Kansas State Historical Society

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The Kansas State Historical Society was organized in 1875 by the newspaper editors and publishers of the state, and four years later it became the official trustee for the state’s historical collections. Since then, the Society has operated both as a non-profit membership organization and as a specially recognized society supported by appropriations from the state of Kansas.

The purposes of the Society are the advancement of knowledge about and the preservation of resources related to the history and prehistory of Kansas and the American West, accomplished through educational and cultural programs, the provision of research services, and the protection of historic properties. The Society is governed by a ninety-nine-member board of directors, elected by the membership, and is administered by an executive director and an assistant executive director.

The new Kansas Museum of History features exhibits and educational programs based on the Society’s rich artifact collections. It is located near the historic Pottawatomie Baptist Mission west of Topeka, adjacent to Interstate 70. All other Society departments remain at the Center for Historical Research, Memorial Building, across the street from the State Capitol in Topeka.

All persons interested in Kansas history and prehistory are cordially invited to join the Society. Those who would like to provide additional support for the Society’s work may want to consider contributions in the form of gifts or bequests. A representative of the Society will be glad to consult with anyone wishing to make such a gift or establish a bequest or an endowment. Address the Executive Director, 120 West Tenth Street, Topeka, Kansas 66612-1291.

Cover: Although John Wayne and Susan Hayward received top billing in Cecil B. DeMille’s film epic, *Reap the Wild Wind*, a Kansas-born actor had an important supporting role in the movie. That Kansas actor, Milburn Stone, is better remembered today as Doc Adams of the television program “Gunsmoke” although he appeared on the Broadway stage and in 150 movies. In this issue of *Kansas History*, Stone’s interview for the Southern Methodist University Oral History Program on the Performing Arts is presented, recounting his memories of life on the stage and before the camera.

Also featured in this issue are “Popularizing the Plains: News of Kansas in England, 1860-1880” and “Elizabeth ‘Betty’ Duncan: Diary of Daily Life, 1864.” The former looks at how English journalists viewed Kansas and the Great Plains while the latter focuses on one woman’s view of herself and her world during the traumatic year of 1864.
KANSAS
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Volume 10  Number 4

Marilyn J. Holt, Editor
Dot E. Taylor, Associate Editor
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Doc Adams of "Gunsmoke": An Interview with Actor Milburn Stone 250
edited by Ronald L. Davis

Popularizing the Plains: News of Kansas in England, 1860-1880 262
by Brian P. Birch

Elizabeth "Bettie" Duncan: Diary of Daily Life, 1864 275
by Katie H. Armitage

Book Reviews 290
Book Notes 295
Index, Volume 10 296