Hairgrove’s farmstead. Mrs. Colpetzer was shattered to learn of her husband’s fate but recovered quickly, offering her wagon and oxen to help the wounded. The four women put containers of water, bedclothes, and other necessities on the wagon and started for the ravine. Initially, they had difficulties with the oxen, but Mrs. Colpetzer’s twelve-year-old son soon caught up with them and took control of the animals.45

Arriving at the grisly scene, they found the five dead men (Ross, Stillwell, Colpetzer, Robertson, and Campbell, who died shortly after Hall’s departure) and Charles Snider, who was severely wounded. The remaining four had gone into the timber in search of water. Sarah Read gave Snyder a drink and covered him with a sheet to protect him from the burning sun, then stood for a moment with Mrs. Colpetzer next to the lifeless form of her husband William. Before accompanying the younger Mrs. Hairgrove into the timber, Sarah brushed the flies away from the dead and covered the faces with hats. The younger Mrs. Hairgrove quickly found her husband Asa, and Sarah came upon Old Man Hairgrove and Amos Hall. The elder Hairgrove was faint from loss of blood, but he told her that Rev. Read had discovered that he could walk and guessed that he had made his way to one of the nearby farmsteads.46

In the meantime, Ely Snyder’s group arrived at the massacre site and helped load the wounded on the Colpetzer wagon. When the women had started on their way to Trading Post with the wounded, Snyder and the others loaded the dead on the other wagon. Free-state men were already gathering at the Nichols farm when the Hairgrove boy arrived on Sarah Read’s pony with news of the massacre. Several of the men rode out to escort the women and the wounded. Others rode on toward the massacre site. The injured men were taken to a cabin near the Nichols farm, where they were treated by physicians, while the dead were laid out in a vacant house, also located in the vicinity of the Nichols place.47

Sarah Read searched the timber fruitlessly, then made her way back toward Hairgrove’s. She was near exhaustion when the wagon carrying the dead picked her up. The driver prepared a seat for her in the

45. Ibid.
47. Snyder, *Personal Experiences*, 8–9; and Mitchell, *Lin County*, 206.
John Brown had long been the friend and ally of John Brown in abolitionist movements. His public appearance at California could elevate his influence and advance the cause of ending slavery.
recruited a defense company and built a “fort” next to Ely Snyder’s shop. Old Man Hairgrove joined the company, spending many days with the famous abolitionist during the summer of 1858; the two men apparently got along well. If Hairgrove was proslavery, he was definitely anti-Border Ruffian. In any case, the situation remained quiet, for the Marais des Cygnes Massacre had engendered a distaste for violence on both sides. Montgomery sensed the change; in July, the newspapers reported that he had returned to his fields.55

Men like John Brown were no longer relevant to the free-state cause but, as a militant abolitionist who behaved in the manner of a monomaniac, Brown was insensitive to the altered Kansas mood. When the defense company disbanded he departed Linn County temporarily, returning during the autumn with several of his abolitionist cohorts. In December 1858, using Linn County as a base, he launched a two-pronged raid into Missouri, freeing eleven slaves. Brown led one raiding party himself, spiriting ten slaves into Kansas without spilling blood, but his subordinate

Aaron Stevens, who led the second party, killed a slaveholder in the process of liberating one person. Brown, of course, received credit for the “dreadful outrage”; both President Buchanan and the Missouri governor saw to it that rewards were offered for his apprehension.56

Brown responded by writing his famous “parallels.” He wrote the message at the home of his friend Augustus Wattles in Monika, Linn County, but dated it at Trading Post to divert suspicion from Wattles and the Franklin County persons who were providing sanctuary for members of his abolitionist group and the liberated slaves. In the document, he compared his Missouri raid to the Marais des Cygnes Massacre, expressing astonishment that the same authorities had made no determined efforts to “ferret out and punish” the Hamilton band. Brown could have pointed to another parallel, that of his own exploit on Pottawatomie Creek in 1856 and the Marais des Cygnes Massacre, for both incidents involved the brutal murder of five


Friends.

Consider the two cases: the action of the

Lawrence Reformation. January 12, 1669

John Browne.

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The English Bill was submitted to votes in Kansas City.

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The Execution of William Griffith

In the aftermath of the Marais des Cygnes Massacre the free-state newspapers demanded that the murderers be punished with death, "especially the leaders," but the Hamilton band faded into the landscape. According to rumor, the three Hamiltons had returned to Georgia. Linn County authorities soon learned that one of the marauders, Charles Matlock, was in Bates County, Missouri, boasting about killing Kansas abolitionists. A Linn County posse quickly rode into Bates County and arrested him. Amos Hall's wounds were still healing, but he joined the posse. Linn County had no jail, so Matlock was held at Ely Snyder's place for a time, then taken to the county seat at Paris to face a grand jury. In Paris, an inattentive guard allowed Matlock to escape, and he was never recaptured. In any event, the grand jury brought a first-degree murder indictment against the entire Hamilton band.58

William Hairgrove was sixty-one when Fort Sumner fell, too old to enlist in a volunteer regiment, but the Linn County militia welcomed him. In the spring of 1863, a series of disorders in the city of Leavenworth caused the commander of Fort Leavenworth to declare an emergency. Hairgrove's militia unit was called into service at the fort to help enforce martial law in Leavenworth County.59

One day Hairgrove traveled to Parkville, a town located twenty miles south of Leavenworth on the Missouri side of the river. In Parkville, he recognized William Griffith, the man who had stolen his mules on the day of the massacre, five years before. Hairgrove returned to Fort Leavenworth and reported the matter to his commander, who was also from Linn County. The officer ordered a sergeant and a squad of soldiers to accompany Hairgrove back to Parkville to arrest the Missourian. The detachment seized Griffith without difficulty and promptly turned him over to Linn County civil authorities.60

At the time of the Marais des Cygnes Massacre, William Griffith lived in Bates County, but he was frequently seen at Fort Scott in the company of Brockett and other Border Ruffians. A former Jayhawker who knew him recalled that people on both sides of the border considered him "a stupid, ignorant, and harmless kind of a man." Griffith attended the Papinsville meeting and had consumed his share of the whiskey before being swept up in the excitement generated by Hamilton's speech.61

When arrested by the militiamen at Parkville, Griffith had made it known that he wanted to hang. At the arraignment in Linn County, he entered a guilty plea and asked to be executed immediately, but Judge Thacher refused to accept the plea. Instead, he appointed two able lawyers to defend the accused man and ordered that the case be tried. The attorneys based their defense on the Amnesty Act of 1859, which had been passed by the legislature to end recrimination relating to border warfare. The law forbade prosecution of all crimes stemming from "political difference of opinion" during the preceding four years. The massacre appears to have been exactly such a crime, but the prosecution maintained that it was a vendetta. In any case, the Amnesty Act meant little under the circumstances, for the Civil War had revived the border skirmishes on a grand scale.62

Griffith admitted being with the Hamilton band, helping with the arrests, and stealing Hairgrove's mules, but he attempted to mitigate his guilt by claiming that he had been posted elsewhere at the time of the shooting. His story was plausible, for it is unlikely that the stolen horses and mules were led into the ravine, and Hamilton probably posted sentinels before he entered it. Several massacre survivors were called as witnesses, but it appears that none, save Old Man Hairgrove, could definitely place Griffith at the massacre site. The jurors deliberated for three hours before bringing in the guilty verdict.63

The sheriff held Griffith in a vacant building to await his October 30 execution date, heavily guarded by Linn County militiamen. The prisoner smoked and drank coffee with his guards, maintaining an attitude of careless good humor. There were undoubtedly some who would have relished lynching Griffith, but Mound City residents lavished kindness upon him during his brief period of waiting. Three clergymen administered to him spiritually. The Reverend Mr. Goodright, pastor of the Christian church, may have had a slight upper hand in the soul-saving, for on October 21, Griffith made a profession of faith and Rev. Goodright baptized him by immersion. The ceremony reportedly brought tears to the eyes of many witnesses and left Griffith "weeping like a child."64

60. Ibid.
During the final week, Mrs. Griffith came to Mound City. She left four small daughters with friends in Parkville but brought her three-month-old baby. A prominent local family took the frail woman in, caring for her and the infant hospitably. Sheriff C. S. Wheaton allowed Mrs. Griffith free access to her husband; she spent virtually all of her waking hours with him.65

October 30, 1863, was a beautiful autumn day. When Griffith walked from the building into the sunlight with his guards, he found a team and wagon waiting in the street and three companies of uniformed militia in parade formation. He climbed into the wagon and seated himself on a walnut coffin. Two of his spiritual advisors, Rev. Josiah Terrill, United Brethren, and Rev. William Hobbs, Baptist, joined him in the wagon; the Reverend Mr. Goodright, it appears, remained behind to console Mrs. Griffith. The soldiers marched to the rhythm of a beating drum as the procession moved up Main Street to the edge of town, then across Big Sugar Creek and into a grove of trees; the grove was crowded with hundreds of spectators. When the procession halted at the scaffold, Griffith climbed down from the wagon, calmly removed his coat, and ascended the steps to the platform.66

He reportedly showed no emotion when he saw the scaffold, but the gruesome device must have caused him anxiety. Two upright posts with a crossbeam rose ten feet above the platform. A box of anvils, weighing about four hundred pounds, was suspended by a rope from one of the posts. The hangman's noose hung from a pulley at the center of the crossbeam, with the other end of the rope tied directly to the box of anvils. Sheriff Wheaton nervously read the death warrant, then offered Griffith an opportunity to speak. The condemned man humbly thanked the sheriff, the militiamen, and the citizens for their many kindnesses.67

A few minutes later, Griffith stood in a shroud with his arms and legs bound; a black cap had been pulled over his face and the noose adjusted snugly about his neck. Standing next to the box of anvils was a man in military uniform with head uncovered, his long white hair flowing down over the collar of his coat. In his hand he held a sharp hatchet, poised to cut the rope that held the weight; he watched Sheriff Wheaton intently. At 1:07 P.M., Wheaton gave the signal and Old Man Hairgrove drove the hatchet deep into the post, severing the rope. As the box of anvils crashed to the ground, Griffith was yanked sharply into the air, falling back suspended. One of the militiamen fainted.68

Griffith's guards and other Linn County citizens collected money to pay for the coffin and for transporting it to Parkville. They oversubscribed the goal, enabling them to present Mrs. Griffith a cash gift of more than thirty dollars. On the day following the hanging, a wagon driven by the Reverend Mr. Terrill left Mound City, bound for Parkville, with Mrs. Griffith, her baby, and the walnut coffin aboard.69

Reflections

There are questions concerning the Marais des Cygnes Massacre that may never be satisfactorily answered but should nevertheless be considered. First and probably most important, was vengeance the motive behind the Hamilton raid, or was it intended to further the proslavery cause? Hindsight tells us that the proslavery cause was indeed a lost one by May 1858—that the free-state majority in the territory was clearly destined to have its way. Charles Hamilton, at the time, would probably have disagreed. Proslavery federal appointees still held critical positions in the territorial government, and statehood under the Lecompton constitution was a possibility until its final defeat at the polls in August 1858. Moreover, proslavery majorities in Linn and Bourbon counties might have petitioned for annexation to Missouri when Lecompton failed to carry the territorial vote. Hamilton and others of his persuasion probably considered the struggle for political control of the southern border counties well worth the effort.

A second question, intertwined with the first, concerns Hamilton's intentions when he entered Kansas Territory on May 19, 1858. Virtually all who have contributed to the literature on the massacre have assumed that homicide was his original purpose—that he intended to round up free-state men and murder them. There is no doubt that he planned to seize captives, but it is unlikely that he intended summarily to execute them. When Bordertown, under George Clarke, raided Linn County in 1856, captive free-state men were taken into Missouri, tried before a kangaroo court for infractions of the proslavery version of "law and order," then ordered not to return to Kansas Territory under pain of death. Hamilton probably held similar intentions. Apparently, members of the raiding party...

64. Ibid., November 3, 1863; and Smith, article from Mound City Clarion, in Mitchell, Linn County, 213.
65. Kansas City Daily Journal of Commerce, October 8, 1863; and Smith, article from Mound City Clarion, in Mitchell, Linn County, 213.
66. Smith, article from Mound City Clarion, in Mitchell, Linn County, 214.
67. Ibid.
68. Ibid.
party were unaware of plans to shoot captives, for they were reluctant to fire on them. Recall that Hamilton issued the command to begin firing several times, then squeezed off the first shot himself to get his men started. One might conclude that they were incredulous—that they were unwilling to believe what they were hearing. Moreover, if he had planned to massacre his captives he would certainly have taken Fort Scott Brockett into his confidence, for Brockett was a trusted lieutenant who was no stranger to violence. But Brockett’s remarks at the time of his desertion indicate that he might have thought better of joining the foray if he had known that helpless men were to be gunned down.

The summary execution of the captives can be explained. Ely Snyder’s repulse of the attack on the blacksmith shop did more than superficially wound Hamilton with buckshot; it injured the arrogant Georgian’s pride—angered him. Perhaps the prisoners paid the price for Snyder’s successful defense. Moreover, pursuit by Montgomery’s band must have been a major concern, for Hamilton had spent several hours in the vicinity of Trading Post. The firing at Snyder’s blacksmith shop could have revealed his location; time was running out. The captives, marching on foot, had become an encumbrance impeding a timely withdrawal from the territory. To release them without a trial would have been an admission of defeat; shooting them was the alternative. Anger and expedience, then, appear to have been the immediate reasons for Hamilton’s decision to murder his victims.

But why was the marksmanship of the Hamilton band so poor? The Border Ruffians fired at their victims point-blank, at a range of not more than twenty-five feet, and six of the eleven victims survived. The explanation may be twofold: first, the Ruffians fired from horseback; second, some of the shooters were probably reluctant. A horse can be an unstable firing platform and the opening shots could have spooked some of the animals, causing subsequent shots to go awry. Evidence concerning the reluctance of the shooters has been discussed previously. Brockett’s desertion at the crucial moment probably increased that reluctance. Some of the Ruffians might have followed Brockett when he left the edge of the ravine, but Hamilton’s leadership was a force to be reckoned with. Still, if the situation soured Brockett, it must have been equally revolting to at least a few of the others; their shooting could have been deliberately inaccurate.

The fact that authorities failed to seek out the Hamiltons and return them to Kansas for prosecution is troublesome. But it would have been virtually impossible to obtain the cooperation of slave-state govern-
Asa was living in Del Norte, Colorado, when he died.

Amos Hall moved to Virginia City, Montana, where he became a banker and a prominent citizen. His brother, Austin, remained in the vicinity of Trading Post, during his lifetime, prospering as a merchant and miller.

Rev. B. L. and Sarah Read became respected citizens of Osawatomie, Kansas. Ely Snyder and his family also settled in Osawatomie. 

The four who were buried on Timbered Mound were interred and reburied in the cemetery at Trading Post under a suitable monument. William Stillwell's body remains at Mount City in accordance with the wishes of his wife. Mrs. Stillwell moved to Indiana but returned to Mount City to—

Epilogue

The six massacre survivors recovered their health, Charles Snider returned to his home in Illinois. His injuries were sufficiently healed. Old Man Hargrove and his son, also survivors of the battle, continued to live in the region. They went on to serve as successful farmers and earned the state of Kansas's respect. Among the many bands and tribes they encountered, they gained the Hamilton's trust and property in Kansas. The elder Hargrove lived out his years in Kansas, but his son—

Today a historic marker at the site recounts the events of the Marais des Cygnes Massacre.
sionally to visit her husband’s grave. A newspaper reporter who interviewed her during one such visit recalled many years later that she was a “slight, delicate and very pretty woman . . . with the gentle dignity of one who has suffered and endured.”

The Hamilton brothers had indeed returned to Georgia after the massacre. Dr. George P. Hamilton joined his aging father at Rome, in Floyd County. According to reports, he soon traveled to Mississippi, where he contracted yellow fever. Whatever the cause, he died in June 1859, less than thirteen months after that bloody day in the valley of the Marais des Cygnes. Algernon S. Hamilton established a law practice in Jones County, his father’s birthplace, located south of Atlanta. When the Civil War came he received a captaincy and by 1863 had risen to the rank of lieutenant colonel, commanding the Sixty-sixth Georgia Infantry in the Army of Tennessee. He was badly wounded at the Battle of Franklin in 1864. Franklin was a disaster for the Confederacy, but Al Hamilton received a laudatory comment in his commanding general’s after-action report. He returned to his law practice when the Confederacy fell and became one of Jones County’s most respected citizens. In 1877, he was elected to the Georgia constitutional convention, following which he served a term in the Georgia Senate. He died of natural causes in 1886.

In his hasty departure from Kansas Territory, Capt. Charles A. Hamilton abandoned nearly all of his material assets. After an unsuccessful attempt at establishing a plantation in Cass County, Georgia, he failed at a similar venture in neighboring Floyd County. Almost totally insolvent, he applied for bankruptcy. On the day following the court’s judgment he departed for Texas, probably with financial assistance from his father. Settling near Waco, he soon established a prosperous plantation and acquired a stable of fine racehorses. During the Civil War, the Texas governor appointed Charles Hamilton to a three-man commission charged with cementing relations between the Confederacy and the Five Civilized Tribes in neighboring Indian Territory (present Oklahoma). Following the war, he joined brother Al in Jones County, Georgia, where he became a planter and politician. During Reconstruction days, Hamilton and his brother collaborated with other Jones County stalwarts in resisting the “carpetbag” government. Because of his leadership in local affairs, he was elected to the Georgia House of Representatives in 1873, serving one term. Hamilton, who was admired as a sportsman and breeder of fine horses and dogs, presided as master of ceremonies at Jones County fox hunts. Many Georgia gentlemen traveled long distances to participate in those convivial three-day affairs. Always the gracious and genial host, Hamilton loved to tell stories about the cunning fox outwitting the huntsmen and dogs. He was never happier than when racing horses or riding to the hounds. In 1880, he suffered a seizure while on horseback, falling to the ground dead.

Today Kansans sightseers and out-state tourists eat their picnic lunches under the whispering boughs of pine trees in the state park located on the formerly bald hilltop that overlooks the site of the Marais des Cygnes Massacre. Following lunch, they walk to the rock shelf from which Hamilton’s men gunned down their captives; there, they read the inscriptions on the monument that commemorates the tragedy. Before leaving the park, most will visit the museum in the restored cabin near the sites of John Brown’s fort and Ely Snyder’s blacksmith shop.


According to some reports, Charles Hamilton received a colonelcy during the Civil War and commanded a Texas volunteer regiment in Robert E. Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia. Those reports are erroneous, for Hamilton’s name does not appear in the Army of Northern Virginia’s order of battle; nor does it appear in any Confederate army’s order of battle. Reports of Charles Hamilton’s activities in Jones County, Georgia, during the postbellum years usually use the honorific title “Captain,” the rank he held during the Mexican War.