Welcome

The commemoration of the 150th anniversary of Kansas statehood begins January 29, 2011. The Kansas Historical Society is planning special Kansas Day activities and programs. Look for more specifics to come in our next issue.

We serve as the lead agency for the state’s Kansas 150 commemoration. Please visit the website ks150.org to learn more about these activities, including the issue of a Kansas stamp. As part of the anniversary, our own websites, kshs.org and kansasmemory.org, will be updated. There are many more ways you can participate; find ideas on page 9. Other exciting changes have already begun.

Terry Marmet begins a new phase in his career with the Kansas Historical Society. He will retire after 31 years working with the state agency and join the Kansas State Historical Society, Inc., the 501(c)(3) nonprofit foundation, as director of operations. In this capacity he will oversee day-to-day management of the organization, and facilitate communication and development of the board of directors, its members, annual donors, and customers.

As historic sites division director for 20 years, Marmet oversaw numerous fundraising, rehabilitation, and reinterpretation projects for the Historical Society’s 16 state historic sites. In 2004 he served as interim executive director of the state agency. Marmet also worked as facilities planner and historical architect for the Historical Society. Previously, he worked for two private architectural firms in Indianapolis, Indiana.

“The role of the private foundation continues to grow,” Marmet said. “I am excited about the opportunity to work with the executive committee and board as we begin our sesquicentennial year.”
“A Man Ahead of His Time”

Oscar Micheaux was born in Illinois, the fifth of 13 children. Many of his family members, including his parents, became early settlers in the area of Great Bend. He left his family’s farm at age 17 and worked as a Pullman porter in Chicago. From there he moved to South Dakota and became a farmer and entrepreneur. It was in South Dakota that Micheaux began his career as a novelist.

In 1913 Micheaux published and marketed his first book, *The Conquest*. At first Micheaux traveled door to door to sell his books to South Dakota farmers and businessmen. He overcame prejudicial attitudes and the restrictions on African Americans at the time and founded his company, Western Book Supply. Micheaux wrote *The Case of Mrs. Wingate*, the first best-selling novel written by an African American. In 1951 he told the New York Amsterdam News why he wrote and published his own books.

_I want to see the Negro pictured in books just like he lives … But, if you write that way, the white book publishers won’t publish your scripts… so I formed my own book publishing firm and write my own books, and Negroes like them, too, because three of them are best sellers._

Micheaux didn’t stop at writing books. He went on to create Micheaux Film Corporation, which became the only black-owned, independent film company to continually operate through the 1920s and 1930s. After rewriting his first book, he produced and directed it in 1919 as the film *The Homesteader*. This silent film was the first full-length movie produced by an African American.

Micheaux went on to produce more than 40 feature-length films. He was the first African American to produce a sound film with *The Exile* (1931). His last film, *Betrayal* (1948), was the first African American-produced film to open in white theaters.

With limited funds to produce his movies, Micheaux found ways to cut corners. He couldn’t afford to re-shoot scenes or film from multiple angles. While his films were sometimes criticized as being technically inferior, he was able to successfully mix entertainment with social messages.

Micheaux died in 1951 while on a promotional tour in North Carolina. He claimed two adopted homes, Harlem, New York; and Great Bend, Kansas. Micheaux chose to be buried in Kansas. His tombstone simply read, “A Man Ahead of His Time.” In 1988 the community erected a monument in memory of this pioneer American filmmaker.

Micheaux continues to receive recognition. He was inducted into the Black Filmmaker’s Hall of Fame, which honors him each February by presenting the Oscar Micheaux Award. The Directors Guild of America named him the posthumous recipient of the Golden Jubilee Special Directorial Award in 1986. Also that year he was honored with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Researchers can view the 1994 reprints of Micheaux’s books, *The Conquest* and *The Homesteader* at the State Archives & Library in Topeka.

James Barney Marsh was born in Wisconsin and graduated from Iowa State College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts in 1882. He began his professional career in the Des Moines office of the King Bridge Company of Cleveland, Ohio, working in design, sales, and the construction of metal bridges. Marsh later worked for the Kansas City Bridge and Iron Company and again the King Bridge Company in Des Moines. In the spring of 1896 Marsh formed his own company, the Marsh Bridge Company (later called the Marsh Engineering Company).

As a contracting engineer, Marsh was able to develop his own bridge designs, usually using steel as a medium. In the early 1900s he started adding concrete to his designs. In 1911 Marsh patented a design for a “rainbow arch” bridge that used reinforced concrete spans for major stream crossings. The design was unique because the arches could contract along with the bridge floor under varying conditions of moisture and temperature. This concept competed with the popular steel truss design at the time, and Marsh set out across the Midwest to solicit his rainbow arch bridge. The Marsh Bridge Company designed 76 bridges in Kansas between 1917 and 1940.

Of the Marsh bridges in Kansas, 11 are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. They can be found in Chautauqua, Cherokee, Coffey, Geary, Linn, Lyon, Miami, Montgomery, Sedgwick, and Shawnee counties. Of the eight triple-span rainbow arch bridges in Kansas, two are located in Miami County, which has the most National Register-listed Marsh bridges of any Kansas county. Both bridges are located in Osawatomie and are still open to
traffic. Because Osawatomie is bound by the Marais des Cygnes River on the north and Pottawatomie Creek on the south, these bridges are vital to access the community from the outlying areas.

North of town, the Creamery Bridge was built in 1931 to span the Marais des Cygnes at Eighth Street. The bridge was named for the dairy business located north of the river. It is 345 feet long and has a rainbow span reaching 140 feet into the air at its highest point. According to the December 12, 1930, issue of the Osawatomie Graphic, the Maxwell Construction Company had been selected for the project with a bid of $36,087.84. The bridge would replace one that had been condemned several times. The May 21, 1931, issue of the Graphic mentioned that county engineer Harold J. Abbey predicted seven more working days were needed to complete the structure.

South of Osawatomie is the Pottawatomie Creek Bridge, located on Sixth Street. Built in 1932, the bridge reaches 120 feet into the air. It was built by J.S. Vance and Son Construction Company of Parsons in 218 days at a cost of $66,751.56. The July 31, 1931, Miami Republican predicted that the mile of roadwork including the bridge would cost over $114,000. “This is the most costly and will be the most pretentious bridge in the county,” the paper claimed.

Upon completion of the Pottawatomie Creek Bridge in June 1932, the Graphic described the community of Osawatomie’s event to celebrate the bridge opening. Kansas Adjutant General Milton R. McLean was in attendance to represent Governor Harry Woodring. McClean cut the ribbon, officially opening it to traffic. The American Legion Juvenile band played, and Hardie Dillinger made a successful balloon ascension and parachute jump, landing just north of the Marais des Cygnes.
Goodnow House State Historic Site

When rehabilitation needs at Goodnow House State Historic Site in Manhattan reached a critical stage, foundations and individual donors joined with federal funds to preserve Kansas history. A 2009 federal grant of $150,000 provided major restoration work on the two-story farmhouse to ensure the long-term preservation of the property and to provide for the public’s safety. The $185,500 project required a match of $37,100. The Manhattan Fund – Caroline F. Peine Charitable Foundation, Bank of America trustee, made a gift of $20,000 for reproduction wallpaper and carpet. Through the Partnership Historic Sites Tax Credit program individual donors in the community provided the remaining funds. The final border wallpaper and carpet installation is expected to be complete this fall. Once the work is complete, the site will reopen to the public.

Publicity Funds

The Kansas Museum of History is planning a special exhibit for the state’s anniversary, 150 Things I Love About Kansas. This major display will feature 150 items that represent the spirit of Kansas both past and present including historical artifacts, documents, photographs, artwork, writings about Kansas, and reminiscences of historical events. A donor has provided funds for the exhibit’s creation; please watch for an announcement in the next Reflections. Yet there are no funds available to let the public know about this new exhibit. The Johnson County Heritage Trust Fund’s generous support of marketing dollars for Shawnee Indian Mission State Historic Site in Fairway has proven that increased awareness results in increased attendance. A gift of $20,000 is needed to cover the cost of a billboard, printing, advertising, and announcements for the special exhibit. If you know an individual, foundation, or corporation that would be a good match for this project, please contact Vicky Henley at 785-272-8681, ext. 201; vhenley@kshs.org.

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“The proudest thing I can claim is that I am from Abilene.”

— Dwight D. Eisenhower
For settlers and those hauling freight across the Santa Fe Trail, Council Grove was an important stop. Located in a grove of trees along the Neosho River, it provided access to water and abundant grass and timber.

Once home to the Osage, Council Grove became part of a 20-mile square reservation set aside for the Kansa, or Kaw Indians. The 1846 treaty that established this reservation also provided that the U.S. government would make an annual payment of $1,000 to advance the education of the Kansa. In 1850 the Methodist Episcopal Church South entered into a contract with the government and began construction on a mission and school building.

A two-story native stone building was erected to accommodate 50 students in addition to teachers, missionaries, and farmers. School began in May 1851 under the direction of Thomas Sears Huffaker. Classes were held at the school until 1854 when it was closed due to the excessive cost ($50 a year) of maintaining each student. During its activity, the school averaged 30 male students a year. They were taught spelling, reading, writing, and arithmetic.

An 1859 treaty further diminished the Kaw reservation. Their lands were relinquished in the 1870s and the tribe was moved to a reservation in present-day Oklahoma.

The mission building and grounds were sold to Huffaker in 1865, and he maintained it for 14 years. The property passed hands several times until 1951, when the Kansas legislature authorized the purchase of the property on which the mission stands. It is now a state historic site that tells the story of the Santa Fe Trail, Council Grove settlers, and the Kansa people.

Visit the site!
Kaw Mission State Historic Site • 500 North Mission • Council Grove • 620-767-5410 • kshs.org/places/kaw
Admission: $3 adults, $1 students; KSHS, Inc., members and children five and under admitted free
Visitor hours: 9:30 a.m. - 6 p.m. Wednesday – Saturday
Charles Robinson was born in Massachusetts in 1818. After attending Amherst College, he turned to medical studies and soon opened a practice. Following the death of his first wife and two infant children, Robinson headed west, passing through Kansas, to California to become a physician for gold prospectors. He added restaurateur and newspaper editor to his resume, and became involved in a dispute with settlers and land speculators. Robinson was indicted for murder and spent 10 weeks on a prison ship. During that time he was elected to the California legislature and was acquitted of the charges. He returned to Massachusetts and in 1851 married Sara Tappan Doolittle Lawrence.

Sara was born in Massachusetts in 1827. She received a classical education and attended Salem Academy. She and Charles had met prior to his travels west. The couple lived in Fitchburg where he reestablished his medical practice and edited the local newspaper.

An experienced traveler and interested in the free-state cause, Robinson was designated agent for the Massachusetts Emigrant Aid Society. He went to Kansas Territory in July 1854 to select company town sites. After returning to Massachusetts to lead a group of settlers to the new territory, he established the town of Lawrence, named for his cousin Amos Lawrence, a wealthy manufacturer and supporter of the cause. There Robinson was elected president of the town company and became a leader in the free-state movement.

Sara followed her husband to Lawrence in spring 1855. Life was harsh in the territory and she enjoyed the opportunity from time to time to visit friends and family in the more comfortable environment of Massachusetts.

A different breed of leaders emerged through the tough times of Bleeding Kansas—ones with strong beliefs and passions for adventure. Kansas’ first governor and first lady were motivated by the free-state cause to live on the frontier and face violence and even incarceration. They came to Kansas Territory at the beginning of the conflict that would decide the fate of the state.

Left, Charles and Sara Robinson; above, the Free State Hotel in Lawrence was destroyed amidst the strife of Bleeding Kansas.
Motivated by supporters in New England, Charles expressed optimism that freestaters would prevail in the effort to make Kansas a free state.

“Success appears to be certain & we hope to have a free State in full blast in less than one year snugly seated side by side with Mass in the Union.”—Charles Robinson wrote to Amos Lawrence in September 1855.

Robinson helped negotiate a truce, ending the “Wakarusa War” in December 1855. The following January he was elected governor of Kansas under the Topeka Constitution. Robinson was arrested in May 1856 with other freestaters on treason charges. He served several months in confinement at Lecompton, the proslavery capital. In response, Sara wrote and published an account of the social and political situation, Kansas, Its Interior and Exterior Life. At the time Sara’s book was considered second only to Uncle Tom’s Cabin in importance to the antislavery cause.

Let it be sounded in the ears of the American people, that high treason against the United States consists in arming one’s self and friends, in defence of homes and property, in face of a mob, who threaten innocent men with death, and timid women with a fate in comparison with which death were infinitely preferable.

On the first of June, my husband, under the charge of his guard, arrived at Lecompton, and was placed in a tent with the other prisoners; thus making seven persons crowded into one tent.

Robinson returned to the free-state cause after his release, and in December 1859 he was again elected governor, this time under the Wyandotte Constitution. When Congress ratified this new free-state document, allowing Kansas to become a state, Robinson took office. He served one term from two months before the outbreak of Civil War until January 12, 1863.

As a result of Robinson’s rivalry with the flamboyant Senator James Lane, he was impeached but acquitted of wrongdoings as governor. The Robinsons continued to live in Lawrence and Charles stayed actively involved in politics. Charles died in 1894, Sara in 1911. Much of their correspondence, photographs, and records are among the collections of the Kansas Historical Society.
Countdown to Statehood:  
“I know of no state that deserves more, for no state has suffered more”

As Kansas Territory (and the nation) waited for admission into the Union, correspondents in Kansas sent messages eastward, relaying the stories of political conflict, drought, and other challenges to living in the territory.

Oscar E. Learnard was a leader in Free State and Republican parties. He helped establish the town of Burlington and built the first mill there. From Lawrence, Learnard wrote letters to his father, S.T. Learnard, in Vermont. In a letter dated July 23, 1856, Oscar stated his disappointment in the people of Vermont and throughout the North who supported the Pierce administration.

I have no words to express my contempt and scorn of the poor [xxx] of the north who uphold and sustain a system of wrong in Kansas . . .

In a November 6, 1860, letter to Oscar, his father expressed his hope that Kansas would soon become a state, bringing conflicts his son and others were enduring to an end.

I know of no state that deserves more, for no state has suffered more. If there ever was a people who deserved a monument to commemorate them their courage suffering & endurance in the Cause of Liberty, it is those brave men & women who in the darkest hour stood firm & undaunted in the cause of freedom . . .

S.T. Learnard’s wish for his son came true when Kansas was admitted to the Union two months later. Oscar went on to serve as judge of the Fifth Judicial Circuit until the start of the Civil War, when he resigned to enter the Union army as lieutenant colonel of the First Kansas Infantry. He later served in the Kansas Senate, worked as a railroad attorney, and published the Lawrence Daily Journal. Learnard died in Lawrence in November 1911.

Oscar E. Learnard
Kansas Sesquicentennial

The Kansas sesquicentennial is quickly approaching. This is a time to reflect on the history that led to the 34th state entering the Union on January 29, 1861, and the significance of the 150 years that followed. This commemoration also inspires us to look toward the future, to ensure that our children and grandchildren will continue to take pride in their state’s history.

As part of the commemoration, we are working to strengthen our foundation for the next 150 years. You can take part in this effort by continuing your membership in KSHS, Inc., and by giving the gift of membership to friends and family. Even more importantly, we encourage you to help us build the endowment for continued support of education, and building and preserving collections. Gifts to KSHS, Inc., our 501(c)(3) foundation, are tax deductible.

You can help support Kansas history by visiting the Kansas Museum of History, Kansas State Capitol, our 16 state historic sites, and Museum Stores located at many of these sites.

Visit our virtual history sites—kshs.org and kansasmemory.org are being redesigned. We invite you to visit and learn more about our state’s history. Shop online for Kansas books and gifts at kshs.org/store. The Kansas 150 website, ks150.org, features 150 others ways to commemorate this anniversary.

Please join us during the sesquicentennial and preserve Kansas history for future generations!

Left to right, Constitution Hall State Historic Site, Hollenberg Pony Express Station State Historic Site, Kansas State Capitol.
From Our Collections

Stories in Quilts

Quilts are objects of great comfort and are also tools that help tell the story of Kansas history—especially women’s history. Both functional and fashionable, quilts provided a creative outlet and a source of pride for the creator. Quilting was often a social activity for women in a community who could share in a group project while catching up on the latest news.

During the decades before the Civil War, the art of quilt making peaked. Popular early types included mosaics, patchwork, red and greens, and intricate appliqué.

Crazy quilts appeared after the nation’s centennial in 1876. First called Japanese quilts because of their unusual Asian symmetries, the early quilts were made of silk with embellishments. Clara Strieby Hughes’ Crazy Quilt was a treasured wedding gift to her niece, Mary “Mamie” Dillon, on her marriage to James M. Miller. Hughes was born in Pennsylvania around 1832. She was a business woman with a share in the M.C. Armstrong & Co. store in Council Grove. She may have used store samples in her quilt which measures 75 3/4” by 59”.

Red and green on plain white background was popular in the 19th century. The limited color range was due in part to fashion and because red and green were the most colorfast dyes available.

Millie J. Okeson chose a red and green Triple Pomegranate in Vase design for her quilt completed in 1898. Born in Illinois around 1866, Okeson’s family was living in Nemaha County by 1880. Okeson also used red quilting thread, which was unusual for a turn-of-the-century quilt.

She may have been influenced by Turkey red embroidery that featured a similar thread dying technique. Okeson’s quilt measures 87 1/2” by 86”.

Elizabeth Marthaler Stauf was inspired to create a patriotic quilt during World War I. Eagles was made between 1914 and 1917 before the United States entered the war. It features the red, white, and blue coloring of the U.S. flag; the bald eagle, America’s national symbol; and a border of stripes. Born in Berne, Switzerland, in 1860, Stauf came to the United States at the age of 18. She first settled in Hiawatha, then moved to Marysville in 1880. Stauf’s quilt measures 90” by 68 1/2”.

Mary Lucinda Wilson Carl chose the popular Dresden Plate pattern for her work created around 1930. The bright colors and scalloped edges are

Above, Okeson’s Triple Pomegranate in Vase quilt.

Above, Stauf’s Eagles quilt; left, Carl’s Dresden Plate quilt.
typical of the era. Feed and flour companies sold products in fabric bags, which were used for quilts such as this one. Carl’s quilt measures 92 1/4” by 74 1/2”.

Hannah Haynes Headlee designed the intricate *Iris Garland* quilt (featured right and on cover) around 1935. Headlee, born in Topeka in 1866, was an artist who taught watercolor and china painting. She was inspired by several famous Emporia quilters. Headlee created the appliqué design, purchased nine shades of violet for the iris blooms, and dyed one shade herself. An unidentified needle worker did the quilting. Headlee’s quilt measures 85 1/2” by 74 3/4”.

Gertrude Hawks enjoyed quilting to pass the time after her husband died in 1947. Born in Hiawatha, Hawks and her husband had been farmers. She often used leftover scraps for her quilts, as with the *Postage Stamp* quilt.

The quilts in the museum’s collection span all areas of the state and illustrate the different groups that settled here, their communities, their families, and their lives.
Happening at KSHS

Kansas 150
Join us for a commemoration of the 150th anniversary of Kansas statehood on Saturday, January 29, 2011. Events will take place on or around that date at the Kansas Museum of History, our state historic sites, and other locations across Kansas.
ks150.kansas.gov

2011 Official Kansas Ornament
This year’s official ornament to decorate the Kansas tree in Washington, D.C., commemorates the 150th anniversary of Kansas’ statehood. You can find the ornament, along with a selection of Kansas 150 merchandise, at the Kansas Historical Society’s Museum Store. kshs.org/store

Fort Hays Reopens
New exhibits recently opened at Fort Hays State Historic Site in Hays. The newly renovated visitor center features exhibits on the clash of cultures that created the need for frontier forts. Exhibits in the guardhouse detail the everyday lives of enlisted soldiers. Life-size figures on the grounds tell the stories of officers’ wives, laundresses, and other civilians at the fort. With a variety of exhibit formats, including computerized interactive displays, there’s something for everyone to enjoy during their visit to Fort Hays. kshs.org/places/forthays

Holiday Open Houses at our State Historic Sites
Our sites are ready to celebrate with events throughout the holiday season. Depending on the site, look for period decorations and traditions, holiday goodies, or specials in the stores. Visit the following sites during their open houses to get in the holiday spirit:

December 2
Kaw Mission • Council Grove
kshs.org/places/kaw

December 3–4
Fort Hays • Hays
kshs.org/places/hays

December 4
Hollenberg Pony Express Station • Hanover
kshs.org/places/Hollenberg

December 4–5
Shawnee Indian Mission • Fairway
(Kansas City area) • kshs.org/places/shawnee

December 5
Pawnee Indian Museum • Republic
kshs.org/places/pawnee

December 10–11
Grinter Place • Kansas City
kshs.org/places/grinter
CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Online at kshs.org/calendar

Through November 28, 2010

*Cars: The Need for Speed* • Exhibit at the Kansas Museum of History, Topeka

November 1–December 31, 2010

*No Trespassing: The Segesser II Paintings* • Exhibit at Pawnee Indian Museum State Historic Site, Republic

November 5, 2010

KSHS, Inc., 135th Annual Meeting
Kansas Historical Society, Topeka

December 2, 2010

A Kaw Mission Christmas • Event at Kaw Mission State Historic Site, Council Grove

December 3–4, 2010

Christmas Past • Event at Fort Hays State Historic Site, Hays

December 4, 2010

Christmas Open House • Event at Hollenberg Pony Express Station State Historic Site, Hanover

December 5–6, 2010

Holiday Open House • Event at Shawnee Indian Mission State Historic Site, Fairway (Kansas City area)

December 5, 2010

Holiday Open House • Event at Pawnee Indian Museum State Historic Site, Republic

December 10–11, 2010

Christmas Traditions • Event at Grinter Place State Historic Site, Kansas City

January 28, 2011

*150 Things I Love About Kansas* • Exhibit at Kansas Museum of History, Topeka

January 28–29, 2011

Kansas Day • Events planned at the Kansas Museum of History and several state historic sites
Kansas Memory

November is American Indian Heritage Month. We invite you to browse kansasmemory.org for more than 350 images of native people, including this drawing of the November 1867 Council at Medicine Lodge Creek.