Kansas State Capitol Virtual Tour
With Governor Laura Kelly
Middle and High School

Audience – Grades 6-12
Length – 29:04:10 (minutes, seconds, frames)

Objectives:
Students will be able to:
1. describe purposes for the state Capitol
2. understand that John Brown is a controversial figure
3. understand some challenges for Kansas to become a state
4. understand that Kansas had a role in the start of the Civil War
5. understand roles in state government
6. name important civil rights movement in Kansas

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<td>Second Floor Governor’s Office and Ceremonial Office</td>
<td>(Governor Kelly) Hello Kansas kids. I’m Governor Laura Kelly. And I’m here to take you on a virtual tour of the Kansas State Capitol here in Topeka. I’m doing this because ordinarily this time of year, April and May, there are hundreds of kids coming from all different school districts from all around the state to tour the Capitol on a field trip. You didn’t get a chance to do that so I’m going to bring the Capitol to you. Here’s Joe Brentano. Joe gives tours in the Capitol all the time. And I can tell that while I have never gone on one of Joe’s tours, he’s the best. So, get it started, Joe. (Joe Brentano) Well, thank you Governor. This is a great honor. We don’t normally get to come back to the private space and there’s some really beautiful, wonderful things, and most notably we’re going to start here with the George Stone mural. Stone was a native of Topeka born in 1858 and he was trained in Europe and other places and he really came back to Topeka and along with publisher and cartoonist Albert Reid began what would then eventually become the Washburn University art department. He was known for his landscapes and portraiture, but this Spirit of Kansas was commissioned sometime in the early 1900s. We talk a lot about in Kansas history freedom from slavery, the Spirit of Kansas. So, you’ll notice at the bottom left, the shackles there of the former slaves. So the Spirit of Kansas has a lot of things, the spirit of freedom and inclusion.</td>
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Hey guys, this is my actual office. This is where I work. You can see up on the walls we’ve got a lot of absolutely stunning photographs. These were done by my friend Judith Sabatini. She’s an artist and she focuses on the Flint Hills.

So, over here I’ve got a lot of leftover stuff from the 14 years I spent in the state senate, lots of good gee gaws. One of my favorites is this box of baseball cards. This is actually Joe DiMaggio, some of you may have heard of him, he was very famous New York Yankee, they called him the slugger. I was a Yankees fan when I was a kid. My dad and my mom were born in New York, as was I, and so I grew up as a Yankees fan. I love the Royals now, but I was this. So, and the chief justice of the supreme court also was a Yankees fan and he gave these to me as a gift. So, one of my favorite things. Up here, you’re going to see an elephant. If you know the symbols of the political parties, Democrats have donkeys, Republicans have elephants. And my Republican friends in the senate gave that to me when I broke my femur in a parade, and they gave that to me as a gift well gift. And up here you can see I’ve got a pair of boxing gloves. I was given these boxing gloves by people who work with children with developmental disabilities because I fight for kids.

So, Governor, working in this space, what are some of the most important things that you’ve worked on while in the office.

Well, there’s absolutely no doubt that the most important thing that I’ve done since I’ve been Governor, aside from trying to get us through this public health crisis, was the passage of the school finance bill. When we finally started, you know, giving our schools enough money to do the job that they are entrusted to do. So getting the school finance bill passed was the most important thing.

We’re in what’s called the governor’s ceremonial office. This is where people come in if there are being recognized for a special award. Or if we are proclaiming a month as national school month. Everybody will come in here and have their picture taken with the governor. If you were to come here as a page during the legislative session you would come in here in the morning and have your picture taken with the governor. And with that, I’m going to let Joe tell you a little bit about this room.
(Joe Brentano)
Well, there’s some really wonderful things in here, more notably is the Landon desk, which has a really incredible story there. Alf Landon was a successful businessman, he was our governor in the thirties, a very popular governor. He would even run in the 1936 ticket for the Republican nominee for president against Roosevelt. And he did not win that election but thus remained very popular. This desk is very special because apparently Landon liked to work with his assistant close by so this is a special custom-made desk known as a partner desk. And you may notice there are drawers on each side. So two people can work together at it. Another special thing it was built by the Kansas state school for the deaf in Olathe, Kansas, in their cabinet making department. So that also makes it very remarkable too. Now many of you know Alf Landon’s daughter Nancy Kassebaum was for many years our U.S. senator and she was instrumental in having the desk donated here to use in the ceremonial office. Now apparently Landon liked to put his boots up on the desk so you might notice some marks at the top. And she specifically did not want those buffed out. She wanted the public to see how her father had used the desk.

(Governor Kelly)
As you know I’m the Governor of the entire state of Kansas. In the state we have 105 counties. Every county has a courthouse as the center of the county. So what I wanted to do was show off that part of Kansas. So I asked the Kansas Historical Society to put together a collection of photographs of all of our courthouses. And we’ve got 14 of them up now. The Historical Society will come and take these down and put up 14 more. And we will continue to rotate them so that all 105 county courthouses will be displayed in the ceremonial office over the course of my first term.

Second Floor Rotunda
Curry’s Tragic Prelude mural

(Governor Kelly)
So now we’re on the second floor of the Kansas State Capitol right outside the governor’s office. Joe, what have we got?

(Joe Brentano)
What we have here is one of the more remarkable pieces of artwork in our Capitol, certainly it’s the most well-known. And it’s John Steuart Curry’s Tragic Prelude. Curry’s a native Kansan. He was commissioned in the mid-1930s to design murals for the second floor and his idea was to lay this out like a timeline of Kansas history. So for instance I’m going to start over here with the Spanish explorer Coronado and Padre Padilla. In the history of the Santa Fe Trail we
don’t always think of the Spanish influence but it is very important there the trading route from Santa Fe, New Mexico. Coronado comes over into the North American interior. Now originally, he’s looking for gold to take back to Spain with him. So this mythical tale of the kingdom of Quivira draws Coronado this far into the North American interior. We know he gets to about Lindsborg, Kansas, before he realizes there’s just no gold here on the prairies. Moving on to the other side of the arch you get into the era of the buffalo hunters and plainsmen and the buffalo roman the prairies of the North American interior. And Buffalo Bill and certainly others came. Curry did not paint this figure to be Buffalo Bill but you could certainly think of somebody in his era like him. Unfortunately they hunted or killed so many of the bison or buffalo. At one time they were nearly considered extinct as a species.

Now behind me we are really going to get into the focal point of the mural there. John Brown came from the east there and he was not only passionate but he fully believed that slavery was inhumane and he would do anything necessary to stop not only the expansion of slavery into Kansas but totally abolish the institution all over the U.S. Now it’s interesting the way Curry Brown portrayed. Look at him in this image. He’s larger than life. I’ll tell you he wasn’t really 11 feet tall. But the artist Curry is trying to tell us something about Brown. This was not a little issue. So he’s painted him larger than life. Couple very important symbols in his hand. In his left he has that Bible, that open Bible. But look over what’s in his right hand there. He has the rifle there. The Sharp’s carbine rifle. John Brown is really the lightning rod that begins that movement. He’s ready to go to any means to achieve the goal of abolishing slavery. So, you see John Brown in the center. You’ve got that division on both sides of him. So, Curry has generally the Union portrayed over onto the left with the U.S. flag. And over on the right you have the Confederacy there. In the middle at the heart of the issue are the slaves over which the issue is about. And then the coming civil war. So, Curry has the two soldiers, both portraying the Union in the blue and the Confederate in the gray, soldiers. The more than a million and a half that would make that ultimate sacrifice during the coming civil war. He also puts a couple very important things in here. You’ve got the trail systems west, so you see some pioneers and wagons moving westward there. But symbolically Curry puts these things into the mural. That’s symbolic of the gathering storms have roots in that Kansas-Nebraska Act and equally the symbolism of a prairie fire. Think about a prairie fire, you are burning fields because you want to make way for the new change, the new growth to come along. So, think about this time in U.S.
history. It’s very important, this lead up to the Civil War and eventually the 13th Amendment to the Constitution to abolish slavery. Kansas has a really significant role in U.S. history and Curry recognized that in this artwork with the symbolism there.

**Second Floor Curry’s Kansas Pastoral mural**

Well here we are in front of Curry’s Kansas Pastoral. This is the third part of the timeline that Curry designed, and this is really the ideal unmortgaged farm meant to represent the modern Kansas. Now I mean modern in the 1930s. So his focal point really here is that farm couple and how important they are to the culture and the character of our state. And when we get to the last section of the mural, it’s the prairie at night. Perhaps the prairies are one of our greatest natural resources there. But by the time Curry gets to working on this about the summer of 1942 Curry has gotten quite discouraged at the lack of support he had. Unfortunately, he did not sign the work because he didn’t feel it was finished nor complete and he died not long after in 1946. So he didn’t get the opportunity to come back and finish those things there.

**Second Floor Winter’s Education mural**

(Governor Kelly)

So here we are still on the second floor but now we are in what’s called the rotunda sort of the central hallway of the statehouse. And what we’re going to talk about here will be this mural here, which has a one-room schoolhouse like kids used to go to in Kansas and then also a very special person in Kansas history. Joe.

(Joe Brentano)

In 1978 Lumen Martin Winter is commissioned to design the murals and we are going to focus on a couple here. The one-room schoolhouse was often the center of the community and the teacher was responsible for all the curriculum for several grades, first grade up into the eighth grade there. So, she would be responsible for reading, writing, and arithmetic, the basics there. They used slates and slate pencils and that was their very basic supplies. The teacher was responsible for giving all the lessons for all the grades and of course it was the blackboard that was the main tool, sort of the iPad of its day I suppose where all the lessons were written down. And the students were expected to do recitations for testing and such. The older grades might bring in wood for the pot-bellied stove. Younger kids might be assigned to clean the blackboards, and clean those wool felt erasers, clap them together was often one of the fun things. The teacher might have a map in the classroom, a globe, and if the teacher was musical, there would often be a piano available. So, a bit about the one-room schoolhouse. They were common in Kansas even up into the mid-1950s. But consolidation really closes a lot of the schools and the need for more technical learning grades there.
So, Lumen Martin Winter specifically has this schoolhouse placed here and notice the teacher is leading the children to shelter there because of the tornado. But I will share with you, you might notice there is one young man in the foreground not seeming to be not paying attention to his teacher. Well that happens to be the artist. Winter painted himself in the painting. He grew up near Larned, Kansas, and it’s said he patterned that schoolhouse to look like the one he attended growing up there. So that’s one of the eight panels we are going to focus on, on this tour.

**Second Floor**

**Felten’s Amelia Earhart statue**

But next to the panel over here are the statues. There are four of these done by Pete Felten from Hays, Kansas. And he was commissioned in 1981 to design the statues. They are carved out of Silverdale Limestone, which is a variety from south central Kansas.

And right here we have pilot, aviator, Amelia Earhart. Amelia Earhart grew up in Atchison, Kansas, there. And he parents and grandparents, Muriel, were encouraged to explore and one of the best-known stories is they created a roller coaster out of some roller skate wheels as a child and she got her sense of flying from that example as a child. She would go on to educate herself there and be involved in many issues but mostly learning to fly. She’ll set many speed records. I think in the 1930s she will be the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic. And of course she wanted to be the first person to do something. So her goal was to circumnavigate, or fly around, the globe. And in that attempt in 1937 she gained fame there. But she did not make it of course all the way around the world. She was lost over the Pacific in 1937. So today we still think about that spirit of adventure that Amelia Earhart had and her sense of growing up here in Kansas where that was where she captured that spirit of adventure there. I’m told these statues weigh about 2,000 pounds a piece so something we don’t want to move often there.

**Third Floor**

**House of Representatives**

(Governor Kelly)

You know, the laws of Kansas are made right here in the state Capitol. I’m standing in the Kansas House of Representatives chamber. Your moms and dads elect the folks who come here to help make the laws. I am going to let Joe tell you a little bit about this facility.

(Joe Brentano)

Thank you, Governor. Well our house is made up of 125 representatives. They come from districts from all over the state. And the districts are population based so each one represents roughly
24,000 Kansans. And they are elected to serve a two-year term. We don’t have term limits on our legislators in Kansas so they may be elected to serve multiple terms there. Members are seated by their political affiliation. And you’ve got the leadership in each of the parties and their desks are up front. The large chair up front at the top of the podium or rostrum is where the speaker sits. The speaker is chosen by the group to serve as the leader. Clerks sit below and the podium in front is the well of the chamber where our laws are vetted and debated here. They have a procedure here in the house. Every member has buttons at their desks and they must be recognized by the chair to, when they are recognized they will go up front and debate at the podium. And there are two microphones up there so you might be standing next to your colleague debating the pros or cons of these bills or ideas that potentially could become our state law. Now when the members are ready to vote they do it electronically. So, at each of their desks they have a series of buttons, a yes and a no vote, and the voting results appear on the voting boards, which are at the top of the chamber. Because we are not in session right now the voting boards sit flush in the wall and you hardly notice they are even there. But during session you would see an LED light display and you would get an immediate feedback of how your representative is voting. You would be able to see that on the voting boards. And that’s a little bit different process than they do in the senate and we will talk about that when we go over there. The gallery is up on the fourth floor. The public gallery is open to anyone when they are debating and discussing bills during the 90-day session. Our Kansas constitution says our legislature must meet annually for 90 days. And typically, the session is from January to early May. They can go shorter or longer or can be called back into a special session to address something as necessary. I want to focus a little bit on the historic things in the room. This wing of the building was finished in 1881 and this décor reflects that era. And if you look on the ceiling you’ve got these wonderful murals here. These were recently restored because for many years they had been covered up with paint. The themes are Justice to the back of the room, the First Dawn of Liberty at the right or north, Law is above the rostrum at the front of the room, and History is above me over on the south side of the room. They restored not only the beautiful murals but all of the ceiling colors and patterns and they uncovered the 10 names above the windows. They had been covered up as well for many years. All of these men had something to do with Kansas as a free state or abolitionist state. You’ll recognize John Brown. Now over on the north, you’ve got J. H. Lane, Jim Lane. Lane organized the Lane Brigade, fought in the Civil War, the Lane Freedom Trail was something he pioneered. And that
was a network of the Underground Railroad that ran north of Topeka up into Nebraska. So, a little bit about all of the names and how they contributed to early Kansas and abolitionist history there.

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|                    | This is absolutely my favorite place in the entire state capitol. I spent 14 years here serving in the state senate, sitting at this very desk. Now let’s go over to Joe and talk about the chamber.

(Joe Brentano)
Well, welcome to the senate. And the state senate is made up of 40 members and again they are elected by districts based on population. Senators have a four-year term and they represent a larger constituent base of about 70,000 Kansans. The senate has a longer term. They provide that leadership role over time. Whereas remember with house members they serve the two-year term so if voters want changes more quickly you have that opportunity. So, the idea of the two-chamber legislature and the checks and balances they provide. Now behind me the senate also chooses a leader. He or she is known as the senate president. So, the large chair at the rostrum is for senate president. Clerks sit below and those student pages, pages are 12- to 18-year-olds that come and work for the day, for their representative or senator, and get to take part in the process. So, if you’re a page you get to sit up front here. Now unlike the house remember that had the large podium in the center, each senator has their own microphone. So, the senators stand from their desk to address the group. They don’t have to come up front as they do in the house. And notice on the desks there are no electronic buttons or tabulations for voting because in the senate it is by the division of the assembly, an oral yeah or nay vote. So, no digital voting boards over here. You really have to pay attention and listen to the voting in the senate. So, a little bit of the differences between the house and the senate. This wing of the building is the original and is the earliest wing of the Capitol. And in the early days the wing accommodated both the house and the senate until 1881 when the house moves to their own wing. And it’s later in 1885 that the room you see today was designed there. It really reflects some of the high Victorian style and unlike the house that changed so much through the years the senate really retains most of its original features. I think one of the marvelous things in here are the copper columns there. Italian artisans did all the metal work. And notice the columns are set up on those boxes with the air grill underneath. That was unique and it helped draw up the warm air and circulate. As you know the warm air rises and it ventilates out. Today they are still connected into the modern ductwork system and still function as they were originally intended.
I want you to know that all of our elected legislators have an office in the building. So, when you come here to visit during session you can visit them. In the east wing here on first, second, and third floor we have mostly our state senator’s offices in there. You’ve got the west wing of the Capitol here where we have representative offices and the constituent services office down the hall.

Third Floor
State Library

(Governor Kelly)
We are now on the third floor and we are in the official Kansas State Library. This is an absolutely remarkable facility and I hope you have a chance to come visit this yourself. But in the meanwhile, we are going to have Joe describe what is going on in here. But before I give it over to Joe I want to tell you Annie Diggs was the very first state librarian to actually work in here. And she was famous not only for being a state librarian, but also because she was very active in establishing women’s right to vote. She was a suffragette.

(Joe Brentano)
So, Annie’s really remarkable as you said, Governor. In her role she was self-educated and she was a very highly south after speaker. She got a lot of her speaking experience through her church in Lawrence but also would travel later to Europe and other places. She lobbied both the major political parties to adopt women’s suffrage and when refused that she really got involved with the Populists of the era and they adopted that platform of women’s suffrage. And they also represented farmer and small business and the temperance, the moderation and the consumption of alcohol. All those movements kind of coalesced there. And Annie was really well thought after. And by 1898 when she was appointed the librarian, it’s on that strength of her character that she had this room designed. And I say it that way, she insisted on having these bookshelves from a company out of Jamestown, New York, and they are solid, a high-quality steel and they have built in book lifts there on each end. And the remarkable thing is the glass floors, the purpose allowing more natural light in there. You didn’t have the modern right electric bulbs, even though this was the first room to have electricity. Still the glass augmented and helped allow more natural light in there. He wanted the image of the sunflower and the bras railings that you see below there. So Annie really had a vision for this and a strength of character on there. Every state has a library system, however, they are not always located in the capitol. Ours has always been here. Any Kansan can use the resources here. There are a lot of repository of federal documents. Any you’d want to know about Kansas, Kansas history, laws that have been passed, can be researched right here. Maybe
you are a Kansan that can’t travel to Topeka, you can go through your local library and get a state e-library card and access all of the resources here.

Third Floor
Young’s *Brown v. Board of Education* mural

(Governor Kelly)
We’re on the third floor of the state capitol right outside the old supreme court room. A new edition to the state capitol was this mural done in 2018 and it depicts one of the most important events that ever happened in the state of Kansas and that probably has the biggest impact on your schools today.

(Joe Brentano)
Yeah, Governor, like you said the first new mural or artwork in over 40 years there. And there is visually a lot to see in this. The artist is Michael Young native Kansan from Leavenworth. There’s a lot of images in here. So let’s start on talking about the Brown versus Topeka Board of Education decision in 1954 there. Let’s start with the two schools involved in Topeka. There were schools in Kansas that could segregate based on race. So in Topeka, at the top left, you have the Sumner School. Notice at the top right is the Monroe School, the segregated school for African American children. And that was really unfair. So, with the local NAACP they started to pull these cases together. And they would be wrapped up and taken all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. In fact those five flags at the top right are the other states involved, which are South Carolina, Virginia, Kansas, Delaware, and the District of Columbia. They choose Oliver Brown as the lead plaintiff because in Topeka, Kansas, the two schools, Sumner and Monroe, were about the same age. So equal facilities, teacher’s salaries between white and black teachers were competitive, and textbooks were up to date. What we are trying to prove is separate but equal is still unequal. So that’s part of the reason why Oliver Brown is listed as the lead plaintiff. But all those cases are rolled together. They will be argued all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, which is the building depicted in the center background. And it was unanimous in 1954. All nine justices agreed separate but equal is inherently unequal. And that would begin the process of desegregating public schools all over the U.S. there. Now Michael Young’s focus is that integrated classroom. There’s a lot of wonderful detail in here, things you might identify with. But I want to draw your attention to the man in the photo frame on the teacher’s desk and he is the attorney Thurgood Marshall who would lead those oral arguments to the supreme court. Later on Marshall would be appointed as the first Black associate judge on our U. S. Supreme court, much later in 1967 there. So a lot of the image here. You kind of have over here on the left, the challenges and the adversity to
integrating schools, and over on the right the positive outcomes and that idea if we can all learn and have opportunity to have an education that we can all achieve our potential there. So you’ve got people in various career garbs and wear depicted. Again, a lot to see in here and what do you see particularly in the mural?

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<td>(Governor Kelly)</td>
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<td>We’ve come to the end of our tour of the Kansas State Capitol. I want to thank Joe so very much. You did a fabulous job. I’m sure the kids will enjoy it. And I want to thank all of you for taking the time to watch this. I hope so much that very soon you will actually be able to come here and meet Joe and have a tour of the Capitol in the actual building. You all take care.</td>
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