The Kansans who experienced the territorial era first-hand knew they were participating in something of historic proportions. Thus, many of them wrote of this time and their involvement during and after the fact. Some were more prolific than others, but few, perhaps, could match the record left by Samuel J. Reader, who contributed several hundreds pages of illustrated diary and autobiographical commentary about his varied experiences in Kansas Territory.

Born in Greenfield, Pennsylvania, on January 25, 1836, Samuel James Reader removed with his family to La Harpe, Illinois, in 1841. His diary begins with the latter part of his initial trip to Kansas and goes on to describe his life in Kansas Territory. Reader, an amateur artist who settled in Shawnee County north of Topeka, described mundane daily activities as well as events related to the territorial struggle; with his free-state militia company, for example, Reader participated in the battles of Kanopolis and Hickory Point.

The Reader diaries are but one more example of the hundreds of items available on the Territorial Kansas Online website. Visit www.territorialkansasonline.org to discover letters, diaries, photographs, maps, newspapers, government documents, and historical artifacts, all of which provide a tangible connection to the people who lived and experienced Bleeding Kansas.
"EMPHATICALLY A ROCK ISLAND TOWN": THE RAILROAD LEGACY OF HORTON, KANSAS, 1887–1946
by I. E. Quastler

THE LONG ROAD TOWARD "THE RIGHT THING TO DO": THE TROUBLED HISTORY OF WINFIELD STATE HOSPITAL
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