Reflections
Bringing the past into the present

The Women of Moneka:
Fighting for Equal Rights

Autumn 2007

Taming the West
Fred Harvey

KANSAS HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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The collections of the Kansas Historical Society are full of wonderful stories – stories of real people, past and present. It is with pleasure we bring you these tales of courage, perseverance, and triumph.

In June many of you joined us at the annual Spring Meeting. At Fort Hays State Historic Site, “Elizabeth Bacon Custer” visited us from the past. She told us of her devotion to her husband, General George Armstrong Custer, and her love of the prairie, as she experienced it while living at the fort. We also had a glimpse at the life of John Fenton Pratt as we toured Cottonwood Ranch State Historic Site. In Nicodemus the story of early settlers Thomas Johnson and Henry Williams began to unfold at the site of the Kansas Archeology Training Program. Sewing machines and bottles were uncovered at the excavation site, giving us a peek into 1870s life. We hope you will join us for the 132nd KSHS, Inc. Annual Meeting, November 2 in Topeka, where we have many more stories to share with you.

Early this year we were awarded $10,000 from the Gault Hussey Charitable Trust, Bank of America Trustee, to develop new educational tours at the Kansas Museum of History. All new tours will be based on the Kansas Curricular Standards and each program will explore original historical documents and artifacts. One new tour, Risk Takers and Pizza Makers: Entrepreneurs of Kansas, has been developed to serve fourth graders throughout the state. Students will learn about Joseph McCoy, Fred Harvey, Walter Anderson, and the Carney brothers. Each of these Kansans had a vision and influenced the world in which we now live. As we sit down to dinner each night there is a very good chance that these real people from the past are influencing what and how we eat.

Be watching for the launch of our new marketing campaign featuring our tagline, “Real People. Real Stories.” You’ll see our tagline on billboards and rack cards across the state. It explains what we are all about. This program is made possible by a federal marketing grant to help raise awareness for the state-owned properties. Marketing studies show that travelers often make their decision to visit museums just minutes prior to their stop. We invite you to visit the Kansas Museum of History, State Archives & Library, and our 16 state-owned historic sites this fall to learn more about the real people and real stories of Kansas!

Vicky Henley, executive director of KSHS, Inc., and Jennie Chinn, executive director of KSHS, are excited about the launch of the new Kansas Historical Society branding and marketing campaign, which includes the use of billboards.
Fred Harvey began his career in the restaurant business in 1850 at the age of 15 when he arrived in New York as an English emigrant. Moving from one restaurant job to another, Harvey made his way through New Orleans and finally arrived in St. Louis.

The Civil War took its toll on the restaurant business and Harvey decided to diversify by taking a job as a mobile mail clerk in the booming railroad business. Twenty years, hundreds of bad train meals, and several railroad jobs later, Harvey had the notion that a business that offered travelers good food and personal service would stand to be very successful. Although his employer, the Burlington Railroad Company, wasn’t interested in his pitch, Harvey had the good fortune of meeting Santa Fe Railway president Charles F. Morse (who shared Harvey’s opinion on railroad food), and in 1876 Fred Harvey opened a dining room in the Santa Fe Topeka train depot.

The success of the Topeka restaurant led to the opening of the first Fred Harvey Hotel in Florence, Kansas, in 1878. By 1891, 15 Harvey House restaurants were in operation. Soon 84 restaurants were serving travelers at Kansas locations including Newton, Hutchinson, Dodge City, and Lakin.

In a strange and at times dangerous land where travelers dared not stray far from the safety of the train, the Harvey establishments provided a clean, safe place to relax and enjoy a good meal in a polished and sophisticated surrounding. Where beans and biscuits had been the norm, diners could now sate their appetites with thick, juicy steaks and hot, crispy hash browns. Meals were served on tables outfitted with imported linens, silver table service, and fine china, many personalized with the Fred Harvey name. To add to the sense of gentility, Harvey mandated that all men in the dining room must wear coats. To make sure that no one would be turned away, a supply of dark alpaca coats was always kept on hand.

Fred Harvey, it has been said, helped to tame the Wild West. Not with a gun or a badge, but with a knife, a fork, and a linen napkin. This restauranteur/entrepreneur and his corps of waitresses, known as “Harvey girls,” brought a sense of decorum, community, and responsibility to many plains and western towns … along with a few “pleases” and “thank yous.”

From Our Collections

Taming the West: Fred Harvey

The Santa Fe depot in Topeka, location of the first Harvey restaurant.

A group of Harvey girls from the Syracuse Harvey House, c. 1920.
“He kept the west in food and wives.”
— humorist Will Rogers

Perhaps the most famous feature of the Harvey House establishments was the Harvey girl, a waitress wearing the iconic black shirtwaist dress, black bow, and perfectly starched white apron and cap. Thanks to the 1946 MGM musical *The Harvey Girls* (featuring Judy Garland), these young women were immortalized as a part of American railroad history.

After his death in 1901, Fred Harvey’s sons and grandsons continued to run the restaurant business. The largest challenge they faced was the decline in railroad traffic and the mass production of automobiles and airplanes. Since the Harvey House restaurants were located on the rail lines, their business slowed.

In 1968 the Hawaii-based Amfac (now called Xanterra) Corporation bought the Fred Harvey Company. The Amfac hotels and resorts throughout the world proudly adopted the Harvey quality standard. Although the Harvey name as a business trademark ceased to exist, you can still see Harvey House items and other railroad artifacts at the Kansas Museum of History or view photographs and documents at the State Archives & Library.

**To Do:**

- **Visit Us Our Main Gallery**
  
  You can see a gong from the Topeka Harvey House that was donated by R.E. LaBounty, a Fred Harvey executive who once worked as a busboy in Topeka. This gong and others like it were used to alert the staff that trains were approaching or preparing for departure. You can also shop for Harvey girl books, a cookbook, and railroad-related gifts and books in the Museum Store. For hours, directions, and admission fees, visit kshs.org/places/museum.htm or call 785-272-8681.

- **Learn from Us The Kansas Journey**
  
  As part of our commitment to meeting education standards for Kansas history, we have written a textbook for seventh graders called *The Kansas Journey*. Students of all ages can read more about Fred Harvey and other Kansans who have had nationwide impact in this beautifully illustrated 297-page, full color book. The book is available to non-educators for $37.95 plus tax and can be found in our Museum Store, 785-272-8681, ext. 413, or online at kshs.org/store. Schools may contact Gibbs-Smith Publishers, gibbs-smith.com, for ordering information.

- **Discover Us Santa Fe Magazine Collection**
  
  Your key to more railroad history lies within our State Archives & Library – among our many publications, documents, and photographs. We hold the entire 78-year collection of *Santa Fe Magazine*, a publication for employees of the railroad. The magazine featured company information, general railroading news, and features about employees and the communities in which they lived. The Library in Topeka is open 9 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Tuesday – Saturday, closed most state holidays. Admission is free. More at kshs.org/places/state_archives/ or contact 785-272-8681, ext. 117, or reference@kshs.org.
Lilla Day Monroe

When Lilla Day Monroe asked women to write about their pioneer life experiences in Kansas, she surely had no idea how it would change her life. As publisher of The Kansas Woman’s Journal, Monroe asked readers to submit their stories of life in Kansas in the 1880s and 1890s. Overwhelmed by the response, Monroe dedicated the rest of her life to collecting, editing, and publishing the sketches.

Monroe was herself a pioneer. As a youth she moved to WaKeeney with her parents in the late 1800s. Monroe was among the first Kansas women to pass the bar exam and be admitted to practice in the district court (1894) and the Kansas Supreme Court (1895). Monroe was also a groundbreaking women’s suffrage advocate and fought for the 1912 amendment allowing Kansas women to vote.

The Kansas Woman’s Journal was conceived by Monroe as a vehicle to help educate and inform the female voters of Kansas on political issues and women’s rights. In the 1920s she began research for an article on pioneer women. Monroe’s call for stories resulted in a flood of 600 letters from women across Kansas who had been children during the pioneer days, offering a unique perspective on the past.

Monroe decided to publish a single compilation – a book – on what grew to be nearly 800 stories of pioneer women – work that consumed nearly all her time. Failing health impacted her ability to continue work on the project and, finally, with her death in 1929, the collection was taken on by her daughter, Lenore Monroe Stratton, and eventually, her great-granddaughter.

Joanna Stratton

It isn’t unusual to stumble across an old diary or letter while exploring grandmother’s attic, but imagine coming across nearly 800 accounts of young women who had experienced pioneer life in Kansas.

On semester break from Harvard in 1975, Joanna Stratton visited her grandmother’s home in Topeka. While searching through the attic, she discovered metal cabinets that held neatly indexed file folders. Each folder held a biographical sketch of a woman who had lived in Kansas during the 1880s and 1890s.

Joanna Stratton had uncovered her great-grandmother’s collection of stories about pioneer women. Stratton’s
grandmother, Lenore Monroe Stratton, began working on the stories when her mother, Lilla Day Monroe, died in 1929. The elder Stratton made a significant contribution to her mother’s project by typing and cataloging the stories.

Six years after that attic discovery, Stratton published Pioneer Women: Voices from the Kansas Frontier, a collection of the stories her great-grandmother had collected, and her grandmother had typed and indexed. She dedicated the book to both women along with her mother.

Stratton has since donated the collection of biographical sketches to the Kansas Historical Society’s State Archives & Library, where they can be read and researched.

Internships

When researching her book, Pioneer Women, Joanna Stratton turned to the Kansas Historical Society for photos and research materials. The State Archives & Library has helped generations of historians, archivists, and genealogists find information, locate primary sources, and discover the history of Kansas and its people.

The KSHS staff and the collection, particularly the photos, impressed Stratton. “The people of Kansas should feel so fortunate,” she said. “I’ve lived on two coasts and have worked with historical organizations on each. I have not seen a historical society anywhere with such an unmatched reputation.”

In addition to our staff, interns play a vital role in our operations. “Internships introduce young people to this organization,” Stratton said. “They allow the work of KSHS to continue for future generations.”

Not only do interns help accomplish our mission of connecting people with the past, but their intern experience often inspires them to choose careers involving Kansas history. Nikaela Zimmerman, a former KSHS Lela Barnes intern, is now the assistant registrar and conservator for the Kansas Museum of History.

“Internships are key for young professionals trying to break into the museum field,” Zimmerman said. “All the theory and hypotheticals they teach in the classroom cannot fully prepare a person for the hands-on experience of caring for historic collections. If students receive this training, they are much better prepared when the collections become their responsibility.”

KSHS, Inc., the non-profit foundation that helps support the Historical Society, is concerned that funds for internships are running out. It is currently trying to raise $50,000 to create an endowment, the interest from which would go to fund future internships at KSHS.

You can help create a permanent internship program at the Historical Society! Please consider making a gift to KSHS, Inc. or becoming a member of our Kansas Heritage Circle, donors who have included the foundation in their estate plans. For more information, contact KSHS, Inc. Executive Director Vicky Henley at 785-272-8681, ext. 201, or vhenley@kshs.org.
Wes Jackson became concerned during the unrest of the 1960s. All of the decade’s crises were troubling, but Jackson and his wife Dana were especially worried about the environment. What could be done to stop the destruction?

From faculty positions at Kansas Wesleyan University in Salina to Sacramento State University in California, Wes continued to ponder the question. In 1976 the Jacksons found the answer – The Land Institute. Established in Salina on a 200-acre site that was the Jacksons’ former homestead, the institute was a no-credit school dedicated to searching for alternative thinking about the environment.

The format of the institute changed as students were allowed to experiment. Some of the first student projects were solar windmills, boardwalks, and building houses out of newspapers.

Students constructed much of the campus from damaged scrap items such as telephone poles, railroad bridges, and a pool table. Conservation is the institute’s principal theme and is carried out with solar outdoor showers, compost toilets, and a bathroom built in a granary. By 1980 the Jacksons had become focused on agricultural research.

Wes Jackson, with a PhD in genetics, focused research efforts on developing perennial root systems for plants such as sorghum and sunflowers. One of Jackson’s aims is to control soil erosion with less tilling. “The Land,” as it is called, is building higher yields in wheat plants and working to keep the seeds on plants until harvest. It is working to gain a better understanding of which plants grow best together. Jackson’s goal is to replicate nature, not control it.
The world has begun taking notice of The Land’s efforts. Jackson was named a Pew Scholar in Conservation and the Environment in 1990, received a MacArthur Fellowship in 1992, was honored with a Right Livelihood Award in 2000, and was among the Smithsonian’s 35 people who made a difference in 2005. The Land has been featured on major national media including The Atlantic Monthly, Audubon, The MacNeil-Lehrer News Hour, and National Public Radio.

This environmentalist, plant geneticist, and writer is hopeful for the future. Jackson believes that sustainable agriculture is possible and continues to take that message to audiences around the nation. He knows that humans must learn to live with nature on nature’s terms.

The rich collection of materials from The Land Institute’s history is preserved at the Kansas Historical Society’s State Archives & Library. The collection includes records from 1974 to present—correspondence, financial records, notes on experiments, newspaper and magazine stories, and speeches. These materials can be viewed during a visit to the Library in Topeka.

To Do:

✔ Discover Us National Register
The National Register of Historic Places and the Register of Historic Kansas Places include agricultural sites such as farms, barns, and ranches. You can search our online database to find agricultural properties on the registers by county, city, and category. Visit kshs.org/resource/national_register/. Here you can also discover more about listing potential properties on the registers.

✔ Visit Us KSHS Prairies
We maintain several reestablished prairies among our sites, which you can visit. One of these is the Nature Trail at our headquarters in Topeka. This 2.5-mile hiking trail winds through the wooded and prairie portions of the property. Trail signs provide information about the cultural and natural history of the area.

You can also visit the Mine Creek Battlefield trail and the Hollenberg Pony Express Station walking trail. kshs.org/places/nature/

✔ Browse Us Angell Plow
Farmers settling in western Kansas discovered that wheat crops were suited to the growing season. They began breaking sod to prepare the soil for planting. This process removed natural vegetation that held the topsoil in place. During times of drought, this topsoil was taken away by the wind. One of the inventions for breaking the soil was the one-way disc plow developed by farmer/mechanic Charles Angell of Plains, Kansas. Browse the story of the Angell Plow in our Cool Things section online at kshs.org/cool2/coolplow.htm.

Salina

The Land Institute presents an annual Prairie Festival in Salina to celebrate the ecosystem.
From Our Collections

The Women of Moneka:
Fighting for Equal Rights

Women in the town of Moneka, Kansas Territory, wanted the same rights as men. They wanted to vote in elections, own property, and be guardians of their own children. The women of Linn County valued these principles so strongly that they formed a women’s rights organization soon after their arrival in Kansas. Many of the early women’s rights supporters also participated in the antislavery movement.

Named for an American Indian word meaning “morning star,” Moneka was established in 1857 by abolitionists and idealists. Among the founders were the Wattles family, who helped to form the Moneka Woman’s Rights Association.

At the meeting on February 2, 1858, Esther Wattles was elected president and a committee was appointed to draft a constitution. The recording secretary began keeping minutes of the proceedings, providing a glimpse into the past. At the February 13 meeting, members elected a full slate of officers and adopted a preamble and seven articles for their constitution that would advance their goals.

From the community of about 200 people, 42 joined the Moneka Woman’s Rights Association; about half of the members were men. The society set monthly programs with “such women lecturers as are accustomed to public speaking,” established dues, and adopted resolutions to convince every woman “to convert to her views at least one legal voter.”

... It shall be the object of the Society to secure to woman her natural rights and to advance educational interests ...

The Moneka Woman’s Rights Association secretary’s minutes offers a glimpse into the past.

In order to achieve their goals, the members of Moneka knew they must influence the new Kansas constitution.

Three previous constitutions had been defeated – one proslavery and two free state. Moneka turned its focus to the fourth constitutional convention in Wyandotte in 1859. Moneka members distributed petitions that would provide “equal rights for all.”

Moneka members enlisted the help of Clarina I. H. Nichols, a newspaper woman and a leader in the women’s rights movement in Wyandotte County. They asked Nichols to present the 250 petitions to the constitutional convention on their behalf.

Nichols was one of three women to attend the Wyandotte Convention. Although she could not
Because of the efforts of the Moneka Woman’s Rights Association and Clarina Nichols, women were able to vote in municipal elections.
Margaret Steineger, Georgia Howlett, and other members of the Junior League in Wyandotte County were concerned about the future of the Grinter family house. Among the oldest properties in the county, the 1857 house of Annie and Moses Grinter overlooked the Kansas River. Here they operated an early ferry and trading post. By the 1960s the home was privately owned and operated as a restaurant.

“The people who bought it from the Grinter descendents had an offer to tear it down and build an inn,” said Margaret Steineger. “We started the friends group because it was important to save the site.”

To this end, the Junior League adopted Grinter as their project and began fundraising to purchase the property. They deeded the house and five acres of land to the state.

The 1968 Kansas Legislature accepted the donation of Grinter Place. In October 1973 the site was opened to the public. The following year it was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

The barn located at the site served as meeting space for both the Friends of Grinter Place and the Junior League. When the barn burned in the 1980s, the friends group faced new challenges.

“I was in charge of fundraising and construction,” said Georgia Howlett, president at the time of the rebuilding. “We spent five years getting the barn rebuilt.”

The new barn was located closer to the Grinter Place site. It continues to serve as a meeting and event space for the friends group.

Grinter Place State Historic Site

received a Transportation Enhancement grant administered by the Kansas Department of Transportation for rehabilitation. The exterior is now complete and the interior work will be completed this fall.

Moses and Annie Grinter.

Kansas City
History's Heroes Now

Sharing a Passion for History

Ruth Lawson and Mary Mosher have been longtime friends. Their children grew up together and they were members of the same church. The two also share a passion for history, which is why they have devoted three decades to volunteering for the Kansas Museum of History.

“I went on a school trip to the museum with one of my children,” said Ruth Lawson. “Volunteers were giving tours and I said, ‘This is something I can do.’” Lawson joined the tour program when the museum was located in the Memorial Building at 10th and Jackson in 1975. She recruited Mosher the following year. When the museum moved to west Topeka in 1984, the two became the core of the new volunteer program.

Lawson has focused her tours toward fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students, and adults. Mosher enjoys tours for younger students. The two both love the American Indian sections of the gallery and enjoy sharing those stories with students. Both have led numerous tours for all ages including westward migration, “Bleeding Kansas” and the Civil War, the railroad era, immigrant history, and living on the High Plains. “I enjoy the time spent with children,” said Mosher. “Fourth graders are especially forthcoming. And the education division staff is really nice to work with.”

“The institutional support of volunteers over the years has been phenomenal.” Lawson said. “They have valued our partnership and provided leadership to the docent program. Tens of thousands of school children and adults have had their lives enriched as a result of the combined efforts of these two wonderful volunteers.

Each year Lawson and Mosher have participated in the stationing program in the main gallery, sharing hands-on artifacts with thousands of school children during their annual spring field trips to the museum. They have helped with numerous special events, including Kansas Day and special exhibit programs. For a number of years Mosher taught classes for summer programs and helped with “Slides, Guides, and Buffalo Hides,” a transitional exhibit. Lawson has regularly volunteered at the Potawatomi Mission since its opening in 1995. The two have mentored many new docents and provided leadership to the docent program. Tens of thousands of school children and adults have had their lives enriched as a result of the combined efforts of these two wonderful volunteers.

Mary Mosher and Ruth Lawson have each volunteered more than three decades for the Kansas Museum of History.
Happening at KSHS

**Kaw Mission Councils – “Our Fabulous Flint Hills”**

Join us as we celebrate the 16th anniversary of our Kaw Mission Councils educational series. Nine presentations scheduled throughout the year are highlighting the rich resources of the Flint Hills of Kansas – natural, cultural, and historic. Programs are free. See the calendar at right for dates and specific topics, or visit kshs.org/places/kaw/

**Shawnee Indian Mission Fall Festival**

Take a step into living history at our 21st annual Fall Festival October 13–14. Meet Missouri Free Trappers, a blacksmith, a broom maker, spinners, weavers, and lace makers. Tour a tipi or visit a pioneer camp. Buy handmade items from the craft village or treat children to the petting zoo, pony rides, or games and activities from the 1800s. Gather the family around the campfire Saturday night for storytelling. A fee will be charged for some activities. kshs.org/places/shawnee/.

**Fort Hays – Graveside Conversations**

This fascinating forum will give you chills as you hear the stories of “residents” of the Fort Hays Cemetery – at the cemetery – as told by volunteers in period clothing. Meet a 7th Cavalry sergeant who was shot by a disgruntled trooper, buffalo hunters who froze to death in a snowstorm, a young girl who died of typhoid, the Blue Light Lady – a nurse at the fort during the cholera epidemic of 1867, and the Wild Huntress of the Plains, forever searching for the murderer of her husband. There is no charge for the tour, but reservations must be made in advance. kshs.org/places/forthays/

**Museum Store**

Shop for books on Wilt Chamberlain, the Kansas City Monarchs, and other sports-related gifts and books for all ages related to the special exhibit Game Faces: Kansans in Sports. Find books on many of the famous Kansans in this issue. Check online for a more complete selection at kshs.org/store/.

**Kansas Memory**

This window into Kansas history is one example of the images that will be available when Kansas Memory makes its debut in the next few weeks. This new online resource will bring thousands of Historical Society photographs, diaries, maps, and artifacts to the Internet. Teachers, take note ... Kansas Memory also features materials to address state history standards. kansasmemory.org.
Calendar of Events
Online at www.kshs.org/calendar/

Through December 30
Game Faces: Kansans in Sports
Exhibit at the Kansas Museum of History, Topeka

September 22
Cookin’ at the Cottonwood
Cottonwood Ranch State Historic Site, Studley

September 22 – November 3 (Thursdays)
Kaw Councils “Our Fabulous Flint Hills”

September 22: The Great Kansas Buffalo Hunt
October 13: The Santa Fe Trail Traveler’s View of the Flint Hills
November 3: Flint Hills Cowboys – Tales of the Tallgrass Prairie
Kaw Mission State Historic Site, Council Grove

September 29
William Allen White B-29 Crew Reception
William Allen White House State Historic Site, Emporia

October 5 – 6
Kansas Book Festival
Wichita State University, Wichita

October 13-14
Shawnee Indian Mission Fall Festival
Shawnee Indian Mission Historic Site, Fairway

October 27
Fort Hays Cemetery Graveside Conversations
Fort Hays State Historic Site, Hays

November 2
132nd KSHS, Inc. Annual Meeting
Kansas Historical Society, Topeka

December 1-2
Shawnee Indian Mission Holiday Open House
Shawnee Indian Mission State Historic Site, Fairway

December 6
A Kaw Mission Christmas
Kaw Mission State Historic Site, Council Grove

Autumn 2007

Kathleen Sebelius
Governor of Kansas

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KANSAS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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**Kansas Memory**

The Kansas Historical Society’s newest online resource will be unveiled this fall. This image of American Indians at the Haskell Institute stadium dedication, Lawrence, is among the photographs in the digital repository. The man in the top row, second from right, is Two Guns White Calf. He was the model for the Indian head buffalo nickel.