One of the most innovative characteristics of the WPA was the multiplicity of its goals: create opportunities for work relief or meaningful employment and provide valuable services to people throughout the United States. The Recreation Project was typical. It was "designed to provide a quality-service program to communities by employing persons in need, who are qualified to furnish leadership in organizing activities of a recreational nature and in directing group participation."

New Deal efforts in this area originated in 1933 under the Civil Works Administration and continued as a WPA program after that agency's creation in 1935. The Recreation Project operated on a statewide basis. In Kansas this meant that the state superintendent of public instruction and appropriate individuals or institutions within participating communities sponsored the program. In large part, their success is reflected in the number of people served: by 1940 Kansas had 189 recreation units employing 405 people, and "approximately 45,000 persons participate monthly in sports, games of many kinds, folk dancing, crafts, children's play centers, and other supervised leisure-time activities."

Officials recognized the need to adapt the various recreational programs to the needs of a given community and also believed it necessary to target the special needs of certain groups of individuals. According to the Manual for Recreation Supervisors, special attention was to be given in some cases "to the minority groups (racial, economic, etc.), areas of high delinquency as a preventative rather than cure for crime, to rural areas with their particular problems, and to certain individuals in need of recreational therapy."

On occasion and in keeping with the racial attitudes of this era, "special attention" meant separate recreational or playground facilities for white and black children.

The above photograph is the fourth and final image in a series featuring WPA programs in Kansas during the 1930s and early 1940s.
FORGOTTEN KANSAS ARTIST: ADAM ROHE
by John M. Peterson

VOICES FROM A DISEASE FRONTIER: KANSANS AND CHOLERA, 1867
by James N. Leiker

CIVILIZING KANSAS Presidential Address
by Craig Miner

PHYSICIAN TO BODY AND SOUL: JOTHAM MEEKER—KANSAS MISSIONARY
by Charles R. King

REASSESSING WESTERN LIBERALITY: DIVORCE IN DOUGLAS COUNTY, KANSAS, 1867–1876
by Lyn Ellen Bennett

BOOK REVIEWS

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May 22. With two Ottawa men finish my chiliad drain.

Commence filling my old well, clinch one another well. Hunt for men to assist me on to-morrow at replanting my corn field.

23. Work hard all day at corrugation, planting my corn field.

24. Finish replanting corn at sunset. Mr. Jones moves his family to Ottawa. The weather is becoming very warm.

25. Cut corn, coke all day from my yesterdays work. Stay about home, and do a few small jobs. Send to Kansas for my furniture, greenhouse, etc. Two weeks ago we had frost yesterday and today. The mercury is at 56.87. The earth is very dry.


27. Have stuck to assist me at translating on Sikes Gospel. Give out medicine to several of the Ottawa.

28. Jacob and I complete the translation of Luke, or such portions as are omitted by Matthew and John.

29. I'm engaged nearly all day at setting types. A Catholic priest from Potawatomi calls on us. J.B. Donnerick.

30. Work in the office. Hand in paper and at Shawneobud. Leave that a general war between the Pot. Kansas, Brage, Kickapoo, Delawares, Shawnees, and Fox tribes in the south, and the Paines on the other is being rained forthwith.

31. Work all day in the office. Several of the Ottawa start to attend the Potawatomi annuity payment.

32. Finish the setting of the types of the translation of