At dawn on August 21, 1863, William Clarke Quantrill and a band of more than three hundred guerillas attacked Lawrence, killing nearly two hundred men and boys and burning much of the town to the ground. Depiction of “The Lawrence Massacre,” Harper’s Weekly, September 5, 1863.
At dawn on August 21, 1863, William Clarke Quantrill led a guerilla band of more than 300 men in a raid against the city of Lawrence, Kansas. When it was over, between 150 and 200 men and boys were dead and more than two hundred homes and businesses had been destroyed in a massacre that has the distinction of being the worst perpetrated during the American Civil War. Quantrill and his band of guerillas were loosely connected to the Confederacy, though they generally acted on their own and for their own profit. This essay, in part to commemorate the just-past 150th anniversary of the raid, highlights some of the primary sources related to this infamous event that are now available online. Not all of the Quantrill materials held by the State Archives at the Kansas Historical Society are featured here, and even those are only a fraction of the almost five hundred documents, photographs, and other materials related to the Civil War available on the Society’s digital portal, Kansas Memory (kansasmemory.org).

Kansas Memory was designed to provide access to digitized copies of the Society’s rich holdings of primary sources and currently displays more than 350,000 images of letters, diaries, photographs, published and unpublished maps, and Kansas government records from the State Archives Division. It also contains copies of rare pamphlets, a limited number of historical publications, and some artifacts from the Kansas Museum of History’s collection. New items are added on an ongoing basis. Items can be accessed by searching specific keywords and/or locations. Registering on Kansas Memory allows the user to create “bookbags” where items about a particular topic can be saved for future access. Some handwritten items are accompanied by searchable transcripts, and volunteers are continually transcribing additional content. During the school year, more than twenty-five thousand users a month access the website. However, the items on Kansas Memory represent “the tip of the iceberg,” as the manuscripts, photographs, maps, and official state government records in the State Archives collections contain approximately sixty thousand cubic feet of records.

Patricia Michaelis is director of the State Archives Division, Kansas Historical Society. She was involved in developing Kansas Memory and participates in preparing additional content on the site.
When we think about the events of August 21, 1863, today, during the post-9/11 era, we perhaps have greater empathy with the victims of this nineteenth-century act of terrorism and a greater understanding of how it impacted the people who dealt with its death and destruction as well as those who heard about it and were concerned that something similar could happen in their own communities. Modern Americans know well the emotions raised by recent terror attacks, the trauma of which is followed by in-depth news coverage and striking visual images on social media. We feel sympathy for the families of those who were killed and injured and we are appalled with the destruction these events cause. We create memorials for those killed and contribute funds to help the survivors. We wonder how the survivors will get over the trauma of the attack and return their lives to some semblance of normalcy. The same was true in Lawrence after Quantrill’s raid. Many of the townspeople had to rebuild their homes and businesses. They had to adjust to life without husbands and sons. In 1895 a memorial was established for those killed, and the survivors of the raid felt a kindredship, maintaining their connection over the years.

Just who was William Clarke Quantrill? He was born in Canal Dover, Ohio, in 1837. Quantrill was well educated and followed in his father’s footsteps, becoming a school teacher at the age of sixteen. He moved often during his early adulthood in search of adventure and, more importantly, money. He made stops in Illinois, Indiana, Utah, and Missouri. By 1859 his travels returned him to Stanton, Kansas. Quantrill had spent some time in this little Miami County town two years earlier and he returned to a job teaching school and to settle down. His plans soon changed, however, and Quantrill took up the more lucrative career of horse thief and slave trader, stealing slaves and horses from Missouri and reselling them to the highest bidder. The start of the Civil War offered Quantrill and his band a way to “legitimize” their activities.

National tensions over slavery, states’ rights, and other issues had been building for a number of years, but they increased with the Republican Abraham Lincoln’s victory in the presidential election of 1860. South Carolina declared its secession from the Union in December 1860, and six more states seceded by February 1861. The bombing of Fort Sumter, a federal installation in the harbor at Charleston, South Carolina, marked the beginning of the Civil War in April 1861.

In December of that year, William Quantrill organized his infamous guerilla band, which included William “Bloody Bill” Anderson, George Todd, Fletcher Taylor, Cole Younger, and Frank James, to name a few. Although Quantrill claimed his band was part of the Confederate States of America’s military forces, their connection was always tenuous at best. During the Civil War, Quantrill and his men made numerous raids on the Kansas side of the Missouri-Kansas border. Most notable was the August 1863 attack on Lawrence. Quantrill never explained why he chose to attack the town, but Lawrence residents had
been some of the most active supporters of the free-state movement before and during the war. The town had been founded by the New England Emigrant Aid Company, which had as its goal to bring enough free-state supporters to Kansas to make it a free (rather than slave) state.1

Several in-person accounts of the death and destruction in August 1863 in Lawrence are available on Kansas Memory. The three items discussed here offer details of the raid and also provide a sense of the emotions felt by the correspondents.

On September 7, 1863, H. M. Simpson, a banker in Lawrence, wrote to Hiram Hill in Williamsburg, Massachusetts, giving him an account of the events of August 21. Although Hill never lived in Kansas, his involvement with the state, primarily as a land investor, was extensive, and he corresponded with a number of people in Kansas. Simpson began his letter with a list of some of those killed and injured by Quantrill’s men:

Among the killed are J. C. Lask, Dr. Griswold, Mr. Thorp, Mr. Pollock (Clothing Dealer), Mr. Dix, Mr. Lemuel Fillmore, Judge Carpenter, Mr. Fitch, Mr. Sargent. . . . The whole number killed will exceed 150. The wounded will not count above 15. This shows how bloody and cruel the shooting was.

Quantrill’s men came in at the south east part of town a little before sunrise, and commenced murdering our people at once. . . . Mr. Dix purchased his life by paying $1000. As soon as the money was handed over he was killed.

He also describes the damage to businesses on Massachusetts Street, Lawrence’s main thoroughfare.

Of the west portion of Mass. St. not a business house remains south of the old stone Hutchinson building, except the Miller building. On the East side nothing remains between Pease’s building & the old B. W. Woodward building. Among the houses destroyed are Lane’s, Simpson’s, C. Duncan’s, Collamore’s, Judge Miller’s (new), Fitche’s, both of the Grovenor’s, Cordley’s, Guilds, Ladd’s, say 120 dwellings in all . . . . The total loss, after a pretty careful examination, is estimated at $1,100,000. Almost all the business men of our city are penniless. . . . I lost everything, and have to commence life again at the bottom of the ladder. Our firm will commence business at once. We do not intend to abandon the place no matter what may happen.

On Quantrill’s motivations, Simpson noted that the Springfield Republican reported the guerilla’s attack was in response to raids by Kansans into Missouri. Simpson discounted this argument.2

A woman’s perspective on the raid is provided in an October 10, 1863, letter written by Mary Savage, who lived just outside Lawrence, to her mother and sister. In her descriptions of activities during and after Quantrill’s raid she uses emotionally charged words and phrases such as “horrors” and “fiendish pleasure.”

. . . . I have been very busy since the raid of the bushwhackers into our town. The first week our Minister and family stayed with us as they were burned out and lost every thing. And then the soldiers camped near us and I had to bake for them for three weeks until the bakery was started. And now I have one of the soldiers and


2. H. M. Simpson to Hiram Hill, September 7, 1863, Hiram Hill Collection, State Archives Division, Kansas Historical Society, Topeka, available online at kansasmemory.org/item/213271.
Quantrill never explained why he chose to attack the town, but Lawrence residents had been some of the most active supporters of the free-state movement before and during the war. After the raid, more than two hundred homes and businesses lay in ruins, including the Eldridge Hotel, pictured in the foreground of this drawing from Harper’s Weekly, September 19, 1863. Residents would later start up a petition asking the hotel’s owner to rebuild.

his wife boarding with me so you see I have not had much time to write.

I suppose you have read a great deal about the Massacre at Lawrence but you cannot begin to get an idea of it as those of us can who have seen its horrors, and the fiendish pleasure they took in witnessing the death agonies of our best citizens. Murdered in cold blood without any chance of resistance, as in the case of Mr. Fitch in whose death we feel more personal loss than in any other one man killed, he was awaked on that fatal morning as were most of the town by the yells and shooting of the guerillas, who were so near the house that there was no chance of escape. They saw through the blinds that they were sparing some houses and hoped they would pass theirs but in a few moments there were twenty or more rushed up[,] came in and called for the man of the house. Mr. Fitch was upstairs[,] he walked down to them and as he got to the bottom they shot him in the presence of his young wife and three children. They then set fire to the house, refusing to take out the body or to permit her to, also refusing to permit her take anything out of the house not even some clothes for her baby who was not dressed. But this is only one of the many tales of suffering in this place, but I have not time to write more now, as it is time to get supper.3

Mary Savage also shared her concerns about the possibility of another attack in the following addition to the preceding letter. The Joseph mentioned here and in the following excerpts is Mary’s husband.

... we feel quite exposed, as there is a possibility of an attack from the west by some of the guerilla bands that are becoming so numerous in this part of the county. We live in a state of constant excitement and I watch from the windows many times at night, whenever I hear the least noise, and I don’t allow Joseph to go to the door if any one comes in the evening preferring to know who is there first as the guerillas have not killed any woman yet. Still we don’t know what they may do if they should come in here again, but we hope they will not try it again. Our citizens are all armed and trying to be ready for them if they do come. But their mode of warfare is so treacherous that we cannot have a fair fight. Their advantage is in the swiftness of their horses and their perfect knowledge they have of all our affairs. They seemed to know every house and who lived in it, and who had money. They took all the money and jewelry they could find, even to the wedding rings from the fingers of the wives whose husbands they have butchered. I never thought it possible that we should see such fiendish actions in the christian land, but I fear we have not seen the end.4

Mary Savage gave more details of the attack in a letter to Jane Simpson, written from Lawrence on November 29, 1863.

But I intended to have told you something of the raid of the rebels into Lawrence. Just before sunrise on the 21 (Aug) I heard the tread of hundreds of horsemen coming in the road above the house and looking out saw the road filled with them and the advance guard stopped at the gate and one of them rode up to the house and knocked at the door and hollowed [sic] but as it was not opened he rode off[.] He had his pistol in his hand and doubtless would [sic] have fired it if Joseph had opened the door. We did not know what they were till they reached town when they commenced firing as fast as they could and we heard the cries of the frightened people running in every direction to make their escape as they shot right into the houses and at every man they could find. ... We harnessed up as quickly as possible and started for Uncle Forest’s, about four miles from town. We had not gone more than a mile when we saw one of our neighbors and a member of the same church running from his house and two of the bushwhackers after him. They were just taking aim at him as we drove up. Joseph

comprehended the whole thing in a moment and jumping from the buggy was over the fence and into the corn field in a second, while I sat almost stupefied with horror at the scene before me. They shot Mr. Langly three times and I can never efface from my memory the look and cry of anguish that he gave as he fell, the blood running in streams from his wounds. Joseph came to the edge of the corn and told me to turn round and go back and I did so, but they fired after me and cursing told me to come back. I did so and they said they were not killing women and children (Daphne was with us) but that they were going to kill the man (our hired man), who was with us. They told him to get out of the buggy. They accused him of having been in the militia, but I assured them he had not and that he was sick and they let him go. They threatened me in hopes to get money but I assured them I had none, and told them to examine my pocket, at which they were quite indignant, telling me that they would make me give it to them. I then stood up and told them to examine the buggy if they did not believe me. They did so and taking Joseph’s new silver horn, which I had taken to save it, and carried it off with them. They also took a halter from one of my horses, and bidding me go on they started for the next house. They found the horn too large to carry, so they smashed it on the fence [sic] and left it there and we recovered it and sent it back to Boston to be made over.

When they were talking to me, the one told the other to go in and see to the fires in the house (a nice brick one) so when they had gone I went in and found both the straw beds burning and put them out drawing water from the well to do so with. . . . We then drove on to Forest’s and stayed there until the rebels left town. Joseph went round through cornfields till he got near town just as they left it and he was busy till after dark helping to take care of the wounded and dead. I can give you no idea of the scene which presented itself after they left. The business part of town a heap of ashes, and the smell of burning flesh and the wail of the bereaved, all mingling together as they would discover the remains of their dear ones in the burning embers.5

Another account of Quantrill’s raid was written by John Stillman Brown in a letter to John L. Rupur dated September 1, 1863. Brown was born on April 26, 1806, at New Ipswich, New Hampshire, and died in Lawrence, Kansas, July 15, 1902. Ordained a Unitarian minister in 1844, Brown served as pastor in Fitzwilliam, New Hampshire, and Ashley, Massachusetts, before migrating to Kansas in March 1857 and settling on a farm a few miles west of Lawrence. In 1860 he became pastor to the Lawrence Unitarian Church and in 1863 gave up his farm to live in the city.

Brown viewed the attack from a hill west of Lawrence, but first he took time to milk his cows before he left the farm. He wrote about U.S. Senator and General James H. Lane coming out of a corn field near his home after Quantrill’s men had left the area. He included a list of many of the dead and estimated the damage done to houses and businesses.

We are all well—The Lord hath spared us—Lawrence has seen and experienced dreadful things—You have seen the lists of the dead—The Brick Walls can be built up again—but what workman can build up our dead again. . . . It was a little after sunrise when three men came galloping into our enclosure and said Quantrill was in Lawrence killing & burning[,] we looked towards the city which lies N.E. of us and saw very distinctly the smoke curling up. Charles took a horse and rode west to arouse the people. William took the bridle and tried to catch some of our horses—I looked up the guns and swords—we had plenty of arms but little ammunition. I went out and milked the cows, eat breakfast[,] took a double barrelled [sic] shot gun[,] and started for town. But after going a few rods I thought how foolish it was to take a gun as I was no marksman and these bushwhackers were sharp shooters; so I laid down my gun and started again for Lawrence. Previous, however, we had carried out our greenbacks of which we had considerable quantity, as a friend had just left me 100 dollars to be paid to another man, and we had some of our own—we also hid a trunk or two of goods in the tall grass—I walked liegurely [sic] towards town and took my stand on the hill west of the city—here I could see the town—and the bushwhackers as they rode from place to place as they went to this work of death, burning and

5. Mary Savage to Jane Simpson, November 29, 1863, Miscellaneous, Mary Savage, folder 24, box 1, State Archives Division, Kansas Historical Society, Topeka, available online at kansasmemory.org/item/225701.
plundering all the business part of the city was in flames[.] About ten o'clock the main body of the brigands had ridden out of town and formed their lines on the south east, in plain sight of the place where I stood. I judged there were not over two hundred and fifty—They rode off south burning the houses as they went; we could see their path for ten miles or more by the smoke of burning buildings—After they had all got fairly away I went home—here I found men women and children—some sixty or seventy who had fled for refuge—To my surprize [sic] I found coming up from our ravine the brave Gen. James H. Lane our United State Senator, and soldier—I told him the way was all clear. I had just come from town and the last guerrilla had gone. He then told about getting a horse and pursuing them in hot haste. I believe he did get together a band and went after them, but I have no evidence that he was the means of shooting any. These rebels, and bushwhackers, and guerillas and marauders, and murderers, were a motley band, as hard a set of fellows as ever rode horse—some were perfectly brutal—some of a milder type. They came to kill and plunder. At first they shot indiscriminately every man that was seen—their object seemed at first to inspire terror—to let no men get together for concerted action—they took I judge in money not less than 150,000 dollars and destroyed in property perhaps 1,500,000—it may be more—then again it may be less. Probably in Lawrence and vicinity two hundred were killed—generally shot through the head, one, two, three, four, five balls in each. Some were killed under circumstances of the greatest atrocity—Many were burned to death, a great many houses were fired and then put out again by the inmates—Probably not one fifth of the dwelling houses in town were burned, all the stores hotels and business part of the town was destroyed, there were but two or three stores left standing and these were rifled of their goods. This raid took place on Friday morning about sunrise 21st of August.6

Brown also wrote of “an awful scare” that came over Lawrence the following Sunday night when word spread that “the ‘bushwhackers’ were upon us again” and that “they were burning Eudora. . . . The panic was terrific,” he wrote,

women men & children flying as for life—Many crossed the river—many fled to the neighboring cornfield, and staid [sic] out all night, though we had a terrible thunder shower between ten and eleven o'clock—I think the citizens suffered more from fear Sunday night then they did the

6. John Stillman Brown to John L. Rupur, September 1, 1863, John Stillman Brown Collection #300, box 2, Correspondence 1863, State Archives Division, Kansas Historical Society, Topeka, available online at kansasmemory.org/item/220191.
day when the ruffians came. But we are now settling down to our wanted state of calmness and hopefulness. No one was prepared for such a calamity. We all thought that such a band could not enter Lawrence without our receiving some intelligence of the fact. An hours warning would have been sufficient. We could have driven them all away if we could have had only an hour warning—we had not a moments—It came sudden as a thunderbolt—The citizens were mostly asleep. There had been a great Rail Road meeting the night previous and all the business men were taking an extra nap. Some twenty negroes were killed—half of the Germans in town were shot—I mean of the voting men—a Dutchman stood no chance. These miscreants were pursued to their homes—I understand a great many were killed—Relief in money and goods and provisions is coming in—a great many families have gone East.\(^7\)

But in the midst of all this anxiety and suffering, Lawrencians immediately started rebuilding their lives and their little city. The Reverend Brown reported that

The shovel the saw and the hammer are again in requisition—The foundations are being cleared away and stores are again commencing to rise. We can soon recover from the loss of property. The loss of life is the great, the essential loss. Last Sunday we had a Union meeting of all the churches in the city. We met at Mr. Cordleys Church—the Congregationalist—Mr. Paddock, the Methodist minister preached the sermon, a long, rambling pointless affair—Strange how little a man can continue to say in an hour.

... Mary has gone to Buffalo to spend a year—Sarah is at home almost sick—if well enough she will go into school next Monday. I suppose we are, the rest of us pretty well—your chest of tea has at length arrived at Leavenworth—William is at home—I must go to town and visit the sick the disconsolate. Mr. Paddock said last Sunday that there were 85 widows in town and 250 orphans made such by these wretches.\(^8\)

Efforts to rebuild the town are also evident in two petitions that circulated not long after the raid, both of which attested to the Free State (Eldridge) Hotel’s importance to Lawrence.\(^9\) The first is dated September 1, 1863, and addressed to Colonel S. W. Eldridge from the “Ruins of Lawrence.”

The Free State Hotel is again in ruins by the hands of Proslavery fiends—We, Your neighbors & friends appeal to You not to be discouraged but arouse Yourself to action & rebuild the noble structure as near as possible as it was—We will aid You to the utmost of our ability & firmly believe the friends of freedom throughout the land will aid You—We respectfully urge You to visit those friends throughout the States & give them the opportunity of contributing—We know they will aid in the Erection of such a monument to Freedom.

The second petition, apparently addressed to the “City of Lawrence,” proposed bonds be issued by the city to support the rebuilding of the hotel.

We the undersigned Citizens and property holders of the City of Lawrence in view of the great importance of the immediate erection of a first class hotel in our City, believing our best interests will justify and the present emergency require that Municipal aid be given to such an enterprise and reposing confidence in the ability of Col. S. W. Eldridge to prosecute the same successfully, do humbly express our willingness that the City of Lawrence by its Constituted authorities should issue to the said Col. S. W. Eldridge its bonds in the sum of Ten thousand Dollars payable in six, eight, and ten years from their date with interest at the rate of six per cent per annum—such bonds to be void in case such hotel be not erected by the said S. W. Eldridge within ______ years from the date of their issue—and we do hereby pledge our votes and undivided influence to secure such action at the hands of our City authorities.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. Petitions to S. W. Eldridge and the City of Lawrence about rebuilding the Free State Hotel in Lawrence, Kansas, 1863, History, Lawrence Collection #611, box 1, State Archives Division, Kansas Historical Society, Topeka, available online at kansasmemory.org/item/225619.
There are over one hundred signatures on both petitions, including those of Governor C. Robinson, the current U.S. senators James H. Lane and Samuel C. Pomeroy, and many Lawrence residents.

As in disasters today, people also offered goods to be given to the victims. Benjamin Talbot Babbitt, a New York City businessman and inventor who had amassed a fortune selling Babbitt’s Best Soap, wrote the following in a letter to Kansas Governor Thomas Carney on December 30, 1863.

I was waited upon by Mr. Veazy a few days since & asked to subscribe something for the “Lawrence” sufferers. This I propose to do in the following manner viz I will contribute 100 packages ea 10 lbs of my best Soap total 1000 lbs. . . . These packages to be given one to each of the 100 families who suffered by the Quantrell [sic] raid.

This will be an advertisement for me & at the same time the soap is as good as money to the receiver—If you will receive & forward this contribution please advise & I will ship soon after the receipt of your letter.10

In the mid-1870s, the State of Kansas became involved with Quantrill Raid survivors by providing reimbursement for losses to survivors of numerous incidents in Kansas during the Civil War. The State Archives contains a volume in the state auditor records titled “Record of Claims allowed for losses by guerillas and marauders during 1861 -2 -3 -4 & -5.” This volume contains over five hundred claims submitted and approved for losses due to raids in Kansas during the Civil War. The bulk of the claims relate to Quantrill’s 1863 raid on Lawrence, but others came out of attacks on Humboldt in September and October 1861; on Olathe on September 6 and 7, 1862; and

10. B. T. Babbitt to Governor Thomas Carney, December 30, 1863, Governor’s Papers, Carney, folder 22, box 2.1, State Archives Division, Kansas Historical Society, Topeka, available online at kansasmemory.org/item/213229.
numerous other attacks in Johnson County throughout the war years. There may be claims for incidents in a few other counties, as there is at least one listed from Miami County. Claims were presented to a special commission established by the 1875 Kansas Legislature; it was organized on March 18, 1875, and commenced receiving claims in Ottawa on April 20, 1875. The first claim was for losses from a guerilla raid on July 1, 1861, in Cherokee County. It contains a general list of losses and property values: dwelling house, household goods, cattle, and hogs. It also includes a list of claimants, where they lived, and the amount of money awarded to each. Most of the claims are marked paid in 1887 or 1888, with the volume’s last three claims coming in 1891.11

While many of the surviving citizens of Lawrence rebuilt their homes and businesses and went on with their lives, and as others moved from the town and the state, the memory of the event and those killed remained. In August 1891 the survivors of Quantrill’s raid gathered in Lawrence to commemorate the twenty-eighth anniversary of the event. They formed an organization—the Association of Survivors of Quantrill’s Massacre, of the Citizens of Lawrence, Douglas County, Kansas, August 21, 1863—elected officers, and resolved to meet annually on August 21. Association documents can be found on Kansas Memory, including the initial resolution; a newspaper account of the August 21, 1891, meeting, which reports the remarks of the main speaker, former Kansas congressman Sidney Clarke; and an extensive list of the signatures of the survivors, all collected under the title “A List of Quantrill’s Raid Survivors.”12

Kansas Memory also contains a photograph of the stone monument erected in Lawrence’s Oak Hill Cemetery and unveiled on May 30, 1895, to honor the victims of Quantrill’s Raid. The monument’s inscription reads:

Dedicated to the memory of the one hundred and fifty citizens who defenseless fell victim to the inhuman ferocity of border guerillas led by the infamous Quantrill in his raid upon Lawrence August 21, 1863.13

There is also a 1925 photograph of survivors taken in front of Strong Hall at the University of Kansas. The fact that many of the survivors were children is evident by the number of survivors still living sixty-two years after the incident. There are several African Americans in the photograph.14

Kansas Memory contains many additional items related to the Civil War more generally. Records from the State Archives include correspondence from governors Robinson and Carney, adjutant general records and correspondence, and numerous muster rolls and descriptive rolls for the infantry and cavalry units of the Kansas State Volunteers and the Kansas State Militia, with two rosters of “colored”


12. Manuscript volume with a “List of Quantrill’s raid survivors, Lawrence, Kansas, 1891,” History, Lawrence Collection #611, State Archives Division, Kansas Historical Society, Topeka, available online at kansasmemory.org/item/225627. For more on the commemoration over the years, see Sheridan, “A Most Unusual Gathering,” 177-91.


troops. These rolls contain personal information about the men serving in the various units, similar to that found in census records. There are over two hundred photographs of military units, exterior scenes of troops and battlefields, and portraits of individuals and notables such as Governor Robinson, James H. Lane, and President Lincoln. Unpublished items from the manuscripts collection on Kansas Memory total more than one hundred items and include correspondence from a number of soldiers to officials and family, several diaries, and collections of correspondence that include Civil War-era letters but which also cover longer periods of time. One of the more unique items is the Confederate First Cherokee Regiment day book, a semi-official journal covering the period from November 10, 1862, to March 31, 1863, during which the author served with the Confederate First Cherokee Regiment in the Indian Territory under Colonel Stand Watie.15

Such primary sources are not just for doing “serious” history. They are an excellent way to “get to know” people from the past. The examples highlighted in this article convey the emotions of the people who experienced the death and destruction that occurred in Lawrence on August 21, 1863, and in dealing with the aftermath of that attack. The ongoing commemoration of the event illustrates how bonds were created among survivors of a particular tragic event. Kansas Memory is filled with such primary sources—letters, diaries, reminiscences, and photographs from all eras of Kansas history—that can help us understand the past from the perspective of people who recorded their daily lives and/or participated in momentous events. KH